

## FOSTERING EMPATHY THROUGH DIVERSE PICTURE BOOKS

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“Books are sometimes **windows**, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also **sliding glass doors**, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author.

When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a **mirror**.”

-Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop

when children cannot  
find themselves  
reflected in the  
books they read, or  
when the images they  
see are distorted,  
negative, or laughable,  
they learn a powerful  
lesson about how they  
are devalued in the  
society of which they  
are a part.

DR. RUDINE SIMS BISHOP



### 10 REASONS TO READ DIVERSELY

- 1** The world is diverse, so why shouldn't our books be?
- 2** It's **boring** to only read about people just like you.
- 3** Heroes come in **all shapes and sizes**.
- 4** Diverse books inspire us to be the **authors of our own stories**.
- 5** Walking in someone else's shoes **builds empathy**.
- 6** Diverse books make us feel **seen and understood**.
- 7** Reading diversely can help **turn nonreaders into readers**.
- 8** Understanding different cultures **helps us succeed** in a global world.
- 9** **Magic happens** when we step outside of our comfort zones.
- 10** Diverse books redefine **who and what** we can be.



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DIAZ

FROM MAMA'S BLANKET/LA MANTA DE MAMA BY MONICA BROWN

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## **OTHER SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

### **MULTICULTURAL PAPER DOLLS**

Instructions:

1. After reading some books, talk about their clothes. Are there some places where they use some different traditional clothes?
2. Talk about students' culture and experiences with this topic.
3. Ask them to outline a doll.
4. Ask them to draw clothes and decorate them by using materials such as tissue paper, fabric, painting, etc.
5. It would be good if they could do it in collaboration with their families at home.

### **DIVERSE FLAG**

Instructions:

1. After reading many diverse books including diversity such as cultures, races, religions, abilities, and disabilities, etc, talk about this diversity.
2. Talk about our differences and our similarities.
3. Then, let the classroom create a flag together to represent as many diverse characters, food, places, and traditions as possible. Encourage them to include their own and others.
4. Alternative - students can create a song talking about diversity.

### **OUR STUDENT POPULATION ON THE MAP**

1. Have a big world map.
2. Ask students to pin where they or their families are from.
3. Pin different main characters.
4. Talk about different traditions, food, clothes, etc from each country.

### **GLOBAL COOKBOOK**

1. After reading diverse books with recipes, ask each student to talk to their families about different recipes.
2. They will write the recipe to be integrated into a book
3. If they can cook and take pictures, great. If they can't, they can illustrate the steps.
4. Alt - they can bring food to be shared.

### **MASTER CHEF**

1. After reading books about different countries, talk about and research different recipes.
2. Divide the students into groups of 4.
3. Ask them to choose two recipes from different countries.
4. Then they will create a plate that mixes both. For example, my students created an empanada of chicken waffles.

5. If they can cook and bring it to school, that will be great. If they can't, then just have them illustrate and write the recipe and show it to a juror panel (other teachers).
6. A cookbook can also be made.

### **FEELINGS COLLAGE**

1. After reading diverse books, talk about the characters' feelings.
2. How did the character feel when that happened? How would you feel?
3. Ask them to draw their feelings. You might want to give them face outlines.
4. For example, how did the character feel when she couldn't do anything right? How would you feel?
5. Then, you can make a collage with all the feelings.
6. You can also make a collage showing how would you feel if someone would make fun of your culture, your disability, your traditions. And talk about respect and empathy.

### **WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THIS CHARACTER**

1. After reading books, discuss what they have learned from them. It might be something about a different culture, or a feeling, or how to help someone, etc.

### **PERSPECTIVE**

1. Read some diverse books.
2. Choose two characters from different books and ask: How would this character react to this situation? Or will they act/feel different in a specific situation? Why?
3. Talk about two different students.
4. Talk about not being right or wrong. And how we can respect each other's different opinions.

Source: Tavangar, Home Sabet/ Mladic-Morales, Becky - Global Education Toolkit - Corwin 2014

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Diverse Book Lists and Lived experience creators:

We Need Diverse Books - <https://diversebooks.org/>  
<https://diversebooks.org/resources-old/where-to-find-diverse-books/>

Las Musas Books - <https://www.lasmusasbooks.com/>

SCBWI AZ Equity and Inclusion List <https://arizona.scbwi.org/scbwi-arizona-curated-ei-book-list/>

World of Words - <https://wowlit.org/links/booklists/>

Pinterest - suggestions - <https://pin.it/1atE7le>

Empathy Lab - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIt09hX-wwVfe5GVTyK8DuA>

### **Contact Us**

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