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Culture in transitional chapter books: Assimilation or inclusion

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Abstract

In the context of schools experiencing an influx of students from a more diverse range of cultures, and with a goal of assisting librarians to better serve these students, this qualitative research focuses on the presence of cultural diversity in transitional chapter books and, when present, identifies whether characters modify culturally determined behaviors. The cultural diversity within books, especially transitional chapter books, can allow newly independent readers an opportunity to deepen their identification with and connection to reading. The value of identifying with a character in a book is established in prior research (Alter, 2016; Goodale, 2012; McNair & Brooks, 2010). With the aim of identifying books that represent the range of cultural identity and that will engage new readers, several research questions were explored. These questions addressed embedded messages, illustrations supporting culture, and the choices characters made affecting their cultural identity. The research sample consisted of the books from two lists - separated by ten years - the School Library Journal recommended list for 2009 and 2019 in an effort to observe a change in cultural perspective as represented in books for youth.

CULTURE IN TRANSITIONAL CHAPTER BOOKS: ASSIMILATION OR INCLUSION

A Graduate Research Paper
Submitted to the
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by
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Titled: Culture in Transitional Chapter Books: Assimilation or Inclusion

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the
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ABSTRACT

In the context of schools experiencing an influx of students from a more diverse range of cultures, and with a goal of assisting librarians to better serve these students, this qualitative research focuses on the presence of cultural diversity in transitional chapter books and, when present, identifies whether characters modify culturally determined behaviors. The cultural diversity within books, especially transitional chapter books, can allow newly independent readers an opportunity to deepen their identification with and connection to reading. The value of identifying with a character in a book is established in prior research (Alter, 2016; Goodale, 2012; McNair & Brooks, 2010). With the aim of identifying books that represent the range of cultural identity and that will engage new readers, several research questions were explored. These questions addressed embedded messages, illustrations supporting culture, and the choices characters made affecting their cultural identity. The research sample consisted of the books from two lists - separated by ten years - the *School Library Journal* recommended list for 2009 and 2019 in an effort to observe a change in cultural perspective as represented in books for youth.

Findings revealed an increase in diverse cultural representation when the works on the newer list were compared to those on the earlier list. Ultimately, the 16 books were grouped by culturally neutral or some culture found -either illustrations, embedded messages, or quotes. When using an awareness mindset of cultural diversity, teachers can use transitional chapter books to acknowledge both assimilation and pluralism in discussions. Finally, this analysis provides tools to assess culturally diverse options

through literature selection via an open, culture-minded lens. However, this research focused on a specific list recommended by *School Library Journal* (SLJ) and additional research is recommended to include other book lists and/or a greater number of books.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As the complexities of a population's cultural diversities change, meeting students' educational needs requires educators to provide resources and curriculum that reflect a wide array of cultures. The Vision Statement of The American Association of School Librarians states that the library is “an open, friendly, welcoming organization that embraces cultural and ethnic diversity” (AASL, 2003, p. 2). While all educators are given the task to include and respect diversity, it has long been a mission of the Teacher Librarian (TL) to advocate for inclusion, diversity, and multicultural understanding as indicated by the American Library Association’s Code of Ethics (ALA, 2012).

To advocate for inclusion, diversity, and multicultural understanding, the TL curates literature that portrays realistic main characters from various cultures. The presence of a positive and successful main character is a key factor in choosing texts for the reluctant reader (Koss, 2015). Multicultural literature deepens connections to a reader’s own culture, gives the opportunity to learn of other cultures, and boosts self-image. According to Koss (2015), children may feel marginalized by how they see or don’t see themselves in a picture book. “Enjoying a book is more than liking a book. It is finding and affirming personal reasons to keep reading the book” (Brinda, 2011, p. 13). Finding a connection with characters enables inclusion, positive self-reflection, and enhances the reading experience.

Research conducted by Goodale (2012) provides tools to guide teachers and educators in enhancing the curriculum through multicultural picture books. Bridging

curriculum and culture is a key factor in building stronger learning connections. In a report regarding English Language Learners (ELL), the researcher states, “Relating classwork to their home country, when appropriate, acknowledges the presence of the ELLs and gives them a familiar connection” (Washburn, 2008, p. 249). Having a wide variety of books that reflect an array of characters will promote a sense of acceptance of bilingual cultures (Scanlan, 2011). Chapter books have a wide range of genres, characters, and plots. However, researchers have found that rather than promoting diversity, some may promote monoculturalism that focuses on assimilation ideology (Yoon, Simpson, & Haag, 2010).

For this research, the term “assimilation”, in keeping with its use by Yoon et al. (2010), refers to one (non-dominant) culture conforming to another (dominant) culture. It will use the terms “chapter books” and “transitional books” interchangeably just as in the work of McNair and Brooks (2010). Here “bilingual” means linguistically diverse, i.e. Spanish and English (Scanlan, 2011).

Justification

Educators must actively and intentionally develop all of a student’s linguistic resources if that student is to continue strengthening his or her bilingualism over time (Pacheco & Miller, 2016; Scanlan, 2011). One approach to doing so is to evaluate cultural content and provide a wide array of reading options for students that presents cultures through equal and diverse perspectives. Exposure to differences and similarities of perspective can open discussions and affirm positive self-images of cultures and promote inclusion (Koss, 2015).

Specific Ideology

Inclusion is a foundational element of librarianship. The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) asserts that, “School librarians practice responsive collection development and support print-rich environments that reflect the curriculum and the diverse learning needs of the school community” (AASL, 2010, para. 6). This professional focus aims to assist teachers in avoiding pedagogical pitfalls. According to Yoon et al. (2010), “Teachers may not realize that certain multicultural texts deliver the messages of underrepresented groups’ assimilation into a mainstream culture, which is implicitly described as superior” (p.110). One way to address a lack in neutral representation of non-dominant culture is through literature that has realistic events and situations that cross cultural stereotypes. Cole (2013) states, “Students come to school and expect to break away from stereotypes” (p. 1). Careful analysis of literature can address specific ideology, promote inclusion, and avoid stereotypes.

Diversity in Chapter Books

Studying transitional books, McNair and Brooks (2012) identify the scarcity of culturally diverse books with an African American female protagonist, a lack that may inhibit a reader’s ability to connect with the works provided. Correspondingly, a lack of cultural diversity in transitional books impedes learning to read. Transitional chapter books are specifically designed to support readers in their growth from picture books to more complex stories, a process that relies on reader engagement with texts. More research on transitional books is needed to promote inclusion and avoid unrealistic cultural representation, as well as, educate all students regardless of their cultural

backgrounds. As Yoon et al. (2010) discuss, teachers can use multicultural education “to ensure educational equity for all students” (p. 111). In **transitional** chapter books, diversity is needed to connect students to their cultures in a manner that strengthens reading abilities from picture books into more extensive chapter books while representing all cultures accurately (p. 111). Providing exposure to diversity and the accurate representation of various cultures is an essential role of a library. This is true across the United States and is specifically articulated in Iowa Code which delineates, “The library program services provided to students and staff shall include the following...Access to a diverse and appropriate school library collection” (281 Iowa Admin. Code, 12.2(256), 2009 & 2013).

The Importance of Multicultural Text Opportunities

Students from dominant and non-dominant cultures benefit from reading literature that represents both cultures (Yoon et al., 2010). Providing the opportunity for all students to study and compare both similarities and differences of cultures promotes deeper understanding and provides cross-cultural support. Yoon et al. (2010) also assert that there is an implied preference conveyed by picture books for non-dominant cultures to assimilate to the dominant culture (p. 111). Often this is accomplished with multicultural texts which “are typically designed to promote assimilation ideology for underrepresented groups” (Yoon et al., 2010, p.110). Understanding the importance of how a text supports inclusion or promotes a particular ideology is valuable to all educators and is especially germane to the library curation process.

Rationale

This research provides an analysis of transitional chapter books to determine the prevalence of equitable cultural voice for readers from non-dominant cultures. Previous studies establish a need for further analysis of chapter books to assist educators in meeting the needs created by changes in dominant and non-dominant cultures (Yoon et al., 2010; McNair & Brooks, 2012; Cole, 2013). Teacher Librarians can address this concern and champion equality through chapter book selection informed by an understanding of potential ideology, specific or implied, within texts.

Deficiencies

There is a lack of transitional chapter books that meet curricular needs for incorporating multicultural literature, or that support multicultural understanding (Yoon et al., 2010; McNair & Brooks, 2012; Cole, 2013).

Summary of Problem Statement

There is a deficit of readily available chapter books that promote equal cultural voice. Therefore, there is a need to analyze chapter books for the inclusion and realistic portrayal of non-dominant cultures to provide diverse works to newly independent readers.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to determine whether cultural diversity is present in transitional chapter books and to identify if characters modify culturally determined behaviors.

Research Questions

1. What messages are implied or overt within transitional chapter books regarding assimilation or bicultural acceptance?
2. What are the predominant visual and textual indicators of culture within transitional chapter books?
3. Is there an implied or overt cultural change relating to assimilation or pluralism within transitional chapter books?

Limitations

Three limitations are acknowledged. First, there is an extensive range of possible cultures; therefore not all cultures can be considered at this time. The cultures documented throughout this study are those determined by the text, illustrations, and/or author statements. Second, this research is limited to *School Library Journal* recommended transitional books for 2009 and 2019 limited by reading grade levels of 1.4 - 4.6 to show consistent points of comparison (Jones et al., 2009; Jonker & Williams, 2019). This is a relatively small sample of books from one recommendation source, thereby, results may be skewed. Third, the researcher is a member of a dominant culture and the only coder which may unintentionally affect the research process and ability to identify or relate to assimilation. Potential assumptions made by this researcher regarding the interpretation of implied or explicit meaning could also skew research results due to implicit bias. Wildemuth (2016) states, “Any time humans observe phenomena or interpret meaning, there is bias” (p. 311). Therefore, cultural ideology relating to

assimilation, inclusion, or change neutrality needs to be further evaluated in transitional chapter books.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research is to determine whether cultural diversity is present in chapter books and, if so, to identify whether characters modify culturally determined behaviors. To identify and understand ideology, diversity, and cultural prominence, it is important to understand how students relate to literature. When students make personal connections with literature it deepens their understanding of that literature (Roser et al., 2007). This connection to the main characters enhances pedagogical approaches to supporting students' comprehension of literature (p. 550). This research is supported by literature relating to the following three subthemes: textual analysis to identify the presence of specific ideologies, a lack of diversity in transitional chapter books, and the need for multicultural understanding for both dominant and non-dominant cultures.

Ideology Message

Literature is intentional in its message. Yoon et al. (2010) explored the subject of assimilation ideology concerning multicultural education. Built on prior research focused on cultural authenticity, Yoon et al. (2010) chose to address five approaches to multicultural education. The goal was to discover "embedded" multicultural text ideology and how it presented either assimilation or pluralism (p. 109). They evaluated four multicultural picture books chosen by a librarian who randomly made text selections from the library in which she worked (p. 111). Yoon et al. (2010) did not discuss their findings among the group until each had completed their analysis and categorized each book into three topics (p. 112). One category was "neutral/ unclear"; the second was

“pluralistic” and the third was “assimilationist.” Their findings indicated some books had more than one characteristic of each category (p. 112). The final categorization was made by the choice made by characters at the end of the book. The books with assimilation ideology were found to have components of resistance and then assimilation. Most of their findings indicated an assimilation ideology promoted through the “need to assimilate to a dominant culture that has power” (p. 115). Ultimately, Yoon et al. (2010) stated, “When understanding the story from a broader sociocultural perspective focusing on ideological issues in the ending of the text, however, readers may discover that the story delivers praise of the dominant culture only” (p. 115). Their findings helped them identify what the text promoted concerning assimilation ideology and what was multicultural by promoting cultural pluralism (p. 114).

In a similar study, Alter (2016) focused on assimilation and examined ideology regarding a person’s name. The purpose of Alter’s (2016) research was to examine ideology in multicultural picture books. Alter (2016) stated that immigrants may have changed their names to assimilate culturally to a new community (p. 5). Two picture books were reviewed to discern the characters’ approaches to assimilation. Noted through the analysis were strong characters who struggled to integrate into social settings because of cultural differences. Each of the characters were portrayed as members of a non-dominant culture that chose to assimilate (p. 2). Significantly, reported in this research was the stereotypical depiction presented in both texts (p. 13). In the final comments, Alter (2016) identifies the message may have been the dominant culture’s push to assimilate “without offering [newcomers] space to contribute to their arrival” (p.

19). While both books reviewed allowed for critical thinking, they both portrayed the assimilation of non-dominant cultures to dominant culture through different means (p. 2).

Changing a name is one way to assimilate from culture to culture. Another assimilation message may be found in a lack of diversity within a book. The absence of similarities between reader and character inhibits reading connections. Koss (2015) explored the diversity within picture books with respect to children seeing themselves in the stories (p. 32). A reader's connection to the character(s) is important when considering the author's message. First, the research addressed character ethnicity and the populations represented (p 34). The second question addressed children's identification with the author and illustrators of similar cultural and ethnic identities (p. 34). A systematic content analysis procedure and coding system were developed following prior studies (p. 34) and 455 picture books published in 2012 were selected. Results confirmed the proposed statement of a lack of diversity in picture books (p. 37). The overall findings indicated that the text in these picture books was culturally neutral. Any indication of diversity lacked depth of cultural insight (p. 35). Koss (2015) completed an in-depth review and presented alarming statistics that confirmed the need for greater diversity in literature for children to represent the growing diversity in the United States. Yoon et al. (2010), Alter (2016), and Koss (2015) establish perspectives on assimilation and diverse cultures represented in various books for youth and indicate the need for further research into the representations of culture in transitional chapter books.

Cultural Portrayal Lacks Diversity

Prior research establishes criteria for rating the level of cultural equality embedded within the messages of a work. Cole (2013) examined the content of 16 books from within a specific library (p. 6). Text was analyzed and categorized through inductive reasoning and coding. (p. 26). The selection of books was made using the *Middle and Junior High School Core Collection* (p. 27). Cole (2013) then quantified the coding within a table and made comparisons of the contents of each text (p. 28). This evidence was then used to identify themes regarding various stereotyping of characters. Of these themes, positive and negative portrayals of characters and family were identified. All sixteen books posed a main character as a survivor of negative aspects such as motherlessness, fatherlessness, and/or low income among other obstacles (pp. 34 - 40). Fifty-six percent of the books displayed one or more of the characteristics viewed as stereotypical according to the definitions employed by the study. One positive finding, for instance, noted a book that included an educated, professional parent. Ultimately, seven themes were identified to aid in library selection decisions (p. 42). Further delineation indicated three “overarching themes” would inform the selection process: Authenticity, Positive Families, and Positive Main Characters. Cole (2013) states in the conclusion, “The problem with stereotypes is that if they are consistent, they begin to become believable” (p. 43).

One means for avoiding the perpetuation of stereotypes is through exposure to diversity. Library collections are curated to support reading and curriculum needs such as that for diversity in picture books. The lack of diverse books within a library was

addressed by Goodale (2012). That research, in part, was designed to develop annotated bibliographies of culturally diverse books (p. 7). The parameters stated a “limit of twenty picture books of a copyright date of 2002 or later” (p. 23). The next guiding factor was the use of sources such as awards lists and publishers, etc. (p. 24). Goodale (2012) used “Robert G. Hanvey’s (1976) five dimensions of global perspectives” to determine the best titles for the research (p. 25; p. 40). Additionally, Iowa Core Curriculum Social Studies Standards were used to make title selections. Each book was then assessed, and notations were made to identify the themes presented (p. 26). After reading the selected text and completing an annotated bibliography, it was concluded that “there is a multitude of picture books in print within the theme of multicultural literature” (p. 40). Chapter books offer a dual benefit in that “to connect students to multicultural issues would also strengthen the Social Studies curriculum” (p. 40). Goodale (2012) also recommended that an annotated bibliography be completed regarding chapter books (p. 40).

The cultural lens applied to literature has developed beyond the limits of race or ethnicity and expanded into cultural practices. McNair and Brooks (2012) explored female protagonists depicted in African American transitional chapter books and their concerns and values (p. 568). After defining the parameters of what constituted a transitional chapter book, McNair and Brooks (2012) identified themes found within the specified texts (p. 568). Using *The Horn Book* and the Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database, the selection was then narrowed (p. 569). Using content analysis four categories emerged: solidifying friendships, developing morality, fitting in, and valuing learning (p. 569). The researchers acknowledged “the potential to expose

beginning readers from various backgrounds to the experiences and lives of young Black children while at the same time introducing aspects of culture and history” (p. 575). Another interesting finding of the study noted that the “lens of ethnicity, genre, and readability has served (and will continue to serve) incredibly useful purposes” (p. 575). The final elements summarized indicated the continued need for children to be exposed to more sophisticated portrayals of characters. Transitional chapter books were also found to be beneficial in the pedagogical process (p. 576).

The portrayal of characters has been analyzed in a variety of genres including fairy tales. McConnell (2009) examined the portrayal of gender equality and sought clarification of the current social mores and gender roles presented in fairy tales. To obtain answers, McConnell (2009) conducted a qualitative content analysis. Books were chosen for having publication dates between 2000 through 2009 (p. 23). The initial search “yielded 234 titles” and was further reduced using the number of pages as a limiter. Ultimately, 56 books were read (p. 24). Using a spreadsheet, all books were categorized into five divisions (p. 25). At the end of the analysis, only five of the books were found to exhibit positive examples of collaboration (p. 41). An additional finding of importance was the “emergence of characters that have realized autonomy and personal strength” (p. 41). The final recommendations identify the importance of considering gender equity before purchasing materials to add to a library collection (p. 42). McConnell (2009) finished with the statement that, “children learn from the relationships presented in the books they read” (p. 43).

The reviewed research provides processes to assess cultural portrayal and its effect upon the learning process. It reaffirms the need for transitional chapter books that provide multicultural diversity with equitable voices.

Multicultural Understanding

Library resources support various aspects of the curriculum and contribute to a stronger pedagogical process. Hilts (2016) evaluated the resources of two different libraries to assess the quality and usefulness of the material curated (p. 5). The researcher asked what differences existed between the school with respect to quality, quantity, relevance, and usefulness of resources (p. 16). The method used was a qualitative analysis that examined topics, themes, and inferences (p. 17). Procedure guidelines were established to create equitable analysis for both libraries. Hilts (2016) proceeded after having chosen “nonfiction text that might have been considered for use during instruction” (p. 18). The content of the text met the study’s inclusion criteria if it also met the Nebraska second grade social studies economic standards. Other criteria were “attention to visual features, grade-level appropriateness, child-centered/ high interest, errors, and potential use” (p. 19). The conclusion found that one school had newer texts as indicated by copyright dates and the content was determined to be of higher quality (p. 34). Essentially, Hilts (2016) conveyed the need to have high-quality texts available so that a teacher may choose to use them in teaching. The library that lacked in quality collection development also had less collaboration between teacher-librarians and classroom teachers (p. 35).

Support through quality text and collaboration benefits the pedagogical process specifically when teaching about the characters within stories. According to Roser et al. (2007), “characters cannot be lifted away from the narratives that enfold them” (p. 548). The researchers focused on the teaching process and how students related to the story, especially the characters. In their research, *Characters as Guides to Meaning*, they identified the character as a “player - whose decisions, actions, desires, and dilemmas shape plot and just might invite readers to think deeply about ethics, moral choices, and codes (contributing to the underlying themes of narratives)” (p. 548). They sought to understand what makes characters memorable as students develop. Through observations, Roser et al. (2007) found that younger students focused on the action of a story, and older students were “more attuned to the inner workings of literary characters” (p. 550). The researchers also stated that teachers facilitated how students considered feelings and reactions throughout the story (p. 552). Understanding a character and making connections is a key goal (p. 555). In the end, the researchers observed students did “tackle transitional chapter books” and retell the stories with depth regarding their characters (p. 557).

These research studies provide evidence of the need for quality curated content and the important curricular component transitional chapter books provide to the pedagogical process.

Summary

The ideology of assimilation was explored and proven to be prevalent in literature (Alter, 2016; Yoon et al., 2010). Whether through embedded messages, resistant

assimilation, or a lack of diversity in characters, the need to further understand and assess chapter books is clear (Alter, 2016; Koss, 2015; Yoon et al., 2010). The themes and messages present within picture books and other texts can be a complicated web of perceptions from many points of cultural interactions (Cole, 2013; Goodale, 2012; McNair & Brooks, 2012; Hilts, 2016; McConnell, 2009). The definitions of cultural pluralism versus assimilation needs to be understood and discussed using an open, multi-leveled perspective (Cole, 2013; Yoon et al., 2010). In order to provide the best resources that present cultures on an equitable platform, librarians need to be aware of potential stereotypical character presentations as well as advocate for funding needed to curate quality materials (Hilts, 2016). Teachers facilitate discussions and open dialogues to aid in cultural understanding (Roser et al., 2007). Given these facts, identifying and selecting transitional chapter books that support realistic characters through ideologies intermingled in transitional chapter books will benefit both classroom and library teachers.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to identify the presence of cultural diversity in transitional chapter books and whether characters modify culturally determined behaviors. Questions asked were :

1. What messages are implied or overt within transitional chapter books regarding cultural assimilation or bicultural acceptance?
2. What are the predominant visual and textual indicators of culture within transitional chapter books?
3. Is there an implied or overt cultural change relating to assimilation or pluralism conveyed through the content of transitional chapter books?

Research Design

Qualitative content analysis was used to evaluate the character portrayal in transitional chapter books and assess the messages infused within. Wildemuth (2016) states, “qualitative analysis of content involves a set of systematic and transparent procedures for processing data” (p. 320). This researcher based the inquiry process on the categories outlined in prior research by Yoon et al. (2010) and their coding scheme - ideology through inferred messages; representation of all people; and promotion of critical pedagogy (p.116). Qualitative analysis of content was developed to “explore underlying meanings of messages,” using mostly induction, and in some cases “attempts to generate theory” (p. 319). In this research, themes were identified according to their ideology: assimilation - adapting to a dominant culture from nondominant; cultural

pluralism - embracing multiple cultural and linguistic identities, or neutrality - ideology is unclear/neither pluralistic nor assimilated. Does the text and/or illustrations support the character's native culture, place value to the native culture, and offer critical discussion (Yoon et al., 2010, p. 116)? An example of assimilation is choosing not to wear traditional clothes or not preferring the traditional food of a character's native culture. An example of pluralism is incorporating both native language and non-native language in a story, or family, friends, and/or other people accepting choices made by the main character. A book considered culturally neutral has no identified connection to a culture such as an animal book with no specific message of cultural change. Friendship, loyalty, and a focus on basic reading skills are examples of culturally neutral text.

Sample of Books

Annually, book review lists are created for different categories of books and reader abilities by various professional groups. The books chosen for this research were selected from the *School Library Journal* Recommended List for 2019 (Jonker & Williams, 2019) and 2009 (Jones et al., 2009) (see Appendix A). These lists were selected because *School Library Journal* is a professional publication that is highly recognized for its 60 years of research and evaluations of resources that support librarians and information specialists (SLJ, n.d.). Lists with 10 years of separation were chosen to indicate any growth in diversity awareness between decades. Wildemuth (2016) states "qualitative/thematic content analysis requires relatively small, purposely selected samples" (p. 308, 319). For this research, the book selection was narrowed by reading level. The interest and grade level of readers of transitional chapter books are generally accepted as approximately first

grade, fourth month to fourth grade, sixth month, or 1.4 to 4.6. However, books below a first-grade reading level or fifth grade and above are excluded as they are not considered transitional chapter books.

The 2019 SLJ transitional chapter book list includes 8 books (Jonker & Williams, 2019) and the same with the 2009 list - 8 books. A total of 16 books with 24 stories were examined initially. These were identified as culturally diverse or neutral. Four books from each list including 2009 and 2019 (a total of eight books) ultimately were categorized as culturally diverse. The other eight books were noted as culturally neutral.

Procedures

The selected works were read once without analysis. This allowed the researcher to become familiar with plots, characters, and illustrations. Upon the second reading, this researcher noted quotes that exemplify the ideology embedded in the story. Specifically noted are quotes of affirmation of a choice made such as food preferences or what to wear and any implied change in behavior that led to assimilation or pluralism.

Additionally noted were visual indicators of potential cultural aspects of the book.

Illustrations were analyzed on their cultural content such as a character wearing a hijab or the tone of skin in the illustration. Other supportive visual indicators reflect the text by illustrating the object or person being identified. For instance, a type of clothing is identified and defined in the text of the book and a picture then enhances the reader's understanding. Prior research coded by Cole (2013) “involved writing quotes, phrases, and paraphrases from the books to exemplify and support the themes” (p. 26). According to Wildemuth (2016), “Manifest indicators are manifest content characteristics that are

assumed to indicate the presence of latent content” (p. 309). The process began with a familiarization and then focused on each area of inquiry relating to culture.

Data Sources

This research utilized prior studies and professional publications to identify connections between transitional chapter books and culture. Initially, this researcher reviewed various research regarding diverse books for a wide range of reading skills. After completing an extensive review of the research, a connection between established findings and this researcher's area of interest was made. The following terms were adopted as defined by prior research: assimilation; pluralism; dominant culture; non-dominant culture.

This researcher selected two lists from a leading professional journal to make a comparison of past recommended books to presently recommended titles. The intention was to reflect any potential change in the diversity in beginning chapter books and in the population’s cultural needs over time. This is to bring an awareness of mindset when selecting books and aid in pedagogy by highlighting the cultural ideology of a book and how culture is portrayed: assimilation, biculturalism, or neutral.

Data Analysis

This research utilizes qualitative content analysis to indicate the presence of a specific ideology identified via targeted text and/or illustration(s). This allows for systematic interpretation of the text. As described by Wildemuth (2016), “Directed analysis of content, in which initial coding starts with a theory or relevant research findings” (p.319 After reviewing prior research, this researcher identified character

portrayal and/ or changed expectations through coding and analysis. A change in culturally accepted actions, such as expressing a dislike for a specific food considered important to their native culture, would be coded as a cultural change. Character behavior was identified by specific text that indicated a change and reaction by others in the story. For example, a pleasant response to a new kameez/ outfit by family members was coded as approval. This aided in identifying the embedded message of either assimilation, pluralism, or culturally neutral (if no evidence found) as outlined by Yoon et al. (2010). Embedded messages are the implied or stated desired outcome of the story or the choices made are approved as evidenced by the support of other characters within the story - friends, family, etc. The approach to text interpretation used quotes and illustrations that implied or stated a change from non-dominant to dominant culture, as previously defined as assimilation. Further evidence was documented as providing visual indicators of cultural content such as skin tone or attire. Finally, the character's orientation to culture - assimilation or pluralism- was identified via story content. Did the character take action, verbally or otherwise, to express a difference in cultures? Did other characters encourage or discourage preference for a particular culture? A preference in relation to culture is evident in how characters express their approval of their own culture or describe their desire to make changes to it.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Qualitative research was completed to analyze transitional chapter books. This was a continuation of prior research on culture, diversity, and inclusion such as that of Yoon et al., (2010). The 2009 and 2019 *School Library Journal* recommended transitional chapter books were selected. After narrowing the recommended lists by reading levels ranging from 1.4 - 4.6 (identified by grade) the books were read twice and summarized. The first eight books in this discussion focus on books with people as the main characters. Four books from each recommendation list were selected due to their inclusion of clear examples of diverse cultures, and each of these was read and summarized. Then the findings were grouped into three main themes - embedded messages about culture, visual indicators of culture, and orientation to culture: assimilation or pluralism? A brief summary of each book is given followed by examples of each main theme. The final discussion will focus on the remaining eight books that were excellent books but found to be culturally neutral due to animals being the main characters.

Summarization Of Books

Of the books included on the recommended list for 2019, those that feature a person as the main character include *Yasmin In Charge* (Farqui & Aly, 2019), *King & Kayla: And the Case Of Found Fred* (Butler & Meyers, 2019); *Juana & Lucas: Big Problemas* (Medina, 2019); and *Charlie & Mouse: Even Better* (Snyder, 2019). These four books indicate cultural connections in a fun and relatable way for newly independent readers.

They also inform the reader of various aspects of different cultures. These instances will be described in greater depth below.

Yasmin In Charge (Farqui & Aly, 2019), features a young Pakistani girl with an adventurous spirit and strong ties to family traditions and a balance of familiar American school-girl activities such as a class trip to the zoo. Readers will learn about Pakistani culture and language along the journey. Yasmin wears a new Kameez for her birthday party and discusses what she likes and dislikes about Pakistani foods. She is also presented in leadership roles as the teacher allows Yasmin to be in charge briefly.

King is Kayla's friendly and smart dog that helps a stray dog, Fred, find his way home in *King & Kayla's: Case of Found Fred* (Butler & Meyers, 2019). While the story is told by the dog, it is also about an African American girl on vacation at her grandmother's house at the lake and the many adventures they have together. They meet many different people in their search to find their new friend's home.

Juana Medina's book *Juana & Lucas: Big Problemas* (2019) is about her childhood experiences. Juana is a girl from Columbia who lives with her mother. Her best friend is her dog, Lucas. Together they learn to adapt to changes in their family dynamics. Years after Juana's father died, Juana's mother begins to date and eventually remarries. Juana eventually adapts to a new father and new "casa" (p. 68)?

Charlie and Mouse are quite the sibling team. Their story starts out with their mom making them pancakes and ends with her surprise birthday party. Along the way, they go shopping and dad burns the birthday cake. Mom is almost home; how will they fix the burnt cake? This story's illustration shows a Caucasian mom, Asian dad, and two

children who are not identified by gender. Neither of them are referred to as he or she in the book but only by their names. *Charlie & Mouse Even Better*, by L. Snyder (2019), is a light-hearted and fun story of family celebration.

Of the 2009 recommended books, 4 books were identified as having people as main characters: *Tricking the Tallyman* (Davies & Schindler, 2009); *Camille McPhee Fell Under The Bus* (Tracy, 2009); *Thunder-boomer* (Crum & Thompson, 2009); and *Looking Like Me* (Myers & Meyers, 2019). These four books also had embedded cultural messages. Each of these books are discussed in more detail later in this section. The best example offering a culturally rich insight into an African American boy's reflections of himself is *Looking Like Me* by W. D. Myers and C. Myers (2009).

Tricking the Tallyman (Davies & Schindler, 2009) is a historical fiction book that explains the origins and purposes of participating in the census. Phineas Bump is given the task to complete the very first census in 1790 and is met with much resistance from the townspeople. They do not understand what the information will be used for and believe it will lead to their men being taken off to war. Once they learn the census is really for both conscription and representation in the new government, the townspeople comply and Phineas gets the census done, "Entirely." (Davies & Schindler, 2009, n.p.).

In *Camille McPhee Fell Under The Bus* (Tracy, 2009), Camille is quite the fourth-grade girl. She seems to have a lot of bad luck. Her best friend moves away, she is diabetic, experiences bullying at school, and her parents separate but eventually work things out. This realistic book is about being hopeful and making new friends while

remembering the old ones. Without illustrations, it is left to the reader to imagine all the text describes.

Thunder-Boomer by Crum & Thompson (2009) is a story set in the Midwest on a farm. It opens with Mom and two children playing at a pond. A summer storm suddenly blows in and the family has to take cover. The excitement of getting the tractor and farm animals safely taken care of is well illustrated and conveys a lot of energy. The crack of lightning and dark clouds indicate that the storm is a big one. After the storm settles and the family ventures outside, they find a young kitten. What else could they name him but *Thunder-Boomer*?

Reflection upon oneself is a great way to learn about how you see yourself and how others see you. In *Looking Like Me* (Myers & Myers, 2009), Jeremy sees himself as many different people. He is a brother, a dancer, a son, an artist, a writer, among other roles. The vivid illustrations show a dark-skinned boy and colorful surroundings.

Embedded Messages About Culture

In six of the eight books summarized prior, specific phrases or illustrations were identified to indicate how culture was portrayed and how the characters feel about their cultural expectations. For instance, food is a part of many cultures. Showing preferences enlightens the reader as to the feelings the main character is experiencing. Yasmin conveys her dislike for spicy and messy foods, “Why does Pakistani food have to be so spicy or sour or messy?” (p. 35). In Medina's book, *Juana & Lucas Big Problemas* (2019), Juana shares that her favorite soup is Ajiaco. “Eating ajiaco is like giving my tummy a warm hug.” (n.p.). Throughout the story, Juana uses English and Spanish to

share her thoughts about family and change. The use of both languages encourages acceptance of both languages and provides learning opportunities about other cultures. In the story of *King & Kayla* (Butler & Meyers, 2019), Kayla is presented as a young, African American girl on vacation with her dog at her grandmother's lakehouse. While visiting, they find a lost dog and help him find his way home. The message in this book is of an affluent, African American family with a lake house and a boat. Juana in *Juana & Lucas: Big Problemas* (Medina, 2019), has a message of pluralism as evidenced by the use of English and Spanish throughout the book. At one point, Juana, her mom, and Luis drive to his country house and have to stop for a snack. They stop at a roadside vender and eat "crunchy empanada or soft and delicious buñuelos" (p. 31).

Similarly with Charlie and Mouse, in *Charlie & Mouse Even Better* (Snyder, 2019), there is no specific mention of culture in the text or a desired behavior with respect to culture. However, the illustrations convey a happy, racially blended family. Their activities of shopping for a gift and baking a cake for their mom did not imply a culture-specific activity or need to change.

Tricking The Tallyman (Davies & Schindler, 2009) clearly conveys the historical information of the census process and need. However, it also encourages assimilation to the new ways the government works and how the townspeople need to comply. Boston Pepper, a young boy of the town, returns from the next town and tells his mom that "it's not for taxes or soldiers....it's to figure out how many men we send to the new government" (n.p.). At the end of the story a townspeople, Mrs. Pepper states, "we decided 'twas better to be fair and true" (n.p). The townspeople cooperated to get the

census completed. By doing so, this shows they accepted the new government's activities and participated.

While reflecting on who he is, Jeremy is proud of all the things he sees as an African American son, brother, musician, dancer, and so on, in *Looking Like Me* (Myers, 2019). Jeremy looks in the mirror and sees “a real handsome dude looking just like me.” (n.p.). He talks to family and friends and exchanges a “baam” (a fist bump) of approval (n.p.) from them. At one point Jeremy states he is “walking tall” and “walking proud” (n.p.).

Two of the books found to be culturally neutral are *Thunder-Boomer* (Crum & Thompson, 2009), and *Camille McPhee Fell Under The Bus* (Tracy, 2009).

Thunder-Boomer is the name given to a cat the family finds after a storm. This is a story of life on a farm in the summer. The story begins with mom and children playing in a pond to cool off from the summer heat. Dad is in the field on his tractor. All members are illustrated with fair-skin and no mention of cultural activities are mentioned. *Camille* is an unlucky but hopeful fourth-grade girl. There is no real description that would indicate a specific culture.

Visual Indicators Of Culture

In seven of the eight books, visual indicators of culture were identified by how pictures support the text and plot. In Faruqi and Aly's (2019) *Yasmin in Charge*, the dress Yasmin wears to her party is called a Kameez (p. 42). Also noted at her party, the adult women are wearing a hijab or scarf that covers their hair (n.p.). While preparing for her birthday party, Yasmin talks about the types of food she likes, and dislikes as a part of her heritage/ culture. Pictures and text demonstrate her reactions to the spiciness of foods.

Yasmin tried biryani, “too spicy!” followed by an illustration of her gasp (p. 34). The message embedded in King & Kayla’s story is within the illustrations. The story is familiar as a lost dog needs help finding his home. However, Kayla and her grandmother are illustrated as dark-skinned with dark curly hair. Kayla is spending summer vacation with her grandmother at her grandmother's lake house. She also uses a boat to take King, Fred, and Kayla around to find Fred’s family. Much like King and Kayla, Charlie and Mouse have familiar stories of planning a surprise birthday party and picking a great gift for their mom. The illustrations hold the key to diversity. The children are gender-neutral. The father has a darker complexion and dark straight hair - possibly Asian. Their mother is fair-skinned and has red hair. This indicates a potential multi-racial family.

Three of the 2009 recommended books had illustrations that clearly conveyed cultural tones. *Tricking the Tallyman* (Davies & Schindler, 2009) displayed all the people in the 1790’s attire—a historical cultural reference. In *Looking Like Me* (Myers, 2009), Jeremy and the people he interacts with are dark-skinned. The scenes in *Thunder-Boomer* (Crum & Thompson, 2009) display barefoot kids and casual attire. The young girl in the story is wearing a summer dress (n.p). The culture of life on a farm during the hot summer and what might need to be done if a storm pops up. Scurrying around to secure all the animals and laundry from the line is indicated with detail in the illustrations. However, all the people are fair-skinned or Caucasian. While *Camille McPhee* is not an illustrated book, the cover illustrates Camille with dark, curly hair and she describes it in the story as well. Therefore, illustrations did not support specific cultural diversities and were coded as neutral.

Orientation to Culture: Assimilation or Pluralism

The third category that emerged was the orientation to culture. Two books supported pluralism as the main character would use English and their native language. *Yasmin in Charge* by Farqui & Aly (2019), provides opportunities for readers to identify with both Pakistani and American as she tells her story and uses both English and Urdu. Yasmin is planning a surprise for her party and wants to try a food that “wasn’t too spicy, wasn’t sour, and wasn’t messy?” (p. 35). She later creates a special recipe of “Chicken, veggie, and fruit” in a kabob style that could be associated with an American tradition of grilling (p. 45). All of her family enjoyed the blended meal. Her family approved with “Good work, Chef Yasmin” (p. 46). In another activity, Yasmin and her classmates go to the zoo. This delightful story is intermingled with vocabulary that teaches both English and Urdu (Pakistani language). Yasmin states, “Bandars!” (p. 58). Monkeys are her favorite animals as the book explains. Especially helpful for readers, is a dictionary of Urdu words included in the back of the book. Faruqi & Aly (2019) tell a delightful story through her main character that is proudly Pakistani and American and promotes pluralism.

Similarly, in the 2019 book *Juana; Big Problemas* by Juana Medina, vocabulary incorporated in the story builds a bridge between both English and Spanish speaking cultures. The first statement in the book is “My life is just about perfect.” (p.2) This is quickly followed by, “Lately, *mi vida* has become a little less perfect.” (p. 4). This pattern is continued throughout the book and is part of a fluid story that subtly blends both languages. Chapter 4 introduces Mami’s new friend, Luis. During their conversation of

getting to know each other, Luis is asking several questions and Juana tells the readers “I think perhaps he could have asked fewer *preguntas*” (para. 1). Ultimately, this book encourages cultural pluralism as it presents situations not limited to one culture (loss of father, re-marrying, moving to a new home) and family interactions/ support. The use of both native and English language also promotes acceptance of being bilingual.

In D.H. Butler and Meyers’s *King & Kayla* (2019), and L. Snyder’s, *Charlie & Mouse Even Better* (2019), the idea of assimilation or pluralism is not clear. Butler and Meyers offer an African American family in what could be considered an affluent lifestyle as her grandmother is at a lake house and has a boat. This is a cute story of a lost dog with a character that young African American readers may connect to and all may enjoy. In *Charlie & Mouse*, Snyder (2019), shares a story of a mixed-race family that celebrates their mom’s birthday with gifts and cake. Neither story compels their characters to assimilate cultures or promotes one culture over another.

In *Tricking the Tallyman*, the verbiage reflects the purpose and goal of the book which is to highlight and present information about the first census in the late 1700s (Davies& Schindler, 2009). The text includes phrases such as “cheese and chowder” (n.p.) and “one free white female thus counted” (n.p.) that would be used during that era and culture. In 1790 Phineas was given the task to complete a census. He is out of “paper, ink, and quills” (n.p.) and wonders how he will get the job done. He knocks on the door of the first house in Tunbridge, VT, and addresses the lady “Madam” (para. 2). Mrs. Pepper quickly tells him to “begone” (para. 3). Word choice reflects the era and typical language. Later, as she is trying to trick the tallyman, she tells Phineas her husband has

died. Phineas then refers to her as “Widow Pepper” (para. 8). However, there is a message for the townspeople to comply with the government and be counted. Eventually, the townspeople understand the purpose and benefit of being a part of the census and comply. This is an example of assimilation that can be incorporated into a classroom discussion. When viewed as historical information and taken in context with the culture of 1790 compared to current culture, *Tricking The Tallyman* (Davies & Schindler, 2009), provides many talking points about assimilation, census, and the history of The United States and immigration. The tone of the book is to convey assimilation to the new government.

Looking Like Me (Myers & Myers, 2019) has a strong message of acceptance of oneself. It has clear messages of accepting not only the person in the mirror but of the heritage through the tone of the text and the various descriptions he uses to define who he is. He is an artist, a dancer, a son, a brother, etc. He gives each personality a “bam” (n.p.) of approval and his entourage reciprocates. This story is about being ok with yourself and your culture.

Two of the best examples of diversity are the 2019 books -*Yasmin In Charge* (Farqui & Aly, 2019), and *Juana & Lucas: Big Problemas* (Medina, 2019). Both books visually support cultural diversity and provide a vocabulary of both dominant and nondominant cultures through interspersing the use of both languages throughout the books. Juana’s story also concludes with a statement of acceptance, “Now I can take pictures of my old *familia* and my big new family” (p. 79). Yasmin’s “Baba” (p. 71), or

dad, affirms that Yasmin was a superhero because she “helped many people on our street today”(p. 86).

The other eight books were found to be culturally neutral as the main characters were animals and no cultural dilemma or choices were indicated in their stories. Of the 2009 books, *Yummy* by L. Cousins (2009) is a compilation of classic fairy tales illustrated with slightly more grim details such as the head of a wolf being chopped off (p. 20) in *Little Red Riding Hood*. Only one of the eight stories has people as characters and they have a giant turnip in their garden. The turnip grows so big they need help from many animals and people to pull it up. This is a Russian fairytale classic. A sly fox is trying to get some grapes in *Lousy Rotten Stinkin Grapes*, by Palatini, M., Moser, B., & Aesop. (2009). He employs the help of other animals but thinks he knows the best way to get to the grapes. The sky is falling in the classic story of *Chicken Little* by R. Emberly and E. Emberly. A chicken mistakes a fallen acorn as a sign of the sky falling. She gets many of the other farm animals to react to impending danger. The fourth book of 2009 that is mainly about animals and found to be culturally neutral is *Adventures in Cartooning: How To Draw Your Doodles Into Comics* by Frederick-Frost, A., Arnold, A., & Sturm, J. (2009). This fun and inventive book is about how to draw with a backstory of a girl learning to draw a dragon.

The books from 2019 with main characters as animals are Mo Willems, *Who is the Mystery Reader* (2019). Willems uses squirrels to lead the newly independent reader to discover new words, build confidence in their reading skills, and laugh along the way. Another 2019 book, *Harold & Hog Pretend For Real* by Mo Willems and Dan Santat

(2019), is a fun story about two friends that “pretend to be Elephant and Piggie!” (p. 4) The irony is Harold is an elephant and Hog is a pig. They learn a lot about each other but mostly they learn they are great friends. Cece Bell entertains with a comical story of two friends and using good manners in *Chick and Brain: Smell my foot!* (Bell, 2019). Chick (presented as the smarter friend) gets into trouble but Brain (who seems to not be as smart) saves the day. In the final book from 2019 that has animals as main characters in the story is *Snail & Worm All Day* by Tina Kögler. Snail and Worm are friends that help each other to understand their environment and make new discoveries together. This is quite a funny little tale of friendships. These eight books are entertaining and great books to help newly independent readers but were found to be culturally neutral.

The first eight books had various cultures represented and offered opportunities for students to learn about other cultures. The diversity content in the later eight books was not clear and coded as neutral. The embedded message for Yasmin and Juana is acceptance of both native and non-native cultures. Both through use of bilingual text and illustrations as well as family and friend statements of acceptance.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultural diversity allows newly independent readers an opportunity to deepen connections with transitional chapter books. The value of identifying with a character in a book is established in prior research (Alter, 2016; Goodale, 2012; McNair & Brooks, 2010). This qualitative research focuses on cultural diversity in transitional chapter books; and, when present, identifies whether characters modify culturally determined behaviors, i.e. assimilation, pluralism, or culturally neutral. The research questions addressed embedded messages, illustrations supporting cultures, and the choices characters made affecting their cultural identity.

Sixteen books from *School Library Journal* recommendation lists from 2009 and 2019 for grades 1.4 to 4.6 were analyzed. Results indicated a representation of varied cultures but 8 of the main characters and stories featured animals and were culturally neutral. Of the books with clear cultural connections, four were from the 2009 list and four from 2019. However, the four books from the 2019 list offered greater variety. Each main character identified as part of a diverse culture, i.e. skin tone, text, illustrations, etc., were portrayed in strong, family environments and confident in both dominant and non-dominant cultures.

Finally, this analysis provides a guide to assess the depth of culturally diverse literature selection via a culture-minded lens (see Appendix C). However, this research focused on a specific list recommended by *School Library Journal* (SLJ) and additional

research is recommended to include other professional book lists and/or a greater number of books.

Conclusion

Research question 1 asked, what messages are implied or overt within transitional chapter books regarding cultural assimilation or bicultural acceptance? The assimilation messages found within these chapter books were not direct. Only one book had a strong message to assimilate and that was from the 2009 recommended lists and was focused on a historical context- *Tricking The Tallyman* (Davies, J., & Schindler, S. D., 2009). The majority of books from both lists were humorous, and animals were used as the main character in some of the books in the initial list, which is fitting for beginning readers and their interests. Four books, *Yasmin in Charge* (Farqui & Aly, 2019), *Juana & Lucas: Big Problemas* (Medina, 2019), *Looking Like Me* (Myers, 2019), *Charlie & Mouse Even Better* (Snyder, 2019), have very diverse cultural connections through their texts, illustrations, and overall story/ plot. These are good references to use when looking for transitional chapter books and discerning the embedded messages.

Research question 2 asked what visual and textual indicators support cultural diversity. These were found in 7 of the books. The illustrations of various settings, outfits worn, facial expressions, and skin tone supported the content and activities of the books, as to be expected. Most noted for cultural indication was the attire worn and skin tone of some of the characters. This, along with definitions, gave clues to the cultural meaning of what they were wearing and overall appearances.

In research question 3, this study also inquired about a change of behavior that the main character may or may not make in connection with cultural orientation. There were no changes from one culture to another. There were, however, strong support for acceptance of both dominant and nondominant cultures in *Yasmin In Charge* (Farqui & Aly, 2019), *Juana & Lucas: Big Problemas* (Medina, 2019), *Charlie & Mouse Even Better* (Snyder, 2019), and *Looking Like Me* (Myers & Myers, 2019). All of these books featured confident main characters that demonstrated a connection to more than one culture. These books contained illustrations and texts that provide learning opportunities to readers of any culture.

All 16 books can be used to engage this age of reader at this skill level. Of significance, this revealed an increase of diverse cultural representation from the 2009 recommended list to the one for 2019. Diverse chapter books provide opportunities for culturally nondominant readers to connect to protagonists thereby strengthening reading skills and provide a pathway to open discussions of similarities and differences. Teachers, with an understanding and cultural awareness, can also use transitional chapter books to acknowledge both assimilation and pluralism in pedagogical discussions that provide opportunities for readers to identify with and learn about other cultures. Selecting transitional chapter books through a culturally-minded lens and an understanding of assimilation versus biculturalism will support both newly independent readers and pedagogy.

Current professional recommendations include a wider variety of culturally diverse chapter books when compared to that of ten years prior. However, continued research of

transitional chapter books needs to be completed to support equity in transitional chapter books.

Recommendations

Further research is recommended to compare a larger number of books, specific series, or award-winning transitional books. This researcher agrees with prior studies that prove reader connections increase when a personal culture identification is made. Combining text with illustrations enhance these connections. Yoon et al, (2010) states “Teachers can reexamine their preconceived ideas...and expand awareness...to promote cultural pluralism” (p. 112). Amplified by the understanding of perceived cultural choices, teachers can improve their pedagogy by incorporating chapter books that provide realistic character portrayal. These realistic protagonists can also facilitate dialog to increase understanding of other cultures. Ultimately, culturally diverse book selection with an understanding of embedded ideology aids the pedagogical and material curation process.

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APPENDIX A
SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL RECOMMENDED BOOKS

2019 Title	Author	Publication Date	Reading Level
Chick & Brain: Smell My Foot	Cece Bell	2019	1.7
King & Kayla and the Case of Found Fred (#5)	Dori Hillestad Butler	2019	1.9
Yasmin in Charge	Saadia Faruqi	2019	2.7
Snail & Worm, All Day	Tina Kügler	2019	1.7
Juana & Lucas: Big Problemas	Juana Medina	2019	4.6
* <i>Poof! A Bot</i>	<i>David Milgrim</i>	2018	.7
Harold & Hog Pretend for Real	Mo Willems & Dan Santat	2019	1.4
Charlie & Mouse: Even Better	Laurel Snyder	2019	2
Who is the Mystery Reader?	Mo Willems	2019	2.5

* Not included in analysis

2009 Title	Author	Publication Date	Reading Level
Yummy: Eight Favorite Fairy Tales	Lucy Cousins	2009	3.4
Tricking the Tallyman	J. Davies	2009	3.7
Chicken Little	Rebecca & Ed Emberley	2009	2.3
* <i>The Boy Who Invented TV: The Story of Philo Farnsworth</i>	Kathleen Krull	2009	5.5
Looking Like Me	W.D. Myers & C. Myers	2009	2.6
Lousy Rotten Stinkin' Grapes	Margie Palatini	2009	2
Adventures in Cartooning:	James Sturm, Andrew	2009	2.1

How to Turn Your Doodles into Comics	Arnold, & Alexis Frederick-Frost		
Camille McPhee Fell Under the Bus	Kristen Tracy	2009	4.1

* Not included in analysis

APPENDIX B
ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

TITLE	Diverse Culture	Character	Message relating to culture
Smell My Foot	No	animal	neutral
King & Kayla and the Case of Found Fred (#5)	Yes	realistic	present
Yasmin in Charge	Yes	realistic	present
Snail & Worm, All Day	No	animal	neutral
Juana & Lucas: Big Problemas	Yes	realistic	present
Harold & Hog Pretend for Real	No	animal	neutral
Charlie & Mouse: Even Better	Yes	realistic	present
Who is the Mystery Reader?	No	animal	neutral
Yummy: Eight Favorite Fairy Tales	1 of 8	varies	neutral
Tricking the Tallyman	Yes	realistic	present
Chicken Little	No	animal	neutral
Looking Like Me	Yes	realistic	present
Lousy Rotten Stinkin' Grapes	No	animal	neutral
Adventures in Cartooning: How to Turn Your Doodles into Comics	No	negative	neutral
Camille McPhee Fell Under the Bus	Yes	realistic	neutral
Thunder-Boomer!	No	realistic	present

APPENDIX C

GUIDE TO SELECTING DIVERSE CONTENT

Questions/ Information to look for to determine the diversity and / or ideology.	
What is the story wanting the main character to do? Assimilate? Bicultural?	
Are there illustrations that convey diversity? Skin tone. Clothing choice. Setting.	
How is the culture portrayed? Accepted? Powerful? Need to change?	
How can this book be used to teach awareness of cultures?	