

DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE? SEEKING SELF-
REFLECTIONS FROM BLACK STUDENTS

by

April Deniece Thomas

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
the University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Curriculum and Instruction

Charlotte

2023

Approved by:

Dr. Erik Jon Byker

Dr. Karen Cross

Dr. Erin Washburn

Dr. Bruce Taylor

ABSTRACT

APRIL DENIECE THOMAS: Do you see yourself in multicultural literature? Seeking self-reflections from Black students

(Under the Supervision of Dr. ERIK BYKER)

In the United States, Muhammad (2020) explains how Black students who attend schools have a greater potential for success when they see themselves represented in the curriculum and when their cultural, gender, and racial identities are affirmed. This dissertation study examined the ways in which third grade Black girls and boys (n=8) see themselves in American multicultural literature. The study also investigated the literary elements in African American multicultural text that encourage self-reflection. The study's methodology was based on a qualitative research design, which included a pilot study (n=4) of the interview protocol. The interview protocol was revised for suitability based on the findings from the pilot study. Both the pilot study and the main dissertation research study were conducted using semi-structured interviews. The participants chose a text from a collection of African American multicultural literature and shared their responses to that text based on the revised interview protocol. The following research questions guided the study: 1) How do Black children respond to African American multicultural literature?; 2) How do Black children describe their cultural and racial identity within African American multicultural literature?; and 3) What literary features facilitate Black children's ability to self-reflect? The findings of the study were organized based on these research questions. The study utilized Black Identity Development (Jackson III, 2012) to unpack and discuss the findings. The discussion and analysis of the study's findings includes the definitional support for the idea of "multicultural self-reflection." This idea explains and provides insights into how Black children self-reflect when reading African American multicultural literature. Multicultural self-reflection represent the emergence of an idea for future

research studies to further examine how Black children engage in “multicultural self-reflection” when responding to African American multicultural text.

Key Words: African American, Black children, Black Identity Development, interview study, multicultural literature, multicultural self-reflection, qualitative research, self-reflection

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Erik Byker for believing in my dissertation idea, helping me transform the research idea into an interview study, helping me process my ideas and encouraging me through mentorship. You have consistently shown me what it takes to be a leader, teacher, researcher, helper, and developer. Most of all, thank you for being my dissertation chair. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Whittingham for believing in me and encouraging me to give “seeing yourself” a chance. I am forever grateful for meeting you at the right time in my life. Thank you for being right there for this dissertation journey. I would also like to thank Dr. Erin Washburn, Dr. Karen Cross, and Dr. Bruce Taylor for your support, expertise, understanding, and commitment in my dissertation journey. I would like to acknowledge the members, branch managers, and parents from Bridgeforth Avenue, Emma Road, and Curbell Lane Youth Clubs (pseudonyms) who participated and aided in my research study’s success.

DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation in the memory of my grandmother, Mrs. Thelma Bridgeforth Thomas. Because of your love and support, I gained the confidence to accomplish my goals and to be a strong Bridgeforth woman. As a young child, I always knew your love was special. Today I know that every encouragement and compliment you gave me was done to strengthen me for the future. You will always be in my heart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study	4
Purpose Statement	5
Significance of the Study	5
Research Questions	6
Study Overview	6
Positionality	8
Definitions of Key Vocabulary Terms	9
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
Context for Inclusion of Multicultural Literature	12
History of Black Literacy	14
Current Need for Representation	17
Power of Multicultural Literature	19
Multicultural Literature as a Tool for Reflection	21
Multicultural Literature as Way to Make Connections and Foster Self- reflection	22
Recent Studies of Self-Reflection among Black Children	25
Connections to Representation	30
Framing Self-Reflection through Theory	34
Moving Forward with this Current Study	40

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	42
Methodological Overview	42
The Purpose	42
Research Questions	43
Research Design	43
Ethical Review for the Study	48
The Study's Location and Participants	49
Sample Description	50
Data Collection	51
List of Books	53
Shared Reading Method	54
Interview Protocol	56
Pilot Study	58
Procedure	59
Pilot Study Findings and Changes to the Interview Protocol	61
Main Research Study Procedure	62
Before Reading	63
During Reading	63
After Reading	65
Data Analysis	65
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS	73
Background and Overview	73
Research Question 1	81

Statements	82
Conversation	83
Emotions	84
Nonverbal Connections to the Text	85
Black Identity Development and Participants' Responses	86
Research Question 2	88
Hair	89
Family Connections	91
Recreational Activities	91
Fashion	93
Black Identity Development and Cultural and Racial Identity	93
Research Question 3	95
Events	96
Main and Supporting Characters	97
Illustrations	100
Character Traits	104
Characters' Problems	107
Characters' Solution	108
Black Identity Development, Stories and Literary Elements	110
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION	114
Situating the Study in the Literature	114
Convergence with the Literature	114
Divergence with the Literature	115

Framing the Findings with Theoretical Frameworks	116
Multicultural Self Reflection of Text	119
Reflections on the Research Process	120
How to Converse with Black children	120
Black Magic	121
What do Black Children Want to Read?	123
Limitations	124
Significance of the Study	128
Future Research Agenda	129
Multicultural Comfort Reading	129
Multicultural Self-Reflection Conceptual Framework	130
REFERENCES	132
APPENDIX A: Interview Protocol Pilot	153

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: List of Proposed Multicultural Literature for this Study	50
TABLE 2: African American Multicultural Literature Selections and Self-Reflections	68
TABLE 3: Participatory Self Reflections and Research Questions	70

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: Organizational Framework for the Literature Review	11
FIGURE 2: Kenzo Bastien	31
FIGURE 3: Manu Araujo Marques	32
FIGURE 4: Black Identity Development	36
FIGURE 5: Elements of Black Identity Development's Culture	37
FIGURE 6: Shared Reading Method	55
FIGURE 7: Interview Protocol	57
FIGURE 8: Participant 1 Cycle 1	66
FIGURE 9: Comparative Interview Question Chart for Data Analysis	68
FIGURE 10: Graphic Representation of the Structured Analytical Approach	71

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In October 2019, I was hired to provide reading intervention services for the third through fifth African-American gap group at a local, urban elementary school in North Carolina. At this particular school setting, there was a high population of students of color, but African American or Black students represented a very small percentage, and they received little to no intervention services. The LatinX students had the highest population, and they received more services than the other English Language Learners and other academic gap groups at the school. At this particular time, the school had a new need for reading intervention services to be provided for its African American student population based on their state reading scores. I interviewed for the reading intervention position at the school, and I was excited to accept the job at the school.

Over the next few months, I met with several groups of African American third through fifth grade students for the daily reading intervention groups. During Black History Month 2020, I was charged to review Black history trivia with all of the African-American students who received intervention services for the upcoming Black History trivia competition. I planned to spend half of the reading intervention time reviewing the historical facts before I began each of my intervention groups. At 8:30am, the first group of the day was my third grade students who were eager to follow me into the mobile classroom for our 30 minute session. Today was our first Black history trivia review, and one of the students was selected by his teacher to represent his class in the competition.

As the students waited for me to display the next historical facts, with my back turned to them, I blurted out, “ If anyone gets these questions right, it has to be us.” I expected the room to fill with statements of affirmation instead the room had a strange quietness. I turned around to

find blank stares then a student simply asked why. I said, “because we are Black.” They looked at me rather strangely, and some with lines on their foreheads and scrunched up noses. They began to look around at each other by leaning forward and backward to look at each other's faces and to see who was in the room. One student began to count us one by one to find out how many Black people were in the room. They began to say with smiles on their faces, “We are Black. Yeah, we are Black” as if to say “duh, we are Black, I had not noticed it until now.”

Immediately, I began to think to myself, what in the world do they do when they read? Do they see Black characters? Do they see themselves when they read African American multicultural literature? Why did they fail to notice that our group was filled with African American students? I began to think the reason may have been because of the high population of Spanish speaking students who received several services and attention from the staff. The African American students at the school shared spaces with students from diverse backgrounds, students from over 20 different countries, and students who spoke several languages. Perhaps they were in a learning space where the color of your skin was not a concern as well as their ability to speak English.

My curiosity peaked beyond seeing yourself as a physical presence in a learning space but during reading. Do Black children “see themselves” when they read literature that is written for and about them? Based on the way students responded to seeing themselves in a room of African American peers during the Black history trivia practice, I was perplexed and a little heart broken. After the Black history trivia practice, I began to think about Black writers, intellectuals and parents' thoughts about whether Black children see themselves in spaces and literature.

With permission from my neighbor's grandmother, I invited my 5th grade African American male neighbor to participate in a reading session using African American multicultural

literature to get some preliminary findings. If I do not prompt him with a conversation about Blackness and seeing yourself in texts, would he independently select a book that was relevant to his life or with characters that looked like him? Which book would he select? Is seeing yourself based on physical features or something else related to being a Black person in America? Why would he select it? How would he interact with African American multicultural literature? This was worth investigating, and I had a one track mind about seeing yourself. To me, seeing yourself, for Black children, was seeing your physical and racial image in a text.

I selected African American multicultural picture books which are books written for and about African American children by Black authors. I presented him with the following five books:

- *All Because You Matter* by Tami Charles
- *Queen of the Scene* by Queen Latifah
- *Just the Two of Us* by Will Smith
- *I Got Next* by Daria Peoples- Riley
- *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* by Derrick Barnes

Before I finished the directions, he picked up *All Because You Matter* by Tami Charles. He said, “The boy looks just like me, the skin color, the face, the nose, but not the haircut, he has a box.” He covered his mouth in disbelief. “But oh my God; he looks just like me.” The illustrator, Bryan Collier, created a realistic, handsome, Black child with caramel colored skin, bright eyes, a cute nose and coily hair that allowed my fifth grade neighbor to see himself throughout the text and in context. After he read the book, he shared the text’s events that were connected to his life- mother and son and father and son bonds. He also used the illustrations to

affirm his life with the text. When he shared the events and illustration connections, I didn't relate those aspects to seeing yourself and didn't expect to find this evidence again in the study.

Background of the Study

Frederick Douglass (1849) wrote "if you teach that nigger (speaking of himself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave" (As quoted in Sims Bishop, 2007, p. 5). Douglass and several other Black leaders answered the call for liberation and taught the enslaved and freemen to read and write. Subsequently, W.E.B DuBois followed up on this effort by writing entertaining children's literature filled with Black accomplishments and history, which reflected Black life and its children as something special in the world by normalizing Blackness. The mission of DuBois' work for Black children and today's multicultural literature allows children to see themselves in the literature (Sims Bishop, 2007). What are the conversations or thoughts that Black children have about their literature? Do those interactions happen at all?

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop (1990b) stated that "literature transforms human experience and reflects it back at us, and in the reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience" (p. ix). According to Williams (2008), multicultural theorists believe in the importance of giving students access to books that allow them to see themselves. Williams (2008) also reported that schools can close home to school challenges by providing books that reflect the students' ethnic backgrounds. Multicultural education theorists highlighted that when students see familiarity with their own heritage, they will be motivated to read. In 2006, Mohr questioned whether children picked up books that mirrored their lives and found they chose window books instead of books that mirrored their gender, ethnicity, or cultural background. Williams (2008) suggested combining everyday cultural interests and representation as reading

choices. Sciurba (2008) suggested that teachers interview their own students in a similar way to determine the types of books that reflect them, as well as what types of books interest them. Ultimately, Black children should be able to share “that’s me” just as my fifth grade neighbor and Morrell and Morrell’s (2012) two year old child pointed out in the text, *Busy Toes*. Even a two year child saw himself in a character whose hair resembled his curly hair and skin color.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to describe and report on the ways in which Black children respond to African American multicultural literature that is written for and about them. Equally important, another purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence Black children's responses to text. The study was conducted using semi-structured interviews about a collection of African American multicultural literature to capture the students’ responses. This study uncovered how Black children see themselves in text, converse about their cultural and racial identity after reading African American multicultural literature and make connections to the text’s literary features that may evoke their responses. With all of the multicultural literature that has been written for Black children for over 100 years, Black children should be able to identify with African American multicultural literature and facilitate conversations about their connections.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is centered on how Black children self-reflect when they read multicultural literature. Multicultural literature is written so that marginalized children are allowed to see themselves as they read the text. In this study, third and fourth grade Black children participated in a reading session and an interview session that investigated whether their responses provide statements that show self-reflections using African American multicultural

picture books from the everyday experience which are also realistic fiction. This study will affirm children's literature authors' reason for writing their books for Black children and to help define what it means to see oneself in text. The children's responses will provide insight to how they communicate and process their connections or self-reflections to everyday experiences in African American multicultural literature. The author's words, the illustrator's illustrations—or both—may inspire, renew, affirm, and/or transform a Black child's self-awareness and foster a deeper sense of Black pride. The Black community also needs more information about the process by which Black children connect and see themselves in children's literature. This study is important and significant as it reports the ways that Black children connect to and communicate their voices of Black representation from African American multicultural children's literature. Often there is an importance to have Black representation for Black children or students of all ages in learning, literary and social spaces. It is also important to have a conversation about representation in literature with the targeted audience- Black children.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

RQ1: How do Black children respond to African American multicultural literature?

RQ2: How do Black children describe their cultural and racial identity within African American multicultural literature?

RQ3: What literary features facilitate Black children's ability to self-reflect?

Study Overview

For my research, I conducted a qualitative pilot study and interview study to explore how Black children self-reflect when reading African American multicultural literature. I also examined the literary elements that facilitated their responses. Using a qualitative research

design (Maxwell, 2008) helped me examine the meaning of the responses and connections to the text that promoted self-reflections. The pilot study for this research included a sample of 4 Black fourth grade students (n=4) who participated in a pilot of the Interview Protocol, which was the main data collection instrument for the study. Based on the pilot study data, I revised the study's interview protocol so the questions would be more suitable and understandable for the participants. The main study for this dissertation included a sample of 8 Black third grade students (n=8) female and male, who attended three different youth clubs that I refer to by the pseudonyms: Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club, Emma Road Youth Club, and Curbell Lane Youth Club.

Each student in the study participated in a one on one, semi-structured interview using a combination of shared reading strategies and perspectives from leading reading researchers in shared reading approaches (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001; Tyner & Green, 2012). During this semi-structured interview, the student chose one of the featured African American multicultural texts to read and provided follow-up self-reflections and evidence from the text's page that indicate the literary features that brought out the self-reflections. The study's data analysis was two-fold. I used Miles and Huberman's (1994) three-step interpretive approach to code and draw conclusions in the data. I also used Riemen's (1986) Structured Analytical Approach for data analysis in order to select and analyze the quotes from the study's participants, which would illustrate the codes and themes in the data.

Positionality

For this study, I chose to expand the participant selection from African American students to children who identify as Black because I want to offer the opportunity to children who are available and willing to participate who are of African descent or who identify as Black.

African American means that person is born in the United States from parents who are descendants of African enslaved people in America. However, every Black person is not African American and may belong to a group of people from across the world who consider themselves to be Black and of African descent. Because I am African American and of African descent, I expanded the pilot study and main study to third grade students who identify as Black, such as African American, Caribbean, African, Afro-Latino or Afro-Latina, and mixed race/biracial with a parent of African descent. The participants must be the appropriate chronological age for the study. The location in which the study was conducted had a melting pot of Black children from several diasporic regions and Africa.

Most of all, I believe in unity and positive affirmation among all people of African descent within the diaspora and indigenous people of Africa. I believe that people of African descent are one group of people who desperately need to come together for the betterment of our communities, for greater educational opportunities, for economic development, for the creation of generational wealth, and for a healthy and positive self-image. I chose African American multicultural literature instead of literature from a variety of Black backgrounds to show that children of African descent may find commonalities to self-reflect while reading African American literature. In essence, the selected literature reflected the everyday experiences of Black children in the United States.

I believe that creating ways to help Black students use their personal experiences and background and use their self-reflections during reading may increase their reading motivation and achievement. Most of all, Black children should approach their literature, multicultural literature that is written for them, by looking for their likeness and putting their Blackness first regardless of their personal or educational circumstances

Definitions of Key Vocabulary Terms

The following terms are significant to the study:

African American: An African American is an individual born in the United States with African ancestry from slavery in the United States.

Black: Black is an individual who identifies their race as having ancestry originating from Africa.

Black Identity Development: This development of identity is about “the levels/stages of consciousness that Black people tend to follow in the development of their Racial/Black identity” (Wijeyesugnghe & Jackson, 2012, p. 38).

Colorblindness: The phenomenon of colorblindness is “a philosophical and practical approach to teaching and learning that intentionally ignores racial differences in and among various student populations” (Husband, 2019, p. 54).

Literary elements: Literary elements are the story elements in text such as characters, setting, and events. Literary elements also include illustrations.

Mirrors: Mirrors is a metaphor that is used to indicate that books allow readers to see themselves and their lives and it reflects back at the reader (Sims Bishop, 1990b, ix).

Multicultural comfort reading: Multicultural comfort reading is one on one shared reading practice using grade level appropriate multicultural literature that allows the adult reader to read the text while the student joins in by whisper reading and/or taking over reading from time to time then participates in a reading discussion (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001; Tyner & Green, 2012).

Multicultural literature: Multicultural literature represents literature about people from diverse cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and religious backgrounds. This includes people groups who

have been marginalized and considered outside of the mainstream of society (Morrell & Morrell, 2012).

Multicultural self-reflection: Multicultural self-reflection is an idea that emerged from this study's dissertation. This idea is based on the self-reflection themes and the literary elements data analysis in this dissertation. The ideas is explained more in this dissertation's discussion section.

Reader response theory: Reader response theory is a pedagogy that "promotes learners' (as active readers) freedom, enjoyment, and engagement, in reading texts and literary works usually illuminated by such critical and emotionally personal responses triggered by teacher/instructor's guiding questions and tasks" (Isknak, Mujiyanto & Hartono, 2020, p. 119).

Self-reflect: Self-reflect is the ability to racially, culturally, or personally identify with multicultural literature based on a common experience.

Self-reflection: Self-reflection is the ability to self-reflect through communication or with a statement that the participants will provide that demonstrates seeing oneself in multicultural literature from the perspective of African American children.

Shared reading: A shared reading "is one in which both the teacher and student share in the reading and discussion of the text" (Tyner & Green, 2012, p. 13). Shared reading also includes how "students join the teacher to read aloud in unison from an enlarged text- big book, a poem, or any enlarged message or story" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 26).

Sliding glass doors: The sliding glass doors is a metaphor that is used to indicate that books allow readers to walk through the text using their imagination (Sims Bishop, 1990a).

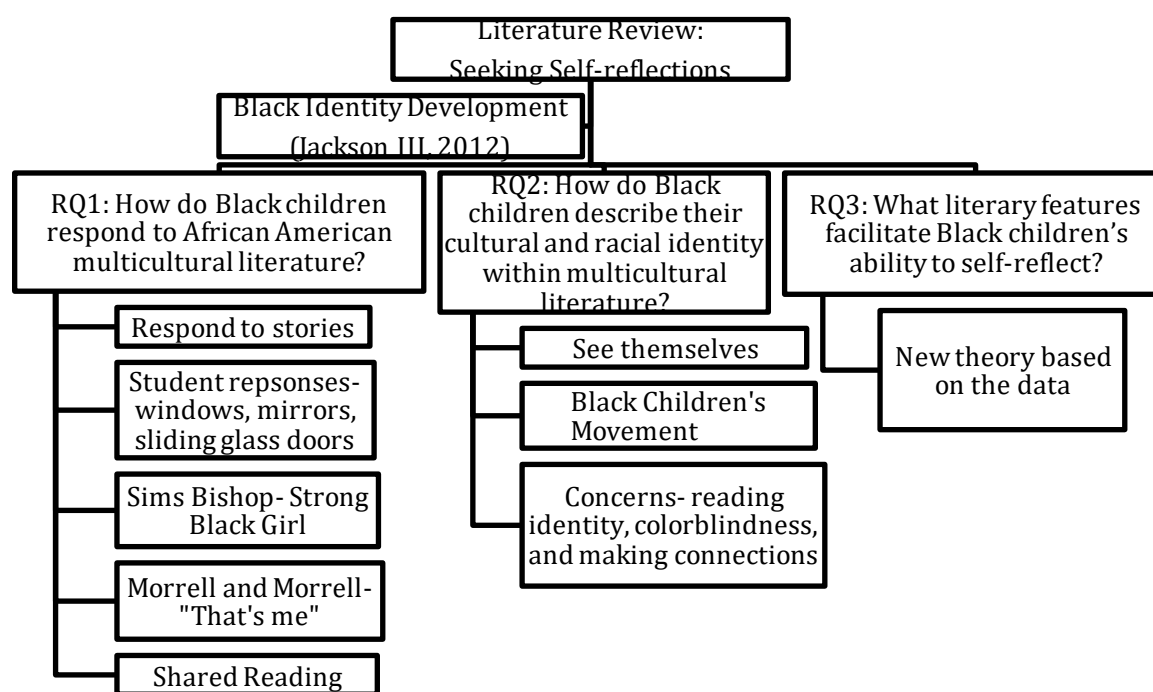
Windows: Windows is the metaphor that is used to indicate that books allow readers to view "worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange" (Sims Bishop, 1990b, ix).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following chapter, a review of the literature begins with an explanation and examination of contextual information related to multicultural literature. The literature review is centered on answering and examining the following questions: (1) How do Black children respond to African American multicultural literature? (2) How do Black children describe their cultural and racial identity within multicultural literature? and (3) What literary features facilitate Black children's ability to self-reflect? The flow chart in Figure 1 illustrates how each subtopic aligns with the research questions.

Figure 1

Organizational Framework for the Literature Review



Note. The flowchart showed how the literature's topics, research questions, and theoretical framework connect and inform the research.

Throughout this literature review, I examine the context for my study with the inclusion of current and historical perspectives to shed light on the importance of studying Black children whose ancestors desired to be literate despite the unjust practices to prevent the liberation act. The review explores how literacy and literature movement mattered from a positive, affirmative, and successful Black experience and was placed in the forefront for the early 1900s through the present. Then I examine the literature about self-reflection and its relationship with self-awareness, identity, and self-affirmation and the ways that self-reflections influence racial identity. This literature review also includes and addresses contributions and research about Black children as well as literacy approaches using multicultural literature. Finally, the chapter explores the need to use African American multicultural literature and how to begin investigating Black children's self-reflections.

Context for Inclusion of Multicultural Literature

Muhammad (2020) shared that in the United States, Black students have a greater potential of success when they see themselves represented in the curriculum and when their cultural, gender, and racial identities are affirmed. This finding connects with the overall purpose of my dissertation study, which is to examine the process by which Black children self-reflect when they read African American multicultural literature and to report on the factors that influence self-reflections. Roberta Price Gardener (2020) stated that African American literature has broadened its work to allow, particularly, Black children and Black people to see themselves within the pages of the book. In the 2019 report on *Projections of Education Statistics* from the National Center of Educational Statistics, public school enrollments in the United States for children of color are on an upward trend. In fact, there is a steady growth trend estimated for the 2027 public school enrollment of children representing ethnic and racial categories such as

Blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and students of two or more races. The demographic trends in public schools shows the importance for greater inclusion of multicultural literature in school classrooms. While the enrollment trends for students of color continue to increase, the trend among White students and American Indians/Alaska Native students is a decrease in enrollment numbers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). According to Lin (2005), “one of the greatest challenges of teacher education in the 21st century is to prepare teachers for diversity” (p. 240). The concern exists related to effective ways to teach the diverse populations of students to self-reflect while reading multicultural literature. Moreover, researchers like Piper (2019) have found that new teachers have been instructed to use classroom materials that support scripted teaching practices for all students in their instructional spaces which hinder opportunities to show creative appreciation for and affirmation of cultural differences.

Another problem that has hindered the effectiveness of using multicultural literature in the classroom is the colorblind approach (Husband, 2019) to the inclusion of multicultural literature with marginalized populations of students. Husband (2019) explains how “Colorblindness is defined as a philosophical and practical approach to teaching and learning that intentionally ignores racial differences in and among various student populations” (p. 1060). Muhammad (2020) found that when White teachers work to gain job security through tenure, they do not heed to the pressure to instruct their students using culturally relevant practices and instead they continue their familiar practices. These familiar practices often perpetuate colorblindness throughout the curriculum including in the ways that multicultural literature are introduced and implemented in the classroom (Husband, 2019; Muhammad, 2020).

History of Black Literacy

During slavery in the United States, enslaved Africans found liberation in the highly prized form of literacy that came with a sense of self-determination or the ability to influence one's destiny. This liberation gave the enslaved access to information, the ability to teach others the heroic act of reading, and the gateway to escape the plantation (Sims Bishop, 2007). Given the strong association with liberation and literacy, many enslaved Africans zealously pursued opportunities for learning and their heroic efforts often came at great personal risk. Learning to read and to teach themselves came with the threat of beating or was even a death sentence just for attempting to learn to read. The Frederick Douglass quote in Chapter 1 of this dissertation captures the power of literacy and reading. When communicating about how reading was outlawed for the enslaved on the plantations, Frederick Douglass wrote "if you teach that nigger (speaking of himself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever be unfit to be a slave" (As quoted in Sims Bishop, 2007, p. 5). Despite all the risks and dangers associated with learning to read, many Black folks, like Frederick Douglass, taught themselves to read and became self-educated. Their self-education was premised on the fact that literacy is a conduit to freedom.

The pathway to literacy in a formal setting was also delivered by free Blacks, missionary efforts of Whites, and Quakers who concluded that slavery and Christianity were not compatible (Sims Bishop, 2007). Their work was to prepare Black people for citizenship and emancipation. During the schooling at New York African School Free School, students' writings addressed their struggle thus seeing themselves in their experience: "the evils of slavery, calling for freedom for their brothers and sisters in chains and thanking the convention-goers for their support for the abolitionist cause" (Sims Bishop, 2007, p. 7). These students wrote from their

experiences and used self-reflections from their world to share their pain and plea for slavery to end. Over time one of the earliest religious publications, the *Recorder*, published poems and fictional stories about living as Black people written by Black writers for Black children's entertainment. This marks the beginning stages of providing literature that reflected Black children. Previously, the *Recorder* published children's literature that was made available for any readers, but Blacks moved away from including children's literature by Lydia Maria Child, Hans Christian Andersen, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Oliver Optic to including writings about their own experiences (Sims Bishop, 2007).

Notably, W.E.B. DuBois was the director of the publication, *The Crisis*. This magazine was first published in 1911 and included an annual children's issue. As an advocate for Black children and education, DuBois removed the children's issue because *The Crisis* also published the recordings of lynchings which he felt were not the proper influence on Black children. DuBois and Augustus Dill published a separate publication for Black children called *The Brownies' Book*, a magazine that featured influential Black literature for Black children. DuBois demanded excellence for Black children and "a strong foundation for reading, writing, and especially thinking" (As quoted in Sims Bishop, 2007, p. 22). During this time, the focus of *The Brownies' Book* magazine was to help Black children to know that being colored is a normal and beautiful thing and to be aware of the history and accomplishments of the Negro race. The publication aimed to have Black children view with keen awareness that other Negro children grew up to be beautiful, productive, and successful citizens and practiced anti-racist behaviors. Additionally, the work was to influence Black children to practice self-control in the community and in the household, call upon the good in life, and desire an occupation and duty with care (Sims Bishop, 2007, p. 23). The mission of *The Brownies' Book* holds the same goals of today's

multicultural literature that is written for Black children: to see yourself in literature that serves as a mirror, window or sliding glass door.

Despite DuBois' endeavors, in other literature spaces, Blacks were included as "plantation stereotypes, objects of ridicule or laughter, or faithful or comical servants to White children and their families" (Sims Bishop, 2007, p. 24). *The Brownies' Book* continued to focus on racial pride and self-esteem for Black children and be known as the race that stood for a national Black cultural community. The magazine exposed Black children to national and international achievements of Black people from the past to the present and from young to the old. After *The Brownies' Book* was discontinued and went out of circulation, Black people continued to be characterized and displayed as "subhuman, comical caricatures, not only in literature, but also in films, advertisements, and commercial logos, and in popular everyday objects such as ashtrays, and salt and pepper shakers" (Sims Bishop, 2007, p. 67).

Similar to DuBois' initial displeasure for the lack of literature for Black children, Black librarians saw flaws in the literary work about African American children written by a variety of people as well. They created and published criteria that vetted black characters in literature in order to continue on the quest to have Black children connect back to their very soul through the representation of authentic African American literature (Sims Bishop, 2007). In the 1970s, Eloise Greenfield, a Black author, brought the essence of the appreciation for the arts and for language, self-love, a focus on the positive, effective, problem solving, knowledge of Black heritage and acquaintance with Black heroes, respect for elders, and recognition of the strength of the Black family to literature (Sims Bishop, 2007, p. 123-124). Her movement in Black literature was a foundation for Black children to see themselves represented in books as well as to see representations of the Black family.

Lastly, the education of Black children in the south was not valued in a similar manner of their images or stories that authors wrote about them. Black children's images were valued in *The Brownie's Book* by showing that being a Black child was a beautiful thing in the world. Dubois wanted Black children to have Black models who were in the world doing great things. Black parents allowed their children to attend school when it was available despite losing wages and labor. However, planters interfered in the educational gains of Black children by restricting access to school and disturbed their reading identity and abilities to read any little about themselves or any other person. A little over 80 percent of the children went to school for the six months that school was available, and "state and local governments refused to provide transportation for black children" (Anderson, 1988, p. 150). These children were given the right to attend school with obstacles that prevented them from having a chance to read self-reflective and empowering literature during the school day.

Current Need for Representation

As it was in the past, there is still a current need for greater representation of Black children in multicultural literature. Muhammad (2020) proclaimed that "if we seek to advance the educational development of the youth, we must create frameworks that are written in response to their histories and identities" (p. 66). There should be opportunities for students to realize who they are while in the school setting because it is unfair to have students' initial learning experience about themselves in college or adulthood. The level of awareness needs to happen on a deep level that explores their history and reality of diverse people. Students "need K-12 classrooms to make sense of who they are and who they are not, because students of color are flooded with images and representations in media, literature, and social media that depict their identities in deficit ways" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 67-68). Trotman-Scott (2014) found that a

“positive portrayal of Black females has been long overdue, so is the need for Black females of all ages to embrace the color of their skin, so it follows that an emphasis on race and racial issues is in order” (p. 45).

Gomez- Najarro (2019) shared that “students who consistently see themselves in learning materials assume that it is normal for them to inherit their privilege” (p. 394). Tami Craft Al-Hazza (2010) argued that it is a huge weight to place on students to never engage with books that reflect people or ideas similar to them in their K-12 school experience. Limited experiences with reflective instructional resources foster and propagate dominant narratives about how some social and racial classes are more important than others. This, in turn, leads to the feeling of marginalization by many students (Freire, 1970). Paulo Freire (1970) explained how marginalized students can perceive themselves as being isolated and disconnected to the events of the classroom and even to the larger events of the world. Sadly, many marginalized students will likely enter school classrooms with inadequate feelings like they do not matter as learners or are not welcomed at school. Geneva Gay (2002) advocates using culturally responsive approaches to remove the weight placed on marginalized students.

In response to this historical and current context related to Black representation and connection in multicultural literature, my dissertation study investigates how Black third grade students self-reflect or see themselves when they read multicultural literature from the Black experience using an interview process. Even though African American multicultural literature has been written for almost 100 years and Black children have the opportunity to see themselves, a definition, description or framework for “seeing themselves” has not been explicitly created by authors and literacy advocates. The student voice and perspective has not been included in the quest to provide this image or feeling of seeing oneself in multicultural literature.

Power of Multicultural Literature

In Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop's seminal work (1982), she discussed that African American literature provides self-confirmation for African-American children, and "it presents an image of Afro-Americans as courageous survivors with a strong sense of community and cultural affinity and was positive feelings about being black" (p. 105). She also catapulted her essay on mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors as a metaphor for how readers reflect and connect with literature. Mirrors are used to show how reader reflections are in the literature. Ford and colleagues (2018) found that "Mirror books promote not just engagement with reading but also provide racial pride, self-efficacy, motivation and coping strategies when faced with challenges including negative peer pressures and isolation in predominantly white gifted classes" (p. 42). Windows allow readers to peek into the lives of the nonfiction or fictional text using their imagination. Sliding doors show how readers moved through the text using their imagination to embrace their place in literature's world (Sims Bishop, 1990a). Since then, Bishop's work has held the keys to understanding the need for multicultural literature for African-American children and the application of windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors, but "seeing yourself" has not evolved into a defined term or description for literary use.

According to Morrell and Morrell (2012), "through encountering stories that serve as a mirror into our own lives, we come to understand ourselves better as we read and react to the stories of others who have had similar fears, joys and experiences" (p.12). Representative texts have shown to increase students' motivation to read by making the literature relevant to their lives, providing them with a voice, and affirming their culture and identities. The tool that fosters cultural awareness is children's literature; especially multicultural children's literature (Gomez-Najarro, 2019). Husband (2019) explains how "Multicultural books provide opportunities for

children from diverse racial backgrounds; they have personal and collective experiences, history and knowledge bases related to race affirmed and are celebrated in the classroom” (p. 1069).

Husband (2019) goes on to share how multicultural children’s literature is a conduit for kids to develop a positive self-image through the portrayal of strengths based views on culture and the representation of a diverse array of racial groups in a community.

Multicultural literature includes children and people representing the diversity in our society. This diversity includes various abilities, cultures, genders, languages, socioeconomic statuses, and religious backgrounds. Morrell and Morrell (2012) stated that a benefit of including multicultural literatures in the class is that such literature can often aid in students development of their self-efficacy as they maneuver through life; furthermore, “students bring their multiple cultural perspectives with them wherever they go and these perspectives allow them to read with and against the text they encounter” (p.12). Multicultural literature is also a reflection of marginalized cultures. Iwai (2013) reported that multicultural literature reflects racial, ethnic and social diversity in literary work. When implementing multicultural literature in the classroom, students develop several viewpoints about their cultures. Multicultural literature fosters self-awareness and develops experiences involving their culture. It also helps students reflect on themselves (Iwai, 2013). According to Lin (2005), including multicultural literature allows the students to have a mirror that will “reflect on who they are and why they behave and believe as they do from other people’s perspectives” (p. 239).

As a component of a transformative human experience and self-affirmation, multicultural literature provides a mirror that reflects back on readers and allows the readers to examine their lived experiences in relation to the larger human experience (Ford et al., 2018). Rozek et al. (2015) found how the inclusion of cultural affirmation in multicultural literature was often an

“an intervention that allows students to buffer themselves from the deleterious effects of stereotype threat by bolstering their sense of self-integrity” (p. 1). This finding connects with Sims Bishop’s (2007) argument about how multicultural literature serves as a mirror that both reflects and affirms humanity’s beautiful tapestry of culture, languages, and experiences. Gomez-Najarro (2019) further explains how multicultural children’s literature provides reflective narratives that prove or affirm to young children that their lives and their school experiences are valuable.

Multicultural Literature as a Tool for Reflection

Osorio (2018) found that multicultural literature is a classroom tool that is used “to promote or develop an appreciation for diversity, honor students’ voices, connect to students’ rich and linguistic backgrounds and promote critical consciousness and empower students to the holder of knowledge” (p. 49). This allows students to have purposeful conversations about the text and allow the teacher to facilitate and learn from the experience while the students assume the role of the “knowledge holder” (Osorio, 2018, p.49). This process advocates the role of self-reflection and self-awareness.

Lin (2005) found that when teachers give kindergarteners and third graders opportunities to discuss their lived experiences with the experiences of characters in multicultural books it led to much more engaging and rich forms of classroom discussion. d the investigative instructional tools to examine how students and the characters represent their culture, they are helping students build and evaluate their own background and others’ backgrounds. Martinez and Lopez-Toberson’s (2000) study found that first grade students not only made academic connections, but the students made more complex connections to their personal lives also. Texts, readers, and contexts—each inseparable from the other—are also inseparable from the larger sociocultural

contexts in which they are enacted. Sociocultural perspective allows students to use a variety of perspectives to the learning experience.

Husband (2019) argued that urban educators teach their early childhood students about race, racism, and racial justice, and multicultural picture books are a tool to create a pathway to conversations on those topics. He contends that urban literacy educators should use a variety of perspectives into the instructional environment as a way of “validating and affirming the experiences of different social identities in the classroom” (p. 1063). Additionally, he pointed to the importance of a dialogical approach that cultivates literacy practices that closely connect it to singular and multiple experiences of early learners in which they are situated. This approach will create school and learning environments and resources for students to feel comfortable to share their personal experiences and connections without silencing and diminishing their perspectives. Lastly, Husband (2019) stated “to be successful in school and society common urban literacy learners have to develop the ability to function in and move between their own cultural communities and the larger dominant society” (p. 1063). In connection to the findings from these researchers, multicultural literature is a powerful tool for reflection and for the representation of the diversity of children in school classrooms. Multicultural literature, for instance, provides an opportunity for Black children to have a sense of Black pride, to be motivated, and to have examples that mirror their life. The descriptions that foster seeing themselves do not state what the children will see from the Black perspective.

Multicultural Literature as Way to Make Connections and Foster Self-reflection

Making connections is a learning process that allows students to make intertextual connections adopted from the classroom environment with “shared topics, themes, issues, or stances, which are also connected to the social and cultural practices that surround them” (Lin,

2005, p. 238). Harvey and Goudvis (2007) described making connections, particularly text to self, as centering on family experiences, everyday activities, personal snippets, big ideas, themes, past experiences, problems, and similarities between characters such as being the same age. They conclude that “when kids make meaningful connections to the characters, problems and events, they seem to gain some insight into the story as a whole” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 95).

Another aspect of making connections is that commonalities can include statements such as “the character is a boy and I am a boy” and “the coolest character’s name is Jasmine, and my name is Jasmine” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 102). If these connections called *connections in common* are supported with the understanding that it is tough to tell the reader that those connections are irrelevant or superficial and do not add to making meaning about the text, then marginalized children should be able to make these *connections in common* with ease.

Marginalized children need to be taught to share the connections in common to the multicultural text they read. These connections in common (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 103) may include remarks like: “the main character is black, and I am black” and “The character has a big puff with a big bow, and I wear my hair in a big puff with a bow sometimes”. Most of all marginalized students need to be encouraged to make the connections to cultural and racial similarities with text, such connections could lead to greater self-reflection.

Self-reflection can be fostered as students make connections in reading multicultural children’s literature. What does it mean to help students self-reflect or see themselves in the text during reading and discussions? Based on Morrell and Morrell’s (2012) call for self-reflection, the word action verb self-reflect has to be created to help all students and namely Black students begin and continue to *self-reflect* when they read text that is written about them, for them and by Black authors. Gay and Kirkland (2003) stated “self-reflection and cultural critical consciousness

are imperative to improving the educational opportunities and outcomes for students of color” (p. 182). According to the online dictionary, www.merriam-webster.com, self-reflection, a noun, means “self-examination” and the most fitting synonym is something akin to soul searching. In this study and as a verb, *self-reflect* means to visually see oneself in a comparative state to a phenomenon, an experience, or an event. Moreover, the word self-reflect has a space and a place with the words self-awareness, self-affirmation, and identity as it pertains to multicultural literature and its human audience. *Self-reflections* are synonymous to the term mirrors as described by Dr. Rudine Sims-Bishop (2007) but not as superficial as the making connection strategies such as text to self.

Conversely, the word, *self-reflect*, belongs in a space of depth, awareness, acceptance, understanding, appreciation, and fearlessness. Reflect is paired with the word self as the overarching power. Self-reflect is a fresh literacy term that will be used to help marginalized students see their authentic selves in the literature that is written for and by people of color, specifically Black people in this study. While the reader engages with reading multicultural literature and self-reflects, the reader will become immersed into seeing and finding likeness within the text. The reader will search for identity or likenesses. In the process of self-reflecting with literature, the reader must have or begin to use self-awareness, apply positive self-affirmation, and know one’s identity or individuality when reading multicultural literature (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020). Again, a two year old child readily self-reflects while listening to a text read by his parents while picture reading the illustrations which is aligned with Black Identity Development’s Naïve stage.

Recent Studies of Self-Reflection among Black Children

Furthermore, self-reflections and multicultural literature afford an opportunity for Black children to engage in positive self-awareness, identity, and self-affirmation by expressing what they see when they read multicultural literature from the Black experience. In a variety of the studies using multicultural literature, researchers used implemented approaches to encourage, motivate and create a sense of acceptance for Black students through text selections, bibliotherapy, readers' theatre, read aloud, and reading block integration. These studies show the need to focus on student responses in a way that allows the students to provide self-reflections using everyday multicultural literature from the Black experience.

The earliest of these five studies, Williams (2008) used grounded research to study 293 African American boys and girls who were tasked to self-select books from the book fair to provide reasons for their text selections. The findings concluded that "the influence of media and mass marketing saturated the data and everyday cultures" and "served as a foundation for the grounded theory that participants' source of familiarity influenced their descriptions of book selections" (Williams, 2008, p. 60). Williams (2008) offered an extension to the research by finding out whether these book selections increased reading achievement and facilitated an interest in actually reading them after selection. She also challenged teaching pedagogy to include literature in the classroom that mirrors the "everyday lives and cultures of the children in both spaces and linking those texts to instructional course mapping" (Williams, 2008, p. 62). Williams' (2008) aim did not include the participants' self-reflections while reading, but the overall goal was defined as the reason for text selection which is very close to seeking evidence regarding understanding self-reflection and book choices.

Next, Ford et. al. (2019) suggested bibliotherapy as an approach to promote cognitive skills and self-esteem and gifted Black girls. In the study, they found appropriate use of texts that have “various narratives, stories, and shared voices of resilience where black girls may be able to “see themselves and take comfort in reading about the strength of others . . . but one cannot be what he or she cannot see” (Ford et. al., 2019, p. 55). This finding and powerful quote provides support for the use of multicultural literature as a promising way to make connections and foster self-reflection. It is also recommended that gifted African American girls read texts that reflect their heritage, lifestyle, and day-to-day encounters to increase their abilities, participation, and enthusiasm (Ford et. al., 2019). In the Ford et al. (2019) study, it can be inferred the participants were provided texts that provided a type of mirror of experience, but the books are just references to help students cope with acceptance and provide motivation to persevere when times are tough for Black girls.

Similarly, Jeffries and Jeffries (2014) found that readers theatre “participants reference greatness taken directly from a literary work” and placed “literacy at the very center of the shared experience” (p. 208). In support of components of multiculturalism, hair, power, race and gender issues, Black adolescent girls used Sylviane Diouf’s (2001), *Bintou’s Braids*, to create a readers theatre script to capture the concerns and interests about the role of African American hair. According to Jeffries and Jeffries (2014), “this activity was used to enhance knowledge, increase knowledge acquisition, expand comfort for critical or tough discussions, and engage in constructive and positive behaviors” (p. 209). This script was created for elementary students using a text that supports compelling female central characters who represent positive influences. The reader's theater script version of the text, *Bintou’s Braids*, filled the insufficient accessibility

to reading selections; however, the multicultural literature was used as reference for acceptance and problem solving approaches for the failed beauty standards in the United States.

Additionally, Black girls must accept and recognize their hair and blackness. The multicultural text centers itself around the texture, length, and beauty in having and wearing black hair as a character struggles to accept her own *small tuffs* of black hair. Jeffries and Jeffries (2014), explained how “There is a complex, cultural symbol overflowing with a varied connotation dependent upon the audience of interpreters” (p. 208). Additionally, in society, there are those “who gaze upon black females and may be seen as defiance against the norms” (Jeffries & Jeffries, 2014, p. 209). The researchers supported the need for more methodologies using literacy strategies that support multicultural literature about hair experiences and strength for black girls. The other themes, moral development, affirmation, rites of passage ritual and social responsibility were explored to support black girls with acceptance and recognition about hair insecurities using multicultural literature.

In contrast, Piper (2019) conducted a study to examine African American children's identity development and perception when engaged in multicultural social justice literature that captures the Civil Rights Movement of 1965. This type of literature highlighted the social change of minorities who created a platform through *movement– oriented social action*. In this case at the freedom school summer program third through fifth grade participants the goal was to explore the Black identity development of elementary-aged children and their engagement with *Civil Rights- Themed Literature*. The participants developed an understanding of the process and how to interact with the literature which is key in this case. The findings included all of the participants connected with the text and provided evidence that the African American participants did connect with African American multicultural literature based on the characters'

parental experiences, comparative experiences with Mexican African-American characters and the segregation the characters faced, and connections to today's and past civil rights issues.

However, the participants were taught strategies and instructional practices to reflect and connect to historical multicultural literature instead of multicultural literature from the everyday experience using empathy.

Furthermore, Piper (2019) has asserted that it is believed that the text in the students' classrooms were likely from a Eurocentric perspective because the participants had difficulty making superficial connections within the text and with characters, specifically. The absence of connections to multicultural social justice literature and a reduction in their racial representation in the text, the participants were left with a lack of interaction with multicultural children's literature and given contact with traditional school curriculum that included the Eurocentric perspective.

Whereas Piper (2019) studied historical multicultural literature, Lawrence et al. (2017) conducted a study with three pre-service teachers who helped Black students make connections, text to lived experiences, with multicultural literature from the everyday experience and from the historical perspective in their clinical practice. In one of the classrooms, the students were challenged to closely examine multicultural literature that presented biases and the stereotypes that reduced Black accomplishments during close reading. In the third classroom the students read self-selected narrative and expository text that "reflected their cultural background during small group instruction" (Lawrence et al., 2017, p. 38). All of the classroom experiences that used multicultural literature were linked to instructional practices that placed multicultural literature as the secondary instructional focus while practices such as writing composition and comprehension questions were the focal point.

The first classroom's clinical teacher explicitly asked the students "to reflect on the class textbooks and whether they believe the texts reflected them or whether people encountered in the texts "looked like them" (Lawrence et al., 2017, p. 35). However, the three students reported how using a culturally responsive curriculum and supplemental materials impacted their lives by making them aware of themselves and their heritage. While one student understood more about his lifestyle and found solutions to improve their quality of life from the new learning and reading experiences using multicultural literature.

The results included that in the first classroom experiences, the students compared their current textbooks to the multicultural texts, began to show higher level questioning skills, and increased their background knowledge. Similarly, the second classroom teacher found the African American boys fundamentally selected texts "that they have some background knowledge of or can relate to" (Lawrence et al., 2017, p. 37). Lastly, the third classroom "multicultural text fostered an increase in students' comprehension of the text" (Lawrence et al., 2017, p. 39). In contrast, the literature did not explore independent self-reflections, but the reflections that were provided increased the students' reading achievement. This study explicitly asked the students to self-reflect but the self-reflections seemed to be solution oriented and tapped into self-revelations instead of expressing their likeness to the text.

Studies have been conducted to find out how African American students connect to multicultural literature, but their responses or activities related to the connection does not offer evidence that tells how the students see themselves based on what they have read. For example, the students did not share responses that prove the text mirrors their everyday life experiences and gave evidence about how they see themselves. The activities were solution oriented that allowed the participants to find ways to navigate through life as Black young person which is

commendable. The studies offered opportunities that allowed the students to learn positive behaviors, find ways to validate oneself in conversations, to feel accepted, and simply to participate in the reading process for motivation and to have Black representation in literature.

Connections to Representation

Today multicultural literature has continued to follow *The Brownies' Book* vision to provide a proper influence on Black children in schools. Morrell and Morrell (2012) made “a case that centered multicultural literature in English language arts classrooms” (p. 10). Morrell and Morrell (2012) made the claim during a reading of *Busy Toes* by C.W. Bowie, their two year old child exclaimed, “that’s me”, each time the child saw a character with the same skin complexion, tresses and facial characteristics. Self-reflecting with a text at any age will allow children to continue the process of self-affirmation, self-awareness, and the relationship to instructional vernacular and texts. Morrell and Morrell’s (2012) stance on and evidence of independent self-reflections support the need to explore multicultural literature, if students in the K-6 setting were taught or allowed to make self-reflective connections when reading multicultural literature.

In media, movies like the newly released Disney’s *Encanto*, a two year African American boy and a two year old Portuguese girl have seen themselves in the characters (Figure 2). As Figure 2 illustrates Kenzo Bastien on Instagram (katchingupwithkenzo, 2021) saw himself in the character Antonio. Kenzo’s mother reported, “he seemed to be in awe, just smiling and staring at the screen” (Schweitzer, 2022, para. 3). His mother believes Kenzo saw himself in Antonio because they share the same resemblance. The Instagram posts in Figure 2 show Kenzo in awe at Antonio in the movie, *Encanto*. Kenzo and Antonio have fluffy, curly afro hairstyles that spread out like sun rays from a small sun, light brown skin, and similar facial features, specifically the nose and

the eyebrows. Antonio's physical features offered a mirror image for Kenzo that caused him to point at the television screen without prompting as if to silently say "That's me!"

Figure 2

Kenzo Bastien



Note. Kenzo sees himself in Antonio from @katchingupwithkenzo on Instagram.

Lastly, two year old Manu on Instagram (manubaby03, 2022) saw herself in the character Mirabel from Disney's Encanto (Figure 3). During Mirabel's two stages of life in the movie, Manu said in Portuguese, "It's me, mommy" and "I grew up, mommy" (Valdivia, 2022). Manu and Mirabel share similar skin complexions, eyewear, bright eyes, and short chocolate brown, bouncy curls. In photographs presented in Figure 3, Manu shows her excitement when she sees Mirabel and thinks that is her in the movie.

Figure 3*Manu Araujo Marques*

Note. Manu sees herself in Mirabel as a child and a grown up from @manubaby03 on Instagram.

The connection between media and multicultural literature exists in representation for people of color, and media leans toward the visual representations that are created as illustrations on screen. The same connection to the media's visuals can produce the same or similar effects resulting in reactions that will produce self-reflections. It is evident that children know what they look like and can identify their likeness based on physical appearances. They can articulate their reflections by pointing to their likeness or stating in their native languages that they see themselves. For example, according to Reed (2021): "From movies and television shows, to politics, and of course, throughout literature, the gospel truth is that representation does matter. People like to see and hear stories about people who look, sound and live just like them" (para. 1). Reed (2021) goes one to emphasize how representation is important because it affords Black children to see themselves in literature, and "for every reader, regardless of their circumstances, life experiences, or reading ability, to have at least one opportunity to nod, laugh and say

“YAAS! I know exactly what you talking’ ‘bout!” (para. 8). Reed (2021) often shared personal and funny childhood stories with his students because his stories resonate and affirm connectedness across the Black experience in the United States.

At age 4, Tameca from brownbabiesbooks.com (n.d), found Black representation from Lisa and Lisa’s mother in the book *Corduroy* by Don Freeman that allowed her to see herself and her mother. She saw her hairstyle, the determination to have a teddy bear and her mom’s budgeting skills in the text. She also found it challenging to access representation in characters in books and authors of books, and that was a concern not only for her but other parents. Her work began at Brown Babies Books, after she began to share titles and lists with friends and the community.

Author Derrick Barnes (n.d) shared his purpose for writing *I Am Every Good Thing*. Barnes (n.d.) explains how he “wrote this book for Black boys and the people that love them all over the globe. Their lives are just as priceless as any other son or grandson or nephew of any other hue” (para., 9). He acknowledged Black boys’ royalty across the globe in New York, California, Haiti, South Africa, London, and Nigeria. Dr. Zetta Elliott (n.d) found that her invisibility in the world brought out writing. While she predominantly writes about Black children, she finds writing for that audience to be therapeutic as she “gives a voice to the diverse realities of children” (para., 2). She writes the books that she wished she had access to as a child; books that cover hardships, discrimination, and substance abuse. Authors write to inspire, connect with, motivate, and provide representation for their readers. Children are responding by making connections and through self-reflection of their representative work whether it is in print, multicultural literature or in media, a movie. Reader response theory and Black identity

development may provide insight on how to develop self-reflections using multicultural literature from the African American experience.

Framing Self-reflection through Theory

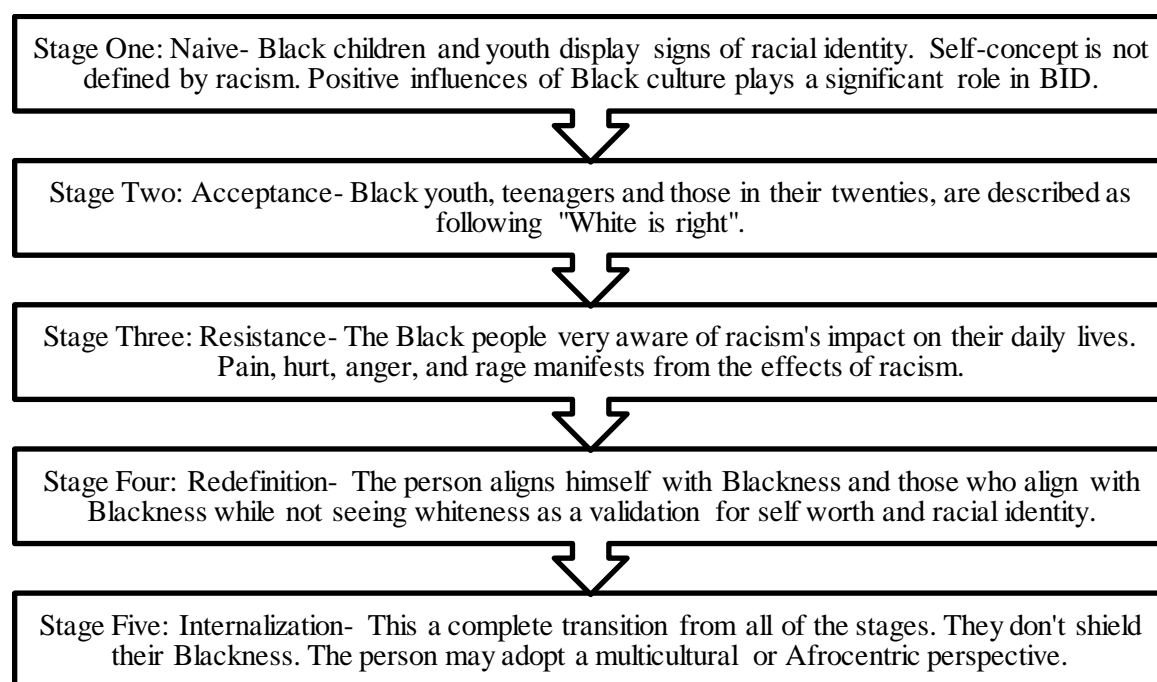
There were a number of promising theoretical frameworks for connecting self-reflection with multicultural literature. For example, *Reading Identities* (Niland, 2021) focuses on the ways that the reader embodies oneself while reading across subjects and time. It shows who readers are when they interact with texts instead of focusing on reading skill development. As a cognitive and social act, reading does afford the reader to construct meaning but to also place oneself and one's life into the act of reading (Wagner, 2019) which would support self-reflections while reading African American children's literature. Reading identity develops reading interests, inspiration and self-confidence. Reading identities should be developed at an early age (Niland, 2021). Third grade students who self-reflect when reading may have developed a reading identity that can be associated with understanding who they are as a reader and connecting it to reading content that is self-reflective. It would be beneficial to have insight on what literary features cause Black children to self-reflect and create ways to build their reading identity that includes the Black experience.

Niland (2021) reported that teachers can facilitate reading identities by providing diverse texts or picture books that represent the students' backgrounds. Nonfiction text can be restated with the same understanding, but fiction does not follow the same rules because emotions and experiences are involved. However, if the student knows the task before reading, that should provide direction to approach the text and the follow up with corresponding or desired responses.

Black Identity Development Theory (Jackson III, 2012) was the primary theoretical framework in my research study. This theory provided insight into how Black Identity

Development develop self-reflections using multicultural literature from the African American experience and how they listen to and interact with stories. The Black Identity Development model found that as Black children transition from the Naïve stage to the Acceptance stage of consciousness, Black children begin to learn and adopt the ways of their cultural group and that of other groups. Specifically, among African Americans, the children begin to recognize whiteness as superior, normal, beautiful, and powerful. Black children often have strong and appropriate self-confidence until they begin to understand where society plays them in the world (Jackson III, 2012).

Jackson revised his previous work on Black Identity Development to highlight how Black culture, culture of race and ethnic cultures influenced four of his five stages, which include: Stage 1: Naïve; Stage 2: Acceptance; Stage 3: Resistance; Stage 4: Redefinition; and Stage 5: Internalization (Figure 4). According to Jackson III (2012), “Black Identity development introduced a theoretical framework that emerged from research conducted by Jackson and was designed to establish the existence and nature of stages of Black Identity Development” (p. 38). It also included the stages of consciousness that Black people tend to follow in the development of their Racial/Black Identity.

Figure 4*Black Identity Development*

Note. Black Identity Development emphasized the presence of race/culture perspectives.

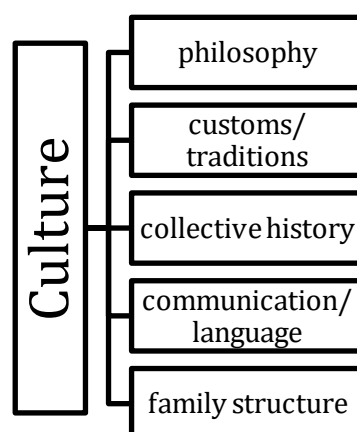
The Black Identity Development Naïve stage of happens within the early childhood stages; children are aware of their physical appearance and differences among other races. However, during this stage, Black children do not feel a sense of inferiority, distress or aggression. There is a sense of interest without placing a high regard on other racial differences over their own likeness. As Black children transition from this stage, they begin to view Blackness as less than Whiteness, and they learn the social norms and rules in the world as a Black person. The environment in which the Black children are reared will inform their structure of Blackness and cultural messages specifically from the Black social agents and institutions that transport Black or African American distinctiveness (Jackson III, 2012).

Jackson also shared the importance of culture as major influence in Black Identity Development in four of the five stages and as “an interweaving of both effects of racism and

elements that are part of a heritage of Black culture that exists independently, to varying degrees, of the primary influence of racism” (p.39). Jackson suggested from Tatum (1992) that children’s school experiences with racism and parental guidance with positive experiences also shape Black children’s identity. Self-concept is developed by the positive influences of Black culture concurrently with racism. Black culture (Figure 5) in Black Identity development focused on philosophy, customs and traditions, collective history, communication and language, and family structure. In the study, Black culture will be used to help unpack the findings.

Figure 5

Elements of Black Identity Development’s Culture



Note. Black Identity Development draws on culture to show how it manifests in the development process as well as race relations outside of the Black community.

As the children transition from the Naïve to the Acceptance stage, they begin to learn and adopt an ideology about their own racial group as well as other racial groups, in addition to understanding messages that being Black is inferior and being White is superior to being Black. They also learn that they are susceptible to being treated unfairly based on societal norms in places, among people, and under certain rules with a set of consequences for Black people based on race relations. Jackson III (2012) stated that Black children are influenced by more than just

racism but five elements of culture that have significant markers in their development namely, “the biological and extended family; the Black community; faith-based institutions; social clubs; schools; and other socializing institution that carry the uniqueness of Black/African American culture” (p. 41). Black children’s ethical and spiritual influences, historical background, and lessons learned from and about the Black family contribute to their Black Identity Development. The Black contributors to the Black community and the larger society by other Black people have an influence on their developmental process as well.

At the Acceptance stage, a Black person has internalized the barrage of negative messages about what it means to be Black in the United States such as Black male incarceration and the lack of educational advancements for Blacks against the positive outcomes from the Black people in the United States. This stage is regarded for Black youth in their teenage years and their twenties who “struggle with developing understanding of racism and with decisions about how much they are doing to fight or collide with the expectations that a White racist society imposes on them” (Jackson III, 2012, p. 42). They follow the “White is right” notion.

The Resistance stage “continues with greater intensity because Black people are painfully aware of the numerous ways in which covert as well as overt racism impacts them daily as Black people” (Jackson III, 2012, p. 43). They begin to scrutinize all codes and values passed down by White culture and anyone that colludes with the manifestations of White racism. This stage contains anger, pain, hurt, and rage. At the Redefinition stage the Black person is concerned with defining oneself without the lens of Whiteness. During this stage, the Black person places attention on connecting with other Black people who are moving in the same direction, namely defining oneself independent of Whiteness and do not find it necessary to have Whiteness as the marker for a positive sense of self and racial identity. At the Redefinition stage, the Black

cultural perspective is strongest and most salient in one's life. In the last stage, Internalization, the Black person has transitioned and experienced all of the stages of development and no longer feels the need to describe, defend, or safeguard their Black identity. As all things Black are disregarded, demeaned, or condemned by society, nurturing is essential. Instead they may balance their lifestyle with an Afrocentric perspective and lifestyle or adopt a multicultural perspective.

Identity formation includes commitments to roles and relationships, and identity may be multifaceted (e.g., social, cultural, academic, athletic). Specifically, identity is the aspect of the self that is most salient to interact in particular contexts and aspect of the self to which one is deeply committed. Reading can also offer preadolescents opportunities for aesthetic experiences while supporting their complex quests for meaning and identity. Books may be a perfect method for identity exploration for advanced readers (Walker et al., 2021). Trotman-Scott (2014) found that racial identity is a key component in the psychological and social well-being and health of children. A positive self-awareness raises and enhances social relations, disposition, and educational achievement.

Moving Forward with this Current Study

The Black Identity Development theoretical framework along with the findings in this literature review helped to shape the purposes for my dissertation research study. Again, the purpose of my study is to describe and report on how Black children respond to African American literature that is written for and about them. In this study, I used picture books that include Black characters and perspectives. Picture books refer to the genre of children's literature in which "pictures and written text are interdependent"; "the two forms working together tell the story or relate the content," and "a major part of the story is carried with pictures" (Sims Bishop,

2007, p. 115). The illustrations are an extension of the text that fills in the gaps and tells the story instead of situating illustrations as isolated events or encounters in the text. Picture books were used to help provide an understanding of the visual and auditory elements that may contribute to the eliciting student responses that provide a self-reflection or statements about seeing oneself.

According to Tyner and Green (2012), shared reading allows the teacher and the student to share the reading experience using text. The students are held “accountable for whispering along or chorally reading with the teacher. It is inappropriate to ask individual students to read the text aloud in the shared reading setting” (p. 13). The shared reading provides an opportunity to read and share a particular grade level specific text. The shared reading model uses grade level appropriate texts.

Fountas and Pinnell (1996) shared that “shared reading allows students to join the teacher to read aloud in unison from an enlarged text- big book, a poem, or any enlarged message or story” (p. 27). The selected text should foster reading enjoyment and will be requested for repeated reading. According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), “Aside from the literacy learning involved, another value of shared reading is the role it can play in creating a community of readers who enjoy participating together in literacy events” (p. 28). Additionally Fountas and Pinnell (2001) affirmed students to read along with the teacher and occasionally the students will read the text to the teacher. The students can study the text with the teacher.

In the next chapter, I explain the qualitative research design that explored the ways in which the study’s participants’ responses were engaged with self-reflections of the multicultural literature selection. While the literature shed light on a variety ways Black children respond to multicultural literature, my study filled a gap in the literature by purposely investigating how

Black children in the third and fourth grade identify with and self-reflect on multicultural literature. I selected third and fourth grade Black children because that is when literacy is developing for many students as they are learning to read independently. The study included detailed descriptions of how the students see themselves in the characters and events. The qualitative research design of the study provided ways to examine how the literary features in multicultural literature could spark connections for how students see themselves and self-reflect on the literature they have selected. This study aimed to help Black students be aware of and connected to the African American that is written for and about them. The study has the potential to be helpful to Black parents and children by giving themselves permission to express how multicultural literature is just like them and to articulate their justifications with pride, love, and security. W. E. B. DuBois wanted Black people to read literature that exemplified they are a beautiful thing in the world. The study aimed to be part of DuBois' vision for what multicultural literature could embody.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I explain the research methodology for my study. This includes describing the research questions, the research design, the ethical review and permission for the study, the participants, the data collection instrument, the pilot study I conducted to refine the data collection instrument, and the data analysis for the study. Again, the study's purpose is to examine how Black children see themselves in African American multicultural literature and to investigate the literary elements that evoke their responses and self-reflections. Using a qualitative research design, the methodology for my study is intended to address a gap in the literature by exploring and investigating how Black children identify with and self-reflect when reading African American multicultural literature.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to describe and report on the ways in which Black children respond to African American multicultural literature that is written for and about them. Equally important, another purpose of this study is to and examine the factors that influence Black children's responses to text. This study uncovered how Black children see themselves in text, converse about their cultural and racial identity after reading African American multicultural literature and make connections to the text's literary features that may evoke their responses. The study was conducted using semi-structured interviews about a collection of African American multicultural literature to capture the students' responses. With all of the African American multicultural literature that has been written for Black children for over 100 years, Black children should be able to racially identify with the text and have conversations about their connections to the reading experience.

Research Questions

In order to meet the purposes of the study, the study is premised on the following three research questions:

RQ1: How do Black children respond to African American multicultural literature?

RQ2: How do Black children describe their cultural and racial identity within African American multicultural literature?

RQ3: What literary features facilitate Black children's ability to self-reflect?

Research Design

The aforementioned research questions were intended to guide the qualitative research design for this study in order to explore Black children's self-reflections when they read African-American multicultural literature and to examine the literary features that influence their self-reflections. This study was based mainly on qualitative methodology using semi-structured interviews. As Miles and Huberman (1994) explained, qualitative methodology is research that is conducted in natural settings with ordinary events that occur naturally, so that we have a strong handle on what is happening. Qualitative research can include data collection methods like artifact analysis, field observations, participant observations, and interviews with participants.

The qualitative research method for this study explores my personal, intellectual and practical goals. Maxwell (2008) shared that "personal goals are those that motivate you to do this study; they can include a desire to change some existing situation, a curiosity about a specific phenomenon or event, or simply the need to advance your career" (p. 219). Initially, my research centered on finding out if using African American leveled text during guided reading would help first grade Black children become a better reader. The research would explore Black children seeing themselves in the text and reading everyday African American experiences,

fictional text, within a six week period in a first grade classroom. I was a former reading specialist and first grade teacher who helped young readers make significant reading gains within a six week reading period without using overtly multicultural texts.

With the shift to the idea of seeing yourself in Black literature and media, I wanted to teach Black children how to read these texts, check to see if they were able to see themselves, and the impact those components would have on reading achievement. Maxwell acknowledged the importance of using your personal goals to drive and inform your research. With support from dissertation chairs, the study shifted to the precursor to reading achievement in my proposed study to how do Black children see themselves when reading African American multicultural children's literature which is my intellectual goal.

According to Maxwell, intellectual goals are centered on "understanding something, gaining some insight into what is going on and why it is happening" (p. 220). There are five intellectual goals that are valuable in qualitative research studies. First, an intellectual goal is interpreting meaning from the participants' perspective and the stories they give about their lives and experiences. In this qualitative study, I interpreted the participants' responses to understanding the ways that they see themselves using African American multicultural literature and the ways in which they identify their racial and cultural identities. Second, qualitative research typically studies a small group of participants, for example in this study, there are 8 (n=8) participants, and it is important to understand the context of the research. Third, an intellectual goal in a qualitative study is to identify "unanticipated phenomena and influences, generate new grounded theories about the latter while testing and exploring questionnaires" (p. 221). This goal supports my drive to explore self-reflections and the ways that they happen for Black children who read African American multicultural children's literature. Maxwell shared

the fourth goal as an understanding of processes by which events and actions take place. In the study, the participants are allowed to select their own texts, choose their shared reading preference, and discuss their experiences as the interview protocol is asked. The last goal, the fifth, is to make causal explanations “in terms of processes and mechanisms, rather than simply demonstrating regularities in the relationship between variables” (Maxwell, 2008, p. 221).

Maxwell (2008) found that practical goals in qualitative research produced understandable and credible results and theories from experiments for the parties involved - the participants, the researcher, Black authors, the Black community and others who desire to identify and understand ways Black children see themselves. Practical goals in qualitative research are designed to conduct formative studies, “ones that are intended to help improve existing practice rather than to determine the outcomes of programs or practices being studied” (p. 222). Lastly, practical goals in qualitative research engage in empowerment research with research participants. This practical goal aligns with the Black author’s purpose for writing children’s literature to allow Black children to see themselves, and this study explores their voice and responses to validate what they do and do not see when reading.

Qualitative research design is a way for researchers to examine and explore research questions that will explain what the study will attempt to learn or understand (Maxwell, 2005). Additionally, a qualitative research design should be “a reflective process” and “one in which components work harmoniously together” (p. 2). This dissertation study reflects features of the qualitative research design in that I examined and explored how Black children self-reflect on their selections of African American multicultural literature. This is a topic that has not been examined all that much in the literature.

The qualitative methodology helped to shape and structure the study's data collection instruments and data analysis. Although I used the existing theory, Black Identity Development Theory (Jackson III, 2012), to discuss the findings from the data, the influence of qualitative research design was connected to investigate the everyday lives of individuals. In this study my goal was to examine Black children's voices from the study's interviews as they shared how they see themselves (old problem) in everyday African American children's literature and to develop and conceptualize some terminology for their voices (new and emerging area). According to Maxwell's goals (2008), qualitative research design seeks to find and describe explanations for what happened in the data and allows the researcher to describe, explain, interpret, and make sense of the participants' responses and interactions in a study.

Following that description by Maxwell, my qualitative study included the use of semi-structured interviews for data collection in order to capture how Black children respond and self-reflect on their choices of African American multicultural literature. The semi-structure interview data collection allowed me to explore the: (1) ways that Black children see themselves in African American multicultural literature; (2) their racial and cultural connection to African American multicultural literature; (3) and the expression of commonalities within literary elements in African American multicultural literature.

In this study, I examined and compared the participants' responses to the interview protocol that was part of the semi-structured interview data collection. The constant comparative method also uncovered some similarities and differences in how Black children read and responded to African American multicultural literature. The constant comparative method provided a way to report on the meanings and interpretations of the participants' responses. Ezzy (2002) stated that "comparisons allow data to be grouped and differentiated, as categories

are identified and various pieces of data are grouped together” (p. 90). Using the constant comparison process will also reveal how responses that appeared to be unrelated have common themes or codes and these that appear to be similar have differences as they may belong with another code.

Ezzy (2002) explained how the core of qualitative methodology is in uncovering the meaning making that participants engage in about a problem or issue under study. Ezzy (2002) also explained how findings develop and emerge from the data and are not created before the data collection. The findings from qualitative exploratory research can lead to future research studies that help to shape the development of ideas and conceptual frameworks for future exploration (Mertens, 2014).

In this qualitative research study, I explored how children's literature could be a gateway for Black children's self-reflections about how they may see themselves in the African American multicultural literature they are reading. The study was based on semi-structured interviews for the data collection. The qualitative research design helped to further shape the semi-structured interview protocol as I organized and wrote questions about the process, questions about the central problem or experience, and questions that addressed an individual experience (Charmaz, 2001). Additionally, the interviews required specific attention and consideration to interviewing Black children in order to generate a conversation about their experiences while reading African American multicultural literature and to find out how they see themselves while interacting the literature during the interview.

Charmaz (2001) explained how interviews are also ways to capture the “individual experience” (p. 678) of the participants in a study. For the semi-structured interviews, each data collection session was conducted using a one-on-one interview procedure. This one-to-one

interview procedure allowed the participants to share their individual perceptions and self-reflections of the text they selected.

This interview study allowed the participants to select an African American text to read then share how they see themselves or self-reflect from a set of before, during and after interview questions. I describe the interview protocol that I followed in the Data Collection section further below. I also explain how I piloted this interview protocol using semi structured interviews in order to refine the questions and make sure that I was indeed asking questions in ways that second and third grade Black children would understand.

Ethical Review for the Study

Before I could conduct the pilot study and this main research study I had my research design vetted and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for ethical research at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. I submitted and received IRB approval for this entire study including for the piloting of the data collection instruments like the study's interview protocol. After approval from IRB, the participant recruitment process began with gaining permission to conduct the study from branch managers at the Bridgeforth Avenue Youth, Emma Road Youth Club, and Curbell Lane Youth Club. As I mentioned earlier in the dissertation, these three youth club names are pseudonyms. Then, I sent an interest and recruitment letter to parents at Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club, Emma Road Youth Club, and Curbell Lane Youth Club in order to identify potential participants for this study. I obtained written parent consent and written student assent from all participants including from the participants in the study's pilot study. The participants' parents gave their consent for their children to be part of the study. Likewise, all the student participants gave their assent to participate in the research study at their respective locations.

The Study's Location and Participants

The study was proposed and conducted at three local Boys and Girls Clubs, which I will refer to as Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club, Emma Road Youth Club, and Curbell Lane Youth Club. These clubs are primarily after school clubs that engage with youth—including elementary aged Black children. The participants in this study were selected using a unique and purposeful sampling method (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) to primarily recruit third grade Black children at the Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club, Emma Road Youth Club, and Curbell Lane Youth Club to participate in the study. This purposeful sampling method is “based on unique, atypical, perhaps rare attributes or occurrences of the phenomenon of interest” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 97). I purposely recruited third grade students to further understand one of the ages groups within the Black Identity Development Theoretical Model (Jackson III, 2012). According to the Black Identity Development Theory, around the third and fourth grade, Black children often transition from the Naïve stage to the Acceptance stage of consciousness. At this Acceptance state, Black children begin to learn and adopt the ways of their cultural group and that of other groups. Specifically, among African Americans, the children begin to recognize whiteness as superior, normalcy, beauty, and power. Black children have good and appropriate self-confidence until they begin to understand where society places them in the world (Jackson III, 2012).

It is important to note that reading achievement scores were not a factor for recruitment in this study. The participants were not selected based on their reading ability or reading achievement; this study aimed to examine and report on the responses that Black children produced to provide more insight about seeing themselves when they read multicultural literature. As I will explain later in this section, the proposed African American multicultural

literature for the interview protocol pilot and for this study was appropriate for students who are ages five through ten years old.

To be selected for the study, the participants needed to identify as Black and be a participant in either the Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club, Emma Road Youth Club or the Curbell Lane Youth Club. They also needed to assent to participate in the study. Their parent or guardian also needed to give consent to participate in the study. The study was open to students of various backgrounds who identify as Black such as African American, Caribbean, Afro-Latino or Latina, African and other religious or culture groups that identify as Black. The purpose for this inclusion was to have all children who are members of the African diaspora who typically do and do not identify as African American and who live in and/or are from the United States. However, they must identify as a Black person.

Initially, the selection process consisted of randomly choosing a total of 5-10 participants if more than 10 students agreed to participate. However, only 8 third graders and 4 fourth graders (for the pilot study) were available to participate and they all met the study's criteria. Those students participated and closed the selection process.

Sample Description

The interview protocol pilot study included four Black participants in fourth grade while the main research study included 8 (n=8) Black students in third grade who attended either Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club, Emma Road Youth Club and/or Curbell Lane Youth Club. The ideal student age range was between eight and ten years old. Third and fourth grade Black boys and girls were recruited in the study to provide a perspective from both genders of the Black children. Prior to conducting the study, I spent a significant amount of time at the sites as a registered volunteer, specifically Curbell Lane Youth Club, and I provided reading services for

second through fifth grade participants. For the purpose of the study, I visited the Emma Road and Bridgeforth Avenue's sites to get to the layout of the youth clubs and to participate in the welcoming activities to conduct getting to know you activities with the potential participants. I also arranged individual meetings with the parents to share the purpose of the study and the study's design.

Data Collection

The data collection in this study was based on a semi-structured interview design. I utilized a semi-structured interview research design in this study to explore the meaning of participants' perceptions and self-reflections throughout the active interview process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Roulston (2010), semi-structured interview is usually an open-ended prepared interview guide that includes many questions. During the semi-structured interview process, the researcher asks the participant questions and often probes or follows up with additional questions to seek more details and descriptions about the questions posed. It calls for great listening skills. Using a semi-structured interview in this study is a great fit for children because the question prompts were used to gain clarity, descriptions, and data to address the research questions.

The semi-structured interview method for data collection allowed me to better understand how Black third graders connected to children's literature, their world, and to their thinking process before, during, and after a reading session. During the interview study, I used a before, during, and after reading model with questions that explored and defined the process. Additionally, I found that during the data collection and after the data collection, I questioned the data by asking so what questions. I included questions about the participants' book selection and their responses to that question for the interview. I questioned their responses by rereading from

meaning and clarity. I questioned their responses and the interview questions for meaning that would unfold the way they talk about their Blackness. I also valued the participants' verbal and nonverbal responses.

There was a data collection process for this study. Using a schedule, I conducted the one on one interviews with the participants in several cycles. I interviewed Participant 1 then I transcribed the data. After the first cycle, I interviewed Participants 2 and 3 then I went back to the Youth Clubs to conduct the study on two different days with Participants 4 and 5. I concluded the study by interviewing three additional participants at Curbell Lane Youth Club over three days. I followed my interview schedule. The semi structured interviews were conducted at each youth center site, Emma Road, Bridgeforth Avenue, and Curbell Lane in a small classroom that was child friendly and allowed the participants remain in the comfort of their day to day environment.

The Emma Road, Bridgeforth Avenue, and Curbell Youth Centers participants arrived at the center at about 3:15 and left with their parents before 7:30pm. Prior to the study, I spent several days and hours at all of the sites to build relationships with the branch managers, participants, and parents. I met with the branch managers to discuss the site and to find the best atmosphere on site to conduct the interviews. Between the three sites, I scheduled times to meet with the parents to discuss the study, and I followed up with them to collect the interest forms and to give the parents the study's next steps. Simultaneously, I continued to build relationships with the members (participants) by engaging in art projects, meeting with them to share common interests, talking with them at arrival and dismissal, and participating in youth club activities at each site. I became very familiar with the participants and their siblings, cousins and friends. In

total, I spent about 28 hours of time at all three sites. The interviews lasted for about 20-30 minutes each with the understanding that relationship building was integral in the process.

That process included a pilot study of the data collection instruments. In this section, I discuss and explain the list of books (Table 1) that I generated for the students to choose from for this study. Then, I discuss the use of a Shared Reading approach that I used for the data collection. The Shared Reading (Figure 4) approach is a method for having students examine, select, and engaged in a shared reading response of text. After explaining the Shared Reading method, I describe and share the Interview Protocol (Figure 5) that I used for the study's data collection. The Interview Protocol was what I followed for conducting the interview study with each of the study's participants. After describing these data collection instruments, I explain the way I revised these instruments based on the pilot study that I conducted.

List of Books

I started with 20 African American multicultural literature books based on some of my personal selections and recommendations from a reading professor and a library assistant in the local area. Because my study focused on African American multicultural literature and seeing yourself, I thought the study needed to also include the latest literature that was written in 2022. Black authors wrote their books to provide a text for and about Black children. I believed the vision to allow Black children to see themselves was continued and strengthened in the African American multicultural children's literature that was published in 2022.

During the reading session of the interview study, there were 26 African American multicultural picture books and the accompanying summaries provided as a single selection for the study. Figure 4 lists the African American multicultural literature for the study. Majority of the books were written by authors who identify as African American and wrote a story about the

everyday life of a Black child living in the United States which falls under the realistic fiction category of literature for children. One of the books, *Strong to the Hoop*, is written by a white male author, John Coy. This book captured the everyday events at the neighborhood basketball court that African American boys would encounter and possibly would allow the participants to see themselves in the text.

Table 1

List of Proposed Multicultural Literature for this Study

<i>A Girl Like Me</i> By: Angela Johnson	<i>Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self</i> By: Frank Morrison
<i>A Special Place for Alex</i> By: Karen Boyd Cross	<i>Kicks</i> By: Van Garrett
<i>Cool Cuts</i> By: Mechal Renee Roe	<i>Me & Mama</i> By: Cozbi A Cabrera
<i>Daddy and Me and the Rhyme to Be</i> By: Chris Bridges and Halcyon Person	<i>My Mommy Medicine</i> By: Edwidge Danticat
<i>Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize</i> By: Brittany Mazique	<i>My Name is a Story</i> By: Ashanti
<i>Don't Touch My Hair</i> By: Sharee Miller	<i>Princess Cupcake Jones and the Dance Recital</i> By: Ylleya Fields
<i>Glow</i> By: Ruth Forman	<i>Queen of the Scene</i> By: Queen Latifah
<i>Hair Love</i> By: Matthew A. Cherry	<i>Ruby's Reunion Day Dinner</i> By: Angela Dalton
<i>Happy Hair</i> By: Mechal Renee Roe	<i>Soul Food Sunday</i> By: Winsome Bingham
<i>I Am Every Good Thing</i> By: Derrick Barnes	<i>Strong to the Hoop</i> By: John Coy
<i>I Got Next</i> By: Daria Peoples-Riley	<i>The Electric Slide and Kai</i> By: Kelly J. Baptist
<i>Jabari Jumps</i> By: Gaia Cornwell	<i>This Is It</i> By: Daria Peoples-Riley
<i>Keep Your Head Up!</i> By: Aliya Neil King	<i>When My Cousins Come to Town</i> By: Angela Shante and Keisha Morris

Note. The proposed multicultural literature for the study was age appropriate for the participants.

Shared Reading Method

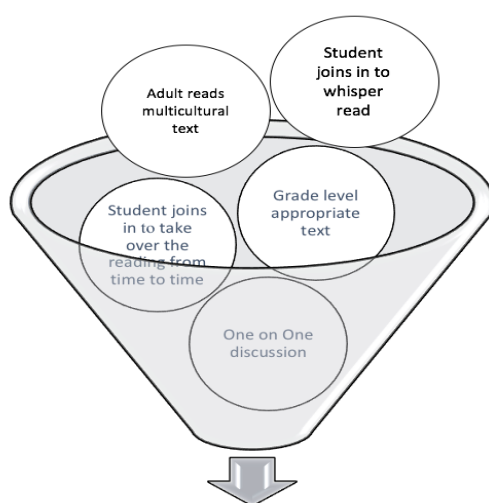
I followed the combined shared reading approach, which is described by Fountas and Pinnell (2001) as well as by Tyner and Green (2012). I implemented this method to guide the process for collecting the data during the one on one reading interview sessions with the

participants. The way that the Shared Reading Method works is that the participant begins by previewing all the texts that are on display. The participant can then ask for a summary of any of the books. The participant chooses and selects a book of interest. As the interviewer, I explained the option to have the book summary with the participant before we began the reading process. As part of this Shared Reading, I asked the participants to share the reason for selecting the book and to show something from the book that caused them to choose the book.

As illustrated in Figure 6, I implemented a combined version of Shared Reading with the option to read to the student and the student joined in (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001) by whisper reading (Tyner & Green, 2012) or taking over the reading from time to time (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). This reading practice included one of the same grade level appropriate practices (Tyner & Green, 2012) using multicultural literature in a one on one setting. After reading the text, I continued the interview and the participant provided the necessary responses to the interview questions. I go into more detail about the Interview Protocol in the next sub-section.

Figure 6

Shared Reading Method



Shared Reading for Self-Reflections

Note. This funnel illustrates how the features of the Shared Reading Method are combined to create a developmentally appropriate reading experience to promote self-reflection.

The rationale for this Shared Reading approach was to allow the participant and the researcher to share the reading experience, to increase reading motivation, and to allow the student to be comfortable instead of challenged by the reading process (Tyner & Green, 2012). The Shared Reading Method also allows for the participants to engage in a discussion of the text as part of the process of sharing about the reading. The Shared Reading Method also allowed the students to comfortably read or engage in the reading process to build their reading identity and to remove colorblind teaching practices. Allowing the participants to feel comfortable while reading lined up with Rosenblatt's (2004) ideology; "the transacting process of texts in more nonthreatening atmosphere can possibly nurture democratic participation" (as quoted in Isknaq, Mujiyanto & Harton, 2020, p. 119). In relation to this study, I made sure to provide a warm and comfortable reading environment while the participants were engaged with the Shared Reading.

Interview Protocol

Figure 7 shows the Interview Protocol data collection instrument. This Interview Protocol was piloted, revised, and utilized for the dissertation's main research study data collection during the participant interviews. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), it is "important to plan and use an interview protocol for asking and recording answers during a qualitative interview." It is recommended that the interviewer take short notes and write quotes. The interview protocol is organized using a before, during, and after interview process.

Figure 7

Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol- Provide the students with an overview of the study. Announce that the session will be recorded.

Researcher: “Before we get started, I’d like to record our session. I’ll take notes also but I would love to record our session because I want to make sure that I have every response you share with me. I can replay the session and rewind the recording if I need to hear something again. If I write it all down, I might miss something important, but the recording will help me.”

Researcher: “Let’s talk a little bit more about books.”

Before Reading

1. Do you have conversations with anyone about yourself and the books you like to read? Tell me about that.
2. If you could find the perfect book for you, what would that book be like? Talk to me about that.
3. Do you read or look at books that may be like your life? Tell me about that.
Probe: Is that something you would like to read? Tell me more about that.
4. How would you feel if you met someone (character) who was just like you? What would that be like? Tell me about that.
5. How would you feel if you read a book that was just like your life? What would that be like? Tell me about that.
6. Do you like to read books that may be like you or different from you? Talk to me about it.
7. Tell me about a book that you didn’t like to read.
8. If you had 20 books, do you think you could find a book that is just right for you? How would you do that? Let’s find one.
9. Share the summaries of the books as needed.
10. Before we get started: Why did you choose (insert the name of the book)? Show me what made you pick (insert the name of the book). Tell me about it.
11. Reread the summary for the selected book.

Choosing the book-

Share the summaries of the books as needed.

Before we get started: Why did you choose (insert the name of the book)?

Show me what made you pick (insert the name of the book).

Reread the summary for the selected book.

Researcher:

“During our reading session, I will read first, and you may read along by whispering while I’m reading or you can let me know if and when you would like to read some of the book aloud. We can take turns reading the book, if you like. I want you to be comfortable and enjoy the book. This is not a reading test. I just want to know about what you will see that’s like you in the book. If you get stuck on a word, or you will need some help, I am here to tell you any of the words. Yes, I’ll tell you the words. Remember this is not a reading test. What do you think?”

Wait for the student’s response.

Researcher: “I’m ready to read. Are you? Let’s get started.”

Students will preview the book as needed and I will provide the summary of the selected book again, if needed.

During Reading

We will begin the shared reading process.

After Reading

1. Was the book like your life? Let’s find that in the story. Tell me about it.
2. Was there someone in the story that reminded you of yourself? Let’s find that in the story. Tell me about it.
3. Tell me about anything from the book that reminds you about yourself. Let’s find that in the story. Tell me about it.

Wrap up question

1. If you wrote a book about yourself, what would it be about? Is that important to you? If so, why? If not, why?

In order to check for the suitability of the questions in this Interview Protocol, I conducted a pilot study. According to Burnett et al. (1998), checking for suitability in interviewing is a way to check if the question is understandable to the participants and appropriate to their age and ways of communicating. In the next section, I will explain the systematic way I checked the Interview Protocol with a pilot study of the data collection instrument.

Pilot Study

The study included a pilot study of the Interview Protocol for the data collection. I interviewed the students for the protocol pilot study. The pilot study of the Interview Protocol (Figure 7) was conducted with 4 fourth grade members ($n=4$) from Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club and Emma Road Youth Club. The gender distribution for the pilot study was equal. There were 2 fourth grade African American girls, one from each location, and 2 fourth grade African American boys from Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club. The one-on-one interviews were conducted using an interview schedule with specific days of the week to conduct interviews, to transcribe, memo, and review the data after each interview before proceeding with the next interview. This allowed ample time to check the suitability of the questions in the Interview Protocol. The pilot study took over two weeks long as I had to work around each student's schedule at the sites to conduct the individual interviews in the pilot study. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes.

Procedure

I had the students select a book from the list of books in Table 1. Then, I followed the Shared Reading Method by asking the students the questions in the Interview Protocol in order to check for the suitability of the questions in the protocol. Before I conducted the interviews for

the pilot study, I got to know each of the participants and was involved in some of the activities at the Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club and Emma Road Youth Club. This helped me build some rapport with the participants and helped foster a comfortable and trusting relationship. During site visits, I also engaged in child friendly introductory conversations with the participants. These conversations included talking about the study's procedure, the time duration for the interview and Shared Reading, the location in the youth club, and I always ended these introductory type conversations by asking if the participants had any questions about the study. The purpose of this introductory activity was to help the participants feel comfortable and confident when sharing responses and interacting during the study. The introductory activity also allowed them to produce authentic responses that best represent their perceptions and responses to the books they selected. The introductory activity was also a way to build trust with the participants so that they would be willing to verbally express if they were uncomfortable with the study or Interview Protocol in any way.

I also found that the introductory activities and conversations helped me become more aware of the schedules at the two youth clubs. This helped me identify the most ideal times at the youth clubs to engage in the pilot study of the Interview Protocol. Often Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club and Emma Road Youth Club were frequented with visitors, volunteers, and special guests that may have scheduled events at the site that requires the members' attention. So I was able to identify less busy times to engaged in the shared reading activity and the pilot study of the Interview Protocol.

I provided a summary for any book selection, then the participant chose one book to complete the interview protocol. The session was audio, and handwritten notes were taken on the comparative interview question chart for review.

In figure 6, I used the combined version of shared reading with the option to read to the student and the student joined in (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2001) by whisper reading (Tyner & Green, 2012) or taking over the reading from time to time (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). This reading practice included two of the same grade level appropriate practices (Tyner & Green, 2012) using multicultural literature in a one on one setting. After reading the text, I continued the interview, and the student provided the necessary responses to the interview questions. This allowed the participant and the researcher to share the reading experience, to increase reading motivation, and to allow the student to be comfortable instead of challenged by the reading process. Lastly, the student participated in a discussion. This practice allowed the students to comfortably read or engage in the reading process to build their reading identity and to remove colorblind teaching practices. Allowing the students to feel comfortable while reading lined up with “the transacting process of texts in more nonthreatening atmosphere can possibly nurture democratic participation” (Isknak, Mujiyanto & Harton, 2020, p. 119).

Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested to “have sensitivity to the needs of the vulnerable populations (e.g., children)” (p. 55). Additionally, throughout this pilot study I found that semi-structured interviews with a before, during and after interview protocol and the combined shared reading approach was a dynamic method for being responsive to the participants (Hermanowicz, 2002). It also allowed the participants to feel comfortable with participating in the study, helped them to engage in reading the text without judgment about their reading abilities, and they provided responses that helped to move the pilot study in a positive direction. Following the IRB approved procedure, I audio recorded each of the four interviews for the pilot study.

Pilot Study Findings and Changes to the Interview Protocol

As the interview protocol was conducted, I composed handwritten revised questions as needed for the suitability of the Interview Protocol. For example, I found that most of the participants in the pilot study had intriguing responses to the opening question in the Interview Protocol. The first question asked, “Do you have conversations with anyone about yourself and the books you like to read?” The participants provided good insight about whether Black children have conversations about the books they read. Three of the pilot’s participants shared that no one talks to them about them and the books they read while one male participant shared that his teacher talked to him about books. I felt confident that the participants connected the wordy questions in this interview to be more of an academic and school-based discussion versus an everyday conversation about reading.

From the pilot study of the Interview Protocol, I also found that some questions needed a little rewording to make them more open-ended responses rather than closed questions. For example, in the original Interview Protocol, there were too many questions that were just yes or no type of questions. Consequently the participants’ responses in the pilot study were flat and thin. I could tell from the pilot study participants’ responses and from the facial expressions that some questions were just not connecting with the participants. So I revised the Interview Protocol to include more probing type of questions. I found that adding the phrase “tell me more about it” was a way to get a deeper response from the participants. I rephrased a number of questions in the Interview Protocol to include more probing type of follow-up prompts. For example, I added the word more to a number of the prompts after the questions. So I revised the Interview Protocol and changed the follow-up prompts that were originally phrased with “talk to me about that” to the new phrasing of “tell me **more** about that.” I also updated the probing

questions to include the word importance in the follow-up prompt. For example, after the pilot study, I added the phrase “tell me why that is important to you” as a follow-up prompt on a number of the Interview Protocol questions.

Main Research Study Procedure

After piloting and revising the Interview Protocol with the four participants in the pilot study, I conducted the main research study with the 8 third grade participants from Bridgeforth Avenue Youth Club, Emma Road Youth Club, and Curbell Lane Youth Club. I conducted four visits or rounds to the sites to conduct the interviews to allow some time to review the data intervals. During the interview study, I used the same procedure for the one to one interviews but with the revised interview protocol. Each of the interviews was conducted in a small classroom space at the youth clubs. I set up the 26 African American multicultural books on a table in the classroom. I positioned the book so that they stood upright to show their covers and the summaries were placed inside them.

I also had a clipboard with the Interview Protocol attached to it. I also had my audio recorder next to me. I explained how I would use the audio recorder in the interview by stating, “I’d like to record our session. I’ll take notes also but I would love to record our session because I want to make sure that I have every response you share with me.” Each participant was agreeable to having the interview audio recorded for this purpose. I then restated the purpose of the interview and reviewed the reading session’s steps that included having a conversation about reading preferences, choosing a book and hearing the summary, talking about the book, reading the book and having a conversation about the book at the end. I also explained how the procedure for the interview was going to include some Before Reading activities and discussion, some During Reading activities, and After Reading questions.

Before Reading

The reading session was designed with Before Reading type of question and preview activities. For example, each participant discussed their reading preferences that allowed me to understand the people they read aloud to and have conversations about reading. It also allowed me to know about whether they wanted to read about characters and books that were most likely connected to their life. Most of all, I wanted to know if they met a character just like them who jumped out of a book, what would they do, say, or feel about that. During the Before Reading part of the interview session, the participant would choose one book from the set of 26 books by previewing the book. The participant would open up the book to review it and look at the book's illustrations. During this previewing time, I observed the participants interactions for picture preview, word skimming, and facial expressions as signals that that particular book may be the book of choice. I read the summary for any book they selected, encouraged them to take a good look by moving around the table to see the choices. After the book selection was made by the participants, I reread the summaries. I closed the book selection session by asking the student to share the reason for selecting that particular book and to provide text evidence. I recorded their responses on the interview question chart.

During Reading

Using the Shared Reading Method, I asked the participant each interview to explain how they would like to read the book they selected such as one reader reads a page or half of the text then the next reader takes his turn to read the next page or the last half of the text or a reader reads the entire text whether it is the participant or the interviewer. I recorded their combined shared reading preferences on the interview question chart. The combined approach allowed the reader to read some or all of the book or to choose to have me to read the entire book. During the

Shared Reading sessions, I defined concepts, conducted a think aloud and checked for understanding.

Without doing a final readability preview, Participants 1 and 2 requested that I read the text to them. Participant 3 read the texts from beginning to end, and I offered support by stating the correct words to avoid losing the texts meanings, to affirm that my assistance with challenging words, and to remove all academic concerns. After doing a readability preview, Participant 4 became tired of reading based on the sound of his voice at about midway through the book, so I offered to finish reading. Participant 5 requested that we take turns reading, and I requested to know when I needed to begin reading.

Participant 6 preferred reading method was to take turns reading the text by allowing him to read a page then I read the next page. I paused during the reading session to conduct think alouds and to explain events. Participant 7 used her time wisely to preview each book and listen to summaries before selecting the book that was just right for the reading session. The preview session lasted for six minutes. Initially, Participant 7 decided to independently read the entire book, and I offered to read if she grew tired of reading the entire book. After thinking about whether she would grow tired from reading, I offered to read half of the book. Finally, she decided that we should read the book by taking turn using the I read a page then you read a page method. During the reading session, I conducted a think aloud. After hearing the Shared Reading options, Participant 8 requested that I read the entire text to him. During the reading session, he initiated an unsolicited think aloud about the book, and I joined in as needed to support his responses.

After Reading

When the during the reading section was completed, we transitioned to the after reading section. I asked the participants' questions to have a conversation about their text selections around the study's goal of investigating third graders' "seeing yourself" responses. As I asked each question on the Interview Protocol, I recorded key phrases and statements on the interview recording chart. For each question that required text evidence, I also labeled the pages using sticky notes and coded those sticky notes with the phrase "Like Me," which I wrote on the sticky notes for data analysis. After the reading sessions and all data were collected, I labeled the page numbers in participants' book selections for the study to easily find the text evidence for data analysis.

Data Analysis

I began the study by interviewing the participants to develop a conceptual framework around self-reflection and provide meaning and descriptions for seeing yourself in literature. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that completing data collection, displaying the data, coding the data to conduct data reduction, and drawing and verifying conclusions are the components of data analysis in an interpretive model using in qualitative studies. Using the three step process, I wrote summaries, identified and created codes, wrote memos using a structured analytic approach using my comparative interview question chart. I also looked for patterns and explanations while moving from maintaining openness and skepticism to explicit and grounded thought patterns.

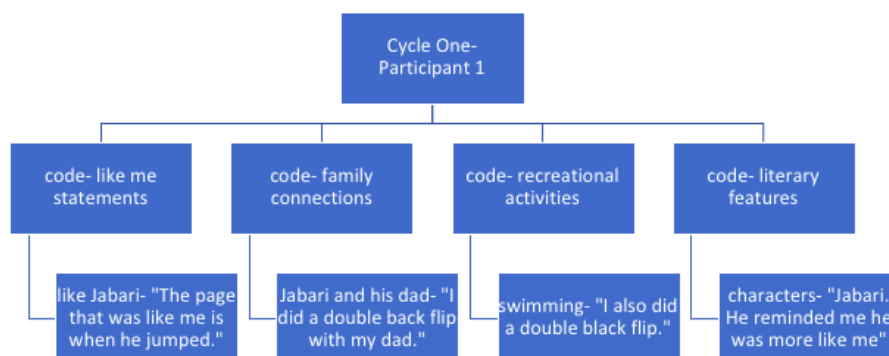
Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that "data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appeared in written field notes or transcriptions" (p. 11). I reviewed the the repeated codes and patterns in the transcripts until it

was evident that the participants' responses did not show evidence of differences in responses. I interviewed them in cycles, transcribed their audio recordings, coded the data and began to develop the beginning stages of the conceptual framework, *multicultural self-reflection conceptual framework*.

I interviewed Participant 1 (Figure 8), transcribed the data and analyzed the data. After the first cycle, I interviewed Participants 2 and 3 then I returned to the Youth Clubs to conduct the study on two different days with Participants 4 and 5. I followed my interview schedule. I interviewed Participant 6, 7, and 8 at Curbell Lane Youth Center. I interviewed each of them on separate days.

Figure 8

Participant 1 Cycle 1



Note. The participant cycle shows how one interview transcript was coded during data analysis.

During each interview session, the session was recorded using a voice recorder. I was able to transfer the audio recording to my laptop for transcribing the audio on www.office.com, and handwritten notes on the interview question chart. The purpose for voice recording, using an audio recorder, was to capture the participants' responses that were uploaded to a computer to produce a transcript. Audio recordings are the most common way to record interview data to "ensure that everything said is preserved for analysis;" and "verbatim transcription of recorded

interviews provides the best database for analysis” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 131). I transcribed the recordings with aid of the transcription software in Microsoft Office’s Word program.

First I interviewed Participant 1 and produced a transcript from the audio recording. I created and used the Comparative Interview Question Chart and the transcript to begin the open coding process (see Figure 9). I identified quotes from the interview’s transcript that showed he produced self-reflection statements or excerpts using his self-selected book and selected specific statements or excerpts as described in the structured analytical approach. During the constant comparison method’s process, I read and reread the first three transcripts, and I immediately found the data that the data had no commonalities. I reread the research questions for codes within the questions that focused on the participants’ responses. I pulled words responses, cultural and racial, and literary elements from the research questions. I used my first transcript for data analysis using the codes from the research questions and wrote key words from the participant’s responses under each research question code. I followed up by identifying codes for the excerpts and integrated phrases from the research questions such as family, recreational activities, and literary elements.

Figure 9*Comparative Interview Question Chart for Data Analysis*

Interview Protocol Pilot- interview question chart

Before Reading	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
Do you have conversations with anyone about yourself and the books you like to read? Tell me about that.				
If you could find the perfect book for you, what would that book be like? Talk to me about <input type="text"/>				
Do you read or look at books that may be like your life? Tell me about that. Probe: Is that something you would like to read? Tell me more about that.				
How would you feel if you met someone (character) who was just like you? What would that be like? Tell me about that.				
How would you feel if you read a book that was just like your life? What would that be like? Tell me about that.				
Do you like to read books that may be like you or different from you? Talk to me about it.				
Tell me about a book that you didn't like to read.				
If you had 20 books, do you think you could find a book that is just right for you? How would you do that? Let's find one.				

Interview Protocol Pilot- interview question chart

Choose your book	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
Share the summaries of the books as needed. 5 minutes				
Before we get started: Why did you choose (insert the name of the book)?				
Show me what made you pick (insert the name of the book). Tell me about it.				
Reread the summary for the selected book.				
During Reading Let's get ready to read the text. Read the text- Who will read the book?				

Interview Protocol Pilot- interview question chart

After Reading	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
Was the book like your life? Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it.				
Was there someone in the story that reminded you of yourself? Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it	What page?	What page?	What page?	What page?
Tell me about anything from the book that reminds you about yourself. Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it.	What page?	What page?	What page?	What page?
Wrap up question If you wrote a book about yourself, what would it be about? Is that important to you? If so, why? If not, why?				

Note. The *Comparative Interview Question Chart for Data Analysis* was used to take notes during the interview and help develop codes for data analysis.

Next I conducted a second cycle of one-on-one interviews for data collection with Participant 2 and Participant 3. During this cycle of data analysis, I repeated the process by

identifying quotes and phrases as excerpts. I used the constant comparative method and my Comparative Interview Question Chart to compare the three participants' self-reflection statements to create more codes and descriptions from the three transcripts while integrating phrases or words from the research questions. I repeated the process of using the second and third participants' transcripts to compare the participants' responses which developed new codes that were similar and different. Ezzy confirmed "through the comparative process, events that at first seemed entirely unrelated may be grouped together as different types of the same category, or the events that seemed similar may be categorized differently" (p. 90).

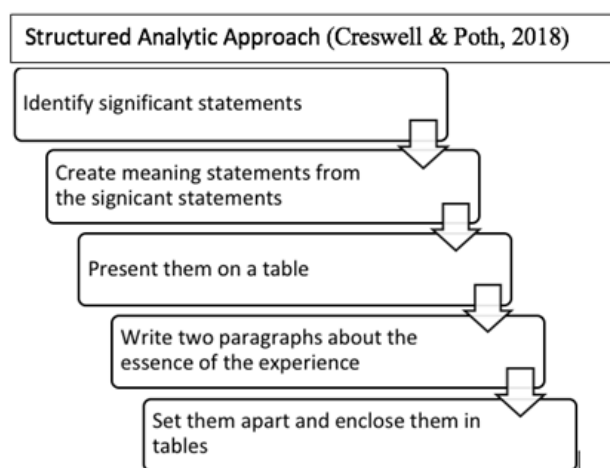
I completed two additional cycles of interviews with Participant 4 and 5 on different days and continued the open coding and coding process by selecting excerpts and creating more codes or refining them using the constant comparative method and my Comparative Interview Question Chart. Finally I conducted my last three cycles with participants 6, 7, and 8. During these cycles, I checked for repeated codes and new and emerging codes.

After the seven cycles of data collection were completed, I began descriptive coding to make connections among the codes and to be more interpretive (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During the process, I discovered commonalities among the codes and connected those codes to the study's framework, Black Identity Development and the combined Shared Reading approach. Analyzing the data allowed me to discover all of the participants self-reflections as multicultural self-reflections using selective coding. Lastly, I began to conceptualize the beginning stages of a conceptual framework named *multicultural self-reflection conceptual framework* which will be developed extensively in future research.

During each cycle, I also used Miles and Huberman's (1994) three-step interpretive approach along with the constant comparative method (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) to complete the

first round of data analysis using themes. The three-step interpretive process of data analysis included: (1) data reduction through coding; (2) data display with visuals and charts; and (3) conclusion drawing from the data analysis. To support this three-step interpretive approach with data collection and to guide the constant comparative method, I used the Comparative Interview Question Chart that I developed to find commonalities in the excerpts and to create the codes.

As Figure 9 illustrates, the Comparative Interview Question Chart was organized using the Before, During, and After reading activities and questions from the Interview Protocol. The Comparative Interview Question Chart was also a way to get a wholistic snapshot picture of the study's data based on the Interview Protocol. I utilized this Comparative Interview Question Chart as a recording and note-taking sheet throughout each interview. For example, I wrote the participants' significant statements or responses on an interview question chart that aligned with the recording session using the audio recording using a handheld voice recorder. To identify key quotes in the interview I relied on the Structured Analytical Approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Figure 10 shows a flowchart diagram of the Structured Analytical Approach. Because I investigated seeing yourself in literature, I used Riemen's (1986) structured analytical approach (Creswell & Poth, 2018) which is a chart that allowed me to create handwritten key words for each one on one interview session to prepare for coding. After the interviews, I replayed the audio recording to create a transcript using Microsoft Office's transcription feature, and I recorded any additional key words, phrases, and statements while I listened.

Figure 10*Graphic Representation of the Structured Analytical Approach*

After the transcript was produced, I listened to the audio recording using headphones and used the transcript to help make sense of participants' responses. In a notebook, I wrote a question stem from each interview question that produced data and listed each participant's responses in key words or phrases under the question stems. I listened to the audio and the transcript, I edited and highlighted the participants' responses that answered the research questions. I reviewed the participants' responses by comparing and contrasting the responses to understand which statements have common themes. I completed several rounds of listening to the audio recordings and took notes to find responses that answered the research questions.

As Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested, I then conducted a second round of data analysis and created research memos that connected the themes and responses to Black Identity Development's Naïve stage of development, the impact of culture on their responses based on Black Identity Development, the combined shared reading approach, multicultural self-reflection, multicultural self-reflection theory, text to self, and the examples of self-reflections in the literature review. Through this process that data was be coded for organized themes and for

interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994) on a large post it note and smaller post it notes to connect the ideas. The data was added to a chart on the Google drive. All interest, consent, assent, and notes were stored on my password protected computer. Lastly, the data provided meaning and understanding to inform the research questions and provided the beginning stages of Multicultural Self-reflection Conceptual Framework, which I developed in greater depth in Chapter 5, the Discussion chapter of this dissertation.

In summary, I used a host of instruments and methods to shape this study to generate meaning from the data. I conducted an interview pilot protocol and the main interview study to find the ways Black children see themselves in African American multicultural literature. I used my research questions to open code, code, create axial and selective codes. I also conducted cycles of data collection to allow me to review and reduce the data. Constant comparative method and data reduction played a major role in the open coding and coding process.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

I have organized this results chapter of my dissertation to describe the findings of my study's research questions. In the sections below, I first provide background information, an overview of the participants' reading selections, and preferences from the interview protocol (Table 2) and report on the findings for each research question (Table 3). Next, I report on research question 1 and explain how the eight Black children in my study responded to African American multicultural literature. Then, I report on the findings from research question 2 by describing how the eight Black participants in the study described their cultural and racial identity within multicultural literature. Finally, I report on research question 3 and explain the literary features the eight participants identified and discussed in relation to their self-reflections in the books they selected. After I reported the findings for each research question, I provided the analysis for Black Identity Development's naïve stage and the impact that culture has on the participants' responses.

Background and Overview

As I reported on the findings of this research by providing background information about the books the study's participants selected when they completed the Interview Protocol. Table 2 provides an overview of the books the participants selected and indicates their ability to self-reflect based on their self-selected African American multicultural text.

Table 2*African American Multicultural Literature Selections and Self-Reflections*

Book Titles	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	Ability to self-reflect
<i>Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize</i> by Brittany Mazique		x							x
<i>Hair Love</i> by Matthew Cherry					x				x
<i>I Got Next</i> by Daria People- Riley			x						x
<i>Jabari Jumps</i> by Gaia Cornwall	x								x
<i>Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self</i> by Frank Morrison						x			x
<i>Kicks</i> by Van G. Garrett								x	x
<i>My Mommy Medicine</i> by Edwidge Danicat							x		x
<i>The Electric Slide and Kai</i> by Kelly J. Baptist				x					x

Note. Table 2 shows the eight participants and each title of their book selections.

During the interview session, the participants self-selected one book from a collection of 26 African American multicultural picture books to read and the accompanying pre written summaries of each book. They previewed any of the books on the display before they selected their final choice. As they previewed the books or walked near a book, I immediately reminded the participants that I will read a summary for each book. I read the summaries or the participants declined to have a summary of their selected book read to them.

Participant 1 is a third grade male who chose the book *Jabari Jumps* by Gaia Cornwall. Jabari is a little black boy. Jabari is definitely ready to jump off the diving board. He's finished his swimming lessons and passed his swimming test, and he's a great jumper, so he's not scared at all. "Looks easy," says Jabari, watching the other kids take their turns. But when his dad squeezes his hand, Jabari squeezes back. He needs to figure out what kind of special jump to do anyway, and he should probably do some stretches before climbing up onto the diving board.

From among the set of books, Participant 1 chose the book, *Jabari Jumps* by Gaia Cornwall, because “swimming is his favorite thing to do on hot days”. He also liked when Jabari went up the diving board. During the before reading the session, Participant 1 shared that he has conversations with friends about the books he likes to read. He reads basketball books that are like his life. When he reads books like his life, he feels happy and calm. The perfect book for him would be about swimming because he likes swimming on hot days or kinds of shoes. It would make him happy to read a book that was just like his life. If he pretended to meet a character that is just like him, the character would be his twin. He shared that he would be glad and excited because he would have a “twin” and three brothers instead of two. He would take the twin to his home and eat breakfast with him. He would rather read books that are like him because it is cool and unique. At the end of session, Participant 1 shared that if he wrote a book about himself it would be about back and front flips and the trampoline, and the book would be written to entertain people and to make them happy.

Participant 2 is a third grade female who selected a Mardi Gras influenced book, *Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize* by Brittany Mazique. I have provided a short summary of the book. Delphine wants to participate in the Mardi Gras parade in a float, but her friends would rather ride their bikes. Delphine decides to do it to her then realizes that she wants to be with her friends.

Participant 2 chose the book, *Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize* by Brittany Mazique because the “girl on the front cover looked good”. She shared that she completed a reading survey, and she talked about what she likes to read while she was in the media center. The topics she reads that are like her life are books about high shoes and a messy room. When she reads books like his life, she finds the books interesting. The perfect book for her would be

about animals, specifically pandas, how to take care of animals, and chapter books. It would make her happy to read a book that was just like her life. When pretending to meet a character that is just like her, she shared that the character would be her “sibling”. She shared she would be surprised and happy. She would take the character to her home. She would rather read books like her, and she would read the book every day. At the end of session, Participant 2 shared that if she wrote a book about herself it would be about going somewhere to have super fun with her friends. She wants people to read her book and make a book about super fun with their friends.

Participant 3 is a third grade male who selected the book, *I Got Next* by Daria People-Riley. In this summary, I included a question about inspiration. This picture book is about a young Black basketball player who receives inspiration from a surprising place and joins the competition ready to try his best. Who or what inspires you? Participant 3 shared that he loves to read basketball books, especially books about Black basketball players.

Participant 3 chose the book, *I Got Next* by Daria People. He selected this book from among the set of books because he liked reading basketball books and about Black basketball players. During the before reading session, Participant 3 shared that he talks with his doctor about books, and he receives books when he leaves the doctor’s office. He does not read books that may be like his life, and he doesn’t know why he has not read books like his life. He would be surprised if he read a book that was just like his life. He would ask, “Who made this book?” The perfect book for him would be about cleaning up the Earth, especially the beach and the streets. If he pretended to meet a character that is just like him, he shared that the character would be his “clone”. Initially he said he would just stand still, ask “how,” and he would want to put the character back in the book. Within seconds, he shared he would be happy, and it would be nice to have a clone to things people need him to do. He likes to read books that are like him

and different from him because there are a lot of books in the world that are not similar to his life that he would want to read. At the end of session, Participant 3 shared that if he wrote a book about himself it would be about playing on a football team because he loves football, especially the Dallas Cowboys.

Participant 4 is a third grade male who chose *The Electric Slide and Kai* by Kelly J. Baptist. The summary stated Kai must learn how to do the electric slide. Kai is the only family who cannot do the electric slide, and he cannot dance also. Everyone in his family pitches in to help him learn how to dance and to do the electric slide to prepare for his aunt's wedding reception. Kai can't wait to get his dance name from his grandfather. Everyone has a special dance name except him.

Participant 4 chose the book, *The Electric Slide and Kai* by Kelly J. Baptist, because Kai snuck out of the wedding reception room. During the before reading session, participant 4 shared that he tells people how well he can read. He reads that are like his life are books about basketball. When he reads books like his life, he feels happy and calm. The perfect book for him would be about swimming because he likes swimming on hot days or kinds of shoes. It would make him happy to read a book that was just like his life. If he pretended to meet a character that is just like him, he shared that the character would be his twin. He would take the twin to his home and eat breakfast with him. He shared he would be glad and excited because he would have a twin and three brothers instead of two. He likes to read books that are like him and different from him. At the end of session, Participant 4 shared that if he wrote a book about himself it would be about sports tricks.

Participant 5 is a third grade male who chose the book *Hair Love* by Matthew Cherry. In this child friendly summary, I included questions in the summary to get the participant engaged

in the idea of a dad who styles hair instead of a mom. Would you let your dad style your hair? Do you think he could do a good job? A little girl's daddy steps in to help her style her hair into styles that allow her to be her natural, beautiful self. After reading this book, you probably should give Dad a chance to style your hair.

Participant 5 chose the book, *Hair Love* by Matthew Cherry, because it was a “good and cool book” that he liked. He previously watched the *Hair Love* short. During the before reading session, Participant 5 shared that he has conversations with his parents, family and grandma about the books he likes. The books he reads that are like his life are books about basketball. He likes to read books about his life that tell what he can do, what he can be and what he can see, and what he can be perfect at. The perfect book for him would be about something he could be such as an excellent thing or a great thing. It seems that he likes books that are inspiration for young Black boys. He would feel like he would be “in another world” if he read about that was just like his life. If he pretended to meet a character that is just like him, he shared that the character would be his “twin”. He would do things with the character. He shared he would be excited, and it would be cool to have a “twin brother”. He shared that both of them would have self-control. He likes to read books that are like him because the books would tell him that he is a good thing. At the end of session, participant 5 shared that if he wrote a book about himself it would be a three page book about the time when he was a little boy and he wanted to be a paleontologist but he got it all wrong. In the book, he will change his mind from paleontology to business.

Participant 6 is a third grade male who selected the book, *Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self* by Frank Morrison. The book is about a Black boy named Epic who moves to a new neighborhood. Epic has a hard time making new friends and fitting in with his skateboard. He

tried football, soccer, basketball, and water games. He learns that the key to making friends is to be yourself. He skateboards through the neighborhood and makes new friends.

Participant 6 chose the book, *Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self* by Frank Morrison, for the shared reading experience. At the start of the school year, Participant 6 moved to his new school where he has not made any friends, and he is teased by his classmates. He chose the book because he and Epic don't have friends. After I shared the summary for the book, he said, "I like this." He listened to the summary then said, "that's me except the skateboard stuff." He also shared that he doesn't have conversations about the books he likes to read and he doesn't read books that are like his life or like him. However, if he read a book about his life, he would be "happy and excited" but it needs to be a different character. If he pretended to meet a character that is just like him, he shared he would be "happy" and "sad." Participant 6 shared that he would be so excited while he is backing back to scan the character over a few times. At the end of the session, he shared that if he wrote a book about his life story, it would be a chapter book about bullying or a diary.

Participant 7 is a third grade female who chose the book, *My Mommy Medicine* by Edwidge Danticat. In this book, a young Black girl and her mommy show the unique ways to heal the body when a child is sick. It's the special things the mommy does to make her make her daughter feel better which is called mommy medicine.

Participant 7 chose the book, *My Mommy Medicine* by Edwidge Danticat. Participant 7 carefully chose the book that was just right for her. She touched and opened the books, previewed the pages, and listened to the summaries of all 26 books. She chose *My Mommy Medicine* because when she is sick her mom helps her and she drinks "stuff" to make her feel better. She has conversations with people about the sight word books, and books about dogs

would be the perfect book for her. She said she “kind of” would like to read books about herself. She also stated that reading a book that is just like her life would be “crazy, weird, surprising, and shocking because that is like my life.” If she pretended to meet a character that is just like her, she shared that it would be bad and she would want the character to go back into the book. Lastly, she shared that if she wrote a book about herself it would be about playing outside on the swings.

Participant 8 is a third grade male who selected *Kicks* by Van. G. Garrett. It is an ode to those who love kicks which are also called sneakers. This book is shared through the eyes and experiences of a young Black boy. Kicks are compared to people, places and things. Kicks are celebrated with love and a variety of words are used to show love for kicks.

Participant 8 chose the book, *Kicks* by Van G. Garrett, because he likes kicks or sneakers, and the book is just like him. When he has conversations about books that he has read, he shares that he talks about how he feels and how good the book was to him after he read it. He wants to read books that are like him and like his life especially if the books are funny or action themed. He would read the books about him every morning. If he pretended to meet a character that is just like him, he shared that he would be happy and calm, and excited but not too excited, and he would jump into the books and trade places with the character. Lastly, if he wrote a book about himself, it would be about a book like the book *Kicks*, and he would change the cover to show only sneakers. However, it would be more realistic and about Jordan’s, the sneaker.

Table 3 shows an organizational chart and breakdown of self-reflection categories in each of the research questions. The chart indicates the points in relation to the research questions where each participant self-reflected and connected to the text while participating in the

interview protocol. After I reviewed the data, I indicated that each participant independently self-reflected using the text.

Table 3

Participatory Self Reflections and Research Questions

Self-reflection Categories	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
RQ1 Verbal: Like me words, phrases and statements	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
RQ1 Verbal- Conversation	x	x	x	x	x			
RQ1 Verbal- Emotions	x	x			x	x		
RQ1 Nonverbal- Pointing		x						
RQ2 Hair					x			x
RQ2 Family Connections	x				x		x	
RQ2 Recreational Activities	x		x	x				
RQ2 Fashion								x
RQ3 Events	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
RQ3 Main and Supporting Characters	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
RQ3 Illustrations	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
RQ3 Character Traits	x	x	x	x	x	x		
RQ3 Characters' Problems				x	x	x		x
RQ3 Characters' Solutions	x		x	x	x		x	

Note: The Youth Club Participants and their self-reflection responses.

Research Question 1

Research question one asked: How do Black children respond to African American multicultural literature? The research question was designed to unfold the ways in which Black children communicate when they read multicultural literature. Verbal and nonverbal participant responses emerged from the data, and the verbal findings were more prevalent than the nonverbal findings from the during and after reading sections. The verbal findings fell into the categories of using like me words, statements, and phrases, having conversations, and showing verbal emotions. These caused the participants to engage in think alouds and hold conversations,

verbally participate in the reading process, show excitement with dialogue, talk about themselves, and compare and contrast their likeness.

The nonverbal findings fell into categories that indicated body language such as pointing to the evidence on the page without discussing the evidence which included finding the evidence to support the self-reflection then falling silent and/or smiling. The participant also pointed to words. By pointing to the words the participant was showing ways to interpret the meaning of the selected picture.

Statements

There were a number of instances throughout each interview in the study where the participants provided evidence of their self-reflections using “like me” words, phrases and statements. Here are some example quotes from the participants:

- Participant 1: The page that was like me is when he jumped. When he climbed up and then he stretched it, he jumped off. I like climbing stuff and I love stretching and I jumped very high. I can.
- Participant 3: Sometimes I almost gave up in the game and my coach reminded me and my coach reminded me you should never get what you should try if he loses, it’s ok, you always have another time. You never give up.
- Participant 4: Just like me when I don’t want to be somewhere. And I'm nervous to do something like try to sneak out or something like that.
- Participant 5: (turned to the hairstyling page with the hair products and tools in the bathroom) Like, like this.
- Participant 5: Let’s start off like this. No, not like the hair girl. Boy like type.
- Participant 6: (as the story ended) That’s me. The whole story.

- Participant 7: I drink tea, hot cocoa and soup. I do that when I'm sick. My mom takes care of me, well us.
- Participant 8: Oh yeah, a lot. Some days I don't know which ones (kicks or sneakers) to decide and which ones to choose. Some days it's my special ones (kicks or sneakers) or I put on my new ones.

After I reviewed the data, I selected a response from each participant to show a variety of ways self-reflections may appear when seeking the ways Black children will see themselves in African American multicultural literature. During the interview, I found that the participants identified their likeness and compared themselves to the character and characters' everyday experiences in the text. The texts were about having a fear of jumping off the diving board, deciding to plan with friends or standing alone, building skills and courage to play in a basketball game, learning to do a popular African American line dance, figuring out how to achieve a hairstyle, making friends and choosing a pair of kicks. In some cases, the participants used statements, phrases or words to indicate that they see themselves in the text. Often Participant 5 turned to a page to state "like, like this" to show that everything in the illustrations and in the author's text on that page was like him during the hair styling process. Sometimes he used his finger to draw a circle around the illustrations or quickly flipped from page to page.

Conversation

When that occurred and I needed more information, I interjected by asking the participant to use more words to tell me what he wanted to say. It is important to recognize that the participants' responses are unique in their expressions. As such, the interview often flowed into a conversation that the participants had about the text they selected. An example of such a conversation includes this exchange I had with Participant 1:

- Interviewer: And on the back of the book, it says working out the courage to take a big leap is hard, but Jabari is nearly, almost ready to make a great big splash.
- Participant 1: And my teacher told me to never give up and try my best. This is a good book.

The participants engaged in a conversation by making comments, conducting a think aloud, and comparing or contrasting their life experiences with the characters and the everyday experiences in the text. the reading process during the reading session. compares the summary to his teacher's encouragement to him. As I ended the reading with Participant 1, I read the summary on the back of the book to transition from the during reading section to the after reading section. Participant 1 blurted out an example of the way his teacher encourages him to never give up and to try his best. This type of expression and conversational add-ons were unsolicited, and the participants engaged with the text and the reading session in a way that allowed me to see the benefit in coded these types of responses. Their conversational style showed that they were actively engaged, sought ways to show they liked the text, and the text was like me.

Emotions

The participants also connected with several different emotions when they were reading and engaged in the interview. The emotions from the reader ranged from excitement, which was often followed with a voice inflection. Here are some examples:

- Interviewer: Up off the board, flying like a bird (jumped in to read with excitement)
Participant 1: Like a bird!
- Participant 1: (used a high pitched voice and was excited that Jabari was successful)
Yeah, he did a cannonball!
- Participant 2: I know when she is ready to ride her bike. And she was excited to do it!

- Participant 6: (Epic didn't make any new friends after doing his skateboard tricks.) We (Epic and Participant 6) don't have friends. They bully me and be mean. They didn't *see* him either.

The data also showed that the participants showed emotion when they engaged in the reading session. During the reading session, the participants affirmed the characters' everyday experiences by raising their voices or smiling to show excitement. As I read *Jabari Jumps*, Participant 1 carefully and quietly read along with me. Suddenly, he began to read "like a bird" with excitement because finally Jabari jumped off the diving board and was up in the air like a bird then descended into the pool. His response appeared to show that he could imagine the times he jumped off the diving board and soared like a bird. He knew how it felt to be in the air like Jabari. The high-pitched response "like a bird" landed in my ears, and I smiled to indicate it is just fine to be excited for Jabari. Participant 2 showed excitement when Delphine Denise rode off on her bike with her friends after their Mardi Gras parade celebration. In *Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize*, Delphine Denise and her friends made up and Participant 2 smiled and held her face when the friends were back together on their bikes.

Nonverbal Connections to the Text

Throughout each interview, I observed that many of the participants were engaged and connected to the texts they selected in nonverbal ways like pointing. Here is an example of how Participant 2 engaged with the text through pointing:

- Participant 2 found the text evidence that is just like her. She pointed and I gave an interpretation. From the book, *Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize*, Participant 2 is a happy person and Delphine Denise reminds her of herself and she can also get mad like Delphine Denise does in the book.

During the reading session, it was important to note that participants used nonverbal cues that required me to pause. In the example above, I had to pause to give time for Participant 2 to gather her thoughts to have time to formulate her response. Participant 2 selected the *Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize* because of “the girl on the cover” and the cover looked good. Delphine has a beautiful smile with both arms waving in the air. She is dressed in a purple and gold dress with gold feathers on wrists and a gold-feathered boa around her neck. Mardi Gras beads and streamers float across the pages. Delphine Denise’s story is based in New Orleans unlike Participant 2’s current location, but she enjoyed seeing Delphine adventures through the illustrations. Participant 2 was familiar and comfortable with locating text evidence. Often, she located the page and pointed to her self-reflection without prompting then looked back at me without describing her evidence. During our session, I worked with her to share her thoughts about her text evidence and encouraged her to talk about the responses.

Black Identity Development and Participants’ Responses

Based on the findings for RQ1: How do Black children respond to African American multicultural literature?, a variety of codes and responses connected with Black Identity Development theory’s naïve stage and how culture impacts the stage. In research question one, some of the codes or categories included are verbal statements such as the *like me words, phrases, and statements, emotions and conversations*. The participants are in the naïve stage of development and may be transitioning to the acceptance stage. Black Identity Development’s naïve stage stated that “parental guidance with positive experiences,” “self-concept,” “signs of racial identity,” and “positive influences of Black culture played a role in Black identity” (Jackson III, 2012, p. 40). Jackson III stated that culture also impacts the stage. According to Black authors, they wrote their literature to allow Black children to see themselves.

Because the African American multicultural books are situated with Black characters and everyday experiences as in fiction that is about Black children, it would be customary for Black children to express themselves from a Black perspective or experience. Participant 1 talked about his experiences swimming at the pool and shared the confidence that he can climb and stretch with conviction. Using his positive self-concept, Participant I conversed about Jabari from *Jabari Jumps* and signaled that he can do that like Jabari and showed excitement when Jabari finally made his first jump off the diving board. Participant 3 connected with the pep talk between Shadow and the boy in *I Got Next* and his basketball coach who gave him pep talks. His response showed the connection to a positive influence in the Black culture from his coach as he shared, “it’s ok. You always have another time. You never give up.”

Participant 8 resonated with the Black boy from the book, *Kicks*, an ode to sneaker culture in African American community and culture and shared his special relationship and love for sneakers. This book allowed Participant 8 to share his positive self-concept and positive influences of Black culture as the author wrote about how magical sneakers make you feel. He understood the author’s metaphoric language between sneakers and pizzas- designing and producing sneakers is like building an amazing pizza.

The participants’ responses connected with their self-concept that allowed them to be self-reflective with the characters and their own responses to situations and to confidently be honest about their actions or feelings. Participant 2 found Delphine’s vexing behavior in *Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize* to appear the same as her facial expressions when she is upset and mad. Participant 4 recalled the way he responded when he was nervous is exactly what he does, that is like Kai in *The Electric Slide in Kai*; he avoids the task by sneaking out of

the situation. Participant 6 understood how it felt to be the new kid in the community and at school, to want friends, and to fit in through the *Epic in Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self*.

In summary, the participants' responses to the text and the interview questions allowed Black Identity Development to bring insight on how culture and the naïve stage impacted the participants' verbal and nonverbal connections to the text. Jackson III (2012) outlined customs and traditions and family structure as culture that fit with the context of the study and the research questions. The customary practices and the traditions and the family structure in Black culture coupled with the naïve stage descriptions influenced the participants to self-reflect when reading African American multicultural literature.

Research Question 2

Research question two asked: How do Black children describe their cultural and racial identity within African American multicultural literature? The interview questions were designed to have the participants identify their cultural and racial identities within their book. The racial and cultural responses fell into the categories of hair, family connections, recreational activities, and fashion. The racial and cultural evidence that showed that Black children see their likeness in the text. In this section, I outline this evidence through the categories of hair, family connections, and recreational activities.

Hair, family connections, recreational activities and fashion were found in the data as more excerpts were coded and constant comparative analysis was performed. During the data analysis, I found four of the texts *Hair Love*, *I Got Next*, *The Electric Slide* and *Kai, Jabari Jumps*, and *Kicks* that were chosen that provided racial and cultural identities.

Hair

There were a number of instances throughout each interview in the study where the participants provided evidence for the racial and cultural responses to the text. The book, *Hair Love* by, produced cultural and racial responses about the collection of hair tools and products, hairstyles, hair frustrations, and hairstyling methods. Participant 5, a Black male, connected with the female character's hair journey. The character's gender did not interfere with the participant's ability to self-reflect or identify with his racial or cultural identity. Participant 5 is a young Black male who chose a book about a young Black girl and her hair journey. This was a powerful experience to listen to and watch this participant enjoy the text without allowing gender to stop the self-reflection flow. There were times when he announced he was not a girl, but the experiences were like his life. There were times Participant 5 discussed his hair styling failed hair experience with his dad that were like Zuri in *Hair Love*.

- Participant 5: Umm hmm. So he tried to do her hair. She got mad. And it was really messed up. (This is like his life)
- Participant 5: When the cat got mad when they put their hair in a bunny thingy. That was the same thing. I got mad when my mom when my mom put my hair in a bun.
- Participant 5: Start to get messy and all of that and all of that. And so we all got like this, but not like the girl.
- Participant 5: We had all the materials from my Hair
- Participant 5: I got mad, but I still had to do it.
- Participant 5: (turned from page to page to tell how the hair style process was like his life) It's starting to get messy again and they start. It puffed up. You when you start combing hair. Got messy again. It was this part. I started to get mad. When I get it (all of

the materials for the style), I didn't have an idea. When I when it started, I got back to it. And when she did it, she had all the materials ready. Yeah, all the materials for these pages. It got all done.

- Participant 8: The boy. His hair is like mine. (He has a box haircut which is an African American hairstyle for men and boys.)

There were incidents when Participant 5 flipped through the pages to show that most of the book was just like his hair journey. He was willing to verbally share his responses, but it appeared that he was overwhelmed by the thought of discussing so many pages about his hair journey. I accepted short phrases that indicated that his family has hair materials to style hair, and it is a slow process to style some hair textures because it will "puff up" causing the styling process to start over until the perfect hairstyle is achieved. Participant 5 related to Zuri's frustrations, but the process always turns out exactly right. Black family connections were identified in the participant's responses as bonding time, a way to build self-esteem, and show love during the hairstyling process and support for a Black father. This also connected and showed up as evidence for family connections.

Family Connections

- Participant 1: I did a double backflip with my dad. He was very excited and he, he wanted to do it and he did a double back flip.
 - Interpretation: Jabari and his dad splashed around in the pool. Participant 1 shared a self-reflection about a time he shared with his dad. Participant 1 self-reflected about spending time with his dad and the excitement his dad showed. During the session, he was Jabari with his dad. Jabari's dad was excited and jumped around with Jabari in the book.

- Participant 5: He (Zuri's dad) tried to help. And the first style was a big no wow no way and she got mad. And that was how I did when I first got my hair done by my dad. Well basically I didn't really like it. And the first time it was ok but really I didn't know which way it really was.
 - Interpretation: Participant 5 shared his hairstyling experience that is like Zuri's hair love experience. The hairstyle was not a good look on Participant 5 or Zuri.
- Participant 5: Wait, what my mom did. It was like all of these. We had all the materials from my hair, but we didn't have the laptop. And the cat wasn't there.
 - Interpretation: Participant 5 provided self-reflections about spending time with dad and mom to achieve a hairstyle for a Black boy.
- Participant 7: We make funny jokes and dance. I like spending time together. We watch scary movies and sad movies together. Sometimes I have yucky medicine too.
 - Interpretation: Participant 7 was provided self-reflections about the interactions between her and her mother.

Recreational Activities

Racial and cultural category recreational activities were revealed in the participant's responses before and after they read African American multicultural literature. The recreational responses revealed participants' connections to basketball and swimming and a disconnect to one the Black cultural dances, the electric slide.

- Participant 1: When you said double backflip cause one time I went to a water, water park and there's a big pool and there was a diving board, and I also did a double black flip.

- Participant 1: I like when he went down and down and then he went up 'cause that's very cool and I did that before.
- Participant 3: I did play, I played in a basketball championship here. Me and some of the kids was playing basketball and we won the championship.
- Participant 3: Sometimes I mean like I mean I be dribbling under the leg putting my arms like this and shooting. So that is why I picked that one.
- Participant 4: Dancing- can't dance
- Participant 4: When he couldn't do it, the electric slide, he tried to sneak out by his uncle showed him some moves. Then he had no other choice then he had no choice but to not mess up. Then he had no other choice to not mess up.
- Participant 4: But I can't read and write like people teach me how to do it. If you don't like practices stuff.

Interviewer: So, you're saying that he really couldn't do it and then you felt like you couldn't do it, but then when you practiced you could do it.

- Participant 4: Acknowledged the interpretation with a nonverbal response.

I categorically placed responses under the recreational activities that Black children participate in swimming, basketball and dancing despite the myths around the activities. Participants 1, 3, and 4 found swimming, playing basketball, and doing the electric slide as key self-reflections to text. Participants 1 and 3 included technical language associated with the sport in their self-reflection, such as going on the diving board and dribbling under the leg. They connected to recreational activities and shared several examples. However, Participant 4 shared his connection to Kai from *The Electric Slide and Kai* was that both cannot dance. He spent most

of his time explaining that he would sneak out to avoid doing something in the same way that Kai does in the book.

Fashion

- Participant 8: He (the boy) is dressed like me. I put my pants over my shoes like that. I have so many shoes (kicks or sneakers). I don't know where to put them. I stack them up like that (keeps the shoes in the shoeboxes and stacks them against the wall).

Black Identity Development and Cultural and Racial Identity

Based on the findings for RQ2: How do Black children describe their cultural and racial identity within African American multicultural literature?, a variety of codes and responses connected with Black Identity Development theory's naïve stage and how culture impacts the stage. In research question two, some of the codes and categories included are hair, family connections, recreational activities, and fashion. Research question two, the participants' cultural and racial identity, the African American multicultural literature from the everyday experience, and their naïve stage of Black Identity Development that showed that with "parental guidance with positive experiences," "self-concept," "signs of racial identity," and "positive influences of Black culture played a role in Black identity" (p. 40) namely "customs and traditions" and "family structure" (p. 38).

Throughout the interview with Participant 5 who selected *Hair Love*, he discussed how the Black hairstyling process in the book was like the process at home with his mother and father. His self-reflections showed that he has a positive influence of Black hair and parental guidance with positive experiences around Black hair. With that understanding about Black hair his racial identity played a role in the hairstyling process through customs and traditions in Black culture. He shared that he doesn't "take good care of his hair," but he understood that there is a

process to taking care of Black hair that shouldn't be avoided. In the Black family structures and community, a variety of trusted hair products, tools and procedures are used as described and illustrated in *Hair Love* and validated by Participant 5. Participant 5 has a natural hairstyle with gathered tuffs that point up like five fingers on a hand. His mother has long, natural locs while his brother has short individual hair twists that are forming into short natural locs. It is visible that his family has a positive self-concept about the Black hair that grows from their scalp and has not sought a method to alter it that moves away from Black textured hairstyles which gave Participant 5 the confidence to have a conversation about his hair experiences. Participant 8 found shared the same box haircut as the boy in *Kicks*.

Culture's impact on Black Identity Development was found in the family connections responses from participants 1, 5, and 7. These participants related to the story characters Jabari and his dad in *Jabari Jumps*, Zuri and parents in *Hair Love*, and the girl and her mother in *My Mommy Medicine* through the themes of family structure, customs and traditions, self-concept and parental guidance with positive experiences. The participants' racial and cultural responses as it relates to family connections appeared when Participant 1 talked about swimming and doing backflips with his dad with pride. His dad's expressions of approval and encouragement through excitement were evident during his recollection. The ability to converse about the hair styling experience in connection to a text was evident that the Participant 5 and Zuri had shared positive and trial and error hair experiences with their parents as they guided each other through the hairstyling process. Participant 7 related her background to the ways her mother takes care of her on sick days that aligned with the text, *My Mommy Medicine*. The story detailed the ways the Black mother conventionally and homeopathically took care of her daughter. Most children in their culture or racial group have been treated with some remedies that their parents have used to

soothe or heal an illness. The participants' book selections brought their family connections to the African American multicultural texts and how their family culture and self-concept as a Black participant allowed that to happen.

The participants' likenesses to the characters' recreational activities were also parts of Black culture and how the naïve stage of development impacted their connections. Jabari was a swimmer and diver in *Jabari Jumps*. The boy and Shadow played basketball in *I Got Next*. The Participant 1 and 3 found swimming and playing basketball to be one of their favorite things to do and they were good at those recreational activities. They had positive family structures and parental guidance in Black culture who gave them confidence and support and allowed them to participate in the recreational activities.

Research Question 3

Research question three asked: What literary features facilitate Black children's ability to self-reflect? The interview question responses were used to explore literary features that brought out Black third grade participants' self-reflections. During the choosing the book section of the interview, it was designed to allow the participants to select their own book and to have a quick conversation about their book selection before conducting the during reading section. After the participants selected their book, they were asked to state their reason for selecting the book and find a part of the book that helped them make the book selection. From the reading sessions, the participants' literary features responses fell into categories like events, illustrations, character traits, the characters' problems, and the character's solution.

In the interviews' after reading section, the participants answered a series of questions about their life, themselves, and signals that reminded them of themselves from the book and found text evidence to support their answers. From the reading sessions, the participants' literary

features responses fell into the following categories: events, main and supporting characters, illustrations, character traits, the characters' problems, and the character's solution. In the section below, I outline and give examples of the evidence from each of the categories: events, main and supporting characters, illustrations, character traits, the problems, and the solutions.

Events

The participants' responses are connected to the everyday experiences or events in the text. Combs cited that "the actions and reactions of the characters create problems and tensions that build toward a resolution" (p. 437) as a part of the plot's events. Their responses showed that the participants related to and gravitated to the main and supporting characters' actions and reactions in the events by sharing their likeness. Participant 1 provided countless examples about his swimming experiences with Jabari's final leap, and Participant 5 tirelessly found all the events that show the hair styling process self-reflection. I listed a few examples to show that the participants used the events to find their self-reflection. According to Combs (2002), "good stories keep readers or listeners engaged, waiting to find out what happens" (p. 437). The events are a major component that helped the participants' responses emerge and fit under other categories.

- Participant 1: stated about the book, *Jabari Jumps*, "I said that my favorite hobby is swimming on hot days." He also "likes when he (Jabari) goes up the diving board."
- Participant 1: I like climbing stuff and I love stretching and I jumped very high.
- Participant 3: stated without prompting "I really want to read this book. I like basketball people, especially black basketball people."
- Participant 4: stated "sneaking out of the room" This is an event in the story. He chose the book, *The Electric Slide and Kai*.

- Participant 5: stated “I don’t take care of my hair. I don’t want the same thing to happen. So I picked this book to make my hair feel better.” He chose the book, *Hair Love*.
- Participant 6: stated “I try to do new things, but it’s not right. He (Epic) tries to do new things like play sports with the kids, but it’s not right because he’s only good at skateboarding.”
- Participant 7: Sometimes I have yucky medicine too.
- Participant 8: He liked that the boy ate a bowl of Frosted Kicks cereal and the part when the boy imagines that building kicks is like having the right ingredients to make a pizza. He said, “I think of my cereal like that sometimes.”

Main and Supporting Characters

During the interview study, the participants were asked to name someone who was like them or reminded them of themselves. Those questions provided specific answers that told who the participants they were like. The main and supporting characters always appeared in the participants' responses when character questions were asked and when they explained their responses. Combs (2002) shared that it is through the story’s dialogue and what other characters say about the character that leaves the work to the reader to “put the pieces of information together to form your own understanding of the character” (p. 435). For example, Participant 1 compared himself to Jabari as he stretched, climbed up the ladder to the diving board and used his swimming techniques. Participant 5 shared when he got his hair styled by either parent, he felt mad like Zuri and the cat. The characters and their experiences in the text allowed them to self-reflect. I asked the following interview question to receive this specific information: Was there someone in the story that reminded you of yourself? Why did you choose that part to say that that reminds you of you?

- Participant 1: Jabari. He reminded me he was more like me, because he looked up and then climbed. I climbed, and then I jumped off. After I stretched. Stretching is very important.
 - Character: Jabari
 - Participant's explanation: One time I, I didn't wanna go on the diving board 'cause I felt like I had to crack something and then I told my dad I had to stretch.
- Participant 2: When she (Delphine) is happy a lot. She's not happy (with prompting).
 - Character: Delphine Denise
 - Interpretation: Participant 2 had a self-reflection when she saw Delphine show her angry emotions.
- Participant 3: Him. This one. The one the one with the game face on. The boy.
 - Character: young Black basketball player- when the boy puts on the game face
 - Participant's explanation: I actually, I actually had similar shorts on and it was like gray. It was Gray and red and It was Gray and red. And then he he he exactly like me because we won.
- Participant 4: When he was trying to the electric slide and he was messing up and stuff like that. He tried to sneak out by (passing) his uncle. He showed him some moves. Then he had no other choice. He had no choice but to not mess up.
 - Character: Kai
 - Participant's explanation: Just like when I don't want to be somewhere. And I'm nervous to do something like try to sneak out or something like that.
- Participant 5: (Zuri) It start off like this. No, not like the hair girl. Boy like type. I got mad, but I had still had to do it. it's starting to get messy again. It puffed up. (Zuri's pet

cat) When the cat got mad when they put their hair in a bunny thingy. That was the same thing. I got mad when my mom when my mom put my hair in a bun.

- Characters: Zuri and Zuri's pet cat
- Interpretation: Participant 5 shared a character self-reflection that talked about similarities in Zuri's hair styling process and his experiences with hairstyling as an African American boy. Zuri's cat had hair gathered on top of its head with a bow that caught Participant 5's attention to think about a time he had a bun and didn't like it.
- Participant 6: We don't have friends. I try to do new things, but it's not right. He (Epic) tries to do new things like play sports with the kids, but it's not right because he's only good at skateboarding.
 - Characters: Epic
 - Interpretation: Participant 6 and Epic try to get along or try to fit in which doesn't help them make friends.
- Participant 7: Sometimes I have yucky medicine too.
 - Characters: The girl
 - Interpretation: Participant 7 understands what medicine tastes like during an illness.
- Participant 8: The boy. His hair is like mine. (He has a box haircut which is an African American hairstyle for men and boys.) He (the boy) is dressed like me. I put my pants over my shoes like that. I have so many shoes
 - Characters: The boy
 - Interpretation: Participant 8 and the boy found similarities with the boy's hairstyle and fashion sense.

Illustrations

The illustrations were also impactful in the study in the way that the illustrations provided a visual representation for self-reflections. Because of copyright protections in each of the books, I did not include illustrations to match the self-reflection quote. I provided illustration descriptions that aligned with the participants' self-reflection. When I coded the data, I found that the participants pointed to the pages to find it with no explanation or verbal details or found the page and the illustration that helped bring clarity to the interview. I used quotes from each participants' interview that discussed the characters, events, character traits, the problems, and the solutions to support the ways that illustrations are used to show self-reflections. The illustrations allowed the participants to locate, support, and describe their self-reflections in addition to rereading the texts' pages, if needed. Participant 2 pointed to the illustrations to show that the illustrations from *Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize* to help her share the self-reflection she found when she would find the words. Participant 3 chose the front cover to influence his decision to select the book, *I Got Next*. Participant 5 used his finger to draw a circle around pages of self-reflections in *Hair Love*. The illustrations helped the participants share self-reflections that the authors' words didn't say in *Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize* and provided a great hair care and styling sequence in *Hair Love*.

- Participant 1: The page that was like me is when he jumped. When he climbed up and then he stretched it, he jumped off. I like climbing stuff and I love stretching and I jumped very high. I can.
 - Illustration description: Jabari finally has the courage to jump off the diving board. Jabari jumps in the air like a bird. The illustrations show Jabari jumping off the diving board.

- Interpretation: Participant 1 indicated that he was like Jabari when he jumped off the diving board.
- Participant 2: When she is happy a lot.
 - Illustrations: Delphine Denise has beignets in her hands. Her cheeks are filled with beignets, and she wears a huge closed mouth smile while wearing a crown.
 - Interpretation: Participant 2 pointed to pictures of Delphine when she was happy like Delphine. The evidence was a nonverbal, and the participant pointed to the illustrations.
- Participant 2: Pointed to the front cover of the book.

Interviewer: (interviewer's statements to confirm the finger pointing) In the front? On the cover? Is there anywhere else?

Participant 2: pointed to the page that showed a happy self-reflect with Delphine wearing a crown, eating beignets and smiling. Interviewer: When she had the crown and she imagined that she won? Participant one agreed with the illustration's description which was her self-reflection.

- Illustration description: On the front of the book, Delphine rode in a Mardi Gras themed wagon with the letter "D" for Delphine on the front as if she were in a Mardi Gras parade. Wearing a huge and pretty smile and a big puff ponytail, Delphine waved her arms up in the air with gold feather bracelets on her wrists. Delphine has on a gold, purple, and green dress. The wagon is covered with streamers, flags, cookware, and jazz saxophone on the front of it.
- Interpretation: Participant 2 found and pointed to the front cover and Delphine with the crown to show times when she is happy like Delphine. Participant 2

stated that she is happy like Delphine even though Participant 2 did not share any of the illustrations descriptions that were like her. She connected with an overall happy feeling.

- Participant 3: Sometimes, I mean like, I mean, I be dribbling under the leg putting my arms like this and shooting. So that is why I picked that one.
 - Illustration description: In the book, there are four pictures of the boy doing basketball moves. The boy dribbles the ball through his legs, lifts the ball to make a shot, and releases the ball to make a three-pointer.
 - Interpretation: Participant 3 does the same basketball moves as the character in the picture. The words on the page say “I start at the top of the key, slow it down, the put’em to sleep.
- Participant 4: When he (Kai) couldn't do it, the electric slide. He tried to sneak out by uncle. He (the uncle) showed him (Kai) some moves. Then he had no other choice. He had no choice but to not mess up.
 - Illustration description: In the illustration, it is time for the family to do the electric slide. Kai sneaks out of the reception hall because he still doesn't know how to do the line dance. Kai tip toes out of the reception hall through a side door.
 - Interpretation: Participant 4 chose a self-reflection that connected to avoidance. He explained that when he doesn't want to do something he sneaks out of doing it. Even though Participant 4 didn't connect the illustration to the avoiding dance, his overall self-reflection was about avoidance.

- Participant 5: We had all the materials from my hair. Wait, what my mom did. It was like all of these (flipping from page to page and drawing a circle with his finger). We had all the materials from my hair, but we didn't have the laptop and the cat wasn't there.
 - Illustration description: Three pages showed the materials that are needed to style Zuri's hair. Zuri showed her dad a wide toothed comb. Dad squeezed out some hair cream. On the sink, there were rubber bands, a hair pick, a rattail comb, hair twisters, bobby pins, hair clips, and a bristle brush. On the last page of hair materials text evidence, it shows the materials Dad used to style Zuri's hair.
 - Interpretation: Participant 5 quickly flipped through the pages that showed he used materials like the illustration to get his hair ready also. He used his finger to draw a circle around the pages.
- Participant 7: I like spending time together. We watch scary movies and sad movies together.
 - Illustration description: Mommy and the girl smiled and watched movies together during the girl's illness.
 - Interpretation: Participant 7 connected to mother and daughter activities that didn't necessarily connect to providing mommy medicine during an illness.
- Participant 8: I imagine putting pizza toppings on my shoes like the book. I don't do that; it's in my imagination. The shoe cereal makes me think of shoes in my head.
 - Illustration description: The boy ate a bowl of Frosted Kicks cereal. The boy imagines that building kicks is like having the right ingredients to make a pizza.
 - Interpretation: Participant 8 enjoys the fun ways the book displays kicks or sneakers.

- Participant 8: I don't know where to put my shoes.
 - Illustration description: The boy has all of his kicks in the original shoeboxes in stacks and lined up along the wall in his bedroom.
 - Interpretation: He uses the illustration to describe that he doesn't have enough room in his closet like the boy in the book, so he lines up the shoeboxes along the wall.

Character Traits

During the participant's interview sessions, they named or made references to character traits as they shared their self-reflections with the character and the text. McCormick Caulkins (2001) stated that "during mini lessons we might tell kids, for example, that when we read books, we pay attention to what a story character does because sometimes actions give us a window into personalities, revealing the kind of person a character is" (p. 469- 470). These character traits were found in the data as I began to reveal literary elements from their responses. I did not ask the participants for their interpretations, inferences, or explanations about the character traits they casually mentioned, but I have offered my interpretations from their responses.

- Participant 1: I'm saying he was a great jumper. He said he wasn't scared at all.
- Participant 1: I was not like that scared at all, but when I was up there I was like kind of scared, but I faced my fear of heights.
 - character trait and character: brave/ Jabari
 - Interpretation: Jabari became brave like Participant 1. Both of them had to face their fears. Jabari finally gained the courage to climb up the ladder to the diving board and jump off it.
- Participant 2: When she is happy a lot. She's not happy.

- character trait and character: unhappy or mad and happy/ Delphine Denise
- Clarification during the interview: So that is so I would say there is someone in the book that reminds you of yourself then because you're happy a lot. She's very happy.
Interpretation: Participant 2 found an example in an illustration that showed Delphine Denise's happy and mad facial expression as a likeness; even though Participant 2 is happy often, she sometimes get mad like Delphine Denise. Participant 2 pointed often with nonverbal cues and with prompting the responses were limited.
- Participant 3: Sometimes I almost gave up in the game and my coach reminded me and my coach reminded me you should never get what you should try if he loses, it's ok you always have another time. You never give up.
 - character trait and character: determine, game face also known as a serious face/ the basketball player
 - Interpretation: Participant 3's word would be game face. I chose the word game face from Participant 3's response because putting on your "game face" can mean to put on your serious face or be serious. He reported that he had to put on his game face like a basketball player when he played in a championship with the other kids.
- Participant 4: When he (Kai) couldn't do it, the electric slide. He tried to sneak out by uncle. He showed him some moves. Then he had no other choice. He had no choice but to not mess up. So like. When I can't read and write like. People teach me how to do it.
- Interviewer: So you're saying that he really couldn't do it? And then you felt like you couldn't do it, but then when you practiced you could do it. So that's like that.
 - character trait and character: sneaky/ Kai

- Interpretation: Participant 4 was very attached to the single event, Kai snuck out of the wedding reception hall to avoid doing the electric slide with the family. He shared that he sneaks out when he doesn't want to do something.
- Participant 5: He tried to help. And the first style was a big no wow no way and she got mad. And That was how I did when I first got my hair done by my dad. Well basically I didn't really like it. And the first time it was ok but really I didn't know which way it really was.
 - character trait and character: mad/ Zuri
 - Interpretation: Participant 5 remembered a time when he was mad like Zuri when a hairstyle didn't turn out to their liking. Participant 5 and Zuri were styled by their fathers. The participants' ability to compare themselves to the characters and events allowed character traits to emerge as a literary element.
- Participant 6: "We have the same feelings." "I tried everything and it didn't work out."
 - character trait and character: sad and determined
 - Interpretation: Participant 6 and Epic were determined to make friends by participating in activities to make friends, but they found themselves without friends.

Characters' Problems

Each of those character traits that the participants selected and that I have provided some interpretations for are further evidence for the connections and self-reflections around literary features in their selected texts. According to Combs (2002), when readers wait "to find out what happens, the "what happens" is usually tied to the solving of a problem or dilemma that faces a significant character" (p. 437). These character traits were often reflected in the characters'

problems and characters' solutions that the participants identified in the interviews about their selected books.

The last two literary elements that emerged from the data are problem and solution. During the reading sessions, the participants named examples that I used as evidence to show that problem and solution statements are shared when making self-reflections. The problem and solution statements have a relationship with the characters and the everyday experiences in the text. If the participants named the characters in their responses, they are more than likely to share the problem and solution because they are parts of the plot in a story.

I outline some examples of the characters' problems and characters' solutions below:

- Participant 4: Just like when I don't want to be somewhere. And I'm nervous to do something like I try to sneak out or something like that.
 - Interpretation: Participant 4 shared his self-reflection about getting nervous to do something with Kai who decided to sneak out to avoid joining the family's electric slide dance. He shared that not wanting to do something can be a problem and he relates to Kai.
- Participant 5: It starts off like this. No, not like the hair girl. Boy like type. I got mad, but I had still had to do it. it's starting to get messy again. It puffed up. (Zuri's pet cat) When the cat got mad when they put their hair in a bunny thingy. That was the same thing. I got mad when my mom when my mom put my hair in a bun.
 - Interpretation: Participant 5 shared his self-reflection during some trying and difficult times with hairstyling. Zuri's hair styling session and the cat's hair style reflected the participant's responses to a problem with hairstyling. The girl's hair

was not styled the way she liked it, and Participant 5 found that to be the same way.

- Participant 6: We don't have friends.
 - Interpretation: Participant 6 and Epic shared the same problem. They were new to the neighborhood and school, and both of them expected to make friends easily which caused them to force friendships with their peers.
- Participant 8: I don't know where to put my shoes.
 - Interpretation: He uses the illustration to describe that he doesn't have enough room in his closet like the boy in the book, so he lines up the shoeboxes along the wall.

Characters' Solutions

- Participant 1: The page that was like me is when he jumped. When he climbed up and then he stretched it, he jumped off. I like climbing stuff and I love stretching and I jumped very high. I can.
 - Solution: Stretch, climb up, and ladder to finally make the dive
 - Participant 1 shared that even though he is always brave, unlike Jabari, he was like Jabari when he stretched, climbed up the ladder and was finally brave enough to jump off the diving board.
- Participant 3: Sometimes I almost gave up in the game and my coach reminded me and my coach reminded me you should never get what you should try if he loses, it's ok you always have another time. You never give up.
 - Solution: Put your game face

- Participant 3 shared a time when he gave up like the character. In the book the boy's shadow tells him to put his game face on. Participant three thought of a time when he listened to his coach during a basketball game. He had to put on his game face to solve his problem like the boy in the book.
- Participant 4: Just like when I don't want to be somewhere. And I'm nervous to do something like try to sneak out or something like that.
 - Solution: Sneaking out
 - Participant 4 shared that his nervousness causes him to want to leave the room and avoid his responsibilities.
- Participant 5: We had all the materials from my hair. Wait, what my mom did. It was like all of these (flipping from page to page and drawing a circle with his finger). We had all the materials from my hair, but we didn't have the laptop and the cat wasn't there.
 - Solution: Hair materials
 - Participant 5 shared that Zuri's hair needed a good style and her dad used hair styling materials until he achieved the style that satisfied her taste.
- Participant 7: I drink tea, hot cocoa and soup. I do that when I'm sick. My mom takes care of me, well us.
 - Solution: taking mommy medicine such as hot tea, spending time together, having a little fun, and taking a dose of real medicine
 - Participant 7 has a mother who provided the same care as the mother in the book when her child is sick.

Black Identity Development, Stories and Literary Elements

Based on the findings for RQ3: What literary features facilitate Black children's ability to self-reflect?, a variety of codes and responses connected with Black Identity Development theory's naïve stage and how culture impacts the stage. In research question three, the codes and categories included are *events, main and supporting characters, illustrations, character traits, characters' problems, and characters' solutions*. Research question three, the literary elements and self-reflections, the African American multicultural literature from the everyday experiences, and their naïve stage of Black Identity Development that showed that with "parental guidance with positive experiences," "self-concept," "signs of racial identity," and "positive influences of Black culture played a role in Black identity" (p. 40) namely "customs and traditions" and "family structure" (p. 38).

The literary elements and the participants' self-reflections have culture and the naïve stage at the core of the results for the study. When the naïve stage's themes were developed, it was evident that positive influences of Black culture, signs of racial identity, parental guidance with positive experiences, and self-concept influenced the way the participants responded to the interview questions. The literary elements were detected in the responses when the participants shared commonalities with the characters, named a part of the story that was a self-reflection, described the character using words that signaled a character trait and experienced the same problem and/or solution. These fictional stories are based on the everyday experience of Black children, follow the same formula of all the other children's picture books that have story elements and are written for and about children who live in the United States.

Those experiences in the African American multicultural picture books contained Black culture in its plot and the participants' background in Black culture, namely family structure and

customs and traditions, evoked their responses to align with the representations of Blackness in the text and the illustrations provided context the text did not include. The participants' everyday lives mirrored their text selections' plot which are the literary elements and aided in identifying the appropriate themes from Black Identity Development's naïve stage, namely positive influences of Black culture, signs of racial identity, parental guidance with positive experiences, and self-concept.

The responses that shaped the code events reflected family structure, positive influences of Black culture, parental guidance with positive experiences, and self-concept. Participant 1 received praise from his dad when they spent time at the swimming pool. The Black family structure that includes spending time with each other to build self-esteem and self-concept especially with Black boys allowed him to self-reflect using his own experiences instead of pretending there is a self-reflection or feeling ashamed for not having positive family guidance and experiences. Participant 2 discussed that he "likes basketball people, especially, Black basketball people." The book, *I Got Next*, was full of events with a boy and his shadow that allowed him to self-reflect. Participant 2 immediately shared the statements that contributed to his racial identity and self-concept. He established that he was comfortable reading books that are written for and about him. However, there can be an opposing factor; Participant 6 is a new student at his school who has a high self-esteem, but he has struggled to make friends despite trying. He found that *Epic in Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self* tried to make friends but his efforts went unnoticed until he went back to being true to himself.

The illustrations and character traits often reveal what the author did or did not write using the words. The participants' self-reflections align with positive influences of Black culture and parental guidance with positive experiences, and self-concept. The illustrations provided

connections to the Black male character's basketball moves in *I Got Next* and Participant 3's dribbling and leg moves from the Black basketball players he knows in reality. The positive influences from Black basketball culture and his own self-concept helped him self-reflect using illustrations. Throughout the participants' lives as they have changed and grown within their family's structures and influences which afforded them to experience emotions that resonated with the characters' traits based on what was or was not written in the text. Their self-concept aligned with the characters actions and evoked bravery, sadness, happiness, determination, anger, and avoidance.

Lastly the characters' problems and solutions were explored and situated in culture and the naïve stage's descriptions that applied to the codes. The participants' self-concept, positive influences of Black culture, and parental guidance with positive experiences helped their responses connect to the literary elements, problem and solution. Participant 5 experienced a challenging hairstyling session like Zuri in *Hair Love* and he remembered the frustrating experiences when his hair "puffed up and got messy again" along with getting a bun hairstyle that wasn't the style for him. His problematic styling session connected with how his mother worked to achieve his desired hairstyle through parental guidance with positive experiences. As a result, Participant 1 had a positive self-concept and positive parental experiences that allowed him to show that like Jabari in *Jabari Jumps* he can do anything. Participant 3 had a positive influence in Black culture from his Black basketball coach who reminded him to remain determined and his love for Black basketball players and the sport. He has a positive self-concept that allowed him to connect with the boy and his shadow in *I Got Next*.

In summary, Emma Road, Bridgeforth Avenue and Curbell Lane participants' self-reflections that developed the codes, axial codes, and selective codes and generated the

development of *Multicultural Self-reflection Conceptual Framework*. The participants' quotes provided insight into how Black children see themselves in eight out of 26 African American multicultural literature picture books.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

In this discussion section, I situate the study's findings in the literature. Then, interpret and discuss the findings of this dissertation research study in relation to the study's theoretical framework, Black Identity Development. I explain and discuss how these theories and texts from the literature review connected to the findings and results of my three research questions: 1) How do Black children respond to African American multicultural literature?; (2) How do Black children describe their cultural and racial identity within multicultural literature?; and (3) What literary features facilitate Black children's ability to self-reflect? I conclude this chapter by explaining the significance of the research study. I will share some general reflections on the research process. I also discuss the limitations of this research and I provide a future research agenda.

Situating the Study in the Literature

The discussion section begins by situating the study's findings in the literature that was reviewed in the second chapter of this dissertation. In this section, I examine the ways the findings connected to the literature by first discussing how the findings converged with findings from the literature. Then, I discuss the ways that these findings diverged from the literature.

Convergence with the Literature

There were a number of findings from this study that converged with the literature. One finding relates to what Gardener (2020) found about increasingly how African American literature has broadened its work to allow Black children to see themselves in the pages of children's literature. The ways in which the participants talked about and made self-reflections in their selected books shows evidence for how there are more African American children's literature titles that appeal to Black children. A second convergence with the literature relates to

how African American multicultural children's literature can provide self-confirmation for Black children. For example, the findings related to the second research question show how the participants made self-confirmations of their racial and cultural identity in connections to categories like hair, family values, and recreational activities. The racial and cultural evidence that showed that Black children see their likeness in the text. This follows what Sims-Bishop (1982) asserts as the importance of African American literature connecting to self-confirmation "with a strong sense of community and cultural affinity and positive feelings about being black" (p. 105). The findings also suggest that for many of the participants, the books they selected became a type of mirror book for self-confirmations. It is like Ford et al. (2018) explain how mirror books can provide and reflect racial pride and a sense of self-confirmation. Finally, there was also a convergence with the literature findings in connection to how the participants in this study made verbal identification in the children's literature they selected by stating "that's like me." This connects with the findings from the literature related to the type of "that's like me" text connection examples that Kenzo (2021) and Manu's (2022) highlight. I will discuss these connections in greater detail towards the end of this chapter.

Divergence with the Literature

There were also some findings that diverged from the literature or, perhaps a better way to phrase it, are findings that need further research. One of the main purposes for this study was to examine how Black children self-reflect on African American multicultural literature. There was a gap in the literature related to these self-reflections. The findings from this research seek to be a step in addressing that literature gap. There are a few studies in the literature that examine Black children's self-reflections on African American multicultural literature in relation to literary features and elements in the text. In this research study, I found how the participants

began to make self-reflections to the text features and literary elements like: events, illustrations, character traits, the characters' problems, and the character's solution. More research, though, is needed to explore and examine how and why these literary features and elements are connected to self-reflections.

Framing the Findings with Theoretical Framework

The findings for this study also were connected and can be better understood with the theoretical framework in the study. In this study I used Black Identity Development (Jackson III, 2012) to guide my understanding about how readers will respond to their text selections. I also included Black Identity Development to understand how Black children view themselves in their stages of development. After analyzing the data and reporting the findings, I found that the Black Identity Development guided my research and interpretations of the findings from this research study.

For example, in relation to the first research question about how Black children respond to African American multicultural literature, I found that Black Identity Development supported the findings that participants may respond in their special way and no two responses will be the same (Jackson III, 2012). The participants' responded using phrases, statements nonverbal cues such as point and drawing a circle around the illustrations on the pages when there are too many self-reflection examples to share at one time. I found that the responses included body language, voice inflections, emotions and feelings. The way the reader responds depends on what is evoked from the text.

I used a combined Shared Reading approach from Tyner and Green (2012) and Fountas and Pinnell (1996 & 2006) to allow the participants to engage in the reading process in a non-academic and non-threatening manner in which Rosenblatt (1973) supported and suggested. The

participants were allowed to decide their reading preference by choosing to read the entire text, take turns reading the text, whisper reading, joining in from time to time or to allow me to read the entire text. At the participants' requests, I read the entire text two times, took turns two times and one participant read the entire text during the session. I provided three of the readers with miscue support so they could successfully complete the reading without focusing on their reading skills. Based on the participants' responses, the combined Shared Reading approach was the good fit for the study.

During the before reading section of the interview, I opened the interview by asking, "do you have conversations with anyone about yourself and the books you like to read?" Eder and Fingerson (2001) supported interviewing young people because "interviewing young people is to study those topics that are salient in their lives but do not occur in daily conversations or interactions" (p. 33). This study allowed the participants to share their voices.

In relation to my second research question about how Black children describe their cultural and racial identity within multicultural literature, I relied more on Black Identity Development to interpret the findings from this research question. Black Identity Development explains how third grade students are moving into the Acceptance stage of development with a strong acceptance of White culture and a diminished sense of Black acceptance (Jackson III, 2012). However, in this study, their responses align with the descriptions of the naïve stage of Black Identity development. Black Identity Development's naïve stage stated that "parental guidance with positive experiences," "self-concept," "signs of racial identity," and "positive influences of Black culture played a role in Black identity" (Jackson III, 2012, p. 40).

Throughout my interviews with the participants, I observed that none of the participants expressed intimidation, insecurity, inferiority, annoyance, rejection, or guilt about reading

African American multicultural text. Participant 3 shared that he liked reading books about basketball players especially, Black basketball players. Upon walking in the interview room with the 26 African American multicultural books, Participant 6 expressed that he loved all of the books that were displayed on the table as a choice for reading during the study. Majority of the participants wanted to read more than one text selection while the study called for only one text selection. The participants selected an African American multicultural book as though this was normal routine. Based on their interactions with the text, their Black identity and Black Identity Development, the Black participants seem to know that being Black is a beautiful and wonderful thing and that being Black has a place in the world.

In reporting on the second research question, I outlined and described evidence in the form of racial and cultural categories from their responses. The categories were as follows: family connection, hair, extracurricular activities and fashion. Participants 5 and 8 discussed Black hair with love expressing that they felt inferior because of their hair; they know Black hair needs particular materials, a special style and patience to achieve a desired Black hairstyle. It can be concluded that these participants have the confidence to be Black and proud and see themselves in the text.

The third research question in my study was about the literary features that facilitate Black children's ability to self-reflect. Black Identity Development (Jackson III, 2012) helped me identify the literary elements from the participants' responses. Based on their responses, I found the traditional story elements, characters, illustrations, events, problem and solution, and character traits, emerging from the data. I found that African American multicultural literature, Black Identity Development and the combined Shared Reading Approach will produce self-

reflections and specifically Multicultural Self-Reflection that are specific to the participant's background, race, and/or culture.

Multicultural Self Reflection of Text

The study examined the ways that Black children see themselves when they read African American multicultural literature. In discussing the findings of this study, I have begun to unpack and coin a new word for describing the self-reflections the participants made to multicultural literature. I call this term, "Multicultural Self-Reflections." These are self-reflections to multicultural text that are specific and connected to a reader's background, race, and/or culture. Multicultural Self-Reflection provides an oral description or explanation for the way Black children see themselves reflected in multicultural literature from the perspective of African American children. Ultimately, the term needs more research in order to better define the features and tenets of multicultural self-reflection. Additionally, more research is needed to identify and explain how multicultural self-reflections are part of the ways that Black children may see themselves in multicultural literature.

The term emerged after the data analysis was completed. My goal was to begin to name how readers can see themselves in reading everyday literature or mirror books (Sims Bishop, 2002). When readers are comfortable with the reading approach, they are allowed to respond with text evidence using their voices and are allowed to experience their culture in texts, they will produce self-reflections. From this study, I noticed that features of multicultural self-reflection include the nonverbal cues and verbal statements that mirror literary, cultural and racial elements between the reading selection and reader. One of the goals is to provide text that allows the reader to feel they have met their *twin, clone, or sibling*, which are words that the participants in this study used in response to the interview portion of the study. Multicultural

self-reflections seem to be supported by locating text evidence and elaborating about the experience. Multicultural self-reflection also seems to be implemented using a combined shared reading approach with an emphasis on non-threatening reading practices and reader self-selection practices based on their multicultural identity. However, as I mentioned earlier, more research is needed in order to fully develop and define multicultural self-reflection.

Reflections on the Research Process

I would like to make a few comments and observations about lessons that I learned from the research process. The study provided insight on the ways that we converse with Black children during interview studies, their self-efficacy when they engage in reading African American multicultural literature from the everyday experience and finally topics they would like to read about. This transformative information is a catalyst for composing and illustrating African American multicultural literature that may provide powerful multicultural self-reflections.

How to Converse with Black Children

When interviewing the participants, I found that there is a way of using cultural communication with Black children during an interview and everyday conversation. Even though this was an interview study, I needed to communicate and engage with the third grade participants in a manner that would allow them to respond to my questions. The communication does not need to be formal and adult communication, but that is lay communication for children and comfortable for them to open up and share their responses with ease. It would be appropriate to practice the interview questions by saying the questions aloud and thinking about if that is the way you would want to ask a child that question and how they may nonverbally respond or search the interviewers' faces for more information or a rephrase.

Black Magic

During a discussion with one of the youth club's branch managers, we discussed an interesting idea that questioned how the participants would respond if they were given a choice to select a book about a Black or a White character. I responded that there is Black magic in the Black book that kept the participants' interest. When I say Black Magic, I mean the way Blackness is presented that allows Black people to feel comfortable with what they see and the identity in the thing. I think if the characters were White, my participants would have questioned the events if they were not relatable. I also noticed that the participants continued to listen to the story when they had very little knowledge of the content such as New Orleans' Mardi Gras culture and the electric slide. However they continued to read the text and provide self-reflections. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) concluded that "when kids make meaningful connections to the characters, problems and events, they seem to gain some insight into the story as a whole" (p. 103). After conducting the study and analyzing the data, "the story as a whole" possibly does not include a place to discuss racial and cultural identity. However, the Black participants identified characters, problems, solutions and character trait statements using African American multicultural picture books that were like them or like their everyday experiences as a young Black person.

I believe there was something about the Black Magic in the text that caused the participants to continue listening to or reading the text during the reading session without asking to end the session or to select another book. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Roberta Price Gardener (2020) stated that African American literature has broadened its work to allow, particularly, Black children and Black people to see themselves within the pages of the book. Because of this notion, I believe that is the reason the participants simply kept reading and

participating. The author's wrote those books and the illustrators wrote the books in a way that captivated the reader with Black magic, Black reader magic.

The study also shifted my thinking back to my vignette about my group of third grade black students whom I thought did not notice that the group happened to be African American. My study's data and theoretical framework helped me view the situation differently. What I mean by that is based on the stages of Black Identity Development, the advanced stage, (Jackson III, 2012), the third-grade children did exactly what they should have done which is know that you are black, and you possibly do not have to announce it. They probably have not encountered situations in which they have to seek other Black people to feel comfortable. They may be comfortable with their Blackness. During the study I noticed that the participants, one participant mentioned that he liked reading about black characters. Gomez- Najarro (2019) shared that "students who consistently see themselves in learning materials assume that it is normal for them to inherit their privilege" (p. 394). None of the other participants indicated race, but their responses gave underlying indicators that they knew the books are about Black people.

It was the Black Magic that Black children have during the stages of Black Identity Development (Jackson III, 2012) that allows them to move through life without an announcement when they see Blackness. At the advanced stage, I believe, or it could be believed that black children see Black as beautiful. They have the self-confidence to validate themselves and seek community if needed when they step into a space with African American books and Black people. It could be said that they know who they are. Based on the data I interpreted that black children in the third grade still see themselves as Black and beautiful no matter what society has or has not said about being a Black person in America.

Based on these topics and their interactions with 26 African American multicultural texts, perhaps Black children would continue to choose self-reflective books if Black characters were included in their spaces. As I previously included in the literature review, making connections is that commonalities can include statements such as “the character is a boy and I am a boy” and “the coolest character’s name is Jasmine, and my name is Jasmine” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 102), but including some prompts that would help the reader share racial and cultural identities that diverge with plot using African American multicultural literature. It was the black magic in the text and the child that allowed them to see blackness, it is not a problem, and I accept that blackness may be in these books. Also, they may read Black books in their classroom or be taught to respect Blackness from home.

What do Black Children Want to Read?

A pondering question I have for Black society and Black writers: have the authors had a conversation with Black children to find out what they want to read? What is important to them and their reading experience? Do black children want to hear stories about their life? Do they want to meet characters and books that are just like them? Do they want to read books that are just like them?

In the before reading section of my interview protocol, the participants and I had conversations about their reading preferences. During and after each interview session, I found that Black children want to read books that are written like their life; they want to meet characters who are just like them. As a cognitive and social act, reading does afford the reader to construct meaning but to also place oneself and one’s life into the act of reading (Wagner, 2019) which would support self-reflections while reading African American children’s literature. Three of the participants called the “just like me” characters a twin. One participant called the “just like

me” character a sibling. Another participant called the “just like me” character a clone. This parallels Kenzo (2021) and Manu’s (2022) self-reflections in the movie *Encanto*; they saw their clone, and they were delighted about it. Morrell and Morrell's (2012) two-year-old child saw his clone in literature, *Busy Toes*. And this is the place that we need to get.

Limitations

After conducting the study I found several limitations. The small sample size is one of those limitations. It is important to note that this study was proposed during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in 2021 in which school and facilities updated their guidelines or their enrollment was significantly low. In spring of 2022, I faced several challenges gaining access to children because of the COVID guidelines in schools and churches and low enrollment in afterschool programs. Initially, I was scheduled to conduct the study at a local charter school. The school’s principal reported the school board changed their visitor policy because of the omicron COVID-19 variant. In addition, I contacted at least 10 afterschool programs, a childcare program, and a local church to recruit third grade participants from their special programs. The church then decided that they did not want to extend the study’s participation announcements to its church members. All of the afterschool programs replied that they did not have the population, Black children, at their site except Curbell Lane Youth Club (a pseudonym). The childcare program did not respond to the email. Curbell Lane Youth Club’s branch manager wanted to participate in the study, but the site had only one third grade student. Curbell Lane’s branch manager connected me with Emma Road and Bridgeforth Avenue’s branch managers to have an in-depth conversation. Even though Emma Road, Bridgeforth Avenue and Curbell Lane Youth Clubs allowed me to conduct the study at their sites, their membership was very low because of the pandemic.

I completed all of the necessary paperwork and the background check to have access to the sites and the members based on the Youth Clubs' guidelines. At the time Emma Road had two third grade members, Bridgeforth Avenue had six third grade members, and Curbell Lane had one third grade member who declined to participate. Curbell Lane was the only Youth Club that had one second grade member. At that time, I had access to eight third grade participants. To conduct the study at Emma Road and Bridgeforth Avenue sites, it would require traveling to two sites on the southeast and southwest sides of the city. During the summer 2022, the six Bridgeforth members did not participate in the program and two of them did not return in fall 2022. At Emma Road, one of the two participants moved away and was no longer a member. In fall 2022, the recruits were fourth graders. I kept the fourth grade recruits as interview pilot protocol participants. The relationship that I built with them made the transition for us very smooth, and their time was spared. I began to recruit a new third grade sample at the two sites.

I recruited a total of eight third grade participants. One of the recruit's parents indicated that the recruit is Black, but the recruit did not want to participate because the recruit identifies as biracial. I allowed the recruit to make the choice to decline. Another recruit could no longer attend the club because of financial circumstances. A parent did not respond to several contacts, and the recruit was sickly. Initially I began the study with 5 participants with IRB permission, parental consent, and student assent. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic presented so many challenges for the recruitment process of this study in addition to member preferences and health concerns. My study called for 5-10 African American third grade participants. During the pandemic, I was presented with challenges that prevented me from recruiting the maximum number, 10, but I was able to recruit and retain the minimum number of 5 for the study's sample at that time.

In December 2022, I began my last round of student recruitment at Curbell Lane Youth Center in hopes that their enrollment increased at their new location. I recruited 6 third grade participants from Curbell Lane Youth Club. However, I retained two boys and one girl for the study. I continued the study with a total of 8 participants with IRB permission, parental consent, and student assent. The small sample size of this study is a limitation. In keeping with the design of a qualitative research study, the findings are not meant to be generalizable to the wider population but are more representative of the small sample of students that were part of this study.

Another limitation is that the participants may have read the proposed multicultural literature because of the popularity of some of the titles. In the winter 2021 and spring 2022, new African American picture books were released that could have been used in the study. In this study, the students were not taught how to explain how they see themselves or Blackness. The students needed to have their own self-awareness and understanding to have a conversation about Blackness and to independently self-reflect when reading African American multicultural literature.

A variety of African American skin complexions would have been beneficial in the books to allow the readers to experience the “clone”, “twin” or “sibling” aesthetic the participants want to jump out of the book. Manu said in Portuguese, “It’s me, mommy” and “I grew up, mommy” (Valdivia, 2022). Manu’s translations captured the racial and cultural responses that show that she possibly sees her “clone” or a mirror image of her life. In the Black community, the skin tones range from the color of coffee cream to the color of coffee. Focusing on the complexion was not integrated in the study while the everyday experience of African American children in literature was hard to find and needed to bring out racial self-reflections or to mirror Blackness.

Some of the color barriers in the context to the world, such Black people can't talk about being Black or Black identity; the world, society, community and peers may say being black, and talking about being Black may be comical or dismissive to other people or within their culture group. Showing a variety of hues may help with seeing that Black is beautiful.

A somewhat related limitation was that some of the texts were written in a poetry type style or written to convey an inspirational message. During the interview protocol pilot, all of the four participants selected texts that were written as an inspirational text. Even though I did not analyze the pilot protocol's data, I did pay close attention to their book choices in addition to their responses to the questions. From the pilot interview, I found that Participant 1 did not find a character in the book that was just like her to self-reflect with a style of writing that did not contain a plot. Using more African American multicultural books with a plot may be more appropriate.

During the study, I audio recorded the interview session. It would have been beneficial to video and audio record the interview session. During the sessions, Participant 2 pointed to her self-reflections and Participant 5 drew a circle around his self-reflections. I prompted them for more information, but I needed the visual to see what the audio recording and notes may not have captured. Participant 5 quickly flipped through the pages to show how the hair styling pages were his self-reflection. I asked him to show me one more time and to explain his self-reflections. I believe that I could have captured some emotional cues from a video regarding finding those pages. A video recorder was needed to capture the pages, illustrations, and text evidence that showed their self-reflections. I put sticky notes on the pages to bookmark and annotate information about their self-reflections. However video recording would have allowed the interview to smoothly flow without waiting a few seconds to bookmark the pages and write

the annotations. When using a picture book in an interview, I found that for future research it will be important to select the best recording device such as a video recorder in combination with an audio recorder to capture the illustrations and the pages, the ways the participants may respond, and the limit some annotating on the text's page.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is centered in how Black children self-reflect when they read multicultural literature. Multicultural literature is written so that marginalized children are allowed to see themselves as they read the text. In this study, third and fourth grade Black children participated in a reading and an interview session that investigates whether their responses provide statements that show self-reflection using mirror books. This study will help the field of education and children's literature authors recognize ways that Black children see themselves in text. It is also significant because it will assist Black authors and educators to better understand the ways in which Black children see themselves in literature that is written for and about them. The children's responses will provide insight to how they communicate and process their perceptions of everyday Black experiences in literature. The responses may inform writers that their texts have captured the reflection of Black children. The author's words, the illustrator's illustrations—or both—may inspire, renew, affirm, and/or transform a Black child's self-awareness and foster a deeper sense of Black pride. The Black community also needs more information about the process by which Black children connect and see themselves in children's literature. This study is important and significant as it reports on the ways that Black children connect to and communicate their voices of Black representation in multicultural children's literature. Often there is an importance to have Black representation, but the conversation about feelings about having representation from school aged children is important to have.

This study provided a voice for Black children to express what they see that is their likeness when they read multicultural literature. Lastly, this study delved into the decisions about what may lead to increased reading motivation and engagement using African American multicultural literature in any setting that teaches reading and fosters the love of books.

Future Research Agenda

In conclusion, I have developed a future research agenda in relation to the findings and discussion of this study. This future research agenda focuses on conducting more research related to multicultural comfort reading and multicultural self-reflection.

Multicultural Comfort Reading

When I began to think about what the reading session would look like with the participants, I wanted the session to be non-academic and conducted in a way that allowed black children to feel comfortable to choose a book and not worry about whether they could read the book or not. I called it multicultural comfort reading using Fountas, Pinnell, Tyner and Green's approaches to shared reading. It is a shared reading approach that could happen during interview studies with children of color during buddy reading, shared reading, or after school programs.

This approach would be with one-on-one reading sessions or small group sessions. It would involve a teacher or a reader and multicultural literature in the reading session with children in a nonacademic manner. During this session, the student assigns the reader. For example, the teacher would ask how we will have our session for the day. Flexible reading choices would exist. The teacher reads the entire text, the teacher reads the text, or the child joins in by whisper reading. The teacher and the student take turns reading the text page by page, section by section, or half of the book. The student reads the entire text, and the teacher provides support with reading miscues. The teacher would always provide reading support.

During the reading session there would be a before reading, during reading, and after reading model. The content of the before, during and after session depends on the purpose of multicultural comfort reading. Using the shared reading approach allowed the students to conduct a think aloud when they read the text with me, read it on their own, or listened to me share the story. I would like to fully develop and implement multicultural comfort reading into a future reading study.

Multicultural Self-Reflection Conceptual Framework

To continue this research in the future, I will recruit more participants to generate more data to add to the development of ideas related to multicultural self-reflection. Specifically, after conducting this study, I would like to do more research with Black literature and Black children in a K-5 setting to continue to develop the features of multicultural self-reflection. Multicultural self-reflection comes from the idea that black children who read African American or multicultural literature using a shared reading technique such as or the future idea of multicultural comfort reading can be an opportunity to eliminate text to self. During the study, the students began to conduct their own think alouds, and they held a conversation with me regarding the book during the reading process.

I intend to conduct more research to examine the features of multicultural self-reflection and to investigate how this terminology could emerge as a conceptual framework, called something like Multicultural Self-Reflection Conceptual Framework, that could have potential to better inform and support Black children through shared reading techniques of African American multicultural literature. I also want to conduct future research on the impact of utilizing shared reading technique such as multicultural comfort reading to produce or share self-reflections. The combined shared reading technique would offer a reading opportunity for Black children to feel

comfortable to select a text, explain why they selected the text, look through the text, and decide if the readability is on their level or above without judgment, and feel comfortable enough to the voice whom they would like to have as the reader during the reading session.

References

- Al-Hazza, T. C. (2010). Motivating disengaged readers through multicultural children's literature. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 45(2), 63-68.
- Anderson, J. D. (1995). *The education of blacks in the south, 1860-1935*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Baptist, K. (2021). *The electric slide and Kai*. Lee and Low Books.
- Barnes, D. (n.d.) *Books*. <https://derrickdbarnes.com/books/>
- Burnett, J. R., Fan, C., Motowidlo, S. J., & Degroot, T. (1998). Interview notes and validity. *Personnel Psychology*, 51(2), 375-396.
- Caulkins, L. M. (2001) *The art of teaching reading*. Addison- Wesley Educational Publishers Inc.
- Charmaz, K. (2001). Qualitative interviews and grounded theory analysis. In A. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research*. 675-692. Sage.
- Cherry, M. (2019). *Hair love*. Penguin Random House LLC.
- Combs, M. (2002). *Readers and writers in primary grades*. Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Cornwall, G. (2017) *Jabari jumps*. Candlewick Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 82–90 Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*.
- Danticat, E. (2019). *My Mommy Medicine*. Roaring Book Press.
- Diouf, S. A. (2001). *Bintou's braids*. San Francisco: Chronicle Press.
- Eder, D. & Fingerson, L. (2001). Interviewing children and adolescents. In A. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research*. 181-201. Sage.

- Elliott, Z. (n.d.) *Why I write*. <https://www.zettaelliott.com/bio/why-i-write/>
- Ford, D. Y., McZeal Walters, N., Byrd, J. A., & Harris, B. N. (2018). I want to read about me: Engaging and empowering gifted black girls using multicultural literature and bibliotherapy. *Gifted Child Today*, 42(1), 53–57.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217518804851>
- Izzy, D. (2002). *Qualitative analysis: Practice and innovation*. Routledge.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Herder and Herder.
- Garrett, V.G. (2022). *Kicks*. Versify.
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 106-116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053002003>
- Gay, G. & Kirkland. K. (2003). Developing cultural critical consciousness and self-reflection in preservice teacher education. *Theory in Practice*. 42(3), 181-186.
- Gomez-Najarro, J. (2019). Children’s intersecting identities matter: Beyond rabbits and princesses in the common core book exemplars. *Children’s Literature in Education*, 51(3), 392–410. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-019-09390-9>
- Harris, V. (2007). In the praise of scholarly force: Rudine Sims Bishop. *Language Arts*, 85(2).
- Harvey, S., & Goudvis, A. (2007). *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension for understanding and engagement*. Stenhouse Publishers.
- Hermanowicz, J. (2002). The great interview: 25 strategies for studying people in bed. *Qualitative Sociology*, 25(4), 479-499.
- Husband, T. (2018). Using multicultural picture books to promote racial justice in urban early childhood literacy classrooms. *Urban Education*, 54(8), 1058-1084.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085918805145>

- Iser, W. (1993). *Prospecting: From reader response to literary anthropology*. JHU Press.
- Iwai, Y. (2013). Multicultural children's literature and teacher candidates' awareness and attitudes toward cultural diversity. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 5(2), 185–198. Directory of Open Access Journals.
<https://doaj.org/article/7e5eb9cdba404a41b7c10437533bd419>
- Jackson III, B. W. (2012). Black identity development: Influences of culture and social oppression. In C. Wijeyesinghe & B. W. Jackson III (Eds.), *New perspectives racial identity development: Integrating emerging frameworks*. 33–50. New York University Press.
- Jeffries, R., & Jeffries, D. (2014). Cultural significance through reader's theatre: An analysis of African American girls and their hair. *Multicultural Learning and Teaching*, 9(2), 203–218.
- Katchingupwithkenzo [@katchingupwithkenzo]. (2021, December 30) *Check Kenzo out in the new Disney movie "Encanto" lol*. [Photographs].
https://www.instagram.com/p/CYII_HVrgxN/
- Lawrence, S., Johnson, T., Baptiste, M., Caleb, A., Sieunarine, C., & Similien, C. (2017). Pre-Service Teachers' Use of Multicultural Literature. *Journal of Inquiry and Action in Education*, 7(1), 28–47.
- Lin, Q. (2005). Multicultural visions in early reading classrooms: Implications for early childhood teacher educators. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 25(3), 237–245. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1090102050250307>
- Manubaby03 [@manubaby03]. (2022, January 8). Sou eu mamãe. Muuuuita gente indicou pra gente esse filme mais que lindo @encantomovie. Agora, quero assistir ele todos os dias.

Dizem que sou a cara da Mirabel. O que vocês acham, gente? [Video].

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CYfDmpqFMuh/>

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods, Volume 41. SAGE.

Maxwell, J. (2008). Designing a qualitative study. In L. Bickman & D.J. Rog's (Eds.), *SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods, Volume 2* (214-253). SAGE Press.

Mazique, B. (2021) *Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras prize*. Albert Whitman and Company.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. 31–33. Jossey-Bass.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (2020). Merriam-Webster.com. <https://www.merriam-webster.com>

Mertens, D. M. (2014). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology*. 248–249. SAGE Publications.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *An expanded sourcebook: Qualitative data analysis*. SAGE Publications.

Morrell, E., & Morrell, J. (2012). Multicultural readings of multicultural literature and the promotion of social awareness in ELA classrooms. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 47(2), 10–16.

Morrison, F. (2022). *Kick push: Be your epic self*. Bloomsbury Children's Books.

Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy*. Scholastic Inc.

Niland, A. (2021). Picture books and young learners' reading identities. *The Reading Teacher*, 74(5), 649–654. <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1994>

- Osorio, S. L. (2018). Multicultural literature as a classroom tool. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 20(1), 47-52.
- Piper, R. (2019). Navigating Black Identity Development: The Power of Interactive Multicultural Read Alouds with Elementary-Aged Children. *Education Sciences*, 9(2), 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci9020141>
- People- Riley, D. (2019). *I got next*. Greenwillow Books.
- Price Gardener, R. (2020). The present past: Black authors and the anti-Black selective tradition in children's literature. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 46(2).
- Reed, D. (2021, September 29) *Representation matters in literature*. Follett Community.
<https://www.follettcommunity.com/s/article/representation-matters-in-literature-dwayne-reed>.
- Reid-Searl, K. & Happell, B. (2012). Supervising nursing students administering medication: A perspective from registered nurses. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 21(13/14), 1998-2005.
- Riemen, D. J. (1986). The essential structure of a caring interaction: Doing phenomenology. In. P. M. Munhall & C. J. Oiler (Eds.), *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective*. 85-105. Appleton-Century-Crofts.
- Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective interviewing: A guide to theory and practice*. SAGE.
- Rozek, C. S., Hanselman, P., Feldman, R. C., Quast, E. A., Crawford, E. P., & Borman, G. D. (2015). *Inside the black box of self-affirmation: Which parts of affirmation exercises are critical for treatment efficacy?* 1–4. SREE Spring 2015 Conference.
- Saldana, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE.
- Schweitzer, K. (2022, January 4). *Mom's 2-year-old son thought Encanto character was him: It was the impact of feeling seen*. PopSugar. <https://www.popsugar.com/family/boy->

watching-encanto-sees-himself-in-antonio-character-

48668059?fbclid=IwAR0dN99gxEuNZ82dTdmyMPyS9GRdX6yKt9sXh3ZzR9Xutdc66AS

HSFYFxas

Sims, R. (1982). *Shadow and substance: Afro-American experience in contemporary children's fiction*. National Council of Teachers of English.

Sims Bishop, R. (1990a). Mirrors, windows and sliding doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books in the Classroom*, 6(3).

Sims Bishop, R. (1990b). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives*, ix–xi. Greenwood Press.

Sims Bishop, R. (2007). *Free within ourselves: The development of African American children's literature*. Greenwood Press.

Sullivan, J. M., & Platenburg, G. N. (2017). From black-ish to blackness. *Journal of Black Studies*, 48(3), 215–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934716685845>

Tameca. (n.d.) *About us*. <https://brownbabiesbooks.com/pages/about-us>

Trotman-Scott, M. (2014). Resisting dark chocolate: A journey through racial identity and deficit thinking: A case study and solutions. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 4(1), 43–55.

United States Department of Education. (2019). *Projections of Education Statistics to 2027*.

Nces.ed.gov. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2019001>

Valdivia, P. (2022, January 19). *This girl looks just like a young Mirabel in Encanto. And her reaction to it is so pure*. BuzzFeed. <https://www.buzzfeed.com/pablovaldivia/mirabel-encanto-represenation>

- Vasquez, V. (2017). *Critical literacy across the K-6 curriculum*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Wagner, C. J. (2019). Connections between reading identities and social status in early childhood. *TESOL Quarterly*, 53(4), 1060–1082. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.529>
- Walker, A., Bower, J., & Kettler, T. (2021). Preadolescent advanced readers: Exploring attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. *Gifted Child Today*, 44(2), 68–82.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1076217520940756>
- Whaley, K. D., Wells, S., & Williams, N. (2019). Successful instructional reading practices for African American male third-grade students. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.5590/jerap.2019.09.1.20>
- Wijeyesinghe, C., & Jackson, B. W. (2012). *New perspectives on racial identity development: Integrating emerging frameworks*. 33–50. New York University Press.
- Williams, L. M. (2008). Book selections of economically disadvantaged black elementary students. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 102(1), 51–64.
<https://doi.org/10.3200/joer.102.1.51-64>

Table 1*List of Proposed Multicultural Literature for this Study*

<i>A Girl Like Me</i> By: Angela Johnson	<i>Kick Push: Be Your Epic Self</i> By: Frank Morrison
<i>A Special Place for Alex</i> By: Karen Boyd Cross	<i>Kicks</i> By: Van Garrett
<i>Cool Cuts</i> By: Mechal Renee Roe	<i>Me & Mama</i> By: Cozbi A Cabrera
<i>Daddy and Me and the Rhyme to Be</i> By: Chris Bridges and Halcyon Person	<i>My Mommy Medicine</i> By: Edwidge Danticat
<i>Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize</i> By: Brittany Mazique	<i>My Name is a Story</i> By: Ashanti
<i>Don't Touch My Hair</i> By: Sharee Miller	<i>Princess Cupcake Jones and the Dance Recital</i> By: Ylleya Fields
<i>Glow</i> By: Ruth Forman	<i>Queen of the Scene</i> By: Queen Latifah
<i>Hair Love</i> By: Matthew A. Cherry	<i>Ruby's Reunion Day Dinner</i> By: Angela Dalton
<i>Happy Hair</i> By: Mechal Renee Roe	<i>Soul Food Sunday</i> By: Winsome Bingham
<i>I Am Every Good Thing</i> By: Derrick Barnes	<i>Strong to the Hoop</i> By: John Coy
<i>I Got Next</i> By: Daria Peoples-Riley	<i>The Electric Slide and Kai</i> By: Kelly J. Baptist
<i>Jabari Jumps</i> By: Gaia Cornwell	<i>This Is It</i> By: Daria Peoples-Riley
<i>Keep Your Head Up!</i> By: Aliya Neil King	<i>When My Cousins Come to Town</i> By: Angela Shante and Keisha Morris

Note. The proposed multicultural literature for the study was appropriate for the participants.

Table 2

African American Multicultural Literature Selections and Self-Reflections

Book Titles	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Ability to self-reflect
<i>Jabari Jumps</i> by Gaia Cornwall	x					x
<i>Delphine Denise and the Mardi Gras Prize</i> by Brittany Mazique		x				x
<i>I Got Next</i> by Daria People- Riley			x			x
<i>The Electric Slide and Kai</i> by Kelly J. Baptist				x		x
<i>Hair Love</i> by Matthew Cherry					x	x

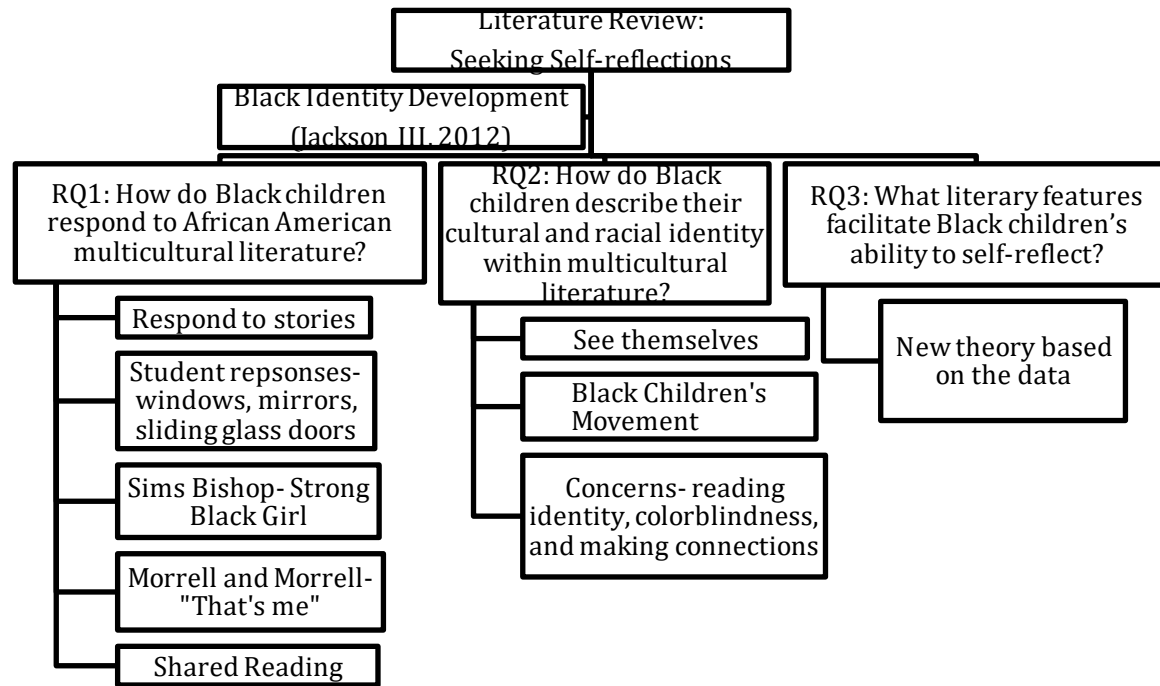
Note. Table 2 shows the eight participants and each title of their book selections.

Table 3 *Participatory Self Reflections and Research Questions*

Self-reflection Categories	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
RQ1 Verbal: Like me words, phrases and statements	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
RQ1 Verbal- Conversation	x	x	x	x	x			
RQ1 Verbal- Emotions	x	x			x	x		
RQ1 Nonverbal- Pointing		x						
RQ2 Hair					x			x
RQ2 Family Connections	x				x		x	
RQ2 Recreational Activities	x		x	x				
RQ2 Fashion								x
RQ3 Events	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
RQ3 Main and Supporting Characters	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
RQ3 Illustrations	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
RQ3 Character Traits	x	x	x	x	x	x		
RQ3 Characters' Problems				x	x	x		x
RQ3 Characters' Solutions	x		x	x	x		x	

Note: The Youth Club Participants and their self-reflection responses.

Figures

Figure 1*Organizational Framework for the Literature Review*

Note. The flowchart showed how the literature's topics, research questions, and theoretical framework connect and inform the research.

Figure 2

Kenzo Bastien



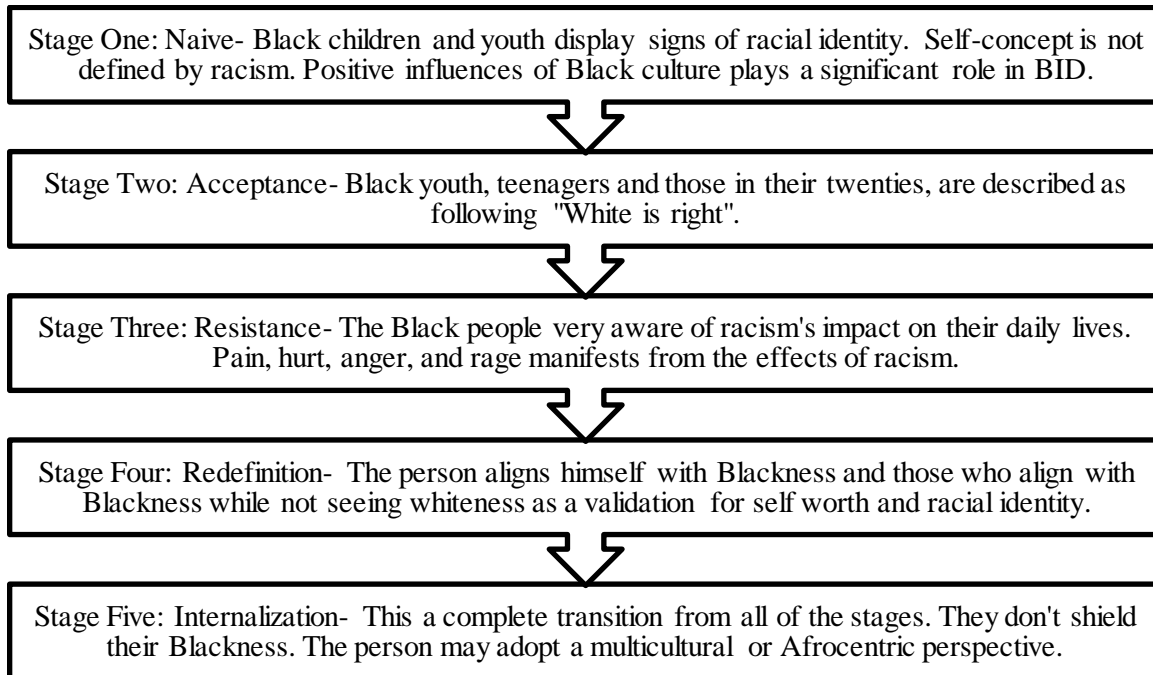
Note. Kenzo sees himself in Antonio from @katchingupwithkenzo on Instagram.

Figure 3

Manu Araujo Marques



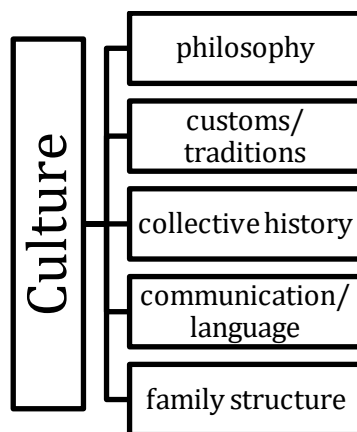
Note. Manu sees herself in Mirabel as a child and a grown up from @manubaby03 on Instagram.

Figure 4*Black Identity Development*

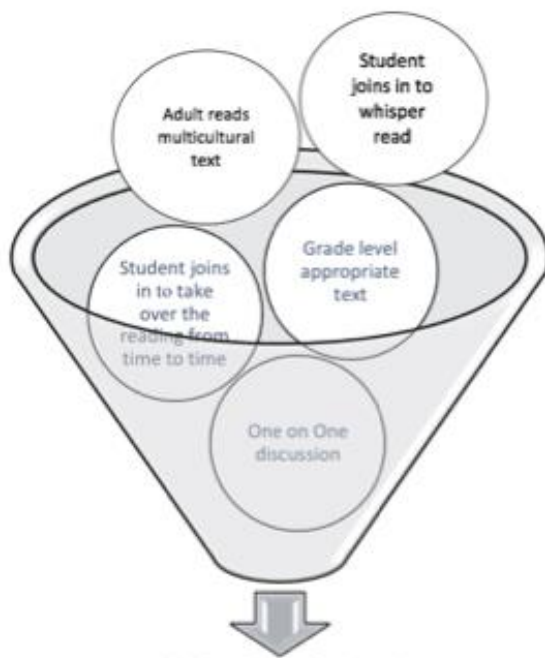
Note. Black Identity Development emphasized the presence of race/culture perspectives.

Figure 5

Elements of Black Identity Development's Culture



Note. Black Identity Development draws on culture to show how it manifests in the development process as well as race relations outside of the Black community.

Figure 6*Shared Reading*

Shared reading for self-reflections

Note. This funnel showed how Tyner, Green, and Fountas and Pinnell's versions of shared reading will be combined to create a developmentally appropriate reading experience for third grade students.

Figure 7*Interview Protocol*

Interview Protocol- Provide the students with an overview of the study. Announce that the session will be recorded.

Researcher: “Before we get started, I’d like to record our session. I’ll take notes also but I would love to record our session because I want to make sure that I have every response you share with me. I can replay the session and rewind the recording if I need to hear something again. If I write it all down, I might miss something important, but the recording will help me.”

Researcher: “Let’s talk a little bit more about books.”

Before Reading

2. Do you have conversations with anyone about yourself and the books you like to read? Tell me about that.
3. If you could find the perfect book for you, what would that book be like? Talk to me about that.
4. Do you read or look at books that may be like your life? Tell me about that.
Probe: Is that something you would like to read? Tell me more about that.
5. How would you feel if you met someone (character) who was just like you? What would that be like? Tell me about that.
6. How would you feel if you read a book that was just like your life? What would that be like? Tell me about that.
7. Do you like to read books that may be like you or different from you? Talk to me about it.
8. Tell me about a book that you didn’t like to read.
12. If you had 20 books, do you think you could find a book that is just right for you?
How would you do that? Let’s find one.
13. Share the summaries of the books as needed.
14. Before we get started: Why did you choose (insert the name of the book)? Show me what made you pick (insert the name of the book). Tell me about it.
15. Reread the summary for the selected book.

Choosing the book-

Share the summaries of the books as needed.

Before we get started: Why did you choose (insert the name of the book)?

Show me what made you pick (insert the name of the book).

Reread the summary for the selected book.

Researcher:

“During our reading session, I will read first, and you may read along by whispering while I’m reading or you can let me know if and when you would like to read some of the book aloud. We can take turns reading the book, if you like. I want you to be comfortable and enjoy the book. This is not a reading test. I just want to know about what you will see that’s like you in the book. If you get stuck on a word, or you will need some help, I am here to tell

you any of the words. Yes, I'll tell you the words. Remember this is not a reading test. What do you think?"

Wait for the student's response.

Researcher: "I'm ready to read. Are you? Let's get started."

Students will preview the book as needed and I will provide the summary of the selected book again, if needed.

During Reading

We will begin the shared reading process.

After Reading

2. Was the book like your life? Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it.
3. Was there someone in the story that reminded you of yourself? Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it.
4. Tell me about anything from the book that reminds you about yourself. Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it.

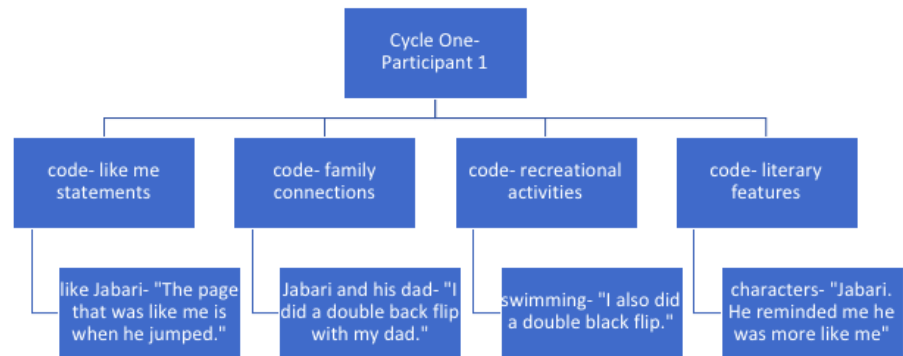
Wrap up question

2. If you wrote a book about yourself, what would it be about? Is that important to you? If so, why? If not, why?

Note. The interview protocol pilot includes the before, during, and after interview process with the interviewee.

Figure 8

Participant 1 Cycle 1



Note. The participant cycle shows how one interview transcript was coded during data analysis.

Figure 9*Comparative Interview Question Chart for Data Analysis*

Interview Protocol Pilot- interview question chart

Before Reading	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
Do you have conversations with anyone about yourself and the books you like to read? Tell me about that.				
If you could find the perfect book for you, what would that book be like? Talk to me about				
Do you read or look at books that may be like your life? Tell me about that. Probe: Is that something you would like to read? Tell me more about that.				
How would you feel if you met someone (character) who was just like you? What would that be like? Tell me about that.				
How would you feel if you read a book that was just like your life? What would that be like? Tell me about that.				
Do you like to read books that may be like you or different from you? Talk to me about it.				
Tell me about a book that you didn't like to read.				
If you had 20 books, do you think you could find a book that is just right for you? How would you do that? Let's find one.				

Interview Protocol Pilot- interview question chart

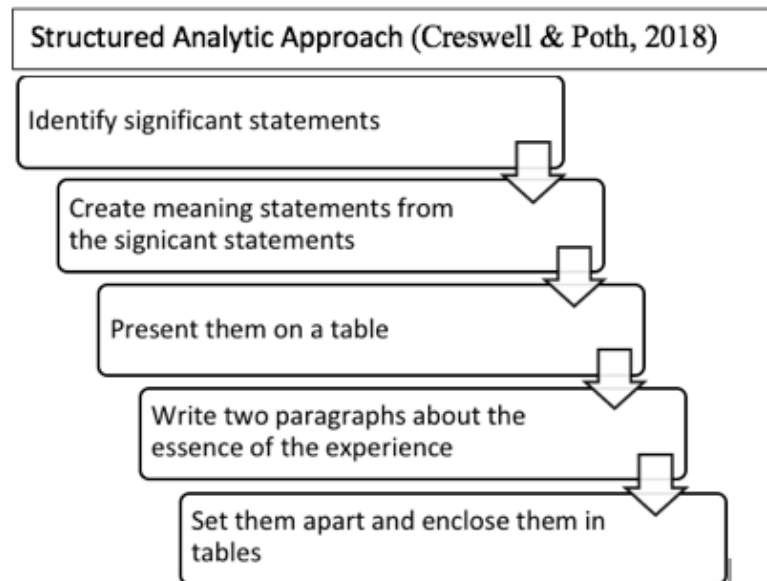
Choose your book	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
Share the summaries of the books as needed. 5 minutes				
Before we get started: Why did you choose (insert the name of the book)?				
Show me what made you pick (insert the name of the book). Tell me about it.				
Reread the summary for the selected book.				
During Reading Let's get ready to read the text. Read the text- Who will read the book?				

Interview Protocol Pilot- interview question chart

After Reading	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
Was the book like your life? Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it.				
Was there someone in the story that reminded you of yourself? Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it	What page?	What page?	What page?	What page?
Tell me about anything from the book that reminds you about yourself. Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it.	What page?	What page?	What page?	What page?
Wrap up question If you wrote a book about yourself, what would it be about? Is that important to you? If so, why? If not, why?				

Note. The interview question chart includes the before, during, and after interview process for the interviewee.

Figure 10

Graphic Representation of the Structured Analytical Approach

Note. During the data analysis process, the structured analytic approach will be used to process and make meaning from the notes.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol Pilot - Provide the students with an overview of the study. Announce that the session will be recorded.

Researcher: “Before we get started, I’d like to record our session. I’ll take notes also but I would love to record our session because I want to make sure that I have every response you share with me. I can replay the session and rewind the recording if I need to hear something again. If I write it all down, I might miss something important, but the recording will help me.”

Researcher: “Let’s talk a little bit more about books.”

Before Reading

3. Do you have conversations with anyone about yourself and the books you like to read? Tell me about that.
4. If you could find the perfect book for you, what would that book be like? Talk to me about that.
5. Do you read or look at books that may be like your life? Tell me about that.
Probe: Is that something you would like to read? Tell me more about that.
6. How would you feel if you met someone (character) who was just like you? What would that be like? Tell me about that.
7. How would you feel if you read a book that was just like your life? What would that be like? Tell me about that.
8. Do you like to read books that may be like you or different from you? Talk to me about it.
9. Tell me about a book that you didn’t like to read.
16. If you had 20 books, do you think you could find a book that is just right for you? How would you do that? Let’s find one.
17. Share the summaries of the books as needed.
18. Before we get started: Why did you choose (insert the name of the book)? Show me what made you pick (insert the name of the book). Tell me about it.
19. Reread the summary for the selected book.

Choosing the book-

Share the summaries of the books as needed.

Before we get started: Why did you choose (insert the name of the book)?

Show me what made you pick (insert the name of the book).

Reread the summary for the selected book.

Researcher:

“During our reading session, I will read first, and you may read along by whispering while I’m reading or you can let me know if and when you would like to read some of the book aloud. We can take turns reading the book, if you like. I want you to be comfortable and enjoy the book. This is not a reading test. I just want to know about what you will see that’s like you in the book. If you get stuck on a word, or you will need some help, I am here to tell you any of the words. Yes, I’ll tell you the words. Remember this is not a reading test. What do you think?”

Wait for the student’s response.

Researcher: “I’m ready to read. Are you? Let’s get started.”

Students will preview the book as needed and I will provide the summary of the selected book again, if needed.

During Reading

We will begin the shared reading process.

After Reading

3. Was the book like your life? Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it.
4. Was there someone in the story that reminded you of yourself? Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it.
5. Tell me about anything from the book that reminds you about yourself. Let's find that in the story. Tell me about it.

Wrap up question

3. If you wrote a book about yourself, what would it be about? Is that important to you? If so, why? If not, why?