

Respectful Representations of Disability in Picture Books

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Bringing diverse portraits of disability into the classroom through children's literature is a powerful way to ensure that all students can find themselves in the pages of a book.

When students enter my second-grade classroom, the first thing they see is a colorful corner bordered by four low bookshelves and a large blue-and-white striped couch. The bookshelves in the classroom library hold more than 1,200 books organized by favorite authors, genres, series, and topics. On one wall above the shelves, surrounded by tissue paper flowers, is the central message, "Reading makes your mind bloom!" This is our classroom library, the space where magic happens as students find joy and excitement in the books they discover.

One of my favorite Saturday morning activities is perusing children's books in our local bookstore. I seek out books that will fit the interests and needs of the students I teach. Many of my students love stories about friendship, sleepovers, and playing dress-up, so we've accumulated a surplus of easy-reader book series that fit the bill: *Fancy Nancy*, *Heidi Heckelbeck*, and *Pinkalicious*. Other students play on sports teams, so I have acquired books like Jonathan London's *Froggy Plays Soccer* and the *Ballpark Mysteries* series. For my students who love adventure, *The Magic Treehouse* series remains a long-standing favorite. Year after year I stake out the bookstore, searching for the perfect books to match each student's interests and abilities.

Occasionally, I find myself on a mission to find a book that addresses a specific student need. I want my students to learn that books can provide not just a source of enjoyment but also a place of comfort and reflection shared with characters like themselves in situations like their own. Though I have become quite skilled at navigating the world of children's books, I am often left empty-handed when it comes to finding books for the students in my classroom who don't fit the mold of the typical sleepover-loving, friendship-bracelet-making, T-ball-playing 8-year-old.

My students with disabilities are often the most perplexing. Where are the books with characters who have disabilities and who engage with life in the rich and varied ways of more typically developing characters? Where is the book for my student who struggles

to communicate her thoughts with her peers at school, much less join a sleepover? Or my student who struggles to play soccer with his classmates as he learns to control his wheelchair? Or my student who has a meltdown whenever there is a minor change to our daily schedule? No matter how often I visit the bookstore, my mission to find books that every student in my classroom can relate to and enjoy remains incomplete. Where are the books for my students who don't see themselves reflected in characters like *Fancy Nancy* or *Jack and Annie*?

When Ashley (first author) shared this story and these questions with David (third author), a professor in her doctoral program, he was unable to suggest more than a few titles of such books, none meeting the specific needs that she was trying to address: *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox, describing a young boy's interactions with an elderly friend with dementia; *Dad and Me in the Morning* by Patricia Lakin, describing an early morning walk taken by a young boy who is deaf and his father; and *Mama Zooms* by Jane Cowen-Fletcher, about a preschooler who enjoys riding in his mother's lap in her wheelchair.

David contacted a colleague, Barbara (second author), a school-based speech-language pathologist,

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who had spent a career integrating the use of texts and written language activities into interventions for students with significant disabilities. She understood the challenges in finding great books for all students, having spent decades scouring thrift stores and garage sales, seeking out Scholastic warehouse sales, and developing strategies for acquiring books cheaply.

Barbara recommended a few more titles, including *Susan Laughs* by Jeanne Willis, a picture book tracking a full day of fun for a young girl who, it is revealed at the end, also uses a wheelchair, and *My Friend Isabelle* by Eliza Woloson, in which Charlie compares and contrasts his friend's and his own interests, and finally we learn that Isabelle has Down syndrome.

Barbara noted additional difficulties experienced in searching for such books. First, many of her students progressed through elementary school making slow progress in learning to read. One serious challenge was finding books that they could read but would not reject as books intended for younger students. A second was that so many of the books she found with characters who had disabilities were written to explain the nature of the disability to typically developing children and often contained patronizing messages about how special children with disabilities were or employed *you/them* language (e.g., "You should help classmates with Down syndrome because *they* have learning difficulties"). She felt uncomfortable encouraging her students who had disabilities to read such books.

These initial discussions about more inclusive children's literature led the three of us to investigate more systematically the existence of more such texts. In this article, we describe the importance of such books, what we sought, how we searched, and what we found.

The Importance of Characters With Disabilities in Children's Literature

Portrayals of disability in children's literature have been included in discussions of multicultural literature since the late 1980s, when many marginalized groups joined the fight for societal and curricular reform that embraced diversity in all its forms (Sims

Bishop, 1997). Definitions of multicultural literature vary from author to author. Many have embraced an all-encompassing view that such literature mirrors the racial, ethnic, and other dimensions of diversity that are representative of our society and in our world, rather than solely portraying perspectives of "the other"—any people other than white, middle class, able-bodied Americans (Sims Bishop, 1997).

Disability, unlike other types of diversity, has a negative connotation in the label itself. The Latin prefix *dis-* means apart, asunder, or away, creating the literal definition as away from ability. The use of the label *disability*, then, is different from other group descriptors in that it connotes a negative and nonspecific quality, however neutrally it may have been intended. "This student has a disability" is a statement that, in schools, is seldom followed by

"but [he or she] does have these other abilities."

Many scholars have affirmed that reading inclusive literature is one way that schools can cultivate a view of human differences along an infinite number of dimensions, including ability and disability (Adomat, 2014; Andrews, 1998; Ostrosky, Mouzourou, Dorsey, Favazza, & Leboeuf, 2015). Furthermore, Sims Bishop (1997) argued that such reading experiences enable students to learn to appreciate, respect, and affirm diversity, thereby creating a world where democratic pluralism is viewed positively.

A metaphor of books as mirrors, windows, and doors is found in discussions about diverse children's literature, with implications both for identity development and social practice (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). These images provide a lens through which we can better examine the value of using inclusive literature in classrooms.

As mirrors, books can provide students with reflections of their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences. As students read about characters similar to themselves, they begin to envision connections to the world and its possibilities. They increase their sense of belonging and self-affirmation (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). One such inclusive book is *Blue Skies for Lupe* by Linda Kurtz Kingsley (2015). In this story, Lupe, a young immigrant from Mexico, uses

PAUSE AND PONDER

- What role should children's literature play in developing an understanding of disabilities?
- How can book selections contribute to creating classroom environments that are physically, emotionally, and socially inclusive?
- In what ways can you incorporate inclusive literature to encourage rich and meaningful classroom discussions about ability?

a wheelchair (see Figure 1). Lupe learns that she is able to enjoy many activities, such as playing basketball and dancing. Students with physical disabilities might relate to Lupe's participation in activities that need not be restricted by her disability. Simultaneously, the book could serve as a window through which nondisabled students can see that disability is not the sole determinant of enjoyment or participation in life.

As windows, children's books present places and adventures different from those of readers. Readers can view the realities of new worlds through the characters' experiences and responses. These windows, however, can only promote acceptance and compassion to the extent that the view they offer is accurate (Andrews, 1998). Children's literature offering authentic representations of disability can help students with and without disabilities begin to see

meaningful similarities between themselves and others (Ostrosky et al., 2015). Sims Bishop (1997) argued that such windows are needed to prevent the miseducation of students who may see themselves and their experiences as normal and all others as unusual or abnormal.

Finally, books can be seen as doors transporting the reader both into and out of everyday conditions (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). All children deserve the experience of getting lost in the adventure, fantasy, and mystery of great books. A book such as *Piano Starts Here: The Young Art Tatum* by Robert Andrew Parker offers a door into the life of a musician who was blind but had a highly successful career as a jazz pianist.

It is vitally important to consider who is represented, who is underrepresented, who is misrepresented, and who is ignored in literature (Botelho & Rudman, 2009). When books painting diverse and accurate portraits of the incredible range of ability and disability are not available to students, we must question what we are teaching them about who is valued and what is important.

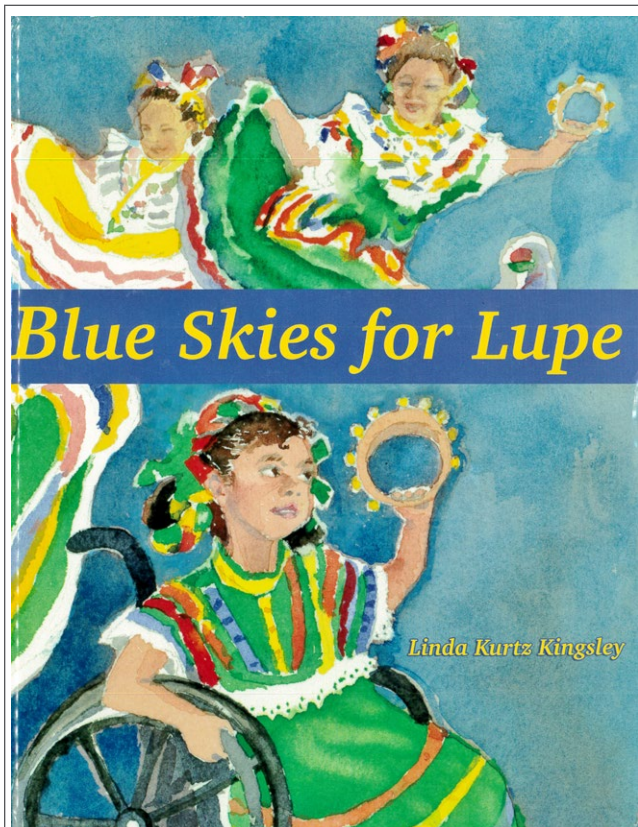
Further, if the stories we share are not representative of the range of ability and disability, we risk perpetuating, rather than disrupting, what Adichie (2009) referred to as "the single story." Restricted reading about diversity can lead to naive perceptions (e.g., that all people with cerebral palsy use wheelchairs, that all people with autism spectrum disorders have behavioral challenges).

As Alam (2016) asserted, "We need books that proclaim the territory of childhood belongs to all children" (para. 8), yet children with disabilities may be one of the most underrepresented and inadequately portrayed groups in children's literature (Blaska, 2004; Dyches, Prater, & Jenson, 2006). At the same time, more than 13% (6.5 million) of the students attending U.S. public schools receive special education services (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2016). Classrooms should be places where books offering authentic and diverse representations of ability and disability are commonplace and where it is possible for every student to find mirrors, windows, and doors in which and through which to experience possibility.

Diverse Abilities and Reading Teachers

Three out of every five students who receive special education services spend more than 80% of the

Figure 1
Cover of *Blue Skies for Lupe*



Note. From *Blue Skies for Lupe*, by L.K. Kingsley, 2015, Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House. Copyright 2015 by Linda Kurtz Kingsley. Reprinted with permission. The color figure can be viewed in the online version of this article at <http://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com>.

school day in regular education classrooms (NCES, 2016). These students often struggle in learning to read; national data indicate that fourth graders with disabilities on average read below a basic level (i.e., they have failed to achieve even partial mastery of knowledge and skills fundamental to learning from texts or applying what they read to real-world situations; NCES, 2015).

It is crucial that teachers find inclusive books that are not only appropriate to use in their classroom, but these books must also offer levels of text difficulty that make the content accessible for students with disabilities who may be reading well below grade level. Classroom teachers play an important role in creating classroom environments that are inviting for students with disabilities (Andrews, 1998; Dyches et al., 2006), which can be facilitated by the use of inclusive literature (Adomat, 2014; Leininger, Dyches, Prater, & Heath, 2010).

In the most recent version of the International Reading Association's (2010; now the International Literacy Association) *Standards for Reading Professionals*, one of the identified responsibilities of reading specialists and literacy coaches is to work with the educational team to meet the needs of all students in a school or district. Reading specialists have the experience and expertise to assist classroom teachers in identifying inclusive literature that can be read and enjoyed by all students. Further, the professional standards state that reading professionals should create opportunities for students to engage in literacy experiences that increase awareness of diversity and appreciation of difference (International Reading Association, 2010).

The Search Process

There have been many reviews of children's literature that explore disability. Typically, the authors of these reviews identify books that can be used to teach children without disabilities about the experiences of those who have a disability (e.g., Artman-Meeker, Grant, & Yang, 2016; Price, Ostrosky, & Santos, 2016) or describe how characters with disabilities are portrayed in texts (e.g., Leininger et al., 2010). Some have examined the ways in which using such children's books enabled democratic discussions about disability in an inclusive classroom (Adomat, 2014) or respectful attitudes toward classmates with disabilities (Ostrosky et al., 2015).

The Present Review

What we sought in this review was children's literature with a somewhat different purpose, one that might be useful in extending our literature toolbox so we can educate students about the diverse range of abilities and also help students with disabilities find stories that mirror their own experiences or offer exciting, new perspectives. We recognized that the books should be readable by students whose reading skills might lag behind their same-age peers.

Although portrayals of disability have been explored in award-winning picture books and novels (Dyches et al., 2006; Leininger et al., 2010), as well as in adolescent literature (Prater, 2000) and in literature for young children (Ostrosky et al., 2015), text complexity has not been mentioned in reviews of these books. Teachers cannot assume that reading a text aloud makes it accessible because many students with disabilities experience language comprehension difficulties (McDuffie & Abbeduto, 2009; Nation & Norbury, 2005; Paul, 2009). Our shared belief is that students should not have to wait until they are able to read sophisticated texts to find characters like themselves involved in interesting narratives. Some of our favorite inclusive texts include Kathryn Erskine's *Mockingbird* and Sharon Draper's *Out of My Mind*. Both children's novels offer deeply moving narratives written from the perspective of children with disabilities, and both offer mirrors for students with disabilities and windows for typically developing students. However, neither could be read independently by students who struggle with reading, because they fall in the range of upper elementary text difficulty.

Our Search Criteria

Early in the search process, we established our intention to identify children's books that were interesting and meaningful for all readers but especially for upper elementary students who read below grade level. We wanted books that they could enjoy reading themselves and that would offer worlds inhabited by characters who experienced challenges and triumphs to which they could relate. Finally, we wanted books that could also be read and enjoyed by all students to increase their awareness of the richness of diversity that exists in our world. We established specific search criteria:

- The book must be easy to read. We defined this as approximately a third-grade readability level or easier.

- The story must not be overly didactic. The character with a disability should be portrayed authentically and not pitied or patronized. A teacher would not be embarrassed to read the book aloud in front of students with the disability being portrayed in the story.
- The book should offer an interesting and engaging story line and have characters with depth. The story would be interesting to students with disabilities, and they might be able to identify with the story in meaningful ways.
- The book should use respectful language and portray the characters with disabilities as rich and complex individuals who are defined by more than their disabilities.
- The book must be readily available from booksellers or public libraries. We saw no point in identifying good books if readers could not find them.

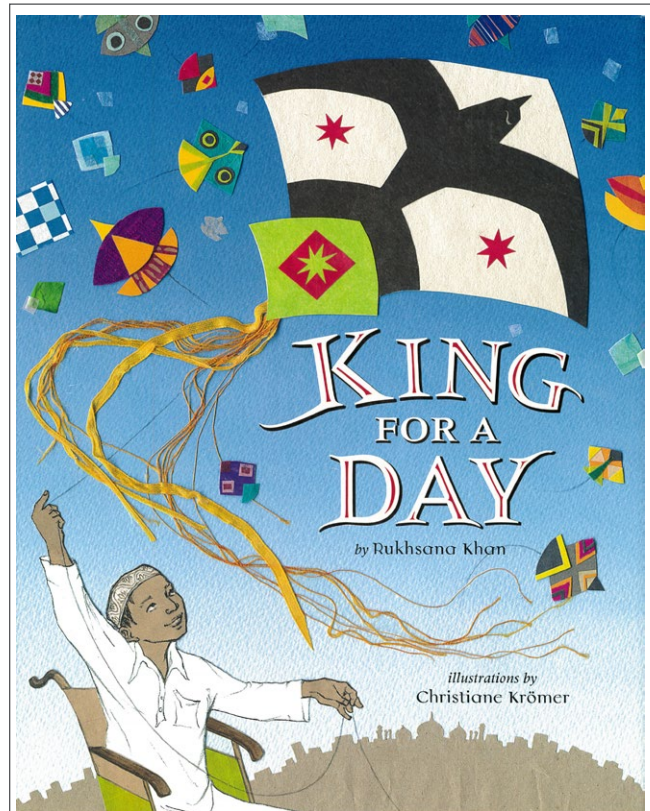
Two Sample Books: *King for a Day* and *Can I Play Too?*

One book that stands out as an ideal match for our criteria is the award-winning multicultural picture book *King for a Day* by Rukhsana Khan (2014). This high-interest book is about Malik, a boy in Pakistan struggling with a bully and hoping to become the best kite fighter in Lahore (see Figure 2). It is only through the vibrant illustrations that the reader realizes that Malik uses a wheelchair. During the Pakistani spring festival of Basant, Malik challenges others' kites, captures many, and ultimately gives the bully's captured kite to a child whose kite the bully had stolen. The celebration of cultures and differences, as well as the relatively easy reading level, make this book an outstanding inclusive text.

However, we excluded Mo Willems's (2010) easy-reader book *Can I Play Too?* The main characters, Piggie and Gerald, an elephant, meet a new friend who wants to join in their game of catch. The new friend, Snake, has understandable questions about how he can play catch without hands. After multiple failed attempts to include Snake in the game, Gerald and Piggie ultimately decide that the best way to include him is to use him as the ball. Although Snake does not have a defined disability, he is portrayed as a character who has difficulty joining his peers because of a deficit.

Ashley read this book aloud to a group of classroom teachers and elicited their reactions. Through the initial pages, the teachers laughed at Snake's

Figure 2
Cover of *King for a Day*



Note. From *King for a Day*, by R. Khan, 2014, New York, NY: Lee & Low. Text copyright 2014 by Rukhsana Khan and illustrations copyright 2014 by Christiane Krömer. Reprinted with permission. The color figure can be viewed in the online version of this article at <http://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com>.

mishaps and noted that students would undoubtedly love this amusing story. They commented on the kindness and flexibility of the characters as they sought to include a new friend in their game. However, when the teachers discovered the solution to throw Snake back and forth, their conversation shifted from excitement to concern about the message sent to readers.

Although we do not think this book was written to poke fun at children with disabilities, the characters' actions and the problem's resolution have the potential to humiliate a student with physical impairments. The text meets our criteria in terms of readability and might be an enjoyable read for many students. However, the treatment of Snake, because of his difference and the inability of the characters to find inclusive solutions, disqualifies this

book from a place on our list. *Can I Play Too?* is not an example of an inclusive book, but the teachers suggested that it might be read to generate a discussion about student differences and more productive problem solving.

The Search for Books

Our search for books began in our local communities and public schools with the help of university librarians, reference librarians, and booksellers. We searched for both fiction and nonfiction children's books with specific search parameters around disability and keywords including specific disabilities. An initial search yielded roughly 700 fiction titles and more than 1,100 nonfiction titles. To identify suitable texts, we also used a booklist with stories that included characters with disabilities or chronic illness (Prater, 2003), but we found that most of the texts were difficult to obtain or failed to meet our other criteria. Amazon and Goodreads were two other sources used to identify potential books for inclusion. The websites' recommendation features and booklists led to identification of a few additional books not identified by other methods.

One of the better search sites we found was Mackin Educational Resources (<https://www.mackin.com/>), a company that sells pre-K-12 books to libraries and schools. We signed up for a free account and searched a wide variety of titles and topics in the company's index of nearly 3 million books. Search results included plot summaries, publication dates, reading levels, and costs.

As we searched, we read through summaries, and if the book seemed to meet our criteria, we requested a copy from the library or purchased one. We read each of these books and evaluated them for text difficulty, authenticity and depth of character, use of respectful language, and literary quality. Additionally, we checked to make sure the book was readily available in bookstores and libraries. Ultimately, we were able to compile a list of 72 books (<https://www.goodreads.com/review/list/36555428?shelf=read>). Our search yielded more books that featured characters with sensory or physical impairments but fewer with autism spectrum disorders or learning disabilities. It is important for teachers to be aware of this lack of diversity when selecting inclusive literature for use in the classroom. We believe that the selection of books for the classroom should be tailored to the students who will read them.

Our Selection of Books

The 10 books highlighted here represent a sampling of the best of the inclusive literature we have found to date. These books represent a range of disabilities and genres. Each book has the potential to transcend the disability category and could be enjoyed, and learned from, by all students.

In *Emmanuel's Dream: The True Story of Emmanuel Ofosu Yeboah* by Laurie Ann Thompson (2015), a boy in Ghana is born with a physical impairment, but he is determined to succeed. He hops the two miles to and from school, learns to play soccer, and eventually bicycles 400 miles across Ghana. This book offers readers a powerful message that disability does not mean inability.

The Snow Rabbit by Camille Garoche (2015) is a wordless picture book in which two sisters watch it snow outside their window. One goes outside and makes a snow rabbit. She brings the snow sculpture inside to her sister, who uses a wheelchair for mobility. When the rabbit starts to melt, both sisters go outside to play together, and the magic begins.

The autobiographical graphic novel *El Deafo* by Cece Bell (2014) is about Cece, who loses her hearing at age 4. The dual story line focuses on her struggle to learn to read lips and decipher sounds through her hearing aid and on her desire to find a true friend. Cece takes the role of El Deafo, an imaginary superhero who is able to hear everything, including nearby private conversations. More important, Cece finds the friend she sought.

Miss Little's Gift by Douglas Wood (2009) is an autobiographical picture book about a boy named Douglas, who has ADHD and difficulty learning to read. Douglas's teacher, Miss Little, believes in him and tells him that he will become a good reader. With the help of a caring teacher, Douglas finds a book that interests him and learns how fun reading can be.

The picture book *Kami and the Yaks* by Andrea Stenn Stryer (2007) tells the story of a young Sherpa boy in the Himalayas. His father and brother earn money by working as guides for mountain climbers and transporting their gear on yaks. When the yaks disappear, Kami decides to find them before a big storm arrives. Although Kami is deaf and cannot speak to his family, this does not prevent him from saving the endangered yaks.

A Boy and a Jaguar by Alan Rabinowitz (2014) is an easy-to-read picture book that tells the true story of a boy who spent his school years in a special

classroom because of his stuttering. Although his teachers consider him incompetent, the boy finds his voice through talking to animals and eventually becomes a strong advocate for wildlife conservation. Although the boy's speech struggles are central to his journey, his ambition to defend animals ultimately defines his story.

I'm Here by Peter H. Reynolds (2011), another easy-to-read book, is about a boy who is isolated but fully aware of his surroundings. He takes in the world around him as he sits on the playground and, referring to the other children, feels that "they are there" and "I am here." He creates a paper airplane, sends it into flight, and imagines flying away on it. The airplane is returned by a girl who may become a new friend. This simple yet powerful story offers insight into both friendship and autism.

In *Skateboard Sonar* by Eric Stevens (2010), a graphic novel about a skateboard competition, the main character, Matty, is both blind and the local favorite skateboarder. Matty is challenged by several bullies. By beating the bullies in the competition, Matty shows his challengers that "seeing isn't everything."

Inspired by a real first-grader, *My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay* by Cari Best (2015) is about Zulay, a student who is blind and included in a regular education classroom. Zulay and three of her best friends must decide what events to participate in on Field Day. Despite her blindness, Zulay decides to run a race with the help of her friends.

In *Zoom* by Robert Munsch (2003), a humorous picture book, Lauretta needs a new wheelchair. In the store, she is attracted to the fastest wheelchair sold. Although her mother has misgivings, Lauretta takes the 92-speed dirt-bike wheelchair home for a trial. Then, the real adventures begin.

Conclusion

This initial list of what we characterize as respectful and inclusive children's literature began with conversations about our shared belief that all children should be able to deeply and personally connect with books. The purpose of our search was to identify and evaluate books that offer respectful representations of disability that are suitable for all readers. We hope that searches such as this might extend the demand for more diverse portrayals of disability in children's literature.

Further, we hope that teachers will carefully consider the way the world is depicted in the books they offer to students. Can readers across the

ability/disability continuum find books that mirror their own lives in meaningful and authentic ways? Do some books provide windows for typically developing students to begin to understand diverse abilities? Are all children represented?

We do not advocate defining students by their disabilities, nor do we believe, for example, that students with physical impairments should always read books with characters that have physical disabilities. We find it troubling, however, that almost no books in classrooms serving students with disabilities include stories of characters with disabilities engaged in exciting adventures or fully engaged in life. We are all partially defined by our abilities and differences, and we should be able to read about them in a wide array of interesting books regardless of where we fall on the ability/disability continuum.

Our search led to the compilation of a relatively short booklist in an industry that has increased nearly 40% in the last decade (Gilmore, 2015). More important than volume is that inclusive literature should celebrate differences in ability, rather than pitying or degrading the characters who are different. Few books that we considered offered respectful representations of disability, and some disabilities were woefully underrepresented. Many of the books we found were written to teach typically developing children about a particular form of disability, and many books that were respectful in content were written for skilled readers. Certainly, we limited possibilities by constraining the desired reading level, but we contend that children should not have to be expert readers before they are able to read widely in books that mirror their own experiences, interests, hopes, and imagination.

Our search for books, although ongoing, highlights a need for more children's literature that respectfully represents the continuum of ability in our world. Educators should take a proactive stance in ensuring that every student is respectfully represented in the books they offer in their classrooms. Exploring and evaluating children's literature and acquiring new books that offer such perspectives is one way to actively work toward this goal. Our hope is that teachers and other educators will use this resource as a starting point for critically examining the books in their classrooms and considering whether all of their students can find a personal reality in one or more books. We envision educators using these types of books to encourage thoughtful discussions and to engage students who may not

often read about characters and experiences similar to their own.

Although many educators may find it challenging to acquire new books for their classrooms, we are aware of three resources that have been particularly useful to school systems, school libraries, and teachers with limited budgets for materials. Some schools have found that when book acquisition needs can be linked to innovative instruction, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation (see the More to Explore sidebar) is supportive. Individual teachers have also found that DonorsChoose is responsive to minigrant requests for currently unmet classroom needs and can be quite helpful in guiding teachers through the process.

Finally, tools such as Tar Heel Reader, a free book creator website, make it simple to create easy-to-read picture books that students can then read on their own or with synthetic speech read-aloud support (see the Take Action! sidebar). The site is particularly useful for addressing the fact that disability experiences are as unique as students themselves. For the times when it is difficult to find a book for a particular student, we encourage teachers to consider writing their own.

It is essential that teachers maintain a critical lens when selecting books for the students they

serve so all abilities and differences are appreciated and understood. Making inclusive books accessible is an important first step. Teachers should also make spaces for conversations that celebrate diverse abilities in the classroom, school, and community. The power of literature to transform lives and shape understandings of the world is unequivocal.

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TAKE ACTION!

1. Go to the Tar Heel Reader FAQ page (<http://tarheelreader.org/frequently-asked-questions/>), send an e-mail to the address given at the top of the page, and request a registration code.
2. Use the registration code to create a free account at Tar Heel Reader (<https://tarheelreader.org/wp-login.php?action=register>).
3. Read Gary Bishop's Tar Heel Reader book *Help: How to Write a Book* (<http://tarheelreader.org/2013/02/06/help-how-to-write-a-book/>) for a simple introduction.
4. Go to Tar Heel Reader's opening screen (<http://tarheelreader.org>), click "Write a book," and log in with your new account.
5. If you need a mentor text or two, read *Wheeling* (<http://tarheelreader.org/2015/10/16/wheeling/>) or *Fun With Small Champions* (<http://tarheelreader.org/2016/07/21/fun-with-small-champions/>).
6. Write your own e-book with characters who have disabilities. Seek feedback from your students. Try, try again.

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MORE TO EXPLORE

- ReadWriteThink.org's *Text Messages* podcast "Exploring the Disability Experience" (<http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/podcast-episodes/exploring-disability-experience-31077.html>): This podcast is part of a larger series for older readers. In this episode, students (or teachers) can listen to the empowering stories of children who live with disabilities.
- "Inclusive Stories: Teaching About Disabilities With Picture Books" by Krista Sherman (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/inclusive-stories-teaching-about-1011.html>): This lesson plan is intended for the secondary language classroom, but the lessons can be modified to use with younger students. Students are guided through a book study that features characters with disabilities and are invited to think critically about how they view differences in ability.
- Disability in Kidlit (<http://disabilityinkidlit.com>): This website reviews books that offer portrayals of disability in middle grade and young adult books, offering a platform for discussions from a disability perspective.
- Dollar General Literacy Foundation (<http://www2.dollargeneral.com/dgliteracy/Pages/index.aspx>) and DonorsChoose (<https://www.donorschoose.org>) are two resources that educators may find useful for obtaining funding for new books, such as the ones on our list, to add to their classroom libraries.