Access to this work was provided by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) ScholarWorks@UMBC digital repository on the Maryland Shared Open Access (MD-SOAR) platform.

Please provide feedback

Please support the ScholarWorks@UMBC repository by emailing scholarworks-group@umbc.edu and telling us what having access to this work means to you and why it's important to you. Thank you.

Chapter 25
Embedding Diverse Children's Literature Throughout a Teacher Preparation Program

Amy Tondreau

ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4006-9697
Austin Peay State University, USA

Zachary T. Barnes
Austin Peay State University, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the incorporation of diverse children's literature into a teacher preparation program, both in and beyond a required Literature for Children course. With the aim of cultivating positive reading identities for pre-service teachers, the authors focus on the process for implementing changes to build a culture of reading, so that pre-service teachers identify as life-long readers, and specifically readers who understand the importance of diverse texts. Changes to curriculum in writing, social studies, and special education methods courses are described, as is the creation of a college-wide book club. The goal of embedding children's literature in and across teacher preparation programs is for pre-service teachers to feel prepared to bring these texts into their own classrooms and to facilitate discussions on the topics that these texts raise with their students, administrative team, and parents. In order to do this, teacher educators need to provide ample opportunities for students to practice selecting, analyzing, and discussing diverse children's literature.

INTRODUCTION

As teacher educators, both authors teach a section of *Literature for Children*, a required course for future early childhood, elementary, and special education teachers. Our work in this course serves several aims: to cultivate genre knowledge and understanding of literary conventions, to familiarize students with current diverse children's books, and to develop our students' identities as readers. Building a reader's

identity is an important process for teachers and school librarians. However, building preservice teachers' (PSTs) identities as readers is challenging when many young adults join us out of high school with a negative perception of reading. According to the 2020 National Assessment for Educational Progress, 26% of high school seniors report never reading stories or novels outside of school. Another 24% report only reading outside of school once or twice a year. While it could be assumed that these numbers would differ among teachers and teacher candidates, that's not the case (Granado & Puig, 2015; Nathanson et al., 2008; Valencia, 2017). When Nathanson and colleagues (2008) asked over 700 teachers about their reading habits, they found that there was "a high prevalence of aliteracy, the ability to read but a disinterest in personal reading." The authors suggested that education professors need to incorporate strategies to cultivate the reading lives of teacher candidates.

Our experiences with students in our own courses reinforced these findings. Across the semesters, as we engaged in conversations with our students, we realized that many of them did not see themselves as readers. In an assignment at the beginning of each semester, students are asked to share a multimedia timeline of their reading life, and we heard similar patterns repeating. Our PSTs shared with us past struggles with reading, quoting the negative feedback their teachers had given them years ago. They recounted the moments in middle and high school when the texts became too challenging, or simply irrelevant, so they stopped reading and started skimming SparkNotes. Some PSTs questioned if the reading they engaged with, such as fanfiction on WattPad, comic books, or romance novels, "counted" after years of being told that what they read wasn't academic enough. We found ourselves wondering about the implications of these patterns; if teachers are not readers, how could they effectively model reading strategies and behaviors? How could they increase student interest and engagement with texts? And how would they, in turn, foster positive reading identities for their own students?

This chapter will explore our work to address these questions through revision of our teacher preparation courses to incorporate diverse children's literature in and beyond the *Literature for Children* course, with the aim of cultivating positive reading identities for our PSTs. We will focus on our process for implementing changes in our courses and beyond, so that building readers, and specifically readers who understand the importance of diverse texts, is a practice that is embedded in and across our pre-service programs. Our goal is for our PSTs to feel prepared to bring these texts into their own classrooms and to facilitate discussions on the topics that these texts raise with their students, administrative team, and parents. We argue that in order to do this, we need to provide ample opportunities for students to practice and engage with diverse children's literature and the concepts these texts center throughout their coursework.

In the following sections, we describe our efforts to embed diverse children's and young adult literature across our teacher preparation program. First, we provide a description of the context of our teacher preparation program and our own positionalities. Next, we describe the changes made to our shared course, *Literature for Children*, with the goal of fostering positive reading experiences. Then, we discuss the ways that we built on our children's literature course by incorporating diverse texts into four additional courses: writing methods, social studies methods, methods for inclusion, and a mild to moderate disabilities course. We then share our experiences in establishing a College of Education Book Club to offer opportunities to read diverse literature outside of our courses. Finally, we draw on what we have learned throughout the process of making these changes in our own program to offer a "road map" of suggestions for others hoping to embed children's literature throughout their own teacher preparation programs.

CONTEXT

Both authors teach at a mid-sized four-year public univeristy in the southeastern United States that serves approximately 10,000 students. The student body is 62% female and 38% male, and 59% of the students identify as white, 20% as Black, 8% as Hispanic, 6% as bi- or multi-racial, and 2% as Asian. One factor unique to this context is that, while approximately 50% of students are drawn from the county the school is located within, a significant portion of the student body is also drawn from the seven surrounding rural counties. In addition, approximately 24% of students have a military affiliation. The College of Education enrolls approximately 350 undergraduate students and 200 graduate students; of these, approximately 15% of students identify as racially diverse.

Both Zack and Amy are assistant professors in their first few years at this institution. Amy identifies as a white, cisgender, heterosexual middle-class female—an identity that aligns with many pre-service teachers, as well as the majority of the teaching profession. However, her identity as a "Yankee" (someone who grew up in the northeastern United States), as well as her identity as an agnostic, are sometimes points of tension in her current context. Zack identifies as a white, cisgender, heterosexual, middle-class male. He is also a first-generation college student, an identity he shares with many students at our university. He grew up and completed his doctoral work locally, and these experiences inform his teaching.

We acknowledge that our positionalities mean that we carry a great deal of privilege and power, and we work to utilize this positioning to advocate for anti-racist, anti-bias practices and policies within and outside of our institution. As both classroom teachers and teacher educators, we draw upon critical, socio-cultural theories and culturally sustaining pedagogy, as well as critical reflexivity regarding our own practice and our continuous learning and unlearning.

BACKGROUND

Importance of Reading Literature in Teacher Preparation

Rosenblatt (1938) posited that it was the job of teachers to help people realize that literature can be a source of pleasure. However, many PSTs may not realize this themselves.

While many college students will read for their coursework, it is more uncommon for them to read for leisure (Burgess & Jones, 2010). More concerning, however, is that education majors are unenthusiastic about reading (Applegate & Applegate, 2004), and have actually been found to read for pleasure even less than other groups of college students (Chen, 2007); Rogers Haverback (2013) found that nearly half (44%) of PSTs surveyed read zero minutes a week, while 78% read less than an hour.

These findings are concerning because researchers have argued that a "profound love and respect for the printed word" (Turner et al., 2009, p. 254) is crucial for teachers to become literacy leaders. The more an individual reads, the more their reading ability increases (Beglar et al., 2012), and reading for pleasure is also correlated with increased creativity (Kelly & Kneipp, 2009). Reading habits and attitudes have also been found to be correlated to literacy achievement (Benevides & Peterson, 2010). All of these individual gains have an impact in the classroom, as well. When a teacher is able to serve as a reading model for students, students' reading motivation increases (Gambrell, 1996), and teachers are able to provide modeling of additional skills and experiences (Rogoff, 1990; Nathanson et al., 2008).

Importance of Reading *Diverse* Literature for Teacher Preparation

Historically, the children's and young adult literature in libraries and classrooms have featured predominately white characters and authors. Even as recently as 2018, half of children's books featured a white main character. In fact, more children's book featured animal main characters (27%) than African American (10%), Asian (7%), Latinx (5%), or American Indians (1%) combined; the percentage of texts written by authors of color are event lower (Cooperative Children's Book Center, 2020). When examining preschool classroom libraries, Crisp and colleagues (2016) found that only 5.7% of books included in teacher's libraries featured characters from diverse backgrounds. In addition, there were two times the number of male characters compared to female characters. As the U.S. student population grows more diverse, students of color are less likely to see themselves represented (and represented accurately and positively) in classroom texts than their white counterparts. Too often, when a diverse character is represented, one story to represent an identity becomes a single, often problematic story (e.g. stories that represent Black American experiences, but only center times of oppression) (Thomas, 2016).

A concurrent issue is the mismatch between teacher and student diversity. The teaching force in the United States is relatively homogeneous; educators are over 80% white, and only 20% of principals are people of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). For example, in the 2017-2018 school year, 80% of public-school teachers were white, 9% were Hispanic, and 7% were Black, while 51% percent of school-aged children were white, 25% were Hispanic, and 14% were Black. Research shows that Eurocentric values and content dominate curriculum (Simmons, 2019), linguistic racism perpetuates the myth of a standard, superior language (Baker-Bell, 2020), and students of color are disciplined more harshly than their white peers (Quick, 2018). And, while teachers know that well-selected children's literature provides an opportunity to introduce complex topics to their students and to provide children with mirrors of themselves and windows into other worlds (Sims Bishop, 1990), they may feel unprepared or uncomfortable facilitating text-based conversations about the issues of social justice that diverse texts often raise. PSTs, many of whom identify as white, middle-class, monolingual, and female, may lack experiences of interacting with people of diverse cultures; consequently, multicultural teacher education is necessary to improve their future relationships with diverse students (Jetton & Savage-Davis, 2005). Diverse literature is one tool that teacher educators can draw upon to foster deeper understanding of sensitive topics with their students (Casto, 2020).

Prior research has suggested that discussions of multicultural literature has the possibility to transform teacher education practices (Haddix & Price-Dennis, 2013). Sharing diverse literature with PSTs can help them realize the adversity that students of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups face when they do not have access to diverse books and materials that appropriately represent them (Colby & Lyon, 2004). And while having diverse texts available in classrooms is an important first step, just having these texts available does not accomplish the teaching or the learning and unlearning of stereotypes perpetuated in society (Schwartz, 2019). Students need repeated opportunities to engage with these texts and discuss them. Gibson and Parks (2014) found that, through work with diverse children's literature across three teacher preparation courses, PSTs developed an increased awareness and readiness for acknowledging culture in their future classrooms, selecting high-quality multicultural literature, and the challenges associated with establishing a socially just curriculum. Engaging with diverse literature can support a new appreciation for the importance of utilizing this literature in the classroom and the importance of exploring multiple perspectives and viewpoints with elementary students (Casciola, 2014). This research

indicates that engaging our PSTs with diverse literature throughout their teacher preparation program can have important implications for their own identities as readers, as well as on their future students.

CHANGING OUR COURSES

Literature for Children

At our university, students are slated to take *Literature for Children* the first semester of their junior year. This is most commonly their fourth education course, after *Introduction to Education*, *Introduction to Special Education*, and *Instructional Strategies*; though, due to the significant population of transfer, non-traditional, part-time, and military-affiliated students we work with, students come to this course with varying degrees of experience. Because we know how important it is for teachers of reading to be readers themselves, we position our *Literature for Children* course as an opportunity to bring our students to (or back to) a love of reading.

The need for this emphasis was made clear to us through one of the first activities we have our students complete in the course. As shared above, PSTs are asked to create an autobiographical reading timeline to discuss their reading memories from before elementary school until their time in college; this assignment is similar to what Tatum (2013) and Muhammad (2020) refer to as a "textual lineage." Students are asked to incorporate family literacy practices and family stories, specific books, authors, and readers that shaped them, and in- and out-of-school experiences. They are then asked to present these multimodal timelines to the class. We see several concerning trends throughout these presentations. First, many of our students describe childhood and elementary experiences as readers who love to spend time reading, but middle and high school experiences that were discouraging, irrelevant, or simply boring. Many PSTs animatedly recounted the specific books that provoked their ire, and reported skimming, using online summary sites, or abandoning texts partway through. Many of these students, who are the products of post-No Child Left Behind accountability measures, also reported being pushed to read faster to earn more Accelerated Reader points, and the emphasis on standardized testing scores in their English language arts instruction as additional factors that decreased their engagement in and enjoyment of reading. Their school experiences often impacted their out-of-school reading lives as well. While some had begun to find their way back to reading through a course with a particular professor or interests such as comic books, fan fiction, or popular series novels, many of them continued to identify as aliterate, capable readers who read when necessary, but not for pleasure.

These patterns mirror those evident in the literature. For example, the *Kids and Family Reading Report* (Scholastic & YouGov, 2019), which is on its 7th edition, has found consistently across all editions that, "as kids grow up, reading frequency, enjoyment and children's sense of its importance decline. As one 16-year-old girl described it, *'I really don't have time to read any books that I want. I liked it better when I was younger and could read whatever I wanted'*" (p. 11). As the enjoyment of reading decreases, so does engagement. Engaged readers are individuals who read a wide range of materials and do so frequently. Reading engagement is a critical element of reading, and is a predictor of students' achievement (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Guthrie et al., 2001; Guthrie et al., 2013; Morrow & Gambrell, 2011; Ruddell, 1995; Ruddell et al., 1994). In addition, reading engagement is a professional expectation. The International Literacy Association's (2017) professional teaching standards for elementary educa-

tors assert that educators must be "readers, writers, and lifelong learners" who "plan literacy learning experiences that develop motivated and engaged literacy learners" (p. 3).

Yet, we know many of the PSTs that walk into our classrooms are not engaged readers, and they struggle with internalized messages of what they are "allowed" to read and enjoy. Our goal is to foster enjoyment and motivation for reading that our students can share, model, and foster for their own students. This is important because in order for teachers to help students build a positive reading habit, they need to have one themselves (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Commeyras et al., 2003). Although aliterate teachers possess reading competence, their teaching performance is compromised by their own negative attitudes toward reading (Dottin, 2009). Because there is ample evidence for the connections among engaged reading, motivation, achievement, and enjoyment (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Guthrie & Cox, 2001; Guthrie et al., 2001; Guthrie, et al., 2013; Morrow & Gambrell, 2011; Ruddell, 1995; Ruddell et al., 1994), we aim to build our students up as readers and to broaden their definitions of what "counts"' as reading. Reading graphic novels is reading. Reading fanfiction is reading. Reading magazine articles online is reading. Expanding their definitions of reading invites more students to see themselves as readers, and they will bring those broader definitions into their classrooms to view more of their students as readers, too.

In the *Literature for Children* classroom, we both model our own reading habits and share our reading lives and identities with our students. Zack loves to start class by giving a book talk on a text he has recently read. He models his own positive reading experiences, and he shares his classroom experiences of getting to know his students through their reading interests. Amy asks students to interview one another about their reading lives, and models the process by inviting students to interview her, sharing her own identity as a reader (for example, "I'm the type of reader who abandons a book if it doesn't hook me quickly. But if it does hook me, I can't put it down and stay up too late to keep reading."). We find that it is important to be transparent about both our strengths and our areas for growth, our preferences and our aversions, our successes and our shortcomings. For example, Amy shares the books she never read from her high school English classes, and her hesitancy to admit that she's never read those "classics." This modeling offers a tacit invitation for PSTs to share more openly and works toward a classroom community in which our students can share honestly, without feeling like they will be judged for their opinions. This process also normalizes the complex realities of our students' reading identities, and makes space for them to build positive self-perceptions despite prior negative experiences.

Beginning with the multimodal timeline activity allowed us to learn so much about our students, and it helped to create a welcoming space to discuss all of the aspects of reading identities, both negative and positive. As our students shared their experiences, we were able to draw connections to many current topics in literacy instruction, engaging in discussions on the importance of choice in reading, the process of developing expertise in the genres we love, debates about requiring students to read the cannon, the purpose of reading (and how it's not earning Accelerated Reader points), the significant role that a teacher's modeling and engagement can play, the social nature of literacy, and, most importantly, how books can change the lives of those that read them.

As we reflected on our PST's presentations and discussions, we began the work of revising our *Literature for Children* courses to specifically foster positive engagements with texts, with the aim of shifting students' perceptions of reading and cultivating more positive reader identities. Just as we had done with our K-12 students, we offered our PSTs choices in the books they read throughout the semester (e.g. book clubs on *New Kid* by Jerry Craft, *First Rule of Punk* by Celia C. Pérez, *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang, and *A Good Kind of Trouble* by Lisa Moore Ramée). While we hope that in the future our students

will already have an awareness and knowledge of diverse texts by the time they get this course, that is currently not the case; so, we work to cultivate a space to start the conversation about the importance of representation in texts. We know that the first step is immersion, so that students are exposed to a wide selection of amazing, current, diverse titles, and that these books not only represent diverse characters but are written by diverse authors, as well. This raises students' levels of awareness of the choices available to them as readers, and the choices they can make available to their own students. We know that when our students find enjoyment in diverse texts themselves, they are more prepared (and more likely) to plan to successfully incorporate these texts into their instruction.

We begin each class with picture book read-alouds to highlight books to the whole class. Zack worked closely with a local children's librarian to select a variety of diverse, relevant picture books to include in his course. In addition to our own library visits, we draw from our own ever-growing personal collections, and have also advocated for university funds to be allocated to the purchase of new texts so that we can bring stacks of books with us each and every class. As we share these options with students, we explicitly discuss the need for diverse books in the classroom, share resources for our students to find these books, and teach how to evaluate the quality of books they want to use in their classroom. We both utilized tools such as Teaching Tolerance's (2016) *Reading Diversity: A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts* and Teaching for Change's *Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books* (Derman-Sparks, 2013) to select our own texts and guide students in their selections.

Our PSTs get many opportunities to apply these strategies for text selection because we also make it a priority to model the power of choice in their book selections. Our students get to move around the classroom and "shop" for books that they want to read from the new selections we share each week. As students engage in these "book tastings," we walk around with them to share recommendations or quick booktalks on the books students are considering. We know that this approach is essential to the success of our courses because students respond with excitement over the new batches of books they can pore over each week, collecting their individual stacks and returning eager to share about their favorites. Students often bring books back and pass them on to their classmates - an example of a readerly habit that can carry through their lives.

Amy also began to infuse critical literacy (Freire, 1970/2018; Janks, 2010; Lankshear & McLaren, 1993; Luke & Freebody, 1999) practices into her *Literature for Children* course. As Cochran-Smith (2004) argues,

In order to learn to teach in a society that is increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse, prospective teachers as well as experienced teachers and teacher educators need opportunities to examine much of what is usually unexamined in the tightly braided relationships of language, culture, and power in schools and schooling. (p. 49)

To work towards this goal, Amy asked students to consider representation in texts, utilizing Rudine Sims Bishop's (1990) concepts of texts as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. Mirror texts are those in which readers see aspects of their own identities and experiences reflected, while window texts are those which provide insight into identities and experiences that are different from the reader's own. PSTs are asked to consider what aspects of their own identities and experiences have been reflected in texts, and which were silenced, missing, or marginalized. Amy had students study publishing statistics, such as those from the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin Madison (2020), or the *School Library Journal* (2019). This fostered conversations not only about the content of

the texts we explore together in class, but also about the implications and importance of text selection and representation as connected to the identities all students are building as readers. In order to illustrate the implications of the statistics students studied in a concrete way, Amy asked each student to submit a PowerPoint slide containing a memorable book for their childhood reading experiences, one they might read aloud in their own classrooms. Once compiled, the class was able to consider patterns that emerged, including who was represented as both characters and authors. Realizing that both characters and authors were almost exclusively white, and that texts portrayed primarily heteronormative, middle-class, white experiences, students were able to discuss the ways in which our text selection can perpetuate hidden curriculum (Apple, 1971). This activity also created space for our students of color to acknowledge or share that it wasn't until they were older (in high school or beyond) that they experienced a book with characters that looked like them. These discussions revealed an important classroom implication: the essential nature of access to both window and mirror texts for all students' multifaceted identities.

However, despite all of the changes we made to our *Literature for Children* courses, we quickly realized that just one semester, and one course on children's literature, was not enough for our students to develop their own reading identities in ways that would sustain them as life-long learners. Nor was it enough time to develop a deep understanding of diverse representation, critical literacy, and culturally sustaining practices they could bring into the classroom. We believe that it is important to name that for our students, as well, so we share with them that the work we do in *Literature of Children* is just the introduction to a topic that they will continue to see and hear as they move forward in their teacher preparation. We see the experiences of this course--developing awareness of diverse books, learning how to find and select those books, engaging positively with them, and understanding the importance of reading these books in their future classrooms--as building the foundation for their continued experiences with children's literature.

When we think about building readers, we know that exposure to diverse texts is only the first step. This might lead our PSTs to bring diverse texts into their classroom libraries, but we want to ensure that the books won't merely sit on the shelves. We also want to prepare teachers who will know what to *do* with those texts, who will invite their own students into critical considerations of power and representation, and then take action in their communities (Jones, 2006; Souto-Manning, 2009). Consequently, we knew that diverse children's literature couldn't just live in our children's literature course; it needed to be purposely infused into methods courses throughout our program.

Writing Methods

Amy also teaches a writing methods course, *Teaching Language Arts K-6*, which students typically take the semester after they complete *Literature for Children*. Children's literature is integrated into the course in two ways. First, picture books that center the experiences and identities of writers are consistently highlighted as read-alouds. Titles like *Ralph Tells a Story* by Abby Hanlon, *The Best Story Ever* by Eileen Spinelli, and *Any Questions?* by Marie-Louise Gay can support the generating phase of writing, while *Rocket Tells a Story* by Tad Hills, *A Squiggly Story* by Andrew Larson, and *Little Red Writing* by Joan Holub can support the drafting process. *How This Book Was Made* by Mac Barnett, *The Whisper* by Pamela Zagarenski, and *I Am A Story* by Dan Yaccarino illustrate the writer's life and getting published, while postmodern picture books like *This Is My Book!* by Mark Pett and *The Panda Problem* by Deborah Underwood draw attention to problems that can arise in the writing process. These

texts support conversations about the stages of the writing process, the individual nature of each writer's process, and normalizing both the challenges and satisfactions of engaging in that process.

The second use of children's literature in the writing methods course is when PSTs learn to utilize children's literature as mentor texts. Amy guides PSTs to study the craft moves that authors use in each genre, and illustrates how to name them in transferable ways so that they can become teaching points for elementary writers. Well-written mentor texts serve as exemplars of a genre, full of teaching points that students can apprentice themselves to and approximate in their own writing. Amy guides PSTs to "read like a writer" (Ray, 2002) and invites them into this work by introducing different craft elements for each genre and modeling how to match these with the goals writers work towards. For example, studying *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson as a narrative mentor text, readers might notice that the author uses revealing actions to introduce the problem. Studying *Surprising Sharks* by Nicola Davies as an informational writing mentor text, writers might notice that the author uses comparison in order to show the scale of something unfamiliar. Practicing analysis of mentor texts allows PSTs to develop "insider" knowledge about how texts are constructed and deepens their understanding of craft techniques and literary language. This also allows PSTs insight into creating their own demonstration texts, guiding them to consider what aspects of the genre they want to model for their students in their own writing.

Perhaps the most important incorporation of children's literature into the course, however, is the emphasis that Amy places on using mentor texts to invite PSTs to tell their own stories. The course intentionally centers the connection between storytelling and identity, and the inherent vulnerability of telling one's own stories. PSTs are asked to consider the implications for whose stories are told, published, believed, and heard, and whose voices are left out. In selecting texts such as *I Am Every Good Thing* by Derek Barnes as a poetry mentor text, Amy guides students to consider the power of centering the positive affirmations of Black boys as they develop their own poetry modeled on the structure of the text, poetry that shares their own intersectional identities. Texts like *Milo Imagines the World* by Matt de la Peña invite students to consider dominant narratives and to create counternarratives (Delgado, 1995) that disrupt them. In these ways, Amy's writing methods class explores the ways that telling our stories to one another builds a writing community, and the ways that the stories we tell might inspire others.

Social Studies Methods

Amy also teaches a social studies methods course, which students typically take in the semester following her writing methods course, right before their student teaching semester. Children's literature, both fiction and nonfiction, is woven throughout the course in various intentional ways. At the beginning of the semester, PSTs examine texts that deal with the topic of diverse names. Texts by the center diverse characters and written by diverse authors, such as *Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal, *Your Name is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi, *My Name* by Sandra Cisneros, and excerpts from *My Name is Maria Isabel* by Alma Flor Ada and *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo, can foster students' consideration of the importance of identities (their own and their students'). PSTs select a children's literature example to serve as a mentor text and write their own name stories to share with classmates in small groups. For our predominantly white, female PSTs, reading texts that are written by authors of color offers a new perspective on the importance of culturally sustaining practices in the classroom, and the opportunities made possible in social studies curriculum when we connect teaching and learning to our students' lives, identities, and cultures in inclusive ways. Researchers have identified diverse literature as a "tool for developing these understandings of power

and privilege and preparing PSTs to be more culturally competent, moving them away from harboring culturally deficit perspectives of others" (Casto, 2020, p. 25).

Amy also draws upon critical literacy tenets to engage PSTs in exploring the ways that children's literature may perpetuate and/or disrupt stereotypes about different identity categories. PSTs do an inquiry into picture books, identifying the ways in which texts portray gender, race, class, family structure, and other identity categories. Following the class discussions of this inquiry, students plan social justice interactive read-alouds (Kesler et al., 2020) as a way to implement their learning. Amy models this for students with texts like *The Paper Bag Princess* by Robert Munsch, *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales, *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Rob Sanders, *A Different Pond* by Bao Phi, and *All Are Welcome Here* by Alexandra Penfold. It is essential for students to have models of read-alouds that focus on social justice topics and not exclusively literacy skill and strategy instruction, as PSTs often report feeling uncomfortable or unsure of how to address these issues with students (Gibson & Parks, 2014; Jimenez, 2014). As Hartsfield and Kimmel (2021) argue, it "is clear that more education and training are needed in how to use controversial books in the classroom" (p. 7); this assignment provides our students with repeated practice engaging with social justice topics they may find difficult or uncomfortable in a relatively low-stake environment before they bring these discussions into the classroom. PSTs are then asked to annotate their lesson plans to specifically identify the ways in which their plan for teaching is culturally responsive and inclusive.

Another assignment in the social studies methods course requires PSTs to watch Adichie's (2009) "danger of a single story" TED Talk and utilize this concept in conjunction with the concept of texts as windows and mirrors (Sims Bishop, 1990; Tschinda et al., 2014). They explore digital text sets that help them identify the single story of different topics (individuals with disabilities, Muslim women, and immigrants, for example), and how multiple sources and perspectives work to challenge them. Next, they engage with topics in the social studies curriculum, reading children's literature that portrays the "single story" of Christopher Columbus, Rosa Parks, and other historical figures included in the state social studies standards, and then read and watch multiple sources that disrupt previously held conceptions. Primary sources, video clips, autobiographies, and websites are combined with picture books and young adult novels to comprise the text set and complicate and add nuance to students' learning. This assignment in particular is one that students continue to cite throughout the semester as a turning point in their own understanding of a different, more engaging way of teaching social studies than many of them were taught, one that incorporates multiple perspectives and lots of children's literature.

As a culminating project for the course, PSTs select historical fiction or realistic fiction novels to serve as anchor texts for source sets that challenge the "single story" of a historical event or actor, or a current event of their choice. As a social studies teacher, it is essential to know how to find and vet excellent resources, as well as to provide students with a variety of viewpoints about any given topic. For this project, PSTs select a middle grade or YA novel as an anchor text; this text may be historical fiction or realistic fiction that centers on an important social issue. They are encouraged to select topics that represent a gap in their own knowledge, something they want to learn more about themselves. PSTs then generate an annotated bibliography of at least five excellent resources that connect to and build upon the novel. These may be picture books, articles, field trips, plays, films/documentaries, websites, artifacts, poems, songs, interviews, primary sources, community resources, etc.

Students are instructed that it is particularly important to seek out and include non-dominant, typically silenced or omitted points of view, and marginalized voices to challenge the "single story" of their topic. PSTs create an overview of the text set, which includes an essential question(s) and enduring

understandings the text set is meant to address related standards; students draw from state social studies and ELA standards, as well as Learning for Justice's (2020) Social Justice Standards. For each source, an annotation provides a rationale describing how the source fits with the essential question and/or enduring understandings, how it connects to, builds on, or challenges other resources in the set, and how it relates to the single story. PSTs also delineate a plan for how they would use the source in the classroom, drawing on methods discussed in the course, and discuss opportunities for differentiation, assessment, and interdisciplinary connections. Topics that students have explored include the Harlem Renaissance and Black Excellence, America's treatment of refugees, the role of women in the American Revolution, and the representation of individuals with disabilities in the media.

Effective Inclusion Strategies

Zack also uses children's literature texts in his *Effective Inclusion Strategies* course, which is a requirement for special education and elementary PSTs. This course is usually taken after the children's literature course and in the same semester as Amy's writing methods course; it is the second and final special education course that our K-5 majors will take. Building upon the foundation that *Literature for Children* provides, *Effective Inclusion Strategies* offers another opportunity for the students to read diverse texts, this time centered on a student with a disability (such as *El Deafo*, *Out of my Mind*, and *Meena Meets Her Match*). These texts offer a narrative entry point to the concepts of the course, and challenge students to think from the perspective of the students that special education and inclusive practices serve.

As our collaboration around children's literature continued, and we (Zack and Amy) discussed the importance of building a coherent strategy to build diverse books into more courses throughout our program, we worked together to plan how we could most effectively use children's books in this special education course--a course that, while taught simultaneously with literacy methods coursework, had traditionally been treated as a separate entity. The goal of the inclusion class is to provide the strategies and knowledge to effectively include all students in a classroom setting, especially students with disabilities. And while the information that Zack provides to our PSTs is applicable across content areas, being prepared to deliver inclusive literacy instruction is a significant portion of any special education or general education teacher's role in elementary classrooms.

Because the students in the inclusion class have already taken *Literature for Children*, they are already aware of the importance of students' identities being represented in mirror texts, as well as the possibilities for students to learn about experiences different from their own through window texts (Sims Bishop, 1990). However, in the literature and in our own courses, we know that there has not been enough attention paid to the representation of individuals with disabilities in children's literature. There is a substantial body of research on how children discuss social issues in texts, including research on race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (e.g. Jones, 2006; Kesler et al., 2020; Ryan et al., 2013). However, disability representations in children's literature are less prominent. From the limited empirical research on using texts with disability representation in classrooms (Adomat, 2014; Cameron & Rutland, 2006; Wilkins et al., 2016), we know that increased exposure to characters with disabilities can lead to more positive interactions between students with and without disabilities and limit some of the unintended consequences of inclusion, such as poor self-confidence and emotional insecurity (Adomat, 2014; Cameron & Rutland, 2006).

As our PSTs learn about effective inclusion strategies, including Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2018), they must also develop their ability to welcome students with disabilities in their classroom through

inclusive literature, and to utilize literature with positive, well-rounded representation of students with disabilities to disrupt deficit conceptions students without disabilities may hold of classmates with disabilities. Scholars have provided guidelines for choosing texts that promote inclusive thinking (Andrews, 1998; Nasatir & Horn, 2003) and suggested practices for engaging students in discussions of disability representations in texts (Ostrosky et al., 2015; Prater et al., 2006). These methods include preparing questions about the content of the story, explicitly teaching about a disability and related vocabulary, and facilitating discussions about the similarities between main characters and students.

However, as Pennell and colleagues (2017) highlight, individuals with disabilities are often absent from texts, or portrayed in negative and stereotypical ways. Few books show characters with disabilities living a full life or going on an adventure. PSTs must be aware of how texts portray those with disabilities, but also have knowledge about those disabilities and how to select books based on that information. More importantly, PSTs need practice with critical disability readings to disrupt their own misconceptions and challenge deficit conceptions present in texts.

With this information in mind, Zack and Amy provided a book list for students in the Zack's inclusion class to choose from. Sets of these texts were purchased with support from our department chair for building an inclusive and representative library for our PSTs. This is a key element in programmatic support and development of our PSTs' reading identities, and another way to model for our PSTs the importance of building an inclusive classroom library. For the semester of this writing, PSTs could choose from the following books: *El Deafo* by Cece Bell, *Out of My Mind* by Sharon M. Draper, *Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus* by Dusti Bowling, *Get a Grip, Vivy Cohen!* by Sarah Kapit, *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key* by Jack Gantos, *Niagara Falls or Does It?* (Hank Zipzer series) by Henry Winkler and Lin Oliver, *Meena Meets Her Match* by Karla Manternach, and *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt.

Characteristics of Mild to Moderate Disabilities

In addition to *Literature for Children*, *Teaching Language Arts K-6*, and *Effective Inclusion Strategies*, special education majors are required to take a course in mild and moderate disabilities. This course, also taught by Zack, gives future special education teachers strategies for working with students with high incidence disabilities. This includes strategies for working with students in both a pull-out environment and an inclusive co-teaching classroom. The course is primarily offered as an online, asynchronous course. Again, we worked together to determine the best way to incorporate diverse texts into this course. We decided that narrative texts could offer a unique opportunity for PSTs to consider the different experiences students with disabilities might have in classroom settings.

Because of the online delivery method, Zack decided to upload recorded read-alouds of multiple picture books that include characters with disabilities to his course modules, highlighting different disability categories and asking students to critically reflect on how the characters with disabilities were portrayed in each text. These books include: *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* by Cari Best, *Hello Goodbye Dog* by Maria Gianferrari, *Hands and Hearts* by Donna Jo Napoli, *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña, *John's Whistle* by Lili Ferreiros, *King for a Day* by Rukhsana Khan, *Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You* by Sonia Sotomayor, and *Ada Twist, Scientist* by Andrea Beatty.

After listening to each of the books, PSTs were asked to reflect on each story and make connections between the work they would be doing with students with disabilities, the strategies they were learning, and the characters in the book. To support PSTs with these reflections, a prompting guide (Tondreau & Rabinowitz, 2021) is provided to encourage them to consider common misconceptions or stereotypes of

individuals with disabilities, and utilize their critical literacy skills to complicate or push back on those depictions. Several of the questions provided to push students' thinking are included below:

- Are characters with disabilities excluded or included in the setting?
- Is the disability represented as a problem that needs to be overcome?
- Are the character's emotions tied to their disability (shame, fear, embarrassment)?
- Does the plot focus on a non-disabled character helping the character with disabilities?
- Is a character with a disability seen as a burden?
- Is the lesson learned by the character with a disability, by others, or both?

These guiding questions support PSTs in their critical reading and interpretation, and repeated practice across different texts enables discussion of both the patterns and nuances of how the experiences of students with disabilities are portrayed in books and the implications this has for classroom practice. Through these experiences, PSTs have the opportunity to apply the critical literacy practices that they have learned in Amy's classes specifically to the special education context of Zack's course.

Book Club

As we (Zack and Amy) spoke about the need to continue conversations about reading, diverse texts, and reading identities throughout the four years of teacher preparation, we knew that our current locus of control was our own classes. But we also wondered how we might maintain the relationships that we built with students in our courses beyond each individual semester, and how we might help our students maintain the momentum of their reading lives. Then it dawned on us: we needed a book club. This book club could live outside of required courses as a fun community space with snacks and conversation. With no associated assignments and a focus on social connection around shared texts, this reading experience more closely mirrored the experiences of life-long readers who read for their own purposes. We hope that it will serve as a bridge for students between their course readings and reading outside of the classroom because we know that teachers who read consistently for pleasure are more likely to enact stronger literacy practices in the classroom than those teachers who do not read for pleasure (McKool & Gespass, 2009). Rogers Haverback (2013) recommends opportunities such as literature circles or book clubs to help PSTs experience reading as a social activity, arguing that this can increase the fulfillment students get from reading and, in turn, continue to increase their reading habits.

As a K-12 teacher, Zack had previously been a part of the Project LIT Community, "a national, student-led, grassroots literacy and community service movement" (Yorio, 2019). Beginning with a group of students in Nashville, Project LIT has grown into a national movement, with over 800 chapters around the country. The organization is centered around four tenets: "empowering students and educators to be leaders and change agents in their communities; connecting passionate students and educators who support and inspire one another; celebrating reading every day in as many classrooms, schools, and communities as possible; and improving literacy attitudes and outcomes, one book and one conversation at a time" (Yorio, 2019). We decided to establish our club in alignment with this organization and these goals. Each year, Project LIT releases a new set of recommended books for middle grades and young adults. We adopted seven books from their most recent list for our book club to read together across the academic year: *Pet* by Awaeke Emezi, *From the Desk of Zoe Washington* by Janelle Marks, *Patron Saints of Nothing* by Randy Ribay, *Tristan Strong Punches a Hole in the Sky* by Kwame Mbalia, *Love*

From A to Z by S. K. Ali, *Dragon Hoops* by Gene Luen Yang, and *Clap When You Land* by Elizabeth Acevedo. We tried to balance young adult literature with middle grade literature, and to include a variety of genres, as well as diverse gender, racial, and LGBTQ author and character identities.

We developed multimedia fliers to advertise the book club, which offered images and descriptions of the text of the month along with links to the book trailers and a Google form to sign up and request to borrow a copy of the text. Our initial call to students recruited about 15 members for our first read, *Pet* by Awaeke Emezi. During our monthly meetings, we have been offering in-person attendance as well as Zoom attendance due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. This allows students who have children at home, long commutes to campus, or other extenuating circumstances to have access to the meetings. Following the Project LIT model of student leadership, the students in the group decided to rotate discussion leadership, so that the power differential between faculty and students is minimized as much as possible. Students also requested to establish a GroupMe specific to the book club to discuss texts in progress throughout the month in between meetings.

Over the next few months, we have averaged about 10 sign-ups per month and about six members in attendance. While this number is lower than we had hoped, there are several encouraging signs. We have had participation from across programs in our college, even those we do not typically have as much interaction with, such as secondary education majors. Different students have signed up each month based on their interest in the particular title and genre, or their workload in a particular month. The students who have participated have been a more racially and ethnically diverse population than the population of the College of Education as a whole. We have also had participation from several faculty members, and the conversations at each meaning have been lively and rich, touching on the plot and craft of the text itself, connections to social justice issues and representation, and classroom connections and implications. All of this has occurred during a year when the pandemic has limited our ability to recruit and gather, or even to supply the snacks and camaraderie we had originally hoped for. We hope to continue to grow the number of participants as time passes and others hear about the experience or see text selections that appeal to them. Our long-term goal is to not only recruit more students and faculty, but local teachers and members of the community, as well. We hope that those who participate as students now might come back to participate as alumni, creating the potential for mentoring opportunities and the cultivation of a broader professional network connected through diverse texts.

A ROADMAP FOR EMBEDDING DIVERSE LITERATURE

Through sharing our experiences with embedding diverse literature throughout our program, we hope that we have encouraged others to join us in this important work. To that end, we want to highlight some important features of our experience to provide a roadmap of sorts, which might help others to navigate more effectively and efficiently. First and foremost, we must display to our PSTs that this work is not to be done alone, but can and should be done collaboratively. As we work together, we show our PSTs that collaboration makes the work more effective, more purposeful, and frankly, more enjoyable. Teaching does not happen in isolation; rather, it is most effective when a team works together towards a shared goal. Our PSTs learn that the inclusion of diverse texts is not limited to the literacy block; this leads them to view everyone in the school community--librarians, social workers, special education service providers, administrators, teachers of math, science, and social studies--as potential collaborators with ideas and opportunities to bring important texts into their classroom.

Another important consideration for us was text selection and access. In order for our PSTs to choose books they're interested in and to develop an understanding of the field of children's literature as a whole, they must have access and exposure to a wide selection of diverse and relevant texts. As described above, we really went out of our way to collect as many texts for our students as possible, making weekly trips to our local libraries on and off-campus, building our own collections, and advocating for funds from our department and college to update the school's collections. And we have seen the power of providing access to these books in our courses as students discover new texts that connect to their identities and their interests. This does not mean, however, that each book that PSTs have access to needs to be brand new and perfectly curated; rather, we have found that our students also benefit from the opportunity to bring a critical lens to texts and discuss problematic representations, outdated language, or oversimplification of social issues. If framed and scaffolded purposefully, these experiences cultivate students' abilities to evaluate and select texts--both those they would use in the classroom and those they would not. Additionally, students often realize that the same book can disrupt certain stereotypes and reinforce others. Engaging in this work themselves allows our PSTs to practice the critical literacy skills they want to model and foster in their own students.

PSTs love the ability to choose books they want to read, and it is not the "level" of the texts but these positive experiences with texts that help them to grow as readers. But more than just access to a wide variety of books, PSTs must be able to apply what they have learned once they step foot into their own classroom. They quickly realize that not only are the texts different (more inclusive, more varied, more engaging) than they previously thought, but the ways that they can use and interact with literature can be different, too. We hope that, following their repeated experiences with children's literature across a series of methods courses, they are stepping into their classroom as a self-identified reader. As teacher educators, we aim to build up each PST's reading identity with the same commitment that we brought to the readers in our K-12 classrooms. When students arrive their freshman year, many of them choose not to read beyond what is assigned for their courses. Some of them associate reading with negative experiences, prescribed assignments, "wrong" interpretations, or reading that didn't "count." They often do not understand the impact that their own reading identity can have on their students. When they enter our classrooms, we seek to counteract their negative experiences with positive ones, with the goal of creating lifelong learners who are ready to share their reading lives with others. If we provide a positive reading environment by creating a school culture of reading, and offering multiple, repeated, positive interactions with texts across time, we can build up positive attitudes about reading. Those positive attitudes will grow as PSTs enter classrooms and see the tables turn, as they work to create positive literacy experiences that build their own students' reading identities. We hope that they can use what they have learned from us to prepare their students to be engaged, confident, lifelong readers, too.

Of course, as we have described, this lofty goal cannot be reached in just one children's literature course taken in the fall of junior year. Even if we create a course filled with choice and social interaction and joy, an isolated learning experience can only have so much of an impact; as teachers, we know that learning takes time. If, instead, purposeful engagement with diverse and inclusive literature is deliberately modeled throughout their teacher preparation program, PSTs will understand children's books as tools to draw upon across content areas and units, across the school day and year. They will understand its power to offer windows and mirrors and sliding glass doors, to start difficult conversations and spread joy. While we tell them all of this in our children's literature class, we *show* them by embedding literature throughout their program.

REFERENCES

Acevedo, E. (2020). *Clap when you land*. Quill Tree Books.

Acevedo, E. (2020). The poet x (Reprint ed.). Quill Tree Books.

Ada, A. F., & Thompson, D. K. (1995). My name is maria isabel (Reprint ed.). Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Adichie, C. N. (2009, October). *The danger of a single story* [Video]. TED Conferences. https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/up-next

Adomat, D. S. (2014). Exploring issues of disability in children's literature discussions. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, *34*(3), 9. doi:10.18061/dsq.v34i3.3865

Ali, S. K. (2020). Love from a to z (Reprint ed.). Salaam Reads / Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Andrews, S. (1998). Using inclusion literature to promote positive attitudes toward disabilities. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *41*(6), 420–426.

Apple, M. W. (1971). The hidden curriculum and the nature of conflict. *Interchange (Washington, D.C.)*, *2*(4), 27–40. doi:10.1007/BF02287080

Applegate, A. J., & Applegate, M. D. (2004). The Peter effect: Reading habits and attitudes of preservice teachers. *The Reading Teacher*, *57*(6), 554–563.

Baker-Bell, A. (2020). *Linguistic justice: Black language, literacy pedagogy, and identity*. Routledge. doi:10.4324/9781315147383

Barnes, D., & James, G. C. (2020). I am every good thing (Illustrated ed.). Nancy Paulsen Books.

Barnett, M., & Rex, A. (2016). How this book was made (Illustrated ed.). Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Beaty, A., & Roberts, D. (2016). Ada twist, scientist (Illustrated ed.). Harry N. Abrams.

Beglar, D., Hunt, A., & Kite, Y. (2012). The effect of pleasure reading on Japanese university EFL learners' reading rates. *Language Learning*, *62*(3), 665–703. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00651.x

Bell, C. (2014). El deafo (Illustrated ed.). Harry N. Abrams.

Benevides, T., & Peterson, S. S. (2010). Literacy attitudes, habits and achievements of future teachers. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, *36*(3), 291–302. doi:10.1080/02607476.2010.497375

Best, C., & Brantley-Newton, V. (2015). My three best friends and me, zulay. Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR).

Bowling, D. (2019). Insignificant events in the life of a cactus (Reprint ed., Vol. 1). Sterling Children's Books.

Burgess, S. R., & Jones, K. K. (2010). Reading and media habits of college students varying by sex and remedial status. *College Student Journal*, *44*, 492–508.

Cameron, L., & Rutland, A. (2006). Extended contact through story reading in school: Reducing children's prejudice toward the disabled. *The Journal of Social Issues*, *62*(3), 469–488. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.2006.00469.x

Casciola, V. (2014). Examining the impact of place on the cultural competence of preservice teachers. *Journal of Research in Education*, *24*(2), 79–89.

CAST. (2018). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2*. https://udlguidelines.cast.org/

Casto, A. R. (2020). The permutations of multicultural literature as a tool for teacher preparation: A systematic review of the literature. *Multicultural Education*, *27*(2), 24–30.

Chen, S. (2007). Extracurricular reading habits of college students in Taiwan: Findings from two national surveys. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *50*(8), 642–653. doi:10.1598/JAAL.50.8.3

Choi, Y. (2003). The name jar (Reprint ed.). Dragonfly Books.

Cisneros, S. (1991). *The house on mango street*. Vintage.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). *Walking the road: Race, diversity, and social justice in teacher Education*. Teacher College Press.

Colby, S. A., & Lyon, A. F. (2004). Heightening awareness about the importance of using multicultural literature. *Multicultural Education*, *11*(3), 24–28.

Commeyras, M., Bishlinghoff, B., & Olson, J. (2003). Teachers as readers: Perspectives on the importance of reading in teachers' classrooms and lives. International Reading Association.

Cooperative Children's Book Center University of Wisconsin-Madison. (2020). *CCBC diversity statistics*. https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/literature-resources/ccbc-diversity-statistics/

Craft, J. (2019). *New Kid* (1st ed.). Quill Tree Books.

Crisp, T., Knezek, S. M., Quinn, M., Bingham, G. E., Girardeau, K., & Starks, F. (2016). What's on our bookshelves? The diversity of children's literature in early childhood classrooms libraries. *Journal of Children's Literature*, *42*(2), 29–42.

Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (1997). Early reading acquisition and its relation to reading experiences and ability 10 years later. *Developmental Psychology*, *33*(6), 934–945. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.33.6.934 PMID:9383616

Davies, N., & Croft, J. (2005). Surprising sharks: Read and wonder (Illustrated ed.). Candlewick.

de la Peña, M. (2021). *Milo Imagines the World*. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Delgado, R. (1995). Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for narrative. In R. Delgado (Ed.), *Critical race theory: The cutting edge* (pp. 60–70). Temple University Press.

Derman-Sparks. (2013). *Guide for selecting anti-bias children's books*. https://www.teachingforchange.org/selecting-anti-bias-books

Dotting, E. S. (2009). Professional judgement and dispositions in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *25*(1), 83–88. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2008.06.005

Draper, S. M. (2012). Out of my mind (Reprint ed.). Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Emezi, A. (2021). Pet (Reprint ed.). Knopf Books for Young Readers.

Ferreiros, L. (2021). *John's whistle*. Cuento de Luz.

Freire, P. (2018) *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Revised). Herder & Herder.

Gambrell, L. B. (1996). Creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation. *The Reading Teacher*, *50*(1), 14–25.

Gantos, J. (2014). Joey pigza swallowed the key (Reissue ed., Vol. 1). Square Fish.

Gay, M. (2014). *Any questions?* Groundwood Books.

Gianferrari, M., & Barton, P. (2017). *Hello goodbye dog*. Roaring Brook Press.

Gibson, K., & Parks, M. W. (2014). Toward social justice: Literature to promote multiple perspectives. *Multicultural Education*, *21*(2), 41–50.

Granado, C., & Puig, M. (2015). Reading identity of preservice teachers as component of their reading autobiographies. *Ocnos*, *13*, 41–60. doi:0.18239/ocnos_2015.13.03

Guthrie, J. T., & Cox, K. E. (2001). Classroom conditions for motivation and engagement in reading. *Educational Psychology Review*, *13*(3), 283–302. doi:10.1023/A:1016627907001

Guthrie, J. T., Klauda, S. L., & Ho, A. N. (2013). Modeling the relationships among reading instruction, motivation, engagement, and achievement for adolescents. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *48*(1), 9–26. doi:10.1002/rrq.035 PMID:26412903

Guthrie, J. T., Schafer, W. D., & Huang, C. (2001). Benefits of opportunity to read and balanced instruction on the NAEP. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *96*(3), 145–162. doi:10.1080/00220670109599912

Haddix, M., & Price-Dennis, D. (2013). Urban fiction and multicultural literature as transformative tools for preparing English teachers for diverse classrooms. *English Education*, *45*(3), 247–283.

Hanlon, A. (2012). *Ralph tells a story (8/19* (12th ed.). Two Lions.

Hartsfield, D. E., & Kimmel, S. C. (2021). Supporting the right to read: Principles for selecting children's books. *The Reading Teacher*, *74*(4), 419–427. Advance online publication. doi:10.1002/trtr.1954

Hills, T. (2012). *Rocket writes a story* (1st ed.). Schwartz & Wade.

Holub, J., & Sweet, M. (2016). Little red writing (Illustrated ed.). Chronicle Books.

Hunt, M. L. (2017). Fish in a tree (Reprint ed.). Puffin Books.

International Literacy Association. (2017). *Standards for the preparation of literacy professionals 2017.* https://literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/standards/standards-2017

Janks, H. (2010). *Literacy and power.* Routledge.

Jetton, T. L., & Savage-Davis, E. M. (2005). Preservice teachers develop an understanding of diversity issues through multicultural literature. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *7*(1), 30–38. doi:10.120715327892mcp0701_6

Jimenez, L. M. (2014). "So, like, what now?": Making identity visible for preservice teachers. *Journal of Language & Literacy Education*, *10*(2), 68–86.

Jones, S. (2006). *Girls, social class, and literacy: What teachers can do to make a difference.* Heinemann.

Kapit, S. (2020). *Get a grip, vivy cohen!* Dial Books.

Kelly, K., & Kneipp, L. (2009). Reading for pleasure and creativity among college students. *College Student Journal*, *43*(4), 1137–1144.

Kesler, T., Mills, M., & Reilly, M. (2020). I hear you: Teaching social justice in interactive read aloud. *Language Arts*, *97*(4), 207–222.

Khan, R., & Krömer, C. (2019). King for a day (Reprint ed.). Lee & Low Books.

Lankshear, C., & McLaren, P. (Eds.). (1993). *Critical literacy: Politics, praxis, and the postmodern.* SUNY Press.

Larsen, A., & Lowery, M. (2016). A squiggly story (Illustrated ed.). Kids Can Press.

Learning for Justice. (2020). *Social justice standards.* https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/TT-Social-Justice-Standards-Anti-bias-framework-2020.pdf

Luke, A., & Freebody, P. (1999). *A map of possible practices: Further notes on the four resources model.* Australian Literacy Educators' Association.

Manternach, K., & Alencar, R. (2020). Meena meets her match (Reprint ed.). Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Marks, J. (2020). *From the desk of Zoe Washington.* Katherine Tegen Books.

Martinez-Neal, J. (2018). Alma and how she got her name (Illustrated ed.). Candlewick.

Mbalia, K. (2020). Tristan strong punches a hole in the sky (Reprint ed., Vol. 1). Rick Riordan Presents.

McKool, S., & Gespass, S. (2009). Does Johnny's reading teacher love to read? How teachers' personal reading habits affect instructional practices. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, *48*(3), 264–276. doi:10.1080/19388070802443700

Morales, Y. (2018). Dreamers (Illustrated ed.). Neal Porter Books.

Morrow, L. M., & Gambrell, L. B. (Eds.). (2011). *Best practices in literacy instruction.* The Guilford Press.

Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy.* Scholastic.

Munsch, R., & Martchenko, M. (2018). The paper bag princess (Illustrated ed.). Annick Press.

Napoli, D. J., & Bates, A. (2014). *Hands & hearts: With 15 words in american sign language*. Harry N. Abrams.

Nasatir, D., & Horn, E. (2003). Addressing disability as a part of diversity through classroom children's literature. *Young Exceptional Children*, *6*(4), 2–10. doi:10.1177/109625060300600401

Nathanson, S., Pruslow, J., & Levitt, R. (2008). The reading habits and literacy attitudes of inservice and prospective teachers: Results of a questionnaire survey. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *59*(4), 313–321. doi:10.1177/0022487108321685

National Assessment for Educational Progress. (2020). *NAEP report card: 2019 NAEP reading assessment. National Center for Educational Statistics*. https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/highlights/reading/2019/g12/?anchor=comparison-section

National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *Characteristics of public school principals.* Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_cls.pdf

Ostrosky, M., Mouzourou, C., Dorsey, E. A., Favazza, P. C., & Leboeuf, L. M. (2015). Pick a book, any book: Using children's books to support positive attitudes towards peers with disabilities. *Young Exceptional Children*, *18*(1), 30–43. doi:10.1177/1096250613512666

Peña, D. M., & Robinson, C. (2015). *Last stop on market street* (1st ed.). G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.

Penfold, A., & Kaufman, S. (2018). *All are welcome* (1st ed.). Knopf Books for Young Readers.

Pennell, A. E., Wollak, B., & Koppenhaver, D. A. (2018). Respectful representations of disability in picture books. *The Reading Teacher*, *71*(4), 411–419. doi:10.1002/trtr.1632

Pérez, C. C. (2018). The first rule of punk (Illustrated ed.). Puffin Books.

Pett, M. (2016). This is my book! (Illustrated ed.). Knopf Books for Young Readers.

Phi, B., & Bui, T. (2017). A different pond (Illustrated ed.). Capstone Young Readers.

Prater, M., Dyches, T., & Johnstun, M. (2006). Teaching students about learning disabilities through children's literature. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, *42*(1), 14–24. doi:10.1177/10534512060420010301

Quick, K. (2018). *School discipline without racial equity is discrimination*. The Century Foundation. https://tcf.org/content/commentary/school-discipline-without-racial-equity-discrimination

Ramée, L. M. (2020). *A good kind of trouble*. Balzer + Bray.

Ray, K. W. (2002). *What you know by heart: How to develop curriculum for your writing workshop* (1st ed.). Heinemann.

Ribay, R. (2020). Patron saints of nothing (Reprint ed.). Penguin Books.

Rogers Haverback, H. (2013). Where does the time go? Reading for pleasure and preservice teachers. *The Reading Professor*, *36*(1), 32–37.

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*. Oxford University Press.

Rosenblatt, L. (1938). *Literature as exploration*. Appleton-Century.

Ruddell, R. B. (1995). Those influential literacy teachers: Meaning negotiators and motivation builders. *The Reading Teacher*, *48*, 454–4633.

Ruddell, R. B., Ruddell, M. R., & Singer, H. (1994). Theoretical models and processes of reading (Subsequent ed.). International Literacy Association.

Ryan, C. L., Patraw, J. M., & Bednar, M. (2013). Discussing princess boys and pregnant men: Teaching about gender diversity and transgender experiences within an elementary school curriculum. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *10*(1-2), 83–105. doi:10.1080/19361653.2012.718540

Sanders, R., & Salerno, S. (2018). Pride: The story of harvey milk and the rainbow flag (Illustrated ed.). Random House Books for Young Readers.

Scholastic Inc. (2019). *Kids & family reading report: Finding their story* (No. 7). https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/KFRR/Downloads/KFRReport_Finding%20Their%20Story.pdf

School Library Journal. (2019). *An updated look at diversity in children's books*. https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=an-updated-look-at-diversity-in-childrens-books

Schwartz, S. (2019). Teachers push for books with more diversity, fewer stereotypes. *EdWeek*, *38*(35), 6.

Simmons, D. (2019). How to be an antiracist educator. *ASCD Education Update, 61*(10). http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education-update/oct19/vol61/num10/How-to-Be-an-Antiracist-Educator.aspx

Sims Bishop, R. (1990). Windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, *6*(3), ix–xi.

Sotomayor, S., & López, R. (2019). Just ask! Be different, be brave, be you (Illustrated ed.). Philomel Books.

Souto-Manning, M. (2009). Negotiating culturally responsive pedagogy through multicultural children's literature: Towards critical democratic literacy practices in a first grade classroom. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *9*(1), 50–74. doi:10.1177/1468798408101105

Spinelli, E., & Wilsdorf, A. (2008). The best story (Illustrated ed.). Dial Books.

Tatum, A. (2009). *Reading for their life: Rebuilding the textual lineage of African American adolescent males*. Heinemann.

Teaching Tolerance. (2016). *Diverse text selection tool*. https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Reading-Diversity-v2-Redesign-WEB-Nov2017_0.pdf

Thomas, E. E. (2016). Stories *still* matter: Rethinking the role of diverse children's literature today. *Language Arts*, *94*(2), 112–119.

Thompkins-Bigelow, J. (2020). Your name is a song (Illustrated ed.). The Innovation Press.

Tondreau, A., & Rabinowitz, L. (2021). Analyzing representations of individuals with disabilities in picture books. *The Reading Teacher*. doi:10.1002/trtr.2017

Tschida, C. M., Ryan, C. L., & Ticknor, A. S. (2014). Building on windows and mirrors: Encouraging the disruption of "single stories" through children's literature. *Journal of Children's Literature*, *40*(1), 28–39.

Turner, D., Applegate, M. D., & Applegate, A. J. (2009). Teachers as literacy leaders. *The Reading Teacher*, *63*(3), 254–256. doi:10.1598/RT.63.3.11

Underwood, D., & Marks, H. (2019). The panda problem (Illustrated ed.). Dial Books.

Valencia, S. V. (2017). Reading motivation and reading habits of future teachers. *Investigaciones Sobre Lectura*, *7*(7), 85–96. doi:10.24310/revistaisl.vi7.10983

Wilkins, J., Howe, K., Seiloff, M., Rowan, S., & Lilly, E. (2016). Exploring elementary students' perceptions of disabilities using children's literature. *British Journal of Special Education*, *43*(3), 233–249. doi:10.1111/1467-8578.12138

Winkler, H., Oliver, L., Heyer, C., & Watson, J. J. (2003). Niagara falls, or does it? (hank zipzer; the world's greatest underachiever) (Illustrated ed.). San Val.

Woodson, J., & Lewis, E. B. (2012). Each kindness (Illustrated ed.). Nancy Paulsen Books.

Yaccarino, D. (2016). I am a story (Illustrated ed.). HarperCollins.

Yang, G. L. (2020). Dragon hoops (Illustrated ed.). First Second.

Yang, K. (2019). Front Desk (Scholastic Gold) (Reprint ed.). Arthur A. Levine Books.

Yorio, K. (2019, May 13). *Teacher reflects as student founders of ProjectLIT prepare to graduate*. School Library Journal. https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=teacher-reflects-as-student-founders-of-projectLIT-set-to-graduate

Zagarenski, P. (2015). The whisper (Illustrated ed.). HMH Books for Young Readers.

ADDITIONAL READING

Derman-Sparks. (2013). Guide for selecting anti-bias children's books. https://www.teachingforchange.org/selecting-anti-bias-books

Kesler, T., Mills, M., & Reilly, M. (2020). I hear you: Teaching social justice in interactive read aloud. *Language Arts*, *97*(4), 207–222.

Learning for Justice. (2016). Diverse Text Selection Tool. https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Reading-Diversity-v2-Redesign-WEB-Nov2017_0.pdf

Learning for Justice. (2020). Social Justice Standards. https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/TT-Social-Justice-Standards-Anti-bias-framework-2020.pdf

Lee and Low Books: About Everyone for Everyone (n.d.) *Resources for Educators.* https://www.leean-dlow.com/educators

Tschida, C. M., Ryan, C. L., & Ticknor, A. S. (2014). Building on windows and mirrors: Encouraging the disruption of "single stories" through children's literature. *Journal of Children's Literature*, *40*(1), 28–39.

We Need Diverse Books. (2021). https://diversebooks.org/

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Asset Pedagogies: Teaching that repositions the cultures, languages, and literacies of non-dominant communities, including working poor communities, indigenous communities, and communities of color, as resources and assets to value. These pedagogies work to move beyond supporting acquisition of dominant white middle class culture, language, and literacy skills and values to affirm and extend other ways of acting and being in schools.

Book Club: An activity where everyone in the group reads the same book and comes together at a designated time to discuss the book. There are usually guiding questions for the group to discuss together.

Children's Literature: Written work that is created for children and young adults. This can include works that are fiction or nonfiction. Children's literature spans all genres of written work.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP): An educational theory based on the work of Samy Alim and Django Paris that builds upon the work of Gloria Ladson- Billings and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. CSP focuses on the multiple identities and cultures that contribute to youth culture, emphasizing hybridity, fluidity, and complexity. This work embraces global identities and supports students in a process of critical reflexivity, such as reflection on their cultural practices to identify what is emancipatory and for whom and what is oppressive in those movements.

Disability Studies in Education: A framework for conceptualizing disability that disrupts a medical understanding of disability by bringing historical, political, social, and cultural lenses to reread disability as an identity rather than solely an embodied impairment.

Reader Identity: Describes how a person views their ability to read and understand text, which can influence if they view themselves as a reader. A reader's identity must be cultivated over time and can be influenced through social or cultural contexts.

Universal Design for Learning: Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a decision-making framework to support educators in planning instruction that is both appropriately challenging and accessible for all learners. Based on 30 years of neuroscience research, UDL allows teachers to practically apply a DSE framework to their classroom environment, instructional design, and teaching practices.

Young Adult Literature: Written work that is specifically writtern for young readers between the ages of 12-18. Often referred to as "YA", these books can be in any genre.

APPENDIX

Table 1. List of books used broken down by class or activity

Class/Activity	Title	Author
Literature for Children	*New Kid*	Jerry Craft
	A Good Kind of Trouble	Lisa Moore Ramée
	First Rule of Punk	Celia Perez
Writing Methods	*Ralph Tells a Story*	Abby Hanlon
	The Best Story Ever	Eileen Spinelli
	Any Questions?	Marie-Louise Gay
	Rocket Tells a Story	Tad Hills
	A Squiggly Story	Andrew Larson
	Little Red Writing	Joan Holub
	How This Book Was Made	Mac Barnett
	The Whisper	Pamela Zagarenski
	I Am A Story	Dan Yaccarino
	This Is My Book!	Mark Pett
	The Panda Problem	Deborah Underwood
	Each Kindness	Jacqueline Woodson
	Surprising Sharks	Nicola Davies
	I Am Every Good Thing	Derek Barnes
	Milo Images The World	Matt de la Peña
Social Studies	*Alma and How She Got Her Name*	Juana Martinez-Neal
	Your Name Is A Song	Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow
	The Name Jar	Yangsook Choi
	My Name	Sandra Cisneros
	My Name is Maria Isabel	Alma Flor Ada
	The Poet X	Elizabeth Acevedo
	The Paper Bag Princess	Robert Munsch
	Dreamers	Yuyi Morales
	Pride: The Story Of Harvey Milk And The Rainbow Flag	Rob Sanders
	A Different Pond	Bao Phil
	All Are Welcome Here	Alexandra Penfold
Special Education	*El Deafo*	Cece Bell
	Out Of My Mind	Sharon Draper
	Meena Meets Her Match	Karla Manternach
	Insignificant Events In The Life Of A Catcus	Dusti Bowling
	Get A Grip, Vivy Cohen!	Sarah Kapit
	Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key	Jack Gantos
	Niagara Falls or Does It?	Henry Winkler and Lin Oliver
	Fish In A tree	Lynda Mullaly Hunt
	My Three Best Friends And Me, Zulay	Cari Best
	Hello Goodbye Dog	Maria Gianferrari
	Hands And Heart	Donna Jo Napoli
	Last Stop On Market Street	Matt de la Peña
	John's Whistle	Lili Ferreiros
	King For A Day	Rukhsana Khan
	Just Ask! Be Different, Be Brave, Be You	Sonia Sotomayor
	Ada Twist, Scientist	Andrea Beatty
Book Club	*Pet*	Awaeke Emezi
	From The Desk of Zoe Washington	Janelle Marks
	Patron Saints of Nothing	Randy Ribay
	Tristan Strong Punches A Hole In the Sky	Kwame Mbalia
	Love From A To Z	S. K. Ali
	Dragon Hoops	Gene Luen Yang
	Clap When You Land	Elizabeth Acevedo