THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS' WRITTEN RESPONSES TO MULTICULTURAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE DURING POSTREADING ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

Using critical race theory (CRT) and discourse analysis method, this qualitative study examines third-grade Korean American students' written responses after learning about stories from multicultural children's literature in a Korean heritage language school in the United States. Eight different multicultural (Asian American, Mexican American, African American, and Indigenous peoples of North America) children's picturebooks are introduced throughout the semester, and the class participates in postreading activities as follow-ups after reading and discussing each multicultural children's book. The findings present how the students express their thoughts and viewpoints in written forms toward diverse topics or issues that are depicted in the selected multicultural literature when participating in relevant class activities that involved writing (e.g., writing a letter to the protagonist, keeping a diary from the viewpoint of a story's protagonist). The findings provide implications for educators of culturally and linguistically diverse students that using multicultural children's picturebooks can be a great medium and a powerful pedagogical tool for students when implementing them with relevant in-class writing activities.

KEYWORDS

multicultural children's literature, reading and writing activities, critical race theory, Korean bilingual students, heritage language school

ACCORDING TO a 2020 National Center for Education Statistics report, the total number of minority students in public schools reached more than 50% in 2017, and less than 50% of school students were white. Indeed, scholars in the past projected that 50% of students in U.S. schools would be minorities by 2020 (Webb et al., 2000). Despite the increasing size of the diverse student population over the past decades, the majority of U.S. public school teachers are white (de Brey et al., 2019); these teachers might have limited cultural knowledge and exposure to issues of diversity (Bloom et al., 2015; Gibson, 2012). According to bell hooks (1994), "most of us were taught in classrooms where styles of teaching reflected the notion of a single norm of thought and experience, which we were encouraged to believe was universal" (p. 35). Thus, literature that portrays minority cultures and experiences of people of color has seldom been available in traditional classroom settings (Chaudhri & Teale, 2013; Crisp et al., 2016; Koss, 2015).

Scholars notably indicated the lack of Asians or Asian Americans in children's literature by pointing out that Asian Americans are regarded as the most invisible figures among racial minority groups in the U.S. school curriculum (Loh-Hagen, 2014; Rodríguez & Kim, 2018; Yoo-Lee et al., 2014). Accordingly, Asian American children in the United States are less likely to encounter accurate stories and authentic illustrations from a broader range of Asian American perspectives. The students in my Korean heritage language class were U.S.-born Korean children who attended English-speaking schools during the week and Korean language school on the weekends. During weekdays at their American schools, the students have often been exposed to

literature that emphasizes white culture. The students have strongly identified with the mainstream culture but were provided insufficient opportunity to learn about cultural diversity, including their heritage culture (Salas et al., 2001).

To help the students develop multicultural voices and perspectives, I designed a curriculum focusing on multicultural literature to allow them to see themselves and encounter various cultural backgrounds through literature. Throughout the semester, the students were introduced to different types of multicultural children's literature and asked to provide their written reactions and responses to the books' stories. The purpose of this study is to investigate the students' written responses to diverse topics or issues that are depicted in the selected multicultural literature while participating in postreading activities that involved writing in a Korean heritage language classroom. The following research questions guided my study: How do third-grade Korean American students provide their written responses during postreading activities after learning about stories from multicultural children's literature? What are the benefits of implementing writing activities to expand students' worldviews and enrich their cultural competence?

Using critical race pedagogy from CRT, educators can foster diverse community recognition to value minority races, cultures, and languages that social organizations and institutions have undermined.

Theoretical Framework

Critical race theory (CRT) recognizes intersectionality, or multiple forms of oppression (such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, language, and immigration status), in our society as experiences among people of color (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado, 2011). Proponents of CRT acknowledge that the concept of race is not a biological or scientific fact, but a socially constructed phenomenon (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Willis et al., 2008). CRT scholars consider racism as a normal aspect of society and understand a regime of white supremacy, with its subordination of people of color (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013). In the same regard, Museus and Iftikar (2014) identified that racism exists in people's lives in a natural way and as a permanent fixture in society. Solorzano (1998) also explained that CRT includes the commitment to social justice to eliminate racism and other forms of oppression in society. In short, CRT scholars believe that race and racism permeate our society and function to oppress or subjugate people of color.

Scholars in higher education have adopted the CRT framework to challenge white privilege, dominant belief, and color blindness (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013) and to analyze how race and racism function to oppress people of color (Museus et al., 2012; Poon, 2014; Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Educational researchers who have adopted the CRT framework identified that race and racism intersect with other forms of subordination, such as class, gender, and ability, which shape the social construct of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Solorzano et al., 2000). According to Compton-Lilly (2009), CRT exposes the importance of literacy among people of color that involves the acknowledgment of race, cultures, language, and abilities that people of color use and hold. Willis et al. (2008) observed that CRT includes narratives that "foreground the voice, experience, and realities that inform the consciousness of people of Color" (p. 36). CRT aims to use literature to form social protests and political movements against racism through a critical race lens (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013).

Using critical race pedagogy from CRT, educators can foster diverse community recognition to value minority races, cultures, and languages that social organizations and institutions have undermined (Poon, 2014). Critical race pedagogy can seek active transformation to increase students' sense of self-efficacy and resilience (Sleeter, 2017). Proponents of critical race pedagogy recognize the silence of internalized racism. They particularly claim that multicultural literature should be used to counter dominant hegemonic narratives and eschew the harmful stereotypes of minority groups that are prevalent in contemporary society. In other words, critical race pedagogy challenges the use of language, literacy, and power to normalize and universalize whiteness (Gangi, 2008; Willis et al., 2008).

The Merits of Using Multicultural Literature

A number of researchers advocate the benefits of including multicultural literature in the school curriculum (Bishop, 1990, 1992; Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Cai, 2002; Cai &

Bishop, 1994; Colby & Lyon, 2004; Crisp et al., 2016; Ebe, 2010; Rodríguez, 2018). Literature that portrays diverse races and cultures can support children to develop multicultural perspectives by helping them develop understandings of different social and cultural issues from a wide range of experiences (Brinson, 2012; Evans, 2010; Wake & Modla, 2008). Hence, introducing multicultural literature to students can enhance their beliefs and perspectives about diverse cultures in the world (DeNicolo & Fránquiz, 2006; Gopalakrishnan, 2010). Cai (2002) argued that the role of multicultural literature is not just to accept cultural differences or appreciate cultural diversity but also to "transform the existing social order to ensure the greater voice and authority to the marginated culture and to achieve social equality and justice among all cultures" (p. 7). In the same regard, Bishop (1992) pointed out that multicultural literature can be used as a vehicle for changing inequality and achieving social justice.

Literature that portrays diverse races and cultures can support children to develop multicultural perspectives by helping them develop understandings of different social and cultural issues from a wide range of experiences.

Bishop (1990, 1992) claimed that children should be involved not only with literary mirrors that reflect their own culture, experiences, and identities but also with literary windows that present others' cultures and life experiences. Children can become aware of the differences between their world and that of others, find similarities between themselves and others, and develop tolerance and understanding of unfamiliar cultures (Bishop, 1990, 1992). According to Cai (2002), multicultural literature can be an empowering tool for students from marginalized cultures since they can see themselves and hear their stories as a part of a shared culture in the literature. By encountering multicultural children's literature, young readers can develop their awareness, understanding, and appreciation of different cultural groups, helping them establish their values of justice, fairness, and equity (Cai & Bishop, 1994). As reading literature about various cultural groups expands the reader's viewpoints, multicultural literature challenges the norm that regards white culture as a golden standard. Multicultural children's literature can disrupt the dominant hegemony by addressing existing power relations and social injustices to ensure educational equity for all students (Boutte et al., 2011; Chaudhri & Teale, 2013; Yoo-Lee et al., 2014).

Research Context

This study used qualitative discourse analysis methodology (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) to collect and analyze the data (Gee, 2014). The study took place in a Korean heritage language (HL) school in an urban Texas school district where 80,000 Korean people reside. Approximately 41% of the town population identified as non-Latinx white and 6% as Asian. Korean–English bilingual education programs were not available for Korean bilingual students in the local school districts. Therefore, Korean parents who wanted to develop their children's heritage language in the town funded the Korean HL school. Thus, the school was private and designed for Korean students to help their HL learning by providing formal instruction in Korean at each grade level. Most of the enrolled students were second-generation Korean Americans born in the United States after their parents immigrated. The school provided classes for Korean students in kindergarten to Grade 5. The classes at all grade levels met three hours per week on Saturdays, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The data collection for this article occurred during the fall semester in the third-grade class in 2019 at the Korean HL school.

There were six students enrolled in the third-grade class. All the students were invited to participate in the study. Parental permission, with consent letters, was granted for the seven students, and student assent letters to participate in this study were also gathered. All six students were born in the United States to parents who had immigrated from South Korea. They received all-English instruction at the U.S. schools they attended during the weekdays. Pseudonyms have been used for all the participants.

I was also the third-grade teacher at the Korean HL school. Hence, I held positions as an insider (classroom teacher) and an outsider (researcher). To avoid potential biases (as both a teacher and a researcher) that may impact the study, I identified my primary role as a teacher to encourage the students' classroom participation by facilitating their learning. In other words, I tried to collect data in a natural setting by foregrounding the students' learning over the data

collection. I am from South Korea, a native Korean speaker, and bilingual in Korean and English. I have a PhD in bilingual education and expertise in qualitative discourse analysis methods. It was my first year of teaching at this school, but I had worked as a first- and second-grade Korean HL teacher in a university town in the Midwest for five and a half years.

Instruction in the Third-Grade Classroom

The class met for three hours every Saturday for 16 weeks throughout the semester. With the parents' and school principal's permission, I introduced multicultural children's literature that portrays diverse cultural representations of ethnic groups during the reading and discussion sessions every two weeks. The students participated in storybook reading time both in Korean and English for 40 to 50 minutes, depending on the length of a selected book. For the next 40 minutes, the class held a literature discussion based on the book they read together. I often elicited class discussion about the topic, event, or issue from the story of the book using a variety of higher-order thinking questions (e.g., "Do you think it is fair to treat people differently based on their skin color?" "How can the food that you eat represent your culture?" "How would you feel if someone doesn't allow you to use your language?"). Then, the students engaged in postreading activities that involved writing exercises for the rest of the class period (about 40 minutes). The class was given a different writing prompt for each book and encouraged to provide their written thoughts about diverse topics or issues from the selected multicultural literature, which allowed them to further think about others' lives, cultures, and experiences.

Although the language of instruction was Korean in the classroom, as all six students were bilingual speakers and readers, I challenged literacy practices based on the strict separation of languages. I implemented translanguaging pedagogy (García, 2009), which refers to instructional practices, for instance, where students read a book (a receptive activity) in one language and discuss it orally or in a written form (a productive activity) using another language (García et al., 2017). I provided time and space for translanguaging in the classroom so that the students could flexibly utilize their linguistic resources when reading, discussing, and writing. I planned to provide bilingual texts to the students to invest their bilingual identities using dual-language repertoires while reading, thinking, and discussing the books. Yet, only one Korean multicultural literature selection out of the eight chosen books was available in both English and Korean. Thus, I produced a translated version in Korean for the rest of the books in English. The class read the books together in Korean first and later in English, but the students were encouraged to use both Korean and English during the book discussions and were allowed to provide their written responses in English.

Selection and Use of Multicultural Children's Literature

I chose eight multicultural picturebooks that illustrate different racial groups with diverse cultures and dynamic life experiences. I selected the literature aligned with the following criteria: (a) They were "culturally specific books" (Bishop, 1992) that depict the unique experiences of nonwhite cultural groups, (b) they illustrate minority children as main characters and portray the inner voices of the literary characters, (c) the artwork and illustrations in the books are culturally distinct and authentic, and (d) the books were written or illustrated by cultural insiders (Banks & Banks, 2006; Cai, 2002) and the stories are told from the insiders' perspectives.

Based on the criteria, I selected three Asian or Asian American, two Mexican American, two African American, and one Indigenous Canadian multicultural book (see Table 1). It is important to note that Asian or Asian American children's literature is limited to the East Asian groups, particularly Chinese and Japanese (Rodríguez, 2018; Yi, 2014); thus, the histories and contemporary experiences of other Asian groups (i.e., Southern or Western Asian minority groups) remain marginalized in Asian American children's literature. To provide diverse Asian ethnic groups' cultures, rather than grouping all Asians collectively, I included stories from three different Asian ethnic, regional, and religious groups (from Korea in Northeast Asia, Islamic Iran in West Asia, and Afghanistan-Pakistan in South Asia). I introduced the multicultural literature in a South Korean context first because I wanted my Korean American students to identify with their heritage culture before learning about other cultures (Colby & Lyon, 2004; Liang et al., 2017; Louie, 2005).

Although utilizing multicultural literature is a good way of providing culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014) or culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018), simply including multicultural literature in the curriculum is not enough (Rodríguez, 2018; Yoo-Lee et al., 2014). Scholars have reported that students benefitted more when multicultural children's books were used with

Table 1
MULTICULTURAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE SELECTION WITH RELEVANT CLASS ACTIVITIES

Book Title (Author, Year)	Book Type and Genre	Class Activity After Reading
The Name Jar (Choi, 2003)	Northeast Asian (Korean); contemporary fiction	Drawing a Venn diagram by providing the similarities and differences between the protagonist and themselves
Moon Watchers: Shirin's Ramadan Miracle (Jalali, 2017)	Western Asian Muslim; contemporary religious fiction	Writing a letter to the protagonist
Four Feet, Two Sandals (Williams & Mohammed, 2007)	Southeast Asian (Afghanistan-Pakistan); contemporary realistic fiction	Creating a T chart by writing their wish and comparing it to the wishes of the protagonists
Friends From the Other Side (Anzaldúa, 1993)	Mexican American; contemporary realistic fiction	Writing as if they were making a fictional friend
The Other Side (Woodson, 2001)	African American; historical realistic fiction	Drawing a scene and writing a story in which the protagonists travel out of the book into the present
Separate Is Never Equal (Tonatiuh, 2014)	Mexican American; historical nonfiction biography	Writing a persuasive letter to the superintendent at school from the story
Freedom Summer (Wiles, 2005)	African American; historical realistic fiction	Keeping a diary as if they were the protagonist
I Am Not a Number (Dupuis & Kacer, 2019)	Indigenous people of North America (Native Canadian); historical nonfiction biography	Writing a double-entry journal

teacher-guided class activities (Ludwig, 2012; Ramirez & Ramirez, 1994; Shechtman, 2009). Hence, I provided follow-up class activities that integrated reading and writing, and the students were invited to participate in writing activities after reading and discussing the books.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

The primary data for this article were the students' (n = 6) in-class writing samples, written when they participated in the follow-up class activities after reading and discussing multicultural books every two weeks. Throughout the semester, the students participated in eight different postreading activities that involved writing exercises. Thus, I collected 48 writing samples from the students altogether. The transcripts of audio recordings of the students' discourses during the postreading activities were also collected and analyzed to document their oral responses while engaging in writing exercises.

To seek the answer to my research questions, I analyzed the students' writing samples from the postreading activities. I examined each student's written responses to the stories, characters, and issues by reflecting on the theme of each book. To identify how the students expressed their thoughts and viewpoints in written forms toward diverse topics or issues from the selected multicultural literature, I employed a coding framework from CRT. Using CRT that underlines the intersectionality of individuals' different race/ethnicity, class, gender, culture, language, and history (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado, 2011) as a guiding lens, I determined codes for data by synthesizing emerging patterns and themes from the students' writing samples.

Findings

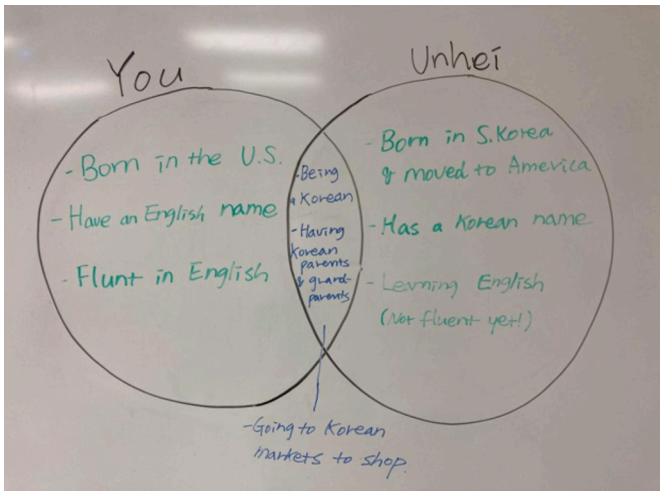
Using eight multicultural children's books throughout the semester, the class participated in eight different activities after reading and discussing the selected multicultural picturebooks. The following section discusses each class ac-

tivity that involved writing exercises every two weeks and then presents the students' written responses to each writing prompt to show how they expressed their thoughts and viewpoints toward multicultural topics or issues that are depicted in the stories from the literature.

Activity 1: "Drawing a Venn diagram by providing the similarities and differences between the protagonist and themselves" helped the students not only increase their self-identity but also avoid essentializing.

The Korean multicultural book *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2003) closely mirrors the students' life as Korean descendants, and the story reflects their own experiences and culture. Thus, the students were able to find themselves in the book by making connections to the Korean protagonist. After reading the story, each student was given a Venn diagram worksheet to provide similarities and differences between the Korean protagonist and themselves. Figure 1 shows the Venn diagram that I created on the whiteboard in the classroom by collecting all the students' responses from their worksheets to share their answers with the whole class.

Figure 1

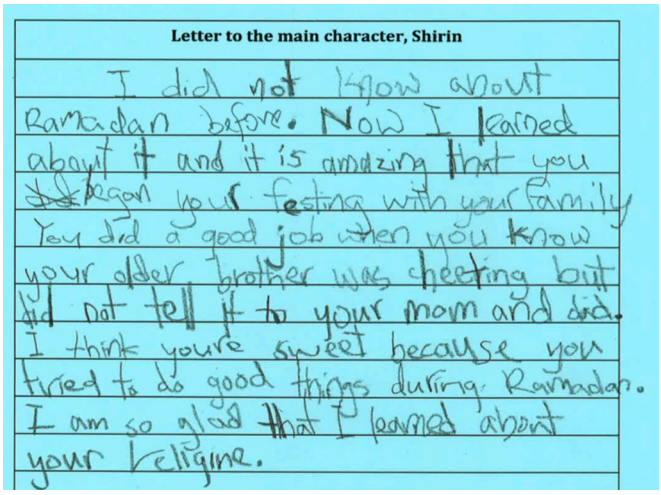


As shown, the class found similarities such as being Korean, having Korean parents and grandparents, eating Korean food in the United States, and going to Korean markets for grocery shopping. For the differences, the students pointed out that, unlike the protagonist, they were born in the United States, had an English name, and became fluent in English before entering school. It appears that encountering the mirror book helped the students enhance their self-concept and self-identity because they could see themselves and their culture in the literature in a positive manner (Cai, 2002). By finding different features from the mirror book, each student presented differences between the protagonist and him- or herself. The students learned about how to avoid essentializing, which refers to the assumption that "there is something identifiable…[and] shared by all members of certain groups" (Nodelman & Reimer, 2003, p. 171) as they identified individual distinctiveness and different experiences within the same heritage ethnic group.

Activity 2: "Writing a letter to the protagonist by sharing their thoughts" assisted the students in creating a sense of otherness and developing an openness to other cultures.

Through reading the West Asian Muslim multicultural book *Moon Watchers: Shirin's Ramadan Miracle* (Jalali, 2017), the class learned about Ramadan and discussed Muslims' religious practice of fasting during the month of Ramadan. After reading and discussing the story together, the students were encouraged to write a letter to Shirin (the female protagonist, whose age is similar to the students') by providing their responses, thoughts, and reactions to the story. Figure 2 displays Jay's letter to Shirin.

Figure 2



Letter to the main character, Shirin

I did not know about Ramadan before. Now I learned about it and it is amazing that you ~~bet~~ began your fasting with your family. You did a good job when you know your older brother was cheeting but did not tell it to your mom and did. I think you're sweet because you tried to do good things during Ramadan. I am so glad that I learned about your religine.

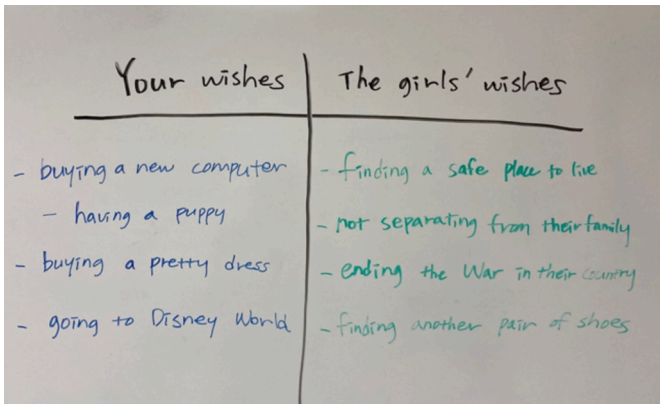
As shown in his letter, reading the story about Muslim religious practices supported Jay to be aware of Shirin's culture and developed his knowledge and understanding of different religious practices and traditions. Jay's letter also indicates that he appreciated and respected what Shirin did

in the story to conform to her cultural values and religious beliefs as a Muslim. Other students also presented their awareness and openness to others as they stated in their letters that they had learned about a new religious practice. In other words, writing a letter to literary characters from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds after reading a story can help students develop their cultural knowledge and gain a sense of acceptance of and openness to other cultures.

Activity 3: "Creating a T chart by writing their wish and comparing it to that of the protagonists" helped the students develop sympathy and increase their self-worth.

The class engaged in reading the South Asian multicultural book *Four Feet, Two Sandals* (Williams & Mohammed, 2007), which reveals the hardships of children at refugee camps when seeking a safe place. Before reading, the students were exposed to several contemporary photographs of people in refugee camps and a short film that exhibits refugees in South Asian countries to preview their life. After reading and discussing the story, each student was given a T chart worksheet and asked to provide his or her wishes in the left column and the wishes of Lina and Feroza (the protagonists in the story) in the right column. Figure 3 displays the T chart that I created on the whiteboard after collecting the students' responses from their worksheets to share their answers with the whole class.

Figure 3

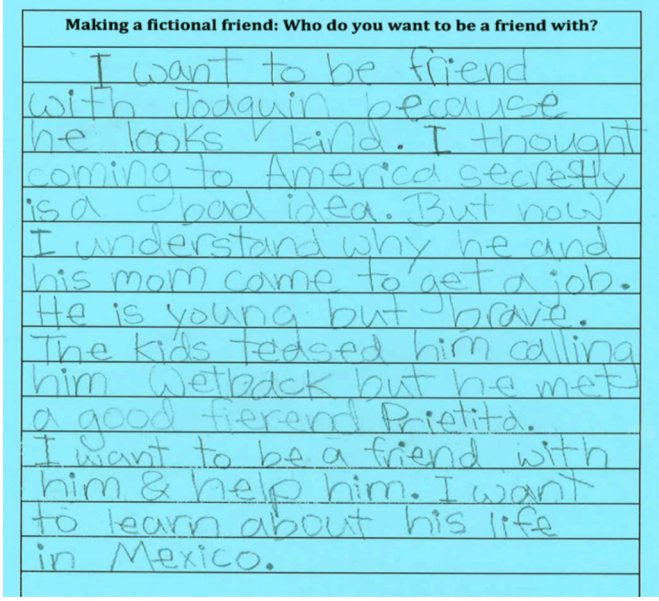


As shown, the students' wishes include "having a new computer," "having a puppy," "buying a pretty dress," and "going to Disney World." On the other hand, the students provided the protagonists' wishes as "finding a new and safe place to live," "not separating from their family," "ending the war in their country," and "finding another pair of shoes." When I asked the students to compare their wishes to those of the protagonists, they expressed sympathy toward the main characters, whose life experiences and circumstances are different from their own, by stating, "I am sorry for Feroza because her name was not on the list" and "I would be sad if I were Feroza because only Lina was going to America." The students additionally said, "I thank you for my parents to have whatever I want to have," "I thank God to be safe and don't have to worry about wars," and "I appreciate that I have a house to live safely." The writing activity helped the students increase their self-worth and self-value since comparing different types of wishes led them to show their appreciation and gratitude in their daily lives.

Activity 4: "Writing as if they were making a fictional friend" helped the students break stereotypes by seeing life through another person's eyes.

After the class read the Mexican multicultural book *Friends From the Other Side* (Anzaldúa, 1993), the students were asked to think about one of the characters in the story they wanted to be friends with. Then, the students were encouraged to write about their fictional friend along with their reasons to choose the literary character on a "fictional friend" worksheet. Figure 4 shows Suzi's written response, which depicts Joaquin (the Mexican protagonist from the story) as her imaginary friend.

Figure 4


Making a fictional friend: Who do you want to be a friend with?

I want to be friend with Joaquin because he looks kind. I thought coming to America secretly is a bad idea. But now I understand why he and his mom come to get a job. He is young but brave. The kids teased him calling him Wetback but he met a good fierend Prietita. I want to be a friend with him & help him. I want to learn about his life in Mexico.

As demonstrated in her second sentence, Suzi seemed to hold prejudices and stereotypes toward particular groups of people, specifically undocumented people living in the United States. Yet, her subsequent statements indicate that she began to understand Joaquin's difficult living situation in his home country by seeing life through Joaquin's eyes. In her last sentence, Suzi stated that she wanted to learn more about what Joaquin's life looks like in Mexico; it appears that the story replaced her overgeneralized belief and negative assumption toward undocumented immigrants with curiosity and understanding. Reading the story about others and thinking about their life experiences from their perspectives helped Suzi break prejudices and stereotypes that she previously had.

Activity 5: "Drawing a scene and writing a story in which the protagonists travel out of the book into the present" aided the students to develop a cross-cultural friendship.

After the class read the African American multicultural book *The Other Side* (Woodson, 2001), which portrays the issue of segregation between white and Black people in the United States, the students participated in an engaging class activity. They were asked to draw a scene and write a story in which the two literary characters (white and African American girls) time-travel into the present by using their imaginations. Figure 5 displays Jena's drawing and writing as she imagined a scene in which the two characters live in her neighborhood.

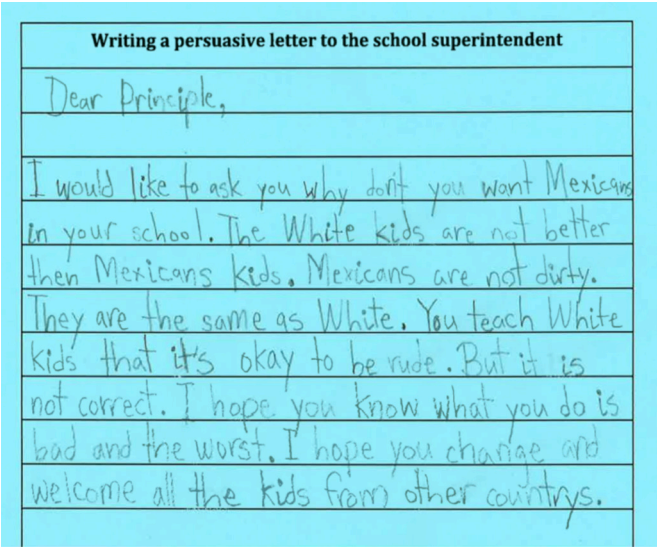
Figure 5

Veering away from the original version in the historical fiction, Jena recreated the story by writing that there is no segregated fence dividing the towns for the white versus Black people. Jena depicted the two girls (white and African American) becoming best friends, and she was also a close friend of them. Her writing with drawing indicates that she developed a cross-cultural friendship by creating storylines of interracial harmony and unity. Jena appears to understand that different racial and ethnic backgrounds do not hinder friendship; instead, she understood that people of other races could build a strong bond and become best friends in contemporary society.

Activity 6: "Writing a persuasive letter to the school superintendent from the story" supported the students to develop a critical eye to view unfairness in our society.

The class read the Mexican American multicultural book *Separate Is Never Equal* (Tonatiuh, 2014), which deals with issues of discrimination and segregation. The class discussed the unequal opportunity that Mexican American children confronted in the story. Then, the students were asked to write a persuasive letter to the school superintendent who expressed racial discrimination toward Mexican American students. Figure 6 presents Ethan's letter attempting to persuade the superintendent.

Figure 6



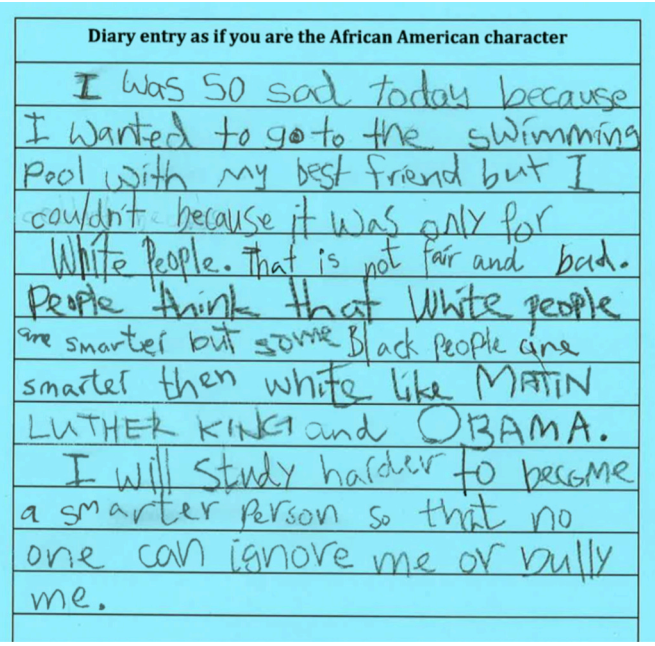
As shown in his letter, Ethan recognized the unfair treatment toward Mexican American children in the story. Specifically, Ethan addressed the school superintendent's unequal and discriminating behaviors toward the Mexican American

characters by using the words "rude," "not correct," "bad," and "worst." He also pointed out the importance of having an equal opportunity and the danger of holding the idea of white supremacy by writing, "Mexicans are not dirty. They are the same as white," and "You are teaching white kids that it is okay to be rude." The other students' letters also indicate that they understood the concept of equality, fairness, and inclusion; they wrote things such as "Everyone is equal no matter what," "It is not fair to tell them that they can't go to the American school," and "Everyone should be able to go to any school with any skin color and background." As demonstrated in Ethan's and the other students' letters, writing a persuasive letter helped the students promote their critical perspectives and develop a critical eye to view unfairness and inequality in society.

Activity 7: ''Keeping a diary as if they were the protagonist in the story'' helped the students promote strategies to cope with issues in their life.

The class read the African American multicultural book *Freedom Summer* (Wiles, 2005), which also deals with racism and segregation issues. After reading about the social inequality presented in the story, the students were asked to keep their diary entries as if they were the African American protagonist in the story. Figure 7 displays Jase's diary entry, showing his coping strategy to overcome potential challenges he would encounter in his life as an African American.

Figure 7


Diary entry as if you are the African American character

I was so sad today because I wanted to go to the swimming Pool with my best friend but I couldn't because it was only for White People. That is not fair and bad. People think that White people are smarter but some Black People are smarter then white like MATIN LUTHER KING and OBAMA.
I will Study harder to bessme a smarter person so that no one can ignore me or bully me.

As shown in his diary, Jase understood the existing racism and social injustice in society and pointed out that treating people differently based on their skin color or race is "not fair" and a "bad idea." Jase also criticized people's notion of white supremacy by asserting that "some black people are smarter then [than] white people," and then listing several African American heroes' names. Jase came up with a coping strategy to overcome a possible challenge by stating, "I will study harder to become a smart person" so that he (as an imagined African American) would not be ignored or bullied by others. The other students' writings also revealed that engaging in writing a diary as if they were the African American character who encountered racism and discrimination helped them develop critical perspectives toward inequality and injustice in society. This writing activity explicitly facilitated Jase to promote his personal coping skills to deal with potential challenges in his (imagined) life.

Activity 8: ''Writing a double-entry journal'' helped the students facilitate empathy.

The class learned about a part of an Indigenous Canadian's history by reading the book *I Am Not a Number* (Dupuis & Kacer, 2019). After reading the story, the students were asked to write a double-entry journal, listing sentences from the story and then providing their own reaction to those passages. I selected quotations from four harsh scenes and provided them in the left column of the double-entry journal worksheet, and the students were asked to provide their reactions, emotions, and connections to each scene in the right column of their journal. Figure 8 illustrates Hanna's responses to the four chosen scenes, when the Indigenous Canadian protagonist is treated inhumanely by the teacher at the residential school.

As displayed, Hanna expressed her reactions and empathy by stating, "I am mad and upset," "My heart really hurts," and "I actually feel her pain." It appears that reading the story from the perspective of Irene, the protagonist, enhanced Hanna's ability to gauge Irene's emotions and feelings. Hanna further made personal connections to Irene by comparing their different daily life and experiences. Her sentences, such as "I can grow my hair if I want, but she couldn't," indicate that Hanna was making a close connection to the protagonist, which helped her build understanding and facilitate greater empathy for the Indigenous child in the story. The other students in the class also showed

Figure 8

Double-Entry Journal

Quotes From Text	Reactions/Emotions/Connections
1. "We don't use names here. All students are known by numbers. You are 759!"	I am mad and upset beacause She has a pretty name but not allowed to use it.
2. "That's the evil's language! You should be ashamed of yourself."	That is a bad idea to not to use her language. I use my languge all the time to tak to friends, but She was not able to talk to her friends.
3. "Let's get rid of that hair. Sit up straight."	I can grow my hair if I want, but She couldn't. I would cry all day if I were not allowed to grow my hair. I actually feel her pain.
4. "If you throw it up, you will have to eat the vomit."	I am schocked and [illegible]!! That is the worst!!! I feel so bad and my heart really hurts!!! Such a bad idea.

their empathetic responses to the literary character in their double-entry journals, which suggests that they understood the fact that all children feel the same emotions no matter what their physical appearance is, what language they speak, or where they reside in the world.

Discussions

This study examined third-grade Korean American students' written responses to multicultural children's books when they were engaged in postreading activities that involved writing exercises after learning about diverse cultures and life experiences from the books. As a third-grade classroom teacher, I used eight multicultural children's books, including three featuring Asian characters (one book each about Korean, West Asian Muslim, and Afghanistan-Pakistan characters), two about Mexican American characters, two about African American characters, and one featuring an Indigenous Canadian character. Correspondingly, the eight different postreading activities were implemented in the classroom after reading and discussing the multicultural stories. The findings revealed that multicultural children's literature offered multiple benefits when these books were used along with relevant writing activities.

Specifically, while creating a Venn diagram, the students increased their positive self-concept by finding similarities between the Korean protagonist and themselves from the mirror book. The students also avoided essentializing by identifying individual distinctiveness and different experiences within their ethnic group, which can further help them eschew unconscious beliefs about and biases toward a particular ethnic or cultural group. By engaging in writing a letter to the protagonist, the students created a sense of otherness and developed an openness to other cultures as they learned how to appreciate and value other cultural practices. When the students created a T chart comparing their wishes with those of the protagonists from refugee camps, they developed sympathy and showed their increased sense of self-worth. The students demonstrated their ability to recognize prejudice and break stereotypes about literary characters (in this case, an undocumented Mexican immigrant) while creating a fictional friend from the story. Drawing a scene and writing a story in which the literary characters travel out of the historical fiction book into today led one of the students to develop a potential cross-cultural friendship. In addition, writing a persuasive letter to the school superintendent allowed the students to develop a critical eye to view unfairness in our society. By writing a diary entry as if he were the African American character in a story, one of the students developed his coping strategy to deal with the racial issues in his (imagined) life. Furthermore, writing a double-entry journal helped the students develop a strong sense of empathy and an empathetic attitude toward the protagonist in one story.

Overall, the students appear to have broadened their perspectives on diversity and inclusion from multicultural children's literature when reading was combined with relevant follow-up class activities through writing. The different writing activities allowed the students to share their thoughts, insights, and emotions both openly and critically by analyzing difference, inequity, and injustice from critical perspectives, which helped them build mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance for different cultures and life experiences. Reading and learning about other children in various situations expanded the students' worldviews to gain insight into other cultures, challenged biases and stereotypes that they previously had (Iwai, 2015; Thein et al., 2007), and enriched their cultural competence (Lehman, 2017).

Implications

The findings provide implications for educators of culturally and linguistically diverse students that multicultural children's literature can be a great medium and a powerful pedagogical tool for students when used with relevant class activities (Ludwig, 2012; Ramirez & Ramirez, 1994). As shown from the students' writing samples, teachers should acknowledge that various postreading activities can help their students further engage in thinking, learning, and developing their insights and viewpoints toward the issues in our pluralistic society. The findings of the study imply that students' cultural awareness and multicultural perspectives can be developed through a good quality and authentic piece of multicultural literature (Rodríguez & Kim, 2018) that is judiciously selected by the teacher and introduced along with well-related and connected postreading activities.

Limitations and Direction for Future Research

This study had several limitations. First, the student sample size (n = 6) was relatively small. Second, although the subjects were exclusively Korean Americans, only one book depicted Korean culture. Since there has been an increasing number of children's multicultural books featuring Korean protagonists, I could have used more books that reflected the students' culture. Third, although the students' oral discourses during the book discussions were initially collected, the data analysis of this article was limited to the students' written responses that they completed during postreading activities. Analyzing both the students' oral discourses and written responses might have provided a more precise picture regarding how they develop their insights and viewpoints toward the diverse and complex issues in our multicultural society throughout the books. Last, because the study focused on the students' written responses, my language use and instruction as the teacher were not the focus of the study and were not analyzed. However, it is important to note that my discourse and assistance might have influenced the students' oral discourses and their written responses during the follow-up writing activities. These are considerations for future research.

Researchers need to further investigate the role of children's multicultural literature for emergent bilingual students' identity construction and cultural competence development. Researchers also need to examine how teachers in diverse classrooms include multicultural literature in their instruction so that their students can develop mutual understanding and enrich their cultural competence. In this way, researchers can inform teachers that their curriculum and instruction provide the hybrid learning space and time for the students to broaden their perspectives by analyzing difference, inequity, and injustice through a critical lens in a multicultural society. •

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