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EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Investigating the Gap: A Study of the Diversity in Elementary Literature

Honors Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the

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Spring 2020

By

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Mentor

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Investigating the Gap: A Study of the Diversity in Elementary Literature

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This study looks into the diversity of elementary level literature used in classrooms for read alouds. Research has shown (e.g., Crisp, 2016; Harrington, 2016), that in many schools, there is a lack of diversity in the literature created for young students. This leaves students feeling that they are not a valued member of the community when they are not represented in the literature read and other students are unable to accept and appreciate the diversity found in their community.

This study worked with two first-grade teachers and had them keep a list of all books that they read aloud over a two-month period. Content analysis methods were used to analyze each read-aloud selection for various representations of diversity (race, gender, religion, family representations, etc.) In addition, teachers participated in two interviews in order to ask about their selection of classroom read-alouds, the diversity of their choices for read aloud, and what influences them in their selection of literature.

Findings suggest that teachers read-aloud selections were guided by the curriculum, connection to a theme, and personal connections. Using these as guides led to a lack of diversity in the books read aloud. This lack of diversity impacts all students by not allowing them to have a book that they can see themselves in and it impacts other students because they are unable to learn about other differences from them to prepare them for the future. Some suggestions to increase the diversity of literature available to future students are to be intentional in looking for diverse books and be vocal about the lack of diversity from publishing companies. This can be done by using different websites, such as Diverse Book Finder, and working with local librarians.

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Introduction

Walking around Mrs. Oaks' first grade classroom all 19 students are seated in their desks looking to the front of the room. Some of the students are fidgeting in their seats, with pent up energy ready to be released. Mrs. Oaks sits at her desk in her swivel chair with a sheet of paper under the document camera that is just waking up. As the sheet is seen on the board, a page titled "All About Me!" appears. The page has four boxes where students will fill in information about themselves, how old they are, their favorite food, their favorite thing to do, and finally a box for them to draw a picture of themselves.

Mrs. Oaks tells the students that they will be filling in the paper to show to their parents for their student-led conferences coming up in March. The students buzz with excitement to lead a conference all on their own. Mrs. Oaks puts some words on the board that students might need to fill in their answers, she then reads the first blank, what is your Favorite Food, then tells the students to fill it in. Hands immediately rise up asking for help spelling "pizza" and "chicken nuggets". I walk around the classroom bouncing from student to student helping them sound out the word they are trying to spell.

As they finish, students sit quietly or talk with a neighbor. Mrs. Oaks tells them that if they are finished to begin to draw a picture of themselves in the bottom left-hand box. As I continue to walk around the room helping students spell words, I make it to the other side of the room and help Xavier spell "spaghetti". Then I help Regan find her lost red crayon before I make it over to Archer. Archer had his hand up waiting for someone

to come and help for a while but while he was waiting, he started drawing and coloring himself.

“Ms. Taylor, how do I spell macaroni and cheese?” Archer asks me. I begin to spell it for him, at the same time I look over his paper. When I see his portrait of himself, I smile. He drew himself in black tennis shoes that look just like the ones he wears every day. On his legs he has blue jeans and his shirt is his favorite green and black hoodie. When I look at the face of his drawing, the smile drops from my lips. Archer, an African American, has colored his skin a shade of peach, a shade of skin that does not resemble his own.

A similar experience to Archer’s happened to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) which she shares in her Ted Talk, *The Danger of a Single Story*. In this piece, she speaks about growing up in Nigeria on a college campus where she read British and American children’s books because that is what was available. When she began writing, she wrote stories and drew pictures that were similar to the books she read. She goes on to tell us that “All my characters were white and blue-eyed. They played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out” (Adichie, 2009). Then we are told that she had never seen snow, they ate mangos, not apples, and that she had never heard anyone in her community talk about the weather. These two examples show us how young students are impressionable. Adichie goes on to explain that because she had never seen a character that looked like her in the books she read, she “did not know people like me could exist in literature.” By including diverse literature, students are rescued from a fate of not knowing they belong in literature.

This is just one example where students are lacking an identity in regard to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, and/or disabilities in literature. All students need to be recognized in the classroom and one of the best ways to do this is to bring literature that has characters who are similar to them in it. Bishop (1990) wrote an inspiring article titled “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors” where she addressed how books can assist readers in seeing themselves in books, educate themselves on others who are different from us, and allow us to be a part of another’s culture. This is what we need in our classrooms so that all students feel welcomed and part of the culture of the classroom. If classrooms are not including diverse literature, it reflects that diversity is not welcomed and that there is one way that all students should be in our community. Therefore, if we are not including literature that reflects who they are and things they know, then we are not including them in our community.

Statement of the Problem

The problem highlighted in the vignette above related to the need for diverse children’s literature for students is threefold. Research suggests that there is a lack of children’s literature being published that is diverse in nature. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) has collected data for the past 25 years of the types of students in the United States public school system. This data indicates that in 2016, over 50,000 students were enrolled in public elementary or secondary schools. From that group, only 48.2% of the population was white, which means that the majority of students enrolled come from minority backgrounds (NCES, 2016). Therefore, classrooms today need to bring students together by discussing those various backgrounds and making all students a part of the community.

Data collected from the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) indicated that in 2015 the percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds made up 14.2% of books published that year, while white characters made up 73.3%. In 2018, the percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds increased to 23%, while white characters made up 50% (Horning, 2019). While the amount of literature being published about diverse groups is increasing, there is still substantially more literature about white middle class families than any other group, despite the fact that they represent less than half of the students in public schools.

While there is not an abundance of diverse literature available, teachers and administrators should make an effort to add literature about other cultures, races, disabilities, and so on to their classroom library. With this being said, the second problem is that even though there has been an increase in diverse literature being published, it is up to teachers and administrators to be selective when choosing books for their students and choose books that authentically and accurately represent the diversity of all the students in the classroom. One very important reason to do this is to help students' comprehension levels rise. Diamond (1995) found that it is important to make sure all students have books they can relate to because "the degree to which students' lives and cultures are visible in the curriculum predicts academic success" (p. 43).

The third and final problem that stems from the first two is that if teachers and administrators are picking the diverse children's literature available for their classrooms, it needs to be used in instruction to ensure that all students are hearing the importance of diversity. While it is wonderful to have diverse literature in your classroom library for students to read if there is downtime or part of a reading center, this does not

automatically ensure that students will read these books. Many students will reach for what they are comfortable with and not branch out to books that seem different from what they are used to. When teachers use diverse literature in their classrooms not only are they making each student in the classroom part of the community, they are also opening the door to important discussion on the diversity and differences around them every day. Smolen (2008) advocated for this issue when she wrote that teachers need to be consciously working to pick books and use books in our daily instruction that address other cultures and follow up with discussions that make students go past understanding and begin to respect the differences and similarities within different cultures as well (p. 2). These conversations can be very impactful for students and can lead to them embracing and understanding parts of different cultures that are not their own. Smolen (2008) goes on to argue that her research found that when multicultural literature is used in teachers' daily routines and lessons, students learn to foster more respect for differences and develop recognition for common characteristics between different cultures (p. 3). Therefore, using the diverse literature for instruction can cause a community to build in the classroom where there is mutual respect for all learners.

Research Questions

The research questions that this study investigated were a) How diverse is the children's literature being read aloud in first-grade elementary classrooms? and, b) What influences the teacher's selection of read aloud literature?

Literature Review

Children need to see and hear diverse literature for many different reasons. It is vitally important for their growth so that they can begin to understand and accept the world around them. However, there is a severe lack of diverse authors and therefore, diverse literature available to teachers to share with their students. This causes major problems when teachers attempt to bring more diversity into the classroom to share new information with students. Finally, because there is a lack of diverse authors and diverse literature published, even though many teachers would like to include diversity into their instruction, they cannot. (e.g. Boyd 2015; Ching 2005; Martens 2015). In this section I will address the importance of diverse literature, the lack of diverse authors and publications, and the importance of the read-aloud in elementary instruction.

Importance of Diverse Literature

Using multicultural literature in elementary schools and classrooms is of utmost importance in order to educate our students on the different groups of people that are not only found in the world as a whole, but also in their community. Rudine Bishop Sims (2015) explains to us that

“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 or recreated by the author...a window can also be a mirror. 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.” (2015, p. 1).

Therefore, it is vastly important to a child’s development that the literature chosen for elementary classrooms, specifically for read alouds, encompasses books that act as windows, sliding glass doors, and mirrors.

Without diverse literature in the classroom all students have difficulty making meaning of what they are reading. Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) states that “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” (p. 1). If we are not including that diverse literature, then students are not getting to see their reflection and recognize that their lives are part of a community.

Teachers strive daily to make connections to what experiences students have had. By using literature that is diverse, students will be able to learn about other cultures while making connections based on the experiences they have had themselves. Including books that are diverse for students is a powerful example of culturally relevant pedagogy in which the teachers use cultural competence to teach to the diverse learners in their classroom. Diverse literature also helps students make the needed connections for learning while allowing them to make personal connections to the content with their own schema. Researchers at Teachers College Columbia (Wells et al. 2016) conducted a study that explained that having racially diverse schools would assist students in learning and chipping away at the achievement gap. Wells et al. (2016) found that “students’ exposure to other students who are different from themselves and the novel ideas and

challenges that such exposure brings leads to improved cognitive skills, including critical thinking and problem solving”. Therefore, using diverse literature in instruction can further students' learning while aiding them in developing respect for the similarities and differences of the students in their classroom, school, and community.

When diverse literature is not being used, students see themselves as less than and not important (Bishop, 1990). Since most books published have featured white families, people without disabilities, and have followed gender norms; students who do not fit into this criterion get the idea that they do not matter to the make-up of the class. In a study conducted by Koss (2015), she does a picture book content analysis of print books published by major companies and written and illustrated by US citizens. Through this research she found that there was very little diversity in these books when it came to disability, race/ethnicity, and gender stereotypes. Koss (2015) in her implication's details that “children who interact with current picture books predominantly see White faces and receive the message that...to be White is better.” (p. 37). However, if we include diverse literature in our instruction, we are valuing all types of races, cultures, and groups of people. Boyd et al. (2015) also conducted similar research to Koss (2015) where the researchers looked at different literature available to teachers and conducted a content analysis, while specifically looking at Nikki Grimes' *My Man in Blue* and how choosing a diverse book such as it could aid students in making connections while others could relate to the characters. From seeing a lack of diversity in the content analysis, Boyd argued that if children never see themselves in the books they read, they are receiving subtle messages that they are not important enough to appear in books. On the other side, if there is a specific group of students who are continually seeing themselves in books,

then they are drawing the conclusion that they are the only group worthy of appearing in literature and that others are not (p. 378).

Lack of Diverse Authors & Publications

Crisp et al. (2016) explains to us in his article “What’s on our Bookshelves? The Diversity of Children's Literature in Early Childhood Classroom Libraries” that in children’s literature the world depicted is “overwhelmingly White. It is also a world that is predomi-nantly upper middle class, heterosexual, nondisabled, English-speaking, and male” (p. 29). Plainly, most of the children’s literature available to us does not include any characters that are not considered “mainstream”. Research completed by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) that shows the children’s literature created does not reflect the population data collected by the United States Census (Horning, 2019). In 2013, data showed that of the 2,300 books the CCBC received to be published only 93 of those books had African or African American content, 67 books were authored by black authors or illustrators. Thirty-four books had American Indian themes, topics, or characters, 61 books had significant Asian/Pacific or Asian/Pacific American content, and 57 books had significant Latino/Latina content (Boyd et al., 2015, p. 380). This piece of their research looked at the race alone, however, from this fraction of data it is already clear to see how many groups of people are not being given a chance to be represented in children’s literature. When these people, especially young, impressionable students are not represented they begin to see themselves as lesser than others who are represented in the literature available which results in very low self-esteem.

Henderson et al. (2020) explains that having children's literature that has animals as the characters is a common trend in many teachers' classroom libraries. In her study, the researchers inventoried elementary classroom libraries to determine what literature was on teachers' shelves and what needed to be changed to reflect the diversity of our classrooms. They found that an overwhelming amount of literature had animals as main characters. In one classroom, only 37% of her books had people in them. From this we can see that there is a lack of diversity present in the books chosen by teachers and published by companies for teachers to be used in their classrooms.

To further push the issue, many scholars (e.g., Horning 2019; Ketter & Lewis 2001; Logan et al. 2016) have looked at specific groups of people and the amount of children's literature that has been published about them. This research has shown that there are many underrepresented groups of people that are present and involved in our culture. For instance, a research study conducted by Craft Al-Hazza and Bucher (2008) discusses the small amount of children's literature available to elementary students that identify with Arabic culture. In their research, they interviewed a select group of teenagers who were born in the Middle East but attended elementary school in the United States. For their study, they questioned them about the literature they remember reading in elementary school. All participants noted reading favorite European American, Hispanic American, and African American children's stories but no stories that reflected their own Middle Eastern culture. When the interviewers asked the students how they felt about this, their responses were surprising. One said, "I thought that, in America, stories were about other people, not about us." Another participant said that "My family always read Arab stories to us in Arabic. I didn't even realize that any of the Arab stories

were translated in English” (2008, p. 210). This provides an example of how the United States authors, publishers, and teachers are failing students by not making them feel like a valued piece of the community. Unfortunately, Arab students are not the only group that has been left out of the literature created and read.

Another group that is vastly left out of children’s literature is the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ literature reflects the stories and experiences of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (or questioning) and others. This group of people is largely ignored in children’s literature in the elementary school setting because, as Crawly (2018) explains, many pre-service and in-service teachers are afraid of the parent backlash they might receive. Crawly (2018) highlights that by including LGBTQ+ literature students and peers become more inclusive to their peers, which led to less anti-LGBTQ+ hate and harassment (p. 65). Crawly (2018) also noted that due to the integration of LGBTQ+ literature, bullying of youths perceived to fit into this category were lowered which in turn caused youth suicide to drop significantly. Concerns of teachers and administration need to be recognized, but this should not stop schools from finding and using this literature in classrooms in order to create, not only a more inclusive classroom, but a more inclusive school and community where all types of people feel valued and equal.

Literature can be an engaging way to bring up difficult concepts to young students. Currently, only 18% of youths report to having ever been taught about same-sex families or households. When elementary literature is read in the classroom which displays families with LGBTQ+ connections, students are able to see how this family situation is normal for many students. Using this literature in the classroom not only

shows all students that these families are normal and gives them experiences with new ideas, it also shows that all types of families are equal no matter if you have heterosexual parents or same-sex parents. However, when literature involving same-sex couples or other LGBTQ+ members is not used, students perceive that this group of people is not as important to the community and therefore can lead to ostracization and bullying of students who identify with the LGBTQ+ community (Logan et al., 2016).

Another group frequently left out of literature are Asians/Asian Americans. Rodríguez and Kim (2018) found that much of the literature published in regard to Asian culture portrays them as immigrants to the United States. While this can be fitting for some of the culture, there is a population of Asian Americans who have lived in the United States for decades that are not being addressed, limiting the Asian American experience to the single-story, which Adiche Ngozi (2009) highlighted as a major issue to children. They found that, when choosing literature in regard to Asian American culture, educators need to be looking for literature with themes of cultural pluralism, positively portrayed characters, strong plot and characterization, and historical accuracy, with authentic illustrations and settings in the United States (Rodriguez & Kim, 2018).

Another group that needs to be addressed are the immigrant families that are a part of our school systems. Rodriguez and Braden (2018) examine Latinx immigrants closely and the effects of not having literature that represent their lives and their struggles in the classroom. Rodriguez and Braden completed a detailed content analysis of thirteen books published between 2010- 2016 that display the experiences of immigrating to the United States. In this content analysis they found a common trend in these books that many of the characters usually struggled with the transition to the United States and that

there were varying levels of awareness of the characters through the immigration journey. In the discussion and implications setting of their article, Rodriquez and Braden explain that Latinx immigrants would enhance the classroom and serve as a mirror to or window for many students. Through their research, Rodriguez and Braden (2018) discovered that by using this literature schools are offering “a window into the lives of undocumented families and children who make and have made the dangerous and difficult journey to the United States” (2018, p. 57).

While there are many other groups of people that are not being addressed, another major group of people that are not addressed in children’s literature are people with disabilities. Students should be given the opportunity to read about books that represent themselves and currently, there is hardly any literature available that portrays students with a visible disability. As Pennell et al. (2018) said in her research “We are all partially defined by our abilities and differences, and we should be able to read about them in a wide array of interesting books regardless of where we fall on the ability/disability continuum. (p. 417). Further, her research displays the need for more children's literature that respectfully represents the continuum of ability in our world (Pennell et al., 2018).

Value of Read Alouds

Read alouds are vitally important for children. Witte (2016) studied the benefits of using Complex Text Analysis (CTA) with first-grade students. To use CTA in the classroom, the teacher must read books aloud and then students can discuss the central message and key details they heard. Witte study shows that by using read alouds, her students were able to work on comprehension of more complex texts than they would

have been able to read on their own. Through this study, it is obvious that by reading aloud to students they were able to expose them to higher-level texts that challenged them and helped them grow.

In another research paper published by Giroir et al. (2015), researchers were able to study the benefits to English Learners when read alouds were used. They explain that “when teachers take a linguistically and culturally informed approach to read- alouds, learners are challenged to use and practice new language by making meaningful text- to- self and text- to- world connections, allowing for deeper processing of the new language and deeper understanding of the ideas connected to that language” (p. 2). Therefore, including read-alouds in daily instruction can assist not only English Learners, but also can expose the whole class to new experiences that can help them make connections to further their learning.

Acosta-Tello (2019) explains that using read alouds greatly benefits students learning, with significant gains in language developments. In her articles she argues that “the frequency of reading aloud, the dialogue that occurs throughout the reading, and the level of the children’s engagement that occurs during the reading experience appear to be factors in positively influencing children’s language” (p. 2). Therefore, if we use her recommendations to build anticipation, help students make connections, and use voice inflections when reading aloud to students we will see improvements in many of our students when it comes to language skills.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the children's literature that was included in first-grade elementary classrooms and whether it represented the growing diversity in schools. An additional purpose was to see what influenced teachers' decisions on what to include in their classroom libraries' and what to read aloud in their classrooms. The goal was to collect a book list of the literature being read aloud and analyze it to find what diversity is being discussed in elementary classrooms and what is not. Then this information is discussed in an exit interview with the teachers and recommendations were made to include more diversity in their children's literature selections. The significance of this project is that this study investigates the literature chosen for read alouds in two elementary classrooms. This study set out to determine how teachers were selecting literature for classroom instruction and read alouds. This study used qualitative case methodology to answer the research questions.

Data Sources and Analysis

The research methods for this study include interviews of two elementary teachers from Cherry Grove Elementary School. Each teacher was interviewed twice, one towards the beginning of the study and one at the end after all data had been collected, and partially analyzed. This study is original because of the data that I collected via interviews with each teacher and through their book lists. The first interview was completed in person and focused on how the teachers chose the books for the classroom whether it was for read alouds or reading groups. The study also investigated the books the teacher chose and how often they chose to update their classroom library, specifically

their read-aloud books. This interview was recorded and transcribed. Due to COVID-19, the second interview was conducted through written questions. These questions were emailed to each teacher, to complete and send back. The second interview followed-up on the data collected through their read aloud selections. Most questions were centered around what dominated each section of diversity and why this was the case. The second interview also included questions about where they got their books from and how intentional they were with picking diverse books. The questions for the interviews are included in Appendix A and B.

After the first interview, and across a two-month time period, both teachers kept a list of the books they read aloud to the class. Mrs. Pearl kept her own log of read alouds and shared texts going back to October. The book list included all books read aloud to the class, from curriculum, literature from online, CDs, and trade books. Both of these teachers have varied experiences which allowed the books they chose to be unique and bring new perspectives to all of their students. This list was then analyzed using content analysis methods to examine using the specific criteria for this study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The criteria used to breakdown the content of the book included why it was chosen, family structure, race/ethnicity, gender norms, disabilities, socioeconomic status, and religion. For family structure, the areas of data it could be broken down to were heterosexual two parent household, same sex household, multigenerational household, and single parent household. Looking at race/ethnicity, I coded this into the following categories: White, African/African American, Asian/Asian American, Native American, Indian, Arab, and animals. Gender norms looks at traditional gender stereotypes and whether the books show any breaking away from those. Socioeconomic status observes

that area that the characters lived in. Religion looked for different religious themes or undertones mentioned in the book. Lastly, disabilities were addressed by making sure that there were accurate portrayals of disabilities. All of this information was analyzed in a content analysis chart; a sample of said chart is pictured below as Figure 1. Finally, after analyzing the literature read by both teachers, I will have a final interview with each teacher. In this interview, the teacher and I will discuss the trends visible in their literature choices and consider why this is the case. If there is a lack of diversity in the literature, we will also examine why this is so and if the teacher is willing to add diverse literature to her instruction.

Figure 1

Blank Content Analysis chart used to determine the diversity in read aloud selections.

Books used in whole class read- alouds	Why Chosen	Family Structure	Race/ Ethnicity	Gender Norms	Socioeconomic Status	Religion	Disabilities

All data collected was analyzed in depth by coding for themes and patterns between the teacher's interviews and the book lists. Coding of the data took place in multiple phases. Reading data repeatedly, closely, and carefully allowed me to identify "Recurring regularities" (Merriam, 2009, p. 176) and patterns.

Participants

The two teachers involved in the study are both first-grade teachers at Cherry Grove Elementary School. This school is located in Eastern Kentucky and has a diverse student population. The school pulls students from rural, suburban, and downtown areas which creates a population that is varied displaying the intense need for diverse literature to be used in classrooms. Mrs. Oaks has been teaching for 13 years all at the same school. She has experience in kindergarten, first-, and second grade, but the majority of her teaching experiences is in first grade. Mrs. Pearl is in her 9th year of teaching. Most of her experience is with preschool age children, in both private and public schools. She is in her second year of teaching first-grade and says that she never wants to leave.

Both teachers have roughly 19 students and those students all have different needs. In each room there are students who are receiving special education services and students in each class go with the gifted and talented teacher even though they have not officially been identified as such yet.

Findings

This research project had two goals of inquiry which were stated in the research questions a) How diverse is the children's literature being read aloud in first-grade elementary classrooms? and, b) What influences the teacher's selection of read aloud literature?. These goals were to discover what influences the text selections a teacher chooses to read aloud to students, as well as investigating whether the children's literature being read aloud in elementary classrooms represented the diversity seen in public schools in the United States. Data analysis indicates that teachers read aloud selections in these first-grade classrooms were guided by six codes: curriculum, holidays, teacher favorites, content themes, student interests, and reading groups books/leveled books. These six codes were organized into three themes: reading curriculum, themes, and personal connections.

Going over each teacher's interview and the content analysis chart, I was able to see some similarities in both teachers' responses that helped to create the categories that the literature they read falls under. Most of the literature selected for the read-alouds from could be coded into one of the six codes. In addition, the interviews supported these codes. In the first interview, both teachers said that they chose books based off of the holidays coming up, which was coded as holidays. Additionally, Mrs. Oaks mentioned that she selected books that work with different content that may be being taught in a different curricular area. These selected were coded as content connections under the themes. Both also said that they try to pick books for the whole group and small groups that they think will interest their students, which was coded as student interest. Further, both teachers have favorite books that they themselves enjoy reading to their students.

Mrs. Oaks picks literature such as *Splat the Cat*, *Pete the Cat*, and the *If you Give a Mouse a Cookie* series. Mrs. Pearl enjoys reading *The Berenstain Bears* books to her class regularly. These read-aloud selections were coded as teacher connection. Both teachers, of course, share the same reading curriculum, so the books they read for whole group literacy were the same and since they were read-aloud were included in this study. The full list of read aloud books is listed as Appendix C.

Selection of Read Aloud Texts

Teachers' read aloud selections were guided by three themes: the reading curriculum, themes and holidays, and personal connections whether they were teacher or student connections. In completing the content analysis, I identified five codes which were organized into three distinct themes. These five codes include: teacher choice, student interest, curriculum, holidays, and themes happening around the school. In this section the selections of literature made by each teacher will be discussed in regard to the three themes.

Curriculum. Based on the content analysis and interviews teachers' read aloud selections were mostly guided by the reading curriculum. Even though they only made up 22.5% of the read alouds, the teachers relied heavily on the books included in the curriculum lists. This included the texts that were designed to be read-aloud for instruction, as well as read-alouds of the leveled readers.

The curriculum that the teachers follow was chosen at the beginning of the year. The *Rooted in Reading* (2018) curriculum encourages teachers to read aloud one picture book a week. After reading it aloud a few times, teachers were to discuss the story,

complete activities related to the book, and work on grammar and vocabulary present in the book. Of the texts read aloud during the study, the majority of the books in the *Rooted in Reading* curriculum included books that had main characters who were white or animals, there was no representation of any disabilities, and stereotypical gender norms, such as girls in dresses and boys wearing blues and green were reinforced throughout the texts. Of the 14 books read from the reading curriculum by Mrs. Pearl, only one book included characters with a disability. Another stressing statistic from this study was that of the 14 books read-aloud from the *Rooted in Reading* curriculum in Mrs. Oaks' class, 12 of them had lead characters that were White or animals. These two statistics show the extreme lack of diversity present in the read alouds. Figure 2, listed as Appendix E, shows the content analysis chart for the curriculum books.

Figure 2

Content analysis chart for curriculum literature

Books used in whole class read- alouds	Why Chosen	Family Structure	Race/Ethnicity	Gender Norms	Socioeconomic Status	Religion	Disabilities
The Girl Who Thought in Pictures	Curriculum	Mom with two kids	all white	boy wears yellow shirt and jeans; girl wears pink dress	Lives in house in neighborhood	None mentioned	none addressed

Amazing Grace	Curriculum	Grandma and granddaughter and mom	African American family; allowed to be Peter Pan at school	Grandma in blue polka dot dress; girl wears bows; dresses up as characters from favorite stories; allowed to play a boy's role at school	live in a house together	not addressed	none mentioned
Sebastian's Roller Skates	Curriculum	Not Mentioned	white boy	yellow raincoat boy; mom wore green coat with scarf and purse	Lives in apartment	not addressed	not addressed; very shy
The Scarecrow's Hat	Curriculum	Chicken lives alone- might be getting ready to have chicks; a whole farm of animals	all different farm animals	scarecrow- brown coat, straw hat; badger-red bandana; crow-blue ribbon; owl wore glasses; donkey	not mentioned	not mentioned	none addressed

				had blue blanket			
A Plump and Perky Turkey	Curriculum	Not a specific family	Predominantly white; two background characters of color	men in overalls and suits; women in dresses	Large community lives in valley	None mentioned	none mentioned
The Ugly Pumpkin	Curriculum	pumpkin all alone in pumpkin patch	round orange pumpkins except for one who was long and had warts	wore orange shoes	not applicable	None mentioned	none mentioned
Over and Under the Snow	Curriculum	Dad and son	White	dad in button up shirt and brown vest and black slacks; son in red hat and scarf and blue coat	not mentioned	not mentioned	none addressed
The Animals Santa	Curriculum	two brother rabbits; other forest animals are a community	Different species of animals you would find in the woods	brothers wear red and black vests; other animals wearing Christmas	Large group of animals that live in the woods	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed

				colored shirts are vests			
Chameleons are Cool	Curriculum	no family addressed; a boy and some chameleons	white boy; all different types of chameleons	boy wore red and blue shirt and hat with blue tinted glasses; also has short cropped haircut	not mentioned	None mentioned	none addressed
Penguin in Peril	Curriculum	three cats live together-relationship is not addressed; penguin lives at the zoo	all the people in the story are white; three orange cats	Cats wore burglar outfits black pants and masks	The cats are out of money in the story	Three nuns are in the story	Not Addressed
The Darkest Dark	Curriculum	Mom, Dad, son, and dog	everyone is all white	mom wears pink shirt; men wore blue; boy sleeps with robot; boy wore red shirt and jeans	did not own a tv, but lived in a house in a neighborhood	None mentioned	none addressed

Cloudette	Curriculum	a community of clouds that all live in the same neighborhood	just talks about the different types of clouds; people are all white	cloudette is a girl who is soft and fluffy; firefighter is a man; garden center is run by a woman; car wash run by a man	not mentioned	not mentioned	none mentioned
The Koala Who Could	Curriculum	lives in the Australian outback; lives in tree by himself	all animals are portrayed accurately	Kevin the koala is a boy; wore blue hat	not mentioned	not mentioned	none mentioned
The Radiant Child	Curriculum	boy, mom, and dad	Puerto Rican	wears white and yellow shirts; has cowboys on shirt; green jumpsuit with paint splatters	live in Brooklyn; assuming middle class	none mentioned	Mom has mental health issues

Themes. During this content analysis it was discovered that the teachers also choose their books largely based on themes happening in the community. The themes happening were mainly associated with upcoming holidays such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Halloween. Many of the books that were not about holidays were about being at school.

Mrs. Pearl especially read many books about being in first grade. Reading by theme can help many students make connections because the storyline of the book looks similar to events happening in their own lives. However, this literature still needs to be diverse in order to reflect all the children who make up our schools.

Largely, the books picked by these teachers did not reflect that changing, diverse makeup of our schools today. When looking at the content analysis chart just for themes and holidays, only one book out of the thirty-four read to students show a character with a disability, The Night Before Groundhog Day, where there is a boy who uses braces to help walk. Looking at religion, the only religion addressed was Christianity when the teachers read six books about Christmas, which is a Christian holiday. However, no other religions or religious holidays from other religions were included in the read aloud selection. Furthermore, when dissecting the diversity in regard to race for this section, the majority of literature depicts white lead characters, followed closely by animal characters. This lack of diversity is prevalent in all other areas of diversity as well which shows the little exposure students are getting to diverse people when it comes to books related to holidays and themes. Figure 3, listed as Appendix F, shows the content analysis for literature read in regard to themes and holidays.

Figure 3

Content analysis chart for theme literature

Books used in whole class read-alouds	Why Chosen	Family Structure	Race/ Ethnicity	Gender Norms	Socioeconomic Status	Religion	Disabilities

Turkey Trouble	Holiday	Farmer Jake, wife, daughter and son	White	men in overalls and flannel shirts; one barefoot; girl in red tank top mom in green vest	have a farm full of animals	None mentioned	none addressed
101 Dalmatians	Theme	Rodger and Anita get married; before are living independently	Every person in story is white	Anita wears purple suit with yellow flower; Rodger wears black slacks with a red coat; smokes a pipe; their maid is an older woman	Very wealthy because can afford a maid and can take care of 101 dogs	None mentioned	none addressed
The Night Before Groundhog Day	Holiday	girl and brother; not specified but lives with mom and dad	school class has some students other than white; teacher is black	Girl sleeps with pink blanket and groundhog stuffed animal; wore pink jacket; boy wears	live in house in neighborhood; town gets together to celebrate	None mentioned	Boy uses walking crutches/braces

				green hat and orange jacket			
There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Turkey	Holiday	old lady lives on the farm	The old lady is white; four children (3 white, 1 African American)	wears red and yellow shirt, glasses, grey hair, bow in hair, and jeans	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
The Night Before Thanksgiving	Holiday	Mom, dad, brother, pet cat and 2 dogs; cousins, aunts, grandpa, grandma, and uncles came too	everyone in the book is white	Girls are wearing pink; little girl has doll; boy wears red pajamas and has a baseball glove; headboard for girl is pink, boy is blue; girl wears purple polka dot sweater, boy wears	Preparing large thanksgiving meal so decently well off	None mentioned	none addressed

				orange and red striped shirt			
This First Thanksgiving Day	Holiday	No specific families looked at just two groups of people	White and Native American	Girls in dresses; boys in pants	Talks about struggles of coming to a new land	Christianity	Not Addressed
Click Clack Boo!	Holiday	Farmer Brown lives alone	farmer brown looks to be of color, maybe Latino	farmer brown wears overalls and plaid shirt; he is older and has grey beard; also has a straw hat	Farmer Brown runs a farm on his own	None mentioned	none addressed

Bialosky's Christmas	Holiday	Bialosky lives alone	He is a brown bear; other friends are bears two but different shades of brown	Bialosky is in a red and white sweater; wore blue pajamas and a red coat and hat	lives in home; prepares for Christmas party	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	None addressed
How the Grinch Stole Christmas	Holiday	Specific family was only Cindi Lou Who and her three siblings; community of Whos; The Grinch and his dog	All Whos- no color for them	Cindi Lou wore a pink nightdress; Grinch in red Santa suit	getting ready for Christmas and spending lots of money on presents and decorating	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed
The Night Before Christmas	Holiday	Mom and Dad and two kids	all white	boy had astronaut toy; girl has purple cow studded animal	live in two story house in a neighborhood	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	Not mentioned
Pete the Cat Saves Christmas	Holiday	none mentioned; seems to be single	Pete the cat is a black cat; other cats of various colors too	wore the red Santa suit	drives a van	Christianity is an underlying theme for Christmas	none addressed

Gingerbread Baby	Holiday	boy mom two sisters and dad; cat dog and chickens and goats	both white	boy wore red shirt with suspenders ; mom wore green and red dress; dad wore tan pants and shirt with suspenders and hat	live on a farm	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed
Froggy's Best Christmas	Holiday	froggy lives on his own	froggy is green; his best friend is a squirrel	froggy wears red pjs	lives in small house	None mentioned	none addressed
Merry Christmas Mom and Dad	Holiday	mom, dad, son, and baby	all the same type of animal	dad wears blue pants, button up shirt, green suspenders , and red and yellow polka dot tie; mom wore purple coat and hat; baby wore pink snowsuit; son wore green coat	live in two story house in a neighborhood	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed

				and blue sneakers			
There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Some Snow	Theme	white old lady	white lady is only character with race	she wore red jacket; green scarf; yellow hat	never showed her home	None mentioned	none addressed
Rock Star Santa	Holiday	White boy, but parents are never shown	main character is a white boy; at the concert there were some people of color	boy wore a red and white striped shirt and jeans	live in a two story house	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed
A Pirate's Night Before Christmas	Holiday	all the pirates live together on their ship	all are white except for one	only two female pirates; pirates are wearing all types of colors	live on the ship; present was a map to follow to treasure	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed

The Night Before First Grade	Theme	Mom, dad, brother, dog, sister, cat	lead is white girl; best friend is black girl; teacher is a man	girl wears purple shirt with green butterfly and jeans; brother wears yellow and blue sweatshirt	live in house	None mentioned	none addressed
Wemberly Worried	Theme	Mom and dad and grandma	All mice; different colors of mice	Wemberly wears dresses and carried a doll with her all the time; girls are usually in purple or pink; teacher is a woman	Live in house with fenced in yard; drive a car	None mentioned	none addressed
First Grade Here I Come	Theme	family not brought up	mostly white students; one student of color with main 6 students; teacher is white; in whole class 4/20	teacher wears skirt and pink top; boy wears blue shirt and yellow pants	All students have everything they need but not specifically addressed	not mentioned	No students show with visible disabilities

			look to be students of color				
Froggy Goes to School	Theme	froggy, dad, and mom	Frogs are all green	Froggy wears red and blue ball cap, green and blue shorts, blue shoes, and red suspenders . Dad wears blue shirt and jean suspenders ; mom wears white skirt; white and pink top and white visor	live in a house together	None mentioned	none addressed

1st Grade Jitters	Theme	mom, dad, boy, and dog	all family members are white; friend tammy is black	played with soldiers and blocks; wears blue shirt, khakis, and black converses	live in a house together	None mentioned	none addressed
My Mouth is a Volcano	Theme	Mom, dad, sister, and brother	white boy lead character; friends with another white boy and a black boy	wears green shirt, brown shorts, and white tennis shoes	live in two story house in a neighborhood	None mentioned	none addressed
1st Grade Stinks	Theme	family is not mentioned	girl is white and only one student in the class looks to be another race	lead girl wears a pink shirt with a purple jacket and her hair in pigtails	a house is never shown	None mentioned	none addressed
Inside a House That is Haunted	Holiday	House full of monsters	Not Addressed	Frankenste in wore jeans and a red sweater	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	None
Pete the Cat: The First Thanksgiving	Holiday	2 cats; Pete and Callie	animals	wearing pilgrim	talks about how pilgrims were very poor	Christianity	none addressed

				hat; boy and girl			
Scaredy-Cat, Splat!	Holiday	Mom	animals	wearing wizard hat; green and orange socks	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	none addressed
Who Will Carve the Turkey this Thanksgiving?	Holiday	Mom and Grandma and Grandpa	White	boy wears navy shirt and has brown short hair; Mom wears apron and cooks	Making a full Thanksgiving meal	Not Addressed	Not Addressed
The Very First Thanksgiving Day	Holiday	No specific families looked at just two groups of people	White and Native American	Girls in dresses; boys in pants	Talks about struggles of coming to a new land	Christianity	Not Addressed
'Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving by Dav Pilkey	Holiday	Not addressed	white, African American	Girl has beads in hair; boy wearing red and white ball cap; by with green glasses and green coat	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Addressed
How to Catch an Elf	Holiday	Santa and the elves	white	Santa in red; elves in green	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Addressed

				and red; boy in green shirt			
Merry Christmas, Splat	Holiday	mom, sister, friend	splat is a black cat; friend is a grey mouse; sister is white cat; mom grey cat	red Santa hat; sister- purple sweater and bow	Have Christmas Presents	Celebrate Christmas- Christianity	none addressed
Pig the Elf	Holiday	dog friend	tan pug and brown wiener dog	red Santa hat; green Christmas sweater; red sweater	Have Christmas Presents	Celebrate Christmas- Christianity	none addressed
Martin's Big Words	Holiday	Mom, Dad	African American and White	martin- black pants and white polo; mom in a dress;	African American citizens were poorer than whites	Christianity	none addressed

Personal Connection. Literature read in the classroom that falls into this category were books that were read because students were interested in them and their topics or because the teacher liked the book and wanted to share it with the class. Mrs. Pearl and Mrs. Oaks read books that fit this theme. However, of the selected read-alouds, personal connections had the least amount of selections. This indicates that the students and teacher interest is not what is largely driving the selection of texts in these first-grade classrooms. Of the fourteen books read to students, the majority of them (9 books)

showed animals as the lead characters. Figure 4, listed as Appendix G, shows that content analysis of literature read in regard to personal connections.

Figure 4

Content analysis of personal connection literature

Appendix G: Figure 4: Personal Connection Books Content Analysis

Books used in whole class read-alouds	Why Chosen	Family Structure	Race/Ethnicity	Gender Norms	Socioeconomic Status	Religion	Disabilities
Pumpkin Soup	Personal Connections (Teacher Favorite)	Cat, Squirrel, and duck	white duck, grey cat, and brown squirrel	Duck is a boy other two not mentioned; do not wear any clothes to identify either way	All live in a house in the woods	None mentioned	none addressed
The Kissing Hand	Free Read/Teacher Favorite	Mom and son	both raccoons; other animals in the woods seen	did not wear clothes; boy cried; liked to swing	live in the woods	None mentioned	none addressed
A Pocketful of Kisses	Free Read/Teacher Favorite	Mom and two sons	all raccoons: other animals found in woods seen too	animals do not wear clothes	live in the woods	None mentioned	none addressed

Chester Raccoon and the Big Bad Bully	Personal Connections (Teacher Favorite)	Mom and two sons	all raccoons look the same; there is also a badger who is the bully	none of the animals' wear clothes	live in the woods together	None mentioned	none addressed
Frog and Toad are Friends	Personal Connections (Teacher Favorite)	Frog and Toad both live independently	Different species of animals you would find in the woods	Toad and Frog both wear greens, greys, and browns	Live independently	None mentioned	none addressed
If Your Monster Won't go to Bed	Personal Connections (Student Interest)	dad, mom, two daughters, monster, and dog	Mom black, Dad white; two daughters, and a dog	little girl wears pink pjs and cat slippers; bed is yellow with rainbows	live in apartment building	none mentioned	none addressed
The Magic Treehouse Dinosaurs Before Dark	Personal Connection	girl and boy	white	boy wears yellow shirt and jean shorts	live in Pennsylvania	none mentioned	none mentioned
The Three Superpigs Once Upon a Time	Personal Connection (Teacher Favorite)	mom and the three pigs	all pink pigs: little red riding hood was white	all wear superhero outfits; one blue, one green, and one purple; mom wore blue dress with white flowers on it	move to Fairyland; build their own houses	none mentioned	none mentioned

Potato Pants	Personal Connection (Student Interest)	a single potato	potatoes were all different sizes; one eggplant	there were many different colors and patterns of pants; eggplant wore yellow pineapple ones and potato wore green striped ones	houses are never shown; are able to buy pants though	none mentioned	none mentioned
The Good Egg	Personal Connection (Teacher Favorite)	lives with his 11 siblings in the carton	different types of food around	no clothes but he does wear black glasses; wears a blue cap	live in a carton in the grocery store	none mentioned	none mentioned
Guji Guji	Personal Connection (Teacher Choice)	Alligator and Ducks; Momma duck and three siblings	Alligators and ducks	No clothes	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Addressed
Pig the Winner	Personal Connections (Teacher Choice)	two dogs that live together	three dogs shown but they are all different breeds	neither dog wears clothes	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Addressed

You Think It's Easy Being the Tooth Fairy	Personal Connection- Student Interest (lots of students had been losing teeth lately)	tooth fairy takes teeth from many different children	tooth fairy is white; kids are of different races; goes to different kids in the USA	tooth fairy wears purple and has a green backpack	tooth fairy sleeps in a room with a "teeth bed" and small nightstand but that all that is visible; various homes for the people she gets teeth from	Not Addressed	Not Addressed
Splat the Cat Blow Snow Blow	Personal Connection (Teacher Favorite)	Mom, dad, sister, and best friend	splat is a black cat; friend is a grey mouse; sister is white cat; mom grey cat	Splat wears a blue top; mom wears a purple dress; dad wears a white button up with red tie and khaki pants; sister wears pink/purple dress with polka dots and a matching bow and carries a doll with her	Live in a suburban neighborhood	Not Addressed	none addressed

Diversity of Read-Aloud Literature as a Whole

After looking at both teachers book lists and completing a content analysis where in each book I looked for diversity in regards to race/ethnicity, family structure, gender norms, socioeconomic status, religion, and disabilities I was able to see that there is a common trend. Most of the literature chosen showed a lack of diversity in all regards. After dissecting the books and adding it to the content analysis chart, I reviewed the interviews in order to find commonalities between the literature chosen and how the teachers felt about the areas of diversity.

Race/ethnicity. For this section we were looking for racial diversity. Some great literature that teachers could use that highlight a main character from a different race would be *My Father's Shop* by Satomi Ichikawa which highlights an African boy, or *The Turtle of Oman* by Naomi Shihab Nye which shares a young boy's fears of moving from Oman to Michigan. After reviewing the race and ethnicity of the books chosen for Mrs. Oaks class, more than half the books (11) had animals as the lead characters. After that there were seven books that had White characters as the leads. Next, there were three books that had multiple races in lead character positions. Finally, African/African Americans and Latinos each had one book with that race as a lead character. This shows that an overwhelming number of published children's books are about animals followed closely by whites. When Mrs. Oaks was asked about this in her interview, she said that this was not an intentional choice and that "I haven't been very intentional about checking for diversity. I probably should be, but I just choose books that I think my students will like."

Next, I looked at different races and ethnicities present in each of the books for Mrs. Pearl. I looked through the books to see what race or ethnicity the lead character(s)

was. After completing the content analysis of the books, I the majority of the books had a White character as the lead. Following right behind that were animal characters with 19 books. Next, there were six books that had multiple races displayed as main characters in the book. Following that there were two books that had foods as the main character and two books that had Latino characters as leads. Finally, there was one book that showed African/African Americans as a lead. When Mrs. Pearl was interviewed a second time and I asked her about the fact that the majority of the read-aloud selections books lead characters that were either White or animals she explained that it was not, “not intentional, I guess, these are books that were available in my classroom. I inherited a lot of books from other teachers or were left in the classroom I’m occupying.” As a new teacher to first grade and having only taught in elementary school for two years, this makes sense that she does not have a rich, overflowing library of books to choose from.

Family Structure. This section was looking for some diversity when it came to LGBTQ+ households. A great book to share with students to expose them to LGBTQ+ literature would be Julián Is a Mermaid by Jessica Love or The Adventures of Honey & Leon by Alan Cumming. Both books have subtle LGBTQ+ influences that students could relate to and enjoy. When analyzing the family structure of the books that Mrs. Oaks read, twelve of the twenty-one books read during this period never showed the parents or family of the characters at all. Of those that did include family members, five books showed two parent (male/female) households, two books showed a single parent, and one book had a single parent and grandparent living in the house together. When Mrs. Oaks was asked about the families depicted in her read-aloud selections; she again explained that it was not a deliberate choice to choose books based on family structure.

Mrs. Oaks' feels continued to explain that she prefers not to read literature to her students that show a gay household. However, gay marriage is legal in all 50 states now which has created a new diverse group of people that need to be represented. The United States Census data from 2019 found that there are 543,000 same-sex married couple households and 469,000 households with same-sex unmarried partners living together (Census, 2019).

Looking specifically at the diversity in family structure for the selection of books made by Mrs. Pearl, 14 of the books she read had two parent (father/mother) households and 14 of the books showed no parent figures to the main character in the book. Eleven of the books read were about adults who did not need or have parents. Six books had a single parent, one book had a parent and a grandparent living with the character, and one book had two parents and a grandparent together in one house. Mrs. Pearl again explained that her lack of diversity was not intentional, but as a newer teacher she was using the literature that was available to her.

Gender Norms. Next, I looked at the gender norms presented in books. I analyzed the text for representations such as girls wearing dresses, along with colors like purple and pink that are often considered girly colors. As well as boys wearing blues and greens with short hair. In Mrs. Oaks books I found that out of her 21 books that 11 of these books perpetuated these gender norms. In 10 of these books, it was really not applicable to apply gender norms for various reasons such as the characters being animals or plants. This meant that there were no books read-aloud that showed any characters that do not fit into traditional gender norms. When asked about this Mrs. Oaks explained that she

simply chooses books that she feels will interest her students and she does not pay attention to this type of diversity.

Next, I looked at gender norms for Mrs. Pearl's selection. An example of literature that breaks these traditional gender norms would be Made by Raffi by Craig Pomranz. In this book Raffi does not enjoy playing games like football and other stereotypical boys' games, rather he enjoys knitting. After looking through the books, it was determined that 32 of the books followed the stereotypical gender norms that people see. There was only one book which showed a character breaking the gender stereotype. Sixteen of the books Mrs. Pearl read did not apply to this section of diversity largely because they had animal characters that did not wear clothes, have hair to styles, etc. Mrs. Pearl stated in her interview that this was not intentional, just that those were the books that were available to her.

Socioeconomic Status. When analyzing texts for SES markers, I mainly looked to see what kind of environment the character lived in. A book that would be a good tool to talk about different types of socioeconomic diversity would be The Magic Beads by Susin Nielsen. In this story the lead character and her mother had to escape an abusive father and now live in a family shelter. When looking over the books, an overwhelming amount (15) of the books had characters that lived in single-family houses. The only other types of homes depicted were for the two books that had animal characters who lived in the woods. All the other books never showed a home for their characters. This shows that most books read were geared toward middle class students who are used to living in a house not an apartment or a car. When Mrs. Oaks discussed this in her second interview with me, she explained that this is not a type of diversity that she seeks out.

For Mrs. Pearl's read alouds, there were 22 books that had lead characters that lived in a house. After that it trickled down to smaller groups. There were four books where main characters lived in the woods, three books where the main character lived on a farm, two where the main character lived in an apartment, one where the main character lived on a ship, and one where the main character lived at the supermarket. There were also 15 books where a home or neighborhood was never talked about or seen in illustrations so therefore were not applicable to this type of diversity. In the second interview, I asked Mrs. Pearl if there was any intention behind picking books based on socioeconomic status, such as living quarters and if she had ever thought about this before. Her answer was honest when she said that there was no purpose behind picking books that the majority showed houses and that she had never really thought about this type of diversity before.

Religion. Religion is a topic that teachers often attempt to stay away from, but in the county where my two teachers teach, there are not any restrictions on reading books about religion or that have religious tones. With this being said, after going through the data for Mrs. Oaks, there are 6 books that had Christian themes to them. All the other books did not have any type of religion mentioned in the book. Almost all of the books that have a Christian theme to them were because they were books about Christmas which is a Christian holiday. When I asked Mrs. Oaks about her books in regard to religion, she stated that "I (and most teachers I know) don't touch a lot on religion. I do talk some about different beliefs and religions at Christmas but other than that I do not." As Mrs. Oaks said, I do believe that this is a topic that many teachers try their best to stay away from.

As stated before, in the area these teachers are in they have both told me that the district has not placed any restrictions on them about reading books that have religion in them. Therefore, they would be able to share literature such as Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors by Hena Khan. While there are religious themes in this book it is not the focal point of the book and students would be able to see important components of a different culture. With this being said, in Mrs. Pearl's read alouds she had thirty-six books that did not address any religion at all. The only other category in this area of diversity was Christianity, in which there were eleven books that addressed or had religious undertones of Christianity. Most of the books that fell into the Christianity category were books about Christmas and since Christmas is traditionally a Christian holiday it became part of that category. When I asked Mrs. Pearl about how most of the books she read did not have any religion to them she said that "As a public school [teacher] generally I do not read religion books" and "I do not pick books with this type of diversity." This was a similar trend with both Mrs. Pearl and Mrs. Oaks, but if they involved literature such as Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors by Hena Khan mentioned earlier then they would be addressing a religious culture without reading solely about religion.

Disability Status. The final category of diversity that I looked at during the content analysis was the portrayal and representation of disabilities. When categorizing this subject, I looked through the text to see if there were any disabilities addressed in the illustrations and/or if they were addressed in the text. Also, I looked to see if these were accurately portrayed and not mockingly or over-exaggeratedly created. A book that would be perfect to share with elementary age students that addresses a disability would

be Six Dots: A Story of Young Louis Braille by Jen Bryant. This book discusses Louis Braille who was blind and invented his own alphabet, Braille, so he could learn to read. After going through Mrs. Oaks books, I was able to see that only one of the books she read talked about or showed a disability. All of the others did not have any disabilities shown. In the second interview I was able to ask Mrs. Oaks about this and she made a powerful statement about the lack of books that have characters with disabilities in them. She stated that “there are more recent[ly] books with disabilities, such as children in wheelchairs, but there haven't been many books [with this type of diversity] until recently.”

In Mrs. Pearl's read alouds, in regard to portrayal of disabilities, an overwhelming amount of the literature (46 books) did not address any disabilities at all. In one book, there was a boy who used braces/crutches to get around and in a different book, in the text, there was a short blurb about a mental health issue of one of the parents of the main character. When I asked Mrs. Pearl about this, she was rather unaware that there was so little of her own literature that addressed disabilities and told me that she did not realize that she had not been intentional enough in picking these books.

Discussion and Implications

The data collected from this study gives detailed information about the kinds of challenges teachers in the United States are facing daily when it comes to creating a diverse read alouds. Since both teachers rely heavily on the curriculum choices it is vastly important to pick a curriculum that shows the diversity found in our schools. Mrs. Oaks said in her second interview that through “the *Rooted in Reading* program [we are

using] this year, I have noticed more diversity, which is good.” This means that Mrs. Oaks felt that this program, which did not include much diversity in the read aloud selections, feels more diverse than previous reading programs.

Both these teachers, especially Mrs. Pearl, hinted at wanting to be more intentional in choosing diverse books for read alouds in specific areas of diversity. Mrs. Pearl explained that she used Google to find books that fit a theme and from the literature that she found, she looked at what is available in the school library or public library. As a new teacher, she is using what she can find, but through her answers in both interviews I can see that good morals in books are what are really important to her when she picks read alouds. New teachers especially, such as Mrs. Pearl, needs resources from the school and the district to aid them in adding resources to their libraries. Many teachers do not have diverse literature in their classrooms, but do not even realize it (Henderson et al., 2020). Therefore, with help from school librarians, principals, and other specialists’ teachers can gain these diverse resources for their classroom libraries’ in order to educate students on the diversity in their community.

Mrs. Oaks said in her interview that she would like to read more books that involve disabilities, but up until very recently there have not been hardly any available. Mrs. Oaks' ultimate goal in reading literature is that her students are enjoying it. She states in the second interview that “I choose books that have characters that my students will enjoy. I have been teaching for several years and choosing what they enjoy is very important to me. Many kids do not get read to at home, so I get to provide them with that at school.” This statement is unfortunately very true for many students, and while I agree, that we should try to find books and other literature with characters that students

will enjoy, we also need be intentional in choosing books that depict diversity so that students can use them to learn about the difference among people that are a part of their daily lives. However, if districts and principals provided professional development for teachers in order to address how important it is to share diverse literature with students and help teachers to set aside their personal biases in order to give positive representations of different cultures that represents all the students in our school and community. By having professional development, the school can also bring in resources that aid teachers in finding this diverse literature.

When I asked Mrs. Pearl and Mrs. Oaks where they got the books they use in class, both told me in their separate interviews that they get books from the curriculum and from Scholastic. This means that these sources are not as diverse as they should be or that teachers are not choosing the diverse choices available. Since both teachers told me that the school district does not mandate any of their choices in regard to religion or any other type of diversity, they have a lot of leeway to pick a diverse reading curriculum that addresses all kinds of diversity.

Recommendations

This study has been an eye opener to the diversity (or lack of) that is found in elementary read-aloud literature. Through this study I have found that the diverse student populations found in our public-school systems are not being adequately represented by the literature read-aloud in these first-grade classrooms. This is an issue that needs to be addressed by teachers, schools, counties, publishers, authors, illustrators, and so many others.

Why is it Important?

This is a real issue considering that the populations that make up our public schools are largely minority groups. Next year alone it is projected that in United States schools that 7,654 will be African American, 14,207 will be Hispanic, and 2,764 will be Asian (NCES, 2016). Further the LGBTQ+ literature has been growing more with the legalization of same sex marriage, therefore, as educators, we need to set aside our own personal biases in order to provide students with the education they deserve. With these large groups of students, we need to have literature that they can see themselves in and connect with. If we are not representing the types of people that students are going to encounter in the world, then we are not helping them to be ready for life.

Many elementary students are still developing a sense of self at their ages and are highly impressionable. This is why it is of utmost importance that teachers include literature that they can see not only themselves in but other groups of people that are a part of their daily life. This will help students see themselves as a true member of the community and show them that they matter to the people they are around. Further, it will help them to see and accept the differences of others in their community rather than lashing out or making fun at someone who is different than themselves.

Curriculum

As you can see throughout this study, the curriculum is heavily relied on by these teachers. The books that are listed in the curriculum that they choose are the ones that the

teachers are reading aloud to students. The *Rooted in Reading* curriculum that these teachers are using now does not have the needed diversity to help students understand and accept the differences in the people around them. If students never see themselves in a book, they will begin to develop a low self-esteem and think that they are not as valued as others who have many choices for books that act as a mirror. Further, if students do not see different types of diversity in books, books that can be sliding glass doors or windows, then they will not be able to communicate, accept, and understand the different cultures that make up the world around them (Bishop (1990), Pennel et al. (2018), Osorio, (2018)).

Since the curriculum is not as diverse as it needs to be for students to be successful and accepting of others around them, teachers need to be intentional in choosing a reading curriculum for their students. There are many reading curriculums available to teachers from all over the country, however, not all of these curriculums have the diversity that students need. Teachers need to deeply review all the books available to them and determine how much diversity there is in the books. It is up to teachers to build an awareness of the diversity of the literature in the curriculums that we are using. When evaluating curriculums for adoption in schools, teachers and administrators need to look carefully at the diversity of the literature included. It is important to review these reading curriculums and ask questions such as: does this curriculum represent all my students?, is there diversity that can be discussed in these books?, are there accurate portrayals of the diversity found in the classroom or school? These types of questions can help teachers determine if the literature in the reading curriculum is diverse enough to impact and educate students.

Teachers' Impact

Another important factor to note is the power that teachers have. As educators, Mrs. Oaks and Mrs. Pearl had a lot of influence in the read-aloud books selected that were not part of the reading curriculum. In a sense creating their own read-aloud curriculum to support their instructional goals. Since we are allowed to do this, we should be intentional in knowing what diverse literature is available and share it with our students. There are various awards that literature can win based on diverse parameters. Some of these awards would include the Coretta Scott King Award and Honors that recognizes authors or illustrators that portrays the experiences of African Americans, the Pura Belpré Award which is given to celebrate the Latino cultural experience, the American Indian Youth Literature Award given for best writing and illustrations by and about American Indians, the Schneider Family Book Award which is given to a book that accurately portrays a disability experience in children, and so many other awards. If we are intentional about knowing what these awards represent and picking them for our classrooms, we are giving students many valuable experiences and are aiding them in seeing windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors.

Finally, publishing companies need to be made aware of the lack of diversity found in their literature, especially when it comes to reading curriculums that teachers often purchase. These companies need to know that teachers are unhappy with the lack of diversity in their programs and that they need to do better to diversify their literature in order to promote equality to all. When this is done, hopefully, these companies will

produce curriculums that include more diverse literature that can be used in classrooms so that all students have a window, a mirror, and a sliding glass door.

Conclusion

To conclude, this research study has worked with two elementary school first grade teachers about their literature selections for read alouds in their classroom. From the data collected from interviews and content analysis based on the books chosen for read aloud by the teachers, it was concluded that there are three major themes that drive selection of literature: holidays and themes, curriculum, and personal connections. From these themes, the literature was dissected based on six areas of diversity: family structure, race/ethnicity, gender stereotypes, disabilities, religion, and socioeconomic status. After reviewing the literature, it was apparent that there was a lack of diversity in all areas looked into and the literature chosen does not reflect the population making up United States public schools.

Due to this lack of diversity in literature students are unable to get the experiences needed for growth and learning. Students need to see themselves in literature and see other cultures different from their own in order to feel valued and develop a sense of self. From the data collected, the curriculum guided the teachers greatly and the curriculum they used was not diverse enough to represent students. With this being said, it is vital to our students that we make conscious efforts to select reading curriculum and other read aloud literature that reflects the diversity in our world. Teachers can do this by looking for award winning literature in regard to disabilities, race, ethnicity, etc. and by carefully going through the reading curriculum so that there is diversity represented in learning.

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Appendix A: First Interview Questions

1. How do you choose the read aloud books that you use in your classroom?
2. How do you choose the books for reading circles?
3. Tell me about how you see these books benefit student learning?
4. What are favorite books to read to students? And why?
5. How often do you update the literature you use in instruction?
 - a. Why or why not?

Appendix B: Second Interview Questions

1. When looking at your list of books I noticed _____. Can you tell me more about this?
2. Why/why not do you use controversial multicultural literature books?
 - a. Can you elaborate on this?
3. Where do you get your books that you read aloud and use in reading circles?
4. Does the school mandate any books that you choose or do not choose to include in your instruction?
5. Tell me about the intentional efforts you make to diversify your literature for instruction.
6. Based on your list of books, what helped (would help) you choose more diverse books?
7. During your read alouds you used lots of books that had {insert characteristic of books}, can you tell me about this?
 - a. Why did you choose these books?
 - b. Can you tell me more about the types of books you include?

Appendix C: Full Book List of Read Aloud Books

- Bateman, T. (2013). *A Plump and Perky Turkey*. Two Lions.
- Bell-Rehwooldt, S. (2007). *You Think It's Easy Being the Tooth Fairy?*. Chronicle Books.
- Blabey, A. (2016). *Pig the Elf*. Scholastic.
- Blabey, A. (2016). *Pig the Winner*. Scholastic.
- Brett, J. (2014). *The Animals' Santa*. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.
- Brett, J. (2003). *Gingerbread Baby*. G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.
- Brett, J. (2009). *Gingerbread Friends*. Scholastic.
- Bright, R. (2018). *The Koala Who Could*. Orchard Books.
- Brown, K. (2011). *The Scarecrow's Hat*. Peachtree Publishing Company.
- Capucilli, A. S. (1998). *Inside a House That is Haunted*. Cartwheel Books.
- Chen, C. Y. (2004) *Guji Guji*. Kane/Miller Book Publishing.
- Colandro, L. (2016). *There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Turkey*. Cartwheel Books.
- Colandro, L. (2003). *There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Some Snow*. Scholastic.
- Cook, J. (2006). *My Mouth is a Volcano*. National Center for Youth Issues.
- Cooper, H. (1990). *Pumpkin Soup*. Doubleday Childrens.
- Cronin, D. (2014). *Click Clack Boo!*. Scholastic.
- Dean, J. (2013) *Pete the Cat: The First Thanksgiving*. HarperFestival.
- Dr. Seuss (2008). *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*. Harper Collins.
- Evans, C. (2019). *The Three Little Superpigs Once Upon a Time*. Scholastic.
- Greene, R. G. (2006). *The Very First Thanksgiving Day*. Atheneum Books for Young

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Hadfield, C. (2016). *The Darkest Dark*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Hancocks, H. (2013). *Penguin in Peril*. Templar Publishing.

Henkes, K. (2010). *Wemberly Worried*. Greenwillow Books.

Hoffman, M. (2007). *Amazing Grace*. Frances Lincoln Childrens Books.

Horowitz, D. (2008). *The Ugly Pumpkin*. Puffin Books.

Jenkins, M. (2010). *Chameleons are Cool*. Walker.

John, J. (2019). *The Good Egg*. HarperCollins.

Johnston, T. (2015). *First Grade, Here I Come!*. Scholastic.

Keller, L. (2018). *Potato Pants!*. Henry Holt and Company.

Krause, G. C. (2008). *Rock Star Santa*. Scholastic.

Lichtenheld, T. (2016). *Cloudette*. Henry Holt and Co.

Litwin, E. (2014). *Pete the Cat Saves Christmas*. HarperCollins.

Lobel, A. (2012). *Frog and Toad are Friends*. HarperCollins.

London, J. (2001). *Froggy's Best Christmas*. Scholastic.

London, J. (1996). *Froggy Goes to School*. Puffin.

Mayer, M. (1999). *Merry Christmas Mom and Dad*. Turtleback Books.

McGuire, L. (1984). *Bialosky's Christmas*. Golden Look-Look Books.

Melmed, L. K. (2003). *This First Thanksgiving Day*. HarperCollins.

Messner, K. (2014). *Over and Under the Snow*. Chronicle Books.

Moore, C. C. (2016). *The Night Before Christmas*. Arcturus Publishing.

Mosca, J. F. (2017). *The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin*. The Innovation Press.

- Osborne, M. P. (1998). *Dinosaurs Before Dark (Magic Tree House #1)*. Random House Children's Books.
- Pallotta, J. (2011). *Who Will Carve the Turkey this Thanksgiving?*. Scholastic.
- Penn, A. (2004). *A Pocketful of Kisses*. Scholastic.
- Penn, A. (2009). *Chester Raccoon and the Big Bad Bully*. Tanglewood.
- Penn, A. (2006). *The Kissing Hand*. Tanglewood.
- Pilkey, D. (2004). *'Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving*. Scholastic.
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- Quackenbush, R. (2010). *First Grade Jitters*. Harper.
- Rappaport, D. (2001). *Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.
- Rodman, M. A. (2006). *First Grade Stinks!*. Peachtree Publishing Company.
- Scotton, R. (2009). *Merry Christmas, Splat*. HarperCollins.
- Scotton, R. (2010) *Scaredy-Cat, Splat!*. HarperCollins.
- Scotton, R. (2013). *Splat the Cat: Blow, Snow, Blow*. HarperCollins.
- Silvano, W. (2009). *Turkey Trouble*. Two Lions.
- Step toe, J. (2016). *The Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*. Little, Brown Young Readers US.
- Vega, D. (2017). *If Your Monster Won't go to Bed*. Knopf Books for Young Readers.
- Wallace, A. (2016). *How to Catch an Elf*. Sourcebooks Wonderland.
- Walt Disney Company (1995). *101 Dalmatians*. Mouse Works.
- Wing, N. (2005). *The Night Before First Grade*. Grosset & Dunlap.
- Wing, N. (2019). *The Night Before Groundhog Day*. Penguin Random House USA.

Wing, N. (2002). *The Night Before Thanksgiving*. Scholastic.

Yates, P. (2011). *A Pirate's Night Before Christmas*. Sterling.

Appendix D: Figure 1: Blank Content Analysis Chart

Books used in whole class read- alouds	Why Chosen	Family Structure	Race/ Ethnicity	Gender Norms	Socioeconomic Status	Religion	Disabilities

Appendix E: Figure 2: Curriculum Book Content Analysis

Books used in whole class read- alouds	Why Chosen	Family Structure	Race/Ethnicity	Gender Norms	Socioeconomic Status	Religion	Disabilities
The Girl Who Thought in Pictures	Curriculum	Mom with two kids	all white	boy wears yellow shirt and jeans; girl wears pink dress	Lives in house in neighborhood	None mentioned	none addressed
Amazing Grace	Curriculum	Grandma and granddaughter and mom	African American family; allowed to be Peter Pan at school	Grandma in blue polka dot dress; girl wears bows; dresses up as characters from favorite stories; allowed to play a boy's role at school	live in a house together	not addressed	none mentioned
Sebastian's Roller Skates	Curriculum	Not Mentioned	white boy	yellow raincoat boy; mom wore green coat with scarf and purse	Lives in apartment	not addressed	not addressed; very shy

The Scarecrow's Hat	Curriculum	Chicken lives alone- might be getting ready to have chicks; a whole farm of animals	all different farm animals	scarecrow- brown coat, straw hat; badger-red bandana; crow-blue ribbon; owl wore glasses; donkey had blue blanket	not mentioned	not mentioned	none addressed
A Plump and Perky Turkey	Curriculum	Not a specific family	Predominantly white; two background characters of color	men in overalls and suits; women in dresses	Large community lives in valley	None mentioned	none mentioned
The Ugly Pumpkin	Curriculum	pumpkin all alone in pumpkin patch	round orange pumpkins except for one who was long and had warts	wore orange shoes	not applicable	None mentioned	none mentioned
Over and Under the Snow	Curriculum	Dad and son	White	dad in button up shirt and brown vest and black slacks; son in red hat and scarf and blue coat	not mentioned	not mentioned	none addressed

The Animals Santa	Curriculum	two brother rabbits; other forest animals are a community	Different species of animals you would find in the woods	brothers wear red and black vests; other animals wearing Christmas colored shirts are vests	Large group of animals that live in the woods	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed
Chameleons are Cool	Curriculum	no family addressed; a boy and some chameleons	white boy; all different types of chameleons	boy wore red and blue shirt and hat with blue tinted glasses; also has short cropped haircut	not mentioned	None mentioned	none addressed
Penguin in Peril	Curriculum	three cats live together-relationship is not addressed; penguin lives at the zoo	all the people in the story are white; three orange cats	Cats wore burglar outfits black pants and masks	The cats are out of money in the story	Three nuns are in the story	Not Addressed
The Darkest Dark	Curriculum	Mom, Dad, son, and dog	everyone is all white	mom wears pink shirt; men wore blue; boy sleeps with robot; boy wore	did not own a tv, but lived in a house in a neighborhood	None mentioned	none addressed

				red shirt and jeans			
Cloudette	Curriculum	a community of clouds that all live in the same neighborhood	just talks about the different types of clouds; people are all white	cloudette is a girl who is soft and fluffy; firefighter is a man; garden center is run by a woman; car wash run by a man	not mentioned	not mentioned	none mentioned
The Koala Who Could	Curriculum	lives in the Australian outback; lives in tree by himself	all animals are portrayed accurately	Kevin the koala is a boy; wore blue hat	not mentioned	not mentioned	none mentioned
The Radiant Child	Curriculum	boy, mom, and dad	Puerto Rican	wears white and yellow shirts; has cowboys on shirt; green jumpsuit with paint splatters	live in Brooklyn; assuming middle class	none mentioned	Mom has mental health issues

Appendix F: Figure 3: Theme Books Content Analysis

Books used in whole class read-alouds	Why Chosen	Family Structure	Race/Ethnicity	Gender Norms	Socioeconomic Status	Religion	Disabilities
Turkey Trouble	Holiday	Farmer Jake, wife, daughter and son	White	men in overalls and flannel shirts; one barefoot; girl in red tank top mom in green vest	have a farm full of animals	None mentioned	none addressed
101 Dalmatians	Theme	Rodger and Anita get married; before are living independently	Every person in story is white	Anita wears purple suit with yellow flower; Rodger wears black slacks with a red coat; smokes a pipe; their maid is an older woman	Very wealthy because can afford a maid and can take care of 101 dogs	None mentioned	none addressed

The Night Before Groundhog Day	Holiday	girl and brother; not specified but lives with mom and dad	school class has some students other than white; teacher is black	Girl sleeps with pink blanket and groundhog stuffed animal; wore pink jacket; boy wears green hat and orange jacket	live in house in neighborhood; town gets together to celebrate	None mentioned	Boy uses walking crutches/braces
There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Turkey	Holiday	old lady lives on the farm	The old lady is white; four children (3 white, 1 African American)	wears red and yellow shirt, glasses, grey hair, bow in hair, and jeans	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned

The Night Before Thanksgiving	Holiday	Mom, dad, brother, pet cat and 2 dogs; cousins, aunts, grandpa, grandma, and uncles came too	everyone in the book is white	Girls are wearing pink; little girl has doll; boy wears red pajamas and has a baseball glove; headboard for girl is pink, boy is blue; girl wears purple polka dot sweater, boy wears orange and red striped shirt	Preparing large thanksgiving meal so decently well off	None mentioned	none addressed
This First Thanksgiving Day	Holiday	No specific families looked at just two groups of people	White and Native American	Girls in dresses; boys in pants	Talks about struggles of coming to a new land	Christianity	Not Addressed
Click Clack Boo!	Holiday	Farmer Brown lives alone	farmer brown looks to be of color, maybe Latino	farmer brown wears overalls and plaid shirt; he is older and has grey	Farmer Brown runs a farm on his own	None mentioned	none addressed

				beard; also has a straw hat			
Bialosky's Christmas	Holiday	Bialosky lives alone	He is a brown bear; other friends are bears two but different shades of brown	Bialosky is in a red and white sweater; wore blue pajamas and a red coat and hat	lives in home; prepares for Christmas party	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	None addressed
How the Grinch Stole Christmas	Holiday	Specific family was only Cindi Lou Who and her three siblings; community of Whos; The Grinch and his dog	All Whos- no color for them	Cindi Lou wore a pink nightdress; Grinch in red Santa suit	getting ready for Christmas and spending lots of money on presents and decorating	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed
The Night Before Christmas	Holiday	Mom and Dad and two kids	all white	boy had astronaut toy; girl has purple cow studded animal	live in two story house in a neighborhood	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	Not mentioned

Pete the Cat Saves Christmas	Holiday	none mentioned; seems to be single	Pete the cat is a black cat; other cats of various colors too	wore the red Santa suit	drives a van	Christianity is an underlying theme for Christmas	none addressed
Gingerbread Baby	Holiday	boy mom two sisters and dad; cat dog and chickens and goats	both white	boy wore red shirt with suspenders ; mom wore green and red dress; dad wore tan pants and shirt with suspenders and hat	live on a farm	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed
Froggy's Best Christmas	Holiday	froggy lives on his own	froggy is green; his best friend is a squirrel	froggy wears red pjs	lives in small house	None mentioned	none addressed

Merry Christmas Mom and Dad	Holiday	mom, dad, son, and baby	all the same type of animal	dad wears blue pants, button up shirt, green suspenders, and red and yellow polka dot tie; mom wore purple coat and hat; baby wore pink snowsuit; son wore green coat and blue sneakers	live in two story house in a neighborhood	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed
There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Some Snow	Theme	white old lady	white lady is only character with race	she wore red jacket; green scarf; yellow hat	never showed her home	None mentioned	none addressed
Rock Star Santa	Holiday	White boy, but parents are never shown	main character is a white boy; at the concert there were some people of color	boy wore a red and white striped shirt and jeans	live in a two story house	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed

A Pirate's Night Before Christmas	Holiday	all the pirates live together on their ship	all are white except for one	only two female pirates; pirates are wearing all types of colors	live on the ship; present was a map to follow to treasure	Christmas is rooted in Christianity	none addressed
The Night Before First Grade	Theme	Mom, dad, brother, dog, sister, cat	lead is white girl; best friend is black girl; teacher is a man	girl wears purple shirt with green butterfly and jeans; brother wears yellow and blue sweatshirt	live in house	None mentioned	none addressed
Wemberly Worried	Theme	Mom and dad and grandma	All mice; different colors of mice	Wemberly wears dresses and carried a doll with her all the time; girls are usually in purple or pink; teacher is a woman	Live in house with fenced in yard; drive a car	None mentioned	none addressed

First Grade Here I Come	Theme	family not brought up	mostly white students; one student of color with main 6 students; teacher is white; in whole class 4/20 look to be students of color	teacher wears skirt and pink top; boy wears blue shirt and yellow pants	All students have everything they need but not specifically addressed	not mentioned	No students show with visible disabilities
Froggy Goes to School	Theme	froggy, dad, and mom	Frogs are all green	Froggy wears red and blue ball cap, green and blue shorts, blue shoes, and red suspenders . Dad wears blue shirt and jean suspenders ; mom wears white skirt; white and pink top	live in a house together	None mentioned	none addressed

				and white visor			
1st Grade Jitters	Theme	mom, dad, boy, and dog	all family members are white; friend tammy is black	played with soldiers and blocks; wears blue shirt, khakis, and black converses	live in a house together	None mentioned	none addressed
My Mouth is a Volcano	Theme	Mom, dad, sister, and brother	white boy lead character; friends with another white boy and a black boy	wears green shirt, brown shorts, and white tennis shoes	live in two story house in a neighborhood	None mentioned	none addressed

1st Grade Stinks	Theme	family is not mentioned	girl is white and only one student in the class looks to be another race	lead girl wears a pink shirt with a purple jacket and her hair in pigtails	a house is never shown	None mentioned	none addressed
Inside a House That is Haunted	Holiday	House full of monsters	Not Addressed	Frankenstein wore jeans and a red sweater	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	None
Pete the Cat: The First Thanksgiving	Holiday	2 cats; Pete and Callie	animals	wearing pilgrim hat; boy and girl	talks about how pilgrims were very poor	Christianity	none addressed
Scaredy-Cat, Splat!	Holiday	Mom	animals	wearing wizard hat; green and orange socks	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	none addressed
Who Will Carve the Turkey this Thanksgiving?	Holiday	Mom and Grandma and Grandpa	White	boy wears navy shirt and has brown short hair; Mom wears apron and cooks	Making a full Thanksgiving meal	Not Addressed	Not Addressed
The Very First Thanksgiving Day	Holiday	No specific families looked at just	White and Native American	Girls in dresses; boys in pants	Talks about struggles of coming to a new land	Christianity	Not Addressed

		two groups of people					
‘Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving by Dav Pilkey	Holiday	Not addressed	white, African American	Girl has beads in hair; boy wearing red and white ball cap; by with green glasses and green coat	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Addressed
How to Catch an Elf	Holiday	Santa and the elves	white	Santa in red; elves in green and red; boy in green shirt	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Addressed
Merry Christmas, Splat	Holiday	mom, sister, friend	splat is a black cat; friend is a grey mouse; sister is white cat; mom grey cat	red Santa hat; sister-purple sweater and bow	Have Christmas Presents	Celebrate Christmas-Christianity	none addressed
Pig the Elf	Holiday	dog friend	tan pug and brown wiener dog	red Santa hat; green Christmas sweater; red sweater	Have Christmas Presents	Celebrate Christmas-Christianity	none addressed

Martin's Big Words	Holiday	Mom, Dad	African American and White	martin-black pants and white polo; mom in a dress;	African American citizens were poorer than whites	Christianity	none addressed
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Appendix G: Figure 4: Personal Connection Books Content Analysis

Books used in whole class read-alouds	Why Chosen	Family Structure	Race/Ethnicity	Gender Norms	Socioeconomic Status	Religion	Disabilities
Pumpkin Soup	Personal Connections (Teacher Favorite)	Cat, Squirrel, and duck	white duck, grey cat, and brown squirrel	Duck is a boy other two not mentioned; do not wear any clothes to identify either way	All live in a house in the woods	None mentioned	none addressed
The Kissing Hand	Free Read/Teacher Favorite	Mom and son	both racoons; other animals in the woods seen	did not wear clothes; boy cried; liked to swing	live in the woods	None mentioned	none addressed
A Pocketful of Kisses	Free Read/Teacher Favorite	Mom and two sons	all racoons; other animals found in woods seen too	animals do not wear clothes	live in the woods	None mentioned	none addressed
Chester Raccoon and the Big Bad Bully	Personal Connections (Teacher Favorite)	Mom and two sons	all racoons look the same; there is also a badger who is the bully	none of the animals' wear clothes	live in the woods together	None mentioned	none addressed
Frog and Toad are Friends	Personal Connections (Teacher Favorite)	Frog and Toad both live independently	Different species of animals you would find in the woods	Toad and Frog both wear greens,	Live independently	None mentioned	none addressed

				greys, and browns			
If Your Monster Won't go to Bed	Personal Connections (Student Interest)	dad, mom, two daughters, monster, and dog	Mom black, Dad white; two daughters, and a dog	little girl wears pink pjs and cat slippers; bed is yellow with rainbows	live in apartment building	none mentioned	none addressed
The Magic Treehouse Dinosaurs Before Dark	Personal Connection	girl and boy	white	boy wears yellow shirt and jean shorts	live in Pennsylvania	none mentioned	none mentioned
The Three Superpigs Once Upon a Time	Personal Connection (Teacher Favorite)	mom and the three pigs	all pink pigs: little red riding hood was white	all wear superhero outfits; one blue, one green, and one purple; mom wore blue dress with white flowers on it	move to Fairyland; build their own houses	none mentioned	none mentioned

Potato Pants	Personal Connection (Student Interest)	a single potato	potatoes were all different sizes; one eggplant	there were many different colors and patterns of pants; eggplant wore yellow pineapple ones and potato wore green striped ones	houses are never shown; are able to buy pants though	none mentioned	none mentioned
The Good Egg	Personal Connection (Teacher Favorite)	lives with his 11 siblings in the carton	different types of food around	no clothes but he does wear black glasses; wears a blue cap	live in a carton in the grocery store	none mentioned	none mentioned
Guji, Guji	Personal Connection (Teacher Choice)	Alligator and Ducks; Momma duck and three siblings	Alligators and ducks	No clothes	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Addressed
Pig the Winner	Personal Connections (Teacher Choice)	two dogs that live together	three dogs shown but they are all different breeds	neither dog wears clothes	Not Addressed	Not Addressed	Not Addressed

You Think It's Easy Being the Tooth Fairy	Personal Connection-Student Interest (lots of students had been losing teeth lately)	tooth fairy takes teeth from many different children	tooth fairy is white; kids are of different races; goes to different kids in the USA	tooth fairy wears purple and has a green backpack	tooth fairy sleeps in a room with a "teeth bed" and small nightstand but that all that is visible; various homes for the people she gets teeth from	Not Addressed	Not Addressed
Splat the Cat Blow Snow Blow	Personal Connection (Teacher Favorite)	Mom, dad, sister, and best friend	splat is a black cat; friend is a grey mouse; sister is white cat; mom grey cat	Splat wears a blue top; mom wears a purple dress; dad wears a white button up with red tie and khaki pants; sister wears pink/purple dress with polka dots and a matching bow and carries a doll with her	Live in a suburban neighborhood	Not Addressed	none addressed