

Mirrors Matter: Using Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Literature to Support Language and Literacy Development

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Overview of the Session

- I. Why it matters: What the research says about the impact of culturally relevant texts
- II. Building multigenre text sets with “mirrors” and “windows”
- III. Collaborative book browsing and discussion
- IV. Examples from preK-3rd grade classrooms
- V. Collaborative Action Planning & Review of Resources



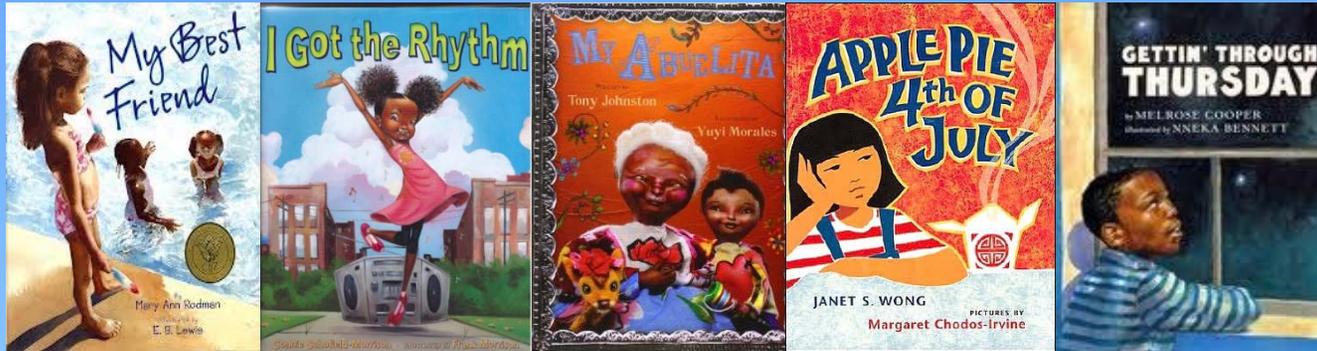
**Dedicated to the literacy learning of
children in city schools**

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The KIDS LIKE US Collection



High Quality Multicultural and Urban Children's Literature

- Multicultural communities
- Language and dialect variation
- Urban ecology and architecture
- Familiar contexts and experiences for children in the city

Books as “mirrors” and “windows”

(Rudine Sims Bishop, 1990)



What’s the balance of mirrors and windows like in your collection, curriculum, or classroom library?

Recent momentum

The New York Times

'Where are the people of color in children's books?' Walter Dean Myers (March 2014)

'The Apartheid of Children's Literature' Christopher Myers (March 2014)

For young Latino readers, an image is missing' (Dec 2012)



'Where is the Latino children's literature?' ' (Dec 2012)

EDUCATION WEEK

'Urban children's literature in short supply' (Feb 2012)



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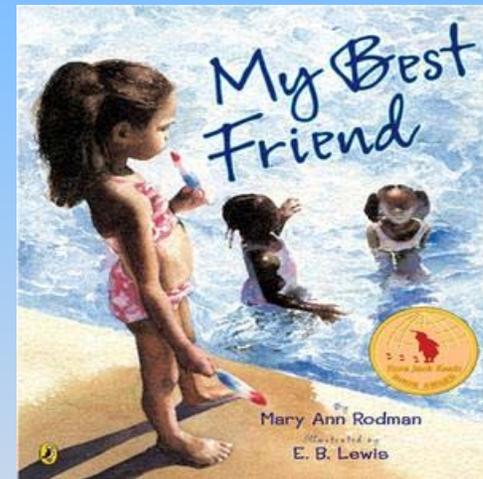
Cultural relevance

Think broadly.

INCLUDES - Race, ethnicity, SES, language, gender, religion

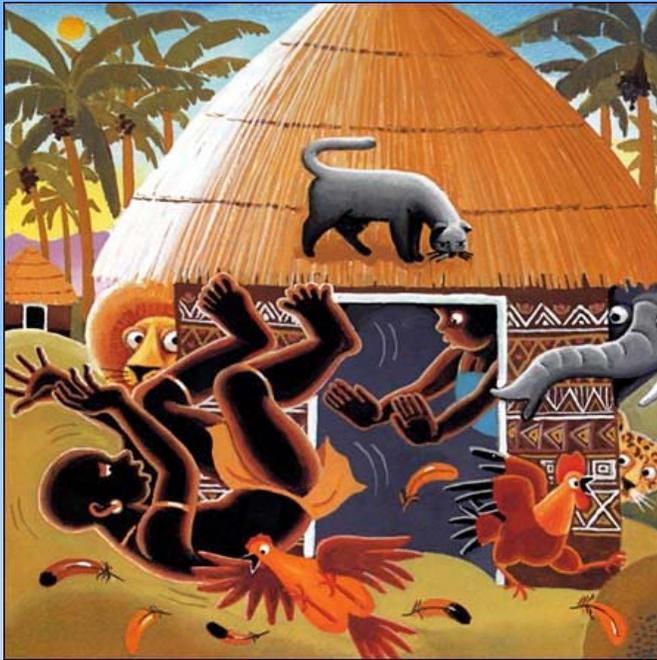
BUT ALSO ...

- Where children live
- What their neighborhoods are like
- Who they spend time with
- What their families are like
- Where they go to school
- What contemporary kids are up to



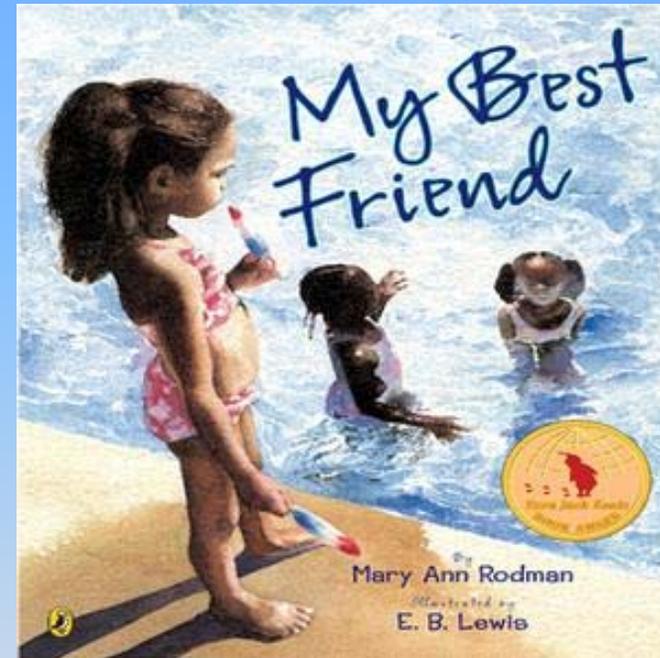
My Best Friend (2007).
Artwork by E.B. Lewis.

Multicultural ≠ Culturally Relevant



The Cat Who Came Indoors in
Nelson Mandela's Favorite Folk Tales (2007)

vs.



My Best Friend (2007).
Artwork by E. B. Lewis.

“culturally relevant” means more “mirrors”



Artwork by Chris Soentpiet in *Amazing Faces* (2010)

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What's the big deal?

Context and experience matter.

The Austin Neighborhood, Chicago



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North Omaha



South Omaha



Douglas County – DC West

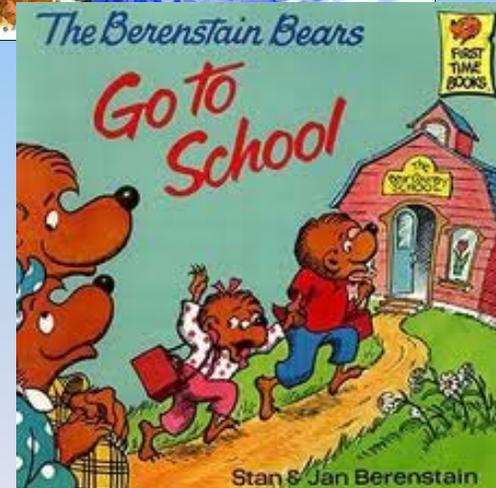
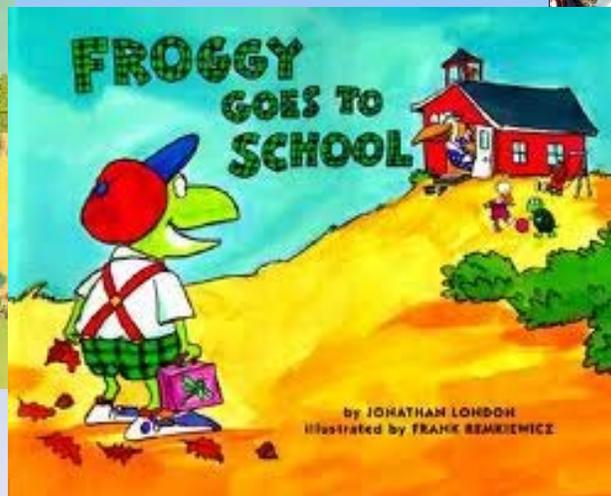
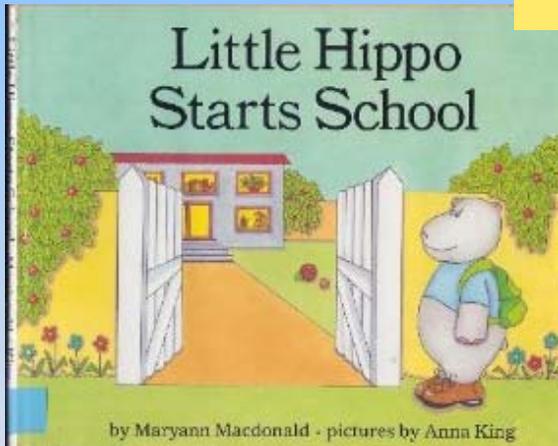
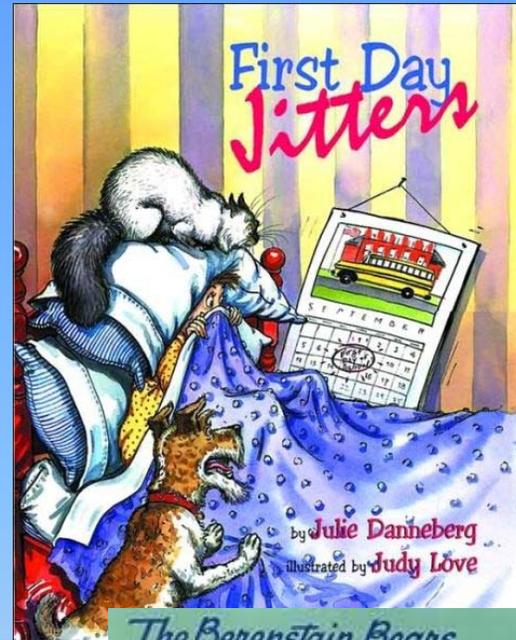
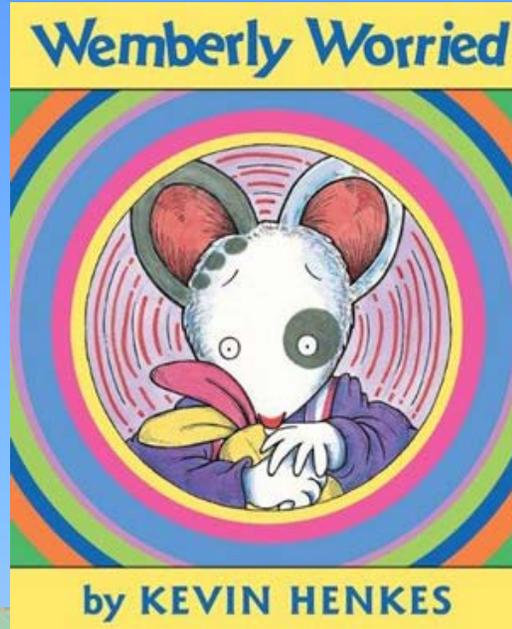
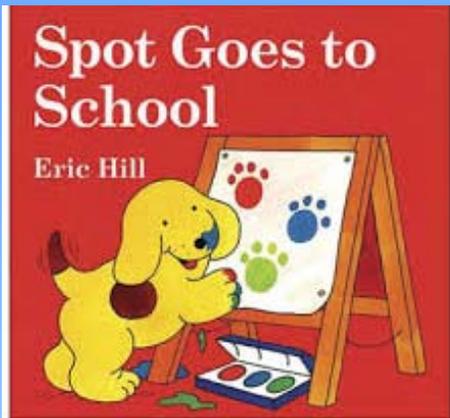


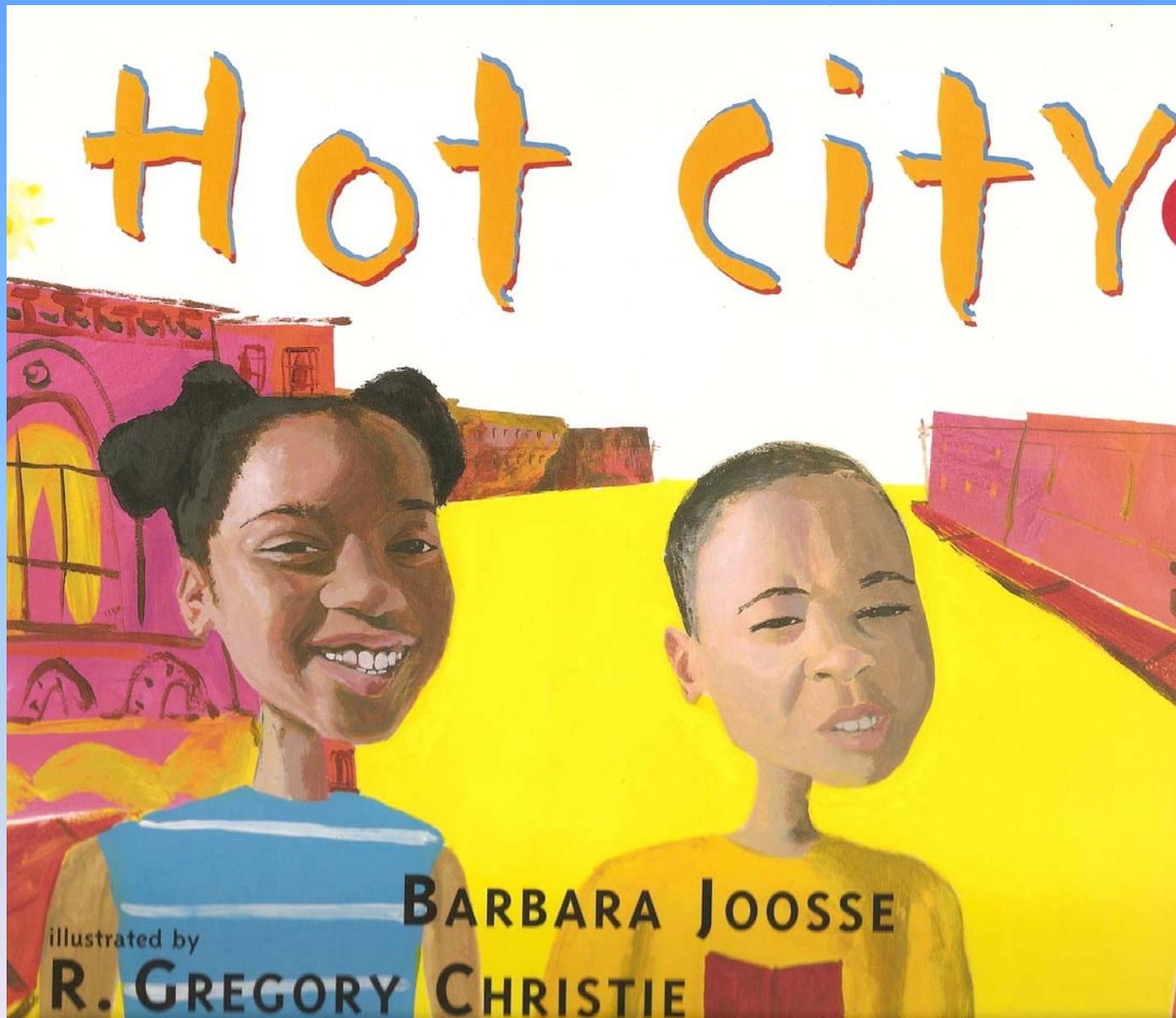
The Austin Neighborhood, Chicago



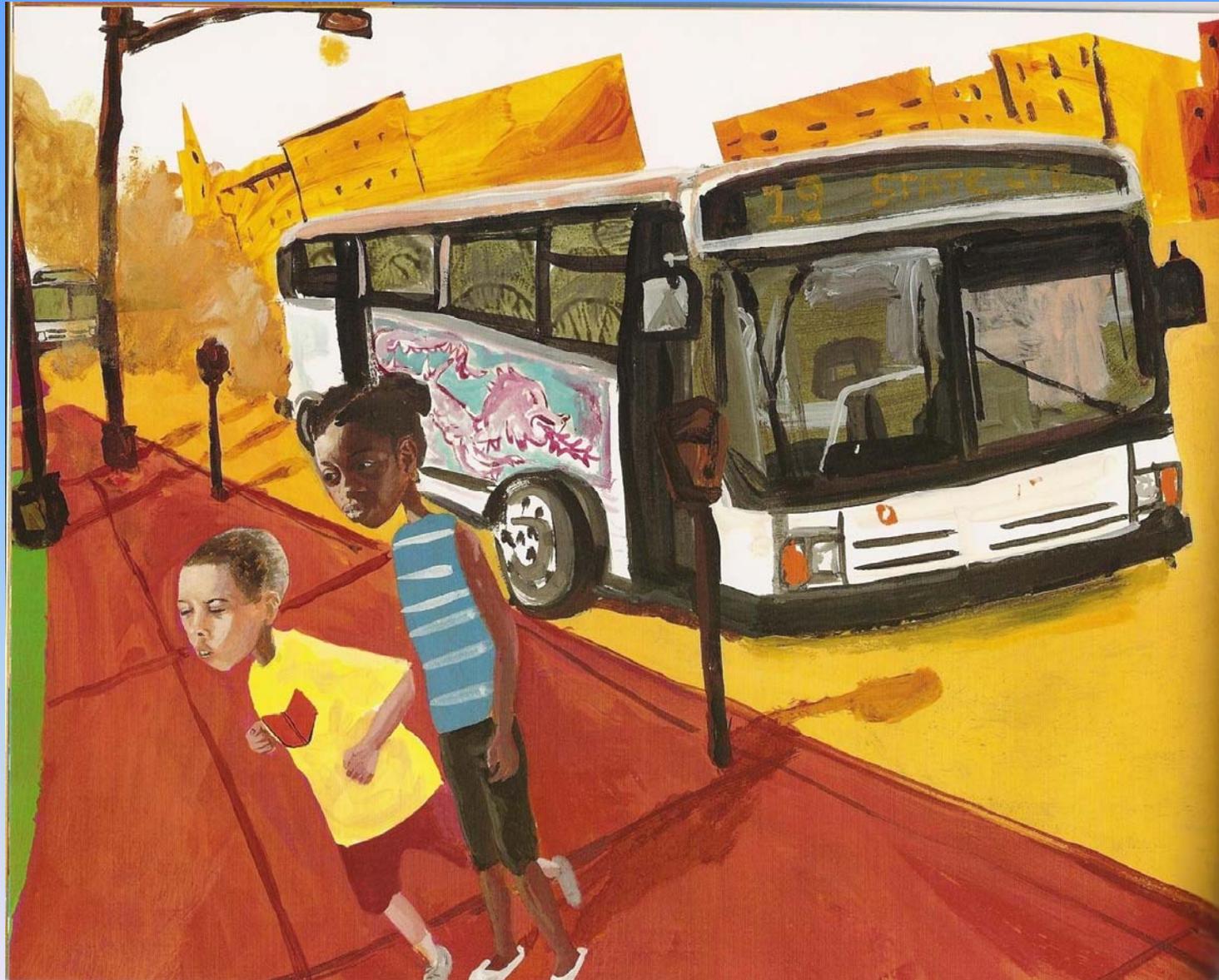
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Imagine that you are a 4-year old, just starting school in Austin...





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Why might “mirrors” matter for language and literacy development?

Culturally relevant literature matters in

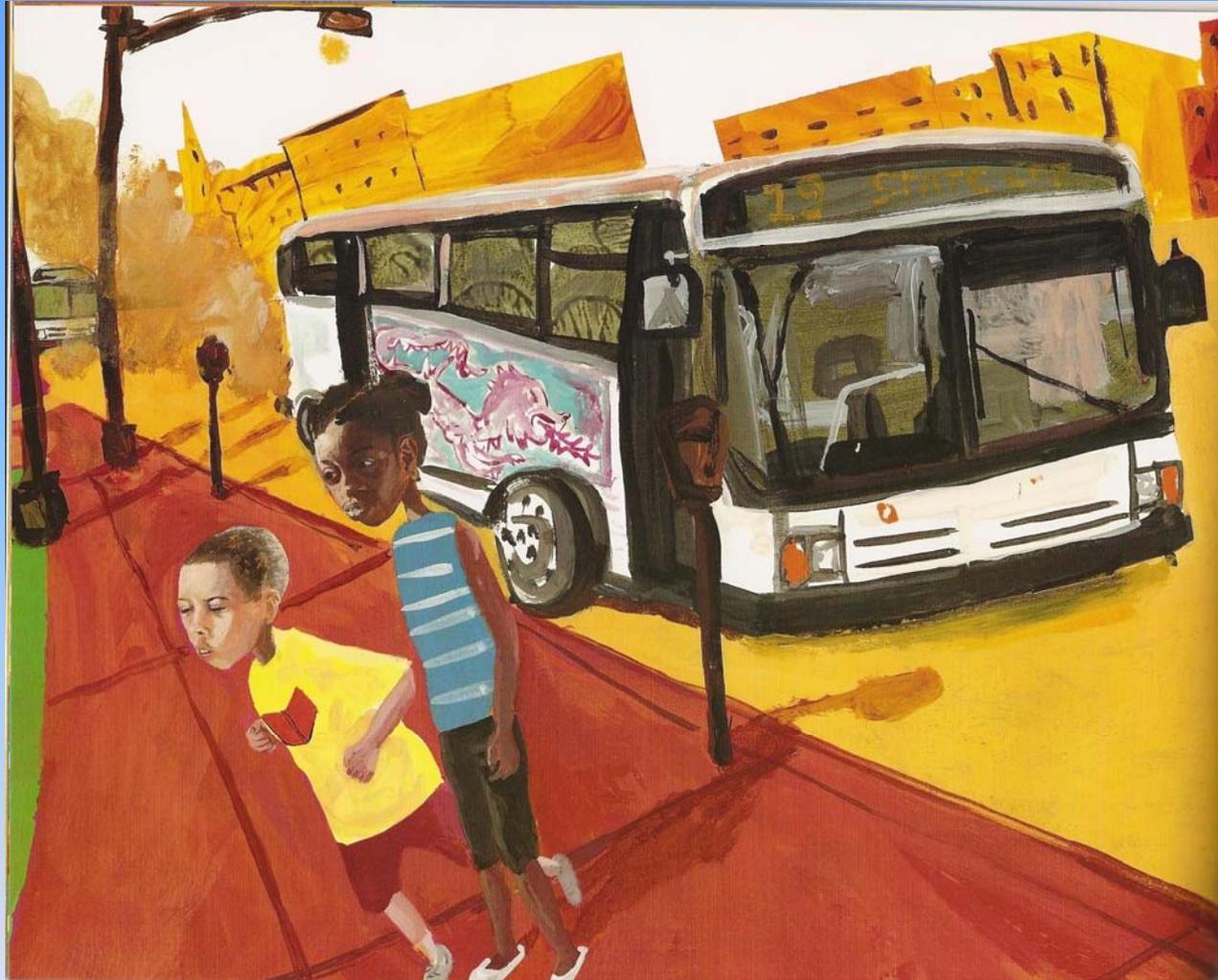
Emergent literacy

Oral language ↔ Literacy



Listening → oral retellings → relating speech to print

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“Out on the street, the buses are huffin’ out dragon-hot smoke.” (Joosse, 2004)

Culturally relevant literature matters for Interest and Engagement

(Wigfield, Guthrie, Eccles; Rueda 2011)

interest → motivation → frequency



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Culturally relevant literature matters for Family engagement

(Larrota & Gainer, 2008; Ortiz & Ordonex-Jasis, 2005)



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Culturally relevant literature matters for
Academic self-concept → achievement



Brown and Chu 2012; Cummins 2001; García Coll and Marks 2009;
Hawley and Nieto, 2010

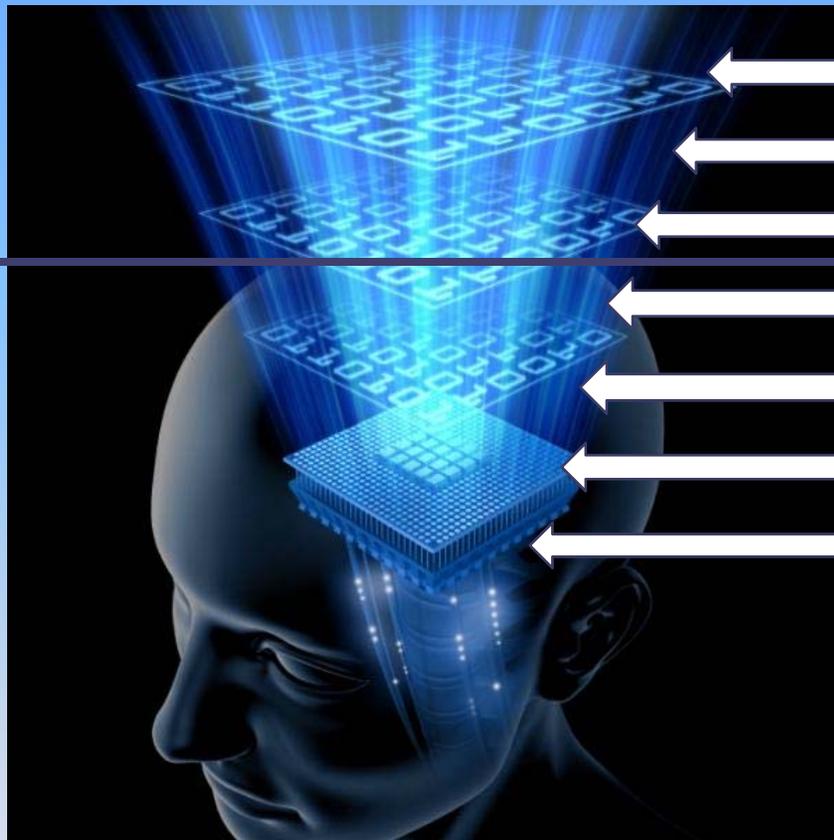
Culturally relevant literature matters for
Reading comprehension

(Rueda, 2011)

Activation of prior knowledge, using schema to support accuracy, fluency, comprehension



CRTs can help reduce cognitive overload



Analysis and synthesis of information

Inference making

Application of comp strategies

Selection of relevant schema

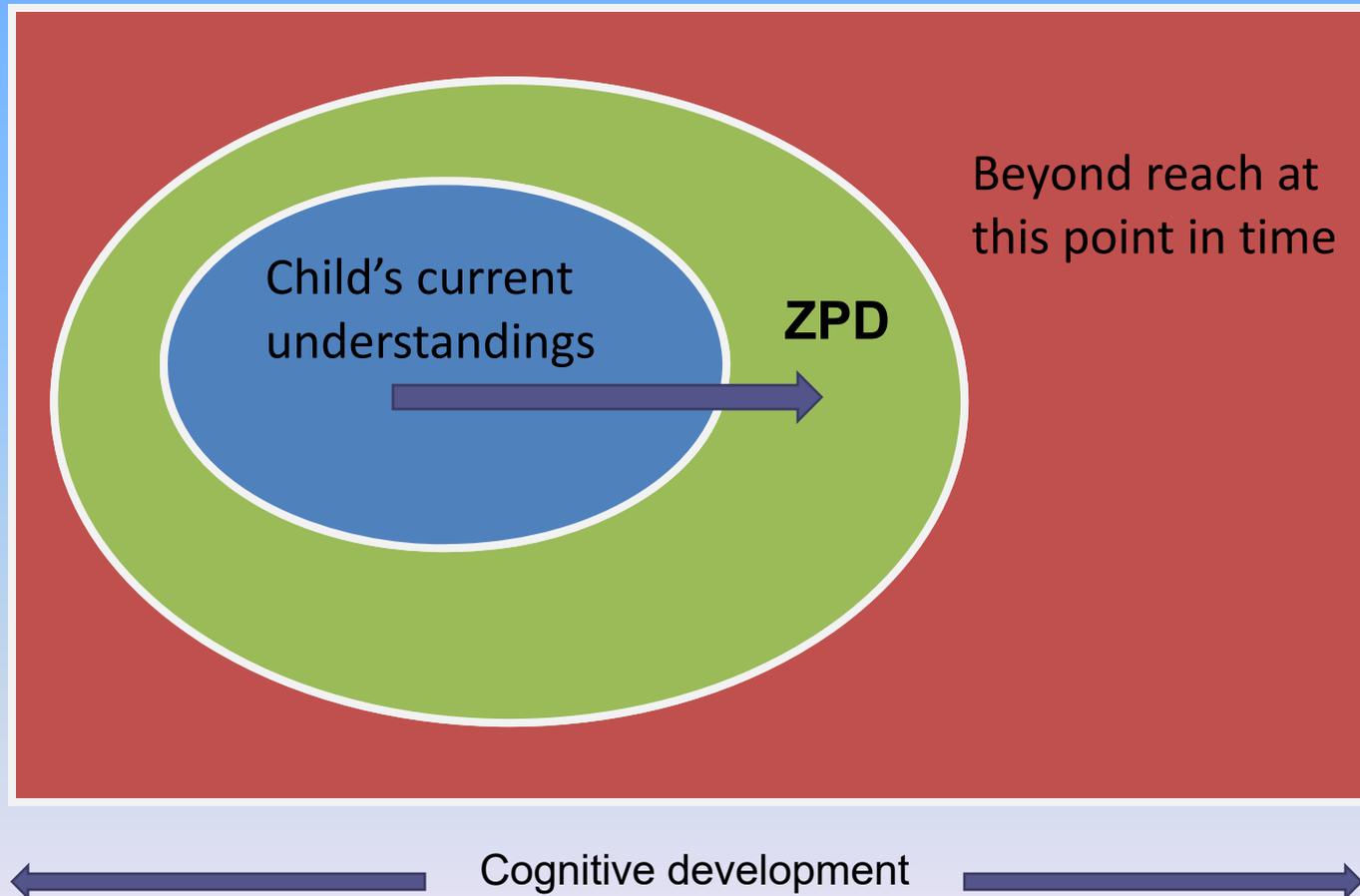
Language and text structure

Vocabulary recall

Word recognition

For novice readers, struggling readers, and dual language learners,
demands on working memory are even greater

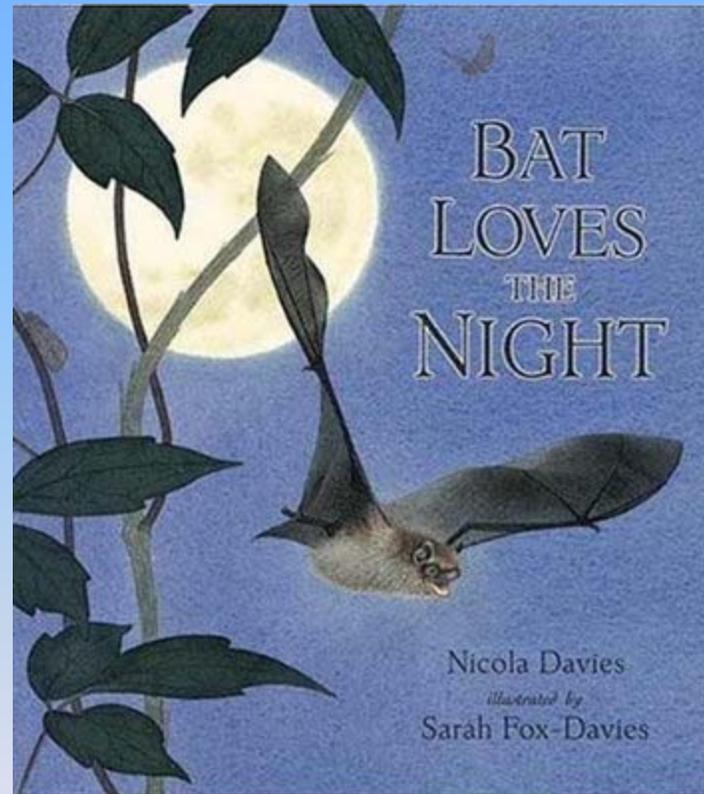
Importance of teaching within the ZPD



**“Much of the material presented in school strikes students as alien, if not pointless.”
~ Howard Gardner**

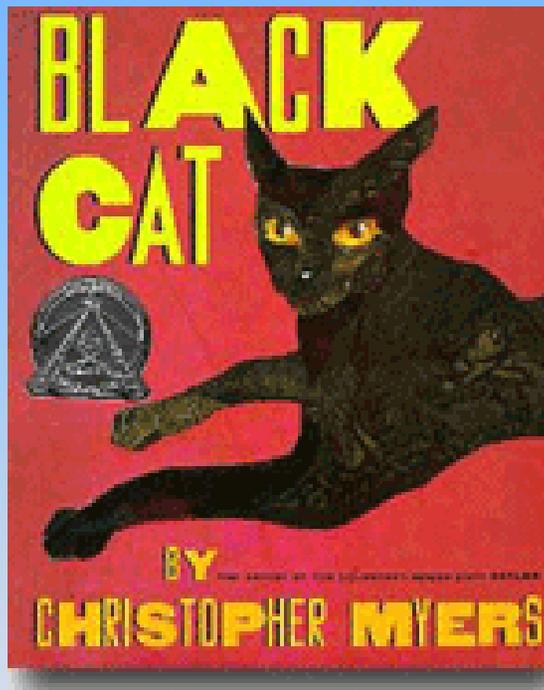
Visualization – Harcourt Story Town

“Bat is waking, upside down as usual, hanging by her toenails. Her beady eyes open. Her pixie ears twitch. She shakes her thistledown fur... Gliding and fluttering back and forth, she shouts her torch of sound among the trees, listening for her supper.”



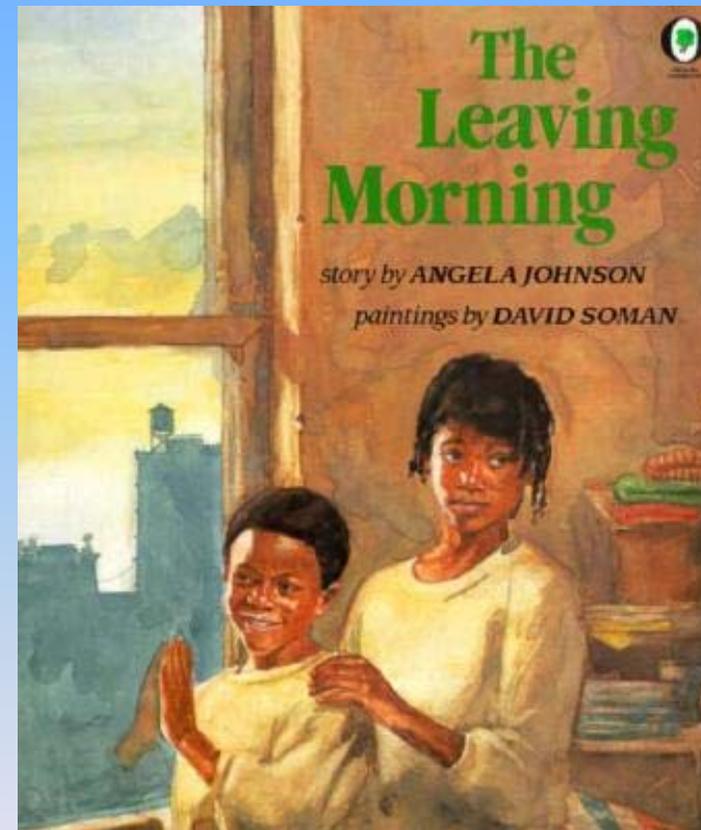
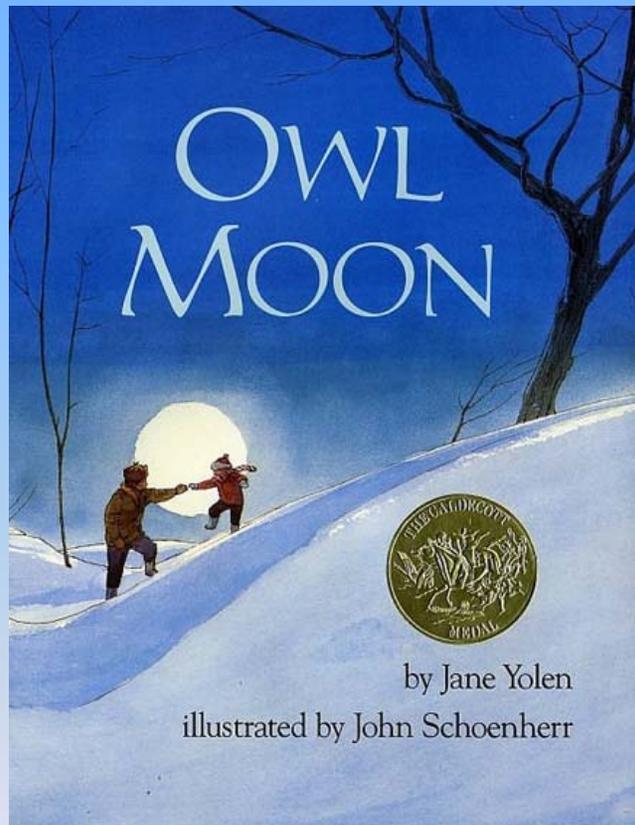
Visualize This...

Black Cat by Christopher Myers



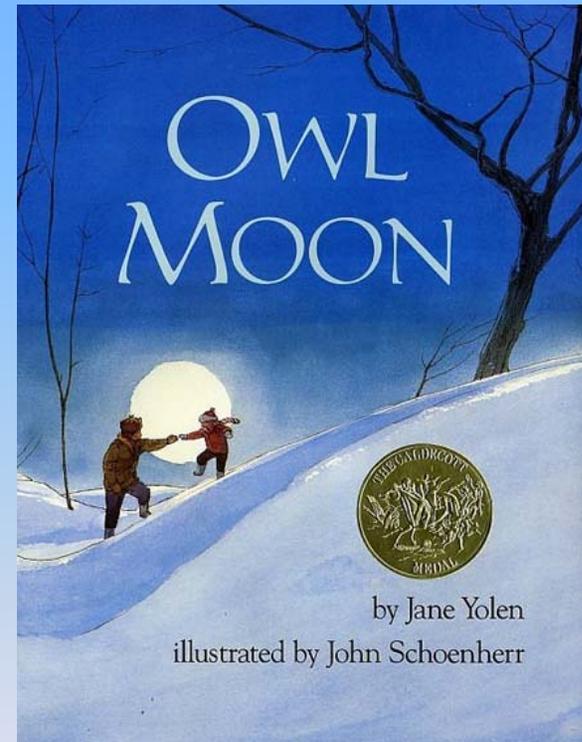
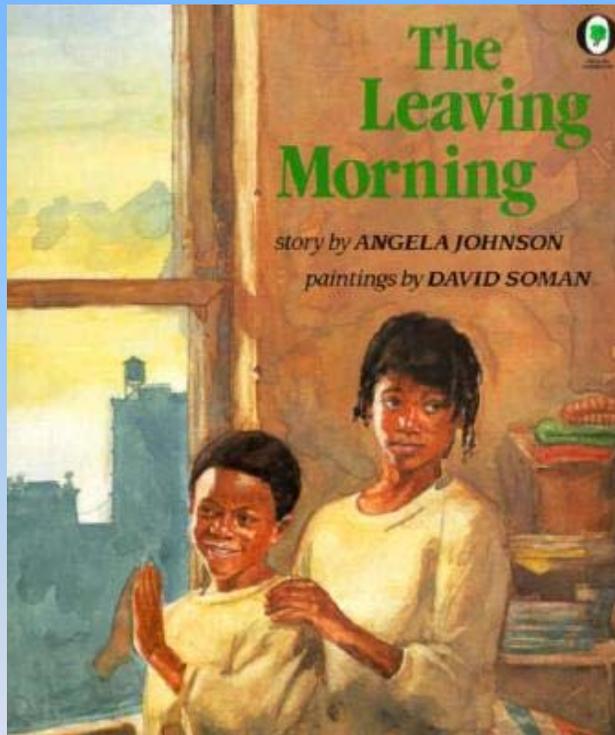
“Black cat, black cat,
cousin to the concrete,
creeping down our city streets
Where do you live?
Where will we meet?
Sauntering like rain water down
storm drains
Between Cadillac tires and the curb
Sipping water from fire hydrants
Dancing to the banging beats of
passing jeeps”
(Myers 1999).

Calkins – Small Moments



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Calkins – Small Moments

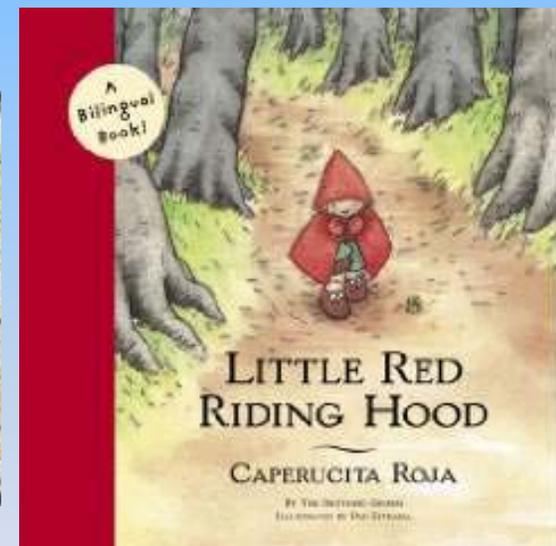
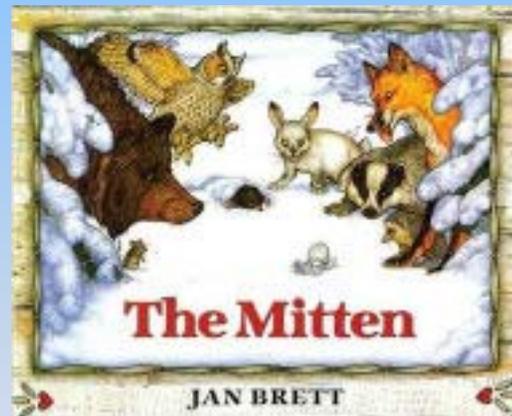
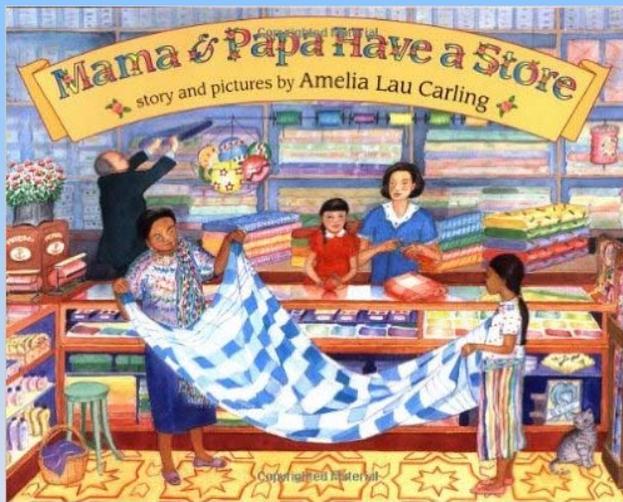


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Developing Text Sets with Mirror and Windows

Creative Curriculum - Clothes Study

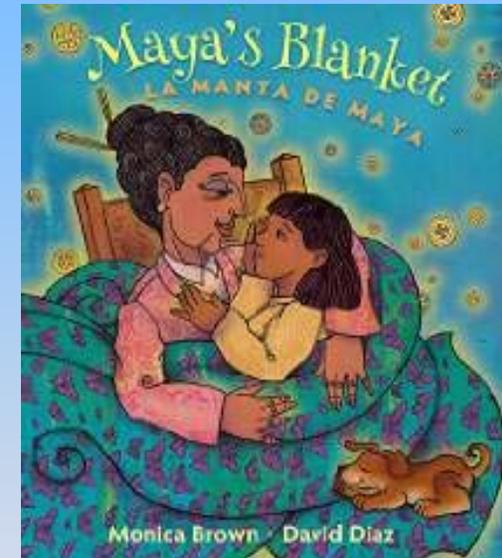
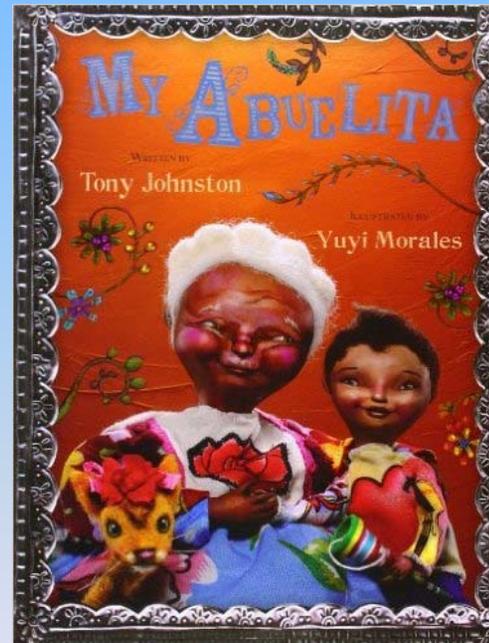
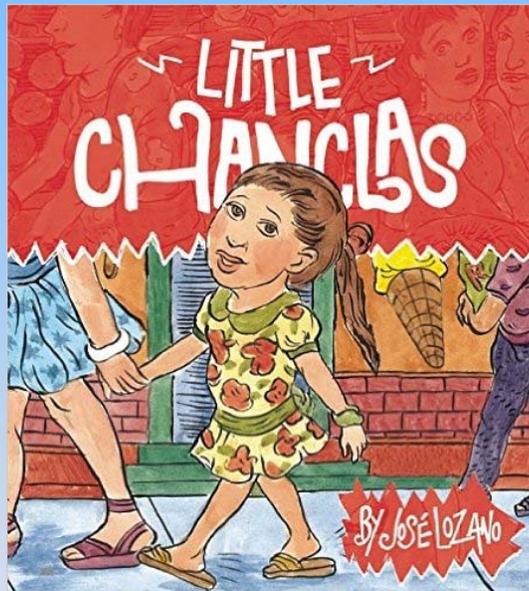
Why are clothes important? Why do people have “favorite” clothes?



Developing Text Sets with Mirror and Windows

Creative Curriculum - Clothes Study

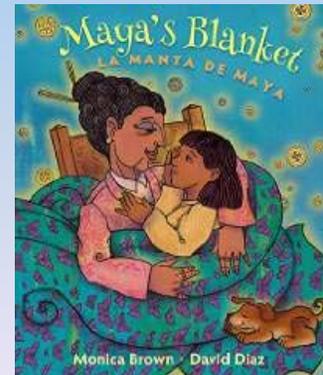
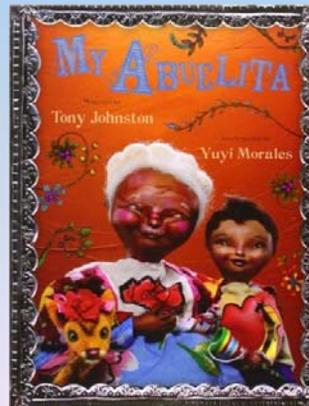
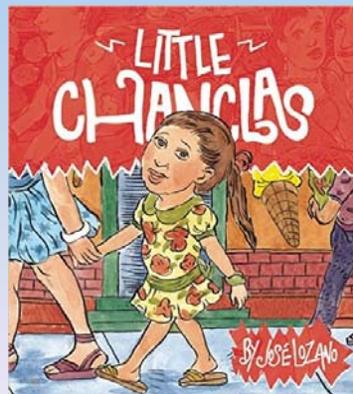
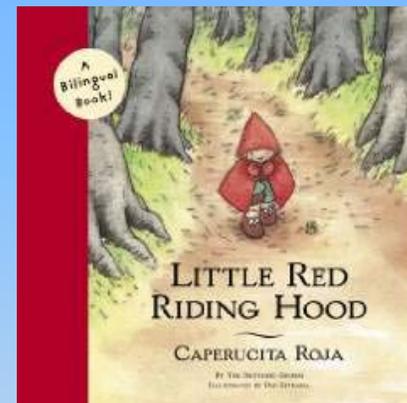
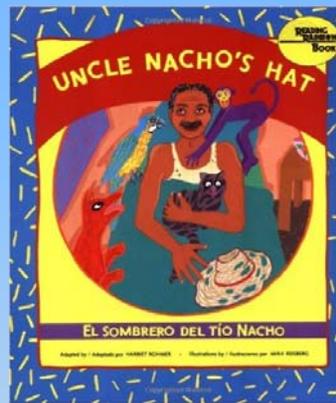
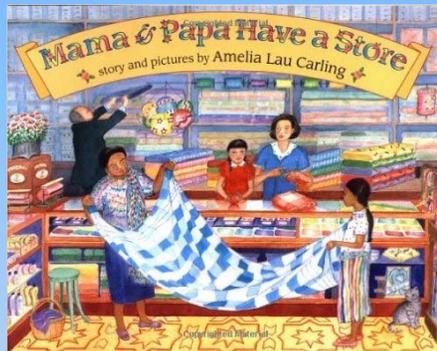
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Developing Text Sets with Mirror and Windows

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Why are clothes important? Why do people have “favorite” clothes?

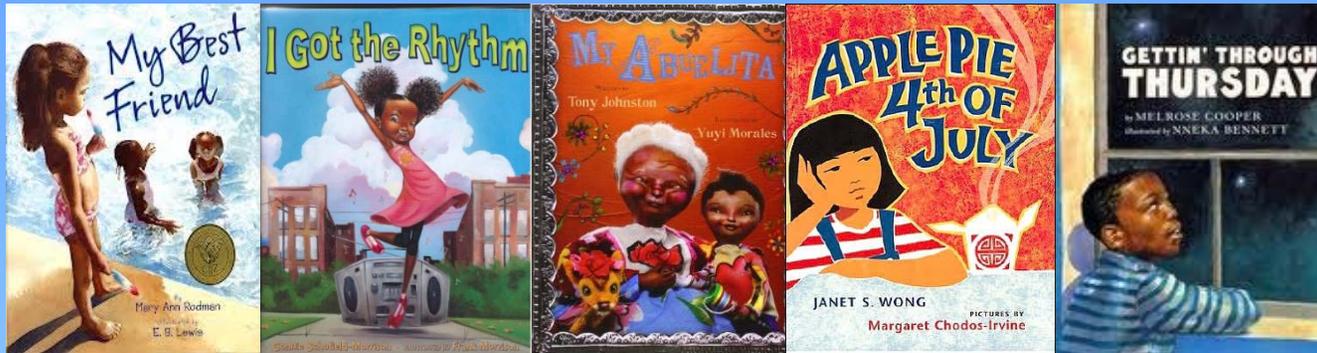


A rectangular box with a dark grey border and a light grey gradient background, centered on a blue background. The text inside the box is "Where do you teach, live, or work?".

Where do you teach, live, or work?

Think about cultural relevance in your setting

- What cultural communities are represented?
- What languages and dialects are spoken in your community?
- What is the landscape like?
- What is the ecology and architecture like?
- What kinds of day-to-day experiences would be familiar to children in your setting?



Book Browsing

Which books might be good “mirrors” or “windows” for the children with whom you work?

Share books and discuss with colleagues



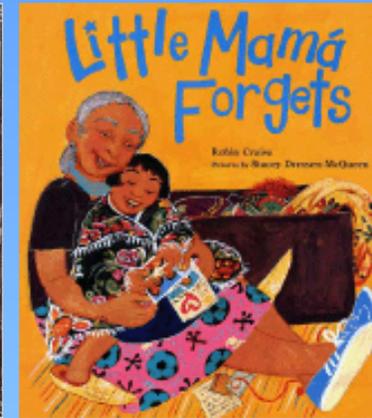
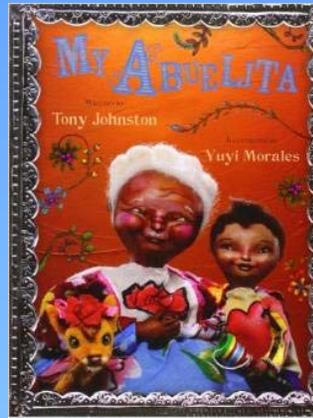
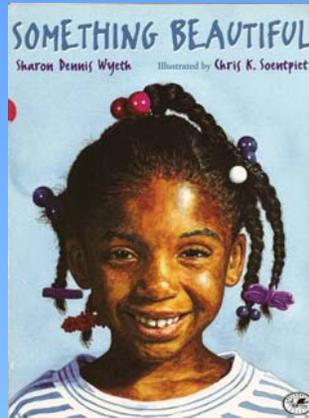
What did you notice about the
collection?

What questions do you have?

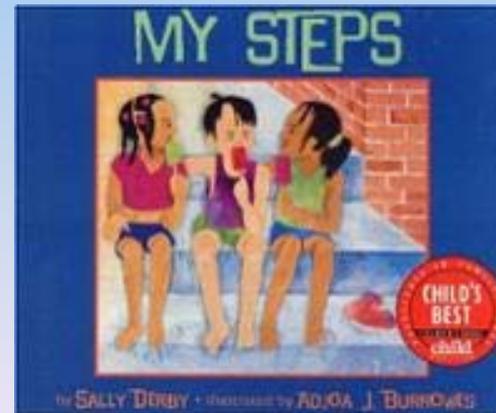
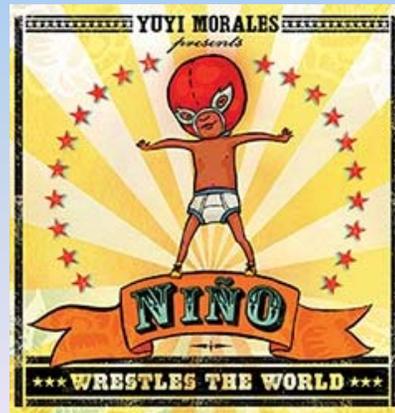
Identifying Action Steps (p. 5)



1. What takeaways can you act on right away in your setting?
2. What next steps would you recommend for KIDS LIKE US?



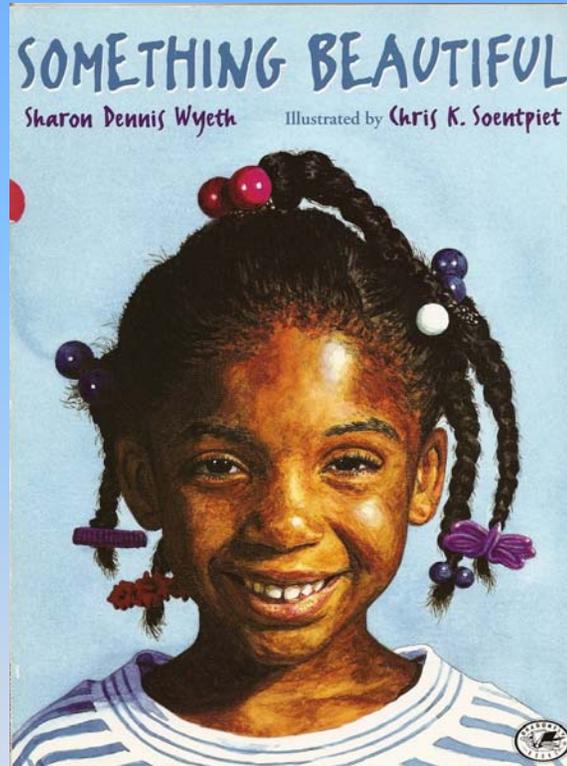
The impact of culturally relevant texts on children and teachers (Clark & Fleming, 2015)



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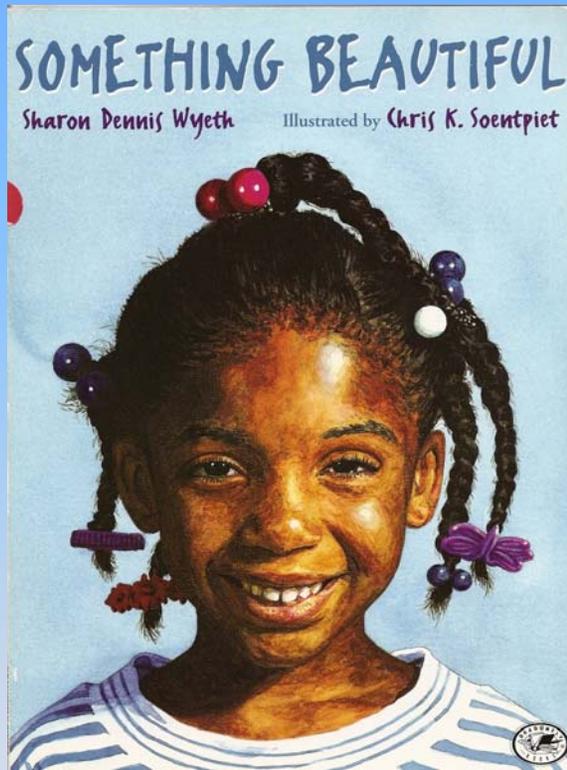
Something Beautiful

Kindergarten



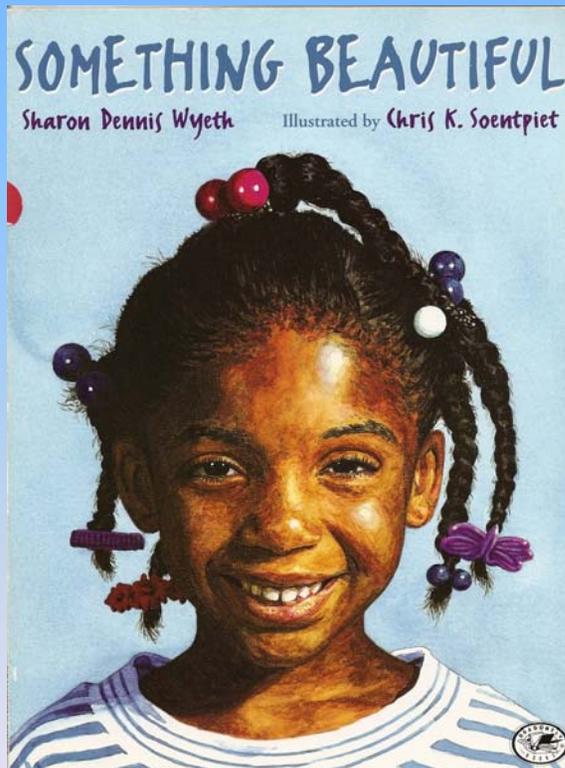
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“You could have heard a pin drop”



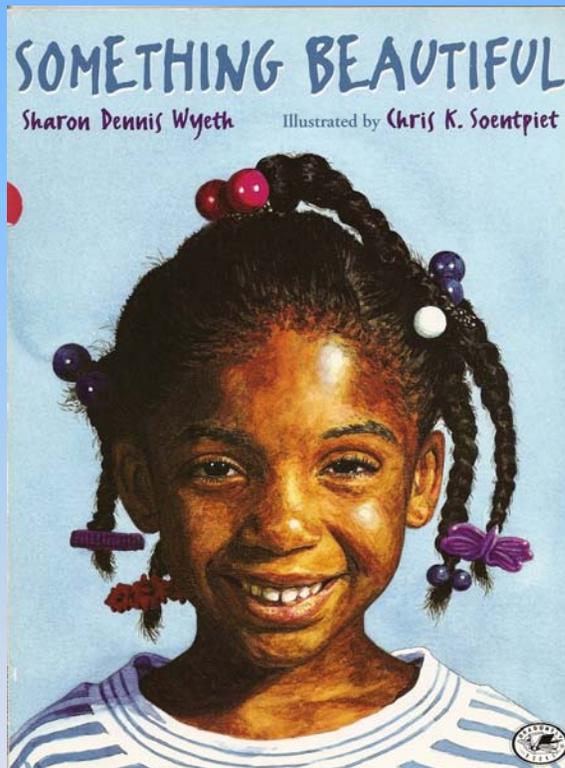
“Kids who sometimes would tune out seemed more focused. Even some of my squirmier ones would stay still and be listening. The kids were super-engaged in the discussion. It was really cool for them to see their neighborhood in a book. Growing up in the Austin neighborhood, you don’t see that represented, so it was, like, very real to them, which was very cool for me.”

“Even five year olds can make pretty profound connections”



“The connections that they were able to make, and how they responded to what was happening in that story, was just like, baffling to me...It was really cool for me to see how even these five year olds can make pretty profound connections with a text like that.”

“They really rise to the challenge”



“I try not to, but I think that sometimes I put some kinds of limitations on the kids. It’s easy to say, oh they’re five, they can’t do that. It made me realize that when given the opportunity, they really rise to the challenge.”



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