

***Incorporating Multicultural Children's Literature into the Classroom***

**An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)**

by

Emily Cade

**Thesis Advisor**

Dixie Denton

**Ball State University  
Muncie, Indiana**

*May 2019*

**Expected Date of Graduation**

*May 2019*

## ABSTRACT

Incorporating multicultural children's literature in elementary classrooms and schools is imperative for helping students grow in their own identities and understandings of the world. The problem, however, is that although a lot of research exists on this matter, children are still lacking access to these vital resources. This project begins by reviewing research that already exists, and then, a study was created to survey current elementary educators about their experiences when incorporating multicultural children's literature in their classrooms and libraries. Once responses were collected, they were analyzed, and solutions were posed for the challenges that survey participants shared when incorporating this literature. Finally, these solutions and resources were shared with preservice teachers during a professional development presentation.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Dixie Denton, my thesis advisor, for supporting me throughout my time at Ball State University. In my very first elementary education course, you challenged me to teach with an assets-based perspective, and this stuck with me every single day since. It was this lesson that became a part of my teaching philosophy, and, eventually, it helped to inspire this research project. Thank you for helping me develop my idea into a research topic, navigate the requirements for receiving IRB approval, conduct a survey for the first time, and planning for my professional development presentation. Thank you for always providing me with encouragement and guidance; it always “gives me goosebumps” to know that I have your support.

I would also like to thank my family, friends, and fiancé for always encouraging me, even when it seemed like completing this project was impossible. From the beginning, you all listened to me brainstorm topics and research ideas, gave me advice when I needed it, and supplied me with support (and chocolate) when I felt overwhelmed. I could not have finished this without you.

## PROCESS ANALYSIS STATEMENT

During the past four years, I have been constantly challenged to incorporate diverse children's literature and curriculum into my lessons and future classroom to provide "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" for my students (Sims Bishop, 1990). I was always taught that such literature not only helps our students feel valued in the classroom and school, but it also helps them flourish academically and socially in the diverse world that we live in. When I was in classrooms, though, I noticed that many were still lacking these incredibly important resources. The purpose of this research was to determine why this is happening and what, if anything, can be done to solve this problem that affects so many.

I began my search for answers by reviewing research that has already been conducted on this topic, specifically those that consider what multicultural children's literature is, why it is important, and what challenges educators might face when trying to incorporate it. Additionally, I reviewed literature that posed possible ways to overcome these challenges. This created a strong foundation for my project.

Next, I needed to design my own study to research elementary educators' beliefs about multicultural literature and their experiences implementing it in the classroom and school. To do this, I created a survey to distribute to elementary educators around Indiana using Qualtrics surveying software. Since this research dealt with human subjects, I had to request approval from Ball State University's branch of The Institutional Review Board (IRB) by submitting an application that outlined my plans for my study, including the type and amount of participants that I hoped to have, letters of support from two elementary school administrators that gave me permission to contact their staff, and proof that I

completed training for conducting such research. A few days after submitting my application, I received “exempt” approval (Appendix F), and it was finally time to distribute my surveys.

With the school administrators’ support, I was able to send a recruitment email (Appendix A) to request participation in my survey titled, “Incorporating Multicultural Literature into the Elementary Classroom” (Appendix B). Although I did not receive as many responses as I had hoped for, I was able to collect a total of 18 responses from general elementary teachers, librarians, literacy specialists, and special education teachers.

Once I received these responses, I began to analyze them for common patterns in their beliefs and experiences. This gave me the opportunity to consider how these responses relate to the research that I had already done—were responses similar to what research suggested they would be or were they completely different? Then, I paid special attention to challenges that teachers shared and, using the knowledge I had gained from my own, personal experiences and the research I had conducted at the beginning, I collected resources and ideas for alleviating some of these challenges.

Finally, I completed my project by presenting my findings, including my proposed plans for overcoming some of the challenges that educators might face when trying to incorporate multicultural literature in their classrooms and libraries, to a room full of preservice teachers. I wanted to share what I had learned and what resources I had collected because I wanted to give these preservice teachers every possible opportunity to succeed in incorporating this essential resource. I finished by sharing my learning and experience with others because I am a teacher and this is what I am meant to do.

## INTRODUCTION

Diversity, just like change, can make people feel uncomfortable and anxious. Just like change, though, it can also be beautiful and eye-opening, pushing people to grow more than they ever could on their own, with only their experiences to learn from. In the world that exists today, diversity is also unavoidable, and, in order for educators to help their students become productive and respectful citizens, they need to expose them to the diverse perspectives that exist, challenge previously held biases, and encourage them to be understanding and accepting of people's differences, no matter what those differences may be. Educators can begin to take on this daunting task by sharing high-quality, multicultural children's literature with their eager students. Easier said than done, sure, but well worth every effort.

With the growing awareness for this need, teachers and librarians are challenged daily—on social media, from colleagues, in educational courses, or at professional development experiences—to find, buy, and promote these multicultural literature to students and other educators to enhance their learning experiences and promote students' understanding and respect of cultures—both their own and those that exist in the world (Haeffner, 2016). That leaves an important question, though—what exactly is multicultural literature? Multicultural literature, or culturally diverse literature, is not a simple term to define; quite on the contrary, in fact. It is multidimensional, complex, and fluid, attempting to address the thousands of differences that can exist, even within a population (Boyd, Causey, & Galda, 2015). For the purpose of this research, however, multicultural children's literature will refer to literature that focuses on themes about race, ethnicity, language, culture, disabilities, family structures, sexuality, gender identity,

socioeconomic status, religious practices, and dialect differences (Boyd, Causey, & Galda, 2015).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Importance of Multicultural Children's Literature*

Educators are constantly challenged to incorporate diverse children's literature and curriculum into their schools and classroom, but before they can do that, they need to understand why this literature is important. According to Emily Style, there are two types of multicultural literature that should be available to all of our students, and she coined the terms "mirrors" and "windows" to describe them (1988). "Mirrors" refers to literature and curriculum that reflect students' own culture and experiences, and "windows" reveal some insights into others' cultures and experiences (Style, 1988). Every child deserves to see themselves reflected in the books they read and the content they learn, but they also deserve to learn about the many other perspectives that exist in this pluralistic world; it is educators' and librarians' duty to ensure that they have these experiences. Students of majority populations, who often find themselves surrounded by mirrors, are unable to experience the reality of the wonderful, multicultural world that they live in when they do not have access to books that serve as windows and sliding glass doors (Sims Bishop, 1990). Students of minority populations, however, are often surrounded by windows into the lives and cultures of majority populations, and this sends a message that their cultures and experiences are less valuable in the school and wider community, which can be detrimental to students' self-efficacy (Sims Bishop, 1990). Rudine Sims Bishop takes the mirrors and windows metaphor a step further. She explains that as students read books

that are windows, they are able place themselves in the story, imagining what it would be like to be the character and exist in the world that the author describes; when they push their imagination, these books become sliding glass doors (Sims Bishop, 1990). Multicultural literature that serves as “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” (Sims Bishop, 1990) can make students feel validated and encourage them to understand others’ lives and perspectives; when students do not have access to such stories, their learning experiences suffer, and, when they do, they flourish. Literature students are exposed to can greatly impact their “perception of the world” and the formation of their identity, and it is educators’ responsibility to make sure that they have the support they need to learn about themselves and the world (Mohamed, 2106).

Multicultural literature is extremely valuable to teachers and librarians because it helps them prepare students to live in the chaotic, diverse world by highlighting the similarities and differences amongst people throughout the world (Esteves, 2018) and throughout history (Haeffner, 2016). Furthermore, it can demonstrate how people are all connected to one another in a “single global community,” despite the numerous differences that exist amongst them (Esteves, 2018), helping students to develop a “broader perspective” of the world around them and an awareness and appreciation for diversity (Iwai, 2015). This also encourages students to think critically about how characters in the stories feel and interact with others that are different than themselves, which helps students respond empathetically to people in their everyday lives (Martinez, Koss, & Johnson, 2016). Developing a “broader perspective” of the world also helps students find their role and place in it, which can strengthen their identity (Gibson, 2012) and appreciation for their own culture (Iwai, 2015).

By exposing students to multicultural literature, teachers and librarians can also disrupt single stories that exist, ones that usually favor the dominant population, by bringing other perspectives to light, decreasing the perpetuation of stereotypes and making “historical events, people, and cultural narratives messy, more complex, and more validating” to everyone (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). Educators can draw students into important conversations about who is being represented in the stories that they read and hear and who may be silenced, which not only develops students’ critical thinking skills, but also encourages students’ awareness of the world (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). After addressing the danger of the single story, multicultural literature also can serve as a wonderful platform for reflection, which provides a gateway for discussing complex and crucial issues about cultures, society, and people that may be difficult to bring to students’ attention otherwise (Iwai, 2015). Without these important counternarratives, curious students are left to make sense of the world using the sources that they have access to, including personal experiences and messages from stories and the media, which may perpetuate stereotypes that can be damaging to students as they encounter in their daily lives (Meese, 2012).

### *Challenges for Incorporating Multicultural Children’s Literature*

One of the biggest challenges for incorporating multicultural children’s literature in classrooms and libraries is that, even today, there are very few authentic and diverse children’s books published. Of the few that are published the themes mainly focus on race, ethnicity, culture, and language, which means that other forms of diversity, such as gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, religion, and ethnicity, are portrayed even less

often (Boyd, Causey, & Galda, 2015). This means that a lot of students will interact with literature that has a very limited view on the world, one that often is conveyed through white, heterosexual, and middle class representations and ignores the diverse complexity of many students' identities. Furthermore, book publishing statistics have not improved much throughout the past few decades, and, according to the Cooperative Children's Book Center, the amount of books published annually that are "written by and about people of color" are very few; the amount of books that reflect other forms of diversity are not even tracked (McNair, 2016). Although looking at this data is quite disappointing, it is also important to note that if teachers and librarians look back far enough, they can find quite a few wonderful, diverse children's books.

Additionally, honors and awards, such as the Caldecott Medal, which garner a lot of attention from teachers, librarians, parents, and other stakeholders as they search for high-quality books for their students and children, often lack the diversity that is present in our classrooms (Martinez, Koss, & Johnson, 2016). There are awards and honors, such as the Schneider Family Book Awards, the Pura Belpré Award, and Coretta Scott King Book Award, however, that were created to specifically honor authentic, high-quality books by and about people from marginalized populations, and teachers and librarians may find some books to include in their collections by perusing books that have won such awards and honors (McNair, 2016). There is still a great need for more high-quality, diverse books to be published, of course, in order to serve all of our students well (Haeffner, 2016), but when teachers and librarians are resourceful, gems can be uncovered.

Another huge obstacle is the “limited resources in terms of time and funding” for teachers and librarians, which make it difficult to procure a high-quality collection of multicultural children’s literature (Haeffner, 2016). to build their libraries It is important to remember, though, that it has to start somewhere. Even if teachers can only purchase one or two representative books a year, it is better than nothing, and, over time, their collection will grow (Mohamed, 2016). It also takes a lot of effort for educational professionals, including teachers and librarians, to spread the word about this need and procure funding for their libraries from their school district, grants, and other generous donations (Haeffner, 2016).

With such limited funding readily available, it is essential that the money is well spent on high-quality literature, but that takes a great deal of time. Searching for multicultural children’s books takes careful consideration in order to determine their authenticity, and, therefore, their value to students’ learning. For a book to be considered high-quality stakeholders should analyze illustrations, dialogue, characters, and descriptions of culture to ensure that portrayals of culture are accurate and appropriate, without the influence of stereotypes or bias (Iwai, 2015). The underlying messages in multicultural literature should also be examined to determine whether it promotes cultural pluralism or if it conveys assimilation ideologies, especially if the book discusses more than one culture (Yoon, Simpson, & Haag, 2010). These messages can be detrimental for developing empathy and an appreciation for diversity in the world unless they are accompanied by a critical analysis of the text and opportunities for students to challenge the misrepresentation of the minority population (Yoon, Simpson, & Haag, 2010). Additionally, it is recommended that teachers, librarians, and other stakeholders

incorporate multicultural literature from a variety of genres. Some genres may be more accessible for some children, provide different opportunities to make personal connections or be more interesting to some, which will encourage students to read and reflect on the book's content (Iwai, 2015). Although searching for and analyzing multicultural literature takes time and money, close examination of the literature is essential for acquiring a collection of high-quality, multicultural children's books.

Another challenge for bringing multicultural literature into classrooms and libraries is that teachers are not always prepared to handle the diversity that they will face and the diversity that exists throughout the world. Although teacher preparation programs try to prepare their students as much as possible, they face quite the challenge because preservice teachers are predominately white females who lack exposure to diversity and, consequently, understanding of how diversity impacts peoples' lives (Gibson, 2012). In a study conducted by Karen Gibson, a professor at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, it was found that exposure to contemporary realistic fiction, coupled with vital discussions among peers and written reflections, helped to promote awareness, develop empathy, and challenge previously held beliefs among preservice teachers, all while they worked to become more prepared for their future careers (Gibson, 2012). In this study, many participants shared their discomfort, inexperience, or fear of working with diverse populations before taking Gibson's course, and these uneasy feelings could potentially inhibit these education students from understanding their students' diverse backgrounds and unlocking their students' strengths (2012). By reading high-quality multicultural literature and discussing and reflecting on their learning, these education students developed a better understanding and appreciation for diversity, and they also realized

the importance of promoting “multiple perspectives in their classrooms” (Gibson, 2012). Additionally, classrooms need to feel “open and accepting,” (Gibson, 2012) and creating such a supportive environment will be nearly impossible if the teacher is uncomfortable or unwilling to discuss important issues with their students. Instead, it will promote a silence that can be harmful to students’ development of their self-efficacy and understanding of the world around them. Teachers who are not prepared to handle diversity in and out of their classrooms will often be unable to lead such vital discussions, and this unintentional ignorance would make these education students unable to properly serve students’ needs and promote equity (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014) unless their previous understandings, or lack thereof, are challenged.

Additionally, when teachers lack experience and understanding, they may unknowingly encourage the perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices. For example, many teachers begin reading books and incorporating activities that feature Indigenous Peoples in November, the same month as Thanksgiving, of course, and National Native American Heritage Month. Although this is often done with a positive intent, the books and activities “often default to stereotypes” where Native people are depicted as boorish, violent people who often wear fringed and feathered clothing (Reese, 2018). Not only is this an inaccurate generalization of numerous tribes, which propagates the misunderstanding that Indigenous People share one culture when, in reality, every single tribe has their own, but it also makes it seem as if Indigenous People are a population from the long ago past (Reese, 2018). These stories, as well as others that involve more than one population, will sometimes claim to promote cultural pluralism, but they may actually be delivering messages about the minority populations’ assimilation into the

dominant culture, which is often portrayed as superior (Yoon, Simpson, & Haag, 2010). Additionally, when Indigenous People—or any population for that matter—are discussed during one unit, week, or month, rather than all year round, then diversity is never normalized, which limits the understandings that people can develop.

Although finding and obtaining a collection of high-quality multicultural books into the classroom can be difficult, the challenges do not end there. Simply bringing multicultural books into the classroom is not enough—not by a long shot. According to Kelli J. Esteves, an Associate Professor and the Coordinator of Global Experiences in the College of Education at Butler University, the next step is to challenge students to “look inward before looking outward” (Esteves, 2018). Educators need to help their students develop their personal identity so that they can begin to understand how other cultures have impacted their lives, the maturation of their own beliefs, and their relationship to the dominant culture where they live (Esteves, 2018). This provides students with a foundation to build on as they learn about others’ identities (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). Additionally, when teachers take the time to help their students consider their own identities, they also have the opportunity to teach their students about the concept of “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” (Sims Bishop, 1990) and challenge them to analyze books that they have read throughout their lives and identify which parts of their identities were reflected and which parts never were (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). This will help them to think critically about who is reflected in stories that we read, the affect that the stories have on certain populations and the world, and how the stories are supported or challenged by those that read them (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). Without these discussions and reflective activities, educators lose the opportunity to

create learning experiences that can foster critical thinking skills, intercultural understanding, self-awareness (Esteves, 2018), empathy (Gibson, 2012), and awareness of important issues about society, culture, and people (Iwai, 2015). Bringing multicultural literature into the classroom is a great start, but it would be a disservice to all students if the learning stopped there.

## RATIONALE FOR STUDY

For decades, educators and researchers have emphasized the importance of including multicultural children's books in libraries and classroom curriculum because, among other reasons, it promotes students' understanding and respect of cultures—both their own and those that exist in the world. Although an abundance of research exists on this matter, as previously explored, many schools are still lacking in these essential resources and teachers are still struggling to incorporate them into their classrooms. Multicultural literature is too important to push to the side, for students and the world, and it is the time to figure why this is happening and what can be done about it.

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into practicing elementary teachers' and librarians' perceptions of multicultural literature and their ability to incorporate it into their classrooms and libraries, to determine if their perceptions align with those described in the aforementioned research, and to provide resources for overcoming some of the challenges that these Hoosier educators face.

## METHODS

In order to develop a foundation for my study, I conducted secondhand research of academic literature that focused on multicultural literature and its importance in the classroom. I garnered resources from various peer-reviewed scholarly journals, such as *The Reading Teacher*, and professional organizations, such as The National Council of Teachers of English. These resources were then analyzed and synthesized to create a strong foundation for my study.

Then, to gain a better understanding of what practicing elementary teachers and librarians think about multicultural literature and their ability to incorporate it into their libraries, I went straight to the source. I created an online survey (Appendix B), which includes the consent form, that challenged participants to reflect on their teaching practices and book choices in their library. Before distributing the survey, I applied for and received exempt approval for my study from Ball State University's branch of the Instructional Review Board (IRB) in March 2019 under the package name, "Incorporating Multicultural in the Elementary Classroom" (#1401947-1). The next step of my study was to reach out to elementary school administrators and request permission to conduct my research with their staff. I garnered support from two elementary schools in Indiana, Forest Dale Elementary School and Maconquah Elementary School for this study. After providing me with letters of support, these administrators were able to send out my recruitment email (Appendix A) to their entire staff. Interested staff members who met the participation requirements then contacted me, and I provided them with the link to my survey.

To qualify for this survey, participants needed to be at least 18 years old and a practicing elementary educator, including administrators, teachers, and librarians or media clerks. Participation in the survey was limited to elementary educators as this is the time that students are exposed to a variety of literature and developing their own beliefs and perceptions about their community and culture, and they are quite impressionable; for this reason, this is a crucial age to introduce children to the multiculturalism that exists in our world. Participants were informed that their participation was completely voluntary, there were no perceived risks for participating, no compensation would be provided, and their responses would be kept confidential.

This survey was created using Qualtrics software, which made it possible to distribute this survey efficiently to participants around Indiana. Using this survey software also allowed me to make the data collection anonymous, so that I, as the principal investigator, was not provided with any of the participants' personal identifiers, such as their name or school corporation. This software also made it possible to quickly and easily analyze and synthesize participants' responses in order to address the challenges that these participants have faced when incorporating multicultural literature into their libraries.

This survey was comprised of 16 questions, including the informed consent form, which served as a gateway for the rest of the questions when participants supplied their consent. Survey questions were written as multiple choice and short answer questions to collect participants' demographic information, perceptions about multicultural literature, and reflections on their incorporation of such literature in the classroom.

## RESULTS AND DATA

By the end of this study, 18 elementary educators completed the survey, “Incorporating Multicultural Literature into the Elementary Classroom.” Participants included general education teachers, special education teachers, literacy specialists, and librarians that work with students anywhere from kindergarten to fifth grade. Amongst participants, 94.4% identified as white and the remaining 5.6% identified as both American Indian or Alaskan Native and white. 88.9% of participants identified as female, and only 11.1% identified as male. In consideration to teaching experience, 22.2% have been teaching for one to five years, 11.1% for six to ten years, 11.1% for eleven to fifteen years, 33.3% for sixteen to twenty years, 11.1% for twenty-one to twenty-five years, and 11.1% for twenty-six to thirty years. Of those surveyed, 83.3% have taught in another school or grade level before their current position, and many shared that, besides different standards when applicable, they noticed significant differences between their previous and current position in terms of socioeconomic status, students’ needs, and emphasis on testing.

When participants were asked how they define “high-quality multicultural literature,” many shared that they see this as literature that does not solely reflect “mainstream” populations, but is also reflective of different cultures, free from bias, relatable, and engaging. Only 16.7% of participants mentioned that they look for diverse authors, as well as characters, and almost all only related diversity to differences in ethnicity, nationalities, and cultures. Of those who participated, only 16.7% mentioned other forms of diversity including representations of diverse family structures, various religions, and LGBTQA+ community.

Another question asked participants to share how comfortable they were in teaching about cultures different from their own, and a majority of participants, 61.1% specifically, shared that they were moderately comfortable with this task; one of the participants shared that they were even slightly uncomfortable. Then, participants were asked to share what concerns they have when incorporating multicultural literature into their curriculum and libraries, and 72.2% of participants shared that they have quite a few concerns. Amongst the educators that shared their concerns, 26.7% shared that limited time to find and implement the literature is a challenge, 26.7% shared that limited funding makes it difficult to procure a high-quality, diverse library, and 40.0% shared that they are concerned about accurately depicting the population that the literature represents. A few participants were concerned about students' families' potential responses to incorporating such literature.

Participants were also challenged to examine their classroom and school demographics. All participant's shared that their students in their school and classrooms are mostly white, and 61.1% shared that their schools are mostly low-income. Then, they were asked to look at their classroom library closely and determine how well it reflects their students. 5.5% of participants shared that their library reflects their students "slightly well," 11.1% shared that it represents them "moderately well," 50.0% shared that it represents them "very well," and 22.2% shared that it represents them "extremely well."

## DISCUSSION

When planning this research and developing the survey, I had imagined that I would get a multitude of responses from elementary administrators, teachers, and librarians all around Indiana. I thought that many participants would reveal that their classroom libraries do not reflect their students' lives and cultures because, from my experiences, that is what I have observed. At the very least, I thought participants would share a variety of specific experiences and challenges that they had faced when trying to incorporate multicultural literature into their learning environments, but I quickly learned that things do not often work out exactly as planned. I am thankful, though, that the responses I received came from teachers that had experienced quite a bit of success when incorporating such literature and from teachers that had faced quite a few challenges. This helped me realize that elementary educators are often aware of this important element of libraries and curriculum and are willing to implement this literature, but, sometimes, they just need some proper support to do so.

The results of this research reinforced the idea that effective teachers must be flexible and adapt to the populations that they work with, standards that they must teach, and resources that are available because, especially between schools and grade levels, these will change. It was also revealed that the definition of "multicultural literature" and even "diversity" can often be limited, which can make it difficult to effectively reflect students' lives and cultures. When describing multicultural literature, many participants only thought of characters' race, nationality, and ethnicity, but there is so much more to it. Multicultural literature also reflects religious beliefs, family structures, gender identity,

and sexual orientation; additionally, the definition does not only consider characters' lives and cultures, but the authors' and illustrators,' too.

Results also revealed that a majority of survey participants have some concerns when incorporating this literature in their classrooms and libraries. A little over half of these participants shared that the biggest challenge they faced were limited resources in terms of time and funding. This helped me realize that it would be extremely beneficial to collect some information about resources that may alleviate some of these challenges or, at the very least, spark an idea for overcoming these challenges. Many other participants shared that they were concerned about their own understanding of cultures and experiences outside of their own, and this helped me realize that I needed to share how multicultural children's literature can benefit educators, too. Although it is essential for educators to do their own research outside of these texts, these texts provide some great information for readers of all ages; as our students grow in their understandings of their world, so do we. Additionally, it is important to help elementary educators understand that they can share their lack of understanding with students, and, if possible, give them opportunities to conduct research as a class or share their personal experiences. This research helped me see that there is a need for this information, for these proposed solutions to some challenges that elementary educators face when incorporating multicultural children's literature in the classroom and school, and I have the opportunity to share it.

There are, of course, limitations to this research. Due to time constraints, I was only able to survey teaching staff from two different schools, and, as a result, the participants' experiences were somewhat limited. I am pleased that I was able to survey

staff from two schools that offer quite different levels of support because it allowed me to address challenges from either end of the spectrum. If I were to continue this research, however, I would survey staff from multiple schools, types of communities, and grade levels because it would have given me the opportunity to address more experiences and challenges that people face when incorporating multicultural children's literature in classrooms and libraries. Additionally, survey participation was limited, even amongst the two schools that I contacted. In the future, I would increase participation by providing an incentive and streamlining the process for participation. As it was, participants had to read the recruitment email, and, then, email me, before receiving the link to the survey; it would have been more efficient had the link to the survey been in the recruitment email.

## IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

Incorporating multicultural children's literature into elementary classrooms and libraries is essential for helping students feel valued, preparing them for the diverse world, and disrupting single stories. Doing so, however, poses quite a few challenges. Educators are faced with limited time to find and implement these important texts, limited funding to procure a high-quality collection of this literature, and, in some cases, limited understanding and experience with others' lives and cultures.

To overcome limited time, I have used the time that I have now to collect a list of high-quality, diverse children's books, authors, and illustrators. This, of course, is not a complete list, but it gives me a place to begin my collection of literature that can offer my students and myself access to "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" (Sims Bishop,

1990). It gives me a place to begin my search, and I will be able to add to this list throughout the rest of my life.

To overcome limited funding, I have researched and brainstormed different opportunities to receive the finances necessary to procure a high-quality multicultural literature collection. These include grants, literacy foundations, nonprofit organizations, and ideas for local fundraising. I have also collected a variety of resources that sell discounted children's books, which can give educators the opportunity to make the most out of any funds that are available, whether they are limited or not.

To overcome limited understanding of experiences and cultures outside of my own, I can make the time to read some of the wonderful texts that I find and do some of my own research. I can also invite my students to share their experiences with me and the rest of the class, which will not only help my class and me learn, but it can also empower my students who choose to share, giving the confidence to share their identify with the world. When I am still unsure or lacking in my understanding, I can also be honest with my students and share that I am still learning. This will help my students come to the realization that our learning is never complete and see the process of growing in that understanding as we embark in our own research to close the gaps in our own knowledge of the world.

Additionally, educators face a challenge when looking for multicultural children's books because there are a limited amount of them published and recognized each year. To overcome this, educators are faced with another daunting task—advocating. We, as educators, can challenge the world to publish authentic stories that reflect diverse experiences, encourage publishers to actually publish these stories, and challenge

committees for various literature awards to honor them. We can also share amazing authors, illustrators, and books that we find with others.

Although there are so many challenges to overcome, we, as educators, owe it to our students, our community, ourselves to do our very best to overcome them. This research really helped me understand what I can do in my own school and classroom, although I know I will have to continue learning, of course, but it is my responsibility, as an educational professional, to share what I have learned with others. What better way to start, than sharing it with my peers, other preservice teachers who will begin their teaching careers, with their own classrooms and students, in just a few, short years?

I decided to create a professional development presentation so that I could share what I learned throughout my research with my peers face-to-face. I created an outline (Appendix C) for this presentation in order to think through and prepare of it, and, afterward, I designed a slideshow (Appendix D) to engage the audience and keep me on track as I presented.

First, though, I looked through the resources that I had collected to help overcome limited time, funding, and understanding, and I put it together in a packet that I could share with preservice teachers (Appendix E). Then, I looked through the research, including my secondary research and survey responses, I had collected and tried to determine what these teachers needed to know. I realized that it was imperative for me to begin by sharing why I did this research. I wanted my audience of preservice teachers to understand that, although they are taught about the importance of multicultural literature throughout their schooling, I rarely see it implemented in elementary classroom or libraries because once preservice teachers graduate and get their own classrooms,

they are faced with so much, and it can be much more difficult to incorporate multicultural literature than they ever thought.

Next, I decided that it was extremely important to clarify what multicultural literature entails, at least for the purpose of my research, and its importance to our students and world. At this point, I also thought that it would be beneficial to walk through how it can specifically help students and teachers grow socially, emotionally, and academically. I wanted to emphasize that it is worth the time and money to implement because, in the world of education, we are often forced to prioritize, and this needs to be a priority.

Finally, it was time to introduce the challenges that elementary educators might face when incorporating such literature. The challenges that I shared stemmed from survey responses and my foundational research, and, although they can be overwhelming, I knew that I needed to be honest about them. I did not want to sugarcoat it, and make it seem easy to do because it is not. Just like I shared in my presentation, though, it is worth it. Then, after explaining some of the more daunting challenges, I posed possible solutions to them, all of which were explored in the packet that I provided. I wanted the audience of preservice teachers to know that it is possible to successfully incorporate multicultural children's literature in their future classrooms and schools, and I wanted to give them some resources that will help them do just that.

I decided to end my professional development presentation by sharing what I gained from this research. I had not only grown in my understanding of multicultural literature, but I also gained some practical resources that can help me build my own library that can reflect my students and open their to the world around them. I wanted to share

how I planned to implement this research because I wanted my audience to know that, as they face this daunting task, they are not alone.

## CONCLUSION

Every single day, teachers are challenged to incorporate multicultural children's literature in their classrooms and libraries, and it is for a multitude of reasons. Multicultural children's literature reflects cultures and experiences from around the world, including representations from diverse races, nationalities, ethnicities, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, family structures, sexual orientations, and gender identities. It provides students with the opportunity to see their own stories reflected and learn about others'. This can help students develop and strengthen their own identities and global understandings. Additionally, multicultural literature can challenge readers to think critically about the world, their biases, their experiences, and stories that they have heard throughout their life. In essence, this literature helps readers grow as learners and global citizens, and one of the many responsibilities of educators is to expose their students to such engaging and critical literature.

The problem, however, is that this is much easier said than done. Elementary educators face numerous challenges including limited resources and understandings of diverse perspectives. We cannot give up, though. We owe it to our students and world to try our very best to make the most out of the resources that we have and to do our part in learning about the multicultural world that we live in. The information and resources that I have collected throughout this project can serve as a starting point, but it is only beneficial if we continue to add to it, share it with others, and advocate for the publication

and recognition of high-quality multicultural literature. We, as educators, are in this together, and, when we work together, we can provide our students with these vital resources.

### **Appendix A: Recruitment Email**

Dear Educator,

My name is Emily Cade, and I am an undergraduate student at Ball State University studying Elementary Education. Currently, I am completing my Honors Thesis by studying importance of incorporating multicultural children's literature in elementary classrooms, libraries, and curriculum and the challenges that educators might face in doing so. This information will be collected to provide some solutions to these challenges at the conclusion of this study in a professional development opportunity for educators.

I am emailing to ask if you would be willing to complete a survey about your personal experiences in reference to multicultural children's literature. There are no perceived risks for participating in this study, and your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You also have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason. This survey would take approximately 15 minutes to complete, and, although the survey will collect some indirect identifiers, such as your current teaching position and years teaching, the results will be confidential. If you choose to participate, your responses will be reported anonymously to me, and they will be stored on my computer until the research is completed, in May 2019, at which point they will be destroyed. I will also remove all identifiers from your responses before reporting them in my research or presentation to ensure your privacy.

To participate in this study, you must be at least 18 years of age and currently employed as an elementary school teacher, administrator, or librarian/media clerk.

If you are interested in participating, please contact the me, the Principal Investigator, at [emcade@bsu.edu](mailto:emcade@bsu.edu), or my faculty advisor, Professor Dixie Denton, at [ddenton@bsu.edu](mailto:ddenton@bsu.edu).

Thank you so much for your time!

Sincerely,  
Emily Cade

### **Researcher Contact Information**

Principal Investigator:  
Emily M. Cade, Undergraduate Student

Elementary Education  
Ball State University

Muncie, IN 47306  
Telephone: (765) 244-0350  
Email: emcade@bsu.edu  
IRBNet Number: 1401947-1  
Faculty Supervisor:  
Professor Dixie Denton

Elementary Education  
Ball State University  
Muncie, IN 47306  
Telephone: (765) 285-8550  
Email: ddenton@bsu.ed

## **Appendix B: Incorporating Multicultural Literature into the Classroom Survey**

### **Q1 Welcome to the research study, "Incorporating Multicultural Literature into the Classroom!"**

We are interested in understanding why multicultural children's literature is important to incorporate in elementary classrooms and libraries, what challenges educators might face in doing so, and possible solutions to these problems . To help us gain a better understanding of what challenges educators might face in incorporating multicultural children's literature in curriculum and libraries, all participants should be 18 years of age or older and an elementary educator, which includes teachers, administrators, and librarians or media.

As a participant in this study, you will be presented with some multiple choice and short answer questions about multicultural children's literature, your classroom, and your experiences, and we ask that you answer these questions honestly. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential, and any identifying information, such as names or school district, will be left out of any presentation of this research. During this research project, all data will be stored on a password-protected computer, in a password-protected file storage site, Dropbox. At the conclusion of this project, in May 2019, all data will be destroyed, and it will not be used in any future research of any kind.

The survey should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete. There are no perceived risks for participating in this study, and your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You have the right to cease participation in this survey at any time and for any reason. You may contact the Principal Investigator of this study to discuss this research, before clicking below or at any time during this study, please e-mail Emily Cade at emcade@bsu.edu.

For additional questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Office of Research Integrity at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. You may call them at (765) 285-5052 or email them at orihelp@bsu.edu.

By clicking the button below, you agree to participate in this research project entitled, "Incorporating Multicultural Children's Literature into the Classroom," and you agree that the study has been explained to you and all of your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You acknowledge that your participation in the study is completely voluntary, you are 18 years of age, you are an elementary school librarian/media clerk,

teacher, or administrator, and that you are aware that you may choose to quite this survey at any time and for any reason

You may print this informed consent form for your personal records.

\*\*Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

### **Researcher Contact Information**

#### Principal Investigator

Emily M. Cade, Undergraduate Student  
Elementary Education  
Ball State University  
Muncie, IN 47306  
Telephone: (765) 244-0350  
Email: [emcade@bsu.edu](mailto:emcade@bsu.edu)  
IRBNet Number: 1401947-1

#### Faculty Supervisor

Professor Dixie Denton  
Elementary Education  
Ball State University  
Muncie, IN 47306  
Telephone: (765) 285-8550  
Email: [ddenton@bsu.edu](mailto:ddenton@bsu.edu)

- I agree; continue to the study.
  - I disagree; I do not wish to participate in this study.
-

Q2 How would you describe yourself? Choose all that apply.

- Asian
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Other
- 

Q3 To which gender do you most identify?

- Male
  - Female
  - Transgender Male
  - Transgender Female
  - Gender Variant/Non-Conforming
  - Not Listed
-

Q4 Current Teaching Position/Grade Level/School: (Ex. Principal/K-5/Washington Elementary School)

---

Q5 Years Teaching:

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 35+ years

Q6 Have you ever taught in another school, position, and/or grade level? If so, what school, position, and/or grade level did you teach in?

---

---

---

---

---

Q7 If you answered "yes" to the previous question, how does your previous school, position, and/or grade level differ from your current one?

If you answered "no" to the previous question, please type "NA."

---

---

---

---

---

---

Q8 How would you describe the student population in your school? How would you describe the student population in your classroom?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Q9 How would you define "high-quality multicultural literature?" Are there any specific features you look for? Are there any particular titles or authors that you've found?

---

---

---

---

---

Q10 Have you ever implemented multicultural literature into your classroom? How did you use it? How do you think it affected your lesson and class?

---

---

---

---

---

---

Q11 How comfortable are you in teaching about a culture different from your own?

- Extremely comfortable
  - Moderately comfortable
  - Slightly comfortable
  - Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
  - Slightly uncomfortable
  - Moderately uncomfortable
  - Extremely uncomfortable
-

Q12 What concerns do you have about incorporating multicultural literature into your classroom?

---

---

---

---

---



Q13 How would you describe your classroom or school library? What levels, interests, genres, and forms of diversity are represented?

---

---

---

---

---



Q14 In your opinion, how well does your library represent your students?

- Extremely well
- Very well
- Moderately well
- Slightly well
- Not well at all



Q15 Have you faced any challenges in acquiring multicultural children's literature for your library?

---

---

---

---

---



Q16 Any additional comments:

---

---

---

---

---

## Appendix C: Professional Development Presentation Outline

### Incorporating Multicultural Children's Literature into the Classroom

#### 1. Bringing Multicultural Children's Literature into the Classroom

- My research has taught me so much about multicultural children's literature, its importance, and how to incorporate it into the classroom, and I want to thank you all for letting me share it with you. Some of this information might be review and some of it might be new, but no matter what, I hope that when you leave here today, you can feel excited about sharing multicultural books with your students.

#### 2. What is it?

- First things first—what exactly *is* multicultural literature?
- For the purpose of this research, “Multicultural literature focuses on themes about race, ethnicity, language, culture, disabilities, family structures, sexuality, gender identity, socioeconomic status, religious practices, and dialect differences (Boyd, Causey, & Galda, 2015).”
- In short, multicultural literature explores experiences outside of the majority population's experiences.

#### 3. Why?

- So, why is it important for us, as educators, to bring multicultural literature into our classrooms and libraries?
- The main reason is that our students deserve it.
  - Students deserve to see themselves reflected in the literature and content that surrounds them—they deserve to know that, although each of their lives are different, they're not alone. They deserve to feel connected to others.
    - It's easy to find books representing the majority population and “normal” family experiences. The ones with a white, heterosexual, two-parent family that have no apparent disabilities or financial struggles. Students of majority populations, with these “normal” life experiences, often don't have to search for books that they can connect to, mirrors that reflect their lives.
    - Students of minority populations, however, are often surrounded by windows into the lives and cultures of majority populations, and this sends a message that their cultures and experiences are less valuable in the school and wider community, which can be detrimental to students' self-efficacy (Sims Bishop, 1990).
  - Students also deserve to learn about the perspectives that exist in the wonderful, pluralistic world that we live in.
    - When students read books that are windows, they are able place themselves in the story, imagining what it would be like to be the character and exist in the world that the author describes; these sorts of books describe experiences that they are not familiar with, pushing the reader to look at the world through someone else's eyes. When

readers push their imagination, though, these books become sliding glass doors, allowing the reader to immerse themselves in the character's world and feel what they feel (Sims Bishop, 1990).

- "They deserve windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors (Sims Bishop, 1990)."

4. It also helps us grow.

- **Fosters Empathy:** When students have the opportunity to read books that serve as windows and sliding glass doors, they can begin to understand perspectives that differ from their own and even share their feelings. These books provide a gateway for discussing diverse perspectives, and, when teachers take advantage of this opportunity and encourage these discussions, they can help to foster empathy amongst students.
- **Builds Global Awareness:** When students are able to read books by and about people from different cultures and who have had different life experiences, they are able to build global awareness. Developing a "broader perspective" of the world also helps students find their role and place in it, which can strengthen their identity (Gibson, 2012) and appreciation for their own culture (Iwai, 2015).
- **Develops Critical Thinking Skills:** Books that expose students to perspectives outside of their own pushes them to address some of their own beliefs and bias. Additionally, when teachers take the time to help their students consider their own identities, they also have the opportunity to teach their students about the concept of "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" (Sims Bishop, 1990) and challenge them to analyze books that they have read throughout their lives and identify which parts of their identities were reflected and which parts never were (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). This will help them to think critically about who is reflected in stories that we read, the affect that the stories have on certain populations and the world, and how the stories are supported or challenged by those that read them (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014).
- **Disrupts Single Stories:** By exposing students to multicultural literature, teachers and librarians can also disrupt single stories that exist, ones that usually favor the dominant population, by bringing other perspectives to light, decreasing the perpetuation of stereotypes and making "historical events, people, and cultural narratives messy, more complex, and more validating" to everyone (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). Educators can draw students into important conversations about who is being represented in the stories that they read and hear and who may be silenced, which not only develops students' critical thinking skills, but also encourages students' awareness of the world (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). After addressing the danger of the single story, multicultural literature also can serve as a wonderful platform for reflection, which provides a gateway for discussing complex and crucial issues about cultures, society, and people that may be difficult to bring to students' attention otherwise (Iwai, 2015). Without these important counternarratives, curious students are left to make sense of the world using the sources that they have access to, including personal experiences and messages from stories and the media, which may perpetuate

stereotypes that can be damaging to students as they encounter in their daily lives (Meese, 2012)

5. Introducing the Challenges: “Nothing worth having ever comes easy.”

- There are, of course, challenges that educators must face and overcome to find and incorporate multicultural children’s literature into their classrooms and libraries.

6. Challenges

- Challenges that educators will face include limited resources, a limited number of authentic, diverse children’s books, and actually incorporate the literature into the classroom. Educators, though, are creative, and there might be some possible solutions to these problems.

7. Limited Resources

- Teachers and librarians are limited in terms of funding and time (Haeffner, 2016). Schools all over the country have felt punishing budget cuts, and, consequently, so have their classrooms and libraries. When dealing with a tight budget and the various other needs in classrooms and libraries, such as supplies, furniture, and necessary equipment, it can be extremely difficult to find the money for purchasing books that provide each of our students with “mirrors,” “windows,” and “sliding glass doors.”
- Pass out the resource, “Multicultural Children’s Literature: A Starting Point.”
  - When there is limited funding, there are still some options.
- Teachers, librarians, and schools can apply for grants from local and national foundations and companies. These are just two that I found, and I would encourage everyone to apply for every grant that they can find.
- Classrooms, libraries, and schools can also plan and take advantage of fundraising events. Educators can create a DonorsChoose profile and request funds, for example, or use points earned from Scholastic book orders to build their libraries. Schools could also plan fundraising events, such as a literacy night, picnic, or dance, where families and community members could participate for a free-will donation. They can even simply plan dress-up days for teachers and staff for small donations—such days don’t cost a thing to set up, and it doesn’t disrupt the school day.
- I also included a list of stores that offer discounted books, that people can take advantage of to make the most of their budgets.
- Finally, I want to remind you all that your colleagues are your greatest resource! Consider partnering with other teachers in your grade level and school to create a lending library amongst yourselves so that you all have the opportunity to access a variety of books without having to purchase them all on your own.

8. Few Authentic, Diverse Children’s Books

- One of the biggest challenges for incorporating multicultural children’s literature in classrooms and libraries is that, even today, there are very few authentic and diverse children’s books published. Of the few that are published, the themes

mainly focus on race, ethnicity, culture, and language, which means that other forms of diversity, such as gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, religion, and ethnicity, are portrayed even less often (Boyd, Causey, & Galda, 2015). This means that a lot of students will interact with literature that has a very limited view on the world, one that often is conveyed through white, heterosexual, and middle class representations and ignores the diverse complexity of many students' identities. It is also important to note that if teachers and librarians look back far enough, they can find quite a few wonderful, diverse children's books.

- Refer to the resource "Multicultural Children's Literature: A Starting Point."
  - Throughout my research, though, I've run across many different books that have been thoroughly reviewed and approved by other professionals that study their authenticity. Using these resources, I've created a booklist that is broken into different forms of diversity, and, when you are able to look at the online version, you can also click on the link for each book title, which will take you directly to its description on Amazon. I also come across a list of great, racially diverse authors and illustrators while reading \_\_\_\_\_, which I've also included in this resource for you all to investigate.
- Additionally, honors and awards, such as the Caldecott Medal, which garner a lot of attention from teachers, librarians, parents, and other stakeholders as they search for high-quality books for their students and children, often lack the diversity that is present in our classrooms (Martinez, Koss, & Johnson, 2016). There are, however, many awards that still honor authentic, diverse literature, and when we know about these awards, they can serve as a great resource.
  - I've included a list of some of these awards in your resource accompanied by a brief description of that award.
- Finally, there are also some great resources out there that will make searching for authentic, diverse children's books much quicker and easier. This information is listed under "Other Resources," which is on the last page of your packets. This list includes blogs, articles, and websites that other professionals have created to inform people about high-quality, multicultural literature that exists.
  - One of my favorite resources on this list is social media. I use different platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, to follow organizations, schools, and teachers so that I can see and share some of their amazing ideas, including some of the wonderful books that they find. This is where I find the most honest and useful book reviews.

## 9. Incorporating the Literature

- Just bringing multicultural books into the classroom isn't enough. One of the best things that teachers can do is use these books daily in their curriculum and activities, to incorporate it naturally into their lessons. Making small adjustments to lessons, such as switching out a bland book for one that reflects global perspectives and can be used to teach the same thing, can make a huge difference.
- Sometimes, though, it can be difficult, especially with the limited time that we have in the classroom. In this case, we can promote new, multicultural books in

their classroom by having giving a small book talk in the mornings as students begin their days or in the afternoons, before students leave. We can also put new books of all kinds by putting them in a special book basket, which can really motivate students to check them out of the class or school library.

#### 10.A Starting Point

- Incorporating multicultural literature into our classrooms and schools is so important to building a positive, supportive learning environment and helping our students become empathetic, open-minded global citizens, but it comes with challenges. With support from colleagues, some creativity, and a willingness to take risks, though, we can overcome those challenges. It won't be easy, but seeing your students' excitement when they connect with a character or learn about another perspective makes it so worth it.

#### 11.My Next Step

- For me, this research has taken me on an intensely personal and professional journey. It has helped me explore my own experiences and concerns for incorporating multicultural children's literature in the classroom. It has also taught me that it is not a choice to do this—it is my responsibility as an educator for my students and our community.

## **Appendix D: Professional Development Presentation**

This is included in my paper copy.

## Appendix E: Professional Development Presentation – Resources Handout

### Multicultural Children’s Literature: A Starting Point

#### Raising the Funds

- **Grants**
  - James Patterson and Scholastic Book Clubs Giveaway for Classroom Libraries
  - The Snapdragon Book Foundation
  
- **Fundraising Opportunities**
  - DonorsChoose: an online nonprofit that gives the public the opportunity to donate to school and classroom projects
  - Free Will Donation Events: families and community members
  - Scholastic Books: earn points for every book purchase—use those points wisely
  - School Dress-Up Days: allow students to dress-up for a small donation
  
- **Store Bargains**
  - Book Outlet: online discount bookstore, selling publishers’ overstocks
  - Hoot of Loot: online store for buying and selling teaching supplies
  - Scholastic Warehouse Sale: yearly event that offers amazing discounts on books
    - 2019 Dates:
      - May 7-9: Fort Wayne, IN
      - May 20-23: Fishers, IN
    - \*\*\*If interested, sign up and receive a coupon!
  - Thriftbooks: online used bookstore
    - Teacher Discount: 15% off when you order 20+ books with the code, “APPLE”
  - Teacher Stores: some stores throughout Indiana provide discounted or free supplies

#### **Remember**

Your colleagues are your greatest resource!  
Consider partnering with other teachers to buy and borrow each other’s books.

## Books

- Disability
  - [\*A Splash of Red: The Life and Art of Horace Pippin\*](#) by Jen Bryant – K-3
  - [\*Rain Reign\*](#) by Ann M. Martin – 4-6
  - [\*The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin\*](#) by Julia Finley Mosca – K-2
  - [\*Junkyard Wonders\*](#) by Patricia Polacco – 3-5
  
- Family
  - [\*Those Shoes\*](#) by Maribeth Boelts – K-3
  - [\*Fly Away Home\*](#) by Eve Bunting – K-2
  - [\*Smoky Night\*](#) by Eve Bunting – 1-3
  - [\*Gettin' Through Thursday\*](#) by Melrose Cooper – 1-3
  - [\*Kimchi and Calamari\*](#) by Rose Kent – 4-7
  - [\*Families, Families, Families!\*](#) by Suzanne Lang – PreK-1
  - [\*Orange Peel's Pocket\*](#) by Rose Lewis – PreK-3
  - [\*How to Steal a Dog\*](#) by Barbara O'Connor – 3-7
  - [\*The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester\*](#) by Barbara O'Connor – 4-7
  - [\*My Very Own Room/Mi Propio Cuartito\*](#) by Amada Irma Perez – 1-3
  - [\*In Our Mothers' House\*](#) by Patricia Polacco – 1-4
  - [\*And Tango Makes Three\*](#) by Justin Richardson – PreK-2
  - [\*Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World\*](#) by Mildred Pitts Walter—3-8
  - [\*A Chair for My Mother\*](#) by Vera B. Williams – PreK-2
  - [\*One Crazy Summer\*](#) by Rita Williams-Garcia – 3-7
  - [\*Visiting Day\*](#) by Jacqueline Woodson – K-3
  
- Gender
  - [\*George\*](#) by Alex Gina – 4-6
  - [\*Sparkle Boy\*](#) by Leslea Newman – PreK-2
  - [\*Pink is for Boys\*](#) by Robb Pearlman – PreK-2
  
- Global Awareness and Multiculturalism
  - [\*Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions from Around the World\*](#) by Selby Beeler – PreK-2
  - [\*Around the World in a Bathtub: Bathing All Over the Globe\*](#) by Wade Bradford – PreK-2
  - [\*Off to Class: Incredible and Unusual Schools Around the World\*](#) by Susan Hughes – 3-7
  - [\*Children Just Like Me: Celebrations!\*](#) by Anabel Kindersley – 2-6
  - [\*Same, Same But Different\*](#) by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw –1-2
  - [\*This Is How We Do It: One Day in the Lives of Seven Kids from around the World\*](#) by Matt Lamothe – K-3
  - [\*Amazing World Atlas: Bringing the World to Life\*](#) by Lonely Planet Kids – 3-6
  - [\*The World In A Second\*](#) by Isabel Minhós Martins – 4-8
  - [\*All Are Welcome\*](#) by Alexandra Penfold – PreK-3

- [\*If the World Were a Village: A Book About the World's People\*](#) by David J. Smith – 3-7
- [\*This Child Every Child\*](#) by David J. Smith – 3-7
- Race & Ethnicity:
  - African
    - [\*The N°1 Car Spotter\*](#) by Atinuke – 3-6
    - [\*Binou's Braids\*](#) by Sylviane A. Diouf – K-3
    - [\*Seeds of Change: Wangari's Gift to the World\*](#) by Jen Cullerton Johnson – 2-4
    - [\*Mama Miti: Wangari Maathai and the Trees of Kenya\*](#) by Donna Jo Napoli and Kadir Nelson – K-3
    - [\*Little Red and the Very Hungry Lion\*](#) by Alex Smith – K-2
  - African American
    - [\*The Crossover\*](#) by Kwame Alexander – 5-7
    - [\*Whoosh! Lonnie Johnson's Super-Soaking Stream of Inventions\*](#) by Chris Barton – 2-5
    - [\*Zora and Me\*](#) by Victoria Bond and T.R. Simon – 4-7
    - [\*Through My Eyes\*](#) by Ruby Bridges – 2-6
    - [\*I Lost My Tooth in Africa\*](#) by Penda Diakité – K-4
    - [\*Everett Anderson's Goodbye\*](#) by Lucille Clifton – K-2
    - [\*Uptown\*](#) by Brian Collier – PreK-2
    - [\*Bigmama's\*](#) by Donald Crews – 1-4
    - [\*The Watson's Go to Birmingham—1963\*](#) by Christopher Paul Curtis – 3-7
    - [\*Nikki & Deja\*](#) by Karen English – PreK-3
    - [\*Honey, I Love and Other Love Poems\*](#) by Eloise Greenfield – 1-4
    - [\*Make Way for Dyamonde Daniel\*](#) by Nikki Grimes – 2-4
    - [\*Aunt Flossie's Hats \(and Crab Cakes Later\)\*](#) by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard – PreK-3
    - [\*Julius\*](#) by Angela Johnson – PreK-1
    - [\*Henry's Freedom Box\*](#) by Ellen Levine – PreK-3
    - [\*The All-I'll-Ever-Want Christmas Doll\*](#) by Patricia C. McKissack – PreK-3
    - [\*The Toothpaste Millionaire\*](#) by Jean Merrill – 5-7
    - [\*Thank You, Omu!\*](#) by Oge Mora – PreK-3
    - [\*We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball\*](#) by Kadir Nelson – 3-7
    - [\*Thunder Rose\*](#) by Jerdine Nolen – K-3
    - [\*Bill Pickett: Rodeo-Ridin' Cowboy\*](#) by Andrea D. Pinkney – PreK-3
    - [\*The Adventures of Sparrowboy\*](#) by Brian Pinkney – PreK-2
    - [\*Tar Beach\*](#) by Faith Ringgold – K-3
    - [\*I Love My Hair!\*](#) by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley – PreK-3
    - [\*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry\*](#) by Mildred D. Taylor

- [\*Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World\*](#) by Mildred Pitts Walter – 4-7
- [\*Before John Was a Jazz Giant: A Song of John Coltrane\*](#) by Carole Boston Weatherford – K-4
- [\*Voice of Freedom; Fannie Lou Hamer, Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement\*](#) by Carole Boston Weatherford – 4-7
- [\*One Crazy Summer\*](#) by Rita Williams-Garcia – 3-7
- [\*Visiting Day\*](#) by Jacqueline Woodson – K-3
- [\*Something Beautiful\*](#) by Sharon Dennis Wyeth – PreK-2
- Native Peoples
  - [\*Thunder Boy Jr.\*](#) by Sherman Alexie – PreK-3
  - [\*The Christmas Coat: Memories of My Sioux Childhood\*](#) by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve – K-2
  - [\*The Birchbark House\*](#) by Louise Erdrich – 3-6
  - [\*This Land is My Land\*](#) by George Littlechild – 1-4
  - [\*In the Footsteps of Crazy Horse\*](#) by Joseph Marshall III – 4-9
  - [\*Walking on Earth & Touching the Sky: Poetry and Prose by Lakota Youth at Red Cloud Indian School\*](#) edited by Timothy P. McLaughlin – 3-7
- Latinx
  - [\*My Name Is María Isabel\*](#) by Alama Flor Ada – 2-5
  - [\*I Lived on Butterfly Hill\*](#) by Majorie Agosin – 5-9
  - [\*From the Bellybutton of the Moon and Other Summer Poems/Del Ombligo de la Luna y Otros Poemas de Verano\*](#) by Francisco X. Alarcón – K-2
  - [\*Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale\*](#) by Carmen Agra Deedy – PreK-3
  - [\*A Day's Work\*](#) by Eve Bunting – PreK-3
  - [\*Waiting for the Biblioburro\*](#) by Monica Brown – K-3
  - [\*Maximillion & the Mystery of the Guardian Angel: A Bilingual Lucha Libre Thriller\*](#) by Xavier Garza – 3-8
  - [\*Niño Wrestles the World\*](#) by Yuyi Morales – PreK-3
  - [\*My Very Own Room/Mi Propio Cuartito\*](#) by Amada Irma Perez – 1-3
  - [\*It Doesn't Have to Be This Way: A Barrio Story/No Tiene Que Ser Así: Una Historia Del Barrio\*](#) by Luis J. Rodriguez – 2-5
  - [\*Parrots Over Puerto Rico\*](#) by Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore – 1-5
  - [\*Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin\*](#) by Duncan Tonatiuh – K-2
  - [\*Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras\*](#) by Duncan Tonatiuh – 1-5
  - [\*The Piñata That the Farm Maiden Hung\*](#) by Samantha Vamos – K-2
- Russian
  - [\*Thunder Cake\*](#) by Patricia Polacco – K-3
- Middle Eastern
  - [\*The Golden Sandal: A Middle Eastern Cinderella Story\*](#) by Rebecca Hickox – K-3

- [The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq](#) by Jeanette Winter – PreK-3
  - South-East Asian
    - [Blackbird Fly](#) by Erin Entrada Kelly – 3-7
  - South Asian
    - [The Grand Plan to Fix Everything](#) by Uma Krishnaswami – 3-7
  - East Asian
    - [Redwoods](#) by Jason Chin – PreK-2
    - [The Name Jar](#) by Yangsook Choi – PreK-2
    - [The Korean Cinderella](#) by Shirley Climo – K-3
    - [Uncle Peter's Amazing Chinese Wedding](#) by Lenore Look – 1-3
    - [Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story](#) by Ken Mochizuki – 1-3
- Religion
  - [Rashad's Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr](#) by Lisa Bullard – K-2
  - [Lailah's Lunchbox](#) by Reem Faruqi – 1-7
  - [Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors](#) by Hena Khan – 3-7
  - [Shmelf the Hanukkah Elf](#) by Greg Wolfe – PreK-2
- Socioeconomic Status
  - [Those Shoes](#) by Maribeth Boelts – K-3
  - [Fly Away Home](#) by Eve Bunting – PreK-3
  - [Gettin' Through Thursday](#) by Melrose Cooper – 1-3
  - [The All-I'll-Ever-Want Christmas Doll](#) by Patricia C. McKissack – PreK-3
  - [How to Steal a Dog](#) by Barbara O'Connor – 3-6
  - [The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester](#) by Barbara O'Connor – 3-6
  - [My Very Own Room/Mi Propio Cuartito](#) by Amada Irma Perez – 1-3
  - [Tar Beach](#) by Faith Ringgold – K-3
  - [Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry](#) by Mildred D. Taylor – 5-7
  - [A Chair for My Mother](#) by Vera B. Williams – PreK-3

## Authors

- African American
  - Maya Angelou
  - Tanya Bolden
  - Gwendolyn Brooks
  - Lucille Clifton
  - Christopher Paul Curtis
  - Tanita S. Davis
  - Sharon Draper
  - Ernest J. Gaines
  - Sundee T. Frazier
  - Nikki Giovanni
  - Eloise Greenfield
  - Nikki Grimes
  - Virginia Hamilton
  - Angela Johnson
  - Julius Lester
  - Frederick McKissack
  - Patricia McKissack
  - Walter Dean Myers
  - Marilyn Nelson
  - Vaunda Micheaux Nelson
  - Angela Davis Pinkney
  - Connie Porte
  - Lesa Cline-Ransome
  - Jewell Parker Rhodes
  - Faith Ringgold
  - Margaree King Smith
  - Mildred D. Taylor
  - Carole Boston Weatherford
  - Rita Williams-Garcia
  - Jacqueline Woodson
- Latinx
  - Alma Flor Ada
  - Francisco X. Alarcón
  - Julia Alvarez
  - George Ancona
  - Anilú Bernardo
  - Carmen T. Bernier-Grand
  - Diane Gonzales Bertrand
  - Sandra Cisneros
  - Carmen Agra Deedy
  - Margarita Engle
  - Julia Ortiz Cofer
  - Ina Cumpiano
  - Francisco Jimenez
  - Victor Martinez
  - Guadalupe Garcia McCall
  - Meg Medina
  - Nicholasa Mohr
  - Patricia Mora
  - Nancy Osa
  - Pam Muñoz Ryan
  - Gary Soto
  - Ana Veciana-Suarez
  - Lenore Look
  - Adeline Yen Mah
  - Ken Mochizuki
  - An Na
  - Lensey Namioka
- Asian and Pacific Island American
  - Debjani Chatterjee
  - Sook Nyui Choi
  - Ying Chang Compestne
  - Demi
  - Chen Jiang Hong
  - Hi-Li Jiang
  - Cynthia Kadahota
  - Marie Lee
  - Thanhha Lei
  - Grace Lin
  - Linda Sue Park
  - Yoshiko Uchida
  - Janet Wong
  - Lisa Yee
  - Wong Herbert Yee
  - Laurence Yep
  - Ed Young

- Native American
  - Sherman Alexie
  - Joseph Bruchac
  - Michael Dorris
  - Louise Erdrich
  - Cynthia Leitich Smith
  - Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve
  - Gayle Ross
- Arab American
  - Randa Abdel-Fattah
  - Ibtisam Barakat
  - Hena Khan
  - Naomi Shihab Nye
  - Marjane Satrap

Note: This list was provided by the article, “Culturally Diverse Literature,” which was written by Fenice B. Boyd, Lauren L. Causey, and Lee Galda.

Boyd, F. B., Causey, L. L., & Galda, L. (2015). Culturally diverse literature. *Reading Teacher*, 68(5), 378–387. Retrieved from <http://proxy.bsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ikh&AN=100633063&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

## Illustrators

- African Americans
  - Ashley Bryan
  - R. Gregory Christie
  - Bryan Collier
  - Floyd Cooper
  - Donald Crews
  - Leo Dillon
  - Tom Feelings
  - E.B. Lewis
  - Christopher Meyers
  - Kadir Nelson
  - Brian Pinkney
  - Jerry Pinkney
  - Sean Qualls
  - James Ransome
  - Synthia Saint James
  - Charles R. Smith
  - Javaka Steptoe
- Latinx
  - George Ancona
  - Robert Casilla
  - Joe Cepeda
  - Raul Colon
  - David Diaz
  - Lulu Delacre
  - Enrique Flores-Galbes
  - Carmen Lomas Garza
  - Susan Guerva
  - Rafael Lopez
  - Yuyi Morales
  - Sara Palacios
  - Enrique O. Sanchez
  - Duncan Tonatiuh
  - Eric Velasquez
- Asian and Pacific Island American
  - Yan Nascimbee
  - Allen Say
  - Ed Young
- Native American
  - Shonto Begay
  - Christopher Canyon
  - Murv Jacob
  - George Littlechild
  - Leo Yerxa

Note: This list was provided by the article, “Culturally Diverse Literature,” which was written by Fenice B. Boyd, Lauren L. Causey, and Lee Galda.

Boyd, F. B., Causey, L. L., & Galda, L. (2015). Culturally diverse literature. *Reading Teacher*, 68(5), 378–387. Retrieved from <http://proxy.bsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ikh&AN=100633063&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

## Awards

- Américas Book Award – honors literature that portrays Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the U.S.
- American Indian Association Award – honors books by and about Native Peoples in North America
- American Indian Youth Literature Award – literature by and about American Indians, including the text and pictures
- Arab American Book Award – honors books by and about Arab Americans
- Asian Pacific American Award for Literature – honors books for Asian Pacific Americans
- Batchelder Award – honors outstanding books originally published outside of the U.S. and translated to English
- Coretta Scott King Award and Honor – honors authors and illustrators that portray experiences of African Americans
- Children’s Choice Book Awards – honors books chosen by children and teens
- Jane Addams Children’s Book Awards – honors “books that promote peace, social justice, and world community” (Martinez, et. al.)
- Middle East Book Awards – honors books that are by and about those from the Middle East
- Notable Books for a Global Society – honors books that celebrate diversity and spread global awareness
- Pura Belpré Award – honors books that celebrate the Latino cultural experience
- Robert F. Sibert Award – honors fantastic informational texts
- Schneider Family Book Award – honors books that represent the disability experience through artistic expression
- Stonewall Book Award-The Barbara Gittings Literature Award – honors books that authentically portray the LGBTQ+ community
- Sydney Taylor Book Award – honors books that authentically share the Jewish experience
- Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award – books about Mexican Americans

## Other Resources

- American Indians in Children's Literature: a blog written to help people find high-quality literature about American Indians
- Book Outlet: "a discount outlet that has a great selection of racially diverse books across genres" (McNair)
- Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison
- International Children's Digital Library
- *Kaleidoscope: A Multicultural Booklist for Grades K-8*
- National Association of Multicultural Education
- Paper Tigers: a website about literature from and about the Pacific Rim and South Asia
- Reading Out: a searchable database for literature for and about the LGBTQ+ community and their allies
- Social Media: follow teachers, schools, educational organizations, and various media brands on your favorite social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and/or Pinterest) for new lesson, classroom, and book ideas
- Teaching for Change: a website that provides teachers and families with the resources to discuss and learn about the world and social justice
- Teaching Tolerance: a website that offers free lesson plans, curriculum materials, articles, and personal stories amongst other resources
- Thriftbooks: an online, used bookstore that offers great deals for teachers and schools
- #WeNeedDiverseBooks: an online resource for promoting and producing diverse children's literature; also offers insight on where to search for more diverse books

## **Appendix F: IRB Exempt Letter**

This is included in my paper copy.

## References

- Boyd, F. B., Causey, L. L., & Galda, L. (2015). Culturally diverse literature. *Reading Teacher*, 68(5), 378–387. Retrieved from <http://proxy.bsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ikh&AN=100633063&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Esteves, K. J. (2018). Fostering global perspectives with children's literature. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, (April-June), 72-77. doi:10.1080/00228958.2018.1443673
- Gibson, K. M. (2012). Influences on diversity in teacher education: using literature to promote multiple perspectives and cultural relevance. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 6(1). Retrieved from <http://proxy.bsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1145198&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Haeffner, C. (2016). MOSAIC multicultural literature selection and promotion. *Teacher Librarian*, 43(4), 32–38. Retrieved from <http://proxy.bsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=tfh&AN=114825288&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Hughes-Hassell, S., & Cox, E. (2010). Inside board books: representations of people of color. *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy*, 80(3), 211-230. doi:10.1086/652873
- Iwai, Y. (2015). Using multicultural children's literature to teach diverse perspectives. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, (April-June), 81-86. doi:10.1080/00228958.2015.1023142

- Martinez, M., Koss, M. D., & Johnson, N. J. (2016). Meeting characters in Caldecotts: what does this mean for today's readers? *The Reading Teacher*, 70(1), 19–28. doi:10.1002/trtr.1464
- McNair, J. C. (2016). #WeNeedMirrorsAndWindows: diverse classroom libraries for k-6 students. *The Reading Teacher*, 70(3), 375–381. Retrieved from <http://proxy.bsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ikh&AN=119088612&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Meese, R. L. (2012). Modern family: adoption and foster care in children's literature. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(2), 129-137. doi: 10.1002/TRTR.01112
- Mohamed, A. (2016). Voicing the voiceless: including the stories of marginalized students in classroom literature. *Language Arts Journal of Michigan*, 32(1), Article 9. doi:10.9707/2168-149X.2151
- Reese, D. (2018). Critical indigenous literacies: selecting and using children's books about indigenous peoples. *Language Arts Lessons*, 95(6). Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/LA/0956-jul2018/LA0956Jul18Language.pdf>
- Sims Bishop, R. & The Ohio State University. (2015). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Reading is Fundamental*. Retrieved from <https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf> (Reprinted from *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 1990, 6(3).)

Style, E. (n.d.). Curriculum as window and mirror. *National SEED Project*. Retrieved from <https://nationalseedproject.org/curriculum-as-window-and-mirror> (Reprinted from *Listening for All Voices*, 1988, Summit, NJ: Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child monograph.)

Tschida, C. M., Ryan, C. L., & Ticknor, A. S. (2014). Building on windows and mirrors: encouraging the disruption of “single stories” through children’s literature. *Journal of Children’s Literature*, 40(1), 28–39. Retrieved from <http://proxy.bsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ1040235&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Yoon, B., Simpson, A., & Haag, C. (2010). Assimilation ideology: critically examining underlying messages in multicultural Literature. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 54(2), 109-118. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.bsu.edu/stable/20775366>