

# The FLORIDA Reading JOURNAL

## Sail Through Great Books



### *In this issue...*

Strategies for Valuing Non-English Speaking Parents

New Resources to Improve Reading Instruction

Literacy Strategies for Students with High Functioning Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities

Including Diverse Literature in Classrooms and Curricula

A New Type of Word Study  
N-grams

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# The FLORIDA Reading JOURNAL

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## Table of Contents

### Articles

Strategies for Valuing Non-English Speaking Parents: ..... 7 One Culturally Relevant Deed at a Time <i>Gilbert Dueñas &amp; Shelly Hudson Bowden</i>	7
Effective Literacy Strategies for Students with High Functioning ..... 14 Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disabilities <i>Lara G. Taylor, Cynthia G. Simpson, &amp; Chad A. Rose</i>	14
<b>Diversity through Children's Literature: The 2010-2011 Notable Books for a Global Society List</b> ..... 29 <i>Ruth McKoy Lowery, Mary Ellen Oslick, Qing Liu, Prisca Rodriguez, &amp; Lauren Thibodeaux</i>	29

### Features

<b>Editors' Note</b> ..... 3	3
<b>President's Message</b> ..... 4	4
Call for Manuscripts ..... 5	5
Just Read, Florida! ..... 6	6
Technology: N-Grams, Witches, and Wizards ..... 21 <i>Terence Cavanaugh</i>	21
<b>Children's Book Award Nominations</b> ..... 26	26
Book Reviews: <u>L</u> iterature: Notable Books for Children and Young Adults ..... 27 <i>Thomas Crisp</i>	27
Florida Reading Association Board of Directors, Staff, and Local Council Presidents ..... 38	38
FRA Membership Application ..... 40	40
IRA Membership Application ..... 41	41
Directory of Exhibitors and Publishers ..... 42	42

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## Editors' Note...

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**Editors, Florida Reading Journal**



Dear Readers,

It's that time of year when students and teachers alike are enjoying their spring break. Typical plans include beach trips, reading a book that has been put on hold for too long, visiting family and friends, travel, or simply enjoying the comfort and serenity of home. We hope that sometime within your break you'll enjoy reading this issue of *The Florida Reading Journal*, and, perhaps pick up some neglected back issues.

In this issue, Dr. Duenas and Dr. Hudson list 10 strategies for forging a relationship with non-English speaking parents in order to promote their children's literacy achievement. Complementing this article is an article by Drs. Lowery, Oslick, Liu, Rodriguez, and Thibodeaux which provides brief synopses of selected titles from the 2010-2011 Notable Books for a Global Society and activities for each book. Dr. Crisp provides a preface to the article and a reiteration of the vastness of topics and themes of diverse literature. Diversity is further explored in the article, *Effective Literacy Strategies for Students with High Functioning Autism and Other Pervasive Developmental Disabilities* by Ms. Taylor, Dr. Simpson, and Dr. Rose. Readers always look forward to Dr. Terry Cavanaugh technology column and will not be disappointed with this column's description of a Google tool that you'll want to use in your classroom and research.

We invite you to join our many authors by submitting an essay about your teaching experience, research you have conducted, or a literacy strategy you successfully implemented in your classroom to the editors at [www.frjeditor@gmail.com](mailto:www.frjeditor@gmail.com)  
Happy Reading,

Happy Reading,

*Ruth Sylvester & Sherry Kragler*

Editors *The Florida Reading Journal*



## From the President...

**Maria Callis**  
**Florida Reading Association President**

While this year's FCAT administration is in the forefront of our minds, I wanted to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude for what each of you do every day in classrooms across Florida.

It seems as if the teaching profession has been beaten up a bit lately, especially with the changes put in place regarding teacher evaluation, but I am here to share with you that what you do has not been devalued in any way – in fact, now, *more than ever*, what you do with students is tremendously important.

We all know that education is the great equalizer – it does not matter what your background is or what your standing in society may be; a solid education provides opportunity that continues throughout a lifetime. When children learn to read, it opens up so many doors for their future. It is the basis for all other learning. When we teach our children to read and to read critically, we provide them with a tool that will never dull. With your help, students get to visit and see the wonders of the Taj Mahal; they can enjoy what the Great Barrier Reef has to offer; they can even visit a place that very few humans have visited – the moon. And the magic is that they are able to do this all with your help right from their classrooms! We provide students with an opportunity of experiential learning they might not otherwise ever have had.

As our state continues to move forward with increased expectations from students and their teachers, what we do is becoming more and more important. We help students master a skill that will permeate every other aspect of their lives – that is really a daunting task when you think about it.

Through all of the challenges that we face in education, when you look across our state, we are doing an outstanding job helping students across the academic spectrum, and I am very proud to be one of your colleagues. I am very proud of the work we do, and I want you all to know that despite the considerable noise outside of our classrooms, what we do inside those walls with the lives that we touch is what matters most.

Yours Sincerely ,  
*Maria Callis*



The logo for The Florida Reading Journal features the word "The" in a serif font at the top left. Below it, "FLORIDA" is written in a green, all-caps, sans-serif font. The word "Reading" is the largest, in a black serif font, with a green palm tree silhouette integrated into the letter "R". Below "Reading", the word "JOURNAL" is written in a green, all-caps, sans-serif font.

# The FLORIDA Reading JOURNAL

## Call for Manuscripts

*The Florida Reading Journal* publishes manuscripts related to literacy research and classroom practice. Research syntheses and creative works are also considered for the journal. *The Florida Reading Journal* (FRJ) has a readership of approximately 7000 teachers, literacy coaches, teacher-educators, and literacy researchers.

### Information for Authors:

Authors are requested to submit only unpublished articles not under review by any other publication. A manuscript (8-14 pages) should be typed, double spaced, not right justified, not hyphenated, and should follow the 6th edition guidelines of APA (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*).

Submit online as an email attachment which is Microsoft Word compatible in .doc, docx, or .rtf format (Mac users please remember to add extensions). Include a cover page this contains the manuscript title, the author(s), institutional affiliation, contact information, and date of submission. Remove any information from the manuscript that might identify the author(s).

Manuscripts are first reviewed by an internal review board for appropriateness of the manuscript for the journal. If it is evaluated as a good fit, the manuscript is blind, peer-reviewed by three members of the Editorial Review Board. If the manuscript is accepted, the coeditors reserve editorial rights. The review process takes about two (2) months. The acceptance rate is 25%.

The journal is published in January, March, and June.

Send manuscripts by e-mail as an attachment to [frjeditor@flreads.org](mailto:frjeditor@flreads.org)

Coeditors: Dr. Sherry Kragler and Dr. Ruth Sylvester  
(University of South Florida Polytechnic)

## Just Read, Florida! Update New Resources to Improve Reading Instruction



As teachers align instruction to meet the rigor of our course descriptions and the demands noted in the FCAT Achievement Level Descriptors, we know that teaching through the use of complex text and a process of close reading combined with greater use of these 5 instructional processes will increase student engagement and understanding of content:

1. Make close reading and rereading of texts central to lessons.
2. Provide scaffolding that does not preempt or replace text.
3. Ask text dependent questions from a range of question types.
4. Emphasize students supporting answers based upon evidence from the text.
5. Provide extensive research and writing opportunities (claims and evidence).

**Close Reading** is a strategy that helps you get more out of reading any text. Close is a finely detailed, very specific examination of a text, in order to find the focus or design of the work, either in its entirety in the case, for instance, of a short poem or, in the case of a selected passage. Close reading is micro-reading. It is the attentive reading of a text. If the text is

short, the entire text lends itself to a close reading. If, however, the work is long, the teacher selects one passage for a close reading and then relates it to the whole work.

Close reading assists students with the following:

- understanding the purpose in reading
- seeing ideas in a text as being interconnected
- looking for and understanding systems of meaning
- engaging in a text while reading
- getting beyond “surface” reading
- formulating questions and seeking answers to those questions while reading

The authors of the CCSS have a new resource to support teachers further developing instructional units that contain these processes - <http://www.achievethecore.org/steal-these-tools>

Source:

Just Read, Florida! Fall 2011 - [http://secondaryreading.pds-hrd.wikispaces.net/file/view/10\\_Improving+Reading+Achievement\\_JRF\\_Fall2011.pdf](http://secondaryreading.pds-hrd.wikispaces.net/file/view/10_Improving+Reading+Achievement_JRF_Fall2011.pdf)

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## STRATEGIES FOR VALUING NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING PARENTS: ONE CULTURALLY RELEVANT DEED AT A TIME

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**Abstract:** U.S. public schools are witnessing a dramatic enrollment increase in non-English speaking students. Despite prior legal decisions and attempts by school leaders, there still remains an academic gap between Hispanic students and their Caucasian peers. From firsthand visits with Hispanic households, this article addresses strategies for building meaningful home-school relationships and valuing the students' cultural knowledge.

Increasingly, significant numbers of linguistically diverse families have migrated to the United States, and their children have entered schools across the country with the hope of acquiring competency in the English language and gaining access to relevant academic experiences (Brock, 2001; Civil, 2008; Fitzgerald, 1995). Yopp and Stapleton (2008) suggested, "Educators face an unprecedented challenge as English Language Learners in public pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade schools number more than 5 million, or 10.1% of the total enrollment" (p. 374). These numbers are up nearly 100 percent from a decade earlier (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005). Furthermore, there are increasing numbers of migrant, Hispanic families moving from their native homeland to the Midwest and southeast regions of the United States (Lundgren & Morrison, 2003), and later placing their non-English speaking children in American public schools with high hopes that

their children will succeed in their academic and English language learning.

In her ethnographic study of ten Mexican immigrant families, Valdes (1996)

Soy padre de un niño en su escuela. Como puedo yo aprender lo que mi niño está aprendiendo en la escuela? Yo quiero ayudar mi niños hacer buenos estudios en la escuela pero yo no hablo Ingles.

As a parent of a child in your school, how can I learn what my child is learning? I want to help my children do well at school but I do not speak English.

*[Summary of Parent-Teacher Association Meeting Minutes, Mar. 2008]*

reported on the importance of schools discovering and valuing the cultural capital: prior learning, family traditions, and the social and linguistic experiences occurring daily within the household that shape their children's out-of-school learning. Educators show their respect for these new families in the United States while learning more about the richness and legacy of the Hispanic cultural values and family practices that ordinarily scaffold household approaches toward school learning. Classroom teachers are often not aware of the

cultural differences in literacy practices between parents and school; and such differences in the teaching of children serve as barriers to communication and academic learning (McCarthy, 2000). Further,

traditional school assumptions of instructional methods and literacy practices of Latino students are often inadvertently alienating, and do not recognize the potential value of English Language Learner students utilizing a bilingual literacy skills approach to learn the curriculum (Jimenez, 2001). Epstein and Dauber (1991) state, "When teachers differ culturally and educationally from their students or when they teach greater numbers of students, they are less likely to know the students' parents and therefore more likely to believe that parents are disinterested or uninvolved" (p. 298).

Since passage of the 1974 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Lau v. Nichols*, that instructed schools to provide an education comprehensible to limited English proficient students, Howe (1994) reported, "School administrators were still struggling to develop appropriate instructional programs to address the particular cultural needs of Hispanics" (p. 42).

As a classroom teacher for 7 ½ years at a K-3, inner city school with approximately a 17% Hispanic student population, I conversed in the Spanish language with many Hispanic families—at school and in their households, tutored their children after school or in the summer, and mediated on behalf of non-English speaking Hispanic parents at school Parent Teacher Association meetings, parent-teacher workshops or classroom breakfast meetings. From these dialogic events, it became apparent to me, as a

classroom teacher, that these parents often relied on their prior cultural experiences and school learning to scaffold their children's out-of-school literacy learning. As I spoke in the Hispanic parents' native dialect, the parents readily disclosed how they routinely enriched their children's literacy learning such as narrating in their native language historical accounts of ancestors, teaching their children to write letters in their native language to distant relatives still living in their native country, or having kitchen table discussions in both languages on life struggles, a family event or school experiences.

Porque no es posible que la escuela no pregunta por nuestra ayuda? Nosotros podemos soportar la escuela también. Tenemos que trabajar muchas horas y hay veces cuando no tenemos el tiempo para ayudar nuestros niños en completar la tarea. Es importante que la maestra obtenga una indicación de la manera que los padres pueden ayudar el niño en sus estudios académicos, porque hay veces que no sabemos cómo ayudar nuestros niños.

Why doesn't the school ask for our help? We can also support the school. We often need to work many hours to support our children, and we do not have the time to help our children complete their assigned homework. It is important that the teacher gain some idea of how the parent can help their child's learning at school because there are times when we do not know how to help our children.

*[Summary of Parent-Teacher Classroom*

A myriad of factors such as the parents' limited English language fluency; limited formal education, fear or intimidation of the classroom teacher, inflexible work hours, and unfamiliarity with the school's communication system, have often however impeded parental involvement in their children's academic education (Commins, 1989; Finders & Lewis, 1994; Sobel & Kugler, 2007). Speaking in their native language during visits to my

classroom or in visits to their household to tutor their children, these Hispanic parents echoed a recurring cultural theme—they viewed their primary role is to inculcate moral values in their children. Similarly, McCarthy (2000) reported Latino families emphasize the development of autonomous and conforming behaviors and parental monitoring. Conversely, these parents view their children's

school teacher as the knowledgeable, authority figure responsible for providing an academic education to their children (Anderson & Gunderson, 1997; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Lindeman, 2001; Pena, Sep/Oct. 2000).

Thus, in the style of David Letterman, what follows are a list of top ten strategies that school administrators and classroom teachers can utilize to forge a mutually respectful, trusting relationship with migrant, Hispanic parents with the aim of supporting their children's literacy emergence. I arranged the following list based on my household visits and school conversations with numerous migrant, Hispanic parents over a seven-year period. Through dialogue in their native language, I discovered that a home-school connection focused on meaningful school learning would emerge from communication based on mutual respect and openness.

10) Have the children interview their parents and write a biography. The classroom teacher can guide student discourse in constructing open-ended questions to ask their parents about their family upbringing, their earlier school experiences, and favorite hobbies and interests. Back in the classroom, the children can work together to write, rewrite, and polish their accounts of their parents, which can later be bound in a class memoir honoring the children's family history. This literacy event offers a critical opportunity to strengthen the parent-school connection and empower the students' families to find a medium to express their voice and cultural heritage (Burkhart, 1995).

9) Hold periodic parent workshops. Consider the school library, a parent's home, a community resource center, or the classroom as the setting that empowers non-English speaking parents with bilingual intervention to freely share household and cultural practices for supporting their children's at home learning. Bilingual speaking parents can serve as facilitators or even workshop teachers to bridge

the language gap between classroom teachers and non-English speaking parents. Through continued dialogue, participants gain access to information about strategies used in the classroom and household to teach literacy and mathematics, and contribute their cultural voice to how literacy learning experiences are orchestrated in the classroom. Within this venue, parents can learn and practice the English language without fear or embarrassment (Enz, 1995; Sobel & Kugler, 2007).

8) Start a parent-student recognition program that involves the parents' native language. Seize opportunities to send home a handwritten note, in the parents' native language that highlights their children's special effort or achievement, or to express your appreciation to the parent for their act of volunteerism or support to the school. On a recurring basis, use the school newsletter to broadcast your parents' involvement. Using letters and written notes creates an informal way of communication with parents that acknowledges cultural preferences for communication via personal connections. (Bazron, Osher, & Fleischman, 2005; Howe, 1994).

7) Host a Family Stories Night. Schedule an evening that allows parents and their children to visit the classroom and share a special family story in person—in their native language. Arrange beforehand for their bilingual child or a parent to translate the story so that everyone can internalize the significance of the parent's message embedded in the story. Similarly, the classroom teacher could arrange for parents to have written their family stories in a journal and later have their children or someone read aloud and translate the story in class. Alongside, the presentation of a family album provides a visual depiction of the family and of important events and memories in their lives. Parents gain greater voice in their children's school learning and the dialogue serves to promote respect and understanding for people (Finnegan, 1997; Meoli, 2001).

6) At the start of the school year, let Hispanic parents know that your school and classroom value dual-language learning. With the aid of a bilingual parent liaison, use an Open House, parent-teacher workshop, or bilingual newsletters to highlight ways in which English Language Learners are encouraged to use their native language to express their ideas, questions, and critical thinking during classroom discussions and student assessments (Estrada, Gomez, & Ruiz-Escalante, 2009).

5) Show parents how they can help, express your beliefs that parents are vital to their children's school learning! It may take a while—perhaps, several parent-teacher events on weekday evenings and weekends to gain their trust and confidence to build a meaningful home-school relationship. However, this is what Latino families look for—a classroom teacher whose words and actions show a commitment toward their children's success at school and toward the parents gaining knowledge about the school's operations and being treated as an equal partner (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Holman, 1997).

4) Redefine our traditional views of parental involvement. Often, Hispanic parents, based on their own upbringing, focus on the moral development of their children and place the burden of responsibility for academic teaching on the classroom teacher. Some parents use everyday experiences such as singing traditional family melodies, planning and cooking a family dinner, or calculating costs while grocery shopping. Although some non-English speaking parents may have a limited degree of English language fluency, they sit with their children and use the Spanish language to converse with their children about a storybook (written in their native language) or about their children's day at school (Pena, Sep/Oct 2000; Vandegrift & Greene, 1992).

3) Meet families where they are—in their household or neighborhood. With the aid of a bilingual parent, consider doing at the beginning part of the school year a household visitation. Visits can help classroom teachers better understand their students' social circumstances such as family and work history, use of code-switching during family discourse, practice of religious traditions, and family and community networks. At the very least, parent-teacher dialogue can help erase misconceptions (Allen, 2008; Ginsberg, 2007; McIntyre, Kyle, Moore, Sweazy, & Greer, 2001).

2) Acknowledge parents as their children's first teacher. In your efforts to reach out to migrant, non-English speaking parents seek to learn, with the aid of a Spanish-speaking parent or an interpreter, of how the family household and their cultural heritage serve as an important foundation and a familiar setting for their children's out-of-school literacy learning. Be open minded to the ways in which the parent ordinarily nurtures their child's physical, mental and emotional growth even before the child walked into your classroom (De La Cruz, 1999; Flood, Lapp, Tinajero, & Nagel, 1995; Koskinen & Shockley, 1994). Having created a foundation that values the cultural knowledge and experience of migrant, Hispanic families, we present the following strategy as the capstone for connecting with non-English speaking parents one culturally relevant deed at a time.

1) Become collaborators, advocates alongside migrant, Hispanic families dedicated to school reform. Our mantra that is displayed on school hallways and advertised at school wide events needs to spell change. As educators, we need to know that Hispanic families view education as the catalyst to their children's future success; they are concerned about classroom conditions, overcrowding and dropout rates. Not satisfied with the status quo, Latino families are looking to us, the educators to help them better understand the educational system and ways of

making changes to traditional teaching practices. What we do and how we do it in the classroom must offer migrant, non-English speaking students equitable opportunities to engage and succeed in a rigorous and culturally relevant educational environment (Wadsworth & Remaley, 2007).

As teachers and parents begin to openly communicate and work together to connect school and at-home literacy practices, meaningful partnerships can become the framework for promoting student success (Paratore, 2005). Sobel and Kugler (2007) proposed that in an immigrant-rich environment, traditional approaches toward building parental involvement must go beyond business as usual—personal contact must occur, beyond one or two interactions with a faculty member. In forging relationships between the home and school, Evers, Lang, and Smith (2009) stipulated that efforts to link classroom literacy learning with the student's household experiences, such as their parent's written stories, could demonstrate a respect and appreciation for culturally diverse families.

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FRA invites all educators, reading coaches, librarians and any other reading stakeholders to submit a conference session proposal for a presentation at the annual conference. If you are interested in submitting a proposal for the FRA Conference, go to the following site for online submission. If you have difficulty, copy and paste the URL into your browser window. Here is the link: <http://goo.gl/ww4RZ>

**FRA 50th Conference  
Rosen Shingle Creek Resort  
October 18-21, 2012**

## EFFECTIVE LITERACY STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH HIGH FUNCTIONING AUTISM AND OTHER PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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**Abstract:** Literacy and comprehension are the foundation of the core academic content domains, and central to educational success. Given the national push for evidence-based practices and teacher accountability, educators are beginning to look at strategies that are both effective for the majority of students, as well as strategies that have been designed to address individual deficit areas. Students with high functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other pervasive developmental disorders may require differentiated and individualized instruction for literacy acquisition and comprehension skills. Consequently, teachers must possess the pedagogical skills necessary to provide intensive instruction in domains such as phonemic awareness, comprehension, and fluency. Mastery of these strategies can provide students with ASD and other developmental delays with the skills necessary to increase academic outcomes and achieve more educational independence.

The ability to read and comprehend text is directly linked to the ability to independently functioning in society (Chiang & Lin, 2007). Therefore, the National Reading Panel (2000) has defined 5 domains of literacy training for all children: a) Phonemic Awareness, b) Phonics, c) Vocabulary, d) Fluency, and e) Comprehension. Children who develop at an age-appropriate rate are able to utilize literacy instruction provided within the general education environment with minimal difficulty, while learning the basic fundamentals of reading. Consequently, children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities may require modified and/or adapted instruction for successful acquisition of decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills (Whalon & Hart, 2011). Given the national push for increased evidence-based practices, a growing body of literature has explored effective and efficient methods of literacy instruction for children with ASD and other developmental disabilities. Fundamentally, however, all teachers who provide direct instruction to children with ASD should have a foundational understanding of the extant literature regarding literacy

instruction and use this information to guide instructional decisions.

### National Reading Panel: 5 Areas of Literacy Training

Effective literacy instruction encompasses the 5 aforementioned domains (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) as identified by the National Reading Panel. Although teachers who are specifically trained in the area of literacy have a clear understanding of these domains, many teachers who have educational backgrounds that emphasized other academic domains or content areas are providing instruction to children with exceptionalities in inclusive classrooms. Specifically, literacy instruction is a fundamental component in all academic domains, where general education teachers outside the language arts content area are required to provide some level of reading or literacy instruction (Spencer, Carter, Boone & Garcia-Simpson, 2008). Therefore, if you teach, you are teaching reading in some capacity.

In making effective instructional decisions in literacy instruction, teachers should examine each of these domains. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes, the smallest units of sound that affect meaning (Browder et al., 2009). More specifically, "It is an auditory skill that does not involve viewing printed words" (Browder et al., 2009, p.275). For example, one who has mastered phonemic awareness understands that when you change the first letter in "pig" to "w", it becomes "wig". An individual who has mastered phonemic awareness can accurately identify the auditory difference. Phonics refers to teaching how to connect the sounds (phonemic awareness) with letters, or groups of letters in order to read and write one's language (Browder et al., 2009). Once the foundation of phonics is mastered, an individual can work toward vocabulary (being able to identify and understand the meaning of specific words), fluency (the rate of reading), and comprehension (understanding the meaning of what is read) mastery (Browder et al., 2009).

### Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Instruction

As previously stated, phonemic awareness serves as the foundation for vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Extant research involving decoding strategies with constant time delay have been replicated with a significant growth in learning efficiency (Tucker Cohen, Heller, Alberto, & Fredrick, 2008) as well as the effects of stimulus superimposition and background fading on the sight-word reading skills (Birkan, McClannahan, & Krantz, 2007), as well as studies on computer aided instruction have indicated that children identified with ASD could benefit from instruction in phonics (Whalon, Otaiba, & Delano, 2009). Therefore, direct instruction in phonemic awareness is not only germane to this population of students; it

may be one of the most critical components of their educational instruction.

For example, Birkan et al. (2007) used superimposition of the target sight-words onto photographs of the corresponding activities. They faded the backgrounds until the text was the only stimulus left visible. Preliminary results suggested that the student was able to correctly read 14 of 15 (93%) target sight-words. Follow up probes (44 days later) revealed that the child retained these target words. Additionally, the student demonstrated generalization of these acquired reading skills across different font sizes and colors.

Computer-aided instruction, another strategy to effectively promote phonics based word identification through sight-words, has emerged as an evidence-based practice within the past two decades (Coleman-Martin, Wolff Heller, Cihak, & Irvine, 2005; Heimann, Nelson, Tjus, & Gillbert, 1995). For example, in the case study by Coleman-Martin and colleagues (2005), three participants, with different low incidence disabilities, were taught decoding and word identification through three instructional methods (i.e., teacher, computer-aided, teacher and computer-aided). Through a multiple conditions design, it was determined that the sessions where the teacher and computer-aided instruction were utilized in tandem demonstrated the highest percentage of correctly identified words. Similarly, Heimann and colleagues (1995) demonstrated the effectiveness of an interactive multimedia program (The Alpha Program) to increase the reading skills in children with autism (Heimann et al., 1995) through a comparison group design of preschool students (i.e., children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, children diagnosed with multiple handicaps, and children who were identified as typically developing). Specifically, Heimann and colleagues (1995) stated:

All groups of children showed considerable progress during training

and displayed significant increases in vocabulary as measured by the built in alpha tests. In addition, strong generalized gains beyond the alpha materials were observed in tests measuring both word reading and phonological awareness, as well as sentence imitation. (p. 475).

To extend research in phonemic awareness, Williams, Wright, Callaghan, and Coughlan (2002) conducted a matched sample, crossover design that involved eight children with ASD. The goal of this study was to compare the progression of reading skills when using computer-based and book based learning for two groups (i.e., computer-based learning and book based learning, book based learning and computer based learning). For both groups, the amount of words read correctly increased slightly, where no consistent patterns were demonstrated in improvement of timed data, and all children recorded increases in their post-test scores based on the North Yorkshire Baseline. However, the group that was administered the computer- assisted instruction first demonstrated an overall greater improvement in concentration and reading for meaning. It was also noted that during computer- assisted instruction, time on task, verbal word use, and spontaneous appropriate communication and gestures increased when compared to book based instruction (Williams et al., 2002).

### Comprehension, Vocabulary, and Fluency Development

The National Reading Panel (2000) suggested that “teaching phonemic awareness (PA) to children is clearly effective. It improves their ability to manipulate phonemes in speech. This skill transfers and helps them learn to read and spell. PA training benefits not only word reading but also reading comprehension” (p. 2-40). Direct Instruction has been demonstrated as an effective literacy strategy for increasing comprehension and

vocabulary development for children diagnosed with ASD or developmental disabilities (Flores & Gantz, 2007). Direct instruction is a teacher-facilitated strategy that utilizes carefully articulated lessons for small group, face-to-face instruction, where cognitive skills are broken down into small units and deliberately sequenced. Flores and Ganz’s (2009) investigated the effects of a direct instruction program (i.e., Corrective Reading Thinking Basics: Comprehension Level A) through a multiple probe across behaviors design across four children between the ages of 11-14 with developmental and intellectual disabilities (i.e., ASD, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and mental retardation). A scripted teacher presentation book, which was divided into different domains (i.e., developing skills, picture analogies, induction, and deduction) served as the administration protocol for the study. Results of the study demonstrated that each participant documented 75% - 100% improvement following the intervention across all behavioral conditions, and retained the information after six-week absence of intervention (Flores & Ganz, 2009).

Similarly, O’Connor and Kline (2004) utilized a within subjects design to examine teacher--directed strategies for determining the effects of answering pre-reading questions, completing cloze sentences embedded within text, resolving anaphora by identifying relevant antecedents, and reading comprehension for 25 school-aged students. Results of the study demonstrated modest increases in passage comprehension throughout each behavior condition. The anaphoric cuing condition, however, resulted in the highest comprehension score per mean value (O’Connor & Kline, 2004). The results of this study indicate that the strategies presented have proven effective for some students with high functioning autism under ideal conditions.

## Alternative Effective Literacy Strategies

Alternate effective literacy strategies for comprehension and vocabulary development include a balance between teacher-directed and student-directed activities. These strategies may include guided reading, cooperative learning groups, peer tutoring, and computer -aided instruction. The use of guided reading strategies with children who have been identified with various disabilities was examined by Simpson, Spencer, Button, and Rendon (2007). Specifically, this study focused on guided reading as an effective literacy strategy to increase the reading skills of 11 students with dual diagnoses (e.g., speech impairments, mental retardation, emotional disturbances, autism) over a nine month period. Results at the conclusion of the nine month period (i.e., one academic year) suggested that participants experienced a growth in reading levels ranging from 6 to 24 month, and reported an increase in reading confidence.

To provide a more comprehensive understanding related to specific strategies for providing effective literacy instruction for children with ASD and other developmental disabilities, Chiang and Lin (2007) reviewed eleven studies involving 48 individuals with ASD and mental retardation. Overall, Chiang and Lin (2007) described effective strategies to use for functional and academic vocabulary perception through sight word and text comprehension. Specifically, the review identified flash cards, progressive time-delay procedures, peer tutoring, cooperative learning groups, incidental teaching procedures, pre-reading questions, anaphoric cuing, completion of cloze sentences, multimedia and computer-based instruction as instructional delivery methods for students with ASD and mental retardation. Results from each study confirmed that individuals with ASD are capable of acquiring functional and academic reading skills through the aforementioned strategies (Chiang & Lin, 2007). However, since a true

meta-analysis was not conducted, a preferential strategy cannot be determined.

## Repeated Readings

Repeated reading has also been identified as an evidence-based strategy for increasing literacy skills among students with ASD. Colasent and Griffith (1998) utilized a thematic approach, where material was presented through a cohesive series of repeated oral reading passages, to demonstrate that literacy skills of students with autism would improve when stories centered on a specific theme. Additionally, the retell ability of students with ASD was increased when students made visual depictions of the story in combination with documenting story details in writing (Colasent & Griffith, 1998).

In addition to increasing the literacy skills in comprehension and vocabulary, the use of the repeated reading strategies can also increase fluency and sharpen decoding skills (Therrien & Kubina, 2006). Implementation of a repeated reading strategy is relatively flexible, and can be conducted using well-trained peer tutors or adults. General protocol for repeated reading follows a distinct stepwise progression, where the student will read the leveled passage aloud to the tutor for one minute. Within that minute, if the student hesitates for 3 seconds, the tutor will prompt the student to move on or provide the student with the word, and the word will be marked as incorrect. Mispronunciations and skipped words should be marked as incorrect on the assessment form. Following administration of the passage, the tutor should inform the student of incorrect words, say the words aloud, and have the student repeat each incorrect word. The tutor and student should continue to practice the selected text until the student reaches a predetermined criterion or reaches the preset fluency level (Therrien & Kubina, 2006).

## Effective Literacy Strategies and Multi-Component Behavior Supports

Although each of the strategies addressed have proven beneficial for the instruction of students with autism spectrum disorders, it is of utmost importance to address the need to create and maintain a consistent and highly structured environment that would help in alleviating any behaviors which may negatively impact the teacher's ability to implement the interventions presented. In each of the studies presented, it is assumed that the conditions were ideal for instruction of students with autism spectrum disorders. The degree of effectiveness of the interventions may be directly linked to the students' ability to comply with academic or skill instruction during the time period that the intervention is available. Combing these specific strategies along with multi-component behavioral supports, such as Positive Behavioral Supports (for review, see [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)), will assist in creating an environment that is equipped to address occasional aberrant behaviors, which are often characteristic of students with ASD/PDD. Using Positive Behavior Supports as a model for a multi-component framework for behavioral support, students are presented with varying degrees of supports based on individual needs and data-based decisions (Sugai & Horner, 2002). These supports are generally situated within a whole school, group, and individual context (Bambara & Kern, 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2002), where the supports increase in intensity as dictated by the student's documented behavioral pattern. The National Association of School Psychologists (2001) indicated that the use of multi-component behavioral support strategies, such as Positive Behavior Supports, may help ameliorate challenging behaviors and replace them with prosocial behaviors. Therefore, coupling evidence-based academic interventions with the data-based decision making process of a multi-component behavior support system will help teachers address both academic deficits as well as provide the student

with age-appropriate behavioral functioning to increase student outcome.

## Conclusion

Overall, there are many evidence-based strategies for increasing literacy development in all five domains identified by the National Reading Panel for students diagnosed with ASD and other developmental disorders. Consequently, future research is critical to determine a literacy method that is most effective for this population of students. At the fundamental level, however, educators must examine the individual needs of their students, have a basic understanding of evidenced-based literacy practices that have demonstrated effectiveness with children with ASD, and utilize this information to make informed instructional decisions.

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## Technology: The N-Grams, Witches, and Wizards: *Observing words through time*

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University of North Florida  
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An n-gram or ngram, not to be confused with a memory engram, the Ingram machine pistol or a scientific unit of mass, is defined as a contiguous sequence of some n items from text or speech, in other words, words. So now you should be asking yourself, great, but what can I do with that? Well think about the concept of a concordance for a book or an author's work. A concordance would be an element of the n-gram information for that word, but a real n-gram investigation would go well beyond just a book or just an author, and instead would be looking at everything that used that word. Sounds impossible, but it's not.

Google analytics is a tool that anyone can use to analyze word usage in books over time, at least books between 1800 and 2000. The Google Book's Ngram Viewer (<http://books.google.com/ngrams>) allows users to investigate a word's use and see the percentages and data for how often that word or phrase appears in print. The books being used in Google Books now included over 15 million scanned print edition and over 500 billion words. This means that we have a new element that can be included in a word study. It is also a way to look at culture over time by its word usage, and can be a way to look at how words change over time in their use.

### Google books Ngram Viewer

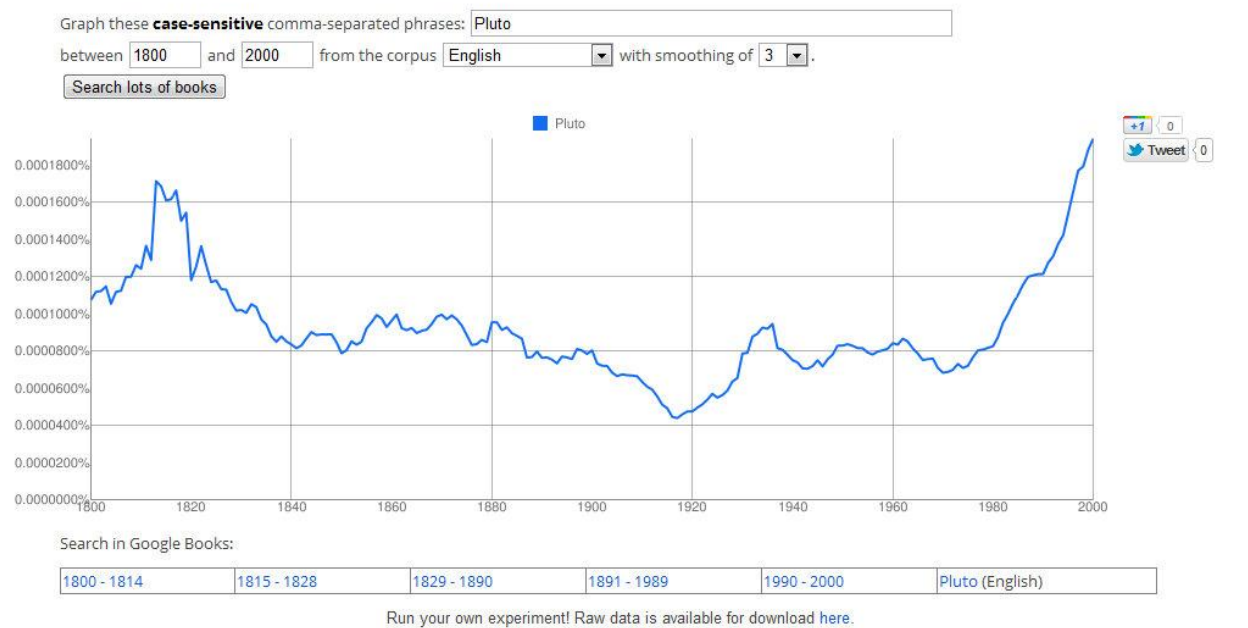


Figure 1: *n*-gram of the word “Pluto” from 1800 through 2000

Here is an example of a word being analyzed. As an old science teacher, I thought that I would start with “Pluto,” since recently the planet Pluto was demoted from a major planet object to a dwarf planetary body. When I go to the Ngram Viewer and type in the word “Pluto” as the search word and click on the Search button I get a graph of the word usage over time (see Figure 1). Now, I can see how often that word appears in print over time for the books scanned. Notice the spike that occurs before 1940 - that would make sense as its discovery was in the 1930’s. Also, notice the rise in occurrences after 1980, when the debate was brewing about whether Pluto was a planet or not. I’m sure if the data continued, we would see another spike around 2006 when Pluto was reclassified. We can also see from the graph, that it isn’t a high use word either, as it maxed at about 0.00018% of word use.

You can also use the system to compare words. Now instead of just typing a single word

into the search bar, you type in different words separated by a comma. Since the *Harry Potter* series just finished and Pottermore has yet to start let’s consider some of the words used in that series. Upon researching I found that the word “wizard” occurs over 240 times in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (although I’m sure that I could have missed a few in my search though the book). And thinking back as a child, I didn’t hear much about wizards, but I often did hear about witches. So let’s examine the word use of “witch” and “wizard” over time. Typing in “witch, wizard” into the search and searching gives me a graph display of the two words’ appearances over time (see Figure 2). Looking at the chart we can easily see that indeed the word “witch” occurs in print much more often than “wizard,” actually at least three times as much. But also in looking at the word wizard though time we might actually see the impact that J. K. Rowling had, as between 1980 and 2000, the word wizard starts becoming more common.

## Google books Ngram Viewer

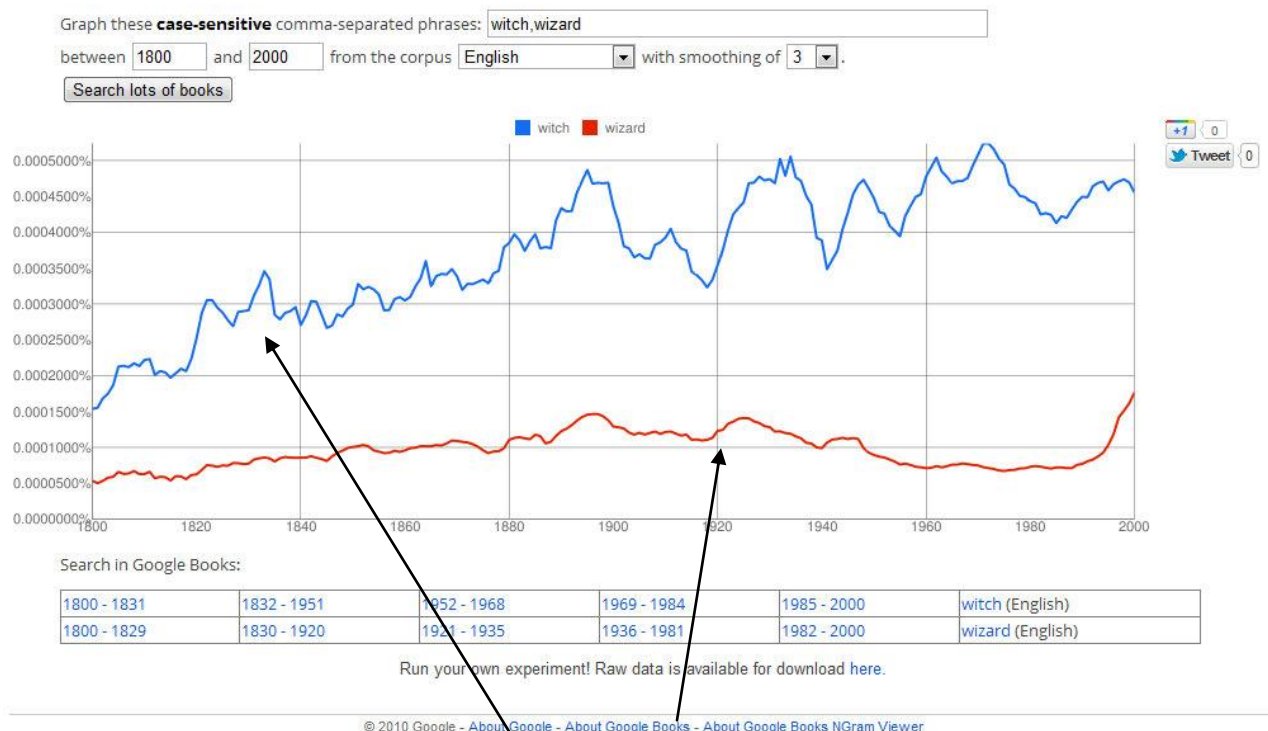


Figure 2: *n*-gram comparison of the words witch and wizard from 1800 through 2000.





Figure 4: *n*-gram comparison of the words vampire and zombie from 1800 through 2000.

was also just recently reading that zombies are the new vampires, that vampires are going out and zombies are the next big thing - something that I'm starting to see in book publications. So I ran a comparison between those two terms (see Figure 4). Indeed it looks like zombies are becoming more common than they use to be and that around 2000, vampires shifted from a rising word to a declining use word.

Recently, a college student reading a short story based on the *Cow Jumped Over the Moon*, had a problem with the word "dryly." She just didn't know what the word meant. While she accepted and understood the definition when told, it made me wonder. So, I researched the *n*-gram for the word "dryly" and got its graph (see Figure 5). That word was twice as common around 1900 as it is today (0.00006%). And while I wasn't reading in 1900, it does help me to understand that she hasn't been exposed to as many instances to a declining used word as I have.

The Ngram Viewer from Google, give educators a new tool in word research. Think about having your students search for words from your word wall or the books that they are reading and talk about how that word's usage has changed though time (good math and science skill - reading graphs). You can also use the graph as a nice visual display about some words in the book that they are reading, such as for your bulletin board, letting them see the word use though time. This tool gives us an ability to do a different kind of Word Analysis, instead of phonics, decoding, or root words, we can instead look at how often people actually use the word in print.

*Happy reading with technology.*

Google books Ngram Viewer

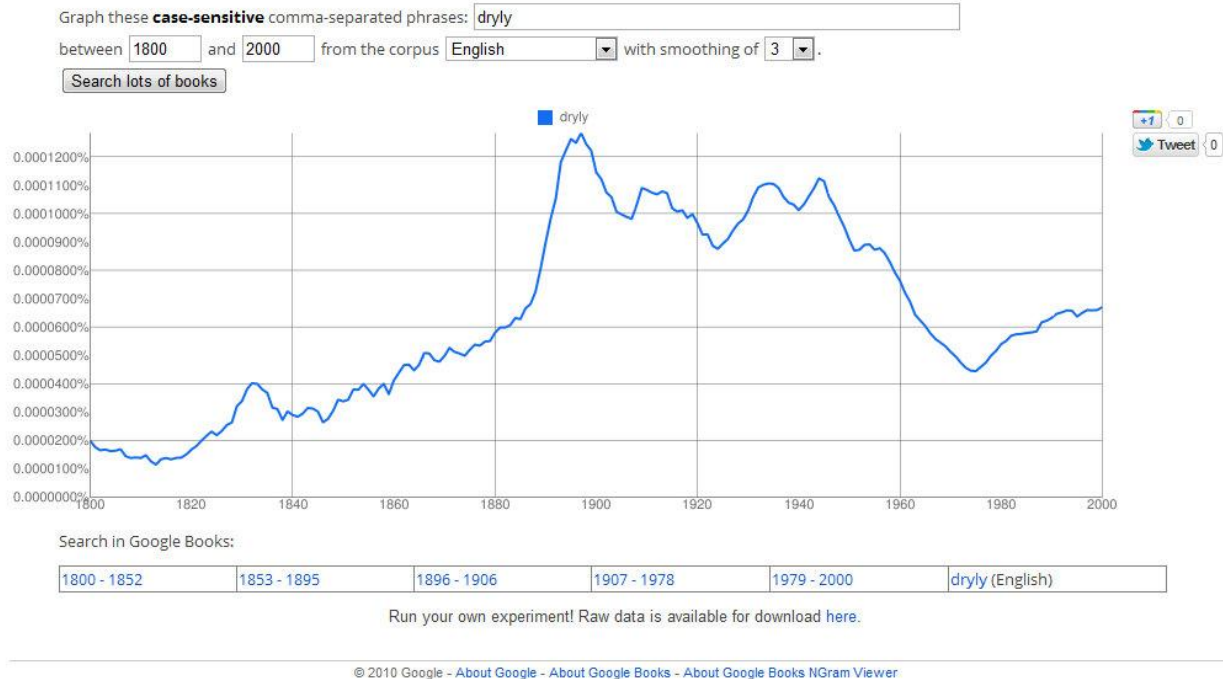


Figure 5: n-gram of the word “dryly” from 1800 through 2000.

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If you have any books you would like reviewed for the 2012-2013 Children's Book Award program, please follow the Recommend a Book link on the Children's Book Award web site.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact us!

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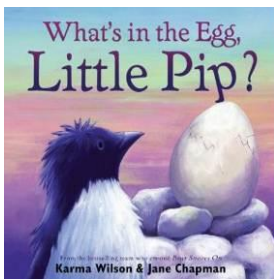
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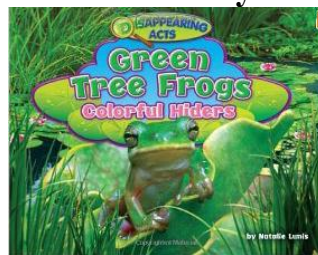
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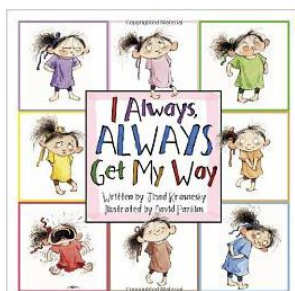
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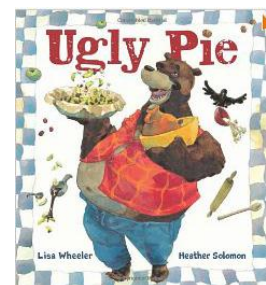
*What's in the Egg  
Little Pip?*  
By: Karma Wilson



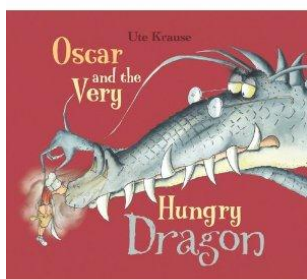
*Green Tree Frogs  
Colorful Hiders*  
By: Natalie Lunis



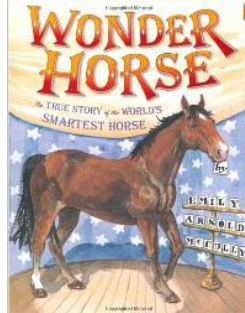
*I Always, Always Get  
My Way*  
By: Thad Krasnesky



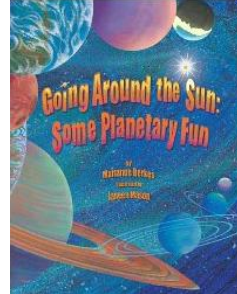
*Ugly Pie*  
By Lisa Wheeler



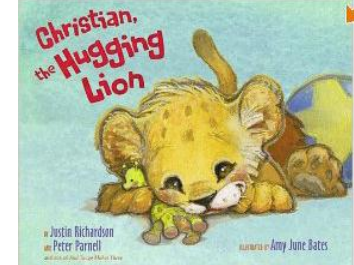
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Fun*  
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*Christian, the Hugging  
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## Book Reviews: Literature: Notable Books for Children and Young Adults

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### Including Diverse Children's and Young Adult Literature in Classrooms and Curricula

Just over one year ago, I published my first “Literature: Notable Books for Children and Young Adults” column (Crisp, 2010/2011a), a collection focusing on the most recent winners of awards for “diverse” children’s and young adult literature. It seems appropriate, then, that the first of these columns for which I served in a more editorial capacity also focuses on diverse or multicultural literature. In this month’s column, Lowery, Oslick, Liu, Rodriguez, and Thibodeaux focus on the International Reading Association’s 2010-2011 Notable Books for a Global Society lists, sharing brief synopses of selected titles alongside ideas as to how each book can be incorporated into school curricula.

As I’ve stated previously, there has been disagreement in the field of children’s literature about what counts as “authentic” diverse or multicultural literature (see, for example, the famous debate between Patrick Shannon [1994], Rudine Sims Bishop [1994], and Violet Harris [1994], a conversation furthered by Mingshui Cai [1998]). As Cai (1998) makes clear, there are multiple definitions of multicultural literature, but ultimately, I believe that multicultural literature consists of those books by and about populations that have traditionally been under-represented in media (including literature) and popular culture. Because these depictions remain relatively scarce (for statistics, see the website for the

University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Cooperative Children’s Book Center: <http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/>), available representations carry a great deal of power and merit careful, critical attention. This is accomplished by asking questions related to who has the “right” to tell which stories (for more on this conversation, see Fox and Short’s [2003] *Stories Matter: The Complexity of Cultural Authenticity in Children’s Literature*), honoring insider voices, and selecting texts that accurately serve both as a window and a mirror for readers (Cullinan & Galda, 1994).

Cullinan and Galda (1994) explain that when literature serves as a “mirror,” readers look into the text and see images of themselves reflected in the pages. When literature functions as a “window,” readers look into the pages of a text and see the lives and experiences of people who are different from themselves; as these readers stare through the pane, however, they also see reflections of themselves. These two functions are equally important: guiding young readers toward not only learning about other people and considering a range of experiences beyond their own, but providing images of themselves: showing possibilities of what they can be when they are grown and who they are already (Crisp & Knezek, 2010).

Debates about awards for diverse children’s and young adult literature are not new (see, e.g., the Aronson [2000] and Pinkney [2001] debate) and, based upon responses to changes in the Lambda Literary Award’s eligibility criteria (see Crisp, 2010/2011b), scholars,

critics, and authors of children's books about populations that have traditionally been marginalized in literature and popular culture don't seem to be nearing a consensus as to whether or not these types of awards are beneficial or detrimental. As Kidd (2007, 2009) argues, awards are not without problems; simply because a book has a seal on its cover or receives the approval of a particular organization doesn't mean it is guaranteed to be a "positive" representation. Readers are encouraged (as is true with all columns published in *FRJ* or elsewhere) to carefully examine recommended texts and decide for themselves how (or whether at all) to include these books in their classrooms. Certainly, the texts included in the list below are far from exhaustive (there is no book, for example, that provides representation to—or focuses on the existence of—LGBTQ people, a population that appears to have been excluded from the 2010 and 2011 NBGS lists). While the authors of this month's column highlight ways in which these texts can be used in classrooms, it's important to remember that diverse literature needs to be included across the curriculum throughout the year—not only during months devoted to the history of a specific population. Beyond this, the inclusion of multicultural literature in classrooms shouldn't be limited to those texts used explicitly for teaching: all classroom libraries should include a range of "authentic" depictions on their shelves, books available purely for the enjoyment of all young readers.

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Have an idea for a "Literature: Exemplary Literature for Children and Young Adults" column? Submit column manuscripts to the FRJ editorial staff and your contribution will be considered for a forthcoming issue of the *Florida Reading Journal*.



## DIVERSITY THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: THE 2010-2011 NOTABLE BOOKS FOR A GLOBAL SOCIETY LIST

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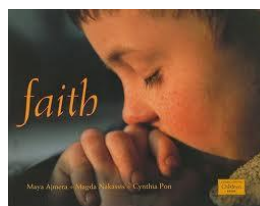
Children's literature enthusiasts often eagerly await lists of notable and award-winning books: the Newbery and Caldecott Award, the Pura Belpré Award, and the Jane Addams Children's Book Award, to simply name a few of the numerous awards for children's literature. Over the years, many of us read and share these titles with others in the field, arguing for our favorites but remaining committed to reading those that may not have sparked our interest in order to more effectively share our ideas and understand why some stories intrigue us while others do not.

Several years ago, we decided to share new multicultural titles with teachers at the Florida Reading Association annual conference in response to the overwhelming interest of professionals looking for texts they could share with their students. As different members of our group have served on the Notable Books for a Global Society (NBGS) committee, a Reading Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association (IRA), we began sharing these titles with teachers in our conference presentations. We are always excited when teachers share with us the ways in which they've integrated one or more of the previous years' titles in their classrooms.

Each year, the NBGS committee selects twenty-five outstanding books for grades K-12. These titles are selected based on themes that reflect the global diversity of the human

narrative and expand the definitions of diversity while bringing the global community closer to home through literature. In this column, we share some of what we believe are the most exemplary 2010-2011 book titles, providing both brief synopses for each text and offering ideas upon which teachers may draw in order to begin incorporating these books in various content areas.

### Recommended Titles



Ajmera, Maya, Magda Nakassis, & Cynthia Pon. (2009). *Faith*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge. 48 pages, \$16.95, ISBN: 978-1-

58089-177-6. Age: 4-8 yrs.

This beautiful book celebrates religious traditions around the world. *Faith* stresses commonalities of different religions, including prayers and meditations, chants and songs, holy books, cleansing, holy places, holidays and festivals, important events, dress, food and drink, and helping others. Colorful photographs and simple text highlight young children participating in diverse religious activities. The book imparts strong messages of respect for others, making friends, and building peace. Teacher uses:

- Supplementary book for social studies to highlight different religions around the world
- Spark students' appreciation and understanding of different religions
- Add to a balanced classroom library collection in all grade levels

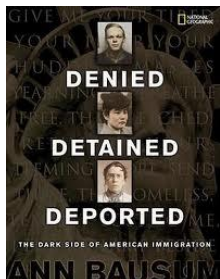
Baskin, Nora Raleigh. (2009). *Anything but Typical*. New York: Simon & Schuster. 195 pages, \$15.99, ISBN: 978-1-4169-6378-3. Age: 9-12 yrs.



*Anything but Typical* is the story of Jason, a high-functioning, sixth-grade boy with autism, who shares with readers his feelings of not fitting in, even though he tries to follow the instructions of therapists, helpers, and family members. He labels the rest of his classmates and teachers as neurotypicals, or NT's for short. Jason is a deep thinker and an excellent writer, who publishes online, an outlet for creativity that leads to his first semi-romantic relationship with a female student/writer. The story is an emotional and true representation of a student who is "differently abled."

Teacher uses:

- Introduce students to individuals with disabilities
- Help students understand students in their class/school who have disabilities
- Help students with disabilities see themselves in literature

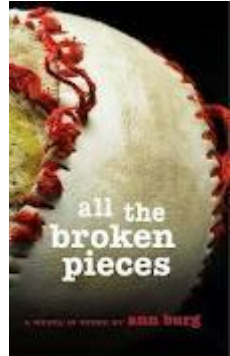


Bausum, Ann. (2009). *Denied, Detained, Deported: Stories from the Dark Side of American Immigration*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic. 112 pages, \$21.95, ISBN: 978-1-4263-0332-6. Age: 11-15 yrs.

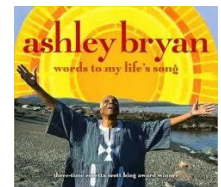
Issues of immigration remain at the fore of major discussions in political arenas across the globe. Bausum presents the experiences of immigrants who were denied entry, detained because of their nationalities, and deported because they spoke out against inhumane labor laws and practices. Experiences of immigrants from China, Germany, Japan and Mexico are skillfully portrayed in this volume. The stories effectively highlight actual people whose lives were, and continue to be, impacted by immigration laws.

Teacher uses:

- Students can explore laws and regulations regarding immigration and citizenship
- Students can explore immigrant experiences 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries
- Students can research the global experiences of diverse immigrant groups



Bryan, Ashley. (2009). *Words to My Life's Song*. New York: Atheneum. 58 pages, \$18.99, ISBN: 978-1-4169-0541-7. Age: 4-9 yrs.



*Words to My Life's Song* is a colorful and artistic glimpse into the life of Ashley Bryan, the well-loved and widely acclaimed African American illustrator and author. Bryan describes growing up during the Depression, his early love of art, and being given the opportunity to practice and express his love of art at an early age. Today, Bryan still shares his love of art with children everywhere as he visits classrooms, drawing, singing, and reciting poems. Samples of his work are artfully woven throughout the text providing an intimate look at this beloved artist's contributions.

Teacher uses:

- Students can conduct an author study to explore Ashley Bryan's work

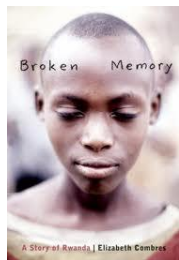
- Students can explore the Harlem Renaissance's importance in African American history

Burg, Ann E. (2009). *All the Broken Pieces*. New York: Scholastic. 219 pages, \$16.99, ISBN: 978-0-545-08092-7. Age: 11-14 yrs.

*All the Broken Pieces* is set after the Vietnam War. Seventh grader, Matt Pin was airlifted out of Vietnam by American soldiers and adopted by a loving American family. Matt has haunting memories of the war and blames himself for his brother's death. He also has difficulties at school and is bullied by boys on his baseball team. The story affirms the disasters of war but also illuminates the healing power of love.

Teacher uses:

- Introduce students to diverse topics like war, family, and bullying
- Incorporate into thematic literature studies like coping with changes in family and life
- Text can add to the variety of literature for middle grade classroom libraries



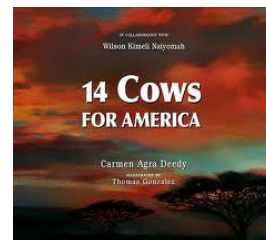
Combres, Élisabeth. (2009). *Broken Memory: A Novel of Rwanda*. Translated by Shelley Tanaka. Toronto, ON: Groundwood Books. 144 pages, \$8.95, ISBN-10: 0888998937. Age: 12-16 yrs.

Although Emma survived her mother's murder during the 1994 Rwandan genocide of the Tutsi people, she is still haunted by the terrible memories. She has only one goal: to fulfill her mother's last wish that she "must not die." This story presents a series of events that lead Emma to catharsis and hope for the future. A powerful story that leaves the reader pondering about the decisions we make and how those may impact others.

Teacher uses:

- Use as a supplemental text in discussions of the Rwandan genocide or war in general
- Introduce students to stories of individuals who have survived war
- Help students understand the ravages of war

Deedy, Carmen Agra with Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah. (2009). *14 Cows for America*. Illustrated by Thomas Gonzalez. Atlanta, GA: Peachtree. 36 pages, \$17.95, ISBN: 978-1-561-45490-7. Age: 7-10 yrs.



This is the true story of Kimeli Naiyomah, who returned home to his Maasai village from New York City and describes the horrors of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Kimeli's story prompted the tribe to give a heartfelt gift to help America heal—14 sacred cows. This important gesture from the Maasai population, which is considered a poor, nomadic tribe, illuminates the powerful statement, "There is no nation so powerful it cannot be wounded, nor a people so small they cannot offer mighty comfort."

Teacher uses:

- Supplemental text for discussions about 9/11
- Introduce students to the Maasai people
- Use to help students understand "acts of kindness"





Edwardson, Debby Dahl. *Blessing's Bead*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux. 178 pages, \$16.99, ISBN: 978-0-374-30805-6. Age: 9-12 yrs.

Young Blessing leaves an unstable life in Anchorage to live in a remote village, with a grandmother she hardly knows. As she struggles to adjust to her new life, Blessing quickly realizes that she does not fit in with her classmates and fellow Inupiaq Eskimos. After finding a cobalt blue bead that belonged to her great-grandmother, Nutaq, for whom she was also named, Blessing comes to learn the stories of her Inupiaq past.

Teacher uses:

- Use as a supplement to history lessons, example understanding Alaska
- Use as a springboard to teach about families and multi-generational relationships
- Use as a coming-of-age supplement



*Every Human Has Rights: A Photographic Declaration for Kids*. (2009). Washington, D.C.: National Geographic. 48 pages, \$26.90, ISBN-10: 1426305117. Age: 7-10 yrs.

In 1948, a total of 30 important human rights were delineated by the United Nations; rights that remain important in today's global economy. This book presents these rights in a format that can be easily understood and appreciated. Each right is illustrated by beautiful photography from all over the world and is combined with poems written by diverse young people. The book illustrates the value and dignity of every individual.

Teacher uses:

- Introduce students to individuals from different backgrounds
- Help students understand the different human rights as set by the United Nations

- Help students from various backgrounds see themselves in literature
- Help students understand the value of every individual regardless of their background

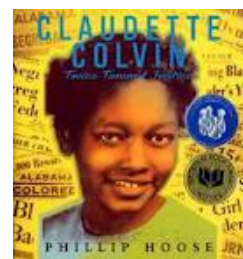


Griffin, Paul. (2009). *The Orange Houses*. New York: Dial Books. 160 pages, \$21.00, ISBN: 978-0-8037-3346-6. Age: 14-18 yrs.

*The Orange Houses* interweaves the lives of three young characters' who reside in one of New York City's housing projects. Tamika, a young teenager who is partially deaf, indulges in turning off her hearing aids and shutting out the world. Fatima, a recent illegal immigrant to the United States, avoids the police, while longing to bring her sister to America and one day visit the Statue of Liberty. The third character, Jimmi Sixes, a poet, recovering drug addict, and war veteran at just 18 years of age. Together, these three characters form an impenetrable friendship.

Teacher uses:

- Introduce students to individuals with disabilities
- Explore themes such as poverty and immigration
- Help students gain perspective on the everyday lives of other people in their community



Hoose, Phillip. (2009). *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Freedom*. New York: Melanie Kroupa. 133 pages, \$19.95, ISBN: 978-0-374-31322-7. Age: 12-18 yrs.

Nine months before Rosa Parks' 1955 historic refusal to give up her bus seat to a white passenger (which later lead to the notorious Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott by African American passengers), a 15-year old student

also refused to give up her seat. The young girl, Claudette Colvin, was dragged from the bus, arrested, and later charged. Unlike Parks' celebrated embrace, Colvin was shunned. One year later, despite her neglect, Colvin agreed to be one of four plaintiffs in the landmark *Browder versus Gayle* busing case which resulted in the desegregation of Montgomery's public transportation system. Colvin's story is one of hope and courage and a wonderful example to others about the resilience of young people.

**Teacher uses:**

- Use as a supplement in African American history
- Use as an introduction to exploring unsung heroes of the Civil Rights era.
- Students can further explore how ordinary people around the world have peacefully lobbied to ascertain civil rights for all citizens

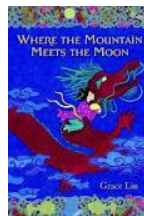


Khan, Rukhsana. (2009). *Wanting Mor*. Toronto: Groundwood Books. 192 pages, \$17.95, ISBN: 978-0-88899-858-3. Age: 9-12 yrs.

After the death of her mother, Jameela and her father leave their home in search for a new life in Kabul. Her father soon remarries, but Jameela is treated like a slave in her own home. She is eventually abandoned by her father in a busy marketplace and is placed in an orphanage where she makes friends, learns to read, and has surgery to correct her cleft lip. Based on a true story and set in Afghanistan, this story describes a young girl's struggle to find herself.

**Teacher uses:**

- Introduce students to Afghani culture
- Introduce students to different types of living conditions and family dynamics
- Help students recognize universal themes such as self-discovery and acceptance

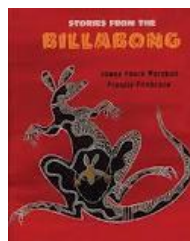


Lin, Grace. (2009). *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. New York: Little, Brown. 288 pages, \$9.93, ISBN-10: 0316114278. Age: 9-12 yrs.

Minli and her parents work themselves weary on the rice fields, with barely enough to sustain their small family. Minli is content with her life and listening to her father's fantastic stories about the Jade Dragon, the evil Magistrate, and the Old Man of the Moon. Minli's mother, however, is unhappy. Minli becomes determined to find the Old Man of the Moon, who holds the threads of everyone's destiny, to convince him to change their fortune.

**Teacher uses:**

- Introduce students to traditional Chinese folklore
- Help students explore what they feel is most important in life
- Help students understand the hardships of poverty
- Help students explore the concepts of greed and gratitude

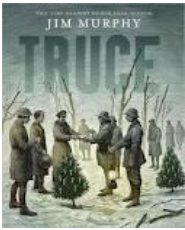


Marshall, James Vance. (2008). *Stories from the Billabong*. Illustrated by Frances Firebrace. London: Frances Lincoln. 64 pages, \$19.95, ISBN: 978-1-84507-704-4. Age: 5-8 yrs.

Ten Aboriginal creation stories, ranging from the creation of Earth to why the frog croaks and the mystery of death, are translated and beautifully illustrated using traditional Aboriginal paints and colors. An informational passage follows each story, providing the reader with explanations, facts, and historical information. Also provided is a brief history of Aboriginal Australians, a glossary of terms and information on Aboriginal symbols and their meanings.

**Teacher uses:**

- Introduce students to folktales from other countries
- Introduce students to different cultural mores
- Explore different forms of art and symbolism in literature



Murphy, Jim. (2009). *Truce: The Day the Soldiers Stopped Fighting*. New York: Scholastic. 116 pages, \$19.99, ISBN: 978-0545-13049-3. Age: 9-12 yrs.

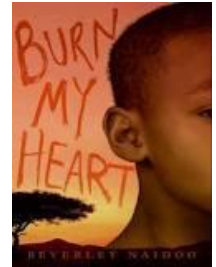
This nonfiction book tells of an amazing event in the history of warfare. On Christmas Eve of 1914, during World War I, a miracle occurred: spontaneous peace erupted and, for more than 24 hours, no fighting took place. Warring soldiers met in the middle of no-man's land between the trenches and exchanged gifts, songs, and Christmas greetings and wishes. The book also includes a concise history of events that lead to World War I. The book is full of historical photographs, illustrations, and quotations from those in the events. The special features at the end of the book promise to be of great value to both educators and students. It has a great timeline, extensive notes and sources, and a section with more references for

World War I resources, books, movies and online resources.

Teacher uses:

- Use as a supplement in teaching World War I social studies
- Use to show impact of civil disobedience (soldiers refusing to fight)

Naidoo, Beverley. (2009). *Burn my Heart*. New York: Amistad. 224 pages, \$12.47, ISBN-10: 0061432970. Age: 9-12 yrs.



In the late 1950s, a series of uprisings by a group called the Mau Mau led to the death of tens of thousands of Kenyans. Naidoo weaves a narrative that begins with the friendship of two boys, Mugo, a Kikuyu servant to the Grayson family, and Mathew, the Grayson's son. When rumors of Mau Mau takeover surface, suspicions against Mugo's family increase. As disaster strikes the Grayson farm, Mathew must decide between telling the truth and betraying his friend.

Teacher uses:

- Introduce students to the Mau Mau uprising
- Encourage discussions of social justice

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and human rights

- Help students understand the complexities of imperialism and revolution



Napoli, Donna Jo. (2009). *Alligator Bayou*. New York: Wendy Lamb. 288 pages, 16.99, ISBN: 978-0-385-74654-0. Age: 12-16 yrs.

Napoli presents a poignant story about early American immigration in Louisiana.

Calogero leaves his Sicilian home, after his mother's death, to help his family in their grocery store. When the Sicilians failed to honor Jim Crow laws, their white customers angrily retaliated. Calogero is barred from attending the white school and has to learn English from a tutor. As he makes friends in the local African American community, he realizes the real meaning of segregation.

Teacher uses:

- Use as a supplement to social studies unit on immigration
- Encourage students to explore the effects of Jim Crow laws in the United States



Nelson, Marilyn. (2009). *The Sweethearts of Rhythm: The Story of the Greatest All-Girl Swing Band in the World*.

Illustrated by Jerry

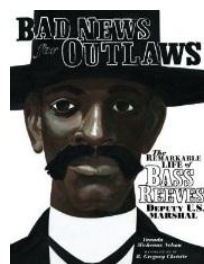
Pinkney. New York: Dial. 80 pages, \$17.15, ISBN-10: 0803731876. Age: 9-12 yrs.

The Sweethearts of Rhythm were the first integrated all-women's swing band in the United States. In this book, Nelson's poetry speaks of the all-girl band's experiences by utilizing the voices of their instruments. They remember how it felt to form the band, music rising above the hardships of the Dust Bowl, World War II, and segregation. The message of hope and solidarity through music permeates every colorful musical note and scenes are

illustrated by Jerry Pinkney in graphite, watercolor and collage.

Teacher uses:

- Introduce students to the first integrated all-women's swing band
- Introduce students to topics like World War II, segregation, and the Dust Bowl
- Help students understand how music can foster solidarity
- Help students understand different elements of poetry



Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux. (2009). *Bad News for Outlaws: The Remarkable Life of Bass Reeves, Deputy U.S. Marshal*. Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie.

Minneapolis, MN:

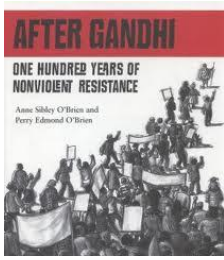
Carolrhoda. 40 pages, \$17.95,

ISBN: 978-0-8225-6764-6. Age: 9-12 yrs.

Bass Reeves, a fascinating historical figure, is brought to life in this nonfiction picture book for middle grade readers. Although he was born a slave, Bass Reeves became the first African-American deputy U.S. marshal and the most successful in American history. This lawman was both greatly respected and feared; and he used his wits and intelligence, courage, character, and incredible marksmanship to bring more than 3,000 criminals to justice with fewer than 14 deaths in the line of duty.

Teacher uses:

- Social studies (African Americans after the Civil War and other events)
- Justice system (introduce US marshals)
- Use as a supplement on peace education

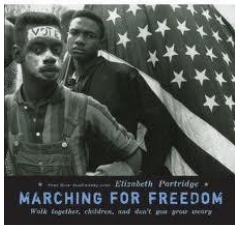


O'Brien, Anne Sibley & O'Brien, Perry Edmond. (2009). *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge. 181 pages, \$24.95, ISBN: 978-1-58089-129-5. Age: 11-15 yrs.

Using Gandhi as its opening point, this nonfiction book traces the history of nonviolent resistance by looking at significant advocates from 1908 to 2003. These nonviolent resisters include: Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Charles Perkins, César Chávez, Aung San Suu Kyi, Vaclav Havel, and Wangari Maathi and groups such as the student activists of Tiananmen Square and the Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Mothers of the Disappeared) in Argentina. The stories present nonviolent movements and their potential as vehicles for change.

Teacher uses:

- Unit on nonviolent resistance (can be read as whole or in parts, as a class or for resource)
- Supplement biographies and accounts from textbooks
- Use in a unit on social justice—how can students change the world for the better?



Partridge, Elizabeth. (2009). *Marching for Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't You Grow Weary*. New York: Penguin Group. 80 pages, \$19.99, ISBN: 978-0-670-07789-6. Age: 9-12 yrs.

Drawing from the experiences and perspectives of children during the voting rights movement in Selma, Alabama, Elizabeth Partridge provides readers with a raw glimpse into the chaos and spirit that accompanied the Civil Rights Movement. Quotations, songs, and

speeches are woven throughout the narrative as the young protestors describe what they saw and the things to which they were subjected during the months leading up to the march to Montgomery in late March of 1965. Black and white photographs with captions complement the text with moving images of children and adults of all colors coming together to fight for equal rights.

Teacher uses:

- Introduce the Civil Rights Movement
- Help students identify power relations in society
- Look at the historical contexts of young people's political involvement

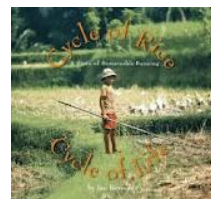


Perkins, Mitali. (2009). *Secret Keeper*. New York: Delacorte. 225 pages, \$16.99, ISBN: 978-0-385-73340-3. Age: 12-18 yrs.

After her father emigrates to America to find work; Asha, her sister, and mother move from Delhi to Calcutta to live with her uncle's family. Tension builds as her uncle is determined to make all decisions as head of household, including finding a suitable husband for Reet. The news of her father's sudden death in New York forces Asha to make a decision that changes their lives forever. Indian culture and the image of a rebellious teen are well-depicted.

Teacher uses:

- Use as a coming-of-age story
- Introduce students to Indian culture
- Help students to explore how the choices they make define and determine their future



Reynolds, Jan. (2009). *Cycle of Rice, Cycle of Life: A Story of Sustainable Farming*. New York: Lee & Low. 48 pages, \$19.95, ISBN: 978-1-60060-254-2. Age: 9-12 yrs.



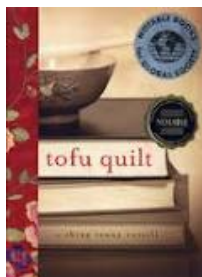
Rice is a common food, but seldom do others know how important it is for the people who grow it. Set in Bali Island in Southeast Asia, the story depicts people who survive by living closely in tune with the natural cycles of the water and soil. The water sharing and crop rotation systems have been in effect for more than a thousand years, but in order to become the best rice producer, the “Green revolution” which advocated using large amount of pesticides and fertilizers was born. The natural cycle of water and soil was destroyed and Bali became the worst rice producer.

Anthropologists and scientists now work to help these farmers return to natural farming.

Teacher uses:

- Help students to understand the importance of rice farming and agriculture in general
- Introduce students to expository writing and help them form non-fiction schemata
- Enhance students’ ecological awareness

Russell, Ching Yeung. (2009). *Tofu Quilt*. New York: Lee & Low. 125 pages, \$16.95, ISBN: 978-1-60060-423-2. Age: 9-12 yrs.



Yeung Ying, a young girl in 1960's Hong Kong, loves reading and is inspired to become a writer. Except for her mother, the family does not think girls should go to school. Her mother uses what little money the family has to send Yeung to a private school. This collection of poems about a girl's daily life, her dreams, passion for reading, and courage to face obstacles is full of rich cultural elements, images and imaginations. Children of all background can relate to Yeung Ying's childhood experiences.

Teacher uses:

- Good choice for classroom sharing on gender and social justice issues

- Help students to explore historical Chinese culture
- Help students understand cross cultural childhood experiences



Stork, Francisco X. (2009). *Marcelo in the Real World*. New York: Arthur Levine. 312 pages, \$17.99, ISBN: 798-0-545-05474-4. Age: 14-18 yrs.

Marcelo Sandoval is a seventeen year-old boy with a high-functioning autism spectrum disorder. He has always experienced music in his head that no one else can hear, and has always attended a school where his unique differences and abilities have been nurtured and protected. But the summer before his senior year, his father forces Marcelo to work in his law firm's mailroom with the intention that Marcelo begin to understand and experience "the real world" and, perhaps, complete his senior year at the mainstream high school. At the law firm, Marcelo learns about many new emotions and ways of life, from competition, jealousy, anger, and desire, to patience, control, wisdom, and strength. When he finds a disturbing photo in a box of documents to be destroyed, Marcelo finally connects with the real world and begins to understand his place in it. Marcelo learns about pain, suffering, and injustice in the world, as well as what he can do to fight them.

Teacher uses:

- Introduce students to individuals with disabilities
- Help students understand and appreciate students with disabilities in their class/school
- Help students with disabilities see themselves in literature

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Available Online at: <http://www.reading.org/downloads/membership/individual-MACF-080626.pdf>

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