A FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF *PERSPECTIVES FOR A DIVERSE AMERICA*

Final Report

2013-2014

Submitted by:

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Executive Summary

Background: Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, developed *Perspectives for A Diverse America* in response to demands for a comprehensive anti-bias curriculum. *Perspectives* focuses on literacy instruction, offering a web-based anthology of texts, strategies and tasks for K-12 teachers. The curriculum became available online in 2013.

Purpose of Evaluation: This evaluation was initiated in response to Teaching Tolerance's need to document curricular impact as well as to map pathways for program improvement. Under the direction of Dr. Kate Shuster, Shuster Consulting, Inc. was contracted to manage a formative evaluation of *Perspectives for a Diverse America*. This report represents the culmination of a pilot program and evaluation of *Perspectives* that took place in the 2013-2014 school year. A five-phase study was designed to answer the following evaluation questions:

1. *Did the scope and nature of the Perspectives curriculum meet teachers' needs?*
2. *Did Perspectives improve teacher capacity in implementing the Common Core State Standards and the goals of anti-bias education?*
3. *What effects of using Perspectives did teachers see in their classrooms?*
4. *How did findings relate to the research informing the Perspectives design?*

The evaluation included the development of a teacher intake survey, grade and phase-specific implementation logs, an exit survey and protocols for classroom observations, focus groups and interviews. As the primary purpose of the evaluation was to refine program materials and processes for ease of teacher use and classroom fit, all measures were teacher facing.

Setting and Study Sample: Eighty-one teachers in 37 schools across five sites (Alabama, Idaho, Illinois, New Mexico and Wisconsin) enrolled in the pilot study. The pilot classrooms were extremely diverse. Teachers with no experience and teachers with more than 20 years on the job piloted *Perspectives* across all grades in urban and suburban settings that included dual-language, special education and gifted classrooms.

Data Collection and Analysis: Qualitative and quantitative data were collected at multiple points. Descriptive analysis was the major method used to report findings.

Findings: Findings are discussed in relation to each evaluation question.

Did the scope and nature of the Perspectives materials meet teachers' needs?

The *Perspectives* materials met teachers' instructional needs across grade levels, teacher experience and diverse classrooms. The overwhelming majority of teachers discovered

challenging texts that exposed students to new points of view, introduced important and relevant issues, promoted student engagement and encouraged social and emotional learning. The Integrated Learning Plan structure helped teachers structure their instruction to match the literacy shifts of the Common Core while working toward a culminating project. Key findings included:

- Almost all (99 percent) teachers agreed that the texts they chose allowed them to introduce important topics into conversations with their students.
- Almost all (97 percent) teachers agreed that *Perspectives* strategies engaged their students.
- Almost all (95 percent) teachers agreed that *Perspectives* strategies helped students build reading comprehension skills.

Perspectives' strategies and tasks were grade-appropriate, challenging and useful. Teachers found a sufficient array of strategies and favorably cited the accompanying rubrics and guides. The curriculum met teachers' needs for challenging texts, vocabulary instruction, oral language development and challenging writing assignments. In addition, teacher reactions to the "Do Something" phase show that those tasks met teachers' needs for meaningful culminating projects.

Did Perspectives improve teacher capacity in implementing the Common Core State Standards and the goals of anti-bias education?

This study shows that *Perspectives* has the potential to significantly improve teacher capacity in implementing the Common Core. Across the more than 200 implementation logs aggregating responses to all strategies, 97 percent of teachers said the strategies helped their students make progress toward mastery of the CCSS. Almost all (90 percent) teachers said the strategies helped them to understand and apply the CCSS. *Perspectives* is very promising for encouraging the wider adoption of high-quality anti-bias education. Pilot teachers reported that the curriculum allowed them to have new and meaningful discussions about identity, diversity, justice and action in their classrooms. The curriculum made teachers feel comfortable and confident discussing issues relevant to their students' lives and communities, even when those issues were controversial. Teacher experiences with *Perspectives* were so meaningful that many encouraged others in their building or professional networks to use the curriculum.

What effects of using Perspectives did teachers see in their classrooms?

Perspectives teachers reported substantial classroom effects in five major areas: literacy development, student engagement, empathy, classroom culture and student behavior. Teachers universally said that *Perspectives* curriculum built students' literacy skills in all of the dimensions measured. The evaluation found that teachers were pleased with students' high levels of engagement with *Perspectives*. This engagement contributed to productive discussions and student enthusiasm for subject material and culminating tasks. Key findings included:

- Almost all (97 percent) teachers said *Perspectives* texts engaged their students.
- Almost all (98 percent) teachers said that *Perspectives* texts helped make classroom discussions more productive.
- Almost all (97 percent) teachers said the culminating task brought their students closer together.

One of the major theories underlying *Perspectives* is the idea that texts can generate empathy in readers, building understanding and awareness of diverse experiences. Pilot teachers observed this phenomenon in their classrooms across grade levels and subject material, whether they were in diverse or relatively homogenous classrooms. Teachers across the country reported that the curriculum helped them to build classroom community and engaged students with their communities in new ways. Teachers saw connections between *Perspectives* and effects such as reduced conflict between students and increased tolerance of differences.

How did findings relate to the research informing the Perspectives design?

Even though this was a limited study, its findings show strong connections between academic research and the *Perspectives* curriculum. Specifically, support was found for the following three key concepts:

- Complex and relevant texts can increase student engagement.
- Appropriate text selection can reduce prejudice by creating empathy.
- Appropriate curricular design can promote collective action.

This evaluation shows that exposure to the *Perspectives* texts created motivated learners. This is in line with research demonstrating that text selection matters tremendously for academic, social and emotional outcomes. This evaluation also suggests that *Perspectives'* central texts, instructional strategies and assessment tasks can induce feelings of empathy in students. Longitudinal use of *Perspectives* materials (which include attention to the justice and action elements of the curricular sequence) may help educators see real results in improved school and community climates. Finally, *Perspectives* shows promise for promoting an integrated instructional approach that moves teaching and learning from prejudice reduction to collective action.

About Perspectives for a Diverse America

Perspectives for A Diverse America is a K-12 literacy-based anti-bias curriculum that provides a free online anthology of hundreds of diverse texts that are meaningful to students, promote anti-bias education and are consistent with the Common Core's approach to text complexity.

Perspectives is an initiative of Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The SPLC is a nonprofit civil rights organization dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of society. Founded by civil rights lawyers Morris Dees and Joseph Levin Jr. in 1971, the SPLC is internationally known for tracking and exposing the activities of hate groups. Since 1991, Teaching Tolerance has produced and distributed free documentary films, books, lesson plans and other materials that promote tolerance and respect in schools. Teaching Tolerance is designed to promote an appreciation for diversity in schools by reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations and supporting equity for children.

There is a continuing—if not growing—need to teach tolerance in classrooms as our society becomes increasingly divided along lines of race, religion, language, sexual orientation and ability. These fractures may not stop at the schoolhouse, but they can be healed there. Educators recognize the need to develop students' social and emotional skills, and have long asked Teaching Tolerance for more comprehensive and systematic curricula that would match rigor to relevance.

In response to this demand, Teaching Tolerance staff set out to create a comprehensive anti-bias curriculum that would meet the needs of diverse K-12 teachers. The result is a curriculum designed to bridge literacy and affective learning so that teachers do not have to choose between rigor and relevance. It is aligned to the widely adopted Common Core State Standards. *Perspectives* has three major components: an anti-bias framework, an anthology of texts and an integrated learning plan. Each component emerged as part of backwards mapping from a foundational framework that identifies measurable skills and outcomes. The curriculum is not scripted; teachers choose the materials they think best fit the needs of their classroom and use those as appropriate. The beta version of the *Perspectives* website (www.teachperspectives.org) became available to the general public beginning in fall 2013.

Curriculum Components

While the Common Core offers a highly detailed framework for literacy and math instruction, until the release of *Perspectives,* no similar framework existed for anti-bias education. State content standards, when they outline suggested content at all, do not offer standards for reducing prejudice, increasing the acceptance and appreciation of diversity, or promoting social justice. A framework is essential for effective curricular design, implementation and evaluation. The principles of backwards design ask educators to begin with the outcomes they wish to see and create activities that will accomplish those outcomes. The Anti-Bias Framework is designed to support backward design for social and emotional learning.

The Anti-Bias Framework.

Perspectives draws from Derman-Sparks's germinal work. In 1989, she outlined four primary goals of anti-bias education: identity, diversity, justice and action. Each of these goals is important for anti-bias education, but they must be engaged in combination to help students and society make lasting changes. In order to transform these goals into tangible classroom outcomes, *Perspectives'* design is oriented around an original set of 20 anti-bias anchor standards, grouped by domain.

The Four Goals of Anti-Bias Education (Derman-Sparks, 1989)

Identity: Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.
Diversity: Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.
Justice: Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts
Action: Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

The Anti-Bias Framework outlines a comprehensive skill set of achievable and measurable student outcomes. These outcomes inform all aspects of the *Perspectives* curriculum, as they provide a framework for text selection and the design of the learning plan.

The Central Text Anthology.

The anthology of texts is at the heart of *Perspectives*. These texts are students' initial contact point with the larger curriculum. They were chosen to fulfill the specifications of the CCSS as well as the anti-bias standards. Beginning with the anti-bias standards, researchers considered interdisciplinary themes such as individual and society, membership and solidarity, power and privilege, freedom and choice, rights and responsibilities, struggle and progress. They looked for different text types, considering literature, informational, visual and multimedia texts. Finally, they looked at voice and issue, including topics such as race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, immigration, religion, disability and bullying.

Texts were divided into grade bands and analyzed using quantitative and qualitative metrics to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Common Scale for Band Level Text Difficulty Ranges. This meant using text analyzer tools including Degrees of Reading Power, Lexile Framework, Source Rater and the Pearson Reading Maturity Metric. Qualitative measures to identify text complexity included meaning, text structure, language features and knowledge demands. Separate qualitative rubrics were used for informational and literary texts.

The Integrated Learning Plan.

The Common Core's ELA and Literacy anchor standards provide a coherent and organized set of goals that are mapped out across each grade level. These standards keep texts central to learning as they call for students to emphasize textual evidence when writing and speaking. The *Perspectives* instructional plan is aligned to the CCSS standards, creating a path for students to experience and examine texts. It relies on five major phases (K-2 classrooms have three) that include a mix of instructional strategies and assessment tasks. Within each phase, *Perspectives* offers ten strategies or tasks for teachers to choose from. The first four phases relate to CCSS strands and each strategy or task is aligned to CCSS standards within that strand.

Phases of the Integrated Learning Plan and CCSS alignment

Word Work (Language standards): Students will increase their ability to comprehend and produce language by accessing and using key vocabulary from the central text in their own reading, writing, speaking and listening.
Close and Critical Reading (Reading standards): Students will improve their reading comprehension skills by analyzing, interpreting, critiquing and making connections to the central text in ways that help them form their sense of self and their views of the world.
Community Inquiry (Speaking and Listening): Students will develop their speaking and listening skills by engaging in meaningful conversation about the central text, relating the discussion back to the text and to the anti-bias standards.
Write to the Source (Writing standards): Students will improve their writing skills by responding to ideas and claims found in the central text, using the text to support their own reflection and analysis.
Do Something: Students will demonstrate their anti-bias awareness and proficiency through their everyday behavior or with coordinated social action.

The phases of the learning plan are not necessarily designed to progress in a linear way. Depending on the text and the context, teachers might decide to circle back to different strategies (for example, if they were using multiple texts) at different phases of the learning plan. For maximum effect, skipping stages is discouraged.

Background of the Evaluation

The design of the *Perspectives* curriculum draws on three major bodies of research: work supporting the literacy shifts of the Common Core; research in multicultural and culturally responsive pedagogy; and research in social psychology dealing with prejudice reduction. This section does not attempt to catalogue the extensive literature supporting the core ideas driving *Perspectives*; rather, it identifies three key concepts underlying *Perspectives* to provide context for the current study.

Complex and relevant texts can increase student engagement.

The Common Core State Standards, now adopted by all but seven states and Puerto Rico, aim to make reading, writing, language and speaking and listening instruction considerably more rigorous across all grade levels. The standards mandate three major shifts in literacy instruction: building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction; reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text; and regular practice with complex text and academic language.

These shifts come in response to a growing body of research that demonstrates the importance of text complexity in reading achievement. The consequences of low literacy fall disproportionately on socioeconomically challenged students, whose exposure to texts falls well below their peers even before they come to school. As Appendix A to the CCSS notes, this "bodes ill for the ability of Americans to meet the demands placed upon them by citizenship in a democratic republic and the challenges of a highly competitive global marketplace of goods, services, and ideas" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Bolstering student achievement requires the use of what Alfred Tatum has called "enabling texts." The importance of prior knowledge means that all students will not approach all texts in the same way. Enabling texts build a bridge between students' abilities and prior knowledge to more complex or foreign texts. The CCSS themselves do not mandate particular texts, but do list exemplars in Appendix B to illustrate what appropriate complexity looks like at each grade level. Unfortunately, the CCSS text exemplar list does not reflect the diverse nature of America's students. For example, Jane Gangi (2010) found that of the 88 books recommended for elementary school students in Appendix B of the CCSS, 69 of had white authors. Only six books focused on the poor and working class.

Perspectives seeks to both build on and aid implementation of the Common Core through an enriched approach. The rationale follows calls by Sleeter (2012) and Bigler (1999) to reconceptualize culturally responsive pedagogy as a paradigm for teaching and learning rather than a set of occasional tools. *Perspectives* draws on the work of Emily Style, who argues that texts frame the world for students, building on existing knowledge while providing glimpses into other worlds, cultures, times and spaces. These glimpses are essential to helping students understand themselves and others: "Education needs to enable the student to look through window frames in order to see the realities of others and into mirrors in order to see her/his own reality reflected. Knowledge of both types of framing is basic to a balanced education" (Style, 1996, p. 35).

Cuturally relevant nonfiction and literary fiction texts have been shown to engage reluctant and struggling readers. Feger (2006) found that challenging and critical non-fiction texts combined with tailored teaching strategies tapped into students' existing interests and improved students' confidence. Multiple studies have supported the argument that culturally relevant content and instructional methods are essential to enfranchise historically disadvantaged students (e.g., Bransford, J.D., Brown, A.L., & Cocking, R.R., 2000; Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003; Lee, 1995; Lipka, *et* al., 2005).

Appropriate text selection can reduce prejudice by creating empathy.

In 1954, Gordon Allport argued that intergroup contact was one of the most effective ways to reduce tension between groups. Ideally, all students would be able to come into contact with members of other groups. But this is neither practical nor always desirable. Even very integrated schools may not have representation from all groups, and the reality is that "very integrated" schools themselves are increasingly in the minority. Even in situations where groups come into contact, tension can increase and biases become retrenched. Bullying is one obvious and common example of this phenomenon.

Fortunately, real contact is not necessary to build intergroup relationships, as research supporting extended contact has shown. Liebkind and McAlister (1999) define the extended contact hypothesis this way:

> [K]nowledge that an ingroup member has a close relationship with an outgroup member leads to more positive intergroup attitudes. The ingroup friendship partner provides a positive model for more tolerant norms for interaction with the outgroup and the outgroup member provides a positive exemplar that disconfirms negative expectations and beliefs about the outgroup (767).

Extended contact has found support in the simulated encounters that texts and media representations provide. As Paluck and Green (2009) found, "extended contact can reduce outgroup hostility, and narratives can communicate norms and inspire empathy and perspective taking" (356). Extended contact "can allow participants to experience contact while avoiding any anxiety or negative feeling arising from direct contact (Cameron, *et al*, 1208).

Texts can diminish biases by presenting stereotype-disconfirming information, characters and stories (Yawkey, 1973). Unfortunately, students are likely to have stereotype-based expectancies that influence their information-seeking behavior. To counteract this tendency, Stephan (1999) says that students must encounter situations "in which stereotype disconfirmations are clear, occur frequently, are dispersed across a number of different members of the outgroup, and continue over time" (85).

Tools must accompany texts to overcome confirmation bias and build empathy. This includes explicit and guided discussion of identities and bias (Aboud & Levy, 2008) as well as perspective-taking activities. Multiple controlled studies show that these activities can work to increase empathy with marginalized and stigmatized groups (e.g., Dovidio, *et al,* 2004; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Galinsky, Ku & Wang, 2005; Galinsky, *et al*, 2006; Vescio, Sechrist & Paolucci, 2003).

Appropriate curricular design can promote collective action.

While there is considerable support for the contact hypothesis, we now know that the positive effects of contact are largely one-sided: While effective for members of a dominant group, intergroup contact is generally ineffective for members of the nondominant group (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). In social psychology, collective action is a term that refers to occasions when groups act together to accomplish goals. Many educators see collective action, in which students act together to accomplish a goal, as an important additional strategy to aid and empower members of nondominant groups.

Although it is common to view prejudice reduction and collective action as complementary aims, research in social psychology suggests that they may be more at odds than commonly understood. In the past, the prejudice reduction strategy has tended to have a different audience than the collective action strategy. Prejudice reduction has generally been focused on members of the advantaged group, while collective action research and strategy has targeted disadvantaged groups. In addition to having different targets, the strategies have contradictory psychological preconditions for success (Wright & Baray, 2012).

Diminishing surface tensions does not necessarily provoke a deep understanding of the causes of inequality and may even stymie inquiry and action. In other words, acknowledging diversity is not the same as understanding disparities (Hyland, 2005). Recognizing discrimination requires students to expand their sense of justice beyond the "rightness" or "wrongness" of interactions between individuals.

Inducing empathy may be critical in moving students toward an expanded concept of justice and awareness of the need to take action. There are many well-established benefits to empathy, including pro-social attitudes and helping behavior. Parallel empathy, where a person experiences an emotional response when exposed to injustice, may lead to attitude changes. Feeling that social arrangements are unjust can reduce prejudice and move beyond to awareness of social inequality (Stephan & Finlay, 1999).

Commonality need not reify differences. *Perspectives* attempts to show that collective action can co-exist with prejudice reduction using appropriate strategies. These include subtyping of allies and other friendly members of the other group, coalitions between groups, and including open discussions about difference, disparate treatment and discrimination in intergroup interactions (Dovidio, *et al*, 2004; Saguy, *et al*., 2009).

Purpose and Description of the Evaluation

Purpose of the Evaluation

Under the direction of Dr. Kate Shuster, Shuster Consulting, Inc. was contracted to manage a pilot and accompanying evaluation of *Perspectives for a Diverse America*. During meetings with Teaching Tolerance staff, several goals for a formative evaluation were proposed, including: (1) help the organization learn how teachers used the newly available *Perspectives* materials; (2) seek teacher feedback on *Perspectives* materials, including suggestions for improvement; (3) explore teacher perceptions of student reactions to *Perspectives* materials; (4) examine how use of *Perspectives* increased teacher comfort with and interest in both the Common Core State Standards and anti-bias education; and (5) as possible, link findings to the research that guided the *Perspectives* design. These broad goals were distilled into the following four evaluation questions:

1. *Did the scope and nature of the Perspectives curriculum meet teachers' needs?*
2. *Did Perspectives improve teacher capacity in implementing the Common Core State Standards and the goals of anti-bias education?*
3. *What effects of using Perspectives did teachers see in their classrooms?*
4. *How did findings relate to the research informing the Perspectives design?*

To answer these questions, *Perspectives* engaged in a five-phase pilot program and accompanying evaluation during the 2013-2014 school year. The evaluation included the development of a teacher intake survey, grade and phase-specific implementation logs, an exit survey and protocols for classroom observations, focus groups and interviews. As the primary purpose of the evaluation was to refine program materials and processes for ease of teacher use and classroom fit, all measures were teacher-facing. Across the phases, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected, including data from classroom observations, surveys, interviews and focus groups.

Five-Phase Design

The pilot and evaluation design involved developing and implementing a five-phase plan. The elements in each phase are summarized below.

- **Phase 1: Launching the Pilot and Evaluation**. The pilot and evaluation manager met with Teaching Tolerance staff in the summer of 2013 to ensure that the pilot and evaluation were consistent with Teaching Tolerance's goals and that the scope of work, timelines and deliverables were mutually agreed upon. Pilot sites were recruited through the summer of 2013.
- **Phase 2: Instrument Development**. All instruments were developed during the fall of 2013, including MOUs for site coordinators and pilot teachers, grade-band specific implementation logs for each grade, text feedback logs, an intake survey, classroom observation protocols, an exit survey and protocols for individual teacher interviews and focus groups. The evaluation manager pursued and confirmed Human Subjects approval with partner districts.
- **Phase 3: Professional Development**. Professional development occurred in two parts: first, with single coordinators from each partner site in October 2013; and again, at each site with pilot teachers. The evaluation manager made logistical arrangements for on-site trainings; Teaching Tolerance staff conducted these trainings to maximize implementation fidelity. Sites received on-site trainings from January through March of 2014. The intake survey was administered at these trainings.
- **Phase 4: Pilot Phase.** Classroom piloting lasted through the spring 2014 semester. During this phase, teachers completed implementation logs as they used *Perspectives* components. The evaluation manager visited sites to observe classrooms and conduct interviews and focus groups. Where teachers could not be interviewed in-person, telephone interviews were conducted. The exit survey and all implementation logs were closed at the end of May.
- **Phase 5: Assessment and Reporting.** In this phase, all interviews and focus groups were transcribed and coded. Survey data was cleaned, merged and analyzed. The final report was delivered in June 2014.

This formative evaluation attempted to be as comprehensive as possible. It was designed to create a base of information that Teaching Tolerance staff could use for strategically adapting, modifying or revising *Perspectives* in subsequent years.

Overview of the Pilot Program

Five sites piloted *Perspectives* during the 2013-2014 school year. Seven sites were initially recruited in Alabama, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, New Mexico, Washington, D.C. and Wisconsin. Each site had a designated site coordinator who attended an orientation in October. The initial goal was to recruit 30 teachers from each site, for a total of 210 pilot teachers. Washington, D.C., dropped out for logistical reasons in January. On-site trainings for the remaining six pilot sites were conducted in January and February of 2014. Logistical reasons eliminated Hawaii from the pilot in the spring semester, and other complications shrunk the Alabama and New Mexico pilot sites. The remaining five sites continued with a reduced number of teachers. Of the 81 total teachers enrolled, 74 completed the pilot program.

Pilot teachers were offered a small stipend ($250) for their participation. In exchange, they were asked to use two *Perspectives* texts and to complete a full Integrated Learning Plan (ILP) in their classroom. They participated in interviews and focus groups and completed implementation logs for each text, strategy and task they used from the *Perspectives* website. Finally, teachers were asked to complete a short exit survey. Teachers were assured that their responses would be treated with full confidentiality, and that their names would never be linked to their responses without express written permission.

From February through May, Dr. Shuster visited each site, with the exception of New Mexico, at least once for in-person classroom observations and interviews. Teachers who could not be interviewed in person were interviewed over the phone.

Instrument Overview

All instruments used in the pilot were designed specifically for *Perspectives*. They were submitted prior to testing and use to Teaching Tolerance staff, whose feedback was extremely helpful in ensuring that their goals for learning about program use would be met through the study. What follows is a brief description of each instrument and its use in the evaluation.

- **Teacher intake survey**. This short survey, administered at on-site trainings in the winter of 2014, collected demographic information about study participants, including teacher gender, ethnicity and experience. It asked teachers to describe the ethnicity of the students they taught and their prior experience with the Common Core and anti-bias education. Intake surveys were used to assign unique study identification numbers for participants. These numbers were used throughout the study to maintain confidentiality and link records together in the final data sets.
- **Text and implementation logs**. A total of nine logs were created. This included a log for feedback on texts and eight logs specific to grade band and phase. Because questions for grades 3-12 were identical except for the strategies available to teachers within their grade band, logs for grades 3-5 and 6-12 were virtually identical. The specific needs of early childhood and the compressed phase sequence of grades K-2 made those logs different. Logs contained a mix of binary

items, Likert scale items and short answer items. In general, log items were divided into five areas of interest: reasons for choosing a curricular component, teacher feedback on the component's instructional efficacy, perceived student reaction to the component, ease of fit and recommendations for future development.

- **Individual interview protocols**. Teacher interview protocols were designed for a 45-minute interview. They asked generally open-ended questions, focusing on five major areas: the need for *Perspectives*, ease of fit, the anti-bias framework, student reactions to the pilot materials and advice for program improvement.
- **Focus group protocol**. The focus group protocol was designed for a one-hour session. It was designed to evoke a more general conversation among participants reflecting on their experiences piloting *Perspectives*.
- **Classroom observation protocol**. The classroom observation protocol was designed to track classroom processes in a narrative manner. Observations were slotted to last a minimum of 30 minutes. The protocol was not designed to evaluate teacher effectiveness, but to observe the manner of implementation. Knowing that observations would cover multiple grade levels and disparate lessons at different points in the ILP phases, they were not designed to be pulled into a comprehensive data set, but instead used primarily to inform interviews and focus groups, as well as to provide targeted feedback to Teaching Tolerance staff that was not covered in the final data set.
- **Exit survey**. The exit survey asked teachers to reflect on several specific holistic areas of the pilot experience, including improved capacity with the Common Core, ease of fit and detailed questions about the ILP and its components.

All surveys and logs, with the exception of the paper intake survey, were built on SurveyMonkey and made available to teachers through a password-protected online site.

Summary of Methods

Data was collected from February 2014 through the end of May. Qualitative data was coded using NVivo through an iterative process seeking major themes related to the goals of the research and the components of *Perspectives* itself. Quantitative data was collected through confidential online surveys and exported to SPSS for statistical analysis.

Quantitative data from implementation logs was cleaned prior to analysis to remove "ghost" survey responses (normally the result of failed teacher logins or mechanical errors). It was subsequently merged to create a master set of log responses with multiple responses per case identified by phase for ease of analysis. Descriptive statistics were analyzed using SPSS, with similar cases grouped for analysis where appropriate.

Interviews and focus groups were transcribed using Transcribe for Chrome and cross-checked for accuracy. All qualitative data, including interview and focus group transcripts as well as responses to open-ended online survey questions, were cleaned prior to analysis. This cleaning included removing personally identifying information of teachers and students (and in some cases, of site location where it might allow

identification of a particular teacher). In addition, transcript and focus group data were cleaned to remove vocalized pauses and outside interruptions to improve the coherence of responses for more effective analysis. In some cases, sentence stems were added when a teacher was responding to a prompt (for example, a sentence beginning with "because" might be changed to "I would use this strategy again because."

This report contains substantial quotation from participants, often at length. It was challenging to decide which quotations to include, in part because teachers were so enthusiastic about their pilot experience. In addition, teacher experiences were so similar in some areas that extensive quotation would not have added much to the descriptive findings. In general, quotations were included here if they were descriptive, directly related to the area of inquiry, constructive, different from or substantially additive to the quantitative data.

Study Sample

Across five sites, 81 teachers enrolled in the pilot study. As a whole, they were an experienced group, with an average of 10 years teaching. The sample was well distributed across grade bands: 19 teachers were in grades K-2, 36 in 3-5 and 28 in grades 6-12. Most (82%) of the teachers identified as white. Their students were considerably more diverse. The intake survey asked teachers to describe their students' ethnicities in general terms. A third of the teachers said their students were mostly white, another quarter described their students as diverse, and the remainder described their classrooms as majority Latino/a, majority African-American or majority Native American.

Although the sample was small, the pilot classrooms were extremely diverse. Teachers with no experience and teachers with more than 20 years on the job piloted *Perspectives* across all grades in urban and suburban settings that included dual-language, special education and gifted classrooms. Their thoughtful and intentional engagement with the curriculum has created a wealth of information.

The Central Text Anthology

"I explored the whole thing, from K-2 to the upper grades and I think it's perfect. Whoever created it made it perfect. You can find anything." -Idaho teacher

The exit survey and teacher interviews collected information from participants to investigate their opinions about the central text anthology. Table 1 shows the findings from relevant items on the exit survey. A large majority of teachers agreed that the text anthology was broad enough to meet their needs and the needs of their students.

Strengths of the Central Text Anthology

Interviews and focus groups asked teachers to reflect on the central text anthology as a whole and in more detail. Teachers expressed substantial acclaim for the central text anthology overall, typified by this Illinois teacher's comment:

I think the texts are short but challenging. They have good vocabulary. It's nice

for rereading. I never hear them say that they're bored, which I have heard them say about other texts. They are nice and brief with good vocabulary and good content. Overall, the anthology is very relevant.

Table 1: Teacher opinions about the central text anthology (N = 57)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The text anthology is broad enough to meet my needs as outlined by the CCSS.	0%	16%	69%	16%
The text anthology is broad enough to meet my needs as determined by my existing curriculum.	0%	19%	65%	16%
The text anthology is broad enough to meet the needs of my specific student population.	0%	18%	67%	16%
The text anthology contains a sufficient diversity of text types.	0%	19%	63%	18%
The text anthology contains enough texts on the issues I wish to bring into the classroom.	0%	30%	53%	18%
The text anthology spans enough subjects.	0%	25%	61%	14%

Many teachers cited the brevity, rigor and variety of texts as major strengths of the anthology. They also enjoyed the way texts engaged students on relevant and interesting issues. One first grade teacher described her students' experience this way:

> I think it was fine the way it was. Just because of the texts itself. We do read-alouds and they are painful. Really painful. Really painful. But with these, the two texts that I did, students were engaged. It was great because they were topics they could relate to. It wasn't some random story, that didn't have any connections to them. These stories have connections. The students can make these connections and that's why students gravitate towards them, versus other read-alouds.

More than a third of teachers said they mixed *Perspectives* texts with other readings to stimulate student interest, as this comment by a Milwaukee teacher illustrates:

> We always recognized the need and we teach social justice through trade books. Our whole idea is social justice, but the trade books are lengthy and it takes a long time to get to anything or to get to the theme and the topic. What is really handy, what I noticed about this is that the articles or the little audio and things are short and right to the point. It's a great way to open up our trade books or start a lesson or throw one in throughout the week: "Let's do this, let's look at this and then look at the trade book." It blends very well.

Teachers also said they liked being able to explore multiple grade bands to differentiate instruction in their classrooms, with some teachers reporting reaching above or below their grade band to meet their topic needs or the specific literacy issues their students face.

How Teachers Used the Central Text Anthology

Pilot teachers used at least two texts from the central text anthology, completing logs for each text. Most teachers (85%) said that the scope of the text anthology met their needs. The overwhelming majority of teachers discovered challenging texts that exposed students to new points of view, introduced important and relevant issues, promoted student engagement and social and emotional learning while fitting within existing curricula. Table 2 summarizes the reasons teachers cited for choosing texts.

Table 2: Reasons for choosing texts (N = 164)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I wanted to challenge my students.	1%	4%	45%	49%
The text was relevant to students from diverse backgrounds.	1%	6%	47%	46%
The text fits into my existing curriculum.	2%	10%	51%	37%
I hoped the text would expose my students to new points of view.	1%	1%	35%	63%
The text deals with issues in my classroom, school or community.	1%	8%	40%	51%
This text allows me to introduce important topics into conversations with my students	1%	0%	35%	65%
The text promotes student engagement.	1%	3%	43%	54%
The text fits with my goals for students' social and emotional learning.	1%	2%	37%	61%
The text fits with my goals for students' literacy development.	1%	5%	55%	39%

Implementation logs asked teachers to report what they did before introducing students to the text. Responses fell into three general categories: vocabulary, anticipation guides and external resource support. About half of the teachers reported using some kind of vocabulary strategy before encountering the text. These included *Perspectives* strategies such as Word Wheels and Four-Fold Vocabulary. Another quarter of the teachers reported using some kind of anticipatory strategy, including graphic organizers, analysis of the text title or classroom discussion to establish necessary prior knowledge. A final group of teachers reported using external material, including other texts (some from *Perspectives*, some Teaching Tolerance materials and some online or printed resources) to establish context and connections to prior knowledge, students' lives or existing curricular themes.

Response to Texts

Teachers were also asked to report on student response to the texts. Table 3 collects their responses. The item with the most variance asked whether the text was easy for students to read. Here we see a split, with about 40 percent saying the text was not easy for students to read. This does not seem to be a criticism of the texts themselves, as

most teachers said the texts were appropriately challenging. A closer look at the data here reveals that many of the teachers who disagreed with this statement were in the K-2 band. In general, K-2 teachers reported that the text anthology could do more to meet the needs of early childhood educators, as this teacher described: "I feel like much of the text that is labeled as K-2 is a little advanced for low language students in K & 1." This feeling was echoed by third grade teachers and is discussed in the recommendations section below.

Table 3: Teacher reports on use of texts (N = 164)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My students were interested in the text.	0%	4%	55%	41%
My students were bored by the text.	36%	55%	8%	1%
The text was easy for my students to read.	8%	33%	41%	19%
The text engaged my students.	0%	5%	53%	42%
The text made my students want to learn more.	0%	9%	57%	33%
The text helped me to have productive classroom discussions.	0%	2%	43%	55%
The text was appropriately challenging for my students.	0%	7%	59%	34%

Almost all teachers reported that the texts they chose were of appropriate length (99% agreed or strongly agreed) and of appropriate complexity (93%). All but three teachers said the text met their instructional objectives; all but seven said they would use the text they chose again.

Most teachers (58 percent) reported using multimedia or visual texts in their classrooms. Teachers who used those texts reported that they added considerable value to their classrooms, including enfranchising English language learners and students with different learning styles. "My class loved the audios we have listened to because they created a different kind of conversation," said one Idaho teacher. "We even extended it to create some illustrations to go with the audio they listened to. The kids had a different, almost deeper connection because it was another child talking versus me telling them a story." Other teachers noted the importance of using multimedia resources to bridge generational gaps. "This is the language they speak as a generation, so it was valuable to add in this piece with my high school students," said one tenth grade teacher.

The Integrated Learning Plan

"I liked the model. It kept you on task making sure you hit every part because each part was necessary. I thought it was a good way to keep you focused on what to work on and when. I liked those five different steps because it really tied it up from reading it to thinking about it to doing something." – Illinois teacher

The exit survey asked teachers a number of questions specific to the strategies and tasks of the Integrated Learning Plan (ILP) structure. Interviews supplemented those

questions by asking teachers to reflect more broadly on the ILP and their experiences using the five-phase approach.

Do the phases fit into CCSS literacy areas? All pilot teachers agreed that they did, with 35 percent strongly agreeing. As one teacher said, the phases helped teachers transition into more complex literacy tasks: "We've done word walls for years, but to have the scaffolding in place before you go into any narrative or informational text or expository writing, just to have it there as backbone, makes the most sense."

Did the phases match existing classroom practices? Ninety-seven percent of teachers agreed that they did. Most were familiar with backwards design and said the ILP matched their current approach, as this teacher explained:

> The backward approach is something we're used to. We look at the standard first and the end goal then start to plan according to that. This ties right into this curriculum. You think of that essential question first and then work backwards off of that.

The interviews revealed that the fit with existing practices was a big "selling point" for teachers, who were happy to see their teaching reflected in the *Perspectives* strategies and tasks.

Were the phases correctly sequenced? Almost all (98 percent) teachers agreed that the phases were correctly sequenced. One teacher described her opinion this way:

> I loved how each phase built on the other and it just continued and flowed so that I could refer back. "Remember when we did this the other day? Let's connect it to this." It was very cohesive and I didn't feel that I was a chicken with my head cut off. It flowed very well.

At the same time, most (88 percent) agreed that the phases overlapped. A quarter of teachers said that they found themselves wanting to skip phases, suggesting that although teachers agreed with the sequencing of the phases, they felt either time pressure or redundancy. The interviews shed some light on this – most teachers reported feeling extremely pressed for time in the spring pilot window, as it coincided with spring break and testing. Some teachers in grades 3-12 felt that there was overlap between Word Work and Close and Critical Reading, saying they wanted to collapse those into a single approach in their classes. Other teachers in the upper grade bands said they collapsed Speaking and Listening with Write to the Source – one teacher described those phases as "mushed together." While teachers overwhelmingly agreed with the goals of the Do Something phase, many teachers reported not having enough time to implement it.

There was a difference in approach between the pilot teachers that shed some light on the "phase skipping" question. Some teachers understood the ILP as something that should be implemented in order each time for each text, while others used multiple texts (including texts not in the Central Text Anthology) and approaches, integrating the ILP phases with other projects and strategies.

Was the ILP appropriately rigorous? Almost all (98 percent) agreed that it was, with 37 percent strongly agreeing. One Illinois teacher commented that the addition of the fifth phase added to the already-rigorous Common Core:

You're not only learning tolerance while you're learning vocabulary. You're learning a writing piece. You're doing something. You're doing something that Common Core isn't doing now and they all go together.

Were students highly engaged throughout the ILP? All teachers said that students were, with a third strongly agreeing. One Milwaukee teacher said the progress of the ILP helped students stay engaged throughout:

We have been trying it out as a staff and we have been noticing that the kids make those connections like, "Oh this where is where we are talking about this." I can really tell that they are bringing more permanent learning then surface learning. I like the progress of the ILP because it reminds me to go through these different phases of learning. You need a text that everything is connected to. The vocabulary that is not just learning so you know it but in the end you are going to go do something with it. In middle school the question is "Why do I need this." This helps me answer that it is going to lead to something positive in your life that you will be able learn and show and do. They are all about that when you give them the opportunity.

Did the teachers follow backwards design when planning their ILP? Most teachers (76 percent) said that they did. Most teachers (88 percent) said that they chose an essential question before planning. Several teachers across the pilot planned together and reported that the common ILP framework helped their collaboration. One member of a cross-grade team described his experience:

What's nice about having it formatted this was that it helps collaboration. When you collaborate without structure, everyone goes their own way and they're not seeing it the same. If you see there's an essential question and central text, it lays it out so you're all working towards a central direction on the same path. When you don't have that, you try to get to the same place but work past each other.

How long did it take to complete an ILP? The average reported total classroom time was 365 minutes, or approximately eight hours. Six teachers reported spending more than 900 minutes on their ILP. Although just about every teacher reported being pressed for time, the interviews showed how valuable the whole ILP was for students. Asked what advice she would give to teachers new to the ILP process, one Illinois teacher said:

I would tell them to definitely do it. I would tell them to continue with all five stages. I know it's really hard to, but the end product is so amazing that you want to see through it. It takes a lot of time so you have to plan for more time than it says, but I would definitely do it, because the overall result and the overall effect and the community it builds in the classroom is so beneficial for the kids that it's worth doing it even though there are time issues.

Another teacher, noting that some teachers in her building did not complete the full five phases, said she thought this was a mistake:

> You have to complete the five phases. When other teachers didn't complete the five phases, they weren't getting what they should out of it. It ties everything together and the kids get it and you see the end product. We thought it was wonderful. That's the key. You have to do each step. It takes a lot of time, but if you plan it during writing time to do Write to the Source, it really fits in. You might not think it does, but it does.

How did instruction shift throughout the ILP? Most teachers saw shifts in instruction across the ILP phases. Those shifts were described in three ways: increased student capacity, a shift toward student-directed learning, and teaching that simply varied depending on the phase. A majority of teachers reported increased student capacity or a shift toward self-directed learning, as in the following comments:

- The students were able to make connections to previous activities and literature that we explored together and our discussions were deeper on a personal level. Dialogues and lived experiences were shared and a greater sense of community was established within our classroom.

- Throughout the process, students became more comfortable completing the various tasks/strategies. As a result, students took ownership of their learning and gained confidence.

Other teachers noted that the phases themselves necessitated changes in instruction. "I think all steps of the ILP built towards taking action to make our world a better place. I did not really view the instruction varying as much as I saw each step integrating with the steps before and the steps after," said one teacher. "This built a deeper understanding within the students and thus a meaningful culminating project for social change."

Supporting Materials

Rubrics, worksheets, graphic organizers and handouts supported a number of strategies and tasks in the *Perspectives* curriculum. In general, teachers had very positive experiences with the supporting materials. Across all grades and phases, 49 percent of teachers said they used the rubrics, worksheets or graphic organizers that accompanied strategies. Of those teachers, 93 percent said the supporting materials were helpful. For vocabulary instruction, *Perspectives* provided two overarching support documents: the Vocabulary Selection Planner and the Vocabulary Strategy Planner. Of the 82 percent of teachers who used the Selection Planner, 80 percent said it was helpful. Of the 76 percent of teachers who used the Strategy Planner, 72 percent said it was helpful. One other major support document was the Planning for Do Something Guide. More than half (58 percent) of teachers used this guide. Of teachers who used it, 98 percent pronounced it helpful.

Perspectives and Anti-Bias Education

"Because we were looking at it from a literature perspective, they were able to point out social injustices. Then we moved to questioning where these are represented in our state and our community and then within our school. I saw changes in the way students acted. They tended to be gentler with their classmates." – New Mexico teacher

Much of the interviews and focus groups focused on students' social and emotional learning. Teachers were eager to share stories about the ways students reacted to texts, strategies and tasks. Four themes emerged in analysis of the qualitative data: the importance of anti-bias education, text-generated empathy, improved classroom climate and improved student conduct.

The Importance of Anti-Bias Education

Because the pilot teachers were a self-selected sample already committed to anti-bias education, it is not surprising that they expressed enthusiasm for improving their students' social and emotional learning. All pilot participants agreed that *Perspectives* filled a need in their classroom.

Many teachers said there is a pressing need to counter prejudice outside the classroom. The topic of parental influence emerged often. "If you think about it, their parents probably hang out with the same culture and race," said one teacher. "That's what they're used to. Their parents aren't teaching them about diversity. I think it's our job."

Using *Perspectives*, teachers said they were able to identify and address problems they didn't know their students faced. Texts and discussions raised awareness of discrimination inside and outside of school. This Illinois teacher's story was typical:

> As we started talking about treating each other differently because of their backgrounds, I know that I never thought that existed in my class. But as they started sharing some stories of things that haven't happened in school, that haven't happened right in front of me, then I was aware that some of these things have happened to my students but weren't visible to me, so I just didn't think it existed.

When classroom or school community issues were visible, teachers strongly felt the need for anti-bias education to build capacity in their students. This was true whether teachers worked in diverse or homogenous classrooms. One Alabama elementary school teacher said that the size of the need means that *Perspectives* should be adopted more widely:

> In our community, people who don't follow the norms are ostracized. We have bullying. People remain on the sides. They don't know how to deal with it. They've never been taught to deal with it. That's why I feel it was so important that we continue this curriculum … We need to do it school wide. We need to do it community wide.

This teacher was not alone in her call for wider adoption. Ten pilot teachers explicitly

brought this up in interviews and focus groups. These teachers said they thought wider use of *Perspectives* would produce lasting effects on student behavior and school climate. As one middle school teacher argued:

> If you just have one or two people doing it on their own, it doesn't work. It's a whole process, it's not one particular lesson at one particular time. It's a game plan for education and life. It would be just like teaching algebra one day. You have to see it all the way through, and you'll be much more effective on the higher-order thinking level in the upper grades if they've been familiar with it all the way through. If you just throw it out one time, you will get a limited response at best.

An additional dimension to the need for *Perspectives* was limited teacher capacity. Many teachers said that even though they entered the pilot program with strong convictions about teaching for social justice, they did not feel they had the necessary tools to implement their vision. "I had a student with two fathers," said one teacher. "I think that if that had come up without these documents to accompany teaching about it, I would have been uncomfortable because I wouldn't have known how to go about talking about it."

Fifteen pilot teachers explicitly discussed the ways that *Perspectives* built their skill set in this essential area. "It helped me watch for my own bias," said one high school teacher. "*Perspectives* brings in that human connection that you get to create with your students and they get to create with one another, that is very much lacking right now," said a middle school teacher. "Unless you really take the time to create lessons that really get kids to connect with one another, it's not happening."

Text-Generated Empathy

One of the major theories underlying *Perspectives* is the idea that texts can generate empathy in readers, building understanding and awareness of diverse experiences. Pilot teachers observed this phenomenon in their classrooms across grade levels and subject material, whether they were in diverse or relatively homogenous classrooms. It was common for teachers to mix Teaching Tolerance materials with materials from the *Perspectives* site. One teacher from a majority black urban school was surprised to see how her students reacted to viewing *Bullied*:

> The kid in Wisconsin getting bullied for being gay didn't look like any of our kids. My class empathized with that kid a lot. I never expected that. I actually expected some negativity from that. They used to use the word "gay" at least one time a day to say something negative, but I've heard that a lot less since we watched that movie.

A second grade teacher saw changes when she compared her unit on Rosa Parks before and after she used *Perspectives*:

> Last year I didn't use these documents and we didn't watch the video and I had a number of students who were not as affected and just kind of said, "I wouldn't do

anything, and I don't see where it plays a part in my life today." This year I had more who saw a difference and said, "That is wrong."

Dozens of other teachers reported similar experiences, ranging from students changing their views on immigration and immigrants to kindergarten students expanding their views on gender.

As a third grade teacher said, "These stories are a way to talk without pointing out specific differences or singling out students and cultures. You're just talking about the story. You're not putting someone on the spot as an example." This compared favorably to direct instruction, as one Milwaukee teacher described:

> I didn't think there was a need, but as soon as the students did the two readings that we were focused on I realized that you had to have a way to tell a story about what is the right thing to do without saying this is the right thing to do … I think the kids learned more than if I told them this is what you need to do with your life. I have already done that, it doesn't work. By reading the stories they had to figure out who did the right thing and why they did it and what happened in the story. This was better.

Texts served as intermediaries, so that students were talking about the situations characters or historical figures faced, rather than immediately talking about themselves. Many teachers characterized this as a "safe" process or space to begin more difficult conversations. In one Idaho classroom visit, a teacher read aloud the poem "I will be chosen." Afterward, the students broke into spontaneous applause. One student said, "That poem was awesome! I never knew poetry could be so good!" In the discussion that followed, students found ways to relate to the poem, describing experiences where they felt left out. One student talked about his experience as an immigrant to the United States and how he felt left out of activities because his language was different and his skin color was different. Other students listened avidly, asking him questions about his background and saying "I never knew you felt that way." The teacher later commented in an interview that this student never talked in class and had been more included and active in class after that moment.

Improved Classroom Culture

A quarter of the teachers interviewed said that using *Perspectives* improved their classroom culture. Their descriptions indicated that this was largely a function of increasing student comfort and trust levels. "Students were opening up and telling things about their families and they were definitely invested," said an Idaho teacher. "It built community in that way. Their classmates were willing to listen and very respectful."

Teachers frequently reported that activities involving taking the perspective of others in texts spilled over into taking the perspective of others in the class, as one middle school teacher described:

> For us as a class, we were able for everyone in the room to have a perspective of what other people in the room were going through. We were able to have a real breakthrough and dialogue. I think it really motivated my kids for our service

project to really want to help others and really do service work. I think just recognizing that we have kids here who are completely new to culture, so what can you do? We all have a role we can play … we can all do something. For them, they were really empowered by what they can do. It was cool.

Elementary educators in particular said that one of the major challenges they face is helping students to understand that not everyone is like them: "A lot of them come into school thinking that everyone's the same, or that my way is better." They said that stories with diverse characters were helpful in encouraging students to recognize and respect diversity in their classrooms and communities. "I think it is opening their minds up," said one kindergarten teacher.

Improved Student Behavior

Many pilot teachers saw improved student behavior that they attributed to *Perspectives*. This story by a third grade teacher was particularly poignant:

It's interesting to see how they apply it to their life because slowly I see my kids start to handle themselves in a different way. I have one student in particular who all year has had a hard time getting along with my kids. He's been taking a step back and thinking about what he says before he says it and takes deep breaths. I think part of it is dong these lessons with Teaching Tolerance. He's getting all these different perspectives. With text time talk, he talks to others about how they would handle situations and it's making him more aware of what he should do when he's angry or wants to talk to somebody else. He wrote a letter to my future third graders and said that when they're mad they should take deep breaths and think for a second. I didn't tell him to say that, and just hearing him say that made me so happy!

This teacher was not alone. A middle school teacher saw her "Do Something" phase have lasting effects with students beyond her classroom as her students take leadership roles in the school. A third grade teacher reported that her students were intervening more often in cases where others' feelings were hurt. Several teachers who read *Crocodile and Ghost Bat* reported that students referred back to that story's lessons often when conflicts arose in class. An elementary teacher said that her unit on peacemaking substantially reduced student fighting in her classroom.

The Anti-Bias Framework

"I did go back a few times, especially when formulating my essential question. It would have helped me more if I had gone back more, especially when researching the central text." – Alabama teacher

Most teachers said in interviews that they had not consulted the Anti-Bias Framework (ABF) after the initial training. Asked why, they described it as "text-heavy," or "more for administrators than for teachers." However, all teachers agreed that it was useful to have a document like the ABF. Many teachers, reminded of its existence in their

binder and on the website, said they would consult it in the future. The exit survey asked a few questions about the ABF; Table 4 describes their responses. In interviews, only eight teachers said they had looked at the ABF after training. This means that these responses should be taken with a grain of salt.

Table 4: Teacher opinions about the Anti-Bias Framework (N = 57)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The ABF aligns to the goals of my classroom.	0%	2%	60%	39%
The ABF aligns to the values of my school community.	0%	9%	51%	40%
The ABF's grade-level outcomes are developmentally appropriate.	0%	5%	56%	39%
The ABF is a useful guide for selecting texts.	0%	7%	46%	47%

Interviews and focus groups provided richer information regarding teachers' interactions with the ABF. The eight teachers who reported using the ABF after the training were particularly interested in the four domains (identity, diversity, justice, action). It is worth noting that almost all of these teachers were in the Chicago cluster, where a separate professional development session had focused on the ABF. This suggests that more training is needed to encourage use of the ABF. One high school teacher discussed the importance of the ABF in her teaching:

> I like how it's divided into the different domains. I used the Critical Practices manual a lot when I was coming up with my essential question. The grade level outcomes were appropriate to me, and we were able to go back the essential question when we got to the service project. My question was "How can diverse groups build empathy, understanding and connection," and we were constantly going back to that. As long as I made sure it was challenging, rigorous and engaging, that was the goal.

In classroom observations, two teachers had made posters with the four domains for display in their classrooms. In general, the four domains were present in many classroom observations, particularly in early childhood classrooms that focused on identity and diversity.

Asked about how they used the ABF in interviews, teachers who used it said they saw the ABF as a "reference" or a "focus" that helped them to frame their essential question. Several teachers said it would have helped them if they had looked at it more, but described it as "text heavy" or "theoretical." Thematic organization (e.g., immigration, bullying, human rights) seemed to be more important than the ABF for pilot teachers, as this teacher described:

> I didn't use it a lot when I was planning. I kind of had a general idea from the training of what it was and what it looked like. At the training I had already

picked what my theme was and so I had gone from that. I didn't use it a lot when I got into the meat of planning.

When interviews began, teachers were asked to look at the ABF while discussing it. After a dozen interviews, it became clear that most teachers had not consulted it, and valuable interviewing time was being used for teachers to read over the document. At this point, interview questions shifted to the perceived value of such a document if teachers reported not having consulted it since the training. Most teachers said the primary value of the ABF was for administrators and teachers, with several teachers saying they planned to consult the ABF in their summer planning time for more in-depth consideration.

Do Something

"I like the fact that it encouraged creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, awareness from the students. I like encouraging my students to be active whether it's on the school level or on the global level." – Milwaukee teacher

The Do Something phase met with considerable acclaim by the pilot teachers, even though not everyone was able to finish a full version of this final phase before the end of the pilot (and the school year).[1] Almost all (94 percent) of pilot teachers said they chose tasks to build their students' civic engagement skills. Teachers saw the phase as essential to learning rather than additive, as this special education teacher's comment illustrates:

> I think that if we don't put what we're teaching in the classroom into action where the kids see that it's going to be useful in their lives, they're not going to retain it … Children are their own best teachers. They can learn a lot from each other. If we don't solidify that with an action, how we can apply this to our own lives, how we can spread this around the school, then what we learn is not as powerful and long lasting.

Teachers were asked a series of questions about student responses to "Do Something" tasks. Table 5 summarizes their responses. All teachers agreed that the task inspired their students while helping them understand the essential question. There was strong agreement that the task brought students closer to community and classmates, helped students to understand themselves and empowered students.

Four major themes emerged from analysis of interview and focus group comments about the final phase: applied learning, community-building, empowerment and time constraints.

Many teachers described the final phase as an opportunity for students to apply what they had learned throughout the ILP. As one third grade teacher said, "I think that that's the portion where they're taking what they learned and using it to better their

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[1] A caveat about some of the data reported here. As with other phases, teachers filled out implementation logs. However, interviews subsequently revealed that many teachers did not finish phase five due to time constraints; others admitted that they had not yet finished phase five when they filled out the relevant logs.

classroom or their environment and reaching out and creating something of their own." Teachers said they were often able to see measurable outcomes in student growth during this phase, perhaps because instruction became more student-driven in this phase of the ILP. "If it's our boat, they don't want to drive it. But if it's their boat, they'll drive it," said one Illinois teacher. More than half (60 percent) of pilot teachers used this phase to assess students.

Table 5: Teacher responses to the "Do Something" phase (N = 71)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The task brought my students closer together.	0%	3%	45%	53%
The task increased my students' interest in their community.	0%	11%	50%	40%
The task helped my students feel that they could make a difference.	0%	3%	50%	47%
The task helped my students to build their language skills.	0%	7%	47%	47%
The task helped me measure my students' growth in knowledge and abilities.	0%	7%	50%	43%
This task inspired my students.	0%	0%	43%	57%
The task helped my students to understand the essential question.	0%	0%	47%	53%
This task helped my students to understand themselves.	0%	1%	31%	58%
This task helped my students to understand their community.	0%	8%	51%	41%
The task helped my students see that they could have an impact.	0%	7%	47%	46%

Applied learning often extended beyond the classroom. One classroom wrote letters to their state senator (he has not responded yet). A high school teacher found his students applied thoughts about the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to current events:

> A lot of them were concerned with torture. A lot of them were concerned with marriage laws, and after the Olympics the hatred the world was showing to Putin for his intolerance, just taking what we've been going through all year and applying it with the UDHR. I thought it was phenomenal to see those real life examples brought into focus and trying to solve real world problems.

The final phase also built community in classrooms and across schools. Examples ranged from the small-scale (third graders sharing picture books with first grade classrooms, parents attending student presentations on the diversity of world religions, middle school students producing an anti-bullying PSA) to the extremely ambitious. One sixth grade class initiated a school-wide campaign to end the "R word." A high school class began an

intramural sports program to build community across the school. Their teacher described the program:

> My students wanted to create this intramural program at lunch. We wanted to make it accessible to all kids, because a lot of kids don't have the time after school. By participating, kids have the chance to build relationships with others that they wouldn't necessarily see or talk to. A lot of our students, especially the ones who are language learners in their first or second year, they are in a separate part of the school. What happens is they are just not seen, and maybe some of the kids that I have were unaware of others because geographically they don't even see each other during the day. This was an opportunity for kids to come together and build recognition of each other in the hallway, have a commonality with each other. We've been putting things on the announcements for advertising in school. We've had a lot of people come to observe and see what it's all about. It's been really successful; the challenge right now is to keep the momentum, keep kids interested and see where we can go from here.

Empowerment was an important outcome for students and a major reason that pilot teachers liked the final phase. Teachers were excited to empower students for social change so that students would develop confidence and abilities to advocate for themselves and for social change. Students developed confidence when sharing their ideas with others, as this Idaho teacher described:

> I think they were very excited to share with students who are older than them. To share what they were thinking and to have someone listen was a powerful experience for them. Emotionally, it really did do something for them because they realized that it was important, that people were going to take the time to listen to them.

Time constraints were most often cited as a problem with the culminating phase; this seemed to be more pronounced as the student population became older. Teachers in K-2 had no problem fully implementing their final phase, probably because of the truncated three-phase ILP and more flexibility in early childhood education. Almost all teachers in grades 3-5 finished Do Something. When learning became more segmented in middle school and high school, Do Something projects were most likely to be substantially modified to fit subject matter curriculum. Many secondary school teachers reported significant difficulty completing the Do Something phase. Still, 84 percent of pilot teachers reported that their cumulating task fit within their time constraints.

Perspectives and Literacy

"You can really challenge your students. It's a two for one, because they are engaging and challenging text where students are getting some sort of cultural perspective. I think that is a win-win." – Idaho teacher

Because the pilot program was designed to be a teacher-facing formative assessment, it employed no student-level measures of literacy development. Instead, implementation logs, focus groups and teacher interviews collected teacher impressions of the effectiveness of *Perspectives* texts, strategies and tasks. Teachers found *Perspectives* highly effective overall. Almost all (95 percent) of teachers said they would use each strategy again. Overall, teachers said they saw improvement in student literacy across the phases, as one New Mexico teacher described:

> I definitely saw improvement in their questioning skills, in their abilities to pick out vocabulary that was impeding their comprehension and to decode that and make meaning. I saw increases in their engagement because the issues hit home for them. I saw increases in their persuasive writing because as we had issues they were engaged with and they could back up, that translated into improved writing with good evidence.

Implementation logs used a set of items across disparate strategies and tasks to measure teacher perceptions of effectiveness. Table 6 summarizes those findings with items measured for all strategies regardless of grade or phase.

Table 6: Teacher reports of strategy effectiveness (N = 231)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The strategy bored my students.	35%	56%	7%	2%
The strategy challenged my students.	0%	4%	47%	50%
The strategy engaged my students.	0%	3%	47%	50%
The strategy was appropriate for my grade level.	0%	1%	47%	52%
The strategy helped my students to comprehend new words.	0%	5%	39%	56%
The strategy helped my students to use new words.	0%	5%	54%	41%
The strategy helped my students to explore the text.	0%	7%	50%	43%
The strategy helped my students to understand the text.	0%	3%	43%	54%

Pilot teachers overwhelmingly agreed that the strategies and tasks, taken as a whole, were grade appropriate. The vast majority found them engaging and challenging while helping students to explore and understand texts. Although most teachers agreed

that the pilot window was very short for observation of substantial literacy gains, some teachers described the big leaps their students made as a result of *Perspectives*, as this high school teacher's comment demonstrates:

> What I've noticed in their reading is that they're asking more meaningful questions. It's no more just "I don't understand." They're pinpointing specific concepts and ideas. Their level of interest has increased as well, and their writing has improved, quite honestly. If they're asking questions or taking note of certain things, they will then implement those into their writing and cite them. It's exactly what you would want them to do … It's a cross-curricular win.

As teachers moved through the progression of *Perspectives'* instructional phases, logs asked about different elements more specific to the phase. Across grades and strategies, 95 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that first phase (Exploring Texts in K-2, Word Work in 3-12) strategies helped their students to use and comprehend new words.

Many teachers singled out the vocabulary development as a key area where they saw student literacy gains. In interviews, teachers said that highlighted vocabulary in the online texts combined with rigorous vocabulary strategies made their instruction easier and more effective. There was something special about the anti-bias context of vocabulary learning that made it different for several teachers. This story told by a Milwaukee teacher who made the ABF domains very visible in her shared classroom illustrates the value added by the larger *Perspectives* context:

> We read a text about a middle school child that has Down syndrome whose soccer team lets him get a goal. One of my students with reading comprehension issues said, "So wait the other team kinda' let him get a goal?" I said, "the first goal." He just said, "What a way to value that person," and "value" was one of the words we had studied. I think reading the text and *then* doing vocabulary with the wheels where they had to think about synonyms and antonyms and then use a word in a sentence connecting to the anti-bias perspective. I think it was so powerful … when we were pre-planning, we didn't think they would get those connections. So we had students connect their vocabulary words to the different perspectives [identity, diversity, justice, action]. I think that really solidified their understanding, so they knew, "Ah ha! We are learning this for a really unique purpose."

Table 7 reports teacher responses to strategies in the second phase (Responding to Texts in K-2, Close and Critical Reading in 3-12) and the third phase for grades 3-12 (Community Inquiry) In these phases (The Do Something phase for grades K-2 is considered elsewhere), we see the same trend of near-universal agreement about the benefits of the community inquiry and close reading tasks. Teachers thought that the *Perspectives* suite of strategies overall encouraged close student engagement with texts while building oral and reading abilities.

Table 7: Teacher reports of phase 2 and 3 strategy effectiveness (N = 73)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The strategy encouraged my students to discuss the text.	0%	0%	48%	52%
The strategy helped my students to build their oral language skills.	0%	4%	44%	49%
The strategy helped my students to build their reading comprehension skills.	1%	4%	44%	52%
The strategy helped my students to interpret the text.	1%	2%	37%	61%
This strategy helped my students to critique the text.	2%	2%	25%	71%
The strategy helped my students to build their speaking skills.	2%	2%	25%	71%
The strategy helped my students to build their listening skills.	2%	2%	27%	70%

Teachers reported that strong student engagement with the themes and content of texts made close reading and community inquiry strategies more effective. In other words, there was a likely feedback loop between socio-emotional learning and literacy, as this third grade teacher described:

> It's all done socially, emotionally, and academically. It all went together. I think that was so cool because we're not just learning how to build fluency, we're not just learning vocabulary, we're not just becoming better students, we're also learning about one another, and we're building community. The richness and the levels of depth really struck me. Those kids didn't even see it coming. I didn't even see it coming. You hope that good things will happen, but it was just so easy. That was the part that I was so relieved about, really enjoyed, and can't wait to do again.

For the 56 pilot teachers in grades 3-12, the next phase was Write to the Source. Questions on logs for this phase targeted writing specific outcomes. Table 8 summarizes teacher responses to strategies in this phase.

All teachers agreed that the *Perspectives* writing tasks helped students to build writing skills, with large majorities agreeing that students integrated academic vocabulary, textual evidence and multiple viewpoints. The item with the most divergent responses had to do with integrating multiple viewpoints into writing, but the lack of consensus is probably not a criticism of the tasks, as many teachers used writing products such as "I Am" poems that by design would not integrate multiple perspectives.

Several teachers noted that the arc of *Perspectives* meant that students were unusually motivated to learn and participate when the final tasks began. One high school teacher described the difference she saw in her students' motivation and writing:

> I used the culminating project and Write to the Source, and they were similar

projects. I gave them a prompt and an authentic reason for reading and writing a letter to the editor for our local newspaper. That gave them an authentic motivation for writing, and that audience that they needed. One of my top students came in and was excited for me to read her letter. For the AP test, you don't know who the readers are, or where they are, but this was an authentic reason to write. That's where the learning really occurs.

Table 8: Teacher reports of phase 4 task effectiveness (N = 56)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The task helped my students to build their writing skills.	0%	0%	48%	52%
My students integrated academic vocabulary into their writing.	0%	13%	41%	46%
My students integrated textual evidence into their writing.	0%	7%	39%	54%
My students integrated multiple viewpoints into their writing.	0%	18%	46%	36%

Secondary teachers had very positive experiences with the writing tasks. This middle school teacher's response is typical:

> I was really excited by the writing to the source that we did. They were able to put themselves in the shoes of the people during the civil rights era, and they took so many different forms with that. People pretended they were pastors, and people acted as though they were a child during the civil rights movement, a parent, and a police officer. We had a lot of different examples, and I was ecstatic that they were able to pull out something that a preacher would say, like they're praying for the people. It's awesome for sixth graders to think like that.

Write to the Source was most difficult for students in grades 3-5; those teachers consistently ranked it as their least favorite of the phases in interviews. While they agreed with the goals of the phase, they said the existing tasks may have been too challenging for their students. Many teachers in these grades spent much more time (up to two weeks) than they expected to spend on the writing projects.

Perspectives and the Common Core

"Perspectives will make it easier for many teachers to understand the Common Core curriculum and implement it in their classrooms." –Alabama teacher

One of the most significant findings from the pilot was the extent of *Perspectives'* fit with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This was measured in two ways: through the exit survey and questions on about individual strategies in the implementation logs. The exit survey asked for a more global reflection. Across the more than 200 implementation logs aggregating responses to all strategies, 97 percent of teachers said the strategies helped their students make progress toward mastery of the

CCSS. Almost all (90 percent) teachers said the strategies helped them to understand and apply the CCSS.

The exit survey produced a substantially less robust sample than the implementation logs (only 57 pilot teachers responded to the exit survey, while all filled out logs). Here, 76 percent of pilot teachers said that the strategies helped them to understand the CCSS, and 100 percent said the strategies helped them apply the CCSS. 74 percent said that after using *Perspectives*, they were more confident using the CCSS. Sample size, distance from actual implementation and continuing CCSS training outside of *Perspectives* likely explain the difference in these findings; nevertheless, they are substantial.

In interviews and focus groups, both new and veteran teachers expressed enthusiasm for *Perspectives'* alignment with the Common Core. Several teachers said their experience helped them to gain mastery of the CCSS:

> This was my very first time with the Common Core and so I was really nervous, but as we did it I was like, "Wow. The students are getting it and it's not so difficult." They were getting into the deep discussions and so I loved it!

> I'm new to the Common Core because I moved from administration back into the classroom. Because this was based on Common Core, I was able to find a lot of assignments that made me a lot more comfortable with Common Core at the level I taught.

Experienced teachers said that *Perspectives* was an excellent model for the rigor of the Common Core, as this high school English-Language Arts teacher reported:

> I think that it's extremely well organized and thoughtful. I was excited to use those tools. Next year I'm going to start my year out using those strategies and techniques and see how many I can use. They're all really high level strategies. I taught AP and a lot of my students found them challenging. I found them challenging to teach and get in on time. I think it will raise the rigor in the classroom immensely and that's something that we are striving for. That's what Common Core is.

As many of the pilot schools were shifting to the CCSS, teachers said their existing curricula had not yet caught up. These teachers found *Perspectives* helped them to fill gaps in their existing curriculum. "There's so much of that higher level thinking and processing in the Common Core that isn't necessarily easily available in our existing curriculum," said one Idaho teacher. "This helped me to meet that need."

It was particularly interesting to listen to social studies teachers talk about the way *Perspectives* helped them to implement the CCSS literacy shifts in their subject matter instruction. As one middle school teacher explained:

> As a history teacher we're being told that language arts matters, and this allowed us to say that we're supporting language arts, but the concepts and standards we're

pushing from the history side of things is still being met. I thought it worked nicely and served a dual role.

Although teachers cited "time" most often as an obstacle to fully implementing *Perspectives*, several teachers said that the program's fit with the Common Core was likely to be a time-saver for classroom teachers. This New Mexico teacher's comment was typical of these responses:

> Since the texts are leveled using a combination of qualitative, quantitative and conceptual criteria, it gives teachers a lot of freedom. It allows teachers to reach in, grab a challenging text and think about teaching it and what they're doing with it and not spend so much time on test questions. It creates the ability for teachers to be creative and constructionist on their views on education, and also not really stressed out about getting the lesson planned. I see teachers I work with going to create something all new for the first time and falling into a pit and getting overwhelmed.

Classroom observations strongly supported the program's fit with the CCSS. Almost every observation featured serious student engagement with texts, whether in early childhood read-alouds or high school culminating projects.

Professional Development

"I want to know to reach all students with what's being supplied to me, and how to deal with hard questions while still making discussion relevant to my curriculum." – Idaho teacher

In interviews and focus groups, pilot teachers were asked several questions about the kinds of professional development that would help them (and teachers new to *Perspectives*) implement the program. These conversations were wide-ranging, with teachers discussing everything from suggested video training modules to additional site content. This section attempts to distill the major suggestions, identifying which were most popular or innovative.

Teacher Testimonials

Most teachers agreed that teacher testimonials would be the most important way to encourage new teachers to adopt *Perspectives*. They tended to want testimonials at grade level, but in general they thought short videos with teachers talking about their experience would help to overcome the fear of the new, as this middle school teacher explained:

> You have to have testimonials from those of us who did it telling people that it's not more work, it's not new work. It's a lot of what you do now and you can bend your lesson towards that. Older teachers will think it's too much work. New teachers are overwhelmed and will take it and are stressed out. You need to let

people know that you're taking the lessons you already do, bending them, and reminding them that it's not that hard to do.

Teachers who specialized in particular student populations (e.g., ELL, special education, gifted education) universally said they would be interested in testimonials and professional development focused on their areas. ELL teachers were especially interested in effective strategies for differentiation.

Student Testimonials and Classroom Demonstrations

Several teachers said they thought student interviews and testimonials would be the most effective way to spread *Perspectives* adoption. One veteran elementary school teacher suggested interviewing students:

> I think the most effective thing is to listen to a child say this is what we did and we started with this and this is the outcome we came up with. You can't tell me that is not learning. I don't care what anybody says, you look at a little 6, 7, 8 year old kid their smile, their honesty, and their passion - it goes farther then what you can do, what I can do or what anyone in the state can do. Come talk to these kids about what their lives are like and how this has impacted that and I think that would be the best thing.

Other teachers said classroom demonstrations would be likely to encourage new teachers to adopt *Perspectives*, as this Illinois teacher shared:

> Visually seeing it would be great because then you could see what that particular teacher did with her classroom and see the excitement of the kids. Part of doing Teaching Tolerance is to see how it affects the children and how excited they are. If I were an observer, it would make me more willing to participate in the program.

One middle school teacher noted that the most effective classroom demonstrations would focus on students who had received multiple exposures to texts or strategies:

> I would love for somebody to see the excitement I saw in my kids. There was a big difference from the first time exposure to a story to the third or fourth stories. I may have watched one of those videos and tried that first lesson and thought that it didn't work as well for me as it did for that other teacher. It's important for them to see the same group with a first exposure and then see the difference in the reaction of the students.

Early childhood educators in particular said student reactions to stories and activities would be most effective to encourage wider adoption. Middle and high school teachers were less interested in seeing classroom demonstrations with the exception of some of the more complicated strategies and tasks – Socratic Seminars, for example, or some of the Do Something tasks.

Sample Integrated Learning Plans

Almost every teacher interviewed said they would like to see sample ILPs on the *Perspectives* website. Asked about the value of those samples, teachers generally said they would provide ideas and guidance. Teachers expressed concern that without the extensive training available to pilot teachers, new teachers might feel lost without samples, as this Illinois teacher expressed:

> If you first start without the training we had, it could be overwhelming. There are so many activities with so many different pieces. It takes so long to go through all of them. We spent a whole day, and that was just one lesson. It would be nice to go to the website and have three different topics planned out so that [someone] could try it. Here is an entire plan ready to go, here's what you do. Not scripted but ready to go in a PDF you could print out. This is how it could look. You could try it out, and it might encourage you to go back and find activities that you do like instead of being thrown everything. It's overwhelming.

Teachers cautioned that samples should be organized by grade band: "If it said sixth grade I probably wouldn't even open it because it's going to be way too hard for my kids," said a second grade teacher. "You could get your feet wet if there was one for each grade band and you could get used to it without having to plan for it."

Asked whether sample ILPs would discourage teacher innovation, teachers said it would not. One special education teacher compared sample ILPs to her training: "I use a lot of scripted interventions for special ed. When I started this year with a new intervention, I stuck right to the script. As time went on, I could modify it and things in from other things. Being able to see what it's all about and what it's supposed to be about first would be good, and then you could modify as time goes on."

In general, the pilot teachers were very interested in sharing and communicating with other teachers using *Perspectives*. Several teachers said they wished there was some kind of forum or area on the website where they could share ideas for bundling of texts, use of outside resources and tips for executing strategies and tasks.

Thematic Organization of Content

Teachers in third grade and above were very interested in professional development that would provide support for teaching particular themes. This echoed feedback on the central text anthology, where many teachers said they would like to see more suggested bundling of texts into themes. Social studies teachers were particularly interested in professional development that would focus on integrating *Perspectives* into historical eras to ease its fit into their scope and sequence.

A number of teachers said they would like to see *Perspectives* address emerging social issues or other holidays with updates and suggested texts. One elementary teacher described how this might help her practice: "I think it would be helpful to be able to arrange by month or grade level. They could have some hot topics or holidays to help us plan forward, so I could think about what to work on next."

Training for Controversial Issues

More than half of teachers interviewed said they would like to have more professional development resources to support teaching controversial issues in the classroom. While pilot participants varied in their expressed personal comfort with teaching about race and gender, for example, even experienced teachers said that they would like more support. One veteran third grade teacher described her needs this way:

> I think that teachers who want to want to learn and grow want to learn and grow from the best and be able to have those open and honest conversations. I think a lot of time race factors into a lot of it: "Hmm, I don't know, do I want to talk about race, this is touchy, this is iffy, do I feel comfortable talking about this, and are my students going to feel comfortable talking to me about this?" I would like some guidance into what's a question that is open-ended enough so all the kids can participate in a discussion and what are some risk-taker questions.

A key part of the initial *Perspectives* trainings seems to have been the emphasis on teaching tolerance through texts, as opposed to direct instruction. Several teachers said future professional development should continue to focus on this aspect of the program, as it calmed their fears about participation, as in these two examples:

> When we started the training and we were concerned about how we would talk about this stuff, they gave an introduction to the program where they say right away: "You won't be putting your kids on the spot or making them feel like they're awkward or in the spotlight or feeling bad about themselves. You do it through the text."

> We were all concerned about talking about culture without offending our students. But that's not what this is at all. We didn't really know what it was going into it. People going on the website might think that's what it is. But if there's something that explains right at the beginning that you teach tolerance through related texts, that would be very helpful.

A number of pilot teachers, especially in the more politically conservative pilot sites of Alabama and Idaho, said they would like to see videos of teachers modeling effective conversations about controversial issues like race and gender in their classrooms.

Training of Trainers

Many pilot teachers have been asked to conduct *Perspectives* trainings for their staff or district. Some of these teachers were interested in professional development that would help them to do a better job. One Milwaukee teacher described a potential model this way:

> I also think it would be great if there was a trainer of trainers … If you go to your training, and if you go to this training you get to go back and do an abbreviated version for your staff. Obviously that would be something, because there might be

misinterpret the information. If it was a kit or a thing or a presentation that you could give your staff because we always do that as our staff, that if you learn something you can bring it back but having that already done would also be nice because you could ensure what is being told is being told in a similar way.

Pilot teachers were concerned that teachers simply approaching the website without more hands-on training would not be able to have the same kind of positive experience that they had.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This report represents the culmination of a year-long pilot program and formative evaluation of *Perspectives for a Diverse America* occurring in the 2013-2014 school year. Designed by Teaching Tolerance, *Perspectives* is a K-12 curriculum that facilitates instruction in high-quality literacy and anti-bias education. It represents a unique and enriched take on the Common Core. The *Perspectives* curriculum (and accompanying text anthology) attempts to build on the Common Core in at least three ways. First, it seeks to help students "find themselves" in texts and classroom experiences. Second, it hopes to open students' eyes to experiences different from their own. Third, it encourages teachers to go beyond the Common Core toward applied learning and community action through its culminating "Do Something" phase.

The evaluation was initiated in response to Teaching Tolerance's genuine interest in learning from teachers and creating pathways for program improvement. Under the direction of Dr. Kate Shuster, Shuster Consulting, Inc. was contracted to initiate and manage the first pilot and evaluation of *Perspectives*. This is a formative evaluation and, as such, seeks to identify findings relevant to the evaluation questions and goals while remaining open to unique and interesting information from teachers or observations that would assist in improving *Perspectives* development.

A five-phase pilot and evaluation plan was managed by Shuster Consulting, Inc. through the 2013-2014 school year. The design unfolded throughout the school year, including a range of qualitative and quantitative measured used to assess program implementation. Seventy-four teachers across five sites completed the pilot program. They used the *Perspectives* curriculum with more than 3,000 extremely diverse students across grades K-12 throughout the spring of 2014.

Answering the Evaluation Questions

Did the scope and nature of the *Perspectives* curriculum meet teachers' needs?

This study shows that the *Perspectives* materials met teachers' instructional needs across grade levels, teacher experience and diverse classrooms. Teachers were very enthusiastic about the scope and nature of the Central Text Anthology. The overwhelming majority of teachers discovered challenging texts that exposed students to new points of view, introduced important and relevant issues, promoted student engagement and social and emotional learning while fitting within existing curricula.

This was true across all grade levels, with the most room for improvement found in early childhood (K-2) and at the bottom of each grade band (third grade and sixth grade). In focus groups and interviews, teachers said the array of choices was impressive in the well-curated anthology. *Perspectives* is unique because its texts are selected based on literacy criteria as well as students' needs for social and emotional development. Teachers also used those criteria when choosing texts for their classrooms.

The Integrated Learning Plan structure helped teachers structure their instruction to match the literacy shifts of the Common Core while working toward a culminating project. Veteran teachers found that the *Perspectives* structure matched well with their understanding of best practices in instructional design. Newer teachers reported that the ILP planning process helped them to plan more effectively. Overall, teachers found the curriculum was easy to navigate and fit into their classrooms, as this Idaho teacher described:

> I appreciated that it was all laid out. It was easy to print it up and use it. There wasn't a lot of planning that I had to do. With everything that we're teaching and everything I have to do, I was worried going into this that there was going to be a lot of prep work. But I can see this being something that teachers will really use because it's all there for you.

Perspectives' strategies and tasks were grade-appropriate, challenging and useful. Teachers found a sufficient array of strategies and favorably cited the accompanying rubrics and guides. The curriculum met teachers' needs for challenging texts, vocabulary instruction, oral literacy skill-building and challenging writing assignments. In addition, teacher reactions to the "Do Something" phase show that those tasks met teachers' needs for meaningful culminating projects.

Did *Perspectives* improve teacher capacity in implementing the Common Core State Standards and the goals of anti-bias education?

This study shows that *Perspectives* has the potential to significantly improve teacher capacity in implementing the Common Core. Even teachers with substantial Common Core training reported that the ease of use and strong supporting materials improved their ability to convey the literacy shifts of the Common Core in their classrooms. For teachers new to the Common Core, *Perspectives* strongly influenced their teaching. Teachers who collaborated across classrooms using *Perspectives* reported even greater effects, as the structure allowed them to plan more effectively. Across the more than 200 implementation logs aggregating responses to all strategies, 97 percent of teachers said the strategies helped their students make progress toward mastery of the CCSS. Almost all (90 percent) teachers said the strategies helped them to understand and apply the CCSS.

Perspectives is very promising for encouraging the wider adoption of high-quality anti-bias education. Pilot teachers reported that the curriculum allowed them to have new and meaningful discussions about identity, diversity, justice and action in their classrooms. The curriculum made teachers feel comfortable and confident discussing issues relevant to their students' lives and communities, even when those issues were controversial. One Alabama teacher described a moment when one of her students

brought up transgender issues in her classroom as an example: "I think that if it had come up without the resources to accompany teaching it, it would have been uncomfortable because I wouldn't have known how to go about talking about it."

Teacher experiences with *Perspectives* were so meaningful that many encouraged others in their building or professional networks to use the curriculum. Based on administrator observations of the pilot program in action, at least a dozen pilot teachers have already been invited to train other teachers in their teams, schools or districts. During classroom observations, it was not uncommon for the observing team to be taken aside by school administrators to comment on *Perspectives'* effectiveness and ask how it could be implemented in additional classrooms.

What effects of using *Perspectives* did teachers see in their classrooms?

Perspectives teachers reported substantial classroom effects in five major areas: literacy development, student engagement, empathy, classroom climate and student behavior. Every teacher interviewed told a story about a time during the pilot program when their students had an advance in social or emotional learning.

Teachers universally said that *Perspectives* curriculum built students' literacy skills in all of the dimensions measured, including learning academic vocabulary, close engagement with texts, reading comprehension, oral literacy skills and writing abilities. In interviews, many noted that the pilot window was too short and mixed in with other instruction to attribute overall literacy gains directly to the *Perspectives* intervention.

The evaluation found that teachers were pleased with students' high levels of engagement with *Perspectives.* This engagement contributed to productive discussions and student enthusiasm for subject material and culminating tasks. Many teachers said that students displayed unprecedented levels of enthusiasm for the writing and "Do Something" tasks – they theorized that this was because the projects were relevant and important to students' lives in new ways. Teachers found that the phased ILP approach also built student capacity. As the phases progressed, students began to take more ownership over their learning, with pilot classrooms transitioning from direct instruction to student-driven tasks.

One of the major theories underlying *Perspectives* is the idea that texts can generate empathy in readers, building understanding and awareness of diverse experiences. Pilot teachers observed this phenomenon in their classrooms across grade levels and subject material, whether they were in diverse or relatively homogenous classrooms. Teachers reported that the scaffolded materials created a "safe" space to talk about classroom and community issues by focusing students on texts rather than on individuals. At the same time, "window" type texts exposed students to new perspectives and created a heightened sense of awareness of injustices both historical and contemporary.

Teachers across the country reported that the curriculum helped them to build classroom community and engaged students with their communities in new ways. Classroom discussions in the pilot program built trust and communication in classrooms. The "Do Something" task, explicitly designed for community engagement, took different forms. Students made posters, murals and picture books shared with the school community; others created intramural activity programs and school-wide awareness campaigns. All teachers agreed that this task brought their students together, empowered

and inspired their students, and helped their students to understand themselves and their community. This is a striking degree of unanimity, even for a small and self-selected sample.

Improved student conduct was not measured explicitly in the study instruments, but was a topic raised independently by many teachers in interviews and focus groups. Teachers saw connections between *Perspectives* and effects such as reduced conflict between students and increased tolerance of differences. These are likely to be effects of text-generated empathy and community building; future research might examine student-level indicators such as disciplinary infractions and suspensions to probe this effect more deeply.

How did findings relate to the research informing the *Perspectives* design?

This study identified three major research-based concepts that were important for to the goals and design of *Perspectives*. Those concepts, all related to student level outcomes, are:

- Complex and relevant texts can increase student engagement.
- Appropriate text selection can prejudice by creating empathy.
- Appropriate curricular design can promote collective action.

There are a few important limits on the present evaluation's ability to confirm these outcomes. First, and most importantly, the sample size here was self-selected. Teachers who signed up for the pilot program were, in general, already in agreement with Teaching Tolerance materials and goals; in many cases, they reported that they already infused (or tried to infuse) social justice education in their classroom. Sample size, while always an issue in any evaluation, probably did not play as much of a part – the diversity of grade levels, geography, students served and school types made the sample more robust than it might appear. Second, the evaluation was entirely teacher facing. Student level measures would add substantially to the many teacher accounts of improved student outcomes in all three conceptual areas.

Even with these limitations, the findings collected here do show strong connections between academic research and the *Perspectives* curriculum. There was near-unanimity across essentially every teacher-level measure, whether qualitative or quantitative.

While a self-selected sample often creates external validity questions, in this study it may add power to some findings – in particular, improved teacher efficacy and positive reactions to the materials. The pilot teachers, as a group, already saw themselves as working toward anti-bias education and had explored other materials in this area. If this group saw their practice improved and the materials outstanding, the effects might be even greater for teachers with little background. Although the subjects of the research were teachers, they are the individuals best suited to report on outcomes such as student academic achievement, student conduct and classroom community – in many cases, they are legally charged to report on these outcomes.

Even with its stated limitations, this evaluation presents important findings that support the relationship between *Perspectives* and the prior research that inspired its creation and design.

First, the complex and relevant *Perspectives* texts strongly engaged students. The Common Core stipulates that teachers use rigorous texts to challenge students and build literacy skills across the curriculum. *Perspectives* pilot teachers took that mandate a step further, marrying rigor and relevance. This evaluation shows that careful consideration of including both "mirror" and "window" texts created motivated learners. This is in line with research demonstrating that text selection matters tremendously for academic, social and emotional outcomes. One advantage of *Perspectives* is that it combines culturally relevant and anti-bias education with rigorous texts so that teachers do not have to choose between their students' academic and socio-emotional needs. As *Perspectives* builds a bridge between cognitive and affective learning, it also represents a constructive application of multicultural education, allowing it to move beyond an "addition" to the curriculum to a central element of instruction.

Second, the *Perspectives* pilot evaluation lends support to the idea that challenging texts and accompanying strategies can induce feelings of empathy in students. Teachers reported that when students were exposed to other groups and perspectives through texts, they expressed feelings of empathy and concern. This is precisely what extended contact theory predicts. The integrated, multi-phase approach of the *Perspectives* curriculum makes it possible for teachers to confront intergroup tensions in a new way. Programs to improve intergroup relations have often had a relatively low success rate (Paluck & Green, 2009). Key reasons include a lack of sustained classroom time, a lack of integration into other learning and a failure to address the underlying causes of discrimination and disparate treatment. Longitudinal use of *Perspectives* materials (which include attention to the action and justice elements of the curricular sequence) may help educators see real results in improved school and community climates.

Third, *Perspectives* shows promise for promoting collective action as part of an integrated instructional approach. Research demonstrates that it is difficult to participate effectively in prejudice reduction strategies while simultaneously working for social change through collective action. *Perspectives* resolves this dilemma through instructional sequencing and the arrangement of the four major anti-bias domains (identity, diversity, justice, action). Teachers reporting on student engagement in the final "Do Something" phase reported extensive student engagement in applied learning through collective action. This is likely related to student perceptions of the utility of their actions:

> Learners of all ages are more motivated when they can see the usefulness of what they are learning and when they can use that information to do something that has an impact on others – especially their local community. (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000, 61)

It is difficult to participate effectively in prejudice reduction strategies while simultaneously working for social change through collective action. Fortunately, *Perspectives* has taken a meaningful step toward demonstrating that teachers do not have to choose between these two essential approaches. Emerging research into the psychological and social mechanisms that entrench intergroup inequalities supports *Perspectives'* integrated approach for social justice.

Recommendations

This study offers two kinds of recommendations. It summarizes the major advice teachers gave for program improvement and professional development. In addition, it suggests some directions for future research that might help Teaching Tolerance learn more about the impact of *Perspectives*.

Suggestions for Improving the Central Text Anthology.

In interviews, focus groups and implementation logs, teachers were encouraged to suggest ways to improve the central text anthology if they felt gaps were present for their grade level or subject matter. Major findings were as follows:

- **Focus at the bottom of grade bands**. Teachers at the bottom of grade bands (kindergarten, third grade and fifth grade) in particular often reported that they were not able to find enough texts for use in their classrooms. K-2 teachers in particular expressed an interest in texts that could be used for reading instruction (with sight words) and also additional informational texts.
- **Illustrations.** Early childhood educators, particularly kindergarten teachers, said they wanted more pictures and illustrations in texts. They said the illustrations that were available should be able to be enlarged or shared separately for student examination.
- **Additional suggested texts.** Teachers across all grade levels said they wanted more recommendations for related texts, whether those were contained in the text anthology or not. Many teachers said they wanted an Amazon-like recommender ("If you like this text, you might also like…"). Early childhood educators in particular asked for recommendations for picture books they might order from their anthology.
- **Visual texts**. Secondary teachers asked for more graphs, charts, political cartoons and maps to supplement subject matter instruction.
- **History instruction support.** Social studies teachers across grade levels wished to see more texts to support world history instruction. Several social studies teachers said they also wanted to see texts arranged on a timeline of world and American history so they could more easily choose texts to fit into their existing scope and sequence.
- **Subject matter expansion.** Many teachers said they were looking for texts specific to bullying and could not find enough to fit their needs. Other suggestions included more texts about Asian students, more texts about disabilities and texts dealing with domestic abuse, labor issues (particularly for the 3-5 grade band) and Arab-Americans.
- **Citations.** Secondary subject teachers said they wished texts had full citations available so that students could cite *Perspectives* texts easily and appropriately in their research papers.
- **Consideration of copying**. Photocopies were an issue for teachers with limited budgets. They hoped for texts that could be exported into Word so that they could be shrunk for more economical distribution.

Suggestions for Improving Supporting Materials

Even as teachers found the supporting materials extremely helpful, they offered a number of suggestions. The major ideas are summarized here.

- **Ability to modify**. Most teachers said they would like to be able to modify graphic organizers and rubrics to meet the needs of their specific classes, including shaping to focus on their specific essential question or specific needs.
- **Consideration of distribution methods**. Two issues were at play here. On the one hand, many teachers wished to distribute copies to students (for example, multiple Word Wheels), but wanted them to be more easily shrunk for economy while still remaining large enough for essential information. On the other hand, many teachers (especially in secondary) were working in close-to-paperless classrooms and wanted versions of supporting materials that could be filled in online and shared via Google Documents and similar tools.
- **Learning targets**. Many teachers, particularly elementary teachers, said they would like student-level "I can" style learning target appended to strategies and tasks.
- **Handwriting space**. Elementary teachers often expressed that handouts could better fit their students' still-developing handwriting.

Suggestions for Professional Development.

In interviews and focus groups, teachers were asked to provide suggestions for additional professional development resources that would support their implementation of *Perspectives* and the work of teachers new to the curriculum. Major ideas are summarized here:

- **Teacher testimonials.** Most teachers agreed that teacher testimonials would be the most important way to encourage new teachers to adopt *Perspectives*. They tended to want testimonials at grade level, but in general they thought short videos with teachers talking about their experience
- **Student testimonials.** Several teachers said they thought student interviews and testimonials would be the most effective way to spread *Perspectives* adoption
- **Classroom demonstrations**. Many teachers said that classroom demonstrations would help them to teach more effectively and help teachers to use some of the more complicated strategies.
- **Sample Integrated Learning Plans**. Almost every teacher interviewed said they would like to see sample ILPs on the *Perspectives* website. They thought these samples should be organized by grade band.

- **Thematic Organization of Content.** Teachers in third grade and above were very interested in professional development that would provide support for teaching particular themes. This echoed feedback on the central text anthology, where many teachers said they would like to see more suggested bundling of texts into themes.
- **Training for Controversial Issues.** More than half of teachers interviewed said they would like to have more professional development resources to support teaching controversial issues in the classroom.
- **Training of Trainers**. Many pilot teachers have been asked to conduct *Perspectives* trainings for their staff or district. Some of these teachers were interested in professional development that would help them to do a better job.

Suggestions for Future Research.

Perspectives holds considerable promise for improving teacher capacity and student outcomes. Future research should consider aligning with the existing research and building on this evaluation's design in two key areas: student level measures and comparative analysis. Examining student level outcomes in literacy and socio-emotional learning will allow the curriculum to learn more about its successes, limits and possibilities. A variety of psychometric instruments could help Teaching Tolerance to better understand its impact on students; the results could encourage more teachers and school leaders to adopt the program.

Additionally, comparative analysis will create a more solid base for program development and expansion. This analysis could be internal, with student and teacher pre-tests and post-tests, or it could be more rigorous and experimental, including control groups or comparable approaches. Future research on the curriculum promises to be challenging, given its teacher-centered and highly differentiated approach. This research is still important: *Perspectives* is a unique contribution to education with important implications for the way we teach and our students learn. As such, it deserves additional study.

About the Principal Investigator

Dr. Kate Shuster of Shuster Consulting, Inc. supervised the planning, implementation and evaluation of the *Perspectives* pilot. Shuster has been the principal or assistant investigator for multiple large and small-scale program evaluations. She was the lead statistician for the value-added assessment of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Beyond the Bell program, a senior analyst for multiple evaluations of After School All-Stars Los Angeles and the principal investigator for the first evaluation of the Partners in Education mentoring program. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Studies from Claremont Graduate University.

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