ISSN 2577-0551

WOW STORIES

CONNECTIONS FROM THE CLASSROOM

VOLUME VI, ISSUE 2

Spring 2019

Compassion and Action: Reading and Writing through a Social Justice Lens

Worlds of WORDS

ARIZONA College of Education

wowlit.org

WOW Stories: Volume VI Issue 2
Compassion and Action: Reading and Writing through a Social Justice Lens

Spring 2019

Table of Contents

Contributors to this Issue:
Alexandra Babino, Texas A&M University-Commerce.
Heidi Bacon, Southern Illinois University Carbondale
Chuck Jurich, University of North Carolina, Wilmington.
Ted Kesler, Queens College, City University of New York (CUNY).
Tami Morton, Texas A&M University-Commerce.
Meaghan Reilly, Flushing, New York.
Esther Eng-Tsang, Active Learning Elementary School, Flushing, New York.

Editors:
Tracy Smiles, Western Oregon University, Monmouth, OR
Mary L. Fahrenbruck, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM

Production Editor:
Blaire Krakowitz, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

Editors' Note:

Compassion and Action: Reading and Writing through a Social Justice Lens

Social justice has become a central theme in educational research and practice. Proponents of social justice education challenge educators to recognize, question, and reflect on systems that perpetuate inequity on the basis of gender, social class, ability, sexual identity, race, religion and politics. Of equal importance are questions related to how educators respond to this knowledge to provide each member of the educational community with the opportunity to address inequity through explorations of individual identity and cultural and social intersectionality in order to participate fully in a democratic society. Readers of *WOW Stories* understand the critical importance of this work, and actively pursue ways to enact curricular engagements that address the challenge of disrupting hegemony and fostering a welcoming, humanizing, and intellectual learning environment. Similarly, readers of *WOW Stories* recognize that global children's and adolescent literature holds unlimited promise for realizing the goals of social justice education.

This issue of *WOW Stories* presents readers with four examples of how educators across a variety of teaching contexts addressed issues of social justice through their teaching practice. The issue opens with an interview with a literacy education pioneer and long-time supporter of Worlds of Words, Mary Wong. Heidi Bacon's interview with this notable educator takes readers through Mary Wong's journey and professional career as a special educator, librarian, and philanthropist, driven by a vision of social justice grounded in access to literacy for all. Additionally, this issue features three examples of teachers and teacher educators enacting their visions of social justice education through engagements with children's literature. University educator Ted Kesler and classroom teachers Meaghan Reilly and Esther Eng-Tsang describe a collaboration within a 2nd and 3rd grade blended classroom at a school that serves an urban linguistically diverse student population in an article on translanguaging with picturebooks. They explore how to enact "pedagogy that embraces pluralism, that explores, honors, extends, and, perhaps problematizes our students' heritage and community practices." Chuck Jurich, in an article on reading and writing critically through alternative texts, presents readers with a description of how he promotes reflection on social justice issues with preservice teachers. Chuck utilizes an altered text engagement that, "interrogates multiple viewpoints and examines the social and political issues in texts and using diverse and unconventional literacy practices such as remix, convergence, intertextuality, and multimodal representations, the practice encourages a highly critical stance to reading, writing, and children's literature." Lastly, Tami Morton and Alexandra Babino portray their experience using *The 57 Bus* with preservice teachers, confronting the challenge of helping future teachers grapple with children's literature that deals with difficult themes and the possibilities for their future teaching practice.

The articles in this issue encourage readers to reflect on their own visions of social justice through the fresh perspectives on theory and practice presented in these articles and reinforce the shared vision of the Worlds of Words community to promote equity and democracy through building bridges across global cultures through children's and adolescent literature.

Tracy Smiles and Mary Fahrenbruck, Editors

Interview with Mary J. Wong

Heidi Bacon

For this issue of *WOW Stories*, I had the distinct pleasure of interviewing art collector and retired teacher-librarian, Mary J. Wong. Mary's Chinese name, which is different from her English name, means "Jade." When translated, her full Chinese name means "beautiful precious jade," an apt metaphor for Mary's life, work, and generosity of spirit. Mary's passions include literature, collecting, cooking, and entertaining. She has hosted events for visiting authors for over 25 years and has entertained 150 authors at her Phoenix home, a featured stop on the 2017 American Association of School Librarians conference tour, "Art and Architecture in the American Southwest." Although she describes herself as shy, Mary makes friends easily and is skilled at building relationships, maintaining an impressive global network of friends, authors, illustrators, and professional contacts.

A three-time graduate of the University of Arizona, Mary double-majored in elementary and special education. She holds two master's degrees, one in special education and another in library science, where she completed an internship at the Phoenix Public Library. Her internship was influential in her professional trajectory. As a teacher, Mary loved teaching special education, but sought to expand her repertoire and earned a teaching endorsement in library science. After completing her coursework, Mary obtained a position as a school librarian. Despite her coursework and teaching experience, she still felt unprepared and enrolled in the Library Science master's program at the University of Arizona. She also made a point of joining professional organizations such as the American Library Association, the American Association of School Librarians, the International Board of Books for Young People, and several literacy organizations. Mary remains active in professional organizations and has taken on a variety of leadership positions. She has been instrumental in bringing authors to the American Kidney Association's annual children's literature luncheon, currently coordinates the Children's Author-Illustrator Network and chairs the Grand Canyon Reader Award.

Mary's service evidences her desire for equity and tolerance. Honored by the Maricopa YWCA in 2004, she was one of 11 women whose lives and accomplishments embodied the fight against racism by embracing diversity and empowering women and families (Midey, 2004). When I asked if she viewed herself as an activist, Mary replied that it is important for people to "practice what they preach." As such, Mary considers herself an activist and advocate for reading, literacy, and library programs.

I inquired about Mary's experiences, wondering how her personal life and professional background intersected and coalesced. Her answers drew on her early experiences. Mary explained that as the oldest of eight children born to immigrant parents, her childhood was difficult. Her family was the first non-white family to move into their post-World War II model home community in Flagstaff, Arizona. Initially mistaken for Japanese, Mary and her siblings were not allowed into the homes of their playmates. She spoke no English when she entered school and often felt confused. Looking back, she remembers being quiet to avoid making mistakes and risking the ridicule of her classmates.

In retrospect, Mary understands that she had little frame of reference for the lessons she was learning. She recalls that homonyms were particularly challenging and shared an anecdote where she confused *flour* with *flower*. Mary's enthusiasm for making things led her to ask her

teacher for paste to take home for her various projects. Her teacher finally told her how to make paste from flour and water. Mary spent months attempting to make paste from water, clover, daisies, and roses, an experience she finds humorous today, but one that exacerbated her feeling of being awkward and different.

Although her early childhood was difficult due to societal intolerance toward non-white cultures, Mary did well academically in junior and senior high school. She still struggled with some courses and academic texts and often felt as though she did not fit in. She suspected her teachers had little understanding or knowledge of Chinese culture and values. Mary perceived that her teachers did not recognize her intelligence because, unlike her classmates, she did not speak up or participate in class discussions. Her mother supported her and urged her to persevere. She told her to be a role model, to excel academically, and to rise above discrimination, lessons Mary took to heart and carried forward.

Given the mission of Worlds of Words, I asked how people's perspectives can be expanded through global children's and adolescents' literature. Mary answered that society needs to be tolerant and inclusive of all races and nationalities, and she articulated the critical need for children to read stories by authors and illustrators of color. Several years ago, Mary served on the United States Board of Books for Young People award committee, and found the experience incredibly valuable, as it enabled her to add international literature to her school library's collection. She was pleased to see *Noodle Pie* (Starke, 2010) selected by the committee in 2011, as she could relate to the protagonist since Chinese and Vietnamese cultures share many similarities.

Mary described meeting Kathy Short as "kismet." She cannot call to mind exactly when or how they met, but Mary remembers attending Kathy's workshop with author and illustrator Yuyi Morales and another with author Nancy Farmer. In Mary's words, "I learned a lot through her [Kathy's] workshops." Mary invited Kathy to sit on Governor Janet Napolitano's First and Fourth Grade Book program. The program provided a new book for every first and fourth grade student in Arizona and gave out approximately 100,000 books each year. Mary and Kathy served with first and fourth-grade teachers from across the state until Governor Napolitano left to join the Obama administration. In turn, Kathy asked Mary to serve on the Tucson Festival of Books committee to help plan the program for children and teens, which delighted Mary.

I asked about Mary's views on librarians and her advice for teachers who work with librarians and those who do not have access to a school librarian. She explained that she always viewed herself as a teacher-librarian and a librarian-teacher. In this dual role, Mary regarded herself as a resource for students, parents, teachers, and other school librarians, providing information about programs, teaching ideas, and book selections. And she thinks this is true of all school librarians. Mary defines an effective librarian as a "resourceful person who can think outside the box." She offered the following advice for teachers:

- Teachers who have access to a school librarian should work with them to the "nth" degree;
- Those who do not have access to a librarian should strongly advocate for hiring a school librarian;
- Partner with local bookstores, especially independent bookstores, for information on

what is new in children's literature;

- Sign-up for electronic newsletters, many are free or charge a small subscription fee (Mary subscribes to *Publishers Weekly*, *Booklist Online*, *Library Journal*, and *Hornbook*
- Subscribe to *School Library Journal* (print edition); and
- Follow blogs about children's and teen's books, such as http://www.underdown.org and https://cynthialeitichsmith.com.

Mary stressed the importance of joining and taking an active role in professional organizations and learning to network with colleagues and professionals across the disciplines. She also highlighted the need for creativity and stressed the willingness for teachers to "always try something new at least once."

In four decades of service, Mary exemplifies what it means to be both a resource and resourceful. In a search of the *Arizona Republic* archives, I realized that Mary has been a knowledgeable and influential community resource for children's literature across a variety of featured topics from letting books and babies grow up together to pioneer women and Mexican culture. Mary further exemplifies resourcefulness in how she cultivates relationships and networks. When asked about her longitudinal relationship with the newspaper, one that many organizations would envy, Mary's enthusiasm and dedication were evident, as she spoke of sending press releases for all library events and programs to her district office, newspapers, and local television stations throughout metropolitan Phoenix.

Connie Midey captured Mary's tenacity in the title of her 2004 feature article in the *Arizona Republic* titled "1 Librarian Who's Tough to Catalog" where Mary weighed in on the importance of libraries and librarians. She shared how she and her sisters had library cards and checked out the Nancy Drew and Dana Girls mystery series along with classics such as *Heidi*, *Black Beauty*, and the *Swiss Family Robinson* and her pleasure at finding fiction that enabled adolescents to 'learn about their relationships with family and friends' (Midey, p. E1). Mary stated her belief in helping students make a personal connection to the books they checked out and emphasized that students need to see the authors of the books they read as real people. Most importantly, Midey quoted Mary as saying "I want students to know they all have stories to be told" (p. E2), a driving force for Mary's passion, activism, and advocacy.

Additionally, with today's global news available instantaneously, Mary believes it imperative that children and adolescents have an understanding of, and insight into, the world in which they live. She underscores the vital role of literature to reflect the world that children see in their schools and communities and what they see globally in the news. Mary laments constraints imposed on libraries by the lack of funding to develop their collections.

Her comment on funding led me to ask Mary about fitting grant writing into her schedule. Mary pointed to her internship at the Phoenix Library during her Master of Library Science program as the catalyst. During her internship, she developed summer programs to encourage children to use the library. Her goal was to make the library a fun, exciting hub for reading, research, and exploration. Mary loved setting up bulletin boards and displays. She wanted kids, parents, and teachers to always wonder what they would find new and interesting at the library. Hence Mary's quest to seek funding for projects and programs grew out of her enthusiasm to engage new ideas and be creative in developing programs for people of all ages.

Mary explained that, around the same time, a group of Phoenix businesses got together to form the Teacher Venture Arizona Project, which awarded mini-grants up to $500 for projects. Over the years, Mary received nine mini-grants, one of which was used to fund her story quilt project inspired by the story cloths of Hmong refugees (Cobb, 1993). Using fabric markers, students drew 216 stories based on their reading of international literature. Each grade produced a 6 x 6 quilt comprised of 36 squares. The quilts were displayed in the Desert Cove School library. Mary mentioned she wrote these mini-grants on her own to fund library projects, author visits, and school and community events. She notes that local and national grants for teachers, libraries, and schools are still available, but cautions that "while grants are available and out there, a teacher, school, or library should never have to pay to apply for a grant."

As Mary referred to author visits, I asked her to elaborate on how one might go about bringing authors and illustrators to their classrooms and schools. According to Mary, preparation is vital for a successful author visit. To start, she involved the school's Parent Teacher Organization to help raise funds. Mary ordered books in advance and added them to the collection. She gave book talks to generate enthusiasm, prepared bulletin boards, and notified her network, including other schools in the district. Mary also reached out to businesses to request financial or in-kind support, such as providing lunch for the author, and she asked parents to check with their employers to contribute matching funds, all of which are excellent methods for raising funds and generating goodwill in the community. Moreover, successful author visits accommodate students comfortably. Mary recommends the following: all must be able to see and hear the author; groups must be similar in age (e.g., K-2, 3-4, 5-6); and teachers should be knowledgeable about the author's books, model appropriate audience behavior, and sit with their classes.

Mary then gave two examples of author visits that energized her school. In the first story, unbeknownst to her, a student was so inspired by the visiting author that she submitted a story to a nationally known children's magazine. The student's story was published, and the entire school community was proud and celebrated her success. Mary referred to the second story as "hysterical," one of her "most interesting" author visits—a Friday night sleepover in the library. The children ate an early dinner at home and returned to school with their sleeping bags. Two authors and a storyteller presented to the children. Boys, volunteer dads, and teachers slept in the hallway, while girls, volunteer moms, and teachers slept in the library. A taped Reveille bugle call woke everyone the next morning. For Mary, these cherished stories provide proof that author visits are impactful and worth the time and expense. Mary remains involved with schools, arranging author visits across the greater Phoenix area and promoting reading.

Those who visit Mary's home comment on her graciousness and her "museum quality" curated collections. The idea of collecting original art from children's literature occurred to Mary when Jack Gantos gave her an illustration by Nicole Rubel from his first Rotten Ralph book. Mary thought it would be fun to collect original art, but had no idea how to go about getting started. In the beginning, she purchased a few illustrations from galleries, others from illustrators, and some through auctions and fund raisers. Now, she buys from the illustrators. Mary either contacts them directly or asks upon meeting them at conferences and book festivals. She acquired the art from author and illustrator David McPhail's (2014) entire book of *Andrew Draws*, and her most recent acquisitions include Wilson Ong's "N is for Nutcracker" from Sonia Rodriguez and Kurt Browning's (2011) *T is for Tutu: A Ballet Alphabet* and two preliminary sketches for new picture books illustrated by Carolyn Conahan and Laura Kvasnosky.

Mary's autographed picturebook and novel collection began taking shape with her first author visit. The collection continued to grow as she attended state and national library conferences and state and national book festivals. Her earlier books were not first edition books, but Mary shifted her focus to signed first printings. In addition to illustrations and books, Mary has an autograph "doodle/wall" in her home. She initially got the idea from professor of children's literature and professional storyteller, Colleen Sally, who is since deceased. When Mary visited Colleen's New Orleans French Quarter home during American Library Association conferences, Colleen had several rooms with hundreds of doodles and autographs from children's book authors and illustrators. Mary currently has 85 doodles with signatures and looks forward to adding more. She would dearly like to see more schools and libraries have author walls.

Mary also likes to collect objects from other cultures and recently donated her collection of musical instruments from around the world and her collection of Hmong story cloths and Vietnamese embroidery to Worlds of Words, which featured the story cloth collection in "Stitching Stories: New Exhibit Featuring Hmong Story Cloths" (Geffre, 2018). To date, she has donated 60 framed illustrations and approximately 2600 autographed picture books and novels to Worlds of Words. Mary has 170 illustrations and another 3500 autographed books of which 90% are first printings in her home which will also be donated to Worlds of Words.

In closing, Mary's exemplary life of service was born of her experiences and desire for equity and tolerance. She views stories as a critical means to foster cultural and global understandings through reading and literature. For Mary, children's literature and her connection to Worlds of Words are the best and most seamless way to promote and effect empathy, equity, and diversity, and this is made evident in every facet of her life's work. And so, we offer Mary our thanks and gratitude for her gracious and generous spirit, her willingness to share her passions and experiences, and the enduring legacy of her gifts.

References

Cobb, C. (1993, May 30). Drawing out their stories. *Arizona Republic*, p. KIDS.
Geffre, D. (2018, January 18). Stitching stories: New exhibit in featuring Hmong story cloths [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://wowlit.org/blog/2018/01/18/stitching-stories-hmong
Hanging out with Frank Lloyd Wright, Mary Wong, and Jack Gantos #AASL17 (2017, November 13). *School Library Journal*. Retrieved: https://www.slj.com/?detailStory=hanging-frank-lloyd-wright-mary-wong-jack-gantos-aasl17
McPhail, D. (2014). *Andrew draws*. New York: Holiday House.
Midey, C. (2004, February 18). 1 librarian who's tough to catalog. Arizona Republic, pp. E1, E2.
Rodriguez, S., & Browning, K. (2011). *T is for tutu: A ballet alphabet*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press.
Starke, R. (2010). *Noodle pie*. La Joya, CA: Kane/Miller.

Heidi Bacon is an Assistant Professor of Language, Literacies, and Culture at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Translanguaging in Picturebooks

Ted Kesler, Meaghan Reilly, and Esther Eng-Tsang

Twenty-four third graders sit in rapt attention as Esther reads aloud the first opening of Love as Strong as Ginger *(Look, 1999). Esther speaks the same dialect of Chinese as the grandmother in the story, and after finishing the first opening, she remarks: "You know, this reminds me that I speak Taishanese with my mom, not English. Is that true for any of you? Do any of you speak another language with your parents or grandparents or other family members?" Several students signal "me too" with their hands. They also share the actual names they use to address loved ones, just as Katie does in the story. They then discuss the use of italic and English letters for phonetic spelling of the Chinese words, or pinyin, before Esther turns the page.*

We are a teacher educator and two classroom teachers. Meaghan is lead teacher in a self-contained class of 2nd and 3rd grade children with special needs, Esther is a 3rd grade general education teacher, and Ted is an associate professor of elementary and early childhood education at Queens College, the City University of New York (CUNY). We work together in a city public early childhood school, grades pre-K through 3, that serves the local neighborhood. The school serves a predominantly immigrant and economically-disadvantaged population (67% free or reduced-price lunch). Seventy-eight percent of families are Chinese immigrants. Mandarin is the predominant language in the home. Fifty-five percent of students are emergent English learners, and 20% speak two or more languages other than English.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Translanguaging

We are concerned about addressing issues of social justice and providing culturally sustaining education (Paris & Alim, 2014) to our children. We strive for pedagogy that embraces pluralism, that explores, honors, extends, and, sometimes problematizes students' heritage and community practices. We aim to make children's learning more lasting and personally meaningful by connecting content knowledge to their lived experiences and cultural frames of reference. Paris (2012) asserts that, through these practices, academic achievement for children of diverse backgrounds will improve.

With these priorities in mind, we attended a "Social Justice Saturday," a day of workshops focusing on social justice issues, grades K through 12, sponsored by The Reading and Writing Project of Teachers College. One workshop focused on translanguaging (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017). Translanguaging does not demarcate children's languages; instead, translanguaging maintains children's active negotiation of language resources and practices on a continuum in order to express themselves in particular contexts. This concept focuses on processes of interaction, meaning-making, and the agency of speakers. Families and communities are central in García's (2009) initial definition, considering how family members have different linguistic abilities, with translanguaging as an

inclusive discursive practice that occurs when they all come together. The presenters posed the challenge: how can we encourage translanguaging opportunities in our everyday classroom work?

Exploring Translanguaging in Picturebooks

Meanwhile, back at our school, we were actively ordering recent picturebooks that provide windows and mirrors and sliding doors (Sims Bishop, 1990) for children. With our new challenge of translanguaging, we began noticing authors' and illustrators' use of translanguaging in picturebooks. We noticed authors' use of *italics* or **bold** print to highlight special words and phrases in the featured language. We saw how authors provide context clues, such as using a key phrase repeatedly, or repeating the meaning of these special words and phrases in English, or showing the meaning through actions in the illustrations. Some books provide a glossary of terms. We noticed ways that illustrators show sociocultural meanings of these words and phrases. For example, in *Fiesta Babies* (Tafolla, 2010), the meaning of *coronas, salsa, mariachi, cha-cha-cha, fiestas, siestas, besos*, and *abrazos* is apparent first through the illustrations before getting to the glossary on the back page.

Figure 1 shows the picturebooks we explored with students, conducting interactive read-alouds for most of these books. We explained *translanguaging* as the author's and illustrator's fluid use of more than one language to present particular cultures to readers. We discussed how and why authors make these decisions.

Bridges, S. Y. (2002). *Ruby's wish.* Illust. by S. Blackall. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.
Brown, M. (2010). *Side by side, lado a lado.* Illust. by J. Cepeda. New York: HarperCollins.
Cheng, A. (2000). *Grandfather counts.* Illust. by A. Zhang. New York: Lee and Low.
Deedy, C. A. (2017). *The rooster who would not be quite!* Illust. by E. Yelchin. New York: Scholastic.
Florence, M. (2017). *Stolen words.* Illust. by G. Grimard. Toronto, Canada: Second Story Press.
Garza, C. L. (1996). *In my family. En mi familia.* San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.
Lê, M. (2018). *Drawn together.* Illust. by D. Santat. New York: Hyperion.
Look. L. (1999). *Love as strong as ginger.* Illust. by S. T. Johnson. New York: Atheneum.
Look, L. (2001). *Henry's first-moon birthday.* Illust. by Y. Heo. New York: Atheneum.
Look, L. (2006). *Uncle Peter's amazing Chinese wedding.* Illust. by Y. Heo. New York: Atheneum.
Love, J. (2018). *Julián is a mermaid.* Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.
Morales, Y. (2018). *Dreamers.* New York: Holiday House.
Pak, S. (1999). *Dear Juno.* Illust. by S. K. Hartung. New York: Puffin Books.
Rattigan, J. K. (1993). *Dumpling soup.* Illust. by L. Hsu-Flanders. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
Tafolla, C. (2008). *What can you do with a rebozo? ¿Qué puedes hacer con un rebozo?* Illust. by A. Córdova. Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press.
Tafolla, C. (2009). *What Can You Do with a paleta? ¿Qué puedes hacer con una paleta?* Illust. by M. Morales. New York: Dragonfly Books.
Tafolla, C. (2010). *Fiesta babies.* Illust. by A. Córdova. Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press.
Thompkins-Bigelow, J. (2018). *Mommy's khimar.* Illust. by E. Glenn. New York: Salaam Reads.
Tonatiuh, D. (2014). *Separate is never equal: Sylvia Mendez & her family's fight for desegregation.* New York: Abrams.
Wing, N. (1996). *Jalpeño bagels.* Illust. by R. Casilla. New York: Atheneum.

Figure 1: Picturebooks We Used with Examples of Translanguaging

Picturebooks We Used with Examples of Translanguaging

During one reading workshop session, students met in small groups with small stacks of these books. We gave them sticky notes to mark places where they found examples of translanguaging, with the guiding question: how and why do authors and illustrators use translanguaging in their books? At the end of reading workshop time, we reconvened to share our discoveries. Table 1 shows the discoveries students made.

WHAT and WHY	HOW
For names and terms of endearment, especially if that is how you call someone. For dialogue and speech bubbles. In writing: letters, signs, calligraphy, environmental print. To emphasize specific words and phrases in a primary language: • Sometimes it's the most accurate or only way to say what you mean. • Sometimes it serves as a secret message with the reader. To present the story in two languages as a bilingual book (although we notice that English is always presented first).	They sometimes use *italic* or **bold** or other special print to show words in the primary language. They often repeat those special words and phrases. They might include a glossary for those special words and phrases. They might include a pronunciation key (in the story or in the glossary). For Chinese, authors often use pinyin. They might explain the word or phrase in English right after using it (sometimes in parentheses). They might rely on the illustration to show the meaning of the word or phrase.

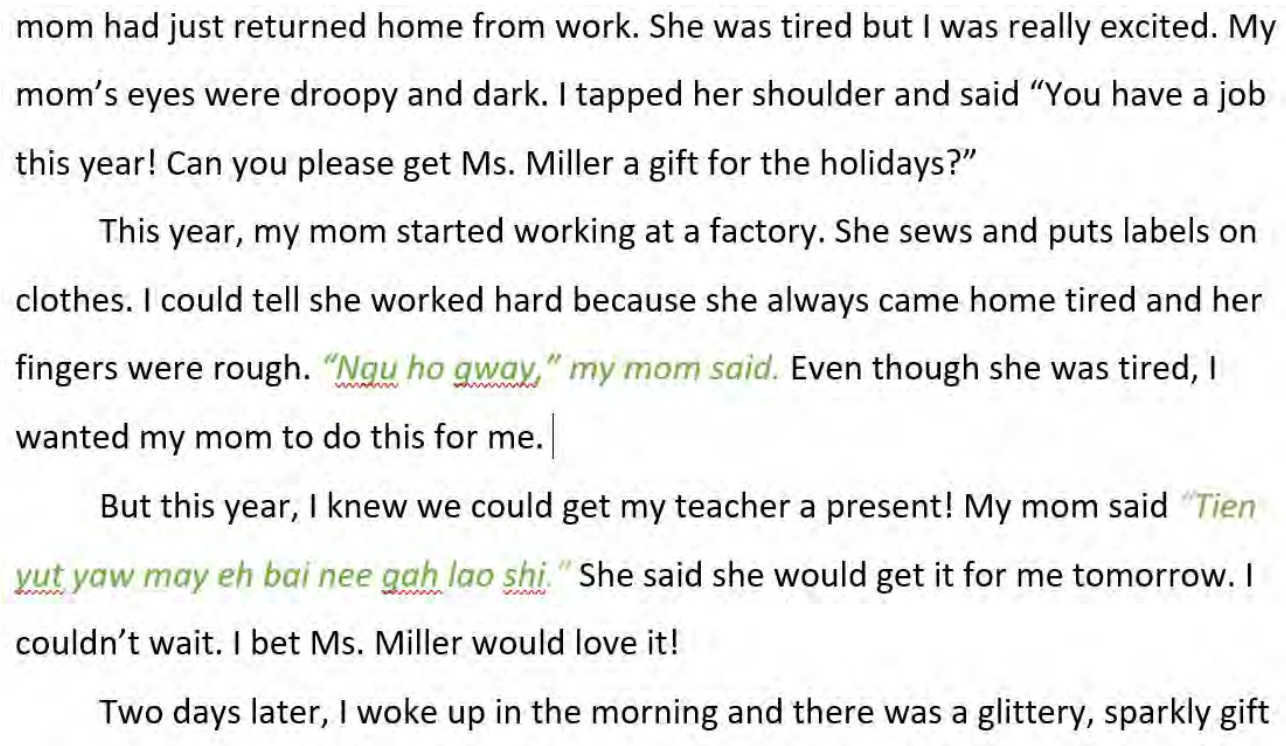
Table 1: Authors'/Illustrators' Use of Translanguaging in Picturebooks

In another reading workshop session, students returned to these books to find out how authors and illustrators show the meaning of words and phrases in the primary language. We highlighted authors' use of a glossary, the use of a pronunciation key, and discussed pinyin. We shared examples of showing meaning of primary language words and phrases in the illustrations, such as for *Fiesta Babies* (Tafolla, 2010). Students picked up on authors' use of repetition of important words and phrases. For example, in *Dumpling Soup* (Rattigan, 1993), mandoo (dumplings in Korean) is used throughout the book. Even though we had emphasized context clues for new vocabulary all year, students now seemed to grasp the use of context clues to explain primary language.

Applying Translanguaging to Our Writing

We wanted children to transfer what they were learning to their own writing, leading to discussions like the one we presented in our opening vignette. We were in the midst of a memoir study, in which we emphasized writing authentic, meaningful moments in our lives. It seemed hypocritical to expect students to write their memoirs using English only, when their authentic moments included speaking to their grandmothers in Mandarin or calling their dads Papí or using their cultural terms for food such as *roti*. We discussed how they use translanguaging in their own lives outside school and discovered that translanguaging was a common practice for emergent English learning students. "You know, like all these authors and illustrators, you could use translanguaging in your memoirs if it will help you tell your story truthfully, more like the way it really happened." Their faces seemed to open up like a thank you.

Esther demonstrated with her own memoir, replacing her English writing with pinyin, "trying my best" to represent the Taishanese sounds with English letters (see Figure 2), and then embedding context clues in English. We then challenged students, asking "how might you use what we learned about translanguaging in your own memoirs?"



mom had just returned home from work. She was tired but I was really excited. My mom's eyes were droopy and dark. I tapped her shoulder and said "You have a job this year! Can you please get Ms. Miller a gift for the holidays?"

This year, my mom started working at a factory. She sews and puts labels on clothes. I could tell she worked hard because she always came home tired and her fingers were rough. *"Ngu ho gway," my mom said.* Even though she was tired, I wanted my mom to do this for me.

But this year, I knew we could get my teacher a present! My mom said *"Tien yut yaw may eh bai nee gah lao shi."* She said she would get it for me tomorrow. I couldn't wait. I bet Ms. Miller would love it!

Two days later, I woke up in the morning and there was a glittery, sparkly gift

Figure 2: An example of translanguaging in Esther's memoir draft.

Jeremy, one of Meaghan's students, wrote about when he accidentally popped the piñata his dad was making for his birthday. Figure 3 shows page 2 of his story. The picture shows his smiling face and children playing at the party with piñatas hanging. He uses Spanish dialogue in interactions with his dad: "*Puedo tocar la piñata?*" he asked his dad. And after he popped the piñata, his dad exclaimed, "*Qué hiciste?*" Grace used Chinese characters for some words in her memoir about her visit to relatives in China. In Figure 4, Grace says goodbye to the dog before leaving on the plane. She wrote the dog's name using Chinese characters. Another student, Moosa, used the words Mameya for Mother and Baba for Father in his memoir. His mother is from Afghanistan, and these are the names of endearment he calls them.

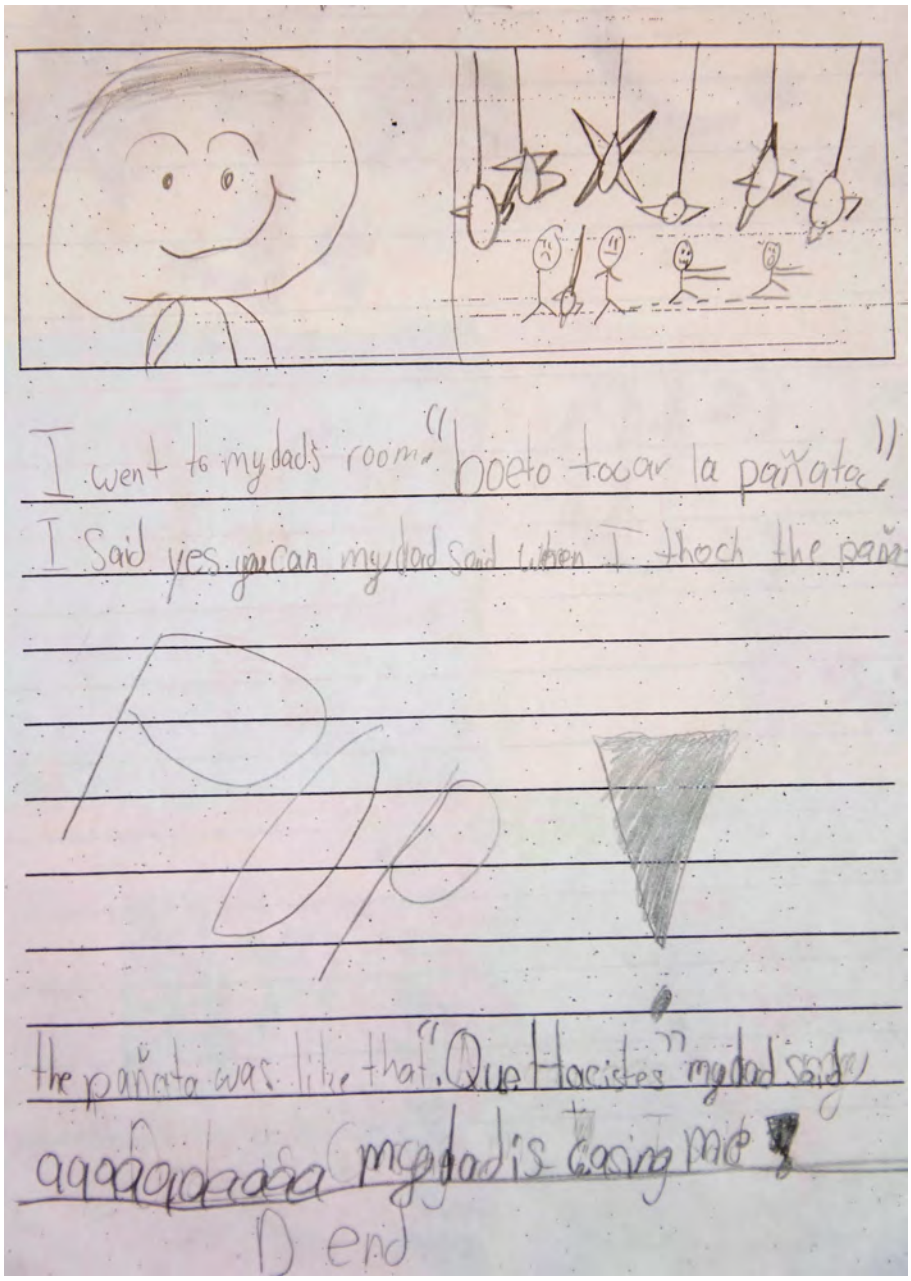


Figure 3: Jeremy's use of Spanish in his memoir.

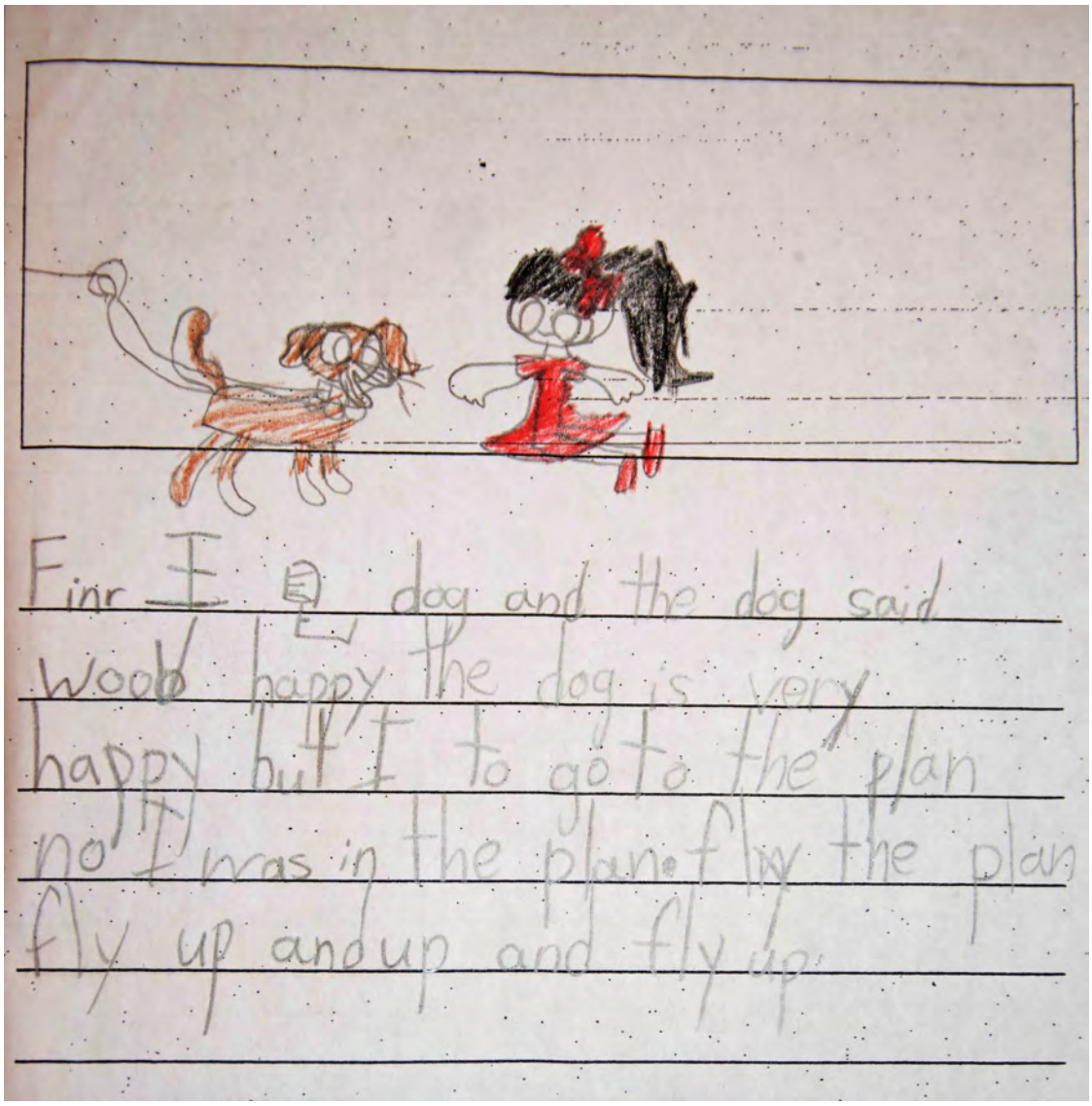
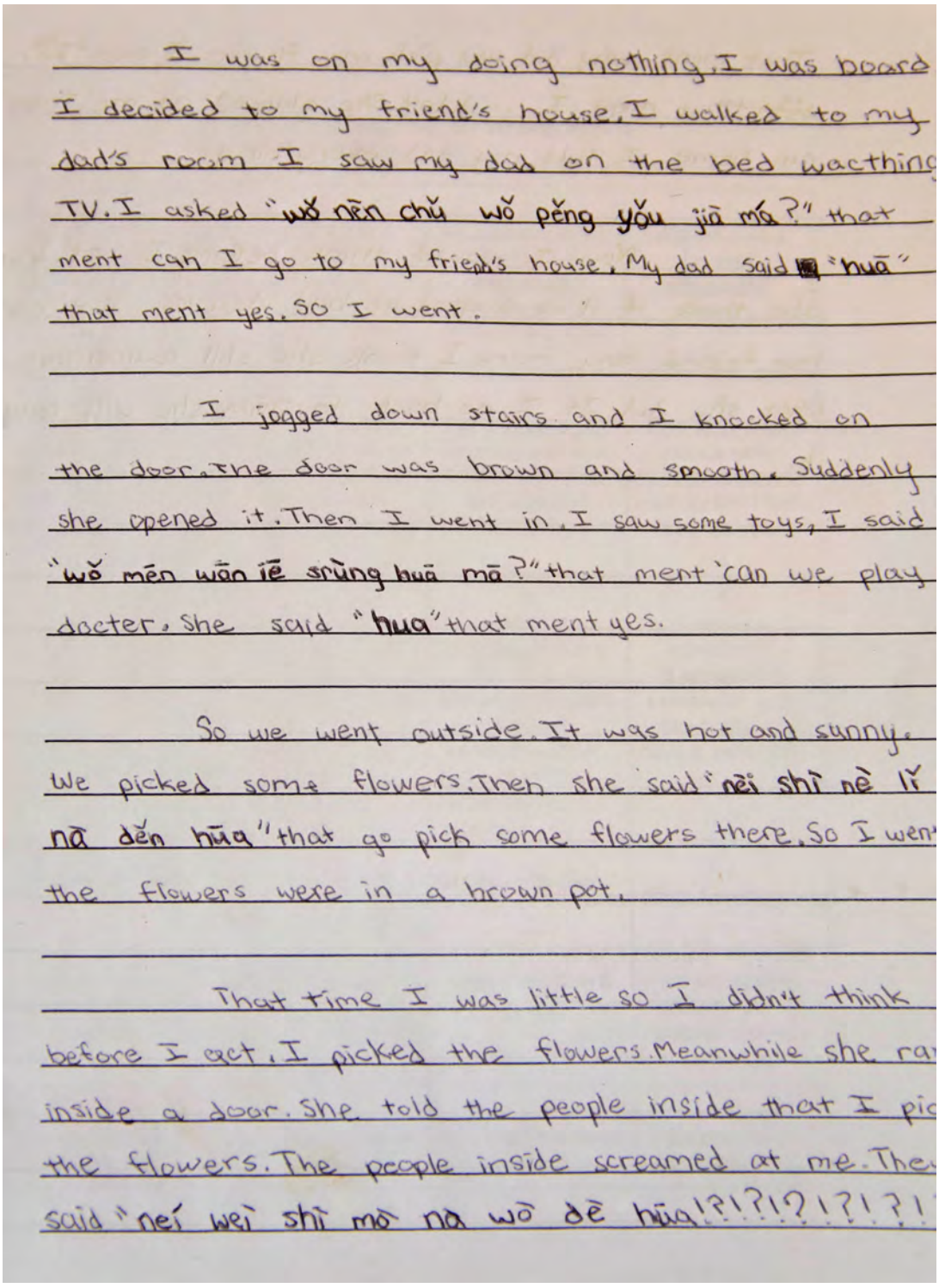


Figure 4: Grace uses Chinese characters.

In Esther's class, several students used pinyin to represent dialogue in Chinese. Figures 5a and 5b are Yitong's memoir about when she was tricked by another girl to pick flowers from a flower pot in China, and then got in trouble. Like some other children, she bolded the pinyin writing. Wendy wrote the title to her memoir in both English and Chinese: "Learning Why Moving Can Be Fun!" (Figure 6). Then, in her story, she used both Chinese characters and pinyin (Figure 7). For example, she wrote *Up, Up!* and *China* using Chinese characters, but used pinyin for dialogue between her and her mother and for Long Island (which she wrote as *Chang Xow*). Across all examples, the children gave strong context clues for their use of primary languages from their household, usually by immediately translating into English. As a result, they also applied sophisticated punctuation, such as off-setting the translation using commas or parentheses.



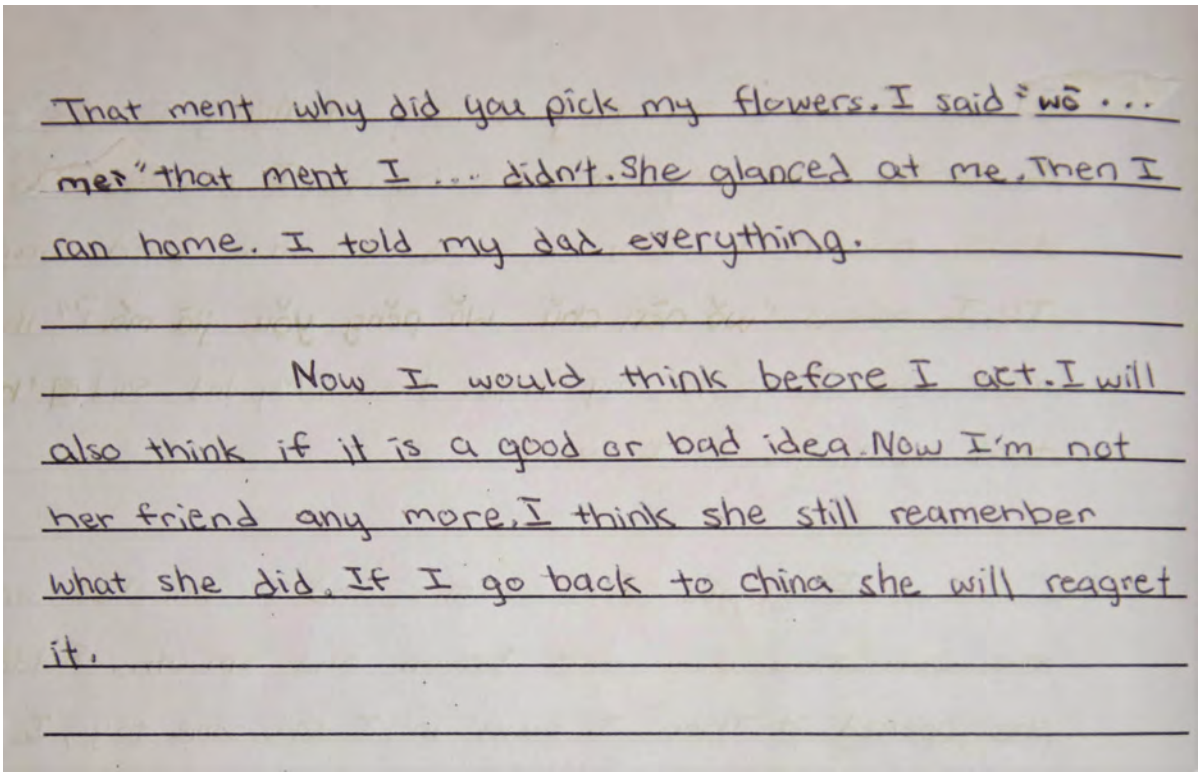
I was on my doing nothing, I was board I decided to my friend's house, I walked to my dad's room I saw my dad on the bed wacthing TV. I asked "wǒ nèn chǔ wǒ péng yǒu jiā má?" that ment can I go to my friend's house, My dad said "huā" that ment yes, so I went.

I jogged down stairs and I knocked on the door, the door was brown and smooth, Suddenly she opened it. Then I went in, I saw some toys, I said "wǒ mén wán iē srùng huā mā?" that ment can we play docter, she said "hua" that ment yes.

So we went outside. It was hot and sunny. We picked some flowers. Then she said "nèi shì nè lǐ nā dèn hūa" that go pick some flowers there, So I went the flowers were in a brown pot.

That time I was little so I didn't think before I act, I picked the flowers. Meanwhile she ra inside a door. She told the people inside that I pic the flowers. The people inside screamed at me. The said "neí wei shi mò na wò dè hūa!?!?!?!?!?!

Figure 5a: Yitong uses pinyin in her memoir.

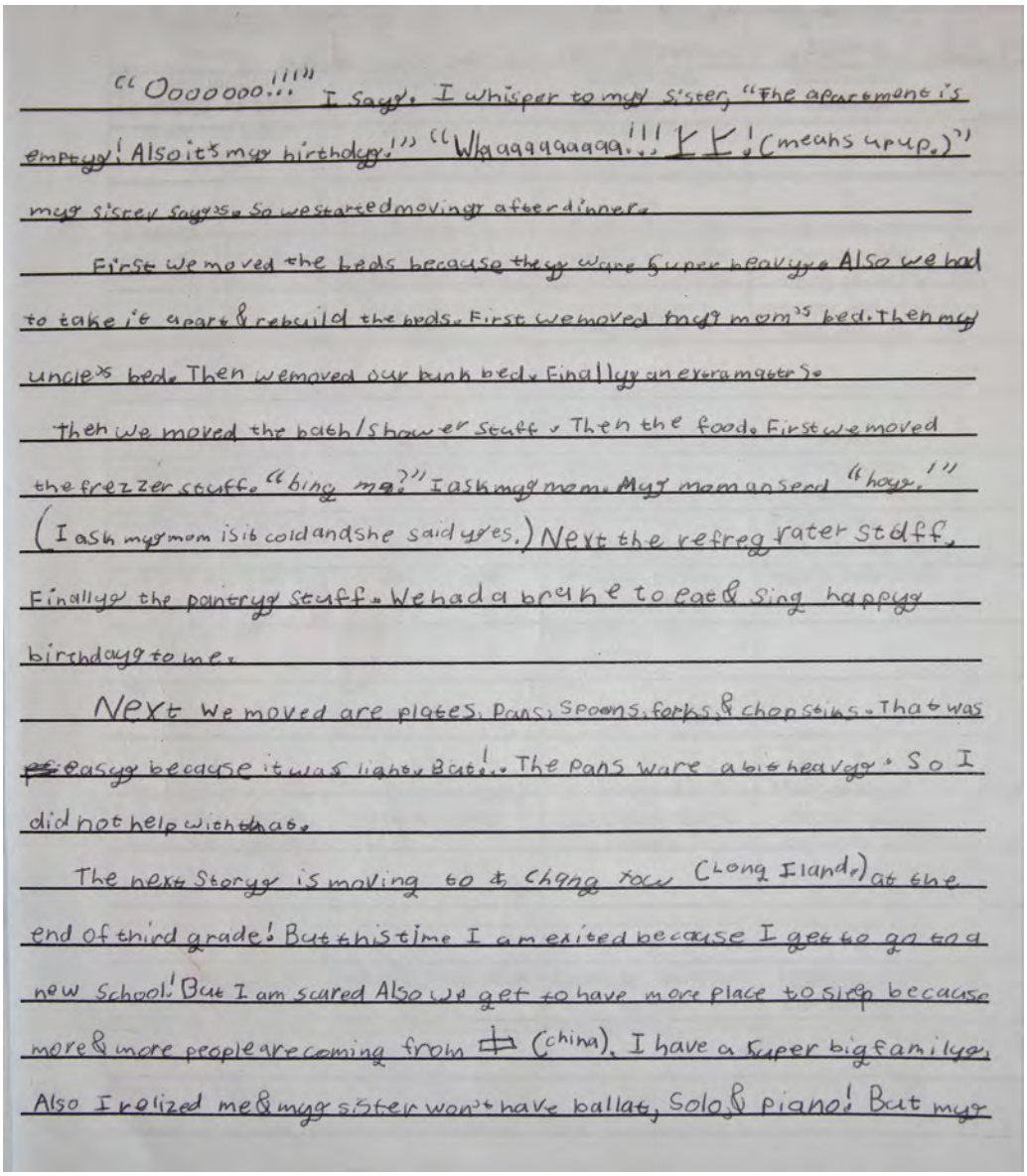


That ment why did you pick my flowers. I said "wō ... me" that ment I ... didn't. She glanced at me. Then I ran home. I told my dad everything.

Now I would think before I act. I will also think if it is a good or bad idea. Now I'm not her friend any more. I thinks she still reamenber what she did. If I go back to china she will reagret it.

Figure 5b: Yitong's memoir, continued.

Figure 6: Wendy's book cover.



"Oooooooo!!!" I sayy. I whisper to myy sister, "The apartement is emptyy! Also it's myy birthdayy!" "Waaaaaaaaaa!!! 上上! (means uhuh.)" myy sisterr sayyss. So we startedmovingg afterdinner.

First we moved the beds because theyy were Super heavyy. Also we had to take it apart & rebuild the beds. First wemoved myy mom's bed. Then myy uncle's bed. Then wemoved our bunk bed. Finallyy an everamaster. So

Then we moved the bath/shower stuff. Then the food. First we moved the frezzer stuff. "bing ma?" I ask myy mom. Myy mom answerd "hayo." (I ask myy mom is it cold and she said yes.) Next the refregrater stuff. Finallyy the pantryy stuff. We had a breake to eat & sing happyy birthdayy to me.

Next We moved are plates, Pans, Spoons, forks, & chopsticks. That was easyy because it was lighe. But... The pans ware a bit heavyy. So I did not help with that.

The nexte Storyy is moving to & Chyna Rock (Long Island) at the end of third grade! But this time I am exited because I get to go to a new School! But I am scared Also we get to have more place to sleep because more & more people are coming from 中 (China). I have a Super big family. Also I rolized me & myy sister won't have ballet, Solo, & piano! But myy

Figure 7: Wendy uses Chinese characters and pinyin.

Opening Our Classrooms to Translanguaging

We have been encouraged by these first steps into opening our classrooms to translanguaging. We are learning to sustain "linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling" (Paris, 2012, p. 95). We believe supporting students' linguistic and cultural flexibility will prepare them for success in the world (Garcia, 2009). We are considering encouraging children to show cultural artifacts in illustrations, as a common strategy used by illustrators. We want to encourage children's use of translanguaging in nonfiction reading and writing. For example, where does translanguaging occur in the nonfiction books we read? How might we apply translanguaging when we write informational books? We also are challenged by the idea of exploring and then composing our own

bilingual books, as some of the authors we studied do (for example, Brown, Garza, and Tafolla). We continue to explore ways to practice culturally responsive teaching and bring translanguaging into our content area work in math, science, social studies, music and art.

True to "Social Justice Saturday" and our intentions for culturally sustaining teaching (Paris, 2012), this first opportunity to express meaning across languages in writing has given children confidence. They approach writing tasks with more flexibility, knowing that they can use a broader language repertoire that is much more congruent with their lives outside school. They are more careful readers, who now call our attention to instances of translanguaging in books they read, but also other instances of author's and illustrator's craft, such as deliberate use of fonts or layout or cultural symbols in the illustrations, or use of metaphors and cultural references in writing. They are more joyful learners because of the bridges we are creating between home and school.

References

García, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective.* Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
García, O., Ibarra Johnson, S., & Seltzer, K. (2017). *The translanguaging classroom: Leveraging student bilingualism for learning.* Philadelphia, PA: Caslon.
Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93-97.
Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 85-100.
Sims Bishop, R. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives*, 1(3), ix–xi.

Esther Eng-Tsang teaches third grade at the Active Learning Elementary School (PS 244Q) in Flushing, New York.
Ted Kesler is an Associate Professor in elementary and early childhood education at Queens College, the City University of New York (CUNY).
Meaghan Reilly is a second and third grade classroom teacher of children with special needs at The Active Learning Elementary School (PS 244Q) in Flushing, New York.

Reading and Writing Transactionally and Critically through Alternative Texts

Chuck Jurich

Pre-service teachers can transform from passive readers into active and critical writers who promote social justice by composing "alternative texts," remixed and critical responses to children's literature. I first describe an alternative text and then focus on the student-made alternative text *Mommy with a PhD* as an example of the power and possibility of this emerging genre. Composing alternative texts is an opportunity to transactionally respond to children's literature and transform any picturebook into a multicultural text. By interrogating multiple viewpoints, examining the social and political issues in texts and using diverse and unconventional literacy practices such as remix, convergence, intertextuality, and multimodal representations, a critical stance to reading, writing, and children's literature is encouraged.

The Alternative Text Assignment: Aesthetic and Critical Responses to Texts

For many years I have taught undergraduate Children's Literature courses for pre-service teachers. The alternative text assignment was born out of the goal of helping students read children's literature from a more transactional and critical perspective. I noticed that students' initial responses to literature tend to be based around nostalgia ("I remember reading this when I was little"), projection ("Kids will really like this book"), practicality ("I could use this book to teach about life cycles"), and/or qualitative personal preference ("I don't like the pictures"). The assignment helps students move past these surface level reactions. At its core, the alternative text is a multimodal response to literature that encourages aesthetic responses (Rosenblatt, 1978), where a reader builds and constructs personal meaning, creates connections, and transacts with the mentor text to create new understandings.

Working either solo or in pairs as an "author/illustrator" team, students first pick a picturebook to examine and study closely the "mentor text." After much deliberation, students then negotiate and work out a plan to construct a transformed version of the mentor text, referred to as the "alternative text." Students explore making purposeful changes to characters, settings, moods/feelings, intended audience, etc. Throughout the semester they see many examples of student-composed alternative texts and are taught some basics of how visuals make meaning in picture books using Molly Bang's wonderful text *Picture This* (2000). When presented in class, the two texts, mentor and alternative text, are shared side by side and the juxtaposition of the two inform one another.

Writing alternative texts is a way of looking at picturebooks from a critical perspective (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002) by "disrupting the commonplace" and paying close attention to details in the mentor text, "interrogating multiple viewpoints" by juxtaposing texts on similar topics or considering multiple interpretations of the same text, and "examining the social and political issues" inherent in all texts. The making of the actual alternative texts is a form of promoting social justice. Over the course of a semester students browse, read, and examine hundreds of picturebooks in a variety of genres and subject areas. Some of these texts overtly address social and political issues such as segregation in *The Other Side* (Woodson, 2001) or homelessness in *Fly Away Home* (Bunting, 1991). Some texts demonstrate multiple perspectives, such as *Voices in the Park* (Browne, 1998), but the vast majority of the

picturebooks read by pre-service teachers seemingly have no political or social angle to them. From a critical perspective, however, once the ordinary has been scrutinized, it becomes easier to identify the social, cultural, and political views expressed in all texts.

Remixing Picturebooks

The alternative text assignment sits at the intersection of children's literature, critical literacy, and remix. *Remixing* is a writing practice that involves taking cultural artifacts and combining and manipulating them into new kinds of creative blends (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008). Lessig (2008) argues that culture as a whole can be construed as remix. A key component of remixing is intertextuality. While all texts are inherently intertextual, explicitly or implicitly referring to and getting part of their meaning from other texts (Lemke, 1985; Bahktin, 1981), intertextuality is what helps gives the alternative text engagement and substance.

There is a long history of remixing in children's literature, particularly folktales which have traditionally been passed on orally and transformed in each retelling. Notable examples of remixed folklore include A. J. Jacobs' *Fractured Fairy Tales* (1999), featured on the TV show *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends* from 1959-1961, and Roald Dahl's boundary pushing *Revolting Rhymes* (1982). Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith have made careers out of remixing fairy tales with books such as *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* (1989) and *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* (1992). Garner (1997) has taken a modern spin on fairy tales with *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*. All of these texts are immensely popular, particularly with adults who arguably might have secretly been the intended audience. These remixes are engaging, using satire, humor and intertextuality in clever ways.

Student composed alternative texts that share these features but (to me, and admittedly I'm biased) their texts are more advanced, remixing from a larger and more diverse pool of mentor texts, moving past fairy tales and clever humor. The alternative texts feel more improvisational; students try out ideas and take risks. The entire text isn't always consistent but there's usually a few pages that are spectacularly insightful. The books have heart and are oddly personal, revealing something important about the author, the mentor text, and the world.

Mommy with a PhD and *Monkey with a Toolbelt*

A good example of an alternative text is *Mommy with a PhD*, a remix of the mentor text *Monkey with a Tool Belt* (Monroe, 2007). In the mentor text, the hero is Chico Bon Bon, a resourceful and helpful monkey who is adept with the many tools in his tool belt. A nefarious "organ grinder" sees Chico and sets to capitalize on the monkey's vast skills. The curious monkey is lured by a banana split sitting on a stool. It turns out to be fake, made of plastic, and he is trapped in a box and re-located to a foreign and mysterious place. Put into domestication as a circus monkey, the fruits of his talents are retained by the organ grinder. However, with his tools and ingenuity, Chico Bon Bon escapes, overcomes his challenges, and returns to happily serve his friends and community.

The author of the alternative text, Janelle (all names used are pseudonyms) was a single mother and at the time just starting to pursue her career in education. She placed herself in the book as the main character, "Janelle Vaughan Vaughan," a teacher and mommy, but also with a PhD. Comparing the two main characters, both are helpful as well as highly capable, only in different

ways. For example, Chico Bon Bon's skills are blue collar in nature and his tool belt contains: "screwdriver, nut driver, nutcracker, squeegee, ouija, planer, strainer, grease container" and much more. Janelle Vaughan Vaughan, in contrast, has just a library card but her white-collar skills are described as: "poverty fighter, poem writer, essay writer, legislation writer, letter writer, wrong righter, memorizer, chemistry, geography, biology, philosophy, creativity, foresight, insight, ability to highlight" (Figure 1).

Figure 1

The two texts diverge even more with the antagonists. The alternative text makes a connection between the evil organ grinder of the mentor text and "an extremely motivated, intelligent, caring, understanding, supportive single guy" who turns out to be as fake as the plastic banana

split. Attracted and tricked by his handsome looks and shiny diamond ring, the Mommy with a Ph.D is trapped and, like Chico Bon Bon, domesticated. The faker turns out to be a "controlling. manipulative, male chauvinist of a husband." Using the visual mode effectively, the author depicts the Mommy with a PhD encircled in the wedding ring (Figure 2) as well as symbolically trapped in a variety of household appliances: washing machine, cooking range, microwave, and toaster (Figure 3). After battling the despair and depression that accompanies her plight, she makes a plan and escapes by successfully filing for divorce, dividing up the belongings, grabbing the kids, and having the sheriff serve her husband the papers.

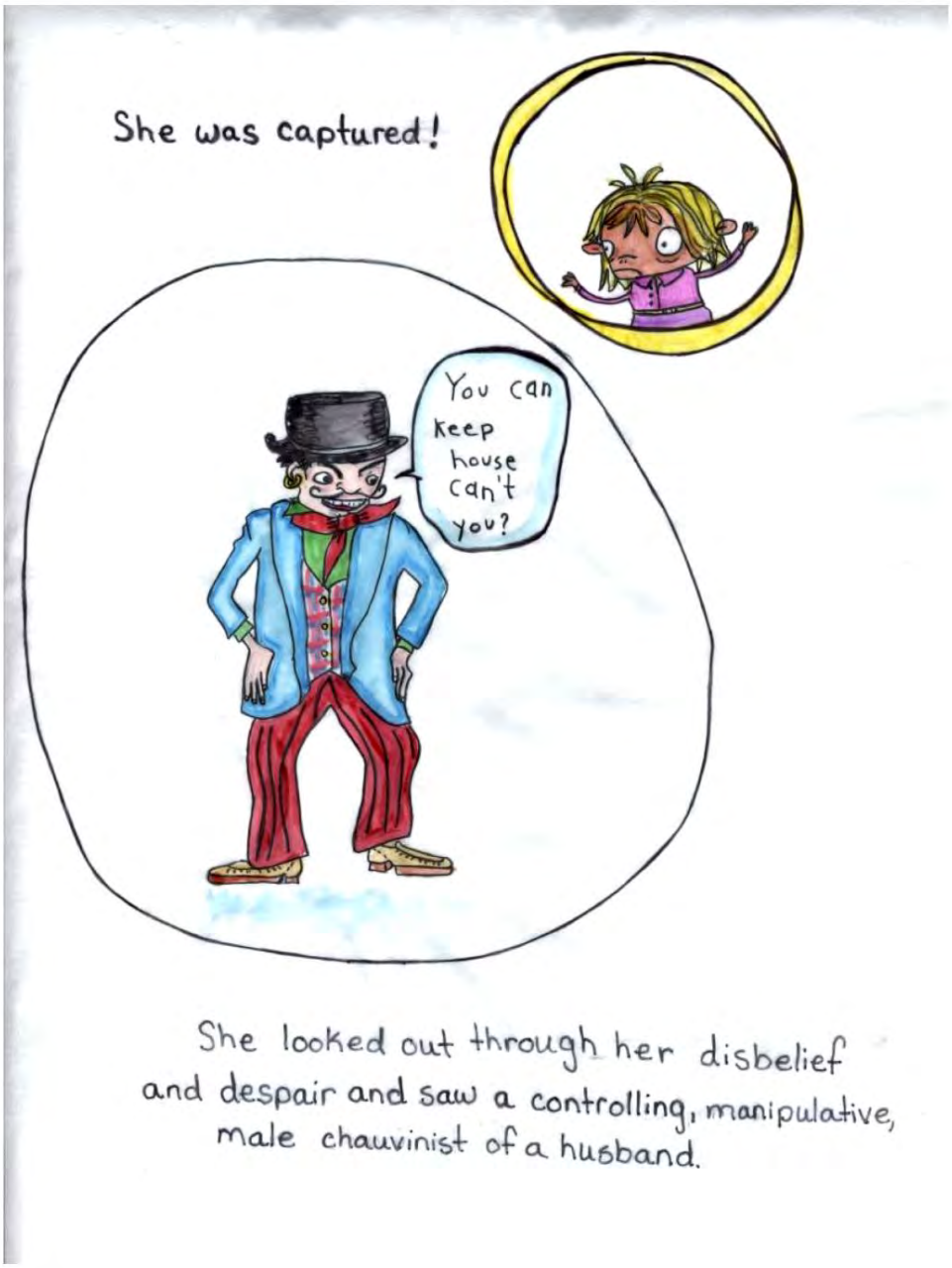


Figure 2

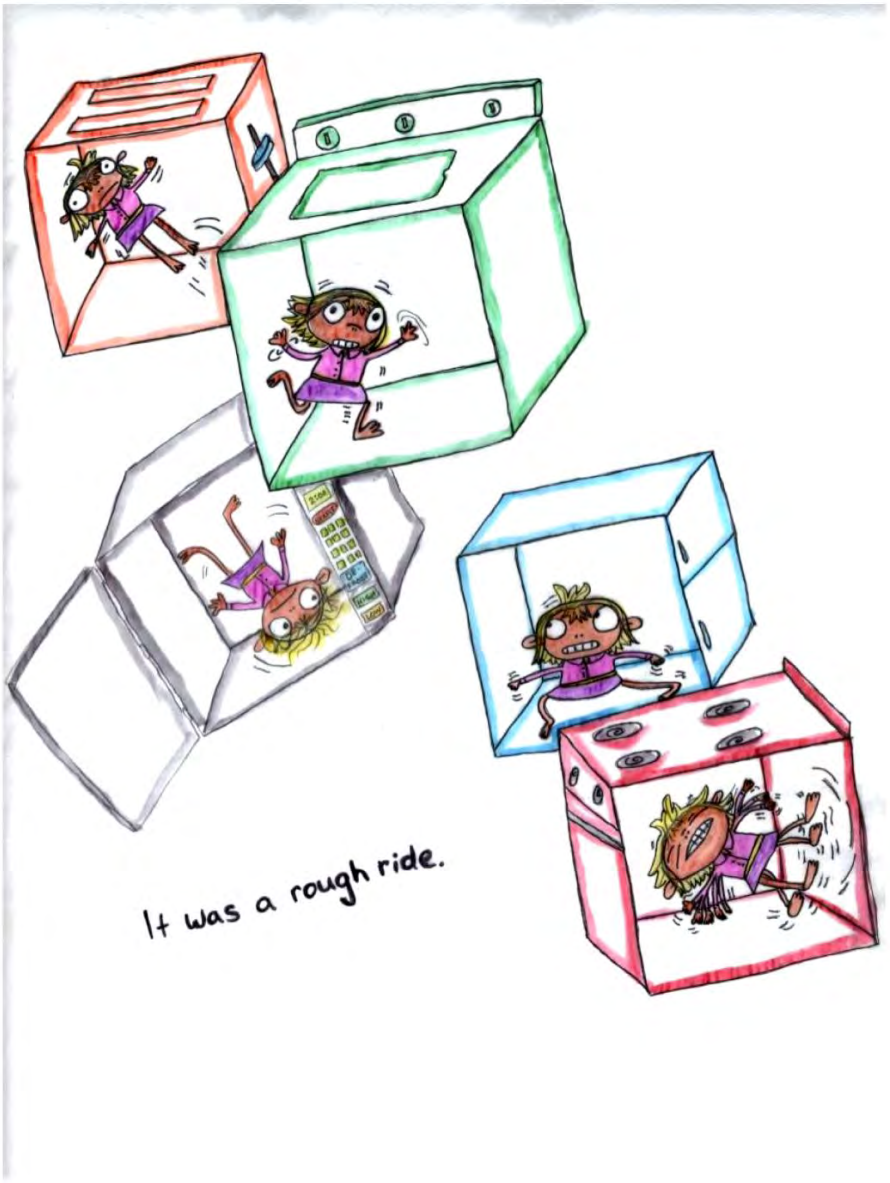


Figure 3

Alternative texts such as *Mommy with a PhD* demonstrate how students transact with mentor texts, addressing important social and political issues that originate from their own lived experiences. *Mommy with a PhD* was written before the "#MeToo" movement and, while some alternative texts are timely, responding to the headlines in the news, Janelle's text is a response to her own experiences, shared by many other women. It is impossible to separate Janelle "the pre-service teacher and author" with Janelle Vaughan Vaughan, "the Mommy with a PhD." The alternative text ends with the hero finding new work in a new town and starting fresh. She tucks her children into bed and goes to sleep herself, alone but content. Janelle's text was admired and appreciated by the all-female class even though it had an unsettling or even unpopular message: you may not get what you want in life, but with hard work and some ingenuity, you get to redefine and decide what you need, and then pursue it. Pre-service

teachers in their early 20's very much want to find love and get married; the alternative text suggests that there may be a different version of "happily ever after."

One Mentor Text, Many Alternatives

One mentor text can be remixed in countless ways and the alternative texts often reveal new insights as well as transform how we make sense of the mentor texts. Students have produced many alternative versions of *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Numeroff, 1985) including *If You Give a Girl Lip Gloss*, a cause and effect circular story of how a girl learns to become "feminine" one small step at a time from lip gloss, to hair dye, to boyfriends, to wedding rings, to children of her own. Another alternative text, *If You Give a Stranger Water*, retells the story of the "encounter" between the Indigenous people of North America and the European settlers, leading to the unfortunate aftermath of this first act of kindness. Accompanied by visuals suggesting the first Thanksgiving, the authors write: "If you give a stranger water, he's going to ask for food." (Figure 4). Mirroring the playful tone of the mentor text and using images that juxtapose the tone, the authors composed a powerful and haunting alternative version. "When he builds his own home, he'll start to miss his family, so he'll need more land. He might get carried away, but he'll save some for you" (Figure 5 and 6). I honestly can't look at that little mouse in blue overalls the same way again.

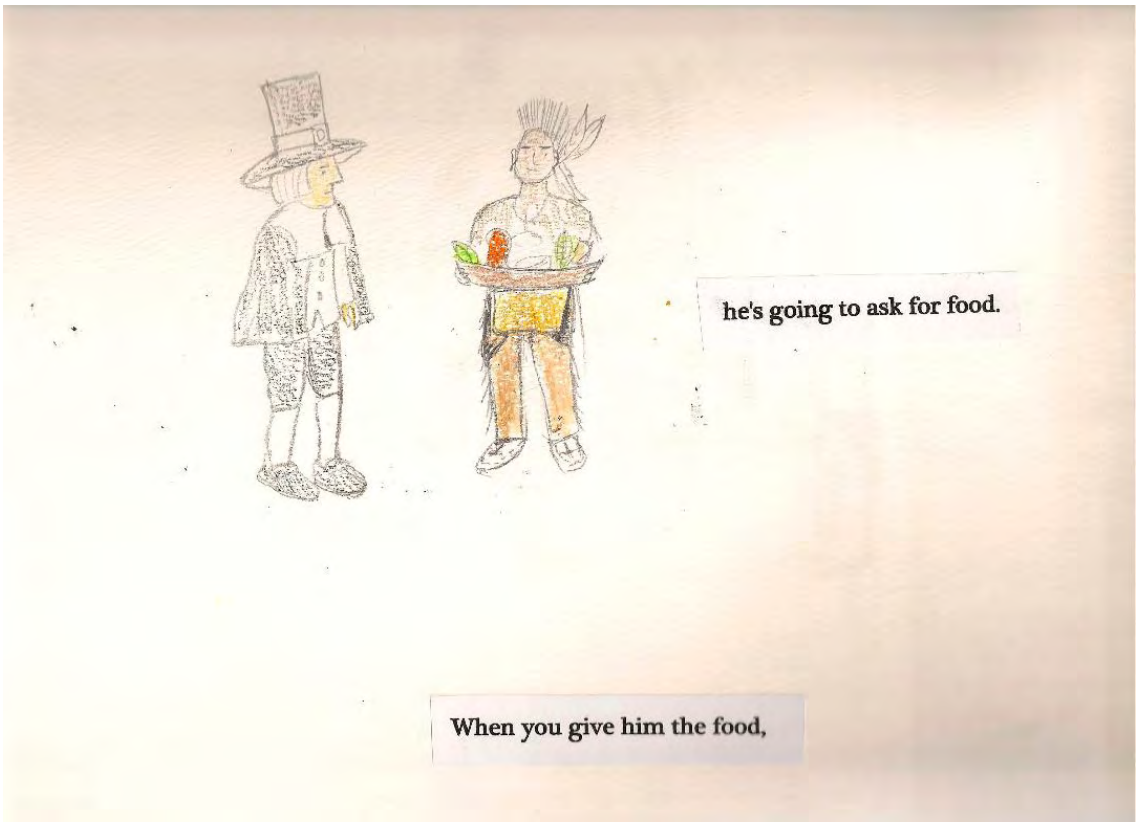


Figure 4

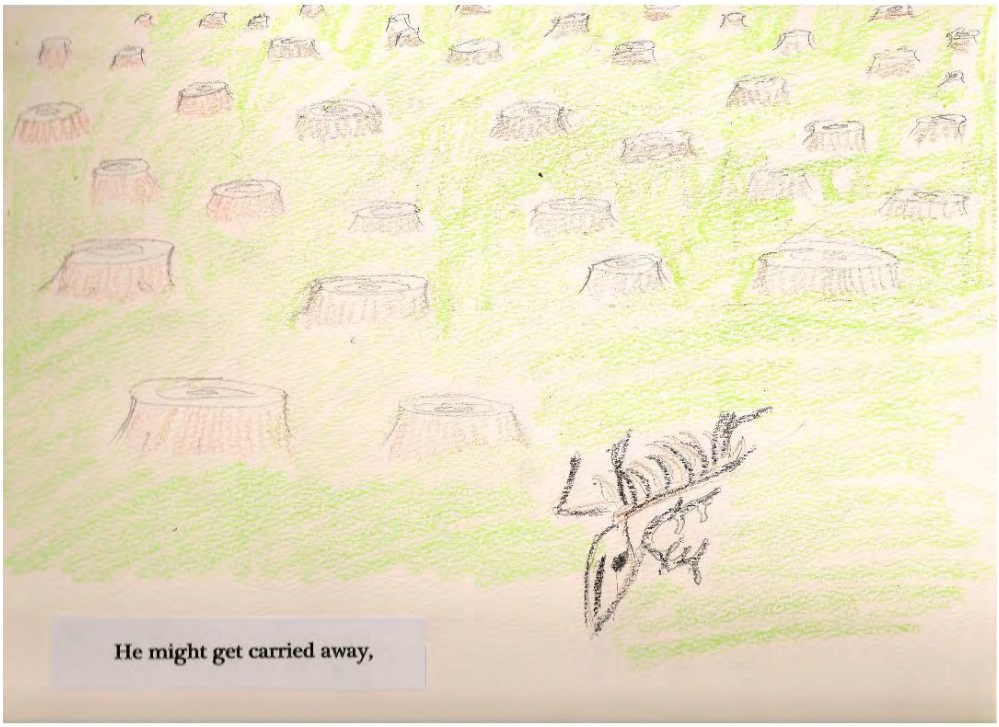


Figure 5

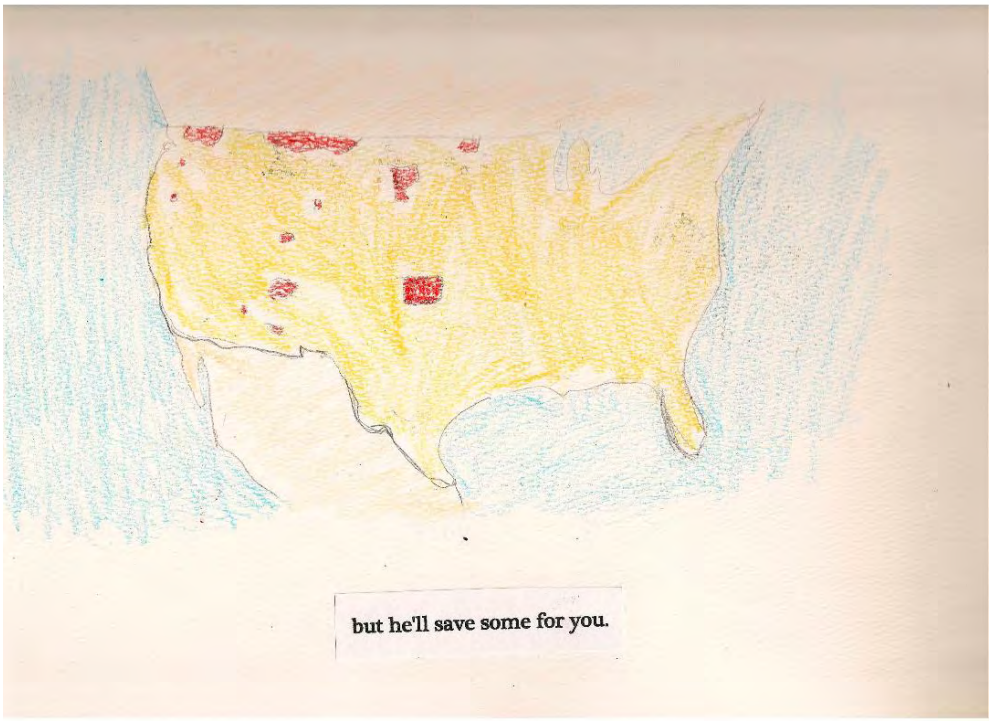


Figure 6

Every Reading is an Opportunity to Create an Alternative Text

The assignment has helped pre-service teachers browse and read books with a transactional and critical lens. We spend approximately 30 minutes of class time each week to browse/read and talk to each other about the books in front of us. I found that because the alternative text was an assignment for university credit, students were more likely to examine texts transactionally and make novel connections while browsing. Every reading was an opportunity to think out a first draft of an alternative text before actually taking on the enormous efforts needed to actually produce one.

For example, students browsed the picturebook *Some Monsters are Different* (Milgrim, 2013): "Some monsters will eat anything; some are picky. Some monsters talk and talk and talk; some are quiet." Alexis, a student from Spain, looked confused, "monsters?" Another student explained that some parents call their kids "little monsters" in a loving or playful way. Rereading the book and replacing "monsters" with "kids" made new sense to her. I made the connection that my own parents called me and my brother "banda" in their native Serbo-Croatian which translated to "bandits" or "gang."

"How can we turn it into an alternative text? What else can be a 'monster?'" A variety of ideas were thrown around from "women" (hmm, not bad...) to "fruit" (?!?) to "serial killers" (intriguing!). Each idea dramatically transformed the "cute" bedtime story. Weeks later, Alexis decided to follow through with *Some Monsters are Different* and changed "monsters" to "athletes." Her book demonstrated the range of bodies and skills that constitute an "athlete" to push back against one idealized form of athlete. Using the mentor text as a guide, each page showed a unique athletic body type including bulky weightlifters, wiry distance runners, older equestrian riders, tiny gymnasts, tall basketball players, and even very "mom-looking" curlers.

Conclusions

While the pre-service teachers in my courses appear to be a homogeneous group, nearly all Caucasian females between the ages of 20-24, I have learned from their alternative texts that they are actually quite different in ways that matter. When students respond aesthetically to picturebooks, we all benefit from these multiple perspectives and diverse connections. Ultimately, alternative texts are transactional critical responses to literature that give readers new insights. They encourage us to re-examine the mentor texts but also re-examine our own understandings of the world. Chico Bon Bon was never just a monkey with a tool belt and Numeroff's classic was never just about a demanding mouse wanting a cookie. Each remixed alternative text is a unique retelling that reflects the background and sociocultural experiences that the authors bring to the text, promoting social justice in ways that connect to their life experiences.

References

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
Bang, M. (2000). *Picture this: How pictures work*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.
Janks, H. (2010). *Literacy and power*. New York: Routledge.
Knobel, M., & Lankshear, C. (2008). Remix: The art and craft of endless hybridization. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 52(1), 22–33.

Lemke, J. (1985). Ideology, intertextuality, and the notion of register. In J. Benson & W. S. Greaves (Eds.), *Systemic perspectives on discourse: Selected theoretical papers from the 9th International Systemic Workshop*, Vol. 1 (pp. 275–294). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
Lessig, L. (2008). *Remix: Making art and commerce thrive in the hybrid economy*. New York: Penguin.
Lewison, M., Flint, A. S., & Van Sluys, K. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language arts*, 79(5), 382-392.
Rosenblatt, L. M. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Picturebook References

Browne, A. (1998). *Voices in the park*. New York: DK Publishing.
Bunting, E. (1991). *Fly away home*. Illus. R. Himler. New York: Clarion.
Dahl, R. (1982). *Revolting rhymes*. Illus. Q. Blake. London: Jonathan Cape.
Garner, J. F. (1994). *Politically correct bedtime stories*. London: Souvenir Press.
Jacobs, A. J. (1999). *Fractured fairy tales.* New York: Bantam Trade.
Milgrim, D. (2013). *Some monsters are different*. New York: Henry Holt.
Monroe, C. (2007). *Monkey with a tool belt*. New York: Carolrhoda.
Numeroff, L. (1985). *If you give a mouse a cookie*. Illus. F. Bond. New York: Harper and Row.
Scieszka, J. (1989). *The true story of the 3 little pigs*. Illus. L Smith. New York: Viking.
Scieszka, J. (1992). *The stinky cheese man and other fairly stupid tales*. Illus. L. Smith. New York: Viking.
Woodson, J. (2001). *The other side*. Illus. E. B. Lewis. New York: Putnam.

Chuck Jurich is an Assistant Professor of Literacy Education at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

Teacher Educators Engage Pre-service Teachers with *The 57 Bus*

Tami Morton and Alexandra Babino

As an African-American female educator, I (Tami) connect with books that include African-American characters, particularly those that feature strong young women with strong ethnic identities like Deja in *Towers Falling* (Rhodes, 2016) and Jade from *Piecing Me Together* (Watson, 2017). Nonetheless, I was attracted to the true story selected for the 2018 Notable Books for a Global Society list, *The 57 Bus* (Slater, 2017) despite some apprehension.

The 57 Bus is an intriguing nonfiction story in which Dashka Slater uses her journalistic style to chronicle the explosive encounter of two high-school teenagers on the 57 bus. One teenager, Sasha, is White and from a middle-class neighborhood. Sasha, wearing a skirt, identifies as agender, rather than as either male or female. Richard is an African-American teen from a low socioeconomic status (SES) neighborhood. The book details the harrowing accounts of each student's life prior to and after an eight-second timeframe that changed their lives forever—when Richard lights Sasha's skirt on fire.

This book explores the points of view of two students who have been traditionally marginalized in today's schools, namely LGBTQIA, African-Americans, and those from low SES neighborhoods. By doing so, this book portrays the multidimensional lived experiences of actual students related to controversial topics like sexual and gender identity, equal housing, equitable education, and justice under the law. The book thus has the potential to counter the dominant narratives of mainstream culture by highlighting the nuanced complexity between individual "choices" and consequences that ripple across a lifetime.

One of the first thoughts that came to my mind after reading this book was the potential responses of students. As a reading professor in teacher education, students in my courses are preparing for teaching reading in the K-6 classroom. Through conversations and research (Haddix & Price, 2013; Hermann-Wilmarth, J., 2010), I realized that most teachers preparing for these grade levels are concerned about what books they can share in their classrooms. They typically shy away from books that feature complicated conversations related to racism, sex, and politics. In fact, they believe that it is their responsibility as teachers to keep these books away from their future students. However, we believe that sharing these texts with pre-service teachers is essential, particularly since teaching is never neutral (Valenzuela, 2016). In a transformative education, teachers work to prepare students to become change agents to address problems in their communities (Freire, 2005; Nieto & Bode, 2018).

Beginning the Journey

Tami spoke to another faculty member, Ale, who teaches bilingual, ESL, and literacy classes. Ale is a second generation Mexican-American, who relates to books that explore the linguistic and identity borderlands of Latinx students. She resonates with characters like Marisol from *Marisol McDonald no combina* [*Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match*] (Brown, 2011) and *Margie in Nacer bailando* [*Dancing Home*] (Ada &

Zubizarreta, 2013) who live at the intersection of two cultures. Together we were committed to exploring how pre-service teachers would experience the book in order to reflect on our own practice.

We decided to offer the book as an optional literature circle to our spring 2018 students that would occur outside of class. Specifically, we wondered how interactions with this book would influence pre-service teachers' personal views in regards to complex social issues and if they would recommend the book for secondary classrooms. By analyzing students' responses to these questions, we ultimately aimed to explore how we could further shape teacher perceptions about including diverse literature that fosters a more knowledgeable and inclusive disposition in teaching.

Inviting Our Students

At our medium-sized, public, rural university, we began the semester by briefly describing the opportunity to our four undergraduate literacy classes (two taught by Tami and two taught by Ale). We both provided a "book talk" in a manner similar to a commercial (Roser & Martinez, 1995), which included a brief description of the book and the issues that were highlighted. Tami also offered to purchase the book for any interested students.

During the literature circle, students were asked to read the book and complete three journal responses. The students were asked to respond in a written format to three questions:

- Before reading, how do you expect to respond to the book? Explain your reasoning.
- After reading parts 1 & 2, do you believe that you would include this book in your classroom? Explain why or why not.
- After reading the book, do you believe this text should be used in your classroom? Explain why or why not. Has your opinion changed?

While 44 students expressed interest in the literature circle, only 11 students completed all three reflections. Participating students were between 20 to 44 years in age and in their junior and senior years of college. When asked why they decided to abandon the book, all but one stated a variation of having school, family, and work commitments interfering with the time to read the book. One did not believe in the issues in the book and she did not need to read about it.

Our Reflection

To aide in our personal reflection, we implemented the constant comparative method of data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) to examine all student responses and identify "key issues, recurring events, or activities that may become the focus of the study and the basis for categorizing data" (Mertler, 2009, p.81). Our codes included reasons for joining the literature circle; personal and professional views; a change of views; and pre-service teachers' recommendations across responses. From these codes, the three principal themes emerged and served as a springboard for our response included

expanding understanding of social issues, conflicted recommendations for reading; and a need for further critical professional learning.

Setting a foundation

When asked why they wanted to join the literature circle, all participants (n = 11) stated they were avid readers and most (n = 9) were interested in reading a book that would help them serve their future students. Seeing their willingness to learn about minoritized groups buoyed our hopes for what we might learn about guiding pre-service teachers in creating an inclusive classroom. As teacher educators, we can build on pre-service teachers' love for reading and openness to learn about the lived experiences of others. While seemingly obvious, we believe this observation should not go unsaid since many preservice teachers report not liking to read (Nathanson, Pruslow, & Levitt, 2008; Vansteelandt, Mol, Caelen, Landuyt, & Mommaerts, 2017). What's more, other teacher educators (Boylan & Woosley, 2015; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010) have found that creating a more open disposition toward diversity may be a developmental process, where teachers move from self-awareness to openness, and then commitment to social justice. In our beginning literacy course, we first focused on (re)igniting a love for reading through literature circles. We believe this is an essential first step before expanding students' understandings of critical, controversial topics.

Expanding understanding

In the first response, all students also noted they had never known anyone who was asexual. By the second response, all students reported some version of having "their eyes opened" to the challenges of being considered a minority in dominant society. Over the course of the three responses, pre-service teachers demonstrated an expanding understanding of the issues facing minoritized groups in a way that led to increased compassion and even a passion (n = 8) to engage with future students around these issues. An illustrative example of this point is how Justin progressed in his reflections. He began his first reflection by sharing, "I have experienced many things in my life, but several of the topics covered in this book are foreign to me [...] The lessons taught in this book will be important for students to learn because they involve real world scenarios that students will encounter."

By his second response, his reflection becomes both more personal and specific on why it is necessary for students to interact with books like this one,

The constant questioning of self that Sasha seems to have been dealt up to this point in the book are things that some people are dealing with on a daily basis in our world. Beyond being realistic scenarios for a lot of people in this country today, these scenarios are also both hot button topics [...] If we are ever going to grow as a country [...] we have to start having the dialogue, and I believe that school is the perfect place to begin this dialogue.

The issue has changed from discussions of minoritized groups that seem ephemeral and impersonal to "questioning of self" which brings the issues to an individual and immediate level. His response also expanded beyond students learning about general

life lessons to having a dialogue in school with the purpose of creating social progress. Over the course of several months, most students (n = 10) demonstrated increased understanding of and empathy for Sasha and Richard's complex experiences. From this experience, we learned that interactions around one book can expand students' personal views.

Conflicting recommendations

While all participants grew in their personal views towards Sasha and Richard and the minoritized groups they identify with, this personal growth did not significantly change their professional views to the point where they would implement the book in a secondary classroom. Only two students enthusiastically and unequivocally recommended teaching from the book; three students vehemently opposed teaching with this book, and almost half of participants (n = 6) would have the book in the classroom as choice reading but would not include it as required reading. Most recommendations for teaching the book included caveats such as Jilliyn, who said: "I would really advise for my students to read [it], but I cannot force them to read it"; another student shared that she would definitely use this text in a secondary classroom if it were a mature class; and another reflected that while she enjoyed the book, she couldn't recommend using it in a public school. They each qualified how they would limit its use on a smaller scale than the entire classroom.

As teacher educators, these responses lead us to consider how we might facilitate students along their journeys towards developing a social justice orientation to teaching. While we realize that this experience deepened their nascent understanding of these minoritized groups, through our personal and professional experiences we know that this is merely one of the first steps that we should continue to build on. Personally, as we've taught LGBTQAI students in elementary schools, we've noticed how our perspectives have transitioned over time: we first became aware of their unique needs, which led us to become curious to learn how we might better support them, and ultimately become an ally. Our personal experiences coincide with research (Boylan & Woosley, 2015; Mills & Balltantyne, 2010) that describes how developing a transformative pedagogy is a developmental process moving from self-awareness, to openness, and finally a commitment to social justice. This also aligns with our professional experiences in this study as we see evidence through students' conflicting recommendations, suggesting that they are straddling the self-awareness and openness stages.

Need for critical professional development

Ultimately, reviewing pre-service teachers' responses to the book reinforced the need to read texts about characters outside mainstream culture while providing students with the tools to expand their personal views and professional practice (Haddix & Price-Dennis, 2013; Nieto & Bode, 2018). Several pre-service teacher responses indicated their surprise and shock at the content and the language in *The 57 Bus*. We believe this would not have been the case if they had more experiences with children's and adolescent books, particularly those that disrupt what people see as typical or expected (Summara, 2002).

Additionally, participants felt it was important for their future students to be exposed to books that share a well written story that provides values and truth, much like those identified by Hirsh (2010) as the "cultural classics." While we feel this is a valid way of thinking about books, it indicates a more "purist" approach (Leland & Lewison, 2018, p. 5). A reader who has a purist approach pays more attention to the elements of story, like the plot, setting, characterization, and theme to discuss the framework of books. However, this approach should not always be the emphasis. We would like for pre-service teachers to have a more critical approach when reading literature, where they would consider multiple viewpoints, focus on the sociopolitical implications, and even take action to promote social justice (Leland, Lewison, & Harste, 2018).

Our Action Steps

As a result of this action research, we are both encouraged and challenged. We're encouraged by how much personal development can occur in a small group of students over the course of several months; yet, we are also challenged as to how we may collectively coordinate across classes to intentionally include materials and create spaces to broaden pre-service teachers' understandings of minoritized groups, in a way that will allow them to create inclusive, transformative classrooms. In particular, we are coming away with the following action steps.

- Continue to provide experiences like literature circles and book talks that foster a love for literacy within the framework of windows and mirrors (Bishop, 1990). With each text, invite students to reflect: How is this a mirror? How is this a window? This curiosity provides a foundation for empathy, as they see both similarities and differences between characters and themselves.
- Continue to provide safe places for students to reflect in personal writing on how they are processing "reading the world" (Freire, 1970). Affirm students' thinking--including the struggle--and suggest additional resources (Rychly & Graves, 2012) that will inform their thinking beyond their personal experiences to demonstrate that personal and professional change requires time.
- Explicitly teach vocabulary related to minoritized groups, including person first language (Dunn & Andrews, 2015). Almost all of our students mentioned not knowing common LGBTQAI terms and found this chapter of the book especially helpful.
- Continue to provide multiple texts that defy stereotypes of diverse groups and thereby show the complexity of lived experiences (Tschida, Ryan, & Ticknor, 2014). Encourage students to see characters as individuals in addition to being members of their social groups so they understand general issues and trends related to each minoritized group, but also value each person's unique experience.
- Continue to model curiosity in your own reading through your book selection, class readings, and reflections. Specifically, share how your thinking has developed and what contributed to your growth. By being transparent in our think alouds, we model how we are humble learners in our own journeys.
- Explore multiple ways of knowing through multimodality and transmediation (Hadjioannu, & Huchinson, 2014). Invite students to demonstrate their learning not only through multiple modalities (i.e. oral, written, visual), but also

by translating their learning from one modality to another (i.e. written to visual). This further substantiates the value of complexity in understanding in the human experience.

As we reflect, we must keep in mind that, though many pre-service teachers have worldviews principally influenced by personal experiences, they are increasingly more open to discussions about multicultural literature. Research has found that pre-service teachers can and do remember the responses given to them about their teaching (Scheeler, McAfee, Ruhl, & Lee, 2006) and developing dispositions toward diversity can be developmental (Mills & Balltantyne, 2010). The next step is to provide multiple texts to use as a window (Bishop, 1990) into diverse cultures and settings and help students find connections. Then, as they are able to gain empathy and understanding, we may guide them to develop the critical tools needed to navigate more controversial issues in their classrooms.

Endnote:

Some use LGBTQIA to be more inclusive of additional groups than the commonly used LGBTQ. It stands for Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer questioning, intersex, asexual. Alternatively, other writers use the term "LGBTQ+". Definitions of these and other terms are included in the book, The 57 Bus.

References

Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives*, 6(3), ix–xi.

Bogdan R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Boylan, M., & Woolsey, I. (2015). Teacher education for social justice: Mapping identity spaces. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 46, 62-71.

Dunn, D. S., & Andrews, E. E. (2015). Person-first and identity-first language: Developing psychologists' cultural competence using disability language. *American Psychologist*, 70(3), 255-264.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Freire, P. (2005). *Teachers as cultural workers: Letters to those who dare to teach*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Hadjioannou, X., & Hutchinson, M. (2014). Fostering awareness through transmediation: Preparing pre-service teachers for critical engagement with multicultural literature. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 16(1), 1-20.

Hirsh, E. D. (2010). *The making of Americans: Democracy in our schools*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press

Leland, C. H., Lewison, M., & Harste, J. (2018). *Teaching children's literature: It's critical!* (2nd ed.) New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Mertler, C.A. (2009). *Action research: Teachers as researchers in the classroom* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Mills, C., & Ballantyne, J. (2010). Pre-service teachers' dispositions towards diversity: Arguing for a developmental hierarchy of change. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3), 447-454.

Nathanson, S., Pruslow, J., & Levitt, R. (2008). The reading habits and literacy attitudes

of inservice and prospective teachers: Results of a questionnaire survey. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(4), 313-321.
Nieto, S. & Bode, P. (2018). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (7th ed.). New York: Pearson.
Rychly, L., & Graves, E. (2012). Teacher characteristics for culturally responsive pedagogy. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 14(1), 44-49.
Roser, N. L., & Martinez, M. G. (1995). *Book talk and beyond: Children and teachers respond to literature*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
Scheeler, M. C., McAfee, J. K., Ruhl, K. L., & Lee, D. L. (2006). Effects of corrective feedback delivered via wireless technology on preservice teacher performance and student behavior. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 29(1), 12–25.
Sumara, D. (2002). *Why reading literature in school really matters: Imagination, interpretation, Insight*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
Tschida, C. M., Ryan, C. L., & Ticknor, A. S. (2014). Building on windows and mirrors: Encouraging the disruption of "single stories" through children's literature. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 40(1), 28-39.
Valenzuela, A. (2016). *Growing critically conscious teachers: A social justice curriculum for educators of Latino/a Youth*. New York: Teachers College.
Vansteelandt, I., Mol, S. E., Caelen, D., Landuyt, I., & Mommaerts, M. (2017). Attitude profiles explain differences in pre-service teachers' reading behavior and competence beliefs. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 54, 109-115.

Children's Literature References

Ada, A. F., & Zubizarreta, G. M. (2013). *Nacer bailando/Dancing home*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Brown, M. (2011). *Marisol McDonald no combina/Marisol McDonald doesn't match*. New York: Lee & Low Books.
Rhodes, J. P. (2016). *Towers falling. New York: Little, Brown.*
Slater, D. (2017). The 57 bus: A true story of two teenagers and the crime that changed their lives. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.
Watson, R. (2017). *Piecing me together*. New York: Bloomsbury.

Tami Morton is an Associate Professor at Texas A&M University-Commerce.
Alexandra Babino is an Assistant Professor of Bilingual/ESL Education at Texas A&M University-Commerce.