



## Impact Report: Classroom Library Project June 2021

### History

In Spring 2012, the Center for Partnerships to Improve Education (CPIE) launched Classroom Library Project (CLP), an initiative promoting the availability and use of diverse children’s books in classrooms. The voluntary program involves College of Charleston majors in early childhood, elementary, and special education during their clinical practice internship (student teaching) semester. Each intern is invited to select three titles from a list of children’s books. CPIE then purchases two copies of the selected books—one for the intern’s future classroom and one for the cooperating teacher’s classroom. In exchange, the intern is expected to incorporate at least one of the books into classroom instruction during clinical practice and submit a reflective essay describing which book was used, how it was used, and the intern’s perception of the lesson.

CLP was initially conceived to run in conjunction with the National African American Read-In, an effort to encourage communities to read together during Black History Month, with emphasis on African American books and authors. In the beginning, CLP occurred only in the spring semester and all books on the list reflected Black history themes. At that time, the program was limited to early childhood and elementary education majors. In 2013-2014, CLP was expanded to include both fall and spring semesters, as well as interns majoring in special education. The fall semester book list consisted of children’s books dealing with death/dying, disability, chronic health conditions, and mental health. The spring semester list continued to highlight children’s books written by or about African Americans. Both book lists are updated periodically to add new titles and remove titles that are no longer available, not eligible for free shipping, rarely selected, or deemed too expensive.

Participation in CLP has grown due to collaboration with the Office of Student Services and Credentialing (OSSC). That office maintains regular contact with clinical practice interns, cooperating teachers, and college supervisors before and during the student teaching experience and has been instrumental in encouraging students to register for the program and submit their reflections on time. From Spring 2012 to Fall 2020, CLP engaged a total of 259 clinical practice interns.

<b>Fall 2011</b>	--	<b>Spring 2012</b>	3 interns
<b>Fall 2012</b>	--	<b>Spring 2013</b>	0 interns
<b>Fall 2013</b>	4 interns	<b>Spring 2014</b>	7 interns
<b>Fall 2014</b>	5 interns	<b>Spring 2015</b>	14 interns
<b>Fall 2015</b>	12 interns	<b>Spring 2016</b>	19 interns
<b>Fall 2016</b>	8 interns	<b>Spring 2017</b>	29 interns
<b>Fall 2017</b>	3 interns	<b>Spring 2018</b>	18 interns
<b>Fall 2018</b>	13 interns	<b>Spring 2019</b>	45 interns
<b>Fall 2019</b>	15 interns	<b>Spring 2020</b>	52 interns
<b>Fall 2020</b>	12 interns		
	<b>72 interns (28%)</b>		<b>187 interns (72%)</b>

## Scope of Report

In 2016, CPIE authored a report documenting the impact of Classroom Library Project during the period spring 2012 through spring 2016. Program registration forms and reflective essays submitted by the clinical practice interns provided the data for that report. A subsequent impact report was developed in 2019 using data from a survey administered to the 83 cooperating teachers who had been involved with CLP from the program's start. Both past reports can be accessed on the [CPIE website](#). The current report extends the initial impact report focusing on clinical practice interns, and therefore will provide data reflecting fall 2016 through fall 2020. Participation and spending totals since the program's spring 2012 start will also be included.

## Program Reach

The reach of Classroom Library Project has grown significantly since the program's inception. From spring 2012 to spring 2016, the program involved 64 interns and over 1300 P-12 students in 36 schools across four school districts. Participation more than tripled in the years following, from fall 2016 to fall 2020. During that period, the program involved 195 interns and over 4000 students in 62 different schools across four districts. The number of P-12 students involved was determined using the class size indicated by each intern on their CLP registration form.

Limited availability of information about cooperating teachers makes it hard to determine how many have participated. In 2018-2019, Classroom Library Project reached its 100<sup>th</sup> cooperating teacher, and CPIE is confident well over 200 have now been involved. CPIE does not track cooperating teachers but is aware that some may have participated in the program more than once. Based on reviews of cooperating teacher names and email addresses provided by the clinical practice interns on registration forms, it appears that at least fourteen (14) teachers have been involved with CLP two or more times. CPIE has no way of knowing if teachers experienced name/email changes or school/district transfers, therefore the exact number of cooperating teachers is unknown. Overall participation information is provided below.

### *Participation rates by school district (spring 2012-fall 2020)*

	<b>Interns</b>	<b>P-12 students</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Title I schools**</b>	<b>Special Education classrooms***</b>
<b>Berkeley County School District</b>	52	1153	17	9 (53%)	9 (17%)
<b>Charleston County School District</b>	178	3583	46*	21 (46%)	34 (19%)
<b>Dorchester School District 2</b>	27	580	11	7 (64%)	9 (33.3%)
<b>Dorchester School District 4</b>	2	36	1	1 (100%)	2 (100%)
	<b>259</b>	<b>5352</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>38 (51%)</b>	<b>54 (21%)</b>

*\*four interns did not identify their school*

*\*\*based on state Title I lists as reviewed in May 2017 and May 2021*

*\*\*\*indicates the number of interns identifying as a special education major and therefore placed in a special education resource or self-contained classroom.*

## Financial Impact

During seventeen (17) semesters of Classroom Library Project, CPIE has invested an estimated \$16,080 or \$62.08 per intern. This calculates to \$3.00 per P-12 student. These funds were used to purchase books. In the eight semesters spanning spring 2012 through spring 2016, expenditures

were approximately \$3,300 or \$51.60 per intern (\$2.50 per P-12 student). From fall 2016 through fall 2020, spending increased to nearly \$12,780. This represents nine semesters and calculates to \$65.54 per intern (n=195) or \$3.15 per P-12 student (n=4047). During this time, the program experienced a sharp rise in participation and reached an important milestone, both of which contributed to increased spending. In 2018-2019 each participant received a fourth book titled "Jake's 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School" to celebrate the involvement of over 100 cooperating teachers.

### **Impact on Teaching**

Each participating intern was expected to use at least one of the books in classroom instruction during clinical practice internship and submit a reflective essay on how the book was used and their perceptions of the lesson. Most interns fulfilled this requirement. Prior to spring 2020, the overall completion rate (spring 2012-fall 2020) of the reflective essays was approximately 94%. Not surprisingly, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools into emergency virtual mode in spring 2020, the completion of reflections was negatively impacted. Only 29% of participating clinical practice interns submitted an essay that semester. The following semester, the submission rate rebounded back to 100%.

CPIE previously analyzed the reflective essays submitted spring 2012 through spring 2016 and described how the interns used the children's books to address social emotional needs, engage and relate to students, and increase their own awareness of children's books as teaching resources. Those findings are detailed in the 2012-2016 impact report posted on CPIE's webpage. For the current report, CPIE analyzed reflections submitted fall 2016 through fall 2020 and, similarly, they revealed how the books were used and additional benefits they provided. Interns intended to use the books to support academic learning, social emotional or character education, and for other purposes. In the process, they also benefitted through improved student engagement and increased awareness of children's books as teaching resources.

### *Academic Learning*

The clinical practice interns demonstrated resourcefulness and creativity in how they incorporated the books into classroom instruction. A few interns described purchasing additional copies or adapted versions of the books to maximize student engagement. One intern working in a special education classroom noted, "Thanks to resources like Teachers Pay Teachers, I was able to just buy an adapted version of this novel for my students. This version offered shortened chapters as well as picture-supported text." Two interns described arts-infused lessons using books they had received. One utilized dance choreography to teach mood and figurative language in writing and reading and the other blended art and creative writing.

Clinical practice interns described using the children's books to help students learn social studies, reading, writing, English/Language Arts (ELA), science, and cross-disciplinary content and skills. The books were used at various points in lessons or units, and in some cases were used as mentor text and revisited throughout instruction. They engaged the students in ways that provided for deeper learning or understanding of the material. According to one intern,

*"Students made connections between the text and their social studies unit and it was interesting to hear connections they had made that I had not recognized in the text when reading it on my own."*

Another intern noted,

*“We had already read non-fiction text about the antebellum era and slavery, so reading a historical fiction book with my class allowed them to bridge the emotional piece of perspectives included in the standard.”*

For some books, the theme was related to the content to be learned. Examples include books set during the periods of the Great Migration or the Great Depression. Other books were used for skill building (e.g., identifying text features) and therefore did not require a theme. The children’s books supported academic learning of the following topics:

Great Migration and family heritage	American symbols
Abolitionist movement	Literature circle on the Great Depression
Three branches of government	ELA unit on justice
Extension of science lesson on plants and nuts	Compare different texts about the same topic
Compare/contrast works by the same author	Compare/contrast poetry, prose, and drama
Write arguments and cite evidence	Folktales unit
Symbolism	Rhyming words and rhyme patterns
Four seasons	Historical fiction
Reading/writers’ workshops on various topics	Story elements
Text features (fiction and non-fiction)	Book study
Mentor text for poetry unit	IB unit on sharing the planet
Reading fluency and comprehension	Ask/answer questions about a text
Opinion writing	IEP goals on citing evidence and comprehension
Perspectives of different social classes in antebellum South Carolina	
Use illustrations to better understand a text and make inferences	

#### *Social Emotional Learning/Character Education*

In addition to developing academic knowledge and skills, the books were used to help children with their personal development. This was accomplished through lessons dealing with social emotional learning and character education. In a few cases, the interns described using the books to address a particular incident, behavior expectation, or collective experience of the children within the classroom. The books were commonly shared as interactive read alouds during morning meeting, after lunch, or prior to dismissal. Some clinical practice interns described blended lessons combining academic learning and personal development, whereas others discussed lessons focused solely on personal development. The social emotional learning and character education topics addressed through the children’s books are listed below.

Social emotional awareness	Being kind
To address a recent playground incident	Self-confidence
Dealing with fidgety behavior	Selflessness and loving kindness
Self-control, focus, and thinking before acting	Dealing with stress and anxiety
Living with a disability (blindness)	Empathy
Character traits of influential people	Writing positive words about others
Cultural differences/accepting differences	Building community within the classroom
Making dream boards	Loving your hair
Solving problems in our lives	To address mean/disrespectful behavior
Who is special to me?	Perseverance
Hard work and determination	Habits of mind
Empathy and compassion	Dealing with loss/grief

Celebrating your uniqueness	To address staying focused and in your seat
Appropriate brain break activities	Different perspectives/points of view
Making peace and cooperation	It's okay to fail or be afraid
Finding your voice and helping others find theirs	Being a risk taker
Dealing with anger	Being a good friend
Adjusting to change	Recognizing your feelings
Coping strategies	Worrying
To prepare for the return of a teacher whose son recently died	

### *Other Uses*

Some spring semester clinical practice interns used the books as the basis of ad hoc Black History Month lessons. These lessons were implemented as interactive read alouds about a person, event, or period. Other interns used the books to fulfill college course requirements. For example, one intern used a children's book to implement a family engagement activity focused on reading comprehension, and another completed a candidate work sample assignment on a unit based on one of the books. Several interns noted that the books were also available in the classroom for students to read independently. A few interns acknowledged that the books they selected were too complex for their students or were better suited for a unit not slated to be covered during their clinical practice internship.

### *Student engagement*

The interns reported high student engagement with the selected books. Registration for Classroom Library Project ends after the interns have been in the classroom for two or three weeks, giving them time to get to know and consider their students' interests when choosing the books. Additionally, interns are encouraged to involve their cooperating teachers. For one intern, one of the selected books resonated especially well with the students because they had previously met the illustrator. This prompted much excitement for the book and associated lesson.

The spring semester books all feature African American characters, and several spring interns noted the racial diversity of the books as a positive attribute. Interestingly, some highlighted the value of having books with African American characters in a classroom with mostly African American students while another discussed the importance of having books with African American characters so that the few African Americans in the class "can relate." Not only did the diverse books support instruction, but they also provided opportunities to connect with students and grow their excitement for reading. In some cases, the topic of the book resonated with students. One intern noted,

*"The book is about a topic the students already enjoy talking about—their hair"*

Another intern wrote,

*"The class as a whole regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status seemed to really enjoy the book and were all excited as soon as I mentioned Michael Jordan in the title"*

Other interns discussed how the experience of reading the books captivated their students. Interns said the following,

*"Because students were only given snit bits [sic] of the story, they were very intrigued to find out how the story panned out. One student even started reading the book that afternoon."*

*"...the book left off on a cliffhanger! [One student] liked the book so much that she looked up to see if there was a second book, which there is."*

*"...part of this project that really stuck with me was that if the teacher demonstrates a love of reading, then the students will pick up on it as well. Students often caught me looking at [the book] during center time or during transitions in order to see what we were reading that day and students made comments such as "[Teacher], don't read without us!" or "[Teacher], you just can't put that book down can you!"*

#### *Resource for Teaching*

Several interns commented about their experience of incorporating the children's book into instruction. For some, the project gave them a sense of autonomy. Others were amazed at how useful the books can be in teaching a range of topics. During the spring 2020 semester, after schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some interns reported using technology platforms such as Seesaw and Photo Booth to conduct read alouds, a demonstration of their resourcefulness. Interns wrote,

*"The book was a perfect way to show the students that text structures can be used in many different forms of writing and there can be more than one text structure used in a single piece."*

*"Th[is] project helped me to see how texts I was initially unfamiliar with can be used to teach standards and texts in new and exciting ways. Both the students and I found a stronger appreciation for these texts and writers through collaboration and analysis."*

*"It was also interesting to see how one simple book could be used for many other lessons, not just ELA."*

*"Through reading this, I was able to tie in several different areas of standards including symbolism in social studies, compare and contrast, social studies then and now, visual art and opinions."*

*"This was a great addition to my student teaching experience. It allowed me to plan something of my own and practice implementing adapted information for my students."*

#### **Summary**

At a manageable \$62 per intern, Classroom Library Project has provided diverse children's books to clinical practice interns and local classrooms for nearly nine years. Over 259 clinical practice interns and 5,352 P-12 students have been involved since the program's inception. Overwhelmingly, the interns expressed gratefulness for the books on behalf of themselves and their cooperating teachers. The books were used primarily for academic learning and social emotional learning. Additionally, interns used them for Black History Month lessons and to complete clinical practice internship assignments. The interns described how the books contributed to student engagement and served as important teaching resources. Their reflective essays provided anecdotes on how the books were used and regarded by the interns. As one intern wrote, "Overall, this was a very memorable part of my time as a student teacher!" It is clear from the reflections that Classroom Library Project is a highly valued initiative that has positive impact on interns and P-12 students.