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REPRESENTATIONS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

A Thesis Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Designation of

University Presidential Honors

Emily Kate Murphy

University of Northern Iowa

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REPRESENTATIONS OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

This study by: Emily Murphy

Entitled: Representations of Health and Wellness in Children's Literature

Has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirements for the Designation University Honors

_____	_____
Date	Dr. Sarah Montgomery, Honors Thesis Advisor, Curriculum & Instruction
_____	_____
Date	Dr. Jessica Moon, Director, University Honors Program

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Abstract

The term health is multifaceted. Health can refer to one's physical, spiritual, or mental state, among other things. The goal of this study was to determine how educators can use children's literature to support students being introduced to healthy habits regarding these aspects at a young age, through children's literature. A content analysis was conducted over a selection of 16 children's literature texts. It was organized by thematic categories matching the aforementioned facets of health and assessed through a Likert scale. This analysis resulted in the development of a website intended to serve as a tool for teachers to implement literacy-integrated health education in the classroom. Major themes that were found in this study were the seemingly higher number of books available in physical health than compared to books available in spiritual and mental health, the lack of diversity within the books selected, and the need for nonfiction books regarding mental and spiritual health. The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze children's literature that addresses aspects of health and wellness. It is important to teach health literacy through children's literature to ensure better prolonged health benefits across the spectrum—physical, mental, spiritual, etc.

Introduction

As an individual living in the United States, I see the conversations about health taking place—a growing percentage of the population categorized as overweight and obese, growing numbers of suicides at increasingly younger ages, and growing fads in the health and fitness industry. As an elementary education major, I see value and opportunity connected to literacy. Behavior patterns connected to all aspects of health begin at a young age. Perhaps literacy addressing these aspects of health could play a role in developing positive habits and leave a positive impact on individual lives and the population as a whole.

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze children's literature that addresses aspects of health and wellness. The goal was to examine current research that focuses on literacy integrated health education and ways to introduce health concepts in the elementary classroom using children's literature. There was a long-term goal for multiple aspects of health to be taught in elementary school curriculum. A content analysis of 16 children's books that address components such as physical, mental, and spiritual health, was conducted. The analysis was organized by thematic categories in a rubric. The findings of this study can provide educators with suggestions on how to use children's literature to best support health education in the elementary setting. These suggestions are available on a Wix website designed to serve as additional resources for teachers to implement health through literacy in their classrooms.

Literature Review

This literature review was comprised of the following three categories: the need for health and wellness in elementary classrooms, existing research and examples of health education practices in elementary grades, and literacy-integrated health education represented in children's literature paired with how children's books can be used to promote healthy habits.

Need for health & wellness education in elementary classrooms

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is a balance of all components—physical, social, emotional, mental, environmental, and spiritual. In 1946, WHO defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 2018, para. 1)." Schools can provide an outlet for students to promote lifelong healthy behaviors, as well as provide a safe environment to engage in these behaviors through practicing healthy eating and participating in physical activity (American Cancer Society, et al., 2018). School health education programs can also reduce health risk behaviors, such as a lack of physical activity, risk of injury, and violence (American Cancer Society, et al., 2018).

There was a need for health and wellness education in elementary classrooms because all health components are directly related to academic performance (Telljohann, et al., 2016). Academic success was an excellent indicator for overall well-being of youth. Better mental and emotional health resulted in higher academic achievement. Additionally, children who practiced healthy eating habits on a regular basis tended to do better in school. In contrast, exposure to violence, risk for intentional injuries, use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and risky behaviors threatened academic success (Telljohann, et al., 2016).

Another determinant in academic success was school attendance. Centeio, Cance, Barcelona, and Castelli (2018), found a positive relationship between adolescent school attendance and healthy habits. An analysis of data from 1,907 participants indicated that students who had positive intentions to be physically active and were more physically fit had fewer unexcused absences than their peers who did not demonstrate those intentions or fitness abilities. In 2018, SHAPE America published the findings of a school that implemented a program called "Breakfast in the Classroom" as well as a healthy fit club that included morning workouts. According to a pre- and post-assessment, teachers reported that students who ate breakfast at the school had improved focus, concentration, and on-task behavior (SHAPE America, 2018). When health and wellness education was present in elementary classrooms, it not only encouraged students to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors, but also supported student success inside and outside the classroom.

Existing research and examples of health education practices in elementary grades

Current health education practices must be comprehensive in order to be effective. Comprehensive school health education programs are based on and supported by National Health Education Standards (NHES) provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2018). The focus of comprehensive school health education programs was to promote knowledge, positive attitude, and skills, while being primarily skills-based (Telljohann et al., 2016). Comprehensive school health education programs provided students with opportunities to develop skills promoting a healthy lifestyle and achieve a sense of accomplishment. Simultaneously they helped students reach educational objectives by providing a more strategic approach for schools to address health issues instead of the old-fashioned approach of knowledge-based school health education programs (St. Leger, 2001).

Mindfulness practices in the school system. One example of health education practices implemented in elementary schools today was the use of a school-based program of mindfulness awareness practices (MAPs). Children with poor executive function who experienced mindfulness awareness practices training showed improvement in regulating behavior, metacognition, and further executive control (Flook et al., 2010). Another approach to implementing mindfulness as health education was through social emotional learning (SEL). SEL, as defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), was the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2018, What is SEL?, para. 1). SEL was taught based on five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. While all are important, the two of particular interest in regards to this study were self-awareness and self-management. These competencies were strongly supported by teaching students a mindfulness approach.

There were many ways to define mindfulness. One such definition stated that mindfulness was comprised of two components— (1) the self-regulatory aspect of maintenance of attention on immediate experience in the present moment and (2) the adoption of a particular orientation toward one's experiences that was characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance (Bishop et al., 2004). Under the umbrella of this definition lay mindfulness approaches. Bishop explained that "mindfulness approaches teach the client [student in the interest of this thesis] to become more aware of thoughts and feelings and to relate to them in a wider, decentered perspective as transient mental events rather than as reflections of the self or as

necessarily accurate reflections on reality. Thus, if self-devaluative, hopeless thoughts are recognized simply as thoughts, the student will be better able to disengage from them since no action will be required" (Bishop et al., 2004, Broadening the Conceptual Model Section, para. 4). The children's book *A World of Pausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness* by Frank J. Sileo, defined mindfulness in simpler terms, better understood by a student or parent. In a note to parents and caregivers, Sileo defined mindfulness as "bringing your attention to what is happening to you in the present moment. It is not concerned with what happened in the past or what may happen in the future. When you engage in mindfulness, you should do so with a curious, accepting mind without judging what you are feeling or experiencing" (Sileo, 2017, p. 30). For the purposes of this study, mindfulness was recognized as an open-minded awareness of the present moment. It was categorized under a broader health component, spiritual health, for the duration of this thesis.

While mindfulness-based methods were just emerging, there were still many helpful sources describing the need for integrating these practices and ways in which to do so. Some mindfulness practices included various breathing techniques, mindful moments and sitting practice, compassion practices, arts-integrated practices, and incorporating movement. One avenue in teaching mindfulness was doing so through arts-based activities. A paper published in the journal Child & Youth Care Forum, explained how young people in need—from a socioeconomic standpoint—can benefit from mindfulness taught as a creative approach, helping to improve self-regulation, social and coping skills, and build self-awareness, self-esteem, and resilience (Coholic, 2011). It was not a stretch to see the impact mindfulness could have on improving mental and emotional health. While it was undeniably important to help young people in socioeconomic need through mindfulness, other young people should not be neglected.

The British Journal of Psychiatry published an article in 2013 on the effectiveness of the Mindfulness in Schools Program (Kuyken et al., 2013). This program put an emphasis on the notion that mindfulness intervention in school was universal for young people who were experiencing mental health difficulties, young people who were in the normal range of mental health, and young people who were flourishing in their state of mental health. It stressed that mindfulness in schools ought to minimize the stigma and social comparison that comes from targeting subgroups through intervention and should instead fit into the school curriculum and be taught by well-trained teachers embedded throughout the school. It stated that this was necessary for long-term sustainability. This study included an assessment on self-reported stress and well-being both immediately following the Mindfulness in Schools Program intervention at a three-month follow-up. The results showed that young people who were more engaged in mindfulness practices had better outcomes—less self-reported stress and greater well-being. It was also evident that the program helped alleviate low-grade depressive symptoms both immediately following the program and at the three-month follow-up. This particular finding implied importance for individuals long-term health, as the report stated, "This is a potentially very important finding given that low-grade depressive symptoms not only impair functioning but are also a powerful risk factor for depression in adolescents and adults" (Kuyken et al., 2013, Main Findings Section, para. 3). It can be concluded that implementing mindfulness practices in schools and integrating them into pre-existing curriculum not only benefited students' current functioning, but also impacted their mental and emotional health in the years following. By introducing healthy habits to students at a young age, it set them up for future success and sustainable optimal health. One way to introduce these healthy habits was through literacy integration, detailed in the next section of preliminary research.

Another study on mindfulness was conducted in the context of an alternative school, published in a paper, "An Exploratory Study of Mindfulness Meditation for Alternative School Students: Perceived Benefits for Improving School Climate and Student Functioning" (Wisner, 2014). This was a unique case because of the personal risk factors that interfered with school success for at-risk students. Benefits found were categorized in three broad areas: intrapersonal, psychosocial, and systemic. Results found that engaging in mindfulness practices facilitated change in response to the psychosocial, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral challenges students face. These intrapersonal changes came in the form of increased self-awareness, calmness, and improvement in stress management. Other benefits included increased control over state of mind, focusing thoughts, and enhanced attention. One psychosocial benefit found was better emotional coping. These improvements reflected similar results in traditional school settings using a mindfulness approach (Wisner, 2014). In addition to intrapersonal and psychosocial benefits, Wisner's study found that mindfulness practices resulted in systemic improvement.

Incorporating mindfulness practices in the classroom did not only benefit the students. As aforementioned, engaging in a mindfulness approach led to systemic improvement. Wisner (2014) found that mindfulness may lead to positive influences in the school environment. Students perceived that the mindfulness school program promoted a calmer and more peaceful school climate that enhanced student engagement. This was coming straight from the mouths of students, that school climate directly affects school functioning. This finding was essential because active school engagement contributed to educational success. Black and Fernando (2014) found that mindfulness-based programs possibly benefit not just students who were trained in mindfulness skills, but also the broader learning environment including school

personnel who were also exposed to the program. Not only was classroom behavior improved through mindfulness training, but entire school learning environments were enhanced.

One way to practice mindfulness was through movement—yoga, for example. One study consisted of an urban inner-city school that implemented a yoga-based social-emotional wellness promotion program. The program resulted in significant reductions in anxiety, depression, and hostility among high-risk youth (Frank, 2014). A 2009 study on the effect of yoga on academic performance in relation to stress found that yoga interventions in school both optimized stress levels and improved academic performance (Kauts & Sharma, 2009).

Literacy-integrated health education.

Deal, Jenkins, Deal, and Byra (2010) found that the key to overcoming barriers to teaching health education may be integrating health and language arts instruction. Their study found that students in classrooms that infused children's books into health education instruction scored significantly higher on health knowledge and skills than students in comparison classrooms. These results showed the benefits of using children's books as the context for teaching and reinforcing health concepts and skills (Deal et al., 2010). Pflug and Nasir (2018) also explored the use of children's literature to enhance health literacy in youth, validated by the fact that educational benefits of reading to children were well documented (Pflug & Nasir, 2018). An article published by the American Library Association argued that health education was the most critical content in existing curriculum in that health was directly linked to the quality of life (Carger, et al., 2007). Traditional teaching approaches of fact memorization were not overly successful. Instead, the National Health Education Standards (NHES) promoted health literacy and encouraged a proactive teaching approach that focused on the strengths and resiliency found in children. One way to further develop such strengths was through literacy integration. Carger

and company (2007), stated that the "seven NHES blend well with critical literacy principles and reader-response teaching techniques" (Carger, et al., 2007, para. 3). It was vital that teachers provided students with opportunities to read books integrating health literacy characteristics followed by opportunities for discussion.

Another opportunity for literacy integration was the incorporation of bibliotherapy in the classroom. Bibliotherapy was defined as the use of books and stories to support social emotional needs (Heath, et al., 2017). This article stated the need for bibliotherapy was justified due to the limited number of mental health professionals and demands for other options to access mental health services (Heath, et al., 2017). Schools had a unique influence on children and youth given the sheer number of hours students spent in the education system. Books were strong resources for teachers to broaden the support of for children's health needs and expose students to aspects of health literacy.

A partnership between books and movement powered a teachers' workshop titled "Booking It." This workshop, presented by Deb Marciano and Sonya Sanderson, encouraged the collaboration of physical and health education teachers, classroom teachers, librarians, and community members to give students experience with "the integration of physical activity and literacy beyond typical 'reading' and 'PE' classes" (Marciano & Sanderson, 2018, p. 34). The article stated "reading children's literature about physical activities may possibly interest students to try those activities, especially if they can relate to the character in some way" (Marciano & Sanderson, 2018, p. 34). It was the responsibility of all teachers to build relationships with each student and provide books that were meaningful to them, which would be helpful in holistic teaching approaches such as the one suggested by Marciano and Sanderson in "Booking It."

Health was represented in many different ways in children's literature. In Remi Courgeon's picture book *Feather,* a young girl focused on physical training to become a talented boxer (Courgeon, 2017). Her new success as an athlete acted to boost her confidence and improve her mental health as she returned to her true passion of playing piano. She learned that physical health was an important aspect of an individual's life, but did not need to be the only focus on overall health. Rather, it should be an avenue toward a change in lifestyle. Books such as this one could promote healthy habits for students, like being physically active while keeping a wide perspective and recognizing other key components of health matter, too.

The book *Fruits,* by Jill Kalz, also addressed physical health (Kalz, 2004). It was a nonfiction text that provided elementary students with reading-level appropriate information on the benefits of eating fruit for physical health and wellbeing, while also including facts on how fruit plants grew and were harvested and distributed. It included an explanation of food groups and even had a recipe with kid-friendly instructions to promote healthy eating habits.

While some books promoted physical health, others covered different components. David Shannon's *A Bad Case of Stripes* connected strongly to emotions and self-esteem, encompassing mental health (Shannon, 2011). Throughout the story, a young girl struggled with the stress of fitting in with her peers and suffered from a case of "stripes," a unique sickness. By the end of the story, she found a cure by staying true to herself and coming to terms with her identity, apart from what others may have thought. This story represented the value in maintaining one's mental health and served as encouragement for students to take steps in recognizing their own emotions and building self-esteem.

As this was simply a preview of the full literature review to be completed for the final thesis, it should be known that these three books were not included in the 16-book analysis that was

conducted as part of the methodology. The content analysis and associated rubric sought to answer the first of multiple research questions listed below.

Research Questions

Several questions guided this thesis study. 1) What are some examples of high quality children's literature that address health and wellbeing components such as physical, nutrition, mental/spiritual, emotional health? 2) How can children's literature support a literacy-integrated approach to health education? 3) What are some current examples from research or practice that address literacy-integrated health education? Health was a topic that was quite broad and composed of many different components, all of which were incredibly important to an individual's quality of life. Since there were so many pieces to the health and wellbeing puzzle, it was important to study ways in which educators can promote healthy habits through a literacy integrated approach to health education.

Methodology

This study identified and analyzed 16 children's books regarding health and wellness. Rod Library Youth Collection Librarian, Katelyn Browne, helped to identify resources and databases with current, relevant information on the topics of children's literature and health and wellness. Meeting with Taranah Matloob Haghanikar, Assistant Professor in Curriculum and Instruction, helped to build a stronger understanding of diversity in children's literature itself and publishers of said children's literature. Collaboration with Associate Professor in Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Sarah Montgomery, guided the development of a rubric to structure the content analysis rubric and Likert rating scale—both of which were explained later in the evaluation of books.

This particular approach was chosen to provide insight and analysis into examples of high quality children's literature addressing health and wellbeing components such as physical, mental, and spiritual health. Its purpose also served to show the representation, or lack thereof, of such health aspects in children's literature. The rubric existed to not only guide content analysis, but to present the results in a concise, organized way for the benefit of readers and those interested in this certain research topic. The results in the rubric sought to address the three main research questions. The research methods were described in detail in the following sections: Selection of Books, Evaluation of Books, and Selection of Featured Books Resource Guide.

Selection of Books

The selection of books was determined following a meeting with Rod Library Youth Collection Librarian, Katelyn Browne. She generously shared her expertise in children's literature, knowledge of Rod Library and local library resources, and provided suggestions for literature under a multitude of health aspects including mindfulness, physical health, sports and exercise, mental health, spiritual health, and religion. Perhaps the most helpful resource in shaping the collection of books for this study was one of the University of Northern Iowa Rod Library Guides. This guide, *Mental Health in Children's and Young Adult Literature*, provided lists of youth book titles addressing a plethora of mental health aspects—anxiety, general feelings awareness, depression, and learning differences, to name a few. It was designed by 2017 Youth Collection Graduate Assistant, Erin Borchardt (Mental Health in Children's and Young Adult Literature, 2018). After selecting a list of books from this library guide webpage, specific books were entered in the University of Northern Iowa Rod Library's OneSearch! online portal (UNI Rod Library, 2018).

This portal helped to locate the desired books in either Rod Library or the College of Education's Instructional Resources and Technology (IRTS). When searching for additional books beyond those found in the library guide, utilizing OneSearch! provided limitations to ensure the books remained in the desired age range for this study and gave access to locations of physical collection items in Rod Library. Key words and phrases were used to find books relevant to the research at hand and search options were narrowed to ensure that the books remain appropriate for students below 4th grade. The number of resources available on the University of Northern Iowa's campus was a testament to the value the university placed on education and research in general.

Evaluation of Books

After choosing the allotment of books for evaluation, they were organized into six subcategories of themes within three broad categories, all under the umbrella of health. The three broad categories consisted of physical health, spiritual health, and mental health. Physical health was specified through the two subcategories of nutrition and movement; spiritual health was specified through approaches to healing and mindfulness; and mental health was focused on navigating emotions. A spreadsheet was created to support the analysis of the books. The title of each book was listed, followed by the author, illustrator, publication date, book description, and suggested age range.

Four key components were used to evaluate each book. These components included diversity, engaging text, appealing illustrations, and accessible language/comprehension supported by illustrations. The evaluation was measured using a Likert scale, devised by Dr. Sarah Montgomery and myself. It was modified from a previous Masters paper composed by a set of graduate students alongside Dr. Sarah Montgomery (Hageman & Martín, 2017). A

published article also helped shape the final product of the Likert scale (Rule & Atkinson, 1994). This scale is outlined below:

Diversity

1 – No representations of aspects of diversity including race, gender, abilities, ages, and cultures were present in the book.

2 – Representations of aspects of diversity including race, gender, abilities, ages, and cultures were present on one or two pages of the text.

3 – Limited representations of aspects of diversity including race, gender, abilities, ages, and cultures were present throughout the book.

4 – Two or more representations of aspects of diversity including race, gender, abilities, ages, and cultures were present throughout the book.

5 – Multiple representations of aspects of diversity including race, gender, abilities, ages, and cultures were present throughout the book.

Engaging Text

1 – Not engaging
2 – Rarely engaging
3 – Somewhat engaging
4 – Engaging
5 – Very engaging

Appealing Illustrations

1 – Not appealing
2 – Rarely appealing
3 – Somewhat appealing
4 – Appealing
5 – Very appealing

Accessible Language/Comprehension supported by Illustrations

1 – Students from the target age range definitely could not read this book independently.
2 – A few students from the target age range could read this book with support.
3 – Some students from the target age range could read this book independently.
4 – Most students from the target age range could read this book independently.
5 – All students from the target age range could read this book independently.

Overall – Average of four previous categories

The diversity ratings were based largely on illustrations, as most text did not explicitly represent aspects of diversity such as race, gender, age, and physical capabilities, to name a few. Engaging text and appealing illustrations were considered with children's lens in mind.

The ending scores of the ratings in the analysis and detailed descriptions explaining each rating helped to clearly communicate themes that encompassed the culture of aspects of health represented in children's literature. After all of the 16 books had been given ratings, six strong examples of children's literature with high overall ratings—none below three—were chosen to be featured on a teachers' resource guide via a Wix website (Health and Wellness Teaching Resources, 2018). Further discussion on this website can be found in the findings section below.

Findings

Thanks to the setup of the content analysis rubric, it was a simple process to decipher informative results under each thematic category: physical health specified as nutrition and movement, spiritual health specified as approaches to healing and mindfulness, and mental health specified as navigating emotions. These findings will first be presented by thematic category, in the order previously mentioned, then a summary of the trends across the categories on the rubric will be provided. In the following subsections, specific scores of the books will be discussed. Please see Appendix A for tables displaying the scores for all four Likert scales—representations of diversity, appealing illustrations, accessible language, engaging text—as well as overall scores for each book.

Physical Health: Nutrition

This section will outline the findings of the analysis of the books from the Physical Health: Nutrition category. The main findings from analysis of these books were that there were several non-fiction texts available for this category, diversity was strongly represented in the books across this category, and that a few of the books included accessible language. Detailed findings from the analyses across the areas of the rubric will now be provided.

Nonfiction options. The physical health books analyzed in the rubric regarding nutrition had a handful of nonfiction options to choose from. This trend was not as strongly evident in either of the two other thematic categories, spiritual and mental health. The nonfiction text features such as a Table of Contents, glossary, and index presented information in an explicit way that clearly informed readers. *Eating Well* and *The Monster Health Book: A Guide to Eating Healthy, Being Active & Feeling Great for Monsters & Kids!* both included lists of additional resources to utilize such as books and websites to further one's knowledge on nutrition and other aspects of physical health. The real images used for illustrations in *Eating Well* made content more relatable because children could identify with the images and see themselves represented in the text, making them more likely to view themselves as individuals with power over their nutrition and physical health.

Diversity. Also empowering, diversity was strongly represented in half of the nutrition books analyzed. *Eating Well* and *Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition* both scored four on the Likert scale because they represented multiple genders and races throughout the duration of the text. The other two nutrition books did not fare so well in the aspect of diversity representation. *Food for Thought: The Complete Book of Concepts for Growing Minds* had absolutely no diversity, so it received a score of one. This was because it simply showed a collection of creative images of food. Not all cultures consume the same

cuisine, so it was quite possible that many of these foods were not understood by all children. The foods on the pages might not have been recognizable, even to those who ate them regularly. This was solely based on the way they were presented. It was completely out of context and in no way ordinary, so it posed a problem for both diversity and overall comprehension of this particular book. *The Monster Health Book: A Guide to Eating Healthy, Being Active & Feeling Great for Monsters & Kids!* was the other book that scored low for diversity, receiving a two. This was due to the fact that the characters included one boy, one girl, and one monster, all in cartoon form.

Accessible language. The accessible language rankings for the nutrition books were utterly polarizing. Two of the four scored fives on the Likert scale, and two of the four scored the complete opposite—ones. The books that were accessible were *Eating Well* and *Food for Thought: The Complete Book of Concepts for Growing Minds*. They earned such high scores due to extremely clear font types manageable for early readers, as well as having simple labels on each individual page. Next, the books determined to have inaccessible language: *Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition* and *The Monster Health Book: A Guide to Eating Healthy, Being Active & Feeling Great for Monsters & Kids!* These books had such complex formats for text layout that it resulted in both information and sensory overloads. Due to the confusing nature, these books would be best used as tools for interactive, shared reading. The delivery would need to be modeled correctly by an adult or older student through being read aloud.

Physical Health: Movement

This section will outline the findings of the analysis of the books from the Physical Health: Movement category. The main findings from analysis of these books were that there

were several non-fiction texts available for this category, diversity was strongly represented in some books across this category, and that most of the books used engaging text and accessible language. Detailed findings from the analyses across the areas of the rubric will now be provided. Please see Appendix A for scoring reference.

Nonfiction options. Much like the nutrition books, physical health books regarding movement had nonfiction options to choose from. The two nonfiction books analyzed include *Children's Book of Yoga: Games & Exercises Mimic Plants & Animals & Objects* and *Keeping Fit*. Interestingly, books regarding movement had two of the three highest overall scoring in the entire content analysis study. *Keeping Fit* and *My Pal, Victor* both received overall scores of four-and-a-half out of five. Perhaps this was due to the general availability of children's literature on physical health being so high, which will be discussed further in overall findings.

Engaging text, appealing illustrations, and accessible language. As mentioned previously, the books *Keeping Fit* and *My Pal, Victor* scored overall ratings of four-and-a-half out of five. This was because they both had rates of five for representation of diversity. They were similar in that they both included illustrations of a child in a wheelchair. Both books had engaging text, but in different ways. *Keeping Fit* grabbed readers' attention using bold words. *My Pal, Victor* was highly engaging because, given that it was a bilingual book, readers had the opportunity to translate between two languages. The two books each scored a four under the appealing illustrations category. *Keeping Fit* had actual photographs of active kids that readers could relate to. *My Pal, Victor* was formatted so that every other page included a full-page image that supported the text. The illustrations were colorful and appeared to be colored pencil drawings, which provided an added detail of texture. Finally, both books scored high for accessible language. This may have been most exciting rate of all, because it meant students

were more than likely able to read the text either on their own or with very little support. *Keeping Fit* consisted of simple sentences with a clear font, including nonfiction text features that explicitly presented information to the reader. *My Pal, Victor* earned such a high accessibility rating because it accommodated for Spanish-speaking bilingual students. However, something to keep in mind with this particular book was the age and reading level of the reader. It was appropriate for late second or third grade students.

Overall scores. In general, it should come as no surprise that the physical health thematic category was home to two of the three highest scoring books in the whole study. There seemed to be a higher number of books available in physical health than compared to books available in spiritual and mental health. This seemed to be indicative of a larger general focus on physical health as opposed to other health aspects. Perhaps this was due to the normalcy surrounding physical health conversation and practices. Children were already exposed to physical health through classes in physical education each year. It made sense that there would be literature related to content that was already in school curriculum. Mental and spiritual health did not yet have the same reach. There was not equal quantity and availability of books across all three thematic categories of health and wellness. There was an evident disparity between the number of physical health books available and the volume of mental health and spiritual health books available in children's literature.

Spiritual Health

This section will outline the findings of the analysis of the books from the Spiritual Health category. The main findings from analysis of these books were that there were not many non-fiction texts available for this category, diversity was inconsistently represented in books across this category, and that the books were consistent with engaging text and appealing

illustrations. Detailed findings from the analyses across the areas of the rubric will now be provided. Please see Appendix A for scoring reference.

Diversity. There were five spiritual health books studied in the content analysis rubric, two of which about approaches to healing and two of which written in relation to mindfulness. There were inconsistent diversity representations across this thematic category, with the rating largely depending on character. Three of the books scored a four or five, while the others scraped by with a one and two on the Likert scale. The low scoring books both had a female main character, but *Now* did not represent minorities or other genders whatsoever, and *Another Way to Climb a Tree* represented minorities on one page in the illustration only. Of the high scoring books, points were earned for having representations of multiple genders and races present, especially if the main characters represented a minority group consistently throughout the duration of the story. *Tashi and the Tibetan Cure* was especially insightful because of the rich cultural practices that were present throughout the book. The ending had detailed information on Tibet's geography, government, Tibetan American immigrants, Tibetan medicinal and spiritual practices, and even a list of Tibetan words with both definitions and pronunciations. *A World of Pausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness* was diverse in its own way. While it did not represent a specific culture, it had multiple representations of diversity present throughout the book, with a clear range of genders, races, and ages consistently present in the illustrations.

Engaging text. The level of engaging text was much more consistent than the representation of diversity. All of the spiritual health books scored at or above average for the engaging text Likert scale rating. Both *Now* and *Steps and Stones: An Anh's Anger Story* provided the reader with opportunities to make connections to the character—whether through

considering one's own favorites like the main character in *Now*, or relating to Anh since he was a student in school, too. Things like rhyme scheme, story-like sequential order, calling upon imagination, and posing direct questions to the reader were all cause for the other books' high scores on the Likert scale. *Tashi and the Tibetan Flower Cure* had the lowest score for engaging text, due to the fact that the lyrical writing of the story was a bit more complex for young readers. This led to the discussion of accessible language.

Accessible language. Accessible language scoring was all over the spectrum in this thematic category with scores of two, two threes, four, and five. *Steps and Stones: An Anh's Anger Story* scored two. This was telling that the story would be easily understood orally, but needed to be read aloud by an adult or other student. At the other end of the spectrum was *Now*, with a score of five for accessible language. Its high score was attributed to the fact that it was a simple text with an easy-to-follow storyline and it was about common, everyday experiences. The repeating pattern was seen in the sentence stem "This is my favorite…" which provided readers with ease to predict what the next page would sound like.

Appealing illustrations. Finally, the consideration of rating for appealing illustrations. All of the books analyzed in this thematic category were given fours or fives on the Likert scale. The illustrations consistently filled entire pages throughout the texts and incorporated vivid colors as well as variety of textures. Texture was especially prevalent in *Steps and Stones: An Anh's Anger Story* as the character, Anger, was a jumbled mess of numerous patterns and textures. This was a way of artistically expressing the pent-up energy many children experienced during bouts of anger. *Tashi and the Tibetan Flower Cure* was illustrated purposely with impressionistic paintings to further represent the culture of Tibet through a clear display of their culture's traditional artistic style.

Aside from the ratings, three of these five books were published in 2017, *Another Way to Climb a Tree* about approaches to healing, as well as *Now* and *A World of Pausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness*, both regarding mindfulness. Given that these publication dates were merely a year old, it can be deduced that there was a very new, increased attention to spiritual health, wellbeing or self-care, and resiliency in children's literature. This statement aligns well with the research done prior to the content analysis of this selection of children's books. Research on mindfulness was an interest among academics that was newly developing and growing, especially in recent years. These books could be integrated into classrooms to enhance student attention, wellbeing, and overall school functioning.

Mental Health

This section will outline the findings of the analysis of the books from the Mental Health category. The main findings from analysis of these books were that there were not many non-fiction texts available for this category, publication dates on this topic were very recent, diversity was poorly represented in books across this category, and that the books generally did not use accessible language. Detailed findings from the analyses across the areas of the rubric will now be provided. Please see Appendix A for scoring reference.

Publication dates. All of the mental health books that were analyzed address navigating emotions. Three of the four had been published since 2010, with *Cheer Up, Mouse!* and *Stuck with the Blooz* being published in 2012, and *Some Days Are Lonely* following close behind in 2013. This showed that it was becoming increasingly less taboo to discuss issues of mental health and increasingly important to include children in these discussions. These books addressed important topics like how to navigate sadness, loneliness, and a plethora of other

emotions. *The Way I Feel…Sometimes* addressed feeling mean, better, afraid, wishful, and okay through the means of various poems.

Diversity and engaging text. While the books in this category addressed important feelings and ways to cope in a healthy manner, the presentation was not done in a way that included diversity. In fact, three out of the four books scored a one on the Likert scale, with *The Way I Feel…Sometimes* being the sole diverse example. The score was a three—which was still only somewhat diverse.

On the plus side, three of the four books scored high regarding engaging text. Children were understandably more likely to feel motivated to read books when they found the stories and information to be engaging. *Some Days Are Lonely* was engaging because it asked the reader direct questions about feelings at the end of the story. It was engaging for parents as well because of resources included for caregivers at the back of the book. Read more about this under the Magination Press heading listed later in these findings. *Stuck with the Blooz* was engaging because it unfolded in sequential order with a storyline that could be easily followed. Its imaginary theme was engaging if understood by the audience. As most children tend to develop imagination at a young age, this was a strong candidate for an engaging text example. Finally, *The Way I Feel…Sometimes* was a prime specimen for engaging text because it consisted of a variety of poems with varying rhyme schemes and included repeating patterns that were familiar to young readers.

Appealing illustrations. Unfortunately, and perhaps surprisingly to some, the illustrations of mental health books did not score as high as the text in the Likert Scale analysis. While they primarily scored fours and fives for engaging text, the illustrations scored threes and fours based on appeal. It was not far off, but still important to note that with young readers,

illustrations played a large part in their understanding of a book. Images told a story just as much as the words on the page, if not more so, for many young readers. The majority of the illustrations consumed entire pages with color and utilized facial expressions as well as certain colors to demonstrate mood for characters throughout the story. Both *Stuck with the Blooz* and *The Way I Feel…Sometimes* utilized facial expressions on every page. This was important for mental health because it showed young readers that different emotions are expressed in different ways. When children could recognize a variety of emotions accurately, they could then turn their attention to finding healthy, positive ways to navigate such emotions accordingly.

Accessible language. Scoring even lower than appealing illustrations was the accessibility of the language in the mental health books analyzed. *Cheer Up, Mouse!* and *Some Days Are Lonely* both scored fours, meaning that most students from the target age range could read the book independently. However, *Stuck with the Blooz* and *The Way I Feel…Sometimes* both scored twos, which was significantly lower and meant that only a few students from the target age range could read this book with support, let alone independently. These scores were not necessarily detrimental, it just indicated that the books would need to be read with someone of a higher reading and comprehension level, perhaps through shared reading or a read-aloud. The low accessible language should be concerning because not all children have the same opportunity to be read to. Not all parents had extra time aside from work to read with their children, not all teachers chose to use instructional time during the school day to read books outside of those encouraged by curriculum and standards, etc. Something to consider with *Cheer Up, Mouse!* and *Some Days Are Lonely*, was that while they both scored high for accessible language, they had the lowest scores for representation of diversity. This meant that even though children may have been able to grasp the gist of the story, the gist of the story may not have been

to the caliber of quality parents and teachers want for their students. Perhaps it is difficult to communicate the mental health content effectively to a young audience. However, this obstacle should not cause authors to shy away from communicating this vital content to young readers.

Summary of Findings

The overall findings from the content analysis, organized in the rubric, showed numerous overarching trends, namely: low accessible language, limited diversity, a need for nonfiction, and mental health information presented by a discovered gem known as Magination Press. Two aspects in particular, diversity and accessible language, brought down the books' overall scoring across thematic categories. This left the results with just a few high-scoring books on the Likert scale: *A World of Pausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness*, *Keeping Fit*, and *My Pal Victor*. These three books all scored a 4.5 for the overall score on the 1-5 scale. Notice that two of the three represented physical health literature, while the third fell under the spiritual health thematic category. While the physical health category had the highest quantity of books available with information, when it came to quality based on the particular scale used for this research, spiritual health books had the highest overall ratings of any of the three categories—physical, spiritual, and mental.

Accessible language. One of the overwhelmingly evident trends found in the content analysis was the lack of accessible language in children's literature regarding books about various aspects of health. Half of the sixteen books analyzed scored a three or below, meaning that only some students from the books' target age range could actually read the book independently, while the other students would need varying degrees of support to understand the material. Three of the physical health books—*Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition, The Monster Health Book: A Guide to Eating Healthy, Being Active & Feeling Great*

for Monsters & Kids!, and *Children's Book of Yoga: Games & Exercises Mimic Plants & Animals & Objects*—scored an underwhelming one on the Likert scale, determining that students from the target age range of these books definitely could not read the books independently. This meant there must be an older student, guardian, or teacher willing and with the time to present the information to students in the suggested range of kindergarten through fourth grade.

This was concerning because low accessibility risked that children would not be exposed to concepts of health at an early age. If students were not able to read these books independently, then it resulted in limited access because not all children had equal opportunities to be read to, or the assistance and support in reading texts beyond their appropriate reading level. Without access to the information presented in these books, as well as others, there is no telling whether or not students are being introduced to healthy habits influencing their physical, mental, and spiritual health at a young age.

Diversity. Low accessible language was not the only concerning result of this research. Diversity was also lacking. There were limited representations of diversity in a majority of the children's literature texts that were analyzed. This disparity was especially evident within books regarding mental health—out of the texts in this subcategory that were analyzed, many of them had none-human characters, which made it increasingly difficult to accurately depict themes of diversity. This was the case for three out of the four mental health books that were analyzed, which resulted in a diversity rating of just one point—the bottom of the Likert scale. The titles of these books include: *Cheer Up, Mouse!*, *Some Days Are Lonely*, and *Stuck with the Blooz*. The remaining mental health book, *The Way I Feel…Sometimes*, scored a mere 3, which was not impressive on a one-to-five scale. In contrast, five of the seven physical health books scored a four or five; three of the five spiritual health books analyzed scored a four or five, as well.

The physical health books that scored four under representation of diversity did so by having multiple genders, races, and ages represented throughout the text. The two physical health books that scored a perfect five were given that rating because there were multiple genders, races, and ages, and representation of children in wheelchairs. These books were titled *Keeping Fit* and *My Pal Victor*. Interestingly, these two books were both categorized specifically under movement, which served to empower readers and showed that regardless of diverse physical abilities, all children could be active and participate in physical activity to improve one's health. *My Pal Victor* was the only bilingual book among the sixteen that were analyzed, which showed that minority cultures were not addressed as often as mainstream cultures in the health and wellness genre of children's literature. Research by others indicated that this trend was not exclusive or unique to this specific genre, but that was not the focus of this particular research. See work by Debbie Reese if this suggested finding is of further interest (Reese, 2016).

There were three strong diversity examples out of the five analyzed in the thematic category of spiritual health. The first two were books about mindfulness, *A World of Pausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness* and *Steps and Stones: An Anh's Anger Story*. Both of these books included multiple genders and races throughout the story. *A World of Pausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness* had a wide age range represented in its bank of characters, and *Steps and Stones: An Anh's Anger Story* incorporated an imaginary creature, which was unique and diverse in the sense that it was not a typical creature familiar to young readers. The standout example of diversity in this category was a book about approaches to healing, *Tashi and the Tibetan Flower Cure*. This book not only represented Tibetan culture, but also showed the power in healing wielded through natural flowers and support from family, friends, and the community as a whole. It addressed coping with illness while maintaining authenticity in the presentation of

Tibetan culture and traditional medicinal practices. Both the text and illustrations represented this minority group throughout the duration of the book, providing consistency in the representation of diversity. This consistency was of great value because many of the books scored low on the scale, due to mentioning diversity once in text or illustrations and thus considering it an accomplishment for representation.

Another point to consider is that often, the diversity representation present throughout the 16 analyzed books was implicit in the sense that diversity was present amongst the illustrations, but not addressed in the text and language of the book. This trend was not unique to individual thematic categories of health and wellness, but rather, was present throughout all three detailed in the content analysis rubric—physical, spiritual, and mental. Some examples of these texts include: *Another Way to Climb a Tree* and *Now*, representing spiritual health; *The Monster Health Book: A Guide to Eating Healthy, Being Active & Feeling Great for Monsters & Kids!*, representing physical health; and *Stuck with the Blooz*, representing mental health.

Magination Press. Another result of findings was the discovery of Magination Press. Magination Press was a publishing company affiliated with the American Psychology Association, which just so happened to be the world's largest publisher of psychology, mental health, and development books. (About Magination Press, 2018). Due to this affiliation, many of the books published were written by mental health professionals, providing valuable ways to navigate feelings, shyness, fear about school, and more serious problems like depression, trauma, or death and dying. While addressing these issues, the books offered readers information on each topic and strategies to cope with the problem at hand. In addition to the text in each Magination Press book was a section titled "Note to Parents" that helped parents, guardians, and teachers alike maneuver through the book. This publishing company was specifically designed to publish

contemporary books that would help children work through the multitude of challenges and issues they may face growing up. By providing factual information, strategies to cope, and resources for parents and guardians, Magination Press helped to reduce the stigma around topics related to mental and spiritual health, especially catering to the younger population.

Of the sixteen books analyzed for the purpose of this research, only two of them were published by Magination Press. *Some Days Are Lonely* was a story about mental health and navigating emotions. *A World of Pausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness* told about mindfulness and spiritual health. Both books were aimed at the target audience of 4-8 year olds, so there were clearly efforts being made to introduce important topics of conversation, regarding health outside the physical realm, to children starting at a young age. The fact that Magination Press was associated with the American Psychology Association, showed that some change was being made and conversation was being changed at a high level around topics that were engrained and seemingly systemic in the United States today.

Need for nonfiction. There needed to be an increase in nonfiction or expository text concerning the topics of mental and spiritual health. Six of the seven physical health books that underwent analysis were nonfiction pieces. While there were plenty of viable nonfiction options for physical health in the 16 analyzed books, there were very few examples of nonfiction children's literature on both mental and spiritual health. When students or readers were only seeing narrative and fiction stories for mental health and spiritual health, but nonfiction pieces for physical health, it sent a message. It sent a message that physical health was possibly more valued than mental and spiritual health. This may or may not have been the case—either way, physical health was much more heavily represented in nonfiction children's literature, and both

mental and spiritual health needed to be discussed just as much, if not more to make up for years of neglect in this area.

Selection of Featured Books Resource Guide

From the 16 children's books analyzed in the rubric, six strong examples were chosen to be featured in an online resource guide for teachers that was developed as part of this study. The six texts chosen were *A World of Plausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness* by Frank J. Sileo, *Children's Book of Yoga: Games & Exercises Mimic Plants & Animals & Objects* by Thia Luby, *Now* by Antoinette Portis, *Eating Well* by Melanie Mitchell, *Stuck With the Blooz* by Caron Levis, and *Tashi and the Tibetan Flower Cure* by Naomi C. Rose. This particular mix was chosen to not only show prime examples of children's literature regarding health and wellness, but to provide a variety of thematic categories under the umbrella of health and wellness, representing all that were present in the content analysis rubric. These books presented information regarding mindfulness, movement, nutrition, navigating emotions, and approaches to healing.

Resource Guide Website

After selecting featured books, a Wix website was designed to serve as a tool for educators to access additional resources (Health and Wellness Teaching Resources, 2018). It was intended to help teachers feel confident incorporating literacy-integrated health instruction in their classroom. The site included a purpose statement, list of the six books with short summaries for each text, reference list, additional resources to supplement the books, and a portal to ask questions or leave comments. It was by no means a cohesive curriculum for teaching health through literacy integration. Rather, it was merely a starting point to put literacy-integrated

health education into practice without the demands of formal training. For a preview into the site's homepage, see Appendix B.

Limitations

This study was not without limitations. Perhaps one of the largest considerations was the selection of children's literature along with research available surrounding the various aspects of health that were the focus of this study. Another considerable limitation was the accessible language or lack thereof in children's literature. Some might argue that health and wellness terms cannot be simplified while accurately presenting information to young learners. The conclusion of this study stated the need to overcome this obstacle and make information on health and wellness available to young readers through children's literature and classroom instruction.

Conclusions

This study was conducted in order to see how students can be introduced to healthy habits at a young age through children's literature and literacy-integrated practices. The results from this study suggested that overall, more children's literature was needed on the topics of physical, mental, and spiritual health. It was difficult to find books for the content analysis of this study, so strides need to be made in the area of publishing children's literature promoting and advocating for health, in addition to increasing access to such books.

Some limitations of this study included the selection of books for content analysis. There might have been other strong examples of children's literature related to health and wellness that this study did not locate and analyze. Further analysis could be conducted delving deeper into themes of diversity and multicultural approaches to health and wellness. Last, it could be argued that the language and terminology surrounding health and wellness may not be highly accessible

to young learners. It is important to present information on these topics in a developmentally appropriate way that reaches children without oversimplifying the concepts and ideas.

Results concerning accessibility pointed to a need for literacy integration because the texts analyzed in this study were generally not accessible to young readers. Shared readings and read-alouds could help account for this discrepancy in accessibility because it presents the information to young readers who otherwise would not have a way to comprehend the material. Other necessary improvements included the need for more nonfiction options available, especially regarding the topics of spiritual and mental health, as well as continued improvements in regards to multiple representations of diversity. A lack of diversity was especially prevalent in mental health children's literature.

The findings of this study implied numerous needs. Given the results of this study, it was clear that there was room for much more research to be done on how educators could teach health and wellness through literacy education. Models, teaching examples, and other resources were needed if teachers are expected to be able to teach on these topics given the demands in elementary schedules and available instruction time. It took weeks to find the selected books for analysis and teachers do not have the luxury of extra time to spend researching materials such as these. Curriculum development was needed regarding available books so that teachers were able to provide instruction on health and wellness without distracting from other classroom demands. Another idea is that collaboration between general classroom educators and physical education teachers could promote conversation to see how themes of health aside from just physical health alone can be presented to students in a meaningful way.

Overall, increased collaboration between families, educators, librarians, and health care providers is needed to address children's health and wellbeing both in and outside of the

classroom. It is hoped that this study offers examples of how teachers and community members can use children's literature to support health education efforts.

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Appendix A: Rubric

Topic	Subtopic	Title	Author	Illustrator	Year Published	Description	Age Range/Reading Level	Representation of Diversity	Rate	Engaging Text	Rate	Appealing Illustrations	Rate 2	Accessible Language	Rate 3	Overall Rating
Physical Health	Nutrition	Eating Well	Melanie Mitchell	Published by Lerner Publishing Group	2006	Non-fiction text that explains what a healthy food group entails and how much of each food group is recommended for daily intake. The book also coordinated with the (outdated) My Pyramid nutrition guide.	5+, JK-Grade 2	Multiple genders and races are represented in this text.	4	The text includes non-fiction text features such as bold words, glossary, index, etc. It would be a good experience for young readers. It also asks the reader direct questions.	4	The illustrations consist of colorful photos with a variety of foods represented.	4	The font type is extremely vital to read and would be unmanageable for elementary readers.	5	4.25
	Nutrition	Food for Thought: The Complete Book of Concepts for Growing Minds	Saxton Freymann and Eiffers	Saxton Freymann	2005	This is a picture book that explores shapes, colors, numbers, letters, and opposites. These concepts are all illustrated using healthy food options like peppers, blueberries, and eggplants.	2+, Pre-K+	There is both diversity in the text, because it is simply shown as creative images but food.	1	The text consists only of labels that are accompanying the illustrations.	1	The illustrations are fun and detailed in nature. Every page is a result of a color.	3	The language is highly accessible because it is a simple label on each page.	5	2.75
	Nutrition	Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition	Lizzy Rockwell	Lizzy Rockwell	1999	Nutrition guide written specifically with kids in mind. The illustrations aid readers' attention to deliver valuable information on food groups, healthy eating, and kid-friendly recipes.	4-8, JK-Grade 3	Multiple genders, races, and ages are represented throughout.	4	There are non-fiction text features and the text is presented in bubbles, and the text is story-like fashion. It includes a table of contents, recipes at the end, which helps the reader form healthy eating habits and put the information to practice.	3	The illustrations are very fun and detailed in nature. Entire pages are full of color.	3	The language is used at a complex and the information text layout would be confusing for young readers. It would be best read aloud by an adult or older student.	1	2.75
	Nutrition	The Monster at the Book: A Guide to Eating Healthy, Being Active, and Feeling Great	Edward Miller	Edward Miller	2006	This book covers healthy choices like proper nutrition, getting adequate sleep, and finding new ways to exercise. It is fiction, but it delivers the facts in a monster that increases the fun factor for readers.	6-9, JK-Grade 2-4	There is both diversity in this text. It includes one cartoon monster, a boy, and a girl.	2	There are non-fiction text features and the text is presented in a variety of fonts, and bright colors.	3	The illustrations are colorful, cartoon-like photos that take up an entire page amid the text.	3	The layout is too busy to be very accessible. However, it would be a highly interactive shared reading material if the model is done correctly.	1	2.25
	Movement & Objects	Children's Book of Yoga: Games, Exercises, Mimics, Plants, & Animals	Thiaa Tuby	Thiaa Tuby	1998	A compilation of fifty yoga poses geared towards children that assemble familiar plants and animals. Complete with how-to instructions and helpful images to aim for.	Grade 3-4	There are multiple genders, races, and ages of children represented throughout.	4	The text is engaging as it walks you through the steps to achieve each yoga pose.	4	The illustrations include images of children demonstrating each yoga pose and the animal or object that the pose is named after.	4	The text consists of simple vocabulary used and length of text. However, as each chapter lists the yoga poses according to difficulty, which is a helpful feature for older students and adults to readers.	3	3
	Movement	Keeping Fit	Emily K. Green	Multiple photographers, named on pg. 24	2007	Non-fiction text that promotes physical health through exercise. This book explains why it's so beneficial to exercise and gives a few examples of physical activities to spark interest.	4-8, Pre-K-Grade 2	Multiple genders and races are represented in this text. An image of a child in a wheelchair is also presented.	5	Bold words grab the attention of the reader.	4	The illustrations are actual photographs of active kids that hopefully the reader can relate to.	4	The text consists of simple sentences and a table of contents, including non-fiction text features like a glossary and index.	5	4.5
	Movement	My Pal, Victor/Mi Amigo, Victor	Diane Gonzales Bertrand	Robert Lee Sweetland	2004	Small stories, offered in both English and Spanish, about two friends who enjoy doing a variety of activities together, such as swimming, going to the park with their dog, and playing baseball. The end of the book reveals that Victor uses a wheelchair, which promotes healthy habits regardless of differences in physical ability.	4-8, Pre-K-Grade 3	The book is bilingual, represents a minority group, and includes a child in a wheelchair--but this is only included on one page.	5	The text is highly engaging because the reader can translate between two languages.	5	Every other page is a full-page image that supports the text. The illustrations are colorful and appear to be colored pencil drawings.	5	The language is accessible because it is accommodates for Spanish-speaking bilingual students. It is dependent on the age and reading level of the reader (late second or third grade).	4	4.5

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Mental Health	Navigating Emotions	Cheer Up, Mouse!	Jed Henry	Jed Henry	2012	A group of forest friends tries and fails many times to cheer up their friend, Mouse. Finally, one of them hugs Mouse and all the animals follow suit. Hugs does show simple gestures and affirms spirits.	4-7	Pre-K - Grade 3	The book includes a variety of animals, which could be considered symbols for diversity.	The text is about the thing engaging and does not follow well.	1	does not show interest in.	The pictures have little neutral tone to them, lending to the setting of nature. The illustrations show happy animals, which is most young readers	2	The sentences are simple but should be modeled for expression. The line, "Cheer up, Mouse!" is repeated throughout the text.	4	2.75
Navigating Emotions	Some Days Are Lonely	Young-Ah Kim	Ji-Soo Shin	2013	This book uses a bear to model how to effectively handle feelings of loneliness without becoming consumed or overwhelmed. A short feelings assessment is provided at the end of the book, along with a note to parents on how to guide children through these moments.	4-8	Pre-K - Grade 3	There is no diversity in this text.	The story and its characters are not developed.	1	back of the book.	At the end of the story, the reader is asked direct questions about feelings. There are also resources for the parents and caregivers at the back of the book.	5	The illustrations consume the entire page and outline the colors that match the mood of the character.	3	The text is manageable and includes descriptions using similes.	4	3.25
Navigating Emotions	Stuck with the Blooz	Caron Lee Davis	Joni Davis	2012	A blue blob named The Blooz "lives" in the main character and the little boy does his best to cheer him up through a variety of activities. Finally, the Blooz leaves and the boy is left looking at his surroundings with a big smile.	4-7	Pre-K - Grade 3	There is no diversity in this text. The Blooz is a creature.	The story and its characters are not developed.	1	audience.	The book consists of full-page, color full illustrations. The illustrator uses many facial expressions and clearly demonstrates mood	5	The complex text includes rich vocabulary that most likely would not be accessible for young readers. Considering this, it would be best	2	3
Navigating Emotions	The Way I Feel...	Beatrice Schenck de Regniers	Susan Meddaugh	1988	A collection of poems that portrays the many emotions children experience in their everyday lives. Ala With Ya Ya for children to see they aren't the only ones who go through changing emotions.	Grade 3-4		Children of multiple races and genders are present throughout the book.	This text consists of a variety of poems and rhyme schemes. The includes 3 repeating patterns that are familiar to young readers.	3		The accompanying poem. Facial expressions are evident on characters' faces, portraying the	4	This text could not be read independently by younger readers, due to its fast vocabulary, but the rhyme scheme would be great for shared reading or read-alouds.	3	3

Appendix B: Teaching Resources Website




Purpose
This website serves as a resource for educators and any others interested in bolstering health literacy through the integration of children's literature.
Read more
Books
This page will give you an overview of six books conducive to a literacy-integrated approach to teaching health and wellness in the classroom. Each book is accompanied by a brief teaching plan with additional resources. Use it to your advantage!
More Details
Additional Resources
Excited to promote health and wellness through literacy integration but don't know where to start? Check out a few additional resources that contributed to fueling this website, along with other helpful tools related to teaching health and literacy.
Read more
Contact Info
Any questions about these resources or how to use them in your classroom? Email me! Or maybe you used a teaching idea and want to share? Feedback is welcome.
Contact us