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“Stop Messin’ with Something!” Children Negotiate Collaborative, Multimodal Responses to Literature: a Study of Fifth-Graders’ Composing Processes, Identities, and Positioning

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“Stop messin’ with something!”

CHILDREN NEGOTIATE COLLABORATIVE, MULTIMODAL RESPONSES TO LITERATURE: A STUDY OF FIFTH-GRADERS’ COMPOSING PROCESSES, IDENTITIES, AND POSITIONING

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Colorado in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy School of Education 2016
This thesis entitled:
“Stop messin’ with something!”
Children Negotiate Collaborative, Multimodal Responses to Literature:
A Study of Fifth-Graders’ Composing Processes,
Identities, and Positioning
written by Kimberly McDavid Schmidt
has been approved for the School of Education

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Date __November 8, 2016

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

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ABSTRACT

Schmidt, Kimberly McDavid (Ph.D., School of Education)

Stop messin’ with something!” Children Negotiate Collaborative, Multimodal Responses to Literature: A Study of Fifth-Graders’ Composing Processes, Identities, and Positioning

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Bridget Dalton

This qualitative, comparative case study explored how fifth-grade students in an urban elementary classroom collaboratively composed multimodal responses to literature through the use of digital devices such as Chromebooks. Over several weeks, students critically read several of Jacqueline Woodson’s books. Then, students collaboratively composed multimodal slide presentations in Google Apps, analyzing literary themes, textual evidence, and personal connections to literature. This study examined two group’s collaborative and multimodal design processes, focusing on students’ positioning, identities, and roles in relation to the tools, project goals, and discourses related to school success and race.

Multimodal analysis yielded four key findings. First, Group 1 collaborated by messin’ with the tools and one another, to negotiate ownership in direct and playful ways throughout the composing process, and Group 2 collaborated by negotiating complimentary roles where they took turns listening to one another and performing different roles, even when they disagreed. Although there was substantial variation in group processes, both groups were successful within the project parameters, suggesting that variation in composing processes can be valuable. Second, students took on new roles that positioned them as successful collaborators, readers, and writers in ways that differed from their classroom identities. However, this sometimes resulted in
unequal contributions between group members, with some students having more opportunity to impact the presentation and develop composition and collaboration skills. Third, students negotiated power and control through the use of shared and individual digital devices, suggesting that tools play an important role in collaborative processes. Finally, students in both groups positioned themselves apart from and in relation to the discourses of race present in Woodson’s books. Group 2 compared Woodson’s experiences to their own immigration experiences, while Group 1 distanced themselves from the experiences in the literature. These findings broaden our understanding of how students collaborate as they use digital tools to create multimodal responses to literature, offering new insights about students’ collaborative processes, positioning, and identities in small groups.
I dedicate this dissertation to my family, my husband Jason Schmidt and my children, Jake, Anna, and Garret. Thank you for your unwavering support in this huge endeavor.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am extremely appreciative of the time I spent with Ms. Moore and the students at Henry Elementary in this research project. Ms. Moore believed in the abilities of all students and let children express themselves creatively and emotionally, always doing her best to support them. Furthermore, the students were brilliant, brave, and savvy with their digital expertise. Jillian, Rhianna, Isa, Yannet, and Lucia taught me to explore the unexpected and follow their lead in the ways they made Jacqueline Woodson’s literature meaningful. Also, I thank the principal, Ms. Kelly, who was the heart of the culture of the school, and believed education was the hope for the students. She accepted all students at her school, and saw the potential in each of them.

To my dissertation chair, Dr. Bridget Dalton, with deep respect, I appreciate your friendship and mentorship through many conversations, detailed feedback, and support along the way. You led me to join conversations that exist in the field of multimodal composition, while extending research in a way that reflects my personal interests. Thank you for inspiring me through your passion, your careful listening, and your encouragement that the research study was strong.

To my committee members, Dr. Elizabeth Dutro, Dr. Susan Jurow, Dr. Silvia Noguerón-Liu, and Dr. Bianca Williams, thank you for your leadership in your respective fields. You have inspired me through your strength, as you pursue your passions and lead others to do the same. You taught me to reflect upon my positionality as a researcher, and the ways in which people, students, and researchers negotiate identities in academia and in schools amidst competing discourses about what it means to be a woman, a woman of color, a researcher, and a teacher in the current political climate. Thank you for your heartfelt conversations and your advice in your respective fields.
To Shelby Wolf, my first advisor and mentor at CU Boulder, for your friendship and mentorship. With loving fondness, I remember your passion for teaching, your love for literature, and your care for graduate students as you encouraged me to attend to my family as well as pursue my academic goals. I miss your read alouds and laughter.

To my teachers and colleagues, for your wisdom and leadership in your respective fields, I deeply respect your diverse perspectives and backgrounds. In particular, my CSR research group was my CU family. These wise, compassionate women were my friends and colleagues who commiserated with me about life and our important research in middle schools.

To my family and friends, for your support along the way of this journey. You were accustomed to seeing the computer attached to my fingertips. I hope that I inspire you to someday pursue your dreams, no matter how big they seem, and I look forward to experiencing the simple things with you shortly, like reading books. Thank you Dad for your fine-grain editing, and Mom for helping me transport kids while I spent hours at the library. I appreciate your unwavering support.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The adoption of digital devices is proliferating within classrooms and across schools. Currently, students have more access to computers than ever before: one computer for every five students. Also, schools access free online resources and adopt devices for standardized testing, where tests are administered through individual, digital devices (Harold, 2016).

National standards are changing to reflect the current technology landscape. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) incorporate media into reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills (Dalton, 2012). The International Society for Technology in Education (2016) recently refined seven standards that identify the types of digital learners we need for the future, including empowered learners, digital citizens, and global collaborators, to name a few. Global collaborators are described in this way: “Students use digital tools to broaden their perspectives and enrich their learning by collaborating with others and working effectively in teams locally and globally” (“ISTE Standards for Students,” 2016). Thus, the adoption of digital devices and their integration in learning opportunities is increasingly being addressed in schools and in standards.

Despite the increase in technology, teachers sometimes find it challenging to integrate new and innovative practices in their classrooms. Cummins (2008) reports that disparities based on students’ socioeconomic status have created a “pedagogical divide in the way new technologies are used to support instruction and a corresponding cognitive divide in the way students use the new technologies to support different forms of learning.” (p. 98) Specifically, Gorski (2008) and Cummins (2008) suggest that teachers who teach students of color and
students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds don’t have adequate support to foster collaborative and innovative technology experiences for students. This pedagogical divide results in inequities for students, where students do not have equal opportunities to use digital devices to pursue their interests and experience critical thinking versus rote learning of skills. In some cases, digital devices such as iPads may provide programs that focus on isolated decoding and comprehension skills, in lieu of critical thinking. Because of our current pedagogical divide and inequitable opportunities for students of color and from low-socioeconomic backgrounds, more research is needed that focuses on the ways technology facilitates 21st century skills, such as collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity for all students (“Framework for 21st Century Learning,” n.d.).

The overarching goal of this study was to develop, enact, and study children’s experiences within a multimodal composition project designed to engage them in meaningful learning and collaboration. The study took place at Henry Elementary (pseudonym used throughout), an urban elementary school where the adoption and integration of Chromebooks in classrooms changed the learning experiences of students. In Ms. Moore’s classroom, students used technology throughout a variety of learning experiences, viewing YouTube videos, recording questions in Google Documents, and creating multimodal projects in math and language arts. For the author study that was the focus of this study, Chromebooks were utilized for two purposes: 1) for collaboration as students created shared, synchronous presentations in Google Slides, and 2) for academics, as students synthesized themes with supporting evidence from literature authored by Jacqueline Woodson.

A body of research shows the benefits of collaborative, multimodal compositions for students in classrooms (Dalton, 2014, 2015; Husbye et al., 2012; Jocius, 2015; Ranker, 2009;
Shanahan, 2013; Smith, 2014; Thomas, 2012). First, in some studies, students collaboratively created projects in partners and small groups in social, collaborative processes that enhanced meaning making (Dalton & Jocius, 2013; Dwyer, 2013; Henry, Castek, O’Byrne, & Zawilinski, 2012; Husbye et al., 2012; Jocius, 2015; Mills, 2007; Ranker, 2009; Shanahan, 2013; Stahl, Koschmann, & Suthers, 2006). As students collaborated, student negotiated varying roles in composing processes, such as leader and suggestion-maker. Secondly, students were repositioned as agents of learning when they utilized multimodal modes, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modes, as compared to print-based modes (Dalton, 2012; Pantaleo, 2013; Ranker, 2008; Thomas, 2012). Students were also repositioned as literate members of the classroom when they took up new identities in literacy activities that utilized digital devices (Collins, 2011; Panteleo, 2013; Vasudevan et al., 2010). Thirdly, young children enacted multimodal selves through performances (Husbye et al., 2012; Lapp, Moss, & Rowsell, 2012; Silvers, Shorey, & Crafton, 2010; Wohlwend, 2009), such as filmmaking, through the use of video (Husbye et al., 2012). Finally, students’ cultural resources transferred into their multimodal projects as the students described community experiences, narrated immigration stories, and played with objects, such as toys, in their multimodal products and performances (Husbye et al., 2012; Pandya et al., 2015; Vasudevan et al., 2010; Wohlwend, 2009).

Despite the benefits of multimodal and digital compositions, little research shows the complexity of students’ positioning and opportunities to take up new roles and identities. Mills (2007) illustrated that students did not have equal access to multiliteracies because of student groupings where certain students were excluded from muliliteracies. Dutro (2010) examined the way students revealed personal experiences in their written responses about lived experiences of poverty in relation to their expected responses from a mandated curriculum. Furthermore, Marsh
(2011) examined how collaborative groups led to complex positioning, including the exclusion of others.

Given the dearth of research on multimodal composition and students’ positioning and identities within collaborative groups of elementary and middle-school students, I argue more research is needed that focuses on these areas. Thus, my study fills a unique niche by adding to and expanding current research situated in multimodal composition. In this study, I examine how students negotiated positions and identities within tools and apps, project goals, and discourses. I also analyze students’ composing processes to understand how collaboration is enacted to achieve a joint slide show presentation, and interview students to obtain their views. As such, this study aims to extend previous research on multimodal composition research, adding insights about the complexity of positioning and identity in relation to roles and collaborative processes that are situated within discourses of race and success versus failure that were salient to the students in the study.

In this study, students created digital and multimodal presentations across two to three weeks, analyzing the themes, textual evidence, and personal connections throughout literature by Jacqueline Woodson. The study focuses on two focal groups of students, examining their collaborative processes and the ways they negotiate roles and express modal preferences. The purposes of this study are twofold: 1) The study adds to previous research on collaborative and multimodal projects to understand collaborative processes, roles, and modal expressions, and 2) the study extends current research focused on multimodal composition with an explicit focus on the positioning and identities of the students in the project.

Importantly, the multimodal project is situated in an author study of Jacqueline Woodson, an African American author who addresses a variety of racial issues throughout her literature.
This focus aligned with the culture of the school, and created opportunities for students to integrate cultural resources and negotiate competing discourses related to race and success versus failure in their interactions and discussions. Thus, their collaborative processes cannot be separated from the context and the culturally relevant literature that foregrounds and mediates the learning experiences of students. Therefore, the following two research questions guide this study:

- **Research Question #1:** How do fifth-grade students collaboratively negotiate their composing processes as they design a multimodal slide presentation in response to literature by Jacqueline Woodson?

  1a. How do students negotiate roles?

  1b. How do students express different modes?

- **Research Question #2:** How do students negotiate identities and positions as they critically discuss and respond to literature given the tools and apps, project goals, and discourses associated with school success and race?

**Overview of the Dissertation**

In chapter two, I discuss the conceptual framework from multimodal, sociocultural, and critical literacy perspectives to enrich the design of my study. Central to my study is the way in which all literacy texts and their related practices are multimodal, including multiple modes such as image, sound, movement, and print that are intentionally used in design processes (New London Group, 1996; Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2010). Furthermore, I utilize discourse, identity, and positioning to understand how children are positioned as they create collaborative, multimodal compositions. In the review of literature, I combine multimodal and critical literacy perspectives, focusing on multimodal composition and the use of digital tools. I analyze how students negotiate positions and identities in interactions with others and in macro structures. In chapter three, I present a detailed account of my methodologies, including my research setting,
participants, questions, and methodological tools. I explain my analysis in a three-step process in relation to the research questions. I employ qualitative interpretive work, micro analysis of student interactions, and tools from critical discourse analysis to understand students’ collaborative processes, positions, and identities negotiated within macro structures, such as the project goals designed within the district literacy framework.

In chapters four and five, I present in-depth case studies of two groups across thirteen composing sessions as they created multimodal presentations in response to literature authored by Jacqueline Woodson. Each chapter presents one case and is divided by the two research questions and main themes associated with collaborative processes and positioning and identity. The main themes for Research Question # 1 include: collaborative processes, both content and design elements, and the classroom identities, roles, and modal preferences of students. The main themes for Research Question # 2 include: positioning within tools, project goals, and discourses. Because I address collaborative processes and students’ classroom identities, roles, and modal preferences, each chapter examines each child individually and collaboratively in relation to the other group members.

In chapter four, I detail the collaborative processes of Case 1, or Group 1, that is comprised of three students: Isa, Rhianna and Jillian. Group 1 is known for its unique collaborative processes as the students declare that they collaborate when they get stuck, and layer design elements in one space. Chapter five illustrates the collaborative processes of Case 2, or Group 2, that includes two students: Yannet and Lucía. Group 2’s processes show how they debate and engage in teamwork to negotiate the ideas and design elements.

In chapters six and seven, I synthesize the study through a comparative case analysis, and discuss the contributions of the study in research focused on the collaborative, composing
processes of students, as well as their identities and positioning. Chapter six compares the two cases in relation to the two research questions and themes. Chapter seven presents a discussion of findings, situating the study within research focused on multimodal composition in relation to identity and positioning and illustrates unique contributions. I conclude with instructional implications and directions for future research.
CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In chapter two, I present my conceptual framework and a literature review focused on the positions and identities students negotiate as they collaboratively compose multimodal compositions. First, I theorize the study from multimodal, sociocultural, and critical literacy perspectives. Then, I review empirical research and descriptive pieces that employ multimodal and/or critical perspectives on multimodal composition, with a focus on the identities and positioning of students in collaborative processes. This review primarily focuses on elementary and middle school students, PK-8th grade, but includes adolescent research that is relevant to multimodal responses to literature.

In this study, critical and multimodal literacy perspectives are integrated into the conceptual framework, design, and analysis of students’ identities and positions. A growing corpus of studies analyzes students’ multimodal composition in elementary and middle school classrooms (Dalton et al., 2015; Husbye & Vander Zanden, 2015; Ranker, 2008; Shanahan, 2013; Thomas, 2012). Some of these studies address how youth express their identities through multimodal compositions in ways that may not be available in print-based text (Husbye, Buchholz, Coggin, Wessel-Powell, & Wohlwend, 2012; Pantaleo, 2013; Vasudevan, Schultz, & Bateman, 2010). Fewer studies describe the roles of students as they collaboratively work together in their composing processes (Dalton et al., 2015; Jocius, 2015, Smith, 2014). Yet, a dearth of literature exists that combines students’ collaborative composing processes with students’ negotiation of roles and identities. This review informs my study focused on the following research questions:
• **Research Question # 1**: How do fifth-grade students collaboratively negotiate their composing processes as they design a multimodal slide presentation in response to literature by Jacqueline Woodson?

1a. How do students negotiate roles?

1b. How do students express different modes?

• **Research Question # 2**: How do students negotiate identities and positions as they critically discuss and respond to literature given tools, project goals, and discourses associated with race and school success?

**Conceptual Framework**

**Multiliteracies and Multimodality Perspectives**

My literacy perspectives are grounded in multiliteracies, a body of work initiated by the New London Group (Cazden et al., 1996) that describes “new literacies” or new forms of communication that involve media and technology in contexts with increased cultural and linguistic diversity. A primary focus of this work includes the transformation of texts from traditional print-based texts to a broad array of texts (Mills, 2009), including video, hip-hop music, digital-storytelling, and blogs, to name a few. Multimodal composers draw upon all available tools and designs in meaning making situations, creating an intertextual blending of texts and genres. The New London Group (1996) describes people as active designers who can select resources including discourse, style, and genre, and multiple and overlapping modalities.

Kress (2010) expands traditional definitions of communication from written and print-based literacies to multimodal forms of expression including overlapping modes, such as visual, aural, and kinesthetic modalities. Kress argues that “various modes have particular potentials and limitations; and that different modes have been developed, articulated, and specialized in particular ways by different cultures.” (p. 194) As such, the mode of representation influences what can be communicated within cultural contexts and may restrict full forms of expression.
Literacy practices are multimodal as students read, compose, and perform ideas drawing on multiple semiotic resources or signs including language, image, gesture, sound, and action to compose (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2010). The production of multimodal texts includes multiple signs and modes such as the integration of sound through music, or emotion demonstrated through the mood of a song. Students are designers as they choose to create and fashion their social and semiotic world through an intentional design process that is shaped by power (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kress, 2010; New London Group, 1996). Because modalities are enacted from students’ positions in the world, they can be enacted in ways that offer new opportunities for children. As outside structures may influence the composing process, certain modes, and signs may be restricted (Kress, 2010). Vasudevan et al. (2010) argue that the affordances of multimodal expression are particularly helpful for students who struggle with print-based literacy, “who may need new invitations and modes in order to contribute to the classroom discourse.” (p. 465) Dalton (2014) extends this argument from a universal design for learning perspective, suggesting that offering students’ multiple modes of expression expands the communication palette, thereby contributing to more inclusive learning opportunities.

The composition process can be conceptualized as a social process drawing on multiple and dynamic modes that may be layered for meaning making purposes while expanding print-based and linguistic forms of communication (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2010; Vasudevan et al., 2010). Together these modes are made meaningful as they are layered, interwoven and fused to produce a unique artifact (Fraiberg, 2010). For example, in Dalton et al.’s (2015) study of fifth-grade students’ multimodal retellings of folktales, students designed with a variety of modes including visual design, sound, and animation with a metamodal awareness or desire to combine modes to convey meaning. These modes were framed as intentional design choices, wherein
students utilized multiple modes and signs to collaboratively illustrate story grammars, such as characterization, found in folk-tales. Thus, modes were combined and sometimes layered in the production of multimodal products to enhance meaning making.

In this study, I explore how children compose with different modes to create a Google presentation. Students designed within a shared digital composition space, with the potential for individual and collaborative designs of the various modes available to them within Google Slides.

**Sociocultural Perspective**

Literacy practices are constructed socially, culturally, historically, and politically within and across communities (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). These cultural practices and related activities surround the production of texts and are situated within literacy events (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Dyson, 2003). Literacy events and practices are influenced by institutions and power relations where particular events and practices become more dominant and significant than others (Hull, Zacher, & Hibbert, 2009; Jewitt, 2008; New London Group, 1996). The social, historical, and cultural literacy practices of children and youth have potential to be integrated into the production of multimodal compositions including students’ cultural resources, including family and immigration stories in this study. Students’ cultural resources and digital expertise can migrate from their homes and communities to classrooms if teachers create and facilitate learning opportunities that integrate the everyday literacy practices and experiences of children (Gutierrez, 2008).

Literacy practices are collaborative and social, wherein students co-construct meaning in relation to one another. Stahl, Koschmann, and Suthers (2006) conceptualize collaboration both as individual and collective processes of meaning making that are negotiated to maintain order.
Similarly, Vygotsky (1980) describes learning as a collaborative process where learning is negotiated in a zone of proximal development, the difference from actual and potential development, through problem solving with adults and peers. Through collaborative experiences and interactions with others, Vygostsky reports, “Children grow into the intellectual life around them." (p. 7)

In multimodal composition work, students may create a form of distributed expertise where certain students take on the roles of experts and assist students in developing new expertise. This expertise can have a cascading effect, wherein new experts assist others in using tools and expertise (Dalton, 2014).

Vygostsky (1978) suggests that tools and signs mediate social processes, such as speech and writing, and words and texts. As such, people construct meaning socially and culturally through the use of digital tools and texts. Tools can be print-based and include texts that are multivoiced and comprised of previous texts over time (Smagorinsky, 2012). Tools such as digital devices mediate learning experiences as the tools change, modify, and adapt the ways in which people interact. For instance, individual digital devices such as Chromebooks, with Google Apps, may create opportunities for all students to participate in a collaborative project at one time. Tools may be appropriated fully within the structures, norms, and culture of communities, including classrooms (Cole & Engestrom, 2007), or students may appropriate surface features of the tools, showing aspects of understanding.

For the purposes of this study, I analyzed the ways in which children negotiated roles and identities within the composing process, sometimes serving more as an expert, and sometimes, more of a novice. I also examined how the available tools, such as texts and digital tools, and students’ personal stories mediated the collaborative learning experiences of students. The tools
included the planning guide, books, and digital tools such as the Chromebooks and Google Apps, and the family and immigration stories of students.

**Critical Perspectives: Student Roles, Positioning, Identity, and Discourse**

In multiliteracies perspectives, researchers theorize that all people access language, work, and power through an increasingly expanding globalized world. As well, people utilize their voices to negotiate and engage with the available resources in their lives (New London Group, 1996). Cope and Kalantzis (2000) contend that designs are available dependent upon “orders of discourses” that can be accessible in a certain place or time. Yet they do not address the concept of agency within relations of power and discourse, specifically the ways in which students are constrained by available designs and may choose to participate outside the “orders of discourse” in the composing processes.

I emphasize that critical literacy practices and related texts are political, as texts and their practices are constructed in inequitable power relations (Cazden et al., 1996; Luke, 2012; Street, 2003). In critical literacy, a dialogic view of reading can be defined as an active process of reading not only texts but also the world, with a critical and political lens (Freire, 1995), including images and media representations. Students not only critically read their world, but also become critical authors as they create multimodal representations as a place to “talk back” to media representations that misrepresent difference (Semali, 2003).

Critical literacy perspectives offer pedagogical tools for students to critically frame or interrogate multiple viewpoints, disrupt the commonplace or what is deemed “ordinary” and take action to promote social justice (Comber, Thomson, & Wells, 2001; Luke, 2012; Street, 2003). Specifically, students can question texts, analyze the production of texts, unpack assumptions about bias or stereotypes, and become critical authors as they create their own media (Semali,
2003). They can also interrogate structures and question what counts as important when conventional forms of print based literacies are enacted in schools.

Critical literacy perspectives also aim to transform the ways people are represented and the “reshaping of possible worlds.” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 9) Cope and Kalantzis situate teachers and students as active participants in social change, designing their social futures through school experiences that are transformative. They describe this transformation in a pedagogical and analytic framework defined as situated learning, the overt instruction of multimodalities and metalanguages, and critical framing wherein students critique knowledge and texts in order to transform practices (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Jewitt, 2008).

This study acknowledges the political nature of literacy practices and texts. I explored the collaborative practices of students and analyzed how their composing processes were negotiated in relations of power, such as the project goals created within district structures, and the school’s normative discourses associated with race and success.

Students’ positioning of themselves and others takes place within socially constructed spaces. Students take up roles in interaction with one another in collaborative processes. Students negotiate roles that shift and change given discourses and structures in relations of power. Davies and Harré (1990) posit a particular role is “…more ephemeral and involves shifts in power, access, or blocking of access, to certain features of claimed or desired identity, and so on.” (p. 10) Roles are not are predetermined categories such as “leader,” but are nuanced and negotiated between students.

Furthermore, positions are also constructed in relations of power in the classroom, school and larger educational landscape and vary in different situations (Foucault, 1978). Positioning involves negotiating oneself within discourses affiliated with binaries and categories. In
categories like “Black” and “other” or “success” and “failure” a person may take multiple and contradictory positions, while trying to disrupt the binaries (Davies, 2000; Dutro & Bien, 2013). Davies (2000) argues,

With positioning, the focus is on the way in which the discursive practices constitute the speakers and hearers in certain and ways and yet at the same time are resources through which speakers and hearers can attempt to negotiate new positions. (p. 105)

Students participate in discursive practices that constitute what it means to be a successful student, or a Black student in classrooms, positioning oneself in the storylines that are available, while understanding, and perhaps disrupting or resisting, how they are positioned. As students negotiate positions they create an unfolding narrative that may have multiple readings from different perspectives. This narrative may include agency to refuse positions that are offered during negotiated interactions.

In this dissertation study, I analyzed student roles in relation to other group members and the tools and structures of the study as they shifted across time. I examined how students negotiated positions in their collaborative groups within structures such as the project goals and classroom norms and discourses centered on race and success that are produced within relations of power. I analyzed how students disrupted the normative discourse of success versus failure as they positioned themselves in relation to success within and outside the confines of the project.

Students’ roles are related to larger concepts of identity/identities. Davies (2000) and Luke (2012) define identities as outward expressions of self, partial and conflicted and produced in structures. Identities are enacted in interaction as students negotiate positions (Moje, Luke, Davies, & Street, 2009). Davies problematizes static identities that draw on essentialized categories of race, class, and gender (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Davies, 2000). When identities are essentialized they are conceived of as the characteristics of individuals or groups as a whole and not in situations. Thus, students are labeled as “at risk,” “high achievers,” or “struggling
readers,” regardless of the context. The identities may appear stable, and yet they are multiple and conflicted and shifting influenced by race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality as socially constructed and reconstructed in interaction (Britzman, 1995; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

Wortham (2004) defines positioning as “an event of identification in which a recognizable category of identity gets explicitly or implicitly applied to an individual in an event that takes place across seconds, minutes or hours.” (p. 166) Specifically, classroom identities are realized in interaction in brief moments, but can thicken over time. These classroom identities are not static but are negotiated within the classroom discourses of what it means to be a successful and unsuccessful or failing student.

Students have agency to negotiate positions and express identities in the classroom through the use of digital tools and cultural resources, so students can be noticed, heard, or may choose to remain silent. Yet, their actions are influenced by the tools, discourses, and subject positions made available in classrooms. Davies (2000) cautions that while students have agency, it is malleable based on the context and may be inaccessible in certain situations.

Exploring students’ roles, identities, and positioning is a key focus in this study, as I sought to understand how students’ collaboration in a multimodal composition project might support students in offering new opportunities to try out roles and identities.

Foucault (1978) contends: “Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.” (p. 101) Discourses comprise language, literacy practices, and texts that are constituted in interactions as ways of thinking, feeling, and believing (Gee, 2014). They are also multiple and exist within structures of power that influence identities and positions available for subjects (Davies, 2000; Dutro, 2010; Fairclough, 2010; Luke, 1995; Moje et al., 2009). Discourse contributes to the
reproduction of structures (Fairclough, 2010), such as curriculum, classroom norms, district mandates, the school’s relationship to the community, and the ways policy is enacted in inequitable ways.

Discourses are normative and dominant such as race, class, gender and sexuality, based on white, patriarchal and hegemonic structures that place non-dominant students as the “other” and invisible (Collins, 2009). Normative discourses associated with race, racism, and discrimination take a white, dominant perspective on equality, specifically by supporting equal opportunities for all versus equitable and radical change that would eradicate systemic racism. Within white, normative racial perspectives macro structures are not problematized that create “equal rules or laws” that may lead to segregated neighborhoods and schools wherein school choice may lead to further segregation and the marginalization of children in classrooms (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Leonardo, 2013). Yet discourses can both “sustain or undermine” macro structures or institutions for the entire schooling process that create segregated schools with inequitable resources (Bell, 2004; Fairclough, 2010).

Broader discourses that talk about “at risk” students, imply we need to fix children in schools when “at risk” is associated with race and class, or biological or societal difference. Discourses of risk overlap with the discourse of success and what it means to be successful within a classroom (McDermott, Raley, & Seyer-Ochi, 2009). Just as students are identified as “at risk” in relation to their race and class, they are also deemed as less successful and not thriving in their schools and communities because of words associated with risk, including Black, urban or high-poverty.

In this study, I examined how the discourses of the classroom, the community, and the larger educational landscape indexed race and school success, and were salient to the ways in
which students negotiated positions and identities within their collaborative projects. Normative discourses are ever present in the lives of the students in all classrooms, but in particular in the lives of the African American and Latina students as they interacted with a white teacher in a predominantly African American school. I drew on various data sources to examine how the discourses of race and success and what it means to be a “successful” student permeated the classroom. Students agentively positioned themselves in relation to discourses associated with race that permeated the literature, followed the norms of what it means to be successful, or chose to disengage from instruction.

**Literature Review**

This literature review of multimodal composition research and multimodality was conducted in November 2014 and updated in October 2016. The review included empirical and theoretical articles from peer-reviewed journals and published books from the last ten years ranging from January of 2005 to October of 2016. The articles were selected through the following procedures. Boolean searches were conducted in ERIC or ProQuest to select and narrow articles relevant to this review. The search resulted in 173 empirical and theoretical studies in articles and book chapters. The abstracts, methods, and findings were culled and pieces were selected if both critical literacy and multimodal frameworks or multimodal compositions were present throughout more than two sections, including abstracts, conceptual or theoretical frameworks, methods and findings.

Twenty-eight central pieces were selected that focused on critical literacy and multimodality, and twenty-four were exclusively situated in multimodal compositions. Six of the articles that focused on both critical literacy and multimodality explicitly discussed the
identities and positioning of students through a multimodal lens such as art or the creation of picture books, but did not incorporate digital tools. This work highlighted the ways identities and positions are influenced through multimodal experiences that are not print based and do not rely on digital tools. Two qualitative and empirical studies were included because they integrated identities and the positions of students in literacy writing contexts. Furthermore, I analyzed five additional studies that focused on student roles in relation to collaborative processes as this became increasingly salient to my study. A senior scholar was consulted in order to acquire and select all final pieces. The combined searches yielded 59 research publications.

Analysis
Patterns and themes emerged from the analysis of critical literacy and multimodal literature and their respective methodologies. First, a list of codes was created from previous literature reviews and initial research questions. These codes included descriptive characteristics such as the context of the study, including demographics and student age, and the presence of multimodal, critical literacy research methods, technology, identity and positioning, and research findings. Next, key findings were compared across all articles, and themes were generated with illustrative examples (Huberman & Miles, 2002).
Table 1 presents an overview of the coding scheme developed during analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade:</td>
<td>Articles were coded for Grades: Pre-K, or elementary, or elementary, middle age, middle school or adolescence, and secondary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting:</td>
<td>Articles were coded for formal school settings and settings that were informal, either after school or outside of school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context:</td>
<td>The context was described, including the demographics of the school, type of school, such as public or charter and the subject area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodologies:</td>
<td>Articles were descriptive, theoretical, and empirical. The empirical research included qualitative methodology and/or case study methods, critical methods, literature reviews and mixed methods. The methodology was coded and described in detail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimodal products:</td>
<td>Products were coded, such as video, multimodal retellings, or podcasts, as well as the integration of technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical literacy:</td>
<td>The critical literacy framework was described, specifically how it indexed positioning and identity throughout the piece. For example, students viewed themselves as digital experts or were positioned as capable in a digital context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identities:</td>
<td>Studies were coded for the inclusion of identities in findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration:</td>
<td>The collaborative nature of projects was coded for groupings such as partners, small group, student roles, and positioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings:</td>
<td>Findings were detailed and linked to multimodal and critical perspectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Themes and Implications

For the purposes of this review, multimodal and critical literacy perspectives were analyzed. Occasionally, studies focused on multimodal learning and did not involve technology, or studies described the positioning of students in learning contexts. I analyzed all themes present, but first highlighted methods consistently utilized throughout the literature.

Theme # 1: Case study and descriptive research were dominant throughout the literature.

Descriptive and empirical research comprises a growing body of multimodal research that occurs with students in elementary and middle school settings. The literature was often descriptive and theoretical, detailing theories, concepts, or classroom projects. The empirical studies included reviews, qualitative studies, case study analysis, quantitative studies, mixed methods, and design-based research, some of which were descriptive in their accounts, yet systematic in their analysis. Yet, a majority of the empirical studies employed qualitative techniques or case-study analysis.

Fourteen studies utilized a case study approach to describe and analyze composing processes for a particular classroom, child, or group of children. In one study, Dwyer and Larson (2014) constructed cases studies of students in a classroom to explore, describe, and explain the phenomenon of online reading within literacy events, including the production of a text and related activities, such as reading online, note-taking, and web-based searches. In this way, researchers employed case-study analysis to describe a particular phenomenon, by providing grounded descriptions of the students in their online interactions.

Stahl et al. (2006) argued that in studies of collaboration, researchers should use small groups as units of analysis to investigate intersubjective meaning making between group members. While Ranker (2008) explored case studies of three focal pairs of students as they
collaboratively composed one video per pair, Ranker did not describe the construction of meaning between group members. However, Ranker detailed the intertextual weaving of the production of one text for one focal pair, describing the students’ composing process as collaborative without specific details. Jocius (2015) analyzed the composing processes of one focal pair detailing both individual and collaborative interactions between students. Furthermore, Smith (2014) utilized cross-case study analysis across three focal cases of two composing partners while contrasting composing processes. Dalton and Smith (2012) studied the multimodal composing processes of two students collaboratively designing a folktale. They completed modal tracings of small groups’ composing processes, comprised of partners, through modal timescapes to illustrate students’ modal expression and the layering of modes within and across moments of time.

Similar to previous research, this dissertation study employed qualitative, case-study research design. I employed cross-case study analysis of two focal groups, one partnership and one group of three students to compare similarities and differences in collaborative processes. Specifically, I observed and recorded interactions between students in their groups in relation to the digital tools and structures and goals of the project, within a unit of study.

Theme # 2: Collaboration occurred in many multimodal composition projects.

Students often worked collaboratively in classrooms and off-line spaces negotiating roles in their groups. Approximately thirty-one theoretical and empirical studies reported students worked collaboratively in small groups or partners in on-line and classroom environments. Yet, only a small body of articles described the collaborative processes involved in digital and multimodal composition. Students worked in partners and in small groups to create multimodal projects (videos, poems, slideshows) while using digital tools (Dalton & Jocius, 2013; Dwyer,
Dwyer and Larson (2014) described collaborative processes in both classroom and online settings. Students in Ireland and the United States read books individually and met in literature circles creating questions and prompts for the digital message board. In this way, they created a community of readers and writers, co-authoring their responses in ways that allowed for new possibilities. The findings suggested that peer collaboration supported the construction of social identity, community, and a sociocultural situated response.

Students learned from the digital expertise of their classmates when they composed collaboratively (Dalton, 2012, 2015; Dwyer, 2013; Ranker, 2009). In partners, students engaged in a design process that positioned students as experts where students taught novices to use digital tools (Dalton, 2012). Dalton (2014) described a cascading expert model for learning new tools and modes for composition. In this model, the author-teacher met with students individually and in small groups to demonstrate and guide the use of applications and modes. Students quickly became leaders spreading digital expertise throughout the class as they worked with new partners. Dwyer (2013) reported that the gradual release of responsibility transformed the learning ecology where teachers guided students to independence, and students assisted one another to acquire new expertise.

Some studies described student roles within collaborative processes (Dalton & Smith, 2012, 2014; Jocius, 2015; Ranker, 2009; Smith, 2014). Ranker (2009) illustrated how students divided their work into distinct roles based on their interests. For example, the students divided the project to pursue areas of high-interest: one student researched background information on baseball for chapter one of the video production, and the other student compiled music for
chapter two. This division helped them engage independently and collaboratively to contribute to the group. Smith (2014) described student roles within composing processes. In the study of three composing pairs in a high school English classroom, students demonstrated the following partnerships: designer and assistant, divide and conquer (dividing the content), and alternating lead, where students took alternating leadership roles. In this way, students took on leadership roles throughout the project, or took turns with leadership roles in different composing partnerships.

Jocius (2015) detailed fifth-grade students’ roles within one collaborative partnership in a summer enrichment program. Specifically, two students co-created a simile and metaphor poem, wherein Eric took a leadership role, while Davonte offered suggestions. Importantly, Jocius (2015) found that the person who physically controlled the computer largely influenced the content and roles. As such, Eric held the computer and typed the content while Davonte offered suggestions that were not always integrated in the project. Their roles were influenced by a disagreement over the project examples that led “to the silencing of one of Davonte’s ideas” (p. 189) to Davonte’s withdrawal from the project. Thus, the digital tools and the ways in which the students negotiated their composing processes, influenced their roles and collaborative processes.

Furthermore, Husbye et al. (2012) described how children produced films and dramatized stories such as stop-animation videos of Star Wars characters. Through a collaborative creation of stories, the children moved fluidly between roles involving scene construction, character portrayal, technical advisor, and the camera operator as they were repositioned as producers. In this way, students’ roles were fluid and shifted throughout the composing process.

Marsh (2011) reported that within Club Penguin online groups, “economic capital led to differential levels of social and cultural capital as members-only groups held parties and
events that excluded others.” (p. 114) The children within the group had different levels of access to the interactions that were occurring. Marsh described how literacy practices were purposeful but also maintained a social order in the groups.

In this study of two groups composing a Google presentation, I examined how students negotiated roles in relation to one another, such as the design leader or suggestion maker. I detailed how students were positioned in all interactions, where they demonstrated agency and where they were silenced. I also traced how students’ roles shifted and were not always equal as they were negotiated in interaction with one another.

**Theme # 3: Students had opportunities for new identities and repositioning.**

Research that focused on both multimodal and critical literacy perspectives addressed students’ identities, where students were repositioned as members of the classroom (Collins, 2011; Panteleo, 2013; Vasudevan et al., 2010). In one example, Vasudevan et al. (2010) found multimodal composing practices led students to author new literate identities and authorial stances. Students’ identities as unsuccessful members of the classroom transformed to literate identities, as students became legitimate authors in the classroom community through the integration of cultural resources and digital expertise. Michael, one of two focal cases, integrated cultural resources from his life to compose a multimodal, digital story about his community including photographs, soundtrack, and voice over. Saima, the second focal case, was asked by her teacher to reflect about identity: “Who was I? Who am I? Who am I striving to become?” (p. 457) The authorial stances taken by these students changed how they were positioned and recognized in the classroom. Challenging the notion of singular identities, the authors described identities as sedimented or layered, complex, and occurring concurrently as the
competing identities led to transformation for Michael and Saima. In particular, they reported shifts in identities and positions across multiple schooling experiences (Vasudevan et al., 2010).

Studies reported that students sometimes used technology as a tool to create a diverse range of products that facilitated their access to information and their identities and performances. They used the following tools to engage with technology in new ways: graphic novels, comic life, photographs, audio, video and storyboarding to prepare for filming, podcasts and sound portraits as examples of technology that allowed them to explore new ways of reading and writing (Husbye et al., 2012; Ranker, 2008; Thomas, 2012). Through the use of digital videos, the students expressed new identities where new types of stories emerged through the use of digital tools (Husbye et al., 2012).

In multimodal composition studies, students were repositioned as agents of learning when multiple modes were privileged over print (Dalton, 2012; Pantaleo, 2013; Ranker, 2008; Thomas, 2012). Specifically, Dalton et al. (2015) argued that multimodal composition was more inclusive than print-based literacies supporting students by expanding forms of expression through the use of digital tools. In the researchers’ analysis of 83 students’ multimodal retellings to a folktale, all students remixed the story by retelling the story in ways that displayed tone, emotion, and action. In addition to retellings, design interviews linked students’ metamodal awareness from print, to the use of sounds, visuals, and music, to display emotion and creativity. Multiple modes provided opportunities for students to participate and position themselves as composers (Dalton, 2013; Dwyer, 2014; Pantaleo, 2013).

A small body of literature portrayed children as multimodal as their identities were performed through different composing practices beyond text-based literacies (Husbye et al., 2012; Lapp, Moss, & Rowsell, 2012; Silvers, Shorey, & Crafton, 2010; Wohlwend, 2009).
Children engaged with digital tools and performed their identities in playful ways during writing, video making, and center times of the school day. These studies involved young children and the students were playful in their engagement with digital tools and one another. Through script writing and story boarding, they expanded the participation of students and repositioned students as producers of knowledge compared to previous experiences with print-based literacies (Husbye et al., 2012; Silvers et al., 2010; Vasudevan et al., 2010; Wohlwend, 2009). For example, Husbye et al. (2012) analyzed a film elective that integrated video into writing time. The class redefined print-based writing times through collaborative filmmaking or a “storytelling workshop.” When going through the film making process, the researchers found children expressed identities through their bodies, in particular their voices. The process of filmmaking, set creation, movement, and dialogue offered new roles and repositioned students as participants with popular media texts, such as toys.

While a small body of literature illustrated how children were repositioned as literate in their classrooms (Husbye et al., 2012; Pahl, 2009; Pandya, Pagdilao, Kim, & Marquez, 2015; Vasudevan et al., 2010), little research showed the complexity of positioning. Mills (2007) illustrated how students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds were limited in their access to multiliteracies because of student groupings and the school schedule. Specifically, Mills reported that students were not able to engage in multimodal activities when they received print-based remediation versus multimodal learning experiences. Further, Dutro (2010) examined how curriculum influenced the ways students responded to print-based text, constraining the integration of children’s personal experiences in their written and print-based responses. Yet, Dutro illustrated the students’ agency to share their lived experiences with poverty outside of the assumptions of the curriculum about the middle-class lives of students.
Thus, a dearth of articles reported the ways in which digital tools and multimodal compositions complicate the positions and identities made available in composing processes and products.

Many studies described shifts in identities that repositioned students as successful members of the classroom. In this study, I analyzed how students held new roles within the multimodal project in ways that differed from their classroom identities, as well as considered how roles shifted across the project. I complicated positioning by conceptualizing positioning and identity as malleable and shifting based on power relations wherein students are positioned in particular ways.

**Theme # 4: Students integrated cultural resources and negotiated positions within macro structures.**

Many research studies found that students integrated their cultural resources, including language, into multimodal texts. A group of studies showed that students integrated cultural resources, such as their community experiences, toys and artifacts from their lives, in their digital and multimodal compositions (Gutierrez, Bien, Selland, & Pierce, 2011; Husbye et al., 2012; Vasudevan et al., 2010; Wohlwend, 2009). For example, when Michael created a narrative about his building, he integrated stories of friends, family and sports, but also the violence in his community in his story (Vasudevan et al., 2010). Furthermore, kindergarten and first-grade teachers created space for toys and popular culture artifacts from the playground to be integrated in the classroom in play, writing, and film making (Husbye et al., 2012; Wohlwend, 2009). Wohlwend (2009) described how toys from popular culture were cultural resources in kindergarten students’ projects that indexed particular social practices from homes and schools.

Gutierrez et al. (2011) described an after school site where hybrid languages, including Spanish, English, African American dialect, and hip-hop vernacular, were expressed, drawing upon linguistic repertoires to interact with a magical wizard. Children were invited to write to El
Maga over the Internet. The researchers analyzed texts and practices of children in an elementary, after-school club, including artifacts, letter writing, digital messages, and responses that were individually and collaboratively created. Findings indicate this space became a linguistic playground of literacy opportunities for El Maga and children.

While a small corpus of research addressed the integration of cultural resources such as toys, artifacts, and language, one study reported students were hesitant to incorporate cultural resources. Pandya et al. (2015) predicted children would tell personal immigration stories in their classroom projects. Researchers identified three kinds of immigration identities in students’ narratives: transnational, immigrant, and American. Students with transnational identities discussed their families in terms of their recent immigration experiences, describing shifting movement between countries, wherein families were separated and reunited across borders at different times. Students with immigrant identities told stories of families moving to the United States, sometimes when students were babies, sharing selective details due to the sensitive nature of stories. And students who evoked “American” identities referenced local restaurants and experiences and did not refer to immigration stories. This silence or omission did not mean that students walked away from their Latino(a) heritage, but that they chose not to share their heritage in their immigration stories.

Four studies broached topics related to critical issues and investigated them closely, revealing issues of race and class (Hobbs, 2013; Lapp et al., 2012; Silvers et al., 2010; Vasudevan et al., 2010). In one illustrative, qualitative study, students researched issues of race in relation to Hurricane Katrina, initiating an inquiry-based social justice project about a community that was far away (Silvers et al., 2010). The children specifically questioned the positioning of Black community members. They utilized multimodal literacy practices as they
used the Internet to search, view podcasts, act out scenes, and create visual representations of their work. The explicit goal of the research was, “We want children to carry with them into the world the image of how to make peace, how to reject racism, how to help someone who is in trouble and how to guard the earth.” (p. 406) Using the multiliteracies curricular and analytic framework that includes situated practice, overt framing, critical framing, and transformed practice, students participated in activities that helped disrupt discourses about race, prevalent in the community they were researching.

A few studies offered findings that addressed identities and positioning in relation to race, class, and disability. Particularly in studies with younger children, researchers analyzed how children were positioned in relation to normative discourses of race and class, and as disruptive in the classroom (Collins, 2011; Dutro, 2010; Wohlwend, 2009). Collins (2011) examined how Christopher was positioned in deficit ways due to the framing of his behavior in the classroom. Specifically, Christopher had invitations to take up new roles and identities amidst competing discourses about his classroom behaviors, which were labeled as disruptive. Furthermore, Dutro (2010) analyzed how students shared their economic struggles in response to a story about the dust bowl. The students were positioned outside of the curriculum, but demonstrated agency to share personal stories in relation to poverty.

Studies showed that students integrated their cultural resources into their multimodal compositions (Gutierrez et al., 2011; Husbye et al., 2012; Vasudevan et al., 2010; Wohlwend, 2009); however, Pandya et al.’s (2015) research suggested we need more studies to understand the complex ways students integrate cultural resources such as personal immigration stories into digital and multimodal texts. Importantly, studies broached critical issues related to race, class and disability and addressed the ways students were positioned within relations of power that
labeled students as disruptive or expected responses to literature that assumed students would respond with a white, middle-class narrative instead of students’ lived experiences.

In this dissertation study, I explored how students integrated their cultural resources into their multimodal responses by integrating information about their families, their lived experiences, and specific details about immigration stories. I also examined how the students were positioned within discourses related to racism and success versus failure.

Summary

Children are increasingly using digital devices in their schools and communities in a variety of ways. Currently, children are multimodal composers in their homes and communities as they employ auditory, visual and kinesthetic modes for communication (Alvermann, 2010). Although schools are moving to integrate technology, classrooms often remain focused on print-based texts and linguistic forms of communication that are valued in high-stakes testing (Husbye et al., 2012; Shanahan, 2013; Walsh, 2007). A small but growing body of literature shows the benefits of multimodal and digital compositions for students in classrooms (Dalton, 2014, 2015; Ranker, 2008, 2009; Shanahan, 2013; Thomas, 2012). Furthermore, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) highlight the need for digital and multimodal composition and 21st century skills in its introduction, but does not integrate digital and multimodal processes throughout writing standards (Dalton et al., 2015).

This review examined extant literature on multimodal compositions and the complex negotiations of identities and positions. Many studies reported students worked collaboratively, but did not describe the ways students collaborated in relation to one another and the digital tools they used. A small but growing body of literature details collaborative processes from cascading models of distributive expertise beginning with a few experts to many students, to guided digital
groups and partners where students have particular roles (Dwyer, 2013). Furthermore, some research has described student roles and interactions within collaborative groups in relation to students’ collaborative processes, such as leader and suggestion maker (Jocius, 2015; Ranker, 2008; Smith, 2014).

In many studies, students took on new identities, and opportunities for participation including new roles, such as digital expert (Dwyer, 2013; Henry et al., 2012; Husbye et al., 2012; Mills, 2007, 2009, 2014; Ranker, 2008; Shanahan, 2013). As students performed their identities they also enacted multimodal selves. These multimodal selves were integrated into classroom spaces and recognized as foundational to students’ literacy practices. As students performed their multimodal selves through play and digital explorations, new identities and positions were made available and children were repositioned as part of the academic community (Collins, 2011; Vasudevan et al., 2010).

In contrast, in some studies, positioning was not addressed explicitly in the frameworks and analysis, but were addressed implicitly when students had new opportunities, roles and ways of participating that moved beyond text-based literacy practices through the affordances of multimodalities (Dalton, 2012; Dwyer, 2013; Henry, et al., 2012; Husbye et al., 2012; Ranker, 2008; Selfe & Selfe, 2008; Shanahan, 2013).

Students’ cultural resources were integrated into the multimodal processes and products such as community experiences, their toys and other artifacts from the playground (Husbye et al., 2012; Vasudevan et al., 2010; Wohlwend, 2009). Furthermore, students combined multiple languages creating linguistic hybridity when composing digital letters (Gutierrez et al., 2011). In contrast, one article described the complexity of students integrating cultural resources, such as personal immigration stories (Pandya et al., 2015).
A few studies accounted for the identities and positions of student in critical engagements, using a variety of methods to address layered discourses that include district expectations, curricular documents, and the ways normative discourses of class, gender, and disability influence how children are positioned in classrooms (Collins, 2011; Davies, 2000; Dutro, 2010). Furthermore, in literature that drew on critical literacy and multimodal perspectives, students investigated these larger structures through topics of critical importance such as Hurricane Katrina exploring the Internet, creating multimodal projects and addressing issues such as race and class in relation to how people are treated in communities (Hobbs, 2013; Husbye et al., 2012).

This review provides a foundation for my study of children’s collaborative multimodal compositions, supporting the need for a study that complicates notions of collaboration, identity, cultural resources and critical engagements in relation to multimodal compositions. When digital and multimodal projects are situated in critical literacy perspectives, children can be recognized in classrooms as their voices and identities are brought into these spaces, wherein they are repositioned as literate members of the classroom (Vasudevan, Schultz, & Bateman, 2010).
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this qualitative study, fifth-grade students created collaborative, multimodal responses to literature combining reading, writing, and digital expertise. The students were immersed in a larger unit of study focused on the analysis of culturally relevant literature by Jacqueline Woodson. Students collaboratively selected and analyzed a theme with supporting evidence from her picture books, poetry, and young adult novels, including their personal connections. In this study, I examined how students negotiate positions and identities as they collaboratively created a Google presentation to analyze salient themes and express a personal response to Woodson’s books and life.

The students’ collaborative processes occurred within one literacy event, the creation of multimodal responses to literature, that took place over thirteen composing days and two additional days for rehearsal and presentations. This event was set within the larger classroom unit of study across seven weeks. I analyzed student interactions, positions, and identities in the classroom within structures such as the classroom norms, project goals, and discourses that emerged, including race, success, and immigration. The classroom identities of the students in the larger unit of study and classroom context were malleable and sometimes influenced their shifting roles and positioning in their multimodal composing groups. Thus, I combined multiple perspectives to analyze collaborative composing processes and interactions in the cases, Group 1 and Group 2, while blending sociocultural, multimodal, and critical perspectives, and related methodology.
In this chapter, I describe the general characteristics of the research setting, teachers, students, and my participant researcher role and positionality. I describe the research design, including the questions, data sources, and data analysis.

The following two questions guide this study:

- Research Question #1: How do fifth-grade students collaboratively negotiate their composing processes as they design a multimodal slide presentation in response to literature by Jacqueline Woodson?
  
  1a. How do students negotiate roles?
  
  1b. How do students express different modes?

- Research Question #2: How do students negotiate positions and identities as they critically discuss and respond to literature given the tools, project goals, and discourses associated with race and school success?

Setting and Participants

School: Henry Elementary

Henry Elementary (pseudonym) is situated in an urban community just outside of a city located in the western region of the United States. It is comprised of 69% Black and 24% Hispanic students according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2011-12 data. Henry Elementary opened in the building of an old school that was previously shut down because of its low performance and declining enrollment. Henry Elementary moved to this building after 2009, when Ms. Kelly (pseudonym), the school principal, brought students and community members from an existing school to an old building. After coming to the building, Henry achieved and published a green school performance rating on their school web site, reporting awards for academic growth over the last two school years, 2012-14.
School Culture and Discourses about Race, Education, and Success. Many students who attended Henry Elementary lived in the northeastern community of the city. These students rode busses to this school from the periphery of the northeastern part of the town. When enrolling in the district choice program, students were given preference for schools in their geographic area. Many students chose to enroll in this school in their region, because the school was renowned for serving students of color, predominantly African American students.

The school website reported that Henry Elementary emphasized tradition and “American values” such as honesty, pride, and respect for self and others. It stated that their program was “rigorous, traditional and back to basics.” (About Henry (pseudonym) hawks, n.d.) Henry Elementary was also known for its African American culture and high expectations for student learning, strongly influenced by their African American principal, Ms. Kelly. In an interview, Ms. Kelly described the school as having a “no-nonsense” approach to student learning and discipline. She stated that all kids were expected to learn, and that teachers should set high expectations for all students. Therefore, she hired staff members with similar values (June 7, 2015). The school promoted a positive school culture through the combination of the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS, n.d.), and a “no-nonsense” approach to discipline, where students were expected to show self-control and respect for one another at all times.

Community relationships were crucial to the success of the school. Therefore, Ms. Kelly made a concerted effort to know the needs of her community by “hanging out everyday” at dismissal, outside the school building (Interview, June 7, 2015). She professed an open door policy where families were welcome to speak with her at any time. Often students who experienced difficulties at another school, were accepted at Henry: “I think they know if they come here and say, and it's okay to have your hardship, and it's okay to be you and you're not
gonna be, um, mistreated for it. I think they feel it's family. Even if not family, it's cousins and they can still be a family.” (June 7, 2015) She preached that school was integral to all students’ future. In her interview, she emphasized that education was important to the identity of the African American and Black students at her school: “It's all about education because our culture, because of our history, we have to have education, like the true freedom is through education.” (June 7, 2015). Ms. Kelly brought community organizations and resources to the school, including Colorado Uplift and Links Inc., both groups that utilize community members to discuss jobs and culture in their community. For example, during this study, Links members came to Henry to discuss the students’ future careers.

**Blended Learning/ Technology Use.** The school focused on blended learning, a term that the technology teacher, Ms. Ralston (pseudonym), described in an interview as “the integration of technology into individualized instruction.” (May 28, 2015) The school advertised that blended learning provided students’ opportunities to voice their opinions through technology, develop individual accountability, and creatively collaborate through synchronous devices (Henry (pseudonym), n. d.). Ms. Ralston reported that she thought that most students had access to technology in their homes, but that technology was not used for educational purposes. And Ms. Ralston reported that often families had access to devices that were not user friendly. The devices were old or refurbished and not as intuitive as newer and more expensive devices available.

**Research Participants**

Table 2 shows the number of research participants and their race and gender.
**Fifth-Grade Students.** The nineteen students in Ms. Moore’s fifth-grade classroom identified predominantly as African American students, but sometimes as Black, and came from different countries and cultural backgrounds, including an immigrant from the country of Ethiopia. One student, who identified as Latina, immigrated to America from Mexico as a baby.

**Focal Students.** I selected four students to work collaboratively in composing pairs for the research study. The focal pairs were selected based on initial classroom observations, teacher recommendations, and results from the technology questionnaire. These pairs were comprised of

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**Table 2**

*Research Participants’ Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Population(s)</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students race and gender: African American- 18, Latina- 1</td>
<td>1 5th grade classroom, 19 students (all permissioned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal students race and gender: Group 1: 3 African American, 3 girls (Isa, Rhianna, and Jillian) Group 2: 1 African American, 1 Latina, 2 girls (Yannet and Lucía)</td>
<td>Two groups of 5 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers race and gender: Classroom teacher: White, 1 female (Ms. Moore) Technology: White, 1 female (Ms. Ralston)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal race and gender: African American, 1 female (Ms. Kelly)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher race and gender: White, 1 female (Kim Schmidt)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
students with varying reading and writing abilities and strengths, collaboration skills, and digital expertise, so students could negotiate both expert and novice roles.

The teacher and I deliberately formed groups with students of similar gender. The teacher advised this as this was a class routine that helped the students work collaboratively. The groups were mixed by ability, particularly by literacy strengths and the digital expertise of students. Literacy strengths were determined by classroom data and benchmark assessments, but also informal observations of the students and teacher recommendations. I observed students in reading and writing workshops to see the variety of ways children engaged with texts and digital tools, as students discussed and responded to texts and engaged with technology in the classroom. Furthermore, I looked at their reading responses to literature authored by Jacqueline Woodson.

When the groups were formed, there were other students who needed groups; therefore, one partnership became a group of three. The groups shifted due to the preferences and interactions of students given issues that arose during the project. Thus, students’ cultural backgrounds were not balanced in the groups. Group 1 contained all students who self-identified as African American girls, and Group 2 included one girl who self-identified as Latina and a girl whose family immigrated from Ethiopia who identified as African American.

**Classroom Teacher.** I selected Ms. Moore (pseudonym) and the students in her fifth-grade classroom because she has extensive teaching expertise and works with children from non-dominant communities. In my previous role as a professional developer, I facilitated lab visits to Ms. Moore’s classroom where I developed a collaborative, professional relationship with Ms. Moore. Ms. Moore was renowned for teaching math and science. During this study, she taught all subjects, including language arts, a subject she had not taught until recently. We viewed our
partnership as collaborative as we supported one another, but specifically, she requested I provide literacy support. Ms. Moore described her passion for education in an interview: “I love what I do.” And she reflected that this passion made her a better teacher year after year (May 2, 2015).

Ms. Moore identified as a white woman with twenty years of teaching experience, primarily working with students from non-dominant communities. This study occurred in Ms. Moore’s first year teaching at Henry Elementary in an African American community, where approximately half of the teachers identified as African American and/or Black. Ms. Moore’s teaching identity shifted this year from previous years, as she wondered, “As a white woman from suburbia, Jewish, am I really in the right place?” (Interview, May 2, 2015). Over time, she felt accepted by the parents in her classroom. But at that time, she questioned whether she was the best teacher for this community, given she was white. Even though she previously taught Latino(a) students living in non-dominant communities, she reflected that it was different for her at this school. She believed there was a social norm that worked for Black teachers. Her teaching style included collaboration and student ownership, and she did not want to dictate instruction. She wondered if this difference in teaching style from the other fifth-grade, African American teacher resulted in a perceived lack of accountability from the parents of students in her classroom.

Furthermore, the feedback she received from students was straightforward. For example, students told her immediately when she hadn’t taught something well. And she was not used to receiving immediate, direct feedback from students. At first, this type of feedback seemed combative, and in the beginning led to power struggles. But, Ms. Moore reflected these power struggles were dissipating. She noted she had changed her teaching style to break down
explanations into explicit steps. Furthermore, she stated that she worked hard to respond in fair and consistent ways (Interview, May 2, 2015).

She described her aspirations as a teacher, specifically that students would find success within and continue to learn and understand why learning is important: “They are the holder of the knowledge.” Furthermore, she expressed that she has to let them be who they are. Therefore, she reflected that she let Jillian (Group 1) stay inside recess to work on projects, because Jillian was not comfortable going out to recess (Interview, May 2, 2015).

Even though Ms. Moore stated that the integration of technology was not her strong suit, she was always willing to try new things. Yet, she was a person who was perceived by the technology teacher to embrace technology in her classroom (Interview, May 28, 2015). As such, she often positioned students as digital experts and asked them to run digital aspects of the classroom.

**Ms. Moore’s Classroom Community Norms and Practices.** The principal, Ms. Kelly, described Ms. Moore’s classroom community as a safe space where students could communicate and be honest with their emotions. The principal reflected she handpicked students to be in Ms. Moore’s class, because Ms. Moore would listen to their needs. She explained that the students she picked for Ms. Moore would not survive with “alpha” or authoritative teachers. Similarly, Ms. Moore described students shutting down when learning was difficult or when they had emotional upheaval in their lives. For example, in her interactions with one student she reflected that when she tried to make the student conform to the classroom norms, he would shut down. Therefore, students had freedom to openly express themselves when they needed their emotional needs met, even when those needs differed from the classroom norms and routines (Interview, May 2, 2015).
Ms. Moore co-created norms with her students during mini lessons, and these norms, such as what it means to be a successful reading and writer, were displayed on charts. Ms. Moore facilitated a mini lesson asking, “What does it mean to be successful?” She then recorded student thinking with their initials. For example, she recorded, “We need to pay attention and show respect,” a quote shared by Yannet. In the beginning of the year, the teacher and students charted together that they could be successful by achieving their goals, listening to others, getting to know each other, learning, following directions the first time, taking action for yourself, and paying attention to show respect.

**Technology Teacher.** Ms. Ralston (pseudonym), the technology teacher, offered professional development and technology support that focused on the integration of Google Apps across all grades. Ms. Ralston provided push-in support for teachers and viewed technology as a tool that supplemented the curriculum. She requested to be included in both the unit of study and the composing project, and her work, support, and guidance influenced the students’ composing processes.

Ms. Ralston was integral to the adoption of blended learning, because she wrote grants for individual digital devices for all students and developed differentiated professional development for teachers. She purchased Chromebooks for the school, the most affordable devices, to provide student access to Google Apps, a user-friendly interface with web cams, speakers, and sound. During the study, she followed a push-in model providing technology support for teachers and students in the classroom. **Ms. Ralston also met frequently with the teacher and me to provide technological advice about the ways tools and apps supported the content goals of the project.**
School Principal. Ms. Kelly (pseudonym) was the principal of Henry Elementary prior to the school moving to this building. Originally, she was not a research participant in this study, but her influence was strongly felt in the discourses and structures present at this school focused on race and success. Her strong beliefs created a communal atmosphere for all students. A key belief and expectation was that all students were to be successful at this school no matter their hardships or difficulties (Interview, April 2015).

Participant Researcher Role

I was a participant researcher working alongside the students and teachers, Ms. Moore and Ms. Ralston, as a teacher, facilitator, and researcher. As a teacher, I was careful to leave as many of the classroom practices in place, and therefore, encouraged the teacher to lead many lessons. However, Ms. Moore and I co-taught and co-facilitated lessons in order to initiate and model discussions that focused on themes and issues present in the literature. Ms. Ralston, the technology teacher, initiated the projects in Google Slides. When Ms. Ralston was not available, I modeled the integration of design elements into Google Slides and encouraged the students to do so as well.

In the classroom, I intentionally integrated critical perspectives throughout the study centered on literature by Jacqueline Woodson. Both Ms. Moore and I shared our perspectives about the texts with the students. Ms. Moore discussed her family’s immigration to America and the importance of home ownership. Also, we shared experiences of discrimination as women in society. However, we were clear to state that our experiences were not the same as African American women who experienced historic racism and sexism across many generations, as described in the literature shared by Jacqueline Woodson. The students, Ms. Moore, and I reflected upon our culture and the influence of Jacqueline Woodson’s culture in her literature.
I facilitated discussions related to the texts looking for opportunities to explore topics associated with race. In class discussions, students shared their perspectives about racism, including examples related to their parents’ employment. I encouraged these conversations, yet I did not share examples of racism in my life. Thus, I aimed to integrate personal and critical perspectives in the content, but I did not share personal stories related to race. Moreover, I presented a model slideshow illustrating diverse families in our society, a theme in Jacqueline Woodson’s literature. Yet, I did not include families with parents of the same gender, like Jacqueline Woodson’s immediate family.

As students composed their slideshows, I worked with three focal groups. Other students consulted with Ms. Moore and Ms. Ralston for support. Specifically, I facilitated the collaborative processes of three groups. The student initiated critical conversations, but I focused on the collaborative processes of the groups and the use of digital tools, even though I set out to inspire and facilitate critical conversations.

**Positionality.** Given the context of the study, I detail my positionality as a white, middle-class woman, a researcher, and a cultural outsider to this community. I recognize the privilege associated with my race, class, and gender, as well as the potential for misconceptions that arise from an outsider perspective. Because of my privilege as a white, middle-class woman, I continually reflected upon my interactions and interpretations throughout data collection and analysis.

In particular, I was aware of deficit discourses about the cultural practices of students and discourses about school achievement that are damaging to children. I checked for instances when I was implicated in sustaining damaging discourses that label children as struggling in classrooms and which often occur simultaneously with race and poverty. I interpreted
difficulties in students’ schooling experiences that I observed during this study as difficulties that intersected with systemic inequalities present in our school system. I worked to disrupt normative and damaging discourse about historically marginalized communities. Specifically, I looked at the cultural resources and assets of the teacher, community, and students, and the complex ways students were positioned in their school and project. I was careful to not only look at the ways students and the teacher were positioned in harmful ways in discourses, but the ways in which the discourses were resources for students to show their critical perspectives, brilliance, and imagination within inequitable structures. For example, Jillian and Rhianna positioned themselves outside of the norms and rules of the project and classrooms by withdrawing from the project and zipping and unzipping their hoodies. I did not analyze this in terms of being “disruptive” or breaking the collaborative norms. Instead, I analyzed the way in which they showed agency as collaborators in relation to the tools and other group members.

Zavella (1996) reports that feminist researchers must be aware of differences between research participants and their lives. Therefore, as a white woman I sought to understand the perspectives of the teacher and students of color in their interactions. To understand student perspectives on the playground, I observed the ways that students interacted with one another during recess. For example, I talked and played with students on the playground. I watched them play kick ball, and in one instance, I intervened when I thought the students were not treating one another with kindness. My involvement upset one of the students, as she did not feel I had permission to mitigate playground activities. This instance illustrated the importance of respecting boundaries, and understanding my role as participant researcher, in relation to students. I needed to build careful relationships with students to understand their perspectives,
and I needed to show respect for their interactions on the playground and in the classroom, and intervene if I had earned their respect over time.

To understand student perspectives in the classroom, I asked the teacher and students questions about specific situations that address the particular views of students when there is a moment of tension or contradiction. For example, I asked Jillian to elaborate on her collaborative role in relation to her work with Isa. She described Isa as bossy and shared an instance where she complied with Isa in order to continue working. In the interview, I asked students to elaborate on stories that related to the subject matter in the texts such as discrimination and racism. For example, Yannet discussed two instances where she felt that she was discriminated against based on race.

I included interviews and artifacts from the Internet about the school and community that helped me interpret the school literacy events, cultural practices and ideologies. I interviewed the principal and gathered information about the community. Furthermore, I observed many classroom activities, attended field trips focused on community outreach, and took field notes when community groups interacted with the students. I researched the background of the community groups and their purpose for interacting with students when this information was available to me. For example, members of Links Inc. provided several activities for the students throughout the study. The members took the students to the art museum to familiarize the children with local art.

To minimize the potential for misunderstandings or omissions, I consulted on an ongoing basis with experienced teachers and scholars of color at CU Boulder and at the school or district when possible. I conducted bi-monthly member checks with the teachers when available and presented emergent findings. In member checks, I presented my analysis and asked for teacher
reflections on the data sources and analysis. At times, the teacher disagreed with my interpretations and made additional suggestions, particularly about her interactions with Jillian. And at other times, she affirmed my interpretations with additional stories. For instance, she shared instances across years that reflected Rhianna’s academic and emotional experiences in classrooms. I hoped to involve the students throughout the analysis and interpretations, but the students went to separate middle schools, and I was not allowed to contact students the following school year per research guidelines.

**Unit of Study: Author Study and Literary Analysis**

Together, Ms. Moore and I planned and wrote a unit of study titled, “Author Study and Literary Analysis” that met district guidelines and school goals (Appendix A). We selected Jacqueline Woodson, a prominent African American, award-winning author. Jacqueline Woodson wrote a variety of texts, including picture books, novels, and poetry about culturally relevant issues, with a focus on the experiences of African American children and families, from slavery to recent history. The vast majority of students in the class self-identified as African American; therefore, we selected culturally relevant literature written by Jacqueline Woodson.

The teachers and I formed the essential questions: Who is Jacqueline Woodson and how does her cultural background influence her writing? What makes her writing interesting and important? How did Jacqueline Woodson develop characters and themes in her literature? And how does her cultural background influence your writing? The unity of study included two phases: 1) The analysis and discussion of literature authored by Jacqueline Woodson; and 2) the creation of multimodal responses to literature. These responses were formulated in Google Slides as presentations. During Phase 1 we focused on theme selection, textual evidence, and the formation of connections to the literature. We introduced a range of literature (see Figure 1).
Text Introduced across the unit of study by focal group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks and Groups</th>
<th>Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weeks 1 and 2</strong></td>
<td><img src="link" alt="YouTube" /> <img src="link" alt="The Other Side" /> <img src="link" alt="Each Kindness" /> <img src="link" alt="This is the Rope" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weeks 3 and 4</strong></td>
<td><img src="link" alt="The Other Side" /> <img src="link" alt="Each Kindness" /> <img src="link" alt="This is the Rope" /> <img src="link" alt="Brown Girl Dreaming" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weeks 5 &amp; 6</strong></td>
<td><img src="link" alt="The Other Side" /> <img src="link" alt="Each Kindness" /> <img src="link" alt="Megan Pie Baby" /> <img src="link" alt="Show Way" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1.* Jacqueline Woodson’s books introduced across the unit of study.

The focal picture books, including *The Other Side*, *Each Kindness*, and *This is the Rope*, were introduced in mini-lessons. *The Other Side* addressed issues of segregation in the 1960’s using a fence as a metaphor for separation between Black and white people. *Each Kindness*, a contemporary, realistic fiction text, tackled themes of poverty, culture, and bullying. *This is the Rope* described the migration of Jacqueline Woodson’s family from the South to the North and their eventual property ownership across time. Another focal text read and revisited across several mini-lessons was the young adult memoir, *Brown Girl Dreaming*. This memoir was comprised of a collection of poems, including “Journey,” from Jacqueline Woodson’s life and addressed issues of race, skin color, culture, and ability.
In the second and third weeks of the research project, Ms. Moore and I facilitated book clubs to develop students’ perspectives on novels. In these small groups of four to five students, Ms. Moore and I facilitated discussions about *Peace Locomotion* and *Locomotion*, two young adult, contemporary realistic fiction novels. Students asked questions and noted emerging themes, supported by textual evidence, while discussing personal connections to the text. Additional texts were available to students throughout the unit, including picture books *Pecan Pie Baby* and *Show Way*. All books were introduced and made available in a variety of ways, and then students selected books for their slide show presentations. While many of the books discussed racial issues throughout history, *Peace Locomotion* and *Locomotion* were contemporary realistic fiction novels and presented modern day issues students related to, such as foster care and sibling issues.

**Multimodal Responses to Literature through Google Slides**

In Phase II of the project, students spent three to four weeks, or thirteen composing days, integrating themes, textual evidence, and personal connections into their collaborative multimodal Google slide presentation. Different groups composed anywhere from eleven to thirteen days depending on the length of time each group took to complete their projects. At the end, the students spent two additional days reflecting upon their projects and presenting the projects to their peers and the community. Students primarily utilized Chromebooks to create the Google presentations, but sometimes students would use other available digital devices, including Ms. Moore’s laptop when the Chromebooks were broken. Each collaborative slide presentation was created by groups of two to three in Google Slides, with a range of ten to fifteen slides per show. The multimodal responses illustrated a theme from Woodson’s books,
specifically including two to three textual examples, and personal connections to the themes and literature (Projects in Appendix B & C).

**Process, Tools, and Apps**

Figure 2 presents an overview of the thirteen composing sessions that occurred during the final two to three weeks of a seven-week unit of study. On the first day, I presented my Google presentation explaining my theme, “Families care for one another and stick together.” (Appendix D) I shared supporting texts from Jacqueline Woodson and my design process in the creation of my project. Following my presentation, the students spent two days brainstorming in small groups and planned their projects on a planning guide. On the third day, students were instructed to select one theme and create their slides together on one computer in Google Slides, an app used in previous projects. Because students had previously used Google Classroom and Google Slides, they were familiar with these apps. Google Slides provided a particular set of affordances, such as composing one project in a shared virtual and synchronous space. Each student had an individual Chromebook or Netbook to compose his or her Google presentation. Students designed with images, color, text, font, layout, and animation, and could insert links to Internet content. Students recorded their audio-narration during days eleven through thirteen, using a PowerPoint version of their Google Slides. The teachers switched the students’ presentations to Power Point at the end of their composing processes, because audio-recording and music integration within individual slides was only possible through Power Point. Students went to the library or computer lab to record sound on their projects on Power Point on the teachers’ separate computers.
**Figure 2.** Students compose across thirteen composing days using different processes and tools.
Teachers and students modeled their process and products in whole-group mini-lessons, highlighting the integration of design elements such as, color, font, space, animation, and the use of music into the projects. Teachers also provided small-group instruction centered on taking and integrating photos and downloading copyright free music from a website. After the composing sessions were completed, the students completed an individual self-reflection using the project rubric (Appendix E). These projects culminated in classroom celebrations where students presented their Google presentation to district administrators, principals, teachers and students from other classes, and the students’ families.

**Google Apps and Chromebooks**

Google Slides was utilized throughout our project. Google products such as Google Drive, Slides, and Classroom were accessed and used through the Internet, because these products were less expensive than other software and could store and manage student information. With Google, students could collaborate on the same project from separate devices in a synchronous environment. However, they sat next to each other as they collaborated on their devices.

**Data Sources**

The list of data sources in Table 3 represents the range and depth of information I gathered to answer each research question. I collected data across thirteen composing sessions, as well as from the seven weeks of the unit of study for each group and the children within the groups. The data sources are organized by the following categories: all students, focal students/groups, teachers, and the principal.
Table 3  
*Research Questions, Participants, and Data Sources*

RQ # 1: How do fifth-grade students collaboratively negotiate their composing processes as they design a multimodal slide presentation?  
1a. How do students negotiate roles?  
1b. How do students express different modes?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>• Classroom video of whole group instruction across the unit of study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Observation field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Artifacts: student work samples including reading response and journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal Students or Small Groups</td>
<td>• Individual pre- and post-interviews focusing on students’ classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and composing identities. (The post-interview includes the retrospective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>design interview.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Groups</td>
<td>• Video of composing project for 13 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Observation field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Screenshots or photos of the composing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Multimodal slideshow projects (sessions and final version)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Google revision history of composing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Artifacts: planning guide, checklist and rubric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>• Pre and post-interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lesson materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>• Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RQ # 2: How do students negotiate positions as they critically discuss and respond to literature given the tools, project goals, and discourses associated with school success and race?  

| Artifacts                     | • Curriculum materials                                                      |
|                               | • Standards documents                                                       |
|                               | • Google Classroom website                                                  |
|                               | • International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards        |
|                               |   documents                                                                 |
|                               | • School website                                                            |
All Students

**Classroom Video.** At the start of every afternoon I video-recorded the opening session. Then I recorded literacy lessons to understand the classroom routines, norms, and instruction. I aimed to capture whole class discussions to help illustrate student positioning and interactions in the classroom. Therefore, I placed one camera on a tripod outside of the carpet where the students gathered for their meetings or lessons from the angle of the researcher towards student and teacher interactions in the classroom. I shifted the video to record the teacher or myself as a participant researcher and the related instruction. At times I recorded the students, so I could see the ways they positioned themselves in relation to the teacher, one another, and myself.

At the end of every lesson, I video-recorded the closing of the reading and writing workshop. The closing included reflection sessions about literary themes, the composing process, and personal connections to the readings. The teacher and I facilitated students’ sharing in the following way: What did you learn as a reader today? How do you know? What does this remind you of? Describe your collaborative process… What went well? What could you improve upon?

**Observation Field Notes.** Whole-group and small-group instruction and student and teacher interactions were written in daily field notes. I noted key moments of the opening and then focused on interactions during the lessons including whole group and small group discussions. If I led the lesson or portions of the lesson, I took notes at the next available time, or at the end of the school day. The notes were organized into three columns including the activity, the observations, and questions and connections that arose while taking notes. For example, on April 28th, I noted the language students used to describe design elements, using “pictures” for images. At the bottom of the field notes, I recorded technology issues and the
ways that influenced student interactions. On April 28th, I noted that a student removed himself from the lesson. When relevant, I noted my positioning in relation to the students. For example, I noted my conversation with Yannet when she hoped to share her presentation and was visibly disappointed that I did not give her the opportunity to do so. In addition to the classroom, I observed students on the playground and during lunch to understand their interactions with their peers in informal settings. I saw Isa’s leadership on the playground as she led many of her classmates in basketball games.

**Questionnaire.** (Appendix F) The questionnaire solicited information about student interests in reading, writing, and the use of technology to ascertain the ways in which they viewed themselves in these areas. Students responded to the statements: I like to write, I like to read, and I like technology, on a four-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire requested students record the types of digital activities they participated in at school and home. The students then rated their use of the following technological skills: email, publish stories, search the Internet, play games, insert images, insert sounds or music, and make videos. This provided student perceptions of their own technological or “tech” expertise.

**Focal Students**

**Pre-Interviews.** (Appendix G) Interviews can provide detailed descriptions of events, integrate multiple perspectives, describe processes, and interpret events from research participant perspectives (Weiss, 1994). The pre-interviews were conducted prior to the study to uncover the perspectives of participants’ classroom identities as readers, writers, and technology users in the classroom and community. In post-interviews, students described the collaborative processes and interpreted specific events that occurred as they created their slide show.
In the pre-interview, I asked students to describe reading, writing, and technology experiences in their classroom and home. Specifically, I asked them to describe successes and challenges they experienced in the classroom and home with a particular focus on their reading, writing, and technology experiences. Preliminary visits to this fifth-grade classroom suggested that the classroom community was framed by the discourse of success--“What does it mean to be a successful student?”--as evidenced by posters and lessons that focus on what it means to be a successful reader, writer and learner. Therefore, I compared student descriptions of successes and challenges to the way success was framed in the classroom. I then asked them information about the author, Jacqueline Woodson, to gather their background knowledge about the focal author.

As a researcher, I also inquired about their lives outside of the classroom to reveal cultural resources students integrated into their projects, such as language and literacy practices from the home. I asked them to describe their interests, specifically the activities they enjoyed on the playground and the literacy experiences in their homes. Furthermore, I asked about the technology they used at home. Importantly, I was attentive to the attention span and interest of the students and discontinued the interview if students felt discomfort or were finished with the conversation. For example, Rhianna began to answer one-word answers and glanced at the ceiling towards the second half of the interview. Thus, I ended the interview.

**Post/Retrospective Design Interviews.** (Appendix H) The post-interview revisited questions and issues from the pre-interview, in addition to new questions and issues that emerged over the course of the study. I focused on normed discourses related to race and immigration that arose in class and small group discussions such as school choice and discrimination by asking each student to describe specific situations that arose in the project or previously in their
lives. As the study unfolded, the students participated in key conversations about race in local contexts in relation to the focal texts and debated the ways racism exists in their lives. I asked the focal students about these discussions and then listened for markers or representations of issues, such as confrontations including one time Yannet observed an argument between two people where they called each other racial slurs.

A large portion of the post-interview attended to retrospective design. In retrospective interviews, students reflect upon their intentional design use throughout the process of creating their compositions design (Dalton et al., 2015; Smith, 2014). I conducted these interviews to understand students individual design processes composing decisions in relation to other group members or their partner. (Why did you choose this image? Why did you integrate this song?) I explored their views on their collaborative processes and the positions they negotiated with their peers. Even though a retrospective interview implies there is an intentional use of design and the use of modalities, not all students integrated design elements intentionally, and students may have assigned intentions in that were not intentional in the moment of creation (Dalton & Smith, 2012).

Because the study focused on collaboration, I also asked students to describe the collaborative design process in relation to their peers and interactions that occurred in the study: I would ask: “Tell me about your process in creating your product. What role(s) did you play? What role(s) did your partner or group member play? What went well for you? What was a challenge?” I noted instances of possible tensions for students and asked them about particular interactions or frustrations.
Small Groups

**Video.** Video or the two small groups was recorded across all composing days. The students and I placed iPads in each small group and recorded their interactions on a daily basis. These iPads were placed by the students and myself prior to starting work. I monitored the positioning of all cameras, but in some cases I was not available immediately to ensure a clear view was established. By the second day, I began to place the class video camera in the middle of the classroom space to record small group work. I focused on one group at a time within the classroom. I only had access to one hand held video recorder and tripod, so I varied the groups I recorded by day, but all groups still recorded their interactions with the iPads. So in some instances, some groups had two recordings, the iPads and the tripod video that was collected and sorted by day. I recorded student interactions with one another, the texts and digital tools, and other people, when other teachers or students interacted with small groups. I created transcripts of the video including screen shots and dialogue.

**Observation Field Notes.** The small group interactions of my focal students were also recorded on the same document as the field notes taken for the entire class. I noted the students’ interactions with each other, the tools, including the tools, digital devices, and books, and the teacher and myself in their small groups. I also noted where groups were placed in relation to the class, such as the library, in the center of the classroom, or in the cozy book nook. I was closely involved in the facilitation and video recording that occurred during the composing sessions, so I took field notes of small groups at the end of the school day.

**Screenshots/ Photos.** Photos and screen shots were collected throughout the process. I took daily photos of the students as they worked both in whole group and small groups on their projects, noting their placement in relation to the class and the teachers. In order to focus on the
positioning of student bodies in relation to tools, their peers, and the project, I took screen shots from video. I stopped video frequently, and through screen capture, created screen shots of their bodies in short still time frames to see changes in their gestures and movements.

**Multimodal Projects/Google Revision History.** Each group or partnership produced a project that was created in Google Slides and downloaded daily to Power Point. This guaranteed a daily record of the composing process and provided a backup in case something happened to the projects when they were stored in Google.

Google Revision History visually displayed the composing pathways of each student in the design process. This history became central to archiving of student work and the composing processes of students. Specifically, this tool recorded composing moves within one day and across all days and coded the changes by student name. The composers or students were labeled by color to understand individual student moves. For example, this revealed that even though Lucía was typing on the computer, she was not making many changes in the presentation until later.

**Artifacts.** Student work samples were collected to analyze the reading and writing of students in response to teacher-led literacy activities. Also, I collected work samples related to the composition process. Each group collectively created a planning guide and checklist to guide their project, and I gathered these shared documents. Individually, all students filled out rubrics on a scale of one thru four, rating the quality of their work. I kept a record of these rubrics for focal students.

**Teachers**

**Interviews - Teachers.** (Appendix I & J) In addition to focal students, I interviewed the classroom teacher at the beginning of the study to elicit her perspectives about the students as
readers, writers, and technology experts. I interviewed the technology teacher and the classroom teacher separately at the end of the study.

I asked the classroom teacher to describe students in specific situations, such as conflicts between students. I also asked the teacher to describe the academic success of the student in the classroom within and across the course of the study. I requested that she describe the strengths and goals of focal students in reading, writing, and technology using specific examples. “What is a strength of this student? What is a goal they are working towards? Can you describe a particular instance where this student experienced a success? What happened?”

The experiences and identities of both teachers influenced their relationships with students and subsequent instructional decisions. Therefore, I sought to understand both Ms. Moore and Ms. Ralston’s successes and challenges as a teacher prior to and during the study through post-interviews. As with students, I asked them to describe particular tensions. In addition, I asked them to describe the successes and challenges they each experienced across the unit through contextualized examples.

**Lesson Materials.** The teachers and I co-planned the unit and daily lessons, recorded the unit and daily lesson on plan, and placed the plan in Google Drive, so we could all add to one document. When applicable, I saved artifacts of the lessons including materials for the day. Sometime these were worksheets such as a planning guide, or pictures of charts that we co-generated through discussions, such as the design elements they noticed in my presentation (A summary of lessons is available in Appendix K).

**Principal and School**

**Interviews - Principal.** (Appendix J) After the study, I conducted a principal interview to understand the school culture, community, and beliefs that arose as the study unfolded. Ms.
Kelly had worked in the school as the principal for approximately ten years and had many relationships in the community. In this interview, she described the history and values of the school as well as the community. Furthermore, Ms. Kelly described Ms. Moore and Ms. Ralston and their interactions with students in their classrooms.

**School and Curriculum Artifacts.** A variety of artifacts were collected throughout the study including those focused on the school, district, and state. First, I collected all curriculum materials related to the unit including the Grade 5 Literacy Scope and Sequence Standards Trajectory, and the Grade 5 Essential Learning Goals for Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language. The Essential Learning Goals (ELG)s detailed all ELGs for the 5th grade year including those written in Unit 5: Author Study and Literary Essay, the unit of this study. The Literacy Scope and Sequence Standards Trajectory provided generalizations or understandings for students including guiding questions, and strategies and skills for inclusion in reading and writer’s workshop. These were used as guides as we co-planned the unit of study and shaped how teachers integrated curriculum in their classrooms. We also used the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) from the state department to guide our planning and instruction. These standards were compared to the district standards and brought forth a national view of curriculum.

Furthermore, the school published a website that stated the school mission, projects, and goals for the year. This site presented information about the school culture and the ways in which the school described itself for the local community. Finally, I used technology standards, specifically information produced by Google Classroom and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards, to document how technology is marketed to all
This shows the larger technology context as it influences schools, such as Henry Elementary.

**Data Analysis**

**Methodological Tools**

My theoretical commitments to critical literacy, sociocultural, and multimodal perspectives can be complimentary frameworks. Therefore, in this study I combined the theoretical frameworks and related methodologies.

First, I employed qualitative, interpretive, and multimodal analysis to address Research Question # 1. I combined student and teacher perspectives in interviews, the roles of students in video transcripts, field note observations, and the modes students expressed in their products, employing a multimodal matrix analytic approach considering students’ processes, products, and perspectives (Dalton & Smith, 2015). For example, in interviews, Yannet stated that she often asked for technology assistance from other students, and did not perceive herself as an expert in this area. But video transcripts revealed she negotiated the role of lead designer in her group and integrated multiple design elements throughout their project.

Second, I analyzed the interactions of children in video to address Research Question # 2. In this analysis, I connected students’ body positioning in their interactions and verbal and nonverbal forms communication to their use of digital devices and texts (Norris, 2004). I analyzed body positioning and gestures in moment-to-moment interactions. I looked for instances of nonverbal negotiations with intense movement. I took still frames approximately every thirty seconds to observe how the students’ positioned their bodies throughout their interactions. For example, through this analysis, I was able to examine the zipping and
unzipping of jackets that occurred during the theme selection as a way of participation, play, or perhaps resistance to the group interactions. Otherwise, this movement would have gone unnoticed.

Third, I used tools from critical discourse analysis (CDA) to attend to macro discourses found in the classroom space, unit of study, school structures and larger educational landscape in relation to small group work (Fairclough, 2010; Luke, 1995). For example, discourses of race, success and immigration were salient to the students, school, and community and influenced their interactions with texts, the students, and their white teacher. I asked in what ways these discourses permeated the text-based discussions, the composing process, and the student and teacher interactions with each other.

In the following section, I detail my analytic procedures. In Phase 1, I completed a thorough analysis of all the data sources looking for initial patterns and themes. Then I created multimodal transcripts to triangulate data sources including the interactions, processes, roles, and products. In Phase 2, I conducted a microanalysis of interactions in relation to products and perspective. I revisited my coding scheme and multimodal transcript to understand the ways in which student negotiated their collaborative processes through nonverbal and verbal communication. In Phase 3, I revisited previous codes related to macro discourses and identities in whole group discussions and small group interactions, interviews, and students’ composing processes. I compared information in the artifacts and interviews about the community looking for discourses that emerged throughout the project in the students’ composing processes. I then completed a cross-case analysis of both cases.
Phase 1: Qualitative Analysis Looking for Patterns and Themes

In qualitative analysis, Erickson (1986) proposes researchers study “the immediate and local meanings of actions, as defined from the actors’ point of view.” (p. 119) Therefore, I did a preliminary reading of all data and wrote content descriptions of all video, instruction, and activities, looking from the perspectives of the children as situated in the classroom. I noted activities in the classroom and larger school context, including informal spaces where interactions occur through the eyes of the students (Dyson, 2003; Dyson & Genishi, 2005). I wrote descriptions of the community activities, such as those provided by Links, Inc. The Links members brought all students to the Art museum, and I attended with the students. I noted the ways in which students negotiated positions with the teachers, within the museum, and the ways they interacted with the artwork. For example, I noted how Rhianna positioned herself in relation to the physical boundaries surrounding the artwork, as each piece of art was taped or roped off. She crossed the physical lines with her body that surrounded the artwork, even after repeated requests from the proctor not to do. Thus, she demonstrated her agency to cross boundaries when it is not clear why they were established.

Coding. (Appendix K) First, I created a list of deductive codes derived from literature in combination with the initial reading of the data, to get a sense of the findings (Creswell, 2009). These codes were related to the research questions, student projects, and the macro discourses of race and language that emerged in the data. I created video transcripts with photos of the students’ interactions and used Atlas to inductively code these transcripts. These transcripts included periodic screen shots of students in video that corresponded with student talk (Huberman & Miles, 2002; Ravitch & Riggan, 2012).
I also coded the student and teacher pre- and post-interviews in Atlas to obtain the participants’ viewpoints on how students were positioned within reading, writing, and technology contexts and in relation to classroom discourses of race and school success. I examined interview data to gain insight into students’ identities. They described specific instances of successes and challenges in the classroom and their processes for creating multimodal compositions. Finally, I met with a senior scholar with expertise in multimodal composition and methodology and refined the coding scheme.

For example, I analyzed all data under the parent code “negotiation,” including the following descriptors: agreement, blaming, compliment, connecting-verbally, criticizing, disagreement, demanding, dialogue, dividing roles, dividing slides, frustration, grabs computer, messin’, negotiation-resolution, playing, positioning, problem, and taking turns. I specifically analyzed moments of tension for the two groups. I sorted these codes in Atlas and reviewed the transcripts and video. I selected those tensions that were representative of the group. Group 1 named collaboration as moments when they got stuck. Therefore, I looked for instances where they were stuck as a group. These often intersected with the phenomenon messin’ that emerged in their data. For example, students reported, “These slides are messin' up everything.” Or they asked questions of one another, “What did you do?” Messin’ mirrored a discourse practice in the African American community often identified as “the dozens.” Students are messin’ as they expressively engage in dialogue marked with teasing, sounding, or dissing that involves physical posturing. Verbal and nonverbal interactions are playful, yet contested, and represent a form of community making (Brown, 2009; Kelley, 2001). Group 2 reflected upon instances where they worked well together, and I coded for those tensions that were resolved and those that remained.
Key themes emerged in both their verbal and nonverbal interactions that I wanted to explore further.

While coding all video and interviews, I began to construct each case within analytic memos. After each day of coding, I documented key events in a two-column memo for each case, reflecting on the process on the left side and the product on the right. After summarizing key events for all days, I went back through the memo and recoded the memo for emerging themes. I placed these themes under the respective research questions, highlighting collaborative processes in yellow and macro discourses in red. For example, when crafting the memo for Case 1, I noted the girls’ frequent use of the term “messin’” and reflected that it was both playful and challenging, expressing emotion. I highlighted this in yellow. I placed this theme under the original research question: How are collaborative processes mediated by digital tools?

**Multimodal Transcripts.** After constructing the memos, I triangulated data by comparing screen shots of students in interactions, their dialogue, and pictures of the their slides from that day. I found it difficult to connect product, process, and perspective with the Atlas qualitative software platform, given the constraints of the software. Therefore, I created multimodal transcripts that connected the different data sources including the students’ discourse or talk, body positions, and products (Dalton & Smith, 2012). Figure 3 shows an excerpt of a multimodal transcript. The transcript is divided into six columns: Bodies and Tools, Talk, Product, Design/Modes, Roles/Expertise, and Content. The first three columns include a picture of the bodies in the classroom space, student talk, and the product at that time in Google Revision history. I used Google Revision history to take screenshots of the product that corresponded with talk. The remaining three columns labelled design/modes, roles/expertise and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bodies and Tools</th>
<th>Talk</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Design/ Modes</th>
<th>Roles, Expertise</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tool: Chromebook</td>
<td>J- Hey wait I thought I was writing the wordle. R- I thought that you didn’t want to put unity…</td>
<td>R- resized font size</td>
<td>J-designer and quote finder from <em>Peace Locomotion</em></td>
<td>R-designer and writer</td>
<td>R- omits collaborating and differences from slide title and adds communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apps: Google Slide and Wordle</td>
<td>K- I love that you are making a wordle. Can you make sure that you’ve found a quote or evidence from <em>The Other Side</em> you can put on there?</td>
<td>J-design graphic</td>
<td>R-designer and writer</td>
<td>Discourse – race (referring to differences in skin color)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books: <em>Peace Locomotion</em> and <em>The Other Side</em></td>
<td>J- I found a quote. (She grabs the book.)</td>
<td>6:45 From um, <em>Locomotion</em> and I am going to put it in this.</td>
<td>I- quote finder from <em>The Other Side</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3.* Excerpt of a multimodal transcript.
content are analysis. In these columns, I labeled the modes that were used, roles or expertise that emerged, and recorded the content, noting what was added or deleted in the slides. I noted when words indexed discourses, through labeling and patterns of interactions that reflected or differed from students’ identities.

**Phase 2: Micro-Analysis of Interactions in Relation to Products and Perspective**

In Phase 2, I completed a tracing of roles and modes throughout the transcripts as well as their multimodal products. In one transcript, for example, I noted that Jillian began to take on the role of the design expert over time and layered multiple design elements into one shared composing space. To understand various modes of expression, I employed multimodal analysis of modes in the slideshows, noting modes such as, images, aural modes including music and sound, and kinesthetic modes including the movement of images (Kress, 2010). Kress explains “various modes have particular potentials and limitations.” (p. 194) Therefore, I sought to understand the ways in which modes were expressed and layered in varying ways to create the slideshow.

I began by creating multimodal timescapes (Dalton & Smith, 2015) across the composing process to show which modes were used in each session. First, I traced modes through Google Revision History. Because the composing moves of each student are coded, labeled and presented in Google Revision history, I recorded these modes on a chart in Excel. Then I created a multimodal timescape chart for each student to show how students were designing with the different modes within and across composing sessions (see Figure 19).
Figure 19. Example of a multimodal timescape showing Rhianna’s design process.

After creating the chart, I analyzed the modes that were expressed in each group for similarities and differences. Then, I connected the modal tracing back to the multimodal transcript, so I could see how the modes were influenced by the available tools and interactions between group members. Thus, I analyzed how children’s modal use was shaped by tools and structures (Kress, 2010), including the adoption of digital tools with particular goals, texts, and classroom structures, and students’ cultural and digital expertise they bring to the classroom.

Because their interactions greatly influenced the way positions and identities were negotiated by the students, I used multimodal interaction analysis, to understand interactions between the Chromebooks and one another. Specifically, I analyzed the context and discourse in relation to the body to understand the interaction of nonverbal cues with words and the context. According to Norris (2004), “Video data diffuse the focus on language and illustrate that there is much more going on in any interaction than just language and context.” (p. 149) Therefore, I selected two to three illustrative moments or tensions and created transcripts. These transcripts included a series of screen shots that showed positioning and body movement in relation to other group members and tools. For example, the screen shots were collected at thirty-second intervals and revealed the zipping and unzipping of both Rhianna and Jillian’s hoodies and the gaze of
both students looking directly at one another, as they showed solidarity in response to Isa’s perceived bossiness.

**Phase 3: Comparison of Micro to Macro Structures**

In Phase 3, I continued to refine existing data through ongoing analysis of macro discourses (Huberman & Miles, 2002). I revisited previous codes that related to discourses, connecting codes to curriculum and planning documents, the structures in the class and school, class and discussions about the content of the texts that were written and coded in Phase I, and interviews. Erickson (1986) describes the importance of “combining close analysis of fine details of behavior and meaning in everyday social interaction with analysis of the wider societal context.” (p. 120) Therefore, I combined earlier analysis in Phases 1 and 2, contrasting student interactions with the perspectives of the participants to reveal identities that emerged in the classroom and in their lives, and in negotiation with the teacher and students in the classroom, and discourses associated with race and school success. Student and teacher perspectives from interviews were connected with student interactions in video transcripts in order to discern classroom identities. The identities shifted throughout the processes based on students’ interactions with one another and the digital tools.

First I asked, in what ways was power implicated in the interactions of students with the tools and projects goals that influenced the control and distribution of power and knowledge within collaborative groups and classrooms (Fairclough, 2010; Luke, 1995). I analyzed the video transcripts for instances where control was negotiated verbally and nonverbally with each other and in relation to the tools. I noted the differences in power in relation to one shared tool and individual tools.
Second, I asked, what discourses emerged in relation to the norms of success that were established in this school and classroom. For example, Isa and Yannet both accepted the school’s message about what it meant to be a successful student and took on leadership roles in their groups. Also, Rhianna was positioned as a student who was below grade level and showed frustration over meeting her reading goals in the classrooms.

Third, this analysis was used to understand how discourses associated with race emerged in the students’ discourse and in their interactions. For example, I noted that Yannet reflected on an incident where she was discriminated against based on her skin color. Then I coded this instance as identity related to race. Also, Yannet and Lucía noted the skin color of the girls in *The Other Side*, and I coded this instance as identity in relation to race. I also noted her responses to “Hair” in *Brown Girl Dreaming* in my field notes and how she shared her experiences about her own hair, and coded this as identity. I considered her identities in relation to normative discourses of race, and noted how she identified as an African American girl, but also as an immigrant from Ethiopia who has experienced hardships similar to Jacqueline Woodson.

**Cross-Case Analysis.** After the two cases were crafted, I utilized cross-case study analysis, comparing cases in ways that addressed the research questions. I looked for similarities and differences between and across cases to identify patterns and contradictions (Stake, 2013). First, I compared the identities of group members that emerged in their interviews to understand how classroom identities influenced the roles students negotiated and their modal expressions. I compared all modes expressed across all students in both groups. Then, I compared their collaborative processes and the representative ways they negotiated tensions noting similarities and differences in their negotiations. Finally, I looked at positioning comparing the ways in
which the tools, the structures, and macro discourses influenced both the positions and identities they negotiated in the process.

**Trustworthiness and Limitations**

I was a participant researcher in this study, spending extensive volunteer time in the classroom before the onset of the study and then collaborating with the teacher on the design and enactment of the curriculum. My identity and positionality, detailed reporting, and transparency contributed to a coherent analysis that is trustworthy. I triangulated data sources to develop themes and findings, and looked for disconfirming information. Case-study analysis does not produce findings that are generalizable to all classrooms and students. Instead, the depth and richness of case study analysis contributes to understanding the particular phenomenon of multimodal responses to literature in diverse classrooms.

I was able to hold member checks and meet with the classroom teacher, Ms. Moore, several times throughout the study, sharing portions of my analysis and asking for her feedback and interpretations. I also built from the funds of knowledge of the teacher, community, and students, noting students’ strengths. However, students negotiated positions in complex ways, sometimes outside of classroom sanctioned events, and thus I have a limited understanding of students’ identity/identities and positioning. I was careful to not sustain negative tropes about teachers and students from non-dominant communities in ways that were harmful. For example, Jillian may have resisted the selection of the theme, unity, through her body positioning and nonverbal gestures, in a way that gave her agency and a form of participation. She was not portrayed in a negative light that would sustain negative discourse about African American girls.

Research should aim to be transparent about the description of the project and activities as well as the analytic procedures (Eisenhart, 2006). Therefore, I was careful to describe the
activities in interaction and what was enacted in the project versus what was intended. As well, I was transparent about the perspectives of teachers and students describing both the concrete details of their interactions as well as their interviews (Erikson, 1996). Because identities and positions are shifting and negotiated in social contexts, I described the context in as much detail as necessary to understand how those shifted in the moment. For example, I provided as much information about the culture and context as I could learn from my interviews and observations of the community groups.

During this process, I carefully analyzed for disconfirming evidence or counter evidence to the emerging themes. At first, I described Yannet and Lucía as partners who collaboratively engaged throughout the entire process. Yet detailed analysis of their modal preferences, showed Yannet implemented most of the digital elements and Lucía offered verbal feedback. While I initially deduced that this group presented as a group who equally negotiated issues, I found discrepancies in the ways the girls integrated digital expertise. I systematically coded and analyzed students’ modal preferences, and found Yannet made more changes than Lucía. Yannet did not have the digital expertise to integrate many design elements in their project such as animation, and the insertion of photos of artwork.

Finally, I was able to develop relationships with the students and teachers throughout the schools year. Even though the study took place in the last months of the school year, I visited the classroom often, weekly, or every other week, to gather a sense of the routines, structures, and discourses that were pervasive, and built relationships with the teachers and students. Even though I did not collect formal data during this time, I was able to carefully observe the ways in which students interacted in the classroom throughout the entire school year in relation to the study.
I bring extensive experience as an elementary teacher and professional developer that helps me to understand and examine the classroom context within larger structures of power. I began my career as an elementary teacher, and I had the opportunity to work in a variety of schools and districts as a professional developer with students from non-dominant communities. In these roles, I was exposed to a variety of ways in which structures, district and state curriculum, school climate, and principal leadership influenced instruction and student learning in complex ways.

While these experiences and identities are valuable, I am aware of the potential bias I bring to the interpretation of the data as a white, middle-class researcher. Students negotiated issues in the classroom and small group settings and I was careful to present the data and my interpretations in relation to their perspectives. To do this, I interviewed all participants to understand their perspectives. However, I was limited in my interpretations because I was not able to meet with the students after the study. This study took place at the end of the year, and the subsequent students moved to different middle schools. Ideally, students would have interpreted the ways they negotiated issues that arose in relation to one another and the structures in the project. They would have watched and reflected upon videos about conversations and tensions in their collaborative process.
CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDY 1: ISA, JILLIAN, AND RHIANNA
““We collaborate when we get “stuck” after layering our design elements.””

This chapter illustrates the first of two cases focusing on these research questions:
1) How do fifth-grade students collaboratively negotiate their composing processes as they design a multimodal slide presentation? How do students negotiate roles? How do students express different modes? 2) How do students negotiate identities and positions as they critically discuss and respond to literature given the tools, project goals, discourses associated with race and classroom success? In Chapter 5, I analyze an additional case, Group 2, and then present a cross-case analysis in Chapter 6.

Group 1 included Rhianna, Isa, and Jillian, three fifth-grade students who self-identified as African American girls. The collaborative processes for Group 1 were unique in that students negotiated the theme of the presentation through dialogue, but some students’ ideas were excluded from the final theme selection. As well, students layered individual design elements in ways that created opportunities for messin’ with the digital tools and one another. Messin’ is a cultural discourse practice associated with African American communities (Brown, 2009; Kelley, 2001), including teasing and physical posturing to elicit laughter and create community.

In this particular study, it is important to note that the tools and apps used in this project—Google, Google slides, and Chromebooks—provided synchronous opportunities for collaboration on individual, digital devices. The students worked on individual devices collaboratively and negotiated composing processes as they sat side-by-side. As well, the multimodal project was set within a larger unit of study focused on the analysis of one author,
Jacqueline Woodson, selected because of the author’s cultural relevance to the students in the class.

Findings indicate the following: 1) Students collaborated when they became stuck and layered modes into one space in ways that created opportunities for messin’ with one another’s work in Google Slides. 2) Roles were negotiated in relation to other group members, and sometimes students’ roles shifted from classroom identities in ways that provided new opportunities to develop digital expertise, and sometimes these roles were secondary to the composing process. 3) The tools and apps influenced the way power was distributed between students. 4) Discourses related to racism and discrimination entered into the conversations and discussions between group members, and were mediated by the texts of Jacqueline Woodson, the author who discussed these discourses intimately. Yet, these discourses did not permeate the entire project and were partially integrated into students’ personal connections.

In the following section, I analyze the collaborative processes of Group 1, as Rhianna, Jillian, and Isa negotiate both content and design elements. When the students reflected upon their collaborative processes in class, they reported that they collaborated when they were “stuck.” Sometimes these moments involved verbal and nonverbal communication between group members, as students physically positioned themselves in relation to other group members.

Research Question # 1: How do fifth-grade students collaboratively negotiate their composing processes as they design a multimodal slide presentation in response to literature by Jacqueline Woodson?

1a. How do students negotiate roles?

1b. How do students express different modes?
Figure 5. Group 1, Jillian (left), Rhianna (center), and Isa (right) negotiate content and design.

Negotiation of Content and Design

**Content.** At the beginning of the project, the girls discussed possible themes and selected one theme for their slide show. All students were instructed to brainstorm and record a variety of themes from Jacqueline Woodson’s texts that were unique and relevant. Isa and Jillian brainstormed possibilities, and I suggested they record unity, a theme Isa and Jillian mentioned previously. Isa then related unity to the book *The Other Side*, explaining that two girls of “two different kinds” (Video Transcript, May 6, 2016) were separated by a fence that went through town. The fence was intended to be a metaphor for barriers and structures that separate all people by race, and Jillian encouraged Isa to think about the fence as it stretched not just through the neighborhood, but also throughout the community.

The next day students were instructed to select one theme and plan their presentations through the use of a planning guide. In addition, Rhianna joined this group after a playground dispute with the previous groups members in Group 2. While Isa suggested unity, Rhianna recommended memories, and Jillian proposed: “A theme that I had was how people… uh, uh,
was that in *Peace Locomotion* their parents die. Uh… One theme was death and stuff… Miss Edna had loss and got like really depressed and stuff,” as she looked down at her socks.

Rhianna responded to Jillian’s suggestion stating, “So basically memories,” and Isa recorded her thinking. Jillian questioned, “How is that memories?” Isa’s ideas were recorded on the top, center of the planning guide, then Rhianna’s and last Jillian, suggesting an order of importance of the themes. Figure 6 illustrates their verbal and nonverbal negotiation of the theme and how the Rhianna and Isa attempted to include Jillian.

1) Isa: Okay so um. I think our theme should be, our theme should, should be unity because our theme should come together no matter what. I think memories tie into that. So if we all break it down. Memories could be into unity, because you have memories no matter what. (Rhianna records Isa’s thinking.)

2) Jillian: What does that say? (She gazes at the paper in Rhianna’s lap.)

3) Rhianna: Don’t you think we should make our theme unity because memories tie in? I think it should be memories also. Memories is how, they show memories in *Peace Locomotion*. It does kind of tie into unity. We have um, wait, so. It ties into *Peace Locomotion* and *Pecan Baby*…

4) Isa: What do you think Jillian? Should it be unity, memories, or death and why do you think that?

5) Jillian: Whatever you think is fine. (She looks down at her socks playing with her shoes.)

6) Isa: What is wrong Jillian? (Jillian does not respond but nods her head and looks down at her lap.) (May 5, 2016)
Isa and Rhianna invited Jillian to participate in the discussion in Line 4, “What do you think Jillian?” but Jillian mumbled quietly in Line 5, “Whatever you think is fine.” Her gestures and gaze differed from her verbal response as she looked away from the girls and towards her socks. Isa was concerned about her nonverbal disinterest and asked in Line 6, “What is wrong Jillian?” And Jillian did not reply. The girls made connections between themes, but did not connect Jillian’s suggestions regarding death and loss. They attempted to bring Jillian into the conversation; however, Jillian did not join the conversation, responding by looking down at her shoes, out at the room, crossing her arms.

In this instance, the girls negotiated the theme through debate, but there was no resolution, as the themes of memories and death and loss were excluded. The group selected the theme unity, even though Jillian did not agree with the theme. While the girls attempted to connect everyone’s ideas, Jillian revealed that she felt her ideas were excluded by the positioning of her gaze down towards her feet. This differed from their negotiation of design elements. Design negotiations brought forth direct and playful opportunities for messin’ with the tools and one another that were often resolved through verbal and nonverbal communication.

**Design.** When the students negotiated their design elements, all of the student layered design elements into the presentations, often on slides they worked on together. This created problems that were often resolved. For example, Jillian layered her wordle onto the layout and content of the slides designed by the other students where the students worked side-by-side with individual devices in a synchronous digital setting. Jillian created a wordle independently for fifteen minutes next to Rhianna and Isa. Isa constructed a quote to insert in the text: “Annie and Clover communicated even though the law says they should be separated,” and inserted an image of the two girls with “racial differences” reaching for each other. Rhianna changed the font and
font background on the titles of the slides from blue to white. Figure 7 shows the layering of design elements by students (Google Revision History, May 5, 2015).

*Figure: 7. Layering of design elements on one slide by different composers.*
In response to *The Other Side*, Isa wrote that Annie and Clover were communicating even though the law says they should be separate in Slide 1. In Slide 2, Jillian and Rhianna prepared for the wordle, by shrinking the quote and placing it under the image of the girls on the fence. Soon after, Jillian inserted her wordle beside the work of others, incorporating a quote from *Peace Locomotion*, “peace covers everything.” Later she placed the wordle over the quote. The layering of both the wordle, text, images, and ideas resulted in negotiations wherein students messed with others’ work. Figure 8 illustrates the dialogue between the girls when Jillian inserted her wordle onto the slide Isa constructed:

1) Isa: Why did you all put that background?
2) Jillian: Actually me and Rhianna thought it was really cool.
3) Isa: You've got to talk to me about it.
4) Rhianna: Oh my God.
5) Isa: What are you doing? (Isa moves over to Jillian and looks at the screen. Then Isa moves back to her Chromebook, looking at her screen).
6) Isa: Stop!
7) Jillian: Oh, my goodness okay. I like that.
8) Rhianna: That is cool.
9) Jillian: Isa watch this. (She shows her. The wordle comes in to the page with animation: “Peace covers everything.”)
10) Jillian: Isa watch this. See, look. Isa.

11) Isa: Oh that's cool. (May 5, 2015)

Figure 8. Jillian (left) inserted the Wordle in the Google slide presentation.

In Lines 1-3, Isa expressed concern that Rhianna and Jillian changed the background. When they made a change without her permission, she responded, “You’ve got to talk to me about it.” Then, Jillian shrunk Isa’s text and placed the wordle, “Peace Covers Everything” on the slide. In Line 6, Isa requested “Stop!” Jillian did not stop, but animated the wordle, and placed her design elements into the slide with the support of Rhianna. Rhianna changed the background and watched the insertion of the wordle. Despite Isa’s initial requests to discuss the changes, Isa stated the wordle was “cool,” the wordle remained, and the girls worked through their negotiation.

In this way, the students engaged in messin’, or verbal and nonverbal negotiations of the design process, where students asked questions such as “Why did you all put that background?” (Line 1) or “What are you doing?” (Line 5). The students asked direct questions of one another when they made an intentional or unintentional change on the slides in a way that impacted everyone’s work. In this case, the background was changed by Rhianna and Jillian without Isa’s knowledge, and Isa requested that they include her next time. Thus, the girls negotiated control of the process through messin’, by asking, who, what, and why changes were being made.

At other times, messin’ occurred when students did not have digital expertise to make the changes they desired. The students had varying digital expertise, and sometimes they made unintentional changes to their slide(s) in ways that impacted other group members. In Figure 9, Rhianna’s inexperience in a synchronous digital environment with Google Slides, caused the presentation to “mess up” causing an individual problem that needed to be resolved:
Rhianna covered her face after she accidentally messed with the slides.

Rhianna was inserting and deleting slides, and got stuck when she attempted to make a change. As she tried to delete a slide, she placed her hands over her face to show frustration, “I am messing up everything.” She then directed her frustration to the app. “These slides are messin' up everything.” After I prompted her to ask a neighbor, she pleaded for help, and I showed her how to add and delete slides.

Furthermore, messin’ could be playful as students negotiated the design process. For example, when the students were reviewing their slides, Rhianna stated, “I didn’t do that,” while banging on the keyboard. Isa responded by rolling her eyes at Rhianna. But then they stopped, snapped their fingers, and smiled as they looked at each other. Then, Isa playfully asked Rhianna, “What did you do?” Jillian clarified the she made the changes, because she divided the slide in to two slides in response to Mrs. Schmidt’s suggestion. Thus, the girls sometimes engaged in messin’ in a playful manner by snapping, smiling, and playfully questioning one another.

Students described collaborative moments as moments when they became stuck in the composing process. In the composing process, the synchronous environment created opportunities for messin’ where students became stuck and negotiated control of the process.
through direct forms of questioning, unintentional changes to the slideshow, and playful negotiations that included teasing and smiling. These episodes were resolved over time, as the students figured out how to coordinate and layer their design elements and ideas in one space.

Identities, Roles, and Multimodal Design

In Group 1, the students negotiated roles that both reflected and differed from the ways they interacted with other students in the classroom. While Isa and Jillian extended their classroom identities in both leadership and “tech-spert” roles, Rhianna departed from her classroom identity as a reader and writer who was significantly below grade level. Instead she shared the role of designer as she created slides and became the sole, photo expert in and outside of her group. The classroom identities of students were not intended to be static identities that constituted labels for the students, but illustrated some of the ways students were perceived by others and themselves in their classrooms. Students’ identities shifted over time in their interactions in the classroom and within the groups during composing processes.

The students expressed themselves through particular modes, either writing and reading text, selecting images, and animating objects throughout their project in ways that were negotiated with other group members. For example, Jillian negotiated the role of lead designer and requested Isa write and type the text while she made the slides pretty. Specifically, Jillian used animation, layout, and font color to express their theme while Isa read and wrote text, selected images, and attended to layout. At first, Rhianna utilized background color, digital images, and font style in ways that did not contribute to the content of the slides, but over time she shifted to being the photo expert, a central role in their group, and integrated many images such as photos of artwork.
Isa: Leader - “Jillian, you got to do your connections!”

In an interview, Ms. Moore reflected that Isa was seen as a confident, hard worker who was told: “You are one of the best and brightest.” (Interview, June 1, 2015) She was selected to work in this group, because she might emerge as a leader and collaboratively move the group in a productive direction. Ms. Moore described her as, “She’s just a strong kid. Like all around good kid.” (Interview, June 1, 2015) She also noted that Isa was a “pleaser,” and someone who worked hard in the classroom. Throughout the larger project, Isa followed directions, answered prompts and did her best to meet the expectations of the project. For example, Isa wrote a page response to each reading response activity.

The other group members accepted Isa’s leadership role at times, but pushed back when they thought she did not include their ideas. Jillian reflected in the post-interview, “Um, her role was kind of being in charge and she was a little bit bossy though.” (May 20, 2015) Jillian also reported that Isa decided who would make the slides and how many. She reflected that she took Isa’s suggestions to avoid an argument; for example, Isa told Jillian, “Do your connections!” and Jillian did them (Interview, May 20, 2015).

In contrast, Isa described the collaborative negotiations by using the subject pronoun “we.” Even though the group members reported Isa selected their theme, in her post-interview Isa stated: “We decided that we would all do the unity part, but after that we should have one slide to ourselves.” (May 19, 2015) Therefore, initially, she was a leader and perceived herself as a leader, in a way that aligned with her classroom identities, but this created tensions as other group members perceived her as someone who made decisions without soliciting agreement from her peers.
Figure 10. Isa (right) incorporated a quote on a slide next to other group members.

**Roles.** Throughout the project, Isa focused on the following roles: leader, prompting others to follow directions; reader or writer; and designer, incorporating quotes and evidence, and incorporating powerful images. Outwardly, she rehearsed the slides to ensure they met the project guidelines. In the following example, she read the following slide aloud until she was happy with the phrasing: “Not leading or following, but coming together during hardships.” Figure 11 shows the slide titled Unity, which Isa rehearsed out loud.

Figure 11. Isa rehearsed the Unity slide and inserted a powerful image.
In addition to writing, and the rehearsal of her writing, she was a designer. She inserted a series of hand images with different skin colors, choosing interlocking hands to portray unity. She placed the text, “To communicate and come together despite our race or other difference,” beside the hand image.

Isa led the group to meet project goals, by completing their personal connections. At one moment, she questioned changes in the background. She asked, “Why did you all put that background?” and other group members changed the background. Initially, she was a leader who gave directions, and this aligned with her classroom identities as someone who was perceived as successful, bright, and a leader by the teacher and some of the other classmates. While Isa’s leadership was accepted in the classroom, Rhianna and Jillian did not always follow her lead. For example, Isa did not think they should include the quote “Ding, dang baby” on the slides. But Jillian and Rhianna determined they should keep the quote in the presentation. Thus, Isa’s role as a leader, shifted across time from a leader who prompted others to following directions, to someone who focused more on reading and writing independently.

![Figure 12](image.png)

*Figure 12.* Isa’s multimodal design process across composing days.
**Multimodal Design Process.** When Jillian told Isa to write the words, so that Jillian could make it look good, Isa wrote much of the text in the presentation. Therefore, Isa interacted with the group with a particular focus on writing text in days one through nine. In addition to writing and then reading her writing, she selected powerful, digital images that aligned with text, days three through six. When she inserted images, she focused on the layout of text and images, including digital images and her own artwork.

Isa read her writing aloud, attending to the flow of the words and made slight changes to text. On day eight, she drew a picture of friends to show unity, explaining that she included a new girl at school, similar to the picture book, *Each Kindness*. On days eight and nine, she took a photo of her picture and inserted this with Rhianna’s assistance. Isa followed the goals of the project, asking other group members to help define, illustrate, and support the theme.

**Jillian: Lead Designer - “Watch this. See, look! I’ll make it look good.”**

In an interview, Ms. Moore reflected that the students and teachers perceived Jillian as the “tech-spert.” In the class Ms. Moore stated, “Any time I have a computer problem she runs it.” (Interview, May 2, 2015) Throughout the school day, Jillian not only solved multiple problems, such as helping students access the Internet, she ran aspects of the classroom routine, such as playing music to transition to the next activity. Furthermore, she set up the projector at the beginning of every activity. In this way, she negotiated a position that was central to the class routines, through her digital expertise, as she facilitated transitions and technology problems.

Ms. Moore noted many of Jillian’s strengths, such as playing the saxophone, but she reflected Jillian had difficulty getting along with others, and engaged in power struggles with the teacher. Often, Jillian chose to work independently during lunch, recess, and in the classroom,
away from other students. And she was not afraid to voice her opinions with both the classroom
teachers and classmates. For example, Ms. Moore shared that when Jillian was not allowed to sit
by a friend during a mandated assessment, she went on strike and refused to take the assessment.
Furthermore, she disagreed with the teacher over homework. Jillian told Ms. Moore that she
wouldn’t do homework during the week, but would do it on Saturday. This illustrates the power
and control Jillian negotiated within testing and classroom norms of what it means to be a
successful student, when she was told she must abide by the rules.

In the interview, Ms. Moore reflected that something else may have been happening in
relation to discourses of gender and race. She noted students constructed a personal photo essay
in art class and were instructed to take pictures of their lives. Instead, Jillian took pictures of the
skinny, white mannequins in the mall to highlight the white, feminine body in society (Interview,
May 2, 2015). During the composing workshops, Jillian noted issues of race and segregation that
impacted her directly, including school choice, and the relationship between law enforcement
and Black members of the nearby community. And she reflected that there would always be
issues related to race. Thus, she was aware of the normative discourses of gender and race and
positioned herself in relation to these discourses.

Roles. In the project, Jillian tried to gain control of one shared, digital device, and
physically withdrew when she was unable to do so. When she had her own device, Jillian
became the lead designer, and on the third day, she stated to Isa, “You do the typing, but just let
me do the design.” As a lead designer she did the following: imported digital images, digital
artwork (the wordle) and photos, background color and font color, animation, music, and
integrated minimal text. Figure 13 shows Jillian sharing design elements with Isa.
Figure 13. Jillian (left) showed design elements to Isa.

In the following Figure 14, Jillian created a wordle with a quote from a text, “peace covers everything.” She placed the wordle onto the existing slides and animated and layered the wordle over the text, “…you have to have peace to have unity.” She played with the font and background color and watched the movement of the animation.

Figure 14. Jillian inserted and animated the wordle, peace covers everything.

In days eight and nine of the project, she requested the girls remove words from their slides and enlarge their images. The girls followed her lead by placing their words in the note
portion of the slides. In the following Figure 15, she focused on her family, minimizing print, and enlarging the image on her slide:

![Figure 15.](image)

*Figure 15. Jillian emphasized images over text.*

She placed her explanation into the notes of the slide: “When I was five we had a family reunion in California.” She also asked the other girls to move their text to their notes (Video Transcript, May 8, 2015).

As a design expert, Jillian assisted group members and other groups by animating their digital images. She was confident about her abilities and shared with me that, “our presentation is really cool because of the animation and pictures.” She identified: “I was the one who figured it out,” (May 5, 2015) showing pride in her digital and artistic expertise. In the project, she helped others with design elements and technology issues. While at times she worked independently, Jillian integrated design elements into the work of others in a way that created tensions and layered design elements. In addition, she offered layout advice and helped students animate images and text. The students were initially hesitant to decrease the amount of text, but took Jillian’s advice in the end. Over time, Jillian collaborated with other group members with her own digital device, shifting from a peripheral participant, to a central group member.
Figure 16 shows Jillian’s multimodal design process across ten composing days.

**Multimodal Design Process.** In particular, Jillian focused on movement and animations and images, using minimal words to convey a message. On days four through nine, she was able to integrate her digital expertise, and began to use a variety of modes to convey her ideas. She created an original wordle or image on day four, animating the object, selecting text colors, and selecting background colors. Across days four through nine, she constructed text and images, and animated the images. Jillian performed the presentation and the animations each day of the project. During this performance, she focused on movement; specifically, she performed circular movements with her hands. Her multimodal design aligned with her classroom identity as a designer, someone who creates powerful images and performs movement, to make the slides beautiful.

**Rhianna:** “Stop messin’ with something, Jillian!”

In an interview, Isa reflected that the project was important to Rhianna because she “gives up on herself and in this project she really showed she can stand up for herself.” She
mentioned Rhianna knew “to do what's right and not get mad or anything because sometimes she gets a little mad.” (May 19, 2015)

This description of Rhianna aligned with the teacher’s concerns that Rhianna found learning to be difficult: “But the thing is that somehow it's not sticking. It's not transferring. Bits and pieces are. Maybe she missed a lot of foundation because she was a really angry kid and so every time she shuts down, she misses out.” (Interview, June 1, 2015) At the beginning of the year the teacher described Rhianna as angry, shouting, and stomping when asked to complete assignments. With trust, fairness, consistency, and academic support from Ms. Moore, Rhianna made strides in reading, writing, and math this year, with fewer displays of anger. Yet, she remained a couple of years below grade level in reading and writing.

Rhianna knew she was not meeting the academic standards in the classroom and school. In one instance, she sat with Ms. Moore and cried, and shared her concern that she tried hard, but did not get good grades (Field Notes, May 4, 2015). She expressed worry over the Accelerated Reader (A.R.) test, because she did not perform well on the assessment and took an A.R. test on every picture book written by Jacqueline Woodson to boost her score. Years of being excluded and labeled by others as a student who was below grade level made the road to success difficult within school and district expectations.

Yet, this project was an opportunity for Rhianna to develop expertise in ways that helped her read, write, and think deeply about text. In this project, she was repositioned as a contributor, someone who was successful and valuable to the project.
Figure 17 shows Rhianna and Jillian learning to take a photo.

![Figure 17](image)

*Rhianna (middle) learning to take photos with a Chromebook.*

Rhianna took on many roles throughout the project: recorder, questioner, photographer, and designer. On the second day of the project, Rhianna joined Group 1, assuming the role of recording ideas. Throughout the entire process, she commented on the design moves of other students and her frustration with the tools and apps. Initially, she experienced technology issues that created frustration. She explained that the app was not working and that the slides were messin’ with her. Despite these difficulties, she designed slides with a particular affinity for font, font color, and background color. For example, in Figure 18 featuring *Pecan Pie Baby*, Rhianna moved the image, changed the font style to Aladdin, and the font color to red.
Figure 18. Rhianna constructed the slide titled, Pecan Pie Baby.

On the seventh day of the project, Rhianna became a photographer, and her role shifted from implementing basic design elements to taking photos within her group. Ms. Ralston taught her to use Internet DIY videos to learn new digital skills, such as taking photos with Chromebooks. She sat next to Rhianna as she watched the video with Jillian and offered support to Rhianna as she took her first pictures. Then, Ms. Ralston suggested she teach others her new expertise. First, Rhianna assisted Isa in taking a photo of a piece of artwork, then she helped Group 2 insert photos in their presentation. In this way, her role shifted from a peripheral participant as a recorder and questioner, to a photo expert.

Figure 19 shows Rhianna’s multimodal design process across ten composing days.
Figure 19. Rhianna’s multimodal design process across composing sessions.

Multimodal Design Process. Initially, Rhianna focused on changing font style, color, and background on different slides, including the slides of others. On subsequent days, she changed the font style, color, and background color of the slide labeled *Pecan Pie Baby*, and then with assistance from other group members and teachers, she integrated a digital image with supporting text. Later in the process, Rhianna took photos with her Chromebook with the assistance of Ms. Ralston. She integrated photos into the group’s slide presentation, and assisted Isa, as well as Lucía and Yannet, in inserting photos of artwork in their presentations. During the initial days of the composing project, she was a peripheral participant, or someone who made changes that did not impact the content, but enhanced basic design. When she developed photo expertise with a Chromebook, she expanded her multimodal design skills and roles, wherein she played a prominent role in the group.

Research Question # 2: How do students negotiate identities and positions as they critically discuss and respond to literature given the tools and apps, project goals, and discourses associated with success and race?

The tools and apps, project goals, and the discourses in relation to school success, racism, and discrimination influenced the identities and positions the students negotiated. For example, the use of digital tools led to a power struggle over the composing process, wherein students
grabbed the computer, and through nonverbal gestures, showed resistance. However, when students had individual devices, power was still negotiated, but was more evenly distributed across the students and devices.

**Tools and Apps**

The students shared both the planning guide and their digital devices as they collaborated. While I focus on the distribution of power surrounding the use of the digital devices, the use of the planning guide was similar, the person who held the planning guide retained power. However, after the introduction of the digital device, the planning guide became a tertiary tool that was only used when students could not gain access to the computer. In Group 1, the planning guide was not used collaboratively during the composing process, but individually as students worked alone.

Students negotiated power in relation to the tools and apps they utilized. On the third day, students began their presentation with one Chromebook and created at least two slides to showcase a theme. The girls sat on the side of the classroom with their back against the fish tank, facing out towards the classroom. Isa held the Chromebook on her lap and began typing while Rhianna and Jillian sat to either side. Figure 20 reveals that Isa controlled both typing and the initiation of the project, but that power was negotiated throughout their nonverbal and verbal interactions. Isa began with the computer in her lap, and Jillian reacted by zipping her jacket over a portion of her face saying, “I think we should all work on it together.” Isa continued to type as Rhianna looked towards the screen and away, but Jillian insisted, “You’ve got to let me type something.” Jillian pointed and pushed at the keys (1:32), leaning over to gain control of the computer. She offered, “You can do the typing, but just let me do the design.” At this moment, she did not have the computer, but pointed and directed Isa to place the words as Isa
held the computer tightly with her fingers. While the girls negotiated control over the computer, Rhianna turned and began snapping her fingers. She then walked away to the corner of the classroom. Then, Jillian grabbed the computer (3:11), “Hey let me try something,” and placed the computer on her lap and says, “I don’t know why you have to keep on doing it though.” In this instance, Jillian grabbed the Chromebook from Isa, gaining control. Then, Isa and Jillian placed both of their hands on the computer while the Chromebook shifted between their laps (4:11). Isa took the computer back to her lap, giving Jillian a look of contempt and began typing the title and text for the first two slides (4:32). Jillian responded by breathing out, “Mmmm” and zipped her head in her jacket (6:11), perhaps an act of resistance in response to Isa’s control of the computer.

Meanwhile Rhianna came back and collaborated through several nonverbal gestures: First, at she leaned over Isa’s body looking over at the screen (5:02). Then, she picked up the planning guide and began to write notes on the top of the page (6:02). Later, she reached for and touched the side of the screen, but did not gain control of the device.

In this way, the tool mediated the distribution of power and control between students. Despite their efforts to compose, all students participated through different means. Students who did not have control of the device showed agency to negotiate positions of resistance or frustration as they responded to the other group members’ attempts to gain control through the use of the Chromebook. In addition, Rhianna and Jillian attempted to collaborate through nonverbal gestures and body positioning, such as glancing towards the screen, or touching the side of the computer, in a way that showed the students’ interest in participating, suggesting a desire to contribute, but also showed that they were limited in the ways they could contribute at times.
Figure 20. Negotiation of power through the Chromebook.
In the following example Jillian and Rhianna zipped and unzipped their jackets over their faces as a way to participate, and signal resistance to Isa, who had the Chromebook. (see Figure 21).

After Rhianna failed to gain control of the computer, she zipped up her jacket (17:13) over her head. As well, Jillian finished helping another group, typed on the computer (17:20) and looked at Rhianna (18:01). In an act of solidarity, she zipped up her jacket as well. The act of zipping and unzipping became a form of participation for the students as they were denied access to the tools that would give them power to compose the project. After zipping and unzipping their jackets, Rhianna continued to stare out in the class, play with her nails and fix her hair while they discussed the words they would write to support their image. By zipping and unzipping their jackets the students were able to communicate non-verbally. Thus, the girls overtly positioned themselves in relation to one another and the Chromebook negotiating power playfully, or in an act of resistance.

Figure 21. Rhianna and Jillian expressed solidarity and resistance through nonverbal expressions by zipping and unzipping their sweatshirts.
In addition to zipping and unzipping, the students contributed to the text by voicing their opinions. While Jillian unzipped her jacket she stated, “This is a picture of a Black girl and a white girl… Well, isn’t it the truth?” Next, Rhianna suggested Isa write their names. Thus, they were active composers. Soon, Jillian confidently took the computer: “Now I am going to mess with it until it is perfect.” At this point, Jillian asserted her use of the computer and gained control.

Rhianna was positioned outside of the composing process for most of the day, and at the end mumbled quietly, “I didn’t really get to do anything.” At this moment, she leaned into the girls, glancing at the screen and out at the classroom with a look of boredom. She found alternate ways of participating, but was denied access to the computer. In this instance, Rhianna was constrained in the way she interacted with others. She was positioned in a way where she did not have access to the computer, and could not participate fully in the process.

But on day four, the girls composed on their own devices, shifting their collaborative processes. Figure 22 shows the way students actively participated on their own devices.

![Figure 22](image)

Figure 22. The students composed on individual devices.

While the students’ contributions varied greatly, power was outwardly distributed across group members. Working on their individual Chromebooks, all students typed and designed slides. Jillian chose a quote for her wordle, and Isa focused on designing a slide for *The Other*
Side. Rhianna changed the font, font style, and color and collaborated by observing other students’ design processes. Thus, power was more evenly distributed when students had access to individual devices.

Still, the composing process varied and was negotiated when they were stuck. Even though the students outwardly participated, these design processes were not neutral and some carried more value, depending on the digital expertise of group members. For example, Jillian focused on design elements that shifted the layout of many slides, and Isa aligned the theme and ideas throughout the slides, while Rhianna focused on changing the font style and background, until she became the photo expert.

Google Comments. Google Slides provides an app feature called Google Comments, where teachers and students offered suggestions to one another by commenting or clicking resolve. In this study, the students positioned themselves in the comments in ways that aligned with, or resisted the teacher’s suggestion, writing, “thank you,” or “no.” Throughout the composing process, I provided feedback and suggestions in Google Comments including grammar, adding a quote, and drawing a picture to add to the slides. In Figure 23, I directed the girls to add a quote from the book titled *Pecan Pie Baby*: 
Figure 23. Google Comments that aligned with the teacher’s suggestion.

The girls agreed with the feedback and added the quote in the presentation. In addition, they responded to the comment by writing, “Ok, thank you,” positioning them in agreement with my feedback and marking the comment as resolved. Students also demonstrated agency by rejecting my suggestions. For example, in the comments I noted that Jillian had deep thinking about unity, and I asked her permission to discuss this on Monday. Jillian responded in writing, “no,” and Isa followed up with a note that Jillian would talk with me. Jillian did not accept this move, writing “no I won’t…,” listing the names of other group classmates. Then Isa marked the comment resolved. Thus, Jillian positioned herself as someone who could reject a teacher’s request to talk, as well as her classmates requests.
Figure 24. Google Comments showing how Jillian rejected teacher’s request and peer directive.

Project Goals

The project goals and norms of success limited and supported the ways students negotiated positions and were able to express their identities. For example, the teacher and I designed a unit of study that aligned with the goals of the district, focusing on author study and literary essay (Appendix A). Students identified one theme, with supporting evidence, written in the District Grade 5 Scope and Sequence for Reading: “Literature: RL.5.2: Determine themes of stories, dramas, or poems from text details, including how characters in stories or dramas respond to challenges or how speakers in poems reflect upon topics.” The teacher and I designed the project so students brainstormed multiple themes and recorded their ideas on a planning guide. On day three, we directed students to select one theme for their multimodal slide presentation. Specifically, the girls were instructed to create their presentation, share their presentation, and create slides, including one title slide and a theme slide. The previous day the
girls brainstormed ideas, where Isa advocated for unity, Rhianna, memories, and Jillian’s loss. The project goals, including the selection of one theme, and the inclusion of one text per slide, may have limited students’ abilities to integrate all ideas into one project. Jillian expressed her concern, “Why does Isa get to decide the theme?” (Video Transcript, May 5, 2015). But, Isa held the computer and typed the theme that she thought worked best. Requiring that students choose one theme may have limited the inclusion of everyone’s ideas, specifically Jillian’s themes of death and loss.

The teacher and I selected culturally relevant literature for students, and designed a portion of the project with the student learning outcome: Students will connect the themes of the text to their lives and discern why this text is personally and culturally relevant to their lives. In doing so, we asked all students to create at least one slide with a personal connection to their chosen theme at the end of the presentation. For example, in Figure 25, Isa related the theme unity to the following scene on the playground.

![Figure 25. Isa’s connection slide.](image)

Isa described a moment on the playground when she asked a new girl to play with her. She explained that they showed unity by welcoming the new girl to play, despite her skin color.
On day six, she suggested the following to the girls and the girls replied that they didn’t have connections:

1) Isa: Jillian, you gotta do your connections.

2) Jillian: I don't really have any connections to this stuff.

3) Rhianna: I don't got no connections (inaudible)

4) Isa: What’s one time that the classroom came together for you?

5) Jillian: Remember that one time with Ms. Moore where everyone said bless you.

6) Rhianna: I don't have no connections either.

On the next day Rhianna repeated, “None of this relates to my life,” while looking at the slides in the presentation. Figure 26 shows Rhianna and Jillian’s connections to the literature:
Rhianna and Jillian composed connections slides about friendship and family. The teachers and I assumed the students would make connections to Jacqueline Woodson’s text in relation to the racial issues. But instead, Rhianna and Isa described a new student coming to class, and Jillian elaborated upon a family reunion. The girls reflected they did not personally connect to the texts, positioning themselves as African American students with different experiences than Jacqueline Woodson. These students were aware of racial tensions, but did not experience the same issues as Jacqueline Woodson. While the author study contextualized African American history and families in complex ways, two of the three girls stated they did not have personal connections to the theme and books. Perhaps the theme unity, the way it was portrayed, was not sufficient to bring forth discourses in relation to racism. The themes death and loss were salient and may have deepened the ways in which Jillian connected to the literature.

**Discourses: Racism, Discrimination, Segregation, and Success**

Henry Elementary was a school with a deep, rich, African American culture, largely influenced by its principal, Ms. Kelly. This culture created opportunities for discourses of race
to circulate the school and classroom related to historic and systemic racism. In an interview, the principal reflected that education was integral to all students’ futures: “It's all about education because our culture, because of our history, we have to have education, like the true freedom is through education” (June 6, 2015). Because of these beliefs, Ms. Kelly handpicked teachers who worked well with her students, often hiring African American teachers, and brought community resources to the school from organizations comprised of African American volunteers, such as Links, Inc.

Ms. Moore was a white teacher in an African American community where approximately half of the teachers identified as African American. But she was chosen by Ms. Kelly to work here, because Ms. Kelly felt she held students accountable for deep thinking. Nevertheless, Ms. Moore and the students negotiated control throughout the year and the study. For example, the feedback Ms. Moore received from her students was frank and forward. When a student told her she had not taught something well, she was not used to receiving direct, unsolicited feedback. Because of a cultural dissonance in communication styles, the frank feedback seemed combative at first, resulting in power struggles she tried to avoid. However, Ms. Moore reflected in an interview that she changed her teaching style to explicit feedback in a no-nonsense, direct way to communicate norms of successful participation to the students (May 2, 2015). For example on the last day of the study she stated, “Jillian needs to join the group. I am not messin’.” This type of feedback was direct, explicit, and integrated the language of the students, telling them, that I am not messin’ with your job as a learner and that they must attend to the work at hand.

Normative discourses related to race were negotiated in the interactions between a white teacher, a white researcher, and Black students through issues presented in the literature and norms of success in the classroom and project. The teachers and I presented our connections to
the text, but they were related to white conceptions of gender and immigration. For example, Ms. Moore shared a powerful experiences about when her family owned a house as recent immigrants. We were careful to state that all of our experiences differed from one another based on our culture, skin color, and gender, but we may have influenced the way in which Jillian and Rhianna connected to the text. I presented a slide show model that did not directly broach issues related to race and should have been intentional about my presentation of critical issues related to difference with gender, race, or family. In addition, we encouraged the students to pursue the theme unity, which may have restricted the way in which they related to the themes in the text.

On the first day of the composing process, the students explicitly discussed racial issues when they selected a theme that that both exemplified Jacqueline Woodson’s literature and connected to their lives. Jillian explicitly related the theme of unity to her experiences in segregated schools in the following discussion with Isa in Figure 27:

1) Jillian: Oh yeh, the unity piece. I think that would be a good thing to do for our um project because I kind of think of like we are still like segregated.

2) Jillian: Isa, think about how many Black kids are here and then how many white kids there are at Field. (She turns and looks at Isa.) Because this is almost an entirely black school and Field is almost entirely white.
3) Isa: Well that's just fine. You can go to any school you want whenever. So if your parents pick you one school, you can go to that one school.

4) Jillian: Umm, mmm. Cuz you don't always get choiced into the ones you want.

5) Isa: I know

6) Jillian: Like, I tried to choice out of Hill, which is my home school and you have to put your home school on your choice form if you want to get bussing. So, like I put it on there, and I got choiced into my home school. I wanted to go to the science school, but who is going to choice out of the science school to go to Henry.

(April 30, 2015)

Figure 27. Isa (left) and Jillian (right) discussed school segregation.

Jillian noted in Lines 1 and 2 that school segregation exists and that we are still segregated when we look at the division between white and Black students in schools: “Think about how many Black kids are here and then how many white kids are at Lincoln.” In Line 3, Isa argued that you can get choiced into the schools you want. Jillian showed a keen awareness of the relationship between school systems and the structures that sustain segregation, such as school choice. She shared her personal experiences with school choice, as she believed parents would not choose to have their children attend her home school, to make room for her to attend a different school. On the other hand, Isa acknowledged Jillian’s comments, by agreeing, “I know,” but believed that you can go to any school you want if your parent picked a school. In this instance, the girls explicitly discussed normative discourses of race in relation to school segregation, where in white dominant discourses, rules and systems of school choice benefit all students, not just white students. But in this case Jillian reported this is not true. Later in the study Jillian reflected that Jacqueline Woodson, in the novel *Hush*, presented police officers from a different perspective than the media portrays them. She noted, “Not all cops are bad,” in comparison to the recent media attention centered on the relationship between law enforcement and the Black community.
Jillian had knowledge of discourses surrounding systemic racism that illustrate the interactions between Black communities and law enforcement as portrayed in the media. Furthermore, in her interview, Jillian related the theme of unity to slavery: “I think the reason why we are, right now, is because people came together. When there’s slavery, it makes it like this isn’t fair and like they like fought to change it and everything.” (May 20, 2015) But Jillian named racism as a persistent problem. She talked deeply about discourses associated with race throughout the project. However, she did not directly connect these issues to the theme unity.

The theme of unity persisted in their project while explicit discussions of systemic racial discourses did not. Students were instructed to select images and quotes from the texts that related to their theme, and therefore integrated discourses related to race through the use of texts. These examples were salient to the theme of unity but often referenced racial tensions that occurred in the Civil Rights Movement. From the beginning, Isa reported, “One thing that I noticed in Woodson’s themes is that she uses unity. And one example I have of this particular genre is that she discusses how in The Other Side there were 2 different kinds and they were separated.” The text became a tool that mediated the discussion about racial tensions, but also a place for Isa to explore issues of skin color further:

It shows how to respect another person, just like me and Jillian. She is lighter skinned than me but well… Let’s use an example. We could use Ms. Moore and I. (She’s looking up at the ceiling while J looks at her.) She is White and I am Black but we still come together and learn from one another even though we are different. (Video Transcript, April 30, 2015)

Isa reflected upon her skin color as a marker of separation, as she noted Jillian has lighter skinned than she. She then addressed race through skin color, describing that Ms. Moore and she have different skin colors. In this instance, the text was a starting place for her to connect her
own racial identity to her collaboration with Ms. Moore. Figure 28 shows the slide “Unity” and the two girls from *The Other Side*, Annie and Clover.

![Unity slide](image)

**Figure 28.** Jillian and Isa discuss skin color in *The Other Side*.

On the fifth day, *The Other Side* was divided into two slides. Jillian and Isa selected an additional image for their theme slide: “Unity- Communicating and collaborating even though we have differences,” to portray differences, or multiple skin colors. First, Isa searched the word unity looking for an image that described their theme and reflected in her retrospective design interviews:

> I was looking for like, different skin colors, and that’s why I didn’t pick that one, other one, because these, this one showed really bold meanings. Like, they’re holding each other strong. Like Martin Luther King, when everybody, he asked everybody to come and help him march.” (May 19, 2015)

She emphasized the importance of people coming together despite their skin color and described that she selected the image because it portrayed strength in the way the hands held tight to one another. Figure 29 shows their careful selection of an image that shows an array of skin colors.
Figure 29. The students show unity by selecting hands with different skin colors.

Jillian reflected on the image in the post-interview, “Because it’s a whole bunch of, people that are like different colors, but they’re all coming together like joining hands.” (May 20, 2015) In the creation of the slides titled, “Unity” and “The Other Side,” they discussed difference, selecting images that highlight strength amidst adversity and a diverse range of skin colors.

Normative discourses related to racism were addressed directly by Jillian, specifically identifying systemic and pervasive racism in schools and society in relation to the texts that were presented in class and the discussions that ensued. And Isa and Jillian elaborated upon racial tension in the texts in relation to the theme of unity that they selected for their project. Specifically, they selected images that illustrated different races and skin colors and collaboratively decided to include the personal names of the characters of the story, because the image showed racial difference. While Rhianna did not explicitly identify racial tensions, she contributed to the group when she recommended that Isa place the names “Annie and Clover” in
Figure 28, instead of Black and white girl. Furthermore, the ways in which Rhianna negotiated positions and her identities overlapped with normative discourses of successes that intersect with race in many classrooms. Rhianna experienced many years of difficulty in the classroom. While she successfully participated in this project, the ways in which she interacted with others were influenced by her previous schooling experiences. For example, Isa in an earlier interview about collaboration, reflected that this project was good for Rhianna, because she was not angry during the process and became a valued member of their collaborative group (May 19, 2015).

Despite the integration of explicit and implicit discourses associated with race and school success in their dialogue and interactions, the students did not integrate these discourses explicitly in their connection slides. Both Jillian and Rhianna said that they did not have personal connections to the literature. Specifically, as Rhianna flipped through the sides, she stated: “None of this relates to my life.” Both Rhianna and Isa connected the literature to a situation with a new kid in school. Rhianna wrote: “If there is a new student comes in your class you should be that students friend.” Similarly, Isa described a time when she played with a friend and included them when they asked, “Can I play?” Yet, Isa went a step further and wrote on her connection slide: “We could unite and be friends even though we had a different skin color!”

Rhianna and Isa’s slide both focused on themes of inclusivity, and Isa addressed skin color. Jillian implicitly described a scene where family members came together to “join us.” While Jillian experiences racial tensions similarly to Jacqueline Woodson through discussions, these tensions were not integrated directly into personal connections. In this case, texts helped to spur racial discourse and revealed racial tensions in students’ lives, but these tensions were not seen as direct connections to the themes in Jacqueline Woodson’s literature.
Summary

Findings indicate that students collaborated successfully in a design process marked with negotiation that they labeled as moments they were “stuck.” In content negotiation these problems were not resolved, but during design negotiations, the students worked through the layering of elements in one space to create a unique masterpiece. This resulted in both verbal and nonverbal interactions that led to messin’, where students negotiated control of the design process through play and direct forms of questioning, including: Who did that? What happened? And why did you do that? This collaborative process was unique because students’ bodies were in close proximity of one another, yet students composed using individual tools in a shared virtual space. This created a place with unmarked rules and boundaries for messin’ as they negotiated the collaborative process in one shared composing space.

Students’ classroom identities and modal preferences were expressed throughout the project based on shifting roles that they negotiated in interactions. Sometimes roles and identities shifted in ways that created new opportunities for success. For example, Rhianna developed digital expertise as a photographer and shared that expertise with her classmates. Rhianna experienced this shift because the technology teacher provided “as needed” support in the classroom and created an opportunity for her to share that expertise with others.

Students’ multimodal design processes were influenced by the students’ digital expertise and their classroom identities. For example, Isa continued focusing on reading and writing in this small group similar to the classroom, because Jillian wanted to be the lead “designer” and make the slides pretty. As well, Rhianna found ways to participate, but her role and multimodal design did not impact the meaning of the presentation until she became the photo expert and
found ways to assist others in her group. Without individual devices, there would have been fewer opportunities for students to express their modal preferences both individually and collectively with one another.

Findings also showed that students negotiated roles, positions, and identities within the project goals, and discourses related to racism and classroom success. These discourses were a part of students’ lives, the school community, and were mediated through the literature. Even when students did not see direct connections with historic racism that was addressed in the books, they directly broached difference through conversations about skin color, school choice, and current tensions between the Black community and the police force. These texts shaped conversations and provided a space for students to integrate discourses associated with race. Even though racial discourses were not pervasive throughout the products, they did permeate the discussions, texts, images, and the ways students made sense of the themes present in the text.
CHAPTER V

CASE STUDY 2: LUCI´A AND YANNE T

“It was like a teamwork thing.”

This chapter presents the second case in response to the two research questions: 1) How do fifth-grade students collaboratively negotiate their composing processes as they design a multimodal slide presentation? How do students negotiate roles? How do students express different modes? 2) How do students negotiate positions as they critically discuss and respond to literature given the tools, project goals, and discourses associated with race and classroom success? The second case, or Group 2, was initially comprised of three students, Lucía, Yannet, and Rhianna. But on Day 3, Rhianna was asked to leave the group by Lucía and Yannet. Even though the teachers formed the groups to represent a range of expertise, the students had agency to shape their group. In this way, the group exemplified the dynamic and changing nature of collaborative groups in classrooms that may vary across projects.

In Group 2, students negotiated key elements of their composing processes through debate and teamwork that resulted in a negotiation of content and design elements. These moments included negotiations that highlighted all voices and texts in the group. For example, they negotiated their theme, acknowledging different perspectives, and even when their perspectives differed, came to a decision that was mutually agreed upon. Lucía first suggested the theme of family, but debated the merits of courage, and eventually agreed that courage would be a unique theme. They engaged in teamwork as Lucía found books and read books while Yannet typed the text. Yet throughout the composing process, Yannet positioned herself as a lead designer in relation to Lucía, and provided direct support to Lucía in the integration of
images and font style. Their digital expertise was unequal, and at times they both became frustrated when Lucía integrated design elements.

In Group 2, students expressed modal preferences such as text, images, and sound based on their classroom identities and roles that were negotiated, such as reader, writer, and lead designer. In the planning process, their teamwork resulted in roles that were evenly distributed, but when students composed with digital tools, their roles were negotiated based on their digital expertise. For example, during the planning process, the students began reading and writing together, wherein they took turns reading picture books and exchanged roles. But when technology was introduced, Yannet supported Lucía in the integration of design elements, such as a particular font or photo.

The partner’s digital expertise and available tools and apps resulted in an imbalance in power. Both students were positioned by the tools in the project and began to participate more fully in new roles and identities with the introduction of individual devices. When they shared one computer, Yannet controlled the typing and the recording of ideas and design elements. Yet, Lucía expressed her opinion about all steps of the process. Furthermore, the students in Case 2 also negotiated positions and identities in the larger discourses at play in their interactions. These discourses included those associated with race and discrimination in the 1960’s, which intersected with personal immigration stories.

Findings indicate the following: 1) Students debated the theme including both of their perspectives, even when they disagreed with one another. 2) Students’ roles and modal preferences were negotiated throughout their collaborative process given their classroom identities and digital expertise. Roles were negotiated in a way that began with teamwork or an equal sharing of ideas, but led to an imbalance in the integration of digital elements in the
presentation due to unequal digital expertise. 3) The students negotiated positions in norms of success and normative discourses of race, and integrated stories of their culture and immigration in their personal connections and interviews.

In the following section, I analyze students’ verbal and nonverbal communication as the partners negotiated the composing process through dialogue and digital tools. Then, I analyze the identities, roles, and modal design process of students. Because I situate the project within larger structures, I also analyze how identity and positioning were negotiated within relations of power throughout the composing processes in ways that were influenced by the tools, project goals, and discourses.

**Research Question # 1: How do fifth-grade students collaboratively negotiate their composing processes as they design a multimodal slide presentation in response to literature by Jacqueline Woodson?**

1a. How do students negotiate roles?

1b. How do students express different modes?

**Negotiation of Content and Design**

Group 2 negotiated key elements of their composing processes through debate when selecting their theme and implementing design elements. These verbal exchanges included both students’ voices. However, Yannet had more digital expertise than the other, an intentional part of group selection which led to an imbalance in the way digital elements were integrated into the presentation. For example, Yannet integrated many design elements with the feedback and encouragement of Lucía, but Lucía integrated fewer design elements.

During a post-interview, Yannet described Group 2’s collaborative process: We “respectfully debate and we listen to each other and say, ‘Wait, well that sounds more reasonable, so I didn't think of it that way, so let's go with your idea.’” (May 21, 2015) In this
study, the students communicated through debate. Students moved beyond the sharing of ideas, to the expansion of one another’s ideas, by asking questions, paraphrasing, and acknowledging different viewpoints. Their dialogue included both verbal exchanges and nonverbal gestures and design choices that occurred in a synchronous digital platform.

Figure 30. Group 2, Lucía (left) and Yannet (right) negotiate slide presentation content.

Content. On the first day, the students brainstormed themes ranging from unity, to family, and courage. Rhianna suggested courage, the final theme the group selected for their project. Even though Rhianna was asked to leave the group on the second day, because of a playground dispute between Yannet and Rhianna, Rhianna was part of their initial collaborative experience, and also the impetus for the theme that guided their project. Figure 31 shows how Yannet, Lucía, and Rhianna negotiated the theme.
1) Lucía: Another theme, Rhianna you want to go?

2) Rhianna: Another theme is like courage (She looks up at the other students.)

3) Yannet: Oh that is something. Here you can write it. Um, *Brown Girl Dreaming*

4) Lucía: Again?

5) Yannet: Yes again. Because number one, her family wanted to move so they could see their grandma and grandpa in South Carolina. They had hope, no I mean courage to go there, because hold on, I am trying to find the poem. (She flips through the pages.)

6) Lucía: I think there’s another book that shows courage. (Lucía gets up to get the book.)

7) Lucía: One is *This is the Rope*. Doesn’t these books show courage? (She holds two books.)

8) Yannet: Yeh they do. Also *The Great Migration* and *This is the Rope* (Rhianna is writing.) In the poem “Journey,” in *Brown Girl Dreaming*. “You can keep your South my father says…” (She reads the text out loud)  

(April 30, 2015)

*Figure 31.* Lucía (left), Yannet (middle), Rhianna (right) discussed the theme.

Lucía invited Rhianna to share in Line 1, “Another theme, Rhianna you want to go?” Rhianna introduced the theme in Line 2 saying, “Another theme is like courage.” After introducing the theme, the other group members added to her thinking and expanded her idea. In Line 3, Yannet built from the idea of courage, “Oh that is something. Here you can write it. Um, *Brown Girl Dreaming*.” Immediately, Yannet elaborated on the theme of courage through the introduction of a text titled *Brown Girl Dreaming*, agreeing with Rhianna’s suggestions.
Then, Lucía asked a question in Line 7, “Doesn’t these books show courage?” (She held two books). Yannet answered her question, “Yeh they do. Also The Great Migration and This is the Rope.” Yannet and Lucía shared ideas, and Rhianna wrote them on paper. In this instance, the girls debated the theme, building from Rhianna’s theme, courage, and expanded the theme by asking questions, recording ideas, and elaborating on the ideas of others.

After Rhianna left the group, the girls continued to debate, and on the second day of composing, selected the final theme for their project, courage. In the following Figure 32, Yannet and Lucia discussed different ideas and signify their agreement through shifts in their body and verbal statements.

1) Lucía: I think family should be our good idea. A lot of people are doing family, and I really don't want to copy.

2) Yannet: I want to be something different. I want to hit another idea, because JW has a lot of ideas and I think that we should do courage as one of them.

3) Lucía: Well my thing is, I think we should family because in all the books. Well actually now that I think about it we should do family because it would be just like-
4) Yannet: There are a lot of ideas. But you can have 2. JW does have a lot of writing. She does have a lot of things. A lot of people want to hit the idea of family. I think we should do the idea of courage. It is different.

5) Lucía: It is more different. Like we could look for books that have courage.

6) Yannet: I agree with you courage.

7) Lucía: I agree with you.

(May 1, 2015)

Figure 32. Lucía (left) and Yannet (right) shift bodies and verbally agree to signify an agreement.

Each student expressed his or her opinions about the theme. Yannet preferred courage, arguing that Jacqueline Woodson presents many examples of courage: “Because she was in the segregated past.” While Lucía preferred an original theme and was torn by their selection because she preferred family, and argued that many of the books were about family. As they expressed their opinions, they acknowledged the other viewpoints in lieu of their own. Yannet acknowledged Lucía’s idea but states in Line 2, “I want to be something different.” Lucía responded, “Well my thing is…” listening to Yannet but expressing her own idea. Yannet agreed, “There are a lot of ideas. But you can have 2.” Lucía listened and responded, “It is more different.” In Line 6 and 7, they agree on a theme stating, “I agree with you courage.” And “I agree with you.” In this way, they debated ideas and negotiated a theme focused on courage as their bodies signaled a shift in agreement. At first, they presented separate ideas while listening to one another as they looked forward at the far wall. Then they looked at one another, moving their bodies inward, while pointing to the text to signify an agreement between the students.

Design. The girls negotiated design elements through teamwork with varying roles. Yannet took the lead decorating the slides and implementing design elements and Lucía provided support and feedback. The following figures 33 and 34 shows how Lucía and Yannet discussed
design choices in the slide titled “Show Way” by asking questions and gathering input from Lucía.

1) Yannet: I am not sure. While you do that (entering text on other slides) let me decorate.

2) Lucía: Got it.

3) Yannet: I am going to decorate the other slides. You don't mind?

4) Lucía: No.

5) Yannet: I will ask you if it looks good. Or not.

6) Lucía: Oh, that looks nice. Look… (Lucia starts typing and turns and looks at Yannet’s Chromebook screen. 1 minute passes)

7) Yannet: How does this look?


*Figure 33.* Yannet (left) and Lucía (right) discussed their design choices.

*Figure 34.* The slide titled Show Way.
In Line 3, Yannet asked Lucía permission to decorate the slides while Lucía worked on other slides: “I am going to decorate the other slides. You don’t mind? And Lucía confirmed, “No.” Then Yannet added an image from the computer on the Show Way slide, specifically adding a star with a quote. She also changed the font of Show Way, so it stood out. Even though she led the design process, she asked Lucía’s opinions about the slide in Line 7, “How does this look?” Lucía did not provide specific feedback about the design features, but affirmed Yannet’s decisions in Line 8: “That looks fantastic!” In addition, Lucía glanced towards Yannet’s screen watching the composing moves while Yannet’s gaze remained focused on the computer. In this instance, the girls established a pattern: Yannet took the lead in integrating design features such as images and objects, and Lucía offered feedback and affirmation while looking at Yannet’s computer.

In Figure 35, the students collaboratively coordinated the theme courage with design elements in their presentation:

![Courage Slide]

*Figure 35. Yannet and Lucía co-created their theme slide titled courage.*

Yannet asked Lucía, “What do you think is a brave color?” Lucía responded that she didn’t know, but Yannet added, “I think red,” explaining that red is a bold color much like
courage. Then, they looked for images together on the Internet. Lucía emphasized, “Get a picture that really SHOWS courage!” (Video transcript, May 7, 2015). The girls searched for images together creating their slides at the same time. Because Lucía shared her ideas verbally, they do not create layers of design elements that competed with one another for space. In these moments, Yannet and Lucía supported one another through the integration of design elements. Yannet integrated many elements with Lucía’s recommendations.

When the girls created their personal connection slides, Lucía requested Yannet’s help to create her slide. Yannet assisted Lucía in the integration of the font, font color, and image into her slide throughout the presentation, but over time this support became more direct and Lucía showed signs of frustration when she banged her hands on the keyboard (Video transcript, May 11, 2015). In the following Figure 36, Yannet moved her body and typed on Lucía’s screen to provide assistance:

1) Lucía: Help me Yannet! I want to get there with you.

2) Yannet: Yes I crop. Go to Google docs (they are in Google Slides) and create a new document.

3) Lucía: I don’t know how to. You got to help me.
4) Yannet: Go to Google doooocs. (She shows her on Lucía’s computer.) Was that so hard? And name your document. (They go to Google docs and cut and paste their picture in the document.) I am going to call it immigration. You can call it that too.

(May 7, 2015)

Figure 3.6. Yannet provides direct assistance for Lucía.

First, Lucía pleaded for assistance for help insert the artwork in the slide: “Help me Yannet! I want to get there with you.” Yannet, told her what to do, but Lucía asked for more help: “You got to help me.” Then, Yannet told her directly to “Go to Google docs” (referring to Google Slides). Yannet reached over to Lucía’s computer and made the changes while explaining what she is doing: “Go to Google doooooocs” (referring to Google slides). She added, “Was that so hard?” hinting that Lucía could figure it out independently.

In this instance, Yannet took a direct lead in “decorating” the slides, as their dialogue shifted from questions and feedback, and shared reading and writing, to requests and direct assistance. Yannet leaned her body towards Lucía’s computer and made the changes for her, and stated “Was that so hard?” implying a shift from collaborative design to direct assistance with a hint of impatience. In this moment, power shifted and was negotiated through the act of implementing design elements. Because Lucía’s success was contingent on Yannet’s willingness to be the digital expert in a supportive and helpful way, Lucía was not able to integrate the digital elements independently. Yannet prompted Lucia through the steps, but also supported Lucía by making the changes herself.

Lucía and Yannet debated different perspectives and engaged in balanced teamwork at the beginning of their composing process. For example, they negotiated the theme, acknowledging different perspectives, and when they differed, made a decision that they agreed was best. The students took on complimentary roles such as reader and writer and design leader and suggestion-maker. But over time balanced teamwork shifted to direct, peer assistance. For
instance, Yannet provided direct assistance in response to Lucía’s requests for help, showing a shift from shared roles to one in which Yannet controlled the process.

**Identities, Roles, and Modal Design Process**

Lucía and Yannet, self-identified as Latina and African American, respectively. Lucía self-identified as bilingual, and both students’ family members continued to speak their first language at home. Lucía’s first language was Spanish and Yannet’s first language was Amharic, and both families had immigrated to the United States. In pre-interviews, both students expressed that they spent time reading and writing in their homes and in the classrooms. And when asked about their experiences with technology, they noted technology could be difficult, specifically regarding issues related to Internet access, or digital expertise with tool and app use, such as using Google Classroom (March 20, & April 6, 2015).

The identities, roles, and modal preferences expressed by Yannet and Lucía were unique and influenced by their interactions in the larger classroom context. I first present their multiple and shifting identities in the classroom context as a snapshot of some of the ways they interacted in the classroom setting. These are not intended to be static identities that frame or “label” the students in particular ways, but instead show the ways in which they are perceived by their teacher, classmates, and themselves. In fact, many identities aligned with their classroom interactions, but not all identities, as student roles in small groups varied from the ways students were perceived in the classroom.

Therefore, I describe their roles and modal preferences in detail in relation to their partner. For example, Yannet took a leadership role in the small group that aligned with her leadership identity in the classroom. Both girls read texts throughout the composition of their
project, but Yannet did more writing and typing throughout the project, perhaps because Lucía enjoyed reading.

**Lucía: Affirmer - “What am I saying; that looks fantastic!”**

Lucía identified as an emerging bilingual at school, and spoke Spanish at home. She shared that she enjoyed reading and writing in English at school and home. At school, she completed all literacy work in English and spoke English with her peers. When we discussed literature in this project, Lucía consistently referenced slavery in discussions and in a post-interview, when describing racial interactions that took place in the 1960’s, during the Civil Rights era (May 21, 2015). This conceptual gap, between slavery and the Civil Rights era, was a common misconception for many learners in the class. She also reflected that she did not relate to critical conversations about skin color stemming from *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Yet, she compared segregation in the 1960’s to her family’s experience of immigrating to the United States.

While Lucía enjoyed reading and writing at home, her school and test-taking experiences differed. In particular, in an early interview she noted that tests that focused on writing could be hard, describing a recent experience when she took the state test and began writing with only ten minutes to spare. She also reflected that writing paragraphs and utilizing punctuation was difficult. Despite her experiences with standardized tests, she reported she enjoyed writing about fun things, such as a summer event, or a birthday memory (May 20, 2015). Lucía perceived herself as a good reader at home and school, but Ms. Moore described Lucía as approximately one grade level below district expectations (Interview, June 1, 2015). Even though she was positioned by her teacher and district expectations as a reader who was below grade level and not meeting school expectations, Lucía viewed herself as a strong reader and reflected that reading
“makes me calm down.” (Interview, March 20, 2015) In particular, she enjoyed reading stories about the character Judy Moody that related to her life, because the stories were about sibling rivalry.

Lucía reflected on the use of technology: “Mmm, I’m not that good cuz every time I use our computers, I always get myself stuck in problems, technology.” (March 20, 2015) This was confirmed by her partner, who reflected that Lucía needed quite a bit of help using technology in the composing process (May 21, 2015). For example, Lucía had trouble inserting a picture into the slides of the presentation. Therefore, Yannet assisted her and then integrated the picture for her. While Yannet expressed similar frustrations related to digital expertise earlier in the school year, in this project, Yannet had more expertise than Lucía and supported her throughout portions of the project. Even though Lucía had difficulty integrating design elements through the use of digital tools, she always contributed her opinion and felt confident about her early contributions. Figure 37 shows Lucía’s role as a reader in their partnership.

![Figure 37. Lucía read one of Woodson’s books to Yannet.](image)

**Roles.** In the composing process, the girls shared many roles. But Lucía negotiated the following roles: reader or writer, text gatherer, design advisor, designer with support, and
affirmer. For example, Lucía and Yannet read and wrote quotes from Jacqueline Woodson’s text and discussed placing the quote in her own words, “Pull down the fear, bring up the courage!!!” They then recorded the quote on a slide to explain the meaning of the poem “Journey” in Brown Girl Dreaming. While they shared many roles, Lucía gathered the texts and placed them in a pile at their table and perused the pages as they selected quotes. Each time they looked for a quote, they discussed the text as shown in Figure 37. In this instance, Lucía opened the book, turned the pages, and selected images and quotes that represented their theme of courage.

Even though Lucía did not lead the group in the use of technology, she expressed her opinions about the design of the slides. For example, she selected the fist for Peace Locomotion shown in Yannet’s slide, by validating the image stating, “I like that.” (Video Transcript, May 5, 2015) In this way she affirmed the image selection. Furthermore, she suggested Peace Locomotion for the final text in the Figure 38, the slide titled “Peace Locomotion.”

![Peace Locomotion](image)

*Figure 38. The slide titled “Peace Locomotion.”*

Yannet selected the image, inserted emojis, chose word art for the font, and typed in the words. But the words were Lucia’s words as Lucía contributed verbally, saying, “Jenkins showed courage by going into war even if he might die or lose something and he used crutches
so he can stand up. He does it for his family.” Lucia added important ideas illustrating the theme of courage, explaining how the main character in Peace Locomotion showed courage.

**Multimodal Design Process.** Figure 39 shows Lucia’s multimodal design process across eleven composing days. Group 2 completed their project on the eleventh day, and on days seven and nine she was absent from school.

*Figure 39. Lucia’s multimodal design process across composing days.*

Lucia began the project by gathering and reading text while Yannet recorded notes on the note catcher. On day three, when the girls composed on one device, Lucia assisted Yannet in selecting an image and font color for their theme slide. Sitting side by side, they selected font colors and two images that exemplified bravery. They found images together and agreed on two images while Yannet typed the words. While Yannet led the design process, and utilized a variety of modes throughout the entire process, Lucia consistently engaged in reading and writing and on day five she read through the picture book Show Way. Specifically, she told Yannet to “Make this picture show up,” while pointing to the page. On days three, four, and six, Lucia offered suggestions regarding the digital images and objects on the layout of slides. Specifically, on day six, she created an arrow that pointed to text. Figure 40 shows
Lucía’s connection slide where she adjusted the font style, color, and the background color on through the guidance of Yannet.

![Lucia's Connection Slide](image)

*Figure 40.* Lucía’s connection slide.

For example, she followed Yannet’s lead and added a font style that shows her “girly” personality and included the flag colors of her homeland and America in the font color when she wrote the words “America” and “Mexico” (the font changed when it was downloaded to Power Point).

**Yannet: Lead Designer - “I am going to decorate the other slides. You don’t mind?”**

Yannet spoke fluent English in fifth grade, but reflected that speaking English in preschool was not easy. Yannet’s family immigrated to America when she was four, and she described difficult experiences when speaking Amharic in an English speaking school. She reflected that learning English was similar to their theme courage because she demonstrated courage in preschool when she did not understand the language (Interview, May 21, 2015). In fifth grade, she was encouraged to speak both Amharic and English at home, but stated that she quickly forgot how to speak Amharic (Interview, April 6, 2015).
Academically, Ms. Moore reported that Yannet was a strong reader, writer, English speaker, and mathematician, and that when learning a new concept in literacy or math, “She kind of sees the big picture of it.” Ms. Moore also noted that Yannet was the most reflective of the students and seemed to take ideas she learned and make them her own (Interview, April 6, 2015). For example, when we discussed metaphors for the concept theme, Yannet reflected this was similar to her writing, which was metaphorical in nature to layer meaning. She was also precise about her writing stating, “I need to like use more descriptive details in each word, like not just say, ‘I was angry,’ you know like make it better than angry, put more details into it, to like describe like what did this person do?” (May 21, 2015)

Yannet reflected that her literacy identity carried over to home where she enjoyed reading, writing, and learning science. For example, she watched medical documentaries about the heart because she hoped to be a cardiologist in the future. As well, she enjoyed writing, particularly free writing, where she expressed her feelings by writing fantasy stories. She reflected that she read at home and would get lost “in the world of my book,” such as Wonder or The Watsons go to Birmingham (April 6, 2015).

Yet she did not view herself as a savvy technology user. She stated she often asked for assistance from others in the classroom regarding the use of technology. For example, when she was confused, classmates would show her how to utilize a Chromebook and navigate Google Classroom. This differed from her partnership in the project, where she was viewed as someone with digital expertise, and she supported her partner in the use of technology.

Roles. Yannet took on the following roles: leader, giving directions; director, providing assistance; lead designer, integrating word art, font color, and image placement; reader or writer; image selector, questioner, and performer. When Yannet gave directions, sometimes
those directions were in the form of a question: “Can you read it and I’ll type it?” (Video Transcript, May 5, 2015) Subsequently, Yannet typed in the words while Lucía read the words aloud from the text. Yannet followed the process checklist that provided suggestions for their composing process and gave further directions, “Now we have to do our quotes. You do it. You type it this time.” At first, Yannet made sure both students shared the composing process. But eventually she took on more of the typing and production as Lucia showed that she had less technical skill. In Figure 41, Yannet asked questions about the design of their project: “What kind of picture, courage? Let’s do another picture. What about this fist?”

Figure 41. Yannet made a fist to show courage, an image they put in their slide.

Then, Yannet made a fist with her hand showing the shape and strength of the image. Lucía responded, “Huh? Maybe,” showing recognition of the image. Yannet created an object in the shape of a flag and placed it on the screen, making sure to create white space, and placing the quote in the middle of the slide. Lucia read the slide back and Yannet verbally added, “expressing what you feel,” showing the importance of the theme of courage and the emotion that is shown with a powerful fist. Together they constructed the following words: “Courage
can not only be fighting and standing up for your right. Courage is also expressing how you feel and doing something for your loved ones.” In this instance, they collaboratively discussed the ideas and selected the image, but Yannet took the lead in selecting font, font color, and image placement.

Yannet also enjoyed reading text with expression. She performed “Journey,” a poem by Jacqueline Woodson. For example, on days one and two, she read “Journey” with fluency and passion, specifically reciting: “Told her there’s never going to be a Woodson that sits on the back of the bus. Never going to be a Woodson that says yes sir, not sir to white people, never going to be a Woodson that looks down on the ground…” She then explained to Lucia, “That shows courage.” And Lucía agreed. On the second day of the composing process Yannet reread the same passage and Lucía explained, “They have courage to go down to the south and say those words.” On the final day, day eleven, Yannet recorded this section of the text, emphasizing the words “Yes sir, no sir,” to highlight the tensions between races. While she enjoyed the design process, her understanding of the themes of the book deepened the ways in which she performed the presentation by emphasizing particular words and ideas.

Figure 42 shows Yannet’s multimodal design across all composing days. On day nine she did not compose because her partner was absent.
**Multimodal Design Process.** Yannet and Lucía began their project collaboratively reading and writing text. While Lucía gathered the text, Yannet recorded ideas on the planning guide. They took turns reading and writing, but Yannet spent more time writing and typing text compared to reading. Yannet was the lead designer, and began selecting images from the beginning of the process, such as a fist. She integrated photographs of pictures in books and personal photos they took while designing their connection slides. For example, in Figure 43, Yannet integrated the photos they took together in the final days of the presentation that summarized their work together in their last slide.

**Figure 42.** Yannet’s multimodal design across composing days.

**Figure 43.** The final slide created by Yannet (left) and Lucía (right) after taking a photo.
Yannet was heavily involved in the layout of the slides. For example, she juxtaposed their photo with an object, title, and phrase they created together. In addition, she led the selection and insertion of images, font style and color, because she had expertise in this area. She integrated font styles named, “Love you like a sister,” to show her personality. After seeing the ways in which Group 2 incorporated animations in their slide show, Yannet decided to animate the picture of Jacqueline Woodson presented on the first slide by rotating JW’s picture in a full circle. Furthermore, she made objects appear and disappear throughout the presentation, such as the picture of Woodson’s mom.

Importantly, Yannet was pivotal to the integration of modes throughout the composition process. While Lucía contributed verbally by giving suggestions and providing quotes from literature, Yannet took Lucía through the design process, leading her to integrate font style and color. Both girls discussed design elements for their slides, but Yannet integrated their ideas into the slides directly, placing animations, images, and objects in relation to the text. Furthermore, she integrated font color and style with the themes of the project and led the group in a blend of powerful themes with a coordinating design.

Yannet was viewed as a leader in the classroom and also took a lead role in her small group throughout the composing and design process. In contrast, Yannet did not perceive herself as a technology expert at the beginning of the project, but developed expertise as she worked on the slide show. Yannet’s digital expertise helped her support Lucía throughout the digital process. However, this expertise was not recognized in the classroom, where Jillian and one other student were perceived as the “tech” experts.
Research Question # 2: How do students negotiate identities and positions as they critically discuss and respond to literature given the tools, project goals, and discourses associated with school success and race?

Tools: Texts, Planning Guide and Digital Tools and Apps

The planning guide, books, and digital devices were central to the composing processes of Group 2, influencing the way students’ negotiated positions and identities. The planning guide shaped Yannet and Lucía’s dialogue as they identified a theme and textual examples as listed on the guide. As well, Group 2 valued texts and gathered, read, held, and flipped through pages of picture books. These texts were shared and influenced the dialogue and interactions negotiated throughout the project. Students negotiated positions surrounding the use of tools and apps including the planning guide, texts, or digital devices. For example, when the students shared a device, Yannet exclusively utilized the planning guide and typed on the computer. But when students had access to individual devices, power was distributed and the girls had opportunities to read, type, and implement design elements, such as integrate quotes in the project based on their modal preferences.

Figure 44 shows Yannet and Lucía composing together when they shared one computer. The screen shots did not always show the computer; however, at times the computer appeared in the frames, revealing that Yannet held both the computer and planning guide as they talked. In pictures 3:30-5:01, Yannet typed in their theme while Lucía looked over at the screen. Lucía grabbed the computer and typed for 15 seconds to help define courage (5:10), but Yannet took the computer back, with the planning guide directly beside her. Yannet held and controlled the use of both the computer when it was shared between the two. Lucía typed for a brief moment again (5:23), but the majority of the digital composing was completed by Yannet.
Figure 44. Lucía and Yannet negotiated control over the computer and composing process.
Then, when the girls acquired individual digital devices and texts, both students had multiple opportunities to negotiate new positions and identities in the composing process. Figure 45 illustrates how control was more equally distributed with the introduction of individual Chromebooks.

![Images of Lucía and Yannet with individual devices]

Figure 45. Lucía (left) and Yannet (right) with individual digital devices.

Different than one device, the girls begin typing and looking at their separate computers. Twice, Lucía looked at Yannet’s screen and then returned to her own. Finally, Yannet looked at Lucía’s computer while she was typing (29:55).

1) Yannet: Can you read it and I’ll type it? “You can keep your south. My father says.” Tell me if there is any commas. (22:00)

2) Lucía: Oh, yeh, comma, my father says. I think you should (inaudible) the words more after we’re done.

3) Yannet: What was I thinking?

4) Lucía: Too big. (Lucía begins typing.) Y is typing and making and adjustment. You can keep your south, comma, my father said. (26:00)

5) Yannet: I’ll make it bigger.
In Line 1 (22:00) they negotiated responsibilities, showing teamwork as Yannet asked, “Can you read it and I’ll type it?” Yannet looked at her screen while Lucía looked and read, “You can keep your south…” She glanced towards Yannet’s screen and tells her “Oh, yeh, comma…” and Lucía continues reading the text. Then, Yannet looks back onto Lucía’s computer as Lucía places “Journey” on the slide. In this instance, they negotiate the use of both books and digital tools to create a slide that showcases “Journey.” In Line 10 (29:55), Lucía reflected, “This is cool. We can actually do the both of us.” In this way the girls utilized texts and digital tools to distribute power as they participated in the composing process. While Yannet did a majority of the typing, Lucía still had opportunities to integrate design elements into the presentation. In addition, she chose to read the text and provide feedback.

While students discussed the themes and shared ideas, screen shots of nonverbal interaction showed Yannet led the planning process utilizing tools including the planning guide and the computer, by holding, touching, and typing on the device almost exclusively. However, Lucía preferred reading and discussing texts and contributed by sharing ideas. In this way, she participated by watching Yannet type and offered advice along the composing process. Both texts and digital devices were crucial in negotiating positions and classroom identities. Yannet held a position of power as she controlled the use of the planning guide and computer. Even though she controlled the typing, she asked Lucía’s opinion, “What do you think is a brave
color?” In contrast, Lucía was critical to the design process, but did not implement the design choices directly through the use of the digital devices. And Lucía utilized texts as a way to position herself as valuable in the partnership. While Yannet led the integration of design elements, Lucía revisited texts across all days suggesting images and quotes and agreeing on final design choices.

**Google Comments.** The students negotiated positions as they responded to feedback both through Google comments and in interactions with the students. Figure 46 shows their exchange.

![Google Comments exchange between Yannet and Ms. Schmidt.](image)

**Figure 46.** Google Comments exchange between Yannet and Ms. Schmidt.

At first Yannet did not understand my written comment, “I wonder what design elements you can use here to bring forth courage.” She told me directly, “Ms. I don’t understand what you are trying to say right here. We did bring courage because J.W.’s mom had courage to go to the south.” And in Google Comments she replied: “We already did. J.W’s mom had courage to go
to the south.” In our conversation I asked her to revisit the comments, to consider the design elements: “…I love this previous slide. Like that one. The images you chose and the color of the font really spoke courage and you go to this slide. You might play with the background and make some things pop.” Yannet then searched for design elements but responded online, “I couldn’t find anything.”

Later, during the composing session, she continued to think through my suggestion, and turned to her partner for assistance with the slide in Figure 47.

![Brown girl dreaming poem: Journey](image)

**Figure 47.** Slide in response to *Brown Girl Dreaming* poem.

Yannet expressed her concern to Lucía twice: “I have been telling you so many times. I wonder what design elements I can use to figure out courage, referring to my comment. Where I could bring courage in this? I don’t understand her.” Lucía did not answer and opened up *Peace Locomotion*. After the second time, Lucía asked, “Well what do you want me to think about?” Yannet did not respond but added the image and the scroll. She then marked the comment, in Figure 46 as resolved. These two girls positioned themselves as active participants who could respond in writing to the suggestions (e.g., “we already did courage”). Thus, they had agency to express their opinions, but ultimately made changes based on my suggestions.
Project Goals

The project goals shaped the ways the girls selected their themes and integrated them into the project. As stated in Chapter 4, the teacher and I followed the district guidelines and created a unit plan (Appendix A) within the parameters of the District Grade 5 Scope and Sequence. However, we had freedom to adjust the curriculum guide to meet the needs of the students in the classroom. For example, we changed the author from Roald Dahl to Jacqueline Woodson. In this project we designed opportunities for students to brainstorm multiple topics or themes before writing. They then selected one theme to analyze deeply, and the theme they selected was to be an original theme. As well, we required they work in a collaborative group selecting one theme together.

Because students collaboratively selected one theme, they engaged in dialogue about the themes. Yannet shared, “Well I would say that we could put courage, she has a lot of examples in her writing. In Brown Girl Dreaming she has a lot of poems where she has courage because she was in the segregated past.” And Lucía shared, “Well my thing is, I think we should family because in all the books.” But this requirement encouraged them to select one theme over another and they selected courage without threading the theme of family throughout.

The students were also required to connect with the texts and present their connections in their projects. This provided the students opportunities to share their cultural identities and positioned their connections as important. Early in the process they discussed the theme courage.

1) Lucía: My mom had a lot of courage.

2) Yannet: Do you miss Mexico?

3) Lucía: Cause my mom really had a hard time, my family had a hard time. My family had a hard to move from Mexico to here and had the courage to do it. (Yannet looks down and finishes writing.)
4) Lucía: Oh, I’m connected to *Brown Girl Dreaming* and “Journey” because they move from one place to another. And my family had a place, courage to move from Mexico to the United States. I need to ask them why they moved. I am going to do that when I get home. Okay. (She grabs the book.)

(May 1, 2015)

In Line 1, Lucía connected “Journey” to her life, referring to the courage her mom took to come to America from Mexico. Yannet questioned, “Do you Miss Mexico?” and Lucía described that her mom had a difficult experience without specifics. In Line 4, Lucía shared the courage her family displayed to come to the United Sates. In this way, the project goals assisted students in sharing their cultural identities through personal examples.

Later, this discussion influenced the creation of two connection slides that told the girls’ immigration stories (see Figure 48).
Figure 48. The connection slides of Yannet and Lucía.

In these slides, the girls selected colors that exemplified their personalities. But they also drew pictures to illustrate their journey and chose font colors that represented their countries of origin. Yannet drew pictures for both girls and illustrated a similar immigration story, because Lucía requested her drawing expertise. Both pictures showed the girls coming to America on a plane. However, Lucía came from Mexico, so she likely experienced a different immigration story. It is unclear here if Lucía’s family immigrated in the same way, or this was Yannet’s interpretation of her immigration story. Lucía stated that she was going to ask her mom the details, but we don’t know if family members willingly shared these details. Therefore, they selected a theme that connected to their lives, but in the process, Lucía’s unique story became Yannet’s immigration experience.

In their words written on the slide, Yannet described her family’s courage to come here for new opportunities from her homeland. And Lucía explained a different scenario, describing the length of time it took for her family to get used to America, that they missed their family, and
that it took great courage to move. She did not know the details of her parents’ departure, as she was only a baby when she came to America. In contrast, Yannet remembers moving here and shared the experiences of being a non-English speaker in a classroom with me.

**Discourses Associated with Race in Relation to Immigration Stories**

Students discussed Jacqueline Woodson’s texts, specifically regarding African American history. In an interview, Yannet self-identified as African American, but further analysis and conversations revealed that she did not identify as African American in the way that Jacqueline Woodson and many of her classmates did as they connected to deep, systemic, cultural roots that originated in America’s experience with slavery and racial discrimination. As a recent immigrant, Yannet did not relate to some of the issues presented in Woodson’s stories, although she did relate to cultural aspects introduced in the texts that addressed skin color and hair. She also experienced difficulty learning English when coming to the United States, and was aware of racial discrimination around her.

In the planning phase, Lucía and Yannet selected the theme of courage because it was original. They selected text-based examples that related to the theme. Discourses associated with race entered into the text-based discussions regarding Jacqueline Woodson as they selected a theme with supporting examples. Specifically, the girls connected the hardships that Jacqueline Woodson endured with their personal immigration stories and their families’ difficulties. They integrated their immigration stories directly into their connection slides, selecting design elements that represented facets of the countries.

In addition to Yannet’s language and immigration experiences, she shared instances when she witnessed and experienced racial tensions. For example, she reflected she witnessed a racially charged exchange between a man and a woman in a parking lot. When asked how she
felt about the situation, she responded, “Can we just let this go?” referring to her desire to have society move beyond racial tensions. In addition to tensions surrounding her, she reported micro-aggressions related to race when she was followed around a convenience store. Moreover, she reflected upon race in relation to culture when discussing brown or black skin in relation to Jacqueline Woodson and her cultural routines in caring for African American hair. Later in the post-interview, she reflected that she should have mentioned those instances in her connection slides.

In contrast, Lucía did not explicitly reflect upon racial and cultural differences. When asked if she had similar experiences to Jacqueline Woodson, she reflected that she did not. She did not report issues related to discrimination related to race or culture in whole class discussions or interviews. And she referred to Jacqueline Woodson’s hardships in “Journey” when she noted how difficult it would be to say “Yes sir, No sir,” to white people. Yet, she did reflect that her mother experienced hardships when coming to America. These experiences were relayed to Yannet, but were not discussed in detail.

Yet, Yannet and Lucía both broached discourses associated with race through texts. Texts were a tool that mediated discussions of race and culture. As well, the students integrated cultural connections related to courage as they wrote about their immigration stories in their connection slides. Figure 49 shows the students discussing courage in relation to The Other Side.
1) Lucía: Annie also takes the courage to pass the fence just to play with him. And they don’t really care about the skin color, they really care about the-

2) Yannet: What’s the pages? (They flip through the pages together.)

3) Lucía: The mother doesn’t really take the courage to be brave with white people. She’s like scared. Like Journey. His father doesn’t take the courage to go to the south. So like The Other Side and Journey because their mothers. (Yannet counts pages.)

4) Yannet: They took the courage to cross.

5) Lucía: Exactly, In Journey, the moms and the daughter took the courage to go to the south; but in this book, their moms, Annie and Clover actually don’t take the courage to meet each other and be brave.

Figure 49. The students discuss courage in relation to The Other Side.

Lucía explored the pictures and noted in Line 1 that the girls in the text didn’t care about skin color. Lucía compared the girls to their moms, stating in Line 4, “The mother doesn’t really take the courage to be brave with white people. She’s like scared. Like ‘Journey.’” In this way, Lucía and Yannet elaborated on courage and used text to expand a conversation about skin color. Lucía added in agreement, “Exactly, in “Journey” the moms and the daughter took the courage to go to the south but in this book, their moms, Annie and Clover, actually don’t take the courage to meet each other and be brave.” The books became a part of the dialogue and deepened the girls’ connections to courage in relation to issues of race and segregation in Jacqueline Woodson’s literature. The texts served as an anchor for the students to discuss race and segregation.
When creating their connection slides, both students integrated their culture as they drew pictures of their countries and their journey to America. Specifically, they addressed the theme of courage and how each family had to leave everything they knew to come to a new country for better opportunities. In addition, they incorporated design elements such as flag colors into the countries, making Ethiopia, green, yellow and red and Mexico, red, white and green. In their connection slides, they negotiated design choices that integrated their cultural background and personalities, such as font style, font color and the placement of a piece of artwork into the slide. But Lucía did not fully integrate her cultural resources as she did not share the details of her immigration story.

Yannet and Lucía discussed racial discourses through texts, such as *The Other Side* and *Journey*, and these texts were integral in introducing racial discourses. As well, the students integrated cultural connections as they designed slides that showcased their immigration stories in relation to “Journey,” an important poem in their composing experience.

**Summary**

Throughout the research project in interviews and discussions in the whole group and with their partners, the students integrated discourses related to race through text-based discussions and personal connections, with an emphasis on their cultural identities. Yannet and Lucía discussed racial discourses through texts, such as *The Other Side* and *Journey*, and these texts were the impetus for discussions about race, difference and the hardships that Jacqueline Woodson faced. Then, the girls compared the difficulties that Jacqueline Woodson faced with their immigration stories. In addition, the students’ integrated cultural connections as they designed slides that showcased their immigration stories in relation to Journey, including design elements that represented their countries of origin.
Lucía and Yannet collaborated through debate and teamwork, by presenting varying perspectives about the theme and discussing their opinions about design elements. Yannet contributed as the lead designer and writer, and controlled the collaborative tools such as the planning guide and computer, and Lucía negotiated roles that aligned with her modal preferences by reading and offering feedback and suggestions. Nevertheless, Lucía was not able to integrate her digital expertise as fully as possible.

The students in Group 2 expressed modal preferences and integrated design elements as they negotiated roles and identities. Yannet was perceived as a strong academic, a leader, and a strong reader and writer. But she did not view herself as a tech expert in the classroom. However in the partnership, she was a tech expert and integrated many design elements, such as animations, texts, objects, and particular font style that displayed her personality. She also modeled the integration of these design elements for Lucía.

Lucía was perceived as an emerging bilingual who was slightly below grade level in reading and writing. She also reflected that she wasn’t good at using technology. She took on roles that aligned with her modal preferences and positioned her as a successful participant. She read texts, offered advice on design elements and began to integrate design elements such as font style, and images, such as objects and photos with the assistance of her partner. Furthermore, Lucía and Yannet began this process as a collaborative endeavor sharing many of the roles, such as reader and writer. But as the project progressed, Lucía experienced frustration in using the Chromebooks and Google Slides.

Yannet exclusively held the planning guide and the keyboard with the screen directly in front of their body when they shared both the planning guide and computer. Lucía attempted to hold the computer, but only for a short while. When students had access to individual devices,
power was distributed and the students had opportunities to read, type, and implement design elements, such as quotes or powerful images. Lucía was critical to the design process through her suggestions and encouragement, but did not integrate design elements throughout.

The students addressed discourses related to race through text-based discussions and personal connections, with an emphasis on their immigration identities. Yannet and Lucía discussed discourses associated with race through texts, such as *The Other Side* and “Journey,” and these texts were the impetus for discussions about race, difference, and the hardships that Jacqueline Woodson faced. Then, the girls compared the difficulties that Jacqueline Woodson faced with their immigration stories. In addition, the students’ integrated cultural resources as they designed slides that showcased their immigration stories in relation to “Journey,” including design elements that represented their countries of origin. Yet, these stories were not accurate portrayals of their separate journeys. Thus, the inclusion of culturally relevant literature in relation to multimodal responses to literature is helpful in broaching discourses and integrating cultural resources, but may position students in complex ways, wherein details from their lives are omitted.
CHAPTER VI

COMPARATIVE CASE ANALYSIS

In Chapters 4 and 5, I presented two case studies of fifth-grade girls composing a collaborative and multimodal presentation in response to their study of award-winning author, Jacqueline Woodson. In Chapter 6, I provide a comparative case analysis of Case 1 and Case 2, analyzing themes, commonalities, and differences across groups. The first case included a group of three girls, Rhianna, Jillian, and Isa, and the second case, partners, Yannet and Lucía. These groups had similar composing processes at times; but their processes differed because of the ways in which the students negotiated roles and designed with different modes. As such, they negotiated positions within structures such as the tools and apps, project goals, norms of success, and discourses about race that permeated texts by Jacqueline Woodson and the classroom community.

First, the groups’ composing processes followed similar patterns. But the processes differed between groups as they negotiated and co-constructed the theme and design elements of their compositions. Notably, Group 1 negotiated and layered design elements in ways that led to opportunities for messin’ with the tools and one another. Group 2 collaboratively negotiated the theme courage and integrated design elements throughout the slides through teamwork, taking on complimentary rather than the side-by-side layering employed by Group 1. However, over time, Group 2’s collaboration became uneven due to differences in digital skills.

Secondly, new opportunities were made available to the students as their roles shifted in their interactions in their small groups. For instance, in Groups 1 and 2, students experienced new roles such as the photo expert or the design leader, roles they did not hold previously. These
opportunities were negotiated in relation to other group members based on their digital expertise. Isa was relegated to work on the text by Jillian, and Lucía took on the role of reader while Yannet typed in the text.

Finally, students negotiated positions and identities within structures, including the digital tools, project goals, and discourses associated with race and classroom success. Collaborative processes were mediated by the digital devices. When students shared a single device at the outset of the project, power tended to rest with the person who physically held the Chromebook. In Group 1 and 2, this led to a struggle for control from the other two group members, as they grabbed the computer from one another. When students used individual devices (e.g., Chromebooks), power was more equally distributed across the members of the group, but still negotiated through the moments when students were “stuck,” as they layered design elements into one space, or had unequal digital expertise.

Students in both groups positioned themselves in relation to teachers through their interactions in Google Comments. As well, students reported they did not have connections to the literature at times, positioning themselves apart from the experiences that were often race-related in the text. Yet, students in Group 1 broached school choice, noting reasons that schools were still segregated. In contrast, students in Group 2 integrated cultural resources throughout their connection slides sharing their immigration stories. But students may have been limited as they omitted details from their immigration stories.

In the remainder of this chapter, I elaborate on these findings, addressing each of the research questions and then present a brief summary. I begin with the first question:
Question # 1: How do fifth-grade students collaboratively negotiate their composing processes as they design a multimodal slide presentation in response to literature by Jacqueline Woodson?

1a. How do students negotiate roles?

1b. How do students express different roles?

The Groups

Group 1 was comprised of three girls who self-identified as African American: Jillian, Isa, and Rhianna. Group 2 included two girls: Lucia who self-identified as Latina, and Yannet who was Ethiopian but sometimes self-identified as African American. They were second-language learners and immigrants from Mexico and Ethiopia, respectively. After the first day of the project, Rhianna moved to Group 1 from Group 2 for the remainder of the project. From the outset, group dynamics in Group 1 were complex compared to dynamics in Group 2. This may have been due in part to the increased complexity of collaborating with three people and in part due to the fact that Jillian was sometimes perceived as an outsider in the class, taking an active role as a resistor and at times had difficulty collaborating with classmates throughout the school year. At first this carried over to group collaboration, but shifted as she focused on the integration of design elements throughout their presentation.

Negotiation of Content and Design

Communication, including verbal and nonverbal interactions, increased the complexity of the composing process as students’ negotiated issues and composed their presentations. In both groups, communication was central to the composing processes, but the groups differed in the ways they negotiated issues that arose through verbal and nonverbal gestures. Group 1 did not integrate all of the ideas of the group members and Jillian expressed her dissatisfaction with this
through verbal responses and nonverbal gestures and body positioning. In contrast, Group 2 presented and debated multiple perspectives, and collaboratively selected one theme. They sat closely together, faced one another, and talked frequently throughout their process.

For example, in Group 1 the group members brainstormed three possibilities for their theme: Rhianna—memories; Isa—unity and Jillian—death and loss. When Jillian suggested death and loss, Rhianna restated to Jillian, “It’s basically memories,” and Jillian asked back, “How is that memories?” (Video transcript, May 1). Jillian crossed her arms and looked away while the other two girls chose the theme. The following day Jillian asked the group why Isa got to choose the theme, as Isa integrated the theme unity in the introductory slide of the slide show.

In contrast, Group 2 reflected they debated the merits of different themes even when they disagreed with one another, selecting a theme they mutually agreed upon. At first, Lucía preferred family and Yannet preferred courage. They discussed the possibilities and concluded that although family was present throughout Woodson’s texts, courage was unique; a theme that other groups would not likely select. Lucía agreed, “It is more different. Like we could look for books that have courage.” In this moment, both girls looked at one another and turned their bodies towards each other. Lucía moved her hand, closing her fingers as she expressed her opinion. Yannet listened and replied that, “I agree with you courage,” stating resolution in their debate and confirming their theme through the gesture of a closed hand while looking at Lucía (Video transcript, May 1, 2015). Figure 50 illustrates the body positioning and gestures in both groups.
Verbal and nonverbal communication increased the complexity of the composing processes for both groups. Specifically, both groups verbally negotiated themes either excluding the ideas of group members, or debating and combining ideas. They expressed their agreements through their gestures and body positioning by crossing their arms and withdrawing (Group 1), or turning towards their partner to signal agreement (Group 2).

**Group # 1: Messin’ and Layering of Design Elements**

Importantly, both groups had unique collaborative processes as they integrated design elements into their presentation by layering design elements, dividing slides, forming verbal agreements, or providing peer assistance. The students were instructed to collaborate, but could choose the ways in which they worked together. Therefore, their composing processes differed based on their group negotiations and interactions. Group 1 placed and sometimes layered their design elements into one shared slide, creating opportunities for messin’ with the tools and one another’s work. The partners in Group 2 engaged in teamwork, taking on complimentary roles such as design expert and suggestion maker, asking questions and gathering input when implementing design elements such as font color. Eventually teamwork shifted from
complimentary roles to the unequal implementation of design elements when Yannet offered
direct assistance to Lucía and made changes for her.

Group 1 layered different elements on one slide, overlapping design elements, requesting
that other group members quit messin’ in ways that were direct and playful. For example, the
students in Group 1 layered different elements into the creation of their slide on Woodson’s
Everything,” as the other girls designed the slide. She then placed the wordle directly on the
slide putting her work beside the work of others on the same slide. Later in the composing
process, Rhianna accidentally changed the background color of all the slides and then changed
the background back because other group members complained. Again, the girls asked one
another to stop messin’ with the slides.

**Group # 2: Debate and Teamwork**

In contrast, while the process of Group 2 was collaborative, a tracing of the modes and
roles revealed that Yannet integrated a majority of the digital elements (Revision History, May
4-8 and 11, 2016). Initially, they took on the roles of reader and writer and discussed the design
of the slides, asking questions and offering suggestions. But over time, Yannet provided direct
assistance to Lucía, leading her through the integration of design elements. On the connection
slides, Yannet helped Lucía select font style, font color, and integrate art photos. And, they
crafted similar immigration stories through Yannet’s leadership, even though their immigration
stories likely differed. The immigration stories mirrored Yannet’s journey to America.

Group 2 did not layer many design elements in their slides. Because they layered fewer
elements, the elements did not “mess” or compete for space with the other partner. Yannet, led
the design process and integrated text throughout. Early in the process, Lucia gathered and read
texts and offered feedback or advice suggesting a particular font style or images. Later, when Lucía independently made changes to slides, they did not impact Yannet’s work and were minor in comparison, such as changing the placement of text, or adding the arrow to point at an object.

**Roles**

In both groups, new opportunities arose for students when they negotiated roles that aligned and differed from classroom identities. Yet, students’ roles and classroom identities may have been limited as they negotiated roles in relation to one another and within the parameters of the project. Table 4 highlights students’ varied classroom identities and roles.

Both Groups 1 and 2 included one member who emerged as a design expert. This person became a digital leader through their expertise in digital design. While Jillian (Group 1) was viewed as the tech expert by other classmates and her teacher (Interview, May 2, 2015), Yannet (Group 2) reflected that she was not (Interview, April 6, 2015). However, Yannet emerged as a tech expert when she led her partner to integrate design elements through technology. In this way, the tech experts in both groups experienced new opportunities. Jillian negotiated positions on the periphery of the group when utilizing print-based literacies, such as a reading response or planning guide, but held a central role to the design process as a tech expert within her group. And Yannet developed her digital expertise through her experiences integrating design elements in her group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Classroom Identities</th>
<th>Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isa</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Leader: prompted others to follow directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Reader or Writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hard worker</td>
<td>Designer: Quotes and evidence, powerful images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pleaser</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jillian</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Designer: Minimal text, images: digital, digital artwork (original wordle), photos, background color/image and font color, animation (performs movement), Sound-music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tech Expert or “Tech-spert”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outsider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiating power and control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aware of difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resistor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhianna</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing reader and writer</td>
<td>Questioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2 to 3 years below grade level as described by teacher)</td>
<td>Photographer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angry (students and classroom teacher description)</td>
<td>DESIGNER: Font, font placement, text and images, font color, background color or image</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Classroom Identities</th>
<th>Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yannet</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Leader: giving directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Director: direct, peer assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>Reader or writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong academic: reader, writer, mathematician</td>
<td>Selects Images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home and School</td>
<td>Asks questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning to use technology</td>
<td>Rereads and performs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DESIGNER: Word art, font color, image placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucia</td>
<td>Latina</td>
<td>Reader or writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second language learner</td>
<td>Gathers texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below grade level in reading, writing (1 year as described by teacher)</td>
<td>DESIGNER: With support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyed reading and writing</td>
<td>Affirmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beginning to use technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because these roles were negotiated in interactions, other group members in both groups negotiated roles in complimentary or secondary roles in relation to the lead designers. And sometimes, students may have been limited by the roles made available to them. In Group 1, Jillian requested that she wanted to make the slides look good, and relegated Isa to type the words. While Isa encouraged the members of Group 1 to follow directions, respond to my comments, and stay focused, the group members often did not listen to her and noted she was “bossy” (Interview, May 20, 2015). Sometimes, they ignored her requests. This differed from her perceived class identity as a leader, who was respected by her peers. As well, Rhianna did not find a role that was complimentary to other group members at the beginning of the project. She may have been limited by the opportunities made available to her or her digital expertise, and made minor changes to the slide show. But later, Rhianna integrated integral design elements with the technology teacher’s assistance.

Similarly, Yannet (Group 2) was the lead designer, which differed from her classroom identity as a strong reading and writer, while Lucía read the text and offered feedback about the design elements. Early in the composing process Yannet made a sincere effort to include Lucía in the design process by soliciting her input, but Lucía did not integrate the elements independently. In Group 1, Rhianna’s digital expertise was developed through teacher assistance, but Group 2 did not receive the same opportunities.

Importantly, in both of the groups, students positioned as below grade level in reading negotiated new roles in the composing process. Both groups included students who read and wrote below grade level per classroom benchmark assessments including the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR) tests. The teacher and classmates commented upon Rhianna’s difficulty with reading in the classroom.
Rhianna found reading to be stressful at times in the classroom and was worried about meeting academic benchmarks such as her Accelerated Reading (AR) goal.

Rhianna (Group 1) began the collaborative process participating on the periphery. She observed the process and watched others initiate the project. She didn’t initiate contributions, and her team members did not invite her to participate. Once she had an individual device, she made small design changes. However, after learning to take photos, she developed digital expertise that was recognized by her peers. Mrs. Ralston assisted Rhianna in learning how to take photos and in turn, Rhianna taught her group-mates and other groups how to take and integrate photos. This was not only a new role for her, but shifted her identity in the group from someone who was perceived as an outsider and less academically able, to someone who was integral to the success of the project.

In Group 2, Lucía was described by her teacher as slightly below grade level in reading (Interview, May 2, 2015). Lucía viewed herself more positively as a reader at home and in school, and took on the role of finding quotes from Woodson’s books to use in their slideshow (Interview, March 20, 2015). Further, through the support and direct assistance of Yannet, Lucía was able to participate and eventually integrated design elements in her slide. Lucía was beginning to develop expertise that perhaps over time could have been developed more with direct teacher assistance.

**Modal Design Process**

The two groups utilized a pattern of modal integration throughout the composing process, including print-based modes when planning, layering during composing, and music and voice narration during recording. After individual Chromebooks were introduced, students had greater access to modes, creating possibilities for multiple modes to be integrated by all students.
Indeed, students began integrating anywhere from 3-7 modes per session with the exception of animation. For example, in a single session, Group 1 inserted text and images into their slides, playing with a range of design features such as font color, background color, animations, graphics of pictures and art, and the design and integration of a Wordle. They worked side by side, collaboratively constructing their slides. Partners in Group 2 also used a range of modes to compose, but with a different balance of modal integration. Yannet integrated more modes than her partner, Lucía. In both groups, only design experts used animation to express movement in the presentations. Figure 51 illustrates how the two groups designed with modes across sessions.

Both groups integrated modes throughout the process beginning with text-based modes, and ending with voice narration and music, similar to the composing process: planning, design integration, and recording. Nevertheless, both groups were constrained by the modes available in their composing software. Google Slides did not support the integration of voice narration and sounds on individual slides. Thus, the groups were not able to integrate music, sound, or voice narration until the end of the project, when the teacher and I copied their slideshows into Power Point. Power Point provided options for recording narration and inserting music at the slide or slideshow levels. Therefore, the final step of the process for both groups included narration and the addition of music, a cumbersome process that required adult assistance.
Figure 51: Modal design across both cases.
Differences emerged between groups throughout the composing processes. In Group 1, visual design was prominent, while the text continued to play an important role. In only one day, all students in Group 1 utilized multiple modes integrating images and text. Jillian integrated all animation across days of their slideshow by either animating objects or performing the animations. In contrast, students in Group 2 enjoyed reading books and writing text throughout the process. But, Yannet integrated animation on a few days. Yannet also integrated multiple modes on days four through eight, layering six to seven modes at a time. But Lucía integrated five modes, at most, through Yannet’s assistance. Lucía did not develop a full repertoire of digital expertise that led to the layering of multiple modes across all composing days.

The digital tools and students’ roles influenced the ways students in both groups expressed themselves. After they acquired individual Chromebooks, most students layered a range of design features including text, digital images and photos, fun font styles and font colors, and animations. Students who had an affinity for reading books, also read and wrote throughout their presentation. For example, in Group both Lucía and Yannet focused on reading books and writing texts, integrating supporting design elements. Hence in both groups, the roles greatly influenced the modes expressed throughout the composing process.

Question # 2: How do students negotiate identities and positions as they critically discuss and respond to literature given the tools, project goals, and discourses associated with race and school success?

Importantly, positions and identities were negotiated within tools, project goals, cultural resources, and discourses imbricated with power, wherein the girls actively positioned themselves and were positioned by one another. Sometimes these discourses seeped into the conversations and discussions between group members, fostered by the students’ readings of
Jacqueline Woodson’s books, regarding African American experiences that explicitly addressed issues of racism in the past and present. Yet, these discourses did not permeate the entire project and were partially integrated into their personal connections.

The students in Group 1 and Group 2 negotiated positions within structures and discourses within relations of power. In particular, the girls actively positioned themselves and were positioned by the digital tools, project goals including instruction cultural resources and the normative discourses of race that were ever present in the African American school and community, and language that emerged through the sharing of first generation immigration experiences.

The principal professed the school had a strong racial identity, representing a variety of cultures including mostly African American students but also African students Africa and a small group of Latino(a) children. She reported her acceptance of all students, no matter their previous experiences and described the importance of education, specifically for African Americans, describing their history of oppression (Interview, June 7, 2015). Furthermore, she brought in many community resources and formed clubs that built a strong Black identity, such as a rap club facilitated by an African American male in the community (Interview, May 2, 2015). Because the school had several white teachers, these discourses were in flux in relations of power negotiated through the books, students, and interactions with a White teacher, Ms. Moore, and a white researcher, me, and a community largely bussed or chose into a school, set within an increasingly gentrified and white neighborhood.

Yet, Lucía and Yannet were students of color from non-dominant communities who were immersed in these discourses. They could relate to these experiences, particularly when Yannet was discriminated against in a store because of her skin color (Interview, May 21, 2015). But
their experiences were unique as recent immigrants from different countries. As well, they described experiences related to culture and language that influenced the ways in which they interacted with the texts. Yet, their immigration stories were qualitatively different from one another, as one student immigrated as a baby from Mexico and did not share details of her immigration experience, while Yannet described her experience in detail.

The classroom structures, norms, and goals were formed around success: “How can I be a successful student? How can I be a successful reader and writer in the classroom?” Ideas of what it meant to be successful in this space were woven throughout all of the experiences of both groups. Students were positioned in particular ways based on their success with reading, writing, digital expertise, and collaborating with others throughout the year, the unit of study and in the project. In fact, groups were selected based on their diverse range of success in all aforementioned areas. Therefore, these norms influenced the interaction of students and their ways of participating, resisting and negotiating success with each other and in the classroom.

**Tools and Apps**

First, power became more equally distributed when students in each group utilized individual devices. In both groups, students began their projects on a shared device. When group members shared one device, the student who held and typed on the digital device, controlled the project. In both cases this student was chosen as the leader by the teacher and took a leadership role at the beginning of the project. For example, Isa was viewed as a leader by her peers and teacher, and began the project holding the device and negotiating control with Jillian. Students negotiated who held that power, grabbing the Chromebook from another group member and turning the screen towards their body, controlling the Chromebook. And in both groups, power was dispersed through the introduction of individual devices so that all group members
controlled their own devices and could compose within the shared presentation. Even with individual devices, students in Group 1 negotiated control over the design processes as they integrated many design elements into one composing space and negotiated agreements about design. After creating group slides, they decided to divide the remaining slides by texts and the debates dissipated.

Furthermore, power was distributed to the extent the students could integrate design elements independently. In Group 1, the individual devices expanded possibilities for group members to use their digital expertise to participate in new ways. For example, Jillian struggled to participate with a shared device, but created and designed key elements of the project with her own device. Also, Rhianna was positioned on the periphery with a shared device, but began to participate more fully with an individual device. At first, Rhianna made minor changes actively positioning herself as a successful contributor, but over time she gained digital expertise through teacher assistance that she shared with other students. In contrast, in Group 2, Lucía did not have as much digital expertise as her partner needed to integrate design elements independently. Therefore, Yannet integrated most of the design elements in their group. But Lucía participated in the composing process by providing verbal feedback and reading texts. And she successfully integrated design elements with the direct assistance of her partner. Collaboratively, all projects were completed successfully per the classroom rubric designed by the teachers. However, individually, students experienced varied success through the support of teachers and classmates. In some cases, more support was needed.

**Google Comments.** Teachers provided timely feedback to the students in the slide show through a tool called Google Comments to help them successfully complete their slideshows. And students in Group 1 and 2 positioned themselves in relation to the suggestions within
Google comments, an unexpected outcome of the feedback. Throughout the composing process, Mrs. Ralston and I wrote comments regarding the composing processes during the evening in our homes. The following day the students opened the comments. Sometimes they would respond, comment, or click resolve. For example, I requested, “Can we talk about this further on Monday?” asking Jillian (Group 1) to discuss the connection slide with me. In response to my request, she said “no,” and then Isa typed, “Yes, she will.” Not only did Google Comments provide an opportunity for Jillian to position herself in relation to my requests, stating her opinion, it also created an opportunity for the students to position themselves in relation to one another. Here Isa states that Jillian will but Jillian replied back through Google Comments to Isa that she will not have a conversation with me.

Furthermore, I provided timely feedback to Group 2: “I wonder what design elements you can use to bring forth courage!” Yannet responded that we already did and added twenty minutes later that she couldn’t find anything. Then, she worked with Lucía to find an image that showed courage. Group 2 used Google Comments as a space to position themselves in relation to me, but did not position themselves in relation to one another.

In this instance, both groups used Google Comments as a tool to position themselves in relation to my feedback. The students had the ability to click resolve, respond by saying no, or ask a clarifying statement or question. The feedback was timely but distant in that students did not receive it in person. Perhaps this distance created an opportunity for students to resist me, a participant researcher, and other students. For instance, in Group 1, Jillian responded no that she did not want to meet me, Isa told Jillian that yes she would respond, and in Group 2, Isa wrote clarifying statements asking how to proceed, and if it was necessary to follow my feedback.
Project Goals and Discourses Associated with Race and Classroom Success

The goals and structures of this project created opportunities for dialogue, but may have constrained the way students shared their perspectives. A goal of the Woodson author study was to immerse students in culturally relevant texts, in this case, novels and picture books that featured African American characters where students explicitly would discuss critical issues related to race. Both groups were instructed to select one theme and discuss the theme. But specifically, the teachers intended for students to select a theme that was related to critical issues associated with race. Also, the teachers intended for students to debate different themes to share diverse perspectives and collaboratively select one theme. However, the design of the study may have limited the way the girls shared their perspectives. Students in Group 1 selected the theme unity, but did not agree upon the theme. Specifically, the students had difficulty connecting Jillian’s theme, death and loss, to the theme of unity. Therefore, Jillian withdrew from the group to the periphery and may have become more involved in the conversation had she explored the themes of death and loss. Jillian explored themes of loss that related to her identity as a woman when she was in art class, and her identity as a Black person in the school system, but the theme unity may have constrained the ways in which she expressed her sense of loss in relation to being a young Black, woman in her community in this project.

In contrast, Group 2 debated and agreed upon one theme, courage, even though they preferred different themes. Yannet described her personal courage in immigrating to America and learning to speak English in the school system (Interview, May 21, 2015). Lucía describes the hardships her mom faced when coming to America, but does not describe her own experiences (Video transcript, May 1, 2015), and perhaps the details are unknown to her as she immigrated to America as a baby. Instead of contrasting the two experiences, their experiences
are combined into one immigration story, even though they are qualitatively different, illustrating a journey on a plane, and surface cultural features of their countries. Perhaps the collaborative nature of the project influenced the girls to merge their stories into one, even though their narratives differed. Or perhaps details of Lucía’s immigration story were omitted in intentional ways.

The students were positioned by the discourses that were woven throughout Woodson’s books, class discussions and activities, and their lives outside of school. During text discussions and participant interviews, discourses emerged that were salient, specifically in relation to race. Group 1, directly broached discourses in their discussions about societal issues and held text-based discussions about race. However, they did not integrate their experiences directly into their connection slides, except when Isa referenced that students should come together despite their skin color. Group 2 discussed their immigration stories in relation to Jacqueline Woodson’s texts and integrated the same immigration story with differing cultural resources into their presentations.

Group 1 explicitly discussed school segregation and skin color in relation to discrimination. Two of the girls discussed inequity in their lives, specifically that Denver schools remained segregated through school choice. However, when asked explicitly if they connected to Woodson’s experiences, they were clear they did not connect the stories of Jacqueline Woodson’s life to their own. In contrast, Group 2 directly discussed the difficulties Jacqueline Woodson faced in the South in the 1960’s, and integrated personal connections into their slide show. In the connection slides, they discussed the courage it took to immigrate to America, specifically, the hardships and language issues they faced.
Summary

These two groups experienced many similarities throughout the collaborative process but differed in the ways in which they integrated design elements. Group 1 layered their work into one space creating opportunities for messin’ by integrating design elements on one slide, on top of the work of other students. Because of the layering, messin’ ensued, including questioning and playful banter. Group 2 discussed each slide and then integrated the design elements. They debated and discussed design elements before making changes. Their teamwork began with verbal negotiations that were resolved before integrating design elements, but led to an unequal implementation of design elements. The collaborative processes between group differed, but both groups negotiated control over the design process in ways that were considered successful given the parameters of the project.

The students expressed modes in relation to their composing processes. In Group 1, students layered and “messed” with one another’s work, which led to the layering of multiple modes across a majority of days by all group members. Students in Group 1 still showed a variety of modal preferences across all days, but maintained a focus on the visual aspects of the presentation. In contrast, Group 2 discussed design elements verbally before integrating them in the presentation. This group emphasized text through reading and writing and text-based modal integration as enhanced by visual design.

New opportunities were made available throughout the process. However, students may have been constrained in their negotiations with group members. Rhianna (Group 1) was not initially integrated into planning and design integration, but during the project Rhianna took up new roles that differed from her classroom identities through teacher assistance. Yannet (Group 2) had the opportunity to become the design expert. She did not perceive herself as a technology
expert in the classroom, but negotiated this role in their small group. Nevertheless, students were sometimes relegated to secondary roles, such as typing text or integrating minor design elements such as font color in their groups. For example, Isa did a majority of the reading and writing throughout the project, and Lucía did a majority of the reading.

Importantly, relations of power were negotiated throughout the process because of the discourses, structures, and the tools and apps available to students. In both groups, power was negotiated through the introduction of individual devices, so that all students participated in the composing process. Even when the students utilized one device, one student controlled the process. Also, the structured and collaborative nature of the project may have limited the ways the students shared and expressed differed perspectives through differing themes.

Furthermore, students integrated discourses associated with race into their discussions and sometimes their projects. This was a goal of the project and students were positioned to do so. Both groups broached text based discussions of race and stories of immigration experiences in relation to their lives. But Group 2 integrated these discussions into their connection slides. They presented the theme courage, through their immigration stories in relation to Jacqueline Woodson’s experiences facing discrimination in the 1960’s. The girls’ stories differed from Jacqueline Woodson, and also differed from one another. In contrast, Group 1 denied connecting their lives to the texts even through they deep discussed racial issues.

Students were positioned within the parameters of what it means to be successful within this collaborative project, unit, district standards, and technology realm. In this way, they negotiated the processes and roles in relation to one another and also what it means to complete the project successfully given the goals of the project and rubric. But sometimes students actively positioned themselves as resistors, who sought to find new ways to participate, changing
what it means to be successful in a collaborative context. These acts of resistance are students ways of positioning themselves as active participants outside of what is considered successful per the teacher, project goals, and what it means to work collaboratively in this context.
CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

This study contributes to existing research on multimodal composition and extends current research. First, this research was situated in a fifth-grade classroom within an elementary school building. Therefore, this study contributes to multimodal research in elementary and middle school contexts, which have been under-studied in comparison to research in both high school, and out-of-school contexts (Smith, 2014). Secondly, this study focuses on the analysis of students’ collaborative processes, identities, and positioning in relation to a particular set of digital tools found in classrooms, such as Chromebooks. Chromebooks and Google Apps are increasingly permeating our schools and impacting the ways students use technology to collaborate (Harold, 2016). Thirdly, the school, Henry Elementary, serves students of color from non-dominant communities, in this case, mostly students who identify as African American. This study engaged students in a challenging, collaborative multimodal composition author study of award-winning African America author, Jacqueline Woodson. Gorski (2008) reports that students of color experience inequities in the way they utilize technology in schools and that often, they use digital devices for rote-learning instead of critical thinking. Fourth, the teachers and researchers brought a critical perspective that was central to the projects as they integrated culturally relevant literature that addressed issues related to race. This study highlights how students in Groups 1 and 2 positioned themselves in relation to digital tools, project goals, and discourses associated with racism that permeated the literature, connecting immigration stories to discrimination (Group 2) and at times reflecting they did not have personal connections (Group 1).
In chapter seven, I synthesize contributions within collaborative, multimodal processes, and critical literacies perspectives, presenting research findings that reflect and extend current research. First, I present the research questions; then, I present the research findings in relation to current research.

Research Question # 1: How do fifth-grade students collaboratively negotiate their composing processes as they design a multimodal slide presentation in response to literature by Jacqueline Woodson?

1a. How do students negotiate roles?

1b. How do students express different modes?

Collaborative Processes. A growing corpus of literature focused on multimodal compositions describes student collaborative processes within partnerships and small groups (Dalton & Smith, 2012; Dwyer, 2013; Henry et al., 2012; Husbye et al., 2012; Mills, 2007; Ranker, 2008; Shanahan, 2013). Multimodal, collaborative processes are social and fluid, drawing on dynamic modes that may be layered (Dalton et al., 2015; Smith, 2014). While previous studies are situated in collaborative contexts, they vary in their attention to issues of identity, power, and negotiation of roles within the composing process.

This study both reflects and extends previous research by illustrating the benefits and challenges of collaboration, and examines the complex interactions that take place within collaborative processes. This study provides additional evidence that students vary in their collaborative processes even when they complete successful projects. In both groups, communication was central to content and design integration. Isa, Jillian, and Rhianna disagreed as they negotiated themes and integrated design elements and did not integrate everyone’s ideas into the selection of the theme. They engaged in ‘messin’ with one another and layered design elements into the shared composing space, Google Slides. In contrast, Lucía and Yannet debated
and agreed upon one theme, even though they had different ideas, and discussed design elements, asking questions and giving suggestions. Despite differences in collaborative design processes, both teams created presentations that they were proud of, and which were viewed as successful by their teacher and classmates. In Group 1, students often engaged in messin’ similar to African American cultural discourse practices referred to as “the dozens” (Kelley, 2001), an often playful, expressive direct banter heard on the playground, as well as in the classroom. Sometimes the girls would use the term messin’ directly to call attention to an interaction and sometimes they would express themselves through physical posturing such as crossing their arms. In this way, students in Group 1 were more direct and playful in their interactions with one another and the tools, similar to their classroom interactions, than the students in Group 2, who engaged in lengthy debates and spent more time asking for and receiving agreement on design decisions. However, their verbal agreement sometimes masked unresolved issues, such as the imbalanced contribution to the final product.

While collaborating, students used nonverbal means to position themselves in particular ways, such as gestures, gaze, and body positioning. Agreement was often signaled by the leaning in of bodies and gazing toward one another, while disagreement was more likely to be signaled by crossing arms, looking away, and physically moving away from the group. These findings suggest the complexity of collaboration, as students communicate in verbal and nonverbal ways to compose multimodal compositions.

**Roles.** In previous research, Smith (2014) and Ranker (2008) reported the roles and processes of partners: designer and assistant, divide and conquer, alternating leads, and alternating chapters based on student interest. Moreover, in the study of a summer school enrichment program, Jocius (2015) described the negotiation of roles in a partnership in relation
to one shared computer. One partner controlled both the computer and the content, despite suggestions from his partner.

In this study, students negotiated new roles in relation to their classroom identities. Jillian (Group 1) became the design expert and integrated animation throughout the presentation in ways that differed from her engagement with print-based literacies. Yannet (Group 2) emerged as the tech expert in her partnership, but was not perceived as such in the classroom. Because these roles were negotiated in relation to other group members, content and design contributions were often integrated in complimentary ways. But sometimes these roles resulted in unequal contributions between group members. Some students made more of an impact on the presentation than other students in relation to what it means to successfully collaborate and create a multimodal response to literature. Isa (Group 1) was asked to write the text while Jillian made it “pretty.” Lucía (Group 2) offered suggestions as Yannet made a majority of the design changes. However, Rhianna made initial changes that did not impact the overall meaning or design of the slideshow, and Lucía did not integrate the elements without assistance from her partner.

Dalton et al. (2012) described a cascading expert model where students became technology or design experts through the distribution of shared and expert knowledge from teachers to students and students to students. This study found that the teachers and students often intentionally supported students in taking on “expert” roles. For example, Ms. Ralston taught Rhianna to take pictures with her Chromebook so that she could teach other classmates how to integrate pictures in their slideshows on their Chromebooks. The students also naturally served as experts, such as when Yannet prompted Lucía through the steps required to design her slide.
Multimodal Design. Previous research illustrates that students layer multiple modes for meaning making purposes (Dalton et al. 2015; Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2010; Vasudevan et al., 2010). After students utilized individual Chromebooks, students integrated multiple modes that were layered in and across the slides, layering anywhere from three to seven modes in one composing day. Furthermore, students made intentional design choices based on their modal preferences (Dalton & Smith, 2012; Smith, 2014).

This study illustrates that students layered multiple modes for meaning-making purposes, but layering was enhanced by students’ access to and use of individual digital devices. Students integrated modes based on their modal preferences, but the negotiations between group members led to visual or text-based preferences that permeated the group. In Group 1, Isa, Jillian, and Rhianna focused on the visual dimensions of their presentation, a preferred mode of expression, and in Group 2, Yannet and Lucía began reading and writing text, their preferred mode and activity in the beginning of the composing process.

Some modes were restricted in composing processes (Kress, 2010). Notably, both groups were limited in their design implementation because of constraints in Google Slides. Both groups concluded with the integration of voice narration and music in the final days of the composition process when the slide shows were downloaded into Power Point. But the groups were not able to integrate their voices and music throughout the entire presentation, because Google Apps did not support audio integration on individual slides.
Research Question # 2: How do students negotiate identities and positions as they critically discuss and respond to literature given the tools and apps, project goals, cultural resources, and discourses associated with school success and race?

Identities. Many studies reported that students expressed new identities or were repositioned in their learning experiences. Students were repositioned as agents of learning when multiple modes were privileged over print (Pantaleo, 2013; Ranker, 2008; Thomas, 2012). As well, Vasudevan et al. (2010) described how students had new opportunities for expression, utilizing multiple modalities beyond print based literacy practices. Husbye et al. (2012) reported students expressed new identities where new types of stories emerged through the use of digital videos.

In this study, students who were below grade-level in reading or did not participate in print-based literacy activities were also repositioned as successful. Rhianna, Jillian, and Lucía were considered to be less successful in the classroom, sometimes for academic reasons, and sometimes for behavioral reasons. Working in these small collaborative groups allowed the three students to be repositioned as successful contributors to their projects. But findings indicate students were not always positioned in beneficial ways, and that their positions shifted throughout the project in relation to other group members and macro structures, such as the standards, the project goals, and norms of success they are expected to meet. Thus, this study showed the complexity of the negotiation of identities and positioning within a collaborative multimodal composition project.

Tools and Apps. Several studies explored the ways in which composing tools influence students’ processes and choices about possible products (Husbye et al., 2012; Ranker, 2008; Smith, 2014; Thomas, 2012). Two key findings emerged in relation to tools and apps. First, sharing a device raised issues of power and control. When students shared a single device at the
outset of the project, power tended to rest with the person who physically held the Chromebook. Control was negotiated and shared by grabbing the computer, turning away, and jointly typing on the keyboard together, and sometimes students withdrew to find alternate ways to participate. In the group of three this led to conflict. In the partnership, students struggled for control of the computer as they grabbed the computer and turned it towards their body, but no one withdrew from the collaborative process. Second, students contributed to the project when they held the individual devices, wherein power and control were overtly distributed but still negotiated between the students and devices. Students in Group 1 intentionally and unintentionally made content and design changes that impacted the work of others in the slide presentation. And in both groups, control of the design process was impacted by students’ digital expertise. Students with more digital expertise had implicit control, as they physically made more changes that impacted visual and text contributions that directly supported the theme found in their slide presentation.

Despite the proliferation of apps like Google Slides, there is virtually no research on how children collaborate through the use of Google Apps. In this case, the group of three found it eased their need for control if they each had their own device and eventually their own slides, in addition to group slides. The composing process of the partners differed in that the introduction of individual devices appeared to help their collaborative process run more smoothly, but their unequal digital expertise led to frustration and the need for direct assistance. These findings provide new insights about how digital tools may influence the ways in which power and control are distributed between students in groups.

Google Comments, a feature of Google Slides, proved to be an important feature that influenced positioning between students and the teacher and students. In Google Slides, the
teacher and students could write comments for various purposes: to provide feedback, to make recommendations, to agree on the role of a successful student, or to disagree with others. The students responded by clicking resolve, or typing “yes,” “thank you,” “no,” or typing a clarifying question. This app feature provided new opportunities for students to position themselves in relation to the teacher and one another; in a virtual environment, students may have responded differently than in person. Verbal negotiations ensued over the written comments, and group members debated one another’s responses. For instance, Jillian responded, “No.” to my suggestion that we discuss her connections; Isa told Jillian both verbally and in Google Comments that yes she would respond; but Jillian, told her and in writing, “No, I won’t.”

**Project Goals.** In previous studies, researchers addressed topics in relation to race and critical issues (Hobbs, 2013; Lapp et al., 2012; Silvers et al., 2010; Vasudevan et al., 2010). Silvers et al. (2010) foregrounded their study in a social justice ethos, with a focus on promoting peace, while building an awareness of racism. In this study, the project was designed to bring forth critical issues that would lead to discussions and focus students on themes related to race in the literature. Yet, the examples the teachers shared did not complicate issues of race directly for students. The teachers asked students to select one theme within their groups to foster discussions amongst students and raise important issues in relation to race in a way that may have limited the ways in which students personally connected to the text. For example, Jillian was forced to integrate the theme unity in the presentation, even though she argued for death and loss. She may have felt that death and loss, loss about school choice, and the ways in which she was positioned as unsuccessful or successful in classrooms were critical to her identity. Thus, this indicates that academic goals must offer opportunities for collaborative negotiation, but not
at the expense of individual self-expression. Also, teachers must provide explicit models and themes of what it means to complicate school success and race throughout projects.

**Cultural Resources and Discourses.** Vasudevan et al. (2010) described the way one student integrated cultural resources, and how the inclusion of those resources repositioned him as a contributor to the classroom. Pandya et al. (2015) discussed students’ diverse immigration stories and the ways students shared their cultural resources through narratives with transnational, immigration, and American identities, where immigration stories were shared in particular and discrete ways. Dutro (2010) described how students negotiate positions given a mandated and scripted curriculum that revealed the power relations between the anticipated middle-class lives of students in schools and the lived experiences of students. Student’s stories revealed personal stories of poverty in relation to the anticipated responses of the curriculum.

Similarly, students in this study integrated cultural resources through their stories, stories about family and friends, and immigration stories, but in ways that related to their themes. Isa, Jillian, and Rhianna (Group 1) focused on family and friends in relation to unity. Yannet and Lucía (Group 2) integrated their immigration stories to align with their theme, courage. They illustrated immigration stories that were similar, even though the stories likely differed based on the students’ countries of origin. Early in the composing process, Lucía mentioned her mom’s immigration hardships and the courage she showed, but she did not bring this information to her story. Lucía’s story was not fully integrated into the presentation because the specific details of Lucía’s story were unknown to her, or omitted in order to protect her family.

The findings in this study indicate that students in both groups positioned themselves in relation to the discourses of race that emanated from literature by Jacqueline Woodson. Students either compared the experiences of Jacqueline Woodson to their own experiences, or distanced
themselves from the experiences in the literature. Isa, Jillian, and Rhianna (Group 1) discussed issues of school choice and skin color throughout their collaborative process, but stated they did not connect to Jacqueline Woodson’s stories. Importantly, the theme unity, specifically the way it was portrayed in their project, did not accurately represent the ways that all the individuals connected to racial issues in the literature as they attempted to integrate other themes, such as memories and loss and death. Yet, Lucía and Yannet (Group 2) connected their immigration stories to hardships that Jacqueline Woodson faced when traveling to the South in the 1960’s. They reflected upon their hardships as they shared their families’ immigration stories. Thus, these examples illustrate how the goals of the project, the selection of the theme, and critical issues must be modeled and attended to both individually and collaboratively, so that students are not restricted in the ways they integrate their lives and connections to their multimodal presentations.

**Instructional Implications**

*Collaboration.* These findings point to the important role of the teacher in designing and facilitating collaborative learning opportunities for students (Stahl, 2006). Specifically, teachers and students can co-create norms for working together and organize small groups that vary in size and composition. Group sizes frequently vary in classrooms and can influence the types of interactions that arise between group members and the available tools. For example, in this study when three students shared one computer, some students were excluded and negotiated control of the Chromebook. Teachers can use these instances as teachable moments for ways that students problem solve as they collaborate together. Findings support the important role of the teacher in creating collaborative groups, co-creating norms, and facilitating collaboration with students.
Tools and Apps. In this study, the Google Slides App contained features that restricted students’ full integration of modes throughout the composing process (Kress, 2010). Google Slides did not have features that integrated audio, including music and voice narration. Therefore, students transferred their projects to Power Point to record their voices and integrate music. But Power Point did not offer a shared space for synchronous collaboration, was expensive to purchase, and was not accessible on Chromebooks. These apps did not coordinate well together and student projects had to be transferred to Mac Books. Because of the complexity of increasing technology use for students, we need more apps for instruction: apps that are user-friendly and compliment each other as they help to foster collaboration and facilitate multimodal composition and collaboration.

Digital Support. Teachers can integrate various formats of instruction, such as small group work and individual conferring to introduce digital design elements. The introduction of technical skills, such as taking photos with Chromebooks, can be provided in small group “just in time” instruction, or in individual conferences. Specifically, in this study, Group 1 received “just in time” instruction in ways that helped to equalize digital expertise between students. This did not happen in Group 2, where Lucía may have benefitted from “just in time” instruction. Thus, teachers can facilitate digital learning opportunities through small groups and individual conferences that match the needs of the students and are inclusive of all group members.

Project Goals. This unit of study was created with an academic and collaborative focus that aligned with state standards and district goals with an explicit focus on culturally relevant literature. Yet, we also hoped to foster creativity and individual expression throughout. Teachers in many classrooms organize multimodal assignments and responses to literature that are open-ended and designed to integrate students’ lives (Husbye & Vander Zanden, 2015;
Jewitt, 2008; Pandya et al., 2015). But the structures in this study, including explicit scaffolding, may have supported some students, and limited some students’ ability to express their personal connections and fully integrate cultural resources. Therefore, instruction should be designed with the following criteria: 1) a critical literacy focus that connects to students’ lives; 2) an academic focus that deepens students’ learning of content; 3) combined with structures that allows for creativity and expression that do not limit the ways in which students can express themselves.

**Implications for Research**

**Collaboration and Interaction.** A growing body of research focuses on multimodal compositions, both in school and out of school contexts (Dalton et al., 2015; Dwyer, 2013; Henry et al., 2012; Husbye et al., 2012; Jocius, 2015; Mills, 2007; Ranker, 2009; Shanahan, 2013). Yet, more research is needed to analyze the complexity of the roles, identities, and positioning of students as they compose multimodal compositions. In this dissertation study, I employed a multimodal matrix analytic framework from Dalton and Smith (2013) in order to connect student interactions in their collaborative processes, their perspectives, and their continual production of their product, their slide shows. While authors Dalton and Smith (2013) utilized screencast software to capture students’ composing processes, I observed and analyzed student interactions through the video and video screen shots (Norris, 2004). This revealed the ways in which students negotiated positions and identities through their bodies, combining their words with their gestures and gaze. Thus, video analysis can be productive in understanding the interactions of students in relation to their products and perspectives. More research is needed that combines video with screen cast software to contextualize the composing moves students
make in interactions, to capture what is happening on screen and in the surrounding physical space.

**Multimodal Analysis.** Researchers argue multimodal analysis involves the body, in ways that are not text bound (Jewitt, 2008; Leander & Boldt, 2013; Mills, 2009; Vasudevan, 2011). In multimodal perspectives, meaning is made through many representational and communicative resources including image, gesture, gaze, body posture, sound, writing music, and speech (Jewitt, 2008). Furthermore, Leander and Boldt (2012) move beyond multimodal production to examine multimodal use, including movement and intensity of the body in relation to texts. While research has been conducted with young children regarding the fine grain analysis of bodies in relation to the production of multimodal products and their interactions in classrooms (Husbye et al., 2012; Silvers et al., 2010; Wohlwend, 2009), more research is needed with elementary and middle school students.

**Positioning and Identities.** Previous research in critical perspectives brings forth identity and positioning in relation to the ways students take on new identities and are repositioned in the classroom (Collins, 2011; Vasudevan et al., 2010). Yet, the findings of this study indicate that the collaborative processes are not benign and that students negotiate positions in complex as they collaboratively compose. At times, students show agency and position themselves outside of class-sanctioned activities in relation to multimodal compositions. Identities are multiple and conflicted and continually shifting as they are socially constructed and reconstructed within macro-discourses such as race (Britzman, 1995; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Classroom identities are also realized in interaction in brief moments, and may thicken over time, but change and shift in interactions (Wortham, 2004). Thus, in this one project, situated at one place in time, it is difficult to see multiple shifts of identities and positions that occur in
interactions in situated contexts. More research is needed that is fully grounded in ethnographic methods in order to describe student identities in interactions across time for a richer, deeper understanding of context and cultural productions such as competing discourses, meanings, literacy practices, and processes within larger structural forms (Eisenhart, 2001).

**Cultural Resources.** Furthermore, future research can extend the study of multimodal practices of students from schools to communities to fully understand and integrate students’ cultural resources such as lived experiences, social relationships, modes of engagement in their homes and communities (Moll, 1998). In this study, I attempted to integrate cultural resources, but students’ cultural practices are complex. I did not become a part of students’ communities and homes; therefore, I was not able to help students fully integrate the resources that students use in these places. For instance, students, such as Yannet and Lucía, shared the same immigration stories, but I could not discuss these stories with their families, nor spend time with them in their homes to understand their cultural practices. Thus, researchers must find ways to be involved in the community as well as the classroom to understand the ways that cultural resources are unique, differ, and can be integrated in authentic ways.

**Reflections.** I learned from my process and role as a researcher and collaborator. First, I learned that research design is complex. In the future, I would conduct a pilot study to work out issues. Specifically, I would include a critical, personal example related to key racial discourses; I would be fully present throughout the collaborative process, and I would gather students’ ongoing perspectives through video reflection. Second, I would take additional time to know students in and outside of the classroom. I focused on my relationship with the teacher and may have missed cues that suggested when students might have needed extra care, or more space to be creative.
**Conclusion**

The adoption of digital tools is expanding rapidly in our schools and classrooms (Harold, 2016). And standards call for the integration of technology in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and for students to be digital citizens and global collaborators, who use digital tools to broaden their perspectives and collaborate locally and globally (Dalton, 2012; ISTE Standards for Students, 2016). But there is a pedagogical divide in the way digital tools are used in classrooms, and students of color and from low-socioeconomic backgrounds often use technology to reinforce discrete skills compared to activities that foster collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. Thus, this study aims to broaden our understanding of how students’ collaborate as they use digital tools to create multimodal responses to literature. The findings in the study reflect previous research that looks at multimodal composition, including how students’ take up roles and design with multiple modes. The findings in this study also extend this research, by analyzing the ways in which students negotiate positions and express identities throughout the collaborative processes. This study offers new insights about how digital tools influence the interactions of students in ways that are complex but have potential to expand learning opportunities in an increasingly digital age, wherein digital devices, and new media are frequently found in the elementary school classroom.
Appendix A

Unit of Study: Author Study and Literary Analysis

Understanding By Design Template (provided and adapted by the district)
Co-created by Kim Schmidt and teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: Identify Desired Results</th>
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<td><strong>Unit Title:</strong> Author Study/ Literary Essay</td>
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**Essential Learning Goals as Determined by District Curriculum Guide: Author Study and Literary Essay**


**Reading: Literature**

RL.5.2: Determine themes of stories, dramas, or poems from text details, including how characters in stories or dramas respond to challenges or how speakers in poems reflect upon topics; summarize texts.

*Common Core ELG Anchor Standard R.2*

**Writing**

W.5.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting points of view with reasons and information.

*Common Core ELG Anchor Standard W.1*

**Speaking and Listening**

SL.5.4: Report on topics or texts, or present opinions, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at understandable pace.

*Common Core ELG Anchor Standard SL.4*

**Language**

L.5.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

*Common Core ELG Anchor Standard L.5*

**Standards from District Grade 5 Scope and Sequence (updated January 6, 2015)**

**Reading: Literature**

RL.5.1: Quote accurately from texts when explaining what texts say explicitly and when drawing text inferences.

RL.5.2: Determine themes of stories, dramas, or poems from text details, including how characters in stories or dramas respond to challenges or how speakers in poems reflect upon topics; summarize texts.

RL.5.3: Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in stories or dramas, draw on specific text details (e.g., how characters interact).

RL.5.4: Determine words’ and phrases’ meanings as they are used in texts, including figurative language, such as metaphors and similes.

**Reading: Foundational Skills**

RF.5.3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

RF.5.4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

**Writing**

W.5.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting points of view with reasons and information.
**W.5.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which development and organization are appropriate to tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**W.5.9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analyses, reflections, and research.

**Speaking and Listening**

**SL.5.2:** Summarize written texts read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

**SL.5.3:** Summarize points speakers make and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence.

**SL.5.4:** Report on topics or texts or present opinions, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at understandable pace.

**Language**

**L.5.1:** Demonstrate command of conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

**L.5.2:** Demonstrate command of conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

**L.5.5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Understandings (co-created with teachers)</th>
<th>Essential Questions (co-created with teachers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Students will define culture.</td>
<td>Jacqueline Woodson:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Students will identify literary elements in</td>
<td>● Who is Jacqueline Woodson and how does her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JW’s work.</td>
<td>cultural background influence her writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Students will define theme.</td>
<td>● What makes her writing interesting and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Students will identify, evaluate, and critique</td>
<td>important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>themes presented by the author.</td>
<td>● How did JW develop characters and themes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For students:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● What makes your writing interesting and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● How does your cultural background influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>your writing?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posted in classroom:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Who is Jacqueline Woodson?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● What makes JW’s writing interesting and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>important?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● How does JW’s cultural background influence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>her writing?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcomes (co-created with teachers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Students will compare and contrast a variety of texts and identify the unique style and literary elements that Jacqueline Woodson integrates in her writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Students will analyze literature and identify the themes with supporting evidence in class discussions and reading response logs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Students will connect the theme to their lives and discern why this text is personally and culturally relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Students will use academic language (in their native language or English) with teachers, peers, and in their writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possible Learning Activities

1. YouTube videos: Video interview, YouTube readings, Meet the author
2. Quick writes inspired by short selected reads.
3. Final Multimodal Project: Students will choose a theme that connects multiple texts and use textual evidence to support the theme across JW’s writing. They will relate the theme to their own lives and how this author and text had made a difference to them.
4. Drama: Enactment of emotional content relating to words that resonate and are important to the character.
5. Multimodal Poem
6. Building towards the end of year continuation event: Students might reflect upon a famous person and write, Because of them we can… Because of hope we can….

Technology

1. Google classroom with shared responses and thoughts, including playlists, thinking journals, Notecatcher 1 play list per week
2. Playlists week 1; Playlist week 2; Playlist week 3; Playlist 4; Playlist 5: building on the goals of the unit and towards the multimodal project
   - Video clips
   - Independent reading
   - Written responses to JW’s writing.
   - Graphic organizer/ Note catcher
   - Thinglink student guide

(The playlists were disbanded after week 3 after a classroom incident where a child wrote inappropriate words on the shared document, and the words could not be edited and removed from the document.)
3. Final multimodal project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Who is Jacqueline Woodson? What makes her writing interesting and important?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Introduce essential questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce the author with a short vignette.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reset norms for independent reading/ play lists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create a t-chart: Who is she as a person? What makes her writing interesting and important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce the play list activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Read aloud Each Kindness.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss the genre- What do you notice about her as a writer? Why do you think she wrote this piece?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write: What would you do in a similar situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Read aloud Brown Girl Dreaming (RR), Hair Night and select 2 more poems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How does the author’s cultural background influence their writing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ask, what is culture?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2-2:30 Colorado Uplift</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Support thinking with information from the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Reread <em>Each Kindness</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Friday  | Revisit a previous text.  
          Ask about culture - Who are we?  
          How are we similar and different? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>No school</td>
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</table>
| Tuesday | Model close reading using three poems in a row to tell a story from *Brown Girl Dreaming*.  
          Show connectivity.  
          Continue to delve deeper w/ the 3 essential questions. |
| Wednesday | Define theme and draw a metaphor to explain what theme means to you.  
            Use *The Other Side* as an example.  
            Intro. book clubs |
| Thursday | Read *The Other Side* illustrating theme with supporting evidence.  
          Students will free-write: TBD |
| Friday  | Model theme with poem from *Brown Girl Dreaming*.  
          Illustrate supporting evidence. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Monday | Read aloud *The Rope*.  
          Analyze emerging themes and evidence (use kid quotes). |
| Tuesday | Read aloud *The Rope*.  
          Ask the following questions: What is hope? Why did people migrate? What does this mean to you?  
          Quick write: TBD |
| Wednesday | |
| Thursday | Reread the beginning part of *The Great Migration*.  
          Look at picture and infer what is happening.  
          Ask: How does this connect to our timeline? How does this connect to JW’s literature? |
| Friday  | Discuss themes: Name themes from texts. How are they connected?  
          Which theme is resonating with the children? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>How can we design our project?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday</strong></td>
<td>Introduce final multimodal project. Small book groups discuss: What themes are emerging? What evidence supports those themes? Chart on chart paper...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday</strong></td>
<td>Begin reading <em>Hush</em>. In small groups discuss possible themes, and provide examples and quotes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday</strong></td>
<td>In book groups break up into partners and select a theme and supporting text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday</strong></td>
<td>Model a Google presentation (on paper figuring out theme, evidence and design) Initiate a class critical conversation about how Hush connects to current events… How is this relevant to our lives today? Meet in book groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>How can we collaboratively design our project? (This week I fill out the plan as we go, because the teacher and I don’t have planning time together.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
<td>Create slides, specifically a theme slide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday</strong></td>
<td>Two students: M &amp; A will share their theme slide with examples from the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday</strong></td>
<td>Introduce checklist. Model step-by-step creation of slides using my presentation. We will begin Hush and ask students to write about one memory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday</strong></td>
<td>Jeremiah and Addison will model how to create a background. Look at the mixture of text and images together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday</strong></td>
<td>Intro white space- How do I spread out my slides to highlight key information? Spread out text boxes… images… (Isa and Jillian can explain.) *Bring in artifacts Connections- How do I get to my deeper connections that really relate to the theme?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>How can we refine our projects?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
<td>Introduce rubric: refine slides, create personal connections, write out notes. Bring in photos to place in presentation. Draw pictures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday</strong></td>
<td>Insert a metaphor of theme. Practice, refine, look at rubric, and make last revisions. Insert photos or pictures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Write and design poems.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Colorado Uplift</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Audio record.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Field Trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Write and design poem.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Week 7     | Final Week: Sharing                             |
| Monday     | Field Trip- 10- 1:15                            |
|            | Gallery walk of presentations                   |
| Tuesday    | Celebration/ Cookies                            |
|            | Invite parents, 2-4                             |
| Wednesday  | Interviews-Continuation Essay                  |
| Thursday   | Interviews-Continuation Essay                  |
| Friday     |                                                 |
Appendix B

Group 1 Presentation: Isa, Jillian, and Rhianna

Slide 1.

Jacqueline Woodson
Author study

By: R, J, and I

Slide 2.

Unity-To Communicate and come together despite our race or other differences.

When everyone sticks together, when there is hardships between us.
Slide 3.

Peacel Locomotion

peace covers everything

We took this quote from Peace Locomotion because you have to have peace to have unity. page 40-41.

Slide 4.

Pecan Pie Baby

When my sisters baby brother came I thought I wasn’t gonna be the baby anymore. -R

I’M SO SICK OF THAT DING DANG BABY’’
Slide 5.

**Pecan Pie Baby**

Gia and her are mom trying to see if she could still fit the clothes that she used to have. -R

Gia and her mom and Gia thinks that she should give the clothes away but her mom thinks not because she has a new baby on the way so Gia can hand them down to her. -R

Slide 6.

**The Other Side**

Two different kinds becoming friends, when before they were separated.

“One day someone is going to, come and knock this old fence down!”
The Other Side

My mama says, I shouldn’t go on the other side. My mama says the same thing. But she never said anything about sitting on this fence.

Annie and Clover communicating even though the law says, “they should not communicate.”

I- Connection(s).
I- Connection(s) continues.

Slide 10.

R’s (connections)

When there was a new kid that came in my class I became her friend because if there is a new student comes in your class you should be that student friend. - R
J’s Connections

This is a picture from our reunion. You might not see me but I was there.

J’s Connections continued
So What Big Deal(s)

After this study learning about Jacqueline Woodson I learned how Jacqueline Woodson can relate to the realistic books, poems, stories, and cultural background. I

We love J.W because she is the most amazing writer/author we have ever heard of! Thank you for learning.
Appendix C

Group 2 Presentation: Lucia and Yannet

Slide 1.

J.W. Author Study

By: L & Y

Slide 2.

Courage

Courage is doing something that feels right to you before you follow someone. It’s that voice in your head and your heart that tells you to do the right thing.
Brown Girl Dreaming Poem: Journey

You can keep your south, my father says. The way they treated us down there I got your mama out as quick as I could. Brought her right up here to Ohio.

Told her there’s never going to be a Woodson that sits in a back of a bus.

Never going to be a Woodson that has to yes sir and no sir white people.

Never going to be a Woodson that has to look down at the ground.

All you kids are stronger than that, my father says. All you Woodson kids deserve to be as good as you already are.

Yes sirree, Bob, my father says. You can keep your South Carolina.

Slide 4.

Brown Girl Dreaming Poem: Journey

Pull down the fear bring up the courage! - Y & L 😍

Never going to be a Woodson that has to look down at the ground.

All you kids are stronger than that, my father says. All you Woodson kids deserve to be as good as you already are.
The Other Side

This shows courage because the characters Clover and Annie took courage to meet each other even if they're different skin color and never met each other they are showing courage.

All your dreams can come true, if you have the courage to follow them.

---

The Other Side

“I got close to that fence and the girl asked me my name.”
“Clover,” I said.
“My name’s Annie,” she said. “Annie Paul.” I live over yonder”, she said, “by where you see the laundry. That’s my blouse hanging on the line.”
She smiled then. She had a pretty smile.
Show Way

In Show Way the whole family that was in slavery helped other slaves escape to freedom by showing them paths by using quilts, they showed courage.

Show Way

“... a show way. came to her when they needed to talk came to her for the stories of brave people; came to her for the patch pieces just before they disappeared into the night”

This shows courage because Mathis May helped other people and showed courage even if she will get in trouble by helping them escape.
Jenkins showed courage by going into war even if he might die or lose something and he used crutches so he can stand up. He does it for his family.

Courage can not only be fighting and standing up for your right. Courage is also expressing how you feel and doing something for your loved ones. - Y and L.
Slide 11.

Yannet

The time I showed courage including my family was when we were in our homeland Ethiopia we moved to America even if we will miss Ethiopia we just went because we could find more opportunities and chances my family showed courage by moving like I said even if we miss Ethiopia.

Slide 12.

Lucia

The time I had courage is when me and my family had to move from Mexico to America. It took a long time for my mom and dad to get use to America b/c they miss there family in Mexico. They show courage by moving.
The end of our journey

At the end of our journey, this is why I think J.W’s writing has a lot of keys and one of the keys is courage.

The end
Appendix D

Teacher Model

Slide 1.

Slide 2.

Theme- Family units care for one another and stick together.
Miracles Boys

Three boys become a family unit taking care of one another after the death of their parents.

"Brother to Brother, Lafayette?" p. 70
Slide 5.

“The function of freedom is to free somebody else.” p. 108

Slide 6.
Slide 7.

SOMETIMES POEM

Miss Edna gets her paycheck the second Friday of every month and we go to C-Town. Sometimes the Twinkies go on sale three for five dollars and Miss Edna says

Get three. You know how we love ourselves some Twinkies, Lonnie

And her smile gets big and so does mine.

We go up to the cash register with all our food.

When I put the Twinkies on the counter, the checkout lady says

I guess your son like Twinkies, huh?

And Miss Edna looks at me sideways.

Then she smiles and says

Yeah, I guess he does.

Lonnie and his foster mother become family.

Slide 8.

Brown Girl Dreaming

Grandparents are important.
Deep winter and the night air is cold. So still, it feels like the world goes on forever in the darkness until you look up and the earth stops in a ceiling of stars. My head against my grandfather’s arm, a blanket around us as we sit on the front porch swing. Its whine like a song.

You don’t need words on a night like this. Just the warmth of your grandfather’s arm. Just the silent promise that the world as we know it will always be here.

Culture

Brown Girl- skin
Grandparents/ family
Jehovah Witness
Southern cooking
Underground Railroad
Civil Rights
Connections - Family Past & Present

Family is people but also the place
Connections- Today
# Appendix E

## Multimodal Project Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>PP</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. We present a clear theme.</td>
<td>We select a theme, but do not clearly say how it connects to JW's work.</td>
<td>We explain how our theme is represented in one of JW's texts.</td>
<td>We explain how one theme is represented across two texts by JW. The theme relates to our lives and is original.</td>
<td>We explain how at least one theme relates to multiple texts, and our lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. We present supporting details.</td>
<td>We choose one detail that may or may not be related to my theme.</td>
<td>We choose supporting details but they are not directly related to my theme.</td>
<td>We choose and present supporting details from two texts including images and quotes from the story related to our theme.</td>
<td>We offer multiple supporting details from many texts that support our theme through images and quotes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We connect the theme to our lives by bringing in supporting examples.</td>
<td>Our connection does not relate to the theme.</td>
<td>We offer one example comparing the theme to our lives.</td>
<td>We offer examples of how the theme relates to our lives. Our examples are personal and original.</td>
<td>We offer multiple examples of how the theme relates to our lives. Our examples are personal and original.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My design is original, creative and includes images, narration, and music that support the theme of my text.</td>
<td>We present a few images to support the text/theme. We included narration that simply reads the information on the slides.</td>
<td>We use images and text on every slide to present a design that supports our theme. We included narration, but that minimally adds to the meaning of the presentation.</td>
<td>We integrate image, sound, and text to present a creative design that supports my theme. We included new information in my narration that adds to the meaning of the presentation.</td>
<td>We use the P design elements but bring in additional (advanced) design elements that support our theme and are creative. We include new information in my narration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F
Student Questionnaire

Rate the following statement: I like to write
Strongly Disagree        Disagree        Undecided        Agree        Strongly Agree

Why?

Rate the following statement: I like to read
Strongly Disagree        Disagree        Undecided        Agree        Strongly Agree

Why?

Rate the following statement: I like science
Strongly Disagree        Disagree        Undecided        Agree        Strongly Agree

Why?

Rate the following statement: I like technology
Strongly Disagree        Disagree        Undecided        Agree        Strongly Agree

Why?

Where do you usually learn to do new things with technology?
I never do        School        Home

What have you learned to do?

Please circle technology activities you take part in at home:

- Snapchat
- Video Games
- Pictures
- Other:

- Texting
- Videos
- Search the Internet
- Other:

- Instagram
- Music
- Google docs
- Other:

- Email
- Facebook
- Publishing

For what purpose?

Please circle technology activities you take part in at school:

- Snapchat
- Video Games
- Pictures
- Other:

- Texting
- Videos
- Search the Internet
- Other:

- Instagram
- Music
- Google docs
- Other:

- Email
- Facebook
- Publishing

For what purpose?

How well are you able to use technology? Mark the box with an X

219
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not very good</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Pretty Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Publish stories</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Search the Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play games</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insert images</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insert sounds/ music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make videos</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*What other digital expertise do you bring to class?*
Appendix G

Student Pre-Interview Protocol

Name ______________________________ Date ______________________________

Setting ______________________________________________________________________

**Introduction:**
I will introduce myself to students and begin a conversation about something I’ve noted in an informal observation.

**General Questions:**
- What is your name?
- What languages do you speak in home?
- What language do you speak at school?
- What languages do you speak on the playground?
- Who do you live with?
- Where do you live?
- What are your favorite activities at school?
- What do you like to do on the playground?
- Describe what you did on the playground today.

**Experiences with Literacy in the Community:**
- Do you read and write at home?
- Explain your favorite reading or writing place in your home? Why?
- Who do you read or write with?
- What types of things do you do when you read and write with others?

**Discourses and Identities: Reading and Writing, Technology?**
- Are you a successful reader? Why?
- Talk about a time you experienced a challenge as a reader? Why?
- Are you a successful writer? Why?
- Talk about a time you experienced a challenge as a writer? Why?
- Are you good at using technology? Why?
- How do you use technology in the classroom?
- How do you use technology outside of the classroom?
- How did you learn?
- Who is your favorite author? Why?
- What do you know about Jacqueline Woodson?
- Why do you like or dislike her as an author?
- What sets her apart from other authors?
- If you were to write a literary essay about an argument about something important to you, what are you passionate about? What would you share with others?
Appendix H

Student Post-Interviews: Retrospective Design Interview

**Multimodal Project:**

1. What is the heart of your project?
2. Why did you select this theme?
3. How does this relate to discussions we had in class or in book club about critical issues: skin color, segregation, racial tensions, and cultural background…?

**Design Collaboration**

1. You worked with XXX and YYY on your project. Tell me how you and your partner(s) created your project together.
2. What was your role and how did you contribute? What was XXX’s role and how did s/he contribute? What was YYY’s role and how did s/he contribute?
3. Sometimes collaboration can be hard. What were some of the struggles for you and your team? Tell me about a time when you were able to resolve the problem. Tell me about a time when your team couldn’t solve the problem (may not have).
4. What was your favorite part of the presentation? Why? What did you do as a designer? Go to the specific slide:
   - What was your role? How did you and your collaborators work together?
   - How did you use images to share your theme and personal connections? (Prompt specific examples in questions 2-6.)
   - How did you use text/ writing to share your theme and personal connections?
   - How did you use sound/ music to share your theme and personal connections?
   - How did you use animation to share your theme and personal connections?

**Identities:**

1. Are you a successful composer/ designer? How?
2. Were you successful at using the digital tools/ technology? How? (Give an example.)
3. What was the biggest challenge as a composer/ designer? Why?
4. Did you read and write while you were designing your project? When and why? How did this go for you?
5. How is being a multimodal composer different from being a writer?

**Content: (optional)**

1. What did you learn about JW?
2. How does her cultural background compare to yours? (How does JW remind you of yourself?)
3. How is your writing similar or different from JW?
Appendix I
Teacher Interview Protocol

Setting _______________________________________________________

Introduction:
I will preface that I plan to have a conversation with the teacher about focal students after
discussing her hopes and desires for our project.

General Questions:
- What have been your biggest successes this year? Why?
- What have been your biggest challenges this year? Why?
- What are your hopes for the remainder of the year?
- What are your strengths as a teacher?
- What goals do you have as a teacher?

Experiences with Literacy in the Community:
- What are your experiences with the community?
- Are they supportive of your work? How?
- How would you describe the identity of the community?
- What strengths do you see in this community?
- What would you change about the community? Why?

Discourses and Identities: Reading, Writing, with Focal Students
- Describe focal students:
- Naming a specific student:
- What are strengths?
- What are learning goals?
- How does this student participate in reading and writing?
- What is their digital expertise?
- What else would you like me to know about this student?
Appendix J

Technology Teacher Interview Protocol

General Questions:
- What is your role at Henry Elementary?
- What digital tools are available at your school? What are the affordances and constraints of these tools?
- What would you change about the way technology supports student learning?
- What are your strengths as a technology teacher?
- What are your goals as a technology teacher?
- You have supported technology integration in Rachel’s classroom? What have been your biggest successes this year? Why? What have been your biggest challenges this year in her classroom? Why?
- How do you support other teachers/students?

Experiences with Technology in the Community:
- What are your experiences with the community?
- Are they supportive of your work? How?
- How would you describe technology use in the community?

The Multimodal Project
- How did you support the project?
- How did you view your role?
- What would you change about your role?
- What aspects of the project went well for the students and or Rachel?
- What was a challenge for the students?
- What would you change about the project?
- What did kids learn as a result of the project?

Discourses and Identities: Technology with Focal Students
- Describe focal students:
- Naming a specific student:
- What are their challenges?
- What is their digital expertise?
- How do they collaborate with others when using technology?
- What else would you like me to know about this student?
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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Appendix K</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Unit Lessons</td>
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</table>
| Monday- Day 1 4/06 | Lesson- Who is JW?  
1. I read essential questions and show a you tube video about JW's cultural heritage and writing background. Students share out what they learn about JW. A student notices that reading poetry inspires her.  
2. Ms. Moore reads the first poem in *Brown Girl Dreaming* titled… February 12, 1963. The students notice she writes about things that are important like human/civil rights.  
3. After students read for 30 minutes, Ms. Moore introduces the menu and the note catcher, modeling note-taking on the note-catcher about what they notice about JW’s writing. |
| Tuesday- Day 2 4/07 | Lesson- Author’s message  
1. I read *Each Kindness*. I ask students about the author's message or heart of the book and what they notice about JW as a writer.  
2. For a “quick-write” I ask students to respond to the quote, “Each little thing, we do goes out, like a ripple, into the world.”- JW. Ms. Moore clarifies: We are planting seeds. What does it mean to show kindness? |
| Wednesday- Day 3 4/08 | Lesson- Culture  
1. I lead the students in a discussion about culture asking, “What is culture?”  
2. Ms. Moore reads “Hair” twice. She lingers over the phrase, "The rest of me is already leaving; the rest of me is already gone."  
3. Ms. Moore asks, “What is important to her that shows who she is?” The students reflect on culture and talk about hair and taste in music. |
| Thursday- Day 4 4/09 | Lesson- What do you notice as a reader and writer?  
1. Ms. Moore charts their noticings.  
2. I reread *Each Kindness*. The students discuss friendships: what it means to be a good friend and be inclusive. They discuss that the character was judging a girl, or a book by its cover. |
| Friday- Day 5 4/10 | Field Trip to the Denver Art Museum analyzing the work of Joan Moro. |
| Week 2 | |
| Monday | Teacher Work Day |
| Tuesday- Day 6 | Lesson- What genre is *Brown Girl Dreaming*? What do we notice about JW as a writer? |
1. I reread *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Yannet shares that even though the novel was not written in her favorite genre, we can learn from JW. I read about JW’s early days in Ohio and her visit to the south. Yannet and Jillian notice how she contrasts history with life today, using different font and style in the writing.

**Wednesday- Day 7 4/15/15**

**Lesson- Theme as a metaphor**

1. I lead the student in a discussion of theme. Students create metaphors for the definition of theme in their thinking journals.
2. Ms. Moore reads *The Other Side*. Students note themes and evidence as they listen. They are drawn to the idea of segregation.

**Thursday- Day 8 4/16/15**

**Lesson- Tracking our thinking**

1. I chart additions to students’ ideas about the concept of theme as Ms. Moore facilitates a discussion.
2. Ms. Moore reads aloud *The Other Side* while students track their thinking on their own copy.

Students notice the characters shift. “The mom didn’t care if they played together and changed her thinking.” They notice the overarching theme of the book: “They said break down the fence they meant that Black and white people break down.”

**Friday- Day 9 4/17/15**

**Lesson- Students explore the concept of theme**

1. The students add to their growing understanding of theme: Ms. Moore charts out new thinking on the theme web while I chart pictures of ideas. For example, a student shares- It’s kind of like mind craft-redstone-power line. The elements are connected and may produce power?
2. Ms. Moore reads “New York Baby” from *Brown Girl Dreaming* and asks the students to identify the theme?

**Week 3**

**Monday 4/20**

**Lesson- Students review the concept of theme and *The Great Migration***

1. Ms. Moore discusses *The Great Migration* and then reads the author's note about the Brooklyn apartment, explaining that the family owned the building. She emphasizes, “I am thinking this is pretty important. Who here, hears their parents talk about owning their own home?” Ms. Moore reflects how owning a home was a big deal for them personally: it’s a dream for many, many people in the United States.
2. Ms. Moore reads *This is the Rope*, but first asks students what they know about the Great Migration. Yannet reflects that judging from the setting, it occurs when African Americans move from the south to north. Another student reflects that they move like animals moving.

**Tuesday 4/21**

**Lesson- Review information about JW**

1. The students share what they know about JW. A student shares that JW is talking about slavery,
| Wednesday 4/22 | Lesson: Point of view and *The Great Migration*  
1. I read aloud *The Great Migration* to the group. I present 2 questions to the group: Whose point of view is the text coming from? What do we know?  
2. The students chart out historical events on the time line, revealing confusion about slavery versus segregation. The students share stories related to racism including those about shootings with police. |
| Thursday 4/23 | Lesson: What is *The Great Migration*?  
1. Ms. Moore presents a short slide show about the book, *The Great Migration*. She asks them to think about the following questions: “What pulled them out? And what pushed them towards the north?” Ms. Moore puts the intro or the author’s note for *The Great Migration* on the document camera.  
2. She stops at exodus and asks, “What do you think exodus means?” They go through the illustrations and discuss them in the presentation. |
| Friday 4/24 | Lesson: What is the theme of a book written by JW? What evidence supports that theme?  
1. Ms. Moore and I revisit the theme metaphors and we emphasize that the theme is important, because it is the essence, the heart of a piece, and it is often a pattern that repeats throughout the piece.  
2. Because the students define the term theme, but do not use this word in their thinking about the literature, we have the students teach the class about their theme with supporting details: “What is a theme and do the supporting details relate back to the theme?” Different students pick different texts and describe their theme. |
| Week 4 |  
**Monday**  
No school |
| **Tuesday 4/28** | Lesson: Review theme and introduce my multimodal project  
1. Ms. Moore reviews theme, reiterating that it is the heart of the lesson.  
2. I model my multimodal response and asked the following questions: What is the theme? How do I support the theme with details? How is my design creative and original? Ms. Moore and I co-chart student thinking about content and design elements. |
| **Wednesday 4/29** | Lesson: Determining a theme in *Each Kindness*  
1. Think Aloud/ modeling- Ms. Moore and I describe our process for theme selection with supporting details. I discuss how identity is our memories and cultural background and share two poems from *Brown Girl Dreaming*. |
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<tr>
<th>Day 1 of composing</th>
<th>Thursday 4/30</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesson</td>
<td>Brainstorming themes while collaborating</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ms. Moore and I model how to collaboratively select a theme. I share identity including culture, history, skin color, trying to get at critical issues. Ms. Moore adds to my thinking, showing how to listen and add to your partner’s ideas. We write down model sentences on the board.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Day 2 of composing</th>
<th>Friday 5/1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lesson</td>
<td>Planning your multimodal project</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A student and I think aloud at the document camera about the themes he listed the previous day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I show students how to plan using a planning guide based on their brainstorming yesterday.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Ms. Moore co-facilitates and emphasizes what we learned the students lives in this process of their sharing.</td>
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<th>Week 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 5/4</td>
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<td>Day 3 of composing</td>
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<p>| Tuesday 5/5 |
| Day 4 of composing | Lessons | Add texts that support your theme and design elements |
| 1. | Revise themes and design with images, color and fonts. |
| 1. | I model the lesson with the following goals: |
| * | Students will go back and revise their theme statements, making sure their statements are complete sentences, make sense, and are original. |
| * | Students will design their slides using images, color, and font style to support their theme. |
| * | Students will design two more slides with examples from one text that supports their theme. |
| 2. | I ask two students (Lucia &amp; Yannet) to share their design process with the class, highlighting their choice of image color that coordinates with the theme courage. |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
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| 5/6       | Lessons- Determine what makes JW’s writing interesting and important in *Hush*: Introduce project checklist.  
1. The computer freezes, so Ms. Moore reads *Hush*. She emphasizes skin color: Hair all over brown, her mother’s hair brown, chocolate, and coppery. She asks, “What makes her writing and interesting and important?”  
2. Students write to the prompt: “Just like JW you guys have memories and important memories. Write about a memory.”  
3. Colorado Uplift  
4. Composing Lesson: I show my slides and compare to our composing checklist. I ask the kids what they notice about my examples. I model design elements: background color and theme color. |
| 5/7       | Lesson: Backgrounds, minimizing and moving text  
1. Two boys model their project but one student is not present. One boy shows his background, and how he places text on the slide. |
| 5/8       | Lesson: Open space  
1. Jillian, Rhianna & Isa share how they use open space on two slides, taking one slide and spreading it across two slides.  
2. The LINKS organization, specifically an African American woman in her 40s, comes to the class to discuss how and why the students should eat healthy foods. |
| 5/11      | Lesson- Introducing the rubric as a guide  
1. I share the rubric with students. Ms. Moore asks students to notice what is different. We emphasize personal and original connections.  
2. Ms. Ralston facilitates a small group, focusing on picture taking with the Chromebooks. |
| 5/12      | Lesson: Transitions, connections, and experts  
1. I model the inclusion of transition words in the notes section of the slides.  
2. Ms. Moore charts them for the class to see: Some ideas are, I found one theme… In *Peace Locomotion*….  
3. We reflect on how connections are personal and link to the theme.  
4. Ms. Moore writes the names of student experts on the board for the following: image, music and resizing text. |
| 5/13      | Lesson: Practicing project presentation  
1. Jillian, Isa, & Rhianna practice their presentations for the class and the kids noticed what they observed. They take turns and share dialogue on each slide. |
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<th>Day 10 of composing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday</strong>&lt;br&gt;5/14</td>
<td><strong>Lesson: Equal slides</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Ms. Moore reminds students to include transition words and divide their slide equally.&lt;br&gt;2. I go to the technology lab to record student voices with Ms. Ralston.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Field Trip</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday</strong>&lt;br&gt;5/15</td>
<td><strong>Lesson: Selecting song</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Ms. Moore asks for student experts to come forward to help other groups select songs.&lt;br&gt;2. I record student voices with Ms. Ralston in the technology lab.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day 11 of composing</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 7</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Monday</strong>&lt;br&gt;5/18</td>
<td><strong>Lesson: Creating a thank you slide for me</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Ms. Moore facilitates the thank you project in the classroom.&lt;br&gt;2. I record student voices with Ms. Ralston in the technology lab.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day 12 of composing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5/19</td>
<td><strong>Lesson: Writing a poem for continuation</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Ms. Moore facilitates students writing a multimodal poem for continuation.&lt;br&gt;2. I finish recording presentations with students in the technology lab.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Day 13 of composing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5/20</td>
<td><strong>Lesson: Project reflection</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Ms. Moore gives students the rubric and asks them to self assess their work. She asks them to fill out additional reflection questions.&lt;br&gt;2. I conduct design interviews with focal students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/21</td>
<td><strong>Lesson: No lesson- Project sharing</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. Students present their projects on computers around the room.&lt;br&gt;2. The focal students use macs to project their volume.&lt;br&gt;3. The remaining students share their projects on school computers that were difficult to hear.</td>
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Appendix J

Principal Interview Protocol

School:
What was the main goal/ focus of Henry this year?
- How was technology a part of those goals?
- What has gone well with…?
- What has been your biggest challenge? Why?
- How do ___ and ___ support those goals?

Community:
- This school has a strong culture and identity. How would you describe the identity of the school? Why?
- What are the most influential community programs for the students at your school?
- Describe technology use in the community.
- How does the community perceive technology use at the school?
- Some students in our class identified with the Jacqueline Woodson study and had an opportunity to talk about racism and discrimination in their lives. How would you describe the racial identity of the students? How would you describe the racial identity of community members involved with the school? (Specifically the students in Ms. Moore’s class.)

Students:
- What are the students’ biggest needs in Ms. Moore’s class?
- How did the project impact those needs?
- What are the biggest hurdles to technology integration and multimodal projects in the classroom?
## Appendix K

### Coding Scheme

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Parent Code/ Code Groups</th>
<th>Codes</th>
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</table>
| Collaboration            | parallel (Side by side), pointing, reaching over and typing, looking over, taking turns, dividing roles, in and out of groups, dividing slides, dialogue, questions, peer assistance, messin’, feedback  
|                          | negotiating-, problem, resolution, frustration, agreement, messin’, blaming, disagreement, criticizing, compliment, grabs computer, playful, demanding (related to positioning) |
| Design, Mode             | text, image, layout, font color, font style, wordle, background color, background image, animation, photo pictures/ art, music, sound, emotion, exploration, play |
| Roles                    | leader- related to giving directions, designer, text expert, suggestion maker, compliment or, tech expert, editor, photographer, musician- dj, writer, reader |
| Identity                 | racial identity, text discussions of race, skin color, culture, gender |
| Process                  | brainstorming, planning, performance & practice, singing & dancing, messin’, setting goals, Google comments, oral rehearsal, revision, editing, narration, recording, “Google,” reading & writing (related to roles)  
|                          | negotiation is a part of the composing process |
| Tool Mediation           | planning sheet, picture books, novels, checklist, technology problem, comments, video, rubric |
| Mediation                | peer assistance, teacher assistance, scaffolding, messin' |
| Positioning              | taking a break, zipping hoodie, negotiation  
|                          | frustration, enjoyment (more emotions) |
| Text                     | theme, textual evidence, text discussion of race, personal connections, confusions, quotes |
References


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Fraiberg, S. (2010). Composition 2.0: Toward a multilingual and multimodal framework. College Composition and Communication, 100-126.


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