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MULTICULTURALISM IN PICTURE BOOKS

JILLISSA PRENTICE  
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Reviewed and approved\* by the following:

Carla Rae Chamberlin-Quinlisk  
Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics/ Communication Arts and Sciences  
Thesis Supervisor

Ronald Lee Zigler  
Associate Professor of Educational Psychology  
Honors Adviser

\* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this thesis is to examine multiculturalism in picture books for young children. I first discuss the importance of multiculturalism and how it teaches values as well as expands the knowledge of various cultures. I continue the discussion by explaining multiculturalism's effect on children's personal identities. Next, I conducted a content analysis on 127 picture books from the summer reading lists of two school districts: The School District of Philadelphia, an urban school district, and Lower Merion, a suburban district. My research questions focus on how diverse cultures were represented in the summer reading lists of both districts. The representations of diverse cultures in the summer reading lists of both school districts were also compared.

The results of the content analysis made it evident that both school districts lack cultural diversity. White main and incidental characters were the most frequent ethnic group for both districts. Therefore in contrast, the most common characters reflected the school populations for Lower Merion, but not for The School District of Philadelphia. In fact, there were very few picture books that included minorities in both school districts especially when it came to Hispanic and Asian American cultures.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Literature is a vital part of young children's learning. In order for students to progress in school, they need to be able to read. The five building blocks of literacy are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Thogmartin (2000) states "Family storybook reading plays a unique role in a young child's literacy development. No other single activity has as much potential instructional value for both attitudinal and academic enrichment" (p. 34). In order for students to excel in all academic areas, they need to read. When it comes to reading, Krashen has stated that when students read often, not only do their reading skills improve, but so does their writing, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar skills (2009, p. 21). Moreover, Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn (2006) say that:

Comprehension...is the heart of reading...Children can build their comprehension by learning to use mental plans, or strategies, to get meaning as they read. These strategies include using what they already know to make sense of what they read, making predictions, paying attention to the way a reading selection is organized, creating mental pictures, asking questions, and summarizing. (p. 6)

Reading thus provides necessary skills in order to succeed academically and in life.

### **Importance of Multiculturalism**

Reading not only builds literacy skills, but it is an important part of social development, a necessity to function in one's daily life. Multicultural literature, for example, can be a smart way for children to connect with their personal identities which will help them to share who they are

with others. The United States of America is full of people of different cultures. Many people emigrate from other countries to come to America to escape dire situations. If they had formerly lived in a poor country, they may not have been able to get an education and therefore may be illiterate. Families like these enroll their children into school. These students are in a completely new environment that can cause stress and anxiety. They need ways to make connections to their old and new homes.

Bilingual books have been used, for example, to promote students' appreciation of their heritage cultures while also building literacy skills in their new language. According to Ernst-Slavit & Mulhern (2003):

Bilingual books can play an important part in supporting ESL students' language and literacy learning. Children who learn to read in their native language do not need to relearn to read in English, since many of the processes involved in decoding text and understanding print relationships transfer from the L1 to English. In addition, children benefit not only by speaking their L1, but, most importantly, by reading literature in their own language that reflects their own cultures...Literacy in the minority language not only provides a greater chance of survival at an individual and group level for that language. It may also encourage feelings of rootedness, self-esteem, the vision and world-view of one's heritage culture, self-identity and intellectual empathy. (Final Thoughts: Some Cautions, para. 1)

It is clear that multicultural literature promotes the learning of English Language Learners (ELLs). Among students who speak different languages, there are students that are of different cultures. Multiculturalism is not just about helping ELLs, but it is a great way to encourage the acceptance and the knowledge of people of every culture.

Statistics of 2013 state that in public schools in the United States, there are 15.8% African American/Black, 23.9% Latino, 1.2% American Indian/Alaska Native, 2.5% Multiracial, and 51.4% White students (Fast Facts, n.d.). These statistics show that there are learners of various races in our public schools, so there should be a way to help them connect with academic content. One such way is through books. *Multicultural Literature for Children* (n.d.) states that multicultural literature:

...may describe how people live in different parts of the world, or they may portray how children from different cultural backgrounds live together in the same country. They can be fiction, nonfiction, folk tales, fairy tales, legends, or poetry, but above all they must be accurate and portray characters in positive, non-stereotypical ways. (General Purpose, para. 1)

To engage students and help them to make connections to literature in the classroom, they should be able to read about and see characters that are like them. In addition, a great way to be exposed to different cultures is to learn about them through multicultural literature. Many children are reading more and more every day, especially with the popular connections between literature and television; many popular books have been made into movies and vice versa. For the purpose of this study, I view multicultural literature as a way for students to develop values, improve self-image, and learn about the world.

### **Why Summer Reading Lists?**

During the summer, reading books may be the last thing on young children's minds. According to the New York State Education Department, summer breaks have been estimated to cause the average student to lose about one month of instruction "...with disadvantaged students

being disproportionately affected...two-thirds of the 9th grade reading achievement gap can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years, with nearly one-third of the gap present when children begin school...” (The Importance of Summer Reading: Public Library Summer Reading Programs and Learning, 2011).

It is undeniable that summer reading lists have a significant impact on maintaining students’ academic skills. However, if the summer reading lists fail to pique the interests of children, they will not be motivated to utilize them. Because summer reading lists can be imperative to literacy development, students need to be able to relate to the content. It is true that some students read literature for humor, and of course to learn new information; this is great. However, summer reading lists can also offer students more opportunity to learn about themselves and others. Many parents also want a way to continue to further the learning of their children; some of them take summer reading lists very seriously. Students may be given incentive to read the lists when they have the chance to receive prizes. Therefore, summer reading lists can be very impactful if the “right” literature is stressed.

According to the American Library Association (ALA Library Fact Sheet17, para. 1, 2011), summer reading programs have been around since the 1890s to stimulate reading skills in urban areas. The National Center for Educational Statistics found that 95% of public libraries offered summer reading programs in 1994. The library summer reading list themes are created by individual or state libraries (2011), the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP), or the Illinois Reading Enrichment and Development (iREAD) program (Themes, para. 1).

Multitudes of schools have summer reading programs to ensure that their pupils are preserving their literacy skills over the summer. If schools do not have summer reading programs, public libraries do. In schools with large populations of multicultural and multilingual

students, as well as those with less diversity, multicultural literature should play an important role in the curricula, including the summer reading lists.

**Purpose of study: Exploring the representations of skin color in picture books**

There are books specifically made to promote multiculturalism. The reason for this study is to get a sense of whether or not these books are being promoted in summer programs. I have chosen this topic because as a future teacher, the literature chosen in my class will make a difference on the mindsets of my students. Not only are my findings important to me, but to other teachers as well. Students in general need to be exposed to people of different cultures. There are some children that live in areas where they see only people of the same color; literature may be their only exposure to other cultures.

In my high school experiences, most of the literature I was assigned to read had primarily White main characters. If there were characters of other races, they were usually supporting characters. I attended a school where the majority of the teachers were White despite the majority of the students being Black. This experience was different from my junior high years because I attended a predominantly Black school. Here, there were lots of books on Black and even Hispanic characters. In elementary school, most of the literature focused on White characters or animals. Classic children stories like *Old MacDonald*, *Curious George*, and the Disney book series have predominantly White characters if not animals. My question is, has the situation improved? In particular, do summer reading lists for children include the elements of multiculturalism that relate to diverse populations of students?

The inclusion of positive multicultural representations is especially important in our increasingly multicultural, yet increasingly segregated, communities.



Children from many different backgrounds come together in books to share their similarities and differences...Books can provide many excellent opportunities for young people to understand the unique qualities of every ethnic group, and to celebrate the richness that diversity brings to the...experiences of everyday living (Volz & Scheer, 2000, p. 59)

Meaningful books are needed to ensure these kinds of experiences. Norton (2000) states that readers benefit from the literature that they read because it can be a valuable tool when they are discovering who they are as people (p. 2). If the literature that they are reading is not diverse, it may not be able to help them in their time of need. According to Norton, students usually connect with characters that are going through familiar situations (2000, p. 2). Children need literature that they can relate to in order to help them discover their personal identities and even to overcome problems in their daily lives.

Unfortunately, G. Pritchey Smith (2004) reports:

...currently, 'U.S. schools are becoming more segregated in all regions for both African American and Latino students' (Orfield & Lee, 2004, p. 1). Based on the Common Core Data of the National Center of Education, the recent studies by Orfield and his colleagues clearly show that schools in the Northern states are presently more segregated than in the Southern states, and the Southern states are more segregated than they were in 1988. In fact, for almost three decades, the South has been the most racially integrated region of the country despite accelerated resegregation since 1988 (Orfield & Lee, 2004)'" (p. 26).

Many of the most rapidly resegregating school systems since the mid-1980s are suburban" (Smith, 2004, p. 26). In places like the South, literature may be the only way that students

connect to their culture. It may also be the only way that students are exposed to cultures outside of their own.

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) began to fight for desegregation in the 1960s. In Pennsylvania's urban areas like Philadelphia, they fought to enforce state rules in smaller communities to promote integration. However, according to Kotok, Reed, Kucsera, and Orfield (2015), today the PHRC has shifted its attention "...towards other forms of discrimination such as unequal discipline, lack of services for disabled students, and sexual harassment" (Executive Summary, para. 1). There is much evidence that exhibits racism in Pennsylvania, but there is not much being done to counteract it.

Of students who attended intensely segregated schools (90-100% minority) in 2010-2011, 85.1% were low-income, and among those who attended apartheid schools (i.e., 99-100% minority), 86.1% were low-income, both of which represent increases from 1999-2000. These figures suggest high and overlapping segregation by race and poverty. (Kotok, Reed, Kucsera, & Orfield, 2015)

Kotok and his colleagues continue to provide statistics that prove that while White enrollment in Pennsylvania schools statewide is decreasing, the enrollment of minorities is increasing.

The white share of the total public school enrollment decreased from 82.8% in 1989-1990 to 71.8% in 2010-2011, a decline of 11 percentage points. During the same time, the non-white share of public school enrollment increased, most notably due to the sizable increase in Latino share of public school enrollment. The state is far whiter than the U.S. as a whole. (Kotok, Reed, Kucsera, & Orfield, 2015)

If white students are continuing to decrease in public schools, this supports the idea that school are beginning to move back into segregation which further shows the need for

multiculturalism in all schools. If students are going to be in classrooms in which they all share the same culture, they need to be exposed to cultures unlike their own. In metro Philadelphia in particular, Kotok, Reed, Kucsera, and Orfield report:

The typical black student...attended a school with 70.9% low- income students and the typical Latino student attended a school with 66% low-income students, more than three times the share of low-income students in schools attended by the typical white student (21.2%), a higher disparity than that found in nearby states” (2015)

Based on the national and local trends toward resegregation and my own professional experiences, it is imperative to inspect how multicultural literature is in fact utilized in both urban and suburban school districts near Philadelphia today.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

The research that I have reviewed to conduct my study focuses on the many benefits of multicultural literature. First I discuss how multicultural literature can increase exposure to diverse values and cultures for all students. Next I discuss how cultures are represented and how multicultural literature can assist English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. I then argue how important multiculturalism is to discovering one's personal identity and review studies of multicultural literature. Finally, I review some studies that I have come across on content analyses of multicultural literature and present my research questions.

### **Multicultural Literature and the Exposure to Diverse Values and Cultures**

Diane Barone (2011) validates how important it is to have multiculturalism in the classroom and the critical role that the teacher plays in the execution of multiculturalism. Teachers can maximize the accuracy in the way a culture is presented as well as minimize the stereotypes of a culture. She shares the following questions in order to help teachers evaluate the books they use in their classrooms: "Is the book of high literary value? Is the plot engaging? Are the characters well developed? Is the theme interesting? Does the book accurately represent the culture shared? Who wrote the story? Who created the illustrations?" In addition, the illustrator's perspective of the culture they present is extremely important in a picture book (Barone, 2011, p. 71).

The books children read should be of high literary value with engaging plots. The characters should be well developed. The author of the children's book is an important factor as

well because they may affect the accuracy of the culture presented (Barone, 2011, p. 19). Barone also discusses the evolution of multiculturalism in picture books today emphasizing that multicultural books can reel in people of all different cultures. Just because the book is about an African family, does not mean that a Hispanic family cannot relate to it.

If students are not exposed to multicultural literature from a young age, it may negatively affect their learning as they get older. A preliminary study exposed the challenges secondary school teachers and students could face when asked to discuss cultural aspects of different texts (Jordan & Purves, 1993). Jordan and Purves found that students were able to connect to literature on a personal basis. However, when the text was about a culture outside of the students' native cultures, they were inclined to dislike it. If students are taught to appreciate other cultures from elementary school, it can promote an understanding of diversity and values. The students did not even realize that the reason they were having trouble understanding the text was their lack of cultural knowledge; the high school students believed that the fault was in the author's writing, or their reading skills (p. 21). This study may imply that when different cultural values are unfamiliar to students, they have difficulty understanding the content. If exposed to multicultural literature from an early age, students can get on the path toward improvement in this area.

Eric Kimmel's "Can Children's Books Change Children's Values?" (2009) states that literature from 1920-60, was geared towards middle class white students. Children's attitudes are affected by what they read according to Kimmel (1970, p. 209). He validates the usefulness of content analysis and states that it is significant in choosing the literature that students read (p. 210). Kimmel's research was published in the 1970s, but in order to discuss the present and future of literature, we need to recognize its past and how it has evolved.

For decades scholars have written about the significant role that multicultural literature plays in teaching children about diverse perspectives of the world. *The Pleasures of Children's Literature* by Perry Nodelman and Mavis Reimer (2003) is one of the textbooks that I utilized in one of my education classes. The book focuses on all aspects of children's literature.

Multiculturalism exposes children to new cultures and therefore expands their knowledge of people (p. 168). America alone has multiple ethnicities, and among these ethnicities, there are many different kinds of culture. Children need to be introduced to diversity from a young age.

In *Children's Literature Studies: Cases and Discussions*, Linda Salem (2006) tries to help teachers by discussing effective ways to use literature in the classroom. Salem tells us that using the critical literacy approach can be very effective. When this approach is used, it "...asks readers 'to think about what effect' readings have on different groups of people'..." (2006, p. 3). Readers need to think about the meaning that it has for them as well and how it compares to others' perspectives. Literature can help teach social responsibility.

Gorski (1999) gives the history of multiculturalism and how it has evolved. This historical perspective says that multicultural education began with the civil rights movement back in the 1960s. The women's rights movement and other causes that pushed for human as well as sociopolitical rights paved the way for educational equality. With the ideas of James Banks, a pioneer of multicultural education, teachers fought for multicultural education in the mid-1980s to late 1980s (Gorski, 1999). Overall, research, pedagogy and history remind us that multicultural education is vital; people fought for the right to have it decades ago. It cannot be forgotten now.

Sonia Nieto (2000) states "Young people whose languages and cultures differ from the dominant group most often struggle to sustain a clear image of themselves because differences are commonly treated as deficiencies by schools and teachers" (p. 138). This should not be occurring

in schools, but a way to counteract it is to have multicultural literature in the classroom. It creates a more welcoming environment. Nieto also states that “the seven basic characteristics of multicultural education are: multicultural education is antiracist education, basic education, important for all students, pervasive, education for social justice, a process, and critical pedagogy” (p. 305).

### **Examples of culture in children’s literature**

Diane Barone (2011) states that multicultural literature is readily available. She discusses the authors Arnold Adoff and Eloise Greenfield who both write poetry about the experiences of African-American and children of other cultures. She also discusses many picture books with main characters that represent diverse cultures. *Bigmama’s* by Crews (1991) is a book about four African-American children who are visiting their grandma. What is interesting about this book is that Barone believes that not only can African-American children relate to the book, but children of different cultures as well (p. 72). Barone also goes into international authors such as the famous *Harry Potter* series writer, J.K. Rowling. In addition, she mentions the international writers Mitsumasa Anno, Mem Fox, Anthony Brown, and Robert Munsch (p. 72).

One book that I have read that is a great example of multicultural literature is *Maria Had a Little Llama/María tenía una Ilamita pequeña* by Angela Dominguez (2013). This is a great bilingual book because the author, also the illustrator, not only relates the story to a classic American story, *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, but through her illustrations, Dominguez teaches the reader about Hispanic culture, showing the cultural clothes that the students wear. The story is nonintegrated because it takes place in a South American country. *Tito Puente: Mambo King/Rey del Mambo* by Monica Brown (2013), a Peruvian-American, is another bilingual book that is a

true story about Tito Puente, the Hispanic mambo musician. What is great about this story is that it teaches the reader that if they believe, they can be anything they want to be. These are just a few examples of the positive cultural representations that we hope to see in children's literature.

### **Multicultural Literature and the Validation of Personal Identities**

Bilingual books are a great way to promote multiculturalism in the classroom. Since the early 1980s, bilingual books have been growing in popularity in the United States.

Understandably, most of those books are intended for the Hispanic population. Appreciatively, U.S. publishers are beginning to make literature in languages like Korean, Vietnamese, Urdu, and Chinese (Ernst-Slavir & Mulhern, 2003).

Biliteracy, the ability to read and write in two languages, can be extremely helpful to ESL students. Ernst-Slavir & Mulhern (2003) state that bilingual students are able to take their literacy skills and strategies in one language and transfer it to the other; this works best "...when both languages use the same writing system... children whose first language is Spanish, French, Italian, German, or Portuguese can identify some of the letters and sounds in English since all these languages use the Roman alphabet" (Literacy and Biliteracy, para 3). Students whose native languages are Russian, Mandarin Chinese, and other languages that do not use the Roman alphabets have trouble when learning English. However, they may still have valuable transferable decoding and reading skills. Examples of some of these skills are scanning, skimming, recognizing textual structure, and many others (Ernst-Slavir & Mulhern, 2003).

"Latino Voices in Children's Literature: Instructional Approaches for Developing Cultural Understanding in the Classroom" by John M. Kibler (1996) discusses the need for everyone to become comfortable with diversity because it is consistently becoming more and



more of a reality every day (p. 245). Children's books are a great way to normalize children's experiences whether they be positive or negative. Literature can be a safe way to deal with personal situations (p. 252).

Kibler believes:

Multicultural literature can be used to build literacy, academic competencies, and comprehension within bilingual, English-as-a-Second-Language, and monolingual classrooms. Mexican American children's literature can provide a realistic view of the Latino community. In an ethnically diverse classroom, authentic first-person reflections of characters' lives can demonstrate to non-Latino students that the Latino community is as rich and complex a setting as their own, while at the same time providing understanding of cultural differences and insight into some of the sources of intergroup conflict. For immigrant and Latino students, culturally relevant literature can normalize and validate painful life experiences, such as traumatic resettlement, disruption of family, and discrimination, while providing a safe place for students to explore their feelings about their lives. (p. 1)

Kibler focuses on Latin culture, but his ideas can be applied to any culture. He discusses the benefits of multicultural literature for ESL students and mainstream classrooms. He also highlights that literature can be life-changing. Books can truly be an escape or a form of therapy for some students (p. 248). Furthermore, Kibler states that teachers have a significant role when implanting multicultural literature in the classroom.

### **Content Studies of Multicultural Literature**

Nicole M. Priestly's (2010) investigation of two teachers teaching multicultural literature in their diverse classrooms reveals effective methods that other teachers can utilize. One of the

teachers, named Sheila, chose literature that her students could relate to culturally that was still applicable to their learning. She searched for books that the students could not only read during reading, but social studies as well. Sheila wanted her students to see themselves in order to comprehend the context of their lessons. The effect this had on her students was proven when the students did extremely well on their standardized tests. Priestly was able to talk to the students firsthand, and could see that the students clearly understood how what they were learning connected to "...who they were as people" (p. 3). The students' discussions were rich with academic language. Priestly states:

The need for culturally relevant teaching came with the simultaneous trend of a growing number of U.S.-born ethnic minorities and a large increase in immigrants flowing into the United States. The implication for schools and more importantly, classroom teachers was significant. Students of color compromised one-third of the students in classrooms. The U.S. Department of Commerce (1996) projected that by the year 2050, African-American, Asian, and Latino students could make-up 57% of the school population. (p. 4)

From Priestly's study, it is evident that the literature in our classrooms need to be more diverse.

Donna M. Saykanic's (1993) "Improving Library Resources in an Elementary Media Center by Assuring Greater Ethnic and Gender Diversity" also raises interesting data about multiculturalism in schools. Saykanic realized that there was not a significant representation of diverse characters in the school library. She used the *State Department of Education Office of Equal Educational Opportunity Checklist for Evaluating Textbooks* to assess the fairness of the gender and ethnic qualities of the books (1993).

In all of the books that Saykanic evaluated, there were only two representations of male minorities on the cover of the books: one Asian Indian and one Native American. Only four percent

of the men in the illustrations were minorities. There was only six percent of both male and female minorities in the focus of the illustrations. All of the children in the illustrations were White. All of the parents in the stories were White as well. Seven percent of the total male characters were minorities (Saykanic, 1993, p. 17). Saykanic also notes that

In all of the books reviewed, Hispanics appeared only once, as enemies of Davy Crockett at the Alamo. Black women were prominent in only one other book, one on military careers for women. Of the books, the most racist and sexist were Tom Swift novels...where minorities appeared, they were depicted as aliens or savages. (p. 25)

Joyce Mosely (1997) conducted a study at Robert Fulton School in which she analyzed 201 picture books. 58 of the 201 books were about animals, fantasies, alphabets, or counting. The books did not focus on real-life situations; she only analyzed 143 books. Mosely states that some of those books depicted stereotypical minorities, specifically Hispanics, Native Americans, and African Americans. Examples of these stereotypes connected to the settings of the stories. For African-Americans, it was inner city ghettos. For Hispanics it was migrant worker farmlands. For Native Americans, it was reservations (p. 23). On the brighter side, stereotyping was not found in large quantities (p. 32).

What was interesting was that for the main characters in the books, African Americans were the main character 43 percent of the time. Whites were close behind with 36.3 percent. Hispanic Americans were at 4.4 percent, and Asian Americans were at ten percent. At Robert Fulton, African American students were 99 percent of the population (p. 23). It is clear that the books did not reflect the student population, but the number of representations were still positive because of the school environment. The students needed to be exposed to cultures other than their

own because multicultural literature should be used to learn about all cultures. Number of students and schools

### **Research Question**

There is a multitude of evidence that supports the significance of multicultural literature in the primary grades for all ethnicities; it is an effective way to develop cultural understanding and identity in all students. The research presented thus far indicates we should further explore the role of multicultural literature in summer reading programs. My research questions are:

RQ 1: How are diverse cultures represented in the summer reading list of a suburban school district?

RQ 2: How are diverse cultures represented in the summer reading list of an urban school district?

RQ 3: Are there differences and similarities in the representations of diverse cultures in the summer reading lists of a suburban and urban school district?

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Subjects**

To conduct the content analyses, I read and analyzed summer reading books of 2014 from the School District of Philadelphia, an urban school district, and Lower Merion, a suburban school district just outside of Philadelphia. The summer reading books for both districts target students from kindergarten to second grade. I performed a content analysis on 127 picture books. Excluded from the study were books that were not available for purchase online, chapter books, poems, or books that were only available in a foreign language.

When it comes to demographics, Lower Merion has 22% minorities. The individual statistics are as follows: 9% Asian, 8% Black/African-American, 3% Hispanic, and 2% Multi-Racial. The other 78% of the student body is White (Fast Facts, n.d.). In Philadelphia there are 14.1% Whites, 55% black, 18.5% Hispanic, 7.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.2% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 4.5% Other. There are 143,898 students in the Philadelphia school district in 214 schools. Lower Merion has a total of 8,053 students in ten schools (Philadelphia School District, Pennsylvania, 2015).

#### **Analytical Framework**

The work of Joyce Mosely (1997) helped to shape my analytic framework. When Mosely did a cultural analysis of the books at Robert Fulton School, she used many guiding questions such as how the families in the stories were portrayed when considering their ethnicities. She

also emphasized the importance of the main characters' ethnicities as well as the supporting characters. The author and illustrators of the books also make an impact on how the characters are portrayed (p. 14). Mosely stated that the reason she only did picture books, as I have chosen to do, is because many psychologists have come to the conclusion that children begin to perceive and form racial attitudes from a young age (p. 12).

Mosely's research revealed that even though there were several authors that wrote about cultures outside their own, it did not seem to affect the quality or the realism of the picture books (1997, p. 31). What was also interesting was that most of the settings of the stories were in rural and non-integrated environments. In her investigation, Mosely performed a content analysis on 201 out of 417 picture books in the Robert Fulton Elementary School library. Mosely validates the use of content analysis by stating that it is used to "...study trends, values and quantitative materials" (1997, p. 31).

Using a coding form, Mosely searched for

the ethnic representation of characters, central and incidental; ethnicity in terms of roles and gender; the importance of the family to the characters and the story; the authenticity and realism of the races portrayed; and whether children would be positively or negatively affected by the content of the books analyzed. (1997, p. 31).

Through her research, Mosely was able to evaluate the portrayal of multiculturalism in Robert Fulton's library. She used that knowledge to assess if the book collection was appropriate for the students at the school. I have chosen to follow Mosely's coding criteria for conducting my analyses:

Mosely's criteria are as follows (1997, p. 26):

1. Title

2. Author: Insider? Outsider?
3. Illustrator: Insider? Outsider?
4. Characters Main \_Af -Am. Hisp. N Am. Asian Am. White
5. Characters Incidental \_Af-Am. Hisp. N Am. Asian Am. White
6. Is the family important to the story? Yes or No
7. What type of family is portrayed? Traditional, One Parent (Female or Male), or Extended
8. How are roles and occupations handled? Positively or Stereotypical
9. What is the setting of the story? Urban, Suburban or Rural and was it Integrated or Non Integrated
10. Are the illustrations realistic and believable? Yes No Somewhat
11. In what manner is the heritage of the racial group portrayed? Positively, Negatively, or Not at all
12. What effect will the book have on the self-image of the reader? Positive or Negative

As I looked at the content of the 127 picture books, other coding criteria emerged including representations of animals and biracial characters. I have added the categories to my analyses. During my research, I analyzed 36 out of 42 books from The Philadelphia School District and 91 out of 97 books from Lower Merion.

## **Results**

The titles and information about authors and illustrators can be found in Appendix A. Items four, five, seven, and nine of the coding analysis are found in Tables 1 through 8. Questions three, six, and ten through twelve are presented in the section after the tables.

Table 1: Distribution of Main Characters by Ethnic Groups in Philadelphia

Group	Frequency*	Percentage
African American	3	8.1
Hispanic American	2	5.4
Native American	0	0
Asian American	0	0
White	8	21.6
Foreign	4	10.8
None	2	5.4
Animals	14	37.8
Inanimate Object	3	8.1
Creatures	1	2.7

\*There was more than one main character for some books



Table 2: Distribution of Main Characters by Ethnic Groups in Lower Merion

Group	Frequency	Percentage
African American	17	14.9
Hispanic American	3	3.0
Native American	0	0
Asian American	1	1.0
White	27	27
Foreign	7	7.0
None	9	9.0
Animals	34	34.0
Inanimate Object	2	2
Biracial: Japanese and White	1	1

Table 3: Distribution of Incidental Characters by Ethnic Group in Lower Merion

Group	Frequency	Percentage
African American	26	20
Hispanic American	6	4.6
Native American	4	3
Asian American	5	3.8
White	43	33
Foreign	12	9.2
None	8	6.2
Animals	25	19.2
Inanimate Object	1	0.7

Table 4: Distribution of Incidental Characters by Ethnic Group in Philadelphia

Group	Frequency	Percentage
African American	6	9.1
Hispanic American	4	7.3
Native American	2	3.6
Asian American	3	5.5
White	14	25.5
Foreign	4	7.3
None	3	5.5
Animals	14	25.5
Inanimate Object	4	7.3
Creature	1	1.8

Table 5: Distribution of Families by type in Literature in Lower Merion

Group	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional	8	10.1
One-Parent Female	9	11.4
One Parent Male	6	7.6
Extended	8	10.1
Siblings(s)	1	1.3
None	54	53
Animal Traditional	3	3.8
Husband and Wife	2	2.5

Table 6: Distribution of Families by type in Lit. in Philadelphia

Group	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional	5	15.6
One-Parent Female	2	6.3
One Parent Male	1	3.1
Extended	2	6.3
Sibling(s)	2	6.3
None	20	62.5

Table 7: Distribution of Settings by Type in Lit. in Lower Merion

Group	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	16	13.2
Suburban	28	23.1
Rural	37	30.6
Integrated	18	14.9
Non-Integrated	11	9.1
Not clear on Setting	11	9.1

Table 8: Distribution of Settings by Type in Philadelphia

Group	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	6	11.1
Suburban	11	20.4
Rural	19	35.2
Integrated	5	9.3
Non-Integrated	7	13
Not clear on Setting	6	11.1

### **Authors and Illustrators: Insider or Outsider**

Only the books that portrayed humans were analyzed for this question. “Insiders” means that the individual has the same ethnic background as the main or incidental characters in the picture books. “Outsiders” refers to the author or illustrator being in an ethnic group outside that of the main character. In Philadelphia 15 of the authors were insiders and only one was an outsider. Therefore, 93.8% of the authors were insiders and only 6.3%, one person, was an outsider. The illustrators have the same statistics as the authors. In the Lower Merion summer reading list, 40 or 80% of the authors were insiders. Six or 12% of the authors were outsiders and 4 or 8% were considered both because the main characters were from two different cultures. The illustrator data shows similar results. In Lower Merion, 39 or 78% of the illustrators were insiders, seven or 14% were outsiders, and four illustrators were considered both.

### **Family Importance**

In six out of 11 books, family was important to the plot of the story in Philadelphia. This is 54.5% of the books. The other 45.5%, 5 books had family, but they were not significant to the plot. In Lower Merion, 72.7% or 26 books exhibited family importance. In contrast, 27.7% or 10 books portrayed families, but they were not important to the plot.

### **Roles and Occupations**

When analyzing the roles and occupations for all of the picture books, only books that had roles, such as how women and men are depicted, were included. One example could be a mother cooking dinner while the dad watches television. These characters may have included



animals. It may have excluded incidental characters that did not have roles in the books. In Philadelphia, 11 or 64. 7% of the books showed positive roles while 6 or 35.3% portrayed stereotypical roles. Lower Merion's statistics show that 32 or 71.1% of books exhibited positive roles and occupations while 13 or 41.9% showed stereotypical roles.

### **Illustrations**

Moving on to illustrations, all of the books that had human characters had realistic illustrations except for one book in each school district. In Philadelphia, this included 24 books. In Lower Merion, this included 61 books.

### **Heritage**

When there were human characters in Philadelphia's summer reading list, 32% or 8 books showed a positive portrayal of the heritage of the characters. On the other hand, 17 books, 68%, didn't show heritage at all. 0% showed negative culture depictions. For Lower Merion, 31 or 50% of the books showed positive portrayals of the culture of the characters while 4 or 6.5% showed negative depictions of the heritage group. 27 or 43.5% showed no heritage even though there were human characters.

### **Self-Image**

Self-image can be defined as how an individual views themselves and the different values that they have of life that affect who they interact with. Self-image may also include an individual's personal views on life and how it affects the actions that they perform. In Philadelphia 47.2%, 17 books, may have a positive effect on self-image of the reader, 0% may

have a negative effect, and 52.8%, 19 books, should have no effect at all. Lower Merion's summer reading list has 34 books: 37.4% that may affect the self-image of the reader; 4.4% or 4 books may have a negative effect; 53 books or 58.2% will not have any effect. Books that affected the self-image of the readers include books with human and animal characters. All of the books were included in this part of the analysis.

If a book was put into the category of "negative," this was due to unresolved problems in the story; the text may have presented a problem that could happen in real life, but failed to solve it. "Negative" self-image picture books also include books that may have portrayed the ethnic groups in the story negatively, therefore possibly affecting the way the reader feels about the heritage group. Books that should have no effect on the self-image of the reader do not teach a lesson about life, or are neutral in the depiction of different cultures.

## Chapter 4

### Discussion

Lower Merion had more than three times as many summer reading books than Philadelphia. However, because of their huge differences in demographics, I believed that Philadelphia would have more multicultural books because its student population is more diverse. However, this was not the case. The following sections will discuss the individual results of the summer reading lists from The School District of Philadelphia and Lower Merion School District as well as compare them.

#### **RQ 1: How are diverse cultures represented in the summer reading list of a suburban school district?**

As expected, Lower Merion's reading list had more White main characters than any other ethnic group. There were African-American main characters, but there were 12.1% more White main characters. There were no Native American main characters and only three Hispanic American main characters in the books. There were 7 more integrated books than non-integrated books for Lower Merion, which seems like a large difference. However when looking at the percentages, the integrated picture books comprised 14.9% of the total settings. With Lower Merion being a predominantly White school district, there needs to be a change in how cultures are portrayed.

An example of an integrated book for Lower Merion is *The Ageless Ideas of Leonardo Da Vinci* by Gene Barretta (2009) which teaches students about Leonardo Da Vinci and the important part that he plays in modern inventions. Even though the book is integrated, it is not a

great example of what integration should look like. There were many incidental characters throughout the picture book, but only two of them appeared to be African-American. Another example of integration is *It's Snowing* (2011) by Gail Gibbons. It is a book about how snow occurs. Even though snow is the focus of the story, the author shows characters of multiple races playing in the snow.

Lower Merion had authors and illustrators that were both insiders and outsiders because the main characters were of two different cultures. An example of a book in which the author was an outsider, but it did not affect the content of the book is *Dave the Potter* written by Laban Carrick Hill (2010), a White author. This picture book tells a true story about an African-American potter who was also a slave; he was amazing at his work. The book has a positive self-image on the reader because it displays African-Americans fairly. The book is a great sample of literature that shows that even if the author is of a different culture to the main character of the book, the culture of the heritage group can be positive as long as the author is non-biased.

### **Cultural Representations and Self-Image**

Statistics for both Philadelphia and Lower Merion school districts show that the most prevalent main character ethnic group is White. For incidental characters, the predominant group was animals. White incidental characters were the second most popular category. Whenever animal owners were depicted, they were White. Lee Wardlaw's book *Won Ton* focuses on a cat that is adopted. Its owner is White. Despite the lack of diversity, the book does not have an effect on the reader's self-image. *Z is for Moose* by Kelly Bingham shows one human, an incidental character, who is White even though the story is about animals. It is clear that Whites are dominate in picture books.

White dominance is continued in *Goldie and the Three Hares* by Margie Palatini and illustrated by Jack E. Davis (2011). It is the only book that may have a negative self-image on the reader. Goldie is a White girl with blonde hair and blue eyes. In the story she is stuck up, conceited, and she gets away with taking advantage of the three hares. This may contribute to negative self-image because it may imply that children that look like Goldie act the same way. It may also influence a negative self-image because students may think that Goldie's behavior is appropriate.

*Fraidyzoo* (2013) by Thyra Heder is a cute story about a White American family that try to help their daughter and sister conquer her fears of the unknown: the zoo. The story positively affects the reader's self-image because it shows the importance of being there for others and the significance of family. However, the one incidental character that the story has is a White woman that scares one of the main characters. *Building Our House* (2013) by Jonathan Bean is another picture book that was non-integrated even though there were several opportunities to add characters of other cultures. On the bright side, the book teaches students about the importance of working together and even family.

*Mitchell Goes Bowling* (2013) by Hallie Durand is a story about a boy named Mitchell spending quality time with his dad when bowling. *Grandpa Green* (2011) by Lane Smith shows the importance of family as well by the main character, a young White boy, going through his grandfather's garden. His grandpa has created statues out of bushes that represent different parts of his life; the boy pretends that he is his grandfather walking through the garden. *My Father's Arms Are a Boat* by Stein Erik Lunde (2012) is unlike any other story I've read before. It focuses on a father and son's relationship after the boy's mother has passed away. As you read, the book seems sad and depressing, but the message comes towards the end of the story: everything will

be alright in time. All of these books have themes of family which positively affect self-image. DiCamillio's *Bink & Gollie: Two for One* (2010) has the theme of friendship. Amy Krouse Rosenthal's *This Plus That: Life's Little Equation* (2011) has the theme of friendship as well as the importance of family and respect. Again, all of these books have White main characters as well as White incidental characters if there are any included. The books vary in their effect on the student's self-image, but they all have White characters in common.

Some books have the purpose of entertaining and have no representations of any culture, as well as no effect on the self-image of the reader like *Benjamin Bear in Bright Ideas* (2013) by Philippe Coudray, and *Warning: Do Not Open This Book!* by Adam Lehrhaupt (2013). Other examples include *Watermelon Seed* by Greg Pizzoli (2013), *1,2,3 Peas* by Keith Baker (2012), *Superhero ABC* by Bob Mcleod (2006), *Dino Basketball* by Lisa Wheeler (2011), *Chester* by Melanie Watt (2009), *Whole-Y Cow* by Taryn Sounders (2010), *Rocket Writes a Story* by Tad Hills (2012). All of these books have animals as main characters except for *Superhero ABC*.

### **Representations of Cultures of the World**

*Jimmy the Greatest!* by Jairo Buitrago with illustrations by Rafael Yockteng (2010) is an amazing bilingual book about a Latin American town. The main character, Jimmy, has a dream to become a boxer. However, even though he has the chance to, he stays in his town in order to improve the community. This story has an immense impact of the self-image of the reader and even of the heritage group. There is a massive sense of community and friendship throughout the story though Jimmy doesn't seem to have a family. The community *is* his family. This is a great book that promotes multiculturalism because the setting is in another country. *Book Fiesta!* (2009) by Pat Mora and illustrated by Rafael Lopez is a beautiful book that has children of all colors celebrating the gift of reading. The strength of the book is in the illustrations: there are

children of just about every ethnicity throughout its pages. However, a weakness is that the characters are just incidental characters. The story does not have a traditional plot such as a problem and a solution.

*Black Jack: The Ballad of Jack Johnson* (2010) by Charles R. Smith is a true story about an African-American who became the boxing champion of the world. The positive message that it gives is to never give up on your dreams no matter what obstacles may stand in your way. This book promotes multiculturalism as well because students are learning about the history of African-Americans. There are incidental characters of both African-American and White characters which is great. The book should have a positive effect on the self-image of the reader.

*I, Too, Am America* by Langston Hughes (2012) is another story about African-Americans with a powerful message. The book is about a young boy who realizes that the way that African-Americans were treated back then were unfair. He believes that being born in America means that you are an American and that your skin color should not change that. This book promotes appreciation of all cultures because it influences the reader to treat everyone with respect; we may all be different, but there is no one race that is better than another.

*Deep in the Sahara* by Kelly Cunnane (2013) focuses on a young girl living in Mauritania, an African country, and her Islamic faith. Her faith is positively portrayed showing the clothing that Islamic women wear and how proud the main character is of her culture. This book promotes confidence in the readers in their own religion and also helps them to accept the religion of others.

*Take Me Out to the Yakyu* by Aaron Meshon (2013) is the only book with a biracial main character, a Japanese and White American young boy. This picture book allows the reader to appreciate the similarities and differences between Japanese and White American culture. The

only weakness for this book is the lack of characters. The reader can only see the face of the main character. Only the adults' feet or hands can be seen. This book would have been more effective if the pictures exhibited more diversity, but the content was great.

*Emeka's Gift* by Ifeoma Onyefulu (1999) is a counting book that has many cultural aspects of African culture like the different objects they use and where they live. It even focuses on the importance of family; these are the strengths. However, a weakness is the lack of characters like the previous book. Inanimate objects are displayed on most of the pictures. However, the book is still a great way for children to learn about African culture and appreciate other cultures.

**RQ 2: How are diverse cultures represented in the summer reading list of an urban school district?**

Even though Philadelphia is a more diverse school district demographically, its main characters and incidental characters were overwhelmingly White. Despite the Native and Asian Americans that are in their school district, there were no books that showed any main characters of this culture, and only four books that even included Hispanic and Asian American incidental characters. It is clear that Philadelphia's reading list does not reflect the students' cultures.

Nevertheless, Philadelphia's reading list did have 4 books that took place in another country. Black students have the highest student enrollment in The School District of Philadelphia, but only 3 books had African Americans main characters. African-American incidental characters were the second highest group when looking at ethnic groups, but it was still only 9.1% of the total books. This is unfortunate because African-American students take up most of The School District of Philadelphia's school population.



I could not find the ethnicity of the author for *Alphablock*. There was no information online that could describe if the only three humans depicted in the story were White because of the author's ethnicity. The illustrator listed is actually a company, and not a specific person so it did not help. However, there were several picture books that were not about specific people, but when human characters were shown, they were predominately White.

### **Cultural Representation and Self-Image**

*Ball* (2015) by Sullivan, lacks family importance. One of the main characters, a young girl, goes off to school on her own. She has a mother, but her mother does not help her prepare for school. The book focuses on the relationship between the girl and her dog. The dog is the real main character. The dog continues to play with the ball after the girl leaves for school.

*Exclamation Mark* (2013) by Amy Krouse is a great book that didn't focus on multiculturalism, but can have a positive effect on the reader. During the story, *On a Beam of Light: A Story of Albert Einstein* (2013), the author, Amy Krouse Rosenthal could have easily added characters of darker skin towards the end when she addresses the audience and shows the children of the future. Instead, she continues with White incidental characters.

*Ten Orange Pumpkins: A Counting Book* by Stephen Savage (2013) was interesting because it is a book about Halloween. This is a summer reading list, so it is not clear why The School District of Philadelphia added this book to their list. Even though the book has a Halloween theme, it never actually mentions Halloween. *Little Santa* by Jon Agee (2013) is another book that does not quite fit into the summer theme. The story focuses on Santa when he was a child. It gives us an original story on how Santa became the man that goes from house to house and delivers presents. It was disappointing to see that even though there were over thirty characters in the book, all of them were White. Little Santa was in the North Pole, but there are

people of all races that live in places like these. *Nothing Like a Puffin* (2011) by Sue Soltis is just meant to entertain the reader, but when humans are shown, she shows both African-American and White people.

### **Representations of Cultures of the World**

*The Day the Crayons Quit* (2013) by Oliver Jeffers is an interesting book about crayons that write a letter to their owner about either their happiness of being used to color, their sadness for not being used, or complaints about not being used. Even though you never see the child that the crayons are talking to, the images that the child and his sister draw or color depict White characters. The reader is inclined to believe that the owner of the crayons is White.

Many of the books are comedic and interesting. However, children need to be able to read about themselves.

*Nelson Mandela* by Kadir Nelson (2013) is an amazingly illustrated book about Nelson Mandela's struggle to help gain equality in Africa for his people. Of course this is based on a true story, but it's interesting that it covers almost all of the multicultural aspects, an obvious strength. Its only "flaw" is the lack of family importance in the story which did not affect the positive influence on the self-image of the reader.

Several books were great examples of multicultural literature. *Niño Wrestles the World* by Yuyi Morales (2013) is one of them. It uses Spanish to engage the reader. Even though the main character, a Hispanic boy, is using his imagination throughout the story, there are multicultural aspects such as a black doll and a Native American doll that he plays with. The theme of family is also strong in the story: he plays with his sisters and they get along. There needs to be more books with this kind of content.

**RQ 3: Are there differences and similarities in the representations of diverse cultures in the summer reading lists of a suburban and urban school district?**

Philadelphia had about ten percent more books with a positive effect on the reader self-image than Lower Merion. Despite their many differences, both reading lists from each school district have similarities as well. Both school district summer reading lists had more animals as main characters than any ethnicity. In addition, animals were the second highest group for incidental characters in both school districts. What is also interesting is that both groups had more White incidental and White main characters than any other ethnic group. This may be because the majority of the authors and illustrators are White.

The majority of the settings in the picture books were rural. Suburban followed behind. Since Philadelphia is an urban school district, this can be seen as both a negative and a positive; in a positive light, this could help students learn about other cultures. On the other hand, students may not be able to relate to the story if other factors such as a positive portrayal of the heritage culture is not evident. In addition, there were not many books that exhibited integration or non-integration. Together, they are only 12 of the 36 books. In Lower Merion, it was only 29 of the 91 books. If students do not see how people of different cultures live or coexist with one another through literature, they may not learn it any other way.

Both school districts had similar data for roles and occupations. There were more positive roles than stereotypical roles which is a step in the right direction. Students need to see how humans have evolved from the stereotypical views of the past. However, stereotypical roles still took up 35/3% (Philadelphia) and 41.9% (Philadelphia) which cannot be ignored. It is still an important part of the reading list. Nevertheless, it is expected because of stereotypes and how

present they are in society: They are everywhere. However, they do not have to be in a summer reading list especially when it is a form of enjoyment for students during the summer.

Looking at the family results, the highest category was none, as in there were no families portrayed at all. Because of this fact, the self-image of the characters were not positively affected. The importance of family is an important theme in young children's books because it helps instill significant life values. Looking at the results of both school district's self-image statistics, over 50% should not have any effect. If more than half of the books that are listed are not affecting the self-image of the reader, they are not learning about culture or life lessons.

### **Cultural Representation and Self-Image**

The illustrations of all characters were realistic and believable in both school districts except for two books. One of them is called *Unspoken* by Henry Cole (2012). Even though the book was about a runaway slave, you never actually see the slave. Instead, the story focuses on the main character, a white girl, that has found him and is helping him (or her) stay hidden. The pictures are also in black and white and you can't see if the characters are black or white. Another book is *Underground* by Shane W. Evans (2011). The setting takes place at night. The illustrator tries to emphasize that slaves traveled at night when they were escaping so that they would not be seen. However, it is so dark that the characters blend into the pages and are not seen well. Both books attempt to focus on African-American culture, but do not do the best job. If *Unspoken* had been in color and the audience actually got to see the runaway slave, it would have had more of an impact on the reader. Without an explanation of what happens in the story because there are no words, students reading this book may be very confused. The illustrations only show a girl that lives with her family and someone hiding. The purpose of the book, which was to inform them

about a time in which there were slaves, is missing without discussion; young children will not comprehend the story that the illustrations tell if it is not explained to them. *Underground* illustrations could have made the book more appealing to the audience as well. This purpose of the story is understood, but the illustrations are not as vivid as they should be.

An example in which integration is lacking in both school districts is evident in the book *Count the Monkeys* (2013) by Mac Barnett, and illustrated by Kevin Cornell. This is one of three books that both The School District of Philadelphia and Lower Merion School District had on their summer reading lists. The picture book is a fun and entertaining story that helps young learners count. The book does not affect the self-image of the reader, but it must be remembered that students need to understand that there are different cultures. The illustrator could have easily added characters of different races to their pictures, but he did not. There were no main characters, but whenever a human was represented, they were White. The incidental characters included elderly white women and men. The book is still very interactive and interesting, but it does not fit into the much needed multicultural criteria.

In animal books or books in which the main characters were creatures, the incidental characters were predominantly White for Philadelphia and Lower Merion school districts. *Mr. Wuffles* by David Wiesner, the author and illustrator, (2013) is a prime example for the Philadelphia school district. The picture book is about a cat named Mr. Wuffles that finds a mini spaceship with aliens. Mr. Wuffle's owner is White; you never see the owner's face, but you see his hands and feet. For Lower Merion, *Click Clack Splish Splash: A Counting Adventure* (2006) by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin is a fun story about animals on the farm. However, the only human representation is the White farmer.

However, *Xander's Party* by Linda Sue (2013) from The School District is an exception. The story is about a Panda that wants to have a zoo party; throughout the text, the Panda invites more and more animals when he realizes that he shouldn't invite specific animals to his party, but everyone because that's fair. The illustrator, Matt Phelan, depicts humans of different skin colors at the end of the story when Xander's panda party begins. Sue's story has a great message that positively affects the audience's self-image despite the main characters being animals: you should be fair and accept others for who they are. Lower Merion did *not* have a book similar to *Xander's Panda Party*.

Both school districts had many books that focused on animals and still managed to positively affect self-image. For The School District of Philadelphia, *A Big Guy Took My Ball* by Mo Willems is a book about animals that learn to share and not to judge a book by its cover. It is a great book for students to read despite the fact that it does not have a heritage culture. Willems still manages to teach children about life. Another story, a classic, is *The Tortoise & the Hare* (year) is told using Jerry Pinkney's illustrations. Though this story focuses on animals, it teaches the age old lesson that you can do anything as long as you put your mind to it. Nevertheless, no culture in the book can be found. *Bully* (year) by Laura Vaccaro Seeger is a story that teaches children to respect others. For both school districts, *Mr. Tiger Goes Wild* (year) by Peter Brown teaches children to be proud of who they are.

### **Representations of Cultures of the World**

Numerous works of literature offer positive depictions of other cultures that can have a good effect on children's self-images. *New Girl* by Jacqui Robbins is a refreshing take on being the new kid at school finding it hard to make friends. The main characters are two girls, one

Black, and the other White. A weakness could be the stereotypical troublemaker who happens to be a young black boy in the story. Another example is *Mama Miti* (2010) by Donna Jo Napoli which takes place in Kenya and tells the true story of “Wangari Muta Maathai, known as “Mama Miti.” In 1977, she founded the Green Belt Movement in Africa; it empowered many to protest against deforestation, environmental degradation, and soil erosion. Mama Titi has had such a significant impact on Africa that more than 30 million trees have been planted all over Kenya. *Say Hello!* by Rachel Isadora (2010) is a beautiful story about a Hispanic girl named Carmelita who says “hello” to people in her neighborhood in different languages because her neighbors are all different races. This book greatly promotes multiculturalism and positive self-image.

The picture books *My Name is Not Isabella* (2010) and *My Name is Not Alexander* (2011) by Jennifer Fosberry are stories that bring important historical individuals together. These books are interesting because the main characters are imagining themselves as significant historical figures. The stories portray the message that you can be anything you put your mind to as long as you believe it.

In *Kindergarten Day* by Trish Marx and Ellen Senisi (2010), the story focuses on the similarities and differences between the first day of Kindergarten in China and America. Both cultures learn to read, they draw, they have lunch, play outside, and even celebrate the birthday of a friend. The differences between the cultures are fewer than the similarities. The differences include speaking different languages and the food that each culture eats. The book has Chinese words on each page and lots of pictures with different ethnic groups. Despite these great connections, the book does not dive deeply into Chinese culture because it focuses more on the similarities. Kindergarten Day would still be a great book for kids to read during the summer.

*Martin & Mahalia: His Words, Her Song* (2013) by Andrea Davis Pinkney and Brian Pinkney is one of the few books that actually has African American main characters. Based on a true story, it centers on the lives of Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahalia Jackson, two important Black Americans. The beautiful images did not depict characters of other races, but Andrea Pinkney's words reveal that people of all different races are present. Coretta Scott by Ntozake Shange is another great example of a book that is integrated. It focuses on Martin Luther King's wife and her significant role in society.



## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

#### Implications for teaching

As a future teacher, the content analysis of an urban and suburban school district has opened my eyes to the lack of multiculturalism in picture books. Even though the books analyzed were from summer reading lists, they still give insight into the books that young children have access to in their schools or local school libraries. Philadelphia school district, is heavily diverse and has many students. The books that are available to the learners should not only reflect their cultures, but expose them to new cultures. Unfortunately, the summer reading books for Philadelphia do not follow these standards.

There have been implications which suggest that the literature that children are exposed to should represent their ethnicities. Nevertheless, the summer reading list book choices needs to be well thought out because it is a limited amount of books. The books on a list may represent the culture when looking at the percentages, but if there are only thirty books on a summer reading list, this means that there might only be a few books with main characters of minorities. Teachers and administrators need to keep in mind the ethnicities of their students.

When evaluating children's books, teachers should use Mosely's criteria. Her criteria had very specific questions that allowed me to fairly judge the books on multiculturalism. One of the most important questions was the effect the book has on the self-image of the reader. The question not only helps with attaining books that are multicultural, but it questions the book's purpose. Students need to read books that can help them through issues that are going on in their lives; they can learn problem-solving skills. The next two questions that were vital to analyzing

the picture books were the ethnic groups for the main characters as well as the incidental characters. These questions focused on who the books were about and who you would see in the books. Pictures are stories in themselves, and the colors that are used to show skin colors or human characteristics can influence children's views on people of different cultures. Therefore, students need to see representations of real people in literature. The question on the realism of the illustrations connects with who the main and incidental characters are; all together, they affect the self-image of the reader.

### **Final Thoughts**

To conclude, in both The School District of Philadelphia, an urban district, and Lower Merion School District, a suburban district, there was a strong lack of diversity. White ethnic groups dominated the picture books for both main and incidental characters. Even though the percentages were close, the suburban school district had more African-American main and incidental characters than the urban school district which is interesting because there are more African-American students in Philadelphia. The urban district had more Hispanic main and incidental characters. There were no Native American main characters for both districts and an extremely low amount of Native American incidental characters for both groups. There were several bilingual and multicultural books, but these picture books were not dominant.

It is evident when looking at the statistics of Pennsylvania and student enrollment in both school districts that their summer reading lists lack cultural diversity; the lists do not reflect the different ethnicities of the student population. Animals were the most common group for both main and incidental characters which gives the implication that multiculturalism is being ignored

in summer reading lists for The School District of Philadelphia and Lower Merion School District.

## Appendix A

### Philadelphia Summer Reading List

- Franceschelli, Christopher. Illus. by Peskimo: *Alphablock*
- Sullivan, Mary. Illus. by the author: *Ball*  
(A 2014 Geisel Honor Book)
- Moundlic, Charlotte. Illus. by Olivier Tallec. Trans. by Claudia Zoe Bedrick: *The Bathing Costume, or, the Worst Vacation of My Life*  
(A 2014 Batchelder Honor Book)
- Coudray, Philippe. Illus. by the author: *Benjamin Bear in “Bright Ideas!”*
- Willems, Mo. Illus. by the author: *A Big Guy Took My Ball!*  
(A 2014 Geisel Honor Book)
- Bean, Jonathan. Illus. by the author: *Building Our House*
- Seeger, Laura Vaccaro. Illus. by the author: *Bully*
- Barnett, Mac. Illus. by Kevin Cornell: *Count the Monkeys*
- Snicket, Lemony. Illus. by Jon Klassen: *The Dark*
- Daywalt, Drew. Illus. by Oliver Jeffers: *The Day the Crayons Quit*
- Cunnane, Kelly. Illus. by Hoda Hadadi: *Deep in the Sahara*
- Sayre, April Pulley. Illus. by Steve Jenkins: *Eat Like a Bear*
- Rosenthal, Amy Krouse. Illus. by Tom Lichtenheld: *Exclamation Mark*
- Huber, Raymond. Illus. by Brian Lovelock: *Flight of the Honey Bee*
- Idle, Molly Schaar. Illus. by the author: *Flora and the Flamingo*.  
(A 2014 Caldecott Honor Book)
- Heder, Thyra. Illus. by the author. Abrams: *Fraidyzoos*.
- Agee, Jon. Illus. by the author. Dial: *Little Santa*.
- Floca, Brian. Illus. by the author: *Locomotive*  
(The 2014 Caldecott Medal Book and a Sibert Honor Book)
- McKay, Hilary. Illus. by Priscilla Lamont: *Lulu and the Dog from the Sea*
- Dominguez, Angela. Illus. by the author: *Maria Had a Little Llama/María tenía una llamita pequeña*  
(A 2014 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book)

- Pinkney, Andrea Davis. Illus. by Brian Pinkney: *Martin & Mahalia: His Words, Her Song*
- Durand, Hallie. Illus. by Tony Fucile: *Mitchell Goes Bowling*
- LaRochelle, David. Illus. by Mike Wohnoutka: *Moo!*
- Brown, Peter. Illus. by the author: *Mr. Tiger Goes Wild*
- Wiesner, David. Illus. by the author: *Mr. Wuffles!*  
(A 2014 Caldecott Honor Book)
- Lunde, Stein Erik. Illus. by Øyvind Torseter. Trans. by Kari Dickson: *My Father's Arms Are a Boat*  
(A 2014 Batchelder Honor Book)
- Lagercrantz, Rose. Illus. by Eva Eriksson: *My Happy Life*
- Nelson, Kadir. Illus. by the author: *Nelson Mandela*  
(The 2014 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book)
- Morales, Yuyi. Illus. by the author: *Niño Wrestles the World*  
(The 2014 Belpré Illustrator Medal Book)
- Isadora, Rachel. Illus. by the author: *Old Mikamba Had a Farm*
- Berne, Jennifer Illus. by Vladimir Radunsky: *On a Beam of Light: A Story of Albert Einstein*
- Roth, Susan L. and Trumbore, Cindy. Illus. by Susan L. Roth: *Parrots Over Puerto Rico*  
(The 2014 Sibert Medal Book)
- Henkes, Kevin. Illus. by the author: *Penny and Her Marble.*  
(A 2014 Geisel Honor Book)
- Rau, Dana Meachen. Illus. by Wook Jin Jung: *Robot, Go Bot!*
- Meshon, Aaron. Illus. by the author: *Take Me Out to the Yakyu*
- Savage, Stephen. Illus. by the author: *Ten Orange Pumpkins: A Counting Book*
- Brown, Monica. Illus. by Rafael López. Rayo: *Tito Puente: Mambo King/Rey del Mambo*  
(A 2014 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book)
- Pinkney, Jerry. Illus. by the author: *The Tortoise & the Hare*
- Lehrhaupt, Adam. Illus. by Matthew Forsythe: *Warning: Do Not Open This Book!*
- Pizzoli, Greg. Illus. by the author: *The Watermelon Seed*

(The 2014 Geisel Medal Book)

- Park, Linda Sue. Illus. by Matt Phelan: *Xander's Panda Party*
- Henkes, Kevin. Illus. by the author: *The Year of Billy Miller*

(A 2014 Newbery Honor Book)

## Appendix B

### Lower Merion Summer Reading List

- Barnett, Mac. Illus. by Kevin Cornell: *Count the Monkeys*
- Bunting, Eve. Illus. by Kathryn Hewitt: *Flower Garden*
- Clayton, Dallas. Illus. by the author: *An Awesome Book*
- Hills, Tad. Illus. by the author: *How Rocket Learned To Read*
- Isadora, Rachel. Illus. by the author: *Yo, Jo!*
- Klassen, Jon. Illus. by the author: *This Is Not My Hat*
- Long, Ethan. Illus. by the author: *Up Tall And High*
- Raschka, Chris. Illus. by the author: *Daisy Gets Lost*
- Reynolds, Aaron. Illus. by Peter Brown: *Creepy Carrots*
- Rumford, James. Illus. by the author: *Rain School*
- Thomson, Bill. Illus. by the author: *Chalk*
- Wells, Rosemary. Illus. by the author: *Yoko Learns To Read*
- Willems, Mo. Illus. by the author: *Elephant & Piggie (Series) — That Is Not a Good Idea*
- Aston, Dianna. Illus. by Sylvia Long: *A Butterfly Is Patient*
- Barnwell, Y Saye: *We Are One*
- Bleiman, Andrew & Chris Eastland: *Zooborns*
- Martin, Bill Jr.: *The Bill Mart In, Jr. Big Book Of Poetry*
- Marx, Trish & Ellen B. Senisi: *Kindergarten Day USA And China*
- Peck, Jan: *The Green Mother Goose: Saving The World One Rhyme At A Time*
- Pinkney, Jerry. Illus. by the author: *The Lion & The Mouse*  
(The Randolph Caldecott Award)
- Sayre, April Pulley. Illus. by the author: *Rah, Rah Radishes*
- Bingham, Kelly. Illus. by Paul Zelinsky: *Z Is For Moose*
- Bottner, Barbara. Illus. by Michael Emberley: *An Annoying ABC*
- Bruel, Nick. Illus. by the author: *Bad Kitty*
- Demarest, Chris. Illus. by the author: *Firefighters A To Z*
- Floca, Brian. Illus. by the author: *Race Car Alphabet*

- Jenkins, Steve. Illus. by Steve Jenkins: *Into The A, B, Sea*
- Mcleod, Bob. Illus. by the author: *Superhero ABC*
- Palotta, Jerry. Illus. by Ralph Masiello: *The Dinosaur Alphabet Book*
- Baker, Keith. Illus. by the author: *1,2,3 Peas*
- Cronin, Doreen. Illus. by Betsy Lewin: *Click Clack Splish Splash: A Counting Adventure*
- Hawk, Fran. Illus. by Sherry Neidigh: *Count Down To Fall*
- Onyefula, Ifeoma: *Emeka's Gift: An African Counting Story*
- Sayre, April Pulley: *One Is A Snail, Ten Is A Crab*
- Sierra, Judy. Illus. by Will Hillenbrand: *Counting Crocodiles*
- Sis, Peter. Illus. by the author: *Fire Truck*
- Smith, Danna. Illus. by Valeria Petrone: *Two At The Zoo*
- Arnold, Tedd. Illus. by the author: *Ride, Fly Guy, Ride! (Series)*
- Brown, Peter. Illus. by the author: *Mr. Tiger Goes Wild*
- Brett, Jan. Illus. by the author: *Mossy*
- Dean, James. Illus. by the author: *Pete The Cat And His Four Groovy Buttons (Series)*
- Dyckman, Ame. Illus. by Dan Yaccarino : *Boy + Bot*
- Henkes, Kevin. Illus. by the author: *Penny and Her Doll*
- Isadora, Rachel. Illus. by the author: *Say Hello!*
- Johnson, Angela. Illus. by Loren Long: *Wind Flyers*
- Kaplan, Michael B. Illus. by the author: *Betty Bunny Wants Everything (Series)*
- Kroll, Virginia. Illus. by Nancy Carpenter: *Masai And I*
- Miller, Pat Zietlow. Illus. by Ann Wilsdorf: *Sophie's Squash*
- Palatini, Margie. Illus. Jack E. Davis: *Goldie And The Three Hares*
- Pearson, Susan. Illus. by David Slonin: *How To Teach A Slug To Read*
- Robbins, Jacqui. Illus. by Matt Phelan: *New Girl And Me*
- Smith, Lane. Illus. by the author: *Grandpa Green*
- Watt, Melanie. Illus. by the author: *Chester (Series)*
- Wheeler, Lisa. Illus. by Gott Barry: *Din0-Basketball (Series)*
- Conway, David. Illus. by Melanie Williamson: *The Great Fairy Tale Disaster*



- Diakite, Babawagué. Illus. by the author: *The Hatseller And The Monkeys: A West African Tale*
- Evans, Shane. Illus. by the author: *Underground*
- Fosberry, Jennifer. Illus. by Mike Litwin: *My Name Is Not Alexander*
- Fosberry, Jennifer. Illus. by Mike Litwin: *My Name Is Not Isabella*
- Gibbons, Gail. Illus. by the author: *It's Snowing*
- Hoberman, Mary Ann: *You Read To Me, I'll Read To You (Series)*
- Jenkins, Martin. Illus. by Jane Chapman: *The Emperor's Egg*
- Jenkins, Steve. Illus. by the author: *Actual Size*
- McDonnell, Patrick. Illus. by the author: *Me . . . Jane*
- Napoli, Donna Jo. Illus. by Kadir Nelson: *Mama Miti*
- Shange, Ntozake. Illus. by Kadir Nelson: *Coretta Scott*
- Wardlaw, Lee. Illus. by Eugene Yelchin: *Won Ton: A Cat Tale Told in Haiku*
- Barnett, Mac. Illus. by Adam Rex: *Chloe & The Lion*
- Buitrago, Jairo. Illus. by Rafael Yockteng. Trans. by Elisa Amado: *Jimmy The Greatest!*
- Cole, Henry. Illus. by the author: *Unspoken*
- Compestine, Ying Chang. Illus. Sebastia Serra: *The Runaway Wok*
- Diakité, Penda. Illus. Baba Wagué Diakité: *I Lost My Tooth In Africa*
- Dicamillo, Kate Illus. by Chris Van Dusen: *Mercy Watson To The Rescue (Series)*
- Dicamillo, Kate. Illus. by Alison McGhee: *Bink & Gollie: Two For One (Series)*
- Garland, Michael: *Miss Smith Under The Ocean (Series)*
- Hills, Tad. Illus. by the author: *Rocket Writes A Story*
- Mora, Pat. Illus. by Rafael Lopez: *Book Fiesta! A Bilingual Picture Book*  
(Pura Belpre Award)
- Piven, Hanoach. Illus. by the author: *My Best Friend Is As Sharp As A Pencil*
- Smith, Lane. Illus. by the author: *Abe Lincoln's Dream*
- Snicket, Lemony: *The Dark*
- Solstis, Sue. Illus. by Bob Kolar: *Nothing Like A Puffin*
- Barretta, Gene. Illus. by Gene Barreta: *Neo Leo: The Ageless Ideas Of Leonardo Davinci*
- Bildner, Phil. Illus. by: *The Hallelujah Flight*

- Bishop, Nic. *Nic Bishop Lizards: Nic Bishop Lizards*
- Grimes, Nikki. Illus. Cozbi A. Cabrera: *Thanks A Million*
- Hall, Michael. Illus. by the author: *A Perfect Square*
- Hill, Laban Carrick. Illus. by Brian Collier: *Dave the Potter*
- Hughes, Langston. Illus. by Bryan Collier : *I, Too, Am America*  
(Coretta Scott King Award)
- Jenkins, Steve: Illus. by the author: *Just A Second: A Different Way To Look At Time*
- Lyon, George Ella & Katherine Tillotson: *All The Water In The World*
- Prelutsky, Jack: *I've Lost My Hippopotamus: More Than 100 Poems*
- Rosenthal, Amy Krouse. Illus. by Jen Corace: *This Plus That: Life's Little Equations*
- Sidman, Joyce. Illus. by Beth Krommes: *Swirl By Swirl: Spirals In Nature*
- Smith, Charles R. Illus. by Shane W. Evans: *Black Jack: The Ballad Of Jack Johnson*
- Sounders, Taryn. Illus. by Tatjana Mai-Wyss: *Whole-Y-Cow*
- Winters, Jeanette. Illus. by the author: *Wangari's Trees Of Peace*
- Winters, Jeanette: Illus. by the author. *The Watcher: Jane Goodall's Life With The Chimps*

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## ACADEMIC VITA

Jillissa Prentice  
jillissaprentice@gmail.com

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### OBJECTIVE

To acquire an elementary school teaching position, grades Pre-K – 4, which will permit me to apply my educational skills and training contributing to the emotional and academic success of my students.

### QUALIFICATIONS

- Three hour Stewards of Children training course that focused on Child Abuse.
- **Schreyers Honors Program**, Penn State Abington: Academic Enrichment
- **CVD Honors Program**: Academic Enrichment
- **Computer Capable**: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Social Media

### EXPERIENCE

**Penn State Abington Kids College**  
*Camp Counselor & Instructor*

June 2012 - August 2014

- Supervised children between the ages of 4 and 13 and participated in activities.
- Helped improve the social skills of introverted students
- Created activities for the children to do.
- Worked with students with several mental disabilities.
- Formulated lesson plans for camps and lead them.

**WorkReady Program**, Philadelphia, PA  
*Youth Worker*

June 2010 - August 2010

- Supervised children between the ages of 4 and 16 and helped with child-centered activities.
- Helped improve the social skills of introverted students
- Independently led students to and from several locations on campus.

### EXTRACURRICULAR

**Abingtones (an a capella group)**, Penn State Abington

August 2011 – May 2014

- Works collaboratively with fellow members to memorize and perform songs. Helped raise money to fight against pediatric cancer. Participated in an a capella competition
- Choir: To Kill A Mockingbird Play**
- Met three hours a week to practice and eventually perform (4 times) songs. Also doubled as an extra in the play