



Application of Multicultural Literature in the Early Childhood Classroom

Dr. Deborah Wheeler & Dr. Jennifer Hill

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What is multicultural literature?

Multicultural literature focuses on diverse cultures and culture plays a crucial role in the narrative.

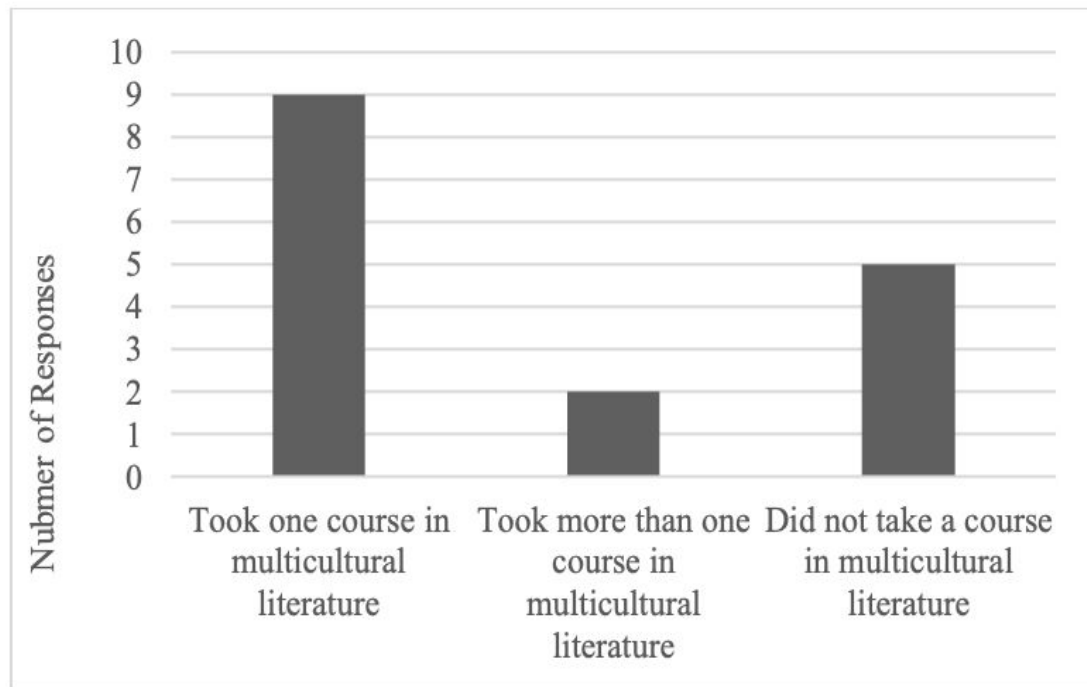


Museum Walk Idea:

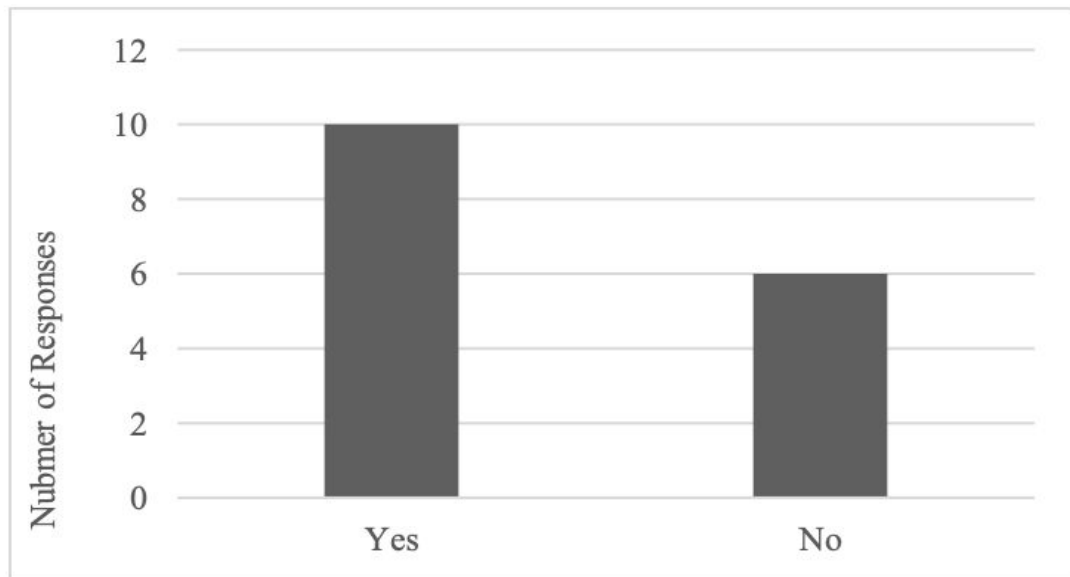
Have participants walk around the room and ask/answer the same questions we asked survey participants. Come back as a whole group and discuss observations and experiences. Show study results.



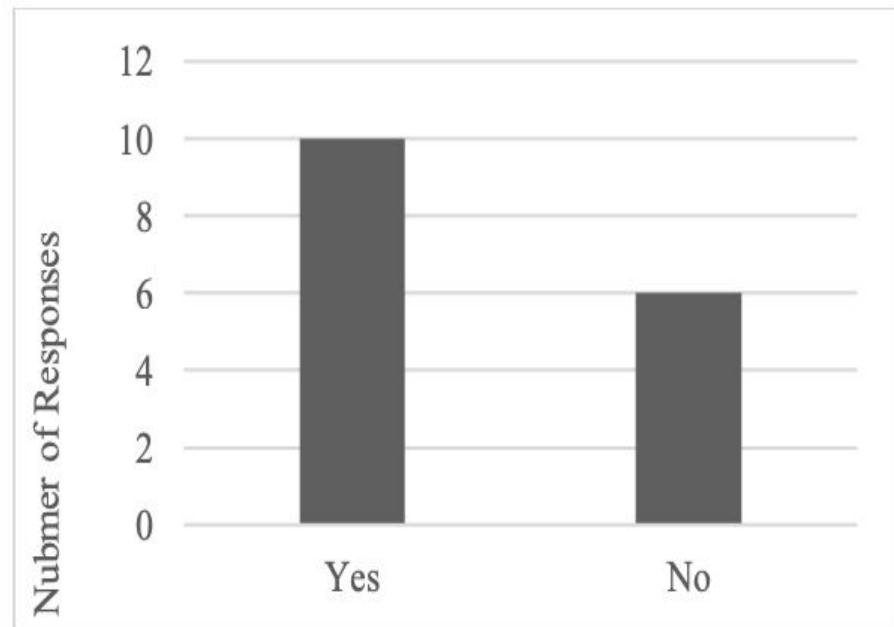
What Best Describes the Multicultural Literature Training You Received as a Preservice Teacher?



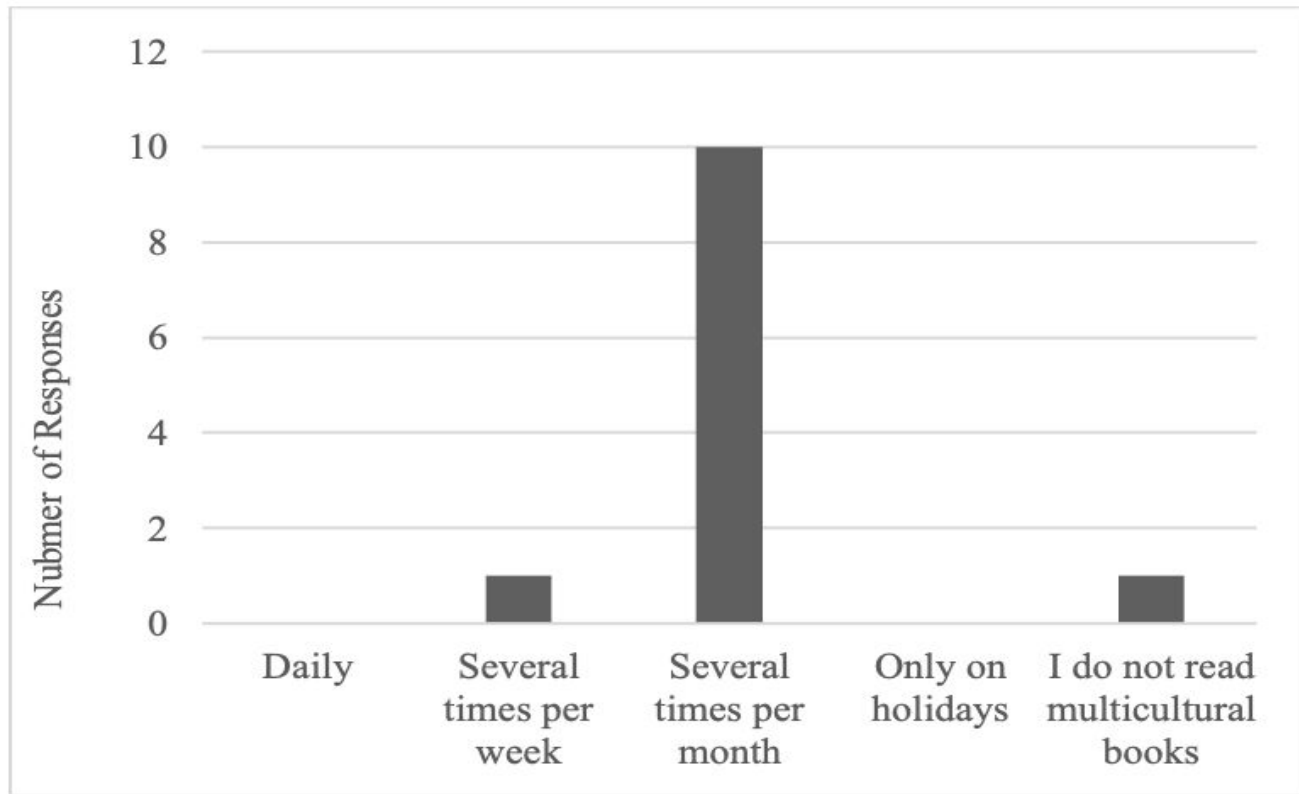
Have You Had Any Professional Development in the Area of Using Multicultural Literature Classroom?



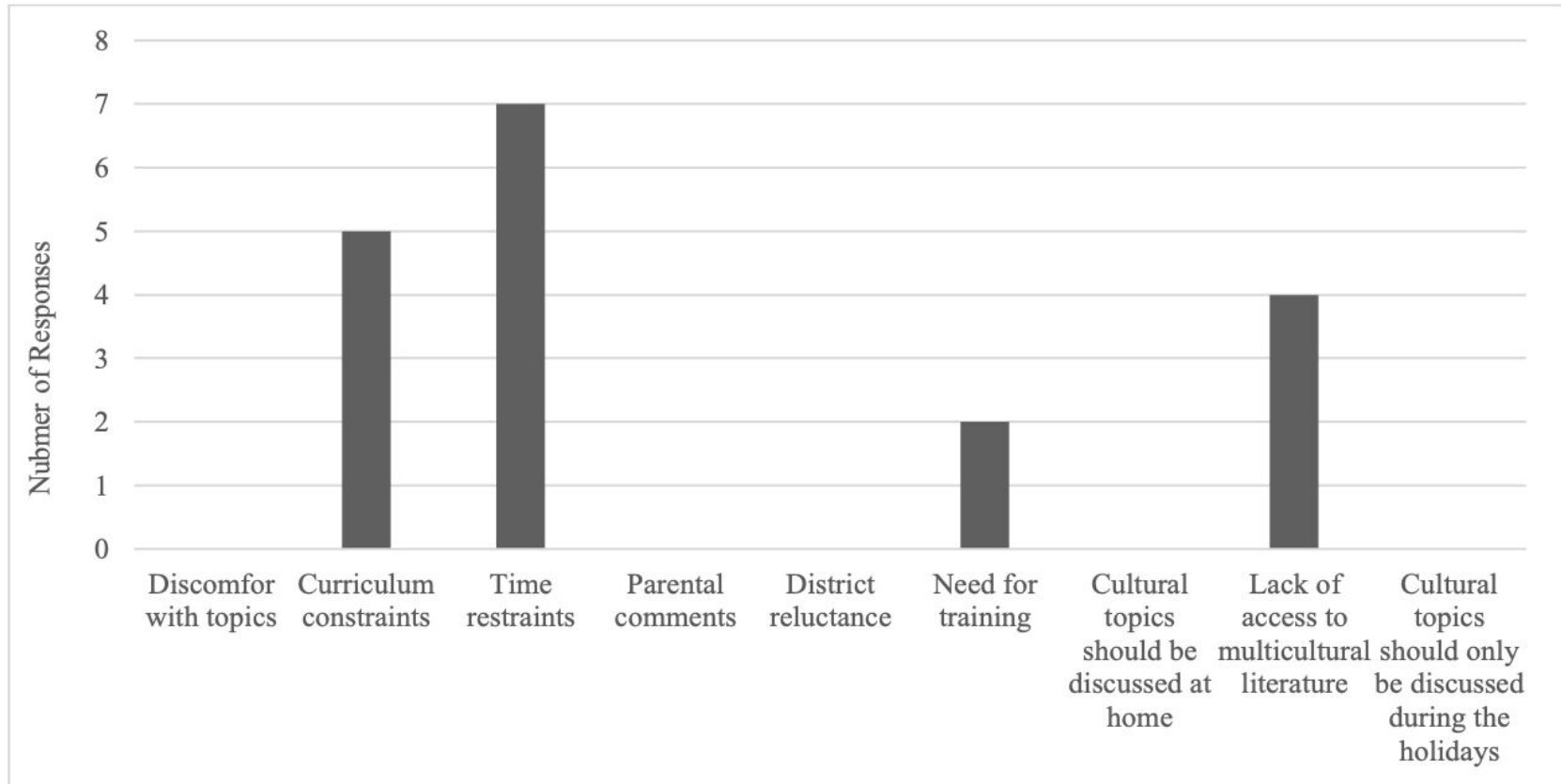
When You Graduated with Your Initial Licensure, Did You Feel Ready to Teach Using Multicultural Read-Alouds to Students?



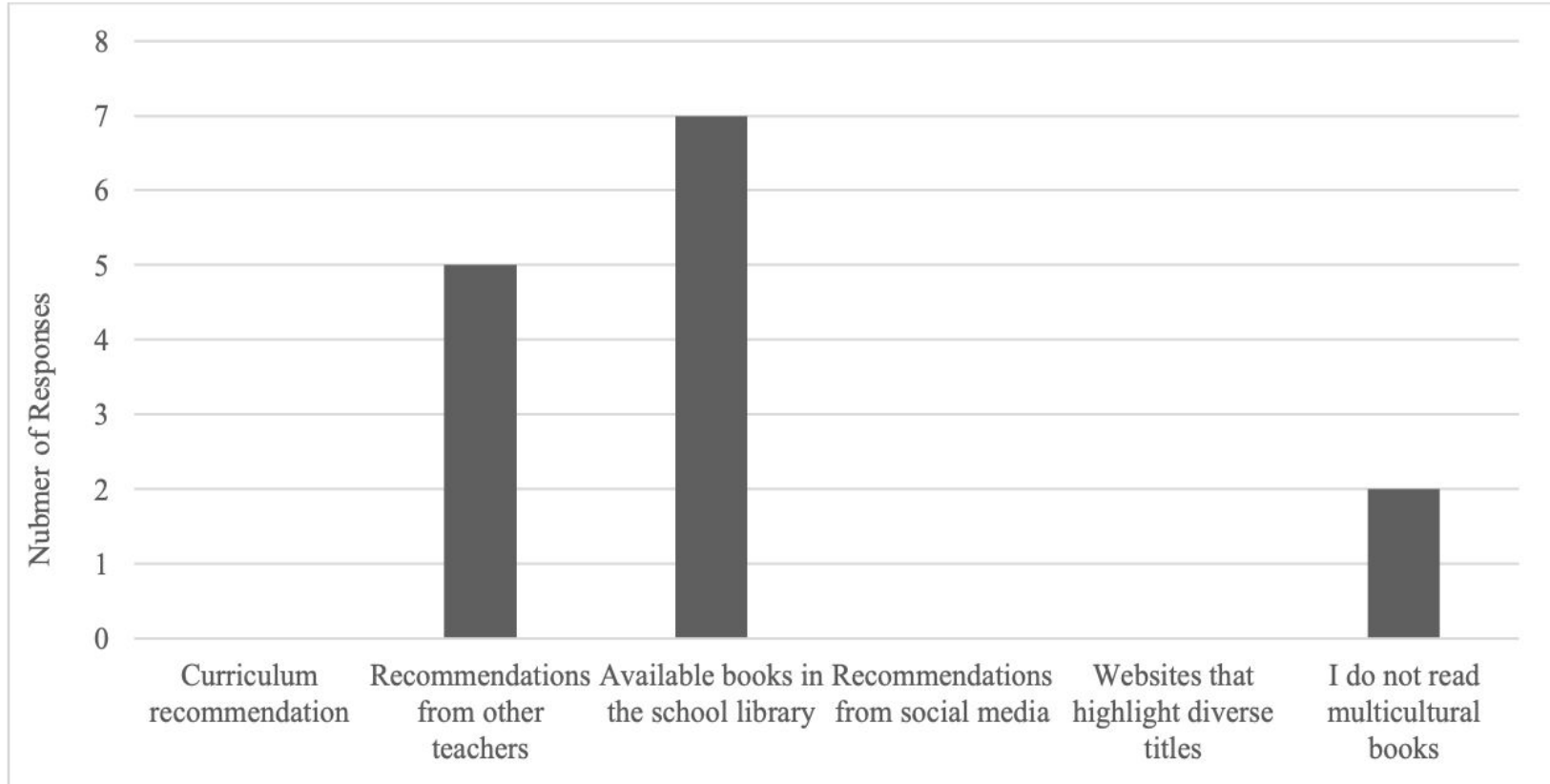
How Often Do You Read Multicultural Books to Your Students?



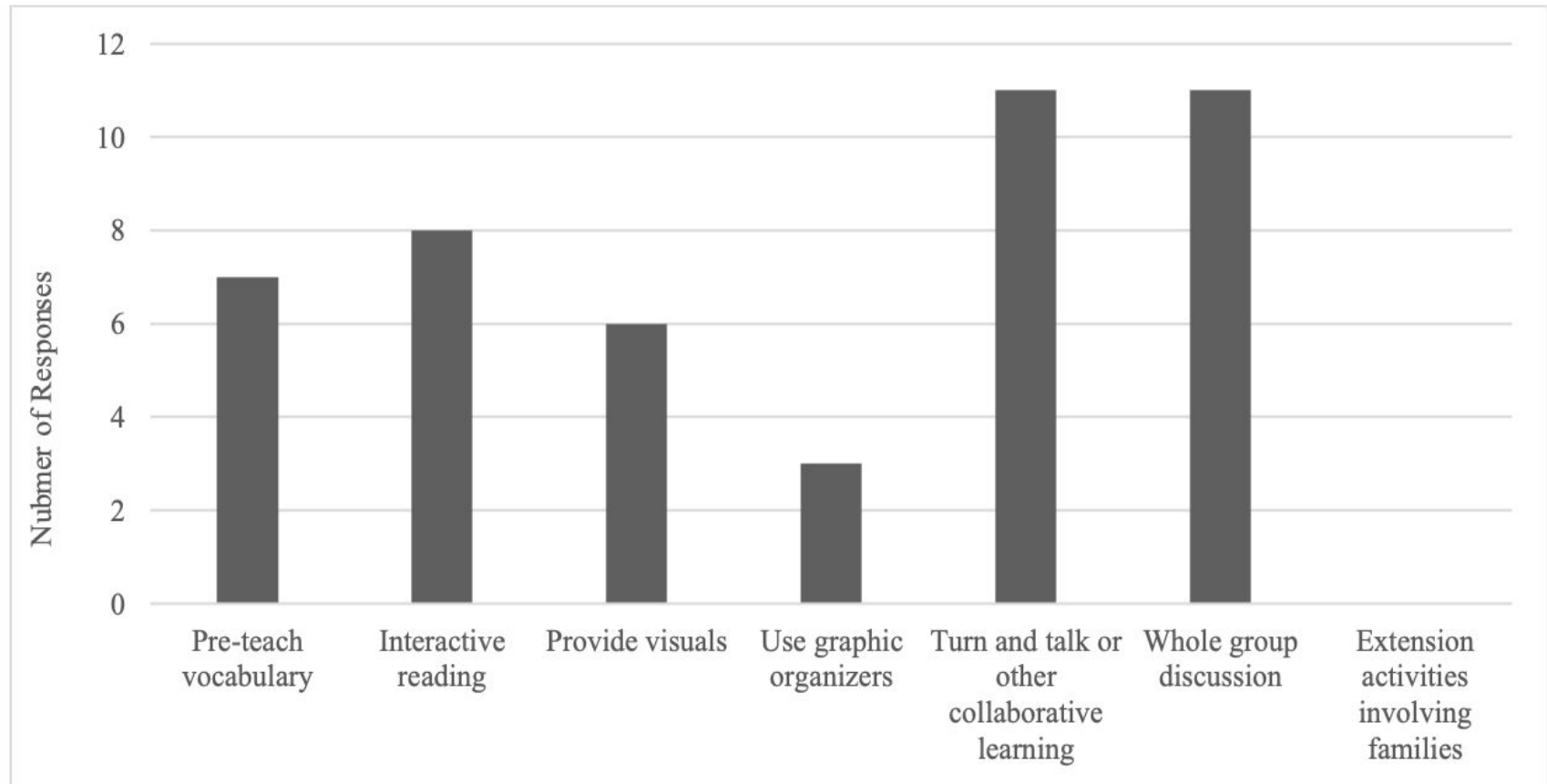
If You Are Not Reading Multicultural Literature to Your Students, What Barriers Can You Identify?



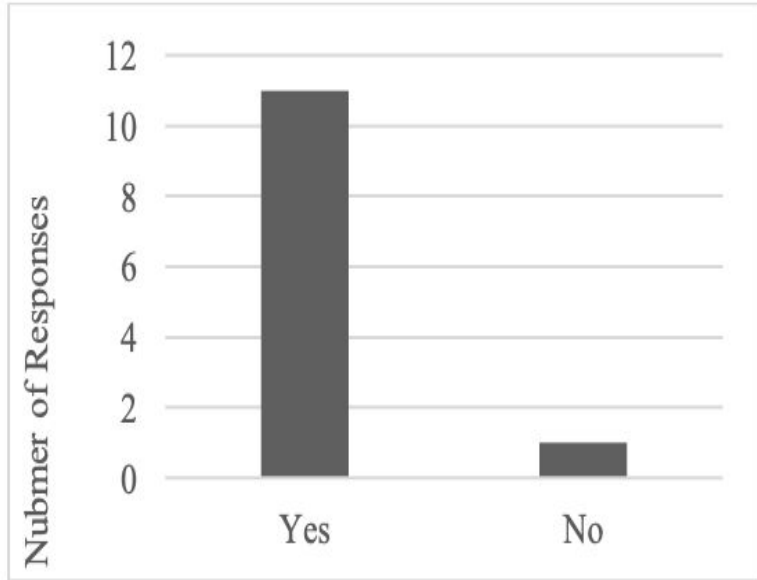
How Do You Primarily Select the Multicultural Books That You Are Reading Aloud to Students?



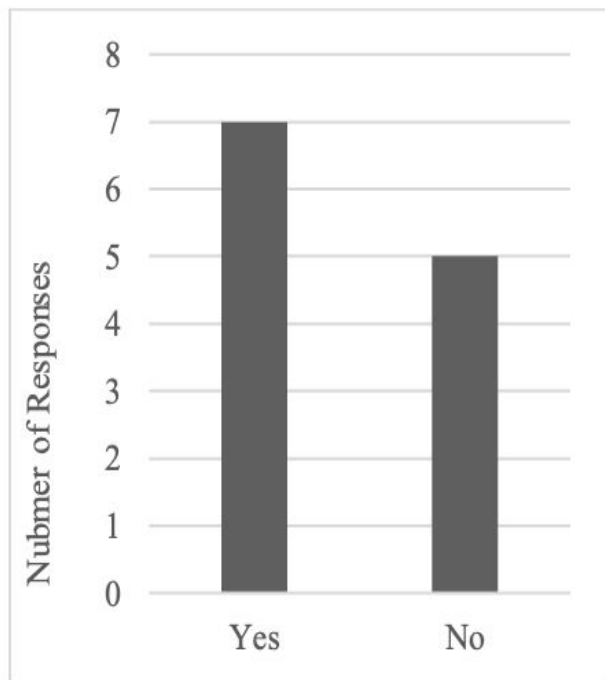
What Instructional Strategies Do You Use to Teach Multicultural Literature?



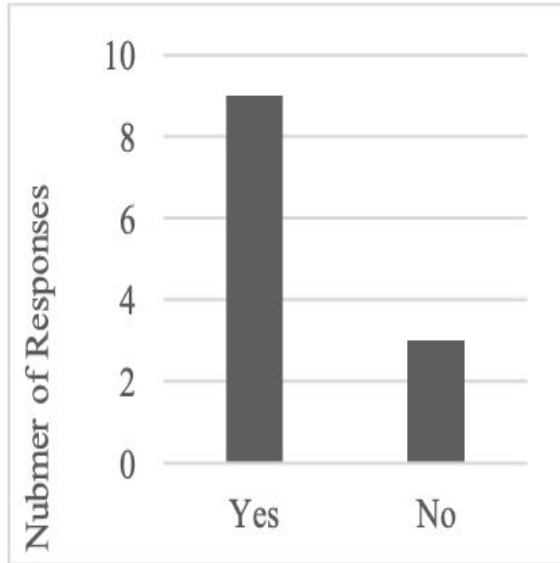
Do You Read Global Literature Which Is Defined As Literature About Cultures and People Outside of the United States?



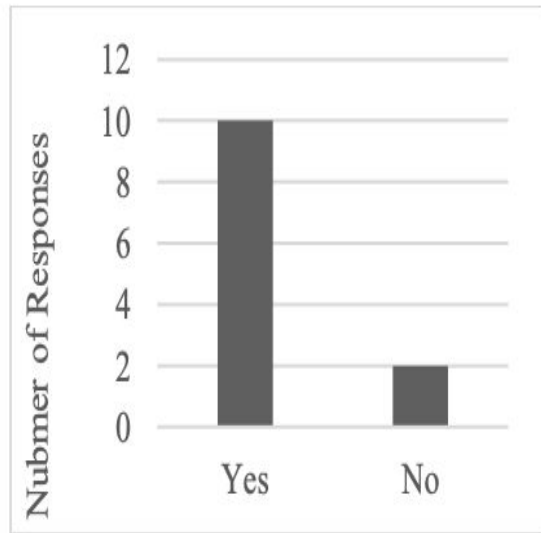
Are You Reading Books That Are Available in Languages Other Than English?



Do You Have Books Available to Students About Diverse Cultures Including Cultures Within the United States and Books About Countries Outside of the United States (Global Literature)?



Do You Feel Your Students Have Expanded Their Awareness of Culture through Being Read Multicultural Books Aloud?



Final Question: Diverse Multicultural Books

Participants were asked the following: Provide the title of 3-5 diverse multicultural books that you have read to your students during the past school year.



Research Results

The results represent a necessity to provide professional development training regarding how to incorporate multicultural books into curriculum and lessons.



The Value of Incorporating Multicultural Literature



Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin

Diverse literature belongs in every classroom and library- on the shelves and in the hands of children, librarians, and teachers. It is essential for Black, Indigenous, and children of color, and it is essential for providing all children an understanding of the world in which they live. (para. 1).



Language and Literacy

- The first three years of life is the foundation
- Books and interactive serve and return
- Learn self-concept, culture, and language



Culture

- Identity
- Shapes values and beliefs
- Gender roles and family structure
- Language
- Dress, food, etiquette
- Approaches to disability
- Child-rearing practices
- Behavior expectations
- Transmission of knowledge and behaviors shared through generations

Kaiser & Rasminsky (2020); Perso (2012)



Surface and Deep Culture

- Culture is dynamic
- Surface culture
 - Food
 - Music
 - Dress
- Deep culture
 - Attitudes
 - Sentiments
 - Ideas
- Culture:
 - Perception of the world
 - Thought process
 - Interaction with others
 - Sense of belonging



Early Childhood & Multicultural Literature

- Sense of self
- Understanding of the world
- Lived experiences
- Promotes self-affirmation
- Reduces ethnocentrism
- Languages
- Traditions
- History
- Values
- Valuable Connections



The Benefits of Multicultural Literature

- Safe and respected
- Global society and cross-cultural understanding
- Broaden perspectives - reduce cultural bias
- Equity and inclusion
- Advocates for asset-based ideology
- Establishes a home-school connection
- Mirrors students' cultural experiences
- Window for students to learn about other cultures and experiences
- Reduces racism and stereotyping
- Foster cultural identity
- Reduce the achievement gap



Diversity Gap

- Primarily White teachers are teaching racially diverse students
- Cultural diversity is not reflected in teachers
- Working to provide students with multicultural experiences needs to happen at three distinct points:
 - Within teacher training program
 - In the classrooms of practicing teachers
 - In the homes of parents of school-aged children



Literature Selection Tools

- [Diverse Book Finder](#) from the Institute of Museum and Library Services at Bates College
- [University of Wisconsin-Madison Cooperative Children's Book Center](#)
- [We Need Diverse Books](#)
- [The Brown Bookshelf](#)
- [Lee and Low Books](#)
- [Association for Library Services to Children](#) (2023)
 - *The Coretta Scott King Award* featuring the African American Experience
 - Pura Belpre Award focusing on Latinx culture
 - American Indian Youth Literature Award which honors indigenous authors and illustrators



Using Children's Books to Help Build Inclusive Classrooms



Evaluate Classroom Libraries

- Is there a rich variety of texts?
- Are the pieces of multicultural in the classroom only developed around special holidays or traditions?
- Are most of the books only told from a European perspective
- Can the books be read aloud in the classroom?
- Can the books inspire essential literacy skills?

(Bennett et al., 2018)



Home School Connection

- Home school connection through reading creates a sense of belonging
- Providing cultural text sets that are sent home
- Family reading nights with a focus on culture
- Literacy activities with a focus on culture





*Developing your Elementary
Collection: Looking Through
A New Lens*

PLACID

Jenny Hill, Ed. D. St Cloud State University

Multicultural Literature Strategies and Ideas

- Read multicultural books several times per week
- Assess background knowledge
- Ask questions prior to reading, during reading, after reading
- Provide discussion prompts
- Include writing



Books should be
windows, mirrors, and
sliding glass doors.

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop



Photo by James J. Bishop

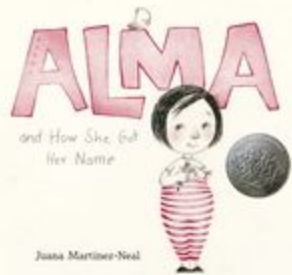


BOOKS ARE...



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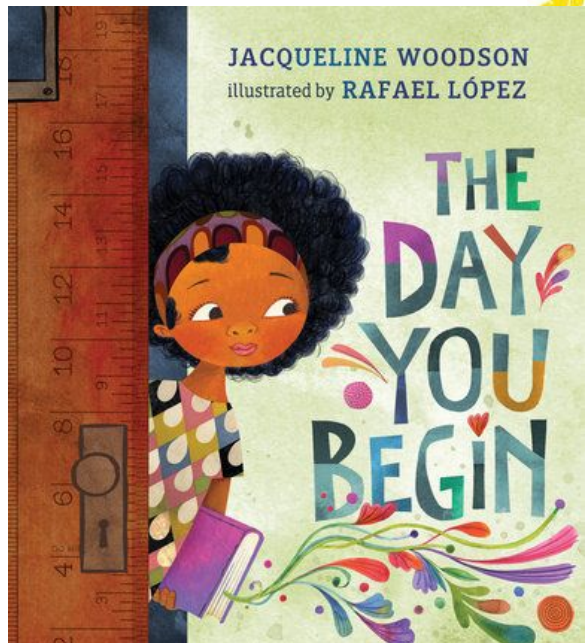
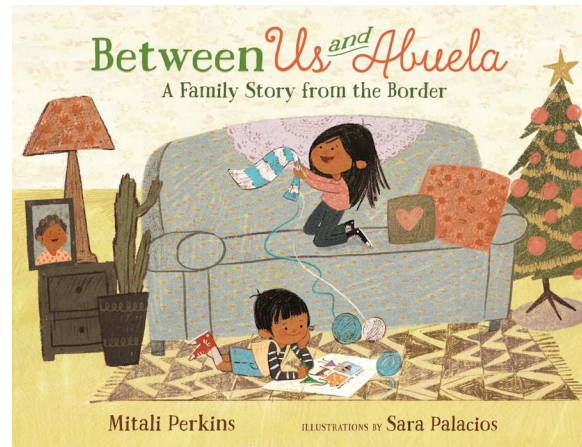




Alexandra Penfold ✨ Suzanne Kaufman



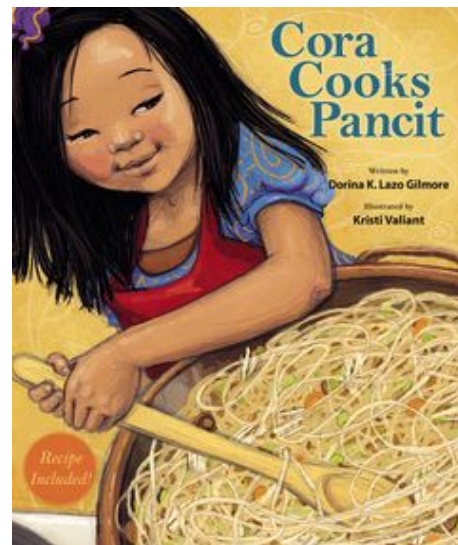
All Are Welcome

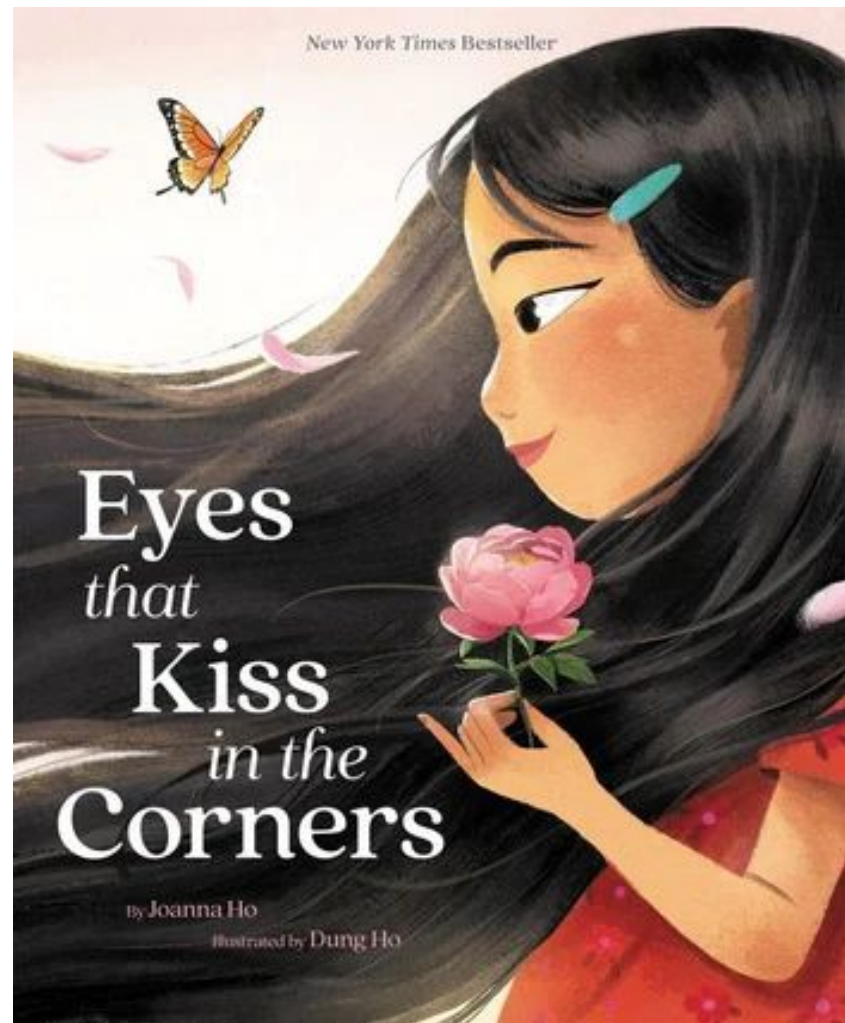
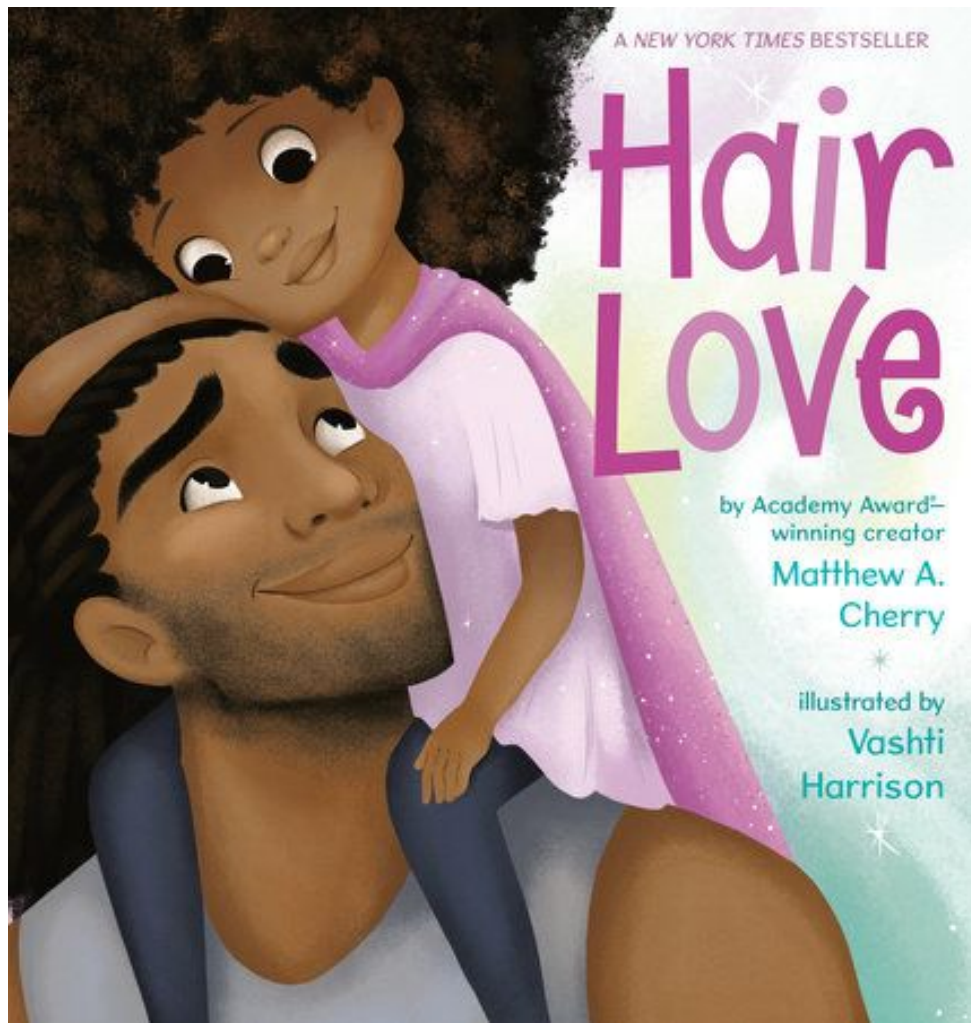


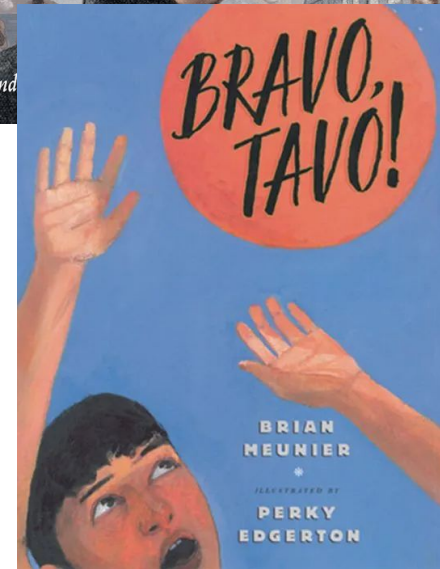
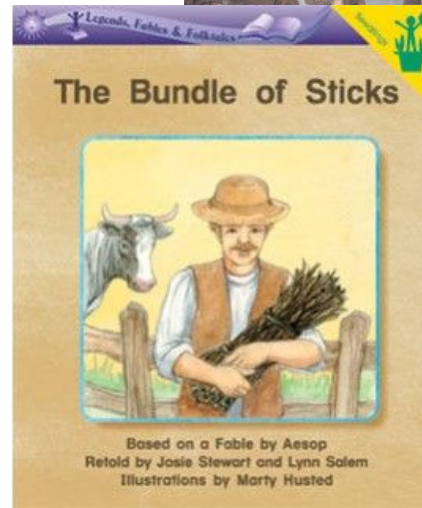
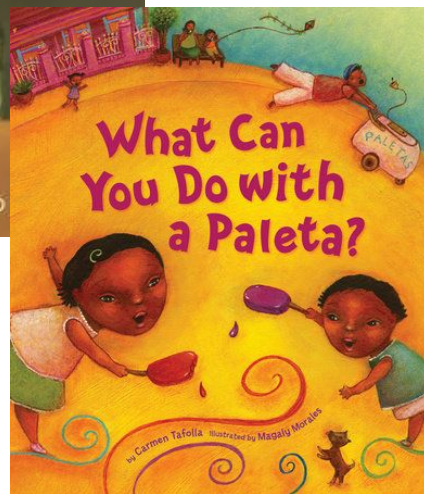
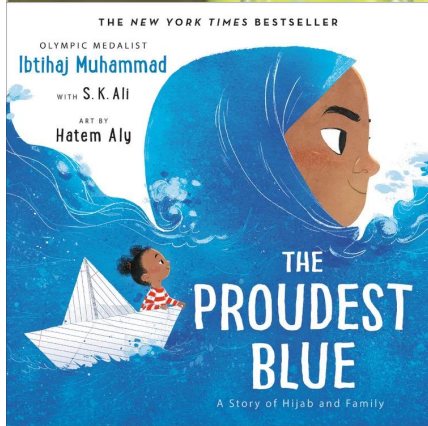
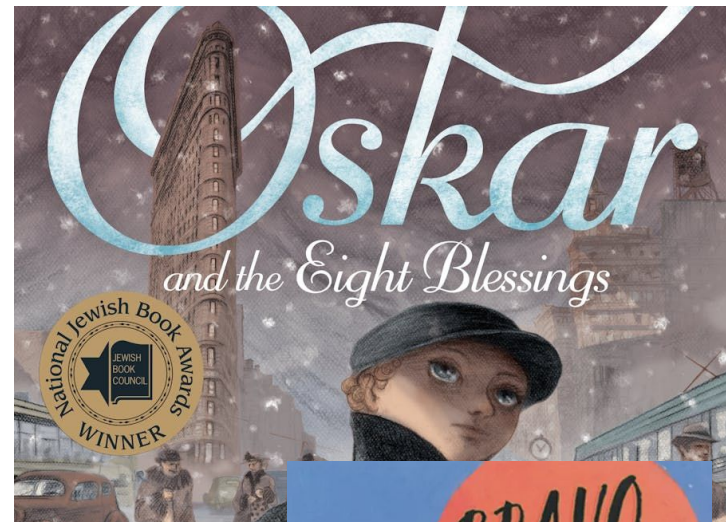
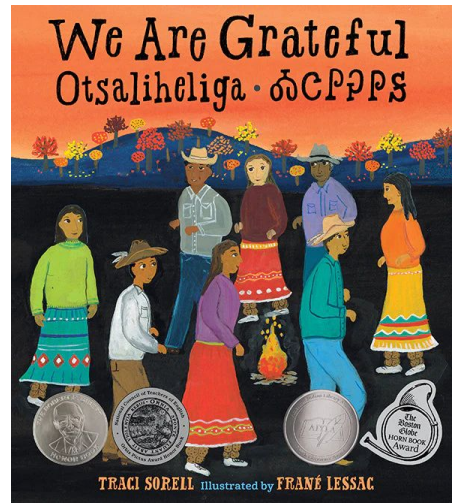
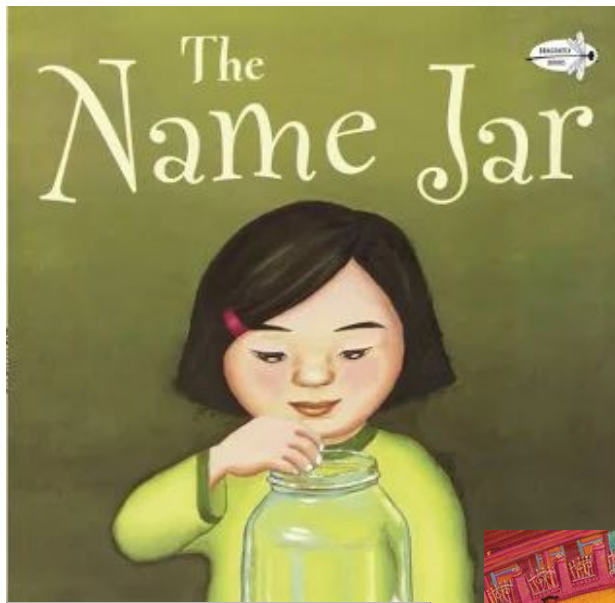
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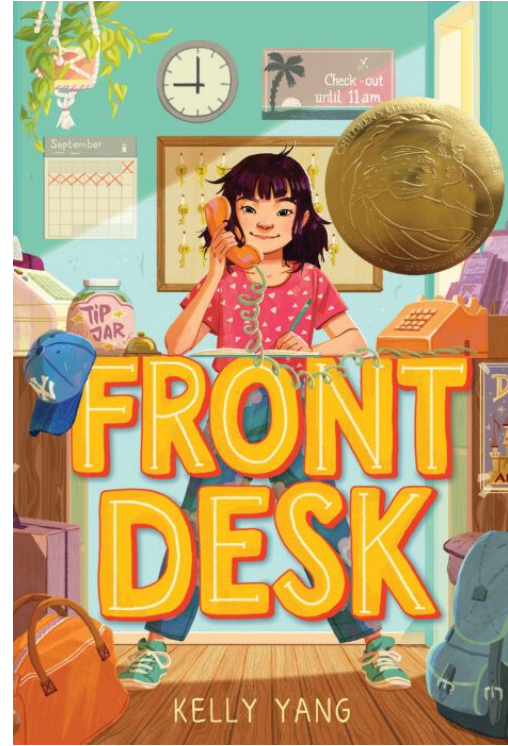
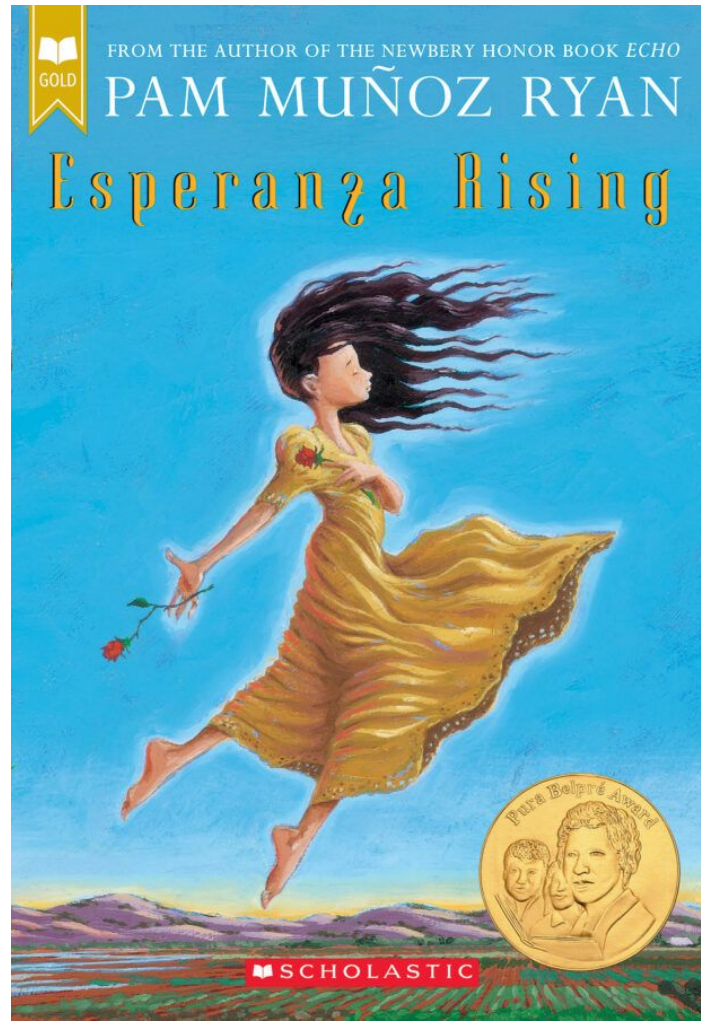
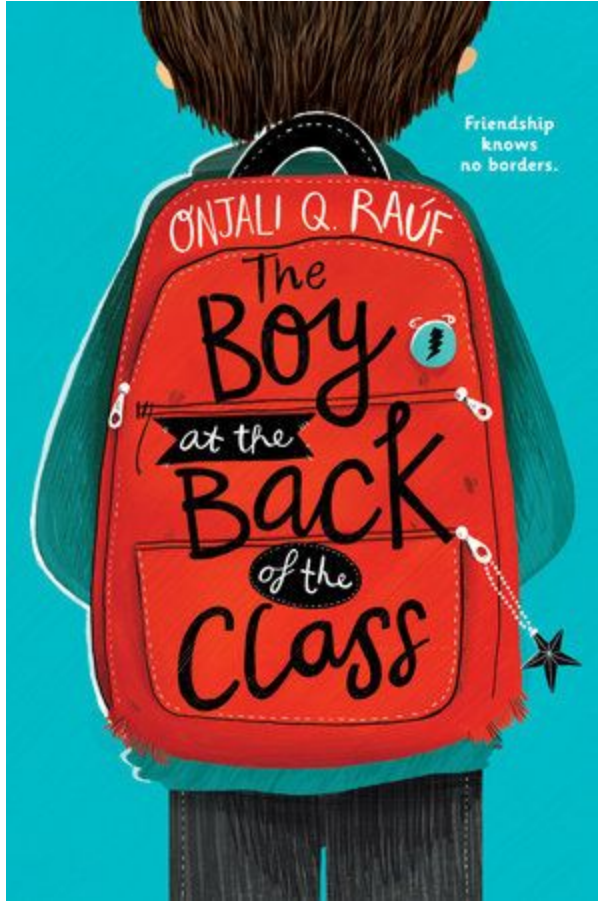


Angela Dominguez









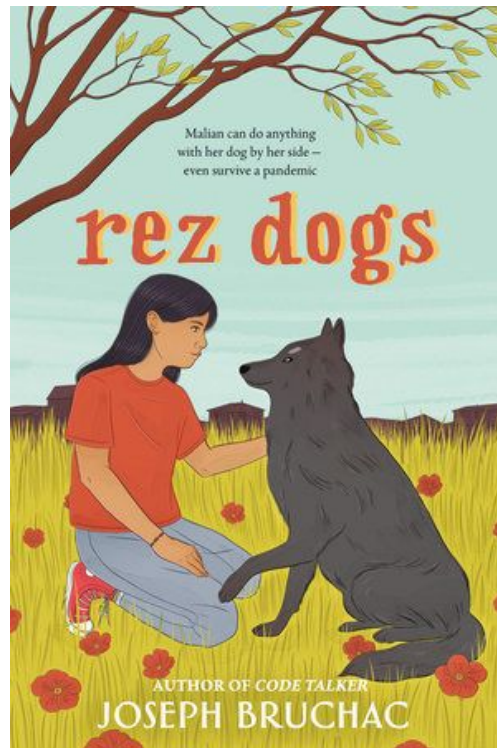
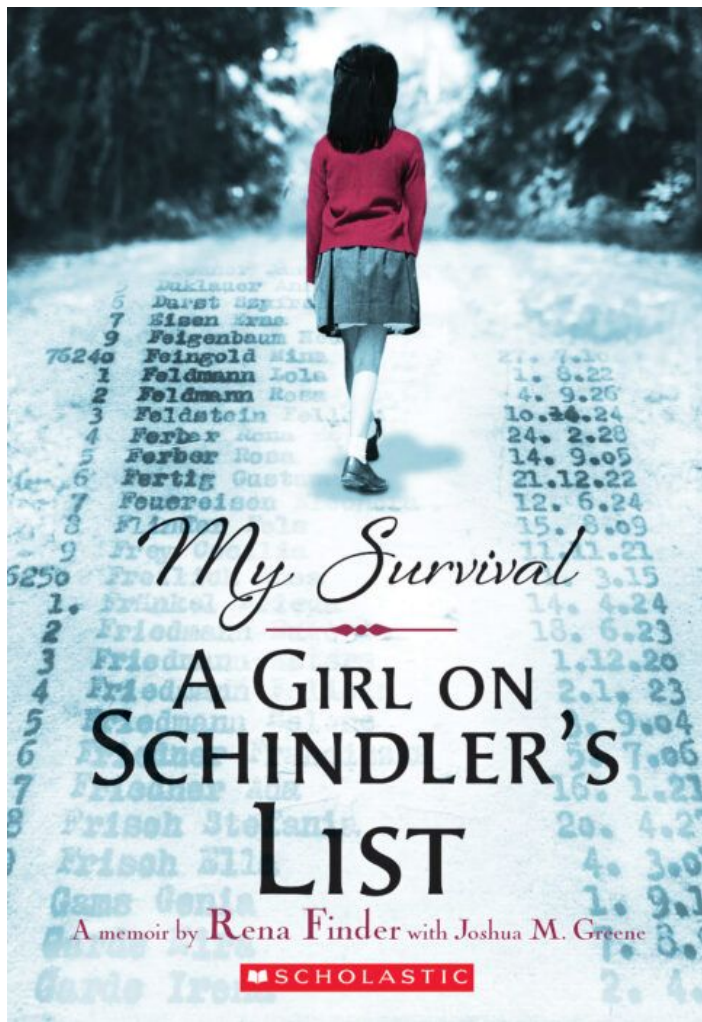
ALAN GRATZ

New York Times bestselling author of **REFUGEE**

GROUND ZERO

A Novel of 9/11

In an instant, the world
can change forever.



PUFFIN MODERN CLASSICS

SADAKO

and the Thousand Paper Cranes

Eleanor Coerr



FROM THE NEWBERY HONOR-WINNING CREATOR
OF *ROLLER GIRL*

WHEN STARS ARE SCATTERED

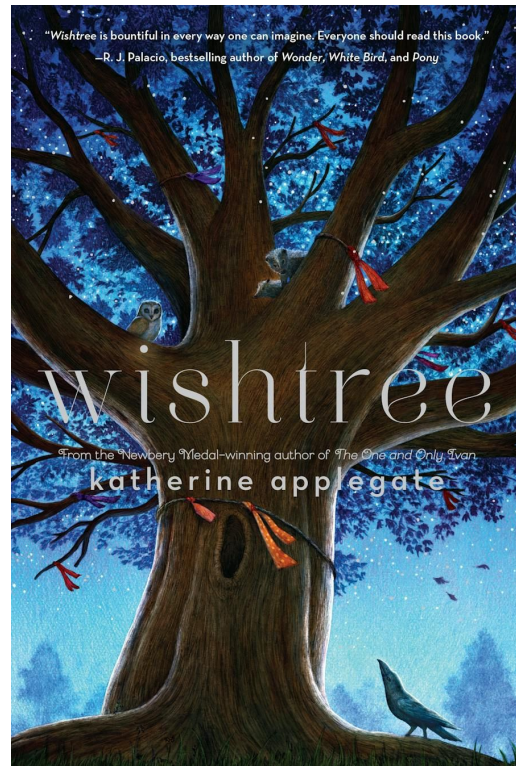


VICTORIA JAMIESON
AND OMAR MOHAMED

"Wishtree is bountiful in every way one can imagine. Everyone should read this book."
—R. J. Palacio, bestselling author of *Wonder*, *White Bird*, and *Pony*

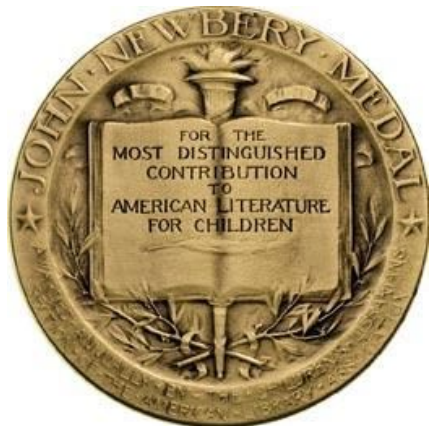
wishtree

From the Newbery Medal-winning author of *The One and Only Ivan*
katherine applegate



A word cloud featuring various ethnic and regional identifiers. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with 'Mexican' and 'Multi' being the most prominent. Other significant words include 'New Yorker', 'Jewish', 'MexicanAmerican', and 'Filippino'. The colors of the text vary, with 'Mexican' in orange, 'Multi' in blue, and others in shades of grey and brown.

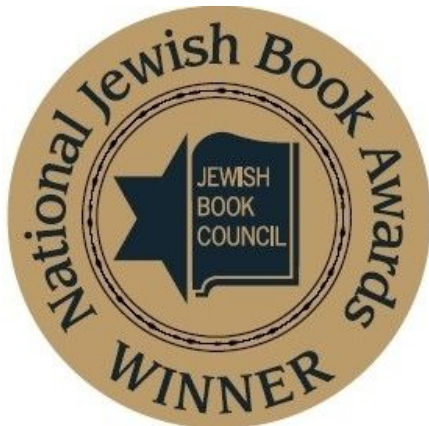
Filippino
New Yorker
Mexican
Wabanaki AsianAmerican
Greek KoreanAmerican Japanese
Jewish Wabanaki
Multi Kenyan
LatinAmerican
Korean Afgani Syrian Cherokee
English AfricanAmerican
Polish
Californian
MexicanAmerican





Blue Peter

BOOK AWARDS 2019



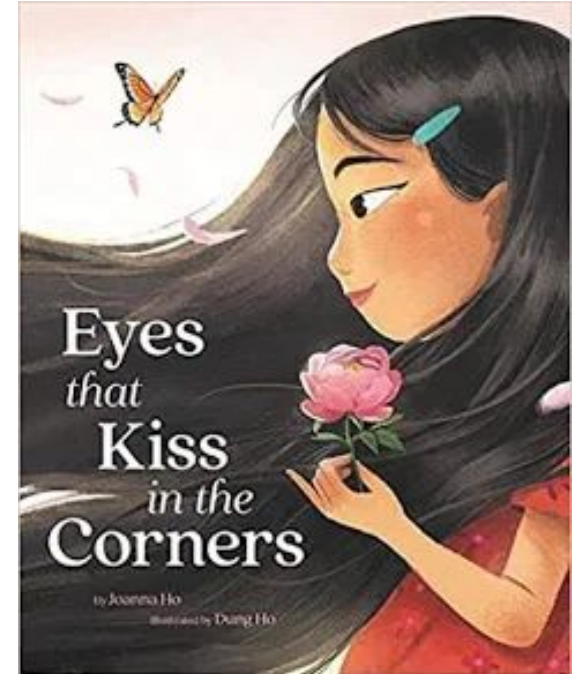
Multicultural Books and Activities

Mirror Reflection: Provide each child with a handheld mirror and encourage them to look at their own eyes. Guide them to describe what they see and how their eyes are unique. Discuss how everyone's eyes are special, just like the characters in the book.

Identity Collage: Help children create collages that represent their identities. Provide magazines, colored paper, glue, and scissors. Encourage them to cut out pictures and words that reflect their culture, family, hobbies, and interests. Display the collages around the classroom.

Family Stories: Invite children to share stories about their families and cultural traditions. Provide storytelling props such as puppets or picture cards to help them express themselves. Encourage active listening and respectful responses from classmates.

Community Connections: Invite family members or community members from diverse backgrounds to visit the classroom and share their stories with the children. Encourage dialogue and interaction to promote understanding and empathy.



Multicultural Books and Activities

Illustration Station: Set up an illustration station where students can draw their favorite scenes from the book or create their own interpretations of Martina and the other characters. Encourage them to use different art mediums such as colored pencils, markers, or watercolors.

Drama Workshop: Divide the class into groups and assign each group a scene from the book to act out. Encourage students to get creative with costumes and props. Afterward, have each group present their scene to the class.

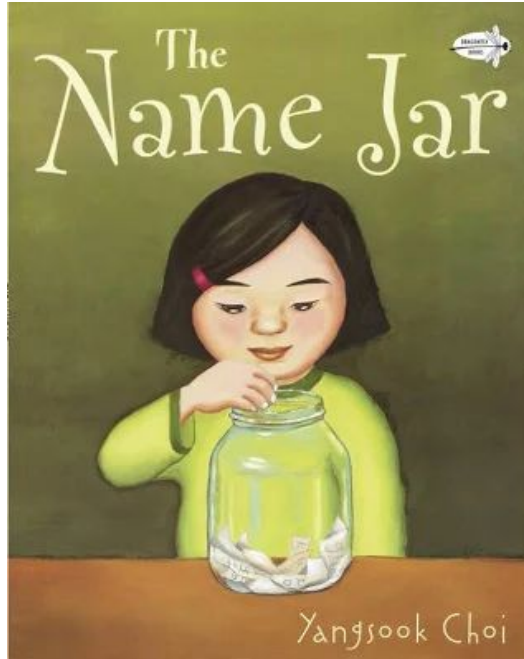
Story Sequencing: Print out images or descriptions of key events from the book and have students work together to put them in the correct sequence. This activity helps reinforce comprehension and sequencing skills.

Cockroach Crafts: Get crafty with cockroach-themed crafts! Provide materials such as paper plates, pipe cleaners, googly eyes, and glue, and let students create their own cockroach characters inspired by Martina.

Cooking Activity: Explore Cuban culture through food by making traditional Cuban dishes mentioned in the book, such as croquetas or arroz con pollo.



Multicultural Books and Activities



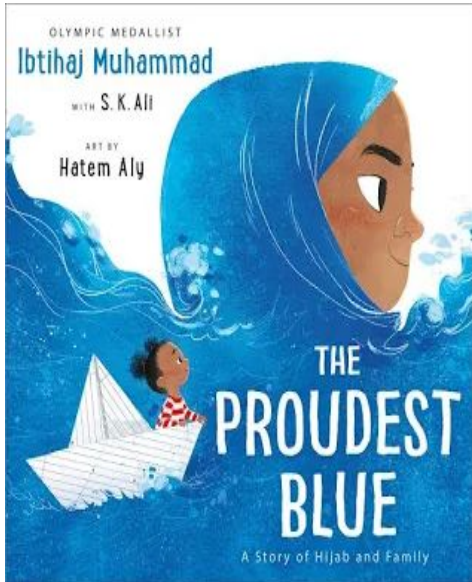
Letter Recognition: Integrate literacy skills by focusing on letter recognition and letter sounds related to the children's names. Provide alphabet blocks, magnetic letters, or letter cards for hands-on learning activities.

Friendship Bracelets: Have children make friendship bracelets using beads or yarn. Encourage them to choose colors and patterns that represent their own unique identities, and then exchange bracelets with classmates as a symbol of friendship and acceptance.

Name Games: Play games that involve names to help children learn each other's names and build community in the classroom. For example, you could play "Name Bingo" where children have to find classmates whose names match certain characteristics or letters.

Create a Name Jar: Set up a "Name Jar" in the classroom where children can place slips of paper with their names written on them. Encourage them to decorate the jar with colorful markers or stickers. Throughout the week, take turns drawing names from the jar and celebrating each child's unique name.

Multicultural Books and Activities



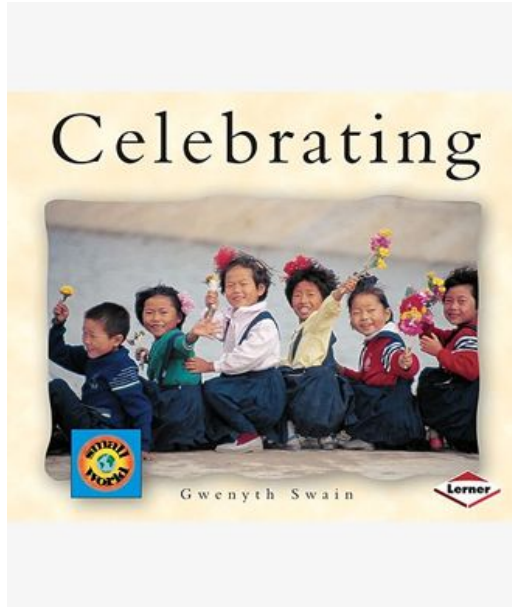
Blue Exploration: Set up a blue exploration station with various blue objects such as toys, blocks, fabric swatches, and art materials. Encourage children to explore the different shades and textures of blue through sensory play and creative activities.

Dress-Up Corner: Create a dress-up corner with blue clothing items such as scarves, shawls, dresses, and hijabs (if appropriate for your setting). Encourage children to role-play and express themselves through dress-up, just like the characters in the book.

Letter Recognition: Integrate literacy skills by focusing on the letter "B" for blue. Provide alphabet blocks, magnetic letters, or letter cards for children to practice recognizing and tracing the letter "B" as they explore the theme of blue.

Outdoor Exploration: Take the children on a nature walk to explore the colors of the sky and water. Encourage them to look for shades of blue in the environment and talk about what makes them feel proud, just like the characters in the book.

Multicultural Books and Activities



Cultural Show-and-Tell: Encourage children to bring in items or photos from their own cultural celebrations or traditions. They can share these with the class, explaining what the items are and how they are used in their culture's celebrations.

Map Exploration: Set up a world map in the classroom and mark the locations mentioned in the book where different celebrations take place. Discuss the countries and cultures represented, and explore the geography of each region.

Crafts from Around the World: Provide materials for children to create crafts inspired by the celebrations featured in the book. For example, they could make Chinese lanterns for Lunar New Year, Mexican papel picado for Dia de los Muertos, or Indian rangoli patterns for Diwali.

Music and Dance: Play music from different cultures and encourage children to dance along. Teach them simple dance steps or hand movements that are associated with the celebrations highlighted in the book. You can also have a multicultural dance party where children take turns sharing their favorite dance moves.

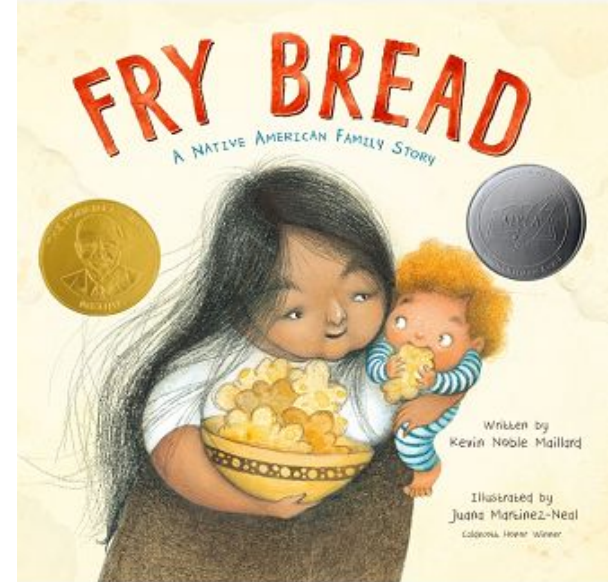
Multicultural Books and Activities

Sensory Play: Set up a sensory table with materials related to fry bread making, such as flour, dough, rolling pins, and cooking utensils. Encourage children to explore the textures and smells associated with fry bread while engaging their senses in hands-on play.

Language Learning: Introduce children to Native American words and phrases related to fry bread and other aspects of Native American culture. Teach them how to say simple greetings or food-related terms in Native American languages, if available.

Cultural Exploration: Take the opportunity to explore Native American culture and traditions with the children. Discuss the significance of fry bread in Native American communities and its role in bringing people together. You can also introduce children to Native American music, dance, and storytelling as part of the cultural exploration.

Cooking: Make fry bread

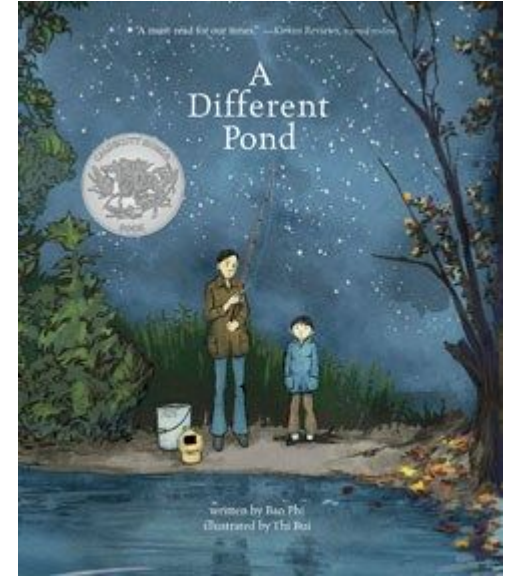


Multicultural Books and Activities

Fishing Pretend Play: Set up a fishing station with pretend fishing rods, magnetic fish, and a large container of water. Encourage children to take turns "fishing" and role-play scenes from the book.

Mathematics: Counting Fish: Use plastic or paper fish cutouts and have children practice counting them. You can ask them to count how many fish they catch, how many fish are swimming in the pond, or how many fish are left in the container after catching some.

Family Comparison: Reflect on what was important to the family in the story and compare that to what is important to your own family. In the shape of two ponds, create a Venn Diagram with words or pictures that compare and describe meaningful details of the boy's family and your own. What attributes do you have in common with the boy and his family?



Multicultural Books and Activities

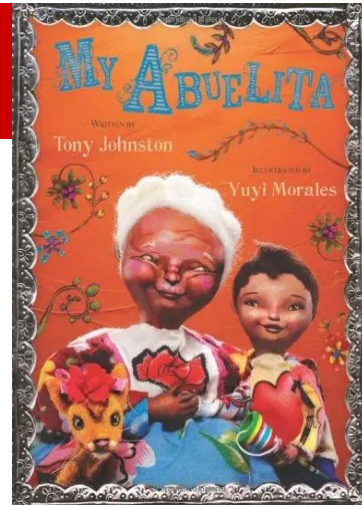
Literacy Activities: Integrate literacy skills by reading other books about family relationships and multicultural traditions. After reading each book, engage children in discussions about the similarities and differences they observe between the stories and their own experiences. Encourage children to share stories about their own grandmothers or other family members who are special to them. Provide storytelling props such as puppets or picture cards to help them express themselves.

Role-Playing Game: Organize a role-playing game where children take turns pretending to be the grandmother or the granddaughter from the story. Provide props such as shawls, aprons, and cooking utensils for them to use during the role-play.

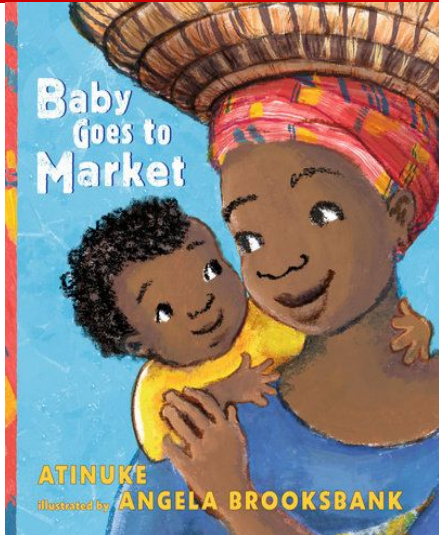
Story Retelling with Props: Use props such as felt pieces or puppets to retell the story of "My Abuelita" while engaging the children. Encourage them to participate by acting out different scenes or making their own props related to the story.

Music and Dance: Play Mexican music or songs about family and love for the children to dance and move along to. Teach them simple dance steps or hand movements that are associated with Mexican culture, and encourage them to express themselves through music and movement.

Family Tree: Discuss the concept of family with the children and talk about their own family members. Help them create a simple family tree using pictures or drawings.



Multicultural Books and Activities



Market Dramatic Play: Set up a pretend market area in the classroom or playroom. Use crates, baskets, and pretend food items such as fruits, vegetables, and grains. Encourage children to take on roles as buyers, sellers, and shoppers, just like Baby and his mama in the book.

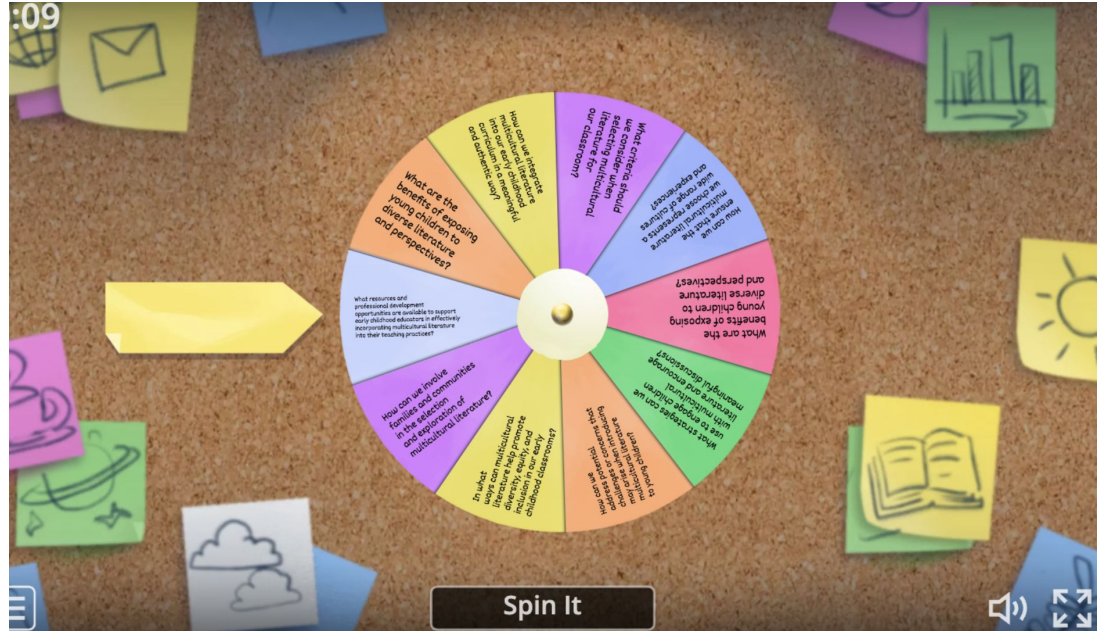
Counting Game: Use toy fruits or vegetables to practice counting with the children. Place a certain number of items in front of them and ask them to count aloud. You can also ask them to sort the items by color, size, or type.

Healthy Eating Lesson: Talk to the children about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables for a healthy diet. Show them pictures of different fruits and vegetables and discuss their colors, shapes, and tastes. Encourage them to try new foods and flavors.

Community Field Trip: Arrange a visit to a local farmer's market or grocery store with the children. Let them observe the different kinds of fruits, vegetables, and other items for sale, and talk to them about the importance of supporting local businesses and farmers.



<https://wordwall.net/resource/69176396>



References

<https://readingpartners.org/blog/cultural-diversity-day-6-literary-activities/>

Wheeler, D., & Hill, J. (2023). Application of Multicultural Literature in the Early Childhood Classroom. *Journal of English Learner Education*. (15)2.

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_AAu58SNSyc