

Looking for It: Language, Literacy, and History in Place

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ABSTRACT

Within this article, we explore how teachers, researchers, and community members—including youth—worked in collaborative conversations and place-based projects to explore the languages, stories, and histories of their local Georgia communities. By examining the process of “looking for it,” as one youth researcher puts it, this article explores three inquiry practices Georgia youth use to identify and sustain community language and literacy practices: personal storytelling, walking histories, and breaking bread. These community literacies resulted in youth having a stronger sense of self and community and understanding the relationship between them. Additionally, the practices spurred critical thinking, historical inquiry, and socioemotional learning. Community exploration through community literacies created the foundation for place-based language, literacy, and history research to take root and flourish.

KEYWORDS

place-based learning;
community collaboration;
community literacies

I want to see people understand that education is not something that’s boxed in, not something that you can all put in a book. You have to go out there and look for it.

–Naiser, 15

Naiser, a self-selected pseudonym, defines education as “not something that’s boxed in” or “you can all put in a book”, rather, at the heart of her advice is moving beyond the traditional four walls of a text, classroom, and school building. This advice comes from two years as a youth co-researcher in the Linguistic Justice Collaboration (LJC); a collaborative whose mission is to identify, design, and sustain the languages, literacy practices, and histories of Georgia’s diverse geographical and cultural communities. This work means putting teachers, researchers, and community members—including youth—into collaborative conversations and place-based projects to explore the languages, stories, and histories of their communities. Within this article, we explore how eight different LJC projects have gone “looking for it”, as Naiser puts it, and what youth have taught us about identifying and sustaining community language and literacy practices in our middle and high school English classrooms.

Where We’re Rooted

We (Leah and Caitlin) are current and former classroom and community educators, researchers, and active community members within Georgia. We, like the LJC collaborators, are committed to

schooling that centers local communities and remains accountable to community goals above (and sometimes in opposition to) standardized goals for learning. In other words, we view schooling as spaces that prepare youth for college, career, and community. Preparing learners to be active, current citizens in their own communities includes an active exploration of community languages, literacy practices, and understanding the histories that both create, erase, and sustain these communities. These beliefs are summarized in the guiding framework: Georgia languages, Georgia races, Georgia histories, and Georgia places (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Linguistic Justice Collaborative's Framework



Language and Linguistic Justice

What is currently the state of Georgia is a snapshot of the language and linguistic diversity across the United States of America, with 10% of residents born outside of the country and 13% of households speaking a language other than English at home (American Immigration Council, 2023). In addition, Georgians who speak English represent a range of linguistic varieties from Geechee Gullah along the Atlantic coastline (Turner, 1969) to Appalachian “mountain talk” in the north (Clark & Hayward, 2013, p. 106) to Black Language throughout the state (Dillard, 1973; Smitherman, 1999; also called Ebonics, African American English, African American Vernacular English, and Black English), particularly in the Atlanta metro area where over 50% of residents identify as Black or part of the African diaspora. Though, this is not to suggest that all Black Georgians speak Black Language nor that all Black Language speakers are Black, particularly given the intersectionalities between race and English language learners (Cooper, 2020). Furthermore, Georgia represents a long history of languages outside of voiced traditions, as well, including one of the first schools for Deaf Education in the country (Gallaudet, 1886).

The classrooms throughout Georgia reflect the language and linguistic diversity in its communities: learners are their language (Anzaldúa, 1981) and bring their full repertoire into learning spaces regardless of how schooling systems do—or often do not—acknowledge, celebrate and sustain these languages and literacy practices (García et al., 2021). Language and linguistic justice (Baker-Bell, 2020; Hudley et al., 2020) collectively refer to creating systems, structures,

and pedagogies that value languages and linguistic varieties outside of voiced Mainstream White English as the dominant language.

Throughout history, what is considered effective communication has been shaped by the languages and literacy practices enacted by cultural groups with power, from the erasure of Indigenous languages within boarding schools to anti-literacy laws and literacy tests to block civic participation for Black Americans to English-only policies (Spolsky, 2022). Each geographic and cultural community develops, adapts, and sustains language and literacy practices that reflect these unique histories and purposes for communicating that are at threat of erasure when they deviate from the myth of a standard English that is associated with proximity to White, middle class, Midwestern ways of speaking (Baker-Bell, 2020; Lippi-Green, 2016; Maracz, 2018). Language and linguistic justice honors each community's languages, language varieties, and literacy practices as ways to sustain individual identities and community identities and prepare learners for more than college and career but for active civic participation in their own communities (Mirra & Garcia, 2017). This is not to suggest learners would not have full access to learning and growing in English and its various varieties, but rather an expansion of how power is understood within communication practices (Cushing, 2021) to identify and abolish racist, ableist, and classist listening practices (Baker-Bell, 2020; Rosa & Flores, 2017). This necessarily demands challenges to the way we conceptualize, study, and teach language and literacy if our goals move past college and career readiness and into sustaining selves and communities (Maracz, 2018).

Language and Literacy in Places

Broadly, place-based education uses local phenomena and students' lived experiences to make education meaningful for learners (Gruenewald, 2008; Smith, 2002). According to Sloan (2013), this approach is "conditioning the mind to inquire about the placement, patterns, and origins of our surroundings [in order for] learners to acquire a deeper understanding of culture and place" (p. 28). Youth are conditioning their own minds to see how the geographic space of their communities came to be a meaning-filled place over time. Furthermore, educators who leverage place-based education facilitate opportunities for learners to inquire about interdisciplinary patterns: the ecological, social, cultural, and historical aspects of society, and connect these meaningful places and their embedded knowledges to themselves (Gruenewald, 2008). Ideally, as students connect their personal experiences to problem-solving in their communities, they are using community-developed languages, literacy practices, and stories to share their ideas and suggest solutions (Smith, 2002). As a result, place-based education has emerged over the past several decades as a transdisciplinary approach to learning that draws from language, literacy, social studies, and science in order to solve problems in youths' communities.

Within our Georgian communities, as youth engage in local place-based work, language is the basis of that communication: how Georgians tell the stories of self and others, and how community members connect to share and develop those stories. This means intentionally working in multiracial, multiethnic, and multilingual teams to ensure the community stories, histories, and problem solving represent the full range of community members' perspectives, experiences, and valued actions. Thus, we draw from place-based learning practices within our work, which can lead to deeper community connections and personal growth through the development of shared language and literacy practices for civic empowerment (Silbernagel et al., 2015). Exploring language and linguistic justice through a place-based lens ensures youth explore and interpret the historical and cultural contexts of their community more thoroughly than a textbook or curricular resource alone could provide (Sedawi et al., 2021). As learners interact with their communities

through hands-on, problem-based exploration, there are more opportunities to connect for youth who previously felt disconnected, better understand their individual identity, and find their place within their community (Donovan, 2016; 2013; Sedawi et al., 2021).

Unboxing Education: Language and Linguistic Justice in Place Based Education

The Linguistic Justice Collaborative (LJC) is a research-practice partnership where teachers, teacher educators, community members, and youth collaboratively identify, design, and sustain the language and literacy practices. The work of identification and design of community language and literacy practices is through sustained, participatory action research within communities that is led by community educators and/or youth. Within this manuscript, we draw from two participatory research projects to illustrate these findings (Table 1).

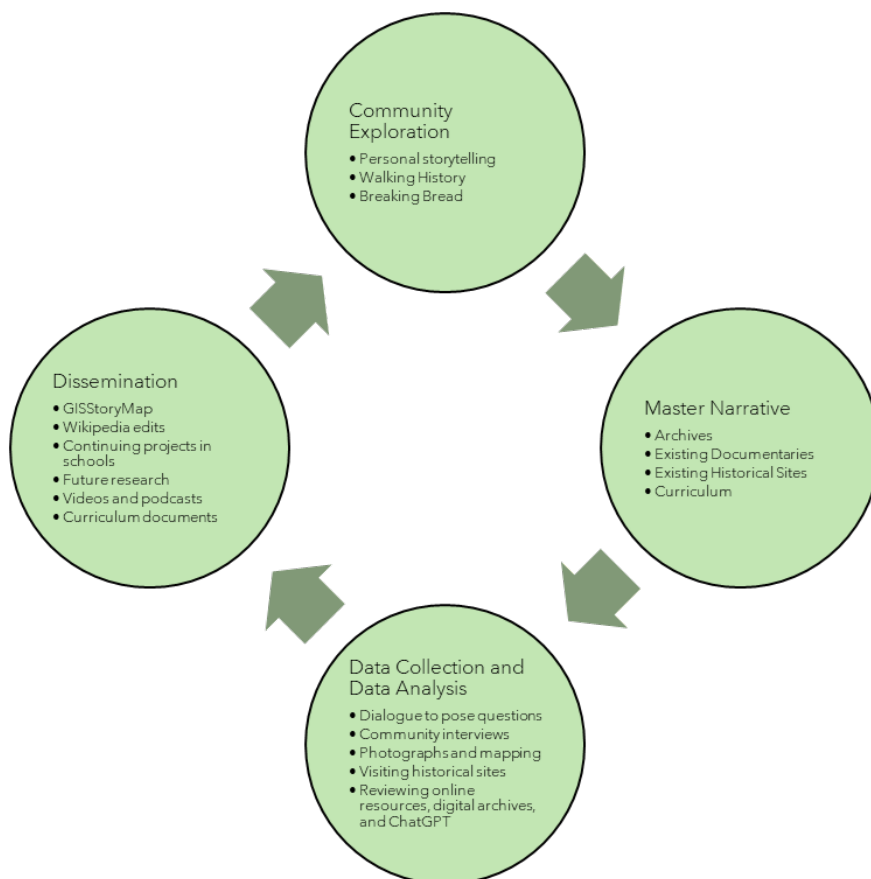
Table 1: Place-Based Projects

Project Name	Original Program Advertisement	Additional Context
Storying Tucker: <i>Who is Tucker?</i>	This free summer literacy program is available for youth aged 13-17 in the Tucker area. Tucker became a city in 2016, but it was a community long before that. What is the history of Tucker? Who is Tucker today? And what could the future of Tucker be? A small group of Tucker youth will be co-researchers to record and capture Tucker's stories, voices, and community histories. The end results will be guided by youth co-researchers, but may include creating podcasts, open access digital archives, adding to Tucker's existing GIS Map, drafting a white paper for the Tucker city council, or book.	This project was in its second summer, and in 2023, ten multiracial, multiethnic, and multilingual youth explored the history of Peter's Park, a historic Black community within Tucker, Georgia, the history of school desegregation within the city, and a broader look at the transnational entrepreneurs who make up the economic life of Tucker, Georgia.
In the Shadow of Stone Mountain: <i>Historicizing Shermantown</i>	This free summer literacy program is available for youth aged 12-18 in the Stone Mountain, Tucker, Smoke Rise, Mountain Park, Lilburn, and Clarkston area. Youth will record and capture the stories, voices, and community histories of Shermantown, an African American community within Stone Mountain Village. This will be guided by youth co-researchers, but may include creating podcasts, open access digital archives, a white paper for the Stone Mountain city government, or book.	This project was in its second year, but 2023 was the first year with youth co-researchers. The five youth represented multiracial and multilingual youth who explored Shermantown, Stone Mountain, Stone Mountain Park, and the Atlanta History Center.

Collaborators regularly translate the findings of our place-based research projects into traditional schooling settings to sustain community languages, literacy practices, stories, and histories. Holistically considering the results of LJC projects from the past three years, we (Leah and Caitlin) offer the ways we have translated place-based into curriculum and instruction that sustains individual and community identities within our roles as a literacy teacher educator and community language researcher (Leah) and community-based educator and place-based researcher (Caitlin; see Figure 2). These practices consider how to (a) engage youth in exploring their local communities, (b) analyze the historical and media narratives surrounding their communities, (c)

develop their own inquiry processes, and (d) share their work to support change. Within this article, we narrowly explore three community exploration practices using examples from three of our most recent projects (Table 1) to consider how community becomes the central curriculum within Georgia literacy education.

Figure 2: Participatory Process for Curricularizing Language and Linguistic Justice in Georgia



Community Exploration

Curriculum describes what knowledge, what language, and which literacy practices are most valued: it is what is explicitly taught, assessed, and ultimately sustained (Giroux & Penna, 1979). Intentionally placing communities at the center of a curriculum is an intentional move to sustain the language, literacies, and valued knowledges of local communities (Paris, 2021). Youth are not future citizens in training but current community members, capable of posing questions, observing, and interacting with their communities. This asset-based understanding of youth results in co-construction of a community-based curriculum with youth through practices such as personal storytelling, history walks, and opportunities to authentically “break bread” with community members and elders.

Personal Storytelling. Through personal storytelling, learners use their experiences from the community to share their existing knowledge, explore areas of curiosity, and understand multiple perspectives, ultimately setting up an environment for youth to tell stories of themselves and their communities. During a program exploring the history of Shermantown, an African

American community within the city of Stone Mountain, youth began by telling stories about their experiences living in Stone Mountain, visiting Stone Mountain Park, and the histories their family members and neighbors had already passed down. Completing a similar project in Tucker, Georgia, the youth walked down the city's main street, stopping in front of each building or greenspace to recall memories of visiting each place, the people who worked there, and the history of the space. The storytelling centered youth languages and language practices as their his collective storytelling sparked additional memories and stories from others where they would take up generational language practices (e.g., Leah learned what it meant to be streets ahead figuratively vs. literally) and translanguaging. Additionally, youth made connections to history, examples of valued languages, patterns of valued literacy practices, and raised questions to guide further inquiry.

Starting with youth storytelling in and through community exploration creates space for youth to understand themselves, the history of their community, and the relationship between the two. For example, after participating in LJC projects across two summers, Nasier reflected, "I think if you're coming into a community, you're bringing something with you, like you're bringing another identity or like another piece to the community with you, making the community bigger and stronger." Each individual identity has something to add to the overall community, and these identities build a stronger community.

These individual identities work together to build unique communities. According to Bud, a self-identified Lakotan, communities "have their own way of operating, by, um, knowing everybody. The people, the places, the language, the religion. Just, like, things that connect them as a community that other communities wouldn't have. Something that like, um, makes them different." These differences both connect and draw in others while also creating points of difference that lead to unique community language and literacy practices.

Considering how personal storytelling leads to connections between individuals and communities, Fantasma describes the importance of racial identities and intersections of language as part of understanding communities and self. He explained, "I feel like race and language plays a big part of it . . . if you share the same ethnicity with your community, I feel like you'll bond easier than the other community that's a different race or this a different ethnicity." As a multilingual Hispanic high school student, he explained how he saw himself in signs written in multiple languages, hearing his youth co-researchers move between Spanish and English in their personal storytelling, and his desire to find Hispanic community members to conduct interviews for his project in Spanish. Shared racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities within the stories of co-researchers and within the community strengthened Fantasma's sense of self and self of membership within the community.

Returning to Bud's explanation of communities having points of "difference" that construct the uniqueness of community, personal storytelling spurred initial community engagement that spurred conversation around points of difference. For Naiser, it was questioning why Black history was a part of her family's memories of the area but not a part of what her White co-researchers were taught around their dinner tables. Or why Bud had visceral memories of what Stone Mountain Park, the world's largest monument to the Confederacy, represented, and others had happy memories of school field trips and family reunions in the same geographic space. These points of difference revealed different valued knowledges that served as the central curriculum for each place-based program. Additionally, the differences in language usage to describe personal memories—what one person describes as a corner store another calls a bodega—and differences in literacy practices enacted in the storytelling—from narrative structures to rhetorical devices.

Recognizing language and linguistic differences in personal storytelling reinforces youth connections to their own racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural communities (Berry et al., 2014) and sustains pluralistic communities by centering youth language, literacy practices, and valued knowledge (Paris & Alim, 2017). By engaging in personal storytelling, youth also found connections between their stories and the stories of the community, further strengthening their relationship within their learning. Youth also had space to explore their personal narratives, building confidence and self-perspective on their role in the community (Berry et al., 2014). Through this exploration, youth found a greater sense of belonging and understanding of their community.

Walking History. Within our place-based programs, youth were learning in their communities by being in their communities: walking throughout neighborhoods, traveling to historic locations, and retracing the literal steps described during storytelling. Rather than prefacing these walks with a mini-lecture, PowerPoint, or reading on the history of the locations we were visiting or walking past. Instead, the walk itself became the setting for authentic dialogue and artifact-based historical learning, resisting traditional approaches to history education.

For example, stopping at street signs to pose a question about the meaning of the street's name before offering the story (Figure 1), pausing on a walk to observe changes in buildings' facades to make predictions about eras of economic growth in the area (Figure 2), or responding in the moment to question evoked during a personal storytelling session, such as providing context to who the United Daughters of the Confederacy were when youth did not have personal stories to tell about a location on a walk (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Using Community Resources, Example 1



Note. Here, a street sign is a curriculum for learning history and historical literacies.

Figure 4: Using Community Resources, Example 2



Note. Here, architecture is a curriculum for learning economics and financial literacies.

Figure 5: Using Community Resources, Example 3



Note. Here, a donated monument is a curriculum for learning history and critical literacies.

As youth walked through their communities—and therefore through community histories—they engaged in various language and literacy practices: speaking and listening with community members, photographing their experiences, writing down questions in their research notebooks, and tracing maps using GPS and GIS technologies. These moments

leveraged their existing language and literacy practices to explore historical contexts and connect them to the present-day community. Dr. Squiggles, a rising junior, described herself as “not much of a reader” but took great pleasure in interviewing community members about a range of topics, particularly when she was the one taking notes and relistening to the audio to catch details her youth co-researchers may have missed. Bruce enjoyed taking the lead in asking the questions, and Bando explained, “I silently collected data. I wasn’t asking questions like that. I was listening. I’m like, just, if you just sit and listen to that person instead of asking a lot of questions, it usually helps.” As a team, the youth drew from one another’s existing strengths: speaking, listening, and note-taking to create historical narratives that Lizzie scripted and Fantasma directed: he guided Lizzie and Bud to perform the scripts in the same locations described in the narratives and where initial interviews took place. The youth created YouTube shorts that functioned as a public digital archive of their research, which was collected, analyzed, and disseminated based on history walks: one that sustained the history of the town while expanding access to the stories through multiple languages. Ultimately, through their experiences with history walks, youth leveraged and challenged one another to develop critical literacies through their collective historical inquiry and challenged their language communities to be a part of the historical remembering.

Across programs, the pattern of history walks resulting in community engagement was sustained. Garnett, a rising senior who had recently moved into the community, explained the importance of attaching new memories and experiences to being within the geographic community, “. . . understanding the place that like I’m . . . walking around every day. I’m driving by every day. I’m living in, like, I feel so much better knowing now, like more history behind it and more of the people and the elders.” She especially appreciated Black community members in their 80s being willing to share their experiences with a White teenager:

And I also just like, love that they had somebody like to talk to, like, like they had, like they, all of them said that they like love that like young people are interested and like they have young people to talk to. . . I will sit there and listen to you talk for hours, like, which I just loved it. It just like made, in like a non-selfish way, it just made me like feel really good about myself and knowing that like I got to know more about the community, but me, too. I love it.

Garnett loved listening to community elders at prearranged church gatherings, stopping in the streets, and being called to join them on their porches as we walked through the neighborhood. As a result of these history walks, which turned into extended conversations, Garnett knew more about the community, “but me, too.”

As learners engaged in history walks, they combined experiences of historical sites, neighborhoods, and community members’ perspectives to explore the history and present day of a place captured in photographs, audio recordings, and videos that facilitated continued exploration and meaning-making of these experiences. Through these artifacts, students created a story of their place, which in turn made youth more likely to identify as members of their community while still bringing their full racial and linguistic identities into the space (Donovan, 2016). Place-based learning allows youth to engage in self-reflection and discovery while encouraging a reciprocal relationship with the community (Janson et al., 2013). Learning becomes transformational instead of transactional, and as youth reflect on their role within the community, they see how essential they are to sustaining the culture and history of their place (Pisters et al., 2023). Walking history was one such practice that created

literal and figurative space for these transformational moments for youth to find and intentionally place themselves in the community.

Breaking Bread. Youth co-researchers routinely described and defined community as more than a geographic area or a shared cultural history, but as a changing and dynamic place where people are “known,” “work together,” “help one another,” and—above all—action-oriented. Dr. Squiggles described the action as “choosing to be a part of it.” Naiser added, “to learn about it” and “be involved in something bigger. . . [being] willing to build a community.” In sum, that community is the active choice to build and sustain a place. Part of our place-based program prioritized spending time in the community with community members but also actively building and engaging with the community. For example, eating meals at locally owned restaurants when meeting with community members, economically supporting local businesses where interviews took place, and asking community members what they wanted to see the youth create or do as a result of their research. Literally and figuratively, community engaged research was centered on opportunities for “breaking bread.”

Breaking bread designs opportunity to talk and interact with community members and elders where the elders feel most comfortable in the community to break down potential barriers and build up meaningful relationships with community spaces. As youth participated in these experiences, they saw where they lived differently. Garnett shared how talking with elders left her wanting to learn more, sharing, “Give me all the conversations. The elder wisdom. I’ll take it all” referring to a porch conversation with a community elder that was in stark contrast to her usual experiences in history and English classes:

I feel a lot like, in a way, like better about myself now. . . I always knew that there was so much history here, but like so many books and stuff, well, one, I’m not, I am not a huge fan of like reading nonfiction. I’m very bad at reading nonfiction. I love to read, but nonfiction is not my thing. And, but I will sit there and listen to somebody talk for hours. So I did not wanna leave that woman. I loved her.

Through breaking bread as part of community exploration, Garnett developed a personal connection to a community member, and the community’s history was made relevant. Similarly, Naiser explained the identity of the community was “to me is the people, cuz without the people. Then you’re not gonna have the business, you’re not gonna have the libraries, you’re not gonna have all this because they bring it in, right?” Thus, spending time with the people in the places they had created—drinking a smoothie together at a coffee shop or walking on the trail at the neighborhood park—made her understanding of the people, the history, and the place that much deeper.

For both Garnett and Naiser, breaking bread led to more than knowledge; it also developed socioemotional literacies or practices for listening with empathy and communication compassion. Bud similarly found breaking bread with community members was essential to his socioemotional learning, stating when “you know about where you are and what people are there and what makes it a place. . . [that] knowledge of people allows you to be a more compassionate and kind person.” Elisa explained how difficult these moments could be, recalling a luncheon at a local church with a group of elders who had different perceptions of the community’s racialized history, particularly their interactions with the Ku Klux Klan in the 1950s:

On some of the particular interviews where people were just saying stuff that you don’t necessarily think is true or believe in, it’s just kind of like challenging to not like push their buttons by like asking more about it. . . Like she [a community elder]

was just very persistent, straightforward with her answers, and like, you asked her a follow-up question, she would kind of just say the same thing, but in like a stronger tone in a way. And it's like, okay, well like that's not really what I'm asking. Like if you ask her about anything, she's like, it's just the same answer that she's given the press a million times. Which, like, I get, like you do an interview or amount of times, you're going to kind of just, you know, feed the same information. But it's like, Okay. We're asking her in-depth questions. Like we've actually studied, like, it's not just like, oh, like a reporter. Like we've sat here all week and studied the town that you grew up in. We've interviewed multiple people that you grew up with and heard their stories. . . Like just trying not to be like, 'well, I heard different from somebody else' was just kind of difficult cuz it's like I don't wanna argue. At all. And I don't wanna make anybody angry. But it's also like, okay. I just don't think that that's true.

Having heard stories that contradicted the community member's recollection, Elisa struggled to know when to listen and when to ask follow up questions or press a particular point. Garnett contrasted the same community elder with another breaking bread experience, getting an early lunch with the first woman to desegregate a local elementary school. Referring to the former, "And she was like, she clearly had some strong emotions, and she felt like some, you know, some negative things. Anyway, that's what I expected most people to feel like, and I feel like that's very justified," and contrasted the experiences with the latter community elder:

But then when we were meeting with [a different community elder] and how she was able to take away. . . it shaped her and made her stronger. . . that was a really shocking takeaway because, like, I don't know everybody, they just have every right to be angry about the way that they were treated and about the way that they had to like, lead their lives, have every right to be angry and she wasn't. And she, I don't know. I just, I don't know how I make sense of all the different, um, the different react like reactions to the experiences and the takeaways that they had. Because like I seriously don't understand how [the one community elder] was able to like, walk away feeling like. . . her being treated horribly, like made her the person she is today. . . I don't have that kind of inner peace.

Where one community member denied the existence of hard things, and others chose to remain angry—justifiably so, according to Garnett—the ability to share a meal with a community member who forgave the racist actions of her classmates and framed these experiences as formative was difficult to make sense of. It revealed her own struggle to find "inner peace" while giving Garnett a model of mercy that appealed to her.

Finding community through shared language and literacy practices helps learners develop social awareness and empathy as they make connections and communicate with each other within and across their languages (Venegas, 2019). While the benefits of learning together are significant, learning histories with community members helped amplify the development of interpersonal literacies (Bone, 2005). Bringing in these moments for interpersonal and intergenerational connection across a kitchen table or smoothie from the local coffee shop invited cross-cultural conversations and deepened the bonds made in these connections: both to one another, the community, and geographic place (Haddix et al., 2016). The shared geographic places also began to remove cultural barriers and invited warm, inclusive conversations that, in turn, created a sense of belonging (Haddix et al., 2016). Through these inter-generational conversations, youth and

elders create a space to talk about the history and present day realities of societal challenges with kindness and compassion.

From Community to Curriculum

Engaging youth in placed-based community exploration through personal storytelling, walking histories, and breaking bread resulted in youth having a stronger sense of self, community, and understanding the relationship between them. Additionally, it supported language and literacy practices that spurred critical thinking, historical inquiry, and socioemotional learning. These opportunities are not reserved for community education programs but can be translated into Georgia middle and high school classrooms, as well. At times, this means bringing the community into the traditional classroom due to the constraints of budgets, field trip procedures, and funding (Table 2).

Table 2: Place Based Practices in the Georgia Curriculum

Place Based Community Exploration Practices	Connections to Georgia Curriculum
Create Opportunities for Personal Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making narrative units multimodal, where learners can integrate video tours, photographs, or self-created maps of where the narrative takes place. • Bellringer or activator activities in class that use local photographs, maps, and landmarks as prompts • Using VoiceThread to make text-to-community connections that learners add to and branch from, creating a multivocality of personal stories related to required curricular texts.
Participate in Walking History Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use GoogleMaps Street View to “walk through” a street in your city as a class to reinforce how to write directions in a “how to” speech while also making authentic connections to the local community. • Shift to a “living book report” and invite students to video record a conversation with a family member, neighbor, or friend as they walk through a place with significance.
Breaking Bread and Porch Talks with Community Elders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students whom they would like to invite to class via Microsoft Teams or Zoom as primary sources while working on a research essay. • Invite local community members to your class publishing party to celebrate the youth writing—and perhaps the community members!

However, given the potential for community exploration experiences to support language, literacy, and history learning and the success of youth participatory action research projects, we also offer examples of how Georgia educators can take up community exploration in both small and large-scale ways to ensure learners’ languages, literacy practices, and historical inquiries take root and flourish (Table 3).

Table 3: Engage in Community Exploration

Action	Ideas	Examples
Create Opportunities for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create prompts to aid in group discussion before visiting a site or discussing a topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before a community resource walk in Stone Mountain, we asked everyone in the group: “What are your experiences with Stone Mountain Park?” and “What

<p>Personal Storytelling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While walking through a community site, stop in front of each building, monument, sign, or street to share stories about personal connections to the place or historical knowledge. • Ensure at least one historical or present-day community member is included on place-based community exploration trips to make sure personal stories and connections to place are included. • Use a physical or digital map to track your route and put “pins” in locations associated with community members’ and youth stories. 	<p>have you heard others share about Stone Mountain?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During a community resource walk in Tucker, we traced our route on a GoogleMaps printout and then added our photographs and audio recordings to a GISStoryMap.
<p>Participate in Walking History Tours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite community members with historical knowledge to lead walking history tours of specific areas, including local parks, historic neighborhoods, a business district, or meaningful geographic sites. • Record interviews with historical societies or community members to create audio walking tours. • Photograph and video record sites throughout the community to create YouTube Shorts, GISStoryMaps, and other digital tools that recreate place-based learning. • Use QR codes to let other visitors to community places experience the community members’ stories, local histories, and youth created guides. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We audio and video recorded the President of the Tucker Historical Society during a walking tour of Main Street. • Youth recorded personal histories of community members that could be posted next to historical artifacts in a local museum to add additional local context to displays.
<p>Breaking Bread and Porch Talks with Community Elders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with community organizations, including historical societies, local government, volunteer groups, and places of worship, to identify community leaders and elders. • Seek to join community elders in their preferred spaces, such as attending a meeting or event, having lunch, or sitting on their porch. • Attending community events (e.g., a tent at a festival) and being present in community spaces (e.g., a table at a coffee shop) to invite community members to share their stories with youth. • Bring technology to record stories (e.g., audio and video recorders) and historical artifacts (e.g., scanner app, portable 3D scanner). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth brought pie to community members and sat on their porches to hear the history of the local neighborhood. • Youth joined a group of community elders at a historic community church to talk about how present-day problems in the community were tied to histories. • We created a toll-free phone number that community members could call to record their stories.

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