



The Narrative of You: Discovering Identities of Young Children by Appreciating Differences in Race, Religion, and Culture

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Selwyn Elementary School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
Kindergarten through Second Grade

Keywords: acceptance, affective insurgency, appreciation, awareness, critical thinking, culture, diversity, kindergarten, identity, narrative, ownership, multicultural education, race, religion

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix I](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: This comprehensive, project-based curriculum unit spans across an entire school year to help young students understand and appreciate the identities of themselves and others. Students explore the beautiful differences that make themselves and others unique. The Narrative of You unit asks educators and students alike to look at what has shaped him or her and identify their perspectives of the world. Identities of race, religion, culture, and ethnicities are studied to create acceptance and comfort with all people. Educators and their students read diverse works of literature and take part in meaningful conversations about diversity and identity as they work to answer how they relate to and respect others' differences. In doing so, students will understand their own identities with pride and self-respect. The process of the readings and discussions creates more accepting and aware children who are more likely to become active participants in the greater global community and spark a culture of kindness.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 21 kindergarten students in the subjects of Literacy and Social Studies throughout quarters 1 to 4.

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Caroline Demmitt

Introduction

This curriculum unit allowed me to align my beliefs of educating the whole child through supporting their physical, emotional, and cognitive wellbeing with the goal of having children explore their self and their surroundings. I am excited to bring this unit into my classroom and the classrooms of others across world. As a kindergarten teacher, I find that bringing culture and acceptance into the classroom is crucial in creating a welcoming and trusting environment that facilitates lifelong learning. I have always had a passion for early childhood education as well as a passion for traveling and experiencing cultures unlike my own. I wrote this curriculum unit by bringing those two passions together in order to promote acceptance and create a culture of kindness. I always strive to bring aspects of culture and diversity into my classroom to learn and grow as much as possible each year. All children are individuals who need to be motivated, challenged, and valued. Young people are naturally curious beings who are designed to explore their surroundings. This unit allows educators like myself to scaffold students' learning to do just that. By drawing upon research on Muslim experiences in the United States and centering children's literature that engages Muslim American experiences, this unit attempts to think through questions of diversity, race, and justice in new and productive ways that are not limited to the usual "Black and White" understanding of diversity that organizes most pedagogy on diversity. It allows students to grow by creating strong relationships with families and children, showing respect for each child, and valuing creativity, responsibility, and individuality, I encourage children to become their very best in an enthusiastic and caring environment. I wanted to create a curriculum unit that would challenge societal norms and expose children to thoughts they have not yet experienced.

Rationale

The Narrative of You Curriculum Unit is a cohesive and unique unit that pushes young students out of their comfort zones, helps shape their perspectives of the world, and challenge any preconceived notions that they may have. Culture is an abstract and complex concept for young learners, especially for kindergartners. However, early exposure is key to creating acceptance and comfort with all people. In our connected world, exposure to religions and backgrounds from an early age is imperative in creating a culture of kindness. Within this curriculum unit, teachers utilize children's natural curiosity to facilitate project-based learning across the course of a school year. Students research a variety of religions, races, and cultures as they work to uncover their narratives and understand all that is beautiful about the identities of themselves and others.

The questions 'what makes you, you?' and 'how can we relate to and respect others' differences?' are central to the unit. Students go through a multi-step project to create a variety of mediums that pique the interest of different types of learning styles. Exploring mediums such as art, oral histories, written works, and literature, allows students to dive into their preferences and strengths in order to create a more meaningful narrative. All students change drastically over

the course of a school year. Because of this, it is important for the topic of creating a narrative and appreciating others' differences to start from day one. As students learn and grow throughout the year, each piece of his or her project builds upon each other to create a beautiful portfolio and story that can be saved and cherished for years to come. Stretching the unit out across an entire school year also allows time for the students to become comfortable in their classroom with their teachers and peers. When students feel comfortable with educators and peers, they are more likely to open up to confront questions, stereotypes, and reveal their true self without worries or hesitations. Additionally, the spring semester is typically a time of exponential academic growth. Students flourish with their reading and writing, often trying harder and completing tasks with renewed enthusiasm, better explanation, and more detail. During this time, students bring their skills, experience, and expertise throughout the year together in order to create their culminating task, a cohesive story of themselves. Narratives of Muslim life in America—along with points of views from Latinx, African Americans, Asians, and Native Americans—are central to this project as students and teachers create a comprehensive overview of student-made narratives, coming from one of the most pure and unique viewpoints of all: the lens of young learners.

School Demographics

Selwyn Elementary School is located in the affluent suburban neighborhood of Myers Park in South Charlotte, North Carolina. Selwyn Elementary is a part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, a public school system made up of 175 schools grades pre-kindergarten through twelve and nearly 148,000 students.¹ While approximately 37% of all students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are Black, Selwyn is quite the contrary.² Of the 814 students enrolled in grades kindergarten through five at Selwyn during the 2018-2019 school year, 74.4% were white, with only 9.8% Hispanic, 8.8% Black, and less than 8% who were mixed and of other nationalities such as Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American.³ Out of the total student population, 13% are Special Education students with Individualized Education Plans.⁴ Selwyn primarily caters to the affluent families that surround it's beautiful, 120 acre campus that is shared with Alexander Graham Middle School and Myers Park High School. The affluence shows in the low percentage of Selwyn students identified as economically disadvantaged, at 15%, and the slightly lower percentage of 13% who receive free and reduced lunch.⁵ This is a drastic difference compared to the 47% of students across all of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools who are economically disadvantaged and the 54.6% overall who receive free and reduced lunch.⁶

Selwyn is a well-supported school that is an integral part of the Southpark and Myers Park community. It is strong with its faculty, academics, and family and community connections. The school is led by one principal and one assistant principal, with 36 classroom teachers in the 2020-2021 school year.⁷ On average, Selwyn's kindergarten through second grades classes have

¹ "District Snapshot for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2019. <https://ncreportcards.ondemand.sas.com/src/district?district=600LEA>.

² "District Snapshot for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

³ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2019. <https://ncreportcards.ondemand.sas.com/src/school?school=600522&year=2019&lng=en>.

⁴ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

⁵ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

⁶ "District Snapshot for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

⁷ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

approximately 18 to 21 students each with one teacher teaching all core subjects.⁸ Grades three through five numbers are slightly higher, averaging 25 students per class with teachers splitting up subjects.⁹ Although Selwyn's administration and staff aim to ensure classrooms are well-balanced academically and racially, it can be difficult with such low diversity numbers. The majority of students come to Selwyn with previous schooling experience and are academically high achieving. 82.6% of the students are proficient upon entering, which gives these young learners a secure and often promising start to their educational career.¹⁰ It does not take long to see the pay off and growth. In 2019 in third through fifth grade, more than 95% of all Selwyn students were labeled as academically and intellectually gifted, allowing them to take advantage of enrichment opportunities within Selwyn.¹¹

The educators at Selwyn are well qualified. In 2019, 83% of Selwyn's teachers were labeled as veteran teachers, with at least three years of teaching experience.¹² 62.5% of Selwyn's educators were labeled as effective and 27.1% were highly effective.¹³ The turnover rate at Selwyn is particularly low and it is common for teachers to retire from Selwyn upon reaching their 30 years of experience. Teachers are well-supported by one another, administration, support staff, and the highly involved parent community. The strength of Selwyn's teachers can be seen through test scores. Selwyn regularly meets and exceeds test score goals and typically surpasses the district average. For example, during the 2018-2019 school year, 85.6% of third through fifth grade students demonstrated grade level proficiency on their end of year Math assessments compared to the 63.3% of total students in the district who displayed Math proficiency.¹⁴ Selwyn's end of year English Language Arts scores were similar. Selwyn students demonstrated 79.8% proficiency, whereas 54.4% of all Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools students demonstrated proficiency.¹⁵ Another factor for the high test scores at Selwyn can be linked to high parent involvement, the ability for many families to pay for tutors when needed or wanted, and pre-school readiness, such as attending high-achieving private or parochial preschools, pre-kindergartens, and transitional kindergartens.

The test results of Selwyn Elementary undoubtedly look impressive. However, when discussing diversity, it is important to look further into the data. When looking into the data, there is an alarming achievement gap between white students and minorities. When broken down into subgroups, 92% of white students scored proficient in Math compared to their Black and Hispanic peers.¹⁶ An upsetting data point reads that 63% of Hispanic students and 49% of Black students were labeled as proficient.¹⁷ English Language Arts scores were similar; 88% of white students scored proficient, with Hispanic students behind them at 51% and Black students at 49%.¹⁸ Selwyn Elementary is a successful school by many accounts. However, its biggest

⁸ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

⁹ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

¹⁰ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

¹¹ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

¹² "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

¹³ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

¹⁴ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

¹⁵ "District Snapshot for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

¹⁶ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

¹⁷ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

¹⁸ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

weakness is that it lacks diversity both racially and socioeconomically, creating a major achievement gap. With the majority of Selwyn students being white upper middle class, infusing diversity into their learning as much as possible is crucial to create acceptance, understanding, and most importantly, appreciation. The solution is to attack the normalization of Euro-centric materials. It is not necessarily that educational stakeholders need to make educational materials more diverse, it is that these stakeholders need to make sure materials do not give undo advantage to white students.

Unit Goals

Upon completion of The Narrative of You curriculum unit, students will have a thorough account of who they are and what makes them unique. They will understand that differences are beautiful and a wonderful part of being human. Students will speak confidently about diversity within races, religions, and cultures, answering the question ‘how can we relate to and respect others’ differences?’ Students will understand that there are people of different races, creeds, and ethnicities and that people all have similarities. People do not have to fit into only one identity; humans are made up of many pieces from varying makeups. Not only will students be able to speak about the diversity of others, they will also be able to address their uniqueness with pride and accomplishment, answering the second main guiding question, ‘what makes you, you?’ They will answer this and take ownership of their identities. Throughout this year-long unit, students and teachers have the opportunity to learn from each other and uncover our greatest strengths and the makeup of our identities. Because the unit spans over the course of a year, the unit will be integrated in Literacy, Social Studies, and Social-Emotional instruction. The unit is intentionally cross-curricular, so students will have practiced and shown growth in their communication skills, reading and writing abilities, and social-emotional development. The whole child truly benefits from this experience.

Students who participate in this curriculum are just beginning their educational journey and are eager to explore. They will have a chance to use the project-based learning approach to experiment within this unit using mediums such as art, film, voice recordings, and writing. When they begin with something as inclusive and comprehensive as this curriculum, students will take their acceptance and awareness with them as they continue in their future years of schooling. The diversity of mediums allows many diverse learning styles the opportunity to access the knowledge discussed. The connection that they will make between themselves and others will help them to see the benefits of working together in order to create and promote a more cohesive world. Students will show empathy and open-mindedness, collaborate with others, think critically, and effectively communicate. These skills are necessary in preparing children to tackle the real world both now and in future careers. The vision of this unit is to take these skills to create a culture of kindness and acceptance as these young children go on to be the world’s future leaders.

Content Research

The desire to be included and appreciated runs deep in every human. Just as adults crave getting along with others when they start at a new job or enter an event, children also just want to fit in. They want to be included in play and conversation and liked by others. When children are

younger, they are more likely to be found engaging with whomever, regardless of looks and interests. One child may have different skin color or hair color but enjoys Legos just the same. One child may pray to many gods while the other does not pray at all, but this is unknown or unspoken as they blast off into outer space or chase each other around the playground. Young children in particular often engage with others with similar interests, regardless of appearance. However, “children are aware of skin color differences and label people accordingly by the age of 3.”¹⁹ While it may be harder to pinpoint these biases, “early childhood is a critical period in which to start multicultural education.”²⁰ Unveiled or not, biases can be formed by parents and caregivers and then imprinted on the child. Children can only understand diversity and uniqueness when the majority of peers look similar by exposure to a variety of resources showcasing different races, religions, and cultures. When children try to fit in when they are just one of a limited number of diverse students in a class or setting, it is key to make them feel welcome and safe just the way they are. The guiding research behind The Narrative of You Curriculum Unit argues this point. All people are constantly affected by society and their surroundings, but the effects are characterized differently for majority versus minority groups. All people have a level of comfort in different situations. People in the majority have a natural comfort level, whereas people in the minority are constantly seeking affirmation to be comfortable.

Dr. Sylvia Chan-Malik, a scholar and professor of Ethnic, Gender, and Religious Studies, calls this concept of not conforming, but standing out ‘affective insurgency.’²¹ Affective insurgency is the idea that those whose presentation-of-self differs from the majority are often inherently drawn into a type of resistance or tension with the norms of the majority. People in the minority are continually going against the societal norms and therefore are constantly impacted by society and their surroundings. Those in the minority have consistent barriers not faced by those in the majority. Chan-Malik argues that “anything against the dominant norm manifests itself in how we carry ourselves every day.”²² To better understand Chan-Malik’s concept, it is best to split it up into two parts. The first part, ‘affective,’ is all of the things that are beyond rationale expressions. Things such as how we dress and speak and what schools people attend, is affective; “you always feel these sensations in your body” and are shown through daily expressions.²³ The second part, ‘insurgency,’ is the intention and resistance to norms. The affective-ness “is insurgent because you are always operating against the normal of what an acceptable, normal citizen should look like or be like at a given moment.”²⁴

¹⁹ So Jung Kim, Su-Jeong Wee, and Young Mi Lee, “Teaching Kindergartners Racial Diversity Through Multicultural Literature: A Case Study in a Kindergarten Classroom in Korea.” *Early education and development* 27, no. 3 (2015), 402.

²⁰ Kim et al, “Teaching Kindergartners Racial Diversity Through Multicultural Literature: A Case Study in a Kindergarten Classroom in Korea,” 402.

²¹ Sylvia Chan-Malik, *Being Muslim: A Cultural History of Women of Color in American Islam* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2018).

²² Kristian Petersen, “Sylvia Chan-Malik, ‘*Being Muslim: A Cultural History of Women of Color in American Islam*’ (NYU Press, 2018),” October 17, 2018, in *New Books in Gender Studies*, podcast, <https://newbooksnetwork.com/sylvia-chan-malik-being-muslim-a-cultural-history-of-women-of-color-and-american-islam-nyu-press-2018>.

²³ Petersen, *New Books in Gender Studies*.

²⁴ Petersen, *New Books in Gender Studies*.

In the United States today, nearly 70 percent of all citizens, regardless of race, identify themselves as Christians.²⁵ While the number of white Christians specifically “now comprise only 43 percent of the population,” white Christians still stand out as the recognizable majority group in many communities around the United States.²⁶ Minorities are always dealing with affective insurgency in how they speak and act. Their lives are often untold or misrepresented in America. As Chan-Malik writes, many Muslim women’s stories were told about them “becoming American” instead of what makes them who they are in the country they live in, the United States.²⁷ Becoming American is only a small portion of their story and should not erase or replace their identity. It implies a measuring stick of Americanness that is itself deeply troubling. Any adults who are around children can see affective insurgency first-hand when children try to fit in. Even if classrooms are segregated, our world is becoming more diverse “both in culture and in ability” so, “teachers are charged with teaching to all levels while developing a stable classroom community where all children can be comfortable.”²⁸

Chan-Malik shared that her studies were sparked by the question: “How would you write a history of Muslim women in this country?”²⁹ She addresses the fact that there was very little to analyze, therefore hiding the stories of those in the minority. This unit takes that concept and applies it to children. Children in the minority may not have much to analyze or relate to, in terms of children’s literature. Books with diverse characters and experiences have improved, but a 2018 study from the Cooperative Children’s Book Center at The University of Wisconsin-Madison found an upsetting statistic within children’s literature. Approximately 50% of children’s books are about white children, 27% about animals or objects, and only 23% represent minorities.³⁰ The lack of representation both in books, media, caregivers, and schools causes children to question whether or not they belong. Representation matters even though it may not always be at stake. However, understanding the actions and listening to the of those in the minority require others to challenge their ideas. Children spend the bulk of their lives in classrooms. These classrooms are often their second, if not their first, home. Therefore, it is critical to ensure a safe place for students to learn and grow and feel represented. During this unit, children of all backgrounds create and proudly share their stories, unveiling everything about themselves that they deem important. Students in the majority then become exposed to something other than themselves, understanding that there is more to the world than what they see in their home, their neighborhood, and school.

Reading is often a direct way for children to connect with themselves and their world. When children enjoy looking at books and reading them, literature can “transform human experience

²⁵ Rachel Zoll, “White Christians Are Now a Minority of the U.S. Population, Survey Says.” PBS. Public Broadcasting Service, September 6, 2017. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/white-christians-now-minority-u-s-population-survey-says>.

²⁶ Zoll, “White Christians Are Now a Minority of the U.S. Population, Survey Says.”

²⁷ Petersen, *New Books in Gender Studies*.

²⁸ Wendy Smith-D’Arezzo, “Diversity in Children’s Literature: Not Just a Black and White Issue.” *Children’s Literature in Education* 34, no. 1 (March 2003): 75.

²⁹ Petersen, *New Books in Gender Studies*.

³⁰ “Books by and/or about Black, Indigenous and People of Color 2019.” Cooperative Children’s Book Center. The University of Madison Wisconsin, 2019. <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/literature-resources/ccbc-diversity-statistics/books-by-and-or-about-poc-2019/>.

and reflect it back to us.”³¹ Children then can see their “own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience.”³² While this was the case in 1990, it still holds validity today. Chan-Malik suggests looking at the absences in representation. Chan-Malik argues that “the absences are actually presences.”³³ When people look at movies, educational materials, and popular culture, among other things, and do not see diverse races, religions, or cultures, the prevalence of whiteness becomes apparent. When only 23% of children’s literature represent minorities, the world is doing a disservice to students in the minority.³⁴ Society cannot expect students to feel comfortable and be successful in their education and life if they “cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable.”³⁵ When this is the case, students “learn a powerful message about how they are devalued in the society in which they are a part.”³⁶ In order to ensure children feel valued, it is important to have books and character that children can relate to.

Not only is it crucial to find character representation, but finding authenticity is just as important, if not more. Characters who speak authentically about their feelings and problems “makes the characters believable and identifies them as members of a particular social group.”³⁷ As Bishop suggests, reading diverse books can only do so much. Although educators and adults alike would love to see diverse books alleviate the greater issues of the world like hunger, homelessness, and racism, “literature, no matter how powerful, has its limits.”³⁸ However, when children see quality characters that represent themselves, they “will see that we can celebrate both our differences and our similarities, because together they are what makes us all human.”³⁹ Teachers are responsible for providing students with appropriate and quality materials. Teachers should choose texts “with multiple narratives that paint the layered, complex, and contradictory stories that exist within each group of people.”⁴⁰ There are many things students can learn from a single story, but “you can never learn everything from a single story.”⁴¹ Teachers need to bring in resources “from all different time periods and places, and ask, ‘how can you use [that information] to raise questions’ and discussions.”⁴² The ability to identify with the authenticity of a character leads to students feeling seen and accepted in society and their communities.

Chan-Malik examines how “being Muslim” is formed and continues to form based on a variety of moving parts such as traditions, clothing, and actions. This curriculum unit uses the same theory, that ‘being you’ “actively forms—intellectually, emotionally, and bodily—at the

³¹ Rudine Sims Bishop, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors,” *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*. 6, no. 3 (Summer 1990).

³² Bishop, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors.”

³³ Petersen, *New Books in Gender Studies*.

³⁴ “Books by and/or about Black, Indigenous and People of Color 2019.” Cooperative Children's Book Center.

³⁵ Bishop, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors.”

³⁶ Bishop, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors.”

³⁷ Bishop, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors.”

³⁸ Bishop, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors.”

³⁹ Bishop, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors.”

⁴⁰ Alina O'Donnell, “WINDOWS, MIRRORS, AND SLIDING GLASS DOORS: The Enduring Impact of Rudine Sims Bishop’s Work.” *Literacy today (Newark, Del.)* 36, no. 6 (May 1, 2019), _.

⁴¹ O'Donnell, “WINDOWS, MIRRORS, AND SLIDING GLASS DOORS: The Enduring Impact of Rudine Sims Bishop’s Work.”

⁴² O'Donnell, “WINDOWS, MIRRORS, AND SLIDING GLASS DOORS: The Enduring Impact of Rudine Sims Bishop’s Work.”

intersections of specific race contexts, gendered insecurities, religious ideas, and lived political structures.”⁴³ Chan-Malik “argues that U.S. Muslim women of color have historically engaged with Islam as concurrent rejoinders to systemic racism and national/cultural patriarchies through both embodied and social acts of faith and politics.”⁴⁴ Although Chan-Malik focuses her studies on Black Muslim women, her theory holds true for people of all nationalities and backgrounds. Because people typically derive their theories from white experiences, even if they are not named as white, people maintain the inequities they see. By drawing theory-making from Chan-Malik’s focus on Muslim women of color, scholars are not particularizing theory. They are expanding what counts as theory beyond the assumed norm of white-male-ness. Chan-Malik’s understanding of what goes into “being Muslim” is the model for how people might understand “being” at a larger level. This model of “being” is no longer a white-male one, but intriguingly, a Muslim-woman-of-color model, which makes a substantial difference. The Muslim community is extremely diverse. People do not know this because of the way our ecosystem of knowledge is corrupted. The Muslim community in particular demonstrates how big of a gap there is between ‘common sense’ American discourse and the reality of lived experience.

The challenge is how do educators fill the holes in diversity education. This, of course, cannot be done by just one person. It is something that will take time and effort and will be more effective when completed on a larger scale. However, it is important to start somewhere and expose children to diversity through race, religions, and cultures. Despite representation, there is almost always a piece of someone’s story that is hidden or untold. When slavery is discussed in most schools across America, there is little to no mention of Muslim slaves, even though approximately “one-fifth to one-third of enslaved people brought to the United States were Muslim.”⁴⁵ These slaves brought that presence into America which then produced something. The identities of the slaves, hidden or not, had an influence on society today, with things such as food and music. Likewise, the students in classrooms across America also are impacting society. Not just what they look like, but their race, culture, traditions, religions are imprinting on others and should not be shamefully hidden or forced to fit in and be like the majority. Children’s lives and voices should be heard and shared in order for others to understand and appreciate the nuances of each individual.

A large part of this unit asks educators and young children to think critically. When students think critically, “the story belongs to the children” and “they tell [the story] often and well, to whomever will listen.”⁴⁶ Thinking critically requires teachers to sometimes address the uncomfortable or unknown. It “listens to and affirms a minority voice that challenges the status quo.”⁴⁷ As young learners, kindergarteners through second graders are often drawn to conflict. Children often tell on each other and are intrigued by issues others are going through. Educator Mary Cowhey argues that frequently in schools, children are protected from conflict and “too often textbooks and other teacher-proof curriculum for young children provide a pat and a happy presentation, devoid of conflict.”⁴⁸ This fault in education can lead to students not exploring their

⁴³ Sylvia Chan-Malik, *Being Muslim: A Cultural History of Women of Color in American Islam*, _.

⁴⁴ Chan-Malik, *Being Muslim: A Cultural History of Women of Color in American Islam*, _.

⁴⁵ Petersen, *New Books in Gender Studies*.

⁴⁶ Mary Cowhey, *Black Ants And Buddhists* (Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers, 2006), 13.

⁴⁷ Cowhey, *Black Ants And Buddhists*, 13.

⁴⁸ Cowhey, *Black Ants And Buddhists*, 12.

interests and questions. Whether teachers are educating in a school similar to Selwyn, where the majority of students are white, upper-middle class, or in a school with majority minorities, teaching critically “reexamines cultural assumptions and values and considers their larger ramifications” instead of “forcing assimilation and acceptance of dominant culture.”⁴⁹ Both Cowhey and Chan-Malik’s theories share the need for acceptance and being noticed.

All the demographic and testing statistics from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Selwyn Elementary demonstrate how prevalent differences in race are in Charlotte’s public schools. Many students are affected by the unrepresentative demographics, therefore making it imperative that educators help children “develop a stereotype-free understanding of diverse races and cultures.”⁵⁰ Because religion and race are not always tied together, it is important to understand that “race” might not mean the same thing to different people, especially when religious expressions are taken seriously. Even still, the demographics and testing data throughout both Selwyn Elementary and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools demonstrates how important it is for these primarily white upper middle class students to be exposed to something other than themselves and understand the actions of those who are affected by affective insurgency to be able to write their own story and explore the stories of others who are both similar and different.

Throughout the entirety of this unit, children’s learning about diversity, religion, and race can continue in more than just their classrooms because “young children recognize differences in races and internalize a superior social norm regarding the social status of different races and ethnic groups.”⁵¹ It is important to provide a sense of ownership and “deliberately nurture sustained interest in questions over time.”⁵² Therefore, this unit is a process spanning across an entire year. As Cowhey suggests, it is crucial to gain sustained attention and interest. Cowhey writes of engagement and interest with her students as they discover different religions and their responses to harming living things. Her students approach this topic with respect and humanity, only wanting to learn with their peers instead of against them. This type of continual curiosity is what educators should aim for throughout this unit. When children have sustained interest, they become the drivers of their education. Not only do children fight any innate biases of their own, but their exploration and understanding of others helps “spread their positive attitudes and the new knowledge gained regarding races and cultures to their family members.”⁵³ These challenged and changed perceptions of others can be extremely powerful, as it “could eventually lead to changing the community, society, country, and world.”⁵⁴ The goal of this curriculum unit is to create more accepting and aware children who will become active participants in the greater global community. Educators should want children’s spark to stay lit throughout the unit and throughout their lives, forever analyzing and wanting to explore differences rather than fear or ignore them.

⁴⁹ Cowhey, *Black Ants And Buddhists*, 13.

⁵⁰ Kim et al, “Teaching Kindergartners Racial Diversity Through Multicultural Literature: A Case Study in a Kindergarten Classroom in Korea,” 417.

⁵¹ Kim et al, “Teaching Kindergartners Racial Diversity Through Multicultural Literature: A Case Study in a Kindergarten Classroom in Korea,” 402.

⁵² Cowhey, *Black Ants And Buddhists*, 12.

⁵³ Kim et al, “Teaching Kindergartners Racial Diversity Through Multicultural Literature: A Case Study in a Kindergarten Classroom in Korea,” 417.

⁵⁴ Kim et al, “Teaching Kindergartners Racial Diversity Through Multicultural Literature: A Case Study in a Kindergarten Classroom in Korea,” 417.

Instructional Implementation

Teaching Strategies

This curriculum unit uses a variety of teaching strategies that allow for in depth dialogue and questioning to ensure a more meaningful experience. One of the first and most important strategies that is used throughout the curriculum is classroom discussions via think-pair-share turn-and-talk peer conversations. A lot of the unit is centered around personal experiences, which requires students to interact with one another and share what they are thinking and what they may have been through. Providing students with a safe environment where students can participate in naturalistic dialog is key. A strategy such as think-pair-share helps students develop their own thoughts and then share them with peers, exposing them to other thoughts and opinions. Teachers are encouraged to change partners up regularly during writing, reading, and social-emotional learning. Teachers will educate students on how to have accountable, respectful, and meaningful conversations with peers. Children will practice taking turns, maintaining eye contact, and other conversation norms such as sharing statements like, “I agree” or, “that is a good point, but I think...” Educators also introduce and implement students speaking in full sentences as well as using academic vocabulary in order to accurately get their points across and more directly connect with others. When children feel respected during thoughtful conversations with their educators and classmates, they are more likely to be more open and allow for flexible discussion.

Another teaching strategy that is used throughout this unit is close readings. Close readings are a way to look at texts in a focused manner by analyzing characters and events. Teachers act as facilitators by asking questions along the way. Teachers stimulate meaningful student discussions about how students may relate to characters, what problems and solutions the characters face, author intention, and how they connect to the text through similarities. However, close readings encourage students to be the ones doing most of the deep thinking. Children evaluate the text on many different levels by answering many “what if” questions. They come to understand the author's purpose, character's traits and evolution, and meaning behind the settings and story line by identifying text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections. During close readings, educators typically choose shorter texts, passages, or choose to read just pieces of a book at a time, often going back and re-reading specific sections. This curriculum unit in particular utilizes a variety of literary resources in order to successfully teach this unit. While there are many great stories with white characters and animals or objects, it is important to address the concern of limited minority characters directly and focus on utilizing works by Muslim, African American, Asian, Native American, and Latinx authors and characters.

More strategies utilized in the project-based unit include the use of film and audio recordings, presentations, and direct teacher instruction. These different educational methods expose children to different perspectives and people. However, educators are not limited to these listed strategies. Teachers and students are encouraged to be autonomous throughout the unit. Educators watch their students learn and grow throughout the year and can change and adapt the curriculum and projects as needed. If one strategy is not working for a specific class or student, the teachers can incorporate a new or different strategy. It is imperative to observe one's students

along the course of the unit and adjust accordingly in order to get the most out of the curriculum unit.

Lessons and Activities

This curriculum unit's projects are intended to be stretched over the course of each quarter, approximately 9 weeks, in order to gain student investment and create a sense of ownership and curiosity to promote lifelong learning. Although the four main projects were designed specifically for kindergarten-age children, the unit itself is naturally differentiated and can be modified for different grades and abilities when applicable. Educators are encouraged to make each project their own to best meet the needs of their students, taking into account age, ability, and demographics. In order to keep fidelity and integrity of this unit, teachers are advised to take part in each of these unique projects in order. However, similarly to adapting each project to each teachers' class, the projects themselves may be slightly modified or abbreviated as needed. Some teachers may choose to speed up the process of each project depending on pacing guides, school curricula, and so forth.

Quarter I: Physical Traits - Self-Portrait

Young children are biologically egocentric, so it is natural for them to begin with discussions and projects about themselves. The desire to draw and write about themselves is second nature and will expose both educators and peers to an interesting insider perspective. Students will start by creating a self-portrait using a medium of their choice such as paint, markers, crayons, and collages. Children will have the chance to analyze and their own portraits along with classmates' giving compliments and sharing observations of similarities and differences.

Objectives: Students will be able to explain visible, physical traits of themselves and others. Students will be able to observe and share similarities and differences of physical traits between themselves and their peers.

Activate Prior Knowledge, 2 weeks: At this time, students are just beginning to learn who their teacher is and who their classmates are. It is important from day one to utilize inclusive vocabulary and terminology to create a feeling of acceptance and comfort within the student's new space. Phrases and words such as respect, love, school family, community, and special, are perfect examples of daily vernacular teachers should use to acclimate children to their classroom. Teachers begin with two perfect books that express the importance of a welcome and safe environment: *All Are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold and *Be Who You Are* by Todd Parr. Teachers will use these texts to have students think about what they already know or have been exposed to. Teachers can spark thoughts by asking children questions such as:

- *What color is your hair, skin, and eyes?*
- *What do your family members and friends look like? Do they have the same hair, eyes, nose, voice?*
- *What do you like to wear?*
- *What do you love about yourself?*

Active Engagement and Application, 4 – 5 weeks: Teachers will engage students in active read-alouds and close readings of the following texts. Teachers are advised to read the following books and ask students aligning questions. Teachers and students will take part in turn-and-talk partner and group discussions. Additionally, teachers can utilize supplemental texts found in [Appendix III](#).

- Week 3: *We're Different, We're the Same* by Bobbi Kates
 - *What type of noses, eyes, hair, skin, do you see?*
 - *What does the author keep repeating after showing us the different pictures?*
- Week 4: *Same, Same But Different* by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw
 - *What do you notice about Elliot and Kailash?*
 - *How are Elliot and Kailash similar?*
 - *How are Elliot and Kailash different?*
 - *What do you do that is like Elliot and/or Kailash?*
- Week 5: *Hair Love* by Matthew A. Cherry
 - *What does your hair look like?*
 - *How do you like to wear your hair?*
 - *Who does your hair? You, your mom, dad, sibling, grandparent, babysitter?*
- Week 6: *Hats of Faith* by Medeia Cohan
 - *Do you go to church or temple or mosque to pray?*
 - *Do you pray with your family?*
 - *Do you wear anything on your head? Why do you wear it?*
- Week 7: *Just Ask!* By Sonia Sotomayer
 - *Do you have anything any needs like the kids in this book?*

Assessment, 2 – 3 weeks: Students will create a portrait of themselves using a medium of their choosing. Once the self-portraits are complete, the teacher will facilitate a gallery walk. Portraits will be displayed around the room and students will walk around, engaging in thoughts and discussions with their classmates about each other. Some questions children can ask are, but not limited to, what color hair and skin does your classmate have, what type of clothes or hats are they wearing, where are they in their portrait, what they are doing in their picture, and potentially who they are with. Teachers will use the rubric in [Appendix IV](#) to evaluate student portraits. Additionally, teachers will take anecdotal notes or audio recordings of conversations and discoveries between classmates to better comprehend the level of student engagement and understanding.

Quarter II: Character Traits – Literacy Piece, Part I

Learning will continue during the second quarter as students begin to uncover what their internal identities. Students will learn about a variety of character traits and the students will then continue the project by creating a piece of literature with varied graphics answering what makes them who they are. The kindergarteners will need assistance from educators to scaffold their explanations. Educators can do so by asking more concrete questions such as where they are from, what their religion or faith looks like (i.e. traditions, holidays), and what their school, community, and of course, family is like (i.e. members and pets, personalities, hobbies, food).

Objectives: Students will use writing and drawing to explain their character traits and interests of themselves and others. Students will be able to observe and share similarities and differences of character traits between themselves and their peers.

Activate Prior Knowledge, 1 – 2 weeks: Teachers will scaffold children to discuss their what they like to do. Students will engage in turn-and-talk, partner and group discussions to share what it is they like to do. Teachers can ask the following questions:

- *What is your favorite color?*
- *What foods do you like?*
- *What sports or activities do you like to do?*
- *How do you act? Are you quiet, loud, silly, caring, kind, curious? How so?*
- *Where are you from/where were you born?*

Active Engagement and Application, 4 – 5 weeks: After discussing the more apparent traits and interests of children, teachers will begin to have deeper conversations with students to explain that every person’s personality is made up of many things. The food they eat, the toys they play with, what languages they speak, what beliefs they hold, the holidays they celebrate, who they live with, are all important in each individual’s personality. These things have shaped and will continue to shape who they are as a person. In order to expose children to all these different factors of identity, children need to first understand what these factors are. Teachers will use Epic Books online, a digital library free to educators, to read and discuss the books in the *Adventures in Culture* series, *Our Values* series, and *Building Character* series. These series include:

- *Adventures in Culture: Holidays Around the World* by Jeff Sferazza
- *Adventures in Culture: Food Around the World* by Charles Murphy
- *Adventures in Culture: Games Around the World* by Mary Pat Ehmann
- *Our Values: My Beliefs* by Kristy Holmes
- *Our Values: My Community* by Grace Jones
- *Our Values: Different Families* by Steffi Cavel-Clark
- *Building Character: Showing Respect* by Penelope S. Nelson
- *Building Character: Showing Kindness* by Rebecca Pettiford
- *Building Character: Being Honest* by Rebecca Pettiford

Assessment, 2 – 3 weeks: Students will create their own piece of literature explaining different things about themselves that makes them unique. Once again, student autonomy and choice are key to creating buy-in. For example, it is suggested that teachers allow students to pick what type of piece of literature they want to create. Some ideas are poems, books and stories, comics, or drawings with labels. Teachers should utilize the prompts in [Appendix II](#) to get their students started, but students should have the option to add more information or change what they want to share is important to their identity. for their students. For older children with more experience writing and drawing with detail, teachers can minimize the amount of prompt or eliminate it altogether. For students who are not quite ready to write, teachers should ask students to draw and explain their drawings so the teacher can dictate on the paper when needed. Once complete, students will share with partners. It is suggested that sharing takes place over

the course of a week so students can explain their piece to several students and can be exposed to several students as well.

Quarter III: The Narrative of Others – Character Study

After investigating themselves and understanding what makes them unique, students will complete a character study with a few different pieces of literature. Students will utilize the suggested diverse student texts to expose students to a variety of races, religions, and people. As the class reads the books, teachers will facilitate meaningful student discussions about how students may relate to characters, what problems and solutions the characters face, author intention, and how they connect to the text. Students once again participate in close readings and engage in conversations about appreciating different cultures.

Objectives: Students will be able to explain and uphold the principle that differences are beautiful. Students will complete this portion of the unit with understanding that differences are to be appreciated and respected. Students will be able to observe and share similarities and differences between themselves and the book characters.

Activate Prior Knowledge, 1 – 2 weeks: Teachers will ask students to take a look at the covers of the books that they will be reading during this section. What do they notice? Do these characters look the same or different? Have we seen any of the things that they are wearing or doing? Teachers can revisit some of the books from the previous section or read more that were not yet read.

Active Engagement and Application, 4 – 5 weeks: Teachers will lead close read-alouds on 2 or more of the following books and ask engage students in the aligning questions. Each book should be read across approximately 1.5 to 2 weeks in order to gain deeper understanding of the text and characters.

- *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S.K. Ali
 - *Who is the main character and what is their problem in the story?*
 - *How are you similar to and different from Faizah?*
 - *What is something you are proud of?*
 - *What lesson does the author want us to learn?*
- *Your Name is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow
 - *Who is the main character and what is their problem in the story?*
 - *How are you similar to and different from the little girl?*
 - *Has anyone ever said something to you that hurt your feelings? How did they make it up to you or what made you feel better?*
 - *What lesson does the author want us to learn?*
- *Leaving for America* by Roslyn Bresnick-Perry
 - *Who is the main character and what is their problem in the story?*
 - *How are you similar to and different from the little girl?*
 - *Have you ever been nervous or scared of something new you had to do?*
 - *How did you move past your worries? Did someone help you by listening, playing, or talking you through it?*

- *What lesson does the author want us to learn?*

Assessment, 2 – 3 weeks: Students will choose a character from one of the books and write and draw about how they are similar to and different from him or her. Teachers should utilize the prompts in [Appendix II](#) to help younger students with sentence structure. Similar to the previous project, teachers can dictate as needed or remove prompts and ask for more detailed explanations of student to character connections.

Quarter IV: Sharing My Story – Oral Histories and/or Literacy Piece, Part II

As the final piece of the curriculum unit, students will take all that they have learned and experienced to create a culminated project where they share their narrative. Teachers may choose either the oral history version of this final project, or a second written literacy piece. These mini histories and narratives allow students to share their current story from start to present-time. a way to dive even deeper into the narratives of these young learners, teachers or family members will record sound bites or small video clips of the children explaining what makes them special. These mini oral histories create a unique keepsake and artifact of which educators and families alike can reflect on diversity, individuality, and acceptance.

Objectives: Students will share their narrative, or what makes them, them. Students will explain their uniqueness and background to better understand who they are.

Activate Prior Knowledge, 1 – 2 weeks: These weeks are a time for reflection. Students will look back on their self-portraits, first literacy piece, character study, and be ready to bring it together to create a seamless and comprehensive narrative. Teachers will ask, what has changed, what has stayed the same, what are you proud of, what do you want others to know more about?

Active Engagement and Assessment, 4 – 5 weeks: This final part of the unit is more in-depth and hands on, therefore requiring more time to put together. Teachers will reflect on the past questions asked and work with students to compile a list of questions they think are important to answer in explaining their identity.⁵⁵ Teachers should ask families to help conduct the student interview, but teachers can conduct it when families are unable to. If families do not want children participating in the audio recordings, children will make another literacy piece. The oral histories do not need to be longer than 10 minutes.

Analyzing and Sharing, 2 – 3 weeks: To finish the unit, students and teachers will take time to celebrate one another and the diversity within the class. Students will have the opportunity to bring in artifacts such as items from home or works from the project to explain their narratives to their school community and anyone else willing to listen.

Assessments

⁵⁵ “StoryCorps Connect: Instructions/Questions List.” New York: StoryCorps, 2020.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools does not give out number or letter grades to pre-kindergarten through second grade students. Because of this, the project-based unit does not entail any formal assessments. Instead, teachers are encouraged to use the rubrics in [Appendix IV](#) to assess student understanding and engagement through the quarterly projects. Additionally, the students are intended to be the drivers of these projects. They are meant to allow for creativity and self-expression, therefore may be interpreted in many different ways. It is crucial for teachers to objectively look at these projects to ask questions to encourage more details and deeper understanding and provide productive feedback to student work. It is suggested that throughout the creative process of these projects, teachers utilize informal assessments. This can include anecdotal notes, checklists, and video or audio recordings to keep track of student answers, conversations, and quality of writing, such as phonological skills, drawing, and expression of thought.

Appendix I: Teaching Standards

This curriculum unit addresses a wide range of Literacy, Social Studies, and social-emotional standards. Lessons can be integrated into either Social Studies or Literacy, or both subjects. A list of applicable North Carolina teaching standards are as follows:

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools' General Learner Outcomes (GLOs)

Collaborator: I listen and share with others.

Creative & Critical Thinker: I think before I act.

Effective Communicator: I share thoughts, questions, and ideas.

Open-Minded: I listen and am respectful to others' ideas.

North Carolina State Kindergarten Standards for Literature

RL.K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL.K.2 With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

RL.K.3 With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

RL.K.4 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about words in a text that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

RL.K.6 With prompting and support, define the role of the author and illustrator in telling the story

RL.K.7 With prompting and support, describe how the words and illustrations work together to tell a story

RL.K.10 Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

RF.K.4 Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

W.K.2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

W.K.5 Participate in shared investigation of grade appropriate topics and writing projects.

SL.K.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.K.4 Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

North Carolina State Kindergarten Standards for Social Studies

K.H.1.1 Explain how people change over time (self and others).

K.C & G.1.1 Exemplify positive relationships through fair play and friendship.

K.C.1 Understand how individuals are similar and different.

K.C.1.1 Explain similarities in self and others

K.C.1.2 Explain the elements of culture (how people speak, how people dress, foods they eat, etc.).

Appendix II: Materials

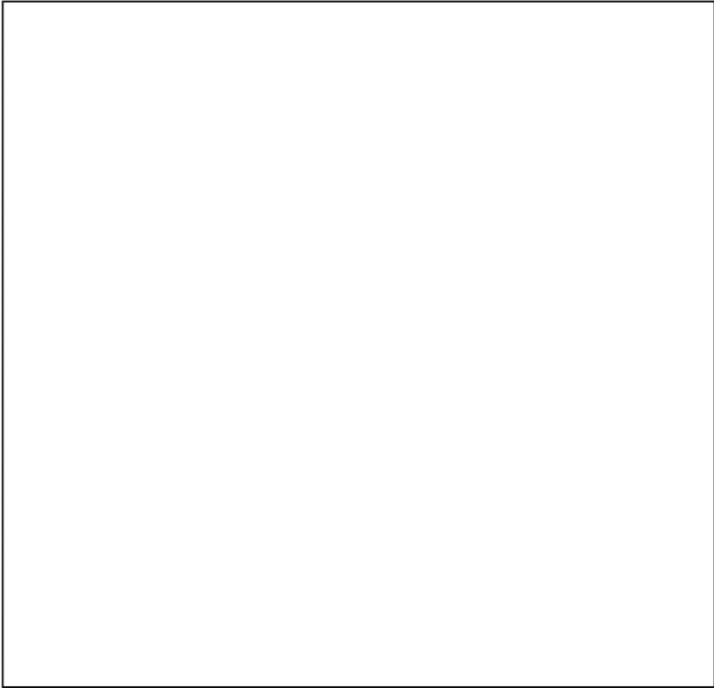
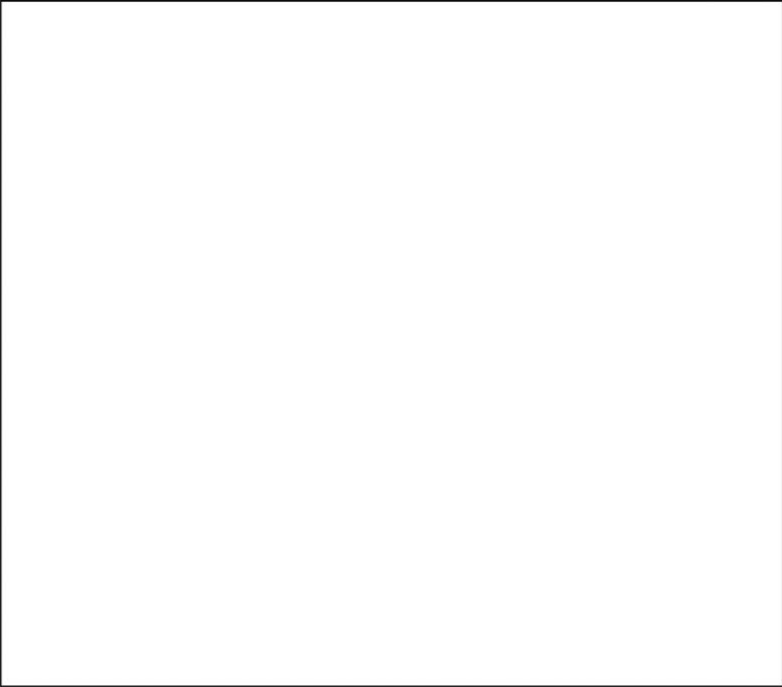
Quarter I: Physical Traits – Self-Portraits

Teachers are encouraged to allow students to pick their own medium and materials for their self-portrait in order to show self-expression and promote further interest and investment. Some suggested materials are, but not limited to:


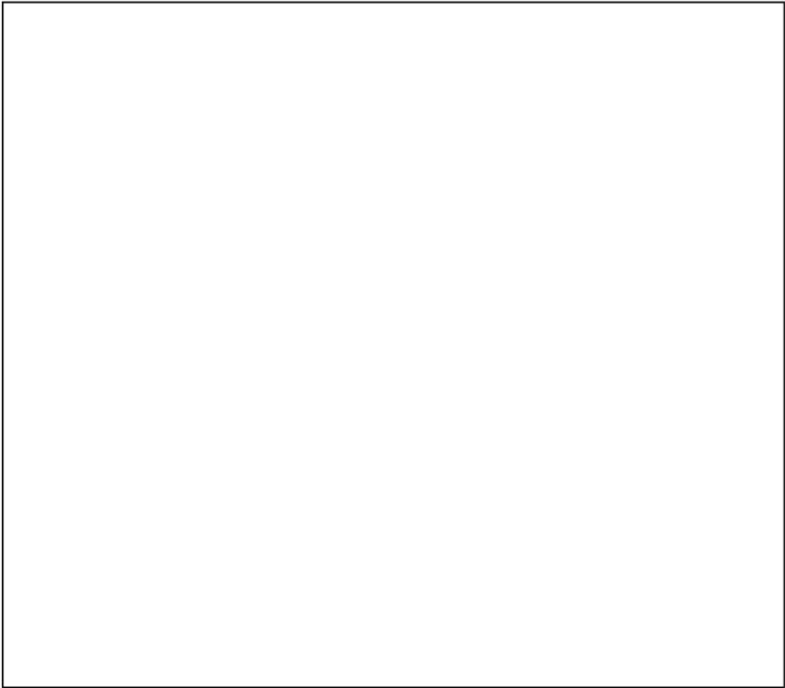
- Large, blank paper (construction, poster, or cardstock)
- Writing utensils (pencils, crayons, markers)
- Paint
- Scissors
- Glue
- Scrap paper of various colors
- Other various craft supplies (tissue paper, yarn)

Quarter II: Character Traits – Literacy Piece, Part I

For the written piece of the unit, teachers should have paper and writing and drawing utensils ready for their students to use. Paper can be blank, lined, or printed with prompts (such as the following two pages), depending on the ability level of students.

<p>What Makes Me, Me!</p>  <p>BY: _____ Date: _____</p>	 <p>I look like this. _____ _____</p>
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Sample Kindergarten Writing Prompt, continued

	<p>Some of my favorite things are _____</p> <p>_____</p>
	<p>I live in _____</p> <p>with _____</p>

Quarter III: The Narrative of Others – Character Study

For the character student, teachers should have paper and writing and drawing utensils ready for their students to use. Paper can be blank, lined, or printed with prompts (such as the following two pages), depending on the ability level of students.

Sample Kindergarten Writing Prompt

Name: _____	Date: _____
Narrative of You Character Study	
This is me.	This is _____ from _____
We are similar because _____	
We are different because _____	

Quarter IV: Sharing My Story – Oral Histories and/or Literacy Piece, Part II

For the oral history project, an adult will need to be present. The adult will need one of the following:

- Phone, computer, tablet/iPad of some sort to record audio on

If completing written work, students will need writing materials, paper, and craft supplies, as explained in the Quarter I and Quarter II projects.

Appendix III: Student Resources

Mentor Texts

The texts below are listed in order of when they are used in the curriculum unit. The purpose of these texts is outlined in the above lesson plans. These works of literature can be found in libraries, online databases, YouTube, or purchased from a variety of both online and in-person sellers.

Quarter I: Physical Traits - Self-Portrait

Penfold, Alexandra, and Suzanne Kaufman. *All Are Welcome*. New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc., 2020.

Parr, Todd. *Be Who You Are*. New York, NY: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2016.

Kates, Bobbi. *We're Different, We're the Same*. New York, NY: Random House, 2021.

Kostecki-Shaw, Jenny Sue. *Same, Same but Different*. New York, NY: Weston Woods, 2015.

Cherry, Matthew A., and Vashti Harrison. *Hair Love*. New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc., 2020.

Cohan, Medeia, and Sarah Walsh. *Hats of Faith*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, LLC, 2018.

Sotomayor, Sonia, and López Rafael. *Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You*. New York, NY: Philomel Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC, 2019.

Quarter III: The Narrative of Others – Character Study

Muhammad, Ibtihaj, S. K. Ali, and Hatem Aly. *The Proudest Blue: a Story of Hijab and Family*. New York, NY: Little, Brown, 2019.

Thompkins-Bigelow, Jamilah, and Luisa Uribe. *Your Name Is a Song*. Seattle, WA: The Innovative Press, 2020.

Bresnick-Perry, Roslyn, and Mira Reisberg. *Leaving for America*. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press, 1992.

Supplemental Texts

The following list is an abundance of titles that lend themselves well to this curriculum unit. They are picture books and are appropriate for ages kindergarten through second grade. Depending on each school's unique demographics and the surrounding communities, teachers may want to choose some of these works of literature to help their students connect to similar characters or authors and have exposure different races, religions, ethnicities, families, and lifestyles. There are many other wonderful books that discuss the lives of minorities or have

minority characters. However, it is crucial that when using new or unfamiliar books, teachers first analyze the book or resources to make sure it does not have any racism in it. Educators can do this by checking for stereotypes, characters in power, author perspective, and even the copyright date, among other things.⁵⁶

Stories Including Themes of Acceptance and Individuality⁵⁷

- *We're All Wonders* by R.J. Palacio
- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes
- *A Color of His Own* by Leo Lionni
- *The Color of Us* by Karen Katz
- *I Am Human: A Book of Empathy* by Susane Verde
- *This Is How We Do It: One Day in the Lives of Seven Kids from around the World* by Matt Lamothe

Stories Including African Americans

- *I Love My Hair* by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley
- *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson

Stories Including Asians

- *Bee-bim Bop* by Linda Sue Park
- *Yoko* by Rosemary Wells
- *Dear Juno* by Soyung Park
- *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi

Stories Including Immigrants⁵⁸

- *The Keeping Quilt* by Patricia Polacco
- *Families* by Aylette Jenness
- *Encounter* by Jane Yolen
- *Two Lands, One Heart* by Jeremy Schmidt and Ted Wood
- *Grandmother's Song* by Barbara Soros

Stories Including Latinx Children

- *I Love Saturdays y Domingos* by Alma Flor Ada
- *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music* by Margarita Engle
- *Mango, Abuela, and Me* by Meg Medina

Stories Including LGBTQ and Blended Families⁵⁹

- *Best Best Colors: Los Mejores Colores* by Eric Hoffman
- *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell
- *The Family Book* by Todd Parr

⁵⁶ Bill Honig, "PDF" (Sacramento, 1998).

⁵⁷ "Children's Books About Individuality and Being Unique," The Best Children's Books, 2020, <https://www.the-best-childrens-books.org/books-about-individuality.html>.

⁵⁸ "Understanding My Family's History," Teaching Tolerance, accessed October 22, 2020, <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/understanding-my-familys-history>.

⁵⁹ "Early Elementary LGBTQ Family-Friendly Books," 2018.

- *All Kinds of Families* by Suzanne Lang

Stories Including Muslim Children⁶⁰

- *Malala's Magic Pencil* by Malala Yousafzai
- *Mommy's Khimar* by Jamilah Tompkins-Bigelow
- *Yo Soy Muslim: A Father's Letter to His Daughter* by Mark Gonzales
- *Big Red Lollipop* by Rukhsana Khan
- *Yaffa and Fatima, Shalom, Salaam* by Fawzia Gilani-Williams
- *Lailah's Lunchbox* by Reem Faruqi
- *Under My Hijab* by Hena Khan

Stories Including Native Americans⁶¹

- *Hungry Johnny* by Cheryl Minnema
- *Hiawatha and the Peacemaker* by Robbie Robertson
- *Jingle Dancer* by Cynthia Leitich Smith
- *Wild Berries* by Julie Flett

Stories Including Themes of Poverty

- *Maddi's Fridge* by Lois Brandt
- *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña
- *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts

⁶⁰ Brittany Murlas, "9 Children's Books About Muslim Faith & Culture," Little Feminist (Little Feminist, March 20, 2019), <https://littlefeminist.com/2019/03/19/9-childrens-books-about-muslim-faith-culture/>.

⁶¹ "Debbie Reese, "PDF" (Longmont, 2016).

Appendix IV: Teacher Resources

Assessments, Checklists, and Rubrics

Sample Kindergarten Project Rubric (to be used throughout the unit)

Student: _____	Date: _____	Project: _____	Narrative of You Unit: Kindergarten Project Rubric			
Standard	Developing 1 point	Progressing 2 points	Mastery 3 points	Exemplary Mastery 4 points	Points	Comments
Words & Writing Conventions: Utilizes letters and words to represent and share ideas	No letters formed, only writes name, or letter strings	Writes name and few letters or words (i.e. high frequency words, environmental text, the letter 'd' to label 'dog')	Labels pictures and writes simple sentences with words spelled phonetically	Formulates 2 or more sentences on topic with appropriate capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure		
Drawings: Utilizes drawings to represent and share ideas	Drawings difficult to understand	Drawings on topic with little detail and few or inaccurate colors	Drawings with detail and appropriate colors	Drawings with background and details		
Organization: Project is on topic (responds to prompt)	Supplies no information on the topic	Responds to most of the prompt	Responds to the prompt with detail	Responds to the prompt and goes further by connecting ideas to something else		
Conversation: Explains what they created to peers and adults	Needs prompting to explain what they created or to stay on topic	Can explain their project with little support	Explains project without prompting	Explains project in depth without prompting		
Total Points /16						

Additional Suggested Online Resources

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. "The Danger of a Single Story." Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story | TED Talk. TED, July 2009.

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en.

Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie speaks of the danger of only knowing one story about someone. She explains how people assume they know everything about someone until that person shares their multiple stories that have made them who they are.

Epic! Creations, Inc. "Instantly Access over 40,000 of the Best Books & Videos for Kids on Epic." Epic Books, 2013. <https://www.getepic.com/>.

Epic! Books is an online digital library with thousands of books suitable for children of all ages. It is free to educators and can be set up with student accounts to be used inside the classroom. Teachers can search by theme, title, author, and assign books for students to read or be read to. Some books even come with comprehension quizzes or teachers can make their own comprehension quizzes with any books that do not have aligning questions.

Keels, Crystal L. "Teaching Tolerance: Diversity, Equity And Justice." Teaching Tolerance, 1991. <https://www.tolerance.org/>.

Teaching Tolerance is a website that is filled with resources for both teachers and students on teaching students of all ages about topics of race, religion, ethnicity, identity, and much more. Educators can use this website to research and create lesson plans that promote anti-bias and eradicate intolerance towards others.

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- "Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Performance Dashboard." Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 2019. <https://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/accountability/Pages/PerformanceDashboardNew.aspx>.
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