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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN MARCOS

A Mixed-Method Embedded Design Study of Culturally Relevant Reading in Community

College Accelerated Basic Skills English Course

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

Pegah Motaleb

Committee in charge:

California State University, San Marcos

Professor Manuel Vargas, Chair

Professor Laurie Stowell

University of California San Diego

Professor Frances Contreras

2018

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Chair

University of California San Diego
California State University, San Marcos

2018

DEDICATION

Praise to Allah, the Merciful, and the Compassionate, who gave me the strength and patience I needed to get through these last three years.

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VITA

- 2006 Bachelor of Arts, English Literature, California State University, Northridge
- 2009 Master of Arts, Literature and Writing, California State University, San Marcos
- 2010- Present San Diego Mesa College, Full-time Tenure Track Faculty in the English Department
- 2016-Present Honors Coordinator, San Diego Mesa College
- 2016-Present Preparing Accomplished Transfers to the Humanities (PATH) Coordinator, San Diego Mesa College
- 2018 Doctor of Education, Educational Leadership, University of California San Diego and California State University, San Marcos

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A Mixed-Method Embedded Design Study of Culturally Relevant Reading in
Community College Accelerated Basic Skills English Course

by

Pegah Motaleb

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California San Diego, 2018
California State University, San Marcos, 2018

Manuel Vargas, Chair

The United States is a diverse nation, and it is projected that over the next few decades, Whites will no longer be the majority. In fact, the Hispanic population is growing, and this change in the country's racial and ethnic demographics will impact many facets of the American life. The review of literature shows that culturally relevant teaching/pedagogy (CRT/P), specifically in readings of ethnic literature, fiction, and text written about and by individuals of color, increases students' sense of ethnic identity, and results in students feeling a strong sense of agency and belonging in academia. These factors contribute to students' success and help narrow the achievement gap. Specifically, there is a dearth of literature about culturally relevant reading in accelerated basic skills reading courses at community colleges.

This mixed-methods research study sought accelerated basic skills students' perceptions about their reading experiences. The results of their responses, to a survey and their explanations during an interview, revealed that while they find engaging with ethnic culturally relevant texts important, there is not a direct positive impact on students' academic achievement, sense of belonging in higher education atmosphere, and motivation to read as a result of engaging with such texts.

Keywords: culturally relevant reading, accelerated basic skills composition, community college basic skills

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Numerous surveys reveal that the United States of America is becoming a more racially and ethnically diverse nation in the world (Colby & Ortman, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2015; United States Census Bureau, 2011). By 2020, almost 32% of the U.S. population will be made up of ethnic minorities. By 2050, half of Americans will identify as racial/ethnic minorities (U.S. Department of Labor, 2001). While the American-born population is expected to increase by 22 %, the foreign-born population is projected to grow 85 % between 2014-2060. By 2060, 29 % of the U.S. population will be Hispanic, 9.3 % Asian, and less than 1% will be of the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population.

Various fields of disciplines recognize that cultural diversity will result in greater innovation, improved strategic decision making, and overall organizational performance (Livermore, 2016). In the field of business, it is recognized that diversity and cultural intelligence result in innovation, larger outreach to international markets, and positive links to entrepreneurship. Not only is it an economic asset, but a social benefit as well (Livermore, 2016; Nathan & Lee, 2013).

Thus, researchers are gauging diversity in different professional fields. For example, the American Medical Association found that in the year 2000, the total number of physicians in the United States was recorded as 812,000. Of this number, 2.5% were African-American; 3.5% were Hispanic; and 8.9% were Asian. Organizations such as the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) are addressing the need for an increase in medical school minority student admissions by using the concept of “non-cognitive strengths” to increase underrepresented minority medical school students. (Non-cognitive strengths

attributes include the students' leadership skills; realistic self-appraisals that speak about their determination, motivation, and coping capabilities; and communication skills). There is appropriate attention being given to disparities. Also, many medical schools have proactively started special exposure and tutorial programs for minority elementary, high school, and college students in order to encourage them to enter the medical field (Delany, 2016).

In the field of technology as well, many studies report the lack of cultural diversity (George, Neale, Horn & Malcom, 2001). One study showed that African Americans only comprise 1.3% of the faculty teaching IT while Hispanics only comprise of 1.7%. In response to the lack of diversity in the IT field, an organization called Center for Minorities and People with Disabilities in IT (CMD-IT) is working to ensure that more individuals, from culturally diverse backgrounds, benefit from the advances in the computing world. This organization focuses its work on ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, and works "To ensure that underrepresented groups are fully engaged in information technologies, and to promote innovation that enriches, enhances, and enables these communities such that more equitable and sustainable contributions are possible by all communities" (Taylor, 2010, para. 3).

While today's American undergraduates are digitally savvy, have access to technology more than ever, and come from diverse backgrounds, they do not know much about the world around (Jayakumar, 2008). The international workforce is highly concerned about the teaching and preparation of students for a diverse world. For example, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, explained that "Diversity promotes learning outcomes and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce, for society, and for the legal profession. Major American businesses have made clear that the skills needed in today's increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure to widely diverse

people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints” (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306, 330 [2003]).

Furthermore, students who are frequently in contact with diverse peers have greater cognitive complexity, demonstrate self-confidence, and are more culturally aware. They are accustomed to social differences, have interpersonal skills, and are prepared for diverse workplaces. They are also more likely to vote (Hurtado, 2003). Thus, higher education institutions all over the world are making efforts to provide educational opportunities for students to learn about diverse social groups inside and outside the classroom (Altbach, 2016; Lumby & Foskett, 2016; Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011). Many stakeholders believe that in order to educate this diverse student population more effectively, faculty should modify their curriculum and instructional methodologies to include multicultural content (Laden, 2004). Higher education institutions have the responsibility to produce cross-culturally competent citizens who can lead and compete in a diverse and global marketplace (Jayakumar, 2008).

Higher education institutions all over the world, including New Zealand, China, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Japan, Canada, and the United States are recruiting international students. This trend, often referred to as the “Internationalization of higher education,” is often perceived by leaders as a “win-win” for students; destination countries and institutions; and for source countries and institutions (Altbach & Knight, 2007). International students maintain the competitiveness of the educational institutions, and also become valuable, skilled immigrants for that country’s labor forces. They offset some of the effects of demographic decline in developed nations. They are presumed to have advanced language skills, trainings, and experience in the labor market.

Another effort by higher education institutions, especially in the United States, includes diversifying curriculum because studies have shown a consistently positive effect on students

(Hurtado, 2003; Bowman, 2009). Seminal figures like Geneva Gay (2010) have researched and proven the benefits and importance of culturally responsive teaching, especially in literacy. For example, in one study of English learners, it was shown that when students were exposed to culturally relevant texts, they eagerly made connections between the book and their personal lives. This connection also resulted in improved academic performances (Feger, 2006). In another study on engaging Black high school students with culturally relevant pedagogy related to their racial identities, increased interest and enthusiastic responses were reported by not only the Black, but Hispanic students as well (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2011).

In the United States, community colleges serve and educate the largest diverse student population in the nation (Community College League of California, 2004). It is the place where students from other cultures begin their education (Gokcora, 2016). They are higher education institutions that represent a global village, encompassing many cultures. In the 2014-2015 school year, more than 41.66% of the 2,318,471 students enrolled in California community colleges were Hispanic, 11.3% were Asian, and 6.75% were African-American (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2016). More than half of all African-American and Hispanic undergraduates are enrolled at a community college rather than a four-year institution (Katsinas & Tollefson, 2009). For example, 57% of all Hispanic students currently attending postsecondary education are enrolled at a community college, along with 52% of all African American students and 61% of Native American students (AACC, 2015). Also, Asian American and Pacific Islander students are more likely to enroll at a community college than a selective four-year university (Teranishi, 2008; Campaign for College Opportunity, 2015).

In their efforts to educate this highly diverse population, community colleges also have the huge responsibility of remedial education. In California, more than 70% of incoming California community college students are placed in remedial courses, often referred to as basic skills courses (Hern, 2014). Students do not earn college credits, or units, when passing these classes; however, they pay the same amount of tuition when they enroll in such courses. Many, who are non-native speakers of English, and are mostly educated in the United States, constitute a big population of basic reading and writing classes (Matsuda, Saenkhum, & Accardi, 2013). Furthermore, English as a Second Language (ESL) students and even other native speakers of English have immediate needs and have some anxiety about, or fear of, enrolling in basic skills English classes (Holland, 2013; Bunch & Kibler, 2015).

Numerous studies have questioned the accuracy of standardized-test placements (Belfield & Crosta, 2012; Burdman, 2012; Hern, 2012; Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2010) that determine levels of basic skills. Thus, students of color are disproportionately excluded from college-level courses based on standardized tests (Henson & Hern, 2014). In some community colleges, depending on how a student scores, they could be placed as low as four levels below transfer courses. This means that the student has to take up to four basic skills, non-credit courses, just to reach transfer level English requirements. According to Hayward and Willet (2014), only 19% of students who start at three levels below transfer go on to complete transfer English in three years. Hern and Snell's (2010) study proves that students' chances of passing college-level mathematics or English, transferring to a four-year university, or earning a degree, decreases with the more semesters of remedial courses they are required to take. Other studies confirm (Hern *et al.*, 2010) claim that the high attrition in basic skills courses

results in students leaving educational institutions (Bailey & Jeong, 2008; Perry, Bahr, Rosin & Woodward, 2010).

The majority of the students who end up on remedial pathways are students of color, first generation college attendees, and those from low socio-economic backgrounds. Specifically, more than 50% of Black and Hispanic community college students place three or more course levels below transfer college mathematics, and of this group, only 6 % complete a transfer level mathematics course within three years of starting the first remedial course (Fain, 2013). In English, students of color are more likely to be placed three to four levels below, with Black students representing 25%, Asian 19%, Latino 18%, and White 8%. Butte College follows these trends, as well as many other community colleges in California (Henson & Hern, 2014).

Students of color are disproportionately excluded from college-level courses (Witham, Malcom-Piqueux, Dowd, & Bensimon, 2015). This is due to the fact that they have experienced inequities in their K–12 educations. Low-income students and students of color are more likely to complete high school less academically prepared for college than their White and Asian middle- and high-income counterparts (McWilliams, Martin, Jones, Mintz, & Saenger-Heyl, 2016; Robinson, 2016; Reardon, 2011). This claim relates to the experience of Cabral (2013), a Hispanic journalist, who recounts his matriculation at a Southern California community college, where he took remedial algebra eight times before realizing that he would never pass the transfer level math course.

Researchers question the reasons why students of color do not succeed in basic skills courses. Hern (2010) asks, “What causes this hemorrhaging of students? Is it that students arrive with such weak skills that they can’t cut it in college? Are they demoralized by the long

road of nontransferable courses ahead of them? Are they de-motivated by the tasks they are asked to perform in these sequences—reviewing rules and procedures for adding fractions, completing fill-in-the-blank grammar workbooks?” (p. 2). Basic skills students enter community colleges with a variety of academic competence, but mostly in need of academic critical reading and writing skills. Many have researched the reading and writing challenges (Benesch, 2008; Roberge, Siegal, & Harklau, 2009; Bunch & Kibler, 2015).

One solution researchers suggest will help narrow the achievement gap in community colleges includes changes to assessment and college standardized placement tests (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011). Henson and Hern (2014) indicate that two studies by the Community College Research Center have found that standardized placement tests are poor predictors of students’ performance in college. Analysis of data from a statewide community college system revealed that placement tests in reading and writing explain less than 2% of the variation in students’ first college-level English grades.

Butte College began its own examination of placements in March 2011 when the English department replaced a previous placement test with the COMPASS exam (Henson & Hern, 2014). Under the new test and cut scores, faculty were surprised to see that many more students were classified as “college ready” (p. 2). Forty-eight percent of incoming students had access to college-level English composition courses, as compared to 23% (before the department used COMPASS.) Under the previous and more restrictive policy, 36% of White students were classified as “college ready” and given access to college English, a rate 2.4 times higher than African Americans. After the change, all students had greater access to college English, and the gap between the two student groups narrowed, but was not eliminated. Students of color were still disproportionately excluded from the college-level

course (White students' access was 1.6 times higher than African-American). Even though the achievement gap narrowed, it still persisted.

Other initiatives notwithstanding, accelerated basic skills pathways seem to be a more immediate solution to eliminating the achievement gap in higher education (Hayward & Willet, 2014). Henson and Hern (2014) claim acceleration courses increase college completion rates for underprivileged students. Acceleration models, like the ones practiced at Chabot and Los Medanos College, College of Baltimore County backed up by data, show that they help narrow the achievement gap. In this model, remedial students are enrolled directly into a mainstream college-level course, with an additional support class taught by the same instructor. The results of this model show that students complete college English at more than twice the rate of students from the longer sequence, in half the time.

Consistent data from several sources confirm the success of the above recommendations. Hayward and Willet (2014), who examined the student outcomes from 16 colleges offering accelerated courses, indicate that students who participate in accelerated pathways completed the required transfer-level course at a rate higher than students who participated in the traditional pathway, thus proving that acceleration narrows the achievement gap. For example, Hispanic students' estimated completion of the required transfer level English course was 33% versus 26% for Hispanic students who took remedial courses in the traditional pathway. The difference was even greater in mathematics where the rate for Hispanics was 40% in accelerated courses versus 15% for Hispanic students in traditional remedial courses. Edgecombe, Jaggars, Xu, and Barragan's (2014) findings of students at Chabot College who participated in an accelerated, one-semester developmental English course and their peers who participated in a two-semester sequence consistently

parallel Hayward *et al.*'s (2014) findings as well. They found that students in accelerated courses in the first year were 25% more likely to complete college-level English than their non-accelerated peers.

At Central College, acceleration courses have also proven to be successful in narrowing the achievement gap (SDCCD, 2013). Raw data results obtained from Hays (2014) show that there is a 30% completion rate of students enrolled in the accelerated courses, as opposed to 24% completion rate of students enrolled in the traditional pathway. Thus, not only did the students in the accelerated courses show a greater success, but also, fulfilled their requirements in a shorter amount of time and decreased the risk of dropping out.

While acceleration's "high challenge/high support classrooms for underprepared students" (Hern & Snell, 2013, p. 1) has proven to be successful, its curriculum is still an area community college faculty are exploring. Little research has been done on the curricular aspects of accelerated reading and writing basic skills courses. Thus, the present study seeks to explore students' perceptions about the effects of culturally responsive teaching (CRT), specifically culturally relevant reading (CRR) in an accelerated reading and writing course at the community college.

Gay (2010) defines CRT "as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). According to this author, CRT expects educators to empower students and commit to their success; engage with cultural knowledge, experiences, contributions, and perspectives; validate every student's culture, bridging gaps between school and home through diversified instructional strategies and multicultural curricula; educate students socially, emotionally, and politically; use students'

existing strengths to drive instruction, assessment, and curriculum design; and liberate students from oppressive educational practices.

One branch of CRT is culturally relevant readings (CRR). Faculty can use CRR to help students establish global perspectives, reflect on their backgrounds, and understand their identities as Americans. Integrating global issues, such as race, ethnicity, and different religious orientations in their readings may challenge students to think about their identity, society, and history in a complex way. As they put their thoughts in writing, they gain confidence in their critical-writing and self-expression skills and stand up for their beliefs and challenge the already established ideas in society (Gokcora, 2016). They acquire the necessary critical thinking skills they lack (Rowles, Morgan, Burns, & Merchant, 2013; Choy & Cheah, 2009; Henderson & Hurley, 2013). As students become aware of other cultures and worlds, their understanding of the world helps them to create more meaningful relationships with greater issues in life (Gokcora, 2016). Through integrated reasoning, students find ways for discussion, reflection, and meaningful feedback.

Furthermore, novels featuring relatable characters can create incentives for reading both inside and outside the classroom. Hughes-Hassell (2013) argues for a greater inclusion of multicultural titles, and suggests that literature can function as a counter-narrative in facilitating identity development in youth of color. In their study of prospective teachers, Colby and Lyon (2004) found that upon reflection about their experiences with reading in school, White respondents recognized the importance of multicultural literature, with one interviewee stating, “I cannot fully understand what it must be like to have a dominant culture being portrayed everywhere I looked, however, I can only imagine the stifling effect it would impose on someone” (p. 25).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the mid-1970s with the early works of Derrick Bell, the first tenured African-American professor of law at Harvard Law School, and Alan Freeman, a White scholar teaching at SUNY-Buffalo Law School. Both were distressed over the slow pace of racial reforms in the United States, and argued that the traditional approaches of the legal system is one reason for the prolonging of such reforms. Other legal scholars who shared their frustration with the traditional civil rights strategies joined them and started the movement called Critical Legal Studies (CLS). CRT outgrew from CLS and is its own separate entity (Delgado, 1995). CRT recognizes that racism is “normal, not aberrant, in American society” (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv), and because of this, it is a part of the American social order, thus appearing both normal and natural to Americans (Delgado, 1995). Critical Race Theory (CRT) examines the structural roots of racism and the persistence of collective White control over institutional power and material resources (Sleeter, 2012). CRT was introduced, developed, and applied to education by Gloria Ladson-Billings and William F. Tate in 1995 in response to Neo-Marxist Critical Legal Studies movement of 1970s. Not only does it recognize racism as a natural aspect of American life, but also expresses doubt against claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy; values the historical context of social laws; and presumes that racism is a factor that has influenced both advantaged and disadvantaged groups. CRT calls for the recognition and acknowledgement of the experiences of people of color when analyzing social laws, and works towards eliminating racial oppression (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). It has also been applied to the studies of many sectors outside of education, including health, social studies, sports, and leisure (Ford, 2016; Hylton, 2016; Marshall, Manfra, & Simmons, 2016). It is also frequently applied to many educational

studies, especially on students' reading experiences (Howard & Navarro, 2016; Johnson, 2016). CRT is an appropriate theoretical framework for this proposed study because it branches away from mainstream legal scholarship and calls for storytelling to "analyze the myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race and that invariably render blacks and other minorities one-down" (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv). Because storytelling is such a huge part of engaging in culturally relevant texts, it is fitting to look at the topic through this framework.

Statement of the Problem

There appears to be little or no research to describe the reading experiences for students of color in these accelerated basic skills composition courses. There is a great need to investigate students' perceptions about their educational experiences in reading (Tanaka & Sanchez, 2016; Aukerman, 2015; Wangsgard, 2014). This research investigation will offer insight into how community college accelerated English faculty can best design curriculum for their courses. Faculty could learn what pedagogical practices should be implemented in order to teach students to establish a critical perspective in their communication.

The California Acceleration Project (CAP) website (<http://cap.3csn.org/teaching/reading-writing-classes/>) provides community college English faculty with high quality resources to design an accelerated English reading and writing course. These resources include suggestions for titles of texts faculty can consider; reading activities; writing assignments that relate to the reading activities; classroom student engagement activities; and even videos in which students share their experiences in the accelerated English course. The website provides guidance to faculty so they may identify and attend to students' affective domains. Through their collaboration with California Community

College Success Network (3CSN), CAP provides faculty professional development opportunities such as the CAP Community of Practice—a year-long professional development program for faculty teaching in accelerated English. During their time at CAP Community of Practice, faculty receive “coaching from faculty experienced in accelerated English; access to curricular materials, including course outlines from other community colleges, sample assignments, classroom activities, and assessments; and inspiration from a statewide network of colleagues teaching accelerated courses in developmental English” (The California Acceleration Project, 2016, p. 2). Furthermore, the 2013 LearningWorks brief, “Toward a Vision of Accelerated Curriculum and Pedagogy,” extensively describes best pedagogical practices in an accelerated English class. While the concept of Culturally Relevant Reading (CRR) has been deeply researched in K-12 settings, it has not been researched as much in community college settings. A few studies include some student perceptions about reading at the community college (Rankin-Brown & Fitzpatrick, 2007; Kozeracki & Gerdeman, 2000). However, there is no qualitative and quantitative research on students’ perceptions of the pedagogy in an accelerated basic skills community college English classes. In fact, other than the CAP website, there is no central database offering information on the reading experiences of accelerated community college students of color. There is even less research reading pedagogies in an accelerated English class.

Purpose of the Study

Resources from the CAP website inform community college faculty about best pedagogical practices that reach and engage students. Specifically, research on the application of CRR pedagogy in accelerated basic skills English courses at the community college may provide all stakeholders new understanding of approaches to help students’ academic success,

retention, and sense of academic agency and belonging. The purpose of this study was to examine, through students' perspectives, whether accelerated basic skills composition students are more likely to excel in reading and their academics when they engage with ethnic culturally relevant texts as oppose to non-ethnic culturally relevant texts.

Research Questions

What are accelerated basic skills students' experiences as they engage with Culturally Relevant Texts?

- How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses?
- How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings?
- How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses?

Research Methodology

A mixed-method embedded design study was implemented to seek answers to the research questions above. The study focused on 40-50 students enrolled in two English 25 A basic skills English classes taught at Central College. For sixteen weeks, in both classes, students read both ethnic CRT and non-ethnic culturally relevant texts. Data were collected on how they responded to these two different types of texts. Data instruments included one survey and one 30-minute interview with up to 15 students who volunteered to participate in the interview phase of this study. These data showed how the curriculum, specifically the texts used to practice reading, writing, and reasoning skills, influenced students' success. The

instrumentation was based on K-12 studies on CRR (Bell & Clark, 1998; Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001; Medina, 2010; Albers & Frederick, 2013).

Significance of the Study

In 2007, Baltimore City Community College faculty first implemented Accelerated basic skills English courses (Doing Developmental Education Differently, 2012). On the west coast, Chabot College was the first to implement these courses in 1997 (Edgecombe, Jaggars, Xu & Barragan, 2014). Since then, only one publication—a monograph—by Hern and Snell (2013) has been published about the pedagogical aspects of an English accelerated course.. While there are several publications about the success of acceleration English courses, only the above monograph discusses the pedagogical aspects of this course. Community colleges all over the nation are adopting and scaling up accelerated English courses. Thus, insight on the type of readings used to expose students of color, and those from underprivileged backgrounds, are of interest to faculty teaching such accelerated classes. The results of this study will help faculty and practitioners determine the best readings that will engage their students.

Organization of this Dissertation

Chapter 1 gives background and context about ethnic and cultural diversity in the United States, as well as higher institutions' response to ethnic and cultural diversity across the globe. Chapter 2, the literature review, delves into details about culturally relevant teaching pedagogy (CRTP); specifically, culturally relevant reading in the American K-12 education system. Some forms of CRTP have been studied in higher education, and those studies will also be reviewed in chapter 2. Chapter 3 will include a detailed description of the planned mixed-method embedded research design that will explore students' perceptions in an

accelerated reading, writing, and reasoning class through their reading experiences. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. Lastly, chapter 5 discusses recommendations and implications for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Basic skills education has been a top concern of not only educators, but state and federal legislators as well (“Bill would cut college remedial classes,” 2012; Merisotis & Phipps, 2000; Bettinger & Long, 2007). Since the beginning, there have been studies revealing mixed results about the student success in basic skills English courses. Some studies reveal that basic skills courses result in student success (Attewell, Lavin, Domina, & Levey, 2006; Blumenthal, 2002; Adelman, 1998). Others prove otherwise, and in fact, that basic skills pathways are a hindrance to student success (Contreras & Contreras, 2015; Bailey, 2009; Kirst, 2008). Since the start of the accelerated basic skills English curriculum, studies have consistently revealed the success of these courses for all basic skills, especially students of color (Hayward, Willet & Harrington, 2014; Henson & Hern, 2014). Thus, they emphasize that student success is attained through the decrease of the pathways and exit points (Perry, Bahr, Rosin & Woodward, 2010). So, a study, like the one proposed here, focused on the pedagogical aspects of the acceleration basic skills English curriculum; this will further inform, both reading and writing, faculty on how to serve best their students and contribute to student success and retention. Faculty will understand the ways in which students of color, who are mainly placed in these classes, respond to the texts they read in accelerated basic skills English courses.

Strengthening students’ racial and ethnic identities, in all academic settings, has been a focus of equity reform initiatives. Cultural gaps between students in education settings continue to persist (Kelly, 2013). Numerous studies show that students’ cultural background influences the level of academic achievement (Rogers, Scott, & Way, 2015; Trail, 2015;

Kena, Aud, Johnson, Wang, Zhang, Rathbun, & Kristapovich, 2014). In addition, socio-economic status is also an influencing factor for academic achievement (Hackman, Gallop, Evans & Farah, 2015; Merritt & Buboltz, 2015; Guo, Marsh, Parker, Morin & Yeung, 2015).

The phrase “marginalized students” has been used to describe students who face challenges in their academics because of various factors, including race, ethnicity, social class, disability, gender, and sexual orientation. “At-risk” is another label used to describe this student population (Mulvey, 2009). First generation students often fall into this category. Marginalized students are often students of color who face the negative stigma of placing in remedial classes in higher education. (Remedial classes, sometimes referred to as developmental, basic skills, or below transfer courses, are classes in which students are placed because of low scores on college assessment tests. Students do not receive college credit or units towards graduation when taking these courses.) A term used to describe this stigma is “social devaluation.” Because of their race, African-American, Asian, and Latino students experience social devaluation in academic settings (Meier, 2015; Wang & Huguley, 2012; Kohli, & Solórzano, 2012; Nieto, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Social devaluation is the systematic belief that a group of people, or person, has less social value than others. It is one of the factors in which African-American students academically perform significantly low (Gay, 2010; Newton & Sandoval, 2015). Thus, there is no doubt that the widening achievement gap between our nation’s students of color and Whites still persist (Barton & Coley, 2010; Howard, 2010; Paige & Witty, 2010).

Specifically, the reading ability of marginalized students appears to be low. On average, Blacks and Hispanics have lower scores on reading assessments as compared to White students (Vanneman, Hamilton, Anderson, & Rahman, 2009). American Indian /Alaska

Native (AI/AN) fourth and eighth-graders' reading scores were lower than the scores for non-AI/AN students in 2007. Moreover, the average scores for AI/AN students were lower than the scores for White and Asian/Pacific Islander students (Moran, Rampey, Dion & Donahue, 2008). In higher education, an increasing number of students of color enroll with poor reading fluency and comprehension skills (Ari, 2015; Scrivener, Weiss, Ratledge, Rudd, Sommo, & Fresques, 2015; Williams, 2010).

Studies show that a student's strong sense of ethnic identity can shield against the negative effects of racial discrimination in educational settings (Ai *et al.*, 2014; Chang & Le, 2010; Mroczkowski & Sanchez, 2015). In fact, the formation of identity is woven into the teaching, learning, and nearly all things related to education (Petchauer, 2009; Williams, 2010). Culturally Relevant Teaching Pedagogy (CRT/P) practices include approaches to increase the academic success of marginalized students because they weave the identities of students into their educational practices (Chang & Le, 2010). As a teaching pedagogy, it empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 2009). This form of pedagogy emerged largely because students of color, and those from economically underprivileged backgrounds, increasingly have negative educational experiences, which may be based on curricular practices that disconnect their ethnic background from the instruction they receive at school (Kelly, 2013). This curricular disconnect, in turn, often results in students of color not seeing people from their race and culture represented in their readings, thus negatively affecting their identity formation.

CRT/P can apply to any discipline. Specifically, it has been highly influential in literature and English classes where the studying of literature brings a certain value to

education. Students have cited that studying literature is engaging, and that it allows for wider and deeper understanding and thinking about social issues. It also provides students an opportunity to shape and mold their identities by developing strong value systems (Chan, 2015). CRT/P recognizes that the instructor's pedagogical choices influence students' perceptions of learning (Cox, 2009). Additionally, teachers' consciousness of racial issues appears to be a factor related to students' success (McDonough, 2009; Toliver, Moore, & Redcross, 2015). Ethnic based school programs that engage in CRT/P also help students develop a better sense of their ethnic identity and of holding higher academic aspirations for themselves (Luna, Evans, & Davis, 2015).

This review examines the extant literature on CRT/P, culturally responsive method of educating, and culturally relevant reading pedagogy (CRRP) in both K-12 and higher education. While CRT/P applies to all disciplines, CRRP emphasizes the need for more culturally relevant readings in all educational settings. A discussion of Critical Race Theory (CRT) is offered to show how CRT/P is grounded in this theory. While there is more depth of empirical studies examining CRT/P and CRRP in K-12 settings, there are limited empirical studies in higher education, specifically community colleges. The goal of this literature review is to analyze and recognize the positive impact that CRT/P and CRRP have had on the academic achievements of students who come from marginalized backgrounds, and the possibility that it can be studied in community college accelerated basic skills English classes.

Review of the Literature

Current policies and practices within the American education system do not meet the needs of a diverse student population (Brown, 2007; Saifer, Edwards, Ellis, Ko, & Stuczynski, 2011). Students of color trail behind their White counterparts in numerous areas, including

test performance, grade retention, and high school graduation (Saifer *et al.*, 2011). Still, studies show that African-American and Latino students aspire to pursue higher education opportunities (Harper & Davis, 2012; Crisp & Nora, 2010). Researchers assert that the achievement of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds would improve if school culture better matched students' home culture (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1992). In fact, it appears that instructors' pedagogical choices influence students' perceptions of learning (Cox, 2009). Too often, students feel that they must shed their true selves to become academically successful. Those who do not change their personalities often resist education because it conflicts with their identity. For students to engage truly in learning, they must be able to feel a sense of belonging in education (Kelly, 2013).

Marginalized students often do not find academic work and practices relevant to their lives. Specific to reading, one study about marginalized students' motivation to read shows that because of the lack of relevancy, reading as a pastime and/or a school-related activity is less common (Hughes-Hassell, Koehler, & Barkley, 2010). This is because teachers frequently use resources in their literacy instruction that highlight White children, rather than children of color. Thus, there is a lack of motivation for students of color to read. Frustration and disengagement from reading happen when students of color do not read books that reflect their real-life experiences. However, when students are exposed to literature that offers personal stories, reflects their own cultural surroundings, and includes insight into their own identities, their motivation to read increases (Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001). If students are constantly reading books with characters they can recognize and relate, they are more likely to find reading appealing (Gangi, 2008; Zygmunt, Clark, Tancock, Mucherah, & Clausen, 2015). Thus, teacher librarians are asked to inform classroom teachers and administrators about the

role multicultural texts play in reading motivation and achievement for students of color (Hughes-Hassell, Koehler, & Barkley, 2010).

While many educators find value in assigning “culturally specific literature,” a term coined by Bishop (1992), they face issues of accessibility to diverse texts. This, in part, is because diverse children’s literature is neglected in the publishing world (Gray, 2009; Zygmunt, Clark, Tancock, Mucherah, & Clausen, 2015). For example, children’s books written by African/African-American authors and about Africans/African-Americans represent only 1.3% of the five thousand published every year. The numbers for books written by authors from other ethnic backgrounds—Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Pacific/Asian Pacific Americans—reflect the same low rate (Horning, Lindgren, & Schliesman, 2013). This is due to the fact that multicultural children’s literature is omitted from popular reading settings such as Scholastic Book Club (Gangi, 2008).

The Influence of Critical Race Theory

Critical Relevant Teaching/Pedagogy (CRT/P) in American education systems, at all grade levels, is grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT), which examines the structural roots of racism and the persistence of collective White control over institutional power and material resources (Sleeter, 2012). CRT was introduced, developed, and applied to education by Gloria Ladson-Billings and William F. Tate in 1995 in response to Neo-Marxist Critical Legal Studies movement of 1970s. It is a theory that recognizes racism as a natural aspect of American life; expresses doubt against claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy; values the historical context of social laws; and presumes that racism is a factor that has influenced both advantaged and disadvantaged groups. CRT calls for the recognition

and acknowledgement of the experiences of people of color when analyzing social laws, and works towards eliminating racial oppression (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

Culturally Relevant Teaching/Pedagogy Theory

Several factors led Gloria Ladson-Billings to introduce the term culturally relevant teaching/pedagogy (CRT/P) to the field of education. Ladson-Billings (1992) describes the demographic shifts in the public school student population, the widening gap on literacy measures, and the range of social and economic problems facing African-American students as the reasons for creating and framing CRT/P. Teachers who had dedicated their lives to teaching African-American students were left out of debates about literacy. As a result, Ladson-Billings (1992) called for a culturally relevant approach to teaching that encourages and inspires students to want to achieve academic success.

Many educators have adopted and found the value of CRT/P (Ali, 2015; Cammarota, 2007; Garza, 2009). Likewise, many educators assert that teaching is most effective when the cultural backgrounds and ethnic identities of students are a part of the curriculum (Dotterer *et al.*, 2009; Gay, 2010; Huber, Murphy & Clandinin, 2011; Reyhner & Cockrum, 2015). For example, in examining the experience of a Chinese-Canadian student, to understand better the complexities of developing curriculum that drives diversity, Chan (2015) considers the ways culture and curriculum intersect in order to understand how the student's home life and the school curriculum combine to mold the student's ethnic identity. She asserts that there is a need for educators to further their knowledge about how to engage students of diverse backgrounds more fully in school communities.

Furthermore, one case study demonstrated that student academic success happened because CRT/P allowed students to think about their own ethnic identities and how they

connect with others. Students were able to express the emotions they felt as evoked by reading ethnic poetry. They examined the role of the author in relation to their own biases, assumptions, and personal experiences. Students not only made connections to issues such as race and class, but age and their educational experiences as well. They discussed the cultural and political position of the author, and considered multiple perspectives. They also explored issues related to poverty. Within groups with their peers, the students shared their ideas and fleshed out their understandings about how tensions among group members within their cultures spark, as well as tension derived from their own experiences. Students began to make conclusions about the different ways that youths are marginalized, and saw how this form of writing could be used to express their own issues. Furthermore, the White students in the class understood better the ways in which individuals of color experience racism on a daily basis. Their voices became central in the learning process as well (Lopez, 2011). These findings were similar to the results of another study which demonstrated that perceived multiculturalism is significantly related to ethno-cultural empathy; for the Asian American and Hispanic student participants, ethno-cultural empathy resulted in academic achievement (Chang & Le, 2010).

In another study, it was revealed that CRT/P had a positive impact on students of color. An overwhelming majority of student participants who were students of color said they strongly agreed that the activities they engaged with during class helped them see how history is written from different perspectives; they learned more about history after taking this class; and they identified and connected with the people from history they learned about. They could recall more historical information too (Martel, 2013). Like Lopez's (2011) study, the perspectives of White students were highlighted as well. The responses of the White students

were not significantly different from the students of colors. In both studies, having the subject of race as the focus of the course influenced the students' racial and academic identities in a positive way. White students were not alienated in this learning process. It is suggested that K-12 U.S. History classes should include more ethnic and racial histories from diverse perspectives (Martell, 2013).

Studies have explored the ways in which teachers perceive CRT/P. It is clear that teachers interpret and practice CRT/P differently (Lopez, 2011). One study on U.S. History teachers from a diverse urban high school in Massachusetts showed that teachers describe and exhibit CRT/P in considerably different ways (Martel, 2014). Regardless of interpreting and practicing CRT/P differently, teachers use CRT/P to develop their students academically, build their cultural competence, and engage them in critical thinking (Martel, 2014). Students have reported a positive response to their teacher's use of CRT/P (Lopez, 2011; Martel, 2014).

Many studies have revealed the negative academic outcomes when CRT/P is absent. For example, the devaluation of a student's language and culture is one of the factors for academic underachievement of bilingual students (Cummins, 2012). A study about the racial and internalized racial micro-aggressions of students of color in K-12 settings demonstrated that students from other non-White races, ethnicities, and cultures have experienced overt and subtle racial micro-aggressions. Whether being culturally disrespectful, unaware of their actions, or even just stumbling over a name they had never seen before, the tone set by a teacher was something significant that students remembered for many years (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012).

Culturally Responsive Method of Educating

Another seminal figure, Geneva Gay, adopted Ladson-Billings' CRT/P, and also called for a culturally responsive method of educating (CRME). Gay (2010) defines CRME as teaching "to and through [students'] personal and cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their prior accomplishments" (p. 26). It is a teaching method that includes close interactions with different ethnic identities, cultural backgrounds, and the students' achievements. Gay reminds educators that students of color already have mastered many cultural skills and ways of knowing through their own cultural practices. Thus, teaching should build on these capabilities.

Culturally Relevant Reading Pedagogy. On November 1970, the Task Force on Racism and Bias of the National Council of Teachers of English passed a resolution that called for an inclusion of minority cultures in reading and teaching materials (Kelly, 1970). Culturally relevant reading pedagogy (CRRP), a term coined by Gay (2002), is one response to this call. CRRP is within the context of CRME. This philosophy of teaching places academic learning within the students' real-life experiences. Culturally relevant and responsive curricula require educators to learn about ways to change their curriculum design process to include ethnic and cultural diversity. It also requires that educators choose a variety of instructional materials (narrative texts, visual illustrations, learning activities, role models, and authorial sources) that are accurate, complex, purposeful, significant, and authentic (Gay, 2002). Culturally responsive teaching recognizes that studying a wide range of ethnic individuals and groups; contextualizing issues of race, class, ethnicity, and gender; and considering multiple perspectives is necessary. Many educators around the United States have implemented CRRP in their curricula as they recognize that language and identity are

connected (DeLeón, 2002; Courts, 1997; Sleeter, 1996). For such reasons, educators have offered a guide for integrating innovative reading pedagogies within the context of a service-learning curriculum (Fitzgerald, 2009).

In many K-12 English classes, minority students read texts that are by and about people unlike them, and this may be the reason why they disengage (Gray, 2009; Kelly, 2013; Scieurba, 2014). One way to engage students from marginalized backgrounds is to incorporate readings that convey to the students that their backgrounds and cultures are just as relevant and worthy of study as those of the students whose cultural identities are traditionally represented in classroom literature. For example, in one study, African-American children were able to recall and comprehend the reading more so than when a story just included African-American characters with Euro-centric theme. This was because the African-American children's literature they read included Afrocentric themes, common cultural communication tendencies, a social environment that had flexible/spontaneous activities, and plays and games that encouraged social interaction (Zygmunt, Clark, Tancock, Mucherah, & Clausen, 2015).

On the other hand, it has also been found that a text is not necessarily significant to a student over the basis that the character looks like or has the same racial/ethnic affiliation as the student. With respect to adolescent boys of color, it appears that they are subject to assumptions about texts that are relevant to them (Scieurba, 2014). Still, as compared to Black children, Whites easily access books with characters that look like them, and as they build strong reading skills, they see themselves in the books they read. The same reading experience is not as true for African-American children (Hughes-Hassell, Koehler, & Barkley, 2010). Nonetheless, many experts agree that CRRP is beneficial to students. Students become

engaged and motivated readers when they can identify with a book's characters and stories. Readers are able to decode and construct meaning when texts use language and involve social issues relevant to their own lives (Myers, 2005). In fact, many researchers point to the importance of connecting students' out-of-school literacies to the formal school curriculum (Skerrett & Bomer, 2011). While the traditional school canon of literature may lack relevance for many students, culturally relevant texts connect directly to students' families, friends, and life experiences (Freeman & Freeman, 2004).

CRRP also makes a positive difference in marginalized students' lives. It validates their heritage and increases their self-esteem by showing respect and appreciation for their cultures (Gollnick & Chinn, 1986; Nieto, 1997). A study of native English and bilingual students, who read multicultural books in different languages, revealed that such books helped them develop greater awareness and appreciation for diverse languages (Rosberg, 1995). The literature may even stimulate greater interest in a student's native language (Christianson, 2002; Rosberg, 1995).

CRRP has been studied in American elementary (Bell & Clark, 1998; Gray, 2009; Medina & del Rocío Costa, 2010) middle (Brooks, 2006; Grater, Johnson & Fink, 2013; Ivey & Broaddus, 2007), and high school settings (Albers, & Frederick, 2013; Lopez, 2011). It has also been investigated in higher education settings, though there is a dearth of literature (Vasquez, 2005). All studies have shown that multicultural literature benefits all, including White students, as they too learn to function effectively in an ever increasing multicultural society (Meier, 2015; Metzger, Box & Blasingame, 2013; Nilsson, 2005).

Elementary school. One study that included interviews with African-American adults, recalling their early elementary school years, reveals that a lack of reading culturally

relevant texts contributed to their feelings of isolation. They admitted that once they discovered books and characters they could relate to, they gained the love of reading (Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001). These feelings and attitudes were confirmed in another study of 109 African-American elementary school students who revealed that they were more likely to comprehend and efficiently recall Black characters in stories as opposed to White (Bell & Clark, 1998). Another study of African-American elementary school students revealed that fifth-grade students do notice the ethnicity of the characters in books, and it does play a role in their reading selection (Gray, 2009). Similarly, fifth-grade students who recently moved to the United States from Mexico and El Salvador showed that their responses to literature allowed them to make sense of the multiple social settings they have experienced including time, locations, and interactions with different people. Thus, they were able to make sense of their cultural identity (Medina & del Rocío Costa, 2010).

Middle school. Similar results were found in studies on middle school grade level students. To help facilitate engaged reading and writing in an English language arts classroom of seventh- and eighth-grade native Spanish speakers, the use of accessible and culturally diverse reading materials proved to be necessary (Ivey & Broaddus, 2007). To prove further this necessity, another study of eight African-American middle school students showed that the participants actively used African-American textual features to develop literary understandings. The data indicated that songs and videos led to increased levels of student engagement. In addition to student engagement, the researchers also noted an increase in student work completion. Significant improvement in the students' writing skills was also noted. Short comprehension student quiz scores also increased. The researchers conclude that for struggling learners, incorporating culturally driven popular culture texts, such as music

videos and lyrics, in lessons, helped them feel more connected to the English class and inspired greater self-efficacy and success (Grater, Johnson, & Fink, 2013).

High school. Many high school grade level educators attest that incorporating culturally relevant literature and non-fiction in their curriculum increased students' engagement in reading (Feger, 2006; Meier, 2015; Nilsson, 2005; Robbins, 2002). For example, one study revealed that culturally situated and student-centered multimodal reading curriculum contributed to the growth of student literacy for ninth-grade Latino students whose standardized reading tests fell in the bottom 20th percentile. Another study, on an after-school literacy program in a university-based literacy clinic in the northeastern United States, also revealed that culturally relevant literature legitimizes the cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge of Latina youth (García & Gaddes, 2012). The researchers also found that culturally relevant literature are mentor texts that help students shape their own stories. CRRP allowed “a hybrid space” to exist so that students could bring to their learning experiences, extend their repertoires of practices, and validate often marginalized perspectives. The students engaged in critical literacies thinking about issues that shape their everyday experiences as Latina teenagers in the United States. In this space the youth validated and legitimized for themselves their complex identities. They utilized their funds of knowledge to mediate their writing and reading experiences. Through their responses to the literature, the students demonstrated how they shared features of their heritage at a macro level. However, they each lived their uniquely personal identities in different and complex ways, honoring the multilayered enactment of their identities.

Practices of Culturally Relevant Reading Pedagogy in Higher Education

Studies have shown that Latinos' healthy perceptions of their role as the breadwinner, and their sense of belonging in higher education academic setting, positively influences their decision to place more focus and effort on academic matters (Harris III, Wood & Newman, 2015). Similarly, many African-American men succeed in academics because they believe that education is the great equalizer despite the frequency of reports that they are disinvested in education (Harper & Davis, 2012; Harris, 2011). Moreover, it is demonstrated that community encouragement, exposure to computers and technology, "a hustler's ambition," and the "New Black" influences Black male college students to pursue IT careers (Kvasny, Joshi, & Trauth, 2015, p. 4). Such findings prove further that the pathway to improve the educational experiences and success of marginalized students is through the strengthening of their ethnic identity.

In 1974, the College English Association called for curricular reforms designed to adapt the study of literature to the aptitudes and interests of "a new and unprecedentedly diverse student body... whose cultural and ethnic background would at an earlier time have precluded their attending college" (Foulke & Hartman, 1976, p. #). Since then, CRRP has been implemented in higher education classes (Ware, 2006). It allows students to reflect on their own obstacles in higher education settings while also engaging in critical reading, critical thinking, reading skill development, and writing. While making personal connections with the readings, students also express their intrinsic motivations for attending community college. Students contextualize reading development and academic work within an intrinsic process of personal empowerment, maturation, and progress. Students are provided with

content that is personally meaningful as they develop an appreciation for the connection between reading and life circumstances (Williams, 2010).

CRRP also helps students identify with their own culture while becoming exposed to the cultures of others. It opens the dialogue on issues regarding diversity. For example, female students in their first year developmental reading and writing course connected to the process of identity development as a result of reading *Persopolis 2*, a graphic novel written about and by an Iranian woman (Bernstein, 2008). The underrepresented communities and cultures are introduced to the students. Students learn to communicate with people from different cultures, cities, nations, and continents. CRRP helps eliminate xenophobia from homogeneous societies. In times of globalization caused by information technology, linguistic dominance of English, liberalization, and technical advancements, CRRP is most needed (Bala, 2015). However, there is a dearth of studies on CRRP in higher education even though African-American, Latino/Chicano, Asian American, and other ethnic literature courses are offered. The following examples include some of the most prominent types of CRPP, namely African-American, Hip-hop, Latino/Chicano, Asian American, and Native American Literature.

African-American Literature. African-American Literature (AAL) holds a prominent place in higher education. In describing his experience teaching AAL at Mott Community College, Shafer (2015) says that his students, both Black and White, were able to realize that racial and identity issues of the past still linger into today's society. His students were able to realize that African-American literature is "fluid [and] living," and often reveals troubling truths that were not previously seen about the experiences of African Americans (p. 2). The students found it fascinating that the experiences of the characters are so similar to their own. Shafer (2015) also writes about his White students' reactions to AAL. A White

male student wrote in his journal that prior to studying about the African-American experiences in literature, he did not consider the racial struggles of these individuals. By the end of the semester, Shafer's (2015) students were able to realize the ways in which words such as "freedom, civilization, goodness, and intelligence" have been established and defined by White America (p. 13).

Hip-hop. Specifically, Hip-hop lyrics have been read in academically rigorous courses in higher education settings (Akom, 2009; Petchauer, 2009; Petchauer, 2010; Prier, 2012; Wright & Sandlin, 2009). In fact, the term "Hip-hop collegian" is coined and used to describe those who study this genre (Matthias & Petchauer, 2012; Petchauer, 2009; Petchauer, 2010; Petchauer, Yarhouse, & Gallien, 2008). Moreover, the instructional strategy is coined Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy (Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Alim, Ibrahim & Pennycook, 2008; Brown, 2009). Richardson (2007) defined Hip-hop literacies as "ways in which people who are socialized into Hip-hop discourse manipulate as well as read language, gestures, images, material possessions, and people, to position themselves against or within discourse in order to advance and protect themselves" (p. 792). Important to this definition is that she situated both Hip-hop discourse and literacies within the larger category of Black discourse. Hip-hop has become relevant in the field of education in three ways: 1) teachers use it in the classroom to empower their marginalized students about the aspects of their lives that are manipulated and controlled by capitalistic demands; 2) educators use it to help their students form their identities to understand themselves and others in the world around them; and 3) educators engage Hip-hop in courses, research, conferences, and symposia (Petchauer, 2009). Several ethnographies show that Hip-hop develops critical literacy and academic skills in students (Newman, 2007; Pardue, 2007; Williams, 2007). Moreover, a strand of literature shows that

Hip-hop is a way for Black students to express their construct of racial identities in educational settings (Alim, 2007; Hill, 2009; Williams, 2007).

Latino/Chicano Literature. Latino/Chicano Literature (LCL) also makes great impact in the educational experiences of students in higher education. Students in a Chicano Narrative senior seminar class in the English Department of the University of California, Berkeley, expressed that Chicano literature spoke to their experience as Latinos, inciting a sense of membership in a community that merits inclusion in a college course. The Latino students identified with the Chicano texts, as they read about similar life circumstances of their own, including poverty, youth gangs, and mixing of Spanish and English languages; such process is identified as cultural mirroring. For some students, the characters resembled family members, and the readings helped explain their families' histories. The students reflected back to their elders in a more realistic way, and could understand the cultural tug of war, which is the result of biculturalism, in many of the books. While some expressed feelings of frustration and the experience of racism as points of identification with the books, others expressed not feeling alone as they navigated through American society. Most of the Latino students stated that their motivation to apply to the seminar in Chicano Narrative was because they related to the literature, and the non-Latinos expressed a desire to explore the Latino culture more deeply (Vasquez, 2005).

The intercultural communicative competence of Mexican university language students has also been examined through reading literary texts. After reading and discussing a short story written by a Chicano writer, the students' socio-cultural characteristics and experiences had an enormous impact on their perceptions of the North American culture. The students found it interesting and motivational to read Chicano literature in terms of improving their

linguistic and non-linguistic skills, as well as enriching their personality. During the classroom discussion, they all agreed with the idea that Chicano writers allowed them to understand better the multicultural character of the American society (Sokolova, 2015).

Asian American Literature. Asian American Literature (AAL) also offers higher education students the opportunity to discuss and engage in literature and history that centralize, as opposed to mute, the voices of marginalized individuals (Nguyen & Gasman, 2015). Like AAL and LCL, AAL is an avenue to help marginalized students succeed in higher education. At Lesley College, the instructors found value in the voice and power of stories in AAL as they built understandings between people. Additionally, when students read AAL, they learn how the dominant culture in the United States has treated Asian Americans, a topic of which their previous schooling has taught them little. They are also made aware of the oppressive aspects of the United States' government policies. Asian American writers bring strong voices to the classroom, allowing students to understand themselves and each other. Just as in LCL, AAL include themes of living in two cultures. Other themes, such as finding ways to be heard and reinventing oneself, exist in AAL, allowing students to become empowered (Hamlen, 1994).

Native American Literature. Native American Literature (NAL) encourages all students, regardless of their ethnic background, to develop a wider range of American culture and history. White college students from Tidewater, Virginia, studying NAL, revealed how their understandings of the Native American experience increased. Amongst many important lessons, the students realized the history and impact of discrimination on Native Americans. The students also learned about the reasons Native Americans place importance on the land

and nature for a strong sense of community. They also experienced the sacredness of the Native American oral storytelling traditions (Rosenberg, 2000).

Culturally Relevant Reading Pedagogy in Community College Basic Skills English Courses

Just as the lack of CRT/P resulted in negative academic outcomes in K-12 settings, it may also result in negative outcomes in community college settings. For example, Latino college students have reported feeling disrespected in the classroom, and that the content of the class did not serve their most immediate goals. They also expressed that the cultural disconnect disables them from understanding the subject matter (Lee, 2007). A study of Latino students taking college developmental mathematics and English courses shows that because of curricular practices, they encountered invalidation that resulted in a negative educational experience. On the other hand, when a focus on social identity in the curriculum appeared, students felt academically validated (Acevedo-Gil, Santos, Alonso & Solorzano, 2015; Garza, 2009). An explanation regarding academic validation appears to be that there is a positive relationship between educational success and an acknowledgement of a student's language and culture, which serves as a form of social capital. Thus, the way in which teachers influence students' identities have a significant impact on whether the student will engage academically or withdraw from academic pursuits (Cummins, 2012).

At the nation's community colleges, the exploration of a student's ethnic identity becomes more significant because data show that more than half of all African-American and Hispanic students are enrolled at a community college rather than a four-year institution (Katsinas & Tollefson, 2009). Of this population, disproportionately Black and Latino, one third requires remedial education (Boylan, Sutton, & Anderson, 2003; Noguera, 2003).

Educators have used CRRP in community college developmental English courses because it may be one of the promising pathways they can engage students and help strengthen student reading skills (Ferguson-Russell, 2009; Russell, 2015). At the same time, CRRP develops a stronger sense of students' ethnic identity, resulting in an increase in student success at the community college level.

Specifically, the experience of Latino and Chicano literature taught in community college English classes has been investigated (Clark & Hiraldo, 2004; Martínez, 2011; Sutherland, 1975; Vasquez, 2005). For example, the teaching of the Latino oral tale "La Llorona" allowed students to widen their scope of knowledge about being American; bridge the borders sometimes found in the multicultural classroom; analyze the take through a various approaches; conduct library and field research; think critically; complete written assignments; and present oral reports and other projects (Lindermann & Cole, 1995). Another study on community college students of color, in a developmental reading course, showed that culturally responsive and critical literacy approaches allowed for students to demonstrate their thinking through verbal and written reflection. The students showed improved habits of mind and learning (Williams, 2010).

Implementing LCL in community colleges has also had a positive impact on the lives of students. In one study of validation in a community college Puente class, a strong academic and interpersonal validation of students took place as a result of CRRP (The Puente Project, initiated in 1981 at Chabot College, is now an active program at 38 California two-year community colleges intended to enlarge the pool of Latino students who transferred from two- to four-year colleges and universities in California.) Upon reading some culturally relevant essays, the students expressed their own struggles in adjusting to college life, being

academically unprepared, and feeling lost. They also expressed a sense of struggle to feel the need to separate from their culture in order to be successful in college (Rendon, 2002). Like Shafer's (2015) students, the students also saw validation in the notion that Latinos are valuable contributors to the body of knowledge that is studied in the classroom. Rendon (2002) calls for all Puente English classrooms to study Latino literature because Puente teachers understand that students need to see themselves in what they are reading. In a Puente English classroom, the fact that the students' personal voice is paralleled to the voice of the writers they are studying is another way in which students are validated. Also, their culture is validated as they learn to read and write while developing cultural pride and examining the purpose and meaning of getting a college education.

Several studies have explored the motivation for reading in community college students enrolled in developmental reading classes (Williams, 2010; Del Principe & Ihara, 2016; Gokcora, 2016; Small, Shanahan & Stasak, 2010; Duke & Pearson; 2008). Specifically, it has been proven that employing culturally relevant teaching pedagogies in an ethnically diverse community college developmental reading class resulted in students' intrinsic motivation to engage deeply with the assigned texts (Williams, 2010). In another study on Latino students in a Chicano studies senior seminar class, it was revealed that students cited a motivation to apply themselves to the readings because they related to the literature being read. In the same study, non-Latino students stated that they were motivated to sign up for the class because they had a desire to explore the backgrounds of people other than their own in the readings assigned in the class (Vasquez, 2005). In another study, students reported inner motivation as a result of reading Latino literature (Rendon, 2002).

Summary

Critical race theory, as a framework for educational practice, explains the need for more diverse approaches in curriculum development and pedagogy. For this reason, educational experts and practitioners, like Ladson-Billings (2009) and Gay (2010), have established practices such as Culturally Relevant Teaching and Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Method of Educating. These practices can apply to any discipline at any grade level. Specific to reading and literacy, Culturally Relevant Reading Pedagogy (CRRP) is a method in which teachers assign readings that are culturally relevant to their diverse student population. Numerous studies in K-12 settings, and fewer in higher education, have shown positive results in student engagement and success as a result of reading culturally relevant texts. Even though CRRP has been practiced in higher education, only a few studies have measured its effects on student success and achievement. Courses such as African-American Literature, Hip-hop, Latino/Chicano Literature, Asian American Literature, and Native American Literature are frequently offered in four- and two-year higher education institutions in the United States. They are also offered in disciplines outside of the English departments. However, more studies, specifically in Community College Remedial English Courses, would illuminate how this pedagogy can benefit all students. In an era in which social justice and equity are a part of institutions' mission statements and goals, such curricular practices need further attention from all educational stakeholders.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Several research studies inform about the reading experiences of students in basic skills English courses at the community college (Hagedorn & Kuznetsova, 2016; Tang, 2016; Braze, Katz, Magnuson, Mencl, Tabor, Van Dyke & Shankweiler, 2016). One research study looked at the effectiveness of two reading instructional approaches: traditional textbook-based instruction versus strategic-reading instruction. Traditional textbook-based instruction is when an instructor uses a textbook to facilitate the curriculum without necessarily assessing the students' development. On the other hand, strategic-reading instructions is when the instructor enforces students to apply specific cognitive and metacognitive reading skills as they navigate reading a text. The results revealed that both methods of instruction were equally effective in improving the reading comprehension skills of community college students in a developmental reading course (Lavonier, 2016). Another looked at a recent sample of 51 community colleges, and found that 33% of the students were in developmental reading courses (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Research studies have also sought students' perceptions about their reading experiences in the basic skills English courses at the community college (Armstrong, Stahl & Kantner, 2016; Gross & Latham, 2016). However, none can be found about the reading experiences and perceptions of students about the reading material they engage with in an accelerated basic skills English class. Because students of color predominantly place into basic skills classes, specifically accelerated basic skills classes (with most community colleges moving towards this form of basic skills pathway), there is a need to know what students' perceptions are about the material they read.

Knowing what their students' perceptions are about culturally relevant books will help faculty teaching these accelerated courses design and plan their curriculum.

Data results from a mixed-method embedded design inquiring about students' perceptions reading texts in accelerated basic skills English courses may help faculty understand what students value and find important for their personal and academic lives when it comes to reading. In addition, as accelerated basic skills courses scale up in community colleges, faculty may be better informed about students' interests. This understanding will help faculty see the types of readings that result in students' academic achievement, students' sense of belonging in college, and increase motivation for reading.

Research Question

This research study aims to find out what students of color, who predominantly enroll in accelerated basic skills English classes, want to read. This broad question led to the creation of the following research questions:

- How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses?
- How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings?
- How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses?

Mixed-method embedded design study

A mixed-method embedded design study was used to inquire about the perceptions of students in various educational settings (Bailey, 2013). Within the realms of this study design, both quantitative and qualitative forms of data were collected sequentially. The qualitative data was a support to the quantitative in that it further explained the students' responses

(Creswell, 2014). In accelerated basic skills English courses, a mixed-method embedded design study allowed for the recommendation of texts to faculty who teach accelerated basic skills composition courses. The value of this reading list, justified by research driven data, reveals how students react and respond to the types of texts and genres.

A mixed-method embedded design study allowed for the opportunity to see students' perceptions of the types of texts they prefer to read in an accelerated basic skills English class. This research approach helped bridge the gap between theory (what faculty have been taught about student perceptions on readings) and educational practice (what faculty will hear from students and their perceptions, as told by students, about what they prefer to read about.) A mixed-method embedded design study also allowed for the opportunity to design an effective reading curriculum for students who are placed in accelerated basic skills English courses because the design of curriculum is interwoven with the testing of the proposed reading list. Suggestions for texts were formulated in the design of this study.

Features of a mixed-method embedded design study. A mixed-method embedded design approach combined both qualitative and quantitative data so that each data set provided a supportive secondary role in terms of findings and results. Because a single data set may not give a deep and rich insight to students' perceptions of the types of texts they want to read, this method fits a comprehensive approach. The premise of this research design is that a single set of data is not sufficient, and different types of questions need inquiry through a variety of questions (Clark & Creswell, 2011). The mixed-method embedded study design allowed for the recommendation of texts to faculty teaching accelerated basic skills composition courses to predominantly students of color.

The results of the study offered faculty members insights into how they can evaluate their choices for text selection. It gave them insight as to how they can increase the quality of their curriculum. It also taught them the factors that increase student academic achievement, students' sense of academic identity, and students' motivation to read. It also addressed the social justice gap, which is the students' voice and perceptions as to what they *want* and *need* from a basic skills community college accelerated composition class.

Students of color are often obligated to read, analyze, and respond to texts written by authors and about characters that do not necessarily speak about, or reflect any aspect of their lives. Thus, this study reinforced the need to inquire into students' voices and perceptions on a regular basis as faculty design curriculum. And finally, this study showed the importance and value of considering students' perceptions as faculty design curriculum.

Research Design

This study used a mixed-method embedded design to inquire students' perceptions of what they value when assigned to read in an accelerated basic skills composition course. This research design aligned perfectly with the goals of describing students' perceptions about the texts they read; comparing different types of texts that students respond and react to; evaluating the most appropriate texts to use in a course that serves students of color; explaining and predicting texts that result in better student academic achievement, stronger sense of identity, and increase reading motivation; and advising faculty on best practices.

About Central College

Central College, located in southern California, is a Hispanic Serving Institution, and one of the most diverse community colleges in southern California. Founded in 1964, the institution is known for many great achievements. For example, Central College ranks as a

top transfer institution. Its transfer rate consistently surpasses the statewide average, with over half of the college's student cohort transferring to a four-year institution within six years (CCCCO DataMart). Also, Central College was the first community college in California to offer a bachelor's degree. The first freshman cohort of the Health Information Management bachelor's degree program began in Fall 2015 (Central College Fact Sheet, 2016). In Fall 2015, it enrolled 24, 343 students, offering 196 associate degree and certificate programs. According to Central College's president, approximately \$2.62 million dollars has been granted to address the student equity issues. Rosa Parks, the great civil rights activist, had a special relationship with the college, and made several visits in the early 1990s.

Participants

Students from two English 25 A courses at Central College participated in this study. The participants were not the researcher's students. Rather, they were students in two other professors' classes, Professor A and Professor B. Students received an email from Central College district's research office informing them of the study, and instructions to follow if they are interested in participating in the survey and interview portion of this study. The students were informed that participating in the study was voluntary, and would not have any effect on their overall grades in the class. In order to inform students who were interested in participating in the interview process of the study, a note at the end of the survey said, "If you are interested in being interviewed about your opinions on the readings in this class, please write your name, email address, and phone number." Table 1 shows the demographics of students in accelerated basic skills English courses as compared to that of Central College's and California community colleges' overall student population.

Table 1: Demographics of students in accelerated basic skills English courses as compared to that of Central College’s and California community colleges’ overall student population

	Fall 2012 Accelerated Eng. 25 A Cohort¹	Central Colleges’s Overall Student Population as of 2014²	California’s community colleges overall student population as of Fall 2015³
Age	84% between 18-24	63% under 25	33.54% between 20-24
Gender	53% Female 47% Male	52% Female 48% Male	53.57 Female 45.38 Male
Ethnicity	56% Latino 15% White 12% African-American 9% Asian/Pacific Islander	33% Latino 32% White 14% Asian/Pacific Islander 7% African-American	43.99% Hispanic 27.21% White Non-Hispanic 6.19% African-American 11.10% Asian 0.43% Pacific Islander

English 25 A Accelerated Reading, Writing, and Reasoning

English 25 A became an official course at Central College in 2010. It is a 4-unit course that combines reading, writing, and critical thinking at an accelerated pace. English 25 A takes the place of up to four courses in the old basic skills pathway. Six exit points are eliminated for the students in both reading and writing. In the accelerated pathway, twice as many students go on to pass transfer-level English. In the old basic skills pathway, after four terms, only 21% of the students completed transfer-level English. However, after only one term, 41% of the students successfully completed transfer-level English. Furthermore,

¹ Data retrieved from Central College’s Office of Institutional Research and Planning

² Data retrieved from Central College’s Fact Sheet

³ Data retrieved from Central California Community College’s Chancellor’s Office

students in the Accelerated course placed lower in both writing and reading courses. Forty-seven percent placed at two levels below in writing as compared to just 18% of non-accelerated students. Twenty-eight percent placed at two levels below in reading as compared to 9% of non-accelerated students. In other words, accelerated students placed lower but succeeded at a higher rate (Hays, 2014). The entire course outline for English 25 A is in Appendix Q.

Reading and Writing Placement Scores of Central Community College English Accelerated Students. Campus data show that 56% of the English 25 A students in the Fall 2013 –Fall 2014 cohorts placed at two levels below in writing based on the Accuplacer assessment exam as compared to just 15% of non-accelerated students. Thirty-five percent placed at two levels below in reading as compared to 7% of non-accelerated students. Just as the students in Fall 2010–Fall 2012 cohorts, accelerated students again placed lower compared to students in the non-accelerated writing courses consistently proving that the accelerated cohort is not composed of high-assessing students. While previous studies have focused on the success and completion rates of accelerated basic skills English courses, in contrast, this study examined the role of the curriculum. This research study initiated a scholarly pursuit of accelerated basic skills composition students’ perceptions on the texts they are assigned to read. Table 2 shows the texts the students read in both of the basic skills accelerated composition courses taught by two central College faculty.

Table 2: Nonfiction texts assigned to the participants of the study.

Type of text	Title	Author	Topics
Ethnic Culturally relevant text	<i>Enrique's Journey</i>	Sonia Nazario	Immigration
Non-ethnic culturally relevant text	<i>Outliers: The Story of Success</i>	Malcolm Gladwell	Success
Ethnic Culturally relevant text	"Learning to Read"	Malcom X	Education
Non-ethnic culturally relevant text	"The College Dropout Boom"	David Leonhardt	Education
Ethnic Cultural relevant text	"Walking Across the Stage"	Veronica Valdez	Immigration/Education
Non-ethnic culturally relevant text	"Brainology"	Carol Dweck	Mindsets

Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures

This proposed mixed-method embedded design had two phases of data collection. In the first phase, data were collected from forty-seven (47) students taking the surveys about their experiences in reading both ethnic culturally relevant and non-ethnic culturally relevant text. The purpose of this first phase was to see the ways in which students reading ethnic culturally relevant texts responded and reacted to the texts versus their responses and reactions to non-ethnic culturally relevant texts. The student surveys were anonymous to ensure students responded in a manner in which they could feel comfortable to answer honestly. Data collected from the anonymous survey questionnaire allowed for the quantitative analysis of this study.

In the second phase, ten (10) students volunteered and expressed interest to be interviewed. The purpose of this second phase was to dig deeper into what perceptions about reading students have, and to gather the ideas they could not fully express in the survey answers. The interviews allowed for a more detailed and descriptive example of their perceptions on reading. Additionally, their answers in the interviews further informed the results of the quantitative data retrieved from the surveys. Appendix C includes the list of interview questions. Interviews lasted no more than 30 minutes, were conducted in person at Central College, and digitally recorded on the app Evernote that requires a password. Each recording was transcribed and coded to identify themes. Table 3 shows the interview and survey questions that addressed the research questions.

Table 3: The survey and interview questions that will address the research questions

Research Questions	Survey Questions For Professor A's Students	Survey Questions For Professor B's Students	Interview Questions For Students in Both Classes
How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses?	Q 16, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 33, 37, 38, 46, 50, 60, 62, 64	Q 16, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 33, 37, 38, 46, 50, 57, 63, 64, 73, 75, 77	Q 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11
How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings?	Q 9, 17, 23, 28, 31, 34, 36, 39, 43, 47, 51, 54, 59, 64	Q 9, 13, 17, 23, 28, 31, 34, 36, 39, 43, 47, 51, 55, 58, 60, 65, 67, 72, 74, 77	Q 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses?	Q 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 49, 52, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 64	Q 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 22, 25, 29, 30, 32, 35, 40, 42, 44, 45, 48, 49, 52, 54, 56, 59, 62, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 77	Q 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11

Data analysis procedures

Coding. Coding is defined as the “critical link” between collecting data and explaining its meaning (Charmas, 2001). It represents and captures the datum’s primary content and essence. The researcher constructs it in order to give interpretation and meaning to the subject it generates. In this process, the researcher detects patterns, categorizes, builds

theory, and engages in other analytical processes (Saldanea, 2013). This process involves aggregating the text from the transcripts into small categories (themes), and then labeling them (Creswell, 2013).

As I learned in *The Coding Manuals For Qualitative Researchers* by Johnny Saldanea, there are two cycle coding methods. I focused my coding analysis in the first cycle to which I began the process of coding by using highlighters with different colors to code for patterns. This act, called Process Code, is when the researcher identifies words or phrases that capture attention in the excerpts of the student interview transcripts. Next, I engaged in a process called Descriptive Code. This is when the researcher applies a one-word capitalized code to summarize the primary topics of the excerpts within the transcripts. I also engaged in the process of In Vivo Coding because it allows the researcher to capture the students' actual voice to enhance and deepen their experiences (Saldanea, 2013, p. 91).

Validity

To ensure the validity of this study, I first sought the content validity of the survey questionnaire and interview questions by members of the dissertation committee who are scholars and researchers themselves, and have expert knowledge and experience in conducting Mixed-Method studies. Next, I used a variety of validation strategies. The first validation strategy used in this study was ethical validation. This is when the researcher questions moral assumptions, the political and ethical implications, and equitable treatment of diverse voices. This strategy was especially important because I am an advocate of using ethnic culturally relevant texts in my own accelerated basic skills courses, and often promote the usage of these texts in curriculum development. Because of this, I engaged in the second validation strategy, which intends to clarify researcher bias (Creswell, 2013). This is when the

researcher comments on past experiences, biases, and perspectives that could influence the interpretation of the data. This validation strategy was especially important because I had to report that the data proved that students didn't particularly find reading ethnic culturally relevant texts increased their academic achievements, sense of belonging, and/or motivation to increasing reading.

Researcher positionality

As a faculty of color who often engages in reflexivity (Brownlee & Schraw, 2017) about pedagogical practices with regard to ethnic culturally relevant text, and as the researcher of this study, it is important to note that there may have been some positionality concerns that may have affected the study. First, as a faculty teaching similar basic skills accelerated courses, I used a series of ethnic culturally relevant texts. In fact, the theme of my own English 25 A is "American Voices," to which I assign my students to read a series of memoirs that reflect the ethnic voices of Vietnamese, African, Chicano, Middle Eastern, and White Americans. Even in my other classes, I made sure to assign students to read at least one ethnic culturally relevant text as student surveys from my classes always express the value of them. Additionally, the focus of my own Master's thesis was related to ethnic culturally relevant texts, so there is a history of research of this topic, and a personal preference of such texts. However, the students were not hand-selected for the study. They volunteered to participate in both the survey and interview phase. They took the survey in the privacy of their own space, and volunteered to engage in the interview process of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

English 25A⁴, Accelerated Reading, Writing and Reasoning, is a 4-unit basic skills course that is designed to prepare students to write college-level papers, including:

...journal entries and/or responses to questions related to assigned readings; paraphrases and summaries of assigned readings; reflections related to readings and one's own development as a writer; class and/or field notes; academic compositions (in class and out of class essays total 6,000-7,000 words); edits and revisions to compositions based on peer review; and formal and informal letters. (Central College District Course Outline, 2015, p. 1)

The reading and writing that students are assigned to do in this course prepare them for academic reading, writing, and critical thinking in all subject areas. Although faculty who teach at Central College have academic freedom, emphasis is placed on designing a course with a thematic perspective within which students develop arguments and strengthen critical thinking, reading, organization, and writing skills at an accelerated pace. In fact, the course is recommended for students whose Assessment Skill Level, based on the Accuplacer college entrance exam, score at 3 in both reading and writing. This course is intended for students who require minimal preparation, and those who want to prepare themselves to read, write, and analyze texts at the transfer level. Thus, the course is taught like a “junior varsity” English 101, transfer-level English, according to Professor Wendy Smith who is a Professor of English, Transformation Grant Director, and Basic Skills Initiative Coordinator at San Diego Central College, and one of the pioneers and advocates of English 25A. The student learning objectives of this course include:

⁴ Name of all courses addressed in this study have been changed to maintain anonymity of the campus in which study was conducted. Since English 101 is a common name for transfer-level English at many community colleges, this course’s name was not changed.

1. Apply critical reading strategies, such as annotations, summaries, paraphrasing and notetaking to understand and explain texts.
2. Identify an author's point of view and main arguments.
3. Analyze an author's support for his/her argument by developing questions and making connections with other texts and one's own experiences.
4. Formulate an argument and/or point of view related to a text through group discussion and freewriting.
5. Construct a clear, structured argument for an intended audience.
6. Compose a structured, analytical academic essay based on one or more main points.
7. Formulate questions related to one's own writing as well as the writing of one's peers.
8. Assess and incorporate peer review feedback to revise writing.
9. Use library and Internet resources to research and develop supporting documentation for basic academic essays.
10. Use Modern Language Association (MLA) style to format an essay. (San Diego Community College District Course Outline, 2015, p. 1-2).

In this course, critical reading practices and writing processes are combined, whereas in the traditional pipeline, students take a reading course (English 28) separate from a writing course (English 29). Thus, students spend two semesters, a total of 32 weeks, before they can transfer to transfer-level English instead of one semester, 16 weeks. In regards to the reading practices of this course, students develop comprehension of thematic texts by practicing annotations, summarizing, paraphrasing, notetaking, and identifying the author's point of view and main argument. Furthermore, they engage in texts that lead them to develop questions, make connections to other texts and their own experiences, and do observations of the world they live in. They analyze the author's supports for arguments and respond to texts by developing their own arguments and points of view. They do so by engaging in group discussions about the texts and free-writing exercises and activities. They gain the skills to define the purpose of any given text and its audience. Reading assignments may include, but are not limited to, theme-based packets and/or full-length texts; articles from newspapers, magazines, and periodicals; on-line sources related to selected thematic readings; and excerpts from textbooks.

The history of English 25A at Central College

Reading, Writing, and Reasoning became a reality at Central College in the Fall 2010-Spring 2011 school year. Central College was the second college in the district to pilot this open-access, one-semester, 4-unit course that integrates reading and writing (based on Chabot College model). The philosophy behind this course was that throughout the sequence of developmental and transfer-level English courses, students develop increasing mastery in college-level academic literacy, specifically the ability to read independently and understand complex academic texts; critically respond to the ideas and information in those texts; and write essays integrating ideas and information from those texts. Thus, in Fall of 2012, 18 courses of English 25A were taught district-wide for pilot efforts, and Central College offered four courses.

While there were significant accomplishments in making this course a reality, there were challenges too. These challenges included skeptical colleagues who felt that one remedial course would not be enough for students who place two levels below transfer in their placement test. In fact, they felt that there was value for a student to take two levels before they could enter English 101 or English 106. This does not include the English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESOL) courses a student would have to take. Others wanted to see data on student success. And one of the three campuses in the district was not on board to offer English 25A.

As shown in Figure 1, if students earn a reading score and writing score of 3 (R3 or W3,) they would have to spend two years in the sequence and pass English 22, 23, 28, and 29 before they could enroll in English 101 or English 106 (transfer level.) Once they reach

transfer level, they would have to spend another year just to finish English 101, or English 106, and English 206.

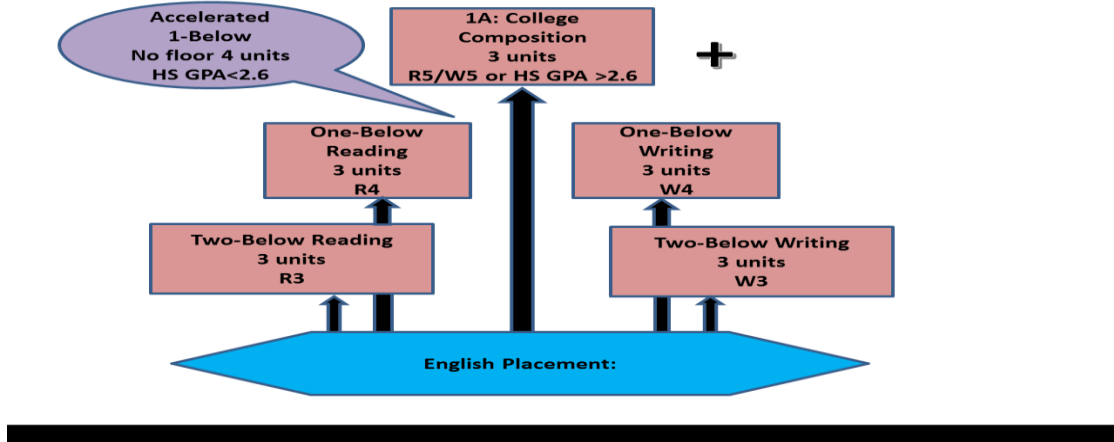


Figure 1: The English course sequence a student would have to take depending on what score he/she earned on either the English as a second language placement test or the English placement test.

This pathway is even more devastating for students who may place at the lowest level of ESOL, which is ESOL 20. Not only does this lengthy pathway result in students dropping out of college, but also, it becomes a financial burden. By the time they transfer to a four-year university, they have depleted their financial aid by paying for tuition, textbooks, and other academic related costs.

In its pilot phase for the Fall 2010-Spring 2011 school year, data collected by three Central College Campus-Based Researchers in 2014 showed that of the 117 students who enrolled in the English 25A accelerated English course, 84 passed the course, 54 enrolled in English 101, and 39 successfully completed English 101. That meant that 33% of the starting cohort passed English 101 after just two semesters. However, in the same school year, 4,086

enrolled in English 22, 23, 28 or 29. Of this cohort, 1,201 enrolled in English 101 the next semester, and of those 1, 201 students, 918 passed English 101. That meant that 22% of the starting cohort for the longer pathway, more than two semesters, passed English 101.

The most recent data tracked students taking both accelerated and non-accelerated composition courses for six terms: Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Summer, 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2015, and Summer 2015 cohorts. Out of the 784 students who enrolled in the accelerated English 25A, 612 completed the course. Of these 612 students, 465 went on to enroll in transfer-level English 101 and/or 106. Of this group, 382 students completed transfer-level English 101 and/or 106. That represents a 49% success and completion rate. On the other hand, 1,001 Students enrolled in English 23, two levels below transfer basic skills course. Of this group, 736 Completed English 23, and 491 enrolled in English 29, another basic skills course. Of this group, 369 completed English 29, and 284 enrolled in English 101 and or 106. Of this group, 225 students completed English 101 and or 106. This shows only a 22% success and completion rate. Additionally, it took the students in English 43 longer to get to transfer-level English 101 and/or English 106 (Herrin, 2017).

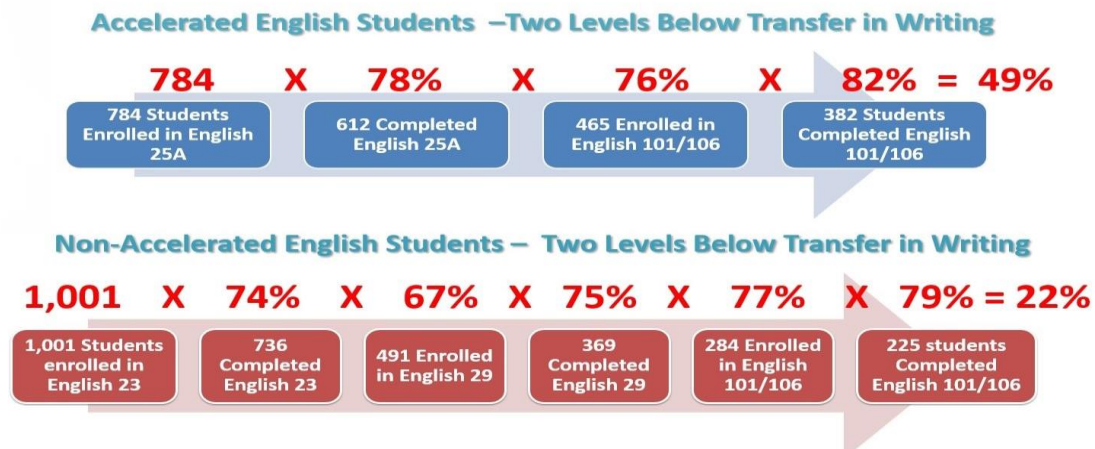


Figure 2: The passing and success rates of students who either placed in accelerated basic skills or non-accelerated basic skills during the Fall 2013, Spring 2014, Summer, 2014, Fall 2014, Spring 2015, and Summer 2015 semesters

In addition to the shorter pathway resulting in higher levels of student success, faculty at Central College were given professional development opportunities, trainings, and workshops to teach accelerated English basic skills courses. One of the most impactful professional development opportunities was the California Acceleration Project (CAP) Institute. A team of faculty from Mesa, along with teams from other California community colleges, were led by Dr. Katie Hern, one of the co-directors of the California Acceleration Project, to not only design curriculum for accelerated basic skills English courses, but also to identify and address the non-academic barriers that students typically face. Participating in the CAP Institute allowed faculty to learn about the importance of establishing and maintaining positive relationships with students; giving students ample class time to understand content and practice; opportunities for metacognitive reflection; incentives and accountability for doing work; intervening when students show signs of struggle or disengagement; and maintaining a growth mindset approach in feedback and grading (California Acceleration Project, 2017).

Thus, faculty at Central College's English department not only embraced this new method of remediation, but also made it a point to continue to review assessments and placements; pursue enacting a multiple measures process for assessment and placement by establishing a multiple measures placement pilot workgroup; continue to redesign curriculum pathways; recruit students into the shorter pathways of remediation by ways of collaboration with counseling; and get more faculty trained to teach accelerated basic skills English courses by establishing Acceleration Innovators at Central College, a semester long, paid training opportunity for all faculty including adjuncts. Furthermore, faculty members who have been tirelessly working on acceleration efforts at Central College also made it a point to highlight the financial sustainability of these courses, negotiate administrative logistics, and participate in conferences by presenting about Central's progress in acceleration as one of the means to achieve equity and excellence. As of Spring 2017, Central College offered twenty-one English 25A courses.

One of the focal points of the trainings that faculty participated in included the selection of text for the reading portion of the class. At both the CAP Institute and AIM, faculty were encouraged to select non-fiction texts that are current and relevant to the lives of the students. However, there has never been a real specific focus on faculty selecting culturally relevant texts. In other words, faculty have never have had specific training on the effects of culturally relevant texts on a student's academic achievement, motivation to read more often, and sense of belonging at academic higher institutions. Thus, the following research questions were developed in order to create data collecting instruments such as surveys and interviews with students in basic skills accelerated courses:

Research Questions

- 1) How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their **academic achievement** in community college accelerated basic skills courses?
- 2) How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their **sense of belonging** in community college settings?
- 3) How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their **reading motivation** in community college accelerated basic skills courses?

The data collected in Professor A's⁵ and Professor B's courses are the first to present what students prefer to read in an accelerated basic skills English course.

Professor A

Professor A, is a Latina, full professor in the English department, has been teaching at Central College for 22 years. She is also one of the PUENTE faculty. In her English 25A, she assigned the students to read and watch a variety of culturally relevant and non-cultural texts. The students who participated in the survey for her class answered questions based on their reading experiences of *Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother* as written by Sonia Nazario and *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell, both non-fiction texts.

⁵ To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms are used throughout the entire dissertation for all participants.

Enrique's Journey

Enrique's Journey, written by Sonia Nazario, is about a Honduran boy's unforgettable journey in search of his mother. He begins his journey eleven years after his mother, Lourdes, left their home in Honduras to find work in the United States to support her starving family. In his mother's absence, Enrique ends up living with his grandmother and later with his uncle. When both living arrangements fail, he ends up on the streets, dealing with gangs, and even doing drugs. Finally, Enrique decides to leave his home and begin his journey "North" in search of his mother. Enrique endures injuries from falling off of trains, getting robbed and beaten up by hostile gang members, and being arrested by the immigration officers for over one hundred days. After seven failed attempts, on his eighth attempt, he crosses over the U.S.-Mexico border with the help of "coyotes," or human smugglers. Once he arrives in the United States, he is reunited with his mother. Although, at first, he is happy to reunite with his mother, soon after, Enrique begins to show his resentment and anger towards her for the years she was not in his life. Again, he begins to use drugs and alcohol to cope with the emotional pain. Enrique's issues are not just the drugs and alcohol. He has a girlfriend, Maria Isabel, and a child with her back in Honduras. Their child, Jasmin, becomes the motivation for Enrique to change his life around, send money to Honduras, and eventually reunite with the family that started with Maria Isabel. On the website www.enriquesjourney.com, author Sonia Nazario updates readers about the Enrique and his family members. As of October 2011, she writes that Enrique brought his daughter, Jasmin, to the United States via smugglers, and that Jasmin leads the life of a normal child here in this country. Additionally, he has a better relationship with Lourdes and has moved on from the resentment. Unfortunately, he struggles at times with unemployment and drug use. A video of Nazario interviewing Enrique in a Florida jail in

2013 also exists on the website. In the video, he talks about missing the birth of both of his children. When asked how he feels about this fact, he responds, “It’s not that I didn’t want to be there, but because life didn’t want me there for the two births of my children.” He tells Nazario that he hopes to one day be a better person for his family, open a restaurant, and buy a home for his family.

Outliers: The Story of Success

Outliers is Malcolm Gladwell’s third non-fiction book, and in it, he tells the stories of the some of the most brightest and successful individuals whom he has researched. He attempts to answer the central question: what makes high-achievers different? In this book, through the stories of members of the Canadian hockey league, Bill Joy, Bill Gates, the Beatles, geniuses such as Christopher Langan, Albert Einstein, Henry Cowell, Robert Oppenheimer, and many others, he answers the question by claiming that what sets these individuals apart, what makes them “outliers,” are factors such as 1) that they are “...the beneficiaries of hidden advantages and extraordinary opportunities and cultural legacies...” (p.19); 2) they have...“accumulative advantage[s]” (p. 30); and 3) they practice their craft at least 10,000 hours or more (p. 35). The major themes explored in this book include success and failure, talent, opportunity, work, luck, timing and historical context, privilege, heritage, and cultural backgrounds.

Professor B

Professor B is a full-time, assistant professor f in the English department at San Diego Central College. He is a White male who co-coordinates the faculty training of accelerated courses at Central College. He has been teaching for 4 years. Like Professor A, he assigns the

students in his class to read and watch a variety of both culturally relevant and non-cultural texts. The students who participated in the survey from his class answered questions based on their reading experiences of “Learning to Read” by Malcolm X; “The College Dropout Boom” by David Leonhardt; “Walking Across the Stage” by Veronica Valdez.

“Learning to Read”

“Learning to Read” is a chapter from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* as written by Alex Haley and Malcolm X. In this chapter, Malcolm X tells about his experience in learning to read at a Charlestown prison. He begins by describing that one of the inmates, Bimbi, inspired him to begin reading because Bimbi was so well-spoken and well-versed. Additionally, he wanted to write better letters to his friends and family members outside of the prison. So, he began the self-teaching process by reading and copying the dictionary starting from the letter A section. As he practiced more, his reading advanced. Later, while at The Norfolk’s Prison Colony’s Library, Malcolm X got access to books such as Will Durant’s *Story of Civilization*; H.G. Wells’ *Outline of History*; and *Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois. He became so inspired and fascinated with reading that he would often read under the prison hallway lights all through the night. Malcolm X describes that his ability to read informed him of all of the injustices that the “White man” has done to other civilizations in the history of humankind. He states, “Book after book showed me how the white man had brought upon the world’s black, brown, red, and yellow peoples every variety of the sufferings of exploitation” (p. 287). He concludes this chapter by writing that prison enabled him to study more intensively than if he would have gone to a college.

“The College Dropout Boom”

“The College Dropout Boom” is a *New York Times* article written by David Leonhardt. It begins by recounting the experience of Andy Blevins, a college dropout, or a “nongraduate” as Leonhardt calls it. The first to attend college, Andy worked at a grocery store in Chilhowie, VA making \$6.75 an hour. On top of making bonuses, Andy enjoyed the attention and independence earning a regular paycheck was bringing into his life. Thus, he decided to drop out of college, and join one in three Americans in their mid-20s who make the same decision. Leonhardt (2005) informs of other facts related to higher education, such as graduation rates of poor students. He reports, “Only 41 percent of low-income students entering a four-year college managed to graduate within five years, the Department of Education found in a study last year, but 66 percent of high-income students did” (para. 9). He cites individuals like Lawrence H. Summers, the president of Harvard, who says, “We need to recognize that the most serious domestic problem in the United States today is the widening gap between the children of the rich and the children of the poor” (para. 9). Other factors Leonhardt (2005) discusses are notions of privilege and inherited meritocracy. He informs that even though higher education institutions are more diverse than they ever have been, they still tend to be accessible to those from upper-middle-class backgrounds. He ends the article by referencing colleges that are increasing financial aid and also promising to give access to students who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

“Walking Across the Stage”

“Walking Across the Stage” is an article written by an undocumented student who graduated from UCLA. She published the article under the pseudonym “Veronica Valdez,” to protect her identity. In the article, she states that even as a college graduate, she is uncertain

about her future due to her status as an undocumented student. She states that she has achieved one component of the American dream, and that is that she has gotten an education, but she is unable to get a job using her degree. She describes the history of her family, and how her parents made the decision to come to the United States as undocumented immigrants in the 1980s. Veronica was only four years old when her parents brought her to the United States. Though she lived in America, her life was full of “struggles and uncertainty” (p. 41). Her mother worked in unstable factory jobs, with no health benefits and job security, and though she always worked, she always lived in fear of getting arrested and deported back to Mexico. Legalization was not a possibility for Veronica and her family because of lack of immigration legislation that addressed the needs of people similar to her family. Veronica tells of going through the Los Angeles Unified School system and working “under the table” jobs when she turned 18. She recalls getting paid less than minimum wage and without any benefits at a bakery. As a college student, she worked at a restaurant to pay for her college tuition as financial aid was not an option. Veronica asks her mother if she would have done anything different in terms of coming to America; her mother responds, “Yes, I would have tried to enter the country legally, to try to find the opportunity to come legally” (p. 44). When Veronica asks her mother why she did not try to enter the country legally in the first place, her mother responds:

Because when the people go from here [America] to over there [Mexico], they tell you that here you earn a lot of money, that it is very easy, and they tell you of a country that is very pretty and different than what it really is. And because I did not think. I was young and did not have the maturity. I did not even know what to expect. Simply, I followed your father. (p. 44)

Veronica ends the article by stating that she considers herself an American and that she will work in any way she can, and in any movement she can, to be recognized by the nation where she has lived all her life.

Students in both Professor A's and Professor B's classes read "Brainology" by Carol Dweck.

"Brainology"

"Brainology" first appeared in the *National Association of Independent Schools* in the winter of 2008. It introduces and defines the terms that Dweck came up with, "fixed" and "growth" mindsets. Through these terms, Dweck explains what factors motivate students to learn. With her group of researchers, she looked into several hundred students transitioning into the seventh grade. They measured the mindsets of the students and monitored their grades for two years. They learned that students who had a growth mindset care about learning rather than looking smart as was the case with the students in the fixed mindsets. The growth mindset students had the idea that the more effort they would put in a task, the more likely they would grow, and that even geniuses have had to work hard for their accomplishments. On the other hand, the fixed mindset students believed that people were born with a certain amount of intelligence, and no matter how hard a person tried, there would be no difference in how much they would grow or accomplish. Dweck (2008) explains that the way parents, teachers, and coaches praise students affects the type of mindsets they will end up having. The article ends by giving advice on how parents, teachers, and coaches can lead their students to achieve a growth mindset.

Demographics of the students who participated in the study

Central College is a diverse community college. It is considered to be a Hispanic Serving Institution. In the 2016-2017 school year, 51.5 % of the students at Central College were women and 48.50% were men. In regards to age, 37.50% are between the ages of 20 to 24 years old; 30% are between 25 to 39 years old; and 24.40% are less than 20 years old. Thirty two percent of Central College's students are Latino/Hispanic; 34.30% are White; 12.40% are Asian; 4.70% are Filipino; 0.60% are Pacific Islander; 6.80% are African-American; and 5.70% are of two or more races. Thus, the demographics of the students in the study are a reflection of the demographics of the students in the campus as a whole.

Thirty seven percent of the students who participated in this study were male and 62% were female. Sixty four percent were 21 years and under; 32% were between the ages of 22-35; and 2% (one student) were between the ages of 36-49 years old. Fifty-six percent of the students were Latino/Hispanic; 18% were White; 8% were Asian American/Pacific Islander/Filipino; 5% were African-American; 2% were Asian American/Pacific Islander/Filipino and White (bi-racial); 2% were Middle Eastern; and 2% preferred not to answer.

The highest reading level a student can be placed on by taking the Accuplacer exam at Central College is 5. Forty-five percent of the students in the study did not state which reading level they were placed on the Accuplacer; 24% received a reading level of 4; 13% received a reading level of 3; 12% received a reading level of 2; and 2% received a reading level of 1. Forty-three percent stated that their last English class was in high school; 29% stated their last English class was in their GED program; 16% stated other; and 10% stated that they finished their ESOL courses. Forty-eight percent stated that their last English class was less than a year

ago; 16% stated that their last English class was a year ago; 16% stated that it has been 2-3 years since their last English class; 8% stated that their last English class was 4-6 years ago; 8% stated that their last English class was more than seven years ago; and 2% stated other when stating the time in which they took their last English class. Seventy-two percent of the students stated that they enrolled in English 25A after taking the college placement Accuplacer exam; 10% stated that they enrolled based on their counselor/faculty recommendation; 8% stated that they enrolled because they finished their ESOL course requirements; 5% selected "Other;" and 2% self-selected into English 25A. Sixty-four percent stated that they are enrolled in other basic skills courses and 35% stated they are not enrolled in other basic skills courses.

Quantitative data of the mixed-methods study design

A mixed-methods study design requires the collection and analysis of data through both quantitative and qualitative methods. The combination of both provides a more complete understanding of the research problem. Quantitative data allow for statistical analysis and inform the frequency and magnitude of trends (Creswell, 2014). Because the data are quantifiable, they are considered more objective (Brief, 2012). For this research study on students' experiences of reading culturally relevant texts and non-ethnic cultural texts in an accelerated basic skills course, a survey questionnaire was distributed to students from both classes. Students could volunteer to participate in the survey questionnaire. The purpose of the survey questionnaires was to collect large quantities of data of students from two different accelerated courses. Additionally, because the results are quantifiable, they are more objective, and eliminate this researcher's own biases as a faculty who frequently uses culturally relevant text in basic skills accelerated courses. The questions in the survey

questionnaire were designed to not only answer the research questions, but also, seek an understanding of the reading experiences of the students in accelerated basic skills composition courses. Appendix A lists the survey questions for each class and how each question in the two surveys connects and seeks to answer the three research questions.

Table 3: The survey and interview questions that will address the research questions

Research Questions	Survey Questions For Professor A's Students	Survey Questions For Professor B's Students	Interview Questions For Students in Both Classes
How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses?	Q 16, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 33, 37, 38, 46, 50, 60, 62, 64	Q 16, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 33, 37, 38, 46, 50, 57, 63, 64, 73, 75, 77	Q 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11
How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings?	Q 9, 17, 23, 28, 31, 34, 36, 39, 43, 47, 51, 54, 59, 64	Q 9, 13, 17, 23, 28, 31, 34, 36, 39, 43, 47, 51, 55, 58, 60, 65, 67, 72, 74, 77	Q 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses?	Q 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 49, 52, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 64	Q 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 22, 25, 29, 30, 32, 35, 40, 42, 44, 45, 48, 49, 52, 54, 56, 59, 62, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 77	Q 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11

Results of students' surveys

Twenty-seven students in Professor A's class participated in the survey with one student submitting an incomplete response to the survey. Nineteen students in Professor B's class participated in the survey with two incomplete responses to the survey.

Students' Sense of belonging in Academic Setting Like Central College. When asked how they would describe their sense of belonging in an academic setting like Central College, 60% in Professor A's class responded that they always feel like they belong; 20% responded that they often feel like they belong; 16% stated that they sometimes feel like they belong; and 4% stated that they rarely feel like they belong. In Professor B's class, 25% stated that they always feel like they belong; 25% stated that they sometimes feel like they belong; 33% responded that they often feel like they belong; and 16% stated that they rarely feel like they belong. Appendix E describes the results for students expressing their level of sense of belonging at Central college.

Students Frequency of Reading for Pleasure. With regard to how often students read for pleasure (non-school related/reading just for fun), in Professor A's class, 44% stated that they sometimes read for pleasure; 24% stated that they rarely read for pleasure; 16% stated that they often read for pleasure; 8% stated that they read for pleasure very often; and 8% stated that they never read for pleasure. In Professor B's class, 41% stated that they rarely read for pleasure; 33% stated that they sometimes read for pleasure; and 25% stated that they often read for pleasure.

Number of students who had read texts written by authors of color previous to English 25 A. When asked if they had ever read texts written by authors of color previous to English 25A, in Professor A's class, 36% responded "yes;" 28% responded "I don't know/remember;" 16% responded "No;" 12% stated "Yes," but did not remember the title; and 8% stated "Yes" and remembered the title. In Professor B's class, 91% stated "yes" and 8% did not answer this question.

Text Most Relevant to Students' Lives. In Professor A's class, with regard to which

texts students found most relevant to their lives, 52% responded that *Outliers: The Story of Success* (non-ethnic cultural text) was the most relevant while 36% responded *Enrique's Journey* (culturally relevant text). Twelve percent of the students found "Brainology"-- another non-cultural text--most relevant to their lives. These findings were consistent with results for the question, "Of the three texts, which did you relate to the most?" For this question, 44% chose *Outliers: The Story of Success*, 32% chose *Enrique's Journey*, 20% chose "Brainology," and 4% chose that they did not relate to any of the texts. Similarly, in Professor B's class, the students stated that they found the non-cultural text most relevant to their lives. Fifty eight percent stated that they found "The College Dropout Boom" (non-ethnic cultural text) was the most relevant, while 16% found that "Walking Across the Stage" (culturally relevant) was most relevant. Equally, another 16% found that "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text) was the most relevant and only 8% found that "Learning to Read" (culturally relevant) was most relevant. These findings were consistent with results for the question, "Of the four texts, which did you relate to the most?" For this question, 66.7%⁶ chose "The College Dropout Boom" (non-ethnic cultural text) while 16.7% related to "Walking Across the Stage" (culturally relevant) and another 16.7% related to "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text).

Professor B's Students' Preference To Read Culturally Relevant Text Over Non-Ethnic Cultural Text. When asked if they prefer to read culturally relevant texts (such as *Enrique's Journey*) over non-ethnic cultural texts such as *Outlier: The Story of Success* and "Brainology," 32% in Professor A's class stated they prefer to read all three, 28% stated they

⁶ SPSS calculations indicated an exact percentage without rounding off to the nearest tenth. Thus, the .7 is written to reflect the SPSS's exact calculation.

had no preference, 24% stated they prefer to read culturally relevant texts, and 16% stated that they do not prefer to read culturally relevant texts. Similarly, in Professor B's class, 33% of the students stated that they preferred to read both culturally relevant and non-ethnic cultural text; another 33% stated that they had no preference; 25% stated that they preferred to read culturally relevant texts; and 8% responded that they do not prefer to read culturally relevant texts.

Type of Text That Inspired The Students. With regard to which text had inspired them the most, In Professor A's class, 44% chose the *Outliers: The Story of Success* (non-ethnic cultural text,) 36% chose *Enrique's Journey* (culturally relevant,) 4% chose "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text,) and 12% stated that all three texts inspired them. Similarly, in Professor B's class, the text that most inspired the students was the non-ethnic cultural text, "The College Dropout Boom." Thirty three percent stated that this text inspired them the most while 16% stated that "Brainology" inspired them the most, and another 16% stated that "Learning to Read" inspired them the most. Another 16% stated that "Walking Across the Stage" inspired them the most, 8% stated that all four texts inspired them, and another 8% stated that neither of the text inspired them.

Students' favorite text. In Professor A's class, 44% stated that *Enrique's Journey* was their favorite reading while 36% chose the *Outliers: The Story of Success* as their favorite. Four percent chose "Brainology" and 12% stated that all three texts were their favorite. For this question, in Professor B's class, 41%, stated that "The College Dropout Boom" was their favorite text. Twenty five percent stated that "Learning to Read" was their favorite; 16% stated that "Brainology" was their favorite, and another 16% stated that "Walking Across the Stage" was their favorite.

Students' Least Favorite Text. In Professor A's class, 40% stated that "Brainology" was their least favorite, while 32% stated "none of the above" when asked which text was their least favorite. Twenty percent selected the *Outliers: The Story of Success* as their least favorite text, while 8% chose *Enrique's Journey* as their least favorite. Consistently, in Professor B's class, 50% stated that "Brainology" was their least favorite while 16% stated "none of the above" when asked which text was their least favorite. Another 16% stated that "Learning to Read" was their least favorite; 8% stated "The College Dropout Boom" and another 8% stated that "Walking Across the Stage" was their least favorite.

Students' Opinion on What All College Students Should Read. In Professor A's class, 52% stated that all college students should read the *Outliers: The Story of Success*; 24% stated all college students should read all three texts; 16% stated all college students should read *Enrique's Journey*; and 8% stated that all college students should read "Brainology." In Professor B's class, the results were not so drastic. In fact, 25% stated that students should read "Learning to Read" and another 25% stated that students should read "Brainology." Sixteen percent stated that students should read "The College Dropout Boom" and another 16% stated that all students should read "Walking Across the Stage." Lastly, another 16% stated that all students should read all four texts.

The Number of Students Indicating that All Basic Skills Students Should Read At Least One Culturally Relevant Text. In regards to the question "How would you respond to this statement: 'All basic skills English courses should at least include one culturally relevant text?'" Forty percent of students in Professor A's class completely agreed with the statement; 40% agreed; 12% somewhat agreed; and 8% neither agreed nor disagreed. In Professor B's class, 50% agreed; 25% somewhat agreed; 8% completely agreed; and 16% neither agreed

nor disagreed.

Students' Likelihood of Recommending a Culturally Relevant Text to Someone

Else. In Professor A's class, when students were asked how likely are they to recommend *Enrique's Journey* to someone they know, 56% stated "Very likely;" 24% stated "Moderately likely;" 16% stated "Slightly likely;" and 4% stated "Not at all likely." In Professor B's class, when asked how likely are students to recommend "Walking Across the Stage" to someone they know, 33.3% stated "Not at all likely;" 25% stated "Moderately likely;" 25% stated "Slightly likely"; and 16.7% stated "Very likely."

In both classes, students were invited to write anything else they'd like about their reading experiences in English 25A. Their responses led to the discovery of six themes: 1) Appreciation for reading texts students could relate to; 2) Appreciation for reading a variety of different types of texts; 3) Appreciation for reading texts about diverse cultural backgrounds; 4) Appreciation for a caring and engaged professor; 5) Appreciation for an engaging learning experience; 6) Appreciation for the class as a whole. The table below represents the theme, the research question the theme connects back to, and the students' answers to the research question.

Table 4: Research Questions Connection to Theme

The Theme	The Research Question the Theme Connects to	Students' Responses	Number of times this theme occurred in the survey responses for the question that asked students to write anything they like about their reading experience in English 25 A.
Appreciation for reading texts students could relate to	How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I wouldn't mind reading more stories that students can relate too." • "It was very critical for us to read a culturally influenced book, it was relatable in different ways to each one of us." • "The books went along well with what we were doing in class and Outliers was the one that was more relatable to college in general and having the need to succeed." 	• Five
Appreciation for reading a variety of different types of texts	How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I like how much we got the opportunity to read such a different variety of readings." 	• Three
Appreciation for reading texts about diverse cultural backgrounds	How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It was really rich and diversity." • "I had never been in a class that was so open and aware of the immigration concerns we are currently having." • "It was very critical for us to read a culturally influenced book. It was relatable in different ways to each one of us." • "We read things that were about us, as in our culture." • "I like how the teacher inspired us to read <i>Enrique's Journey</i>." 	• Seven
Appreciation for a caring and engaged professor	How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I really liked the class, and I enjoyed it. The professor is really engaged in the class, and knows how to tie [sic] ideas with the class." • "I liked the teacher; she was really good and understanding with everyone." 	• Nine
Appreciating for an engaging learning experience	How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I like the structure of the course." • "The overview and discussions in class." • "My reading experience was great; I enjoyed the readings." • "Had guest speakers." • "The reason why I feel I passed the class with such a high grade is because we are doing and reading things that interest me." • "I enjoyed Professor A's way of teaching, and the interaction she would have with us as students and citizens of the United States." 	• Nineteen
Appreciation for the class as a whole.	All three research questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I was shown ways to retain what I was reading." • "I enjoyed reading 'Against School' by John Taylor Gatto [non-ethnic cultural text]" 	• Twenty eight

Students expressed:

Appreciation for reading texts students could relate to. This theme informs the second research question that seeks to find out how students describe the relationship between the texts they read and their sense of belonging in community college settings. This is relevant because when students can relate to subjects or ideas in their reading, they have a higher level of sense of belonging in the academic environment. They expressed, “I wouldn't mind reading more stories that students can relate to;” “It was very critical for us to read a culturally influenced book, it was relatable in different ways to each one of us;” and “The books went along well with what we were doing in class and *Outliers* was the one that was more relatable to college in general and having the need to succeed.”

Appreciation for reading a variety of different types of texts including texts about diverse cultural backgrounds. This theme informs the third research question that seeks to find out how students describe the relationship between the texts they read and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses. This is relevant because when students have different choices to select from, they are more likely to have motivation to read. While the student's natural motivation to read is already there, a variety of reading choices, including those from ethnically diverse, or authors of color, may heighten their motivational level.

Additionally, it informs the second research question about sense of belonging in community college settings because when students read texts that are written by authors from their cultural background, or about characters from their cultural background, they feel a stronger sense of belonging in the academic setting. They said, “I like how much we got the opportunity to read such a different variety of readings;” “It was really rich and [full of]

diversity;” “I had never been in a class that was so open and aware of the immigration concerns we are currently having. I enjoyed Professor A’s way of teaching, and the interaction she would have with us as students and citizens of the United States;” “It was very critical for us to read a culturally influenced book. It was relatable in different ways to each one of us;” “I really love being able to read about the struggles of someone who actually fought so hard for his [sic] life. I really hope I get to read more books like this, not just in any English class, but outside too. Reading about immigration changed my view on a lot of things. I knew it was hard, but never read about it until *Enrique's Journey*;” “We read things that were about us, as in our culture;” and “I like how the teacher inspired us to read *Enrique's Journey*.”

Appreciation for a caring professor who creates an engaging learning experience.

This theme informs the first research question that seeks the relationship students have between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses because an engaging learning environment results in higher academic achievement. They expressed, “I really liked the class, and I enjoyed it. The professor is really engaged in the class, and knows how to tie [sic] ideas with the class;” “I liked the teacher; she was really good and understanding with everyone;” “I like the structure of the course;” “The overview and discussions in class;” “It was a very interesting read. It kept me wanting more;” “My reading experience was great; I enjoyed the readings;” “Had guest speakers;” “The reason why I feel I passed the class with such a high grade is because we are doing and reading things that interest me;” “I was shown ways to retain what I was reading;” “I enjoyed reading ‘Against School’ by John Taylor Gatto [non-

ethnic cultural text];” “Overall the class has [sic] helped tremendously;” “Having a comfortable learning environment;” “Awesome articles;” and “It's great; nothing can top.”

While students expressed positive reading, writing, and learning experiences, they did not express significant favor towards either culturally relevant texts or non-cultural texts. In fact, the following response from one student reflects the results of the *t*-tests below:

I believe that my reading experience in English 25A was so inspirational for me. Everyone should read the three texts. Enrique’s Journey portrayed an immigrants' life, and how hard life is as an immigrant. A lot of people, recently, hate immigrants that come into this country, and they don’t think about their hard circumstance. Living as immigrant is not an easy thing; that's why reading is really an important thing- it raises awareness of immigrants’ issues and many other issues. Reading Outliers changed how I think usually when I think about success. We think about what the person has done, but we don't think about the process that he/she has been through. It explains how our culture and environment have a big effect on our success. Success is not just ‘I get a degree from Central College;’ success is everyone who helped me in my journey to get a degree from Central College Community College.

Purpose of *t*-test

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2013) the *t*-test is used to discover whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of two groups. A *t*-test determines that these differences did not happen by chance, but due to an actual difference between groups. In this study, *t*-test is used to analyze the quantitative data. Specifically, these data are drawn from two surveys of two basic skills accelerated courses in which students are assigned to read a combination of both culturally relevant and non-ethnic cultural texts. Thus, a *t*-test finds the comparison between the preference for culturally relevant texts and non-ethnic cultural text as reported by students. Although similar to a pre-test/post-test situation, this study sought a comparison of ratings of two types of texts that each student read in either Professor A’s or Professor B’s classes. The *t*-test for independent

samples and the *t*-test for related (or ‘paired’) samples are the *t*-test’s two variants. The *t*-test for independent samples assumes that the two groups, culturally relevant texts and non-ethnic cultural text, are unrelated to each other. In the case of this study, the *t*-test statistical analysis was used in the data analysis portion. This analysis is appropriate for this research study because the research instruments, such as the survey and interview questions, asked students to compare their experiences in reading culturally relevant texts and non-ethnic cultural texts. The *t*-test assumes that one variable is categorical (culturally relevant and non-ethnic culturally relevant) and one is continuous (students’ preference). The *t*-test is useful for examining differences between *two* groups of respondents, or as in the case of this study, the same group, on two variables, using data from an accelerated basic skills students. Appendix B shows a *t*-tests analysis comparing each question to neutral response (data from both classes are combined). The survey questions used for this analysis are the ones that asked students about the level of their satisfaction in reading culturally relevant texts or non-ethnic cultural texts. This analysis informs the third research question that seeks the relationship students have between the type of texts that they read and their reading motivation in a community college basic skills accelerated course. It also informs the first research question that seeks the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses. Additionally, the survey questions that asked students about the level of quality for both culturally relevant texts and non-ethnic cultural texts were also used in this *t*-test analysis. This analysis informs the third research question that seeks to identify the relationship students have between the type of texts that they read and their reading motivation in a community college basic skills accelerated course. It also informs the first research question that seeks to identify the

relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses. Furthermore, the *t*-test analysis includes the questions that asked students to describe the effect culturally relevant texts and non-ethnic cultural texts have had on their academic achievement, sense of belonging, and motivation to read.

In summary, Appendix B reflects the above analysis.

Table 5: Satisfaction One-Sample Statistics and Test

One-Sample Statistics						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		
CRSatisfied	37	1.919	.2504	.0412		
NCSatisfied	37	1.946	.1574	.0259		

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 1.5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CRSatisfied	10.177	36	.000	.4189	.335	.502
NCSatisfied	17.234	36	.000	.4459	.393	.498

Table 6: Quality One-Sample Statistics and Test

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CRQuality	37	4.041	1.0026	.1648
NCQuality	37	4.162	.7076	.1163
CRAcad	37	3.878	.6391	.1051
NCAcad	37	4.027	.5886	.0968

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CRQuality	6.313	36	.000	1.0405	.706	1.375
NCQuality	9.990	36	.000	1.1622	.926	1.398
CRAcad	8.361	36	.000	.8784	.665	1.091
NCAcad	10.613	36	.000	1.0270	.831	1.223

Table 7: *t*-tests comparing each question to neutral response (both classes combined; continued)

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CRSense	37	2.338	1.1059	.1818
NCSense	37	2.568	.9513	.1564

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 2.5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CRSense	-.892	36	.378	-.1622	-.531	.207
NCSense	.432	36	.668	.0676	-.250	.385

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CRMotive	37	1.784	.6619	.1088
NCMotive	37	1.932	.6888	.1132

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 2					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CRMotive	-1.987	36	.055	-.2162	-.437	.004
NCMotive	-.597	36	.554	-.0676	-.297	.162

Results of *t*-test

- I. Participants were not significantly more satisfied with ethnic culturally-relevant texts ($M = 1.92, SD = 0.25$) than with non-ethnic cultural texts ($M = 1.95, SD = 0.16$), $t(36) = -0.70, p = .487, r = .12$.
- II. Participants did not significantly find a higher quality of reading experience in ethnic culturally-relevant texts ($M = 4.04, SD = 1.00$) as compared to non-ethnic cultural texts ($M = 4.17, SD = 0.71$), $t(36) = -.62, p = .537, r = .10$.
- III. Participants did not believe that their academic achievements were significantly affected as a result of reading ethnic culturally-relevant texts ($M = 3.88, SD = 0.64$) as compared to non-ethnic cultural texts ($M = 4.03, SD = 0.59, t(36) = -1.36, p = .183, r = .22$).
- IV. Participants did not believe that they had a significantly higher sense of belonging in an academic setting like Central College as a result of reading ethnic culturally-relevant texts ($M = 2.34, SD = 1.11$), as compared to non-ethnic cultural texts ($M = 2.57, SD = 0.95, t(36) = -1.25, p = .221, r = .20$).
- V. Participants did not believe that they were significantly motivated to read more often as a result of reading ethnic culturally-relevant texts ($M = 1.79, SD = 0.66$) as compared to non-ethnic cultural texts ($M = 1.93, SD = 0.69, t(36) = -1.27, p = .214, r = .20$).

Table 8: Paired Samples Statistics

Class			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1	Pair 1	CRSatisfied	1.833	12	.3257	.0940
		NCSatisfied	1.833	12	.2462	.0711
	Pair 2	CRQuality	3.625	12	.8823	.2547
		NCQuality	4.000	12	.6742	.1946
	Pair 3	CRAcad	3.792	12	.6557	.1893
		NCAcad	3.833	12	.6853	.1978
	Pair 4	CRSense	2.125	12	.9077	.2620
		NCSense	2.250	12	.9415	.2718
	Pair 5	CRMotive	1.417	12	.4687	.1353
		NCMotive	1.708	12	.5418	.1564
2	Pair 1	CRSatisfied	1.960	25	.2000	.0400
		NCSatisfied	2.000	25	.0000	.0000
	Pair 2	CRQuality	4.240	25	1.0116	.2023
		NCQuality	4.240	25	.7234	.1447
	Pair 3	CRAcad	3.920	25	.6403	.1281
		NCAcad	4.120	25	.5260	.1052
	Pair 4	CRSense	2.440	25	1.1930	.2386
		NCSense	2.720	25	.9363	.1873
	Pair 5	CRMotive	1.960	25	.6758	.1352
		NCMotive	2.040	25	.7348	.1470

Table 9: Means and Standard Deviation for the outcomes by each class.

Class	Paired Differences						t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
1	Pair 1 CRSatisfied - NCSatisfied	.0000	.3015	.0870	-.1916	.1916	.000	11	1.000
	Pair 2 CRQuality - NCQuality	-.3750	.8292	.2394	-.9018	.1518	-1.567	11	.145
	Pair 3 CRAcad - NCAcad	-.0417	.7217	.2083	-.5002	.4169	-.200	11	.845
	Pair 4 CRSense - NCSense	-.1250	.6077	.1754	-.5111	.2611	-.713	11	.491
	Pair 5 CRMotive - NCMotive	-.2917	.4502	.1300	-.5777	-.0056	-2.244	11	.046
2	Pair 1 CRSatisfied - NCSatisfied	-.0400	.2000	.0400	-.1226	.0426	-1.000	24	.327
	Pair 2 CRQuality - NCQuality	.0000	1.3229	.2646	-.5461	.5461	.000	24	1.000
	Pair 3 CRAcad - NCAcad	-.2000	.6455	.1291	-.4664	.0664	-1.549	24	.134
	Pair 4 CRSense - NCSense	-.2800	1.3077	.2615	-.8198	.2598	-1.071	24	.295
	Pair 5 CRMotive - NCMotive	-.0800	.8124	.1625	-.4153	.2553	-.492	24	.627

Table 10: Inferential statistics for each class.

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 CRSatisfied	1.919	37	.2504	.0412
NCSatisfied	1.946	37	.1574	.0259
Pair 2 CRQuality	4.041	37	1.0026	.1648
NCQuality	4.162	37	.7076	.1163
Pair 3 CRAcad	3.878	37	.6391	.1051
NCAcad	4.027	37	.5886	.0968
Pair 4 CRSense	2.338	37	1.1059	.1818
NCSense	2.568	37	.9513	.1564
Pair 5 CRMotive	1.784	37	.6619	.1088
NCMotive	1.932	37	.6888	.1132

Table 11: Descriptive statistics for both classes combined.

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 CRSatisfied - NCSatisfied	-.0270	.2341	.0385	-.1051	.0510	-.702	36	.487
Pair 2 CRQuality - NCQuality	-.1216	1.1868	.1951	-.5173	.2741	-.623	36	.537
Pair 3 CRAcad - NCAcad	-.1486	.6653	.1094	-.3705	.0732	-1.359	36	.183
Pair 4 CRSense - NCSense	-.2297	1.1217	.1844	-.6037	.1443	-1.246	36	.221
Pair 5 CRMotive - NCMotive	-.1486	.7156	.1176	-.3872	.0899	-1.264	36	.214

Purpose of Qualitative Results of Students' Interviews in Both Classes

The interviews represent the qualitative component of the mixed-method. Interviewing is the main method of gaining first-person accounts of any specific experience (Sohn, Thomas, Greenberg & Pollio, 2017). The purpose of interviews in this study is to seek a deeper understanding of students' reading experiences throughout their lives (before entering the accelerated basic skills composition course at Central College) and during their time reading and experiencing the two different types of texts (culturally relevant and non-ethnic cultural texts). The answers obtained as a result of the interviews allow for a clearer understanding of how the different texts impact the students in their academic achievements, sense of belonging in higher education settings, and reading motivations. The methodology

used for the qualitative aspect of this research study was the interview. As the researcher, I engaged in in-depth dialogue with study participants with humility, sensitivity, respect, and a sincere desire to hear what they have to say as students reading different texts in accelerated basic skills composition classes. The participants led the conversation, and as the researcher, I followed the flow of the discussion, and kept the momentum of the conversation by asking them questions. This approach allowed me to examine the participants' reflections on their reading experiences, engagement with the texts, their instructor, and their peers in their classes.

A total of ten out of the 47 students who participated in the study, from both classes, volunteered to interview. Four students stated that they were 21 years old or younger; six were between the ages of 22-35. Seven students identified as female while three identified as male. The students represented a variety of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds: Latino/Hispanic; White; Asian American/Pacific Islander/Filipino and White (bi-racial); Asian American/Pacific Islander/Filipino; and African-American. They listed their last English class to either have been GED English; High School English; English 43 at Central College(basic skills English course on the traditional pathway); and one student listed Oral Communications as his previous English course taken. The reading scores earned by the students on the Accuplacer Placement Score for Reading were R4, R3, or N/A. Some of the students interviewed were enrolled in the other basic skills courses, and some were not.

Table 12: Student Interview Demographics, Enrollment and Accuplacer Score

Participant's name	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Last English Class	Accuplacer Placement Score for Reading	Enrolled in other basic skills courses	Professor Whose Class Enrolled
ALLESANDR A	21 and under	Female	Latino/Hispanic	GED English	R 4	Yes	Professor A
BRYCE	22-35	Male	White	High School English	N/A	Yes	Professor B
KATHERINE	21 and under	Female	Asian American/Pacific Islander/Filipino and White	High School English	R3	Yes	Professor B
ALYSSA	21 and under	Female	Latino/Hispanic	Engl. 23 at Mesa	R3	No	Professor B
MARY	22-35	Female	White	High School English	N/A	No	Professor A
TAMARA	22-35	Female	Asian American/Pacific Islander/Filipino	High School English	R4	Yes	Professor A
YESENIA	21 and under	Female	Latino/Hispanic	High School English	N/A	No	Professor A
BETHANY	21 and under	Female	Latino/Hispanic	GED English	N/A	Yes	Professor A
LARRY	22-35	Male	African American	Oral Communications	R4	No	Professor B
OSCAR	21 and under	Male	Latino/Hispanic	High school English	R 4	Yes	Professor A

The connection to the research questions

Interview questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 11 address the first research question that asks students to describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses. Interview questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 11 address the second research question that asks students to describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings. Interview questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 11 address the third research question that asks students to describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses. Appendix C lists all of the interview questions.

The students interviewed were generally fond of the practice of reading. Their responses helped inform the third research question that sought to identify the relationship

Interview Questions	Research questions
Q 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11	How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses?
Q 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11	How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings?
Q 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11	How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses?

between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation. When asked to describe their experience with reading in general, and their early recollections of reading, Katherine, Alyssa, Yesenia and Oscar uttered phrases such as “I love reading,” “I like reading,” “I did like stories,” and even “I got really obsessed with memoirs.” Reading got Katherine through times of boredom as a kid and brought a “sense of peace” for her. When reading, she felt like it was time for herself and that no one could bother her. Alyssa described that she read fiction and nonfiction, and that she always gave reading a try. She recalled that in high school she would read challenging texts like *Oedipus*. She says that she wrote an essay about it, ended up liking it, and even “got more into reading.” Mary, compared her reading as an adult in the Navy to when she was in high school. About her reading experiences in the Navy, she used the phrase “incredibly boring.” But in high school, she discovered memoirs, and now says “Memoirs are amazing.” She attributes her passion for memoirs for her appreciation of *Enrique’s Journey* that she read in Professor A’s class. Mary said, “My experience so far [with reading,] one semester in... I’ve really taken to it. I really enjoy the reading.”

In fact, students had strong recollections of titles of texts and found them memorable and impactful. This was evident through their ability to remember titles of the texts read many years ago. This further informs the third research question that sought the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation. Seven out of 10 of the students interviewed recalled texts that were memorable to them. Such texts included Shakespeare plays such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*; Greek mythology such as *Oedipus*; American classics such as *Of Mice and Men*; *Huckleberry Finn*; *Pride and Prejudice*; and *The Sound and the Fury*; popular literary series such as *A Series of Unfortunate Events*; *Artemis Fowl*; *Divergent* and *Harry Potter*; children's book such as *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*; fantasy and thriller such as *The Vampire's Assistant*; science fiction such as *The King of Thieves*; and novel such as *The Tortilla Curtain*.

Many of them spoke about these texts with fond memories and a tone of endearment. They said things like:

LARRY: It was called *The Vampire's Assistant* by Darren Shan, and that whole series was great, so I read it from beginning to end and I'd probably read it again, too.

KATHERINE: *Huckleberry Finn!*, That's one of my favorites. I love that book. *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Sound and the Fury*... *Hamlet*... and then there was another one by Shakespeare...*Macbeth*. We read a lot of Shakespeare... I like those. Tragedies. I like that.

Their motivation to read further extended to their expression of appreciation of the physicality of books. Katherine expressed, "I love the feeling of buying a new book, too.... I started collecting vintage books....I've been getting more of those because it looks very cool in my book collections."

The act of reading seemed to also have a positive influence on the students. This contributes to both the first and second research questions that sought to establish the relationship between the texts students read and their academic achievement and sense of belonging in a community college setting. For example, Oscar expressed the following:

I want to be a successful writer when I grow up, so reading was a big influence to me I do it [reading] just for pleasure instead of watching TV or doing something like video games[When reading] I get to picture everything, and I think that's what makes it kind of fun and impactful ... and I think that inspires me to create some kind of world in my head and to be able to portray that in my own writing as well.

Students described that their fondness of reading changed over a period of time and through various experiences. For some, the change was an increase in the interest to read more often, which informed research question three that seeks students' motivation to read. Larry stated that although it wasn't a disinterest in reading, but preoccupation with other activities. He mentioned, "I really started enjoying it [reading]" as he got older. He found a fictional series that grasped his attention and read "eight books, non-stop..." Similarly, Bethany shared that as a child, she wasn't a big reader, but "Now [as an adult] I like to read readers, and I've been pushed more and more. Now, I read on my own." Mary said that it wasn't until she was in her 20s that she "...got really obsessed with memoirs..." She described memoirs as "amazing," and expresses a fondness over *Enrique's Journey*.

For others, the change was a decrease in the interest to read often, which informed research question three that sought to identify student motivation to read. This response shows how and why students lack motivation to read.

ALYSSA: Throughout my childhood I loved reading. I think I started not getting into reading as much by middle school, especially when it was text that

you had to read that were required. Sometimes they weren't really interesting, so I wasn't really into reading.

However, it is evident that students go through phases in which they enjoy reading or become disinterested in reading. Thus, they go back and forth depending on various factors and influences. These factors and influences can include certain role models in the students' lives. These individuals not only influenced the students' motivation to read (research question 3,) but their academic achievement (research question 1) and sense of belonging (research question 2.) These individuals included teachers who "bought me books out of her own pocket," as Alyssa described and mothers who "...[watched] over me, making sure I didn't make mistakes," as Tamara described. Other factors that influenced the students to increase an interest in reading were maturity in age and growing older as was the experience for Tamara and Bryce. However, for some students, with age, their interest in reading did not increase. Yesenia described:

I always liked it [reading] when I was little, but then, as I got older I kept getting a little more shy and then I didn't really like reading out loud in front of my classmates. I always felt like I had a dyslexic kind of problem.

And for some, reading was a matter of preference and taste, which helped inform the third research question about the relationship between the type of texts students read and their motivation to read. Bryce recalled losing interest in reading because he had to read "stuff that [he] didn't care about...[because] the subject matter was boring, or it wasn't dramatic enough." Some students were indifferent towards reading which also informed the third research question about the relationship between the type of texts students read and their motivation to read. Larry said that for him, "reading was just reading." It's not that he didn't enjoy it, but there were just other things to do. Allesandra echoed similar ideas when she said:

It's not like I ever had a passion for it [reading], but my mom always tried to push me towards it. When I was in high school and we had to read Shakespeare, I'd be open to it. But it's not like I had a passion for it....

During the interviews, in their answers, some students expressed their struggles with reading. Their answers explain research questions one and two that sought to establish the relationship between the texts students read and their academic achievement and sense of belonging in community college. Some of these struggles were due to language barriers as was the experience for Bethany and Yesenia who immigrated to the United States from Mexico. Moreover, for some students, it was due to lack of confidence and fear of making a mistake. Oscar describes feeling “embarrassed...[when messing] up on a word,...and [not wanting] everyone to laugh at [him].” Bethany recalls feeling “very nervous reading and even talking to people.” However, certain activities, such as involvement in the YMCA, helped Bethany develop confidence in reading. When asked if she had a difficult time getting through her school related readings, Bethany responded, “Not at all. Like I said, just not being scared, [and] I was confident enough to read.” Others expressed struggle with reading due to age. For example, Mary said, “I struggle with it [reading.] I think that's more of a generation gap than anything.” However, despite their struggles, students still expressed ways they overcame their struggles by “re-reading things and make sure I understand” as Yesenia described. Bryce described, “actually breaking that down [the text] and saying [to himself] ‘okay, what is it actually asking you to do?’”

Some of the students also expressed lack of interest in reading prior to English 25A. The lack of interest in reading was due to their inability to relate to the reading, and lack of flexibility in choosing their own reading. These responses inform the second and third research question that seek insight about the relationship between the assigned readings

(texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings, and the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college that seek insight about the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings, and the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses. Allesandra describes appreciating her readings in English 25A more because in high school she read texts that were written in “...old English... and hard to connect to.” About her experience with the readings in English. 25 A, she says that they were “...more like a story you could follow along.” Tamara expressed similar sentiments when she said that in high school, she didn’t understand the purpose for reading certain texts. She used the word “annoying” to describe reading a text that “you can’t relate to.” She attributes the lack of connection between the student and the text to the reason why students don’t do well on tests. About the experience of being able to relate to a reading, she said, “Once you get one story or a poem that you relate to, you can go; but if there’s no connection, it’s really hard. I think sometimes it’s great because it opens your eyes, but if there’s nothing there, it’s a struggle.” Alyssa informed that for her, when she was assigned to read texts that were “required” and “weren’t really interesting,” she lost interest. She said, “In high school, there were these books that sometimes I wouldn’t even understand.”

All students interviewed recollected their first memories of reading in elementary schools, and often with another person, whether it’d be with their teacher, mother, siblings, and other students. For some, it seemed as if the individuals they read with were influential (positive and negative influence). Bethany said that her Spanish and English teacher “guided”

her by reading with her one on one. Also, the YMCA program called *P.R.I.D.E.* also gave her the time and attention she needed to develop her reading skills. Alyssa's seventh grade teacher who bought her books taught her to not "judge a book by its cover....[and to] always give reading a try." For Oscar, the reading experience involved his mother and "group reading with other students." He said that he learned different stories, different ethnicities, and different backgrounds, and said that it was overall a great experience. Tamara, too, read small books with her mom watching over her "...making sure [she] didn't make mistakes." Bryce was influenced by his twin brother and older sister who got into reading competitions over *Harry Potter*.

Students also spoke about their reading experiences in English 25A. Their answers informed all three of the research questions. Larry described that the readings in Professor B's class "were good" and that he "enjoyed all of them, and I wouldn't mind reading them again or letting other people know about it [the readings.]" Alessandra also said that she had a good experience in professor A's class in her first semester in college. She said, "I really liked Enrique's Journey because I felt like I had a connection with it." Bryce, too, enjoyed the readings in Professor B's class, especially Malcolm X's "Learning To Read." Bryce enjoyed the unique writing style and the process of analyzing subjects such as socioeconomics of America because he could relate. The readings introduced him to different perspectives. He expressed:

You have one author out of a group of authors writing something. Then the next day we look at something from someone really conservative, or really liberal, or you look at Malcolm X or you look at Horace Mann. They're all different people: some of them [are individuals of color,] some not, but they [authors] all had really good things to say. ... I like how, while the class is structured, it's kind of freeform. It's flexible. The class, I really enjoyed it. I like how it was formatted. I liked the leniency. I like how relaxed it was...In

school, the reading actually got harder, and it wasn't until this class, this English class that I'm in now, that I'm being challenged to think more deeply about basic stuff from reading an instruction to reading a prompt about an essay, to actually breaking that down and saying 'okay what is it actually asking you to do?' So it's making a difference...It wasn't until taking this class that I started having to think more critically about basic things...things I would not have otherwise thought critically about...

In Professor A's class, Alyssa had a similar experience. She said that she "loved" *Enrique's Journey*, and that she "really enjoyed *Outliers*." *Outliers* changed her perspective of how people are successful. She said, that she "...liked how [the teacher] makes all the readings and stuff all connect in one." Similarly, students like Mary and Tamara found their reading experiences to be "eye-opening." Mary also said that it was "very humbling." She said that as a White person, the readings exposed her to certain problems that made her much more humble. She described, "You don't realize how rough it is for them [immigrants.]" Also, *Outliers* had a positive impact on her as well. She explained how it made her think about things from a bigger perspective, and always internalizing one person's actions. Tamara said that she got to "understand other people and their cultures a lot more." About the readings in Professor A's class, Oscar said "I got a very influential experience, and I got to see the other side of the sheltered world where maybe not all things are all sunny and sunshine." Yesenia, too, echoed similar sentiments when she described *Enrique's Journey* as one of her favorites and that she liked "reading about what other people face in life instead of what I do every single day."

Students believed that the readings assigned by both professors were "thoughtfully selected" as Tamara described it. This helps inform the first research question that asks students to describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses. Also, the

fact that students stated that the readings were relevant and relatable informs the second research question that asks students to describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings. In fact, Tamara believed that because "...the professor was enthusiastic about [the book] because it was so relevant...[is the reason she thinks] it rubs off on you [as the student], and you [the student] do well." Similarly, Oscar felt that books like *Enrique's Journey* were not "just another story picked off from some shelf. It was actually handpicked and thought on [by the instructor]. It was something unique that you didn't really see, and I think everyone in the class liked it because they can relate to it, in a way." In fact, many of the students stated that they related to the content of the texts and had a strong sense of connection to the readings, further informing research questions one and two. For example, Yesenia said that *Enrique's Journey* was her favorite because her family is from Mexico. Allesandra also said that she felt a connection to *Enrique's Journey* and likes such books way more as compared to Shakespeare, which she describes as "outdated." She believes that books like *Enrique's Journey* "...show everything immigrants have to go through to come over here [United States and] thought that was really special." For Bryce, "The College Dropout" gave him "insight" because he experienced dropping out of school before. Alyssa stated that she related to "Brainology." She explained:

...because I've always been that type of person that is like, 'oh, I'm not good in Math,' so maybe it is just because I'm not good at it...So I will be taking math in the summer so reading 'Brainology' made me realize that you need to really try to actually change your mindset. Because if you don't, then you are not going to learn from your mistakes, and instead of trying, you're just going to flunk it. So you don't want to do that, so that's made me change a little bit about Math.

The students also spoke about the ways in which the readings provided new perspectives for them. This helped inform all three research questions as new perspectives influence their academic achievement, sense of belonging, and reading motivation in the academic setting. These new perspectives not only helped them grow as individuals, whether it's growth in their educational or professional endeavors, but also, grow as sympathetic and empathetic members of society. Yesenia said that Dweck's "Brainology" provided a new perspective for her because she learned that when kids are awarded for not putting in effort, their level of motivation decreases. While Larry also describes finding "Brainology" "fascinating," he said that he gained new perspective from reading Malcolm X's "Learning To Read" because he saw "how much reading can actually do made me want to read more." Bethany learned new perspective about "...the kids over there [abroad], not just in Mexico, but all around the world, who dream about the American dream." For Allesandra, *Outliers* provided new perspective because she learned that "...where you are born and how you are born has an influence on how successful you can be later on." For Alyssa, the new perspective was found when she read *Outliers* and learned that, "There is this 10,000 [hours to practice a craft] rule.... That's what you really have to put in to be successful." Mary described that the way in which "Brainology" provided new perspective new perspective for her was when she realized that math, a subject she struggles with, is "not a natural ability." She realized that "It's whether or not I'm willing to work to get better at it." *Enrique's Journey* gave her "an appreciation for how much dedication immigrants have to their family." She said, "It helped me to really appreciate the workers for who they are and what they do." Tamara talked about how the readings taught her "someone else's struggle...because everyone judges before you

know them....To know the story before you judge, I think that's something that I learned...to just broaden my mind a little bit more."

The ways in which the readings further influenced the students' academic achievement, sense of belonging, and reading motivation was seen as the students talked about the ways in which the readings allowed an opportunity for them to exchange perspectives and opinions with one another. Their experiences allowed them to not only engage deeply with the text, but with one another as well. About their experiences in discussing the texts in the classroom settings, the students expressed:

YESENIA: Other students understand things differently than I do. Hearing them say what they understand got me thinking, 'oh, yeah; I get what they're saying.

Larry found his classmates' perspectives to be "very insightful." Bethany realized that the other students taught her their perspectives because they all had "different opinions and different ways." Alessandra shared about a student in her class who was older, and attributed his knowledge with his age. She said that when she would listen to him speak, she would think to herself, "wow, I didn't even think of that." She also describes the experience of interacting with one another over the readings, and engaging in the learning process. Bryce shared,

...hearing someone break down how they thought something broke down could give you that layman's definition on it. I think there are a few students in our class who definitely enjoy conversing and throwing their opinion out there, so that helped a lot. They bounced or spring boarded each other into further discussion, which was pretty cool. A lot of times I would be going to raise my hand to say something and someone else would say about the same exact thing, and I could go off of that, or hear their spiel on it...and ask questions about how they just said that.

For Katherine, hearing her classmates' ideas about "The College Dropout" "opened a new view" because she had another classmate who was a parent, who shared about his experience raising his child. She also mentioned that a lot of her classmates could relate to "Walking Across the Stage" because they had friends who are Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students and have similar experiences as the character in the article. Tamara's response further elaborated on this point when she said, "...when you're sitting next to someone that says, 'oh my mom did something similar,' it opens your eyes because it's a lot closer to home than you think... But when you know someone, then it's far more than just a story; it's reality."

Another theme that informs research question one and three (about the relationship between the texts students read and academic achievement, and the relationship between what students read and motivation to read more often) is the theme of students' belief that culturally relevant texts help students who struggle in reading. Students like Yesenia stated that a culturally relevant text "motivates" her to want to learn more. Larry stated that culturally relevant texts are more available and accessible to students who struggle with reading. He said, "So it's [concepts are] easier for them to access, and it'll be easier for them to talk about it, especially since they know a little something about it....They don't want to feel like they're dumb or anything. So it's easier for people to talk, and the more talking that comes into discussion is a lot better for everybody." Bethany shared that she believes "...being open to getting to know other people's cultures interests a person more." While Allesandra shared the same beliefs, Bryce expressed,

BRYCE: You're describing me [struggling reader.] I would say that a good author can make history.... But if you tell it in a way, it can be interesting, and that in itself can keep someone turning the pages... It definitely helps if you

have someone who is good at writing... like Malcolm X is really good at relating with his audience or getting them to feel a certain way or getting on wavelength of where he was coming from. I think in a way that's a good way to possibly engage a reader who doesn't normally read otherwise. I don't normally read, but when you do read something engaging that makes you think.... It's almost like click bait to almost keep you in, kind of like a hook. Yes, I would say it [culturally relevant text] does engage readers who don't like or more so with people who struggle.

Other students like Katherine, Mary, Oscar, and Tamara expressed that ethnic culturally relevant texts help struggling readers in that they can relate to the text; engage with the text more; and give them hope that they can academically achieve. However, there was one student who did not believe ethnic culturally relevant texts necessarily helped struggling readers.

ALYSSA: I personally don't think it matters [if a person reads culturally relevant texts or texts not about cultures.] People probably have different opinions about it, but I think it doesn't really matter whether you like reading or not.

Moreover, students were also asked to describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement (in community college accelerated basic skills courses and any other academic course.) They responded:

BETHANY: [The texts] motivated because it's something that I'm interested in. It's something that I like to read and it's more interesting to me. I find it – I can't find the word – but it did push me and motivate me to read more because it's something that I'm interested in.

When asked which of the three texts motivated her to work harder in her academic achievement, Bethany's response was *Enrique's Journey* because it helped her realize the opportunities for education she has here in the United States. Likewise, Allesandra selected the same text and stated, "I would like to prove that we are capable of much more than immigrating, and what people sometimes think of us." In her answer, she also expressed that

Outliers made her believe that if they [outliers] can do it, then she can do it too. Oscar, too, expressed that *Enrique's Journey* influenced him to “work harder,” while Malcolm X’s “Learning to Read” taught Bryce the value of self-teaching. He stated that “Learning to Read” motivated him more than he motivated himself because he realized that he didn’t have anything holding him back from improving himself, and that he is at an advantage, so she should be the best that he can be. Not only can he get through his class, but to be true to himself and “buckle down” on his education. Bryce also described that “Learning to Read” also positively influenced his academic performance in his mathematics class as it reminded him to be persistent, reach out to his mathematics professor, and seek solutions to his mathematics issues on his own. Similarly, Alyssa shared that the readings had a positive influence on her level of motivation to work hard in academic achievements. Specifically, she related to Dweck’s notion of fixed and growth mindset as she read in “Brainology.” Like Bryce, Alyssa also struggled in Math. The ideas in the article helped her realize that if she tries hard enough, then she can achieve the results that she wants in her mathematics class. She also saw positive effects in her academic achievement in her Child Development course as well. She said,

I’ve actually done pretty well, especially in my observations. They are pretty long, but I’m kind of surprised that I’ve gotten both A’s on my observations. But I put in the time, and it takes me a while. I’m always working hard to achieve it [academic success,] so yeah, it [the reading] has [positively impacted.] It [the reading] has changed me.

Mary also noticed a positive effect on her level of motivation to work hard and have positive academic results. She described that the article “Brainology” and the book *Outliers* taught her about success, and how to obtain it. It also taught her about mindsets and emotions. While she felt that the readings did not address ways to set goals, it got her to do research on

her own goals and other people's goals. She said, "It was interesting to me, that connection, which I would not have done if I hadn't read the text. They [the readings] did affect my motivation. They allowed me to create goals and have a desire to accomplish them."

The students also described how the texts had an effect on academic achievements in other classes at Central College, and even in non-academic settings as well. Oscar described how *Outliers* increased not only his knowledge in school, but outside of school as well. Tamara echoed how the mention of the 10,000 hours rule (it takes at least 10,000 hours of practice to achieve success in a craft) appealed to her work ethics. Yesenia, too, found *Outliers* to be influential. She said, "*Outliers* definitely opened me to understand how a successful student is, what their mentality is. It definitely got me thinking maybe I should start doing some of those things."

Still, not all students in the study found the readings to have an impact on their academic achievement. Larry expressed that while the texts did bring to his attention certain issues, they did not necessarily motivate him to work harder. Similarly, Katherine attributed her hard work in her academics to her own work ethics and personality rather than the texts. These responses only reflect two out of ten students interviewed.

Students were also asked to describe the relationship between the assigned readings in the course, and whether the readings had any impact on their sense of belonging in community college settings. Seven out of ten of the students interviewed stated that the readings did not have any effect on their sense of belonging at Central College. They affirmed by saying "I've always felt like I belonged;" "I really never felt like a huge obstacle or something that I could never do [at Central College.];" "I would say [the readings had] no

effect [on sense of belonging.]...Central College is pretty welcoming.” One student expressed that while the readings didn’t necessarily impact her sense of belonging at Central College, it gave her a different feeling in terms of her identity as a student at Central College. She expressed, “Not belonging [the readings didn’t effect sense of belonging,] but more how incredibly lucky we are to be here;” Allesandra expressed, “I never felt like I didn’t [belong here at Central College.... [The readings] gave a little more boost into feeling accepted here, especially with our professor.”

Still, there were students who did believe that the readings had an effect on their sense of belonging at an institution of higher education like Central College. For example, Katherine expressed, “Malcolm X made me feel belonging because everyone here, maybe not everyone, they know how to read. If they read Malcolm X, they will realize it can bring people more together with books....In that sense, in the classroom, I felt like since we read it, we understand the struggle he went through to learn how to read.” Alyssa, who became emotional and cried a little, expressed,

Yes, definitely [the readings did effect sense of belonging at Mesa.] Just the fact that I want to be successful. I might not be Bill Gates or something extreme like all those high tech people or multimillionaires, but just the fact that I want to have a good career and improve myself because I come from a broken home and poverty. So being here, actually reading all these texts, make me feel like I do belong here.

Oscar shared similar sentiments when he said,

I would say Enrique’s Journey did [increase sense of belonging] only because it focused on Enrique and he’s of Honduran [sic] decent and I am as well. I think it’s very important for students to be taught that the only color is not just White. It’s Brown, Black and any other race. So I would say belonging... Enrique’s Journey did bring that [feeling].

Students were also asked to describe the relationship between the assigned readings in the courses and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses. The majority of the students, eight out of ten, expressed that the readings did increase their motivation to read more often. Yesenia expressed that "...books like *Enrique's Journey* motivated [her] to learn about more cultures and what other people go through and their stories." Bethany expressed that the class and stories like *Enrique's Journey* motivated her to read more immigrant stories and stories about people who have been through rough times. Larry expressed that reading Malcolm X's "Learning To Read" made him think about reading more because it showed how reading can help turn one's life around towards a more positive path. He used the word "incredible" to describe reading about Malcolm X's journey with reading. Katherine shared similar sentiments as Larry. For her, Malcolm X's "Learning to Read" increased her motivation to read because it made her realize that she should "...take advantage of [her] knowledge of [reading]." She also expressed that "The College Dropout" also opened her eyes to take advantage of her skills. Allesandra expressed that *Outliers* increased her motivation to read more because as she described, the stories, chapter after chapter, gave her "a boost of confidence." Mary explained that the readings increased her motivation to read. She said, "...the more information you absorb, the more open-minded you get, the more questions you start asking, the more you want to learn, the more you look into things. It's definitely increased my desire to want to leisurely read." Oscar also described an increase to read more often due to both *Enrique's Journey* and *Outliers*. As for Tamara, she explained that her motivation to read increased due to the fact that *Enrique's Journey* is a true story, and that she would like to read more books that help her "explore different culture and understanding of a different place in the world or of someone else's struggle."

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Overview of purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to specifically inform faculty of the implications text selections have on students' academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses; their sense of belonging in community college settings; and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses.

The goal of this final chapter is to offer a summary of key findings from the study, and to show how the data further inform other studies on the relationship students' basic skills at community colleges have with reading and academic achievement, sense of belonging in an institution of higher education, and reading motivation. Other parts of this chapter include limitations, and implications for theory, social justice, faculty teaching accelerated basic skills composition courses, and faculty who develop curriculum training programs for their campuses.

Basic skills acceleration efforts were faculty driven initiatives that began in 2007 at the Community College of Baltimore County. More than 200 schools around the country, including Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Michigan, and Virginia have adopted, or adapted, a variation of an accelerated basic skills composition course. This model-- Accelerated Learning Program--has consistently demonstrated student success rates. Similarly, in 2010, The California Acceleration Project (CAP) was discovered by Katie Hern and Myra Snell to support the community colleges on the west coast. This faculty-led professional development network supports California's community colleges to transform basic skills courses to increase student completion of English and math, two courses that are

considered “gateway courses.” While all 114 California community colleges participated in CAP outreach workshops between 2010 and 2016, much of the focus has been on strategically supporting faculty to work with administrators and fellow faculty to develop accelerated courses, or co-requisite models of acceleration to decrease the number of basic skills courses and offer accelerated pathways for students who often place more than one level below transfer English. For example, a quasi-experimental study found that in high-impact pathways, students’ odds of completing a college-level course were 2.3 times greater than in traditional remediation (Hayward, Willett, & Harrington, 2014).

In its first five years, CAP’s objective was to support early initiators to pilot variations of accelerated courses, collect data on student outcomes, and make the case for broader change. As they enter into their next phase, to scale up, there is more focus on developing effective curriculum, including practices more fittingly aligned to adults’ interests. Many campuses, including Central College, offer faculty interested in teaching such courses paid training opportunities to develop the curriculum for their classes.

Summary of findings

Quantitative data were collected through surveys that were taken by students in both Professor A’s and Professor B’s classes. The results conveyed the reading experiences and perspectives of the students about the texts they are exposed to, proving that this form of data is essential for faculty to fully understand their students’ opinions and perspectives about the types of texts they read in an accelerated basic skills course. Additionally, qualitative data was collected through student interviews in both classes. The value of such data further informed some of the quantitative results.

T-test analysis. The results of *t*-test analysis demonstrated that students were not significantly more satisfied with ethnic culturally-relevant texts than with non-ethnic cultural texts; did not significantly find a higher quality of reading experience in ethnic culturally-relevant texts as compared to non-ethnic cultural texts; did not believe that their academic achievements were significantly affected as a result of reading ethnic culturally-relevant texts as compared to non-ethnic cultural texts; and did not believe that they had a significantly higher sense of belonging in an academic setting like Central College as a result of reading ethnic culturally-relevant texts, as compared to non-ethnic cultural texts. These results reflect numerous studies in which students reported that other factors contribute to their satisfaction with reading; positive reading experiences; reading and academic achievement; and reading and sense of belonging. For example, the students' interest in the topic and subject matter also contributes to their satisfaction and compliance with the reading assignments (Carkenord, 1994). This theory is further supported in one of the students' responses during the interview of this study, in which he said,

I wouldn't say I stopped reading, but I'd say after having to read a few specific texts for school, like *Of Mice and Men* in high school, there wasn't really interest for me in it because the subject matter was boring, or it wasn't dramatic enough. I like crime and mystery and stuff. A few of the books caught on to where I enjoyed them, but most of the time, after going into the sixth grade, I stopped enjoying reading beyond getting information, or if it was about something I liked.

Also, students in other studies have reported their most positive reading experiences. For example, Jolliffe and Harl (2008) state that in their study, they found that students who had their own individual reading process that was consistent, related to values clarification, was

fulfilling, and prepared them for their future careers had a positive reading experience. The researchers also discovered that students were extremely engaged with their reading, but not with the reading that their class required. The findings in Jolliffe and Harl's study relate to the insights of the students in this study who expressed a preference in having choices in their reading selections, and having some sort of reading autonomy. A student in Professor A's class stated,

All the poetry and novels, they're all selected by example. You don't get a say. So sometimes it's like I don't understand why I have to study this, or you don't like it, but you still have to know about it. I think that aspect is annoying because you can't relate to it, so obviously you won't do well on the test. Once you get one story or a poem that you relate to, you can go; but if there's no connection, it's really hard. I think sometimes it's great because it opens your eyes, but if there's nothing there, it's a struggle.

This same student, who was in Professor A's class also stated,

I felt like they [the texts in Professor A's class] were thoughtfully selected. Before it was 'this is a book you're going to read. You don't have a choice,' whereas with this [class,] it's like the professor was enthusiastic about it [the texts] because it was so relevant. I think with that, it rubs off on you, and you do well.

Another student in Professor A's class stated, "Now I read on my own. I like to just sit down and read. I like articles a lot. If I'm at work and not doing anything, I just sit down, I go on Yahoo and I read there. I have my readers."

Moreover, in Soria, Fransen & Nackerud's (2017) study, students reported that the resources at the library (i.e. collection loans, e-books, and interlibrary loans, and web-based services such as database, journal, and library website logins), and library courses significantly contributed to their positive academic outcomes because they increased their

academic engagement, academic skills, and grade point averages. Additionally, in Bergey, Deacon, & Parrila's (2017) study, it was revealed that students with a history of reading difficulties earn lower GPA and complete fewer credits as compared to students with no history of reading difficulty. They also reported lower scores across multiple metacognitive reading and study strategy scales, proving that the type of text (ethnic culturally-relevant or non-ethnic culturally-relevant) does not necessarily contribute to academic success of students. These findings relate to the sentiments of two students in this study who reported that the readings of ethnic culturally-relevant texts and/or non-ethnic culturally-relevant texts did not necessarily increase their academic success, proving that other factors are related to academic success, not just the text. In response to the interview question, "Did any of them have an effect on your academic achievement in your other classes?" one student in Professor B's class response, "No, I wouldn't say so," while another student in the same class responded,

Well I'm more of a hard worker. I don't need anything to inspire me to do hard work. Ever since junior year, I've been a hard worker. If I say I'm going to do something, I'm going to do it. The texts, they inspired me, but I'm just a hard worker as it is. It didn't really affect me in that aspect.

However, she did state that some of the readings in Professor B's class applied to her child development classes, and she used them in her essays for that class.

The fact that the students in this study reported that they did not believe that they had a significantly higher sense of belonging in an academic setting like Central College as a result of reading ethnic culturally-relevant texts, as compared to non-ethnic cultural texts, is further supported by findings in other studies as well. For example, Meeuwisse, Severiens, & Born's (2010) study showed that students of color have a strong sense of belonging in an educational

setting where they have a positive relationship with their teacher and fellow classmates. In the case of these students, the sense of belonging did further academic progress. Similar to the students in Meeuwisse, Severiens, & Born's (2010) study, the students in this study also reported a positive relationship with their teacher and peers. About their teachers they stated, "I really liked the class, and I enjoyed it. The professor is really engaged in the class, and knows how to tie [sic] ideas with the class." Another student expressed, "I liked the teacher; she was really good and understanding with everyone."

Descriptive data analysis. Descriptive data analysis allowed for an opportunity to further understand the impact ethnic culturally-relevant texts have on students in comparison to non-ethnic texts, and to gauge the students' overall educational experiences at Central College. For example, when the great majority of students in Professor A's class (60%) responded that they always feel like they belong at Central College, and 20% responded that they often feel like they belong at Central College goes to show that reading texts does not necessarily impact students' sense of belonging. Moreover, in Professor B's class, 25% stated that they always feel like they belong at Central College and 25% stated that they sometimes feel like they belong, while 33% responded that they often feel like they belong at Central College. This high sense of belonging may partially be due to the fact that Central College is a Hispanic serving institute, and highly attended by Latino students. Furthermore, the college is known for their efforts in being the leading college in equity and excellence. Thus, all student services programs including tutoring, and many of the new grant initiatives focus on reaching out to underserved students, communicating to students that Central College is proud to serve their educational needs. These responses were consistent with the students' answers during the interviews. Not one student responded that they did not feel a sense of belonging at

Central College. Some of their sentiments included, “Yes. I never felt like I didn’t [belong at Central College.] I really like this school...When [students] go into the classroom,...everyone is different. I really like that because it gives different points of view. Most of [the students] didn’t grow up here, like me, so we bring different ideas [into the classroom].”

Descriptive data analysis also allowed for an opportunity to understand the students’ overall reading experiences and backgrounds. For example, when asked how often students read for pleasure (non-school related/reading just for fun), in Professor A’s class, 44% stated that they sometimes read for pleasure and 24% stated that they rarely read for pleasure. These statistics were fairly consistent with the responses given by students in Professor B’s class: 41% stated that they rarely read for pleasure and 33% stated that they sometimes read for pleasure. These statistics show that the majority of students did not read for pleasure, as was the case for the students in Huang, Capps, Blacklock & Garza’s (2014) study who found that the reason why there has been a decrease in students reading for pleasure is due to having to work and high hours of engagement on social media. Many of their responses during the interviews explained various reasons as to why these students did not read for pleasure. When asked to describe their overall experiences with reading or reading for pleasure (non-school related), students stated, “Honestly, I never did,” or “I guess reading was just reading. It’s not that I didn’t enjoy it, but there were just other things to do. So I didn’t really read as much until I got older...” One student stated, “When I was in high school and we had to read Shakespeare, I’d be open to it. But it’s not like I had a passion for it.” Another student explained,

I have a twin brother and an older sister, and they got into a reading competition over Harry Potter. So for three or four months it was nothing but

Harry Potter. I lost interest because they only wanted to have these huge thick books to read about stuff that I didn't care about. So I just dropped off from there, and got a little more into sports. I wouldn't say I stopped reading, but I'd say after having to read a few specific texts for school, like *Of Mice and Men* in high school, there wasn't really interest for me in it [reading] because the subject matter was boring or it wasn't dramatic enough.

While the majority of students were not particularly swayed by ethnic culturally relevant texts—responses about whether ethnic culturally relevant texts were influential were below 50% of the data analysis—reading such texts was still very important to them. This finding came from their answers during the interviews in which they expressed such sentiments as, “One of my favorite [books] was *Enrique's Journey*” [an ethnic culturally-relevant text.] Another student expressed, “I really like *Enrique's Journey* because it focused around Enrique and his mother, who cared for him and wanted the best for him, and Enrique not about to take what came his way in Mexico [and Honduras,] and having to go through that process of reaching out to his mom and meeting his mom.” In Professor B's class, where students read “Learning to Read” by Malcolm X, an ethnic culturally relevant text, one student expressed, “I think Malcolm X, the one that I picked, out of any of them [readings,] had an impact... because it's literally an excerpt of him, not begging, but pleading with anyone who isn't already self-education to teach yourself to be able to learn...I like how it constantly went back to how important reading was and learning was because if he had never felt the urge to even try, he wouldn't have been a civil rights leader at all.”

However, when it came to describing the type of text that students found most relevant to their lives, the majority of students in both Professor A and Professor B's class selected the non-ethnic cultural texts such as *Outliers*, “The College Dropout Boom,” and “Brainology.” For example, in Professor A's class, 52% responded that *Outliers: The Story of Success* (non-

ethnic cultural text) was the most relevant, while 36% responded *Enrique's Journey* (culturally relevant text). These findings were consistent with results for the question, "Of the three texts, which did you relate to the most?" For this question, 44% chose *Outliers: The Story of Success*, 32% chose *Enrique's Journey*. Similarly, in Professor B's class, 58% of the students stated that they found the non-cultural text, "The College Dropout Boom" (non-ethnic cultural text), to be the most relevant, while 16% found that "Walking Across the Stage" (culturally relevant) to be the most relevant. Equally, another 16% found that "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text) to be the most relevant and only 8% found that "Learning to Read" (culturally relevant) to be most relevant. These findings were consistent with results for the question, "Of the four texts, which did you relate to the most?" For this question, 66.7%⁷ chose "The College Dropout Boom" (non-ethnic cultural text) while 16.7% related to "Walking Across the Stage" (culturally relevant) and another 16.7% related to "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text).

The students' answers in the interviews further explain the reason for relating to the non-ethnic cultural texts more. One student expressed:

I can relate to "Brainology" because I've always been that type of person that is like, 'oh, I'm not good in math,' so maybe it is just because I'm not good at it, I'm not naturally good at it when other people are on it, I can't do that. So I will be taking math in the summer so reading "Brainology" made me realize that you need to really try to actually change your mindset. Because if you don't, then you are not going to learn from your mistakes, and instead of trying, you're just going to flunk it. So you don't want to do that, so that's made me change a little bit about math. [With *Outliers*,] there is this 10,000 rule thing in there. It is like a trip to be like, 'wow, 10,000 [hours.] That's what you really have to put in to be successful.' I wrote about this to Professor A. I was like, 'I'm not really sure if that really is the case, but I mean, I'm going to

⁷ SPSS calculations indicated an exact percentage without rounding off to the nearest tenth. Thus, the .7 is written to reflect the SPSS's exact calculation.

probably have to try it out someday.’ Ten thousand [hours] to be successful is a lot of hours. So I don’t know. But that’s just made me kind of want to try it out, but we’ll see. I really like it.

Students in Professor B’s class also had similar responses that showed the reasons why they related to the non-ethnic cultural texts. One student expressed:

‘The College Dropout’ gave me the insight, because I’ve dealt with it, too. It was kind of a more in depth look at that situation as a whole. But I was torn on that one because in certain situations it seems more like the student is the reason why they’re dropping out. Like the pressures they’re putting on themselves, or the unfortunate situation people can be in to where school isn’t able to be a priority. I don’t think it really changed my perspective on taking school seriously. I think the biggest thing that changed it is paying for the classes instead of having my parents pay. I actually have something to lose, money, if I’m spacing out or falling asleep. But I wouldn’t say the texts directly changed my perspective on anything, but if I had to pick one [to relate to] it would have been ‘The College Dropout’ because I’ve been through looking at wanting to do a little break and work, and then trying to mix work and school and it not working. And life happens. Then you have to either bounce back or deal with where you are.

For the students in the study, the non-ethnic cultural texts proved to open them to situations and circumstances that they are experiencing in their own lives. Thus, their responses about the types of texts they related to the most reflected the results of Schutte & Malouff’s (2004) study that proved that students preferred to read books with content that related to their personalities of “openness” and “conscientiousness.”

Still, even though the majority of students in both classes found the non-ethnic cultural texts most relevant to their lives, the majority stated that they still preferred to read all types of books in their courses. Thirty two percent in Professor A’s class stated they prefer to read all three, 28% stated they had no preference, 24% stated they prefer to read culturally relevant texts, and 16% stated that they do not prefer to read culturally relevant texts. Similarly, in

Professor B's class, 33% of the students stated that they preferred to read both culturally relevant and non-ethnic cultural text; another 33% stated that they had no preference; 25% stated that they preferred to read culturally relevant texts; and 8% responded that they do not prefer to read culturally relevant texts. The preferences for reading both types of texts were explained in their answers during their interviews. One student in Professor A's class explained that while *Enrique's Journey* inspired her to prove that as a Latina, she is "capable of much more than immigrating," *Outliers* also appealed to her because "...everything about it was about success." Reading it made her feel as if "... if they [characters in the book] can do it [achieve success,] that means I can do it, too. It's possible. I think it's possible." Another student in Professor A's class described reading ethnic-cultural texts such as *Enrique's Journey* and non-ethnic cultural texts such as *Outliers* as:

Very eye-opening, very humbling. If you're a white person, it's naïve to say immigrants – it really kind of exposes the problem and makes you much more humble. You don't realize how rough it is for them. And *Outliers* really makes you think about things from a bigger perspective. Always internalizing one person's actions. It's like a whole you can't internalize. Yes, I realize that it's culture, not actions, that you're internalizing. It was really interesting to read, actually. I enjoyed it all.

Similarly, another student expressed:

I really like *Enrique's Journey* because...the story alone just kind of influenced me, in a way, to work harder.... *Outliers* spoke to me in a different way. It showed me that maybe we're the generation of students being impacted by politics, religion and everything else. And maybe it's time for us, as students, to take our vast knowledge of information of history and introduce it to the new generation of students and the new generation of adults. And I think *Outliers* focuses on what could've happened, what can happen, and how you can do it. So I think *Outliers* has been a really good experience for me to increase not only my knowledge in of school, but outside of school.

Another student expressed:

I enjoyed them, actually, because they were completely different to what I've ever read. With Enrique's Journey, it was topics that you kind of hear about, but you don't get to know the detail and I think that was an eye opener. When you know the reasons why people do something, you can understand other people and their cultures a lot more. Then with Outliers, I never read a book that wasn't just a narrative or a story. I thought the structure was really interesting because it was so different, but also, I think it can relate to everybody. To know that the outcome is down to so many different factors, and that you can kind of control those factors. Some are out of your hands, but the ones you can control you can change and you can work hard. I think that one really appeals to everyone today. That one was just an eye opener.

Students in Professor B's class shared similar sentiments and expressed appreciation for both types of texts. A student in Professor B's class mentioned that while the ethnic cultural text, Malcolm X's "Learning To Read," impacted him, and allowed him to reflect on himself, "The College Dropout," the non-ethnic cultural text, related to his own personal experiences of dropping out of school in the past. Another student in the same class had a similar connection to these two texts. She said that Malcolm X's "Learning To Read" reminded her to take advantage of her ability to read, while "The College Dropout" reminded her to use her skills and avoid pretending that dropping out a college is not a reality. These students' perspectives reflect those of the students in Jensen & Llosa's (2007) study who expressed value in reading ethnic culturally-relevant texts.

Limitations of study

One limitation of the study is that all student participants did not read the same combinations of ethnic culturally-relevant and non-ethnic cultural relevant texts. The only text that students in both classes read was "Brainology." Additionally, students' perceptions of the texts could have been influenced not necessarily by the type of text (i.e. ethnic culturally-

relevant and non-ethnic cultural relevant), but the teachers' and peers' approach to the texts. For example, many students stated that they were inspired by their teacher's engagement in the course: "I really liked the class, and I enjoyed it. The professor is really engaged in the class, and knows how to tie ideas with the class" and "I liked the teacher; she was really good and understanding with everyone." Additionally, some students appreciated the teacher's mindfulness about selecting the texts. When asked if there was anything else the student wanted to add to the interview about their experience in reading the texts in the class, one student said:

I just enjoyed them [the texts] because they were so different, but also, I felt like they were thoughtfully selected. Before it was 'this is a book you're going to read. You don't have a choice,' whereas with this [class,] it's like the professor was enthusiastic about it because it was so relevant. I think with that, it rubs off on you, and you do well.

Other students mentioned that they found the texts to be a great tool for engagement during class discussions. Thus, their peers' interpretations and approaches to the text may have influenced their answers for the survey and interview questions. For instance, in response to an interview question "Did hearing other students' perspectives about the readings provide any new insight for you?" one student responded:

Yes. There is one student; he sat all the way in the front, and he was older, so I do think knowledge comes with age. So he had different ideas. I would say, 'wow, I didn't even think of that.' I definitely like the way we can talk about the book as well. It's not just reading and doing a quiz and writing. The fact that we interact about it makes it easier to be engaged.

Lastly, another factor that could have influenced the students' responses is the writing style of the authors as one student did mention that he aspires to be a successful writer.

Implications for practice

It is clear that students find value in reading. Burak (2004) found that students believe reading engages their imaginations and is not a waste of their time. They read for pleasure, and believe that reading increases their knowledge, improves their vocabulary, and engages the imagination. In fact, one student in the study stated that for her, reading is her “sense of peace.” Thus, it is important that faculty be mindful about the texts they assign their students to read in accelerated basic skills courses. For faculty teaching basic skills accelerated composition courses, or for those who organize professional development for such courses, it is important to consider students’ reading habits (Gallik, 2017; Priajana, 2017) and perspectives (Schnee, 2017). Thus, a combination of ethnic culturally-relevant and non-ethnic culturally-relevant texts should be considered for text selection. It is always purposeful when faculty can select texts that complement one another. For example, Dweck’s “Brainology” introduces the notions of growth versus fixed mindsets to students, while *Enrique’s Journey* exemplifies characters who have both a growth and fixed mindset. They should select texts that are relevant to the lives of their students. This can be done by looking at the campus’ demographics to see which ethnic cultures represent the students’ backgrounds. Additionally, texts should be about time periods that students find familiar. For example, one student mentioned in her interview:

In my last year of high school we had to read Shakespeare. That was boring, honestly. If I had to compare my high school English class to this one I took this semester, I like this one way more because Shakespeare... the fact that it’s old English makes it hard to understand. You really can’t connect in any way.

Another student said, “In high school there were these books that sometimes I wouldn’t even understand...I had to read *Oedipus* my sophomore year, and write an essay about it.” This is not to say that there is not any value to reading Shakespeare, *Oedipus*, or texts from other time periods. If faculty should choose to assign texts that our unfamiliar to the students’ time frame, they should consider making the connections and relevancy a part of the reading discussions and writing activities. One example in which this is done is seen in the numerous discussions around the connections of Shakespeare’s writings and Hip-hop. For example, Music of Black Origin (MOBO) award-winning hip hop artist 'Akala' discusses numerous ways in which Shakespeare’s writings connects to Wu-Tang Clan, Rage Against The Machine, Jay-Z, and Nas (Hip-Hop & Shakespeare? Akala at TEDxAldeburgh, 2011). Lastly, besides the texts that the students in this study read, the table below is a recommended list of both ethnic culturally-relevant and non-ethnic cultural relevant texts.

Table 13: Recommended Ethnic Culturally-Relevant and Non-Ethnic Cultural Relevant Texts

Ethnic culturally-relevant texts	Non-ethnic culturally-relevant texts
<p><i>Always Running</i> by Luis Rodriguez</p> <p><i>I Love Yous Are For White People</i> by Lac Su</p> <p><i>The Color of Water</i> by James McBride</p> <p><i>Hillbilly Elegy</i> by J.D. Vance</p> <p><i>The Distance Between Us</i> by Reyna Grande</p> <p><i>And Still I Rise</i> by Maya Angelou</p>	<p><i>Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance</i> by Angela Duckworth</p> <p><i>SuperBetter: The Power of Living Gamefully</i> by Jane McGonigal</p> <p><i>The Happiness Project (Revised Edition): Or, Why I Spent a Year Trying to Sing in the Morning, Clean My Closets, Fight Right, Read Aristotle, and Generally Have More Fun</i> by Gretchen Rubin</p> <p><i>Hyperbole and a Half: Unfortunate Situations, Flawed Coping Mechanisms, Mayhem, and Other Things That Happened</i> by Allie Brosh</p>

Implications for theory

The Influence of Critical Race Theory. In the article “Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education,” Ladson-Billing and Tate IV (1995) consider certain practices of “multicultural education” in schools, such as eating ethnic or cultural foods, singing songs or dancing, reading folktales, as trivial and less than scholarly pursuits of cultural knowledge and quests for social justice. In higher education, they state that the concerns of multicultural education have been over curriculum inclusion. Thus, they argue for the need for a critical race theoretical perspective to address the problems of racism in educational institutions. This process will require scholars to theorize race, and move away from superficial practices of multicultural education. Thus, as critical race theory scholars they call for the alignment of scholarship and activism. This means that faculty who teach basic skills accelerated

composition courses have an opportunity to use a combination of ethnic culturally-relevant texts and non-ethnic culturally-relevant texts to inspire students to take the insights they gain from reading these texts to make a positive shift in their mindsets in order to make positive contributions to the communities they reside in. Students can be encouraged to share their reading experiences with public servants and individuals who have the power to make long-lasting decisions that impact those who are disadvantaged. For example, after reading a series of ethnic culturally relevant texts (*The Color of Water* by James McBride; *I Love You Are For The White People* by Lac Su; and *Always Running* by Luis Rodriguez), a student in my own basic skills accelerated course wrote a letter to Secretary of Education, Betsy

DeVos in which she expressed:

After reading my letter and essay, I would appreciate if you find a pathway to [protect] kids from racism, and prepare policies and educational ways to make it easy for children...to get familiar with all human races. It would be so helpful, and would make our society's future free of any racism and its bad effects on children.

The student felt empowered and heard when she received an email response back that said:

Your email urges the Department to help protect children from racial discrimination and to develop policies encouraging children to understand, accept, and respect people of all racial backgrounds. We appreciate your taking the time to share your thoughtful comments, including your essay, with the Department. As with all comments from the public, we will take these under advisement as we move forward and determine what actions the Department may take regarding the issues you discussed.

Thus, encouraging students to apply their readings into their own lives, and showing them that the texts can be a catalyst for positive changes in their communities is a way to fulfill the alignment of scholarship and activism that critical race theory calls for.

Culturally Relevant Teaching/Pedagogy Theory. Ladson-Billings (1995) defines culturally relevant teaching pedagogy as an educational attempt to collectively empower students. There are three criteria that enhance this definition: 1) students experiencing academic success; 2) students developing and maintaining cultural competence; and 3) students developing an understanding of ways to challenge the status quo of social events that disenfranchise and marginalize a group of people. When reading ethnic culturally-relevant texts, students do experience academic success because as many of the students in the study revealed, ethnic culturally-relevant texts helps struggling readers engage more, but also, they develop cultural competence as well. For example, one of the students in the study explained that after reading *Enrique's Journey*, one of the ethnic culturally-relevant texts, that she "...really had an appreciation for how much dedication they [immigrants] have to their family. After reading that [*Enrique's Journey*, I realized that] they have so much dedication to family, and it's incredible. It helped me to really appreciate the [immigrant] workers for who they are and what they do."

Recommendations for future research

While much has been studied about reading relevancy, especially cultural and ethnic connections, and its impact on students in K-12, not much has been explored about the impact of CRT/P and CRRP on community college students, especially those enrolled in accelerated basic skills courses. Because culturally relevant curriculum, especially reading, has proven to be a factor in student success in the K-12 education systems, and there is a large database of literature that informs students' perceptions on CRRP, it is important to explore the possibility of such success, and students' perceptions in accelerated basic skills English classes at the community college-level. Further research on the impact of CRRP on marginalized students at

the community college-level should address the metacognitive and social impacts that prevent such student population from succeeding, and how engagement with ethnic literature fits in to make an impact. This proposed research should include both a qualitative and quantitative approach. Research could explore the students' social, cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds, as well as their perceptions about their reading abilities in relation to the texts they are reading, and their academic and personal identities.

For researchers who want to continue investigating about the ways in which students perform in accelerated basic skills composition courses, it is recommended that they measure how the texts students are exposed to enhance their non-cognitive abilities and skills such as their attitudes, mindsets, behaviors, motivation, perseverance, and emotional intelligence. They can do so by partnering with faculty of these classes, who as subject-matter/discipline experts select the texts students read. The results of their studies can inform faculty the texts that have the most positive impact on students' overall success as they embark on their futures to become leaders. Specifically, more action research by practitioners can help them understand the ways in which their students grow in their reading and writing skills. It is an opportunity to explore with new texts, and to see how students' reactions, responses, and perspectives about the things they learn can further inform the work of practitioners.

Conclusion

This study helped fill a gap in the literature regarding the reading experiences of students in accelerated basic skills composition courses. With the passing of Assembly Bill 705, California Community Colleges are moving away from standardized placement of students in traditional pathways of basic skills composition classes to more equitable placement practices to which they can experience education in a more fair and efficient

manner. Thus, there will be more of a demand for faculty and practitioners who are needed to teach such courses because less students will need basic skills courses and more transfer level ones. For them to realize and understand their students' reading experiences, reading habits and preferences will help them give an inspiring and impactful educational experience to their students.

Appendix A: The survey questions for each class

Research Questions	Survey Questions For Professor A's Students	Survey Questions For Professor B's Students	Interview Questions For Students in Both Classes
How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses?	Q 16, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 33, 37, 38, 46, 50, 60, 62, 64	Q 16, 19, 20, 21, 26, 27, 33, 37, 38, 46, 50, 57, 63, 64, 73, 75, 77	Q 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11
How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings?	Q 9, 17, 23, 28, 31, 34, 36, 39, 43, 47, 51, 54, 59, 64	Q 9, 13, 17, 23, 28, 31, 34, 36, 39, 43, 47, 51, 55, 58, 60, 65, 67, 72, 74, 77	Q 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses?	Q 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 48, 49, 52, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 64	Q 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 22, 25, 29, 30, 32, 35, 40, 42, 44, 45, 48, 49, 52, 54, 56, 59, 62, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 77	Q 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11

Survey Questions For Students in Professor A's Class

Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario; *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell; and "Brainology" by Carol Dweck

- 1) Please indicate your age range:
 - a. 21 and under
 - b. 22-35
 - c. 36-49
 - d. 50 and over

- 2) Please indicate your gender:
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other

- 3) Please indicate your ethnicity:
 - a. African American
 - b. Latino/Hispanic
 - c. Native American
 - d. Asian American/Pacific Islander/Filipino
 - e. Middle Eastern
 - f. White
 - g. Other
 - h. Prefer not to answer

- 4) Please indicate your last English class:
 - a. High school English
 - b. GED English
 - c. ESOL
 - d. None
 - e. Other

- 5) When was your last English class:
 - a. Less than a year ago
 - b. 1 year ago
 - c. 2-3 years ago
 - d. 4-6 years ago
 - e. More than 7 years ago
 - f. None

- g. Other
- 6) Please indicate how you got placed into English 25 A:
- a. College placement test score
 - b. Completed ESOL
 - c. Self-selected this course
 - d. Counselor/faculty recommendation
 - e. Peer recommendation
 - f. Other
- 7) Please indicate your placement level score range for reading (ONLY IF YOU TOOK THE COLLEGE PLACEMENT TEST):
- a. R1
 - b. R2
 - c. R3
 - d. R4
 - e. R5
 - f. I don't know
- 8) Have you taken, or are you currently enrolled in, any other basic skills courses (such as mathematics?)
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 9) How would you describe your sense of belonging (you feel welcomed here and you feel this is a place for you) in an academic setting like Mesa College?
- a. I never feel like I belong
 - b. I rarely feel like I belong
 - c. I sometimes feel like I belong
 - d. I often feel like I belong
 - e. I always feel like I belong
- 10) How often do you read for pleasure (non-school related/reading just for fun)?
- a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Often
 - e. Very often
- 11) Have you read anything written by, or about, character/s of color within the last year?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

12) In general, how satisfied are you with reading culturally relevant texts such as *Enrique's Journey*?

- a. Not at all satisfied
- b. Slightly satisfied
- c. Moderately satisfied
- d. Very satisfied

13) In general, how much did you relate to the characters in *Enrique's Journey*?

- a. Not at all a reflection of me
- b. Slightly a reflection of me
- c. Moderately a reflection of me
- d. Completely (A very good) a reflection of me

14) How would you rate the quality *Enrique's Journey* (e.g. writing style/plot/themes)?

- a. Very poor
- b. Poor
- c. Fair
- d. Good
- e. Excellent

15) What is the probability of you choosing to read a text written about a character of color?

- a. Not at all probable
- b. Slightly probable
- c. Moderately probable
- d. Very probable

16) What effect, if any, has reading *Enrique's Journey* have had on your overall academic performances?

- a. Very negative effect
- b. Negative effect
- c. No effect
- d. Positive effect
- e. Very positive effect

- 17) What effect, if any, did reading *Enrique's Journey* have on your sense of belonging in an academic setting such as Mesa College?
- It had no effect at all
 - It slightly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
 - It moderately increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
 - It greatly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- 18) What effect, if any, did reading *Enrique's Journey* have on your motivation to read more often?
- Very negative effect
 - Negative effect
 - No effect
 - Positive effect
 - Very positive effect
- 19) How important is it for you that your future English teachers assign at least one text written by an author of color?
- Not at all important
 - Slightly important
 - Moderately important
 - Very important
- 20) How important is it for you that your future English teachers assign at least one text written about a character of color?
- Not at all important
 - Slightly important
 - Moderately important
 - Very important
- 21) How would you respond to this statement: "All basic skills English courses should at least include one culturally relevant text"?
- Completely disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Completely agree

- 22) Have you ever read texts written by authors of color previous to English 25 A?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
- 23) How often did you relate to Enrique's circumstances when you read *Enrique's Journey*?
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Almost always
- 24) Prior to reading *Enrique's Journey*, how aware were you about the struggles of immigrants?
- Very aware
 - Moderately aware
 - Slightly aware
 - Not at all aware
- 25) Did reading *Enrique's Journey* inspire you to read more memoirs written by authors of color?
- Yes
 - No
- 26) Did reading *Enrique's Journey* inspire you to work hard in English 25 A?
- Yes
 - No
- 27) Did reading *Enrique's Journey* inspire you to work hard in all of your other college classes?
- Yes
 - No
- 28) Did reading *Enrique's Journey* make you feel that you belong at Mesa College?
- Yes
 - No
- 29) How likely are you to recommend *Enrique's Journey* to someone you know?
- Very likely
 - Moderately likely

- c. Slightly likely
- d. Not at all likely

30) In general, how satisfied are you with reading a non-fiction such as *Outliers: The Story of Success*?

- a. Not at all satisfied
- b. Slightly satisfied
- c. Moderately satisfied
- d. Completely satisfied

31) In general, how much did you find the book *Outliers: The Story of Success* relevant to your life?

- a. Not at all a reflection of me
- b. Slightly a reflection of me
- c. Moderately a reflection of me
- d. Completely a reflection of me

32) How would you rate the quality *Outliers: The Story of Success* (e.g. writing style/themes/etc.)?

- a. Very poor
- b. Poor
- c. Fair
- d. Good
- e. Excellent

33) What is the probability of you choosing to read a non-fiction book like *Outliers: The Story of Success*?

- a. Not at all probable
- b. Slightly probable
- c. Moderately probable
- d. Very probable

34) What effect, if any, did *Outliers: The Story of Success* have had on your overall academic performances?

- a. Very negative effect
- b. Negative effect
- c. No effect
- d. Positive effect
- e. Very positive effect

- 35) What effect, if any, did reading *Outliers: The Story of Success* have on your sense of belonging in an academic setting such as Mesa College?
- It had no effect at all
 - It slightly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
 - It moderately increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
 - It greatly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- 36) What effect, if any, did reading *Outliers: The Story of Success* have on your motivation to read more often?
- Very negative effect
 - Negative effect
 - No effect
 - Positive effect
 - Very positive effect
- 37) What is the probability of you choosing to read a non-fiction book like *Outliers: The Story of Success*?
- Not at all probable
 - Slightly probable
 - Moderately probable
 - Very probable
- 38) What impact, if any, did *Outliers: The Story of Success* have had on your overall academic performances?
- Very negative effect
 - Negative effect
 - No effect
 - Positive effect
 - Very positive effect
- 39) What impact, if any, did reading *Outliers: The Story of Success* have on your sense of belonging in an academic setting such as Mesa College?
- It had no effect at all
 - It slightly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
 - It moderately increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
 - It greatly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- 40) What impact, if any, did reading *Outliers: The Story of Success* have on your motivation to read more often?

- a. Very negative effect
- b. Negative effect
- c. No effect
- d. Positive effect
- e. Very positive effect

41) Have you read anything written about outliers who have achieved success?

- a. Yes
- b. If so, what was the title? _____
- c. No
- d. I don't know

42) In general, how satisfied are you with reading a non-fiction article such as "Brainology"?

- a. Not at all satisfied
- b. Slightly satisfied
- c. Moderately satisfied
- d. Completely satisfied

43) In general, how much did you find "Brainology" relevant to your life?

- a. Not at all a reflection of me
- b. Slightly a reflection of me
- c. Moderately a reflection of me
- d. Completely a reflection of me

44) How would you rate the quality of "Brainology" (e.g. writing style/themes/etc.)?

- a. Very poor
- b. Poor
- c. Fair
- d. Good
- e. Excellent

45) What is the probability of you choosing to read a non-fiction article like "Brainology"?

- a. Not at all probable
- b. Slightly probable
- c. Moderately probable
- d. Very probable

- 46) What effect, if any, did “Brainology” have had on your overall academic performances?
- Very negative effect
 - Negative effect
 - No effect
 - Positive effect
 - Very positive effect
- 47) What effect, if any, did “Brainology” have on your sense of belonging in an academic setting such as Mesa College?
- It had no effect at all
 - It slightly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
 - It moderately increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
 - It greatly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- 48) What effect, if any, did reading “Brainology” have on your motivation to read more often?
- Very negative effect
 - Negative effect
 - No effect
 - Positive effect
 - Very positive effect
- 49) Of the three texts you’ve read so far in this course, which do you find most relevant to your life?
- Enrique’s Journey*
 - Outliers: The Story of Success*
 - “Brainology”
- 50) Do you prefer to read culturally relevant texts (such as *Enrique’s Journey*) over non-cultural texts such as *Outlier* and “Brainology”?
- I prefer to read all three
 - No preference
 - No (I do not prefer to read culturally relevant texts)
 - Yes (I prefer to read culturally relevant texts).
- 51) Of the three texts you’ve read which has inspired you the most?
- All three
 - Neither
 - Enrique’s Journey*
 - Outliers: The Story of Success*

e. “Brainology”

52) Of the three texts you’ve read, which was your favorite?

- a. *Enrique’s Journey*
- b. *Outliers: The Story of Success*
- c. “Brainology”
- d. None of the above
- e. All of the above

53) Of the three texts you read, which was your least favorite?

- a) *Enrique’s Journey*
- b) *Outliers: The Story of Success*
- c) “Brainology”
- d) None of the above
- e) All of the above

54) Of the three texts, which did you relate to the most?

- a. *Enrique’s Journey*
- b. *Outliers: The Story of Success*
- c. “Brainology”
- d. None of the above
- e. All of the above

55) Of the three texts, which do you think all college students should read?

- a. *Enrique’s Journey*
- b. *Outliers: The Story of Success*
- c. “Brainology”
- d. None of the above
- e. All of the above

56) How would you respond to this statement: “All basic skills English courses should at least include one culturally relevant text”?

- a. Completely disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Somewhat disagree
- d. Neither agree nor disagree
- e. Somewhat agree
- f. Agree

g. Completely agree

57) Have you ever read texts written by authors of color previous to English 25 A?

- a. Yes
- b. It's title was _____
- c. No
- d. I don't know

58) In the blank space below, please write anything else you'd like about your reading experience in English 25 A.

If you would like to participate in a 30-minute interview about your reading preferences and experiences in English 25 A, please write your name, last name, and email address here. You will receive a \$25 complimentary gift card to Mesa College Bookstore for participating in the interview.

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Cell phone number: _____

Survey Questions For Students in Professor B's Class

“Learning To Read” by Malcolm X; “The College Dropout Boom” by David Leonhardt;
“Brainology” by Carol Dweck; and “Walking Across the Stage” by Veronica Valdez

59) Please indicate your age range:

- a. 21 and under
- b. 22-35
- c. 36-49
- d. 50 and over

60) Please indicate your gender:

- d. Male
- e. Female
- f. Other

61) Please indicate your ethnicity:

- a. African American
- b. Latino/Hispanic
- c. Native American
- d. Asian American/Pacific Islander/Filipino
- e. Middle Eastern
- f. White
- g. Other
- h. Prefer not to answer

62) Please indicate your last English class:

- a. High school English
- b. GED English
- c. ESOL
- d. None
- e. Other

63) When was your last English class:

- a. Less than a year ago
- b. 1 year ago
- c. 2-3 years ago
- d. 4-6 years ago
- e. More than 7 years ago
- f. None

g. Other

64) Please indicate how you got placed into English 25 A:

- a. College placement test score
- b. Completed ESOL
- c. Self-selected this course
- d. Counselor/faculty recommendation
- e. Peer recommendation
- f. Other

65) Please indicate your placement level score range for reading (ONLY IF YOU TOOK THE COLLEGE PLACEMENT TEST):

- a. R1
- b. R2
- c. R3
- d. R4
- e. R5
- f. I don't know

66) Have you taken, or are you currently enrolled in, any other basic skills courses (such as mathematics?)

- a. Yes
- b. No

67) How would you describe your sense of belonging (you feel welcomed here and you feel this is a place for you) in an academic setting like Mesa College?

- a. I never feel like I belong
- b. I rarely feel like I belong
- c. I sometimes feel like I belong
- d. I often feel like I belong
- e. I always feel like I belong

68) How often do you read for pleasure (non-school related/reading just for fun)?

- a. Never
- b. Rarely
- c. Sometimes
- d. Often
- e. Very often

69) Have you read anything written by, or about, character of color within the last year?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

70) In general, how satisfied are you with reading culturally relevant texts such as "Learning to Read" by Malcolm X?

- a. Not at all satisfied
- b. Slightly satisfied
- c. Moderately satisfied
- d. Very satisfied

71) In general, how much did you relate to the characters in "Learning to Read"?

- a. Not at all a reflection of me
- b. Slightly a reflection of me
- c. Moderately a reflection of me
- d. A very good a reflection of me

72) How would you rate the quality of "Learning to Read" (e.g. writing style/plot/themes)?

- a. Very poor
- b. Poor
- c. Fair
- d. Good
- e. Excellent

73) What is the probability of you choosing to read a text written about a character of color?

- a. Not at all probable
- b. Slightly probable
- c. Moderately probable
- d. Very probable

74) What effect, if any, has reading "Learning to Read" have had on your overall academic performances?

- a. Very negative effect
- b. Negative effect
- c. No effect
- d. Positive effect
- e. Very positive effect

- 75) What effect, if any, did reading “Learning to Read” have on your sense of belonging in an academic setting such as Mesa College?
- It had no effect at all
 - It slightly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
 - It moderately increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
 - It greatly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- 76) What effect, if any, did reading “Learning to Read” have on your motivation to read more often?
- Very negative effect
 - Negative effect
 - No effect
 - Positive effect
 - Very positive effect
- 77) How important is it for you that your future English teachers assign at least one text written by an author of color?
- Not at all important
 - Slightly important
 - Moderately important
 - Very important
- 78) How important is it for you that your future English teachers assign at least one text written about a character of color?
- Not at all important
 - Slightly important
 - Moderately important
 - Very important
- 79) How would you respond to this statement: “All basic skills English courses should at least include one culturally relevant text”?
- Completely disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Agree
 - Completely agree

- 80) Have you ever read texts written by authors of color previous to English 25 A?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know
- 81) How often did you relate to Malcom X's circumstances when you read "Learning to Read"?
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Almost always
- 82) Prior to reading "Learning to Read," how aware were you about the struggles of people of color?
- Very aware
 - Moderately aware
 - Slightly aware
 - Not at all aware
- 83) Did reading "Learning to Read" inspire you to read more texts written by authors of color?
- Yes
 - No
- 84) Did reading "Learning to Read" inspire you to work hard in English 25 A?
- Yes
 - No
- 85) Did reading "Learning to Read" inspire you to work hard in all of your other college classes?
- Yes
 - No
- 86) Did reading "Learning to Read" make you feel that you belong at Mesa College?
- Yes
 - No
- 87) How likely are you to recommend "Learning to Read" to someone you know?
- Very likely
 - Moderately likely

- c. Slightly likely
- d. Not at all likely

88) In general, how satisfied are you with reading culturally relevant texts such as “Walking Across the Stage” by Veronica Valdez?

- a. Not at all satisfied
- b. Slightly satisfied
- c. Moderately satisfied
- d. Very satisfied

89) In general, how much did you relate to the characters in “Walking Across the Stage”?

- a. Not at all a reflection of me
- b. Slightly a reflection of me
- c. Moderately a reflection of me
- d. A very good a reflection of me

90) How would you rate the quality of “Walking Across the Stage” (e.g. writing style/plot/themes)?

- a. Very poor
- b. Poor
- c. Fair
- d. Good
- e. Excellent

91) What effect, if any, has reading “Walking Across the Stage” have had on your overall academic performances?

- a. Very negative effect
- b. Negative effect
- c. No effect
- d. Positive effect
- e. Very positive effect

92) What effect, if any, did reading “Walking Across the Stage” have on your sense of belonging in an academic setting such as Mesa College?

- a. It had no effect at all
- b. It slightly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- c. It moderately increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- d. It greatly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting

- 93) What effect, if any, did reading “Walking Across the Stage” have on your motivation to read more often?
- Very negative effect
 - Negative effect
 - No effect
 - Positive effect
 - Very positive effect
- 94) How often did you relate to Veronica Valdez’s circumstances when you read “Walking Across the Stage”?
- Never
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Almost always
- 95) Prior to reading “Walking Across the Stage,” how aware were you about the struggles of people of color?
- Very aware
 - Moderately aware
 - Slightly aware
 - Not at all aware
- 96) Did reading “Walking Across the Stage” inspire you to read more texts written by authors of color?
- Yes
 - No
- 97) Did reading “Walking Across the Stage” inspire you to work hard in English 25 A?
- Yes
 - No
- 98) Did reading “Walking Across the Stage” inspire you to work hard in all of your other college classes?
- Yes
 - No
- 99) Did reading “Walking Across the Stage” make you feel that you belong at Mesa College?
- Yes
 - No

- 100)How likely are you to recommend “Walking Across the Stage” to someone you know?
- Very likely
 - Moderately likely
 - Slightly likely
 - Not at all likely
- 101)In general, how satisfied are you with reading “The College Dropout Boom” by David Leonhardt?
- Not at all satisfied
 - Slightly satisfied
 - Moderately satisfied
 - Completely satisfied
- 102)In general, how much did you find “The College Dropout Boom” relevant to your life?
- Not at all a reflection of me
 - Slightly a reflection of me
 - Moderately a reflection of me
 - Completely a reflection of me
- 103)How would you rate the quality of “The College Dropout Boom” (e.g. writing style/themes/etc.)?
- Very poor
 - Poor
 - Fair
 - Good
 - Excellent
- 104)What is the probability of you choosing to read an article like “The College Dropout Boom”?
- Not at all probable
 - Slightly probable
 - Moderately probable
 - Very probable
- 105)What effect, if any, has “The College Dropout Boom have had on your overall academic performances?
- Very negative effect
 - Negative effect
 - No effect

- d. Positive effect
- e. Very positive effect

106) What effect, if any, did “The College Dropout Boom” have on your sense of belonging in an academic setting such as Mesa College?

- a. It had no effect at all
- b. It slightly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- c. It moderately increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- d. It greatly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting

107) What effect, if any, did “The College Dropout Boom” have on your motivation to read more often?

- a. Very negative effect
- b. Negative effect
- c. No effect
- d. Positive effect
- e. Very positive effect

108) What is the probability of you choosing to read an article similar to “The College Dropout Boom”?

- a. Not at all probable
- b. Slightly probable
- c. Moderately probable
- d. Very probable

109) What impact, if any, has “The College Dropout Boom” have had on your overall academic performances?

- a. Very negative effect
- b. Negative effect
- c. No effect
- d. Positive effect
- e. Very positive effect

110) What impact, if any, did reading “The College Dropout Boom” have had on your sense of belonging in an academic setting such as Mesa College?

- a. It had no effect at all
- b. It slightly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- c. It moderately increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- d. It greatly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting

- 111) What impact, if any, did reading “The College Dropout Boom” have on your motivation to read more often?
- Very negative effect
 - Negative effect
 - No effect
 - Positive effect
 - Very positive effect
- 112) Other than “The College Dropout Boom,” have you read anything written about college dropouts in the past?
- Yes
 - If so, what was the title? _____
 - No
 - I don’t know
- 113) In general, how satisfied are you with reading “Brainology”?
- Not at all satisfied
 - Slightly satisfied
 - Moderately satisfied
 - Completely satisfied
- 114) In general, how much did you find the article “Brainology” relevant to your life?
- Not at all a reflection of me
 - Slightly a reflection of me
 - Moderately a reflection of me
 - Completely a reflection of me
- 115) How would you rate the quality of the article “Brainology” (e.g. writing style/themes/etc.)?
- Very poor
 - Poor
 - Fair
 - Good
 - Excellent
- 116) What is the probability of you choosing to read an article like “Brainology”?
- Not at all probable
 - Slightly probable
 - Moderately probable

d. Very probable

117) What effect, if any, has “Brainology” have had on your overall academic performances?

- a. Very negative effect
- b. Negative effect
- c. No effect
- d. Positive effect
- e. Very positive effect

118) What effect, if any, did reading “Brainology” have on your sense of belonging in an academic setting such as Mesa College?

- a. It had no effect at all
- b. It slightly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- c. It moderately increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting
- d. It greatly increased my sense of belonging in an academic setting

119) What effect, if any, did reading “Brainology” have on your motivation to read more often?

- a. Very negative effect
- b. Negative effect
- c. No effect
- d. Positive effect
- e. Very positive effect

120) Of the three texts you’ve read so far in this course, which do you find most relevant to your life?

- a. “Learning To Read” by Malcolm X
- b. “The College Dropout Boom” by David Leonhardt
- c. “Brainology” by Carol Dweck

121) Do you prefer to read culturally relevant texts (such as “Learning To Read”) over non-cultural texts such as “The College Dropout Boom” and “Brainology”?

- a. I prefer to read all three
- b. No preference
- c. No (I do not prefer to read culturally relevant texts)
- d. Yes (I prefer to read culturally relevant texts).

122) Of the three texts you’ve read, which has inspired you the most?

- a. All three
- b. Neither

- c. "Learning To Read" by Malcolm X
- d. "The College Dropout Boom" by David Leonhardt
- e. "Brainology" by Carol Dweck

123)Of the three texts you've read, which was your favorite?

- a. "Learning To Read" by Malcolm X
- b. "The College Dropout Boom" by David Leonhardt
- c. "Brainology" by Carol Dweck
- d. None of the above
- e. All of the above

124)Of the three texts you read, which was your least favorite?

- a. "Learning To Read" by Malcolm X
- b. "The College Dropout Boom" by David Leonhardt
- c. "Brainology" by Carol Dweck
- d. None of the above
- e. All of the above

125)Of the three texts, which did you relate to the most?

- a. "Learning To Read" by Malcolm X
- b. "The College Dropout Boom" by David Leonhardt
- c. "Brainology" by Carol Dweck
- d. None of the above
- e. All of the above

126)Of the three texts, which do you think all college students should read?

- a. "Learning To Read" by Malcolm X
- b. "The College Dropout Boom" by David Leonhardt
- c. "Brainology" by Carol Dweck
- d. None of the above
- e. All of the above

127)How would you respond to this statement: "All basic skills English courses should at least include one culturally relevant text"?

- a. Completely disagree
- b. Disagree

- c. Somewhat disagree
- d. Neither agree nor disagree
- e. Somewhat agree
- f. Agree
- g. Completely agree

128) Have you ever read texts written by authors of color previous to English 25 A?

- a. Yes
- b. It's title was _____
- c. No
- d. I don't know

129) In the blank space below, please write anything else you'd like about your reading experience in English 25 A.

If you would like to participate in a 30-minute interview about your reading preferences and experiences in English 25 A, please write your name, last name, and email address here. You will receive a \$25 complimentary gift card to Mesa College Bookstore for participating in the interview.

Name: _____

Email address: _____

Cell phone number: _____

Appendix B: T-tests analysis

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CRSatisfied	37	1.919	.2504	.0412
NCSatisfied	37	1.946	.1574	.0259

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 1.5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CRSatisfied	10.177	36	.000	.4189	.335	.502
NCSatisfied	17.234	36	.000	.4459	.393	.498

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CRQuality	37	4.041	1.0026	.1648
NCQuality	37	4.162	.7076	.1163
CRAcad	37	3.878	.6391	.1051
NCAcad	37	4.027	.5886	.0968

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CRQuality	6.313	36	.000	1.0405	.706	1.375
NCQuality	9.990	36	.000	1.1622	.926	1.398
CRAcad	8.361	36	.000	.8784	.665	1.091
NCAcad	10.613	36	.000	1.0270	.831	1.223

T- tests comparing each question to neutral response (both classes combined; continued)

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CRSense	37	2.338	1.1059	.1818
NCSense	37	2.568	.9513	.1564

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 2.5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CRSense	-.892	36	.378	-.1622	-.531	.207
NCSense	.432	36	.668	.0676	-.250	.385

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CRMotive	37	1.784	.6619	.1088
NCMotive	37	1.932	.6888	.1132

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 2					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CRMotive	-1.987	36	.055	-.2162	-.437	.004
NCMotive	-.597	36	.554	-.0676	-.297	.162

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1) Describe your experience with reading in general (i.e. When did you first learn to read?

Who

did you read with?)

2) Think back to your childhood, pre-teen, teenage, and even now, adulthood. Describe your experience with reading in your classes at school.

3) Think back to your childhood, pre-teen, teenage, and even now, adulthood. Describe your experience with reading for pleasure (non-school related.)

4) Describe your overall experience with reading the books assigned in English 25A.

5) Of the three texts you've read in English 25A, have any had an effect on your level of motivation to work hard in your academic achievements in English 25A?

6) Have any affected your academic achievement in other courses at Central College? (If yes, how so? If not, why do you think that is?)

7) Of the three texts you've read in English 25A, have any had an effect on your sense of belonging at Central College? If yes, how so? If not, why do you think that is?

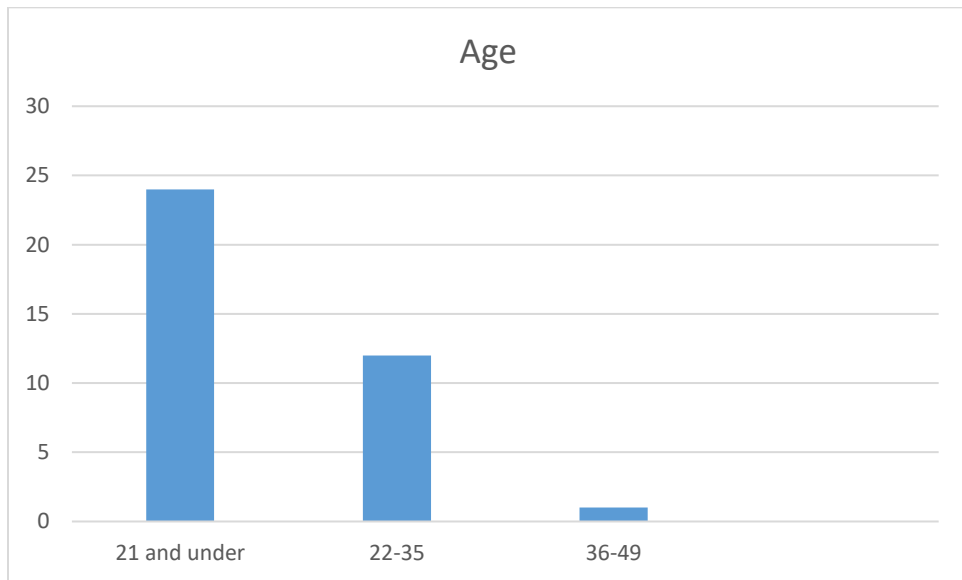
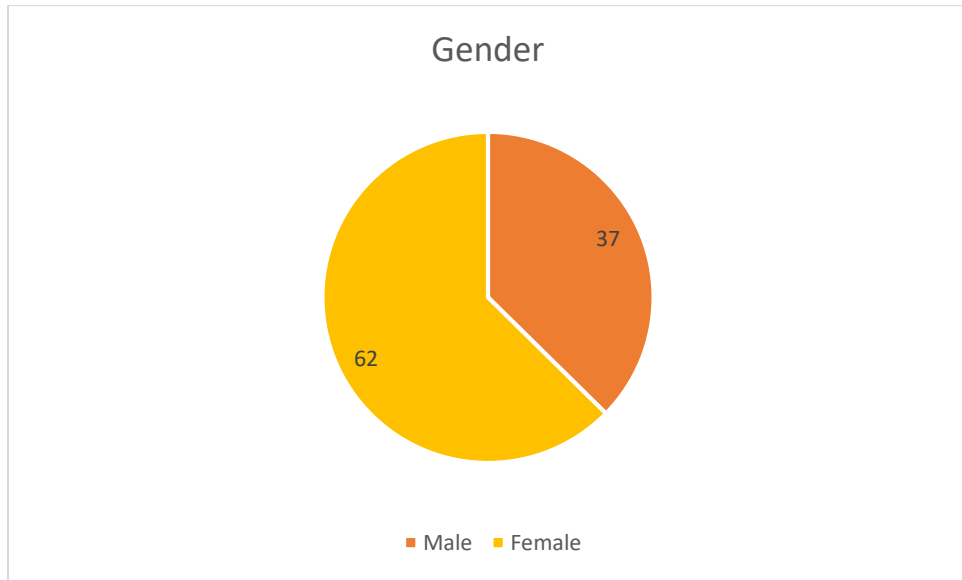
8) Of the three texts you've read in English 25A, have any had an effect on your sense of motivation to read more often than usual? If yes, how so? If not, why do you think that is?

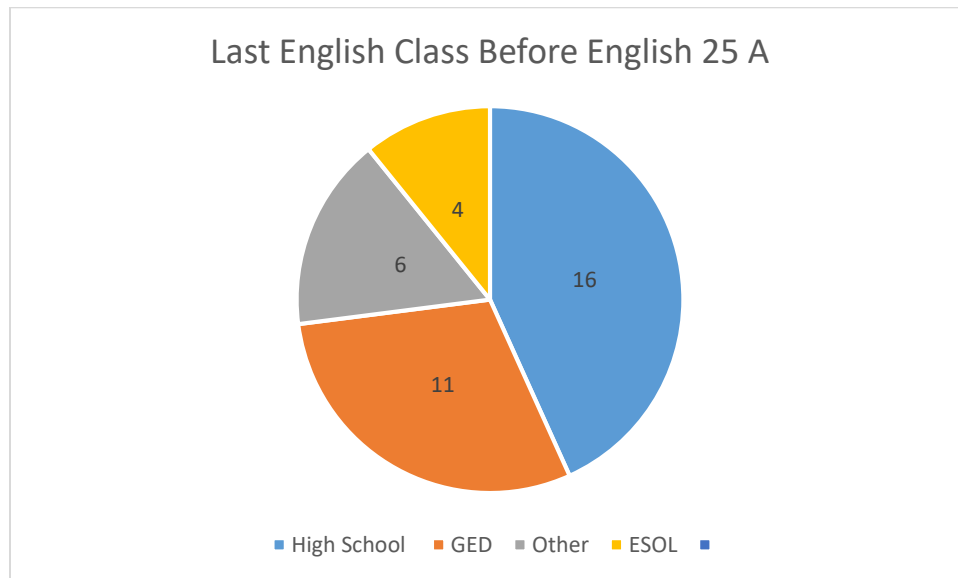
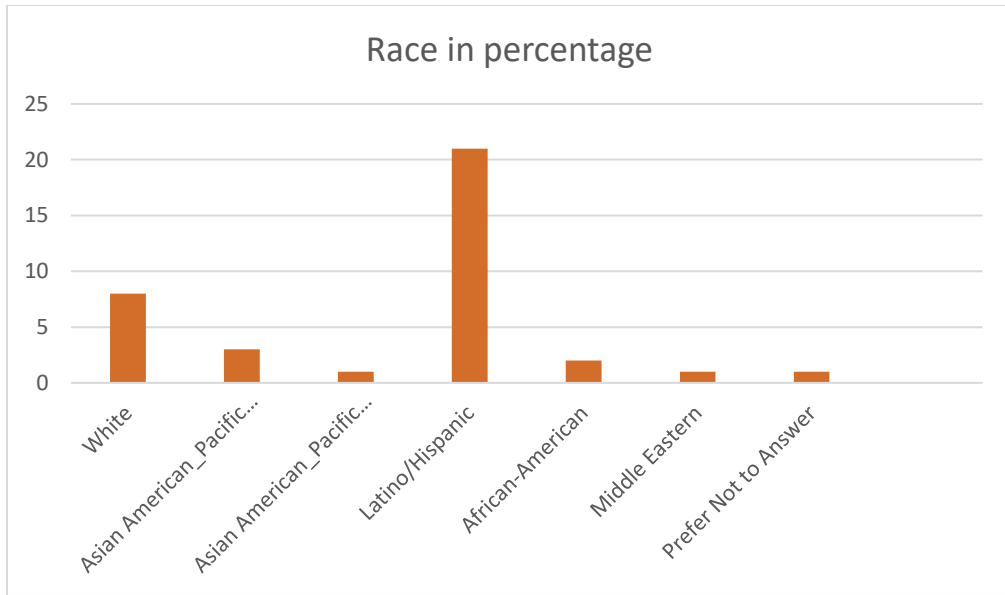
9) Did reading any of the texts provide insights or perspectives you hadn't considered?

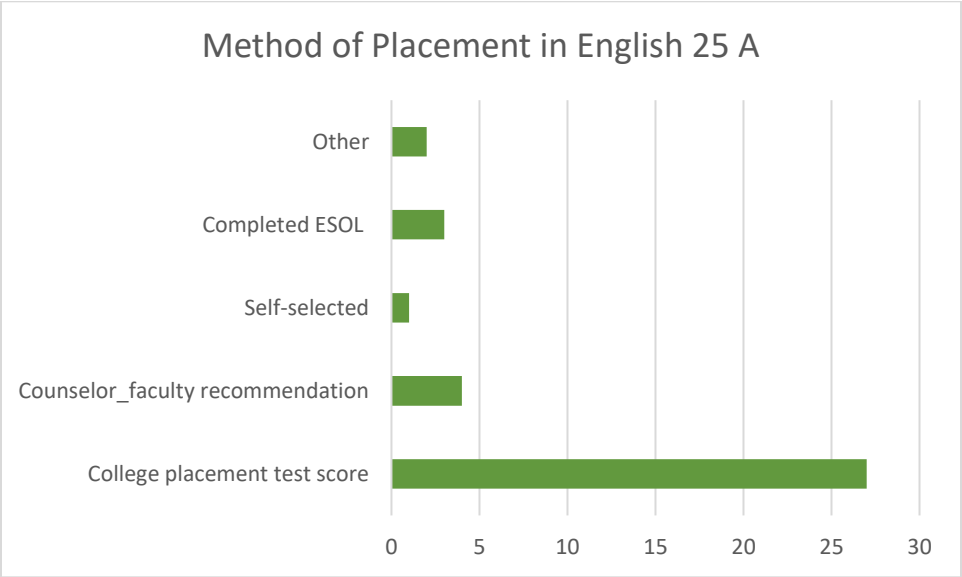
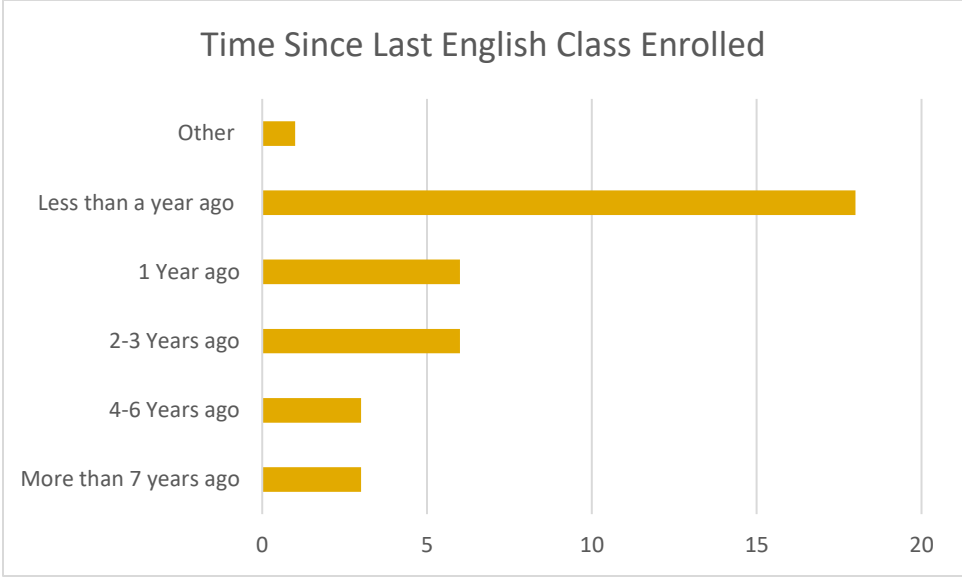
10) Did hearing other students' perspectives on the books provide any insights?

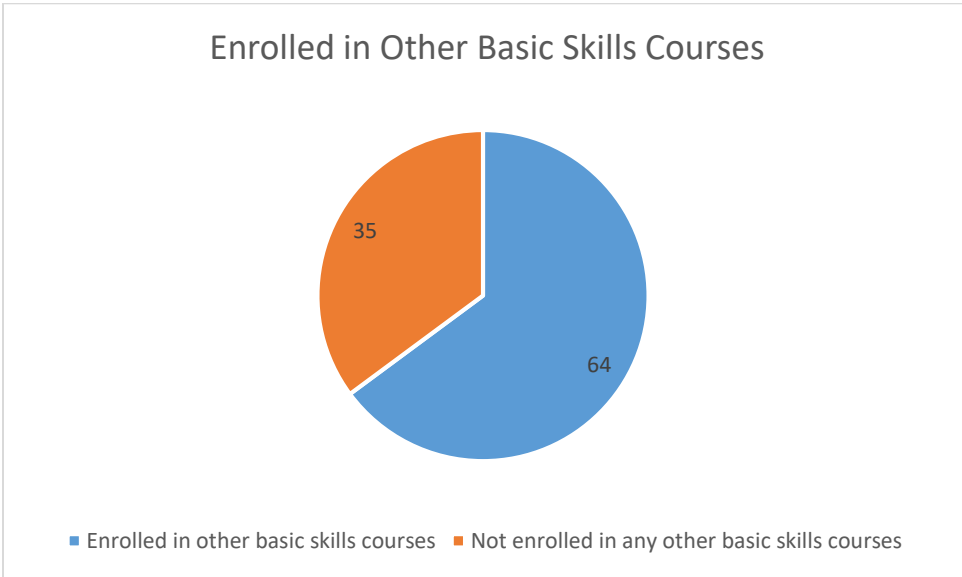
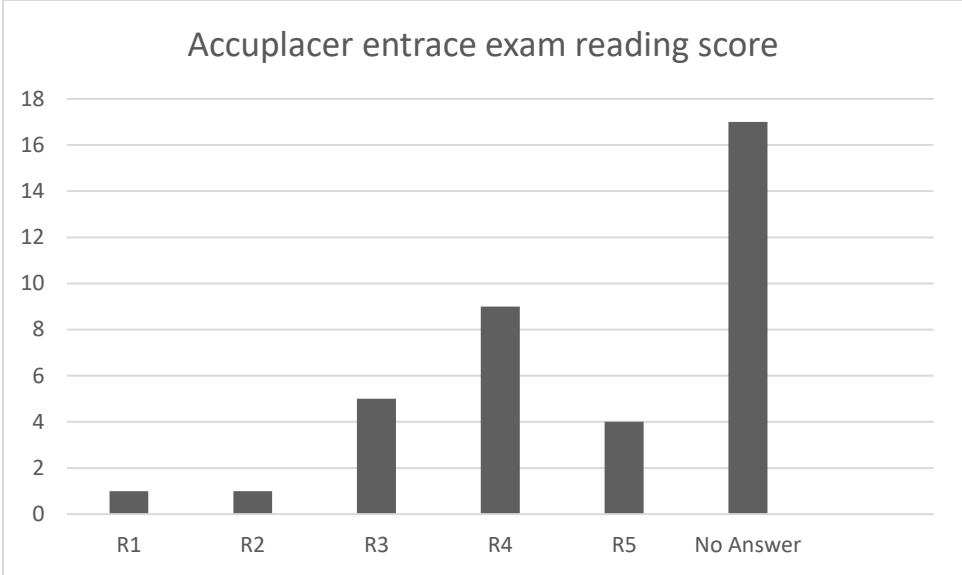
11) Does reading culturally relevant texts engage readers who don't like to read or struggle with reading?

Appendix D: Demographics of students who participated in the study



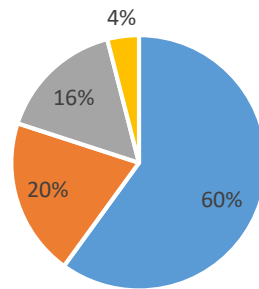






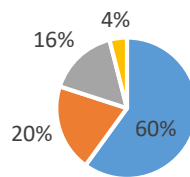
Appendix E: Students' Sense of Belonging in Academic Setting Like Central College

Professor A's Students' Sense of Belonging in Academic Setting Like Central College



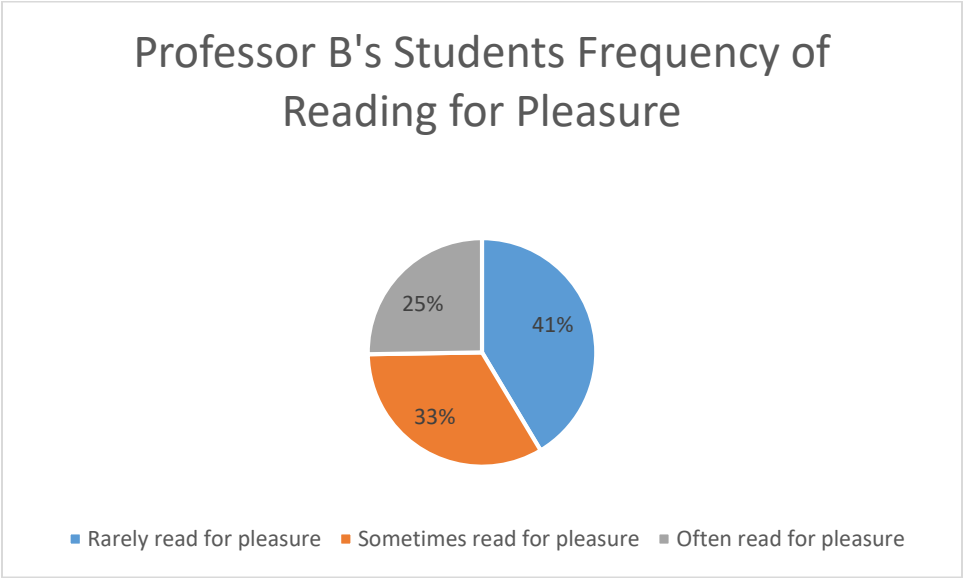
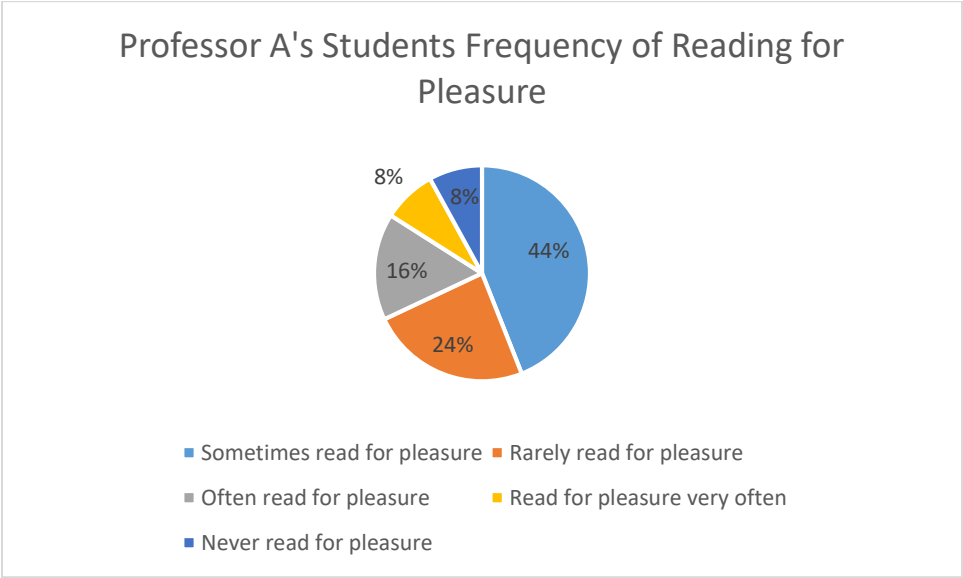
- Always feel like they belong
- Often feel like they belong
- Sometimes feel like they belong
- Rarely feel like they belong

Professor B's Students' Sense of belonging in Academic Setting Like Central College

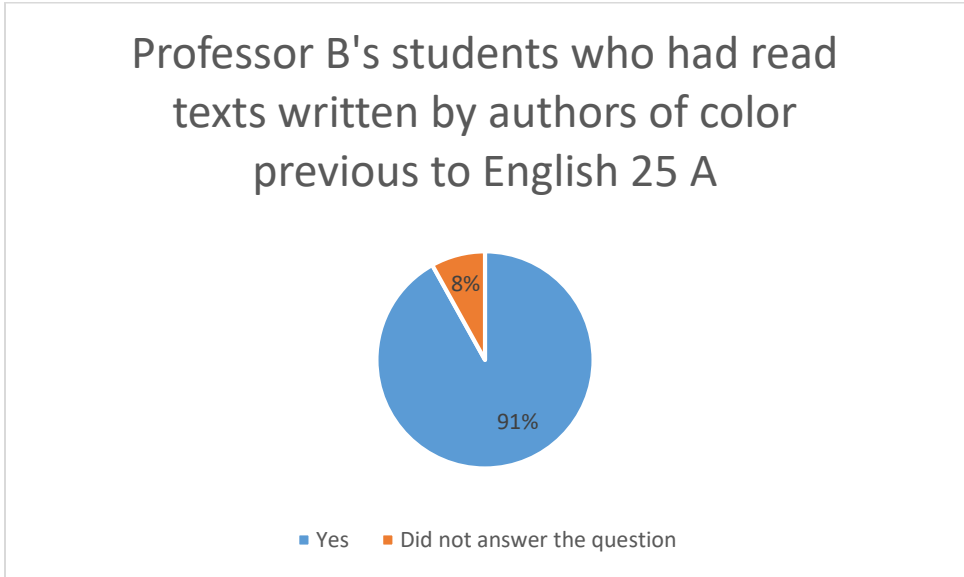
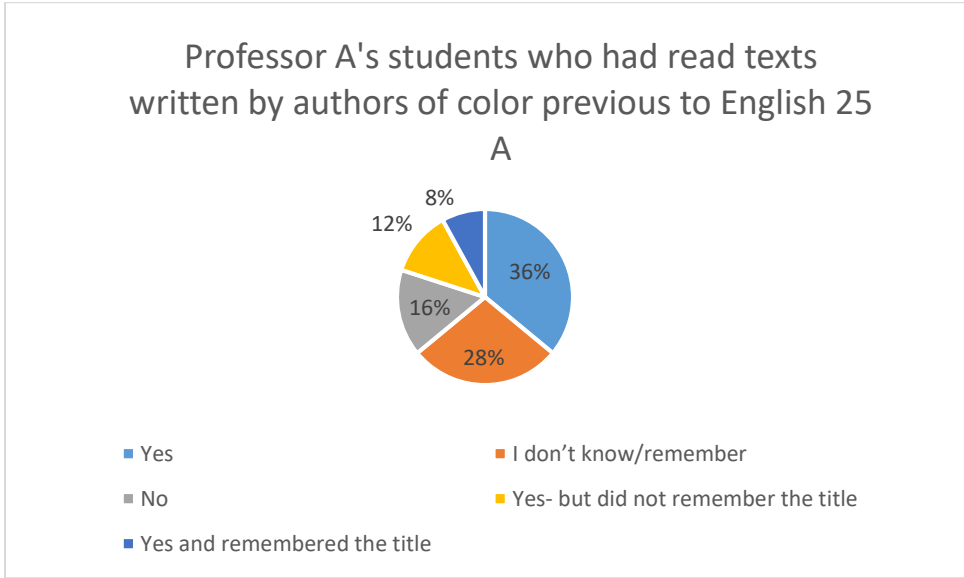


- Always feel like they belong
- Often feel like they belong
- Sometimes feel like they belong
- Rarely feel like they belong

Appendix F: Students Frequency of Reading for Pleasure

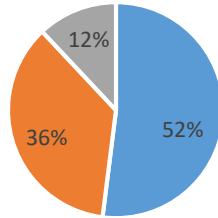


Appendix G: Students who had read texts written by authors of color previous to English 25



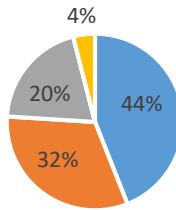
Appendix H: Text Most Relevant to Students' Lives

Text Most Relevant to Students' Lives in Professor A's Class



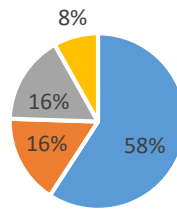
- Outliers: The Story of Success (non-ethnic cultural text)
- Enrique's Journey (culturally relevant text)
- "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text)

The Text Students Related to The Most in Professor A's Class



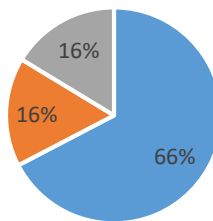
- Outliers: The Story of Success (non-ethnic cultural text)
- Enrique's Journey (culturally relevant text)
- "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text)
- None of the texts

Text Most Relevant to Students' Lives in Professor B's Class



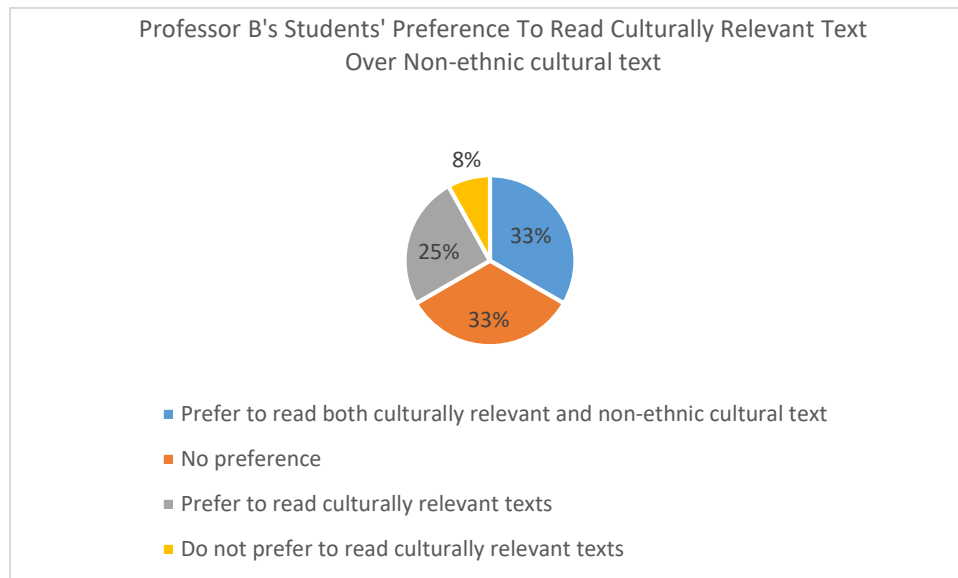
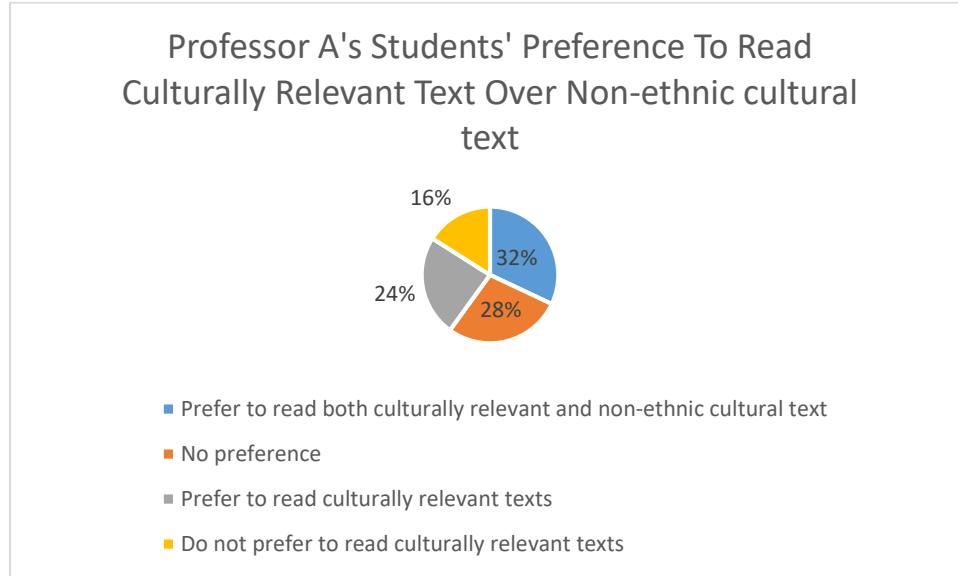
- "The College Dropout Boom" (non-ethnic cultural text)
- "Walking Across the Stage" (culturally relevant)
- "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text)
- "Learning to Read" (culturally relevant)

The Text Students Related to The Most in Professor B's Class



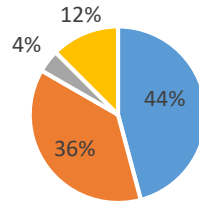
- "The College Dropout Boom" (non-ethnic cultural text)
- "Walking Across the Stage" (culturally relevant)
- "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text)

Appendix I: Students' Preference To Read Culturally Relevant Text Over Non-ethnic cultural text



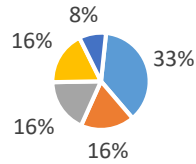
Appendix J: The Type of Text That Inspired The Students

The Type of Text That Inspired The Students in Professor A's Class



- Outliers: The Story of Success (non-ethnic cultural text)
- Enrique's Journey (culturally relevant)
- "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text)
- All three texts

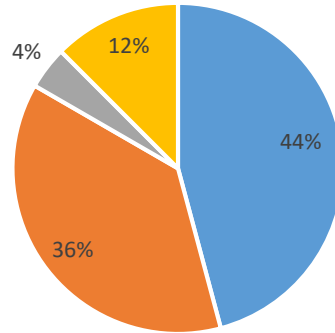
The Type of Text That Inspired The Students in Professor B's Class



- "The College Dropout Boom" (non-ethnic cultural text)
- "Brainology" (non-ethnic cultural text)
- "Learning to Read" (Culturally relevant text)
- "Walking Across the Stage" (Culturally relevant text)

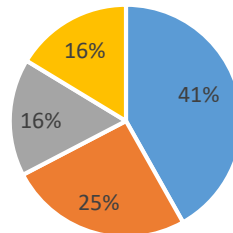
Appendix K: Students' Favorite Texts

Favorite Text For Students in Professor A's Class



■ Enrique's Journey ■ Outliers: The Story of Success ■ "Brainology" ■ All three texts

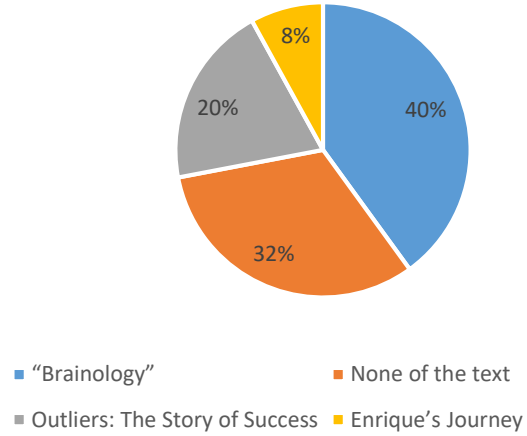
Favorite Text For Students in Professor B's Class



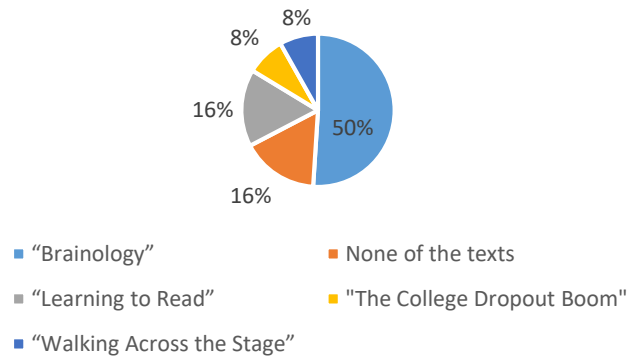
■ "The College Dropout Boom" ■ "Learning to Read"
■ "Brainology" ■ "Walking Across the Stage"

Appendix L: Students' Least Favorite Text

Least Favorite Text in Professor A's Class

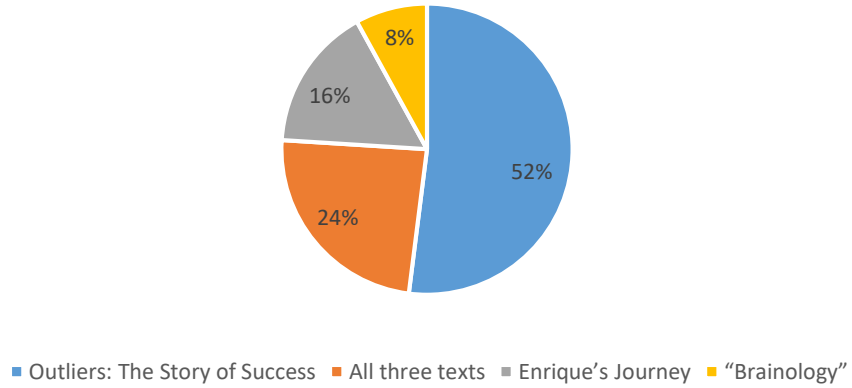


Least Favorite Text in Professor B's Class

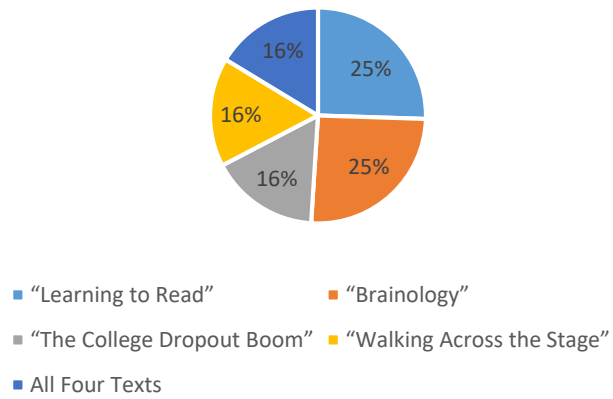


Appendix M: Students' Opinion on What All College Students Should Read

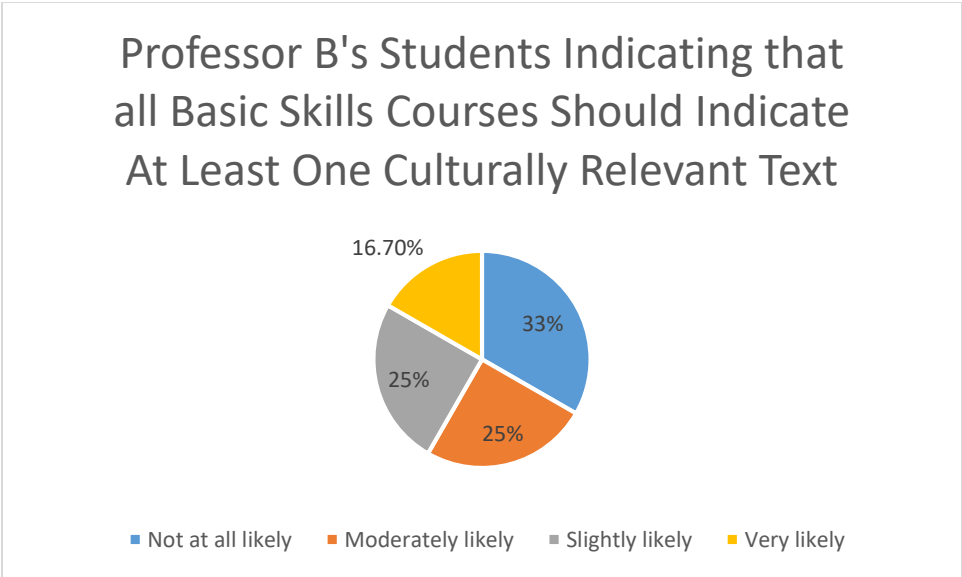
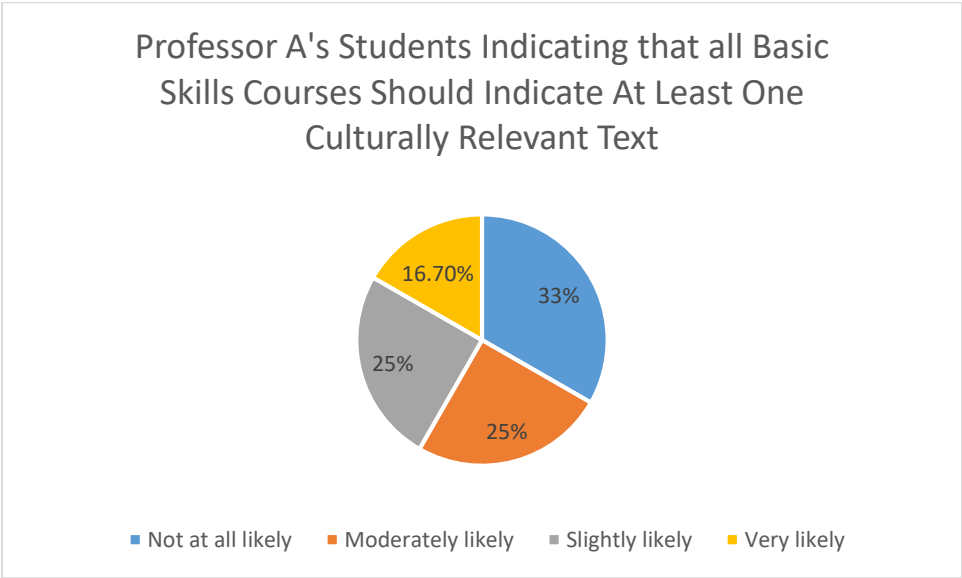
Professor A's Students' Opinion on What All College Students Should Read



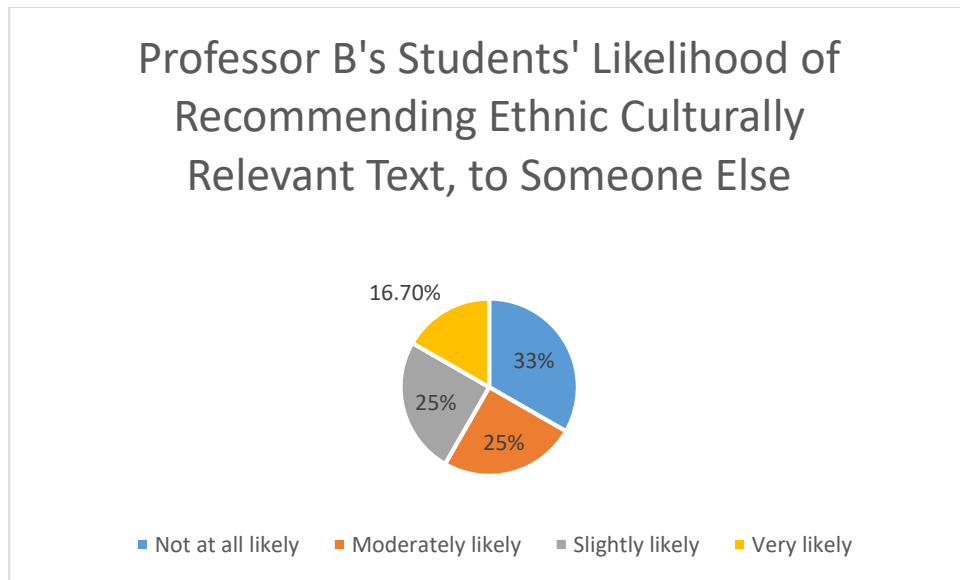
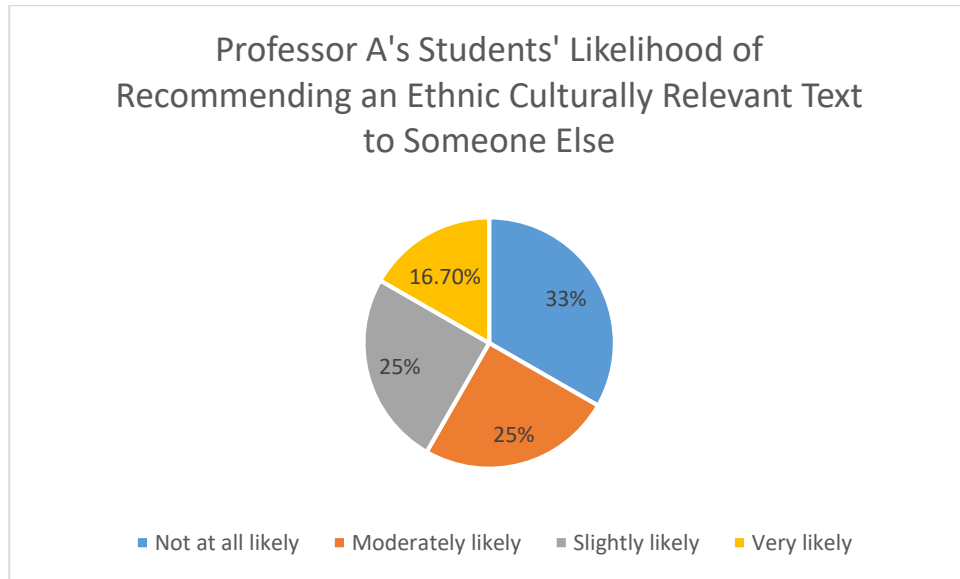
Professor B's Students' Opinion on What All College Students Should Read



Appendix N: Students Indicating that all Basic Skills Courses Should Indicate At Least One Culturally Relevant Text



Appendix O: Students' Likelihood of Recommending an Ethnic Culturally Relevant Text to
Someone Else



Appendix P: Informed Consent for Accelerated English Basic Skills Students

Pegah Motaleb, under the supervision of Dr. Manuel Vargas, Professor, School of Education at California State University, San Marcos, is conducting a study to investigate the learned experiences of basic skills students who engage with culturally relevant readings.

Study Objectives- The objective of this study is to answer the primary research questions:

- How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their academic achievement in community college accelerated basic skills courses?
- How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their sense of belonging in community college settings?
- How do accelerated basic skills students describe the relationship between the assigned readings (texts) in the course and their reading motivation in community college accelerated basic skills courses?

Procedures- A mixed-method embedded study will take place. Data will be collected via student surveys and interviews that will take approximately 30 minutes.

Risks and Inconveniences- There are minimal risks to participating in this study. Participating in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you will take one electronic survey. Participating in the interviews is voluntary. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. All data will be in a locked app that will require a password.

Safeguards- To minimize risks to confidentiality, all data files will be kept private, in a locked account under Qualtrics website and Evernote app that both require a password, and will only to be used for analysis purposes. Pseudonyms for participants will be used to minimize risk of identification.

Voluntary Participation- Your participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn by you at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

Benefits- Although your participation in this research study may be of little benefit to you, beyond personal reflection on your experiences, the data gathered in this study has the potential to benefit other students enrolled in future English 25 A and/or other basic skills English courses.

Questions- This study (has been/will be) approved by California State University, San Marcos' Institutional Review Board. If you have questions about the study you may direct those questions to the researcher, Pegah Motaleb (pmotaleb@sdccd.edu 858-663-6044 or to Dr. Manuel Vargas, Committee Chair mvargas@csusm.edu 760-750-8535).

_____ **I agree to participate in this research study.**

Name: _____

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Appendix Q:

See Attached PDF

Appendix R: Interview Protocol for English 25 A Students

Interview Protocol: English 25 A Students

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Introduction to the interview: The purpose of this study is to understand the perceived reading experiences of English 25 A students. I am interviewing you as well as 9 other students in English 25 A in order to understand better the experiences of students with reading culturally relevant texts. The location of the study and all participants will be made anonymous in the writing of the report and all data collected, including this interview. All data will be maintained in a password locked app and Qualtrics account. This interview will take approximately 30 minutes. You will have an opportunity to review all the information gathered through this review to assess if the information has been noted correctly.

[Have the interviewee read and sign the consent form]

[Turn on and test recording device]

Proceed with questions:

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