

AVAILABILITY OF DIVERSE BOOKS FOR EARLY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

by

Lili Weisman

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Primary Advisor: Julianna Scullen, Ed.S.
Content Reviewer: Rebecca Neal
Peer Reviewer: Julie Bender and Kyle Udem

The question my capstone project will answer is: *How does the availability of diverse books develop students' perspectives of other cultures?* My capstone project is intended for teachers and educators of diverse early elementary school students in an urban public school setting. However, all elementary school students would benefit from their elementary teachers or educators using this website as it is important for all students to gain new perspectives on others' cultures.

For my capstone project, I created a website called Cultural Curiosity that highlights diverse books. On the homepage of my website, an introduction explains who the website is intended for and what one can find there. I then have an About Me page. On this page, I share a little bit about myself growing up going to two diverse urban public schools and not having books that I can connect with in my classroom. Also, on this page, I share my experience as a teacher and my goal of having diverse books available to my students. It is important that I share a little bit about myself as it allows one to understand where I am coming from and the importance this topic holds to me. Next on my website is a page called Importance. This page is all about the importance of having diverse books available to students as it allows students to gain self-confidence (Gomez-Najarro, 2020) and fulfills students' cultural curiosity (Harper & Brand, 2010). Also on this page, I emphasize the importance of having diverse books that are culturally accurate and are not based on stereotypes and generalizations as these can be harmful and do not give the reader the correct perspective (Harper & Brand, 2010). I include the page about the significance of diverse books available to students on my website because it will help teachers and educators understand the need for diverse books in a classroom and why the resources on my website are valuable.

The first main portion of my website offers book recommendations. On my website, I have a page called Diverse Book. On this page, teachers and educators can find book recommendations with read-aloud links in case teachers and educators do not have access to a hard copy of the book. This page offers book recommendations that feature African American, Asian American, LatinX, Native American, and Multicultural/Social-Emotional books. I included these cultures because they are the most prominent cultures I have worked with as a teacher. I organized my books based on culture for two reasons. The first reason is that I want teachers and educators to be able to easily find books that represent their students. The second reason I organized the books based on culture was that I want teachers and educators to be able to easily find a book that highlights a certain culture when a month is celebrating that culture.

The second main portion of my website offers ready-made lessons that highlight diverse books. These lessons can be found on the Literacy Lessons and Social-Emotional Lessons page. I separated these lessons into two different pages because I want the Literacy Lesson page to focus on one specific culture as I have again separated the books based on culture while the Social-Emotional Lesson page highlight multiple cultures like a classroom would. I want to have ready-made lessons to make it as easy as possible for teachers and educators to implement diverse books into their classrooms. These ready-made lesson plans require no preparation to very little preparation. Also, these ready-made lessons include an optional cultural visual survey. This cultural visual survey can be found on the Cultural Visual Survey page. I wanted to include this on a separate page because it is optional yet highly recommended and the visual cultural survey is the same for each lesson. It was also important that the survey was visual as early elementary school students are not yet reading or learning to read.

Website Link:

<https://sites.google.com/d/1MQVD2z3nPQDo6piwbKLLxhv9vMNO7SeZ/p/1-nLVuACBtazaJ4pW8J3qkqqZibbWENkf/edit>

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