A Global Mind is a Nurtured Mind: The Demand to Consider and Cure the Deprivation of Multicultural Education

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A Global Mind is a Nurtured Mind: The Demand to Consider and Cure the Deprivation of Multicultural Education

by

Amber L. D’Ambrosia
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Abstract

The leaders of tomorrow are the bright and knowledgeable students of today. The problem with how these students are being prepared for their role as future leaders stems from the lack of diversity in literature, and the overall lack of multicultural education in American public schools. The dominant narratives being published, circulated, and studied in schools do not appropriately reflect, nor appropriately engage the multifaceted population of students accessing the discourse. The United States must no longer be notorious for its belief in its own cultural and historical superiority, but instead should begin making strides toward evolving the educational experiences in the classroom into more multicultural, pluralistic experiences. In order for students to progress, the literature being published, and the materials being studied in school must do the same. Students and teachers both need exposure to a variety of cultures over the course of their studies in order to be confronted by what they do and do not understand. Human beings should interact with the familiar and the unfamiliar in order to develop into well-rounded, open-minded, informed people.
Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement: The lack of diversity in the literature being studied in American schools today makes for an inadequate learning experience for 21st century learners preparing to be successful in a global society.

The lack of cultural representation in school curricula is a major concern which lies, feebly, below a rubble pile of other contributing systemic issues. Issues such as inequities in publishing, and the overall lack of diversity in children’s literature, all contribute to the largely Eurocentric content being facilitated by a predominantly white population of teachers. Society is inequitable, and it needs to change. If students of today are the future leaders of tomorrow, then it is the students of today that need to be better prepared to understand, and then contribute to reforming the human experience. What better tool to use in school to learn about the human experience, than literature? The problem is, if the vast majority of literature being published only reflects one, narrow, particular experience, the only perception students will develop will be just that; narrow and limited. In order to grow scholastically, students need to be able to see themselves reflected in the literature they read, just as much as they need to question their way through what is different and unfamiliar.

School curricula today is problematic because of its lack of multicultural discourse. The narratives being studied do not appropriately reflect the diverse population being taught. Today’s world is connected in ways one could have never predicted just a few decades ago. The world today demands so much more than one, common, narrow, approach to learning. Between social media and the internet, and the current expectation for an influx of students from Puerto Rico and other Caribbean Islands affected by hurricanes Irma and Maria, people from different
backgrounds, lifestyles, and cultures are connecting both virtually and geographically. During times of tragedy and change, the best place for students is in school where they can learn and experience some form of stability and routine.

The United States is notorious for its belief in the superiority of its own culture and history. The text *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society* reminds readers, “Eurocentrism and Eurocentric curricula place Europeans and European Americans as the focus of the world with respect to culture, history, economics, values, lifestyles, worldviews, and so forth” (Gollnick & Chinn 187). Because American society has such strong Eurocentric roots, European experiences, narratives, and lifestyles may be given higher status than those from non-European backgrounds. Eurocentrism in school curricula not only stems from noteworthy problems, it creates an array of problems too.

Prioritizing the white European experience is evident in the lack of diversity of the authors being published, which in turn results in an overwhelming amount of literary exposure to the works of dead, white, male, authors. Inequities in publishing must subside, in order to provide more appropriate, and rich learning experiences for the diverse population. Only a portion of American students can relate to and connect with, the narratives which circulate in schools today. In addition to providing literary accessibility to a diverse population of learners, multicultural literature can create learning opportunities for individuals who have only ever been exposed to the relatable experiences of others. In our ever-changing, global society, multicultural literature needs to be used to create relatable experiences for some, while challenging the narrowly constructed views of others, in order to facilitate a high-quality, purposeful, and adequate learning experience for the current generation of students in American public schools today.
The lack of representation in literature makes it impossible for all parties involved in the American learning experience to improve their social awareness. Teachers are not appropriately prepared and trained to teach classes comprised of a diverse population, if they too are products of a Eurocentric education. Teachers are responsible for writing and reforming the curricula being taught in schools today, which means it is the teachers who must initiate bringing some variety into the literature being studied. In today’s global society, it is essential that modern-day school professionals derail the age-old boundaries that exist to preserve the “common,” the “familiar,” and the “traditional,” educational experience, and start revolutionizing the curricula to actually reflect the current social strata of today, one diverse literary text at a time.

**Significance of the Problem:**

Whether English is an individual’s first, second, or third language, English language learners need to be fully equipped with the right skills to take on the demands and realities of society today. The quality of the content being used to facilitate the acquisition of the skills and practices necessary to be successful, is just as important as acquiring said skills. The lack of diversity in literature is a significant problem because the content being studied in schools today lacks the variety required to appeal to a wide range of backgrounds and experience. Not all students will find familiarity in what they are reading, but at least with the inclusion of multicultural experiences depicted, there are multifaceted ways for a diverse population of learners to connect with or question what they are reading.

Centuries of Eurocentrism has not only made it impossible for a truly multicultural educational experience for all to exist, it has created a notion of the cultural superiority for the white American experience. In order for the human experience to improve overall, and for all,
changes in society must occur. The ways in which society is discussed and depicted in schools is the catapult needed to facilitate change. An appropriate balance of representation in literature, to better reflect the diversity of the students in America today is a significant contribution to improving the educational experience, thus improving the human experience. American schools must be rid of the cultural elitist attitudes that are identifiable in the literature being studied, and realize that a multicultural education has much more value in a world that continues to globalize both virtually and physically; it’s time to globalize literarily too.

English classes tend to create objectives around preparing students to effectively communicate, collaborate, and cultivate positive outcomes in all endeavors, be they professional or personal. A priority in English class is to help produce critical thinkers, who can articulate ideas and arguments unmistakably and coherently. In an English Language Arts classroom, it is a priority to try and improve a student’s ability to analyze and thoroughly understand the ideas and arguments they receive on a regular basis, from various forms of media, text, and people. If the discourse being used to prepare learners to be successful in society contradicts social realities, students are not being appropriately prepared, and there is a significant problem in schools today if students are graduating from school unprepared to function in society.

The significance of the problem with the lack of representation in literature being published today, and the lack of multicultural literature making its way into classrooms extends beyond the quality of a student’s education. When confronted by such blatant inequities, one can’t help but wonder if schools and the content being studied in schools, perpetuate existing social inequalities in society, or attempt to dispel them. If the role of schools in society is to prepare young people to be successful, smart, well-rounded, globally conscious, socially aware citizens and people, then why haven’t the reformations required to facilitate this occurred yet?
There are different sociohistorical interpretations of education, and its role and goal in society, “In one view, schools are an agent of social reform and can improve the chances of economic success for graduates. The second view posits that schools exist as agents of the larger social, economic, and political context with the goal of inculcating the values necessary to maintain the current socioeconomic systems” (Gollnick & Chinn 77). There are major systemic inequalities which exist and contribute to the lack of diversity in literature and the literature studied in American schools which magnify the significance of the problem with teaching narrow, one-sided narratives in English classrooms today.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this thesis is to prompt the required changes needed to resolve the problem that 21st century learners are ill-prepared to excel in the modern, global society. The lack of diversity in the literature being published and included on the lists of non-negotiable texts studied in schools today needs to change. Teachers must incorporate more multicultural literature into the instruction taking place in English Language Arts classrooms. As an English Language Arts teacher, my goal is to provide more global-minded lessons and understandings. With literary variety, certain students can expand on their inherently narrow view of the world, while others can find refuge in their ability to finally relate to the content being studied.

It is necessary to confront the social issues that exist and evoke the necessary changes to resolve such issues. Social change can begin in the classroom, but only if appropriate materials are being used to facilitate authentic and relevant learning experience for all. Outdated, oppressive, Eurocentric American novels and short stories can no longer be the norm. A multifaceted educational experience will be facilitated with the use of more modern texts, texts
published by non-Europeans, women, from the perspective of people from various socioeconomic statuses and historical contexts. The aforementioned perspectives will be conveyed in various forms, and not limited to the typical novel or short story format. Texts accessed in the form of online, web-based, digital mediums, as well as genres such as the graphic novel, or the vignette will be used to diversify the text-types and text conventions, in addition to livening up the content of the texts.

Chapter III will entail potential lesson plans that can be found useful when providing a multicultural, and multifaceted educational experience, while also highlighting the benefits of the inclusion of the following discourse: Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis*, Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s, “The Danger of a Single Story.” Students will gain exposure to new and diverse perspectives and experiences, while simultaneously acquiring practice navigating their way through the different technical conventions, stylistic attributes, and structural tendencies of three extremely different textual formats: the graphic novel, a vignette collection, and a publicly presented composition in the form of a TED talk.

**Rationale:**

It is remarkable, and disappointing, and hard to believe that in the year 2017, in the avant-garde United State of America, lack of diversity in literature remains an unsolved issue. Such a problem was timely and alarming over fifty years ago when Nancy Larrick published her article “The All White World of Children’s Books,” which points out that the most critical issue in education is the lack of representation in books. The issue has lingered well past alarming, and has now made its way to being a disturbing facet of American culture—a take the good with the bad type of issue—which has been ignored and overlooked for entirely too long.
America is infamous for its history as a diverse nation and heterogeneous society. In the early 1900s the term "melting pot" became synonymous with the United States because of its reputation for fusing nationalities, cultures, and ethnicities. Although uniformity is a characteristic of nationalism, it is important to remember that different ethnic backgrounds can still mean different ways of life, and therefore different understanding. The lack of representation in literature and in publishing inevitably leads to a lack of diversity of literature in schools, marginalizing entirely too much of the population to be considered acceptable. It’s impossible to assume that every single person could and should be able to see themselves in what they read, and relate to the content in some way. But, the discrepancies between the numbers of featured white characters in published literature, in comparison to any other ethnic background still remain too large to ignore, especially when the diversity of the American student population continues to grow. White, male, authors and protagonists dominate the industry, and it is time for texts of this nature—though didactic, innovative, and enjoyable—to be mixed up with a variety of other perspectives and cultural insights in order to, not only boost accessibility for individuals who fall outside such narrow margins, but to boost overall morale, and learning opportunities as well.

Definition of Terms:

- **Avant-garde-** French term for pushing the boundaries of what is accepted as the norm; promotes radical social reforms; progressive; innovative.
- **Common Core-** Educational state standards in the United States that details what K-12 students should know in English language arts and mathematics at the end of each grade.
- **Curriculum** - The subjects comprising a course of study in a school; the totality of student experiences that occur in the educational process.
- **Discourse** - A formal discussion of a topic in speech or writing.
- **Diversity** - The condition of having or being composed of differing elements, especially the inclusion of different types of people in terms of race and culture.
- **Eurocentrism** - A tendency to interpret the world in terms of European or Anglo-American values and experience.
- **Equitable** - Dealing fairly and equally with all concerned.
- **Equity** - Justice according to natural law or right; freedom from bias or favoritism.
- **Global** - Relating to the whole world or embracing the whole of something, or of a group of things; worldwide.
- **Inclusion** - The act or state of including or of being included within a group or structure.
- **Inequity** - Instances of injustice or unfairness
- **Infographic** - Visual representations of information, data, or knowledge intended to present information quickly and clearly.
- **Melting-pot** - A metaphor for a heterogeneous society becoming more homogeneous, harmonious whole with a common culture.
- **Multiculturalism** - The presence of, or support for the presence of, several distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society.
- **Marginalize** - Treat a person or group as insignificant or peripheral; secondary or minor importance.
- **Otherness** - The quality of being different; contested social identities.
• Representation- The description of portrayal of someone or something in a particular way or as being of a certain nature.

Summary Statement:

The marginalization of groups of people is uncanny and inhumane. When it comes to the act of enlightening oneself by the right of an instructional, educational experience, excluding multicultural experiences and dignified, equitable representation of multicultural experiences and perspectives takes away from the quality of the instruction, and the overall importance of education to begin with. To learn is to grow, to grow is to evolve, to evolve is to progress. The value of education in America will remain mediocre and static until the appropriate shifts are finally made in the literary canon. In a global society such as America’s, a multicultural education can no longer just be a marginal option, it needs to be a requirement.

Positioned very low on the social stratification of power in society, I sadly do not have the ability to single-handedly shift the cultural and balance out the inequities in publishing. Nor do I have the power to decide what literature should and will be taught in American schools today. I do however, have the power to determine the supplemental literary texts that will be taught in my classroom, and I also have to power to facilitate the learning from such texts in a way that is respectful, dignified, and open-minded. Creating opportunities for inclusion means slowly removing misconceptions of the unfamiliar, in attempt to turn otherness into just another, equally important example of greatness.

Without question, literary inclusion should occur in the classroom, and literary inclusion is the solution to the lack of diversity in school curricula. With the help of Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis*, Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s,
“The Danger of a Single Story,” a high-quality, global-minded, education will continue to occur in my classroom in attempt to personally contribute to the educational reformation that is necessary, and long overdue.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Progressive Societies Push Boundaries

To confront the issues of politics and privilege involved in the discourse being studied today—in the study of multiculturalism—is to push beyond the comfort zones of the educational community. Pushing the boundaries is the only way growth, improvement, and reform can occur. The literature being studied in schools today needs to be more multicultural, and less Eurocentric in order to better reflect and teach the communities of people learning from the content. The diversity that exists among people is not being appropriately depicted in the discourse, “Curricular and pedagogical reforms have failed to create authentic learning connected to the themes and concerns of the neighborhood…They [teachers] need to reinvent classrooms that draw on the powerful human relations preserved in families and neighborhoods. They must link learning to everyday lives if they are ever to show how diversity in public education is a pillar of progressive societies” (Jackson 198). Social institutions like schools, tend to put an emphasis on the value of their community. The purpose behind reform and reinvention is to conduct positive changes and improvements to the curriculum. The literature being studied should better reflect the reality of today, rather than contradict it. If the mission of public education is to better equip citizens to function successfully, the literature as well as the institution must be more progressive. In his article “Reforming the Disciplines” Thomas Bender highlights the importance of an inclusive and cosmopolitan minded education. Some scholars insist upon the importance of human similarities across cultural, racial, and national boundaries, but learning about the
differences which exist among people and the variety of cultures and lifestyles which inhabit the
globe is equally important. While discussing curricula reform, Bender opines, “The reality is a
bit more complex. Any national curriculum must acknowledge and explore a variety of
solidarities and identities, some smaller than the nation, others larger. It must explicitly address
the relation between parochial feelings of identity, our common identities as Americans, and
those experiences and hopes we share with human beings everywhere” (Bender 60). Curricula
must acknowledge all groups of people that exist in order to provide a holistic and global minded
educational experience. Learning about the similarities people share as human beings is one
thing, but a national curriculum that acknowledges, and therefore provides only a narrow scope
to see through, is not the way to conceive a progressive people.

Lack of Diversity in Children’s Literature Makes for a Pale Experience

Statistics from Cooperative Children’s Book Center reveal the disconcerting truth behind
cultural representation in children’s literature, and the results being rather, pale, reveal that only
a portion of our youth is being prepared to generate a lifelong culture for learning. Children’s
book illustrator Tina Kügler created an infographic in 2012, to bring attention to some disturbing
publishing statistics from the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, disclosing in vibrant color
and animated characters that “93 percent of children’s books were about white or non-human
characters” (Wilson). Of the 3,600 books published by Cooperative Children’s Book Center, 3%
were about African Americans, 1.5% were about Latinos, less than 1% were about Native
Americans, and only 2% were about Asian Pacific Americans. (Kügler). Just three years later in
2015, like ripples in a pond, illustrator David Huyck created another infographic called,
“Diversity in Children’s Books 2015” to highlight the diversity--more like lack thereof-- in
children’s literature, and while the infographic is brilliant in its presentation and delivery, the information it conveys is disappointing to say the least. Representation of Native Americans remained disproportionately low, while a small increase in the depiction of African Americans is identifiable with a percentage of 7.6% represented. Huyck also reveals that, “About a quarter of the total children’s books published in 2015 were picture books, and about half of those depict non-human characters, while the remainder depict white characters.” It is rather uncanny to discover there are more books published about non-human characters than there are texts about Native Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, or any other human being for that matter. David Huyck’s infographic is a genius illustration because it displays young people from multicultural backgrounds such as, Native American, Asian Pacific, African American, and Latino, looking at and searching for their reflections in mirrors. An underlying message of the illustration is that many times, when learning from literary character experiences and conflicts, relatability, or being able to see oneself reflected in a work of art, is pedagogically key in facilitating understanding. Consider the lack of diversity in the literature today, juxtaposed with schools becoming “...increasingly diverse across the United States as the proportion of white students diminishes. In today’s public schools, students of color account for more than half of the student populations, with the largest increases in Asian American and Latino students” (Gollnick & Chinn 2). Two major social issues arise from the lack of diversity in literature today in comparison to the demographic of the student populations: First, half of the students in American can hardly see themselves in the plots they read, and second, the other half of the students--white students--are not learning to function in a multicultural world. Demographics alone demand that school curricula evolve into a more culturally relevant experience in order to extend opportunities to, and empower students of color, and once the inherent discrepancies in the
publishing of children’s literature improve, the accessibility to diverse texts in schools will improve too.

Unprepared Students in a Multicultural World

Primary years are profoundly important in shaping a child’s perception of the world they are preparing to function in. The circulating literature being published, and then studied in schools to prepare students for the real-world, is actually quite far from a true reflection of the realities of our world. Describing the representation in children’s literature as quite far from accurate is putting it lightly. There are entire populations being excluded from the discourse, their voices silenced, and their stories left untold. The lack of diversity in children’s literature is especially alarming if humanity is under the impression that the youth of today are actually being shaped into global-minded citizens who can succeed under any circumstances. In order to
succeed in the complex world around them, young people must be adaptive, and aware, “When this [multicultural] awareness is absent, assumptions of homogeneity are made that can lead to a breakdown of trust and respect and thus negate any positivity that could have arisen from the relationship” (Holder). Having multicultural competence means students will have the knowledge, skills, and awareness to work with all people from all backgrounds in an effective, productive manner. The problem with overly Eurocentric literature in schools is students are not getting enough exposure to a variety of societal experiences to facilitate a sound understanding and awareness. In order to achieve a more socially inclusive and successful society, “it is necessary to generate a lifelong learning culture whereby individuals develop an expectation that, as circumstances change, they will return to formal skills and knowledge learning throughout their lives” (Murphy). In education, high-performance, rigor, and scholastic endurance are qualities bred from a strong foundation for learning established by periodic reading early on in a student’s life, and due to the inherent publishing bias in children’s literature, students are not being accurately prepared for the multicultural world. In 2016 the data from the Cooperative Children’s Book Center website finally revealed that the publishing statistics on children’s books about people of color and the Native Americans have begun showing evidence of change. The increase in representation is a step in the right direction, but “More important, what the low numbers for multicultural literature mean is that publishing for children and teens has a long way to go before reflecting the rich diversity of perspectives and experiences within and across race and culture”( "Children's Books By And About People Of Color"). There has been scholarly dialogue about the lack of cultural representation in children’s literature for decades, and it is remarkably disappointing to see the statistics behind the infinitesimal changes that have actually occurred over the course of time. Nancy Larrick’s
innovative 1965 article titled, “The All White World of Children’s Books” started a discussion about the lack of representation of African Americans in American trade books, and the discussion has yet to conclude with a reasonable outcome. Nancy Larrick pointed out in 1965 that the most critical issue in American education was the lack of cultural representation, specifically of African Americans. African American history is just as much American history as anything else, yet our children’s books, history books, and trade books, among other discourses, do not reflect the truth. Over fifty years ago Larrick said, “For the past ten years, critics have deplored the blatant racist bias of the textbooks” (63). Racial bias in discourse has always been a problem and this issue is not a recent discovery, nor has it merely gone overlooked, but in terms of the change and social reformation needed in American publishing, the issue certainly appears to have been blatantly ignored.

**The Facilitation of Learning Can Make or Break the Experience**

Sometimes change begins at the base phase, tackling a slightly less significant problem, rather than a systemic problem such as inherent bias in publishing. After close consideration, however, the troubles with teacher training—although appearing less significant—can be tied back to a greater systemic issue within the institution of education and academia, which is the lack of diversity, which means lack of experience, among teaching professionals. Diversifying school curricula can’t actually help with systemic racism, but it can help alleviate the problem that there are incomprehensible contradictions relating to a teacher’s personal and pedagogical preparation to properly teach the populations of school today. The aspect of teaching that is not focused on enough, or developed sufficiently enough is the “…teacher educator’s attitude and beliefs about racial, cultural, and ethnic differences. These are the ideological anchors of teaching decisions and behaviors [required to]…meet targets of educational reform” (Gay 143).
If a teaching professional lacks the personal and pedagogical exposure to culture themselves, it becomes increasingly problematic when they are expected to find common ground with students in today’s multicultural classes. Major cultural gaps between the dominating white teachers, and the diverse populations of students, can make reciprocal learning difficult, due to radical differences. It is problematic when, “Teacher education continues to be dominated by European American students and instructors, but the children to be taught in public schools are radically different in both aspiration and actuality” (Gay 142). Multicultural literature can be the bridge for which students and teachers can walk on together, towards a brand new sea of communication and understanding. Multicultural literature can evoke experiences for the naïve to learn from, which can then shape new, and better-rounded understanding of ethnic differences to fuel their teaching decisions and behaviors. In her journal, “Preparing Teachers for Multicultural Classrooms,” Ines Marquez Chisholm discusses several ways for teachers to become more effective in our pluralistic society. The scholar says, “…teachers must gain cultural competence, that is, the ability to function comfortably in cross-cultural settings and to interact harmoniously with people from cultures that differ from their own” (Chisholm). Any educator would agree that harmonious learning experiences are ideal and regularly sought, but not always achieved. If appropriately prepared ahead of time, teachers will be more capable of facilitating a pleasant, yet didactic learning experience for a diverse population of students.

Everyone comes from and with their own unique context. When there are major differences between a teacher’s context and a student’s, it can “interfere rather than facilitate teaching and learning” (Gay 144). The United States presents a guise that there is a nationwide commitment to celebrating differences, when in reality conversations about racial differences are relatively taboo. The difficulty in conversations about racial differences when it’s happening
between people who lack experience with people who are different. Increasing cultural representation in the literature read in schools, is a way to facilitate learning, rather than interfere with learning, when it is expected to occur between different individuals, from their own unique cultural contexts. Using linguistic diversity in various communication and teaching settings is a step towards a solution to the incongruities between today’s teachers and students.

While classrooms in the United States are becoming increasingly more diverse, teachers are expected to keep up with, and still prepare the rapidly changing populations for future success. The non-negotiable narratives being taught in schools today must evolve first, in order for the approaches to learning to evolve alongside them. In some cases, disciplinary departments in schools are expected to be consistent in the materials they use to teach, forcing teachers to pick from a common list of what could be viewed as non-negotiable. If the inflexibility of material options persists, the non-negotiable literature must change in a way that better meets the needs of ill-prepared teachers, and eager to learn students. Expanding cultural representation in curricula will force teachers to think about what they do and do not know about cultures outside of their own, which can lead to ways to improve their ability to teach students from cultures outside of their own. A teacher’s attitude can make or break a learning experience, and “Many prospective teachers do not think deeply about their attitudes and beliefs toward ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity; some even deliberately resist doing so” (Gay 145). When the resistance to learn comes from the teacher and not the student, there is a real problem. If the problem is not resistance, but instead, ignorance, the solution must be knowledge. How teachers are prepared to teach must undergo reform in order to narrow the gap of understanding between them, and the students they teach.
In addition to attitude, there is an entire body of cultural content a teacher should be equipped with, in addition to their knowledge of the content area they teach. A body of cultural content. In the journal article “The Multiple Meanings of Multicultural Teacher Education: A Conceptual Framework,” Marilyn Cochran-Smith discusses the prominent knowledge, interpretive frameworks, beliefs, and attitudes necessary for teachers to embody in order to effectively teach diverse populations, and she along with many other practitioners deduce that “teachers need to know the meaning of culture, the impact of culture on learning and schooling, the ways in which schools and classrooms function as "cultures," the nature of ethnic, racial, and urban cultures different from their own, and the role of culture in patterns of socialization, interaction, and communication” (Cochran-Smith). If teachers themselves are not genuinely committed to being life-long learners, the likelihood of their success in developing life-long learners out of their students. Teachers have a responsibility to teach a diverse population, and if the training they receive at the university level is not sufficient, it is the teacher’s responsibility to reflect on their own perspectives and inherent biases and ignorance, and do some research in order to develop the much-needed cultural competence required in American school teachers today.

**Critical Teachers Create Critical Thinkers**

In this educational era of Common Core, and common planning, and common teaching materials, enrichment needs to come from elsewhere if teachers and students are to find some common ground. Literature being taught in schools today, should, but doesn’t always, cover a wide-variety of voices, experiences, perspectives, and social attributes from around the world. In the text, “Culturally Diverse Literature: Enriching Variety in an Era of Common Core State
Standards”, scholars elaborate on the complex meaning behind culturally diverse literature, “As a social construct, diversity is complex, complicated, multidimensional, and fluid. In terms of literature, themes centered on race, ethnicity, culture, and languages are commonly considered important characteristics of diversity” (Boyd 379). There is a lack of variety in themes centered on characteristics of diversity, such as race and culture, in schools today. Students and teachers alike need more exposure to different cultural experiences, because otherwise schools begin to breed individuals with a limited understanding of the world and the differences among its inhabitants. If diversifying curriculum is attempted, it must be done so with textual authenticity in mind, and specific questions should be asked about a text before considering it to be an enriching addition to the curriculum. The problem with the selection process, when attempting to expand a curriculum, is that not all the literary choices that circulate, are good choices. Schools should teach the highest quality narratives, with authentic depictions of realistic experiences. When selecting culturally diverse literature, Fenice Boyd suggests the following, “(a) study the work of authors and illustrators to determine the quality of culturally rich books, including style, topics, themes, and perspectives; (b) draw from award categories of nonwhite cultural groups as well as various resources; and (c) learn to determine the authenticity of authors’ work” (Boyd 381). The only perceptible problem with this literary selection strategy is that it requires work, and people just haven’t made the time to complete the work. Professionals today have not yet dedicated the time and attention required, to appropriately reform the literature being read in schools today. The minds being molded for the greater good of humanity should be motivation enough for teaching professionals to confront the current curriculum choice, and make some serious adjustments. Teachers need to conduct a critical study of the multicultural works of a
variety authors of culturally rich books, and weigh their authenticity against each other in order to select high-quality multicultural literature to add to the curricula.

The need for critical readers and critical thinkers is greater now than ever before. The ability to analyze the merits and faults of a text—whether it be literary or expository—and follow up with an effective conveyance which proves understanding is a core value in thinking critically. We want our world’s future leaders to be thorough, rigorous, and to use sound judgment as they regard every detail of a piece of information, before making an astute decision. The problem is, exposure to the same text-types repeatedly, lacks rigor, and does not challenge students, thereby weakening the learning experience. When analyzing what lies below the surface of multicultural texts, as well as mainstream texts, students gain better insights into the power relations that exist. While discussing the need for a shift in the dominant paradigm of race relations, Botelho and Rudman asserts, “Critical multicultural analysis deconstructs hierarchical power relations around which language plays a critical role...by analyzing how language works, we come nearer to knowing how our culture constructs itself, and where we fit into that construction” (Botelho & Rudman 2). Inequitable publishing decisions, leads to a predominantly Eurocentric canon, which leads to the lack of circulation of diverse literature. In literature, human experiences, interactions, conflicts, and perspectives are conveyed strategically by authors with language, style, and strategy. When critically analyzing the content and craft, a conscientious, critical thinker will deconstruct the text to find the most meaning. In order to understand the societal issues which exist, and play a role in constructing our culture, there needs to be a major shift in the paradigm, starting with the literature students are accessing and deconstructing.
The One-Way Windows, Mirrors and Doors

A multicultural education is “…an educational construct that incorporates cultural differences and provides equality and social justice in schools. For it to become a reality in the formal school situation, the total environment must reflect a commitment to multicultural education” (Gollnick & Chinn 25). One way to feasibly demonstrate a commitment to multicultural education is to diversify the non-negotiable literature being studied. A common metaphor used in the realm of multicultural literature when discussing lack of diversity in books, and the way in which literature should function in education, is the “Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Doors” figure of speech. Rudine Sims Bishop explained the metaphor best,

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 and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, 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. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books. (Davis).

If the literature being studied in schools is primarily English and American Literature, students are not necessarily being offered a view into various worlds, similar to or different from their own personal world. Students need exposure to a variety of cultures in order to be confronted by what they do and do not understand. Students need to interact with the familiar and the unfamiliar in order to evolve into a well-rounded, open-minded, global conscious people. A major issue that arises when literature studied in schools lacks diversity, is that the constantly
progressing multicultural student populations are unable to see themselves or their own human experiences reflected in the works, which undermines the value of their existence and the value of their individual selves. Efforts towards improving the curricula to reflect a multicultural world is a step towards equality in student achievement, despite their background because, “Achievement is improved when teachers help students interact with the academic content through discussion and authenticity—relating the content to students’ prior experiences and real-world applications” (Gollnick & Chinn 81). The curriculum needs to reflect the population in some way. If students cannot identify with what they are reading, they will lack understanding and overlook underlying meaning. When the students can see a reflection of themselves in what they are reading because the text is authentic to their culture, it’s a much more enriching, and interactive learning experience.

All students deserve a respectful, engaging representation of themselves to interact with, which “simultaneously offers a quality literary and engaging reader experience” (Moller 65). Without a familiar image of oneself to interact with, a reader from a particular background who never gets to see themselves represented, could take away a message that their way of life is somehow devalued compared to others in society. There is a sense of validation evoked by authentic representations in literature. In “Building on Windows and Mirrors: Encouraging the Disruption of ‘Single Stories’ Through Children’s Literature,” scholars discuss the concept of books acting as a mirror and reveal that, “When readers are able to find themselves in a text, they are therefore validated; their experiences are not so unique or strange as to never be spoken or experiences by others. This inclusion, in turn, connects readers even more strongly to the larger world of books. The reality for many readers, however, is that they do not see reflections of themselves in children’s literature” (Tschida 29). Literary inclusion means allowing students
from all walks of life the opportunity to connect with the larger world of books as well as the larger world in general, without being depicted as strange, odd, or as the other. Young people excel when they are provided the reassurance they need to feel confident in themselves, their ideas, and their work. The lack of diversity in children’s literature makes it difficult for entire populations of people to find in the literature they read, validation that their identity matters, or reassurance that they are not alone.

**Chapter Three: Application**

**Solution Statement**

American curricula today continues to reinforce the values of dominant culture, and although the white middle-class continues to wield the most power in the United States, there is no excuse for the continuation of circulating narrow-minded, one-sided literature in schools today. Students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, circumstances, and environments, and it is the responsibility of schools, teachers, and educational professionals to combat the exclusive and stereotypical discourse of dominant culture which continues to circulate. The inclusion of multicultural literature in school curricula today is necessary in order to progress on multiple fronts. Some students lack the privilege of ever seeing themselves in the characters they read about in the literature they are exposed to. Other students are so blinded by, and unaware of their privileges, they need the exposure to a multicultural world in order to expand on their own, limited, personal world. The lack of diversity in the literature being studied, makes for an inept learning experience for all.

Educators are responsible to help students break free from their stereotyped social existence, and facilitate opportunities for student to explore a variety of voices, opinions and
experiences. In attempt to individually contribute to the great endeavor that is educational reform—a relentless battle which requires a collective effort—and one that I optimistically assume is being fought everyday by teachers, I provide an intercultural, global-minded, educational experience in my classroom, that is both dignified in its execution, and didactic in its reception. By including the following Unit Plan titled, “Cultural Perspectives & Text-Type Conventions,” I intend to provide a glimpse into what I’ve deemed a solution to the issue of 21st century learners being ill-exposed, and therefore ill-prepared to function as civil, smart, global-minded individuals.

In the following unit, students are exposed to a variety of voices, perspectives, issues, text-types, and mediums. Students explore text-types including graphic novel, nonfiction article, speech [TED Talk], vignette, and listicle. The intention is to simultaneously boost media literacy while also engaging students by providing a variety of different types of texts, from several different cultural context, conveyed by uniquely different people. Among others, the major works studied over the course of the unit are crafted by Iranian author Marjane Satrapi, African author Chimamanda Adichie, and Mexican-American author Sandra Cisneros. The intention is to expose students to issues, concepts, and settings—some familiar and some unfamiliar—conveyed by voices from all walks of life. The authors included are women, but they were not selected because of their gender, they were selected because of their stupendous literary abilities and because of the common grit shared and identifiable in each work. Grit: courage to resolve, strength of character, persistence, open-mindedness, grit. Grit is what I want to teach.

The graphic novel, *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi will be read over the course of the entire unit, and the reading will be tackled differently each week. As a class we will “jump in” together, and read the exposition and resolution portions of the text as whole-group, then some
reading will be done independently, or in small groups. Over the course of the unit, students will study the conventions, characteristics, and structural and stylistic features of the included text-types, and at the end of the unit, a summative assessment option will be to replicate a text-type studied. Students will complete pre-reading research, they will have whole-group discussions, and they will be responsible to both create and present new information to the class with the use of media-based, web-based technology including Adobe Spark and Google Classroom.

As students interact with a variety of different text-types and their unique elements, they will begin to practice writing about the texts they read. Students will learn the proper terminology used when navigating, creating, and interpreting different texts, such as elements of the graphic novel, or rhetorical devices. Students will practice identifying thematic concepts in the texts they read, and from there craft thematic statements and underlying messages. While making our way through the content, activities, and lessons, students will be provided different study tools and literacy strategies such as the use of Quizlet (an online study resource), pre-made Venn diagrams, and the use of Fish-Bowl style discussion forums.

The summative assessment for this unit will be differentiated in order to appeal to, and engage a variety of different learners, who come embodying a variety of different learning needs and interests. For students who like concrete, critical, and traditional, there is assessment option 1: A Comparative Essay, and for those who prefer a more creative, imaginative, original opportunity, there is assessment option 2: A Creative Piece. Both assessments ask students to reflect on the content studied, and the information acquired over the course of the unit, and demonstrate their new knowledge by completing the assessment that best suits their personal taste.
The unit will take an estimated six weeks to complete, which includes watching the film *Persepolis*, and writing their final paper. The rigor, the insights, and the exposure—brought to them by the multicultural literature, the text-type variety, and the differentiated assessments—will only benefit the students, and prepare them to be media literate, well-rounded, well-informed, intellectual human beings who are well-prepared for our multicultural world.
Unit Overview

Unit Plan Title: Cultural Perspectives & Text-Type Conventions

Curriculum-Framing Statement:
Context determines one's perspective and self-expression.

Inquiry Questions:
Factual: What is the political, cultural, historical, and social context of the graphic novel? (Investigate how context impacts text.)

Conceptual: How can your environment affect your perspective and self-expression? (Explore how perspective and self-expression are directly and indirectly impacted by one's surroundings.)

Debatable: To what extent is human nature and human dignity malleable? (Delve into the nature and ethics of humanity.)

Common Core State Standards

Key Ideas and Details:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2
Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3
Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Craft and Structure:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5
Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6
Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

Comprehension and Collaboration:
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1
Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C
Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D
Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.2
Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.3
Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

**Required Materials and Resources**

**Texts:**
- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi (Graphic Novel)
- “Emma Watson Interviews Persepolis Author Marjane Satrapi” (Nonfiction Article)
- “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (TED Talk Transcript)
- Excerpted vignettes from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (Novel/Vignettes)
- “What the Story of Cinderella Looks Like in 9 Countries Around the World” (Listicle)

**Web:**
- TED Talks: The Danger of a Single Story | Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- Harvard College Writing Center: How to Write a Comparative Analysis
- Access to Google Classroom and Google Docs
- Access to Adobe Spark
- Access to Quizlet

**Other Media:**
- *Persepolis* the movie
Week 1: “Jump-In” to the text
- Text-Type Conventions: Elements of The Graphic Novel
- Pre-Reading Web Quest: Introducing *Persepolis*, Iranian Culture, Meet the Author
- Create Adobe Spark with Pre-Reading Research findings
- Whole-group Read: Chapters 1-5

Week 2: Determining a Theme/ Text-Type Conventions: Listicle
- Underlying Message/Central Idea Practice
- Thematic Statement vs. Thematic Concept
- Panel/Page Theme Practice using *Persepolis*
- *Cinderella* around the World!
- Small-group Read: Chapters 6-10

Week 3: Text-Type Conventions: Speeches using Quizlet.com
- Independent Read: Reading Journals for Chapters 11-15
- Watch/Read/Listen “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Adichie
- Fish-Bowl Discussion

Week 4: Text-Type Conventions: Vignette
- Small-group Theme hunt: Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*
- Vignette Presentations
- Whole-group Read: Chapters 16-19 (complete text)

Week 5: Introduce Summative Assessment Options
- Critical Comparative Analysis or A Creative Piece
- Brainstorm & Outline a plan
- Write response in class

Week 6: *Persepolis* the movie.
Week 1: Procedures, Instructional, Materials

Day 1: Text-Type Conventions: Elements of The Graphic Novel

Students will be handed their individual copies of Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* and be asked to make as many observations about their new text as possible, and to keep track of them in preparation to have a discussion with the class about their initial thoughts.

“It looks like a comic book”
“It’s black and white!”
“There are a bunch of boxes and pictures!”
“That person is wearing a head scarf!”
Students will be introduced to the appropriate terminology for the conventions of a graphic novel, so they can refer to them correctly when analyzing and discussing the techniques at work throughout their reading of the text.

Elements of the Graphic Novel

- **Panels** - squares or rectangles that contain a single scene
- **Gutters** - space between panels
- **Dialogue Balloons** - contain communication between/among characters
- **Thought Balloons** - contain a character’s thoughts
- **Captions** - contain information about a scene or character
- **Sound Effects** - visual sound clues i.e.. Wonk! Pow!

After making note of the terms, students will begin to use the terminology.

Practice

- Students will label the following: Panels, Gutters, Dialogue Balloons, Sound Effects
- Students will add the following: A caption below Panel 6 and a Thought Balloon in Panel 3 & Panel 5
After the students complete the practice, we will go over the answers together and they will receive some reminders:

As a whole-group we will read Chapters 1-2 for further practice
Day 2: Pre-Reading Web Quest: Introducing *Persepolis*, Iranian Culture, Meet the Author

Name ___________________________________ Date ____________

**Persepolis Introduction:**
Soon we will begin reading the graphic novel *Persepolis*, the story of a teenage girl in Iran during the Islamic revolution in the mid-1970s. In order to completely appreciate her story, we need to learn more about Iran and its society, culture, and institutions during that time period (CONTEXT!), and we will be doing that with the help of your research!

The thing to remember throughout your research process is that it’s not the country, nor majority of the innocent people living there, that are corrupt, it’s the people who run the country. The citizens, the public, the commoners, the people, who happen to live there are victims of a corrupt regime. Some people in this world live everyday feeling trapped in a lifestyle that leaves them very little choice and freedom.

So, in order to appropriately discuss a lifestyle which deviates from your own, you must first learn a little about why things are the way they are in Iran, why people act the way that they do, and where the fundamental practices that control populations actually stem from.

**The Task:**
Individually research the following five topics. After taking notes create an Adobe Spark infographic that captures the culture with truth and dignity.

**Part I: Internet Research Topics**
1. Author's background/bio (Read Emma Watson’s Interview of Marjane Satrapi)
2. Timeline and history of Iranian government The Shah, Islamic Revolution, and post-revolutionary theocratic state
3. Islam—major beliefs of the religion and its function in Iranian society and culture
4. Pre and Post-revolutionary society in Iran—institutions such as schools, religion, families, the role of women, government etc.
5. Pre and post-revolutionary culture in Iran—movies, music, art, fashion, including dress for women, etc.

**Part II: Pre-Research Vocabulary (Define the following)**
- Theocracy:
- Fundamentalism:
- Revolution:
- Regime:
- Society:
- Culture:
Day 3: After students complete their research, they will create their Adobe Spark page. Once finished, students will use their sharable link to present their individual creations on the Google Classroom.

Day 4: View & Discuss everyone’s research on Google Classroom. Read Chapters 3-5.
Day 1: Underlying Message and Central Idea Practice

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY: CENTRAL IDEA PRACTICE

A strong central idea is a comment on human beings and their behaviors, emotions or experiences...therefore, one word is NOT ENOUGH.

It is insufficient to say that the central idea of a story is about “loyalty,” or “motherhood,” or “love.”

Poorly written central ideas for Cinderella and Wizard of Oz:

“Cinderella is the story of a poor, servant girl who overcomes the cruelty of her family and lives happily ever after with Prince Charming”

“This story is about a girl names Dorothy who learns to appreciate the life that she has”

WHY ARE THESE BAD?

•

•

Well-written central ideas for Cinderella and Wizard of Oz:

“The story of Cinderella reveals that people who are kind and patient are often rewarded for their good deeds”

“The Wizard of Oz reveals that when people lose sight of reality, they sometimes forget to appreciate the beauty of their everyday lives.”
Central Idea Notes

What is a central idea?

1. __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________

3. __________________________________________

1. What is NOT a central idea?

1. __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________

Write TWO central ideas of *Persepolis*:

1. __________________________________________
After discussing the difference between a weak, one-word “concept” and a strong, in-depth “statement” students will practice determining both a thematic concept and thematic statement of a panel from *Persepolis*, and an entire page from *Persepolis*.

- Select a panel to focus on.
- What’s a thematic concept identifiable in the panel?
- Determine a thematic statement.

Students will determine both a thematic concept and thematic statement which captures the underlying message of the following page from *Persepolis*:
THE BICYCLE

The year of the revolution I had to take action, so I put my prophetic destiny aside for a while.

Today my name is Che Guevara.

I am Fidel.

And I want to be Trotsky.

We demonstrated in the garden of our house.

Down with the king!

Down with the king!

The revolution is like a bicycle, when the wheels don’t turn, it falls.

Well spoken!

And so went the revolution in my country.
Day 3: Cinderella around the World!

Consider the multicultural dimensions of Cinderella by examining the various ways this classic tale is retold in hundreds of other countries all around the world.

**Directions:** Deconstruct the following text for both content and style.

**Link to text:** “What the Story of Cinderella Looks Like in 9 Countries Around the World”

Step 1: Review Notes on the conventions of a Listicle

**Listicle**

- Uses a list as its thematic structure and is published as an article
- Will typically include a number in its title
- Provides some context for the list with an introduction to capture the intention
- Uses quirky, witty, straight-forward tone

Examples:

“25 Hairstyles of the Last Hundred Years”
“10 of the Most Influential Women of 2014”
“5 Clues Your Relationship Will Fail”

Step 2: Complete the following:

1. Select 3 of the 9 Cinderella overviews and discuss the cultural similarities and differences identifiable.
2. Explain which version of Cinderella you best identify with.
3. Discuss the effect of the use of the Listicle format. Provide evidence from the text.
4. After reading about the different versions of Cinderella, cast your vote for which one we will read in class: (circle one)
   - Thailand
   - Poland
   - Iraq
   - Egypt
   - France
   - Nigeria
   - Zimbabwe
   - China
   - Greece

Day 4: Whole-group Read: Chapters 6-10
Day 1: Learn some basic conventions of speeches by using the study features on Quizlet with my pre-made Rhetorical Devices. Followed by 3-5 rounds of Quizlet Live, which forces students to team up and practice retaining the information together.

**Quizlet/ Study Features:**
D) Creating contrasts with parallel opposites

F) Draws attention and emphasizes significance

D) Ideas that are not conveyed literally

F) Forces readers to imagine, makes concepts easier to understand, brings out emotions, and allows images to be formed in minds, and makes complex ideas more simple
**Day 2: Assign Independent Reading Journals for Chapters 10-15**

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- Watch “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Adichie
Day 3: Students will complete a “watch and answer” followed by a “read and answer” question sheet, to complete during and after listening to the speech. With the guidance of the questions, students will annotate the transcript, and analyze the rhetorical devices exemplified in Adichie’s speech.

**Watch + Answer**

What is the purpose of Adichie’s speech?

Identify one way Adichie uses language that you find interesting or *effective*. Explain.

What is the effect of Adichie’s use of sarcasm?

At times, Chimamanda Adichie’s non-verbal gestures can be intentionally wry. What effect does Adichie’s expression have on the audience?

**Read + Answer**

Identify the vignettes. How many are there?

How does the author’s craft choice to include vignettes enhance her point?

Annotate the transcript. What observations can you make about how Adichie’s diction and syntax help further her purpose?

Day 4: Fish Bowl Discussion
Students will conduct a student driven, student assessed Fish-Bowl discussion to share and discuss their thoughts about the TED Talk, the content of the speech, the effectiveness of the speaker’s technique, the underlying messages, and the speech’s central idea.

Students will be broken into 3 groups of 7-8, so the discussions are manageable and easy to follow. While “outside the fish bowl discussion” the rest of the students will listen, take notes, and keep track of the students who don’t contribute to the conversation, so at the end, they can encourage those students to participate by adding to the conversation somehow.
Day 1/2: Students will be placed in small groups, and each will have a copy of Sandra Cisneros’ *The House on Mango Street*. The groups will be participating in a theme hunt. Each group will be assigned a thematic concept to focus on, and they will find a vignette from the collection that includes their assigned theme to read, analyze, and present.

**Theme Hunt**

**Warm-up:**
https://literarydevices.net/vignette/

What is a vignette? (use the provided link above)

**Definition:**
The function(s):

**Directions:**
Discuss your assigned thematic concept with your group, and begin looking for a vignette from *The House on Mango Street* to analyze and present. Find evidence of your theme in the vignette and prepare to explain your analysis.

**Guidelines:**

- Each person in the group is expected to present and speak during the presentation
- Be sure to define and explain your thematic concept
- Turn your concept into a thematic statement
- Conduct an overview of your vignette
- Include evidence from the vignette to support your analysis of the author’s use of the theme

**Thematic Concepts:**

- Dreams, hopes, plans
- Family
- Friendship
- Identity
- Society & Class
- Innocence
- Language

Day 3/4: Whole-group Read: Chapters 16-19 (complete *Persepolis*)
Day 1-4:
- Read Harvard College Writing Center: How to Write a Comparative Analysis
- Unpack the task, select a question
- Brainstorm
- Outline a plan
- Write

Summative Assessment Option 1: A Comparative Essay

Directions:
There are four prompts below, select ONE. Then create a brief outline prior to writing. Consider the following texts:

- “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Adichie
- Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi
- The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

Essay options:
5. Choose a particular theme and consider how it is treated in 2 of the 3 texts studied.

6. How do the different authors we have studied describe and depict oppression?

7. What commonalities are shared in the texts? What factors do you think are responsible for their differences?

8. Compare and contrast the conventions of two different text-types. Determine the benefits and the deficits of both.

Guidelines:
- Introduce a precise thesis statement based on your selected question.
- Analyze the effects of the creator’s choices on the audience and sufficiently justify opinions and ideas with examples and explanations.
- Use strong and thorough text evidence to support your argument and format in-text citations correctly.
- Maintain a formal style of writing
- Follow the conventions of standard written English
Comparative Essay Brainstorm

Type your chosen essay prompt:

________________________________________

1. Complete the Venn diagram below according to the details and attributes that contribute to your chosen essay question. Place any shared qualities in the overlapping section.

2. Outline

Introduction

- Hook:
- Thesis:
- Overview of main points

Body Paragraph(s)

- Topic:
- Aspect:
- Evidence:
- Explanation/Analysis:

Conclusion

- So what?
### Rubric: Comparative Essay

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Standard (D-F)</th>
<th>Meets Standard (B-C)</th>
<th>Exceeds Standard (A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Compares or contrasts, but does not include both. There is no supporting information or support is incomplete.</td>
<td>Compares and contrasts items clearly. The paper points to examples relatively specific to illustrate the comparison.</td>
<td>Compares and contrasts items effectively and clearly. The paper points to specific examples to illustrate the comparison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Organization is not suited to comparison and contrast.</td>
<td>Organization is suited to comparison and contrast.</td>
<td>Organization is well-suited to comparison and contrast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Style</td>
<td>There is little clarity, with many basic errors.</td>
<td>The use of language and the style are generally clear, though there are some inaccuracies sentence construction.</td>
<td>The use of language and the style are clear. Sentence construction and vocabulary are varied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions</td>
<td>Transitions missing; connections between ideas are illogical or confused.</td>
<td>Paper moves from one idea to the next, but lacks or misuses transition words.</td>
<td>Paper moves smoothly from one idea to the next and uses transition words precisely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Day 1-4:
- Review notes and resources on your chosen text-type
- Brainstorm an idea, focus, and/or theme for your creative piece
- Begin rough drafting
- Finalize draft [vignettes], draw illustrations [graphic novel], or record [TED Talk]

**Summative Assessment Option 2: A Creative Piece**

**Directions:** Select one text-type we’ve studied, and demonstrate your knowledge of its conventions by creating one of your own.

**Text-Types:** Graphic Novel, Speech, Vignette

**Creative Options:**

1. Create your own TED Talk. Must be 18 minutes long. Can be recorded or presented live in class.

2. Create a collection of 4-6 vignettes that all share a common theme.

3. Create the first chapter of a new graphic novel. Be sure to include a title page, and author’s note.

**Guidelines:**

- Use the appropriate structural format for your chosen text-type
- Demonstrate awareness of the text’s unique conventions, devices, and/or elements
- Maintain a style and tone appropriate to your text-type
- Follow the conventions of standard written English
# Rubric: Creative Piece

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Standard (D-F)</th>
<th>Meets Standard (B-C)</th>
<th>Exceeds Standard (A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Task shows a superficial understanding of the conventions of the replicated text-type.</td>
<td>Task shows an adequate understanding of the conventions of the replicated text-type.</td>
<td>Task shows an excellent understanding of the conventions of the replicated text-type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Little organization is apparent; task has little structure.</td>
<td>The task is organized; the structure is generally coherent.</td>
<td>The task is effectively organized; the structure is coherent and effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language/Style</td>
<td>There is little clarity with many basic errors. Limited sense of structure and style.</td>
<td>The use of language is generally clear and appropriate.</td>
<td>The use of language is clear, effective and appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary is average.</td>
<td>Vocabulary is varied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Generally appropriate structure and style.</td>
<td>Appropriate structure and effective style.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

21st century learners are not being adequately prepared to function in a global society due to lack of diversity in the literature included in the curricula. The lack of cultural representation in school curricula is now, and has been for an unforgivable number of decades, an alarming issue that has persisted without resolution. The lack of diversity in school curricula is problematic because of the profound number of voices, perspectives, and experiences being silenced and excluded in both the publishing industry as well as in the process of curricular creation and reformation. The marginalization that occurs within America’s highly Eurocentric literary canon is—to say the least—disappointing, disheartening, wrong—and I assert that it has become increasingly difficult for anyone remotely paying attention to continue to ignore.

If the lack of cultural representation in school curricula, and the excessive and often times unescapable cultural misrepresentation in American society continues, the dampening of young minds will too continue. Education is intended to educate human capabilities from within individuals, and facilitate outward discovery, model critical thinking, and evoke curiosity. The outdated, homogeneous literary options still dominating the curricula of public schools today are inaccessible to the ever-changing population of students attending said public schools in America. As student demographics continue to diversify, while the literature being studied remains stagnant, and unchanged, the quality of the learning experience will never exceed the standard of mediocre.

For some teachers, mediocre learning experiences may be satisfying, but for exceptional teachers—who strive to improve, who desire change, and who continue to develop new, relevant, and accessible lessons each and every year—mediocre is just not good enough. Multicultural education intentionally incorporates cultural differences into the materials studied in order to
introduce, model, and teach students with the level of equality and social justice that is expected in everyday society. For some students, diverse literature will provide the much-needed exposure to the unknown and unfamiliar, forcing them to confront their personal biases and misunderstandings. For other students, diverse literature will enable them to see themselves represented in what they are reading, allowing them to engage with a dignified and respectable exemplification. Either way, all students from all walks of life deserve a high-quality education that is both equipped with enough variety to be accessible to many, and rigorous enough to challenge the thinking of all.

If educators truly desire to act as a guiding force in leading their students down a pathway to success, then I recommend making multicultural education the new norm. In order to help students develop into global-minded individuals, capable of thriving under any circumstances, then these students need to be prepared accordingly, and at this rate, students are ill-prepared to prosper in a global society due to their naivety and lack of exposure to diversity. The recommendation is not to completely abandon the framework that is already in place, but simply to make some much needed adjustments. Educators must first acknowledge that the lack of diversity in the literature being studied in American schools today makes for an inadequate learning experience, then once this problem is acknowledged, the appropriate curricula adjustments should be made.
References


*Academic OneFile.*

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https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&amp;lr=&amp;id=5cKQA6AAQBAJ&amp;oi=fnd&amp;pg=PP1&amp;dq=lack+of+representation+in+children's+literature&amp;ots=EgZiM-vptu&amp;sig=f0DSwksYeZ_p5YgvE7W_jHdgTaY#v=onepage&amp;q=lack%20of%20representation%20in%20children's%20literature&amp;f=false


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