

## Chapter 5

# Using Diverse Picturebooks for Inclusive Practices and Transformative Pedagogies

**Rhoda Myra Garces-Bacsal**

*United Arab Emirates University, UAE*

**Najwa Mohammed Alhosani**

*United Arab Emirates University, UAE*

**Hala Elhoweris**

*United Arab Emirates University, UAE*

**Hind Tuaib Al Ghufli**

*United Arab Emirates University, UAE*

**Najla Mohamed AlOwais**

*United Arab Emirates University, UAE*

**Emmanuel S. Baja**

*University of the Philippines, Manila, Philippines*

**Ruanni Tupas**

*University College London, UK*

### ABSTRACT

*Research studies indicate how most teachers lack the capacity to identify diverse books that portray characters with special needs or exceptionalities that can be used in the classroom to promote empathy and kindness towards those who are typically perceived as “the other.” This lack of awareness is alarming since diverse books are found to promote inclusive practices and show students how to be more accepting of individual differences. Based on a research study that examines the use of diverse picturebooks among students enrolled in a teacher-training institute in the UAE, a database of diverse picturebooks that depict an awareness of special needs and the “others” in society have been analyzed and featured in this chapter. Strategies such as discussion questions and activities linking the titles to inclusive practices were shared using the critical multicultural analysis framework. The authors contend that teachers need to effectively use said resources to help implement more inclusive approaches in the classroom and practice transformative and culturally responsive instruction.*

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4680-5.ch005

## INTRODUCTION

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has made noteworthy progress in recent years concerning legislation and policies to support the inclusion movement in the country. More specifically, UAE has passed two legislation policies pertinent to inclusive education: the Federal Law 2006 and 2009 and Dubai Law no. 2. These regulations paved the way for the inclusion of many school-aged children with special educational needs (referred to as “students of determination” in the UAE) in general education classrooms. In fact, the change in terminology from people with disabilities to *people of determination* (POD) or *the determined ones* had been enforced in 2017 throughout the country (Government.ae, 2017). This is meant to highlight the students’ strengths rather than their weaknesses (Gaad, 2019) and has also led to a transformation in the education sector with Abu Dhabi and Dubai leading the inclusion initiatives in the country (Gaad, 2019) as can be seen in the Dubai inclusive education policy framework, for example (KHDA, 2017). Thus, today’s classrooms must now demonstrate that their diverse student population include students of determination with a range of needs (Gaad, 2019).

Although these differences can be a rich source of learning for all learners, they can also create challenges among students. According to research, many students enter schools holding misconceptions and stereotypical views about persons they perceive as different. For instance, Ostrosky et al. (2015) reported that children without disabilities have misconceptions about students with disabilities. This is also evident in the UAE where despite the inclusion movement and an increased number of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, teachers and students are found to hold negative attitudes toward students with disabilities (Elhoweris & Efthymiou, 2020).

The same issues are faced by gifted and talented students who are often misunderstood by their peers and teachers, especially those who are considered double minorities, that is, being gifted and are culturally and linguistically diverse or coming from disadvantaged backgrounds (Garces-Bacsal, 2021; Stambaugh & Ford, 2015) and students with dual exceptionalities (gifted students with disabilities or learning disorders) (Gomez-Arizaga & Conejeros-Solar, 2021). Hence, there is a clear and evident risk of children of determination, gifted and talented students, and culturally and linguistically diverse learners (whose first language is not English or the language of the dominant cultural majority - and are often labelled as English Language learners – see Nguyen, 2012) – referred to in this paper collectively as *students with exceptionalities* - being marginalized and socially rejected without adequate support that would facilitate a sense of belonging with the larger school community (Ostrosky et al., 2015).

## Inclusion and Transformative Pedagogies through Diverse Picturebooks

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2006, p. 13) defined inclusion as the process of “addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education.” This includes content modification, changes in curriculum content, approaches and strategies in order to educate all children, regardless of cultural and linguistic differences. Transformative learning or pedagogy, on the other hand, has been defined as the way through which “individuals think about themselves and their world, and it involves a shift of consciousness” (Corley, 2011, p. 2) predicated upon learners’ reflection and a substantive examination of one’s own learning and progress (Garces-Bacsal & Tupas, 2021).

19 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

[www.igi-global.com/chapter/using-diverse-picturebooks-for-inclusive-practices-and-transformative-pedagogies/307843](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/using-diverse-picturebooks-for-inclusive-practices-and-transformative-pedagogies/307843)

## Related Content

---

### Technology-Aided Interventions to Reduce Challenging Behaviors for Individuals With Autism Spectrum Disorder

Maria Zygopoulou (2022). *Interventions for Improving Adaptive Behaviors in Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders* (pp. 108-125).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/technology-aided-interventions-to-reduce-challenging-behaviors-for-individuals-with-autism-spectrum-disorder/286383](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/technology-aided-interventions-to-reduce-challenging-behaviors-for-individuals-with-autism-spectrum-disorder/286383)

### Overview of Conduct Disorder: Implications for School Rehabilitation Professionals

Michael F. Shaughnessy, Mark Williams II, Carl Michael Carlson and Chia Jung Yeh (2021). *Handbook of Research on Critical Issues in Special Education for School Rehabilitation Practices* (pp. 352-370).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/overview-of-conduct-disorder/274241](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/overview-of-conduct-disorder/274241)

### Supporting Children With High-Intensity Needs Through Interdisciplinary Personnel Preparation

Yaoying Xu, Alison King, Sarah Kye Price, Christine M. Spence, Serra De Arment, Bergen B. Nelson, Maris Wyatt, Dana Yarbrough and Seb M. Prohn (2023). *Handbook of Research on Interdisciplinary Preparation for Equitable Special Education* (pp. 1-20).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/supporting-children-with-high-intensity-needs-through-interdisciplinary-personnel-preparation/316404](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/supporting-children-with-high-intensity-needs-through-interdisciplinary-personnel-preparation/316404)

### Differentiated Learning

Charles Govero Chipika, Menard Musendekwa and Philemon Mahanya (2023). *Closing the Educational Achievement Gap for Students With Learning Disabilities* (pp. 299-313).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/differentiated-learning/331878](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/differentiated-learning/331878)

### Guiding Online Graduate Special Education Candidates Through E-Performance Assessments and edTPA

Charmion Rush and Karena J. Cooper-Duffy (2022). *Research Anthology on Inclusive Practices for Educators and Administrators in Special Education* (pp. 1021-1036).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/guiding-online-graduate-special-education-candidates-through-e-performance-assessments-and-edtpa/292928](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/guiding-online-graduate-special-education-candidates-through-e-performance-assessments-and-edtpa/292928)