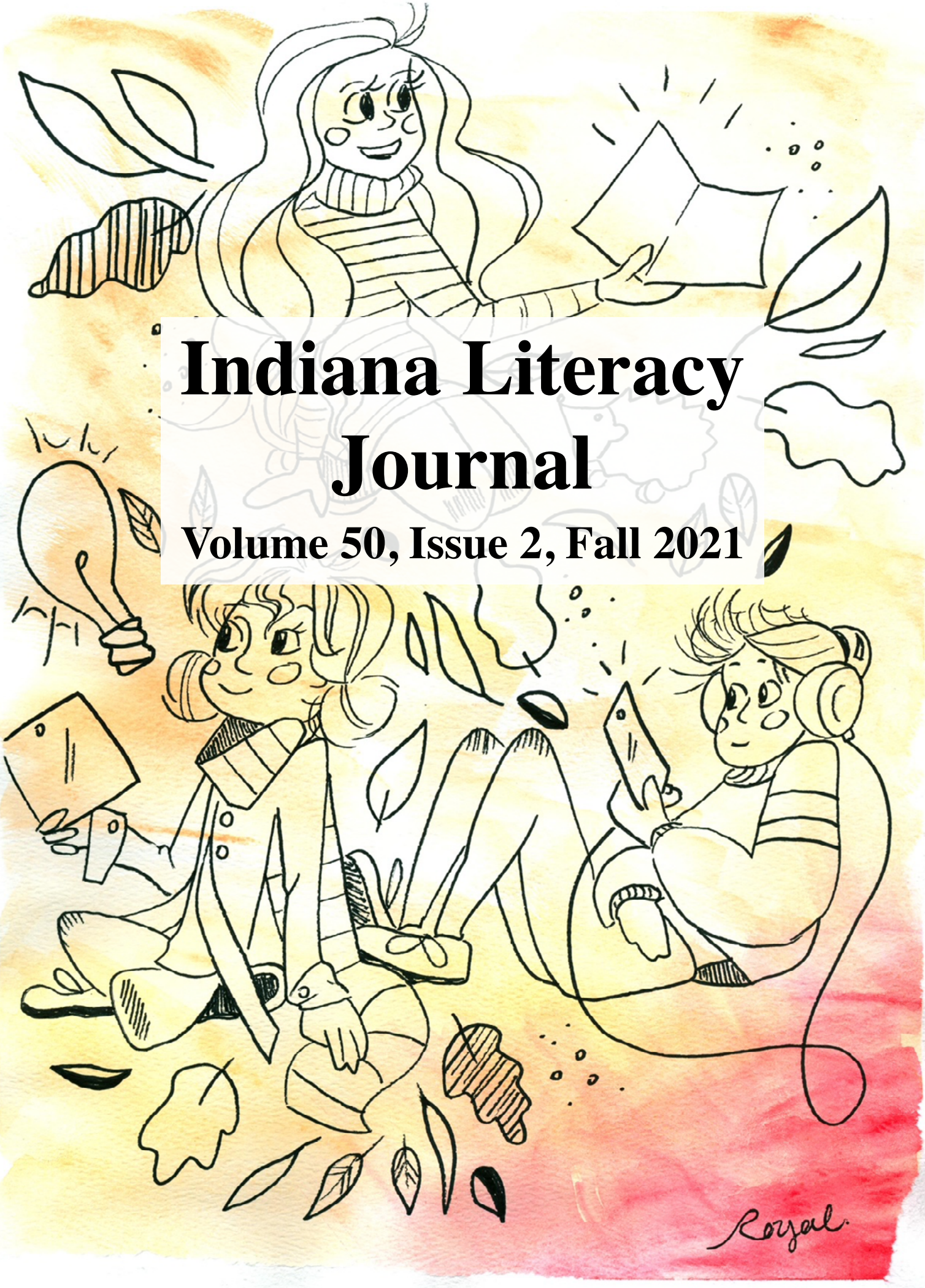

Indiana Literacy Journal

Volume 50, Issue 2, Fall 2021

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A Message from the Chair of the Board….

Thank you for taking the time to read the Fall 2021 edition of the Indiana Literacy Journal. I'm thrilled that so many passionate and dedicated professionals were able to contribute their thoughts and ideas to this latest edition.

Our *Bridging Research to Practice* articles showcase some important and relevant research. Marie Putnam Harvan's article on breaking down reading barriers brought on by Covid-19 offers some practical suggestions for teachers working with students whose reading time might have shifted due to the pandemic. There are two articles looking at diversity in children's literature with excellent book picks for any classroom. Finally, the article on integrating social studies into language arts time provides excellent background information on content integration and the need to strengthen students' background knowledge to improve literacy outcomes.

Our *Voices from the Region* articles provide timely book and tech picks for the classroom. Sarrah Grubb offers a challenge for taking the first step to use picture books more readily in the classroom to access students' background knowledge and spark interest in learning.

Finally, our book reviews for this edition all feature books from nominees and winners of the 2020 Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Author Awards from the Indiana Humanities Council. There are a variety of age levels represented in the books, and the reviews provide practical classroom applications along some connections to Indiana history.

I hope you enjoy the articles in this latest edition, and I would encourage you to check out the Call for Proposals for the spring 2022 edition. Please consider submitting an article on taking the first step to making a change in your teaching practice on any topic you choose! There are many changes you might be circling around based on new research, policies, and information, and we want to celebrate taking that first step, since sometimes that can be the hardest part.

Thank you for your continued passion towards promoting literacy in the state of Indiana.

Benjamin Boche

Indiana Literacy Journal

The Indiana Literacy Journal is the peer-reviewed journal of the Indiana State Literacy Association, which is composed of and serves classroom teachers, literacy specialists, educational leaders, teacher educators, and university faculty. The journal publishes on diverse topics related to literacy, including reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, visually representing, technology, and literature for children and young adults. Submissions are invited in any of the categories below, though we are particularly interested in manuscripts that connect literacy and social justice, address new literacies (e.g., technology, graphic novels, podcasts, etc.), current literacy legislation, and other literacy topics relevant to the state of Indiana.

For our Spring 2022 issue, we welcome submissions for the following categories below and invite authors to consider writing articles about taking the first step to making change. This could be anything - The first step in learning about the science of reading; the first step to using diverse books in the classroom; The first step to handling challenges to classroom materials. The sky's the limit! We all need help in taking that first step to making change, and we want to hear what you have done!

Deadline for submission: February 1st, 2021

Bridging Research and Practice Articles

Articles submitted in this category present original descriptions of research-based instruction that improves the literacy learning of students ranging from birth to college age. Articles describing research-based practices in literacy teacher education will also be considered. Manuscripts in this category must include practical steps to guide readers in applying the research to their practice. Manuscript submissions should include APA formatted references to the relevant research literature and must not exceed 5,000 words (including tables, figures and appendices; excluding reference list) in 12-point font and left-aligned. Any charts or graphics must be of high-quality and in black and white. These manuscripts undergo blind review by members of the journal's editorial review board.

Voices from the Region

Articles submitted in this category will showcase evidence-based literacy practices being implemented throughout the state and region in such varied spaces as classrooms, districts, libraries, after school programs, online schools, homes, daycares, preschools, etc.. We are specifically interested in submissions from practitioners who can share tips and ideas about what is working in their context, why they are engaging in these ideas, and how others could do this, too. Our goal is to hear from a range of practitioners in and around the state who are interested in literacy. Manuscripts in this category should begin with an introduction to the authors and the context of their work. Please also include APA formatted references to the relevant research literature, if appropriate to the piece. Manuscript submissions should be between 750 and 1500 words (including tables, figures and appendices; excluding reference list), double-spaced, and in 12-point font and left-aligned. Any charts or graphics must be of high-quality and in black and white. These manuscripts undergo blind review by members of the journal's editorial review board.

Visual Artifacts and Graphics

Submissions in this category share visual artifacts of literacy teaching practices through photos of teachers and students engaging in literacy, literacy projects, literacy centers, and artifacts of student learning. Each image should be clear, in focus, of a high resolution/quality, and sent as a full-size jpeg or tiff file attachment, accompanied by a brief, 50-100 word description. Documents must be scanned, not photographed; the latter will not be of high enough quality for publication. By submitting an item in this category, the individual indicates that he/she has obtained consent from the district, school, teacher, parent, and child to use the image for publication. The journal's editorial team reviews submissions in this category.

By submitting to the Indiana Literacy Journal, you will be asked to sign an author's permission statement that attests to the originality of your work and your willingness to publish under a Creative Commons License.

Submissions should be sent electronically to Ben Boche at islastatepresident@gmail.com The author(s) must agree that the submitted manuscript is original work and not currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. Manuscripts should include a complete title on the first page, but no identification of the author or affiliation should appear in the title or elsewhere in the submitted manuscript. Use "author" to ensure the submitted version is a blind copy. Be sure to adhere to APA 7th edition guidelines. Manuscripts are peer reviewed and editors reserve the right to edit all copies. Each article is sent to at least two members of the editorial advisory board for review and recommendations to the editors. Manuscripts are evaluated in terms of interest, quality of writing, appropriate documentation of ideas, uniqueness, and needs of the journal. Please contact Ben Boche at islastatepresident@gmail.com with any questions.

Primary Teachers' Goals and Needs: Learning to Integrate Social Studies into English Language Arts Time

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Author Note

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest. The article is based on data presented at the 2018 annual meeting of the National Association of Professional Development Schools. Our professional learning project was supported by Improving Teacher Quality Partnership Program Grant #J22-17-C0658, funded by the Indiana Commission of Higher Education.

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**Primary Teachers' Goals and Needs:
Learning to Integrate Social Studies into English Language Arts Time**

I understand my social studies standards. I understand my literacy standards. But I think for me is putting it all together…

In my own classroom, I know that…. the kids are so excited and it really innovates them to continue learning… I'll be able to grow myself as an educator so that I can best fit the students' needs.

In these quotations, second-grade teachers Wendy and Cora (all names are pseudonyms) express their reasons for seeking to increase their knowledge and skill in project-based learning. Their desire connects with the recent trend we have observed in our work across the country toward greater emphasis on kindergarten through second-grade [K-2] teachers' integration of content areas such as social studies and science into English Language Arts [ELA] time. Primary teachers' integrated instruction enables simultaneous support of children's literacy and content area learning (Casey et al., 2018; Cervetti et al., 2012; Nagy & Townsend, 2012). Their instruction supports children's development of content knowledge and disciplinary literacy, or "ability to engage in social, semiotic, and cognitive practices consistent with those of content experts" (Fang, 2012, p. 19). Through the instruction, children gain experience and skill in historians' and scientists' use of literacy when creating and disseminating knowledge (e.g., Goldman et al., 2016). Increasingly, scholars are arguing that children's content knowledge and disciplinary literacy are a necessary and central focus for K-2 learning (e.g., Cabell & Hwang, 2020; Moje, 2015)

Primary teachers' increased knowledge and skill contributes to equity in K-2 students' learning opportunities. Social studies and science learning frameworks contain expectations for students' reading and writing (e.g., Wright & Domke, 2019). For example:

- "Identify continuity and change between past and present in community life using primary sources" (1.1.1; Indiana Department of Education [IDOE], 2020a, p. 4),

- "Draw simple maps using symbols that show how space is used in familiar areas such as the classroom, the school, and the neighborhood" (1.3.7; p. 8),
- "Develop a timeline of important events in the history of the school and/or school community" (2.1.5; IDOE, 2020b, p. 4), and
- "Read about and summarize historical community events using a variety of resources (the library, digital media, print media, electronic media, and community resources)" (2.1.7; p. 4).

Yet, children's learning to read and write texts in social studies and science has been constrained (Morgan et al., 2016; van Fossen, 2005). On average, K-2 students have used informational text for 0-3.6 minutes (e.g., Duke, 2000; Jeong et al., 2010). Since 2000, fourth-grade students' reading for information on the National Assessment of Educational Progress has involved average scale scores of 219-221, corresponding to the Below Basic and Basic achievement categories (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021a). The average scores for Black, Indigenous and People of Color [BIPOC] students have been even lower: 187-206 (Below Basic). Children, especially those from marginalized racial and ethnic groups, remain in need of instructional support.

In the current study, we asked Wendy, Cora, and their colleagues to help us understand their present integrated instructional knowledge and skill. Although our goal was to enable planning of our project, the study also contributes uniquely to the research literature. The results offer insight that can be used to inform future K-2 professional learning activities.

Primary Teachers' Integrated Instruction

Primary teachers' integrated instruction involves simultaneous addressing of children's learning in literacy and content areas such as social studies and science (e.g., Brock et al., 2014; Cervetti et al., 2012). Figure 1 depicts a sample first-grade integrated instructional unit. As Figure 1 shows, teachers enact units that include demonstrations, discussions, explanations, guided practice, question-driven inquiries, read-alouds, and writing. Rather than relying on themes or simply incorporating informational text (e.g., biographies, news articles), integration makes use of the "synergistic" relationship between literacy and the focal content area by including an equal balance of attention to both areas (e.g., Pearson et al., 2010).

Primary teachers' integrated instruction has been linked to children's learning (Ippolito et al., 2017; Vitale & Romance, 2012; Wright & Gotwals, 2017). For instance, Vitale and Romance (2012) found first- and second-grade students significantly outperformed their peers on standardized reading and science tests after their teachers' year-long use of Science IDEAS. The integrated instruction included hands-on science investigations, learning centers, read-alouds, guided reading, concept mapping, journaling, drawing, and writing. Also, Wright and Gotwals (2017) found, compared to their peers, kindergarten students' scientific claims, use of evidence, and vocabulary knowledge and usage were significantly higher after their teachers implemented a curriculum consisting of science inquiries, read-alouds, questioning, drawing, and writing. In these studies, teachers' instruction led to K-2 students' growth in reading, science knowledge, and disciplinary oral language.

Finally, prior research has showcased the challenges of integrated instruction and primary teachers' need for instructional knowledge and skill (e.g., Isik-Ercan, 2020; Mangiante, 2018). During integrated instruction, teachers attend not only to literacy but also to the focal content area. Researchers have argued both areas include unique processes necessitating separate instructional attention (e.g., Dickinson & Young, 1998). Also, researchers have documented inequities in students' learning opportunities linked to teachers' instruction (e.g., Lindquist & Neal, 2018; Stefanski et al., 2019). The inequities have disproportionately been observed in classrooms serving BIPOC and low-income students (e.g., Curran, 2017; Smith et al., 2016). In one urban first-grade teacher's integrated instruction, text-based research but not inquiry experiences (e.g., observing phenomena, conducting experiments) were included (Howes et al., 2009). The exclusive focus on children's reading circumscribed their learning about scientific processes and scientists' use of literacy when creating and disseminating science knowledge. Teachers' simultaneous and balanced attention to children's learning in literacy, social studies or science, and disciplinary literacy is required.

The Current Study

We examined primary teachers' present integrated instructional knowledge and skill. Attention to teachers' goals and needs is instrumental in the effectiveness of professional learning (e.g., Desimone & Pak, 2017; Hubbard et al., 2020). For example, Hubbard et al. (2020) recognized their lack of attention to teachers' expectations as a constraint in their project's effectiveness when half of their surveyed teachers reported minimal or not enough learning. Consequently, our purpose was to gain insight into teachers' expectations. Rather than seeking insight into teachers' prior learning and lesson planning, we sought to understand their self-reported professional goals and needs. Our research question was: *What are primary teachers' goals and needs prior to integrated instructional professional learning?*

We view primary teachers' knowledge and skill as foundational to their integrated instruction and children's learning (e.g., Dwyer et al., 2016; Gavelek & Bresnahan, 2009). Teachers explain literacy and content area concepts and processes, offer practice opportunities, and give feedback. What teachers say and do makes the concepts and processes available to children. However, teachers' talk and actions also influence children's understandings (e.g., students as learners and future historians and scientists). Additionally, teachers' knowledge and skill are subject to change through experience and professional learning (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), and analyses of their collective expectations reveals teacher-identified shared professional learning goals and needs.

Methods

The current descriptive study was a part of a larger analysis of elementary and middle school teachers' learning during a two-year professional learning project focused on integration of social studies into ELA time (Martin et al., 2018). In contrast to the larger analysis, the current study examined primary teachers' initial knowledge and skill.

Context and participants

Participants were teachers at a Title I primary school in a suburban, Midwestern school district. The school served 621 kindergarten through second-grade students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021b) and had recently adopted new literacy curricula that included reading and writing of informational text. The school's reported student demographic profile was 85.2% White, 4.3% Black, 2.9% Asian, 1.4% Hispanic, and 5.8% Two or More Races. Also, 244 students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. In first and second grade, 40% of the incoming students were identified as reading below-grade-level. At the enrollment meeting, we invited all teachers who had signed up for the project to participate, and all but two consented.

Twelve kindergarten through second-grade teachers participated. Teachers were female, self-identified as Caucasian, and had 4-28 years of teaching experience. Their demographic and teaching backgrounds were reflective of the school's teaching population. Four of the teachers were pursuing or had completed graduate degrees. All teachers reported minimal prior integrated instructional professional learning and the absence of a dedicated social studies instructional block in their daily schedules.

Data Sources

Data sources included a survey and an interview. A team of five researchers specializing in social studies, literacy, and survey methodology developed the survey and interview. The survey included 17 questions. Nine questions focused on social studies and literacy instruction and were analyzed in the study. [The remaining questions sought teachers' input into their professional development activities.] The interview included six questions, and follow-up probes accompanied each question (e.g., "When it comes to [insert topic], about what do you most want to learn?"). A sampling of the questions can be found in Table 1.

Two researchers who were former elementary teachers and an elementary teacher who had 18 years of experience piloted the survey and interview. Piloting suggested the questions were clear and comprehensible, yielded details about teachers' professional goals and needs, and required 10-20 minutes for completion.

We collected data prior to the start of their professional learning, within the four-week period following the enrollment meeting. To distribute and collect the surveys, we used the Qualtrics platform. All teachers returned the survey. Then teachers completed the interviews individually, at a time of their choosing and in their empty classrooms. Although social studies integration was our focus, teachers were neither asked to avoid nor stopped from discussing other content areas. We audio-recorded all interviews. After two research assistants transcribed them, we checked and confirmed the transcripts' accuracy and completeness.

Data Analysis

We used thematic and discourse analytic coding procedures, constant comparison, and descriptive statistical calculations (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Yin, 2015). The first author analyzed the data, and the second author critically examined all analyses (e.g., Denzin, 2001). We began by downloading the data into Excel spreadsheets. For the survey's confidence and frequency-of-use questions, we tabulated teachers' responses and calculated means and ranges. For the remaining survey and interview questions, we separated teachers' answers into idea units (e.g., Chafe, 1985). We developed and iteratively applied emergent categories describing the focus of each unit. Then we (a) separated all coded units by category, (b) examined them for fitness and similarity, (c) re-coded units deemed too similar in meaning, and (d) resolved coding disagreements through discussion. When our second examination yielded no additional changes, we defined and compiled themes in the interview questions, and we tabulated and calculated means for the survey response questions. Lastly, we conducted a search for disconfirming evidence and a final check for fitness and redundancy. No changes were made, and the second author affirmed the lack of presence of additional themes and disconfirming evidence. Table 2 describes the categories and themes in the interview data.

Results

Analysis of the primary teachers' expectations for professional learning revealed an emphasis on their knowledge and skill in addressing children's social studies and disciplinary literacy learning during ELA time. Below, we describe teachers' goals and needs separately.

Primary Teachers' Goals

Teachers' professional learning goals included increased knowledge and skill in their simultaneous teaching of social studies. On the survey, eight teachers reported a desire to improve their integration (e.g., "How to better integrate the content areas into my literacy instruction"). During the interview, teachers noted their daily schedules did not include designated time for social studies and they wished to address social studies learning standards. Teachers also shared they were not satisfied with their existing integration, desired to increase their knowledge, and wanted to learn how to overcome instructional challenges (e.g., finding resources, achieving balance). For example, they said,

- "I'm mainly interested in the social studies because I feel like social studies and science have just kind of gone out the window. We don't really do really anything unless it's a fun thing, a tradition that they do every year" [Kennedy, 2nd grade],
- "So, I think just trying to really be more intent about those standards, because it's all of them in one week… So, I think trying to beef that unit up, so it has more in it to be more intent about teaching those standards" [Bella, Kindergarten],
- "I would want to know just more about what it is; I feel like I have an idea of what it is… and I just want to make sure that I fully understand how to do that" [Harper, 1st grade], and
- "Then I think I'll feel better about teaching it… because I don't feel comfortable about doing it, it almost feels like a hassle, and I don't want it to be that way" and "I want to get all that in there… it's hard to squeeze all that in and feel like it's really quality" [Kinsley, Kindergarten].

The focus was on improving their social studies integration.

Teachers' goals also included increased knowledge and skill in motivating and helping students to learn. On the survey, three teachers shared the goal of supporting their students' literacy and disciplinary literacy learning (e.g., "My hope is that I will also learn how to provide better support/ scaffolds to my most struggling readers and writers along the way"). Also, during the interview, teachers highlighted their desire to accommodate students' social studies learning. Ava [2nd grade] shared, "Because kids have strengths in those areas and… kids love history, and we need to make sure that we include part of that in there." Cora [2nd grade] reported, "The kids are so excited, and it really innovates them to continue learning…" They focused on supporting children's learning in social studies, disciplinary literacy, and literacy.

Additionally, teachers' goals included increased knowledge and skill in creating integrated instructional units. On the survey, four teachers reported wanting to write the units (e.g., "I want to be able to write and execute integrated units"). During the interview, teachers also noted their desire to have units to use in the future. For example, Charlotte [1st grade] said, "I can't wait. I want to try to create units for the whole year so that we can kind of build on that as we go along." Her focus was on developing units for use in future instruction.

Primary Teachers' Needs

Teachers' needs corresponded to their goals of increased knowledge and skill in integrating teaching and support for children's learning in social studies and disciplinary literacy into ELA time. For example, they revealed a need for help with clarifying how disciplinary literacy learning is addressed within integrated instruction. Teachers' prior experiences involved teaching that emphasized students' reading or thematic teaching. Table 3 lists teachers' reported topics and projects. The table shows their integrated instruction included author studies, genre studies, and reading and writing skills. Also, in the interview, teachers discussed incorporating themes and informational text. For instance, they said,

- "I love teaching themey ways. Sure, I taught kindergarten for 15 years, so that's what we did all the time. And so, it's hard for me to not teach that way, but I feel like sometimes it's hard… to get the theme in and all of our scales" [Julia, *1st grade*] and
- "We are integrating Storyworks Junior with our reading workshop format this year. I do like Storyworks Junior… it does provide nonfiction at their fingertips…" [Ella, *2nd grade*].

Their discussions did not include mention of prior experience in supporting children's learning to use historians' and scientists' literacy practices when creating and disseminating knowledge.

Additionally, teachers highlighted the need to expand their social studies and disciplinary literacy teaching. As Table 3 shows, their focus was scattered across topics; taught, on average, by three teachers; and did not include disciplinary literacy. Also, in the interview, several teachers claimed minimal experience. For example, Harper [1st grade] noted, "I don't have any other experiences with that either," and Emma [1st grade] said, "We talked about it briefly when I was in college. Like being taught how to do it. It was like a unit. But it was two chapters." Moreover, Table 4 describes their surveyed instructional foci and skills. The table shows teachers claimed to teach the featured foci and skills, on average, 1-2 times a semester and focused more often on children's literacy learning than their learning in social studies and disciplinary literacy. Teachers' reported integration of social studies and disciplinary literacy was not equal to their literacy teaching during ELA time.

Lastly, teachers emphasized their need to develop additional strategies for supporting children's social studies and disciplinary literacy learning. On the survey, teachers claimed they factored students' learning (e.g., assessment data, lesson goals) and logistical concerns (e.g., time, resources) into their modifications but felt least confident about their instructional support (e.g., helping students conduct research, differentiating for student needs). Table 3, which also lists strategies teachers reported using to help children read and write social studies texts, shows strategies (a) were each used, on average, by 3 teachers; (b) varied in the focus and level of help offered; and (c) did not include help with children's gaining experience in disciplinary literacy and in taking action to effect social change. Moreover, during the interview, some teachers highlighted use of specific strategies but others emphasized their lack of use. For instance, Olivia [1st grade] used explanation, inquiry, and driving questions during a national

symbols unit. She said, "I'll start with just what is a symbol and investigating symbols and then creating our own symbols… so I try and start with a question. And then… letting kids choose the ones they're interested in." She offered instructional support for children's inquiry and project creation. However, Kennedy [2nd grade] reported her economics and life-cycle units did not involve teaching and learning, saying, "I don't teach it but I have a little money system where they can earn money and if they lose their eraser then they have to buy a new eraser because if I lose something I have to go buy something new" and "We haven't done any learning… it's more of just observing and reading about the chicks." Their instructional support within the units contrasted and included minimal strategy use.

Discussion

Greater understanding of primary teachers' goals and needs enables identifications of foci for future K-2 integrated instructional professional learning activities. Our analysis of teachers' surveys and interviews extended prior research by representing their collective perspective and revealed teachers' initial expectations focused on (a) learning more about how to integrate their support of children's social studies and disciplinary literacy learning into ELA time and (b) expanding their future use of instructional foci, teaching strategies, and units. Teachers' focus on their teaching practice (e.g., lesson planning, collaboration) is similar to previous studies (e.g., Hubbard et al., 2020), but the presence of an emphasis on supporting children's social studies and disciplinary literacy learning contrasts with prior research. The emphasis is particularly significant in light of studies documenting inequities linked to teachers' instruction (e.g., Howes et al., 2009); their focus addresses the noted imbalance between teachers' addressing of children's learning in content areas and in literacy during integration.

The results suggest that helping primary teachers to incorporate informational text and to support children's reading of the texts is not sufficient for addressing their professional goals and needs. Children's learning in science and social studies includes not only conceptual knowledge but also processes (e.g., inquiry, effecting social change) and disciplinary literacy. What also is required is a focus on children's opportunities for learning social studies and disciplinary literacy during ELA time. The study teachers discussed their teaching about texts and reading (e.g., text features, generalized reading strategies). However, they did not connect the teaching to children's own reading and writing when creating and disseminating social studies knowledge.

In K-2 professional learning activities, instructional coaches, professional developers, and teacher educators will need to design learning opportunities that enable teachers' increased knowledge and skill in supporting children's social studies and disciplinary literacy learning. Figure 2 showcases a sample plan for one session. The session includes discussions, explanations, and practicing of reading and writing when creating and disseminating social studies knowledge. Additionally, teachers may gain exposure and experience to teaching strategies and instructional supports by reading about social studies integration, viewing classroom snapshots, evaluating curricula, and collaborating to plan lessons. Table 5 lists resources for use in these activities.

Finally, the current study highlights primary teachers' emphasis when seeking to learn about integrated instruction. Our results offer greater understanding of their self-identified goals and needs. The insight holds potential for informing the efforts of instructional coaches, professional developers, and teacher educators who wish to address equitable K-2 literacy learning opportunities. Children, especially BIPOC and low-income students, can benefit from our finding that teachers' expectations focus on improving their support of students' social studies and disciplinary literacy learning during ELA time.

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Table 1

Examples of Interview and Survey Questions

Source & Focus	Examples
Survey	
Needs	• "Rate how confident you are utilizing the following: - Text features… Helping students to conduct research…: Not confident, Somewhat not confident, Neutral, Somewhat confident, Confident, or Unsure."
	• "On average, how often do you engage in the following: Teaching comprehension of nonfiction… Helping students conduct research…: Daily, 1 to 2 times a week, 1 to 2 times a month, 1 to 2 times a semester, 1 to 2 times a year, or Never."
	• "What topics and projects, if any, did you use this year? In previous years?"
	• "Which strategies do you use to help your students read and write social studies texts?"
Goals	• What do you want to learn about reading and writing as a result of participating in the grant?
Interview	
Needs	• "Explain how you (a) teach social studies, (b) teach literacy, (c) assess your students' learning, and (d) use units and projects in your classroom"
Goals	• "What are your professional goals for (a) teaching social studies, (b) teaching literacy, (c) assessment, (d) project-based learning, and (e) lesson study?"

Table 2

Overview of Interview Coding

Categories	Themes	Examples
Challenges	*Assessment, Balance, Standards, Text, Time, Work*	• "That's my other problem. It's hard to find time." • "But it was so much work to put together and it's just not practical."
Create units	*Collaboration, Create more, Have ready-to-use*	• "I really want to develop more unit plans in what we're doing..." • "I think I would definitely enjoy if units were already made that we could use…"
Instructional planning	*Children's interests, Routines, Discussion, Standards-matching, Separate activities, Support, Text features*	• "… And we try to think of an interesting topic… So you get them interested in just diving into whatever it is we're focusing on."
Learning to teach	*Fitting into mandates, How to do, Not very good*	• "…and learning how to do it and doing it well." • "…I think project-based learning is really important, but I'm not very good at coming up with it…"
Prior experiences	*Language Arts, Learning, No experience, Science, Social Studies, Strategies, Theme-based*	• "… our community helpers, seems like all of our standards are really met in that theme…" • "We talked about it briefly when I was in college..."
Student learning	*Answering questions, Knowledge, Citizenship, Community, Themselves, Motivation*	• "It's just something that will help my classroom learn." • "… and kids love history and we need to make sure that we include part of that in there."
Teach social studies	*Addressing goals, Enhance teaching, Shortchanged*	• "But that's the only social studies theme that we do a lot of… So, I really would love to beef that up. Because I think we could do a lot more than what we do."
Want to learn more about it	*Confirm thinking, Like to learn, Not familiar, Want to do*	• "I would want to know just more about what it is; I feel like I have an idea of what it is. And I just want to make sure that I fully understand how to do that."

Table 3

Teachers' Reported Use of Topics and Strategies

Question	# of Teachers[a]
What topics and projects, if any, did you use this year? In previous years?	
Community helpers	5
Genre studies (e.g., fairy tales)	5
Life cycles	5
Space	5
Animals	4
Insects	4
Ocean	4
Presidents	4
Citizenship & Democracy	3
Economics	3
Famous People	3
Holidays	3
Seasons	3
Zoo	3
American Revolution	2
Author Studies (e.g., Mo Willems)	2
Black History	2
Habitats	2
Johnny Appleseed & Apples	2
Matter	2
Reading and Writing Skills	2
Weather	2
Which strategies do you use to help your students read and write social studies texts?	
Teaching text features	6
Discussion	3
Teaching reading strategies (e.g., predictions)	3
Selecting texts (e.g., nonfiction)	3
Creating projects	2
Integrating literature	2
Modeling	2
Setting reading purposes	2
Visual aids	2

[a]Includes identifications by 2 or more teachers.

Table 4

Teachers' Reported Use of Instructional Foci and Skills

Question	Teachers' Response – Mean Rating
How often do your lessons involve…?	
Project-Based Learning (PBL)	Never
Conducting research	Never
Nonfiction comprehension	1-2 times a year
Producing knowledge	1-2 times a semester
Making connections between knowledge/experience and social problems/public policy	1-2 times a semester
Addressing central ideas to produce complex understandings	1-2 times a semester
Considering core democratic values during decision-making	1-2 times a semester
Span disciplines/subjects, bridge time/place, or blend knowledge/skills	1-2 times a semester
Writing informational text	1-2 times a semester
Read aloud informational text	1-2 times a month
Extended conversational exchanges that build shared understandings	Daily
Indiana ELA state standards	Daily

Table 5

Resources for Supporting Teachers' Professional Learning in Social Studies Integration

Resource	Description
"Authentic Literacy Activities for Developing Comprehension and Writing" (Duke et al., 2006/2007)	Describes teachers' disciplinary reading and writing tasks
College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History (Swan et al., 2013)	Describes social studies inquiry processes
Engaging students in disciplinary literacy, K-6 (Brock et al., 2014)	Showcases disciplinary literacy instruction
"Inquiry-Based Learning: Developing Student-Driven Questions" (Edutopia, 2015, August 24)	Introduces question-driven inquiry
"Reading and Writing in History" (Annenberg Foundation, n.d.)	Introduces supporting of disciplinary literacy
"Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool" (Library of Congress, n.d.)	Offers resources for using primary sources
"Using 'Realia' to Build Background Knowledge" (WETA Public Broadcasting, 2019)	Showcases the teaching strategy

Figure 1

Classroom Symbol Sample Unit

Unit Questions
CQ: Should our classroom have its own symbol? *SQ:* Why do people use symbols? What symbols do people use? How are symbols created? How do historians read and write?

Learning Standards
SS: 1.1.2 *ELA:* 1.RN.1, 1.RN.2.1, 1.RN.2.2, 1.RN.4.2, 1.RV.3.2, 1.W.1, 1.W.3.2, 1.W.5, 1.SL.2.1, 1.SL.3.2, 1.SL.4.2, 1.ML.2.1

Questioning		
Lessons 1-3		
Teacher leads discussion of two symbols. Class hunts for, documents, and shares symbols in their school.	Class examines photos and discusses how people show pride and belonging. Teacher teaches noticing graphical details mini-lesson. Class compiles a listing of the symbols.	Teacher reviews prior lessons and asks CQ unit question. Teacher teaches main ideas mini-lesson and reads aloud symbols book. Class reviews mini-lesson and constructs summary anchor chart.

Constructing Knowledge			
4	**5**	**6**	**7**
Students conduct research on national symbols. Teacher teaches minilessons about locating information, taking notes, and recording important words and "just enough" information. Class discusses and creates anchor charts of their learning.			
8	**9**	**10**	**11**
Research continues. Teacher teaches minilessons about organizing information, sourcing, and corroboration. Class discusses and creates anchor charts of their learning.			

Sharing Knowledge				
12	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**
Teacher orchestrates students' creation and sharing of posters teaching about national symbols. Class discusses SQ unit questions and reaches consensus about their need for a symbol.		Students design and share symbols. Teacher leads minilessons on visual design principles, design justifications, and evaluation. Class votes on adoption and constructs a letter informing families of their new class symbol.		

Figure 2

Sample Professional Learning Session

I. Define	
A. Inqiry Arc	*B. Question Types*
1. Display Dimension 1 in the "C3 Framework Disciplinary Inquiry Matrix" (Swan et al., 2013, p. 66). Explain the arc's first step (creating discipline-specific questions) 2. Lead discussion comparing and contrasting social scientists' questions.	1. Introduce compelling questions and supporting questions (Swan et al., 2013, p. 17). 2. Using sample topic, lead teachers' practicing of generating these questions.
3. Explain students' role (raising questions). Ask teachers to share former students' best curiosity-driven questions. 4. Introduce teachers' support: Students first need to have an experience that causes them to feel doubt and uncertainty. Teachers orchestrate this.	5. Explain teachers' support: Getting students to raise questions. 6. Lead discussion of teachers' prior experience with this.

II. Problem Solve
How Will We Get Students to Generate Questions to Research?
1. Introduce strategy: reading of primary sources. Play REAP video. 2. Review, orchestrate, and debrief teachers' practicing of the strategy, using a sample primary source text.
1. Using another sample primary source text, invite teachers to read, generate questions, and choose one compelling question students would be interested in researching. 2. Lead discussion of (a) the questions and (b) how students could be supported to do the same activity.

III. Plan
Into the Classroom
Display and introduce "Teachers' Guide: Analyzing Primary Sources" (Library of Congress, n.d., p.1).
Introduce task (Try out the strategy in your classroom: Teach students that readers think about what our social studies reading makes us wonder about people and people's lives). Help teachers to choose texts from the Library of Congress's (n.d.) "Classroom Materials: Primary Source Sets" collection and sketch their lesson plans.

IV. Wrap Up
Our Learning
Invite teachers to complete exit slips. Review key points: 1. The first step of the inquiry arc involves finding questions to research. 2. Students do this after having an experience that causes them to feel doubt and uncertainty. 3. Teachers support students by orchestrating the experience (e.g., primary source reading).

They Look Like Me! Discovering Cultural Mirrors in Children's Literature

by Deborah Shepherd, Alicia Moore, and Rebecca Giles



"I wish I had been able to read a book like this when I was younger!" Each semester, in a Multicultural Children's Literature course, this same sentiment is heard from many university students of color1. These words represent the excitement and amazement students express when they are presented with opportunities to research, read, and review multicultural books written for children. Multicultural children's literature consists of books that describe and illustrate ways of knowing that are particularly relevant to marginalized communities, and highlight culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic, and language diversity. The students in this course successfully found books stocked in the library that had characters that looked and acted like them--but for many, it was the first time. Now, at a time when multicultural books abound, every child, every adolescent -- and every college student, for that matter -- should be given the opportunity to find a representation of themselves on a bookshelf.

During an assignment in which the students are asked to find picture books that reflect their culture, African American students are particularly astounded when they discover books that serve as cultural mirrors. Many of these students share, "I've never read a book before where I actually saw myself!" In response, educators at all levels and in all roles (teachers, professors, librarians, and administrators) should seek to present African American students with access to books (and textbooks) that provide them with opportunities to: (1) see their likenesses and their identities on the pages, (2) support identity affirmation, and (3) provide them with literature frameworks that promote the acceptance of themselves and others. These literature frameworks provide books that promote authenticity and the values of self-empowerment and reflection, along with possibilities for cross-cultural understandings, collaborations, and friendships that can exist in multidimensional real-life settings. These opportunities are strengthened when educators invest in books that serve as "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" (Bishop 1990, p. ix).

The phrase "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" was coined by Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop (1990, p. ix) to connote the intersections of literature, identity, difference, culture, and the value of the lived experiences of the reader. Bishop, widely recognized as the mother of multicultural literature, has paved the way for diverse books to reach the hands of all children waiting to see their identities affirmed (Francis, 2019) and celebrated in the books they read. She is most influential for her advocacy of and scholarship in multicultural literature, which focuses on the need for African American children to see themselves in and through the books available for them to read (Chenoweth, 2019). Bishop describes mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors as follows:

Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror (Bishop, 1990, p. ix; NCTE, 2016).

Mirror Books: Reflecting and Affirming Lived Experiences

In her writing, Bishop (1990) asserts that books should provide opportunities for African American children to dream, explore, and transform. Mirror books serve as an opportunity for these students to see themselves in the text while simultaneously building their confidence (Smith 1995). Specifically, a case study by Smith (1995) confirmed that African American students "prefer to read texts they can relate to culturally, which increases their interest in reading" (SCIS, 2016, para. 11). Additionally, windows and sliding glass door books may serve as portals that transform students' understanding of the world around them or transport them into any situation they choose based on the author's plot; they also offer opportunities for them to see individuals who are culturally similar and/or diverse, and to explore their aspirations for the present and future.

Fortunately, the number of published books that are created by African American authors and illustrators and that feature African American children has increased in recent years (Huyck & Dahlen, 2019). The struggles of racism are not necessarily a primary focus or a central backdrop that permeates the lives of the characters in many of these books, although this theme may be present. Instead, these books often offer storylines and plots that depict diverse characters living joyously across their pages. The stories share opportunities for the reader to learn about the characters, recognize similarities and differences, and realize the value of the characters as they live happy, intentional, and purposeful lives. Multicultural literature serves as a window for children of all cultures to build cross-cultural connections and understandings while also recognizing their own worth. According to Bishop (1990), "literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience" (Bishop, 1990, as cited in Chenowith, 2019). Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books.

In her 1990 keynote address for the California State University San Bernardino Reading Conference, Bishop discussed three aspects of culture that can serve as mirrors in books for African American children. The first is language (as cited in Atwell et al., 1990). She states, "while on one important level, we all share the same language, on another level, there are many variations that help to keep that language dynamic and rich" (as cited in Atwell et al., 1990, p.13). Authors such as Eloise Greenfield and Lucille Clifton, for instance, capture a cultural rhythm and style in their books and poetry that may look and sound familiar to some African American children. Bishop's second cultural aspect is the rich individual and collective histories revealing traditions of black culture (as cited in Atwell et al., 1990). The wife-and-husband team of Andrea Davis Pinkney and Brian Pinkney have written and illustrated more than 70 books about the lives of famous African Americans. Their books, with subjects including Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Sojourner Truth, Alvin Ailey, and Martin Luther King, contribute to children's understanding of these traditions. The third aspect focuses on cultural values and attitudes (as cited in Atwell et al., 1990). New arrivals like Amanda Gorman's children's book Change Sings (2021, Viking Books for Young Readers) and Grace Byers' book I Am Enough (2020, Balzer+Bray) exemplify the resilience and dignity of black culture.

Widening the Window: Supporting Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Books that affirm children's identities and allow them to feel affirmed in their own skin are extremely important in the development of a healthy racial, cultural, and ethnic identity. These books help to create more authentic and safe spaces for African American children to learn and grow as members of a diverse society. Meanwhile, multicultural literature is tremendously important for students who are not African American, as well. Providing books that serve as windows and sliding doors for some children gives other children an opportunity to see into the lives of the characters who are different from them, thus engendering understanding and empathy (Laminack & Kelly, 2019). When educators fail to provide window and sliding door books, their students may project their current culture and ethnicity throughout the entire world. These cocooned children may be fearful, may struggle to handle situations, or may otherwise react negatively when they encounter people from different cultures and backgrounds. In window books, readers can move between worlds and come to see that their world is not the only world. Rather, it is a valid world connected to many other valid worlds. Therefore,

books that focus on all children's specific identities are necessary when creating spaces that are inclusive and affirming (Francis, 2019).

Behind the Curtain (and the Screen): Disrupting Bias in Social Media Representations

Social media and news outlets continually share incidents and events each day that may negatively affect adolescents' identities, and the ways in which they view and interact with their peers. In addition, even younger children spend an exorbitant amount of time (Common Sense Media, 2019) immersed in content on social media and news outlets. For example, in 2015, Common Sense Media conducted research that "suggests that children between the ages of 8 and 12 years old consume around 5 hours of on-screen media daily, while teenagers consume a little over 7 hours on average" (McCool & Moten, 2020). Some of the content viewed on screen included "outdated cultural depictions" of people of color (Henderson, 2019), including stereotypical dialects and behaviors that may adversely affect students' beliefs about their African American peers. With this fact in mind, educators must recognize the need for greater student support in classrooms to counteract negative stereotypes and their effect on students. This support includes providing opportunities for teachers and students to look behind the proverbial curtains and technological screens (e.g., of cell phones, tablets, and computers, etc.) that shroud and maintain systemic and systematic biases in order to see the more complex, accurate, creative, and appreciative depictions of people who are culturally and ethnically different found in the engaging text and illustrations of multicultural children's literature.

Multicultural literature, particularly books that depict interactions between people from multiple cultures and ethnicities, are valuable teaching tools (Steiner et al., 2008). It can encourage students to embrace change that may circumvent discrimination, regardless of individual differences (Vasquez, 2003). These books increase students' understanding of how discriminatory practices affect children of diverse backgrounds (Nilsson, 2005), while also highlighting their contributions to our schools, society, and nation. Steiner (2001) identifies the specific benefits of using multicultural literature in the classroom, noting that it provides an opportunity for all children to do the following: see themselves in literature, foster the development of positive self-esteem, affirm their identities, prevent feelings of isolation, and cultivate respect, empathy, and acceptance of others. Further, multicultural literature helps to increase cultural awareness, developing self-awareness, and promote intercultural understanding (Aerila et al., 2016).

Opening the Blinds: Resources for Mirror, Window and Sliding Door Books

Locating books that celebrate diversity and social justice is becoming easier (see Text Box below). Many excellent sources are available for locating picture books that can serve as mirrors for African American children and as windows and sliding glass doors for all children, regardless of background or culture (see Table 1 below). To determine which books and/or internet resources to choose, teachers should ask themselves the following pedagogical questions:

1. How will I create positive cross-cultural relationships through the selected texts?
2. Am I aware of my own cultural biases?
3. Am I familiar with the cultures presented in the books?
4. Am I aware of books that may align with the local, state, and national standards?
5. Am I connecting the book with specific subject matter to reinforce concepts (e.g., math, reading, science)?
6. Have I familiarized myself with sources that will provide me with a selection of books that will meet the needs of my students?

Choosing appropriate multicultural books for use in classrooms involves additional considerations. For example, an article posted on the K12 Reader website provides ten tips to help teachers choose the best multicultural books for use during reading, including these four:

1. The book avoids offensive expressions, negative attitudes, or stereotypical representations.
2. The events, situations, and objects depicted are historically accurate.
3. The story includes words and phrases from the culture being depicted.
4. The story acknowledges the diversity of experiences within a particular cultural group.

The use of these guidelines, as well as the resources found in the following paragraphs, can help educators to ensure that all children, regardless of their ethnicity, are given the opportunity to find books that affirm and inspire.

Book Awards

The American Library Association (ALA) website identifies books awarded for their excellence in writing and illustration, and it is an excellent place to start a search when looking for books that feature African American characters. The books that have received awards are selected by committees of reviewers with both passion and expertise in children's literature, based on specific criteria. Although the prestigious Coretta Scott King Award has been given to African American authors since 1970 (and since 1974 to African American illustrators), multicultural books increasingly are receiving general children's literature awards, including The Caldecott and The Newbery Awards. The African American Literature Book Club website lists all Caldecott Winning and Honor book awards given to Black authors and illustrators or books featuring African American characters. These awards, and many more, can be found on the American Library Association's (ALA) website, which contains a list of book winners through the years who have contributed to the affirmation and appreciation of the lovely diversity found in all children.

Internet Sources

In addition to the ALA website, websites of a variety of other organizations also compile lists of resources, identifying books that can serve as mirror books for African American children. By consulting multiple lists, educators will note that some titles are repeated on multiple lists and also can discover many other less recognized or new releases. Table 1 provides recommendations for getting started, along with websites that are particularly helpful for staying abreast of current bestsellers and new releases or for locating books on social justice themes. To access a variety of books that share Black joy and showcase empowering messages, we recommend the *Honoring Black Lives Virtual Library*. This website, created by Jillian Heise, recognizes and honors the work of Black creatives in the children's literature industry. Also among the resources are several blogs that compile monthly book lists of newly released multicultural books.

Authors and Illustrators

Conducting searches on the authors and illustrators who create the books that appear on these lists is another way to find powerful books that celebrate diversity. Some are prolific, including Andrea Davis Pinkney and Brian Pinkney, as we have already mentioned; Jaqueline Woodson, another prolific poet and author, has written more than 30 books about the African American experience and won a multitude of awards, including the National Book Award. Other authors whose work has provided *mirror* books for generations of African American children include Nikki Giovanni, Eloise Greenfield, Julius Lester, Faith Ringgold, Patricia McKissack, Jerry Pinkney, and Pat Cummings. Some new and up-and-coming authors include Jamilah Thompkins Bigelow, Academy Award Winner Lupita Nyong'o, Derrick Barnes, Varian Johnson, and Matthew A. Cherry. As more diverse authors and illustrators continue to make their mark, and with the help of these resources, children should never again have to say, *"I wish I had had a book like this when I was young."*

Author Note:

[1]In this article, the term "of color" **is referenced when used by cited authors** and broadly refers to the racial identities of students who are not only African American, but also Native American, Latinx, Arab American, and Asian American and other racial, cultural, or ethnic identities that may be reflected in the lived experiences of students.

Textbox: Exemplary video, digital, audio, and multimodal resources that can serve as mirrors for African American youth can be found on the internet; however, the engaging illustrations and often simple, but powerful, text of multicultural children's books are particularly impactful in "opening the blinds" to the adverse effects of negative stereotypes.

Table 1

Recommended Resources for Discovering Mirror, Window, and Sliding Door Books

Category	Resource	Description
Book Awards	Coretta Scott King Award	This award is presented annually to an author/ illustrator whose books best exemplify an appreciation of African American life and culture, along with universal human values.
	John Steptoe Award for New Talent	Using the same eligibility criteria as the Coretta Scott King Award, this award is presented to writers or illustrators who have not published more than three works.
	Jane Addams Children's Book Award	This award recognizes children's literature that promotes children's consideration of peace, social justice, global community, and equity for all people.
	"The Walter"	The Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children's Literature recognizes a book whose main character is a person of color, Native American, LGBTQIA, a person with a disability, and/or a member of a marginalized religious or cultural minority in the United States and that addresses diversity in a meaningful way.
Internet Resources	Africa Access Review	Africa Access is a nonprofit organization founded in 1989 to improve the quality of the K-12 book collections about Africa in schools and libraries in the United States. Its list of Children's Africana Book Award winners and honors is divided into sections for young children and older readers.
	Top 150 Recommended African American Children's Books	This site lists the top 154 African American picture books from 1972-2020, compiled by the African American Children's Book Project (AACBP).
	Black Picture Books that Aren't About Boycotts, Buses, or Basketball	This list, compiled by Scott Woods--a librarian, writer, poet, and critic--identifies books that focus on the everyday lives of Black characters, rather than on the struggles that tend to dominate historical views of people of color.
	Broadening the Story: 60 Picture Books Starring Black Mighty Girls	Dedicated to amplifying the voices of Black girls, this website includes a list of 60 picture books featuring Black "Mighty Girls" as characters.
	The Brown Bookshelf (PB bookshelf)	The goal of this website is to promote awareness of the myriad of Black voices writing for young readers. One of their projects--28 Days Later--showcases the best books by Black authors and illustrators for each of the 28 days of Black History Month,

Category	Resource	Description
Internet Resources	Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature	The center is among the leading educational research centers in the field of multicultural literature. It seeks to preserve the richness of the many cultures in the field of children's and young adult literature and to provide children, teachers, parents, educators, students, and librarians access to multicultural children's books.
	Imagination Soup	This site lists picture book biographies of famous African American men and women in categories such as science, activism, and leadership.
	We Need Diverse Books	This grassroots organization includes children's book lovers who created The Walter Award and advocates for diversity in the publishing industry. It provides resources for addressing race, equity, anti-racism, and inclusion in the classroom, including links to book lists for numerous categories of diversity.
	What We Do All Day	The focus of this site is to identify books that combat racism and teach readers how to talk about it.
	Black Children's Books and Authors (BCBA)	A monthly list of new releases, promotes awareness of children's and young adult literature by Black authors, both traditional and self-published.
	Grassroots Community Foundation: Marley Dias's 1000 Black Girl Books	This site lists 1,000 titles featuring Black girls as the main characters. The creators of the guide are still cataloging books and providing updates of new book titles monthly.
	Mahogany Books: Black Books Matter	The website showcases books that represent the interests of the Black community and provides a list of the best-selling picture books every month.
	The Tutu Teacher	Kindergarten teacher, presenter, and consultant Vera Ahiyya compiles a list of newly released diverse books each month on her blog.
	No Time for Flash Cards	This blog is designed as an educator's resource and includes a list of picture books to teach social justice to young children.
	Social Justice Book List	The nonprofit organization, Teaching for Change, has compiled more than 60 lists covering a range of social justice and multicultural themes.
	Picture This and Just One More Page	Every year the Wisconsin State Reading Association evaluates recently published books that emphasize diversity, authenticity and artistry and compiles a recommendation list.
	Today's Parent	The website contains a list of 30 books to help parents talk to their kids about racism, as well as general parenting information.

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"I don't read at home anymore": Breaking Down One Students' Reading Barriers Created by Covid-19

By Marie Putnam Harvan

The goal of independent reading, as an instructional practice, helps habitual readers build conscious reading identities (NCTE, 2019). As a routine, independent reading develops reading stamina, vocabulary, background, and good reading habits. This matters for students, as those with strong reading habits carry them outside of the classroom and become lifelong readers (ILA, 2019). As real-world readers, students need experiences that are peer and teacher supported, enveloped in an environment that extends their thinking (Howard, 2009). Yet, students' perspectives of themselves as literacy learners are facilitated or deterred by the context of the classroom (McCarthey, 2001), and before students can become engaged readers, they have to see others enjoying the experience of reading (Commeyras, Bisplinghoff & Olson, 2003).

To that end, just as independent reading opens up opportunities for students, it also allows teachers to have authentic conversations about how readers read. In coaching individual students or small groups, teachers can deepen strategies and skills to encourage the transfer and continuation of habits and routines of reading (ILA, 2019). However, in order for students to identify as thoughtful, proficient readers, they need instructions that explicitly state what, why, and how readers read. When asking students to practice and discover the work of real readers, we are inviting them to do the type of work they will encounter in the real world - the things independent readers do in real life. In supporting the real-life reading of our students, we are preparing them to stay motivated and engaged when an adult is not there, commanding them to drop everything and read (Miller & Moss, 2013).

Furthermore, independent readers are those who choose their own books, make time to read, and engage in reading. Being a reader should not be limited to teacher-selected texts and teacher-led tasks. In order for student reading to extend outside of the classroom, teachers need to build readers with conscious reading identities (Shaffer, et. al., 2019). In supporting independent reading habits, time spent reading leads to discovering favorite topics, genres, or authors, which is important for students' reading lives beyond the classroom (Springer, Harris, & Dole, 2017).

Marilyn's Story

The Covid-19 global pandemic impacted the independent reading lives of my students in various ways. For some, myself included, reading became a distraction from the constant change in the world. Books provided a safe haven and a form of escapism. For example, a student explained to me, "When we were home. I started to read to my younger sister everyday. We read books that used to be mine and we still do it together." For them, the pandemic created a time to read together and establish a routine that they have maintained. This was not true for all of my students, however, as I discovered in the case of my fourth-grade student, Marilyn (pseudonym).

Instead of diving deeper into the joys of reading, she was faced with reading barriers that had not previously existed. As her father took on more hours at work, her after school routine and recreational reading habits were impacted. For her, instead of uninterrupted time at home after school, she found herself spending more time in the car, which broke up her typical schedule. Marilyn explained, "When I get home, I do my homework and my mom cooks dinner for my dad and then we drive it to him at work. That's when we see him. I don't have time after I finish my homework. If I can't read for very long, I don't do any of it. I don't have the time anymore."

Understandably, her altered routine, combined with a global pandemic, presented her with challenges, and she found herself pushing reading aside. She wanted to read, and expressed disappointment in not being able to engage with it as she had before. I wanted to help her regain a sense of control over her independent reading and wondered if focusing on missed opportunities within her schedule would be

effective. To address this dilemma, I decided to work with her to fit in reading time, which she was having difficulty with. This article describes a short-term intervention that focused on increasing her reading volume outside of school.

My purpose was twofold: 1) To support her reader-to-reader through real world work; and 2) To establish a new reading routine that responded to her current situation.

Bringing the Task Down to Size

In order for literacy to be meaningful to students, teachers need to be mindful of creating situational interest in extremely concrete ways. One way is to link reading to students' personal experiences, to highlight the relevance of reading that occurs in everyday life (Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007). Reed, Schallert, Beth, and Woodruff (2004) encourage teachers to develop learning environments that are autonomy-supportive, where students are enabled to direct and control their literacy. Reeve (1996) explains autonomy support by referring to the amount of freedom the teacher gives to the student, while respecting their agenda and providing learning activities that are relevant to their personal goals and interests.

Providing support for students' self-efficacy in reading is crucial. Without this belief in themselves, students in upper elementary and middle school grades abandon reading. It is also beneficial for self-efficacy to assist with setting realistic goals for reading. In doing so, students gain the belief that they can be successful in reading (Guthrie & Barber, 2019). For Marilyn, the first step was to set aside five minutes at the beginning of the daily reading workshop to confer and best support her needs through an intervention. Since each meeting was meant to discuss her goal of increased independent reading, our time together was very focused and intentional.

Next, I wanted to visually represent (see Figure 1) the goal of increased reading time and ensure that Marilyn knew that our focus would be on increased independent reading. This served as an agenda when we came together and created a familiar routine. When we conferred, I made a point to revisit the purpose of us coming together, as I wanted her to know that each day, we would only focus on this goal.

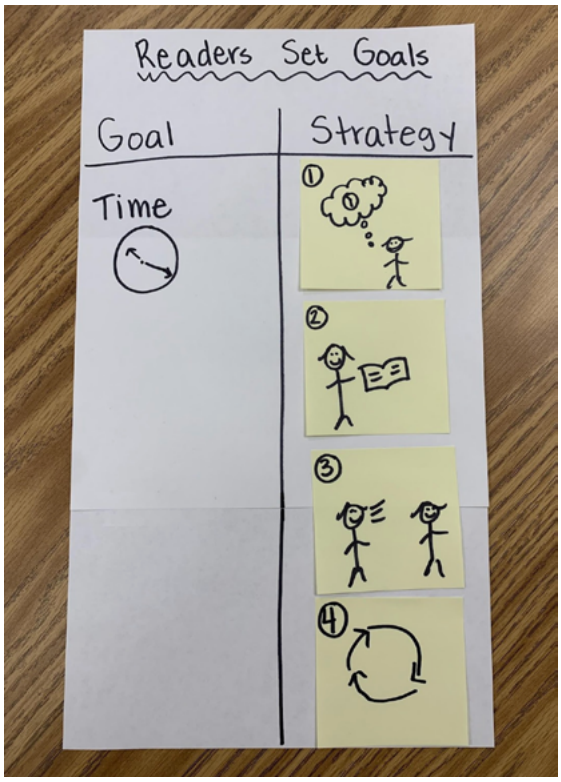

Figure 1. Readers Set Goals

Providing Support Reader -to- Reader

Learners who lack input for decisions feel powerless and unmotivated. In providing support to identify small pockets of time throughout the day, I was equipping Marilyn with the tools to read in the real world and manage her time (Cambourne, 1995). Nicholas (2006) explains, through thoughtful planning, explicit instruction, modeling and purposeful talk in a highly supportive environment, students can take the next step and affect the way they live within the world. Through the scaffolds, students are learning the habits that will enable them to think and speak on their own. Through thoughtful planning and conversations, the thinking continues to grow and transfers into independent practice, which enables our students to read, think, and talk about their own thinking. Over time, this teaches students to have purposeful conversations, even when they are thinking alone.

To enhance Marilyn's thinking about opportunities to read outside of school, I focused on times during the day where she found herself waiting with little to do, such as being in the car on the way to drop off dinner to her father (see Figure 2). Being responsive to her current schedule turned out to be powerful, as I was not asking her to carve out additional time, but working with the current schedule

she was struggling with. This level of differentiation helped me respond with instructional moves that best supported her. In our daily reading conferences, Marilyn successfully articulated her desire to read, as well as reflect on what went well and what needed further work.

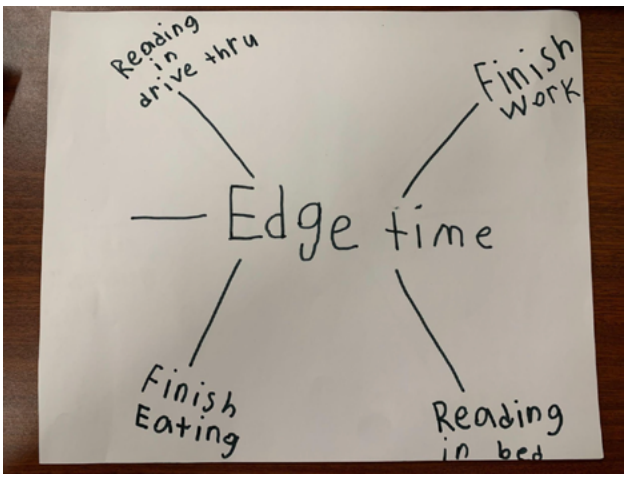

Figure 2. Edge Time

The following is a conversation about her out-of-school reading times:

Teacher: Do you ever find yourself waiting without anything to do?

Marilyn: Yes, we bring dinner to my dad every day and I go with my mom.

Teacher: What do you think about taking a book with you today? That way while you're in the car, you can pull it out and read.

Marilyn: That's not very much time. It's only fifteen minutes.

Teacher: That's perfect. Let's start with that and squeeze in a few minutes.

Marilyn: I'll try it. I usually watch YouTube videos in the back of the car. I'll bring a book this time.

As we worked together to support her goal, I came to value the time we spent reader-to-reader and making adjustments. In conferences, Marilyn began to view the car as her opportunity to read and began to exclusively lean on this location for additional reading time. For example, she explained how she began leaving a book in the car, as she noticed that she forgot to bring it several times. This led to her making sure that the book she kept in the car was her back-up book for reading emergencies when she forgot the book she meant to bring. In finding a solution, we celebrated that problem solving together. She later admitted, "Reading in the car is a good idea because my mom takes forever and I have to wait a lot." Our conversations began to take on a deeper meaning, as she no longer seemed as frustrated and enjoyed sharing times when she worked towards her goal outside of our conferences.

Establising a New Routine

In revisiting Marilyn's goal and making adjustments as needed, real world reading experiences were emphasized. Camber & Castle (1994) believe it is important to consider a students' attitude to foster lifelong reading habits and to tailor instruction. To that end, our conferences shifted toward additional opportunities to read while at home. Since Marilyn was now reading while accompanying her mother to visit her father, I wanted to help her find success in other areas. To temporarily document this time, I leaned on a bookmark version of Miller's (2013) reading itinerary to help Marilyn notice patterns and center our attention on other locations and time accumulated while reading (see Figure 3). This bookmark was used as a tool for reflection during our time together to further highlight her reading habits. It is important to note that this strategy differed from a reading log, as the purpose was to reflect on Marilyn's daily reading habits, not to reward her for minutes read or to criticize a lack thereof. Therefore, while using this tool, our time together focused on literacy engagement.

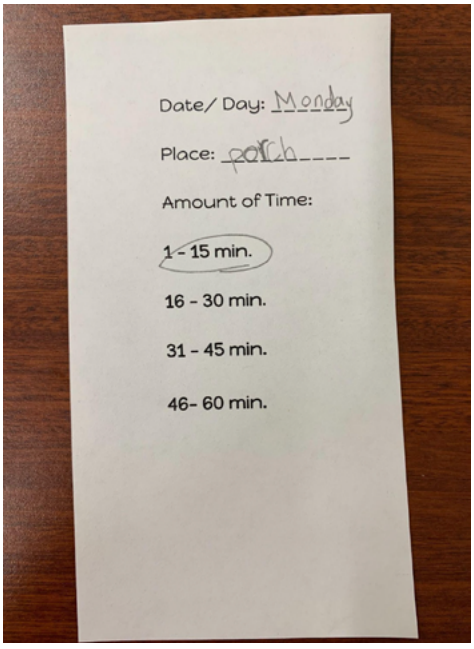

Figure 3. Bookmark

For example:

Me: Were you able to read at home yesterday?

Marilyn: No, I tried to in the car, but it was too loud. There was music on and talking. I tried though. It just didn't work out.

Me: That's great that you tried. (Pulling out edge time graphic organizer) Let's take a look at another opportunity you have to read.

Marilyn: (Looking over graphic organizer) I tried to read in the car and that didn't work out. Maybe I can try to read in bed. I'm never tired when it's time to lay down.

Me: Okay, Let's try that tonight and then we will talk about it tomorrow. I understand what you're saying, I never seem tired when I first try to go to bed. Reading helps me relax.

Marilyn could expand her reading life beyond the car, which seemed to be problematic at times, and I needed to encourage her to feel successful with other locations. As a result, the next day, Marilyn reported that before bed, it was very quiet and this worked well for her. She was able to read for fifteen minutes before she felt tired and needed to put the book down. In doing so, she explained, "I was able to read one chapter last night of my book. It wasn't loud at all. I think I'm going to try my front porch next."

As there is no one right way to read at home, rather than assign the next location, I encouraged her to experiment and share during our conference so I could notice patterns and best support her goal. After accumulating several locations such as her front porch, bedroom, car, and backyard, I continued to listen as she became comfortable with reading in locations other than her car. I listened to Marilyn explain that while her mom was cooking dinner one afternoon, she had time before she had to take her father dinner, and went into the backyard to read. However, the backyard was very loud, as a neighbor's barking dog cut through the silence she hoped to find. Instead of giving up, she simply moved to her bedroom and continued reading for ten more minutes until her mom called for her. She was then able to continue reading in the car and proudly explained that she read for a total of twenty-five minutes that night. This type of reading was not occurring prior to our work together, as she previously viewed reading as an all-or-nothing activity. However, each day's responses allowed me to determine additional support to guide and support her reading goal and move her towards independence.

Nicholas (2006) reminds us that as talk begins to reflect stronger thinking, we must consider how to keep building conversation. As we met, Marilyn and I began to expand her understanding of reading when opportunities presented themselves, even in small bursts of time. She began to feel successful, which fueled other conversations. The level of support significantly decreased, and my role shifted from coach to fellow reader in order to foster deeper thinking. I began sharing personal reading challenges and moments when reading did not work out for me. One conversation focused on a Kindle I recently purchased to carry with me for reading emergencies. Usually when reading, I often skip to the last chapter to find out what happens and then go back to read. However, I was not doing that while reading with the Kindle, which made the book more suspenseful, instead of knowing the ending right away. She appreciated my confession and shared that when reading at home, she would skip to the end to see if she wanted to continue reading. The ending would determine if she abandoned the book or continued reading. We found each other's approach interesting and continued to focus on our literate lives instead of just understanding the text.

Final Thoughts

The purpose of this work was to implement an intervention that would support Marilyn in being successful with reading. As I coached her, I focused on providing as many successful experiences as possible for her to draw from and reflect on. Although very tailored to her, this work reiterates the importance of having time to support the talking and thinking of all readers. Reading is inherently a social act. As real-world readers, students need experiences that are peer and teacher supported, enveloped in an environment that supports and extends their thinking (Howard, 2009).

I envision using this strategy to better prepare for students who say they do not have time to read at home. More importantly, this work reminded me to seek out opportunities to cultivate behaviors of lifelong independent readers. As I continue this work, I am reminded of Gallagher (2010), who calls us to promote the type of thinking that will enable students to become literate, well-informed adults.

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Characters, Disability, and Null Sets: An Examination of Award Winning Picture Books from 2011-2020

By Sally Busby

My daughter is fourteen-years-old. She loves reading and writing, knitting, and music. She loves all animals, especially giraffes and pigs. Her favorite color is periwinkle because of the sound of the word, and her favorite season is winter. She also has a bone condition called pseudoarthrosis of the tibia. She has had many surgeries in the last 13 years, and she always wears a full-leg brace. The leg brace is the thing that receives the most attention from adults and children. She is the "girl with the brace" or the "girl with the leg". She is not a girl with a name and interests. She is only "the girl who can't run".

Recently I explained to my daughter Emily Style's (1988) concept of mirrors and windows in the educational curriculum that Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) then used as a metaphor for good children's literature. Authors can provide mirrors for readers by creating characters that reflect the traits of the reader so that a reader might see themselves mirrored in literature. Authors should also provide windows for readers by creating characters that provide accurate and authentic portrayals of people very much unlike the reader so that one might learn more about many people while exploring literature. She nodded along; the metaphor makes sense. All students should see themselves in books as well as use books to understand others.

"Did you ever read a book that included a character with a leg brace?"

"No."

"Would you have liked to see a character with a leg brace?"

"Well, I guess not. Whenever I imagine myself doing anything, I don't imagine myself in a leg brace."

My daughter never had a mirror. When she imagines her image, she removes a part of herself. Based on the images she has seen in picture books, she has come to several conclusions. The first is that society sees her physical brace as not important. Because it is not important, she tries to ignore a piece of her image. The second is that people with leg braces are not included.

"Rudine Sims Bishop was 18 years old the first time she saw herself in a book" (O'Donnell, 2019, p. 17). Although Bishop had read books about Black children before she was 18, she had not read one that centered around a family that looked like hers – one that was loving and supportive and Black. Children with disabilities must also see themselves in books. We need many books that include children with disabilities so that we do not fall into the "single story" fallacy first introduced by Adichie (as cited in, O'Donnell, 2019).

In 2015 author Corinne Duyvis first used the hashtag #OwnVoices on Twitter to recommend new books written by those with disabilities (Kirtch, 2020). More than five years later, #OwnVoices is used as a shorthand reminder to support underrepresented authors writing their own actionable truths; however, most of the #OwnVoices authors that add to the diversity of literary characters, particularly characters with disability, are found writing middle grade and young adult novels.

Word Choice

Disability studies scholar Katie Aubrecht (2014) explains that she uses "the phrase disabled person with deliberation" (p. 3) because although many people view person-first language as most appropriate she disagrees based on two arguments. The first argument is one made by Aubrecht's fellow disability studies researcher Tanya Titchkosky, "people-first language has not led to a greater understanding of disability and subsequent reduced levels of discrimination, nor to reduced levels of planned exclusions" (p.4). Aubrecht also identifies that

"the inclusion of the word 'with' frames disability as an add-on requiring a supplemental claim to personhood" (Aubrecht, 2014, p. 4).

The choice of "person-first" language or the removal of "with" in phrasing is a personal one for each individual with a disability. I have both seizure disorder and clinical depression, and I choose to identify using person-first language. I do believe that the disability community is a culture (Hoem, 2002; Coogan, 2013; Bolaki & Gair, 2015; Lester & Nusbaum, 2017; Aho & Alter, 2018), but my understanding of the culture of disability does not make me more inclined to use the phrases "epileptic teacher" or "severe-depressive mother" to describe myself. For this reason, I will use person-first language throughout this paper with the exception of the times I quote scholars who have chosen to eliminate the use of "with" in the description of a fellow human.

Why Characters with Disabilities

Picture books provide a place for children to engage with and look for meaning in the words and images found in picture books (Golos et al., 2012, p. 240). These texts provide a way for students to interact with literacy in a way that is both authentic and unique. Children look to connect to the larger society in their reading as well as to see themselves in the illustrations and descriptions within picture books.

A classroom that reads books with diverse characters is more aware and respectful of the diversity around them (McNair, 2016). Picture books that include characters with disabilities can help students create pathways of understanding and acceptance (Prater et al., 2006, p. 20). Children connect to the narrator in the story. They empathize and understand. They see themselves as meaningful and important when they see the places they live, their language and culture, and view people who look like them. Teachers have a responsibility to share books that include characters with disabilities with their students (Leininger et al., 2010, p. 583).

Almost 14% of children (ages 3-21) in the United States qualify for education services based on the definitions for disability used by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], n.d.). The IDEA defines disability as having one or more of the following: "an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment, a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment, a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities." (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/topic-areas/#Disability_Category) Only 5% of the students qualifying for special education programs do not attend a "regular school." (NCES, n.d.) The term "regular school" used by the National Center for Educational Statistics refers to a physical school building consisting of a spectrum of students, those receiving special needs services as well as those who do not. Therefore, the significant majority of students with disabilities interact with peers who are non-disabled each school day.

Teachers share a goal to ensure that all students in a classroom are accepted by the community of learners (Stelle, 1999). As more schools move to an inclusion model to provide special education services, children see more students with disabilities (Sigmon et al., 2016). However, although many students with disabilities spend their days in classrooms with students without disabilities, this placement cannot be viewed as inclusive until teachers allow those students with disabilities to actively participate in text-selection and includes the identities of all students within a classroom (Chandler-Olcott & Kluth, 2009, p. 556). Unfortunately, children who are different are often marginalized in schools by peers and teachers. Picture book authors who offer positive portrayals of characters with disabilities help students learn to empathize with classmates who might share a disability with a character in a picture book (Miller, 2012).

Most children's literature that includes characters with disabilities is middle-grade and young adult fiction (Miller, 2012). Young children, who are not yet ready to read these books, also need to see characters with disabilities. Picture books that include characters with disabilities provide an additional way for students to see the humanity, identity, and importance of all students. In children's literature and disability studies, there is discussion about accurate and respectful portrayals of those characters with disabilities; however, it is almost impossible to analyze the portrayal of various characters with disabilities in picture books when there are so few available.

We know that using picture books that include characters with disabilities can help to add authentic empathy to an inclusive classroom environment where teachers are able to lead students to discuss the needs and interests of the characters with disabilities and encourage students to discuss connections among themselves and the characters with disabilities (Aho & Alter, 2018). Now we need to have access to these picture books. Disability advocates see the potential in children's books to change the world (Dunn, 2016, p. 90). The world can change; we just need access to more books that include characters with disabilities.

Award-Winning Picture Books

Award-winning picture books are widely available in school libraries, classrooms, and bookstores because committees have reviewed the books and found them to be the best (Koss et al., 2016). Teachers and parents are drawn to the symbol on the cover of the book. The symbol of an award indicates that the book is worthy to be read, studied, bought, and shared. Often these award-winning books have a longer in-print lifespan and receive more attention from publishers, researchers, and curriculum writers.

Method

I investigated three well-known awards for picture books, the Caldecott, the Boston Globe Picture Book Award, and the Charlotte Zolotow Award. Although there are other children's book awards, most children's book awards do not focus on picture book offerings. In order to gather a wide sample size, I chose a ten year period of picture book winners. So that the sample size would most accurately represent the most recent literature, I examined all of the winning and honored books from 2011-2020.

I read each book, carefully looking for characters with disabilities. I considered evidence of invisible disabilities such as depression or autism as well as studied each illustration looking for indications of more visible disabilities such as characters wearing leg braces or using a walker. Referencing the disabilities enumerated in IDEA's definition, I made note of whether the picture book author included a main character or secondary character with an invisible or visible disability and/or the illustrator included a picture of a person with a disability in an illustration. As I worked to find characters with disabilities and considered the metaphor of mirrors in picture books, I decided to return to the books for a second viewing, this time examining the age of the characters. I wanted to see, of the characters with disabilities, how many would be the age of a child reading the book in school.

I accessed a copy of each picture book based on availability. I read over one hundred of the books I evaluated using a digital ebook accessible through the local public library. My daughter owned copies of four of the books, and ten of the books I bought at the local bookstore. In order to systematically evaluate each book, I read the book silently once and then read it aloud. During the third reading of each book, I spent an average of two minutes examining each illustration, noting drawings of characters and background images.

I selected three national book awards based on their longevity, respect in the publishing, academic, and bookseller fields, and specificity for honoring picture books. The Caldecott specifically focuses on the illustrations included in picture books while the Boston Globe-Horn Book Picture Book Award and the Charlotte Zolotow evaluate each picture book entry based on the combination of illustrations and text.

Frederic G. Melcher was a book publisher and editor, and in 1922 he created the first children's book award in the world, the John Newberry Medal. By 1937, Melcher realized that illustrators of children's picture books should also have an award honoring their work and proposed the Randolph Caldecott Medal in order to highlight exceptional children's picture books. The American Library Association (ALA) readily approved the new award and Dorothy P. Lanthrop was the first Caldecott winner with her illustrations of Animals of the Bible, A Picturebook. (The Randolph Caldecott Medal, 1999)

Each year a Caldecott committee consisting of 15 members who have been voted or appointed by the Association for Library Service to Children spend months rating and conducting preliminary votes and selection meetings to discuss all eligible books. A book's eligibility is based on the following criteria: 1) the picture book must be for children (up to the age of 14), 2) the book must have been originally published in the United States or a U.S. territory, 3) the book must have been published in the last year, and 4) the illustrations must be original. (Caldecott Terms, Criteria, Submission, and Committee Information, 2020)

The Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards began in 1967 and select one winning book and two honor books in three categories: fiction and poetry, nonfiction, and picture book. Three judges, who are appointed by the editor of the Horn Book, select the winning and honored books in each of the three categories. Books can be published in any country but must also be published in the United States. (BGHB Submission Guidelines, 2019)

The Charlotte Zolotow Book Award was established to honor the "best picture book text published in the United States in the preceding year." (Charlotte Zolotow Award, n.d.) The University of Wisconsin-Madison created the award in 1998 as a way to honor the memory of one of their graduates Charlotte Zolotow who was a book editor and the author of over 70 children's books. The committee of judges consists of five individuals who have a significant understanding of children's literature, specifically picture books. Each judge serves a two-year term. The committee selects one winner and up to five honor books each year. The books must be published in the United States and written for children ages birth to seven. (Charlotte Zolotow Award, n.d.)

Findings

Caldecott Award

From 2011 until 2020, there have been 48 books identified as winning or honor Caldecott Award books. No main characters had disabilities. One book included an image of a character in the background with disabilities. A painting of a city street included a man in a wheelchair (de la Peña & Robinson, 2015). Two books included two secondary characters with disabilities: a mother who stopped interacting with her child and just sat and stared out a window (indicating possible depression) (Steptoe, 2016) and a blind man who enters the bus with the main character and has a conversation about listening without seeing (de la Peña & Robinson, 2015).

Table 1

Noted Characters with Disability: Caldecott Award

	MainN (%)	SecondaryN (%)	Background imageN (%)
School-aged child, 3-21	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Older than school age	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)
Total	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)

Boston Globe-Horn Book Picture Books

From 2011 until 2020, there have been 30 books identified as winners or honor books. No main characters had disabilities. No secondary characters had disabilities. Two books included images of characters in the background with visible disabilities: one girl in a playground scene using forearm crutches (Tamaki, 2018), and in the other book, an older man holds a cane during a group house party (Bean, 2013).

Table 2

Noted Characters with Disability: Boston Globe-Horn Book Picture Book Award

	MainN (%)	SecondaryN (%)	Background imageN (%)
School-aged child, 3-21	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Older than school age	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Total	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)

Charlotte Zolotow

From 2011 until 2020, there have been 49 books identified as winners or honor books. One main character presents as having a disability. Although the reviews of the book and author talks do not note the main character having autism, the main character does display a propensity for lining up his toys and does not engage with his younger brother in a neurotypical way. For instance, not until the very end of the story does the main character use his brother's name after referring to his little brother as the "small person" for most of the story (Child, 2015). The second book that includes characters with disabilities was also a Caldecott winner. This book includes a secondary character who is blind and an image of a man using a wheelchair in the background of a cityscape (de la Peña & Robinson, 2015).

Table 3

Noted Characters with Disability: Charlotte Zolotow Award

	MainN (%)	SecondaryN (%)	Background imageN (%)
School-aged child, 3-21	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Older than school age	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
Total	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)

Discussion

The number of award-winning picture books in three well-known picture book awards for the last ten years totaled 118 books. This number eliminates the books that won multiple awards. Of the 118 books, one has a main character with a disability. Two books have secondary characters with possible disabilities, but neither character is school-aged. Two books include a school-aged child in a background illustration with a disability. Two books include background images that include adults with disabilities. One of these books has both a secondary character and a background character with a disability, de la Peña and Robinson's *Last Stop on Market Street*.

Five books of the 118 award-winning books from 2011 through 2020 have included characters with disabilities. This is 4% of the books. Does this mirror the percentage of children in school with disabilities? No, we would need more than three times the amount of books to include characters with disabilities in order to reach the equivalent percentage of 14% (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], n.d.) of children who receive special education services based on one or more qualifications for IDEA-defined disabilities.

I have included tables that provide the number of characters with disabilities in all three awards. Table 4 separates characters by age whereas table 5 separates characters by visible and invisible disability. Considering the tables, it is difficult to provide crique with such a small sample, but from the five books that include characters with disability, only one character was a main character. The majority of the characters were secondary or only background images. The majority of the characters were older than 21 and had visible disabilities.

Table 4

Noted Age of Characters with Disability: All three book awards, eliminating repeated books

	MainN (%)	SecondaryN (%)	Background image N (%)	TotalN (%)
School-aged child, 3-21	1 (<1%)	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	2 (2%)
Older than school age	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (3%)
Total	1 (<1%)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	6 (5%)

Table 5

Noted Characters with Visible or Invisible Disability: All three book awards, eliminating repeated books

	MainN (%)	SecondaryN (%)	Background image N (%)	TotalN (%)
"Visible" disabilities	0 (0%)	1 (<1%)	3 (3%)	4 (3%)
"Invisible" disabilities	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	0 (2%)	2 (2%)
Total	1 (<1%)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	6 (5%)

My findings were disappointingly low. Not only were characters with disabilities not represented, but when they were, I noticed that some of them supported the tropes of a disabled character being lesser than, pitied by the normal characters, or did not help move the action of the story forward (Aho & Alter, 2018; Pennell et al., 2017; Price et al., 2016; Thomas, 2016; Walton, 2011). At best, the characters might be used as a metaphor for inspiration and hard work. In the playwright Christopher Shinn's (2014) essay, he wonders if the culture is truly ready to accept people with disabilities. "The culture is able to embrace disability as a metaphor of the struggle all individuals experience throughout life, but the same culture is not comfortable facing real disability that provides a level of fear and loathing around disability" (Shinn, 2014, p. 2). Shinn's thoughts fold into the disability rights activist Stella Young's (2012) speeches and writings where she wrestles with the reason that society uses images of those with disabilities as inspiration "so that non-disabled people can put their worries into perspective, and think, 'Well, it could be worse...I could be that person'" (Young, 2012, p. 1).

The critique of characterization and ableist representation of those characters with disability is significant, but until there are more picture book offerings that include characters with disabilities, it is difficult to accurately measure the portrayal of disability in picture books.

Action Steps

Teachers, parents, booksellers, librarians, and children want more diversity in picture books. While publishers and authors work to add picture book titles that address representation of those with disabilities, there are resources to find picture books that include characters with disabilities. The Dolly Gray Award and the Schneider Family Book Award honor books that include characters with disabilities. Both of these awards specifically include a picture book category.

Aisha Ray collates and reviews picture books that include characters with disabilities on her website, BooksforLittles. She provides lists of picture books that are anti-ableist as well as focusing on picture books that include other underrepresented groups. Ray provides reviews of picture books that include characters with disabilities; many of the reviews identify problematic pieces of characterization (Ray, 2015).

An additional website for a robust list of books that include character's with disabilities is Vanderbilt University's IRIS Center's grouping of children's books that include portrayals of individuals with disabilities. The list is organized based on disability and includes a short description of the plot as well as a suggested grade level for most books (*Iris | Children's Books: Portrayals of People with Disabilities,* n.d.).

The websites I share provide a wide selection of picture books and information about how to combat presenting books through a lens of ableism. In the following table, I share a small selection of five picture books and possible questions teachers can use for each of the books.

Table 6

Chart of five picture book suggestions with questions that encourage discussion about disability

Picture book suggestions Title/Author	Questions for discussion of disability
Why Johnny Doesn't Flap: NT is OK!/ Clay and Gail Morton	• What is NT? • What are some of the things that Johnny does that are different from the narrator? • How does the narrator show acceptance of Johnny's behavior?
Benji, the Bad Day, and Me/ Sally Pla	• Why did the narrator have a bad day? • How are the narrator and his brother Benji different? How are they the same? • How does Benji help the narrator?
All the way to the Top/ Annette Bay Pimentel	• What times did you hear, "Stop!" in the book? Why? • What times did you hear, "Go!" in the book? Why? • How was Jennifer brave? • What did Jennifer have in common with people in the story? In what ways was she different?
Jacob's Eye Patch/ Beth Kobliner Shaw and Jacob Shaw	• Jacob Shaw is one of the two authors of the book. Why do you think Jacob wanted to write this book? • How does Jacob feel about his family's choices to answer people's questions? • What does it mean that, "Sometimes you feel like talking about it and sometimes you don't."
Frida/ Jonah Winter	• Why is Frida Kahlo famous? • What choices did Frida make? • Give some examples of how Frida is creative. • How did Frida use her art in personal ways?

There are picture books including characters with disabilities available; now we must work to include these books on wider lists and more inclusive honors.

Conclusion

As Emily Style reminds us, mirrors and windows help to encourage both/and thinking in the classroom and suggest that we might reconsider the wording of the Golden Rule to "do unto others as they would have you do unto them" where the thoughtful consideration of an individual frames one's actions (Style, 1988, p. 4). Diversity in picture books can be the catalyst for children to understand others' viewpoints and needs (Sigmon et al., 2016, p. 111). And providing awareness about a disability through the use of a picture book is only one positive of diversifying literature to include characters with disabilities. Students can also see that each character, including those characters with disabilities, has goals and passions (Prater et al., 2006).

Before we can challenge and change the tropes, provide #OwnVoices for stories about characters with disabilities, and push for anti-ableism in picture books, we must first have authors writing picture books that include characters with disabilities and publishers looking to publish those books. When characters with disabilities in books have an authentic voice, students do not have to see those with disabilities as inspiration or a metaphor for triumph. Instead, students can see these characters as people with dreams, likes, dislikes, and autonomy.

In order to encourage the publication of books that include those with disabilities, award-winning books must include characters with disabilities.

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The Way You Begin: Using Picture Books to Access Prior Knowledge for Student Learning

by Sarrah J. Grubb

It was the end of my first week on my new campus--a regional branch of a large public university. I had gathered my class of early preservice education undergrads into a discussion circle. After introducing ourselves, I pulled out a copy of my newest acquisition, The Day You Begin, authored by Jacqueline Woodson and illustrated by Rafael López.

As a former middle grades and high school English teacher, I look forward to sharing my love of text with each new group of students. A picture book brings ideas in a simplified, but engaging, form. It allows the students to intentionally access prior knowledge to facilitate discussion. Used at the beginning of a lesson, a picture book can create an environment where the instructor can facilitate a successful learning experience.

"There will be times when you walk into a room/and no one there is quite like you" I read (Woodson, 2018). As the words flowed, the students turned from their notes to view the pages, surprised that we would use a picture book in class that did not specifically have "literacy" in the title. After sharing, I ask students a question that becomes routine as the semester continues: "Why is this book in our current curriculum moment?"

Then we paused.

In this quiet moment, I encouraged students to write down their response before sharing our responses with the group. The intentional use of a participation technique termed "Think-Ink-Link" (Himmele & Himmele, 2017), can disrupt the pressured "call on the person with the first raised hand" in order "to move on to the next thing." A question important enough to ask is important enough for everyone to engage with. Writing before sharing gives all students in the class time to think (Himmele & Himmele, 2017), even more so than the more traditional and often used Think-Pair-Share. By taking the step to write, we establish that questions aren't a means to an end--getting the "right" answer. Instead, a written response shows that our thinking takes precedence and that there are a wide range of possibilities within the question.

Now that the question is asked, the pause taken, and the response inked, we begin to share. In a larger class, students break into pairs or triads to share their thinking. I circulate around the room, catching snippets of conversation before requesting teams share their ideas to the whole group. With smaller classes, sometimes we break into pairs before we share and other times, we move right to building our understanding as a group. Sharing their thinking is crucial, as not only do they get feedback from me, but they also consider their thoughts and the thoughts of their peers in the context of the course at the time. This metacognition is deeply important—and often engaging. Students segue into the goal of instruction for the day as they make meaning and connect to their background knowledge, which is the point of intentionally accessing prior knowledge in the first place. Their brains become more ready for new instruction as "neurons fire" (Pollock, 2021).

In his landmark book, Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement (2008), Hattie shares that the effect size of accessing prior knowledge during instruction can significantly increase student achievement. Learning is simply more "successful when teachers succeed in activating prior knowledge" (Hattie, 2018). Much more than a lesson "hook" or review of previous instruction, activating prior knowledge definitively helps students make sense of the instructional goal.

Accessing prior knowledge at the beginning of a period of instruction has many benefits. The picture book is an ideal medium with condensed or absent text, expressive art, and possibilities for interpretation. Paired with an intentionally designed question (and an expectation of total participation) using a picture book to quickly "fire the neurons" (Pollock, 2021) before instructing over new information will deepen student learning.

In this case, our purpose for instruction was to build our classroom community. The students answered that because we were newly working together, Woodson's book reminded us to create space for each other and to value our work together. By the end of our period of instruction, we had accomplished our goals. We had decided on our agreements and semester outcomes. Our hopes, fears, and expectations were established.

As they left, I overhead a student outside the classroom remark, "I wonder what picture book we're going to read next week?" Another answered, before I moved far enough away to not overhear, "I think this class is going to be different." I thought about the words of Woodson's book, which reaffirmed my belief in the way you begin. Not only to build space with a new group of co-learners that deserve to be seen and heard in the classroom, but also in the necessity of deepening their learning by intentionally accessing prior knowledge.

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Author Information

Sarrah Grubb serves as an Assistant Professor of Education at Indiana University, Kokomo. She earned her Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the department of Educational Leadership at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. She has varied experience in education, including teaching at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, and coordinating curriculum, instruction, and professional development across all levels of schooling. She rediscovered teaching as soul work through an appointment at a rural work college in the hills of eastern Kentucky, where she became dedicated to collaborating and co-creating curriculum with preservice teachers as they develop their teacher hearts.

Four Great Tech Tools to Try Today

by Amy Leitze

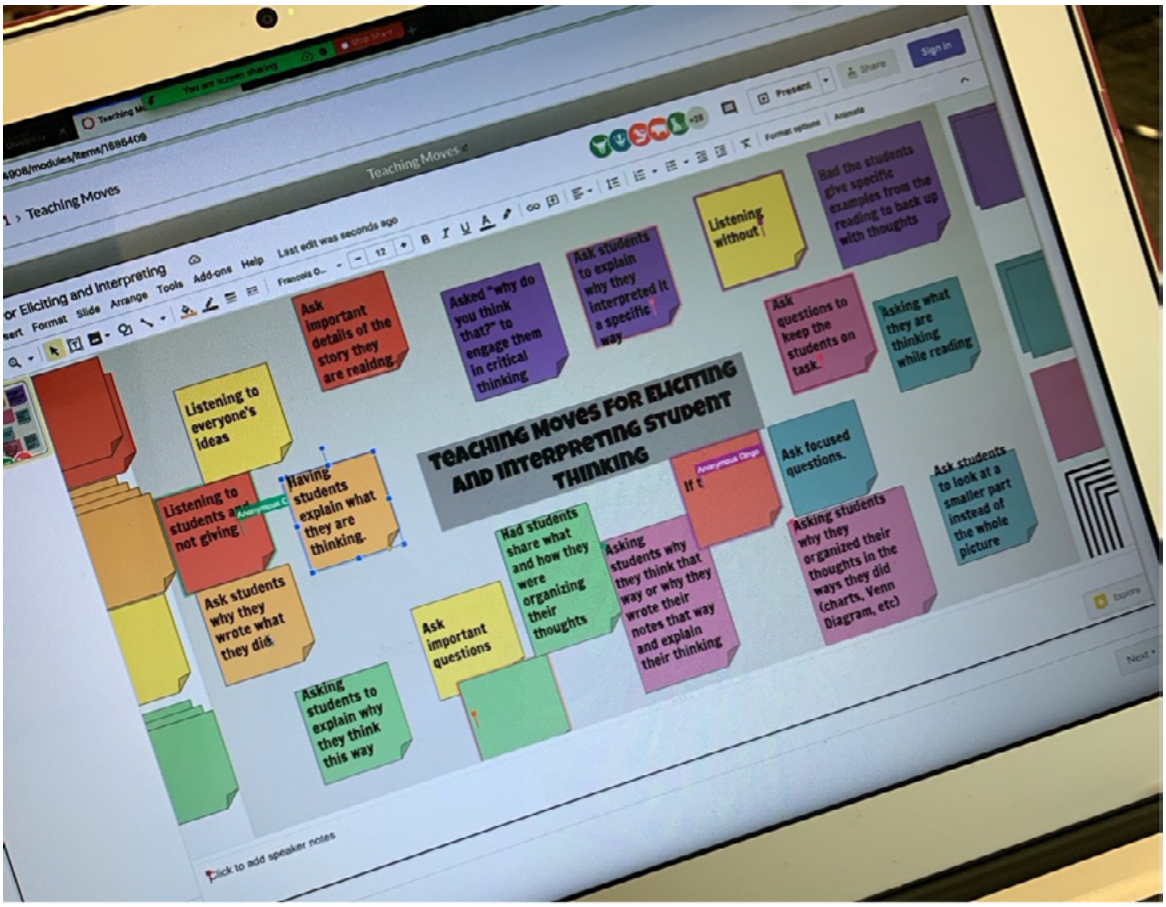
In the classrooms of 2020, tech tools have become even more important as teachers seek to meet the needs of their students in socially distant, virtual, and hybrid environments. The amount of tech tools available and the large number of demands on teacher time can make the selection of these tools even more difficult. In this column, I will share four great tools that I have used in my teaching this fall. These tools have all been helpful in navigating the teaching challenges of today's classrooms, effective in engaging students, useful in a wide variety of classroom settings, and are all free!

I was first introduced to Loom in the spring of 2020 when my son's teacher was using it to present content during remote learning. As a screen and video recording tool, Loom (2016) has since become a go-to tool in my teaching. Using Loom, teachers can create screen recordings, videos of themselves, or screen recordings that include a "bubble" with an image of the teacher. I have used Loom videos to model or explain assignments, for instructional or tutorial videos, and to "flip" instruction. Once recorded, Loom videos are saved to their website and can be shared with others using the generated link. An embed code can also be generated, making it useful to post the videos on pages and within assignments on Canvas in order to provide the videos to my students for online viewing. I also have found it useful to email the links to colleagues as I provide PD on new technology tools. Loom's desktop app is also very helpful since the ability to create a new video is only a click away. Loom accounts are free for all basic users; however, as a part of Loom's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Loom's Pro account is now free for students and teachers (2020). In addition to providing information on how to upgrade to the free account, Loom provides additional resources and ideas to teachers on ways to use Loom in the classroom.

Google Slides

Although Google Slides are not new, socially distant teaching has inspired me to use this platform in ways I never have before. Post-its and chart paper are tools that I would frequently use in my classroom to collect student brainstorming or organize thinking around a certain topic. Sometimes these tools would be used to complete an activity like a Chalkboard Splash (Himmele & Himmele, 2017) where students respond to a prompt and then display their answers to share their thinking with the class. Since we are limiting the sharing of materials and movement in the classroom, I created a new way to have my students engage with course content in meaningful ways. Using a Google Slides template and post-it shapes that I adapted from Matt Miller's post (2018), my students grabbed a post-it from the side and then added their thoughts to the slide to brainstorm about our topic. Once their ideas were on the slide, we organized by moving similar ideas together.

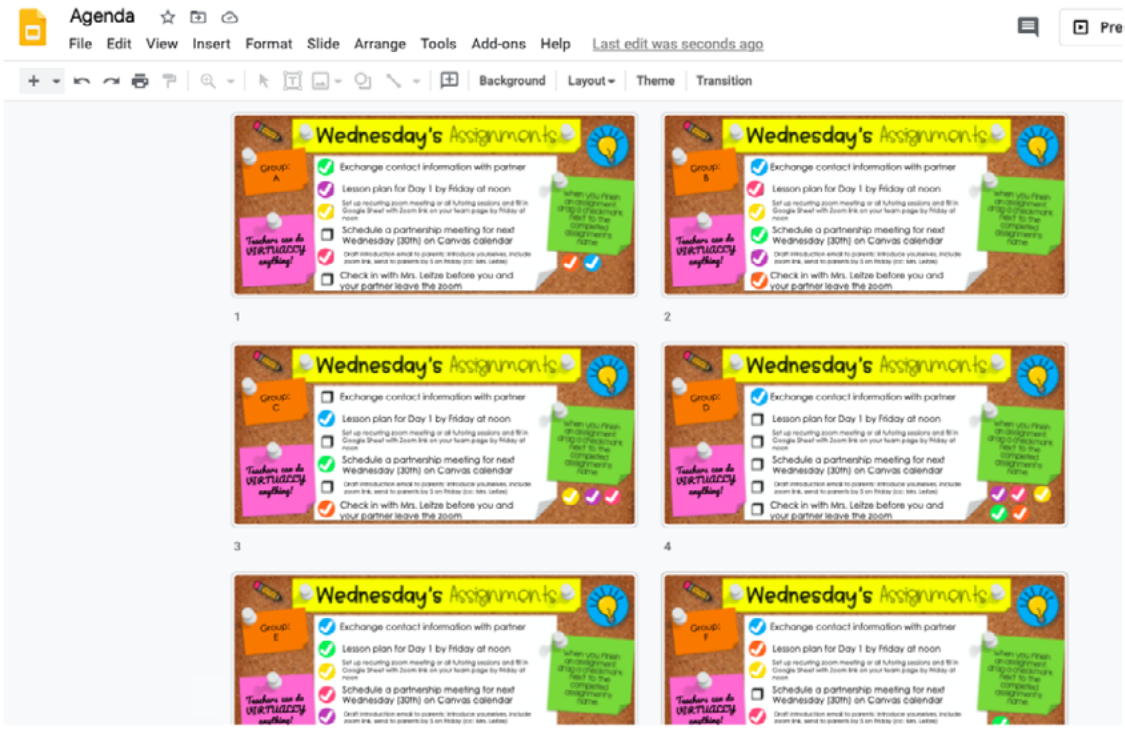
Figure 1.
Students use Google Slides to collect and arrange their ideas in real time during class



Another Google Slides application resulted from reflection on the first couple of weeks of teaching with Zoom. While I value the opportunities for my students to "turn and talk" in the physical classroom, I was struggling with applying these opportunities to the virtual classroom. I was using prompts and sending students to breakout rooms, but I was frustrated with the engagement (or lack thereof) that I would observe when I would join their rooms. For the next class, I decided to use Google Slides to add some accountability to their work. I wanted my students to be able to consider many different categories and add their brainstorming to each one. With a shared Google Slide deck, students could move between slides and add their thoughts and I could observe the work being done by watching the slides and not needing to be in each breakout room to help hold my students accountable, assess their understandings, and help appropriately pace my instruction. The following week, students used a Google Slides template that I created for them to prepare a short presentation and then share their work with the whole class following their breakout sessions. In another class, students had multiple things that they needed to complete in order to prepare for the next week. I adapted the agenda slides from Jennifer Findley (2020), so that each of my pairs had their own agenda checklist slide in one shared slide deck.

Figure 2

An example of agenda slides being used to track group progress during a Zoom breakout session.



Using a shared slide deck that we were all able to access, allowed me to see in real time how the groups were moving through the tasks, even when I was not in the same breakout room with them. Students would document their progress on the agenda items by clicking and dragging the circles with checkmarks from the lower right-hand corner to each item's checkbox as they finished. Since I was using Zoom on my computer to interact with my students, I choose to view the slides using my iPad so I could have multiple screens. Using multiple browser tabs would be another option if only one device is available. Each of these applications of Google Slides helped me increase student engagement and moved beyond using Google Slides simply to present information.

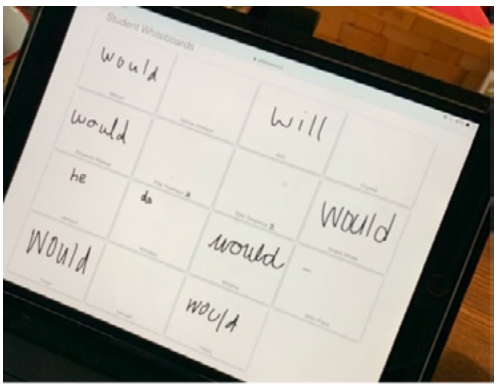
WHITEBOARD.fi

Free online whiteboard tool for teachers and classrooms!

Whiteboard.fi (2020) is a new-to-me tool this semester. This tool is the digital version of individual whiteboards used in the classroom. As I was demonstrating a cloze activity for my students over Zoom, I had them write or type on their whiteboards what words they thought went in the blanks. Similarly to in-person use, the whiteboards allowed me to see all students' thinking and increased engagement during our online class session.

Figure 3.

Students answers on whiteboard.fi



Seesaw (2013) is a learning journal tool that caters primarily to the elementary classroom. In a previous issue of the Indiana Reading Journal, I wrote about how to get started with Seesaw (2017). I continue to use Seesaw as a way to help students document their learning.

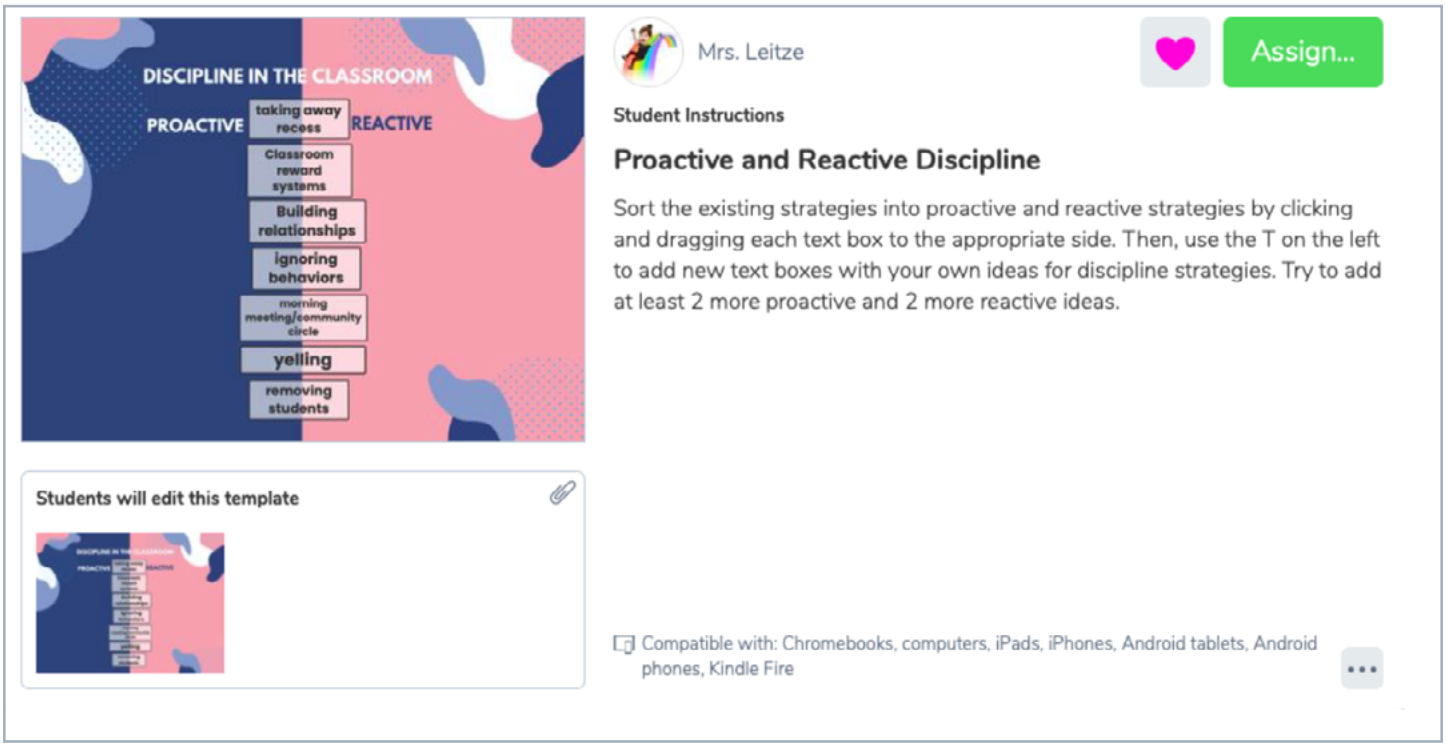
In my classroom this semester, Seesaw has also been a tool I have used to help me build classroom community. When we might have circulated to get to know each other with conversations and community building activities in person, this semester, we created digital collages on Seesaw. While viewing the collages, students found classmates who had similar interests to connect with. Students also posted pictures of what they look like without their masks on and recorded a voiceover of their names, so we could meet each other and learn to properly pronounce each person's name.

In another course, students recommended books that they liked using a note and drew pictures of their favorite leisure activities. The options for using Seesaw for building classroom community are limitless.

New to Seesaw since my original article is the activities feature. This feature allows teachers to create their own activities to assign to students or choose from a curated set of activities created by other Seesaw teachers. For a recent class, I wanted my students to do a sorting activity considering options for proactive and reactive discipline in the classroom. I had my students sort some options that I had created and then had them add some of their own ideas as well.

While my example is fairly specific to my content area, many teachers have shared other activity examples that could be used in any classroom. Activities can be sorted by grade and subject area. Some examples of available activities for literacy include phonics skills, reading responses, sharing student writing, book reviews, and fluency practice. These ready-made activities are available for Seesaw teachers to assign to their students and use immediately.

Figure 4.
Seesaw activity example



Conclusion

Teacher time is at a premium in 2020 even more than in years past. Planning engaging lessons and sifting through tech tools can be time consuming. It's my hope that these four free tech tools will give you something you can pick up and add to your lessons this week. I hope they are as useful in your teaching as they have been in mine.

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Author Information

Amy Leitze is a former classroom teacher who presently is an associate lecturer in the Department of Elementary Education at Ball State University. Amy enjoys working with aspiring teachers in their teacher preparation programs and during their student teaching placements. Her interests are in the areas of literacy, teacher preparation, and digital learning.

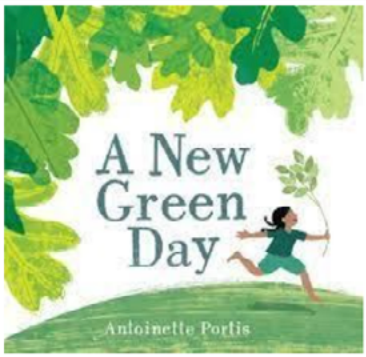
@AmyLeitze

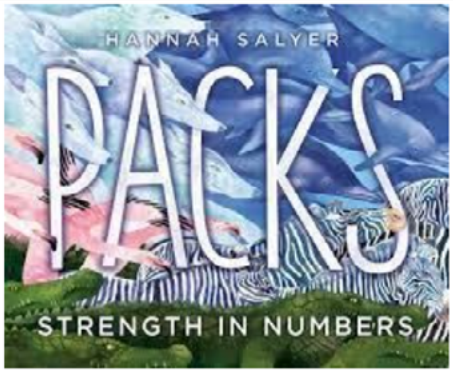
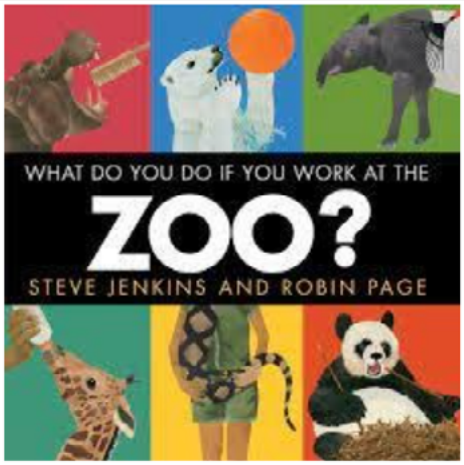
The 2021 Indiana Science Trade Book Annual Reading List (IN-STAR)

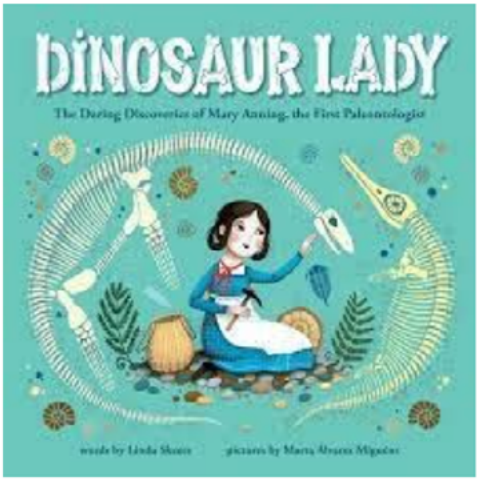
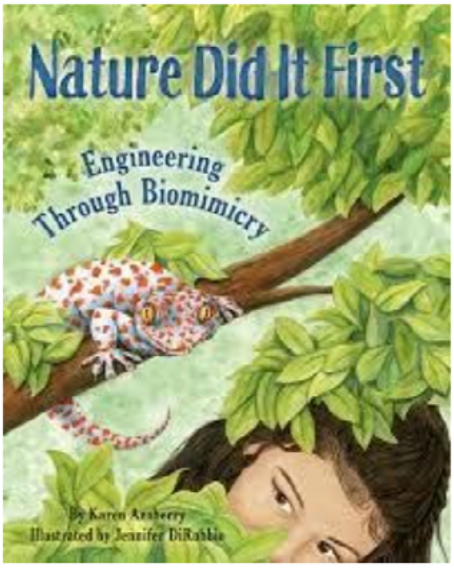
The 2021 Indiana Science Trade Book Annual Reading List (IN-STAR) has some visually stunning and content rich resources. The criteria and process to identify books has been previously described (Gulley & Thomas, 2012). Selections meet the following criteria:

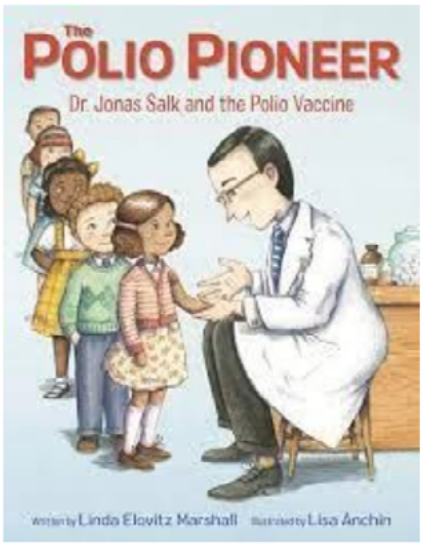
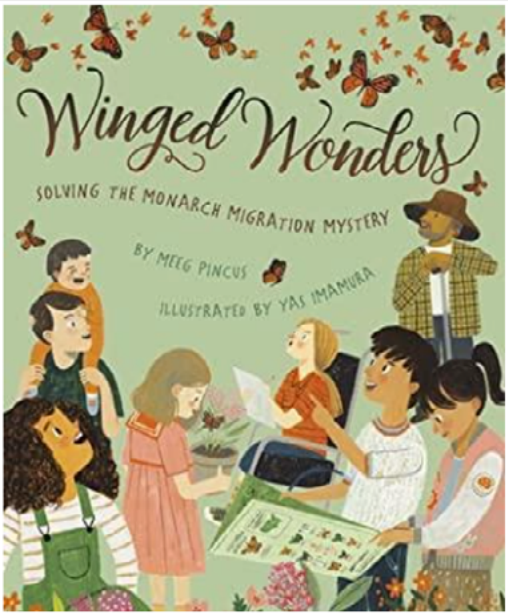
1. The book has substantial science content.
2. Information is clear, accurate, and up to date.
3. Theories and facts are clearly distinguished.
4. Facts are not oversimplified to the point where the information is misleading.
5. Generalizations are supported by facts and significant facts are not omitted.
6. Books are free of gender, ethnic, and socioeconomic bias.
7. Information can be connected to an Indiana Core Standard in Science for grades K-6.
8. Books are readily available in public libraries or bookstores.
9. Books have received at least one positive review in one of the identified professional journals: Booklist, Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, Horn Book, Kirkus Reviews, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal, and Science and Children.

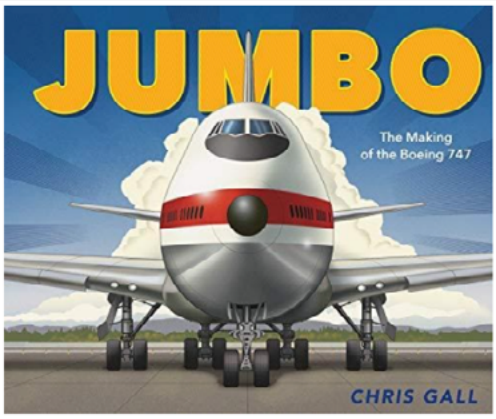
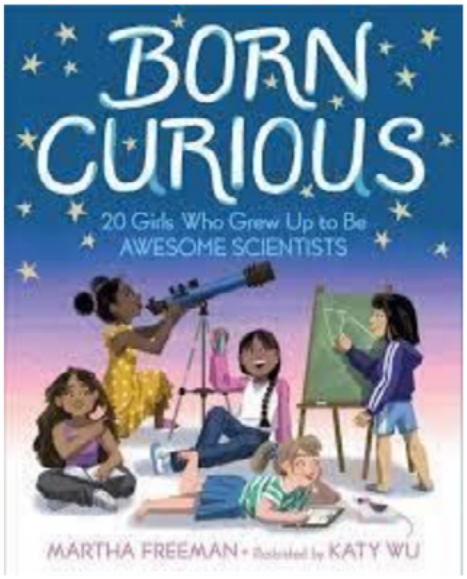
The INSTAR selections are books that teachers can use across grade levels to teach science standards and to integrate science with other content areas. Below are overviews of this year's titles:

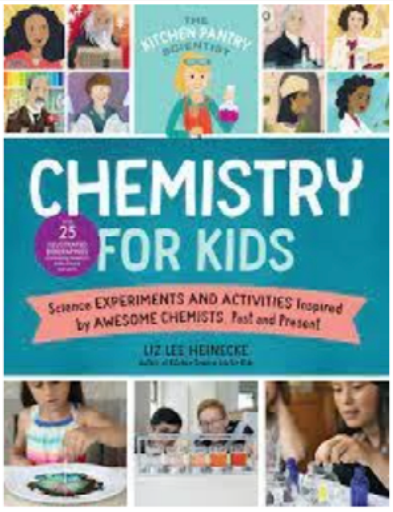
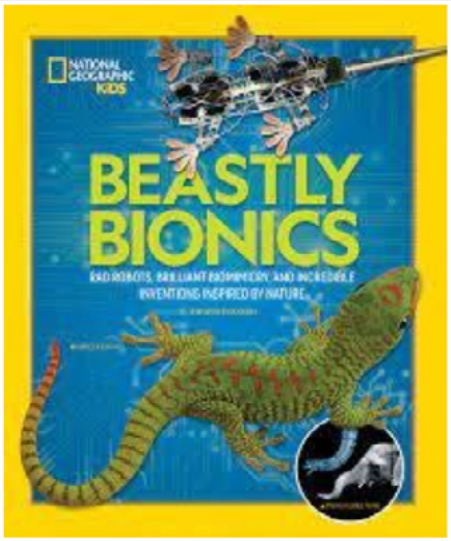
	Kindergarten
	BUTTERFLIES IN ROOM 6. 2019. Caroline Arnold. Charlesbridge. 40 pp. ISBN 13: 978-1580898942. Vivid up-close photographs and easy-to-understand text document the journey of painted lady butterflies from egg to larva, to pupa, to adult, as witnessed by a Kindergarten class. STANDARD: LIFE SCIENCE.
	A NEW GREEN DAY. 2020. Antoinette Portis. Holiday House. 40 pp. ISBN 13: 978-0823444885. Poetic riddles invite readers to consider physical features and behaviors of common objects and animals found in nature. STANDARD: LIFE SCIENCE.

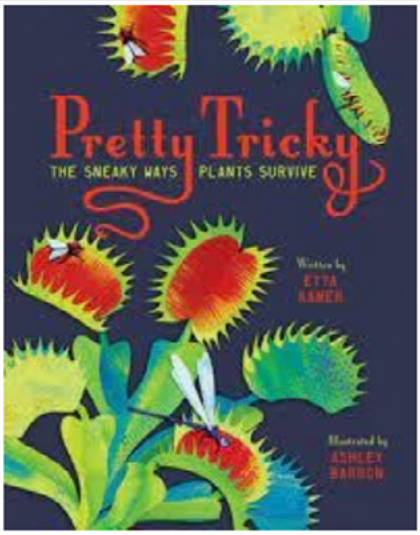
	First Grade
	PACKS: STRENGTH IN NUMBERS. 2020. Hannah Salyer. Clarion Book. 48 pp. ISBN 13: 978-1328577887. From a flamboyance of flamingos to a mob of mongooses, packs, herds, and pods of animal families survive and thrive because they stand together. Twenty-four such groups are described and vividly illustrated. STANDARD: LIFE SCIENCE.
	WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU WORK AT THE ZOO? 2020. Steve Jenkins & Robin Page. Illus. Steve Jenkins. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 40 pp. ISBN 13: 978-0544387591. Zookeepers have some unusual behind-the-scenes chores, from brushing a hippo's teeth to tickling a tapir, to shining a tortoise's shell. Each job has a purpose in helping sustain the animals' quality of life. STANDARD: LIFE SCIENCE.

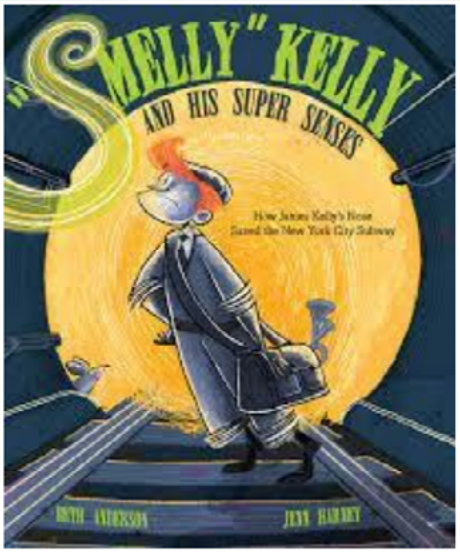
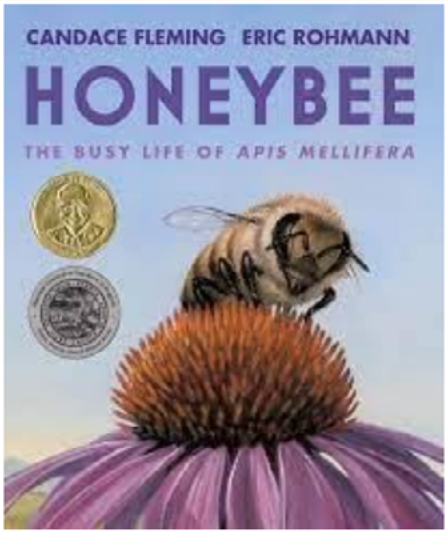
	Second Grade
	DINOSAUR LADY: THE DARING DISCOVERIES OF MARY ANNING, THE FIRST PALEONTOLOGIST. 2020. Linda Seekers. Illus. Marta Álvarez Miguéns. Sourcebooks Explore. 40 pp. ISBN 13: 978-1728209517. Simple text and colorful folk art introduce readers to the life and work of Mary Anning, a bold woman who is credited with creating the science of paleontology. STANDARD: LIFE SCIENCE.
	NATURE DID IT FIRST: ENGINEERING THROUGH BIOMIMICRY. 2020. Karen Ansberry. Illus. Jennifer DiRubbio. Dawn Publications. 32 pp. ISBN 13: 978-1584696582. Rhyming poems with double-spread illustrations describe seven different animals' special adaptations and how engineers have mimicked that trait to solve human problems. STANDARD: LIFE SCIENCE.

	Third Grade
	THE POLIO PIONEER: DR. JONAS SALK AND THE POLIO VACCINE. 2020. Linda Elovitz Marshall. Illus. Lisa Anchin. Knopf Books for Young Readers. 40 pp. ISBN-13: 978-0525646518. The tireless work of Dr. Jonas Salk, who dedicated his career to preventing the spread of the influenza virus and then polio, is depicted in this book. The societal impact of polio prior to Dr. Salk's life saving vaccine will sound familiar to young students experiencing the effects of Covid-19. STANDARD: LIFE SCIENCE.
	WINGED WONDERS: SOLVING THE MONARCH MIGRATION MYSTERY. 2020. Meeg Pincus. Illus. Yas Imamura. Sleeping Bear Press. 40 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1534110403. How are questions about the world around us answered? This book explores the quest to discover the mystery behind the annual monarch migration. STANDARD: LIFE SCIENCE.

	Fourth Grade
	JUMBO: THE MAKING OF THE BOEING 747. 2020. Chris Gall. Illus. Chris Gall. Roaring Brook Press. 48 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1250155801. Realistic cartoon-style illustrations complement the informational text about the history of this magnificent engineering feat. STANARD: ENGINEERING.
	BORN CURIOUS: 20 GIRLS WHO GREW UP TO BE AWESOME SCIENTISTS. 2020. Martha Freeman. Illus. Katy Wu. 128 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1534421530. Both commonly-known women in science, such as Sylvia Earle, and lesser-known women, such as Shirley Ann Jackson, are portrayed in this book. Young students will find connections to these scientists through the exploration of the scientists' childhood experiences that center on curiosity. STANDARDS: EARTH AND SPACE, PHYSICAL AND LIFE.

	Fifth Grade
	THE KITCHEN PANTRY SCIENTIST: CHEMISTRY FOR KIDS. 2020. Liz Lee Heinecke. Illus. Kelly Anne Dalton. Quarry Books. 128 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1631598302. Going beyond just kitchen chemistry experiments, this book includes both activities and scientist biographies for historical context. STANDARD: PHYSICAL SCIENCE
	BEASTLY BIONICS: RAD ROBOTS, BRILLIANT BIOMIMICRY, AND INCREDIBLE INVENTIONS INSPIRED BY NATURE. 2020. Jennifer Swason. National Geographic Kids. 96 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1426336737. Over 40 examples of innovations based on natural phenomena are presented in non-narrative format and supported by captivating photos. STANDARD: ENGINEERING.

	Primary Honorable Mention
	TRICKY PLANTS: THE SNEAKY WAYS PLANTS SURVIVE. 2020. Owlkids. 48 pp. ISBN 13: 978-1771473699. Cut-paper collages and detailed text will help young readers learn how plants use special adaptations to secure food, defend themselves, and reproduce. STANDARD: LIFE SCIENCE.
	WHAT DO SCIENTISTS DO ALL DAY? 2020. Jane Wilsher. Illus. by Maggie Li. Wide Eyed Editions. 64 pp. ISBN 13: 978-0711249783. Children will discover the myriad of jobs performed by different types of scientists in different locations, from forests, to hospitals, to research labs, to outer space.
	YOUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE. 2020. Jason Chin. Holiday House. 40 pp. ISBN 13: 978-0823446230. Caldecott and Sibert Honoree Jason Chin uses his brilliant art to help readers of all ages understand the scope, size, age, and expanse of the universe. Using the height of eight year-olds as the starting point, Chin provides referenced examples of scale to depict objects on Earth and in the galaxy. STANDARD: EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE.

	Intermediate Honorable Mention
	WOOD, WIRE, WINGS: EMMA LILIAN TODD INVENTS AN AIRPLANE. 2020. Kirsten W. Larson. Illus. Tracy Subisak. Calkins Creek. 48 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1629799384. Whimsical illustrations accompany the text chronicling the life of this little-known citizen engineer who tinkered with airplane designs in the early 1900s. STANDARD: ENGINEERING.
	"SMELLY" KELLY AND HIS SUPER SENSES: HOW JAMES KELLY'S NOSE SAVE THE NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY. 2020. Beth Anderson. Illus. Jenn Harney. Calkins Creek. 40 pp. ISBN-13: 978-1684373994. Using his keen sense of smell and his problem-solving insights, James Kelly served as New York City's first subway "leak detective" and thwarted potential catastrophes in the metropolitan area's underground transportation system. STANDARD: ENGINEERING.
	HONEYBEE: THE BUSY LIFE OF APIS MELLIFERA. 2020. Candace Fleming. Illus. Eric Rohmann. Neal Porter Books. 40 pp. ISBN-13: 978-0823442850. Exquisite artwork and succinct science content combine to create an informative book about the life stages of a honeybee. Endnotes extend the science content to provide additional information about honey bee conservation efforts. STANDARD: LIFE SCIENCE.

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Resources

http://www.usi.edu/science/southwest-indiana-stem/instar/

Jeff Thomas, Professor of Teacher Education at University of Southern Indiana, works with emerging and current elementary teachers to promote integration of inquiry-based science, children's literature, and technology.

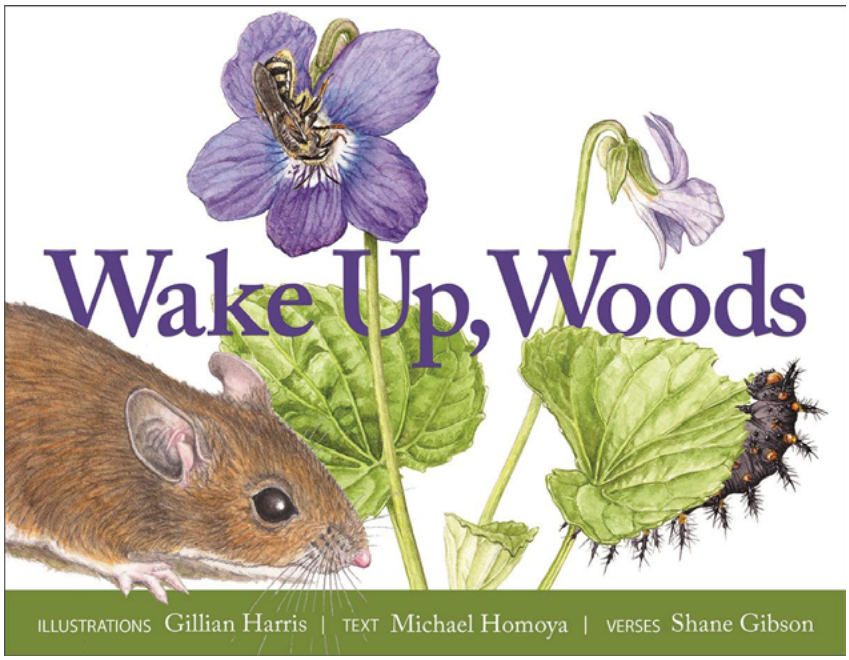
Joyce Gulley, Professor of Teacher Education at University of Southern Indiana, works with teacher candidates to identify high quality children's literature to promote literacy and student engagement with text.

Kristin Rearden, Clinical Professor of Science Education at University of Tennessee, works with elementary and middle grades teacher candidates to support their implementation of research-based interdisciplinary instructional strategies in science.

Amy Broemmel, Associate Professor of Elementary and Literacy Education at University of Tennessee, works with elementary teacher candidates to support their implementation of research-based interdisciplinary instructional strategies.

Wake Up, Woods by Michael Homoya & Shane Gibson, Illustrated by Gillian Harris

Reviewed by Jelena Byers @jelgobes (Instagram)



Wake Up, Woods is a beautifully illustrated book with well written information about the various flora one might encounter in our forests and nature preserves. Each new plant is introduced with easy poetic verse that draws you into the world they might be found in. The poetry leaves the reader thirsting for more information which the author delivers with interesting facts regarding insects and animals that live off these plants as well as their visual characteristics and how they pollinate. This book would be good for any young budding botanist or outdoor enthusiast.

Jelena Byers

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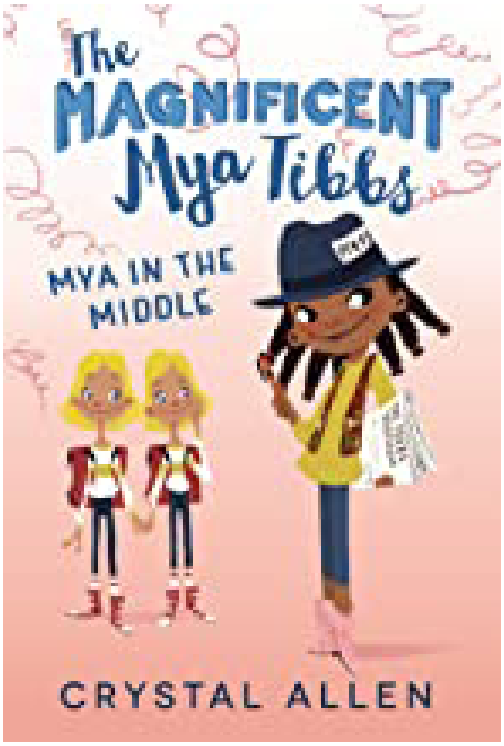
The Magnificent Mya Tibbs : Mya in the Middle by Crystal Allen

Reviewed by Denise Dragash



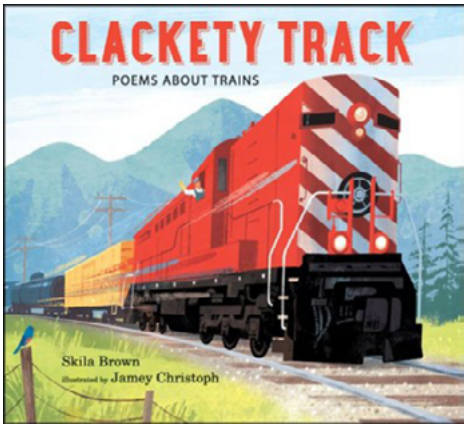
Mya is back for the third book in the series with *Mya in the Middle* by author Crystal Allen. This time Mya finds herself as the middle child after her family welcomes adorable baby sister, Macey. As can happen, the parents are sleep deprived; add in some family business worries and Mya is feeling left out. She tries to solve the problem with the help of some of her friends and big brother, Nugget. Throughout the struggles, Mya learns some valuable lessons about friendship and family. The experiences Mya goes through are relatable to the intended reading audience. Everyone can learn from examples of what to do and not do at school, with friends and family. Positive role models of the teacher and principal serve as a good reminder for readers that these can be safe people in their own lives. The town of Bluebonnet sounds like the perfect place to live which makes parts of the story a little unbelievable, but we can all wish to live in a place as friendly and helpful as Bluebonnet.

Denise Dragash

@PTEMediaCenter

Clackety Track by Skila Brown, Illustrated by Jamey Christoph

Reviewed by Emma Kelley



Clackety Track is a beautifully written picture book consisting of thirteen independent poems that are "right on track" for young train enthusiasts. Not only does Brown address common types of trains in her poems, such as the Freight Train, Steam Engine, and Bullet Train, she also engages readers in information related to trains - explaining the structure of train tracks and the function of the Shoulder Ballast Cleaner, for example. She cleverly begins the book with *Morning in the Yard* and ends with *The Sleeper Train*. While the book is made up of somewhat unrelated poems, Brown achieves a sense of a beginning and end - morning and night.

Most of these poems could be enjoyed autonomously by its intended audience of young readers, yet there are some instances of challenging vocabulary and figurative language that may require assistance. Fortunately, Skila Brown considered this and included twelve additional train facts, written in prose, at the end of the book. The poem *Electric Train* includes the word "pantograph" with very few context clues. However, the seventh train fact on the final page serves as supporting text, providing an explanation about pantographs. The train facts are organized so that there is one fact per train car, spreading across two pages. While the design is appealing, many of the train facts would be more effectively utilized if they were spread throughout the book and placed on applicable pages. In an educational setting, this book would be an excellent resource for exposing young readers to figurative language, such as metaphor. For instance, in *Freight Train*, the train is referred to as a "Clackin' crayon pack on wheels," as well as a "Rockin' rainbow made of steel". Illustrator Jamey Christoph, created thirteen delightful works of art directly aligned with the poems. Each illustration is spread across two pages, taking up the majority of visual space in relation to the words on the page, which benefits the book's young audience. Poetry can be a challenging genre for emergent readers. However, the vibrant illustrations in *Clackety Track* directly support the information in each poem, which aids in understanding.

An additional design element that supports the reader's overall comprehension is the organization of the physical words within the poems. In the poem *Tracks*, the letters in "shudder" have been taken out of alignment, causing movement throughout the word, so it appears to be shaking. In many of her poems, Brown increases the space between words, emphasizing a pause. "Listen. Hush. Here comes a train," intends the reader to stop for a longer period after the word "Listen," increasing suspense, as if the reader is truly listening for a train.

Clackety Track provides an engaging overview on various trains and other related information. Skila Brown and Jamey Christoph invite readers to join them on the journey into the world of trains. "Come on! Hop on now. All Aboard!"

Emma Kelley

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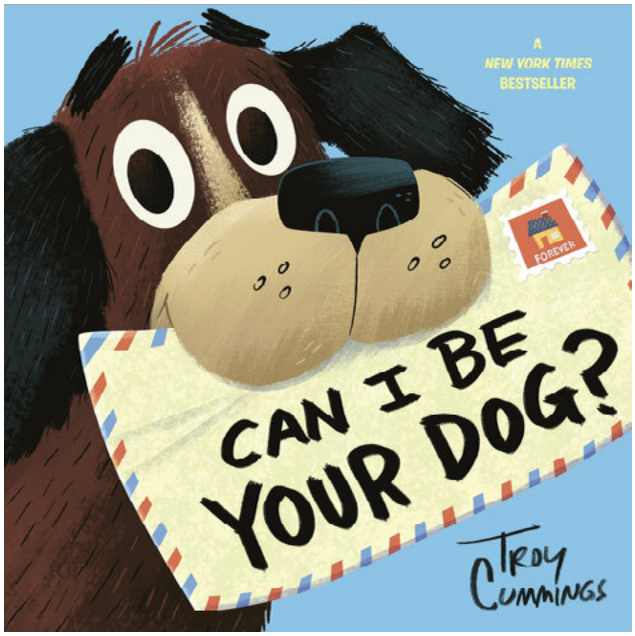
Can I Be Your Dog? by Troy Cummings

Reviewed by Sarrah J. Grubb

Troy Cummings, Indiana native and, according to his Web site "author/illustrator of more than 40 children's books," captures this reader's heart with his charming New York Times bestselling picture book, *Can I Be Your Dog*?



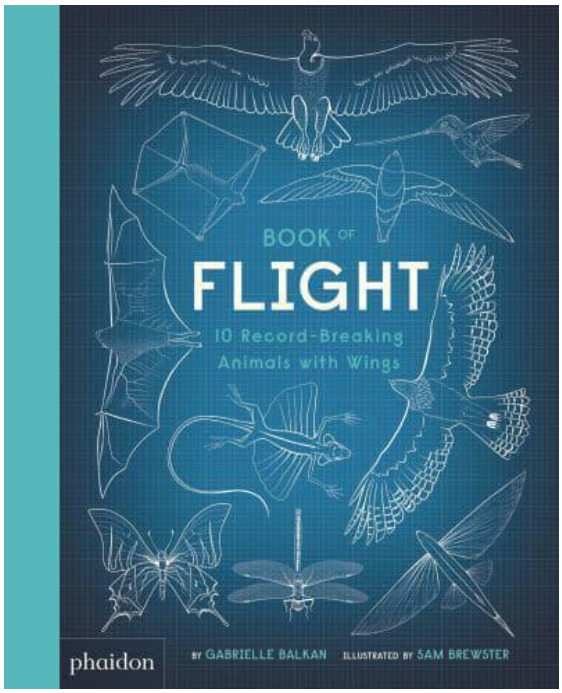
On the cover, the wishful look in the eyes of the title character, Arfy, encourages us to hope that the optimistic pup will find his "fur-ever" home within the brightly painted pages. As we begin the story, we join the homeless dog as he travels Butternut Street. Arfy writes letters to people in the neighborhood asking for a permanent place to live. Cummings' strong paint strokes, use of color to reinforce the mood, and inclusion of the letters between residents of Butternut Street and Arfy encourage the reader to root for Arfy, even as his requests are rejected, in kind and not-so-kind ways. (One family explains that their cat is allergic to dogs.) Children, or children at heart, will empathize as it begins to rain and Arfy's latest letter is stamped "return to sender" unanswered. His dream of a permanent home might not be fulfilled. Will anyone let Arfy be their dog? The resolution of the story is clever and unexpected. As an added bonus, the back pages include an extra note from Arfy to the reader, explaining how they, too, can "extend a helpful paw" to homeless pets.

Overall, two paws up for Arfy and to Troy Cummings for bringing the heartwarming tale of hope to life on the pages of *Can I Be Your Dog*?

Sarrah J. Grubb

Book of Flight: 10 Record-Breaking Animals with Wings by Gabrielle Balkan, Illustrated by Sam Brewster

Reviewed by Michele Grossman



A fascination with and admiration of flying things of all types attracted me to Gabrielle Balkan's *Book of Flight: 10 Record-Breaking Animals with Wings*. It did not disappoint. A first skim of the book was a delighted appreciation of Sam Brewster's illustrations Each "guess who" blueprint of an animal was followed by colorful depictions of the animals in their habitats. Closer inspection revealed that the pages include texture! This was a lovely surprise. A little bit of extra that was delightful to discover.

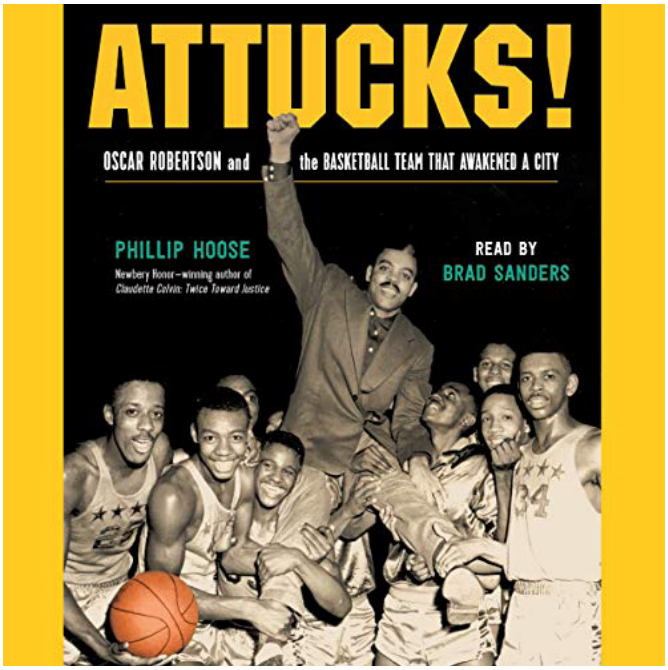
Balkan's text gives the readers clues, details about the structure and behavior of the animal. She labels Brewster's blueprints with interesting facts that distinguish a particular flyer from all others. While doing so she uses onomatopoeia, alliteration, and exclamation marks that express her contagious sense of wonder and curiosity: *Scoop, tuck, tumble, flip!* In addition, Balkan uses relatable comparisons that help the reader comprehend the facts: *If you ate your weight in food, you'd eat more than 100 bananas before bed!*

Although the average reader might guess that the described creatures are moths, bats, or birds, the actual animals will be a revelation to most. The flyers in this book are very specific ones in those larger categories. Recommended for ages 5 to 8, the content will certainly hold up to repeated readings by beginning readers, who will enjoy the illustrations and textures, as well as independent readers, who will learn a good deal about this topic. Even adults who enjoy picture books will learn some factoids that are bound to come in handy at the next trivia night. It is a testament to the enjoyable format that when the final page was a blueprint page that was not followed by an illustrated page, I was disappointed.

Author Gabrielle Balkan's connection to Indiana was as a student at Broad Ripple High School. She currently lives in New York with her family and pets. She has collaborated with illustrator Sam Brewster, a freelance illustrator based in London, on other books for children as well. I will be adding these to my library: *Book of Bones: 10 Record-Breaking Animals (2017)* and *Whose Bones?: An Animal Guessing Game (2020)*.

Attucks!: Oscar Robertson and the Basketball team that Awakened a City by Phillip Hoose

Reviewed by Darolyn Jones



2020 Indiana Author Award Winner
2019 ALA Notable Book o
2018 NYPL Best Book for Teens
2018 Booklist Youth Editors' Choice
2018 Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature Best Book
2018 Kirkus Reviews Best YA Nonfiction Book
2019 ALSC Notable Children's Book of 2019
A YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Award Nominee

Phillip Hoose, a National Book Award winner and Speedway, Indiana native who now resides on the East Coast, writes primarily historical nonfiction and his works center on sports and social justice issues. His recent multiple award winner, *Attucks!: Oscar Robertson and the Basketball team that Awakened a City*, hits close to home because growing up, Hoose remembers well the racial divide of the city of Indianapolis and the frenzy over Hoosier Hysteria. In 1986 and again long gone from Hoosier soil, Hoose was asked by Sports Illustrated to interview Crispus Attuck's famous and beloved player and leader on the court, Oscar Robertson. The interview lasted three hours, because growing up, Hoose's only contact with African Americans was through the Indiana High School Basketball Tourney and of course, he had heard the legendary stories of Robertson. He was curious and the more Robertson talked, the more he wanted to know. Robertson said one line to Hoose that inspired this book: "When the Ku Klux Klan started our school [Crispus Attucks], they really didn't understand what they were doing."

Robertson and the historic Crispus Attuck's 1955 basketball team who became the very first all-Black team to win the Indiana High School's Athletic Association's State Basketball Championship and the first team in the city of Indianapolis to ever win that title is not just a story about basketball. That interview with Robertson led to countless hours of research and interviews and was expertly folded into the pages of this character driven piece of critical nonfiction. It's a story that young readers everywhere should read and that teachers and librarians; Hoosier or not; basketball lover or not, should teach, shelve, promote.

I love historical nonfiction.I love Indiana.And I love Hoosier Hysteria. My stepfather lived in a small town next to Milan, and he remembers that famous game where the small school beat the big school, now famously immortalized in one of the most well-known sports movies, *Hoosiers*. Hoose also has written a young book about that aptly titled, *Hoosiers: The Fabulous Basketball Life of Indiana*. And in 2007, I visited the Crispus Attucks Museum and worked on a memoir project with senior citizens with the historic all African American community center, Flanner house. They are the same senior citizens who lived in Frog Island and attended Attucks, where Robertson and his teammates lived and played; the same senior citizens who watched the famous team practice at the Dust Bowl tournaments in Lockerbie; and the same senior citizens who attended the games and cheered with integrated basketball fans, ironic since where those same African Americans lived and attended school remained segregated.

But, I couldn't truly envisage what Attuck's was really all about and why it was such a critical and historic racial moment for the city, the state, and the country until I read this book. This is much more than

a basketball story. It's a character driven story where we learn through the actions and dialogue of each critical person who contributed either to systemically keeping segregation alive or building Crispus Attucks up to be the beacon of hope, harmony, and excellence it became. What happened at Attucks started a movement to break the long held racial divide in the city. The first time many whites in the city or the state ever saw a Black person was when Crispus Attuck's came to their town to play or Hoosiers flocked to Indianapolis to see the games at Butler Fieldhouse. Watching them, supporting them as their Indiana team humanized them to folks that were previously for segregation and racial divide.

In this accessible, well-written nonfiction chapter book, with images and primary documentation, you will learn how the Klan and the community tried to keep Black residents poor and in a segregated, too small school. You will learn about more than the historic Indiana Avenue, but also about the shameful living conditions of Blacks in Frog Island. You will learn that Attuck's employed some of the top university-trained Black Scholars as teachers because those individuals couldn't get positions at universities or in science or corporations because they were Black.

The book is full of clarifying historic side table insets that explain Jim Crow laws, the Great Migration, even the origin of the word "Hoosier". You will hear from and about the key historical figures who were there and lived during that time. I loved the use of real images from the local newspapers and photographs which helps the reader visualize and understand the political and social commentaries happening in that real time. The book includes a comprehensive Notes and Bibliography section that explains where every source is from. It also includes a "The Times that Followed" section where you can learn what happened to the famous Attuck's players, most of whom are still living.

Darolyn Jones

Girls on the Verge by Sharon Briggs Waller

Reviewed by Lynn Werckenthien

"This is my right. I deserve to be heard." 17-year-old Camille is preparing to attend Willow, an elite theater camp, when she finds out she's pregnant. She has big dreams for her life, and she knows she wants an abortion. Too scared to tell her parents, she sets out on a road trip across Texas with two girl friends: Bea, her reluctant and religiously conservative best friend, and Annabelle, a girl she just met but a champion for Camille's cause and women's rights. On the way, they encounter innumerable setbacks, including a pro-life clinic masquerading as an abortion clinic, angry protesters, a search for illegal medication in Mexico, and an unsupportive judge. The novel weaves in flashbacks in which we learn more about Camille's past and the events that brought Camille to this cross-country trip. Altogether, it tells the tale of a girl who, with the support of her best friends, fights for the right to make the choices that will determine her life's path.

Compelling, honest, and, ultimately, hopeful, Girls on the Verge by Sharon Biggs Waller is an important and timely book for students in high school and above about a woman's right to choose and a girl's journey to finding her voice.

Lynn Werckenthien

@mrs_werck

All the Things We Do in the Dark
by Saundra Mitchell

Reviewed by Corrine Henke

Setting is present day in a high school. The weather is cold with snow. The main character is in high school and experiencing growing pains with her parents. She rebels against her parents and gets a tattoo and on the way home finds a dead body in the woods. She does not report it to the proper officials because she notices someone else in the woods. The book is very dark. This is a well written book, but is not for any grade lower than 8th grade. As I was reading this book poolside a friend remarked, "Wow with a title like that I am surprised that it is a kid's book!" I said not to worry, I love to preview books prior to placing them in my library for my 5th graders. This book will be passed on to my friend who teaches 8th grade. The subject content is for mature audiences. The topic is very relevant to more of a high school reading group.

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