

Where Are *Their* Voices?

Authors of Color in the Secondary ELA Curriculum

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Introduction

Despite the diversification of the P–12 student population (Krogstad, 2019; Krogstad & Fry, 2014), many schools have continued to implement whitestream curricula (e.g., Chandler & McKnight, 2009; Shear et al., 2015), which emphasize the perspectives and identities of people of European descent. Within secondary English language arts (ELA), concerns about the use of whitestream curricula have fueled numerous studies regarding the authorship of works included in anthologies (Applebee, 1991; Hansen, 2005; Mikkelsen, 2009; Pace, 1992; Rojas, 2010) and on the lists of required full-length titles (e.g., Applebee, 1989; Hoffman, 2007; Stallworth & Gibbons, 2012; Stallworth et al., 2006).

These studies have revealed that although there has been a notable increase in the percentage of titles by authors of color (e.g., Stallworth & Gibbons, 2012; Stallworth et al., 2006), that increase has been inconsistent across genres (e.g., Hansen, 2005; Pace, 1992) as lists of full-length works have continued to privilege titles by authors of European descent (e.g., Hoffman, 2007; Stallworth & Gibbons, 2012).

However, the majority of these studies were conducted more than a decade ago. Little is known about the

authorship of the book-length works included in recently developed ELA curricula. Therefore the study reported here examined the book-length works included in the secondary (Grades 9–12) ELA *Guidebooks 2.0 (GB2)* curriculum, a digital open-education resource that has been endorsed by schools and districts throughout the United States.

Specifically, the study examined the share of full-length works by authors of color, the types of full-length works by authors of color, and the extent to which these works were integrated into the secondary *GB2* curriculum. By doing so, the study sought to illuminate the ways in which the selection and integration of full-length titles in the secondary *GB2* curriculum served to privilege or disprivilege the voices and perspectives of authors of color.

This examination of the *GB2* curriculum is important for at least two reasons. First, the reliance on “pale and stale” (Jogie, 2015) literature has been shown to exacerbate feelings of alienation and disinterest, especially among students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds (Coles, 2013; Hoffman, 2007). Thus students must be afforded opportunities to engage with texts that not only reflect their backgrounds but also support their understanding of a range of perspectives.

Second, studies have revealed that when tasked with selecting and integrating diverse literature, teachers encounter a range of difficulties due to limited time and resources and a lack of knowledge about titles by authors of color (Lillo, 2018; Stallworth et al., 2006; Watkins & Ostenson, 2015). Given these

difficulties, it is crucial that curricula incorporate myriad titles by authors from diverse backgrounds as well as the resources necessary to implement them.

Literature Review

This examination of the *GB2* curriculum builds on existing research, which includes numerous studies of the authorship of full-length works (Applebee, 1989; Hoffman, 2007; Lillo, 2018; Stallworth & Gibbons, 2012; Stallworth et al., 2006).

In one of the first studies of its kind, Applebee (1989) examined reading lists from nearly 500 public, independent, and parochial schools across the United States and found that 98% of all book-length works and 100% of those most frequently assigned were written by White authors. However, works by authors of color, which composed only 2% of the overall sample, were not only fewer in number but also assigned considerably less frequently than those by White authors. To illustrate, Applebee (1989) explained that “in the public-school sample, the highest ranked minority authors were Lorraine Hansberry and Richard Wright, who ranked 42nd and 53rd, respectively” (p. 16).

Though Applebee (1989) identified no works by authors of color among the top 40, research conducted in the current millennium has yielded slightly more favorable results (Hoffman, 2007; Stallworth & Gibbons, 2012; Stallworth et al., 2006). In each of two samples from high schools throughout Alabama, Stallworth and colleagues (2006) found one work by an author of color among the top 20. That work, *A Raisin in the Sun* by

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Lorraine Hansberry, ranked 13th in the first sample, which was collected during 2002–2003, and 10th in the second sample, which was collected a year later. Meanwhile, Hoffman's (2007) 2005–2006 survey of 29 Minnesota schools yielded two top 20 works by authors of color: *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, which placed 14th and 16th, respectively. Similar findings emerged from the studies of Stallworth and Gibbons (2012) and Stotsky et al. (2009), whose samples included at least one top 20 work by an author of color.

Apart from the appearance of authors of color on top 20 lists, subsequent studies have revealed the addition of works by authors from a wider array of racial and ethnic backgrounds. For example, though largely absent from Applebee's (1989) sample, novels by contemporary authors of Latinx and Asian descent have been identified in numerous studies (Lillo, 2018; Stallworth & Gibbons, 2012; Stallworth et al., 2006; Stotsky et al., 2009). Examples of such novels include, but are not limited to, *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan (Stallworth et al., 2006; Stotsky et al., 2009), *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende (Lillo, 2018; Stotsky et al., 2009), and *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (Stallworth & Gibbons, 2012; Stotsky et al., 2009). The addition of such novels reveals that efforts have been made to diversify authorship.

Despite these positive developments, further improvements are necessary, as studies have demonstrated that works by White authors still compose the majority of secondary reading lists. For example, Lillo (2018) surveyed ELA teachers at International Baccalaureate (IB) high schools to identify both book-length works and shorter works (e.g., poems, essays) taught in their courses. The findings revealed that 72% of titles were written by White authors, the majority of whom were from North America or Europe, while only 28% were written by authors of color.

Given IB's goal of cultivating "intercultural understanding, open-mindedness, and the attitudes necessary for [students] to respect and evaluate a range of points of view" (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2021, p. 2), such a low percentage of works by authors of color was unexpected. In addition, that percentage might have been lower if the sample either had been drawn from traditional secondary

programs, which usually lack IB's international focus, or had excluded shorter works, which often feature a greater share of titles by authors of color (e.g., Hansen, 2005; Pace, 1992).

Furthermore, studies have shown that the absence of works by authors of color is even more conspicuous among top-ranking titles. Numerous studies in which frequency counts were reported showed that book-length works by White authors accounted for 90%–95% of the top 20; 90%–100% of the top 10; and 100% of the top 5 (Hoffman, 2007; Stallworth & Gibbons, 2012; Stallworth et al., 2006; Stotsky et al., 2009; see Table 1). To this point, Stallworth and Gibbons (2012) explained that

the total number of titles mentioned is much higher and reflects greater diversity in terms of multicultural, young adult, and contemporary literature; *The House on Mango Street*, *The Giver*, and *The Secret*

Life of Bees were mentioned several times across different grade levels. However, the top five titles represent traditional stability. (p. 3)

Therefore, even though works by authors of color routinely place within the top 20, the 5 most coveted spots have remained the exclusive territory of "pale and stale" (Jogie, 2015) authors, such as Shakespeare, Fitzgerald, and Hawthorne (Hoffman, 2007; Stallworth et al., 2006; Stotsky et al., 2009; see Table 1).

Finally, just as studies have identified disparities in representation between White authors and authors of color, they have revealed similar disparities among authors of color from various racial and ethnic groups (Lillo, 2018; Rojas, 2010; Skerrett, 2010). This concern is illustrated, though not explicitly stated, by Stotsky et al. (2009) in their study of the full-length titles used in more than 700 secondary ELA courses throughout Arkansas.

Table 1
Top-Ranked Book-Length Works

Source	Titles
Applebee (1989), public	1. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> 2. <i>Macbeth</i> 3. <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> 4. <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> 5. <i>The Tragedy of Julius Caesar</i>
Stallworth et al. (2006) Sample 1	1. <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> 2. <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> 3. <i>The Great Gatsby</i> 4. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> 5. <i>The Tragedy of Julius Caesar</i>
Sample 2	1. <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> 2. <i>The Great Gatsby</i> 3. <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> 4. <i>The Tragedy of Julius Caesar</i> 5. <i>The Crucible</i>
Hoffman (2007)	1. <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> 2. <i>The Great Gatsby</i> 3. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> 4. <i>Of Mice and Men</i> 5. <i>The Crucible</i>
Stotsky et al. (2009)	1. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> 2. <i>The Tragedy of Julius Caesar</i> 3. <i>The Crucible</i> 4. <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> 5. <i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Stallworth and Gibbons (2012)	1. <i>The Great Gatsby</i> 2. <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> 3. <i>The Crucible / The Odyssey</i> 4. <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> 5. <i>Night</i>

The findings indicated that the most frequently assigned work by a White author, *Romeo and Juliet*, was cited a total of 204 times, whereas that of an African American author, *A Raisin in the Sun*, was cited only 41 times. Works by authors from other demographics fared even worse, as the highest-ranked works by Asian and Latinx authors were cited a combined total of only 17 times. A similar pattern of representation was noted in several other studies (Lillo, 2018; Skerrett, 2010; Stallworth et al., 2006).

Thus findings from existing studies indicate that although there have been positive changes in authorial representation in recent decades, further steps are necessary to ensure the adequate and equitable representation of authors from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. However, as the majority of such studies were conducted a decade ago, additional research is needed to examine the authorship of the full-length titles in recent ELA curricula.

To begin to address this gap, the present study examined how the voices and perspectives of authors of color were privileged and/or disprivileged through the selection and integration of full-length works in the secondary *GB2* curriculum. To this end, the study sought answers to the following questions:

- (a) What share of the full-length works were written by authors of color?
- (b) What types of full-length works were included in the curriculum?
- (c) To what extent were full-length works by authors of color integrated into the curriculum?

Conceptual Framework

To situate the secondary *GB2* curriculum within the larger discourse of race and racism, this examination drew on critical race theory (CRT; e.g., Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Taylor, 2009), which emerged from critical legal scholarship after the civil rights movement. CRT consists of at least five tenets that are useful for examining and illuminating race-based oppression. Together, these tenets acknowledge the ubiquitous, yet invisible, nature of racism and advocate the use of counternarratives and historical context as tools for exposing and countering race-based oppression (Taylor, 2009). The tenets of CRT also recognize that

efforts to disrupt racism generally fail in the absence of *interest convergence*, a concept that denotes the tendency of Whites to support antiracist efforts only when those efforts are mutually beneficial (Bell, 2009).

Since its inception, CRT has been adopted by scholars in myriad fields, including education. Critical race scholars in education acknowledge the salience of race and the deleterious effects of racism on students of color and strive to promote equity by valuing the experiences of students of color and by challenging seemingly “objective” concepts, such as merit and colorblindness (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

Therefore CRT in education exists as “a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant positions in and out of the classroom” (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 25).

As such, education scholars have used CRT as a framework for examining a wide array of phenomena, including teachers’ beliefs about race and racism (e.g., author, 2017; Ullucci & Battey, 2011; Young, 2011) and their interactions with students of color (e.g., Allen, 2013).

In subfields pertinent to the selection of literature, such as ELA and library science, CRT has been used to frame investigations of the representation of characters of color in graphic novels (Moeller & Becnel, 2018), reading intervention textbooks (Thomas & Dyches, 2019), and elementary readers (e.g., Alexander, 2019).

CRT is well suited to the present study because it helps to expose the supremacist nature of whitestream curricula and to explain the failure of U.S. schools to provide a more culturally relevant, sustaining, and affirming

curriculum for today’s increasingly diverse student population (Krogstad, 2019; Krogstad & Fry, 2014).

Method

Data Source

The data for this study were taken from the *GB2* curriculum for secondary (Grades 9–12) ELA, which was developed by a team of educators under the supervision of the Louisiana Department of Education. Though the *GB2* curriculum was designed for the Louisiana public schools, its availability as an open resource has facilitated its widespread use by educators throughout the country.

For example, an internet search conducted in December 2020 revealed that the ELA curriculum had been endorsed by at least six state boards of education as well as countless districts and schools. At that same time, a search of the popular website Teachers Pay Teachers yielded an inventory of 446 teacher-made products designed for implementation with the *GB2* curriculum. These findings are emblematic of the popularity and online presence of *GB2*.

The present study, which composes part of a larger investigation of the *GB2* curriculum, centered on the full-length works included in the secondary ELA curriculum. Comprising 14 units, the secondary ELA curriculum provides a total of 568 days of instruction across the four grades (see Table 2). A scripted lesson plan and the materials (i.e., slides, worksheets) needed to implement the lesson are provided for each day of instruction.

Each unit is organized around an *anchor text*, which serves as the primary reading for that unit. Numerous *supporting works*, which represent a

Table 2
Guidebooks Units for Secondary ELA

Grade	No. units	Unit titles	Days of instruction
9	4	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , <i>Fahrenheit 451</i> , <i>The Odyssey</i> , and <i>Hope, Despair, and Memory</i>	163
10	4	<i>The Metamorphosis</i> , <i>Macbeth</i> , <i>Henrietta's Dance</i> , and <i>Rhetoric</i>	162
11	4	<i>The American Dream</i> , <i>Our Town</i> , <i>A Connecticut Yankee</i> , and <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	166
12	2	<i>Politics</i> and <i>Hamlet</i>	77

variety of genres (e.g., fiction, drama), are also integrated into each unit. The supporting works are intended to enhance students' understanding of the themes and concepts featured in the unit's anchor text.

I became acquainted with the secondary *GB2* curriculum while serving as a teacher educator at a midsized, predominantly White university in the Southeast. At that time, the curriculum was being piloted at the high school in which my secondary teacher candidates were completing a 40-hour practicum. After several candidates expressed concerns about poorly worded objectives (e.g., "read a chapter") and an overreliance on worksheets, I decided to review the curriculum.

As a teacher educator whose scholarship centers on preparing candidates to work with diverse student populations, I was immediately struck by the overreliance on whitestream content. This concern prompted me to begin an in-depth investigation of the *GB2* curriculum, a portion of which is addressed in this manuscript.

Data Collection and Analysis

Content analysis served as the analytical method for this qualitative study. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), *qualitative content analysis* is "the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (p. 1278). To plan and carry out this study, I drafted research questions, selected an appropriate sampling method, and created a coding scheme (White & Marsh, 2006).

Additionally, as the study sought to illuminate the ways in which the selection and use of full-length works privileged or disprivileged titles by authors of color, I selected a framework that was critical in nature and therefore could be used to unveil issues of power within the data (Hoffman et al., 2011). Coding and other aspects of the methodology, including data collection and analysis, are further addressed throughout the remainder of this section.

The first phase of data collection was conducted on unit-by-unit basis over a period of approximately 1 year. For each unit, I read the scripted lesson plans and materials to identify the titles utilized for instructional purposes. Drawing on

information in the lesson plans and materials, I noted the author, genre, and function (i.e., anchor, supporting) of each title.

Next, I consulted reputable sources (e.g., encyclopedias, biographies) to identify the publication dates and to collect information regarding author demographics (i.e., race, gender, origin). After entering the data into SPSS for subsequent analysis, I began coding the data (see Table 3). I used schemes from prior research as a starting point and added new codes as needed; for example, I added *mixed authorship* to denote works coauthored by a man and a woman.

In the second phase of data collection, I read through the lesson plans and materials once again, to determine the amount of instructional time allotted to each title. Using the time frames specified in the lesson plans and materials, I recorded one-tenth (.10) of a class period for each 5-minute interval a text was used. For example, if a lesson plan indicated that a text should be used for 15 minutes, I recorded a time of .30, the equivalent of one-third of a standard class period. If two texts were used simultaneously, I divided the time between the texts.

At the culmination of each unit, I added the times to determine the total number of instructional days allocated to each title in that unit. For example, if a text was used for 15 minutes in each of four lessons, I recorded a total of 1.2, thus indicating that the text was utilized for the equivalent of 1.2 instructional days. As a last step in Phase 2, I entered the instructional times into SPSS.

For the present study, I extracted data pertaining to book-length works, including novels, novellas, plays, long poems, and nonfiction books. Then, I

reviewed the list carefully to identify titles that appeared on the list more than once because they were included in two or more units.

I found seven duplicate titles, and after collapsing each set of duplicates into a single entry, I utilized SPSS to rank order the titles based on the instructional time devoted to each and to perform descriptive analyses related to the characteristics of the authors and the classification (i.e., genre, function) and use (e.g., time, proportion) of the texts. In the following section, I present findings concerning the authorship of the full-length works, the types of full-length works, and the extent to which the full-length works were integrated into *GB2*.

Findings

Author Demographics and Types of Texts

The *GB2* curriculum for secondary ELA featured a total of 157 instructional texts, including 29 distinct book-length titles (e.g., novels, full-length plays). Analysis of *demographic* data revealed that 27 of the 29 titles (93.1%) were written by White authors from the United States and Europe.

By contrast, only two titles (6.9%) were written by authors of color, including one (3.4%) by African American author and abolitionist Frederick Douglass and another (3.4%) by N. Scott Momaday, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Native American descent. The titles by these authors included Douglass's autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, and Momaday's folkloric novel *The Way to Rainy Mountain*.

Therefore the *GB2* curriculum for 9–12 ELA not only contained a dearth

Table 3
Coding of Authors and Texts

	Codes
Author race	AfAm/Blk, Asian/PI, Hisp/Latinx, Multi, NativeAm, Unknown, White/NH
Author gender	Female, Male, MixedAuth, Nonbinary, Unknown
Author origin	Africa, Asia/PI, Aus/NZ, Europe, LatAm, MidEast, US&Can, Unknown
Text genre	Drama, Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry
Text function	Anchor, Supporting

of full-length works by authors of color but also failed to incorporate works by women of color and by authors of Latinx and Asian descent (see Table 4).

Apart from author demographics, I also examined the *genres* represented by the various book-length works. Among the 29 titles were 8 plays (27.6%), 7 novels (24.1%), 2 book-length poems (6.9%), and 12 nonfiction books (41.4%). White authors were well represented in all four major genres (see Table 5), as they accounted for 100% of the plays and book-length poems, 92.0% of the nonfiction books, and 85.7% of the novels in the secondary curriculum.

Authors of color, however, were excluded from two of the four genres and only minimally represented in the other two. As such, titles by authors of color consisted of one novel (3.4%), *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, and one nonfiction work (3.4%), *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, but no plays or book-length poems. Thus, unlike White authors, who were well represented across genres, authors of color were either excluded from or poorly represented in each of the four major genres.

In addition to genre, the titles were classified as anchor texts or supporting works, based on their designated *function*

within the curriculum. Each anchor text served as the focal reading for one of the units, while the supporting works served to deepen students' understanding of the concepts and skills addressed in the anchor texts. Among the 29 full-length works, 10 (34.5%) were designated as anchor texts and 19 (64.5%) as supporting works.

The anchor texts were overwhelmingly homogenous in terms of race, gender, and origin, as all 10 were written by White men from the United States and Europe. However, both titles by authors of color, as well as those by women and mixed-gender pairs, were designated as supporting works (see Table 6). Therefore, whereas full-length works by authors of color accounted for 0% of the anchor texts, they composed 10.5% of the supporting works.

Integration of Full-Length Titles

To measure the extent to which the full-length works were integrated into the curriculum, I calculated the amount of instructional *time* devoted to each title and sorted the list of titles from most utilized to least utilized. Together, the 29 titles provided a total of 245.1 instructional days, with a mean of 8.45 and a median of 5.68.

The most-utilized title, which accounted for 28.0 instructional days, was Homer's *Odyssey*, whereas the least-utilized title, which was allotted only a half-day of instruction, was *The Way to Rainy Mountain*—one of the two works by an author of color (see Table 7).

Given that Douglass's autobiography was allotted 4 instructional days, the combined total for both titles by authors of color was just 4.5 days. This figure, which fell below the mean and median numbers, accounted for only 1.8% of the time allotted to the study of full-length works. Thus the GB2 curriculum not only included few titles by authors of color but also devoted little instructional time to those that were included.

The lack of attention given to titles by authors of color was also apparent in the *ranking* of the various full-length works. As with the anchor texts, all of the 10 most-utilized titles were authored by White men from the United States and Europe (see Table 8). Therefore no authors of color were represented among the top 10 titles, and the top 20 titles included only one title by an author of color, *Narrative of the Life of*

Table 4
Authorial Representation by Demographic Characteristics

	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Race		
White	27	91.1
African America	1	3.4
Hispanic/Latinx	0	0.0
Asian/Pacific	0	0.0
Native American	1	3.4
Other races	0	0.0
Origin		
North America	15	51.7
Europe	13	44.8
Latin America	0	0.0
Asia/Pacific	0	0.0
Africa	0	0.0
Unknown	1	3.4
Gender		
Men	25	86.2
Women	2	6.9
Nonbinary	0	0.0
Mixed	2	6.9
None	0	0.0
Unknown	0	0.0

Table 5
Full-Length Works by Genre

	<i>Genre, n (%)</i>			
<i>Race</i>	<i>Novel</i>	<i>Play</i>	<i>Poem</i>	<i>Nonfiction</i>
White	6 (20.7)	8 (27.6)	2 (6.9)	11 (38.0)
African Am.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.4)
Latinx	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Asian	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Native Am.	1 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Other races	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Totals	7 (24.1)	8 (27.6)	2 (6.9)	12 (41.4)

Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, which placed 16th. The only other title by an author of color, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, ranked last on the list of the 29 full-length works. As such, titles by authors of color accounted for 0% of the top 5 and top 10 works and for only 5% of the top 20 works.

The rankings of the full-length works also revealed that the names of certain White male authors appeared two or more times among top 10 and top 20 most-utilized titles. Among the top 10 titles were three plays by Shakespeare, including *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, which accounted for a total of 61.75 instructional days, or approximately one-quarter of the instructional time devoted to all 29 full-length works.

The list also featured two plays by Sophocles, *Antigone* and *Oedipus Rex*, which ranked 14th and 21st, respectively, and were allotted a total of 7.5 days of instruction (see Table 9). By contrast, the most-represented author of color, Frederick Douglass, appeared only once among the 29 titles and accounted for only 4.0 (1.6%) of the 245.1 days devoted to the study of full-length works.

Apart from the time and rankings of the titles, the extent of integration was also revealed by the *proportion* of each text that was utilized in the curriculum. The results indicated that the top 11 titles (see Table 9), all of which were written by White men from the United States and Europe, were utilized in their entirety. However, only select portions of the remaining titles were utilized, including one chapter of Douglass's autobiography and a brief excerpt from Momaday's novel.

Yet, while many of the excerpted works were also written by White authors, they were afforded more time than comparable portions of works by authors of color. For example, a chapter of *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair was utilized more than 50% longer than the chapter from Douglass's autobiography, and the excerpt from *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw was utilized four times as long as that from Momaday's novel. These results demonstrate that the extent of integration varied in terms of the proportion of the text addressed in the curriculum and the amount of time allotted to it.

Finally, the extent of integration was also illustrated by the *frequency*

with which the various texts were used. The results revealed that two titles, including Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville, appeared in two or more units and grade levels. As such, the nine instructional days allotted to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* resulted from the sum of three separate readings, including "Pyramus and Thisbe," which was read in 9th grade, and "The Transformation of Arachne" and "Icarus and Daedalus," which were read during 10th grade. Similarly, excerpts from Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* were utilized on four different occasions in the 11th and 12th grades. Yet, despite the repetition of these two titles, both titles by authors of color were limited to only one unit and grade level.

In summary, the results reveal that the GB2 curriculum included mere excerpts of just two book-length titles by authors of color. As both of these titles were designated as supporting works and utilized quite sparingly within their respective units, neither placed among the top 10, and only one placed among the top 20 titles.

By contrast, titles by White authors accounted for the majority of the full-length works, including 100% of the anchor texts and top 10 titles. They also accounted for all of the plays and poems and the majority of the novels and nonfiction. Therefore White authors were not only better represented than authors of color but their titles were also utilized more frequently, more thoroughly, and for a

Table 6
Authorship of Anchor Texts in 9–12 ELA

Anchor text	Genre	Author	Race	Gender	Origin
<i>The Odyssey</i>	Poem	Homer	White	Male	Europe
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Play	Shakespeare	White	Male	Europe
<i>Hamlet</i>	Play	Shakespeare	White	Male	Europe
<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	Novel	Bradbury	White	Male	U.S.
<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	Novel	Hawthorne	White	Male	U.S.
<i>Macbeth</i>	Play	Shakespeare	White	Male	Europe
<i>A Connecticut Yankee</i>	Novel	Twain	White	Male	U.S.
<i>The Metamorphosis</i>	Novella	Kafka	White	Male	Europe
<i>Our Town</i>	Play	Wilder	White	Male	U.S.
<i>The American Dream</i>	Non-fiction	Cullen	White	Male	U.S.

Table 7
Time Allotted to the Top 20 Titles

Rank	Title	Time (days)
1	<i>The Odyssey</i>	28.0
2	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	24.5
3	<i>Hamlet</i>	19.75
4	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	19.25
5	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	18.05
6	<i>Macbeth</i>	17.5
7	<i>A Connecticut Yankee</i>	14.5
8	<i>The Metamorphosis</i>	14.45
9	<i>Our Town</i>	14.30
10	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	13.25
11	<i>The American Dream</i>	9.0
12	<i>Metamorphoses</i>	9.0
13	<i>The Jungle</i>	6.63
14	<i>Antigone</i>	5.75
15	<i>Democracy in America</i>	5.68
16	<i>Narrative of Frederick Douglass</i>	4.0
17	<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>	3.25
18	<i>The Professor and the Madman</i>	2.7
19	<i>Pygmalion</i>	2.10
20	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern</i>	2.0

greater number of days than those by authors of color.

Discussion

The findings from this study suggest that the voices and perspectives of authors of color were disprivileged through decisions surrounding the selection and integration of the full-length works. Such decisions resulted in (a) the limited representation and exclusion of authors of color and (b) the marginalization and minimization of titles by authors of color. In this section, I discuss these key findings in relation to insights from previous research and from CRT.

Limited Representation and Exclusion of Authors of Color

The limited representation of authors of color was readily apparent in the delineation of texts by genre and in the overall percentage (6.9%) of full-length works, which seemed to resemble that of early research on the authorship of secondary reading lists. Specifically, the percentage of full-length works by authors of color in *GB2* was only 4.9% greater than that of Applebee's (1989, 1992) sample, which was collected more than 30 years ago, and nearly 20% lower than Lillo's sample, which was drawn from IB schools in 2018.

However, as none of the other studies from the current millennium reported the percentage of titles by

authors of color (e.g., Hoffman, 2007; Stallworth & Gibbons, 2006), there are no other comparisons for this measure. Based on the information available, the authorship of *GB2* appears to be far less diverse than that of IB programs, yet slightly more diverse than that of decades-old reading lists.

Additionally, as there was only one title by an African American author and one title by a Native American author, the *GB2* curriculum failed to adequately represent authors from a wide array of racial and ethnic backgrounds. Unlike previously examined reading lists, which included numerous titles by authors of Latinx or Asian descent and by women of color, the *GB2* curriculum included no titles by authors from these demographics (e.g., Stallworth & Gibbons, 2012; Stallworth et al., 2006; Stotsky et al., 2009).

And although the previously examined reading lists failed to provide equitable representation across demographics, they still offered greater representation of racial and ethnic diversity than the *GB2* curriculum. As such, the findings of this study suggest that selections made by the developers of *GB2* resulted not only in a limited representation of authors of color but also in the exclusion of authors from several historically marginalized groups.

Findings concerning the exclusion or limited representation of authors from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds are extremely troubling, particularly in light of changes in the school-aged population. According to the Pew Research Center (Krogstad & Fry, 2014), the percentage of White students in U.S. public schools fell below 50% in 2014.

However, more than 90% of the full-length works in the secondary *GB2* curriculum were written by White authors. Furthermore, the Pew Research Center reported that the demographic changes in the student population were attributed first to higher birthrates in existing Latinx and Asian communities and second to the influx of families from Latin America and Asia. Given these changes, the exclusion of authors of Latinx and Asian descent seems especially egregious.

Owing to the transformation of the school-aged population, as well as the benefits of cross-cultural education, scholars have long decried the lack of curricular diversity in secondary ELA and urged teachers to incorporate texts

Table 8
Authorship of the Top 20 Titles

Rank	Title	Race/gender
1	<i>The Odyssey</i>	White/male
2	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	White/male
3	<i>Hamlet</i>	White/male
4	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i>	White/male
5	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	White/male
6	<i>Macbeth</i>	White/male
7	<i>A Connecticut Yankee</i>	White/male
8	<i>The Metamorphosis</i>	White/male
9	<i>Our Town</i>	White/male
10	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	White/male
11	<i>The American Dream</i>	White/male
12	<i>The Metamorphoses</i>	White/male
13	<i>The Jungle</i>	White/male
14	<i>Antigone</i>	White/male
15	<i>Democracy in America</i>	White/male
16	<i>Narrative of Frederick Douglass</i>	Bl/AfAm/male
17	<i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i>	White/female
18	<i>The Professor and the Madman</i>	White/male
19	<i>Pygmalion</i>	White/male
20	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern</i>	White/male

Table 9
Rankings and Instructional Times by Author

Rank	Author name	Total no. titles	Total time (days)
1	Shakespeare	3	61.75
2	Homer	1	28.00
3	Bradbury	1	19.25
4	Hawthorne	1	18.05
5	Twain	1	14.5
6	Kafka	1	14.45
7	Wilder	1	14.3
8	Fitzgerald	1	13.25
9	Cullen	1	9.0
10	Ovid	1	9.0
11	Sophocles	2	7.5

that reflect the identities and cultures of the students they serve. Jogie (2015) explained that “providing additional options—in the form of contemporary and culturally diverse texts—may provoke deeper and more meaningful discussions, which students might engage with more as they relate closely to their world and identity” (p. 295).

Thus ELA teachers who wish to engage, affirm, and connect with learners, including those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, must transform curricula, such as *GB2*, that depend heavily on the whitestream literary canon (Coles, 2013; Hoffman, 2007; Jogie, 2015).

Although *GB2* should be far more diverse than the reading lists developed at the start of the 21st century, findings regarding the limited representation and exclusion of authors of color are not surprising. Studies of factors affecting the text selection process revealed that although teachers want to provide more diverse curricula for their students, they feel daunted by a plethora of obstacles.

Oft-cited obstacles include, but are not limited to, a lack of familiarity with works by authors of color, limited access to curricular resources, and a lack of time to explore alternatives to the whitestream canon (Lillo, 2018; Stallworth et al., 2006; Watkins & Ostenson, 2015). Teachers in more conservative areas also cite concerns about the reactions from parents and administrators (Lillo, 2018; Stallworth et al., 2006; Watkins & Ostenson, 2015). Given that the *GB2* curriculum was developed by teachers for implementation across the conservative state of Louisiana, it is likely that the selection process was impacted by these factors.

Nonetheless, CRT points to other explanations for the limitation and exclusion of authors of color. First, although racism is a pervasive part of the cultural landscape, it often goes unnoticed by Whites, who are not directly impacted by it (Taylor, 2009). Given that the U.S. teaching force is overwhelmingly White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), it is likely that the teachers who developed *GB2* were oblivious to the supremacist nature of their selections.

Second, research has shown that many teachers espouse seemingly objective concepts, such as colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2013; Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). Thus many of the

developers of *GB2* would have been unwilling to consider race as a criterion in the text selection process.

Third, as Bell’s (2009) work on interest convergence has shown, the needs of people of color often remain unmet until they converge with the interests of Whites. As such, the selection of works in *GB2* may reflect the interests of the teachers who developed it and the consultants hired to guide the curriculum development process.

Marginalization and Minimization of Titles by Authors of Color

Just as decisions about text selection resulted in the limitation and exclusion of authors of color, decisions about text integration led to the marginalization and minimization of titles by authors of color. The marginalization of the titles by Douglass and Momaday was readily apparent in the classification of the anchor texts and supporting works.

Given that the anchor texts served as the primary resources for the units, while the supporting works served to build students’ understanding of the anchor texts, the decision to classify both titles as supporting works appeared to subordinate them to the works of the “pale and stale” (Jogie, 2015) authors who dominated the list of anchor texts. This seemingly subordinate positioning of Douglass’s and Momaday’s works appeared to push them to the margins of the *GB2* curriculum.

The marginal status of these titles was further illustrated by the rank ordering of the 29 full-length titles. Because these titles were used sparingly compared to titles by White authors, neither appeared among the top 10, and only one made the top 20. As with the percentage of texts by authors of color, this finding also reveals that *GB2* offers a slight improvement over the lists examined by Applebee (e.g., Applebee, 1989, 1992), which included no top 20 titles by authors of color.

However, *GB2* appears to provide no advantage over the reading lists examined between 2006 and 2018 (e.g., Hoffman, 2007; Stallworth & Gibbons, 2012; Stallworth et al., 2006), all of which included one or more top 20 titles by an author of color. In this way, the present study corroborated the findings of other 21st-century studies pertaining to the selection of full-length works used in secondary ELA classrooms.

However, whereas other 21st-century studies have centered primarily on the selection of full-length works, the present study also examined the extent to which the full-length works were integrated into the curriculum. Findings concerning the integration of full-length works indicate that titles by authors of color were afforded less instructional time and were used less frequently and less thoroughly than titles by White authors.

These findings suggest that the titles by authors of color were not only limited in number but also minimized in at least three other ways, including the amount of instructional time allotted to each, the proportion of each included in the curriculum, and the frequency with which each was utilized. By minimizing these titles in multiple, overlapping ways, the developers of *GB2* limited the use of these titles and cemented their peripheral status within the curriculum, which, in turn, reinforced the dominant position of the whitestream literary canon.

Conclusion

This study investigated the ways in which the selection and use of book-length works in the secondary *GB2* curriculum served to privilege or disprivilege the voices and perspectives of authors of color. In particular, the study examined the authorship of the full-length works, the types of works included, and the extent to which the works were integrated into the curriculum.

The findings reveal that the representation of authors of color was quite limited and that authors from certain racial and ethnic groups were excluded altogether. The findings also show that the two titles by authors of color were marginalized and minimized in a plethora of ways. Given these findings, it appears that the voices and perspectives of authors of color were disprivileged through both the selection of full-length works and the integration of those works into the *GB2* curriculum.

These findings illuminate important concerns about the development of the *GB2* curriculum. As research has illustrated the difficulties that teachers face when tasked with integrating literature by authors of color, it seems unwise to hire teachers to develop an ELA curriculum for a state with a high percentage of students of color and an enduring legacy of racial injustice. But

if teachers must serve as curriculum developers, the individuals responsible for hiring them must give preference to those with a demonstrated commitment to racial justice and extensive content knowledge, including knowledge of literature by and about people of color. Otherwise, the curricula they develop will privilege the literary accomplishments of whitestream authors, such as Shakespeare, Fitzgerald, and Hawthorne, while marginalizing and excluding those of authors of color.

Additionally, practicing ELA teachers and candidates in English education programs must be afforded opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for valuing, selecting, and implementing literature by and about people of color. Such opportunities may consist of workshops, university courses, and practical experiences that address the deleterious effects of the whitestream canon, alternatives to “pale and stale” literature, and strategies for addressing stakeholder concerns.

Without opportunities like these, teachers will continue to struggle with the selection and implementation of texts by and about people of color and to privilege the whitestream literary canon, while silencing the voices and perspectives of authors of color.

Given the dire consequences for students from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, it is critical that P-12 schools and colleges of education work more diligently to change the status quo as it relates to ELA curricula.

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