Developing a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Through the Use of Diverse Literature and Perspective-Taking: A Resource Guide

Katie Dushek
kdushek@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/honorsprojects

Part of the Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons, and the Secondary Education Commons

Repository Citation
https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/honorsprojects/457

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.
DEVELOPING A CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY THROUGH THE USE OF DIVERSE LITERATURE AND PERSPECTIVE-TAKING

A Resource Guide
Table of Contents

- Introduction ....................................................3
- List of Diverse Books ...........................................6
  - This section is broken down into seven different categories of
diverse literature, and under each category are 7-10 diverse titles
that could be used in ELA instruction.
- Recommendations .............................................9
  - Recommendations are made on how to replace non-diverse texts
that are traditionally taught with diverse texts that fulfill the same
analysis of topic, theme, P.O.V., etc.
- Suggested Activities .........................................12
  - Nine classroom activities are suggested that promote perspective-
taking and can help to build skills of empathy and critical thinking.
- Standards Alignment .........................................15
  - This section provides alignment between the suggested activities
and the Common Core State Standards.
- Annotated Bibliography ......................................17
  - If you would like to read more about specific facets of diverse
literature and perspective-taking, you can find a brief list of
sources and descriptions here.
- Conclusion ......................................................21
- References ......................................................22
- Appendices ......................................................24
Introduction

Dear Reader,

Hello, and welcome to my resource guide! You are most likely an educator, or a pre-service educator, and are looking to diversify your curriculum and help your students engage in perspective-taking and building skills of empathy and critical thinking; basically, you want to become a more culturally relevant educator. If that sounds like you, then you’ve come to the right place! This guide will provide you with suggestions of diverse texts that you can incorporate into your teaching, ways to replace (or teach texts in addition to) some of the canonical classics, some activities to encourage your students to engage in perspective-taking and critical thinking in the classroom, alignment of these activities with the Common Core State Standards for ELA, and an annotated bibliography with some of the research that guided my development of this resource guide if you are interested in looking more into diverse and multi-cultural books and perspective-taking.

A little about me: I am currently a pre-service teacher, studying secondary integrated language arts education at Bowling Green State University. I will be graduating soon, and have created this resource guide as part of my Honors Project for the BGSU Honors College. This project first started when I learned about the We Need Diverse Books campaign, a nonprofit organization with the goal of creating a world in which all children can see themselves in the pages of a book (visit them at diversebooks.org). I realized that an overwhelming majority of the literary canon, and the part of the canon that is most commonly taught in secondary schools, was written by white men, about white men, and for white audiences. Almost no books that I personally read in high school featured a strong female protagonist, or a person of color; through further investigation, I realized that this was the case for many of my peers as well. Sure, many of us read To Kill a Mockingbird, and I was assigned Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison my senior year, but the majority of what we read in school is not representative of the diversity of our nation or our world.

With this lack of diversity in the curriculum in mind, I began researching about how reading diverse literature impacts students, which then led me down the road to looking into perspective-taking. Through my research, I found that the two are inextricably linked. The main goal of teaching diverse literature, in my opinion, is to provide students with “both a window to other cultures and a mirror reflecting their own” (Glazier & Seo, 2005,
This allows students who frequently read about characters who look, sound, and act like them to broaden their horizons, and it allows students who do not often see themselves in the pages of a book to feel that they are being represented, and their experiences are being validated. In order to be able to read these diverse books and understand the experiences of the characters if they are different from the students’ own personal experiences, students need to engage in perspective-taking. Looking into another person’s culture and way of life and being able to sympathize and empathize with their struggles is not something that will come naturally to all students, so it is important to build perspective-taking skills through the entire year and engage your students in perspective-taking activities, even when you are not teaching a diverse text (perhaps even more so when you are not!).

Let me backtrack a bit, and define what I mean when I use the phrases “culturally relevant pedagogy,” “diverse literature” and “perspective-taking.” The concept of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) was made popular by Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings in the early 1990s, and she defined it as a theory of teaching that “not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469). Geneva Gay (2010) expanded on the concept of CRP, stating that culture can affect a student’s beliefs, motivations, and learning preferences. In order to teach to the whole child and tailor instruction to every student and their culture, teachers must differentiate their instruction, which benefits all students, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background. Additionally, CRP can help students to critically examine cultural and institutional inequities, as well as encourage learners to seek answers through inquiry and embrace a mindset of social justice. In short, culturally relevant teaching is good teaching.

One way to begin implementing a culturally relevant pedagogy is to incorporate diverse literature into your curriculum. The definition that I am using in the development of this resource guide comes from the We Need Diverse Books campaign, which states, “We recognize all diverse experiences, including (but not limited to) LGBTQIA, Native, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities.” The diverse texts that I have included in this guide are categorized into: African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Mental Health, Native American, Female-driven, Asian/Asian American, and Queer/LGBTQ+. Diverse literature is meant to represent the voices that have been typically omitted from the literary canon (Glazier & Seo, 2005, p. 686).
In reading diverse literature, students are put in a better position to encounter new perspectives that might conflict with the experiences they bring with them into the classroom. This tension between beliefs is then able to spark critical thinking and conversation about certain beliefs and perspectives and the inequities that exist within our society. This provides students with the opportunity to step into new perspectives and potentially gain a willingness to try on different perspectives in order to develop their skills of critical thinking and empathy (Thein, Beach, & Parks, 2007, p. 55). This is what I am defining as “perspective-taking” in this resource guide.

As you traverse these pages, I hope you are inspired to diversify your own curriculum and engage your students in perspective-taking and reading about diverse peoples, places, cultures, and experiences. It is imperative that we, as teachers, foster a community in our classrooms that is open and welcoming, and provide opportunities for our students to critically analyze the world we live in, and the systems we have in place. Through this, we will be able to raise our students into well-rounded, open-minded, and accepting radical thinkers of the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Katie Dushek

Katie Dushek
List of Diverse Books

The following list of diverse literature includes classic canonized texts (that are commonly taught in grades 7-12) as well as contemporary Young Adult novels. This list can be used as a guide if you are looking to teach more diverse literature in your classroom but do not know where to start. These lists were compiled using a mixture of journal articles pertaining to the teaching of diverse texts, newspaper and magazine articles that recommend diverse texts to read, my own personal experiences reading, analyzing, and teaching them, and crowd-sourcing using peers, teachers, and students. It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive, and many of the texts can also transcend the category in which they are placed. Additionally, these categories are not the only categories of diverse literature; other such categories that you might want to explore include differences in socioeconomics, religion, political beliefs, etc. Finally, these texts should not be taught solely for the category they are in; they are diverse representations of a multitude of themes and experiences, and should be read and analyzed as such.

Note: Not all texts will be appropriate for all audiences. Some texts contain content that is mature, deals with difficult topics, or is inappropriate for younger audiences. The books on these lists are not guaranteed to be approved by school boards, parents, or other educational stakeholders. Decisions to teach any of these texts must be made with acknowledgement of the context in which you teach.

Texts denoted with as asterisk (*) indicate that they are included in the Common Core State Standards English Language Arts text exemplars for Grades 6-12. If you experience difficulty in introducing diverse literature into your classroom due to skepticism from school boards, parents, or other educational stakeholders, then these texts might be a good place to start.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>African American:</th>
<th>Hispanic/Latinx:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings—Maya Angelou*</td>
<td>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents—Julia Alvarez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invisible Man—Ralph Ellison</td>
<td>The House on Mango Street—Sandra Cisneros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their Eyes Were Watching God—Zora Neale Hurston*</td>
<td>The Alchemist—Paulo Coehlo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beloved—Toni Morrison*</td>
<td>Drown—Junot Diaz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Figures—Margo Lee Shetterly</td>
<td>The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child—Francisco Jiminez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry—Mildred D. Taylor*</td>
<td>One Hundred Years of Solitude—Gabriel Garcia Marquez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hate U Give—Angie Thomas</td>
<td>Esperanza Rising—Pam Muñoz Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Color Purple—Alice Walker</td>
<td>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter—Erika L. Sanchez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Girl Dreaming—Jacqueline Woodson</td>
<td>Buried Onions—Gary Soto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Son—Richard Wright*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mental Health:

- *Perks of Being a Wallflower*—Stephen Chbosky
- *The Hours*—Michael Cunningham
- *Tender is the Night*—F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *The Passion of Alice*—Stephanie Grant
- *Turtles All the Way Down*—John Green
- *The Bell Jar*—Sylvia Plath
- *It’s Kind of a Funny Story*—Ned Vizzini
- *Mrs. Dalloway*—Virginia Woolf

Female-driven:

- *Little Women*—Louisa May Alcott*
- *Speak*—Laurie Halse Anderson
- *Emma*—Jane Austen
- *Beaut y Queens*—Libba Bray
- *Graceling*—Kristin Cashore
- *The Hunger Games*—Suzanne Collins
- *Girl Code*—Andrea Gonzales & Sophie Houser
- *Dumplin’*—Julie Murphy
- *I Am Malala*—Malala Yousafzai

Native American:

- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*—Sherman Alexie
- *Code Talker*—Joseph Bruchac
- *#NotYourPrincess*—edited by Lisa Charleyboy & Mary Beth Leatherdale
- *The Game of Silence*—Louise Erdrich
- *Mean Spirit*—Linda Hogan
- *House Made of Dawn*—N. Scott Momaday
- *Winter in My Blood*—James Welch

Supplementary Resources

I recognize that, due to factors outside of your control—such as set curricula or lack of funding/resources—you may not be able to teach many of the titles from this list of diverse books. However, you can still supplement your instruction of classic and/or non-diverse texts with diverse poems and short stories that will help you incorporate more diversity into your instruction and examine multiple points of view of a specific time period or situation. The following poems/short stories are broken down into the same categories as the diverse books, and are all in the public domain and available online.

African American:

- “The Space Traders”—Derrick Bell
- “Let America Be America Again”—Langston Hughes
- “The Eatonville Anthology”—Zora Neale Hurston
- “Lift Every Voice and Sing”—James Weldon Johnson

Hispanic/Latinx:

- “América”—Richard Blanco
- “Girl”—Jamaica Kincaid
- “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”—Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- “The United Fruit Company”—Pablo Neruda

Mental Health:

- “The Yellow Wallpaper”—Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- “Flowers for Algernon”—Daniel Keyes
- “Symbols and Signs”—Vladimir Nabokov
- “Lady Lazarus”—Sylvia Plath
- “Six Months After Contemplating Suicide”—Erika L. Sanchez
Asian/Asian American:
- American Dervish—Ayad Akhtar
- Behind the Beautiful Forevers—Katherine Boo
- Crazy Rich Asians—Kevin Kwan
- Mamba in Chinatown—Jean Kwok
- Everything I Never Told You—Celeste Ng
- Pioneer Girl—by Bich Minh Nguyen
- The Astonishing Color of After—Emily XR Pan
- The Joy Luck Club—Amy Tan*
- American Born Chinese—Gene Luen Yang

Queer/LGBTQ+:
- Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda—Becky Albertalli
- Will Grayson, Will Grayson—John Green & David Levithan
- Deliver Us From Evie—M.E. Kerr
- Queer, There, and Everywhere—Sarah Prager*
- Empress of the World—Sara Ryan
- Rainbow Boys—Alex Sánchez
- My Heartbeat—Garret Freymann-Weyr
- Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit—Jeanette Winterson
- From the Notes of Melanin Sun—Jacqueline Woodson

Supplementary Resources Continued

Native American:
- “Only Approved Indians Can Play Made in the USA”—Jack D. Forbes
- “A Red Girl’s Reasoning”—Pauline Johnson
- “Borers”—Thomas King
- “A Tribute to Chief Joseph (1840?-1904)”—Duane Niatum
- “Impressions of an Indian Childhood”—Zitkala Sa

Female-driven:
- “And Still I Rise”—Maya Angelou
- “Désirée’s Baby”—Kate Chopin
- “They shut me up in Prose”—Emily Dickinson
- “A Woman Speaks”—Audre Lorde
- “The Applicant”—Sylvia Plath

Asian/Asian American:
- "How I Got That Name”—Marilyn Chin
- “My Country and My People”—Lee Tzu Pheng
- “Mother Tongue”—Amy Tan
- “Rootless”—Jenny Xie

Queer/LGBTQ+:
- “Paul’s Case: A Study in Temperament”—Willa Cather
- “Recreation”—Audre Lorde
- “Smoke, Lilies, and Jade”—Richard Bruce Nugent
- “The Long Arm”—Mary Wilkins
Recommendations

This section provides five recommendations of diverse texts to teach instead of (or in addition to) classic canonized texts. I want to emphasize the in addition to, because I think it is important to recognize that we do not have to completely eradicate these classics from our classrooms—it is because of their literary merit that they are a part of the canon in the first place. However, these classics should not be the only thing we teach. Replacing a few of the classics with their more contemporary and diverse counterparts can help to diversify the curriculum and ensure that students are being exposed to a wide variety of different stories, cultures, and representations; this is imperative if we want our students to become open-minded and critical thinkers. Another option is to teach the two books as companion texts and compare and contrast the different interpretations of the topics and themes across lines of race, gender, time period, etc. The following recommendations have been made using a combination of personal experiences in reading and analyzing the texts, research on the themes and topics, internet searches to determine if similar recommendations have been made/taught, and crowdsourcing to gain better insights from peers, teachers, and students.

Overview: These two texts have many similarities, including that they are both set during the Great Depression in the south, are narrated by a young girl, are examples of a bildungsroman (coming-of-age story), and discuss similar topics such as race, justice and injustice, and community.

What you lose: One of the main differences between these texts is the intended audience: To Kill a Mockingbird is typically taught in high schools, whereas Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry is more appropriate for a middle school classroom. Thus, it is not a perfect replacement, depending on the grade level you teach. Additionally, the Southern Gothic genre is depicted in Lee’s classic, whereas it is not in Taylor’s text. In replacing Mockingbird, you also miss the opportunity to analyze the failure/racism of the American justice system in that time period (and possibly compare it to today’s society).

What you gain: To Kill a Mockingbird, though it is a classic, is a story about race from a white perspective, and can be seen to promote a white savior attitude; Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry is narrated from a black perspective, and written by a black author; therefore, it is better able to portray the actual experiences and struggles of a black family in America during that time period. Because of this, it also promotes better perspective-taking for students.

If you liked…. Then you should try…

To Kill a Mockingbird (1960) by Harper Lee

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (1976) by Mildred D. Taylor
Overview: *Beauty Queens* is almost exactly a modern-day, female-dominated *Lord of the Flies*. In both texts, the characters (groups of girls and boys, respectively) get stranded on an island, isolated from civilization, and have to figure out how to survive without supervision. They both strongly feature the topics of isolation, survival, identity, and youth.

What you lose: *Lord of the Flies* is dominated by violence, a topic which is almost completely absent in its counterpart. In replacing *Lord of the Flies* with *Beauty Queens*, you also lose the opportunity to critically analyze “toxic masculinity,” which is ever-present in the classic text, and is important to discuss with 21st century students. Additionally, you lose the clear-cut depiction of mob mentality that Golding explores in his novel.

What you gain: Because *Beauty Queens* is a contemporary Young Adult novel, it is easier for students to comprehend the language, allowing more time for in-depth analysis and exploration of the themes rather than focusing on plot. It brings a light to gender relations, female sexuality, issues with body image, and expectations/limitations placed on girls and women—all important concepts for students of all genders to analyze and explore.

---

Overview: Written nearly 150 years apart, *The Scarlet Letter* and *Speak* both explore issues of isolation and alienation from society by featuring female societal outcasts. They also explore the topics of shame, social wrong-doing, and internal/external punishment for sexual actions.

What you lose: *The Scarlet Letter* is often taught in American Literature classes as one representation of the literary movement American Romanticism. The text gives perspective on both the time period in which it was written, 1850, as well as the time period in which it is set, the 1640s. In replacing this text with *Speak*, you are unable to analyze the movement of American Romanticism, and the importance of exploring each of the time periods that the novel represents and how the societies of these different periods in American history viewed/treated women.

What you gain: You gain a contemporary perspective, a more empowered and young female protagonist, and a more applicable and relevant topic, which is difficult yet necessary to teach: rape. Anderson also provides more representation from female authors (which is significantly lacking in the traditional canon).
Overview: *The Catcher in the Rye* is a novel notoriously filled with Holden Caulfield’s teen angst, but it also focuses on other aspects of adolescent identity, and the concept of trying to find yourself. *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* is a contemporary bildungsroman (coming-of-age novel) that exemplifies similar themes as Salinger’s classic.

What you lose: *The Catcher in the Rye* is one of the most widely taught books in the secondary ELA curriculum. While Sanchez’s protagonist holds some of the same ideas about society as Holden Caulfield and uses a similar colloquial and sometimes crude speech, you lose Holden’s blatant unreliability as a narrator, which makes him so intriguing to many. You also lose the utter isolation and alienation from society that Holden experiences.

What you gain: You gain a Mexican-American female protagonist, who is facing some of the same problems as Holden Caulfield: expectations from parents, a wavering identity, and teen angst. However, the main character is also facing emotional trauma from the recent death of her sister, and is trying to cope with that alongside existing anxiety and depression. This focus on mental health, combined with the character’s experiences as the daughter of undocumented immigrants, makes the novel all the more relevant and necessary in our 21st century classrooms.

Overview: These two texts seem like they could not be more different, in that *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is often called “the Great American novel,” and *American Born Chinese* is a contemporary graphic novel. However, the two texts both focus heavily on topics of identity and finding yourself, as well as dealing with difficult topics such as race and racial stereotypes.

What you lose: *Huck Finn* is taught so often in high schools because of its historical context in the Antebellum South. It is a depiction of American regionalism, which Mark Twain is known for, and was the first novel to be written in vernacular English. In replacing it with *American Born Chinese*, you are unable to analyze the historical context and genre.

What you gain: You gain a multicultural look into modern day racism against Asians and Asian-Americans, and a main character who is more relatable to the students you will be teaching. This text also caters towards visual learners, which may help some struggling readers in your classroom to digest the information and be able to critically analyze the text without getting caught up on the language.

Teacher Tip: Using graphic novels in the classroom can help to bridge the gap between different literacies! See Miller (2012).
Suggested Activities

The following activities are intended to promote perspective-taking in the classroom and help students to step into another’s shoes and see issues and situations in a different light. Due to this nature of the activities, they can also be used to develop skills of empathy—being able to understand and connect with how another person or group is feeling—as well as critical thinking—the ability to objectively analyze and evaluate a given situation. All of these skills (perspective-taking, empathy, critical thinking) are important for both primary and secondary school students to develop in order to make them more caring, compassionate, and critical citizens. Each activity is followed by a brief description and an explanation on how to use it in the classroom. Additionally, if there are any materials that accompany the activity, there is an indication of where you will find them in the Appendices. The majority of these activities come from outside sources, and their sources are listed below the activity as well. The first five activities are from Oxfam’s Guide to Global Citizenship in the Classroom, and have been chosen because they provide opportunities for students to explore issues outside of themselves and put themselves in another’s situation to see how they might react to or solve the problem. The remaining activities were selected based off of a combination of personal experience using them in the classroom and peer suggestions. Those activities all also encourage students to see situations differently and acknowledge that people come from different backgrounds, and do not always have the same privileges. As with the diverse texts, not every activity will be appropriate for all audiences, so it is important to analyze your context and community to determine if the activity is right for your classroom.

Why-why-why Chain

This activity begins with an issue, posed as a question, and continues to ask “why” and provide several answers to each “why” in order to get at the root of a problem. This can be used to promote perspective-taking by posing a question that prompts students to think like an individual from a different background, and get to the root of global problems that the student might not encounter.

You can use this with literature to prompt students to think about the characters, situations, and experiences depicted in the text, and get to the root of a particular decision or situation.

More information on this activity is included in Appendix A.

Interrogating Photos

This activity prompts students to dissect photographs and determine what they know about the photograph and what they would like to know. This promotes perspective-taking because it furthers their knowledge of the circumstances of the photograph and expand their perspective.

This activity can be used particularly well when teaching nonfiction or historical fiction by having students analyze photos of historical people and places to determine what they know and do not know about the context. This is a good way to set the scene for a text and engage the students in critical analysis and perspective-taking.

More information on this activity is included in Appendix A.


Issue Tree

This activity allows students to identify an issue, speculate the causes/effects of the issue, and propose solutions to the issue in a visual way. This encourages perspective-taking because it can be used to prompt students to critically think about global and local issues, issues facing minority populations, and many more.

You can use this activity in the classroom to prompt students to analyze the causes/effects of a character’s actions, and predict the outcome or propose a new outcome that might have worked better for the character.

More information on this activity is included in Appendix A.


Consequences Wheel

Similar to the “Why-why-why Chain,” this activity begins with an action and prompts students to think of consequences to the action, and determine consequences of each consequence, and so on and so forth.

More information on this activity is included in Appendix A.


Opinion Continuum

This activity provides students with an opportunity to choose and defend their opinions on issues (which can be real life issues or issues that a character deals with in a novel), and take a stance of where their opinion falls on an issue by using a continuum, which recognizes that no issue is simply black or white. This promotes perspective-taking because students are given the opportunity to debate with their peers on the issue, which helps to open the minds of students with new/differing information.

More information on this activity is included in Appendix A.

What do you see?

This activity is based on a particular image, that can be interpreted either as a young woman or an old woman (two distinctly different images in one picture). The point of the activity is to show students that any two people can look at the same thing and see two different things, so perspective and context are imperative. This activity could be used with virtually any optical illusion to demonstrate differences in perspective.

More information on this activity is included in Appendix B.

Cross the Line

This activity is meant to build community in the classroom and help students to understand that their peers may be going through situations that they are unaware of, but also that the students are not alone in their own struggles.

More information on this activity is included in Appendix C.
Source: Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute & North American Interfraternity Conference.

Assimilation Simulation

This activity puts students into the shoes of an Irish immigrant family in the mid-1800s, when Irish Catholic immigrants were heavily discriminated against. The students have to make decisions on whether or not to “assimilate” the family into the dominant culture or stay true to their values, and allow them to understand the consequences of each decision. While this activity focuses specifically on assimilation, simulations in general are very useful to use in the classroom and can help students immensely with perspective-taking.

More information on this activity is included in Appendix D.
Source: Amanda Borow’s professional portfolio, amandaborow.weebly.com.

Diary Entries/Letters

Having students write diary entries or letters as certain characters or other figures can help place the students in another’s shoes and see a situation from a different perspective in order to understand how that person or character might feel.

This activity is easy to incorporate into the teaching of any text, and aids in perspective-taking as well as understanding characterization. It can help students to sympathize with characters and see their point of view.
Standards Alignment

This section reviews how the suggested activities, as well as the resource guide in general, align with both the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the 2019 Ohio Department of Education Strategic Plan for Education. The following graphic from the ODE Strategic Plan outlines the plan to teach the whole child, an important component of CRP. The next page aligns each suggested activity with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, and provides descriptions from CCSS that represent the concepts of CRP, which demonstrates that practicing a CRP in your classroom is supported by both ODE and CCSS.

The ODE Strategic Plan, “Each Child, Our Future” (which you can find the full text of by going to education.ohio.gov), discusses the state’s plan to implement more culturally relevant teaching into each school for the benefit of every child. The main idea is to teach the whole child, including addressing their diverse cultural backgrounds and providing and teaching equity in education. The plan supports the vision of ensuring that each student is challenged and empowered through culturally relevant teaching and quality education. The following graphic summarized the main tenets of the plan.
Note: The following activity/standard alignments include standards for English Language Arts Grade 11-12. However, the standards featured are extremely similar across all grade level standards 7-12, and only vary based on complexity of the standard, but not the overall concept. You can find the full text of the standards as corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/. 


Activity: Why-why-why Chain
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1

Activity: Interrogating Photos
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7

Activity: Issue Tree
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1

Activity: Consequences Wheel
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1

Activity: Opinion Continuum
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.5

Activity: What do you see?
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7

Activity: Cross the Line
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

Activity: Assimilation Simulation
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6

Activity: Diary Entries/Letters
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6

The two descriptions below are quotations from the Common Core State Standards that directly connect the standards and their intended outcomes to the teaching of diversity, diverse texts, and perspective-taking in the classroom.

They come to understand other perspectives and cultures. Students appreciate that the twenty-first-century classroom and workplace are settings in which people from often widely divergent cultures and who represent diverse experiences and perspectives must learn and work together. 

Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening, and they are able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. They evaluate other points of view critically and constructively. Through reading great classic and contemporary works of literature representative of a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different than their own.

Note on range and content of student reading
To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements. By reading texts in history/social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas. Students can only gain this foundation when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades. Students also acquire the habits of reading independently and closely, which are essential to their future success.
The following sources are all articles that guided and informed my research and were particularly thought-provoking and/or significant to the development and creation of this resource guide. The sources are classified based on which category they best fit—many of these sources could fall into several of the categories, but I have placed them in just one based on the primary focus and purpose of the article. The categories are: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, which focuses on defining CRP and how to effectively practice culturally relevant teaching in your own classroom—this includes the foundational research made on the topic; Diverse Literature, which focuses on the importance of diverse literature in the classroom, as well as the incorporation of specific diverse texts and genres into the classroom (such as Queer and Native American literature); and Perspective-Taking, which focuses on the need for more opportunities for perspective-taking in the classroom, both for students and teachers (in-service and pre-service). Each source is followed by a traditional annotation that summarizes the article, addresses any limitations of it, and connects it to other works and authors. APA citations for the articles are included in the References, starting on Page 21.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

“Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy” by Gloria Ladson-Billings

Ladson-Billings sets out in this piece to define her concept of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), and differentiate it from its predecessors, such as cultural responsiveness, cultural compatibility, and cultural synchronization. The author states that CRP addresses student achievement while also accepting and affirming students’ cultural identities. It also helps students to develop critical perspectives that challenge societal, systemic, and institutional inequities. Ladson-Billings researched her theory of CRP by conducting a 3-year study with 8 successful teachers of African-American students. She detailed their teaching behaviors, ways of caring for students and student achievement, involvement in the community, and the teachers’ core beliefs that contribute to them being successful teachers who practice CRP. Similar to Gay (2002) and Colby and Lyon (2004), Ladson-Billings also makes the claim that universities need to provide better education on CRP to pre-service teachers, who oftentimes enter the field ignorant to the ways that culture functions in education, and how to address, accept, and utilize students’ cultures in their classrooms. Throughout the article, the author is critical of her identity as a black woman, and how that may shape/influence her research; being aware of this possible bias has allowed her to avoid it, instead making the research and theory of CRP objective and reliable.
“Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching” by Geneva Gay

In this article, Geneva Gay introduces the concept of cultural competency and culturally responsive pedagogy, explaining that pre-service teachers need this education on culture in order to have the tools and skills necessary to teach diverse classrooms. She states that because different cultures have different views on education and learning, it is imperative for teachers to educate themselves on those cultures so that they can plan their instruction appropriately in order to meet the needs of their diverse students. Gay provides a basis of how to develop a culturally responsive pedagogy, which includes focusing on symbolic curricula (namely, how teachers decorate their classrooms and use their space to advocate for diversity) and enforcing/teaching multicultural communication skills. Within multicultural communication skills is the concept of code-switching, which allows teachers to respect the home language of students while teaching them that different “codes” or ways of speaking are appropriate for different contexts.

Diverse Literature

“Teaching Queer-Inclusive English Language Arts” by Mollie V. Blackburn and JF Buckley

Blackburn and Buckley begin this article by defining queer-inclusive literature as literature that educates students on the intersectionality of sexuality, identity, and literature (which is different from LGBTQ+ literature, which focuses mostly on the sexuality aspect). They claim that queer literature disrupts the notion of normal, and that when it is not included in the curriculum, it “others” queer people and has the ability to ostracize any queer students in the class. To figure out teachers’ perceptions of including queer literature in the ELA curriculum, the authors surveyed 212 schools; only 18 of them responded as having discussed same-sex desire in ELA. To combat this exclusion of queer literature, Blackburn and Buckley present a dozen Young Adult novels that address issues of queer students, the intersectionality between sexuality and race, and transgender issues. The authors qualify all of the novels they present as well by discussing their strengths and limitations. Finally, they provide guidance on how to create a queer-inclusive classroom by describing a classroom activity that gives students a lesson in perspective-taking.

“Heightening Awareness about the Importance of Using Multicultural Literature” by Susan A. Colby and Anna F. Lyon

Colby and Lyon utilized pre-service teachers in Methods to explore how their understanding of multicultural literature and its functions in the classroom would change after reading and responding to an article about the importance of representation in literature. The article the students read encouraged them to confront their own whiteness and white privilege, which for many of the students, was the first time they were doing so. Colby and Lyon address the fact that multicultural literature helps students “identify with their own cultures, exposes them to other cultures, and opens the dialogue on issues regarding diversity.” The authors state that children are less engaged when they do not see themselves in the pages of the book, and that the inclusion of multicultural literature would help students to understand principles of tolerance, diversity, inclusion, and respect for all. The implications for educators are abundant,
but most importantly, teachers need to recognize the necessity for including diverse and multicultural literature in the curriculum.

“Multicultural Literature and Discussion as Mirror and Window?” by Jocelyn Glazier and Jung-A Seo

This article defines multicultural literature as representing the voices that have been omitted from the traditional canon. Glazier and Seo state that multicultural literature provides readers with a window into other cultures, which helps students to take on differing perspectives from other cultures, and provide a mirror to their own culture, to reflect their own practices back to them. The benefits of this idea of multicultural literature as a window and mirror is that it allows minority students to find their voices, but it also can cause majority students to feel their voices being stifled. The authors interact explicitly with Colby and Lyon’s (2004) “Heightening Awareness” piece, stating that it is necessary for all students to have the opportunity to connect with their cultural voices; in order to ensure this happens, it is important for the educator to choose texts that are representative of all cultures and ethnicities in the classroom, as well as some that are not. These texts must be transformative so that students can try on multiple perspectives. This article insists that a dialogue across cultures needs to be created, and the classroom needs to be a safe space for teacher and students to discuss controversial multicultural issues.

“Embracing Intercultural Diversification: Teaching Young Adult Literature with Native American Themes” by Kenan Metzger, Andrea Box, and James Blasingame

Metzger, Box, and Blasingame detail the implementation of a Native American Literature course at a high school in Arizona, taught by Andrea Box (an author of the piece). The students in Box’s class were very diverse, and the literature and history that she taught helped her non-Native students to understand the history and oppression of Native American peoples, and it helped her Native American students to connect to their own cultures and discover more about their own tribes. The authors found that by engaging in reading that was relevant to the students and contained a perspective that was relatively unknown to them prior to them taking the course, the students had a reason to come to school each day and were genuinely excited to take part in their learning.

Perspective-Taking

“Promoting Multicultural Education through a Literature-Based Approach” by Elaine Bieger

In this article, Bieger presents a hierarchical framework for incorporating multicultural literature into the curriculum. It begins with the “contributions approach,” in which students learn about holidays, heroes, and customs on special occasions throughout the year. The next tier is the “ethnic additive approach,” in which multicultural material is added to the curriculum without making any structural changes. The third level is the “transformation approach,” which allows students to consider different perspectives on the same issue through the reading of multiple sources of literature. Finally, the fourth level is the “social action approach,” which prompts students to identify societal concerns and plan a course of action to resolve them. Bieger reiterates the idea that students’ education of their own cultures aids in their understanding
and willingness to accept other cultures as well. She addresses the need for multicultural literature to represent all groups of people in a variety of roles, not just their stereotypical contexts; however, while she claims that literature can expand a student’s understanding by “depicting experiences that are common to all,” she does not discuss the issues that can arise when students oversimplify a tale of oppression in order to connect it to their own lived experiences.

“Multicultural Readings of Multicultural Literature and the Promotion of Social Awareness in ELA Classrooms” by Ernest and Jodene Morrell

Ernest and Jodene Morrell argue in their article that learning to engage with multicultural readings of multicultural literature is imperative for all students—not just those who have been marginalized themselves. They state that providing students with opportunities to engage with these readings promotes cultural pluralism, or the concept of smaller groups within a society maintaining a unique cultural identity that is separate from society at large (in contrast with the concept of assimilation, in which minority groups adopt the customs of the majority in order to “fit in”). The authors address the fact that reading and including multicultural literature in the ELA curriculum allows students to acknowledge and celebrate diversity while dismantling cultural stereotypes; it also addresses the fact that not all literature that promotes itself as multicultural works to challenge stereotypes and provide varying perspectives, so teachers need to be aware of what message their multicultural literature is promoting. The authors echo the work of Thein, Beach, and Parks (2007) by encouraging teachers to create opportunities for perspective-taking in their instruction, and they echo Glazier and Seo (2005) by stating that literature can act as a mirror to one’s own culture and identity.

“Perspective-Taking as Transformative Practice in Teaching Multicultural Literature to White Students” by Amanda Thein, Richard Beach, and Daryl Parks

In this article, the authors—Thein, Beach, and Parks—address the unfortunate fact that white students can often push back against multicultural literature because they do not want to be implicated in institutional or systemic racism; it is difficult to recognize one’s own privilege. The authors also mention that teachers must handle the teaching of diverse literature carefully because they often run the risk of oversimplifying and universalizing the struggles of oppressed peoples when asking students to connect it to their own lives. Thein, Beach, and Parks studied a class of students over the course of a year that were introduced to more diverse and multicultural literature, and recorded the changes in the students’ understandings of multicultural literature and diverse perspectives. They concluded that changes in perspectives occurred slowly and with a gradual progression, but that the students’ willingness to take on different perspectives was increased by the year’s instruction.
Conclusion

My hope in creating this resource guide is that it aids teachers in creating a more diverse classroom where students feel comfortable taking on new perspectives and practicing empathy and critical thinking. Developing a more culturally relevant pedagogy and implementing that teaching in your classroom encourages student engagement in the classroom and provides relevance to student learning (see: Ladson-Billings, 1995; Colby & Lyon, 2004; Morrell & Morrell, 2012; Metzger, Box, & Blasingame, 2013). It is imperative, especially in our current educational climate and in a society that is little by little recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion, to promote culturally relevant teaching in our classrooms and schools. It is our job, as educators, to ensure that all of our students feel seen, heard, and represented in our classrooms, and that we are providing opportunities for students to learn about other cultures and experiences.

This guide will hopefully be just one step in creating more culturally relevant classrooms and encouraging educators and future educators to teach for social justice and the betterment of themselves, their students, and their society. My challenge for current educators is to begin implementing facets of CRP into your teaching, such as incorporating more diverse literature, either in the form of full books or supplementing with poems and short stories, and beginning to use more perspective-taking activities. My challenge for pre-service educators is to enter your teaching career with the goal of being a culturally relevant teacher, and to do that by planning your instruction around CRP and keeping that goal of helping students develop their skills of empathy and critical thinking in mind through everything you do in your classroom. The end goal is for all teachers to practice CRP in their classrooms and promote diversity, inclusion, empathy, and critical thinking. Every individual teacher that implements CRP in their classrooms is a step towards that goal. With the implementation of these suggestions, our students will be more engaged with their schooling, will feel a greater sense of membership in their community, and will therefore be prepared not only to go forth into the world, but to change the world.

“Be the change you wish to see in the world”

—Mahatma Gandhi
References


ASKING QUESTIONS

Guidelines

• Learners should be helped to recognise different kinds of question and think about their merits.
• Learners should be encouraged to examine their own assumptions. You can help them do this by continually asking them ‘Why?’ and ‘What do you mean by that?’
• You should also help learners to distinguish between factual questions and those whose answers will involve beliefs or opinions, whether ethical, moral, political or spiritual.

Images and artefacts are useful for stimulating learners’ questions.

Why-why-why chain

What is it?
This tool gets learners thinking beyond surface impressions to the underlying causes of any issue. It can be a highly effective way of linking the local to the global with little or no steering by the teacher, other than to keep asking questions beginning with the word ‘why’.

Classroom set-up
Best done in pairs or threes, or as a whole-class discussion activity. Flip-chart or sugar paper, and pens or sticky notes are useful.

How is it done?
1 Write the issue in a box at the left-hand side of the page. Then ask learners to think of all the direct reasons for the issue. These should be written [or drawn] in boxes in a neighbouring column, linked to the issue box by arrows.

2 Ask learners to think through the possible reasons behind this first set of reasons. Each reason may have more than one contributing factor. Repeat the process as many times as the issue will allow, each time starting a new column to the right of the previous one. The end result is a flow chart which highlights the complexity of an issue and the different scales of causation. You could then ask learners to distinguish between links that they can support with evidence and those that they cannot.

3 Once the process has gone as far as it can, look at the boxes on the right-hand side, and encourage learners to ask: ‘Is it fair that this is happening?’ and ‘What can be done to change things?’.
Interrogating photographs

What is it?
Photographs can be hugely influential in shaping our ideas about ourselves, other people and the wider world. However, the pictures we see do not always tell the whole story. Images in the media can often be one-sided or perpetuate negative stereotypes. So visual literacy is arguably as important to learners as text literacy. The following activity gets learners questioning photographs (or artefacts), as well as their own assumptions about them.

Classroom set-up
Learners work in groups of three or four. Each group will require table space.

How is it done?
Learners look carefully at the photograph or artefact and discuss what they know about it. They then consider what they would like to know, and write down all the questions that they can think of (the photograph or artefact could be placed on a piece of sugar paper and the questions written around it). You can then use the Route Finder tool (see ‘A further tool for stimulating questions’ on page 12) to categorise the questions and see if there are any lines of questioning that the learners have not addressed.

To encourage learners to question their assumptions about a photograph, you could ask:
• Where is this place? Is it in the UK? Why do you think that?
• What is happening beyond the frame?
• Why do you think that? Learners could lay the photograph in the middle of a sheet of plain paper and draw what they think lies beyond the frame around it. Alternatively, if you want to compare learners’ ideas with the reality shown in the photograph, you could reveal just a section of the original image and ask them to extend it.
• What happened before the picture was taken and what might have happened afterwards? Why do you think that?

Issue tree

What is it?
This is a way of structuring an enquiry to encourage learners to explore the causes, effects (or symptoms) and solutions of a given issue.

Classroom set-up
This activity is best done in groups but can be completed individually.

How is it done?
• Learners draw a fruit tree in outline.
• They then label the trunk with the chosen issue, the roots with the causes of the issue, the branches with the effects (or symptoms) of the issue, and the fruit with possible solutions to the issue.
• This activity can be carried out either before learners research the issue, as a way of representing what they already know, or at the end of their research as a way of presenting their findings.
MAKING CONNECTIONS

Guidelines

• Themes common to young people’s lives throughout the world – such as water, food, transport, homes, school, waste, conflict and play – make good starting points. They focus learners’ minds on the things they share with young people in other countries, before they go on to consider their different experiences of these aspects of life.

• The concept of a journey is very useful in making local–global connections. The journeys of both people and goods (for example, bananas) demonstrate vividly the meaning of global interdependence.

• Connections also need to be made between issues. Investigating any issue, such as inequality, of both local and global significance usually reveals a web of connections that involve other important factors.

• While you should avoid oversimplifying complex global issues, there are still many useful connections to be made between global concerns and everyday classroom life; for example, parallels can be drawn between sharing equipment and social justice.

Consequences wheel

What is it?
A consequences wheel is a type of mind-map which can help learners think through the consequences of an event, action or issue. As well as making connections between cause and effect, consequences wheels can also help learners appreciate the global significance of local actions, and the local significance of global issues or trends.

Classroom set-up
This activity can be done individually, in small groups or as a whole class.

How is it done?
1. Learners write the main event or action inside a circle in the middle of the page.
2. Learners write each direct consequence of the event inside another circle, which is linked to the main circle with a single line. Learners try to think of as many direct consequences as possible. These should be arranged in a circle around the main circle.
3. Learners then consider the consequences of these consequences. These are once again written inside circles, linked to the direct consequences – and so on. Learners can colour each circle depending on whether the consequence is good or bad.
4. Go through the learners’ assumptions with them and ask whether they are justified. Discuss with learners how they can find out more about the facts.
5. Further discussion could involve looking more deeply at the issues that have arisen, and getting learners to think about what could be done to break chains of negative consequences.
EXPLORING VIEWPOINTS AND VALUES

Guidelines

• Establish ground rules which create a safe environment for learners to express opinions. Ideally, the class will help draw up these ground rules, as this will encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning process.
• Discussions do not have to reach conclusions or consensus.
• Splitting the class into small groups can help less confident learners express their opinions. Consider having the members of each group assign themselves roles, for example, note-taker, timekeeper, spokesperson.
• Consider your own role carefully. The box to the right provides some guidance.

Opinion continuum

What is it?
This is a simple way of encouraging learners to think through their position on two opposing views about an issue. It is a helpful means of exploring complex issues and diverse viewpoints.

Classroom set-up
At its most basic, this activity only requires space for a continuous line (real or imagined) from one side of the classroom to the other. An alternative approach is to hang a line of string (at around waist height) between two facing walls, and invite learners to come to the line one at a time and use pegs to mark their opinions.

How is it done?
These guidelines should enable everyone to take part in a calm way:
1 Introduce the opinion that you want learners to consider, for example, ‘People should have to pay for plastic bags in shops’ and outline two opposite positions (strongly agree vs strongly disagree). Explain that everyone’s view will fall somewhere along the line, and that there are not necessarily any right or wrong answers.
2 Explain the rules, such as learners choose whether to participate or not; the person taking their place on the line is the only person talking; no reactions – verbal or otherwise – from the rest of the group.
3 Any learner may begin by taking a position on the line that represents their view. The volunteer says a few words to the class about why they have taken that position. The process is repeated, with selected learners expressing their opinions one at a time.
4 If some learners are reluctant to take part, you could suggest that they mark their position on the line without saying anything.
5 When everyone who wants to has spoken, tell learners they can change their position on the line in the light of the arguments they have heard.
6 Debrief the learners. How many learners changed their positions? What led them to change their minds? What have they gained from this process?

To encourage learners to practise negotiation skills, you could divide them into groups and ask them to come to a group view. Each group can then send one representative to identify the place on the line that best represents the group view. This is also easier in terms of classroom management, with fewer learners out of their seats at any one time.

CHOOSE YOUR ROLE CAREFULLY

When handling controversial issues, the teacher can play any one of a variety of roles:

Committed – the teacher is free to share their own views. Care needs to be taken as this can lead to a biased discussion.

Objective or academic – the teacher gives an explanation of all possible viewpoints without stating their own position.

Devil’s advocate – the teacher deliberately adopts an opposite stance to each pupil’s, irrespective of their own viewpoint. This approach helps ensure all views are covered and challenges learners’ existing beliefs.

Declared interest – the teacher declares their own viewpoint so that learners can judge later bias, then presents all positions as objectively as possible.

Advocate – the teacher presents all available viewpoints and then concludes by stating their own position with reasons.

Impartial chairperson – the teacher ensures that all viewpoints are represented, through learners’ statements or published sources. The teacher facilitates but does not state their own position.

Any of these roles may be appropriate at a particular time, and each one has its advantages and disadvantages.

Think carefully about which role you will adopt in each situation and why.
WHAT DO YOU SEE?

PROCEDURE:

1. Explain to the students that you are going to show a picture on the overhead. You want them to look at it and think about what they see but not say yet.

2. Show the transparency without giving it a title.

3. Ask students what they see in the picture.

4. Select one student who sees the young woman to point her out to the others. Do the same for the old woman.

5. Explain to students that some people see an eagle and a beaver. Explain that other people may see other things.

6. Ask:

   Why did some people see a young woman while others saw an old woman, a beaver while others saw an eagle? Is there a correct way to see the picture?

   What did you feel towards those who saw the drawing the same way you did? Towards those who saw it differently?

   What did you feel when you "discovered" the other aspect of the picture?

   Was there ever a time when you saw something one way and someone else saw it differently?

   How did you feel about the person who saw that situation differently?

Closure:

If it's true that two people can look at the same picture and see something different without either being wrong, how might this affect a conflict?

What if each person sees the situation a different way? How can they figure out a resolution to the conflict if they are both right about what they see?

OBJECTIVES:

The student will:
- Understand how people may have different perceptions of the same event
- Appreciate that seeing things differently does not necessarily mean that someone is right or wrong.

MATERIALS:

- Transparency of "Perception Picture"
- Overhead projector.
Appendix C

Crossing The Line
Adapted from: Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute & North American Interfraternity Conference

Objectives
- To emphasize the importance of knowing and communicating personal values
- To highlight how personal values influence the group
- To develop the idea that knowing your values will be the basis for leadership
- To introduce the concept of values based actions

Values
- Presenter begins discussion by asking participants to define values
- Ask participants to identify where they learn their values and who teaches them values
- Ask participants to identify specific values they hold. Ask: Are they people with values? Yes or no?

Introduction
The next activity will afford people the chance to think about their values and to express them to others. It is important to begin Cross The Line by establishing common ground for the activity. We live in a diverse world. In this exercise we will explore the diversity among us by thinking about our values, our backgrounds, our teachers, and our experiences. We might even discover that this fairly homogeneous looking group is much more diverse than any of you would assume. This activity will involve labeling and personalizing some of this diversity. This personalization might prove uncomfortable at times. Eventually, however, it might empower us to break down some of the stereotypes and assumptions that we, as a product of our cultures, experience, and life hold.

Instructions
This activity is fairly simple. Ask everyone to gather on one side of the room/line and face towards its center. I will call out specific categories/labels/descriptions, and ask that all of those to whom this applies, walk to the other side of the room/line. For example, I might request that anyone with glasses please cross the room. If this describes you and you feel comfortable acknowledging it, you would walk to this side of the room/line. Once there, turn and face the crowd you just left. Get in touch with your feelings and think about those people on both sides, then return to the side you started from. After a few seconds, I will continue with a new question. Remember, there is no pressure to cross the room/line if you don’t feel comfortable doing so. You will need to make that decision. At the conclusion of the activity, we will discuss what we felt and what we learned. There may be times when this activity makes you feel slightly uncomfortable. I would urge you to lean into that discomfort since it may mean that you are about to gain an important learning or insight.

Ground Rules
There are two important ground rules to this activity.
1) The first involves listening. Let’s have silence throughout the exercise. “No talking, snickering, giggling, nonverbal messages.”
2) It is imperative that we respect the dignity of each person who is here. All that is shared should remain confidential. “Nothing that is offered should leave this room. However, if after the workshop you really need to talk to a particular person, be sure to ask his/her permission.”

Questions for the Activity
- Anyone who has visited another country
- Anyone who is female
- Anyone who prefers day to night
- Anyone who has never flown
- Anyone who owns your own car
- Anyone who since his/her first year of high school has been in love and been hurt
• Anyone who is Atheist or Agnostic
• Anyone who is Jewish
• Anyone who is a person of color
• Anyone who feels that he/she knows very little about his/her cultural heritage
• Anyone who would describe his or her family as blue collar or working class
• Anyone who would describe his or her family as middle class
• Anyone who would describe his or her family as upper class
• Anyone who is the oldest in the family
• Anyone who is the youngest in the family
• Anyone who is an only child
• Anyone who sometimes has low self confidence
• Anyone who sometimes feels lonely
• Anyone who has ever been in a fight to prove you were tough
• Anyone who has received a 3.5 GPA or higher last semester/quarter
• Anyone who received lower than a 3.0 GPA last semester/quarter
• Anyone who considers him/herself a Democrat
• Anyone who considers him/herself a Republican
• Anyone who considers him/herself a Socialist
• Anyone who is adopted
• Anyone whose natural parents have divorced
• Anyone who has had one or more of their parents pass away
• Anyone who believes it is alright for someone to have a date of the same gender at a social event
• Anyone who has a family member who is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender
• Anyone who is choosing to abstain from sex until marriage
• Anyone who has experienced the effects of alcoholism in their family
• Anyone who has experienced the effects of drug addiction in their family
• Anyone who has a friend or relative who has attempted to commit suicide
• Anyone who has had a friend or relative to commit suicide
• Anyone who has a friend or relative who has been sexually assaulted or abused
• Anyone who has not yet crossed the line

Does anyone have any other questions that they would like to ask the group? Presenter invites participants to sit and form a circle. Presenter then facilitates a discussion about the activity. “Try to focus on values.”

Processing Questions
• Do values matter?
• What kind of feelings did you have as you participated?
• How did you feel when there were very few of you on one side of the room?
• What does this activity have to do with leadership?
• Did you find yourself making judgments of others?
• How did the movement of others influence you?
• What did you learn through this activity that can make our environment more welcoming?
• What did you learn through this activity that will make you a better person or leader?
• Through this activity, intentionally or not, did you share your values?
• Through this activity, intentionally or not, do you think that you learned about the values of others?

Learning Outcomes
• How do values represent themselves in everyday life?
• How do values represent themselves in our organizations?
• Are there times in life when values are ignored?
• What is the result when values are ignored, trashed, forgotten?
• Ask again, DO VALUES MATTER?
Family Descriptions:

The Meehan Family

Welcome to the United States! You and your family just emigrated from Ireland and are settling into your new home. Though you had to leave Ireland, you miss it dearly and are trying to find an Irish community here in the Boston for support. Life is not easy and you are going to have to make some hard choices as a family to survive.

When you are making choices make sure that you:
• Listen to one another and work together
• Many people are working in this space – discuss your decisions quietly!
• Think about the potential benefits and potential sacrifices of each choice

Scenario Descriptions, Choices & Outcomes:

Scenario #1
The father just got a job as a roofer’s assistant. The pay is 85 cents every day, which is just enough to pay for the family’s food and rent. To support the family, mother and the family’s eldest daughter have to work as seamstresses earning 25 cents a day. There is opportunity to get a raise and a promotion if father works hard. But, his boss is Protestant and does not like Catholics. Father is worried that his will affect his chances of getting a promotion.

Scenario #1 Choices:
Do you choose to:

Stay faithful to your religion and participate in the church. The Irish Catholic community is warm and welcoming. The children will sing in the choir and attend parochial school. If your boss finds out that your family is Catholic, father may not get a raise and could even get fired.

OR

Hide your religion to protect father’s job and increase the chances that he will get a much needed raise and promotion. If you do not participate in the Catholic Church you may feel lonely with a community and lose parts of your cultural and religious identity.

Think about/discuss:
• What are the potential benefits of each choice?
• What are the potential sacrifices of each choice?
• How does being who you are at work/school impact your happiness and comfort?

Scenario #1 Outcomes:

You have decided to assimilate:

Father hides his religious beliefs at work and gets a raise and promotion after 2 months. The increase in pay makes life much easier for the family and the family’s eldest daughter can now
return to school. In order to hide the family’s Catholic faith you do not attend church. Without the support of a community the family is lonely and isolated. Father and mother are worried that the children will grow up without faith and will be ashamed of their family’s history and religion.

What did you expected would happen?
What surprises you about this outcome?

You have decided not to assimilate:

You decide to stay faithful to your Catholic religion because it is important to who you are and makes your happy. Your family is involved in the Catholic Church and the community has been very important. The kids sing in the choir and attend parochial school - they are learning about and are proud of their Irish Catholic heritage. Father’s boss finds out that you are Irish Catholic and reduces his pay to 75 cents a day. Mother and the eldest daughter have to take on more work as seamstresses. After another month, father is fired from his job and the family’s future is very uncertain.

What did you expected would happen?
What surprises you about this outcome?

Scenario #2:

One of the children in your family is being teased at school for bringing traditional Irish food for lunch. He is being called names because other students know that he is Irish and have been taught by their parents and society to discriminate against Irish folks. Your child is very unhappy and begs you to send him to school with non-traditional Irish food instead so he will have the same food as the other students.

Scenario #2 Choices:

Do you choose to:

Even though your child is being teased, you decided to send him to school with traditional Irish food. You tell him to be proud of his culture and heritage. Sometimes life can be hard and people can be mean but you should not change who you are to fit in.

OR

Send your child to school with bread and butter with the hope that he will no longer be teased by his classmates. The food cost more than the traditional Irish food that you buy.

Think about/Discuss:
• What are the potential benefits of each choice?
• What are the potential sacrifices of each choice?
• How important is food to your culture/cultural identity?

Scenario #2 Outcomes:
You have decided to assimilate:

The non-traditional food that you send with your child for lunch cost more. In order to buy the food, mother has to take on more work as a seamstress. Even though he has different food, your child still gets teased for being Irish. He eventually becomes ashamed of his cultural history and does not want to eat traditional Irish food at home or attend church.

What did you expect would happen?
What surprises you about this outcome?

You have decided not to assimilate:

Your child continues to be teased for his traditional Irish food. He finds a group of friends at school who are also Irish and a few other students are not mean. The next year he attends a parochial school where most of the students are Irish Catholic. He is proud of his Irish history.

What did you expect would happen?
What surprises you about this outcome?

Scenario #3

Father only makes 85 cents at his job which is just enough to pay for rent and food. He just heard that he might lose some of his wages or possibly lose his job because free Black folks are moving North and are willing to work for less wages. Father’s friends in the Irish worker union are upset and want to vote to exclude Black workers from the union and try to prevent them from getting jobs. Your family knows what it is like to face hardship and be discriminated against but you are also worried for your family’s well-being and security.

Scenario #3 Choices:

Do you choose to:

Do you let your Irish friends in the union that you are joining the abolitionist movement because you are against slavery? You believe that all people should have access to work and wages. OR

Do you join your friends in the union to discriminate against Black workers? You can vote against allowing Black workers to join the union and try to prevent them from getting jobs in the mill. This may protect your wages and job to ensure that you can support your family.

Think about/Discuss:
• What are the potential benefits of each choice?
• What are the potential sacrifices of each choice?
• Why would Irish folks want to be considered “white” in the United States?
**Scenario #3 Outcomes:**

**You have decided to assimilate:**

Your vote to exclude Black workers from the union protects your wages for now. The Irish union reminded management that they are white and should be hired over Black workers because America is a “country of whites”. By discriminating against Black workers your family and the union are supporting antiblack sentiments in the United States and are closer to being considered white. Eventually management decides to hire Black workers at lower wages. Because the Black workers are not unionized they cannot fight for fair wages and your wages are cut to match their lower wages.

What did you expected would happen?
What surprises you about this outcome?

**You decided not to assimilate:**

Your refusal to vote to discriminate against Black workers isolates you from many of your friends in the Irish union. You do not receive the benefits that they seem to get from discriminating against Black folks. You hope that in the future a joint union can form between Irish workers and Black workers and together you can fight for fair wages and safer work conditions.

What did you expected would happen?
What surprises you about this outcome?