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Using Picture Books with Adolescent Readers to Enhance Literacy Instruction

Gwyn W. Senokossoff

Abstract

This article discusses the benefits of using picture books with adolescent readers, describes strategies that can be taught with picture books, and provides examples of books the author has used. Some of the topics discussed include: reading comprehension, visual literacy, interactive read-aloud with facilitative talk, literary elements, and content-area reading. The advantages and disadvantages of using e-books and picture books that can be accessed online are also discussed. An annotated bibliography with more than 50 picture books is included in Appendix A. The books that may be accessed as e-books or audio CDs are also identified. Appendix B contains a list of books and websites where print, digital, and online resources can be found.

Introduction

For those who have spent any time studying children's literature, picture books are a familiar and well-loved tool for teaching reading. Many of us have spent hours poring over the most recent arrivals in the children's section of our local bookstore or library. We continue to collect picture books, fondly remembering the times we shared bedtime stories with our own children. However, if you have spent anytime reviewing picture books recently, then you know that many of today's picture books are not written for young children. Publishers now offer an assortment of picture books that deal with topics like interpersonal relationships, physical abuse, peer pressure, drug abuse, teen violence, and psychological issues such as suicide, cutting, and eating disorders (Lightsey, Olliff, & Cain, 2006). Picture books can be found in digital as well as traditional format, and in fiction and non-fiction. The vivid artwork engages visually-oriented youth who are used to learning through technology (Ammon & Sherman, 1997). Because there is less text for these students to read, and illustrations to support the story, these books work well with delayed readers, ESL students, and students with special needs (Carr, Buchanan, Wentz, Weiss, & Brant, 2001; Henry & Simpson, 2001). Yet, based upon my experiences and earlier research (Duchain & Mealey, 1993; Megyeri, 1993), I have not seen many middle or high-school teachers using picture books in their classrooms. Perhaps these teachers have not been taught how to use picture books with older readers or they do not know how to locate books that are appropriate for older students. Regardless, I believe these teachers are missing a great opportunity to supplement the materials they use in their classroom and support the needs of all their students. In this paper, I will discuss the benefits of using picture books with adolescent readers, describe strategies that work well with picture books, and provide examples of books that I have used. I will also discuss the use e-books and picture books that can be accessed online. An annotated bibliography with more than 50 picture books is included in Appendix A. I have also identified which books may be accessed as an e-book or audio CD. Appendix B contains a list of books and websites where print, digital, and online resources can be found.

Benefits of Using Picture Books

Reading Comprehension

Twelve years ago, many researchers concluded that adolescent students were being short-changed by literacy educators across the curriculum (Moore, et al., 1999). Little research had been done in adolescent literacy and many of our students were in trouble. In their 2012 position statement on Adolescent Literacy, the International Reading Association (IRA) is more positive. An abundance of research has been done since 1999 and our adolescents are making some progress. However, these students still need comprehension and study strategies that can be used across a range of both print and non-print materials in all disciplines (IRA, 2012). Literacy instruction today must include skills like activating prior knowledge, predicting, questioning, summarizing, synthesizing information from multiple sources, and understanding key vocabulary (IRA, 2012). Biancarosa and Snow (2006) recommend that teachers teach comprehension explicitly, motivate students, include discipline specific literacy strategies, and use diverse texts.

Think-Aloud

Middle and high-school teachers can use short texts like picture books, to explicitly model comprehension strategies through “think-alouds” (Harvey & Goudvis, 2002). “Think-aloud,” a process where the teacher states exactly what she is thinking out loud, permits students to see how an expert reader processes text. These comprehension lessons can serve as “anchor lessons,” because once a strategy is modeled with a memorable picture book, the teacher can refer students back to the lesson to recall and apply the strategy in other reading situations (Harvey & Goudvis, 2002).

Interactive Read-Aloud with Facilitative Talk

In an interactive read-aloud, the teacher reads a text aloud and both the students and the teacher discuss and respond to the text. A carefully planned interactive read-aloud can deepen students’ understanding of the text and help them become more analytical (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). The teacher guides and shapes a conversation around the text through comments, demonstrations, and questions (Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). In preparation, the teacher becomes familiar with the text and plans a series of questions for the students. The teacher uses the questions as a guide to sustain the conversation and makes adjustments to keep the students actively involved. Following is an example of an interactive read-aloud using the text, *Gleam and Glow* by Eve Bunting (2001). In this story, a family must flee their

home when enemy troops come to their village. In an effort to save the family's pet fish, the boy releases the fish into a nearby pond. After the war, the family returns home to find that the fish have survived and multiplied.

Teacher: Today, I am going to read the book, *Gleam and Glow* by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Peter Sylvada. This story is about family who flees their home and leaves everything behind during war. It's also about what happens after the war. Listen to how the story begins.

When Papa left to join the underground, Marina cried. To be truthful, Mama and I cried, too.

"I don't want Papa to be underground," Marina sobbed. "Shh, little one," Mama said. "It just means he's fighting secretly with many of our men. On doesn't know much. I'm eight and I know a lot.

Teacher: What's happening in this scene?

Ethan: The father is leaving to fight in the war. He's joining the underground.

Nathalie: Everyone is very sad.

Teacher: What do you think "the underground" is?

Sophie: It's a group of people who hide and fight for a cause...like the Underground Railroad that helped slaves escape to the north during the Civil War.
Teacher: Danny, what makes you say that?

Teacher: Sophie, great answer! You are exactly right and I like the way you connected this story to the Civil War.

Teacher: Sophie, great answer! You are exactly right and I like the way you connected this story to the Civil War.

Teacher: [Teacher reads the text.] *Before he left, Papa had tried to explain things to Marina. "Why don't those people like us?" she'd asked. I didn't know why either, but I rolled my eyes and pretended I did. "We're different from them," Papa told her. "They think this is their country and they don't want us living here. But this is our country. I will fight with the Liberation Army to stop them from pushing us out of our land."*

Teacher: Where do you think this story is taking place?

Danny: In Egypt or Libya.

Teacher: Danny, what makes you say that?

Danny: I remember hearing about the rebellions and I think one of the rebel forces had a Liberation Army.

Jose’: I think it takes place in Germany...you know, the Nazis...because the picture in the book shows a man in a long coat wearing a hat or cap and it looks like he’s in the woods.

Teacher: Okay, great answers! Danny, you made some great connections with recent world events and Jose’, you made a great inference using the illustration. The author actually has a note at the end of this book explaining that this story came from something that happened to a family in Bosnia, but she makes the story ambiguous so that it might represent any family’s experience in war.

Visual Literacy

Another important skill that supports students’ reading comprehension is visual literacy. Visual literacy is the ability to recognize and understand ideas conveyed through images (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2012). Readers learn to interpret illustrations by looking at the color, line, shape, size, and style of the picture (O’Neil, 2011). Certain colors, for instance, black may convey strong or dark emotions. Harsh and jagged lines may imply danger. The focal point of a picture or the size of a character in an illustration sometimes conveys importance or the lack of importance. Illustrations reinforce or enhance the meaning of the text, or even communicate part of the story not described by the text alone (O’Neill, 2011).

For example, on page 18 of the book, *Rosa* by Nikki Giovanni (2005), illustrated by Bryan Collier, Collier creates the image of a city sidewalk, shops and storefronts towering over the street, with signs labeled, “White Entrance.” In the forefront of the lower right side of the illustration is a woman standing on the sidewalk with her head bowed slightly and her eyes cast down. At first glance, one might think that she is being submissive, except that she has her left fist raised in the air. Some of the text reads:

She sighed as she realized she was tired. Not tired from work but tired of putting white people first. Tired of stepping off sidewalks to let white people pass, tired of eating at separate lunch counters and learning at separate schools.

At this moment in this story about Rosa Parks and the Civil Rights Movement, Rosa is waiting for the police after she refuses to give up her seat on the bus. While she knows her actions might cause trouble, she refuses the unfair treatment. She takes a stand. The combination of this illustration with the text invites students into the story. Shared viewing and discussion of picture books like this one is a wonderful way to help students develop visual literacy skills in an increasingly technological

world (Lightsey, et al., 2006). When teachers explain how to “decode” or interpret illustrations, they support students’ reading comprehension (O’Neill, 2011).

Vocabulary

Children’s picture books are also an excellent source for vocabulary development. They contain more rare words per thousand words than adult prime-time television or the conversations of college graduates (Hayes & Ahrens as cited in Lightsey, et al., 2006). Children’s picture books have 32 rare words per thousand compared to prime-time television scripts with 22.7 rare words per thousand. When college graduates talk with one another, they use only 17.3 rare words per thousand. One of the hallmarks of an educated individual, a large, rich vocabulary, is built through the context of what one reads (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002). Students must read widely to come across a sufficient number of new words, but the context in which they encounter those words is also important (Beck, et al., 2002). A directive context, one that provides enough information to derive meaning, is the most supportive for the student (Beck, et al., 2002). While students may encounter new vocabulary in a variety of texts, many texts do not provide enough information for the student to figure out the meaning of the word. The rich, succinct language in picture books can support this type of vocabulary development (Ammon & Sherman, 1997; Carr, et al., 2001).

For instance, in the book, *Coolies* by Yin (2001), illustrated by Chris Soentpiet, Yin writes:

The bosses hired by Central Pacific did not believe the Chinese could endure the building of the railroad—on average they were skinny and looked upon as mere weaklings. The bosses made fun of their straw hats, pajama-like clothes and even their long queues, braids which they wore down the center of their backs.

In this example, the reader is led to the definition of the word “queues” through the phrase, “braids which they wore down the center of their backs.”

In another example from the same text, readers learn the meaning of the word “ancestor.” In this example, two characters, a grandmother and her grandson, are talking at the beginning of the story. The grandmother begins to tell the story of her great-grandfather.

“Yes, your ancestors!” she says. “Let me tell you of two we do not forget. Of my bokgong—my great-grandfather—and his brother.”

In this instance, the reader learns the definition of “ancestor” through example with the words, “my great-grandfather—and his brother.”

Delayed Readers

The treatment classrooms used the High Scope approach to early childhood (HohYoung children, who have a “limited vocabulary, syntax, and world knowledge,” use the illustrations in picture books as “mental scaffolds” to facilitate their understanding of written text (Fang, 1996). Many older students, who are delayed in reading, also lack the skills to create mental images while they are reading (Beers, 2003). Their focus on decoding the words prevents them from visualizing what they are reading, and they are unable to draw inferences or make predictions (Hibbin & Rankin-Erickson, 2003). Often, these students read well below grade level and do not have age-appropriate reading materials. Picture books can be a great alternative for them. These books are well-written and include supportive illustrations that make the reading experience more enjoyable (Henry & Simpson, 2001; Hibbing & Erikson, 2003).

Furthermore, a number of picture books contain mature and interesting topics that older readers would not be embarrassed to read (Henry & Simpson, 2001; Huck, Kiefer, Hepler, & Hickman, 2004). For example, in Maurice Sendak’s (1993) book, *We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy*, Sendak takes two nursery rhymes and pairs them with illustrations that lead the reader into a story about poverty and homelessness (Henry & Simpson, 2001).

English Language Learners

Picture books can also be suitable for students who are learning English as a second language (Hashim, 1999). They offer simple, repetitive sentence patterns, authentic dialogue, uncomplicated plots, and stunning illustrations. The “visual-verbal connection” or the act of associating pictures with text supports second language learners and builds their reading confidence (Henry & Simpson, 2001, p. 1). Furthermore, picture books are short, between 24 and 48 pages, and can be read in less than 30 minutes (Giorgis, 1999; Henry & Simpson, 2001). This is useful in middle-school or high-school classrooms where students change classes every 50 minutes.

Literary Elements

Many of the themes and issues in picture books are universal and easily understood by older readers (Carr, et al., 2001; Henry & Simpson, 2001). Picture books are also effective tools for teaching writing, because many include strong story structure and literary language. Examples of literary elements (e.g., point of view, character, setting, theme, plot, and tone) can be introduced through picture

books by middle or high-school teachers. Figurative language or strong story leads may also be found in picture books.

For example, in the book, *A Boy Called Dickens*, by Deborah Hopkinson (2012), illustrated by John Hendrix, Hopkinson begins the story as follows:

This is old London, on a winter morning long ago. Come along, now. We are here to search for a boy called Dickens. He won't be easy to find. The fog has crept in, silent as a ghost, to fold the city in cold, gray arms.

In the example above, the author introduces the story with a strong lead and draws in the reader. She also creates a great metaphor about the fog which can be used to teach older readers about writing.

In a second example, author Margaret Wise Brown (1999) writes the following in her book, *The Important Book*:

The important thing about a daisy is that it is white. It is yellow in the middle, it has long white petals, and bees sit on it, it has a ticklish smell, it grows in green fields, and there are always lots of daisies! But the important thing about a daisy is that it is white.

In this book, Brown provides readers with detailed descriptions of ordinary things. Teachers can use these descriptions to teach students about adding detail or elaborating when they write.

Some picture books also offer great examples of “pattern writing,” where the writer uses a particular pattern to reveal the story (Henry & Simpson, 2001, p. 2). For instance, in Helen Ketteman’s (2001) book, *Heat Wave*, illustrated by Scott Goto, Ketteman writes this story as if she is creating a tall tale.

Then we heard a commotion in the pasture. We raced over. The cows were hopping around like rabbits. The ground had gotten too hot, so we herded them inside the barn. They still looked miserable, though. Pa figured their milk had gotten too hot, so we set to milking. As it turned out, the cows had jumped too much, they'd churned their milk to butter. It came out melted. We'd milked the last of the butter when I had an idea.

After reading her book, older readers might enjoy creating a tale of their own.

Content-Area Reading

Much of the reading middle and high-school students do in school is in the content-areas. According to the International Reading Association (IRA), teachers must support content-area reading instruction, differentiate instructional approaches to meet students’ content literacy needs, and build diverse content-area classroom libraries that include traditional print and digital or online resources

(2010). Picture books are an excellent resource for content-area reading because they are short and often provide more depth on a single topic than textbooks (McLaughlin, 2010). The writing is less dense and the information provided is more current. Furthermore, picture books can improve students' comprehension in the content areas (Landt, 2007). Teachers

Picture books also come in several forms; fiction, non-fiction, and "faction," a combination of fiction and non-fiction. One great example of "faction" is the picture book, *Freedom Summer* by Deborah Wiles (2005), illustrated by Jerome Lagarrigue. In this book, the author creates a story about two fictional boys, one black and the other white, and their experiences in Mississippi in 1964 after a law is passed forbidding segregation.

Picture books can be used in the content-areas to introduce a new concept or topic. Once the topic is introduced, it may be followed with an assignment in the textbook. In some picture books, diagrams explain math concepts (Murphy, 2000) while in others images paired with content vocabulary, scaffold students' comprehension (Landt, 2007). Older readers often find the narrative structure in picture books more interesting (Landt, 2007).

Benefits of Accessing Picture Books with Technology

Reading Online

According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NTCE), "technology has increased the intensity and complexity of literate environments, [demanding] that a literate person possess a wide range of abilities and competencies, [or] many literacies" (2008). Students today must be able to read and comprehend vast amounts of text online at high levels (International Reading Association, 2009) and strive for multiple ways of knowing (NCTE, 2005). Many picture books can be retrieved in a variety of digital formats and these books provide strong reading comprehension and fluency support (NEIRTEC, 2004). However, reading online requires a different skill set than the one used to read traditional texts. When students read traditional texts, the experience is static; the text is created by someone else, and each time the student reads, the text remains unchanged (McLaughlin, 2010). When students read a digital text, the experience is dynamic; the reader is able to create his/her own original text (McLaughlin, 2010). For instance, when the text has "hot spots" or links that the student may select, the student is taken to a new web page with more information. Often, digital texts include features where key vocabulary is highlighted and if selected, will provide a definition for the student.

Many digital texts also offer students the option of having the text read. Each time the student reads a digital text, the experience is unique.

Problems with Reading Online

Digital texts or e-books are not new. They have been around since 1997 when *Stellaluna* was published by Living Books; however, until about two years ago most e-books were textbooks or adult titles designed for the Kindle, Nook, or Sony e-Reader (Guernsey, 2011). Since the advent of Apple's iPad, and then, the Nook Color, an increasing number of children's picture books and novels have become available (Guernsey, 2011). Sites like Tumblebooks, Scholastic's BookFlix, One More Story, Big Universe, Disney Digital Books, and MeeGenius are available by subscription. Storyline Online by the Screen Actors Guild Foundation and the International Children's Digital Library at the University of Maryland at College Park are also available at no cost (Guernsey, 2011).

Yet, not all e-books are the same. Some e-books are merely PDFs while others include animated characters, interactive games and puzzles, and text that can be "played" while the words are highlighted (Brueck as cited in Guernsey, 2011). Finding the best e-books for literacy instruction is still a challenge. While there are several resources available, there is not a single source where teachers might go to access the books and even with the best of sites, there is no guarantee that the e-books on the site are high-quality. Furthermore, some researchers are skeptical about whether these books should be called books at all (Guernsey, 2011). One researcher downloaded a copy of *Toy Story* by Disney (2010) on his iPad and described it as 25 percent book and 75 percent movie (Bederson as cited in Guernsey, 2011). Much more research is needed in this area. An annotated bibliography of picture books that can be used with older readers is provided in Appendix A. A list of books and websites where print, digital, and online resources can be found is included in Appendix B.

Conclusion

With the focus on adolescent literacy over the past ten years, middle and high-school teachers remain under pressure to increase their students' reading achievement. While the dropout rate in America has decreased from 14% in 1989 to 8% in 2009, our high school students still rank ninth internationally in literacy (NCES, 2011). According to the Commission on Adolescent Literacy (1999), some of our teens need specialized instruction to succeed, others need "extensive opportunities

with comfortable materials” to learn, and almost all of our students will need support with the unfamiliar vocabulary they encounter in the content areas (Moore, et al., p. 4). “Authentic literacy experiences should occur across the disciplines with varied types of text that are inclusive of print, audio, and fixed and moving images” (IRA, 2012). The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (2006) describes a reading curriculum that focuses on selecting, reading, responding to, and analyzing a wide range of literature. They also call for literature that is accessible to all students, literature that represents a variety of topics and degrees of difficulty (NCTE, 2006). Since most classrooms include children reading at various levels of proficiency, materials like picture books, considered inappropriate for whole-class instruction, might be suitable for small-group or individual use (NCTE, 2006). To increase students’ reading achievement, teachers must use as many resources as possible. Picture books can be a great instructional tool for teachers of adolescents.



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Appendix A

Examples of Picture Books for Older Readers

American Revolution

Frandin, D. B. (2005). *Let It Begin Here!: Lexington and Concord: First Battles of the American Revolution*. Walker & Company.

This is an account of Paul Revere's ride to warn Americans that the British are invading.

Sobel, S. (2001). *The U. S. Constitution and You*. Barron's Educational Series.

Kindle Sobel explains the U. S. Constitution and what it is meant to do.

Bullying

Shamblin, A. (2002). *Don't Laugh at Me*. Random House Children's Books.

Kindle

This is a picture book version of the song, "Don't Laugh at Me," by Peter Yarrow. It is appropriate for elementary and middle-school.

Civil Rights Movement

Bausum, A. (2005). *Freedom Riders. John Lewis and Jim Zwerg on the Front Lines of the Civil Rights Movement*. National Geographic Society. **Audio CD**

This book describes the experiences of two young college students, one black and one white, as they participate in the Freedom Bus Rides during the Civil Rights Movement.

Bridges, R. (1999). *Through My Eyes*. Scholastic, Inc.

This book shares the story of Ruby Bridges, the six-year old black child who was one of the first children to attend a white elementary school after desegregation.

Giovanni, N. (2007). *Rosa*. Square Fish.

Author, Giovanni retells the story of Rosa Parks, an African American woman on her way home from work who refuses to give up her seat on the bus, during the Civil Rights Movement.

Loribiecki, M. (2000). *Sister Anne's Hands*. Penguin Group. **Audio CD**

In this book, Loribiecki tells the story of an African American nun in a Catholic School who educates her second graders about racism during the Civil Rights Movement.

Wiles, D. (2005). *Freedom Summer*. Aladdin.

In this story, Wiles tells the story of two friends, one black and one white, who are excited to go to the community swimming pool when segregation is abolished, but it is 1964 in Mississippi.

Civil War

Adler, D. (2004). *Enemies of Slavery*. Holiday House.

This book includes profiles on 14 famous individuals, from Abraham Lincoln to Denmark Vesey, who fought against slavery.

Levine, E. (2007). *Henry's Freedom Box*. Scholastic, Inc. **Audio CD**

The story of a slave child who mailed himself to freedom.

- McDonough, Y. Z. (2002). *Who Was Harriet Tubman?* Penguin Group.
This book describes the life of Harriet Tubman and her contribution to the Underground Railroad.
- Polacco, P. (2009). *January's Sparrow*. Penguin Group.
This is the story of a family of slaves, the Crosswhites, who flee to the North through the Underground Railroad.
- Polacco, P. (2011). *Just in Time, Abraham Lincoln*. Penguin Young Readers Group.
This book describes the adventure of two boys who visit a Civil War museum and end up going back in time to meet Abraham Lincoln.
- Polacco, P. (1994). *Pink and Say*. Penguin Group. **Audio CD**
In this story, an African American Union soldier finds a young white union soldier lying injured in a field and takes him home for medical care. When the two teens try to return to duty, they are captured by rebel soldiers and sent to prison.

Drug Abuse

- Taylor, C. (1992). *The House That Crack Built*. Chronicle.
Taylor uses the nursery rhyme, "The House That Jack Built," to create a poem about the problems associated with cocaine.

Ecology

- Van Allsburg, C. (2011). *Just a Dream*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
This story is about a boy, Walter, who is a litterbug. Then, one night he dreams about what will happen to Earth if people like him do not change.

Famous People

- Bolden, T. (2008). *George Washington Carver*. Abrams Books. {illustrated with photos}.
This book describes the life of George Washington Carver.
- Capaldi, G. (2008). *A Boy Named Beckoning: The True Story of Dr. Carlos Montezuma, Native American Hero*. Carolrhoda Books.
This story describes the life of a Native American boy named Wassaja, or "Beckoning," who was kidnapped from his people and sold as a slave. He is adopted by an Italian photographer in 1871 and travels throughout the West. Later he becomes a doctor and a leader for his people.
- McDonough, Y. Z. (2005). *Who Was John F. Kennedy?* Penguin Group.
This book describes the life of John Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States.
- Tanaka, S. (2008). *Amelia Earhart: The Legend of the Lost Aviator*. Abrams
This book describes the life of Amelia Earheart.
- Thompson, G. (2004). *Who Was Eleanor Roosevelt?* Penguin Group.
This book describes the life of Eleanor Roosevelt.
- Waldron, A. (2009). *Who Was Claude Monet?* Penguin Group.
This book describes the life of famous painter, Claude Monet.

Fitting In

Moss, P. (2010). *One of Us*. Tidbury House Publishers.

Moss describes the problems a young girl experiences on her first day of school as she moves from group to group trying to find out where she fits in.

Foreign War

Bunting, E. (2005). *Gleam and Glow*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

This story describes a family that flees their home when enemy troops invade their village during war. As the family gets ready to leave, the son lets his goldfish go in a nearby pond. After the war when they return home, the family finds that the fish have survived and multiplied.

Garland, S. (1997). *The Lotus Seed*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

This is the story of a Vietnamese-American grandmother and her journey from Vietnam to American. When she comes to America, she has a lotus seed that she brought as a reminder of her country.

Sis, P. (2007). *The Wall. Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

This is the story of Sis' experiences growing up in Prague prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall and his experiences when he moves to America after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Stamaty, M. A. (2004). *Alia's Mission: Saving the Books in Iraq*. Random House Children's Books.

This is the story of an Iraqi librarian and her determination to save the books in the library when she finds out that her country will be going to war. This book is illustrated like a graphic novel.

Guns in School

Loribecki, M. (1996). *Just One Flick of a Finger*. Penguin Group.

This is the story of a young boy who takes a gun to school to scare the bully who has been tormenting him. The gun is fired accidentally and his friend is shot.

Immigration

Bunting, E. (1997) *A Day's Work*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. **Kindle**

This is the story of a Mexican-American boy who helps his grandfather find work. The grandfather does not speak English.

Garland, S. (2002). *My Father's Boat*. Scholastic.

Garland tells the story of a Vietnamese-American father and son fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. As they fish, the father tells his son stories of his childhood in Vietnam and of his grandfather.

Polacco, P. (2001). *The Keeping Quilt*. Aladdin. **Kindle**

Polacco tells the story of a quilt her Russian mother makes from several family member's clothing. The quilt helps them remember their family back in Russia.

Los Angeles Riot

Bunting, E. (1999). *Smokey Night*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Bunting tells the story of several families' experiences during the Los Angeles riots.

Marginalized People

Tingle, T. (2006). *Crossing Bok Chitto. A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom*. New York, NY: Cinco Puntos Press.

This story takes place in Mississippi during the 1800's. A Choctaw girl breaks her family's rules and crosses the Bok Chitto in search of blueberries. She becomes friends with the slaves on a nearby plantation and eventually helps a family escape to freedom.

Williams, S. A. (1997). *Working Cotton*. Sandpiper.

This is the story of the life of a migrant family who pick cotton in California.

Yin. (2003). *Coolies*. Penguin Group.

This story chronicles the experiences of two Chinese brother who come to America and work to help build a railroad in 1865.

Poverty

Baylor, B. (1998). *The Table Where Rich People Sit*. Aladdin.

In this story, Baylor describes the lesson a young girl learns about her family's way of living. Her parents do not possess many material things, but they teach their children about the richness of their surroundings and their relationships with each other.

Bunting, E. (1993). *Fly Away Home*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

This is the story of a homeless boy who lives in an airport with his father.

Park, F. (2000). *The Royal Bee*. Boyds Mills Press.

In this story, an impoverished young boy who works in the Governor's palace is offered a chance at an education and he ends up competing in a national education competition, *The Royal Bee*. This story is set in Korea in the late 1800's.

Sendak, M. (1993). *We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy*. HarperCollins.

Sendak pairs two nursery rhymes with his illustrations to tell a story about homeless children, kittens, and a baby.

Power to Effect Change

Nivola, C. (2008). *Planting the Trees of Kenya. The Story of Wangari Maathai*. Francis Foster Books. {Nook Book}.

This is the story of Kenyan activist, Wangari Maathai, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her achievements in the environmental movement and human rights.

Rylant, C. (1996). *An Angel for Solomon Singer*. Scholastic, Inc.

In this story, Solomon, a lonely, impoverished man, finds friendship in a restaurant and learns to enjoy his life more. Children learn that small gestures can make a difference.

Role Models

Robbins, T. (2007). *Bessie Coleman: Daring Stunt Pilot*. Coughlan Publishing.
This is the story of the female, African-American stunt pilot, Bessie Coleman, who achieved her dream of flying in the 1920's. This book is illustrated in graphic novel format.

Stone, T. L. (2008). *Elizabeth Leads the Way. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Right to Vote*. Henry Holt and Company.
This book describes the life of Elizabeth Stanton who fought for women's right to vote.

Scientists

Sis, P. (2000). *Starry Messenger: Galileo Galilei*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Sis describes the life of famous astronomer, Galileo Galilei.

Sis, P. (2003). *The Tree of Life: A Book Depicting the Life of Charles Darwin: Naturalist, Geologist, and Thinker*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Sis describes the life and work of Charles Darwin.

September 11th

Brown, D. (2011). *America is Under Attack*. Roaring Book Press. **Kindle**
Brown explains the events of September 11, 2001 when the terrorists attacked America.

Deedy, C. A. (2009). *14 Cows for America*. Peachtree Publishers, Ltd.
An American diplomat travels to Kenya to visit his home after the terrorists attacks of September 11th and shares the story of what took place. The Maasai decide to send a gift back to the grieving Americans.

Suicide

Garland, S. (1994). *I Never Knew Your Name*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
In this story, a teenage boy narrates the story of his neighbor, another teenager, who commits suicide.

Veterans

Raven, M. T. (2005). *America's White Table*. Sleeping Bear Press.
This story describes the tradition of setting an empty place at the dinner table to honor family members who have died, are missing in action, or being held captive during war.

Vietnam

Bunting, E. (1992). *The Wall*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. **Audio CD**
In this book, Bunting shares the story of a father and son who visit the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in to find the son's grandfather's name.

World War II

Adler, D. (1995). *Child of the Warsaw Ghetto*. Holiday House.
This is the story of the Warsaw Ghetto told through the eyes of an orphaned boy.

Adler, D. (2002). *A Hero and the Holocaust: The Story of Janusz Korczak and His Children*. Holiday House.

This is the story of Janusz Korczak, who was the director of a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw, Poland during Nazi rule, and the children for whom he cared.

Bunting, E. (2009). *So Far From the Sea*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. **Kindle**

In this story, a family returns to Manzanar, where thousands of Japanese-Americans were imprisoned during World War II, to pay their respects to their grandfather.

Judge, L. (2007). *One Thousand Tracings. Healing the Wounds of World War II*. Hyperion Books for Children.

This book tells the story of an American family after World War II who contacted a family in Germany and began to send them supplies, particularly shoes. Soon, families from all over Europe began to send tracings of their feet so that they, too, could receive new shoes from America.

Mochizuki, K. (2003). *Passage to Freedom*. The Sugihara Story. Lee & Low Books.

This book describes how Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat in Lithuania, uses his connections to help Jews escape the Nazis during World War II. He was later imprisoned for his actions.

Polacco, P. (2009). *The Butterfly*. Penguin Group.

In this book, Polacco tells the story of two girls who become friends during World War II. One girl and her family are part of the French Resistance and the other is Jewish.

Writing

Brown, M. W. (1990). *The Important Book*. HarperCollins.

In this book, Brown describes her observations of everyday objects like apples, spoons, and daisies.

Hopkinson, D. (2012). *A Boy Called Dickens*. Schwartz and Wade.

In this book, Hopkinson describes author, Charles Dickens, childhood. Many of the things that happened to him as a child inspired his writing.

Ketteman, H. (2000). *Heat Wave*. Walker Books for Young Readers.

In this story, a family deals with the exaggerated events on their farm caused by a heat wave.

Van Allsburg, C. (1986). *The Stranger*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

In this story, Van Allsburg tells the story of a farmer who brings home a stranger he finds in the road. The stranger lives with the farmer and his family until he gets his memory back and leaves to go south. Van Allsburg leaves the identity of the stranger a mystery. His writing style and mysterious ending make this a great book to use to teach writing.

Van Allsburg, C. (1991). *The Wretched Stone*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

In this story, unusual things happen to the crew of the ship, the Rita Anne. Van Allsburg leaves readers with another mystery to solve, making this a great book to use to teach writing.

Van Allsburg, C. (1993). *The Sweetest Fig*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

In this story, a sadistic dentist is given two magic figs in payment for dental work he has done on one of his patients. The figs can make one's dreams come true. In the end, the dentist's dog eats the second fig and makes his own dream come true.

Appendix B

Sources for Finding Appropriate Picture Books

Print Sources

- Ammon, B. & Sherman, G. (1997). *Worth a Thousand Words: An Annotated Guide to Picture Books for Older Readers* (**available as an e-book**).
- Culham, R. (2004). *Using Picture Books to Teach Writing with the Traits*. Scholastic, Inc.
- Hall, S. (2007). *Using Picture Story Books to Teach Literary Devices: Recommended Books for Children and Young Adults*, (4th ed.). Libraries Unlimited. (**available on Kindle**)

Web Sites

Big Universe. www.biguniverse.com.

This site offers hundreds of fiction and non-fiction books for children in grades K-8. Many of the informational texts could be useful for content-area reading and the books are written like graphic novels. However, picture books for older readers did not seem to be available.

Children's Books Online. www.childrensbooksonline.org.

This site is sponsored by the Rosetta Project and it includes the largest collection of illustrated antique books on the internet (Adam & Mowers, 2008).

BookPALS Storyline at www.storylineonline.net.

This site offers many great picture books (mostly for younger readers) that are read aloud by celebrities. This site is sponsored by the Screen Actors Guild.

Project Gutenberg. www.gutenberg.org.

This site offers a large collection of free e-books for all ages. The books are free because their copyright has expired and they are part of the public domain.

Storia by Scholastic. store.scholastic.com.

Storia is an app that may be loaded on iPhone, iPod, or iPad. There is a large collection of picture books for young children and chapter books or novels for older students. The site listed above is the Scholastic store and other picture books may be found there.

Storynory. www.storynory.com.

This site offers e-books read to the reader by storytellers, mainly Natasha Gostwick. Most of the stories are for young children, but they do offer myths and fables that might interest older students. They also offer original stories as well.

The International Children's Digital Library (ICDL) . www.icdlbooks.org.

This site offers a collection of outstanding historical and contemporary books from around the world. The ICDL Foundation's goal is "to have every culture and language represented so that every child can know and appreciate the riches of children's literature from the world community" (ICDL website, 2012).

TumbleBooks www.tumblebooks.com.

This site offers many well-known contemporary books for children of all ages. They also offer National Geographic Videos and audio books. This site does require a subscription and the prices vary depending on the type of subscription one signs up for (Adam & Mowers, 2008).

About the Author

Gwen Senokossoff is a faculty member in Reading Education in the Department of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education, Florida International University. Her research interests include early intervention in reading and reading comprehension instruction with delayed adolescent readers and adolescents with high-functioning autism.

