

## Multicultural Voices in Children's and Young Adult Literature

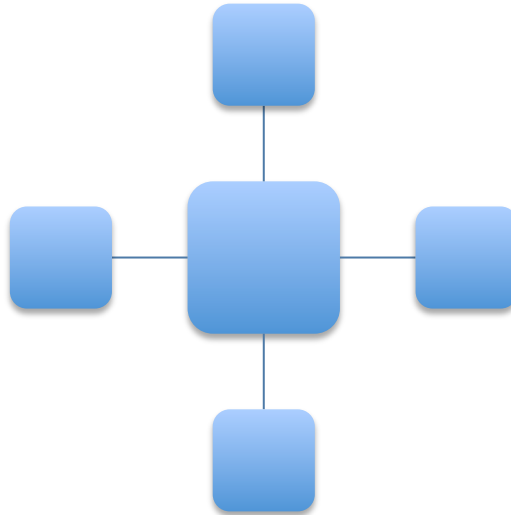
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*This course is based around 4 essential questions (and the components that help answer them):*

Question	Evidence
1) What is multicultural literature?	Each participant will develop a rationale for the use of multicultural literature with students.
2) Why is multicultural literature relevant to your curriculum?	1) Each participant will participate in literature circles with multicultural literature representative of several cultures. 2) Each participant will "workshop" several books that match up literature with current curricula across the content areas
3) How do we evaluate multicultural literature for authority and authenticity?	Each participant will be shown resources for evaluating multicultural literature and will contribute to a database with reviews of multicultural literature.
4) How is multicultural literature a mirror and window?	Each participant will develop a multicultural literature autobiography/text set.

*The course began with students investigating who they were as multicultural beings through a literature autobiography/text set:*

### *Circles of My Multicultural Self*



1. Share a story about a time you were especially proud to identify with one of the descriptors you used above.
2. Share a story about a time it was especially painful to be identified with one of your identifiers or descriptors.
3. Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence:

I am (a/an) \_\_\_\_\_ but I am NOT (a/an)\_\_\_\_\_.

Participants used the authority/authenticity rubric to evaluate literature for use in classrooms and created a website to post their findings (<http://multiculturaliterature.weebly.com>):

Criteria	3	2	1
<b>Authority</b>	Novel is written by a person from the culture being depicted and/OR novel has been researched thoroughly, as evidenced through the works cited or acknowledgement page.	Novel is not written by a person from the culture being depicted BUT has some evidence of research through works cited or acknowledgement page.	Novel is not written by a person from the culture being depicted and does not have evidence of research through works cited or acknowledgement page.
<b>Cultural Authenticity</b>			
Characterization	Characters are believable, grow naturally, and show depth. Characters are described without exaggeration in relation to their culture.	Characters are somewhat believable but depth is questionable. Characters are described with a few stereotypes or biases.	Characters are portrayed as caricatures of the culture being presented. Characters are described with several stereotypes or biases.
Setting	Setting is natural in relation to the content of the book and described without using stereotypes. Setting is universal instead of "typical" to the culture.	Setting is related using few stereotypes. Setting is in keeping with the content of the book. Setting could be "typical" to the culture presented.	Setting is related using overt stereotypes. Setting is unnatural in relation to the content. Setting is "typical" to the culture presented.
Style	Dialogue and discourse of book are natural to the culture presented. Content is easily understood by both members of the culture portrayed and other readers.	Dialogue and discourse are slightly out of sync with the culture presented through some stereotypes. Content may be misinterpreted by the members of the culture portrayed and/or other readers.	Dialogue and discourse present over stereotypes of the culture presented. Content is harmful to the members of the culture portrayed and/or misunderstood by other readers.
Theme	The theme is universal to all cultures and applied correctly to the culture portrayed.	The theme may be "typical" of the culture presented or may not be applied correctly.	The theme is "typical" of the culture presented and/or is applied in a hurtful way to the culture portrayed

Students read several articles and books to become versed in literature that reflects diversity:

*Literature Circle books –*

Asia: *Homeless Bird*, Gloria Whelan; *Sold*, Patricia McCormick

Middle East: *Habibi*, Naomi Shihab Nye

Central America and the Caribbean: *Before We Were Free*, Julia Alvarez

North America: *An Unlikely Friendship: A Novel of Mary Todd Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckley*, Ann Rinaldi

Africa: *Journey to Jo'Burg: A South African Story*, Beverly Naidoo

Ability: *My Thirteenth Winter: A Memoir*, Samantha Abeel

Gender & Sexuality: *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*, David Levithan & John Green

*Plus many, many more of their choosing (see the website!)*

*Select articles*

Wilfong, L.G. (2007). A mirror, a window: Assisting teachers in selecting appropriate multicultural, young adult literature. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 9, p. 1-13.

Al-Hazza, T., & Bucher, K. (2008). Building Arab Americans' cultural identity with children's literature. *The Reading Teacher*, 62, p. 210-219.

Steiner, S., Nash, C., Chase, M. (2008). Multicultural literature that brings people together. *The Reading Teacher*, 62, p. 88-92.

Al-Hazza, T. (2010). Motivating disengaged readers through multicultural children's literature. *The NERA Journal*, 45, p. 63-68.