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Civic-Critical Literacy

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Abstract

The poem featured in this submission is from a larger poetic inquiry research study. The poem *Civic-Critical Literacy* addresses what it means to be literate in art and literature by capturing youth participants' use of literature to develop civic literacies. This researcher-generated participant voiced poem (Prendergast, 2009) was written by the poet-researcher by pulling quotes, images, and metaphors from participants' semi-structured interviews and reorganizing them into poetry using poetic inquiry criteria (Faulkner, 2009).

The purpose of the research this poem is from was to explore the civic actions of minoritized spoken-word poets ages 18-20 and the meaning-making by which they constructed civic identities as one source of contemplating routes toward equitable education. Participants included the nation's four 2016 regional Youth Poet Laureates, an honor awarded to civically active youth poets in America's urban cities. Critical thematic analysis and poetic analysis were employed to analyze semi-structured interview data. The findings were that participants' civic identities were influenced by their families, literature, and their exposure to out of school learning spaces such as social justice-oriented writing groups, community organizations, and slam poetry competitions. Participants were civically active by making the poetic political, volunteering, leading organizations, advocating, and fostering awareness. The significance of this research is that the transformative pedagogy employed to develop a critical minoritized youth citizenry can position youth as stakeholders in their own communities around issues and policies that affect them most. Additionally, this research offers a counter-narrative to the normative view of minoritized youth citizens as apathetic, disengaged, or civically unaware. This research was IRB approved (#9598081).

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References

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