

REACTIONS TO A REQUIRED, DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE TEXT READ-ALoud IN RURAL CLASSROOMS



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READING ALOUD to students is a transactional process in which the students interact with the text, each other, and their teacher (Morrison & Wheeler, 2022). This is a common practice in primary grades, and is also very beneficial for students in upper elementary, middle school, and high school (Albright & Ariail, 2005). Specifically, the interactive read-aloud process encourages the teacher to read the text while modeling fluency (e.g., accuracy, rate, expression), addressing essential vocabulary, and posing critical questions before, during, and after the reading (Morrow & Gambrell, 2019). This promotes oral language development, fluency, comprehension (Copenhaver, 2001; Hurst & Griffity, 2015), vocabulary growth (Calderón et al., 2011; May et al., 2019; Morgan, 2009) and engagement (Marchessault & Larwin, 2013; Wadsworth, 2008). In fact, in *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*, Anderson et al., (1985) noted that reading aloud to children is one of the most effective ways to support students' academic success. An interactive picturebook read-aloud requires planning that includes building students' background knowledge, reviewing key vocabulary words, and engaging students in open-ended questions (Brooks, 2022).

Engaging in read-alouds motivates independent reading (Morgan, 2009) and promotes a love of literature (Albright & Ariail, 2005) and life-long reading practices. Regular time spent reading aloud communicates the value of reading and demonstrates the enjoyment that can result from reading. In addition, the whole-class shared reading experience helps

to build a classroom community around literature (Ganske, 2019; Varlas, 2018).

Diverse and Inclusive Texts for Read-Alouds

Picturebooks are not just resources to teach literacy skills: they also address topics such as racism, immigration, and discrimination (Tomé-Fernández, et. al., 2019) by conveying attitudes and values (Morgan, 2009). Zapata et al. (2017) defines diverse literature as “books that reflect varied voices and faces, experiences, and histories” (p. 62). Diverse and inclusive texts help students identify with their own culture and learn about the cultures of others (Kibler & Chapman, 2019; Koss, 2015; Young, 2019). The regular use of diverse picturebooks affirms students' lived experiences, and the lived experiences that differ from their own (Everett, 2018).

Diverse and inclusive literature reflects and respects different abilities and attributes. Bishop's (1990) seminal work asserts that diverse books help students understand the multicultural world in which they live while creating connections with others. However, children's literature has historically been dominated by white, middle class characters, often limiting and omitting Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) altogether (Koss, 2015). In the rare instance that children's literature included BIPOC characters, it often misrepresented their lived experiences (Morgan, 2009). More recently, the 2023 report from the University of Wisconsin's Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) identified a 7-year positive trend

in the number of diverse books printed for children and young adult readers. Forty percent of total books published had at least one BIPOC creator and 39% of books had at least one BIPOC main character (Cooperative Children's Book Center, 2023). Though encouraging, books that feature white characters, animals, and other objects still outnumber those centered on BIPOC characters.

Teachers must evaluate texts to consider the voices represented, underrepresented, misrepresented, or missing. Texts that reflect students' culture, language, and lived experiences not only support reading comprehension, but also foster empathy and respect among students and demonstrate culturally responsive teaching (Francis, 2019). Texts used in the classroom have an impact on students' perceptions of themselves and others, so teachers must be strategic in the selection of texts and the messages communicated through them.

Diverse and Inclusive Texts in Rural Areas

The use of diverse texts is essential for classroom instruction but there are many barriers to using them in rural areas. For example, rural schools often receive fewer resources than urban and suburban schools (Weiss, 2019) and teachers and students have limited access to reading materials (Weingarten, 2017). These book deserts (Ness, 2024; Miller, 2019) are areas where students and teachers cannot easily access books for purchase or borrowing, making it difficult for teachers to provide students with windows and mirrors in the classroom.

Preparing Teachers to Incorporate Diverse Read-Alouds

As curriculum demands increase, many practicing teachers have discontinued interactive read-alouds and discussions to ensure that time is devoted to mandated skills instruction. These "hurry-up-let's-go circumstances of schools" (Copenhaver, 2001, p. 157) eliminate peer engagement and silence the voices of students trying to connect with the texts. As an integral part of their pre-service training, teacher candidates must learn how to be intentional with their book choices and learn how to embed multicultural texts within the mandated skills instruction.

In order to prepare pre-service teachers to successfully use diverse literature in the classroom, teacher education programs must support the development of pre-service teachers' cultural competency (Ladson-Billings, 2006), with the awareness and skills to "appreciate, value, and celebrate similarities and differences within, between, and among culturally diverse groups of

people" (Taylor et. al, 2016, p. 4). As teacher candidates learn how to embed literacy in all content areas, they must also investigate how to identify diverse populations and perspectives represented and underrepresented in their course materials so that they can strategically select diverse books, authors, and illustrators for classroom use (Koss, 2015).

In addition to developing their cultural competency and learning to select and evaluate diverse texts, pre-service teachers also need to know how to use diverse texts in the classroom. Simply reading diverse and inclusive picturebooks is not enough to support culturally responsive classrooms; teachers must engage their students with the texts (Howard et al., 2018). Discussion that accompanies a read-aloud supports literacy skills development and students' engagement as a member of the community of learners (Stead, 2014; Copenhaver, 2001). The conversations that occur before, during, and after the reading provide opportunities for students to interact with and connect to the narratives and information presented (Albright & Ariail, 2005; Howard et al., 2018; Quest & Bazemore-Bertrand, 2019). For this reason, it is imperative that teacher candidates learn how to conduct an effective interactive read-aloud that integrates higher-level questions that engage readers' discussion and reflection to promote understanding (Kibler & Chapman, 2019; May et al., 2019; Tomé-Fernández et al., 2019). In addition to crafting effective questions, pre-service teachers also need to learn how to navigate and lead students through sensitive or difficult topics in ways that promote empathy and understanding rather than perpetuate stereotypes or cause harm (Morgan, 2009).

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how teacher candidates' developing teaching practices were impacted by the careful selection and intentional use of diverse and inclusive picturebooks in authentic, rural classrooms. Teacher candidates were exposed to diverse and inclusive texts in course instruction and practiced reading picturebooks aloud, so the study intended to provide opportunities for teacher candidates to read picturebooks in their field experiences.

Specifically, the following questions guided the research:

- How can diverse and inclusive picturebooks be used to foster empathy and respect, demonstrating culturally responsive teaching in K-6 classroom settings?
- How does a diverse and inclusive picturebook read-aloud requirement affect teacher candidates' teaching practice development?

This research was inspired by Lohfink's (2014) study evaluating the outcomes of a multicultural read-aloud assignment with 54 pre-service teachers in kindergarten through fifth-grade classrooms. In that study, pre-service teachers learned how to connect multicultural literature with students and observe how students' backgrounds affected their responses to literature.

Study Methodology

Design

This study was designed with the mixed-methods instrumental case study approach (Crowe et al., 2011). Using a case study framework (Fetters et al., 2013), qualitative and quantitative data were collected to investigate a group of people (pre-service teachers) and their experiences reading aloud diverse picturebooks in their field experience. Data included both closed- and open-ended questions on a questionnaire for teacher candidates, in order to collect different but complementary data from the real-life context of participants and their specific teaching experiences. This study took place during the fall 2021, spring 2022, and fall 2022 semesters. One hundred fourteen participants responded to the closed-ended questions and, of those participants, 69 responded to the first open-ended question, and 83 responded to the second question.

Participants

Convenience sampling was used to gather participants ($n=114$) for the study. The student population was primarily white (81%), with multiracial (5%) and American Indian or Alaska Native (4%) students as the next largest demographic groups represented. Numerous schools were used for field experience placements, with varying student demographics. For example, one school's student population was 82% white, 8% Hispanic/Latinx, 7% multiracial, and 2% American Indian or Alaska Native. Another school had 64% American Indian or Alaska Native, 18% multiracial, 13% white, and 4% Hispanic/Latinx students. It is not known if the teacher candidates worked with emergent bilingual students in their field experience. However, the state's licensing board, through the standards of effective practice, requires that all teacher candidates understand the role of language and culture in learning.

At the end of each semester, teacher candidates who were enrolled in the two language arts courses, (prerequisites for taking language arts methods), were asked to complete an online survey. The response rate for teacher candidates was 96%.

Procedures for Implementing the Read-Aloud

In the first two of three required language arts courses, teacher candidates engaged in picturebook read-alouds at the beginning of each class (see Appendix A for a sample list of texts used). Throughout the semester, they discussed the qualities of diverse and inclusive texts and used the text selection tool, *Reading Diversity: A Tool for Selecting Diverse Texts*, (Learning for Justice, 2023), to evaluate the books. The tool encouraged pre-service teachers to critically evaluate texts and justify their use in the classroom. Questions on the tool asked about the books' quantitative measures (e.g., Lexile, language features) and asked teacher candidates to identify voices present or missing. The authors' attitudes, beliefs, and points of view were noted and any concerns about generalizations, stereotypes, or misrepresentations were identified.

Teacher candidates also learned how to recognize students' funds of knowledge (Moll, 2019) and lived experiences to connect students with texts during their field experience in a K-6 classroom. Similarly, teacher candidates' ability to discern students' funds of identity (Moll, 2014), or ability to connect with the world to develop their identity, was emphasized to promote the selection of texts that connected with students' culture, identities, and experiences.

Teacher candidates were required to bring a diverse picturebook and prepare to read it (with before-during-after activities that posed higher-level thinking questions and highlighted vocabulary) at each visit to a field placement at a rural, K-6 classroom. Some of the activities included stopping points to highlight key vocabulary (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2015) and higher-level thinking questions to lead partner discussions (Tomé-Fernández et al., 2010). The number of times a teacher candidate conducted a read-aloud was determined by the field experience classroom teacher, but the expectation was that each teacher candidate would be guaranteed at least one opportunity to read aloud a diverse text. Both teacher candidates and classroom teachers were made aware of the course expectations through a distributed field experience fact sheet. Teacher candidates in the first language arts course completed a full-day field experience one day a week for 8-10 weeks, while candidates in the second language arts course completed a full-day field experience two times per week for 8-10 weeks.

Prior to the start of field experience, a school principal sent an email to the field experience clinical office, stating that "upon reading the [course] description... we absolutely can't allow any student to bring a diverse/inclusive picturebook

into our school.” Finding classroom placements for teacher candidates in the rural area was challenging post-COVID, so the university’s clinical office worked with the school principal to allow the teacher candidates back in the school. That group of pre-service teachers did not bring diverse/inclusive texts to their field experience and used books from that school’s building and classroom libraries. The school was not used for pre-service field experience placements after the semester.

Study Materials

Many classroom and school libraries lack representative texts where students can see themselves and their lived experiences represented (Henderson et al., 2020; Bailey, 2021). Rural schools also face obstacles with professional development opportunities and funding for texts that support culturally responsive instruction (Smith & Seeger, 2023). For those reasons, collaboration with the campus library staff was utilized to write grants and acquire diverse and inclusive texts to ensure book access for teacher candidates’ use. These books received awards such as the Children’s Africana Book Award, the Middle East Outreach Council Book Award, the Americas Award (Latin America), and the South Asia Book Award. The library staff curated a selection of award-winning representative texts and provided a printed list of the texts in the children’s book section of the library and an

online database for teacher candidates’ quick access. The teacher candidates were encouraged to use these texts for the read-aloud assignment.

Analysis

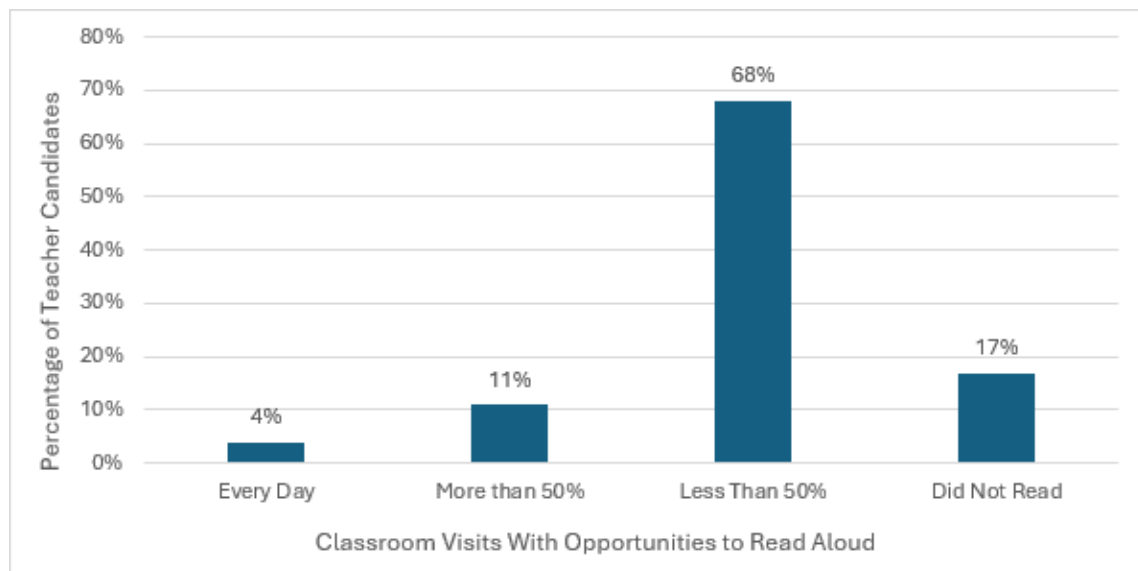
Inductive coding was used for this study, as responses were not presumed or pre-planned (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Quotes were manually sorted according to common verbs and topics. In-vivo and descriptive codes were used to identify and analyze responses, then grouped into themes. Codes such as *inclusion*, *equity*, and *language diversity* were merged to create the overarching theme: *Books were intentionally selected to support culturally reflective teaching*. For the final review, themes were assigned to the original quotes and then compared with the previous analysis for accurate alignment. Any misalignment was reviewed again and adjustments to codes were considered. Quantitative responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Students’ closed- and open-ended survey responses demonstrated that the diverse and inclusive picturebook read-aloud assignment had a positive impact on the majority of participants (91%). Many participants stressed the value and importance of careful and intentional selec-

Figure 1

OPPORTUNITIES TO READ ALOUD DURING FIELD EXPERIENCE



tion of picturebooks, as well as the preparation needed to read them effectively in K-6 settings. Teacher candidates shared that the assignment prompted them to evaluate texts and consider their use in everyday instruction. The following results are highlighted through students' responses to one closed-ended question and two open-ended questions.

Closed-Ended Question #1: Approximately how often did you read diverse/inclusive picturebooks in your field experience this semester?

The course requirement was to read at least one book. One hundred fourteen participants answered this question and the majority of them (85%) read less than 50%

of the days of field experience. Eleven students read diverse/inclusive texts more than 50% of the days in field experience (11%), and five students (4%) read a diverse/inclusive text every day of their field experience. Nineteen students (17%), did not read a single diverse and inclusive book in their K-6 classroom field experience. Figure 1 illustrates these data.

Open-Ended Question #1: How did you use diverse/inclusive texts to foster empathy and respect and demonstrate culturally responsive teaching within the K-6 classroom?

When asked how the texts were used in field experience, teacher candidates highlighted the importance of careful selection of texts for classroom use. They noted that they were

Table 1
THEMES, CODES, AND QUOTES REFLECTING PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, "HOW DID YOU USE DIVERSE/INCLUSIVE TEXTS TO FOSTER EMPATHY AND RESPECT AND DEMONSTRATE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING WITHIN THE K-6 CLASSROOM?"

THEMES			
Books were intentionally selected to support culturally reflective teaching. 27/69 (39%)	Before, During, and After (BDA) reading activities were carefully planned. 31/69 (45%)	Books were used to build connections with American Indian students and their peers. 6/69 (9%)	Obstacles prohibited teacher candidates from reading a diverse picturebook. 5/69 (7%)
EXAMPLE CODES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language diversity Diversity in music Student interest Inclusion Empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned Questions Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight American Indian cultures Build Connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text selected by the classroom teacher. Not allowed to read.
EXAMPLE QUOTES			
<p>"I carefully chose the diverse and inclusive texts I would be reading."</p> <p>"I used the texts to expose students to cultures they were not familiar with and used the book to show them that there are different ways of life outside of their small town, and that all ways should be respected and valued just like their own."</p>	<p>"I stopped to ask questions throughout the reading and paused for reflection."</p> <p>"I read the story to the students and had questions ready for them."</p>	<p>"I used my text to show how Native culture has tied into all our lives through food, family, words, and the land that we live on."</p> <p>"In my classroom, we have American Indian students, and talking about something that is familiar to them was important as you could see on their faces."</p>	<p>"I wasn't able to use a diverse text in class. We read a book on Thanksgiving, and it was based on ONE side of the story."</p> <p>"I wasn't able to read very much in the classroom... my host teacher wasn't too worried about diversity."</p>

more intentional about the books used (39%) and they tried to choose books to which students would connect. Pre-service teachers had selected books for use in classrooms in previous courses, but did not consider diversity and inclusion as part of the evaluation process prior to this assignment. For teacher candidates in these rural schools, it was important to facilitate connections to cultures beyond their small town, “I used the texts to expose students to cultures they were not familiar with and used the book to show them that there are different ways of life outside of their small town, and that all ways should be respected and valued just like their own.” These connections are critical for affirming students’ individuality and identity (Francis, 2019).

A good number of teacher candidates (45%), also shared that the read-aloud activities were used to review vocabulary and prompt higher-level thinking discussions. This aligns with the work of Blachowicz and Fisher (2015) who stressed that read-alouds support vocabulary development. It also connects with the research of Tomé-Fernández et al., (2010) who noted that picturebooks can be a fun way to engage students in meaningful discussion.

Most, if not all teacher candidates, were placed in classrooms with students of Native American heritage, so finding books about their students’ Anishinaabe culture in historic and contemporary settings was important. Seven percent of participants specifically noted the value of reading texts that reflect Native American perspectives. As one student wrote, “In my classroom, we have Native American students, and talking about something familiar to them was important, as you could see on their faces.” These picturebook texts were used to connect with Native American students and teach all students about local connections in their community.

Seventeen percent of the pre-service teachers were not allowed to read aloud a diverse text in their field experience. Either the teacher would not allow the book to be read (and the candidate was prompted to use a book from the teacher’s library or one that the teacher selected); time was not provided for the teacher candidate to read aloud; or, the school’s principal would not allow diverse and inclusive texts in the classroom. One student noted the disconnect between campus learning and classroom experience, “I wasn’t able to read very much in the classroom... my host teacher wasn’t too worried about diversity.” Five of 69 students (7%) provided a comment about reading restrictions, as shown in Table 1.

Open-Ended Question #2: After using these texts with students in a K-6 setting, how has the experience affected you as a person and an educator?

The effects of this read-aloud assignment varied for the pre-service teachers. The majority of participants (54%) noted that this activity created a heightened awareness of the value and use of diverse and inclusive texts in the classroom. As one pre-service teacher stated, “I noticed how important it is to represent all of my students and make them all feel heard and represented.” The teacher candidates witnessed students’ positive reactions to the texts and noticed how engagement was bolstered when students connected with the stories.

Pre-service teachers also recognized an increased capacity for selecting and using the texts in authentic settings (18%) and reflected upon their own teaching practice and future classrooms (18%). They were more confident in their abilities to plan for a read-aloud, lead discussions, and promote critical thinking in their students. As Kibler and Chapman (2019) noted, teachers should not only read diverse and inclusive texts but engage students in dialogue that encourages critical thinking. Some teacher candidates stated that the assignment had no effect on them (6%) and others admitted that they were not allowed to read a diverse text in their field experience placement (4%). For one teacher candidate, the reading restriction prompted them to consider their future learning environment, “Because I didn’t see them used in the classroom, I now want to incorporate them in my classroom.” The negative experience had a positive impact on the teacher candidates’ plans for their future teaching practice.

Discussion

The goal of this case study was to explore the impact that a diverse text read-aloud assignment had on teacher candidates’ teaching practice. Ninety-one percent of participants were positively impacted by the work and reading experience of this assignment, 6% were not impacted, and 3% were not able to read a diverse and inclusive text. However, one of the participants who was not allowed to read was more motivated to read diverse and inclusive texts because they had been denied that opportunity. These findings align with the research of Lohfink (2014), who noted that diverse picturebook read-alouds support pre-service teachers’ developing pedagogical understandings. As one teacher candidate shared, “I believe that reading diverse and inclusive texts in the classroom is good for both the teachers and the students.” This statement

concur with Young (2018) who noted that this work benefits teachers and students.

The required read-aloud assignment guided teacher candidates to consider the value and purpose of using diverse and inclusive picturebooks in rural classrooms. Those who read aloud representative texts noted that they experienced

an increased capacity for evaluating books and preparing discussions and vocabulary learning opportunities. Those who were not allowed to read a diverse and inclusive book expressed either frustration with the situation or motivation to read diverse and inclusive texts in their future classroom. This reflection is particularly important for teacher candi-

Table 2
THEMES, CODES, AND QUOTES REFLECTING PARTICIPANTS’ RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION, “AFTER USING THESE TEXTS WITH STUDENTS IN A K-6 SETTING, HOW HAS THE EXPERIENCE AFFECTED YOU AS A PERSON AND AN EDUCATOR?”

THEMES				
Teacher candidates experienced a heightened awareness of the value of using diverse and inclusive texts in the classroom. 45/83 (54%)	Teacher candidates felt an increased capacity for using diverse and inclusive texts in the classroom. 15/83 (18%)	Teacher candidates were introspective when considering their future teaching practice. 15/83 (18%)	Teacher candidates were not affected by the experience. 5/83 (6%)	Teacher candidates were not allowed to read diverse and inclusive texts. 3/83 (4%)
CODE EXAMPLES				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Opened my eyes” • Better understanding of diversity and diverse and inclusive texts • Realized the importance of diverse and inclusive texts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss heavy topics • Reading aloud • Engage students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive focus • “What we read matters” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not affected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allowed
EXAMPLE QUOTES				
<p>“It solidified the importance of using texts that respond to the students’ interests and backgrounds instead of my own.”</p> <p>“I noticed how important it is to represent all of my students and make them all feel heard and represented.”</p>	<p>“I’ve learned how to lead a conversation about a topic with students, what to do and what not to do, and how to combat silence when asking questions.”</p> <p>“I am more confident in my (teaching) abilities.”</p>	<p>“I will for sure be reading many diverse and inclusive texts in my future classroom because I believe it is very important for students to see themselves in the book.”</p> <p>“This experience has affected me because it helped me understand and learn about different cultures. I believe this could help me as a teacher because if I had a student who was from a different background, I could try and connect with them or read about their culture to understand more.”</p>	<p>“Didn’t affect me.”</p> <p>“Hasn’t changed me.”</p>	<p>“Wasn’t able to read or use texts in class.”</p> <p>“Because I didn’t see them used in the classroom, I now want to incorporate them in my classroom.”</p>

dates' capacity to work with diverse student populations (Wegner & Dinsmore, 2005).

Sometimes the equity-oriented practices taught in teacher preparation programs are not observed in teacher candidates' field experience classrooms. While this may be frustrating for teacher candidates, the misalignment provides an opportunity to analyze how schools provide or deny students access to equitable literacy learning opportunities and consider equitable literacy policies, practices, and advocacy (Lazar, 2022). Class discussions back on campus provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to reflect on their culturally reflective mindset and plan for equity-focused instruction as future teachers.

Above all, this assignment guided pre-service teachers to learn more about their students and intentionally connect them with meaningful texts. It provided an opportunity for the K-6 students to learn more about other cultures and experiences represented in their rural classrooms and small communities, (e.g., the Anishinaabe culture), and how they were all connected. This assignment evoked interest in diversity, created connections among students and texts, and inspired action in teacher candidates' future classrooms. The read-aloud assignment demonstrated how a small text could be used to impart a big impact on teacher candidates' developing teaching practice in rural schools.

Conclusion

Teacher preparation programs have the responsibility of preparing teacher candidates to use texts that mirror their students' lived experiences and offer a view into the world of others. For programs in rural areas, it is particularly important that pre-service teachers are provided access to diverse and inclusive texts as part of their training and have opportunities to evaluate books, prepare lessons, and use the texts in authentic classroom experiences. Geographic isolation can create barriers to book access in rural areas, but the provision and use of new and diverse texts in teacher preparation programs support the developing pedagogical understandings of teacher candidates while also making new texts accessible for classroom teachers and students in their field experiences. •

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Appendix A

BOOK TITLES USED TO MODEL READ-ALoudS FOR TEACHER CANDIDATES

- Behar, R. (2022). *Tia Fortuna's new home: A Jewish Cuban journey*. (D. Holzwarth, Illus.) Knopf Books for Young Readers.
- Cocca-Leffler, M., & Leffler, J. (2021). *We want to go to school!: The fight for disability rights*. Albert Whitman & Company.
- Cornwell, G. (2020). *Jabari jumps*. Candlewick Press.
- de la Peña, M. (2015). *Last stop on Market Street*. (C. Robinson, Illus.) G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.
- de la Peña, M. (2021). *Milo imagines the world*. (C. Robinson, Illus.) G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers.
- Denise, A.A. (2019). *Planting stories: The life of librarian and storyteller Pura Belpré*. (P. Escobar, Illus.) Harper.
- Duster, M. (2022). *Ida B. Wells, voice of truth*. (L. Freeman, Illus.) Godwin Books.
- Fritsch, K., & McGuire, A. (2021). *We move together*. (E. Trejos, Illus.) AK Press.
- Gale, H. (2019). *Ho'onani: Hula warrior*. (M. Song, Illus.) Penguin Random House Tundra Books.
- Gladden, Y., & Pizzoli, T. (2022). *When the schools shut down: A young girl's story of Virginia's "Lost Generation" and the Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decision*. (K. Morris, Illus.) HarperCollins.
- Greendeer, D., Perry, A., & Bunten, A. (2022). *Keepunumuk: Weeachumun's Thanksgiving story*. (G. Meeches Sr., Illus.) Charlesbridge.
- Ho, J. (2021). *Eyes That Kiss in the Corners*. (D. Ho, Illus.) Harper Collins.
- Ho, J. (2023). *Say my name*. (K. Le, Illus.) HarperCollins.
- Hubbard, R.L. (2020). *The oldest student: How Mary Walker learned to read*. (O. Mora, Illus.) Anne Schwartz Books.
- Jordan-Fenton, C., & Pokiak-Fenton, M. (2013). *When I was eight*. (G. Grimard, Illus.) Annick Press, Ltd.
- Khalil, A. (2020). *The Arabic quilt: An immigrant story*. (A. Smeirdzhyan, Illus.) Tilbury House Publishers.
- Lindstrom, C. (2023). *My powerful hair*. (C. Littlebird, Illus.) Abrams Books for Young Readers.
- Lindstrom, C. (2020). *We are water protectors*. (M. Goade, Illus.) Roaring Brook Press.
- Maillard, K.N. (2019). *Fry bread: A Native American family story*. (J. Martinez-Neal, Illus.) Roaring Book Press.
- Mosca, J.F. (2017). *The girl who thought in pictures: The story of Dr. Temple Grandin*. (D. Rieley, Illus.) The Innovation Press.
- Muhammad, I. (2019). *The proudest blue: A story of hijab and family*. (S. K. Ali Hatem Aly, Illus.) Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.
- Paul, M. (2015). *One plastic bag: Isatou Ceesay and the recycling women of Gambia*. (E. Zunon, Illus.) Millbrook Press.
- Perkins, M. (2019). *Between us and Abuela: A family story from the Border*. (S. Palacios, Illus.) Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers.
- Quang, P., & Lién, H.K. (2021). *My first day*. Make Me a World.
- Rivera, L. (2023). *I absolutely, positively, love my spots!* (N. Mata, Illus.) HarperCollins Publishers.
- Sorell, T. (2018). *We are grateful otalibeliga*. (F. Lessac, Illus.) Charlesbridge.
- Sterling, M. (2022). *A sweet New Year for Ren*. (D. Ho, Illus.) Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.
- Stocker, S. (2022). *Listen: How Evelyn Glenne, a deaf girl, changed percussion*. (D. Holzwarth, Illus.) Dial Books for Young Readers.
- Thompkins-Bigelow, J. (2020). *Your Name is a Song*. (L. Uribe, Illus.) The Innovation Press.
- Thundercloud, R. (2022). *Finding my Dance*. (K.J. Fuller, Illus.) Penguin Workshop.
- Walker, T. (2020). *Nana Akua goes to school*. (A. Harrison, Illus.) Anne Schwartz Books.
- Wang, A. (2021). *Watercress*. (J. Chin, Illus.) Neal Porter Books.
- Weatherford, C.B. (2017). *Shomburg: The man who built a library*. (E. Velasquez, Illus.) Candlewick Press.
- Weatherford, C. (2021). *UNSPEAKABLE: The Tulsa Race Massacre*. (F. Cooper, Illus.) Carolrhoda Books.
- Williamson, E. (2018). *GIZO-GIZO! A tale from the Zongo Lagoon*. Sub Saharan Publishers.
- Yang, K.K. (2020). *The most beautiful thing*. (K. Le, Illus.) Carolrhoda Books.