

Opening the Door to Diversity: Helping Teachers See the Value of Mirrors and Windows in Children's Literature

Lisa Riddle

Assistant Professor of Education, University of Sioux Falls

Lisa.Riddle@usioxford.edu



Next Steps for All Teachers:

- Learn about students' cultures, languages, & identities in effective ways
- Analyze texts through the lens of cultural relevance
- Develop instructional conversation skills that allow open-ended and up-take questions to elicit more student participation, conversation, and engagement
- Use instructional conversations to help students develop critical consciousness about race and social justice

Next Steps for Teacher Preparation Programs:

- Model selecting culturally relevant text across all methodology courses
- Model instructional conversations about race and social justice to support pre-service teachers' ability to develop critical consciousness in their future students

Christ, T. & Sharma, S.A. (2018) Searching for mirrors: Preservice teachers' journey toward more culturally relevant pedagogy. *Reading Horizons*, 57 (1). Retrieved from:

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol57/iss1/5

Scharma, S.A., & Christ, T. (2017) Five steps toward selection and integration of culturally relevant texts. *The Reading Teacher*, 71(3), 295-307.

Mirrors & Windows Book List:



Award or List	Website	Selection Criteria
American Indian Youth Literature Award	https://ailanet.org/activities/american-indian-youth-literature-award/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honors the very best writing and illustrations by and about American Indians
Americas Award	http://www.claspprograms.org/americasaward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honors distinctive literary quality of children's and young adult literature with regards to cultural contextualization; exceptional integration of text, illustration, and design; and potential for classroom use
Arab American Book Award	http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/bookaward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honors books written by and about Arab Americans
Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature	http://www.apalaweb.org/awards/literature-awards/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honors literary and artistic merit Recognizes individual work about Asian/Pacific Americans and their heritage
Batchelder Award	http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/batchelderaward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes outstanding books originally published in a language other than English in a country other than the United States, and subsequently translated into English and published in the United States
Belpre Medal	http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honors a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator of books for children and youth whose works best portray, affirm, and celebrate the Latino cultural experience
Carter G. Woodson Book Award	https://www.socialstudies.org/awards/woodson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages the writing, publishing, and dissemination of outstanding social science books for young readers that treat topics related to ethnic minorities and relations sensitively and accurately
Children's Africana Book Awards	http://africaaccessreview.org/chilrens-africana-book-awards/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognizes authors and illustrators for the best children's and young adult books on Africa published or republished in the United States
Coretta Scott King Book Awards	http://www.ala.org/rt/emiert/cskbookawards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honors outstanding African American authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults that demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture and universal human values

Mirrors & Windows Book List:



Award or List	Website	Selection Criteria
ILA Notable Books for a Global Society	https://www.clrsig.org/notable-books-for-a-global-society-nbgs.html	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes books with appealing and enduring quality with regard to (a) physical characteristics, (b) intellectual abilities and problem-solving capabilities (c) leadership and cooperative dimensions, (d) social and economic status • Recognizes books that represent cultures in rich detail • Recognizes books that honor and celebrate diversity as well as common bonds in humanity • Recognizes books that provide in-depth treatment of cultural issues • Recognizes books that include characters within a cultural group or between two or more cultural groups who interact substantively and authentically • Recognizes books that include members of a minority group for a purpose other than filling a quota
Jane Addams Children's Book Award	http://janeaddamschildrensbookaward.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes children's books of literary and aesthetic excellence • Recognizes books that effectively engage children in thinking about peace, social justice, global community, and equity for all people
Skipping Stones Honor Award	http://www.skippingstones.org/honors_98.htm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes creative and artistic works by young people that promote multicultural, international, and nature awareness
Sydney Taylor Manuscript Award	https://jewishlibraries.org/content.php?page=Sydney_Taylor_Manuscript_Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honors outstanding manuscripts by unpublished authors for children and teens that authentically portray the Jewish experience
Tomas Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award	https://www.education.txstate.edu/ci/riverabookaward/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honors authors and illustrators who create literature that depicts the Mexican American experience

Suggested Culturally Relevant Texts



The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin by Julia Finley Mosca

My Name is Sangoel by Karen Lynn Williams & Khadra Mohammed

Maya Lin: Artist-Architect of Light and Lines by Jeanne Walker Harvey

Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin by Duncan Tonatiuh

Four Feet, Two Sandals by Karen Lynn Williams & Khadra Mohammed

Under My Hijab by Hena Khan

Iqbal: A Brave Boy from Pakistan & Malala: A Brave Girl from Pakistan by Jeanette Winter

Twenty-two Cents: Muhammad Yunus and the Village Bank by Paula Yoo

Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier

Marvelous Cornelius: Hurricane Katrina and the Spirit of New Orleans by Phil Bildner

Auntie Luce's Talking Paintings by Francie Latour

My Name is Yoon by Helen Recorvits

The Youngest Marcher by Cynthia Levinson

Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez-Neal

Last Stop on Market Street by Matt De La Pena

Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour

David's Journey by David Jal & Laura K. Jacobs

All these texts were utilized in the workshop.

Suggested Culturally Relevant Texts



Dear Juno by Soyung Pak

Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah by Laurie Ann Thompson & Sean Qualls

I, Matthew Henson: Polar Explorer by Carole Boston Weatherford

Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat by Javaka Steptoe

I'm New Here by Anne Sibley O'Brien

The Color of Home by Mary Hoffman

Mae Among the Stars by Roda Ahmed

Whoosh! Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions by Chris Barton

Ada's Violin: The Story of the Recycled Orchestra of Paraguay by Susan Hood

Delores Huerta: A Hero to Migrant Workers by Sarah Warren

Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan by Jeanette Winter

Fish for Jimmy by Katie Yamasaki

Ron's Big Mission by Rose Blue & Corinne J. Naden

What a Party! By Ana Maria Machado & Helene Moreau

Mommy's Khimar by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow

Sumi's First Day of School Ever by Soyung Pak

All these texts were utilized in the workshop.

Suggested Culturally Relevant Texts



Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx by Jonah Winter

A Piece of Home by Jeri Watts

Silent Music: A Story from Baghdad by James Rumford

Big Red Lollipop by Rukhsana Khan

Cora Cooks Pancit by Dorina K. Lazo Gilmore

Suki's Kimono by Chieri Uegaki

A Day's Work by Eve Bunting

Amelia's Road by Linda Jacobs Altman

Galimoto by Karen Lynn Williams

Rain School by James Rumford

My Two Blankets by Irena Kobald & Freya Blackwood

We're All Wonders by R.J. Polacio

The Water Princess by Susan Verde

The Hallelujah Flight by Phil Bildner

She Sang Promise: The Story of Betty Mae Jumper, Seminole Tribal Leader
by Jan Godown Annino

The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq by Jeanette Winter

Dreamers by Yuyi Morales

Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson

All these texts were utilized in the workshop.

Suggested Culturally Relevant Texts



Trombone Shorty by Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews

Waiting for Biblioburro by Monica Brown

Islandborn by Junot Diaz

Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation by Duncan Tonatuih

My Dadima Wears a Sari by Kashmira Sheth

Firebird: Ballerina Misty Copeland Shows a Young Girl How to Dance Like the Firebird by Misty Copeland

Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez by Kathleen Krull

All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold

Deep in the Sahara by Kelly Cunnane & Hoda Hadadi

Mama Does the Mambo by Katherine Leiner

Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman by Kathleen Krull

Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman

My Beautiful Birds by Suzanne Del Rizzo

Goodbye, 382 Shin Dang Dong by Frances Park & Ginger Park

Painted Words, Spoken Memories by Alike

A Boy Called Slow by Joseph Bruchac

Smoky Night by Eve Bunting

All these texts were utilized in the workshop.

Suggested Culturally Relevant Texts



Jingle Dancer by Cynthia Leitich Smith

The Girl with a Mind for Math: The Story of Raye Montague by Julia Finley Mosca

Say Hello! by Rachel Isadora

Malaika's Costume by Nadia L. Hohn

Most People by Michael Leannah

The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson

Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan by Mary Williams

One Green Apple by Eve Bunting

Thunder Boy Jr. by Sherman Alexie

My Shoes and I: Crossing Three Borders by Rene Colato Lainez

The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family by Ibtihaj Muhammad

I Walk with Vanessa: A Story about a Simple Act of Kindness by Kerascoet

Stolen Words by Melanie Florence

Two White Rabbits by Jairo Buitrago

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind by William Kamkwamba

Touch the Sky: Alice Coachman, Olympic High Jumper by Ann Malaspina

Little Melba and Her Big Trombone by Katheryn Russell-Brown

Nothing but Trouble: The Story of Althea Gibson by Sue Stauffacher

All these texts were utilized in the workshop.

Resources for Selecting Culturally Relevant Texts

One-on-One Student Interview

Adapted from *Five Steps Toward Successful Culturally Relevant Text Selection and Integration* by Sharma & Christ (2017)

Demographic Information	
Name:	
Age:	
How long have you attended this school?	
Where did you attend school before this?	
Family Members & Living Arrangements	
Tell me about your family. Do you live in an apartment, house, etc.?	
Do you have any pets? If so, tell me about them.	
Favorite Family Activities	
What are some activities that you do weekly with your family?	
What kinds of celebrations or holidays do you and your family enjoy?	
What kind of media do you enjoy (TV, movies, video games, etc.)? Why?	
Is there anything you want me to know about you, your family, or things you enjoy?	
Perceptions about Reading	
Do you like to read? Why or why not?	
Do you read at home? How often?	
Do you prefer to read with someone else or by yourself? Why?	
Do you think it's important to know how to read? Why or why not?	
<i>The next two sections of the interview are best done when students are familiar with the texts presented (read them before) or can leaf through them during the interview. Book choices can be changed to meet student age/interest/level.</i>	

Modified from:

Scharma, S.A., & Christ, T. (2017) Five steps toward selection and integration of culturally relevant texts. *The Reading Teacher*, 71(3), 295-307.

Resources for Selecting Culturally Relevant Texts



Take a look at the books above. Do you see anything there that you would like to read? Why or why not?	
What book do you think would be just right for you to read? What makes it just right?	
What book do you think would be too easy for you to read? What makes it too easy?	
What book do you think would be too hard for you to read? What makes it too hard?	
Perceptions about Cultural Relevance of Texts	
Which of these books do you think has characters that are like you? How are they like you?	
Which of these books takes place in places that you've been before? How are they like places you've been before?	
Which of these books has characters that talk like you?	
Which of these books has an event that is like an experience that you've had?	
What was your experience and how does it relate to the book?	
Additional Notes	

Resources for Selecting Culturally Relevant Texts

Cultural Relevance Text Evaluation Rubric

Book title and author:	1	0
How the book portrays culture, part 1 (Sims, 1983; Sims Bishop, 1991)	<i>Culturally conscious</i> books validate a culture through accurately portraying language and experiences in their illustrations and words.	<i>Socially conscious</i> books perpetuate stereotypes. <i>Melting pot</i> books ignore cultural differences (e.g., <i>The Snowy Day</i> by Ezra Jack Keats).
How the book portrays culture, part 2 (Ebe, 2010; Walters, 1998)	The author or illustrator are of the background being portrayed in the book.	The author or illustrator are not of the background being portrayed in the book.
Analyzing cultural relevance, part 1 (Ebe, 2010)	The main characters are the same race/ethnicity/religion as the reader. (Characters' cultural markers are relevant.)	The main characters are <i>not</i> the same race/ethnicity/religion (or other cultural marker) as the reader.
Analyzing cultural relevance, part 2 (Ebe, 2010)	The main characters are the same age/gender as the reader. (Characters' cultural markers are relevant.)	The main characters are <i>not</i> the same age/gender as the reader.
Analyzing cultural relevance, part 3 (Ebe, 2010)	The main characters talk like the reader. (Characters' cultural markers are relevant.)	The main characters <i>do not</i> talk like the reader.
Analyzing cultural relevance, part 4 (Ebe, 2010)	The reader has probably lived in or visited places like those in the story (relevant place), and the story could take place this year (relevant time period). (Settings are culturally relevant.)	The reader has probably <i>not</i> lived or visited places like those in the story, or the story could <i>not</i> take place this year.
Analyzing cultural relevance, part 5 (Ebe, 2010)	The reader has probably had an experience similar to one in the story. (Events are culturally relevant.)	The reader has probably <i>not</i> had an experience similar to one in the story.

Evaluation of the Cultural Relevance of *The Color of Home* by Mary Hoffman

Book title and author:	1	0
<i>The Color of Home</i> by Mary Hoffman		
How the book portrays culture, part 1 (Sims, 1983; Sims Bishop, 1991)	<i>Culturally conscious</i> books validate a culture through accurately portraying language and experiences in their illustrations and words.	<i>Socially conscious</i> books perpetuate stereotypes. <i>Melting pot</i> books ignore cultural differences (e.g., <i>The Snowy Day</i> by Ezra Jack Keats).
How the book portrays culture, part 2 (Ebe, 2010; Walters, 1998)	The author or illustrator are of the background being portrayed in the book.	The author or illustrator are not of the background being portrayed in the book.
Analyzing cultural relevance, part 1 (Ebe, 2010)	The main characters are the same race/ethnicity/religion as the reader. (Characters' cultural markers are relevant.)	The main characters are <i>not</i> the same race/ethnicity/religion (or other cultural marker) as the reader.
Analyzing cultural relevance, part 2 (Ebe, 2010)	The main characters are the same age/gender as the reader. (Characters' cultural markers are relevant.)	The main characters are <i>not</i> the same age/gender as the reader.
Analyzing cultural relevance, part 3 (Ebe, 2010)	The main characters talk like the reader. (Characters' cultural markers are relevant.)	The main characters <i>do not</i> talk like the reader.
Analyzing cultural relevance, part 4 (Ebe, 2010)	The reader has probably lived in or visited places like those in the story (relevant place), and the story could take place this year (relevant time period). (Settings are culturally relevant.)	The reader has probably <i>not</i> lived or visited places like those in the story, or the story could <i>not</i> take place this year.
Analyzing cultural relevance, part 5 (Ebe, 2010)	The reader has probably had an experience similar to one in the story. (Events are culturally relevant.)	The reader has probably <i>not</i> had an experience similar to one in the story.

Opening the Door to Diversity: Helping Teachers See the Value of Mirrors and Windows in Children's Literature

Lisa Riddle

Assistant Professor of Education, University of Sioux Falls

Lisa.Riddle@usioxford.edu



Sources:

Christ, T., Chieu, M. M., Rider, S., Kitson, D., Hanser, K., McConnell, E., Dipzinski, R., and Mayernik, H. (2018). Cultural relevance and informal reading inventory performance: African-American primary and middle school students. *Journal of Research and Instruction*, 57(2), 117-134.

Christ, T., & Sharma, S.A. (2018) Searching for mirrors: Preservice teachers' journey toward more culturally relevant pedagogy. *Reading Horizons*, 57 (1). Retrieved from:
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol57/iss1/5

Cooperative Children's Book Center. (n.d.). Publishing statistics on children's books about people of color and first/native nations and by people of color and first/native nations authors and illustrators. Retrieved from
<http://ccbc.education.wisc.edubooks/pcstats.asp>

Iwai, Y. (2012). Multicultural children's literature and teacher candidates' awareness and attitudes toward cultural diversity. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 5(2), 185-198.

Lohfink, G. (2014) The impact of a school-university multicultural read-aloud project on pre-service teachers' pedagogical understandings. *School-University Partnerships*, 7(2), 34-47.

Lukianoff, G., & Haidt, J. (2015) The coddling of the American mind. Retrieved from
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356/>

Martinez, M., Koss, M., & Johnson, N. (2016). Meeting characters in Caldecott: What does this mean for today's readers?. *The Reading Teacher*, 70(1), 19-28.

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2019). Racial/ethnic enrollment in public schools. Retrieved from
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_rbb.asp

Papola-Ellis, A. (2016). "It's just too sad!": Teacher candidates' emotional resistance to picture books. *Reading Horizons*, 55 (2). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vl55/iss2/2

Sharp, L.A., Diego-Medrano, E., & Coneway, B. (2018). What's the story with children's literature? A content analysis of children's literature courses for preservice elementary teachers. *Reading Horizons*, 57(2). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol57/iss2/2

Scharma, S.A., & Christ, T. (2017) Five steps toward selection and integration of culturally relevant texts. *The Reading Teacher*, 71(3), 295-307.