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Title: Children's Literature: An invitation to diversity awareness

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Abstract:

The relationships between literacy and social justice are inextricably woven. Children's literature links the two as it weaves an understanding of and empathy toward people of the many cultures within our society. It is within children's literature that our students see, through a literary window, into the lives of people they might not otherwise know in their families, their neighborhoods, or their schools. Unfortunately, the inclusion of multicultural children's literature is often overlooked as new teachers bring into the classroom the books from their own childhoods, a time in children's literature that has been described as an "all white world." It is therefore important, as pre-service teacher educators, that we emphasize not only the importance of the inclusion of multicultural children's literature but also provide ways in which the issues that are presented through the introduction of this literature may enhance not only literacy skills but understandings of equity issues. This presentation will demonstrate the relationships that can be made between the teaching of multicultural issues in a foundations course, and the teaching of children's literature in a teacher education program to increase students' understanding of multiculturalism and diversity.

Topic Areas: Educational Foundations and Reading Education