How does culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student’s literacy development in the primary grades?

Kaylan Louise Carlson
Hamline University, kcarlson26@hamline.edu

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HOW DOES CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM IMPACT AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT’S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRIMARY GRADES?

by

Kaylan Louise Carlson

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Literacy Education

Hamline University
Saint Paul, Minnesota
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Primary Advisor: Jennifer Carlson
Secondary Advisor: Beth Villalobos
Peer Reviewer: Kelsey Carlson
To my husband, Cory, for encouraging me, cheering me on, and, most of all, for always loving me. Thank you for being my rock and my best friend.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Introduction and Background

In the public education system, certain groups of students are able to excel more so than their peers. Today, it is theorized that systematic racism existing within the school system has created a gap in achievement. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) states, “The achievement gap refers to the differences in academic performance between groups of students. Closing gaps in achievement and ensuring all students are performing at high levels are critical to the social and economic well-being of Minnesota” (2015). Data from MDE shows that in 2015, only 34% of third grade Black students statewide scored “Proficient” in the reading MCA exam, while 68% of third grade white students scored “Proficient” (2015). It is also important to note that America’s Best Workforce legislation states that in 2017, all third graders must be reading proficiently (MDE, 2015), thus something needs to change.

The numbers are frightening. Even more frightening when we consider the following statistics: “African American children are three times as likely to drop out of school as white children are and twice as likely to be suspended from school” (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 2). Systematic racism still exists within the schooling system, in addition to many other institutions, and is keeping certain groups, specifically African Americans, from succeeding or achieving their full potential in the education system.

As an educator, I observe the achievement gap, firsthand. I am terrified by the statistics that surround us and feel an overwhelming need to do something, anything, to ensure that all students are allowed success in the school. When considering the
significant gap that exists, I often wonder what things are taking place in the learning environment that hold some back while allowing others to supersede? I wonder whether some educators have unchecked biases strong enough to influence placing certain groups behind others? What disadvantages have we socially normalized?

I see a population in my school that has evolved from one of almost completely white to a more realistic representation of our diverse world. Regardless of the change, it does not seem as though many practices have shifted to accommodate the new population. I believe we are creatures of habit, with some teachers simply refusing to bend in any way shape or form. When we take the data into consideration, we know that something has got to give and it can not be the future of our students that we put on the chopping block. Therefore, I have devoured every book, article and piece of research that I can find on improving and changing my practice to not be a perpetuator of the achievement gap. Through research, I seek to understand, “How does culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student’s literacy development in the primary grades?” I strive to engage all students and hope to excel them as well, regardless of what the data may predict based on their marked race.

Racial Autobiography

Courageous conversations (Singelton & Linton, 2005) would ask me to isolate race and keep my comments personal, local and immediate. In order to begin this work, I must examine my experiences and how they have shaped the person that I am today, in addition to my experiences within the educational system.

I was born in Maple Grove, MN in 1989. At that time, Maple Grove was still being developed into the bursting suburb that it is today. My parents brought me home to
a large house in a great, family-oriented neighborhood, which would determine the schools we would attend. I could not wait to start school, as I had two parents who had navigated through the system and graduated from Mankato State University. Their experiences were positive and their appreciation and valuation of schooling was imprinted upon me.

It was in Kindergarten that I decided, I too, would become a teacher just like the one that I had. I saw myself in my teacher. She was a young, blonde woman and she reminded me both of myself and of my mother. Everywhere I went in my school, I saw myself represented. It was not hard to feel like I belonged within the educational system as a blonde-haired, blue-eyed girl from an upper-middle class family. I spoke the language, my mother came in to volunteer almost every day, and everything seemed to come so easily to me. I had school figured out!

I began to read at a young age. During this time in my life, I loved books like *Amelia Bedelia* (1999) and *Junie B. Jones* (1994) and anything written by Beverly Cleary. I had a wide range of reading interests and with no shortage of books at my disposal at home or in the school library, I read a lot. In the elementary years, I remember reading through books as quickly as possible so that I could take the accelerated reader test that followed. As a result, I was awarded with many different accolades for my accomplishments, not to mention the fact that my parents paid me for my good grades. My sister showed in interest in reading as well so my love of books continued to grow. I never once thought of reading as a task or something that someone else possibly struggled with.
Overall, I grew up without experiencing much diversity, as I lived in a predominantly white suburb. It was not until 4th grade that I had my first friend who was of another race and this new friend amazed and fascinated me. She spoke English but in a way that sounded a little bit more like music to my ears. I wanted to learn all that I could about her so I followed her around like a puppy dog. When she did not show up for school one day, I imagined she must have been sick. However, she was not there the next day...or the next. Our teacher explained that her family had moved away, and I never heard from her again. I was sad to lose a friend and could not imagine why anyone would ever want to leave my school. It would not be until later that I would realize she was one of two black students in the fourth grade. The other student was adopted and raised in a white family. How alone did my friend really feel?

As I grew older and moved into junior high, the population began to change. My neighborhood kept me in the same district but also meant that I would attend a school with students from the nearby town of Osseo. As sassy pre-teen Maple Grove citizens, my friends and I would lovingly refer to Osseo as “The Ghetto.” When crossing from Maple Grove into Osseo, one could almost feel the shift. The houses just did not look as nice and there were not as many shops, stores or restaurants. It was around then, that I began to associate white with status and money. Following that same logic, I assumed black meant poor and helpless. As a person who has always believed in treating others with kindness, I did not let my assumptions allow me to treat black students in a mean-spirited way. However, I do recall feeling sad for them and not quite understanding the idea that empathy outweighs sympathy a million times over.
Nonetheless, I made friends with a variety of people from different backgrounds. In the end, I did not keep contact with many people from high school. I decided that college would be the place where my doors would really open. After graduating, I attended the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. Maple Grove was a busy suburb while Eau Claire was a quiet, seemingly rural college town. I felt at home in Eau Claire and did not see much difference in the racial and cultural makeup of the town. While Eau Claire has a growing Hmong population, the number of African American or black families living there is not something that I did not take note of. After two years, I began my formal program to become a teacher. It would not be until my third year of college that I took my first class that explored diversity in the learning environment. We read books about the inequalities of education and looked at the historic roots of the issues we still see today. I was blown away. I had lived my whole life not even realizing any of this. My professor explained that as white people, by definition, we were racist. This was due to the fact that as white people we were in a position of power and privilege.

While I have a working definition of race, and, subsequently, racism now, I will never forget hearing that I was part of a hateful system. I experienced a range of emotions and mainly felt guilty. Ashamed for my ancestors and the subsequent privileges they had awarded to me through hateful acts, I wanted desperately in that moment to be the one to break the system. My dreams were big and my goals were lofty, but I spent a couple of years after that course naively feeling as though my work was done. I took the course, I understood the issue and because of that, I would not be a part of the “system.”
Bienvenidos a Realidad

After graduating from UWEC, I found a job quickly at a Spanish Immersion School. I interviewed and was hired on the spot, regardless of my somewhat rusty Spanish. The fact that I was teaching at a Spanish school just further reassured me that I was doing the work that needed to be done. I was working toward a better future, in which students performed well, regardless of their skin color or background. I started teaching fourth grade and noticed that, yet again, I was surrounded by people who looked like me. With the exception of my fellow new teacher colleague from Colombia, we were a team of white, upper-class women. The grade level had around 10 students of color out of a total of 131 students.

Our district asked us to attend a “Beyond Diversity” training. My new teacher friend and I rode together. I expected to hear many things that I already knew. After all, I took that course in college! However, my world was rocked that day. I learned about the many ways that my privileges set others back. On our drive home, my friend and I had an honest discussion about her feelings toward our school, the lack of culturally responsive practices and many other things that were sure to change my perspective. Shortly after, I joined the Equity Leadership team and continued to learn more and more surprising and fascinating things.

The next year, I was ready for a challenge so I switched into teaching second grade. I had always loved primary grades and knew that I would be successful wherever I went. At this point in time, the way in which we invited families into our school had changed and, therefore, we had a population that was more representational of the surrounding area. For the first time, I had a significant number of students of color in my
room. I was ecstatic and ready to change their lives. I was surprised to see that the majority of black boys did not really seem interested in reading, even when I tried to offer books that I thought fit their interests. I was stumped when an African American girl would not complete her homework or turn any finished assignments in, written or otherwise. I received negative feedback and pushback from one of my families of a black student. In fact, I felt targeted due to my whiteness. It would take time, tears and many honest conversations for me to understand the real underlying issues for each of those instances.

Racial Awakening

Flash forward to the present. I am an active member of the Equity Leadership Team and a member in a National Urban Alliance Cohort. I have taken elective courses in urban education and spent a summer reading every book, article and research piece that I could get my hands on about culturally responsive teaching practices. My husband teaches at an alternative learning center and works with a population that is majority students of color. He is immersed in equity work and our dinner discussions usually move to that place as well. It is a great time of learning and reflection for myself. I am still teaching second grade and, sadly, still seeing many black boys not interested in reading. My district has used a prescribed curriculum in the past that teachers were taught to use “with fidelity.”

After analyzing data and looking at best practice, the district has finally moved to a model that allows more freedom in the literacy block. Therefore, I am allowed to ponder a bit more about whether or not the students see themselves reflected in the literature. When I look through the books we have used traditionally, I see different
cultures represented but not in ways that stray from the “holidays and celebrations”
model. We celebrate Black History Month, Latino History Month, Women’s History
Month, etc. However, we are still missing a curriculum that really shows who we are and
draws our learners into a place of feeling represented and welcome.

Summary

As I think about my journey and the many things that I have learned and
experienced, I wonder how would my path have differed had I been born a different race?
Would I have seen myself in my teacher? Would I have found myself in my books?
Would reading be automatic for me? Would I feel welcome and appreciated? It is
necessary for me to address these questions as an educator. I know that my experiences
shape who I am. I cannot change the way that I became who I am today. However, I can
continue to learn, grow and question the practices in place while looking for positive
ways to make changes. While the achievement gap is not something that I created
directly, it is something that I must take responsibility for. In order to continually
question and challenge my practice, I will further explore the question, “How does
culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student's literacy development
in the primary grades?”

In the next chapter, I will present my literature review. In addition, I will provide
a brief overview of the racial disparities that exist in education, specifically in literacy.
Chapter two will provide an argument for the need of a culturally responsive curriculum,
explore the implications of culturally responsive teaching, look at African American
literature and its implications for all students, specifically students of color, and, finally,
give an overview of the benefits of literacy development that takes place with a
multicultural focus. In the following chapters, I will provide the methods for data collection, curriculum implementation materials and support along with areas for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The Journey

There are differences in the way that students are provided access into academic content. As the majority, or white, culture sees themselves represented on a day to day basis, other minority cultures, for example: black students, may see themselves only every once in a while. The difference is a representation of culture relegated to isolated lesson plans, versus a culture mandated daily through the ongoing curriculum as well as the school’s official calendar, that schedules holidays around majority religions. Disparities in performance are prevalent between white and black students and one may wonder if the disparities have a connection to the lack of representation within the curriculum.

These performance disparities are most often referred to as the achievement gap. The MN Department of Education (MDE) (2015) states, “The achievement gap refers to the differences in academic performance between groups of students. Closing gaps in achievement and ensuring all students are performing at high levels are critical to the social and economic well-being of Minnesota”. Data from MDE shows that in 2015, only 34% of third grade Black students statewide scored “Proficient” in the reading MCA exam, while 68% of third grade white students scored “Proficient”. Therefore, when looking at the data, the gap between white and black student performance is rather large. The data clearly demonstrates the need for some type of changes to take place.

An equitable education may be the key. While equity is a journey and not a destination, there can still be changes in order to create a more equitable experience. This
could be reached through the use of culturally responsive teaching practices and a more culturally representational curriculum. However, there are many obstacles in the way of reaching a state of an equitable education. “Frustrated by the racial achievement gap’s existence, educators often blame social, economic, or political factors external to the school and unrelated to the quality of learning and teaching” (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 3). This research project seeks to understand how to close the achievement gap by studying, “How does culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student's literacy development in the primary grades?” In order to fully explore the question, chapter two will first examine the current state of education and culturally responsive teaching practices, specifically in the area of culturally responsive literacy. Finally, a multicultural approach will be explored in addition to considering the benefits of such an approach.

**The Current State of Education**

In its current state, education may not always consider the whole child, allowing some to “fall through the cracks” (Wood, p. 662). The students who generally “fall through” are those who are culturally or linguistically diverse. Specifically, there is a disparity between white students and African American or Black students, with African American students not performing as well as white students according to standard measures of achievement (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 2). Figure 1 shows 34% of African American and Black students scoring proficient on the Minnesota reading MCA-III in 2015 (MDE, 2015), while Figure 2 shows 68% of White students, not of Hispanic origin, scoring proficient on the same test (MDE, 2015). There are many possible reasons why such disparities exist. Scholars Roger and Mosley (2006) posit that racism is deeply
rooted within the educational system; therefore, it is a part of most school cultures (p. 467). If it is known that racism is integrated into the very culture of the educational system, we have to begin to question the practices that we are using and the procedures that we are following. The goal is to meet all learners where they are at and to take them to their highest potential.

Figure 1. MDE Report Card, MCA-III, Reading 2015, Black not of Hispanic Origin
In addition to the test results, statistics show that an African American child is three times as likely to drop out of school as a white child, and also two times as likely to be suspended from school (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 2).
Data helps to understand the current state of education and, historically, has been used in conjunction with education legislature. In general, data comes from high-stakes testing, sometimes creating a focus on testing. Sleeter and Cornbleth (2011) explain that the general response to such focus on high-stakes testing include teachers narrowing curriculum in order “teach to the test.” When this happens, studies also show that the learning environment shifts from student-centered to teacher-centered (Sleeter & Cornbleth, 2011). Therefore, the curriculum becomes less about the students and more about the teacher, drawing the cultural relevance out of the room. When the content becomes focused on the teacher being the giver of knowledge, the teacher’s culture and frame of reference becomes the most heard voice in the room, shutting other ideas and perspectives out.

Factors in Success

Overall, Black and White students differ in testing outcomes, with Black students falling behind White students (Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott, & Garrison-Wade, 2008, p. 48). Figure 1 shows results of Black students for the MCA-III reading test from 2015. Of the 48,548 students tested, 34% students scored “proficient” (MDE, 2015). Figure 2 shows results of White students for the MCA-III reading test from 2015. Of the 307,911 students tested, 68% students scored “proficient” (MDE, 2015). These numbers show a great disparity in the outcome between White and Black students. In order to best understand the current state of education, including this disparity, educators must consider the innate privileges that accompany being white and the dire consequences of being “color-blind.”
Examining whiteness. Inequalities exist in the world of education, especially for students of poverty, English language-learners, and those who are not white (McIntyre & Hulan, 2013, p. 28). This imbalance could be an effect of white privilege. White privilege, as defined by Rogers and Mosley (2006), is “the way that white people benefit from a racist society, referring to unearned advantages that are based solely on skin color and sometimes unnoticed by white people” (p. 466). These “unearned advantages” may allow white people to succeed with less adversity and feel more adept at navigating through the system than, for example, a black person without such advantages. The concept of white privilege holds true especially when the historical roots of the educational system are brought into consideration.

Being color-blind. When presented with troubling statistics and disparities, educators can sometimes feel attacked. In order to relinquish blame for any of the existing disparities, some may explain that they do not see color and are “color-blind,” meaning they will treat all students the same. Nieto (1999) states, “[a]lthough color-blindness is a good thing when it means that people do not discriminate on the basis of race, it can have negative consequences when educators refuse to see their students’ racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences” (p. 67). Many White teachers may have some level of cultural misunderstandings or disregard (Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott, & Garrison-Wade, 2008). Educators must be cognizant of their predispositions, biases and prejudices in order to keep them in check and provide an educational experience that is equitable (Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott, & Garrison-Wade, 2008). In addition to looking inward, educators must also be aware of the ways in which students feel they belong to the learning community.
**Sense of belonging.** Researchers have substantial evidence that when looking at academic achievement, sense of belonging is contributor to success (Osterman, 2000). When it comes time to discuss Black student performance, many seek to blame lack of prior knowledge/experience and lack of family support (Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott, & Garrison-Wade, 2008). However, in order to feel that one belongs within a certain place, there must be representation of that person in the space. A great majority of content materials used contain dominant White culture and images. Therefore, the question remains as to whether *all* students are allowed a sense of belonging in educational community (Osterman, 2000). In addition to student belonging, families must feel as though they belong, as the family unit is an integral part of the learning process.

**Family matters.** Family involvement is one way to make learning culturally relevant. When family members are able to come in to the school, it provides a direct window into the culture of that individual. Sleeter and Cornbleth (2011) explain that “[in] high-poverty communities, immigrant communities, or other marginalized communities, there may be a huge psychological gulf between the school and the community” (page 3). Therefore, the school community must take extra steps in order to allow access for all families from all cultures, races and backgrounds to feel welcome in the school and to feel as though they are part of the process. This may entail hosting parent information nights, providing transportation for families as needed and/or finding alternative means of communication that best meet the needs of each family.

**Dominant culture.** According to Singleton and Linton (2006), “the collective message from the dominant racial group to people of color is that the problem of race stems from their inability to thrive in ‘mainstream’ society” (p. 26). Although best
practice is usually assumed to be culturally responsive, that’s not always the case. As Sleeter and Cornbleth (2011) explain, “[t]he problem is that what is culturally responsive for White middle-class students passes as the norm, labeled as ‘good teaching’ or ‘best practices.’ However, ‘best practices’ and culturally responsive teaching are not necessarily mutually exclusive.” (p. 3). Research has shown that White teachers generally work from within a Western framework, meaning that they hold lower expectations for Black students and also have a lack of respect for the families of the students and their culture (Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott, & Garrison-Wade, 2008). If a teacher does not truly respect a student, their ability to effectively teach said student decreases greatly (Douglas, Lewis, Douglas, Scott, & Garrison-Wade, 2008).

**Common practice.** Most common literacy practices and discussion models follow the same pattern as discussions between White, middle class parents and their children (Colombo, 2004). Therefore, discussion may come easily to White students, while seeming unnatural or uncomfortable for students of other races and cultures, because they are not able to be practicing nightly at home. In addition to the discussion patterns, most stories that we use in the classroom follow the same discourse pattern that mainstream, White families use when communicating (Colombo, 2004, p. 50). Therefore, in order to combat these existing commonalities that limit access, educators must become well versed in culturally responsive teaching practices.

**Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices**

Culturally responsive teaching means that the teacher connects with students, rather than simply teaching content (Toppel, 2015). The focus of the learning falls on where the students are, each child starting with important background knowledge and
experiences to build upon. Culturally responsive teaching bridges what students know into new learning which makes the content relevant and authentic for the learner (Banks & Banks, 2012). Therefore, there must always be a tie-in to previous knowledge. Overall, classroom work should drive students to think, view and hear from differing perspectives. In addition, in order to foster learning that enables students to participate in a democratic society, culturally responsive teaching practices must include an element of working for social justice (Sleeter & Cornbleth, 2011).

**Culturally responsive teaching theorists.** In the pedagogy of culturally responsive teaching, one of the big names and widely known scholars is Gloria Ladson-Billings, author of seminar work, *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (2009). Ladson-Billings (1992) explains that culturally responsive teaching means that the students culture helps to form the culture of the learning; thus rather than creating a curriculum that forces culture, students bring their culture to the forefront and the work becomes helping other socializing and making the learning authentic. This means that the group must collectively work together to bring everyone up, rather than moving some students forward and leaving others behind.

Culturally responsive teaching means seeing students of color and celebrating their culture throughout the course of the learning, not just in specific months or for certain celebrations (Ladson-Billings, 1992). In only acknowledging students of color during certain months or holidays, the students become isolated, or tokenized. The same goes for only sharing cultural icons or famous people of color. A culturally responsive teacher must share the work of cultural icons while also featuring less known people of color and, in general, show books with people of color as everyday people.
The end goal of culturally responsive teaching is to promote social justice work and to engage everyone in making a difference (Ladson-Billings, 1992). It is important for cultural stereotypes and social issues to come to the forefront of learning in order for students to be ready to make a difference. The spectrum of issues shared with students may vary based on age level but issues shouldn’t be avoided in order to keep students innocent, as that only keeps them from knowing reality. Before this learning can take place, a teacher must first build relationships with students and see their potential as endless rather than fixed.

Another notable name in the field of culturally responsive teaching is Geneva Gay, author of *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2000). Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (p. 31). Gay (2000) also explains that culturally responsive teaching is both validating and affirming in the sense that it allows students to be who they are and use that sense of self to succeed.

Culturally responsive teaching also features cooperation, communication and connectedness as central features to success (Gay, 2000). In looking closer at these tenets, Gay (2000) also speaks to the importance of “relational competencies [that] encompass knowing, valuing, doing, caring, and sharing power, resources and responsibilities” (p. 21). This means that in addition to using culturally responsive practices to teach content, there must also be a focus on building a group of caring learners who can collaborate and make change together.
Building a community. The way that a student is treated by a teacher matters. An important aspect of culturally responsive teaching is that educators see learners as full of potential and valuable experiences. As noted previously, culturally responsive teaching practices draw upon a student’s prior knowledge to move them forward. Therefore, teachers must scaffold, focus on instruction and challenge students to think beyond what they already know (Ladson-Billings, 1994). In this sense, the teacher is more of a facilitator of learning rather than an expert relaying knowledge. The learner and the educator must work together as a team to build upon existing knowledge and grow new learning.

In addition to building upon prior knowledge and learning to see and understand from multiple perspectives, Sleeter & Cornbleth (2011) state the importance of integrating the work towards social justice within the learning community. Many times this means that one must enable a multicultural approach in order to foster a sense of acceptance and understanding for the many different views and perspectives that exist.

A Multicultural Approach

While the terms multicultural education and culturally responsive education are different and it is important to note their difference, it can also be said that they intertwine in their goals to create an education that is more accepting and all-encompassing. Banks and Banks (2012) explain that “[m]ulticultural education is an idea stating that all students, regardless of the groups to which they belong, such as those related to gender, ethnicity, race, culture, language, social class, religion, sexual orientation, or exceptionality, should experience educational equality in the schools” (p. 20). Multicultural education is formed on that basis that all people are created equally and
have value, along with rights. It focuses on eliminating stereotypes and negative attitudes towards groups of people that are different from the majority culture. Its goal is to foster a more positive attitude towards other groups, nations and cultures (Suh & Samuel, 2011). A meaningful multicultural curriculum contains issues that promote equity and social justice, with attention to topics that can sometimes feel taboo in the education world (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015).

**Dimensions of multicultural education.** Some of the big names in multicultural pedagogy are James Banks and Cherry McGee Banks, authors of the book, *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* (2012). Banks and Banks (2012) explain that multicultural education has five dimensions. Those dimensions are: (1) content integration, (2) the knowledge construction process, (3) equity pedagogy, (4) prejudice reduction, and, (5) empowering school culture and social structure (Banks & Banks, 2012). The use of examples and materials that are representational of multiple cultures is highly encouraged (Banks & Banks, 2012). Educators are urged to use materials in authentic ways rather than in contrived manners. The knowledge construction process is explained as the extent to which educators aide learners in understanding how knowledge is constructed with a critical lens (Banks & Banks, 2012).

Banks and Banks (2012) define equity pedagogy as educators facilitating the learning based on the needs of the diverse student body and prejudice reduction as purposeful learning that seeks to foster positive attitudes towards different racial ethnic and cultural groups. Empowering school culture and social structure means that the staff and students closely examine the organization of the school to ensure that they are promoting gender, racial and social-class equity (Banks & Banks, 2012). Once one has a
grasp on culturally responsive practices and a multicultural approach, there must be an examination of what they look like in the literacy-learning block.

**Culturally Responsive Literacy**

Many schools and districts have reading programs implemented that are not always the best option for a culturally responsive practice in the literacy-learning block. Although many teachers must use a reading curriculum, it does not mean that they cannot make the content culturally responsive or relevant (Toppel, 2015, p. 544). Bishop (1990) sites, “Less than 2 percent of the 2,500 to 3,500 children's books published each year feature Blacks as major characters or focus on information about Blacks and Black life” (p. 556). Students who do not see themselves represented or feel as though they are validated fairly in school will tend to perform at a rate lower than their true potential (Gay, 2000). Although the number of books with Black characters produced is dire, an educator can still seek out those texts and look for different texts that show other groups. Books that contain major African American characters and culture tend to provide a focus on family, history, heritage, music and a representation of African American dialect (Bishop, 1990, p. 560). This representation is important and necessary for all students to either see themselves or to learn about and experience individuals different than themselves.

**Content matters.** In addition to choosing books with characters that represent their students, an educator must also choose content and topics that are actually meaningful, rather than those that are convenient or safe (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015, p. 36). Culturally responsive literacy means that the content and materials used within the learning build upon students’ prior knowledge while also serving as both windows and mirrors into the
lives of the learners. The content of a book used to teach reading skills is just as important (if not more so) as the skills being taught, as the content that children read helps to form their view of the world (Bishop, 1990). In order to teach young learners that reading is a necessary life skill, we must ensure that our readers are able to see themselves within the text, to identify, connect and see the importance of reading (Bishop, 1990). If a student does not feel represented within the texts that are used in the literacy block, they will receive the message that they are undervalued and that reading, and/or school is not for them (Bishop, 1990).

**Supporting All Learners**

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students must be provided with rich instruction that promotes collaboration and interactions between learners (Callins, 2006). CLD students comprise a large portion of the schooling population and they are regularly forgotten or dismissed. However, these are students in great need of a very specific setting. Collins (2006) emphasizes that “[i]mportant features of such settings include high expectations, exposure to academically rich curricula and materials, approaches that are culturally and linguistically responsive and appropriate, use of instructional technologies that enhance learning, and emphasis on student-regulated, active learning rather than passive, teacher-directed transmission” (p. 62).

**Communication.** Communication is key, both in education and the real world. An educator must ensure that the communication methods they use are accessible to all students, not just the majority. In addition, a learning environment must allow time and space for student voice to be truly heard, not just listened to (Sleeter & Cornbleth, 2011).
There must also be in-depth instruction for the students to learn how to hear one another’s voice, as well.

All students deserve the chance to succeed and that can happen when educators enact purposeful strategies. Gay (2000) stresses, “the more teachers know about the discourse styles of ethnically diverse students, the better they will be able to improve academic achievement” (p. 125). This means that educators must understand the unique ways in which students and families communicate and build upon that as strength. In addition, all learning strategies must be implemented in a way that most meets the needs of the students, while taking the school environment into account (Herrera, Perez, Kavimandan, & Wessels, 2013). Overall, a teacher must not default to stereotypical forms of cultural communication, rather consider the context and learn the ways in which students and families are already communicating.

Conclusion

The question, “How does culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student's literacy development?” was explored. First, the current state of education was examined using data from the MN Department of Education. In order to better understand some of the underlying causes of disparities in testing outcomes, Whiteness, the dominant culture and the dangers of being “color-blind” were explored. This section articulated the need for different, specific strategies and processes that would allow success for all students, but specifically for African American students. Focusing on the work and of Ladson-Billings, Gay and many others, Chapter two illuminated the idea that culturally responsive teaching means achievement for all by building upon prior knowledge, fostering social justice and holding high standards for all. Lastly, while
delving into culturally responsive and culturally relevant practices, this chapter highlighted Bank’s work with multicultural education. In order to create a learning community that accepts and values all races, cultures and genders, there must be a multicultural approach to content.

Chapter three will highlight the project methodology. It will provide specific information about the district in which this project will take place in addition to the participants in this project. Moreover, chapter three will lay out the curriculum design process and create a structure for a comprehensive unit design.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The beginning of this project illustrated a personal connection to the work. Chapter two illuminated the research and subsequent implications for the need for culturally relevant practices. When diving deeper in culturally responsive literacy, it becomes clear that one of the main issues is that the majority of the content used in the literacy learning block is not representative of all students. Rather, it features White, dominant culture. All of the information presented in Chapter Two supports the idea that an educator must enable a multicultural approach through the use of culturally responsive teaching strategies in order to allow access to success for all students, and, specifically Black students. Chapter Three will provide more information about the goals of this project, explain the setting for where the work will take place, illustrate the project methods and highlight curriculum development process.

The goal of this project was to support African American students in literacy development through the use of culturally responsive practices. This project entailed curriculum development that would not replace the curriculum being used within the school, but, rather to serve as a supplement. Therefore, the scope and sequence were coupled with the standards as established by the school. In addition, innovative and new strategies, texts and content not previously used were to be implemented.

The intentions of implementing this supplemental curriculum were to show that African American students could improve their literacy skills when they saw themselves in the content and felt supported by their teacher. In addition to seeing growth from
African American students, the hope was to see improvement from all culturally and linguistically diverse students through the use of a multicultural approach. A multicultural approach meant that more students would see themselves represented and feel as though they had applicable and usable previous knowledge and experiences to share.

Setting/Participants

The setting for this project was a Spanish Immersion School with a staff comprised of a white female principal, a white male vice principal and a white female instructional coach. The table below shows the makeup of the other staff members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade/Specialty</th>
<th>Number of Sections</th>
<th>Number of females</th>
<th>Number of males</th>
<th>People of color on grade/specialty team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First grade</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth grade</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Assistants</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

Staff Member Population – 2015-2016
Due to the immersion setting, the teaching population was more diverse than other schools in the sense that there were many native Spanish-speakers on staff. The majority of the Native Spanish-speakers self-identified as a person of color, which is reflected in the table. That said, there were zero Black teachers. There was a Black male educational assistant, a Black male custodian and three Black staff that worked in the before and after school program, two males and one female.

Location. The school was located in a suburb, close to an urban city. The school district served students from suburban and urban locations, bussing in students from the urban locations through a program that made it possible. While the immersion program was a public school, enrollment worked like a lottery in the sense that parents would need to enroll their child in Kindergarten and hope that their child’s name was pulled to be enrolled. In the past, there were many obstacles that kept the population mainly upper-middle class and White. However, due to adjustments in the process, the population slowly became more representational of the surrounding neighborhood residents.

Student demographics. The student demographics of the school were 71.1% White students, 10.3% Black students, 13.6% Hispanic students, 4.3% Asian/Pacific Islander students and less than 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native students. When viewing the demographics through a lens of special population, 2% of the student body were English Language Learners, 4.2% qualified for Special Education and 20.3% qualified for free and reduced lunch.

Program specifics. The immersion model stated that in Kindergarten and 1st grade, students would work in Spanish for the whole day. In 2nd grade, English instruction would begin for 150 minutes each week, with the rest of the day in Spanish.
After beginning formal English instruction in 2nd grade, the amount of time spent in English instruction increased by fifteen minutes each year, reaching one hour and fifteen minutes daily in 5th grade. The school used the Responsive Classroom model and had just begun to mandate the use of Daily 5 (Boushey & Moser, 2014) and CAFÉ (Boushey & Moser, 2009) in the literacy block during the creation of this project. While this was mandated, there was not fidelity in implementation, nor a formal training for all to attend so it looked different in all of the classrooms.

**Logistics.** For the purpose of this capstone, there were not any human subjects used. Rather, the project included creating and implementing a comprehensive unit. The unit would foster a multicultural approach through the use of culturally responsive strategies and practices. The content would be applicable for the primary range, with a focus on 2nd grade literacy standards.

**Curriculum Development Process**

In order to create a comprehensive unit there needed to be a plan for development. “Understanding by Design,” by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe provided a structure that begins with the end goal in mind. The structure utilizes a “backwards design process” in which educators begin by identifying the end goal (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Wiggins and McTighe (1998) describe the three stages of backward design as: desired results (stage one), determining acceptable evidence (stage two), and planning learning experiences and instruction (stage three).

*Stage one – desired results.* Stage one is the beginning, critical phase in which an educator identifies the end goal for learners. The end goal must consider the setting of the school, the school and grade level goals in addition to state standards. All educators are
helped to implementing said standards daily and within each lesson. The state standards help to determine what students should learn and be able to do, based upon their grade level. In identifying the end goal of the unit, an educator must specify what students will know, understand and be able to do (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998).

Stage two – determining acceptable evidence. After determining what the desired outcome will be, educators move to determine the evidence that will show that learning or desired outcome (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Assessment is always an integral part of learning to monitor and measure student growth. A diagnostic assessment comes at the beginning and helps to collect evidence as to what students know before starting the unit. Throughout the unit, other non-formal or formal assessments may be collected including, but not limited to, anecdotal observations, exit slips, extension activities, open-ended prompts, or tests or quizzes (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). The end of a unit should incorporate a summative assessment to check and measure student growth.

Stage three – planning learning experiences. Once those two first critical steps are in place, an educator can begin to plan the learning process (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). The figure below comes from the text, “Understanding by Design” and visually lays out the design questions, considerations, criteria and the outcome.
Facets of understanding. Wiggins and McTighe explain, “The key to understanding by design is to cause rethinking to appropriate inquiry and performance” (p. 32). Understanding, as defined by Wiggins and McTighe, has six different facets. Those facets are: explaining, applying, having perspective, empathizing and having self-knowledge (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Each facet can guide and inform an educator’s assessment of the student’s understanding (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998).

Unit design. In addition to guiding assessment, the six facets of understanding drive unit design. Wiggins and McTighe (1998) use the acronym, “WHERE,” which stands for “where we are headed, hook the student, explore the subject and equip the student, rethink our work and ideas, and evaluate results.” (p. 115). This acronym, working in harmony with the six facets, helps to guide the unit design in a way that puts inquiry and performance first.

Text set. The creation of this unit also involved a text set, or a group of books focused on a specific topic. This text set was created by exploring a multitude of
children’s literature. After seeking out the literature, it was evaluated to ensure that it fit the unit plan. In order to fit in this set, the book needed to feature diverse characters. The work for this capstone produced a core text set, with annotations of each book. In addition, there was a supplemental set that was organized based on the racial group that was represented or present in the literature.

Conclusion

Chapter Three provided a closer look into the specifics of this project by providing details on the district, school, and class where the work would take place. This project explored the question, “How does culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student’s literacy development in the primary grades?” This work was done through curriculum development at a primary level in a Spanish language immersion school. Although there were no human subjects or concrete data being collected, this project shed light on the importance of keeping content culturally relevant and responsive.

Chapter Four will explain the specifics of the unit creation, providing detailed information as to how the curriculum was formed. Chapter Five will summarize the major research findings, explore the implications and limitations of this work, in addition to considering areas of future study and reflecting upon this process.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

If a student is to be successful and engaged with their literacy experience, they must be able to connect with the content in meaningful ways. An important connection comes from seeing oneself or a representation of oneself within the literature. Currently, there are certain groups of students, namely culturally and linguistically diverse students, who are underrepresented in the literature used within the education system. As explained by Tandria Callins in *Teaching Exceptional Children* (2006), “in order for culturally and linguistically diverse students to become productive members of society, they need to be fully functional participants in literate communities” (p. 62). Based on the fact that certain groups, namely culturally and linguistically diverse students, are sometimes underrepresented in the literature used, it is possible that some are being denied a true equitable opportunity at literacy success.

In order to work toward a more equitable experience, this project seeks to explore the question, “How does culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student’s literacy development in the primary grades?” The beginning portion of this project set up the base for and expanded upon the work to be done through the exploration of existing literature. This chapter will explain what the finished project will look like. The hope is that once this work is implemented in the classroom, there will be more engagement and subsequent success with literacy from all students and, specifically, students of color.
Unit Plan

Through the research completed for this work, the theme of the importance of seeing oneself represented in literature was consistent. After considering the existing literature and curriculum in place within the project setting, it became clear that a supplemental unit was needed to bring a culturally responsive presence into the learning environment.

Understanding by Design, (1998) by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe provides a structure for curriculum and unit planning that begins with the end goal in mind. The creation of this curriculum follows the Wiggins and McTighe (1998) process as it begins with a theme. The template for planning a unit using the Understanding by Design (1998) format can be found in Appendix A. For the purpose of this project, the template has been modified (Appendix B).

Unit goal. The goal of this unit is to encourage learners to both see themselves and others as important and capable of doing great things and achieving in both literacy and other life goals, while exploring and recognizing differences. In addition to valuing differences, this unit asks students to name their differences and bring their culture to the forefront. The unit theme is titled “We are all unique.” The unit plan can be found in Appendix E.

Essential questions. In order to explore this theme, the unit must have big, broad questions that keep the learners thinking and engaged throughout the process, while remaining culturally responsive. Banks and Banks (2012) explains that culturally responsive teaching bridges what students know into new learning which makes the
content relevant and authentic for the learner. The essential questions of the unit are the following:

- What makes a person unique?
- How are people alike?
- How are people different?
- How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member?
- How can I make a difference in the community?

These questions draw upon the prior knowledge that the child already possesses and asks them to apply it in a broader sense, making the learning culturally responsive. Additionally, these questions foster a sense of cooperation, community and connectedness, tenets emphasized as extremely important by Geneva Gay (2000).

**Learning targets.** This unit requires students to think critically about the ways in which differences make each person unique and full of value; to become a contributing member of society who values equity over equality; and, to feel confident about themselves as individuals. In addition to these unit learning targets, the plan also integrates academic literacy standards from the Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts, as adopted by the state of Minnesota in 2010.

**Evidence of success.** After determining the desired outcome, Wiggins & McTighe (1998), ask educators to move to determine the evidence that will show that learning or desired outcome. A unit of study must begin with a diagnostic assessment to see what students already know and finish with a summative assessment to measure student
growth. The plan for these items, in addition to other evidence to be collected along the way, can be found in Appendix E.

*Diagnostic assessment.* The diagnostic assessment will involve showing students a variety of photos with people of different races. Students will be asked to write about what they see, think and notice. In order to gather more information on student understanding of the content standards, they will write some questions they have about the photos, as well.

*Other evidence.* Throughout the course of this unit, there will be many check-in points to see student learning and understanding. These items will include thinking maps, exit-slips, extension activities and quick-writes. In addition, students will create a portfolio that can be collected periodically to check progress.

*Summative assessment.* As a unit-ending indicator for success, students will create a portfolio-style learning journal to document the different work completed throughout this unit. Students will drive the learning through the creation of this portfolio/learning journal, which is an important aspect of successful literacy learning for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Callins, 2006).

The portfolio will be a working document that can be collected periodically for formative assessment. The finished product will serve as the summative assessment for the unit. In addition to serving as assessment, the work created by the students will be shared frequently throughout the unit. Sharing the work will amplify student voice and create a space where each student voice is valued, as a learning environment must allow time and space for student voice to be truly heard, not just listened to (Sleeter &
Cornbleth, 2011). Completed work in addition to work in progress will be celebrated each day, reminding students that their effort is appreciated.

**Vocabulary.** Every unit of study should incorporate new vocabulary words and/or phrases terms for students to learn. This unit includes the words *empathy, unique, race,* and *stereotype.* Students will learn about these terms through the shared reading of texts, classroom discussions and other activities. These terms are beneficial to the unit as they encompass the theme and help students to explore the essential questions.

**Lesson Plans**

The lesson plans were designed keeping culturally relevant practices in the forefront. The formation of the lesson plans took ample time and thoughtful organization. Each lesson encourages the use of a book coming from a text set featuring Black people as major characters. Each lesson includes an anticipatory set in which students can share what they already know in order to start from a place of knowledge rather than deficit. After sharing knowledge, the lessons move into a whole group activity with plenty of opportunities for sharing ideas and working together in order to amplify and feature student voice. For example, every lesson has at least five or more turn and talk opportunities throughout each read-aloud. These talking times will allow students to process through the text, while making connections and sharing things from their frame of reference. While the teacher will be the one reading the text aloud, it will mainly be the students whose voices and ideas will be shared throughout the process in order to keep the focus on the culture of the students, rather than that of the teacher.

Most lessons feature a small group or partner work extension from the whole group. For example, many of the lessons have students moving into small groups
to complete an activity in which the information from the text is applied in a new way. One lesson calls for students to role-play certain scenarios like one featured in the read-aloud. A different lesson asks students to collaborate to write an alternative ending or an additional chapter onto the text. These activities and others will allow for students to continue to have their voices heard and create a stronger sense of community and belonging as the students learn from one another.

After working with small groups or partners, students have the chance to bring their ideas back to the whole group, again creating another opportunity to have their voices heard. Next, after time to have built upon prior knowledge, students will move into independent work time. As stated previously, students will always have the opportunity to share their work and ideas in order to keep their voices present in the learning. While each lesson plan appears as one session, it could easily be spread out over a longer period of time or multiple days to allow for deeper or more enriched conversation. The lesson timing and pacing may be altered during the unit in order to best fit the needs of the classroom and the learners (Appendix E).

**Courageous conversations.** Throughout the duration of the unit, the learners will use a modified version of Singleton and Linton’s (2006) four agreements for a courageous conversation on race. This is a critical aspect, as each lesson plan calls for conversation to take place in the classroom that may go off-track or cause some students to share things that they would not normally. These agreements will help to guide the conversation in a way that it is positive and productive. Singleton and Linton’s (2006) four agreements were designed for use by adults ready to discuss race in an honest and open way and they state the following: stay engaged; experience discomfort; speak your
truth; and, expect and accept nonclosure (Appendix C). The wording and explanation of these agreements have been modified for use in the primary classroom and can be featured as an anchor chart to guide conversation (Appendix D). Through the use of these agreements, both the educator and the learners can participate in respectful and meaningful dialogue.

Text Set

A text set rich with people of color as major characters in places of power will act as a resource to pull books for use in the lessons. This text set is structured as an annotated bibliography. This set will focus on featuring Black people in places of power as Bishop (1990) sites, “Less than 2 percent of the 2,500 to 3,500 children's books published each year feature Blacks as major characters or focus on information about Blacks and Black life” (p. 556). While there are other culturally and linguistically diverse groups that may be underrepresented as well, this text set will focus in on that group and have additional texts that promote diversity and social justice in general.

Finding the texts for this text set was quite difficult. Although many books exist featuring Black people as main characters, the majority of those books are set in a historical tone in which the Black person starts from a place of oppression. For example, there are many texts that show Black people as slaves, overcoming slavery or fighting for their civil rights. In only showing these types of texts, students only hear one narrative, that of the oppressed person. Therefore, this text set strives to keep the books in a more modern tone, not to assume that Black people do not face oppression still today, but to allow students to form a different, more positive mindset about the culture as a whole (Appendix F).
Supplemental text set. In addition to the core text set of this unit, Appendix G will host a supplemental text. This set will house texts that can be self-selected by students to read throughout the unit. The texts in this set will fit in the unit theme, featuring a cast of diverse characters of different races and ethnicities, organized by the following races: Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian and American Indian. Moreover than focusing in on characters of different races, this set will also feature different family types, living situations, people overcoming adversity, and texts that encourage self-love and appreciation.

Conclusion

This project sought to explore the question, “How does culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student’s literacy development in the primary grades?” in order to promote a more equitable literacy. The beginning of this work involved gathering research in order to best understand the current state of education, the changes that need to take place and the concepts of culturally responsive and culturally relevant teaching practices in the area of literacy learning. After setting up the procedures, the work began to create a unit to foster these culturally responsive/relevant teaching practices. The creation of this unit was a learning process and a way to evaluate current texts and literacy practices.
CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

Purpose

This capstone project attempted to explore the following research question: “How does culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student's literacy development?” The beginning chapter explained my personal connection and passion for this topic. In addition, it examined the current state of education looking at recent testing data. After setting the purpose, the next chapter reviewed the existing literature relevant to this research topic. The research explored topics such as culturally relevant and culturally responsive teaching, multicultural education, and implanting culturally responsive literacy practices. Through this research, my understanding on the topic grew and I became ready to begin creating the curriculum. Before designing the curriculum, I took a deeper look at the site and participants that would be affected by this work. The creation of the unit was the last step in this process and it took the most time and care. This unit was designed to promote engagement with literacy from all students, and to focus specifically on African American students. Through the use of texts that feature black and brown people as major characters in a variety of settings, African American students would be able to see themselves in the literature and feel more connected with the topic.

This chapter will synthesize major findings and how they relate to the research on the topics such as culturally responsive/relevant teaching, multicultural education and African American student literacy success. Next, this chapter will explore the implications and limitations of this project. In addition, I will explain some areas of
further study related to this work. Finally, there will be a reflection on the future use of this curriculum.

**Major Findings**

After the completion of the unit and the text set, I was able to reflect upon the necessity of integrating the practices researched for this project into the everyday classroom. During the process and at its completion the ideas of culturally responsive teaching and a multicultural education rang true to me as best practice.

**Culturally responsive teaching.** Scholars Geneva Gay (2000) and Gloria-Ladson-Billings (2009) explain culturally responsive teaching as being a way to build upon the culture and knowledge that students bring with them. Learning is a community process in which the collective group must work together to advance the whole. The teacher is the facilitator of learning, rather than the giver of knowledge. Both Gay (2000) and Ladson-Billings (2009) encourage the integration of social justice and working toward making a difference in the world through the breakdown of stereotypes and the empowerment of all learners. Every child comes in with endless potential and it is the job of the educator to ensure the student leaves feeling empowered, valued and affirmed.

**Multicultural education.** While it is not the job of the teacher to bring the culture into the room, there are ways in which an educator can foster the sharing, appreciation and learning of multiple cultures and perspectives. Banks and Banks (2012) explain, “[m]ulticultural education is an idea stating that all students, regardless of the groups to which they belong, such as those related to gender, ethnicity, race, culture, language, social class, religion, sexual orientation, or exceptionality, should experience educational equality in the schools” (p. 20). In conjunction with culturally responsive teaching,
multicultural education calls for the breakdown of stereotypes and the fostering of social justice work, in addition to empowering students to become agents of change.

Implications

This work has implications for both students and educators. As Ladson-Billings (2009) and Gay (2000) emphasize, the learning process involves both parties actively. Therefore, in both implementing and in participating in the unit, change can come for both.

Implications for students. As students engage in this unit, some will be provided with a mirror experience, in which they see themselves represented, perhaps for the first time, in literature. Rather than only seeing themselves in historical fiction, they will have the chance to experience seeing themselves in a variety of literature, including fiction that is relatable and, at times, humorous. It is my hope that this will inspire those students to continue engaging with literacy in meaningful ways that will allow them to grow and flourish.

For other students, they will be provided a window experience, in which they see into the lives of others. For these students, they will have a chance to broaden their horizons and see beyond themselves, hopefully becoming more accepting and loving of others different from those they already know.

In both instances, students will be exploring the same set of essential questions in order to continue learning, both about themselves and others. Students will seek to find ways to compare and contrast differences, learning to acknowledge, celebrate and see those differences as positives. In addition, students will consider themselves as activists of change and capable of making a difference in the world.
Implications for teachers. Culturally responsive teaching is a transformative approach to pedagogy. Through the process, teachers are able to learn about their students and, in turn, their culture. Therefore, teachers will learn alongside their students as they create an environment that fosters change. This practice is not a strategy to be implanted, rather a paradigm shift in the way the classroom works and the way in which content is moved from being delivered to students to becoming explored by and identified by students.

The pedagogy of culturally responsive teachers requires teachers to remove themselves from their traditional role of power in the classroom and asks them to move into the position of a facilitator of learning. In implementing this pedagogy, teachers must constantly check their biases and keep their mind open and critical at the same time. As the teacher and the learning community grow in their ability to engage with the process, both will feel a more inviting, all-encompassing and empowering environment.

Limitations

The creation of this unit was extremely beneficial to myself as an educator. However, it does have limitations. This unit was designed with my second grade class in mind, although it could be easily altered to fit a different primary grade. While selecting texts and formatting lesson plans, I kept my students in mind, meaning that the way it is laid out currently may not work for every other class setting. Although the text selection and formatting was created keeping culturally responsive and multicultural practices in the forefront, I know that the understanding of my classroom and students played a role as well. As any great educator knows, when something created by another person is implanted in the classroom, there must be adjustments made to fit the exact and unique
needs of the specific students to who will be participating. Therefore, this unit may require some changes if implanted in a different setting.

When working with a new pedagogical method, it is important to have strong background knowledge. While the research collected in Chapter Two provides a general overview of the topics at hand, it is in no way all-encompassing of the material that explores these issues. Therefore, a teacher who is not familiar with the culturally responsive teaching pedagogy may need to do some additional research before implanting it with fidelity. Additionally, it is important to note that I, a white woman, selected the research to be used in this work. Although I am constantly working to keep my implicit biases in check, all of the things that I do are done through my own frame of reference. While I selected each text with care, that does not imply that they are the best or the only options. The texts selected for the research and for the unit may need to change over time, depending on new learning and world situations.

Lastly, this curriculum has not yet been implemented due to timing. This means the unit has not been tested in the classroom. If it had been implemented, there would have been a chance to make changes, both to the structure and content, as needed. Additionally, implementing the unit would provide a better indicator of success in regards to the text selection and reveal any areas that needed more or less focus.

Future study

While exploring the question “How does culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student's literacy development?” there were many other areas of research that came to mind. In fact, keeping the project focused on that question became almost impossible the more that I read and learned along the way. There are so many
applications and related fields of study related to culturally responsive teaching practices and multicultural education.

In my research, I focused on the pedagogy of culturally responsive teaching. While not directly related, the practice of critical literacy came to my mind multiple times as I saw many parallels between the two practices. Both call for students to seek out and break down stereotypes, view things from multiple perspectives and work from a social justice frame of mind. For more future study, I would like to see how the implementation of critical literacy practices could foster a culturally responsive teaching and learning environment.

While exploring culturally responsive teaching practices, I focused my data and research on African American students. Gay (2000) stresses that these practices are beneficial for African, Asian, Latino and Native American students; therefore, the study and data could be broadened to include these student groups as well. While this project does not only feature materials with or for African American students, the scope of the research was pared down to that specific group. This decision was made based on my classroom population and the conversations that I am engaged in with my equity team in my building.

In addition to looking closer at culturally responsive practices, an area for future study could be delving deeper into multicultural education. The bulk of the information on multicultural education in Chapter Two comes from Banks and Banks (2012) work. However, they are not the only scholars in the field and that is an area of knowledge that could be enhanced. Moreover, this work demonstrates a comprehensive look at existing research. As the educational world continues to grow and change, new research and
pedagogical shifts will take place. It will be my responsibility to keep myself educated and constantly looking for ways to sharpen my culturally responsive practices to best serve the students I work with.

Finally, this work has inspired me to constantly improve and better my teaching practice. As I do not work in isolation, rather on a team, it will also be my responsibility to share both the research used in this work and research that I find as I continue to learn and grow. Through the sharing of knowledge and by engaging in honest, courageous conversations on the strategies and content being used in the classroom, my hope is that my team will grow in our ability to move all students forward. I can share through reciprocal or co-teaching opportunities; to work alongside another educator to ensure that the methodology is understood and in order to help provide more buy-in. Furthermore, I can share this work and my understanding through a workshop or a professional development opportunity through my current school or through the Hamline Summer Literacy Institute.

**Summary**

In reflecting upon my educational career and engaging in many courageous conversations, I became highly motivated to make some changes to my teaching practices. This motivation and passion to do better led me to explore the research question, “*How does culturally responsive curriculum impact African American student's literacy development?*” After collecting and analyzing a large amount of research, I only became more passionate about the subject. Although I do not consider myself an expert, I feel so much more confident in my understanding of and ability to implement culturally responsive practices. Through these practices, I am able to bring my students’ cultures
and identities to the forefront, actively engaging them in their learning and empowering them to be their best selves.

While this capstone process was long and tedious, it has truly inspired and shown me how to continue becoming the best educator that I can possibly be. This project provided me the opportunity to write my own unit, something that I had not done in its entirety since my pre-service teacher program. While creating this unit, I had the opportunity to evaluate children’s literature with a critical eye, to look closer at teaching practices and structures currently in place and to consider the ways to weave essential questions and learning into state standards.

Culturally responsive teaching is a pedagogy that requires the teacher to move beyond the role of power and leader, and allow students to take the lead. It calls for students’ cultural and racial identities to be considered as strengths that can be built upon. No child comes into the learning environment with any type of deficit, rather a plethora of experiences and knowledge to be shared, expanded upon and explored. Culturally responsive teaching calls for social justice and a democratic society in which everyone has the power to make a difference. In this way, the classroom becomes a catalyst for change, with students as the acting agents.
REFERENCES


Wood, S., summer.wood@vanderbilt.edu, & Jocius, R., robin.jocius@vanderbilt.edu (2013). Combating 'I hate this stupid book!': Black males and critical literacy. *Reading Teacher, 66*(8), 661-669. doi:10.1002/trtr.1177
Appendix A

Wiggins and McTighe’s Backward Design Template
### Identify Desired Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What overarching understandings are desired?</th>
<th>What are the overarching “essential” questions?</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will students understand as a result of <em>this</em> unit?</th>
<th>What “essential” and “unit” questions will focus this unit?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

### Determine Acceptable Evidence

*What evidence will show that students understand?*

- **Performance Tasks, Projects**

- **Quizzes, Tests, Academic Prompts**

- **Other Evidence (observations, work samples, dialogue)**

- **Student Self-Assessment**
**Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction**  
*Given the targeted understandings, other unit goals, and the assessment evidence identified, what knowledge and skills are needed?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will need to know…</th>
<th>Students will need to be able to…</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

*What teaching and learning experiences will equip students to demonstrate the targeted understandings?*

Appendix B

Modified Lesson Plan Template
## Stage One: Desired Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Standards</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes, Understandings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Academic Standards: English Language Arts K-12 (2010):</td>
<td>Essential Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will be able to use their learning to...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will understand that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common Misunderstanding(s):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Stage Two: Acceptable Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Assessment Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Assessment:</td>
<td>Summative Assessment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other evidence:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Stage Three: Learning Experiences and Instructional Activities

#### Lesson One:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Appendix C

Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations
The Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations (Singleton & Linton, 2006)


2. Experience discomfort: This norm explains “participants need to be personally responsible for pushing themselves into a real dialogue – the kind that may make them uncomfortable but will lead to real growth” (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 63).

3. Speak your truth: This means being “absolutely honest about your thoughts, feelings, and opinions and not just saying what you perceive others want to hear” (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 60). In remaining quiet on issues of race, we allow our beliefs or opinions to be misinterpreted or misrepresented (Singleton & Linton, 2006).

4. Expect and accept nonclosure: This agreement “encourages participants to recognize that they will not reach closure in their racial understandings or in their interracial interactions” (Singleton & Linton, 2006, p. 64). This means that we must accept the fact that there is not one solution, rather that the process of dialogue will bring about positive change (Singleton & Linton, 2006).
Appendix D

Modified Four Agreements for Courageous Conversation
Modified Four Agreements of Courageous Conversation (Singleton & Linton, 2006)

1. **I will stay engaged.** This means I will actively listen, think and share ideas.

2. **I will experience my emotions.** This means that sometimes I may feel unsure about what to say or think. I will continue working through these times to help better our learning community.

3. **I will speak my truth.** This means that I will share what I am thinking in a respectful way. I will consider the ways in which my words affect others.

4. **I will understand that I can make a difference,** but I may not be able to solve all of world’s problems and that is okay!
Appendix E

Lesson Plans
## Stage One: Desired Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Academic Standards</strong></th>
<th><strong>Learning Outcomes, Understandings</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Academic Standards: English Language Arts K–12 (2010):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.1.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

2.1.3.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

2.1.5.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

2.1.10.10 By the end of the year, select, read and comprehend literature including stories and poetry for personal enjoyment, interest, and academic tasks, in the grades 2–3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

### Essential Questions

- What makes a person unique?
- How are people alike?
- How are people different?
- How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member?
- How can I make a difference in the community?

### Students will be able to use their learning to...

- Think critically about the ways in which our differences make each person unique and full of value.
- Become a contributing member of society who values equity over equality.
- Feel confident about themselves as individuals.

### Students will understand that...

- It’s okay to be different.
- Everyone deserves respect.
- There is value in belonging to a race or culture that is different than that of the majority.

### Learning Targets

**Students will know…**

- differences make people unique
- it’s okay to be different and notice differences but not okay to treat people poorly based upon differences

**Students will be able to…**

- define and explain empathy, unique and race
- demonstrate an understanding of empathy and why it’s
• demonstrate an understanding of empathy and why it’s important
• identify a stereotype as an untrue story
• identify a community service project and explain it’s importance

**New Vocabulary**

- Unique
- Empathy
- Race
- Stereotype

**Common Misunderstanding(s):**

- Children are used to seeing books with mainly white characters that follow a Midwestern way of communicating and acting. Therefore, some students may not be aware that the main characters in their books can be people of color. Children are used to seeing these types of books pop up and featured during months such as “Black History Month,” but not so much throughout the year and rarely with a Black main character in a modern setting.
### Stage Two: Acceptable Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Assessment Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Diagnostic Assessment:** This assessment will be used to determine student understandings and to get some base knowledge on where each student is coming from.

**Part One:**
Students will speak in partner pairs to share what they know about people. The class will work together to create a taxonomy that shows the ideas that students already know.

**Part Two:**
Students will view photos of both white and black people of varying ages. Students will then write in their journals about what they noticed in the images and anything that they think about the people they saw.

**Summative Assessment:** Throughout this unit, students will keep a journal that will serve as a portfolio of their learning. This portfolio will serve as a narrative for each student to share more about themselves through the completion of activities, writing exercises, written reflections and illustrations.

**Other evidence:** In addition to the diagnostic and summative assessment, the following items will be used to monitor learning along the way:
- Learning journal – collected periodically
- Turn and talk points
- Anecdotal notes as observed during teacher
- “My skin is the color of…” activity
- “My hair is…” activity
- *Honey, I love* student-created poems
- Individual circle maps
- Double bubble partner compare map
- Community service project proposal
### Lesson One: Diagnostic Assessment/Unit Opener

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part One: Small Group/Whole Group Sort</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before starting the activity, keep the unit theme and essential questions covered so as to not influence student thinking. This will also provide a better idea of the vocabulary students have to express their ideas on this topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first activity will engage students and ask them to draw upon their prior knowledge. The second activity will be independent and collected by the teacher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part One: Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Explain that you will be starting a fun new unit exploring people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ask students to turn and talk to a partner pair about what things they know about people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Call the group back together and show them the blank taxonomy labeled: “People: We are all unique!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Keep the portion “We are all unique!” covered in order to see what students think of on their own</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Ask for students to share what things they know about people and add them to the taxonomy in the corresponding areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Let students know that the taxonomy will continue to grow as learning continues throughout the unit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Next, hand out the portfolios and allow students some time to decorate the covers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part Two: Journal Response</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Call students back together and explain that they will now see some photos of people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. As they see the photos, they will respond, sharing what they see, notice, think and know about the people in the photos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part Three: Setting Up for Success</strong></td>
<td>Taxonomy, labeled: “People: We are all unique!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolios – one per student</td>
<td>Diagnostic assessment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Explain that this unit will involve having many courageous conversations – meaning you will speak about things that some people never talk about</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Show the modified four agreements and read through each one, discussing what they will look like, sound like and feel like</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Add illustrations or symbols to each agreement using student ideas to attach an image to each concept</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Once students feel comfortable with the agreements, they can take ownership by signing the anchor chart, agreeing to abide by those regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Revisit this anchor chart throughout the unit and as necessary based upon conversation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. Share your thinking: Look at the photo of these people. Write about what you see, what you notice and what you think. There are no wrong ideas!


___________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________  _______________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________  _______________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

Flip this sheet over...
2. Formulate some questions: Look at the photo of these people. Write some **questions** that you have about the people or what you see in the photo.

![Photo of students with a globe](https://www.britishcouncil.mw/sites/default/files/our_work_in_education.jpg)

___________________________________________________________________________________

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## Lesson Two: Chocolate Me by Taye Diggs

**Standards Referenced:**
- **2.1.1.1** Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- **2.1.3.3** Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

**Essential Questions Explored:** What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Activate background knowledge**  
1. Show the book, *Chocolate Me* by Taye Diggs  
a. Ask: “What do you see?”  
b. Ask: “What do you notice?”  
c. Ask: “What do you wonder?”  
2. Share the unit anchor chart with the taxonomy alongside. Explain that you will be using texts to explore the questions: What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different? | **Chocolate Me** by Taye Diggs  
Unit Anchor Chart with essential questions  
**Taxonomy** |
| **Pre-teach vocabulary**  
3. Show the word, “wig,” and ask students to share what they know  
a. Draw a picture to help define it  
b. Explain that some people use wigs for fashion and some people use wigs because they do not have any hair of their own  
4. Show the word, “’fro” and explain that it is an abbreviation of the word “afro”  
a. Ask students to share what they know  
b. Draw a picture to help define  
c. Explain that it is a traditional hairstyle worn by some Black people | **Easel with chart paper** |
| **Read-Aloud/Discussion**  
5. Explain that good readers think about the text and also ask and answer questions as they read  
a. Share the student learning object: “I can ask and answer questions about the text to better understand the main events and key details.”  
6. Explain that during the lesson you will use a tree map to organize the questions that you think of before, during and after reading the text – use three different colored markers to code the questions accordingly  
7. Model some before-reading questions and record | **Easel with chart paper**  
**Tree map on chart paper**  
**Three different colored markers** |
them on the tree map using one of the colored markers
   a. “Why is the book called Chocolate Me?”
   b. “Who is the boy on the cover?”

8. Begin reading, Chocolate Me by Taye Diggs

9. Stop after the first pages
   a. Model formulating a question and document on the tree map: “I see that this boy is sitting by himself on the steps while these three boys play together. My question that I’m wondering is: why aren’t they all playing together?”

10. Stop on page 8
    a. Model formulating a question: “I notice that the boys called his hair a ‘wig.’ I remember that word means fake hair. Why are the boys calling his hair a wig? I wonder how I would feel if that happened to me.”

11. Stop on pages 14 and 17 and ask for students to stop and think about any questions they have about anything that has happened in the story so far
    a. Ask for students to turn and share with a neighbor
    b. Call on students to share out and record their thinking on chart paper

12. Stop on page 20
    a. Model formulating a question: “I see that his mother is comparing his skin to fudge. Why may she compare his skin to fudge?”

13. Stop on the last spread and explain that good readers think about the ways that the characters in a book may feel by asking questions such as “How does ______ feel?”
    a. “For example, how does the main character feel? How do you know?”
    b. Explain that empathy is a word used to describe understanding someone else’s feelings
    c. Ask for students to think again about any questions related to the text that they may have
       i. Ask for students to turn and share with a neighbor
       ii. Call on students to share out and record their thinking on chart paper
14. Finish the story and ask for students to share what they thought about while reading that story

Small Group
15. Students will speak in partner pairs to consider the following questions:
   c. What is something you could tell the friends in the book to help them understand how they made the other boy feel?

16. As students communicate in small groups, circulate through the room and take anecdotal notes while asking students to elaborate their thinking

Independent Work/Assessment
17. Students will complete a brief extension activity in which they recreate a scene from the book and add thought bubbles to show what one or more of the characters is thinking
18. Students will have time to read choice books from the supplemental text set and add post-its with their questions to the text
   a. This may be collected for a formative assessment on asking questions

Closure
19. Revisit the taxonomy chart and add any new student thinking
20. Ask students to consider the scene they recreated and the way they thought the characters may have felt. Ask them to share what they learned from that experience.
**Lesson Three: The Colors of Us by Karen Katz**

*Standard Referenced: 2.1.1.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.*  
*2.1.3.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.*

**Essential Questions Explored:** What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lesson</strong></th>
<th><strong>Resources/Materials</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activate background knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Colors of Us</strong>, by Karen Katz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
   a. Ask: “What do you see?”  
   b. Ask: “What do you notice?”  
   c. Ask: “What do you wonder?”  
| **Unit Anchor Chart with essential questions** |
| 2. Share the unit anchor chart with the taxonomy alongside. Explain that you will be using texts to explore the questions: What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different? | **Taxonomy** |
| **Read-Aloud/Discussion** | **Easel with chart paper** |
| 3. Explain that good readers think about the text and also ask and answer questions as they read  
   a. Share the student learning object: “I can ask and answer questions about the text to better understand the main events and key details.”  
| **Tree map on chart paper** |
| 4. Explain that during the lesson you will use a tree map to organize the questions that you think of before, during and after reading the text – use three different colored markers to code the questions accordingly | **Three different colored markers** |
| 5. Ask for volunteers to share some of the questions they have BEFORE reading  
   a. Record thinking on the tree map using the marker coded for BEFORE reading | |
| 6. Ask for students to share their questions while reading – raise hand to share ideas | |
| 7. Read *The Colors of Us* aloud  
   a. Stop to record student questions along the way using a different colored marker than that of the BEFORE reading questions | |
| 8. Stop after reading page 8 for a turn and talk  
   a. Ask: “What is the author comparing skin color to? How does that help us to visualize or think about the colors?” | |
| 9. Stop after reading page 12 for a group discussion  
   a. Ask: “What do you notice about the skin colors of the people that Lena has seen so far?” | |
far?”
10. Stop after reading page 16 for a group discussion
   a. Ask: “Lena says that the legs are different
      ‘shades.’ What does that mean?”
11. Stop after reading page 22 for a turn and talk
   a. Ask: “Lena says that her friends are
      ‘delicious.’ Do you think that means she
      really wants to eat them? What might it
      mean?”
12. Finish reading the story.
   a. Ask for students to share their questions that
      they still have after reading
   b. Record student thinking using the other
      colored marker
13. Ask students to remember the story *Chocolate Me*
    from the previous day. Turn and Talk – “What
    things did you notice in both stories?”
    a. Help guide the conversation to talk about the
       fact that everyone had different colored skin
       and that it is okay to talk about those
       differences, as long as it is in a positive way
    b. Ask for students to consider the way they
       feel when talking about skin color or
       differences between them and others
14. Introduce the vocabulary term “unique”
    a. “Lena learned that everyone has a unique
       skin color that makes them different from
       one another. Rather than everyone looking
       the same, the unique skin color meant that
       everyone looked special in their own way.
       Although they may have had similar colors,
       they were unique in the sense that they
       weren’t exactly the same and Lena could
       describe them using different food.”
    b. Turn and talk: “Can you think about
       something that makes you unique?”

Small Group
15. Explain that it is okay to see other people’s skin
    color and even to talk about it but that it’s not okay
    to make fun of someone or treat them poorly because
    of their skin or any difference they may have
16. Explain that you will celebrate the differences in the
    room by creating a collage that shows all of the
    different skin colors in the room
a. Hand the paint chips out to the small groups  
b. Each student will select a paint chip that closely matches their skin

17. Remind the students of the way that the boy’s mother compared the color of his skin to fudge and the way Lena compared skin tones to various types of food. Encourage students to think of something their skin color could be compared to  
a. Students will share their thinking in their small groups

Independent Work/Assessment  
18. Students will cut the paint chip in half  
19. Students will paste one half onto the large sheet of paper labeled “We are beautiful!” for the collage  
20. Students will take the other half and paste it to the sheet where they will complete the sentence by filling in the blanks  
a. “My skin is __________ like ______________. Beautiful me!”  
b. This sheet will be added to the student portfolio  
21. Students will have time to work with their choice book from the day before. The task will be to revisit their questions and look through the text to see if they can locate the answer or information that would help provide the answer. Thinking may be recorded on post-its.

Closure  
22. Ask for students to consider the essential questions and fill in the following sentence frame: “I used to think ______ but now I think (or know) __________.” Students can share this thinking with a partner  
23. Ask for students to consider the learning objective and rate their ability to ask and answer questions about a text using a 1-2-3 scale (1= I need more time and practice, 2= I feel good about it!, 3= I could teach others how to do this.)
Name: ________________________

My skin is ________________________ like ________________________.

Beautiful me!
### Lesson Four: Let’s Talk About Race by Julius Lester

**Standard Referenced:** 2.1.1.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

**Essential Questions Explored:** What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different? How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activate Background Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Let’s Talk About Race</strong> by Julius Lester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ask students to take their portfolio in a small group and share the work completed the day before – “My skin is _____”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Explain that the class will continue to work with different texts to explore the essential questions: What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Show the book, <em>Let’s Talk About Race</em> and ask students to share what they know about race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Record student thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Work together to come up with a working definition of race – explain that the book will help us to understand more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Read-aloud/Discussion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Explain that good readers think about the text and also ask and answer questions as they read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Share the student learning object: “I can ask and answer questions to better understand the text.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Explain that this text will be a little different from the others that we have read so far as it has elements of non-fiction, or true information/facts in it</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Stop after reading page 6 for a turn and talk</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Explain: “The author has explained that each one of us has a story. He said that there are so many things that make up our stories. He listed off some of those things. Let’s take time to ask some questions with an elbow partner to learn more about one another’s stories.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Stop after reading page 10 for a group discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| a. Ask: “The author has stated that his race is Black. He also named some other races, such as White, Hispanic and Asian. What does that tell us about our definition of race? Do
we want to add anything?”

b. Ask: “The author also said that sometimes people tell an untrue story by saying their race is better than another race. Can anyone think of a time when this has happened in real life?”

7. Stop after reading page 14 for a turn and talk
   a. Ask: “Have you ever heard someone say they were better than someone else? Have you seen someone act like they were better than someone else? How did it make you feel? What did you do?”

8. While reading pages 15 and 16, encourage students to follow the author’s directions to press gently on their skin below their eyes
   a. Students may ask an elbow partner to touch their skin below their eyes but may only do so if the other person agrees

9. Stop after reading page 20 for a group discussion
   a. Ask: “How would you feel if everyone looked exactly the same? Would you be able to tell who is who?”
   b. Ask: “Is it okay for people to look different and to see those differences?”

10. Stop after reading page 24 for a group discussion
    a. Explain: “The author says that we can’t know a person’s story just by looking at them. Let’s think about an example. When I see someone, I may be able to tell the color of their skin, hair and eyes but I don’t know who they are, what things they like and the kind of person that they are. Sometimes people forget that and just look at people and think they know them just because of the color of their skin.”
    b. Ask: “How can we get to know people before deciding we know them?”

11. Stop after the last page for a whole group discussion
    a. Ask: “The author asks us to take off our skin. Do you think he really means that? What does he mean?”
    b. Explain: “The author tells us it’s important to get to know others before deciding that you know their story, based upon the way they look. When someone decides they know
another person’s story just because of the color of their skin or the way they look, it is called a stereotype. An example is if I were to say all blonde haired people are smarter than brown haired people. It may be true that some blonde haired people are smarter but not true that all blonde haired people are. Stereotypes are dangerous because they tell a story that is not true, just like the author explained.”

c. Explain: “You know something is a stereotype if it talks about a whole group of people, or a race and says something about them being better or worse than a different group. Everyone is unique, even people from the same race. We will do an activity where you will see some stereotypes, or untrue stories and some facts, or true stories. You will work in a group to organize them.”

Small Group
12. Students will move into small groups to complete the stereotype sort
13. After completion, students will talk about the reasoning behind their sort and way they felt when they read the stereotypes or true cards using the following oral speaking frames:
   a. “I think this is a stereotype because ________.”
   b. “I think this is true because ________.”
   c. “I agree with ______ because ______.”
   d. “I do not agree with ______ because ______.”
   e. “I believe ______ because ______.”

Independent Work
14. Remind students that everyone has their own story. Students will begin to share their story by creating a circle map about themselves.
   a. Completed work will be added to the portfolio
15. Students will continue to share their story by speaking with an adult family member, using the home connection letter
   a. Students will document their conversation with a short written piece or a drawing to be
16. Students will have time to read choice books from the supplemental text set and add post-its with their questions to the text
   a. This may be collected for a formative assessment on asking questions

**Closure**

17. Gather students in a circle to consider the essential questions and share out using the following oral speaking frame: “I used to think ______ but now I think (or know) ________.”
Dear families,

This week we have been learning about what makes people so unique. We have begun our unit by exploring some similarities and differences between people. So far, we have read the texts, Chocolate Me by Taye Diggs, The Colors of Us by Karen Katz and Let’s Talk About Race by Julius Lester. We are having wonderful conversation in the classroom in regard to who we are and who we want to become.

In order to keep the conversation going and to continue learning about one another, your child will have light homework each night that will involve a conversation with a family member. Below, are some of the questions your child will need to ask. Please do your best to help your child answer and explore these questions:

- **Day One:** What is my race? Where do my ancestors/relatives come from?
- **Day Two:** How did I receive the name I have now?
- **Day Three:** What is a special or cultural food to our family?
- **Day Four:** Where do we live? What is our neighborhood like?

Your child may either take some quick notes or a complete a drawing to summarize the discussions that you have. Please do not feel that you need to write out any responses, unless that is something you would like to do!

In addition, if you have any artifacts that you feel comfortable sending in to help support your child answer these questions, we would love to hear and see more! We will take time at the beginning of each lesson to share out what each child has learned at home and will have time to share any artifacts. I will send them back home that same day.

As always, contact me with any questions or concerns. Thank you for supporting your child’s learning. We all look forward to hearing more about your child and your family!

In partnership,
Sra. Kaylan Gierhart
Name: ______________________

Directions: Read and cut apart the statements on the “Stereotype or Truth” sheet. Then, sort them based upon the whether they are a stereotype or a truth. Remember the following definitions:

**Stereotype**: A story that is not true. Something that talks about a group of people being better or worse than another or makes a statement about a whole group without considering everyone’s individual stories.

**Truth**: A story that is true. Something that is honest or a fact – it could be proven.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stereotype</th>
<th>Truth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotype or Truth?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Asian people are good at math.</strong></td>
<td><strong>All Black people like to play sports.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White girls are smarter than white boys.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Some people have blonde hair.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Hispanic people only know how to speak Spanish.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Some people can speak more than one language.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Some girls like to play hockey.</strong></td>
<td><strong>All football players are bad at math.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Some people like to eat spicy food.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Everyone has their own story!</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Lesson Five: Same, Same But Different by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

**Standard Referenced:** 2.1.1.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

**Essential Questions Explored:** What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different? How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activate background knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Show the book, <em>Same, Same But Different</em> by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw</td>
<td><strong>Same, Same But Different</strong> by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Say: “Think of an example of something that is the same but also different.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Share an example and ask for students to think of their own example</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Think-Pair-Share</td>
<td>Unit anchor chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Share the unit anchor chart with the taxonomy alongside. Explain that you will be using texts to explore the questions: What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different? How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member?</td>
<td>Taxonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Read-Aloud/Discussion</strong></td>
<td>Double bubble map on easel paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Explain that good readers pay attention to the characters in the book to better understand them and to better understand the story overall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Share the student learning object: “I can pay attention to the characters to better comprehend the story.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Begin reading, <em>Same, Same But Different</em> by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Stop on page 4 and ask how many main characters there appear to be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Explain: “Because this book is called <em>Same, Same But Different</em>” and we now know that there are two main characters, can you make a prediction about what this book will be about?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ask: “What do you think the phrase ‘same, same but different’ means?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Stop on page 6 and explain: “One way that we can track similarities and differences is by using a double bubble map. We will start a double bubble map and work together to fill it out.”</td>
<td>Double bubble map on easel paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Add the boys names, Elliot and Kailash to</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
b. Add the known information to the corresponding sides: Elliot lives in the United States, Kailash lives in India

7. Stop on page 12 to fill in new information on the double bubble map
   a. Consider the differences about the boys and ask students to think about the ways in which they are actually similar

8. Stop on page 18 to fill in new information on the double bubble map

9. Stop on page 24 to fill in new information on the double bubble map

10. Stop on page 26 and ask students to consider the phrase from the story, “We’re best friends…even though we live in two different worlds. Or do we?”
    a. Ask students to turn and talk to think about what that means – what evidence from the book can we use to explain what that means?

11. Finish the story and ask for students to share what they thought about while reading that story

Partner Work

12. Explain: “These boys lived in different parts of the world but were still able to become friends. Today, we will work on making a new friendship or getting to know someone in our room better. We will partner up and create a double bubble map comparing and contrasting the partner pair.”
    a. Students will work in partner pairs to complete this activity on a larger sheet of paper to fit their thinking
    b. The completed work will be displayed in the classroom

13. Once groups have finished the class will participate in a gallery walk in which students move about the room to look at everyone’s work

Independent Work/Assessment

14. Teacher will collect the double bubble maps and make copies so that each partner has a copy to place in their portfolio

15. Students will have time to read choice books from the supplemental text set and may create a double bubble map to compare and contrast characters or

Partner pairs

Large sheets of paper for partner pairs to work with

Supplemental text set

Blank sheet of paper, one
ideas from that book  
  a. This may be collected to monitor student understanding

**Closure**  
16. Move the class into a circle and ask each student to share using the following oral speaking frame: “I learned *(fact)* about *(student name)*. We are the same, and we are different!”
### Lesson Six: *The Name Jar*, by Yangsook Choi

**Standard Referenced:** 2.1.3.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

**Essential Questions Explored:** What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different? How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activate background knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Name Jar</strong> by Yangsook Choi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ask students to share their name and if they know anything about how they got their name</td>
<td>Unit anchor chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Show the book, <em>The Name Jar</em>, and ask students to make a prediction as to what the book may be about</td>
<td>Taxonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Share the unit anchor chart with the taxonomy alongside. Explain that you will be using texts to explore the questions: What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different? How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member?</td>
<td><strong>“Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So”</strong> template</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read aloud/Discussion</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Explain that good readers pay attention to characters and the ways in which characters respond to major problems or changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Show the template for “Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Explain each portion and that this template can be used to retell a story, explaining how a character responded to a problem or change</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Share the student learning objective: “I can describe the way that a character responds to a problem or challenge.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Stop on page 3 and ask for students to share a time where they felt nervous or sad</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Ask: “What do you think the grandmother means when she says that the name is ‘in the bag’?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Stop on page 6 and ask students to consider how Unhei feels and also to consider why the other kids are laughing at her name</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Read through the next page and model: “At this point, I think I know who the main character of this story is. The main character is Unhei. I know this because she has been on each page and this seems to be telling her story. I will add that to the template</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
and start to look for what it is that Unhei wants.”

8. Stop on page 10 and model: “I notice that after Unhei had the experience on the bus, she no longer wanted to share her name with any other class members. I’m thinking that she didn’t want to share her name because she didn’t want anyone else to laugh at her. She wanted to fit in and make friends. Before I add that to the chart, I’m going to keep reading to check and make sure that’s the best answer.”

9. Stop on page 18 and ask for students to turn and talk to share what they think it is that Unhei wants
   a. Use student language to fill in that section on the template – something similar to “Unhei wants to change her name in order to fit in with her new classmates.”

10. Stop on page 23 and ask for students to turn and talk to share what the problem is for Unhei in choosing a new name
    a. Use student language to fill in that section on the template – something similar to “Unhei has trouble choosing a new name for herself.”
       i. Extend student thinking by asking them to consider why it may be hard for her to think of a new name – she is a very smart girl

11. Stop on page 24 and ask students to consider the phrase, “It’s the same rain…but in a different place.”
    a. Turn and talk to share any connections or ideas
    b. Make the connection to the text Same, Same but Different

12. Stop on page 30 and ask for students to turn and talk to share what they think may go in the template section “Then” – what was Unhei doing to solve her problem? Use evidence from the text
    a. Use student language to fill in that section on the template – something similar to “Unhei took suggestions from her classmates in a glass jar.”

13. Stop on page 37 and ask students to turn and talk to share about how they think Unhei felt when Joey learned her real name. Also, why was Joey at the
Korean market?

14. Stop on page 43 and ask students to consider the events that have happened since Unhei saw Joey at the Korean market
   a. Ask: “Why did Unhei decide to share her real name with the class?”

Small Group

15. Encourage students to consider how Unhei’s experience would have been different if the kids on the bus hadn’t laughed at her name or if someone would have stuck up for her. Explain that everyone has those opportunities to make a difference in someone else’s life and we will practice some possible scenarios.

16. Students will move into small groups to talk about and role play various scenarios (see next page)

Individual Work/Assessment

17. Remind students of the name stamp that Unhei had. Explain that each student will create a symbol incorporating either their name or their initials
   a. Students will have time to draw out six possibilities
   b. Students will select their favorite option

18. Students will receive a page to add to their portfolio where they can draw their name symbol

19. Next, students will rotate around the room, adding their name to each sheet in the others’ portfolios

20. Students will have time to read choice books from the supplemental text set and may fill out their own “Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So” template using their text
   a. This may be collected to monitor student understanding

Closure

21. Explain that students will have a little homework as they need to speak with a family member who can help them to learn about their name – does it have a special meaning?
   a. Ask students to document this conversation by writing, drawing or recording it. The work will be added to student portfolios.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios written on note cards (one per group)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blank white sheet of paper, one per student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental text set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So” template, one per student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**I can describe how major characters in a story respond to major problems and challenges.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Somebody</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Who was the main character or person?</em></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Wanted</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>What did the character or person want?</em></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>But</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>What was the problem?</em></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Then</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>How did the character or person try to solve the problem?</em></td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>So</strong></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>What was the resolution or outcome? How did the story end?</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Use the template from the other side of this sheet to retell the story. Be sure to include more detail on this side! You may also include drawings.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You are playing outside and you hear a group of children picking on a boy from a different class. They are making fun of him because his last name is hard to pronounce. They tell him he should just get a new name.</th>
<th>There's a new girl in the classroom. She doesn't speak any English and she's still learning Spanish. She sits by herself at lunch and recess. All you know about her so far is her name.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are in the bathroom. You hear a group of children talking about how much they don't like another kid in your classroom, because they have &quot;weird skin.&quot;</td>
<td>In class, you notice that some children are constantly sitting behind one classmate and pulling her hair. They tease her because her hair is curly and big.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You notice some older children making another student move to the back of the lunch line. They are telling the kid that only people with blue eyes can stand at the front of the line.</td>
<td>Outside at recess, you see a group of girls picking on a boy for wearing a pink shirt. They are telling him that only girls can wear pink because pink is a girl's color.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your new friend from a different classroom tells you that all Asian people only like to eat spicy noodles and they always smell weird.</td>
<td>You see a kid tripping another kid in line in the hallway each day. The kid being tripped is too scared to say anything.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Lesson Seven: *The Sandwich Swap*, by Queen Rania of Jordan Al Ala

**Standard Referenced:** 2.1.3.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

**Essential Questions Explored:** What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different? How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activate background knowledge</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Ask students to think about a food that is special to their family, perhaps a traditional food or something they eat frequently&lt;br&gt;   a. Ask students to share their thinking with an elbow partner&lt;br&gt;2. Show the book, <em>The Sandwich Swap</em>, and ask students to make a prediction as to what the book may be about&lt;br&gt;3. Share the unit anchor chart with the taxonomy alongside. Explain that you will be using texts to explore the questions: What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different? How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member?</td>
<td><em>The Sandwich Swap</em> by Queen Rania of Jordan Al Ala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Read aloud/Discussion</strong>&lt;br&gt;4. Explain that good readers pay attention to characters and the ways in which characters respond to major problems or changes&lt;br&gt;   a. Remind students of the “Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So” template used previously.&lt;br&gt;   b. Share the student learning objective: “I can describe the way that a character responds to a problem or challenge.”&lt;br&gt;5. Stop after reading page 3 and ask for students to think about the two sandwiches, one peanut butter and one hummus. Ask for students to share what they know or if they have ever tried either&lt;br&gt;6. Stop after reading page 13 to discuss what you’ve learned about the main characters, Lily and Salma&lt;br&gt;   a. Explain: “At this point, we know who our main characters are. It seems like what they want is to be friends and spend all of their time together.”&lt;br&gt;7. Stop after reading page 15 and ask students to think about Lily and Salma’s reactions to one another’s lunches – share thinking with an elbow partner</td>
<td>“Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So” template</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Stop after reading page 17
   a. Model: “I see we have some events that have taken place. First, Lily and Salma were eating lunch together and Lily told Salma her food looked gross. Salma became angry and told Lily her food was gross. This seems like a problem that could even turn into something more.”

9. Stop after reading page 20
   a. Explain: “It looks like we have more to add to the problem of the story. After arguing with one another, the girls started a huge food fight. Let’s add that to the template”
   b. Ask: “Why did the other kids start saying mean things about one another after Lily and Salma started arguing? How do you know?”
   c. Ask: “What would you do if you were sitting by them?”

10. Stop after reading page 23
    a. Model: “Lily and Salma decided to try another’s sandwiches, causing them to become friends once again. This was a way that they tried to solve their friendship problem. Let’s add that to the chart!”
    b. Ask: “How would you feel if your best friend said your food looked gross?”
    c. Ask: “Would you try something new if your best friend really liked it?”

11. Stop on the last, large spread for a group discussion
    a. Ask: “What happened? What did Lily and Salma suggest to the principal?”
    b. Model: “Lily and Salma resolved their friendship issue so we need to add that to the chart. Lily and Salma asked the principal to allow students to bring in special foods from home to share with everyone so that everyone would learn about new foods.”

Small Group/Partner Pairs
12. Students will work from the “Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So” chart to retell the story, either in writing or in a video recording on an iPad or other device in the room
13. In addition to retelling the story, students will think about the essential question: How can I learn about iPads/other digital devices
others to become a more caring, kind and empathetic community member?

Individual work/Assessment

14. In considering the essential questions, students will write about what happened the next day at Lily and Salma’s school, using the following guiding questions/prompts:
   a. Write about what happens the day after the cultural food fair at Lily and Salma’s school.
   b. How did kids feel?
   c. How did kids treat one another at snack or lunch time?
   d. How did the environment of the school change?

15. Students will have time to read choice books from the supplemental text set and may fill out their own “Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So” chart using their text
   a. This may be collected to monitor student understanding

Closure

16. Tell students that they will have homework in the form of talking to a family member about a special or traditional food that is important to the family
   a. Students can document this conversation in the form of writing, drawing or a digital recording
   b. This work will be added into the portfolio

17. Revisit the taxonomy and add any new thinking to the chart

Home Connection

If possible, send out a letter or email asking for families to send in the recipe of a special dish. Compile the recipes to create a class cookbook, make copies and send home for all to enjoy.

*The Sandwich Swap* extension sheet, one per student

“Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So” chart

Taxonomy chart
**The Sandwich Swap** by Queen Rania Al Abdullah

1. How do you think the students felt when they were able to share a special food with their classmates?

   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________

2. How could the school change because of the food sharing? For example, would students be nicer to one another? Would they be more willing to try new things?

   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________

3. What may have happened the next day at school?

   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
4. Use your thinking from questions 1-3 to write the next part of the book. Write about the next day of school, after the sharing of food. You may write in the form of a thinking map or you may record your thinking using an iPad. You can also add drawings and illustrations.
I can describe how major characters in a story respond to major problems and challenges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Somebody</th>
<th>Wanted</th>
<th>But</th>
<th>Then</th>
<th>So</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who was the main character or person?</td>
<td>What did the character or person want?</td>
<td>What was the problem?</td>
<td>How did the character or person try to solve the problem?</td>
<td>What was the resolution or outcome? How did the story end?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use the template from the other side of this sheet to retell the story. Be sure to include more detail on this side! You may also include drawings.
# Lesson Eight: Jojo’s Flying Sidekick by Brian Pinkney

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Activate background knowledge**<br>1. Ask students to think about a hobby, sport or interest that they have<br>   a. Ask students to share their thinking with an elbow partner<br>2. Show the book, *Jojo’s Flying Sidekick*, and ask students to share what they see, think and wonder about the book<br>3. Share the unit anchor chart with the taxonomy alongside. Explain that you will be using this text to explore the questions: What makes a person unique? How are people alike? How are people different?<br><br>**Read aloud/Discussion**<br>4. Explain that good readers pay attention to characters and the ways in which characters respond to major problems or changes<br>   a. Remind students of the “Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So” template used previously. Explain that today; students will be filling their own chart in as you read the book aloud. Students will work in groups after reading to compare thinking<br>   b. Share the student learning objective: “I can describe the way that a character responds to a problem or challenge.”<br>5. Stop after reading page 4 for a turn and talk<br>   a. Ask: “Who is the main character and what is it that she wants to do?”<br>   b. Ask: “Have you ever felt nervous about something you needed to do?”<br>6. Stop after reading page 8 for a group discussion<br>   a. Ask: “What do we know now about Jojo’s grandfather? What is he trying to do? How do you know?”<br>7. Stop after reading page 12 for a group discussion<br>   a. Ask: “What do we know now about PJ? What is he trying to do? How do you know?”<br>8. Stop after reading page 14 for a turn and talk<br>   a. Ask: “Why does Jojo think the tree is so scary? Have you ever felt scared about
9. Stop after reading page 18 for a group discussion
   a. Ask: “What do we know now about Jojo’s mom? What is she trying to do? How do you know?”

10. Stop after reading page 20 for a turn and talk
    a. Ask: “Why can’t Jojo sleep? What do you think will happen at the yellow belt ceremony?”

11. Stop after reading page 24 and ask students to turn and talk to explain what happened during the yellow belt ceremony
    a. Share out thinking

12. Stop after reading page 29 for a group discussion
    a. Ask: “Why did Jojo feel like she could go on the swing in the scary tree now?”

Small Group/Partner Pairs

13. Students will work in partner pairs to compare their charts and make changes as needed

14. After completing the charts, partner pairs will work together to retell the story using detail on the other side of the sheet

Individual Work/Assessment

15. Students will complete a drawing with a short narrative piece that shows them doing something they love. Students may alternatively (or additionally, if time) complete a drawing with a short narrative piece that shows a time where they demonstrated bravery or overcame an obstacle
   a. Completed work will be added to portfolio

16. Students will have time to read choice books from the supplemental text set and may fill out their own “Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So” chart using their text
   a. This may be collected to monitor student understanding

Closure

18. Students will sit in a circle and share out using one
of the following oral speaking frames: “I am good at _______” or “I was brave when ________.”
Lesson Nine: *The Adventures of Sparrowboy* by Brian Pinkney

**Standard Referenced:** 2.1.5.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

**Essential Questions Explored:** How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member? How can I make a difference in the community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activate background knowledge</td>
<td><em>The Adventures of Sparrowboy</em> by Brian Pinkney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ask students to think about their favorite superhero</td>
<td>Unit anchor chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Share thinking with an elbow partner</td>
<td>Taxonomy chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ask: “If you could have any superpower, what power would you choose and why? Share your thinking with a new elbow partner and be prepared to share out afterwards.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Show the book, <em>The Adventures of Sparrowboy</em>, and ask students to make a prediction as to what the book may be about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Share the unit anchor chart with the taxonomy alongside. Explain that you will be using this text to explore the questions: How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member? How can I make a difference in the community?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read aloud/discussion</td>
<td>Flow map on chart paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Explain that good readers pay attention to the structure and sequence of a story, focusing on what happens in the beginning, middle and end</td>
<td>Student notebooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Explain that one way to track the events in the beginning, middle and end is to use a flow map</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Share the student learning objective: “I can retell a story, focusing on what happens in the beginning, middle and end.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Ask students to bring a notebook to the read-aloud area as they will be tracking the events using a flow-map</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Begin reading <em>The Adventures of Sparrowboy</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Stop after page 4 for a group discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Ask: “What happened in the comic that Henry, the paperboy, read?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Stop after reading page 8 for a turn and talk</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
|   a. Ask: “What is the connection between what Henry read in the newspaper and what just
happened to him?”

b. Help students to understand that the comic he read is now playing out in his imagination

9. Stop after reading page 14 for a turn and talk
   a. Ask: “How is Henry using his superpowers? What do you notice about the choices he makes in using his powers?”

10. Stop after reading page 18 for a group discussion
    a. Ask: “We have seen Bruno, the neighborhood bully causing trouble a couple times now. What could Henry do to help Bruno and the neighborhood?”

11. Stop on page 21 for a turn and talk
    a. Ask: “What can’t the sparrow fly anymore?”

12. Stop after reading page 28 for a group discussion
    a. Ask: “What clue does the comic give to Henry about why the sparrow can’t fly anymore?”

13. Stop after reading page 34 for a turn and talk
    a. Ask: “How did Henry make a difference in his community, his neighborhood?”
    b. Ask: “Do you think Henry was really able to fly around his neighborhood as he delivered papers?”

Small Group/Partner Pairs
14. Students will move into small groups with their notebooks and recorded flow maps
    a. Working together, the group will create a final flow map

15. After creating the map, the group will consider and write about the ways in which Henry made a difference in his community, his neighborhood

16. Ask group members to consider the community where they live or where they go to school. How can they make a difference there?

Individual Work/Assessment
17. Students will imagine themselves with a superpower and create a comic strip, similar to that in the story, to show themselves making a difference in the community, either where they live or where they go to school
    a. This work will be added to student portfolios

19. Students will have time to read choice books from
the supplemental text set and may fill out their own flow map using their text
a. This may be collected to monitor student understanding

### Closure

20. Explain that during the next couple days, students will be thinking about the ways in which they can make a difference in the community

21. Sit in a circle and allow students to share out some ideas they have

22. Finally, ask students to consider their ability to retell a story, focusing on the way a character responds to major challenges or problems

   a. Students can self-rate themselves using the following 1-2-3 scale: 1= I need more time and practice, 2= I feel good about it!, 3= I could teach others how to do this.
Name _____________________

Title of book: __________________________

1. Retell the story using a flow map. Be sure to include only the main events of the story. You may also add drawings.
2. Use the flow map and details from the text to retell the story. Be sure to use complete sentences! You may also add drawings.
**Lesson Ten: Something Beautiful by Sharon Dennis-Wyeth**

**Standard Referenced:** 21.5.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

**Essential Questions Explored:** How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member? How can I make a difference in the community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activate background knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Something Beautiful</strong> by Sharon Dennis-Wyeth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Ask students to think about something that is very special to them – it could be a person, place or a thing  
  a. Share with an elbow partner and then share out to the whole group | Unit anchor chart |
| 2. Show the book, *Something Beautiful*, and ask students to share what they know about the word “Beautiful” | Taxonomy |
| 3. Share the unit anchor chart with the taxonomy alongside. Explain that you will be using this text to explore the questions: How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member? How can I make a difference in the community? | Flow map on chart paper |
| **Read aloud/discussion** | **Student notebooks** |
| 1. Explain that good readers pay attention to the structure and sequence of a story, focusing on what happens in the beginning, middle and end  
  a. Explain that one way to track the events in the beginning, middle and end is to use a flow map  
  b. Share the student learning objective: “I can retell a story, focusing on what happens in the beginning, middle and end.”  
  c. Ask students to bring a notebook to the read-aloud area as they will be tracking the events using a flow-map | |
| 2. Begin reading *Something Beautiful* | |
| 3. Stop after reading page 2 for a group discussion  
  a. Ask: “How do you think this girl feels looking out her window and seeing what she sees? How do you know?”  
  b. Ask: “What do you see when you look out your window?” | |
| 4. Stop after reading page 4 for a group discussion | |
a. Explain: “It looks like someone wrote something very mean on the door of the place where her family lives. This is called “graffiti” and it means when somebody writes on someone else’s property. Has anyone ever seen graffiti on any buildings or trains nearby?”

b. Ask: “How does the girl feel when she sees that word written? How would you feel?”

5. Stop after reading page 6 for a turn and talk
   a. Ask: “Why is the lady sleeping on the sidewalk? Have you ever seen someone sleeping outside?”
   b. Ask: “How do you think the lady sleeping on the sidewalk feels? How does the girl who sees her feel?”

6. Stop after reading page 10 for a turn and talk
   a. Ask: “Think about what we said we knew about the word ‘beautiful’ before reading. How are our definitions and the girl’s definition different and the same?”

7. Stop after reading page 16 for a group discussion
   a. Model: “Let’s think about what has happened so far in this story. When I use a flow map, I want to focus on the main events and big ideas, rather than writing every detail. The first big event is that the girl feels sad because of her surroundings and wants to find something beautiful that will make her happy. I will add that to the flow map.”
   b. Ask: “What does she do in order to find something beautiful?”
      i. Record ideas in student language, guiding students to something along the lines of “she looks around her neighborhood, asking people to tell her about beautiful things.”

8. Stop after reading page 24 for a turn and talk
   a. Ask: “The girl has heard about many things that are beautiful to people in her neighborhood. When she gets home, she still sees the graffiti on her door and the garbage all around. How is she feeling? What may be her ‘something beautiful?’”

9. Stop after reading page 26 for a group discussion
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Ask: “Why does the girl feel powerful after cleaning off the graffiti?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Stop after reading the last page for a group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Ask: “How did the girl make a difference in her community? How does she plan to continue making a difference?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Stop after completing the story to look at student flow maps and share thinking. Talk about the way the story flows and how that helps us to understand the author’s message and the story better</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Small group/partner pairs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Students will move into small groups to begin working on a project to better the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Students will first decide what community they want to work in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Students will brainstorm a list of possible issues that exist in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Students will use the guiding sheet to move through this process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Completed work will be placed in the portfolio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Individual work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Students will consider the story <em>Something Beautiful</em> and make a connection to their life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Explain: “In this story, the little girl realizes that her ‘something beautiful’ is her power to make changes in the world. Think about something that is beautiful, or very important to you. You will have the opportunity to write, draw, or record something to document your ‘something beautiful.’ This will be added to the portfolio.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Students will have time to read choice books from the supplemental text set and may fill out their own flow map using their text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>This may be collected to monitor student understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Closure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Gather students in a circle and have each one share out using the following oral speaking frame: “My something beautiful is __________.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resources**

- Community project guide sheet
- Blank paper, iPads, coloring supplies available to all
- Supplemental text set
- Blank sheet of paper for flow map, one per student
Essential Questions: How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member? How can I make a difference in the community?

We all have power to make a difference! Working together with your group, you will follow the next steps to come up with a community project that can make change for the better. Together, you can do it!

1. Choose a community. It could be where you live or where you go to school.

2. Brainstorm some issues. What are the things you wish you could change? Who are some people that may need help? How can you make their lives better?

3. Make a plan! What supplies will you need? Will you need help from an adult? What are the steps you will take? Use a thinking map to help guide you.

4. Share your idea. How will you share this community project with others to help get them involved? Could you make a poster? A video? Send a letter?

Document your group’s thinking on the above steps in your notebook. Your final project will go in your portfolio.
**Lesson Eleven: Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña**

**Standard Referenced:** 2.1.5.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

**Essential Questions Explored:** How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member? How can I make a difference in the community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Resources/Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activate background knowledge</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Ask students about the different ways that they get to places. Do they travel in a car? On the bus? On trains? By bicycle?&lt;br&gt;  a. Ask students to share their thinking with an elbow partner&lt;br&gt;2. Show the book, <em>Last Stop on Market Street</em>, and ask students to share what they see, think and wonder about the book&lt;br&gt;3. Share the unit anchor chart with the taxonomy alongside. Explain that you will be using this text to explore the questions: How can I learn about others to become a more caring, empathetic and kind community member? How can I make a difference in the community?</td>
<td><strong>Last Stop on Market Street</strong>&lt;br&gt;by Matt de la Peña&lt;br&gt;Unit anchor chart&lt;br&gt;Taxonomy chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Read aloud/discussion</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Explain that good readers pay attention to the structure and sequence of a story, focusing on what happens in the beginning, middle and end&lt;br&gt;  a. Explain that one way to track the events in the beginning, middle and end is to use a flow map&lt;br&gt;  b. Share the student learning objective: “I can retell a story, focusing on what happens in the beginning, middle and end.”&lt;br&gt;  c. Ask students to bring a notebook to the read-aloud area as they will be tracking the events using a flow-map&lt;br&gt;2. Begin reading <em>Last Stop on Market Street</em>&lt;br&gt;3. Stop after reading page 4 for a turn and talk&lt;br&gt;  a. Ask: “Why is CJ upset about waiting in the rain? How do you know?”&lt;br&gt;  b. Ask: “Where may CJ and Nana be going? Explain your thinking.”&lt;br&gt;4. Stop after reading page 10 for a group discussion&lt;br&gt;  a. Ask: “What do you notice about the people...”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Stop after reading page 12 for a turn and talk
   a. Ask: “How does CJ feel about being on the bus? How does Nana feel about being on the bus? How do you know?”

6. Stop after reading page 16 for a group discussion
   a. Ask: “How does Nana show that she cares about the people in her community?”
   b. Ask: “What is the main event that has happened at the beginning of the book?”
      i. Record student thinking – guide students towards the idea that CJ and Nana ride the bus although CJ doesn’t really want to.

7. Stop after reading page 20 for a turn and talk
   a. Ask: “How does CJ feel at the end of the bus ride? How did the people on the bus and Nana help him to change the way he felt?”

8. Stop after reading page 22 for a group discussion
   a. Ask: “What connections can we make to the book *Something Beautiful*?”

9. Stop after reading page 24 for a group discussion
   a. Explain: “CJ and his nana are going to a soup kitchen. A soup kitchen is a place where people can go to get free food. This is a place for people who may not have the money or resources to get food on their own. It doesn’t mean they’re poor or we should feel bad for them, just that they need an extra bit of help.”

10. Stop after reading page 28 for a turn and talk
    a. Ask: “What are CJ and his nana doing at the soup kitchen?”
    b. Ask: “How are CJ and nana making a difference in their community?”

11. Stop after completing the book for a group discussion
    a. Explain: “Nana and CJ could have given money to the soup kitchen. They volunteered their time every Sunday to help serve food. I also noticed that they took time to get to know the people that they were feeding. This shows that they really cared about those people and wanted to make a difference.”
    b. Ask: “How can you make a difference in your community? How can you show others..."
Small group/partner pairs
12. Small groups will have time to work on their community service project
   a. Teacher will circulate and provide assistance as needed

Individual work/assessment
13. Explain: “Throughout this unit, we have been adding work to our portfolios. These portfolios help to tell our stories. Tomorrow, we will have time to share our portfolios with one another to continue learning and growing as a community. Today, you will have time to organize your work and make sure everything is in place.”
14. Students will have time to organize their portfolio using the portfolio checklist

Closure
15. Students will have time to share their community projects with other groups to build off one another’s ideas
16. Gather students in a circle for each to share out using the following oral speaking frame “I can make a difference by __________.” Encourage students to either share part of their community project or think of something they can do immediately and on their own, right in the classroom
Portfolio Checklist

1. Make sure that these items are in your portfolio, ready to be shared with the class. Check the item off if it's ready to go! Unfinished work can be done at home, during recess or any extra time that you have throughout the day.

____ “My skin is the color of ________”

____ “My race is one part of my story”/Circle map of ME!

____ Double bubble partner map

____ Name symbol sheet and conversation with a family member about name

____ My special food

____ Something I’m good at/A time when I was brave...

____ Me as a superhero comic strip

____ My something beautiful

____ I can make a difference plan sheet

____ I can make a difference final project

____ Portfolio checklist
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Twelve: Summative Assessment/Unit Closure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lesson</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activate background knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Show the unit anchor chart and taxonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Ask for students to add new understandings</td>
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<tr>
<td>to the taxonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reflect on the amount that you have all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learned throughout this unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Explain that today will be a day to celebrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new learning and to continue to grow together</td>
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<tr>
<td>as a community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Show all of the texts used in the unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Ask: “What did these texts help us to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learn?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Ask: “How would it have been different if</td>
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<tr>
<td>these books only had White characters?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Revisit the essential questions of the unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and ask students to share out the things they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Explain: “Today, we will have time to share</td>
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<tr>
<td>our portfolios with one another. This will be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a time to celebrate the way in which we share</td>
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<tr>
<td>our stories and the many things that make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>each one of us so unique. After our time</td>
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<tr>
<td>sharing, we will each assess our own work</td>
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<tr>
<td>and our learning from this unit.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Students will sit in small groups and each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one will share their favorite part of their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>portfolio</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. Students are reminded to sit and listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respectfully and to save questions until the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sharer is ready</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. After sharing in small groups, students will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place their portfolio on their desk and move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>around the room to look through other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>portfolios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Each student will have a pad of post-its</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that viewers can use to leave positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comments or connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual work/Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. After completing the walk around the room,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students will return to their own work and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complete the self-assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a. Students will be reminded to be honest and truthful in their work

Closure
10. Gather students in a circle for one last sharing time using the oral speaking frame: “I used to think _____ but now I think (or know) ______.”
11. Remind students that the work done throughout this unit is work that they will continue to do for the rest of their lives – becoming a caring, empathetic and kind community member who makes a difference is a lifelong process

Name: __________________

Answer the following questions about your work and learning during this unit. Be honest and use complete sentences! Use a piece of notebook paper to record your thinking.

1. What is one piece or part of your portfolio that you feel you did really well? Explain why.

2. What is one piece or part of your portfolio that you feel you could improve? Explain why.

3. What is something new that you learned during this unit?

4. What was your favorite book? Why?

5. What is something that you learned about a classmate during this unit?

6. What is a stereotype?

7. What does unique mean?

8. What does empathy mean?

9. What does race mean?

10. Flip to the other side of this sheet to give yourself a grade on the portfolio...
Circle the grade you feel best describes your work in this unit:

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<th>N</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portfolio Work</strong></td>
<td>My work is completed, neat and demonstrates my best effort. I did what I needed to do and even a little bit more!</td>
<td>My work is completed, neat and demonstrates my best effort</td>
<td>Most of my work is complete and neat. It may not demonstrate my best effort.</td>
<td>I have missing or incomplete work. I may not have taken my time to do my best.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class Discussions</strong></td>
<td>I listened, spoke with others, shared my own ideas and opened my mind to new ideas every day. I helped to keep the conversation going.</td>
<td>I listened, spoke with others, shared my own ideas and opened my mind to new ideas.</td>
<td>I sometimes listened and shared my ideas. I sometimes learned new things.</td>
<td>I need more practice listening and respectfully sharing my ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>I can explain what the new vocabulary terms mean and provide an example of each one.</td>
<td>I can explain what the new vocabulary terms mean.</td>
<td>I can explain what some of new vocabulary words mean.</td>
<td>I do not yet know how to explain the following terms: empathy, race, unique and stereotype.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Unit grade:** ________

Teacher comments
Appendix F

Annotated Bibliography
### Lesson Two:

**Diggs, T., & Evans, S. (n.d.). Chocolate me! Feiwel & Friends.**

This book tells the story of a boy who is teased by his friends for having dark skin. His mother helps him to see that his dark skin is something that makes him special.

**Rationale:** This book will help children to consider skin color as an attribute that is okay to talk about and recognize. This will help guide us into speaking about race as being a part of our stories and one of the ways that we are unique.

### Lesson Three:


A young girl decides to paint a self-portrait and ensues a search to find the perfect shade of brown. As she walks through her neighborhood, she realizes the many different colors that skin can be and associates the different colors with various foods.

**Rationale:** This book will help children to consider skin color as an attribute that is okay to talk about and recognize. This will help guide us into speaking about race as being a part of our stories and one of the ways that we are unique.

### Lesson Four:


This picture book introduces race in a basic way. Through the use of images and questions, race is explained as a part of each person’s story.

**Rationale:** This book will start a courageous conversation in the room. This will also serve as the jumping off point to begin work in the portfolio, where each student will get to share his or her story.

The story follows the correspondence of two young boys, one from the US and one from India. The boys learn about each other’s worlds and celebrate the fact that although they have differences, they also have a lot in common.  

Rationale: This book will help children to talk about and consider the similarities and differences that can exist between people, and even between friends. This book can serve as a jumping off point to recognize and celebrate what makes a person unique. |
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<tr>
<td><img src="https://www.amazon.com/Same-But-Different-Jenny-Kostecki-Shaw/dp/0805089462" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="https://www.amazon.com/Name-Jar-Yangsook-Choi/dp/0440417996" alt="Image" /></td>
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This book tells the story of a young girl who moves to the United States from Korea. She is too nervous to tell the classroom her real name as she worries they will laugh at her. She learns that she can embrace her own name as one classmate encourages her and even takes on a Korean nickname.  

Rationale: This book will help children to think about the ways in which their differences may cause anxiety. It will help them to feel empathy for a new student or someone concerned about their differences. It will also lead into a discussion about names and how each student got the name they have, tying in home life and culture. |
| ![Image](https://www.amazon.com/Name-Jar-Yangsook-Choi/dp/0440417996) | ![Image](https://www.amazon.com/Sandwich-Queen-Rania-Jordan-Abdullah/dp/1423124847) |

This is the story of two best friends who do everything together. One day, a dispute over their lunch puts their friendship to the test. Through this experience, they learn that it’s okay to have different opinions and to be yourself.  

Rationale: This book will encourage children to stay true to themselves rather than to like something just because others do. In addition, it will open up a conversation on special foods that are part of family culture. |
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<tr>
<td><img src="https://www.amazon.com/JoJos-Flying-Sidekick-Brian-Pinkney/dp/0689821921" alt="JoJo's Flying Side Kick" /></td>
<td>This book tells the story of Jojo and her quest to excel in Tae Kwan Do. Once it’s time for Jojo to take the test for her next belt, she becomes nervous and looks for advice from various family members. In the end, she realizes that the one person she really needs to listen to and trust is actually herself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rationale: This book features a girl overcoming her fears. This will encourage students to think about the ways that they can be brave while also opening the conversation up into student interests, hobbies and sports.</td>
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<td><img src="https://www.amazon.com/Adventures-Sparrowboy-Brian-Pinkney/dp/0689835345" alt="The Adventures of Sparrowboy" /></td>
<td>This book tells the story of Henry, a paperboy with a very big imagination. After reading a comic in a newspaper, Henry and his imagination create his very own comic-like adventure throughout his neighborhood.</td>
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<td>Rationale: This book will help children to consider the ways in which they can be a “superhero” in the community.</td>
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<td><img src="https://www.amazon.com/Something-Beautiful-Sharon-Dennis-Wyeth/dp/0440412102" alt="Something Beautiful" /></td>
<td>This is the story of a young girl who lives in a neighborhood with sights that sometime frighten her. Once her teacher shares the word “beautiful” with the class, she becomes eager to find beauty. She goes in search of finding the beauty in her neighborhood and learns that there is much more than meets the eye where she lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale: This book features a young girl looking to make her neighborhood a better place. Students will consider the community they live in and think about the ways in which they can better it.</td>
<td></td>
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Lesson Eleven:


This story features a young boy and his grandmother who take a trip on the city bus each Sunday. This time, the young boy is quite unhappy with his surroundings. His grandmother tries to keep him happy by showing him the positive in all the things they see. Once they reach their destination, he is reminded of how good things really are.

Rationale: This story shows a young boy and his grandmother learning about people from the community and volunteering their time to give back. This will serve as a jumping off point for students to think about a project they can do in the community.
Appendix G

Supplemental Text Set
### Supplemental Text Set

| Books that feature African American people as main characters | • *What Color Is My World* by Kareem Abdul Jabar  
• *Flower Garden* by Eve Bunting  
• *These Hands* by Hope Lynne Price  
• *Sugarplum Ballerinas* series by Whoopi Goldberg  
• *Ellray Jakes* series by Sally Warner  
• *Clubhouse Mysteries* series by Sharon M. Draper  
• *Ruby and the Booker Boys* series by Derrick Barnes  
• *Salt in His Shoes: Michael Jordan in Pursuit of a Dream* by Deloris Jordan  
• *You Can Do It!* by Tony Dungy  
• *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats  
• *Nappy Hair* by Carolivia Herron  
• *Do Like Kyla* by Angela Johnson  
• *Her Stories: African American Folktales, Fairy Tales, and True Tales* by Virginia Hamilton  
• *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman |
| Books that feature Asian people as main characters | • *Dear Juno* by Soyung Park  
• *Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji* by F. Zia  
• *Zen Shorts* by John Muth  
• *Wabi Sabi* by Mark Reibstein  
• *I Live in Tokyo* by Mari Takabayashi  
• *Uncle Peter’s Amazing Chinese Wedding* by Lenore Look  
• *Lin Yi’s Lantern* by Brenda Williams  
• *Suki’s Kimono* by Chieri Uegaki  
• *Cora Cooks Pancit* by Dorina K. Lazo Gilmore  
• *King for a Day* by Rukhsana Khan  
• *Big Red Lollipop* by Rukhsana Khan  
• *Alvin Ho: Allergic to the Great Wall, the Forbidden Palace, and Other Tourist Attractions* by Lenore Look  
• *Moin and the Monster* by Anushka Ravishankar |
| Books that feature Hispanic people as main characters | • *Santiago Stays* by Angela Dominguez  
• *Marisol McDonald* series by Monica Brown  
• *The Cazuela That the Farm Maiden Stirred* by Samantha Vamos  
• *Ladder to the Moon* by Maya Soetoro-Ng  
• *Nino Wrestles the World* by Yuyi Morales  
• *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote* by Duncan |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books that feature Native Indian people as main characters</th>
<th>Books that celebrate and promote diversity/feature characters or families that challenge the norm</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Tonatiuh</td>
<td>- <strong>This Day in June</strong> by Gale E. Pittman</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Dear Primo</em> by Duncan Tonatiuh</td>
<td>- <strong>My Brother Charlie</strong> by Holly Robinson Peete and Ryan Elizabeth Peete</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Tito Puente, Mambo King</em> by Monica Brown</td>
<td>- <strong>Woolbur</strong> by Leslie Helakoski and Lee Harper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>My Name is Celia</em> by Monica Brown</td>
<td>- <strong>Jacob's New Dress</strong> by Sarah Hoffman and Ian Hoffman</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx</em> by Jonah Winter</td>
<td>- <strong>Not Every Princess</strong> by Jeffrey Bone</td>
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<tr>
<td>- *Book Fiesta!: Celebrate Children's Day by Pat Mora</td>
<td>- <strong>Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress</strong> by Christine Baldacchino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Abuela</em> by Arthur Dorros</td>
<td>- <strong>Stella Brings the Family</strong> by Miriam B. Schiffer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>The Coqui and The Iguana</em> by Alidis Vicente</td>
<td>- <strong>My Friend Isabelle</strong> by Eliza Woloson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Mango, Abuela and Me</em> by Meg Medina</td>
<td>- <strong>A Friend Like Simon</strong> by Kate Gaynot</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>My Pal, Victor</em> by Diane Gonzales Bertrand</td>
<td>- <strong>Susan Laughs</strong> by Jeanne Willis</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Featherless</em> by Juan Felipe Herrera</td>
<td>- <strong>Dan and Diesel</strong> by Charlotte Hudson</td>
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<td>- <em>The Star People: A Lakota Story</em> by S.D. Nelson</td>
<td>- <strong>If the World Were a Village</strong> by David J. Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Thunder Boy Jr.</em> by Sherman Alexie</td>
<td>- <strong>This is Our House</strong> by Michael Rosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>The Blue Roses</em> by Linda Boyden</td>
<td>- <strong>Each Kindness</strong> by Jaqueline Woodson</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Eagle Boy</em> by Richard Lee Vaughan</td>
<td>- <strong>Giraffes Can’t Dance</strong> by Giles Andreae</td>
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<tr>
<td>- <em>Powwow's Coming</em> by Linda Boyden</td>
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