

# Breaking Silence and Amplifying Voices: Youths Writing and Performing Their Worlds

Tracey T. Flores

Through participation in a weeklong creative writing workshop, youths ages 13–21 amplify their voices through the writing and performing of stories from their lived experiences and learn to use writing as a powerful tool to break silence and transform their worlds.

The Latinx Cultural Arts Center (LCAC) is a vibrant art space nestled among tall buildings in a city located in an urban area of the Southwestern United States. It is a colorful space adorned with handmade sculptures of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* and paintings created by local artists in protest of the politics impacting the state.

During the day, LCAC is frequented by visitors interested in the arts and performances hosted in the space. These performances celebrate the rich cultural and linguistic heritage and stories of the Latinx and indigenous populations residing in this region of the country.

Tonight, LCAC brings the community together to support and celebrate youth writers. It is the backdrop for youths sharing the poetry of their words and worlds. Now, folding chairs placed in rows face a small elevated stage. Tall bistro tables line the perimeter of the room for guests to stand and enjoy bite-sized desserts and lemonade.

The audience quiets as the first young writer, Sheila (all names are pseudonyms), a 17-year-old Chinese American youth, adjusts the microphone. She begins reading: “A minority. / The moment I came out of my mother’s womb, / The odds were already stacked high against me. / Why couldn’t I have been born, / Blonde-haired and blue-eyed? / Let me tell you something.”

The room is quiet as Sheila pauses and looks at the audience. She continues: “The ‘American Dream’ doesn’t exist for people like us. / My parents have been slaving. / Slaving. / Slaving for you people since day one. / Since the day they first stepped foot on this American soil.”

The audience is visibly moved by Sheila’s words. She concludes her performance with the following words: “So I’m here to tell you my dream. / Because it has been way too long and we are all tired of this shit. / It’s time for you to wake up.” The audience loudly applauds.

The night continues as, one by one, 17 youth writers, ages 13–21, take the stage to share their truths. For Sheila and several other youth writers in attendance, this is their first experience of sharing their writing in a public space. Collectively, their writing is used as a platform to break silence and speak truth to the dominant discourse that assumes our youths to be apathetic, deviant, and deficient in both upbringing and education. However, through the courage of writing and sharing stories from their lived experiences, their words reveal youths who are aware, full of hope, and determined to (re)write their futures.

In this article, I share the voices and stories of the youth writers I worked alongside in the Youth Writing Collective (YWC), a summer creative writing program for youths. Situated in Arizona, a state with mandated English-only policies (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Garcia, Lawton, & De Figueiredo, 2012) and restrictive curricula, this study highlights the possibilities that exist when we create spaces with and for youths to utilize

**TRACEY T. FLORES** is an assistant professor of language and literacy in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Texas at Austin, USA; e-mail [tflores@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:tflores@austin.utexas.edu).

writing and performing as a tool to break silence and amplify their voices while examining and challenging their worlds. In addition, I share how participation in the YWC supported youths in raising their collective awareness of issues present in their lives while fighting to create their place in the world.

## The Silencing of Youth Voices

For eight years, I taught and wrote with culturally and linguistically diverse youths and families in a region of the country that Anzaldúa (1999) referred to as “*una herida abierta*” (p. 25), an open wound. This “*herida abierta*” is a region in the Southwest contextualized by English-only policies (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Garcia et al., 2012), Ethnic Studies bans, and restrictive curricula and instruction. These policies silence and control the experiences and lived realities of youths from historically marginalized homes and communities through de facto segregation, alternative curricular standards, and narrow views of language and literacy.

As a teacher in these communities, I witnessed the impact that these restrictive policies had on youths, not only personally but also academically. State-sanctioned English-only policies segregated students into English Language Development classrooms based on their perceived English proficiency. In these classrooms, students received four hours of discrete skill instruction in the areas of reading, writing, grammar, listening, and speaking, thus limiting access to the same curricular opportunities as their peers (Lillie, Markos, Arias, & Wiley, 2012), namely, instruction in science and social studies.

In these segregated classrooms, students receive standardized and decontextualized language and literacy instruction. Curricula were designed and implemented within a narrow view of language and literacy that did not account for the cultural and linguistic resources and literacies of students’ homes and communities. Within this context, language and literacy curricula were reduced to an autonomous model (Street, 1995), or rather a skill-based approach to instruction, in which my students were viewed as deficient.

Bearing witness to these inequities, the silencing of my students, and my own view of the powerful potential of writing as a tool to break silence and amplify voices is what led me to collaborate with my cofacilitators in the YWC. As a participant observer (Spradley, 1980), I explored the question, What can educators learn from the writing, performing, and sharing of stories from youths about how they view their worlds and what matters most to them? In the following section, I discuss the

scholarship that informed the vision, design, and practices of the YWC.

## Youth Writing

Some scholars have studied the writing that youths have crafted, created, shared, and performed in literacy workshops and creative spaces, both in and out of school (García & Gaddes, 2012; Haddix & Mardhani-Bayne, 2016; Jocson, 2010; Muhammad, 2012). In these contexts, youths developed their craft through engaging in an exploration of self and their worlds. These studies highlighted the empowering and transformative ways that youths used writing to examine, name, and give voice to their experiences.

Jocson (2010) conducted an ethnographic study of youth participation in the Poetry for the People program in their American and World Literature classes. She highlighted how the inclusion of multicultural texts and student-centered practices supported youths in self-exploration and examination of their worlds, thus inspiring the crafting and performing of their own original pieces. In addition, Jocson noted that offering Poetry for the People during class time served as a bridge for youths to engage with social issues not included in the regular curriculum.

García and Gaddes (2012) studied an after-school reading and writing workshop for Latina adolescent girls that was created using sociocultural theories of literacy and learning within a culturally and linguistically responsive framework. From analysis of writing, the researchers found that the use of culturally relevant literature supported girls in authoring their lives, finding ways to articulate their experiences through writing, (re)writing ascribed scripts, and (re)envisioning their futures.

Muhammad (2012) facilitated, organized, and studied a five-week writing institute for black adolescent girls ages 11–17. Workshops were designed to empower girls to share their stories while realizing the power of writing to amplify their voices. She found that one participant used writing to make meaning of and develop her identities in ways that differed from how she used writing in the classroom.

Based out of Syracuse, New York, Writing Our Lives (Haddix & Mardhani-Bayne, 2016) is a year-round writing program for youths in grades 6–12. Writing Our Lives is a space “to celebrate youth literacies and to make visible the kinds of spaces that support their literacy interests and needs” (p. 132). The program offers many creative opportunities for youths to continue to develop their writing and share stories in a variety of

forms, including through participation in after-school digital composing and theater-based programs.

Collectively, these scholars focused on youth participation in intentionally organized and designed second classrooms (Campano, 2007) and third spaces (Gutiérrez, 2008), spaces of creative resilience and transformation, where youth literacies were leveraged in expansive ways. In these (re)mediated spaces, youths read, wrote, and (re)wrote their lives in powerful ways. The practices, texts, and ways of being together were grounded in the lived experiences of youths, drawing on their existing linguistic, cultural, and familial resources for the creation of texts and performative expressions of being and becoming.

My study of the YWC draws on the foundational work and practices of the spaces highlighted in these studies. I expand their work by focusing on the practices and writing of youths in a creative writing program in a state with mandated English-only policies, Ethnic Studies bans, and restrictive language and literacy curricula. I focus on the collaborative work of youths and facilitators in the co-construction of a third space (Gutiérrez, 2008), where youth cultures, languages, voices, and lived experiences amplified through the writing and performing of personal narratives. In the next section, I provide an overview of the goals and practices of the YWC.

## YWC

The YWC was a free creative writing program for youths ages 13–21 hosted on the university campus during the summer. The weeklong program convened for three hours a day and included a final celebration of writing. YWC goals were to empower youths to critically examine their worlds, create positive self-definitions (Collins, 2009), and bring “silence into language and action” (Lorde, 2007, p. 40). As facilitators, we collaborated with youths toward these goals by inviting and encouraging them to write, share, and perform stories, in any language, from their lived experiences while continuing to develop their craft.

To provide access to the YWC, we secured donations of materials, space, and volunteers. Family and friends donated writing materials, such as composition books, binders, markers, and pencils. The university provided classroom space, and all of the facilitators, guest writers, and presenters volunteered their time and talents.

The YWC consisted of specific practices that invited youths into the writing and performing of their stories. These practices included freewriting, group readings of mentor texts (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2007), discussion, composing time, and author speak (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
**Workshop Schedule**

1:30 p.m.	Freewriting
2:00 p.m.	Group reading of mentor text
2:45 p.m.	Composing time <sup>a</sup>
4:00 p.m.	Author speak
4:30 p.m.	Reflection

<sup>a</sup> *Pláticas* were held on Tuesday and Thursday.

In addition, we modeled our writing in both English and Spanish and included bilingual mentor texts in workshops to encourage youths to share their stories in many languages.

We opened all workshops with freewriting to a guiding question. Guiding questions included the following: Why am I here? Where am I from? *¿De donde soy yo?* What does community mean to me? We invited youths to write, draw, or use other modes in their freewriting. The opening freewriting anchored the writing and sharing of the workshop.

Next, we introduced mentor texts to further discussion and inspire writing (see Figure 2). We introduced and included mentor texts that were not only culturally relevant but also multimodal, as they “utilize[d] a variety of modes to communicate or represent concepts and information” (Serafini, 2013, p. 12). These texts were models for speaking our truths in a variety of modes and were intentionally selected based on their focus on issues related to identity, language, culture, and community (see Figure 2).

During composing time, youths worked on new pieces, continued works in progress, and engaged in one-on-one writing conferences with facilitators. We provided youths with time and space to engage in topics and genres of their choice. Several youths choose to expand on their freewriting by using mentor texts for inspiration in structure and form.

Finally, we closed workshops with author speak, when youths read their writing aloud to the group to receive constructive feedback. This time punctuated the end of our workshop, as we shared and celebrated our words and stories.

In addition, we invited university faculty, staff, and alumni to facilitate writing workshops and participate in *pláticas*, which are conversations that youths engaged in with community members to learn about their career pathways and experiences with navigating college. We included guest workshops and *pláticas* in workshops to extend our community while building a network of

## Figure 2 Mentor Texts

"The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me" by Sherman Alexie

"Coming Into Language" by Jimmy Santiago Baca

"Ego Tripping" by Nikki Giovanni

*The Circuit: Stories From the Life of a Migrant Child* by Francisco Jiménez

"I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King Jr.

"A Letter to Gabriela, a Young Writer" by Pat Mora

"A Homemade Education" by Malcom X

resources and support for youths to draw on in their future endeavors.

## YWC Writers

To recruit youths, I reached out to local middle and high school teachers, literacy coaches, and administrators. I created flyers, in English and Spanish, with the registration information, program description, and workshop schedule. I delivered the flyers to schools and posted them on social media. Also, a friend connected me with the local Spanish-language news station, which then invited me to discuss the program on air.

After three months of recruitment, 25 youths registered for the YWC. Of the initial 25, 17 youths ages 13–21 in grades 7–12 participated in the workshops. Thirteen of the participants were female, and four were male. Four youths participated with their siblings.

YWC youths attended public, charter, or parochial schools located throughout the city. Five youths were affiliated with an organization that supports high-achieving, first-generation students with financial assistance to attend private parochial schools. In addition, the organization provided youths with mentorship and resources to support the college enrollment process.

Youths were actively involved in their schools and communities. Two youths, siblings, were active members of an immigrant activist organization that educates and builds capacity within the community to advocate, protect, and defend families. Five youths volunteered at soup kitchens and tutored elementary students. Four youths were members of their school choir and band, and one youth played badminton.

All of the youths were born in the United States. Eleven identified as Hispanic/Latinx, three as African

American, one as Chinese American, one as white American, and one as Indian American. Sixteen of the 17 participants spoke another language at home besides English: Chinese, Spanish, or Hindu.

## YWC Team

The YWC was organized and facilitated by a group of four Latina educators and writers between the ages of 20 and 40. As a doctoral student in English education and the lead facilitator, I brought my eight years of teaching in local public schools and my experiences with working with youths and families in after-school writing workshops (Flores & Early, 2017). Our collective experiences included teaching and working with youths in school and community spaces, theater- and arts-based learning, and designing writing curriculum across these contexts.

## Third Space

To understand the space that was co-constructed with and for YWC youths and the stories and performances that occurred in the space, I turn to Gutiérrez's (2008) theorization of third space. She used this construct in her work with migrant youths participating in a university-sponsored program to describe third space as the "transformative space where the potential for an expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge are heightened" (p. 152). She described the intentionally organized practices that attended to vertical and horizontal forms of learning. That is, the practices of the space not only tended to the learning that occurred in formal settings but also privileged the out-of-school practices that youths engaged in daily.

In this program, this third space, the facilitators worked with youths to reflect on and (re)write their histories by taking into account the sociopolitical nature of their experiences. The facilitators selected critical texts that provided youths with a new lens to understand their experiences. This program was a "social environment...in which [youths] begin to reconceive who they are and what they might be able to accomplish academically and beyond" (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 148). Youths (re)read and (re)wrote their lives throughout the program while at the same time laying the groundwork for their futures.

Like the youths and facilitators in Gutiérrez's (2008) work, from inception to implementation of the YWC, youths joined in the co-construction of a third space with facilitators and invited guests. Facilitators intentionally organized workshops to tap into the

interests of youths through the intentional selection of culturally relevant texts that engaged them in the crafting and performing of stories from their lived experiences.

## Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis was an iterative and ongoing process. As lead facilitator, I participated in all aspects of the YWC, with a focus on curriculum development, workshop facilitation, and data collection.

In workshops, I took field notes focused on my initial impressions, the sharing of stories, and discussions. I collected writing that youths crafted in the workshops. Their writing provided me with insight into the themes that were emerging and evolving from their written words.

On the first and last day of workshops, I collected pre and post surveys completed by youths, and one month after the completion of the program, I conducted semistructured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Surveys and interviews provided a lens into any growth, change, or new understandings noted by youths through participation in the YWC.

These multiple data sources worked together to paint an in-depth portrait of youths and the YWC. They illuminated what mattered to them through the narrative constructed by their words, stories, and actions.

I analyzed data by weaving together grounded theory, constant comparative methods (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), and narrative methods (Riessman, 2008). I coded all of the data in stages using grounded theory coding techniques. I organized codes into categories and, based on emergent themes, collapsed and expanded them. Throughout analysis, I wrote memos (Saldaña, 2013) to support my reflection of analysis and comparison of codes, categories, and themes.

## Findings

In this section, I share two themes that emerged in the analysis of data: awareness and “creating my place in the world.” These themes speak to the co-construction of a third space by youths and facilitators and what matters to them. In addition, I focus not only on the experiences of youths in the space but also on the practices that facilitated their growth and (re)seeing of self throughout the week.

### Awareness

I would want the world to know that young people our age are well informed; more than people assume. Students at

my high school are able to deconstruct global issues and make strong connections and opinions based on our world today. These are valuable skills that can benefit us in our futures. (Miriam, 16 years old)

Miriam’s words illustrate an awareness of the unfair assumptions that society places on youths. She wants the world to know that youths are aware, informed, and capable of changing their world.

At the YWC, youth discussions, writing, and performances were rooted in the injustices they faced at the intersections of age, gender, language, and race. Their stories echoed the contradictions and tensions of their daily realities of navigating unfair stereotypes, racism, prejudice, and educational inequity. Their realities created what Anzaldúa (2009) referred to as a “perspective from the cracks” (p. 322), a heightened sense of awareness that is experienced in traveling and existing in multiple worlds while negotiating life within and between these spaces of marginalization.

For example, during composing time on the fourth day of workshops, Seneca, a 17-year-old black youth, drafted a piece titled “I Have a Dream.” Her writing was in response to the question, “What stereotypes does society have about youth?” She started this piece during freewriting and finished it during composing time. In the piece, Seneca expresses her desire for black girls to realize that their beauty is not defined by the shade of their skin or by “society’s image of beauty”:

I have a dream  
That our beauty  
Will not  
Correlate with the color of our skin  
A dream  
That girls will not feel insecure because they are “dark.”  
A dream  
that girls will not bleach their skin  
so that they may try to attain society’s image of beauty!  
Black is black  
Black is BEAUTIFUL  
We come in all shades  
And we are ALL beautiful.

Seneca’s words illustrate her awareness of “society’s image of beauty” that is unfairly imposed on black girls. In the final lines of her poem, she calls on black girls to celebrate their beauty and create positive self-definitions (Collins, 2009) of themselves on their own terms.

Similarly, Janeth, a 16-year-old Mexican American youth, wrote a piece titled “Where I’m From/De Donde Soy Yo,” which she drafted after reading the poems “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon and “De Donde Soy” by Levi Romero. In her writing, Janeth addresses

the prejudice and stereotypes that society imposed on her long before she was born:

I was born with prejudice upon me  
 For where I'm from is often put down  
 Por qué represento ser latina  
 Pero yo llevo sangre mexicana  
 I was born with thinking I would fail  
 Already my arrivance;  
 alarmed others because where I'm from  
 What some people miss is where I'm from  
 is rich in culture, in traditions  
 I am deeply from México pero I was born in Arizona,  
 yet that doesn't change who I am and what my roots are

In Janeth's writing, she names the prejudices and stereotypes that she experienced in her life, while defining who she is and where she is from as "rich in culture [and] in traditions."

In these examples, both Seneca and Janeth draw on their lived experiences to break silence to name and confront the tensions and contradictions that exist in their lives. Their voices critique and challenge the oppressive structures that marginalize and silence many while privileging few.

In workshops, youths were invited to participate in a variety of writing activities in which they drew on their experiences to craft and perform stories from their lives. In addition, as illustrated in their writing, the inclusion of culturally relevant mentor texts supported their writing and opened up space for youths to examine their lives and worlds.

### ***Creating My Place in the World***

I lay on my bed, feet towards the pillows, and stare at the world map pinned up on the wall. Where was my place? Where did I belong? My search so far has been trial and error. But when I do find something I like, it makes me feel like it's possible. It is possible to have a place in the world; the hard part is finding it. But I'm figuring out that maybe life is not about finding your place, life is about creating it. (Destiny, 17 years old)

In Destiny's final writing, she describes her search to find and create her place in the world. During the YWC, like Destiny, all youths explored their histories while at the same time writing toward their futures.

In workshops, some youths discussed and wrote about painful experiences that they carried with them as scars on their hearts. However, these were not stories of damage (Tuck, 2009); in their writing, youths shared stories of hope, their desire to achieve their goals and make a difference in their communities. Their hope

was stronger than their painful experiences. Their hope empowered them to write, to author their lives (García & Gaddes, 2012) and create the futures that they envisioned for themselves.

Throughout the week, Daniel, a 17-year-old Mexican American youth, wrote several short pieces. In his final writing, he combined the pieces to create an original poem, which describes his ultimate goal of being the first in his family to attend college:

After I read the United States Constitution,  
 I realize that America hasn't found the solution  
 So many resources at my feet,  
 Yet there is so much to complete.  
 I will not run, I will not cower,  
 Instead I will be the one not afraid of my power  
 My greatest goal is to absorb all this knowledge,  
 So I can reach my dream of attending college

Daniel acknowledges the uncertainties and obstacles that may be in his path, yet he realizes that he must keep looking to the future to make his dream a reality.

The hope illustrated in Daniel's piece is also reflected in the writing of his YWC peers. Youths wrote and discussed their desire to use the lessons learned from their own hardships to help others experiencing similar challenges. In Olivia's writing, she states, "I want to do all I can to ensure the strength of my community and people around me." The youths' goals and dreams are not for them alone but for their families and communities. In their goals, the youths are breaking silence and finding their voices while creating their place in the world.

### **Discussion**

I do not want to be known as the shy one who never spoke, I want to be known as the one who screamed her feelings through her writing. My writing is my voice. (Nadia, 16 years old)

In my work alongside youths and facilitators in the YWC, I witnessed the strength, hope, and power that resides in the stories and experiences of our youths. Within their stories and experiences is a deep desire to bring "silence into language and action" (Lorde, 2007, p. 40) and make a difference in their communities and their worlds.

YWC youths live and learn within a political context that increasingly works to silence and control them. The English-only policies and curricular mandates of the state place limitations on the learning opportunities that some youths receive in school. Our classrooms

must be spaces where students are provided with opportunities across the day to develop their craft as readers and writers while learning ways to critically examine and challenge their worlds.

Throughout the week, we modeled our writing and performed our stories in English and Spanish to encourage youths to do the same. At the YWC, some youths began to explore writing and sharing their own stories in their native languages by infusing their pieces with the words and sounds of their homes. However, as educators, we must constantly challenge existing policies and practices, sustaining the work of programs like the YWC that disrupt the privileging of English as the dominant form of expression in our classrooms.

The YWC is an illustration of the possibilities that exist when we challenge English-only policies and practices and collaborate with and for youths to open brave spaces to write, share, and perform our worlds. It is a (re)mediation of space that centered their voices and experiences while continuing to nurture and develop their literacy practices (Haddix & Mardhani-Bayne, 2016) in meaningful ways.

Through writing, sharing, and performing, youths used writing as a tool, a weapon, to confront injustice. Their writing brings awareness to issues present in their worlds, providing an entry point for dialogue and action. Their writing and their voices offer solutions to the ways that we may begin to (re)imagine our literacy classrooms as spaces to deconstruct oppressive systems and (re)construct them for a more just society.

## Implications

In the construction of empowering and transformative literacy spaces, such as the YWC, scholars have advocated for the use of texts and writing that invite students' lives into the classroom and draws on youths' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), cultural and linguistic resources (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Heath, 1983), and home and community knowledge and experiences (Hull & Schultz, 2001; Yosso, 2005). The YWC was co-constructed with and for youths to provide an empowering and transformative experience through the act of writing personal stories within a supportive community of peers and caring adults.

The practices of the YWC mediated the co-construction of a third space (Gutiérrez, 2008) that centered the voices, experiences, and ways of knowing of youths in all aspects of the workshop. The YWC can provide English language arts teachers with concrete examples of how they may create space in their

classrooms with and for students to engage in similar literacy opportunities.

In the YWC, the intentional selection and inclusion of culturally relevant texts that emerged from the lived realities of the youths (Kirkland, 2008) was vital to our work in the space. Texts served as an entry point into discussion of social issues that are often absent in the curriculum (Jocson, 2010).

Throughout the workshops, facilitators modeled, shared, and performed our own writing alongside youths. Several youths discussed how this sharing fueled their writing and helped them realize that they are not alone. For example, Yadira, a YWC writer, described how she felt when a facilitator shared a personal story of the judgment she endured because of her weight:

I remember the sharing of a woman that was there. She shared how she was always labeled big. This touched my heart because I had shared a similar story. In the moment of the workshop I couldn't help but fuel one of my poems with emotion....It was an interesting moment for me to release how I really felt.

This collective sharing of narratives enriched the workshop by inviting youths into one another's lives and encouraging them to share their own experiences and opinions without judgment. The sharing of our own stories blurred the boundaries of "the formal and informal, the official and unofficial spaces" (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 152) between facilitators and youths in which one story, way of knowing, or being was not privileged over another.

## Youths Writing and Performing Their Worlds

The final youth writer, Mia, a 17-year-old Mexican American, walks to the small stage in the LCAC. Holding her writing, she looks up at the audience and begins to read her piece titled "There Is Beauty in the World":

There is beauty in this world  
I've seen it myself  
please believe me when i tell you  
You are worth every flower that ever blossomed  
every song that has been sung  
Every first step taken.  
There is beauty in this world  
And it is you.

As she comes to her final words, the audience breaks into loud applause, signaling the collective power and engagement produced through youth stories and experiences that can connect with audiences across contexts.

## TAKE ACTION!

Suggestions for creating space for youth voices in your classroom:

1. *Set guidelines:* Collaborate with students to create norms or nonnegotiables for writing, sharing, and performing personal stories (e.g., be free, be fearless, be challenged) that will support the creation of a brave space.
2. *Gather high-interest and relevant texts:* Collect a variety of culturally relevant texts written in many languages and genres that are connected to students' lived experiences and realities.
3. *Model your writing and share your stories:* Write alongside your students, modeling the messiness of writing and the vulnerability of sharing our personal experiences.
4. *Build on the resources of your community:* Invite local authors, poets, and storytellers into the classroom to conduct guest writing workshops and share their practices and writing lives with students.
5. *Celebrate the writing and stories of your students:* Organize a reading in your classroom for students to publicly share their work with one another and/or invited guests to celebrate their writing and amplify their voices.

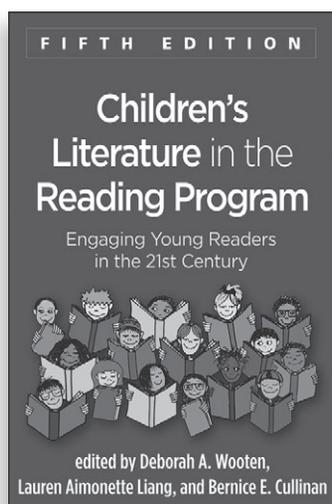
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