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Central Idea

Does the development of a community contribute to levels of literacy and growth in education within the communities of Staten Island?

Statement of Purpose (describe the essay option you selected and add relevant information)

For this essay, I have chosen to conduct ethnography of the communities of Staten Island utilizing Observations, cross-sectional analysis, and a Qualitative questionnaire to identify if there is a strong relationship between the communities development and level of literacy and growth in education. This development may include libraries, programs, politics, schools, and resources provided within the communities. These communities will consist of the North Shore, South Shore, and Mid-Island Neighborhoods/ East and West Shores which consist of different areas of Staten Island grouped into one region.

Theory

If a community shows great development (e.g, politically, modernization of structure, programs), then I believe a high level of literacy and growth in education will be seen.

Research Methods

The research methods utilized for this paper consisted of an observation, a qualitative questionnaire, and a . The observation took place in the North Shore and Mid-Island

Neighborhood/East Shore of Staten Island. Data was recorded based on analysis of what posters, buildings, or community groups featured a relationship with literacy based on the idea of “reading and writing.” Also, if a large or small amount of people were seen performing literacy related activities.

To provide further data, a cross-sectional data was conducted in which data from 2013 was reviewed and analyzed. This analysis would then be compared with data gathered from the questionnaire to see if a pattern can be seen.

A qualitative questionnaire was used to gain a deeper insight into the beliefs and thoughts of Staten Island residents concerning personal experiences with literacy and education while growing up. This consisted of 12 questions in total and are seen as follows:

Questions (QUICK FACT: literacy skills specified when mentioning “e.g., reading and writing”)

1. What region of Staten Island did you grow up? (E.G, North Shore, East Shore, Stapleton, etc.)
2. What region of Staten Island did you mostly attend school? (E.G, North Shore, East Shore, Stapleton, etc.)
3. Did you attend a public school or private school while growing up? Or both?

4. What do you believe is the difference between a “literate” individual and an “illiterate” individual?
5. Can you describe your experience with learning literacy skills (e.g, reading and writing) at home, while growing up?
6. Can you describe your experience with learning literacy skills (e.g., reading and writing) in school, while growing up?
7. Did you believe your education at home interfered with your education at school? Why?
8. Do you believe your community or neighborhood, while growing up, provided you with the materials you needed to not only advance your literacy skills (e.g., reading and writing), but education as well? Why?
9. Do you believe your schools’, while growing up, provided you with the materials you needed to not only advance your literacy skills (e.g., reading and writing) , but education as well? Why?
10. Do you believe your cultural background or race impacted someone you knew or yourself when it came to education or emotions while growing up? How?

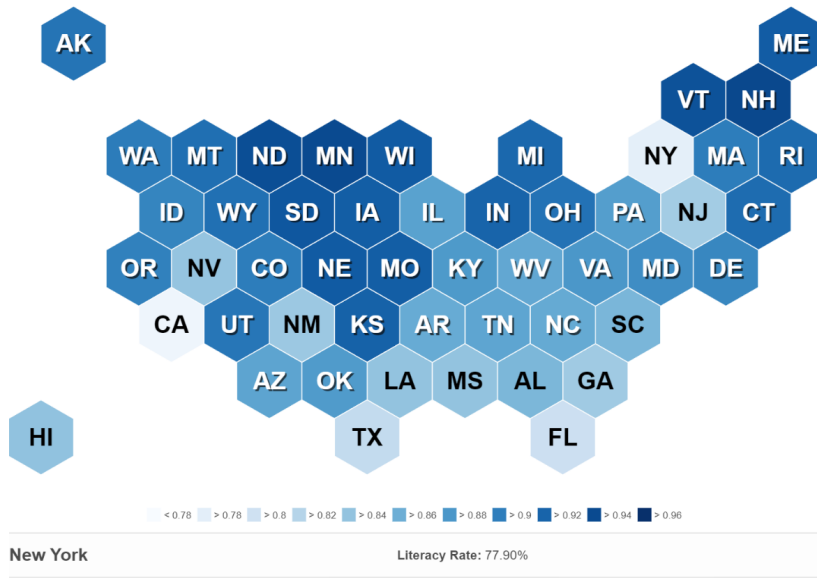
11. Do you believe politics played a role in influencing your development of literacy skills (e.g, reading and writing) and receiving a “good” education while growing up? Why?

12. Do you believe the literacy skills (e.g, reading and writing) or education you developed in school or at home, while growing up, helped you get to where you are today? How?

The answers to these questions were asked to be written by the participants taking it. The hours or minutes permitted for the questions to be answered was nonexistent and allowed for participants to have a flexible amount of time to take the questionnaire. Aside from this, to protect personal-information from leaking, the individuals interviewed were to remain anonymous. This allowed for questions concerning what region of Staten Island did they grow up and attend school to be answered without concern of data leakage.

To interpret the data collected, a mix of Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and content analysis was utilized which focused on identifying key terms or themes and the frequency of terms or beliefs mentioned by participants. This allowed for certain patterns to be identified within the data and where the pattern may skew.

Supporting Evidence/ Your Data

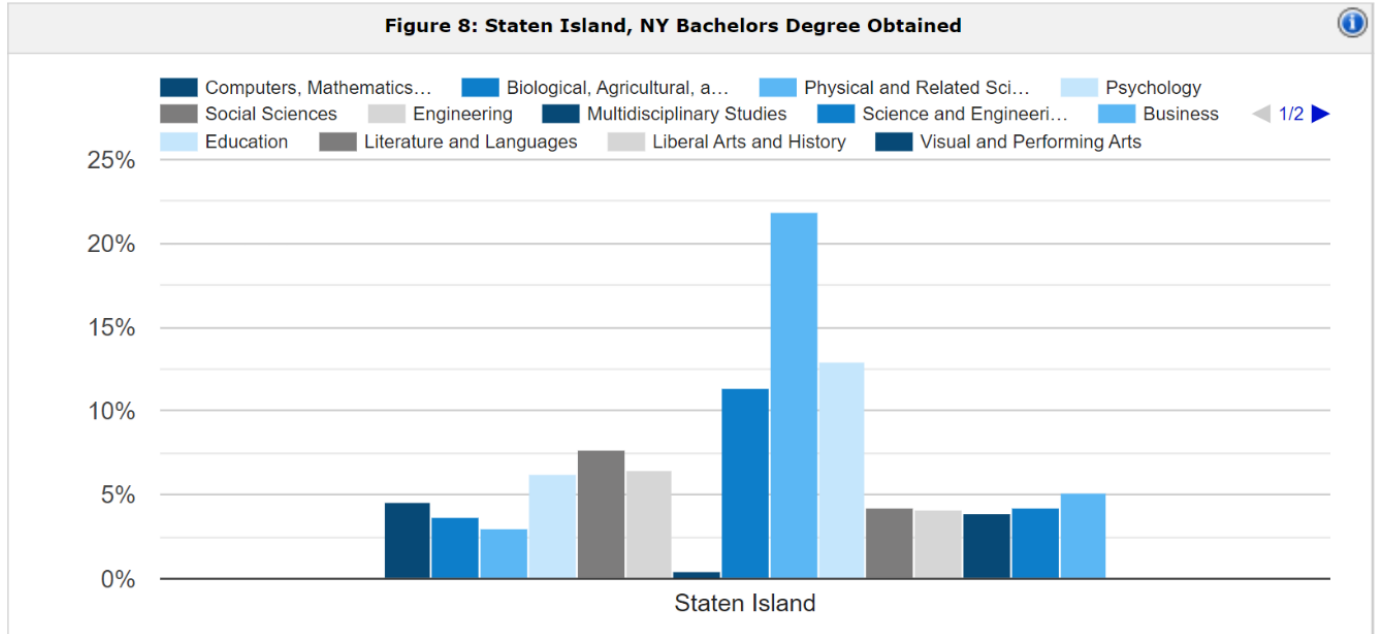


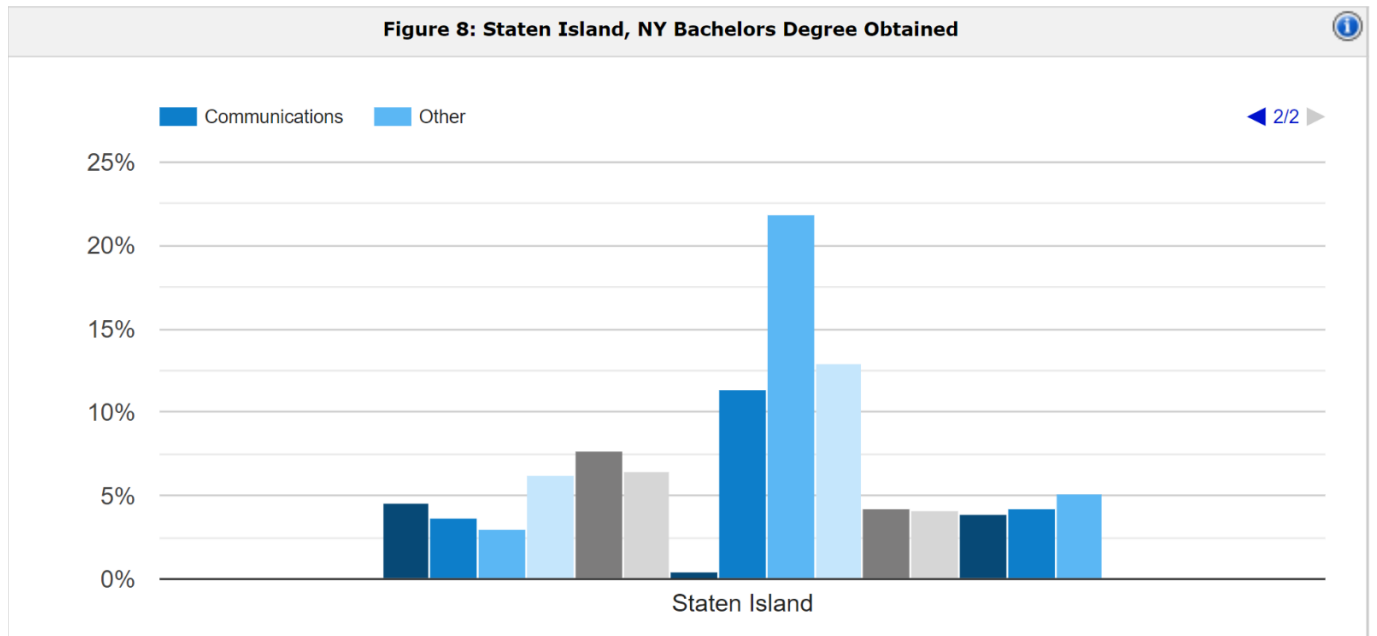
Highest Rate: New Hampshire (94.20%)
 Lowest Rate: California (76.90%)

(U.S. Literacy Rates by State 2022 -

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/us-literacy-rates-by-state>)

Figure 8: Staten Island, NY Bachelors Degree Obtained





(Figure 8: “...provides a more detailed deep dive on the category of major degree obtained for people aged 25 years or older who earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Specifically, this frequency distribution details out what the major field of study was the degree obtained. Staten Island has the smallest proportion of percent of people with a degree in social sciences at 6.5% of the total. Second, it has the largest proportion of percent of people with a degree in engineering at 0.5% of the total and is ranked #1.” -

<https://www.towncharts.com/New-York/Education/Staten-Island-borough-NY-Education-data.html>)

Figure 5: Staten Island, NY Education Attainment Breakdown

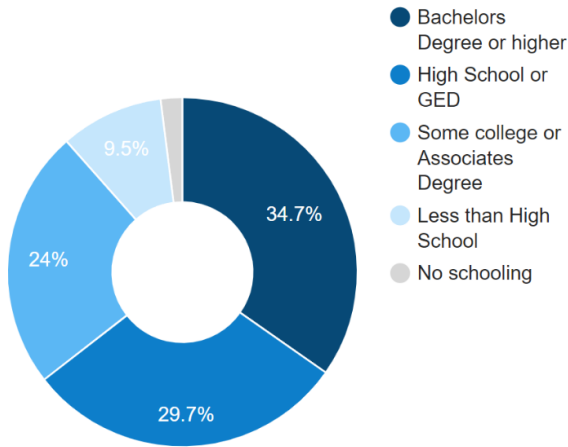


Figure 6: Higher Education Attainment (100%=All People with Bachelor or better)

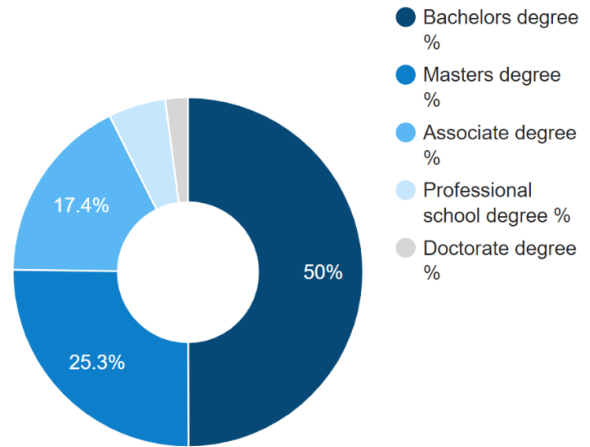


Figure 7: Staten Island, NY Bachelors Degrees Field of Study

(**Figure 5** (First Image to Left): "...provides a more detailed look at the educational attainment for Staten Island New York. This chart provides the proportion of people aged 25 years of age or older and what was their level of educational attainment. The chart provides 5 broad categories including: No Education/No School, Some High School, High School or equivalent, Some college or Associate's Degree, and Bachelors Degree or higher. Staten Island has the percentage of percent of people with less than a high school education the second smallest when sorted by percent of people with no schooling of all the other places in the surrounding region at 30% of the total.")

(**Figure 6** (Second Image to Right): "The next chart shows a break down of people who have received a bachelor's degree or higher advanced degree generally in a campus learning environment....provides the proportional breakdown of all the people who have received a postsecondary education along with what the level of advanced degree that was obtained. Note that these categories do not include any type professional development type activities such as those related to maintaining professional credentials in workshop lessons. Note Professional Degree includes medical, dental, lawyers, etc. Staten Island has one

of the largest proportions of percent of people with a bachelors degree at 25% of the total and is ranked #2. The only larger city being Avenel CDP with 31%.")

Questions (QUICK FACT: literacy skills specified when mentioning "e.g., reading and writing")

1. What region of Staten Island did you grow up? (E.G, North Shore, East Shore, Stapleton, etc.)

Stapleton

2. What region of Staten Island did you mostly attend school? (E.G, North Shore, East Shore, Stapleton, etc.)

Stapleton

3. Did you attend a public school or private school while growing up? Or both?

Both public and private

4. What do you believe is the difference between a "literate" individual and an "illiterate" individual?

A literate individual can read and write, while an illiterate cannot.

5. Can you describe your experience with learning literacy skills (e.g, reading and writing) at home, growing up?

My mother helped me with reading and writing while I was growing up.

6. Can you describe your experience with learning literacy skills (e.g., reading and writing) in school, while growing up?

Reading was an important part of home for me because I loved getting lost in the fictional worlds created.

7. Did you believe your education at home interfered with your education at school? Why?

No because I felt that most of my learning occurred at school.

8. Do you believe your community or neighborhood, while growing up, provided you with the materials you needed to not only advance your literacy skills (e.g., reading and writing), but education as well? Why?

Yes because my community provided tutoring classes to help with reading and writing, and a public library was available to allow for more reading.

9. Do you believe your schools', while growing up, provided you with the materials you needed to not only advance your literacy skills (e.g., reading and writing) , but education

as well? Why? Yes they provided proper classes and equipment that helped my learning.

10. Do you believe your cultural background or race impacted someone you knew or yourself when it came to education or emotions while growing up? How?

No because everyone I knew received the same type of education.

11. Do you believe politics played a role in influencing your development of literacy skills

(e.g. reading and writing) and receiving a "good" education while growing up? Why?

No because the schools I had attended formed their own educational criteria.

12. Do you believe the literacy skills (e.g. reading and writing) or education you developed in

school or at home, while growing up, helped you get to where you are today? How?

Yes I do because they helped me to better understand the world around me and understand my own personal feelings.

Questions (QUICK FACT: literacy skills specified when mentioning "e.g., reading and writing")

1. What region of Staten Island did you grow up? (E.G, North Shore, East Shore, Stapleton, etc.)

North Shore

2. What region of Staten Island did you mostly attend school? (E.G, North Shore, East Shore, Stapleton, etc.)

Oakwood and Rosebank

3. Did you attend a public school or private school while growing up? Or both?

I attended both.

4. What do you believe is the difference between a "literate" individual and an "illiterate" individual?

- I believe a "literate" person is someone who can read or write and understand the information within a field well compared to an "illiterate" person.

5. Can you describe your experience with learning literacy skills (e.g, reading and writing)

at home, growing up?

- As I was growing up, I would spend some time at home reading a variety of books my parents may have bought from the past or books rented from the library.

6. Can you describe your experience with learning literacy skills (e.g., reading and writing)

in school, while growing up?

- I believe my literacy skills in school improved over time as I was taught about the different type of formats in writing when it came to a Research Paper (APA format) and MLA format.

7. Did you believe your education at home interfered with your education at school? Why?

- I believe my education at school interfered with my education at home because I would always return home from school tired and unable to find time to read my books at home.

8. Do you believe your community or neighborhood, while growing up, provided you with

the materials you needed to not only advance your literacy skills (e.g., reading and writing), but education as well? Why?

Yes, I believe my neighborhood provided me with the materials I needed to advance my literacy skills and education as there was a local library within my neighborhood that provided computers and free books to take out and read at home.

9. Do you believe your schools', while growing up, provided you with the materials you

needed to not only advance your literacy skills (e.g., reading and writing), but education

as well? Why?

- For public school, I believe it did not as it barely provided new textbooks or other texts for me to use while in-
- private school, I received ~~new textbooks~~ ~~because they~~ helped a lot with
- others ^{AS} students were provided new models of laptops for a short period to get access to class material and provided a library in school and

10. Do you believe your cultural background or race impacted someone you knew or

yourself when it came to education or emotions while growing up? How?

- No, I do not know nor have ~~much~~ I experienced any issues growing up when it came to my race and cultural background.

11. Do you believe politics played a role in influencing your development of literacy skills

(e.g., reading and writing) and receiving a "good" education while growing up? Why?

- I believe politics did play a role because, during my short period of time in the public school system, specific information concerning history and how students were viewed were influenced

12. Do you believe the literacy skills (e.g., reading and writing) or education you developed in

school or at home, while growing up, helped you get to where you are today? How?

- I believe the literacy skills I had developed at home helped me get where I am today because ~~it~~ the books I read at home covered ~~much~~ a variety of vocabulary not covered in school and allowed me to have a better grasp/idea of what I read today. Also, how to identify the main idea of an article/book.

brand new textbooks for class.

greatly by new policies in New York.

Notes:

Days 1-7 (North Shore):

- Multiple churches seen along shore
 - Offers reading sessions on Sundays for the Bible
 - Offer religion-related books (e.g, Bible, book of hymns, etc.) for reference to session
 - Certain churches are connected to private schools in which students attend reading sessions in church as a part of religious studies
- One library is offered per each major area/community of the North Shore
 - Stapleton Library
 - St.George Library
 - West New Brighton Library
 - Mariners Harbor Library
 - Port Richmond Library
 - Horrmann Library
- Each library has featured a series of posters and papers featuring library calendar dates for events to promote literacy practices in community members such as learning how to write in HTML (coding) or to learn a different language (English being the most frequently desired language to learn)

- Some libraries have shown updates or modernization in building structure and design (e.g, Stapleton Library and Mariners Harbor Library)
 - Modernization of libraries seems to offer more residents of each community as they seem more comfortable conducting literacy related activities within the building.
 - These literacy activities consisted of:
 - Reading magazines, books, comics, and online information on computers offered in libraries
 - Attending programs that helped community members learn such as how to read and write in English, learning about information concerning cultures and their literacy, and book clubs
 - Students utilizing space offered in libraries to do homework and projects with classmates
 - Libraries that showed no modernization or updates in building structure did not show the same large number of residents coming in to stay.
 - However, there still were many residents who came to take out books and learning related resources, to utilize computers specifically made to sort through storages of newspapers and articles from very old dates in time.
- Libraries have been observed inside schools or around its vicinity (e.g, Tottenville High School and St.George Library)
- Little Free Library book-sharing boxes have been observed around certain areas of the North Shore (e.g, St. Paul’s Ave) which are sponsored by a non-profit group, “Little Free

Library”, meant to promote reading for children and adolescents by sharing a series of books within a neighborhood.

Observations

2

Notes:

Days 8-11 (Mid-Island Neighborhoods/East Shore)

- Multiple Churches have been observed
 - Offers reading sessions on Sundays for the Bible
 - Offer religion-related books (e.g, Bible, book of hymns, etc.) for reference to session
 - Certain churches are connected to private schools in which students attend reading sessions in church as a part of religious studies
- One library is offered per each major area/community of the Mid-Island
 - Richmondtown Library
 - New Dorp Library
 - Dongan Hills Library
 - South Beach Library
 - College of Staten Island Library
- Each library has featured a series of posters and papers featuring library calendar dates for events to promote literacy practices in community members such as learning how to write in HTML (coding) or to learn a different language (English being the most frequently desired language to learn)
- Some libraries have shown updates or modernization in building structure and design (e.g, Stapleton Library and Mariners Harbor Library)

- Modernization of libraries seems to offer more residents of each community as they seem more comfortable conducting literacy related activities within the building.
 - These literacy activities consisted of:
 - Reading magazines, books, comics, and online information on computers offered in libraries
 - Attending programs that helped community members learn such as how to read and write in English, learning about information concerning cultures and their literacy, and book clubs
 - Students utilizing space offered in libraries to do homework and projects with classmates
- Libraries that showed no modernization or updates in building structure did not show the same large number of residents coming in to stay.
 - However, there still were many residents who came to take out books and learning related resources, to utilize computers specifically made to sort through storages of newspapers and articles from very old dates in time.
- Libraries have been observed inside schools or around its vicinity (e.g, New Dorp Highschool containing personal library in school)
- Little Free Library book-sharing boxes have been observed around certain areas of the Mid-Island, but there are very few compared to the North Shore

<https://littlefreelibrary.org/>

Your Interpretation of Evidence/ Data

Based on the data collected from this paper's Observations and Qualitative questionnaire, a strong relationship has been seen between the resources provided within a neighborhood and growth in literacy and education. From the questionnaire, both participants mentioned how the library within their community provided them with the resources they needed to advance their literacy skills and education through free access to books. Also, one participant stated how their community "provided tutoring classes to help with reading and writing" (Questionnaire 1). This aligns with the programs seen available within the library, based on Observations, in which both the North Shore and Mid-Island Neighborhoods/East Shore featured which consisted of opportunities to improve on reading and writing, predominantly, in the English Language. This strong relationship is supported by the recent installation of "Little Free Library book-sharing boxes" as observed in certain areas along the North Shore and Mid-Island Neighborhoods/East Shore in which may have been installed to better improve the literacy rates within Staten Island by reaching out to the youth early.

A strong relationship has been seen between school and growth in literacy and education as both participant's did agree schools provided them with the materials they needed such as "proper classes and equipment" (Questionnaire 1). These equipment consist of new models of laptops and textbooks provided to students as mentioned by participant 2 (Questionnaire 2). Although, one factor that does skew whether this relationship is positive or negative is the type of school both participants attended in which both attended a public and private school. While participant 1 did show signs of a positive relationship with both the public and private school system, participant 2 showed a positive relationship more with the private school system then the public school system as, according to them when answering question 9 of how school helped them

grow, “For public school, I believe it did not as it barely provided new textbooks or other texts for me to use while in private school I received help along with others as students were provided with new models of laptops for a short period to get access to class material and provided a library in school and brand new textbooks for class.” This is an interesting answer as there have been reports of poor materials provided to students within the public school system as mentioned by Kandice Sumner, a teacher in Boston, in her TedTalk, “How America’s public schools keep kids in poverty”, where she explains how “Schools in low-income neighborhoods across the US, specifically in communities of color, lack resources that are standard at wealthier schools -- things like musical instruments, new books, healthy school lunches and soccer fields -- and this has a real impact on the potential of students.” This negative relationship with the public school system is further seen with participant who answers question 11, compared to participant 1, with a strong response about how politics did play a role in their life as, according to the participant, “....during my short period of time in the public school system, specific information concerning history and how students were viewed were influenced greatly by new policies in New York.” This negative relationship contrasts with the private school system in which both participants have shown a positive relationship as participant 1 answered to question 11 that their private school followed a different criteria than the public schools within New York City. Also, participant 2 showed no negative views on the private school system. While both relationships were negative and positive, it still does not dismiss the correlation between school and growth in literacy and education as these negative and positive data show the influence schools can have on former or current students. The different criteria and resources provided by either the public school system or private school system are a main factor to consider in further research on literacy and literacy rates in Staten Island.

These strong relationships between school and literacy and education growth along with politics within New York and its relationship with literacy rates and education growth may contribute to the interesting data provided by the World Population Review on U.S. Literacy Rates by State 2022 showing a low literacy in New York in general as it has a low-literacy rate of 22.1% which is odd when New York has the ninth-highest percentage of adults with Bachelor's degrees or higher of 35.7%. This odd phenomena is further seen in figures 5 and 6 provided by the education data for Staten Island on Education Attainment in which showed a large percent of Bachelor's Degree or higher attainment up to 34.7% when compared to those who received no schooling and 50% of Bachelor's Degree attainment compared to other degrees. This information suggests that the level of literacy of residents within New York is low and kept as a "silent" factor when it comes to obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in education or higher as seen in Figure 8 of the education data within Staten Island in which there was only a small percent of about 4% to 5.5% out of 25% who obtained a NY Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences and Literature and Languages. This may support the recent installations of Little Free Library book-sharing boxes to help the youth improve their literacy growth and improve literacy rates within Staten Island and New York.

Conclusion

I can conclude that there is a strong relationship between the level of literacy and growth in education within the communities and the development of communities when it comes to updated building structures and resources based on the data gathered for this paper. However, I must stress that this area of research requires a lot of attention. Originally, this paper was meant

to focus on the North Shore of Staten Island (e.g. St. George, Port Richmond, Tompkinsville), but there was no known data available on the literacy rates of the North Shore nor other areas of Staten Island or the borough itself. The only available data, which is very little, is literacy rates and education growth within New York as a whole and the other four boroughs of New York: Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens. Staten Island was the number one borough to show barely any records on literacy rates and the only available data was concerning what level of education residents obtained from the early 2010's. This suggests a need for attention concerning Staten Island when it comes to properly recording literacy rates within New York and how records should be updated more frequently. This lack of specific rates on literacy within Staten Island is why I stress the need for more research on literacy and education in Staten Island to provide further proof of a strong relationship can be seen between residents schooling and literacy rates and education along with how politics plays a part in it. In regards to the areas of Staten Island, I believe further attention should be placed in properly dividing the areas of Staten Island as the East Shore and Mid-Island Neighborhoods do mix up and it is not clear which area falls into which region. This is something that I suggest should be dealt with first and updated, then can research proceed on literacy rates within Staten Island.

Reference to at Least One Course Material

“How America's public schools keep kids in poverty”, Kandice Sumner -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7O7BMa9XGXE&ab_channel=TED

What You Think You Need to do to Improve the Draft

I believe I can improve this draft by getting more participant's to take the questionnaire. Also, I believe the questionnaire needs to be adjusted to better reflect the purpose of this paper and provide more data. If anything, a survey may be used, but it will not provide the same in depth views seen within the Qualitative questionnaire. The area I want to say can be improved is gathering more data on the education growth and level of literacy within Staten Island through other research that has been conducted, but, as mentioned in the conclusion, this is a very limited area of research, so it may take some time and consideration to find. Also, my "Statement of Purpose" can use some work to provide a better background behind this research along with how I cite my work.

