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Embracing New Experiences: Young Adult Literature About the Immigrant Experience

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Embracing New Experiences: Young Adult Literature About the Immigrant Experience

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify themes in quality young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States. The researcher questioned which themes are evident in young adult immigrant literature. To pursue this information, the researcher analyzed highly recommended young adult realistic fiction published from 2000 to 2017. Twelve novels were selected, read, and coded. After the first reading, two novels were eliminated; therefore, ten novels are reported. Analysis revealed six themes including: causes of immigration, assimilation, perseverance, identity, socioeconomic status, and stereotypes.

EMBRACING NEW EXPERIENCES: YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE
ABOUT THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

A Graduate Research Paper
Submitted to the
Division of School Library Studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Ashley Hoppenjan

December 2018

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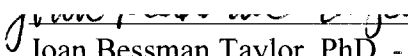
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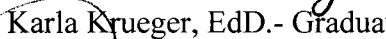
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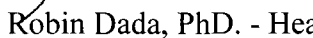
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify themes in quality young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States. The researcher questioned which themes are evident in young adult immigrant literature. To pursue this information, the researcher analyzed highly recommended young adult realistic fiction published from 2000 to 2017. Twelve novels were selected, read, and coded. After the first reading, two novels were eliminated; therefore, ten novels are reported. Analysis revealed six themes including: causes of immigration, assimilation, perseverance, identity, socioeconomic status, and stereotypes.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Imagine leaving your homeland to pursue life in a different country. Couple learning a new culture and language with navigating the challenges puberty presents. While grappling with changes that make it difficult to understand yourself, other people grapple with understanding you. This scenario showcases a real situation some young adults face in the United States, and educators, including teacher librarians, can provide advocacy for immigrants and their communities.

Problem Statement

Students in American schools are becoming more diverse, which requires educators to adapt services to meet a variety of needs. A major source of this diversity is the influx of people born outside the United States relocating and making their home in America. As a result, immigrants and nonimmigrants require support in understanding one another. An approach for building such understanding is providing exposure to literature that represents the diversity of society. Therefore, to appropriately serve their stakeholders, teacher librarians will benefit from learning how to select literature that represents the immigrant experience.

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) periodically releases position statements to guide teacher librarians in their decision-making on topics of urgency or confusion. According to the AASL (2010) Position Statement on the School Librarian's Role in Reading, a foundational component of school library programming is that "school librarians practice responsive collection development and support print-rich environments that reflect the curriculum and the diverse learning needs of the school

community” (para. 7). To meet the diverse learning needs of the school community, librarians must be cognizant of students’ backgrounds. While not every student has directly experienced being an immigrant, many will know immigrants and may struggle with understanding the immigrant experience as immigrants and children of immigrants join their classrooms. Integration of immigrant literature will help students from all backgrounds build sensitivity toward one another. Also, the inclusion of this literature will enable achievement of the AASL (2017) *National School Library Standards*. Specifically, it will support students with the Shared Foundation: Include, which articulates expectations for learners to appreciate other perspectives and identify with the stories, thinking, and experiences of others. Reading immigrant literature allows students to practice the standard because it represents the diversity of society, which is characterized by an immigrant population.

The population of immigrants in the United States is significant. The year 2000 marked the first decade in the last 50 years in which the immigrant population of the United States exceeded 10% of the total population, and the immigrant population has continued to increase since then (Zong & Batalova, 2017). In fact, the 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS) revealed that “immigrants and their U.S.-born children now number approximately 84.3 million people, or 27 percent of the overall U.S. population” (Zong & Batalova, 2017, para. 6).

With changes in demographics, a need exists to provide students with access to quality immigrant literature including immigrant fiction. According to Boelhower (1981), immigrant fiction is defined by the presence of “an immigrant protagonist who represents an ethnic world view, comes to America with great expectations, and through a series of

trials is led to reconsider them in terms of his final status” (p. 5). When immigrants have access to immigrant fiction, they recognize that their identity is valued. Knowing that their bicultural status is honored is important to immigrants and children of immigrants because children who adapt to life in a new country without abandoning their native culture have a stronger sense of identity and pride, which fosters more successful assimilation (Perez, 2007).

Not only will access to immigrant fiction benefit immigrants and children of immigrants, but it will also influence nonimmigrants. Quintero (2009) asserts “that the ‘texts’ students and teachers ‘decode’ should contain images of their own concrete, situated experiences with the world and the transnational global realities of neighbors, near and far” (p. 79). When literature reflects authentic experiences, it empowers readers to make connections, so they better understand and appreciate society’s diversification.

Previous research has focused on how reading immigrant fiction impacts teachers and students by helping them learn about the immigrant experience (Gold, 2008; Graff, 2010; Gregor & Green, 2012; Heineke, 2014; Lewis, 2014; Stewart & Patterson, 2016). Prior studies have explored how educators may learn about diversity and assimilation, which are factors that may affect teaching and learning. Further, previous research has shown how immigrants are able to make connections between their lives and those of protagonists in young adult immigrant literature. Nonetheless, more information is needed about themes of quality immigrant fiction. Such knowledge will benefit librarians in text selection as they seek to enhance their collections. Consequently, their patrons will benefit from enriched access to literature.

Summary of Problem Statement

A lack of research exists about the features and themes of young adult realistic fiction that may be helpful in guiding librarians' selection of quality young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience, which makes it difficult to provide access to texts that foster connections and sensitivity between immigrants and nonimmigrants.

Purpose

The purpose of this content analysis is to ascertain features and themes of quality young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States that may foster connections and sensitivity between immigrants and nonimmigrants.

Research Question

What features and themes that may foster connections and sensitivity between immigrants and nonimmigrants are evident in quality young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States?

Assumptions

Assumptions exist regarding this study. One assumption is that common themes are shared among young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience. Another assumption is that patrons want access to young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience.

Limitations

The study is limited to young adult realistic fiction texts about the immigrant experience in the United States. Only books considered highly recommended on the H.W. Wilson Core List, which were published between 2000 and 2017 are included because this represents quality literature published within the aforementioned timeframe

of immigrant population growth in the United States. Further, only texts held by at least 300 Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) member libraries are included because books that may be accessed at those libraries are ones that are the most widely available.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to ascertain themes of quality young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States. Previous research conducted about this genre may be categorized in a variety of ways. Researchers have completed studies to determine how reading immigrant literature affects educators and students. Also, researchers have studied elements of young adult literature about the immigrant experience. These elements were selected as relevant to this research project because they help facilitate connections between the outcomes of studying immigrant literature and the elements that may evoke those outcomes. Therefore, nuances from each study inform the methodology of the current study.

Impact of Reading Immigrant Literature on Educators

Researchers have conducted many studies to determine how reading immigrant literature affects educators. Graff (2010) recognized a problem in the escalation of anti-immigrant sentiments in the United States, and she believed that educators may foster critical thinking and be change agents. Therefore, she sought to learn how analyzing the construction of immigrants in children's and young adult immigrant literature influenced teachers' communication about immigrants. She engaged 12 students in a graduate course, collecting data from them in two stages. During the course, she collected data including teachers' personal response journals and her own research observation notes. Each student read 12-20 books, studying immigrants' experiences and connecting their interpretations of the immigrants' experiences with data from political science and sociological research. A year later, she followed up with the group of 12, collecting data

from them via teacher interviews. In the journal prompts and interviews, Graff asked the teachers to consider ideas such as the feelings the coursework evoked, the differences in ideologies with which they grappled, and the experiences they underwent using multicultural literature in their classrooms. Graff analyzed journals and notes thematically and analyzed the interviews via Gee's discourse analysis framework. She found that literature helped educators learn about the world and their own thought processes. Specifically, they became more humble, recognized the humanity of immigrants, and supported more heterogeneous communities. Further, the teachers demonstrated recognition that immigrants are unique, and the assimilation process may be problematic.

In a similar study, Gregor and Green (2012) engaged graduate students in a project involving analysis of immigrant literature; however, they also required teachers to write immigrant literature. The aim of their research was to support graduate students who taught immigrants by increasing their understanding of immigrant experiences. Two groups of practicing teachers were study participants who read, critiqued, and responded to a variety of immigrant literature prior to researching immigration and writing a children's immigration story. The researchers analyzed the teachers' graduate work to identify themes in learning, which included factors that cause people to emigrate, the adjustments that immigrants must make to a new culture, and the cultural differences among immigrant groups living in the United States. This enabled both the professors and students to learn how reading and writing about the immigrant experience may impact teachers' knowledge.

Heineke (2014) also conducted research with practicing teachers, but she engaged preservice teachers in her research as well. She perceived a problem with the amount of training teachers of English learners complete to prepare them to work with their target student population. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to determine how reading multicultural picture books affected their preparation. In particular, she investigated how participation in literature circles supports teachers' dialogue about English learners. Four sections of undergraduate and four sections of graduate education students participated in the study by reading and discussing texts. The researcher recorded and transcribed 23 literature discussions and then employed discourse analysis. She recorded patterns in words and phrases and subsequently identified themes, which revealed that the texts enabled the participants to discover the realities of English learners, make connections with past experiences in teaching and learning, and investigate implications for their teaching. Themes the educators identified in the texts included: family traditions, circumstances of immigration, language learning, and school experiences. Overall, the results show that literature and discussion strategies have the power to engage teachers in discussing immigrants' stories in connection to classroom applications. This and the other studies about educators' interactions with immigrant literature (Graff, 2010; Gregor & Green, 2012; Heineke, 2014) inform the current study of conclusions readers may draw from various themes the texts may convey. Educators benefit from reading immigrant literature, and students benefit from the practice as well.

Impact of Reading Immigrant Literature on K-12 Students

Researchers have executed various studies involving the impact that reading immigrant literature has on K-12 students. For example, Lewis (2014) conducted a study

to discover ways young adults demonstrate literary competence with a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse students. He sought to identify students' discursive roles during book clubs and ways students demonstrate literary competence. Four of his five subjects were children of immigrants who were identified from a sixth grade class comprised of both native English speakers and immigrants with emergent English abilities that was co-taught by a general education teacher and an ESL teacher. The researcher engaged the students in reading, writing in response to, and discussing immigrant literature in a school-based book club over a three-week time period. The students met weekly to discuss the text and responses, and each student and each of his or her teachers was interviewed after the final discussion. The researcher recorded and transcribed the book discussions and interviews. Then, he coded the data to identify connections among descriptive features of the data and the discursive practices the teachers and students exhibited. Consequently, the researcher concluded that four of the five students took on a discursive role as co-character when reading in which they experienced thoughts, feelings, successes, and disappointments alongside the protagonist of the text. Specifically, students connected immigration stories about their family members' challenges to that of the novel's protagonist. Thus, they expanded their literary competence via the strong connections they made with the text.

Rather than seeking to identify students' literary competence via their textual interaction with immigrant literature, Gold (2008) sought to identify how textual interaction supports students in learning about themselves and how she could facilitate the process of identity negotiation for students through literature. Her purpose was to learn about Chinese American teenagers' thoughts and investigate how to create a school

setting to explore their racial identity. Gold's research population was composed of seven eighth grade students who are Chinese or Chinese Americans. She led and recorded four literature groups in which the students discussed young adult immigrant fiction. She drafted weekly journal entries during the study, and she interviewed each student after having him or her fill out a survey. To analyze the data, Gold identified generative themes that were conveyed via the journal entries, book discussion meetings, and interviews. The study revealed that students enjoyed reading literature with protagonists whose experiences reflected theirs because they could make text-to-self connections, which helped them gain confidence in their identities. The researcher identified new strategies for approaching students as individuals, with an appreciation of how vulnerable and changeable their identity is as young adolescents.

Stewart and Patterson (2016) were also able to facilitate immigrant students' learning by making connections to text, but their population consisted of high school students rather than middle school students. The purpose of their study was to explore learning systems to identify patterns. Specifically, they questioned what patterns would emerge in the language and actions of students. They worked with students who were immigrants or children of immigrants. They engaged the students in reading and writing lessons with culturally relevant literature. The students read a variety of immigration texts and wrote narratives and poetry about their immigration experiences. The researchers gathered data by taking field notes, interviewing the students' teachers, and examining students' writing samples, and they coded the data to identify themes. Themes included authentic engagement, curiosity, and inquiry in which teachers and students shared roles of educators and learners. Consequently, the researchers described the key

pattern as engaged learning. Specifically, students were engaged when they shared personal stories about dire conditions in their home countries in response to immigration texts. The studies involving immigrants' learning (Gold, 2008; Lewis, 2014; Stewart & Patterson, 2016) provide guidance for the current study because they showcase the importance of selecting texts with themes that reflect immigrants' experiences.

Elements of Young Adult Literature About the Immigrant Experience

Researchers have also conducted studies to identify elements of young adult literature about the immigrant experience, and each was done through its own unique lens. Sung, Fahrenbruck, and Lopez-Robertson (2017) sought to engage in critical content analysis of a set of immigration-themed books through the lens of postcolonial studies. They questioned how female protagonists who are immigrants are represented in children's literature and how intertextuality, or relationships among texts, influences readers' perceptions of immigrants. They limited the study to four award-winning immigration-themed young adult novels and completed the research in three phases: recalling memories of reading the novels, intertextual thinking about the novels, and discussing intertextual assumptions. Critical content analysis of the ideas revealed that female protagonists' sense of agency grows after facing challenges derived from immigrating to the U.S., and that protagonists compare their homeland with the United States. Also, analysis of the relationship among texts resulted in identification of themes regarding assumptions about immigrants: language barriers, socioeconomic status, community members, and beliefs about childhood. As they focused the analysis further, they honed in on additional themes: exotic homelands and lifestyles, challenges to home and family structures, learning a new language, and colonizing the childness of

immigrants. The researchers found that the themes perpetuated readers' perceptions of immigrants as being different, which provides readers with opportunities to challenge stereotypes, biases, and prejudices embedded in literature. Therefore, analyzing themes helps readers recognize and grapple with their internal tensions regarding immigrants.

Clifford and Kalyanpur (2011) also studied young adult novels with immigrant protagonists; however, they did not limit their research to literature with female protagonists. Their purpose was to determine the effects of the immigration process. They focused on twenty young adult immigrant literature texts published from 2000-2011. Upon reading the novels, they conducted a content analysis of the authors' descriptions of the immigration process with a focus on experiences prior to emigration/immigration, the journey of immigration, and adjustments due to immigration. The analysis revealed two interrelated themes: the dynamics of power and the deficit. They concluded that power may be in the form of monetary and social capital, which is heavily dependent on language, and the theme they call the deficit represents their observation that immigrants are portrayed in texts as people who struggle with identity formation, which entails others seeing their differences as deficits.

While the aforementioned studies focused on literature representing immigrants from a variety of countries, Cummins (2013) focused her research on texts for young adults that strictly portray immigration between Mexico and the United States. Her goal was to identify patterns in the literature. To do so, she examined eleven young adult novels published from 1981–2011. Content analysis revealed the patterns: narrative perspective, the question of agency in crossing the border, poverty as an antagonist to young border crossers, antagonistic forces of physical danger and immigration laws, swirl

migration, and the borderlands ethical stance. This and the other studies (Clifford & Kalyanpur, 2011; Cummins, 2013; Sung et al., 2017) focusing on elements of immigrant literature reveal features such as narrative perspective as well as themes about external and internal struggles immigrants encounter, all of which are elements that provide guidance for the current study in terms of selecting themes to explore in immigrant literature.

Summary

Prior research has indicated that reading immigrant literature affects educators and students, and that common elements of young adult literature about the immigrant experience exist. The group of studies about immigrant literature's impact on educators reveals that young adult immigrant literature has the power to heighten teacher awareness about the immigrant experience (Graff, 2010; Gregor & Green, 2012; Heineke, 2014). In fact, Graff (2010) found that educators drew conclusions about immigrants' heterogeneity and assimilation, which mirrors two of the conclusions Gregor and Green (2012) identified in their study's results. Further, the study by Gregor and Green (2012) indicated that teachers learned factors that incite immigration, which was also uncovered in the research Heineke (2014) executed. The ability of the texts to increase educator awareness clarifies the importance of selecting literature that conveys themes about heterogeneity, assimilation, and causes of immigration.

Researchers have also explored how reading immigrant literature affects students. The studies involving immigrant literature's impact on students show that the literature enables readers to make connections (Gold, 2008; Lewis, 2014; Stewart & Patterson, 2016). Stewart and Patterson (2016) uncovered a point of connection in immigrant

literature that involves challenges in native countries prior to immigration while the study by Lewis (2014) revealed struggles in the immigration journey itself with which students connected. In the research by Gold (2008), results showed that students connected with characters' identity negotiation, which Stewart and Patterson (2016) also identified in their study. The way immigrant literature enables students to make rich connections highlights the need to identify literature with themes that reflect authentic conditions prior to immigrating, challenges the immigration journey poses, and identity negotiation in the United States.

Elements of immigrant literature allow educators and students to enhance their knowledge. The studies on themes in immigrant literature indicated that external and internal challenges are commonalities of the genre (Clifford & Kalyanpur, 2011; Cummins, 2013; Sung et al., 2017). The studies of Clifford and Kalyanpur (2011) and Sung et al. (2017) both revealed the external challenge of language acquisition. The theme of language acquisition has an impact on socioeconomic status, which is another theme. The studies of Cummins (2013) and Sung et al. (2017) show socioeconomic status as an external challenge. The internal challenge common to immigrant literature texts is identity negotiation, and that was described in the results of two studies (Clifford & Kalyanpur, 2011; Sung et al. 2017). These shared themes provide a foundation for identifying themes in young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States.

Although research has been conducted about the effects of reading immigrant literature and elements of it, a lack of extensive research has been conducted regarding specific themes in the literature. Studies (Graff, 2010; Gregor & Green, 2012; Heineke,

2014) have been done to determine how reading immigrant literature affects teachers.

Also, research (Gold, 2008; Lewis, 2014; Stewart & Patterson, 2016) has been executed to reveal how reading immigrant literature influences students. While some common themes have been identified in young adult immigrant literature (Clifford & Kalyanpur, 2011; Cummins, 2013; Sung et al., 2013), a need exists to expand the identification of themes.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Prior studies revealed a need for analyzing young adult immigrant literature to identify themes present in the literature. The purpose of this content analysis is to ascertain features and themes of quality young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States that may foster connections and sensitivity between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Highly recommended young adult literature about the immigrant experience published between 2000 and 2017 was analyzed for this study with the aim of determining features and themes that may foster connections and sensitivity between immigrants and nonimmigrants.

Research Design

In order to identify elements of quality young adult immigrant literature, qualitative research was conducted. Qualitative studies entail analyzing and interpreting information to determine significant patterns that describe a particular phenomenon (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). For this study, an approach to qualitative analysis of content called directed analysis of content was employed. According to Wildemuth (2017), directed analysis of content is when preliminary coding originates with a theory or relevant research results, and the researcher subsequently identifies additional themes during data analysis. Shared elements that previous researchers identified and demonstrated a need for readers to interact with in young adult immigrant literature served as a reference and start list for analyzing texts, and additional elements were identified. To uncover additional themes, the researcher followed the qualitative analysis of content process that Wildemuth (2017) describes as carefully examining and

constantly comparing data. Therefore, previous conclusions about immigrant literature may be extended.

Sample of Books

The researcher analyzed a sample of young adult literature with a focus on immigrants. The researcher began the selection process by using the search term “immigra*” in the H. W. Wilson’s *Middle and Junior High Core Collection* database. The search was limited to the most highly recommended fiction books for students in grades 5 through 9 published after 2000. The year 2000 is significant because it marks the start of the first decade in the last 50 years in which the immigrant population of the United States exceeded 10% of the total population, and the immigrant population has continued to rise since then (Zong & Batalova, 2017). The initial search rendered 23 books (see Appendix A). Then, the descriptions of the titles were checked according to the *Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database* to determine the focus of each immigration story. During this phase, texts that did not depict immigration to the United States were eliminated from the study as was a wordless graphic novel because the lack of text would make it difficult to support theme identification. This step eliminated six books.

Subsequently, the researcher narrowed the sample to strictly include books present in at least 300 OCLC member libraries according to WorldCat to ensure accessibility. From this process, the original list of 23 books was further limited, and 11 books remained.

Upon the first reading of the texts, one was eliminated from the book list based on its specific content. *West of the Moon* by Margi Preus does not capture the immigrant

experience in the United States because during the course of the text the protagonist never arrives in America. Rather, the setting shifts around Norway and onto a ship. Therefore, the final book selection list includes 10 titles (See Appendix B).

Procedures

Data Sources

The researcher read each of the selected texts twice. The researcher recorded notes each time by utilizing the note taking form shown in Appendix C. During the first reading, the researcher recorded the protagonist's age, country of origin, and gender. The researcher also looked for evidence of the seven themes that originated from previous studies as determined from the literature review summary as well as indicators of additional shared themes. The preliminary seven themes are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Preliminary Seven Themes for Analysis of Books

Assimilation
Causes of immigration
Individuality (heterogeneity)
Identity negotiation
Language acquisition
Socioeconomic status
Challenges in the journey to the United States

During the second reading, the researcher revisited the themes of each text and identified connections among the texts. Specifically, the researcher looked for quotes that support theme identification. After reading the novels, the researcher expanded the theme list to accommodate additional themes. Then, the researcher integrated categories and their properties by developing interpretive memos. The interpretive memos were comprised of an outline of the defining characteristics of each of the categories that were integrated and brief notes about their connections.

Data Analysis

Directed analysis of content was utilized to analyze the data. According to Wildemuth (2017) this is when initial coding begins based on research findings. For this study, the researcher used deductive reasoning to establish the coding scheme (start list) with preliminary themes based on the literature. The researcher sought to find evidence of each theme by closely reading the texts. During the reading process, the researcher also engaged in identifying other themes. This process follows Wildemuth's (2017) assertion that "during data analysis, the researchers immerse themselves in the data and allow themes to emerge from the data" (p. 319). The constant comparative method was employed to develop the new themes. This inductive process entails comparing each text assigned to a category with the other texts assigned to the category and the integration of categories and their qualities by creating interpretive memos (Wildemuth, 2017). Conclusions were drawn from the aforementioned analysis.

Limitations

The young adult immigrant literature in this study is limited to fiction novels published between 2000 and 2017. Consequently, the study could be more

comprehensive if additional texts including nonfiction and texts from other time periods were considered. Further, the qualitative analysis of content was conducted by one person for a limited duration of time. Therefore, the modes of improving the credibility of research results that Lincoln and Guba posit including “prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, triangulation, negative case analysis, checking interpretation against raw data, peer debriefing and member checking” was not possible (as cited in Wildemuth, 2017, p. 323).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The researcher analyzed ten positively reviewed young adult realistic fiction novels about the immigrant experience in the United States. Common themes were displayed in the texts, which teacher librarians may reference as a guide for selecting novels to meet their patrons' needs. Tables were constructed to showcase the themes and the novels that revealed them.

After reading the novels, the researcher expanded the preliminary start list of themes to accommodate additional themes. Five themes were added to the preliminary start list of themes, and all are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Expanded List of Twelve Themes

Assimilation
Causes of immigration
Individuality (heterogeneity)
Identity negotiation
Language acquisition
Socioeconomic status
Challenges in the journey to the United States
Perseverance
Immigrant support system
Adults' struggles in America causing dependence on children
Name changing
Stereotypes

The researcher integrated categories and their properties by developing interpretive memos. For instance, Language acquisition and Name changing are both done to facilitate assimilation. Therefore, the elements of the categories were combined, and Assimilation remained as the overarching theme. Also, all of the examples of Adult's struggles in America causing dependence on children were rooted in the adults failing to assimilate as well as their children did; therefore, that theme was also added to the overarching theme of Assimilation. Other categories that were integrated were Challenges in the journey to the United States and Perseverance because the immigrants in the two texts that depicted dire circumstances in the journey to the United States were able to endure the journeys because of their perseverance; thus, Perseverance remained as an overarching theme. The theme Immigrant support system was also added to Perseverance because the various support systems that bolster immigrants contributed to the perseverance of the characters in the texts. Commonalities are also evident between Individuality and Identity negotiation because one's individuality and determining one's identity both entail one's identity. Therefore, Identity Formation and Individuality were combined to create the overarching theme Identity. After themes were integrated, six remained for analysis, which are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Themes Remaining After Integration

Causes of immigration
Assimilation
Perseverance
Identity

Socioeconomic status
Stereotypes

For more specificity, Table 4 indicates the final themes and the novels associated with each theme.

Table 4

Final Themes and Texts

Theme	Novels displaying the theme
Causes of immigration	<i>Home of the brave</i> <i>City of orphans</i> <i>Brooklyn nine</i> <i>Brooklyn bridge</i> <i>Inside out and back again</i> <i>Under the mesquite</i> <i>Katerina's wish</i> <i>A step from heaven</i> <i>Illegal</i> <i>The sun is also a star</i>
Assimilation	<i>Home of the brave</i> <i>City of orphans</i> <i>The Brooklyn nine</i> <i>Brooklyn bridge</i> <i>Inside out and back again</i> <i>Under the mesquite</i> <i>Katerina's wish</i> <i>A step from heaven</i> <i>Illegal</i> <i>The sun is also a star</i>

Perseverance	<i>Home of the brave</i> <i>City of orphans</i> <i>The Brooklyn nine</i> <i>Brooklyn bridge</i> <i>Inside out and back again</i> <i>Under the mesquite</i> <i>Katerina's wish</i> <i>A step from heaven</i> <i>Illegal</i> <i>The sun is also a star</i>
Identity	<i>Home of the brave</i> <i>City of orphans</i> <i>Inside out and back again</i> <i>Under the mesquite</i> <i>Katerina's wish</i> <i>A step from heaven</i> <i>Illegal</i> <i>The sun is also a star</i>
Socioeconomic status	<i>City of orphans</i> <i>Brooklyn bridge</i> <i>Inside out and back again</i> <i>Katerina's wish</i> <i>A step from heaven</i> <i>Illegal</i> <i>The sun is also a star</i>
Stereotypes	<i>Brooklyn nine</i> <i>Inside out and back again</i> <i>Illegal</i> <i>Katerina's wish</i> <i>The sun is also a star</i>

Causes of Immigration

Every novel indicates causes of the characters' immigration to the United States.

Although the catalysts vary, all entail improving quality of life. For instance, characters

in the novels *Inside Out and Back Again* and *Home of the Brave* are escaping war-stricken lives. The protagonist, Kek, in *Home of the Brave* flees the civil war-torn country of Sudan to join extended family members who are recent arrivals to Minnesota. When Kek is reunited with his cousin Ganwar, he recalls,

The night Ganwar lost his hand/ was the night I lost/ my father and brother,/ the night of men in the sky with guns,/ the night the earth opened up like a black pit/ and swallowed my old life whole. (Applegate, 2007, p. 21)

He seeks refuge in the United States just as Ganwar and his aunt have already done.

Similarly, characters in *City of Orphans* and *Brooklyn Bridge* pursue safer lives in America because they face persecution in their homelands. Specifically, the Michtom family who are depicted in *Brooklyn Bridge* fled Russia because of religious persecution. In the United States, they were able to begin anew with a teddy bear business. After Joseph's papa made the first bears, it was cold outside, which triggered recollections of the weather of Russia. For Mr. Michtom,

Thoughts of Russia stirred memories of the Russian bear, symbol of a country that hated its Jews. That Russian bear was so different from these things Papa held now under each arm. He was thinking about how his sister Golda. . . had saved his life by bringing him to America." (Hesse, 2008, p. 10-11)

As the story progresses, the family learns that Golda helped a number of Jews who were targeted by Cossacks in Russia immigrate, so they could live better lives in the United States. Despite the horrific circumstances some of the immigrants in the texts faced, not all of them fled violence.

In fact, three of the texts reveal stories of immigrants escaping poverty. In *The Brooklyn Nine*, *Katerina's Wish*, and *Illegal*, the protagonists' families desire life in the United States because of the economic disadvantages in their native countries. In *Illegal*, the main character Nora learns from her father that he is choosing to emigrate because

there is no business, jobs, or money. When he can no longer support Nora, her mother, and grandmother by sending money, Nora questions, “How would we pay for groceries this week? Or the taxes next month?” (Restrepo, 2011, p. 21). Her uncertainty incites her decision to immigrate to the United States. She feels she has no other choice.

Not every impetus for immigration is characterized by such dire circumstances. *A Step from Heaven*, *Under the Mesquite*, and *The Sun is Also a Star* are all texts in which characters move to the United States to pursue the American Dream. Natasha is a Jamaican immigrant who is the main character in *The Sun is Also a Star*. Her father wanted his family to move to America, so he could pursue his aspiration of becoming a Broadway actor. As a teenager, Natasha reflects on how she was a little girl when her father tried to convince her that, “He was going to get the American Dream that even Americans dream about” (Yoon, 2016, p. 64). He was very hopeful that life would be better in the United States, just like the immigrants in the other novels.

Assimilation

Once immigrants arrive in the United States, they begin the assimilation process. Every novel in this study depicts assimilation. While the degrees to which characters assimilate vary, every protagonist undergoes changes to adapt to life in the United States. Through English language acquisition and even changing their own names, the characters adjust to American culture. A prime example of this is shown in *Brooklyn Nine*, which illustrates changes in a family of German immigrants over time. Their family name is Schneider; however, they begin going by Snider instead. When Walter Schneider asks his father why he expressed his name was Snider to a hotel clerk, his father explains, “It’s those Russian Jews that have been coming over. . . Why can’t they be . . . more

American? If they would just blend in more, not cling to the old ways so much” (Gratz, 2009, p. 110). The rationale reveals the father’s commitment to Americanizing.

While Young Ju, the protagonist of *A Step from Heaven* also assimilates by surrendering her given name and going strictly by Young at school, her parents do not fully learn English as part of the assimilation process. Nonetheless, they adapt to life in America, which is possible by relying on their children. When Young Ju’s father takes her to the Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services, he is able to navigate by following crowds of people some of the time. However, when they need to find the correct location for green card renewal, he stares at a sign and asks Young Ju, “What does this say?” (Na, 2001, p. 84). His question reveals that even though he has some adaptations in place for living in the United States, he counts on his daughter for translations.

Language is not the only element of assimilation immigrants face. Some immigrants even change their religion, which is shown in *Inside Out and Back Again*. When the protagonist Há and her family arrive in Florida from Vietnam, they realize that Americans favor Christianity. Therefore, they convert. This is clear when Há reflects, “Mother amends our faith,/ saying all beliefs/ are pretty much the same” (Lai, 2011, p. 108). Consequently, the family gains sponsorship from a Christian family in Alabama whose support enables further assimilation to life in America. Regardless of the degree of adjustment, all of the immigrants change their lives to acclimate to the United States.

Perseverance

Another theme revealed in all novels analyzed in this study is perseverance. The novels *Inside Out and Back Again*, *The Sun is Also a Star*, and *Illegal* all illustrate

characters' persistence in arriving and remaining in the United States. Nora from *Illegal* has an especially arduous journey to the United States from Mexico. After riding a bus to a border town, she contends with a person that smuggles people across the border, who wants her virginity in addition to money. Then, she endures a ride that is difficult to survive. During ten hours in the back of a mango truck, Nora reflects,

The noise from the machines was deafening inside the metal shell of the trailer. The air got heavier. The space filled up with the scent of ripe mangoes and heat. No crying or giving in to the fear. I had to concentrate on Papa. Our life could begin once we found him. I had to think clearly about our survival. (Restrepo, 2011, p. 47)

With her mental determination, Nora persists through the journey and the additional obstacles that arise upon her arrival to Texas.

Similar to the perseverance required by some immigrants to enter the United States, some must persevere in the quest to find employment. This is illustrated in *Home of the Brave* when its protagonist Kek is determined to get a job to compensate for the dishes he broke while trying to clean for his aunt. The skills he built in Sudan were limited, but they include farming experience. Therefore, he returned to the farm he visited on his first day in America and “went to the door and asked [for a job]” (Applegate, 2007, p. 124). His perseverance is effective because he secures work at the farm after his friend Hannah explains his situation to the woman who owns it.

In addition to showing perseverance in employment, immigrants in some of the novels demonstrated perseverance in education. Specifically, characters in *Inside Out and Back Again*, *Under the Mesquite*, and *A Step from Heaven* were very persistent in school. A strong example of this is shown by Young Ju, the protagonist in *A Step from Heaven*. When Young Ju first attends school, her knowledge is so limited that she does

not even understand basic greetings in English. She takes her academics very seriously, so she studies often. At her school, the person in each class with the highest grade point average earns a certificate, and at her freshman awards ceremony, the principal announces, “The ninth-grade award goes to Yungpark” (Na, 200, p. 120). The tremendous accomplishment was possible because of her perseverance.

For some immigrants, perseverance is possible because of support immigrants provide and receive. Support systems like this are illustrated in *City of Orphans*, *Brooklyn Bridge*, and *Katerina's Wish*. The main character, Katerina, in *Katerina's Wish* immigrated to Colorado from Bohemia. Katerina's family along with many immigrant families live in a mining community in which migrant workers cope with unsafe work conditions. Old Jan and his sons are Katerina's neighbors in the mining community, and Katerina's family supports them when Old Jan is injured working in the mine. Katerina reflects on the situation,

Old Jan's leg had been crushed in a cave-in at the mine and had been amputated just below the knee. The old man had not worked since, nor would he again. As they were our neighbors and our countrymen, we had stuck by them, and they had become like family to us. . . Since both sons worked the night shift, Old Jan was alone in the evening, so my parents welcomed him, no matter how tired they were. (Moblely, 2012, p. 8)

Even with little food and money of their own to subsist on, Katerina's family works diligently to provide for themselves and Jan's family. Katerina's father works in the mine when it is in service. Also, Katerina, her mother, and sisters do laundry for miners, garden, fish, and eventually work with a salesman to sell products. Whether characters show perseverance in how they arrive and stay in the United States, secure employment, achieve academically or support others, they all show great determination to be successful.

Identity

Perseverance is an attribute that may contribute to preserving one's identity even if s/he is immersed in a new environment. Eight of the 10 texts depict immigrants who grapple with identity. Cultural traditions that people practice contribute to their individuality. *Inside Out and Back Again*, *Illegal*, and *Katerina's Wish* are novels in which immigrants seek to retain their identity by observing traditions from their native countries when they are in the United States. A strong example of this is in *Katerina's Wish*. Katerina often thinks of the life she lived in Bohemia and keeps the memories strong by listening to traditional Bohemian tales and practicing Bohemian traditions. When her family's friends Martina and Karel get married, they celebrate the nuptials with a Bohemian tradition. Katerina describes the tradition by explaining that Karel's brother tied spoons together with a ribbon and provided a bowl of soup for the newlyweds to share. Then, the families "watched as they struggled to eat it with their joined spoons" (Mobley, 2012, p. 142). Katerina's actions show her individuality, which is defined by a commitment to stay true to who she was before she immigrated to the United States.

Observing native practices while adopting new ones leads to a dual sense of identity for immigrants. While a dual identity enhances individuality, it may pose internal and external conflicts for immigrants. A marked example of an internal conflict that arises from dual identity is displayed through Há's experiences in *Inside Out and Back Again*. When Há enrolls in school in the United States, she is required to repeat the previous grade because she was not able to complete it in Vietnam. This is frustrating to her because she knows she is an intelligent young girl, but her skills are not evident to her teacher Miss Scott because of her limited knowledge of the English language. Há is upset

when she thinks, “I can’t read/ a baby book./ Who will believe/ I was reading/ Nhat Linh?” (Lai, 2011, p. 130). Há’s thoughts reveal that she feels inferior because she has nascent reading skills in English despite her superior skills in reading Vietnamese. Truly, she is conflicted by her dual identity.

Issues with dual identity are not limited to internal challenges. In fact, dual identity evokes external conflicts in *City of Orphans*, *Home of the Brave*, *A Step from Heaven*, *The Sun is Also a Star*, and *Under the Mesquite*. Lupita is the protagonist in *Under the Mesquite*. She speaks Spanish at home because her mother never needed to learn English when they emigrated from Mexico since they live in a community with many Mexican immigrants. However, she speaks English at school. Her interest in acting leads to her enrollment in a drama class in which her teacher explains to her that if she is serious about acting, she must strive to eliminate her accent. Committed to academic success, Lupita follows his recommendation and practices speaking without an accent. However, her decision is not accepted by her friend Mireya. At lunch, she sneers at Lupita, “You talk like/ you wanna be white... You’re Mexican, just like the rest of us./ Look around you. Ninety-nine percent/ of this school is Mexican. Stop trying to be something you’re not!” (McCall, 2011, p. 80- 81). While the strained friendship is hurtful to Lupita, she is confident in her dual identity. She later tells Mireya, “Changing how I talk/ doesn’t change who I am./ I know where I came from” (McCall, 2011, p. 95). Following new practices, regardless of the conflicts that may arise, and observing native traditions reveal a keen awareness of identity.

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status is another theme illustrated in a number of the novels in this study. Seven of the texts illustrate extreme circumstances evoked by socioeconomic status. While most of the characters contend with extreme poverty, in one text a family becomes affluent. The families that authors depict in *Inside Out and Back Again*, *Katerina's Wish*, *A Step from Heaven*, *Illegal*, *The Sun is Also a Star*, and *City of Orphans* live in poverty because they lack the education needed to secure occupations with adequate compensation to support families. Readers encounter some of the direst situations when reading *City of Orphans*. The protagonist Maks and his family struggle to survive in New York City in 1893. Even with his father working in a shoe factory and all of the children who are capable of working contributing to the family income, meeting basic needs is challenging. Their main form of sustenance is soup, they cannot afford the medical treatment Maks's sister needs, and their housing conditions are substandard. When Maks describes the three-room apartment where he lives, he indicates, "The landlord's never put in water. No gas, electricity, neither . . . All eight of us been living there eight years" (Avi, 2011, p. 29). Daily life is quite difficult for the family.

A more modern portrayal of immigrants struggling with socioeconomic status is clear in *A Step from Heaven*. Because of limited skills, Young's parents secure low paying jobs such as cleaning, sewing, gardening, and food service positions. Even though both work a second job, they cannot afford a babysitter for their two children. Therefore, Young and her brother spend Thursday and Friday nights outside of Johnny's Steak House "playing in the alley behind the restaurant, next to the open door of the kitchen" as their mother works (Na, 2001, p. 62). On nights when it rains, they must sit

in the family jealousy. Truly, they are adversely impacted by their family's socioeconomic status.

In contrast, one novel describes an immigrant family with a high socioeconomic status. In *Brooklyn Bridge*, the Michtom family is very successful. They own a candy shop, and their business expands when Joseph Michtom's parents begin crafting stuffed bears and advertising them as Teddy's bears after a news story reveals that Theodore Roosevelt refused to kill a bear cub. Joseph clarifies the success by reflecting that his family, "made bears . . . and we sold them as fast as we made them" (Hesse, 2008, p. 137). The money they earn by making and selling the bears enables them to live comfortably and share their wealth. Joseph Michtom's father financed a grand celebration for Uncle Meyer and Aunt Lizzie's wedding in which all the guests enjoyed food and entertainment on Coney Island. Such extravagances are a testament to the socioeconomic status the family achieved. Whether extremely high or extremely low, socioeconomic status impacts immigrants' experiences.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes that people hold also affect immigrants' experiences. In five of the novels in this study, stereotypes are revealed. Characters in *Inside Out and Back Again* and *The Brooklyn Nine* are impacted by religious stereotypes. In *The Brooklyn Nine*, the Schneider family loves baseball and goes to Coney Island to enjoy a vacation. Because of their last name, the concierge at the Brighton Beach Hotel assumes that the Schneiders are Jewish and denies them accommodations at the hotel. Instead, they are told that there are plenty of rooms at the West Brighton Hotel. At that establishment, Walter Schneider observes, "Jews here. Lots of them. Russian Orthodox Jews will full beards and long

curls who'd been flooding into New York the past few years" (Gratz, 2009, p. 110). The Schneiders are not Jewish, so Walter is offended by the assumption made about his family and the resulting treatment.

In addition to stereotypes based on presumed religious affiliation, two novels involved stereotypes based on presumed behaviors. In *Katerina's Wish* and *Illegal*, characters are portrayed who make assumptions about immigrants' behaviors. This is very clear in *Illegal* when Nora tries to purchase false paperwork to utilize when seeking employment. A Colombian woman meets with Nora to carry out the business deal. She speaks quickly and does not explain her ideas. When Nora asks for clarity, the Colombian woman responds, "I don't need this. You're still wet from the river. Everyone will know you just came over, and it isn't my problem you are so ignorant" (Restrepo, 2011, p. 95-96). The woman's words convey a stereotype that she holds. In reality, Nora crossed the border in the trailer of a semi-truck. Regardless of the truth, the Colombian woman's words imply that she believes she is superior to new arrivals from Mexico.

Also, a stereotype about talent is portrayed. This is shown in *The Sun is Also a Star*. The protagonist of this text, Natasha, is a Jamaican immigrant who people infer is African American based on her skin color. While she is living in New York City, she meets Daniel, a young man whose parents are immigrants from South Korea. When the two meet for coffee, Natasha brings up the Novikov self-consistency principle. She is shocked that he is not familiar with the science of the principle and thinks, "I guess I assumed he'd be nerdy because he's Asian, which is crappy of me because I hate when other people assume things about me like I like rap music or I'm good at sports" (Yoon, 2016, p. 75). Her thoughts reveal that Natasha contends with stereotypes herself even

though she holds some. Whether they are grounded in religion, behavior, or talent, stereotypes impact immigrants as they experience social interactions that evoke negative emotions.

Summary

A variety of overarching themes are portrayed in young adult literature about the immigrant experience. Causes of immigration, assimilation, and perseverance are present in all 10 novels. Identity, socioeconomic status, and stereotypes are also evident in a number of the texts. Collectively, the themes are defining characteristics of quality young adult immigrant literature.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify themes in quality young adult literature about the immigrant experience. The researcher questioned what features and themes that may foster connections and sensitivity between immigrants and nonimmigrants are evident in young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States. To pursue this information, the researcher analyzed highly recommended young adult immigrant literature published from 2000 to 2017. Twelve novels were selected, read, and coded. After the first reading, two novels were eliminated; therefore, ten novels are reported. Analysis revealed six themes including: causes of immigration, assimilation, perseverance, identity, socioeconomic status, and stereotypes.

The six themes are repeatedly shown, and they are represented in various ways, which may nurture connections and sensitivity between immigrants and nonimmigrants. Specifically, causes of immigration is a theme that is evident in all 10 novels; however, the causes differ. Thus, readers may learn that immigrants relocate to the United States for a myriad of reasons. Assimilation was also shown in every novel, yet the degrees to which each character assimilated differed. The variance in causes of immigration and assimilation may help readers understand the heterogeneity of immigrants, which was a conclusion made by educators in the study conducted by Graff (2010) that was cited previously. Perseverance is another theme evident in all of the texts. The consistency in which perseverance is shown may help readers build cognizance of the determination that immigrants have.

Identity was shown in eight of the 10 novels, which was surprising to the researcher who expected every immigrant to grapple with maintaining individuality while adjusting to American culture. Learning about immigrants' unique backgrounds and the challenges they face in having dual identities teaches readers the importance of honoring immigrants' choices regarding their cultural practices. This is an important learning experience as previously expressed by Perez (2007) who asserts that immigrants whose bicultural status is honored assimilate more successfully.

In seven of the 10 novels, socioeconomic status was shown. Because some immigrants experienced extremely low socioeconomic status, and some immigrants experienced extremely high socioeconomic status, readers may realize that they cannot make assumptions about immigrants' economic backgrounds.

Also, five novels revealed a theme of stereotypes. The stereotypes entailed religion, behavior, and talent. In all situations involving stereotypes, the assumptions were inaccurate. Thus, readers may discover the danger of believing stereotypes.

Not only may the content analysis reveal how the texts may lead readers to draw conclusions about the immigrant experience in the United States, but it may also impact how librarians and educators serve their stakeholders in an effort to foster connections and sensitivity among immigrants and nonimmigrants. In particular, the content analysis may support librarians in text selection. Because the six aforementioned themes are consistently present in quality young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States, librarians may determine which of the six themes are present in texts they are previewing. Also, they may analyze how each theme is shown to ensure that they are building a diverse collection that accurately represents the

multifaceted nature of immigrants' experiences. Therefore, the content analysis may serve as a decision-making guide for collection development.

In addition to supporting collection development, the content analysis may function as a guide for librarians as they create text sets. Librarians may identify a particular set of books that they may use to facilitate library programming and/ or to support educators in accomplishing goals. To facilitate library programming such as a celebration of the immigrant experience, librarians could promote young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States. Specifically, they could highlight the presence of the theme perseverance in the texts in this study and seek additional texts about the immigrant experience that reveal the theme. The promotion could be accomplished through library displays, a webpage on the library website, flyers, or book talks. Also, the text sets could form the basis for book discussions that librarians may facilitate.

Similarly, librarians may use the content analysis as a guide for supporting educators. They may identify texts for engaging educators in professional development and for collaborating with educators during unit design. For example, if teachers seek to build awareness of how immigrants grapple with identity negotiation, librarians could consider how the theme was shown in the books in this study and identify other texts that represent the theme. After identifying texts that best fit educators' needs, librarians could facilitate book studies among school professionals about the texts. The book studies could nurture educators' sensitivity to immigrants and may even lead them to incite student learning about themes present in young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States.

Librarians and teachers may utilize the content analysis as a guide for text selection during unit design. Once they identify a theme that correlates with the objectives of each unit, they may consider the ways the theme is represented in texts. This may lead them to select books that are part of the content analysis, and it may provide them with a springboard for identifying and evaluating other texts. For example, if educators want to teach students about the assimilation process, they may consider if they want to focus on how some immigrants assimilate by changing their language or if they want to focus on how some immigrants assimilate by changing their religion. Depending on educators' goals and their students' abilities, educators could select a number of texts that represent themes differently, and have students choose what they read and share information that is unique to their text with other students in a jigsaw learning activity. Truly, the themes in the novels have the power to enrich library collections and learning that readers achieve.

Recommendations

As the immigrant population in the United States increases and more young adult realistic fiction about the immigrant experience in the United States is published, additional analysis of the genre will be necessary. This study was not limited to immigrants from particular countries or regions. Therefore, research could be conducted on novels including protagonists who journey from the same country. Also, lessons from the texts could be identified. Rich learning opportunities are possible with each book that is not limited to the themes it presents. Further, readers' changes in empathy could also be analyzed after they have read the novels. Specifically, researchers could seek to

determine if readers are able to connect with the themes and apply the connections to real world situations by displaying heightened sensitivity.

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APPENDIX A

INITIAL SELECTION OF BOOKS

- Applegate, K. (2007). *Home of the brave*. New York, NY: Square Fish.
- Avi. (2011). *City of orphans*. New York, NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.
- Bock, C. (2011). *Lie*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin.
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- Gratz, A. (2009). *The Brooklyn nine: A novel in nine innings*. New York, NY: Dial Books.
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- Myers, W. D. (2009). *Riot*. New York, NY: Egmont.
- Na, A. (2000). *A step from heaven*. New York, NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.
- Preus, M. (2014). *West of the moon*. New York, NY: Amulet Books.
- Restrepo, B. (2011). *Illegal*. New York, NY: Katherine Tegen Books.
- Stanley, D. (2010). *Saving Sky*. New York, NY: Harper.

Tan, S. (2007). *The arrival*. New York, NY: Arthur A. Levine Books.

Volponi, P. (2009). *Homestretch*. New York, NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Yoon, N. (2016). *The sun is also a star*. New York, NY: Random House Books.

APPENDIX B

FINAL BOOK SELECTION LIST

- Applegate, K. (2007). *Home of the brave*. New York, NY: Square Fish.
- Avi. (2011). *City of orphans*. New York, NY: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.
- Garcia McCall, G. (2011). *Under the mesquite*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.
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APPENDIX C
NOTE TAKING FORM

Title of Book	
Protagonist's Age	
Protagonist's Country of Origin	
Protagonist's Gender	
Themes Shown	
Assimilation	
Causes of immigration	
Individuality (heterogeneity)	
Identity negotiation	
Language acquisition	
Socioeconomic status	
Challenges in the journey to the United States	
Additional Themes	