Teaching race through multicultural children's literature

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Abstract
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TEACHING RACE THROUGH MULTICULTURAL CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

A Graduate Action Research Paper

Submitted to the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
Kaley Bailey and Maiya Duthoo-Wolpert

May, 2021
This Action Research Paper by: Bailey, K. and Duthoo-Wolpert, M.

Titled: Teaching Race through Multicultural Children’s Literature

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts.

__________________________________________________________
Date Approved                     Dr. Sarah E. Montgomery

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Date Approved                     Dr. Dana Atwood-Blaine

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Date Approved                     Dr. Robin Dada, Head,
                                    Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Abstract

There is considerable confusion in today’s society when it comes to talking about race. In result to this, race talk in schools can be overseen with challenges, leading to problematic conversations, disconnection, and ultimately student disengagement. This study is used by two Elementary educators one an Asian, the other a Caucasian - found in the Midwest, showing how teachers can break that uncomfortable barrier of the topic about race and navigate conversations through multicultural children’s literature books. The study demonstrated how to choose the most effective multicultural children’s literature to share to a classroom of students and how beneficial it can be to use art as a tool to express one’s self. The results of the study revealed that the two educators steered through unexpected dilemmas through strategic temporary alignments of children’s books and art projects, but found in both groups of children, silence was not an option.
Teaching Race through Multicultural Children’s Literature

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Teaching Race through Multicultural Children’s Literature

Introduction

Race is a social construct, not a biological given. Yet, race still matters. Race shapes our experiences and has real influences from the smallest interpersonal interactions to the largest established engagements. It is important for teachers not to ignore race, leading the children to adapt color blindness, but to examine the ways that race can influence society every day. “Colorblindness fails to acknowledge the impact of racism on all people, and, further, does not push White people to do the important work of reckoning with the legacy of white supremacy in our lives” (Cole & Verwayne, 2018, p. 37). Teachers would be doing students a disservice if we encouraged them to think that racism is a remainder of a distant historical era.

Although our society is becoming more diverse, the picture books that students have access to are not. Teachers should introduce racial differences to ensure that all children have the same opportunity to have equitable learning opportunities and can see their lived experiences reflected in school curriculum. The more children read, the more it increases their engagement and enjoyment of being able to use a mirror perspective of themselves through the situations in the literature. “Multicultural literature helps children identify with their own culture, exposes children to other cultures, and opens the dialogue on issues regarding diversity” (Colby & Lyon, 2004, p. 24).

As educators, it is imperative to be aware of the effects of racism and to learn how to teach about them to students. Regardless of whether or not the racial diversity of our society is shown in a given classroom, it is critical to bring diverse voices and perspectives inside the classroom setting besides just sharing personal experiences. It is important that students see themselves in the multicultural children’s literature they read, without feeling like they are a
background piece. If the curriculum is undoubtedly multicultural, it would reflect the diversity found in society including ethnicity, gender, and disability.

“Educators and professionals in the field need to feel confident offering an honest and safe space for discussions of this nature and one way they can do that is through art” (McCoy, 2019, p 7). Art is a way for self-expression and a way to share your voice about something important in order to have perceptions be communicated. Incorporating hands on activities provide students with an outlet for their feelings and thoughts to keep them interested in learning.

This study explored how educators can select and use children’s books about race when teaching young children between the ages of three to ten years old. This study has two parts. The first part focused on analyzing multicultural children’s literature about race and examined what the characteristics are that teach about issues of race and racism in engaging ways. The second part of the study looked into how children benefit from participating in lessons and arts-integrated learning opportunities related to these books, and how they respond to them in discussions and art projects. The teacher researchers created two rubrics to analyze ten books to carefully select two to share with their students. They gathered qualitative data through semi-structured interviews, observations, and photos of the art projects. It is hoped that this study helps the participants build empathy and compassion for others so that they are better able to see when things in the world seem unfair or unjust and that they can make a change and do something about it.

**Literature Review**

*Teaching Diversity through Multicultural Literature*
Many children begin developing implicit racial biases toward other racial groups in society at a relatively young age. Exposing children to counter stereotypical images of people from various racial groups in society can help reduce implicit racial bias in children (Gonzalez et al., 2017, p. 128). Educators can expose children to counter stereotypical images through the use of multicultural literature. Multicultural picture books are one of the most appropriate mediums for helping young children form positive attitudes towards different races and cultures and play an important role in helping children learn about different races and cultures not often encountered in everyday life (Kim et al., 2015).

**Race**

Race is defined as “any one of the groups that humans are often divided into based on physical traits regarded as common among people of shared ancestry” (Merriam-Webster's, 2021). Multicultural children’s literature with racial narratives can serve as an opportunity to open up conversations about race. “These approaches encourage educators to allow children’s inquiries to lead classroom curriculum, to support children noticing and naming race, and to consider issues of racism” (Fontanella-Northom, 2019, p. 12). As educators, sometimes race is avoided as to avoid offending someone for not having enough experience or understanding of other races. Cole and Verwayne (2018) write that,

If I do talk about race, will it offend anyone? How do you talk about it in a way that doesn’t offend people… I think a lot of teachers will just choose not to address it because if you don’t address it, you’re not offending anybody… I think this is the problem that we have in our country… We never have an honest, open discussion about race ever. (p. 37)

**Racism/Racial Bias**
Anyone can hold a bias against people of another race, but only some races are subject to oppressive structures and practices as a result of that bias” (Cole & Verwayne, 2018, p. 36). According to Cole and Verwayne, racism is a system of oppression that results from a combination of prejudice and power (p. 36). This combination creates institutional structures and social practices that deny equity to people based on race. Racism can create common misconceptions that are biased or prejudiced that some people of color can hold against Caucasians account for “reverse” racism. Because of this, racism can produce structures and practices that withhold equity and justice to people of color. It is critical that race is taught at a young age so children can learn to socially and emotionally engage with others. “Conversations about race with young children can work toward developing socially and emotionally engaged citizens who understand it is permissible to have questions about social differences such as race, skin tone, and skin color” (Fontanella-Nothom, 2019, p. 11).

Culture

Multicultural children’s literature can serve many purposes, but one of its most accomplished is its ability to bring people closer together, regardless of their culture and ethnicity. By providing children with accurate and positive representation of the many cultural groups that make up the community, society and the world in which they live in, multicultural children’s literature helps increase student cultural awareness to support them gaining greater cognitive skills as they learn to engage with and evaluate the texts that they read. Children can start to recognize physical differences at a young age. Derman-Sparks & Edwards’ (2010) book said the following:

In the years from birth to age 8, young children learn who they are and their place in the world. By the end of their first year, they begin to notice differences and similarities in
the physical appearance of the people in their immediate world (Njorogoe et al. 2009); as toddlers, they express awareness of racial and gender differences; and by age 3, they are paying close attention to variances in dress, speech, and behavior (p. 48).

Understanding cultures can help students overcome and prevent racial and ethnic division. If students are not taught about other cultures, they will not learn about the influences that cultural groups have had on their mainstream history and culture. This will cause students to miss out on an accurate view of how their society and community.

**Color blindness**

Multicultural children’s literature can be a resource that educators can use to challenge the color-blind approach, or the belief that ignoring racial differences is beneficial. The color-blind approach denies the existence of different races and creates a false reality that everyone has equal opportunities. “This vision of color blindness as a means of eliminating racial discrimination is founded on the seemingly paradoxical notion that it is noble to ignore race while simultaneously honoring diversity” (Hollingworth, 2009, p. 34). The impact of racial bias is visible and not allowing children to process this injustice is confusing, which denies them the opportunity to see themselves as agents of change to resist injustice. Colorblindness creates a society that denies negative racial experiences, rejects cultural heritage, and invalidates unique perspectives. Using multicultural children’s literature within the context of early childhood social studies education can both challenge color-blindness and support the need to explicitly teach about diversity.

**Multicultural Children’s Literature in Early Childhood Social Studies**

Responding to the cultural and linguistic diversity demands of our changing society requires a well-planned and well-implemented social studies curriculum that enhances young
children’s understanding about past and present issues and events that affect their lives and communities (Meléndez, 2015, p. 49). Integrating social studies through the use of children’s picture books helps children to play with ideas that might be too sensitive to discuss as personal narratives. Educators must be intentional about how they teach about diversity especially in the context of social studies. As Derman-Sparks & Ramsey (2011) write, “The diversity in the United States today requires teachers to intentionally lay a foundation that permeates every child to develop a healthy sense of self-worth to which respect for differences is an integral part” (as cited in Meléndez, 2015, p. 48). Early childhood social studies can support social justice, equity, and anti-racist approaches.

**Social Justice**

It is necessary to teach students about making positive change in the world by connecting with them, discussing real world problems, and giving multiple perspectives of the stories they read from multicultural children’s literature. Social justice is a reminder that everyone has equal rights and opportunities to be treated without prejudice. Prejudice refers to a negative emotional response toward a particular group of people. Young children’s development of stereotypes and prejudices come from internal (biological and cognitive) and external (environmental and societal) factors according to many scholars. Teachers can teach for social justice in many ways, including classroom practices that honor student voices to be heard. When educators create space for students to share their ideas and background experiences, they are also creating space for cultural awareness and cultural competency. Educators can transform into culturally responsive workers who stand up against all forms of injustice in educational practices by becoming culturally aware. Educators who are culturally aware can use multicultural children’s literature as
a pathway to beginning conversations about power, discrimination, and injustice (Ching, 2005, p. 129).

When an organization makes decisions or acts a certain way that could potentially discriminate against someone based on their race, religion, skin color, gender, or sexuality, this is social injustice. See Appendix A for a list of the organizations that offer social justice curriculum according to Cole and Verwayne (2018). These resources respond to teachable moments that are defined as “never one size fits all,” and offer candid and thoughtful sharing of teacher knowledge that can provide teachers with models of practices and strategies (p. 41).

One social justice curriculum organization that uses children’s literature to teach social justice is named Learning for Justice. Thirty years ago, Teaching Tolerance was founded by the Southern Poverty Law Center and its goal was to eradicate hate by fighting intolerance in schools. On February 3, 2021, Teaching Tolerance changed its name to Learning for Justice. They justified their name by applying the term “tolerance” by saying that there was no single word that captured the range of solutions needed to create a fair, equal society. On their website, it is stated that, “The fact is, tolerance is not justice. It isn’t a sufficient description of the work we do or of the world we want” (Learning for Justice, 2021). When deciding to change its name, Learning for Justice’s mission was to not only think about the changes they wanted to see in their schools, but thought about how to best make those changes. That’s why they chose to shift from “teaching” to “learning.” Over the years, Learning for Justice has expanded their focus. Their Social Justice Standards bolstered their celebration of identity and diversity with the attention to question justice and strategies for student action and collective action. Their community has grown with many educators, administrators, counselors, librarians, and many more who have
joined together. They all work together and promise to honor this truth: that learning from- and with- one another is the first step to making justice real (Dunn, 2021).

**Equity**

Teaching about equity can create a safe place for the students to explore, discuss, challenge, and form their own opinions and values. Equity is achieved when people are given the appropriate support and access they need to be successful, regardless of where they come from or what they look like. Educators are taught to not judge one by their differences. “The diversity in the United States today requires teachers to intentionally lay a foundation that permeates every child to develop a healthy sense of self-worth to which respect for differences is an integral part” (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2011, p. 48). Children need to understand equity and know their rights to understand both how they should be treated, and how they should treat others. It is critical that educators use multicultural children’s literature that can allow authors to share important messages of welcoming the differences of people, whether they are cultural, gender, or appearance based and not letting these differences stop them from making friends or excelling in life. Allowing students access to a variety of multicultural children’s literature can help guide them to learn the importance of other cultures' history. “The classroom library can offer a child-friendly opening to learn about important histories and to celebrate the accomplishments of seminar figures in the fight for racial equality” (Cole & Verwayne, 2018, p. 40). Educators can teach equity via multicultural children’s literature in the context of early childhood social studies giving all students the support and access they need in getting an education. Helping children see the role they have to play in promoting equity through racial justice is an important piece that everyone has a fair opportunity in learning.

**Multicultural Children’s Literature as a Powerful Tool for Young Children**
“Botelho and Rudman (2009) stated that “children’s literature should affirm the diversity of society (p. 10).” Using multicultural children’s literature is one tool in a wide range of curricular possibilities for affirming the social and cultural difference between children. Sadly, research has been documented by the overrepresentation of white characters in multicultural children’s literature (Cooperative Children’s Books Center, 2016, Myers 2014). Consequently, those who read children’s books with young children must carefully select books that represent the diverse nature of society and both introduce and discuss them with children critically. Teachers need to intentionally select books that challenge stereotypes and represent the students in their classroom. Stress levels are lowered, and classroom behavior and academic achievement are improved when children read books or told stories that represent them in some way.

**Mirrors & Windows**

Diverse multicultural children’s literature provides a chance for readers to see themselves represented visually and be able to learn about others’ lives. Bishop (1990) wrote about the metaphors of windows and mirrors, where books can be mirrors for children to see their lives reflected and windows give the children an opportunity to learn about the lives of others. When children cannot identify with a book or see their lives celebrated through stories, it may have a negative impact on their self-image. “Seeing self is critical, but not seeing self is even more critical because children may feel marginalized” (Koss, 2015, p. 32). Multicultural children’s literature allows children to identify with and develop empathy for the characters, specifically those who may be different from themselves.

**Multicultural Children’s Literature & Art**

Children can use art in their daily learning as a way to express knowledge and develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. Art has proven to be an amazing mechanism for
conversation and for change and has also been shown to have beneficial impacts on individual youth (Americans for the Arts, 2018).

Teaching Race through Children’s Literature was a study aimed to help students demonstrate their learning through art. McCoy (2019) says the following:

Through art, youth can educate the general public about their perspectives of social issues and how they came to learn about them. It is vitally important for society to recognize the impact that these issues are having on the lives of youth and understand how youth voice can contribute greatly to change in our world (p. 18).

Art was also used as a conversation in the present study to help the students explain their thinking from the topics that arose in the picture books. “Art is known as a mechanism for conversation and can be used as an expressive outlet when words fail” (McCoy, 2019, p. 17).

In defining multicultural literature, the authors of this article focused on issues related to race, such as social justice, equity, culture, and racial bias. The purpose of this study was to provide insight into how educators can choose quality multicultural children’s literature to help teach about race. It is a two part study: the first part focused on analyzing multicultural children’s literature about race and what characteristics are that teach about issues of race and racism in engaging ways, the second part looked into how children benefit from participating in lessons and arts-integrated learning opportunities related to these books and how they respond to them in discussions and art projects.

**Methods**

**Overview and Research Questions**

Teaching Race Through Multicultural Children’s Literature engages young children in open discussions about their perceptions of racism today. During this study, there were two groups that participated in this research project. Group A and Group B were students in the
Midwest that engaged in collaborative discussions and honest reflections about their racial identity and how they viewed racism during their book readings. The students also joined in for an art project that followed after the readings that helped the participants understand the effectiveness of using art as a way to engage in race.

This study explored how educators can select and use multicultural children’s books about race while teaching PreK-6 grade children. The research questions for the study are 1. How can educators use children's literature to teach about issues of race and racism?, 2. What are the characteristics of children's literature that teach about race or racism in effective and engaging ways?, 3. How do children benefit from engaging in lessons and arts-integrated learning opportunities related to these books?, and 4. How do children respond to these books in discussion and art projects that they produce? These questions were designed to help children recognize and celebrate their differences from one another. This gave the children the opportunity to acknowledge that though people look different, racism can be unfair and unjust. The goal for this study was to help children be able to share one’s story and honor diversity.

**Research Design**

This study had two parts. The first part involved an analysis of the books. The second part of the study was our lesson that included the researchers reading two stories and incorporating an art project that followed each book. During the book analysis, the researchers examined what the characteristics are that teach about the issues of racism. The researchers used rubrics to analyze their ten books. Each book can be found in the data collection below. Details about this first part of the study is provided in the data collection and analysis below. The researchers introduced the two books they selected via the analysis to the students. The students first noticed the cover illustrations and were asked engaging questions about the cover of the book. The questions were, “What do you notice about the cover of this book?”, “What do you
think is going to happen in this book?”,” How do you think the character will act or change in this book?”, “ How might the character be feeling?” , and “What do you predict about how the character’s feelings might change during the book?” These questions encouraged the students to have an open discussion about listing the many examples of bias and stereotypes in their readings. These questions also gave students space to talk about race and racial stereotypes. This gave the children a chance to question who is doing what in the story’s plot, who is the main character, who has been left out of the story, and why is this happening.

After the read aloud of the book, students were able to reflect verbally on the book and given the opportunity to extend their learning through an art project related to the book. This helped the students give a reason to care about what they were learning by connecting themselves to the situations and concepts that are relevant to their lives in order to build a positive race identity. For the reflection, students were asked to identify some similarities and differences (physical, character traits, etc.) between the characters and themselves. The students were also invited to share why the story was unfair, how the character felt in the beginning and the end of the story, and how they would help the character if they were in the class or situation. Lastly, the students had to explain what they learned from the book and how it made them feel. After these reflections and discussion, the students engaged in an art project. The art project was an activity that showed what the students learned from the stories. They were able to express their feelings in a total of two art projects, one for each book The students learned that ignoring race is not a choice. By ignoring race, it is a fundamental part of a student identity and can damage a part of a person’s trust. During this design, race was brought front and center, connecting to the curriculum and not allowing it to pass unnoticed. The full lesson plans for both of these lessons can be found in Appendix E.
Setting and Participants

There were two groups of kids in this study that will be characterized as Group A and Group B. Group A comprised two kids ages three and five, one girl and one boy, both kids identified as Caucasian. Group B comprised two kids ages five and seven, one girl and one boy, both kids identified as American Indian and White. Both of the groups participated in two lessons that were an hour each. Group A’s lessons took place in the children’s home, while Group B’s lessons were taught inside the home of the teacher researcher.

Data Collection

After identifying the ten books, the researchers developed two different rubrics to use to analyze the books. The first rubric was a modified version of the scaling categories and criteria for assessing picture books taken from *A Content Analysis of Thirty Children’s Picture Books about Ecology* (Martin et al., 2019). The following four categories from this previously published rubric were used: Representation of Diversity, Appropriate Illustrations, Story Appeal, and Developmental Appropriateness. Appendix B provides detailed descriptions of each of these categories. The second rubric created was a modified version taken from the Learning for Justice website from the book *Reading Diversity: A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts* (Dunn, 2021). The teacher researchers looked at diversity and representation, critical literacy, and reader and task from this rubric for the analysis of books in this study (see Appendix C for detailed descriptions).

The second part of this study, with the help of our college instructor, the teacher researchers created questions that became our semi-structured interview questions to ask before, during, and after the reading. In Efron and Ravid (2020) they describe semi structured interviews as follows: “During the interviews, participants are invited to co-construct the narrative and raise and pursue issues that are related to the study but were not included when the interview questions were planned” (p. 103) The semi structured interview questions can be viewed in Appendix D. The teacher researchers created the lesson plans for each book (see Appendix E for the lesson plans). During the lessons they recorded the conversations to analyze later to hear responses and make observations. The teacher researchers also took pictures of the completed art projects.

**Data Analysis**

For the book analysis part of the study, the researchers picked five books independently that represented what they thought were good books to share to their students about race. Some of the books were award winning while others were not. The first researcher’s top five books that
were chosen to analyze were: *The Other Side* (Woodson, 2001), *Something Happened in Our Town (A Child’s Story About Racial Injustice)* (Celano & Hazzard, 2018), *Sulwe* (Nyong’o, 2019), and winning books: *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* (Quintero & Peña, 2019), and *The Last Stop on Market Street* (De la Peña & Thomann, 2015).

*The Other Side* (Woodson, 2001) was picked because of the plot of the story. It told the story about segregation between two neighbors who were Caucasian and African American. *Something Happened in Our Town (A Child’s Story About Racial Injustice)* (Celano & Hazzard, 2018) was about a police shooting that happened in a community from an African American family’s point of view. *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* (Quintero & Peña, 2019) received the Boston Globe Horn Book Award. This story was picked because it told the story about a Hispanic girl who immigrated to the United States and told about the community she lived in. The next book was *Sulwe* (Nyong’o, 2019). Sulwe learns to embrace her natural beauty and love where she originated from. Lastly, *The Last Stop on Market Street* (De la Peña & Thomann, 2015) was a winner of the Newbery Medal. This story is about a little boy who rode the bus every day with his grandmother.

The second researcher’s top five books that were chosen to analyze were *The Day You Begin* (Woodson, 2019), *Malala’s Magic Pencil* (Yousafzai, 2019), *We Shall Overcome: The Story of a Song* (Levy, 2014), *What is Given From the Heart* (McKissack, 2019), and *Drawn Together* (Lê, 2018). These books were chosen because they were on award winning websites such as Jane Addams Children’s Book Award (Jane Addams Peace Association, 2021) and Pura Belpré Award (American Library Association, 2021). See Data Collection section above for details on the awards these books have been given. These books were also chosen because the researcher believed the books were relatable and easy for children to comprehend. Each book
was read independently multiple times and analyzed using the rubrics in Appendix B and C. The teacher researchers then met to discuss findings and refine their scores based on the discussion. The complete analysis of the books can be found in the Results section of this article.

Data analysis for the second part involving participants began with the researchers first analyzing the student responses in discussions, followed by the observation data, and finally the interview data and photos of students’ art projects. The constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998) was used. The teacher researchers began by reading through each of these data sources and identifying early codes and thematic categories. Then the researchers reviewed all of the sources again and refined their thematic findings. The following section provides the overall findings from the study.

**Results and Discussions**

The researchers sought out to answer: How can educators use children’s literature to teach about issues of race and racism? and What are the characteristics of children's literature that teach about race or racism in effective and engaging ways? They did this by using two rubrics to analyze the 10 books. Each researcher independently scored the books. Then the researchers met and talked through their scores and came up with an agreed upon score for each book. The first rubric was based on the representation of diversity, appropriate illustrations, story appeal, and developmental appropriateness (Appendix B). Each category was rated from a scale of 1-5, giving each book an opportunity to be scored out of 20 points total. See Table 1 below for the scoring of all of the books using this rubric. For the second rubric, the researchers used a more detailed tool to be able to inspect each book. The rubric was scored based on developmental representations, voices of characters, elements and lived experiences, generalization/stereotypes/misrepresentation, voices not heard, strengths/weaknesses/silences, mirror, window, and
motivation. See Table 2 in Appendix F for the analysis details for each of the books. These rubrics helped the teacher researchers to be able to analyze the books thoroughly and make educated decisions to choose books that would teach the students about race and racism accurately. The following sections will provide further details about each book and results of the analysis of the books.

**Part A**

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Representation of Diversity</th>
<th>Appropriate Illustrations</th>
<th>Story Appeal</th>
<th>Developmental Appropriateness</th>
<th>Overall Score of Book</th>
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<td><strong>Last Stop on the Market Street</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Day You Begin</strong></td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td><strong>Malala’s Magic Pencil</strong></td>
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<td><strong>We Shall Overcome</strong></td>
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<td><strong>What is Given From the Heart</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Drawn Together</strong></td>
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**Part A: Book Analysis**

**The Other Side**

The first book that the researchers analyzed was *The Other Side* (Woodson, 2001). The researchers rated this book with a perfect score of 20/20 points. This story is about segregation.
The story is told through the eyes of a little African American girl, who becomes confused about the fence that someone has built in her yard and the racial tensions that divide her world from the Caucasian people’s world. She later becomes friends with Caucasian neighbors, but they are only allowed to play on the fence that separates their houses. The girls learned to cherish their friendship against the society that should separate them. The voices that were not heard were from the adults’ perspectives. This story mirrored to all children and gave a window reflection to anyone who experienced segregation in the past. Woodson (2001) was inspired to write *The Other Side* to inspire young readers to relate and think about segregation history and that they Caucasians and African Americans could have been friends before, but the society stopped them.

**Something Happened in Our Town (A Child’s Story about Racial Injustice)**

*Something Happened in Our Town (A Child’s Story About Racial Injustice)* (Celano & Hazzard, 2018), was given 19/20 points. The researchers agreed that the developmental appropriateness was a 4 out of 5 because children under the age of 7 might not understand the destruction racism can cause to a person’s life. This story follows two families- one Caucasian, one African American- as they discuss a police shooting of an African American man in their community. There were many generalizations, stereotypes, and misrepresentations found throughout the story. An example of one is that an African American got shot by the police because of the color of their skin. Celano and Hazzard (2018) gave an allegory in the story about how society ran on a pattern. “This pattern is being nice to White people and mean to Black people. It’s an unfair pattern.” The voices that were not heard in the book are police officers. This story had a mirror view for anyone who has been treated unfairly because of the color of their skin and a window view for anyone who is not a Person of Color (POC) who can understand the point of view from an African American. The moral of *Something Happened in*
Our Town was to answer children’s questions about traumatic events and help them understand the racial injustice in their own lives.

My Papi Has a Motorcycle

Next, the researchers gave My Papi Has a Motorcycle (Quintero & Peña, 2019) an 18/20. The researchers believed that the book lacked representation of diversity because the book only focused on Mexican American people. Due to that, it was given a 3 out of 5 for the diversity section. The story celebrates the love between a father and daughter, and their vibrant immigrant neighborhood. There were some stereotypes found in this book. During the book, Daisy Ramona (the little girl) only mentioned the people in her neighborhood who are Mexican Americans. Also, a mural was shown in the book about the Mexican culture. Many of the adults' voices were not heard throughout the book. The mirror view was aimed at the community of Corona, California where Quintero grew up. The window is for Mexican Americans or Hispanic people. My Papi Has a Motorcycle (Quintero & Peña, 2019) was written to students who are bilingual that experience other cultures during their life.

Sulwe

Sulwe (Nyong’o, 2019) was given a 20/20. Sulwe has skin the color of midnight. She is much darker than the rest of her family and anyone in her school. She wishes her skin was beautiful and bright like her mother and sister. Through a magical journey in the night, Sulwe learns to embrace her natural beauty. The only people’s voices told in the book were the woman (the mother, sister, and Sulwe herself). One of the strengths from this story was Nyong’o (2019) incorporating all different skin tones of African Americans. Her goal was to uplift children of color and make them realize that they are beautiful just the way they are.

The Last Stop on Market Street
Finally, *The Last Stop on Market Street* (De la Peña & Thomann, 2015) was given a 20/20 as well. This story raised questions about the diversity of people, their circumstances and the role that helping other people plays in a good life. De la Peña & Thomann (2015) share a variety of diverse people, abilities, and ages throughout the book that contain teenagers, the elderly, the blind, and even a wheelchair bound. The message of this book was guided by Nana as the value of helping the less fortunate and how to grow up to be a good person.

**The Day You Begin**

*The Day You Begin* (Woodson, 2019) is a story that is representative of an African American girl who feels different in any situation she is put in at school. She does not have things in common with other students from the way she looks to where she is from or what she eats. Only when she shares her story does she find a friend. The researchers gave this book a rating of 20/20. *The Day you Begin* (Woodson, 2019) gives an authentic account of lived experiences by talking about the differences between people and although people may feel different, there is almost always someone who has something in common with you. The story takes place at school which may be the first place that students begin to recognize differences, but also find friends who have things in common. The voices not heard in this book are adults. The story mirrored to students who feel different based on outward appearances, and windowed to Caucasians who may not have ever felt left out because they have never been in a situation where they have been the minority.

**Malala’s Magic Pencil**

*Malala’s Magic Pencil* (Yousafzai, 2019) is a story that is representative of Malala Yousafzai who is from Pakistan. She talks about the changes that she would make with a magic pencil like putting a lock on her door or making other people happy like giving her mother the
most beautiful dresses. When she finds a girl about her age at the dump and boys fishing for metal scraps she asks her father why the girl is not in school. Her father proceeds to tell her that not everyone sends their daughters to school and that some children must work to support their family. Malala then decided that instead of wishing for a magic pencil she would work hard and speak out about what it felt like to be scared to walk to school and how some of her friends moved away because of the threat they faced in their city. Malala Yousafzai was the Nobel Peace Prize winner in 2014. The researchers gave this book a rating of 19/20 because they did not think the topic was appropriate for the age group of the students they were working with. *Malala’s Magic Pencil* (Yousafzai, 2019) does a nice job of giving an authentic experience of what it is like to be a female and live in Pakistan, although the voices not heard are men. This story mirrors to any student who wishes to create equality and windows to any who is not Muslim or have lived in Pakistan.

*We Shall Overcome: The Story of a Song*

*We Shall Overcome: The Story of a Song* (Levy, 2014) is a story that is representative of a song that has its roots in the time of slavery in America. The book gives a detailed account of experiences of what slavery looked like for African Americans. The story goes through Emancipation, the Jim Crow period, Civil Rights era, and continues to the present day. The researchers gave this book a 19/20 because of the illustrations. Although the pictures went well with the story, they were not very appealing or accessible for young children. The images typically showed people singing the song. This story was typically one sided being told from an African American point of view. *We Shall Overcome: The Story of a Song* (Levy, 2014) windows to African Americans and mirrors to Caucasians. A strength of the book is the recollection of specific events in American history that have affected African Americans. The history of the
United States needs to be taught in a way that accurate information is shared, and this story does a good job of that. This story mirrored to African Americans and windowed to Caucasians.

*What is Given From the Heart*

*What is Given From the Heart* (McKissack, 2019) is a story that is representative of an African-American mother and son that have continuously been through difficult times; the loss of a spouse, losing their house, and their dog disappearing. One day at church they were told about a family that lost everything in a fire and that they should bring whatever they think might be useful. The boy, James Otis, wonders how they will have anything to give. The Reverend and Mama use the quote, “What is given from the heart reaches the heart.” James Otis thinks about the things that he has and how the girl would not want anything that he has. He decides to create a book for the girl, Sarah, because of the book that he had and how much joy it brought him. The researchers gave this book a rating of 19/20 because of the lack of representation of diversity. This book gives an authentic reflection of peoples’ lived experiences by showing a family who loses everything in a fire and another family who gives from the little that they have. *What is Given From the Heart* (McKissack, 2019) is told from the perspective of the boy, but it only shows African Americans in the story. This story reinforces the stereotype that African Americans are poor and there are no fathers in either family. A strength of the story is that it showed that gifts do not have to cost a lot and can mean a lot if they come from the heart. This story is a mirror to any family who has experienced a fire or not having a lot especially during the holidays. It windowed toward families that do not struggle with finances.

*Drawn Together*

*Drawn Together* (Lê, 2018) is a story that is representative of a Vietnamese-American boy visiting his grandfather, but their lack of common language creates confusion and silence.
The story does not have a lot of words so the reader has to tell the story in their own words by using the pictures. The pictures are illustrated beautifully to show the differences between the boy and grandfather, but they come together through their own art. This provides an authentic account of peoples’ lived experiences by showing the separation between the grandfather and grandson because of their language barrier. The researchers gave this book a rating of 19/20 because of the developmental appropriateness. Although the book had great pictures, there was not a lot of dialogue for students to engage in. The teacher would have to be doing a lot of explaining what is happening in the book. A strength of the book is that even though language separates the grandfather and boy, they still find similarities through art. The mirror view is towards students whose grandparents may speak a different language. It windows to families who all speak the same language.

After the analysis of the books, the teacher researchers chose *The Other Side* and *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* to use in their two lessons. The researchers chose *The Other Side* because it does a nice job of giving a real account of segregation between African Americans and Caucasians and they believed that students would be able to connect to making friends through this book. *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* was ultimately chosen because of its developmental appropriateness for the students that we were going to be working with. We had a few different options for our second book, but decided since we were teaching about race that we needed to show a different race other than African American or Caucasian.

**Part B: Semi-Structured Interview responses, observations, artwork**

In Part B of the data analysis process the teacher researchers were trying to answer the questions: How do children benefit from engaging in lessons and arts-integrated learning opportunities related to these books?, and How do children respond to these books in discussion
and art projects that they produce? They did this by recording the responses to the semi-structured interview questions, observing the students, and analyzing the art projects the students made to demonstrate their learning. Each researcher decided to collect their data by video recording the children and themselves during their lessons. They were able to review the children and themselves during their semi-structured questions, book readings, and art project. The researchers explained that this was more efficient for them to not only just hear the childrens’ responses, but to also see how they reacted during the lessons when reviewing. The researchers were able to rewatch the video recordings multiple times to analyze their data. The following sections will synthesize the data collected from each researcher during the semi-structured interview, observations, and artwork.

**Researcher A: The Other Side**

After collecting all data from the semi-structured interview, the recordings, and the artwork, the first researcher noticed how many times Student A would use the phrase, “black people are mean/bad” during *The Other Side* lesson. Student A stated before the lesson began that they already knew about what racism is, giving previous knowledge from school to use towards answering every question asked. In result, many of the answers to the semi-structured questions were answered along the lines of “White people thought the dark people were mean,” “I think the white girl is going to be mean to the black girl,” and “The white girl is going to be mean to the black girl because she thinks black people are bad.” Student A repeated these answers 5 times during the questions. Throughout the book Student A would even point out pictures of the girls during the story and believe that there was something wrong with them because they would not talk to each other. Because of this, she concluded that it was because someone was being mean based on their color of skin. Student B said similar answers to Student
A when answering the semi-structured questions. Though, Student B included what actions the girls would take after inferring they were being mean to each other. Student B said, “They will play together!”, when being asked during the book reading what will happen next.

Student A and B were able to identify some similarities and differences between themselves and the characters. Student A noticed different character saying:

One girl has red hair and the other girl has black hair, but they both have long hair. I have white skin just like the girl in the book and you (pointing to the researcher)- you look like the black girl in the book.

Student B found many differences between the characters and himself. “They are both girls. They have different color hair. But I have eyes, ears, and a nose, just like them!”

For the art project for The Other Side, Student B lost interest and did not complete the lesson. Student A completed the art project and demonstrated what their art project was and why they created the scene she did. Student A described that they refused to move the fence from in between the two girls’ houses because that would change the story line. Instead, she explained that one day she hopes that more girls choose to sit on the fence so that the fence can be knocked
over completely.

![Image of a student's art project for "The Other Side" showing a fence made from toy houses and dolls.](image)

**Figure 1. Student A, Art Project for *The Other Side***

Student A built a fence in the middle of the houses to follow the story line. Student A believes that more girls can sit on the fence together in order to one day be able to knock that fence over for good.

**Researcher B: *The Other Side***

During the semi-structured interview following the read aloud of the book *The Other Side* (Woodson, 2001), student C responded to the question, “What do you think is going to happen in this book?” by saying:

I think because they are different races their mom and dad do not want them to be friends. That is why they put a fence there. Because of their races. Because back in the old days Martin Luther King had a friend that was white and his mom and dad did not want him playing with him (Interview, 2021).
Based on this response, Student C is thinking critically about racial diversity and injustices. She understands that things used to be worse than they are now, and that things have changed.

Student D seems to think about the fence in a different way, believing that the fence is there for protection. Student D said, “They need a fence between them so they do not hurt each other because of the color of their skin. Because they are different races.” Student C responds in a similar way when asked the question, “Why do you think there is a fence separating the houses?”

Student C stated:

Martin Luther King had a friend that was white and his parents did not want him playing with him back in the old days. “Why?” “Because it does not really matter, but because they were saying like his skin is brown he should be treated worse because he is brown. I am white and he is poor and I am not.” (Interview, 2021)

In this quote, the student makes sure to say that people should not be separated because of their skin color. When asked, “What did you learn from this book?” Student C responded, “People were separated from each other, but they should not be.” Researcher B believes that based on Student D’s response, they feel the same way. Student D exclaimed, “I am gunna kick it over!” referring to the fence. Researcher B enjoyed learning that the students would not separate themselves from the African American girls. When the question was asked, “How could you help the character if you were in their class or situation?” Student C said, “I would invite them to play with me and sit on that fence.” and Student D said, “Play with them!”
After the read aloud of *The Other Side*, the students were asked to create an art project using sticks and the house cut out templates. The sticks were to be used to create the fence similar to the one in the book. Once the students were done building their fence they were asked to color their houses. After each of these steps were done, the students were asked where they wanted the houses and fence to be. In Figure 5, Student C put the original fence she built around the houses, then put a smaller fence between the houses. She also put the girls, Clover and Annie, on the fence similar to the ending of the book. In Figure 6, Student D put his fence between the houses similar to the book. He also has the girls sitting on the fence together like the ending of the book.

There were follow-up questions after the students had completed the art project that were asked to help the students to explain their thinking about their art project. Researcher B asked, “Why did you choose to make this?” Student C and researcher B’s conversation went as follows: “And you have the girls on the fence together, why is that?” “Because African Americans and white people should not be separated. They should all be friends.” Again this shows that Student C has an understanding of racism and the belief that everyone should just be friends no matter their skin color.

When Student D tells me about his art project he says:
Teaching Race through Multicultural Children’s Literature

They are both on the fence. I am going to put the fence in the middle like the book. The girls are going to sit on the top of the fence. This girl lives in the purple house because she is really poor.” “I am really poor” “I am really rich. “We are sitting on the fence”. (Art Project, 2021)

During his explanation of his art project. He played with the stick figures created to represent the characters in the book. He refers to the African American multiple times as being poor. When asked about what his reasoning was for referring to the girl that way he did not give a response.

**Researcher A: My Papi Has a Motorcycle**

During the *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* lesson, the first researcher noticed that Student A and B both were not as engaged in this lesson as the researcher anticipated. Student A and B said, “The girl likes to ride the motorcycle with her daddy” four times and “The girl is happy because she is riding the motorcycle with her daddy” three times during the semi-structured questions. When asking the students about the culture of the town, the children lost interest in the details and illustrations. The students did not understand the concept of the book without the researcher helping them explain the meaning.

Student A and B had very different art projects of their choosing. Their assignment was to create a mural that explains what’s important to them. Student A created her mural of her three kitties and her family. She said:

“This mural is a picture of my three cats. Each cat is painted differently because they are just like people- different. I also painted mommy, daddy, and brother. We are all standing under the same sun with a colorful tornado coming toward us! AHHHH!”
The three cats were all different colors just like how people are different colors. Student A expressed how the tornado is colorful because every person on Earth has a different color of skin and that the tornado mixes all people together in the world.

![Image of a painting of a family and three cats](image)

**Figure 4. Student A, Art Project for My Papi Has a Motorcycle**

Student A painted her family. Her mom, dad, and brother. Student A also painted her three cats all different colors. In the picture, you will find the colorful tornado that she mentions.

Student B was able to find pictures in magazines of people who looked different from one another and connected the pictures with lines and words that related to harmony, equality, and acceptance. This student said, “I drew lines to connect the words and pictures that represented equality! Though all people are different, we all are connected living together.”
Student B cut out pictures from different magazines that represent equality. He found pictures of people of different skin color and words that represent creating a change in the world. Student B created colorful lines that connected each picture and word together.

The researchers found that the books that they chose to analyze were overall good books for students to learn about race and also culture. The rubrics that the researchers created helped them to analyze the books to make educated decisions about the books. The first lesson using The Other Side was a good choice to teach the students about segregation and race. The students seemed to grasp the concepts easily and were able to accurately describe what was wrong with segregation. During My Papi Has a Motorcycle, the students in both households were not as engaged. The researchers believe this is because the book describes the culture of Mexican Americans rather than directly relating to race or racism.
Researchers B: *My Papi Has a Motorcycle*

During the second lesson from *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* (Quintero & Peña, 2019) the students were less engaged and the responses were less thorough. Researcher B believes this falls back on their review of the book because the dialogue in the book does not allow for much discussion around the topics of race and racism. She also thinks her students were more distracted. Researcher B had the supplies out and ready for the art project which made it so the students had something to fidget with. They were redirected several times to not play with the items. During this lesson, the rest of the students' family was also in the same house. The students also had a new candy that had been given to them before the lesson. At the beginning of the lesson the students were asked, “What do you notice about the cover of this book?” Student C said, “Her skin looks a little darker than mine. It looks like she is riding a bike or riding a scooter with her dad.” Student D said, “She has a unicorn on her helmet! Her dad looks a little bit darker.” Researcher B is glad that the students are recognizing different skin colors as the color-blind approach denies the existence of other races and creates a false reality that everyone has equal opportunities. When the students were asked, “What do you think is going to happen in this book?” Student C said, “Maybe she speaks two different languages and is bike riding.” Student D said, “That they are going to speak different languages. Or maybe she is thinking about the words that she says.” When introducing the lesson, Researcher B told the students about being bilingual and that the girl in this book speaks Spanish and English. During the reading on page two, Researcher B asked, “What do you notice about the illustrations?” Student D said, “The words!! Not these ones like those ones (pointing to the Spanish words).” Following the book, the students were asked to recognize some similarities and differences between the characters and themselves. Student C said, “They spoke Spanish. I know that their skin is a little
darker than mine.” Student D was noticing the different sounds that the character recognized throughout the book. Student D said, “It is cause there are lots of noises and she knows the world is with her.” and “Happy! Because the girl was laughing because there were lots of noises everywhere.” *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* (Quintero & Peña, 2019) was more about the culture of Mexican Americans which was a topic that was not introduced to the students. I believe this is why the lesson did not resonate with the students as well as the first lesson.

After the read aloud of *My Papi Has a Motorcycle*, the students were asked to create an art project using paint and poster board. First, Researcher B told the students that they were going to be creating a mural similar to the one in the book. The researchers explained what a mural was and why it is important. Then, the students were asked to create a list of the things that are important to them. After the list was created, the students began to create their own mural of things that were important to them. In Figure 7, Student C created their mural with a picture of them in the middle and the things they find important surrounding her. In Figure 8, Student D created their mural following the list that they created. This student worked left to write painting the things that were important to him.

There were follow-up questions after the students had completed the art project that were asked to help the students to explain their thinking about their art project. When asked to tell about their art project, Student C said, “I am thankful that I am on this earth. That is me and
that is my dance shoes because I like dance, and I like rainbows and oh yea my candy.” Student D said, “I am thankful for pizza, myself, my candy, mom and dad, my school, and my egg!” The students talked about being thankful six times during the discussion following the art projects. When asked how the art connected to the book Student C said, “Because it is things I am thankful for.” Student D said, “Because we are thankful.” This connected to the book because the girl in the book, Daisy, was riding around town with her father seeing the people and places she has always known. She is thankful for the way her community has always been as well as how it is always changing. Overall, the students were distracted by their candy which caused them to not focus on the read aloud as well as they did in the first lesson.

**Conclusion**

This article, along with the suggested resources, provide a starting point for teachers and families seeking to do the important work of supporting young children's learning and understanding about race and racism. As Researcher A and B experiences illustrated, their work was both challenging and essential.

From the findings, this study demonstrated that children around the ages from 3-7 are not only capable of discussing topics of race, but they are also invested. The children demonstrated examples of race, racism, culture, and colorblindness. In particular, the children were also able to explain social justice and equity throughout the lesson providing stories of social studies that they already had learned in class. Most importantly, the children were able to use the literature that was shared to relate to them on a personal level and

![Figure 7: Student D, Art project for My Papi Has a Motorcycle](image)
were able to express themselves from the stories using art as a way to share their experiences to others.

This research project was completed within two households and only examined the responses of four students. The researchers learned that this study would be more effective with a larger group of students and that the results would make the study more generalizable. The researchers also suggest using a different book for the second lesson, or helping the students to recognize that the story is more about culture and not race.

The students understood what the term racism meant and the effects of what racism can cause. You can see this in the responses to The Other Side, all four children inferred from the cover of the book that there was segregation involved in the story. For example, Student C said, “I think because the two girls are different races, their mom and dad don’t want them to be friends.” Additionally Student A shared, “I think the fence is there because the white people thought the black people were bad.” In this study, the repeated reading of and responding to racially conscious children’s literature was found to support the childrens’ critical thinking about and engagement of topics of race, skin color, and other characteristic traits. In the My Papi Has a Motorcycle lesson, the student’s engagement was not as prominent as The Other Side. Students were not as interested in learning about what culture stands for rather than what they previously learned about race. However, the children understood the qualities of what a mural represents and were able to illustrate their thoughts on paper with what they are thankful for. All the children stated that they were thankful for their family. The one quote that stood out the most was from Student A who said, “There is a colorful tornado coming our way. Every person on this Earth has a different color of skin and the tornado's job is to mix all people together in the world.”
These findings are similar to other findings found in *Teaching Kindergarteners Racial Diversity Through Multicultural Literature: A Case Study in a Kindergarten Classroom in Korea* (Kim et al., 2015) During this case study the students were exploring the notion of equality. Kim et al. (2015) said:

In this excerpt, the children and the teacher were able to investigate the notion of equity and equality by discussing why Grace was not able to play Peter Pan in her school play. As they discussed how Grace overcame her peers’ doubts and fulfilled her desire to perform as Peter Pan, they were able to consider concerns with stereotyping, such as why Peter Pan is always a White male. (p. 412)

The students thought about why things were the way they were when other people are just as capable to perform the same task.

This research study produces important questions and implications for educators to consider, such as the following: 1. How can educators use children's literature to teach about issues of race and racism?, 2. What are the characteristics of children's literature that teach about race or racism in effective and engaging ways?, 3. How do children benefit from engaging in lessons and arts-integrated learning opportunities related to these books?, and 4. How do children respond to these books in discussion and art projects that they produce? As we prepare young children to become citizens, educators must offer them opportunities to celebrate all aspects of their identities and to resist racial bias.

**Implications for Practice in Schools & Classrooms**

It is a teacher’s responsibility to look beyond the walls of the classroom and demonstrate global competence and use their work to expand the impact of students’ work to their families and local and global communities. One way that teachers can do this is by providing access to a
diverse range of multicultural literature in the classroom library. “Multicultural literature helps children identify with their own culture, exposes children to other cultures, and opens the dialogue on issues regarding diversity” (Colby & Lyon, 2004, p. 24). Not only should students have access to these books, but teachers should openly discuss race and different cultures throughout the entire school year. Teachers can start by collaborating with teacher librarians to identify books that address race from award-winning lists. Schulte-Cooper (2015) wrote an article titled, “Awards that Celebrate Diversity in Children’s Literature” that provides award-winning lists of websites with high-quality literature for young people about diverse peoples.

An essential task for educators is to be able to challenge not only the students, but themselves to dig deeper into the issue of racism. Educators need to be knowledgeable about race. It can be challenging to teach about a topic that may be considered “awkward” at times, though it is critical that educators can encourage action. A way in doing so could be encouraging students to engage in open discussions about racial issues. In doing so, the information needs to be accurate, appealing, and appropriate for the students. Educators need to encourage their students to be brave in calling out racist behavior. People should never be disrespected because of the color of their skin. Arts-integrated approaches can be an accessible way for students to explore race and racism. In this study, incorporating art into literacy lessons helped students be able to demonstrate their learning, giving the students an opportunity to express what they are learning.

Administrators and policy makers should support the purchase of multicultural literature. The researchers believe that students need more access to diverse literature that represents the global society. In doing this, educators should take the time to learn about their students and other people’s cultural backgrounds and celebrate them. Through the use of multicultural
children’s literature, students will have the chance to be able to recognize that different does not necessarily mean bad. When children learn about different cultures, they can mirror their lives and prepare themselves for the realities of society today.

Educators want to promote positive change in the world. In doing so, they need to take action rather than to blame or shame. In order to demolish racism, more people need to acknowledge, “there are no others, just other people.” (Unicef, 2020). Demonstrating kindness and standing up for every person’s right to be treated with dignity and respect can result in moving one step closer to a just society.
References


https://www.britannica.com/topic/critical-race-theory


doi:10.1177/0042085907312496


V.J. Harris (Ed.), *Teaching multicultural literature in grades K-8* (pp. 37-53). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gorden.

**Multicultural Children’s Literature References**


Appendix A

Preparing for and Responding to Teachable Moments

National Association for the Education of Young Children’s Anti-Bias Resources-
NAEYC.org/topics/anti-bias-education


Learning for Justice- learningforjustice.org

Raising Race Conscious Children- raceconscious.org

Border Crossers: Racial Justice In Education - bordercrossers.org

Responsive Classroom- responsiveclassroom.org


### Appendix B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representation of Diversity</th>
<th>Evaluates the degree to which stereotyping is avoided in treatment of either issues or characters. Answers the questions, “Does the book portray diverse populations? Is there diversity represented within cultural groups? Do the illustrations avoid reinforcing societal stereotypes? Are children portrayed as capable of creating change?”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Illustrations</td>
<td>Assesses the degree to which illustrations enhance the text. Answers the questions, “Do illustrations complement and enhance the text? Are illustrations and photographs appealing? Do illustrations move the story forward?”</td>
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<td>Story Appeal</td>
<td>Evaluates the characters and indicates whether the story has appropriate action, suspense, pace, and outcome. Answers the question, “Is the story structured and presented in a way that engages readers on both an intellectual and an emotional level?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developmental Appropriateness</td>
<td>Rates books on the appropriateness of concepts, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Answers the questions, “Is the information age appropriate to ensure children can understand it? Is the information accurate? Does the information eliminate threats to young readers?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY:**

- **5:** Outstanding—exceeds every part of the criteria with not one question in researchers’ minds
- **4:** Very Good—meets criteria with slight omissions
- **3:** Good (average)—covers the topic of the criteria but could do more
- **2:** Fair—may discuss one part or at least has some science related material
- **1:** Not Recommended—has no mention of the criteria at all
Appendix C

This tool was taken from the website Learning For Justice from the book *Reading Diversity: A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts* (2016). It was used as a second rubric for the analysis of the books.


**Reading Diversity: A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts Extended Edition**

**CONSIDERATION II DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION**

1. Does the identity or experience of this text’s author support the inclusion of diverse voices in the curriculum? Which voices? Explain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>LGBT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Do the identity or experiences of this text’s characters and/or speakers support the inclusion of diverse voices in the curriculum? Which voices? Explain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>LGBT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Which elements of this text, if any, provide an authentic account or reflection of peoples’ lived experiences?
4. Do you have any concerns about generalizations, stereotypes or misrepresentations in the text?

Explain (why yes or no).

CONSIDERATION III CRITICAL LITERACY

Gaps and Silences: Authors intentionally and unintentionally include and exclude information. A gap exists where something is left out of the text for the reader to fill in. A silence occurs when a voice or viewpoint is left out or suppressed.

1. Are certain people or groups left out or given roles that don’t enable them to be heard? Are certain questions or topics not raised?

2. What strengths and weaknesses does this text pose in terms of gaps and silences?

CONSIDERATION IV READER AND TASK CONSIDERATIONS

Reader considerations: Culturally responsive text selection relies on a teacher who knows the reader(s) and considers their experiences, motivations and knowledge. These considerations relate to the discursive background of your readers.

1. Experience: For whom could this text be a mirror, a reflection of identity and experience? For whom could this text be a window into the identities and experiences of others?
2. Motivation: How could this text motivate and connect with the interests and concerns of my students?
Appendix D

Before Reading:
1) What do you notice about the cover of this book?
2) What do you think is going to happen in this book?
3) How do you think the character will act or change in this book?
4) How might the character be feeling?
5) What do you predict about how the character’s feelings might change during the book?

During Reading:
1) What do you think will happen next?
2) How would you feel if you were in this situation?

After Reading:
1) Identify some differences and similarities between the characters (physical, character traits, etc.)
2) Identify some similarities and differences between you and the character.
3) What in this story was unfair? Why?
4) How did the character (or other characters in the book) feel or how did their feelings change?
5) Why do you think the character (or other characters) felt that way?
6) How could you help the character if you were in their class or situation?
7) What did you learn from this book?
8) How did this book make you feel? Why?

Questions Following Art Project:
1) Tell me about your art project?
2) How does it connect to our book?
3) Why did you choose to make this?
4) What do you want others to learn from looking at your art?
OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this lesson is to provide students with literature that reflects our society while teaching them to be unbiased by giving them opportunities to learn about diversity through literature.

EDUCATION STANDARDS

1. RL.K.1 - With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about the key details in a text.
2. RL.K.2 - With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.
3. RL.K.3 - With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
4. SS.K.9. - Compare and contrast rules from different places. (21st century skills)
5. SS.K.7. - Describe ways in which students and others are alike and different within a variety of social categories.
6. SS.K.17. - Compare life in the past to life today.

OBJECTIVES

1. After reading the book The Other Side, sharing a discussion, and creating an art project, the students will be able to recognize similarities and differences between African Americans and Caucasians.
2. The students will be able to answer questions about a text using key details from the text with prompting and support.
3. The students will be able to compare and contrast life in the past and present.

INTRODUCTION

Start by introducing the topic of race to the children

“In the past, certain opportunities were only created for white people and this was unfair to people who were not white. This is called racism. There are still a lot of unfair things that happen to people because of their skin color.” This is a book that addresses racism.

What do you notice about the cover of this book?
What do you think is going to happen in this book?
How do you think the character(s) will act or change in this book?

Next, we will do a picture walk of the book.
“Before I read the book, I am going to flip through every page of this story. What do you think is happening, what do you notice, can you guess how the characters are feeling, etc. Then, I will read the book and you will see if your predictions were right.”

1) Introduce the book, support students noticing the cover illustrations and ask engaging questions about the book, e.g.,

How might the character(s) be feeling?
What do you predict about how the character’s feelings might change during the book?

2) Read the book, stopping to support students making connections between the book and their life, asking questions, and pointing out observations about the character(s) or illustrations, as well as the characters’ feelings. Some sample questions might include,

What do you think will happen next?
How would you feel if you were in this situation?

Content, language, or illustrations
Page 1- Why do you think there is a fence separating the houses?
Page 3 Why was Sandra so quick to say no?
Page 8- What do the girls notice about each other?
Page 10- The girls seem to push the “rules” How do you think the mother’s will react? Why?

3) Discussion after the book: After each book ask the students questions such as:

Identify some differences and similarities between the characters (physical, character traits, etc.)
Identify some similarities and differences between you and the characters.
What in this story was unfair? Why?
How did the character (or other characters in the book) feel or how did their feelings change? Why do you think the character (or other characters) felt that way?
How could you help the character if you were in their class or situation?
What did you learn from this book?
How did this book make you feel? Why?

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson
2. Copy of Lesson Plan
3. Recording Device
4. House Cut Out Template
5. Tape
6. Popsicle sticks
7. Glue
8. Markers
Teaching Race through Multicultural Children’s Literature

9. 2 small toys (2 little dolls with different color hair, anything that can represent Clover and Anna) for play

ACTIVITY

Art Project following the book: Students will be invited to create an art project related to the read-aloud.

“Now we are going to make an art project. We are first going to create a fence using these popsicle sticks.” *Make connections about the fence from the book. Share what the fence symbolizes.*

“Next, we are going to cut out these houses. Each house represents the Clover and Annie’s.” *Allow them to color, cut, and glue the house together.*

Okay, now that we have the houses and the fence built, show me where you want to place all of them. Where do you want the houses to go? Where should the fence go and why?” *Bring in the two small toys* “Let’s pretend that these toys represent Clover and Annie. How will they react to one another? What will they do and say to each other?”

1. First glue your popsicle sticks together to create the base of the craft. Be sure to leave some space between the popsicle stick pieces so it looks like a picket fence.
   * Set aside to let it dry completely.
   Grab your paper plate, craft paint and paint brush.
   * Squirt paint on the paper plate.
   * Once the popsicle stick shape is dry enough, have children paint the front of their fence of their color choice.
   * Set aside again, to allow the paint to dry a bit.
   2. Glue fence in the middle of the colored construction paper.
   3. Cut out 2 house silhouettes.
   4. Glue both houses down in position of choice
   5. Use dolls to reenact Clover and Annie on the fence.

Tell me about your art project?
How does it connect to our book?
Why did you choose to make this?
What do you want others to learn from looking at your art?
OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this lesson is to provide students with literature that reflects our society while teaching them to be unbiased by giving them opportunities to learn about diversity through literature.

EDUCATION STANDARDS

1. RL.K.1- With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about the key details in a text.
2. RL.K.2- With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.
3. RL.K.3- With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
4. SS.K.9.- Compare and contrast rules from different places. (21st century skills)
5. SS.K.7.- Describe ways in which students and others are alike and different within a variety of social categories.
6. SS.K.17.- Compare life in the past to life today.

OBJECTIVES

1. After reading the book My Papi Has a Motorcycle, sharing a discussion, and creating an art project, the students will be able to recognize similarities and differences between Mexican Americans and Caucasians.
2. The students will be able to answer questions about a text using key details from the text with prompting and support.
3. The students will be able to compare and contrast life in the past and present.

INTRODUCTION

Start by introducing the children about the topic of a different culture. First we are going to show them a map of where Mexico is.
“Do you know how to say “I love you in Spanish?” It is Te Amo. That’s right. Some people know how to speak Spanish just like we know how to speak English. During this story, we will notice that this little girl knows how to speak Spanish and English. She is bilingual. Bilingual is when someone speaks more than one language.

What do you notice about the cover of this book?
What do you think is going to happen in this book?
How do you think the character(s) will act or change in this book?

Next, we will do another picture walk of the book.
“Before I read the book, I am going to flip through every page of this story. What do you think is happening, what do you notice, can you guess how the characters are feeling, ect. Then, I will read the book and you will see if your predictions were right.”

1) Introduce the book, support students noticing the cover illustrations and ask engaging questions about the book, e.g.,

How might the character(s) be feeling?
What do you predict about how the character’s feelings might change during the book?
2) Read the book, stopping to support students making connections between the book and their life, asking questions, and pointing out observations about the character(s) or illustrations, as well as the characters’ feelings. Some sample questions might include,
   - What do you think will happen next?
   - How would you feel if you were in this situation?

Content, language, illustrations
Page 2 - What do you notice in the illustrations?
Page 6 - What do you notice about the characters and buildings so far?
Page 7 - What is a mural?
Page 9 - Why do you think this “place” means so much to the girl?

3) Discussion after the book: After each book ask the students questions such as:
   - Identify some differences and similarities between the characters (physical, character traits, etc.)
   - Identify some similarities and differences between you and the characters.
   - What in this story was unfair? Why?
   - How did the character (or other characters in the book) feel or how did their feelings change? Why do you think the character (or other characters) felt that way?
   - How could you help the character if you were in their class or situation?
   - What did you learn from this book?
   - How did this book make you feel? Why?

MATERIALS NEEDED
1. *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* by Isabel Quintero
2. Copy of Lesson Plan
3. Recording Device
4. Poster Board
5. Scissors
6. Glue
7. Magazines
8. Paint
9. Paint Brush
10. Paper Plate
11. Markers

ACTIVITY

4) Art Project following the book: Students will be invited to create an art project related to the read-aloud.

“Now we are going to make an art project. We are first going to create a mural.” *Make connections about the mural from the book. Share what a mural is and why it is important.*
“We are going to take this poster board and pretend it is a wall because we should not actually paint on Mommy and Daddy’s real wall. They will be upset if we did that. I want you to pick some colors that you are going to use for your mural.” *Allow them to pick the colors of paint and their paint brush.*
“Okay, now think of what’s important to you. Whether that be a person/people, an activity you like to do, your favorite food... what makes you, YOU?” *Bring in the magazines for them to find anything they want to cut out and glue on their poster board.*

“Here is my mural I created. Can you tell me about my mural and what you think is important to me?”

1. First cut your poster board in half hotdog style to separate the board into two sections for each child.
2. Have each child pick out colors for their mural. Pour each paint color on a paper plate for them to use as a palette.

Make a list of things that are important to each child for them to put on their mural

3. Find some pictures in the magazines that they chose to cut out and glue on their board.
4. Allow the children to paint or glue on their board.
5. Have them share!

Tell me about your art project?
How does it connect to our book?
Why did you choose to make this?
What do you want others to learn from looking at your art?
### Teaching Race through Multicultural Children’s Literature

#### Appendix F

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity &amp; Representation</th>
<th>Voices of Characters</th>
<th>Elements &amp; Experience</th>
<th>Generalizations, stereotypes, or misrepresentations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voices Not Heard</td>
<td>Strengths, Weaknesses/ Silences</td>
<td>Mirror</td>
<td>Window</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity &amp; Representation</th>
<th>The Other Side</th>
<th>Something Happened in Our Town</th>
<th>My Papi Has a Motorcycle</th>
<th>Sula</th>
<th>Last Stop on the Market Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race between a Caucasian and African American girl, Age because of what adults believe compared to children who are told what to believe before</td>
<td>Race, African American's perspectives versus Caucasians. Age: Father, Mother, Son, and Daughter</td>
<td>Race- Talks about how family moved to the states</td>
<td>Race-the different shades of colored people</td>
<td>Race, age, place, class, and ability-It is a well written book that takes place at church, on the bus, and at a soup kitchen. The nana and the boy travel to Market Street to serve. The book shows teens, elderly, blind, and wheelchair bound</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race- African American girls and Caucasian girl</td>
<td>Race and age- There is mention of White, Black, and the boy from a country far away. The students also talk to their parents about the information they heard at school.</td>
<td>Race, Gender- told from little girl's perspective</td>
<td>Race, Gender, Age</td>
<td>Race, Gender, Ability, Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting: The place they lived. Events: During that time it took place</td>
<td>Setting, characters, events, and illustrations-this text gave a very real account of what students experience in a day at school after big events happen</td>
<td>Setting, Characters, events, language, and illustrations all give an authentic account of people's lived experiences</td>
<td>Characters and events-the author used this book to describe her feelings towards herself</td>
<td>Characters and events-the author used this book to describe her feelings towards herself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I believe it shows how stereotyping one's race affects others and how misrepresentation affects one's relationship</td>
<td>Black people getting shot because of the color of their skin. Police stand up for one another even when they are in the wrong.</td>
<td>Somewhat. On the motorcycle ride, the daughter only mentions the people in her neighborhood who are Mexican Americans. Also, all of the businesses have English and Spanish</td>
<td>No. This text describes about the natural beauty about one's skin</td>
<td>The soup kitchen being in a run down part of town</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voices Not Heard</td>
<td>The Other Side</td>
<td>My Papi Has a Motorcycle</td>
<td>Last Stop on the Market Street</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Police officers and Caucasians</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths, Weaknesses/ Silences</th>
<th>The Other Side</th>
<th>Something Happened in Our Town</th>
<th>My Papi Has a Motorcycle</th>
<th>Salwe</th>
<th>Last Stop on the Market Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths-strong female characters and the real account of segregation Weaknesses-men aren't mentioned in the text</td>
<td>Strengths-the students talking to their parents about the information they heard at school. Weaknesses-the police officer isn't given a voice to defend themselves</td>
<td>Strengths: Shares about another culture Weakness: Does not include other cultures in story</td>
<td>Strengths-showing different skin tones of Black Americans</td>
<td>Strengths-all of the different abilities represented in the book weaknesses- N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Mirror | This text could be a mirror to students whose grandparents have lived through the years of segregation in the United States. This also still happens with housing availability | Anyone who has been treated differently based on the color of their skin | Mexican Americans, Spanish | Any student who doesn't feel like they belong because of something that makes them different than everyone else | Any child who doesn't have everything that someone else does Examples: car, MP3 player |

| Window | This shows our students today about the history of our country and that it wasn't very long ago. | Caucasians can see the world from an African American's point of view | Hispanics | How treating someone differently because of the way they look can effect them | For students who do get anything/ everything they want. This book shows them to be humble. I also like how the book has them serving others at the soup kitchen |

| Motivation | Students want to be able to hang out/be friends with anyone without being segregated. | Students who want to create change/equality | Students who are bilingual that experience other cultures during their life | Students like to feel like they belong-but sometimes it is helpful to know that others have felt like they didn't belong and found a place | Students who are transported by bus to and from different places |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity &amp; Representation</th>
<th>The Day You Begin</th>
<th>Malala’s Magic Pencil</th>
<th>We Shall Overcome</th>
<th>What is Given From the Heart</th>
<th>Drawn Together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race and immigration-the story talks about how different you can be from others. The story talks about a guy, Rigoberto who just moved from Venezuela.</td>
<td>Race, ethnicity, religion, class-The story takes place in Pakistan where the child is Muslim. the story talks about how the girls are forced to stay home from school by the Taliban on the streets</td>
<td>Race-the story is specifically about African Americans and the oppression that they feel</td>
<td>Race and religion-the story is about an African American family who doesn't have a lot giving what they do have to another African American family who lost everything in a fire. They mom and son go to church</td>
<td>Race, language, age-The story is about a Vietnamese-American child hanging out with his grandpa. There is a language barrier that is broken when they start to draw together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Voices of Characters | Race-the main character is an African American | Race, religion, gender, class-Malala goes to school, dreaming about a magic pencil. Eventually forced to stay home | Race-the story is specifically about African Americans and the oppression that they feel | Race-the story is about African American families | Race, language, and age-The grandpa speaks their native tongue while the boy speaks English. It is a grandson and grandpa in the story |

| Elements & Experience | Setting, characters, events-the story takes place at | Setting, characters, events, language, and illustrations all | Setting, events, illustrations-recollect the experiences of | Setting, characters, and events-There is a family who | Characters, language, and illustrations-The grandfather |
### Teaching Race through Multicultural Children’s Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generalizations, stereotypes, or misrepresentations</th>
<th>The Day You Begin</th>
<th>Malala’s Magic Pencil</th>
<th>We Shall Overcome</th>
<th>What is Given From the Heart</th>
<th>Drawn Together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kind of: Only shares Colored People's point of view about racism</td>
<td>Strengths-people have more in common than they have differences. Weaknesses- N/A</td>
<td>Strengths-giving a real account of what it is like to be a female and live in Pakistan Weakness-not giving an account of the men</td>
<td>Strengths-the story recalls specific events that are true Weakness- Only getting one point of view</td>
<td>Strengths- showing that gifts can come from the heart and don't have to cost a lot Weaknesses-showing only African American families that are poor</td>
<td>Strengths-even though language separates the grandfather and boy, they still find similarities through art Weaknesses- showing the grandfather in a traditional role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That she didn't go on a vacation during the summer and just stayed home to care for her sister</td>
<td>Any student who feels different as soon as they walk into a room based on different outward appearances</td>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>Any family that has experienced a fire or that doesn't have a lot especially in times of holidays</td>
<td>This text could be a mirror for any student whose grandparents may speak a different language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voices Not Heard</th>
<th>Adult</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Caucasians</th>
<th>There aren't any father's in either of the families the story talks about</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths, Weaknesses/ Silences</td>
<td>Strengths-people have more in common than they have differences. Weaknesses- N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirror</td>
<td>Any student who feels different as soon as they walk into a room based on different outward appearances</td>
<td>Any student who wishes to create equality</td>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>Any family that has experienced a fire or that doesn't have a lot especially in times of holidays</td>
<td>This text could be a mirror for any student whose grandparents may speak a different language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window</td>
<td>Caucasians who may not have ever felt left out because they haven't been in situations where they would be the minority</td>
<td>Anyone who isn't Muslim or have lived in Pakistan.</td>
<td>Caucasians</td>
<td>Families that aren't struggling with finances</td>
<td>Families who all speak the same language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Although you may feel different as soon as you walk into a room, you can almost always find someone who has something in common with you</td>
<td>This story helps to educate people about what it is like in different countries for different genders</td>
<td>This story gives a good recollection of the history of African Americans which could be a great teaching point. Not sure how it would interest students</td>
<td>Showing students that gifts don't have to cost a lot, they can simply have meaning behind them to make the present special</td>
<td>This story helps students to see that even though there are differences between the grandfather and boy, they still can connect through art</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>