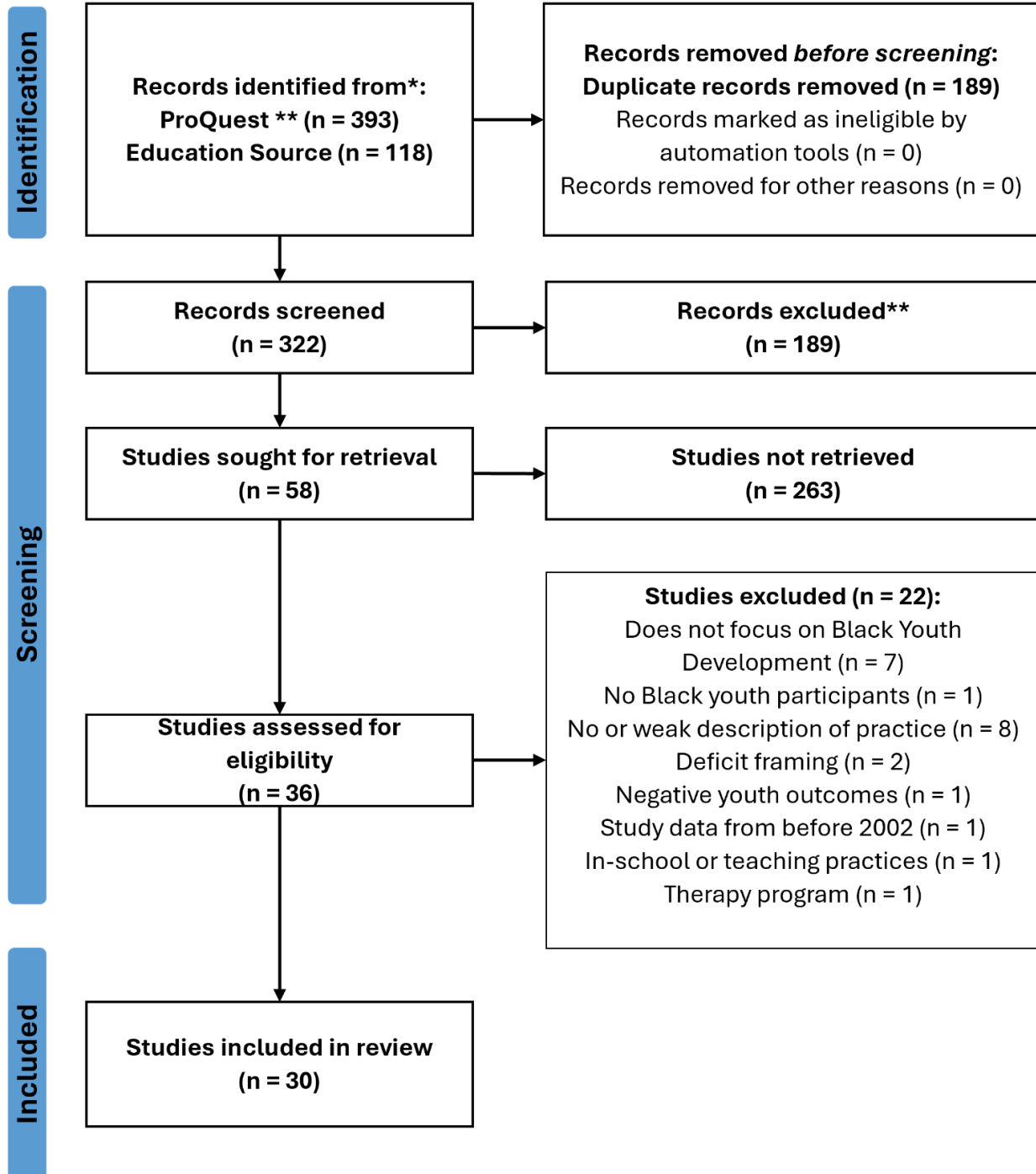# NAVIGATING TO JUSTICE:
How Youth Programs Support the
Positive Development of Black Youth

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Identification of studies via databases and registers

Identification

Records identified from*:
ProQuest ** (n = 393)
Education Source (n = 118)

→

Records removed *before screening*:
Duplicate records removed (n = 189)
Records marked as ineligible by
automation tools (n = 0)
Records removed for other reasons (n = 0)

Screening

Records screened
(n = 322)

→

Records excluded**
(n = 189)

Studies sought for retrieval
(n = 58)

→

Studies not retrieved
(n = 263)

Studies assessed for
eligibility
(n = 36)

→

Studies excluded (n = 22):
Does not focus on Black Youth
Development (n = 7)
No Black youth participants (n = 1)
No or weak description of practice (n = 8)
Deficit framing (n = 2)
Negative youth outcomes (n = 1)
Study data from before 2002 (n = 1)
In-school or teaching practices (n = 1)
Therapy program (n = 1)

Included

Studies included in review
(n = 30)

*No registers were searched.

**ProQuest databases included ERIC, PsycINFO, and Sociological Abstracts.

Citation	Name of Program	Location (City State/ Region + Programming site)	Mission/ Goals/ Aim of program	Program Participants (or Study Participants)	Program Leaders/ Staff Race-Ethnicity or Background
Anyiwo, N., Richards-Schuster, K., & Jerald, M. C. (2021). Using critical media literacy and youth-led research to promote the sociopolitical development of Black youth: Strategies from "Our Voices." Applied Developmental Science, 25(3), 201–216. https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2021.1906246	Our Voices	Large Midwestern city	Our Voices' primary objective was to use YPAR to develop the SPD, critical media literacy, and academic self-efficacy of high school participants. We aimed to arm participants with research skills (i.e., in data collection, video coding, data synthesis, dissemination of findings) to use in their future academic training, career pursuits, and civic engagement activities.	14 high school students (8 male, 6 female) (1 freshman, 3 sophomores, 3 juniors, 7 seniors) Basquiat Academy is a predominantly Black (99%) middle and high school, composed of a student population largely from relatively low-income homes (i.e., 81% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch).	The first author developed the program with feedback from school staff, administration, and students. The program was facilitated by two Black women doctoral students (the first and third author).
Baldridge, B. (2018). On educational advocacy and cultural work: Situating community-based youth work[ers] in broader educational discourse. Teachers College Record, 120(2), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811812000206	Educational Excellence (EE)	Northeastern US	Founded in the late 1980s by a white male philanthropist, Educational Excellence (EE) original purpose was to help low-income students of color enter four-year universities. In 2002, under the leadership of the current executive director, Dr. Leah Davis, the organization expanded its purpose and describes itself as a "college completion and youth development organization." There is a deliberate emphasis on academic excellence and youth development focusing on the social, emotional, and cultural lives of young people.	Black youth from American, Caribbean, Latin, East African, and West African backgrounds. A little more than half of the youth populate are female.	Author was in the role of youth worker at time of study. As former classroom teachers, school administrators, and lifelong community-based educators, EE staff members held strong and nuanced critiques of schools and the educational system. Dr. Leah Davis, EE's executive director at the time of study and former school teacher and administrator, a Black woman familiar with the system of public education and nonprofit youth development… Walidah Thomas, the director of middle school programs and former classroom teacher, held extensive knowledge about educational processes and school choice in the city.
Bennett, S. V. Gunn, A. A., & Peterson, B. J. (2021). Access to multicultural children's literature during COVID-19. The Reading Teacher, 74(6), 785–796. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.2003	Children's After-School Recreation Center	Southeastern US	An organization that serves primarily African American children and families from low-socioeconomic areas, to create multicultural literacy opportunities for students during after-school hours and the summer.	150 children, ages 5–15, who come from low-income homes. Approximately 96% of the children are African American, and 4% are White.	--

Citation	Program	Location	Program Description	Participants	Staff
Bethea, S. L. (2012). The impact of Oakland Freedom School's summer youth program on the psychosocial development of African American youth. Journal of Black Psychology, 38(4), 442–454. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798411431982	Oakland Freedom School (OFS)	Oakland, CA	OFS's program is designed to be a child-focused, supplemental educational program, reflective of African American culture and experiences.	79 children (35 Girls, 44 boys) all African American or Black	The staff of OFS is African/African American at both the administrative and management and program treatment levels.
Brockenbrough, E. (2016). Becoming queerly responsive: Culturally responsive pedagogy for Black and Latino urban queer youth. Urban Education, 51(2), 170–196. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085914549261	Midtown Aids Center	Mid Sized city in northeastern US	MAC was the only local organization with an explicit mission to improve the health and wellness of queer communities of color.	8 queer males, 2 transgender females ranging in age from 16 to 22. 8 youth identified as Black and 2 as Black and Latino	The adult staffers and volunteers included 5 Black queer men and 2 White queer women, all of whom had bachelor's degrees and 5 of whom had graduate degrees.
Brown, A., Outley, C. W., & Pinckney, H. P. (2018). Examining the Use of Leisure for the Sociopolitical Development of Black Youth in Out-of-School Time Programs. Leisure Sciences, 40(7), 686–696. https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2018.1534625	Three programs (pseudonyms): Umoja, Ujima, and Kuumba	Atlanta, GA; Harlem, NY; Dallas, TX	Three culture-specific programs designed to raise critical consciousness among Black youth. All three sites selected for this case study held outcomes and SPD activities that overlap. For these programs, cultivating African-American SPD is a direct response to the social, political, cultural, and economic environment in which the youth navigate.	Umoja: 20 Black youth, 13-17 Ujima: 50 Black and Latino boys 11-18 Kuumba: 40 Black youth, 5-18	--
Bulanda, J. J., Tellis, D., & Tyson McCrea, K. (2015). Cocreating a social work apprenticeship with disadvantaged African American youth: A best-practices after-school curriculum. Smith College Studies in Social Work, 85(3), 285–310. https://doi.org/10.1080/00377317.2015.1071063	Empowering Counseling Program of SUHO (Stand Up Help Out)	Chicago, IL	SUHO was designed as a social work apprenticeship with the intention of providing youth with the opportunity to positively address community problems through mentoring younger children and engaging in community organizing activities.	15 to 30 adolescents aged 14 to 18 and living in some of the most impoverished, high-crime communities on the south side of Chicago	Led by a social work faculty member as principal investigator, the initial team included a social work doctoral student and MSW student interns. Instructors were doctoral students, master's level social workers, and/or graduate students in social work, supervised by the principal investigator who had more than 25 years of clinical social work experience with children and youth.
Carter, S. P., Damico, J. S., & Kumasi-Johnson, K. (2008). The time is now! Talking with African American youth about college. Voices from the Middle, 16(2), 47-53.	Community Leadership Intervention Program (CLIP)	--	The Community Literacy Intervention Program (CLIP) is an after-school pre-college program that Stephanie designed to provide academic support for Black youth while affirming their cultural and linguistic resources and knowledge.	10-15 Black middle and high school students	Stephanie, an African American university professor and former high school teacher; James, a European American university professor and former middle school teacher; and Kafi, an African American doctoral student and former high school English teacher and librarian

Cipollone, M. (2006). Creating engaged citizens: Using young adult novels and thematic units to encourage democratic action. Afterschool Matters, 5, 12-19.	StreetSquash Book Club	Harlem, NY	The StreetSquash Book Club encourages young people to become active, engaged citizens by means of thematic units that use young adult novels as entry points for discussion, games, community interaction, and civil activism.	Approximately 15 seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-graders; All of the students attend public schools in Harlem and are African American or Hispanic; most are female.	--
Daniels, J., Crum, M., Ramaswamy, M., & Freudenberg, N. (2011). Creating REAL MEN: Description of an intervention to reduce drug use, HIV risk, and rearrest among young men returning to urban communities from jail. Health Promotion Practice, 12(1), 44–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839909331910	REAL MEN (Returning Educated African American and Latino Men to Enriched Neighborhoods)	New York, NY	REAL MEN seeks to increase young men's chances of economic and social stability, and thus better health, by linking them to employment and educational opportunities after release from jail. The program also seeks to engage participants in a critical examination of how dominant social constructions of masculinity and race influence the contexts that they encounter and their own actions and health risks.	Participants were recruited from two facilities located at the NYC Department of Corrections' Rikers Island Detention Center that house all male adolescent inmates. Males between the ages of 16 and 18; individuals determined to be eligible for release within 12 months of intake; and those planning to return to the Bronx, Brooklyn, or Manhattan, the boroughs with the highest incarceration rates, were eligible for enrollment. The mean age of the 552 young men who completed the intake interview between 2002 and 2005, when enrollment ended, was 18 years. More than half (54%) described themselves as Black/non-Hispanics and 37% as Hispanic/Latinos. About 12% were born outside the mainland United States.	--
Deroo, M. R., & Watson, V. W. M. (2020). "Air I Breathe": Songwriting as literacy practices of remembrance. Journal of Literacy Research, 52(2), 158–179. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X20915518	Verses Project	--	Verses was co-designed with a music-education faculty member as an interdisciplinary literacy and music-education collaboration. The instructional design of Verses allowed for teaching artists to scaffold students' already-present multimodal literacy skills and talents.	Since 2016, more than 200 fifth- through 12th- grade youth from 46 schools and 22 metro area communities, including 98% youth of color, have participated.	--
Edwards, D. (2005). "Doing Hair" and literacy in an afterschool reading and writing workshop for African-American adolescent girls. Afterschool Matters, 4, 42-50.	--	--	• To provide African-American adolescent girls with the opportunity to talk, read, and write about a cultural topic that is typically not sanctioned in school • To promote critical thinking by inviting the girls to examine why hair matters to them and to view hair from cultural, historical, and socio-political perspectives • To encourage the girls to reflect on their reading and writing experiences about hair • To give the girls an opportunity to share their knowledge with others	10 African-American adolescent girls ages 12 to 16	--

Green, K. L. (2013). "The way we hear ourselves is different from the way others hear us": Exploring the literate identities of a Black radio youth collective. Equity & Excellence in Education, 46(3), 315–326. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2013.808506	Youth Voices	Urban southeastern city in the US	• Valuing and using personal life experiences in educating each other • Using multimedia and various techniques to create a framework for consciousness raising • Using our histories to build one future and take action	Twelve youth, self-identifying as African, African American, and Caribbean, and ranging in ages 14 to 21	--
Green, D. (2014). Freedom Schools for the twenty-first century. The Western Journal of Black Studies, 38(3), 163–176.	Baton Rouge Freedom School	Baton Rouge, LA	Today's Freedom School programs, like those found in the summer of 1964, attempt to counteract negative forces often found in inner-city environments through storytelling, cultural events, and mentorship. The leaders in the program strategically target literacy skills and promote social advocacy and self-confidence among at-risk students.	Five mentors, five students, and two parents (or guardians) of the students that were interviewed. All of the participants self-identified as African- American.	Mentors in this program were characterized by their efficacy, and their belief in the ability to make a difference in the lives of program participants.
Hargrave, C. P.. (2015). Counter space: Analysis of educational structures of an after-school program that fosters Black academic success narratives. The Journal of Negro Education, 84(3), 348–361. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.84.3.0348	Growing students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (G-STEM),	Midwestern city in the US	G-STEM is comprehensive in nature: youth, middle and high school teachers, and parents are targeted, supported and empowered to increase student academic success, preparation and motivation to study in STEM fields.	There are approximately 300 students in the Metro Area Schools G-STEM program enrolled in 11 middle schools and 5 comprehensive high schools. Annually 40%-50% of G-STEM participants in Metro Area Schools are African American.	--
Holly, J. S.. (2020). A critical autoethnography of a Black man teaching engineering to Black boys. Journal of African American Males in Education, 11(2), 25–42.	Curriculum on Repurposing Engineering and Teaching Equity (CREATE)		CREATE has three modules interwoven throughout the curriculum to pursue an interdisciplinary educational experience that addresses problems of academic disengagement and civic misfortune experienced by Black males. Engineering education, civics education, and culturally relevant teaching are merged to (a) cultivate Black male intellectuals and (b) foster sociopolitical development.	middle-school-aged Black boys between 10-13 years old	Researcher was program leader When I was younger, I participated in the Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program (DAPCEP). I participated before entering high school and did not do any engineering-specific programs afterwards. I was encouraged to explore engineering by a former teacher after sharing my interest in mathematics and problem-solving. After turning to Google searches to learn about engineering majors. I determined that Mechanical Engineering (ME) would be the best fit for me. I was rejected admission to my first-choice university but was admitted to Tuskegee University (TU), my second choice. I went on to earn a master's degree in ME from Michigan State University (MSU), even though I was nearly

					dismissed for unsatisfactory performance. My enrollment at Purdue University's School of Education doctoral program was a calculated quest to merge my engineering training with my devotion to Black youth' welfare. This project is the culmination of that effort.
Jayakumar, U., Vue, R., & Allen, W. R. (2013). Pathways to college for young Black scholars: A community cultural wealth perspective. Harvard Educational Review, 83(4), 551–579. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.83.4.4k1mq00162433l28	Young Black Scholars (YBS)	Los Angeles, CA	The purpose of the program is to prepare African American and other minority high school youth to become competitively eligible for university admission and college success.	25 YBS graduates (16 females and 9 males) who were projected to enter college as freshmen between the fall of 2003 and the fall of 2007. All were born in the United States and attended high school in California. They were involved in YBS for at least one year during high school and were enrolled in four-year postsecondary institutions in the springs of 2007 and 2008.	The Young Black Scholars program was developed by the 100 Black Men of Los Angeles, Inc., a civic and community-based organization that works to improve the quality of life for African American and other students of color. It continues to be operated and funded by Black community members.
Johnson, T. A. (2016). "I walk a bit bigger now": Lessons from students in an African-centered after school program. The Journal of Negro Education, 85(2), 143–155. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.85.2.0143	Kamili Ville	Oakland, CA	The program was designed to provide African (i.e., of African descent) students with an opportunity to explore their whole self through their own eyes, using writing, historic literature, and mass media.	The primary participants in this study were 10 middle school students of African descent between 11 and 13 years old who attended a public school in Oakland, California. Eight participants were girls and two were boys.	--
McCreary, M. L., Young, J. J., Jones, M. Y., Pasquariello, C. D., Fife, J. E., Grosz, E., Stewart, N., & Desmangles, J. (2011). Project IMPPACT: A psycho-educational problem-solving intervention for children. Journal of Instructional Psychology, 38(2).	IMPPACT (I Must Pause, Pray, Analyze, Chill, and Take action)	Virgina	IMPPACT is designed as a community-based program that applies salient dimensions of African American religiosity and cultural values in the effort to cultivate resilience and self-efficacy outcomes among African American families	11 former IMPPACT participants	The intervention is conducted in the church setting utilizing church volunteers.church staff, and university undergraduate and graduate students.
De Royston, M. M., Vakil, S., Nasir, N. S., Ross, K. M., Givens, J., & Holman, A. (2017). "He's more like a 'brother' than a teacher": Politicized caring in a program for African American Males. Teachers College Record, 119(4), 1–40. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811711900401	Manhood Development Program	South Los Angeles, CA	The Manhood Development Program was an elective class in the high school and an after school program at the middle school that sought to improve Black male students' academic success and school experiences, and teach students about their cultural and community histories.	African American male students from Oakland Unified School District high schools	African American male teachers, coaches, and/or community members

Shimshon-Santo, A. (2018). "Do our lives matter?" Music, poetry, and Freedom School. Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, 13(3), 256–267. https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197918793057	Community Coalition's (COCO) Freedom School of South Los Angeles	Los Angeles, CA	Our goal was to provide a culturally rich arts education, rooted in black and brown creativities, that facilitated opportunities for youth to grow as leaders through music production and creative writing.	LA's District 8 is primarily black and Latinx—44% black and 41% speak Spanish at home	I've taught arts education for more than 25 years in neighborhood spaces, schools, and universities. Avila, my son, is a musician, composer, and arts educator. My daughter Reva is a multimedia storyteller. In this project, Avila taught music production, I taught poetry, and Reva served as the project's visual documentarian. I am of Jewish origin. My ancestors fled Europe due to fascism. My mother's family relocated to the Middle East, and my father's came to the United States. My children's father is black and immigrated to the United States from Brazil. While my children and I are LA natives, we have immediate family ties to three continents. Our family is intercultural, interfaith (Jewish and Ifa), and polly-lingual (English, Spanish, and Portuguese).
Smith, C. D., & Hope, E. C. (2020). "We just want to break the stereotype": Tensions in Black boys' critical social analysis of their suburban school experiences. Journal of Educational Psychology, 112(3), 551–566. https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000435	Voice Project	Suburban, mostly White, affluent community in the Midwestern US	The Voice Project was designed as a Black male space for mentorship, identity exploration, narrative sharing, and the discussion of issues that may be sensitive across generations.	5 Black Boys at a suburban high school from their sophomore year through high school graduation	The Voice Project was both an afterschool program and an ongoing program of research. The first author served as a facilitator of program activities while acting as principal investigator of the research study. At the time of the study, the first author was a graduate student; the supporting team consisted of another graduate student, a professor, and a postdoctoral fellow.
Staples, J. M. (2008). Hustle & Flow: a critical student and teacher-generated framework for re-authoring a representation of Black masculinity. Educational Action Research, 16(3), 377–390. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650790802260349	Youth Leadership	Philadelphia, PA	A student and teacher-generated framework for re-authoring a troubling representation of Black masculinity in a popular culture narrative. This description highlights the ways my students and I provided a means for literacies to serve students' desire to re-author images and words they found problematic in the texts they are most drawn to, in addition to fostering methods of critical consciousness and empowerment.	The 12 students in the program ranged from 14 to 18 years old.All students self-identified as African American and each was school-identified as a 'disengaged' reader or writer.	--
Staples, J. (2008). How do I know what I think 'till I hear what I say? International Journal of Learning, 14(11), 107–118. https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9494/CGP/v15i11/45583	Youth Leadership	Philadelphia, PA	motivate "disengaged" urban adolescents to engage media texts (like films, the Internet and popular periodicals) along with traditional texts (like short stories and poems), and cultivate literacy practices.	The 12 students in the program ranged from 14 to 18 years old.All students self-identified as African American and each was school-identified as a 'disengaged' reader or writer.	--

Citation	Program	Location	Description	Participants	Facilitator
Stiler, G., & Allen, L. (2006). Making connections with the past:(un) masking African American history at a neighborhood community center. Multicultural Education, 13(4), 24-28.	–	Evansville, IL	Enrichment activities generally focus on language arts, social studies, math, and science, but in the fall of each year an Afrocentric curriculum involves students i the construction of exhibits for the Children's African-American History Museum	K-6 children	--
Sule, V. T., Nelson, M., & Williams, T. (2021). They #woke: How Black students in an after-school community-based program manifest critical consciousness. Teachers College Record, 123(1), 1-38. https://doi.org/10.1177/0161468121123001 03	Brother to Sister (BTS)	Midwestern US	BTS was founded in 2008 in response to cross-racial tension, intra-racial quibbles, comparatively high Black student suspension rates, and dismal college matriculation among Black students attending a traditionally White high school in the Midwest. Marcus and Diop were convinced that change could occur by creating a space for Black peer-support and Black cultural-historical education.	Fifteen members of BTS (eight self-defined Black females and seven self-defined Black males)	Led by a high school student with the assistance of his father (pseudonyms Marcus and Diop).
Thomas, O., Davidson, W., & McAdoo, H. (2008). An evaluation study of the Young Empowered Sisters (YES!) Program: Promoting cultural assets Among African American adolescent girls through a culturally relevant school-based intervention. Journal of Black Psychology, 34(3), 281–308. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798408314136	Young Empowered Sisters (YES!)	Semiurban Midwestern city in the US	The goals of the intervention are to instill a healthy Black identity, promote a collectivist orientation, increase an awareness of racism, and encourage participation in liberatory activism.	A total of 74 African American girls participated in the study, of whom 57% were freshmen and 43% were sophomores in high school. The average age was approximately 14.68. In all, 58% received free or reduced- price lunch. The average GPA was 2.34 (GPA was obtained through official school records).	The primary investigator of this study and a research assistant, who are both Black women, co facilitated the two intervention groups.
Turner, N. (2012). Multimodal hip hop productions as media literacies. The Educational Forum, 76(4), 497–509. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2012.708 617	Multimodal Media Production (MMP) course		The MMP course held as its overarching goal to both incorporate and validate students' literacy practices outside of school (in this case Hip Hop production) and to use these tools for learning and knowledge production.	30 students: FMS serves a student population with a wide range of experiences with technology, as well as a high percentage of students who live with families that subsist below the poverty level (over 75 percent receive free or reduced lunch).	The MMP teacher, Mr. Soto, also a Hip Hop artist, has published his music and music videos on CDs, Facebook, and YouTube, and has taught history, English, and physical education since 2002.
Turner, K. C. N., Hayes, N. V., & Way, K. (2013). Critical Multimodal Hip Hop Production: A Social Justice Approach to African American Language and Literacy Practices. Equity & Excellence in Education, 46(3), 342–354. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2013.809 235	Digital Underground Storytelling for You(th) (DUSTY)	California	DUSTY offers free courses in multimodal media production and provides students with a context to work, learn, and create digital stories, public service announcements, music videos, and digital music, especially hip hop and rap, at multiple elementary, middle school, and high schools. DUSTY's choice to use hip hop was a conscious decision to engage students in the San Francisco Bay Area in their own literacy practices as a vehicle to	a group of 30, urban, African American, Chicano/a/Latino/a, and Asian youth.	Mr. Soto requested that I use his real name. He is a 33-year-old African American, independent hip hop artist who has taught since 2002. He was the lead instructor at DUSTY's FMS site during the period of investigation, teaching lyric writing and digital storytelling Monday through Thursday. As an independent hip hop artist, he has published his music and music videos on CDs, Myspace.com, and YouTube. Since completing his credential

			develop other literacies.		he has taught history, English, and physical education at an alternative high school and two middle schools.
Woodland, M. H., Martin, J. F., Hill, R. L., & Worrell, F. C. (2009). The most blessed room in the city: The influence of a youth development program on three young black males. Journal of Negro Education, 78(3), 233-245.	–	Western city in the US which has consistently ranked among the top 10 most dangerous places to live	Providing a safe environment for these young men was paramount. ... The participants were encouraged to explore their own lives and to think critically about the interaction between history, policy, culture, and their personal experiences.	The majority of youth participants were Black with a substantially smaller group of Latino youth who attended the program regularly. There were approximately an equal number of males and females and no age limit was placed on program participants, but most participants ranged from 15 to 23 years old (more precise demographic data were not available).	When walking into the program, one entered a vibrant intergenerational community of approximately 40 young people, with several adults interspersed throughout the group. These adults were parents, neighbors, concerned citizens, program employees, and all others who were interested in working with local youth.