Reading for diversity: Picturebooks and intercultural education

Anna Birketveit
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Intercultural competence

The ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognize as being different from our own

(Routledge Encyclopedia of Lg Teaching and Learning)
Michael Byram: 5 savoirs

• **Attitudes** (savoir être): curiosity and openness, relativise one’s own beliefs and values, ability to *decentre*

• **Knowledge** (savoirs): how social groups and social identities and practices function

• **Skills of interpreting and relating** (savoir comprendre): meaning-making

• **Skills of discovery and interaction** (savoir apprendre/faire): ability to ask questions, appropriate behaviour

• **Critical cultural awareness** (savoir s’engager): questioning of your own modes of understanding
The Iceberg Concept of Culture

Like an iceberg, nine-tenths of culture is below the surface.

**Surface Culture**
Most easily seen
Emotional level - low

**Shallow Culture**
Unspoken Rules
Emotional level - high

courtesy, contextual conversational patterns, concept of time, personal space, rules of conduct, facial expressions, nonverbal communication, body language, touching, eye contact, patterns of handling emotions, notions of modesty, concept of beauty, courtship practices, relationships to animals, notions of leadership, tempo of work, concepts of food, ideals of child rearing, theory of disease, social interaction rate, nature of friendships, tone of voice, attitudes toward elders, concept of cleanliness, notions of adolescence, patterns of group decision-making, definition of insanity, preferences for competition or cooperation, tolerance of physical pain, concept of "self", concept of past and future, definition of obscenity, attitudes toward dependents, problem solving roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and ...

**Deep Culture**
Unconscious Rules
Emotional level - intense
Multiculturalism

- Originated in the US Civil Rights (60s and 70s).
- **Four** historical stages in the USA:
  - ethnic studies
  - equality and equity
  - including gay, lesbian, disabled, feminists
  - theory, research, practice of race, class and gender

*(Banks and McGee Banks, 2009)*
Shift towards diversity

- Earlier integration, assimilation
- Post-multicultural: everybody is entitled to participate as an individual with a multifaceted identity.
Learners

• Explore their cultural identities and develop a conceptual understanding of culture
• Value and respect different cultural perspectives and human experience
• Learn about issues that have personal, local and global relevance and significance
• Show responsibility and commitment to making a difference
• Develop into caring human beings who take action to create a better and more just world.

(Short, 2009)
Stories

- A mirror
- A window
Criteria for selection

• Plot, characterization, setting, theme, point of view create a convincing story
• Age-appropriate
• Authentic and realistic illustrations (?)
• For all children
• Variety of genres and cultures
• Convey respect for diverse cultures
Strategies

- Venn Diagram: analytical skills

Charles
- quiet
- lonely
- bored
- timid
- lives in a villa
- upper class
- has a dog
- needs friends
- sense of humor

Smudge
- lower class
- poor
- sees life in colours
- happy
- outgoing
- cheerful

Voices in the Park
Anthony Browne
The tallest, a red-haired boy, spat out a very mean word. The other boys laughed and shouted the mean word again and again. Desmond pedalled away as fast as he could. His heart pounded and his chest ached.

Desmond felt terrified and angry.

The boy stood up and moved towards him. Desmond froze. The boy looked around to see if anyone was watching and then handed Desmond a piece of chocolate. For just a moment, Desmond looked into the other boy’s eyes and smiled.

Desmond felt good.
(delighted/on cloud nine)
Vocabulary Puzzle

around a theme, culture or concept
whole class or small groups
half of the group find words, other half illustrations/definitions
pairs of pupils read their word, put it in a sentence or share a custom

Alaska/Inuit
Bingo

• Make a grid with 9 squares.
• Fill in words from the new vocabulary below.
• Draw words out of a hat, read and put in a sentence or explain.
• The first to have 3 in a row shouts bingo.

Variation: two rows or the whole grid.

Vocabulary:
Somali, indoors, damp, playground, friendly, tiring, creature, lovely, roof, bullets, gun, flames, sadness, paint, wet, hajab, translate, leave behind, noise, smell, soldiers, hide, prayer mat, Qur’an, queue, stay behind, frightened, journey, grey, bright, colours
Situation card

• Brainstorm with the class various situations in which you might show empathy, compassion, and respect. Examples: when someone is sitting alone, when someone is not being allowed to play, when someone is crying, when a new child joins the class, when two children fight over a toy, when someone yells a mean word at you, and so on.
• Discuss the compassionate ways one might respond to each instance
• Write each situation on an index card. Call two or three children at a time to the front of the room, hand them a card, and ask them to act out the situation and a compassionate response to it.
Resources on-line

• James Rumford (*Silent Music*)
  http://www.jamesrumford.com/jamesrumford.com/About_Me.html

• Voices in the Park
  http://research.kingston.ac.uk/booksalive/flash/book.html

• Ziba Came on a Boat

• Desmond and the Very Mean Word
Picturebooks are wonderful material to work with in EFL.

Try it!

THANK YOU!
References

Secondary sources


Globalcompetency [http://globalcompetency.wikispaces.com/Iceberg+concept+of+culture](http://globalcompetency.wikispaces.com/Iceberg+concept+of+culture)
Primary sources