

Culture, Comprehension, and Multicultural Literature
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How does culture affect comprehension?

- Life experiences
- Ways of communicating
- Types of reading material
- Differing contextual knowledge
- Differing perspectives
- Luis Moll's work on "funds of knowledge"

Educational Implications:

- Create a culturally responsive language and literacy environment.
- Connect student background to literacy instruction.
- Recognize the first language and add English.
- Provide assessment that accurately reflects students' strengths and weaknesses.
- Establish strong home, school, family connections.
- Include multicultural literature as reading material in the classroom.
- Read literature as a catalyst for discussions of diversity.
- Read and participate in extensive professional development to further understand issues of diversity.

Why does multicultural literature matter?

- Provides mirrors and windows for all readers
- Provides connections to curriculum
- Provides context for a wider range of experiences
- Provides rich reading experiences

How can we promote multicultural literature?

- Make them readily available.
- Choose to read them aloud because the more different the context of the story than the child's own world, the more scaffolding they need to remain engaged with the book.
- Book talk and promote them.

What are the "right multicultural books"?

- Books that engage readers
- Books that are of personal interest

- Books that stretch and teach
- Books that connect to curriculum
- Books that show diversity of all kinds
- Books that are visually interesting

What can teachers do?

- Read, read, read!
- "Keep up" with the array of possibilities
- Collaborate with other teachers
- Partner with librarians and specialists
- Assess student needs and interests
- Organize books in ways that foster connections
- Make the classroom library an inviting place for all

References:

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