



April 2023

Empathy Throughout the Curriculum: Using Picture Books to Promote Activism & Equity

Kathleen M. Olmstead
SUNY Brockport, kolmstead@brockport.edu

Peter Kalenda
SUNY Brockport, pkalenda@brockport.edu

Logan T. Rath
SUNY Brockport, lrath@brockport.edu

Jeffrey Xue
jeffrey.xue23@gmail.com

Jie Zhang
SUNY Brockport, jzhang@brockport.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/lls>



Part of the [Elementary Education Commons](#), [Humane Education Commons](#), and the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Olmstead, Kathleen M.; Kalenda, Peter; Rath, Logan T.; Xue, Jeffrey; and Zhang, Jie (2023) "Empathy Throughout the Curriculum: Using Picture Books to Promote Activism & Equity," *The Language and Literacy Spectrum*: Vol. 33: Iss. 1, Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/lls/vol33/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Elementary Education and Reading at Digital Commons at Buffalo State. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Language and Literacy Spectrum by an authorized editor of Digital Commons at Buffalo State. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@buffalostate.edu.

...The responsibility of education is not only to prevent the exclusion of historically silenced, erased, and disenfranchised groups, but also to assist in the promotion and perpetuation of cultures, languages and ways of knowing that have been devalued, suppressed, and imperiled by years of educational, social, political, economic neglect and other forms of oppression. (NYS Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework, 2019, p.6)

Mindful, inclusive picture book selection and thoughtful use in the classroom is a valuable component of social justice teaching — it can disrupt stereotypes and foster understanding of multiple perspectives (Colantonio-Yurko et al., 2022)—while also serving to inspire students to take action to make their communities and the world a better place. Inclusive picture book use enables students to see themselves in texts, values students’ identities and thus fosters more inclusive and equitable classroom spaces that are well-aligned with New York State’s Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CRSE) framework. The CRSE is a document created to guide New York State teachers in “promoting equitable opportunities that help all children thrive” through four principles: establishing a welcoming and affirming environment; maintaining high expectations and rigorous instruction; engaging in inclusive curriculum and assessment; and ongoing professional learning (p.6).

Throughout this article, we focus on embedding empathy-building picture books and literacy experiences across the curriculum and seek to share children’s literature and resources useful for teachers and support staff. Together, we explore the following questions:

1. What is empathy and why is it necessary to create mindful spaces for developing empathy in our classrooms?
2. In what ways can picture books open conversations that promote understanding of others across the curriculum?
3. What are the most effective ways to find culturally responsive-sustaining children’s literature and related resources?

Why Empathy?

Empathy is part of social emotional learning (SEL) skill development that includes understanding others, problem solving, self-regulation, understanding and managing emotions, etc. Social emotional learning development and competence have been shown to promote both students’ academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011) and success in many areas of life including healthy relationship development, positive interactions with others, citizenship, grit and determination (Jones et al., 2015).

Literacy experiences, particularly engagement with picture books, can be powerful catalysts for empathy development. To illustrate the power of books, Cunningham and Enriquez (2022) reflect on the importance of children

experiencing what they name *book joy*— and the consequences of never having experienced it.

The most devastating of all perhaps is a life lived without the company of characters to remind you that you are not alone. To know that your story is not the only story. And to know that the challenges you experience in life do not define you (p.192).

Indeed, the seminal work of Bishop (1990) also inspires us to mindfully select and incorporate books that are *mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors* for our students—honoring their experiences and stories and providing a richer understanding of others’ humanity (Baldwin, 2018; Cunningham, 2015). Similarly, in Chimamanda Adichie’s 2009 influential TED Talk, *The Danger of a Single Story*, Adichie illustrates the need for many stories in order to avoid stereotypes and improve understanding of one another. Indeed, empathy can be built by both seeing and imagining others’ experiences while engaged with rich, diverse and inclusive picture books (Chen & Browne, 2015; Souto-Manning, 2009; Williams-Sanchez, 2021)—leading children to connect with and care more about others as well as act mindfully and with compassion. Forming connections with one another can build classroom communities and support the development of a safer, more participatory classroom environment (McLean et al., 2021).

Empathy in the Disciplines?

Like Cunningham (2015), we believe stories matter; they are the heart of literacy instruction and are what make us human. The incorporation of rich children’s literature is valuable across many ages and many disciplines. In *The Power of Picture Books*, authors Fresch and Harkins (n.d.) conclude that picture books aren’t just for young children and should be used in varied contexts—even with older students. Through the use of picture books, “teachers across the disciplines can introduce new topics into their curriculum, ... provide authentic and meaningful cultural perspectives, and help meet a wide range of learning needs” (para. 5). In addition to appealing to a wide variety of students, diverse picture books provide opportunities to open conversations across the curriculum (Olmstead & Troiani, 2023)—meeting standards in multiple content areas.

Promoting Empathy: Impactful Picture Books and Related Resources

Below, we share recently published picture books which may be used to inspire empathy and activism in the classroom. We use the interactive read aloud framework (Fountas & Pinnell, 2018; Fountas & Pinnell, 2017; Fountas & Pinnell, 2006) to provide lesson possibilities and ideas for teachers to adapt to their own classroom contexts. The interactive read aloud framework by design encourages talk; teachers plan many opportunities for robust conversations. Students turn and talk to share their understandings and perspectives with one another (in pairs or small groups) and also engage in whole class, text-based conversations making connections with the books, each other and their experiences in the world. While

we have chosen the interactive read aloud framework for this article, mindfully selected picture books may also be effectively utilized as part of text sets, book clubs, literature circles, and perhaps other more student-guided literacy contexts appropriate to varied educational learning environments.

Content Area: English Language Arts

“The most important thing is that we need to be understood. We need someone to be able to listen to us and understand us. Then we will suffer less.” - Thich Nhat Hanh

Thoughtful, story-centered English language arts (ELA) contexts engage students in reading, writing, listening and speaking about the human experience—helping students better understand and connect to both book characters and each other. The first book we share is *One of a Kind, Like Me / Único como yo*—a powerful read aloud choice that opens classroom conversations about gender stereotyping and gender bias. It is an important book that can help teachers create classroom spaces that are welcoming and affirming to everyone. See Table 1 below for an empathy building ideas for *One of a Kind Like Me/Único como yo* (Mayeno, 2016).

Table 1

Empathy Building Plan for “One of a Kind Like Me/Único como yo” (Mayeno, 2016)

<p>Structure for Interactive Read Aloud Adapted from Fountas & Pinnell, 2018</p>	<p>Plan for Empathy Building in the ELA Context</p>
<p>Picture Book Selection & Preparation Know your students...what are your goals? What book will you select and why? Analyze the text and plan for teaching.</p>	<p>Book Title: <i>One of a Kind Like Me/Único como yo</i> Author: Laurin Mayeno Illustrator: Robert Liu-Trujillo Book Summary: “<i>One of A Kind, Like Me / Único como yo</i> is a sweet story about unconditional love and the beauty of individuality. It's a unique book that lifts up children who don't fit gender stereotypes, and reflects the power of a loving and supportive community” (amazon.com, n.d.). It is based on a true story of author Laurin Mayeno’s child Danny who desired to be a princess for Halloween. Why this book? 1. This engaging text is in bilingual format</p>

	<p>which provides opportunities for valorization of both Spanish and English in the classroom.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. This book is written by Mayeno, an author who shares identities and experiences with the characters and topics in her book, providing a more authentic text experience. 3. <i>One of A Kind, Like Me / Único como yo</i> also provides a wonderful opportunity to open classroom spaces to discuss and disrupt gender bias and help students build deeper understandings of self-expression. 4. This picture book can also serve as a powerful mentor text, as the main character, Danny, offers counter-arguments when confronting damaging stereotypes from his classmates, helping to disrupt gender bias.
<p>Book Introduction Engage students’ interests, activate thinking, provide any necessary background information</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you notice about the cover? • What do you predict the story will be about?
<p>Book Reading Stop at pivotal moments in the book to invite students to engage in conversations grounded in the book</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After reading page 22, What does “one of a kind” mean? • After reading page 25, Why do you think Danny “couldn’t keep his eyes off the clock?” How do you think Danny was feeling? • After reading page 28, How do you think Danny is feeling now? How do you know?
<p>Book Discussion Robust conversations about the text</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn and talk to a partner. What was your favorite part of this book? • What were some of the challenges Danny faced? • How did Danny resolve the challenges? • What do you think led Danny to say “I

	<p>guess we are all one of a kind” (p. 31)? Explain your thinking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn from this book?
<p>Book Response Engagement in text-related experiences like inquiry/activism, art, drama or written responses</p>	<p>Book Response: <i>In What Ways are You One of a Kind?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on instructional level, students create a poster, art project, personal story or video presentation which illustrates the way/s that they are <i>one of a kind</i>, too. Students share their work—celebrating classmates’ uniqueness.
<p>Related Resources</p>	<p>Related Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need help in selecting books that promote social justice? See the website Social Justice Books https://socialjusticebooks.org/. The organization provides book reviews and resources for teachers. See a review of One of A Kind, Like Me / Único como yo here: https://socialjusticebooks.org/one-of-a-kind-like-me/ • Worried about what questions children might ask or what parents might say? See author Laurin Mayeno’s Educator Guide with helpful tips for talking with children and parents about questions or concerns that may arise: http://oneofakindlikeme.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/One-of-a-Kind-Educator-Guide-V3-092219.pdf • Want more information on understanding the gendering of language? See tips for more inclusive language use in the classroom and other resources provided by Mayeno here: https://oneofakindlikeme.com/using-gender-inclusive-language-with-children-families-7-tips/ • Want to know more about Mayeno’s

	<p>personal story and challenges? See Laurin Mayeno’s animated video about conceiving Danny, being Danny’s parent and her focus on honoring Danny’s identity called <i>A Mother’s Promise: You Can be Yourself</i>: https://www.nytimes.com/video/well/family/100000005267829/conception-son-individuality.html</p>
--	---

Content Area: Science

Fiction and non-fiction picture books are helpful tools in science classrooms to engage learners. These books often do more than just teach our students about science—they reach them on an emotional level (Morgan & Ansberry, 2017). Students can fall in love with their new favorite animal, become excited about traveling to an exotic location, or even become passionate about a new STEM career.

Picture books can inspire emotional conversations between children and adults that can aid in building self-confidence, building emotional competence, and developing prosocial behaviors—like environmental activism (Garner and Tameka, 2018). In Table 2, we outline how a children’s storybook can be used to model empathizing with animals who have lost their homes due to climate change and how children can join the fight to save our planet.

Table 2

Empathy & Activism with “The Tantrum that Saved the World” (Herbert and Mann, 2022)

Structure for Interactive Read Aloud Adapted from Fountas & Pinnell, 2018	Plan for Empathy Building in the Science Context
Picture Book Selection & Preparation Know your students...what are your goals? What book will you select and why? Analyze the text and plan for teaching.	Book Title: <i>The Tantrum that Saved the World</i> Author: Megan Herbert & Michael Mann Illustrator: Megan Herbert Book Summary: “Sophia is minding her own business when the doorbell announces an unexpected guest: a polar bear. Despite Sophia’s protests, he walks right in, making himself at home. His ice cap is melting—where else is he supposed to go? Soon more visitors arrive who have lost their homes, and

	<p>Sophia learns that this is her fight too. Sophia discovers the strength of her own voice and the power of working together” (Herbert and Mann, 2022).</p> <p>Why this book?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This book begins by building an emotional relationship with readers through showing how animals are harmed when they lose their habitats. 2. The story then models empathy development through the main character, Sophia, as she has her own emotional reaction to losing her home when displaced humans and animals move in without permission. She learns to empathize with these house guests and becomes passionate about making a positive change through environmental activism.
<p>Book Introduction Engage students’ interests, activate thinking, provide any necessary background information</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a tantrum? • How do you think the main character will save the world? • Why do you think there are animals on the book cover?
<p>Book Reading Stop at pivotal moments in the book to invite students to engage in conversations grounded in the book</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you think the polar bear’s ice has gone? • Why are all these animals and people losing their homes? • Why are they making signs to take to city hall? • What is cooperative action?
<p>Book Discussion Robust conversations about the text</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some actions you could take to help animals and the environment? • If you could make a sign to take to city

	<p>hall with Sophia, what would it say?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you seen or heard of “weird weather effects” like Sophia? • What are some things you do at home to help the environment?
<p>Book Response Engagement in text-related experiences like inquiry/activism, art, drama or written responses</p>	<p>Empathy Building Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity #1: Environmental Activism Posters. Create a sign to take to city hall with Sophia. Students can parade around the school or display their posters in the school hallway to share their message about climate change. • Activity #2: Cooperative Action. Students become an expert in one way to help the environment, like recycling. They then teach their peers, neighboring classrooms, or their families. • Activity #3: Public Service Announcement (PSA). Students create a 30 second PSA to share during morning announcements or during a parent-teacher conference night about climate change and how you can help reduce your impact.
<p>Related Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Poster called “World Saving Action Plan” link in this storybook: World Saving Action Plan — World Saving Books

Content Area: Social Studies

New York State’s emphasis on civic education empowers students to recognize and work to solve problems in their classrooms and communities (<http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/civic-readiness-initiative>). Understanding and connecting with others is key to developing civic mindsets where students are encouraged to take action to make their schools and communities better places. A picture book we’ve selected to promote empathy and action in the social studies classroom context is: *Fridge-opolis* (Coffey, 2022). While *Fridge-opolis* might initially strike students as a silly or even a gross book, it introduces very important issues that impact many people in our state, our nation, as well as worldwide—food waste and consequently food insecurity. We invited

Jeffrey Xue, a high school student activist, to share a reflection of his own experiences addressing food waste and food insecurity in his school and community. Jeffrey writes,

I imagine a world where food insecurity does not exist—where all basic needs are fulfilled before we hit the classroom door. Food insecurity is a failure of the “American Dream,” but more importantly, a failure of societal obligations. How is it possible in America, a place where grocery stores are lined with impeccably symmetrical produce, where processed foods adorn aisle after aisle, where carts lined with meat roam the store, people can be hungry? This question has piqued both my curiosity and anger for years. My interest in food insecurity started with my fascination, or rather envy regarding food waste. In elementary school, I could be found, sitting behind an empty tray after wolfing down my food, staring at the trays of food being dumped into the garbage by my peers. Food waste made me angry. My eyes were opened to the hunger present not only in our community, but within our school. Nearly half the student population of my school is eligible for the free lunch program. When I pointed this out to my 8th grade history teacher, he nodded and asked me: “What can you do about it?”

Inspired by his teachers to take action, Jeffrey collaborated with teacher mentors to form a non-profit. Through this work, he developed a fruit redistribution program servicing his school and community to reduce school lunch waste (unfortunately, this was suspended due to pandemic issues). However, Jeffrey is currently working on revitalizing a school garden which will provide extra food for students and families in his community. In the table below, Jeffrey works with us to share ideas and resources for teachers and other students interested in reducing food waste and addressing hunger and food insecurity after reading *Fridge-opolis*.

Table 3
Read Aloud Plan for Empathy and Activism for “Fridge-opolis” (Coffey, 2022)

<p>Structure for Interactive Read Aloud Adapted from Fountas & Pinnell, 2018</p>	<p>Plan for Empathy Building in the Social Studies Context</p>
<p>Picture Book Selection & Preparation Know your students...what are your goals? What book will you select and why? Analyze the text and plan for</p>	<p>Book Title: <i>Fridge-opolis</i> Author: Melissa Coffey Illustrator: Josh Cleland Book Summary: Spoiling foods come to life in a nasty refrigerator and look for ways to reduce waste.</p>

<p>teaching.</p>	<p>The book includes some informational backmatter with statistics and background information about the problems with food waste—this section brings attention to food insecurity.</p> <p>Why this book? <i>Fridge-opolis</i> can help open conversations about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Food waste and the harmful consequences for our planet. Food waste harms the environment and uses up valuable resources like water and nutrients in soil. Rotting food in landfills pollutes our environment. Additionally, discarded food could have been shared with others while still fresh to reduce food insecurity. 2. Food insecurity. According to USDA (2021) statistics, 10.2 % of U.S. households were food insecure in the US in 2021— that’s more than 13 million families 3. Composting & recycling: Not only does composting keep food waste out of landfills, thus reducing harmful methane production, but composting and recycling serve as important educational tools. Teaching students about the importance of conserving the finite resources we have available to us on Earth. Composting also produces nutrient-dense fertilizer, opening the door to endless possibilities in gardening.
<p>Book Introduction Engage students’ interests, activate thinking, provide any necessary background information</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you notice on the cover? • What do you think is happening? • How are the characters (the food) feeling? How do you know from looking at the cover?

<p>Book Reading Stop at pivotal moments in the book to invite students to engage in conversations grounded in the book</p>	<p>Guiding Questions: Pause after reading a few pages, ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the mess “Mayor Mayonnaise” had on his hands? • Why had Fridge-opolis fallen into “rancid ruin and disgusting decay?” • Why do you think the food fight started? How were the problems of <i>Fridge-opolis</i> solved?
<p>Book Discussion Robust conversations about the text</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the book’s back matter to students & discuss: why is food waste a serious matter? • Why do you think the US has a national goal of cutting food waste in half by 2030? • Are there times when you waste food? When? Why? • What can you do at school to prevent food waste? What can you do at home to prevent food waste?
<p>Book Response Engagement in text-related experiences like inquiry/activism, art, drama or written responses</p>	<p>Book Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite students to whole class, small group or partner brainstorm using the prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How can we help solve food waste in our classroom/school/community etc.? ○ How can we help address food insecurity? • Research volunteer opportunities in the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is there a school food shelf and/or a community food pantry? ○ Is there a soup kitchen or community garden? ○ Is there a school or community composting program?

<p>Related Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to get students involved locally? Contact your nearby food bank. For example, Foodlink is the regional Food Bank that serves our area—Monroe County (and surrounding) https://foodlinkny.org/. They are always in need of volunteers, so prospective student volunteers can visit their website to sign-up to volunteer, see the food shelves/pantries that serve their areas, see the resources that they have available for food shelves in the area etc. • Want to get students involved nationally? Contact a US-wide organization: Feeding America is a nonprofit organization that food banks all across America belong to. Students can use their website https://feedingamericaaction.org/ to look up the food banks in their area, and from the websites of those local food banks, get involved on their community level. • Want to learn about government laws regarding food donations? Students can look at the USDA website https://www.usda.gov/ if they are interested in the laws/regulations. For instance, Jeffrey used the USDA website to do research about the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act (1996) which allowed entities and persons to donate food and for nonprofits to distribute the food without the fear of legal action, if the food was donated in good faith and no gross negligence occurred.
---------------------------------	---

Area: Special & Inclusive Education

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2022) reports that 7.2 million or 15 percent of students ages 3-21 enrolled in public schools receive special education services, and 66 percent of them spend 80% or more of their school day in general classes in regular schools (n = 4.75 million). With an

increasing number of students with disabilities receiving education in inclusive settings, it is very likely that teachers and students will interact with students with disabilities. Thus, it is urgent for teachers to teach disability awareness, develop empathy, and create an inclusive and respectful environment for all learners.

Children's picture books about disabilities help students learn the characteristics of disabilities, as well as the strengths and challenges experienced by students with disabilities. They are valuable resources for teachers to help children raise awareness and gain a better understanding of disabilities and increase acceptance of students with disabilities (Prater et al., 2006). During the teaching process, teachers not only teach empathy, but also model how to contribute to an inclusive, respectful, and positive learning community for all students (Sigmon et al., 2016). The book we share is *Did You Say Pasghetti? Dusty and Danny Tackle Dyslexia* (Fortune, 2020)—a fun story to learn about dyslexia, its challenges, and how to tackle the challenges with hard work, persistence, and friendship. See Table 4 below for an empathy building plan for *Did You Say Pasghetti? Dusty and Danny Tackle Dyslexia* (Fortune, 2020).

Table 4

Empathy Building with the book “Did You Say Pasghetti? Dusty and Danny Tackle Dyslexia” (Fortune, 2020).

Structure for Interactive Read Aloud Adapted from Fountas & Pinnell, 2018	Special and Inclusive Educator Plans for Empathy Building
Picture Book Selection & Preparation Know your students...what are your goals? What book will you select and why? Analyze the text and plan for teaching.	Book Title: <i>Did You Say Pasghetti? Dusty and Danny Tackle Dyslexia</i> Author: Tammy Fortune Illustrator: Pleter Els Book Summary: This picture book is written from Dusty the dog’s view. It describes how Danny, Dusty’s best friend and a boy with dyslexia, learns to overcome his learning challenges to spell, read, and write better. It is an engaging story to learn about dyslexia, its challenges, and how to tackle it with hard work, persistence, and friendship. Why this book? 1. Dyslexia, one type of the specific learning disabilities (LD), has the largest population among students with disabilities. Over 98% of students with LD are enrolled in

	<p>regular schools, and over 73% of them spend 80% or more of their school day in regular classrooms with peers without disabilities (NCES, 2022). It is likely that the students have a peer with dyslexia in their class.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. This book helps readers to learn about dyslexia and students who have dyslexia in a fun way. 3. This book describes the shared emotions of frustration when learning or doing something difficult. It also talks about how hard work and persistence could be helpful to accomplish the learning task. It is easy for the readers to make connections with their own feelings when faced with difficulties and reinforce the importance of persistence. 4. This book also shows the power of friendship and connectedness, which provides a wonderful opportunity for the readers to discuss how to extend kindness and support, and make friends with peers to create an inclusive community.
<p>Book Introduction Engage students’ interests, activate thinking, provide any necessary background information</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you struggled to learn something difficult? What did you feel at the beginning? • (If frustrated/confused) How did you overcome the feeling and learn it? What did you feel after you achieved the goal? • What do you notice about the cover?
<p>Book Reading Stop at pivotal moments in the book to invite students to engage in conversations grounded in the book</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the text and illustrations, tell who is Dusty? Who is Danny? • How does Danny feel? Explain your thinking. • Using the text and illustrations, tell what

	<p>happened with Danny? Why do you say so?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Danny feel? Explain your thinking. • What is dyslexia? How do you know that? • How does Danny feel? Explain your thinking. • What happened in the story that helped Danny’s feelings change? What led to the changes? Explain your thinking.
<p>Book Discussion Robust conversations about the text</p>	<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think – What are the characters, the settings, the events, and the characters’ feelings described in the book <i>Did You Say Pasghetti?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is your favorite part of the book? • Pair – Tell your reading partner the characters, the setting, the events, and the characters’ feelings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tell your partner about your favorite part of the book. Explain why that part was your favorite. ○ Remember to ask your partner to share their thoughts about the book too. • Share – Be ready to share your discussion with the whole class. • Reflect & Write – Think about what you learned from the previous think-pair-share activity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reflect on “How does paying attention to the story elements help you to be a better reader?” ○ Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook. (Remember to include examples from the story!)
<p>Book Response Engagement in text-related experiences like inquiry/</p>	<p>Book Response Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect – Think about one experience when you were learning something hard.

<p>activism, art, drama or written responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What did you struggle with? ○ What helped you learn? ○ Write, draw, and/or use the “emotions playdough mat” to demonstrate your emotion(s) (sad, happy, etc.) in that learning process. ● Gallery walk – Students go around the room to view peers’ reflection demonstration. ● Whole class discussion to strengthen the learning community building – What did you learn from another peer, or from this process?
<p>Related Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A free teaching guide, activities, and games: www.DustyTheDog.com ● Emotions playdough mat: https://veryspecialtales.com/emotions-playdough-mats-faces/ ● Lesson plans and children’s books on differences and disability awareness: https://rwcwithmrsp.wordpress.com/2017/01/16/lesson-plans-and-childrens-books-on-differences-and-disability-awareness/ ● National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). Students with Disabilities. Condition of Education. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64

Teacher Guide to Available Resources

There are many places to find books that promote empathy and understanding in the classroom. One great place to start is to search for book lists that have been curated by experts. Your local public or school librarian can help you find more options than you thought were possible. For those that do not have easy access to a librarian, there are a few places you could start:

The American Library Association has many committees that oversee awards that recognize different aspects of diversity. For example:

- Corretta Scott King: outstanding African-American authors

- Pura Belpré: celebration of Latinx culture
- Stonewall Book Award: LGBTQIA+ representation

There are also other professional organizations with book awards. Examples include:

- Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature
- American Indian Youth Literature Award
- Association of Jewish Librarians, Sydney Taylor Book Award

Beyond these specific awards, there are many lists available in reputable publications such as HuffPo, Common Sense Media, Teach Thought, Goodreads, and more. We have put together a webpage of diverse book lists as well as curated lists of books to build empathy with students. Our guide can be found at: <https://library.brockport.edu/education/diversebooks>.

Children's Literature Cited

- Coffey, M. (2022). *Fridge-opolis*. Little Bee Books.
- Fortune, T. (2020). *Did you say pasghetti? Dusty and Danny tackle dyslexia*. Tammy Fortune.
- Herbert, M. & Mann, M. (2022) *The tantrum that saved the world*. North Atlantic Books.
- Mayeno, L. (2016). *One of a kind like me/Único como yo*. Blood Orange Press.

References

- Adichie, C. (2009, July). The danger of a single story [Transcript]. TED Conferences.
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/comments
- Baldwin, K. (2018). The power of using international picture books with young children. *Young Children*, 73(2), 74–80.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00050>
- Bishop, R. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives*, 1(3), ix–xi.
- Chen, X., & Browne, S. (2015). Pearls of meaning: Preschool children respond to multicultural picture books. *New Waves Educational Research and Development*, 18(2), 16-28.
- Colantonio-Yurko, K., Olmstead, K., Rath, L. & Hutchings, M., (2021). Standing-up to social injustices: Using critical literacy and global children's literature for equity. *The Dragon Lode*, 39(2), 27-36.
- Cunningham, K. (2015). *Story: Still the heart of literacy learning*. Stenhouse.
- Cunningham, K., & Enriquez, G. (2022). Planning for book joy: Reconceptualizing power in literacy instruction. *Language Arts*, 99(3), 192-194.

- Durlak, J., Weissberg, R., Dymnicki, A., Taylor, R., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development, 82*, 405-432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x>
- Fountas, I. & Pinnell, G. (2018). *The literacy quick guide: A reference tool for responsive literacy teaching*. Heinemann.
- Fountas, I., & Pinnell, G. (2017). *The Fountas & Pinnell literacy continuum: A tool for assessment, planning, and teaching*. Heinemann.
- Fountas, I., & Pinnell, G. (2006). *Teaching for comprehension and fluency: Thinking, talking and writing about reading, K-8*. Heinemann.
- Fresch, M., & Harkins, M. (2009). *The Power of picture books: Using content area literature in middle school*. Read, Write, Think. <https://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/professional-library/power-picture-books-using#>
- Garner, P. W., & Tameka S. P. (2018). Young children's picture-books as a forum for the socialization of emotion. *Journal of early childhood research: ECR, 16*(3), 291–304. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X18775760>
- Jones, D., Greenberg, M., & Crowley, M. (2015). Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness. *American Journal of Public Health, 105*, 2283-2290.
- Morgan, E., & Ansberry, K. (2017). *Picture-perfect STEM lessons, K-2: Using children's books to inspire STEM learning*. NSTA Press.
- Kesler, C. M., & Knight, M. (2021). *Now More than Ever: Why Empathy is Core*. Core Empathy. <https://www.coreempathy.com/post/now-more-than-ever-why-empathy-is-core>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2022). *Students with disabilities. Condition of education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64>
- New York State Department of Education. (2019). *Culturally responsive-sustaining education framework*. <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/crs/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education-framework.pdf>
- Olmstead, K. & Troiani, S. (Eds.). (2023). *Many books, many stories: Using children's and young adult literature to open classroom conversations*. Peter Lang.
- Prater, M. A., Dyches, T. T., & Johnstun, M. (2006). Teaching students about learning disabilities through children's literature. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 42*(1), 14–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10534512060420010301>

- Sigmon, M. L., Tackett, M. E., & Azano, A. P. (2016). Using children's picture books about autism as resources in inclusive classrooms. *The Reading Teacher*, 70(1), 111–117. doi: 10.1002/trtr.1473
- Souto-Manning, M. (2009). Negotiating culturally responsive pedagogy through multicultural children's literature: Towards critical democratic literacy practices in a first-grade classroom. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 9(1), 50-74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798408101105>
- Williams-Sanchez, V. L. (2021). *Reading builds empathy: Piloting a literacy tool to measure reading's impact on kids' empathy development*. [Doctoral Dissertation, St John's University]. Early Childhood Commons.