

Critical Literacies Book Club 2022-2023

Critical Literacy is a way of thinking and a way of being that challenges the way we think about texts and life as we know it. The Critical Literacies Book Club was designed to give educators an opportunity to practice a critical stance for thinking and being. This report explains both the design of this book club and how the book club experience impacted participants. The Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NNRPDP) is called upon by members in the region and the state as an intervention measure to impact desired outcomes. Therefore, the NNRPDP State Evaluation Form results address the quality of the book club professional learning. Also, an analysis of an end-of-book club questionnaire corroborated by comprehensive open-response reflection statements collected during each book club session provides evidence of this project's success.

Initial Data and Planning

The Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) call for critical ways of thinking and questioning in most if not all, content areas. For example, readers of these state documents can find this expectation in the following: 1) The Computer Science and Integrated Technology Standards Knowledge Constructor focus area, 2) NVACS for K-12 ELA portrait of a student, 3) NVACS for Social Studies requirements of a student-centered approach to instruction in which critical thinking and inquiry are the focus, 4) NVACS for Science requirements for students to demonstrate their understanding through critical reading, and 5) NVACS for K-12 Mathematics Standards for Mathematical Practice. Further, a post-licensure course in multicultural education is mandatory for newly licensed educators in Nevada. Examples of multicultural education themes include social justice, consciousness, respectful engagement with diverse people, and identity. A critical literacies lens for thinking and questioning can address these themes. The Critical Literacies Book Club was designed to provide Nevada educators an opportunity to practice their critical ways of thinking and questioning.

The goal of the Critical Literacies Book Club is to provide educators a space to practice positioning themselves, as Paulo Freire (1983) describes, "to read the word and the world from a critical stance." The objectives of the Critical Literacies Book Club include providing participants the opportunity to use critical literacies' way of thinking and questioning, engage in courageous conversations, recognize an understanding beyond their own points of view, and, in some way, change their ways of thinking and seeing the world.

To maintain a clear focus in planning a way to support teachers in their own critical ways of thinking, two areas of focus were chosen based on issues identified in recent peer-reviewed academic studies. First, educators are busy and overwhelmed (Boogren, 2018; Krame, 2021), suggesting little time to reflect on and become aware of various points of view, personal biases, or perspectives of the world that may impact how they conduct themselves in a classroom. Second is the call for increased critical thinking skills when consuming content in our technologically enhanced world. For instance, thinking critically, considering multiple perspectives, and questioning intent have become an asset when navigating an online world where anyone can both create and gain access to any information (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, &

Leu, 2014). This flood of information leads to possible problems, for example, accessing and trusting content that may be categorized as “fake news” (Gerosa, Gui, Hargittai, & Nguyen, 2021).

This report describes the third year this book club has been offered as a professional learning experience by NNRPDP. During the first year, this book club was offered once during the spring semester and attended by educators in northeastern Nevada (n=8). During this first year, a regional coordinator colleague from the Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (SNRPDP) asked if they could be a participant. They enjoyed and valued the learning experience so much that they suggested a partnership for the following year to bring this learning experience to their region. The two regional coordinators worked together, opening up registration for both regions. During the second year, the book club was offered twice, once during the fall semester and once during the spring semester. The number of participants was capped at (n=30) for each semester as this number felt manageable within the established book club structure. The third year brought the book club back to only the northeastern Nevada region as the colleague from SNRPDP could no longer fit this work into their schedule. With the return to a single region, the number of participants was capped at (n=15) for each semester.

A digital flyer announcing the Critical Literacies Book Club, year three learning opportunity, including a link to register, was sent to all teachers in Nevada’s northeast region. The fifteen available spots for the book club filled quickly without reaching capacity (n=11), unlike year two, which had a waiting list. This was not surprising given the significantly smaller number of teachers in the region, Southern Nevada has over 18,000 teachers compared to Northeastern Nevada, with approximately 1,200 teachers.

During year three, two professional learning leaders from NNRPDP collaborated as the Critical Literacies Book Club facilitators. Each facilitator’s bio, co-composed with ChatGPT, follows.

The first facilitator and initial creator of the book club has an impressive 22-year track record of teaching across diverse educational settings, ranging from K-12 to college-level courses, including extensive experience in online education. Holding a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and Educational Technology, this educator is a true expert in her field. Serving as a professional learning leader for the NNRPDP since 2008, this facilitator's commitment to enhancing the learning experience for all learners is second to none. She is also National Board Certified in literacy-related fields. As a literacy specialist, she has participated in work with the literacy standards at the local, state, national, and collegiate levels. She has presented at local, state, and national conferences and has facilitated numerous courses, workshops, and professional development opportunities related to literacy across the region.

The second facilitator, joining the book club work this year, possesses extensive teaching experience spanning from K-6 education to adult contexts, with a strong background in elementary school classrooms. Over the course of eighteen years, she has demonstrated her expertise in the classroom environment. In addition, she has dedicated years to facilitating on-site professional development sessions and served as a mentor for new teachers. Equipped

with a Master of Science in Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, the facilitator possesses a solid academic foundation that informs her teaching practices. Her educational background enhances her ability to design effective curricula, implement instructional strategies, and assess student progress. In her current role as a regional coordinator for the NNRPDP, the instructor places a strong emphasis on building upon teachers' strengths and empowering them to grow through reflection and discourse. Combining her extensive teaching experience, academic qualifications, and passion for empowering educators, the facilitator brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the book club, creating an enriching and dynamic learning environment for all participants.

With the goal to provide educators a space to practice positioning themselves to read the word and the world from a critical stance, the RPDP professional learning leaders' expertise served to establish roles and responsibilities, implementation timelines, resources, and monitoring strategies as outlined in the Critical Literacies Book Club Logic Model table below. For further details of the initial data and planning, see the Professional Learning Plan (PLP) in Appendix A.

Table 1

Critical Literacies Book Club Logic Model

Problem	Educators are expected to teach critical literacy skills. Educators are busy and overwhelmed, limiting their time to practice these skills.
Subproblem(s)	Educators are unlikely to provide themselves space and time to practice their own critical literacy skills
Goal	To provide educators a space to practice positioning themselves, as Paulo Freire (1983) describes, to read the word and the world from a critical stance.
Objective(s)	Critical Literacy Book Club participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a critical literacies way of thinking and questioning. ● Engage in courageous conversations. ● Recognize an understanding beyond their own points of view. ● Change their ways of thinking and seeing the world.
Activities	Each book club includes five carefully selected picture books. Each of the five books is the focus of a 4-day cycle. Each day is a thirty-minute session sequenced as follows: Monday: Review Key Aspects of Critical Literacy. For example, reading and discussing excerpts from the NCTE publication, "Critical Literacy as a Way of Being and Doing" (2019), and or other information provided by the book club facilitators. This is followed by paired and small group

	<p>discussion, concluding with an introduction to the picture book the group will focus on for the week.</p> <p>Tuesday: Work “within the book” discussing the contents of the picture book first recounting what happened first, next, and last in the book followed by a conversation about what the book made them think.</p> <p>Wednesday: Work “around the book” learning about the author and illustrator then engaging in discussion about the picture book and how their thinking may have changed about the picture book given their new knowledge about the author and illustrator.</p> <p>Thursday: Work “around the book” consuming additional resources of content related to various social justice themes connected to the picture book.</p> <p>All sessions were facilitated virtually through ZOOM.</p>
Process Measures	The process measures check that facilitators met expectations and were perceived as useful as measured by the State Evaluation Form.
Outcome Short Term	Book club participants demonstrate increased awareness of practicing critical literacy skills as measured by an ongoing open response reflection opportunity at the end of each thirty-minute session and a questionnaire at the end of the book club learning experience.

Method

Learning Design

The NNRPDP is called upon by members in the region and the state as an intervention measure to impact desired outcomes. The effectiveness of the NNRPDP is evidenced in annual reports to stakeholders and outlined in professional learning plans based on research-based practices. The NNRPDP literacy specialists’ learning design of the Critical Literacies Book Club was informed by Nevada’s Standards for Professional Development (2018), Guskey’s Five Levels of Professional Development (2002), the U.S. Department of Education’s guidance document, non-Regulatory 2 Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments (2016), and effective teacher professional development research. Further, the content of the book club was based on a book club session the first facilitator participated in while attending a national literacy conference. Multiple book club session practice rounds with RPDP colleagues were conducted providing feedback on the design and final plan.

Seven Elements of Effective Professional Development

The Critical Literacies Book Club incorporates the seven elements of effective professional development identified in a review of 35 studies conducted by Linda Darling-Hammond, Maria E. Hyler, and Madelyn Gardner, with assistance from Danny Espinoza (2017),

from the Learning Policy Institute. Incorporation of the seven Elements of Effective Professional Development follows.

Content Focus. Critical literacies are considered the content focus of this learning opportunity.

Active Learning. The opportunity for engagement in active learning is provided during paired and small group discussions. Active learning is also supported during each book club session through the completion of the whole group reflection shared document.

Collaboration. The creation of space for sharing ideas and collaboration is reflected in a focus on the frequent use of breakout groups for discussion.

Models of Effective Practice. The modeling of effective practice is reflected in a focus on transparency of facilitator planning, and the use of talk-alouds to model ways of thinking critically during book club sessions.

Coaching and Expert Support. The sharing of expertise and best practices targeting individual needs is reflected in individual support offered outside of the official sessions via emails, and/or virtual meetings.

Feedback and Reflection. The facilitation of reflection and solicitation of feedback is reflected in agendaized time for individual and collaborative reflection, end-of-session informal discussions, and end-of-course evaluations.

Sustained Duration. Adequate time to learn, practice, implement, and reflect is evidenced in the ongoing and sustained book club sessions over five months, offered twice each academic year.

Course Delivery

Given the vast geographical distances between school districts in the northeastern and southern regions of Nevada, a virtual platform, ZOOM, for synchronous class attendance was used. The book club sessions were taught in five-month sections, one picture book per month, from September 2022 to February 2023 for the first book stack, and from January 2023 to May 2023 for the second book stack. Each book stack contained five texts, for a total of ten texts covered across both sessions. Monthly book club sessions occurred for four consecutive days each month. Activities for each of the four days are described in the next section.

Book Club Overview and Session Descriptions

The book club structure was modeled after a learning experience one of the facilitators attended during a week-long literacy conference. During the conference, each book club session was thirty minutes long, one session per day over four consecutive days. Aware that educators are very busy, it was determined to maintain this same thirty-minute time structure.

Each agenda was designed to be consistent and predictable, allowing participants to focus on the content rather than the book club structure.

The same structure is followed for each session: an introduction followed by three rounds of discussion: round one in pairs, round two in a small group, and round three as a whole group, ending the session with a quick closure. The only element of the structure that changes is the topic of discussion. Day one is an introductory day with a social justice theme or critical literacy lens. Day two is a discussion of the picture book. Day three is a discussion of the author and illustrator of the book and Day four is a discussion of social issues in the world that in some way could be connected to the book. This four-day cycle is repeated each month with a different book.

Every session starts with a reminder of the book club goals and objectives, followed by an invitation for participants to type in the Zoom chat a Courageous Conversation (Singleton, 2014) agreement they would intentionally practice during the meeting. The four Courageous Conversation agreements (Singleton, 2014) are to 1) stay engaged, 2) speak your truth, 3) be ready to sit inside discomfort, and 3) accept and expect non-closure. Once participants set their focus intention, the facilitator provides a mini-lesson or very brief opening statement before sending participants into round one discussions. This first round of discussion is conducted in pairs allowing each participant ample time to share their thinking. After round one, participants returned to the whole group. They reflected on the following prompts: a) "What made our conversation go well?" b) "What could you give yourself feedback for?" and c) "Did you hold to your self-selected agreement focus?". As participants silently give themselves feedback and consider what they will say during round two discussions, the facilitator creates small group break-out rooms and quickly sends participants into groups of four. Round three discussion is the whole group starting with open discussion for those who wish to speak, followed by all participants synchronously typing their thoughts and responding to colleagues in a shared Google Document. The session ends with a reminder of what will be discussed the next day.

To provide support for productive discussions, a digital book club handout is provided to each participant. This handout includes reminders of language to practice and questions to consider. For example,

Identity work interpretation lenses:

- Mirrors, Windows, (Emily Styles, 1988) and Sliding Glass Doors (Rudine Sims Bishop, 1990)
- "We bring the book of ourselves to the text in front of us."
- How does our personal identity influence what we are getting ready to read?
- Who do I sympathize with? Why?
- How do we see new parts of ourselves when reading a new story?

Questions to consider when thinking/reading:

- Who has power? Who doesn't?
- When does power shift in the text?

- Who is marginalized?
- Who is demonized?
- Who is stereotyped?
- Who is missing or Who is left out?
- Who is able to change their circumstances, and who is not?
- What is beautiful, what is problematic? A well-written text usually has both.

Participants and Procedure

The fall 2022 book club cycle launched in September with 13 members representing three of the six districts in the Northeastern Nevada region: Elko (7 teachers), Lander (2 teachers), and White Pine (4 teachers). Classroom experience ranged from over 20 years to less than three years. Over the first five-month book club experience, 4 participants discontinued the class, thus n=9 completed the fall book club.

The spring 2023 book club cycle launched in January with 11 members representing two of the six districts in the Northeastern Nevada region: Elko (10 teachers), and White Pine (1 teacher). Similar to the fall book club, classroom experience ranged from over 20 years to less than three years. During this five-month book club experience all 11 participants remained active maintaining n=11.

Measurement

Two of Guskey's Five Levels of Professional Development (Guskey, 2002) were measured in this project: level one, participants' reactions, and level two, participants' learning. These measures are also listed in the logic model as "process measures" and "outcomes short term," respectively.

Level One, Participants' Reactions

Evidence of course quality was documented using the participants' mean Likert scale ratings, ranging from not at all (one) to a great extent (five), of the following State Evaluation statements:

- The training matched my needs.
- The training provided opportunities for interactions and reflections.
- The presenter's experience and expertise enhanced the quality of the training.
- The presenter efficiently managed the time and pacing of the training.
- The presenter modeled effective teaching strategies.

Level Two, Participants Learning

The learning goal of the Critical Literacies Book Club is to provide educators a space to practice positioning themselves to read the word and the world from a critical stance. Four objectives

were identified to measure the success of this goal. Participants will be able to 1) use critical literacies way of thinking and questioning, 2) engage in courageous conversations, 3) recognize an understanding beyond their own points of view, and 4) in some way, change their ways of thinking and seeing the world. To measure the extent to which the objectives were met, information regarding each objective was collected during the last session of the book club cycle. Participants from both the fall and spring book club cycles, fall (n =9) and spring (n = 11), completed the open response questionnaire. These open response questions are listed below.

- During this book club experience, did you have an opportunity to practice a critical literacy way of thinking and questioning?
- During this book club experience, did you have an opportunity to practice courageous conversations?
- During this book club experience, did you have an opportunity to grow an understanding beyond your own points of view?
- Please give some examples of how your thinking changed because of this book club experience. If your thinking did not change, please reflect on why that might be.

Results

RPDP Evaluation Survey

The process measures check that facilitators met participant expectations and were perceived as useful. The five evaluation questions and mean scores for each are shown in Table Two.

Table 2

State Evaluation Survey Questions and Mean Scores

Survey Question	Mean Score 2021-2022	Mean Score 2022-2023
The training matched my needs.	4.6	4.6
The training provided opportunities for interactions and reflections.	5.0	4.9
The presenter's experience and expertise enhanced the quality of the training.	4.7	4.7

The presenter efficiently managed the time and pacing of the training.	4.9	5.0
The presenter modeled effective teaching strategies.	4.7	4.8

The 2022-2023 data closely correspond with the 2021-2022 data. These data continue to suggest participants favored this learning experience as it was structured and facilitated. The questions scoring 5 and 4.9 are particularly noteworthy. All who responded to the evaluation agreed that the presenter efficiently managed the time and pacing of the training and that the Critical Literacies Book Club provided opportunities for interactions and reflections. The goal of this learning experience was to provide time for participants to practice critical literacy ways of thinking and questioning. Achieving this goal within a thirty-minute session requires well-managed time for discussion and reflection.

The state evaluation form given by the Northeastern region included an open-ended reflection question to understand better how participants received the learning experience. The example responses below further indicate a high level of satisfaction with the Critical Literacies Book Club:

From this experience I will strive to look at students through a better lens to help them and understand them and their background. This implementation will also help my students think more critically about books and be more accommodating when thinking about other cultures.

This class always brings so much insight about children's books. I no longer just grab a book and read it. I like to dive in and figure out the message, where the inspiration for the story and the pictures came from, and how my students can relate to it. Every book is selected with intention.

I truly enjoyed this book club and can't wait to participate in another one. This book club allowed me to sit in discomfort and listen to view points from the opposite of mine. It was a challenge not to confront the off comments.

Learning Goal

The goal of the Critical Literacies Book Club was to provide educators a space to practice positioning themselves to read the word and the world from a critical stance. Evidence of goal achievement was provided through four book club objectives. An end-of-book club questionnaire measured objectives. The questionnaire asked participants to self-report their amount of experience engaging in a particular way of thinking and questioning using a four-point scale of yes (4), most of the time (3), a few times (2), and no (1). To corroborate these

data, participant reflection statements were collected during each book club session. Outcomes for each objective are presented next.

Objective One: Participants will be able to use critical literacies way of thinking and questioning

All respondents reported using critical literacies ways of thinking and questioning to some degree, with half 50% reporting “yes” and the remaining respondents admitting this work was not something they experienced all of the time but did engage in either most of the time or a few times.

Table 3
Participants Self-Report Critical Literacies ways of Thinking and Questioning

Survey Selection	(n) 20	Percent
Yes	10	50%
Most of the time	9	45%
A few times	1	05%
No		0%

A follow-up question was given: Please provide examples of new ways of thinking and questioning or talk about why this book club did not help you think or question in new ways. All respondents provided examples of new ways of thinking. Similar to the previous year’s book club response, participants in the book club reported engaging in critical thinking and questioning, challenging their initial understandings, and gaining new perspectives through diverse lenses. They also highlighted the importance of cultural awareness, self-reflection, and the impact of the book club on their teaching practices and personal growth.

Table 4
Participant Examples for Critical Literacies ways of Thinking and Questioning

Self-Reflective	These books really made me sit in discomfort and think about how others might perceive a book. I had chances to try and overcome and go beyond my initial understandings/opinions. I also had to think about these books through a variety of lenses.
Appreciation for all perspectives	Sometimes we get wrapped up in our own way of thinking from our upbringing to our current situation or environment that I think

	we forget to take it to that next level. So for me this club really got the wheels turning in terms of my way of thinking.
Literary Analysis and cultural awareness	My thinking and questioning changed in how I first read a story and then go back and research the author/illustrator. Then I go back and re-read knowing more about them brings the book alive in a different way. It helps me see their perspective better. Normally, I wouldn't look to much into topics like Gentrification or the importance of names or what you call a particular culture or object (Hajib) so it helped me dig a bit deeper.
Teaching practices and personal growth	I have been able to enjoy conversations with my students as well as my co-workers without the fear of hurting anyone's feelings. I have learned to be more transparent with my students in my classroom.

Objective Two: Participants will Engage in Courageous Conversations.

All respondent reported using courageous conversations to some degree, with 60% reporting “yes” and the remaining respondents admitting this work was not something they experienced all of the time but did engage in most of the time or some of the time.

Table 5
Participants Self-Report Engaging in Courageous Conversations

Survey Selection	(n=20)	Percent
Yes	12	60%
Most of the time	6	30%
A few times	2	10%
No		0%

The questionnaire included this follow-up question: Please say a bit about your selected response. For example, give a few examples of how you practiced courageous conversations or talk about why this book club did not help you practice courageous conversations. All respondent provided examples of engaging in courageous conversations. The responses revolve around participants' personal growth and learning as they engage in courageous conversations, overcoming challenges and stepping out of their comfort zones. They emphasize the importance of speaking one's truth, creating an open and non-judgmental environment, gaining empathy and understanding different perspectives, and their desire for continued growth and impact. When responses were submitted to ChatGPT for textual analysis of patterns and

themes, the following six themes described below were generated (OpenAI, 2023). Themes overlapping last year's data are identified with an asterisk followed by the text describing that theme. One theme identified last year but not this year was collaborative learning.

Table 6

Participant themes for Engaging in Courageous Conversations generated by chat.openai.com

<p>Importance of Speaking One's Truth * Feeling brave enough to speak my truth</p>	<p>Several responses emphasized the significance of speaking one's truth and sharing personal opinions, even if they differed from others. Participants felt empowered by being able to express their thoughts openly and have their opinions heard.</p>
<p>Open and Judgment-Free Environment *Open to justify my own thinking</p>	<p>Participants appreciated the supportive and non-judgmental environment provided during the courageous conversations. They felt comfortable sharing their perspectives, knowing that they would not be judged or deemed wrong. Honest and open discussions were valued.</p>
<p>Overcoming Challenges and Stepping Out of Comfort Zones * Discomfort in Sharing Views</p>	<p>Some participants mentioned finding it difficult to express their opinions or speak up, indicating that engaging in courageous conversations required them to step out of their comfort zones. Overcoming shyness and feeling out of place were mentioned as challenges to be overcome.</p>
<p>Personal Growth and Learning</p>	<p>Participants mentioned learning to communicate better, becoming better listeners, and being open to different perspectives. They expressed a desire to improve their ability to engage in courageous conversations and expand their understanding of various topics.</p>
<p>Empathy and Perspective-Taking</p>	<p>Some participants mentioned the importance of understanding different viewpoints and having their eyes opened to other ideas. They appreciated hearing the thoughts and experiences of others, as it broadened their understanding of various topics.</p>
<p>Desire for Continued Growth and Impact</p>	<p>Several participants expressed a desire to continue practicing courageous conversations, both personally and professionally. They saw the potential to apply what they had learned in their own lives and potentially teach others, such as their students.</p>

Objective Three: Participants Recognize an Understanding Beyond their own Points of View

All respondents reported recognizing an understanding beyond their own point of view, with 85% reporting “yes” and the remaining three respondents admitting this work was not something they experienced all of the time but that they did engage in the work of this objective most of the time and for one participant, a few times.

Table 7

Participants Self-Report About Recognizing an Understanding Beyond Their Points of View

Survey Selection	(n=20)	Percent
Yes	17	85%
Most of the time	2	10%
A few times	1	05%
No	0	0

The questionnaire included this follow-up question: Please give some examples of how your thinking changed because of this book club experience. If your thinking did not change, please reflect on why that might be. All respondents provided examples of how their thinking changed. These examples provide evidence for the last objective as detailed below.

Objective Four: Participants, in some way, “Change their ways of Thinking and Seeing the World”

When analyzing examples from the associated follow-up question, the emerging themes from last year could be found in statements from this year. The table below provides representative examples for each of these two themes, changes in classroom practice and changes in levels of awareness with a focus on personal change.

Table 8

Participant Examples for Changes in Thinking and Seeing the World

Changes in the classroom	<p>I started to evaluate the books that are in my classroom and decided I need to add a few more.</p> <p>I think, having access to different books related to culture unlike my own is beneficial, not only for myself but for my students. I plan on bringing these books into my classroom library.</p>
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<p>Self-awareness and wanting to make personal change</p>	<p>Many of the books were windows into lives I had not considered before.</p> <p>I had to think a lot beyond my own thoughts and understandings. I was presented with new concepts that pushed me to think outside the box and dig deeper. I had never even considered how deeply ingrained my bias was when thinking about Islam and Muslim people, but digging through this topic (and being reminded about many of the events that I have lived through) really opened my eyes to my personal prejudice.</p> <p>Looking at topics beyond a single perspective and digging deeper into the books and digging deeper into the topics the books were portraying. I wouldn't normally do that I would just read and enjoy a story, not look too much into it. Now my interest is piqued and I want to find out more!</p>
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The overall goal for this professional learning experience was to provide educators a space to practice positioning themselves to read the word and the world from a critical stance. Again, similar to last year, comments emerged expressing appreciation for space and time to practice this way of thinking and questioning, and the importance of feeling safe within this space. The following participant statements capture this:

It helped me realize that within the context of this class, I can think of topics in multiple ways not just a single way. We were able to discuss topics in honest, open ways without feeling judged or wrong because of this.

I enjoyed hearing other people's point of view during our time together. It was nice to hear what others are thinking and experiencing and how they were applying what they were learning, it gave me more ideas and insight into how I could do better.

Discussion

The Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS) call for critical ways of thinking (or critical literacies) in most, if not all, content areas. The Critical Literacies Book Club was designed to provide Nevada educators a place to practice their critical literacy skills. Given this focused time to pause, reflect, and practice critical ways of thinking, an expectation is for book club participants to change their ways of thinking in some way. It is considered a bonus if this work transfers to the participant's role in education, but such measures were not formally part of this project. Therefore, the goal of the Critical Literacies Book Club was to provide educators a space to practice positioning themselves to read the word and the world from a critical stance. This report described the book club design and how the experience impacted

participants during the third year of implementation. Data were collected using the required state evaluation form and an end-of-book-club questionnaire in corroboration with participant reflection statements written during each book club session. Both measures provide evidence suggesting goals and objectives were achieved.

Data from the third year of teaching this book club mirror the data reported from year two. The state evaluation mean Likert scale ratings ranged from 4.6 to 5.0, indicating the Critical Literacies Book Club met participants' expectations and was perceived as high-quality professional learning. The thirty minute, fast-paced sessions seem to work well to help participants engage in the sometimes difficult, oft-avoided social justice themes that arose. It may be beneficial to conduct a follow-up study exploring this conjecture. Themes found for three of the four learning objectives and self-report data for all four objectives further suggest the success of this project. Each objective was achieved, including some participants providing examples of classroom connections.

Participants' responses suggest that the first objective, using critical literacies ways of thinking and questioning, was met as 95% agreed that they use this way of thinking all of the time or most of the time. This positive response may be in connection with the use of the book club handout. During all sessions participants were given access to the digital handout and frequently reminded to use the language of the handout. One respondent admitted, "I think at times I didn't really understand my critical thinking or how to think critically." They followed up by asking for "...some sentence frames to guide responses." As facilitators of the book club, we added an additional sentence-frame resource to the original handout.

Similarly, the second objective, using courageous conversations, was met with 90% reporting they used this way of talking all of the time or most of the time. Again, this was an expectation during each book club and participants set personal goals to maintain a courageous conversation focus. The remaining respondents reported using courageous conversations at some point. This makes sense as the work of courageous conversations is not easy and takes practice as illustrated in the following response, "I can't say always, because I know that I held back. The book club gave me the opportunities to experience courageous conversations, and maybe with more practice I can help to teach my students."

The third objective, recognizing an understanding beyond their own point of view, was met with 85% (compared with 95% last year) reporting they experienced this understanding all of the time with 10% most of the time, and 05% a few times. Although the percentage dropped by ten, considering points of view beyond one's own perspective remained one of the most successful of the four objectives. The conjecture stands as written in the year-two report, these results may be because no presentation of action is required. Although building awareness is a mental action, it does not require the added effort of sharing anything with a larger audience. One does not have to explain themselves or feel uncomfortable speaking a truth, rather, they can maintain feeling safe within their own thoughts and reflections in preparation for future action.

The fourth objective, Participants, in some way, change their ways of thinking and seeing the world, was successful with all participants providing some examples of how their thinking has changed. These reflections of change were directly connected to their increased awareness of other points of view and or actions in the world and in the classroom. Similar to last year, given the data collected, the degree of change and level of actions beyond mental actions is unclear. What is clear, is the positive response from all book club participants. In some way, once again, in year three, each individual grew as a critical thinker.

Conclusion

When educators are expected to teach their students critical thinking skills, it makes sense that they would appreciate and benefit from a structured learning opportunity to develop these habits of mind. Developing these habits of mind takes time, practice, and support. As this report suggests, the Critical Literacies Book Club is one means of providing a structured learning opportunity that assists educators in developing the necessary habits of mind for embodying critical thinking skills, personally and professionally. Furthermore, the Critical Literacies Book Club structure and design provide an opportunity to achieve this goal in a reasonable amount of time, thus making it more realistic for overwhelmed educators to engage in and benefit from the professional learning.

Unfortunately, the paragraph written a year ago still applies as what was proposed in some states has now become law.

Beyond state-mandated standards, this unique professional learning experience is important, especially now, in what seems to be a moment of tumultuous anger in North America and around the globe. To gain ratings, cable news magnifies this anger, encouraging individuals to only see and value a single perspective. Social media video clips highlight emotional parents calling for library book bans and censorship of some textbook content. Teachers have been threatened with job loss based on what they may say in the classroom or who they might love in their personal life. Learning to pause, reflect, and consider other perspectives is only the beginning of what might help solve this us-against-them mentality.

The optimistically minded might point out a few positive changes from last year with some of the most controversial voices on cable news being released from their contracts and some more divisive political figures are finding less time in the public spotlight. Maybe these are signs for a more reflective, critically minded way of being in our country.

Like the year two conclusions, themes remained in year three. Analysis of participants' responses about their experiences and learning in the Critical Literacies Book Club validated that practicing courageous conversations is valuable but can sometimes be uncomfortable. During book club conversations participants admitted such conversations are often avoided, when possible, but, most of the time, met with gratitude when it is clear that other educators are also committed to thinking and teaching critically. The variety of experiences and learning is to be expected when the content is something usually avoided otherwise. This avoidance

seems to be a defense mechanism. Some participants admitted to avoiding discomfort. A discomfort they may project onto themselves as they worry about hurting feelings or causing trouble. Ideally, learning about courageous conversations and how to effectively engage in these conversations should help with these worrisome feelings.

The Critical Literacies Book Club structure and design continues to help participants recognize an understanding beyond their initial point of view through courageous conversations with other participants during the sessions. Ultimately, participants reported the Critical Literacies Book Club changed their way of thinking and seeing the world because the professional learning was structured to provide opportunities for practice, conducted in a feasible amount of time, and included support from facilitators focused on consideration of various points of view.

The NNRPD will continue to offer this critical literacies book club learning opportunity next year with the addition of book stack three, including text addressing gender themes not included in the first two stacks.

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Appendix

- A. Professional Learning Plan
- B. State Evaluation Form
- C. End of Book Club Open Response Questionnaire