

Literature Genre Log:
Grades 1-3 Identity and Inclusion
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IDENTITY & INCLUSION

Grades 1-3
Literature Genre Log

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Introduction and Rationale

This Thematic Literature Genre Log is based on the theme of Identity and Inclusion. It will provide an annotated bibliography of twenty books organized according to the picture books' genre. This Genre Log is intended for students in Grades 1 through 3 and references professional book reviews, as well as various lists of selection criteria found in *Essentials of Children's Literature*, a textbook written by Kathy Short, Carol Lynch-Brown, and Carl Tomlinson (2017). These are used to validate our choices and ensure we are choosing the most effective literature for our future students.

We decided upon Identity and Inclusion as our theme because the English Language Arts 2 Curriculum introduces the importance of "Personal and Philosophical Development" (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 12). This theme addresses the overarching K-12 goals of "understanding, valuing, and caring for oneself, others, social, economic, and environmental interdependence and sustainability" (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 4). As these goals are for all students from Kindergarten to Grade 12, the same ideologies will be present in the Grade 1 and Grade 3 curricula.

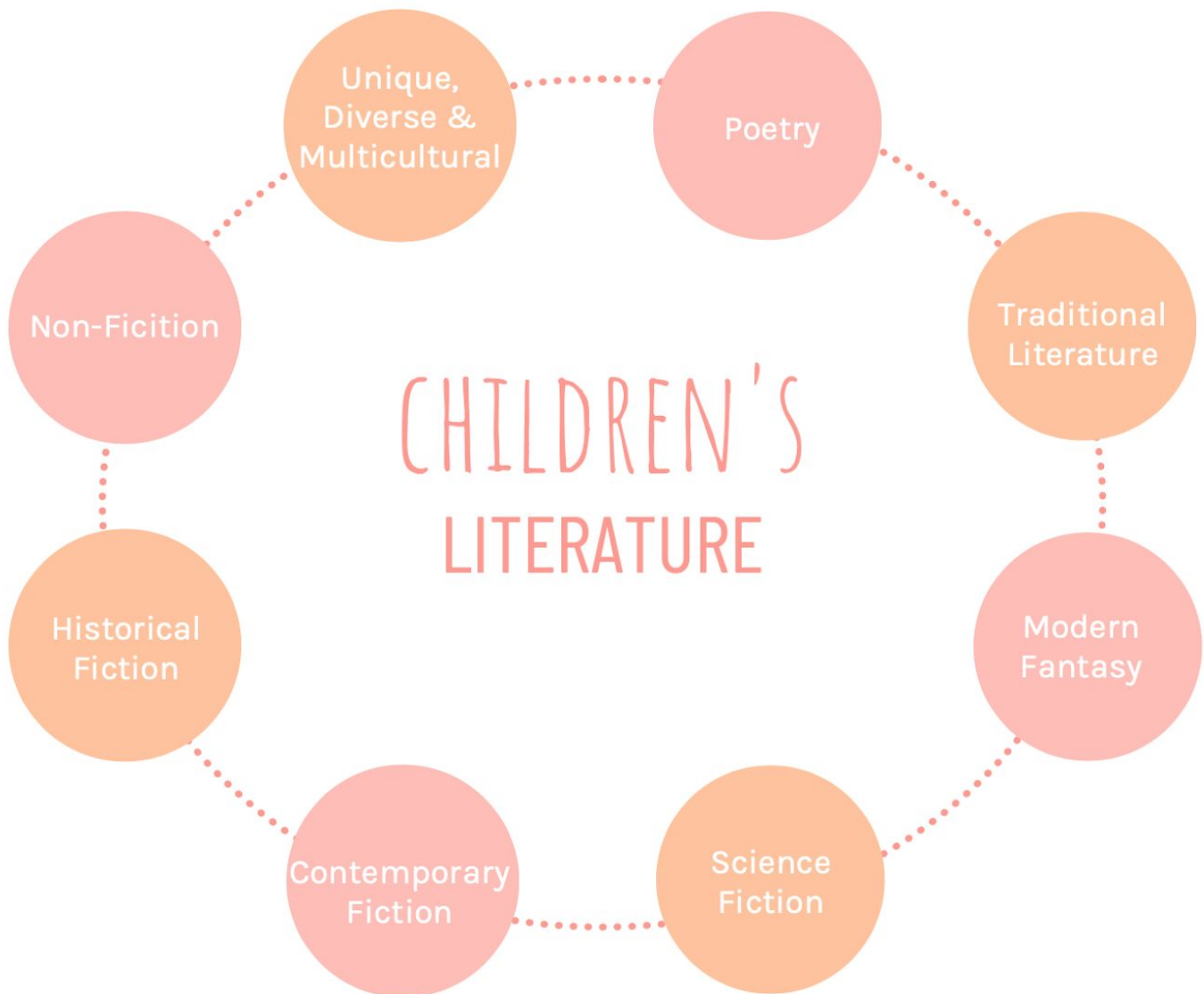
According to the curriculum, an effective English Language Arts (ELA) course provides an opportunity to allow students to develop language skills. There are five contexts that guide programming and provide a baseline for lessons to be generated from. These contexts are essentially guidelines that ensure ELA programs cover a broad range of topics, rather than simply focusing on one or two areas. The one that encourages identity development is known as the personal and philosophical context which provides students the opportunity to "reflect on personal feelings, self-image, influential life forces, ideas, belief systems, values, and ways of knowing" (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 8). The other four contexts focus on social, cultural, historical, imaginative, communicative, environmental, and technological areas (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 9).

The curriculum requires that each instructional unit should focus on one or more contexts and allows for integration of multiple contexts, should the teacher wish. Within the curriculum, children are encouraged to believe in their own self-worth and build relationships with fellow students (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 12). It is encouraged that teachers integrate various, diverse forms of literature in order to represent the students in their classrooms. By choosing books that are applicable to all students, it will be more engaging and interesting. It is very important that, as teachers, we create an inclusive and welcoming environment for our students so they can feel confident and comfortable in their own skin. If we choose literature that portrays stories of believing in oneself and building relationships in the classroom, we are providing a positive and encouraging example for our students.

In the article “Developing a sense of identity in preschoolers” Melica Jelic (2014) explains that obtaining a strong sense of oneself encourages children to be more open to others and more accepting of the diversity in our world. Jelic also discusses that there are many ways a teacher can encourage a child to challenge and develop their self-image, including presenting various literatures. By reading about students similar to themselves children are able to place themselves in the world and see the value that their life has (Jelic, 2014). The Kids Help Line explains that it is very important to pay attention to how kids are feeling and reacting to certain life events because it allows them to express themselves and will play a vital role in their eventual personal identity (Helping kids identify and express feelings, 2019). It is important to present students with literature that is reflective of many life events, backgrounds, cultures, and varying gender and sexual identities in order to show developing students that it is okay to be who they are, no matter who that may be.

This Thematic Literature Genre Log is based on the genres outlined by Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017). We have tabbed our Genre Log according to the nine genres that we will focus on and have provided a detailed Table of Contents for the readers’ benefit. We have also created a genre web and provide definitions of each genre throughout our Genre Log.

Genre Web



Uniqueness of Picture Books

Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017) explain that picture books combine words and illustrations. The illustrations are “integral to the reader’s experience of the book and to the telling of the story” (p. 58). Picturebooks are not a genre of themselves, and rather can be written in all genres with illustrations on every page or every other page (Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson, 2017, p. 58). There

are many different types of picture books that cover a very wide range of topics, from true stories to the totally make-believe.

The Day You Begin

Author: Jacqueline Woodson

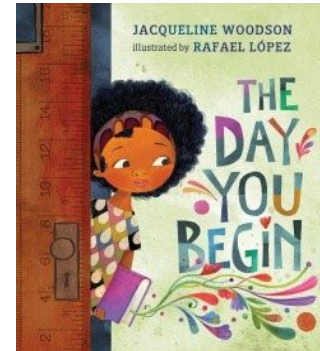
Illustrator: Rafael López

Publisher: Nancy Paulsen Books

Year of Publication: 2018

Place of Publication: New York

Book Themes: the immigrant experience, friendship, acceptance



The first book we chose was written by Jacqueline Woodson (2018) and is called *The Day You Begin*. This book represents how unique picture books are because it celebrates the differences of people in the world. *The Day You Begin* would be an excellent book to share with students on the first day of school or as an introduction to a unit on identity. As teachers, we would be able to guide the discussion of this book in a way that makes students feel comfortable and safe in our classroom, therefore fostering their ability to delve into their own personal identities. We could also challenge students to pay attention to the things that the characters reveal about themselves and ask them to share some things that make them unique. This is a great way to allow students to get to know each other better and uncover their similarities and differences.

The Day You Begin explains that at some point, we will all probably feel like an outsider, but sometimes we have to take a leap of faith and share something about ourselves. When we do this, we might realize that others are more like us than it may seem. The illustrator, Rafael López, utilizes the strong feelings and emotions that Woodson (2018) writes, to create beautiful, detailed illustrations that add great detail to the text. We think it is important to note that this book is also available for purchase in Spanish, encouraging more students to read and enjoy it.

This book was awarded a 2018 Blue Ribbon Picture Book award, from The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books and was also named one of the *Publisher's Weekly* Best Books of 2018. Having been awarded countless other awards, including Chicago Public Libraries Best Books, Picture Books-2018; Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature Best Books-2018; International Literacy Association's Teachers' Choice- 2018; Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices 2019 Choice: Understanding Oneself and Others- 2019; Association for Library Service to Children Notable Children's Books- 2019, it is obvious that book is widely recognized.

Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017) provide a list of questions that guide the evaluation and selection of picture books (p. 58). We applied three of these questions to Woodson's (2018) *The Day You Begin* to determine if it was appropriate to present to students.

Is the picture book on a topic that children enjoy or find intriguing? We believe that students would find the topic of this book interesting because it is one that they would be able to relate to their own life. It is likely that students have felt uncomfortable or nervous in a situation, or have felt like they are totally different from everyone else. However, Woodson (2018) encourages students to take a chance and share something about them and watch as they find a “new friend [that] has something a little like you [them]...” (p. 25).

Does the book avoid racial, ethnics, social class, or gender stereotyping in text and illustrations?

Yes, this book does a great job of introducing the differences between students in a positive way. It uses characters of varying genders and races to create a wonderfully diverse and uplifting story.

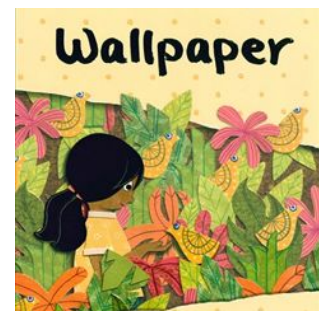
Does the book offer connections for both children and adults in a read-aloud experience? Yes, this picture book is relatable for readers of all ages because it approaches the topic of feeling excluded or unwelcomed, which is something that all people feel at varying times in their life. It also would aloud the adult who is reading aloud to connect with the students and assure them that they are welcomed in this classroom, creating a trusting environment.

Based on the above criteria, we confidently believe that Woodson’s (2018) *The Day You Begin* is a great fit for the classroom, especially in a unit focused on identity and inclusion. This book provides many opportunities, but most importantly it celebrates the diversity of our future students and will emphasize the importance of including and accepting each of our classmates.

Wallpaper

Author: Thao Lam

Publisher: Owlkids



Year of Publication: 2018

Book Themes: new to the neighborhood, overcoming fear, friendships

The second book we chose for the uniqueness of picture books genre is called *Wallpaper* by Thao Lam (2018). This book is nearly wordless and uses vivid, yet simplistic illustrations to portray its messages. Lam (2018) tells the story of a little girl who just moved to a new house, but is too shy to go and introduce herself to the other children playing outside. All of a sudden, a small bird appears in one of the cracks in the wallpaper and she is soon absorbed into a new world, where a monster appears. Many other adventures emerge in the universe inside of the wallpaper, including ones of friendship, encouraging the little girl to make friends outside of the imaginary world.

Lam's (2018) beautiful illustrations dazzle, despite their simplicity, allowing readers of all ages to recognize and connect to the images on the page. This story makes challenging emotions easily accessible to children and because it is essentially wordless, children are able to imagine themselves as the protagonist. Lam (2018) aims to encourage children to take a chance and create new friendships, no matter how hard it might seem. We feel that this book fits into our theme of Identity and Inclusion because it encourages students to make friends with their classmates, even though it might be scary and nerve-wracking. It sets the scene for a very inclusive classroom because when all of the students are friends, they are more likely to be kind to one another and include everyone.

Wallpaper (Lam, 2018) was named one of the Kirkus Best Children's Book of 2018 and was awarded the 2018 Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Canadian Picture Book Award. It was also nominated for a Cybil's Children's and Young Adult Blogger's Literary Award. Lam herself studied illustration for three years at Sheridan College in Toronto, Ontario. She won the Highlights Five Pewter Plate award for verse illustration of the year. Lam specializes in using textured papers to make her collages come alive. This unique style has earned her much respect as a remarkable Vietnamese-Canadian illustrator and writer.

In their review of *Wallpaper*, Kirkus Reviews claims that "careful attention to detail make complex emotions visible and real for young readers" (*Wallpaper*, 2018). We agree that this is true because the book does not have many words, its concepts can be used for readers of so many ages. The idea of shyness and being nervous to make friends is a very relevant concept that almost everyone will experience at some time in their life. Because this idea is portrayed in such a simplistic, yet captivating manner, many students will connect and relate to the morals of this picture book.

Kay Weisman calls *Wallpaper* "satisfying visually, narratively, and emotionally" (2018). The unique illustrations that Lam (2018) creates are such a great addition to this story. She uses a graphic novel type style by dividing the illustrations into different panels. Lam (2018) also creates variances in textures and colours by selecting one theme for each imaginary adventure within the book. This creates distinct lands and builds up to the rainbow world where the little girl leaves feeling confident and ready to make friends in the real world (Weisman, 2018).

Overall, we think that Lam's (2018) *Wallpaper* would be a great addition to any classroom and will provide many opportunities for in-depth conversations about the importance of friendships. Teachers

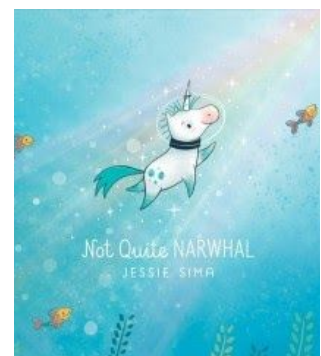
could also use this story to encourage students to befriend someone new, therefore fostering an environment of inclusion.

Not Quite Narwhal

Author: Jessie Sima

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

Year of Publication: 2017



Place of Publication: New York

Book Themes: identity, belonging, family

The third book we chose to represent the uniqueness of picture books is *Not Quite Narwhal* by Jessie Sima (2017). This picture book belongs to this genre because it has beautiful images to go along with the unique story. The story is about a young unicorn who is born under the sea and lives with narwhals. One day, the unicorn is swept away by a current and taken to the land where he meets a bunch of unicorns and discovers that he is in fact a unicorn, not a narwhal. Eventually the unicorn grows homesick and returns to the sea and decides that he will be both a narwhal and a unicorn and does not have to choose one identity. We believe this is a wonderful picture book to use in the classroom.

Sima's (2017) picture book is excellent to incorporate into a classroom. It involves characters, unicorns and narwhals, that young students would be interested in. Also, the point of the story is one that many students may be able to relate to or would find beneficial as they grow into their own person. Many students may struggle with discovering who they are and how they identify. Therefore, we believe this book would be great to incorporate into the classroom for young students.

Red Thread Broken wrote a review of this picture book. Within their review they stated that "the concluding message is that children do not need to choose between families or cultures" (RTB, 2018). This quote summarizes the meaning of the story quite well. It is very important for young children to know they can choose to be how they wish to be and can choose more than one option. Red Thread Broken also states that the main character can "relate to any child living with loss and longing for love from both first and adoptive families, a child navigating ...divorce, a child moving...who wishes to keep old friends and make new ones, and many other situations" (RTB, 2018). This picture book is beneficial in more ways than one. Many different children may be able to relate to this depending on what situation they may be in. *Not Quite Narwhal* has not won any awards.

Overall, we believe this picture book would be a great addition to the classroom. This picture book would be great to read to a class if there happen to be students in the class who are struggling with personal choices. Also, this picture book is a great starting point to generate conversations about different problems children may be experiencing and will help to create a safe space for children in the classroom. This story is excellent for any teacher to add to their classroom and we believe it fits well into this genre of unique picture books and into our theme of inclusion and identity.

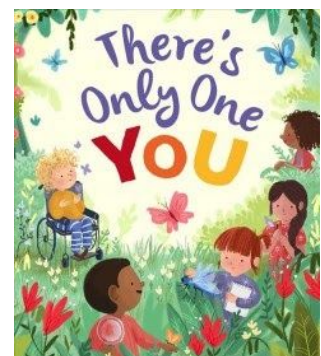
There's Only One You

Author: Kathryn Heling and Deborah Hembrook

Illustrator: Rosie Butcher

Publisher: Sterling Children's Books

Year of Publication: 2019



Place of Publication: New York

Book Themes: individuality, self-esteem, acceptance

The final book we chose to add to the uniqueness of picture books genre is *There's Only One You* by Kathryn Heling and Deborah Hembrook (2019). The picture book has very vivid images that go along perfectly with a beautiful story about inclusion. This would be a great option to read to students near the beginning of the school year to let students know that having differences is okay and we are all capable of doing the same things. This story describes that no matter what a person does there is only one them and what makes them different makes them wonderful. This book is excellent as it includes images of children of all ethnicities, races, varying abilities, and gender. This book fits into the theme of inclusion and identity very well. We believe that *There's Only One You* is a great choice to incorporate into any classroom to help students understand inclusion.

This picture book would be great to use in a classroom because there is so much diversity both in school and outside school. We think that this particular book is great at highlighting that all differences are wonderful and every student can do what they set their mind to. Diversity is evident throughout this picture book and we think students would be able to relate to it and be proud of themselves.

There's Only One You has just recently been published this past year in 2019. Although it has a great message, wonderful illustrations, and very inclusive content it has not won or been nominated for any awards. This picture book is still excellent despite not winning any award and we believe it is a wonderful piece of literature to read aloud to children.

In their review of *There's Only One You*, Kirkus Reviews (2019) discusses the text and words chosen and states that “it celebrates the diversity of these children not just in terms of their identities, but by commenting on their personalities, their talents and ... their families” (para 1). This is a point made that we also agree with. This picture book explores multiple forms of diversity and therefore shows inclusion for many different factors. This quote also ties into the fact that it could be about helping children find their own identity. This book is an excellent choice for teaching students that there are so many factors that differentiate everybody and all those factors are beautiful too.

We think that *There's Only One You* is a wonderful choice to add to a classroom. Many students could benefit from this picture book. It is a wonderful book to help students understand inclusion. This picture book has the potential to help students not only discover their own identity, but learn that everyone else's individual identity is beautiful too.

Diverse and Multicultural Literature

It is well known that literature is extremely valuable in children's lives for many reasons, including enjoyment, personal and cultural identity, and knowledge, among many others (Short, Tomlinson, & Lynch-Brown, 2017, pp. 6-7). Because of this great importance, it is essential that we, as future teachers, provide diverse and multicultural literature in our classrooms so that students can see

themselves in the books. This will allow them to better understand the ideas portrayed in the stories, and will also educate other students about other cultures and their values.

The Moccasins

Author: Earl Einarson

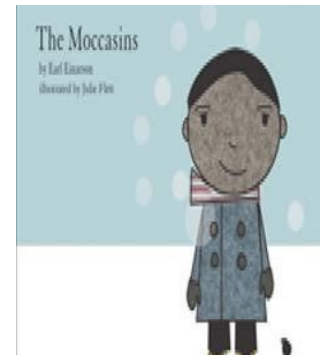
Illustrator: Julie Flett

Publisher: Theytus Books

Year of Publication: 2004

Place of Publication: Penticton, British Columbia

Book Themes: foster care, identity, First Nations



The first book that we selected for the Diverse and Multicultural Literature genre is called *The Moccasins* and is written by Earl Einarson (2004), a member of the Ktunaxa First Nation in British Columbia. Einarson (2004) tells the story of a young Aboriginal boy (himself, we learn later) who is currently in foster care. His foster mother gives him a special gift; a pair of moccasins. These moccasins become such a vital part of his life and through the help of his foster mother, he learns to accept and love his Native heritage. Soon enough, the boy outgrew the moccasins and they decided to pack them away into a box. Once the boy was married with a child of his own, his foster mother brought him another gift. Tucked nicely into a box, where his old moccasins. He was excited to pass the moccasins down onto his son, and teach him to love his heritage and be proud of where he came from.

This touching story is beautifully illustrated by Julie Flett, a Cree-Metis author, illustrator, and artist. She has illustrated countless award winning picture books by various authors. Her simplistic styles allow children of all ages to access and appreciate the concepts portrayed in these stories. *The Moccasins* was nominated for the 2005 Christie Harris Illustrated Children's Literature Prize. It was also awarded Theytus Books' BC Book Prize in 2005.

We selected this book based on the criteria outlined by Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017) regarding Multicultural and International Literature (p. 175).

Authenticity of cultural beliefs and values from the perspective of that group. Because *The Moccasins* is written about a young boy, who we later learn is actually a true story from Einarson's childhood, we can be confident that the story is accurately represented and retold.

Power relationships between characters. The foster mom never once overpowers or overrules the young boy in the story. Rather, she provides him with something that encourages his understanding and appreciation of his own culture.

Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017) also provide a list of questions that guide the evaluation and selection of picture books (p. 58). We applied two of these questions to Einarson (2004) *The Moccasins* to determine if it was appropriate to present to students.

Does the book offer connections for both children and adults in a read-aloud experience? Yes, this book offers a chance for both students and teachers to connect and discuss the messages of the story. By sharing this story with the students, we are encouraging them to be proud of where they come from and their cultural history, as well as sharing a very important story of Indigenous history.

Is the picture book on a topic that children enjoy or find intriguing? We believe that students would find this book very engaging as it tells a story that may be very real and applicable to their own lives. Chances are good that at some point in our careers as teachers, we will encounter a student in foster care and this would be a good resource to use to show how loving and kind foster families can be.

This book also shows how important it is to provide children with endless love and support in their lives. We feel that this book fits into the theme of Identity & Inclusion because it encourages children to accept and honour their cultural identity. *The Mocassins* tells a beautiful story about how essential keeping a connection to one's heritage and history is. We also feel that sharing this story with kids currently in foster care, or in similar situations a sense of comfort in knowing that they are not alone. We think that Einarson's (2004) story is a really heartwarming one, with a rather simple message: everyone deserves to be loved and to love where they come from.

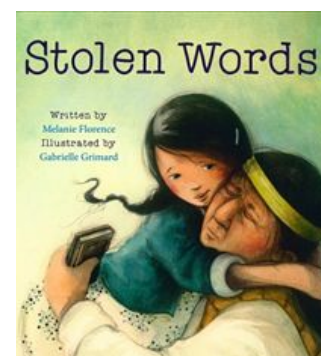
Stolen Words

Author: Melanie Florence

Illustrator: Gabrielle Grimard

Publisher: Second Story Press

Year of Publication: 2017



Place of Publication: Toronto

Book Themes: grandparents, language, cultural identity

The second book we decided to choose for the diverse and multicultural genre section of our genre log is *Stolen Words* written by Melanie Florence (2017). This book is about a young Indigenous girl and her grandfather. She asks her grandfather what a Cree word is for something spoken in English and the grandfather gets emotional and tells his granddaughter about how his words had been stolen from him at a school he had to attend when he was a child. The granddaughter eventually gets a Cree dictionary for her grandfather as a way to give his words back to him.

This picture book is a great way to introduce younger students to the topic of residential schools. Also, it can be a way to discuss with students that identity means more than the way you look. Identity, in context with this piece of literature, can also mean your language. The grandfather got his language taken away from him which could have also resulted in him losing a part of his identity. We believe this picture book has multiple ways to be beneficial in the classroom which is why we chose it.

Florence's (2017) picture book *Stolen Words* was the winner of 2018 Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Award (Lee, 2018). *Stolen Words* was also nominated for the 2018 Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award (Lee, 2018). The book was a finalist for this award, but did not win this award. Despite this, there is no question as to why this picture book was nominated for two awards. This picture book beautifully tells the story of grandfather and granddaughter while respectfully discussing a difficult topic. We believe this would be a great addition to any elementary classroom.

We chose to include this picture book based on the criteria discussed by Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017) in regards to Multicultural and International Literature (p. 175).

Authenticity of cultural beliefs and values form the perspective of that group. This book was written by Melanie Florence who is of Cree and Scottish descent and had a close relationship with her Cree grandfather (Florence, 2015). Therefore, since she was close with her Indigenous grandfather and she is of Indigenous descent we are confident that this story accurately depicts values and beliefs of this culture.

Integration of culturally authentic language. After the granddaughter brings her grandfather the Cree book, he says a variety of Cree words as does the granddaughter does when she gifts him the book. We believe this piece of literature includes accurate Cree language.

Power relationships between characters. The story is about the grandfather explaining that his words were lost and the granddaughter decides to find his words for him. Essentially, the only part of the picture book with a power role is when the grandfather discusses residential schools, but is later in a caring relationship with his granddaughter and the focus is off of a power role.

Overall, *Stolen Words* would be a wonderful addition to any classroom. It respectfully introduces residential schools, discusses the power of our language, and even includes some Cree words within it.

Florence's (2017) story is beautifully written and would be an excellent way to teach children that language is an important part of our identity. We believe this story is a wonderful one to incorporate into the classroom.

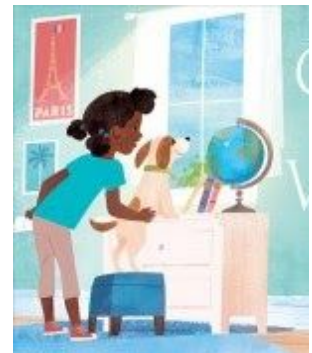
Outside My Window

Author: Linda Ashman

Illustrator: Jamey Christoph

Publisher: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers

Year of Publication: 2018



Place of Publication: Grand Rapids, Michigan

Book Themes: multiculturalism, individuality, cultural identity

The third book we selected to represent the diverse and multicultural section of our genre log is *Outside My Window* by Linda Ashman (2018). This is a beautifully illustrated picture book that wonderfully represents multiple cultures. The story goes through many different places around the world and includes children saying what they see outside their window. There is a wide range of cultures included and locations vary from by the ocean, to the city, and to a secluded area. Many children will be able to relate to this book as there it is very diverse.

We think this picture book would be a great addition to any classroom based on its diversity. Young children will be able to relate to it as they can think about what is outside their own windows and there is a huge diversity in cultures discussed in the book. This ties into the theme of our genre log because where someone lives can be a huge part of their identity. Therefore, we believe Ashman's (2018) story is a great addition to any classroom.

While Ashman's (2018) picture book *Outside My Window* has not won any awards, it has been added to a couple book lists. It was added to Eerdmans Books for Young Readers 2018 and is acknowledged as a CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Book 2019 (Ashman, 2019). This book is excellent for educating young children on the diversity of the world and acknowledging each individual student's personal identity based on where they live.

We chose to include this book based on the criteria provided by Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017) within the multicultural and international section (p. 175).

Authenticity of cultural beliefs and values from the perspective of that group. This book includes a wide range of cultures which is why we feel it is a strong choice. Each culture that is featured is accurate and we feel that children who come from those cultures will be able to relate to this piece of literature. There is also a key feature in the back of the book that states which cultures have been included in the book.

Perspectives and audience. We feel that this picture book is done well in the sense that there are multiple cultures included within the story and multiple audiences will appreciate it. Since there is such diversity within this picture book, whoever chooses to read it will greatly appreciate the diversity. Especially children who come from the cultures included in the story.

Adequate representation of any group within a collection. This book is adequately representative of all groups included. This story looks at children from different cultures around the whole world, not just within one same country. Therefore, we feel that it is a good representation of the groups included.

Overall, we feel that Linda Ashman's (2018) picture book *Outside My Window* is a wonderful addition to any classroom. This picture book offers many educational opportunities. There can be discussions on the various cultures featured in the picture book. There can also be discussions about how

where we live is a part of our identity. We feel that this beautifully illustrated, educational book is a great addition to both our genre log and any classroom.

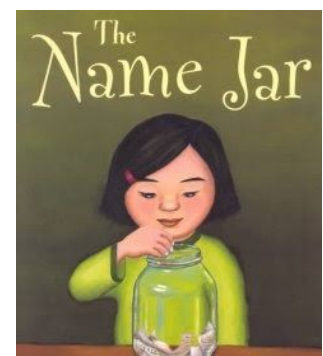
The Name Jar

Author: Yangsook Choi

Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf

Year of Publication: 2001

Place of Publication: New York



Book Themes: names, identity, cultural identity

The final book we selected for the Diverse and Multicultural genre was written by Yangsook Choi (2001) and is called *The Name Jar*. In this book, Unhei has just moved from Korea and on her first day of school, the kids on the school bus tease her about her name. She becomes very self-conscious of her name and it is decided that her classmates will put names into a Name Jar and she will select an English name from it. Eventually, Unhei decides to accept her name and even begins to be proud of it and its meaning. From here, the book shares a bit about Korean name stamping and each of the characters. One boy, named Joey ends up becoming good friends with Unhei, and even adopts a Korean nickname himself.

Choi (2001) introduces the idea of cultural diversity in a fairly simplistic way. We feel that this book fits into the Identity & Inclusion theme that we have selected very well. First of all, this story addresses how hard it can be to move to a new place and accept your differences. However, it tells a story of acceptance and details how everyone benefits when one's differences are accepted. Secondly, Choi (2001) talks about how essential it is that we accept all students for who they are, including ourselves. Eventually Unhei came to accept and love her name, which is essential to her identity, so by encouraging this, we are encouraging students to pursue their own identities. Finally, Choi (2001) uses friendship to encourage Unhei to accept the things about herself that she cannot really change. This pays homage to the power of a friend and will encourage students to reach out and befriend their fellow classmates.

The Name Jar was shortlisted for the California Young Reader Medal (Primary) in 2004, the Flicker Tale Children's Book Award (Picture Book) in 2004, and for the Arkansas Diamond Primary Book Award in 2003.

According to Lynne Burke (2003), the paintings that Choi (2001) created are "warm and uncluttered" (p. 37) which allow the reader to "focus on the intangible accoutrements of a name: its cultural and ethnic significance" (p. 37). We feel this is very accurate, because while the illustrations complement the story very nicely, they do not distract or take away from the importance of the messages within the text.

Mrs G. (2015) from Here Wee Read, claims that *The Name Jar* will help children to "understand how Unhei felt and could even teach them about self love and acceptance of others" (para 6). She also states that she feels that all students could relate to this story and found "Unhei's strength and courage at the end of this story to be very inspirational" (Mrs G., 2015, para 5). We agree that this story explains a very relevant topic and is one that everyone should experience. *The Name Jar* would make a great addition to classrooms and would help students recognize the importance of being proud of their cultural identity and accepting their fellow classmates for who they are.

Poetry

Poetry is defined as the “concentrated expression of ideas and emotions through precise and imaginative words carefully selected for their sonorous and rhythmic effects”, according to Short, Tomlinson, and Lynch-Brown (2017). Poetry “touches our minds and hearts by drawing on all of our senses” (Short, Tomlinson, & Lynch-Brown, 2017, p. 78). There are many various forms of poetry books and each offer value in the classroom.

Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox

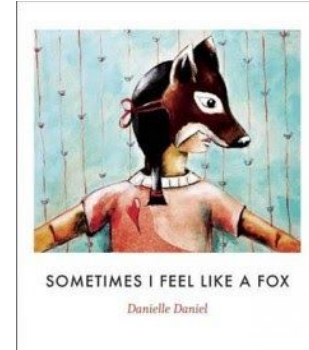
Author: Danielle Daniel

Publisher: Groundwood Books

Year of Publication: 2015

Place of Publication: Toronto

Book Themes: canadian fiction, cultural identity



We selected Danielle Daniel’s (2015) *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox* for the poetry genre because it contains four lines of free-verse writing on each page. We found it very interesting that Daniel (2015) wrote this in lines of four, because it reminded us of how sacred the number four is to Indigenous peoples. *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox* details 12 totem animals that are important to Anishinaabe traditional culture and identity.

Daniel (2015) is a Métis artist and created beautiful images of a child wearing a totem animal mask. On the other page she writes the four lines of text. These lines describe the attributes of that animal and how they make the child feel sometimes. This book would be a great fit for a classroom learning about cultural identity. Kirkus Reviews (2015) claims that this book “will fascinate children expanding their horizons and learning about other cultures” (para 1). *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox* also discusses feelings and how the different animals are represented through emotions. This might provide students an outlet to describe their emotions, through an animal.

According to Senta Ross (2015), although this book was written to spark Daniel’s son’s interest in his cultural heritage, it “can also help children of all cultures to understand the many characteristics within themselves and others” (para 4). We selected this book for our Identity & Inclusion theme because we believe that accepting one’s cultural identity is an essential step in identity development. In a utopian world, we would hope that all students would cherish their heritage and accept themselves. In this same world, these students would also accept and include their classmates, fostering an environment for great personal expansion and identity growth. We feel that by sharing this story of cultural tradition, we are encouraging students to accept themselves and where they come from.

In 2015 *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox* was named one of the 49th Shelf Favourite Picture Books of the Year and was on the New York Public Library Best 100 Books for Reading and Sharing list. It was also listed on the CCBC Best Books for Children and Teens in 2016 and named a 2016 TD Summer Reading Club Top Recommended Read. *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox* won the Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award in 2016 and was short-listed for the 2017 Blue Spruce Award.

Short, Tomlinson, and Lynch-Brown (2017) provide a list of evaluation criteria for poetry (pp 79-80) in their book. We applied these criteria to *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox* in order to determine its appropriateness for children.

Does the poet use authentic, fresh, and imaginative language and images to express ideas and emotions? Yes, Daniel's uses descriptive, yet simplistic language to describe what each totem animal means. She also provides images of each animal in mask form.

Does the poem convey ideas and emotions in ways that encourage children to perceive ordinary things through a new perspective? This book describes common animals that children have very likely seen or heard of before, however it explains them for their traditional meaning, which is potentially a new concept for students.

What is the relationship of the illustrations and visual images to the mood and content of the poems? The illustrations in this book are beautiful and add to the poems. They are painted on simple backgrounds allowing the images to stand out. The visual representation of the animals helps to capture the reader's attention and focus them on the animal that the text is explaining.

We feel that this book is a very valuable one to share with the students because it not only explains a piece of Indigenous culture but also details the importance of accepting one's culture.

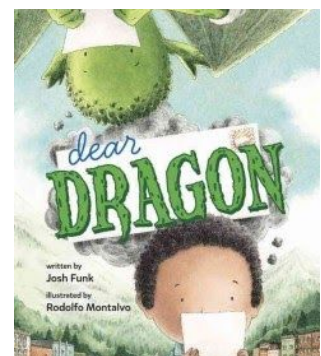
Dear Dragon: A Pen Pal Tale

Author: Josh Funk

Illustrator: Rodolfo Montalvo

Publisher: Penguin Group

Year of Publication: 2016



Place of Publication: New York

Book Themes: cultural differences, inclusion, friendship

The second picture book we chose for the poetry genre was *Dear Dragon: A Pen Pal Tale* written by Josh Funk (2016). We chose this piece of literature because it contains poems throughout the whole book in the form of pen pal letters. There are alternating rhymes throughout the whole picture book which make it fun to read. Also, it is a great introduction for students to the poetry genre as it is very basic poetry.

This story is about a young boy who gets a pen pal as part of a poetry assignment in school. His pen pal is a dragon whom he writes back and forth for some time. Eventually, after sending letters back and forth the two pen pals learn they enjoy writing to each other and wish to continue to do so after the assignment is done. The story ends with the two pen pals meeting each other and learning they have been writing to someone who is not the same as them, a dragon writing a human and a human writing a dragon. This is a great story for children to learn about poetry, the joys of writing, and the classic cliché, not to judge a book by its cover.

We believe this picture book would be a wonderful addition to a classroom. In terms of the theme of our genre log, this picture fits because the two pen pals did not know the identity of the person they were writing and they were still thrilled to meet each other. This is a great way for students to learn to accept everyone and include everyone. This picture book would be a great addition to any classroom.

Funk's (2016) *Dear Dragon: A Pen Pal Tale* has won and been nominated for a number of awards. It won the 2016 Nerdy Book Club Award, was a finalist for the 2017 SCBWI New England Crystal Kite, was added to the 2017 International Literacy Association Teacher's Choice Reading List, won the 2017 Bank Street Best Children's Books of the Year, was nominated for 2017/2018 Maine Chickadee Award, was nominated for the 2018/2019 Indiana Library Federation Young Hoosier Book Award, and was nominated for the 2018/2019 Missouri Association of Librarians Show Me Award (Josh Funk Books, 2019).

Denise Mealy did a wonderful review of this picture book and states that "it's cleverly done, and the story structure is highly original" (Mealy, 2019) which we believe to be true and it part of what contributed to our selection of this picture book. Children will absolutely love this story and it also has a message that goes along with it. As stated in the book review, "the conversation this book can raise ... seems that you may not have anything in common with another person" (Mealy, 2019) is what relates to the theme of our genre log. "The diverse cast of characters" (Mealy, 2019) is what makes this such a great picture book to teach children that even though there may be differences between all of us that we all can be friends. The diversity of this picture book is done in a truly unique way the young students will definitely find intriguing.

We are confident that this picture book fits both our theme of inclusion and identity and the poetry genre. The whole story is told through rhyme. Also, the characters represent inclusion which is

portrayed in a simple way that young students would be able to understand and enjoy. We believe this book is a wonderful addition to any classroom.

Traditional Literature

Short, Tomlinson, and Lynch-Brown (2017) define traditional literature as “the body of ancient stories and poems that grew out of the oral tradition of story-telling before being eventually written down” (p. 96). Characteristically, these books have no real author and rather, are written by groups of people or cultures, and then retold by present day authors. These stories are very important because

commonly they focus on important moral lessons that students should know. (Short, Tomlinson, & Lynch-Brown, 2017)

The Ugly Duckling

Author: Hans Christian Andersen

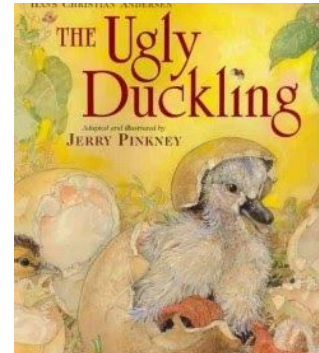
Adapted & Illustrated: Jerry Pinkney

Publisher: Morrow Junior Books

Year of Publication: 1999

Place of Publication: New York

Book Themes: loneliness, acceptance, identity



We selected *The Ugly Duckling* written by Jerry Pinkney (1999) for the traditional literature genre. This story is based on the classic tale and follows a swan born into a family of ducks. He is disowned by his family and ventures out into the world alone. The swan gets made fun of and called an “ugly duckling” until he comes across a group of white birds, who he finds very beautiful. Eventually he catches a glimpse of his reflection and realizes that he too has grown up to be a very beautiful swan.

Kirkus Reviews describes Pinkney’s (1999) version as “memorable” and a “spirited, artistic adaption” (para 1). We feel that Pinkney (1999) effectively captures Hans Christian Andersen’s original, but adds a fresh look to it. He created stunning watercolour images to perfectly accompany this timeless tale. The School Library Journal claims that Pinkney’s (1999) illustrations are “carefully composed and rich in detail” (para 1). The Journal explains that these remarkable images would keep any Naturalist happy. This book is great to share with students because it not only offers great morals, it provides detailed, accurate images to spark readers interest.

Pinkey’s (1999) *The Ugly Duckling* was named a Caldecott Honor Book in 2000. It was also named an ALA Notable Children’s Book in 2000.

This story details one’s journey to find their identity. The ugly duckling was so determined to find his place in his world which encourages children to never give up. He is put down many times, but continues on to find those that accept him for who he is. The ugly duckling learns that he is actually a swan, rather than a duckling and lives happily with the other swans, who encourage him to be his best self! This encourages students to push through and discover their own personal identity.

We feel that this book fits into the Identity & Inclusion theme because it addresses the importance of accepting yourself for who you are. This story makes it clear that we may not be able to control who accepts us, however we can control our own behaviours and commit to staying true to ourselves. *The Ugly Duckling* provides students with a very powerful message and pushes students to accept their true personality.

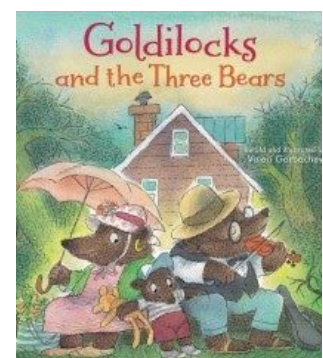
This traditional tale also encourages students to never give up following their dreams. The duckling perseveres and finds his place in the world, despite how many people tried to push him down and away. *The Ugly Duckling* is very applicable to students because chances are very good that students will have, at sometime in their life, felt left out or like they didn't belong. It is important, as teachers, that we encourage our students to accept all of their classmates, and everyone else that meet to foster an inclusive environment. We think the book would be a great fit for any classroom.

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Retold & Illustrated: Valeri Gorbachev

Publisher: North-South Books

Year of Publication: 2019



Place of Publication: New York

Book Themes: family, how your actions hurt others

We chose to include *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* written by Valeri Gorbachev (2019) in the traditional literature section of our genre log. This is a classic story retold and illustrated by Gorbachev (2019). The story is just as the classic story goes, the three bears go out while their porridge cools off and young Goldilocks makes her way into their cottage. She tries all the porridge, sits on all the chairs, and finally ends up sleeping in the baby bears bed. The bears then arrive home and find their things have been moved around and see Goldilocks sleeping in the bed. She then wakes up and runs away never to be seen by the three bears again.

We feel that this is a great addition to our genre log. This picture book is related to our theme, inclusion and identity, because each of the bears has their things in a particular way to best suit them. This is a part of their individual identities. Every person has different preferences on how they eat their food, sit on their chairs, and the way their bed is. This can be easy for young students to discover their individual identities. Gorbachev's (2019) retelling of this classic story is very well done and his images are beautiful as well. However, he has not been nominated for or won any awards for his work.

We chose this book, based on the criteria outlined by Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017, p. 96), to include in the traditional literature section of our genre log.

Does the tale reflect a narrative storytelling style? We are confident that this story sounds like it is being told rather than read. It is a classic tale and definitely sounds like a verbal story rather than a written story.

Do the illustrations match the tone of the text and help to capture the essence of the culture? This picture book is beautifully illustrated and the images accurately match the tone presented by the text.

Does the tale employ rich literary style? This story is definitely one that children will enjoy. It definitely will captivate children's attention and will keep them engaged from start to finish.

Goldilocks and the Three Bears is a wonderful addition to our genre log. It is a classic story that comes along with beautiful images that both the reader and the audience can appreciate. A deeper meaning can be drawn from this story, everyone has personal preferences which ultimately tie into our personal identities. Gorbachev's (2019) retelling of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* is a great addition to any classroom.

Modern Fantasy

Modern fantasy covers the stories in which authors create "events, settings, or characters that are outside the realm of possibility" (Short, Tomlinson, & Lynch-Brown, 2017, p. 108), or in simpler terms, something that cannot occur in real life. For example, in these stories, furniture might talk or new,

alternate universes might be created. These stories often contain concepts that are relevant to today, however they are portrayed in a unique way.

Ta-da!

Author: Kathy Ellen Davis

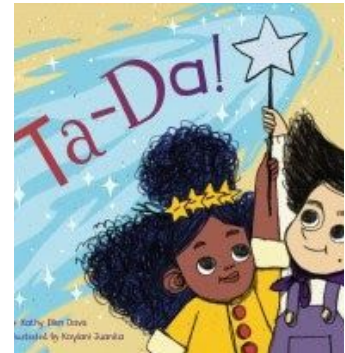
Illustrator: Kaylani Juanita

Publisher: Chronicle Books LLC

Year of Publication: 2018

Place of Publication: San Francisco, California

Book Themes: culturally diverse, friendship, inclusion, working together



We selected Kathy Davis' (2018) *Ta-da!* for the modern fantasy genre because it tells the story of two young children using their magical powers during their playtime. We think that this book fits into the modern fantasy genre because it introduces fire-breathing dragons, magical pirates, and spell casting. These things cannot occur in real life and are figments of the children's imagination.

Ta-da! follows two kids' imaginative journey on a rainy day. The little girl is perfectly happy playing with her animals in her castle but then a dragon comes and wrecks her castle! A boy and the dragon burst in and quickly the young girl grabs her magic wand, soon to transform the scary dragon into a friendly dragon. The boy continues throwing wrenches into the girls scenarios, but she keeps making them into happy situations. Eventually the little boy gets sick of this and decides to go put on his own magic show. Unfortunately, no one comes, except the little girl. She quickly decides to share her magical powers and the pair play together happily from then on.

We selected this book for our Identity & Inclusion theme because it shows how important it is to work together and accomplish a goal. In the end, the characters are treated as equals and incorporate each others ideas into their play scenarios. Neither of the character's ideas are more important than the others, which is highlighted here. This book also shows students how important it is to have friends. The kids in the story play together to have a great afternoon filled with fun and enjoyment!

School Library Journal (2018) describes this book as fun to read and calls the illustrations "imaginative" (para 1). School Library Journal (2018) also mentions that each character is represented by separate colours and font, which is something that we also noticed. This made it so simple to recognize who was speaking.

Davis (2018) has a "very lively voice" (para 1) according to Publishers Weekly (2018); "playful typography gives the mild comedy an extra nudge, and the singsong sound effects invite reader involvement (para 1). She also includes the repetition of "dun dun duh!" and "ta-da!" to distinguish between the characters speaking. These are also helpful in recognizing who is talking and being the problem creator or solver.

Kirkus Reviews (2018) explain that the “bold, expressive illustrations blend the children’s real world with their imaginary worlds, creating a lively display on the page” (para 1). We agree with this because while the text was great, the illustrations really made it come to life and stand out. We are sure that the students will enjoy the colourful and exciting illustrations that add great detail to the story.

We think it is important to note that this is both Kathy Davis’ and Kaylani Juanita’s first book. *Ta-da!* has not yet won any awards, however we don’t think that this takes away from it’s remarkable message. We believe that this book would be really good to share with students in order to encourage them to make friends and include each other’s ideas.

From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea

Author: Kai Cheng Thom

Illustrator: Wai-Yant Li, Kai Yun Ching



Publisher: Arsenal Pulp Press

Year of Publication: 2017

Place of Publication: Vancouver

Book Themes: identity, gender identity, bullying

The second book we chose for our modern fantasy section is *From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea* written by Kai Cheng Thom (2017). This story is about a child whose mother raised them to be anything they wanted to be, no specific gender, characteristic, or anything. The child wears clothes portraying animal characteristics like turtle shells, feathers, and animal prints instead of gender oriented clothing. When the child decides to stop wearing animal things the children invite the child to play with them, but then they ask the child if they are a boy or girl, to which the child says they don't know. After discussing the situation with their mother, the child resumes wearing animal characteristics to be anything they want to be and then the other children soon then do that too. This story is wonderful to introduce to young children that it does not matter what gender you are or that you must identify as a specific gender, you can be however you wish to be.

We believe that Cheng Thom's (2017) *From the Stars in the Sky to Fish in the Sea* is a great addition to our genre log. It fits perfectly into our genre log theme of identity and inclusion. This picture book is centered around the theme of identity. From start to finish the main character is not identified as a specific gender and the mother of that child is very supportive of her child and does not force anything onto the child. Many children will benefit greatly from this picture book since there are children who do not identify with the gender they were born with. *From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea* is a wonderful book for any classroom.

From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea has not won any awards. Kai Cheng Thom is a Canadian writer. This picture book she wrote may not have won any awards, but it has been recognized on a variety of platforms such as "CTV's The Social and The New York Times" (Cheng Thom, 2017). This picture book is wonderful and has had media recognition despite not winning an award.

Quill and Quire did a wonderful review of Cheng Thom's (2017) picture book. They discuss more than just the content such as "the illustrations ... are saturated with colour and sparkling with invention" (Cotter, 2017). The images in this picture book are stunning and are sure to capture children's attention. Also, the images fit very well into the theme of modern fantasy. In this review, Quill and Quire also states that "the story ... provides a point of reference for young readers to better understand the issues of gender identity..." (Cotter, 2017). Essentially, this is a way for children to gain an understanding of themselves if they are confused with their gender identity.

Overall, we believe this is a great picture book.. *From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea* is a great book that is about identity, specifically gender identity. We believe this picture book would be a great one to start the conversation with students about gender identity and expressing yourself the way you choose to. Many children will benefit from this picture book if they are unsure of how they want to

identify and express themselves. We believe that Kai Cheng Thom's (2017) picture book *From the Stars in the Sky to the Fish in the Sea* is a wonderful addition to our genre log and to any classroom.

Science Fiction

Science fiction and modern fantasy are easily confused, however they do have their differences. In science fiction, the events are actually plausible and must be able to be justified according to the rules

of science and what is possible. These books add an element of accessibility to students and encourage the use of the imagination.

Doug Unplugged

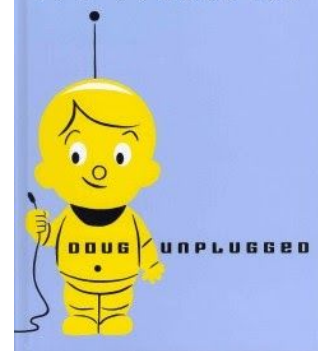
Author: Dan Yaccarino

Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf

Year of Publication: 2013

Place of Publication: New York

Book Themes: self expression



The picture book we chose to represent the science fiction section of our genre log is *Doug Unplugged* written by Dan Yaccarino (2013). This is a wonderful selection for all children. This story follows young robot Doug whose parents want him to be smart and successful. However, by doing this his parents plug him in to have him download information. The story follows Doug as he unplugs himself and goes on an adventure to learn new things through experience. This is a wonderful selection about learning, self-discovery, and technology.

We believe *Doug Unplugged* fits well into our genre log. This book can help students realize that sometimes they have to expand their horizons to learn new things. Also, it can represent the identity theme because Doug learned that his identity is more than being plugged in to learn things. This is a wonderful science fiction story that children will love.

Yaccarino's (2013) *Doug Unplugged* has a couple awards. First, it was named one of the 2013 Knopf Books for Young Readers, and second, it was named one of the Best Books of the Year for Children and Young Adults which was selected by the Children's Book Committee (Yaccarino, 2013). This book is an excellent choice for younger audiences and also has great images to go along with the story.

Children's Books and More book review of *Doug Unplugged* wrote a positive review of this picture book. They write, "the people and robots are bright colours so there's no race" (Children's Books and More, 2013). This is why this selection fits so well into our genre log theme of inclusion and identity. Any child will thoroughly enjoy this picture book since there is no race depicted and any child will be able to relate or draw comparisons to the character. This picture book would be excellent to use in the classroom since no children will be left feeling not included. This is a very inclusive picture book since there is no culture, race, or ethnicity shown.

We believe Yaccarino's (2013) picture book *Doug Unplugged* is a wonderful addition to our genre log because it will get children interested in science fiction and technology. Also, it will help children to realize that they should go explore the world and not stay inside all the time. On a pedagogical view of this picture book, there is no race depicted as stated in the book review. Therefore, this would be

a wonderful selection to incorporate into the classroom because all students will be able to enjoy and identify with the book. *Doug Unplugged* is a cute story of a young robot and we are confident children will enjoy this piece of literature.

Contemporary Fiction

Short, Tomlinson, and Lynch-Brown (2017) define contemporary fiction and realism as “stories that take place in the present time and portray attitudes and mores of the present culture” (p. 122). They

explain that these books typically focus on varying topics, including relationships within families, peer friendships and bullies, gender and sexuality, life within local and global communities, among others (Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson, 2017, pp. 125-128). These books are often set in the present or recent past and often cover topics that may be difficult for students to accept and understand. However, they are extremely valuable and important to children's developing self.

Sparkle Boy

Author: Lesléa Newman

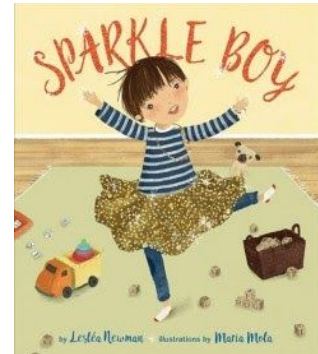
Illustrator: Maria Mola

Publisher: Lee & Low Books Inc.

Year of Publication: 2017

Place of Publication: New York

Book Themes: gender identity, bullying, siblings, acceptance



The first book that we chose from the contemporary fiction genre is called *Sparkle Boy* and was written by Lesléa Newman and illustrated by Maria Mola in 2017. This book focuses on the complex idea of gender diversity and portrays a story of love and acceptance. This book's main character is named Casey, who is rather fascinated with things that his sister has, especially her new sparkly skirt. While Casey's sister Jessie has her doubts about Casey's interests, the kids' parents are totally and completely loving and accepting of each of their likes. It isn't until Casey is ridiculed at the local library that Jessie realizes he has the right to be whoever he wants to be and wear whatever he wants to wear. This book tells a touching story about how we should all accept one another, despite our likes and dislikes.

We chose this book based on the following criteria that Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017) provide:

Does the story permit some cause for hope? Yes, this picture book does act as a source of hope because it encourages children to accept others, despite their differences. In the book, Jessie comes to realize that even though Casey likes to wear sparkly things, he still deserves to be loved and cared for in the same way. This book provides hope for children who might be struggling to accept their own differences, and potential gender identities, because it shows that they can be included and accepted. This story will also likely inspire other students to reach out and be a friend to children that might be struggling.

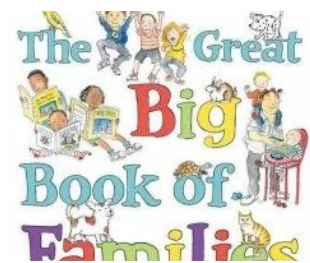
Is the story a thin disguise for a heavy-handed moral lesson? Yes, this story highlights the importance of accepting gender diversity and expression, but does so in a very simple and basic format. The main idea is not overemphasized and this book is written to share a story of love and acceptance with readers. The storyline is simple- Casey likes sparkly things which Jessie thinks is kind of strange, but soon enough she comes to realize that this is okay and he deserves to be included and loved despite this.

Is the story believable? Yes this story is absolutely believable. It is written about something that could occur in anyone's life, including our student's. Because this story is written about siblings, it is something that many students will be able to relate too. This book is also relatable because students may be able to see their own feelings represented in Casey's story.

Based on these criteria, this book is a great fit for the contemporary fiction genre. *Sparkle Boy* was named an Honour Book in 2018 by the Massachusetts Book Awards. It was also named the Bank Street Center for Children's Literature Irma Black Award Honor Book in 2018, as well as the Storytelling World Resource Awards Honour Book of 2018.

We chose this book for our theme of Identity and Inclusion because it encourages students to accept one another despite our differences. We feel that this is a good fit because students will be able to relate to either character, depending on their own feelings and personal identities. For example, if one of the students is currently struggling with their own gender identity, they may find comfort in the end result. Alternatively, other students will be able to recognize the end result and be encouraged to accept others, as Jessie does in the story.

This book provides many opportunities for teachers to introduce gender non-conformance and encourage all of their students to accept their peers. We feel that this is a very important book to share with students because in our evolving world, children are having to make very difficult decisions and it is essential that they feel loved and cared for in this world.



Author: Mary Hoffman
Illustrator: Ros Asquith
Publisher: Dial Books for Young Readers
Year of Publication: 2011
Place of Publication: New York
Book Themes: families, acceptance, identity

The second picture book we chose for the contemporary genre of our genre log is *The Great Big Book of Families* written by Mary Hoffman (2011). This is a great addition to our genre log and any classroom as well. This book starts off by describing the many ways a family can be made and that there are so many different types of families. The picture book then goes through the things that make each family unique such as the type of food they eat, where they live, the way they feel, and the type of pet they may or may not have.

We believe this picture book by Mary Hoffman (2011) would be a great way to get students to not only think about their own families, but also the different ways other families are made up and function. It is a great way for students to understand that every type of family is beautiful and no matter how big or small their family is, it is still family. *The Great Big Book of Families* is a great way to discuss the different ways families are made up

The Great Big Book of Families was nominated for several awards and even won one. It was nominated for the 2011 Cybils Awards, the 2011 Information Book Award which it won, the 2011 NASEN and TES Special Educational Needs Book Award, 2011 Distinguished Books, 2011 Kirkus Book Review, and the 2011 School Library Journal Book Review Stars (Stars).

Kirkus Reviews has a wonderful book review of this picture book. They state that “it celebrates diversity” (Kirkus, 2011). This is very true of Hoffman’s (2011) picture book. This book is very diverse and will help to open children’s minds to diversity and acceptance. Kirkus Reviews is an excellent source for the review of *The Great Big Book of Families* written by Mary Hoffman (2011).

We believe that this is an excellent addition to our thematic genre log. It perfectly fits into our inclusion and identity theme. Family is so essential to a child’s identity and inclusion. It will help young children to learn that there is not only one type of family. There are so many different types of families and each of them are beautiful in their own way. Hoffman’s (2011) picture book is very diverse and is a great addition to any classroom to teach students about families and help get them discussing diversity. We believe this is a wonderful addition to our genre log.

Historical Fiction

Short, Tomlinson, and Lynch-Brown (2017) claim that historical fiction is “realistic fiction set in a time remote enough from the present to be considered history” (p. 136). These books are usually written by authors in which the events occurred at least 20 years earlier, however the events in the books still apply to life in the present. There are a few styles of historical fiction that take varying approaches to the genre.

The Soccer Fence:

A Story of Friendship, Hope, and Apartheid in South Africa

Author: Phil Bildner

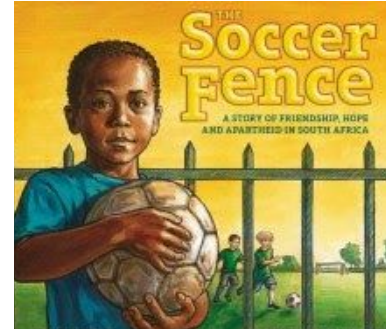
Illustrator: Jesse Joshua Watson

Publisher: F.P. Putnam’s Sons

Year of Publication: 2014

Place of Publication: New York

Book Themes: friendships, cultural identity



The picture book we chose to represent the historical fiction section of our genre log is *The Soccer Fence: A Story of Friendship, Hope, and Apartheid in South Africa* written by Phil Bildner (2014). This story is about a little boy, Hector, who is living in Africa during the apartheid. Hector longs to play soccer with the boys on the other side of a fence but cannot due to the apartheid however, Nelson Mandela gets released from prison and the apartheid starts to end. Hector watches his favourite soccer team win the championship and Hector then knows that dreams can happen. We believe this story is a great addition to a classroom.

This story fits into our theme in multiple different ways. First, this picture book discusses the apartheid and how it was eventually ended. This is a good way to teach students that no matter what one’s race is we are all friends. Secondly, sports are a big part of this picture book. This book would be excellent for athletic children in a classroom as they will be able to relate to it. This story shows that sports can be a part of a person’s identity. We are confident that this picture book fits into our theme of inclusion and identity.

Bildner’s (2014) story has not won any awards. This picture book has beautiful illustrations and a wonderful, historical story. We believe this picture book is still a wonderful addition to any classroom despite not winning an award. Also, we believe this story has multiple things that would be beneficial for students to learn from it such as the historical context of the apartheid and Nelson Mandela, friendship, sports as an identity, and including everyone.

We applied some of the criteria for evaluation and selection of historical books to the list provided by Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017, pp. 153-154) to *The Soccer Fence: A Story of Friendship, Hope, and Apartheid in South Africa*.

Is the book written in a clear, direct, easily understandable style? The book is very easy to understand considering the historical context. It is told from the point of view of a child so therefore children would easily be able to understand the story.

Is the book organized around a theme or idea that brings coherence to the information? Bildner's (2014) picture book is about the apartheid in South Africa and a story of a young boy and friendship. Essentially, the idea of this story is that despite people's differences everyone should be included and everyone can be friends and differences should not be taken into account. The theme of friendship is a great way for children to learn about and begin to understand what apartheid was.

Is the book visually attractive to the child? Often times, books with a historical context can have plain images which children do not find interesting. That is not the case for this picture book. The images are bright and well done which will intrigue a child even more.

Bildner's (2014) *The Soccer Fence: A Story of Friendship, Hope, and Apartheid in South Africa* is an excellent choice to incorporate into a classroom. We believe this story has multiple factors that students will benefit from. The story is touching as well, a young boy who is living through the apartheid and after witnessing a team win a championship learns that dreams can come true.

Non-Fiction

Non-fiction books are based on true events or stories and typically take two approaches: biographies or informative books. Biographies “give factual information about the lives of actual people, including their experiences, influences, accomplishments, and legacies” (Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson, 2017, p. 148) told in story form. Informational books “give verifiable factual information or explain some aspect of the biological, social, or physical world” (Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson, 2017, p. 151). These books are very educational and important to offer to students.

The Water Walker

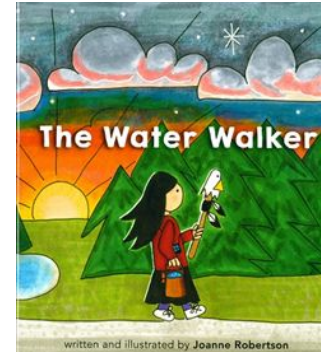
Author: Joanne Robertson

Publisher: Orca Book Publishers

Year of Publication: 2017

Place of Publication: Toronto

Book Themes: non-fiction, cultural identity



The Water Walker by Joanne Robertson (2017) is based on a true story about an Ojibwe grandmother who walked all around the Great Lakes in order to protect our water. The grandmothers’ name is Josephine Mandamin and her and the Mother Earth Water Walkers walk the Great Lakes each year. Their culture is deeply committed to water and preserving Mother Earth’s resources.

We selected this book for our theme of Identity & Inclusion because it shows students how one’s cultural identity and beliefs can guide their actions. This is important because it can encourage students to follow their passions and dreams, and accept their own cultural identities. In turn, this book will hopefully encourage students to use their cultural identity to guide their actions. Robertson (2017) uses Ojibwe words throughout the text which also encourages cultural identity. Languages play a very important role in one’s identity and by encouraging their use, we are fostering the students identity growth. Kirkus Reviews (2017) claims that the decision to use Ojibwe language in the book “enhances the book’s substance” (para 1).

This book also challenges students to look at how important water is to our world. The School Library Journal (2017) claims that this book is a “worthwhile read about a First Nation grandmother and her commitment to one of our most important resources” (para 1). We feel that while this book encourages identity development, it also spreads a very essential message about keeping our water clean and unpolluted. Water is very important to Indigenous culture and is a vital part of their identity. By sharing this book with students we encourage them to expand what they consider as part of their own personal identities.

We decided to apply some of the criteria outlined by Short, Lynch-Brown, and Tomlinson (2017, p. 153) to determine if this book is appropriate to share with students.

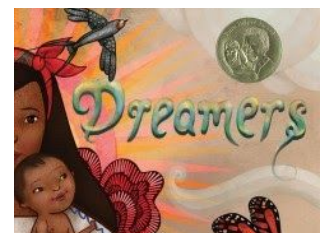
Is the book written in a clear, direct, easily understandable style? Yes, this book is written in very simplistic terms. The images also help students to decipher the meanings of the text.

Is the information presented as a means of supporting conceptual understanding, and does it encourage analytical thinking? Because this book talks about the importance of water, it allows teachers to pose many thought-provoking questions to students. Teachers would be able to ask students why they think water is important and why they think it should be preserved, among other things.

Is the book organized around a theme or idea that brings coherence to the information? Yes, this book's main goal is to encourage students to pursue their cultural beliefs and to preserve the natural resource of water.

We think that this book would be a great addition to the classroom. It provides many different discussion opportunities and tells a very important story.

Dreamers



Author: Yuyi Morales
Publisher: Neal Porter Books
Year of Publication: 2018
Place of Publication: New York
Book Themes: cultural identity, family

The final book that we chose for our genre log based on Identity & Inclusion is Yuyi Morales' (2018) *Dreamers*. In this book, Morales (2018) details her own journey of leaving her home in Mexico and immigrating to the USA with her son. The story talks about the transition of language and how important words were to their immigration.

Dreamers "moves easily from English to Spanish and back" (para 1) states Charlotte Seedy of Publishers Weekly (2018). This book discusses the importance of languages to a culture and describes Mexican cultural symbols. The mother and son find comfort in the library and in the words of the books housed there. The mother claims that they "learned to read,/ to speak,/ to write,/ and/ to make/ our voices heard" (Morales, 2018, pp. 10-12). This pays homage to the importance of words and how essential they are in our everyday lives. Seedy (2018) explains that while "many books about immigration describe the process of making new friends and fitting in; this one describes what it's like to become a creative being in two languages, and to learn to love in both" (para 1). Again, this expresses the importance of languages and what it's like to come to a new place and learn a new way of life.

We selected this book for our Identity & Inclusion theme because we feel that it is quite likely that at some point in our careers as teachers, we will have students in our classroom who have recently, or not so recently, immigrated from somewhere else. It can be hard to feel like you belong in a new place, let alone in a new country, but by sharing this story we can provide these students with hope that they will find their place. We also encourage the students in our classrooms to reach out and include all of the students in their environment, regardless of where the students are from.

Languages are a very important part of culture and one's identity. This book encourages students to accept their cultural identity and shows that immigrating and building a new life can be a very challenging, yet rewarding journey. We feel that this story would resonate with anyone who has personal experience with immigration as it beautifully represents the journey to finding a home in a new place. This book also talks about family which is a very important part of a student's identity. *Dreamers* won the 2019 Pura Belpré Illustrator Award. It was also named a New York Times/New York Public Library Best Illustrated Book of 2018. This book has won countless other awards, including being named a 2019 Boston Globe Horn Book Honour Recipient, an Anna Dewdney Read Together Honour Book, named a Best Book of 2018 by Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal, among many others.

We believe that this is a very powerful story and strongly recommend sharing it with students. It contains stunning illustrations and remarkable text. *Dreamers* celebrates the wonderful things that immigrants bring with them and portrays a positive message about the importance of both family and languages, as it is through both of these that Morales (2018) and her son, find a home in America.

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