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**PICTURE BOOKS IN HIGH SCHOOL:
HOW PICTURE BOOKS IMPACT STUDENT UNDERSTANDING OF
REVOLUTIONARY LITERATURE CURRICULUM**

by
Larae Lyn Drinkhouse

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Education
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Reading Education
at
Rowan University
December 6, 2017

Thesis Chair: Dr. Stephanie Abraham

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Dedications

I would like to dedicate my thesis to my husband, Eric. Without his unwavering support, this thesis would not be possible. At the beginning of my M.A. in Reading journey, we just embarked on our own journey as an engaged couple and new homeowners. At the journey's end, I can call him my husband of just over one year. I am forever grateful for his ability to keep me motivated and focused on pursuing my goals.

I would also like to dedicate my thesis to my family, Linda, Louis, and Lea D'Angelo. Thank you for all of the pep talks, guidance, phone calls, and support during both the Master's and wedding planning process. To say planning a wedding while working full time and going to grad school wasn't easy would be an understatement. However, I would not have been able to successfully complete either task without their love and assistance.

I would be remiss if I did not dedicate this thesis to my furbaby, Annie. Annie has only known me as a busy graduate student. I am forever thankful for her company during the long days and nights in my office and for her persistent puppy eyes that motivated me to get my work finished so we could go out and play.

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The students of this study site and my co-teacher, Andria Morrison, should be acknowledged for their hard work and willingness to participate in my research. The administration of the study site and the staff of Rowan University's M.A. in Reading program should also be acknowledged for their guidance and support of my teacher research.

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Abstract

Larae Lyn Drinkhouse
PICTURE BOOKS IN HIGH SCHOOL:
HOW PICTURE BOOKS IMPACT STUDENT UNDERSTANDING OF
REVOLUTIONARY LITERATURE CURRICULUM
2017-2018
Dr. Stephanie Abraham
Master of Arts in Reading Education

The purpose of this study is to document student engagement and understanding of American literature when picture books supplement 11th grade curriculum. The specific aim is to see what happens when 11th graders use picture books to make sense of Revolutionary era literature and persuasive rhetoric found in texts such as *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine, “Speech to the Virginia Convention” by Patrick Henry, and *The Declaration of Independence* by Thomas Jefferson. Student questionnaires, interviews, artifacts, and observations were analyzed. The focus group of students demonstrated changes in the overall value of picture book usage in the 11th grade classroom. The limitations and implications for using picture books in 11th grade are discussed.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

BACKSPACE- I hit 'backspace' so many times that I feared the key would stop working. Stressed, anxious, and uncertain, I tried so hard to develop a research question that would be intellectually stimulating and intriguing to me as a researcher while simultaneously benefit my students and my instruction as a teacher. Idea after idea, question after question. I had a feeling that I would never be able to develop a research question and the feeling was devastating. I tried not to carry my woes into work; however, after a meeting with the reading specialist in my school district, Lisa, I couldn't help myself from sharing my struggles with her. It was as if I needed to get my thoughts out there for someone to hear that would understand to help make me feel better.

As a reading specialist, Lisa is a fellow teacher researcher, so I figured if anyone could provide me with the empathy and direction I needed, it would be her. I thought simply sharing my thoughts with her and having her allow me to lament for a few minutes would be enough relief; however, Lisa did more for me that day than lend an ear. Lisa questioned me and her questions sparked the idea that fueled all of my research. She asked me to reflect on myself as a graduate student. She posed, "Now that your graduate classes are finished, think back. What did you enjoy the most?" I paused for a second, but an answer came to me quicker than I anticipated. I responded, "Well, I really enjoyed all I learned from my Multicultural Literature class," to which she responded with the greatest question of all, "Why?" That answer was even easier. I said, "Because I read picture books for the first time in a long time."

ENTER- As soon as I said “picture books” and continued my conversation with Lisa, the wheels started turning in my head, and my ideas turned into real possibilities. I was finally pressing ‘enter’ on my keyboard and beginning to develop my research question! I had finally found a topic that was exciting, intriguing, and truly had the potential to impact my students and my teaching. Who knew that my journey as a teacher researcher would begin with a reflection of myself as a graduate student? Finally, I was able to envision my research involving picture books and my 11th grade American literature curriculum. I thought to myself, if I could learn about multiple cultures as well as the value of authentic picture books in the classroom as a graduate student, my high school students might have the same experience as we read American literature together. Furthermore, if I could enjoy reading picture books as an adult, my students might enjoy reading picture books as teenagers. No longer anxious about creating a question, I became anxious to get started and see where my journey as a teacher researcher would take me, my teaching, and my students.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research was to investigate how 11th grade students respond to picture books supplementing their American literature curriculum. More specifically, the study’s aim was to evaluate student engagement and analyze data to determine student understanding of Revolutionary era American literature when picture books supplemented traditional instruction and were presented to high school students as both an independent or peer experience and a read aloud. Particular emphasis was placed on using the picture books to build student schema about the Revolutionary era and teach identification of and know purpose behind the use of persuasive rhetoric.

Picture books are often viewed and dismissed as juvenile books instead of complex, sophisticated texts that can benefit secondary level students and curriculum. However, prior research suggested that “picture books are multifaceted and can enhance motivation in the learning process and can be used to integrate aspects of multiple curricula for intermediate and secondary students” (Massey, 2015, p.45). For example, Premont, Young, Wilcox, Dean, & Morrison (2017) explored the use of picture books in a high school setting to improve students’ word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions in narrative writing. The tenth grade student participants in Premont et al.’s study used the “picture books as coaches” (Premont et al., 2015, p. 302). The results shared a significant increase in their performance and in their writing skills after the implementation of picture books into their curriculum.

Another study that revealed the value of picture books in a secondary classroom was Taliaferro’s (2009) novel study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. In a ninth-grade classroom, Taliaferro augmented his curriculum to include “African picture books to help students imagine alternative views of Africa and of themselves - new views that led several of them to take their first steps in advocating for a more just world” (p. 31). The results revealed that not only did the picture books help the students with contextualizing vocabulary and explaining specific cultural traditions, but the picture books “helped shape class discussions around cultural ideas rather than solely around a literary analysis of the text” (Taliaferro, 2009, p. 34) which serves as another glimpse of the positive impact picture books can have in a secondary classroom.

Picture books can provide the scaffolding that traditional text books and higher level mentor texts cannot provide to upper level ELL and special education students. The

illustrations present in the picture books can aid all emerging readers by providing them with “a bridge to content that might otherwise be missed by allowing pictures to fill in the blanks of unfamiliar vocabulary” (Wilkins, Sheffield, Ford, & Cruz, 2008, 177). Higher order literacy and critical thinking skills can be developed with the implementation of picture books into secondary level curriculum. When educators skillfully select and embed picture books into their curriculum, picture books can help an older students’ construction of knowledge, motivate them to read, and help them solidify literary concepts that might not have been able to understand without the assistance of the picture books (Lyman, 2013; Wilkins, Sheffield, Ford, & Cruz, 2008). The brevity of picture books was also a feature that made picture books so valuable to secondary classrooms that have reluctant readers because those students were less intimidated by picture books and therefore more willing to give them a chance and become active readers and participants in their learning.

Read alouds of picture books should be considered as supplements to secondary education curriculum as they can make content accessible for special education and English language learners, as well as, emerging readers at the upper levels (Al Khaiyali, 2014; Wilkins, Sheffield, Ford, & Cruz, 2008). To reveal the true potential of a read aloud, Lyman’s (2013) study on eighth grade students explored what happens when picture book read alouds were implemented into their classroom. By the end of the study, not only did the data reveal a change in the students’ overall attitude toward reading but Lyman shared that reading aloud also helped the “students to internalize the structures of written language used to create every text genre and promote familiarity with the language that serves children well as they read and write independently” (Lyman, 2015,

p. 29). Reading aloud to older students serves as a strong model of good reading that can essentially improve their reading comprehension, oral fluency, and reinforce content knowledge.

It was clear that the scholarly research revealed a positive impact that picture books can have on a student's mastery of curriculum and the overall engagement in reading at the upper levels. However, research also exposed that teachers need to be careful when selecting and presenting picture books to their students. For instance, Montgomery's (2009) study provided a glimpse into a classroom where the teacher ended up highlighting cultural differences using the picture books in the classroom instead of using them as a mirror for the Latino students to see themselves and value their culture. Also, Meyer's (2015) study data shared that not all students valued the picture books or enjoyed being read to by their teacher. Instead, they would rather read independently because to some students the idea of reading a picture book made them feel like they were being treated like elementary students. Therefore, it was important to note that teachers need to be sure to make every effort to establish a classroom mindset that the picture books are valuable, complex texts that should be taken seriously so that a culture is established that will be accepting of using picture books as part of the curriculum.

Though the themes regarding how picture books can impact student learning and multiculturalism as well as support struggling readers were prevalent in my research, the gaps that I found in the research inspired me the most as I began to develop my study. One gap I noted was that there needed to be more investigation and research conducted on the impact of picture books at the upper high school levels. Also, I believed that further research was needed to determine the most effective way to present picture books

to secondary students when they are used to supplement curriculum. Therefore, my research specifically targeted junior level high school students and shared what happened when picture books were used to supplement curriculum as both a read aloud and an independent or peer oriented task. It is hoped that my research provided a clearer picture of the potential for picture books at the high school level that will inform other secondary teachers about which method of implementation they want to use when they supplement picture books in their classrooms.

Statement of Research Problem and Question

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effects of supplementing 11th grade American Literature curriculum with picture books. The specific aim was to use questionnaires, student artifacts, student talk, observations, and interviews to analyze and evaluate student engagement and understanding of both Revolutionary era American literature and persuasive rhetoric when picture books were implemented into the curriculum as both an independent or peer experience and a read aloud. How was the overall classroom climate and culture impacted when picture books supplement the curriculum? In what ways did picture books increase student engagement? How did picture books impact student mastery of curriculum?

Story of the Question

As per the New Jersey Department of Education's standards for English Language Arts for grades 11-12, in order to for students to become both college and career ready, "students must grapple with works of exceptional craft and thought whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries" (NJSL, 2016, p. 2). Students need to experience a wide and deep reading of American literature that will increase in

sophistication as the school year progresses in order for the students to gain a “reservoir of literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images” (NJSL, 2016, p. 2).

However, many 11th graders struggle to read the American literature classics because they are not able to approach the texts because they lack the “capacity to surmount the challenges posed by the complex texts” (NJSL, 2016, p. 2). Therefore, it is up to the English Language Arts teacher to provide their students with the necessary supports needed to allow them to interact with the texts necessary for them to understand at the 11th grade level.

Working with 11th grade students in a general level English class for the second year in a row, I had seen that phenomenon occur often in my classroom; most of my students generally read below grade level and need scaffolding and additional support on a regular basis in order for the 11th grade American literature texts to be accessible to them. As we approached the Revolutionary era of American literature, the challenges I was presented as a teacher were that some of my students did not have the historical background needed to make sense of the specific literary piece, and some lacked the literary skills necessary to pick up on the specific nuances of the texts at this level such as an understanding of persuasive rhetoric. Some students also lacked enthusiasm for the traditional readings and instruction. Knowing that I wanted to use picture books to enhance and strengthen my instruction based on the experience with my reading specialist that I alluded to earlier, I thought that I could implement the picture books into my curriculum to build schema, teach rhetoric, and create enjoyment of a usually rather drab topic. In other words, I would be using the picture books as the main focal point of my study in hopes of strengthening my teaching and attempting to increase student

engagement with them which is what Shagoury and Power (2012) would call good teaching; Shagoury and Power (2012) state, “at its best, teacher research is a natural extension of good teaching” (p.3). As a teacher researcher, I wanted to focus on how I could use picture books to enhance the 11th grade American Literature curriculum to help my students make sense of the texts from the era we were reading about at the time of my study, the Revolutionary period, as well as understand the persuasive rhetoric used within many of the core texts we read from that era.

After I narrowed my focus on the Revolutionary era of American literature, I reflected on my classes, and I researched how picture books were used in other studies. One of my main concerns was that my students would feel like they were being treated like “babies,” so I knew that when I selected the picture books, I would need to do my best to “sell” them as truly complex, and intriguing texts that could not only help them gain information but be enjoyable, as well. To do this, I decided to make sure that I had enough picture books for my students to investigate on their own and read at their own pace. I wanted them to see all different styles of picture books, but more importantly, I wanted them to have their hands on the books and their eyes exploring the illustrations on the pages, and I wanted them to have time to take in the whole experience. I decided to use this style of picture book reading to help my students build their schema and background knowledge by having them read through picture books that shared information about that time period either independently or with a peer.

The research I found shared the value of read alouds to older students, so I wanted to make sure I incorporated read alouds of picture books into my study, too. This meant that I needed to select the book to read instead of having my students select the

book on their own. I thought to myself that I could use picture books to explain one of the toughest topics of the Revolutionary era curriculum which was teaching persuasive rhetoric. Knowing this, I selected two picture books that would help me exemplify rhetoric techniques but were also pleasurable texts that could be enjoyed when read aloud. With all of the pieces finally coming together in terms of designing my research question and study, I was ready to see what happened when I implemented picture books into my instruction.

The following chapters share my journey as a teacher researcher as I explored using picture books to enhance my instruction of Revolutionary era literature by building student background knowledge and teaching persuasive rhetoric using a variety of picture books. Chapter Two will divulge more information about the current and historical research regarding picture book usage at the secondary level. Information from that chapter reveals the impact picture books can have on mastery of curriculum and multiculturalism as well as and the impact of read alouds on older students. Next, Chapter Three provides the context of study site and participants. Additionally, Chapter Three discusses the research design and methodology. Chapter Four reviews my analysis of the inductively coded triangulated data sources, and Chapter Five will summarize my study's conclusion, limitations, and implications for the field.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

A picture book is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document; and, foremost, an experience for a child. As an art form, it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page. On its own terms its possibilities are limitless. (Bader, 1976, p.1)

Introduction

Picture books are often viewed and dismissed as juvenile books instead of complex, sophisticated texts that can benefit secondary level students and curriculum. However, prior research suggests that “picture books are multifaceted and can enhance motivation in the learning process and can be used to integrate aspects of multiple curricula for intermediate and secondary students” (Massey, 2015, p.45). Chapter two presents the impact picture books can have on mastery of curriculum, student engagement, and classroom culture. To begin, chapter two explains how higher order literacy and critical thinking skills can be developed with the implementation of picture book read alouds into secondary level curriculum. Next, the chapter shares that when educators skillfully select and embed picture books into their curriculum, picture books can help an older students’ construction of knowledge and engagement, motivate them to read, and help them solidify literary concepts that might not have been able to understand without the assistance of the picture books. Additionally, chapter two emphasizes the benefits of picture books to overall classroom culture as picture books can serve as both a mirror that lets students gain personal cultural insight and a window to allow students to view the lives of those that differ from their own. Though prior research has been conducted revealing the potential of picture book use at the upper levels, studies have not

considered the more appropriate way to present the picture books to high school students. Therefore, chapter two concludes with a summary of the literature and reveals how this study may provide insight regarding the functionality and appropriate implementation of picture books into 11th grade curriculum.

How Can Picture Books Support Student Mastery of Curriculum?

Picture books can serve as an integral part of relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory curriculum for any content area. Costello & Kolodziej (2006) believed that by “incorporating picture books in content area classrooms, teachers can provide a wider variety of reading material to enhance their curricula” (p. 32). Picture books can be used in all content areas to help students master all content area curriculums particularly at the middle school and high school level; Massey’s (2015) research revealed that “there is a children’s book available to meet any objective named in the Common Core State Standards” (p. 46) which shares the true potential of integrating picture books into all content area classrooms.

In an upper level language arts classroom, picture books can be used to “convey literary devices and to model creative writing” (Costello & Kolodziej, 2006, p. 29). Because social studies teachers struggle with making content relevant so that students can personally connect with it, picture books can be used to create an emotional appeal of realistic characters to provide relevance for adolescents that will in turn facilitate the learning of content. Science and mathematics teachers should view picture books as ways to display “visual images to facilitate the learning of complicated content and concepts” (Costello & Kolodziej, 2006, p. 30).

With skillful integration, picture books can enhance the learning of all content area curricula at all grade levels and ages. Meyerson's (2006) qualitative study involving undergraduate students justified the use of picture books at even the college level. Complex topics can be condensed into picture books to help students grasp even the most challenging topics such as psychology which was the content area Meyerson focused on in his research study. Meyerson (2006) believed that picture books are the best place to begin teaching challenging curriculum and that "children's picture books could be effective tools in helping to teach a variety of college disciplines" (Meyerson, 2006, p. 261). In addition to specific curriculum topics, picture books can help students of all ages become more thoughtful, strategic readers and writers which will aid their success in their language arts classes and other content areas. "Combined-text picture books that unite multiple genres of expository and narrative writing" (Dean & Grierson, 2005, p. 456) can be used as exemplary texts and tools that middle and high school students can use to help them re-envision reading and writing in all content areas and disciplines. Because students enjoy reading picture books, they will feel inclined to read and write more frequently and at greater lengths compared to only using traditional texts.

Though Meyer's (2015) research supported reading aloud to older students as the study revealed an increase in comprehension for most students, the results of his study contrasted the belief that most students want to have texts read aloud to them. Meyer's (2015) data revealed that most seventh grade student participants would rather read independently than be read to by the teacher or read aloud programs and software despite their increase in overall comprehension. It is important to note that not all students will be eager to be read or interact with picture books in general for reasons such that they feel

like they are being treated like juveniles or they are simply not used to being read to because they did not have experiences with read alouds even at a young age from their teachers or parents. However, current research has reported that when picture books are presented to adolescents in a way that allows them to understand that value and substance that can be found within the pages of the text, students will become “cognizant those picture books are not “easy books,” thus gradually eliminating the stigma of picture books associated with older students” (Massey, 2015, p. 45). In other words, regardless of whether the book was read silently or aloud, if the teacher set a purpose for reading the picture book that was rigorous and engaging, older students became more likely to accept them and consider them texts that truly have the potential to be seriously evaluated, analyzed, and studied at their grade and age level.

Mastery of curriculum can be achieved with the use of picture books to supplement curriculum for special needs students: the English Language Learner (ELL), the exceptional education student, and the reluctant reader. Traditional texts books do not provide the scaffolding exceptional education students need to access their grade level curriculum, understand the content, and engage in learning with their peers. Particularly in the area of vocabulary, the illustrations aid ELL students and special education students by providing “a bridge to content that might otherwise be missed by allowing pictures to fill in the blanks of unfamiliar vocabulary” (Wilkins, Sheffield, Ford, & Cruz, 2008, 177). Drawn into the text because of the pictures, both ELL and exceptional education students, specifically students with reading difficulties, have a better chance of understanding complex topics by using picture book illustrations to guide their thinking than they do when simply reading textbooks (Wilkins et al., 2008). Al Khaiyali’s (2014)

study confirmed the consensus that picture books can benefit students who are learning English. Using picture books to teach explicit comprehension strategies to eighth grade ELL students, that data suggested that the students' "knowledge of reading comprehension strategies changed remarkably after they have experienced learning these strategies explicitly using children's picture books" (Al Khaiyali, 2014, p. 117).

Reluctant readers, who read below grade level, will utilize the illustrations to aid their comprehension, too, which will lead to better understanding of complex topics. Read alouds of picture books allow students of all ages, who do not ordinarily achieve success in the classroom, become active participants in their learning of complex content that they would not have been access through traditional textbook use.

The reading of picture books aloud could enhance students' vocabulary, word choice, sentence fluency, listening skills, and writing conventions, as well as, support decoding and oral fluency. Even though some upper level educators may view "reading aloud as a step backward pedagogically, or not the most productive use of class time, reading aloud can advance teens' listening and literacy skills by piquing their interest in new and/or rigorous material" (deCourcy, 2015, p. 44). This idea was supported by the research of Lyman's (2013) study on eighth grade students' attitudes toward reading with the use of read alouds. Not only did students' attitudes toward reading change for the better at the end of the study, but the results revealed that "reading aloud helps students to internalize the structures of written language used to create every text genre and promotes familiarity with language that serves children well as they read and write independently" (Lyman, 2015, p. 29). Reading aloud to older students, especially those with exceptional

needs, can provide students with a model of good reading that can help improve their comprehension and reinforce content knowledge.

Premont, Young, Wilcox, Dean, & Morrison (2015) explored the use of picture books in a high school setting to enhance struggling students' word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions in narrative writing. The tenth grade student participants in Premont et al.'s study viewed the "picture books as coaches" (Premont et al., 2015, p. 302) and saw a significant increase in their performance and in their writing skills. Comparing their first draft of their narrative writing pieces to their final draft, Premont et al. (2015) noted that the writing that occurred after the students were introduced to a picture book illustrating strong vocabulary exemplified much stronger word choice. Premont et al.'s data also shared that "the most obvious impact of picture books was seen in use of colons and semicolons, which were not present in any of the rough drafts, but used in the final draft" (Premont et al., 2015, p. 299) which showed a true transfer of knowledge from the picture books to the student work. Overall, the read aloud of the picture books played a role in the enhancement and refinement of most students' literacy skills.

In What Ways Do Picture Books Enhance Student Engagement?

When students enter the upper grade levels of middle and high school, they are expected to have mastered basic reading skills. Therefore, secondary education, particularly in the English language arts classroom, focuses on advancing student literacy skills such as interpretation, inference, and developing connections to readings. Secondary education teachers ultimately teach "students to enjoy literature, and make it a meaningful part of their life" (Lyman, 2013, p. 9). Students' attitudes towards reading in

middle and high school will largely determine their lifelong reading behaviors which is why emphasis needs to be placed on student engagement when it comes to designing secondary level literacy curriculum.

Picture books are fun, attainable reads for secondary students who traditionally have a negative attitude toward reading. Reading aloud and discussing picture books is a strategy that may show promise with students who normally would feel inept in the traditional English classroom (Lyman, 2013, p. 105). What is appealing to secondary students is the brevity of text in picture books as they often feel like the sheer length of traditional upper level mentor texts can determine if a task impossible and daunting which will cause the students to become immediately disengaged with the lesson. Instead, picture books decrease the length of the text without compromising complexity as “the readability of picture books often exceeds the age level for which they are intended” (Costello & Kolodziej, 2006, p. 29). Students find picture books to be approachable which makes them more willing and motivated to learn from them.

Picture books are fun and visually arresting for secondary students (Wilkins, Sheffield, Ford, & Cruz, 2008). Secondary students “clamor to see the illustrations, listen intently to the text, and enjoy the novelty of a read aloud. The format’s concise text is enhanced through the use of vivid imagery. The images are often great works of art in and of themselves” (Wilkins et al., 2008, p. 177) and the students enjoy those images and use them to help them visualize the story’s content when comprehending the text. When Lyman’s (2013) study had middle school teachers reading picture book aloud and showing students the illustrations, qualitative data revealed that the study “ended with

positive attitudes toward reading following the read aloud intervention” (p. 105) at both middle schools involved in the research.

The multidimensionality of picture books can enhance student motivation in the learning process (Massey, 2015). They offer opportunities for collaborative, literature-based activities that promote interest and discussion with teacher and peers. These literature based activities can stir up a student’s emotions and allow them to make memorable emotional connections with a text which often leads to overall enjoyment. Because picture books are “engaging, nonthreatening, and enhanced with illustrative features to aid comprehension” (Massey, 2015, p. 45-46), secondary students feel motivated to be active participants of their learning as readers and listeners. When students are able to have a positive attitude toward a text, positive learning experiences and outcomes will likely follow.

Good literature can be enjoyed at all ages (deCourcy, 2015; Giorgis, 1999; Meyerson, 2006). Few secondary students remember having seen a picture book since entering middle or high school and much less remember having had one read aloud to them. However, the same exciting, enthralling experience an elementary student would have when their teacher or parent is reading them a picture book occurs when picture books are read to older students. Giorgis (1999) shares an anecdote from her research that reveals this enjoyment:

A group of high school students sit impatiently waiting for the teacher to begin the story. As the picture book is read aloud, the students’ lean forward in their seats, and all eyes are focused on the colorful and detailed illustrations. The text is brief, and the entire thirty-two page book is read in less than fifteen minutes. It is

obvious from the thoughtful silence and audible sighs that the students have responded to the story. The students, now eager to discuss their connections to the book and to examine the artistic style and technique used by the book's illustrator, have just been introduced to *December*, an engaging story about a homeless boy and his mother who encounter an "angel," written by Eve Bunting and beautifully illustrated by David Diaz. (p. 51)

Enjoyment of a text can occur at all ages because of the power of a good story- especially one that is support with engaging illustrations.

However, Costello & Kolodziej (2006) shared general considerations that teachers should keep in mind when selecting picture books to use in their classrooms. The teacher's enthusiasm for the book needs to be present as well as the "book's intensity of information, ability to meet high literary standards, and portrayal of diversity" (Costello & Kolodziej, 2006, p. 28) need to be considered before implementing a read aloud of a picture book to the classroom. There is a greater chance of increasing student engagement if a teacher carefully selects a picture book and presents it to their class with an engaging, excited demeanor. Meyerson's (2006) research confirmed this ideal when a Likert scale questioning system was used to reveal that 63.6% of the upper-secondary students considered reading the children's picture book an excellent and enjoyable learning experience (Meyerson, 2006, p.261) at the conclusion of the study. deCourcy (2015) shared that a teen parent found so much enjoyment from read alouds that he "began reading to his son after his positive experiences with read-alouds in high school" (p. 45). Picture book read alouds have the potential to develop a positive experience that

transcends time by creating of lifelong readers because they truly found joy in simply reading a book and desire to share that enjoyment with their closest family and friends.

How is Classroom Culture Impacted When Picture Books Supplement the Curriculum?

Authentic, multicultural picture books can expand adolescents' perceptions of themselves and others. The brevity and accessibility that picture books offer teachers, especially secondary educators, makes picture books a simple yet powerful and authentic way to promote multiculturalism and build background knowledge. Freire (1970), a critical literacy theorist, shared that reading can either foster or inhibit the empowerment of students. To empower students, he believed educators should teach students how to analyze different perspectives with a critical lens. Gay (2004) believed that most educators are aware of the role of multicultural education plays in attempting to create a more just world and the empowerment of students, but that some teachers, particularly at the secondary level, do not think that they have enough time to incorporate multiculturalism into their classrooms due to all the content that must be covered to prepare students for high-stakes standardized testing.

Literature has the potential to transform the views a reader has of their current lives and provides them with the opportunity to imagine worlds beyond their own. In fact, it is important that students do not only come in contact with literature that reflects their own life. Instead, they should read books that allow them to explore other worlds and cultures that are unlike their own so that they can envision alternative ways of thinking and being. Picture books are “progressively recognized as an accessible means to provide guided first experiences for some and to expand the initial perceptions of others”

(McEwing, 2010, p. 2), and they can provide students of all ages with the opportunity to view other cultures in a powerful, authentic, visually appealing manner.

Secondary teachers can use picture books to activate schema and build background knowledge about cultures and perspectives students need to make sense of complex, culturally complex texts. For example, Taliaferro's (2009) novel study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* in a predominantly middle-class ninth- grade classroom implemented "African picture books to help students imagine alternative views of Africa and of themselves - new views that led several of them to take their first steps in advocating for a more just world" (p. 31). Not only did the picture books help the students with contextualizing vocabulary and explain specific cultural traditions, but they "helped shape class discussions around cultural ideas rather than solely around a literary analysis of the text" (Taliaferro, 2009, p. 34) which serves as just a glimpse of the transformation multicultural picture books can have on a secondary classroom.

When multicultural literature is present in a classroom, the literature can stimulate discussion about controversial cultural issues; picture books can assist in the discussion, explanation, and understanding of those issues such as racism to ensure that students are getting a well-rounded, thorough view of the issue. Instead of ignoring or glossing over topics such as racism, critical multiculturalists believe that teachers should "deliberately focus on these issues...and that educational equity can be achieved only if they expose power relationships in society and work to dismantle educational practices and policies that advantage some at the expense of others" (Lazar &Offenberg, 2011, p. 281).

However, many teachers can still be reluctant to dive deep into the issues and present all possible sides of a topic- even with authentic, high-quality picture books to

use as support. In Lazar and Offenbergs (2011) qualitative study, they explored and assessed the teacher's ability to discuss racism when teaching students that ranged from six to thirteen years old in a summer reading program. The teachers were encouraged to use texts that reflected their students' culture and heritage (Au, 1998), and several multicultural texts were specifically made available. The teachers' verbal and written questions were analyzed to determine the way the teachers used the protagonists and antagonists and plot events in the picture books to explain racism to the students. Qualitative data revealed that about 17% of all questions they asked "related to the challenges Black protagonists faced because of racism, which is a surprisingly low percentage given the explicit address of racism" (Lazar &Offenberg, 2011, p. 291) in the picture books, and "very few teachers named Whites as complicit in racism in their discussion questions" (Lazar &Offenberg, 2011, p. 292). Although most of the teachers missed the mark by not using the texts to have their students critically analyze the characters in the story to address the issue or racism, the teachers in the study used the picture books to employ "personal response transactions that focused the children's attention on the perceptions, feelings, and traits of the primary story characters who confronted problems that were rooted in racism" (p. 302-303). Teachers need to maximize the potential picture books have for addressing issues that surround multicultural literature to make sure they are used to promote cultural acceptance instead of aiding ignorance by dodging the important discussions.

If picture books are not presented correctly, read alouds of multicultural picture books can reinforce cultural and linguistic differences (Montgomery, 2009). For example, in Montgomery's (2009) study on how authentic ethnic picture books could supplement

middle school curriculum to help teachers and students connect across their cultural and linguistic differences, Montgomery noticed how the picture books highlighted the differences in language and culture between the teachers and the students instead of serving as a way for the Latino students to see themselves in the literature read during their class. Language differences were noted when one teacher depended on the students to pronounce and translate the Spanish words from the text into English and the other teacher erased the Spanish by paraphrasing the story text (Montgomery, 2009). The qualitative data posited that “both teachers distanced themselves from the culture of their students, and used the Latino children’s literature as a conduit for expressing their attitudes towards Latino culture. What could have been a real support and point of engagement for the children became a demarcation between the teachers and their students” (Montgomery, 2009, p. 334). However, despite the tribulations regarding the presentation of the picture books by the teachers, the group-peer discussions that followed the readings were characterized by Montgomery (2009) as “enthusiastic reading and playing with Spanish text together with shared understanding of story situations which resulted in students personal connections to story text” (p.5) which ultimately reveals the power of the use culturally responsive picture books in the classroom.

Conclusion

Many studies and literature revealed the impact picture books can have on mastery of curriculum, student engagement, and classroom culture at all grade levels. Picture books have the potential to increase student engagement and mastery of content if teachers can effectively select appropriate texts and pose higher order thinking questions about that text to the students. Teachers also have to be mindful about how they present

the picture books to the students by maintaining the mindset that picture books are complex texts that should be taken seriously and establishing a classroom culture that is accepting of all perspectives and heritages that are established in the authentic texts.

Though it is clear that the teacher's selection and implementation of picture books in the curriculum is critical to their value in a secondary classroom, further research is needed to determine the most effective ways to present the text to upper level students to supplement curriculum. Read alouds of texts to older students may be the best way to increase student engagement, yet providing students with autonomy in book selections and providing them time to interact with the books independently or with a peer could be beneficial, as well.

This study focused on the impact that the supplementation of picture books had on 11th grade American literature curriculum. Student feedback through interviews, written artifacts, and student talk determined the effects of having 11th grade students interact with picture books through both independent or peer-oriented readings and teacher led read alouds to enhance their understanding of the Revolutionary movement of American Literature. It is hoped that the research determined how picture books affected student engagement in 11th grade American Literature curriculum.

Chapter 3

Context

Community

The study site, Wave High School, was located in a quaint 1.5 square mile town in southern New Jersey. According to the 2010 Census, Wave High School's community had 9,919 residents. There were 3,600 households and 2,293 families in the borough. The population was dense in this small town as it held 5,925 people per square mile. The racial make-up of the town consisted of 95% white, 3% Hispanic, <1% African American, <1% Asian, <1% other races or more than one race. The Census survey revealed a median household income of \$73,193 and a median family income of \$89,399 with <4% of the families and 6.5% of the population below the poverty line. Founded in 1905, Wave High School's community worked hard to maintain traditions that have been established over the years and holds a distinction of being the "Most Patriotic Small Town" in America.

School

Built in 1926, Wave High School was the center of its close-knit community. Wave High School served as the lone secondary school in its community and was accompanied by two elementary schools that are within walking distance of Wave's building. As a comprehensive six-year high school, Wave High School served students in grades 7 to 12. Wave High School's district had a sending/receiving relationship with a neighboring town, Mount Township, and was a School Choice school; therefore, Wave's student population was comprised of Wave students, as well as, approximately 30% of the student body being Mount school district students and approximately 11% being

school choice students from varying communities. Together, there were 867 students and 74 classroom teachers for a student-teacher ratio of 11:1. Wave High was also a Title I school. As of 2014-2015, there were 163 students that receive free lunch and 84 students eligible for reduced-cost lunch.

As per the New Jersey School Performance Report, 50% of the student population was male and 50% was female. The percentage of the students by ethnic/racial subgroups revealed the following data: White 86.5%, 6.3 Hispanic, 4.6% Black, 1.6% Asian, and <1% two or more races. 97% of the students speak English, 1.4% speak Spanish, and <1.6% speak multiple language or other languages. Students with Disabilities were 20% of the student population. Economically disadvantaged students were 24% of the student population, and 2% of the student population are English Language Learners.

In terms of academic achievement, Wave High School was measured by the content knowledge revealed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. Based on scores from the 2015-2016 school years, 46% of Wave High students met or exceeded expectations on the English Language Arts Literacy assessment and 24% met or exceed expectations on the Mathematics assessment. Demonstration of college readiness was indicated by 100% of the students participating in the PSAT with a mean score of 936 compared to the state's mean score of 950, 55% of the students participating in the SAT with scores above the state average for reading and writing and just below the state's average for math. Wave High School graduated 94% of its student population, which exceeded the state's target of 81%, and has a <1% drop out rate.

The district's motto was "A Tradition of Pride and Excellence" and that expression complimented Wave High School's missions statement which declared that Wave students are provided with motivating and challenging learning experiences that prepare them to achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards at all grade levels, in a safe setting of mutual respect in order to develop ethical, productive citizens who will contribute to the local and global community. Students at Wave High School were encouraged to work hard academically, but also to be involved in their school and the community by participating in any of the various clubs, music, and athletic programs that are offered to become well-rounded students that are prepared for their future endeavors.

Classroom

My study took place during junior level English III class five days a week, for three weeks, for forty-five minutes during period two. As per Wave High School's curriculum guide, the goal of the English III curriculum was to instruct students in what it means to be an American through a chronological survey of the traditional American literature canon from the Colonial period to the modern era. This was my second time teaching the English III curriculum. Serving as a general level English course, the study of various genres of American literature strengthened students' fundamental reading skills. For example, my students read numerous excerpts, short stories, and poems from literary eras such as Puritanism, Romanticism, Transcendentalism, Realism, Modernism, and Contemporary eras of American literature, and they analyzed those texts while refining key literary skills such as characterization, theme, and comprehension strategies. Core texts that were read as part of the English III curriculum were *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Adventures of*

Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain, and *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Students received intensive instruction in the fundamentals of the English language, and their writing skills were strengthened as students write research papers and analytical essays related to the literature studied.

The physical space of the student site was located on the second floor of Wave High School. The room was small, rectangular and holds 27 student desks. The desks were typically arranged in “partner pods” or pairs, and students were assigned their seats. There was a projector and two teacher computers located in the classroom along with white boards and chalkboards. The walls of the study site were bright with yellow wallpaper and English curriculum/literacy based posters on the bulletin boards. There was a file cabinet in the room, but the room lacks room for a classroom library so books are often piled along the classroom’s windowsills or chalkboard ledge. The students in this class worked 1:1 with Chromebooks, and Chromebooks were a major feature of English III’s instruction as the students used them daily by working on Google Classroom and using the internet for research.

A typical week in the English III classroom revealed the students working on a blend of vocabulary, reading, and writing exercises. The students were facilitated by their teacher through all of the class activities, and most of the class work and reading was completed in class as there was limited work sent home as homework. Many of the texts read during class were adapted and modified texts that are supplemented with the full text as well as short stories, poems, plays, etc. Class texts were read both on paper and electronically through access to e-books on the Chromebooks. Though lectures were teacher led, the students were seen active in their leaning while working either

independently or in partners during English III on paper-based work or on the Chromebooks. Most of the student collaboration took place through partner or group discussion, but partner and group work was completed virtually using web 2.0-based programs like Google Docs. Google Classroom was where most of the class work, lecture notes, e-texts, and resources were located for students to access as needed.

Teacher Researcher

I conducted this study as a co-investigator and teacher researcher during my fifth year of teaching at Wave High School. I graduated from Rowan University in 2013 with a B.A. in Secondary Education and a B.A. in English. In addition to my secondary education and English certifications, I am also a certified teacher of students with disabilities and a certified mathematics teacher for grades 5-8. My course load as a teacher at Wave High has varied every year, and I have always taught a blend of English, math, and special education classes. Over the past five years, I have taught every grade level –seventh through twelfth, and I have taught at varying class levels such as resource room, in-class support, general level, college-prep, and honors. I am active in my school as a co-advisor of Interact Club, a member of Instructional Council and the Sunshine Committee, and a volunteer coach for the varsity swim team. My career as a M.A. in Reading graduate student began during the 2015-2016 school year when I came to the realization that I wanted to blend my passion for reading with my skills as a special education instructor in hopes of being able to become a better teacher for all of my students, regardless of the grade level, content area, or course level. This qualitative research study served as the final step needed to earn my Master’s degree in Reading to become a certified Reading Specialist.

Students

There were eight English III students participating in this study. Those students were eight out of the fifteen total students present in my period two English III class. Students needed to be recommended to be placed into the English III course, and they needed the credits from English III to graduate. Most students in English III did not score proficiently on the PARCC or other standardized assessment for English Language Arts and did not show profound interest in pursuing a four-year college or university post-graduation. As a whole, the period two class was moderately behaved and participatory. Six of the eight students participating in the study have had me before as their teacher when they were in Language Arts 7. That repetition allowed for the immediate creation of a comfortable learning environment and smooth transition into the school year for both me and my students.

The group of students that participated in the study consisted of three girls and five boys. Two of the girls and two of the boys had Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and received in-class support services daily during English III class, one boy had a 504 plan that indicates modifications needed for his success in English III, and one girl was a former English Language Learner. Each student completed a motivation to read survey and multiple intelligences survey at the start of the school year, and the students completed a questionnaire regarding this study during the first week of research.

River was an 11th grade female who loved socializing with her friends, music, dancing, and taking photos. English class was not her favorite subject, but she admitted that reading is important. Instead, her favorite was Skills for Living. River was an interpersonal learner that preferred to work with partners instead of alone. On the

questionnaire, River admitted that she only read books when they were assigned by a teacher and that she was comfortable reading a book aloud to her classmates. She also preferred that she had choice when it came to selecting a text to read.

Clara was an 11th grade female who loved to draw, shop, and cosmetology. English was her favorite subject even though she used to struggle with reading and writing when she was younger. She found value in reading and thought reading was an important skill. Clara was a verbal-linguistic and visual-spatial learner who preferred to learn from reading, seeing, and modeling. On the questionnaire, Clara admitted that she only reads books when they are assigned by a teacher and that she did not feel comfortable reading aloud to her classmates. She also preferred that she had choice when it came to selecting a text to read.

Sydney was an 11th grade female who enjoyed movies, art, and music. English was her favorite subject because she liked to write and journal, and she thought reading was valuable. Sydney was an intrapersonal learner who preferred to work alone than in groups. On the questionnaire, Sydney admitted that she only reads books when they are assigned by a teacher and that she does not feel comfortable reading aloud to her classmates. She also preferred that she had choice when it came to selecting a text to read.

Harold was an 11th grade male who loved to play basketball and hang out with his friends. English was not his favorite subject, but he found reading valuable. He preferred gym class. Harold was a bodily-kinesthetic learner who learned best when he completed something hands-on. On the questionnaire, Harold admitted that he only read books when they were assigned by a teacher and that it depended on the text to help him determine if

he feels comfortable reading aloud to his classmates. He also preferred that a teacher picks a book for him to read so he does not have to choose.

Owen was an 11th grade male who loves cosmetology and Netflix. Though Owen doesn't mind English class and finds reading to be a valuable skill, Owen said he preferred art class over English class. Owen was an interpersonal learner that preferred to work with partners instead of alone. On the questionnaire, Owen admitted that he can't remember the last time he read a book and that depended on the text to help him determine if he feels comfortable reading aloud to his classmates. He also preferred that he had choice when it comes to selecting a text to read.

Wink was an 11th grade male who loves to draw and watch videos online. English was not Wink's favorite subject because he could not pick any subjects that he likes. He did not find reading to be a valuable task or skill. Wink was a bodily- kinesthetic learner who learned best when he was completing something hands-on. On the questionnaire, Wink admitted that he only reads books when they are assigned by a teacher and that it depended on the text to help him determine if he feels comfortable reading aloud to his classmates. He also preferred that he had choice when it comes to selecting a text to read.

Henry was an 11th grade male who loves to socialize with friends, drive, and play sports. English was not his favorite subject, and he did not find reading to be a valuable task or skill. Gym was his favorite subject. Henry was a logical-mathematical learner that learned best when assignments were broken down into manageable lists and sequenced. On the questionnaire, Henry admitted that he does not remember the last time he read a book and that it depended on the text to help him determine if he feels comfortable

reading aloud to his classmates. He also preferred that he has choice when it comes to selecting a text to read.

Moe was an 11th grade male who likes to drive and listen to music. English was not Moe's favorite subject because he could not pick any subjects that he likes, but he did find value in reading. Moe was a bodily- kinesthetic learner who learned best when he was completing something hands-on. On the questionnaire, Moe admitted that he only read books when they are assigned by a teacher and that it depended on the text to help him determine if he feels comfortable reading aloud to his classmates. He also preferred that he has choice when it comes to selecting a text to read.

Research Design/Methodology

Marsha Pincus' (2000) *Circle of Inquiry* painted a clear picture of the process of teacher research. Though the process is a circle that has no end, in order for a teacher conduct research and "enter" the circle of inquiry, they first need to be able to identify dissonance in their classroom. The identification of dissonance starts the process, but it is the desire to ask questions and want to find answers that fuels the rest the teacher research process. As soon as a teacher feels uncomfortable about a situation in their classroom, it will fuel their desire to ask questions, search for answers, and look closely at their classroom –all essential components of Pincus' teacher research cycle of inquiry. That cycle will continue until the questions get answered and the teacher can take new action before another area of dissonance occurs again. Qualitative teacher research is born and bred in the classroom.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) believed in a duality of roles when it comes to teacher research where the teacher educator "participates in the inquiry process as

researchers, working from the inside” (p.41). Teacher research allows teachers to “work from the inside” in a way that has them actively involved with making the needed changes in their classroom year after year. This is important because as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) explain, usually someone on the “outside” is trying to make changes to the classroom. Teachers need to have the ability to research and work on what is important to them and their classroom each and every year in order to see a change in student learning because they know their classroom better than anyone on the outside.

As Shagoury and Power (2012) explained, “At its best, teacher research is a natural extension of good teaching” (p. 3). This study was qualitative teacher research that involved “observing students closely, analyzing their needs, and adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs of all students” (Shagoury& Power, 2012, p. 3). Qualitative data was collected and analyzed to help the teacher gain valuable insight about dissonance noticed in the classroom, and the teacher used that data to inform further instruction.

Procedure of Study

The main purpose of my qualitative teacher research study was to determine how 11th grade students used picture books to make sense of the Revolutionary era of American Literature. Therefore, my goal was to augment my traditional teaching with the addition of the picture books to help build student schema and solidify the concept of persuasive rhetoric which is taught during the Revolutionary era portion of the American literature curriculum. The following titles represent the texts that were used to highlight the Revolutionary era of American literature in this study: *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine, “Speech to the Virginia Convention” by Patrick Henry, and *The Declaration of*

Independence by Thomas Jefferson. This research question emerged from my experiences approaching the Revolutionary movement of the 11th grade American literature curriculum and noticing significant challenges emerging such as some students lacking the historical background needed to make sense of the specific literary piece, having a general disinterest in the traditional way this unit was taught, and some approaching the texts without the literary skills necessary to pick up on the specific nuances of the texts at the 11th grade level, such as an understanding of persuasive rhetoric. I focused on using the picture books to enhance the 11th grade American Literature curriculum to help the students not only become more interested and engaged with the presentation of this unit but to also help students use their knowledge from the exemplar picture books to assist them when they needed to make sense of the texts from the Revolutionary era. Therefore, the picture books were used in two ways. One way the picture books were used was to build student background knowledge through the reading of various picture books instead of through traditional methods such as lecture. The picture books used to build student schema regarding the Revolutionary era were the following titles: *Give me liberty!: The Story of the Declaration of Independence* by Russell Freedman, *George Vs. George: The American Revolution As Seen from Both Sides* by Rosalyn Schanzer, *What's the big idea, Ben Franklin?* by Jean Fritz, *Let It Begin Here!: April 19, 1775: The Day the American Revolution Began* by Jean Brown, *The Constitution* by Christine Taylor-Butler, *The Declaration of Independence In Translation: What It Really Means* by Amie Jane Leavitt, *The American Revolution: A MyReportLinks.com Book* by Carl R. Green, and *The Declaration of American Independence* by Valerie Bodden. The students' had autonomy over the books they

wanted to read, but every student needed to read two choices. The students also had choice regarding how they wanted to read the books. For example, they could read the book independently or with their peers, silently or aloud.

The second way the picture books were used was to provide the students with various examples of persuasive rhetoric so that they can not only identify the rhetoric within the texts they are reading but understand the value and purpose of using the rhetoric, as well. *Don't let the pigeon drive the bus!* By Mo Willems and *Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters From Obedience School* by Mark Teague were both used to exemplify persuasive rhetoric techniques. These picture books were specifically selected by the teacher and both were read aloud to the class by the teacher. Students were to apply the knowledge they gained from reading the picture books regarding persuasive rhetoric to the Revolutionary era texts. It was hoped that through this qualitative research, 11th grade readers will be provided with the historical context and conceptual information necessary to grasp the Revolutionary era curriculum due to the supplementation of picture books.

The procedure of this study began at the end of October/beginning of November 2017 with an initial questionnaire that provided the co-investigator with the students' initial reactions to the implementation of picture books into the classroom. The picture books were then added to the classroom in an independent or partner oriented exploratory format that allowed the students to investigate multiple picture books that will provide them with insight and context necessary for them to build schema and gain new background information about the Revolutionary era of literature. Interviews were conducted following this experience to document the students' experience. Picture books supplemented the curriculum again except they were presented in a more regimented

format as I read specifically selected picture books aloud to the class that explained and emphasized examples of persuasive rhetoric. Interviews followed this experience to gain insight into the students' take on having the picture books read aloud to them and their impact on their learning. After that portion of the study's procedure was complete, the students were exposed to the 11th grade mentor texts for the Revolutionary era, and they were observed as they understood and analyzed the texts and cited persuasive rhetoric within them. The final part of the procedure involved a final round of student interviews and a final questionnaire that was distributed to discover student responses after the picture books were added to the curriculum and they approached the on-grade level Revolutionary texts. At the conclusion of the study's 3 week data collection period, I evaluated and synthesized the information collected from the observations, field notes, questionnaires, and student artifacts and discovered any trends or patterns present within the data.

Data Sources

My study used a qualitative research design with triangulated data sources that were inductively coded. Data was collected at the start of the school year that indicates the type of learners present in this study. The source of that data came from the use of an assessment involving Howard Gardner's (1983) *Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, and the results indicated a style of learning each student preferred based on their individual responses. Those results were evaluated in conjunction with the information collected from the initial open-ended questionnaire that has the student responding to questions focused on their initial opinions about their own motivations toward reading and picture books.

Throughout the study, observations and field notes were continually collected to allow me to document the students' experiences and interactions with the picture books that will supplement the 11th grade curriculum. The daily field notes were used to document the comments from students while making observations of the students interacting with the picture books. To ensure that each student's learning experience was valued, all study participants were interviewed regarding their engagement, literacy practices and interactions with the picture books throughout the study.

To further grasp an understanding of the student learning that took place during the study, artifact analysis was conducted. It was requested that participants share their written responses to the picture books, as well as, any other formal assignments, such as essays, and quizzes associated with the picture books and the curriculum the picture books supplemented throughout the study.

Data Analysis

Triangulated data sources (Guion, 2002) were aggregated, synthesized, and inductively coded at the conclusion of the study. I analyzed the student observations, field notes, questionnaire responses, interviews, and the student artifacts, and I compared and reflected on any patterns, themes, or trends notice within the data presented from both the individual students and the group of participants. As much as the student artifacts and questionnaires were essential to collect, the informal observation notes and the interviews allowed for the 11th grade students to share their most authentic thoughts and experiences without being filtered through the formality of the assignments or limitations of the questionnaire. The blend of informal and formal data collection from

this qualitative research study provided a realistic glimpse into the 11th grade classroom as the students interacted with picture books.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

Data was collected in a linear format during the three weeks of research. While the field notes and teacher journal entries were collected data on a daily basis, the rest the information from the remaining data sources were gathered according to the following research timeline and protocol: First, the questionnaire (Appendix A) was given to allow me to see where the students stood in terms of reading interests and opinions of picture books. Next, observation notes (Appendix B) were collected while the students work on the pre-reading and background information activity using the first round of picture books. Student artifacts (Appendix C) were collected from that activity to reveal how much knowledge they gained from the picture books compared to the information they had when they entered the classroom. Following their first experience with picture books was the first round in interviews (Appendix D) which inquired about the students' experience investigating a picture book for the first time in 11th grade English III to gain background information and build schema.

Next, observation notes were jotted as the students worked with Mo Willems' *Don't Let the Pigeon Ride the Bus* picture book after the class read aloud, and student artifacts (Appendix E) were collected as they worked on deciphering the purpose behind the main character's dialogue. Field notes were continued daily even as the students learned about persuasive rhetoric through class lecture and discussion. Following the formal notes on persuasive rhetoric, *Dear Mrs. LaRue- Letters From Obedience School* by Mark Teague was read aloud and observation notes were taken; student artifacts were collected (Appendix F) as they identified the persuasive rhetoric used in the main

character's letters and supported their responses with text evidence. The second interview was conducted following the experience of using Willems' and Teague's picture books from the read alouds so that they could provide information about how the read alouds impacted their understanding of persuasive rhetoric. When the students approached the 11th grade texts, they were exposed to the texts and the persuasive rhetoric identification through a gradual release model. The students read *The Declaration of Independence* by Thomas Jefferson with the class, and then I modeled how to read, analyze, and evaluate the text for persuasion. Next, as a class and with a partner, the students worked on an excerpt from *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine using the same exercise and technique until the responsibility was placed on them individually. Student artifacts (Appendix G) were collected when the students assessed Patrick Henry's "Speech to the Virginia Convention" on their own for persuasive rhetoric. The third and final interview followed the student's completion of that activity, and the questionnaire from the beginning of the study was sent as a closing to the research to document any changes in the student after this experience.

As I gathered data from all of my data sources, I began to notice thematic trends regarding how 11th graders respond to the supplementation of picture books to their American literature curriculum. Questionnaires, student artifacts, student talk, observations, and interviews were inductively coded and analyzed to evaluate student engagement and understanding of both Revolutionary era American literature and persuasive rhetoric after the implementation of the picture books. To begin to see the trend in data, a data overview chart was created so that I could view my results in a summarized format (see Table 1). In addition to the data outlined on the overview chart,

the complete contents of each data source were evaluated, inductively coded, and triangulated (Guion, 2002), and the following statements reveal the themes that emerged: 11th graders prefer to read picture books independently, picture books can make challenging material accessible and engaging, and 11th graders can value picture books as a supplement to their curriculum.

Table 1

Data Overview Chart

	<u>Questionnaire:</u> Are picture books valuable?	<u>Observation Round 1:</u> Independent or with peer? / Did they gain background information?	<u>Interview #1:</u> Significant Quote	<u>Student Artifact:</u> Grade: Willems'	<u>Student Artifact:</u> Grade: Teague's	<u>Interview #2:</u> Significant Quote	<u>Student Artifact:</u> Grade: Patrick Henry	<u>Interview #3:</u> Significant Quote	<u>Questionnaire:</u> Are picture books valuable?
Clara	Yes	Independent / Yes	"I liked looking at the pictures by myself"	100%	100%	"PBs helped me understand rhetoric faster than the notes"	95%	"I like the challenge of this and get the PBs purpose"	Yes
Sydney	No	Independent / Yes	"Seem like little kids book, but hey facts are facts"	90%	100%	"I focused more on words than pictures but needed my notes to help"	85%	"If the PBs got me and our class to read, they're valuable"	Yes
River	No	Peer/ Yes	Absent	90%	85%	Absent	75%	"It was way easier with PBs so I struggled on this whole assignment"	Yes
Henry	No	Peer/ Yes	"Helped me remember stuff from history"	100%	95%	"PB give examples of the higher order stuff so I feel like I can get it"	95%	"This was harder but what we did with PB helped"	Yes
Wink	No	Peer/ Yes	"Enjoyed reading with a friend"	75%	80%	"PBs were boring and too simple. Not helpful to me."	70%	"I wish this had pictures"	Yes
Harold	No	Peer/ Yes	"Pictures actually helped me"	70%	80%	"I don't understand why we needed the PBs. Didn't help me"	60%	"I'm still stuck but the PBs were easier than this"	No
Moe	Yes	Peer/ Yes	"I don't need the pictures but looked anyway"	90%	95%	"Pictures help me understand the rhetoric."	90%	"I think the picture books made a difference"	Yes
Owen	Yes	Absent	Absent	95%	95%	"The PBs made me understand the purpose of the rhetoric; emotion of character"	100%	"The notes and PBs helped me equally"	Yes

11th Graders Prefer to Read Picture Books Independently

When I was reviewing information about picture books for my literature review, the topic of read alouds came to the forefront of my research. Though most of the information about read alouds focused on students that were younger than 11th grade, many studies (deCourcy, 2015; Giorgis, 1999) revealed that read alouds can have a positive impact on students of all ages. Meyer's (2015) research show potential in reading picture books aloud but shared that most of his 7th grade students would rather read the book independently instead of aloud, and the results of my research yielded a similar conclusion. I wanted to my research to provide an inclination that would determine if read alouds worked better than independent reading when it came to using picture books with 11th grade students. My triangulated data sources (Guion, 2002), interviews, field notes, and questionnaire, determined that when given the choice, 11th grade students would rather read the picture book independently than participate in a class read aloud.

When the students read with their peers to gain background information during round one of our picture book experience, I observed that the students were really spending the time to look closely at the images on each page. In fact, some students truly judged a book by its cover by only looking at the pictures as they explored the picture books for the first time. Through the student interviews that followed the first round of picture book exploration, the students shared that they liked the hands on experience with the picture books. When asked, "Can you tell me about the illustrations you observed and how they helped you understand what you read?" off the interview script, Sydney and Harold responded that they enjoyed and benefitted from the illustrations (see Table 1). Henry commented that the pictures "helped [him] remember stuff from history class"

about the Revolutionary War and helped him build his schema (see Table 1). Most students agreed that having the text in front of them helped them to evaluate what was on the page beyond just the plot of the story. Because they were asked to analyze the picture book's text in such a specific way (Appendix C), the students needed to spend time in the text and illustrations independently and up close. Therefore, a single read from a class read aloud was not enough exposure.

Field notes from the read alouds of the Willems and Teague picture books shared how the room was completely silent and how the students were enthralled by both stories. This was my first time reading a picture book aloud to a classroom of students, so the students corrected me on multiple occasions to move closer to them so they could see the pictures. In hindsight, I should have grouped them closer together so that I would have been able to do a better job showing off the illustrations, but their desire to have me walk around and give them a glimpse of the illustrations revealed to me that they were interested in the pictures and invested in the picture book. However, because the experience with the illustrations seemed so distant to them physically, the students seemed to favor the independent experience reading the picture books so they could spend more time on each page and illustration.



Figure 1. Class Read Aloud Photo. This was taken while I was giving directions for the assignment related to Mo Willems' Don't Let Pigeon Ride the Bus.

Table 2 summarizes all of the data the questionnaire given at the start of the study provided. Survey participants responded to this survey before picture books were introduced into their curriculum. Therefore, information from the questionnaire that was given at the start of the study shares the beliefs and feelings of the students when they entered the study. When asked, “What do you think of when you think of picture books?” on the questionnaire, 7.7% of the students responded that they think “they are for babies and children,” 38.5% said that “I think of my childhood, so picture books make me happy,” and 53.8%, the majority, said that picture books can be valuable but they “can’t think of the last picture book” they read. Most of the students, 58.3%, revealed that they feel the best when a teacher reads to them, and most students responded in a way that showed the participants’ overwhelming insecurity with reading a book independently

with 100% of the students selecting three or lower on the scale of 1-5 indicating their feelings when they need to read a book on their own. Every student admitted to liking books with illustrations, and they all believed that illustrations can be valuable which raised questions when those statistics were juxtaposed to the 7.7% of participants that believed that picture books are for babies and children. It seemed that the students liked illustrations and found them valuable, but they think there is a distinct difference between pictures in books and picture books. The question that asked students if they believed “picture books are a valuable resource to 11th graders,” revealed a split in the class’ opinions at the beginning of the research as 53.2% responded “yes” and 46.8% responded “no.” Table 2’s data concludes that there was a contrast between the students’ values in pictures and their belief that picture books are childhood texts. There was also a lack of student confidence in reading on their own which was supported with their original indication that they prefer that their teacher reads to them compared to reading a book independently.

Table 3 comprises the information collected from the questionnaire that was given at the conclusion of the study. When the results of Table 2 and Table 3 are compared, there were notable changes in the data. First, when the students responded to the question, “What do you think of when you think of picture books?” 0% of the students responded that they think picture books are for “babies and children” which was a percentage decrease compared to that data from the questionnaire results from the start of the study. This reveals a change in the participants’ mindset in terms of how they view picture books as a result of this study. The results from this questionnaire are similar to questionnaire from the start of the study with regard to the students’ continued lack of

confidence reading a text aloud or independently and their desire to have the teacher read to them. An increase in the students' belief that picture books can be valuable for "11th graders to use to help them comprehend other texts they are reading" was noted as the percentage increased from 53.2% to 90.6% after the students had the picture books supplement their curriculum. All participants revealed that they continued to enjoy and find value in illustrations. With the illustration statistics staying consistent from the beginning to the end of the study and a change in the students' first thoughts about picture books, it can be concluded that this study allowed for students to redefine picture books in their minds; no longer were picture books only for children because they used them as a tool for their own learning and enjoyment. As a result of the research study's supplementation of picture books into the 11th grade curriculum, there was a boost in the students' understanding of the value of picture books and a continued love for both illustrations and read alouds.

Table 2

Questionnaire Given at the Start of the Study

Questions	Percentages
When is the last time you read an entire book?	76.9%- the last time my teacher read one to me 0%-I am an avid reader 23.1%- I can't remember the last time I completed a book
What do you think of when you think of picture books?	7.7%- I think they are for babies and children 53.8% -I think they can be valuable, but I can't think of the last picture book I have read 38.5%- I think of my childhood, so picture books make me happy
On a scale of 1-5(5 being the best), how do you rate how you feel when YOU select a book to read instead of a teacher assigning one to you?	8.3%- 1 16.7%- 2 25%- 3 33.3%- 4 16.7%- 5
On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the best), how do you rate how to feel when your teacher reads to you?	0%-1 0%-2 16.7%-3 25%-4 58.3%-5
On a scale of 1-5 (5 being best), how do you rate how you feel when you have to read a book on your own?	8.3%-1 41.7%-2 50%-3 0%-4 0%-5
Do you feel confident reading books aloud?	50%- No 16.7%- Yes 33.3%- Depends on what I'm reading and who I am reading to
Would you feel comfortable reading a picture book aloud more than a text from your 11th grade English class?	76.9%- Yes 23.1%- No
Do you like books with illustrations?	100%- Yes 0%- No
Do you think illustrations are valuable features of a book?	100%- Yes 0%- No
Would you rather the teacher assign a book to you or would you like to pick one out on your own?	62.9%- I like to pick because I will pick a text that interests me most 30.8%- teacher assigned- I wouldn't be able to make up my mind
Do you think that picture books could be a valuable resource for 11th grade students to use to help them comprehend other texts they are reading?	53.2%- Yes 46.8%- No
What approximately what percentage of the class do you think would enjoy reading picture books in English class?	7.7%- 25% of class 15.4%- 50% of class 61.5%- 75% of class 15.4%- 100% of class

Table 3

Questionnaire Given at the Conclusion of the Study

Question	Percentages
When is the last time you read an entire book?	85.6%- the last time my teacher read one to me 0%-I am an avid reader 14.4%- I can't remember the last time I completed a book
What do you think of when you think of picture books?	0%- I think they are for babies and children 16.4% -I think they can be valuable, but I can't think of the last picture book I have read 83.6%- I think of my childhood, so picture books make me happy
On a scale of 1-5(5 being the best), how do you rate how you feel when YOU select a book to read instead of a teacher assigning one to you?	0%- 1 0%- 2 19.5%- 3 65.3%- 4 17%- 5
On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the best), how do you rate how to feel when your teacher reads to you?	0%-1 0%-2 9.7%-3 0%-4 90.3%-5
On a scale of 1-5 (5 being best), how do you rate how you feel when you have to read a book on your own?	8.3%-1 41.7%-2 50%-3 0%-4 0%-5
Do you feel confident reading books aloud?	63%- No 6.7%- Yes 30.3%- Depends on what I'm reading and who I am reading to
Would you feel comfortable reading a picture book aloud more than a text from your 11th grade English class?	95%- Yes 5%- No
Do you like books with illustrations?	100%- Yes 0%- No
Do you think illustrations are valuable features of a book?	100%- Yes 0%- No
Would you rather the teacher assign a book to you or would you like to pick one out on your own?	41.5%- I like to pick because I will pick a text that interests me most 58.5%- teacher assigned- I wouldn't be able to make up my mind
Do you think that picture books could be a valuable resource for 11th grade students to use to help them comprehend other texts they are reading?	90.6%- Yes 9.4%- No
What approximately what percentage of the class do you think would enjoy reading picture books in English class?	0%- 25% of class 13%- 50% of class 71.5%- 75% of class 15.5%- 100% of class

Data gained from comparing the student responses to both questionnaires (Tables 2 and 3) revealed that the majority of the class generally liked to be read to; however, observation notes indicated that though the students were silent and enthralled by the read aloud experience, when it came to completing the persuasive rhetoric assignments, they needed be able to take their time with the text. Therefore, though the questionnaire results reveal that 11th graders generally like being read to, in the case of picture books and their usage in this specific study, the students would rather investigate the book on their own if given the choice.

Picture Books Can Make Challenging Material Accessible and Engaging

The potential benefits to using picture books in the classroom were apparent through the research comprised within my literature review. Research (Al Khaiyali, 2014; Meyerson, 2006; Premont et al., 2015; Wilkins et al., 2008) revealed that picture books can be used to teach a wide variety of content to students with exceptional learning needs because the picture books can make the higher level material accessible and attainable. With my study containing four participants that had IEPs, one participant that had a 504 plan, and one participant being a former ELL student, I posited that my research would be similar to those from my literature review in the sense that challenging material can become accessible to those that participants that struggle academically, and my data sources indicated that my assumption was correct. After triangulating (Guion, 2002) the data from the interviews, observations, and artifacts, it can be concluded that picture books can make challenging material accessible and engaging for 11th grade emerging readers and ELL students.

A theme that arose from the interviews was that the student used the picture books to help them understand persuasive rhetoric. Though many of the students had an initial disregard to the idea of picture books with 7.7% saying that picture books are for babies and children on the questionnaire (see Table 2), all of the students responded on both questionnaires 100% yes to both the question, “Do you like books with illustrations” and “Do you think illustrations are valuable features of a book?” (See Tables 2 and 3) Within the interviews, students confirmed this by sharing that the illustrations helped them to understand the emotion, intention, and purpose behind the use of the rhetoric. Therefore, the students always loved illustrations but would not commit to liking picture books right away. However, when asked the question, “Can you tell me about the illustrations you observed and how they helped you understand what you read?” Owen responded by saying, “The picture books helped me understand the purpose of the rhetoric because I could see the emotion in the character’s face in the picture.” (See Table 1) Owen’s comments were echoed by Henry, Clara, and Moe. In fact Henry stated, “The picture books give examples of the higher order stuff so I feel like I can get it” which reveals the scaffolding the picture books were able to provide for these students. Clara stated, “Picture books helped me understand rhetoric faster than the notes!” which made me feel confident in the choice of using the picture books to break down the complex task instead of only relying on traditional lecture and notes to teach the skill. When they needed to complete the tasks using the 11th grade Revolutionary texts, I observed several students going back to their picture book assignments as a reference; they were able to see that picture books are not just for babies and children after all. This observation solidified for me the idea that picture books can be a useful tool in the classroom to help my students

meet the demands of challenging texts and activities that are found within the 11th grade curriculum.

In addition to the complex skill of rhetoric, the picture books were able to build student schema and background information. Because my literature review research revealed all of the success picture books provided in the area of multiculturalism by allowing authentic picture books to become a window for students to see cultures other than their own, I thought the picture books could be used as a window to their own American culture by exposing them to texts that provided them with information about the Revolutionary era. They read the picture books to see what America was like before it was actually America, and know more about the history and culture present in 1770s. The student artifacts that were produced showed an increase in all students' background information.

As seen in Figure 2, the student, Henry, began with only remembering one incorrect fact about the Revolutionary period based on his prior background knowledge from history class; on the worksheet, Henry said that he thought the Revolutionary War “took place in the 1900s.” This information was corrected and clarified through his reading of the picture books. For example, after Henry read two picture books, he was able to provide an abundance of information about the issues between “Great Britain and the colonies, the Boston Tea Party, and the Battles of Lexington and Concord which took place in 1775” on his worksheets (Figure 2). He shared details about the similarities between George Washington and King George as well as listed many famous people to know from the Revolutionary era such as “Paul Revere, John Adam, and John Hancock.” The picture books provided him with more of a well-rounded glimpse into the

Revolutionary era. He was able to read about the important people who were living at the time, the prominent events that occurred, and he was able to recall the significant desire for the colonists to want to break away from Great Britain which was important context necessary for him to know as he began reading the texts from that era provided in the 11th grade Revolutionary American literature curriculum.

After reading the picture books with his partner, he was able to gain a significant amount of new information about the historical and literary aspects of the Revolutionary period as well as refresh his memory on the topics from that period that he did learn through his past classes. This activity allowed the students to visually see the increase in information that the picture books provided for them; starting their picture book experience off with this exercise allowed my students to see picture books as a valuable tool for their learning.

<p>Picture Books in 11th Grade Part 1- What do you know?</p> <p>A. In the box provided, bullet all of the information you know about the Revolutionary Era of literature. Consider historical information, literature, famous writers and documents of that time.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revolutionary War • It was in the 1800's • • • • • </div>	
<p>Picture Book #2</p>	
<p>Picture Book Title & Author: George vs. George by Rosalyn Schanzer</p> <p>Are you reading this silently/ independently or aloud with a partner(s)? (Who is your partner? & Who is doing more of the reading?) Partner: Stephen Reading-both doing an equal part</p>	<p>Picture Book #1</p> <p>Picture Book Title & Author: Let it begin here by Don Brown</p> <p>Are you reading this silently/ independently or aloud with a partner(s)? (Who is your partner? & Who is doing more of the reading?) Partner-Stephen Reading - we both read the same amount</p>
<p>Historical Information: George Washington fought along the British Army When France gave up its territories England and America were very happy. The 13 colonies were not united and they all had separate governments with its own laws and taxes</p>	<p>Historical Information: Britain and America had recently had problems and were ready for war. Bostonians dumped tea into the harbor rather than paying taxes on them. Troops went from Boston to Middlesex County to get a large amount of gunpowder. The Men believed that Cogan's mission was to destroy the colonists' gunpowder at Concord. The Yankees and British were face to face and nobody was going to flee but a bullet came and the shooting began.</p>
<p>Famous People to Know: George Washington King George Samuel Johnson</p>	<p>Famous People to Know: Paul Revere George III Thomas Gage John Adams Samuel Adams John Hancock Patrick Henry Benjamin Franklin George Washington John Jay Alexander Hamilton James Madison James Monroe John Quincy Adams Andrew Jackson Martin Van Buren James K. Polk Zachary Taylor Millard Fillmore Franklin Pierce Abraham Lincoln Andrew Johnson Ulysses S. Grant Rutherford B. Hayes James A. Garfield Grover Cleveland Benjamin Harrison William McKinley Theodore Roosevelt William Howard Taft Woodrow Wilson Warren G. Harding Calvin Coolidge Herbert Hoover Franklin D. Roosevelt Dwight D. Eisenhower John F. Kennedy Lyndon B. Johnson Richard Nixon Jimmy Carter Ronald Reagan George H. W. Bush Bill Clinton George W. Bush Barack Obama Donald Trump</p>
<p>Other Significant Information about the Revolutionary Era: King George III and George Washington were very much alike Great Britain and the American Colonies had much in common King George had 15 children The death rate was high in London from the coal Riots were very common King George controlled 31 colonies and many more things</p>	<p>Other Significant Information about the Revolutionary Era: Middlesex had the largest amount of gunpowder The Yankees and the British don't know for fired the first shot to start The War</p>
<p>Illustrations: What kind of illustrations were present in this text? What could you learn from them? There were many illustrations of people shooting and a lot of men. Also many of the pictures gave us a better understanding of the text and could picture the words from the text.</p>	
<p>present in this text? What could you learn from them? what is trying to be said in the text even though there aren't many pictures.</p>	
<p>*Summarize what you learned about the Revolutionary Era based on the information provided for you in this picture book: We learned that King George and George Washington had many conflicts. Also, England and the American Colonies had many things in common but also some differences. There were many things that were key factors in acquiring the colonies.</p>	

Figure 2. Background Information Artifact. Henry's work reveals his gain of background information about the Revolutionary period after reading two picture books.

Observing the students as they interacted with the picture books individually or with their peers, I noted an increased excitement and energy fill the classroom. Before using the picture books with my students, most of my class would moan and groan at the idea of reading any piece of text on their own. The picture books were considered different and fun from the start, so the students were very eager to get their hands on them and see what was inside without much prompting. Though it was noted in the field notes that some students were shocked at how long in length some picture books could be, the majority of the class was pleased with the idea that there were pictures on every page, so picture book page length was not a concern. Even when they were completing the 11th grade level work related to the picture books, they approached those assignments with much more confidence and engagement knowing that they had the picture books to rely on.

11th Graders Can Value Picture Books as a Supplement to Their Curriculum

Costello & Kolodziej's (2006) research shared general considerations for teachers to keep in mind when they decide to infuse picture book use into their secondary curriculum; their research explained that the teacher's enthusiasm for the book needs to be present as well as the "book's intensity of information, ability to meet high literary standards, and portrayal of diversity" (Costello & Kolodziej, 2006, p. 28) has to be established or the students will not take the picture books seriously. Keeping this in mind, I worked hard to implement the picture books as a valuable tool for my students to use and did my best to present them in an enthusiastic manner with hopes of my students' buying into the idea that the picture books should be given a fair chance. Data from

interviews, student artifacts, and questionnaires were triangulated, and they determined that 11th graders can value picture books as a supplement to their curriculum.

The students' shared their positive experiences using the illustrations from the picture books to make sense of the persuasive rhetoric and to build their background knowledge in the interviews. When Sydney said, "Seems like a little kids book, but hey, facts are facts" during her interview after she read the picture books for information, I think it is clear that she was able to see the potential picture books provide. Her ability to see the picture books as having the potential to be factual, informative pieces was shared with Henry through his interview and the majority of the class as they read and evaluated each text for historical and literary information. Not once was it noted that the students questioned something or thought something was invalid within the picture books the students were exploring. When Sydney was asked during her interview, "Would call these picture books valuable to your understanding of the Revolutionary American literature we are reading in class?" and she said, "If picture books get me and this class to read, they're valuable!" Her response makes it clear that students like Sydney see the potential picture books provide. Beyond learning the rhetoric or gaining the background knowledge, the implementation of the picture books to the 11th grade curriculum created a classroom environment that promoted sustained, engaged reading which is very valuable –especially in a classroom that has many emerging and reluctant readers.

Overall, there was an increase in the class' belief that picture books can be valuable in 11th grade on the questionnaire. The original responses to the questionnaire (Table 2) showed only 53.2% saying "yes" to the question: "Do you think that picture books could be a valuable resource for 11th grade students to use to help them

comprehend other texts they are reading?” After the study, the students responded to the same question and 90.6% said “yes” to picture books being a valuable resource for 11th grade students.

On a similar note, another element of value that this research study presented was the value of student interviews that were conducted with the picture books. Not only did I appreciate and gather the most helpful data from the interviews, but my students truly loved being interviewed and sharing their experiences with the picture books. The fact that I took the time out of the day to meet with them one-on-one to discuss the picture books made them not only feel special, but I believe it added value to the picture books and the learning activities that accompanied them. For instance, even though Harold and Wink were my lowest scoring students academically, they attempted each question on the worksheets which, based on their previous performances in my class, does not always happen. My research journal notes from November 9, 2017 and November 15, 2017 reflected my experiences interviewing the students on those days. It was noted in the entries for both of those days that Harold and Wink were the first to raise their hands to be interviewed, and they were also both willing to stay after class to continue to talk with me about the picture books and how I was going to incorporate them next into our curriculum. This reveals a significant increase in their interest and initiative when it comes to their learning because of the study’s interview experience. It can be concluded that when the students feel like they truly have a voice and an audience that is willing to listen, they will want to take a more active role in their learning.

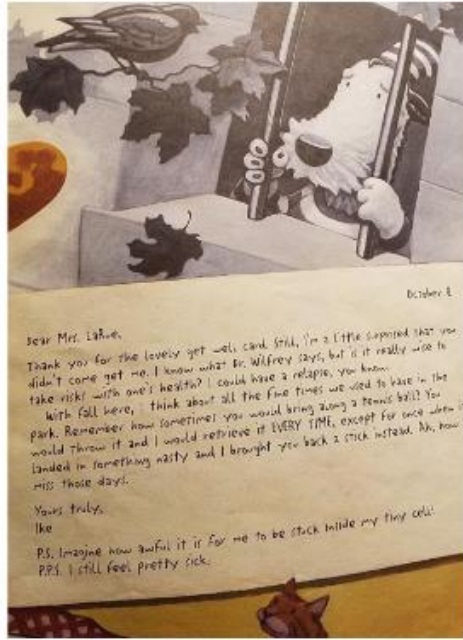
As much as it seems like there was an obvious benefit to the use of picture books in the 11th grade class room, it is important to note that not all students believed that the

picture books provided them with assistance. During the first round of interviews, some students said that picture books were “for babies” or that “11th graders shouldn’t read them because they will not be reading picture books in college.” Also, as the data overview (Table 1) reveals, students like Harold and Wink viewed the picture books as “unhelpful” and “without a purpose.” However, a correlation was evident in the student scores that revealed a true testimony to the value of using the picture books as a tool to help understanding the rhetoric: those that performed well on the picture book assignments generally performed just as well or better with the 11th grade material. The two students who seemed to value the picture books the least based on their responses to the questionnaires, Harold and Wink, also scored the lowest on the Patrick Henry assignment (see Table 1). Those that seemed to value the picture books the most, Henry, Owen, and Clara, scored the highest on the Patrick Henry assignment.

An example of Wink’s (Figures 3 and 4) and Clara’s (Figures 4 and 5) exemplar work is shown to reveal the difference in accuracy between both students’ responses. Wink struggled with understanding the purpose behind using a rhetorical question as a mode of persuasive rhetoric as seen on Figure 3, his *Dear Mrs. LaRue- Letters from Obedience School* worksheet. He said the purpose of asking a rhetoric question was “He isn’t looking for an answer.” Instead of trying to make sense of the desired outcome for using a rhetorical question in terms of the impact on the speaker’s audience, Wink discussed rhetorical questions as if he was simplistically defining the term. The same mistake was made by Wink on his “Speech to the Virginia Convention” worksheet. Wink said the purpose behind using repetition was “he said ‘we must fight’ twice.” His responses were unable to go beyond basic recall of definitions; Wink was unable to

develop an understanding of purpose behind a speaker's use of the rhetoric when reading the picture book or working with the 11th grade texts.

Even though Wink struggled to achieve the higher order thinking required to successfully complete these tasks, Clara was able to begin to develop her understanding of purpose as she worked with the picture book *Dear Mrs. LaRue- Letters from Obedience School*. For example, on her worksheet, Figure 5, she was able to start developing her understanding of the speaker's purpose of using rhetoric when she said, rhetorical questions were used to provide Mrs. LaRue with "an obvious answer" and pathos was used to "make her feel bad for leaving him." She was able to elevate her thinking beyond just a definition of each rhetorical term. Clara expresses clarity in her understanding of the purpose behind the use of persuasive rhetoric when she responded to the "Speech to the Virginia Convention" worksheet. Not only did she identify each passage with the correct mode of rhetoric but she provided specific explanations, as seen on Figure 6, such as "Logos-this is a fact that he wants his audience to think about. He wants it to seem logical that he is looking to the past to make changes to the future," "Repetition- the main purpose of his speech is to motivate his audience to be willing to fight. Repeating the phrases emphasizes his point," and "Pathos- emotional appeal to the audience by telling them that they are not weak." Based on her artifacts, it seems that Clara was easily able to apply her learning from the picture book to the 11th grade text as her responses clearly indicate that she was able to see the relationship between the speaker, audience, and the message embedded within all examples of persuasion regardless of the text's level or complexity.



Persuasive Rhetoric Used	Text Evidence	Purpose
Rhetorical Questions	"...but is it really wise to take risks with one's health?"	He isn't looking for an answer
Pathos	"P.S. Imagine how awful it is for me to be stuck inside my tiny cell!"	Making her feel bad for leaving him

Figure 3. Persuasive Rhetoric Work Sample 1. A sample of Wink's work after reading *Dear Mrs. LaRue- Letters from Obedience School*

"listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts"
Purpose: Allusions, Hes speaking of a thing like a person place or thing like this song.
"Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty?"
Purpose: Rhetorical question, Hes asking a question about the wise of a man which wasnt supposed to be answered.
"I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past."
Purpose: Allusion, He says he has no way to judge by the future but by the past, and that catches the readers attention because thats a cool fact.
"we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight!"
Purpose: Repition, he repeated We must fight twice.
"Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. The millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave."
Purpose: Logos, He started speaking about the many people in this world, and how we go about our days everyday.
"I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"
Purpose: Pathos, He was saying how it gives liberty or give me death and thats pretty

Figure 4. Persuasive Rhetoric Work Sample 2. A sample of Wink's rhetoric work on Patrick Henry's "Speech to the Virginia Convention"



Persuasive Rhetoric Used	Text Evidence	Purpose
pathos	I think about all the fine times we used to have in the park.	He wants Mrs. LaRue to miss him and think about him.
Rhetorical questions	Remember how sometimes you would bring along a tennis ball?	He has this question that has an obvious answer that Mrs. LaRue can answer.

Figure 5. Persuasive Rhetoric Work Sample 3. A sample of Clara's work after reading *Dear Mrs. LaRue- Letter From Obedience School*

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS of "The Speech to the Virginia Convention"

Color Code:
 Yellow= Ethos Blue= Pathos Green= Logos Red= Repetition
 Purple= Rhetorical Question Pink= Parallelism Orange= Allusions

I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past.

Purpose: Logos- This is a fact that he wants his audience to think about. He wants it to seem logical that he is looking to the past to make changes that will impact the future.

we must fight! I repeat it, sir, **we must fight!**

Purpose: Repetition- The main purpose of his speech is to motivate his audience to be willing to fight. Repeating the phrase emphasizes his point.

"Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. The millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave."

Purpose: Pathos- Emotional appeal to the audience by telling them that they are not weak and that they can trust that they will never fight the battles alone. If they fight, they will be considered vigilant, active and brave. <emotional appeal.

"I know not what course others may take; **but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!**"

Purpose: Ethos- Stating his stance and revealing to his audience that he is willing to die for his country if that's what it takes so they should too.
 Parallelism- Parallelism was used to make his audience have this phrase stick in their minds. The balance of the statement makes it clearly share with the audience the extremes that Patrick Henry has in his mind-- it's either liberty or death- no other way.

Figure 6. Persuasive Rhetoric Work Sample 4. A sample of Clara's rhetoric work on Patrick Henry's "Speech to the Virginia Convention"

Those students that were able to take the picture book readings and activities seriously were the ones that were able to build and develop the higher order thinking skills necessary to grasp a complex topic like persuasive rhetoric and apply that knowledge to the 11th grade level texts with ease. Based on their student artifacts and responses to the questionnaire and interviews, it seems that if the students were able to approach the picture books with an open mind and view them as valuable, the picture books had the capability to turn into a tool for success.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Limitations, and Implications

Conclusions

When this study began, I had the goals of determining the impact of picture books when they supplement 11th grade American literature curriculum. I wanted to know how the classroom culture would change, if student learning would be impacted, and whether or not picture books would affect student engagement. The data that was comprised from questionnaires, student artifacts, student talk, observations, and interviews suggests that picture books have a positive impact overall in my classroom in the areas of student engagement and comprehension. Therefore, supplementing 11th grade curriculum with picture books was a successful way to build student background knowledge, increase student engagement, and scaffold challenging 11th grade American literature curriculum.

The implementation of picture books into the American literature curriculum created a change in my classroom climate and culture. Before this study began, my students lacked background knowledge on the Revolutionary era and for the most part looked at reading as a daunting, unexciting task. Even though some students viewed picture books as books just for babies and children, exposure to the picture books in a way that was structured and purposeful allowed most of the students to change their minds and see picture books as valuable in an 11th grade classroom. Picture books allowed my classroom of emerging and reluctant readers to feel at ease when they picked up a book, and they allowed my students to take the time to truly take the time to find pleasure in evaluating both the words and the pictures on the pages. My students were excited and eager to read as well as share their opinions about their reading through

interviews. They valued the texts as tools that can have a positive impact on their understanding of the curriculum, and I truly valued their efforts as they became active participants in their learning.

The picture books were used in two ways to impact student mastery of curriculum. Because most 11th grade students approach the Revolutionary era texts with reluctance and a lack of background knowledge, the picture books were used as an exploratory and investigational tool to help them build schema and activate prior background knowledge. The data revealed that this experience was positive as all students improved their knowledge about the Revolutionary era after reading the picture books. The second way the picture books were used to impact student mastery of curriculum was through their use as a tool and guide to explain persuasive rhetoric and the author's purpose behind its use. Two picture books were used to scaffold the students as they developed their understanding of the elements of persuasive rhetoric so that they could apply that knowledge to the 11th grade texts when they evaluated them for their use of persuasion. The data suggests that the picture books did enhance student understanding of the concepts and evidence revealed many students referring back to their work with the picture books to aid them as they approached the challenging Revolutionary texts.

Interviews provided the most candid reactions from my students regarding the picture book implementation. When the responses to their interview questions were compared with their questionnaire responses, it became evident that though the students like to be read to, this particular experience with picture books was one they preferred to handle on their own; the students would rather read the picture books independently than

be read to through a class read aloud. When the students read independently or with a peer, they were engaged and active readers. They looked at every picture and read every word as reading the picture books did not appear to them as a daunting task. Instead, they wanted to read the picture books and enjoyed the process of turning each and every page on their own accord.

In conclusion, picture books can be a valuable tool that can supplement 11th grade curriculum. Their use can not only build student schema and scaffold the students to bridge their understanding of complex curriculum, but they can be used to impact overall student reading engagement and classroom culture.

Limitations

The limitations of this qualitative study begin with the limitations of my data analysis. Qualitative data is interpretative and conclusions are based on the observations and thematic analysis of the teacher researcher. Therefore, my findings were determined by my own personal belief, understanding, interpretation of the data collected.

My participants represented eight out of the fifteen total students enrolled in my English III class. The lack of student and parent permissions limited the amount of participants which could impact the data. Therefore, my conclusions were established based on a small sample set, and I am unable to determine if their data would be able to represent the opinions and experiences of all 11th grade students in my class, in my high school, or in general.

Though the questionnaire provided valuable information, it could be seen as a limitation because the students selected pre-existing answers instead of responding in an

open-ended format. This could have forced the students to answer in way that does not entirely encompass their true response to each question.

Specific limitations to the conduction of my study were time and student absences. Working in a high school setting that has 45 minute periods per subject causes the participants to read and work under strict time constraints that could impact their productivity. Therefore, most of the research tasks took multiple days to complete. Many of the picture books were read during multiple class periods which could have affected student comprehension as their reading experience was interrupted after 45 minutes. Student absences were also a limitation as three out of my eight participants experienced an absence of one or more days during the research period. Their absences limited their ability to experience all of the essential components of the research study which could have impacted the data collected and produced.

Implications

As Marsha Pincus' (2000) *Circle of Inquiry* explained, qualitative teacher research is a cyclical journey that has no end. Though this study has come to its conclusion, the implication of this study will allow for new questions to form and further research to be conducted. The increase of student engagement and the value my students placed on picture books has opened my eyes to the possibilities picture books can have within my classroom. Picture books made the 11th grade curriculum accessible and engaging which helped not only improve my students' performance but my overall teaching as well. Knowing that reluctant readers can approach a picture book with confidence and that picture books can be valuable tools used to scaffold difficult and

complex material, I aim to see how I can continue to incorporate picture books into my teaching as the possibilities are endless.

This research study shares data that impacts the field of secondary reading education as it provides qualitative data analysis that yields the benefits of incorporating picture books into 11th grade curriculum. The data provided from this research study will be shared professionally with my colleagues so that they can begin to develop new and different ways they can incorporate picture books into their curriculum at any grade level. Together we can continue the cycle of teacher research as we answer questions such as: What happens when picture books supplement curriculum at each grade level for language arts? What implications would arise if content area teachers were to use picture books to supplement part of their curriculum at all grade levels? If picture books are used as part of a school-wide reading initiative, how is the school's overall culture and climate impacted?

In addition to the implications to the field, this research had positive implications on my students beyond their experience within the Revolutionary unit of their 11th grade curriculum. This research study refreshed my students' love of reading which caused them to want to share that passion with their younger counterparts; on their own, my students desired to read picture books to the elementary school students so that they can share their enjoyment of reading picture books with others. Implications of this nature are what make teacher research so valuable.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire



Link to Online Questionnaire

<https://goo.gl/forms/5YhacTTik8qDiIOT2>

When is the last time you read an entire book?

What do you think of when you think of picture books?

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the best), how do you rate how you feel when YOU select a book to read instead of a teacher assigning one to you?

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the best), how do you rate how to feel when your teacher reads to you?

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being best), how do you rate how you feel when you have to read a book on your own?

Do you feel confident reading books aloud?

Would you feel comfortable reading a picture book aloud more than a text from your 11th grade English class?

Do you like books with illustrations?

Do you think illustrations are valuable features of a book?

Would you rather the teacher assign a book to you or would you like to pick one out on your own?

Do you think that picture books could be a valuable resource for 11th grade students to use to help them comprehend other texts they are reading?

What approximately what percentage of the class do you think would enjoy reading picture books in English class?

Appendix B

Observation Chart



Observation Form

Student Pseudonym	Date	Picture Book Title	Observation

Appendix C

Background Information Chart

Picture Books in 11th Grade	Part 1- What do you know?
<p>A. In the box provided, bullet all of the information you know about the Revolutionary Era of literature. Consider historical information, literature, famous writers and documents of that time.</p>	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 50px; width: 100%; margin: 10px 0;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> </div>	
PART 2	
<p>Directions: You will be reading two picture books to gain background information about the Revolutionary Era of literature. Repeat this chart for Picture Book #2.</p>	
Picture Book #1	
Picture Book Title & Author:	
Are you reading this silently/ independently or aloud with a partner(s)? (Who is your partner? & Who is doing more of the reading?)	
Historical Information:	<u>What are people writing about at this time? Literature/Documents/Speeches Mentioned & their purpose:</u>
Famous People to Know:	<u>Other Significant Information about the Revolutionary Era:</u>
Illustrations- What kind of illustrations were present in this text? What could you learn from them?	
* Summarize what you learned about the Revolutionary Era based on the information provided for you in this picture book:	

Appendix D

Interview Script

Title: Supplementing 11th grade American Literature Curriculum with Picture Books
Principal Investigator: Stephanie Abraham



Interview Script for 1st and 2nd round:

Did you select a picture book or were you assigned a picture book to read?

Which picture books did you read?

Do you enjoy the picture book you read? Why or why not?

Can you tell me about the illustrations you observed and how they helped you understand what you read?

What did you learn from the picture books?

How do you think the information you learned from the picture books will help you understand the Revolutionary American literature we are reading in class?

Would call these picture books valuable to your understanding of the Revolutionary American literature we are reading in class? Why or why not?

Interview Script for 3rd round:

How did the picture books you read help you understand the Revolutionary American literature we read in class?

Which picture books helped you the most?

Some of the picture books you read on your own, some with a peer, and some were read to you. Was there a difference your understanding of the picture book because of the way it was presented to you?

Would you recommend your teacher allow next year's student to use these texts to help them understand the Revolutionary American literature we are reading in class? Why or why not?

Appendix E

Mo Willems Activity Excerpt

"Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!" By: Mo Willems

Picture Book Pages	What's the goal of Pigeon's persuasion? What is it trying to get the audience to know/understand/believe/do?
	
	
	
	

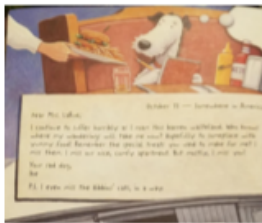
Appendix F

Mark Teague Activity Excerpt

Dear Mrs. LaRue- Letters from Obedience School By: Mark Teague



Persuasive Rhetoric Used	Text Evidence	Purpose



Persuasive Rhetoric Used	Text Evidence	Purpose

Appendix G

Patrick Henry Activity Excerpt

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS of "The Speech to the Virginia Convention"

Color Code:

Yellow= Ethos

Blue= Pathos

Green= Logos

Red= Repetition

Purple= Rhetorical Question

Pink= Parallelism

Orange= Allusions

"No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen if, entertaining as I do opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely and without reserve. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country"

Purpose:

"listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts"

Purpose:

"Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty?"

Purpose:

"I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past."

Purpose:

"we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight!"

Purpose:

"Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath