JOYOUS READING: ASPECTS OF LITERATURE ENJOYMENT FOR BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS

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DEDICATION

To my sister, Janelle, you are why I care(d).

To my friend, Naimah, you are why I persevere(d).

To the elders, family, and childhood friends

of the borough where I conducted my research,

you are why I return(ed).

To the ancestors, the community,

and the brilliant brown children

who have brought so much joy to my life,

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ABSTRACT

JOYOUS READING: ASPECTS OF LITERATURE ENJOYMENT FOR BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS

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This study primarily explores the types of books African American children in a local fourth grade classroom like and enjoy. Books students are interested in reading and other related aspects that contribute to their literary enjoyment are also explored. It is during the upper elementary years that many students who eventually express little or no preference for reading first "become ambivalent toward reading… because they [can] no longer find reading material that interest[s] them" (Davila and Patrick, 2010, p. 200). Even when children select a book on their own, they are almost always selecting from books preselected for them by adults (librarians, teachers, booksellers, publishers, parents, etc.). Encisco, Wolf, Coats, and Jenkins (2010) refer to the heavy adult influence in children's literature as "a shadow" that never truly departs (p. 259). As a result, children's voices tend to be ignored in a field that supposedly exists for them. Applying a student voice lens and critical ethnographic approach, this dissertation considers the research question from a variety of method sources.

Participant observation, surveys, interviews, book club discussions, book logs, and circulation records are analyzed and compared to better understand the topic presented.

Emphasis is placed on book genres, formats, and elements that potentially contribute to student enjoyment, as well as the impact of students' reading environment. The results reveal participants' enjoyment of realistic fiction, comedy, horror, biography, and science nonfiction books. While chapter books proved to be the most enjoyed format by frequency, longer visual texts (comics, graphic novels, and multimodal books) were considered to be the participants' favorite format. Also, a book's characters were found to be the most important book element contributing to liking/enjoying a book. Findings regarding other aspects of literary enjoyment include a desire for comfortable seating, outdoor reading, and freedom to choose their own books. Topics of leveling policies, peer influence, and how adults contribute to and/or obstruct joyful reading experiences are also discussed. The overall goal of conducting this research was to explore and provide information regarding literature children in this demographic may be more inclined to enjoy.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Story of the Question

It was winter of my first year teaching in Philadelphia, and the heat was not working properly in the building. I looked out on a sea of colorful coats and brown faces, buried in individual or shared copies of Christopher Paul Curtis' novel, *The Watsons go to Birmingham*. At the time, we could identify somewhat with the first chapter, which described the cold weather of Flint, Michigan in the 1960s. When I finished reading the two chapters I planned to read aloud to the class that day, a chorus of groans came from the group; they wanted to keep reading. Overall, the children seemed to enjoy *The Watsons go to Birmingham* in ways they had not experienced any other text that entered our classroom that year. We laughed together as one of the main characters managed to get his tongue stuck on an icy mirror, and we grieved together when we thought of the four little girls dying in the 1963 church bombing.

Throughout each day and outside of class, questions and comments related to the book continued. We discussed a lot of topics, from regional accents to racism. We got to know each other better through discussions of family history and explanations of why we were each fond of different characters. Reading became so much more than text; it became a living experience that fostered community and connected us to both imagined and real worlds. It became what Heath (1983) refers to as a *literacy event*.

This series of literacy events reminded me of those experienced in my own upbringing (e.g., family members reading to my sister and I during the summer nights of our childhood, relatives telling stories around the kitchen table or the front porch, library

camp activities, my undergraduate alma mater's annual campus-community Read-In (involving a set of events revolving around a single book read by everyone affiliated with the university)). These were among the salient events that encouraged my passion for books and literacy education. Coming together in the name of literature was a wonderful experience in itself, but I was able to see the crucial role that the actual books played too. As a teacher, each school year, I sought books that would best contribute to this experience of literary enjoyment. The search led me to further question what types of books African American children are more likely to enjoy reading.

This question initially began developing and burning inside of me when I was eight or nine years old. It was then that I noticed a sudden, relative loss of interest in books among family members and friends my age. This was a puzzling observation for me. My father's family was full of teachers, authors/poets, and avid readers. Both sides of my family were full of dramatic and effective storytellers. We loved stories! Yet, my sister and cousins seemed to become increasingly disinterested in reading. As I grew older, I continued wondering why those same loved ones had such a passion for stories, but not necessarily in the format of a book. Many of them became or returned to being avid readers as college students and adults, later claiming they had not been introduced to books they genuinely enjoyed in their younger years (usually referring to upper elementary and middle school grades).

Often, throughout my time teaching fourth grade, I thought of my sister, cousins, and childhood friends. Some of my students shared their names or mannerisms and seemed to begin the year with low expectations for reading enjoyment. I wanted them to

enjoy the experience of reading for reasons beyond academic achievement, so I made it my mission to seek books that would help spark and sustain a passion for reading. The search for such books proved to be exciting, but exhausting. Throughout the process, I kept asking, "What kind of books do African American children tend to like? What kind of books might they need?" However, searching for official answers to this question only led me to more questions.

Research Questions

My study utilizes various methods (surveys, questionnaires, circulation records, interviews, and book club discussions) to explore the following research question: ***What types of books do Black/African American fourth grade students like and enjoy?*** To be more context-specific, I sought information regarding a population sample living on the urban-suburban border of a major northeastern city. While the question posed mostly relates to the types of books Black/African American fourth grade students like and enjoy presently, I am also interested in ***sub-questions*** that posit: ***What types of books do they think they might like or enjoy that they have not read or that do not (yet) exist? What other potential factors contribute to their literary enjoyment?*** Applying a variety of research methods, I focused much of my inquiry on the genres, formats, and elements of the books that upper elementary African American children tend to like and enjoy, but I also explored more social considerations such as reading environment.

Landscape and Statement of the Problem, Part 1: Literacy-Focused

"I like that book becaussse... I be prayin' for a fire drill [like the character in the book] because… once the fire alarm goes off… it's ***done****—the tests, no more tests!"* –Brian

The words of one of the interview participants (Interview 1) highlight one of the main problems that seem to be obstructing the public's knowledge of African American children's reading interests and enjoyment. We are currently living in the era of testing; it is prevalent and often unavoidable. Teachers and schools are punished all over the United States when they do not meet state/federal test score requirements (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Green, 2014). However, those most hurt by the dominance of standardized testing are the children who are forced to deal with test anxiety and a school year full of lessons focused on passing test scores for the sake of teacher or school survival/reputation. As Darling-Hammond (2010) explains, "It is virtually impossible to punish underresourced high-needs schools without punishing the students who attend them" (p. 74). In my experience at such schools, the lower the school's scores the previous year, the more the school seems to drill students on test topics and memorization the following year. This especially seems to be the case in upper elementary grades, when the "achievement" gap first tends to become apparent (O'Connor, Hill, & Robinson, 2009). (Note: O'Connor et al. are among the various scholars who problematize the term "achievement gap" itself, questioning its emphasis on holding children accountable for society's injustices.)

Green (2014) notes that predictions were made at least as early as the 1980s that an emphasis on teacher accountability related to test scores would indeed lead to ""attempts to 'teach the test'" (p. 13). The results of this focus on high-stakes

standardized testing are devastating. Originally, standardized tests were supposedly made for the benefit of schools and students; the goal was to reveal students' strengths and weaknesses so improvements could be made in an attempt to turn those weaknesses into strengths (Popham, 1999). Many teachers, parents, and policymakers simply want to know what their children know in order to move forward with what should be learned. However, the high stakes that students, teachers, and schools face has instead led to a constant focus on testing and the "achievement" gap. Books (2011) argues, "Because it means so many different things to so many different people, talk about closing the achievement gap actually means very little—and I suggest, has been so broadly embraced partly for this reason" (p. 45). She explains that the gap is a reflection of society despite people's attempt to place the blame on communities of color and/or living in poverty.

Accountability policies that were supposedly intended to enforce higher standards for children from all backgrounds instead resulted in "a decline in effective teaching and learning" and the furthering of deficit discourse about students who are of color and/or living in poverty (Allington, 2010, p. 500). Darling-Hammond (2010) points out,

> Enormous energy is devoted in the United States to discussions of the achievement gap. Much less attention, however, is paid to the opportunity gap—the accumulated differences in access to key educational resources—that support learning at home and at school. (p. 28)

Schools and national policies significantly contribute to creating the gap in test scores that they are supposedly working to eliminate. Darling-Hammond (2010) cites differences in school buildings, financial resources, and teacher qualification as three (of

a number of) reasons school equity is not a national reality in the United States. A research team found they could predict a school's test scores based on three of the community's basic demographic percentages: the percentage of (1) families with an income of over $200,000, (2) people living in poverty, and (3) people with a Bachelor's degree (Holbrook, 2017). If standardized testing has not helped to decrease the score gap, what is its true purpose? Beyond encouraging an atmosphere of stress and competition, it appears test scores are mainly used to further degrade and condemn people and communities that are not affluent and predominantly White.

Given this landscape, in addition to the overall history and stereotypes of African American literacy in the United States, it is understandable that much of the research related to African American literacy and children's literature is about culturally relevant pedagogy or literature, social justice, reading engagement, and the less recognized/appreciated literacy practices of African American youth. Gibson (2010), Husband (2012), Kirkland (2009), and Muhammad (2015) each note the prevalent myths and stereotypes associated with African American literacy and the way this impacts African American students. Studies regarding culturally relevant pedagogy/literature stress that African American students would likely be more interested in school literature or score higher on standardized assessments if United States schooling and curriculum included/accepted more of the students' cultural norms, experiences, or practices (Gay, 2000, 2010; Harris, 1997; Kirkland, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 2010; Sims Bishop, 1990; Tatum, 2006).

Researchers have shown how African American students demonstrate a variety of literary interests and behaviors despite U.S. school exclusion, from urban fiction (Gibson, 2010) and spoken word (Fisher, 2007; Wissman, 2008), to hip hop literacies (Brown, 2009; Morrell, 2002) and drama performances (Winn, 2010, 2012). African American writers reflecting the feelings and realities of African American life write much of the literature used in these studies. Often, the research includes literature as a springboard for (usually teenage) African American youth to also create texts of their own. Honoring the power of self-determination and counter-storytelling, this research demonstrates the ways in which critical literacy can promote social justice and identity (re)construction for African American adolescents (Richardson, 2002, 2007; Sutherland, 2005, Tatum & Gue, 2012).

The emphasis on African American literacies remains vitally crucial, especially given the ways in which literacy has been used as a sorting mechanism in U.S. society (Collins, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Street & Street 1991; Winn, 2010). Ever-increasing attention has been given to explaining reasons for the "achievement" gap (Delpit, 2012; Howard, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2006; O'Connor, Hill, & Robinson, 2009; Tatum, 2000, 2005), as well as the problems with zero-tolerance policies and the school-to-prison pipeline (Crenshaw, Ocen, & Nanda, 2015; Laura, 2014; Morris, 2012; Nolan, 2011; Tatum, 2009; Winn, 2010), topics that have a tendency to connect with discussions of literacy acquisition in K-12 schooling. It often seems advocates of African American children are at war with a culture that refuses to acknowledge, encourage, foster, or accept the brilliance and beauty of African American people.

Much of the discussion referenced above regarding African American literacy understandably appears to be a response to the negative stereotypes/myths about African American people. Similarly, I did not want my dissertation research to involve a deficit perspective of African American students. Taking it a step further when considering the significance of my question, it was vital to me that the goals of my research remain as unconnected as possible to standardized test scores. I aimed to remove myself from the discussion as much as possible. In an effort to distance my work from the anxiety, pressure, and confinement of the current schooling landscape, I moved towards the opposite end of the schooling spectrum: the place where joy exists.

Landscape and Statement of the Problem, Part 2: Literature-Focused

Wolk (2008) suggests, "immerse students in a culture of good books, and you surround them with joy" (p. 13). This is certainly a goal of mine, but the question remains how we determine which books are "good" books. In his discussion of African American male reading engagement, Tatum (2006) identifies "the role of text in literacy development" as "the missing piece" in research related to literacy education (Tatum, 2006, p. 45). He explains, "Specific texts and text characteristics that should inform curriculum selection are strikingly absent. This is problematic because educators who are seeking to identify ways to engage African American males in reading-related tasks have little guidance in doing so" (p. 45). Despite the prioritizing of engagement over enjoyment, I agree with Tatum's claim that the texts being presented to students are not discussed enough in research literature. What do students like about the books? Which specific narrative elements are children highlighting, regardless of adult intervention, that

contribute to their positive experience? These are some of the questions I want to understand more clearly.

Another reason we do not know much about the interests and literary enjoyment of African American children is because of the dominant role adults play in the field of children's literature. Encisco, Wolf, Coats, and Jenkins (2010) refer to this heavy adult influence as a "hidden" omnipresence in the world of children's literature, "a shadow" that never truly departs (p. 259). Children are not the primary purchasers of children's literature (Reese, 2000), and though researchers and librarians continue to claim that children prefer books they choose themselves (Asher, 1979; Davila & Patrick, 2010; Mellon, 1992; Purves & Beach, 1972), we must remember that children are rarely choosing books for themselves truly and freely. They may select a book on their own, but they are almost always selecting from books preselected for them by librarians, teachers, booksellers, and publishers. Children may even require/seek the approval of parents or other adult authority figures before borrowing or purchasing the books they select. Many are also limited by classroom practices such as book circulation based on reading levels. As a result, what is deemed children's choice is really what Bourdieu (1986) refers to as "forced" choice" (pp. 177-178). Book selection is rarely (if ever) a true/complete choice.

Adults often authoritatively act on the belief that they know what children need. The same can be said in the children's literature market/field. This is logical to an extent; children may not always be aware of the options that exist beyond what lies in front of them or in their imagination. Some may exclusively and tightly hold on to a chapter

book series they love, for example, until they learn that there is another series that is similar or better. If adults know of books that children may like and enjoy, and/or books that might build children's knowledge, self-esteem, character, etc., perhaps it is their duty to share such books with them. Children's relative inability to protect themselves is what I believe to be at the heart of various children's literature debates (e.g., the authorial insider/outsider debate, banned book protests, discussion of the need for culturally relevant literature). Sometimes the children know what they need and are able to bravely and wonderfully demand it, but often, adults must step in to support or advocate for them. This advocacy is a responsibility that should be taken seriously.

Adults often think they know what children would enjoy, but are perhaps more removed than they would like to believe. This reality is demonstrated in Munde's (1997) study, when the participants (adults and children) selected humorous books they thought children would like. The adults were more likely to select books that demonstrated clever, cognitive humor and involved a moral/lesson, but the children selected books with simpler humor, amusing wordplay, and a triumphant underdog/protagonist. Often, adults happen to make great or effective book selections, but a line is easily and frequently crossed when adults completely lose sight of what children actually need, want, and enjoy. The balance between books adults want for children and books children want for themselves is essential, and books that meet the less common, shared approval of both groups are what I believe to be the classics.

It is virtually impossible to completely remove the adult presence from children's literature work, but I aimed to focus my research as much as I possibly could on the

voices of the students because of this reality. The desire to place their voices at the center of my work significantly impacted my decisions regarding research methods and considerations. For example, students were encouraged to donate and request books that were not already present in the classroom library. I did the best I could despite certain constraints to ensure students' evaluations, suggestions, and beliefs were heard, because ultimately, I believe the children should be the primary evaluators of literature that is being presented and made for them.

Significance

Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest that education research should address four specific domains of significance: knowledge, policy, practice, and action. The story of my question speaks to the implications for practice. As a teacher, I often wondered about the answer to this research question because I wanted to be able to apply the answers in my own classroom and school. Exploring my question allowed me to potentially contribute to the knowledge of what types of stories upper elementary African American children may be more likely to enjoy. In terms of action and policy, this information may be significant for adults who encounter African American children each day and/or play a crucial role in the books children can access (e.g., teachers, librarians, policymakers). On a larger scale, the results of this study could prove informative for curriculum planning and publishing, with regards to the types of texts major companies market and produce.

Knowing the types of books students want, like, and enjoy is crucial for a number of reasons. Most importantly, the information can potentially aid in the fight against what Gallagher refers to as *readicide*: "the systematic killing of the love of reading, often

exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools" (Small & Arnone, 2011, p. 13). Strommen and Mates found that many older students who express little or no preference for reading "became ambivalent toward reading between the ages of 9 and 11 because they could no longer find reading material that interested them" (Davila and Patrick, 2010, p. 200). This study reinforces my own observations as a child and teacher. To encourage a love for reading and/or an appreciation for what quality books can do for us as people, the books children have access to matter. This seems especially true for African American children, who are often already stereotyped as being less literate than their peers. The broader goal of my research is to contribute to finding ways to make African American children's lives even fuller and better. In this specific case, that means encouraging parents, teachers, librarians, bookstore owners, policymakers, publishers, and general community members to be aware of the types of books upper elementary African American children enjoy reading, and to provide them with those types of books.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Chapter Overview: The research I conducted was primarily planned and carried out through the lens of student voice scholarship. Additional, less dominant lenses and theoretical considerations include genre theory, Black Feminist Epistemology, and aspects of Critical Race Theory. Three of the four lenses contribute to understandings related to power and/or the rights of people being oppressed (by age, race, and/or gender), the balance between collective voice/experience and intersectionality, the importance of acknowledging people's individual and collective history, and the rights of the people to determine what counts as knowledge and tell their own stories. Participants voices are involved in the discussion of genre as well as in the Conceptual Framework section of this chapter, which includes a detailed discussion regarding how the terms *interest*, *like* and (mostly) *enjoy* were conceptualized throughout the research process. The chapter concludes with two Definition of Terms sections based on the theories and conceptualizations presented.

Theoretical Framework

Student Voice

Student voice has not been officially theorized yet, but as Robinson and Taylor (2007) emphasize, "There is currently an urgent need for a theoretical consideration of student voice work" (p. 8). The definition of student voice is not fixed; Cook-Sather (2006) claims the definition "depends in part on the relationship that exists in a particular context between 'voice' and 'agency' or 'action' (Holdsworth, 2000, p. 357)" (p. 363). From reading the literature regarding student voice, I understand it to be the valuing of

students' perspectives, opinions, experiences, knowledge, and desires, especially as related to their school environment and practices. This involves listening intently to students and taking action based on the ideas they share. Mostly, student voice is discussed/utilized with aims to improve school policies.

As scholars work to theorize student voice, some have noted overarching themes or values. Robinson and Taylor (2007) note four core values of student voice work: dialogue, democratic participation, acknowledgement of power relations, and possibility of change. Similarly, Cook-Sather (2006) identifies *rights*, *respect*, and *listening* as major terms or themes in the literature about student voice. Some researchers (e.g., Fielding, 2004; Holdsworth, 2000; Lodge, 2005) have even crafted levels or typologies of student voice (cited in Cook-Sather, 2006). To better understand the meaning of the concept, it is important to consider its history.

What is being referred to as a student voice movement (Cook-Sather, 2007) began when various education scholars started highlighting the ways in which policies made by adults were being forced on students in schools across the country and world without consideration of students' opinions or responses. The Victoria Department of Education (2007), looking at an international history of student voice work, points out that terminology about students began changing in the 1980s when phrases like 'empowerment', 'student rights', and 'student participation' were being increasingly used in discussions of educational policy and practice (p. 4). This was also the time when 'voice' became an increasingly popular phrase among writing scholars like Barbara Kamler. Some began to more vocally express the belief that children are an oppressed

group within the population in most countries around the globe. According to Cook-Sather (2002, 2006, 2007), Jonathan Kozol (1992) was one of the first scholars in the United States to shed light on the issue when he emphasized that children's voices were completely absent from discussions about educational practices, policies, and reform. Cook-Sather notes (2007) this disregard for student voice demonstrates children's role in the system as people without power or respect. She continuously emphasizes that school policies and practices in the United States have historically been controlled and determined by adults with little, if any, consultation from the students who are expected to abide by them each day.

When considering the historical treatment of children in general, Giroux (2003) points to a shift in public perspectives, stating,

> Rather than being cherished as a symbol of the future, youth are now seen as a threat to be feared and a problem to be contained. If youth once symbolized the moral necessity to address a range of social and economic ills, they are now largely portrayed as being the source of most of society's problems. Hence, youth now constitute a crisis that has less to do with improving the future than with denying it. (para. 4)

He continues on to say that this shift results in the distrust, fear, and surveillance of modern-day youth, and that the country continues to harm children as much, if not more, than it helps them. Giroux (2003) further emphasizes, "Instead of providing a decent education to poor young people, American society offers them the growing potential of being incarcerated… Instead of guaranteeing them food, decent health care, and shelter,

we serve them more standardized tests" (para. 6). He points to high poverty and homelessness rates, as well as a lack of access to quality health insurance or schooling, to demonstrate the treatment of children in what is considered to be a more free, democratic society. Essentially, as Giroux (2003) reveals, "Children have fewer rights than almost any other group and fewer institutions protecting these rights. Consequently, their voices are almost completely absent from the debates, policies, and legislative practices that are constructed in terms of their needs" (para. 5). Scholars like Cook-Sather (2002, 2006) view student voice as a way to reverse this historic trend.

Cook-Sather (2006) points to other scholars who began to publicly highlight the lack of student voice in schools, a movement that started in the 1990s and was mostly "documented in Australia, Canada, England, and the United States" (p. 359). She states,

> …this way of thinking is premised on the following convictions: that young people have unique perspectives on learning teaching, and schooling; that their insights warrant not only the attention but also the responses of adults; and that they should be afforded opportunities to actively shape their education. (Cook-Sather, 2006, pp. 359-360)

The Victoria Department of Education (2007) and Robinson and Taylor (2007) both inform readers that student voice is actually a right according to the United Nations. The United Nations Convention states that children have the right to participate, express their views, be heard, and take part in decisions affecting them (Robinson & Taylor, 2007; Victoria Department of Education, 2007). Despite this legislation, students too often remain silenced in schools around the world. Cook-Sather (2002) discusses the way

adults tend to continuously return to the notion that because they were students, they know what teaching and learning entails and what it means to be a student. However, Cook-Sather claims these adult beliefs about schooling tend to be social constructs that prevent educational reform. She further explains that although adults have a longer history of schooling to aid in their determinations, "we do not know what it means to be a student in the modern world and what it might mean to be an adult in the future" (Cook-Sather, 2002, p. 25). As she highlights, adults need to pay attention to students' voices instead of silencing them if they genuinely desire to understand and work with children for a better future.

Student voice scholars work to combat this silencing through an emphasis on power, respect, dialogue, listening, and action. Robinson and Taylor (2007) claim, "Student voice work begins with the recognition that power inhabits all communication and that different social groups have differential access to, and in some cases privileged access to, forms of communicative and institutional power not available to all" (p. 12). While conducting my research, I aimed to remove as much authority from my role as possible and allow space for the participants' authority. This is evident from my language use, methods, and data coding choices. However, as Fielding (2004) points out, perhaps "there are no spaces, physical or metaphorical, where staff and students meet one another as equals, as genuine partners in the shared undertaking of making meaning of their work together" (Cook-Sather, 2006, p. 361). I found this to be true on a number of occasions in my data collection process. I advocated for the students and their choices in literature, but the teacher, principal, or parents/guardians of the students ultimately made

most decisions. I attempted to fight against this reality by privileging students' words when coding interviews or writing data chapters, choosing anonymous questionnaires to allow space for their opinions without backlash, and using the knowledge I gained to make suggestions to school staff members at my research site.

Cook-Sather (2002) discusses the challenge of balancing the power between researcher and student participant roles in her own work, as well. In some ways, it seems practically impossible. Much of adult discussion and research on education reveals student ideas through the perspectives of adults. More specifically, Erickson and Schulz (1992) claim, "If the student is visible at all in a research study she is usually viewed from the perspective of adult educators' interests and ways of seeing (p. 467)" (Cook-Sather, 2007, p. 17). Researchers translate for students in order to share results with the adult community, and often attempt to fit student responses into premade categories or codes (Cook-Sather, 2007). This practice concerns some student voice scholars (e.g., Cook-Sathers, 2007; Fielding, 2004; Silva, 2001) who warn against reinforcing power hierarchies and further oppressing the students while working to shed light on their perspectives and uplift them. Cook-Sathers (2006) claims that though we cannot promise full or true equality regarding the balance of power with students, we can work towards it and get closer to privileging their voices more.

One way to avoid the aforementioned concern as much as possible is to engage in a deeper level of listening. Cook-Sathers (2007) and the Victoria Department of Education (2007) discuss the fears associated with listening to children, pointing out that many adults/officials, in their refusal to listen, subconsciously acknowledge the potential

power of student voice. They reveal how students' voices can be viewed as threatening or inconvenient to some adults, and Cook-Sathers (2007) specifically claims that student voice is not tolerated because "to really listen means to have to respond" or be open to change (p. 15). She also acknowledges that it is often difficult for people to hear what they don't want to hear or know how to hear. As a result, she suggests an alternative, deeper listening that goes beyond simply hearing students and involves listening for complexities beyond immediate identity markers.

To be more specific, Cook-Sathers (2007) recalls Delpit's (1988) encouragement of a type of listening that requires open hearts and minds, and stops insisting that it has all of the answers. Delpit (1988) explains, "We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs" (Cook-Sathers, 2002, pp. 18-19). With this idea in mind, I reflected deeply on my position at my research site and my beliefs as a scholar throughout the research process. I also allowed my colleagues from a variety of backgrounds to review and share their thoughts regarding my data instruments, did my best to listen openly and intently to students, and asked questions that allowed for a variety of responses and further explanation.

Authentic listening requires open dialogue. Cook Sather (2002) suggests, "It is a challenge to the students themselves and to those listening to them to learn both to speak and listen" (p. 20). The topic of dialogue in student voice literature often connects to the work of Paulo Freire, who created a dialogical method of teaching that influenced other notable scholars like bell hooks. In an interview, Freire (1987) shared his belief that "dialogue is a moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and

remake it" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 13). He further states, "Through dialogue, reflecting together on what we know and don't know, we can then act critically to transform reality" (p. 13). Other benefits that Freire mentions include dialogue's ability to form relationships and balance authority and freedom.

However, Freire cautions that dialogue should simultaneously allow space for optional silence. He maintains that students have a right *not* to speak as much as they have the right to speak. Connecting to the work of Audre Lorde, Cook-Sather (2006) also advises recognition of the power of silence, since voice and silence are both potentially political acts. For this reason, when I talked with participants during interviews and book club discussions, I aimed to respect their right to silence. The decision required me to more deeply consider the reasoning for students being quieter at various moments and encouraged me to strive to act in accordance with this reasoning.

Shor theorizes, "Student silence is created by the arts of domination. Students are not silent by nature. They have a great deal to say, but not in the script of the traditional classroom" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 30). He also claims, "if teachers are used to speaking a great deal very loudly, students are used to saying very little very lowly" (p. 29). As a result, students may seem unprepared when adults in a school genuinely ask them about their opinions with intentions to make real changes. Throughout my research, it seemed difficult for some participants to speak with me authentically at times (e.g., saying what they may have thought I wanted to hear, using class vocabulary words in interviews, hesitating to share their dislike of a book or admit not knowing an "answer"). I recognize this behavior was also likely connected to identity representation or power

relations (The Victoria Department of Education (2007) notes that dialogue and behavior are often adjusted and inhibited based on context and power relations), but I also believe it to be a reflection of the students' lack of practice with freely expressing their thoughts and beliefs in a school setting.

In recognizing the identity of students and their histories, student voice scholars (Cook-Sather, 2002, 2006, 2007; Robinson & Taylor, 2007) cautiously suggest not viewing one voice as the single representative of the collective student population. This idea, mostly stemming from post-structural feminist theory and women of color scholars like Patricia Hill Collins, emphasizes that a single child's voice is not the universal voice. Cook-Sather (2002) asserts that no single group of children should be held responsible for representing or leading school reform for all students. The effort to avoid the false idea of universality is understandable, but it is equally important to consider people's collective identities and histories as well. Cook-Sather (2006, 2007) also notes this need to not view students as detached from history, politics, and privilege. She encourages identity as a "starting point," but one that leaves plenty of space for individual differences (Cook-Sather, 2007, p. 8).

Student voice scholars (Cook-Sather, 2002, 2006, 2007; Mitra & Serriere, 2012; Robinson & Taylor, 2007; Victoria Department of Education, 2007) also suggest going beyond listening to allowing space for student agency and action. However, the same scholars also note that there are levels of student voice and not all require action. Time and my role at the research site limited my ability to act in some ways, but I truly strived to ensure participant input was heard and respected. Robinson and Taylor (2007),

explain, "listening to pupils itself is not sufficient, it is what happens with the information, what is done with it, that is also of great importance" (p. 14). With this understanding, I used my results to help create classroom and school library collections and to provide the participants with more books they wanted or claimed to enjoy.

Overall, effective student voice work has aided in students' sense of belonging, more accessible curriculum, students feeling respected, and the view of teaching and learning as a more collaborative effort (Cook-Sather, 2002, 2006). Mitra and Serriere (2012) note a dearth of student voice research and projects aimed towards younger, elementary-aged students, claiming there is a need and space for growth with this particular demographic. I sought to emphasize student voice in my research because of adults' looming presence in schools and the field of children's literature, and I aimed to do my best to listen seriously and openly while attempting to avoid any potential inclinations to manipulate or dismiss students' voices. The lens attributing value to student voice remained a major factor in planning, conducting, and reporting my research.

Additional Theoretical Lenses and Considerations

Originally, I approached my study with a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens and a desire to carry out the research methods in a way that aligned with Black Feminist Epistemology (BFE). CRT and BFE both share commonalities with the work of student voice scholarship in a variety of ways. They acknowledge the validity and importance of participants' experiences and histories, advocate for the balancing of power, and share an understanding of diversity within groups. The value of voice in CRT is particularly

relevant, considering the experiences and perspectives of research participants and inclusion of books written by Black/African American children's book authors.

Tate (1994) argues that the stories/experiences of people of color are often ignored or not taken seriously (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) consider this to be a crucial problem in the field of education, concluding, "the voice of people of color is required for a complete analysis of the educational system… Without authentic voices of people of color it is doubtful that we can say or know anything useful about education in their communities" (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 13). For this reason, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and Dixson and Rousseau (2005), who theorize and discuss CRT specifically within the field of education, emphasize the significance of voice. One of my primary research goals is to share the voices of African American children regarding the books they read and their general reading experiences. Ladson-Billings (1998) promotes this right of people of color to "[name] their own reality" (p. 15), and the CRT lens I was utilizing allowed me to view the participants' claimed reading experiences as a sufficient knowledge source for exploring my topic.

Race and racism play a key role in the problems, landscape, and past studies associated with my research question (presented in Chapters 1 and 3). As a result, CRT informed the class library restructuring process and traces of this lens can be found throughout my work. CRT provided me with an additional lens through which I was able to consider my findings, but was not a primary theoretical lens in this regard. With understanding of the complexities involved in applying a CRT lens to my work, I discuss the topic further when considering implications for research in the concluding chapter.

The role of BFE was limited strictly to my methodological and ethical decisions. While neither (BFE or CRT) was my primary lens, both impacted my study and seemingly cannot go without acknowledgement in the discussion of my theoretical framework. Essentially, they helped to confirm and remind me what I was looking for, what counted as a knowledge source, and what mattered most: the students' experiences and beliefs.

Conversely, genre theory was not part of my original plans and considerations for this study, but was employed as a theoretical lens towards the end of my research process. As I began to enter codes for the types of books present and available in the classroom library utilized for my research, I noticed that it was difficult to determine official genres for some books. However, it was not until I began to analyze and organize the information after the data collection process that I became truly aware of the many ways books could be categorized into genres, which seemed more definitive when I began my work. Each time a new genre or subgenre emerged, I was forced to recode parts of my database. Underwood (2016) notes, "The concept of genre is as old as literary theory itself, but centuries of debate haven't produced much consensus on the topic" (p. 1). I knew it would not be practical (or potentially even realistic) to attempt to define every genre and subgenre of children's literature for the purpose of my study.

With an ever-growing awareness of the complexities of genre theory and the decades of work sometimes involved in trying to define a single subgenre, focusing all of my attention on this one consideration within my research would potentially lead to a different study in itself. Also, even if I was to consider all of the various guidelines (still debated) for each genre, time would still not allow me to read the 750-900 children's

books included/mentioned in this study in order to categorize them based on those guidelines. Instead, with consideration of the traditional debate regarding genre theory (Chandler, 1997), I reflected on some of the topics addressed and determined how I could best apply genre theory to my specific data analysis methods while remaining aligned with other aspects of my theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The decision to focus on Chandler's work also stems from the recognition that much of the scholarship regarding genre theory in the past few decades has centered on genre's interaction with readers and moved away from classifying texts (Bawarshi, 2000; Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). More specifically, Bawarshi & Reiff (2010) claim, "genre has come to be defined less as a means of organizing kinds of texts and more as a powerful, ideologically active, and historically changing shaper of texts, meanings, and social actions" (p. 4). For my own research purposes however, I needed a way to organize/classify books, so I utilized Chandler's thorough and historical discussion of genre to assist in this aim.

Chandler (1997) claims, "The classification and hierarchical taxonomy of genres is not a neutral and 'objective' procedure… Furthermore, there is often considerable theoretical disagreement about the definition of specific genres" (p. 1). With this understanding, I aimed to include information from a variety of sources (e.g., front and back matter of the texts and public online databases, such as goodreads.com) to determine how each book would be classified. Chandler (1997) explains that while some theorists take the Romantic approach to genre theory, believing that every work of art is "unique" and therefore unable to be placed in a single strict category with other works, some theorists' beliefs align more with philosopher Jacques Derrida, claiming "there is

no genre-less text" (p. 6). Leaning more towards the opinion of Derrida, I began considering how I would determine categories for my research specifically.

Chandler (1997) offers the suggestion that "how we define a genre depends on our purposes" (p. 3). The main purposes for defining the genres within this study were to seek and provide information (both general and specific) that would help contribute to better understanding of the types of books the participants liked and enjoyed. In order to accomplish that goal, I needed to be able to code and categorize the genres and books that were a part of the research in a way that helped me to explore participants' passionate interests, affection, and enjoyment in a flexible and efficient way. I also wanted it to be in a way that respected participants' voices. Chandler notes that genres were once considered to be inflexible/"fixed," but over time, theorists began to view them as temporary, adjustable, contextual, and overlapping.

The tendency of genres to overlap is best demonstrated by the fantasy subgenre with regards to this study specifically. It seemed many subgenres could be included within this particular subgenre (e.g., horror, magical realism, anthropomorphism, fairytales). If I merged the subgenres and merely referred to all of them as fiction, I would not be able to see how large (or small) of a role each genre played in participants' enjoyment. Horror books were almost always fantasies, but horror seemed to require its own category based on the number of participants who enjoyed horror more specifically, without necessarily enjoying other subgenres of fantasy. In an aim to balance the avoidance and allowance of space for the breadth of each genre, I assigned each book a primary genre, and supported it by listing secondary genres or subgenres as well.

In addition to considering the book's front/back matter and the genres assigned to it by public databases, I also considered each book's plot and language while simultaneously asking myself what the author's primary intention seemed to be. If the primary purpose seemed to be to make the reader laugh, I coded it as a comedy or humorous story. Many stories had humorous moments, but I aimed to consider the tone, plot, and intended audience reaction overall. Most importantly, I considered students' reactions to the books and definitions of what qualified for each genre. Before I had a chance to know the participants better, the Initial Survey I utilized had already been created. Given the age of my participants, I framed genres in child-friendly terms on the Initial Survey, while referencing the more official/accepted terms of film/literary studies in my data chapters. For example, comedy and horror stories are referred to as "funny" and "scary" stories on the Initial Survey and in many conversations with the participants. As a result, it may appear that the genres discussed throughout my research are inconsistent, but the reality is that they truly were ever evolving. In the Definition of Terms section at the end of this chapter, I describe each of the genres I included in my databases and the subcategories that I either expected or observed over time, with consideration and inclusion of the participants' descriptions and perspectives.

Conceptual Framework

"…if I pick it up that day, but then kinda leave it alone the other day, cuz, you know, tryna get away from it, then it shows I wasn't really interested in the book… But if I do, I'm like, (in a singing, loud whisper) 'Where's the book? Where's the book? I have to read the book!'" –Jade, discussing the term *enjoyment*

My conceptual framework includes three concepts/terms: *interest*, *like* and (mostly) *enjoy*. Before describing and defining these two concepts, it is important to provide the background information that led me to them. A relatively significant amount of research exists about children's reading interests, preferences, and selections. However, African American children are an understudied population in this regard (Williams, 2008), and while a small segment of this research occasionally touches directly upon books students like, much of it surprisingly does not.

Interest studies tend to deal with hypothetical books (e.g., fictitious titles and questions about books children would like to read) and focus on the *possibility* of children liking or enjoying literature. Choice and selection studies became popular in recent decades due to accusations of the credibility of interest studies, but selection of a book does not guarantee student approval of the book upon reading. Regarding preference studies, preference does not necessarily speak directly to readers liking or enjoying a book either. To further illustrate this point, Peterson (1971) provides the example of a child who may prefer one vegetable to another without actually liking either vegetable.

As a more relevant example, Abrahamson and Wilson (1988) asked 733 fifth and sixth grade students to vote for books they deemed to be "classic" from a list preselected by the researchers. None of the 27 books were written by or about people of color. A

participant (especially, but not necessarily, a student of color) may have thought none of the books were "classic," but as a result of a lack of options, likely voted a book as a book he/she liked merely because it was better than the other 26 on the list. Studies exploring children's reading interests, choices, selections, and preferences provided me with important, helpful, and interesting information, but often did not describe exactly what I was hoping to find.

Passionate Interest

Carter (1976) points out that "a lack of consistency in defining the term" *interest* in literature/education studies is what has caused so much confusion in the field and prevented researchers from being able to make generalizations across studies (p. 3). For example, Spangler (1983) claims reading interest refers to what children actually read, while the term preference speaks to an attitude regarding a hypothetical action. However, few studies about what children actually read apply the word *interest* in their title, book preference studies involved both hypothetical and actual books, and in the studies I encountered, researchers used the words *choice*, *selection*, *preference*, and *interest* interchangeably. Oddly enough, the word *interest* came up the least in titles when I was reviewing the literature about books children select, like, show interest in, or prefer. When the word did occur in the title (e.g., Barchas, 1971), the study often employed the same instrumentation or methods that studies with the word *preference* in the title (e.g., Fisher, 1988; Haynes & Richgels, 1992) employed. As a result, the definition of the concept of *interest* in the literature remains somewhat indefinite.

However, based on the literature and comparisons to terms like *preference* and *selection*, *interest* seems to imply having curiosity about a particular person, place, event, object, or specifically in this context, book. For example, in Barchas' (1971) study, the participants were asked to choose imagined books they might like based on fictitious titles. In this case, a participant may have been curious about a title without wanting to read the actual book if it existed. Therefore, interest in a title is not necessarily positive or negative. A person could want to know more about a book without wanting to read it or expecting to enjoy it. As a result, I conceptualized the term *interest* to mean a feeling of curiosity about a book or desire to read a book. I added the adjective *passionate* to this concept because it encompasses the positive affect and hints towards a desire aspect of interest that goes beyond mere curiosity. Therefore, I am conceptualizing passionate interest as *the desire to read a book or type of book (whether it currently exists or not).*

To "Like"

In literacy research, the term *like* is often associated with *attitude,* which is defined as "a set of acquired feelings about reading that consistently predispose an individual to engage in or avoid reading" (Conradi, Jang, & McKenna, 2014, p. 154). Attitude usually encompasses feelings towards reading as a subject or activity overall (Kimiecik & Harris, 1996; McKenna, 2001), but does not seem to directly address a student's feelings about a specific text or textual feature. McKenna (2001) points out how individual components often impact a child's attitude. He claims that whether a child chooses a video game over a book "might depend on *which* book and on *which* video game had been made available" (McKenna, 2001, p. 125). In his example,

McKenna explains that a child who has negative feelings towards reading overall may be more likely to choose a book than a video game if the book's topic is of high interest and the video game theme is not. He acknowledges that this aspect makes judging attitude more difficult. Still, this example provides the basis for a conceptualization of attitude I can use specifically for my current study, despite the fact that I am more interested in the specifics within the reading experience than children's attitude towards reading overall (while acknowledging they are themes that have the potential to be interconnected).

Kimiecik and Harris' (1996) definition appears a bit more encompassing: "liking is an affect related to an evaluation of an object or behavior (i.e., attitude)" (p. 254). For the purposes of my work involving specific texts, I am also conceptualizing the term *like* in terms of affect and attitude, but in this case more specifically, as *any positive evaluation or feeling about a specific book/text or one of its features*. This conceptualization allows space for liking a book that may not make a student laugh, smile, or feel joyous. The text can be meaningful, informative, or relevant for the student… it may make them cry or become angry in painful recognition and understanding; it may simply provide them with a lot of new factual information. Regardless, for the purposes of this study, the term *like* hints at a positive evaluation or feeling regarding the experience of reading a particular book.

En"joy"ment?

The concept of *enjoyment* is much more contentious in academic research than the concept of *liking* an object/experience. It is a topic that is less studied despite being a subject of relatively popular interest (Goetz, Hall, Frenzel, & Pekrun, 2006; Izard, 2000;

McCarthy & Jones, 2005). Kapsner (2009) claims the topic of enjoyment is mostly discussed in psychology research, involving studies related to media, sports and exercise, motivation, and psychological well-being. A number of scholars share Kapsner's (2009) belief that there is a lack of clarity in the research regarding the term *enjoyment* (Kimiecik & Harris 1996; Lin, Gregor, & Ewing, 2008). Much of the debate is about whether enjoyment should be considered an affect, as two commonly associated terms (*joy* and *pleasure*) are.

Kimiecik and Harris (1996), who are primarily exercise/sport researchers, argue that enjoyment is automatically considered to be an affect in much of exercise/sport research because joy is an affect. They clarify, "We are not questioning the notion that joy is an affect" (Kimiecik & Harris, 1996, p. 256). Similarly, researchers differentiate between pleasure and enjoyment as well. Kapsner (2009) and Kimiecik and Harris (1996) point to Csikszentmihalyi's distinction between the terms, explaining that pleasure is about the satisfaction of biological and social needs, whereas enjoyment adds to pleasure with an experience of psychological growth that is usually challenging. Still, they agree there is at least a connection between enjoyment, joy, pleasure, happiness, affect, and/or intrinsic motivation.

Supporting the idea that joy is part of enjoyment, Nieburg (2000) shares, "Tomkins and McCarter (1964) note that enjoyment is the most accurately recognized affect" (p. 89). Nieburg points out that some researchers believe enjoyment is recognizable by a person's uninhibited smile or laughter, while Izard (2000) claims past studies have not demonstrated any clear distinction between smiles based on enjoyment

as opposed to smiles based on other causes. Despite Nieburg's (2000) claim that enjoyment has "distinctive universal expressions," it seems most research determines enjoyment based on participants' subjective view of the term (p. 57). Surveys, scales, and methods that act as examples of this observation include the Physical Activity Enjoyment Scale (PACES), Experiential Sampling Method (ESM), Flow Questionnaire, Groningen Enjoyment Questionnaire, and Intrinsic Enjoyment (IE) Scale.

In entertainment/media research, enjoyment is seen as a key component at the center of media sensation and consumption (Eliashburg & Sawhney, 1994; Raney, 2003; Sherry, 2004). An example of a factor contributing to film enjoyment is how the viewer feels about particular characters (also known as affective disposition theory (Raney 2003, 2004)). While enjoyment may not be at the center of entertainment/media or sports/exercise research, it is a commonly recognized factor and an often-referenced topic (at least more frequently discussed than in other branches of psychology, it seems) in sports and exercise research, where a significant amount of attention is given to enjoyment's connection to motivation. Researchers acknowledge that people are more likely to continue activities they enjoy than those they do not (Day, 2010; Kimiecik & Harris, 1996; McCarthy & Jones, 2005; Wankel, 1993). Much of the debate about enjoyment versus pleasure also takes place in this particular subfield (sports and exercise research), with researchers tending to cite Wankel (1993) or Kimiecik & Harris (1996).

Wankel (1993) argues that enjoyment can be defined as "a positive emotion, a positive affective state…homeostatic in nature, resulting from the satiation of biological needs (e.g., need to be active), or growth oriented, involving a cognitive dimension" (p.

153). Kimiecik and Harris (1996) disagree, arguing that enjoyment is not merely an affective state. Instead, they define enjoyment as "an optimal psychological state (i.e., flow) that leads to performing an activity primarily for its own sake and is associated with positive feeling states" (Kimiecik & Harris, 1996, p. 256). Despite their admission that enjoyment is associated with positive feeling states, they claim Wankel's definition is more about pleasure than enjoyment, while their more exclusionary definition rules out enjoyment as an affect. Instead, they view positive feelings as merely one of many offshoots of the enjoyment experience. Referring to the lack of clarity regarding the term *enjoyment*, Kimiecik and Harris (1996) admit they do not believe there will ever be full agreement in the field regarding an official definition or framing.

In education research specifically, the study of enjoyment appears to be much less common. Goetz, et al. (2006) created a hierarchical model of enjoyment based on their research involving students in Germany. With four levels of enjoyment (life, school, learning, and strategy use), they found evidence of a strong top-down effect (e.g., a student's enjoyment of reading in general or reading with peers could significantly impact his/her enjoyment of reading activities). Lumby (2011) would likely say it is difficult to produce this top-down effect since "there is little opportunity for enjoyment in school" (p. 261). This was a primary finding of his national longitudinal study of high school students in England, for which he defined enjoyment using four concepts: flow (absorption), interruption of anxiety, satisfaction, and belonging.

Lumby (2011) found that flow was experienced least frequently, despite being the key factor in students' ideal learning experience. He explains, "A loss of self-

consciousness through absorption was rarely experienced" (Lumby, 2011, p. 261). Yet, it was this exact state of flow that the students considered to be most effective in their learning; they considered associated lessons to be memorable, engaging, and valuable. Lumby's (2011) findings confirm the claims of researchers he mentioned in his work (Goetz et al., 2006; Shernoff, D., Csikszentmihalyi, Schneider, & Shernoff, E., 2003), asserting that in England and the U.S., "the absence of enjoyment is one of the foundational reasons for young people failing to achieve their potential" (p. 248). Lumby's assertion supports the need for more understanding of student enjoyment.

Education scholars like Wolk (2008, 2010) urgently plead for joy to be returned to U.S. schools. Regarding literacy education specifically, some researchers fight against the growing "readicide" impacting our nation's schools (Gallagher, 2010; Small & Arnone, 2011). This fight against readicide is reflected in statements like that made by the student in Wilhelm's (2008) study, who proclaimed to his teacher, "I liked [the book], and I don't want anybody to ask me any questions about it" (p. 144). Wilhelm (2008) elaborates, "[the student] was stating that his enjoyment and experience of the book was sufficient, and should suffice for the teacher too" (p. 144). Small and Arnone (2011) emphasize that readicide can be avoided by "encouraging the notion that the pleasure of reading in and of itself is its own reward—not stickers, unrelated incentives, or forced reading" (p. 15). Wilhelm and Novack (2011) echo this sentiment: Reading for its own sake reflects one of the essential components of flow.

Csikszentmihalyi's theory of "flow" was cited by most of the aforementioned researchers noted throughout the enjoyment section of this conceptual framework (Goetz,

et al., 2006; Izard, 2000; Kapsner, 2009; Kimiecik & Harris 1996; Lin, et al., 2008; Lumby 2011; McCarthy & Jones, 2005; Sherry, 2004; Wankel, 1993; Wilhelm & Novack, 2011; Wolk, 2008). *Flow* is described as "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it at even great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, cited in Wolk, 2008, p. 10). In his TED talk, Csikszentmihalyi (2004) explains that growing up in Europe during World War II led to his interest in the study of enjoyment. He explains,

> I realized how few of the grownups that I knew were able to withstand the tragedies… how few of them could even resemble a normal, contented, satisfied, happy life once their job, their home, their security was destroyed by the war. So I became interested in what contributed to a life that was worth living. (Csikszentmihalyi, 2004)

As a result, he spent his career as a psychologist studying the criteria of happiness and enjoyment. Csikszentmihalyi spent decades interviewing artists, assembly line workers, athletes, motorcycle gang members, entrepreneurs, nuns, business managers, entrepreneurs, musicians, and shepherds across various age levels and from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds. He came up with the term "flow" because it reflected the way many of his interviewees (from all walks of life) described their feelings of enjoyment.

Some of Csikszentmihalyi's books, articles, and speeches mention seven dimensions of flow, while others offer eight or nine. In an effort to include all dimensions that have been provided over time, I listed them, along with their definitions

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, pp. 111-112) in Table 2.1. Csikszentmihalyi insists not every dimension needs to be present in order for flow to be experienced. Often, numbers one and two in Table 2.1 are merged together into one dimension (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993). In Csikszentmihalyi's (2004) TED talk, this was the case; not only were numbers one and two merged together, but so were numbers three and six. Stevens, Moget, de Greef, Lemmink, & Rispens (2000) claim that Csikszentmihalyi suggests the autotelic experience is the most crucial dimension of flow, given the way he uses the three terms (*autotelic experience*, *enjoyment*, and *flow*) interchangeably.

Table 2.1 *Dimensions of Flow*

Dimensions of flow	**Description given by Csikszentmihalyi (1996, pp. 111-112)**
1. Clear goals	"we always know what needs to be done"
2. Immediate feedback	"we know how well we are doing"
3. Balance between challenge and skill	"our abilities are well matched to the opportunities… balanced on the fine line between boredom and anxiety"
4. Merging of action and awareness	"concentration is focused on what we do… one-pointedness of mind"
5. Focused concentration	"distractions are excluded…intense concentration on the present"
6. No worry of failure	"we are too involved to be concerned with failure"
7. Loss of self-consciousness	"too involved to care about protecting the ego… might even feel that we have stepped out of the boundaries of the ego"
8. Time distortion	"we forget time… our sense of how much time passes depends on what we are doing"
9. Autotelic experience	"Greek for something that is an end in itself"

Kimiecik and Harris (1996) also cite Csikszentmihalyi's interchangeable use of the terms *enjoyment* and *flow*. However, Wankel (1997) argues that flow and enjoyment should not be considered synonymous. This argument is supported by McCarthy and Jones' (2005) example of figure skaters that enjoy skating for a number of reasons not

limited to flow. As a result, McCarthy and Jones (2005) define enjoyment for their purposes as "an affective response, which comprises a range of positive emotions such as happiness, joy, and excitement" (p. 160). While they do not agree on the distinction of terms and exact definitions, each of the aforementioned researchers agree that joy, enjoyment, and flow have positive effects on people's psychological wellbeing.

Wankel (1993) cites research that demonstrates "the relation of flow to life satisfaction, self-esteem, and a general sense of well-being" (p. 162). Benefits of happiness and joy include those Wankel listed, in addition to reduction of tension/stress/anxiety, confidence, recovery from illness or negative emotions, and enhanced creativity and affectionate behavior (Consedine, Magai, & King, 2004; Izard, 2000). Nieburg (2000) shares Tomkins' claim that "one of the most important functions of the positive affect of joy is as a competitor and reducer of a wide spectrum of negatively motivating conditions" (p. 87). He later explains that in a moment when one has a strong sense of joy, "other negative experiences are felt to be minor or secondary in stature" (Nieburg, 2000, p. 89). Enjoyment then, has the potential to defeat/obstruct negative emotions and experiences. Csikszentmihalyi (1996) assures readers, "In many ways, the secret to a happy life is to learn to get flow from as many of the things we have to do as possible" (p. 113), and quite simply, I believe all children have the right to a generally "happy," joyful life.

A Shared Definition of Enjoyment

Now that I have discussed the debate regarding the various conceptualizations of enjoyment in academic research, I hope to share how I defined it for the purposes of my

own work, giving equal respect to academic researchers in the academy and the fourth grade participants in my study. Combining multiple definitions in Table 2.2, I realized that most researchers could not separate affect from the term *enjoyment*. Even Kimiecik and Harris (1996) admitted in their definition of enjoyment that it is "associated with positive feeling states" (p. 256). The idea of focused attention was also recurring, as was the notion of the autotelic experience.

Table 2.2 *Definitions of Enjoyment in the Research*

Author	**Definition of Enjoyment**	**Key Phrases***
Csikszentmihalyi (1990)	flow ("the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it at even great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it") (p. 4)	*Attention, autotelic, merging of action and awareness, loss of self-consciousness*
Kimiecik & Harris (1996)	"an optimal psychological state (i.e., flow) that leads to performing an activity primarily for its own sake and is associated with positive feeling states" (p. 256)	*Autotelic, positive emotions/ affect,* all components of flow (including *attention, autotelic, merging of action and awareness, loss of self-consciousness)*
McCarthy & Jones (2005)	"an affective response, which comprises a range of positive emotions such as happiness, joy, and excitement" (p. 160)	*Positive emotions/affect*
Wankel (1993)	"a positive emotion, a positive affective state…homeostatic in nature, resulting from the satiation of biological needs (e.g., need to be active), or growth oriented, involving a cognitive dimension" (p. 153)	*Affect,* pleasure/*satisfaction,* cognition, growth
Warner (1980) (in Lin, Gregor, & Ewing, 2008)	engagement (focused attention), positive affect, and fulfillment (pp. 42-43)	*Affect*, *attention***,** fulfillment (*satisfaction*)

*Note: phrases/concepts mentioned more than once in this column are in italicized font

I agree with Kimiecik and Harris (1996) that enjoyment should go beyond the term *like* to describe a more optimal experience. As Daniel (participant) emphasized to

his tablemate, I wanted to know "what we *really* like." I wanted to know what books aid in students feeling intense emotion or as if they are no longer a part of this tangible world. Reminded of the feeling and observation I was trying to describe in my Story of the Question section, words like *passion*, *joy*, *enraptured*, and *free* come to mind. These words go beyond the mundane experience in an attempt to capture how it feels to be completely and positively lost in a book. Therefore, even though I believe enjoyment can be derived from pleasurable (basic biological and social) activities, I support the separation of *enjoyment* for the purposes of a more intense meaning in this regard.

Despite agreeing that a more intense experience should be included in the definition of enjoyment, I had no intention of including all nine of Csikszentmihalyi's dimensions of flow for the purpose of my study. For example, while flow theory claims there should be an equal balance between challenge and skill, I believe it is possible to deeply enjoy a book that is easy skill-wise. Often, advanced readers in my study intentionally selected books two to three grade levels below their reading level for this exact reason. Despite the lack of "challenge," they seemingly chose to read for autotelic purposes and were very attentive or lost in the book. Jade, a participant reading at the level of a sixth grade student, confirmed this idea during our interview, when I asked her what types of books were easier to get "lost in" of those she mentioned as her favorite genres/formats. She explained, "Sometimes science books are too lonnggg, and they start, like, getting a little, you know, they kinda *muddle* me—they get a little complex, so… it's comics that are easier, which is why, I mostly brought comics today." Later, when I asked Jade for confirmation of whether she meant easier to read or easier to get

"lost in" as part of my member-checking process, she confirmed she indeed meant easier to get lost in at the time, but that both descriptions seemed accurate to her. In this way, she acknowledged that the reading itself was not necessarily complex (by her definition), but that it was easier to enjoy, with consideration of other dimensions of flow.

The term *challenge* itself is subjective, and one could argue reading is a challenge regardless of skill level; therefore, all reading could encompass this aspect of flow. Similarly, I do not agree that there must be a goal and immediate feedback; these aspects appear less relevant to my topic. Learning more about the characters involved or the topic of the book are examples of goals one might set while reading a book, but I do not believe a goal must exist for enjoyment to occur. The idea of an expected goal almost seems to work against the autotelic aspect of flow, interrupting the idea of reading for the sake of reading. Fortunately, Csikszentmihalyi does not demand all aspects of flow to be present for an experience of enjoyment to occur.

Using much of Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) definition of flow, along with elements from the other researchers' definitions in Table 2.2, I originally conceptualized enjoyment as *an intense affective/psychological state in which a person is so involved in an activity that he/she loses sense of time, distractions, and/or self, and hopes to continue the activity regardless of external factors*. This definition is mainly Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) definition of flow, but with the addition of affect and only involving five of the nine dimensions (merging of action and awareness, focused attention, loss of self-consciousness, time distortion, and autotelic experience). It acknowledges the role affect often plays in the enjoyment experience and incorporates Kimiecik and Harris' (1996)

understanding that "other extrinsic or ulterior factors may have motivated participation… but the key is that when activities become enjoyable, they will be pursued" (p. 256).

Various students described this autotelic aspect of the process when describing what it feels like to enjoy a book. Daniel (participant) explained, "I read it a loooot, and how I always read it—until I finish it, I just, I just… even though I finish reading it, I still read it." Similarly, Jade, as quoted at the beginning of the chapter, describes, "I'm like, (in a singing, loud whisper) "*Where's the book? Where's the book? I have to read the book*!" In the same interview, she specifically recounted the experience of enjoying one of her favorite books, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School* (Kinney): "it actually draws me into the book, and I'm able to pay attention. It's not like, 'Oh, I'm reading this, I wanna do something else.'" There exists a strong desire to continue or finish reading the book, and in some cases, to read it again.

During my first month in the classroom where I conducted my research, I discussed the contention regarding the definition of enjoyment with the students. Many agreed that it meant to "get lost" in a book: to become so engrossed in the story or information that "you don't even notice [or] care what's happening around you." Some more general definitions of the term were shorter and more direct: "you love it," "you're really happy." Some (immediately followed and) contradicted each other: "you want to tell your friends" "and share it with 'em" "nah, you wanna keep it all to yourself (group laughter)." Although I welcomed debate regarding what the term *should* mean throughout the duration of my time at the site, we agreed on a class definition for the

purpose of my research (mainly regarding the survey built into the reading log asking students whether they enjoyed a book when they returned it).

The class definition of enjoyment was "when you're so focused (or 'lost') in a book that you forget what time it is, where you are, and/or who you are, and you want to keep reading." The teacher added her thoughts about what it may mean to feel like you are "inside of a book," and I shared a large poster reminder of our class definition. It included an image of children reading inside of a balloon and in a boat in the middle of the sea, unaware of birds flying above them and a large orca whale swimming below them (similar utilized recreated image shown in Figure 2.1). The visual poster (which remained on the wall beside the library throughout the duration of my study) added to the idea of enjoyment as being happily lost in the center of another world, with little or no consideration of time and/or potential difficult realities, going with the "flow" of where the book takes you. Over time, the teacher suggested students (voluntarily) place a symbol beside their reading log entry at the end of the independent reading period if they enjoyed their book. A student suggested "waves" (which took form as a tilde-like "~" symbol) with consideration of the poster and group/class discussions of flow.

At the end of the school year, I asked again (through an open-ended survey question) which way the participants leaned regarding what they believed the definition of enjoyment should encompass after considering it throughout the semester. Most students agreed it essentially meant being "lost" in a book. Their responses to that particular question are discussed further in Chapter 6. However, I want to point out that most of their suggestions remained similar to those they shared during my first weeks in

the classroom. Scott's (participant) response, in particular, seemed reflective of multiple students' when he wrote, "I think that when you enjoy a book it means you get lost in it and when you stop, you don't know what happened around you" (End-of-Year Survey).

Figure 2.1 Enjoyment Analogy Image

Given this section's discussion of theories, concepts, and terminologies, my aforementioned conceptualization of the term *like* can be included in our concept of the term *enjoyment*, but is not synonymous. The findings of this study, detailed in Chapters 6 and 7, further suggest reasons the term *like* should be a part of enjoyment and demonstrate its role in participants' enjoyment experiences. This conclusive, collective class conceptualization of enjoyment more readily connects to the feeling of being simultaneously caught and free in a book world, and when combined with the affective concept of liking a book, the two terms hint towards a certain type of joyous reading that aligns much more closely with the experience I originally sought to explore.

Definition of Terms, Part 1

The five following definitions are based on constructed conceptualizations referenced in the previous section, information from official sources, or a combination of participants' expressions and my personal beliefs. Regardless of their origin, the definitions below demonstrate how I utilized the terms in my research and throughout this dissertation.

Like: *any positive evaluation or feeling about a specific book/text or one of its features* (sometimes referred to as *affection* when used as a noun)

Enjoy/Enjoyment: (1) "when you're so focused, or 'lost,' in a book that you forget what time it is, where you are, and/or who you are, and you want to keep reading"; (2) *an intense affective/psychological state in which a person is so involved in an activity that he/she loses sense of time, distractions, and self, and hopes to continue the activity regardless of external factors*

Passionate Interest: *the desire to read a book (whether it currently exists or not)*

Black/African American: person who is part of the Black race and born in the United States of America, including those whose parents were born in Africa or the Caribbean, and especially those whose parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents were born and raised in the United States

Borough: *residential area in the state of Pennsylvania that is not large enough to be considered a city but is more developed than rural areas are considered boroughs* (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2016)

Definition of Terms, Part 2

Definitions of Major Genres in this Study

Realistic Fiction- *"it's mostly, um, like a everyday life."* -Jade, Interview 3
: A type of fiction literature involving fictitious characters and stories that resemble a relatively familiar everyday life

Fantasy- *"…where anything is possible."* –Charles, Interview 6
: A type of fiction with characters or events that would (most likely) never exist in reality

Nonfiction- *"…it's* real *…you can get real facts from this."* –Charles, Interview 6
: Literature that is "real;" it (usually exclusively) provides facts or verifiable information

Subgenre Definitions

Action- *"everybody's* throwin' stuff… *nobody's gettin' hurt but…"* –Brian, Interview 1
: A story involving a lot of physical movement on behalf of the characters

Action/Adventure- *"he's always going on different adventures"* –Daniel, Interview 2
: A combination of the (action and adventure) genres (because participants often used the term "adventure" in description of any sort of exciting action on behalf of the characters)

Adventure-*"…adventures. Say for instance… Antarctica.*" –Daniel, Interview 2
: A story involving danger and action taking place outside of an everyday life setting

Animal Fiction- *"the pig is trying to make a book"* –Amber, End-of-Year Survey
: Literature involving an animal/insect as the main character and/or featured in the title of the book; usually fictitious stories of an animal talking/living like a human (coded as ***Anthropomorphism***). As a result, it is also considered a fantasy, though not marked as such. Animals in literature without this characteristic are coded as NT (***Non-Talking***)

Biography- "*I think a few of them are probably still living today."* –Charles, Interview 6
: Story of a person's life; ***Living*** (people still living today); ***Past*** (people no longer living and/or whose major life events primarily qualify as part of the history genre)

Comedy- *"I was laughing at that. It was so funny."* –Jerrica, Girls' Book Club 1
: A humorous, or "funny" story (seemingly) intending to provoke laughter

Concept- *"in first grade learning about colors… glad that actually a* book*, kinda you know, was talking mostly about colors."* –Jade, Interview 3
: A book that primarily teaches about a basic concept (e.g., colors, counting, shapes, time, alphabet, seasons, fractions); usually, but not always geared towards younger children

Drama: *"much crying"* -Charles; *"all of this…up and down"* –Jade; Interviews 6 & 3
: A story (seemingly) intended to provoke a lot of different emotions

Folklore- *"the wolf, tries to persuade her… to give him the basket"*- Janelle, Interview 4
: Stories passed down from generation to generation (often orally) (***Folktales***), sometimes also involving a moral as the primary theme (and often, animals) (***Fable***); sometimes involving fantasy-related elements/characters (e.g., giants, witches, fairy godmothers with magical abilities) (***Fairytale***); sometimes involving real history and/or a focus on a person who lived in real life (***Legend***); sometimes involving a real person/culture/place, with supernatural elements and a focus on a certain truth/wisdom (***Myth***).

Historical Fiction- *"I looked at the article and it said…"* –Ashley, Girls' Book Club 2
: A story that is fictional but set in the past and based on real events that can be verified by expository nonfiction sources

Historical Nonfiction- *"a lot of information… people don't know"* –Brian, Interview 1
: Literature that is factual and describing past (and sometimes continuing) events, activities (e.g., sports), items (e.g., video games), cultural customs, etc.

Horror- *"I'm scared… I'm scared. Yep… I'm really scared."* –Brian, Interview 1
: A story with the primary intention (seemingly) being to provoke fear

Horror-Comedy-*"Once somebody gets scared I'm always laughing."*-Brian, Interview 1
: A story that blends horror and comedy together

Media- *"It's a show."* –Janelle, Interview 5
: A story that is based on a TV show or film or involves public figures who are popular in the media or general consumers market

Memoir
: Story of a moment/event or time period in a person's life; similar to biography

Musical- "the way they *dance*, …the way they *sing."* –Janelle, Interview 5
: A story that involve singers, dancers, or music/songs

Mystery- *"…even try to solve…"* –Brian, Interview 1; *"a* sleuth*"* –Jade, Interview 3
: A story involving a character trying to solve a case or problem, often utilizing clues

Nonfiction Science- *"it informs me of information about animals."* –Charles, Interview 6
: Literature that is factual and focused on a branch of science (***Physical***: e.g., machines, automotive, speed, sound; ***Earth & Space***: e.g., geography, environmental, meteorology, planets; ***Life***: e.g., biology, zoology)

Romance- "they kissed… kind of romantic and stuff." – Marquise, Boys' Book Club 1
: A story that focuses on a romantic relationship between people, often involving physical affection

Science Fiction- *"the kids figure out oh, my teacher's an alien"* –Daniel, Interview 2
: A fictitious story involving science (often space or environmental), taking place in imagined worlds that could potentially exist in the future or may exist on another planet

Superhero- *"…super people, fighting* other *super people"* -Brian, Interview 1
: A story involving characters with supernatural ability, often involving graphic/comic illustrations and a sense of action/adventure, but not necessarily comedic

Format Definitions/Explanations

Chapter Book
: For my study, given the grade I was working with (4th) it seemed less important to distinguish between novels and chapter books; I categorized any (non-multimodal) book with chapters or sections and in the format of a novel (typically more than 65 pages, but including Beginning Chapter Books for younger readers aimed at students in grades 1-3) as a chapter book; Note: Originally, I distinguished between Beginning/Early Reader Chapter Books and Chapter Books for older grades by describing Early Readers as books with chapters/sections and illustrations throughout (also with a specific page range). However, this became less relevant when I began observing that many chapter books generally had at least a few illustrations and the word count per page simply went up with the grade level. More specifically, virtually all of the chapter books in the 2nd-grade-reading-level baskets were Easy Readers. Therefore, I include Beginning/Easy Reader Chapter Books in my Chapter Book category for this study.

Collection/Anthology- "Some *of them were…"* –Charles, Interview 6
: A book containing a variety of individual stories and/or information sections (a collection is written by the same author and an anthology is written by multiple authors)(e.g., *Falling Up* (Silverstein) poetry collection or *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* (Schwartz) short story collection)

Comic/Graphic Novel
: Story or a collection of stories told in comic format (i.e., most/all pages involve a panel or sequence of panels and employ various forms of visual symbolism and "emanata" (Mort Walker) (e.g., motion lines or sweat beads) often associated with comic strips/books)(e.g., *Calvin & Hobbes* (Watterson) or the *Big Nate* series (Peirce)).

Journal/Diary- "*they show a* liiittle *clip of the picture."* –Jade, Interview 3
: Books that are written in first person and demonstrate clear indicators of a personal journal/diary (e.g., accounts describing a day at school or major event, description of feelings about people/places/events)(usually, the books is written as one continuous text (sometimes marked/divided with dates) instead of having chapters, and the word "journal" or "diary" is often in the title)(e.g., *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Kinney) or *Dear Dumb Diary* (Benton))

Multimodal Visual- *"I see it the same way as [the character]"* –Jade, Interview 3
: Books that emphasize visual modes, but are combined with written text; combining multiple semiotic modes and including comic features (e.g., speech bubbles) (e.g., a book that has pages/sections presented in graphic novel format and pages with strictly written texts or a diary that incorporates handwritten font with hand-drawn illustrations of characters with thought bubbles)(e.g., *Bad Kitty* (Bruel) or *Flora & Ulysses* (DiCamillo))

Picture Book
: Any book with an illustration or photograph on every page/opening (or almost every page/opening) that is (usually) less than 40-50 pages in length and larger in physical size than most chapter books or novels

Poetry/Rhyming
: Note: I did not code rhyming picture books as there were many in the 1st grade reading basket. However, I did code for poetry books/collections (usually) geared towards 3rd - 7th grade… ***Verse Novel*** (novel written in poems; e.g., *The Crossover* (Alexander)); ***Poetry Collection*** (a book of poems written by the same author but not told in a story format with a specific plot line or series of events; e.g., *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (Silverstein) or *Honey, I Love* (Greenfield)); ***Verse Picture Book*** (similar to a verse novel, but in picture book format (rhyming is not a requirement, but telling a story through a collection of poems is)(e.g., *Meet Danitra Brown* (Grimes))

Series
: A group of books that (usually) share a main title and include more than three books with the same characters/elements; a "series" with three books and similar (or different) characters/elements is referred to as a trilogy in this study, more specifically, but is also counted with series sometimes (when noted) (e.g., *Magic Tree House* (Osborne) or *National Geographic Kids* (various authors))

Other Formats Mentioned (Infrequently)
Play
: A format of literature written for the purpose of being performed in front of an audience

Guide/Handbook
: A book that provides instructions on how to complete a task

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview: To better understand the purposes and design of my study, various topics and categories must be intertwined and discussed. The first topic discusses the basic confines of my literature review, and the second section furthers this discussion with an explanation of certain aspects of African Americans' history and presence in children's literature and how this landscape contributed to my research decisions. The third section describes empirical studies that ignore race, but offer relevant information regarding the topic of books upper elementary children generally like, show interest in, or prefer. Similar studies that include an acknowledgement of race in the participant description and/or results section of the research are presented in the fourth section. The chapter concludes with a fifth section that includes a brief discussion of the impact the literature had on my own data methods.

Confines of the Literature Review

The literature review focuses primarily on empirical studies regarding the types of books upper elementary African American children like, show interest in, or prefer. Since the concept of *enjoyment* was not used in most of the previous literature, I have included studies that discuss books students claimed to like or be interested in, in addition to books they preferred. As discussed in the Conceptual Framework section, the term *prefer* was often interchanged with *interest* in much of the research. To narrow my search further, I included studies involving students in upper elementary grades 3-6 (only), as my participants are fourth grade students in the middle of the upper elementary

age group. This decision was also based on Purves and Beach's (1972) suggestion that student preferences and interests tend to change over time, as students age and grow.

The literature review is also focused on studies conducted post-1970, a decision made in part because of noted scholar Rudine Sims Bishop's (2012) insistence that much of the children's literature about African Americans published before the 1970s was pejorative, degrading, or written specifically for White children. Purves and Beach's (1972) acknowledgement of how political climate can impact book selection studies also affirmed my decision in this regard. More specifically, in their often-cited article, Purves and Beach (1972) keenly remind the audience, "titles on checklists or questionnaires have not until recently included options of ethnic or minority writers" (p. 112). Children can only report books they like or prefer based on what publishers, researchers, and other adults present. Since these options appeared to be most limited racially prior to 1970, I am focusing on later studies, conducted between 1970 and 2015. Another reason I made this decision is because I encountered a lot of derogatory language and racist assumptions in studies published (mostly, but not exclusively) before the 1970s.

Researchers claim that much of the research about books children like, show interest in, or prefer has dealt with differences in sex/gender preferences (Boraks, Hoffman, & Bauer, 1997; Purves & Beach, 1972; Tibbets, 1974). After gender, the identity markers most often referenced historically include socioeconomic status and IQ or reading levels. Given this emphasis, factors of race or peer/adult influence have not been sufficiently considered. The next section explains why race and history are necessary considerations in this field of research and for the purposes of my study.

African American History and Presence in Children's Literature

In 1990, noted scholar Rudine Sims Bishop wrote a powerful article about the need for every child to be presented with books that serve as mirrors (books that provide a reflection of our selves/lives), windows (books that show us a world/life that is often less familiar, but can become a mirror in certain lighting), and sliding glass doors (books that allow us to use our imagination to become part of another life/world). She explains, "Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience" (Sims Bishop, 1990, p. ix). Sims Bishop asserts that children of all races and backgrounds benefit from reading books that reflect their cultures, in addition to books that reflect cultures that are not their own. It is best to keep this metaphor in mind while considering the history of African Americans in children's literature and publishing.

As Sims Bishop (2012) points out, African American authors have been writing for children since the beginning of the 20th century. However, "The body of work that we recognize today as African American children's literature did not come into its own until the late 1960's" (Sims Bishop, 2012, p. 9). This appears to be the case for a variety of reasons. Sims Bishop (2012) cites one such reason when she explains, "Many books published in the 19th century and the first two-thirds of the 20th century present Black characters as objects of ridicule and generally inferior beings, representations not likely to have been created primarily for Black children to enjoy" (Sims Bishop, 2012, p. 6). In her often-cited book, *Shadow and Substance*, Sims Bishop (1982) demonstrated why the

number of books published about African Americans does not matter nearly as much as how African Americans are portrayed in the books.

Dividing the literature into three categories, Sims Bishop's (1982) content analysis study described three types of children's literature involving African American people, published between 1965 and 1979: (1) social conscience books (books that attempt to explain African American experiences to White children in hopes of developing sympathy/empathy), (2) melting pot books (books considered to be universal that ignore racial difference in favor of assimilation), and (3) culturally conscious books (books that "attempt to reflect and illuminate both the uniqueness and universal humanness of the Afro-American experience from the perspective of an Afro-American child or family" (p. 15)). Sims Bishop (1982) and Nephew (2009) found that mostly White authors wrote social conscience books and African American authors wrote most culturally conscious books.

Despite these findings, Black children's authors have incredible difficulty getting books about their own race published, and their literary gifts and achievements have often been unacknowledged by major institutions and organizations. This is best described by Brooks (2009) as "the historical and long-standing exclusion or devaluation of children's literature written by people of color from the literary canon" (p. 37). For (at least) the past ten years, approximately 5% of all children's books published in the U.S. each year were written about Black people ("Children's Books by and about People of Color Published in the United States," 2015). This percentage certainly does not reflect the Black population percentage in the country. More alarming, perhaps, is the fact that as

recently as 2009, White authors have been producing nearly half of the already limited amount of children's literature about African American culture/history (Sims Bishop, 2009). This is concerning not only because of the two groups' racial history in the United States and the CRT belief in the right to tell one's own story, but also given the aforementioned notes about the different types of African American literature most often written by White authors.

Regarding literary awards, one example to further demonstrate this historic exclusion is the fact that only four African Americans have won the prized Newbery medal in the 94 years since its inception. As McNair (2008) illustrates, "It cannot be argued that there are not enough authors and illustrators of color who write children's books. This is simply not true" (p. 198). Instead, the problem is primarily one of inequitable access and respect in the realm of children's publishing and particular literary circles. Grimes (2009) recounts how African Americans are historically awarded the Newbery or Caldecott Honor, or "bridesmaid spot" (if awarded at all), but are rarely the actual award/medal winners (p. 392). This exclusion contributed to the creation of the Coretta Scott King Award (for books written by and about African Americans) in 1970. Five years after the creation of the Coretta Scott Kind Award, Virginia Hamilton became the first African American author to win the Newbery Medal. In the past few years specifically, internationally recognized award committees are awarding more African American children's authors and illustrators for their work, which demonstrates the potential progress of the world and the field of children's literature. Still, it is important

to remember the history of their treatment and how books about African Americans have been limited and devalued over time.

This selective tradition also reveals itself in the sources from which many researchers, children's librarians, and teachers obtain book suggestions. Scholastic, for example, prides itself on being the "largest publisher and distributor of children's books in the world" ("About Us," 2015). Yet, despite their global presence, they also have a selective tradition that excludes authors of color. In a content analysis study of Scholastic's Book Club catalogs, McNair (2008) examined two different monthly catalogs for children in grades P-1. She found that during the 2004-2005 school year, books written or illustrated by people of color were only presented 34 times, while White authors and illustrators were presented at least 600 times. McNair points out how this selective tradition excludes people of color and contributes to the false stereotype that African Americans do not read or purchase books.

McNair (2008), Myers (2014), and Sims Bishop (1983) each refer to the common cyclical pattern: publishing companies and booksellers claim they publish fewer books about African Americans because there are not enough purchasers of African American literature, while teachers, parents, and award committees claim there are not enough books present to purchase or review. Sims Bishop (1983) explains, "Unsuccessful searches lead to abandoning the quest, which in turn leads to low sales and a subsequent lack of availability" (p. 26). Unfortunately, the children suffer most from this cycle and as McNair (2008) reiterates, this sort of exclusion is actually a disservice to all children. McNair's research highlighted for me the vital importance of access. Students cannot

read books they cannot access, a consideration I kept in mind when gathering classroom library books for my study.

This past year, Scholastic indirectly addressed the aforementioned concerns by publishing a catalog entitled "Scholastic Reading Club: Special Edition for Grades 4-8." This catalog was created in partnership with the We Need Diverse Books organization and included 78 books primarily featuring people of color as the main characters. It also included books about children with physical or mental disabilities and books about White children. Similar to the shift in literary awardees, this catalog demonstrates the potential of progress. However, this catalog was not well publicized and Scholastic seemed to misunderstand that a more diverse reading catalog should be the norm instead of the "special edition" exception. Scholastic is not alone in this widespread exclusion of authors/illustrators of color and culturally conscious children's literature. As a result, the booklists in empirical studies about books children like, show interest in, or prefer are crucial to understanding research results.

This history and present landscape of the field further clarifies why I did not include studies published prior to 1970 in the literature review. It also highlights the way issues of race are continuously present in the children's literature field, which provides an important backdrop for my Methods, Results, and Discussion chapters. This description reveals how booklists in literature studies like mine influence results and present a sort of unsolved dilemma. The next section details empirical studies that prove to be relevant despite the way they overlook or minimalize race in their reports.

Empirical Studies

Empirical Studies Not Acknowledging Race

Most of the empirical studies involving the types of books children like, prefer, or show interest in, can be divided rather easily into four categories when accounting for race/ethnicity: The first two categories involve studies that either make no mention of race at all, or mention race in the discussion of the participant sample but not at all in the data analysis section. These two types of studies often attempt to make generalizable claims about books all children like and essentially ignore the existence of race altogether. Readers are not able to glean information specific to African American children from such studies. The third type notes racial details or comparisons in its analysis, and the fourth type focuses specifically on African American children. The next section will discuss the third and fourth types, while this section will focus on the first and second.

A number of researchers utilize "Children's Choice" lists to further analyze the types of books children like (e.g., Abrahamson, 1980; Lehman, 1991; Munde, 1997). "Children's Choice" is a project that involves a national survey conducted by the International Reading Association's (IRA) Children's Book Council each year. They survey 10, 000 children across the country in grades K-6, asking them to suggest their favorite books. The top 100 books (published that year and donated by book publishers), based on the children's votes, are listed and publicized in *The Reading Teacher* (and other academic publications) every October. Carter and Harris (1981) refer to it as the "junior 'best-sellers' list" (p. 54). The IRA claims to consider many factors in selecting

the schools/districts that will take part in the voting process, but race is not specifically mentioned as a factor. Instead, professional involvement and attendance at IRA conferences are specifically mentioned as factors determining participation.

In a content analysis study, Lehman (1991) analyzed nine award-winning books from the "Children's Choices" list. Considering the theme, style, and structure of each book, she found that children prefer predictable qualities, optimistic tone, and lively pacing. Conversely, they tended not to like books with unresolved endings, tragic tones, or slow and introspective plots. Similarly, Abrahamson (1980) draws conclusions from the previous year's "Children's Choices" list about the types of plot structure children prefer. He found that over 50% of the books children chose for the list that year employed either a confrontation ("characters encounter a problem…and find a solution") or episodic ("plot is revealed incident after incident") plot structure (Abrahamson, 1980, p. 168). The least common of the eight plot structures was the origin plot structure ("gives an explanation of some observed phenomenon, such as the origin of rain") (Abrahamson, 1980, p. 168). Abrahamson also found humor and fantasy to be prevalent aspects of many of the books.

Munde (1997) utilized the books from the "Children's Choices" list to explore the specific preferences for humor in children's literature and how the humorous books children like match or differ from those that adults like. It is unclear whether he asked the participants to read the books, peruse the books, or simply review the lists. For this reason, I categorized this study as a preference or interest study instead of one that directly reveals books children like. Regarding the 8-13 age group specifically, Munde

found that the children were much more likely to select humorous titles/stories in which the protagonist or underdog triumphed against a more powerful opponent, while adults were more likely to select humorous titles/stories with animals as characters. Considering my Theoretical Framework and issues of power, I find it interesting that the children showed more interest in the "underdog" narrative than the adults. Also, while adults showed interest in books that demonstrated clever, cognitive humor, literary quality, and a moral/lesson, the children chose books that involved simpler humor that was enjoyable merely because it consisted of word play or was amusing. This study serves as a reminder that children like humorous books and adults do not necessarily know what type of stories will be considered funny or likeable to children.

Although Abrahamson and Wilson (1988) do not utilize books from the "Children's Choices" list as their primary source for their booklist, they seem to duplicate the "Children's Choice" project's process in their study. Providing 733 fifth and sixth grade students in nine schools with 27 different books, Abrahamson and Wilson ask the participants to vote for the books they consider "classic"/best. They found that students preferred books published after 1920, and with regards to the top ranked book, Charlotte's Web (written by E.B. White), that students liked the talking animal characters, the way the book made them feel, the writing style, and the believability of the fantasy. Abrahamson and Wilson's centering of students' opinions is noteworthy, though the booklist raises questions. The list, compiled mostly from *Horn Book Magazine* publications, does not include a single book written by or about a person of color. As discussed previously, this could be problematic for a number of reasons;

without a diverse list, some children may have voted for a book they did not like or have any interest in, merely for the sake of participation. This would be that much more concerning if any of the participants were students of color. However, because Abrahamson and Wilson make no mention of participants' race, the details of the issue remain vague.

Wendelin and Zink's (1983) study also makes no mention of race, but it is cited fairly often in children's book preference/interest literature. Surveying 688 fifth grade students in Nebraska and California, the researchers aimed to find out more about the factors that impact student book selections. Though it is framed as a study of book choice, it is more a study of interests, attitude, and preference. This becomes clear when viewing Wendelin and Zink's (1983) methods and instrumentation; the questionnaire asks questions such as, "Which would you be more likely to read? [hardback or paperback book?]" or "What do you like to read about?" (in terms of genre)(pp. 85-86). Significant findings include that the children claimed to be interested in books recommended by their friends more than their teachers, paperback more than hardback books, and mystery more than other genres. They also provided a list of three books recently read that they "liked" and Wendelin and Zink (1983) presented the top books ("enjoyed by fifth graders") in a table (pp. 86-87). Most of the books were popular fiction books at the time (e.g., *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Charlotte's Web*, *The Outsiders*, *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*, and *Little House on the Prairie*). One exception was *Peanuts* comics/books, demonstrating a percentage of students liking graphica literature in the 1980s, notably before the 21st century.

Similar to Wendelin and Zink, librarian and professor Constance Mellon (1992) utilized questionnaires and interviews to learn more about books students like or show interest in reading. However, her approach was unique because her college/graduate students collected the data instead of a specific professional research team. One of her primary goals was to ensure students' voices were not left out of class discussions regarding the study of children's literature. Collectively, her students at Eastern Carolina University surveyed or interviewed 400 children (ages 4-12) in rural North Carolina to better understand their reading behaviors, attitude, and (primarily) interests.

Mellon and her students found that children in their district liked and showed the most interest in mystery, adventure, humor, horror, animal, informational, and "happy" stories. With considerations of gender, they found boys most frequently mentioned books about sports, cars, real people/things, and science fiction, while girls most frequently mentioned series like *The Baby-Sitters Club* and books about girls their age. Children also showed interest and affection for magazines like *Highlights*. Yet, Mellon (1992) notes, "Surprisingly enough, comic books were infrequently mentioned… That might be because, as two children explained, they aren't 'real' books" (p. 40). It is interesting to consider that students mention magazines but may not have mentioned comics simply due to the lack of recognition of the latter as books. This finding demonstrates the importance of how adults and researchers phrase the term *book* when working with children. It is also interesting to consider whether children in today's technological world would even recognize magazines like *Highlights*.

With a similar finding regarding boys' reading interests and with more of an emphasis on gender differences, Haynes and Richgels (1992) also studied the reading preferences and interests of upper elementary students. Instead of using literature, they asked 523 fourth grade students in four different geographic regions of the United States to express their preference for imaginary books based on fictitious titles. The purpose of using fictitious titles was to avoid biases related to author names, book illustrations, awards, etc. Participants listened to a recording of each book title and description before noting on a survey the likelihood that they would read the book if it existed. Data analysis and results focused mostly on comparing gender preferences. They found the boys were most interested in the idea of books about adventure, space, science, and sports, and girls were most interested in fantasy and books about growing up. Both genders preferred books about fantasy, realistic fiction about romance and adjustment, historical fiction, scientific items, and biographies.

Consensus and General Claims. Overall, the research literature in this section reveals a relative consensus regarding boys' interest in or affection for sports and general nonfiction literature. Less popular suggestions include boys' interest in or affection for adventure, fantasy, science, science fiction, and superheroes, as well as girls' interest in or affection for realistic fiction, fantasy, and series. Across genders, the aforementioned researchers most frequently pointed to an affection or preference for simple humor, mysteries, animal stories, adventure, and fantasy books. Another general suggestion is the preference for pleasant or happy stories.

All of this information is helpful with regards to my research. However, applying a CRT lens, I am wary of attempts at colorblindness. Sims Bishop (1982) declares that the avoidance of difference leads to the reflection of how difference is being devalued, and Delgado and Stefancic (2012) point to a case in which Thompson claims, "'politely pretending not to notice students' color makes no sense unless being of different colors is somehow shameful' (p. 524). When students begin to internalize this shame or sense of abnormality, color-blindness can become a form of microaggression" (p. 16). The next section shifts to similar studies that acknowledge African American children's presence.

Empirical Studies Acknowledging Race

Fictitious titles/stories. Like Haynes and Richgels (1992), Barchas (1971) utilized fictitious titles in her study comparing the reading interests of 219 fifth grade students from four different racial/ethnic groups living in or near Tucson, Arizona. Her study is unique because it is the only study I encountered that compares the interests of upper elementary children from various ethnic groups in practically equal numbers. Barchas' sample includes 51 Native American, 53 African American, 60 Chicano, and 55 White children. Asked to select the fictitious titles they felt most interested in reading, the participants chose from two lists, one involving cultural titles and one involving "neutral" titles that did not provide hints of race/ethnicity (Barchas, 1971, p. 67). General findings across all ethnic groups were based on the neutral list. Barchas (1971) claimed students from all backgrounds preferred mystery, adventure, animal, humor, and language-learning stories. As for the cultural lists, with titles and topics directly related to African American, Latinx, and Native American culture, Barchas found that children

of color preferred books about their own race. With regards to African American children specifically, they demonstrated a significant interest in what Barchas (1971) refers to as titles about "Child's Immediate Environment and/or Ethnicity" (p. 94). There was also a strong preference for humor and fantasy books, and little preference for books about animals.

A few years after Barchas' study was published, Johns (1975) conducted research using fictitious text *and* images to study the reading interests of children in grades 4-6 across four large cities in the Midwest region. Though Johns (1975) claimed his study revolves around issues of class or socioeconomic status (SES), it is clear that implications regarding race are being made as well when he describes his participant sample as 515 Black students and 82 "other" (p. 307). From the beginning, Johns set out to disprove the belief that children in the inner city prefer stories depicting urban life. Presenting participants with slides he created to compare rural, urban, and suburban life, he asked them to raise their hands in order to vote on which slides they most preferred.

Johns (1975) concludes, "inner-city children in the intermediate grades preferred the middle class settings over the stark inner-city settings" (p. 309), but when one considers the slides that students were asked to choose between, more clarity is brought to how the researcher may have coerced such a response. Johns (1975) was "loading" (Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer, and Tourangeau, 2009, p. 147) the text options with evaluative terms, leading to the questioning of the study's validity and hinting towards researcher bias. In the slide examples, Johns (1975) associates city life with "dirty", cramped, dilapidated spaces and "trouble," while associating suburban

living with “church,” order, and being “nice” (pp. 307-308). His description of urban areas is considerably negative. As a result, it is not surprising that the participants preferred the slides depicting suburban life.

Interests based on book selection. Instead of fictitious titles, Williams (2008) included actual books from a school Book Fair for her study. Though her research was mostly focused on the books students selected, the information she presents also offers details related to children’s preferences and interests. Williams (2008) conducted a longitudinal study involving 293 children in grades 3-5, living in a metropolitan area of Florida. Students were encouraged to self-select 15 books at the Book Fair, 12 of which they were allowed to keep. Williams triangulated her data by facilitating three different types of data collection: book order forms, recorded participant conversation, and 30 in-person interviews.

Results of this study demonstrate participants’ overwhelming preference for series books, as well as the typical gender sensitivity issue regarding boys being less interested in reading a book with a main character of the opposite sex. However, contrary to most studies, she also found the girls were much more likely than the boys to select nonfiction books. This nonfiction was mostly media or mas marketing literature about popular celebrities. The most talked about book topics by gender were superheroes (for boys) and celebrities (for girls), and Williams notes there was a recurring interest for books to connect to personal experiences.

Despite her finding that the children showed interest in books connecting to their personal experiences, Williams (2008) somehow concluded that students are interested in

reading more media and mass marketing books that reflect their "everyday culture" as opposed to books about African American culture/people (p. 61). This conclusion is in direct conflict with Williams' research results: four of the five books most selected by the children at the Book Fair had an African American celebrity/person on the cover. Williams' decision to solely focus on the fact that four of these top five books were about famous entertainers demonstrates her lack of understanding regarding race, and more specifically, her refusal to acknowledge the intersections of race and genre. Her claims are troubling because they resist the likelihood that racial culture can be included as a significant part of children's "everyday culture." Still, Williams' overall findings helpfully highlight a potential need for a perhaps often-excluded genre: mass marketing and media literature. More specifically, there may be a relatively large number of books about celebrities, for example, but it seems they are often not taken seriously as qualifying for good/real literature worthy of study or awards.

Favorite (and least favorite) books. Boraks, Hoffman, and Bauer (1997) are among a number of researchers in the field who question the validity of fictitious title/text surveys. Similar to Johns (1975), the researchers claim to be studying SES but there are clear implications made regarding race. They describe four of the participating classrooms as being set in "urban," "mostly Black, lower income" areas of Virginia, and they describe the other four classrooms as being set in "a mostly White, upper-income" or middle class suburban area (Boraks et al., 1997, p. 316). The research team asked 315 students in grades 3-5 to fill out a questionnaire informing researchers of the children's

favorite books. In general, they found girls and children living in the suburbs preferred realistic fiction, while boys and children living in the city preferred fantasy books.

Boraks et al. (1997) also claim that urban participants' preference for mass media books (compared to suburban children's preference for literary-award-winning books) "may mean Virginia teachers are working hard just to get children to read" (p. 336). Their claim is unsupported by evidentiary reasoning and potentially problematic when considering the researchers' description of the Virginia participants as "urban" and "mostly Black, lower income" (p. 316). This particular finding is also noteworthy when considering the previous discussion regarding the racial exclusiveness of major literary awards. It becomes less surprising that African American students did not like the awarded books as much as their White counterparts. Also, in the midst of explaining their coding methods, Boraks et al. (1997) describe a participant's claim that (s)he liked a book because "It talks about our Black America" (p. 334). Despite the evident connection to race and African American culture, Boraks et al. (1997) only coded the child's comment as "emotional impact" (p. 334), disregarding the participant's direct connection to race/ethnicity.

Unlike Boraks et al. (1997), Howard's (1975) study found no significant correlations between reading preference and SES. Nor did she find a correlation between preference and reading score. Howard surveyed 307 African American students in grades 4-6 from 13 schools across Columbus, Ohio, to determine which books from a preselected list were their favorite books. She employed a 5-node Likert scale for her survey, and results revealed that overall, the participants preferred stories with humor,

action, suspense, familiar experiences, and unique experiences. Their least preferred genres/themes were supposedly historical fiction, mystery, and adventure.

An important note to consider is that a Black author wrote only one of the 15 books in Howard's (1975) study and most of the books are centered on White people or animals. Only three books are about Black people and two of those three are considerably depressing or traumatic: an emotionally sad Black girl orphaned in the early 1900s and a Black boy who is pressured into illegal activity by a gang. These two stories were the least liked by Howard's participants. As a result, Howard (1975) claims, "Black urban children in grades four, five, and six enjoyed stories with unfamiliar settings and non-Black characters more than they enjoyed stories with Black characters involved in unpleasant situations" (p. 191). This is not surprising. Rather, it is completely understandable if Black children do not want to read about inaccurate/depressing depictions of Black people.

With similar findings regarding the avoidance of negative or depressing stories, Taylor (1997) studied fifth grade students' reactions to culturally conscious and melting pot picture books (Sims Bishop's (1982) categorization terminology). Taylor compares the responses of 14 African American and 10 Latinx students at a school in Texas, students whom she describes as inner-city children and struggling readers. In terms of procedures, the classroom teacher read each of Taylor's 24 picture books aloud to students over an extended period of time. After each book was read, the students were asked to complete a basic survey regarding the book.

The survey asked two questions, one regarding their opinion of the book on a Likert scale of 1-5 and another regarding whether or not the participants could imagine themselves in the book (bipolar, yes/no response option). The three books most preferred by African American students were culturally conscious books, and the least preferred book was a melting pot book. The lowest ranked book was a story described as an unpleasant book about a girl and her divorced father. Taylor's (1997) assertion that the melting pot book demonstrated children's dislike of stories in which African American characters are placed in unpleasant situations is reminiscent of Howard's (1975) claims.

Sims Bishop (1983) found a similar result when she conducted what appears to be the only case study involving books upper elementary African American children like. Studying the responses of a 10-year-old Black girl named Osula, Sims Bishop found the participant favored books about Black girls like herself: strong, active, and clever. Osula's distaste for books "in which Black characters are denied human dignity or treated unjustly" (Sims Bishop, 1983, p. 25) supports the results of Howard (1975) and Taylor's (1997) research. Sims Bishop also spoke with Osula's mother regarding the books Osula claimed to prefer and the family's access to such literature. The participant's mother expressed the difficulties of searching for culturally relevant books at various bookstores, reflecting the aforementioned discussion regarding access.

Although Osula stated a preference for books with characters that share similar experiences, she also expressed a desire to read about characters with experiences unlike her own. More specifically, she shared that she wanted to read more about African American children living in other regions, such as the southern United States. Osula

claimed to dislike books she considered to be boring, seemingly unrealistic, or having a plot that is too predictable. Instead, Osula showed a preference for humorous stories, "aesthetically pleasing illustrations" (Sims Bishop, 1983, p. 25), and the representation of distinct African American experiences. When Sims Bishop asked Osula why she liked the books she considered her favorite, she described their lyrical, rhythmic language as a major contributing factor.

Reasoning for liking the book(s). Smith (1995) studied three urban, African American fifth grade students' responses to African American literature and notes the type of books they self-select and "enjoy." Smith does not explicitly explain how she defines the terms *enjoy* and *enjoyment*, but it seems her understanding of the word *enjoy* referred to liking a book/characteristic or having a positive reading experience. The participants (two male, one female) represent different types of readers, but all three like/enjoy African American children's literature. Smith's data methods include direct observation and one-on-one interviews. The first student she discusses is described as a reluctant reader. When asked how he feels about the books, he explains that he "just like[s] the way they sound" (p. 572), and that he enjoys them because they are funny and "have Black people in them" (p. 572). This participant's response reflects Sims Bishop's (1983) findings regarding African American children's language preferences, as well as the finding that African American children prefer and enjoy humorous stories (Howard, 1975; Sims Bishop, 1983).

The second student Smith (1995) discusses is a girl who the teacher describes as an average reader despite her low scores on reading tests. Unlike the two boys, she finds

it difficult to express to the researcher(s) why she likes African American children's literature, but she writes poems based on the books she reads and (with one exception) exclusively self-selects books about African American people/culture. The third student is a boy described as a struggling reader. He claims he enjoys African American children's literature because he likes to read and learn about Black history. He tells Smith (1995), "I just wanna know a lot about my heritage" (p. 573), and tells his classmates, "We got to know this to help each other" (p. 574). All three children seem to have different reasons for liking African American children's literature, but they each like it nonetheless.

Consensus. Common trends in this section of the literature review point to African American children liking or showing interest in books that involve Black people/culture/history, humor, mass marketing or media, fantasy, and appealing (e.g., rhythmic) language. Less popular suggestions included a desire for series, nice illustrations, action, and suspense literature. Similar to the more general findings in the previous section, this section also reveals a consensus regarding a dislike for unpleasant narratives or books that involve Black/African American characters being treated unjustly. This is particularly interesting given Black/African American people's history of being treated unjustly and having to overcome unpleasant circumstances to rise and move forward. Also, the topic of whether or not participants liked or were interested in books about African American people/culture was discussed in virtually every study referenced in this section of the literature review. It is interesting that while some studies

refuse to account for race at all, those that do acknowledge and account for race consistently incorporate this seemingly contentious debate.

Learning from the Past to Navigate my Study

As Purves and Beach (1972) illustrate, most studies involving the types of books children like, show interest in, or prefer involve surveys or questionnaires, often with a follow-up interview to confirm or triangulate the survey data. Similarly, my study incorporates surveys and interviews, in addition to reading logs, circulation records, and book club discussions. While I understand the idea of avoiding bias through fictitious books/titles, I utilized actual books for my study in an effort to more accurately reflect the reality of children's experiences. For questions regarding the types of books participants may want to read someday that do not (yet) exist, I frame this inquiry as an open-ended question, asking my interview participants, for example, "If you could have a book written just for you and your friends, what would it be about?" After reviewing the literature, I also realized my goal was primarily to explore books children actually like and enjoy, as opposed to books they are solely interested in reading. While I still considered passionate interest in my research, I aimed to focus more on affection and enjoyment.

Combining the sections that account and do not account for race, there seems to be an overall finding that upper elementary Black/African American children may be more inclined to like or show interest in books involving humor and/or fantasy, as well as happy/pleasant stories. While a number of studies supported the findings of others, some studies contradicted each other's (or their own) research. For example, it is interesting

that stories about animals are a common theme regarding books this age demographic likes more generally (Barchas, 1971; Mellon, 1992), but that this finding is mostly absent from research about African American children more specifically (Barchas, 1971; Sims Bishop, 1983; Taylor, 1997; Williams, 2008). Barchas' study conversely reveals animals were the least preferred book topic for African American children in her study. Similarly, while Lehman (1991) notes a general interest in predictable plot, Sims Bishop's (1983) case study participant lists an overly predictable plot as one of the few aspects she tends to dislike about a book. These findings reaffirm the importance of accounting for race in research regarding the books children like, show interest in, and enjoy. The reviewed literature also provided genres to pay special attention to in conversations with the participants of my study.

Another topic that was frequently discussed in literature not accounting for race was the issue or comparison of gender. This conversation rarely, if ever, occurred in research reports strictly focused on predominantly African American populations. Conversely, a topic frequently discussed in the latter type of study was whether or not African American children like to read books about African American people/culture, which was rarely, if ever, discussed in studies not considering or highlighting race. For the purposes of my own research, I intend to explore comparisons of gender, not only out of scholarly interest, but also because it contributes to ideas of intersectionality and diversity within cultural groups. The debate about whether African American children want and/or need books about African American people/culture is discussed more in the Role as Researcher section of Chapter 5. I did not avoid the topic while conducting my

study, but I tried not to emphasize it in an effort to allow students' voices (instead of adults' voices) to be highlighted throughout the data.

I was mostly excited to learn more about the genres, moments, and types of characters participants liked. Besides comedy and fantasy, there was a fairly frequent mentioning of mystery books. I also wanted to know more about the specific interests and attitudes regarding the topic of books under the umbrella of Black history/culture. Given the dominant emphasis on genre, I additionally sought to learn more about formats, specific narrative elements, and participants' general reading experiences that contributed to their enjoyment (or lack of enjoyment) of literature. Finally, the literature reviewed also aided my thinking regarding booklists and other factors related to methodology, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

Chapter Overview: This chapter opens with an explanation of my methodological framework, which primarily includes a critical ethnographic approach to my research study and considerations related to Black Feminist Epistemology (BFE). Mostly, the chapter details my research design (instrumentation and data collection, more specifically) regarding participant observation, book logs and circulation records, surveys, interviews, and book club discussions. Information regarding the various ways data was analyzed follows that section, and the chapter concludes with considerations of triangulation, validity threats, and general criteria of quality research.

Methodological Framework

I spent five months with Beth Brescia's fourth grade class at Clayton Elementary School* applying various methods to better understand the types of books the participants liked, demonstrated interest in, and enjoyed. As discussed in previous sections/chapters, my goal was to highlight the voices of the students as much as possible. As a result, my research design involves multiple methods for providing the participants space to share their evaluations and considerations of numerous books. Similarly, my theoretical framework's emphasis on discourse and experiential knowledge influenced my decision to employ interviews and book club discussions as two of my three primary methods. In addition to participant observation, I utilized surveys throughout my study, which served as my third primary research method.

My choice of methods most closely aligns with those of critical ethnographic research. Ethnographic methods typically involve participant observation, interviews, and

document collection as the three types of data methods (Creswell, 2012; Florida Literacy and Reading Excellence Center; O'Reilly, 2012). Critical ethnography acknowledges the oppression of certain groups, places the work in historical contexts, empowers people, and seeks to disrupt the status quo for the betterment of the population studied (Creswell, 2012; Madison, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Beyond its alignment with my theoretical framework (e.g., the valuing of participants' voices/interactions), I also include an ethnographic approach because of its focus on exploration instead of testing hypotheses and its support of applying a variety of methods to gain information. It is important to note, however, that I am not using ethnography as an overall methodology, but am instead applying an ethnographic approach to my research.

Regarding the surveys specifically, I followed the guidelines set forth by a variety of well-known scholars in the field (Czaja and Blair, 2003; Fowler, 2001; Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer, and Tourangeau, 2009). I considered their advice throughout the instrumentation process especially, aiming to ensure as much as possible that my survey would provide the most accurate results it could. The use of surveys is important for my methodological framework because it is a written way of providing student voice. Although my theoretical framework emphasizes oral communication more than written text, both (written and oral discourse) potentially involve the sharing of people's experiences and voices. Also, some participants likely disclose more honest thoughts on surveys than they would if they were orally speaking with a researcher or an authority figure. My decision to include a variety of methods that include both oral and

written measures is an attempt to provide multiple opportunities to hear a variety of voices in more than one way.

Black Feminist Epistemology (BFE), which "encompasses standards for assessing truth that are widely accepted among African American women" (Collins, 2000, p. 256), was also utilized when determining my methods. I sought to carry out my study in a way that would meet the approval of BFE scholars/theorists. Mostly, BFE was considered because it aligned very well with the scholarship regarding student voice. For example, BFE also values personal experience and dialogue as means of knowledge acquisition. In Collins' (2000) book, Gwaltney states, "I know what I'm talking about because I'm talking about myself. I'm talking about what I have lived" (p. 258). Similarly, I believe the participants in my study are more than capable of speaking about their own reading experiences, feelings, and evaluations. The students' voices are at the center of my work because it is about their enjoyment and their lives, and I believe they are the people who know those topics best.

BFE also recognizes the value of emotion and an ethic of personal accountability. The latter opposes the positivist stance of the researcher being objective and detached. Instead, Collins (2000) describes, "Assessments of an individual's knowledge claims simultaneously evaluate an individual's character, values, and ethics… all views expressed and actions taken are thought to derive from a central set of core beliefs that cannot be other than personal" (p. 265). As a result, I made a true effort to share my personal connection to my research topic in The Story of the Question, as well as my very personal history with the research context and my role as a researcher with regards

to the participants (Chapter 5). Generally speaking, I acknowledge that I cannot completely disconnect from my personal beliefs and experiences when conducting my research and reporting my findings.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The five phases of my study are presented in Table 4.1 and demonstrate a data collection timeline for my research.

Table 4. 1 ***Data Collection Timeline***

Phase	Time Period	Method: Data Being Collected
Phase 1	January ongoing	Participant Observation
Phase 2	February & February ongoing	Initial Survey (#1), 100 Book Challenge Log, Book Log Survey (with survey (#2) built in)
Phase 3	May	Interviews, Library Circulation Records
Phase 4	May-June	Book Club Discussions
Phase 5	June	End of Year Survey (#3)

Participant observation

O'Reilly (2012) claims, "If you take part in things then everything you want to study becomes within easy reach… But more than this, participation helps you to experience things as the insiders do and thus understand them better" (p. 17). For five months, I spent 2-3 days per week (on average) in Ms. Brescia's fourth grade classroom. I usually arrived 30 minutes before the lunch period, as students were beginning their independent reading time. This allowed me the opportunity to observe what books students were reading and how they demonstrated liking or enjoying a book. Often, adults ask older elementary students to read in their presence without reading in the students' presence themselves. With this in mind, I always brought a book of my own to

read as the children read their books, occasionally glancing around every few pages or so to make observations, which I usually recorded at the conclusion of the 30-minute period.

After a month of observations the teacher asked me if I could read with students who were struggling with fluency and could benefit from reading aloud. As a result, for the remainder of the school year, I alternated between bringing my own book during the independent reading period and (mostly) listening to students read their books aloud to me. This practice helped me forge relationships with the struggling readers in the class; they enjoyed reading to me and I enjoyed the stories and information they shared. From the first day, I aimed to avoid the instructional reading block after the first three weeks because I did not want to be considered a reading authority or teacher in that particular context. Instead, I assisted with the math/science period as a form of reciprocity. Most days, this assistance involved working with one of the students the teacher found to be challenging, a young girl who was the first to introduce herself to me when I entered Ms. Brescia's classroom. Other days, I supported the teacher by helping a table near me solve a problem or practice their math vocabulary terms, or by rotating tables to assist students after Ms. Brescia's whole-class lesson.

During lunch and gym periods, I alternated between spending time talking with Ms. Brescia and the students. Sometimes, this involved playing a game, turning a jump rope, or participating in drills with participants. I also attended school assemblies when requested to do so by members of the school community. All of these practices helped me to subtly become part of the classroom community. Students quickly learned my name when they realized I was learning their names and interested in who they were.

Working with the students allowed me to recognize the various personalities and dynamics within the classroom. I believe they were beginning to view my presence and involvement as a relatively normal occurrence.

For the first three weeks, I observed a full day with the class. After that, I arrived 30 minutes before the lunch period (as mentioned previously). Whenever students were engaged in classroom literacy practices, I recorded field notes on my computer or inside of my notebook (to be added to a document on my computer later). At the end of each week, I reviewed my field notes before writing brief analytic memos. After the first month, data collection became my primary focus; my field notes became much shorter and memos were usually no more than a paragraph. Overall, field notes included everything from details about the physical space, social climate, and community, to books being read under desks and comments made about reading. Although collecting artifacts was not a primary data method, I took pictures on my cell phone of important class/school documents or events (e.g., reading posters, book offerings at the annual school book fair, book club craft activities, etc.).

Book Logs

The participants filled out two ongoing book logs. One was the teacher's 100 Book Challenge log (Appendix A), which required students to write the book title and number of pages read each time they read independently. This log existed prior to my arrival at the research site and required an adult to sign each entry. Sometimes the adult was the teacher and other times the adult was a family member at home. After I arrived and explained my concept of enjoyment to the students, the teacher and I invited them to

draw a wave symbol (~ or ≈) whenever they finished reading and realized they had enjoyed what they read. This technique is somewhat similar to the Experiential Sampling Method (ESM) that I mentioned in the Conceptual Framework section. The ESM process usually involves beeping (or audibly alerting) participants as they are participating in an activity, and asking them to answer a series of questions regarding what they were thinking or feeling the moment before they were alerted.

The other reading log (referred to as the Book Log Survey, Appendix B) was utilized for library circulation records in addition to survey responses. Since students were being asked to write titles, pages, etc. for the 100 Book Challenge Log, I did not ask them to write these details for the Book Log Survey. Instead, I personally wrote in the titles and authors or a student designated as the class library assistant conducted this task. The teacher insisted that book selections be made based on reading levels (discussed further at the end of this chapter and throughout my dissertation). Each Tuesday, at the beginning of independent reading time, students in the three lowest reading level groups were invited to select 1-2 books each from colored baskets representing their reading level, and each Thursday, the highest reading levels were invited to do the same.

Most often, the students were asked to peruse and select books in groups. This decision was made based on the limited time allotted for library circulation and the issues regarding the leveled baskets (again, to be discussed towards the end of the chapter). In order to avoid disrupting students reading independently at their seats, groups checking out books were expected to be relatively quiet while perusing the library. While students occasionally whispered to each other, most conversation involved talking with me about

book suggestions or reactions. There was also a message box (crafted from a perfume box) for this purpose, which allowed students to leave me potentially anonymous notes regarding suggestions or reactions related to books they were reading or wanted to read (Appendix C, Message Box). All students were given 5-10 minutes to search for a book. Once selected, I wrote the title and author's name down. When students returned a book, they were asked to answer the same three questions each time: *Did you enjoy the book? How much did you like this book? If you liked the book, what did you like most about it?*

The first question is a "bipolar" (Groves et al., 2009) yes/no question with the concept of enjoyment in mind. The second question involves a 4-node Likert scale based on the Howard's (1975) research (mentioned in the Literature Review chapter). Howard borrowed the scale from a study (Terry, 1972) surveying children's poetry preferences. The scale Terry and Howard use has five nodes and employs pictures of the cartoon character Snoopy to demonstrate attitude in place of the numbers 0-4 (or 1-5). The scale is supposedly more child-friendly. I removed the third node and made it an even-point, 4-node Likert scale based on the advice of Groves et al. (2009) to exclude neutral answers as a way to avoid acquiescence and satisfice. Finally, the third question on the Book Log Survey was created specifically to better understand what narrative elements or book details contribute to students liking a book. The participants were given options (setting, theme, language, tone, characters, topic, information, plot) that they could simply circle, as well as space to write their own potentially unlisted responses.

Accompanying the Book Log Survey was a paper with labeled illustrations representing each of the aforementioned narrative elements and book details (Book Log

Survey Addendum, Appendix D). This document was always present in the classroom library corner as a reminder of our class conversation about what each of the words meant. Similarly, after the class discussion about the definition of enjoyment, the poster used to demonstrate the concept was placed on the wall in the library corner for students to refer to and remember. The Book Log Survey was maintained each week from late February until the last full week of school in early June. It was not required, and students who were not participating in the study were still allowed to borrow and request books.

Initial and End-of-Year Surveys

The book log had a survey built in, but students were also given two other surveys that were not ongoing: one in February and the other at the end of the school year in June. After two weeks of observing and participating, I explained to the students what I wanted to do in their classroom and school and asked if they would help. I informed them that I wanted to learn more about the books they like and want, and then help make those types of books more accessible to them. At this point, I did not explain my concept of enjoyment, as I wanted the first survey to be more of an open, exploratory questionnaire. The results of the survey were considered when selecting interview participants and helping to restructure the classroom library.

When creating the survey, I attended to Fowler's (2001) list of steps when designing a survey instrument. I wrote a paragraph about what I wanted the survey to accomplish (Fowler refers to this as the survey objective) and spoke with African American upper elementary students from across the metropolitan area as part of a small gender-stratified focus group (three girls and three boys). The focus group discussion

helped me to reconsider the goals of my survey before drafting my questions. I employed Czaja and Blair's (2003) "question utility" guide in an effort to ensure each survey question measured my original research questions and that participants would understand the questions and have the information they needed to answer them (p. 71). After drafting the questions, I went through the process of a critical review to increase the reliability and validity of my survey.

During the critical review process, I considered much of the advice of Fowler (2001) and Groves et al. (2009). I created a survey that avoided evaluative phrasing, inadequate wording, probing, and the use of multiple-meaning words (Fowler, 2001). Fowler also suggested that surveys should avoid encouraging participants to claim they do not know the answers to questions about their own lives. This notion aligns with my theoretical framework: people should have the space and power to speak about their experiences and have those experiences be counted as knowledge and considered. Similar to my approach with the Book Log Survey, in order to avoid neutral answers, I drafted mostly closed-ended nominal and ordinal questions and avoided an odd number of nodes on Likert scales. However, with my theoretical framework in mind, I wanted to also make space for students to have answers I could not foresee, so I informed them that they could write in any answer that was not listed. This decision was my way of avoiding acquiescence and satisfice while also allowing space for student voice beyond the boundaries of the optional responses on the page. I also applied Groves et al.'s (2009) suggestions regarding the use of universal terms, ensuring a sufficient number of possible answers for all of the questions, being specific, and avoiding check-all-that-apply and

"double-barreled" questions (p. 249). The advice of Fowler (2001) and Groves et al. (2009) helped me to improve each survey draft.

After the critical review was complete, I asked two colleagues I consider experienced scholars in the field of literacy to take the survey, a suggestion made by Czaja and Blair (2003). They agreed that the questions were age appropriate and relevant, but had suggestions for improvement regarding the phrasing of the questions and directions. One colleague suggested different ways to direct students to respond and helped me think through issues of language. The other colleague also had suggestions regarding the directions, but also provided advice about page formatting. After hearing their suggestions, I worked to reorder and rephrase questions and clarify directions. I also went back to review Czaja and Blair's (2003) advice about questions and formatting. This led me to move easier, opinion-based questions to the top of the survey while maintaining appropriate font size and spacing. After the revisions, I conducted a pretest with six third grade students (selected by their teacher) at a Philadelphia elementary school. Questions that were left blank or required probing were reconsidered afterwards. Through this process, I realized I had prepared for struggling readers without consideration of struggling writers. In a post-interview debriefing, the students also helped by making specific suggestions for clearer phrasing.

I revised the survey three more times before introducing the final draft to my research participants at Clayton Elementary School in February (Initial Survey, Appendix E). I waited for a day when all participants were present and the teacher could spare 15-20 minutes of the students' day without sacrificing critical instruction time. At this point,

I had been observing the classroom for approximately two weeks. I explained the purpose of the survey from a three-sentence script, read the directions, and proceeded to read the questions aloud. After reading each question twice, I waited at least 30-60 seconds before moving forward, depending on the question (e.g., the first question did not require more than 30 seconds but the second and third required more than one minute). I only stopped the survey if a student had a question. Afterwards, I collected the surveys from each table in the classroom.

Participants were informed that I was asking for the purposes of my research question, but also because I would be helping to restructure their classroom library. As a result, all of the students were given the option to participate (or not participate) in answering the Initial Survey questions. The data I utilized and discuss in Chapter 6 is strictly reflective of the sample group, but I occasionally comment on how the larger population impacted the decisions that were made. The restructuring of the library, which resulted from the Initial Survey, was not based solely on the 20 participants in my sample group; I considered the input of all 27 students, as well as their teacher. This inclusion was important to me for a number of reasons, mainly related to community and trust building. I wanted the students to know that their decisions regarding participation and/or involvement levels in my study would not determine access or the way I treated them. For those who decided to participate in my study specifically, this decision was also a step in showing that the way they responded to my questions was primarily being recorded for the purposes of understanding and supporting them. It was essential that the classroom library represent the people of the class community and their literary interests.

At the end of the school year, I asked the students to answer the first question from the survey at the beginning of the semester to see if their attitudes about reading had changed once they were exposed to books they claimed to like and enjoy more, a question included by Ms. Brescia's request. The rest of the End-of-Year Survey (Appendix F) focused on two aspects: favorite books of the year and joyful reading experiences. The first part of the survey asked the participants to rank the top five books they read all school year and describe the reasons why they liked them. Printed copies of their school and classroom library circulation records for the year were provided to each individual student to aid in this task. The copies were also made available with consideration of response bias; I aimed to avoid students simply selecting the books they read most recently as much as possible.

The End-of-Year Survey was conducted in small groups of 5-7 participants and took place in the afternoon, either outside on the playground or inside the school library (depending on the school's available space at the given time). This happened over the course of two consecutive days the week before the final week of school. I explained the directions to each group before providing them with their reading log surveys and library circulation records. However, students were informed they could write about books not listed (e.g., one student wanted to write about a book he read at home that was not checked out from the school or classroom library). They were also informed they could opt to list less than five books (e.g., one student had three favorite books and claimed the rest of the books were merely average). Each group required approximately 15-20 minutes to complete this process. I focused much of my attention on supporting the

struggling readers and writers of each group, helping them with any words they struggled to read or write.

After students completed the aforementioned ranking part of the survey, they also answered five closed and open-ended questions. The closed-ended question was the aforementioned question requested by Ms. Brescia and included in the Initial Survey. The other four questions were open-ended. At the time, I had a few inquiries based on the data I collected throughout the process. Though I was not absolutely certain the results would prove to be valuable, I did not want to leave without asking the participants the four questions that could potentially provide more insight for my research. I asked them to define enjoyment in the way that made the most sense to them, describe factors that contribute to making reading a more joyful or less joyful experience, and share types of books they wish there were more of in the world around them. Similar to the Initial Survey, I read each question aloud and assisted students identified as struggling readers and writers. This support involved spelling words for them when requested.

Classroom Library Restructuring and Library Circulation Records

For each survey, the classroom library collection either impacted results or was determined based on results. The Initial Survey determined what books were added to the collection, the Book Log Survey was entirely based on books from the classroom library, and the first part of the End-of-Year Survey provided the option of listing books circulating from the class collection. Therefore, the process of restructuring the library seems important to describe. I restructured the classroom library collection with books

from the teacher's collection and the schools' 100 Book Challenge bins, as well as books that were donated or purchased from Scholastic and Amazon's website.

When I arrived in January, the class had 52 books in their collection, and only some of the students were allowed to borrow books from the teacher. A select number of students had access to two baskets holding 52 books placed on a bookshelf in the back corner of the classroom. The books were unmarked for the most part, and with one exception, none of the books were for students reading below a fourth grade reading level. The exception, a beginning chapter book for students reading on a second or third grade level, was marked as being a fourth grade text. Of the 52 books, 46 were chapter books, three were picture books, one was a verse novel, and one was a fairytale anthology. Thirteen of the books were part of a series, and almost half of the books (24) were realistic fiction; other popular genres included adventure, mystery, and historical fiction.

More books (100) were in boxes under the back table in the classroom, unavailable to the students. Unlike the books in the baskets on the bookshelf, the collection found in the boxes consisted almost entirely of picture books for younger grades. Other than the 72 picture books, there were eight chapter books, one handbook/guide for writing letters, one collection of poetry, and two short story collections. The most frequent genres among this group of books included science nonfiction (21 books), realistic fiction (11 books), and history related texts (including biographies, memoirs, and historical fiction in addition to general nonfiction)(12 books).

Combined, the two collections had mostly picture books and chapter books (129 of the 136 books), as well as a diary book, a letter writing guide, two poetry related texts (a collection and verse novel), three short story collections, and no multimodal novels or graphic novels/comics. The most frequent genres were realistic fiction and science nonfiction, with mystery, adventure, fantasy, and history-related texts (historical fiction, biographies of people no longer living, and historical events) being the next most common genres. Twenty-five of the books were part of a series (not including books that were part of instructional reading company series, such as decodable books from Harcourt). From this combined classroom collection, I removed 30 books. Most of them simply did not fit the upper elementary age group. For example, some were regarded as Young Adult novels for high school students, while others were marketed for toddlers or preschoolers. Participants who happened to be nearby as I began the restructuring process referred to these books as "baby books" and many of them included (often outdated) TV/media figures like Doug, The Puffalumps, or Ronald McDonald. A few of the books were removed because they were historically inaccurate, racially problematic, and/or employing pejorative terms related to people of color. Books that were in very poor physical condition were also removed, especially if there was a duplicate copy.

With my Literature Review in mind, I wanted participants to have a more balanced collection to select books from and evaluate. I asked the teacher and students what types of books they liked and wanted to add to the library (Initial Survey), and Ms. Brescia provided the key to the lockers in the hallway where the school's 100 Book Challenge book bins were located. From the school's collection, I added 148 books to

the classroom library (131 targeted towards students reading on a first or second grade level). Finally, seeing that there was still a serious dearth of journals/diaries, graphic novels, certain types of nonfiction books, horror books, authors of color, and books involving children of color, I added 249 books to help fill various gaps, based on student responses, suggestions from fourth grade teachers, and my own professional experience.

Considering the initial class collection and the survey data discussed in Chapter 6, when searching for books from the school library and various websites, I intentionally sought out a variety of books, giving special consideration to those that appeared to be multimodal novels, graphic novels, and poetry collections. In terms of genre, the survey data discussed in Chapter 6 guided my search for more books that involved elements of comedy, fantasy, and horror, in addition to general realistic fiction. Analysis of the survey data also led me to include more books written by or about people of color, with an emphasis on Black/African American characters or figures living in the past. With an understanding of Sims Bishop's metaphor of every child needing/deserving literature that serves as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, I also sought to include books by/about Latinx, Asian, and Native American people. I did this based on my growing knowledge over the past four years on the topic of diverse and meaningful children's literature.

Authors like Grace Lin, Cynthia Leitich Smith, Yuyi Morales, Juan Herrera, Thanhha Lai, Joseph Bruchac, Ken Mochizuki, Sandra Cisneros, and Matt de la Peña were represented in the collection in addition to celebrated Black/African American authors, such as Nikki Grimes, Christopher Paul Curtis, Jacqueline Woodson, Mildred

Pitts Walter, Kwame Alexander, Eloise Greenfield, and Sharon Draper. With consideration of the broader African Diaspora, I also sought books about Black/African American people set outside of the United States (almost entirely in Africa, given the participant demographics), such as *Faraway Home* (Kurtz), *GOAL!* (Javaherbin), and *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (Kamkwamba). I included African American celebrities' books like those written by Debbie Allen, Nick Cannon, and Whoopi Goldberg. Some genres and formats had more Black/African American authors and characters than others. For example, the only modern horror book I found by a Black author was *The Jumbies* (Baptiste). Finding primarily comedic books in this regard also proved difficult. Similarly, many comics, graphic novels, and multimodal texts featured White people as sole/primary characters. In an effort to balance this outcome as much as possible, I intentionally added books in this format that included Black characters more generally (even if they were secondary). These inclusions were in addition to recommended, praised, and more readily accessible books with White characters/casts. Overall, I mostly aimed to include more diverse, quality literature for the participants to explore and access. The final classroom library collection included 534 books; 121 came from the boxes and bins in the classroom, 148 came from the school's collection, 21 were donated (17 by participants, 4 by the local public library), and I purchased 244 of the books.

Books were labeled with color-coded electrical tape based on 100 Book Challenge Reading Levels and placed in a basket of the same color. For example, books that were suggested to be for students reading on a fourth grade reading level were represented by the color black, so a book on this level would have a piece of black tape

wrapped around the bottom of the book's spine and would be placed in a black basket on the library shelf. The reading level of each book was determined by combining information from a variety of physical and virtual sources: the book itself (usually noted as "RL" on the back cover), other previously coded books in its series, the book's various reported levels according to website databases such as Scholastic's Book Wizard or TeachingBooks.net, including lexile level, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) level, Accelerated Reader (AR) level, and Fountas and Pinnell text level. The books' various assigned levels were recorded in a database and the overall level was determined using a conversion chart; the chart and a detailed library database can be found in the Appendices (Reading Level Conversion Chart, Appendix J; Classroom Library Database, Appendix K). A discussion of how this process conflicted with my theoretical and conceptual frameworks, as well as my personal beliefs, is included in Chapters 5 and 6.

A month after we met, the school librarian and I engaged in a discussion about this leveling concern (among many other topics). As a professional and out of respect for Ms. Brescia, I did not express my personal feelings about the class/school leveling policies, but I shared with the librarian that I was concerned I would not know what books the students wanted beyond their leveled classroom baskets. I asked her to share with me what books were being circulated most for Ms. Brescia's class when students had the opportunity to check out any book in the library's collection regardless of reading level. She offered me the participants' circulation records instead, explaining that she was less certain about books Ms. Brescia's class checked out specifically. Due to the fact that she works with every grade at the school and spends half of the week working with

students at another school, this was understandable. Although the records were not a part of my original research design, once encountering the resistance regarding leveling, I was constantly seeking ways to view students' passionate interests, affection, and enjoyment from more sources.

The librarian and I talked with each other rather often, but it was not until June that I returned to reprint an updated copy of the circulation records. None of the students' identifying information was presented on the page beyond what was already included on the general class rosters (name and student number), and while the records usually went back as far as students' enrollment date, I only printed participants' records for that school year. Sometimes, the page also included some of the books from previous school years (e.g., if a student checked out only four books during the fourth grade year). I did not avoid looking at this information, but for the purposes of data collection and analysis, I only included books checked out during the 2015-2016 school year.

Interviews

During the second week of May, I conducted semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with six participants that I selected in consultation with the classroom teacher (selection process discussed further in the next chapter). The first day, I interviewed two students at a table outside near the playground, but the following four interview sessions were moved indoors to the school library in an effort to ensure better audio quality. Each day, I met two of the six students during their lunch period. While one participant ate lunch and engaged in recreational activities (e.g., swinging on the playground set, choosing a library book, drawing, etc.), I interviewed the other, and then the participants

swapped places. I allotted 15-25 minutes for each interview, but the interview times ranged from 10 to 23 minutes. Some students decided to share more than others and some had extra questions given my observations and inquiries. The six interviewees were asked one week in advance to select 2-3 books they considered to be their "favorite books of all time" and bring the books (or a page with the titles written down) to the interview session so we could discuss what they like about the books they brought/selected. The first four interview questions directly address the books the participants selected or brought in with them. Sims Bishop (1983) employed this method in the case study referenced in the Literature Review presented in Chapter 3.

The rest of the 12 questions deal with topics of genre, interest, enjoyment, and joyful or happy reading experiences. Each interviewee was asked the same 12 questions from the interview guide in addition to questions specifically geared towards them as individuals (totaling an average of 15 questions each). After explaining the swapping process and ensuring setup, I began the interviews by reading the script (Interview Guide, Appendix G) and asking if they had any general or specific questions. I then proceeded to read the interview questions aloud and engage in a discussion with the participant being interviewed. Interviews were recorded using the Garage Band software on my MacBook Air computer. Garage Band is usually utilized for creating music or podcasts, but it serves as a sound studio/library more generally. It can record for extended periods of time and be transferred to other sound software/apps (e.g., iTunes). I ended each interview, with my theoretical framework in mind, asking students if there was anything we did not discuss about books, reading, enjoyment, etc. that they wanted to add.

When I was drafting interview questions and planning the interview process, I primarily consulted two scholars' books (Brinkmann, 2013; Seidman, 2013) about qualitative interviewing. Brinkmann (2013) notes that semi-structured interviews are likely the most common type of interview utilized in qualitative research. I chose this type of interview structure because the benefits aligned closest with my theoretical and methodological frameworks regarding student voice and the value of both personal experience and dialogue. Brinkmann (2013) explains, "Compared to structured interviews, semi-structured interviews can make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing much more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee" (p. 21). Semi-structured interviews tend to be a more flexible method that involves open-ended questions and probing.

Although the questions are open-ended, they are purposeful and geared towards obtaining particular information/knowledge (Brinkmann, 2013). Brinkmann (2013) suggests, "good interview questions thus [sic] invite interviewees to give descriptions" (p. 22). He further suggests that more abstract or reflective questions should be avoided or presented after a series of descriptive questions. As a result, I moved a series of descriptive questions to the beginning of the interview guide. After drafting the guide, I had it reviewed by colleagues and advisors in the field. This decision was made to determine whether I was effectively avoiding ambiguity, excessive details or questioning, and certain forms of researcher bias.

As a researcher, I tried my best to ask questions in a relatively objective tone and way (in terms of phrasing). Sometimes, I was so caught up in our interview discussion

that I provided a statement instead of a question. I worried about this with one question in particular. However, Kvale and Brinkman describe an interview as "literally an *inter view,* an interchange of views between two persons" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 145). This belief aligns with BFE's dialogue and personal accountability tenets, and it helped me to view these interchanges as personal and more acceptable than I initially considered. Such statements were usually made in an effort to probe or connect more with participants during the interview process, given my goal of acknowledging and understanding them better.

Book Club Discussions

Unlike the individual interviews, the book club discussions did not have an official question guide. They were relatively unstructured in comparison. The approach of the book club discussions was similar to that of a group interview or focus group. Hennink (2014) describes focus groups as a "very flexible research method…particularly effective for exploratory research" (p. 15). The primary goal was to explore students' likes or dislikes of various aspects within the same book. As Hennink (2014) notes regarding focus groups, I was not aiming to "[reach] consensus" (p. 27), but to highlight a variety of outlooks on a particular issue, and in this case, a particular book.

The book clubs began in mid-May and every participant in the class was invited to participate (selection process discussed further in the next chapter). They were also made aware of the books that would be the focus of the club. Separating the clubs by gender was a decision supported by the classroom teacher and made based on the social dynamics of the classroom, as well as the relative dearth of quality, age-appropriate

literature that involves main characters of both sexes simultaneously and equally. Four boys and ten girls volunteered to participate. Hennink (2014) claims focus groups tend to involve 6-8 people, a number larger than the boys' club and smaller than the girls' club. Since participation was voluntary, I did not limit the number of participants. Also, it is important to note that I was not applying a focus group methodology as much as I was utilizing a focus group approach when planning this phase of my study.

I selected the book for the boys' club primarily based on the recommendation of the local librarian. I mainly asked him because he is a respected community member who is very knowledgeable about children's literature and positive reading experiences for youth of all ages. However, I also asked him because of his self-stated identity as a Black/African American male who grew up in a metropolitan area in the northeastern United States. In passing, I asked him what would be a good book for a boys' reading club and without hesitation he suggested Christopher Paul Curtis' book, *Bud Not Buddy*. I was familiar with the book and agreed it might serve as a great book club choice because of the class interest in Black history (detailed in later data chapters). This encouraged me to find a similar history-related book for the girls' club.

Deciding the book for the girls' club, however, was more complicated. I sought the advice of fellow (current and former) fourth grade teachers and some of the girl participants. I also sought the advice of the principal, classroom teacher, and an instructional assistant at the school. Some books were eliminated simply due to concerns about such a wide range of reading levels in the club. When the decision was narrowed down to two books as a result, I asked three of the girls in the class who read widely

across genres (based on circulation records) which book they felt their peers would like most based on the summaries. Finally, the decision was made for the girls' club to read Rita Williams-Garcia's book, *One Crazy Summer*. One of the participants voted for this book because she had already read it, "loved" it, and wanted to read it again. Another simply claimed she liked that it was about summertime (this comment was made with a little more than one month of school left). The third participant gave no explanation beyond the fact that both books looked good, but she was more interested in Williams-Garcia's book.

Since there were two boys and five girls reading below the book's assigned level, I recorded each chapter of both books on my computer using Quick Time Player's audio recording software. Each recording was transferred to my iTunes library and placed on an iPod that I left in the classroom beside the teacher's desk, along with a Belkin Rockstar Multi-Headphone Splitter (Appendix I). Students who were reading below level were encouraged to read with family members at home and follow along with the audio recordings at school. This was used by all seven students, but mostly by the two girls reading at the lowest levels. Ms. Brescia also allowed girls reading at higher levels to engage in paired reading with the girls who were struggling readers.

Each of the two groups met three times between mid-May and early June. During the first club meeting, I explained the book club process and I introduced the book by reading the first chapter and passing out a Vocabulary Guide (Appendix H). I also gave each participant 10 sticky tabs (post-its) to mark moments in the book they wanted to talk about during the second meeting, as well as a blank bookmark to decorate and mark their

spot in the book while reading. Both of the first meetings took place outside during lunch and recess; the boys sat on a table near the playground and the girls sat with me on a larger wooden component of the playground. This session lasted the entire lunch and recess period (45 minutes), and unlike sessions two and three, it was not recorded.

The second meeting took place in the school library during the participants' lunch period and lasted approximately 15 minutes (for both groups). I had a few questions written down as discussion openers or to be used for moving the conversation forward if we became stuck: *What do you think about the book so far? Can you describe a favorite moment? Do you have a favorite character?* Although I had these questions prepared, my intention was to allow the participants to determine the topics they wanted to talk about as much as possible. I left the space open for wherever the discussion decided to take us and engaged more as a participant than a facilitator. This was especially true with the boys' club, which had less than half the number of participants of the girls' club. With the girls' club, I found myself having to act as a facilitator more often because of the large number of participants and the tendency of some to talk much longer than others despite a discussion about leaving space for everyone to share equally.

Gibson (2010) describes how (Appleman's (2006)) book clubs influenced plans for her own, as the book clubs Appleman described had "no expectations for what the participants voiced or learned" and were considered "liberating because there was no pressure to participate in the conversations or prepare for some form of assessment" (p. 24). Similarly, I wanted the book club to serve less as an instructional/academic space and more as an open space for students to genuinely discuss their reactions to the book.

I predicted that aspects of the literature that they liked or enjoyed would easily be included as part of that conversation. This session (as well as the third session) was recorded using the same Garage Band software (previously mentioned) that I used to record the individual interviews.

The third and final book club meeting was a celebration of the books the participants read. The boys' session took place in the classroom and the girls' session took place in the school library (both during the lunch and recess period). Food directly related to scenes from the book mentioned by the participants was provided, and participants were invited to participate in a related arts and crafts activity. As a result, the three questions I wrote down to potentially include in the discussion were related to the activity at the end of the session. The boys had baloney sandwiches and strawberry soda (vampire blood) based on a scene from *Bud, Not Buddy*. Some of their discussion focused on how the main character dealt with fear and what made him feel at home, and their activity was building houses out of toothpicks and Dots (candy)(Book Club Crafts and Materials, Appendix I). The girls shared shrimp lo mein and fruit punch based on a scene from *One Crazy Summer*. Some of their discussion focused on how the main characters dealt with their feelings about their mother, how they treated each other, and the theme of the value of a name. Their activity involved using fabric paint to decorate mini-tote bags with their names (Book Club Crafts and Materials, Appendix I).

The food, activity, and questions were based on participants' previous book club meeting discussions and conversations in the classroom/lunchroom between sessions. Though this final session was a little more guided than the second, I aimed to ensure

space for any topics they wished to discuss. The decision to include an activity is supported by Hennink's (2014) claim that focus group activities "can be an effective strategy to simultaneously build rapport, promote discussion, and generate data… [and] immediately change a group dynamic, enabling participants to feel more at ease as they interact on a specific task" (p. 62). In addition to the benefits she mentions, the participants seemed to enjoy the craft activities for the sheer sake of creative expression. The food and activities were wonderful ways to culminate our book clubs.

Data Analysis

Analyzing Surveys and Book Logs

Descriptive statistics is the main analysis tool utilized for the surveys and book logs. Holcomb (1998) explains, "Descriptive statistics are used to organize and summarize data whether they come from studies of populations or samples" (p. 2). Unlike inferential statistics, I am not attempting to make generalizations about the entire population (all upper elementary African American children across the country/world) based on my sample (the 20 African American participants in my study). Descriptive statistics focuses on the percentages, mean, median, mode, range, and/or standard deviation of a data set (as well as the Pearson r, coefficient of determination, and linear aggression when data includes scores) (Holcomb, 1998). Most of the questions on the surveys and book logs provided nominal or equal interval data. Therefore, most of the results are presented in frequency tables, pie charts, column or bar charts, and general lists. For example: book formats that participants liked and enjoyed are presented in a frequency table as well as a bar chart; a genre like fantasy, which encompasses a variety

of subgenres is broken down in a pie chart to further illustrate the composition of the sample group's responses; the most frequently circulated books and series are listed and organized in a general table.

The first survey was coded in February while I was at the research site because it informed the decisions I made for other phases of the study. I transferred participants' responses to a Microsoft Excel document on my computer and created and reviewed frequencies and percentages using the Excel software. The rest of the surveys were mostly coded in the summer or fall after the data collection process ended. I utilized SPSS statistical software at the university's computer lab in addition to Excel software at home, to code and analyze the survey and book log data. A colleague who I consider to be very knowledgeable in the field of education and statistical analysis assisted me with the process to contribute to the validity and reliability of the results. Most of the survey questions are close-ended, but four questions from the End-of-Year Survey are open-ended. For those four questions, I applied thematic analysis, categorizing the responses into various categories. Afterwards, I asked a fellow doctoral student in the dissertation stage to create themes for the four question responses as well. This inter-rater reliability process resulted in an 86.7% agreement.

Analyzing Book Club Discussions, Interviews, and Field Notes

Field notes, interviews, and book club discussions were all analyzed using qualitative coding methods described in Saldaña's (2016) book, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. I began by transcribing all of the interviews and book discussions from Garage Band into Microsoft Word documents on my computer during

the summer following my research study. It is important to note that although I did not transcribe the data until the summer, I listened and wrote reflexive notes about each interview or discussion the day or week it occurred to better inform my decisions for future sessions. All three of these data methods (field notes, interviews, and book club discussions) went through a pre-coding stage. Saldaña (2016) advises researchers to "never overlook the opportunity to 'pre-code' (Layder, 1998) by circling, highlighting, underlining, or coloring rich or significant participant quotes or passages that strike you" (p. 20). The interview and book discussion went through more coding stages than my field notes. After pre-coding, my field notes were categorized thematically into 44 categories, then collapsed twice to form nine main themes/categories: curriculum, staff connections, local connections, family connections, context description, role as researcher, conflict, books being read/discussed, and community.

While pre-coding the interviews and book club discussions, I also recorded "preliminary jottings" in the margins (Saldaña, 2016). This mostly consisted of code considerations, surprises, questions, notes to look into or think about later, and immediate feelings/thoughts. After reviewing each transcript, I wrote a brief analytic memo. Saldaña (2016) describes, "Analytic memos are somewhat comparable to researcher journal entries or blogs—a place to 'dump your brain' about the participants, phenomenon, or process under investigation by thinking and thus writing and thus thinking even more about them" (p. 44). After the preliminary coding stage, I engaged in two initial or "first-cycle" coding methods (Saldaña, 2016, p. 68): Emotion and In Vivo coding. Emotion coding is an affective method that "labels the feelings participants may

have experienced" (p. 124). More specifically, the codes label the "emotions recalled and/or experienced by the participant, or inferred by the researcher about the participant" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 125). Regarding my research specifically, this coding method highlights the feelings students potentially experienced while reading or describing various reading experiences/identities.

In alignment with my conceptual and theoretical frameworks, I wanted to explore how the participants felt about various books, book elements/details, and reading experiences. Emotion was therefore a key element in my analysis. When I conducted interviews/discussions and transcribed the data, I was very attentive to tone, emphasis, and nonverbal cues. Saldaña (2016) advises researchers in the process of emotion coding to pay attention to "*language* use" and "nuances of voice" (p. 129). This is especially important when considering the age of my participants. Saldaña (2016) notes, "Developmentally, middle childhood (approximately ages 8-9) is a period of emotional ambivalence in which children experience new emotions but do not necessarily have the vocabulary to describe them" (p. 129). Instead, Saldaña claims, participants this age may use metaphors or similes to explain their feelings. He suggests that researchers can potentially better understand the more ambiguous feelings expressed by considering the "triggering emotion" that came before the initially coded emotion. This occasionally indirect acknowledgement of feelings also requires closer attention to subtext and potential unstated meaning, while cautiously ensuring the researcher is not making assumptions or false claims. For this reason, I engaged in member-checking with seven

interview and book club participants after the data collection stage, asking them if my codes seemed to accurately depict their responses.

In Vivo coding was even more essential for ensuring the participants' voices remained at the center of my research. According to Saldaña (2016), "The root meaning of in vivo is 'in that which is alive,' and as a code refers to a word or phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record" (p. 105). The participants' exact words are specifically utilized to create codes, a practice that often acknowledges one's culture. In Vivo coding is the coding method that best fits my theoretical and methodological frameworks in this regard. Saldaña (2016) confirms, "In Vivo coding is particularly useful in educational ethnographies with youth. The child and adolescent voices are often marginalized, and coding with their actual words enhances and deepens an adult's understanding of their cultures and worldviews" (p. 106). For this reason, In Vivo coding was my primary first-cycle coding method, which I mainly utilized to code each interview individually.

To gain a different perspective and condense the number of codes from the first-cycle coding process, I also applied a "second cycle coding method": pattern coding. Pattern coding is described by Saldaña (2016) as " a way of grouping those [first-cycle] summaries into a smaller number of categories, themes, or concepts" (p. 236). He furthers, "Pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration, or explanation" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 236). I utilized pattern coding across interviews instead of across questions to compare interview participants' responses with each other. To complete the coding process, I mainly coded manually

first, which was recommended by Saldaña (2016) for "first-time or small-scale studies" (p. 29). Then I pasted the data into an ATLAS.ti document if it was necessary for further consideration (e.g., to find the number of times a particular word was used across interview sessions). Unlike the interviews and discussions, however, I coded the field notes on my computer using Microsoft Word software, highlighting (with different colors) various phrases/sections based on their theme.

Triangulation and Criteria of Quality Research

As mentioned previously, I employed a variety of methods to better understand my research questions. For triangulation purposes, I ensured a variety of methods (observations, surveys, book logs, interviews, discussions), participant sources (various students), and theoretical lenses (student voice, CRT, BFE). I also engaged in peer review, cross-checking (inter-coder agreement), and member checking processes. Survey research often calls for attention to issues of validity and reliability. As described in the previous section, I aimed to ensure the validity and reliability of my surveys as much as possible in the instrumentation and data collection phases.

I believe the largest threat to the validity of my study to be the leveling of the books in the classroom library, a theme that is discussed throughout current and later chapters. Often, students wanted to select a book that was not in their basket. As stated in Chapter 3's review of the literature, students cannot select books that are not available to them. In an effort to balance this threat, I included data from student logs and school library records (graciously volunteered by the school librarian) in my data analysis, research findings, and discussions. Interview data also helped provide more balance in

this regard. I did not ask participants about the leveling system, but Chapters 6 and 7 reveal how the participants initiated discussion regarding the topic, as well as the ways the system impacted students' ability to select and evaluate various books. If given the chance, I would not have utilized the 100 Book Challenge system, but this policy was set in place by the classroom teacher and I felt a need to respect her wishes to an extent, a topic discussed further in the next chapter regarding my conflicts and role as a researcher.

In addition to the leveling system, conflict related to defining genres (as described in Chapter 2) also potentially threatens the validity of my results. Definitions are subjective, and while I aimed to balance my own definitions with various sources and the participants' definitions, the potential threat remains. I also worked to counteract this threat as much as possible by assigning books primary and secondary codes, as well as highlighting results more specifically and generally to confirm my findings. A third threat to the validity of the research results is the unintentional dearth of texts in the science fiction, media, and general (not history or science related) nonfiction genres. Each of the genres was represented in the class library, but not as much as others. While this threat is out of my control now that the data collection phase is over, I recognize and acknowledge the potential meaning of this threat throughout my discussion of the results.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest trustworthiness is especially vital in qualitative work. Trustworthiness involves attending to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I worked to apply these criteria through prolonged engagement at my research site, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, providing thick description, and maintaining a reflexive journal. No external audit was

conducted for my study, but I involved scholars and researchers in the field who are uninvolved with my study in my research instrumentation and analysis stages. The advice of experts in the field should be noticeable throughout my dissertation. I also aimed to be honest with regards to my beliefs, actions, role, and reporting. This is discussed more extensively in the next chapter, which furthers the discussion of my research design, but with an emphasis on the people involved instead of the methods.

CHAPTER 5: CONTEXT, PARTICIPANTS, RESEARCHER'S ROLE, ETHICS

Chapter Overview: Given critical ethnography's emphasis on historical context and BFE's emphasis on personal accountability, this chapter thoroughly describes the context and participants involved in this research study, as well as my role as a researcher and considerations regarding ethics. The sections regarding ethics and my role as a researcher also relate to the limitations and threats to the study's validity and confirmability. Throughout this chapter, I aimed to provide a historical backdrop for my study and an honest account of some of the more personal topics related to my research.

Context

"I can relate because, um, like, it was in Philadelphia, and like, that's kind of our neighborhood." –Jade

In order to discuss the context of Clayton, where I conducted my research, I must weave in my field notes regarding the school and classroom, as well as details of my connection to the area and my role as a researcher in this setting. To say Clayton is a familiar place for me would be an understatement. It is where my father, grandfather, aunts, uncles, and cousins were raised. Many of these family members actually attended Clayton Elementary School, where I conducted my research. In this section, I will share information about the context and my family's role in it, as well as my own experiences in the setting.

Clayton: The History of a Borough and Community

Different people would likely describe Clayton's location in different ways. Located five miles from downtown Philadelphia, it borders the city and is easily

considered to be part of the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Yet my grandparents and great uncles and aunts, who grew up in or around Clayton in the 1930s and 1940s, have always distinctly described the borough as a "suburb" of Philadelphia. The description of Clayton appears to depend on one's age and role in the area. The principal at Clayton, for example, refers to Clayton as an extension of Philadelphia. She and my family members have reiterated to me that most of Clayton's residents (increasingly over the past 50 years) moved to the borough from nearby Philadelphia neighborhoods.

According to the Delaware County Planning Department (2001), Clayton began as land owned and occupied by the Lenni Lenape tribal nation. European colonists eventually took over the area. Clayton "thrived early due to its proximity to Philadelphia markets and the energy that [the creek] provided for industry" (Delaware County Planning Department, 2001, p. 2-5). The area was mostly farmland until the middle of the 19th century. Named for one of the landowner's hometown in England, Clayton was established as its own borough in 1893. The borough's greatest population increase came between 1910 and 1950, when the small town of 689 people became a town of 11, 068 people. My family is included in this number since it was the late 1920s when my paternal grandfather's parents moved their family to Clayton from Philadelphia and Scranton, Pennsylvania, and the late 1940s when my paternal grandmother's parents did the same, from Lynchburg, Virginia, by way of the nearby borough of Darby.

By this time, Clayton was looking more like a U.S. suburban town than a rural area. However, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania does not acknowledge towns as a type of municipality. Instead, they have cities, boroughs, and townships (Commonwealth

of Pennsylvania, 2016, p. 6-5). Areas that are not large enough to be considered a city but are more developed than rural areas are considered *boroughs*. There are a number of detached dwellings in Clayton, but approximately half of Clayton's housing units have historically been townhomes or twin-homes (two separate housing units connected by one common wall). This common structure contributes to the appearance of Clayton being more urban than suburban or rural. Also, Philadelphia's transit system extends into Clayton with buses, trolleys, and local trains.

In 1990, only 23.5% of Clayton residents were employed in the county where Clayton resides (Delaware County Planning Department, 2001). To my knowledge, much of the community tends to work in Philadelphia. This was the case for my grandparents and aunt who each worked more than 30 years as teachers in the School District of Philadelphia's public schools. It was also the case for my great uncle and cousins who worked for the local Philadelphia newspaper company, my aunts and cousins employed as nurses, my uncle who worked with Philadelphia's main electric company, etc. The same was true for my grandmother's neighbors and the parents of my childhood friends in Clayton. As such, Philadelphia is a crucial part of Clayton. It is where many residents were born (e.g., our family friends growing up), it is where many residents' families are from (e.g., my great grandfather's family), and it is where many residents work and spend a significant amount of their recreational time.

As Clayton grew and times changed, the population shifted from a predominantly White, older demographic to a younger African American demographic. The Delaware County Planning Department (2001) claims, "During the 1980's, the White population of

Clayton declined by one half, while the African American population more than doubled," leading to a demographic change without significantly increasing the population. By 1990, Clayton was 65.6% African American (Delaware County Planning Department, 2001, p. 2-12). Clayton had become a suburban mecca of sorts for some African Americans living in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. The Delaware County Planning Department (2001) describes the African American population in Clayton (during the 1930s - 1960s) as "highly educated and prosperous" (p. 2-6) and "self-sufficient" (p. 2-7). The department document also notes that prior to 1970, 98% of Clayton residents were college graduates. The decades being referred to in the aforementioned description represent my grandparents' youth. My grandparents both attended college, at a time when school segregation was still the law of the land. I do not know as much about the history of my great aunts and uncles on my grandfather's side of the family, but regarding my grandmother's side, all ten children attended college. Many proved to be unusually successful (by most people's definition of the word). The borough my grandparents know as Clayton, however, is not the Clayton my father knows, and neither perspective is the Clayton my cousins or my sister and I know.

Family/Generational Views

My grandfather was born and raised in Clayton, and my grandmother moved to Clayton with her parents and siblings when she was 16 years old. My grandmother vividly remembers the segregation and racism of Clayton. I am reminded of this when she refers to a local grocery store as "The Black [store]." Similarly, my grandfather remembers the racial tension of his youth and the first fight he was part of in middle

school that began because of the derogatory names White children called him and his friends. My grandparents lived in Clayton when it was still predominantly white. They were not allowed to be teachers in Clayton, which is partly why they began their teaching careers in Philadelphia's public schools. However, it was always clear to me that they were very proud of their African American roots.

My uncles were the most visibly proud of our racial heritage, constantly telling us about the history of our race and teaching us local Black phrases and greetings. This pride was also exhibited in the local community. The year after my father was born, the local swim club decided to continue to ignore the nation's landmark *Brown v. Board* ruling of 1954 and denied African American residents entry to their club. Clayton's African American community joined together, formed a non-profit, and created the first black-owned and operated swim club in the country. They named it after a river in Africa with our cultural heritage and pride in mind, and they carried on with their own membership services. It was at this pool, one block from my grandmother's house, that I first learned how to swim.

My father was also born and raised in Clayton. As a child of the 1960s, he remembers the racism my older relatives reference as well. However, he was also a high school student in the 1970s, when the demographics of Clayton first began to shift to a larger African American presence and the borough's population peaked (12, 135 residents) (Delaware County Planning Department, 2001). He was part of a different generation than my grandparents, who were born at the beginning of the country's Great Depression, and his interactions with white people were different and similar to his

parents'. Similar to my grandfather, my father claims most of the racial tension and trouble for him and his cousins started in middle school instead of during the elementary years. However, he recalls that even then, the school was still predominantly White and not without issues of racism.

By the time my sister and I were born in the mid-1980s, Clayton was a predominantly African American borough with a very proud community and a number of older prominent members of Philadelphia and Clayton's society. After retiring from 39 years of being a teacher and reading specialist in Philadelphia, my grandmother ran for mayor of Clayton. The summer between my fourth and fifth grade school years, she won the office, simultaneously becoming the first African American and the first female mayor of Clayton. Mayoral terms in Clayton last four years, but my grandmother was re-elected twice, and served as Clayton's mayor for 12 years. Her final year in office was the year I moved to Philadelphia after college to attend a teacher education program.

My grandmother being the mayor contributed to my sister and I having certain experiences when we spent summers with her. She and my great uncle were on a number of local boards: the borough's hospital, the public library, the swim club, the city zoo, etc. My grandmother's strong emphasis on literacy and service encouraged my own path as a community-engaged, literacy scholar. My sister and I worked our first volunteer and paid jobs in Clayton. We were candy stripers at the nearby hospital, camp counselors at the school beside Clayton Elementary, office assistants at the Borough Hall across the street from the school, basketball league managers, etc. Spending every summer and Christmas holiday in Clayton meant that it became a second home for us.

My sister and I moved around a lot when we were younger. More specifically, I attended four different schools in two different states from preschool to fifth grade. Clayton was a consistent home for us when we did not have one. My grandmother being such an active community member contributed to our own community experiences. We attended various summer camps at her church and library (the former run by my older cousin and the latter run by my grandmother's friend). We sat in, relatively unaware, on local library, church, and council meetings. We attended New Year's Eve parties at my uncle's house that hosted some of Philadelphia's most influential leaders, like the city's mayor. As is the way with children, I was not impressed by these opportunities and experiences when I was younger. I knew my family and the community as the regular, everyday people they are before I fully grasped how they sometimes appeared to others.

Yet, at the very least, being surrounded by successful African American professionals and entrepreneurs from such a young age likely sparked a subconscious belief in my own ability to succeed. I was raised in predominantly White schools and neighborhoods that marginalized people of color, but I always knew of a place where Black people ran their own businesses, led their own organizations/programs, were presidents and CEO's of companies, wrote and published noteworthy books used in classrooms across the country, served as mayors and council members, etc. For my generation in the family, that was more the norm than the exception. Education and success were not necessarily stressed as much as they were normal, obvious expectations. I believe this outlook is similar to my older relatives' outlook, but is an intensified version. Perhaps, every generation believes their day and time to be the most legendary,

but I truly believe I was fortunate to witness Clayton during one of its best periods. I knew the stories of struggle, but I mostly witnessed the victories. The Clayton I know was full of African American people who were seemingly unstoppable, self-sufficient, culturally proud, and very community-focused.

Clayton Elementary: At the Center of it all

The Delaware County Planning Department (2001) states that the intersection where Clayton Elementary School (CES) sits "has historically been the center of the Borough" and that Clayton's first school was built at this intersection in 1811 (p. 2-6). The school is bordered by the Clayton Public Library and one of the district's two high school campuses (which houses grades 9-10). CES sits on a corner directly across from the Borough Hall, which houses the mayor's office, borough's council, police station, and fire station. On the other two corners are local gas stations. The main street (between the school and Borough Hall) is lined with community shops (mostly take-out dining, but also a Laundromat, drugstore, auto-repair shop, barbershop & hair salon, liquor store, nondenominational church, major and minor convenient store, bank, and post office).

Bordering southwest Philadelphia, the school is within 5 minutes (driving) of other schools within the district as well as schools in Philadelphia's school district. To further explain the school's location related to Philadelphia, Clayton is as close (5-minute drive) to three School District of Philadelphia elementary schools as it is to Clayton's second elementary school. The school district is the only district outside the city of Philadelphia's border that is accessible by Philadelphia public transportation system trolleys. It is also accessible by the city of Philadelphia's buses and local trains. The

area where my four paternal great grandparents settled is also within a five-minute drive of the school, as well as the hospital where my father, grandfather, and various extended family members were born.

Clayton is part of a small school district that serves six boroughs and includes eight elementary schools, but only one public middle school and one public high school (which has two campuses separated by grades: grades 9-10 attend the school beside Clayton and grades 11-12 attend school at a different campus in a neighboring borough). Various family members have mentioned to me that they felt the borough and school changed significantly when the school districts were consolidated in 1972 as part of desegregation efforts and restructured again in the 1990s. Speaking with my grandfather and father about their experiences at Clayton in the 1930s and 1960s when it was predominantly White, they both remembered their elementary years with relative nostalgic happiness despite the racially tense climate of the country. My grandfather recalled segregated classrooms and race-based tracking, but emphasized that race relations were manageable for the most part until he entered middle school. Similarly, my father described an atmosphere of racial tension that was evident but less significant when compared to the U.S. south where my mother lived. He, too, shared that most of the racial conflict he witnessed and experienced began in his middle school years. Both men contributed this to the age of the students at Clayton; my grandfather subtly emphasized, "I mean, we were *chil*dren."

Today, Clayton Elementary School children continue to learn and move forward in the same building. Like Clayton's community, one major change since my older

relatives attended Clayton is the shift in racial demographics. Of the 366 students, 98% are Black/African American. Less than 2% of the students are Latinx, Asian, or White according to school data. The front office boasts plaques that inform visitors of the school's record of making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) 7-10 years ago. Then, the school was also a technology magnet school. In my conversation with the principal, I learned that the school returned to being a regular public school "five or so" years ago. Her concerns echo those of my family members, who continuously comment on the way Clayton is changing because of the influx of residents from West Philadelphia. The principal shared stories with me about the various ways families from Philadelphia come to the area and school with hopes of leaving the city for a more suburban lifestyle, but simultaneously tend to bring the lifestyle they are trying to leave behind with them to Clayton. She describes a community that wants the best for their children, but has many obstacles to overcome in order to obtain their goals.

A recent article from a popular Philadelphia news outlet discusses the financial crisis Clayton's school district continues to face. The article (Boccella, 2017) notes:

> [The district] has been on the front lines of the fight over state education funding. It currently is the lead plaintiff in a sweeping lawsuit contending that Harrisburg's inequitable funding formula – in a state that studies have shown has the widest gulf between rich and poor districts – violates the Pennsylvania Constitution. (para. 11)

The district's 5,500 students are 91% African American and approximately 80% of the students live at or below the poverty level (Boccella, 2017, para. 12). At Clayton, 65% of

the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. This number is lower than other schools in the district. For example, 73% of students at Clayton's other elementary school (a five-minute drive from Clayton) qualify for free/reduced lunch. As a result of the funding issues, Clayton shares a number of crucial staff members (the school's counselor, social worker, art teacher, music teacher, librarian, etc.) with other schools in the district.

Along with an increased concern for low-income families and students, various members of the community seem concerned about a recent wave of violence and death in the local area. This past year at Clayton, within the class I worked with alone, two students had immediate family members (a brother and a mother) who were murdered in Clayton, one of whom was talked about often in the news because of his position on a school athletic team. This sort of painful loss is impossible to keep out of the schools. With a small borough and only one school for each level after elementary school, many of the students grow up together and know each other's family members. It makes having a sufficient number of school counselors and social workers critically necessary. The counselors were present for the high school students after the district's loss this year, but at Clayton there were younger siblings, neighborhood children, and former teachers who were left to grieve without sufficient professional support.

Fifteen years ago, the Delaware County Planning Department (2001) described, "The economy of our community has declined; the quality of education provided to its children has also declined. However, the stability of the neighborhoods remains… and the residents remain passionately committed to their hometown" (p. 1-1). Despite the funding problems, Clayton does the best it can with a dedicated staff and supportive

network of parents and community members. Some of the staff members grew up in Clayton and bring a strong sense of history and community presence to the school. Clayton offers art, music, and gym for every student, as well as unique extracurricular clubs (e.g., cooking class, martial arts) run by community volunteers. The principal collaborates with various community organizations as well. I had the honor of joining the Kindergarten students when a local storyteller visited the school. Similarly, the principal invited me to join the local public library's after-school girls' book club when she arranged space for them to air a podcast at CES with the local librarian.

Many of the children from Clayton go to the borough's public library after school. The two buildings face each other, back to back, with only a chain-link fence separating their relatively small parking lots. On a number of occasions, I walked with the large group of students around the fence to the library after school. Most often, this happened as the result of a student's request to talk with me while trying to avoid being late for the library's after school program. I also encountered students at the library while there with my grandmother, who remains on the library's Board of Trustees. As a result of this connection, I already knew the librarian before the book club met at the school.

The book club was started by a fifth grade student at Clayton who took action after realizing she did not like any of the books presented for her age group at another local library. She asked the librarian if he could help her lead a girl's book club and he agreed, resulting in 12-15 girls (mostly from Clayton Elementary, grades 3-6) meeting regularly to read a book called *Where Little Flower Got Her Power* (Griffin, 2015). The book is set during the Civil Rights period in the United States and focuses on an African

American girl who stands up for a friend with a physical disability. Anti-bullying and self-esteem are major themes in the book, and the girls' discussion led to the opportunity to meet the author and participate in a live podcast. The principal and local librarian coming together to make the event happen for the children further demonstrates the community's collective dedication to the students' academic and social success.

The students at Clayton also have a wonderful school library, where each class is scheduled to go once or twice a week to explore and checkout books with one of the district librarians. I sat in on two library sessions with the participants from my study towards the beginning of my data collection phase in an effort to learn more about the routines and practices of library sessions/matriculation. The librarian agreed to allow me to host my book club discussions in the library a few months later. While at the library, students were often introduced to a few genres or books before rotating between checking out books, exploring the stacks, and playing literacy-related games on a set of iPads. While observing this process, I noticed that students mostly chose books based on what was recommended by their classmates/friends. Each time, only 3-4 students in the class chose books the librarian mentioned or had on display.

The principal at Clayton, Principal Hairston, has worked in the district for over a decade and has been the principal at CES since 2010. Over the years, she has strengthened community partnerships and aimed to ensure that families feel like an essential part of the school. Despite her busy schedule, she is usually open to detailed conversations about ways to further improve the school. As mentioned previously, given the size of the district, most children at the school know each other and see each other

outside of school. This became obvious during a discussion of the local park, when a group of students began voluntarily informing me how close everyone in the class lived in relation to it.

Site selection and Participants: School, Classroom, and Student Selection

Principal Hairston and I first met when I was searching for a school to host my Ropes and Reading summer camp. She was actually one of the last principals I asked solely because the school's location was a relatively long distance from my residence at the time. However, I asked anyway because of other aspects of its location (e.g., neighboring the local library where I spent many of my own childhood summers) and because I was hoping to return some of the love and labor that was provided for me by the Clayton community when I was a young girl. The principal approved my program, but other important deadlines had already passed and I was not able to host the camp at Clayton. However, this continued relationship allowed me to suggest the school as a site for my university advisor's project related to elementary children's responses to books about slavery. Surprisingly (and somewhat embarrassingly), I remained unsure if my father and grandfather attended the school until months after the principal and I met. Since there are only two elementary schools in Clayton, I knew most of my family attended one of them, but I was not sure which school.

Although my decision to conduct my research at Clayton began mostly as a form of convenience sampling, it was important to me that Clayton's racial makeup allow me to work with students who fit my research topic. Regarding books African American children like, show passionate interest in, and enjoy, much of the emphasis is on African

American students living in U.S. cities, as the literature review in Chapter 3 demonstrates. In some ways, I wished to break from this tradition, but I needed the research site to be within an hour of where I lived and worked. I also recognized that in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, schools are highly segregated, and it would be better to have a high number of students to invite to participate in my study as opposed to a low number if I wanted to have a relatively sufficient sample size and consider intraracial diversity. Clayton seemed to be the perfect in-between location, as it was not quite urban or suburban; the categorization depends on whom you ask. As discussed earlier in this chapter, while Clayton was easily recognized as "suburban" prior to the 1980s, it has become more of an extension of the city of Philadelphia over time, and some people (including a few members of Clayton's staff) laugh openly at the mere mentioning of the borough as a present-day suburb. The school's border location made it even more appealing to me with regards to my research.

When choosing a class to research more specifically, I asked Principal Hairston to connect me with a teacher of her choosing in grades 3-5. Later, I narrowed the selection to fourth grade (mainly) because it is in the middle of upper elementary school and it is a grade I know well based on my own professional experience. The principal connected me with a fourth grade teacher of her choosing: Ms. Brescia. I believe this decision was based primarily on the fact that Ms. Brescia and I are alumni of the same local teacher education program. Ms. Brescia is a white woman in her late 30s who attended mostly Friends schools (based on Quaker beliefs) in Philadelphia for her own K-12 schooling. This schooling reveals itself in her practices (e.g., having "silent time" after

lunch/recess). She also worked for the American Reading Company for a number of years, which became evident as we began planning to restructure the classroom library together. Before coming to Clayton, Ms. Brescia taught fifth grade at a nearby elementary school for 8-10 years. It was at this school that she met the principal of CES, whom she jokingly said she followed when the invitation was extended to do so. The year I conducted my research was Ms. Brescia's first year at Clayton Elementary School.

Her fourth grade class consisted of 27 students: 16 boys and 11 girls. All of the students identified as Black/African American except for one male student from India. Seven of the students (all raised in the United States) had one or two parents who migrated from Africa. Most of the students in the class knew each other fairly well; some went to the same aftercare programs or community events outside of school. While all of the students supposedly live in the district, some have parents who live in the city of Philadelphia. This became evident in conversations about which parent they spent weekends with and what activities they engaged in over the weekend. References to specific neighborhood streets or places also helped me to understand (upon questioning further) which students traveled back and forth quite frequently between family members in Philadelphia and Clayton. As with many school classrooms in the 21st century, bullying was an issue identified by the teacher and students. The principal planned a series of self-esteem and cultural pride initiatives to deal with the social climate.

The school used the scripted Success For All (SFA) reading curriculum, which required teachers to use specific words, strategies, and texts while teaching. Compared to other subjects, the reading period took up a significant part of the day. While 45 minutes

were designated for either science or social studies and a “special” (e.g., gym, music, art, library) each day, one hour was scheduled for math, “silent time” replaced the short writing block, and more than two hours were dedicated to reading (with approximately 30 minutes involving independent reading and the rest of the time focused on SFA). The SFA period required students to switch classes across the school, which meant some of the fourth graders went to fifth or sixth grade teachers while others went to second, third, or fourth grade teachers. It was the only period in the day where instructional support was given to Ms. Brescia, and sometimes school/district officials walked around her classroom to observe her teaching during this particular block.

When I arrived in January, there was already a small classroom book collection, mostly gathered from books used school-wide. The schools’ books were stored in unused, locked lockers in the hallway and sorted into baskets by level, based on the leveling system of the American Reading Company (100 Book Challenge). This leveling system is discussed more in the next section. Although Ms. Brescia used the 100 Book Challenge leveling system for sorting her classroom library, the school based students’ reading levels primarily on the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) assessment. Word count per minute and comprehension were also tested using online assessments. I sat with one of the fourth grade students while she took the SRI assessment and observed that most, if not all, of the questions consisted of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank sentences that seemed to focus more on vocabulary than general reading ability.

Based on the school assessments when I began my research in January, Ms. Brescia’s class had five students reading on a fourth grade level, twelve students reading

below grade level, and ten students reading above grade level. The boys were scattered among the spectrum, with four reading above grade level, five on grade level, and seven below grade level. However, the girls were interestingly either reading below or above grade level. It was a fairly balanced split, with six girls reading above grade level and five reading below grade level. Table 5.1 highlights the demographics and reported reading levels of the class.

Of the 27 students in the class, four did not return consent/assent forms required to participate in the study. Two students gave their assent, but their parents did not consent to their participation. Additionally, four students agreed to participate in the study, but their parents did not consent to the students being involved in any type of audio recording. This meant they could participate in surveys and book logs, but could not be selected for interviews or participate in the book clubs. Since the interviews and book club discussions were not intended to include the entire class, a lack of consent regarding audio recordings was not significant.

One student, whose family was from India and did not identify as Black/African American was invited to fill out the logs and surveys for the sake of avoiding exclusion, but I did not analyze his responses. This student, along with the two who did not consent and the four who did not return their forms, made up the total seven students who did not participate in the study. Therefore, the participants in my research study represent 74% of their class. Groves et al. (2009) note that researchers disagree as to what constitutes an acceptable response rate, but a response of at least 70% is ideal for avoiding "serious bias" (p. 189).

Table 5.1 Class Demographics

Roster – Girl Students				**Roster – Boy Students**			
Reading Level (based on Grade Level (GL))	**Participation (part.) in the Study**			**Reading Level** (based on Grade Level (GL))	**Participation (part.) in the Study**		
	General part. (Yes/No)	*Specific part. Int./BC*			*General part. (Yes/No)*	*Specific part. Int./BC*	
1. Below GL (1st)	Y		BC	**1.** Below GL (1st)	--N--	---	---
2. Below GL (2nd)*	Y		BC	**2.** Below GL (1st)**	--N--	---	---
3. Below GL (2nd)	Y	I	BC	**3.** Below GL (2nd)	--N--	---	---
4. Below GL (3rd)	Y		BC	**4.** Below GL (2nd)	--N--	---	---
5. Below GL (3rd)	Y	I	BC	**5.** Below GL (3rd)	Y	I	BC
6. Above GL (5th)	--N--	---	---	**6.** Below GL (3rd)*	Y		BC
7. Above GL (5th)	Y		BC	**7.** Below GL (3rd)	Y		
8. Above GL (5th)*	Y		BC	**8.** On GL (4th) *	Y		
9. Above GL (5th)	Y		BC	**9.** On GL (4th)	Y	I	
10. Above GL (6th)	Y	I	BC	**10.** On GL (4th)	Y		BC
11. Above GL (7th)*	Y		BC	**11.** On GL (4th)	Y		
				12. On GL (4th)	--N--	---	---
				13. Above GL (5th)	--N--	---	---
				14. Above GL (5th)*	Y	I	
				15. Above GL (5th)	Y		BC
				16. Above GL (6th)	Y		

*- Students with one or more parent born/raised in an African country
**- Student did not participate because he and his family do not consider themselves to be Black/African American
I- Interview
BC- Book Club

Only one of the girls did not consent to participate. The four students who did not return the assent or consent forms were all boys, and three of the four students were reading below reading level (as Table 5.1 demonstrates). This concerned me at first because I thought the voices of boys who were struggling readers would remain unheard. However, the five boys not participating did not seriously impact the balance I sought in terms of having representation of students reading below, at, and above grade level. Without the five aforementioned boys, there were three boys reading above grade level, four reading on grade level, and three reading below grade level. Similarly, the one girl who chose not to participate helped balance the participant group regarding reading

levels, because five of the remaining girls were reading below grade level and the other five were reading above grade level.

Surveys, questionnaires, and book logs included all participants' responses. However, book club participation was voluntary. After passing around a flyer with information about the club, I announced to the class how the book club would work and what books we would be reading. I also asked students' families to try to contribute half of the book price ($3.00). One parent offered to sponsor any student(s) who could not afford the book but wanted to participate. Based on a student's suggestion and the social behaviors of the class, I split the book club by gender. For the girls' club, every girl in the class returned forms to participate except for the student whose mother did not want her to participate in the research study at all. It was clear the girls were all very excited, and I did not want the one student who could not participate to feel excluded. I also wanted to avoid her having to sit by herself in the lunchroom (school norms require girls and boys to be seated according to grade, class, and gender during the lunch period) simply because her parents did not agree with her desire to participate. As a result, I allowed her to sit in the library with us, where she could eat with the group as long as she did not participate in the group's recorded discussion. While the girls' book club had an unexpectedly high turnout (91%), the boys' book club was more intimate, having only four members (25% of the boys in the class).

Voluntary book club discussions were scheduled towards the end of the month that interviews were conducted because I wanted students who were not selected for interviews to be reminded that I valued all of their voices. I also wanted the students who

continuously asked to work with me to have an opportunity to do so. Conversely, the classroom teacher and I selected interview participants. After months of recording field notes, helping restructure the classroom library, and reviewing reading log circulation records and surveys, I was able to more effectively decide which students would be the most ideal to interview. However, to avoid bias and add a level of credibility, I also asked the teacher for recommendations and approval of the final list. With a few exceptions, we mostly suggested the same students, and confirmed this decision after discussions of our perspective on what each student could offer as an interviewee.

Before discussing each selected interview participant individually, it is important to describe the criteria that guided the decision. After analyzing the first survey, some patterns began to emerge, and I wanted to talk with students who reflected these patterns. For example, a number of students were reading the *Goosebumps* series when I entered the class, including one of the interviewees. In addition to considering survey results, I reviewed my field notes regarding my observations from the first month of my research to see if there were students who I wanted to talk with more about specific comments or ideas. I also considered Schlechty's (1994, 2011) Levels of Student Engagement. The concepts of engagement and enjoyment are not the same but are related, and I wanted to select participants with intention/purpose based on a topic that seemed equally (if not more) connected to literary enjoyment than interest. I considered the levels to be fluid, as the participants did not always match the level where we considered them to be on the scale, but at that time, they were the participants who best fit the various descriptions.

Schlechty (1994) claims there are five levels of student engagement: Engagement, Strategic Compliance, Ritual Compliance, Retreatism, and Rebellion. For each level, I wrote the names of 2-3 participants in Ms. Brescia's class who seemed to fit Schlechty's descriptions. She looked at Schlechty's scale as well and made suggestions for students she thought fit each description. We combined our lists and notes/considerations in a discussion about which students should be selected and found that for the most part, we listed the same students. Two of the students listed had not returned consent/assent forms at the time so they could not participate. Although, I was not aiming to select a student from each reading level, a wide range was represented based on our selections. This was the case even though the reading levels did not correlate directly with the engagement levels (i.e., some might predict that the students who were less engaged were the struggling readers, but that was not necessarily the case).

The first student, at the "engagement level" (high attention and high commitment), is Jade. Jade was reading on a sixth grade level when I met her in January and was considered to be one of the school's highest achievers. It was clear from the beginning of the year that Jade liked to read and did so for her own purposes. She was the first participant to tell me that she really enjoyed the books she was reading from the restructured classroom library. On one occasion, in the midst of reading Philbrick's book, *Freak the Mighty*, she explained to me in passing that she chose the book because her older sister read it when she was in fourth or fifth grade and said it was a good book.

Jade's older sister was in the school's gifted program and her mother was a reading specialist in the district. Jade was often comparing herself to her sister and she

seemed hurt when voluntarily sharing with me that despite her own attempt to be accepted into the gifted program, she believed she was not as smart as her sister. In March, Jade was the first student in the class to donate books from home to the classroom library. While conducting the interview with her, I learned that she actually was a struggling reader in her early elementary years, a history I did not expect. She explained to me that she repeated the first grade, describing it as " a very memorable year," during which her mother worked with her to catch her up to grade level. Jade also loves basketball and is a girl who visibly attempts to be kind to her classmates.

The "strategic compliance" level of engagement (high attention, low commitment) describes students who participate for seemingly extrinsic reasons. Daniel was the student we selected for this level. In January, he was reading at a third grade level. Although he appeared attentive in class, it seemed he did so for the sake of high grades and adult approval. Daniel never quite seemed genuinely interested in the books the class was reading. He often said he loved reading, but I quickly learned that he loved reading books specifically not assigned by the teacher. While Ms. Brescia read aloud to the class, Daniel opened his book and read along, but his facial expressions and group discussions after the read-aloud revealed his potential boredom. Still, it was clear he wanted to succeed in school. He was a student who routinely completed his work and stayed out of trouble.

During the first week of my observation period, Daniel was excited to tell me, "My whole family loves to read!" Similar to Jade, he was also one of the first students to share with me that he was really enjoying a book from the classroom library (Bruel's

book, *Bad Kitty: School Daze*). Daniel interested me because he seemed to read a wide variety of genres and was sometimes caught reading or exchanging books with a friend during the math period. The books he was reading or exchanging under the desks tended to be Manga books (a type of Japanese comic) like *Naruto*. When I asked him to bring in his "favorite books of all time" for the interview, he brought in three fiction chapter books, but when I asked him about the last time he felt "happiest" reading during the interview session, he described reading *X-Men*. His enthusiasm was at its peak during this part of the interview, and it left me wondering if he was a student who already understood that many adults do not consider comics to be real books or literature.

The third student, Shaaron, was selected based on Schlechty's third level of student engagement, "Ritual Compliance" (low attention and low commitment). In January, she was reportedly reading at a second grade level. Shaaron was usually described as a "good" student, but I soon learned that most teachers were referring solely to her behavior when they made this claim. Although she is very intelligent student, she often seemed to do the bare minimum with her schoolwork. The attention she gave the teacher often seemed to be a result of seeking attention or hoping to avoid conflict/trouble. Shaaron's "good girl" reputation allowed her various privileges from a number of staff members. For example, she was the only student in the class who Ms. Brescia allowed to read from a basket higher than the one her reading level assigned. In my field notes, I mention that she strikes me as a girl who is passed along year to year, staying under the radar because of her relatively good behavior.

Shaaron has a relationship with her mother and father, but lives with her grandmother and older sister. Her grandmother is visibly doing the best she can to provide the two girls with academic resources and to steer them away from trouble despite various personal struggles. Shaaron and her sister are part of the large group of students who go to the local library next door (mainly for an after-school program) until their grandmother arrives from work. Though Shaaron claimed to like reading, her attention constantly drifted during the independent reading period. This was especially the case when compared with her attention span during the math period. Over time, it became clearer that Shaaron humbly and quietly excels in math.

The fourth interview participant, Janelle, also claimed to like reading despite her lack of focused attention during the independent reading period. We considered her to be a reader who most closely fit the "Retreatism" level of engagement (no attention and no commitment). Janelle is a student who often completed her homework, but mainly because of her strict father's standards and involvement in his children's schooling. When no one forced her to complete her assignments, Janelle usually chose not to do them. When the teacher read books aloud to the class, Janelle was usually staring past the book while other students followed along with their eyes. Sometimes, during independent reading or shared reading periods, I observed her looking at the ceiling instead of in the direction of the book. Janelle seemed frequently disengaged or withdrawn from the classroom and reading experience.

When asked to provide answers about the book/article the class read or complete a related assignment, Janelle often claimed she could not do it or did not want to do it.

Reading on a third grade level, books did not seem to interest her much. As surveys and the interview later confirmed, she was a student who was more interested in fashion, dance, music, and the entertainment industry. Her mother is a hairstylist, which I believe contributed to Janelle's wonderful sense of creativity. Her father is a frequent volunteer at the school and plays a major role in the school's parent association. Janelle usually earned grades that placed her on honor roll lists regardless of her motivation/passion for reading. On the end-of-year survey, she wrote about how she likes when her mother gives her candy upon reading a book in its entirety. Often, it seemed the act of reading was considered a performance for Janelle, an act to display in order to satisfy minimal requirements and obtain other things she liked or wanted (for this reason, she was also listed as a possible "Strategic Compliance" participant).

Similarly, Janelle's classmate, Brian, also appeared disengaged from the class activities and reading experiences when I arrived in January. Unlike Janelle though, Brian was considered by the teacher to be somewhat of a troublemaker who encouraged his peers to disengage with him. This description aligns closely with the "Rebellion" level of engagement. For example, during my first day observing the class, each table of students was instructed to turn and talk with each other about the chapter they had just read and the conflict so far in the novel. Instead, Brian managed to convince his group to talk about a recent (local) basketball game and a song that came out that week. When the teacher continued reading aloud, Brian leaned back in his chair and looked around at his classmates, laughing whenever his peers' behavior was corrected. If told to do something,

he usually disregarded the warning or defiantly opposed (e.g., when told to stop leaning back in the chair, he stopped momentarily, then leaned back further).

Although Brian seemed to fit the "Rebellion" description many days, he was a very kind and considerate student more generally. It is also important to note that his attitude about reading and school changed throughout the course of the study. Brian struck me as a student who is very intelligent but disapproving of his schooling environment and process. At the time, he was reading on a fourth grade level and seemed to enjoy learning on his own terms. This became more evident during his interview when he discussed the excessive testing environment, as well as the notion of reading in order to prove he knows certain information and therefore has a right to speak and be heard. His relationship with the teacher alternated between good and bad days, but Brian was always excited about the classroom library; he was constantly suggesting books to add and excitedly sharing with me about the books that he was reading.

To ensure a gender-stratified sample, I included a sixth interview participant. Charles was a very unique student. Without knowing anything about his background when I entered the classroom in January, I observed his avid reading behaviors. He was one of the few students allowed to borrow books from the teacher when I arrived, and he was constantly caught reading under his desk. In late February, I observed Charles trying to finish a chapter of Grace Lin's book, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon,* while simultaneously carrying his group's science tub to the back table. We considered him to be part of the "Engagement" level like Jade; he was clearly reading for his own intrinsic purposes.

I soon learned from an instructional assistant that Charles was tested for autism and was assigned a behavioral/therapeutic support staff member to help him with behavioral challenges in his earlier elementary years (up until the current school year). I did find Charles to be slightly awkward socially when observing the students during lunch, but I never would have guessed that he was a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In January, he was reading on a fifth grade reading level and devouring novels (mostly from Roald Dahl). His intense passion for reading was why I included him as an interview participant, but his schooling history made me even more excited to learn more about his thoughts regarding literature and his reading experiences.

Researcher's Role and Ethics

Marshall and Rossman (2011) claim, "In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument. Her presence in the lives of the participants…is fundamental to the methodology" (p. 112). This statement aligns with the BFE domain of personal accountability. As an African American woman, community member, and former educator, I understand my identity may concern some readers with regards to suspicions of researcher bias. However, given BFE's commitment to values and ethical aims, I view my cultural identity and passion more as strengths than limitations. This section discusses my role as a researcher based on the field notes and analytic memos I recorded and collected from January through August of 2016. The notes were coded into nine main themes/categories: curriculum, staff connections, local connections, family connections, context description, role as researcher, conflict, books being read/discussed,

and community. All of the categories except the context description and books being read/discussed will be mentioned in this section.

Staff/Local/Family Connections

When I began my research study, the principal and administrative assistant were the only two staff members who knew my father's family is from Clayton. They did not necessarily know significant details in this regard. Again, at this time, I still did not know many of my family members attended the school when they were children. I avoided referencing my relationship to my grandmother, but because I share her last name, it was always possible for community/school members to know of this connection without my admission. The first week of my study, I was signing in at the office when the principal introduced me to the kindergarten teacher, who grew up in Clayton. The principal asked if she knew my family, based on my grandmother's maiden name. We quickly realized that the teacher's older brother and my older cousin were close childhood friends (who still communicate with each other). This was not a common occurrence while conducting my research. However, it was a significant part of my introduction week because it contributed to the recurring sense of my being both an insider and outsider of the school/local community.

My grandmother is still a board member at the local public library next door to Clayton, a place where I spent a lot of time in the summers when I was a child and where many of the students from the school spend their time after school. The library donated some of their books to my project for this reason, and I often heard about incidents at the library from the perspectives of both participants and family members. When one of the

participants was kicked out of the library after school, for example, other participants told me about what happened the next day at lunch and my family brought up the topic at a dinner event a few weeks later. When the principal invited me to sit in on the local book club's podcast session, there was no need to officially introduce me to the local librarian. He pointed out that I physically resemble my grandmother and we recalled a library event my sister and I attended when he was first hired as librarian.

After the first two weeks, I introduced myself to the students with a handcrafted, poster-size book, which included a brief note about the summers I spent in Clayton. I mentioned how I read at the local library and swam at the local pool because my family was from Clayton. My introduction did not focus on my family connection; this page was one of five. However, I created and shared this information because the students were constantly asking questions about my life and research plan, despite a very brief introduction from the teacher on my first day. When I read the page about the library and local swim club, many of the students' faces lit up in recognition and some called out that they also spend/spent their summers at those two locations. I believe this relative commonality or idea of shared experience positioned me with the participants as a community insider in some ways, despite my age and the fact that I told them I mostly grew up in North Carolina. Instead of describing places and locations to me, participants began using local nicknames to refer to the library, swim club, hospital, take-out restaurant, etc. During lunch and/or after school, some students talked with me about issues that impacted them personally, in addition to issues that the local community was

dealing with more generally. This connection extended beyond Clayton to the city of Philadelphia, where some of them seemed to spend their weekends.

Similarly, my identity as a Philadelphia resident and teacher helped me to connect with many of the staff members as well. I fully understood the pressures of the state and local requirements and what skills were most difficult to work on for fourth grade students. However, I also connected with staff members regarding more personal topics. For example, within the first few weeks, one of the assistants and I realized we lived near each other and were therefore able to discuss commuter routes that avoided the most traffic. She also knew of the school where I taught fourth grade and some of my former colleagues who worked there. These conversations extended into discussions about everything from computers and shopping to life goals, family, and finances. When a member of the maintenance staff found out I worked in a local Philadelphia school a few years ago, she asked me about suggestions for schools in that area to send her daughter to the following year. I also saw some members of the school at the annual African American Children's Book Fair in the city, and brought back a book for the school's librarian. These connections and discussions seemingly quickened the process of mutual understanding and respect in certain ways and contributed to my eventual role as a community member.

Community Role

My primary role was that of a researcher. However, I also volunteered or was asked to participate in the community in a variety of other ways. For the teachers who did not meet me during the five months (mostly grade K-3 lead teachers), I remained a

familiar yet unknown face until the following school year (after my study was completed). For the teachers I encountered every day, however, I was often spoken to as though I was a neutral sounding board. Once they confirmed I was not a district or administrative spy and really was focused on the children and books, they became more comfortable having conversations about their school-related issues and concerns. Some of the teachers talked with me about the school environment, student behavior, administrative processes, testing, and curriculum. Similarly, the principal often shared her own frustrations with me regarding the challenges of her role and certain district policies. I mostly kept the discussions I was a part of to myself (sometimes, I discussed them with a very close friend outside of the school whom I taught with prior to entering graduate school). This further contributed to what I believe was my role as a relatively neutral party.

This role as a neutral sounding board also extended to the students (including but not limited to the participants in my study). They often wanted me to know about the books they liked and did not like. In this way, I viewed my role as that of a researcher, but also a book enthusiast and adult listener. Over time, I became a familiar and seemingly welcomed face for many of the students and staff members. Brief conversations during admissions, lunch, or dismissal led to smiles and hand waving in the halls from support staff and siblings of the students I worked with throughout my time there. I was introduced to the students as a volunteer who was once a teacher, but with a clear division between children and adults (as most schools seem to have), I was often categorized as a teacher. This led to a few instances where I was asked to perform the

duties of a teacher/assistant. For example, when one of the instructional assistants had an emergency and had to leave early, I was asked to fill in for her by walking her student to his bus during dismissal. Similarly, as much as I aimed to avoid being present during Ms. Brescia's absences, I was sometimes unexpectedly and suddenly placed in the position of being the only adult with the students as we waited for Ms. Brescia or the substitute teacher to arrive.

The principal also occasionally viewed me as a teacher or literacy specialist more than a researcher. She often asked me to provide advice or ideas for the staff, and attempted to persuade me to work as a teacher at CES upon the completion of my program. In Ms. Brescia's classroom specifically, I was asked to work with a student who visibly frustrated her. The first few months, I worked with the student at the back table in the classroom for at least one hour each day. In some ways, behavior management became part of my role with regards to this one particular participant. I did not mind because I viewed it as a form of reciprocity for Ms. Brescia, and the student and I did not have clashing personalities. On the contrary, I was very fond of her. After a few weeks of the student talking about me at home, her mother contacted me and discussed how she would like to proceed with my role as a mentor for the student.

Around this time, I was discussing with Ms. Brescia how I could give back to her and the students in her class to show my appreciation for them allowing me to conduct my research there. The library organization, books, and research results would count as forms of reciprocity, but I wanted to ensure I was also engaging in a form of reciprocity that the teacher specifically wanted/valued as well. In addition to working with the

aforementioned student in the afternoon, she suggested an anonymous writing rubric, small group assistance in math, fluency support during independent reading, and individual academic support. The writing rubric and small group assistance in math/science helped me develop a rapport with the participating class without connecting directly to the topic of reading. The fluency support, discussed in Chapter 4 simply involved me listening to students read during the independent reading period.

For the individual academic support, there were five students who were on the border between third and fourth grade reading/math levels. Three of them also struggled with math. Ms. Brescia wanted me to focus on the boys in the group, but I focused on the girls instead because I know how easily well-behaved girls and/or girls of color get lost in our nation's school systems (as evidenced by her encouragement of me to focus my energy on the boys). However, there rarely seemed to be enough time in the day to work with the students. In March, I began tutoring the three girls after school. Since two of them were already selected as interview participants (Shaaron and Janelle), I focused on math tutoring for the first month. This role as tutor provided me with an even deeper involvement in the school community.

For two and a half hours, two days a week after school, I worked with the three students in the library or Ms. Brescia's classroom until the school year ended. In hindsight, it may have been best for me to select two different interview participants once tutoring began. However, the decision not to do so truly provided me with a much more in-depth view and understanding of the reading attitudes, beliefs, practices, and behaviors of African American girls who appear to be reluctant readers and are often ignored as

they quietly fight to survive on various academic and social fronts. As the Story of the Question in Chapter 1 partly describes, it was children like these two students that first led me to my research question many years ago. Therefore, I do not regret the decision, and though I worked to avoid bias with these particular participants, I acknowledge that my role as their tutor is an important note to consider in this regard.

Conflicts with Leveling and Race

As mentioned previously, the school/district uses a scripted reading curriculum and the school organizes its books according to 100 Book Challenge reading baskets and levels. However, this organization is largely left up to the teachers. There was a lot of flexibility in terms of writing and independent reading periods. For this reason, teachers like Ms. Brescia, who utilized the 100 Book Challenge logs, did not set up correlating baskets in her classroom or abide by the typical process of the 100 Book Challenge approach (prior to my arrival). To further illustrate the flexibility level, I was unaware that the school even employed the 100 Book Challenge program until February when the time came to restructure the class library. It was around this time that Ms. Brescia informed me that she worked for 100 Book Challenge's parent company, American Reading Company, at one point in time. As a result, Ms. Brescia insisted that the restructured library should be organized based on the associated colors and levels. This concept was understandable, but it was also difficult for me to accept in some ways.

I began to read about the debate regarding whether students should only be allowed to read books based on their independent reading level. I talked with former and current upper elementary school teachers to consider perspectives beyond my own. One

of my concerns was that students would associate the colors of the baskets with their intelligence level or reading ability, and for those reading below grade level, they might be discouraged as readers. The baskets are essentially color-coded according to grade level (and for younger grades, according to reading levels within that grade). My other concerns were that the system would further limit choice for all of the students and it was a decision based on test scores. In Chapter 1, I explain the desire to distance my research from standardized testing because of its relative lack of efficacy for African American children. For example, I considered there could be a student who scored relatively low on the utilized reading assessment but actually reads on grade level and is only allowed to select books that are actually below his/her ability. Or even if the assessment was accurate, I considered students who may read on a sixth grade level, but enjoy grade level literature. I recognized the leveling of the library would be a serious limitation for my research, so I addressed these concerns respectfully with Ms. Brescia. She decided she wanted to continue with the American Reading Company's method.

Again, her decision was understandable. When I taught fourth grade, I leveled our classroom library and expected students to choose from their assigned baskets/shelves as well. I understand that many literacy scholars and teachers believe in the benefit of students reading at their independent reading levels in school. It is not a practice I oppose. However, my reconsiderations of literacy education throughout graduate school and my new role as a researcher contributed to leveling practices being considered more of a roadblock to finding answers to my primary research inquiry. I also began seeing potential problems with associated leveled library policies. For example,

even if we want students to check out books on their independent reading level, the classroom library may be many students' main access point to children's literature more generally. A teacher may view the class library as a student resource for checking out books solely for in-school independent reading time, but what about students who want to take books home to read with family members? What about peer reading? By limiting the library in this way, we potentially send messages about reading expectations regarding individualism/community and in-school vs. out-of-school practices.

I also worried about issues of power, control, and access in this regard. Telling students they cannot read or select a book is clearly taking away their rights to choose their own reading material (during the rare occasion they arguably should be able to do so). The rest of the school day is full of mandated curriculum and reading, but to tell children to choose from an already adult-selected collection and then limit those choices further seems relatively unjust. Throughout the course of my study, I continued to consider how this practice could be revised in a way that might appease all involved parties, but at the time, I did not have better suggestions to offer. Much like the discussion of genre theory, I agreed organization of some sort was necessary. With that belief in mind, I decided to work within the school's structure regarding book leveling, but it was still a personal struggle I grappled with throughout the course of my research.

Once the decision was made to go forth with the various color baskets, I aimed to include more of a balance of genres across reading levels. Finding books for the lower and higher levels was incredibly difficult due to age appropriateness. Also, having to explain the process to the students was personally challenging. Ms. Brescia stood nearby

as I explained how students were to select books from the classroom library. The students had questions immediately, which I allowed Ms. Brescia to answer. It pained me somewhat to hear the students ask what the colors meant and to witness some of them continue to ask throughout the remainder of the school year if they could finally read a *Goosebumps* book or switch baskets. Ultimately, I knew my role had boundaries and it was Ms. Brescia's classroom, so I did my best to accept her desired method.

Ms. Brescia also expressed her dislike of comics and multimodal visual texts a month after my arrival. Since I help teach classes about the value of visual literacy, this was another conflict of beliefs for us. After explaining what I know about visual literacy and pointing out the ways I was already limiting my research because of the leveled baskets, Ms. Brescia allowed the inclusion of graphic novels and diaries (e.g., *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Dork Diaries*, etc.) into the restructured library collection. However, she informed the students that comics, graphic novels, nonfiction, and contemporary diaries could not be used for their monthly book report. Therefore, students could read them in addition to a book they were reading for their book report, but that would require extra reading on their behalf. Despite this rule, many of the students selected graphic novels, nonfiction, and diaries anyway. One male student in particular, who loved the *Big Nate* series, continuously selected graphic novels and refused to complete his book report at all. Many students also checked out books from the school or local library that they were not allowed to access in the classroom, a finding discussed more in Chapter 6.

Ms. Brescia and I also occasionally disagreed about issues of race. When conducting the Initial Survey, I was surprised to hear a few of the students question

whether they were Black/African American. More specifically, two of the male students initially denied being Black. When I (privately) asked how they would categorize themselves instead, one student said "American" and the other said "Puerto Rican." Acknowledging the social construction of race and the intersectionality of identities, I explained to the first student that I understood and respected his response but wanted him to consider that being American is more related to nationality and can be interconnected with one's race. Upon further investigation with the second student, I found out one of his distant relatives is from Puerto Rico, but his immediate family is understood to be primarily of Black/African descent. After a brief discussion, both students claimed they are Black/African American, but not exclusively. I shared my belief that none of us are "exclusively" anything and the three of us carried on with the day's events.

Though I smiled and fought to control my inner feelings, the discussion shook me for a number of reasons. Coming from such a culturally aware family and knowing how racially proud Clayton's community was when I was a child, it was devastating to hear some of the students trying to deny their race/ethnicity. I cried on the car ride home, thinking about how the world makes being Black/African American an identity marker that some children feel the need to deny, and lamenting that some of the children were walking in the world not knowing a significant part of who they are. Later, I called a friend who taught fourth grade with me in Philadelphia at an Afrocentric charter school, and we discussed the state of education for African American children as well as potential ways for me to move forward.

When I discussed my surprise with Ms. Brescia the following day, she shrugged and explained that sensitive parents have made it so that race cannot be effectively discussed in schools anymore. She further explained that she wanted to send information about a red envelope project home regarding Chinese New Year, but did not do so because of the anticipated response from parents. She added, "We really just don't have time to teach the cultural stuff" (personal communication, February 9, 2016). Her phrasing alone bothered me, but I remained visibly unemotional as I suggested that there should always be time for cultural understanding because cultural identity often serves as a reference point for children. How can we genuinely appreciate others before we appreciate ourselves? We simply did not agree with each other, and in an effort to prevent the discussion from becoming an argument, I did not proceed further with the conversation. However, race continued to be a relevant topic throughout my study.

Personal Considerations

Racial understanding seemed to strengthen my connections with other staff members and participants. My role as an insider in this aspect contributed to instructional assistants and family members of participants talking with me about topics I believe they otherwise would not have. One of the school leaders emphasized "*our* kids" when she spoke with me, and I knew she meant African American children in general and in the borough specifically. Most of the school's support staff was Black/African American, and it seemed there was often a sense of a shared understanding among us as well. Also regarding race, my personal beliefs about Black/African American children having access to Black/African American books played a role in my research as well.

Though I definitely do not force books on children and I believe in the rights of children to read whatever they wish, I believe *access* to literature about one's race, gender, religion, ability, etc. is every child's right as well.

Beyond my racial identity, my position as an Ivy League student impacted my relationship with the principal and staff too, but I do not believe it significantly impacted my research or relationship with the students. The topic was only addressed on a few occasions. The principal and I discussed my role as a student when talking about an unrelated upcoming project and in a conversation about her desire to return to school as well. Ms. Brescia is an alumnus of the same university as me, so our occasional discussions about school during lunch were mostly nostalgic. Twice, when discussing writing with the students, she mentioned that I have to write over one hundred pages (in an effort to convince them that one or two pages of writing is perhaps a less daunting task). However, I did not speak in detail about my life as a student and the participants generally did not seem interested in my enrollment at the University of Pennsylvania.

Outsider Too

Considering Crenshaw's ideas related to intersectionality and CRT's emphasis on anti-essentialism, Delgado and Stefancic (2012) claim, "No person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity… Everyone has potentially conflicting, overlapping identities, loyalties, and allegiances" (p. 9). I have expressed these intersections as much as possible in an attempt to reveal my relationships to the work and my ethical aims. With the understanding that even within groups, there are groups, I acknowledge the ways I was both an insider and outsider (often simultaneously). Although I was an insider with

regards to race and (to an extent) local context, I was also still an outsider. My role as a researcher meant that I was not an official teacher and/or staff member within the context of my research site. While I could talk with staff members and attend school events, there was a level of school community that I was not a part of, simply due to the fact that I was not an employee of the school/district and was not at the school every day of the week building relationships as other community members were.

Also, despite my deep personal and family connections to Clayton, I was mostly raised in the southeastern United States, grew up as part of the southern Black middle class, and attended predominantly White schools most of my life. My socioeconomic privilege occasionally blinds me to the plight and perspectives of my family, friends, and community members who more readily see the injustices people with a lower income deal with each day. Despite my general upbringing, however, I have also survived periods of very serious financial struggle. I believe those experiences, in addition to my experiences teaching and tutoring in Philadelphia, and simply having (and engaging with) more extended family members who are working class, have all helped me to recognize this privilege and be more aware of the ways it limits my understanding. I also believe these factors continue to drive my advocacy for socioeconomic equality and justice, but ultimately, I recognize my general upbringing and socioeconomic status still positioned me as an outsider and continue to limit my worldview in specific ways.

Regarding my theoretical framework, I understand that adults usually hold a position of power when children are involved. Similarly, I recognize that I am not of the same generation as my participants and therefore, do not view the world from the same

generational lens or with the same understanding regarding history/time. Regarding gender, my identity as a woman also made me an outsider with the group of boys who participated in my study. Throughout the process, I attempted to remove my "academic armor" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 113) and allow for the fluidity of my various roles and identities. Some days, this proved to be easier or more difficult than others.

Ethical Considerations

Collins (2000) maintains, "In [BFE], values lie at the heart of the knowledge validation process such that inquiry always has an ethical aim" (p. 267). Throughout Chapters 1 and 5, I have shared how my personal background and experiences led me to this study about African American children's enjoyment of literature. I have also described my connection to the context and the personal conflicts that arose as I conducted my research, as well as the various ways I dealt with the conflicts that occurred. Sometimes it required a reminder of my theoretical framework, a clarifying of boundaries and my role as a researcher, holding my tongue when I wanted to protest, risking the questioning of bias for the sake of reciprocity and service, or learning to be more comfortable with taking a relatively personal approach. Regardless, I aimed to love, protect, and bring more joy to the children participating in my study as much as I could without sacrificing the validity or credibility of my research.

I maintained the safety and privacy of my participants by utilizing pseudonyms and removing certain identifying information. For the same reason, I included audio recordings instead of visual recordings in my research plan. Ultimately, I avoided (as much as possible) participating in schooling processes that I believe harm children, and

I worked to support activities and processes that I believe promote student joy. All of my aims have been connected to increasing student joy and literary enjoyment, and because I agree with the school of thought that argues true objectivity is beyond the human scope, I engaged in peer review, member checking, and various forms of reflexivity. Furthermore, I understand that my research will undoubtedly involve my personal experiences as a lens to understanding my inquiry and reporting my findings (a BFE-aligned belief), and it is for that reason I have attempted to share my personal history, biases, beliefs, and perspectives in significant detail before sharing my research results.

CHAPTER 6: PASSIONATE INTEREST, ENJOYMENT, RESISTANCE

Chapter Overview: This chapter focuses primarily on the data collected and analyzed from the Initial Survey, interviews, and participant observation. However, circulation records and other surveys are mentioned as well. The next chapter focuses specifically on format, genre, and story elements, with more emphasis on the other surveys and a continued emphasis on responses from interview participants. In this chapter, the data is separated into three categories: Passionate Interest, Enjoyment, and Peer Sharing and School Library Circulation as Resistance.

Passionate Interest: Initial Survey Results and Book Requests

When I entered the classroom in January, I observed students reading a variety of books. The most popular series seemed to be Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, R. L. Stine's *Goosebumps*, and Judy Blume's *Fudge* series. It was important to me that the participants have access to books they already liked and those that they may want but not have been able to access at the time. As described in my literature review, Sims Bishop (1983), McNair (2003), and Myers (2014) each point to a common cycle within the children's literature market, which often involves children not being able to read books they may desire because those books are not accessible to them. From the beginning of my time in Ms. Brescia's classroom, I sought to avoid this cycle as much as possible by observing what types of books students were already reading and asking what types of books they liked and wanted to read. A method for exploring this topic involved asking the participants to provide me with insight in the format of a 7-question survey.

One question from the Initial Survey asks participants, "What is the title of your favorite book or series?" As Table 6.1 reveals, most of the participants referenced a series instead of a particular book, demonstrating a potential passionate interest in books that are part of a series. The most commonly referenced series was *Goosebumps* (Stine), which was listed by seven of the 20 participants (slightly more than one third of the sample group). *Big Nate* (Peirce) and *Dork Diaries* (Russell) were mentioned by two participants each, and other series (listed in Table 6.1) mentioned by one participant each include *Amber Brown* (Danzinger), *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Kinney), *Judy Moody* (McDonald), *Nancy Clancy* (O'Connor), and *The Loser List* (Kowitt). Two students listed specific titles of books that are part of a series. Also, three chapter books (*Charlotte's Web* (White), *The Chocolate Touch* (Catling), and *The Lemonade War* (Davies)) were mentioned, in addition to a single picture book written by Vera Williams, entitled *A Chair for My Mother*.

Table 6.1 Favorite Books (Initial Survey)

Title	**Mentioned (Frequency)**	**Genre 1**	**Genre 2**	**Format**	**Series**
Goosebumps	7	Horror	Fantasy	CB	Yes
Big Nate	2	Realistic Fic	Comedy	GN	Yes
Dork Diaries	2	Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D	Yes
Amber Brown	1	Realistic Fic		CB	Yes
Diary of a Wimpy Kid	1	Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D	Yes
Judy Moody	1	Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB	Yes
Nancy Clancy	1	Mystery	Realistic Fic	CB	Yes
The Loser List	1	Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D	Yes
In Business with Mallory	1	Realistic Fic		CB	Yes/No
The Phantom Bully	1	Science Fiction	Media	MM	Yes/No
A Chair for my Mother	1	Realistic Fic		PB	No
Charlotte's Web	1	Fantasy	Animal	CB	No
The Chocolate Touch	1	Fantasy	Myth	CB	No
The Lemonade War	1	Realistic Fic		CB	No
Judy Blume	1	Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB	Yes/No
Roald Dahl	1	Fantasy		CB	No

Most of the books were realistic fiction, which was not surprising, as realistic fiction seems to encompass many other categories and be a prevalent genre in children's literature. However, what was somewhat surprising was that two of the boys listed books with girls as main characters. As mentioned in Chapter 3, there is a common finding in children's literature research that highlights boys' preference for books that have main characters of the same sex. Yet, the *Amber Brown* series and *A Chair for My Mother* were both recommended by boys. Also, it is interesting that two students listed authors instead of books/series. One student, for example, responded, "all books by Roald Dahl." Dahl is a popular author in the fantasy genre of children's literature, and I later found that school library circulation records showed a high number of Dahl's books (as well as Blume's) checked out by participants prior to and upon my arrival.

Fantasy seemed to be a popular genre overall. However, as Charts 6.1 and 6.2 demonstrate, consideration of the way genres overlap is crucial in this regard. The *Goosebumps* series accounted for 70% of the fantasy category, despite its primary genre being horror. Realistic fiction was the most frequently occurring genre of the books participants listed, with fantasy, horror, and comedy being the next most common genres. It is also worth pointing out that none of the books or series that the participants mentioned as their favorite books were nonfiction texts.

Chart 6.1 Frequency of Genre Based on Favorite Books List

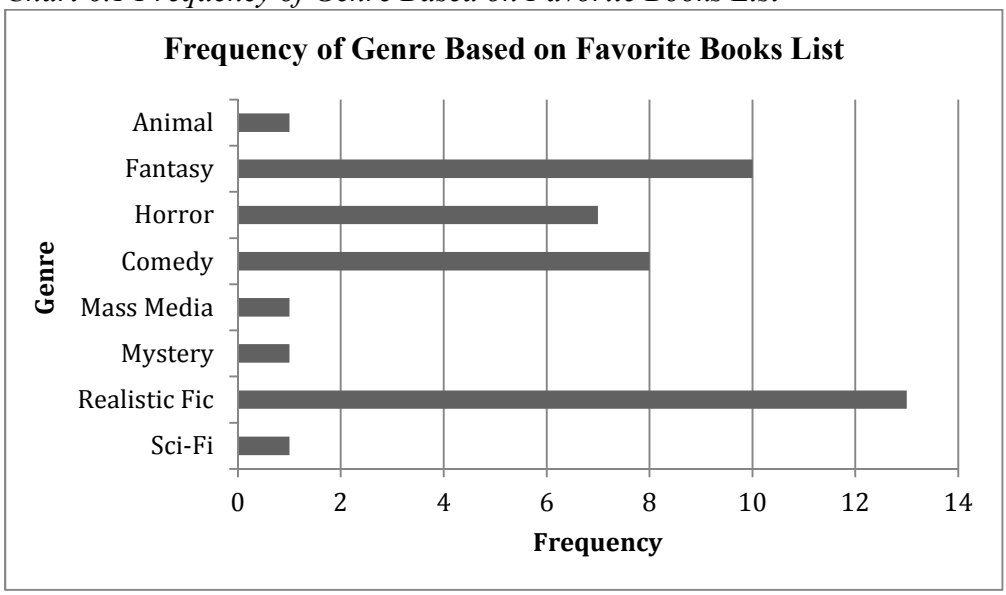
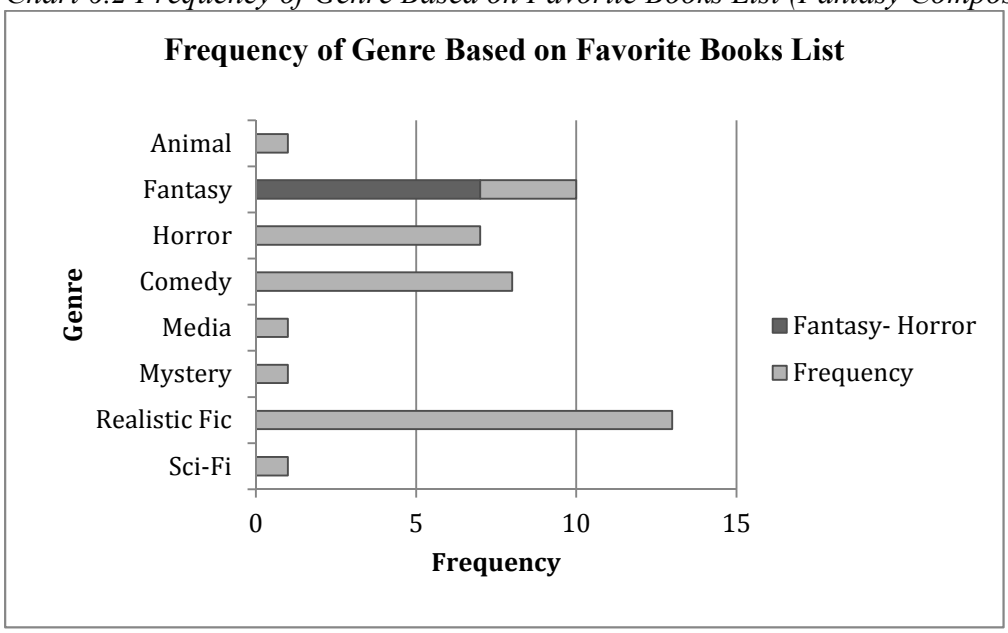


Chart 6.2 Frequency of Genre Based on Favorite Books List (Fantasy Composition)



Regarding the books' formatting, Chart 6.3 reveals that chapter books were most frequently referenced, followed by multimodal books and graphic novels. With one exception, the multimodal books/series were specifically journals/diaries (e.g., Russell's *Dork Diaries* series). The exception was a science fiction and media-related multimodal

book (part of the *Star Wars: Jedi Academy* (Brown) series) with sections that incorporated a graphic novel format. Interestingly, only one participant in the sample group listed a picture book as their favorite book/series.

Chart 6.3 Frequency of Format Based on Favorite Books List

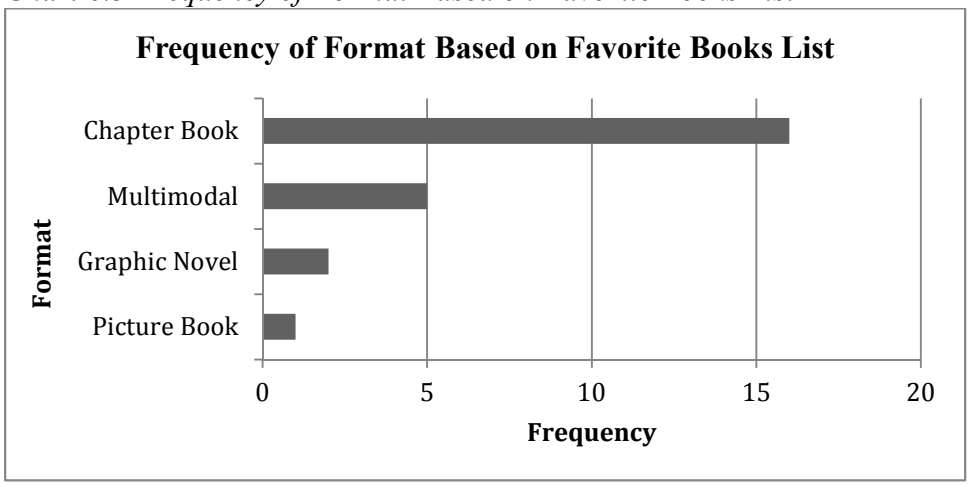
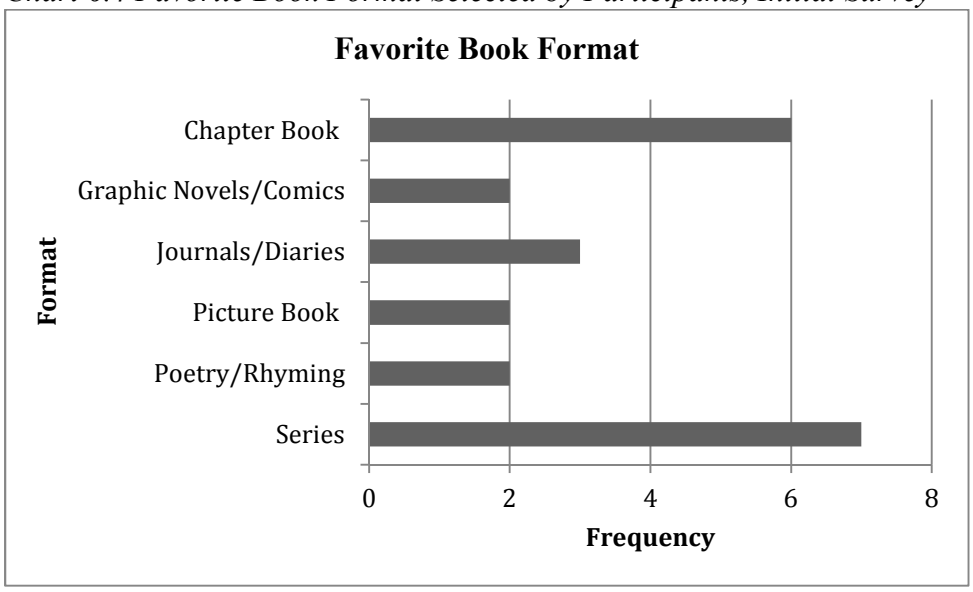


Chart 6.4 Favorite Book Format Selected by Participants, Initial Survey

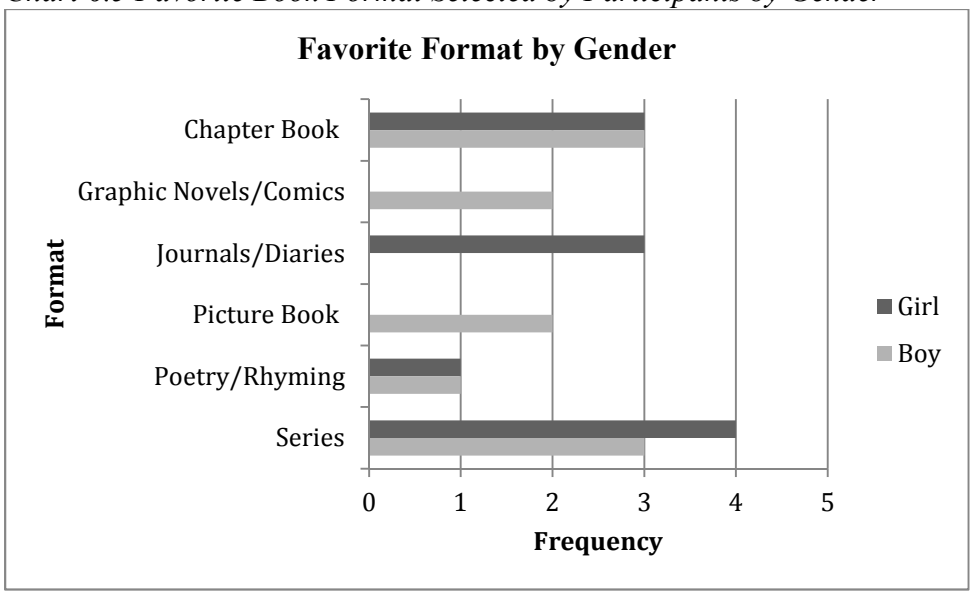


When the survey directly asked about formats participants liked most, responses were similar to the format data in Chart 6.3. However, when given the chance to select series as a format type, series books became the favorite format (Chart 6.4). Chapter

books and journals/diaries were the next most liked format, which is supported by the format of the books listed as participants' favorites in Chart 6.3. The decision to categorize series as a type of format on the Initial Survey was debated, and after the Initial Survey, series books were not coded as a type of format; they were instead given their own category separate from genre and format. This decision was easier when it was my job as the researcher to code the books. For the Initial Survey, I was more concerned about ensuring participants had as many options as possible presented without the list of options becoming overwhelming. Regardless, without series books being included in the format data (Chart 6.4), this passionate interest still aligns with the participants' list of favorite books. Another commonality is the passionate interest in chapter books and journals/diaries more than any other format.

Considerations of gender are important however, as Chart 6.5 demonstrates when compared with Chart 6.4.

Chart 6.5 Favorite Book Format Selected by Participants by Gender



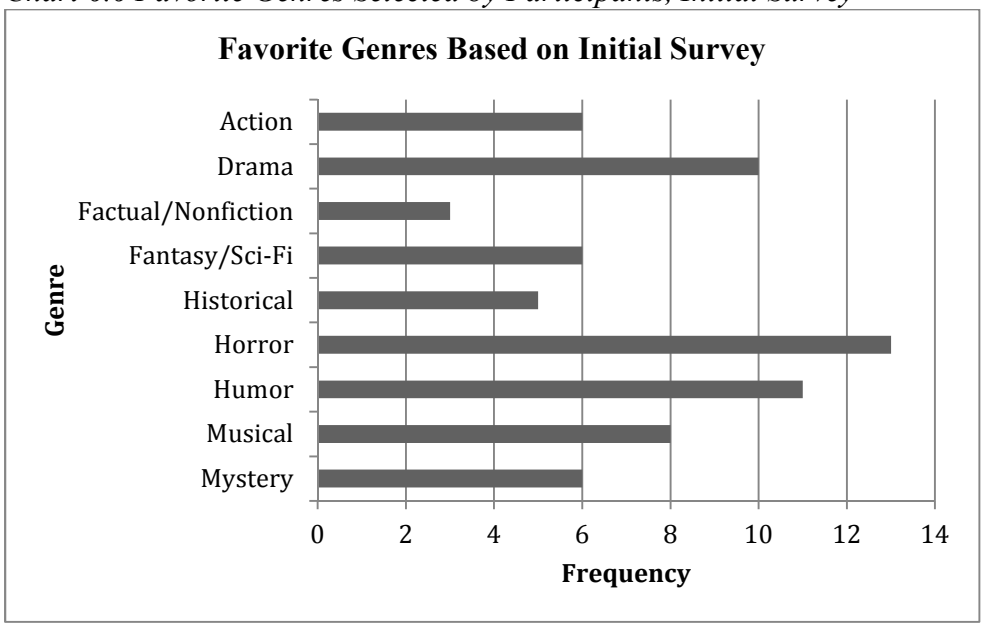
Although series and chapter books are most liked across genders overall, none of the boys reported journals/diaries as their favorite format. This does not mean they do not like this format, but when they were advised to limit this particular response to only one "favorite," they prioritized other formats. Therefore, despite journals/diaries being ranked the third most liked format for the class, I kept in mind that this statistic was largely determined by the responses of a select number of girls in the class. Instead, the boys' affection for graphic novels and picture books tied as the third most liked book formats reported. Interestingly, none of the girls listed either of these categories as their favorite formats.

Regarding genre, participants were asked to circle all of the genres they "really like[d]," instead of only marking one favorite type. My desire to go beyond realistic fiction led me to remove it from the response options (though participants were still invited to write it in, as they were with virtually all survey responses). More specifically, with the exception of the nonfiction and fantasy genres, all of the response options could potentially be present in a realistic fiction book. In this way, many of the categories are both genres and subgenres. Chart 6.6 reveals the most frequently referenced genres/subgenres that participants claimed to like most were horror, comedy, and drama. At least half of the sample group noted one of these three genres as genres they "really like[d]." The fact that a number of students selected drama was interesting, given the removal of realistic fiction.

The next genre most frequently mentioned was the "musical" genre, described as stories that involve singers, dancers, or music (i.e., songs). At the time, I was considering

discussing television, film, and songs with the participants at a future date as part of my research regarding types of stories they liked. Therefore, the musical category seemed more necessary than it did later when I opted not to include studies of stories beyond books. However, I was surprised to see the number of students (40% of the sample group) who demonstrated passionate interest in this type of story.

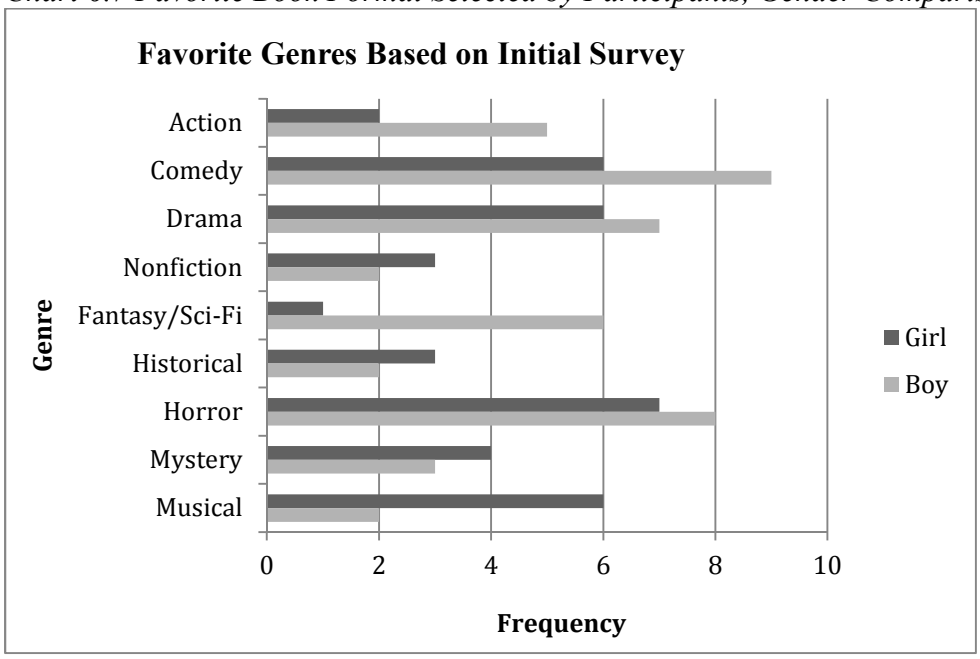
Chart 6.6 Favorite Genres Selected by Participants, Initial Survey



Fantasy, mystery, and action tied for the participants' fifth most liked genre, while science, history, and informational texts were the least referenced. When comparing genres participants claimed to like (Chart 6.6) with genres of the books the participants listed as their favorites (Chart 6.2), comedy and horror are the main commonalities. Most of the titles they listed as their favorite books (Table 6.1) are considered realistic fiction, but they involve comedy as a primary or secondary genre. Only six of the participants claimed to "really like" fantasy or science fiction books, which was interesting given the presence of fantasy and science fiction literature included in the list of favorite books.

However, some students were reading books they did not consider to be fantasy literature (most notably, Stine's *Goosebumps* series). When accounting for gender, some genres were selected at the same rate across genders while others were not. The high frequency of responses related to comedy, horror, and drama represented a fairly equal number of boys and girls. However, as Chart 6.7 reveals, the girls noted liking musical books much more than the boys, and the boys noted liking action and fantasy/sci-fi books much more than the girls.

Chart 6.7 Favorite Book Format Selected by Participants, Gender Comparison



The final consideration when initially surveying participants and restructuring the classroom library was the issue of race/ethnicity in books. Applying a 4-node Likert scale, the survey asked participants two questions: "Do you want to read more books about African American people from the past?" "Do you want to read more books about African American people living today?" As Charts 6.8 and 6.9 demonstrate, there was a considerable passionate interest in reading books about Black/African American people.

More specifically, at least half of the participants responded "Yes!" and only three participants responded "No!" to either question. Approximately 30-40% of the participants' responses were closer to the neutral center of the scale.

Chart 6.8 Black/AA Past Interest

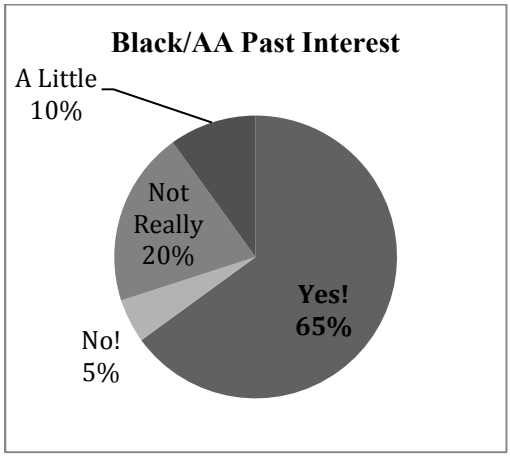
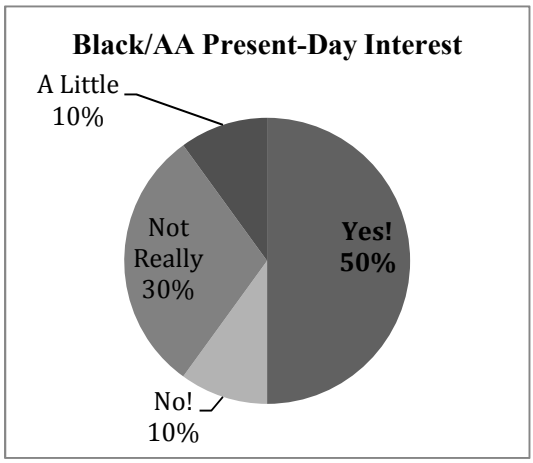


Chart 6.9 Black/AA Present Interest



The participants demonstrated more passionate and general interest in reading books about Black/African American people living in the past than those living in the present, with 75% of the group stating an interest in the former topic compared to 60% stating an interest in the latter. This result was the most surprising at the time. Considering research mentioned in the Literature Review, I expected more of an interest in present-day media or fictional African American characters. However, throughout the course of the study, participants in Ms. Brescia's class continued to show a strong passionate interest in Black/African American people living in the past. This finding is discussed more in Chapter 7.

The data presented throughout this section was utilized when considering ways to restructure the classroom library. As mentioned in Chapter 4, upon my arrival, a select number of students had access to two baskets holding 52 books. Almost all of the books were chapter books, and the most frequent genres were realistic fiction, adventure, mystery, and historical fiction. I restructured the library based on the data from the Initial Survey in an effort to provide a more balanced library collection based on participants' passionate interests (discussed more in Chapter 4). Essentially, the process involved adding more books with certain genres/subgenres and formats in mind: horror, comedy, fantasy, drama, multimodal and graphic novels, and books about Black characters/figures and history/culture, especially from the past.

The Message Box I kept on the back table in the library corner was available for students to make book requests (or leave other notes for me in general). While class norms did not necessarily allow students to walk around the room simply to leave me a

note, students occasionally dropped a message in the box while they were checking out or returning class library books. Throughout my time at the research site, I aimed to provide as many books as I financially could for the students. I took the students' requests seriously, whether they were part of the participant group or not, and that meant adding books to the library after the restructuring process was complete. There were 23 individual requests between February and the last week of school in June (Table 6.2).

As discussed further in the Chapter 7, Table 6.2 highlights the various ways I struggled to keep up with students' passionate interests and requests for horror, biography, series, graphic novels, and multimodal books. Students were reading many of them as soon as they came in, and it was difficult to find books that met certain requests for each basket/level. The teacher did not want *Naruto* in the classroom, but this Japanese manga series (along with *Pokémon*) was still frequently passed around and shared by a group of boys in the class.

Table 6.2 Book Requests

Month Request was Made	**Requested Books/Series**
February	*Goosebumps* (4), *Werewolves* (Monsters Inc.)
March	"scary books," (2) "series"(2), (more) *Bad Kitty*, *Magic Tree House*, (more) *Big Nate* (3), *Who Was Martin Luther King, Jr.?*, (more) *Who Was…* (2)
April	(more) *Who Was…, Naruto*
May	*Dork Diaries*, *Halfway to Perfect* (Dyamonde Daniel series)
June	*Gone Crazy in Alabama*, "a book about Cleopatra"

Other books I was not able to obtain were the requests that were made in late May and early June. *Gone Crazy in Alabama* was requested by a student who was enjoying Williams-Garcia's *One Crazy Summer* trilogy. Her prior passionate interest was likely further ignited by the use of *One Crazy Summer* as the girls' book club selection. The

same student also requested a book about Cleopatra, but it was too late in the year to order the two books she wanted. Overall, what remained clear was students' passionate interest in horror books, biographies, and lengthier (than picture books) illustrated texts.

Enjoyment

"I always get lost in books…except… " –Malcolm

Within two weeks of the classroom library being set up and open for book circulation, Ms. Bresica shared with me that she noticed an immediate change in the students' reading behaviors. She noted that they all seemed much more "engaged" in their books and attributed this to the fact that many of them were reading "on their level." I, too, had observed a slight shift in students' reading behaviors and attitudes, though I felt it was due more to the fact that they had the opportunity to select and read books they demonstrated passionate interest in or requested. During the independent reading period, students who were easily distracted seemed intensely focused on their books. If the door opened, for example, only two or three students looked up compared to previous weeks when it seemed more than half the class did so.

Ms. Brescia was the most pleased about a particular student who was often referred to as a troublemaker by various staff members. She pointed out that she had not seen him show an interest in reading prior to that week, and she was pleasantly surprised that he had already almost finished the book he checked out from the class library. I was glad she was pleased and happy the student was enjoying the book, but much less surprised by his interest given the book he was enjoying. The book (*Big Nate: On a Roll* (Peirce)) was part of a graphic novel series featuring a boy with a reputation similar to the

student's: Nate is a smart boy who is often in trouble at school and much more concerned about his friends, drumming skills, and reputation than he is about his grades. I was not sure how much Ms. Brescia knew about the series, but I was glad both she and the student were pleased with the results. The same student was one of the first to ask if he could switch books before his group's day to do so, and he remained the most loyal *Big Nate* enthusiast throughout the course of the study.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, at the end of each independent reading period, students were invited to mark their 100 Book Challenge logs with a "wave" symbol if they enjoyed their book that period (with enjoyment being based on the class definition referenced in Chapter 2). Of the 20 participants, five of them did not fill out their reading logs in general, three opted not to participate in drawing the wave symbol whether they enjoyed a book or not, five drew the wave symbol next to virtually every log entry, and eight drew the wave symbol on some log sheets but not others. The five students who always drew a wave symbol were a mixed group of boys and girls across reading levels. When Ms. Brescia first mentioned the wave symbol option, 12 of the 13 participating students drew the wave symbol next to almost every log entry.

As time went on however, I noticed some students were marking that they enjoyed a book (as part of the return process utilizing the Book Log Survey) but had not drawn a wave symbol to indicate on their 100 Book Challenge Log. When I asked a table of students about this, some students informed me that they kept forgetting to put the wave symbol when they received a new 100 Book Challenge sheet, but that they were definitely enjoying their books. This response matched what I observed from their 100

Book Challenge logs as five of the eight students did not draw a wave symbol on any 100 Book Challenge papers after March, while the remaining three participants alternated between months with the wave symbol everywhere and months with no symbol at all.

However, students did not forget about this symbol more generally. Many of them used the word "waves" to discuss enjoyment with me throughout the course of the study, and two of them drew the symbol as a response on the Book Log and End-of-Year Surveys. From the months that the majority of the participants did participate in drawing the wave symbol, I learned that students almost always claimed to enjoy the books they were reading. When I asked a small group of students about this one day while they were searching for books from the class library, they each said that they were indeed usually lost in the books they read. The Book Log Survey confirmed this recorded note.

Of the 197 books (not including five that were checked out twice by the same participants) that circulated from the class library during the data collection period, the participant group indicated that they enjoyed 167 (85%) of them. In addition to those 167 books, there were five books that students claimed they both enjoyed and did not enjoy. Two students explained that they believed the amount of time they spent lost in the book was equal to the amount of time they did not. For example, one student described how she did not like the language in a particular *Dear Dumb Diary* (Benton) series as much as she liked other books in the series and so she did not enjoy the book as much as she usually enjoyed books in the series, but she still enjoyed it sometimes. Another student, Diane, checked out a book more than once and claimed she got "lost" in it the second time despite the fact that she did not have the same experience the first time she read it.

Since I did not count the five books read more than once, twice in the class database, her response was coded as "both," an average of the two responses.

Diane, a participant reading on a first grade level, along with another girl participant, Shauna, reading on a seventh grade reading level, accounted for fourteen of the 24 "no" responses combined (as well as three of the five "both" responses). The girls are noted on the class roster as having the lowest and highest reading levels in the class, and both of them have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) document as part of their student records. Regarding Diane specifically, eleven of the "no" responses came from her. I aimed to always be in the vicinity to help her fill out the Book Log Survey if she needed me, as I knew she was a struggling reader and wanted to ensure she was not struggling with or frustrated by the written aspects of the log. She checked out 17 books from the class library (three of them twice), and while there were books she enjoyed, she claimed she did not get lost in most of them.

Trying to find books that Shauna and Diane might enjoy was a constant challenge. For Diane, the struggle was often that she found the topic or characters in the book too "baby"-ish, which was understandable. Many of the books in her basket were concept books and/or were focused on decoding/phonics skills for younger readers. Similarly, Shauna, the student with a gifted IEP, requested more books that were for older readers as well. The problem was that much of the content in the books I considered adding was arguably not age appropriate for Shauna. Eventually, I found that Diane enjoyed (among other books) the *Bad Kitty* series and books illustrated by local Philadelphian, N. Joy. I wondered if her *Bad Kitty* affection was partly due to the fact that she sat near students

who were reading longer multimodal versions of *Bad Kitty*, and perhaps felt more included in a shared reading experience with her peers who were reading at different levels. I also realized that Shauna liked the *Dear Dumb Diary* series more than other books she checked out from the class library. However, the struggle to find books that Shauna and Diane would potentially enjoy was difficult, and I often felt that I was learning about their reading interests too late in comparison to their peers.

Another finding from the Book Log Survey regarding enjoyment was that although students enjoyed 167 of the 197 books, they indicated *liking* 178 of the circulating books. More specifically, eight of the participants indicated liking books they did not enjoy, demonstrating that readers can like a book they do not get lost in or without experiencing other aspects of *flow*. However, this trend did not work in reverse; with the exception of Tasha, the participant who replied "both" regarding the *Dear Dumb Diary* book, participants did not claim to get lost at all in any of the books they did not like. One could argue that this highlights a need for affect to be part of the conceptualization of enjoyment. The results led me to consider whether disliking some aspect of a book/story is what actually disrupts the enjoyment experience, which is not to suggest that it may be the only disruption of literary enjoyment, but that it may be a significant factor. For example, the aforementioned participant, Tasha, who claimed to not like the *Dear Dumb Diary* book as much as other books in the series intentionally circled both "yes" and "no" in her response regarding whether or not she enjoyed the book. The language Tasha did not like could have interrupted her experience of enjoyment at various points throughout the book.

Applying an analogy based on the image (Figure 2.1) presented in the Conceptual Framework section of Chapter 2, I am comparing this theory to if Tasha is floating along in the boat while reading and enjoying her experience: If a weather condition she does not like (e.g., rain or thunder (representing the language in the book)) suddenly presents itself, Tasha may immediately lose her focus. Suddenly, she may become aware of her surroundings beyond the book world she was lost in previously. While the same could happen for a condition she *does* like (e.g., sunshine (representing a character in the book)), the condition she likes may only interrupt her enjoyment for a brief moment (or perhaps further enrich her experience instead), whereas the condition she does not like may prevent her from regaining her sense of enjoyment. Though Tasha may not need the sunshine, for example, to enjoy her boat reading experience, she may require the absence of rain/thunder to fully enjoy her experience. With this understanding in mind, I focused much of my attention in the later stages of my data analysis process on considering the books that were both enjoyed *and* liked by the participants, as it seemed the combination of the two concepts was where joyous reading occurred most.

Two interview participants addressed this presence of positive affect involved in their reading enjoyment experiences. When asked how he interpreted the class definition of enjoyment, for example, Daniel (Interview 2) explained,

> …it's like, if your like, if your teacher was talking about like, maaath or something, and you're busy reading a book. And you're, and like, the teacher calls on you and you don't hear her, because you're busy reading the book that you *really like*.

His emphasis on the phrase *really like* points to the importance of this concept being a part of enjoyment. Similarly, Shaaron explained that outside of the class definition of

enjoyment, she knows she is enjoying a book when she has a particular, somewhat indescribable feeling. She attempted to explain, "I have like, this *feel*innng, and I just feel good" (Interview 4). Again, the words the participants chose to emphasize highlight the affective state's role in their enjoyment experiences.

In a more detailed note about a specific moment of literary enjoyment while reading a book from Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, Jade (Interview 3) described,

> Well, it was on my independent time, of course with the comics, because I just laaauugh— I'm laughing—I was like 'This is really funny; I'm en*joy*ing this.' And I notice that.

Yet again, the participant's tonal emphasis highlights the value of the affective state in the process of enjoying a book. More than the responses regarding feeling, the most common theme from the interview participants' descriptions of enjoyment was the idea of not being able to hear anything, an aspect that four of the six participants mentioned and one that connects to Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) fifth dimension of flow: focused concentration. Charles explained, he knows he is enjoying a book "when something's pretty noisy, [and] I don't really like, *care* about anything. I'll—I'm just *really* focusing on the book" (Interview 6). Charles' description is similar to Daniel's aforementioned explanation of not hearing the teacher because he is "busy" reading the book he likes.

Daniel's previously mentioned statement about reading during the math period also reflects my observation of various students reading under their desks from February through June. According to my field notes, Daniel in particular was reprimanded for reading a *Pokémon* book under his desk during math towards the end of the school year. The same day, I observed him swapping this book with his friend at a nearby table in

exchange for a different book in the same series. However, Daniel was not the only student who engaged in this behavior. My field notes mention seven other observed occurrences of the same behavior (two from other interview participants), and I am certain there were more occurrences that simply were not recorded and/or involved students who were not part of the participant sample.

Each time I witnessed students reading under their desks, I tried to avoid visibly demonstrating that I noticed the behavior, because I did not want the students to think I was necessarily encouraging it. If Ms. Brescia did not notice the student reading, I did not bring it to her attention though. I was most interested in the students who complained about reading during the instructional reading block but were caught reading books like *Naruto* (Kishimoto), *Falling Up* (Silverstein), *Big Nate* (Peirce), and *Julian, Dream Doctor* (Cameron) under their desks. It was less surprising, for example, to see Charles reading under his desk twice in one day the first week we began class library circulation; I had not been in the class two weeks before noting that he seemed to be an avid reader. After all, Charles was the same student who was visibly annoyed in late February when it was merely suggested to him that he put his book (Lin's *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*) down while returning his table's science bin to the back table (instead, he carried the book with him, reading it as he balanced the bin in his other arm).

I was even more curious about the students who were often accused of being disrespectful or who were reading below grade level, and who were interestingly not caught reading under their desks during the instructional reading block despite their complaints about the subject, but specifically elected to read during math and science. I

wondered about their choice of books in those moments. However, there did not seem to be a particular theme that connected the books or students together other than the fact that most of them had illustrations of some kind on virtually every page of the book and none of them were nonfiction. This note regarding format and genre is supported further by the data revealed in later sections, which highlight participants' affection for narrative and longer illustrated texts.

I considered whether the aspect of literary enjoyment privileges fiction over nonfiction, but the books students were caught reading under their desks and the books they most frequently identified as their favorites tended to be fiction texts. This idea is supported by the list of favorite books from the Initial Survey especially, but also by the End-of-Year survey, which asked participants to rank their favorite books of the year. Nonfiction books were certainly liked and enjoyed though, as demonstrated by Daniel, one of the primary science enthusiasts in the class. During his interview, in response to the question of what types of books are easier to get lost in he claimed,

> Maayyybeeee informational… Informational. Cuz you can learn facts about themmm, and all the—and how like, the—they talk about like, Civil War and stuff, that you can learn stuff about what was in the past when you wasn't there.

Despite this claim, Daniel elected to bring in three fiction books for his interview when asked to share about his "favorite" books. Similarly, circulation records and log surveys demonstrate that many of the participants liked and enjoyed nonfiction texts, but when students were asked to bring in or rank their "favorite" books, nonfiction books were less popular. One could argue that this is due to the way schools tend to privilege fiction or

the presence of more fiction than nonfiction books in the class library. However, it seems to me that the main reason is the power of narrative and character connection (Chapter 7).

During the interviews, participants were asked to recall a moment when they were "happiest" reading. The question was separate from questions of enjoyment, but participants still identified aspects of enjoyment in their descriptions, further reinforcing the link between positive affect and enjoyment. All of the books they mentioned were fiction books (*Sugar Plum Ballerinas*, *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*, *The Magic School Bus*, *X-Men*, *The Crossover*). Half of the moments they described took place in school during the independent reading period while the other half took place in students' homes. I also asked, "What kind of environment do you need to get lost in a book?" and despite the fact that three of the participants mentioned happy moments in school, five of the six of them responded to this particular question with descriptions of factors that are less likely to occur in their school.

Four of the participants (three of them, girls) mentioned nature in their response, so I clarified that the question was not necessarily referring to the environment considered in environmental science as much as it was about social environment more broadly. However, the participants confirmed that they understood the question and included social environment aspects in their description but continued to also mention natural surroundings like breeze and sunshine. Janelle, for example, stated, "I think what would help me get lost in a book isssss like a sunny daaayyy, quieeeett… with flowers and birds around" (Interview 5). I wondered if part of the reason they did not mention social aspects was because they envisioned not being around people at all. For example,

Shaaron noted, "I need to be under a *tree*. And in my *own world*. With nobody around me…by myself. Me, myself and I. And that's it" (Interview 4). Similarly, Charles (Interview 6) expressed, "*No* one. I would just sit in a nice, field of grassss, and read."

In a more detailed description of the environment she needs, Jade shared,

> Well, it *definitely does* have to be a little noise level—a secluded place when everybody's, like, quiet, and they're *busy*. And maybeee on a couch sitting somewhere…or just laying in the bed, and like the sun's out, everything's quiiiet, you know… and *all* that. Nature's being their*selves*. Everybody's doing their own thing. But they're not tryna keep asking me, "Hey Jade, I need help with this. Hey, can you do the dishes. You gotta do *that*. You know? Just, everything's taken care of, and that *ahhhh*, I can sit down, and read a book. (Interview 3)

Jade's description includes the natural element of the sun, but also the presence of others around her. However, she notes the requirement that the presence of others not be a distracting or bothersome presence. The people around her are there, but "doing their own thing" outside of her book world, allowing space for the focused attention Csikszentmihalyi (1996) includes in his dimensions of *flow*. Similarly, Daniel described his ideal environment as "Maybe like a *quiet* place, like a library, and no distractions bothering you. And you're like, like, if a friend's like, next to you and [you] just ignore them while you're reading your nice, enjoyable book" (Interview 2). They both describe a space that is quiet, but not necessarily silent, involving people in their presence, but not interrupting their experience of literary enjoyment.

Jade's mention of a bed or couch also points to the desire for comfortable, physical seating. At a different point in the interview, she mentions reading on the bed in her room at night. Similarly, Brian claimed he enjoys reading at home (presumably in his room) in the "darkness." He explained, "All I do is put a little flashlight and I just do 'dat

(motions, demonstrating holding flashlight over book)… Youuu point to the book. Like one of those storytellers" (Interview 1). Similar to Jade and Brian, Charles talks about reading a book in his living room. When combining all six responses, only Daniel mentioned reading inside a building that could potentially be their school. However, he specifically says, "a library" despite the fact that the interview was taking place in the school library. His decision to say "a library" instead of "the library" or "here" points to the likelihood that he was not referring to the school's library space in his response.

Some classes/schools allow students to read outdoors, but in my time at Clayton, I did not witness this if it was happening. Based on some of the participants' responses, there is potential to add to reading enjoyment experiences in this way. Wolk (2008), a leading advocate of joy in schools, notes, "It is delightful for a student to sit under a tree and read" (p. 13). He further suggests, "Fresh air, trees, and a sunny day can do miracles for the human spirit" (Wolk, 2008, p. 12). Humans cannot individually control the weather, but we can find ways for students to enjoy the weather on pleasant days.

It was also interesting that all of the interview responses involved reading independently. It was not surprising when considering their ages, but rather considering the reference to independent reading exclusively. Reading programs like Reading A-Z suggest independent reading is an indicator of students successfully approaching the fluency level of reading development in elementary school (Stages of Development, 2017). As a former fourth grade teacher, I recognize students' overall preference for selecting books themselves and reading them independently. However, I also recall many students enjoying read-aloud experiences as well, and I previously noted in my

field notes that some students continued reading books in a series based on their enjoyment of their former teachers' read-aloud selections. For example, the same week that the library was restructured and made available to the class, I expected a group of boys who had been requesting Stine's *Goosebumps* series to select a *Goosebumps* book immediately. One of the students did, but three of the boys checked out a book that was part of Blume's *Fudge* series instead.

After observing their passionate interest and high level of excitement, I inquired as to what led to their interest in the series and one participant shared that the first book in the series was a read-aloud selection the previous school year. Over the course of the school year, nine of the 20 participants checked out a book from Blume's *Fudge* series from the class or school library. On the Book Log Survey, one student wrote that he liked *Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great* because of the information it included and the fact that it was a "sequel." This observation led me to continue considering the impact of teacher read-aloud experiences and whether it is the book, the people, or the combination of the two that ultimately impacts student enjoyment most. In hindsight, I would have liked to ask the interview participants specifically about this aspect.

At the end of the year, when participants were given a chance to consider books they liked and enjoyed over the course of the school year, I asked what they felt should be included in the definition of enjoyment. Many of them (65%) claimed the class definition of getting lost included all of the ways they would define the term. Six students expressed that they felt the term aligned more with the idea that they enjoy a book "when it feels good or [they] want to share it with other people" (End-Of-Year

Survey, Appendix F). This potential definition was based on students' descriptions of the affective state involved, as well as the observation of the pervasiveness of peer book sharing throughout the course of the study. For example, when I asked Daniel during the interview about the moment he felt happiest reading, he first excitedly described a moment primarily related to sharing about the book he was reading instead. He said,

> Wellll, *I* was reading to my friend about um, *The Magic School Bus*, how they adapt to environment. I was like, "Hey! Did you ever read *The Magic School Bus*, about their environment, and how Ms. Frizzy took 'em to Antarctica to learn about penguins?" (Interview 2)

I was also reminded of my first weeks in the classroom when two students described enjoyment (in a broader sense) by saying, "you want to tell your friends" "and share it with 'em." The fact that almost a third of the students leaned towards the "feels good…want to share" definition potentially points to the communal aspect of literacy.

Five of the students added additional suggestions for the term *enjoyment*. Two aligned with the class definition and were coded as such (e.g., "When you do not notice anything"). One participant mentioned all aspects of the class definition with one exception (discussed more in the Characters section of Chapter 7). Another participant indicated that he believed the definition should be to get lost in a book but added, "Also it means your mind blows up with knowledge." I understood this response to be more of a result of the literary enjoyment process than a necessary part of it. One of the girl participants wrote, "Because it reminds me of what I'm going through" (End-of-Year Survey). This response stood out because it reminded me of an interview participant's claim that "depending on which person is talking about it, I can relate to *some* things, and like, sometimes if I can relate to something, it's enjoyable to *read*" (Interview 3). These

two responses highlight the possibility that it may be easier for some students to get lost in books that connect to their lives and experiences (especially regarding readers of primarily realistic or historical fiction as these two participants were).

Peer Sharing and School Library Circulation as Resistance

"Let us choose our books." –Shauna (End-of-Year Survey)

In some ways, I am glad the class leveling policy existed… mainly because it allowed me to see the various ways students resisted it. This resistance is likely what students across the country/world do when adults limit or force their reading selections. The data presented in Chapter 7 focuses mainly on the books students liked and enjoyed across levels despite the leveling system. However, it is important to consider how this data correlates with other sources (in this case, library circulation records and field notes). I also want to illuminate the role of peer sharing and influence, as well as how the school library records helped me to see what genres of literature students were potentially liking/enjoying that I was unconsciously excluding from the class library and discussions with participants.

As soon as Ms. Brescia and I explained the class library circulation policies in February, many students were disappointed to find out the ways leveling would impact their selection choices. Initially, the series most requested across grade levels was *Goosebumps*, but the class leveling policy meant that only five students could access the series. While some books from the series are marked as matching a third grade reading level at the school and across various websites, most of them are marked as fourth grade reading level books. Ms. Brescia was adamant about series being part of the same basket,

so the *Goosebumps* books were all placed together in the same basket. This was disheartening for many reasons. The Initial Survey demonstrated that many of the participants considered *Goosebumps* to be their favorite series. All five students assigned to the third grade level basket, for example, listed this series on the Initial Survey. Yet, none of them could access it through the class library.

Some students responded to this refusal by checking out the books from the school library or the local library next door. Shaaron was one of the students who did this and chose to bring in a *Goosebumps* book for her interview (Interview 4) when asked to bring in three of her favorite books of all time. Other students, like her friend Janelle, seemed to accept that despite their passionate interest in certain books/series, they would have to find a different book/series to read for the time being. When interviewing Janelle, I asked if she could tell me about the mismatch between her Initial Survey responses (where she claimed to favor horror stories and journals/diaries) and her class library selections (almost entirely realistic fiction at the time I was preparing for our discussion). Janelle explained, "cuz you don't have, I-I think you don't have some thick—some journal, orrr, some journal books, in the ummm—some journal books in *white*" (Interview 5). When originally restructuring the library, I ensured there were journal/diary books, but after becoming aware of the class leveling policy, I had not gone back to confirm that girls across levels would have access to that particular format.

School library circulation records show that Janelle checked out a book from the *Abby Hayes* (Mazer) journal/diary series a few weeks prior to our interview, which I had no knowledge of at the time. I later found out that this was a series frequently checked

out from the school library by the girls in the class, and was surprised none of them mentioned it to me or requested it. I wondered if they thought adding it to the collection would either go against Ms. Brescia's stated format tastes or result in the series being placed in another basket they would not be allowed to access. There seemed to be a personal element to Janelle's statement as well; I sensed she was possibly trying to avoid offending me. Her choice of the words "you don't have" seemed to reflect a belief that the library was mine more than it belonged to the class, which was difficult for me to accept since my goal was always to make the library more theirs than mine. However, since I was the adult she saw restructuring the library and managing library circulation, it was understandable that she viewed it in this way. Trying to make sense of the situation, I soon wrote in my reflexive memo, "After all, a library with books she cannot access can perhaps never truly be hers, right?"

Similarly, another interview participant demonstrated the way levels limited the books I was able to know about students reading. The transcript below also highlights the way students engaged in the behavior of both noticing and disregarding the leveling policy simultaneously.

> **Sherea**: …I see that all of the "Who was…" people you read about are men. Like King Tut, George Washington Carver, Martin Luther King,--
> ---**Brian**: I only read one Harriet Tubman
> **Sherea**: Jackie Robinson, oh! I didn't see that one.
> **Brian**: Oh, no, not fo—not in your collection.
> **Sherea**: Oh! So you read it somewhere else?
> ---
> **Brian**: …yes…. And I saw the cover of *another* Harriet Tubman. The Harriet Tubman that I, that I read, was the Harriet Tubman in the orange group.
> **Sherea**: Ah… oh! Oh, yes, which is *I Am Harriet Tubman*. Got it.
> **Brian**: Yeah, *I Am Harriet Tubman*. I read *that* at somebody else's house.

Brian's statement shows that he not only noticed that the book he read was not available to him, but that he understood this and elected to read it outside of school instead. Similar to Janelle, Brian also referred to the class library collection as mine. This was interesting to me because I do not recall ever referring to the library as "my collection" with the students; I was constantly making myself aware of the language I used in this regard for that exact reason: I wanted the students to feel the library was their collection. Five of the participants acknowledged that I introduced them to a new favorite genre or series, so I was glad to know their assignment of my role as book provider and library keeper was also a positive consideration, at least. However, I struggled with the reality that despite my framework, research design, and best efforts, I was not able to make the library feel more like the participants' own, and I believe the leveling policy played a significant role in that struggle.

Another way students resisted the leveling policy was by sharing books with each other. I noticed this behavior mainly as a participant observer, but also when reviewing their 100 Book Challenge logs. Many of the students had at least 1-2 books that were not listed in their class or school circulation records, but could easily be matched to the circulation records of a tablemate or friend. For example, one of Brian's favorite books of the school year was *The Crossover* (Alexander), a book he read towards the very end of the year when students were allowed to choose from a basket above or below their assigned level. It is a book he talked to me about as soon as he returned it, as well as during his interview (Interview 1). I noticed that Brian was taking longer than usual to read the book, but attributed it to the notion that maybe it was because he was enjoying it

and wanted to indulge in each moment. However, when I saw that his close friend, Malcolm, recorded the book in his 100 Book Challenge log around the same time period (despite no record of checking out the book himself), I immediately considered Brian lent the book to Malcolm. Malcolm later confirmed this notion, but at the time, I did not mention anything to either of the participants.

I handled most cases in the same way, asking about specific books shared towards the end of the school year, because I worried early questioning might stop students from engaging in this behavior. Other books/series I witnessed being shared across levels included *Big Nate* (Peirce), *Goosebumps* (Stine), *Bad Kitty* (Bruel), *Weird and Wonderful: Show-offs* (Whitfield), *Whoopi's Big Book of Manners* (Goldberg), *Minions: The Junior Novel* (Chesterfield), *Star Wars: Jedi Academy* (Brown), *Sassy* (Draper), *Captain Underpants* (Pilkey), *Naruto* (Kishimoto), *Pokémon* (Kusaka and Yamamota), and a handbook about the "Minecraft" video game (unsure of author). Four students across genders and levels were reading a single copy of *Minions*, but other books were usually shared between two people. With the exception of *Goosebumps*, *Minions*, and *Whoopi's Big Book of Manners*, the books being passed around under desks or exchanged during transition periods were books being read and shared mostly by boys in the class.

Some of the books were also multimodal, a format Ms. Brescia mentioned not being fond of, as discussed in Chapter 5. The very book she picked up from a student's desk nearby and held up for the class to see (Pilkey's *The Adventures of Captain Underpants*), in order to further illustrate her point, was the most frequently circulated book by the participants in Ms. Brescia's class from the school library during the school

year I was conducting my study. When I was restructuring the library, Ms. Brescia's grade partner shared with me that she was also against the promotion of books like *Captain Underpants* and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. I wondered what this disapproval meant for all of the students who liked *Captain Underpants*, especially the boys whom the books seemed to be marketed towards and who were enjoying this literature.

In an online article in *The Guardian*, Dav Pilkey (2015), the author of the *Captain Underpants* series, shares a story about the way his early interests in comics clashed with his disapproving second grade teacher's preferences and what it felt like to learn years later that his books were the most frequently banned books two years in a row, even "beating out *Fifty Shades of Grey*" (Pilkey, 2015). Pilkey (2015) remarked, "I understand that people are entitled to their own opinions about books, but it should be just that: a difference of opinion" (para. 8). With the participants at Clayton, I observed that even this difference in opinion, when stated in certain ways from certain adults, can be a form of censorship. Yet despite teacher disapproval, some of the students kept reading books from this series (and *Pokémon* or *Naruto*), often under desks and supposedly outside of school. Charles brought a book from the *Captain Underpants* series in for his interview, claiming it was one of his all-time favorite books because the main character is "very funny" (Interview 6). He chose to talk mostly about the other book he brought in, but I continued to wonder what it might mean to have to downplay or hide books one enjoys in the very place claiming to promote literacy most.

Issues of censorship also occurred regarding a relatively well-known book entitled *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros), which was included but removed from the library

collection after the first few weeks. When I was adding and removing books from the classroom library, I tried to remove many of the more teenage or YA-targeted books with consideration of the population. At the time I encountered Cisneros' book, I added it to the collection with two students in mind. They were responsible, mature for their age, and reading at levels much higher than their peers. I could not remember all of the details of the book, but remembered reading it in my seventh grade English/Language Arts class and noted that the book's assigned reading level on various websites was fifth or sixth grade. The summary did not give away the book's more graphic scenes or dialogues. It was the first book Shauna, the aforementioned student with a gifted IEP, chose and enjoyed. When Ms. Brescia noticed, she asked me to remove the book immediately because "the girl is raped" in it. I removed the book, understanding the potential consequences it could have for Ms. Brescia and mostly agreeing the topics of sex and/or rape are arguably not age appropriate for a fourth grade student to read about without warning or parental consent.

I forgot about the book until Shauna listed it as the best book she read all school year (End-of-Year Survey), which then led me to further consider the issues of censorship and enjoyment. Author Sherman Alexie, whose books for young people are also frequently banned from schools, discusses the problem with adults censoring books for youth. In response to a reporter's article in the *Wall Street Journal*, Alexie (2011) wrote, "Does she believe that a YA novel about murder and rape will somehow shock a teenager whose life has been damaged by murder and rape?" After recalling his own childhood and how he wishes he had books like the one being censored, he explains,

> They wanted to protect me from sex when I had already been raped… I don't write to protect them. It's far too late for that. I write to give them weapons–in the form of words and ideas-that will help them fight their monsters. (Alexie, 2011)

Similarly, in an NPR podcast (Neary, 2014) discussing comments that his books are anti-authoritarian, Pilkey stated,

> I don't consider the books to be anti-authoritarian, but I do think it is important, if you think something is wrong, to question authority — because, you know, there are villains in real life, and they don't always wear black capes and black hats. Sometimes they're dressed like authority figures. And kids need to know that it's important to question them.

Both authors seem to argue that while some adults believe they are protecting children from the authors, the authors believe they are protecting the children from some adults.

While a text that is also taught in high schools may not be considered appropriate for a young girl in upper elementary school, it was noteworthy that Shauna selected *The House on Mango Street* as her favorite book of the year and that Charles selected *Captain Underpants and the Terrifying Return of Tippy Tinkletrousers* as one of his favorite books of all-time. Similarly, Jade brought in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School* to her interview, and Shaaron brought in the *Goosebumps* series she could not access because it was not available for students reading at her level. Policies and bans did not stop many students from reading books they enjoyed or talking about them when asked.

Being able to see what was checked out at the library without Ms. Brescia's permission also helped me to see what genres and formats were missing from the class

library collection. Ms. Brescia noticed some kids were reading the *Martin Bridge* (Scott Kerrin) series and I noticed students reading *Fudge*, *Goosebumps*, and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, but kids were reading many books we did not know they were reading. I was learning about series I had not heard of prior to the study (e.g., *Loser List*, *Abby Hayes*, *Star Wars: Jedi Academy*, *Bamford Monster*) and series I had heard of but knew less about (e.g., *Geronimo Stilton*, *Beast Quest, Molly Moon*). Library records also revealed that students were reading genres I had not considered (e.g., a guide for how to play basketball or draw dragons, a book of songs, pop-up books, and cookbooks).

Six participants (four girls and two boys) checked out a cookbook, and one book in particular was the second most frequently circulated book from the school library by participants in Ms. Brescia's class (Table 7.1, Chapter 7). Upon review of students' school library circulation records I began wondering why I had not seen many of these books being read in the classroom. How could I be recording and observing and not have noticed? After reviewing the 100 Book Challenge logs, I noticed most students in the class were recording books from the class library collection. The same observation was made in my field notes regarding books being read during the independent reading period (other than some of the aforementioned books being read under desks or passed around during transition periods). It became clear that students were mostly taking the school library books home or reading them purely for pleasure, a finding that was too late for me to deeply explore at the time. For this reason, I include a list of the top books and series from both the class and library collections, in an effort to include the books participants

seemed to be reading outside of school in addition to the books they recorded reading or were observed reading in school.

As a final note in this regard, during my visit to the library with the participants I observed that students usually selected books based on their peers' verbal suggestions, or interests in the covers of books their peers were reading. I was reminded of Brian's comments about how he often finds out about new books from his tablemates and friends in the class. First he explained (regarding the *Big Nate* series and the other boys in the class), "they show me a lot of pages, and about how it is, and I be like, 'Oh, I want that, I like that book'" (Interview 1). Later in the interview, Brian also states more generally,

> when I'm looking at my book, I'll look at other people's covers, like I always look at Jade's cover, cuz she sits across me, and I'll be like, 'Oh, that's like a great book. Jade, when you finish with dat, can I hold dat? And I'll give it right back.' (Interview 1)

Jade mentioned that she heard about the first book she selected from the class library (Philbrick's *Freak the Mighty*) from her older sister, and Charles, the student who responded "all books by Roald Dahl" to the question of what his favorite book/series is, similarly acknowledged that he first learned about Dahl's books from his older sister (in sixth grade at Clayton Elementary at the time) (Initial Survey; Interview 6). Based on discussions with the participants, it often seemed that siblings and friends were the primary introduction or influence regarding books students were more willing to search for or consider.

A book frequently seen on some of the girls' 100 Book Challenge Logs, for example, was the book being read by the book club at the local library. However, not all of the girls reading the book in Ms. Brescia's class were in the club. Author R. L. Stine

notes the impact children have on each other in this regard, and fully credits the popularity of Goosebumps to this very behavior. Stine shares,

> [The books] sat there…. And the whole thing happened by word of mouth. It was just kids telling kids… they're in school, they're together, and they talk… Kids told kids. I think that's how the big book crazes started, not by advertising. You can't really force kids to read something they don't want. …Kids telling kids, all over the world. That's the amazing part. (Plante, 2015)

Similarly, it seemed this was mainly how the *Big Nate*, *Dear Dumb Diary*, and *Who Was…* series became popular in the class. Students saw each other reading the books or heard each other talking about the books and wanted to read the books for themselves. Many of the participants did not allow leveling policies, adults' opinions, or individual access to impede their process. Once they knew about a book/series and had a passionate interest in reading it, one student having access to it was often enough for a whole group to access it. They seemed excited to share their enjoyment with each other, confirming that the desire to share the feeling/experience has the potential to be yet another aspect of enjoyment after all.

CHAPTER 7: FORMAT, GENRES, ELEMENTS, AND OTHER ASPECTS

Chapter Overview: This chapter focuses primarily on the formats, genres, and elements participants liked and enjoyed regarding the books they read over the course of the study. Overall findings include the enjoyment of chapter books, multimodal and visual formats, nonfiction science, biographies, horror, comedy, and realistic fiction, as well an affection for books' characters and topic/information. Compared to the previous chapter, more of the data collected and analyzed from the Book Log and End-of-Year Surveys, interviews, and book club discussions is emphasized. The chapter is separated into four categories: Format, Genre, Elements, and Other Aspects of Joyous Reading.

Format

"Well I got The Third Wheel, and once I got *it, I was like up ta' 10* o'clock*!"* –Jade
(talking about enjoying *Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel*)

At the end of the data collection phase, I organized the circulation records and surveys across three different sources (Book Log Survey, library circulation records, End-of-Year Survey) to better examine the most frequently checked out and/or liked books overall. Table 7.1 reveals the books checked out, liked, and enjoyed by the most participants (not including books checked out by the same participant more than once) from the classroom library. Along with the genres referenced in the list, the books' formats stood out to me almost immediately; I recognized that most of them were graphic novels, multimodal journals/diaries, or picture books. The exception included a biography of basketball player LeBron James. However, this book also has illustrations on virtually every page.

Table 7.1 Top Books Checked Out, Liked, and Enjoyed From The Class Library

Book Title	**Author**	**Primary Genres**	**Format**	**Number of Participants**
100 Most Indestructible Things on the Planet	Claybourne, A.	NF- Science	PB	4
Big Nate: In a Class by Himself	Peirce, L.	Realistic Fic, Comedy	GN*	3
Dear Dumb Diary: Let's Pretend This Never…	Benton, J.	Realistic Fic, Comedy	MM J/D*	3
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School	Kinney, J.	Realistic Fic, Comedy	MM J/D*	3
El Deafo	Bell, C.	Fiction, Memoir (Anthropomorph)	GN	3
I Am LeBron James	Norwich, G.	NF- Biography, Living	CB*	3
The History of Video Games	Funk, Joe	NF- General Info, Media	PB	3

*- books that are part of a series

Three of the books that almost made the list because of their higher circulation records, but did not because 1-2 students indicated not enjoying or liking the book included *Dear Dumb Diary: My Pants Are Haunted* (Benton), *Falling Up* (Silverstein),

and *Who Was Michael Jackson?* (Stine). Similar to the books listed in Table 7.1, one book is a multimodal journal/diary, two are part of the biography or comedic realistic fiction genres, and all three involve illustrations on virtually every page. To further illustrate this finding, the books checked out the most by participants from the school library (Table 7.2) over the course of the school year revealed a similar pattern.

The most circulated school library books were also primarily illustrated texts. The only exception in this case was a chapter book that is part of a horror series. Interestingly, a Halloween-themed cookbook was the second most frequently checked out book from the school library by the participants in the study (as mentioned in Chapter 6). Comedic realistic fiction, horror, biographies/memoirs, and nonfiction science proved to be the four most popular genres across data sources, so it was not surprising that these genres were recurring in the lists of participants' most circulated and/or liked and enjoyed books.

Table 7.2 Top Books Checked Out From The School Library

Book Title	**Author**	**Primary Genres**	**Format**	**Number of Participants**
The Adventures of Captain Underpants	Pilkey, D.	Adventure, Fantasy, Comedy	MM*	4
Halloween Sweets and Treats	Owen, R.	NF- Info, Cooking	Collec	3
Froggy's Sleepover	London, J.	Animal Fiction (Anthropomorph)	PB*	3
Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel	Kinney, J.	Realistic Fiction, Comedy	MM J/D*	3
Frankenstein Moved in on the Fourth Floor	Levy, E.	Horror	CB*	3

*- books that are part of a series

Most of the books from both Tables (7.1 and 7.2) are also part of a series, and knowing how popular series books were with the participants, I was curious as to whether

this data would align with the information regarding individual books. Tables 7.3 and 7.4 reveal the top series checked out from the school library as well as the top series liked and enjoyed from the class library. Similarly, the recurring genres and formats were illustrated texts, biographies, nonfiction science, comedic realistic fiction, and horror. With the exception of Blume's *Fudge* series, chapter books or collections without illustrations on every page did not make any of the four lists unless they were horror series. Despite the adult disapproval of multimodal/graphic texts, participants continued to read books in this format.

Table 7.3 Top Series Checked Out From The School Library

Book Title	**Author**	**Primary Genres**	**Format**	**Number of Participants**	**Number of Books**
Diary of a Wimpy Kid	Kinney, J.	Realistic Fiction, Comedy	MM J/D	6	10
Abby Hayes	Mazer, A.	Realistic Fiction, Comedy	MM J/D	5	7
Froggy	London, J.	Animal Fiction (Anthropomorph)	PB	4	16
Geronimo Stilton	Stilton, G.	Animal Fiction (Anthropomorph); Adventure, Hist. Fic	MM/ GN	4	7
Captain Underpants	Pilkey, D.	Adventure, Fantasy, Comedy	MM	4	6

Table 7.4 Top Series Checked Out, Liked, and Enjoyed From The Class Library

Book Title	**Author**	**Primary Genres**	**Format**	**Number of Participants**	**Number of Books**
National Geographic	Various	NF- Info (Science and Biography, Past)	PB	7	8
Who Is/Was…?	Various	NF- Biography	CB	6	13

Goosebumps	Stine, R. L.	Horror	CB	6	10
Big Nate	Peirce, L.	Realistic Fiction, Comedy	GN	4	9
Bad Kitty	Bruel, N.	Animal Fiction (Anthropomorph)	MM	4	6
Scary Stories	Schwartz, A.	Horror	Short St. Collec	4	5
Diary of a Wimpy Kid	Kinney, J.	Realistic Fiction, Comedy	MM J/D	4	3
I am…	Norwich, G.	NF- Biography	CB	4	4
Dear Dumb Diary	Benton, J.	Realistic Fiction, Comedy	MM J/D	3	8
Fudge	Blume, J.	Realistic Fiction, Comedy	CB	3	3
Visual Explorers	n/a	NF- Science	PB	3	3

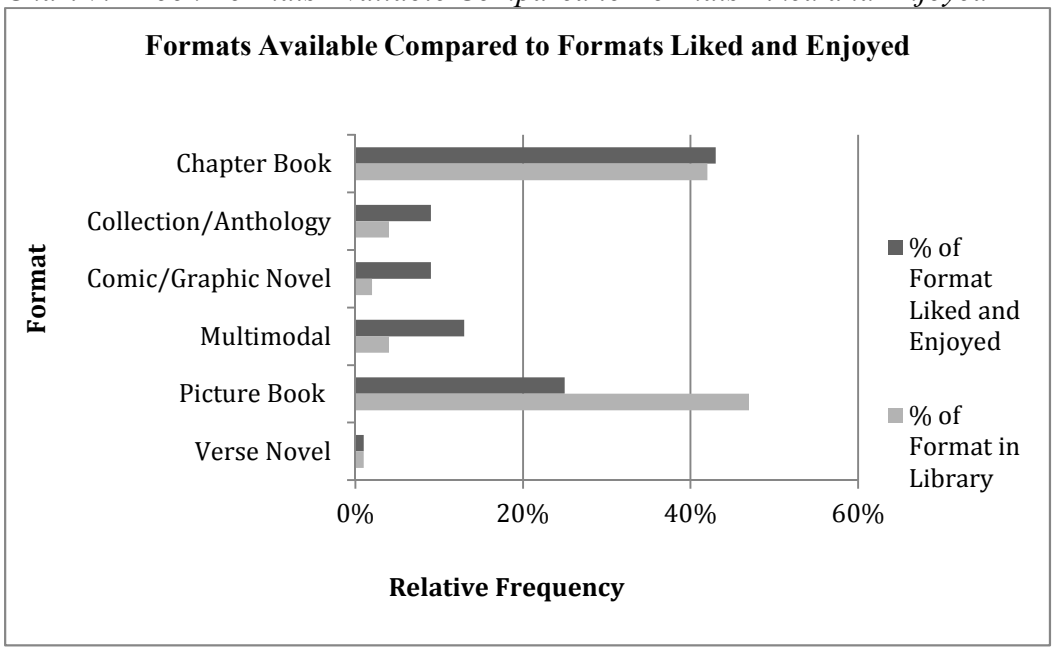
The patterns appear even more significant when considering the contents of the library collections. The class library, for example, only had 20 multimodal books and 12 graphic novels, but more participants indicated liking and enjoying this format at a higher rate than the much larger number of picture books and chapter books. Table 7.5 and Chart 7.1 highlight the consideration of this comparison regarding the class library collection and Book Log Survey.

Table 7.5 Frequency Table, Book Formats Liked & Enjoyed vs. Formats Available

Format	**Books Liked & Enjoyed**		**Books in Class Collection**	
	Frequency	**Relative Frequency**	**Frequency**	**Relative Frequency**
Chapter Book	73	43%	222	42%
Collection/Anthology	15	9%	22	4%
Comic/Graphic Novel	15	9%	12	2%
Multimodal	22	13%	20	4%
Picture Book	43	25%	253	47%
Verse Novel	2	1%	5	1%

Total	*170*	*100%*	*534*	*100%*

Chart 7.1 Book Formats Available Compared to Formats Liked and Enjoyed



Although I do not have the school library's complete database, I observed the general collection students had access to during my time spent in the library and there is no promotion of multimodal or graphic novels. Most books targeted towards the fourth grade students appeared to be general chapter books or novels. It is also worth noting that the library circulation records do not reveal whether participants liked/enjoyed the books listed. However, the library lists contribute to a triangulated view of the data and further confirm the findings from the class Book Log Survey. As Chapter 6 notes, the library records potentially show what students checked out more freely, making the alignment of the findings more meaningful.

Conversely, although one or two picture books were listed in each table (Tables 7.1-7.4), participants demonstrated a clear interest in chapter books and/or longer texts. Other than the *Froggy* (London) and *Black Lagoon* (Thaler) series, most picture books

were nonfiction. Also, the same two participants accounted for almost all of the *Froggy* series circulation. Despite my attempts to provide a better balance or inclusion of the types of books that students claimed to like on the Initial Survey, the class library collection included more picture books (253) than chapter books (222). Yet, participants checked out and indicated liking and enjoying more chapter books than picture books. However, it is again important to note that many of most frequently circulated, liked, and enjoyed chapter books were basically chapter book versions of illustrated texts, with illustrations on virtually every page. Also, what seemingly remains most significant is the participants' clear affection for multimodal texts (mostly journals/diaries) and graphic novels. It seemed the library could not keep up with students' affection for these formats.

During her interview, Jade (Interview 3) described part of the appeal of the multimodal journal/diary format from her perspective, and compares Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* to Blume's *Fudge* series.

> **Jade:** well I've always liked um, Jeff Kinney's, you know, *style* of writing. And, um, it also reminds me of Judy Blume, which I read he gets his style from that so, that's why it's related and, I feel like, if you read it, you know, it's like *waves*. It makes me very interested in it. And sometimes fun, to read, in my off time.
> **Sherea:** Okay, two questions about that: What do *you* mean by there are like, waves?
> **Jade:** Well, it actually draws me into the book, and I'm able to pay attention. It's not like, "Oh, I'm reading this, I wanna do something else."
> **Sherea:** Mmhm. Waves like what we put on the reading log—
> ---**Jade:** Yes
> **Sherea:** --to say we enjoy a book? Okay, and then my second question is: You said you read that he got his style from Judy Blume?
> **Jade:** Yes, which is one of the books that I said I enjoyed as well, and I've been reading her series. And I've noticed they are *similar*.
> **Sherea:** Uh-huh. Do you read that at home? Cuz—
> ---**Jade:** Yes, I have the whole collection…

Jade's connection between authors reminded me of Pilkey's (2015) claim that his multimodal books often lead children who are considered to be struggling readers in their younger years to read other literature that is often taken more seriously in classrooms. I did not know until our interview discussion that Jade was once a struggling reader herself. She shared,

> **Jade:** Well, this is kinda gunna be funny, but like in the past, I used to read read-aloud books with my mom when she'd help me cuz, actually before, in first grade—it is a very memorable year, cuz I took it two times, and it was cuz I had struggled *reading*. So, I—she always used to work with me, and that's why, now I'm a*bove* the reading level. Cuz she worked with me *so* much. So those *Mommy and Me* books I used to read, you know, are kind of in a *memoir* in my mind, about what we used to read together that helped me progress in my reading level.
> **Sherea:** Wow. Jade, thanks for shar—I never knew that about you. So I appreciate you sharing that.
> **Jade:** Yeah. They're similar to *The Case of Stripes*, but now, I've gained to learn how to pick out books *I* like, and so far I like comic books and, sorta realistic fiction I guess. It's *fun* to see in real life how things happen.

I believe Jade's story helped me to understand her better from a different perspective. Jade was one of the top readers in her class and school, but not because the journey there was easy. Knowing this about Jade provided me with a much deeper respect and admiration for her as a person and student. Also, her school library book selections (mainly picture books from the aforementioned *Froggy* and *Black Lagoon* series) began to have more meaning. Some of the picture books geared towards younger grades seemed to remind Jade of a "memorable" time in her life, a struggle that led to victory through the work and loving bond between her and her mother.

Jade was reading at a sixth grade level when I first met her in January, the highest reading level of the participants I interviewed. Although she read a relatively large amount of realistic fiction, many of the books were specifically multimodal or

comics/graphic novels. The leveled baskets prevented her from reading many of the *Big Nate* graphic novels, but as soon as she was allowed to read from any basket at the end of the year, that was the series she chose. She also liked and enjoyed two comic collections (both *Fox Trot* (Amend)) from the class library. When asked to bring in her favorite books of all-time, she was one of two interview participants to bring in solely illustrated texts (*Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School*, *Big Nate: Makes a Splash*, and *The Case of the Stripes*).

Interestingly, the participants considered to be struggling readers were the participants who brought in more traditional chapter books, while the participants identified as being more advanced readers brought in strictly illustrated texts. For example, Daniel, a participant who was considered to be reading on a third grade level, brought in three fiction chapter books. The three selections highlighted his affection for animals and science fiction, and I believe they were indeed his three favorite chapter books. However, when I asked him to recall the last time he was happiest reading, his eyes lit up and he talked more than he talked (responding to any other question) throughout the entire interview when he described reading an *X-Men* comic. The transcript excerpts below (Interview 2) highlight this difference (the first book he describes is *The Magic School Bus #8: Penguin Puzzle* (Bauer)).

> **Transcript Excerpt 1:**
> **Sherea:** What makes this book one of your favorite books? Why do you rank [*Penguin Puzzle*] even above the other 2 in your hand?
> **Daniel:** Well, because I really like animals and that, and my *favorite* one is a penguin. Cuz I wonder how they can survive in Antarctica. So that was surprising for me. So that's why I picked, um, Penguins.
>
> **Transcript Excerpt 2:**

> **Sherea:** When do you feel happiest reading? … Like, just the last time you were really happy reading a book?
> **Daniel:** Well, I was reading, um, *X-Men* and I really like their Avengers how, they—the *old* Avengers got stuck in the—like this big blob of monster, and they, the monster ate 'em whole, so the—this guy had'a make a *new* team of Avengers. It was *X-Men*, this girl that fires lasers, and um, this guy who fires lasers through his eyes. And that's the time when I actually enjoyed it. And then the guy was, um, saying, (imitating) "oh, you did an excellent job saving the old Avengers. You could probably be one of the new Avengers one day."

Reviewing the transcript, it became clearer to me that Daniel, a student often passing around *Naruto* (Kishimoto) books with his friends, may have believed comics were not an acceptable format to bring to the interview.

Despite the disapproval of comics, graphic novels, and multimodal texts, Jade and Charles brought in books from the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, *Big Nate*, and *Captain Underpants* series. Both participants described the main characters as "funny" (Interviews 3 and 6). Jade explained further, "his antics make me laugh, which is another thing I liked about comics" (Interview 3). The humor and characters present in many multimodal texts, comics, and graphic novels are discussed again in later sections regarding genre and book elements. However, with humor being a common theme across all of the research data, it is important to note that this popular format among the participants in Ms. Brescia's class is often liked and enjoyed for this reason; participants found the characters and their actions humorous.

Most of the collections liked and enjoyed were either horror short story collections (e.g., Schwartz's *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark*) or poetry (e.g., Greenfield's *Honey, I Love and Other Poems*, Silverstein's *Falling Up*). Regarding the former, the general data hints that the genre was likely the reason for the books'

popularity rather than the books' format. There were other short story collections in the library collection, but the only other genre represented of the short story collections participants liked and enjoyed was a comedic nonfiction collection (Zullo's *World's Dumbest Crooks*). There were fairytale or folktale short story collections/anthologies, for example, but the participants did not check them out. One general collection that was checked out, liked, and enjoyed, but not attributed to the horror or poetry genres was Smith's collection, *28 Days: Moments in Black History that Changed the World*.

Considerations of genre are also important when looking at the types of poetry collections participants liked and enjoyed. Although there were poetry collections about animals or adjusting to school for example, three of the five poetry collections participants selected and indicated liking and enjoying were Shel Silverstein's *Falling Up* or *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, involving poems that tend to have a silly or humorous tone. Two more participants, not included in the aforementioned five poetry collections counted, also liked *Falling Up*, but indicated not enjoying every poem and thus circled "no" regarding enjoyment on the Book Log Survey. Overall, combined with the two other poetry collections liked and enjoyed (Cannon's *Neon Aliens Ate My Homework: And Other Poems* and Greenfield's *Honey I Love and Other Love Poems*), the poetry collections participants indicating liking and enjoying align with the group's overall passionate interest and affection for realistic fiction, comedy, fantasy, and science fiction (Initial Survey).

When accounting for gender, boys liked graphic novels more than the girls and girls liked journals/diaries more than the boys. However, this finding was somewhat

questionable due to the leveling of texts. The class leveling system prevented more than half of the boys from reading journals/diaries and more than half of the girls from reading graphic novels. More specifically, all of the journal/diary books were available only to students reading above grade level. Most of the graphic novels were part of the same series and/or in the third and fourth grade reading level baskets. The two graphic novels in the third grade level basket both had female animals as the main character, and each of the three girls able to select books from that particular basket read and indicated liking one of the two books, while only one of the three boys assigned to that basket read one of those two books. Therefore, it seems unfair to conclude that the boys simply like more graphic novels than girls, since much of it was determined by what was available to the participants. For example, a popular journal/diary series that I was less aware of at the time (Kowitt's *The Loser List*) was not available to students, and it is difficult to determine if the presence of this book would increase the number of boys who liked journals/diaries.

Another consideration in this regard is that library circulation records show some participants in the class had already read many of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* books prior to the class library being restructured, which could also have impacted gender results. However, the finding does reflect passionate interest data from the Initial Survey, which demonstrated more boys than girls desiring comics/graphic novels and more girls than boys desiring journals/diaries. As a result, this finding regarding gender may require more exploration, but certainly appears to be valid based on the limited data available. It remains clear though, that across genders, participants demonstrated a shared affection

for multimodal books as well as graphic novels and comics; with two exceptions, all of the books in these three formats read by participants were liked and enjoyed.

Leveling also impacted the results regarding gender with regards to the data revealing more of a balance for girls regarding the number of picture books (30) and chapter books (37) liked and enjoyed when compared to the boys (who liked and enjoyed 36 chapter books compared to only 13 picture books). This result can potentially be explained by the fact that there were two more girl participants reading below grade level than boy participants. More specifically, the only students reading below a third grade level in the participant group were girls whose baskets included mostly (if not solely) picture books. This demographic detail also explains why the only concept books (picture books with the primary purpose of teaching a concept, in this case: time, counting, opposites, and homophones) that were liked and enjoyed by participants were by girls from this group.

There was also a demonstrated affection for series books. Considering that there were 215 series/trilogy books in the class library (40% of the class collection), the students checked out and indicated liking 116 books that were part of a series/trilogy. That total is more than half (67.4%) of the 172 books students liked. The genres presented were important to consider as well (and this aspect is discussed further in the next section), but it seemed that across genres, there was a shared commonality of illustrated texts. I often wondered whether the format influenced participants' affection and enjoyment of the genre more or the genre influenced the format more. As discussed previously, many of the books ranked highest on the most frequently circulated, liked,

and enjoyed booklists were biographies, nonfiction science, comedic realistic fiction, and horror stories. With the exception of horror chapter books and short story collections, many of those books had illustrations on virtually every page.

Genre

"…it's like a kind *of a realistic book but then it's not.."*-Janelle

As noted in the Theoretical Framework of Chapter 2, it was difficult to determine the various genres and how they would be represented throughout the course of my research. In this section, I first describe the results of the Book Log Survey in terms of all major genres and subgenres I initially coded and labeled during the data analysis process. However, the section primarily focuses on the most liked and enjoyed genres within what I considered to be the three main branches of literature during my final coding process: Nonfiction, Fantasy, and Realistic Fiction. Within those branches, the most popular subgenres were nonfiction science, biographies, horror, and comedy.

Upon analysis of the 172 books participants indicated liking and enjoying from the classroom library, genres/subgenres with the overall seven highest frequencies were realistic fiction (62 books), comedy (48 books), fantasy (36 books (excluding anthropomorphism)), biography/memoir (23 books), horror (21 books), animals in fiction (20 books), and nonfiction science (17 books)(Chart 7.2). However, when considering the percentages of each genre in the overall library collection (Chart 7.3), frequencies prove to be a bit misleading. Nonfiction science and animals in fiction appear to be more popular genres until they are compared with the percentages of those books in the collection. When we consider those percentages, genres such as horror and

biography/memoir become more emphasized, and nonfiction science and animals in fiction seem less important. More specifically, although these two genres were included more than any other genre in the library besides realistic fiction and fantasy, the percentages of books liked and enjoyed by the participants in those two genres were lower than genres with fewer books available, such as horror and comedy.

Chart 7.2 Genres Liked and Enjoyed by Frequency, Book Log Survey

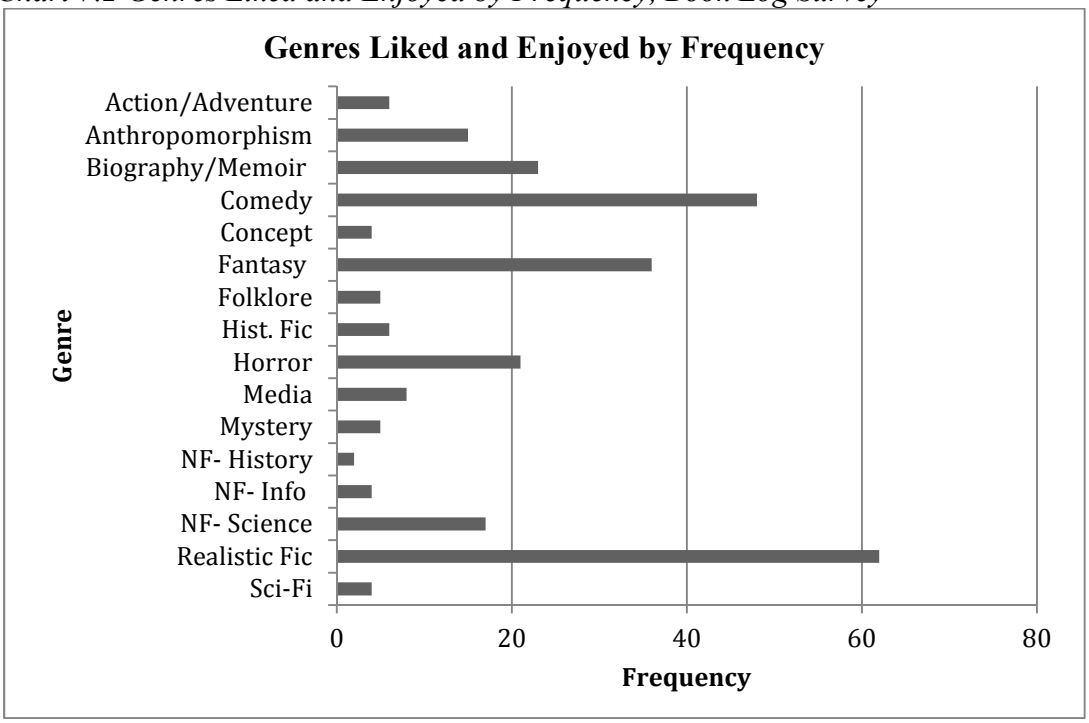
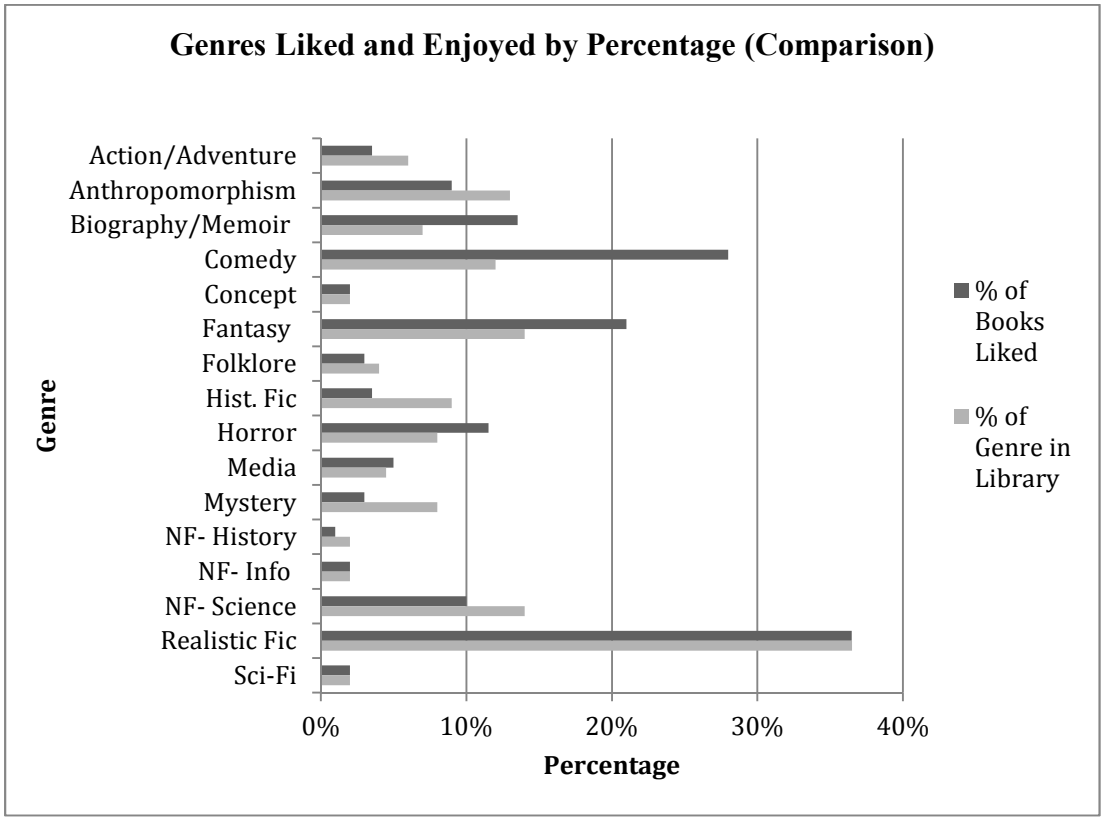


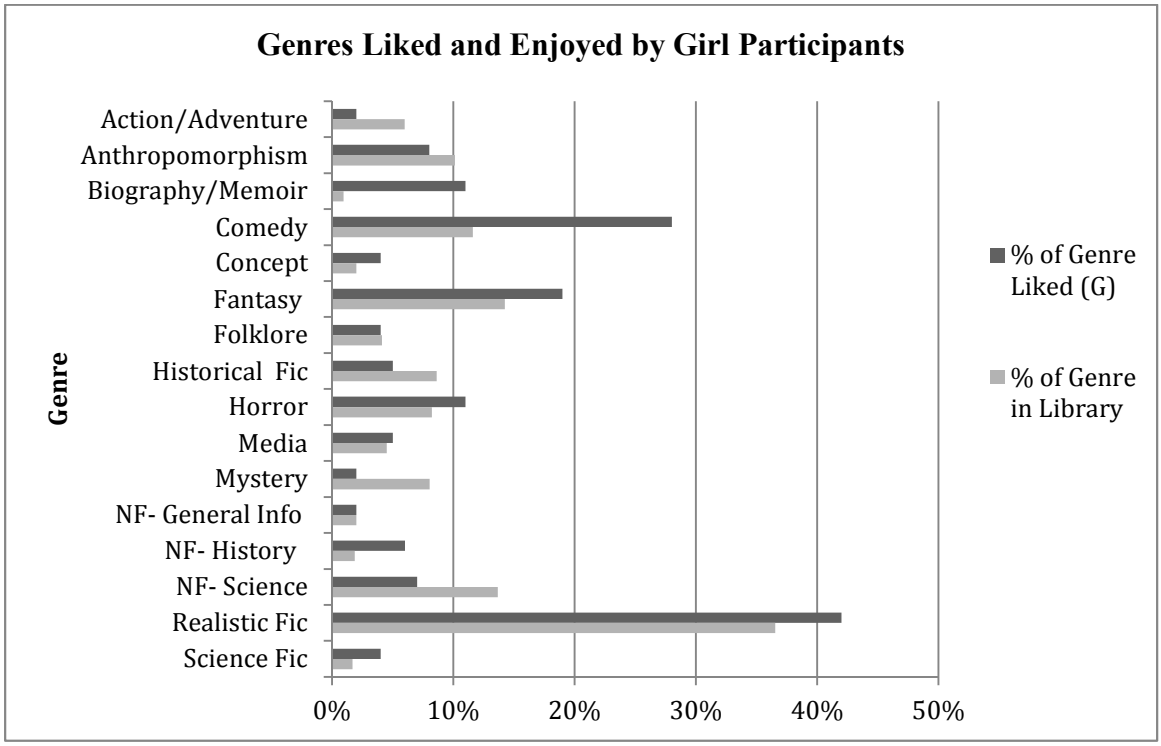
Chart 7.3 Genres Liked and Enjoyed by Percentage (Comparison), Book Log Survey



Another example involves comparing percentages of horror, historical fiction, and mystery books. They represented approximately the same number of books in the collection, but the books liked and enjoyed by participants show much more affection for and enjoyment of horror than the other two genres.

Overall, the two genres/subgenres that were liked and enjoyed most were realistic fiction and comedy, which is evident from looking at data from both perspectives. With consideration of the girls, more specifically, Chart 7.4 reveals an affection for or enjoyment of realistic fiction, comedy, fantasy, biography/memoir, and horror more than any other genre or subgenre. This finding is consistent with the overall sample group findings.

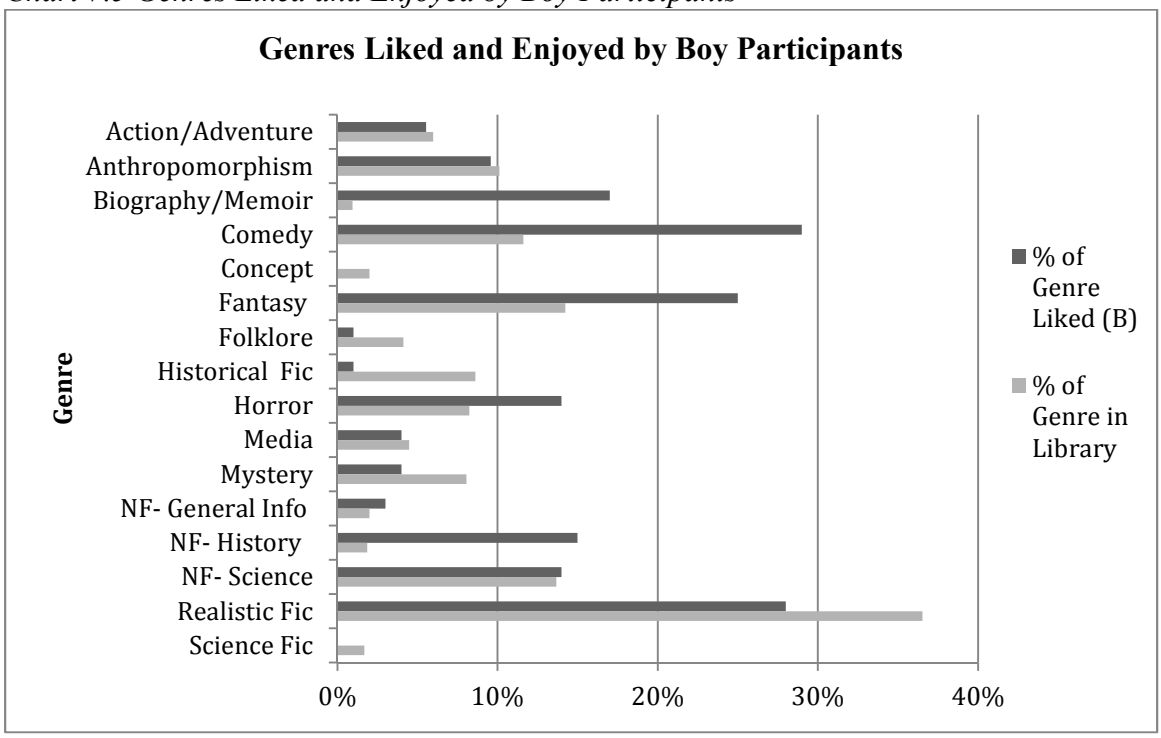
Chart 7.4 Genres Liked and Enjoyed by Girl Participants



Of the genres/subgenres with the fewest titles (less than 10% of the class collection), the girls liked and enjoyed books across categories. However, considering what was availble to them, science fiction, concept, and media books seem like categories worth exploring more in the future. It is important to note that most of the fantasy books were horror, all but one of the nonfiction history books was a biography/memoir, and all four science fiction books were part of *The Magic School Bus* (Cole) series.

With specific consideration of the boy participants, Chart 7.5 reveals an affection for or enjoyment of comedy, realistic fiction, fantasy, biography/memoir, nonfiction history and science, and horror more than any other genre or subgenre. This finding is also consistent with the overall sample group findings. However, most notably, the boys have a higher percentage regarding the nonfiction and fantasy genres and a lower percentage regarding the realistic fiction genre.

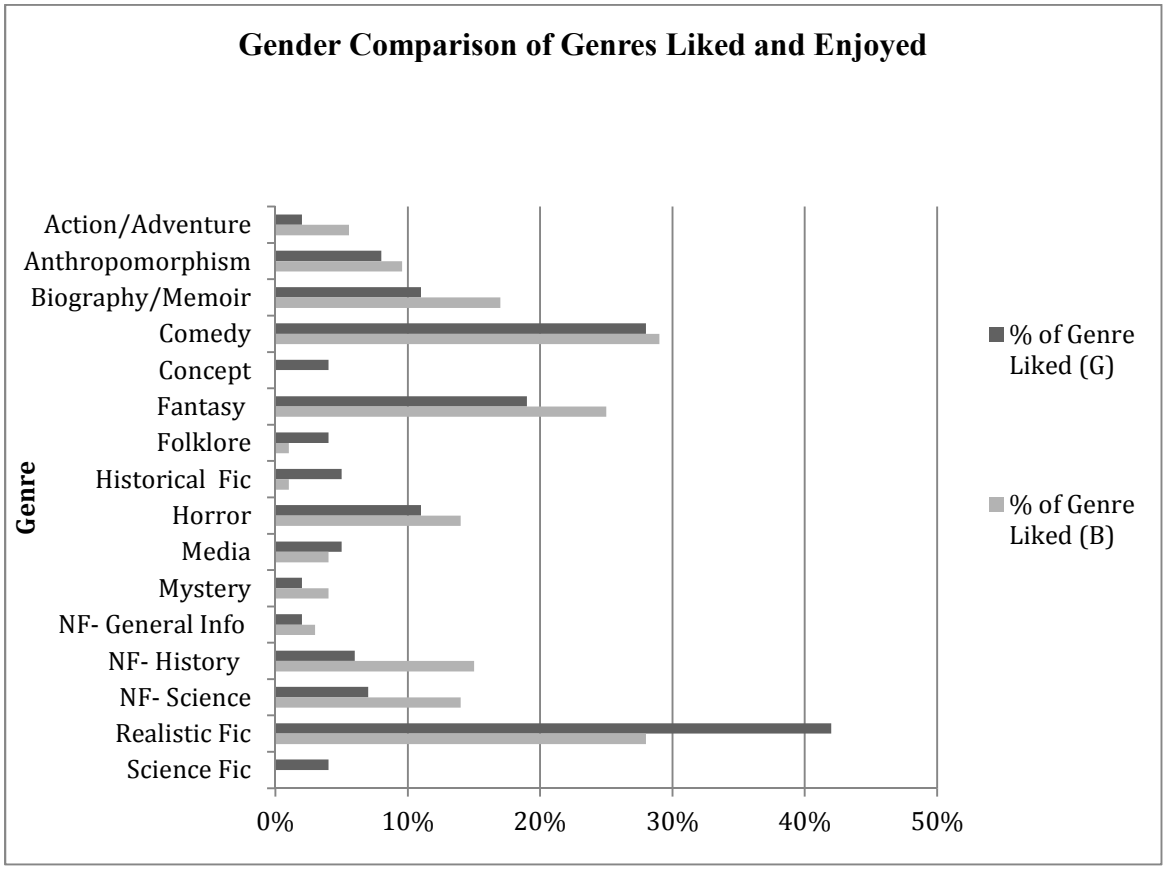
Chart 7.5 Genres Liked and Enjoyed by Boy Participants



Of the genres/subgenres with the fewest titles (less than 10% of the class collection), it seems action/adventure, media, and general nonfiction may be worth exploring more in the future. Similar to the girls' data, most of the fantasy books were horror and all but one of the nonfiction history books was a biography.

The girls checked out, liked, and enjoyed 98 books compared to the boys' 72 books, so it seems comparing their results based on frequency is less effective than comparing by percentage (Chart 7.6).

Chart 7.6 Genres Liked and Enjoyed by Girls and Boys (Percentage Comparison)



Emphasizing genres/subgenres that marked more affection and enjoyment by more than 1-2%, boy participants liked and enjoyed action/adventure, biography/memoir, fantasy, nonfiction, and horror more than girls, and girls liked and enjoyed realistic fiction, folklore, historical and science fiction more than boys. However, most of the class unfortunately did not have access to more than one science fiction book from the class library, a note I consider further in the next section and final chapter. It is also important to keep in mind that most of the fantasy books for both groups were horror texts and the nonfiction history genre was almost entirely biographies/memoirs. Also, though the girls liked and enjoyed certain genres more than the boys, and boys more than girls, genres they collectively liked and enjoyed more than others (comedy, realistic fiction, fantasy,

horror, biographies/memoirs) were among the most liked and enjoyed genres for both groups (with the addition of nonfiction science for the boys).

Nonfiction Science

"I like the fact that it's real*... Like you can get real facts from this."*–Charles

Slightly more than half of the 18 nonfiction science books the participants liked and enjoyed involved zoology, while the rest were either earth science or general science (Chart 7.7). None of the books selected and liked by participants dealt with environmental science or physical science, and four of the 18 participants shared an affection for and enjoyment of the same book, *100 Most Indestructible Things on the Planet* (Claybourne). This book describes the toughest materials, animals, and plants in the world and the ways they survive, protect themselves, and/or prove difficult to kill/destroy. The only other nonfiction science book checked out by more than one participant was *National Geographic Kids: Everything Sharks* (Musgrave). Generally, more boys than girls liked books that were part of the nonfiction science genre, which is demonstrated by the fact that only one girl checked out, liked, and enjoyed either of the two aforementioned books.

Although animals were the most popular nonfiction science topic, participants also talked about or checked out literature that was not related to animals. This is supported by the lists at the beginning of the chapter (Tables 7.1-7.4), which demonstrate that the book checked out, liked, and enjoyed by the most participants was a nonfiction science book, but not one that was necessarily animal-focused, as it incorporated other aspects and braches of science as well. Similarly, the top class library series, *National*

Geographic Kids, included a book about water and a biography about Martin Luther King, Jr. that were liked and enjoyed as well. The other nonfiction science series on the list, *Visual Explorers*, included one book about animals and two about earth science. Only girl participants checked out the three books about geology. Other than a book about water and *100 Most Indestructible Things on the Planet*, boys exclusively checked out, liked, and enjoyed books about animals/insects. The animals they read about included wolves, sharks, "big cats," and animals that were described as "predators" or "deadliest" in the book titles.

Charles was the only participant to bring in a nonfiction science book (*Weird and Wonderful: Show-offs* (Whitfield)) for his interview. He explained, "I like *Show-Offs* because it informs me of information about animals" (Interview 6). When I asked why he liked the book more than the other book he brought in (a book from Pilkey's *Captain Underpants* series), he responded, "Because *Show-offs*, you know, it—I like the fact that it's *real*… Like you can get real facts from this" (Interview 6). In a similar comparison, Daniel, who brought in three science or animal-related books noted, "Like *Captain Underpants*, I kinda like it but I don't really like it as [much as] *Penguin Puzzle*" (Interview 2). Both boys seemed to favor the "real"-ness of science-related texts specifically focused on animals. This is further clarified by the observation that although Daniel brought in *The Magic School Bus #8: Penguin Puzzle* (Bauer), and had more access to *The Magic School Bus* series in the classroom library than 80% of the boys in the class, he did not check out any of the books from this series from the class library. Of

the eight books from the series in the classroom library, only one involved animals (polar bears), and potentially did not interest him.

It seemed that for Daniel, his enjoyment of the book was more related to the animals and setting than anything else, as demonstrated below (includes previously mentioned transcript, Interview 2).

> **Daniel:** I *like* the *Penguin Puzzle* cuz it shows how the um, penguins are—react with each other, how they survive, and how they adapt to their environment.
> **Sherea:** What makes this book one of your favorite books? Why do you rank [*Penguin Puzzle*] even above the other 2 in your hand?
> **Daniel:** Well, because I really like animals and that, and my *favorite* one is a penguin. Cuz I wonder how they can survive in Antarctica. So that was surprising for me. So that's why I picked, um, *Penguins*.
>
> **Sherea:** Who is your favorite character in the book?
> **Daniel:** My favorite character is Frizzy, because she takes them into different um, places, like Antarrrcticaaaaa, …

Daniel also prioritized the nonfiction aspects when comfortably meshing the genres of science and science fiction. When I asked him what kinds of books he likes most, he shared, "Mine's is science, becaussse, it talks about—like the *Magic School Bus* is about penguins and that's basically science, and, how they live and they adapt to their environment" (Interview 2). Although Daniel did not check out any of the class library's science fiction books, he indicated liking and enjoying two of the *National Geographic* books from the library collection that did not focus on animals. One was a book about water, which Daniel said he was interested in because of its connection to what he was learning about in school. He explained, "we was talkin' bout wateerrrr and I wanted to know what water dooeesss, and all that type of stuff" (Interview 2). Given his responses, I was not surprised to hear Daniel claim that he finds informational books the easiest

genre to get lost in because of the facts that he learns while reading. He was also one of the primary historical nonfiction enthusiasts, which was demonstrated by his enjoyment of the other *National Geographic* book he checked out: a biography of Dr. King.

Biographies and Memoirs

"I just *got* Who was Jackie Robinson*, my favorite* Dodg*ers player!"* –Brian

Most of the biographies in the class collection were books about Black/African American people from the past. However, there were also books about people living in the present and people who were/are not Black/African American, such as Malala Yousafzai, Cesar Chavez, Helen Keller, Diego Rivera, and Anne Frank. The people most read about (of the class books participants liked and enjoyed) were Martin Luther King, LeBron James, Harriet Tubman, and Michael Jackson. This group was a diverse mix of sports, entertainment, civil rights, and abolition figures across a relatively wide timeline. Other people read about (by one participant each) included President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, George Washington Carver, Sojourner Truth, Jackie Robinson, Helen Keller, King Tut, and Abraham Lincoln. Although the Initial Survey results showed a preference for Black/African American people living in the past, LeBron James was the second most read and liked biography, second only to Dr. King.

Biographical books from the *Who Was*... series made up only nine of the 28 biographical books in the collection, but accounted for 14 (74%) of the 19 biographical books liked and enjoyed by the participants and was one of most frequently circulated series from the class library (Table 7.4). Since this series was placed in the black (fourth grade reading level) basket, which only boys had access to until the end of the year, it

was difficult to determine if girls would like and enjoy the series too. However, when given the chance to choose a book from any basket at the end of the year, three of the girls selected books from this series; two of them liked and enjoyed their books, while one did not. Also, though the *Who Was…* series was one of the most popular series in the class, students read biographies across levels. As mentioned previously, Daniel read *National Geographic Kids: Martin Luther King* (Jazynka) and three participants read *I Am LeBron James* (Norwich). Overall, 74% of the biographies checked out and liked by participants were about people living in the past compared to only 26% living in the present. However, it is important to note that there were more books about people in the past, as I aimed to include books primarily based on students' responses from the Initial Survey, which indicated more of a passionate interest in reading about Black/African American people from the past than the present.

Originally, the *Who Was…* series had an equal number of male and female figures. However, with requests and donations, the final collection included a slight leaning towards biographies about men. For this reason, I found it interesting that, of the biographies checked out from the school library, four of the six books focused on women (Michelle Obama, Ruby Bridges, Ariana Grande, and Pinkney's collection, *Let it Shine: Stories of Black Woman Freedom Fighters*). The other two books were about Martin Luther King and Derek Jeter (checked out by Daniel, which was not surprising given his affection for informational texts and the life of Martin Luther King). Since the six books were checked out by a small number of students, I was able to confirm that the participants liked the books they read in this category.

Again, I noticed that there was a relatively significant interest in people living today as well as the past, and I soon found out that the lines between past and present were more blurred for some students than others. For example, during Charles' interview he mentioned that he would rather read about people from the present than the past, which surprised me because his circulation records did not reflect this interest. Instead, I recalled him recently checking out Smith's collection *28 Days: Moments in Black History that Changed the World*. Seeking clarification, I wanted to ensure I understood.

> **Sherea:** I thought I saw you read a book about um, oh! *28 Days Later*? Was the title—
> ---- **Charles:** Yeah
> **Sherea:** And it was about like, different African American people, right?
> **Charles:** Yeah.
> **Sherea:** But that was—was that mostly the past? Or was that people today?
> **Charles:** *Some* of them were people today…
> **Sherea:** Okay, so it was a *mix*?
> **Charles:** Wait…you know Li—the, the Little Rock 9?
> **Sherea:** Mmhm
> **Charles:** I think a few of them are probably still living today.
> **Sherea:** I think they probably are. Did you like reading about them?
> **Charles:** Yeah …their poem was nice.

Although the Little Rock Nine activists are indeed still living, many of them are in their mid-70s and the moment the book described (their fight to integrate Little Rock Central High School) happened in 1957, long before Charles was born. Yet, to Charles, because the people are still living, he does not consider reading about them as reading about people from the past. This conversation was one that led me to reconsider the distinction between past and present, based on definitions by participants such as the one Charles provided in this example.

Other than Charles' enjoyment of *Who Was Sojourner Truth?* (McDonough), the

boy participants did not check out biographies about female figures from the class library. However, the girls were relatively gender balanced; three of the girls read books about President Obama, Michael Jackson, LeBron James, and Dr. King. As mentioned in Chapter 6, Brian claimed that for him, it was partly because of the leveled baskets. He noted that he read a book about Harriet Tubman that was in the orange (fifth grade level) basket outside of school. He also attributed the statistic to his passionate interest in reading books about people he is more familiar with as opposed to those he is not. When asked why he did not also read about women in the series, he explained, "I didn't hear *a-bout* them" (Interview 1). Despite this claim that his knowledge of the people determined his selections, he also expressed towards the end of our discussion,

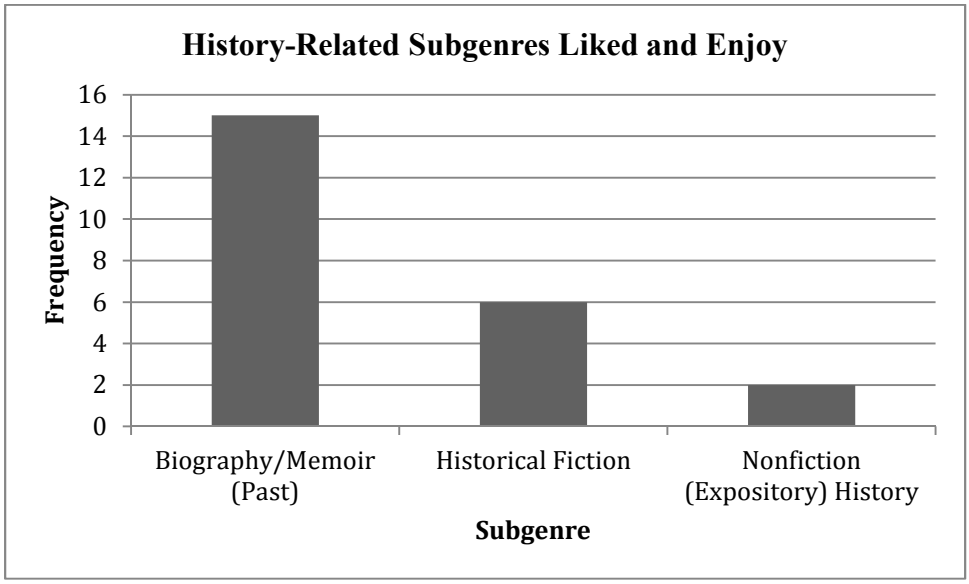
> If [Malala Yousafzai] was a author, I would definitely read her, to learn, cuz she might make ***all*** Muslim books, and I wanna learn more. Well I really learned a lot, but I just wanna know a lot—more, something that I don't know.

After the interview, I shared with Brian that Malala was an author of her own autobiography, not only because I wanted him to be aware in case he decided to read her book in the future, but also to demonstrate an example of young people's abilities to tell their own stories and because I knew Brian enjoyed the biography genre. During the interview, Brian and I also had a conversation about the race of authors when he brought up his recognition of the fact that "It's a lot of white authors and a lot of women" (Interview 1). For this reason, the mentioning of Malala's autobiography and the fact that one of Brian's favorite books (*The Crossover*) was written by an African American male seemed particularly relevant.

Brian also exclaimed in his interview, “I love history!” Various participants in the sample group made similar claims, which was partly why I included historical nonfiction and historical fiction in the restructured class library. I also made final decisions regarding book club selections based on this information. However, I eventually realized that the students were more interested in the people of history than history itself. The popularity of biographies reflects this passionate interest and affection. This realization also became clear from analyzing across the data sources more generally.

School library circulation records noted that books circulated by participants in Ms. Brescia’s class regarding history tended to be biographies/memoirs. The only exceptions were two books entitled *The Aztecs* and *The Declaration of Independence*. The former hints towards an emphasis on people as much as the biographies/memoirs, leaving only one circulated history book that was not people-focused. Similarly, books from the Book Log Survey related to history were primarily biographies/memoirs, as previously mentioned. However, this is more significant when considering that there were more historical fiction books (46) in the class library than historical biography/memoir books (33) (and only 10 expository history books). Yet, as Chart 7.7 highlights, historical fiction was not liked and enjoyed as much as biographies and memoirs. Also, considering that the same participant checked out five of the six historical fiction books liked and enjoyed by the sample group, this result becomes even more significant.

Chart 7.7 History-Related Subgenres Liked and Enjoyed (Composition)



Library circulation records show that the few books checked out by participants with historical fiction as a subgenre were either part of the *39 Clues* series (which is primarily part of the mystery-adventure genre) or a graphic novel from the *Geronimo Stilton* series (primarily anthropomorphic fantasy-adventure). None of the circulated books were primarily historical fiction. In April, before this data became clear, I selected a historical fiction book for each book club: *Bud, Not Buddy* (Curtis) for the boys and *One Crazy Summer* (Williams-Garcia) for the girls. Chapter 4 describes the text selection process in more detail, but it is important to note again that part of my decision was based on participants' passionate interest in reading about Black/African American people from the past (Initial Survey). Though the survey asks about "people" from the past/present, I utilized this phrasing with the purpose of including both fiction and nonfiction texts. And though I believe most (if not all) participants responded accordingly, I noticed towards the end of my data collection process that their responses also may have been pointing to a passionate interest specifically regarding actual people more than fictional characters.

During the book club discussions, conversations about favorite characters and moments led to questions and discussions about the more factual information in the books. For example, when the group was talking about the moment Bud found out that Herman E. Calloway was his grandfather, one participant pointed out to the group that the section in the back of the book included information about people the book was based on, relatives of the author.

> **Kerry:** Um, I saw—I didn't see this before—I saw in the back of the book shows the pictures. Like Bu-Bud was talking bout, in the beginning of the story.
> **Sherea:** Mmhm… and it has like, pictures of the actual author, Christopher Paul Curtis, these are like some of *his* family members, on some of them.
> **Marquise:** His family member is… (practically shouting) *Jackie Robinson*?!!
> **Daniel:** Nooo
> **Marquise:** (laughing, knowingly) (Boys' Book Club Discussion 2)

Kerry's initial reference to the afterword was unexpected, despite the idea that the historical elements were why I agreed *Bud, Not Buddy* would potentially be a good book selection. His acknowledgement of his attention to this section of the book demonstrates an interest in the actual people and events of the time in which the story was set. Unfortunately, I missed the opportunity to ask Kerry at the time to elaborate on this note.

Kerry's choice of words also hinted towards the previously mentioned affection for and enjoyment of illustrated texts. Although the afterward includes 5-6 pages of texts and only two photographs, Kerry specifically said, "the back of the book shows the pictures." The biographies and memoirs students were reading were heavily illustrated, especially in comparison with historical fiction books like *Bud, Not Buddy* and *One Crazy Summer*. Also, Marquise's connection to Jackie Robinson seemed to bring about a sense of excitement and laughter, much to the feigned annoyance of one of his peers.

The illustration was of the author's grandfather, a former Negro League pitcher whom Curtis based one of the characters we discussed in the club on, swinging a baseball bat on the edge of what appears to be a baseball field inside of a stadium. Marquise's immediate and energetic connection to Jackie Robinson highlighted a potential passionate interest in knowing more about Robinson and similar figures in history.

In the girls' book club, participants similarly turned to the topic of people in history in the midst of a conversation about how the main characters in the book support and protect each other. Shaaron, who had been patiently waiting for an opening in discussion, asked about the Black Panthers, who were referenced throughout the book. She had not caught up to where many of the girls were regarding chapters read, so many of them demonstrated what I coded as a sense of surprise or annoyance by her question. However, the girls were also eager to answer her question, and Shaaron's curiosity and wonder highlight the passionate interest participants often expressed regarding people in history (transcript excerpts below, Girls' Book Club Discussion 2).

> **Shaaron:** Okay. My question, my question is, who are the Black Panthers?
> **Anonymous, multiple:** (gasps) (sighing, seemingly annoyed)
> **Sherea:** Alright, throughout the book, they gave us some answers to that. What does the book say?
> **…**
> **Tasha:** Black *Panthers*—are like, these people (aside) yes, and they are Black, Black… are these people that, they stick up for like, their race and stuff. Cuz they was talkin' bout how it's some *rac*ism… w—because Black—White people shootin' the Black people for no reason.
> …
> **Jerrica:** …they shout—shout, I forget what they *say*. Like it, it's like, somethin' that has to do with like, the race.
> …
> **Jade:** They feed them food and, it's like a summer camp, basically for Black Panthers… Some other races showed, cuz they're talking about the *line* to breakfast, if you didn't get there early enough.

> …
> **Shauna:** I was wantin' to say, I also care about the breakfast program too because, ummm they would gi—cuz they would give, aaa free like, breakfast to people who didn't like have fooodd, like White people too. And also, the summer program, and ummm, what's that thing? Like they gathered in the park. It was like a—
> **Sherea:** Oh, the rally.
> **Shauna:** Yeah, the rally. Uhhh, they, like, put up posters in people's store, and they wouldn't um, they taught them, if the, if-if you ask the people at the store if you wanted—if they wanted to hang up the *fli*ers for the rally, and if they said no, they taught them like, to leave with *dignity*, and not look up disappointed.

Similar to the boys' club conversation (though with a bit more seriousness, likely due to the topic), some of the girls seemed to demonstrate a feigned annoyance at first by Shaaron's question. However, their various responses demonstrated that they were clearly paying attention to the Black Panthers' role in history and the text.

The conversation also turned to a discussion of Bobby Hutton, who was discussed in later parts of the book. Ashley (Girls' Book Club Discussion 2) shared,

> (softly) Lil' Bobby like, um, he died when he was 17, and I saw a picture of him… he *looked* really, really young. And actually, umm, I looked at the article and it said Lil Bobby was shot by the police (inaudible) because they thought he had a weapon. He wanted to prove he didn't, and they like (louder) they, like, it's like they shot him for no such-a-reason. They said somethin' to him for no such reason. (quickly and adamantly) I *looked* it up.

Ashley's unrequested search to learn more details about Lil' Bobby highlights her interest and intrinsic motivation to learn more about the event and person the book mentioned. It also illustrates a finding regarding participants utilizing texts to justify their knowledge about history.

Jade and Brian both stressed a need or desire to be able to prove their knowledge specifically when confronted with being lied to or accused of lying. This is demonstrated in the following two transcript excerpts.

> **Sherea:** What do you like about the "Who was…" series?
> **Brian:** It bri—it shows—a lot of information that I *don't know*, is right there in that book and a lot of information other people don't know, is in that book. So I could just ***show*** people, like yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, I could ***prove*** it to 'em. So they won't be like, 'Oh, you're *lying*. Shhh, don't talk no more.' (Interview 1)
> ….
> **Sherea:** On the survey you took when I first entered your classroom, you mentioned that you want to read more books about African American people. Can you tell me more about this?
> **Jade:** Well, my mom *does* have African American books about history and things. And, um, I *do* like to enjoy that so that *I* can know my background and, if people try to liiie to me, I can actually have the *proof*. And, you know, not just, 'Oh yeah, that's not true,' but I actually know for myself. (Interview 3)

History and the subgenre of biography seemed to provide participants with a sense of assurance and/or power, in addition to its ability to "show" them a lot of information. When I was invited to sit in and participate with the local library's book club event at the school, the principal noted a need for children to read more historical fiction based on their responses to the local librarian's question about historical characters they read about previously. Without hesitation, they responded with names like Harriet Tubman, Henry Box Brown, Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King, Will Smith, and Maya Angelou. The girls may have thought the librarian was referring to solely nonfiction reading despite the relatively open nature of the question, but regardless, it revealed many of them had read or been exposed to biographical literature. The book they were reading for the club was a historical fiction book, but much of the conversation focused specifically

on the Little Rock Nine (mentioned in the book) and other real people throughout the course of history.

Reflecting on this later in an analytic memo, I noted, "seems like the kids would enjoy the return of social studies to the curriculum" (Memo, February 29, 2016). Many schools have removed social studies from their curriculum to make more space for the subjects students are tested on at the end of the school year (Walker, 2014). As mentioned in Chapter 4, Ms. Brescia noted, "We really just don't have time to teach the cultural stuff" (personal communication, February 9, 2016). When I entered the classroom in January for the first time, the class was finishing Mildred Taylor's historical fiction book, *Song of the Trees*. The district and school's adult leaders, likely aware of the lack of history curricula present in many classrooms, perhaps also noticed the passionate interest in history that many students at Clayton seemed to demonstrate. Since Taylor's books in the Logan series are supposedly based on her family (or the stories they told her), I now wish I had been able to explore students' responses to the book when I first arrived. Regardless, it remains clear that the students continued to show a passionate interest in the realities of history and (mostly) the stories of people who lived during those events. There seemed to be an intense thirst for the biographies of people the participants heard and wondered about before reading. As Brian (Interview 1) described regarding his introduction to the *Who Was…* series, "I started reading and reading and reading it, I got impressed, and I was like 'Oh, I wanna learn some more.'"

Horror: The Realest Fantasy(?) of All

"…scaaarrrrryyyy! (playfully, imitating spooky voice) Me *love scary*." –Shaaron, in response to the question, "What kinds of books do you like the most?"

More than half of the fantasy books liked and enjoyed by participants were primarily horror books. Fantasy was by far one of the most difficult genres to code and analyze. It was difficult to determine what fit in this genre. Fantasy is often described as a subgenre of fiction, but with characters, settings, or events that could not exist in real life. The problem with this idea is that it is often difficult to determine what could and could not happen in real life. Are ghosts real? How do we explain accounts of supernatural occurrences? Where do we draw the line? When the students thought of fantasy, they most often referred to things like wizards, giants, dragons, magic carpets or powers, imaginary worlds, etc. The students I spoke with in this regard did not include things like ghosts, vampires, mummies, and other beings often associated with horror stories. I later wondered if the more human element of those beings made them appear more real for participants, and as a result, much less of a fantasy.

In an interview with a writer from an online magazine, R. L. Stine shared, "with *Goosebumps* I always make sure [young readers] know it's a fantasy, that it's crazy. They have to know it could never really happen" (Waldman, 2015). This fit Brian's (Interview 1) description of *Goosebumps* when he explained,

> I like *Goosebumps* books… they are scary, they do not *live* like other people: they lose their hands, they become invisible, they can still see, they have dogs that can talk, and it's just crazy. And I get scared and I shiver…in my boots.

Similarly, during her interview, Shaaron described a character in her favorite *Goosebumps* book by affectionately explaining, "He's very funnnny…and he disapp*ear*s." Despite these descriptions of magic and "crazy"-ness, both participants

claimed they really do become afraid sometimes reading *Goosebumps* due to the elements of potential truth.

When I asked Shaaron how people live in the book, she said, "I would say they live *normal*." In Brian's interview, despite describing people and events as abnormal, he shares that there is simultaneously a sense of normalcy or possibility that he can relate with at times.

> **Interviewer**: Do you just like that other people are scared or is it that you like being scared when you read?
> **Brian**: (sighs)(in a laughing whisper) I'm scared… I'm scared. Yep… I'm *really* scared.
> **Interviewer**: I understand.
> **Brian**: because like this stuff is happening in real life. Some of this stuff in Goosebumps are like some stuff that happen to me and I be havin' *flashbacks* and that scare me.
> **Interviewer**: Okay do you have an example of that?
> **Brian**: Cuz in Goosebumps, um, someone—well, this exactly happened to me: I was riding around with my friends, and…

Brian went on to connect a moment when a street seller's interactions with he and his friends reminded him of the main character and her friend's attempt to purchase a magical camera at a garage sale in the book, *Say Cheese and Die Screaming*. In the same interview mentioned previously, when asked if "the difference between horror for kids and horror for adults [is] that there's a fantastical element," Stine replied, "I think they're opposites… kids, I want them to know it's not real. When you write for teenagers… every detail has to be real or they're not going to go along with it, they're not going to accept it" (Waldman, 2015). The participants' acceptance of the blur between fantasy and reality in horror stories seems to lean towards the understanding that the events would likely never happen, but there seem to be moments that lead them to believe much

of the stories are simultaneously real… that perhaps this is what actually makes them scary. As Brian says, "I'm *really* scared…because like this stuff is happening in real life." He does not seem to be referring to the talking dogs or disappearing people who can "still see," but the aspects of the story that appear, as Shaaron describes, "*normal*."

According to McCort (2016), effective horror literature requires the reader to be (1) "emotionally invested in the situation at hand," (2) "[experiencing] fear", (3) "[rejecting] the terrifying thing while also fearing that he or she might become its next victim," and (4) "perhaps most important," "excited by the horrifying experience that he or she has willingly engaged in as the reader" (p. 10). This description seems to accurately describe Brian and Shaaron's responses to *Goosebumps* and the horror genre more generally. They appear to be emotionally invested and experiencing fear at some point in the stories. While they claim it is not real, they also connect some aspects to reality, and Brian notes that he believes some of the events could happen in "real life." They were also visibly excited to talk about *Goosebumps* and scary stories.

Goosebumps was one of the most popular series circulating in the class library despite it being limited to one basket. When students were allowed to select a book from any basket at the end of the year, five students from various reading levels above and below the basket *Goosebumps* books were located in, selected a book from this series. No other book or series had this same result, which led me to wonder how different the results could have potentially been without the leveling process. Yet, when I reviewed the school library records, only two students checked out a *Goosebumps* book throughout the course of my study from the school library collection (though the school library's

collection was relatively limited in size in this regard). A very small number of students brought in books from home or the local library, however, and *Goosebumps* was a book I occasionally observed students (who had not checked the book out with the school or class library) reading. I discuss *Goosebumps* further in the comedy section because many of the students throughout the course of my study remarked in various ways that they found the series to be funny, a reaction that surprised me.

The horror books in the class collection were not always fantasy books, but most were because of the appearance of werewolves, vampires, monsters, ghosts, etc. Of the 33 fantasy books checked out, liked, and enjoyed by the participants, 20 of the books (61%) were primarily horror. Ten were part of Stine's *Goosebumps* series, five were part of the Schwartz's *Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark* trilogy, two were part of O. Penn-Coughin's *They're Coming For You* series, and three were part of the Thaler's *Black Lagoon* series. I observed one of Schwartz's books being read by two participants when I arrived in January, and added his trilogy with special consideration of the aforementioned five participants who claimed *Goosebumps* was their favorite series (but could not access the basket holding the series). Four of the five participants read at least one book from the trilogy, and Shaaron requested more books like it through the Message Box.

Her request was the reason a book from O. Penn-Coughin's series was added to the class library in April. Two of the five participants in this group liked and enjoyed the book, but surprisingly, Shaaron did not check this particular book out from the class library. School library circulation records showed that she was checking out the Bamford Monster (Levy) series, confirming a continued passionate interest and/or affection for the

horror genre. As a result, I later wondered if the fact that there was only one book from O. Penn-Coughin (instead of the whole series being present) contributed to her potential disinterest in checking out the book, or if the book did not appear child-friendly enough (in comparison to Stine and Levy's series, for example). When I asked Shaaron what she liked about scary books, she replied, "Well, I like the way they like, jump *ooouuuut* and like, they're like very funnyyyy" (Interview 4). Again, I was surprised to hear that various participants found the horror series mentioned throughout this section funny.

Shaaron's comment also hints towards the previously mentioned sense of realness in the horror genre. The idea that the genre's elements "jump out" from the page for Shaaron indicates a lively interaction of sorts. It seems Shaaron finds it easier to get lost in the horror book world because the horror world seemingly comes to *her* while she is reading, potentially easing and/or quickening the process of enjoyment. When people are afraid or surprised, it seems it would be difficult to *avoid* giving the object of the fear/surprise their focused attention, one of Csikszentmihalyi's dimensions of flow. He describes,

> Distractions are excluded from consciousness… We are aware only of what is relevant here and now… Flow is the result of intense concentration on the present, which relieves us of the usual fears that cause depression and anxiety in everyday life. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 112)

Although Csikszentmihalyi's description adds clarity to the potential enjoyment of horror stories, it also hints towards the question of why a person would exchange one fear or stressed response for another. More specifically, how can horror relieve people of their

fears? Perhaps, this is where the fantasy element of horror becomes most crucial. The fears in horror stories are (hopefully) not children's everyday fears, even if they resemble them in some way. As Brian said, "they do not *live* like other people" (Interview 1).

Gates, Steffel, and Molson (2003) claim "fantasy literature, like all other forms of myth, springs from the human need to understand the struggle of good versus evil" (p. 2). McCort (2016) makes a similar connection between fantasy and the potential subgenre of folklore. She suggests, "Consider the fairytales written by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, for instance, in which horrific elements are central to many of the stories…. Little Red Riding Hood is devoured by a wolf for straying from the path…" (p. 6). This comparison helped explain the connection between the books Shaaron brought in for the interview (*Little Red Riding Hood*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *Goosebumps Most Wanted: Son of Slappy*). Shaaron even comments about the same story McCort mentions, stating, "I like, *Little Red Riding Hood* cuz *Little Red Riding Hood*, I like when the wolf, tries to persuade her to give her—to give him the basket" (Interview 4). McCort's connection between general fantasy and fairytales/folklore help us see the ways in which Shaaron's reading enjoyment is connected by a common theme, and that while her genre/subgenre preference has changed over time, it has also remained under the same overarching (fantasy) genre.

McCort claims that while fairytales and more traditional horror stories sought to scare children into submission or society's code of ethics, modern horror stories aim to cause children to reconsider fear and encourage courage. In this way, horror supposedly helps children deal with their real fears. McCort (2016) states,

> The fantasy of horror offers young readers and viewers a dreamscape that parallels their reality, sometimes making it easier to cope with the monsters they must face in the real world; it is a proving ground of sorts… the creators of horror for children and young adults spawn monsters and monstrous human beings who test readers' abilities to overcome people, objects, and events that elicit visceral and psychological terror in their own lives—even if, sometimes, these monstrosities are unconquerable. (p. 22)

She also explains that horror stories for children are less frightening because there tends to be a resolved or pleasant ending. The resolved or pleasant ending may not be the case in participants' personal lives, but the horror genre may encourage them to confront their fears and fight for their happy ending. As author Neil Gaimon reminded readers with the epigraph in his book, *Coraline*, "Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten" (McCort, 2016, p. 17). The literature serves as an introduction or reminder of the potential for victory, against all odds and against one's deepest fears or most frightening/horrific enemies.

It is also worth noting that horror stories tend to involve children being "alone, without parents or adult protectors, and living in a world full of random dangers" (Hood, 2008, p. 5). McCort (2016) cites McGillis making similar claims: "McGillis muses, 'I wonder what it is that attracts them to these books? …Perhaps it is this: As so often in children's books, the plots show children coping with difficult and apparently dangerous situations alone, without their parents' help'" (p. 22). McGillis reiterates that this aspect is not limited strictly to the horror genre of children's literature and that the independence

of characters "[addresses] the child reader's desire for control" (McCort, 2016, p. 22). When considering the discussion of power in the Theoretical Framework section of Chapter 2, this desire for control becomes more significant. Is horror a popular genre because it allows children control of their own lives and potentially removes the oppression of adults?

More specifically, it seems that similar to the *Big Nate* book Chris was reading (Chapter 5) and Pilkey's *Captain Underpants* series, horror does not emphasize or privilege adults, or cast them all in a necessarily positive light (if they are present at all). Instead, children are the knowers, the problem solvers, the rescuers, and the victors. Overall, horror stories seemed to be an effective blend of reality and fantasy that many of the students in Ms. Brescia's class liked and enjoyed. Other than comedic realistic fiction, horror was the genre of books that I observed children laughing with at their seats the most.

Realistic Fiction and the Humor In Everything

"One of the funny, funniest parts in this book was when…" –Brian

The Initial Survey, Book Log Survey, and school library circulation records each demonstrate participants' passionate interest in, affection for, and/or enjoyment of comedy. More often than not, the comedy subgenre was part of the realistic fiction genre. Realistic fiction was the most popular genre mentioned, liked, or enjoyed by participants, but it was also the most available branch of literature in the class library. As mentioned in Chapter 2, I separated realistic fiction and fantasy during the data collection

and analysis phases for that reason. Fantasy books made up 28% of the class library collection when including anthropomorphism, horror, and folklore, but realistic fiction was by far the largest subgenre of fiction, making up 37% of the class library books, (195 of the 534 texts). Similarly, realistic fiction made up 36% of the books from the class library that participants indicated liking and enjoying on the Book Log Survey.

At least 50% of the realistic fiction books liked and enjoyed based on the Book Log Survey were comedic. Books not specifically included in the comedy subgenre often included humorous moments based on everyday life, despite not being coded as comedy books. Some students had a clear preference solely for comedic realistic fiction. Brian describes this preference when he says,

> I like books that's not, based on my real life… orrrr books that happened in the real worrrllldd, cuz, if I wanna read a book like that, all I gotta do is really ask my dad how it is, out*side* and stuff. So, and I'm too young and I don't wanna know about it. (Interview 1)

Brian brought in two realistic fiction books (*The Lemonade War* (Davies) and *Martin Bridge on the Lookout* (Scott Kerrin)) when asked to bring in his favorite books, so I did not expect him to say he does not like realistic fiction. The following transcript excerpt (Interview 1) demonstrates my attempt to seek clarification.

> **Brian:** I just wanna have ***fun***. And do what I gotta do, and get past schooool and get my presents.
> **Sherea:** So you just want fun books?
> **Brian:** Mmhm.
> **Sherea:** Okay. Does that include realistic fiction? I couldn't tell if you were putting that on the list or not… where it's like kinda real, but it's not. Like, Judy Blume, where it's like these characters—they're like—
> --- **Brian:** Oh! A realistic book?
> **Sherea:** like Fudge is a real person, but he's not like, actually real. He's like, made up, but he lives just like everyday people…maybe.
> **Brian:** I like Fudge, yeah.

I used the example of Blume's series because I knew it was familiar to Brian. However, in my attempt to further clarify the definition of realistic fiction, I was reminded of how broad the term actually is. Most importantly, I recognized that Brian was referring to more serious realistic fiction (often, but not necessarily, associated with a subgenre like drama or referred to as "general"). This understanding aligned much more with the books be brought in for the interview and talked about during our discussion.

Part of the problem with assigning such a broad spectrum of literature with the term *realistic*, is that (like fantasy), reality (or "truth") is often based on a person's perspective. Hence, Brian and I both struggled to determine what qualified as everyday life or people. My struggle with this notion is presented in the previous transcript when I say Blume's character Fudge "lives just like everyday people… maybe" (Interview 1). I hesitated because in the moment of explaining, I was also realizing the danger of assigning a single lifestyle or experience as "everyday." Brian also demonstrated this uncertainty when describing how people live in one of his favorite *Martin Bridge* books. Wisely, he considers, "They live like—they don't live like—*yes*, they ***do*** live like normal people. Because normal people make mistakes" (Interview 1). Brian also noted certain differences though. When asked why Martin is his favorite character, one reason Brian provided was "he always gets the official stuff, and not just the dollar store stuff," and when I asked him to describe what he thought Martin looked and talked liked, he stated,

> I only know what Martin Bridge look like because he's on the cover of the book, and well, what they look like is like normal people but just dressed different from

> us—doesn't wear no KD's, no Jordan's, nuttin' like that—they just wear tan or black shoes.

Janelle, another participant who brought in realistic fiction books for her interview, similarly described characters in the book *Shake it Up: Step by Step* (Grace) as "regular people" (Interview 5).

Janelle was the only participant to bring in three realistic fiction books, and none of them were a comedy. Instead, her favorite book, *Shake it Up*, is based on a *Disney Channel* television show and considered a to be part of the drama subgenre. Janelle claimed she liked the book because of the way the characters dance, dress, and sing, and then she showed me the photo illustrations inserted inside of the book. Similar to Brian, Janelle expressed uncertainty regarding how the characters in the book lived, leading me to wonder if the setting was simply not a particularly significant element for participants.

Another commonality among three of the four interview participants who brought in a realistic fiction book to their interview was their acknowledgement of connection to characters. Brian noted that, like him, Martin Bridge likes science and Josh (a character in *The Crossover* (Alexander)) likes basketball. On the End-of-Year Survey, Janelle noted her favorite book of the year was a book from the *Dyamonde Daniel* (Grimes) series, explaining, "Dyamonde is just like me." Perhaps, Jade describes this best when she explains, "I can relate to *some* things, and like, sometimes if I can relate to something, it's enjoyable to *read*" (Interview 3). Although Jade and Brian both brought in two realistic fiction books, each of them described their favorite books as being funny. Brian cites a moment that stood out to him more specifically for this reason, sharing,

> I like *Martin Bridge on the Lookout* because *Martin Bridge on the Lookout* was funnyyyy and Martin shows, like in—one of the funny, funniest parts in this book was when Martin thought, that it was his friend's birthday that was a girl, but he went there and her birthday was yesterday, so he was just stuck there…. for the rest of the day. But they—it turned out good. (Interview 1)

Despite the fact that *Martin Bridge on the Lookout* is not specifically marketed as humorous realistic fiction, Brian's explanation illustrates the element of humor that participants valued and an example of its presence in much of the general realistic fiction.

I also found most of the non-comedic realistic fiction books liked and enjoyed were books featuring characters of color as the main characters. More specifically, 21 of the 29 non-comedic realistic fiction books checked out, liked, and enjoyed by the participants featured an African American, Latinx, or Native American child as the main character. Seventeen of the 21 books featured an African American child as the main character (e.g., *Kinda Like Brothers*, *Dyamonde Daniel* series, *Locomotion*, *Sugarplum Ballerina* series), and were written by African American authors. The two exceptions to the latter include *Ellray Jakes Walks the Plank* (Warner) and *Public School Superhero* (Patterson)). To emphasize this finding, it is also important to note that of the 17 Black/African American authors who wrote realistic fiction books presented in the class library, only five had books not read by the participants.

Of those five, I was only surprised by one duo: Tiki and Ronde Barber (*Kickoff* series). It was less surprising, for example, that Dawson Boyd's *Circle of Gold* was not read, given the fact that only boys had access to the basket where the book was placed. As mentioned previously, past research reveals a tendency for boys to not select books with main characters of the opposite sex. While this was not always the case (for

example, a boy selected and liked/enjoyed a book about a girl from the same basket, entitled *President of the Whole Fifth Grade* (Winston)), it was less surprising when this preference potentially presented itself. I was surprised none of the three books in the Barber brothers' series were read for a number of reasons, but mainly because of past studies' claim that boys may be more likely to read books about sports and I figured at least one of the participants may have known who the brothers are. However, the five boys reading from this basket mostly read books from the *Big Nate*, *Fudge*, and *Who Was* series (two of them being comedic realistic fiction series).

Participants also noted humor in fantasy and horror. Table 7.6 lists the fantasy books participants liked and enjoyed that were not primarily part of the horror genre. Three of the 10 books are specifically coded as having comedy as a subgenre (*Chocolate Fever*, *Flora and Ulysses*, and *Holes*). The most frequently recurring author (not only on this list, but among all of the non-series books liked and enjoyed) was Roald Dahl. Dahl's books were coded as primarily fantasy, with Matilda being a book more specifically fitting the magical realism subgenre. However, Dahl's books are known for their dark humor (de Castella, 2011), and could very well be considered comedy as well. Similarly, three books from Table 7.6 actually have *comedy* listed as a subgenre.

Table 7.6 Fantasy Books Liked and Enjoyed That Are Not Primarily Horror

Title	**Author**	**Number of Students**
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	Dahl, R.	2
Chocolate Fever	Smith, R.	2
Flora and Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures	DiCamillo, K.	1
Help! I'm Trapped in a Supermodel's Body	Strasser, T.	1
Holes	Sachar, L.	1
Magic Tree House: Night of the New Magicians	Osborne, M.	1
Matilda	Dahl, R.	1
Serafina and the Black Cloak*	Beatty, R.	1

The BFG	Dahl, R.	1
Where the Mountain Meets the Moon	Lin, G.	2

*horror is considered a subgenre of this book

As mentioned previously, a number of students also often found the horror genre to be funny. For Shaaron, the humor was often the result of the writing style or plot. The following transcript excerpt (Interview 4) illustrates this reaction.

> **Sherea:** *Scary books are funny*?
> **Shaaron:** Yeaaaahhhhhh.
> **Sherea:** What's funny about *scary* books?
> **Shaaron:** Wellll, I like the—cause [Schwartz's book] was about how, it was—it was like a *song*… like, um, "Ol', ol', um, somethin' is *dead*, and so issss his friend; they're both in the tub, and they don't even *know*." And it was funny.

For Shaaron, the way the story is told and the story itself contribute to the comedy of the book. Brian, who was a fan of *Goosebumps*, similarly mentioned the plot being part of why he finds scary books funny, but he focuses more specifically on the character's fear or his own reaction as causing the humorous aspect (noted in the following excerpts).

> **Brian:** I like scary books because once somebody gets scared I'm always laughing and if you're running in a movie and you fall—I'm, I'm *dead*—I'm laughing at you.
> ….
> **Brian:** but, *Goosebumps* (his emphasis), I think in my miiinnd… um, I be like, oh, this is scary to like a 20-year-***ollld***. And then, once I finish making that thought, I might jump, cuz I be scared. Or I might *laugh*, after I finish jumping, cuz I'm laughin' at my*self*.
> **Sherea:** For being scared?
> **Brian:** Yup. (Interview 1)

Brian connects the sense of fear in books to the horror stories in film, explaining that the characters' reactions, feelings, or behaviors are what cause him to laugh. However, he furthers that he also finds his own reactions to the scary aspects of the book to be humorous. It seems laughter might be his recognition of the separation between fantasy

and reality; he laughs when he recognizes he is not in any immediate danger himself.

In an attempt to better understand the laughter I observed from students reading horror stories, I read interviews and brief biographies of the authors of the horror books students liked and enjoyed. I found out that Schwartz, Stine, and Levy also wrote books that were primarily comedy (e.g., *101 Silly Monster Jokes*, *How to be Funny*, *My Life as a Fifth-Grade Comedian*, *Witcracks*). In a conversation about the beginning of his writing career, Stine described, "I always wrote these funny novels for adults, but no one ever wanted them. I never wanted to be scary, either. I only wanted to be funny" (Plante, 2015). Suddenly, the observation of students laughing while reading *Goosebumps* made more sense. Stine *aimed* to be funny. In another interview, he specifically stated, "…there's always a funny chapter, it sort of adds to the puzzle, and the funny stuff is so that it doesn't get too intense" (Waldman, 2015). Similar to Brian's aforementioned comments, Stine also notes, "…horror for me, I think it's funny. Horror always makes me laugh." In the interview with *The Verge* (Plante, 2015), Stine further confirms, "They're very closely related, humor and horror." His thoughts echo the participants' considerations regarding the appeal of the horror genre. As readers, they seem aware of the humorous nature or writing style of the author, and they similarly find the sense of fear and the fearful situations to be funny and amusing.

In addition to particular genres, some of the book formats participants liked and enjoyed also involved elements of humor. Many comics, graphic novels, and books written in a multimodal format involve comedy as the primary or secondary genre. Often, the journals/diaries accessible to students were realistic fiction, while the comics

and graphic novels tended to either be realistic fiction or fantasy (providing more of a balance than journals/diaries). Given the history of comics, it is not surprising that humor is a major component of the comic/graphic novel format. As Jade describes, regarding the main character in the *Big Nate* series, "his *an*tics make me laugh, which is another thing I like about comic books" (Interview 3). Jade is able to point out specifically that the humor involved is a reflection of the format as much as the story itself.

Journals/diaries often involve a self-deprecating type of humor. Tanner (1996) describes this type of humor as "high expectations comically transformed into disappointments" (p. 54). He further describes, "The matters treated are hardly momentous. Usually our accepted, conventional, respectable lunacy is the subject of the self-deprecating humorist, who overwrites the ordinary or trivial for comic effect" (p. 54). This description certainly seems to suit the journal/diary books the participants liked and enjoyed, such as *Dear Dumb Diary*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and *Dork Diaries*. Snyder and Pulvers (2001) claim women are "more apt to use self-deprecating humor" than men (p. 291), which may (or may not) explain the girls' reading interests, selections, and attitudes regarding journals/diaries when compared with the boys in the class.

The most common character personality description that interview participants discussed regarding their favorite books was a character being "funny." Four of the six interview participants mentioned this aspect when talking about books that were part of the horror and realistic fiction genres. Regarding a living puppet/dummy Shaaron adoringly claimed, "I love Slappy, because… he's very funny." Similarly, Jade and Brian pointed to the ability of characters to make them laugh contributing to their

favoring of particular realistic fiction texts (books from the *Martin Bridge* and *Big Nate* series). Laughter also was a frequent result of discussions about characters or participants imitating characters during book club discussions, especially for the girls. The boys often laughed at their peers' comments about the characters more than the imitation of characters. For example, group laughter ensued after Marquise described a fight scene in *Bud, Not Buddy* (following transcript excerpt, Boys' Book Club 1).

> Like… my *worst* character, I kinda don't like in this book, is Todd because he's a jerk. Because um, (group laughs) *and his mom*… because his mom was sitting there watchin' …when she *clearly saw* that um, Todd was jackin' him uuppp… she just *allowed* it. …she just was looking at it. And den she said (imitating Mrs. Amos), "*You hurt my son*!" What? He was hurtin' *him*. (group laughs)

Although the imitation of the character contributed to the humor of Marquise's comments, the group seemed to be laughing more at Marquise's commentary regarding his opinions of the characters and their words/actions.

The girls' laughter was also connected to each other's opinions of characters, but more frequently connected to their peers' imitation of the characters than the boys. This imitation was also further removed from the actual text. More specifically, the boys' imitations of characters were short (rarely, if ever, more than a sentence) and utilized mainly to highlight their point before a comedic punch line or serious, meaningful thought. The girls' imitations were longer and much more exaggerated. For example, we can compare L's aforementioned imitation of Mrs. Amos to the following imitations from the girls' book club in the following transcript excerpts.

> **Ashley:** My favorite moment was when, was when um, Big Ma said, (imitating) "Why can't you—why can't she just come over to our house and then pick up her own children, then we gotta go all the way to California with that green stucco house" (girls laughing)

…
Tasha: My favorite character is *Fern* because, she always sassy because when her mom—when she came to ask for some cold water, her mom—sh-her mom was all gettin' a attitude with her, and she wasn't—she wasn't like, *takin'* it from her. She was all like, (imitating) "*No*, I want my cold water. You finna give me my water." (one participant laughing throughout imitation, most of the group laughing after)… So then, when her mom was like, (imitating) "You fin—you bout drink all this water," she was like, she sat there and drunk the whole thing without stoppin'.
…
Jerrica: And my favorite moment was when they went to Ming's um, and, the *lady*, the—her name was—they called her Mean Lady Ming—
---Ashley: (same time) Mean Lady Ming
Jerrica: And, it was fun-ny because she had tol'—she said (one participant laughing)—because she—they had gave them their order and then she was like, "Okay, *sit*." And then she said, um (imitating), "People poor. I feel bad. And I give free—
----Tasha (same time): No free—
----Jerrica & Tasha in unison (imitating): free egg roll! (Tasha laughs)
Sherea: And then everybody—
Jerrica: (laughing, imitating) *Everyone* want free egg roll. (Tasha laughing) I was laughing at that. It was so funny.
----Shaaron: Tasha crackin' up.
Jerrica: Just the way she like, *said* it. And I imagine her sayin' it like, "*Free egg rolls."* Like, like, all like not *calm,* like all mad…

While the boys' imitations were fairly close to the characters' actual words, much of the girls' imitations were not; instead, the girls often seemed to take on the characters' voices in their heads and add their own translation.

Every favorite moment discussed during the session with the girls involved the imitation of a character, which was interesting. While the boys' favorite moments were mostly about characters' actions (fighting, kissing, believing a man is a vampire), the girls' moments involved language. However, it is important to note that when I later asked the group to write a few words describing their favorite moment, each girl listed a specific action. This decision could have been based on the fact that I informally asked

them to "write a few words," and they could have felt limited by the space on the paper or the writing aspect itself. However, it seems that being able to talk about the moments and characters in the club added an element of performance, during which the girls wanted to share with the group how they interpreted the dialogue of the book. This was interesting because girls noted language being part of their reason for liking a book (Book Log Survey) 41 times compared to the boys, who only noted language playing a role five times. Language/dialogue seemed to matter more to the girls. Still, the imitation and comments related to the books' characters resulted in laughter from both groups.

Across formats, genres, and literary elements, humor was everywhere I turned throughout the course of the study. This reflects the participants' passionate interests reflected on the Initial Survey, as well as books they indicated liking and enjoying on the Book Log Survey; humor was consistently one of the most liked genres. With regards to enjoyment, as mentioned in the Conceptual Framework section of Chapter 2, Nieburg (2000) explains that some researchers point to laughter as a visible indicator of joy and/or enjoyment. A number of psychologists discuss the ways laughter can contribute to joy and positively benefit the human soul. Lefcourt (2001) states, "That humor could be a successful means for coping with emotions aroused by stress has been advanced by many notable theorists" (p. 71). He describes humor as a form of "emotion-focused coping" that protects individuals and allows them distance from their problems. Snyder and Pulvers (2001) add that laughter can help people "[survive] traumatic stress," and they discuss Lazarus and Folkman's belief that "situations that are uncontrollable are most effectively dealt with by emotion-focused coping" (p. 291). They further state, "humor

makes the stressor more palatable; in turn, a person can deal more effectively with that stressor" (Snyder & Pulvers, p. 291). Laughter, then, serves as a way to effectively deal with the uncontrollable, and it potentially becomes increasingly logical that comedy is given such priority for the participants, as they are part of a demographic often oppressed or trying to be controlled by other groups (primarily adults).

Sousa (2011) strictly describes the physiological benefits: laughter provides more oxygen to our bloodstream and brain, releases endorphins, decreases stress and blood pressure, relaxes muscle tension, etc. Specifically, he states,

> Endorphins are the body's natural painkillers, and they also give the person a feeling of euphoria. In other words, the person enjoys the moment in body as well as in mind. Endorphins also stimulate the brain's frontal lobes, thereby increasing the degree of focus and amount of attention time. (Sousa, 2011, p. 68)

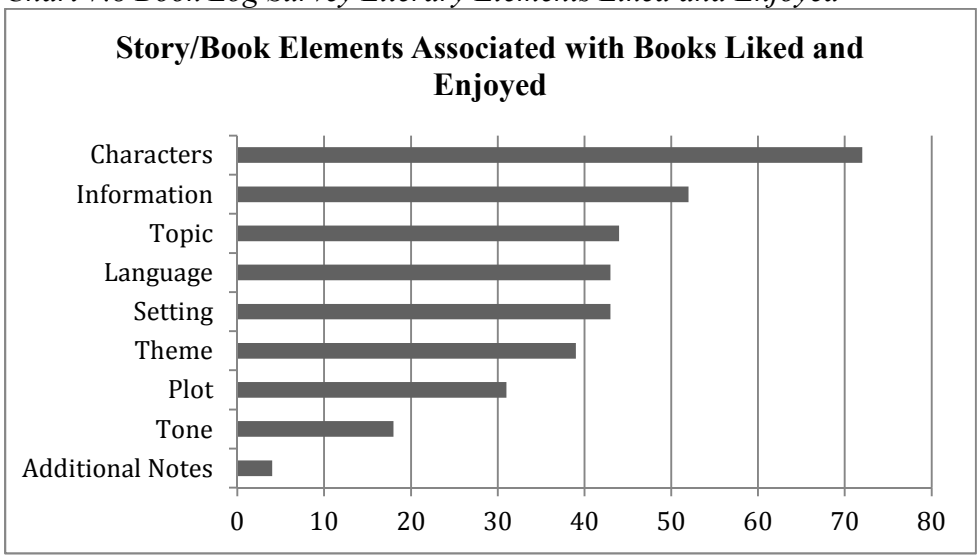
Sousa not only uses the term *enjoy* in his description, but he also notes a connection between laughter, endorphins, and focused attention (one of Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) dimensions of *flow*). In essence, laughter seems ideal for literary enjoyment, and many of the participants' responses confirm the importance of humor in various types of texts.

Characters, Information, and Topic

Characters and information were the most frequently mentioned book elements that participants indicated being the reason for them liking a book on the Book Log Survey (Chart 7.8). Participants indicated these preferences by circling or writing in the elements they liked about each book. For the End-of-Year Survey, which was more open-ended, participants were able to write any reason they liked the book in general.

After coding, characters were the most frequently noted reason for liking their top-ranked books, followed by topic.

Chart 7.8 Book Log Survey Literary Elements Liked and Enjoyed



Since most of the literary elements were related to fiction books, *information* seemed to be a comprehensive term and selection for most nonfiction books. More specifically, only eleven of the 33 nonfiction books did not have *information* listed as a reason for liking the book. The information in the nonfiction books liked and enjoyed by participants tended to be historical, scientific, or media-related (mostly science nonfiction and biographies, as discussed in the previous section). The only four nonfiction books liked and enjoyed that were not biographies or nonfiction science were *The History of Video Games* (Funk), *28 Days: Moments in Black History that Changed the World* (Smith), *Frontier Home* (Bial), and *World's Dumbest Crooks* (Zullo). The information in these four books was related to historical events/people/culture, video games and illegal behavior.

Although nonfiction books were the main type of text for which participants selected *information* as the reason they liked the book, the word *information* was sometimes selected for fiction books as well. For example, a student who wrote that he liked one of Judy Blume's books indicated that he liked it because it was a sequel from which he gained information about various characters and events. The information was not factual, but informative nonetheless. In another example, a participant claimed to like the information in *El Deafo* (Bell) because of what he learned about the experience of being deaf. This information, though told through a fictitious narrative, was still factual. During Jade's interview, she claimed that information should be included in any book she reads, stating, "I always, feel the need—if you're reading a book, you should get information from it—that's just *my* opinion" (Interview 3). It seems Jade was not alone; the information presented in the books was important to many of the participants.

Unlike the element of information, all of the books participants listed as their favorite books of the year because of the topic (End-of-Year survey) were nonfiction texts. More specifically, there were two books about basketball or a basketball player (one being a biography about LeBron James), two participants liked the topic of video games (Funk's aforementioned book), and one liked the topic of cooking in Wilkes' *Children's Quick and Easy Cookbook*. This finding reinforces the idea that many of the nonfiction books were liked because of the topic of the information presented.

More than the information or topic, characters were the most common book element referenced when a book was liked, enjoyed, and listed as a favorite (Book Log Survey; End-of-Year Survey). Children's book editor and publishing consultant,

Summer Edward (2013), points out that chapter books written for readers who are 7-10 years old tend to be character-driven. Similarly, this age group tends to like series books, which often involve "predictable language, action, and characters" (Stoodt, 1996, p. 66). Stoodt (1996) notes, "This predictability, coupled with following the same characters' adventures through several books, creates a familiarity that many children enjoy. Second, children identify readily with the characters in these books" (p. 66). Each of the interview participants claimed to like or love a character in their favorite book(s). Similarly, while not every member of the book clubs had a favorite moment, they all had a favorite character and many seemed adamant about their preference. Reasoning was varied. The most frequent related responses involved a character's actions, personality trait, behavior, appearance, or ability. Often it was a trait/ability the participants admired.

Characters' actions, behaviors, and personality seemed to be the most recurring themes in discussions about why participants liked particular book characters. Book club participants claimed to like Bud (*Bud, Not Buddy* (Curtis)) because he was "interesting," "honest," and was constantly involved in "fun escapades." With a hint of admiration, Daniel explained, "…he escaped from home. Like I don't think no, no other child or someone would do that" (Boys' Book Club 1). Similarly, the girls seemed to admire the main character and her female relatives (sisters, mother, grandmother). They described liking the characters in *One Crazy Summer* (Williams-Garcia) because they were "sassy" and "pretty," and because of the way they interacted with their sisters (following or supporting each other, protecting each other, keeping the younger sisters "in line," etc.). A hint of admiration is heard when Ashley exclaims, "My favorite character is Big Ma

because she is very sassy. This is what I love to be like; (group laughing) she is like—she is *on fleek, yo*" (Girls' Book Club 1). In another example, the girls talk admiringly about the moment Fern and Delphine request a glass of water from their mother; Tasha describes Fern as a character who is "sticking up for herself" (Girls' Book Club 1, 2).

The interview participants also demonstrated a sense of admiration regarding the characters' personalities and behaviors. Janelle mentioned liking Zendaya because she sings and dances better than the other main character in *Shake it Up: Step by Step* (Grace) (Interview 5). Brian admiringly claimed, "Martin is the type of person who doesn't give up. He's always looking or wants to settle something" (Interview 1). Some of the interview participants also found the characters to be funny or similar to them, as discussed in the previous section. Sometimes they chuckled (or laughed outright) when describing the characters, sometimes they smiled describing the characters' appeal, and sometimes their tone and proud mannerisms indicated the admiration or connection they felt for/to the characters. Regardless of the type of reaction, almost every participant I spoke with had a reaction to the mentioning of a favorite character. Even before seeing the overall results, I sensed that the characters were important to the participants' enjoyment experience.

As discussed in the previous section, Black/African American characters were relatively common in books liked and enjoyed by participants. This was especially the case with realistic fiction. The previous section details the prevalence of African American characters in non-comedic realistic fiction. However, it is equally important to note a relatively significant number of the comedic realistic fiction books (primarily

comic books, graphic novels, and multimodal visual texts) also involved Black/African American characters. Despite the students' passionate interest in humorous literature (as demonstrated by the Initial Survey), it was surprisingly difficult to find middle grade books for the class that fit the comedy genre and had a Black/African American child as the main character. For this reason, the fact that participants read, liked, and enjoyed the few books that came closest to meeting this description seems important to note.

Many of the comic books, graphic novels, and multimodal visual texts participants liked and enjoyed included Black/African American people as secondary characters. For example, *Fox Trot* and *Big Nate* center around a White boy as the main character, and both of them have best friends who are African American boys (Marcus and Teddy). Similarly, *Dork Diaries* centers around a White girl named Nikki (named after and based on the author's African American daughter in reality), and Nikki's two best friends are African American (Zoey) and Latina (Chloe) girls. Considering the *Captain Underpants* series, which was popular based on school library circulation records, the main characters are a duo including an African American boy named Harold. The only comic, graphic novel, or multimodal text with a Black/African American child as the sole primary character was Patterson's book, *Public School Superhero*. Interestingly, this was also the only comic, graphic novel, or multimodal text in the class library that was not considered to be part of the comedy genre. Much like other previously mentioned non-comedic realistic fiction books, Patterson's book included humorous moments, but more of the attention seemed to be given to the drama and/or seriousness of issues like bullying and peer pressure.

Two popular series that did not include any Black/African American main characters include *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Dear Dumb Diary*. I mention this observation to illustrate that I am not claiming the participants only read books or wanted to read books about Black/African American people. They read books across a wide range of racial representation, formats, and genres. However, there was a very clear, confirmed interest in and affection for reading about characters sharing their racial identity as well. Sometimes, children's genre or format interest made determinations about race less clear. For example, Jade, a student who proclaimed throughout the course of the study that she was finding herself to be an avid comic/graphic novel fan, enjoyed the *Fox Trot* series but never checked out the *Calvin and Hobbes* book located in the same basket. When I saw that she liked Amend's *Fox Trot* books, I began wondering if she would follow up that reading with Watterson's classic comic collection. After all, Amend alludes to *Calvin and Hobbes* in quite a few of his strips and Watterson wrote the forward for Amend's first book. Some would say Jason and Calvin, the main characters of the two comic collections, even share a few physical and personal traits in common.

The day Jade picked up the *Calvin and Hobbes* collection and perused the pages to determine whether she wanted to check out the book, I discreetly observed from a few feet away as I organized one of the class baskets. Jade flipped through for a minute or so, with what appeared to be clear interest, but eventually decided to check out *Maniac Magee* instead. I did not get a chance to ask her about this later, but I wondered if her decision to not check out *Calvin and Hobbes* was due to a reflection of her taste in genre, the absence of Black characters (as in *Fox Trot*), or a combination of the two potential

factors. As mentioned previously, Jade was not a fan of the fantasy genre, so perhaps the idea of a tiger coming to life in Calvin's imagination was not appealing to her. This consideration is one example of the way ideas related to genre and race occasionally intersected.

Other Aspects of Joyous Reading

At the end of the school year, I asked students how adults contribute to and/or obstruct joyful reading experiences. A colleague and I agreed that the responses fell into codes/categories: tone/behavior when reading, rewards/incentives, forced reading, types of books, and nothing. Many of the students wrote that they believe adults can make reading more joyful for them by reading with a certain tone or in a certain way. More specifically, they mentioned liking when adults read with expression, and in a "nice," "joking," or "cool" way. Conversely, they also described the way adults' tone while reading can negatively impact their experiences, stating they disliked adults reading "like you're a baby," "reading like a zombie," or reading with a "weird voice." Regarding other forms of adult behavior, two participants suggested external rewards/incentives like candy, while seven participants suggested adults not forcing them to read. For some of the participants, the concept of forced reading was more specific (e.g., telling them "read when you are bored," "making you read every day," telling you to sit down while you read, "[having] to read too many books," timed reading). Participants like Shauna requested instead, "Don't force us to read. Let us choose our books." Along with adult tone and forced vs. free reading, the types of books was one of the three most popular responses regarding ways adults contribute to and/or obstruct joyful reading.

Half of the participants wrote that "old" or "boring" books make their reading experiences less joyful (seven mentioned boring books, three mentioned old books). For example, one participant specifically exclaimed, "They make us read those 1950 mystery books, yo!" For her, genre also played a role. Some students combined the concepts of *boring* and *old* together (e.g., "giving us boring, old school books"). Most of the students who wrote that "boring" books make reading less joyful did not describe what they consider to be a boring book. Similarly, six students mentioned that adults contribute to making reading more enjoyable or joyful when they provide/read books that are "fun," "cool," "interesting," or specific to their individual tastes, but most did not describe what qualifies as a fun, cool, or interesting book. Conversely, one participant specifically mentioned science fiction books, a reminder of the dearth of this genre in the library.

The final question on the End-of-Year Survey began with the prompt, "I wish there were more books that…" My colleague and I agreed on four codes/categories and I noticed a fifth afterwards. The most common answers involved books that are scary, funny, expository/nonfiction, illustrated/visual, and alive. The desire for horror and comedy were reflective of the findings throughout the course of the study. Similarly, the desire for expository/nonfiction and illustrated texts was also not surprising given the findings of the study. One student specifically referenced the "anime" that was discouraged in class. Another interestingly suggested books that are "like comics but also give some true information." Her response speaks to the passionate interest in the visual comic format, but moves away from the more common realistic fiction she was presented with in comics and graphic novels in the class and school libraries.

Another format and genre requested was "American literature poetry." Requests for occasional "sad" books were mixed with a desire for "fun" books. Two students specifically mentioned pop-up books, a format I had not even considered while restructuring the library, and one that also highlights participants' passionate interest and affection for more visual formats. Jerrica specified that she wished there were more books that "had pop-out characters, but [are] advanced for me." This response reflects the participants' affection for the story characters and again demonstrates the power of texts emphasizing the visual aspect.

The responses related to pop-up books connected to an interview participant's claim (regarding a very similar question) that he wished books could come alive. More specifically, Charles stated, "It *would* be cool if, they just jumped out the book and came to *liiife*" (Interview 6). Similar to Jerrica's survey response, Charles' comment also reiterates the importance of characters. I asked him "What would make reading a more joyful experience for you?" Yet, he specifically said if "they" jumped out of the book and came to life, indicating a specific desire for the characters/creatures in the text to come alive. Another interview participant shared the desire for books to be more real, saying reading would be a more joyful experience if adults "do something [to] bring like, the book to life" (Interview 2). He suggested performing a play as one way to accomplish this goal. A third interview participant also suggested reading would be more joyful if it was more interactive, as described in the following transcript excerpt.

> **Brian:** What would make reading more joyful, isss… for me to…(laughs)
> **Sherea:** What were you thinking just now that made you chuckle? Cuz I want your *honest* answer. Go 'head!

> **Brian:** Is for me toooo—what would make me, is to um—cross out stuff in the book. And write my new stuff, like funny stuff. Like, when they said he would squirt ketchup onnn the bun, I'd be like he would ***dab*** (does the *dab* motion) ketchup on the bun.

Interestingly, each of the three interview responses related to making the book come alive were from the boys. The survey responses related to pop-up books both came from girls though, so this is not to say that only boys wish for more "alive" or tangible stories. I do find it important to note, however, that the more interactive, real world experience seemed to be emphasized by the male participants in the interview group.

When I asked the interview participants what kind of book they would want specifically written for them and their friends, they all mentioned plots that were reminiscent of the action-adventure genre. Every suggestion also included their friends as characters (though this may be because of the way the question was phrased). Excerpts of their responses are presented in Table 7.7. I was somewhat surprised that most, if not all, of the responses were related to the concept of adventure (some participants explicitly used this term, as demonstrated in Table 7.7). However, it is important to note that many of the adventures could also be considered realistic fiction (Daniel's, Jade's, Shaaron's). As Jade describes, they are more "our versions of adventures" (Interview 3). This notion becomes clearer when comparing it with the two fantasy-related responses (Charles and Brian's), which involve magic and superpowers. Still, the sense of adventure is a common, noteworthy theme.

Table 7.7 Responses to the Question About a Book Written Just for the Participants

Participant	**Response**
Brian (Int. 1)	"Superheroes… it's just like they're in the movie… good superrr-super people, fighting *other* super people, and then once one of the groups finish or win, they all…get together and… cut it out"

Daniel (Int. 2)	"adventure…like, if the parents left you by yourself, and the kids went on somewhere, like the waterparrrk—that's surprising—and they do all this crazy stuff, and then they have to make it home before their parents come home."
Jade (Int. 3)	**"**going on adventures… but it's *realistic*… like, a *problem*, or a dilemma that's going on, but… um, we—we should, try to sol—um, make sure that it's fine… it's sort of our…versions of, you know, adventures, not always seeing ponies or being attacked by, um, talking iguanas… it's also in *our* community"
Shaaron (Int. 4)	**"**hooowww, *me* and my friends, went on a journey annndd we got lost in the *woods* while we were therrrre."
Janelle (Int. 5)	**"**me and my friends [make] up this camp… all girls… in…uhhhh, Mississippi."
Charles (Int. 6)	**"…***us*, finding some kind of… *magical* portal in our basement, that-that leads into a magical world… where *any*thing is possible."

The types of books that participants said they wanted and wished for highlight a desire for books to live and break past the 2-dimensional wall. They asked for adventure, which evokes a sense of movement, which further evokes a sense of life. Similarly, the requests for pop-up books and the wish for books to come to life seem to speak specifically to the desire for books to enter participants' worlds more. I am reminded of Shaaron's description of how horror stories "jump out" (Interview 4). Stories that are exciting seem to meet students where they are. The comments regarding adults' tone while reading similarly connect to the idea of liveliness, as demonstrated when participants wrote about the desire for adults to read with expression and not like "zombie[s]." Many of the descriptions further the idea of the desire for books to live.

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSIONS

Summary and Discussion of Findings

"If you know me, you might heard that I like…" –Brian

Although there were favorite genres and formats, participants liked and enjoyed reading a variety of texts. Yet, combining various sources (surveys, interviews, book club discussions, observations, and circulation records), it became clearer which types of books were favored in the class. Participants liked and enjoyed chapter books more than picture books, but with the exception of horror fiction chapter books, their favorite books were primarily visual texts. Their passionate interest in and affection for graphic novels, multimodal visual texts (especially journals/diaries), and comics was evident across sources, and these types of books were among the most circulated books despite their considerably limited accessibility. Similarly, "favorite" and most frequently circulating

books/series included picture books, and the chapter books that frequented such lists, excluding horror stories, were primarily visual texts as well (e.g., the *Who Was*… series). Even as genres varied, the power of the visual in text often remained across categories.

Popular genres were realistic fiction, comedy, horror, biography, and nonfiction science (in order of popularity). More than half of the realistic fiction liked and enjoyed was comedic, but more serious stories of a character's everyday life were also appreciated. As Jade described, there was a desire for stories that are "realistic," familiar/relatable, and reflective of "our community" (Interview 3). Participants like Jade, Brian, and Janelle enjoyed seeing themselves reflected in the characters in realistic fiction. People were also a large part of the nonfiction category of books liked and enjoyed, as demonstrated by the high interest and notable affection for biographies. Although there was more of a focus on people living in the past based on student interest, many of the students also read about people living in the present. Regardless, there was an interest in what life was like during times when participants "[weren't] there" (Daniel, Interview 2), and an emphasis on the story of the people more than the events.

Horror was by far one of the most popular genres, especially considering the relative dearth of books in this genre compared to others (e.g., realistic fiction, comedy). Participants like Brian and Shaaron mentioned finding this genre of literature funny, exciting, and realistic in light of its fantastical aspects. The realities of the literature reflect horror's position as perhaps the realest subgenre of fantasy. Participants also requested, liked, and enjoyed expository nonfiction for what Charles described as the

"real facts" (Interview 6). Most often, this expository nonfiction involved animals or (to a lesser extent) geology and general science.

Of the nonfiction books, information and topic were deemed the most important elements, but overall, a book's characters were considered the most frequent and favored element regarding books participants liked and enjoyed. Many of the characters were admired for their humor, style, and attitude (e.g., persevering, "sassy," brave, tough). Characters are a major part of series books, so it was no surprise that series were also very popular among participants. The most popular series (e.g., *Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Who Was…*, *Goosebumps*, *National Geographic*, *Big Nate*, *Abby Hayes*, *Bad Kitty*, *Scary Stories*) were reflective of the genres participants favored.

Overall, there was a recurring pattern/emphasis related to visual literacy, humor, reality, and people. Across formats, the power of the image remained clear. Genres such as realistic fiction, horror, biography, and nonfiction science are genres that are reflective of people's real lives. Even though the horror books were often part of the larger fantasy genre, it is perhaps the most realistic (or one of the most realistic) of the fantasy subgenres. Similarly, the affection for realistic fiction, biographies, and characters hints towards an interest and emphasis on people. Participants often seemed to want to read books about human beings (past or present, real or imagined) that they could relate to, connect with, learn from/about, and admire. Comedy was a key factor in popular formats, genres, and character descriptions/imaginings. Across sources and aspects of literature, these patterns (visual literacy, humor, reality, and people) remained dominant.

Other factors that significantly contributed to participants' affection for or enjoyment of literature include accessibility, environment, peer sharing or opinions, adults' reading behaviors, and the ability to choose books for themselves. Accessibility was often limited by leveling policies, adult disapproval, and censorship, but it was redeemed by peer sharing and rebellious reading practices (e.g., reading under desks, bringing books from home, covertly swapping books between class periods). Interview participants noted a desire to read in the comfort of the outdoors or environments similar to home (where there are couches/beds). Survey participants highlighted adults' ability to contribute to or detract from joyful reading experiences with their tone, practices (e.g., forced reading, incentivized reading, free reading), and the types of books they provide. It was the latter impact that mattered most to me regarding the purpose of this study.

Limitations

"...give [us] books that [we] like, like sci-fi." –Trent, End-of-Year Survey

Despite my best efforts, mistakes were occasionally made and findings were relatively limited. I gleaned valuable insights from these lessons and limitations. There are so many types of books. I originally thought I was including almost all of them, but I realized over time there were significant gaps in the library collection. Science fiction is by far the most regrettably limited genre. There were less than ten books that qualified, and most were part of *The Magic School Bus* picture book series. An oversight on my part, I should have included a series like *Star Wars: Jedi Academy*, which was even mentioned by two participants upon my arrival. I included a number of science books with all students in mind, but especially the boys; however, almost all of them were

expository nonfiction. Somehow the science fiction genre was overlooked in the process of restructuring the library, and if I could conduct the study again, it would be made more of a priority.

Another genre that was less visible in the classroom library was general nonfiction, which I am defining (for this purpose) as expository texts not necessarily related to science or history. I quickly learned upon arrival that many students across levels and genders wanted to read more informational texts in general. When some of them mentioned "information" books to me in January, I asked for more details and added primarily science nonfiction books with their requests in mind. I did not understand fully until reviewing the data that many of them seemed to be referring to books about things and places like video games, cultural practices in other countries, food/cooking, hair care, how to play a particular sport, etc. Since the Initial Survey did not indicate this passionate interest when I was in the planning stages of restructuring the library, this was another limited subgenre that could have potentially been liked and enjoyed by more participants. For example, during Janelle's interview (Interview 5), we were discussing *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* and what qualifies as a book about Black/African American people. I pointed out that I noticed she liked and enjoyed the *Dyamonde Daniel* series (Grimes), but when I asked her why she would want to read more books about Black/African American people, she spoke specifically about a nonfiction book regarding Black hairstyles. She commented, "I have this book at home, it's a book, it's a African American book—it talk about haiirr, and I like to do haiirr" (Interview 5). Throughout the course of researching, I learned more and more that

participants would have likely benefitted from expository books less (directly) related to school subjects.

Regarding book formats, I did not include pop-up books, non-school-related guides (e.g., how to play a sport or bake cookies), individual comic issues, dramatic plays, or 3-D books, which results hint could have all been popular among participants. Despite my addition of comics, graphic novels, journals/diaries and other multimodal visual texts, there was still a relatively small number of these formats. Granted, there were no books representing these formats at all when I arrived in January; this was not a consideration overlooked. Instead, I simply wish I could have provided many more books like those that were included. In hindsight, I learned how publishing and (mostly) schooling norms impacted my own inclusion of texts. When I was adding and purchasing books, for example, there were not many formats available or promoted beyond typical picture books or chapter books and novels. Multimodal visual books and graphic novels were surely present (likely more than ever before in our nation's literary and/or schooling history), but the numbers paled in comparison to more traditionally included and awarded/praised texts.

Similarly, there was a very clear dearth of books about African American characters in particular genres. By far, the easiest genre to find Black characters in was history and/or historical fiction. This was less surprising when considering the types of children's books about Black/African American people that often receive awards and recognition. The nine Newbery winning books about African American people or characters are either set in the past or considered realistic fiction (the former applying to

more than half of those nine books). With more of a balance regarding realistic fiction, the Coretta Scott King award winners have also been almost entirely historical (fiction or nonfiction) or realistic fiction. Genres like horror, fantasy, science fiction, adventure, and comedy rarely, if ever, make the lists.

More notably, the realistic fiction on these lists tends to be serious and (primarily) non-comedic, addressing issues like death, teen pregnancy, adoption, poverty, drugs, cancer, etc. While some of these books have comedic moments, most are primarily considered to be general or dramatic realistic fiction. As a result, perhaps I should have been less surprised to find that most of the teacher, librarian, bookstore, and website recommendations included books in history-related or realistic fiction genres. However, I highlight this observation mostly to emphasize the difficulty involved in searching for middle grade books (especially chapter books) featuring Black/African American characters that were part of other subgenres. Knowing many of the participants were interested in or liking/enjoying comedy and horror stories, as well as books about Black/African American people, I consider the aforementioned finding to be a limitation.

Another limitation was the classroom leveling policy, which I did not foresee when planning my study (despite my clear recognition of the politics of education). Understandably, the teacher wanted students to read on their independent reading level. She believed this would improve their reading skills, which likely was a reality for many students. As a former teacher, I engaged in similar practices for similar reasons. However, as a researcher who cared more about joy than reading skills, the common practices of institutional education clashed with and potentially obstructed my research

aims and exploration in a variety of ways. For example, *Goosebumps* was requested by all of the students who were assigned to the third-grade reading level basket, and even though some *Goosebumps* books are written on a third-grade level, their collective assignment to the fourth grade basket prevented these participants from being able to access the series until the very end of the school year. Similarly, girls who were assigned to first and third grade baskets requested journals/diaries that were mostly unavailable for their reading level. Fortunately, I had access to school library records, which I attempted to use as a triangulation method, but the records also served as very informative reminders/notes regarding the ways I limited the library myself and what types of books students were checking out beyond the classroom when they were not constrained by leveling policies.

Regardless of the types of books available, another limitation is that the large quantity of books accessible to students made it virtually impossible to read and be truly knowledgeable about every single text. I created a database to help with this effort, but there were so many books time did not allow me to know in-depth. This became clear while talking with Shaaron, for example, about a song in Schwartz's *Scary Stories* series. I was familiar with the book, but forgot it included songs. I would have liked to explore this further but found my limited knowledge of the details of all 700-900 books encountered throughout this study prevented this deeper analysis. My years studying children's literature proved helpful in this regard, but it still was not enough to thoroughly and confidently know every book in-depth.

One final note regarding the study's limitations is that this research is reflective of a sample group within larger populations. Results do not speak for every Black/African American student in the world, or even every Black/African American fourth grade student at Clayton Elementary School. This limitation was expected though, as the study sought to explore the research topic with participants from a specific sample group. Still, it is important to note. As Cook-Sathers (2002) reminds us, "We need repeatedly to ask these questions of all students in every context because student answers are neither universal or monolithic" (p. 13). The results of this research are hopefully a helpful resource to consider, as that was the goal from the outset, but the results should not be viewed as permanent and applicable to all children (or groups of children).

Implications for Research, Practice, Policy, and Future Work

One of the largest implications for research related to this topic is the importance of accounting for and acknowledging the role of race (and its intersections). Despite general findings claiming that children tend to like or want mystery books and animal fiction books, this was not necessarily the case for Black/African American children in my study (or others acknowledging race, as described in Chapter 3). Animals were a major topic in nonfiction science books liked and enjoyed, but this was the least popular of the top genres liked and enjoyed (despite the high availability). Mystery books were among the least liked and enjoyed genres, and with one exception, animals in fiction were only liked and enjoyed if the animal was the main character and anthropomorphized. Regarding gender, much of the research did not account for the intersectionality of race and gender in relation to this research topic. More research is needed in this regard.

In the future, I would like to review my findings more from a Critical Race Theory lens. As stated previously, doing so was my original intention because so much of the problem and landscape is connected to issues of race and racism. However, time did not allow certain in-depth considerations in this regard. For example, even after my study concluded, I was finding out more and more information about the books included in the class library. I chose to include *Dork Diaries* because it was one of the only multimodal books/series I knew of written by an African American author. Having skimmed and discussed the series before with youth I have worked with over the years, I knew the main character was White. However, I did not know the secondary characters were girls of color. Also, knowing humor, movement/verve, creativity, and language are important and very much present in the African American community, I would like to consider how those aspects presented themselves in the participants' favorite books, especially those featuring solely White characters. Since the participants were limited in terms of the genres featuring Black/African American characters, I would like to explore the aspects of Black/African American culture that they enjoyed and still were able to find despite the limitations.

A comment made by Jeff Kinney, author/creator of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, further demonstrates the reasoning for my desire to explore more in-depth regarding race and culture. Kinney notes, "I think that what I did was create a very particular format where the interaction of text and comics creates a rhythm, a call-and-response that's essential to the humor" (Cavna, 2015). Call-and-response is prevalent in Black/African American tradition/culture (Allen and Boykin, 1992; Collins, 2000). Similarly, rhythmic

movement is often considered to be a dimension of African American culture (Allen and Boykin, 1992). Might this help (partially) explain the popularity of the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series among participants? Similarly, the peer book sharing I witnessed may have potential connections to the communalism valued in Black/African American culture. While other factors may also explain the findings of this research, I would simply like to explore them further with more complex considerations of race.

Another implication for research is the need to theorize genre and enjoyment in ways that are specific to children's literature and/or the school literacy context. Findings of this study demonstrate that affect played a large role in enjoyment. Engagement seems to play a role in the enjoyment process as well, but enjoyment should not be limited by the inclusion/definition of engagement alone; enjoyment is more than engagement. I return to the idea of what it means to feel simultaneously caught and free in a book world, to be so lost in a book that the physical world disappears (somewhat, at the very least). While it is impossible to truly know participants' innermost thoughts and feelings as I do my own, what they described is a positive feeling that is similar to the aforementioned description, and for some, includes a desire to share that feeling with others. In order to cure and prevent "readicide" (Gallagher, 2010), we should know what types of books keep children wanting to read.

In terms of implications for the world of children's literature and publishing, this study confirms some potential genres and formats worth exploring further and producing in higher quantities. As mentioned in the previous section, I was unable to access books in certain genres that had Black/African people as primary characters. Favorite formats

and genres involved predominantly visual texts, horror, and comedy, but finding "mirrors" (Sims Bishop, 1990) for the participants in this regard was an incredibly difficult task. This is especially problematic when considering that the story element that contributed most to participants' liking and enjoying a book was the book's characters and that from the beginning, they showed a passionate interest in reading about Black/African American people. Many of the visual texts were comedic realistic fiction, and some participants found horror to be humorous at times. As a result, the emphasis on comedic stories is very clear. An interest in or affection for humorous books is also one of the very few findings that the Literature Review highlights as a commonality across races and genders. Why is there not more literature in this genre for this particular age group featuring Black/African American primary characters? I believe authors and publishers can help fill in this crucial gap. How many more avid readers would there potentially be if children's literature really was diverse across genres? Access matters. As Sims Bishop (1983), McNair (2003), and Myers (2014) also remind us, children can only choose from what is available.

The issue of access also directly presents a currently unresolved dilemma for researchers. I cannot claim participants do or do not like books they are unable to access. In this way, we need to make as many types of books as possible available to participants before making relatively broad claims; how else can we ensure participants are truly selecting their favorite books? This became even clearer to me as I reviewed library circulation records and learned about formats and titles I had not considered including in

the class library. Again, the role of access proves to be especially crucial regarding the topic of books children like and enjoy.

In terms of policy and practice, when we limit their access, some children give up fighting to be the readers we claim we (as adults/educators) want them to be. Fortunately, many of them rebel instead. Most of the types of books participants in this study showed passionate interest in, favored, liked, and/or enjoyed are part of historically banned formats and genres. Comics, for example, have been heavily censored and banned for nearly a century (Lopes, 2006; Sanders, 2013). As a result, graphic novels and multimodal visual formats that incorporate aspects of comic literature are also commonly underappreciated formats. Books like *Captain Underpants* continue to be banned in schools around the country, and it joins the company of *Goosebumps* as a series frequently mentioned on the American Library Association's lists of most banned books (Pilkey, 2015; McCort, 2016). Series books are also frequently underappreciated and considered less literary than traditional stand-alone novels despite their obvious and long-lasting appeal (Barone, 2011; Ward & Young, 2007).

Sanacore and Palumbo (2008) emphasize, "when children read materials that interest them, they are more apt to read often" (p. 68); yet, "Regrettably, what students are interested in reading is often unavailable in classroom and school library collections" (p. 69). What impact does this have on students? As this study confirms, many of them read the banned, censored, and unapproved texts anyway. They read around us, literally and figuratively. They share books with each other and sneak the books adults snatch from their hands, shake their heads at, and remove from library collections. What does it

mean though, to feel the need to hide your literary enjoyment? Surely, the message contradicts our aims.

Teachers, authors, researchers, librarians, parents, and the general public want children to read more, right? That seems to be the common desire, and it seems children want to read too. Despite the many ways adults obstruct joyous reading, many of the participants want to read and enjoy reading (given reasonable conditions). As adults, we are often their roadblocks to literary enjoyment as much as we are their guides to it. Again, leveling has its purposes. I understand the need for children to select books they can readily understand and that challenge them. However, many advanced readers wanted to read books below their reading level and many struggling readers wanted to try reading books above their level. Some students in the class persisted and rebelled against the leveling system, but there were also some students who seemed to quit searching. For one student in particular, this visibly led to less interest in reading.

When they were allowed to choose whatever books they wanted from the school library or, at the end of the school year, from the class library, participants usually selected books within 1-2 grade levels of their reported reading level. It seems the difficulty level potentially prevented enjoyment and consistent circulation of particular books without adult intervention. Perhaps, a better way to approach the practice of leveling is to provide more of a range for books and to inform students about how to gauge their own reading levels without necessarily obstructing their access to literature.

There is also a need to find out more about our students as readers and allow them the space to consider their own reader identities. Some of the participants remarked how

the constant discussion of what they liked to read and/or the inclusion of a variety of formats/genres essentially pushed them to find the types of books they like most. This was reflected in interviews and surveys. Jade learned she loved comics and graphic novels and detested fantasy, and Brian fell in love with biographies. It seemed the more books they had access to, the more they were able/willing to explore different genres of literature (especially if their peers were reading other genres). Determining what types of books they liked led to some students visibly reading more and/or being more excited about the act of reading.

Sometimes the teacher and I thought we knew what students liked and were completely wrong. There were books and series they read that we did not even know existed or that they were reading. Perhaps, very brief interviews/surveys can be set up throughout the school year for the teacher to learn more about class interests and the students to learn more about who they are as evaluators and readers of children's literature. Half of the class library could be set up based strictly on the results of those surveys/interviews soon after the school year begins. Also, the participants knew more about what each other were reading than the adults, and they influenced each other's reading choices in a number of ways (e.g., verbal suggestions, observation of book covers, swapping books). This behavior demonstrates potential for the success of peer book sharing programs and communal literacy events that enable children to make suggestions to each other and talk about their books with their peers and families.

While I am not suggesting every moment of the school day should involve joyous reading, I am suggesting more time should be devoted to it. Participants at schools like

Clayton spend almost half of the school day reading books adults demand they read and participating in associated activities. Often times, the books are outdated, as a participant points out when exclaiming on the End-of-Year Survey, "They make us read those 1950 mystery books, yo!" in response to how adults obstruct joyous reading. Books that enter the school curriculum are usually determined by adults, without the input of the students who will be expected to read them. Perhaps, a better balance of institutional aims and students' rights could involve asking the students about books they like/enjoy throughout the school year, and making some of those books part of the curriculum. An alternative could involve continuous literature circles that allow students to choose a book within varying genres. At the very least, it seems a fair amount of time (more than 10-15 minutes) should be devoted to students being able to read books they want to read.

I understand most teachers do not have control of broader school/nation-wide policies in this regard. The suggestions I have made throughout this chapter may require school/district/state/federal support. Simply reading outdoors and having more home-like, comfortable furniture in their class were two wishes participants shared, for example. Those two desires are not incredibly expensive, especially when considering what could potentially be gained in exchange. However, teachers attending to those tasks may require the approval/support of their administration. Therefore, the policies made for schools remain of critical importance in the fight for more joyous reading.

As the participants confirmed, the role of the text is a crucial factor in creating an atmosphere of joyous reading. Every classroom should have a reading corner with a diverse library collection (especially in schools without broader library access). Much

like my stance on every child deserving a balance of mirror, window, and sliding glass door books (Sims Bishop, 1990), I believe children deserve and have the right to relevant literature in good condition, as well as access to the types of books they desire to read more generally. Admittedly, I still wonder about where we should draw the line though, if we must. Do we prevent students from reading historically racist and ideologically damaging books? Is it in the students' best interest to remove books about sensitive topics like rape and abuse, or is it only in our best interest as adults? Do we allow books that include characters that demean each other or potentially introduce children to harsh vocabulary we prefer to keep them unaware of (if they are indeed unaware)? I continue to wonder and remain uncertain, but ultimately, I remember Shauna's plea on the End-of-Year Survey: "Don't force us to read. Let us choose our books."

Conclusion

"Adults can help make reading enjoyable just like Ms. Mosley did. She gave students books that they've never read but wanted to. That's how she made me like books more."
– Scott

Conducting this research study, I learned a lot about what I sought to explore. As is often the case, the unexpected results and experiences perhaps impacted me most. This study taught me a lot about the participants' interests and affections regarding book formats, genres, and elements, but I also learned just how little we, as adults (researchers, teachers, librarians, etc.), tend to know about our children's specific reading interests and affections. If we, as a community, want children to read more and/or enjoy reading, knowing the books they want and like matters significantly. It is also of the utmost importance that we provide them with access to such books.

Furthermore, the study confirmed for me that every child is a potential reader and those who are not reading in the classroom are likely either reading out of our direct line of vision or have not been introduced to the books they most enjoy yet. Shaaron pointed this out when she informed me that she liked reading more after the library restructuring because she found that she really likes scary books. Scott's response on the End-of-Year Survey (presented at the beginning of this section) also hints towards this idea. For the participants who seemingly were not impacted in similar ways, the search for the books and environment that could be the change for them continues. Although, I share this consideration with the understanding that perhaps not every child will love reading, and many who like it may not prioritize it over other pleasurable activities, such as playing a game outside with friends (Mellon, 1992). I am not necessarily trying to change that, but I am definitely trying to contribute to preventing the "readicide" (Gallagher, 2010) that plagues our schools.

Levin reminds us, "Students already have a voice…. Don't give them a voice. Give them our schools" (Strauss, 2014). With that suggestion in mind, I recognize the reporting of my findings is not enough to make all classrooms places of joy and joyous reading. I want my life's work to continue to strive towards that goal though, and this research study was a significant part of the process. I am forever grateful for the voices the participants provided, and I hope I presented their passionate interests, affection, and enjoyment as accurately as possible. Mostly, I hope the study and the findings contributed to making the children's classroom/world a more joyous place to read and be, for that remains one of the ultimate aspirations of my work.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Teacher's 100 Book Challenge log Example

("waves" far right column)

Challenge

Each Step represents 15 minutes of reading.

ATTENTION HOME COACHES: Please sign only if you *heard* or *saw* the student reading.

Step #	Title	Date	Pages	Level	Coach's Signature	Home
61	Everything Sharks	3/29/16	25	Or		
62	Everything Sharks	3/30/16	32	Or		
63	Everything Sharks	3/30/16	32	Or		
64	Public School Superheros	3/31/16	15	Or		
65	Public School Superhero	4/1/16	17	Or		
66	Public School Superhero	4/1/16	17	Or		
67	Public School Superheros	4/1/16	20	Or		
68	Goosebumps	5/4/16	34	Or		
69	Goosebumps	5/4/16	34	Or		
70	I am LeBron James	5/6/16	17	Or		
71	I am LeBron James	5/6/16	17	Or		
72	I am LeBron James	5/9/16	21	Or		
73	I am LeBron James	5/9/16	21	Or		
74	I am LeBron James	5/10/16	30	Or		
75	I am LeBron James	5/10/16	30	Or		
76						
77						
78						
79						
80						

Total # of Steps to date = _____. This number divided by 4 = _____ Total Hours of Reading

Please indicate which Steps the reader read at home with an asterisk (*) in the "Home" column.

Appendix B: Book Log Survey

Book Log Survey *(Circle your responses)* **NAME:** ______________________

Book Title (First 3-4 words)	**Book Author (Last Name, First Initial)**	**Did you enjoy the book?**	**How much do you like this book?**	**If you liked the book, what did you like most about it?**
		Yes No	It's great! I like it. I don't like it. I hate it!	Setting Theme Language Tone Characters Topic Information Plot Other: ______________
		Yes No	It's great! I like it. I don't like it. I hate it!	Setting Theme Language Tone Characters Topic Information Plot Other: ______________
		Yes No	It's great! I like it. I don't like it. I hate it!	Setting Theme Language Tone Characters Topic Information Plot Other: ______________
		Yes No	It's great! I like it. I don't like it. I hate it!	Setting Theme Language Tone Characters Topic Information Plot Other: ______________
		Yes No	It's great! I like it. I don't like it. I hate it!	Setting Theme Language Tone Characters Topic Information Plot Other: ______________

Appendix C: Message Box (Class Library)

Appendix D: Book Log Survey Addendum

ENJOY
(to flow; when you like it so much you get lost in the book; you forget who and where you are and what time it is, and you want to keep doing it)

SETTING
(where and when the story/events took place)

THEME
(the message the book is trying to send to people who read it)

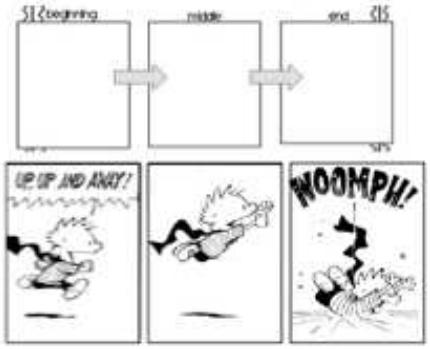
TONE
(the way the book made you feel)

LANGUAGE
(the way the people in the book talked)

CHARACTERS
(the people in the book)

TOPIC
(what the book was mostly about)

PLOT
(what happened in the book; action & events)



INFORMATION
(new things you learned from the book)

Appendix E: Initial Survey

Name: _____

Directions: *Circle your response to each question.*

1) How do you feel about reading books?

I love reading books! Books are okay… I do **not** like reading books

2) What types of books do you like <u>most</u>?

Poetry/Rhyming Picture books Chapter books

Journals/Diaries Series Graphic novels/Comic books

3) What is the title of your favorite book or series?

_____

4) Do you want to read more books about African American people from the past?

Yes! A little Not really No!

5) Do you want to read more books about African American people living today?

Yes! A little Not really No!

6) I really like stories that are… **(*You can circle more than 1*)**

historical scary funny factual/scientific

full of drama mysterious full of action musical (people sing & dance)

out of this world (imagined/sci-fi/fantasy)

7) Are you and your parents Black/African American?

Yes No One of my parents is African American, and the other is not

Appendix F: End-of-Year Survey

End-of-Year Survey

Part 1. Library Books You've Read This Year

1) Place a checkmark next to your 5 favorite books from this year.
2) Order them 1-5 (#1 being the best).
3) Write why you liked each one (on a separate piece of paper).

Part 2. Enjoyment Questionnaire

1) **How do you feel about reading books?**

I love reading books! Books are okay… I do **not** like reading books

2) **Some people say you enjoy a book <u>when you get lost in it</u> (focused, want to read more of it, forget where you are, who you are, and/or what time it is). Some say you enjoy a book <u>when it feels good or you want to share it with other people</u>. What do you think?**

3) **How can adults help make reading more enjoyable or joyful?**

4) **Are there things adults do that make reading less enjoyable or joyful?**

5) **I wish there were more books that…**

Appendix G: Interview Guide

Interview Questions/Prompts*

Hi (insert name)! Thank you for bringing some of your favorite books today. I'm really excited to talk about these books and why you like them, as well as other books you may enjoy and how you know you enjoy them. I have 10-15 questions I want to ask you, and I want you to try to give me your most thoughtful, honest answers, okay? If you do not understand something I ask you, just let me know or tilt your head like this (demonstrate). Are you ready to share with me?

1) What makes this book one of your favorite books?

2) Describe it: How do people talk? How do they live? What do they look like in your mind?

3) Who is your favorite character in this book? Why?

4) Think about some other books you like that you did not bring in today. Are they like the books you're holding in your hands now in any way?

5) What kinds of books do you like the most?

6) What kinds of books do you like the least?

7) If you could have a book written just for you and your friends, what would it be about?

8) Do you remember how we describe what it means to *enjoy* a book? Did you feel that way with any of the books you brought in today? (If yes,) Can you describe a moment when you were enjoying a specific part of the book? What was happening in the book? How did you know you were lost in it?

9) What kind of environment do you need to get lost in a book?

10) Other than the class definition, how else do you know when you're enjoying a book?

11) When do you feel happiest reading?

- Describe the environment, who's there, who's reading, and whether the book is being read silently or aloud

12) Question(s) just for the individual interviewee, then: What would make reading a more joyful experience for you?

Appendix H: Vocabulary Guide

NAME: _____

Bud, Not Buddy — Christopher Paul Curtis

Vocabulary

#	Vocab Word	Definition or Synonym	P. #	Chapter
1.	*Depression*	Time period when people have very little money	2	1
2.	*Glum*	Sad	2	1
3.	*Commence*	To begin	5	1
4.	*Engagement*	Plan to attend an event	6	1
5.	*Luxurious*	Extremely comfortable, fancy, or enjoyable	7	1
6.	*Bucking*	To fight against; resist	10	2
7.	*Welt*	A red, swollen mark left on a person's skin after being hit	11	2
8.	*Blubbery*	Puffy, fat, or thick	11	2
9.	*Provoked*	To purposely make someone angry or annoyed	11	2
10.	*Locomotive*	The part of the train that pushes or pulls the other cars	12	2
11.	*Urchin*	A mischievous child (usually dressed in rags)	12	2
12.	*Wallop*	Strike or hit something very hard	17	2
13.	*Nudge*	A light touch or push	20	2
14.	*Terrified*	Very afraid	24	3
15.	*Budged*	Moved slightly	26	3
16.	*Rafters*	Slabs of wood that form the roof (picture on back)	26	3
17.	*Revved*	Increased in energy or speed	26	3
18.	*Stake*	A sharp piece of wood or metal	27	3
19.	*Revenge*	To hurt a person who hurt someone else	33	4
20.	*Cupboard*	A cabinet or closet	33	4
21.	*Spigot*	Water faucet	33	4
22.	*Valve*	A device that controls how a liquid moves through a pipe	34	4
23.	*Useless*	Having no ability, skill, or purpose	37	5
24.	*Saddle*	A seat tied to the back of a horse	39	5
25.	*Intended*	Planned	41	5
26.	*Bud*	A tight knot on a plant that grows into a leaf or flower	42	5
27.	*Privilege*	A special right or advantage	46	6
28.	*Blended*	Mixed or combined	54	7
29.	*Whiff*	A quick smell of something	54	7
30.	*Stricken*	Seriously affected by an unpleasant feeling or situation	56	7
31.	*Matrimonial*	Relating to marriage	56	7
32.	*Radiating*	Shining; spreading light, heat, or energy out in waves	57	7
33.	*Practical*	Able to be done or used	58	7
34.	*Organ*	Instrument with rows of pipes (like a piano or keyboard)	66	8
35.	*Dimple*	A crease or dent in someone's skin	74	8
36.	*Raid*	A sudden attack on an enemy	81	8
37.	*Alias*	A fake name or identity	86	8
38.	*Gory*	Bloody and violent	90	9
39.	*Critter*	A living creature (person or animal)	99	10
40.	*Ventriloquist*	A person who talks without moving his/her mouth a lot, so that it seems the words are coming from somewhere else	101	10
41.	*(at) ease*	Relaxed	103	10
42.	*Passenger*	A person who is traveling but is not the driver	105	10
43.	*Telegram*	A message sent through wires and electrical connections	106	10

NAME: _____

Bud, Not Buddy — Christopher Paul Curtis


Locomotive

Rafters

Spigot

Accordion

Bud

"giant fiddle" (double bass)

"mouth organ" (harmonica)

NAME: _____

One Crazy Summer Vocabulary — Rita Williams-Garcia

#	Vocab Word	Definition or Synonym	P. #	Chapter
1.	*Spectacle*	Unpleasant center of attention	2	1
2.	*Shrill*	High-pitched, piercing sound	5	1
3.	*Toting*	Carrying	6	1
4.	*Descent*	To go down or decline	9	2
5.	*Altitude*	Height above sea level	9	2
6.	*Bay*	A body of water connected to an ocean or lake	9	2
7.	*Savor*	To enjoy something unhurriedly	12	2
8.	*Stewardess*	A woman whose job is to help passengers on a plane	11	2
9.	*Warble*	To sing with often-changing notes	16	3
10.	*Appalled*	To be shocked or horrified	16	3
11.	*Barrier*	Something that blocks access	18	3
12.	*Beret*	A flat, round hat	20	3
13.	*Scrutiny*	Careful observation or inspection	26	4
14.	*Smirk*	To smile in an irritatingly smug, conceited, or silly way	34	5
15.	*Fugitive*	Someone who has run away	36	5
16.	*Plea*	An urgent request or excuse	40	6
17.	*Formulated*	Created a plan or proposal	41	6
18.	*Seize*	Take hold of by force suddenly	44	7
19.	*Retreated*	Moved back or ran away	46	7
20.	*Reliable*	Able to be counted on; dependable	50	8
21.	*Loan*	Borrowed item	50	8
22.	*Indignant*	Being angry about something unfair	57	9
23.	*Revolution*	To turn, rebel or overthrow a government/system	57	9
24.	*Militant*	Aggressive or involved in fighting	57	9
25.	*Inseparable*	Not able to be separated	60	9
26.	*Invaded*	Enter in large numbers and spread by force	58	9
27.	*Lanky*	Awkwardly thin and tall	62	10
28.	*Steer*	To guide or direct	63	10
29.	*Refrain*	To hold back or repeat	66	10
30.	*Beckon*	To signal someone to come	70	11
31.	*Envious*	To want what someone else has; jealous	70	5
32.	*Sullenly*	Moving slowly or quietly in an angry or sad way	70	11
33.	*Frantically*	Out of control; all over the place; excited or hurried	72	11
34.	*Declaration*	Official announcement or speech	73	11
35.	*Baffled*	Confused/puzzled	78	12
36.	*Infiltrate*	To intrude; to enter and spread in a sneaky way	78	12
37.	*Communist*	People who believe	79	12
38.	*Bawling*	To weep/cry loudly	83	13
39.	*Indulgence*	Something allowed that's a great comfort or a treat	89	14
40.	*Amiss*	Not quite right; inappropriate or out of place	93	14
41.	*Defiant*	To go against authority; disobedient	97	15
42.	*Accountable*	To be responsible for something/someone	98	15
43.	*Intention*	Plan, goal, or purpose	103	16
44.	*Toll*	The price people pay	103	16
45.	*Sniping*	Attacking someone using words	104	16
46.	*Dreaded*	Feared and/or worried about	105	16

NAME: _____

One Crazy Summer Vocabulary — Rita Williams-Garcia

Muhammad Ali (a.k.a Cassius Clay)

Huey Newton in chair

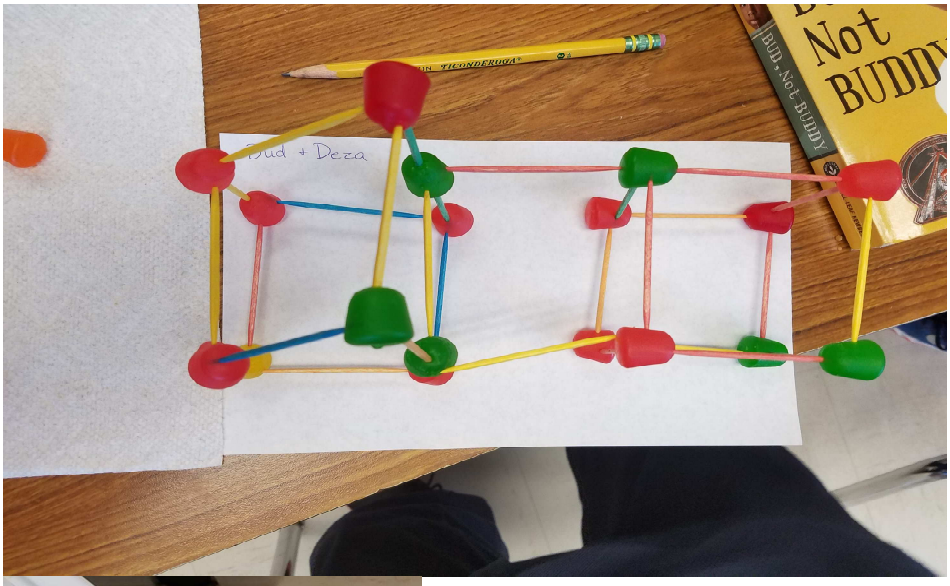
Golden Gate Bridge (in California)

Lil Bobby

A phone booth

Black Panthers Breakfast Program

Appendix I: Book Club Crafts and Materials



*Name scratched out for privacy

Belkin Rockstar Multi-Headphone Splitter

Appendix J: Reading Level Conversion Chart

Conversion Chart

Grade Level AR	Fountas and Pinnell GRL	Lexile Level	DRA	Reading Recovery	Rigby Literacy Levels	Rigby PM/PM Plus Levels	Basal
K	A	*	A,1	A,B,1	1-2	Starters 1	Readiness
K.5	B	*	2	2	3-4	Starters 2	Readiness
1.0	C	*	3	3,4	5	3-4 red	Preprim.1
1.1	D	100	4	5,6	6	5-6 Red/Yellow	Preprim.2
1.2	E	*	6-8	7,8	7	7-8 Yellow	Preprim.3
1.4	F	200	10	9,10	8	9-10 Blue	Primer
1.5	G	*	12	11,12	9	11-12 Blue/Green	*
1.7	H	300	14	13,14	10	13-14 Green	Grade 1
1.8	I	*	16	15,16	11	15-16 Orange	Grade 1 (late)
2.0	J	400	18	17,18	12	17-18 Turquoise	Grade 2
2.3	K	*	20	19,20	13	19-20 Purple	*
2.6	L	500	24	*	14-15	21 Gold	*
2.9	M	*	28	*	16-17	22 Gold	*
3.0	N	600	30	*	18	23 Silver	Grade 3
3.3	O	*	34	22	19	24 Silver	*
3.6	P	*	38	*	20	25 Emerald	*
4.0	Q	700	*	24	*	26 Emerald	Grade 4
4.3	R	*	40	*	*	27 Ruby	*
4.6	S	*	*	26	*	28 Ruby	*
4.8	T	800	44	*	*	29 Sapphire	*
5.0	U	*	44	28	*	30 Sapphire	Grade 5
5.3	V	*	50	*	*	*	*
5.6	W	900	*	*	*	*	*
6.0	X	*	60	30	*	*	Grade 6
6.5	Y	*	*	*	*	*	*
7	Z	1000	70	32,34	*	*	*
7.3	*	1100	*	*	*	*	*
7.6	*	1200	*	*	*	*	*
8+	*	*	80	*	*	*	*

Appendix K: Classroom Library Database

Note- Books listed in this database are coded based on the American Reading Company 100 Book Challenge colors:

(2) Blue- 1st grade
(2) Red- 2nd grade
White- 3rd grade (in this case, highlighted grey)
Black- 4th grade (in this case, bolded black)
Orange- 5th grade
Purple- 6th grade
Brown- 7th grade

Already in the Classroom
(January, available, 44 TOTAL, 0BL, 0RD, 1WHT, 15BLK, 25ORG, 3PRPL)

1. **Julian, Dream Doctor**	**Cameron, Ann**	F- Realistic Fic		CB	2.3, 480L, 34, O
2. **Amazing Impossible Erie Canal**	**Harness, Cheryl**	NF- History		PB	1050L, 40, S
3. **Babysitter's Club: Kristy and the Vampire**	**Martin, Ann M.**	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	4RL
4. **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**	**Dahl, Roald**	F- Fantasy		CB	5.9, 810L, 40, R
5. **Circle of Gold**	**Boyd, Candy Dawson**	F- Realistic Fic		CB	4
6. **Crash**	**Spinelli, Jerry**	F- Realistic Fic		CB	4.8, 560L, 50, V
7. **Finding Buck McHenry**	**Slote, Alfred**	F- Hist. Fic	Mystery/Suspense	CB	5.1, 500L, 40, S
8. **Locomotion**	**Woodson, Jacqueline**	F- Realistic Fic		Poetry Verse N	4.9, BLK
9. **Mississippi Bridge**	**Taylor, Mildred**	F- Hist. Fic		CB*	4, 810L, S
10. **Mountain Born**	**Yates, Elizabeth**	F- Adventure	Animal (NT)	CB	5.6, 870L
11. **Outernet #3: Odyssey**	**Barlow, Steve & Skidmore, Steve**	F- Sci-Fi		CB*	4
12. **The Great Turkey Walk**	**Karr, Kathleen**	F- Hist. Fic		CB	4.8, 700L
13. **The Hoboken**	**Pinkwater,**	F- Fantasy	Comedy, Animal	CB	4.1,

Chicken Emergency	**Daniel**				780L, 30N
14. **Weird Wacky Science**	**Markle, Sandra**	NF- Science		CB	3
15. **Wild at Heart #10: Time to Fly**	**Anderson, Laurie**	F- Realistic Fic	Animal (NT)	CB*	Black
16. **Wonders of Science**	**Berger, Melvin**	NF- Science		CB	3, BLK
17. A Series of Unfortunate Events #4: The Miserable Mill	Snicket, Lemony	F- Mystery	Adventure, Realistic F	CB*	6.6, 1000L, 50, V
18. A Series of Unfortunate Events: The Ersatz Elevator	Snicket, Lemony	F- Mystery	Adventure, Realistic F	CB*	6.7, 1110L. 50, V
19. Dogs Don't Tell Jokes	Sachar, Louis	F- Comedy	Realistic F	CB	5.1, 560L, O
20. Following My Own Footsteps	Hahn, Mary Downing	F- Hist. Fic		CB	4.8, 740L, 40 S
21. From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweieler	Konigsburg, E.L.	F- Mystery	Adventure, Realistic F	CB	4.7, 700L, 40, S
22. Frozen Summer	Auch, Mary Jane	F- Hist. Fic		CB*T	5.6
23. Jake's Orphan	Brooke, Peggy	F- Realistic Fic		CB	5.5
24. My Side of the Mountain	George, Jean	F- Adventure	Realistic F	CB	6,7, 810L, 50, U
25. Nancy Drew #89: The Case of the Disappearing Deejay	Keene, Carolyn	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	5.5,
26. On My Honor	Bauer, Marion	F- Realistic Fic		CB	5.3
27. Our Golda: The Story of Golda Meir	Adler, David	NF- Biography (P)	History	CB	
28. Prairie River #2: A Grateful Harvest	Gregory, Kristiana	F- Hist. Fic		CB*	5.0
29. Swan Sister: Fairy Tales Retold	Datlow, Ellen and Windling, Terri	F- Fairytale		Short St. Anthol	
30. The Bully of Barkham Street	Stolz, Mary	F- Realistic Fic		CB	
31. The Cheat	Koss, Amy	F- Realistic Fic		CB	5.2, 50 U
32. The Christmas Doll	Woodruff, Elvira	F- Fantasy	Hist. Fic	CB	5.8, 820L
33. The Chronicles of Narnia: The	Lewis, C. S.	F- Fantasy	Fairytale, Horror	CB	5.6, 790L,

Magician's Nephew					50, T
34. The Girl Who Chased Away Sorrow: The Diary of Sarah Nita, a Navajo Girl	Turner, Ann	F- Hist. Fic		J/D*	6.2, 920L, 50, T
35. The Hero	Woods, Ron	F- Realistic Fic	Adventure	CB	5.2
36. The Missing Manatee	DeFelice, Cynthia	F- Mystery	Adventure, Realistic F	CB	5, 830, 40, S
37. The Time Bike	Langton, Jane	F- Fantasy	Hist. Fic.	CB	5.5, 810L, 40, S
38. Twin Connection #4: On the Run	Mills, Adam	F- Adventure	Mystery, Realistic F	CB*	
39. What's Faster than a Speeding Cheetah?	Wells, Robert	NF- Science (Physical, Speed)		PB	
40. Wild Palamino	Holt, Stephen	F- Realistic Fic	Animal (NT)	CB	5
41. Wonder	Palacio, R.J.	F- Realistic Fic		CB	5, 790L, 50, U
42. Destination: Jupiter	Simon, Seymour	NF- Science (Space)		PB	960L,
43. The Haunting of Granite Falls	Ibbotson, Eva	F- Horror	Fantasy, Adventure	CB	6.1, 960L
44. What Janie Found	Cooney, Caroline	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	6.1, 600L
~~45. **The Good Master**~~	~~Seredy, Kate~~	~~F- Hist. Fic~~		~~CB~~	~~5.1, 640L, S~~
~~46. A Stranger Game Ashore~~	~~Hunter, Mollie~~	~~F- Fantasy~~	~~Folktale/Legend/Myth, Adventure~~	~~CB~~	~~4.9, 1060L, 50, U~~
~~47. Circle of Gold~~	~~Boyd, Candy Dawson~~	~~F- Realistic Fic~~		~~CB~~	~~5.1, 610L, 40, R~~
~~48. George Washington's Socks~~	~~Woodruff, Elvira~~	~~F- Hist. Fic~~	~~Fantasy~~	~~CB~~	~~5.9, 840L, 50, T~~
~~49. **The Babysitter's Club: Kristy's Great Idea**~~	~~**Martin, Ann M.**~~	~~F- Realistic Fic~~		~~CB*~~	~~5.3, 640L, 34O, RL4~~
~~50. The King of Attolia~~	~~Turner, Megan~~	~~F- Fantasy~~		~~CB*~~	~~YA~~
~~51. Abe Lincoln Gets His Chance~~	~~Cavanah, Frances~~	~~NF- Biography (P)~~	~~History~~	~~CB~~	~~Green~~
~~52. The Birdcatcher~~	~~Dunker, Kristina~~	~~F- Realistic Fic~~		~~CB~~	~~9, YA~~

Already in the Classroom
(January, unavailable, 77 TOTAL, 6BL, 32 RD, 23 WHT, 13BLK, 3ORG)

53. Pillbug	St. Pierre, Stephanie	NF- Science (Zoology, Insect)		PB	1
54. Hooray for Grandparents' Day!	Carlson, Nancy	F- Animal		PB	320L
55. The American Alligator	Francis, Dorothy	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	1, 400L
56. The Brave Little Steam Shovel	Evers, Alf	F- Anthrom (Machine)		PB	1
57. The Great Mouse Detective (Disney)	Disney	F- Animal	Fantasy, Mystery, Media	PB	1
58. Too Many Dogs	Haskins, Lori	F- Animal (NT)		PB	20, L,
59. A Horse Named Seabiscuit	Dubowski, Kathy & Mark	NF- History	Animal (NT), Media	PB	Red
60. A-Z Mysteries: The Bald Bandit	Roy, Ron	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	Red
61. Arthur and The True Francine	Brown, Marc	F- Animal	Media	PB*	Red
62. Arthur's Back to School Day	Hoban, Lillian	F- Realistic Fic	Media	PB*	2R
63. Baby Brown Bear's Big Bellyache	Coco, Eugene	F- Animal		PB	Red
64. Community Helpers: TV Reporters	Boraas, Tracey	NF- Career		PB	Red
65. Diego	Winter, Jeanette	NF- Biography (P)	History	PB	420L, 24, M
66. Germs Make Me Sick!	Berger, Melvin	NF- Science (Biology)		PB	Red
67. Goodbye, Goose	Clark, Patricia	F- Animal		PB	Red
68. Grandfather Counts	Cheng, Andrea	F- Realistic Fic		PB	Red
69. Grandmother Winter	Root, Phyllis	F- Folktale	Concept (Seasons)	PB	Red
70. Hedgie Loves to Read	Brett, Jan	F- Animal		PB	Red
71. Just the Best	Judge, Ann & Tripp, Valerie	F- Realistic Fic		PB*	Red
72. Ladybug	Hartley, Karen & Marco, Chris	NF- Science (Zoology, Insect)		PB	Red
73. Lionel at School	Krensky, Stephen	F- Realistic Fic		Short St. Collec*	Red
74. Moles	Whitehouse, Patricia	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	Red

75. Munching, Crunching, Sniffing, and Snooping	Moses, Brian	NF- Science (Zoology)	Concept (Senses)	PB	Red
76. Peter and the Wolf	Disney Book Club	F- Folktale		PB	2
77. Rabbits & Raindrops	Arnosky, Jim	F- Animal (NT)		PB	Red
78. Raven's Gift	Kuharski, Janice	F- Fairytale/Legend	Animal	PB	Red
79. Robocat Stops Crime	Clements, Andrew	F- Fantasy		PB	Red
80. Someday Cyril	Gershatos, Phillis	F- Realistic Fic		PB	Red
81. The Berenstain Bears and the Sitter	Berenstain, Stan & Jan	F- Animal	Media	PB	Red
82. The Boy Who Rode a Lion	Ngumy, James	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy, Animal (NT)	PB	Red
83. The Daring Escape of Ellen Craft	Moore, Cathy	NF- Memoir	History	PB	Red
84. The Land Before Time: Friends in Need	Razzi, Jim (adapted from Freudberg, Judy & Geiss, Tony	F- Animal	Media	PB	Red
85. The Snow Bear	Moss, Miriam	F- Animal		PB	Red
86. The Yellow Star: The Legend of King Christian of Denmark	Deedy, Carmen Aga	F- Hist. Fic	Legend	PB	550L, 20, L
87. What a Trip, Amber Brown	Danzinger, Paula	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	Red
88. Will and Orv	Schulz, Walter	F- Hist. Fic		PB	Red
89. Me Too! (Critter Series)	Mayer, Mercer	F- Animal		PB*	Red
90. Just Me and My Little Sister (critter series)	Mayer, Mercer	F- Animal		PB*	3, Red
91. A Picture Book of Anne Frank	Adler, David	NF- Biography (P)	History	PB*	800L, M
92. A Picture Book of Rosa Parks	Adler, David	NF- Biography (P)	History	PB*	RL3, 5.1, 880L, M
93. A Picture Book of Sojourner Truth	Adler, David	NF- Biography (P)	History	PB*	910L, M
94. A Tale of Antarctica	Glimmerveen, Ulco	F- Animal	Science (Environm)	PB	White
95. Amelia and	Ryan, Pam	F- Hist. Fic		PB	White

Eleanor go for a Ride	Munoz				
96. Appalachia: The Voices of Sleeping Birds	Rylant, Cythia	NF- Info- Place, CCustoms		PB Essay	White
97. Bicycle Book	Gibbons, Gail	NF- Info	History	PB (pt. Guide)	530L, 34, O
98. Brave Potatoes	Speed, Toby and Root, Barry	F- Anthrom (Food)		PB	White
99. Charlotte's Web	White, E.B.	F- Animal	Insect	CB	4.4, 680L, R
100. Chicken Sunday	Polacco, Patricia	F- Realistic Fic		PB	650L, 30, N
101. Chickens Aren't the Only Ones	Heller, Ruth	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	3.6, 620L, L
102. Dizzy	O'Donnell, Peter	F- Animal		PB	White
103. Florence Nightingale	Vickers, Rebecca	NF- Biography (P)	History	PB	3.6
104. Is There Life in Outer Space?	Branley, Franklyn	NF- Science (Space)		PB	White
105. It's Raining Laughter	Grimes, Nikki	F- Realistic Fic		Poetry Collec	4.8, 38, P
106. Magic Tree House #4: Pirates Past Noon	Osborne, Mary	F- Fantasy, Hist. F	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	
107. Messages in the Mailbox: How to Write a Letter	Leedy, Loreen	NF- Info	Writing	Handbook/Guide	White
108. Sunshine Makes the Seasons	Branley, Franklyn	NF- Science (Space, Seasons)		PB	O
109. The Great Undersea Search	Needham, Kate	NF- Interactive (Search)	Science	PB	2-3, 460L, S
110. The Milk Makers	Gibbons, Gail	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	3.2, 770L, N
111. The Tiny Seed	Carle, Eric	F- Science (Plants)		PB	White
112. Train Whistles: A Language in Code	Sattler, Helen	NF- Science (Automo, Sound)		PB	White
113. Zipping, Zapping, Zooming Bats	Earle, Ann	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	3.5, 730L, M
114. **101 Freaky Animals**	**Berger, Melvin & Gilda**	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	860L, 38P
115. **Body Basics: Bodies: Peel Back the Layers…From**	**Ganeri, Anita**	NF- Science (Biology)		PB	BLK

the Outside In					
116. **Charlotte's Web**	**White, E.B.**	F- Animal	Insect	CB	4.4, 680L, R
117. **How Do Flies Walk Upside Down? Questions and Answers About Insects**	**Berger, Melvin & Gilda**	NF- Science (Zoology, Insect)		PB	4.6, 650L, R
118. **I Didn't Know That: Crocodiles Yawn to Keep Cool (and Other Amazing Facts…)**	**Petty, Kate**	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	4.5, 840L
119. **If You Lived at the Time of the Great San Francisco Earthquake**	**Levine, Ellen**	NF- History		CB	4.6, RL3, 760L, Q
120. **National Geographic Reading Expeditions: Amazing Animals**	**Jerome, Kate**	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB*	750L, T-U
121. **Nature! Wild and Wonderful**	**Pringle, Laurence**	NF- Info	Career, Memoir	Collec	4.3
122. **Penguins Swim but Don't Get Wet (and Other Amazing Facts About Polar Animals)**	**Berger, Melvin & Gilda**	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	960L, 40, S
123. **Stories to Solve: Folktales from Around the World**	**Shannon, George**	F- Mystery	Folktale, Interactive	Short St. Collec	790L
124. **Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt**	**Hopkinson, Deborah**	F- Hist. Fic		PB	680L, 40, S
125. **The Trail of Tears**	**Bruchac, Joseph**	NF- History		PB	4.3, 610L, 40R
126. **The Universe**	**Farndon, John**	NF- Science (Space)		PB	
127. Environment Alert!: Garbage and Recycling	Woodburn, Judith	NF- Science (Environm)		PB	5
128. Help! I'm Trapped in a Supermodel's Body	Strasser, Todd	F- Fantasy		CB*	5

129.Kid Power	Pfeffer, Susan	F- Realistic Fic		CB	RL5
~~130.Can You See What I See?: Toys~~	~~Wick, Walter~~	~~NF- Interactive~~	~~Search/ Puzzle~~	~~PB~~	~~1, blue~~
~~131.Poky Little Puppy's Special Day (Little Golden Book)~~	~~West, Cindy~~	~~F- Animal~~		~~PB~~	~~1~~
~~132.Pooh's Honey Tree~~	~~Gaines, Isabel~~	~~F- Animal~~	~~Media~~	~~PB~~	~~PK 1~~
~~133.Walt Disney's Story of Mickey and the Beanstalk (A Little Golden Book)~~	~~None listed (Disney)~~	~~F- Fairytale~~	~~Media~~	~~PB~~	~~BL~~
~~134.Christopher Columbus~~	~~Schaefer, Lola~~	~~NF- Biography (P)~~		~~PB*~~	~~RD~~
~~135.Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (Little Golden Book)~~	~~Disney, RH~~	~~F- Fairytale~~		~~PB~~	~~2~~
~~136.Betty Doll~~	~~Polacco, Patricia~~	~~NF- Biography (P)~~		~~PB, Letter~~	~~3.8, 540L, M~~
~~137.Firetalking~~	~~Polacco, Patricia~~	~~NF- Biography (L)~~		~~PB~~	~~3.9, 770L, M~~
~~138.I Can Count to Ten and Back Again (Sesame Street)~~	~~Hayward, Linda~~	~~F- Math Concept (Counting)~~	~~Media~~	~~PB~~	~~White~~
~~139.The Black Snowman~~	~~Mendez, Phil~~	~~F- Fantasy~~		~~PB~~	~~White~~
~~140.The Market Square Dog~~	~~James Herriot~~	~~F- Animal~~		~~PB~~	~~4.1, 690L~~
~~141.**Classifying Plants and Animals**~~	~~**Parker, Lewis**~~	~~NF- Science (Plants, Biology)~~		~~PB~~	~~Black~~
~~142.Runaway Jack~~	~~Lees, Stewart~~	~~F- Hist. Fic~~		~~CB~~	~~3~~
~~143. **Teammates**~~	~~Golenbock, Peter~~	~~NF- History~~		~~PB~~	~~930L, N~~
~~144.**American Chills: Maryland: Ghost Harbor**~~	~~**Massie, Elizabeth**~~	~~F- Hist. Fic~~	~~Fantasy~~	~~CB*~~	~~RL 4Black~~
~~145. Barbie: Let's Share (Golden Books)~~		~~F- Fantasy~~	~~Media~~	~~PB~~	
~~146. Daffy Duck for President~~	~~Jones, Chuck~~	~~F- Media~~	~~Animal~~	~~PB~~	
~~147. Discover the Rainforest: Ronald McDonald~~	~~Meiron, Gad & Stone, Randall~~	~~F- Media~~	~~Science (Environ)~~	~~PB~~	

~~and the Jewel of the Amazon Kingdom~~					
~~148. Doug: Quailman Battles the Giant Space Slug (Little Golden Book)~~	~~Korman, Justine (Disney)~~	~~F- Fantasy~~	~~Media, Action~~	~~PB~~	
~~149. The Puffalumps and the Big Scare~~	~~Chardiet, Jon~~	~~F- Fantasy~~	~~Media~~	PB*	
~~150. The Puffalumps Treasure Hunt~~	~~Chardiet, Jon~~	~~F- Fantasy~~	~~Media~~	PB*	
~~151. Who Framed Roger Rabbit? (Disney Storyteller)~~	~~None Listed~~	~~F- Fantasy, Media~~	~~Animal~~	PB	
152. A Writer's Notebook: Unlocking the Writer Within You	Fletcher, Ralph	NF- Guide (Writing)		Handbook	Reference

Added February (school lockers, 148 TOTAL, 77BL, 54RD, 13WHT, 2BLK, 2ORG)

153. A Buzz is Part of a Bee	Lynn, Carolyn	NF- Science (Zoology, Insect)		PB	1, blue
154. A Visit to the Library	Iversen, Sandra	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
155. At the Library	Medearis, Angela Shelf	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
156. Big Machines	Jones, Melanie D.	NF- Science (Machines)		PB	1, blue
157. Brave Dave and the Dragons	Reed, Janet	F- Fantasy		PB	1, blue
158. Bugs!	McKissack, Frederick and Patricia	NF- Science (Zoology, Insect)		PB	1, blue
159. Caps, Hats, Socks, and Mittens: A Book about the Four Seasons	Borden, Louise	F- Science (Seasons, Weather)		PB	1, blue
160. Car Wash Kid	Fishman, Cathy Goldberh	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
161. Carlo Likes Counting	Spanyol, Jessica	F- Math Concept (Counting)	Animal	PB	1, blue

162. Clean Beaches	Burton, Margie; French, Cathy; Jones, Tammy	NF- Environm		PB	1, blue
163. Clifford's Really Big Movie: The Star of the Show (Clifford the Big Red Dog)	Neusner, Dena (adapted by)	F- Animal	Media	PB	1, blue
164. Colors Help Animals Hide	Larkin, Bruce	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	1, blue
165. Decodable Book 11 (Morning Song, Mort's Trip to the Store, The Fort, More Corn)	Harcourt Publishers	F- Realistic Fic		Collec PB	1, blue
166. Decodable Book 14 (At the Park; Back on the Farm)	Harcourt Publishers	F- Realistic Fic, Animal (NT)		Collec PB	1, blue
167. Decodable Book 16 (Dr. Kern, The Third Bird, Burt and Kurtis, Mom's Helper, Dig and Stir, Burk's Sunburn)	Harcourt Publishers	F- Realistic Fic, Animal		Collec PB	1, blue
168. Decodable Book 25 (Let's Fly, Fried Fish and Apple Pie, Freddy and the Fly, A Fly on My Pie)	Harcourt Publishers	F- Animal, Realistic Fic		Collec PB	1, blue
169. Ee	Charlesworth, Liza	NF- Concept (Alphabet)		PB	1, blue
170. Eight Friends in All	Littleman, Iris	F- Math Concept (Counting)		PB	1, blue
171. Endangered Animals	Burton, Margie; French, Cathy; and Jones, Tammy	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	1, blue
172. Fireworks	Cowley, Joy	NF- Info		PB	1, blue
173. Four Very Big Beans	Floyd, Lucy	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
174. Frogs	Canizares, Susan; and Moreton, Daniel	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	1, blue
175. Funny Foods	Charlesworth, Liza	F- Food	Animal	PB	1, blue
176. Harry's Hat	Phillips, Anne	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
177. How Animals Get Around	Larkin, Bruce	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	1, blue
178. I Went Walking	Williams, Sue	F- Realistic Fic	Animal (NT)	PB	1, blue
179. I'm Not Scared	Hall, Kirsten	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
180. Ii	Charlesworth, Liza	NF- Concept (Alphabet)		PB	1, blue
181. In My Desert	Mora, Pat	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	1, blue
182. Jimmy's Goal	Iversen, Sandra	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue

183.Joe Makes a House	Smith, Annette	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
184.Kitty Cat Plays Inside	Smith, Annette	F- Animal		PB	1, blue
185.Let's Exercise	Torrisi, Cathy	NF- Info (Exercise)		PB	1, blue
186.Let's Go to the Aquarium	Faley, Cate	NF- Place	Science (Zoology)	PB	1, blue
187.Let's Visit an Apple Orchard	Daly, Melissa	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
188.Lightning's Feelings	Scollon, Bill	F- Cars	Media	PB	1, blue
189.Lunch Crunch	Charlesworth, Liza	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
190.Made of Metal	Larkin, Bruce	NF- Science (Metal)		PB	1, blue
191.Max Rides his Bike	Giles, Jenny	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
192.Mother's Day	Randell, Beverley	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
193.My Climate	Miranda, Anne	NF- Science (Weather)		PB	1, blue
194.My Garden	Ostrow, Jesse	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
195.My Mom	Bailey, Debbie	NF- Family		PB	1, blue
196.Oh, No! A Baby-Sitter!	Fontes, Justine	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
197.Pancakes	Iversen, Sandra	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
198.Pancakes, Crackers, and Pizza	Eberts, Marjorie and Gisler, Margaret	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
199.Places Where the Girls Have Fun	Lopez, Jasmin	NF- Place		PB	1, blue
200.Pom-Pom's Big Win	Allen, Margaret	F- Realistic Fic	Animal (NT)	PB	1, blue
201.Rocks	Parkes, Brenda	NF- Geograph		PB	1, blue
202.Sleepy Bear	Eschenbach, Bob	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	1, blue
203.Sneakers! Sneakers!	Medaris, Angela Shelf	F- Animal (Insect)		PB	1, blue
204.Stuck in the Mud	Jackman, John; and Frost, Hilary	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
205.Surprise Puppy!	Walker-Hodge, Judith	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	1, blue
206.Tails	Vaughan, Marcia	F- Animal (NT)		PB	1, blue
207.The Ball Game	Packard, David	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
208.The Berenstain Bears: Let's Sell It	Berenstain, Stan & Jan	F- Animal	Media	PB	1, blue
209.The Big Red Sled	Gerver, Jane	F- Animal		PB	1, blue
210.The Clever Penguins	Randell, Beverley	F- Animal		PB	1, blue
211.The Foot Book	Dr. Seuss	F- Concept (Opposites)		PB	1, blue
212.The Pizza	Barrie, Nicola	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
213.The Race	Riley, Lizza	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
214.The River Grows	Clifford, Gale	NF- Science (Geograph)		PB	1, blue
215.The Sick Bear	Cowley, Joy	F- Animal		PB	1, blue
216.The Tickle-Bugs	Naden, Ngarangi	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
217.This is a Polar Bear	Santiago, Jennifer	NF- Science		PB	1, blue

		(Zoology)			
218. This is Pollution	Larkin, Bruce	NF- Science (Environm)		PB	1, blue
219. TIME for Kids: Animals, Animals	Rice, Dona	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	1, blue
220. Tiny and the Big Wave	Smith, Anette	F- Animal (NT)		PB	1, blue
221. Valentine's Day	Mohr, Carole	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
222. Want a Ride?	Gordh, Bill	F- Animal		PB	1, blue
223. Water	Canizares, Susan; and Chanko, Pamela	NF- Science (Earth)		PB	1, blue
224. What Do You Do?	Hardin, Suzanne	F- Animal		PB	1, blue
225. What Time is Is, Mr. Crocodile?	Sierra, Judy	F- Animal	Math, Concept (Time)	PB	1, blue
226. Where is Kate's Skate?	Ellis, Margaret	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
227. Which Number is Bigger?	Larkin, Bruce	NF- Interactive	Math Concept (Numbers)	PB	1, blue
228. Words	Martin, Bill; and Archambault, John	NF- Info (words)		PB	1, blue
229. Yo! Yes?	Raschka, Chris	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1, blue
230. "Wanted Dead or Alive": The True Story of Harriet Tubman	McGovern, Ann	NF- Biography (P)	History	PB	2.9, 540L, P
231. A Birthday Basket for Tia	Mora, Pat	F- Realistic Fic		PB	Red
232. A Chair for my Mother	Williams, Vera	F- Realistic Fic		PB	3.8, 640L, 24M
233. After-School Monster	Moss, Marissa	F- Fantasy	Horror	PB	Red
234. All Aboard Trains	Harding, Mary	NF- Science (Automo)		PB	Red
235. Amber Brown: It's Justin Time, Amber Brown	Danzinger, Paula	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	Red
236. Animal Babies: Fish	Theodorou, Rod	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	700L, 24, M
237. Appalachian Mountains	Mader, Jan	NF- Science (Geograph)		PB	2.9, 550L
238. Arthur's Underwear	Brown, Marc	F- Animal	Media	PB*	Red
239. Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)	Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald	F- Realistic Fic	Hist. Fic	PB	Red
240. Big Al	Clements, Andrew	F- Animal		PB	880L, 20, L
241. Buffalo Bill and the Pony Express	Coerr, Eleanor	NF- History	Memoir	PB	Red
242. C. D. Clues	Miranda, Anne	F- Realistic Fic		CB	Red

243. Cam Jansen and the Chocolate Fudge Mystery	Adler, David	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	Red
244. Cherries and the Cherry Pits	Williams, Vera	F- Realistic Fic		PB	Red
245. Colorful Chameleons!	Knudsen, Michelle	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	Red
246. Crow Boy	Yashima, Taro	F- Hist. Fic		PB	620L, 20, L
247. Down the Road	Schertle, Alice	F- Realistic Fic		PB	Red
248. First Tomato: A Voyage to the Bunny Planet	Wells, Rosemary	F- Animal	Fantasy	PB	Red
249. From Mud to House	Knight, Bertram	NF- Info	Manufact	PB	Red
250. Godzilla Ate My Homework	Jones, Marcia Thornton	F- Realistic Fic		CB	3.5 460L
251. Hairs/Pelitos (from The House on Mango Street)	Cisneros, Sandra	F- Realistic Fic		PB	190L, 20, L
252. Hello, Amigos!	Brown, Tricia	NF- Info- CCustoms		PB	1.7, 630L, J
253. Horrible Harry and the Kickball Wedding	Kline, Suzy	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	Red
254. Horrible Harry in Room 2B	Kline, Suzy	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	Red
255. I Can Read About: Thunder and Lightning	Cutts, David	NF- Weather		PB	2.9, 430L, K
256. I Like it Here at School	Prelutsky, Jack	F- Realistic Fic		Poetry Collec	Red
257. If It Weren't For Farmers	Fowler, Allan	NF- Career		PB	Red
258. In the Snow	Lee, Huy Voun	F- Realistic Fic		PB	Red
259. It Takes a Village	Cowen-Fletcher, Jane	F- Realistic Fic		PB	Red
260. Just Going to the Dentist (Critter Series)	Mayer, Mercer	F- Animal		PB*	2.4, 380L, J
261. Little Bill: My Big Lie	Cosby, Bill	F- Realistic Fic	Media	CB*	Red
262. Little Bill: The Day I Saw My Father Cry	Cosby, Bill	F- Realistic Fic	Media	CB*	Red
263. Little Bill: The Meanest Thing to Say	Cosby, Bill	F- Realistic Fic	Media	CB*	2
264. Machines at Work: Under the Ground	Pluckrose, Henry	NF- Science (Geograph)	Science (Physical-Machines)	PB*	Red
265. Madeline in London	Bemelmans, Ludwig	F- Realistic Fic	Media	PB	K
266. Meet Danitra Brown	Grimes, Nikki	F- Realistic Fic		Poetry PB*T	

267. Nancy Drew Notebook #17: Whose Pet is Best?	Keene, Carolyn	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	Red
268. Nancy Drew Notebook #22: The Clue in the Glue	Keene, Carolyn	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	Red
269. Nancy Drew Notebook #35: Third-Grade Reporter	Keene, Carolyn	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	Red
270. Pablo's Tree	Mora, Pat	F- Realistic Fic		PB	Red
271. Sheep Have Lambs	Stone, Lynn	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	Red
272. Sherwood Forest Goes to Pieces	Condon, Bill	F- Fantasy	Adventure	PB	Red
273. Sitti's Secrets	Nye, Naomi	F- Realistic Fic		PB	590L, 20, L
274. The Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV	Berenstain, Stan & Jan	F- Animal	Media	PB	Red
275. The Cafeteria Lady from the Black Lagoon	Thaler, Mike	F- Fantasy	Horror	PB*	550L, 20, L
276. The Case of the Elevator Duck	Berends, Polly B.	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB	Red
277. The Music Teacher from the Black Lagoon	Thaler, Mike	F- Fantasy	Horror	PB*	Red
278. The Principal from the Black Lagoon	Thaler, Mike	F- Fantasy	Horror	PB*	2, 330L, 18, K
279. The Stories Julian Tells	Cameron, Ann	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	Red
280. The Wild Boy	Gerstein, Mordicai	F- Hist. Fic		PB	3.5, 530L
281. Totally Spies!: The Christmas Bandit	Bergen, Lara	F- Mystery	Adventure, Media, Realistic F	PB/CB	Red
282. Vejigante Masquerader	Delacre, Lulu	F- Realistic Fic		PB	2.9, 550L
283. Volcanoes (Scholastic Science Readers)	Wood, Lily	NF- Science (Geograph)		PB*	620L, 24, M
284. Big, Bad and a Little Bit Scary	Zahores, Wade	F- Animal (NT)		Poetry Collec	White
285. Carlos and the Cornfield / Carlos y la milpa de maiz	Stevens, Jan	F- Realistic Fic		PB	White
286. Celebrating the Pow Wow	Kalman,Bobbie	NF- Info-CCustoms		PB	2.5, 780L
287. Cena & Orton: Rivalry in the Ring (WWE)	West, Tracey	NF- Media	Info (Sports)	PB	780L
288. Chocolate Fever	Smith, Robert	F- Fantasy	Comedy	CB	4.8, 680L,

					34, O
289. It's Halloween	Prelutsky, Jack	F- Horror		Poetry Collec	3.6, K
290. Keep on Reading: Science: A Look at Landforms	None listed	NF- Science (Geograph)		PB	White
291. Magic Tree House #12: Polar Bear Past Bedtime	Osborne, Mary Pope	F- Fantasy, Hist. Fic	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	White
292. Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters	Steptoe, John	F- Folktale/Fable		PB	720L, 30, N
293. Spiders' Secrets	Platt, Richard	NF- Science (Zoology, Insect)		PB	680L, 30, N
294. When Sun Ruled the Land	Palazzo-Craig, Janet	Legend/Folktale		PB	White
295. Arthur Ashe: Stepping Across the Line	Cullen, Lynn	NF- Biography (P)		PB	6, White
296. Baseball Saved Us	Mochizuki, Ken	F- Hist. Fic		PB	550L, O White
297. **Into the Sea**	Guiberson, Brenda	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB	4.8, 900L, O
298. **There's a Boy in the Girl's Bathroom**	Sachar, Louis	F- Comedy	Realistic F	CB	Black
299. Through my Eyes	Bridges, Ruby	NF- Memoir	History	PB	860L, 40, R
300. Rascal	North, Sterling	NF- Memoir	Animal (NT)	CB	7.1, 1140L, 50, V

Added February
(purchased; 211 TOTAL, 2BL, 9RD, 50WHT, 78BLK, 56ORG, 13PRPL, 3BRN)

1. Bad Kitty Does Not Like Candy	Bruel, Nick	F- Comedy	Animal	PB*	**410L**
2. The Secret Olivia Told Me	Joy, N.	F- Realistic Fic		PB	1.9, 350L
3. Giraffes Can't Dance	Andreae, Giles	F- Animal		PB	2.5, 450L, 24, M
4. GOAL!	Javaherbin, Mina	F- Realistic Fic		PB	2.7 350L
5. Henry's Freedom Box	Levine, Ellen	NF- Biography (P)	Hist. Fic, History	PB	2.3, 380L, 40, Q
6. Judy Moody: Girl Detective	McDonald, Megan	F- Comedy	Realistic F	CB*	570L, 30, N
7. Judy Moody: Goes to College	McDonald, Megan	F- Comedy	Realistic F	CB*	600L, 24, M

8. Judy Moody: M.D.: The Doctor Is In!	McDonald, Megan	F- Comedy	Realistic F	CB*	510L, 24, M
9. Judy Moody: Predicts the Future	McDonald, Megan	F- Comedy	Realistic F	CB*	390L, 24, M
10. Last Stop on Market Street	de la Peña, Matt	F- Realistic Fic		PB	2.4, 610L, 24, M
11. National Geographic Readers: Sea Turtles	Marsh, Laura	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB*	2.5, 620L, 16, J
12. Babymouse: Cupcake Typhoon	Holm, Jennifer & Matthew	F- Comedy	Animal	GN*	3, 270L, 38, P
13. Bad Kitty School Daze	Bruel, Nick	F- Comedy	Animal	MM*	3.3, 630L, 38, P
14. Bad Kitty vs. Uncle Murray	Bruel, Nick	F- Comedy	Animal	MM*	620L, 38, P
15. Brothers of the Knight	Allen, Debbie	F-Fairytale		PB	3.4, 560L, 38, P
16. Clubhouse Mysteries: The Space Mission	Draper, Sharon	F- Mystery		CB*	5.7, 900L, 40, R
17. Dancing in the Wings	Allen, Debbie	F- Realistic Fic		PB	3.2, 540L, 20, L
18. Dyamonde Daniel: Almost Zero	Grimes, Nikki	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	3
19. Dyamonde Daniel: Almost Zero	Grimes, Nikki	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	3
20. Dyamonde Daniel: Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel	Grimes, Nikki	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	3.5, 620L
21. Dyamonde Daniel: Rich	Grimes, Nikki	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	3.5
22. Dyshawn's Gift	Zetta Elliott	F- Hist. Fic		CB	White
23. El Deafo	Bell, Cece	F- Memoir	Animal	GN	2.7, 420L, 40, Q
24. Ellray Jakes Walks the Plank!	Warner, Sally	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	4.8, 820L, 38, P
25. Falling Up	Silverstein, Shel	F- Varied		Poetry Collec	3.5, 38, P
26. Faraway Home	Kurtz, Jane	F- Realistic Fic		PB	3.4, 610L, 34, O
27. Go Mo'! Mo'Ne Davis: The Girl Who Changed Baseball History	Bubar, Joseph	NF- Biography (L)	Media	CB	3
28. Grandma and Me at the Flea	Herrera, Juan	F- Realistic Fic		PB	3
29. How Mountains are Made	Zoehfeld, Kathleen	NF- Science (Geograph)		PB	3.1, 620L, 24, M
30. In My Family/En Mi Familia	Garza, Carmen	NF- Memoir		PB	3.9, 680L, 30, N
31. Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World	Walter, Mildred Pitts	F- Hist. Fic		CB	3.1, 620L, 38, P
32. Magic School Bus: Electric Field Trip	Cole, Joanna	F- Sci-Fi	Science (Electric)	PB*	3.5, 490L, 38, P

33. Magic School Bus: Human Body	Cole, Joanna	F- Sci-Fi	Science (Biology)	PB*	3.9, 520L, 38, P
34. Magic School Bus: Inside a Hurricane	Cole, Joanna	F- Sci-Fi	Science (Weather)	PB*	3.0, 500L, 38, P
35. Magic School Bus: Inside the Earth	Cole, Joanna	F- Sci-Fi	Science (Earth)	PB*	3.6, 500L, 38, P
36. Magic School Bus: On the Ocean Floor	Cole, Joanna	F- Sci-Fi	Science (Geograp)	PB*	4.0, 490L, 38, P
37. Magic School Bus: Polar Bear Patrol	Cole, Joanna	F- Sci-Fi	Science (Zoology)	CB*	3.2, 460L, 38, P
38. Magic School Bus: Solar System	Cole, Joanna	F- Sci-Fi	Science (Space)	PB*	3.7, 480L
39. Magic Tree House #1: Dinosaurs Before Dark	Osborne, Mary Pope	F- Fantasy, Hist. Fic	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	2.6, 240L, 40, Q
40. Meet Danitra Brown	Grimes, Nikki	F- Realistic Fic		Poetry PB*T	3.9, 30, N
41. Miss Brown is Upside Down	Gutman, Dan	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB*	560L, 38, P
42. Mrs. Lane is a Pain	Gutman, Dan	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB*	610L, 38, P
43. National Geographic Kids: Martin Luther King, Jr.	Jazynka, Kitson	NF- Biography (P)	History	PB*	630L
44. National Geographic Readers: Deadliest Animals	Stewart, Melissa	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB*	6.3, 940L, 38, P
45. National Geographic Readers: Great Migrations Elephants	Marsh, Laura	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB*	3.7, 770L
46. National Geographic Readers: Water	Stewart, Melissa	NF- Science (Earth)		PB*	38, P
47. Ninja Red Riding Hood	Schwartz, Corey	F- Folktale	Action	PB	570L, 24, M
48. Sassy #1: Little Sister is Not my Name	Draper, Sharon	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	3.5, 630L
49. Sassy #2: The Birthday Storm	Draper, Sharon	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	3.3, 590L, 40, Q
50. Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark	Schwartz, Alvin	F- Horror	Fantasy	Short St. Collec*T	2.4, 640L, 38, P
51. Sugar Plum Ballerinas: Dancing Diva	Goldberg, Whoopi	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	3
52. Sugar Plum Ballerinas: Terrible Terrel	Goldberg, Whoopi	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	630L
53. The Boxcar Children #1: The Boxcar Children	Warner, Gertrude C.	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	3.0, 490L, 34, O
54. The Boxcar Children #2: Surprise Island	Warner, Gertrude C.	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	3.3, 530L, 34, O
55. The Boxcar Children #3: The Yellow House Mystery	Warner, Gertrude C.	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	3.1, 440L, 34, O
56. The Boxcar Children	Warner,	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	3.1, 440L,

#4: Mystery Ranch	Gertrude C.				34, O
57. The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind	Kamkwamba, William	NF- Memoir	Science (Earth, Physical)	PB	5.0, 910L, 38, P
58. The Mouse and the Motorcycle	Cleary, Beverly	F- Animal		CB*T	4.1, 860L, 34, O
59. **The Science Fair from the Black Lagoon**	**Thaler, Mike**	F- Fantasy	Horror	CB*	3.5, 670L, O
60. The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs	Scieszka, Jon	F- Folktale	Comedy, Animal	PB	3.0, 570L, 40, Q
61. They're There on Their Vacation	Cleary, Brian	F- Realistic Fic	Concept (Grammar)	PB	3
62. **Bad Kitty For President**	**Bruel, Nick**	F- Comedy	Animal	MM*	4.3, 690L, 40, R
63. **Bad Kitty Goes to the Vet**	**Bruel, Nick**	F- Comedy	Animal	MM*	4.0, 600L, 40, Q
64. **Bad Kitty Meets the Baby**	**Bruel, Nick**	F- Comedy	Animal	MM*	4.4, 720L, 40, Q
65. **Big Nate: On a Roll**	Peirce, Lincoln	F- Comedy	Realistic F	GN*	2.5, 440L, 40, R
66. **Big Nate: Strikes Again**	Peirce, Lincoln	F- Comedy	Realistic F	GN*	2.4, 430L, 40, S
67. **Big Nate: In a Class by Himself**	Peirce, Lincoln	F- Comedy	Realistic F	GN*	4.0, 500L, 40, S
68. **Bunnicula: A Rabbit Tale of Mystery**	**Howe, Deborah & James**	F- Animal	Mystery	CB	700L, 40, Q
69. **Clubhouse Mysteries: Lost in the Tunnel of Time**	**Draper, Sharon**	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	3.9, 610L, 34, O
70. **Clubhouse Mysteries: Stars and Sparks on Stage**	**Draper, Sharon**	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	5.6, 870L, 40, R
71. **Clubhouse Mysteries: The Buried Bones Mystery**	**Draper, Sharon**	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	4.3
72. **Crenshaw**	**Applegate, Katherine**	F- Fantasy	Animal	CB	4.0, 540L, 40, Q
73. **Double Fudge**	**Blume, Judy**	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB*	4.5, 450L, 40, R
74. **Fourth Grade Fuss**	**Hurwitz, Johanna**	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB	5.0, 750L, 38, P
75. **Fractions, Decimals, and Percents**	**Adler, David**	F- Concept (Math)		PB	3.7, 640L, 40, Q
76. **Framed**	**Korman, Gordan**	F- Mystery	Realistic F Comedy	CB*	4.5, 730L, 40, R
77. **Frindle**	**Clements, Andrew**	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB	4.8, 830L, 40, R
78. **Fudge-a-mania**	**Blume, Judy**	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB*	4.5, 490L, 40, Q
79. **Go Long!**	**Barber, Tiki &**	F- Realistic		CB*	4.7, 770L,

	Ronde	Fic			50, T
80. **Goosebumps #4: Say Cheese and Die!**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	4.9, 610L
81. **Goosebumps #7: Night of the Living Dummy**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	3.7, 590L, 40, Q
82. **Goosebumps #11: The Haunted Mask**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	2.4, 580L
83. **Goosebumps #13: Piano Lessons Can Be Murder**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	4.6, 530L, 38, P
84. **Goosebumps #14: Werewolf of Fever Swamp**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	4.7, 540L
85. **Goosebumps #17: Why I'm Afraid of Bees**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	4.8, 570L, 38, P
86. **Goosebumps #37: The Headless Ghost**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	4.3, 440L, 38, P
87. **Goosebumps #51: Beware, the Snowman**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	4.3, 450L, 38, P
88. **Goosebumps Classic #32: Please Don't Feed the Vampire!**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	4.0, 390L
89. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 1: Revenge of the Living Dummy**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
90. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 2: Creep from the Deep**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
91. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 3: Monster Blood for Breakfast**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
92. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 4: The Scream of the Haunted Mask**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
93. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 5: Doctor Maniac vs. Robby Schwartz**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
94. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 6: Who's Your Mummy?**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
95. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 7: My Friends Call Me Monster**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
96. **Goosebumps**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4

Horrorland # 8: Say Cheese –and Die Screaming!					
97. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 9: Welcome to Camp Slither**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
98. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 10: Help! We Have Strange Powers!**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
99. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 11: Escape from Horrorland**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
100. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 12: The Streets of Panic Park**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
101. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 13: When the Ghost Dog Howls**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
102. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 14: Little Shop of Hamsters**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
103. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 15: Heads, You Lose!**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
104. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 16: Weirdo Halloween: Special Edition**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
105. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 17: The Wizard of Ooze**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
106. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 18: Slappy New Year!!**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
107. **Goosebumps Horrorland # 19: The Horror at Chiller House**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	RL4
108. **Goosebumps Most Wanted #9: Here Comes the Shaggedy**	**Stine, R. L.**	F- Horror	Fantasy	CB*	4, 470L
109. **Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez**	**Krull, Kathleen**	NF-Biography (P)	History	PB	4.8, 800L, 40, S
110. **Help! I'm Trapped in the First Day of School**	**Strasser, Todd**	F- Fantasy		CB*	5.1, 550L, 40, Q
111. **Honey, I Love and**	**Greenfield,**	F- Realistic		Poetry	4.4, 24, M

Other Love Poems	**Eloise**	Fic		Collec	
112. **Kickoff**	**Barber, Tiki & Ronde**	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	4.5, 760L,
113. **Lemonade War**	**Davies, Jacqueline**	F- Realistic Fic		CB	4.1, 630L, 40, S
114. **More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark**	**Schwartz, Alvin**	F- Horror	Fantasy	Short St. Collec*T	4.6, 760L, 40, S
115. **One Crazy Summer**	**Williams-Garcia, Rita**	F- Hist. Fic		CB*T	4.6, 750L, 50, T
116. **Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great**	**Blume, Judy**	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB*	4.2, 590L, 40, R
117. **President of the Whole Fifth Grade**	**Winston, Sherri**	F- Realistic Fic		CB	4.8, 730L
118. **Runaway Ralph**	**Cleary, Beverly**	F- Animal		CB*T	4.1, 890L, 34, O
119. **Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes**	**Coerr, Eleanor**	F- Hist. Fic		CB	5.2, 630L, 40, R
120. **Superfudge**	**Blume, Judy**	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB*	4.2, 560L, 40, Q
121. **Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing**	**Blume, Judy**	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB*	3.3, 470L, 40, Q
122. **Testing the Ice: A True Story About Jackie Robinson**	**Robinson, Sharon**	NF- Memoir	History	PB	5.3, 800L, 30, N
123. **The Chocolate Touch**	**Catling, Patrick**	F- Fantasy	Myth	CB	4.5, 770L, 30, N
124. **The Chocolate Touch**	**Catling, Patrick**	F- Fantasy	Myth	CB	4.5, 770L, 30, N
125. **The Great Gilly Hopkins**	**Paterson, Katherine**	F- Realistic Fic		CB	5.3, 800L, 40, S
126. **The Road to Paris**	**Grimes, Nikki**	F- Realistic Fic		CB	3.7, 700L, 50, T
127. **The Thing About Jellyfish**	**Benjamin, Ali**	F- Realistic Fic		CB	4-7, 740L
128. **The Witches**	**Dahl, Roald**	F- Fantasy		CB	4.7, 740, 40, R
129. **Unleashed**	**Korman, Gordon**	F- Mystery	Realistic F Comedy	CB	5.3, 730L, 40, S
130. **Where the Sidewalk Ends**	**Silverstein, Shel**	F- Varied		Poetry Collec	3.9, 40, Q
131. **Who is Barack Obama?**	**Edwards, Roberta**	NF- Biography (L)	Media	CB*	6.0, 740L, 40, S
132. **Who is Malala Yousafzai?**	**Brown, Dinah**	NF- Biography (L)	Media	CB*	4.0, 680L, 40, S
133. **Who Was George Washington Carver?**	**Gigliotti, Jim**	NF- Biography (P)	History	CB*	
134. **Who Was Harriet Tubman?**	**McDonough, Yona Z.**	NF- Biography	History	CB*	3.1, 650L, 40, R

		(P)			
135. **Who Was Helen Keller?**	**Thompson, Gare**	NF- Biography (P)	History	CB*	3.4, 570L, 40, Q
136. **Who Was King Tut?**	**Edwards, Roberta**	NF- Biography (P)	History	CB*	3.7, 690L, 40, S
137. **Who Was Michael Jackson?**	**Stine, Megan**	NF- Biography (P)	History	CB*	
138. **Who Was Sojourner Truth?**	**McDonough, Yona Z.**	NF- Biography (P)	History	CB*	600L
139. **Wild Card**	**Barber, Tiki & Ronde**	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	4.5, 740L
140. 28 Days: Moments in Black History that Changed the World	Smith, Charles	NF- History		Collec	5.0, 1080L, 50, V
141. Basketball Superstars 2016	Kelley, K. C.	NF- Media	Info (Sports)	PB	1000L 50, U
142. Between Madison and Palmetto	Woodson, Jacqueline	F- Realistic Fic		CB*T	4.9, 660L
143. Bud, Not Buddy	Curtis, Christopher Paul	F- Hist. Fic		CB	5.0, 950L, 50, U
144. Dear Dumb Diary: Let's Pretend This Never Happened	Benton, Jim	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	1120L, 50, V
145. Dear Dumb Diary: Let's Pretend This Never Happened	Benton, Jim	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	1120L, 50, V
146. Dear Dumb Diary: My Pants Are Haunted!	Benton, Jim	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	990L, 50, V
147. Dear Dumb Diary: School. Hasn't This Gone on Long Enough?	Benton, Jim	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	940L, 50, V
148. Dear Dumb Diary: The Worst Things in Life are also Free	Benton, Jim	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	950L, 50, V
149. Diary of a Wimpy Kid (Book 1)	Kinney, Jeff	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	5.2, 950L, 50, T
150. Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever (light blue)	Kinney, Jeff	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	5.6, 1060L, 50, T
151. Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School (black)	Kinney, Jeff	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	
152. Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules (blue)	Kinney, Jeff	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	5.3, 910L, 50, T
153. Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw (green)	Kinney, Jeff	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	5.2, 970L, 50, T
154. Dork Diaries: Tales	Russell, Rachel	F- Realistic	Comedy	MM J/D*	710L, 50,

from a Not-so-Glam TV Star	Renee	Fic			V
155. Dork Diaries: Tales from a Not-so-Happy Heartbreaker	Russell, Rachel Renee	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	MM J/D*	690L, 50, V
156. Esperanza Rising	Muñoz, Pam Ryan	F-Hist. Fic		CB	5.5, 750L, 50, V
157. Fast! Bullet Trains	Graham, Ian	NF- Science (Automo)		PB*	890L, 38, P
158. Fast! Jet Planes	Graham, Ian	NF- Science (Automo)		PB*	810L, 38, P
159. Fast! Speedboats	Graham, Ian	NF- Science (Automo)		PB*	38, P
160. Fast! Supercars	Graham, Ian	NF- Science (Automo)		PB*	38, P
161. Flora and Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures	DiCamillo, Kate	F- Fantasy	Comedy, Superhero	MM	4.0, 520L, 50, U
162. Freak the Mighty	Philbrick, Rodman	F- Realistic Fic		CB	5.5, 1000L, 60, W
163. Harriet the Spy	Fitzhugh, Louise	F- Realistic Fic		CB	4.8, 570L, 50, T
164. Holes	Sachar, Louis	F- Fantasy (MR)	Comedy, Mystery	CB	4.6, 660L, 50, V
165. I Am Harriet Tubman	Norwich, Grace	NF- Biography (P)	History	CB*	5.0, 1060L, 40, S
166. I Am LeBron James	Norwich, Grace	NF- Biography (L)	Media	CB*	6.0, 1040L, 50, T
167. Last Summer with Maizon	Woodson, Jacqueline	F- Realistic Fic		CB*T	5.5, 620L, 40, Q
168. Last Summer with Maizon	Woodson, Jacqueline	F- Realistic Fic		CB*T	5.5, 620L, 40, Q
169. Liar, Liar	Paulsen, Gary	F- Realistic Fic		CB	5.8, 940, 50, V
170. Locomotion	Woodson, Jacqueline	F- Realistic Fic		Poetry Verse N	4.9, 50, V
171. Lucky Strike	Pyron, Bobbie	F- Fantasy (MR)		CB	5.2
172. Maizon at Blue Hill	Woodson, Jacqueline	F- Realistic Fic		CB*T	5.2, 700L
173. Maniac Magee	Spinelli, Jerry	F- Realistic Fic		CB	5.4, 820L, 60, W
174. Mariah Keeps Cool	Walter, Mildred Pitts	F- Realistic Fic		CB	
175. Matilda	Dahl, Roald	F- Fantasy (MR)		CB	5.2, 840L, 40, S
176. National Geographic Kids: Everything Big Cats	Carney, Elizabeth	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB*	5.1, 50, U
177. National Geographic	Musgrave, Ruth	NF- Science		PB*	6.0, 1030L,

Kids: Everything Sharks		(Zoology)			50, V
178. Number the Stars	Lowry, Lois	F- Hist. Fic		CB	4.5, 670L, 50, U
179. Old Wolf	Avi	F- Adventure	Animal	CB	630L, 50, T
180. One Crazy Summer	Williams-Garcia, Rita	F- Hist. Fic		CB*T	4.6, 750L, 50, T
181. P.S. Be Eleven	Williams-Garcia, Rita	F- Hist. Fic		CB*T	770L
182. P.S. Be Eleven	Williams-Garcia, Rita	F- Hist. Fic		CB*T	770L
183. Peace, Locomotion	Woodson, Jacqueline	F- Realistic Fic		Letters	5.6, 860L
184. Public School Superhero	Patterson, James	F- Realistic Fic	Superhero	MM	560L, 50, V
185. Return to Sender	Alvarez, Julia	F- Realistic Fic		CB	5.5, 890L, 50, V
186. Serafina and the Black Cloak	Beatty, Robert	F- Fantasy, Horror	Hist.F, Mystery	CB	850L, 50, V
187. The BFG	Dahl, Roald	F- Fantasy	Adventure	CB	5.8, 720L, 50, U
188. The Crossover	Alexander, Kwame	F- Real. Fic		Poetry Verse N	5, 750L, Z
189. The Entirely True Story of the Unbelievable Fib	Shaughnessy, Adam	F- Fantasy	Myth, Adventure, Mystery	CB	720L, 50, U
190. The Watsons go to Birmingham-1963	Curtis, Christopher Paul	F- Hist. Fic		CB	5.5, 1000L, 50, U
191. The Watsons go to Birmingham-1963	Curtis, Christopher Paul	F- Hist. Fic		CB	5.5, 1000L, 50, U
192. Visual Explorers: Predators	None Listed (Scholastic)	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB*	
193. We Are The Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball	Nelson, Kadir	NF- History		PB	5.0, 900L, 60, W
194. Westing Game	Raskin, Ellen	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB	5.3, 750L, 50, V
195. Where the Mountain Meets the Moon	Lin, Grace	F- Fantasy	Folktale	CB	5.4, 820L, 50, T
196. 100 Most Indestructible Things on the Planet	Claybourne, Anna	NF- Science		PB	960L, 60, W
197. Calvin and Hobbes	Watterson, Bill	F- Comedy		Comic	360L, 60, Y Purple
198. Dead End in Norvelt	Gantos, Jack	F- Hist. Fic	Memoir	CB	6.4, 920L, 60, Y
199. History of Video Games	Funk, Joe	NF- Info	Media	PB	Purple, Brown
200. Jack: The True Story	Shirtliff, Liesl	F- Fantasy	Fairytale	CB	670L

of Jack & The Beanstalk					
201. The House on Mango Street	Cisneros, Sandra	F- Realistic Fic		Collec Vignette	5.6, 870L, 60, W
202. The Jumbies	Baptiste, Tracey	F- Fantasy (MR), Horror	Folktale	CB	680L, 60, X
203. The Tapper Twins Tear Up New York	Rodkey, Geoff	F- Comedy	Realistic F	MM*	760L, 60, X
204. Visual Explorers: Extreme Earth	None Listed (Scholastic)	NF- Science (Geograph)		PB*	
205. Walk Two Moons	Creech, Sharon	F- Realistic Fic		CB	6.6, 770L, 60, W
206. Wish Girl	Loftin, Nikki	F- Fantasy		CB	590L, Z
207. World's Dumbest Crooks	Zullo, Allan	NF- Comedy	Info- Crime	Short St. Collec	6.4, 950L, 50, T
208. World's Dumbest Crooks 2	Zullo, Allan	NF- Comedy	Info- Crime	Short St. Collec	8.6, 1070L
209. Fox Trot: Houston, You Have a Problem	Amend, Bill	F- Comedy	Realistic F	Comic*	Brown & Purple
210. Fox Trot: May the Force be With Us, Please	Amend, Bill	F- Comedy	Realistic F	Comic*	Brown & Purple
211. National Geographic Mission: Wolf Rescue	Jazynka, Kitson	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB*	7.3, 1110L
212. The 50 States	Balkan, Gabrielle	NF- Info	Geograph, History	PB	5, Class Reference

Added February (donated by public library, selected by me; 4 TOTAL, 1BL, 3RD)

213. **I Already Know I Love You**	Crystal, Billy	F- Realistic Fic		PB	
214. **Jingle Dancer**	Smith, Cynthia Leitich	F- Realistic Fic		PB	3.4, 710L, 24, M
215. **Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book**	Morales, Yuyi	F- Folktale, Math Concept (Counting)		PB	2.4, 540L, 18, K
216. **Nate the Great and the Boring Beach Day**	Sharmat, Marjorie	F- Realistic F		CB*	2.1, 320L, 18, K

Added March
(donated by students; 14 TOTAL, 1BL, 3RD, 3WHT, 5BLK, 1PRPL, 1BRN)

217. **The Iguana Brothers, a Tale of**	Johnston, Tony	F- Animal		PB	RL 1 1.9, 160L, 38P BL

Two Lizards					
218. **Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King**	Marzollo, Jean	NF- Biography (P)	History	PB	RL2 800L; 20L
219. **Junie B. Jones and the Stupid Smelly Bus**	Park, Barbara	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB	2.9, 380L, 24M
220. **The Thanksgiving from the Black Lagoon**	Thaler, Mike	F- Fantasy	Horror	CB*	2.3, 670L, 30N
221. **The Magic School Bus: On the Ocean Floor**	Cole, Joanna; and Degen, Bruce	F- Sci-Fi	Science (Geograp)	PB*	RL3, 490L, 38P
222. **Third-Grade Detectives #1: The Clue of the Left-Handed Envelope**	Stanley, George	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	3.1, 370L, 30N
223. **Third-Grade Detectives #3: The Mystery of the Hairy Tomatoes**	Stanley, George	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	3.2, 380L, 30N
224. Grimmtastic Girls: Cinderella Stays Late	**Holub, Joan; and Williams, Suzanne**	F- Fairytale		CB*	4.2, 680L, 40S
225. Locomotive	**Floca, Brian**	NF- History	Science (Automo)	PB	4; 840L; 34O
226. One Crazy Summer	**Williams-Garcia, Rita**	F- Hist. Fic		CB*T	4.6, 750L, 50, T
227. Ramona Quimby, Age 8	**Cleary, Beverly**	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	5.6, 860L, 34O
228. Ramona the Pest	**Cleary, Beverly**	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	RL4, 4.1, 850L, 34O
229. **The Missing Golden Ticket and Other Splenderiferous Secrets**	Dahl, Roald	F- Fantasy NF- Biography (P)		Collec	6.0, 1070L
230. **Frontier Home**	Bial, Raymond	NF- History		PB	RL7, 5.9, 1140L, 40R
231. The Iguana Brothers, a Tale of Two Lizards	Johnston, Tony	F- Animal		PB	RL 1 1.9, 160L, 38P
232. Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King	Marzollo, Jean	NF- Biography (P)	History	PB	RL2 800L; 20L
233. Junie B. Jones and the Stupid Smelly Bus	Park, Barbara	F- Realistic Fic	Comedy	CB	2.9, 380L, 24M
234. The Thanksgiving from the Black Lagoon	Thaler, Mike	F- Fantasy	Horror	CB*	2.3, 670L, 30N
235. The Magic School Bus: On the Ocean	Cole, Joanna; and Degen,	F- Sci-Fi	Science (Geograp)	PB*	RL3, 490L, 38P

Floor	Bruce				
236. Third-Grade Detectives #1: The Clue of the Left-Handed Envelope	Stanley, George	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	3.1, 370L, 30N
237. Third-Grade Detectives #3: The Mystery of the Hairy Tomatoes	Stanley, George	F- Mystery	Realistic F	CB*	3.2, 380L, 30N
238. **Grimmtastic Girls: Cinderella Stays Late**	**Holub, Joan; and Williams, Suzanne**	F- Fairytale		CB*	4.2, 680L, 40S
239. **Locomotive**	**Floca, Brian**	NF- History	Science (Automo)	PB	4; 840L; 34O
240. **One Crazy Summer**	**Williams-Garcia, Rita**	F- Hist. Fic		CB*T	4.6, 750L, 50, T
241. **Ramona Quimby, Age 8**	**Cleary, Beverly**	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	5.6, 860L, 34O
242. **Ramona the Pest**	**Cleary, Beverly**	F- Realistic Fic		CB*	RL4, 4.1, 850L, 34O
243. The Missing Golden Ticket and Other Splenderiferous Secrets	Dahl, Roald	F- Fantasy NF- Biography (P)		Collec	6.0, 1070L
244. Frontier Home	Bial, Raymond	NF- History		PB	RL7, 5.9, 1140L, 40R

Added March (purchased by me; 3 TOTAL; 1WHT, 2BLK)

245. **Scary Stories 3: More Stories to Chill Your Bones**	Schwartz, Alvin	F- Horror	Fantasy	Short St. Collec*T	5.1, 680L, 38, P
246. **Who Is Michelle Obama?**	**Stine, Megan**	NF- Biography (L)	Media	CB*	
247. **Who Was Martin Luther King, Jr.?**	**Bader, Bonnie**	NF- Biography (P)	History	CB*	4, 750L, R

Removed March

The House on Mango Street	Cisneros, Sandra	F- Realistic Fic		Collec Vignette	5.6, 870L, 60, W

Added April
(purchased by me; 26 TOTAL; 2BL, 0RD, 10WHT, 7BLK, 5ORG, 2PRPL)

248. **Bad Kitty**	Bruel, Nick	F- Comedy	Animal	PB*	1.4, 280L, 16, I
249. **Bad Kitty Does Not Like Dogs**	Bruel, Nick	F- Comedy	Animal	PB*	1, 250L, 14, H
250. **Kinda Like Brothers**	Booth, Coe	F- Realistic Fic		CB	3.8, 660L, White
251. **Magic Tree House #29: Christmas in Camelot**	Osborne, Mary Pope	F- Fantasy, Hist. Fic	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	3.1, 420L, 24, M
252. **Magic Tree House #30: Haunted Castle on Hallows Eve**	Osborne, Mary Pope	F- Fantasy, Hist. Fic	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	3.6, 390L, 40, Q
253. **Magic Tree House #31: Summer of the Sea Serpent**	Osborne, Mary Pope	F- Fantasy, Hist. Fic	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	2.9, 550L, 40, Q
254. **Magic Tree House #32: Winter of the Ice Wizard**	Osborne, Mary Pope	F- Fantasy, Hist. Fic	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	2.8, 530L, 24, M
255. **Magic Tree House #33: Carnival at Candlelight**	Osborne, Mary Pope	F- Fantasy, Hist. Fic	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	3, 590L, 30, N
256. **Magic Tree House #34: Season of the Sandstorms**	Osborne, Mary Pope	F- Fantasy, Hist. Fic	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	2.3, 580L, 30, N
257. **Magic Tree House #35: Night of the New Magicians**	Osborne, Mary Pope	F- Fantasy, Hist. Fic	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	3.1, 590L, 30, N
258. **Magic Tree House #36: Blizzard of the Blue Moon**	Osborne, Mary Pope	F- Fantasy, Hist. Fic	Mystery, Adventure	CB*	3.1, 570L, 24, M
259. **They're Coming for You: Scary Stories that Scream to be Read**	Penn-Coughin, O.	F- Horror	Fantasy	Short St. Collec*	3
260. Big Nate: Boredom Buster	**Peirce, Lincoln**	F- Comedy	Realistic F	GN*	4, 460L, 40, R
261. Big Nate: Dibs on This Chair	**Peirce, Lincoln**	F- Comedy	Realistic F	GN*	360-390L, 40-50, Q-S
262. Big Nate: Makes a Splash	**Peirce, Lincoln**	F- Comedy	Realistic F	GN*	360-390L, 40-50, Q-S
263. Big Nate: Pray for a Fire Drill	**Peirce, Lincoln**	F- Comedy	Realistic F	GN*	360-390L, 40-50, Q-S
264. The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano	**Manzano, Sonia**	F- Hist. Fic		CB	4.4, 720L, 60, W
265. Who Was Jackie Robinson?	**Herman, Gail**	NF-Biography (P)	History	CB*	3, 670L, P
266. Wilder Boys	**Wallace,**	F- Adventure	Realistic F	CB	4, 750L, 50,

	Brandon				T Bl
267. **Bearwalker**	Bruchac, Joseph	F- Adventure	Fable	CB	5.5, 860L, 50 V
268. **Hatchet**	Paulsen, Gary	F- Adventure	Realistic F	CB	5.7, 1020L, 40, R
269. **Listen, Slowly**	Lai, Thanhha	F- Realistic Fic		CB	5.3, 800L
270. **Neon Aliens Ate my Homework: And Other Poems**	Cannon, Nick	F- Comedy		Poetry Collec	3-6
271. **Surviving Sharks: And Other Dangerous Creatures (10 True Tales)**	Zullo, Alan	NF- Science (Zoology)		PB*	3, 930L, 60, W
272. **Booked**	Alexander, Kwame	F- Realistic Fic		Poetry Verse N	6, 660L, 60, Y
273. **Inside Out & Back Again**	Lai, Thanhha	F- Hist. Fic		Poetry Verse N	5.3, 800L, 60, W

Added May (donated by students; 3 TOTAL; 2BL, 1BLK)

274. **Fairy Tales Treasury, 1**	Jerrard, Jane	F- Fairytale		PB/BB	
275. **Fairy Tales Treasury, 2**	Jerrard, Jane	F- Fairytale		PB/BB	
276. **Who Was Abraham Lincoln?**	**Pascal, Janet**	NF-Biography (P)	History	CB*	4.4, 720L, 40R

Added June
(purchased by me (2 from school book sale); 4 TOTAL; 1BL, 1RD, 1WHT, 1ORG)

277. Summer in the City	Wainwright, Kathleen	F- Realistic Fic		PB	
278. Ziggie Tales: Ziggie's Big Adventure	Wainwright, K.	F- Realistic Fic	Animal (NT?), Adventure	CB	2
279. The Magic Finger	Dahl, Roald	F- Fantasy	Comedy	CB	3.1, 450L, 30, N
280. Help! I'm Trapped in the First Day of Summer Camp	Strasser, Todd	F- Fantasy		CB*	4.6, 590L, 40, Q

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