International Journal of the Whole Child

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Volume 3   Number 2   2018

Introduction

IJWC remains committed to extending an understanding of the critical importance of ensuring all children with holistic and inclusive learning opportunities. Each child is regarded as unique; teachers perceive differences as natural and contributing to the overall learning environment. Using professional knowledge, educators intentionally plan experiences integrating both cognitive and affective strategies. This IJWC Fall issue provides readers with relevant and specific information with which to implement learning events which are both holistic and inclusive.

Articles

The IJWC editors remain committed to providing our readers with the most relevant and current knowledge with which to create innovative, holistic, and responsive instructional practices. Yet, in the first article, "Neuroeducation and Early Elementary Teaching: Retrospective Innovation for Promoting Growth with Students Living in Poverty," Karyn Allee-Herndon and Sherron Killingsworth Roberts provide readers with an interesting conundrum. They ask readers to acknowledge the effective learning strategies used by our grandparents generations ago; at the same time, they underscore the relationship between these age-old practices with the most current understanding of the brain. Authors define "education, or educational neuroscience is an emerging field combining various scientific disciplines as it relates to learning to study the relationships between the biological processes of the brain and students' cognitive development." Authors describe the positive benefits for holistic learning, especially children challenged with socio-economic status and other adversities, by recalling many traditional games, songs, and experiences. There may be some contemporary educators not familiar with the practices from a by-gone era; authors discuss what our children might be missing. Creating opportunities to play, use language, and diminish stress enhance all children's learning, but in particular, support children who may be additionally vulnerable. Allee-Herndon and Killingsworth Roberts clearly describe how without additional funding, training, or consulting, educators can nurture children's developing brain, learning, and feeling. In other words, this article provides us with an opportunity, in order to move forward, to step back and reflect on what is best for children.

In the second article, "Educator Perceptions of Student Ownership and Self-Authorship: Building a Connective Framework Between Two Constructs," Brian A. Stone and Kendra Surmitis highlight the role of holistic development by reminding readers of the importance of children's emerging sense of self and other. In addition to the familiar construct of ownership, authors as well underscore the critical role of self-authorship as equally significant for a child's healthy development. Ownership, well defined in the existing literature, refers to ensuring children's

voice in decision-making, involving students in school routines, and legitimizing a child's personal relevance and individual instruction. Self-authorship, in contrast, focuses on the internal self-regarding an integration of 'values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and interpersonal states' (Kegan, 1994, p. 185). Authors discuss how practitioners who seek to understand how to most effectively plan for a range of diverse student populations, will find this content decisive when considering children naturally integrate their "identity, beliefs, and social relationships while critically considering external variables and perspectives."

As teachers nurture children's holistic development, they may be aware of the intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions; but may not be as familiar with the epistemological (how a child views the world). In this preliminary study, Stone and Surmitis describe the role of holistic development by reminding readers of the importance of discussing teachers' perceptions of self-authorship with respect to assigned value and classroom manifestation. For some readers, self-authorship may be a new construct; therefore, in order to maximize students' holistic learning experiences, this manuscript affords readers with a possibly new insight.

In the third article, "Exploring the Power and Processes of Friendship through Picturebooks," Patricia Crawford and Kaybeth Calabria affirm the critical importance of friendships in children's healthy development. They describe how, in addition to children's ongoing observations of others interacting as friends as well as their own continuous efforts to initiate and maintain friendships, the role of quality picture books may prove a valuable learning alternative. Crawford and Calabria provide readers with an "overview of the role of friendship in the lives of children and consider ways in which children can develop the skills and habits of mind and heart needed to *initiate*, *sustain*, and *navigate challenging areas* within these types of relationships." This article identifies related texts in each developing area in which children may struggle; a secure friendship requires knowledge, skills, and dispositions in which children potentially lack experiences or competencies. Using quality picture books, children come to understand through the characters, story-lines, and strategies, that they are not alone in their efforts to make and maintain friends. Picture books provide children with examples to both think and feel through issues arising between friends. In addition to several examples of high-quality picture books, authors provide descriptions supporting readers' understanding of children's developing sense of friendship.

Pictures For Reflection

Although thousands and thousands of pages currently describe the critical importance of children's dress-up and role play, in this issue, one picture captures the self-confidence, self-esteem, and sheer pleasure a child experiences when pretending to be someone/something else. This single photograph evidences the thinking and feeling motivating children's dress-up play. Take a look, smile, and wonder at children's imaginations.

Tech Talk

Nancy Caukin, an espoused technology-user enthusiast, describes in "EdTech: Where Do I Start?" how technology affords teachers, students, and parents a wide range of learning possibilities. Most importantly, her content well supports users by describing why not to become overwhelmed, how not to expect proficiency, and where to seek additional information, support, and feedback. She describes a platform to learn, an arena to explore, and the freedom to enjoy.

ETC.

Readers frequently ask the editorial team what is meant by the ETC. descriptor in IJWC. It is true the abbreviation ETC., is not typically used in formal writing. Yet, in reading manuscripts, authors frequently use "etc." as if readers will quickly generate several examples; this is not always the case. In order to support readers' ability to connect research studies with best practice examples, the ETC. section of IJWC commits to clearly demonstrating connections across theory, research, and best practices.

Terri Tharp, with the assistance and collaboration of university and community colleagues, is most successful in securing grant funding to plan and implement numerous family literacy events. She believes this article may support others', particularly teacher candidates', efforts to build upon child and family literacy understanding through school-community partnerships. Terri Tharp identifies the essential components of successful grant funding and as well provides readers with straightforward descriptions to effectively implement family literacy events.

Neuroeducation and Early Elementary Teaching: Retrospective Innovation for Promoting Growth with Students Living in Poverty

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Sherron Killingsworth Roberts, Professor of Language Arts and Literacy at the University of Central Florida, currently serves as the Robert N. Heintzelman Literature Scholar. Published in the *Reading Teacher, Journal of Teacher Education, Journal of Research in Childhood Education, Journal of Adult and Adolescent Literacy, Teaching and Teacher Education, The Dragon Lode: Children's Literature Journal, International Journal of Educational Development, Journal of Poetry Therapy, International Journal of Inclusive Education, Reading Horizons,* and *Journal of Reading Education* among others, her research considers literacy as social practice, content analyses of children's literature, and innovative pedagogy in teacher education.

Introduction

Neuroeducation, or educational neuroscience, is an emerging field combining various scientific disciplines as it relates to learning to study the relationships between the biological processes of the brain and students' cognitive development. Researchers and educators, increasingly working together, attempt to bridge these fields to increase positive learning experiences for increased school readiness and academic achievement, especially for children experiencing significant adversity. In fact, brain research remains such a timely topic that the May 2017 issue of *Young Children* highlighted articles focused on the important role of neuroeducation in preschool education. While researchers agree that brain development during early childhood is a critical period of growth comprised of both extreme vulnerability and competence (Lally & Mangione, 2017), the brain remains malleable or plastic throughout children's years of schooling (Pakulak et al, 2017; Shonkoff, 2017). Early elementary educators can utilize emerging research to help make their classroom environments growth-friendly to support children's developing capacities

for success in K-12 school environments. Therefore, this manuscript outlines a strong rationale for promoting academic growth with students living in poverty through instructional strategies that might even be considered retrospective in many ways.

Teachers of early elementary classrooms are more and more in need of strategies for those children most in need. Neuroeducation brings much hope to the field, creating growth-promoting classrooms that are language rich, emotionally rich, steeped in play (Hassinger-Das, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2017), and protected from excessive stress can "dramatically improve the life prospects of all young children" (Shonkoff, 2017, p. 15). The critical difference between children who overcame extreme toxic stress or hardships and children who were unable to persist comes down to significant, stable, and responsive relationships (Shonkoff, 2017).

The field of education is beginning to understand more concretely how specific conditions, such as poverty, affect brain and cognitive development and the related impacts on academic achievement. More than 10 million children who live below the poverty threshold attend public preK-12 schools, and over 1 million of these children attend public prekindergarten and kindergarten (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2017). Especially in early childhood, poverty poses the single greatest threat to children's well-being and educational equity. As educators, early childhood professionals commit to a mandate to ensure all students are afforded every opportunity for school success. Innovative approaches in the primary grades can apply emerging brain research to continue to build elementary-aged children's readiness for school, emotional resiliency, and abilities to be successful academically.

Recent improvements in neuroimaging, a relatively new discipline using various technologies to image the structure and function of the brain, allow us to better understand how the brain develops, and this affects our understanding of teaching and learning, specifically in the areas of executive function (EF) and self-regulation (SR). These increased understandings allow educational professionals to tailor instructional practices to best meet the needs of students, especially students living in poverty who are at greater risk for underperforming compared to their more resourced peers. To meet the needs of all our students, but especially our students living in poverty or other stressful environments, teachers offer learning experiences that engage children emotionally, socially, and cognitively in growth-promoting classrooms to increase children's chances for success in school and beyond. This paper highlights the salient connections between poverty and brain development, and then aligns neuroeducational insights with innovative, yet retrospective instructional strategies linked to the early childhood areas of language and literacy, dramatic and imaginary play, games and puzzles, and gross motor and musical movements.

The Connections Between Poverty and Brain Development

Self-regulation involves resisting impulsivity, delaying gratification, responding effectively and appropriately to our environments, and utilizing appropriate skills at appropriate times. Executive functions are domain-specific mental skills including task completion, response inhibition, attention control, attention shifting or cognitive flexibility, and working memory that advantage self-regulation (Shonkoff, 2017). Both occur largely in the prefrontal cortex of the brain and affect judgment, differentiation, anticipating outcomes, time management, attention

and switch focus, planning and organizing, remembering details, and social-emotional aptitude. Scientists assert that early childhood is a critical period for developing executive function skills critical for school readiness (Blair, 2016; Blair & Raver, 2015; Fitzpatrick, McKinnon, Blair, & Willoughby, 2014; Lally & Mangione, 2017; Pakulak et al, 2017; Shonkoff, 2017). Increasingly, researchers continue to uncover poverty's impacts on executive function development (Blair & Raver, 2015; Fitzpatrick et al, 2014). Shonkoff (2011) emphasizes how school readiness and achievement gaps can be reduced with high-quality, research-based pedagogy and curriculum in conjunction with nurturing, supportive environments that reduce stress on developing brains. Existing neuroeducation research suggests a predictive relationship between executive function and to literacy and numeracy skill development (Shonkoff, 2011). Blair and Raver (2015) provide further evidence linking executive function as a predictive agent for academic achievement associated with socioeconomic status for children of poverty.

Teaching with Neuroeducation in Mind: Instructional Strategies

For the past decade, researchers increasingly focused on executive function and self-regulation as an essential underpinning for success in formal K-12 schooling. Indeed, "coordinating multiple, and sometimes competing, demands on cognitive activity, is one of the central hallmarks of readiness for the seismic shift in complexity of the learning tasks that will occur in early elementary school" (Moreno, Shwayder, & Friedman, 2017, p. 144). The strategies included here focus on building specific executive function skills, especially for children of poverty. Researchers in neuroeducation identify three main types of brain function that act as "the air traffic control system" of the brain (Center for the Developing Child, 2011; 2017). These primarily include working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control, but also subsume decision-making, delaying gratification, planning, goal setting, rule following, and problem solving.

Working memory requires children to preserve information, work with this information, and use it at the appropriate time. Remembering an idea to share for turn-taking, retaining the options available when it is time to select a center activity, and following multi-step directions or procedures all require working memory (Gathercole & Alloway, 2007). Cognitive flexibility is the ability to be nimble with one's mind. This includes transferring easily between tasks or activities, employing different rules or procedures depending on the situation, and maintaining or shifting attention in response to various demands. Focusing on a task while ignoring distractions, sorting and classifying objects by color one time and shape the next, and transitioning when directed are all indicators of cognitive flexibility (Center for the Developing Child, 2017). Inhibitory control can be thought of as a combination of impulse control, planning, and considering possible outcomes. Waiting for a turn, anticipating potential consequences to choices, making a plan for play or learning and keeping that plan all require inhibitory control (Galpod, 2013).

While executive function can be negatively affected by stressful environments and a lack of quality interactions with caring adults (Lally & Mangione, 2017; Shonkoff, 2017), "growth-promoting environments" (Center on the Developing Child, 2017; Pakulak et al, 2017) can help children develop or strengthen their executive function. Predictable routines, familiar

procedures, adults who model pro-social-emotional behaviors and stress management techniques, gross motor development and exercise, creative play opportunities, scaffolding with a gradual increase of complexity and independence are all components of executive function-friendly classroom environments. Much of what supports executive function growth can be found in constructivist, discovery-based classrooms aligned with the respected theories of Montessori (1912), Piaget (1977), or Vygotsky (1978).

In recent decades, the elementary school focus collectively has shifted to an environment of increasing testing and decreasing play and autonomy. Neuroeducational findings demand reflection and a return to an early childhood environment in primary elementary grades reminiscent of the past that could significantly help students, especially those students living in poverty, experience greater academic success. Components of whole-child, constructivist classrooms often include language and literacy learning, dramatic or imaginary play, games and puzzles requiring logic and spatial awareness, gross motor play, and music and movement. Classroom games and learning experiences that can help support the development of working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control are outlined below and are organized by areas of early learning classrooms.

Language and Literacy. The authentic foundational literacy experiences that occur in early childhood classrooms support the development of executive function (Center on the Developing Child, 2017; Moreno, Shwayder, & Friedman, 2017). Storytelling itself requires planning, elaboration, and organization. Reading stories to children using dialogic strategies and think-alouds, supporting them as they engage in their own writing at various developmental levels by encouraging planning, organization, and creativity, and encouraging bilingual storytelling all help support the development of working memory and cognitive flexibility. Adding elements of reader's theater, either from memory or a script, and using authentic student writing to develop personalized plays (Bodrova & Leong, 2007) can help develop inhibitory control.

Dramatic or Imaginary Play. Dramatic or imaginary play develop working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility. Teachers can support children in building background knowledge vicariously through literature, multimedia, and real-life experiences. Student writing plans for imaginary play that function almost as scripts (Bodrova & Leong, 2007) blend emerging writing with planning, inhibitory control, problem solving, and language development. Stories that emanate from the circle area, classroom library, or small groups may translate into dramatic retellings. Children may also engage in thematic play, with toys, props, or costumes, to practice and reinforce concepts learned about home, community, and professions. While younger children may need more concrete representations for play, older children can move toward more abstract and child-made props, promoting cognitive flexibility (Center on the Developing Child, n.d. A). For example, younger children may use plastic or cardboard food props while older children may use blocks to represent merchandise in a store, which helps develop cognitive flexibility. Using housekeeping materials as part of play, like carefully pouring liquids from pitchers (Montessori Primary Guide - Introduction to Practical Life, n.d.), in dramatic play helps develop inhibitory control and can easily be integrated with other conceptual understandings like spatial awareness, mass, and volume.

Games and Puzzles. Although it may seem less than academic to the naïve onlooker, games and puzzles remain a smart choice for teachers. Whether used at circle time, in centers independently, with some teacher guidance and narrative talk, or in more formal small group instruction, games and puzzles, such as matching or classifying, can also help to improve working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility. On the rug, teachers (or students) could offer a change to traditional rules to familiar games (or songs); this provides opportunities for cognitive flexibility and inhibitory control (Center on the Developing Child, n.d., A). For example, touching one's toes when you are actually asked to touch one's head, or not listening when "Simon Says," or putting a *Bingo* marker on something large when you hear a cue for something small strengthens children's cognitive flexibility and inhibitory control. Puzzles, word games, brainteasers, matching or sorting games, and mazes of increasing difficulty require working memory, planning, and cognitive flexibility (Center on the Developing Child, n.d. B). Many games require working memory like the many iterations of *Memory* or the newer game, *Blink*. More complex card games, like *Go, Fish!* (Center on the Developing Child, n.d. B), require children not simply to match and remember, but to concentrate on multiple pieces of information such as who has which card and what cards are needed to make a match or a pattern. Some games, like *Quick Cups* and *See-It? Slam-It!*, require rapid responses that support inhibitory control and cognitive flexibility. Games like *Qwirkle*, *Rummikub*, and *Connect Four* promote strategic and logical thinking that support all executive function domain areas (Center for the Developing Child, 2011). Montessori sensory activities (Montessori Primary Guide - Introduction to Sensorial, n.d.), and all kinds of activities that support sorting, classifying, and seriation of objects by attribute, can help support this type of cognitive functionality. Logic, reasoning, visual discrimination and guessing games like *I Spy* and *20 Questions* are also beneficial (Center on the Developing Child, n.d. B). For specific details regarding games aligning with current neuroeducational findings, Appendix A provides a helpful, annotated bibliography.

Gross Motor Play/Music and Movement. The more neuroscientists know about the brain, the more early childhood educators learn that exercise and movement help build cognition. Furthermore, play evidences the capacity to scaffold children's development in positive directions and potentially helps "prime neural mechanisms" (Hassinger-Das, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2017, p. 49) which are important for healthy brain development. Gross motor movements that increase in complexity challenge children to develop working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control. Songs like Hap Palmer's classic "Listen and Move," the camp favorite "Telephone," and "The Wheels on the Bus*"* have movements or actions that incrementally repeat to support working memory. Playing different genres of music and asking children to interpret it through movement and encouraging complex outdoor play that includes climbing, balancing, pedaling, and jumping are also good strategies. Planning obstacle courses or specific physical challenges, such as transferring water from one bucket to another using sponges, promote cognitive flexibility. Traditional dances and games like *Simon Says*, square dancing, or other dances requiring partner changes or shifting directions, and freeze dance develop working memory and inhibitory control (Center on the Developing Child, n.d. A). Montessori games such as *Walk the Line* do the same by requiring children to focus on balance and movement while ignoring a variety of distractions (Pugh, 2010). Games like *Duck, Duck, Goose* and *Red Rover* support working memory, fast-paced ball games like tether ball and dodge ball support inhibitory control, and organized sports and mindfulness activities help support

cognitive flexibility (Center on the Developing Child, n.d. B). Classics from Ella Jenkins like "Did You Feed My Cow?" and familiar tunes like "If You're Happy and You Know It," "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," and "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" that require partner singing, echoing, rounds, and parts support working memory development and inhibitory control. Complicated clapping rhythms like *Patty Cake* and *Miss Mary Mack* can help build all three highlighted areas of executive function.

Closing the Relationship Gap and the Play Gap Could Help Close the Achievement Gap

School readiness and achievement gaps may be reduced with high-quality, research-based pedagogy and curriculum in conjunction with a nurturing, supportive environment that reduces stress on developing brains (NAEYC, 2005; 2009; Shonkoff, 2011). Existing neurocognitive research suggests a predictive relationship between EF and SR to literacy and numeracy skill development (Shonkoff, 2011). Blaire and Raver (2015) provided evidence linking EF as a predictive agent for academic achievement and socioeconomic status for children of poverty. These same experts believe that growth-promoting environments in early elementary classrooms are ones that are language-rich, include purposeful play, and allow discovery and exploration with the support of peers and teachers scaffolding metacognitive development of skills that support SR and EF development.

Growth-promoting, brain compatible classrooms that utilize purposeful play, discovery-based, language-rich, child-directed learning using strategies like those outlined above need not sacrifice accountability, rigor, and standards-based education. Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) is a long-standing and highly-respected early childhood education (ECE) approach that values meeting children where they are developmentally and socially with age- and stage-appropriate rich, engaging content. As the field of neuroeducation evolves, many parallels between DAP and the types of learning environments recommended by neuroscientists are aligning and being solidified. In the newly revised DAP position statement, NAEYC (2009) advocates for a blending of the best of both the ECE world and the K-12 world since kindergarten is uniquely positioned as a bridge between them. A comprehensive, holistic, and effective elementary curriculum diligently attends to academic and socio-emotional competencies. Today's early elementary classroom incorporates attention to robust content, learning progressions, quality systematic assessment, and effective curriculum and teaching (traditionally, the domain of the K-12 world) while also scaffolding and differentiating learning in a prosocial environment to support each student's unique needs (traditionally, the domain of the ECE world). To help mitigate the achievement disparities often associated with family income, ethnicity, and language background, young children require access to enriched, intensive learning experiences at an early age. Enabling and empowering teachers to ensure increased agency to make curricular decisions means that teachers recognize that purposeful play may be the right choice to meet individual needs. To be effective, highly competent teachers require high-quality teacher preparation and professional development (NAEYC, 2005; NAEYC, 2009) that empower teachers to make critical classroom decisions to include purposeful play that may run counter to current high stakes testing emphases (Boote, 2006).

Often at odds with the state-mandated standards approach which tends to reinforce instructional strategies perhaps more appropriate for older students (Goldstein, 2007a, 2007b; Graue, 2008), teachers in DAP settings including kindergarten and early elementary grades would do well to provide high-level, purposeful play opportunities (NAEYC, 2009). Many young children, especially children who are under resourced, do not spend time out of school engaging in this type of play (Bodrova & Leong, 1996). Because high-level, purposeful play affords so many socio-emotional and cognitive benefits, DAP purports that quality early childhood classrooms provide play-based learning opportunities supported by skilled facilitators (NAEYC, 2009). By incorporating rich learning activities, as described in the paper and additional website resources annotated in Appendix B, educators can start to advance academic equity. All children will benefit, but particularly children living in poverty.

Final Thoughts and Future Research

To be effective, elementary classrooms include environments of both emotional stability and intellectual novelty full of predictable routines, safe spaces, consistency, and respectful caring guidance (Lally & Mangione, 2017). Strategies to increase predictability and reduce stress can be used both in classrooms and encouraged with families to bridge caring home and school environments. Playful learning environments where children have choice and agency within safe, guided limits help to develop these important socio-emotional and cognitive skills (Hassinger-Das, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2017; Jarrett & Waite-Stupiansky, 2009). These environments can impact a child's entire lifetime (Shonkoff, 2017). "Not only should play and games *not* be pushed out of the classroom to make room for more 'academic' learning, they need to be taken very seriously" (Bodrova & Leong, 2008, p. 58). A balanced approach tapping current neuroeducation advances and involving creative, guided, and independently directed movement and play in a supportive environment will help all children, but especially children living in poverty, to be more successful in navigating the rigorous demands of today's structured learning.

All of these suggested brain-compatible activities for the early elementary classroom, reinforced by today's neuroeducational research, harken back to a time before *No Child Left Behind* (2002) in early childhood classrooms. They are reminiscent, in fact, of the types of instructional strategies used almost 25 years ago. One could argue, as Bodrova, Leong, and Akhutina (2011) have, that innovative teaching, informed by our emerging understanding of educational neuroscience, supports a return to discovery-based, independent, autonomous, self-directed, constructivist, hands-on learning aligned with the theories of Montessori (1912), Piaget (1977), and Vygotsky (1978). Curricula such as *Tools of the Mind* (Bodrova & Leong, 2007) incorporate similar learning experiences intended to develop self-regulation and executive function while simultaneously building foundational literacy and early math skills. To support all children's development of executive function, it is critical teachers create learning activities "to be generalizable enough that [they] are not dependent on the implementation of a particular curriculum or intervention that emphasizes executive function" (Moreno, Shwayder, & Friedman, 2016, p. 144). Researchers, teacher educators, professional developers, and especially practitioners remain charged with identifying how self-regulation and executive function may innovate everyday teaching and learning experiences in early childhood education classrooms.

Many schools could benefit by incorporating these retrospective instructional strategies intended to close poverty-related school readiness and academic achievement gaps that are increasingly explained by differences in executive function skills (Blair & Raver, 2015; Fitzpatrick, McKinnon, Blair, & Willoughby, 2014; Moreno, Shwayder, & Friedman, 2016; Shonkoff, 2011).

Future research is sought to align daily, granular practices that boost executive function and self-regulation skills, and to assess executive function and self-regulation capacities efficiently in the classroom. Additional short-term and long-term studies of the effectiveness of learning activities can deepen our understanding and allow educators to make research-informed decisions about emerging practice and policy for our early elementary classrooms. What is new is our increasing understanding of how critical brain development is, how toxic stress, scarcity, and poverty impede cognitive growth, and exactly how to support areas of impaired cognition in children who need it the most. In short, the early elementary classroom now can reap the benefits of concrete research findings and increasing neuroeducational evidence that older strategies are worth making new again to increase equity and achievement for students living in poverty.

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Appendix A
Annotated Bibliography of Commercial Games Referenced in Manuscript

Staupe, R. (1990s) *Blink* (Card game). El Segunda, CA: Mattel, Inc.

"How fast can you match? That's the key to BLINK. Shape, count, or color - any way you can match it, do it fast to get rid of your cards. You need a sharp eye and a fast hand to win this lightning-fast game!" (http://shop.mattel.com/shop/en-us/ms/mattel-games/blink-card-game-t5931) – Recommended age 6+

Connect 4 (Connection game) (1974). Pawtucket, RI: Hasbro.

"Challenge a friend to disc-dropping fun with the classic game of Connect 4! Drop your red or yellow discs into the grid and be the first to get 4 in a row to win. If your opponent is getting too close to 4 in a row, block them with your own disc! Whoever wins can pull out the slider bar to release all the discs and start the fun all over again!" (https://www.hasbro.com/en-us/product/connect-4-game:80FB5BCA-5056-9047-F5F4-5EB5DF88DAF4) - Recommended age 6+

Coffelt, D. M. (1984). *Go Fish!* (Card game). Berkeley, CA: Peaceable Kingdom.

"Swim with the sharks and lunch with the lobsters! Go Fish is a great way for young kids to learn how to play cards – how to hold them, how to deal, how to read the numbers, how to take turns. The game set includes instructions for a simple game and a challenging game." (https://www.amazon.com/Peaceable-Kingdom-Fish-Classic-Card/dp/B002BRSCJ6) – Recommended age 3+

Memory (Card game). Pawtucket, RI: Hasbro.

"Children learn about taking turns and matchmaking in this game as they try to make pairs of elated elephants, panting puppies, smiling suns, and other familiar objects. The 48 (cardboard) cards have lively, colorful drawings that make them easy to remember and a tray for storing them. Played alone, Original Memory is a quiet activity for developing concentration and memory. With more players, it's even more of a memory challenge to remember where the cards are that have already been turned over. And you have to wait your turn, which is sometimes harder than anything. The printed rules in the box set the tone for this child-friendly game: the youngest player always goes first. --*Lynne Sampson*" (https://www.amazon.com/Hasbro-Original-Memory-Card-Game/dp/B00000IWDD) - Recommended age 3+

Quick Cups (Board game). Toronto, ON: Spin Master.

"QUICK CUPS™ is the fast-paced family game of matching and stacking cups to a picture! Each player gets a set of five cups in five different colors. When a picture card is turned over, everyone races to line up or stack up their cups in the same color order as the picture. When the picture is horizontal, you line your cups up. When the picture is vertical, you stack them up. Finish first and ring the bell -- you just won the card! Win the most cards after all have been played, and you win the game! QUICK CUPS is match e'm up, stack 'em up fun!" (https://www.spinmaster.com/product_detail.php?pid=p10444) - Recommended age 6+

Ross, S. M. (2006). *Qwirkle*. Omaha, NE: MindWare.
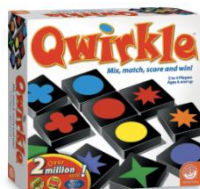
"Mix, match, score and win! Qwirkle is a must-have for your next family game night. MindWare's best seller is a simple game of matching colors and shapes that requires tactical maneuvers, quick-thinking and a well-planned strategy. Players of this addictive game score points by building rows and columns of brightly-colored tiles that are either all the same color or all the same shape, without creating duplicates. Look for opportunities to score big by placing a

tile that touches multiple pieces with matching attributes; create a line of all six in a row, and you score a "Qwirkle". The player with the most points when the tiles run out wins! Qwirkle combines the game play of Dominoes and Scrabble and is the perfect combination of skill and chance! This easy-to-learn, yet challenging game for children and adults will have all three generations on the edge of their seat! Grab your family and friends and see for yourself why everyone is hooked on Qwirkle!" (http://www.mindware.orientaltrading.com/qwirkle-a2-32016.fltr?keyword=Qwirkle) - Recommended age 6+

Hertzano, E. (1977). *Rummikub* (Board game). New York, NY: Bello Games New York, Inc.

"It's no surprise that Rummikub is so popular--it has all the elements that make a great game: it's easy to learn and fast moving, it's different every time it's played, it combines luck and strategy, and it changes quickly so every player has a chance to win until the very end. And with more than 50 million units sold, Rummikub is one of the world's best-selling, and most-played, games. Players take turns placing numbered tiles in runs (consecutive numbers of the same color, like 2, 3, 4 in red) and groups (three or more of the same number in different colors, like a red 9, a blue 9, and a black 9), rummy style. It's easy to learn, but packed with strategy--the "board" changes all the time as players adjust the tiles on the table. The Joker tiles add to the fun; they can be any color or number. The object is to be the first player to play every tile on your rack. Players keep track of who wins each round--the player who wins the most rounds wins this time-tested tile game (there's also a point system for use as a tie-breaker). Rummikub is ideal for people of different ages to play together, and it's great for a game night too. When kids play, it reinforces STEM and STEAM concepts such as sequencing, pattern recognition, and planning skills. It's got lots of exciting moments, but it's also designed to bring people together, with plenty of opportunities for talking, chatting, and sharing with family and friends."
(https://www.amazon.com/Rummikub-Original-Rummy-Tile-Game/dp/B00000IZJB) - Recommended age 8+

See-It? Slam-It! 2016). Victoria, BC: Outset Media.

"**See-It? Slam-It!** is a fast-paced family card game where players must shout out a word associated with a picture. There are three picture cards showing at all times. A letter card is flipped over and players race to spot something on any one of the cards beginning with that letter. See something!?! Then slam your hand down fast on the card before someone else spots a match. For example, the three picture cards shown are of pears, a cactus, and a shark jumping

out of a pail. You flip over the letter card and it's a "P". Now slam your hand quick on one of the picture cards and make a connection to the letter, "P". You could slam the cactus and say, "prickly"! BAM! There you go! You saw it, you slammed it. Now you know how to play See-It? Slam It! Get ready for a fun game of speed and observation."
(http://www.outsetmedia.com/games/see-it-slam-it) - Recommended age 7+

Appendix B
Helpful Website Resources for Early Elementary Implementation

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Educator Perceptions of Student Ownership and Self-Authorship: Building a Connective Framework Between Two Constructs

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Dr. Kendra A. Surmitis is a licensed professional counselor, researcher, and counselor educator. As psychoanalytically-informed psychotherapist, she integrates insight-based therapy within a wellness counseling model that emphasizes the development of self-authorship. Dr. Surmitis works with a diverse range of adolescents and adults at her private practice, and is a core faculty member at Prescott College.

The Constructs of Ownership and Self-Authorship

Student ownership in K-16 education is well defined in the literature, with multiple examples of the benefits to individual students. According to Fletcher (2008), "Students feel connected, engaged, and meaningfully involved when they are addressing relevant issues that reflect their interests, their passions, and their identities" (para. 4). Simply defined, student ownership or autonomy is an "action that is chosen; action for which one is responsible" (Deci & Ryan, 1987, p. 1025). Scott (2009) suggests that teachers help students develop ownership in the classroom by "including students in school-decision-making processes, by ensuring that students have the opportunity to express their opinions about the way schools are run, and by creating school communities that are symbiotic" (para. 2). It is critical students actively interact in constructing the curriculum, and indeed, their own learning experiences (Scott, 2009).

In close relation to ownership is the developmental construct of self-authorship. Baxter Magolda's (2001) concept of self-authorship is a derivative of more general cognitive developmental models, grounded in work attributed to developmentalists including Piaget, Kohlberg, Perry, and Kegan. Self-authorship is a constructivist phenomenon, and is exhibited as an individual constructs or makes meaning of their relationship to the world around them.

Specifically, self-authorship is the term describing a shift of meaning-making capacity from outside-of-self to inside-of-self. As an individual constructs self-authorship, they "integrate values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and interpersonal states" (Kegan, 1994, p. 185).

Achievement of self-authorship is therefore recognized in the coordination of defining identity, beliefs, and social relationships while critically considering external variables and perspectives. Complete development therefore includes three elements of construction, including the intrapersonal (self), interpersonal (in relation to others), and epistemological (how we view the world) (Baxter Magolda, 2008).

With an interrelation of ownership and self-authorship in healthy developmental processes of the individual, the authors of this study determined to qualify educator perceptions of these constructs, both in terms of assigned value and classroom manifestation.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research is situated in social and critical constructivism. Social constructivism is defined as knowledge that is constructed individually through personal experiences as well as through social and cultural influences (Schreiber and Valle, 2013). Critical constructivism is defined as an epistemology that is affected by socio-cultural context and aids in cultural transformation (Taylor, 1996). When students possess a high level of ownership in their learning process, they will build through meaningful, relevant experiences that also connect to personal interest. In addition, the pathways for their self-authorship will be strengthened by the social-cultural allowance for freedom of choice. In other words, if peers and teachers provide opportunities for the ownership of learning experiences through personally interesting activities, students will gain a stronger internal voice. This research also draws from self-determination theory, positing that individuals have a strong psychological need to feel competent, to feel connected, and to feel autonomous (Deci, 1975).

Methods

This pilot qualitative study involved a twenty-question descriptive survey sent via email link to a small group of randomly selected teachers in the local school district from K-12 levels. It was also sent to university professors and contingent faculty in the college of education at the local university. Detailed responses were received across the different levels. Participants described their level of familiarity with the constructs of ownership and self-authorship. Additionally, they described the importance of the constructs and their usage of such ideas in their respective classroom environments. The authors, using a compare-contrast analysis (Walk, 1998), examined the descriptions of the participants, identifying four emergent themes including Teacher Dominance and Control, Teacher Modeling and Facilitation, Personal Experiences Inform Pedagogy and Practice, and Teachers Value Ownership and Authorship.

Results and Discussion

Baxter Magolda and King (2004) believe self-authorship represents the capacity of an individual to internally define a belief system and identity that engages in the larger world. Self-authorship entails a "seat of judgement" in which an individual is able to develop a personal authority that is unhindered by external constraints or expectations (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). As a developmental process, individuals mature from a reliance upon external authorities to an internally-defined orientation in which one becomes the "author of one's inner psychological life" (Kegan, 1994, p. 31). Ownership, as defined previously, is simply a student's capacity for choice and self-determined actions within the classroom. A deep and previously unexplored connection exists between the constructs of ownership and self-authorship as many school processes, instructions, philosophies, and assessments maintain an expectation of individual reliance and dependence upon the external authority (i.e. teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists).

Participants' responses indicate a perceived connection between academic effort and success. Many participants expressed the importance of effort and success when asked to describe both ownership and self-authorship in their classroom and in their own educational experience. For example, one participant responded that self-authorship is manifested by "self-confidence" and success in school. The same respondent said, "I have strong self-authorship due to my successes in school." Furthermore, the participant said that if the "family respects and encourages the construct of education, then the child is likely to as well." Another stated, "I equate success in academics to success in athletics - regular skills practice, learning new techniques a little at a time, following the coach's rules and guidelines, talking to the coach if you are unhappy with your playing time, and expecting to have to work harder to get more playing time." These responses align with a reproduction of authoritarian control and student compliance under the umbrella of academic success. Responses do not mirror the constructs of ownership or self-authorship development.

Teacher Dominance and Control

Participants' responses evidenced inherent levels of teacher-control and an authoritarian mindset. The language often reflected the level of control. Participants typically responded with first-person language, which was followed by a qualifier. For example, one participant wrote, "I hold my students accountable," and "I ask what steps the student has taken to take advantage of the many resources I provide for them." Another wrote "I encourage…ownership…by asking [students] to put forth the necessary extra effort." Still another wrote, "I can provide…assignments to help students practice, but it is up to them to implement them outside of the classroom." Teachers perceived students developing ownership and self-authorship if they followed the teacher's assignments, the teacher's timetable, and learned to implement the teacher's advice for success. One respondent wrote, "students develop tests" and another wrote, "I require that students attend community events…however, students can make choices about what events they want to attend (with some exceptions). With some choice comes the potential for some ownership and larger scale development of self-authorship, but it is still situated in a controlled environment with approved directions for students.

For those whose views more closely aligned with the constructs of ownership and self-authorship, the evidence for teacher-directed activity and systemic barriers was

substantial. From the question on barriers to ownership and self-authorship, it was evident that teachers saw control as an obstacle. "Students are not granted autonomy," one person wrote. Another focused on the system and how it conditions children by saying, "I find so many students have experienced the socialization of conditioning in K-12…they may find themselves focused on grades and testing rather than learning," and students do not focus "on assignments that are more open-ended." The same person said, "compliance is an important construct that deters ownership and self-authorship."

Teacher Modeling and Facilitation

If ownership could properly be modeled and then facilitated by teachers, then students would be more likely to develop along the continuum of self-authorship. One teacher wrote, "My role is to model these behaviors for them…I need to approach situations with an open mind and a critical thinking lens while treating others involved with respect." This was a common attitude expressed throughout the responses across both ownership and self-authorship questions. However, what teachers expressed as modeled ownership and self-authorship often did not match the defined constructs of those terms.

Personal Experiences Inform Pedagogy and Practice

Personal experiences inform pedagogy and teaching practice. The fourth theme revealed across responses generates from participant student-personal story narratives and the ways in which these memories inform the participants' understanding of their approach to teaching as well as their strategies for teaching in the classroom. Effectively, nearly all participants provided a written account of connected events in his or her own educational experience as a student, from which the researcher identified parallels to later participant responses concerning teaching pedagogy and practice. For example, a participant shared the following, "As an on campus student at all levels, I tended to learn as much if not more from my professors outside of the classroom. These experiences have influenced me to get to know my students." While this participant disclosed that he did not perceive a high level of ownership or authorship in his own student experience, he recognizes that in order to meet the goals that he has set for his students (e.g. to make independent decisions), it is critical for him, as a teacher, "to know them personally". His early experiences as a student are informing his approach to instruction and attainment of goals for his students, a shared theme across participant reflections.

A related response further highlights the relationship between personal student-narratives and teaching pedagogy and practice, and the influence of shared gratitude, or the quality of being thankful, in the classroom. The participant shared the following memory of her experience as a student teacher. She wrote, "As a student teacher, I had the privilege of teaching several honors biology classes. At the conclusion of the 3 month stint, my students put together a series of notes from each member of the class. Students thanked me for my positivity and faith in them. They recognized that I strove each and every day to provide them a welcoming, safe and fun classroom. This recognition has shaped my perceptions of others and my approach to education." This particular participant's approach to teaching mirrors her positive experience with gratitude and kindness, which she includes as one of her teaching goals, "Treat others with

respect and kindness", and her understanding of sociocultural impacts on the ability to facilitate ownership and authorship in young students. She writes, "The culture of the community and the individual family play a big role in ownership and self-authorship. If the family respects and encourages the construct of education, then the child is likely to as well. This will lead to both constructs."

Teachers Value Ownership and Authorship

Regardless of the contradictions between participants' working definitions of ownership and self-authorship, participants overwhelmingly supported the use of ownership and self-authorship in the classroom. For the purpose of gauging perceptions of value of these constructs, participants completed a number of questions that specifically requested their perception of importance. Questions followed the definition of ownership and self-authorship as provided by the associated, primary authors of the construct. The questions included: 1) How important is it that students have ownership in their educational experience, and 2) How important is it that students develop self-authorship in their educational experience? When asked about ownership in the classroom, participants marked responses ranging from "important" to "extremely important," with six of eight selecting "extremely important." Similarly, when asked about self-authorship in the classroom, responses ranged from "somewhat important" to "extremely important," with six of eight selecting "extremely important." These responses indicate a high level of perceived value of both constructs, and lends to the question of probability of student ownership and self-authorship in the participants' classrooms.

Following the question of importance, and for the purpose of gauging perceptions of probability of student ownership and self-authorship in the participants' classrooms, participants completed a number of questions that specifically requested their perceptions of likelihood. Questions followed the definition of ownership and self-authorship as provided by the associated, primary authors of the construct. The questions included: 1) How likely are students to have ownership as previously defined in your classroom, and 2) How likely are students to have self-authorship as previously defined in your classroom? When asked about ownership in the classroom, participants marked responses ranging from "somewhat unlikely" to "extremely likely," with six of eight selecting "somewhat likely." When asked about self-authorship in the classroom, responses ranged from "somewhat unlikely" to "extremely likely," with four of eight selecting "somewhat likely," three selecting "extremely likely."

Despite a high value, educators did not indicate positive outcomes of ownership or authorship in their specific classrooms. Essentially, the data indicate teachers do not have the skill-set or knowledge base that informs the successful facilitation of student ownership and authorship. While many teachers mirror the behaviors and strategies used by their own instructors of the past, they perhaps lack strategy. These trends are strongly suggestive of an opportunity for researchers and teacher educators to directly confront this gap in knowledge. Introducing these terms early in teacher preparation may support stronger familiarity, perceptions of value, and student outcomes; continued research is warranted.

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Exploring the Power and Processes of Friendship through Picturebooks

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Introduction

"Friendship is the only cement that will ever hold the whole world together."

--Woodrow Wilson, 1918

These words of Woodrow Wilson, spoken a full century ago, ring just as true today in a world that often feels like it is falling apart. In the daily news cycle, national and global debates constantly swirl around issues of justice, equity, and civility, with concerns raging about the core elements needed for individuals, communities, and nations to interact successfully. No doubt, children are impacted by the way these issues play out on the world stage. However, they also learn similar, more developmentally appropriate life lessons about key relationship values and what it means to engage fairly, successfully, and happily with others, through the power of personal friendships. Close, personal friendships evidence the potential to serve as both anchors and supportive scaffolds for the developing child; rooting children in the security of established, close relationships and giving them the confidence and assurance essential to engage in new ones. Thus, it is important that children have opportunities to learn about the meaning and power of friendship, and receive tangible support to develop the pro-social skills necessary to forge, navigate, and deepen these relationships.

Children learn about friendship through many avenues, including observations of interpersonal interactions, their evolving participation in personal relationships, and the information about friendship that is presented through books and other media sources. High quality picturebooks provide an excellent source of accessible and developmentally appropriate information about the nature of friendship, revealed through informational tips, as well as through the stories of protagonists who grow through opportunities to alternatively embrace and struggle with different aspects of their personal relationships.

In this article, we offer an overview of the role of friendship in the lives of children and consider ways in which children can develop the skills and habits of mind and heart needed to *initiate*, *sustain*, and *navigate challenging areas* within these types of relationships. Related touchstone texts are introduced in the discussion of each of these areas. Finally, we discuss pedagogical possibilities for effectively sharing friendship-based stories with young children.

Friendship in the Lives of Children

There is little doubt that strong, healthy relationships bring joy and stability to both young and old (Hartup & Stevens, 1999; Maunder & Monks, 2015). Relationships matter deeply to children from the time they are born. Infancy is a critical time for establishing strong attachments with parents, family members, and caregivers; people who often comprise the totality of the child's social world (Zeanah, Berlin, & Boris, 2011). As children emerge into the toddler and early childhood years, relational shifts begin to occur and their social worlds expand to include others beyond this tight circle. Even the very young begin to notice, acknowledge, and eventually interact with other similarly-aged children, setting the groundwork for the development of peer relationships (Erwin, 1998; Rubin, 1980).

The nature of peer relationships changes over time and across circumstances. For example, peer relationships among the very young may take the form of one child simply connecting with another through eye gaze or touch, while slightly older children may engage in parallel play, and eventually, in more interactive forms of engagement. As children develop physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially, they gain access to "tools" that enable them to extend their play and interactions, allowing them to participate in a greater range of relationships (Coplan & Arbeau, 2009). By the time children arrive in the middle childhood years, there is often a significant shift, in which children spend a more substantial amount of time with similarly-aged others. Thus, the impact of peer influence expands, while the impact of parents, family members, and other caregivers may begin to wane (Erwin, 1998, Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003).

Children's peer relationships also change in other ways throughout time. In terms of activities, young children typically engage in varied forms of pretend play, which eventually give way to participation in more structured forms of games and activities. Eventually, as children enter middle childhood, they begin to prefer extending opportunities to simply spend time talking and visiting in less structured ways with their peer group (Gifford-Smith, 2003; Zarbatany, Hartmann, & Rankin, 1990). While toddlers and very young children are typically satisfied spending time with whatever children are close to them in terms of proximity and availability, older children develop more specific preferences for the children with whom they want to

interact. In this way, children do not just participate in a general peer social network. Rather, they begin to develop genuine friendships.

Unlike more general relationships, childhood friendships are evolving, intimate relationships with selected similarly-aged peers; close relationships in which the participants are relative equals in terms of power and in which there is a degree of reciprocity (Gifford-Smith, 2003; Kemple, 2004; Nangle, Erdley, Newman, Mason, & Carpenter, 2003; Rubin, Coplan, Chen, Bowker, McDonald, & Heverly-Fitt, 2015). By the time that children reach the preschool years, they frequently identify other children who are friends, and it is not long after this that they may willingly identify a "best friend" (Erwin, 1998; Rubin, 1980). Studies indicate that children tend to build friendships with individuals who are somewhat similar to themselves. While young children often seek friends who are similar to them in superficial ways (i.e. same gender, similar ages, race, ethnicities, and abilities, etc.), older children tend to expand the scope of their friendships to include others who have similar beliefs, values, and interests (Rubin et al 2015).

While research indicates that there is a strong element of stability in children's friendships, it is also clear that some friendships wax and wane; requiring more of an effort from participants at certain times than others. While many childhood friendships are maintained through long periods of time, other friendships seem to fade or lose importance; friends may develop new interests and grow in different directions, sometimes resulting in a relationship that is abandoned or left in a state of disrepair (Erwin, 1998; Staub, 1998).

The benefits of childhood friendships are rich and manifold. Friendships not only provide an opportunity for children to expand their relationships beyond the bounds of family and caregivers, these relationships provide an opportunity for children to develop important social skills that help them to engage in the give-and-take process that helps them to interact successfully with others (Kemple, 2004). As they develop communication skills with a trusted peer, they learn to better understand the perspectives of others, share confidences, and increase their level of relational intimacy. Children learn that high quality friendships not only offer a means of companionship, but can be a key to happiness, offering a "port in the storm" when they experience emotional stress or find themselves in difficult circumstances at school or at home (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003; Nangle et al, 2003; Rubin et al 2015).

Many friendships seem to have an organic quality and appear to evolve naturally, as two people are drawn together due to similar interests, activities, and personalities. However, it is also apparent that educators can do a number of things to help expand both the quantity and quality of children's friendships; helping children to become more inclusive and to more effectively connect with others who differ from them or who struggle to engage socially (Guralnick, Neville, Hammond, & Connor, 2007; Kemple, 2004; Nangle et al, 2003; Staub, 1998).

Learning about Friendship through Literature

Children's literature provides an excellent medium to help young readers learn about many different types of social phenomena, including friendship (Lacina & Griffith, 2014; Roberts & Crawford, 2008). Through literature, children have the opportunity to access developmentally appropriate information about high quality friendships, as well as more problematic ones. As is well noted, literature provides both illuminative and reflective qualities that invite readers to look

intently at their own life experiences and perspectives, while also gaining insight into the lives of others (Bishop, 1990; Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Crawford & Calabria, 2018; Short, 2009; Wanless & Crawford, 2016). In particular, picturebooks provide the opportunity for authors and illustrators to offer multimodal, richly-layered stories that invite readers to consider information, weigh sensitive issues, and consider multiple perspectives of characters, all within the confines of a short, and accessible text (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001; Wolfenbarger & Sipe, 2007).

In the sections that follow, we consider picturebooks as sources from which readers can learn about friendship. Specifically, we consider messages that these texts offer related to the areas of initiating friendships, sustaining friendships, and navigating challenges within friendships. Introductory comments and touchstone texts are provided for each of these areas.

Initiating Friendships

Imagine a playground filled with children playing on swings, climbing gyms, or at a water table filled with all sorts of toys and containers. As children play, it is easy to observe how they glimpse at each other, and then how the glimpse becomes a lingering look, a smile, and a welcoming expression. The tentative looks of interest can be observed between all of us as we rest on park benches, survey playgrounds, and look up from our phones in waiting rooms. The noticing of another is the fragile beginning of an affiliation that can lead to a deeper sense of camaraderie.   Friendships become initiated when we realize kindred experiences and recognize reciprocal feelings of trust and loyalty.

Sam and Jump (Mann, 2016) is a provocative text that illustrates the trust and loyalty experienced by two boys whose friendship begins on a sandy beach littered with sand pails, shovels, and toys. As the story begins, Sam goes to the beach accompanied by his family and best friend, Jump, a stuffed bunny. While building sandcastles, Sam meets Thomas, another child and fellow beach-goer. They play together happily and agree to meet again the next day. All goes well until the ride home, when Sam realizes that Jump was forgotten on the shore. After a restless night, they return to the beach, but Jump is not to be found. Happiness is restored only when Thomas arrives, with Jump tucked safely inside his sand pail. "Now Sam and Thomas-- and Jump-- are best friends" (n. p.). With scant text, the story probes these relationships, and the different types of security found within them. Together, words and pictures depict the initiation and development of a blossoming friendship.

In *Snappsy the Alligator and His Best Friend Forever! (Probably)*, Falatko & Miller (2017) nicely capture the proverbial dance that occurs when individuals are identifying new friends, defining relationships, and in some cases establishing relational boundaries. This graphic-rich book details a conversation between an unlikely pair, Snappsy the Alligator and Bert, his loyal chicken sidekick, who serves as story narrator. Bert admires everything that Snappsy says and does, and wants to be with him all the time. Snappsy is unconvinced they are destined to be friends and at times doesn't even seem to notice Bert's efforts. After many miscues, all hope for friendship seems to be lost. A satisfying turn around occurs when *both* animals realize they need and value the friendship. This seemingly light and humorous book raises important questions about how one might identify potential friends and behave in the early stages of friendship.

A decidedly more serious perspective of initiating friendship is presented in *The Day War Came* (Davies & Cobb, 2018). Inspired by a true story, this haunting book depicts the utter loneliness a young refugee experiences as the pain of war pervades her life and seemingly follows her to new places. Her agony is exacerbated when she is not welcomed in her new land and a teacher turns her away from school, "There is no room for you, you see. There is no chair for you to sit on. You have to go away" (n. p.). Light enters her darkness when a child knocks on her door, offering a chair so that she can come to class, and promises that the other classmates are doing the same so all children can attend school. Through an act of kindness, new friendships begin, "[p]ushing back the war with every step" (n. p.). This is a powerful tale that invites readers to enlarge their vision of who can be a friend and to take the necessary generous, caring actions required to make these friendships happen.

Sustaining Friendships

Mutual trust and loyalty are part of the affective threads tying together friendship. The affective ties become stronger as feelings and thoughts are shared. Friends laugh, smile, look at each other, talk, and mimic each other more readily than with other individuals (Hartup, W.W. & Stevens, N., 1999). Our interactions as friends are often focused on activities that require us to cooperate, and cooperation necessitates compromising and working out differences. Negotiation makes a friendship elastic, thus the tugs and pulls of disagreement will stretch the friendship rather than break the affiliative bonds. At these less than ideal moments of a friendship, conflict is resolved when we look within, recognize our part in causing problems, and then attempt to repair the ties of friendship. The willingness to compromise and resolve conflict is a hallmark of a sturdy friendship as illustrated in the following books.

Starting a friendship is one thing. Sustaining it is another. In *How Do Dinosaurs Stay Friends*, Yolen and Teague (2016) ask readers simple, but important, questions about what one must do to sustain a friendship during difficult times: "How does a dinosaur keep his best friend when a terrible fight just might signal the end?" (n. p.). The lyrical rhymes and engaging illustrations will capture children's interest. Meanwhile, this clever text offers concrete advice on ways to help resolve relational problems: one could apologize in person, send a note of explanation, invite the friend in question to play, or share a snack to start the healing process. The book ends on a reassuring note, reminding readers "that even though friends may occasionally fight, there is always a way to make everything right" (n. p.).

The Big Balloon (Scheffler, 2013) provides a reminder that small things matter in the life of a friendship. Pip and Posy have a day about town, showing off Pip's beautiful, big, red balloon. Then, in one sad moment, the balloon slips away; soaring higher and higher until it pops. Pip is inconsolable until Posy comes up with an idea. She invites Pip to make bubbles with her. Like the balloon, the bubbles soar high and pop, but Pip and Posy don't mind. Fun and happiness is restored. Ideal for the very young, this book invites children to understand their own sense of agency. When a friend is troubled, they can do small things that make a big difference.

Yak and Gnu (MacIver & Chapman, 2015) is the lyrical story of two friends who love to sail: "This is Yak, this is Gnu--/the best of friends,/ dear and true./ Yak has a kayak,/ Gnu a canoe./ Yak's is black./ Gnu's is blue." As the two set out, they sing a happy song that celebrates their friendship and their unique ability to sail together: "No one else/ but you and me/ can float a

boat/or sail the sea" (n. p.). Much to their surprise, they are quickly joined by many others. A virtual animal kingdom arrives on a host of different vessels. Their surprise turns to anger and sadness when they realize they are surrounded by many who can do the same things that they can. Their strong emotions fade when they realize that no matter what else happens or who is around, they always have each other. Even in the midst of a crowd, their friendship goes on, special and unique. This poignant, yet whimsical tale, invites readers to think about "next steps" in friendships. What happens when the uniqueness of a special friendship seems to wear off? How does one sustain a friendship, when surrounded by many others?

Navigating Challenges within Friendships

Proximity is often a stable characteristic that allows friendships to flourish at school, clubs, sports, and work. When proximity changes, friendships can be weakened, particularly for children who cannot independently navigate new distances occurring in place and time. In such circumstances affective ties become undone and companionship fades. Alliances become less reliable when friends grow apart in interests or when one friend no longer keeps confidences safe. When misunderstandings do occur, the friendship becomes disrupted with conflict and rivalry leading to emotional disengagement. The following books offer glimpses into the challenges of friendships when the ties that bind are tested. In the first two examples, the friendship challenges have happy outcomes and appear to be repaired "just in time." The fate of the friendship in the third example, *My Best Friend* (Rodman & Lewis, 2004)*,* looks less promising*.* Although a new relationship will not be a replica of a previous friendship, picture books can assist children in recognizing that all friendships are similar, therefore, they will again experience mutual positive regard, shared interests, and companionship with a new friend.

In *Are We Still Friends?* (Horowitz & Gómez, 2017), powerful lessons about the importance of communication are provided in the form of a nature-based metaphor. With their yards separated by only a small wall, Beatrice the bear and Abel the mouse are happy neighbors. Abel grows apples and Beatrice raises bees. Bea's bees pollinate Abel's apple trees to make a sweet honey, while Abel's trees produce the most delicious apples. The friends help each other and enjoy the fruit of their collective labor in the form of tasty apple butter and sweet honey. All goes well until Abel gets stung by a startled bee. Suddenly, a series of misunderstandings occur, in which each neighbor thinks the other has no empathy. Is it possible that Bea is actually laughing at Abel's pain? The two fall into a war of words, refusing to see one another. Meanwhile, outside, the bees continue doing what they always do, buzzing and pollinating, and helping wonderful apples to grow. Life goes on. It is not until the pair hits a crisis that they are willing to reconcile and renew their friendship. This bright, colorful picturebook shows that it's easy to be friends… until something goes wrong. Then, it requires understanding, patience, and effort to make the relationship work.

 In *The Two Tims*, Elliott and Aborozo (2016) explore a common challenge in friendships: How can close friends expand the boundaries of the relationship by including others?   In this story, two boys, both named Tim, are best buddies who love to do all the same things and go everywhere together. All goes well until Tom, a third boy, enters the picture. Predictably, things quickly change, with two boys pairing off in different turns and the third boy feeling left out of the trio. Using an economy of words and an upbeat tone, the author captures the growing pains

that often occur when a pair of friends enlarges to become a group of three. In the end, the two Tims and a Tom find that they can all be best friends.

Are all friendships meant to be? Do they always end happily? Rodman and Lewis (2005) probe these questions through their poignant picturebook, *My Best Friend.* Each week, six-year-old Lily ventures to the pool to play with her best friend, seven-year-old Tamika. The only problem is that Tamika does not seem to know they are best friends. Each week, Lily tries to impress, cajole and attract Tamika. However, it is all to no avail, since Tamika almost always chooses to spend time with someone else, casting Lily in the role of a "baby" who simply tries too hard. Lily wonders, "How can I make her be my friend?" (n. p.). In the end, she realizes that she can't and turns her attention to another little girl who clearly wants to be her friend. The well-told story, accompanied by Lewis' luminescent illustrations, has strong emotional pull, raising questions about how to navigate one-sided friendships, and ultimately how to maintain self-respect in situations in which friendship goes unrequited.

Sharing Friendship-Oriented Literature with Children

Children's picturebooks offer a plethora of opportunities for children to learn the lessons of friendship. Surely, many children will benefit from simply having the opportunity to read these books or to listen as the books are read aloud to them. However, an abundance of research indicates that children gain much more from their literary experiences when they have an opportunity to transact deeply with texts; to read closely and respond to the print and visual messages within them (Panteleo, 2008; Rosenblatt, 1994; Sipe, 2007; Wiseman, 2011). The need for this deep type of transaction is particularly important when the content of texts address a complex, multilayered social phenomenon such as friendship. Young readers need the opportunity to read deeply as they consider their lives in light of the text and the text in light of their lived experiences. Repeated readings and the opportunity to look closely at illustrations within the text can help to facilitate these deep readings.

Educators can support children's transactions with friendship-themed picturebooks in a number of practical ways. First, teachers might consider ways in which they can surround the reading of these books with opportunities for rich talk and discussion. This can be done through the implementation of interactive read alouds; shared reading experiences which include opportunities for children to interact with the text, as well as with the teacher and other children who are listening to the story (Panteleo, 2008; Wiseman, 2011). This type of read aloud allows for discussion and can be used as an invitation for children to make verbal connections between the story and their own life experiences with the topic. In this way, the texts can be used as a springboard for discussing student observations about friendship in both their literary and lived experiences. Literature circles, small group experiences in which readers have rich, student-led discussions based on texts, offer another excellent opportunity for children to pose questions and talk about the models of friendship they see in literature (Peterson & Eeds, 1990). Teachers might also consider ways in which children can respond to these books through writing, the visual arts, or dramatic role play experiences. Ultimately, educators can use friendship-oriented literature as an invitation to praxis, as tools that provide tangible support to children as they seek out new friends and work through both the joys and challenging quirks that occur within friendships.

Concluding Thoughts

Friendships are among the most treasured and important experiences in the lives of children. These relationships offer opportunities to learn to get along and to make that all important human connection. As children engage with friends they have ongoing opportunities to mature and to discover ways in which friendships can be sources of joy, confidence, and companionship. Reflective of Woodrow Wilson's words, children can begin to see that friendship may indeed be the "cement that holds the whole world together." Picturebooks, and the thoughtful pedagogical experiences that surround them, can accompany children on this developmental journey, providing reassuring models and serving as crucial informational sources about the power, processes, and potential of friendship for their lives.

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Pictures for Reflection

As young children dress-up, they rehearse, they try on different roles. Sometimes, children approximate the familiar roles of a parent, teacher or community helper; in other instances, children assume the super powers of a s/hero, and other times, they try-on the costumes, conversations, and characters from television programs and movies. In all instances, children use clothes and props to assume a different persona. Young children, lacking power and authority, now fly, disappear, and save the world.

Adults, observing children's fantasy role play, gain insight into children's feelings. When children role play together, they reverse roles and practice perspective-taking. Children's fantasy play originates from somewhere - a piece of children's literature, a movie, or the television. Dress up is appropriate for children and allows them safe experimentation of dress, role, and language. Providing children the time, props, and foundations for role play is healthy, fun, and contributes to children's emerging sense of self and other.

And, when a young child is not quite sure of a particular role, they may try on several roles to see what happens.

EdTech - Where Do I Start?

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When we think about educational technology (edtech), we may picture in our minds a teacher using PowerPoint during a lesson, or a room of computers with students huddled around screens, or individual students working on laptops that are perched on desks. We may visualize iPads with educational games located at student learning centers, or clicker systems used in the classroom for both engagement and assessment, or particular software that students participate when home. Certainly, these are all examples of educational technology tools; however, before implementing any technology with students, the first step is for teachers to ask, "What is the purpose of educational technology and where do I begin?"

Technology demonstrates many functions in education. For example, to support teachers it can be used to streamline tasks, such as lesson planning, communicating, tracking tasks and maintaining grades, managing student profiles, and organizing and presenting instructional content. Technology can also be used to increase student engagement. For example, students practice skills learned on various software platforms, such as educational games. Using technology, they create graphs, flyers, posters, drawings, and even their own apps. Students work collaboratively, engage in innovative and design thinking, and demonstrate mastery in multiple ways. There are so many possibilities that teachers and students can do with the appropriate educational tools.

There are multiple pieces of the puzzle to consider when using edtech in the classroom. Teachers take into account student interests and needs, accessibility, costs, needed system supports, maintenance, and the time it takes to learn these new technologies. For many teachers, this last

consideration regarding time and the learning curve, becomes the initial and overwhelming thought and frequently diminishes the process of using edtech in the classroom. "It is just too daunting, too time consuming, and too risky." Educators know technology is an integral part of our society. Classroom teachers acknowledge the responsibility to prepare our students for their future; a future of learning, a future of change, and a future with jobs that do not even yet exist. For these reasons, teachers become technically proactive in students' futures, not with all of the answers, but with the skills and mindset to tackle problems as they arise and the commitment to prepare students to the best of their ability.

The first step to initiate on the journey of integrating edtech is to do a self-check, a sort of personal inventory describing your own personal beliefs about how you learn as well as reflecting on how your students' learn. If you believe learning is an exciting and time consuming process; that making mistakes is part of that process; and that you can learn new things with time and effort; then chances are you believe the same thing about your students. It is significant for teachers to exhibit a growth mindset as well as promote a growth mindset in their students. This growth mind-set is integral in order to ensure students explore different alternatives and become life-long learners.

Importantly, it is not necessary for teachers to "go it alone to figure out the complex world of edtech." There exist many available resources to help navigate the deep and seemingly treacherous waters of using educational technology in classrooms. Professional organizations, professional learning networks (PLNs), webinars, blogs, chats, and even people in your own building who serve as a resource for support. See below criteria to consider when integrating edtech into classroom life.

The International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE) is a global network of educators who believes in the power of technology to transform teaching and learning. ISTE is worth the time and effort to become familiar. ISTE publishes two peer-reviewed journals, numerous books, hosts an annual conference, offers professional learning, and evidences a community of educators to connect with and learn. They also have standards (for educators, students, administrators, coaches, and computer science teachers) that serve as a framework for creating innovative learning environments. The seven standards for educators represent an initial place for teachers to begin considering how to approach educational technology. These standards can be found at https://www.iste.org/standards/for-educators. The seven ISTE Standards for Educators include:

1. Learner – Educators continually improve their practice by learning from and with others and exploring proven and promising practices that leverage technology to improve student learning.

2. Leader - Educators seek out opportunities for leadership to support student empowerment and success and to improve teaching and learning.

3. Citizen – Educators inspire students to positively contribute to and responsibly participate in the digital world.

4. Collaborator – Educators dedicate time to collaborate with both colleagues and students to improve practices, discover and share resources and ideas, and solve problems.

5. Designer – Educators design authentic, learner-driven activities and environments that recognize and accommodate learner variability.

6. Facilitator - Educators facilitate learning with technology to support student achievement of the ISTE Standards for Students.

7. Analyst - Educators understand and use data to drive their instruction and support students in achieving their learning goals.

These standards set the bar for educators to strive for in considering implementing educational technology tool use in classrooms. Remember, it is not critical teachers demonstrate proficiency in any of the ISTE Standards; rather, to begin the journey, teachers just remain willing to use them as a framework.

Teachers can also use resources to help learn more about and vet educational technology options. Common Sense Education (https://www.commonsense.org/education) is an independent, non-profit organization whose mission to improve the lives of students and families by providing information about media and technology. This is a go-to place to read a short synopsis of the edtech tool under consideration and perhaps find a short tutorial video of the edtech tool.

Another step to take on the journey of integrating edtech is to become a member of an online professional learning network (PLN) or maybe two, or even three. Twitter is an opportunity to follow people or groups and just read; then, when you are ready, enter into chats by asking questions and responding to posts. You can search for an organization like @ISTE and @commonsenseed, or a journal such as @EdTech_K12, or even search for an individual you know, an author or presenter, or the technology coach at your own or a nearby school. An additional resource is The Educator's PLN (http://edupln.ning.com/) which is a social networking site for teachers with over 11,000 members and more than 100 different specialty groups (i.e. fifth grade teachers, game based learning, Web 2.0 Emerging Technology). Educators PLN's include tutorials, blogs, videos, chats, and instructions on how to get started.

In the process of discovering your particular PLNs, become a "lurker" (someone who reads others' posts without posting themselves). Take a few minutes each day to check your twitter feed and read what's new. Then start retweeting and asking questions. Read what Commonsense Education reports about an edtech tool in which you are interested.   Download the app Pocket and place articles that you do not have time to read now, but will read later.

Next, just try out something new. Be bold, be brave, and be empowered. Start somewhere. Allow students to introduce themselves on a Flipgrid, pre-assess students on a Kahoot!, communicate with parents and guardians with Remind.com, solicit student thinking in a Padlet, convert a PowerPoint into an interactive Nearpod presentation, or support students demonstrating their understanding on a Canva flyer.

Finally and importantly, reflect on the process. Identify which edtech tool works well, which tool usage requires tweaking, and which tech implementation warrants re-thinking. Critically, solicit feedback from your students. Ask students their thinking on what edtech tools you try to use, how they feel about the different edtech tools, and how the lesson might be improved. Remember that edtech is a tool whose purpose is to suit the task. Think about how to use edtech to get more student engagement, promote deeper learning, and more easily collect and analyze data to inform instruction. Continue to work on improving. And, with your students, you will discover how much fun edtech can be!

Family Literacy Events: A Framework for Teacher Candidates

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Introduction and Background

Trelease (2013) believes that a "nation that does not read much does not know much and therefore is more likely to make poor choices in the home, the marketplace, the jury box, and the voting booth" (p. xxvi). Literacy continues to be an essential must for individual and community well-being. Families represent a crucial role in the literacy development of their children, and family involvement is associated with numerous benefits for children, families, schools, and communities (Chance, 2010; Livingston & Wirt, 2003). In addition to research findings describing how family perceptions of reading frame literacy practices, data also support the proactive influence of parents as children's initial literacy models (Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Yet, teacher candidates, as they newly prepare to enter the educational profession, may not always understand this integral connection between classroom and family learning (Falk-Ross, Beilfuss, & Orem, 2010). Consequently, in order to establish the groundwork for the significance of family literacy and further, to provide teacher candidates with a framework toward building this critical relationship between families and schools, this discussion describes how a genuine need exists for university coursework to include a variety of relevant experiential service-learning opportunities.

In particular, in our increasingly diverse and complex school learning communities, ensuring teacher candidates participate in "real schools with real families" is integral toward building positive family school relationships. Toward establishing networking on behalf of children and families, collaborative planning for family literacy events is a viable alternative to connect families, local schools, university colleagues, and community agencies.

Contemporary teachers, viewing each family as an asset, honor and extend children's current literacy learning. In order to foster optimal literacy learning experiences for all children, teachers respect children's unique and personal contexts including cultural, socio-economic, ethnic, ability, and language differences.

In planning a family literacy event, it is important for the university to communicate collaboratively with both local elementary schools and community agencies. Interactions during family literacy events include immersing teacher candidates in real-world professional development, building relationships between teacher and families, and connecting families with relevant community agencies.

Funding and Support

Practitioners evidence a key role in identifying partners and resources to plan and implement family literacy events. Community organizations such as *Read to Succeed*, *Books from Birth*, and the *Children's Reading Foundation* support schools by providing books, volunteers, and resources. Business sponsors may provide meals, volunteers, and/or financial support. Parent-teacher organizations or school district resources also provide assistance.

Funding for meals, books, and materials often become available through both university public service and community-based grants. In collaboration with university faculty, teacher candidates and classroom teachers identify different grant resources to support family literacy programs. An initial starting place is to look at public service grants provided by local universities. Additionally, community-based grants also provide possibilities for funding. Importantly, identify funding that specifically describes the needs of the school and children you wish to support.

Writing the Proposal: Important to Know

Most successfully written grants include the following six major components:
        1) target group to be served
        2) location
        3) rationale
        4) objectives
        5) estimate of funds
        6) evaluation.

Target Group. Perhaps, the most critical first-step is to identify the target group.   This means, "who will this funding immediately serve?" Once the children and families become intentionally identified, the remaining components will naturally follow. Ask yourself: Will it be a school wide event (often the case for a Title 1 school) or a specific population such as English New Language (ENL) Learners?

      Grant writers consider:
      Why am I identifying this particular group?
      What is the purpose for the event?
      What are the outcomes the school intends to achieve?
      How can an evaluation inform teachers' instruction and children's learning?
      Location. In identifying a school to support, questions to consider include:

Where is the most critical need in your service area?

Are there local schools requesting assistance in the area of family literacy and community involvement?

Are there Title 1 schools that barely miss this designation and lack the funds to support a family literacy event?

Rationale Justification. The rationale/justification is the "why" of the family literacy event. For this component, it is important the grant writers know - truly know- their population. Additionally, identifying existing research to support their funding claims is beneficial. For example, in justifying the importance of the family literacy event, a key component includes describing how and why each participating child receives a copy of one of the featured books to own and take home. Regarding the take-home book, contrary to appearing as merely a door prize, research clearly demonstrates the critical importance of providing children access to literature; family engagement remains as a critical concern in literacy education (International Literacy Association, 2018).

Identifying Objectives. When Identifying objectives, write as an advocate for the family. Be consistent describing advocating the importance of family literacy; objectives support families' emerging understanding of how to implement best literacy practices in the home.

Estimating Funds. Funding depends on the numbers of children and families to be served. Scholastic is an extraordinary resource to purchase books in large quantities at reasonable prices. Also, book companies such as Barnes & Noble will often give discounts for such events, and local literacy agencies represent access to different book outlets who can offer reduced prices on many titles.

Evaluation. Importantly, *e*valuation originates with school personnel and families. Classroom teachers and family members become involved in the assessment as a process and thereby, ensure facilitating their particular school needs. University faculty members assist in designing the questions, collecting the information, and analyzing the data. The evaluation process, however, is unique to each school community; university faculty remain as support personnel.

The Teacher Candidate

Critical to the current discussion is a consideration of the importance of teacher candidates' emerging awareness of the relationship across the classroom, family, and community. In meeting the needs and abilities of a diverse student population, in order to be effective, the contemporary teacher builds upon and extends from children's home literacy experiences. Involving teacher candidates in a range of family literacy events provides real-life opportunities for preparing teachers to understand effective instruction is not about a lesson plan, but instead about relationship-building. Helping teacher candidates to deeply reflect upon the range of experiences occurring during family literacy events provides abundant professional development. Through meaningful interactions, reflective papers, and critical discussions, teacher candidates

begin to understand that genuine learning is supported by the family in the home; teachers and families collaborate and become partners in children's learning.

As a teacher education instructional strategy, providing teacher candidates with this grant-writing family literacy framework, describes not only the importance of establishing this school-community connection, but as well provides emerging teachers with strategies to maintain and extend this integral school-home relationship. The aim of the grant becomes two-fold: to improve children's and families' literacy as well as to establish a school-home rapport. But, all schools, all children, and all communities are not the same. "What specific needs and issues do I consider that most clearly represent the unique characteristics of this school-home connection?" Providing this ability to personalize the particular school-home connection significantly enhances the grant proposal.

Teacher Candidates and the Process

Collaborating with building principals, literacy coaches, and university faculty represent a team approach for writing a grant. After the grant funding is secured, teacher candidates also become instrumental in the process of implementation. The following example illustrates a framework for implementation.

First, identify a theme and a featured book (s). Then, under the supervision of the university faculty, teacher candidates work together to organize, plan, and lead literacy activities. The literacy activities follow a cross curricular focus incorporating social studies, art, science, music, and math which relate to the featured book (s). Featured books include both fiction and informational texts; activities may include graphing favorite foods to reader's theatre to making slime to creating journals!

Examples of featured books include: *Grace for President* (DiPucchio, 2012), *Math Curse* (Scieszka and Smith, 1995), *The Three Ninja Pigs* (Schwartz, 2012), and fiction/non-fiction selections from the *Magic Tree House* series. Additionally, community organizations supply a meal /snack for families to enjoy, provide information at a community resources table, and identify volunteers to assist with check-in and family photo opportunities.

Guided by the leadership of the teacher candidates, families participate together in the literacy activities including an interactive read aloud. This capacity to interact, communicate and share becomes the essence of family literacy learning. Each participating child receives a personal copy of the featured book (s) for them to keep and enjoy as well as any materials used during the learning activities. This take-home aspect is a critical component of the family literacy event; research clearly evidences book ownership is a lasting and positive impact on children's achievement (Selmawit & Washington, 2013).

Conclusion

In addition to fostering the importance of children's literacy learning and engaging teacher candidates' civic responsibility, family literacy events also evidence supporting the local schools, partner universities, and nearby community agencies. Through family literacy events, the local schools interact and build relationships with their children's families, university programs network and support local schools, and community agencies become visible and accessible to families. In other words, family literacy events become a win-win-win-win-win for all participants – the families, local schools, community agencies, and teacher candidates, but above all, the children benefit.

Importantly, as teacher candidates move forward in their chosen profession, they begin to acquire the knowledge, skill, and personal experience to effectively become a partner in grant funding and as well understand how to be supportive in the literacy event implementation and subsequent evaluation. In all regards, teacher candidates become more effective practitioners as they follow through and extend this collaborative role as they become classroom teachers. Providing teacher candidates with a range of opportunities to collaborate in grant-writing as well as to participate in family literacy events, allow first-hand experience regarding the personal and integral connection between classroom learning and family learning.

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