

SHARED CURRICULUM PLANNING IN K-12 EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC
REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND REMIXING ENGLISH CURRICULUM FOR
CULTURAL CONGRUENCE, RELEVANCE, AND ENGAGEMENT

by

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*To my husband, Steve, and my children, Parker and Julia, whose support and
boundless love sustained this journey.*

In memory of my grandparents, Al and Ada Turney, who sparked my love of literacy.

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ABSTRACT

SHARED CURRICULUM PLANNING IN K-12 EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND REMIXING ENGLISH CURRICULUM FOR CULTURAL CONGRUENCE, RELEVANCE, AND ENGAGEMENT

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Students find curriculum more accessible when it mirrors their societal realities and personal identities. Traditional K-12 curricula often rely on skills-focused, monolithic resources that are inflexible and do not incorporate students' interests and identities. This misalignment between students and curriculum contributes to student disengagement because the students cannot connect to the curriculum. One way to engage students in ELA classes is to redesign the curriculum to center contemporary literature that reflects students' realities while working in traditional texts and skill-based instruction. Students demonstrated gains in behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and agentic engagement during the redesigned learning unit. Another way to address the misalignment between students and curriculum is to engage in shared planning, in which parents and community members work with teachers to plan student learning. Shared planning turns parents and community members into educational assets, which mitigates barriers and fosters trusting relationships between families and school systems.

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CHAPTER ONE

Explanation of Manuscripts

This dissertation is comprised of three manuscripts. The first manuscript is a systematic literature review that explores the concept of shared curriculum planning. Shared curriculum planning is a process in which teachers partner with parents or community members to select resources and design learning activities for students. The literature indicates that shared curriculum planning can be used in all content areas and has many positive outcomes, including curriculum that is more culturally appropriate for and relevant to students; higher levels of student engagement; and empowerment of students and participating community members. This manuscript was submitted to the *Journal of Curriculum, Teaching, Learning, and Leadership in Education*.

The second manuscript details the process of redesigning curriculum based on students' feedback. It explains the use of focus groups to obtain feedback from students about their perceptions of their learning and the resources used to teach them. In this case, the focus was on eleventh grade English curriculum. Then, a process is outlined for using students' feedback to redesign curriculum resources while working within district curriculum mandates. The manuscript closes with a brief report on the positive impact of redesigning curriculum to be more culturally appropriate for and relevant to students. This manuscript was accepted for publication to the *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*.

The final manuscript combines the ideas of shared curriculum planning and redesigning curriculum according to students' feedback. It features a study in which I examined student engagement during a teacher-planned unit and during a shared planning

unit, which was designed with respect to students' needs and interests. The effects of shared planning on student engagement are discussed, as are the study's limitations and directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Shared Curriculum Planning: A Systematic Review of Literature

Introduction

Curriculum designed to educate students in core subjects - mathematics, English language arts (ELA), science, and social studies - should be developmentally appropriate and tailored to students' specific contexts. To ensure that curriculum is appropriate for students and relevant to their lives, educators and communities must have the ability to apply their professional expertise and knowledge of their students to design lessons and select learning materials that are appropriate to students' developmental levels, unique learning needs, and cultures (e. g., Muhammad, 2020; Winn et al., 2019). Consequently, school curricula are variable across the United States.

Although local control over curriculum is ensured by US Statute 1232a (1970), control has been a perennial issue for educators and communities for many reasons (Whittingham & Hoffman, 2024). First, the concept of local control is usually interpreted to mean state legislatures, intermediate school districts (ISDs), and district-level school boards. These governing bodies make the most decisions about curriculum, basing their choices on finances and assessment data, which leaves little room for input from members of the communities served by the schools (Whittingham & Hoffman, 2024). Second, the curricula purchased for schools tend to come from large publishing companies that may not consider the needs of minoritized groups when designing learning materials. This matters because students learn best when their cultures are validated and present in school curriculum in positive ways (e. g., Esteban-Guitart &

Moll, 2014; Martin-Beltran et al., 2018). Cultural misalignments between students and curriculum may prevent students from accessing knowledge and gaining necessary skills (Muhammad, 2020; Winn et al., 2019). Third, parents and community members who enroll their children in local schools, or otherwise interact with students who are the products of local schools, are seldom invited to participate in decisions about curriculum, even though current research demonstrates parental and community involvement in schools creates more positive outcomes for students (e. g., Budhai & Grant, 2023; Lofton & Davis, 2015; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Ishimaru, 2019). This exclusion is even more profound for parents and community members from minoritized populations (Barton et al., 2004; Clifford & Goncu, 2019; Delpit, 1988; Posey-Maddox, 2017). Knowing this, research on the impact of increased parental and community involvement in curriculum planning is warranted.

Need and Significance

Low levels of parental and community involvement in schools is a multilayered problem facing many school districts in the United States (Budhai & Grant, 2023; Gross et al., 2020). Many parents and community members do not actively participate with schools because they are unaware of opportunities to do so or do not feel welcomed in schools (Achinstein et al., 2019; Budhai & Grant, 2023). Parents and community members from minoritized cultural groups are more likely to feel unwelcome in their children's schools than are White parents because standards of participation are centered on White, middle-class norms, which clash with some cultural perspectives surrounding involvement in education (Barton et al., 2004; Christianakis, 2011; Delpit, 1988). For

example, in Latinx cultures, parents are considered to be involved in their children's education by providing a safe and nurturing home environment, proper nutrition, and guidance in developing their children's morals, social behaviors, and manners (Budhai & Grant, 2023; Gross et al., 2020). This definition of involvement is at odds with the concept of parental involvement in American schools, which prioritizes parents doing things like volunteering in their children's classrooms and working with students at home on academic tasks such as reading and homework completion (Budhai & Grant, 2023; Liu et al., 2018). Shared curriculum planning may bridge these different concepts of parental involvement.

Greater involvement from parents and community members in curriculum selection and planning may help to mitigate the issue of cultural mismatches between students and their academic content (e. g., Rawls et al., 2023; Venegas & Scott, 2023). Further, the inability of minoritized students to access the curriculum due to the underrepresentation of their cultures in their learning materials unfairly stigmatizes them by limiting their ability to connect to school content, which hinders knowledge expansion and skill development (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Muhammad, 2020). A plethora of empirical research published in the last three decades asserts that students learn best when they can make connections between themselves and their learning materials (e. g., Bishop, 1990; Krishnaswami, 2019; Macapugay & Nakamura, 2024; Rodriguez, 2016; Winn et al., 2019). Students who cannot access content as a result of misalignments fail to build foundational skills, which negatively impacts them as they advance to higher grade levels (Winn et al., 2019). This alignment is vital to learning and, therefore,

presents a veritable need for better understanding of how greater parent and community involvement might mitigate mismatches between students and curriculum.

Research Questions

I researched educational programs that include communities as equal thought partners in curriculum planning in order to understand the layers, and complexities, of how such involvement positively impacts both students and community members. I am using the term “programs” to refer to traditional K-12 classrooms and schools as a whole; university initiatives, partnerships, and courses involving K-12 students; and community-based learning projects for K-12 students. The research questions guiding this work, then, are as follows:

- How are communities involved in curriculum development in educational programs that serve minoritized K-12 students?
 - What are the differences between community involvement at elementary levels and community involvement at secondary levels?
- What are the outcomes of community involvement in curriculum development for students? For community members?

Article Selection Process

The purpose of this systematic review is to examine how shared curriculum planning is conducted in various educational programs and how shared curriculum planning impacts minoritized students as well as community members. I reviewed empirical research on shared curriculum planning and its impact on minoritized students over the last three decades. I employed a three-step search and selection process that

included the initial search, screening process, and reference combing. This process led to the final selection of relevant articles.

First, I conducted searches in my university library's OneSearch and in ERIC and Google Scholar databases using the terms "community-planned curriculum," "English," and "minority students." My initial searches yielded few results. I adjusted my search terms so that I was searching for a particular theoretical framework, the Community Cultural Wealth model (CCW), rather than "community-planned curriculum" because I found that doing so yielded more focused results. The terms that yielded the greatest results across OneSearch and both databases were "community cultural wealth" or "ccw" and "literacy" or "reading." This search yielded 2,965 results. I read titles and abstracts for these articles and selected three for inclusion in this study. During this search, I discovered that my terms were too specific in regard to the content area. So, I searched OneSearch, ERIC, and Google Scholar again using the following terms:

- "community cultural wealth" or "ccw"
- "curriculum" or "school curriculum" or "content" or "content area"

This search was much more fruitful. At first, I delimited my search to include only articles published between 2010 and 2024. I increased this range by 5-year increments and repeated my search until I had identified a suitable pool of articles. Additionally, I delimited the search to include only empirical articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

Next, the title and abstract of each selected article were screened to ensure that the article met the following criteria:

- Published in a peer-reviewed journal
- Represent empirical research in which data were collected and analyzed
- Focused on community involvement in curriculum development for programs that serve minoritized students in grades K-12.

After screening titles and abstracts, 22 articles were selected for inclusion in this study. Then, I read the selected articles in their entirety to ensure that they meet the criteria for inclusion. Eight articles were eliminated from the study because they did not meet one or more of the above criteria. Reference combing (examining each article's reference list to identify new articles for inclusion in the study) occurred for the remaining articles, which yielded three more articles for inclusion. In total, 17 articles were included in the study.

Analytic Methods

I used a five-step process for analyzing the 17 articles in this systematic review. First, I read, annotated, and reread the articles, noting participant and researcher demographics, locations of the programs, featured curriculum, and how each study defined culture. Next, I examined the findings sections of the articles for descriptions of the impact shared curriculum planning had on students and communities. Each relevant finding was given a thematic or topic description. Applying the constant comparative method (Corbin & Strauss, 2014), I determined four overarching themes and subcategories for the 17 articles. As outlined and explained in the following sections, these overarching themes are communities; program locations; grade levels and content area; and collective impact.

Findings and Discussion

Findings from the systematic review of these 17 articles are organized into four sections. First, I present the findings as they pertain to defining what community means and how it can be involved in curriculum development. Second, I examine the locations of the programs in terms of whether they occurred in schools or outside of schools. Third, I explore grade levels and content areas for which shared curriculum planning transpired to identify trends. For purposes of this review, the elementary level is defined as kindergarten through fifth grades and the secondary level is defined as sixth through twelfth grades. Finally, I analyzed the impact of shared curriculum planning on students, on communities overall, on teachers and school staff, and on the individual community members who were directly involved in the process.

Communities

The studies included in this review defined community in a variety of ways, such as people who live within a geographic area; people who share common cultures, ages, or interests; and people who are affiliated with a specific organization, such as a sorority or school. For this review, teachers are considered to be part of the community when they share culture with the students or live in the geographic area served by the school. Further, more than one definition of community can be applied to a single context (e. g. Rawls et al., 2023). These definitions of community are important to this review because they affect shared curriculum planning in terms of the resources selected, skills taught, and overall program goals. Figure One depicts how the definitions of community coincide.

All 17 studies defined community as people who live within a geographic area in tandem with other definitions. Thirteen studies simultaneously defined community as people who are members of the same cultural group. Rocha et al. (2024) explained that people with common racial or ethnic backgrounds share historical experiences. Rodriguez (2016) asserted that members of ethnic and racial groups experience similar challenges and aspirations. These historical and experiential congruences foster connections between group members. Shared curriculum planning functioned well when the geographic and cultural definitions of community overlapped. For example, in Ako-Asare's (2015) study, students acquired technological skills through a program called Hack the Hood, which they used to build websites for community businesses. Students gained valuable technological skills by designing websites, and local businesses who were recipients of those websites gained online platforms for their products and services. Students' participation in Hack the Hood also transformed how the community viewed teenagers of color; they were recognized as valuable members of the community because they used their technological skills to benefit the wider community (Ako-Asare, 2015). Shared curriculum planning also worked well when students and teachers shared culture. For example, the teacher in Martin-Beltran et al.'s (2018) study encouraged students to question oppressive structures through written expression. Further, DeNiccolo et al.'s (2015) study, which also featured a teacher who shares her students' cultural background, served to counter deficit notions of Latinx students and families; they accomplished this by leveraging *testimonios*, or personal testimonies, to bridge the gap between between students' home cultures and the school environment overall.

Additionally, four studies defined community as affiliation with a school or organization. This definition of community always functioned in conjunction with the geographic definition, and sometimes included community as characterized by membership in a racial or ethnic group (e. g., Ako-Asare, 2015; Jayakumar et al., 2018). Shared curriculum planning operated well when the geographic, cultural, and organization association definitions of community overlap. For example, Jayakumar et al. (2013) reported that both students and participating community members were empowered by the mentoring relationships forged over the course of the study. Further, Venegas and Scott (2023) reported that students and community members forged deeper relationships through participation in social action, and that students' parents also expressed desire to join their children and community in civic engagement. Overall, these studies demonstrate how shared curriculum planning benefits students and communities, regardless of how those communities are defined.

Program Locations

The studies in this review featured education programs that occurred within schools, adjacent to schools, and outside of schools. Six studies featured in-school learning and leveraged CCW to enhance classroom lessons (DeNiccolo et al., 2015; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Martin-Beltran et al., 2018; Moll et al., 1992; Rodriguez, 2016) or implementing special programming within the classroom to enhance community outcomes (Cuevas, 2016). For example, Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014), Moll et al. (1992), and Rodriguez (2016) employed the community as sources of knowledge and curriculum within classrooms; they studied the students' home cultures and then

implemented lessons which centered and celebrated these cultures. Additionally, Cuevas (2016), DeNiccolo et al. (2015), and Martin-Beltran et al. (2018) employed *testimonios* and counter-storytelling at the classroom level. Centering student and community experience within classrooms demonstrated respect for students' cultural backgrounds and validated their experiences, resulting in greater equity (Bishop, 1990; Yosso, 2005).

Additionally, two studies featured community programs that partnered with schools to extend learning outside of the classroom. Budhai and Grant (2023) focused on developing the voices and academic skills of the parents, which improved their abilities to help their children gain math and literacy skills outside of the classroom. This resulted in gains for the students as well as greater parent involvement with the school through a parent-staffed resource room. Achinstein et al. (2019) mobilized community-based organizations to act as bridges between the school and students' homes, resulting in sharing of resources and expertise that benefited the school as well as the students and their families. The teachers in Achinstein et al.'s (2019) study incorporated community knowledge and experiences into their curriculum, which made it more relevant and engaging to students. In turn, the students used their school learning in their community-based internships. In both of these studies, shared curriculum planning was used to meet the needs of all stakeholders: Students and parents gained knowledge and skills, parents gained access to community resources and opportunities to engage within the school, and community-based organizations gained opportunities to cultivate future leaders, which will eventually benefit the community as a whole (Achinstein et al., 2019; Budhai & Grant, 2023; Winn et al., 2019).

The remaining studies focused on educational programs that operated independently and were not affiliated with a K-12 school. These programs had their own academic foci, membership criteria, and aspirations for students (e. g., Jayakumar et al., 2013; Rawls et al., 2023; Venegas & Scott, 2023). Two programs were designed specifically for African American students, with the goal of preventing summer learning loss (Rawls et al., 2023; Venegas & Scott, 2023). These programs, which were developed by community members who were invested in the education of local children, were predicated on the importance of cultural role models and the development of students' identities. They were committed to social justice through civic engagement: Students researched their community's needs and perspectives, then designed and implemented action based on their research (Rawls et al., 2023; Venegas & Scott, 2023). In both studies, the students were empowered through community action, and the communities benefitted from the students' problem-solving skills. Other programs involved building specific skills sets and career exploration. For example, three studies featured programs that aimed to build students' STEM competencies and broaden their knowledge of STEM career pathways (Ako-Asare, 2015; Habig et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2024). These authors discussed the importance of developing the students' STEM voices and identities so that they could envision themselves in STEM careers; they viewed such development as critical to their studies because minoritized groups are underrepresented in STEM careers (Ako-Asare, 2015; Habig et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2024). Additionally, Jayakumar et al. (2013) sought to develop African American students' identities and voices as scholars,

and support them in entering higher education. By helping students to see themselves as scholars and scientists, these programs broadened students' post-graduation prospects.

Grade Levels and Content Areas

The studies included in this review spanned all grade levels, from kindergarten through twelfth grade, and included many content areas. Table One displays a list of the studies with their grade level and content area foci. Two studies focused only on the elementary level, seven studies focused only on the secondary level, and eight studies spanned both the elementary and secondary levels. Of the studies which examined the secondary level, two studies focused exclusively on students in sixth through eighth grades (Cuevas, 2016; Venegas & Scott, 2023), while five studies focused on students in ninth through twelfth grades (Achinstein et al., 2019; Ako-Asare, 2015; Jayakumar et al., 2013; Martin-Beltran et al., 2018; Rocha et al., 2024). Of the eight studies that spanned elementary and secondary grade levels, one study focused more heavily on students at the elementary level (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014) and two studies focused more heavily on students at the secondary level (Habig et al., 2021; Rodriguez, 2016).

The content areas included in the articles were literacy, which encompassed quintessential ELA content, such as reading and writing; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); social studies; and other, unspecified content. Four studies featured elements of STEM content (Ako-Asare, 2015; Habig et al., 2021; Moll et al., 1992; Rocha et al., 2024). One of these was STEM-focused studies was cross-curricular in that it paired mathematics with economics (Moll et al., 1992); economics is considered to be social studies content (Common Core State Standards, 2025). Five

studies focused on literacy (Cuevas, 2016; DeNiccolo et al., 2015; Martin-Beltran et al., 2018; Rawls et al., 2023; Venegas & Scott, 2023). Two of these literacy-focused studies also incorporated elements of social studies content through civic participation (Rawls et al., 2023; Venegas & Scott, 2023). Eight studies did not specify their content areas. The studies which concentrated on secondary grade levels tended to align with specific academic content rather than unspecified academic content.

At the elementary level, DeNiccolo et al. (2015) and Moll et al. (1992) centered student and community voices in the areas of writing and mathematics, respectively. DeNiccolo et al. (2015) employed testimonios to build students' literacy skills, helping them to develop their voices as Latinx writers. Moll et al. (1992) brought community voices and culture into the classroom to enhance students' math skills. Both studies functioned to validate students' home cultures and foster deeper connections between families and the school. Moll et al. (1992) also cultivated trusting relationships with students' families, which increased teachers' understanding of their students' cultures and helped families to feel more comfortable with the school. Additionally, the eight studies that spanned grades K-12 reported a reduction in barriers to academic achievement, such as low support at home, lack of connection between home and school, and general disengagement in learning due to cultural misalignment between students and curriculum. This finding provides powerful support to the argument that shared curriculum planning increases learning opportunities for students, regardless of content area or grade level (Winn et al., 2019).

At the secondary level, studies that featured literacy content used shared curriculum planning to empower students (Cuevas, 2016; Martin-Beltran et al., 2018; Rawls et al., 2023; Venegas & Scott, 2023). Cuevas's (2016) and Martin-Beltran et al.'s (2018) use of written *testimonios* spotlighted minoritized students' voices as a means of pushing back against negative perceptions of Latinx immigrants. Rawls et al. (2023) and Venegas and Scott (2023) leveraged civic action and social justice to develop students' literacy skills. Further, the studies that focused on STEM content (Ako-Asare, 2015; Rocha et al., 2024) worked to change perceptions surrounding minoritized youth entering STEM careers. While they included fifth graders in their study along with students in secondary grades, Habig et al. (2021) also employed their research to challenge stereotypes pertaining to youth of color entering STEM careers. In all of these studies, shared curriculum planning was employed to help students develop their voices and identities as scholars and activists, which increased students' confidence and competencies (Davis et al., 2019; Yosso, 2005).

Collective Impact

The impact of community involvement in education was determined in different ways. Some studies focused on how students were affected (e. g., Achinstein et al., 2019; Habig et al., 2021; Martin-Beltran et al., 2018), while others focused on how adults were affected (e. g., Budhai & Grant, 2023; Housel, 2020; Liu et al., 2023). Adults were grouped into two categories: community participants in the schools, including parents; and teachers and school staff.

Eleven studies focused on how students were impacted by community involvement in education. In all of these studies, centering community voices in student learning validated students' home cultures, which made curriculum more relevant to the students' lives, regardless of content area, grade level, or program location (Bishop, 1990; Macapugay & Nakamura, 2024; Muhammad, 2020). All 11 studies referenced this cultural relevance as a factor in improved student engagement and academic performance. For example, two studies specifically cite improvement in students' social and emotional wellbeing (Achinstein et al., 2019; Martin-Beltran et al., 2018). Nine other studies cite gains in elements such as mentorship and social networks (e. g., Cuevas, 2016; Habig et al., 2021), student empowerment and self-efficacy (e. g., Jayakumar et al., 2013; Rocha et al., 2024), cultural validation (e. g., Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Rodriguez, 2016), and motivation (e. g., Cuevas, 2016; Jayakumar et al., 2013). Increases in these elements are also associated with improvement in students' social and emotional wellbeing. Overall, the benefits to students of shared curriculum planning were far-reaching.

Further, three studies focused solely on how adults were impacted by their involvement in education. Incorporating community voices in curriculum planning had positive effects on participating community members, including students' parents. For example, Liu et al. (2023) ascertained the barriers to participation for minoritized parents and worked to reduce them, which resulted in better relationships between parents and the school. In identifying and minimizing barriers to participation for parents, Liu et al. (2023) combated negative perceptions of minoritized parents. Additionally, Housel

(2020) found that developing teachers' multicultural pedagogies fostered trust between parents and the school, which transformed immigrant parents into educational assets. Budhai and Grant (2023) cultivated parents' ability to help their children learn math and literacy skills outside of the classroom, which also served to transform parents into educational assets and foster trust between the community and the school. These enhanced skills also provided parents with a gateway for greater involvement in the school through tutoring students in reading and math in special resource rooms (Budhai & Grant, 2023). Overall, parents and community members experienced positive outcomes from their involvement in education.

Additionally, two studies examined the impact of shared curriculum planning on both students and parent and community participants. Ako-Asare (2015) found that participation in shared curriculum planning cultivated CCW among community participants and among students. Students also gained valuable STEM skills, personal empowerment, and stronger relationships with community members (Ako-Asare, 2015). Rawls et al. (2023) reported that students' families and community participants were empowered by participating in shared curriculum planning, intergenerational relationships were fostered, and connections between a local university and the surrounding community were strengthened. Student learning was enriched through culturally relevant learning experiences; students also accessed positive role models (Rawls et al., 2023). In both studies, students as well as parent and community participants were positively impacted by shared curriculum planning.

Finally, one study examined how community involvement in education impacted teachers. Moll et al. (1992) partnered with parents to plan a mathematics and economics unit and found that providing parents with opportunities to share their cultural knowledge and skills had a profound and positive impact on teachers. Moll et al. (1992) found that, when teachers centered community voices and partnered with parents to plan curriculum, they increased the relevance of their instruction and thus, student engagement increased. Higher levels of student engagement benefit educators because engagement is the first step in academic growth (Adelman & Taylor, 2022; Archambault et al., 2022; Keller et al., 2021).

While only Moll et al. (1992) purposefully examined the impact of shared curriculum planning on teachers and school staff, several studies indicate its benefits to educators. Developing teachers' multicultural competencies was beneficial in that it equipped teachers to better serve all families, which fostered better relationships between families and schools (Housel, 2020; Moll et al., 1992). Additionally, Budhai and Grant's (2023) development of parents' academic abilities led to a parent-staffed, in-school tutoring program to which teachers could send students to receive additional support; this is beneficial to teachers because it helped them to meet the needs of all students (Christianakis, 2011; Davis et al., 2019). Finally, Achinstein et al. (2019) indicated that educators benefited from the presence of community-based organizations in school because these organizations functioned as mediators between the school and students' families, which fostered more trusting relationships between school and students' homes.

Every study included in this review reported positive outcomes for students, participating community members, and school staff. Students developed their voices as scholars and citizens of the world, regardless of their grade levels. Participating community members, including parents, built trusting relationships with the schools and used their voices to become assets in students' educations. Teachers and school staff grew as professionals and experienced increases in student engagement through centering their students' cultures in their classrooms.

Implications

The studies included in this literature review span over three decades and feature a plethora of ways in which parents and community members can get involved in curriculum planning. Getting involved matters because students need strong support systems to maximize academic success (e. g. Brown, 2024; Evans, 2024; Fischer et al., 2019; Kipp et al., 2023). Children of engaged parents see that education is valuable, which makes them more likely to value education themselves and engage in learning (Keller et al., 2021). These studies also indicate that minoritized parents, in particular, and other community members are assets to children's education. This matters because members of minoritized groups are often undervalued in education (e. g. Budhai & Grant, 2023; Latunde & Clark-Loque, 2016; Liu et al., 2023). Rather, members of minoritized communities are valuable sources of information and experience from which students can benefit (e. g. Acevedo & Solorzano, 2021; Yosso, 2005). Therefore, the data indicates that schools should embrace parental and community involvement in school beyond

chaperoning field trips and planning celebrations and, instead, work with and alongside parents and community members as fully invested partners in teaching and learning.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are several limitations to my analysis of these studies. First, I limited this review to studies which featured only American schools. Including schools from other nations would be valuable because doing so would present an opportunity to examine how parents and community members are involved in curriculum planning outside of the US, and how US schools might adopt these practices to benefit all parties involved. Second, I did not break down the data by geographic area within the US because I could not find enough studies that featured each region. Examining regional variances in approaches to shared curriculum planning may be useful in terms of understanding whether parents in different parts of the US experience different barriers to participation. It would also be informative to see how different regions define community. Third, I only examined minoritized students as a group rather than breaking the data down by specific ethnicities or genders because, as I examined preliminary data, I found that outcomes were the same for students regardless of ethnicity, and because the studies included in this review did not analyze their data according to gender. Breaking the data down by ethnicity and gender would be valuable because it would provide information about which community groups would be most beneficial for various groups of students. Finally, I did not limit my review to a specific content area because I sought to examine how shared curriculum planning functions in different academic contexts; doing so may have revealed multiple avenues for community involvement in education within a single

content area, which would reduce barriers for parents and community members who have specific skills sets.

There are several directions for future research in the realm of shared curriculum planning. First, few studies featured content-specific shared curriculum planning within the classroom. This indicates that parents and community members are largely underutilized in terms of learning which occurs inside the classroom. Also, only Budhai and Grant (2023) sought to develop academic skills in students' parents. Future researchers might consider ascertaining and if needed, developing parents' academic abilities, and then leveraging them to plan units of academic content. Second, studies included in this review did not examine whether shared curriculum planning impacted students' academic outcomes in terms of changes in grades or standardized assessment scores; therefore, it is unclear whether shared curriculum planning is valuable in this regard. Future researchers may be interested in examining the relationship between shared curriculum planning and academic achievement. Third, only two studies (Ako-Asare, 2015; Rawls et al., 2023) examined the effects of shared curriculum planning on students as well as parents and community members; the remainder of the studies focused on only one group (students, educators, or community members). Future researchers may seek to examine how shared curriculum planning impacts all parties involved to build understanding of how and when shared curriculum planning can benefit everyone. Fourth, studies which featured elementary grades tended not to specify the content used in shared curriculum planning (e. g. Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Liu et al., 2023; Rios-Aguilar, 2010). Examining shared curriculum planning at the elementary level with

specific academic content would provide insight into how parents and community members can best be utilized to help students gain formative skills.

Conclusion

This review sought to examine how communities are involved in shared curriculum planning; the differences between community involvement at elementary and secondary levels; and the outcomes of shared curriculum planning for minoritized students and community members. I found that community involvement in shared curriculum planning largely occurs outside of the classroom, in extracurricular or community-based programs. I also found that there are no differences in shared curriculum planning between the elementary and secondary grade levels. Finally, I found that students and community members benefit from shared curriculum planning.

CHAPTER THREE

Remixing English Curriculum for Cultural Congruence, Relevance, and Engagement

Many American schools rely on textbook companies for their curricula. The resources provided by these companies often include lesson plans, assessments, and supplemental materials which are aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSSs) and claim to be flexible, meeting students' needs regardless of ability while raising achievement and reducing teachers' workloads. The textbooks' units also have themes that seem engaging and relevant to students' life circumstances. On the surface, these resources seem ideal. However, close examination reveals a monolithic, abstract, inflexible curriculum that does not meet students' needs.

This was the case for my English 11 class in a small, urban high school in Mid-Michigan. The textbook curriculum did not account for the scaffolding that was necessary to support deep learning, and the students found the content to be disengaging. Units with titles like "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives" that seemed ideal were actually texts grouped by time period, beginning with works from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and culminating with works from the 1980s. From the students' perspectives, these texts were antiquated and irrelevant. The students also noted that groups such as women, people of color, and people who live in poverty were underrepresented in the authors and texts included in the curriculum. Taken together, the lack of scaffolding, disengaging reading selections, and underrepresentation made the curriculum largely inaccessible to my students. As I worked with the prescribed

curriculum and with my students, it became apparent that adjustments were necessary to make it accessible to students and to improve student engagement.

Remix Rationale

When textbook companies produce curriculum for English classes, they tend to make choices that benefit the dominant culture and disregard minoritized groups or subcultures, resulting in curriculum that is composed of texts by deceased, White, male authors which perpetuate middle and upper-class values (Hilaski, 2020; Muhammad, 2020). This lack of representation creates a cultural misalignment between these students and their English curriculum (e. g., Bishop, 1990; Larson et al., 2021). Such misalignment may also cause students to view curriculum as irrelevant or disengaging (Galindo et al., 2022; Muhammad, 2023). When students are not engaged and do not perceive the usefulness of their learning materials, they are unable to gain needed skills (e. g., Muhammad, 2023; Winn et al., 2019), which perpetuates the problem of diminished student achievement (Larson et al., 2021). Rather than amplifying the dominant culture, English curriculum should center students' cultural identities (e. g., Muhammad, 2020; Muhammad, 2023; Willis et al., 2022); have real-world relevance (e. g., Cuevas, 2016; Venegas & Scott, 2023); and foster student engagement (e. g., Galindo et al., 2022; Hofkens & Pianta, 2022).

Further, students struggle with finding relevance in their learning in English classes because the curriculum is often “task oriented and narrowly focused on basic skills, vocabulary, and mechanics as a strategy to meet accountability measures” (Larson et al., 2021, p. 174). Curriculum that is structured in this way does not leave room for

students' interests, current events, or creative pedagogy. When the curriculum is remixed with respect to students' histories and cultures, students are better able to connect their learning to the world outside of school (e. g., Castillo et al., 2023; Moll et al., 1992). Also, remixing English curriculum to include real-world applications affords students opportunities to develop their literacy skills beyond the classroom, which will help them to see the relevance of their learning (Rawls et al., 2023; Venegas & Scott, 2023).

Finally, the curriculum can have an impact on student engagement in English classes (Muhammad, 2020; Wigfield et al., 2008). Student engagement has four components: Behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and agentic engagement (e. g. Lei et al., 2018; Reeve & Jang, 2022). Behavioral engagement encompasses students' actions, such as reading, writing, and participation in class discussions (Allen & Boyle, 2022; Kipp et al., 2023). Emotional engagement refers to students' feelings about and connections to texts, learning activities, and other people in the learning environment (Griffiths et al., 2022; Lei et al., 2023). It is important to note that emotional engagement includes both positive and negative emotions (Guthrie et al., 1997). Cognitive engagement refers to students' use of learning strategies (Allen & Boyle, 2022; Archambault et al., 2022). Agentic engagement references the impact that students have on their learning and the learning environment (Reeve & Jang, 2022). Remixing English curriculum to increase cultural alignment and relevance will improve student engagement (Muhammad, 2020; Wigfield et al., 2008). Specifically, incorporating students' cultural identities in the curriculum supports students' emotional engagement (Muhammad, 2023). This is important because strong emotional engagement

positively affects the other three types of engagement (Lee et al., 2021; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004).

Remixing the Curriculum

In remixing my English 11 curriculum, it was necessary to find a balance between students' interests and needs, district directives, and the CCSSs. First, I met with students to determine their needs and feelings about the curriculum and analyzed this information to determine what to focus on in remixing the curriculum. Second, I conducted an inventory of the district curriculum. Third, I examined district directives pertaining to curriculum use and sought a high-interest, modern novel that would engage students while accommodating forays into mandated readings, and meeting requirements set forth by the CCSSs. I also sought auxiliary readings to support concepts presented in the novel and mandated texts, illustrate real-world connections to the texts, or provide contrasting viewpoints when it was appropriate to do so. I arranged all readings according to where they fit within the context of the novel. Finally, I designed a practical, standards-based unit assessment and daily lessons aimed at building critical literacy skills.

Step One: Talk to Your Students about the Curriculum

Seeking feedback from the students about the curriculum was important because I did not want to rely on only my own perspective; my observations might not have aligned with students' perceptions, especially concerning relevance and engagement (e. g., Cleary & Liu, 2022; Gladstone et al., 2022). For example, some students might have appeared to be engaged because they completed coursework but did not voice their feelings of

boredom or exclusion. Having focused conversations with the students also allowed me to gain insight into their cultures and identities (Houchen, 2013; Muhammad, 2023).

Conducting Focus Groups

To explore students' perspectives on their learning in their English classes, I conducted two after-school focus groups. Each focus group met for 45 minutes. A total of 18 students participated in the focus groups. The participants' demographics were representative of the overall student population at my school: 12 students were African American, four students were White, and two students were Latinx; nine students were male and nine students were female. Additionally, three of the students received special education services, three students identified as LGBTQIA+, and two students were English learners. Nine students were in eleventh grade, and nine students were in twelfth grade. All students participated with their parents' permission. The grouping of students for the focus groups was determined by the participants' schedules: I allowed them to choose the date and time that worked best for them.

The focus groups were held in my school's media center. I arranged the tables into a U shape, seating the students around the U and myself in the middle, facing them. I prepared each place around the U with a new notebook and pen, a bottle of water, and a mint. Taking such measures was important in order to help participants to feel welcome and comfortable (Seidman, 2006). The focus groups were audio recorded, and the recordings were later transcribed using Otter software. I also took notes as the students spoke. Additionally, I began each focus group with introductions and a short discussion

about procedures and manners to maximize participants' comfort and ensure a positive experience (Seidman, 2006).

I employed a semi-structured format for the focus groups so that I would be free to explore topics raised by the participants (Seidman, 2006). I asked the students eight questions about their identities, literacies, and experiences in English classes. This information appears in Table One. As we worked through the questions, conversation flowed freely among the participants and between the participants and myself. The participants built upon each other's responses, asked their own questions, and disagreed with each other in a courteous and productive manner.

Focus Groups' Feedback

To analyze the focus group transcripts and my notes, I employed grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). This means that I noted patterns within the data and looked for connections between concepts. For example, students referred to age, race, religion, gender identity, and socioeconomic status multiple times. These concepts are related in that they are all elements of culture, so culture became a theme in the data. Analysis of the transcripts and my notes revealed the themes of cultural misalignment, relevance, and engagement. The consensus of the focus groups was that, while students enjoyed some texts, they felt disconnected from course content and did not feel that their learning in English classes would be useful in the real world. The students also had suggestions for improving their English curriculum.

When students discussed whether they could relate to characters, situations, and ideas in their English texts, they referenced cultural elements such as age, race, and social

factors. Caitlin discussed youth culture when she explained that she could relate to the protagonist in *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951), because he was a “teenager who swears a lot” and had a chaotic thought process that mirrors her own. Other students referred to racial and social elements of culture when discussing English curriculum. Ray asserted that the stories included in the curriculum are “all by dead, straight, White people.” Thia observed that, even when people of color are included in books, she did not see people like her in them. Ayanna noted that when people of color were present in texts, they were often depicted in stereotypical ways, which made her feel that her culture was not respected.

This cultural misalignment was intertwined with relevance. Many students felt that, because their identities were absent from or misrepresented in the curriculum, it had no meaning for them. Ray posited that there was “no real inclusiveness for those who come from different households or different family structures or have a different economic status. Theo explained that the texts included in the English curriculum were outdated, so that the characters “are not having the problems we have today.” Joseph echoed this sentiment and proclaimed that “even if there are people of color in stories, I still cannot relate to them unless they are going through the problems I am going through myself.” Other students argued that the curriculum was not relevant because it minimized omitted topics that mattered to them and lacked real-world applications. Dechavez pointed out that the topics included in the curriculum “might be relevant to people who want to go to college,” but excluded “others who want to do an apprenticeship and start working or go to trade school.”

The combination of cultural misalignment and lack of relevance in the curriculum led to student disengagement. While some students engaged with the curriculum because they cared about their grades, they were bored with repetitive readings and tasks. Other students were disengaged because they preferred to think critically but felt that their teachers pushed through content instead of allowing students to grapple with difficult concepts. Additionally, several students postulated that lack of inclusiveness may be the reason that students did not want to engage with their English curriculum. Alex posited that “if there are more relatable things [in the curriculum], there will be a lot more students raising their hand and talking about their experiences, which might make other students want to raise their hand and talk about their experiences, too.”

Finally, the students shared changes that they would like to see in their English curriculum. Many students expressed a need for “much more engaging,” diverse, and modern literature. Ray thought that students should have access to “pieces of literature that include things about struggle and pain” because they would be relatable. Dechavez suggested that the curriculum should include “more emotional texts rather than informational texts [because] it would be valuable to find something that motivates somebody or makes people think about what to do in their life.” Sanaii expressed that she wants to learn her ancestors’ history in a way that is not whitewashed. Keon asserted that English curriculum needed to “move beyond basic skills and teach advanced, real-world literacy skills.”

Step Two: Take an Author Inventory and Compare Demographics

My district mandated the use of district-purchased resources for teaching English. So, my next step in remixing the curriculum was to conduct an inventory of the English 11 textbook. I counted the total number of authors included in the textbook and in the textbook's online resources. Then, I selected categories into which to sort the authors based on the feedback I received from the students. I counted the number of authors in each category, then divided that number by the total number of authors. Then, I used MI School Data (2024) to examine students' demographics in the same categories I used for the authors. I compared the percentages in each category to identify misalignments between the students and the English 11 curriculum. This information appears in Table Two.

Step Three: Select Texts, Align Them to Standards, and Arrange the Unit

Several factors informed my text selections. I was mindful that any texts I used must be purchased by my school district, and that I must incorporate some of the texts from the textbook in order to adhere to the CCSSs. I used data obtained from the student focus groups and curriculum inventory to select the primary text. According to these data, the primary text should be a recently published novel, preferably written by a female author of color, that featured young people working through a problem. This novel should also incorporate at least one of the six themes from the textbook. I was fortunate that my district purchased *Dear Martin*, a novel in which the main character, Justyce McAllister, is a 17-year-old African American boy from a single-parent family who is trying to navigate the pressures of high school while coping with systemic racism (Stone, 2017).

Close examination of *Dear Martin* revealed that it addresses the textbook's themes of Writing Freedom; The Individual and Society; and Power, Protest, and Change. Such required texts as the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution, excerpts from works by Emerson and Thoreau, the assenting opinion from *Brown vs. The Board of Education* (Warren, 1954), and selected poems from Langston Hughes fit into *Dear Martin* very naturally because they were alluded to in the text. For example, in chapter three, Justyce's class discussed the Declaration of Independence; therefore, my class read and analyzed the Declaration of Independence prior to reading chapter three so that they understood it. I also chose auxiliary texts, such as "The Road Not Taken" (Frost, 1916) and "I Have a Dream" (King, 1963), because they are mentioned in *Dear Martin*; I also selected several poems by Emily Dickinson and "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (Douglass, 1852) because complemented passages in *Dear Martin* wherein Justyce worked through various challenges.

After selecting texts, I matched them to the CCSSs for eleventh grade English. I used a spreadsheet to organize the unit. I laid out the sequence of texts, including where the required and auxiliary texts fit into the novel. I mapped the standards to each text. I also included assessments and their aligned standards in the spreadsheet.

Step Four: Design Assessments and Daily Lessons

I designed the culminating assessment for this unit with a focus on real-world application. The textbook prescribed an argumentative essay as an assessment, using the readings as evidence to support claims. Instead of individual essays, I designed a class-wide debate project, which aligned well with *Dear Martin* because Justyce was on the

debate team and was also involved in a courtroom trial, in which arguments were presented and supported with evidence. The class worked together to select a topic that was relevant to the school or to the larger community. I assigned students to teams, and the teams worked to gather evidence, build arguments, anticipate counterclaims, and prepare counter arguments. The teams also composed opening and closing statements and prepared to answer questions about their position.

The students performed their debates in front of invited guests, including school administration, members of the school board, and members of the community. This performance afforded students the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and critical thinking abilities in a realistic setting. Preparing and performing the debates met many of the CCSSs for argumentative writing, the writing process, language use, and speaking and listening.

To design daily lessons, I considered the students' needs in terms of skill development and engagement. I created recording sheets to accompany each chapter of *Dear Martin*, and each required and auxiliary text. On these sheets, students responded to questions about the text; used multiple strategies to define words; connected the text to themselves, other texts, and the real world; made predictions; distinguished explicit meaning from implied meaning; and analyzed rhetorical choices. I made sure to place at least one item per page of text so that students had plenty of opportunities to interact with the text, pause and reflect, and discuss their thinking. I designed skill development items based on district assessment data and my observations of students' needs.

Outcomes

The students responded very well to the *Dear Martin* unit. They expressed excitement over reading about a young protagonist of color. Many students identified with Justyce as he entered adulthood amidst adversity because they were close to Justyce's age and connected with his circumstances. The students also appreciated how the text mirrored societal problems.

Aligning this unit of curriculum to my students' cultures made English 11 content more relevant to the real world (e. g., Moll et al., 1992; Muhammad, 2023). The students were willing to work with texts that they considered disengaging, such as the aforementioned founding documents, because they were able to make sense of them within the context of *Dear Martin* and then apply them to real situations. For example, the students applied the Bill of Rights to the opening scene of the novel to analyze whether the characters' actions were legally admissible and extended the discussions to include similar community situations. Additionally, organizing a debate instead of writing an essay provided students with a real-world application of skills developed in the classroom. The invited guests responded well to the students and commented on their poise and thoroughness. The school board president commented on the students' high levels of engagement.

Engagement increased dramatically during this unit. The most obvious improvement was in emotional engagement. Students came to class excited to read and became invested in the story and often commented that they "felt" Justyce. I was surprised by how many young men were interested in the love triangle included in the story. Behavioral engagement also increased. The students stayed on-task better and

frequently volunteered to read aloud. They also began to redirect each other when they became distracted or disruptive. Cognitive and agentic engagement also increased, particularly during the debate project, as the students analyzed connections between texts and the real world, researched meaningful topics, and applied argument strategies.

Overall, the *Dear Martin* unit brought my English 11 curriculum in line with students' cultural identities, which increased its relevance and raised student engagement. The students learned and applied new critical literacy skills. Remixing the curriculum honored students' histories and identities, developed their literacies, and liberated them from disengagement.

Acceptance Message from the *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*

Good morning, Kim Stein.

On behalf of the Language Arts Journal of Michigan (LAJM) editorial team, we thank you for your manuscript submission, *Remixing English Curriculum for Cultural Congruence, Relevance, and Engagement (2559)* for the LAJM Summer/Fall 2026 publication. We appreciate your contributions to LAJM through the years, and we are excited to accept your submission for the forthcoming issue, *They Deserve It All: Centering the Joy and Genius of Students at Home and in the Classroom and Community*.

As you know, the manuscript review process can take a few months before all accepted submissions are identified prior to publication, so we appreciate your patience. We are overjoyed that LAJM will be represented at such a pivotal point in your education journey. Once again, we thank you for your submission. As LAJM editors our goal is to

anticipate the questions and responses of our readers in advance and ensure the expertise of LAJM authors like you are well represented, ensuring a fruitful exchange of knowledge and practice across the LAJM community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tanya Upthegrove Gregory

CHAPTER FOUR

Augmenting Student Engagement Through Shared Curriculum Planning

Introduction

Engagement in schools can be examined through multiple lenses. Student engagement has four primary domains. Behavioral engagement includes actions taken by students such as note-taking or participation in class and extracurricular activities (e. g. Allen & Boyle, 2022; Keller et al., 2021; Kipp et al., 2023; Lei et al., 2018). Emotional engagement includes students' feelings about and personal connections to texts of learning activities (e. g., Albataineh et al., 2024; Griffiths et al., 2022; Lei et al., 2018). Cognitive engagement includes students' use of learning strategies (e. g. Allen & Boyle, 2022; Archambault et al., 2022; Cleary & Liu, 2022). Agentic engagement refers to students' impact on their learning and learning environment, such as by posing questions that drive instruction in the direction of students' interests and needs (e. g., Reeve, 2013; Reeve & Jang, 2022).

Student engagement is a dynamic concept that can be influenced. Engagement is constantly in flux because students' interests change as they mature; they become more aware of the world and observant of trends (Goshin et al., 2019). Themes that resonate with students today may fall flat next month. As interests quickly change, so, too can the effectiveness of pedagogical techniques over time. Additionally, the pervasive use of personal electronic devices, such as smartphones and tablets, shortens attention spans, which further confounds teachers' abilities to hold students' attention (e. g., Albataineh et al., 2024; Albert et al., 2023; Silas & Mwila, 2024). This is especially problematic in

schools where there is not a policy which limits or bans the use of personal electronic devices in the classroom (Garcia-Santillan & Espinosa-Ramos, 2021; McCoy, 2013; Mupinga, 2017).

Shared curriculum planning, which occurs when parents and teachers work together to select learning materials and plan activities for students, could positively affect student engagement (e. g., Budhai & Grant, 2023; Moll et al., 1992; Rawls et al., 2023). Parents know their children best, so tapping into their expertise could make learning more relevant to the students' realities (Achinstein et al., 2016; Moll et al., 1992). When students perceive that classroom learning is relevant to their lives, they are more likely to engage in lessons, which better enables them to gain knowledge and skills (DeNiccolo et al., 2015; Martin-Beltran et al., 2018). Therefore, shared curriculum planning is worth exploring.

Need and Significance

Engagement for students is critical because learning cannot occur if students passively receive information or fail to devote attention to academic content (Albataineh et al., 2024; Bond, 2019; Chrisman, 2025). High-quality student engagement in the classroom can be difficult to obtain for several reasons. First, students may disengage because they cannot connect to course content (Bishop, 1990; Krishnaswami, 2019; Muhammad, 2020). A plethora of empirical research published in the last three decades asserts that students learn best when they can make connections between themselves and their learning materials (e. g., Bishop, 1990; Krishnaswami, 2019; Macapugay & Nakamura, 2024; Rodriguez, 2016; Winn et al., 2019). Second, students typically do not

have an affinity for all academic content (Brown, 2024; Chrisman, 2025; Keller et al., 2021). For example, some students may enjoy mathematics but dislike social studies; therefore, they engage fully in math classes but may ignore instruction in history classes. Third, personal electronic devices and misuse of school-provided devices pull students off-task (Albataineh et al., 2024; McCoy, 2013; Mendoza et al., 2018; Silas & Mwila, 2024). Shared curriculum planning could help to alleviate issues with student engagement because parental involvement in selecting learning materials may result in curriculum that is more interesting to students (Muhammad, 2020), facilitate connections between students and curriculum (Bishop, 1990), and bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application (Latunde & Clark-Loque, 2016; Winn et al., 2019).

This study distinguishes itself from previous research on shared curriculum planning in two ways. First, the majority of the extant literature examines the effects of shared curriculum planning for extracurricular programs or special units of study. This study examines the effects of shared curriculum planning on a unit of study in a core content area, ELA, as part of the standard course of study. Second, previous studies on shared curriculum planning employed qualitative techniques only. This study will apply qualitative techniques and quantitative techniques to explore the connection between shared curriculum planning on student engagement as well as student achievement.

Research Questions

In my context as a high school English educator, I am interested in examining how shared curriculum planning engages students in ELA learning and how students'

academic outcomes are impacted by changes in their engagement. My research question is as follows:

- What are the effects of shared curriculum planning on students' engagement and academic outcomes?

Literature Review

Student Engagement

Student engagement is not monolithic. This study will focus on behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic aspects of student engagement (e. g., Albataineh et al., 2024; Berhanu & Sewagegn, 2024; Reeve & Jang, 2022). These components do not operate in isolation; rather, they are interconnected across developmental processes where change in one component can affect the others (Archambault et al., 2022). For example, an increase in behavioral engagement, such as following along while reading a story, may augment emotional engagement as the student becomes invested in the tale, which may also raise cognitive engagement as the student thinks about the events and characters in the narrative. Some researchers, such as Ivey and Johnson (2015), assert that certain aspects of student engagement, such as emotional engagement and cognitive engagement, should not be examined separately because engagement is a social and human experience that is simultaneously individual, relational, and collective. Analyzing aspects separately risks overlooking how students transform their own worlds and identities, which can create an inaccurate picture of what student engagement is and looks like (Ivey & Johnson, 2015). This study will examine behavioral, emotional, cognitive,

and agentic engagement separately, and collectively, to analyze how changes in one aspect of engagement affect others (e. g., Kim et al., 2017; Lyu & Hu, 2025).

Additionally, student engagement can be moderated by several factors such as electronic devices (Kates et al., 2018; McCoy, 2013; Mendoza et al., 2018), school and classroom climate (Grazia & Molinari, 2023; Lei et al., 2018), and cultural and social factors (Galindo et al., 2022; Keller et al., 2021; Kipp et al., 2023). Further, research has established a strong connection between student engagement and academic outcomes (e. g., Adelman & Taylor, 2022; Archambault et al., 2022; Burns et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2018). The following subsections define each component of engagement, describe its moderating factors, and discuss its connection to academic outcomes.

Behavioral Engagement

Behavioral engagement, in general, involves active participation in school-related activities, including extra-curricular activities (Allen & Boyle, 2022; Lei et al., 2018). In the classroom, behavioral engagement consists of students' actions, such as following along with lessons, asking questions, and completing assignments (Archambault et al., 2022; Farnsworth et al., 2022). For example, students who demonstrate that they are paying attention to the lesson, such as by taking notes or asking questions, and complete classwork have higher levels of behavioral engagement than students who do not. Behavioral engagement also manifests in non-academic ways (e. g., Archambault et al., 2022; Farnsworth et al., 2022; Neuharth-Pritchett & Bub, 2022). When students attend class regularly (Archambault et al., 2022), arrive on time (Allen & Boyle, 2022), and follow teachers' directions (Neuharth-Pritchett & Bub, 2022), they are displaying

behavioral engagement. Students can also exhibit behavioral engagement by simply avoiding disruptive activities (Allen & Boyle, 2022). For example, students who keep their personal electronic devices put away during instruction and refrain from loud conversation demonstrate behavioral engagement. Additionally, behavioral engagement includes students' persistence in completing academic tasks as well as how much effort students invest in their coursework (Anderson et al., 2022). Students who refuse to give up on challenging tasks exhibit higher levels of behavioral engagement than those who capitulate. Likewise, students who demonstrate higher levels of effort in their coursework, such as by revising paragraph structure in a writing assignment or using a thesaurus to augment their word usage, exemplify behavioral engagement.

Behavioral engagement is critical to literacy learning because students cannot develop reading skills or accrue knowledge without attending to instructional content (Martinez-Lincoln et al., 2021). In literacy classes, behavioral engagement encompasses many actions. Beyond the previously mentioned activities, students demonstrate behavioral engagement by reading silently or aloud (Wigfield et al., 2008), writing (Lee et al., 2021), and otherwise participating in literacy activities. (e.g., Lee et al., 2021; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Additionally, discussion and interactions with peers are important components of behavioral engagement in literacy classes (Ivey & Johnston, 2015; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004; Wigfield et al., 2008). Social interactions are central to engaged reading because they transform reading from a solitary act to a collective experience. Discussions with peers can extend beyond the curriculum and class activities, leading to deeper and more positive relationships between students and bolstering

emotional engagement (Ivey & Johnston, 2015). Behavioral engagement in literacy can also extend beyond the classroom because books and other curricular materials can provide new avenues of communication between students and their families (Ivey & Johnston, 2015). This is important because conversations about texts with parents and siblings can augment students' engagement with their learning materials, which leads to deeper thinking and higher degrees of comprehension, giving rise to better cognitive engagement (Ivey & Johnston, 2015; Lee et al., 2021; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Further, students' effort and persistence during literacy activities is also a manifestation of behavioral engagement (Anderson et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2021).

There are many factors that moderate, or influence, behavioral engagement. One important moderator of behavioral engagement is the prevalence of personal electronic devices in classrooms (Albert et al., 2023; Garcia-Santillan & Espinosa-Ramos, 2021). Personal electronic devices negatively impact behavioral engagement because their presence induces students to display off-task behaviors (Albert et al., 2023; Silas & Mwila, 2024). For example, smartphone notifications occur frequently, and students may feel compelled to check them, which pulls their attention away from instruction or coursework (McCoy, 2013). This distraction demonstrates a decrease in behavioral engagement. Additionally, classroom climate moderates behavioral engagement (Allen & Boyle, 2022; Castillo et al., 2023). Clear expectations and consequences position students for more favorable behavioral engagement (Adelman & Taylor, 2022; Neuharth-Pritchett & Bub, 2022). When students understand what is expected of them in the classroom space, they are better able to adhere to desirable actions, which increases their behavioral

engagement. Another moderator of behavioral engagement is pedagogy (e. g., Allen & Boyle, 2022; Martin, 2022). Pedagogical practices which incorporate degrees of autonomy for students inspire greater behavioral engagement, especially for adolescents (Allen & Boyle, 2022; Hofkens & Pianta, 2022). Also, pedagogical practices which facilitate social interactions within the classroom increase behavioral engagement because they afford students opportunities to discuss their learning (Hofkens & Pianta, 2022; Ivey & Johnston, 2015). Finally, cultural factors contribute to behavioral engagement (Jimerson & Chen, 2022). Employing culturally appropriate curricular materials increases students' sense of belonging within the classroom, which decreases negative behaviors, thereby increasing behavioral engagement (Davis et al., 2022; Jimerson & Chen, 2022).

Academic outcomes are closely related to behavioral engagement. Lei et al., (2018) assert that there is a strong correlation between behavioral engagement and academic achievement because of the emphasis placed on practice and operation, which are related to behavioral engagement. Higher degrees of behavioral engagement typically result in more favorable academic outcomes, such as higher grades (Adelman & Taylor, 2022; Archambault et al., 2022; Burns et al., 2022). These higher grades due to positive behavioral engagement function to increase graduation rates (Archambault et al., 2022; Farnsworth et al., 2022). Additionally, positive behavioral engagement is credited with lower levels of absenteeism and fewer disciplinary problems; these factors strongly influence academic achievement (Adelman & Taylor, 2022; Jimerson & Chen, 2022). For example, students who are removed from the classroom due to disciplinary infractions

have fewer opportunities for behavioral engagement, which can negatively impact their academic outcomes, while students who remain in class have more opportunities for behavioral engagement (Galindo et al., 2022; Jimerson & Chen, 2022).

Emotional Engagement

Emotional engagement, also referred to as affective engagement, is defined as students' emotional reactions to teachers, their peers, learning, and school overall; it includes students' identities and sense of belonging as well as their interest in course topics, boredom, and levels of happiness, anxiety, and other emotions (Albataineh et al., 2024; Griffiths et al., 2022; Lei et al., 2018). For example, students who are enthusiastic about or interested in their classes demonstrate emotional engagement. Further, it is important to note that positive emotional engagement can be attained even when students experience negative emotions (Guthrie et al., 1997). For example, students may experience negative emotions, such as sadness or anger, when a literary character dies; this show of emotion signifies positive emotional engagement even though the emotions themselves are negative. Relationships also play a significant role in emotional engagement (Galindo et al., 2022; Griffiths et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2021). For example, students who feel that an adult at school cares about them as people attain higher degrees of emotional engagement than those who do not (Griffiths et al., 2022). Similarly, students who have positive relationships with their peers are more likely to be emotionally engaged than those who do not (Knifsend et al., 2022). Emotional engagement is also linked to students' sense of belonging at school (Allen & Boyle, 2022).

In literacy classes in particular, emotional engagement manifests in a number of ways. Students may demonstrate their enjoyment or displeasure with texts and literacy activities through verbal or written means, as well as through body language (e. g., Lee et al., 2021; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). During lessons, students may use emotion-laden sections of text to initiate discussions of complex topics, and to elicit and mediate emotional responses in others, thereby displaying emotional engagement (Kim et al., 2017). For example, students may use excerpts of poignant novels or quotes from relevant leaders' writings to discuss topics such as racism or significant global events. Students may also indicate that they identify with emotions expressed in text and other learning materials, which is another indicator of emotional engagement (Lee et al., 2021; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Another way that students may demonstrate emotional engagement is through sharing personal stories as they relate to course content (Kim et al., 2017), which is indicative of emotional engagement because it illustrates connections between the students and the content which are rooted in emotion.

Three important moderators affect emotional engagement: Relationships (Griffiths et al., 2022; Lyu & Hu, 2025), classroom climate (e. g., Griffiths et al., 2022; Knifsend et al., 2022), and curriculum selection (Muhammad, 2020; Wigfield et al., 2008). Students' relationships with their literacy teachers play a pivotal role in emotional engagement (Farnsworth et al., 2022; Griffiths et al., 2022; Lyu & Hu, 2025). Close, supportive relationships with teachers help students to feel safe and comfortable in class (Adelman & Taylor, 2022). Further, relationships with peers contribute to students' emotional engagement (Guthrie et al., 1997; Kim et al., 2017). Positive relationships with

peers also foster feelings of safety and comfort in the classroom, which in turn nurtures students' sense of belonging (Davis et al., 2022; Knifsend et al., 2022; Neuharth-Pritchett & Bub, 2022). These positive relationships and sense of belonging increase the likelihood that students will engage in learning activities (Adelman & Taylor, 2022), which is especially important in literacy classes because reading and writing skills are critical to all other content areas and cannot be developed if students do not engage (Wigfield et al., 2008).

Similarly, positive classroom climate moderates emotional engagement because, if learning experiences elicit unpleasant emotions (Adelman & Taylor, 2022) or induce feelings of inadequacy (Guthrie et al., 1997), students may be hesitant to partake in them. Teachers and students build positive classroom climate through the aforementioned relationship-building (Griffiths et al., Lyu & Hu, 2025), through employing pedagogy that prizes student autonomy and social interactions (Lee et al., 2021; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004), and through selecting curricular materials that validate students' lives and cultures (Muhammad, 2020; Winn et al., 2019). Curriculum selection moderates emotional engagement because students are more likely to participate when they are interested in the content (e. g., Castillo et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2017) or when they can connect to the content on a personal level (Bishop, 1990; Muhammad, 2020; Winn et al., 2019). For example, allowing students to select interesting reading materials and organizing discussion groups accordingly meets students' needs for autonomy and socialization, thereby raising emotional engagement.

Emotional engagement affects academic outcomes in several ways. First, emotional engagement is key in guarding against students dropping out of school (Wang & Eccles, 2012). Archambault et al. (2022) contend that a lack of emotional attachment to school negatively impacts students' sense of belonging and induces disengagement in other domains, such as behavioral and cognitive, ultimately leading to dropout. Additionally, positive emotional engagement increases students' school connectedness, which raises students' motivation; this increased motivation is associated with higher levels of academic achievement (Davis et al., 2022). Relatedly, strong teacher-student relationships induce emotional engagement, which increases students' academic achievement (Hofkens & Pianta, 2022). Further, for students of color, emotional engagement is a significant predictor of academic success because of cultural traditions of defining oneself through relationships (Jimerson & Chen, 2022). Finally, feelings of competence and autonomy, especially during adolescence, fuel emotional engagement and position students for academic achievement because students are more likely to engage in academic tasks, even difficult ones, when they feel that they are capable (Hofkens & Pianta, 2022).

Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement refers to students' use of appropriate self-regulation and deep-processing strategies while learning (e. g. Allen & Boyle, 2022; Archambault et al., 2022; Cleary & Liu, 2022). Students may demonstrate cognitive engagement by planning their work carefully, such as breaking down a large task into smaller tasks; utilizing available resources; and preventing, correcting, and learning from mistakes (Archambault

et al, 2022). Further, students may display cognitive engagement by prioritizing tasks, setting goals, and using learning strategies (Cleary & Liu, 2022; Farnsworth et al., 2022; Griffiths et al., 2022). Additionally, students express cognitive engagement by relating new learning to what they already know (Griffiths et al., 2022; Neuharth-Pritchett & Bub, 2022). Finally, students who show that they value learning and are motivated to learn are cognitively engaged (Cleary & Liu, 2022; Farnsworth et al, 2022; Griffiths et al., 2022).

In literacy classes, students demonstrate cognitive engagement by using literacy-specific learning strategies. For example, when students activate their prior knowledge about an author or the time period during which a text was written, students are cognitively engaged (Baye et al., 2018; Spires et al., 2018). Another example of cognitive engagement during literacy classes is the use of vocabulary strategies to learn and use new words; such strategies might include using knowledge of Latin and Greek word parts, Frayer models, and context clues (Baye, 2018; Stark et al., 2024; Wigfield et al., 2008). Additionally, students enact cognitive engagement when they break down large literacy tasks, such as essays, into manageable chunks (Lee et al., 2021). Further, students may display cognitive engagement during text-centered discussions with peers, in which students connect concepts between texts or extend text concepts into the real world (Ivey & Johnston, 2015; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Other ways that students show cognitive engagement in literacy classes include being motivated to read (e. g., making statements like “I can’t wait to read what happens next!) and assessing their own literacy skills (Lee et al., 2021).

Many factors moderate cognitive engagement. First, the learning environment and classroom climate contribute to cognitive engagement (Allen & Boyle, 2022). For example, clear expectations and opportunities for students to exercise autonomy and participate in decision-making processes foster higher levels of cognitive engagement (Allen & Boyle, 2022; Farnsworth et al., 2022). Additionally, teachers' use of pedagogy that incorporates collaboration and authentic tasks rather than repetition bolsters students' levels of cognitive engagement (Allen & Boyle, 2022; Ivey & Johnston, 2015; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). Further, effectively managing students' intrinsic and extraneous cognitive loads augments cognitive engagement (Martin, 2022). Intrinsic cognitive load refers to the difficulty of the curriculum itself; teachers manage this by presenting materials that are developmentally appropriate for students (Martin, 2022). Extraneous cognitive load refers to the unnecessary burden on students that is caused by teachers' instructional methods (Martin, 2022). Students' extraneous cognitive load increases when curriculum is presented in ways that are complex or disorganized, which negatively affects their cognitive engagement; conversely, when curriculum is presented in systematic ways, students' extraneous cognitive load decreases, which positively affects cognitive engagement (Martin, 2022). Finally, the relevance of curriculum to students' lives and interests moderates cognitive engagement because students achieve higher levels of cognitive engagement when they can connect their learning materials to the real world (Galindo et al., 2022; Jimerson & Chen, 2022).

Cognitive engagement affects students' academic outcomes in a variety of ways. Higher levels of cognitive engagement are associated with increased motivation, which

positively affects academic performance (Allen & Boyle, 2022). Additionally, students' self-regulation skills, which are associated with cognitive engagement (Cleary & Liu, 2022), contribute to positive academic outcomes because students who can self-regulate are less likely to be removed from the learning environment, resulting in more learning opportunities for students and therefore higher degrees of academic progress (Galindo et al., 2022). Further, higher levels of cognitive engagement typically result in higher degrees of skill development, which increases students' competencies (Allen & Boyle, 2022); in turn, increased competencies decrease the likelihood that students will drop out of school, leading to long-term gains (Archambault et al., 2022).

Agentic Engagement

Agentic engagement was defined by Reeve and Tseng (2011) as “students’ constructive contribution into the flow of instruction they receive” (p. 258). It is distinct from other types of engagement because it is proactive and transactional; it occurs before learning activities begin with the goal of personalizing and influencing learning (Grazia & Molinari, 2023; Reeve, 2013). Students demonstrate agentic engagement by asking questions; communicating their interests, likes, and dislikes to their teachers; and seeking clarification (Reeve, 2013). Students may also enact agentic engagement by offering suggestions, recommending goals or objectives, and otherwise collaborating with their teachers (Reeve & Tseng, 2011; Reeve, 2013). Agentially engaged students enable teachers to adjust instruction so that lessons are more relevant and supportive to students (Reeve & Jang, 2022).

There is limited research available regarding how agentic engagement manifests in literacy classes; however, conclusions can be drawn based on generalities. Students may demonstrate agentic engagement in literacy classes by communicating with their teachers about what they would like to read, how they prefer to engage in reading, and what their strengths and challenges are in terms of literacy. Further, agentially engaged students may make suggestions to their teachers about how they would like to learn. For example, students may request to engage in a class-wide debate rather than write individual research papers, arguing that, while they would gain research, writing, and argument-building skills in either task, engaging in a debate would help them to hone their speaking skills. Further, students may display agentic engagement in literacy classes by assessing their own work prior to receiving feedback from their teachers (Zenouzagh et al., 2025).

Moderators of agentic engagement appear more subtly than moderators for other forms of engagement. Reeve (2013) suggested that students' ages and the subject matter they study might moderate agentic engagement but did not state how. Additionally, the way teachers interact with students and deliver instruction affects agentic engagement; students are more agentially engaged when teachers support students' autonomy and foster intrinsic motivation (Reeve & Jang, 2022). Similarly, students display higher levels of agentic engagement when teachers model how students should express their interests and preferences and communicate their needs (Reeve & Jang, 2022). Further, teachers' responsiveness to student input moderates agentic engagement; as teachers respond more positively to students' suggestions, students' agentic engagement increases (Reeve, 2013;

Reeve & Jang, 2022). Finally, agentic engagement has a unique ability to modify itself because when students act agentially, they can create a more supportive learning environment for themselves and generate motivational satisfaction, which promotes future agentic engagement (Reeve, 2013; Reeve & Jang, 2022).

Students' academic outcomes are positively affected when they are agentially engaged. Longitudinal studies with adolescent students indicated that students who were agentially engaged at the beginning of a semester demonstrated increased outcomes, including higher course grades and greater domain-specific skill development (Reeve et al., 2020; Reeve & Jang, 2022). Additionally, agentic engagement creates a more motivationally supportive environment for students, which positively impacts academic achievement (Reeve, 2013). Finally, agentic engagement moderately affects other forms of engagement, with the effect of improving academic outcomes for students (Reeve, 2013). For example, when students exercise agentic engagement to communicate their preferences to teachers *and* teachers incorporate these preferences into their courses, students demonstrate higher levels of behavioral and emotional engagement because they enjoy what they are learning about.

Shared Curriculum Planning

Shared curriculum planning occurs when educators partner with parents, members of their students' communities, or community fixtures such as colleges, churches, and nonprofit organizations, to build curriculum that centers students' needs while reflecting family and community values. Shared curriculum planning can be applied to many academic content areas: literacy (e. g. DeNiccolo et al., 2015; Martin-Beltran et al.,

2018); science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (e. g. Ako-Asare, 2015; Rocha et al., 2024); cross-curricular studies (e. g. Rawls et al., 2023; Venegas & Scott, 2023); and general studies (e. g. Budhai & Grant, 2023; Jayakumar et al., 2013). Shared curriculum planning can also occur at any grade level (e. g. Cuevas, 2016; Moll et al., 1992; Venegas & Scott, 2023).

Previous empirical research examined the effects of shared curriculum planning on various stakeholders, including students and educators. For students, learning became more personalized and meaningful. For example, several studies leveraged testimonios, written personal testimonies, to elevate students' voices within the classroom; these studies encompass both elementary and secondary grade levels (Cuevas, 2016; De Niccolo et al., 2015; Martin-Beltran et al., 2018). Additionally, shared curriculum planning facilitated civic engagement for students, wherein students researched their community's needs and perspectives, then designed and implemented action based on their research (Rawls et al., 2023; Venegas & Scott, 2023). Further, shared curriculum planning helped students to gain new academic and real-world skills (e. g., Ako-Asare, 2015; Jayakumar et al., 2013). Most importantly, shared curriculum planning validated student's home cultures (e. g., Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Rodriguez, 2016) and had a positive impact on their motivation, engagement, and social and emotional wellbeing (Achinstein et al., 2019; Cuevas, 2016; Habig et al., 2021; Jayakumar et al., 2013; Martin-Beltran et al., 2018).

Educators also reaped the benefits of shared curriculum planning. Moll et al. (1992) found that, when teachers partnered with parents to plan curriculum, they

increased the relevance of their instruction and thus, student engagement increased.

Higher levels of student engagement benefits educators because engagement is the first step in academic growth (Adelman & Taylor, 2022; Archambault et al., 2022; Keller et al., 2021). For example, students cannot make academic gains without engaging in learning processes in some way, such as by paying attention to classroom instruction, reading, or completing independent research. Additionally, Budhai and Grant's (2023) development of parents' academic abilities led to a parent-staffed, in-school tutoring program to which teachers could send students to receive additional support; this was beneficial to teachers because it helped them to meet the needs of all students. Further, shared curriculum planning enhanced teachers' ability to meet students where they are, which was beneficial in that it equipped teachers to better serve all families, which in turn fostered better relationships between families and schools (Housel, 2020; Moll et al., 1992).

Something that is noteworthy about this body of work is that, in most instances, shared curriculum planning was employed outside of schools, such as through extracurricular or community programs, or in token ways, such as special projects or school events, rather than to create in-classroom, day-to-day learning experiences. For example, programs studied by Habig et al. (2021), Jayakumar et al. (2013), and Rocha et al. (2024) provided academic enrichment in the STEM field independent of students' schools, while programs studied by Rawls et al. (2023) and Venegas and Scott (2023) provided literacy enrichment and civic engagement through community organizations

during the summer. So, even though the benefits of shared curriculum planning are salient, schools tend not to engage in this practice.

Theoretical Framework

This research is guided by three frameworks. The first framework is the bioecological model, which was developed by Bronfenbrenner in the 1970s. Bronfenbrenner and other researchers modified this framework over the ensuing four decades (e. g., Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Elder et al., 1996; Lerner, 2002). The bioecological model is frequently employed to examine student engagement (e. g., Bempechat et al., 2022; Bond, 2019; Gross et al., 2020; Keller et al., 2021). Additionally, funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) and Rosenblatt's (1969) transactional theory will function within the bioecological model to guide analysis of parent involvement, and student engagement with curriculum for literacy learning, respectively.

Bioecological Model

Bronfenbrenner's (1977) bioecological model is a framework for human development and behavior in various, interconnected contexts. These contexts are referred to as ecosystems. The ecosystems that comprise the bioecological model are typically visualized as concentric circles surrounding the developing individual (e. g., Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Maynard et al., 2014; Tong & An, 2024). Immediately surrounding the individual is the *microsystem*, which is the setting where the individual experiences activities, social roles, and interpersonal relationships (Rahimi, 2023; Skinner, 2023; Tong & An, 2024). Within the microsystem are elements with which

individuals interact often, such as immediate family, school, peer groups, workplace, and neighborhood (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Tong & An, 2024). Interactions between these elements and the individual are reciprocal; individuals can act upon their environments just as environments can act upon individuals (Skinner, 2023; Tong & An, 2024). Outside of the microsystem is the *mesosystem*, wherein elements of individuals' microsystems interact and influence each other; essentially, the mesosystem is a system of microsystems wherein reciprocal interactions occur between microsystems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Tong & An, 2024). Surrounding the mesosystem is the *exosystem*, which consists of formal and informal social systems that influence individuals without directly containing them (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Tong & An, 2024). Entities such as local government, religion, mass media, and extended family exist in the exosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Beyond the exosystem is the *macrosystem*, which encompasses cultures and subcultures, large-scale political systems, economic systems, education systems, and social norms (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Tong & An, 2024). The elements that make up the macrosystem influence the inner systems (Kaambaara & Linb, 2023) and can contribute to structural inequalities and hierarchies (Skinner, 2023). The outermost layer of the bioecological model is the *chronosystem*, which contains change or consistency over time in both the individual and their environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Tong & An, 2024). The chronosystem can refer to historical time or to the individual's lifetime (Tong & An, 2024).

Contained within the bioecological model are proximal processes, which are defined as "progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, p. 996). To be considered a proximal process, an interaction must demonstrate increasing complexity, duration, frequency and reciprocity over time, with the individual as an active participant in the interaction (Tong & An, 2024). Typically, proximal processes occur within individuals' microsystems, such as between individuals and their families (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

My research occurred primarily in the microsystem and mesosystem. I sought to engage students (individuals) in texts and class activities (school), and their parents (family) in curriculum planning (school). Family and school are part of students' microsystems (Gregg et al., 2024; Skinner, 2023). In my research, students' family and school microsystems interacted through shared curriculum planning because parents helped to plan ELA lessons.

Funds of Knowledge

Funds of knowledge were defined by Moll et al. (1992) as the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills that are essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). This concept operates on the premise that all students and families are valuable and accumulate knowledge, skills, and cultural resources drawn from their life experiences (Castillo et al., 2023; Daries & Ebrahim, 2021; Durham et al., 2024). Examples of funds of knowledge include

home language use, family values and traditions, caregiving practices, family roles and responsibilities, and professional knowledge (e. g., Liu & Russell, 2022; Moll et al., 1992; Shani, 2023). Since its inception, funds of knowledge has been applied in a variety of contexts around the world. For example, funds of knowledge has been employed to plan special mathematics projects in elementary schools (e. g., Bennet et al., 2023; Moll et al., 1992); educate preservice teachers (e. g., Bhattachali et al., 2025; Durham et al., 2024; Liu & Russell, 2022); engage high school students in many disciplines, from physics to the arts (e. g., Anantanukulwong et al., 2023; Camara, 2023; Gluckman, 2022); compare rural and urban literacy development in middle schoolers (e. g., Castillo et al., 2023); explore cultural influence on early childhood education (e. g., Daries & Ebrahim, 2021; Esteban-Guitart et al., 2022; Spiteri, 2024); and examine how adults accumulate and use cultural knowledge in a variety of contexts (e. g., Maravillas, 2023; Shani, 2023). The common threads in these studies are that funds of knowledge can be leveraged to enhance engagement and learning across contexts, and that they influence educators as well as learners.

In this study, I sought to use funds of knowledge to forge a strong classroom-home partnership that is predicated on an assets-based view of students and families. Harnessing funds of knowledge to design curricula makes learning more meaningful for students because students can draw on their experiences to connect classroom learning to their everyday lives (Bennet et al., 2023; Castillo et al., 2023; Liu & Russell, 2022). Further, leveraging funds of knowledge to plan curricula positively impacts student engagement (e. g., Anantanukulwong et al., 2023; Castillo et al., 2023; Spiteri, 2024).

Specifically, funds of knowledge affect emotional engagement (Castillo et al., 2023; Evans, 2024) and agentic engagement (Anantanukulwong et al., 2023; Bennet et al., 2023). Emotional engagement increases when funds of knowledge are activated because students' cultures and voices are centered in the classroom, which creates space for students to express their emotions, particularly through literacy activities (Brown, 2024; Castillo et al., 2023; Evans, 2024). Agentic engagement increases as students connect classroom learning with their own cultures (Bennet et al., 2024; Spiteri, 2024) because piquing students' interests induces them to ask questions that influence future instruction (Anantanukulwong et al., 2023). Further, funds of knowledge can be used to create a supportive classroom environment, which helps to fuel student engagement (Durham et al., 2024; Maravillas, 2023).

Funds of knowledge operated within the mesosystem and microsystem of the bioecological model. Students (individuals) brought their funds of knowledge to literacy learning (school), which affected how students made meaning of text (e. g., Muhammad, 2020; Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016). These interactions between students and texts occurred in the students' microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Transactional Theory

Rosenblatt first articulated the transactional theory of reading in 1969 and later refined it, and expanded it to include writing (Rosenblatt, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1988; Rosenblatt, 2018). Transactional theory rejects traditional views of reading as an interaction between two separate, prescribed entities, the reader and the text (Rosenblatt,

1969), and redefines the relationship between readers, writers, and text as reciprocal (Lee, 2024; McGee, 2021; Rosenblatt, 1988). In this paradigm, the writer composes text, which offers meaning potential that the reader then works with (Marhaeni, 1998); there is no prescribed meaning to the text, as each reader interprets the text differently based upon the emotions, sensations, mental images, or any other associations that occur during the reading process (e. g., Lee, 2024; Marhaeni, 1998; Rosenblatt, 1988). Therefore, meaning does not reside in text, but is born during the transaction between “a particular reader and a particular configuration of marks on a page, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context” (Rosenblatt, 1988, p. 6). Transactional theory also posits that readers process text in two ways (Rosenblatt, 1988). When readers take an efferent approach, they are reading primarily to extract information (e. g., Rejan, 2017; Rosenblatt, 1988; Tharp, 2025); this approach is most often used with nonliterary text (Smith, 2017). When readers take an aesthetic approach, they are reading to absorb the text on an emotional level and to make connections with the text (e. g. Marhaeni, 1998; Rosenblatt, 1988; Tharp, 2025); this approach is used primarily with literary text (Smith, 2017). Writing is tied into transactional theory as a process of learning and of discovery, wherein connections between the reader and the text can be demonstrated and explored (Rosenblatt, 1988; Tharp, 2025). This means that writing can be used as a tool for students to demonstrate their learning (efferent), and to express their emotions and personal experiences in relation to the text (aesthetic) (Tharp, 2025; Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016).

Transactional theory states that readers bring their “funded experience” and “linguistic-experiential reservoir” to every text they read (Rosenblatt, 1988, p. 6). Funded experiences and linguistic-experiential reservoirs are defined as readers’ prior experiences with texts as well as with language and life experiences (e. g., McGee, 2021; Roseblatt, 1988; Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2017). These definitions align well with funds of knowledge, described above, which posits that students use their cultural and experiential knowledge to construct meaning and enhance engagement (e. g., Castillo et al., 2023; Moll et al., 1992). Like funds of knowledge, transactional theory will operate in the mesosystem of the bioecological model. Transactions between the students and text are proximal processes, and proximal processes occur in the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris) because the text (school) acts upon the student (individual), who in turn interprets the text. These interpretations are influenced by the students’ literary (Rosenblatt, 1988) and personal (Moll et al., 1992) backgrounds. Further, reading can expand students’ funds of knowledge because texts are bridges to new experiences that can augment cultural knowledge (Connell, 2000; Soonsaar, 2024).

Additionally, transactional theory plays a role in student engagement (e. g., Ivey & Johnston, 2015; Rosenblatt, 1998; West, 2020). Specifically, transactional theory impacts emotional engagement (e. g., Hutchinson, 2016; West, 2020), cognitive engagement (e. g., Lee, 2024; Marhaeni, 1998), and agentic engagement (e. g., Soosaar, 2024; Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016). When students engage in aesthetic reading, they inhabit the world of the text (Soonsaar, 2024) and enter the minds of the characters

(West, 2020); in doing so, the students become emotionally invested in the text because they can make connections between themselves and the conflicts presented in the text or characters' traits (Connell, 2000; Smith, 2017; West, 2020). Additionally, both aesthetic and efferent text can evoke cognitive engagement because students can apply reading strategies to both types of text (e. g., McGee, 2021; Wigfield et al., 2008). Cognitive engagement is also achieved when students relate what they read in text to the real world (West, 2020) and when they persist in difficult literacy tasks (Smith, 2017). Agentic engagement is influenced by transactional theory because readers have agency: Readers are active creators of the meaning they take from text (e. g., Rejan, 2017; Rosenblatt, 1988). Also, students are agentially engaged when they question or push back against text (Tharp, 2025; Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016).

Research Context

This research took place at a small, urban high school in Michigan, referred to herein as BHS. BHS is a Title I high school that served approximately 500 students in grades nine through 12 during the 2025-2026 school year. According to MI School Data, 91.8% of the students are economically disadvantaged; 52.2% of students are chronically absent; and 13.6% of students live with disabilities. The racial and ethnic composition of the student body is 74.45% African American, 11.78% Latinx, 9.38% Caucasian; and 4.39% multiracial (MI School Data). The students' gender distribution is 48.9% female and 51.1% male; MI School Data does not permit gender description in other terms. During the 2023-2024 school year, there were 220 instances of student suspension or

expulsion (MI School Data). BHS's graduation rate is 74%, which is below the state average of 82% (MI School Data).

Students at BHS take the majority of their standardized assessments during eleventh grade. BHS uses the SAT to measure proficiency in ELA and mathematics, and the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) to measure proficiency in science and social studies; these assessments take place in April. During the 2023-2024 school year, 19.2% of students were proficient in ELA; fewer than one percent of students were proficient in mathematics; 9.6% were proficient in science; and 11.4 % were proficient in social studies (MI School Data). This is far below the state averages, which are 55.4% proficiency in ELA; 27.5% proficiency in mathematics; 34.9% proficiency in science; and 42.1% proficiency in social studies (MI School Data).

This research occurred in my classroom, during four grade-level, non-honors English 11 classes. Two of the classes met in the morning, and two met in the afternoon. There were between 25 and 31 students enrolled in each class, which is above the district average of 23 students per class (MI School Data). The seating arrangements for students consisted of 5 pods of 5 desks and 1 pod of 6 desks; the purpose of this arrangement was to help facilitate interactions between students and foster positive peer relationships, and for ease of moving through the room. I taught from many places around the room rather than remaining at the front; the purpose of this practice was to facilitate interaction between myself and all students. The decor in the classroom was rather eclectic and consisted of samples of student work from the last 15 years, some of which is very high-quality artwork; prints by a modern surrealist; encouraging quotations; family pictures;

bookshelves with high-interest reading material; and a white holiday tree, dubbed the Seasonal Shrub, that has special decorations for every month. The purpose for such decor was to appeal to a wide variety of interests and preferences while cultivating a home-like atmosphere. Additionally, the overhead lighting was adjustable and there were purple holiday lights around the whiteboard at the rear of the room. Supplies such as pencils, paper, tissues, hand sanitizer, and lotion were available at the front and rear of the room, where students could access them freely and without asking for permission; this was important because it eliminated potential embarrassment if students' supplies were forgotten or were not affordable. Many students, staff members, parents, and community members reported that the room was aesthetically pleasing and had "good vibes."

Methods

I sought to compare the effects of teacher-created curriculum and collaboratively planned curriculum on student engagement and achievement. To do this, I taught a dystopian learning unit that I planned using textbook resources and a novel. *Animal Farm* (Orwell, 1945) was the primary text for the unit. I also included the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution as prescribed by the Common Core State Standards (CCSSs); Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s (1963) "I Have a Dream" speech; "Harrison Bergeron" (Vonnegut, 1961); and clips of *The Hunger Games* (Ross, 2012). During this unit, I met with parents to select resources for the shared planning unit. We decided on a theme of Power, Protest, and Change, which we planned to examine across time. The shared planning unit centered on *Dear Martin* (Stone, 2017), a novel about a college-bound, 17-year-old African American boy who faces injustice and discrimination

despite his academic achievements. Power dynamics and protest play a role in *Dear Martin*. We paired each section of *Dear Martin* with music from past decades that speaks to the theme: “What’s Going’ On?” (Gaye, 1971), “Fight the Power” (Public Enemy, 1990), and “Change” (Shakur, 1994). We also selected poetry including “Harlem” (Hughes, 1951) and “The Hill We Climb” (Gorman, 2021), excerpts from Person and Rooker’s (2021) memoir of the 1961 Freedom Rides titled *Buses Are a-Comin’*, and Congressman Lewis’s (2014) commencement speech to Emory University titled “You Must Find a Way to Get Into Good Trouble.” Student engagement and achievement data were collected during each unit and compared.

I utilized a mixed-method design in this study, wherein I collected and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data. Sources of quantitative data were survey items such as multiple choice, check all that apply, and Likert-scale questions, which allowed me to gather information about students’ engagement; and students’ grades over a period of 8-10 weeks. Sources of qualitative data included open-ended survey questions, which allowed me to gather personal contexts and stories behind the survey data pertaining to student engagement; transcriptions of focus group conversations; and artifacts that were produced by the focus groups and students in class.

Recruitment Process

After receiving approval for this research from a university internal review board (IRB), I recruited student participants. I used my school district’s mass messaging systems to contact parents about the opportunity to participate in shared curriculum planning and their children’s participation in the study insofar as collecting data about

their engagement, utilizing their academic data, and participation in surveys and focus groups. I attached the consent forms for parents' convenience. I also sent letters and consent forms home with students to give to their parents and made telephone calls to parents for whom email addresses were unavailable. Once parents gave their consent for their children to participate in the study, I obtained students' consent to collect engagement data, utilize their academic data, and participate in surveys and focus groups. Students and parents were permitted to refuse participation in any and all parts of the study.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of students who are enrolled in my English 11 classes. 105 students were included in the data. These students were eleventh graders, between the ages of 16 and 18. Other demographics are described above.

Measuring Student Engagement

I measured students' behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and agentic engagement in several ways. First, I asked students to self-report their engagement during the teacher-created unit and shared-planning unit using a survey (Fredricks, 2022). Second, I recorded my observations of students' engagement during each unit. It is important to have both self-reported and teacher-observed data because some forms of engagement are outwardly observable while others present themselves more subtly (Fredricks, 2022). For example, behavioral engagement is the most easily observable component of student engagement (Fredricks, 2022; Gladstone et al., 2022) and is typically measured through observance of on-task behaviors, such as assignment completion, interactions with peers

and teachers that are related to class activities, and asking questions during class or otherwise contributing to discussions (Albataineh et al., 2024; Chrisman, 2025; Fredricks, 2022). Emotional engagement is typically measured through observations of students' body language and speech as well as through surveys (Chrisman, 2025; Grazia & Molinari, 2023), while cognitive engagement is typically measured through teacher observations or students' self-reporting, though it can also be measured through more objective means, such as eye tracking or physiological sensors (Li, 2021; Pietarinen et al., 2014). Agentic engagement can be observed through students' personal connections to class materials, questions asked, and suggestions for future learning (Grazia & Molinari, 2023). Third, I conducted one interview and one focus group to gain more insights into students' engagement during each unit. An interview was conducted with the student whose parent took part in the study, and one focus group was conducted with English 11 students whose parents did not take part in the study.

Survey

Students were asked to complete a survey twice during this study. They were first asked to complete the survey at the conclusion of the teacher-planned unit, prior to learning from the shared-planning unit. They were asked to complete the same survey at the end of the shared-planning unit (see Appendix C). The parts of the survey that changed were the directions and the open-ended questions. Students were directed to focus on their learning in English class in December and early January during the first administration of the survey, and to focus on their learning in late January and February during the second administration of the survey. The wording of the open-ended questions

was adapted on the second administration of the survey to focus students on their learning during the shared planning unit (Fredricks, 2022). The survey was administered using Qualtrics, and students accessed it via a link posted in Google Classroom. Out of the 105 student participants, 69 completed the initial survey, while 51 completed the final survey. The survey administered to student participants opened with an informed consent page using IRB-approved language, followed by instructions and a short section which collected such demographic information as age, gender, and ethnicity. The majority of the survey was adapted from Lam et al.'s (2014) scale for measuring students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive engagement, and from Reeve's (2013) Agentic Engagement Scale (AES) (see Appendix C). Both scales included Likert-scale items in which one is the lowest level of agreement and five is the highest. Lam et al.'s (2014) international study included 3,420 junior-level secondary students from 12 countries, including the United States. The reliability of Lam et al.'s (2014) engagement scale was assessed through internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Construct validity was examined using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test whether the data fit within the theoretically proposed model which was based on the three-factor (behavioral, emotional, cognitive) model of student engagement (Lam et al., 2014). Of the three models that were tested, the second-order model was preferred because it specified behavioral engagement, emotional engagement, and cognitive engagement as first-order factors and overall student engagement as a second-order factor, or metaconstruct (Lam et al., 2014). Reeve's (2013) revised agentic engagement scale was assessed for reliability and validity over the course of three studies; in all three studies, the AES was found to have

acceptable levels of internal consistency. Additionally, CFA was performed to ensure that the items in the AES were distinct from items measuring behavioral, emotional, or cognitive aspects of engagement (Reeve, 2013). The items on the survey were adapted to help students focus on their learning in English 11 rather than in school in general (Fredricks, 2022). For example, an item which was originally worded “I am very interested in learning” (Lam et al., 2014, p. 231) was adapted to read “I am very interested in learning in English class.” The final section of the survey included open-ended questions which I created (Fowler, 2013). Open-ended questions were used to gain information without leading the students (Fowler, 2013). The survey consisted of 46 items in total - four demographic items, 36 Likert scale items, and six open-ended questions - to maintain students’ attention and maximize accuracy of results (Grazia & Molinari, 2023).

Teacher Observations

I recorded my observations of student engagement during each class period of English 11. I noted such information as the time of day, number of participating students present, and a short summary of the lesson or activity. Collecting such information is important because these factors can affect students’ engagement. For example, students may be sleepier in the early morning and late afternoon, which could lead to lower levels of engagement. I tallied the number of times I observed each type of engagement and took notes to provide additional context. I also recorded off-task behaviors, such as use of personal electronic devices, putting heads down, and off-topic conversations during the lesson (Albert et al., 2023; Garcia-Santillan & Espinosa-Ramos, 2021). I checked for and

tallied device use and putting heads down every 5 minutes and recorded off-topic conversations as they occurred. Please see Appendix C for the recording sheet.

To qualify and quantify the four types of engagement, I watched and listened for indicators. For behavioral engagement, I watched for actions taken by students, such as reading along silently, reading aloud, raising hands to respond, and working on class assignments (Lee et al., 2021; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004; Wigfield et al., 2008). For emotional engagement, I monitored for indicators that the students are emotionally invested in class curriculum or activities. These indicators include facial expressions, body language, statements that include feeling words (e. g., “I’m glad the animals ran Mr. Jones off the farm”) or blatant expressions of emotion via tone of voice, inferences about literary characters’ feelings, statements or written responses that connect class content to students’ lives, and positive interactions with peers surrounding class activities (Ivey & Johnston, 2015; Lee et al., 2021; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). For cognitive engagement, I looked for evidence of students’ use of learning strategies, such as verbalizing thought processes, annotating texts, taking unmandated notes, utilizing resources, and making connections between course content and the real world (Baye, 2018; Ivey & Johnston, 2015; Stark et al., 2024; Wigfield et al., 2008). For agentic engagement, I watched and listened for students’ expressions of their personal interests, suggestions about future materials or activities, communication of learning needs, self-assessment of coursework prior to teacher feedback, and any ways that students drive discussion, such as questions or comments that take the lesson in a different direction (Reeve, 2013; Reeve & Jang, 2022; Zenouzagh et al., 2025).

Interview and Focus Group

One interview and one focus group were conducted with students after the completion of the shared planning unit. These meetings occurred after school and lasted approximately 25 minutes; student participation was voluntary (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The interview took place with a student whose parent was involved in the development of the curricular unit. I asked this student about their learning in my class during the teacher-planned unit and during the shared planning unit, and about their engagement during each unit. I also asked the student how their parent's involvement in curriculum planning affected their learning. The focus group consisted of six English 11 students whose parents were not involved in curriculum planning. I asked this group about their feelings about and engagement in their learning in English 11 prior to, during, and after the shared planning unit. I also asked this group how they think their learning might have been different if their families had been involved in curriculum planning. Questions for the interview and focus group appear in Appendix C.

Academic Data

To examine the relationship between student engagement and academic gains, I examined students' grades. I examined trends in students' grades in English 11, noting the pass/fail rates and grade distribution per class period and in aggregate, during the teacher-planned unit and shared planning unit in order to compare student achievement between the two units. These reports were generated by Skyward, the student management system, and checked by hand. These data were later correlated with student

engagement data to examine potential connections between students' engagement levels and academic achievement.

CHAPTER FIVE

Augmenting Student Engagement Through Shared Curriculum Planning- Continued

Findings

In this section, I report students' engagement during a teacher-planned unit and during a shared planning unit each within a time frame of just under one month. Six data points consist of (1) the initial survey wherein students reported their engagement during the teacher-planned unit, (2) the final survey wherein students reported their engagement during the shared planning unit, (3) teacher observations of student engagement during each unit, (4) a student interview, (5) a student focus group and (6) students' academic grades at the end of each unit.

Engagement During Teacher-Planned Unit

Initial Survey

Sixty-nine students reported their initial levels of engagement at the end of the teacher-planned unit. I examined the data in aggregate and by class period. Table Four displays the students' initial self-assessment data from the Likert-scale survey items (See Appendix D).

Class periods at the school in this study are segmented and referred to as hours. In first hour, fourth hour, and fifth hour, for example, students reported higher emotional engagement. Students in third hour and fifth hour reported higher levels of agentic engagement. Behavioral engagement was lower for students in third hour and fourth hour, while agentic engagement was lower for students in first hour. Students in fifth hour reported the lowest levels of cognitive engagement, which were 23.2 percent lower

than the overall average for cognitive engagement. The strongest metric across class periods is emotional engagement, which stays between 3.92 and 4.19. Examining these data according to students' cultures and genders did not reveal differences in engagement trends.

On the constructed response items, students reported their likes and dislikes about ELA; commented on the classroom environment; reported their personal electronic device use relative to other classes; and explained whether they can relate to course content, such as characters and situations presented in texts. Many students chose not to respond to these items. When asked about their favorite part of ELA, 19 students responded that they enjoyed *Animal Farm* and learning about related topics such as the Russian Revolution. Three students mentioned that they enjoyed learning about *The Hunger Games* as part of the dystopian unit. Six students referenced learning about rhetorical analysis and commented on its usefulness beyond the ELA classroom. Seven students reported that they would prefer to do more projects; two students would prefer more "intense" books with "more drama;" one student would prefer to do more writing; and one student would like to learn more higher-level vocabulary. Further, one student stated that it was "cool that [the teacher] mixed small history lessons" with the novels and classwork.

When asked about the classroom environment, 20 students reported that its effect on their learning was positive. They described the room as "calm," "warm and comfortable," and "peaceful." Two students commented on the colors and scents in the classroom, while three students stated that the decor made them feel "at home." One

student discussed the classroom climate, noting that “everyone is nice and helps each other” and stated that they were comfortable because “the teacher and my classmates are funny and can make jokes out of anything (in a good way).”

Additionally, students commented on their electronic device use in ELA relative to other classes. Of the 32 students who responded to this item, 18 reported using their phones less in ELA than in other classes, 13 students reported using their phones the same amount in ELA as in other classes, and one student reported using their phone more in ELA than in other classes. When asked whether they could relate to stories, characters, and topics in ELA, 14 students stated that they can connect; however, only three students mentioned specific information, such as the name of a character with whom they connected. Eleven students reported that they could not connect with ELA content.

Teacher Observations

I observed students’ engagement during the teacher-planned unit for just under one month and collected data by class period. I used emergent coding when analyzing my observation notes (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The predominant codes for behavioral engagement were reading, aloud or silently; asking and answering questions; completing classwork; and participation in class discussion. The predominant codes for emotional engagement were facial expressions; verbal reactions; laughter; and positive peer interactions. The predominant codes for cognitive engagement were connection to other texts or content; connection to real world; making predictions and inferences; and using evidence. The predominant codes for agentic engagement were student-proposed topics, which were unrelated to course content; and student questions drove discussion, in which

student's questions about course content took the discussion in a different direction than I had planned. I also observed modifiers of engagement; the most prevalent modifiers were use of personal electronic devices, heads down or sleeping, and off-topic conversations during the lesson. Table Five displays these data as weekly totals for each type of engagement and modifier (see Appendix D).

I examined the observational data in aggregate and by class period. To determine the degree to which students were engaged overall, I combined the total observations for all four types of engagement. I divided this figure by the total of all observations of engagement and modifiers. This revealed that students were engaged 57.5 percent of the time. Behavioral engagement accounted for 30 percent of total observations; emotional engagement for 14.2 percent of total observations; cognitive engagement for eight percent of total observations, and agentic engagement for 5.3 percent of total observations.

While recording observations, I noted that cognitive engagement appeared to be driving agentic engagement. To test this, I used linear regression. The linear regression showed a statistically significant, positive correlation between cognitive engagement and agentic engagement ($p = 0.001$), indicating that when students are cognitively invested in the lesson, they are more likely to assume an agentic role and drive the lesson. Additionally, linear regression revealed that emotional engagement is a positive predictor for the other three forms of engagement; however, the strength and significance of the correlations vary. Emotional engagement most strongly predicts cognitive engagement ($p = 0.022$), which is statistically significant. There is a moderately positive relationship

between emotional engagement and behavioral engagement ($p = 0.058$), which is just outside the bounds of statistical significance. There is also a moderately positive relationship between emotional engagement and agentic engagement ($p = 0.065$), which is not statistically significant.

Linear regression within class periods revealed other relationships among the types of engagement. In first hour, there was a negative correlation between emotional engagement and cognitive engagement ($r = -0.55$), which suggests that emotional engagement might be social in nature rather than academic. In third hour, there was a near-perfect relationship between emotional engagement and agentic engagement ($r = 0.99$), which suggests that students are more likely to drive the lesson when they are emotionally invested in the content. In fourth hour, emotional engagement correlated almost perfectly with cognitive engagement ($r = 0.99$) and agentic engagement ($r = 0.95$), which suggests that as students' emotional connection to course content increased, so did the depth of their thinking and their agency to drive the lesson. In fifth hour, emotional engagement was most closely correlated with behavioral engagement ($r = 0.88$) and cognitive engagement ($r = 0.86$), which suggests that students are more likely to stay on-task and engage in deeper thinking when they are emotionally invested in the topic.

For modifiers of student engagement, the use of personal electronic devices was most prevalent and head down or sleeping was least prevalent. Use of personal electronic devices was lowest at the beginning of data collection and rose steadily throughout. Linear regression of total modifiers and total engagement reveals a negative correlation

between personal electronic device use and engagement ($r = -0.29$), which suggests that phone use erodes engagement.

Academic Data

I examined students' grades at the end of the teacher-planned unit. During this unit, 93.3 percent of students had a passing grade of sixty percent or higher. Of these students, 66.3 percent had grades of 80 percent or higher. Breaking down the data according to students' cultures and genders did not reveal differences in achievement trends. Table Six displays the breakdown of grades (see Appendix D).

Engagement During Shared Planning Unit

Final Survey

Fifty-one students reported their final levels of engagement at the end of the shared-planning unit. I examined the data in aggregate and by class period. Table Seven displays the students' final self-assessment data from the Likert-scale survey items (see Appendix D). The strongest metric across class periods was emotional engagement, which stayed between 4.09 and 4.38. Students in first hour reported the highest levels of behavioral engagement and agentic engagement, while students in fourth hour reported the highest levels of emotional engagement. Students in third hour reported the lowest levels of emotional engagement and cognitive engagement, while students in fifth hour reported the lowest levels of behavioral engagement and agentic engagement. Examining these data according to students' cultures and genders did not reveal differences in engagement trends.

On the constructed-response items, students reported their feelings about what they have learned in ELA, their use of personal electronic devices in ELA relative to other classes, and whether they can connect with characters, situations, and topics included in the curriculum. Many students chose not to respond to these questions. When asked about their favorite thing that they learned in ELA this year, eight students reported that they most enjoyed reading *Animal Farm*; 15 students reported that they most enjoyed reading *Dear Martin*; two students reported that they most enjoyed film clips of *The Hunger Games*; five students reported that they most enjoyed doing projects; and one student reported that they most enjoyed rhetorical analysis. Additionally, one student responded that their favorite thing about ELA is the conversations that take place in class because they “learn a lot from them.” Another student commented that they particularly like how “[the teacher] will help [students] privately or openly, so that others who might have the same question can learn, too.” Students also shared insights about their preferences when responding to this item. For example, students who enjoyed *Dear Martin* described it as “more entertaining and realistic” than other texts included in the ELA curriculum this year, while others commented on the “diversity of the book and the environment” and appreciated that “we got to learn about Black people and our past.”

When asked about personal electronic device use in ELA relative to other classes, 17 students reported using their device less in ELA, while 12 students reported using their device about the same amount in ELA as in other classes; no students reported using their device more in ELA than in other classes. Four students who reported using their devices less in ELA commented that they used their devices less during the shared

planning unit because they were more interested in the content than they were in the content during the teacher-planned unit. When asked whether they can connect with characters, situations, or topics in ELA, five students responded that they connected with *Animal Farm*, two of whom mentioned a character by name; 17 students responded that they can connect with *Dear Martin*, and seven students stated that they could not connect with the content. Students who connected with *Dear Martin* explained that they identify with the main character because they are similar in age to him or have experienced similar situations in their own lives. Several students commented that *Dear Martin* mirrors “real-world biases,” while others mentioned that they appreciate how *Dear Martin* connects with other texts, television shows, and songs that they are interested in.

Teacher Observations

I observed students’ engagement during the shared planning unit for just under one month and collected data by class period. I used emergent coding when analyzing my observation notes (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The predominant codes for behavioral engagement remained the same as during the teacher-planned unit with the addition of redirecting peers, in which students redirected their peers’ off-task behaviors. The predominant codes for emotional engagement also remained the same as during the teacher-planned unit, with the addition of emphatic reading, which refers to students reading with passion. The predominant codes for cognitive engagement and agentic engagement remained the same as in the teacher-planned unit. I also recorded observations of the same modifiers as during the teacher-planned unit. Table Eight

displays these data as weekly totals for each type of engagement and modifier (see Appendix D).

While recording observations about behavioral engagement, I noted several differences from my observations during the teacher-planned unit. First, I noted that students in all hours volunteered to read aloud with greater frequency. During the teacher-planned unit, only students in fourth hour volunteered to read aloud, whereas during the shared planning unit, many students in each class period volunteered to read aloud. Additionally, I noted that in third hour, two students who receive special education services for disabilities in reading volunteered to read aloud every day. Further, I noticed a correlation between students reading aloud and students redirecting their peers. For example, when students talked out of turn during the lesson, the student reader paused and addressed them, which almost always resulted in a successful redirection.

While recording observations about emotional engagement, I noticed a greater number of verbal reactions than during the teacher-planned unit. For purposes of this research, a verbal reaction is an audible vocalization that occurs as a reaction to a story, discussion, or other occurrence in the classroom. Examples of verbal reactions are utterances such as “dang!” “wow!” or “that’s not fair.” While reading *Dear Martin*, students committed verbal reactions more frequently than during texts previously read.

I also noticed changes in students’ cognitive and agentic engagement. Students made connections between *Dear Martin* and themselves, other texts, and the real world to a greater degree than they did while reading *Animal Farm*. They linked situations presented in the text to well-documented events in our world and extended their thinking

through discussing hypothetical situations. For example, *Dear Martin* opens with an encounter between the main character and a police officer and alludes to other such encounters as the narrative develops. The students in third hour discussed these encounters, and the discussion evolved into a debate over lethal versus nonlethal force, and when each type of force would be appropriate. The students thought out various situations and supported their opinions with evidence from the text or from their own experiences. They eventually asked me what I thought, and my response turned into an impromptu lesson in self-defense. The discussion continued beyond my classroom: in the cafeteria, where my students engaged their friends in other grades in their debate; in the hallway, where my students solicited opinions about the use of force from multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) staff; and in the school resource officer's (SRO's) office, where my students asked questions about the use of nonlethal devices such as tasers, protocols in an officer-involved shooting, and the functionality of body cameras. All of this happened because students connected with the text in various ways.

Quantitative analysis of the observational data collected during the shared planning unit revealed connections between the four types of engagement that are similar to those uncovered during the teacher-planned unit. Linear regression demonstrated a strong positive correlation between emotional engagement and cognitive engagement ($r = 0.98$), which indicates that cognitive engagement rises with emotional engagement. There are also moderate positive correlations between emotional engagement and behavioral engagement ($r = 0.35$), and between emotional engagement and agentic engagement ($r = 0.49$). Additionally, the connection between behavioral engagement and agentic

engagement strengthened during the shared planning unit, increasing from $r = 0.24$ to $r = 0.66$. Further, the correlation between cognitive engagement and agentic engagement increased from $r = 0.84$ to $r = 0.96$.

Finally, the breakdown of total observations changed during the shared planning unit. Cognitive engagement rose from eight percent of total observations to 12.5 percent, while emotional engagement rose from 14.2 percent of total observations to 22.5 percent. Agentic engagement rose from 5.3 percent of total observations to 6.1 percent. Behavioral engagement held steady at 30 percent of total observations. Overall engagement increased from 57.5 percent to 71.7 percent of total observations, while disengagement dropped from 42.5 percent of total observations to 28.3 percent. Use of personal electronic devices decreased by 60 percent (from 4,181 to 1,658 instances); off-topic conversations decreased by 65.3 percent (from 2,139 to 742 instances); and sleeping decreased by 15.4 percent (from 538 to 455 instances).

Interview and Focus Group

I conducted an interview with one student whose parent was involved in shared planning. When asked about her learning during the teacher-planned unit, she reported that it was hard to pay attention to *Animal Farm* because there was not much action in the book. While she did not enjoy *Animal Farm*, she liked the culminating project for the unit because she had a choice in how to demonstrate her learning. When asked about the shared planning unit, she responded that she likes *Dear Martin* because “it’s about Black people” and “it’s real.” She connected with the main character because she could see herself in him: This student and the protagonist are African American teens from single-

parent families on the brink of adulthood, trying to figure out where they fit in the world. When asked about how her parent's involvement in shared planning affected her learning, the student responded that it did not. She elaborated that she does not discuss her learning with her parent, even when she is interested in the content. We closed the interview by discussing what the student would like to learn more about in ELA. She shared that she wants to do more reflective writing at the end of chapters, and to learn more about history because she does not have a history class.

Additionally, I conducted a focus group with six students whose parents were not involved in shared planning. Five of the students were African American while one student was European American. Three students identified as male and three students identified as female. Two of these students received special education services. When asked about the teacher-planned unit, some students responded that they liked *Animal Farm* because the characters stood for "real people" who lived during the Russian Revolution. Other students shared that, while the message conveyed by *Animal Farm* was worthwhile, the story and assignments were boring. One student shared that he "did not feel like [he] was involved" in *Animal Farm*. One student shared that he enjoyed "Harrison Bergeron" because the story focused on a "teen with problems" and explored the concept of "forced disabilities" to create equality in society. One student also mentioned that they enjoyed the film clips from *The Hunger Games* because they depicted "real people with real emotions" and that she felt that she could relate to the characters because they were kids.

When asked about the shared planning unit, students smiled before responding. The students shared that they feel connected to *Dear Martin* because “it’s about society” and shows “how people of [our] race and color live today.” The students also shared that they appreciate that *Dear Martin* focuses on “regular people” rather than wealthy, powerful, or inhuman characters. Some students shared how specific characters mirror aspects of society. For example, one student explained that Melo, the protagonist’s occasional love interest, demonstrates the realities of teenage substance abuse and lack of self-respect. Another student described how the relationship between Manny and the rest of his peer group illustrates how friends can influence each other in positive and negative ways. I noted that conversation between students flowed naturally when they discussed *Dear Martin*.

The students also compared their learning during the teacher-planned unit and the shared planning unit. The students unanimously declared that they feel that they learned more from the shared planning unit. They stated that *Dear Martin* is relevant to their generation and appreciated that multiple perspectives are included in the text. One student explained that different people could learn different things from *Dear Martin* depending on their background and experiences. He offered himself as an example, stating that he could not connect with all situations in *Dear Martin* because he is Caucasian, but that he could certainly relate to being a teenager and being misunderstood by adults. Another student commented that *Dear Martin* allows readers to explore different types of relationships and joked that the “toxic relationship” between the protagonist and his love interest is relatable. The students also commented on my

pedagogy, stating that they like how I am teaching *Dear Martin* and that they appreciate how I talk about the book and its real-world connections with them. The students also commented that they were much more willing to read aloud in class while working on *Dear Martin*. We closed our conversation with students sharing what they would like to learn about in ELA. They stated that they would like to learn more about their past; about equity and how it can look in the real world; language structures; and the “how” and “why” of modern society.

Academic Data

I examined students’ grades at the end of the shared planning unit. During this unit, 81.9 percent of students had passing grades of sixty percent or higher. This is an 11.4 percent decrease compared to the passing rate during the teacher-planned unit. Additionally, the percentage of students with grades of eighty percent or higher was 60.9 percent during the shared planning unit, which is a decrease of one percent from the teacher-planned unit. These data are displayed in Table Nine (see Appendix D).

Discussion

Engagement

As the data indicates, students reported higher levels of all four types of engagement during the shared planning unit as compared to during the teacher-planned unit. Further, I also observed a higher proportion of engagement during the shared planning unit. This is important because higher levels of engagement more typically result in gains in one’s knowledge and skills (e. g., Burns et al., 2022; Chrisman, 2025; Wigfield et al., 2008). While the academic data does not reflect these gains, it is not

without merit in aligning engagement with academic growth. For example, more students scored in the A range (90-100 percent) during the shared planning unit as compared to during the teacher-planned unit. Additionally, further interrogation of the data for students with grades below 60 percent revealed that seven of the 19 students were absent for one week or more due to illness or discipline; therefore, disengagement with the shared planning curriculum is not solely responsible for the higher percentage of students with failing grades.

The shared planning unit centered young voices of color and situations that are relevant to the modern world instead of centering abstract concepts such as communism or dystopia, for example. According to my observations and student feedback, the students were better able to connect to the curriculum during the shared planning unit because the alterations in the curriculum made it more relevant to the students and their life experiences. These personal connections are an important part of emotional engagement because they facilitate deeper interactions between the students and the text (e. g., Archambault et al., 2022; Galindo et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2021). In other words, the shared planning unit altered one of the students' microsystems (school), which elicited a different response from the students who then interacted with that microsystem in new and engaging ways. This represents a proximal process and is important because more complex and frequent interactions between students and the text results in higher levels of emotional engagement.

Augmentations in emotional engagement were important because they drove increases in all other forms of engagement. The increasing complexity of interactions

mentioned above led to deeper thinking about the texts, which raised the quality of students' thinking and discussions, indicating improvement in students' cognitive engagement. Class discussions are another form of proximal process because students are interacting with two of their microsystems, school and peers, in increasingly complex ways (e. g., Gregg et al., 2024; Tong & An, 2024). For example, students progressed from asking "why" and "how" questions within a single context to discussing hypothetical scenarios in the contexts of the text, our school, and the real world. The students also began using evidence to support their responses. These shifts demonstrate growth in students' cognitive engagement, particularly in fifth hour, in which students reported an 18 percent increase in cognitive engagement in the shared planning unit over the teacher-planned unit. This is important because higher levels of cognitive engagement most typically lead to advances in knowledge and skills (e. g., Chrisman, 2025; Pflaum & Bishop, 2004). These advances in emotional and cognitive engagement fueled the growth of agentic engagement. During lessons, agentic engagement frequently stemmed from connections that students made between the text and the real world, which led to new, extemporaneous topics of discussion. Students' emotional investment in the text also bolstered agentic engagement. For example, the students in first hour became enthralled with the love triangle in *Dear Martin*, which prompted them to ask questions about relationships; these questions drove class discussion for the next several minutes. This is important because emotional engagement provided students with an avenue to exercise agency within the classroom and to explore topics that interest them. Finally, behavioral engagement was positively affected by emotional engagement because when students

were emotionally invested in the lesson, they more frequently volunteered to read aloud; followed along with the text; and contributed to discussion.

The increases in cognitive and agentic engagement can be explained in another way. In centering young voices of color during the shared planning unit, I activated students' funds of knowledge. My students are young people of color, and they have experienced situations that are similar to those portrayed in *Dear Martin*; therefore, their stores of real-world knowledge could be applied to authentic text (e. g., Castillo et al., 2023; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014; Moll et al., 1994). Activating these funds of knowledge allowed students to describe, narrate, and react to their experiences as readers and citizens of the world, which in turn allowed them to interpret and interact with the text in personalized ways (e. g., Castillo et al., 2023; Hutchinson, 2015; Rosenblatt, 1988). For example, the students interacted with the text on personal levels during the discussion of lethal versus non-lethal force, using their funds of knowledge as lenses through which to articulate their positions and respond to others. In short, the students demonstrated their cognitive engagement through their funds of knowledge and transactions with the text.

Teaching Implications

This research has several implications for teachers who seek to augment their students' engagement through shared planning. First, students' ability to connect to the curriculum affects their emotional engagement (Galindo et al., 2022); therefore, it affects all forms of engagement (Lee et al., 2021). Shared planning helps teachers gain insight into their students' interests and identities, which will help them to engage students on an

emotional level and overall (Bennett et al., 2023; Castillo et al., 2023). Further, shared planning functions to minimize disconnects between students and curriculum by leveraging funds of knowledge (Camara, 2023). Doing this functions like built-in scaffolding because students are able to connect new knowledge to prior knowledge more readily (Gluckman, 2022; Moll et al., 1992). For example, I found that I did not need to use as much scaffolding during the shared planning unit because students made connections for themselves, using their funds of knowledge as the basis for their new knowledge and skills.

Additionally, the shared planning curriculum resulted in more high-quality discussions and scholarly interactions between students. For example, students made more connections between the text, themselves, and the real world, which made our class discussions more fruitful. In fourth hour, in particular, the students had a penchant for building upon each other's ideas to construct conversations that eclipsed those that took place in other classes. Students also had fewer off-topic conversations during lessons because they were too busy discussing the text and ideas related to it. This is evidence of increases in all types of engagement because students used their agencies to conduct cognitive conversations with their peers. Further, and importantly, these higher levels of engagement and productive student interactions led to a 60 percent decrease in the use of personal electronic devices. This should matter to teachers because personal electronic devices account for a significant portion of disengaged behaviors (Garcia-Santillan & Espinosa-Ramos, 2021; McCoy, 2013; Mupinga, 2017).

Another consequential outcome of shared planning was that learning extended beyond the classroom as students engaged in dialogue on relevant topics with members of the school community outside of my classroom. The students' heightened engagement was contagious as their conversations continued into the cafeteria with their peers; into the hallways with MTSS staff; and into the SRO's office. In engaging with other peers and school staff, the students gained access to many funds of knowledge beyond their own. This is important because students built connections with knowledgeable others outside the classroom and expanded their own funds of knowledge. Relatedly, my own funds of knowledge were activated in surprising ways when, for example, the class discussed the use of lethal versus nonlethal force. This is important because I related to the students in new ways and discovered shared funds of knowledge between myself and my students.

Finally, the classroom environment was an important positive modifier of student engagement (Castillo et al., 2023; DeNiccolo et al., 2015). Included in the classroom environment is the concept of classroom climate, which refers to the general atmosphere in the classroom and includes interactions between teachers and students, and between students and their peers. Students reported that they felt safe, calm, and comfortable in my classroom, which enabled them to learn without unnecessary pressure. They also commented on the quality of interactions with me and with their peers. This was important because students had a sense of belonging within the classroom, which fostered emotional engagement, which in turn bolstered all other types of engagement (Griffiths et al., 2022; Knifsend et al., 2022).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study was limited in several ways. First, I was both the researcher and the teacher of the classes in which the research occurred. It was difficult to record information while delivering content and managing student activities. Additionally, this study did not examine the effects of shared curriculum planning on standardized assessments; therefore, it does not fully explore its effects on academic achievement. Finally, the study design was rather broad and did not allow for tracking engagement of individual students.

There are several avenues for future research on shared curriculum planning. To achieve greater parent participation in shared planning, the study could commence at the beginning of the school year rather than in the winter. The winter months are often busy for parents because students have sports and other activities. Also, people often become ill during the winter, which makes it difficult to attend meetings. Further, researchers could partner with volunteer organizations such as the National Honor Society (NHS) to provide babysitting for young children so that parents could attend the meetings. Parents could also be provided with more ways to participate, such as via Zoom or through questionnaires, which would allow them to share their ideas without being physically present.

Additionally, this study could be repeated with a team of researchers rather than a single researcher. Multiple researchers could watch for indicators of engagement more thoroughly than a single researcher. Researchers could even specialize in observing and recording specific types of engagement rather than coding for all four types. Multiple

researchers would also allow for better information to be gathered about modifiers to engagement, such as electronic device use. For example, a researcher whose sole task is to observe and record electronic device use could examine the frequency with which students access devices during the lesson rather than just the total number of times that device access occurred. Another option is to video record the classes and analyze the videos to record student engagement rather than doing so in real time. Further, future studies could examine the effects of shared curriculum planning on standardized test scores, such as the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). For example, students' fall PSAT scores could be collected prior to shared curriculum planning and compared to their spring PSAT or SAT scores, which would be collected after teaching the content created during shared curriculum planning. Doing this would be particularly powerful because it would demonstrate the impact of shared curriculum planning on measures of student achievement utilized to determine school quality and teacher effectiveness. Finally, altering this study's design to track engagement for individual students could yield more specific information about how students engage. For example, a future study could track engagement trends for students who receive special education services; specific gender or cultural groups; or ability groups. This approach would allow researchers to gather information about how best to engage these students.

Conclusion

This study explored the effects of shared curriculum planning on student engagement and academic achievement.

t. While this study does not support the notion that shared planning improves students' academic achievement, it strongly supports shared planning for student engagement. Students self-reported higher levels of all four types of engagement during the shared planning unit compared to during the teacher-planned unit. Additionally, there was a significant decrease in off-task behaviors during the shared planning unit, which includes a 60 percent decrease in the use of personal electronic devices. Further, emotional engagement positively affects the other three forms of engagement, and positive cognitive engagement facilitates greater agentic engagement.

APPENDIX A

Chapter Two Tables and Figures

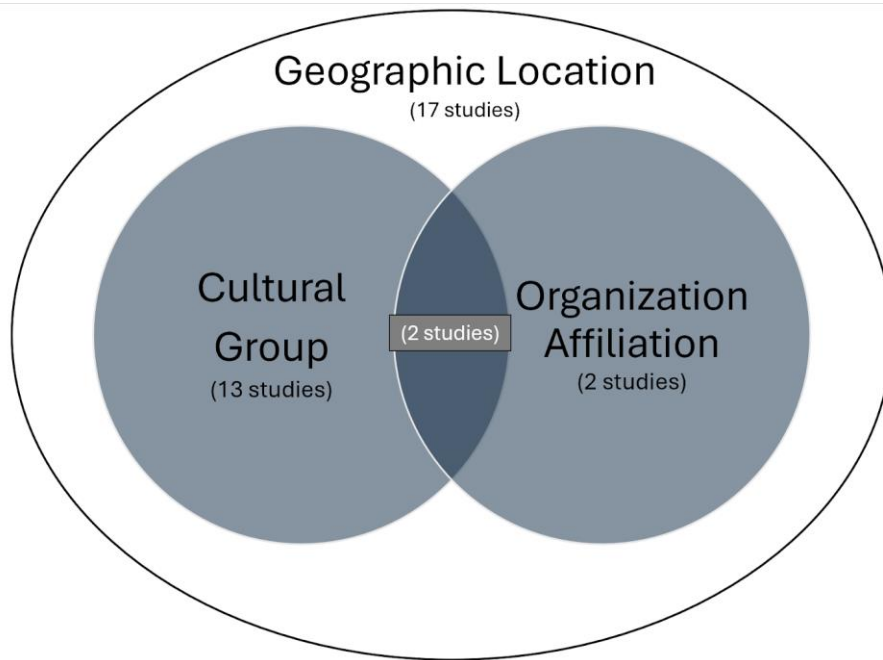
Table One: List of Studies and Their Foci

Study	Elementary (Grades K-5)	Secondary (Grades 6-12)	ELA	STEM	Social Studies	Unspecified
Achinstein et al. (2019)		X				X
Ako-Asare (2015)		X		X		
Budhai & Grant (2023)	X	X				X
Cuevas (2016)		X	X			
DeNiccolo et al. (2015)	X		X			
Esteban- Guitart & Moll (2014)	X	X				X
Habig et al. (2021)	X	X		X		
Housel (2020)	X	X				X
Jayakumar et al. (2013)		X				X
Liu et al. (2023)	X	X				X
Martin- Beltran et al. (2018)		X	X			
Moll et al. (1992)	X			X	X	

Table One — Continued

Rawls et al. (2023)	X	X	X	X
Rios- Aguilar (2010)	X	X		X
Rocha et al. (2024)		X	X	
Rodriguez (2016)	X	X		X
Venegas & Scott (2023)		X	X	X

Figure One: Overlapping Definitions of Community



APPENDIX B

Chapter Three Tables and Figures

Table Two: Focus Group Questions

Question
1. What do you consider to be the most important element of yourself?
2. Describe a favorite book, poem, informational article, or short story that you have read in English class during the last 5 years. If you do not have a favorite, please explain why.
3. Do you feel the books, short stories, poems, and articles used in your current English classes include characters/people with whom you can identify? If so, please give an example. If not, please explain why.
4. How do you feel about the English curriculum which you are currently studying?
5. Do you feel that your current English curriculum includes authors like yourself?
6. How would you describe your level of engagement in your English class? Why do you think this is?
7. How do you feel about the relevance of your learning in English class? In other words, how do you think you'll use this learning in the real world?
8. What changes would you like to see in your English classes?

Table Three: Curriculum and Student Demographic Comparison

Category	Author Demographics (%)	Student Demographic (%)
Gender: Female	38	50
Gender: Male	62	50
Race: African American	18	74
Race: Caucasian	78	11
Race: Latinx	4	11
Race: Multiracial	0	4

APPENDIX C

Chapter Four Tables and Figures

Figure Two: Student Survey

Demographic Items (4 items)

Select your class period.
How do you describe your gender?
How do you describe your race / ethnicity?
Are your parents involved in the curriculum planning group?

Behavioral Engagement Items (11 items)

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how much do you agree that the following statements accurately describe your learning experience in English class in November and December, 2025?
I try hard to do well in English class.
In Mrs. Stein's English class, I work as hard as I can.
When I'm in Mrs. Stein's class, I participate in class activities.
I pay attention in English class.
When I'm in Mrs. Stein's class, I just act like I'm working.
In English class, I do just enough to get by.
When I'm in English class, my mind wanders.
When I have trouble understanding a question in English class, I go over it again until I understand it.
When I run into a difficult task in English class, I keep working at it until I think I've figured it out.
I am an active participant in English class activities, such as group discussions and projects.
I volunteer to help in Mrs. Stein's class.

Emotional Engagement Items (8 items)

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how much do you agree that the following statements accurately describe your learning experience in English 11 in November and December, 2025?
I am very interested in learning in English class.
I think what we are learning in Mrs. Stein's class is interesting.
I like what I am learning in English class.
I enjoy learning new things in Mrs. Stein's class.
I think learning in English class is boring.
I like my English class.
Most days, I look forward to going to English class.
I am happy to be in Mrs. Stein's class.

Cognitive Engagement Items (12 items)

On a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always), when learning things in English 11 during November and December 2025, how often do you do the following?
In English class, I try to understand the material better by relating it to things I already know.
In English class, I figure out how the information might be useful in the real world.
When learning new information in English class, I try to put the ideas into my own words.
In English class, I try to connect what I am learning with my own experiences.
I make up my own examples to help me understand the important concepts I learn in Mrs. Stein's class.
When learning things for Mrs. Stein's class, I try to see how they fit together with other things I already know.
When learning things for English class, I often try to associate them with what I learned in other classes about the same or similar things.
I try to see the similarities and differences between things I am learning for English class and things I already know.

I try to understand how things I learned in English class fit together with each other.
I try to match what I already know to things I am trying to learn for Mrs. Stein's class.
In English class, I try to think through topics and decide what I'm supposed to learn from them, rather than studying new topics by just reading about them.
In English class, I try to combine different pieces of information from the course materials in new ways.

Agentic Engagement Items (5 items)

On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how much do you agree that the following statements accurately describe your learning experience in English 11 in November and December, 2025?
I let Mrs. Stein know what I want and need.
During Mrs. Stein's class, I express my preferences and opinions.
When I need something in Mrs. Stein's class, I'll ask her for it.
During English class, I'll ask questions to help me learn.
I let Mrs. Stein know what I'm interested in.

Open-Ended Items (5-6 Items)

Please respond honestly to the following questions about your experience in Mrs. Stein's English 11 class during November and December, 2025. If you do not wish to respond to a question, type "Prefer not to say."
Please describe your favorite thing that you learned in Mrs. Stein's class.
What would make Mrs. Stein's class more interesting to you?
How does Mrs. Stein's classroom environment affect your learning and comfort level? (Think about how the room looks or feels to you.)
Please explain whether you tend to use your personal electronic devices (such as smartphones or tablets) in Mrs. Stein's class more or less than you do in other classes.
Please explain whether you can connect with stories, characters, and topics in English 11 on a personal level.
To be added to the second administration of the survey: Please explain which unit of study you most enjoyed and why: The <i>Animal Farm</i> unit or <i>Dear Martin</i> ?

Figure Three: Teacher Recording Sheet

Date:	Class Period / Time:	Number of Student Participants Present:
Lesson / Activity Summary:		

Behavioral Engagement Count:	Emotional Engagement Count:	Cognitive Engagement Count:	Agentic Engagement Count:
Notes:	Notes:	Notes:	Notes:

Modifiers (off-task behaviors):	Additional Notes:
--	--------------------------

Figure Four: Focus Group and Interview Questions

Children of Parents Involved in Curriculum Planning

1. Think about English class in November and December. How would you describe the story we read and the topics we discussed?
2. Think about English class in January and February. How would you describe the texts we read and the topics we discussed?
3. Please explain which unit of study you found more engaging and why.
 - a. In which unit do you feel that your learning was more relevant to your life?
4. During which unit do you think you learned more?
5. How do you think your parents' involvement in planning the January/February unit affected your learning?
6. What would you like to learn more about in English class?

English 11 Students (Parents Uninvolved in Curriculum Planning)

1. Think about English class in November and December. How would you describe the story we read and the topics we discussed?
2. Think about English class in January and February. How would you describe the texts we read and the topics we discussed?
3. Please explain which unit of study you found more engaging and why.
 - a. In which unit do you feel that your learning was more relevant to your life?
4. During which unit do you think you learned more?
5. What would you like to learn more about in English class?

APPENDIX D

Chapter Five Tables and Figures

Table Four: Students' Initial Self-Reported Engagement

	Overall (n = 69)	First Hour (n = 17)	Third Hour (n = 19)	Fourth Hour (n = 18)	Fifth Hour (n = 15)
Behavioral Engagement	3.74	3.81	3.68	3.50	3.85
Emotional Engagement	4.07	4.07	3.92	4.12	4.19
Cognitive Engagement	3.75	3.89	3.71	3.78	2.88
Agentic Engagement	3.76	3.78	4.03	3.60	4.19

Table Five: Initial Teacher Observations of Student Engagement

	Engagement				Modifiers		
	Behavioral	Emotional	Cognitive	Agentic	Phone Use	Sleep	Off-Topic Convo.
First Hour							
Week 1	170	83	54	44	160	37	28
Week 2	465	397	51	38	182	41	36
Week 3	521	113	70	14	481	21	296
Third Hour							
Week 1	207	88	51	64	194	26	37
Week 2	358	172	61	97	335	38	103
Week 3	482	165	145	90	555	11	439
Fourth Hour							
Week 1	218	86	80	55	232	41	64
Week 2	423	411	294	177	341	87	122
Week 3	553	312	249	106	558	57	275
Fifth Hour							
Week 1	223	75	53	50	260	33	98
Week 2	403	175	88	35	395	95	338
Week 3	607	184	134	90	488	51	303

Table Six: Student Grades During Teacher-Planned Unit

Grade Range	Overall (n = 105)	First Hour (n = 27)	Third Hour (n = 26)	Fourth Hour (n = 26)	Fifth Hour (n = 27)
A (90 - 100)	37	9	8	8	12
B (80 - 89)	28	11	6	4	7
C (70 - 79)	14	1	7	6	0
D (60 - 69)	19	4	5	5	5
F (0 - 59)	7	2	0	2	3

Table Seven: Students' Final Self-Reported Engagement Data

	Overall (n = 51)	1st Hour (n = 11)	3rd Hour (n = 16)	4th Hour (n = 16)	5th Hour (n = 8)
Behavioral Engagement	3.86	3.99	3.65	3.85	3.49
Emotional Engagement	4.2	4.14	4.09	4.38	4.14
Cognitive Engagement	4.02	3.67	3.64	4.17	3.78
Agentic Engagement	4.18	4.36	4.08	4.34	3.8

Table Eight: Final Teacher Observations of Student Engagement

	Engagement				Modifiers		
	Behavioral	Emotional	Cognitive	Agentic	Phone Use	Sleep	Off-Topic Conversation
First Hour							
Week 1	167	125	43	10	53	11	11
Week 2	205	195	112	65	131	14	40
Week 3	209	125	100	65	129	25	39
Third Hour							
Week 1	215	165	37	26	103	9	25
Week 2	285	253	218	188	198	31	69
Week 3	215	126	79	37	163	21	69
Fourth Hour							
Week 1	262	196	78	19	90	19	41
Week 2	348	342	215	160	153	82	98
Week 3	222	200	185	121	128	73	119
Fifth Hour							
Week 1	258	138	57	18	119	18	56
Week 2	241	210	135	54	227	85	122
Week 3	193	127	71	15	164	67	53

Table Nine: Student Grades During Shared Planning Unit

Grade Range	Overall (n = 105)	First Hour (n = 27)	Third Hour (n = 27)	Fourth Hour (n = 26)	Fifth Hour (n = 25)
A (90 - 100)	43	14	7	9	13
B (80 - 89)	21	3	9	3	6
C (70 - 79)	14	2	5	3	4
D (60 - 69)	9	3	2	3	1
F (0 - 59)	19	5	4	8	2

APPENDIX E

IRB Approval

Date: December 11, 2025

Study #: IRB-FY2026-20

Study Title: Augmenting Student Engagement and Parent Involvement through Shared Curriculum Planning

Submission Type: Initial

IRB Decision: Approved

Research Team: Kim Stein, S. Rebecca Leigh

Based on applicable federal regulations, the above referenced study has been determined to involve no more than minimal risk to participants and to be Approved, with the following expedited categories:

6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. [45 CFR 46.101\(b\)\(2\)](#) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Notes for Researcher(s):

This submission includes the following approved documents:

Recruitment:

- Parent Letter/Email
- Parent Phone Script
- Student Letter
- Classroom Announcement

Consent:

- Date-Stamped Child Assent Form V. 12/11/2025
- Date-Stamped Parent Permission Form V. 12/11/2025
- Date-Stamped Adult Consent Form V. 12/11/20

Letter and Consent Document:

This letter along with the IRB approved (date-stamped) consent document can be found in Cayuse in the Submission Details page under Letters and Attachments, respectively.

The IRB approved version of the consent document must be used in consenting participants. Federal regulations require that each participant receive a copy of the consent document unless a waiver is granted by the IRB. Signed consent forms must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project. Please remember that informed consent is a process that continues throughout the project, starting with recruitment and assurance of participant understanding of the project, and followed by a signed consent form when applicable.

Permission from Research Sites:

Please note the following:

- This IRB approval letter means that the research has met the federal criteria for approval per 45 CFR 46.111 Criteria for IRB Approval of Research.
- Before the research is initiated, permission to conduct research at a given site must be obtained from all research locations listed in the IRB submission. You must keep copies of all such permission letters for your records.
- It is the responsibility of each researcher to follow all applicable policies and procedures of any outside institution where the research will be conducted.

Modifications:

Any changes to the approved project must be approved by the IRB prior to initiation by submitting a MODIFICATION request. Do not collect data while the changes are being reviewed. Data collected during this time cannot be used in research.

Incidents:

All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others, serious and unexpected adverse events, non-compliance issues and/or serious complaints regarding this project must be reported promptly to the IRB by submitting an INCIDENT report.

You are approved to start the research. Please retain a copy of this notification for your records. If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office.

Thank you.

The Oakland University IRB

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