



Reading, Writing, and (Anti-)Racist Picturebooks: Reframing Literacy Engagements

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Abstract

The US student body is rapidly diversifying, but remains unmatched by the teachers who serve in their classrooms. There is a growing understanding that teachers, particularly White teachers, must explicitly and thoughtfully engage in anti-bias and anti-racist practices in their classrooms. Our nation, and correspondingly our schools, have witnessed or engaged in tide swells of social activism leading to increased awareness of how systems of oppression have broad-reaching impacts on our society broadly and our students specifically. It can feel difficult or uncomfortable to address issues like privilege, activism, and social justice with children, however, especially when this very concept is the topic of much political and legislative debate currently. Teachers of young children already engage in daily literacy learning, and these experiences provide the perfect opportunity to use carefully chosen picturebooks to scaffold students' perspective taking, reflection, and thoughtful discourse, but these moments do not happen accidentally. In this thought piece, we describe some of the pivotal cultural moments over recent years, how children's literature has responded to and amplified these moments, and strategies teachers can use to ground anti-bias/anti-racist learning opportunities within literacy learning using picturebooks highlighting diversity. We also provide links to instructional resources and culturally responsive book titles for educators to support their forays into anti-racist teaching in their early childhood classrooms.

Keywords Picturebooks · Childhood literacy · Anti-racist education · Social justice

As basic as the 1950s three R's (reading, writing, arithmetic), today's sociocultural contexts are particularly ripe for providing opportunities for reading, writing, and (anti-)racist picturebooks to reframe literacy engagements. Alongside reading and writing, picturebooks can serve to scaffold children's thoughtful engagement in the world around them. Alongside meaningful reading and writing, anti-racist literature is essential in a democracy knowing that literacy learning impacts social justice, economic advancement, and positive outcomes for all children. Eradicating the idea that young children are too young to engage in the world around them and to discuss race and social justice, research shows that children can critically engage in conversations around race and racism with thoughtful reflection, ideas,

and questions (Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Wood, 2010). Children tend to develop negative opinions about themselves and internalize stereotypes when they receive no guidance in regard to understanding their own feelings and experiences. When the opportunity for discussion is limited or non-existent, children lack the language to build their own capacities and develop counter-narratives to refute these negative opinions and stereotypes (Kayser & Kayser, 2020).

Since most teachers are White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019a) and the growing corpus of students are of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019b), today's literacy engagements can begin with natural conversations about race, inequity, and privilege with our youngest learners. To participate actively in anti-racist education, all teachers, but especially White teachers, must be willing to be vocal allies for students and families of color. As White teacher educators ourselves, we must be willing to listen, check our assumptions, take risks, and speak up even when uncomfortable to address racism and (anti-)racism (Kaczmarczyk, Allee-Herndon, & Roberts, 2019). Believing that all children can learn and

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deserve to reach their full potential, our work relies upon Kendi's (2020) powerful definition: "To be antiracist is to think nothing is behaviorally wrong or right—inferior or superior—with any of the racial groups. Whenever the antiracist sees individuals behaving positively or negatively, the antiracist sees exactly that: individuals behaving positively or negatively, not representatives of whole races...Behavior is something humans do, not races do" (p. 105). Therefore, anti-racist education must be as basic as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Our purpose is to support primary teachers in their thoughtful, deliberate use of quality children's literature and literacy strategies to explore the colors of our world, engender meaningful antiracist conversations, and advocate for social justice. This piece begins by addressing the shifting mindsets in regard to race and then works to outline ways to reframe literacy engagements that move beyond book covers toward positive, compassionate, anti-racist classrooms.

Shifting Mindsets

With recent surges of people joining advocacy groups and protests for social justice (Cohn & Quealy, 2020), social media is buzzing with resources for teachers, families, and the general public, particularly White people, to learn about systemic racism. Resources related to White privilege maintain that in order to be considered anti-racist, the underlying assumption is that we are actively anti-racist, actively racist, or complicit in racism (Kendi, 2020). The resources in Appendix A provide helpful information for parents and teachers on raising anti-racist children, supporting and advocating for our BIPOC friends, neighbors, colleagues, and fellow citizens. Suddenly, titles like Ibram X. Kendi's *How to Be an Anti-Racist* (2019) were sold out nationally and internationally, and older titles like Layla F. Saad's *Me and White Supremacy* (2020) gained new popularity (Haynes, 2020). Even with the current backlash to diversity, equity, and inclusion, many educators turned to the work of impactful scholars to boost our understanding and to find strategies for exploring race, privilege, and the inequitable and diverse world in which we live (Muhammad, 2020; Price-Dennis et al., 2015). Bestselling books, like Ibram X. Kendi's (2020) *Antiracist Baby* and Alexandra Penfold's (2018) *All Are Welcome* helped parents and teachers, many of whom are White, to be more aware and to engage in caring dialogue without expecting BIPOC to be responsible for this growth (Haynes, 2020). Appendix A was created to support parents and educators with resources and accessible articles to support families and educators in their journeys to teach and support today's anti-racist children.

Picturebooks to Reframe Literacy Engagements

Educators, too, are becoming more aware of social justice issues and how they are reflected in our classroom libraries and practices. When *Sesame Street*, a children's show that has been popular since its inception in 1969, celebrates LGBTQ + Pride (Reynolds, 2020), addresses topics like COVID-19, racism, and autism with the new Muppet Julia, and creates a show in Arabic to teach children in refugee camps, the signs seem clear that media and books in general are changing to be much more inclusive (Sesame Street, n.d.). "Best of" lists of digital media are now readily available to teachers and parents and represent diverse characters, curated lists of resources, including books and other anti-racism, social justice, and diversity materials for children of all ages. Titles include *Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey* (Syrian refugees; Ruur, 2016), *Dreamers* (Mexican immigrants; Morales, 2018), *Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao* (Chinese; Zhang, 2019), *Let the Children March* (the 1963 Children's March in Birmingham; Clark-Robinson, 2018), *On Our Street: Our First Talk About Poverty* (Roberts, 2018), *Why Johnny Doesn't Flap: NT is OK!* (exceptionalities; Morton & Morton, 2015), *Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness* (police racism and violence against BIPOC, White supremacy; Higginbotham, 2018), and *Coolies* (reframes Western Expansion, Yin, 2016).

The sheer volume of available titles represent a dramatic shift in children's literature to spark courageous conversations about racism, bias, equity, and privilege both at school and in homes. However, just because books can be acquired by purchasing or in classrooms or libraries (Nel, 2017; Thomas, 2016), without explicit and intentional teacher intervention, availability does not necessarily mean children will read them (Reid & Twardosz, 1996; Ting, 2017). Children as young as preschool exhibit racial bias and a preference for Whites (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Jordan & Hernandez-Reif, 2009; Shutts, 2015; Zinser et al., 1981), yet attitudes toward race can evolve when engaged in racial literacy lessons (Lazar & Offenber, 2011). Recently, Muhammad's (2020) *Historically Responsive Literacy* (HRL) framework works to cultivate genius using authentics through four pillars; Identity, Skills, Intellect, and Criticality, which are deeper, critical layers to understand power and equity. Therefore, addressing racial illiteracy across all races and ethnicities through literacy instruction is critical (Boutte et al., 2011; Priest et al., 2016; Roy, 2017). As suggested previously, "coupling powerful literacy instruction with books that evoke thoughts and feelings regarding race and social justice can aid teachers in facilitating these much-needed

conversations” (Kaczmarczyk, et al., 2019, p. 524), even with young children.

Moving Beyond the Cover

With home and classroom libraries quickly filling with more diverse, anti-racist books, such as Penfold’s (2018) *All Are Welcome* and Kendi’s (2020) *Antiracist Baby*, it is vital that parents and educators do the work. Appendix B provides a streamlined list of anti-racist books, which now appear on many vetted lists and which prove to be our favorites in provoking discussions with children and families. These books must go beyond simply sitting on a shelf to be seen by children and visitors, where one’s “wokeness” may be measured by the number of diverse books on their bookshelf or in their classroom library. Until children are exposed to the stories and information within these books, their understanding of how their own culture and background situates them in society may be limited. Parents and educators must move beyond the front cover and use these books to their full potential by engaging in rich and courageous conversations around racism, bias, equity, and privilege.

Books provided by state- or district-mandated curricula and found in a majority of current classroom libraries rarely feature BIPOCs as main characters (Ritts, 2023), yet children’s books need the cultural consciousness to invite authentic conversation about race and issues surrounding racial equity (Pennell, 2022). Even with a BIPOC main character, their actions and experiences may still reflect that of the dominant culture. While they may appear authentic, most are “primarily representative of the institutional hegemony” (Hollie, 2018, p. 145) and represent the dominant culture (Hammond, 2015; Jewell, 2020). In the United States, “people who are white, middle class, Christian, and cisgender are the dominant culture. They are in charge of the institutions and have establishes behaviors, values, and traditions that are considered acceptable and the ‘norm’” (Jewell, 2020, p. 17). Traditionally, schools have served to reinforce these norms through books, lessons, and hesitancy that sidesteps anti-racist conversations.

Parents and teachers can break from these norms and support conversations around race and equity by examining and supplementing their shared reading with culturally authentic books. Culturally authentic books, whether non-fiction or fiction, illuminate the genuine cultural experiences of a specific cultural and/or racial group (Muhammad, 2020). Within a culturally authentic text, one cultural group cannot be swapped for another without jeopardizing the integrity of the story and the experiences within (Hollie, 2018). These books provide readers with metaphorical windows in which they can access views and experiences

of groups of individuals they may otherwise never know, and mirrors to help them understand their own experiences as part of a larger human experience (Bishop, 1990). The books shared in Appendix B offer the opportunity of windows and mirrors for children to understand their own place in society and the role that bias and privilege plays in systemic racism. Children’s inherent sense of empathy and fairness offer a broad foundation to implement the following strategies. Thus, conversations around racism and equity can be fostered from these literacy engagements.

Reframing with Successful Literacy Strategies

As parents and educators begin to ‘do the work’ to ensure their bookshelves are flanked with diverse books, that these books are being read and shared, and that courageous conversations are happening, one may wonder what strategies should be implemented. While it may seem that new books and new conversations require new strategies, it may be refreshing to know that relevant, earnest discussions often are sparked with the right books. Whether at home or at school, effective strategies, such as read alouds, think alouds, questioning, conversation starters, literature circles, or Google Lit Trips can be leveraged to share any book and to engender conversation. Parents and teachers alike can use read alouds as a window (Bishop, 1990) into different cultural and racial groups, social justice issues, and anti-racist actions. During shared reading, think alouds, questioning, conversation starters can be utilized to model and engage in self-reflection and courageous conversations. Likewise, literature circles and Google Lit Trips may also be incorporated into instruction to give students more interactive ways to participate in crucial examination of the dominant culture and the impact on social issues.

Read Alouds and Think Alouds

Read alouds are infinitely versatile for home or classroom use. “It makes sense to take advantage of the instructional opportunities that a read aloud presents” (Walther, 2019, p. 1). Walther (2019) insists that read alouds focus on meaningful books that connect to our lived experiences and to the real world. Fountas and Pinnell (2016) define the read aloud as instruction “in which you read aloud a selected text to the whole class, occasionally and selectively pausing for conversation” (p. 12). These pauses facilitate thinking about, talking about, and responding to the text so that students are actively processing the meaning of the text throughout the reading. During read alouds, teacher think alouds are often utilized to model how students should make meaning of the text in their own minds. The teacher/reader verbally

reflects on parts of the selection to show what they notice, facts about the character(s), predictions, and questions they have (Oster, 2001). Parents can easily facilitate the same experience when reading aloud at home. In these ways, discussion of social issues such as race and racism can easily be integrated into read alouds.

Questioning and Conversation Starters

Employing picturebooks that address color, culture, race, and racism can illuminate dominant culture and challenge stereotypes in complex and multifaceted ways, particularly with compassionate questioning. Intentional questioning and conversation starters can “invite students to resist the dominant discourse on social issues while gaining intercultural insights” (Mathis, 2020, p. 103). “Books like *A is for Activist* (Nagara, 2016) or *The Colors of Us* (Katz, 2002) support before, during, and after conversations about fairness, equity, opportunities, and feelings” (Authors, 2019, p. 524). Before reading, students’ background knowledge and understanding of equality and social justice issues can be activated through predicting and picture walks. During and after reading, children should be encouraged to engage in self-connections and conversations around race, racism and advocacy. Previously, Kaczmarczyk, et al. (2019) created a convenient bookmark that provides natural connections and reflective stems for conversation to connect with family or classmates. Prompting emotional connections to the events in the book, such as relaying a book portion that reminds readers of times when courage was needed, or ‘firsts’ in their own lives, or lessons learned from the book, will aid in critical engagement and analysis around important topics for today’s students. Some additional critical questions that teachers and parents could pose during and after reading are: Whose perspectives are shared and whose are missing? I’m wondering which characters have power and which do not? What do you think the author is trying to say to us? (Short et al., 2017). These conversation starters can prime students to share their responses with teachers/parents, with book buddies, small-group discussions, or perhaps whole-group community building.

Literature Circles

By nature, literature circles are a powerful place where students choose an appealing book for authentic conversations about any issue, but in this case, race, racial inequality, social justice, and advocacy are the focus. Literature circles (Burns, 1998; Daniels, 2002; Peterson & Eeds, 1987, 2007) create a classroom climate where cooperation and social interaction are encouraged as students explore others’ perspectives and thinking about their book. Students set the agenda, take charge of their own conversations, and

hold one another accountable. The literature circle format varies depending on student abilities, interests, needs, and classroom characteristics (Lin, 2004). In the early childhood classroom, this format may be read alouds of carefully selected anti-racist books by the teacher followed by small group re-readings, discussions, and brief, student-planned celebrations. These celebrations often prompt other readers to choose another presented book to enjoy for their next literature circle engagement.

Google Lit Trips

Another literacy strategy for engaging in reading, writing, and anti-racist literature is Google Lit Trips. Mark Twain (1869) once wrote “Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness” (p. 407). More exposure to different cultures, races, and individuals’ stories aids in understanding and empathy for their experiences. Physical travel is often a barrier, but Google Lit Trips allows students to immerse themselves in three-dimensional, literary field trips (Google Lit Trips, n.d.). This amazing use of Google Lit Trips allows students to experience key places and important settings that bring a book to life via Google Earth. In this way, educators create educational journeys via Google Lit Trips, inserting short videos, historical articles or photos, or probes, so that children become traveling companions with characters to different times and places within the pages of the book. Rather than standard book summaries, these authentic activities generate higher-order questions and analytical thinking. Teachers and parents can utilize existing Google Lit Trips, such as *Abuela* (Dorros, 1997), archived at <https://www.googlelittrips.org/litTripLibrary/gradesK-5.php> or support young readers in creating their own lit trips based on anti-racist books, such as *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Coles, 2010), a six year old girl who singularly integrated public schools. Participants can see the school she integrated, the newspaper headlines, the letters to the editors, and the house in which she lived on the Google Lit trip. Or, when children join the young 1963 characters through a Google Lit Trips with *Let the Children March* and virtually march in Birmingham, Alabama, natural questions and connections arise surrounding these place markers related to social issues, setting the stage for courageous conversations, ensuring engagement with civil rights, and elevating democratic ideals.

Scenes from an Anti-Racist Classroom

Race is often noted as unseen, yet young children are intuitive and innocent observers of color. To this end, teachers may use the book *The Colors of Us* by Karen Katz (2002) to engage students in conversations around race, more specifically skin tone. In Katz’s (2002) picturebook, the protagonist begins to recognize how people with whom she has grown up

look uniquely different, and she identifies various paint hues to describe their skin tones. A read aloud of *The Colors of Us* (Katz, 2002) can jumpstart an activity, with natural conversations surrounding Identity (Muhammad's, 2020, HRL first pillar) utilizing paint in which students create and explore their own unique colors. Students then share their creation with classmates. Teachers can then follow up with a shared reading of *All the Colors We Are: The Story of How We Get Our Skin Color* (Kissinger, 2014) which provides a scientific explanation of how skin color is determined by our ancestors, genetics, melanin, and the sun. The real value of this activity is two-fold. Students gain awareness and appreciation of their own skin tones, while engaging in positive discussion around the differences among their classmates. Using the suggested strategies above and others that teachers develop or co-create with peers, additional conversations around skin tone and race can be furthered through read alouds of complementary books such as *The Skin You Live In* (Tyler, 2016), *Happy in Our Skin* (Manushkin, 2015), and *Different Different* (Gupta, 2019).

By pairing what may seem like two unlikely books, teachers can harvest important life lessons for dealing with injustice. Read alouds or literature circles of Cronin's *Click, Clack, Moo!* (2000), an allegorical story of some efficacious cows who use the power of literacy to type their demands from the farmer, provide layers of meaning in humorous, but pointed ways. Without any mention of strike, younger readers can glean the importance of speaking up for themselves or for those in need, as well as seeing a model of literacy in action. Teachers of young children might then brainstorm reasons and evidence to speak up to right a wrong (Muhammad's, 2020 HRL Skills and Intellect pillars). Passing out other titles from the classroom library, such as *Martin's Big Words* (Rappaport, 2007), *Let the Children March* (Clark-Robinson, 2018), or *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* (Krull, 2003), will remind students of reasons to add to the brainstormed list. The real thrust of this activity comes with the pairing of *No! The First Book of Protest* (Merger, 2020). An interactive read aloud of each full-page spread offers earnest, energetic children the chance to say, "No!" in response to real-life injustices and authentic social justice heroes who stood up on the right side of history. Teachers might then probe possible reasons to speak up to right a wrong (Muhammad's, 2020 HRL Criticality pillar) These books with many layers generate safe spaces for those important conversations about inequities and our human responses.

Reading, 'Riting, (Anti-)Racism Literature to Reframe Literacy'

Our goal as parents and educators is to engage in early, important conversations around racism, bias, privilege, and advocacy with our children in ways that boost our children's personal and professional success. Surely, just as basic as reading and

writing are to our children's success, these conversations with young children surrounding racism are equally essential. The books and activities were offered to support primary grade teachers and families in using quality children's literature and literacy strategies to facilitate dialogue about racism and advocate for social justice. Books, and the characters within their pages, provide a beautiful and safe place for all of us to rehearse and try out ideas, concerns, and emotions. Furthermore, the children's books highlighted in this piece are layered with meaning, making them appropriate to generate conversations with young children as well as more mature readers.

The vicarious experiences captured in these books give readers of all ages the freedom and comfort of talking about characters; thus, the conversations are once removed from the rawness of their own lives. While engaging young readers in conversations about these texts may bring notes of sadness or despair, these anti-racist books also offer crucial life lessons and positive paths to empathy, relationship-building, advocacy, and hope. Equally important, the anti-racist picturebooks here also model ways of addressing, countering, and acting in response to diversity and social justice issues. Starting these conversations early with young children allows them to vicariously rehearse these complex and personal factors, so children learn to react positively to our fellow human beings. Short (2009) notes, "Through literature, children have the opportunity to go beyond a tourist perspective of gaining surface-level information..." (p. 1). Thoughtful offerings of anti-racist picturebooks and reframing literacy engagements and discussions can birth the means to reframe, examine, re-examine, and grow dispositions of empathy and advocacy (Kaczmarczyk et al., 2019).

No doubt, a critical place to start this anti-racist work is to do the work of looking inside ourselves and examining our own biases, taking note of our own positionality within our current sociocultural landscape. One might begin with journaling or conversing with loved ones about how our own journeys impact our sense of racism and social justice advocacy, personally and professionally. As White professionals who realize we benefit from institutional racism, taking Harvard's Implicit Bias test (<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>) launched a time of inward evaluation. In fact, Lamar Johnson (2017) tags allows us the honesty to create a robust classroom climate of anti-racism through authentic reading and writing with young children. Further, unpacking our own privilege and its impact on our lives allows parents and teachers the clarity and focus to aid in reframing literacy engagements this work as 'soul work' adding, "...these pedagogies require a deep looking within. I believe that teachers' states of being, their hearts, and their minds have to change." (p. 23). Self-reflection with anti-racist picturebooks. The great books in this piece are filled with characters with whom one can vicariously experience racism or whom one can join in advocacy activities and stand ready to promote greater empathy, anti-racist awareness, and social justice.

Appendix

See Tables 1, 2.

Table 1 Anti-racist resources for parents and educators

<i>Anti-racist, anti-bias, diverse children's book lists</i>	
7 Books that teach kids about social justice and activism	A curated list of books is provided that frame complex issues in ways young readers can understand
9 Anti-racist children's books to teach kids about diversity	From the respected <i>Parents</i> magazine, readers learn about nine accessible and anti-racist children's books to teach kids about diversity
10 Books to help you discuss anti-racism with children and teenagers	<i>Today</i> shares a continuum of book titles that can be used across childhood and adolescence to have conversations about racism with children of various ages
10 Quick ways to check for racism & sexism	World of Words adapted these focused, streamlined, and quick ways for parents and teachers to detect racism and sexism in children's media
16 Anti-racism books for young children	Insider has curated a list of 16 anti-racism books that can be used to engage very young children in courageous conversations about equity issues
20 Picture books for 2020: readings to embrace race, provide solace, & do good	Being anti-racist and anti-bias also supposes we do work to grow empathy and goodness and care in our world. EmbraceRace provides an annotated book list to help parents and educators know <i>why</i> some books might be great to choose
200 of the Best Diverse children's books for preschoolers	While there are many book list options in this Appendix, these 200 books shared by Medium are geared toward the younger future activists and allies
Amazon best sellers in children's racism and prejudice books	As a popular online book retailer, Amazon frequently creates lists of best sellers, and they have recently done the same to highlight their best-selling children's racism and prejudice books
Books to teach white children and teens how to undo racism and white supremacy	Charis Books & More, a self-described independent feminist book store, shares book titles that can help teach White children in particular to examine their own privilege and become active in the fight to undo racism and White supremacy
NCTE build your stack: antiracist books for your curriculum today	This great resource from the National Council for Teachers of English [NCTE] has a special section focused on anti-racist books for our young children, ages birth to eight
Social justice books	A resource for educators that includes 50 different lists of children's literature and books for teacher development by social justice topic
Social justice books for children	The BookSource Blogger lists 11 inspiring social justice books for elementary readers to promote activism
The 2020 ultimate list of diverse children's books	Here we read curated their version of the 2020 Ultimate List of Diverse Children's Books
These books can help you explain racism and protest to your kids	<i>The New York Times</i> article shares book titles but also a rationale for why using books can help facilitate conversation about race early on and consistently throughout childhood
We need diverse books	Highlighting and celebrating the diversity within our classroom walls, this site serves as a search engine to inform caring teachers and parents
World of words: children's literature resources	A wonderful website entitled World of Words emphasizing children's books to use as rich resources to "build bridges across cultures" toward inclusiveness
<i>Resources to inform anti-racist/anti-bias practices for parents and educators</i>	
Anatomy of an Ally	<i>Teaching Tolerance</i> , a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, provides clear and accessible guidance for helping children become allies "when caring just isn't enough."
Anti-bias education—teaching for change	The <i>Teaching for Change</i> organization provides strategies for "creating a positive self and group identity development" to boost the potential of all
Anti-bias resources	NAEYC, the oldest professional organization supporting ECE, shares articles to build anti-bias curriculum and classrooms for our youngest, most impressionable learners
Anti-bias tools & strategies	The Anti-Defamation League provides a series of tools and strategies to support anti-bias education in classrooms, but many of the resources can be adapted for families, too
Anti-racism resources	The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Office of the Provost Diversity and Inclusion team has curated a broad list of anti-bias resources like books, podcasts, and articles for parents to raise anti-racist children

Table 1 (continued)

ASCD resources for building racial justice and equity	This resource offered by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD] is chock full of books, materials, activities, and organizations that can support educators of young children in anti-racist curriculum decisions
Becoming an ally	Safe@School provides some resources to help teach students about becoming an ally to help create more equitable and inclusive schools and classrooms
Creating the space to talk about race in your school	The National Education Association (NEA) gives guidance for teachers and schools on how to discuss race across colleagues and in our classrooms
Critical practices for anti-bias education	Teaching Tolerance's Critical Practices for Anti-bias Education is a professional development seminar that shows educators how they can take action and create conditions that bring the key components of culturally responsive pedagogy to life
Diversity, equity, and inclusivity resources for classrooms	Common Sense Education has curated a list of their top picks to highlight our world's vast diversity and promote equity through perspective taking, reflecting on privilege, and understanding other people
Freedom reads	This website is part anti-bias training, part book review containing short videos that explore anti-bias books to strengthen parents' and teachers' anti-racism lens and critical analysis skills
Guide for selecting anti-bias children's books	Based on Louise Derman-Spark's " <i>Ten Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism</i> " (Updated in 2013), this resource helps parents and educators identify instances of bias in children's books
How to Be an ally	This is another professional learning resource for teachers wanting to learn How to Be an Ally
How to talk to your kids about anti-racism: a list of resources	PBS Social has curated this list of resources for parents, caregivers, and educators to "help us embrace the wealth of knowledge spilling out of formal and informal systems to educate each other toward a more inclusive future."
Institute for humane education resource center	The Institute for Humane Education offers activities/lesson plans, guides, book titles, multimedia resources, and more that are searchable and can be filtered by age, type, and subject/issues
National writing project resources for teaching writing—particularly publishing	The National Writing Project has many resources for teaching writing to children of various ages, but the focus on publishing opportunities at this part of the site can help give teachers ideas for authentic ways to support children's activist voices being heard in broader contexts than the classroom
Never too early to learn: antibias education for young children	The highly respected and venerable <i>Phi Delta Kappan</i> offers important lessons about race, diversity, and equity for the youngest learners
Positionality & privilege	EdJustice, a project of the National Education Association, has curated a multi-media list of resources to help educators engage in dialogue and "look through a clearer lens" when examining educational policy and practice in our school systems
Resources for addressing multicultural and diversity issues in your classroom	The National Education Association shares a list of books, websites, and other resources to help educators (and parents) learn about multicultural and diversity issues
Resources for race, equity, and inclusion	We Need Diverse Books is compiling and sharing resources from members of the WNDB community on race, equity, anti-racism, and inclusion that include organizations, book recommendations, Black-owned resources, and more
Resources for talking about race, racism, and racialized violence with kids	The Center for Racial Justice in Education provides lists of interviews, resources, articles, and affinity spaces to talk about race, racism, and racialized violence with children
<i>Teaching tolerance</i>	Produced by the advocacy group, the Southern Poverty Law Center, offers thoughtful guidance on how to address the weaponization of whiteness as we continue critical dialogue about race
Top five ways to promote ally behavior in students	The Human Rights Campaign, a national LGBTQ+ advocacy group, shares their top five ways to help children learn and practice ally behaviors

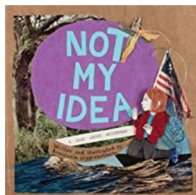
Table 2 Anti-racist picturebooks for young children

Devenny (2016). *Race cars: A children's book about white privilege*. Self-published by J. Devenny



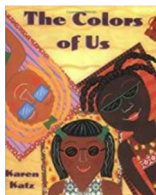
Race Cars is a children's book about white privilege. It was created to serve as a springboard for parents and educators to facilitate tough conversations with their kids about race, privilege and oppression. *Race Cars* tells the story of two best friends, a white car and a black car, that have different experiences and face different rules while entering the same race (from Amazon)

Higginbotham (2018). *Not my idea: A book about whiteness*. AK Press



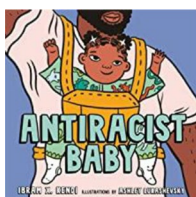
Not My Idea offers an emotional inlet to the crisis white children experience when they know people are being harmed, and they are actively discouraged from feeling anything about it. Inspired by her own children's curiosity, Higginbotham sets the story in present-day America, where a white child sees news coverage of a police shooting. The book empowers kids to seek an education in both white supremacy and those who have always fought against it—including some white people (from Amazon)

Katz (2002). *The colors of us*. Henry Holt & Company



Seven-year-old Lena is going to paint a picture of herself. She wants to use brown paint for her skin. But when she and her mother take a walk through the neighborhood, Lena learns that brown comes in many different shades. Through the eyes of a little girl who begins to see her familiar world in a new way, this book celebrates the differences and similarities that connect all people (from Amazon)

Kendi (2020). *Anti-racist baby board book*. Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Random House



Take your first steps with *Antiracist Baby!* Or rather, follow *Antiracist Baby's* nine easy steps for building a more equitable world. With bold art and thoughtful yet playful text, *Antiracist Baby* introduces the youngest readers and the grown-ups in their lives to the concept and power of antiracism. Providing the language necessary to begin critical conversations at the earliest age, *Antiracist Baby* is the perfect gift for readers of all ages dedicated to forming a just society (from Amazon)

Kissinger (2014). *All the colors we are/Todos los colores de nuestra piel*. 20th anniversary edition. Redleaf Press



Celebrate the essence of one way we are all special and different from one another—our skin color! This bilingual (English/Spanish) book offers children a simple, scientifically accurate explanation about how our skin color is determined by our ancestors, the sun, and melanin. It's also filled with colorful photographs that capture the beautiful variety of skin tones. Reading this book frees children from the myths and stereotypes associated with skin color and helps them build positive identities as they accept, understand, and value our rich and diverse world. Unique activity ideas are included to help you extend the conversation with children (from Amazon)

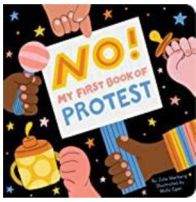
Latham & Waters (2019). *Can I touch your hair?: Poems of race, mistakes, and friendship*. Rock the Boat



How can Irene and Charles work together on their fifth-grade poetry project? They don't know each other, and they're not sure they want to. Irene Latham, who is white, and Charles Waters, who is black, use this fictional setup to delve into different experiences of race in a relatable way, exploring such topics as hair, hobbies, and family dinners. ...this remarkable collaboration invites readers of all ages to join the dialogue by putting their own words to their experiences (from Rock the Boat)

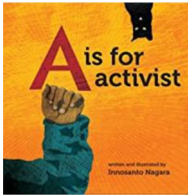
Table 2 (continued)

Merger (2020). No!: My first book of protest. Downtown Bookworks



Little ones who love to say “No!” can chime in while they learn about iconic activists from Frederick Douglass and Alice Paul to Martin Luther King Jr. and Malala. Each spread introduces an iconic figure—such as Gloria Steinem or Cesar Chavez—along with a super simple summary of the actions they took to change the course of history. Activists of all ages will learn about the abolitionist movement, civil rights, women’s rights, and more! And the chance to join the refrain on every spread “NO, NO!” is sure to please the tiniest protestors. A mini-history of protest movements at the end of the books is a handy cheat sheet for parents! (from DTBWpub.com)

Nagara (2016). A is for activist. Seven Stories Press



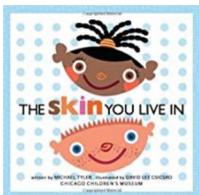
A is for Activist is an ABC board book written and illustrated for the next generation of progressives: families who want their kids to grow up in a space that is unapologetic about activism, environmental justice, civil rights, LGBTQ rights, and everything else that activists believe in and fight for. The alliteration, rhyming, and vibrant illustrations make the book exciting for children, while the issues it brings up resonate with their parents’ values of community, equality, and justice. This engaging little book carries huge messages as it inspires hope for the future, and calls children to action while teaching them a love for books (from Amazon)

Penfold (2018). All are welcome. Alfred A. Knopf



All Are Welcome shares the message of a school: A school where everyone’s differences are loved and celebrated. Page-after-page introduces different types of race, religions, ethnicity, and body types. These differences are celebrated as the message, “All are Welcome Here,” was repeated and shared on page-after-page of this beautiful text. The message in today’s world lately has been so destructive to those who are different. This book chooses to counteract the message of the world by reminding my students every day that they all are welcome in my classroom (from Amazon)

Tyler (2016). The skin you live in. Chicago Children’s Museum. Illustrated by D. L. Csicsko



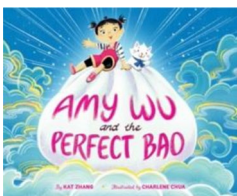
With the ease and simplicity of a nursery rhyme, this lively story delivers an important message of social acceptance to young readers. Themes associated with child development and social harmony, such as friendship, acceptance, self-esteem, and diversity are promoted in simple and straightforward prose. Vivid illustrations of children’s activities for all cultures, such as swimming in the ocean, hugging, catching butterflies, and eating birthday cake are also provided. This delightful picturebook offers a wonderful venue through which parents and teachers can discuss important social concepts with their children (from Amazon)

Yin (2016). Coolies. Puffin Books. Illustrated by C. K. Soentpiet



This book tells the story of Chinese railroad workers in the US West and the racially/ethnically-motivated discrimination they faced doing this grueling work. This book provides the counter-narrative to the typically glorified Westward Expansion usually told in standard curricula

Zhang (2019). Amy Wu and the perfect bao. Simon and Schuster Books for Young Children. Illustrated by C. Chua



This book focuses on Amy’s persistence and creativity using the Chinese culinary foundation of bao, a stuffed and often steamed bun

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