



## Teaching and Learning for Intercultural Understanding

### **ECIS Libraries Week 2021**

### ***Developing Intercultural Understanding Through the Power of Children's Literature* Presented by Debra Rader, International Educator, Author and Consultant**

#### **Introduction**

What joy to be a librarian! What joy to inspire learning and spark imagination!

Story engages our hearts and minds. It inspires us and invites us to explore other worlds and perspectives, and imagine different ways of thinking and being. Just as story is central to our human experience, the library and librarians are central to learning within our schools. As a librarian you are in a unique position within your school to support children, families and colleagues in further developing intercultural understanding and creating an inclusive learning community where everyone is represented, engaged and has a deep sense of belonging; important goals for international schools.

Intercultural understanding is the bridge between diversity and inclusion, and is what makes a diverse learning community an inclusive one. It is a disposition and competence that is developed as a lifelong process and includes knowledge and understanding; transformative beliefs, values and attitudes; essential intercultural, interpersonal and life skills; and engagement in positive action to help create a better world. Intercultural understanding is at the heart of international-mindedness and global citizenship, which we strive to nurture. Teaching and learning for intercultural understanding promotes diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice in our schools and supports antiracist education. As a librarian you have a vital role in inspiring, supporting and extending learning, engaging hearts and minds of all ages, and providing resources that reflect the community you serve.

I hope you find these resources helpful!

#### **Children's literature for developing intercultural understanding**

As you view resources through the lens of intercultural understanding and become increasingly familiar with the *Framework for Developing Intercultural Understanding* (Rader, 2016) you will see connections everywhere. These are the picture books that were shared during this presentation and are powerful for all ages. The titles marked with an asterisk (\*) are those featured in lesson plans in *Teaching and Learning for Intercultural Understanding: Engaging Young Hearts and Minds* (Routledge, 2018).

- Agee, J (2019) *The Wall in the Middle of the Book*. London: Scallywag Press Ltd.
- \*Aliko (1998) *Marianthe's Story: Painted Words and Spoken Memories*. New York: Greenwillow Books.
- \*Castle, C (2002) *For Every Child: the rights of the child in words and pictures*.
- \*Cooper, I (2007) *The Golden Rule*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers. London: Red Fox Books and UNICEF.
- \*Choi Y (2001) *The Name Jar*. New York: Dragonfly Books.
- \*Fanelli, S (1995) *My Map Book*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Hennessy, BG (2005) *Because of You*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press
- \*Hoffman, M (1991) *Amazing Grace*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers.
- Paratore, C (2012) *BIG*. Belvedere, CA: Little Pickle Press.
- \*Reynolds, B (1998) *Tokyo Friends: Tokyo no Tomodachi*. Boston: Tuttle Publishing.
- \*Thong, R (2008) *Wish: Wishing Traditions Around the World*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books LLC.
- \*Wenzel, B (2017) *They All Saw a Cat*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books LLC.

### **Suggested websites for diverse and inclusive children's literature**

<https://lantanapublishing.com/>

Lantana publishes beautiful diverse and inclusive literature for children.

<https://www.redleafpress.org/>

Redleaf Press publishes some lovely materials for Early Childhood and Early Childhood educators. The teacher resource *Roots and Wings: Affirming Culture and Preventing Bias in Early Childhood* by Stacy York is excellent.

<https://www.fbmarketplace.org>

First Book Marketplace provides valuable booklists that promote intercultural understanding and DEIJ.

<https://diversebooks.org/resources/>

We Need Diverse Books™ is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and a grassroots organization of children's book lovers that advocates essential changes in the publishing industry to produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of all young people.

<https://socialjusticebooks.org/about/see-what-we-see/>

See What We See (SWWS) is a coalition of writers, scholars, educators, librarians, and activists committed to social justice. Social Justice Books offers carefully selected lists of books for children and educators, book reviews, and articles on social justice, and multicultural children's literature.

## Suggested articles

[https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/20/opinion/sunday/picture-books-reading.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage&fbclid=IwAR2HY4ZGd1nffbz5eCAUOS6N7YQ-MqW\\_-0uk0tDjpUtMIofw4\\_PNb9Xsbro](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/20/opinion/sunday/picture-books-reading.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage&fbclid=IwAR2HY4ZGd1nffbz5eCAUOS6N7YQ-MqW_-0uk0tDjpUtMIofw4_PNb9Xsbro)

Picture books are for all ages!

<https://www.multilingualism-in-schools.net/rivers-of-reading/>

I love this concept of creating a 'river of reading' linking reading to important events, which beautifully celebrates literacy, values all languages and affirm our identity. This would be a lovely project to do with families and colleagues as well.

<https://stopasianhate.medium.com/ellen-oh-wants-kids-to-see-what-she-didnt-strong-asian-american-characters-in-books-fae39f36f005>

This excellent article recounts the Ellen Oh's experiences of racism in the US and the literature she wishes she could have read as a child. Ellen is cofounder of We Need Diverse Books listed above.

## Suggested resources

<https://www.routledge.com/Teaching-and-Learning-for-Intercultural-Understanding-Engaging-Young-Hearts/Rader/p/book/9781138102729>

My book is a comprehensive guide for educators and contains 18 detailed lesson plans based on quality children's literature. The Appendices contain valuable literature and resource lists.

[https://www.fbmarketplace.org/empowering-educators/?utm\\_source=firstbook&utm\\_medium=blog&utm\\_campaign=empowering-educators&\\_ga=2.240022595.1154785743.1621960824-1676584143.1621960824](https://www.fbmarketplace.org/empowering-educators/?utm_source=firstbook&utm_medium=blog&utm_campaign=empowering-educators&_ga=2.240022595.1154785743.1621960824-1676584143.1621960824)

You can download First Book's *Empowering Educators: A Guide to Race & Racism* here. It is an excellent resource and includes guiding questions for selecting and evaluating resources through an ABAR lens and facilitating conversations.

<https://www.mynamemyidentity.org/resources/investigate-the-world>

This valuable resource highlights the importance of names and identity.

<https://padlet.com/jlifshitz/ddfshg2jfsx00o5y>

This valuable learning engagement was posted on Twitter by Jess Lifshitz @jess5th. She asked her students to think critically and analyse how books push past stereotypes, and they created this padlet. You could have students choose books with positive narratives that promote the different components of intercultural understanding as well.