AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S FICTION PICTURE BOOKS REFLECTING AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE PUBLISHED 2001-2005

by

IRENE J. NEPHEW

B.S., Mary Hardin-Baylor University, 1982
M.S., Kansas State University, 1999

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Secondary Education
College of Education

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Abstract

An ethnographic content analysis was conducted to explore the African American cultural content contained in the text of picture books portraying African Americans published 2001 through 2005. The picture books were limited to beginning readers, stories in rhyme and poetry, historical fiction, fictional biography, and contemporary fiction portraying African Americans and set in the U.S. The books were categorized based on the genre to which they belong and classified as generic books or books with African American cultural content. The African American cultural content in the books in the study was compared to the cultural content contained in picture books in a survey conducted by Rudine Sims Bishop in 1982. Differences between the work of African Americans and non African Americans are discussed. A data collection instrument was constructed and used by several additional raters to test the reliability of the instrument. Each additional rater was given an operational definition for generic books and books with cultural content. The raters were each given one book to evaluate.

The research revealed (1) that more than half of the picture books published during the period of this study were classified as generic, (2) in most cases, only the books written by African Americans contained cultural content and (3) more than half of the picture books with cultural content are classified as historical fiction. (4) Although it is possible for a non African American to write an authentic picture book with cultural content, such books are usually the result of in depth research. (5) During the period of this study, not all generic picture books were written by non African Americans; some African American authors choose to write generic books portraying African Americans with minimal content specific to African American culture.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, the love of my life, Kenny, who has always provided support and encouragement that included proof reading rough drafts and solving numerous technological problems. I also dedicate it to our youngest daughter Taylor who learned at preschool age that a dissertation is something that mummy has to do when she would rather be playing with her. Writing this dissertation has prevented me from spending as much time with my husband, youngest daughter, grown daughter Melantha and son Eric, family and friends as I would have liked and I appreciate their patience and understanding.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Demographic changes in the United States that began in the 1960s have accelerated during the past several decades, resulting in an increasing number of public school students who come from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups (Banks, 2007b). This increased diversity has created a need for teachers to be cognizant of the value of using authentic high quality multicultural literature in the classrooms (Bishop, 1997; Cai & Bishop, 1994; Colby & Lyon, 2004; Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001; Mendoza & Reese, 2001; Taylor, 2000). Schools are facing numerous issues, including increased concerns about the gap between the reading achievements of students of diverse backgrounds when compared to the achievement of the mainstream student population (Au, 2002). An ever-growing emphasis on standards and testing, which began with the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*, also influences the curriculum. The prominence of standards and testing increased with *Goals 2000*, which mandated rigorous academic achievement standards of education by 2000 (Grant & Sleeter, 2007). Passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*(U.S. Department of Education, 2002), with its emphasis on standards and test scores, intensified interest in the differences between the achievements of students from diverse demographic groups, in particular African American students, and Caucasian students (Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Walker-Dalhouse, 2005). As high stakes testing increased, so too did discussions about the limitations of standardized testing and the need for culturally responsive teaching (Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Lee, 1998; Walker-Dalhouse, 2005).

In an effort to improve state test scores, many school districts mandated the use of prescriptive basal reading programs. However, some literacy experts advocate the use of a balanced approach to teaching reading that includes using a wide variety of books written for different reading levels and appropriate for diverse cultural and linguistic needs (Calkins, 2001). During the last few decades, the increasing diversity of school populations has prompted some educators to advocate the use of culturally relevant pedagogy, also known as culturally responsive teaching (Au, 2002; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995a; Nieto, 1999). Multicultural literature has been incorporated into some reading programs as a way to engage

students and improve reading performance (Brooks, 2002). This is especially relevant for students who, for one reason or another, have been excluded or marginalized (e.g. African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans). When mainstream culture is in control of instruction and the school curriculum, school policy is guided by the melting pot or assimilation theory. As a result, the dominant White culture expects People of Color and groups that are not part of mainstream culture, to conform to Eurocentric ideals. The experiences and cultural mores of diverse groups are ignored, as schools try to encourage ethnically and linguistically diverse students to assimilate and accept the values and standards of the dominant culture (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 2000; Marger, 1997; Parillo, 1997).

Over the last two or three decades organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA) have encouraged the use of multicultural literature that represents the pluralistic nature of the United States population. In addition to providing opportunities for all children to understand other cultures, picture books that depict children of various ethnic, racial and cultural groups who live in the United States provide affirmation to children of diverse backgrounds (Mendoza & Reese, 2001). As diversity in schools increases, the need for multicultural literature that represents the cultural backgrounds of children attending school will also increase. According to U. S. Census projections, by 2050 almost half of this nation's school population will be Students of Color (Banks & Banks, 2004b). Consequently, it is crucial that schools find a way to meet the needs of culturally and ethnically diverse students in addition to those of mainstream students. One way is to use multicultural literature that reflects not only the culture of mainstream Caucasian students, but also that of students who are not Caucasian, or not part of the mainstream culture. In a 1990 article entitled Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Doors that originally appeared in *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom* Bishop (1990a) asserts:

> books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human

> experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books.

The researcher was unable to obtain the 1990 publication, but a reprint of it can be viewed on the Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) website at http://www.rif.org/multi_campaign_windows_mirrors.mspx. The cited material is in the first paragraph.

Overview of the Issues

Many researchers question the appropriateness as well as the effectiveness of the traditional western or Eurocentric curriculum that focuses on the values, lifestyles, accomplishments, and worldviews of Europeans and/or European Americans (Asante, 1998; Gay, 1990; Banks, 2007b). Banks (2007b) uses the term "mainstream-centric curriculum to describe the Eurocentric curriculum because it is "organized around concepts, paradigms, and events that reflect the experiences of mainstream Americans" (p. 247). In contrast, a multicultural curriculum acknowledges the strengths and richness of human diversity and is designed "to help students to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function within their own micro cultures, the U.S. macroculture, other microcultures, and the global community" (Banks & Banks, 2004b, p. 25). A multicultural curriculum goes beyond focusing on a particular group for a specific month. According to Banks (2003a), a multicultural curriculum should transform the Eurocentric curriculum by integrating the histories, perspectives and literature representative of the cultures of all students in the classroom into all subjects throughout the school year. Although it is only one small part of a multicultural curriculum, the use of multicultural picture books can offer valuable insights into the cultural identity and historical experiences of ethnic groups. It can provide opportunities for mainstream students to read about the cultures and experiences of ethnic and cultural groups and create opportunities for students who belong to parallel cultures, such as African Americans and Hispanic Americans, to see their lives reflected in the literature they read (Bishop, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995; Diamond & Moore, 1995; Harris, 1993, 1994, 1995; Gay, 2000). One encouraging aspect about African American children's literature is that by the 1980s most of the derogatory depictions of African Americans had been eliminated. Unfortunately, in an attempt to avoid stereotypical images, African American characters have sometimes been eliminated from children's books or when

included, they have been replaced with unrealistic portrayals. Often, the only way African American characters are differentiated from European American characters is by the illustrations. Compared to the "*All-White World of Children's Books"* of the 1960s described in Nancy Larrick's (1965) article, the number of books depicting African Americans has increased. Unfortunately, as one searches library catalogs, many recently published picture books catalogued under the subject "African Americans" contain realistic illustrations of African Americans but do not include cultural content. This study provides information that will assist educators in identifying picture books that contain African American cultural content.

Researcher's Views and Personal Background

During her twenty years as an educator, the researcher experienced first hand the benefits of valuing the cultures of students in her classroom and building on their interests. She advocates the use of multiethnic children's literature that portrays parallel cultures such as African American, Asian American, Native American, Mexican American and other ethnic groups (e.g. Americans of Arab descent) as well as multicultural literature that depicts other cultural groups that are not part of the mainstream population. Based on her years as a kindergarten teacher, the researcher believes literature that represents diverse cultures, including African American children's literature, is essential in all classrooms. It is even more vital in classrooms and libraries serving African Americans and students from other parallel cultures. The term 'parallel culture' was first used by Virginia Hamilton, now deceased, when she accepted the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, and later when she accepted the Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal for *Anthony Burns: The Defeat and Triumph of a Fugitive Slave* (1988). Other educators began to use the term 'parallel culture' in place of the word 'minority,' which suggests an inferior or subservient status (Cai & Bishop, 1994; Cai, 2002; Harris, 2003). The term 'parallel culture' is used to describe cultures that are not part of mainstream culture.

African American children's literature should consist of more than stories about the era of slavery, which is often portrayed unrealistically. The literature should include stories that depict contemporary African American culture and life experiences. Children, especially those who frequently see their culture undervalued and disrespected by the dominant White society, need to see their cultures affirmed and celebrated. This can be achieved with appropriate multicultural literature. African American children need to be able to "make connections

between literature and their every day lives" which is difficult when White culture, consciously or unconsciously, dominates the classroom (Colby & Lyon, 2004, p. 24).

The researcher agrees with Bishop (2003) and Roethler (1998) who assert that African American children's literature should include cultural content and consist of more than just an appealing story with illustrations of African American characters. This belief in the importance of incorporating cultural content into stories about parallel cultures prompted this content analysis of a selection of recently published picture books with African American characters.

The researcher concurs with Gay (2002) that "inclusion of information about ethnic and cultural diversity in supplemental materials such as children's picture books and fiction by ethnic authors about ethnic groups is both encouraging and discouraging." Some teachers, in an effort to avoid using inappropriate books or offending any of their students, choose not to share multicultural literature and rely on literature with which they are familiar. Picture books with African American cultural content may not be used in a classroom because of a teacher's good intentions, lack of awareness, or discomfort when using picture books with African American cultural content. Whatever the reason, the researcher agrees with Nieto (2000), and other educators (Bieger, 1995; Bishop, 1990b; Hefflin & Barksdale- Ladd, 2001; Roethler, 1998) who assert that when literature with cultural substance, characters, and viewpoints from parallel cultures is not included in the classroom, it conveys the message that those cultures are of less value than the dominant mainstream culture portrayed in most books.

Little information exists to assist educators, especially newly trained teachers, in finding recently published books that have cultural substance. The researcher contends that literature used in the classroom should, at a very minimum, reflect the diversity of the students in the classroom. Ideally, it should also include books with characters from numerous ethnicities and cultures in addition to those represented in the classroom. Care must be taken when choosing multicultural literature to ensure that the books do not include caricatures or stereotypes and they portray the culture realistically and authentically. Literature that portrays parallel cultural groups such as African Americans should include stories that are culturally authentic. Sometimes intrinsic components of African American culture are missing from books about African Americans when the author or illustrator is not African American, and sometimes it is not included when the author is trying to appeal to a wider audience.

Statement of the Problem

An investigation of all trade books categorized as multicultural is too vast an undertaking to complete in a dissertation, even if it is limited to recently published picture books. Instead, the researcher chose to limit the focus to African American children's literature, specifically picture books published between 2001 and 2005. Few educational researchers have fully explored the cultural content of recently published books depicting African Americans. The researcher addresses this problem with an ethnographic content analysis of the text of African American children's picture books published between 2001 and 2005, which she compares with picture books included in a survey conducted by Rudine Sims (1982) and described in her landmark monograph, *Shadow and Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction*. Following her marriage, Rudine Sims continued to lecture and write about African American children's literature but published under the name of Rudine Bishop. The name under which a book or article was published, Sims or Bishop, was used for all citations and references.

This dissertation emerged from the supposition that using picture books that reflect the values and cultures of students' lives has the potential to increase the literacy of culturally and ethnically diverse students. Research related to African American children's literature is found in several disciplines including education, history, library science, literature, psychology, and social science. Although the subject of African American children's literature is not new and has been researched and discussed for many decades (See Appendix A), the number of studies about cultural content is limited. This study will address an important gap in available research by analyzing and explaining how African American cultural content is incorporated into African American children's literature. An in depth discussion of the history of African American children's literature in Chapter 2 provides the backdrop for this analysis of recently published picture books. Differences in the way cultural content is treated by African American versus non African American authors is discussed.

Unfortunately, interest in African American children's literature seems to have diminished since the turn of the century. One reason may be the misguided notion that one should focus on ways in which all Americans are the same, rather than on celebrating differences. With the exception of a small number of excellent books, there is very little literary criticism related to issues of race in children's literature. Taxel (1997) asserts that it is an enigma that in the United States, a country still polarized in many ways by race, some people continue to

pretend that race is no longer an issue. Many picture books continue to use an assimilationist paradigm when portraying characters from parallel cultures rather than a cultural pluralist paradigm.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore African American cultural content reflected in the texts of recently published picture books, specifically children's picture books published between 2001 and 2005. In addition to addressing the issues described earlier in the Problem Statement, the books were put into categories based on the genre to which they belong and classified as either generic or picture books with African American cultural content. The study explores and examines how African American culture is depicted not only in historical and realistic fiction picture books, but also in other genres. The books in the study are categorized and a description of African American cultural content included in some of the books is provided. Picture books in this study are compared with picture books included in a survey of children's books with African American characters published between 1965 through 1979 conducted by Sims in 1982.

This research provides information to update and build on the outstanding work of educators, researchers, and others who have written about African American children's literature. It will assist teachers, educators and others who work with or care for young children by creating an awareness of the difference between generic books and those that contain African American cultural content. It contains information for educators, librarians, and those working with young children which will facilitate their appreciation of the value of using authentic children's literature with African American cultural content. It includes a discussion about some of the cultural content found in recently published books and provides more than just an annotated bibliography of picture books with African American main characters. Recommendations about the importance of identifying and using books with African American cultural content are included.

Research Questions

This exploratory study examines recently published African American children's literature in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What African American cultural content is included in the text of children's picture books published during the years 2001-2005?
2. How is African American cultural content woven into the picture books in this study?
3. When comparing African American and non African American authors, what differences, if any, are evident in the picture books categorized as generic or picture books with African American cultural content?
4. How do the findings of this research compare with the findings of Sims' 1982 content analysis of books published during the years 1965-1979?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies not only in the analysis and critique of recently published African American children's literature, but also fills a void in current research about selecting African American children's literature for use in the classroom. Many teachers of young children feel uncomfortable using African American literature and, with the exception of reading one or two picture books about Martin Luther King and inventors such as George Washington Carver during Black History Month, do not read, discuss or provide books that portray African Americans realistically. The pressure to improve test scores and discomfort with discussing topics with which they are unfamiliar sometimes leads teachers to avoid African American children's literature. This study will provide information for pre-service and practicing teachers who have little experience with African American culture that will help them to identify literature that can be incorporated into a multicultural curriculum.

The study will provide a tool for educators to learn how to identify whether or not a book has cultural content. It discusses cultural content that can be found in a number of children's picture books about African Americans, and encourages educators and parents to choose books that include aspects of African American culture. The research explores the fascinating history of African American children's literature, describes recently published picture books that incorporate the history and culture of African Americans and includes a bibliography of those picture books. As a White, middle class female who spent many years as an elementary school teacher in multiethnic classroom environments, the researcher empathizes with the challenges of balancing the demands of principals and state mandated standards with the needs of a diverse

elementary school population. She is also thoroughly convinced of the positive benefits of providing culturally responsive teaching that includes literature with which African American children can identify.

Definition of Terms

African American - as used in this research, African American refers to people who live in the United States and who share a biological and cultural heritage that stems from Africa. It is used interchangeably with the term "Black" or "Black Americans" when the situation dictates. However, in some of the references cited, the term "Black" extends beyond the United States and includes people who were born in Jamaica or who live in England, etc.

Books with African American cultural content – a book in which one or more major characters are African American and the content reflects one or more aspects of African American culture. The story is frequently set in an African American community or home, and the story includes social and cultural traditions and heritage.

Culturally conscious literature - books that include cultural content such as a shared heritage, and social and cultural traditions of African Americans who live in the United States. It is a term coined by Rudine Sims Bishop in her book *Shadow & Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction* (Sims, 1982).

Ethnographic text analysis – an objective text analysis of descriptions (information) in books about a specific culture that includes subjective inferences.

Fictional biography – stories about a specific person that include fictional events and dialogue that may not have taken place.

Generic book - a book in which the text does not recognize differences between racial or ethnic groups and does not include any content in the text to indicate the ethnicity of the characters. Only the illustrations indicate the characters are African American and non-African American characters could easily be substituted for them without changing any of the text.

Parallel culture – is a culture that is not part of White mainstream culture. It is a preferable term to 'minority,' which indicates that the culture may not be considered equal to mainstream culture.

Picture book - is a book which usually consists of 32 pages in which illustrations are an integral part of the story and the combination of words and pictures are both essential. Additional information about picture books is provided in chapter 2.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of a text analysis stems from the fact that meaning is construed from engagement between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1995). According to Krippendorf (2004), "a text does not exist without a reader, a message does not exist without an interpreter, and data do not exist without an observer" (p. 22). Other readers may interpret the texts differently from the text analyst. The possibility of this happening may be greater because the researcher does not approach the literature from the perspective of an African American child. However, her immediate family members, who are African American, have enabled her to gain an understanding of African American culture. Extensive research and participation in numerous events within an African American community have given her a sensitivity to and respect for the culture. Nevertheless, meanings invoked by the texts may not be those intended by the author, and meanings inferred by the researcher may not be the same as those of a child. For this reason, the findings are at times triangulated with critical reviews as well as comments by the authors and the messages they hoped the texts and illustrations would convey.

A study of African American children's literature dating back to the late nineteenth century and extending to 2006 would have offered more in depth information about the evolution of African American children's literature and its unique qualities. However, an interest in early childhood education and time constraints prompted the researcher to restrict the study to picture books, thereby eliminating many excellent books written for elementary students. A direct comparison cannot be made between Sims' (1982) survey and this study because the two studies differ significantly. The books in Sims' survey were limited to contemporary realistic fiction about African Americans published from 1965 through 1979. Her survey included books appropriate for students in grades Preschool through eighth grade. The books in this study extend beyond contemporary realistic fiction to include other genres such as stories in rhyme and poetry, historical fiction, and fictional biography. This study is also limited to picture books

suitable for children in preschool that may be as young as two years old to students in fourth grade.

Summary

Increased diversity in schools in the United States over the last few decades combined with more emphasis on high stakes testing has heightened concerns about the academic performance of Students of Color, in particular African Americans and Hispanic Americans. Concerns about the appropriateness of a Eurocentric curriculum have prompted some educators to advocate the use of a multicultural curriculum that values the culture and lifestyles of diverse students. Multicultural literature can be used in the classroom to stimulate an appreciation and understanding of diversity. Although multicultural literature includes a variety of racial, ethnic and cultural groups, this research is limited to a focus on African American literature. This exploratory study answers questions about the way African Americans are depicted, and the cultural content included in children's books published between 2001 and 2005. Differences in the way African American and non African American authors depict African Americans are also investigated. The study, which includes a history of African American children's literature, provides educators with information pertaining to picture books about African Americans. Additionally, it includes a bibliography of picture books published in 2001 through 2005 that include African American cultural content. For teachers who are reluctant to use African American children's literature, this research includes discussions about incorporating the experiences, history and culture of African Americans, as reflected in children's literature, into the classroom so it permeates the curriculum. Benefits of the study for teachers and limitations of the text analysis are included.

CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This research is built on the premise that all classrooms and libraries should have an abundance of quality multicultural literature, including African American children's literature that reflects the culture of their readers. The purpose of this study is to examine picture books published from 2001 to 2005 inclusive, classify the books into categories based on genre, indicate if the books are generic or contain cultural content, and describe the African American cultural content. Several theories that guide teaching and explain human development are embedded in this analysis of recently published African American children's literature. These theories include multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, and ethnic identity. This chapter includes relevant background information about the significance of multicultural education, information about the benefits of using multicultural literature, as well as a discussion of the importance of ethnic identity and its relevance to young children's picture books. General information about children's literature and its classifications is provided, in addition to a description of the history of African American children's literature that is pertinent to an understanding of the present status of African American children's literature. Studies of African American children's literature are discussed as well as stereotypes and the changing images of African Americans in children's literature. Every year in the United States several thousand new titles of children's books are published (Horning, Lindgren, Rudiger, Schliesman & Elias, 2006; Temple et al., 2002). Even though children's literature ranges from books for babies to those for young adults in their mid teens, the focus of this study is picture books for children in preschool through fourth grade.

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is a complex subject that encompasses a wide range of theories and goals related to the concepts of freedom, justice, equality and equity. It recognizes that schools and teachers can play an active role in preparing students to be successful in an increasingly diverse society. Gay (2004) asserts that multicultural education includes descriptive and prescriptive dimensions and "it recognizes the ethnically and culturally diverse social

structures of the United States and their relationship to national institutions, values, beliefs, and power systems" (p. 33). Citing Baptiste (1986), she adds that it "prescribes what should be done to ensure the equitable treatment for diverse groups" (Gay, 2004, p. 33).

Educators, researchers and organizations have proposed numerous definitions of multicultural education over the past forty to fifty years. Banks & Banks (2001) define multicultural education as:

> an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school (p. 1).

One of the fundamental assertions of multicultural education is that the characteristics of some schools systematically restrict academic success for students who, because of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomics, differ from the mainstream population (Banks, 2004b, 2007a).

According to Nieto (2007), multicultural education began as a reform movement with the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This was followed first by Goals 2000, which set academic achievement standards, and then by the passage of *No Child Left Behind*, in 2001, which led to less emphasis on pedagogy, more emphasis on standards and high stakes testing, and less attention to multicultural education (Grant & Sleeter, 2007). As a reform movement, multicultural education wants to change the educational system to reflect the diversity in the U. S. (Banks, 2007a; Gay, 2004; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 1991). This involves not only changing the implicit and explicit curricula, but also entails reconstructing policies, instruction, materials, assessment, and institutional norms (Banks, 2001; Bennett, 2001; Gay, 2000).

When multicultural education is viewed as a process, it builds on critical pedagogy that advocates social change and social justice (Nieto, 2000). Nieto (2004) defines multicultural education as:

> a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect.

> Multicultural education permeates the schools' curriculum and instructional strategies, as well as the interactions among teachers, students and families, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis*)* as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice (p. 346).

Multicultural education began as a response to a combination of the landmark case of Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, of 1954, and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s (Banks, 2004b, 2004c; Bennett, 2001; Marger, 1997). In the Brown decision, the Supreme Court ruled that separate schools were inherently unequal, imposed an inferior status on Black children, and that school segregation laws violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution (Estell, 1994; Hodges, 1974; Marger, 1997). Although the law no longer sanctions segregation and discrimination, this does not mean that they do not exist. Despite the fact that the Brown ruling reversed the legality of "separate but equal schools," schools remained unequal and a disproportionate number of African American, Indian American, and Hispanic American students were placed in classes for those who were considered culturally disadvantaged or in classes for students with disabilities (Bennett, 2001). As a result of this ruling, the push for integration and against segregation gained momentum.

The focus on desegregating schools gave way to an emphasis on changing the school curriculum. The melting pot approach of the 1970s was gradually replaced by cultural pluralism or the "tossed salad" approach (Marger, 1997). During this period, the deficit view of African American students, which blames their educational problems on their environments, shifted and the educational system was held responsible for poor academic progress (Cross, 1995). What began as an acknowledgement that "separate is not equal" changed to a recognition that integration would not solve the problem, and that cultures should co-exist while maintaining their cultural identities (Banks, 1993; Wyman, 1993). The Civil Rights Movement, led by the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. advocated political, non-violent protest to achieve integration and combat prejudice and discrimination. In contrast, the Black Power movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which celebrated and emphasized ethnic pride, advocated separatism, through political, as well as economic and social sufficiency, began to gain support. Multicultural education opposed the mainstream curricula which primarily reflected European

American perspectives and gradually demanded that the perspectives of other ethnic groups, women, and people with disabilities be integrated into school, college, and university curriculum (Bennett, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994a).

Educators such as Bennett (2001), Gay (2000), Grant & Sleeter (2007), began to develop theories and examine teaching practices in culturally diverse schools. Sleeter (2001) investigated teacher education programs and the preparation of culturally responsive teachers to work in culturally diverse classrooms. As concerns about the lack of academic achievement among many low income students and Students of Color increased, researchers and scholars developed a theory of culturally responsive pedagogy, also known as culturally relevant or culturally sensitive pedagogy (Au, 2000; Delpit, 1988; Ladson-Billings, 1994a; Gay, 2000). Gay (2000) defines culturally responsive teaching as:

> using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them. It teaches *to and through* the strengths of these students. It is culturally *validating and affirming* (p. 29).

According to Gay, culturally responsive teaching encourages students to understand, acknowledge, and value their own and other cultural heritages of different ethnic groups and include all cultures in the curriculum. It acknowledges the impact that culture has on the way a student approaches learning, bridges the gap between home and school, and uses a wide variety of instructional approaches that are appropriate for different learning styles.

Culturally responsive teaching rests on the belief that academic achievement will improve if schools incorporate the culture and language strengths of all their students (Au & Kawakami, 1994; Banks, 2007; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994b). It is a process that recognizes the power of teaching, while realizing that changes in schools and society are also needed if students from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds are to receive an equal education (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994b; Nieto, 1999, 2007). It includes curriculum content, learning context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instructional techniques and performance assessments (Gay, 2000). Culturally responsive teaching respects the cultures and experiences of all ethnic groups, empowers students by valuing and recognizing their cultures, incorporates them into the curriculum, and explains the mainstream culture (Gay, 2000). Culturally responsive teachers are facilitators who are culturally sensitive, communicate high

expectations, encourage active student participation, consider students' backgrounds, and involve parents and community members. In doing so, they utilize different learning styles such as sensory experiences, small group instruction and cooperative learning (Nieto, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994b, 1995a, 1995b).

Schooling is often less effective for students from parallel cultures who are not part of the dominant mainstream culture (Au & Kawakami, 1991; Delpit, 1988; Gay, 2000; King, 1995). Culturally responsive teaching considers the whole child and utilizes literature that reflects many ethnic perspectives and literary genres (Au, 2001; Gay, 2000). Educators (Banks, 2007; Gay, 2000, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994b, 1995a, 1995b) acknowledge that culturally responsive teaching may not solve the problems of underachievement of Students of Color, but consider it an important part of needed reform. Little empirical data is available to support the contention that culturally responsive teaching improves the academic success of culturally diverse students and studies are needed to demonstrate its efficacy.

As Klump (2005), who has compiled a resource listing of research and studies related to culturally responsive teaching notes, there is very little experimental data to demonstrate the effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching. Most studies are "correlational case studies and research reviews or syntheses of other studies" (p. 1). More research is needed to demonstrate the presence or absence of significant improvement in student performance when teachers use culturally responsive teaching. A recent study by Jones (2008) incorporates quantitative and qualitative data in quasi-experimental research into the effects of culturally responsive standards based instruction (CRSBI) on African American achievement. CRSBI includes caring, communication, curriculum, instruction and a focus on California content standards. In this study, California Standards Test results (CST) were used to measure the effectiveness of CRSBI. Jones' research included a longitudinal study for the years 2004-2007 inclusive, in which the control group consisted of students in the Los Angeles Unified School District and students in the State of California who took the CST. The experimental group consisted of students in a school identified as one using CRSBI. Data from 2007 (CST) was used to compare the experimental and control groups and measure individual student growth in achievement. The control group is contained within the experimental group. The results of the study indicated that CRSBI had "an overwhelming positive effect on the academic achievement of African American students (Jones, 2008, p. 68). The quasi-experimental design of Jones' study imposes limitations

on what she can say conclusively about the positive effects of culturally responsive teaching. More experimental research is needed to validate the positive benefits of culturally responsive teaching.

When teachers build on the strengths that students bring to school from their home cultures, learning is more personal and meaningful for students of diverse backgrounds (Au, 1993; Delpit, 1991; Gay, 2000). The focal point of culturally responsive literacy instruction is to provide activities and literature that connects to the culture, language and backgrounds of students in the classroom (Au, 2001). It aims to encourage students of diverse backgrounds to become competent in literacy skills and critical thinkers, while building on their home cultures and letting them respond personally to literature (Au, 2001). An interest in literature can be created when educators build on students' home language and culture. Calkins (2001) advocates "allowing the connections between the stories they read and the stories of their lives to change their understanding of both" (p. 523).

Jackson (1994) lists seven strategies of literacy instruction that are an integral part of culturally responsive pedagogy. While they are appropriate for all learners, these strategies are especially beneficial for students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The strategies include building trust, becoming culturally literate, adapting instruction to different culturally specific learning styles, asking higher-order questions that require critical thinking, and providing effective feedback. Establishing positive home-school relations and analyzing instructional materials are also important. According to Jackson, when teachers choose books to use in the classroom, they need to ensure the texts are devoid of racism, accurately include "strong ethnic characters," are historically accurate, and authentically portray perspectives, attitudes and feelings of the cultural group (Jackson, 1994, p. 47). Using books written by various ethnic writers to study different genres strengthens pride in one's own ethnic identity and improves academic achievement (Gay, 2000). Because culturally responsive teaching is based on using students' identities and backgrounds, a discussion of some features of African American ethnic identity is pertinent at this point.

African American Vernacular English

One important aspect of ethnic identity is how certain members of a group communicate. African American culture is not monolithic and all African American students do not use African

American Vernacular English (AAVE). However, numerous African American students live in environments where AAVE is the primary method of communication. Many learn to code switch or change from AAVE to mainstream English depending upon the location and the people with whom they are communicating. Some African American students bring unique idioms, vocabulary, rhetoric, pronunciation and grammar that can be incorporated into lessons and used for comparison when teaching mainstream English. The use of AAVE is a controversial subject, but it should be noted that AAVE does contain structural rules. Other terms for AAVE include Black English (BE), Black Vernacular English (BVE), and Ebonics. The term 'Ebonics' (from *ebony* and *phonics*) was coined by psychologist Robert L. William and other African American scholars during a conference held in 1973 on the subject of cognitive and language development of the Black Child (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). It was not used much until December 18, 1996, when the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) approved the Ebonics resolution, one of the recommendations suggested by the OUSD Task Force on the Education of African American Students (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). This was an outgrowth of increased concern about the academic progress of African American students in Oakland schools.

The term AAVE is used in this study except where its use is disruptive to the flow of a citation. The term mainstream English is used to refer to the language used by the majority of Americans, rather than Standard English, which seems to imply that if it is not Standard English, it is substandard or inferior English. A great deal of debate and disagreement has taken place not only about the use of AAVE in schools, but also the origins of the language and whether or not it is a language or a dialect. An in depth explanation of AAVE is not possible within the confines of this study, but a number of characteristics of AAVE are described as they pertain to its use in picture books in this study.

Perhaps the most debated and misunderstood feature of AAVE grammar is what is termed the use of the invariant *be* to indicate the future. An example of this is a statement provided by Smitherman such as "He be lookin good" which means he always looks good as compared to "He lookin good" which means he looks good at this particular moment in time (Smitherman, 2000a, p. 23). Another feature which, according to Rickford & Rickford (2000) linguists refer to as "zero copula," is the absence of 'is' or 'are.' In mainstream English a copula is used to join the subject and predicate of a sentence. Using the above example, "He is looking

good" becomes "He lookin good". The only parts of the verb 'to be' that can be omitted are the present tense 'is' and 'are,' not the past tense 'was' and 'were'.

Another grammatical feature related to the verb 'to be' is the use of the word 'been,' which is frequently used for emphasis in AAVE. Instead of mainstream English "I have been singing a long time," the AAVE equivalent is "I been singin." Another feature used for emphasis is beginning a sentence with a negative verb such as "Ain't nobody gonna come" to indicate "Nobody is going to come (no matter what is done to entice them)." Another grammatical difference, which according to Rickford and Rickford (2000) is most frequently used by writers to represent AAVE, is the use of "ain't" instead of mainstream English "is not" or "are not." For example "I ain't gonna go" rather than "I am not going to go."

The use of AAVE words and phrases is not limited to a particular sector of the African American community. It is used by professionals, preachers, rap artists, young and old, and in various locations throughout the U.S. In addition, some features of AAVE are also used in the broad spectrum of the American community. A prime example is the word 'ain't,' which is routinely used by non African Americans. In her introduction to a dictionary of words and phrases, *Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner*, Smitherman (2000b) asserts "Black Talk crosses boundaries of age, gender, region, religion, and social class because it all comes from the same source: the African American Experience and the oral tradition embedded in that experience" (p. 1). Rickford & Rickford (2000) note "one of the many fascinating features of black vocabulary is how sharply it can divide blacks and whites, and how solidly it can connect blacks from different social classes" (p. 93). Unlike the use of slang, which can be specific to a particular age, gender, socioeconomic group or location, some words are used by African Americans of all ages and socioeconomic groups. An example is the word 'ashy,' which has been used for countless years and is a term used to describe dry skin which is more visible on dark skin. Some words eventually cross over from AAVE into mainstream English, especially when they are considered 'hip,' but 'ashy' is one that has not been adopted by the mainstream. The researcher created a chart (Appendix B) indicating some of the differences described by Smitherman (2000a, 2000b), Rickford and Rickford (2000) and Haskins & Butts (1993).

In many instances, the pronunciation of AAVE is very much like the pronunciation of Whites born and raised in the South. However, features of AAVE are not limited to the South,

but can be found throughout northern states, especially in urban areas. Perhaps the most frequently used method for writers to denote AAVE pronunciation is to delete 'g' in words that end with 'ing' such as 'lookin' instead of 'looking.' Rickford & Rickford (2000) explain that:

> another pronunciation that is often described as deleting a consonant – the practice of dropping the final *g* in words like *walkin'* and *singin'* does not actually involve deletion, but the replacement of one type of nasal (the *eng*-like velar nasal, as at the end of *thing*, formed with the back of the tongue raised toward the back of the mouth) with another (the *en*-like alveolar nasal, as at the end of *thin*, formed with the front of the tongue raised behind the upper teeth). (p. 103)

In addition to grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, Smitherman notes that there are also "unique rhetorical strategies and communicative practices among Ebonics speakers" (2000a, p. 21). They include, but are not limited to, call and response, rhythmic pattern, and signifying. Call and response is a central part of the Black oral tradition and involves an audience responding to the speaker. This is widespread in African American churches where the audience will frequently interject "Tell it like it is," or "That's right." The rhythmic pattern is also often heard in an African American church, but not limited to that arena. There is a melodic quality and certain sounds are emphasized or repeated.

Signifying is a rhetorical device that frequently involves using metaphors, in which the speaker exaggerates and competes to see which speaker is the best. Smitherman (2000a) defines it as:

> the verbal art of ceremonial combativeness in which one person puts down, talks about, "signifies on" someone or on something someone has said. Also referred to as "joanin'," "cappin'," "soundin'," and currently "dissin'," this rhetorical modality is characterized by indirection, humor, exploitation of the unexpected, and quick verbal repartee. Sometimes done for just plain fun, signifyin is also a sociolinguistic corrective employed to drive home a serious message without preaching or lecturing. (p. 255)

Signifying is sometimes done for fun. At other times it is used to criticize. It frequently involves the use of irony and includes indirect comments that frequently use the term "yo momma" which literally means "your mother" although the literal meaning is not the way it is used. The speaker who uses the phrase "you momma" followed by an exaggerated insult expects a response. How skilful the response is given determines who is the more creative, spontaneous

or humorous. Additional information about AAVE can be found in Smitherman (1977, 1986, 2000a and 2000b), Perry & Delpit (1998), and Rickford & Rickford (2000).

African American Culture

African American culture is rooted in the history of African Americans that includes customs and traditions stemming from various parts of Africa. African Americans have a dual identity that combines a distinct group identity that they share with other African Americans and a cultural identity that they share with all Americans. This group identity has been influenced by numerous conditions and changes brought about by slavery, emancipation, northern migration, and the civil rights movement. It has also been directly or indirectly affected by the Black Power Movement, Black Muslim Movement, Black Arts Movement and the Harlem Renaissance. The conditions of slavery, which frequently separated members of the same family and same tribe, resulted in the loss of some practices, beliefs and traditions. However some survived and even flourished because of the restrictions imposed as a result of slavery, developing into a distinct culture. For example, prohibiting the education of slaves strengthened the oral tradition pervasive in many tribes that did not have a formal written language. Storytelling has made it possible for African traditions to be passed on for generations. The African oral tradition can be seen in the rhetoric used by many African American preachers and the tradition of call and response in which a church congregation responds and participates in the sermon. A similar call and response interaction that developed in the African American community is also evident in some styles of jazz in which musicians frequently improvise as they play, rather than follow sheet music.

Family is important to African Americans and two schools of thought have dominated research into the Black family. One considers the Black family to be unstable and rejects the notion that the African American family has been influenced by a cultural heritage that can be traced back to Africa (Hill, 2003; McAdoo, 1981). The other believes that the African American family has retained some features of cultural heritage, such as the importance of extended families, the informal adoption of children by relatives, and religious beliefs and practices (Hill, 2003; Sudarkasa, 1981). This school of thought acknowledges the strengths of African American families and applauds their resilience, self-reliance, work orientation, strong kinship bonds and high educational goals for their children (West, 2003).

In her studies, Sudarkasa (1981) notes the influence that African culture has had on African Americans and proposes that the traditional African extended family helped to preserve family ties and socialize children when slavery separated them from both parents. In tribal Africa, child rearing was a communal task and discipline was not only provided by a child's parents, but also by other adults. Sudarkasa suggests that West African heritage includes a strong sense of family obligation, a willingness to care for family members and friends in need, and gatherings of extended family members to celebrate special occasions. Today some African American children are raised in large extended families, in which many adults take on child-rearing responsibilities. According to Franklin, Franklin & Draper (2002), social and cultural values are passed on by many family members and parenting extends beyond the nuclear family.

According to Hill (2003), "flexible family roles have been a cultural strength of Black families for generations" (2003, p. 134). Hill asserts that "studies that conduct racially separate analyses often find more positive outcomes for children in Black single-parent families than for children in White single-parent families" (p. 135). This may be attributable to the extended family networks of Black families that provide vital financial, emotional and economical support. Hill notes that of the more than one million Black children living with relatives, 80% are informally adopted, while the remaining 20% are in foster care (2003, p. 135).

During the era of slavery, family and religion brought solace from the cruelty and poverty of life on the plantations and they continue to provide an important role. References to religion, although not abundant, can be found in some of the picture books with African American cultural content in this study. Hill (2003) asserts that a strong religious commitment tends to play a greater role in the lives of African Americans than Caucasians and may be the most important cultural strength of African Americans. Africans who were brought to America in bondage came from various locations, spoke different languages and had diverse religious backgrounds. Most believed in one powerful God or Supreme Being but many also believed in other African deities. Religion included prayers, sacrifice rituals, songs and spiritual dances such as the ring shout. According to Dodson, Baraka, Buckley, Franklin, Gates, Gordon-Reed and Wilmore (2002)

> God and the spirits were everywhere, and religion was so pervasive in traditional African life that it was present in all aspects of social, cultural, and political life. Religion was

> not simply a part of life, religion was life – so much so that there generally was no distinction in traditional African life between the sacred and the secular. (p. 133)

Because they came from diverse religions and were frequently separated from other members of their tribe, many traditional African religious practices disappeared and the religion that evolved was a blend of various African religious practices and Christianity. Some slave masters encouraged slaves to practice religion so they would be subservient, but would only allow them to attend White churches where they perverted religious teachings for their own purposes (Ciment, 2001). They would not permit slaves to gather together and practice religion in their own way for fear they were planning to escape or riot (Ciment, 2001). Slave narratives reveal that many slaves gathered together in secret to worship. Although they risked being beaten or sold to another plantation if they were caught, many took the risk so they could shout when the spirit moved them, sing spirituals, participate in call and response, clap hands, and pray for freedom as they worshipped. References to some of these earlier traditions, as well as church and religion can be found in a number of the books in this study.

Ethnic Identity

A reader's engagement in literature depends on the interaction of a number of factors such as cognitive development, interest, attitude, cultural background, values and ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is such a complicated construct that in her extensive review of ethnic identity research, Phinney (1990) concluded that there was no agreed upon definition (p. 500). Rotheram and Phinney (1987) propose that:

> ethnic identity is conceptually and functionally separate from one's personal identity as an individual, even though the two may reciprocally influence each other. Ethnic identity is a broad concept that includes many components: ethnic awareness (the understanding of one's own and other groups), ethnic self-identification (the label used for one's own group), ethnic attitudes (feelings about one's own and other groups), and ethnic behavior (behavior patterns specific to an ethnic group). The term ethnic identity has been used in literature to refer to all these components, alone or in combination. (p. 13)

Aboud (1987) refers to ethnic self-identity as "descriptions of oneself in terms of a critical ethnic attribute that defines rather than merely describes the group" (p. 33). Although only one attribute is necessary to meet the criteria of identification, more attributes often make the

identification stronger. Some examples of attributes are skin color, ancestry, nationality, religion, language, and the group's label, which is African American in this study.

Self-identification depends on an awareness of critical attributes that define an ethnic group. Critical attributes are not the same for all ethnic groups and differ in significance, making it difficult to compare self-identification tasks across groups. Aboud (1987) contends that young children's ethnic attitudes develop before identification skills. As young children grow, perceptual and cognitive processes enable them to understand how they are similar to and different from others, so they can categorize themselves more accurately. According to Aboud, this results in an increased preference for members of their own group.

Different theoretical and empirical approaches have been used to study ethnic identification. From the early 1940s to the 1970s, genetic inferiority models were prevalent (Parham, White & Ajamu, 1999). During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the deficit model began to emerge, suggesting that environmental factors, rather than hereditary, were responsible for the presumed deficiencies. Any behaviors, values, and life styles that differed from the mainstream norm were considered deficient. This was followed by the multicultural model, which recognizes that all cultures have strengths and differences, rather than deficiencies (Parham et al., 1999). These models, which concentrate on late adolescence and early adulthood, describe the movement between various stages of identity (Parham et al., 1999). Parham et al. (1999) purport that identity during childhood is "the reflection of parental attitudes or societal stereotypes which a youngster has incorporated" (p. 49).

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the term "Nigrescence model" was used to explain the various stages involved in the process of developing a Black identity (Cross, 1991). According to Cross (1991), the Nigrescence model explains what Cross referred to as "the stages of the Negro-to-Black identity transformation experienced by many Black adults in the Black Power period" (p. 157). Some theorists take a developmental approach in which one's sense of self gradually develops (Erikson, 1968), while others focus more on cognitive abilities (Aboud, 1987; Katz1987). These theorists view ethnic identification as a cumulative process in which a number of ethnic attributes are gradually added to one's self-description (Aboud, 1987).

African American identity and hair are closely connected and for African American women and young girls are almost impossible to separate. The way hair is worn can represent racial pride, self-acceptance and self-expression (Cunningham & Alexander, 2005). The

discussion of African American hair is sometimes a controversial socio political subject. During the 1960s hair was used to make a political statement. Many African Americans, especially women, stopped using lye and straightening irons or hot combs in favor of the Afro hairstyle symbolizing Black pride. The Afro signified a move away from trying to look White and aspiring to White standards of beauty and toward displaying pride in one's own culture and heritage. Some African American women wore their hair in an Afro or Afro puffs while others continued to straighten their hair or wore a wig with straight hair. During that era, women and men with Afros exuded an air of confidence as if they were declaring pride in their African heritage. By the 1970s and 1980s the Afro became shorter and was often referred to as a "natural" because harsh chemicals and hot combs were no longer used. By the 1990s cornrows were popular and by 2000 many contemporary hairstyles consisted of elaborate braids that demonstrated pride in African heritage.

Alexander (Cunningham & Alexander, 2005) explains that "for some women, getting one's hair pressed and curled or making the decision to go natural has been a rite of passage, a ritual, a coming into one's own sense of place in an oftentimes hostile world that has frequently denied the Black woman her rightful place in the beauty spectrum" (p. xi). For many young African American girls, the process of straightening hair signified the passage from childhood to adulthood, since many mothers did not allow use of harsh chemicals and burning hot combs until their daughters were older. Descriptions of the use of chemicals and hot combs have frequently been included in adult African American literature, but less often in children's literature.

McAdoo (1999) suggests that it is more difficult for children to have pride in their ethnic group when the group is perceived in a negative manner by the wider society. She proposes that when children are unaware of their own cultural values or do not accept them, they may suffer from "cultural myopia" (p. 5). As a result, they fail to perceive cultural differences between themselves and other groups. The use of multiethnic literature in the classroom can facilitate the development of ethnic identity by valuing and affirming ethnic heritage, which is especially important for African American children who may face prejudice and stereotyping (Cross, 1991; McAdoo, 1999).

Studies in the late 1930s by husband and wife researchers, E. L. Horowitz & R.E. Horowitz, proposed that young children prefer white dolls to brown dolls and White people to non Whites and interpreted this as a form of self-rejection (Banks, 2004a; Cross, 1991). Later,

the famous doll studies of another social scientist husband and wife team, Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie P. Clark in 1939 and 1940 were used to indicate that the rejection of brown dolls and people is a form of self-rejection (Cross, 1991). Cross provided additional information about Clark and Clark's doll studies and researched the Clark & Horowitz studies. He challenges the self-rejection paradigm by explaining that personal identity and group identity is not the same thing. Cross contends that young African American children do not choose the white doll because they reject themselves or have low self-concepts, but because they have learned that society values whiteness.

Clark & Clark's doll studies were revisited in 2009 when *Good Morning America* (GMA) recreated the famous experiment with 19 Black children aged 5 to 9 (Ahuja, 2009). As in the original study, the GMA study used two dolls, one black and one white. In Clark & Clark's experiment 56% of the Black children said they would rather play with the white doll compared to 32% who would rather play with the white doll in the GMA study. In Clark & Clark's study, 44% of the Black children said the white doll looked like them. In comparison, 88% of the children in the GMA experiment said the black doll looked like them. In the GMA study, a startling 47% of the Black girls said that the white doll was prettier. It does not take much to make the jump from preferring a white doll to preferring white characters in a book. Although the experiment was very limited and is open to bias and multiple interpretations, it indicates that many Black children still think that a white doll is prettier. The results of the experiment demonstrate that some Black children chose to identify with a white doll rather than a black doll. As Cross noted about the Clark & Clark study, young African American children do not necessarily choose the white doll because they reject themselves, but do so because it is learned behavior to assume that society values white dolls or White people more than non White. This leads to an interesting question. If books with White characters and books with Black characters are put on display in classrooms, will Black children pick and identify more with the books with the White characters or with the books with the Black characters? More research is needed to answer this and similar questions.

During the 1990s, several studies, primarily by doctoral students, began to focus on the possibility of a connection between ethnic identity development and the literature used in the classroom. Tomlinson (1995) investigated how variables such as interest, attitude and values interact with ethnic identity development. Tomlinson (1996a, 1996b) proposes that using

multicultural literature to link curriculum goals to an adaptation of Banks' typology of stages can contribute to positive ethnic identity development and "empower all students to understand social issues as they relate to their own cultural groups" (Tomlinson, 1996a, p. 2). Table 2.1 summarizes Banks' typology of the stages of ethnic identity development.

Table 2.1 Banks' typology of the stages of ethnic development

Stage 1	Ethnic Psychological Captivity – characterized by ethnic self-rejection, low self-esteem and negative thoughts about one's own culture.
Stage 2	Ethnic Encapsulation - one believes his or her ethnic group is superior to other groups and voluntarily separates oneself from others who do not belong to the same ethnic group.
Stage 3	Ethnic Identity Clarification – learns to accept positive aspects of oneself and one's ethnic group.
Stage 4	Biethnicity – one functions well in more than one culture, usually one's own culture and mainstream culture.
Stage 5	Multiethnicity and Reflective Nationalism – has a clear picture and is positive of one's own ethnic identity, is positive about other ethnic and racial groups and can function in other ethnic environments.
Stage 6	Globalism and Global Competency – has the ability to function within one's own ethnic group, one's country, and the world.

Note: Data for this table is based on Banks' (1981) Typology of ethnic development, which was described in Tomlinson's discussion of her research pertaining to literacy instruction (1995).

As the field of multicultural education grew, it included more disciplines, became more complex, and was often thought to lack purpose (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). This resulted in numerous scholars creating frameworks and models to explain multicultural education. Bennett (2001) proposed a conceptual framework of research genres to explain the four main principles of multicultural education and contends that the foundation of multicultural education in the United States is the concept of cultural pluralism, or the rights of all ethnic groups to retain their own heritages. She proposes that cultural pluralism, social justice, affirmation of culture, and educational equity and academic success are the four principles of multicultural education. Some of the books in this study exemplify Bennett's 4 principles by including features of African American cultural content with which African American students can identify. The plots in some of the books in the study evolve around social justice and affirm African Americans.

Cultural pluralism is a compromise between cultural assimilation in which ethnic groups give up their language and/or culture to assimilate into the main culture, and segregation in which ethnic groups live in separate communities. It rests on the belief that all ethnic groups have the right to retain their own heritages. In a culturally pluralist educational system, all children's home cultures are affirmed and respected, and students are given equal opportunities to reach their fullest potential (Bennett, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994a, 1995b; Gay, 2000). **Social justice** embraces diversity and aims to eliminate structural inequities, especially racial inequities resulting from White privilege and institutional racism (Bennett, 2001). **Affirmation of culture** is possible when culturally responsive teaching infuses the curriculum, instruction, administration and performance assessment (Au, 2001; Bennett, 2001; Gay, 2000). **Educational equity and academic success** ensue when there are high expectations and equal opportunities for all students (Bennett, 2001; Nieto, 2007). Bennett (2001) also identifies twelve genres which she groups into four main categories or clusters known as *curriculum reform, equity pedagogy, multicultural competence,* and *societal equity,* some of which undergird the topic of this research. Banks (2003a) identifies four approaches to integrating ethnic content into the school curriculum. The ***contributions approach*** provides information about ethnic groups by focusing on heroes, heroines, holidays and aspects of culture such as traditional foods and dress, etc. An example of the contributions approach is the inclusion of Black History Week or the celebration of Cinco de Mayo, Kwanzaa or Hanukkah. The ***additive approach,*** which is easy to implement, consists of adding information and literature about ethnic groups to the curriculum without changing the rest of the content. The use of picture books with African American cultural content, such as those discussed in this study, is an example of the additive approach to incorporating ethnic content into the school curriculum. The ***transformation approach*** focuses on teaching students how knowledge is constructed and encouraging them to view information from the perspective of different ethnic and cultural groups. It encompasses teaching strategies in all subjects as it transforms the curriculum by not just accepting, but valuing differences. Picture books with African American cultural content can also be used in the transformation approach if a teacher models valuing differences and guides the students in her class to value differences. An example of the transformative approach is discussing subjects such as the Westward Movement from the perspective of the Lakota Sioux who viewed the pioneers as invaders rather than heroes (Brandt, 1994). The ***social action approach*** not only encourages

students to consider different perspectives, but also become involved in solving important social issues.

Multicultural education research indicates that "teachers' beliefs about students, curriculum content and materials, instructional approaches, educational settings, and teacher education" impact student performance and achievement when working with a multicultural population (Ladson-Billings (1994a, p. 22). Ladson Billings (1994a, 1994b) notes that it is not known whether or not the race and ethnicity of a teacher has any impact on student learning, but understanding oneself, one's own culture and the cultures of others allows a teacher to be more successful with diverse students. When teachers have negative attitudes and lower expectations for Students of Color, it lessens those students' achievement (Ladson Billings, 1994a; Steele, 1997). Celebrating isolated heroes and holidays is less effective than using a transformative approach, which involves redesigning the curriculum and integrating multicultural materials and diverse cultural perspectives throughout the year. Teachers can change the classroom culture and use multicultural literature throughout the year. For example, nontraditional versions of familiar fairy tales can be contrasted with traditional versions, and characteristics such as language usage or different standards of beauty can be compared.

Multicultural Literature

The term "multicultural literature" emerged during the liberal era of the civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s as part of the multicultural education movement, at a time when many nonwhite writers and illustrators were unable to get their works published (Cai, 2002; Cai & Bishop, 1994; Taxel, 1997). Over the decades, the term multicultural literature has evolved, making it a difficult concept to define because it means so many different things to different people (Cai, 2003b; Cai & Bishop, 1994; Harris, 2003). Cai (2002) describes multicultural literature as "an instrument to reach the goals of multicultural education" (p. 19). These goals include "helping students to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to participate in a democratic and free society" (Temple, Martinez, Yokota & Naylor, 2002, p. 82).

Definitions of multicultural literature range from those that are exclusive and limit it to literature about racial and ethnic groups to those that are inclusive and extend the definition beyond race and ethnicity. Some definitions include books about religious groups such as the Amish, people who live in specific regions of the U. S. such as Appalachia, those with diverse

lifestyles such as homosexuals, and people with disabilities (Harris, 2003; Kruse & Horning, 1991; Mendoza & Reese, 2001; Temple et al., 2002). Educators disagree over whether the definition should be limited to racial and ethnic groups or extended to include regional, social class, gender, disability, religion, language, and sexual orientation. Definitions have expanded over time and opinions have also changed.

Yokota (1993) defines multicultural children's literature as "literature that represents any distinct cultural group through accurate portrayal and rich detail" (p. 157). Bishop (1997b) asserts it "should include books that reflect the racial, ethnic and social diversity that is characteristic of our pluralistic society and of the world" (p. 3). Cai & Bishop (1994) note that even though publishers may not define multicultural literature explicitly, they do so implicitly by the books they include in their multicultural book lists.

Some definitions do not distinguish between dominant and non-dominant cultures, while others describe it as "literature by and about people who are members of groups considered to be outside the sociopolitical mainstream of the U. S." (Bishop, 1993, p. 39). Some restrict it to books about people living in the United States, while others include stories set in countries throughout the world (Cai & Bishop, 1994; Yokota, 1993). No matter which definition one chooses, the focus of multicultural literature is primarily on people who differ racially, linguistically, ethnically, culturally, or in some other way from the "dominant white American cultural group" (Cai & Bishop, 1994, p. 58). In 1997, Elizabeth Bridges Smith, a former student of Rudine Sims Bishop, and at the time an Assistant Professor of Education at Otterbein College, interviewed Bishop. During a discussion about the purposes of multicultural literature, Bishop indicated it can be used as an integral part of multicultural education and serve a political purpose, be used for enjoyment, and provide opportunities for children to "see themselves and others reflected in the texts with which they come into contact" (Smith, 1997, p. 65). Bishop notes that all views are important when teaching and discussing multicultural literature. Cai & Bishop (1994) provide a classification system of multicultural literature and suggest multicultural literature is "an umbrella term that includes at least three kinds of literature: world literature, cross-cultural literature, and 'minority' literature or literature from parallel cultures" (p. 62).

Cai (2002) asserts that the definitions of multicultural literature may be classified as either literary or pedagogical. It is the latter that has met with the most resistance from political

conservatives, provoking controversial debates about which cultures should be included. Much of the controversy centers around who has the right to write, illustrate, publish, and use multicultural literature (Aronson, 2003; Fox & Short, 2003; Harris, 1996, 2003; Lasky, 2003; Nikola-Lisa, 2003). The pedagogical definition is less concerned with the literary features of literature than it is with the role literature about nonwhite and underrepresented cultures plays in education (Cai, 2002). Cai contends that there are different objectives and evaluation criteria for literary, sociopolitical and educational aspects of multicultural literature. Scholars concerned with the sociological and educational function of multicultural literature value works that portray parallel cultures positively and "present strong ethnic characters as role models for young people" (Cai, 2002, p. xv). When the term multicultural literature is used as a pedagogical term, the emphasis is on challenging the existing literary canon to include literature from parallel cultures.

Over the last few decades the power of the written word to influence the way a child feels about his or her culture has been noted by many educators. In 1979, Chall, Radwin, French, & Hall, replicated Larrick's (1965) study to see if the way in which African Americans are represented in children's books had changed. In their report, they state: "underlying this study was the assumption that books influence the way children view themselves and others" (p. 528). Although the words are different, Sims' (1982) message is the same when she opens the first chapter of her book *Shadow & Substance*, with the words:

> There is power in The Word. People in positions of power over others have historically understood, and often feared, the potential of The Word to influence the minds of the people over whom they hold sway. This fear manifests itself in both dramatic and mundane ways-from the burning of books to organized book banning to parents' censoring of their own children's reading. (p. 1)

More than two decades later, Nieto (2000) points out infusing quality multicultural literature into the curriculum is vital because what is excluded from the curriculum can impact students as much as what is included. She contends:

> the decisions we make, no matter how neutral they may seem, have an impact on the lives and experiences of our students. This is true of the curriculum, books and other materials we provide for them…What is excluded is often as telling as what is included. (p. 316)

Nieto continues by suggesting that failing to acknowledge and discuss cultural and racial differences is a form of unintentional discrimination. Roethler (1998) contends that it is not just repeated exposure to negative images that can have a damaging effect, but also the absence of positive images. Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd (2001) affirm this when they state:

> Literature is a powerful medium. Through it, children construct messages about their cultures and roles in society. Literature offers them personal stories, a view of their cultural surroundings, and insight on themselves. When children read books that are interesting and meaningful to them, they can find support for the process of defining themselves as individuals and understanding their developing roles within their families and communities. (p. 810)

Temple et al. (2002) propose there are different degrees of cultural specificity, and "the degree to which multicultural literature focuses on cultural or social issues varies significantly" (p. 85). At one end of the continuum are books that just scratch the surface by including characters from various cultures to provide more diversity in the illustrations, while not depicting a particular culture in the text. These books are known as "generically American," a term coined by Rudine Sims Bishop (1993) to indicate the theme is generic to any culture. Generic stories may provide children from parallel cultures with illustrations of characters who look like them or their family members, but provide no cultural substance. Only the illustrations indicate the character is African American and the racial identity of the main characters does not change the story line. The emphasis of a generic book is on universal human experiences rather than on cultural differences.

At the other end of the continuum are "culturally specific books". According to Bishop (1993):

> A culturally-specific children's book illuminates the experience of growing up a member of a particular, non-white group. Such a book often delineates character, setting and theme, in part by detailing the specifics of daily living that will be recognizable to members of the group. Such specifics might include language styles and patterns, religious beliefs and practices, musical preferences, family configurations and relationships, social mores, and numerous other behaviors, attitudes and values shared by the members of a cultural group. (p. 44)

Culturally specific books not only include details that reflect the culture of the characters, but the culture is an essential part of the books (Temple et al., 2002). Culturally specific books describe situations and historical events accurately, use dialogue, forms of address and character names that are authentic and include interactions that are appropriate for the culture portrayed. Cultural substance can be woven into the setting, plot, actions and words of the characters and the theme of the book (Yokota, 1993. Some scholars (Bishop, 1993, 2003; Cai & Bishop, 1994; Ching, 2005; Harris, 2003; Nieto, 2002; Woodson, 2003) suggest that multicultural literature can demonstrate connections that exist between race, culture and the unequal distribution of power.

Ching, citing Gordon & Newfield (1996), briefly discusses and compares assimilationist pluralism and cultural pluralism as he applies it to multicultural literature for children. According to Gordon & Newfield, "assimilation is compatible with pluralism; but it is *antipluralist* in a fundamental sense" (1996, p. 81). Gordon & Newfield assert that although assimilationist pluralists profess to be color-blind and claim to ignore racial differences, the neutrality they propose is based on "Euro-American ways" and is "racism of culture" (p. 89). Ching maintains that focusing on racial harmony in multicultural literature has resulted in neglecting the unequal distribution of power. Ching contends the "intersection of race, violence and power" is frequently ignored in children's books (2005, p. 129). He asserts that multicultural children's literature should not only advocate the inclusion of all cultures but also bring issues of power differentials to readers' attention. Ching distinguishes between "works that focus primarily on pluralism and works that embody both pluralism and power" as he applies Gordon & Newfield's classifications to multicultural children's literature, (Ching, 2005, p. 132).

Assimilationist pluralism stories celebrate diversity, encourage pride in one's own culture, and appreciation of other's cultures, but they "do not directly address power" (Ching, 2005, p. 132). In contrast, literature that addresses both pluralism and power illustrates how "power, race and culture produce equity and inequity in society" (p. 132). While teaching a children's literature class, Ching cited Eve Bunting's children's book *Smoky Nights* (1994), as an example of how some authors avoid discussing the impact of the lack of power. *Smoky Nights* is a story about the riots that took place in Los Angeles in 1992 following the beating of Rodney King. Ching notes that Bunting, who is not African American and does not live in Los Angeles

where the riots took place, wrote as a cultural outsider, failing to acknowledge that the riots were a reaction to injustice committed by those in power against those who lack power.

Ching's concern with Bunting writing as an outsider is an example of the insider/outsider debate that is one of the most fervently debated questions about multicultural literature. This debate is not a minor discussion limited to multicultural children's literature, but is part of the culture wars that have been taking place in the U. S. for many decades (Taxel, 1997). The debate about cultural authenticity focuses on who has the right to create multicultural literature (Aronson, 2003; Ching, 2005; Fox & Short, 2003; Lasky, 2003; Mikkelsen, 1998; Temple et al., 2002; Woodson, 2003; Yokota, 1993). According to Bishop (1993) and Harris (1993), an insider perspective portrays a cultural group from the point of view of a member of the group and is more likely to portray accurately what members of that group think about themselves. Stories that are based on personal experiences in the culture are more likely to be portrayed authentically (Bishop, 1993; Harris, 1993; Yokota, 1993). Temple et al. (2002) point out that when insiders create stories, they can present a wide range of cultural experiences and diverse opinions.

An outsider perspective gives the view others have of a group's beliefs and behaviors. Even when a story written from an outsider's perspective provides accurate details, "the presentation may be bland and dry, lacking the cultural nuances that make it come alive" (Temple et al, 2002, p. 80). Bishop (1993) notes that an author who is an outsider may be "unaware of the nuances of day to day living in the culture portrayed in the book, or that the distortions and misrepresentations are reflections of an ethnocentric, biased, or at worst, racist point of view" (p. 41).

Cultural authenticity in children's literature is such a complex issue with differing viewpoints and perspectives that editors Short & Fox (2003) decided to address the issue by compiling a collection of thoughts, opinions and perspectives about the subject. Like Ching, they recognize the sociopolitical aspect of multicultural literature and suggest that knowledge of the goals of multiculturalism is critical if one is to understand this debate. Defining cultural authenticity is difficult, but Short and Fox assert it extends beyond the discussion of whether or not stories should be written by authors who do not belong to the culture they depict. They agree with Rudine Sims Bishop that "you know it when you see it" as an insider reading a book about your own culture (Short & Fox, 2003, p. 4).

Much of the debate about insiders and outsiders relates to cultural authenticity, which Bishop (2003) refers to as:

> an elusive term that carries a number of different connotations. In some sense it has to do with the success with which a writer is able to reflect the cultural perspectives of the people about whom he or she is writing. (p. 29).

Some of the controversy surrounding cultural authenticity pertains to content that outsiders include when they create a story about a group with whom they have limited or no experience. The values, themes and images they include may not be valued by members of the cultural group portrayed (Bishop, 2003). Roethler (1998) asserts that illustrators unaware of the nuances of a particular culture may unknowingly and unintentionally communicate their prejudices in their illustrations by including images that may offend. Bishop (2003) suggests one way to understand the cultural perspectives of the people one is writing about is to "devote serious and informed critical attention to the literature produced by writers from parallel culture groups" (p. 29). She advocates careful examination of children's literature by well-known, highly respected and highly skilled writers and artists from the culture central to the story.

If one of the intentions of multicultural literature is to transmit cultural history, values and beliefs, it seems reasonable to demand that African American children's literature be written either by African Americans, or by insiders who are at least cognizant with what it means to be a member of the African American community. Generic picture books, while providing illustrations portraying parallel cultures, seldom contain cultural content in the text. The inclusion of generic books in lists of multicultural literature for children complicates the task of choosing multicultural literature to use in the classroom. Fortunately, guidelines are available to assist teachers in their selection of multicultural literature.

Guidelines for Selecting and Evaluating Multicultural Literature

A study on racism in textbooks conducted by the Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC) in 1977 resulted in *Guidelines for Selecting Bias-free Textbooks and storybooks* (Martin, 2004). The guidelines are based on Charlemae Rollins' work in the 1940s and are intended to encourage teachers and others to examine children's books for racism and sexism. The guidelines, which were published in the CIBC journal *The Bulletin*, are still used as a basis for evaluating and selecting children's books today. They can be viewed at

http://www.birchlane.davis.ca.us/library/10quick.htm retrieved on 4/5/2009. The guidelines advocate being conscious of demeaning stereotypes or inaccurate depictions of non-mainstream cultures, and noting how problems are solved and heroes are portrayed. They also recommend analyzing the author's qualifications and perspective, searching for racist or sexist language, checking the publication date to see if it is likely to be overtly racist or sexist, especially if it was published before 1973, and determining if the story reinforces a child's positive self concept.

Yokota (1993) contends that quality multicultural literature must meet the standards for good literature. She suggests criteria to use when selecting quality multicultural children's literature and discusses important issues to consider. Citing Huck, Hepler, & Hickman (1993), Lukens (1999), and Norton (1991), Yokota proposes: "the literary elements of plot, characterization, setting, theme and style should be well developed" (1993, p. 159). In addition to meeting the criteria for quality literature, she echoes Bishop's (1993) assertion that multicultural literature must also be culturally accurate and insists that "without cultural accuracy, a book cannot be considered a quality piece of multicultural literature" (Yokota, 1993, p. 159). She considers a book to be culturally accurate when values and beliefs of a culture are represented, dialogue and relationships are authentic and rich cultural details are woven into the story. Additionally, she proposes cultural issues central to a culture should not be skimmed over and characters that are not members of mainstream culture should not be included just to "fulfill a 'quota' of sorts" (Yokota, 1993, p. 160).

Kruse, Horning & Schliesman (1997) emphasize the importance of choosing multicultural literature that is accurate and authentic, and seeking the opinions of specialists when in doubt about the authenticity and accuracy of historical and cultural information in specific books. Norton (2001), citing Johnson & Smith (1993), notes multicultural literature should not only include authentic settings, natural characters, but also should be well written, free of stereotypes and portray a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. When dialect is used, it should be realistic and for a purpose. Historical facts should be accurate, social issues should not be oversimplified and offensive vocabulary should not be used.

According to Ching (2005), selection criteria include the accurate development of historical settings, the positive portrayal of characters, the avoidance of stereotypes, and the authentic portrayal of diversity in a cultural group (p. 129). He asserts that most selection criterion focus primarily on "tangible traits and overlooks deeper ideologies that affect the

distribution of power in society" and he suggests one criterion for determining the authenticity of a story is the "author's use of power" (Ching, 2005, p. 129). Ching notes that there is very little literary criticism on issues of race. He considers it an enigma that in the United States, a country that is polarized by race, most literature ignores the fact that race is an issue. He contends authors sometimes unintentionally elevate European Americans and subordinate parallel cultures by idealizing a few aspects of their cultures, instead of questioning the social structures that subordinate certain segments of the populations. Although guidelines for selecting and evaluating multicultural literature for children are applicable for books about many parallel cultures, most evolved from information pertaining to selecting books about African Americans.

Bishop (1991) suggests including a variety of books to ensure children see diversity within cultures and using books that present different perspectives. Citing the CIBC and other sources, she restates the importance of critically examining multicultural literature to ensure the books are well written, tell a good story, include strong characters, and have an understandable theme. She maintains it is important to notice the point of view of the author and the relationship between characters from different cultures as well as determine if the language is appropriate for the characters and time period and not offensive. Bishop (1991) proposes the best way to identify authentic African American children's literature is to immerse oneself in works by well-known and respected African Americans. She discusses a number of authentic African American picture books, pointing out some of the cultural content found within them, such as shared values that include celebration of family, especially extended family members, and a sense of community. She notes the use of different language patterns, including some specific to Black Vernacular English (BVE) and the way some of the picture books incorporate aspects of African American history and heritage or include themes about psychological or physical survival.

Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd (2001) provide a table of characteristics found in high quality picture books suitable for children in primary grades which they base on guidelines for evaluating children's literature proposed by Temple, Freeman, & Moss (1998), Huck, Hepler, Hickman & Kiefer (2000), Cullinan & Galda (1994), and Lynch-Brown, Tomlinson & Tomlinson (1999). Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd propose that the characteristics of quality African American children's literature may be categorized into those applicable for all children's literature and those specific to African American children's literature. General characteristics

include memorable, well-portrayed characters that are about the same age as the reader who are involved in a simple, understandable, suspenseful plot with which children can identify, and built on interesting events that take place in an easy-to-follow sequence. The story should use natural language, flow smoothly, and include an interesting theme with illustrations that complement the story and the theme. Additional guidelines to use when selecting quality African American children's literature are based on the work of Bishop (1997) and Banks (1991) and are also supported by the experiences of Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd (2001) and the teachers with whom they collaborated. As Bishop (1993) recommends, Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd read culturally conscious literature for children by well-known African American authors. They propose that books should include positive, realistic portrayals of African Americans, accurate information about their beliefs, traditions, and shared values, and a true perspective of African American history, if it is included. The illustrations should be realistic and the dialogue should be understandable. Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd's table and guidelines are useful because there is very little unbiased information about diverse groups and few lists of recently published books with detailed information about the cultural content in the books are available.

Benefits of Using Multicultural Literature

In addition to inspiring a love of reading and providing hours of enjoyment, children's literature serves emotional, social, intellectual, linguistic and literary purposes (Temple, Martinez, Yokota & Naylor, 2002). Books can help children to understand their own experiences, can validate their own culture, provide information about other cultures, encourage empathy and inspire imagination (Temple et al., 2002). Boutte (2002) asserts "the power of literature to affect the lives of young children is awesome and far-reaching" (p. 147). She proposes that in addition to educating and socializing children, literature expresses society's overt and covert values, as well as its expectations.

Few studies have been conducted to determine the impact that using or not using books with African American cultural content has on African American or non African American students. In 1983, Sims interviewed a 10 year old African American girl named Osula to determine what it was about African American literature that appealed to her. The young girl indicated that she enjoyed "books about Black girls" (Sims, 1983, p. 23). She revealed that she enjoyed reading about people like her and that she looked for books "related to her personal

experiences" and books with "characters with whom she could identify" (Sims, 1983, p. 223). When Hefflin& Barksdale Ladd (2001) interviewed African American adults about their reading experiences when they were children, the adults indicated that they did not enjoy reading until they discovered books with characters with whom they could relate. One adult whose pseudonym is Robin, indicated "I didn't feel a strong connection between my world and classroom-related literature experiences" (Hefflin & Barksdale, 2001, p. 810).

Although cultural and ethnic diversity in the U.S. is increasing, many children spend their time in classrooms that consist primarily of one culture. Banks (1988) uses the term "ethnic encapsulation" to describe the situation in which children spend their days in a mono cultural environment that provides few, if any opportunities to interact with students from other cultures. Using multicultural literature is just one method to expose students to diversity and incorporate multicultural education into the curriculum. When it is used appropriately, multicultural literature can be very effective. Use of the transformative approach, Banks' third level of curriculum reform, allows students to understand events and problems from points of view of different ethnic and cultural groups. The social action, or fourth and highest level of Banks' hierarchy, encourages students to identify social problems and take action to solve problems related to cultural differences (Banks, 2003a; Bieger, 1995; Rasinski & Padak, 1990).

Culture influences the way children process the books they read (Walker-Dalhouse, 1993). Using a literature based reading program that includes numerous multicultural trade books can encourage a positive attitude to reading. Multicultural literature allows students to define, analyze, and act upon problems encountered by various ethnic groups in society, engages them emotionally and encourages them to explore thoughts, feelings and experiences of people from diverse groups (Temple et al., 2002). Walker-Dalhouse (1992) proposes that incorporating multicultural and multiethnic literature into the curriculum can increase students' awareness of other cultures, decrease negative stereotyping of other cultures and influence racial attitudes towards other groups. Multicultural literature can provide opportunities for all students to understand, acknowledge, celebrate and value diversity by providing glimpses of cultures, traditions, and beliefs other than their own, with which they might otherwise not come into contact (Bishop, 1997; Cai, 2002; Galda & Cullinan, 2002; Harris, 1999; Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001; Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007; Norton, 2001; Temple et al., 2002; Yokota, 1993).

Literature is a vital part of a multicultural curriculum that can provide children with opportunities to see their race, culture, and ethnic heritage authentically represented in the books that are used in the classroom (Au, 1993; Bishop, 1993; Cai, 2002; Henderson, 1991; Norton, 1991; Taylor, 2000). This can be especially beneficial for biracial children reared in a European American culture as well as for adopted children reared in a culture different from the one into which they were born. Multicultural literature can promote dialogue about issues related to race, gender, and social class in the classroom. Children from different cultural groups can identify their own cultural values and beliefs and understand the contributions their cultural group has made to the heritage and history of this country (Norton, 1991). When carefully chosen, quality multicultural literature is part of the curriculum, it provides opportunities for children to connect their life experiences with classroom activities, facilitates learning, encourages children to develop a sense of pride in their cultural heritage and increases self esteem (Bishop, 1997; Cai, 2002; Walker-Dalhouse, 1992; Diamond & Moore, 1995). Multicultural and multiethnic literature can expose children to differences and similarities between their cultures and other cultures (Walker-Dalhouse, 1992). When stories that feature their culture are used in class, children are less likely to feel alienated from school cultures (Walker-Dalhouse, 1993).

Bishop (2003) asserts "when a group has been marginalized or oppressed the cultural functions of a story can take on even greater significance because storytelling can be seen as a means to counter the effects of that marginalization and oppression on children" (p. 25). Even though the situation has improved, many African American children seldom see books at school that provide even a glimpse of their culture. Few books used in primary classrooms contain African American characters, and even fewer books include African American characters participating in experiences with which they can identify. Unfortunately, the books with African American characters frequently found in many classrooms and school libraries are likely to be about slaves or include characters that are African American in appearance only (Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001). Using books in which only the illustrations are African American, which Sims categorized as culturally neutral and later labeled as generic (Bishop, 1993), can convey the message that there is a place for characters from parallel cultures in the classroom. However, it does not accomplish the goal of multicultural education, which is to "increase educational equality for all students" (Banks, 2007a, p. 4). Even though there is no universal, unchanging African American culture, there are aspects of the African American culture with

which many African American children can identify. These include shared values that center on the importance of family and community, language patterns, dialects, and vocabulary specific to African American culture, and other experiences specific to, but not necessarily limited to African Africans. Books with African American characters should include stories about everyday life, not just books about slavery or biographies of people like Frederick Douglas, Dr. M. L. King, Rosa Parks, and Michael Jordan. The latter sends the message that unless an African American is a famous musician, basketball player, etc., or has made some major contribution to society; there is no place for him or her in the literature in the classroom.

Most research on multicultural literature concentrates on how mainstream students benefit from reading literature that includes the contributions, achievements, histories and cultures of all members of society. Although less has been written about how students from parallel cultures benefit from reading or listening to literature with main characters who share their culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic level, and racial group several educators, (Bishop, 1997; Hancock, 2000; Harris, 1997; Johnson-Feelings, 1994) have noted the advantages it provides students. Some educators propose using multicultural literature facilitates learning and increases self-esteem (Bishop, 1997; Diamond & Moore, 1995; Johnson-Feelings, 1994; Taylor, 2000; Yokota, 1993). Others contend that using learning styles that are congruent with their cultural patterns and reading about characters similar to themselves increases students' opportunities for academic achievement (Au, 1993; Bishop, 1997b; Diamond & Moore, 1995; Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001; Lowery, & Sabis-Burns, 2007; Yokota, 1993). Some suggest that children who do not see reflections of themselves in classroom literature are less interested in reading (Bishop, 1997; Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd, 2001; Colby & Lyon, 2004). However, few studies have been conducted to determine how important the race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic level of the character is for a reader to make a connection with literature. One study by Hefflin & Barksdale-Ladd (2001) indicated that when African Americans were interviewed about how they felt as children when they did not see literature with African American characters, they revealed feelings of isolation and a lack of connection between their classrooms and their communities and homes.

Although books with African American cultural content benefit all children, it is especially beneficial to African American children. It not only provides a way for them to recognize their cultural heritage, it also creates opportunities for them to develop a sense of

identity (Collier, 2000). When children do not see images of themselves, it has a negative effect. According to Roethler (1998), "meaning lies with readers, or in the case of illustrations, with viewers, who bring their experiential past, including literary experience, to bear upon their understanding of present circumstance" (p. 95). "Being repeatedly exposed to images will create a lasting impression; negative or positive images will become part of the child's schemata. But the effect can also be more subtle than this. Sustained absence can take on meaning in the child's schemata." (Roethler, 1998, p. 97).

Teachers are busy. Sometimes they base their decision to use a particular book on a favorable review, instead of carefully selecting and sharing quality multicultural literature with students to introduce them to the literary heritages of diverse cultures. Because many teachers tend to use literature with which they are familiar and often select books that were their favorites when they were children, it is essential to incorporate quality reading materials that provide students with literature that represents the diversity of American society (Colby & Lyon, 2004; Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007; Taylor, 2000). Preparing pre service teachers to work with diverse student populations and encouraging them to include multicultural literature is a growing concern facing teacher educators (Colby & Lyon, 2004). Many teachers are unaware how their personal beliefs impact their teaching (Colby & Lyon, 2004; Sleeter, 2001). Colby & Lyon (2004) analyzed the responses of one hundred pre-service elementary teachers enrolled in elementary language arts methods courses, to questions about their attitudes and beliefs about using multicultural literature in the classroom. Many White people, including pre-service and in-service teachers are unaware of White privilege and are oblivious to the advantage their skin color provides them. They do not understand the thoughts and feelings of children who are not represented in the literature used in the classroom and the way White culture dominates the classroom (Banks, 2001b; Cochran-Smith, 2000; Colby & Lyon, 2004; Sleeter, 2001). Some are not cognizant of the important role that multicultural literature plays and the messages sent when multicultural literature is not used in the classroom (Bieger, 1995; Colby & Lyon, 2004). One way to address this lack of awareness is to incorporate a multicultural literature reading program and to encourage teachers and pre-service teachers to look at the way parallel cultures such as African American, Asian American and American Indian, etc. are portrayed in books used in their classrooms.

Genres and Literary Elements of Children's Literature

A discussion of the various genres of children's literature and the literary elements of children's books will facilitate an understanding of the classification of the books in this study. According to Lukens (2007, p. 13), "a genre is a kind or type of literature that has a common set of characteristics." Determining the genre of a particular book is often difficult because genres are not clear and well defined. Authorities on children's literature (Huck, Helper, & Hickman, 1993; Norton, 2001; Lukens, 2007; Temple et al., 2002) differ slightly in the way they classify children's literature.

While the term picture book can be used as a genre, it also refers to the format or the design of a book rather than the content or genre. Temple et al., 2002 define a picture book as a book in which the illustrations and text combine to create a message. It usually consists of 32 pages, although it can contain 24-48 pages; the illustrations dominate the text and are integrated into the story. Most picture books contain fewer than 500 words, although some are wordless, and others have more than 500 words. (http://picturingbooks.imaginarylands.org/using/defintion.html). The classification "picture book' often depends on the way a librarian or educator defines it. Some books are catalogued as picture books in one library, but not in another. Temple et al. (2002) maintain that picture books "can fit into any of the other genres" and "once readers know what genre they're reading they know what to expect from the text" (Temple et al., 2002, p. 23). Picture books serve a variety of purposes including manipulative play, teaching concepts, and beginning reading. There are several different types of picture books, which Temple et al. classify as early childhood books, wordless books, picture books with minimal text, beginning readers' books, and picture storybooks, which are the largest subgroup of picture books.

The picture books included in this research may be categorized as beginning readers, stories in rhyme and poetry, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, and fictionalized biography. **Beginning readers** are used once a child has begun to read and needs books with which to practice his or her reading skills. When a child has mastered many basic sight words, requires more challenge, but still needs to be successful, books with a controlled vocabulary can encourage independent reading. Many beginning readers are predictable, but books with a predictable format are not necessarily beginning readers. Because one of the purposes of beginning readers is to provide practice in basic reading skills, there is more emphasis on using

high frequency words and limiting the vocabulary to develop reading skills, than on providing culturally specific literature. Beginning readers are also known as easy readers and have become very popular over the last few decades. They are frequently divided into various reading levels, with level one often limited primarily to the use of twenty or thirty well known sight words with just a few additional words to maintain a child's interest. The levels are sometimes indicated by different colors or numerically.

Some beginning readers use rhythms and rhymes or simple story structure to make it easy for a young reader to use the pattern of the text to guess upcoming words (Temple et al, 2002). *Shanna's First Readers Series* is a series of books that use repetition, rhyming words, phonics clues, story clues and picture clues to encourage beginning readers. This series, in which the two main characters, Shanna and Shane, are African American, evolved when Andrea Davis Pinkney, an African American writer, then Editorial Director of Jump at the Sun Books, asked Jean Marzollo to write a series of picture books featuring an African American named Shanna as the main character (Harris, 2003).

Stories in rhyme are books in which a story is told using rhyming words, usually at the end of alternating lines. **Poetry** is so difficult to define that even critics do not agree on a definition. The text in them is frequently arranged artistically. It can be considered a genre of literature and includes many subgenres such as ballads, narrative poetry and lyric poetry. Some poems include words that rhyme, whereas others are written in blank verse. Poems for children can be classified by the arrangement of words and include sonnets, limericks, haiku, nursery rhymes, jump-rope rhymes, folk poems, lyric poems, nonsense verse and narrative. Poems may use rhythm, rhyme, sound patterns, repetition and figurative language. Norton (1983) suggests some of the characteristics of poetry are "an original combination of words" that have "emotional impact and evoke visual images (p. 321). In the 1920s the poetry of the African American Langston Hughes expanded the genre of poetry to include parallel cultures.

Contemporary realistic fiction consists of stories in which characters resemble real people who live in a time and place that could or does exist and who face and solve plausible problems or dilemmas (Lukens, 2007; Temple et al., 2002). Frequently, the central character or protagonist experiences a problem, such as making new friends or experiencing discrimination. According to Lukens, realistic stories are about events or circumstances that are possible and do not include magical or supernatural interventions in the action. If, as Temple et al. (2002)

maintain, realistic fiction is the genre of children's literature "that most closely approaches the reality of children's own lives" (p. 282), it is essential that it include stories that represent the diversity within, as well as between ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural groups.

Realistic fiction provides children an opportunity to see not only different lifestyles, but also their own lives reflected in literature. The most popular categories for realistic fiction are humor, mystery and stories about survival. Until World War II, most protagonists in children's realistic fiction were White and middle class (Temple et al., 2002). Since the 1990s, books have increasingly depicted disturbing social problems with characters facing dilemmas that are not solved by the end of the story, and may never be solved. Temple et al. (2002) credit Shelton Root with introducing the term "New Realism" to describe realism that no longer avoids or tries to hide some of the harsher realities of life, such as poverty, racism, sexism, war, and parents experiencing problems. Some of the books in this study are part of this New Realism.

Historical fiction is a work of fiction that is set in some time in the past. According to Lukens (2007), the most written about periods of American history are the American Revolutionary War, slavery and the Civil War, the Westward Movement and World War II. Unlike textbooks, historical fiction provides opportunities for readers to imagine what it was like to live during a specific time period. Reading historical fiction can help readers understand the past, as well as their own and other cultures. Sir Walter Scott is credited with being the first person to write historical fiction (Blos, 1993). Prior to that, authors of the late 1880s primarily wrote adventure stories that were often full of historical inaccuracies. By the 1930s stories tended to idealize the past. Authors did not begin to write historical fiction about ordinary people specifically for children until the 1940s and 1950s. Today's historical fiction tends to be more realistic and idealize the past less. There is no longer an unspoken code that children need protection from negative aspects of the past. Historical fiction in picture book format has emerged during the last few decades. Blos categorizes historical fiction as fictionalized memoirs, fictionalized family history and fiction based on research. Fictionalized memoirs are often rich with details because the authors write from their own experiences. Fictional family history develops from stories that have been passed down from generation to generation, with a story developing from one very small incident or piece of material such as a letter or photo. Historical fiction is based on an author's research of a particular subject or era. According to Blos (1993), most historical fiction written for children is based on eras about which the authors

have no first hand experiences. The setting is an important element and usually requires not only a creative imagination but also extensive research to ensure details are not distorted and illustrations are realistic. Characters must behave in ways appropriate for the time in which the story is set, the conflict must be plausible, grow out of the time in which the story is set and be resolved appropriately for the time and place in which the story takes place (Temple et al., 2002). Fictional biography may be contemporary or historical. The character in the story is a real person rather than a fictional character. The story may include dramatized events or dialogue from the main character's life that did not take place but are fictional.

Knowledge of some of the vocabulary, terms, and literary elements used by critics when evaluating texts is essential for a study of children's literature. The literary elements most often referred to when discussing children's literature include setting, characterization, plot, conflict, theme, point of view, and style. According to Temple et al., (2002) "the setting is the time in which the events of the story are imagined to have occurred" (p. 3). The setting may be contemporary or historical and sometimes is specific to a particular cultural group. The characters are developed through their actions, what they do, how they do it, and the relationship they have with other characters. The main character is often referred to as the protagonist. The plot includes the order of events, what happened and why, and can include a conflict a character struggles with internally, with another character, the environment, or with society. Most plots lead up to a climax, and may close with a denouement, which is a "brief display of the characters' state of affairs after the resolution" (Norton, 1983, p. 40). The theme may be explicit or implicit and readers do not always agree on the theme of a specific book. The point of view is the perspective from which the story is presented. The story may be told in the first person, e.g. "I" and "we" or the third person e.g. "he", "she" and "they." The style is the way the book is written and is determined by the use of words, imagery, metaphors, etc.

History of African American Children's Literature

An understanding of the development of African American children's picture books necessitates some background knowledge of the history of children's books and of African American literature, in addition to an awareness of relevant events in African American history. Although African Americans have been depicted in literature since the seventeenth century, albeit stereotypically and pejoratively, they did not appear in children's literature written by

African Americans until the late nineteenth century (Broderick, 1973; Brown, 1933; Harris, 1990a; Johnson & Mongo, 2004; Marcus, 2004; Sims, 1982). The rich diversity in children's literature did not appear until the latter part of the twentieth century; and until the 1960s, the characters in children's books were predominantly White.

The publication of African American children's literature has varied, with the percentage of published books for children depicting African Americans increasing and decreasing, often dependent on the social and political conditions in the United States. In addition to a fluctuation in the number of books published, the manner in which African Americans are portrayed has changed. Leonard Marcus, an editor and author who has chronicled the effects of social and economic changes on children's books, proposed: "in every generation, children's books mirror the values and aspirations of the people who make them" (Marcus, 2004, p. 17). Consequently, it is hardly surprising that picture book author Yolen (2004) contends that most children's literature written during the late nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century contained both implicit and explicit racism. Although explicit racism is seldom present in children's literature published in the new millennium, a surprising number of books continue to treat cultural differences as if they are no more than a difference in skin color. While not explicitly racist, this approach does nothing to accurately reflect the rich heritage, traditions and diversity of the African American experience.

Numerous children's general interest magazines were in circulation prior to, during, and after the Civil War (1861-1865), but the number of children's books greatly increased after the war (Marcus, 2004). Although it was not the first book with African American characters, one of the best known is a picture book based on a song first published in 1869 and in publication for many years, entitled *The Ten Little Niggers* (Birtha, 1988). A counting book that teaches children the concept of counting backwards, it tells how ten African American boys are eliminated one by one, with most of them meeting gruesome deaths such as being killed by a bear or accidentally being cut in half while chopping wood (Martin, 2004). Numerous versions using different formats were published, but the illustrations continued to portray all the characters looking the same, with black skin, bulging eyes and thick lips. Martin (2004) notes that the inclusion of *Ten Little Nigger Boys* "alongside *Hickory Dickory Dock* and other counting songs reveals how integral these stereotypes of Black people were to the fabric of white society in the early 1900s" (p. 31). According to Martin, the message of the book was so popular that

some time in the 1870s a sequel entitled *Nine Niggers more* was published by an unknown author. Similar counting books with negative stereotypes prevailed for many years.

Another book with African American characters published in the late nineteenth century, entitled *Diddie, Dumps, and Tot* (Pyrnelle,1882), is the story about three enslaved children living on a plantation. According to Birtha, this story "perpetuates the myth of the good master and the happy plantation life" (1988, p. 194). In 1898, E. W. Kemble published *A Coon Alphabet* which Martin (2004) notes freely used the word "coon" "an abbreviation from raccoon and a derogatory term for African Americans throughout the book. Negative portrayals of African Americans continued for many years, frequently including dialogue in heavy, stereotypical dialect that was often unintelligible.

According to Harris (1990a), Mrs. A. E. Johnson's first novel, *Clarence & Corinne: or God's Way* published in 1890 and a story about White characters, not about African American experiences, was the first work for children by an African American writer. Like other children's works of this period, it was didactic and written to encourage children to work hard, and try to live moral and virtuous lives. There is no consensus on which is the first book for African American children. Vaughn-Roberson & Hill (1989) contend that *The Joy*, published by Mrs. Johnson in the 1880s, could be considered the first work written for African American children. Harris (1990a) suggests Paul Laurence Dunbar's collection of dialect poems in a book entitled *Little Brown Baby*, first published in 1895, is the first children's book by an African American for African American children. Dunbar's poetry was difficult for children to read in part because of the way in which the dialect was written, and also because many African American children at that time were illiterate (Harris, 1990a). According to Harris, Dunbar's work, which achieved international recognition, provided an alternative to the Eurocentric literary tradition. However, as Smith (2004) indicates, many African Americans rejected Dunbar's use of southern vernacular at a time when many African Americans emphasized the value of a formal education in conventional English. This controversy continues today with some educators supporting the use of African American Vernacular English in children's literature, while others oppose its use.

Despite stereotypical and derogatory illustrations, the book considered by many to be the forerunner of contemporary African American children's picture books is *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (1899, 1923) written by Helen Bannerman (Birtha, 1988; Harris, 1990a; Martin,

2004). According to Martin, Bannerman, the daughter of a Scottish minister, grew up in India, and "deliberately made Sambo's appearance somewhat ambiguous ethnically since he looks convincingly neither African nor Indian" (2004, p. 6). Numerous versions of this book were published in England and the U.S.A., where it was extremely popular. It was considered a classic by many librarians and teachers, despite the use of the term "Sambo" which Birtha indicates was "the name of the ventriloquist's little black dummy, the stupid buffoon in the minstrel show, and became a derogatory or demeaning name to call a servant or shoeshine boy" (1988, p. 195). Even though it demeaned and ridiculed African American children, it could still be found on library shelves in the late 1980s, if not later. Controversy over its racism did not appear until the 1940s (Birtha, 1988).

During the 1900s, as librarians began to create children's reading rooms to prevent children from reading books considered unsuitable, the children's librarian became an established profession (Elleman, 2004; Marcus, 2004). Many stereotypes of African Americans were rampant at this time, with literature primarily portraying them as light-hearted, irresponsible, careless, living in the present, fond of big words and gay colors, humorous, and musical (Broderick, 1973). Literature written by African Americans was influenced by social and political changes and began to reflect the values of middle-class, educated African Americans (Johnson & Mongo, 2004). Mary White Ovington, a White radical and one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1913, was one of the first White authors to present a more positive image of Black people in books (Birtha, 1988; Harris, 1990a). She wrote *Hazel* (1913), the story of a middle-class African American child growing up in Boston who does not encounter racial prejudice until she visits her grandmother in rural Alabama (Harris, 1990a).

Despite the stock market crash in the 1920s and a depressed economy, the production of children's books increased (Elleman, 2004). Bookstores specializing in children's books began to open in several major cities (Marcus, 2004). Large numbers of African Americans moved from the rural South to Northern cities, especially New York where the Harlem Renaissance artistic movement developed. This movement emerged at a time when many creative African Americans lived in the same neighborhood and camaraderie developed among writers, artists, and musicians. Although the Great Depression began before it could have as much impact on children's literature as it had on adult literature, Harlem Renaissance writers provided literature

that encouraged African American children to develop pride in their heritage (Martin, 2004; Smith, 2004). Even though African Americans began to produce great literary works based on their own values, culture and experiences, most children's books continued to include stereotypes.

One would be remiss to discuss African American children's literature without including W.E. B. DuBois, who Smith (2004) credits with "instituting the genre of black children's literature" (p. 1). DuBois, who was one of the founders of the NAACP and the editor of *The Crisis,* the official publication of the NAACP from 1910 to 1936, believed that children held the key to the future (Smith, 2004). According to Johnson-Feelings (1996), *The Crisis*, which sponsored annual literary contests, was vital in nurturing the writers who were part of the Harlem Renaissance. While he was editor of *The Crisis,* Dubois, concerned with the way African Americans were portrayed in literature and popular culture, organized a symposium on the topic in the April 1926 to September 1926 issues of *The Crisis* (Harris, 1993). Publishers, authors, editors and critics participated in the discussion and expressed diverging views. According to Harris (1993), White writers defended their use of stereotypical portrayals of African Americans by citing their right to freedom of expression, a defense still used today by non-African American writers. In response, African Americans insisted that literature is "an artistic endeavor shaped and circumscribed by socio-political conditions" (Harris, 1993, p. 60).

Although *The Crisis* was written for adults, it included an annual "Children's Number" (Johnson-Feelings, 1996). *The Crisis* which DuBois and Augustus Granville Dill began publishing in January 1920 was so enthusiastically received that it led to *The Brownies' Book,* a magazine written for African American families to read and discuss with their children. *The Brownies Book* sold for one dollar a year or ten cents a copy, and was edited by Jessie Fauset, an African American female writer (Harris, 1990a; Johnson & Mongo, 2004; Johnson-Feelings, 1994). Written specifically for African American children, who DuBois affectionately referred to as "the children of the sun," it was in circulation until 1922 (Johnson-Feelings, 1996, p. 21). The stated objectives of this monthly magazine were:

> to make colored children realize that being 'colored' is a normal, beautiful thing; to inform them of the achievements of their race; to teach them a code of honor; to entertain them; to provide them with a model for interacting with Whites; to instill pride in home and family; and to inspire them toward racial uplift and sacrifice (Harris, 1990a, p. 546).

The Brownies' Book provided historical information about African Americans and their achievements, photographs, news, games and poetry, including some by Langston Hughes (Harris, 1990a; Johnson-Feelings, 1996; Smith, 2004). Although it was only published for a short time due to insufficient funding, it made a significant contribution to African American literature. Dianne Johnson-Feelings (1996) has devoted considerable time and energy to researching *The Brownies' Book* and has written a book entitled *The Best of the Brownies' Book,* which includes selections from 24 issues of the Brownies' Book and information about some of the contributors.

During the 1920s, literary critic William Braithwaite was one of the first people to examine literature published between 1860 and 1900 that depicted African Americans. Braithwaite (1924) asserts that racial inequalities and the refusal of many Whites to view African Americans as equals resulted in portrayals of "the Negro as an inferior, superstitious, half-ignorant and servile class of people" (p. 206). He applauded Paul Lawrence Dunbar, as "the first black man to express the life of his people lyrically," acclaimed Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois as "the most variously gifted writer which the Race has produced," (p. 209), and encouraged other African Americans to write about their diverse experiences (Braithwaite, 1924). However, when they attempted to provide positive images of African Americans, many African American writers faced rejection by mainstream publishing companies. When Langston Hughes tried to get an alphabet book entitled *The Sweet and Sour Animal Book* published, even after revising it in 1952 and again in 1959, he was unable to get it accepted (Martin, 2004).

By the 1930s American publishers began to publish a wide variety of picture books, although many of the books about African Americans were limited to stories about life on plantations or farms (Birtha, 1988; Marcus, 2004). Some White authors tried to write about Black experiences, but their lack of contact with African Americans prevented them from writing convincingly. Despite the good intentions of some authors, stereotypes were still apparent, although not as blatant as in earlier works. Aware of the limited number of books about Black life for children to read, the American Library Association created a bibliography of recommended titles and included it in an article entitled *Library Service for Negro Children* which was published in the 1932 edition of the ALA Children's Library Yearbook (Birtha, 1988). According to Birtha, it listed seventeen titles, which included four books set in Africa, three biographies, three books by Mary White Ovington, three *Uncle Remus* collections, a book

about Paul Laurence Dunbar, and *The Dreamkeeper* by Langston Hughes. The list also included two books for young children; one a derogatory book about a stereotypical boy named Frawg, living on a plantation and the other, a version of *Little Black Sambo.*

During this period an alternative to unrealistic illustrations developed as the forerunners of photographic picture books were published. In 1939 Stella Sharpe Gentry used black and white photographs to illustrate *Tobe*, a story about an African American boy living on a farm in the South (Birtha, 1988; Johnson & Mongo, 2004). Photographs were used to portray the characters in *Shuttered Windows* written by Means in 1938 (Birtha, 1988; Johnson & Mongo, 2004). In 1944 Jane Shackelford also used photographs to illustrate the daily activities of a middle-class African American family living in the city. According to Birtha these early books "compare favorably to later photographic picture books" (1988, p. 202).

African American historian Carter G. Woodson, who in 1915 founded the *Association for the Study of Negro Life and History,* later known as the *Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History,* formed his own publishing company known as the *Associated Publishers.* The Associated Publishers issued the *Negro History Bulletin* for children to provide information about African Americans that had previously been left out of textbooks. Woodson also established *Negro History Week* in 1926, which not only informed adults and children about their history, but also about Black identity (Birtha, 1988; Harris, 1990a; Smith, 2004). In his book, *The Mis-education of the Negro* (1933) Woodson advocates completely changing the way African Americans are educated by using new teaching techniques, new texts and hiring teachers who do not subscribe to racist ideology (Harris 1990a). With assistance from Woodson and the Associated Publishers, *Negro Folk Tales,* written by Helen A. Whiting in 1938, was adopted for use in several schools (Harris, 1990a). During this time many African American writers were interested in rewriting African American history in children's books to ensure the information provided was not biased and did not include negative images. Many of the writers of this period were female schoolteachers, most of whom did not write in Black Vernacular, but preferred to use conventional English.

Arna Bontemps, an African American author, successfully published some nonfiction and historical works. Bishop (1994) credits Violet Harris with identifying Arna Bontemps as "the Father of contemporary African American children's literature" (p. 564). Arna Bontemps and Langston Hughes became friends and collaborated on several picture books including *Popo and*

Fifina: Children of Haiti (1932), a story about a poor, but loving Haitian family and their three children, Popo, Fifina and Pensia. It was lauded for its poetic and realistic portrayal of Haitians in the early 1930s. However, much of the literature either continued to completely ignore African Americans or to consist primarily of stereotypes (Birtha, 1988; Broderick, 1973; Kruse & Horning, 1991; MacCann & Woodard, 1985). In 1942, Ellen Tarry, an African American, wrote *Hezekiah Horton,* a picture book about a young boy living in the city who loves cars and whose character is modeled on a young boy Tarry had met while working in a Harlem community center (Birtha, 1988).

Stereotypes in African American Literature

Critic Sterling A. Brown (1933) developed seven categories to describe the stereotypes prevalent in literature at the beginning of the twentieth century, many of which could be found in children's literature. They included the contented slave, the wretched freeman, the comic Negro, the brute Negro, the tragic mulatto, the local color Negro, and the exotic primitive. The *contented slave* is depicted as devoted to his master, grateful, and content with his slave status. If he runs away, it is not because he dislikes being a slave. He eventually begs to return to slavery. The *wretched freeman* is portrayed as fleeing the South in search of freedom, only to encounter harsh treatment from Northerners, as well as the possibility of freezing to death in the snowstorms of the North. He is nostalgic for his days of slavery, willing to return to his master and work without pay.

Brown (1933) contends that the use of a comic stereotype is a "familiar procedure when conquerors depict a subject people" and notes that the comic stereotype was the forerunner of the Amos 'n' Andy figures (p. 67). The *comic Negro* stereotype, illustrated with exaggerated physical attributes and using big words that he does not understand, was perpetuated not only in books, but also in vaudeville skits, radio programs, and advertisements. An example of this stereotype in children's literature is the male slave Epaminondas in *Epaminondas and his Auntie*, a traditional chain of events story with negative illustrations written by S. Bryant in 1907 (Birtha, 1988; Harris, 1990a).

According to Brown (1933), after emancipation, the stereotypical "Negro" was depicted as causing an increase in crime, immorality and rape because he was no longer under the influence of his master. Brown asserts that the *Brute Negro* stereotype was created to justify the

need to "uphold white supremacy by a lynching" (1933, p. 73). He proposed that the "mulatto" was either portrayed as "inheriting the vices of both races and none of the virtues" or achieving only because of the "white blood in his veins" (p. 76).

Brown (1933) urges anyone studying the Negro in American literature should study the *local color Negro*, recognizable by his dialect, clothing, and customs. He proposed that authors were more concerned with "fidelity to speech and custom, with revelation of his difference in song and dance and story, than with revelation of Negro character" (p. 78). Brown also suggested the *exotic primitive* stereotype was the result of the pendulum shift from Puritanism to modern expressiveness. He speculated that when authors went to Harlem in search of material for their characters, the result was playboy characters that preferred blues and jazz to spirituals, drove fancy cars, were heavy drinkers, and enjoyed life to the fullest. This idealized life of the Harlem Negro was generalized to be representative of all Negroes.

During the 1940s, small changes began to take place in picture books with African American characters. The title of The *Ten Little Niggers* became the *Ten Little Negroes: New Version* (1942) and included the use of the word "negro," the politically correct term at that time (Martin, 2004). Even though many publishers refused to accept manuscripts written by African Americans specifically for Black children, some White authors began to depict African Americans more positively during the 1940s. In 1943, *Small Rain* received the Caldecott Honor Book Award for its illustrations, which showed an African American boy playing with White children, an act that took courage on the part of publishers in the 1940s (Willett, 2004). *Two Is a Team* (1945), written by Lorraine Beim and Jerrold Beim and illustrated by an African American, was the first picture book to depict an egalitarian interracial friendship between Ted, a Black child, and Paul, a White child (Bader, 2002; Johnson & Mongo, 2004; Martin, 2004; Pescosolido, Grauerholz, & Milkie, 1997). This book is one in which the content emphasizes assimilation, universal experiences and integration, with only the illustrations identifying the characters as African Americans, what Sims (1982) termed a "melting pot" book.

Two other books indicative of changes taking place include *My Dog Rinty* (Tarry & Ets, 1946), which featured photographs of African Americans in professional positions, and *By Secret Railway* (Meadowcraft, 1948) about an African American family helping slaves (Johnson & Mongo, 2004). This was followed in 1947 with a similar book by Inez Hogan entitled *Nappy has a New Friend*, a story of friendship and cooperation which included less stereotypical

illustrations (Birtha, 1988). In 1972 *The Black American in Books for Children* by Donnarae MacCann and Gloria Woodard was published. This edited book consists of twenty-three essays on various topics related to the way African Americans are portrayed in children's books. The essays discussed early and current examples of racism in children's books and racism in Newbery prize books. Additionally, several essays focused on the role of publishers in providing children's books with non-stereotypical African American characters.

In her historical, literary and critical analysis of the portrayal of Black characters in children's books published between 1827 and 1967, Broderick (1973), applied Brown's seven categories of stereotypes and found that by 1945 newer stereotypes had replaced the older ones. The theme of condescending tolerance recurred in numerous books and Broderick notes that the "good master" of the slave era had become the "liberal do gooder" (p. 178). Sympathy was replaced with the idea that "black people are exactly like white people" (Broderick, 1973, p. 179). Broderick (1973) contends that the books she examined did not present images that would encourage African American children to have pride in their history and ethnicity. Instead they were no doubt intended for White people to provide "what the white establishment wished white children to know about black people" (p. 6). She asserts that the books were more likely to persuade Black children to accept the "lowly status" assigned to them by perpetuating the idea that African Americans should aspire to a trade rather than a profession (p. 7). In the late 1930s there was a decline in African American characters in children's books and most were relegated to subordinate roles, often with kind, paternalistic Whites helping Blacks who they considered worthy of their help (Birtha, 1988; Johnson & Mongo, 2004).

In 1941, Charlemae Rollins compiled a bibliography entitled *We Build Together: A Reader's Guide to Negro Life and Literature for Elementary and High School Use.* The bibliography, which provides a list of 72 books that contain what Rollins considered to be non-stereotypical African American characters, gained her a reputation as an authority on African American children's books (Hine, 1993; Willett, 2004). It was a landmark publication that provided criteria to use when choosing books portraying African American characters and an unprecedented bibliography of books that depict African Americans appropriately. Throughout her life, Charlemae Rollins campaigned against stereotypes of African Americans in children's books and was instrumental in working to improve the way in which African Americans were portrayed in children's books, informing editors of stereotypical and offensive images of African

Americans and asking them to publish books with more realistic portrayals. She objected to some of the books purchased by the Chicago Public Library, worked to change the image of African Americans in children's literature and promoted the publication of books about the African American experience (Hine, 1993).

Although most books continued to portray segregated life, the 1940s and 1950s was a time of contrasts. In 1945, an African American, Jesse Jackson, wrote *Call Me Charley*, which according to Sims (1982), was one of the first books to explore "racial prejudice and discrimination" (p. 17). *Call Me Charley* was published the same year as *The Rooster Crows: A Book of American Rhymes and Jingles* by Maude and Miska Petersham (1945). When *The Rooster Crows: A Book of American Rhymes and Jingles* won the Caldecott Medal, the NAACP objected to the decision because African American children were illustrated stereotypically with "great buniony feet, coal black skins, and bulging eyes" (Larrick, 1965, p. 65). Despite complaints, the negative, stereotypical images were not deleted until the 1964 edition. Instead of being replaced with more favorable images, Black children were completely eliminated from the book and replaced with White children (Birtha, 1988).

In 1948 the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) published a second edition of *We Build Together: A Reader's Guide to Negro Life and Literature for Elementary and High School Use.* This edition lists 90 children's books that portray African Americans positively, compared to 72 titles in the earlier edition, an increase of only 18 books over a seven-year period (Johnson & Mongo, 2004). Rollins expanded the earlier edition and stated that children's books should have literary merit, interesting plot and characters, be realistic and "interpret and illustrate the attitudes toward human beings that we want all people to have" (Rollins, 1948, p. 4). In addition to providing criteria to use when evaluating all children's books she listed additional considerations such as portraying African Americans realistically and positively, not as caricatures, and using language appropriate for the setting (Rollins, 1948). In the pamphlet, Rollins discusses books that meet her criteria and some that do not, suggesting that if teachers use books from the list of unacceptable books, they initiate classroom discussions to encourage students to learn how to evaluate the books themselves.

The 1950s and 1960s brought changes in the racial climate. Most African American children's literature consisted of biographies of African Americans such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers, George Washington Carver and Frederick Douglas or fictionalized biographies (Johnson

& Mongo, 2004). A fictionalized biography entitled *Amos Fortune, Freeman* (Yates, 1950) won the Newbery Award despite its negative portrayal of Amos Fortune, a fictional African American. In 1954 the Supreme Court ruled on Brown versus the Board of Education, bringing an end to school desegregation in words, if not in actions. During this time few picture books for young children that realistically depicted the lives of African American children were published. Many of the children's books published during this era were later labeled "social conscience" by Sims (1982) who contends they were written to develop a "social conscience – mainly in non-Afro-American readers, to encourage them to develop empathy and sympathy and tolerance for Afro-American children and their problems" (p. 17).

During the 1960s racial conflict in the U.S. correlated with the low percentage of African American characters in books (Pescosolido et al., 1997). Publishers' attitudes began to change as they searched for Black authors and illustrators to create African American children's literature. During the late 1960s some of the books that Sims classified as "melting pot books depicting Black children and Black families" were published. Discussions took place between educators, librarians, authors and illustrators about the definition of African American children's literature and whether or not non-African Americans could write it. This debate continues today and is often referred to as the insider/outsider debate (Cai, 2002; Cai & Bishop, 1994; Harris, 1993, 2003; Howard, 1991). Events such as lunch counter sit-ins that took place in Greensboro, North Carolina had an impact not just on the lives of African Americans, but to some extent, on all Americans. Some of the incidents such as the sit ins, Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat, and the Civil Rights marches were later integrated into African American children's fiction, including some of the books in this study. One example is *Sweet Smell of Roses* (Johnson, 2005), which is the story of two young African American girls sneaking out of their house to join the civil rights marchers. Events such as Dr. Martin Luther King coming to town and freedom fighters coming to a community impacted the lives and thoughts of many of the authors and illustrators who began their careers in the 1950s and 1960s and have become an integral part of African American literature. Lucille Clifton, Tom Feelings, Eloise Greenfield, Virginia Hamilton, Walter Dean Myers, and Jerry Pinkney are just a few of those who lived through the turmoil and unrest, which is evident in some of their works (Harris, 1990a; Johnson & Mongo, 2004).

Writing about picture books in twentieth-century America, Elleman (2004) contends that: "no decade saw the widespread changes in the picture-book arena as did the 1960s" (p. 31). In 1962 Ezra Jack Keats wrote and illustrated *The Snowy Day*, which became the first children's book featuring an African American child to win the Caldecott Award. It is still popular today. *The Snowy Day* is one of the books classified by Sims (1982) as a melting pot book in the sub category "Black Children in Black families." Cummings (2001), writing in the School Library Journal on the 10th anniversary of the Ezra Jack Keats Award, describes how Ezra Jack Keats, born in 1916 the son of poor Polish immigrants of Jewish descent, grew up in a Brooklyn neighborhood. She notes that the inspiration for Peter, the African American protagonist, was "a series of *Life* magazine photographs from 1940 of a small black boy" (Cummings, 2001, p. 47). Keats, who was captivated by the little boy, wrote "none of the manuscripts I'd been illustrating featured any black kids-except token blacks in the background. My book would have him there simply because he should have been there all along" (Cummings, 2001, p. 47).

The demand for children's books increased and a "movement to develop an interracial canon of books for children" began to form (Bader, 2002, p. 657). Publishers produced a few stories about integration, some biographies, and books about African American history. Suddenly authors such as Arna Bontemps and Langston Hughes were in demand (Bader, 2002). The sociopolitical climate of the United States changed dramatically as the demand for civil and women's rights challenged the status quo, and authors began to write about topics that had previously been taboo (Elleman, 2004; Pavonetti & Cipielewski, 2004).

Broderick (1973) credits a combination of the invention of television and the momentum of the Civil Rights movement for the increased awareness of the injustice of racism in America. Television brought the unrest and turmoil into the homes of everyone who had a television set. The dissatisfaction with racial discrimination and racism could no longer be ignored. During the summer of 1964, civil rights leaders participated in the Mississippi Freedom Project to set up "freedom schools," opened up community centers providing medical and legal assistance, and helped register Black voters. Many of the volunteers were affluent White students from the North, witnessing the discrimination and hostility of the South for the first time. The freedom fighters realized that few children's trade books and textbooks featuring African Americans were available and those that were usually portrayed African Americans negatively and included stereotypes (Banfield, 1998). One such volunteer was Richard Moore, the stepson of children's

book author and Scholastic book club editor Lillian Moore (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, August 13, 2004 accessed on line http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4196/is_20040813/ai_n10979897/print). Disturbed by the lack of books with Black characters for African American children living in Mississippi, Moore brought this to Lillian Moore's attention, and she discussed it with other children's authors including political activist Franklin Folsom (Bader, 2002). As a result, Folsom, Moore, and civil rights lawyer Stanley Faulkner organized the Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC).

The CIBC united writers, educators, illustrators and parents to address racism and sexism in children's literature. They conducted studies that revealed that the portrayal of African Americans had not changed much since the beginning of the nineteenth century and stereotypes were still present (Bader, 2002; Banfield, 1998). With the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965 providing school districts with grants to purchase non-textbooks, new publishing houses began to open and publishers rushed to provide books for African American children (Marcus, 2004). The CIBC demanded children's literature and textbooks reflect the history and cultures of African Americans and other ethnic groups (Banfield, 1998; Kruse & Horning, 1991). One of the ways the CIBC encouraged authors and artists of Color to create quality books for children was to organize an annual contest in 1965 for new African Americans interested in creating books for children. In 1970 additional contests were added for other ethnic groups (Bader, 2002; Kruse & Horning, 1991).

The CIBC also established the Racism and Sexism Resource Center, which developed and published resource guides for educators and provided information "about ways of detecting and counteracting racist and sexist attitudes and of promoting cultural pluralism" (Banfield, 1998, p. 19). The CIBC actively campaigned against racist books and audiovisual materials and in 1965 developed the *Bulletin of Interracial books for Children*, which reviewed and evaluated materials, especially the way in which People of Color and women were represented in children's literature (Bader, 2002). Subjects addressed included discussions of controversial books such as *The Story of Doctor Doolittle* (Lofting, 1948). More recent issues provided articles, reviews and discussions about topics such as the authenticity of materials for children and teenagers that depict people of Color (Bader, 2002).

In 1965, Nancy Larrick, former President of the International Reading Association, wrote an article for the September 11th edition of the *Saturday Review* entitled *The All-White World of Children's Books.* Although Larrick (1965) was not the first to challenge what she termed "gentle doses of racism" (p. 63), her article, which brought the scarcity of African American characters in children's books to the attention of the public, is considered a landmark. One wonders if the repercussions from this article were not only because it was published at just the right time, but also because Larrick proposed that the "almost complete omission of Negroes from books for children" was even more damaging for White children (Larrick, 1965, p. 63). For whatever reason, the article became a catalyst in the fight to rectify the scarcity of books portraying African Americans.

In her article, Larrick noted that out of 5,206 children's trade books published between 1962 and 1964 inclusive, only 6.7 percent included one or more African American characters, and "eight publishers produced only all-white books"(Larrick, 1965, p. 64). Some of the books cited are included in the Sims (1982) content analysis. Of the 6.7 percent of books that included African Americans, almost 60 percent of the stories were either set outside the United States or took place before World War II, and "only four-fifths of one per cent of the children's trade books from the sixty three publishers tells a story about American Negroes today" (Larrick, 1965, p. 64). Larrick confirmed what many African Americans such as Augusta Baker and Charlemae Rollins already knew, that children's literature did not reflect the pluralism of the United States. When Larrick lambasted Keats for using racist stereotypes in *The Snowy Day*, he sunk into a deep depression because his work had been so misunderstood. With the help of his longtime friend, Augusta Baker, he was able to overcome his depression (Cummings, 2001). *The Snowy Day* has continued to be the subject of much discussion because Peter's mother is illustrated as "a huge figure in a gaudy yellow plaid dress" (Larrick, 1965, p. 65) resembling earlier stereotypes (Sims, 1982; Cummings, 2001; Thompson & Woodard, 1972).

We Build Together was revised again in 1967 as Charlemae Rollins continued her mission to inform librarians, teachers, and publishers of the need to provide authentic portrayals of African Americans in children's books. Rollins chaired the *Committee for 1967 Revision of We Build Together.* The third edition included a foreword by Muriel Crosby that noted: "between 1941, when the first edition was published, and the present date, a great social revolution has stimulated the first mass effort to assure the ultimate entrance of the Negro into

the mainstream of American life" (Rollins et al., 1967, p. xi). Rollins included annotations to inform readers about weaknesses and strengths in the books listed. In her introduction to the third edition, she notes the purpose of the original edition was to provide a list of books "that would present Negroes as human beings and not as stereotypes" (1967, p. iv). She noted an improvement in the quality of books and indicated they included fewer stereotypes, the use of "author-created dialect" had declined, and the characters were no longer restricted to menial jobs (Rollins et al., 1967, p. xi). Augusta Baker, another African American librarian who worked to remove the negative images of African Americans from children's books, served on the C*ommittee for 1967 Revision of We Build Together*. She understood the importance of making books with information about African American heritage and experiences available for African American children who came to the New York Public Libraries, and knew how vital it was to provide books that reflected their lives and experiences positively (Tolson, 1998). Although Baker removed books with negative stereotypes of African Americans from the library, it was difficult to find replacement books with positive images.

In all three editions of *We Build Together* Rollins indicates that: "stereotypes and prejudice are the result of white people not knowing any black people intimately. Therefore, children's books that are accurate and positive in their portrayal of African Americans are needed to help white children understand black children as they really are and to give black children stories that reflect their real lives" (Thompson & Woodard, 1972, p. 54). However, few publishers accepted manuscripts from African American writers and most White writers portrayed African Americans as submissive and with stereotypes (Tolson, 1998). A group of women living in Harlem, who became known as The James Weldon Johnson Literary Guild, worked with James Weldon Johnson and Arthur Schomburg to provide books that depicted African Americans authentically (Tolson, 1998).

In 1968, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in April followed by that of Robert Kennedy in June resulted in frustration, turmoil and racial riots in many major cities. In 1968 President Lyndon B. Johnson authorized the U.S. Riot Commission Report, also known as the *Kerner Report,* to investigate. It concluded that the riots were the result of the racism and racial prejudice of Whites that threatened the country (Birtha, 1988). In 1968 James Brown released the song "Say it loud- I'm Black and I'm Proud" and the term *Black* became a statement of pride. The attacks on segregation and racism paved the way for all Americans to rethink the

way they thought about race. Lester asserts that his book *To Be a Slave* (1968) was published at a time when African Americans began to rediscover "their historical and racial past" (2004, p. 119). He states it grew out of a need to understand his past and to "give respect and dignity to the lives of slaves" (Lester, 2004, p. 119). *To Be a Slave* (1968), a selection of reminiscences of slaves and ex-slaves about their experiences, won the Newbery honor in 1969.

As the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum, publishers re-evaluated the audience they served and the way children's books portrayed African Americans, which resulted in an increase in the number of children's books with stories about integration and biographies of African Americans (Bader, 2002; Marcus, 2004). Teachers and librarians requested books with African American characters. Authors and illustrators began to provide books to satisfy the demand for authentic literature for and about African Americans as well as Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans (Kruse & Horning, 1991). During the 1960s and 1970s, books that Sims (1982) described as melting pot books, continued to gain popularity.

Another factor that influenced the growth of African American literature for children is the Coretta Scott King Award (CSK), which was established in 1969 by Black librarians, Mabel McKissick & Glyndon Grear, along with publisher John M. Carroll (Aronson, 2001; Johnson & Mongo, 2004). They wanted, annually, to formally acknowledge one published book of high literary quality written for children and young adults by an African American author (Kruse & Horning, 1991; Johnson & Mongo, 2004). Four years later a similar award was established for outstanding illustrations by Black artists (Kruse & Horning, 1991). Most of the books that won the CSK Author Awards have been novels, folklore and non-fiction, plus a few picture books. Illustrator Awards are from a wide variety of genres including poetry, wordless picture books and fantasy. Several of the books in this study have won the Coretta Scott King author or illustrator award(s) or have been named Honor Books. The Coretta Scott King Awards include an Author Award, an Illustrator Award and a Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award. In addition to the Coretta Scott King Author or Illustrator Award and John Steptoe New Talent Award winners, one or two may be selected as Honor Books for a specific year. They are noteworthy books even though they did not receive the Coretta Scott King Award.

Towards the end of the 1960s, literature for children that Sims (1982) classifies as culturally conscious began to emerge, consisting of "books that reflect, with varying degrees of success, the social and cultural traditions associated with growing up Black in the United States"

(p. 49). In addition to African American main characters, the major characteristics of culturally conscious literature include "a story told from the perspective of Afro-Americans, a setting in an Afro-American community or home, and texts which include some means of identifying the characters as Black – physical descriptions, language, cultural traditions and so forth" (Sims, 1982, p. 49). African American literature for children increased and included many outstanding books by African American authors and illustrators. Some books such as *Stevie* (Steptoe, 1969) incorporated Black Vernacular English (BVE) or AAVE. Some of the African American authors and illustrators who published during the 1960s are still writing and illustrating books today.

During the 1970s, Amiri Baraka (whose name was Leroi Jones until he converted to the Muslim faith and adopted the Arabic name Amiri Baraka), and others advocated revolutionary Black Nationalist literature and books reflecting Black culture. The number of books with African American characters increased. In 1971 Augusta Baker's bibliography entitled *The Black Experience in Children's Books* was revised and available free of charge from the New York Public Library. The list of books was reproduced in the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* and included an introduction by Baker in which she stated that the "list is made up of books that give children an unbiased, well-rounded picture of black life in many parts of the world" (1971, p. 144). According to Baker, the list of books represents "every class and condition of society, and a variety of experiences and all periods of history" (p. 145). Baker proposes that

> the literature that will truly give black children a sense of identity will not be literature-as-morality or literature-as-propaganda, but literature as human experience. To black children, blackness is an intrinsic and desirable component of that human experience (1971, p. 143).

Although many of the books with African American characters were simply previously published books reissued with illustrations of African American children replacing White children, African American children's literature continued to evolve during the 1970s (Johnson & Mongo, 2004). An increased interest in African American history resulted in many books such as an alphabet letter book, *The Black ABCs* (1970) by Lucille Clifton, providing information about African American culture and history.

Quality African American literature increased and began to receive well-deserved recognition. In 1972 Muriel and Tom Feelings won the Caldecott Honor Medal for *Moja Means*

One: Swahili Counting Book (1971) and again in 1975 for *Jambo Means Hallo: Swahili Alphabet Book* (1974). Authors such as Lucille Clifton continued to provide books that portray African American culture, with some of them, such as *My Brother Fine with Me* (1975) incorporating Black Vernacular English into the text.

In 1972, Donnarae MacCann and Gloria Woodard published *The Black American in Books for Children: Readings in Racism*, which consisted of an introduction by MacCann and Woodard and a collection of essays about the images of African Americans in children's books. In their introduction, MacCann and Woodard refer to urban riots and the assassinations of civil rights advocates as evidence of a continuing racial crisis. They blame churches and mass media for reinforcing cultural values of the dominant culture while neglecting and reinforcing "myths and distortions conjured up to justify white supremacy and its corollary, the inferiority of minority groups in general and black Americans in particular" (MacCann & Woodard, 1972, p. 1).

The introduction mentions the well-known studies of psychologists Mamie and Kenneth Clark which demonstrated that Black children preferred white dolls to black dolls (Cross, 1991). Several other studies are cited confirming Black children have lower self concept than their White counterparts and that White children exhibited negative attitudes toward Black children and demonstrated feelings of White supremacy (MacCann & Woodard, 1972). MacCann and Woodard contend one of the reasons for these attitudes is the way African Americans are either omitted from or negatively depicted in children's books. They indicate that recent attempts by publishers to remedy the situation have resulted in portraying Blacks from a White perspective. (A second edition of MacCann and Woodard's book was published in 1985). In 1973, *The Image of the Black in Children's Fiction* by Dorothy M. Broderick analyzed "the portrait of the black that emerges from children's books published between 1827 and 1967" (Broderick, 1973, p. vii). The study, based on her dissertation, indicates that many of the books continued the "good master" stereotype of slavery days and included stories about Whites who were kind to African Americans.

In 1973 Johnson Publishing Company, an African American owned company, addressed the need for culturally accurate literature for Black children by publishing the magazine *Ebony Jr*. This monthly magazine, which was aimed at five to eleven year olds, provided an Afrocentric view of Black history and other subjects and encouraged racial pride and self esteem

in a manner similar to the *Brownies' Book* magazine. It was educational. In addition to providing biographies of famous people, science stories and information about Black history, it also included games, letters from its readers, craft projects, cartoons and articles on Black entertainers such as the Jackson Five and sports figures such as Arthur Ashe (Henderson, 2006). Unfortunately, as the emphasis on reading comprehension and vocabulary building increased, the use of Black vernacular decreased, circulation declined, and the publication of Ebony Jr. came to an end in 1975. To date, no other educational and cultural magazine focusing on African Americans has filled the void left by Ebony Jr. magazine (Henderson, 2006).

In 1975 Harriet Rohmer founded Children's Book Press, a non-profit organization and the first publishing company to specialize in publishing quality multicultural literature for children (www.childrensbookpress.org accessed 8 May, 2007). Rohmer was concerned that the books in her son's Head Start program did not reflect the culture and experiences of the children in the program. With the help of a federal grant, Children's Book Press published its first book, *Fifth World Talesfolk Tales* (no author or year provided) (Lodge, 2005). Interest in multicultural literature increased especially in the area of African American folklore and African traditions. In 1975 illustrators Leo and Diane Dillon received the Caldecott Medal for *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*, an adaptation of an African folktale by Verna Aardema and again the following year for *Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions* (1976) by Margaret Musgrove. During that same year, Virginia Hamilton became the first African American to win the Newbery Honor Award for *M.C. Higgins, the Great.* It was also the first book to have received the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award and the National Book Award (Temple et al., 2002; Bishop, 1995). Ms. Hamilton was also the first African American to receive the Hans Christian Andersen Author Award and to receive the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award (Bishop, 1995). She was a prolific writer who has written books in every genre. Her death in 2002 leaves a void in African American children's literature waiting to be filled by younger writers.

In 1979 Chall, Radwin, French, & Hall replicated Larrick's (1965) study of children's trade books published from 1962 to 1964 with a study of books published from 1973 to 1975 inclusive. Chall et al. found that 14.4 percent of books published between the years 1973 and 1974 included at least one African American character, compared to 6.7 percent in Larrick's earlier study. Social and political changes such as an increase in integrated schools and in the number of children learning to read were given as reasons for this increase. Because the study

was a replication of Larrick's, Chall et al. only surveyed publishing houses that were members of the Children's Book Council (CBC) and not new publishing companies that did not belong to the CBC. In Larrick's study "87.3 percent of publishers produced books with at least one Black character" (Chall et al., 1979, p. 529) compared to 94 percent in the later study. In addition to the quantitative aspect of the study, Chall et al. noted that although many of the books portrayed Black characters realistically, stereotypes were still apparent. The number of books with Black characters set outside the U.S. or prior to World War II had decreased and the number of contemporary settings had increased. The study concluded that there had been an increase in the number and quality of books with Black characters, but there was still much room for improvement.

That same year, 1979, in an article later reprinted by MacCann and Woodard (1985), African American author, Eloise Greenfield (1979) proposed that African American literature for children should:

> authentically depict and interpret their lives and their history; build self-respect and encourage the development of positive values; make children aware of their strength and leave them with a sense of hope and direction; teach them the skills necessary for the maintenance of health and for economic survival; broaden their knowledge of the world, past and present, and offer some insight into the future. (p. 4)

In 1980 the Council on Interracial Books for Children published *Guidelines For Selecting Bias-Free Text Books and Story Books*, based on a 1977 study of racism in textbooks. These guidelines are still cited and are applicable today (Martin, 2004). The CIBC found that with the scarcity of funds for school districts to buy books, and the rise of conservatism, the number of books about Black life had declined (Bader, 2002).

During the 1980s "culturally conscious" literature emerged, which Sims (1982) describes in her landmark study, *Shadow and Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction.* The book, written in the form of a monograph and still used by scholars today, prompted this research and comparative analysis. Sims is one of a limited number of researchers to produce scholarly criticism about the way African Americans are represented in children's books. She has written articles about the impact that multicultural literature has on children and has been influential in the field of African American children's literature for many years. Although getting works published could be challenging, children's books with

Afrocentric themes became popular with some African Americans during the late 1980s. Afrocentrism focuses on emphasizing dignity and pride in the African heritage and integrating an Afrocentric perspective into the Eurocentric educational system. When Cheryl Willis Hudson was unable to get her *Afro Bets ABC Book* published in 1987, she and her husband Wade established Just Us Books, which at that time was the only independent publisher dedicated exclusively to publishing African American children's literature. The book, which they published themselves, features African American children intertwined in each alphabet letter, and words such as "cornrows" for the letter "C' and "kente cloth" for the letter "K" in addition to typical objects such as balloon for the letter "B".

By the early 1990s, less than 2 percent of books published were about African Americans, a decrease from about 20 percent to 30 percent in the 1970s. Although the number of books published in the early 1990s was low, the books provided more positive portrayals and illustrations and according to Johnson & Mongo (2004): "featured African Americans engaged in activities unique to their cultural experiences" (p. 131). Cameron et al. (1992) describe culturally conscious literature as "positive images of African Americans in their home, in the street, and in the institutions, acting and reading the way they do. They see and hear themselves, their relatives and friends, and can form opinions about who they really are" (p. 32). The number of biographies declined and fictional stories began to portray diverse family configurations and lifestyles with many of the books focusing on family relationships and community activities. Illustrations depicted African Americans in a multitude of skin tones with countless hairstyles. Some of the texts did not include cultural content, but provided what Bishop (2003) refers to as "universal characters" (p.27). Others were culturally specific, including one that features Gullah dialect. This interest in Gullahs has continued with several children's books written during the late 1990s and three books, *Circle Unbroken: The Story of a Basket and Its People* (Raven, 2004), *Beauty, Her Basket* (Belton, 2004) and *New Year Be Coming: A Gullah Year* (Boling, 2002) included in this study.

As the whole language movement became popular in schools, literature was integrated into the curriculum and the demand for more trade books, including informational picture books, increased. Illustrations began to overshadow the text as advances in printing technology resulted in lower costs for illustrations. As more mothers entered the workforce, the number of day care centers increased, resulting in a demand for books appropriate for younger children.

The publication of numerous concept books and board books ensued, which children's libraries soon began to circulate (Marcus, 2004). Awareness of the impact of institutionalized racism and the way People of Color had been misrepresented or ignored in textbooks grew, as more teachers, librarians and parents from varied racial and cultural backgrounds began to recognize the importance of children of Color seeing themselves authentically depicted in literature (Au, 1993; Bishop, 1993; Harris, 1991; Kruse & Horning, 1991; Sims, 1982).

In 1995 a new award known as the New Talent Award and later renamed The John Steptoe Award for New Talent in honor of John Steptoe was added (Pinkney, 2001). More poetry was published during this decade than any other decade during the twentieth century, and Ashley Bryan became the first African American male to publish poetry since Langston Hughes (Pavonetti & Cipielewski, 2004). Changes in poetry mirrored social changes, covering topics such as divorce, loneliness and interracial families (Hopkins, 2004). Some African American authors and illustrators began writing books with characters of many ethnicities, while others chose to celebrate Blackness. Included in this celebration were books that provided a different perception of beauty. The beauty of skin color, facial features and hair was no longer judged by Eurocentric standards of beauty. The negativity surrounding African American hair that was not straight was replaced by pride in one's ethnic heritage and beauty. Previously many African Americans had felt negatively about naturally curly hair and hair that was difficult to manage, often referring to it as 'bad hair.' This pride can be seen in the book *Cornrows* by Camille Yarbrough (1979). Carolivia Herron and Joe Cepeda's controversial book, *Nappy Hair* (1997) along with bell hooks and Chris Raschka's *Happy to Be Nappy* (1999) celebrate hair textures.

Increasing diversity in schools in the 1990s raised awareness that people of Color were not well represented in children's literature (Pavonetti & Cipielewski, 2004). By the 1990s many librarians and educators became interested in providing children with culturally authentic literature. Some publishers and professional groups began to encourage writers and artists of Color to submit unpublished manuscripts and art (Elleman, 2004). In 1998, the Jump at the Sun Imprint at Hyperion Books for Children was established with Andreas Davis Pinkney, herself an author, as Senior Editor. The name *Jump at the Sun* stems from advice given to Zora Neale Hurston, Harlem Renaissance author by her mother. She encouraged her to aim high by telling her to "jump at the sun" (Patrick, 1998, p. 25). Jump at the Sun specializes in publishing picture books and chapter books for African American children and young adults.

Realistic picture books became popular and *Smoky Nights* (1994) a portrayal of the Los Angeles riots written by Eve Bunting and illustrated by David Diaz won the Caldecott Medal (Elleman, 2004). Celebration of Blackness was visible in many genres of picture books from board books and beginning readers to realistic picture books. Martin (2004) refers to literature beginning in the late twentieth century as the "Golden Age of African American children's picture books" (p. xi).

During the 1990s interest in researching African American children's literature written many decades earlier, resulted in several books. Dianne Johnson-Feelings work on the subject of African American literature includes *Telling Tales: The Pedagogy and Promise of African American Literature for Youth* (1990) and *The Best of the Brownies' Book* (1996). She describes how *The Best of the Brownies' Book* offers insight into the context in which it emerged and provides selections from some of the issues. She includes portions from "*The Judge"* in which Jessie Fauset addresses issues such as behavior and schoolwork, and of *"The Jury"* which features copies of letters from children. The book gives readers a glimpse into what life was like for some African American children in the early twentieth century, revealing that some of the opinions and discussions are still relevant today. In 1998, Donnarae MacCann, who has written about African American literature for many decades, published *White Supremacy in Children's Literature: Characterizations of African Americans 1830- 1900*, (1998), offering additional insight into African American children's literature. She provides information about the history of White supremacy in children's books and connects it to the racial situation today.

According to the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), the number of books portraying African Americans reached 216 in 1997, the highest number published between 1994 and 2000. By the end of the century, the topics of children's picture books seemed endless, ranging from fantasy to realism. The scope of illustrations ranged from realistic to impressionistic, as well as artwork created with the help of computer software (Elleman, 2004).

Although there are currently more quality children's books portraying African Americans realistically and authentically than ever before, only a small percentage of the total number of children's trade books published each year include African American themes (Willett, 2004). The librarians at the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison continue to collect data about multicultural literature published each year, including information on African American children's and youth literature. The number of books has

fluctuated from one year to the next, but the percentage of multicultural literature is still less than 10 percent of the total number of published children's books (Horning et al., 2003). The number of books which CCBC classifies as "specifically about African or African American history, culture, and/or people" has fluctuated as indicated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Number of Books Classified by CCBC as by or about African Americans

Year published	Number of books received at CCBC	Number of books by African Americans	Number of books about African Americans
2001	3000	99	201
2002	3150	69	166
2003	3200	79	171
2004	2800	99	143
2005	2800	75	149

(from http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/pcstats.asp accessed on 5/19/2009).

A continuing debate in the new millennium is the validity of awards such as the Coretta Scott King Award (CSK), which are restricted to authors and illustrators of Color. This continues to cause controversy and prompted Marc Aronson (2001) to write an article in Horn Book Magazine about ethnicity-based awards. Aronson contends that awards such as the Coretta Scott King Award, while beneficial in the 1960s, have outlived their usefulness. He believes literature should not be evaluated on the basis of the author's or illustrator's race or ethnicity, especially when an increasing number of African American artists are in great demand by publishers. Aronson advocates keeping the CSK, Belpre and Asian American awards, but suggests awarding them based on the book's content, not the identity of the author or illustrator. Aronson notes that this would require training committee members to appreciate other cultures, and not rely on the ethnicity of the artist.

Andrea Davis Pinkney, editorial director of Hyperion Books for Children and winner of a 2001 Coretta Scott King Honor Award, responded by stating that "these awards provide a solid ground upon which authors and illustrators of color and the library and publishing communities can stand. These awards are a gateway to progress. They provide a door for authors and illustrators into the world of children's literature, a world that, despite its increasing diversity, still too often maintains a quiet indifference that is racism in its most subtle form" (Pinkney,

2001, p. 535). She continues by indicating that during a recent lecture surveying the history of the picture book she attended, no African American authors or illustrators were mentioned during the seventies, eighties, and nineties. The lecture concluded without mentioning one single Black illustrator. Pinkney (2001) maintains that awards such as the CSK and the John Steptoe Award, which celebrate authors and illustrators of Color, are still necessary to counteract what she refers to as "unintentional neglect" of publishers and librarians (p. 537). Pinkney's comments (2001) express the need to continue awards that celebrate ethnicity.

Many of the books that won the Caldecott Illustrator Award in the early 2000s focus on African American heritage and culture by weaving history into their stories. Brian Pinkney won the Caldecott Illustrator Award in 2000 for *In the Time of the Drums* (Siegelson, 1999), which retells a story from the slavery era. The following year, Bryan Collier won the Caldecott Illustrator Award for *Uptown* (2000), a story about a boy living in Harlem that incorporates some of its history. This was followed by *Goin Someplace Special* (2001) written by Patricia McKissack and illustrated by Jerry Pinkney in 2002, which is based on McKissack's experiences living in the south during the Jim Crow era and is included in the historical fiction section of this sturdy.

In 2003 Nikki Grimes received the Coretta Scott King Author Award for *Bronx Masquerade*, which tells the story of how writing poetry encourages a high school English class to reveal their innermost thoughts, which are hidden behind the masquerade. The Illustrator Award went to E.B. Lewis for his illustration of *Talkin' About Bessie: The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman*, which was also a Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book for Nikki Grimes that year and is included in this study. That same year, 2003, Mildred D. Taylor again received recognition for her outstanding work when she became the first recipient of the NSK Neustadt Prize for Children's Literature awarded by Oklahoma University and *World Literature Today*, an international journal published quarterly. The NSK was established by three sisters, Nancy Barcelo, Susan Neustadt Schwartz and Kathy Neustadt Hankin to honor an accomplished contemporary writer of quality literature for children or young people (www.ou.edu/worldlit/NSK/NSK2003 Laureate.htm).

In 2004 Angela Johnson, a previous Award winner, won the Coretta Scott King Award for *The First Part Last*, a book introducing readers to the realities of teen parenthood that Bobby, a sixteen year old artist faces in raising his daughter alone. Ashley Bryan won the Illustrator

Award for *Beautiful Blackbird*, an adaptation of a folktale from Zambia that he illustrates with a simple paper collage. The Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award for Author went to Hope Anita for *The Way a Door Closes*, a book of poems written from the perspective of a thirteen-year-old boy presenting a portrait of an African American family. Elbrite Brown was awarded the John Steptoe New Talent Illustrator Award for *My Family Plays Music*, a book included in this study. In 2005, author Toni Morrison was the winner of the Coretta Scott King Award for *Remember: The Journey to School Integration*, a children's nonfiction book that uses photographs to introduce young readers to the era of school integration. Illustrator Kadir Nelson received the Illustrator Award for *Ellington Was Not a Street,* (Shange, 2004), a non fiction children's book which is a tribute to African American legends such as Paul Robeson, W. E. B. DuBois, and Dizzy Gillespie. The John Steptoe New Talent Award went to Barbara Hathaway, author of *Missy Violet and Me*. Illustrator Frank Morrison won the John Steptoe Talent Illustrator Award for *Jazzy Miz Mozetta*, which is also included in this research. Another book in this study that focuses on African American experiences and that won the 2005 Caldecott Honor Book Award is *Coming on Home Soon,* written by Jacqueline Woodson and illustrated by E.B. Lewis.

The celebration of Blackness has continued into the new millennium with books such as *Shades of Black: A Celebration of Our Children* (2000) by Sandra L. Pinkney and Myles C. Pinkney. This concept book highlights different shades of skin color and different hair textures, while introducing young children to challenging vocabulary. It is available in numerous public and school libraries as well as local bookstores. Sadly, the same cannot be said for some of the other wonderful books in the study that are not so easily located in libraries and bookstores. To date, this century has seen an increase in realistic picture book stories that offer opportunities for children to identify with characters that do not necessarily "live happily ever after." Jacqueline Woodson, a prolific writer, has created stories that focus on such topics as visiting a father in prison. *Visiting Day* (2002), beautifully and realistically illustrated by James Ransome, portrays a sad reality that many young children, especially African Americans, experience.

Although not unique to African American children's literature, a second and even third generation of African American authors and illustrators are continuing the family tradition of writing and illustrating children's books. The influence of some of the authors and writers of the 1960s continues today as some of their children follow in their footsteps and continue to provide

authentic African American children's literature. They include the Pinkney family, Walter Dean Myers and his son Christopher, the late John Steptoe and his son, Javaka, Donald Crews and his daughter Nina, Arnold Adoff and the late Virginia Hamilton and their son Jamie Adoff.

The new millennium has brought continued interest in researching and documenting African American children's literature. In 2004 Michelle M Martin published *Brown Gold: Milestones of African American Children's Literature 1845-2002*, which offers additional viewpoints and provides new information. This is an excellent resource for anyone interested in an in depth description of African American children's literature published during that time period. Although there is room for improvement in the number and availability of African American children's picture books, books with African American protagonists now encompass a wide variety of genres from concept books and beginning readers to fantasy. What is missing, however, is an analysis of African American children's literature similar to Sims' survey (1982) that investigates the cultural content that is included in the text of children's picture books about African Americans.

Summary

This chapter provides background information pertinent to an understanding of African American children's literature. The literature review provides various definitions of multicultural education and describes some of its theories and goals. A brief discussion about the practice of culturally responsive teaching acknowledges the belief that incorporating the culture and language of students from diverse cultures improves academic achievement. Connections between ethnic identity, AAVE and multicultural literature are addressed. Discussions of multicultural literature include definitions of culturally conscious books, discussions about the insider/outsider controversy and suggestions for selecting multicultural literature. The chapter provides an explanation of some of the vocabulary and terms used when discussing literature that includes a description of various genres and elements of children's literature. It concludes with a description of the history of African American children's literature that includes the changes that have taken place in children's books that portray African Americans.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore African American cultural content reflected in the texts of children's picture books published in 2001 through 2005. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What African American cultural content is included in the text of children's picture books published during the years 2001-2005?
2. How is African American cultural content woven into the picture books in this study?
3. When comparing African American and non African American authors, what differences, if any, are evident in the books categorized as generic or books with African American cultural content?
4. How do the findings of this research compare with the findings of Sims' 1982 survey of books published during the years 1965-1979?

These questions have not previously been fully explored in a qualitative or quantitative study and their answers provide information that can be used when selecting African American children's literature for young children. The answers provide information about the differences between picture books that are generic and those that contain African American cultural content. Numerous examples of cultural content are provided illustrating the way it has been incorporated into the children's picture books in this study.

Research Design

This study included both qualitative and quantitative techniques by combining simple statistics within a qualitative paradigm, also known as a constructivist or naturalistic approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Goode & Hatt (1952) assert that choosing a precise, reliable technique relevant for the data and analysis is preferable to rigidly compartmentalizing research into a false dichotomy of 'qualitative' versus 'quantitative' or 'statistical' versus 'non statistical' approach. Qualitative research, which Wolcott (1994) contends is on the verge of canonization in the field

of educational research, uses words to describe a phenomenon, and as such is warranted for this research topic. Although some statistics are included, the research assumed a qualitative paradigm. It incorporated an inductive process and an emergent, exploratory design characteristic of a qualitative approach (Creswell, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Rossman & Rallis, 1998). The procedures were open and flexible, rather than fixed; and the categories evolved during the research process. Qualitative research is more interested in meanings, and the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. This study was descriptive in nature and focused on meanings gained primarily from the words in the text of the picture books included in the study. As befits qualitative research and asserted by Creswell (1994), the researcher acknowledges the values and biases described in Chapter 1.

According to Woolcott (1994), content analysis is a scientific tool that "beckons qualitative researchers into the opposing camp requiring them to devise and follow systematic counting procedures" (p. 36). Holsti (1969) asserts that the content analyst should use qualitative and quantitative methods to supplement each other because the researcher is most likely to gain insight into the meaning of his data by moving back and forth between these approaches. This assertion further reinforced the researcher's decision to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative method focused on statistics, such as the percentage of books written by African Americans in Sims' survey compared to the percentage written during the years 2001 through 2005. The qualitative aspect of this content analysis extended the study beyond simply counting the number of books to include descriptions of cultural content found in some of the books in this study.

Content analysis is one of the most commonly used research tools in media and communications. It may be used for different types of research problems in various disciplines, including documenting and measuring verbal behavior such as people or characters in films and television programs talking to one another, conversations between characters in books, or the way "heroes" are written about in magazine biographies. Wright (1986) describes content analysis as:

> a research technique for the systematic classification and description of communication content according to certain usually predetermined categories. It may involve quantitative or qualitative analysis, or both. Technical objectivity requires that the

> categories of classification and analysis be clearly and operationally defined so that other researchers can follow them reliably. (p. 125)

Additionally, he notes that it is important to remember:

> content analysis itself provides no direct data about the nature of the communicator, audience, or effects. Therefore, great caution must be exercised whenever this technique is used for any purpose other than the classification, description and analysis of the manifest content of the communication. (Wright 1986, p. 126)

Krippendorff (2004) defines content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (p.18). Additionally, he asserts that as a research technique, content analysis provides new insights, strengthens a researcher's understanding of a particular phenomenon, or informs practical actions. Berger (2000) sums it up succinctly when he states a content analysis "analyzes the content of something" (p.173). Content analysis involves constructing categories, sampling, collecting data, analyzing data, coding data and interpreting data. Holsti (1969) advocates that each step in the research process be carried out according to formulated rules and procedures. The process culminates in theoretically relevant findings that answer a research question, not just provide a list of information about content. Although definitions of content analysis vary, most of them include the use of systematic sampling and classification.

Berger (2000) notes that there are a number of advantages to content analysis, one of which is that it is unobtrusive and relatively inexpensive. It makes use of material that is easy to obtain and work with and can be about current events and topics of present-day interest. Additionally, it provides data that can be quantified.

This study included aspects of critical ethnography and was a blend of objective content analysis and subjective inferences. In general, ethnography refers to the description of people and their culture and its purpose is to develop insights into a specific culture, and provide a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It is usually the result of an extended observation of a group, typically through participant observation or interviews with members of the group to study meanings of behavior, language, and interactions of a culture-sharing group (Stewart, 1998). Although this study was not based on an examination of individuals "in the flesh," the exploration of cultural content representative of African Americans in children's picture books published between 2001 and 2005 includes

characteristics of an ethnographic approach. According to Stewart (1998), ethnography is used to generate insight, and this research sought to provide insight into the way African American cultural content is woven into a selection of recently published picture books.

Altheide (1996) suggests "several aspects of an ethnographic approach can be applied to content analysis to produce ethnographic content analysis." (p. 65). According to Altheide, ethnographic content analysis (ECA) is an approach that is a blend of "objective content analysis with participant observation to form ethnographic content analysis" (p. 2). In his description of ethnographic content analysis, Altheide points out that although the documents, which in this study are picture books, exist independently and are not connected to the researcher, the meaning and significance of them depends on the researcher's focus. The "researcher's eyes and question" transform the information in the documents into data (p.2).

Description of Sims' Survey

The idea for this study arose from a book entitled *Shadow & Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction* describing a survey undertaken by Rudine Sims in the early 1980s. Sims' survey was limited to books representative of fiction about African Americans published between 1965 through 1979 inclusive, and suitable for children in preschool through 8th grade. Because the intent was to focus on contemporary literature, Sims did not include historical fiction about the era of slavery. The books in Sims' survey were drawn from a bibliography housed at the Countee Cullen Branch of the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection and the 1974 and 1979 editions of *The Black Experience in Children's Books* by Barbara Rollock. Sims indicates that although her choice of books to analyze was not random, it was representative of the "types of fiction about Blacks produced during the period in question" (1982, p. vii). The survey was guided by three questions that centered on who wrote the books, the intended audience for the books, and whether or not they were written from an insider or an outsider perspective (Sims, 1982; Bishop, 1991). Sims (1982) notes that her survey and analysis of 152 books includes the works of 34 Black authors, but with the exception of discussing a few well known African American authors and illustrators such as Lucille Clifton, Tom Feeling, Eloise Greenfield and Walter Dean Myers, the ethnicity of the authors and illustrators is not provided. Because all the books in Sims' survey were published in the 1960s and 1970s, it was difficult to determine the ethnicity of some authors and illustrators.

The books in Sims' study were classified as social conscience, melting pot and culturally conscious, and further divided into subsections indicating the major themes or subject matter as shown in Table 3.1. Although Sims describes the results of her survey of 152 books published between 1965 and 1979, she does not provide any instruments or tables she may have used; so the researcher devised her own coding instrument for the books based on the results of Sims' survey. As shown in Table 3.1, only 63 (41%) of the books in Sims' survey are picture books. Brief descriptions of themes follow.

Table 3.1 Statistical Breakdown of Books in Sims' Survey

Category	**Subcategory**	**Books**	**Picture Books**
Social Conscious	School desegregation-marching into the lion's den	2	0
	How to behave when the Black folks move in	8	0
	Doing it the right way – working within the 'system'	5	0
	Learning to get along with Whites	6	1
Melting Pot	Afro-Americans in stories about non-Afro-Americans	7	2
	Afro-American children in integrated settings	12	11
	Black children, Black families	23	22
Culturally Conscious	African American and 'Down Home' heritage & traditions	9	6
	Common everyday experiences	7	6
	Surviving racism & discrimination	5	0
	Living in the city	20	1
	Friendships and peer relationships	10	2
	Family relationships	14	6
	Growing up and finding oneself	24	6
	Total	152	63

Social conscience books

Sims grouped the books in the social conscience category into four main plots. The books in the *School Desegregation – Marching Into the Lion's Den* category focus on conflicts resulting from school desegregation. The books in the *"How to Behave When the Black Folks Move In"* or *"Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?"* depict a White protagonist encountering hostility and prejudice after befriending a Black child or family. The storyline in the *Doing It the Right Way – Working Within the "System* books demonstrate how a Black child or family,

usually with help from liberal Whites, "uses the 'system' - peaceful marches, demonstrations, or petitions - to attain some goal" (Sims, 1982, p. 20). The books in the *Learning to Get Along with Whites* category portray a Black protagonist hostile to a White child until he or she realizes that the White child also has problems.

Books classified as social conscience are written from an outsider's perspective by White authors who write for White children (Sims, 1982). Many of them include distinguishing characteristics such as a White villain, stereotypical portrayals of Blacks, no father present in the Black families, and Black characters that give up because they feel they cannot win. The stories suggest that when Blacks and Whites have contact with one another, problems result because of something that the Black character does or does not do. Sims notes that although the social conscience books increased the number of African American characters in children's books and may have been useful at the time they were written, they are no longer appropriate (Sims, 1982). There is only one picture book in the social conscience category and it is included in this study.

Melting pot books

Most of the melting pot books are picture books that without the illustrations, the reader would probably not have been able to determine if the characters are Black or White. Unlike the social conscience books, the settings are integrated. Instead of topics such as racial prejudice, discrimination and conflict, the books concentrate on universal themes such as friendship, family, and everyday experiences. As the title *Afro-Americans in Stories about Non-Afro-Americans* implies, the main characters in the stories are non African Americans. African American characters play a major role in stories in the *Afro-American Children in Integrated Settings* category. However, their race is not essential to the stories, which are written from the perspective of a White child and the setting is not a Black community. The books in the *Black Children, Black Families* category consists of books in which the main characters are Black. This category includes African American characters that "reflect only the non-Afro side of the Afro-American duality" (Sims, 1982, p. 45). They cover a wide range of subjects. The stories focus on universal problems and experiences related to topics such as divorce, family, and school, but ignore differences created by race (Sims, 1982). None of the melting pot books include authentic language, references to religion or mention soul food. Jazz with its roots in African American culture is a subject about which some non Africans Americans feel comfortable writing and is the focus of two of the melting pot picture books by non African

American writers. It is an element of African American heritage that has been accepted and crossed over into mainstream music.

Culturally conscious books

According to Sims, the melting pot books provided a transition from the social conscience books to the culturally conscious books that "reflect, with varying degrees of success, the social and cultural traditions associated with growing up Black in the United States" (1982, p. 49). A culturally conscious book "consciously seeks to depict a fictional Afro-American life experience" (Sims, 1982, p. 49). The books classified as culturally conscious are written primarily for African American children, reflect African American experiences, and are written from an African American perspective. Many of the stories reflect the oral tradition by including songs, stories, sayings, terms of address, and rhetorical styles that have been passed from generation to generation within the African American community. "Traditional Black services, references to voodoo, especially close relationships between the young and the old, extended families, child-rearing practices, respect for elders, and the belief in the gift of second sight which may be rooted in a traditional African world view" are frequently included (Sims, 1982, p. 50).

The culturally conscious books in Sims' 1982 survey were grouped into the themes: (1) African and "Down Home" Heritage and Traditions, (2) Common Everyday Experiences, (3) Surviving Racism and Discrimination, (4) Living in the City, (5) Friendships and Peer Relationships, (6) Family Relationships, and (7) Growing Up and Finding Oneself. In addition to grouping the books in her survey by theme, Sims (1982) identified and classified recurring features she had observed in the culturally conscious books in her study. She classified these features as (1) language, (2) relationships between young and old, (3) extended families (4) descriptions of skin color (5) names, nicknames and terms of address; and (6) Afro-American historical and cultural traditions, and (7) religious and other belief systems.

African American and 'Down Home' Heritage and Traditions affirm African American unity by focusing on African or African American heritage, southern rural traditions, and experiences that have been passed down for several generations. *Common Everyday Experiences* include everyday experiences of African American children such as playing in the snow, using imagination to create adventures, and playing in different neighborhoods. Although similar to the *Black Children, Black Families* category of melting pot books, they are written from an

African American perspective and differ because they include aspects of African American culture, such as African American Vernacular English and traditional African American food known as "soul food". The books in the *Surviving Racism and Discrimination* category celebrate the courage and determination of African Americans facing racism, oppression, and violence. They describe conflicts between Blacks and Whites from the perspective of an African American.

According to Sims (1982), many of the books in the *Living in the City* category present a bleak picture of life in the city, featuring African American male heroes who are frequently poor and reared in a home without a father. *Friendships and Peer Relationships* include stories on friendships outside the immediate family, most of which are set in the city. *Family Relationships* consists of books about family relations, as its title implies. *Growing Up and Finding Oneself* focuses on reaching a personal goal.

As Rudine Sims Bishop continued to write about African American children's literature and multicultural literature in general, she used different classifications from those used in her survey. In a chapter of an edited book about multicultural literature for children, Bishop (1991) discusses the difficulties faced by teachers when they try to share literature with their students about a particular cultural group about which they know very little. Bishop classifies books about People of Color as *specific, generic and neutral,* "based on their approach to the cultures they portray" (Bishop, 1993, p. 44). She notes that neutral or culturally neutral books are usually picture books that "feature people of color, but are fundamentally about something else" (Bishop, 1993, p. 46). This category includes informational books depicting people from diverse backgrounds to provide information about the topic of the book. An example is a book about community helpers in which the mailman or nurse happens to be African American. Since this description is more applicable to nonfiction, the classification 'culturally neutral' is not needed for books in this study; but the term generic is appropriate for some of the books in this study.

Nephew's Study

The goal of this study is to explore African American cultural content contained in the texts of children's picture books about African Americans published 2001 through 2005 and compare the findings with those of Sims' (1982) survey and analysis. The main source for locating recently published books about African Americans was a set of logs from the

Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC). Information on the CCBC website (www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc retrieved on 9 April, 2009), indicated that in 1985 the CCBC began to document the number of books for children published in the United States each year that were written by, illustrated by, or about African Americans. Logs for the years 2001-2005 inclusive were provided by Merri Lindgren, librarian at the CCBC. Ms. Lindgren, in an email response dated July 2, 2004, indicated that each log "is a very rough, internal document, with no claims to being correct or comprehensive!" She also pointed out that details about the author's and illustrator's ethnicity is often incomplete. Collectively, the logs provided a total of 783 books.

Ms. Lindgren cautioned that the CCBC logs do not include all children's books published in the U.S. but are limited to books sent by the publishers to the CCBC. In 2003, out of 5,000 children's books published in the U.S., the CCBC received more than 3,000 books, the majority of which came from about 45 trade publishers and a few independent publishers (http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1793/6641 retrieved on 9 April, 2009). Because the CCBC relies on publishers to provide information about the books they publish, Ms. Lindgren (personal email dated November 14, 2005) indicated one or more books may have inadvertently been omitted from the CCBC logs. In view of Ms Lindgren's caution and to ensure that as many picture books as possible portraying African Americans and published during the years 2001 to 2005 were included in this study, the researcher consulted subject indexes and databases of children's books in print for the years 2001-2005 as well as databases and websites pertaining to African American children's literature. Indicators such as "children's fiction," "African American" and "Black" were used. Books not included in the CCBC lists when the study began were indicated in the researcher's database by an asterisk in the book code.

Identification and Selection of Books

The information provided by the CCBC did not neatly list all picture books about African Americans alphabetically by author for a specific year. Because the purpose of the CCBC logs is to document books written by African Americans, illustrated by African Americans, or about African Americans, all of the books are contained in one log. Even though some of the books may have been written by an African American, they do not necessarily contain African American characters. The African/African American CCBC logs for each year are divided into

subject areas that include headings such as General, Africa (with subdivisions such as Ghana and Uganda), United Kingdom, and African American. Under each heading, the books are listed in alphabetical order by author and include a call number that indicates if the book is located in the picture book, fiction, nonfiction, or other section of the CCBC library. In addition to PB for picture books, the logs contain a variety of call numbers such as 811, 821 and 'Fic' for fiction. The number of books listed as picture books in the African American section of the CCBC logs is 47 for 2001, 42 for 2002, 29 for 2003, 28 for 2004, and 24 for 2005, a total of 170 books listed as picture books for the period of this study.

The researcher located all the books listed as picture books in the CCBC logs, but in the process, located many books not listed there. A closer look at the logs revealed that many of the picture books with African American characters published between 2001 and 2005 inclusive were included in the CCBC logs but not listed as picture books. Some had numerical call numbers indicating the genre of the book such as poetry, fairy tale, etc. This difference in cataloging is not limited to the CCBC logs. In many cases, an identical picture book is catalogued as PB and housed with picture books in one library within the Fort Worth Public Library system, but catalogued with a numerical call number and located with books of a specific genre in another Fort Worth public library. Because of this lack of consistency in cataloguing, all the books listed in any part of the CCBC logs were located, even if they were not listed as picture books. As a result, the number of picture books derived from the CCBC logs greatly increased.

It soon became evident why Holsti (1969) recommends using consistent rules when deciding which books to include or exclude in a content analysis. Holsti maintains that when a clear, concise description of the requirements for books is included in the study, it strengthens construct validity. Consequently, the following criteria were used to select books to be included in the study: (a) was published from 2001 through 2005, (b) is suitable for young children in preschool through fourth grade, (c) is a picture book that combines text and illustrations throughout the book, (d) is set in the United States (not in locations such as Africa or the Caribbean), (e) includes one or more African American main characters, (f) is one complete story, not several unconnected stories [a collection of poetry may be included if the combination of poems tells a story], (g) is not limited to the lyrics to one or more songs in the text, (h) is not a

reprint, (i) is not a traditional tale such as a folktale, or fairytale, and (j) is not fantasy. Books that did not meet the criteria were deleted. A list of the deleted books is included in Appendix C.

Even though biographies of African Americans fulfill a valuable role by providing role models who have excelled in diverse areas such as fine arts, sciences, sports, and politics, this study is limited to works of fiction. Fictionalized biographies such as Talkin' *about Bessie: The Story of an Aviator Bessie Coleman* (Grimes, 2002), and *Me and Uncle Romie: A Story Inspired by the Life and Art of Romie Bearden* (Hartfield, 2002) were included. The present study concluded with a total of 199 children's picture books published during the years 2001 through 2005 that includes books from the CCBC logs and some located by the researcher. The number of picture books is small enough to include all of them in the study. This eliminates researcher bias in the selection of books, eliminates sampling error and increases validity in the findings. Appendix D contains a complete list of the picture books included in this study.

Development of Data Collection Instrument

A wide variety of sources on the topic of content analysis and ethnographic research such as Berger, (2000), Holsti (1969), and Stewart (1998) provided ideas about the format of a data collection instrument. Pertinent information about selecting multicultural literature was considered when developing the data collection instrument. They include articles, books, and chapters by Rudine Sims Bishop (Sims, 1982, 1983; Bishop 1993, 1997b, 1999, & 2003); chapters and books by Mingshui Cai (Cai & Bishop, 1994; Cai, 1997, 2002, 2003a, 2003b) and chapters by Marjorie Hancock (2000), Violet Harris (Harris 1991, 1993, 1997, 2003), Lukens (1999), Norton (2001), and Temple, et al. (2002).

As the picture books were located and read, notes were recorded about the content and a data collection instrument was developed to record pertinent details about the books in this study. Because Sims' survey does not include a coding instrument or data collection protocol, an additional data collection instrument was developed to record details about the books in her survey. The data collection instrument for the books in Sims' survey was designed to indicate if a book is classified as social conscience, melting pot, or culturally conscious. Subcategories are also recorded on the data collection instrument used for the picture books in Sims' survey. Appendix E contains the instrument developed to reproduce Sims' study and make comparisons to the current study.

The data collection instrument for the books in this study included categories based on some genres. The categories are (1) beginner readers, (2) stories in rhyme and poetry, (3) historical fiction which is subdivided into historical fiction based on family history, historical fiction based on memoirs, and historical fiction based on research, (4) fictional biography, and (5) contemporary realistic fiction. A checklist for cultural content included in the picture book provides space to note examples and details about cultural content in the books. A reflective section, discussed in Altheide (1996), proved useful in revisions of the data collection instrument for this study and in the development of a database. The data collection instrument for books in Nephew's study was revised many times until it captured the necessary information. As the picture books were located and read, notes were recorded about the content and a data collection instrument (see Appendix F) was developed to record pertinent details about the books in this study. Appendix G cites references used in the development of the data collection instruments. As the books in this study were read, recurring features of cultural content were also observed and noted on the data collection instrument and in the database. As this study progressed, categories of recurring features emerged, many of which were the same or similar to the recurring features in Sims' (1982) survey.

During the exploratory stage, familiarity with the data is an important asset in developing valid and reliable categories. The books in the study were read many times before classifying them. In his description of ethnographic research, Stewart (1998) notes it includes the study of behavior, language and interactions of members of a group that share the same culture. Because this study is a content analysis of books, it involves searching the picture books for examples of behavior, language and interactions of African American characters. Defining the term African American cultural content was challenging because it encompasses many behaviors and facets that involve all the senses and are difficult to define objectively. What follows is a discussion of the terms generic books, culturally specific books, and picture books along with the operational definitions of: (1) generic books, and (2) books with African American cultural content used in the analysis. Appendix F contains the final version of the data collection instrument.

Defining Generic Books

Bishop (1993) describes generically American fiction or generic books as ones that "feature characters who are members of so-called minority groups, but they contain few, if any, specific details that might serve to define those characters culturally" (p. 45). Echoing Bishop's thoughts, Cai describes generic books as those that "reflect generic experiences that are shared by all Americans" and notes the characters "could have been converted to white characters without affecting the story" (2002, p. 24). In a generic book, the ethnicity of the characters may only be apparent from the color of a character's skin, rather than his or her actions, dialogue, relationship, or ways of thinking (Bishop, 1993). A book is generic when the author's intentions are to write about universal themes and experiences, rather than to portray specific cultural experiences. The books frequently involve universal themes such as family relationships, friendship, everyday life, etc., and the illustrations of African American characters could easily be substituted with Caucasian characters without changing the text. Bishop asserts that an author does not need the same depth of experience when writing a generic book as an author writing a culturally specific book According to Bishop (1993), generic books may be excellent picture books, but they lack specific cultural details. She cites Ezra Jack Keats's Caldecott Medal Winner, *The Snowy Day* (1962) as the best-known example of an excellent, but generic picture book.

For the purposes of this study**,** a generic book is operationally defined as a book in which the text does not recognize differences between racial or ethnic groups and does not include any content in the text to indicate the ethnicity of the characters. Only the illustrations indicate the characters are African American and non-African American characters could easily be substituted for them without changing any of the text. The cultural details in many of the picture books in this study were provided by the illustrations, rather than the texts, thereby making the use of the term 'generic' an appropriate classification.

Defining Books with African American Cultural Content

A number of terms have been used to describe the inclusion of culture in picture books. In the summary and overview of her survey, Sims (1982) describes *culturally conscious* books as those that "attempt to reflect and illuminate both the uniqueness and universal humanness of the Afro-American experience from the perspective of an Afro-American child or family" (p. 15).

Using the term 'culturally specific,' which is synonymous with her earlier term 'culturally conscious,' Sims notes: "a culturally specific children's book illuminates the experience of growing up a member of a particular non-white cultural group" (1993, p. 44). Because culturally conscious or culturally specific books contain cultural content and details within the text to indicate the characters are African American, the term 'books with African American cultural content' is important to classifying books in this study.

African American cultural content encompasses many behaviors, interactions and concepts that involve all the senses and are difficult to define and view objectively. Sims notes that describing cultural authenticity is complicated and that some people "cannot define it verbally, but 'they know it when they see it'(Bishop, 2003, p. 27). Although, as Bishop indicates, in some cases the reader intuitively knows if a culture is described or portrayed authentically, intuition is not an acceptable component of a research study. For that reason, the researcher clearly defined the categories to enable others to replicate the study with the same books, even though their interpretations may differ. While the researcher acknowledges the importance of specifying the criteria used to categorize elements of African American culture, she also recognizes the difficulty of defining African American cultural content without perpetuating stereotypes. There are, however, certain features with which many African Americans as a collective group identify as part of their culture. The researcher included these features or attributes as she constructed an operational definition of African American cultural content.

For the purpose of this study, a book with African American cultural content is one that includes one or more major characters who are African American and the content reflects one or more aspects of African American culture. Such a book is frequently set in an African American community or home, includes social and cultural traditions and heritage and may include:

- a traditional Afrocentric worldview about family, such as close relationships between young and old, the importance of extended family, child-rearing practices and respect for elders
- traditional African beliefs such as voodoo and belief in the gift of second sight
- African heritage and traditions such as cornrows (the practice of braiding hair into cornrows), and 'jumping the broom' (a wedding tradition)

- information abut African American history, such as the Underground railroad, Northern migration, and the Civil Rights movement
- displays of pride in the achievements of African Americans
- examples of spirituality and references to religion, church, and gospel music
- appropriate dialogue and narrative that includes culturally specific language and humor, such as the use of certain terms of address, nicknames, folk sayings, verbal interplay, as well as the grammar, syntax and vocabulary of AAVE
- references to music such as jazz, spirituals, rhythm and blues, hip hop and rap music
- information about African American culture that has been transmitted by oral tradition, such as the significance of quilts or surviving oppression and racism with determination while maintaining a sense of dignity
- traditional rural southern experiences such as eating traditional African American food sometimes known as "soul food"
- a sense of community based on a shared heritage and common bond
- descriptions of skin color and hair

The operational definition of picture books with African American cultural content was constructed primarily from Sims' description of culturally conscious children's books (Sims, 1982; Bishop, 1993) and also incorporates information described by educators such as Cai (2003a) and Harris (1993, 1997).

It should be noted that not all the content listed above was found in any one book. Although some of the customs, traditions, and values listed can be found in non African American culture, many have a special significance for African Americans. For example, although the oral tradition is important in other cultures, it is especially significant to African Americans because during the era of slavery when learning to read and write was forbidden, it was an important way to transmit culture from one generation to the next. Quilts also held special significance during the era of slavery because they were frequently used to transmit messages to slaves trying to escape on the Underground Railroad. They also provided something tangible to keep memories alive when families were forcibly separated or one family member successfully escaped but others did not. Consequently, quilts became associated with more than keeping one warm at night.

There is great diversity among African Americans and not all aspects of cultural content are specific to all African Americans. For example, a child who has grown up in an integrated suburban community may be unfamiliar with the sense of community and use of AAVE frequently found in segregated urban areas. An understanding of African American culture is essential when identifying cultural content and familiarity with the data is an important asset in developing valid and reliable categories. During the exploratory stage, the books in the study were read many times before developing the categories. When a specific picture book was more challenging to categorize, the definition of the concept was reread.

Coding the Data

According to Holsti, (1969) coding the data is done to make handling the material easier and is "the process whereby raw data are systematically transformed and aggregated into units which permit a precise description of relevant content characteristics" (p. 94). It includes "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specific characteristics of messages" (Holsti, 1969, p. 14). "It bridges the gap between the texts and reading of them, between images and what people see in them, or between individual observations and situational interpretations" (Krippendorf, 2004, p. 84.) To simplify the process of collecting and analyzing data, the researcher assigned a code number instead of using the complete title of each book. As the books were read, categories indicating the presence of cultural content gradually evolved. They include a category for language (including names, nicknames and terms of address), family relationships, physical characteristics of African American identity (including references to skin color and hair), African American historical and cultural traditions, African American traditional food, religion, and a sense of community based on a shared heritage and common bond. The researcher carefully selected the categories to ensure they reflected the purpose of the research.

To facilitate rating or coding the material so any rater or coder could classify the elements in the books being analyzed in the same way, Holsti (1969) suggests using corroborating evidence from independent, non-content data to make inferences about the message the authors are sending. Krathwohl (1998) advocates the use of triangulation, or providing additional data to reinforce a finding. Pertinent remarks in critical reviews of the books in the study, comments by the authors about their work, and background information

about the authors were noted on the data collection instrument. The meanings, associations, values, and intentions that could be inferred from these sources reinforced the findings. Although literature reviews in publications such as the Horn Book, School Library Journal Review and Publisher Weekly Review did not contain any information that could be used to refute the findings, very few reviews provided any information about the inclusion of cultural content or lack thereof. Each book in the study was read numerous times, pertinent information recorded on an individual data collection instrument for each book and in a Microsoft Access database designed to record data from the data collection instruments. The data collection instrument included the book code and facts such as the title, author, illustrator, and publisher. It also contained a summary of the story and direct quotations from the book as needed. Pertinent information obtained from critical reviews, articles, author's websites, and responses to emails was also included in the data collection instrument when appropriate.

Analyzing the data

This study may be considered an ethnographic content analysis. According to Altheide (1987), "one of the distinctive characteristics of ethnographic content analysis is the reflexive and highly interactive nature of the investigator, concepts, data collection and analysis" (p. 68). Pertinent information to describe African American cultural content was documented in the data collection instrument. The researcher's participative role in this study involved reading the books, creating categories and searching for features and aspects of African American culture as it is depicted in the children's picture books in the study. Comments by reviewers, information and comments about the authors and illustrators were incorporated into the study when appropriate. As each book was reviewed, the information was compared using the constant comparison technique (Altheide, 1987; Creswell, 1994; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The books in the study were first read without predefined, rigid categories. As narrative data was collected and recorded, the categories and concepts emerged. Data collection, analysis and interpretation were circular and involved reflection and numerous readings of the books in the study. While analyzing the books and other pertinent information, a cultural portrait of the images of African Americans as they are portrayed in children's literature published since 2001 unfolded. Creswell indicates that one of the limitations of ethnography is reactivity, or the impact of the researcher

on the site and the people being studied (Creswell, 1998, p. 60). Using characters in picture books rather than people reduced this problem.

Validity

"A content analysis is valid if the inferences drawn from the available texts withstand the test of independently available evidence, or new observations, of competing theories or interpretations, or of being able to inform successful actions" (Krippendorf, 2004, p. 313). In a discussion about validity, Krippendorf (2004) describes several types of validity. He notes that "face validity is the gatekeeper for all other kinds of validity" and contends that content analysts rely more on face validity because they are concerned with readings of the texts, and what the symbols and images mean, all of which are rooted in common sense (Krippendorf, 2004, p. 314). If research has face validity, the findings are plausible and believable. The findings of this study are plausible and do not deviate significantly from earlier studies. The criteria for social validity is met because the categories 'generic' and 'books with African American cultural content' are relevant to teachers, librarians, teacher educators and others working with African American children.

Winter (2000) asserts that within qualitative research, validity depends on how representative the description is and whether or not the findings are justifiable. Using the CCBC booklists minimized bias in the selection of books. Clearly defining the criteria a book must meet in order to be included in the study strengthened sampling validity. The validity of the study is strengthened because the data collection instrument was developed from Sims' (1982) content analysis and also incorporated pertinent information from Bishop (1993, 2003), Cai (2003a), Harris (1991, 1993, 1997, 2003) and additional sources listed in Appendix G. Examples of dialogue and the text of books with African American cultural content in the study are included to support the conclusions.

The researcher's cognizance with Sims' (1982) descriptions of culturally conscious children's literature, understanding of African American culture, and knowledge of children's literature, facilitated classifying the books as generic books or books with African American cultural content. Additionally, knowledge of Sims' works enabled the researcher to identify African American cultural content in picture books classified by Sims as culturally conscious when comparing the findings of this study with those of Sims 1982 survey. A definition of the

concepts ‘generic books’ and ‘books with African American cultural content’ provides guidelines for those who are not cognizant of Sims. Comparing the results of this study to Sims’ (1982) landmark study enhances validity.

Triangulating the information lends credence to the results of a study and triangulation was attempted by locating authors’ websites, contacting the authors by email, and reading available reviews of the books in the study. Many of the authors do not maintain a website and few could be contacted by email. Critical reviews of most of the books in the study are available at the Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database or the Fort Worth Public Library catalog, and one or two pertinent articles about authors or books included in the study were reviewed. Few resources included any information about whether or not cultural content was included, which may indicate a lack of awareness among reviewers about the importance of using children’s literature with cultural content. Most critical reviews were limited to information about the plot, characters and relationships between characters. For example, a review may describe a particular book as a story about a warm and loving relationship between an African American grandmother and her grandson. Whether or not it was the illustrations or the text that determined the ethnicity of the main characters is not discussed. Unless the authors were contacted by the researcher, most did not provide any information about the inclusion of cultural details in their books.

Reliability

Bogdan & Biklen (1998) assert that in certain research approaches, reliability is the “consistency in results of observations made by different researchers or by the same researcher over time” (p. 35). In other words, consistency over time or with different researchers is an important feature of reliability. The data collection instrument (see Appendix F) and operational definitions of generic books and books with African American cultural content provide sufficient details to allow the instrument to be used by other researchers or by the same researcher at a different time or with different books. Five books were coded by other raters to check for inter-rater reliability. Information about the raters is provided in Appendix H, which also compares their completion of the data collection instrument with that of the researcher. The raters were given the operational definitions for generic books and books with African American cultural content and then asked to read a book from the list provided by the researcher or from three

books the researcher supplied for that purpose. Some raters chose the same book and their ratings were compared with that of the researcher. Krippendorf (2004) maintains:

> research techniques should result in findings that are replicable. That is, researchers working at different points in time and perhaps under different circumstances should get the same results when applying the same technique to the same data. Replicability is the most important form of reliability. (p.18)

Defining African American cultural content, specifying the criteria used to categorize elements of African American culture and classifying the data objectively facilitates inter-rater reliability, enabling another person to reach the same or similar conclusions about the books in this study. Providing clearly defined operational definitions of 'generic books' and 'books with African American cultural content' enabled other raters to classify a book as a 'generic book' or a 'book with African American cultural content.' Although Krippendorf (2004) touts the importance of replicability in qualitative research, every study is unique and the reliability of qualitative research is limited. Classification categories should be "clearly and operationally defined so that other researchers can follow them reliably" (Wright, 1986 p.125). According to Berger (2000) the strength or weakness of a content analysis rests on adequate definitions of the constructs, which in this study are generic books and books with African American cultural content.

However, the efficacy of the data collection instrument and another rater's ability to discern differences between generic or culturally conscious African American children's picture books is dependent upon a number of factors. These include whether or not the rater has any knowledge and understanding of African American culture, if the rater is familiar with well known authors and illustrators that have a reputation for publishing culturally conscious African American children's literature, and if the rater can identify African American cultural content. For example, can the rater differentiate between authentic African American dialogue and speech patterns and stereotypical speech? Inter-rater reliability was measured by asking several other people to rate the books using the data collection instrument. There was 100% agreement between the other raters and the researcher in categorizing a book as either generic or as a book with African American cultural content. The raters described some, but not all of the African American cultural content described by the researcher.

Even if a library search using different databases or additional indicators produced one or two additional books appropriate for the study, the quantitative data could be replicated with

similar results. Information about the ethnicity of the authors provided by the CCBC was verified by checking as many sources as possible and in some cases this resulted in finding the ethnicity of some of the authors listed as unknown in the CCBC logs. Because this is a content analysis it is not possible, as Creswell suggests, to "take the categories or themes back to informants and ask whether the conclusions are accurate" (1994, p. 158).

Limitations

Although the researcher has worked conscientiously and meticulously, there are several limitations to this study. The selection process may have inadvertently missed one or two books pertinent to the study. However, the use of the CCBC logs and additional searches conducted by the researcher reduces this possibility significantly. Researcher bias may have tainted the results. However, the use of the category 'books with cultural content', which stems from Sims' definition of 'culturally conscious books' in her landmark (1982) study, and the use of the classification 'generic' from her later works reduces personal bias. Researcher bias was avoided by providing criteria for the books included in the study and defining generic books and books with African American cultural content. Despite the detailed operational definition for books with African American cultural content, another rater may disagree with the classification of a particular book. For example, in cases where a book contained little cultural content, another rater could classify a particular book as generic rather than a book with African American cultural content. One or two books were difficult to classify and the researcher sometimes questioned which would be the most appropriate category for a book in the study. She resolved the problem by carefully rereading the book numerous times searching for specific cultural details. Another rater, reading the books from a different perspective might reach different conclusions.

Bogdan & Biklen (1998) assert that two studies can be reliable even though "two researchers studying a simple setting may come up with different data and produce different findings" (p. 36). The generalizability of this study is limited because the findings may not generalize to books that are not part of this study. A study including picture books published since 2005 would provide additional information about the African American cultural content included in recently published children's picture books. Differences in researchers' backgrounds and interests may result in the collection of different types of data and even different conclusions

(Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In this study, the researcher's interest in the way an author integrates cultural content, including African American English Vernacular, into the text may influence the data collected. Another researcher answering the same research questions may decide to concentrate on different content and as a result produce different findings and draw different conclusions.

Although the use of books rather than informants negates any possibility of 'observer effect,' the researcher acknowledges the difficulty in remaining unbiased when classifying a book as a generic book or one with African American cultural content. Remaining objective when reading a book by an author who has a reputation for writing culturally conscious books proved difficult at times. For example, Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard has written culturally conscious books such as *Virgie Goes To School With Us Boys* (Howard, 1999) and *Aunt Flossie's Hats (And Crab Cakes Later)* (Howard, 1990). *Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys* describes Virgie's determination to get an education and how education is seen as the way to freedom. *Aunt Flossie's Hats (And Crab Cakes Later)* portrays a strong intergenerational relationship in an African American family and inserts culturally specific events such as a parade to welcome the African American 92nd Division back from World War 1. Although Howard weaves cultural content into these and other stories, the researcher did not find sufficient cultural content in the text of *Flower Girl Butterflies* (Howard, 2004) to classify it as culturally conscious. It is possible that a different researcher could find cultural content in it.

Summary

The characteristics of qualitative research, content analysis and ethnographic content analysis were discussed. The research design and several definitions of content analysis were included. A description of Sims' 1982 survey of books published between 1965 and 1979 and her classification of those books with subcategories was provided. A description of the selection of books in this study, including the reasons for the deletion of some of the books from the CCBC lists was explained. An operational definition for generic books and books with African American cultural content was provided and the development of the data collection instrument was described. An operational definition of African American picture books with African American cultural content was supplied to ensure the credibility of the study. Reliability and validity were addressed and limitations discussed.

CHAPTER 4 - ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The books in this study were classified into 5 main categories, one of which was divided into 3 subcategories. They are beginning readers, stories in rhyme and poetry, historical fiction (which is subdivided into historical fiction based on memoirs, historical fiction based on family history, and historical fiction based on research), fictional biography, and contemporary realistic fiction. The 5 categories are based on some of the genres described in Chapter 2. Some of the genres such as fantasy, fairy tales and folk tales were not included because the study is limited to realistic stories. The books in each category were analyzed to determine which ones present a generic portrayal of African Americans and which contain African American cultural content in the text. They were then classified as generic books and books with African American cultural content. Table 4.1 provides a breakdown of the number of books in each category. This chapter presents a discussion of the books in the study with particular emphasis on books with cultural content.

Table 4.1 Generic Books and Books with African American Cultural Content by Category

Category of book	Generic books	Books with cultural content	Total
Beginning readers	28	8	36
Stories in rhyme/poetry	24	16	40
Historical fiction-family history	0	5	5
Historical fiction-Memoirs	0	15	15
Historical fiction-Research	6	19	25
Fictional Biography	1	2	3
Contemporary realistic fiction	50	25	75
Total number of books	109	90	199

The books in the study were analyzed to determine which ones present a generic portrayal of African Americans and which contain African American cultural content in the text. Although some books fit more than one category, for example a beginning reader may also be a story in rhyme; each book was only included in one category. Because the major emphasis of this study was to describe the cultural content of the books in the study, less attention is focused on books classified as generic books.

Generic Beginning Readers

Beginning readers include very limited vocabulary and are used when a child has mastered a few basic sight words. During the period of this study, 36 beginning readers with African American characters were published. Twenty-eight of the beginning readers were generic. These include 6 *Shanna's First Readers Series* in this study that use repetition, rhyming words, phonics clues, story clues and picture clues to encourage beginning readers. Although the main character is a young African American girl named Shanna, the stories are generic and do not contain African American cultural content in the text. The six books are all Level l readers and include titles such as *Shanna's Party Surprise, Shanna's Pizza Parlor and Shanna's Bear Hunt.* A number of other beginning readers contain main characters that are illustrated as Black, but nothing in the text indicates they are African American. *The Clubhouse* (Suen, Keats, & Eitzen, 2002) and *Loose Tooth* (Suen, Eitzen, & Keats, 2002) are beginning readers that feature Peter, the young African American boy who made his debut in *Snowy Day* (Keats, 1962). Peter is depicted as several years older than he was in *Snowy Day* and is joined by friends of diverse ethnicities who were featured in other books written by Ezra Jack Keats. *Corduroy's Garden* (Inches, 2002) is another beginning reader that is based on a book published in the late 1960s. The main character, a young African American girl named Lisa, and her teddy bear, Corduroy, are both characters created and popularized in a series of books about Corduroy written by Don Freeman.

Other beginning readers that did not contain any cultural content in the text are *In the Yard* (Meachen, 2002) and *Try Your Best* (McKissack, 2003), which is a Harcourt Green Light Reader written by African American Robert L. McKissack. One book that is different from the previously described beginning readers is *Cassie's Word Quilt* (Ringgold, 2002). This picture book is based on Ringgold's earlier book *Tar Beach* (Ringgold, 1991) in which the narrator,

Cassie, dreams that she is flying above Harlem where she lives and can see herself and her family. The setting for *Cassie's Word Quilt* is the rooftop and apartment located in Harlem that is the setting for the story *Tar Beach*. Tar Beach is the name Ringgold uses to describe the Harlem rooftop where Cassie and her family sometimes have a picnic. *Cassie's Word Quilt* begins with the sentence "On Tar Beach, Cassie dreams she can fly among the stars" (n.p.). The story contains double page illustrations with the labels beside objects and people that are located in Cassie's apartment, school and neighborhood, such as plants, radio, blackboard, brother, policeman and teacher. Alternating pages include a single sentence, such as "Cassie's block has a park where children can play." A chart of generic beginning readers is included in Appendix I, which indicates the series to which the book belongs, the reading level.

Beginning Readers with Cultural Content

Only one early literacy series, the *Just For You!* books by Scholastic, successfully weaves cultural details specific to African American culture into some of their stories. According to Scholastic, books in the *Just for You!* Series are "created by African American authors and illustrators from diverse backgrounds" (retrieved from http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/classroombooks/justforyou.htm on 13 May, 2009). In addition to a story, the books in this series provide activities to reinforce rhyming and comprehension skills. At the back of the book a *Meet the Author* and *Meet the Artist* section includes a photograph and information about the author and illustrator, most of whom are African American. The books are divided into three levels and the series consists of eight books in each level. Although none of the Level l books contain cultural content, there are three picture books with African American cultural content in Level 2 and four in Level 3. Despite the limitation of using restricted vocabulary that consists of sight words most first graders can read, a number of the books in the *Just for You*! Series incorporate African American Vernacular English into the story by using specific words, idiomatic phrases and syntax. Many of the stories portray close family relationships and provide inspiration for readers to try their best and work toward achieving goals. The story with the most cultural content and one that fills a great need for interesting stories with which young African American boys can identify is *Shop Talk* (Ford, 2004), a Level 3 book. This story depicts the culturally authentic experience of going to an African American barbershop. The setting is a barbershop and the main character, who is the

narrator, is a young African American boy named Solomon. The first page sets the atmosphere by detailing how some customers "come in just to hang out and talk" (n.p.). The barbershop is Solomon's favorite place, no doubt because of the camaraderie and welcoming atmosphere. Like many African American barbershops, the one in this story welcomes young males and treats them as if they are "one of the guys." It is a place where customers feel as if they are at home and can comfortably code switch or change from speaking in mainstream English to AAVE. Although Solomon does not use the term 'code switch,' he notes that talking "in the barbershop is different from talking everywhere else." (n.p.)

The barber addresses Solomon as "Shorty," another African American custom of using nicknames that relate to the person's physical or personal attributes. Even the names of the haircuts are specific to African Americans and include a "Caesar" or "Fade." There is bantering back and forth and comments such as "take 'em to the hoop" (n.p.) as some customers watch a basketball game on T.V. When asked "What's up?" (n.p.), Solomon replies "Nothing but the sky," an example of verbal repartee, an element of AAVE in which each participant is ready with a quick retort. Throughout the book there are examples of what Smitherman (2000a) refers to as "the street culture style; the style found in barbershops" (p. 64). The relaxed, easygoing atmosphere is usually restricted to males, especially those who are part of the group. Solomon explains "I walk around the Shop and bump fists with all the guys. That's the way we shake hands in The Shop" (n.p.). It is noteworthy that this is the same bumping of fists that was front-page news when Barack Obama and his wife Michelle bumped fists on national TV as he accepted the presidential nomination. Many of the viewers were unaware that among African Americans this is almost a more intimate and friendly way of saying congratulations than shaking hands.

Some of the social mores of the African American community are passed on in the barbershop. Young males learn that the way the males talk among themselves is not the way to talk when females are present, especially older females who are mothers and grandmothers. When Mrs. Williams brings her son, Jason, to get a haircut, the atmosphere changes and everyone is on their best behavior. Since this is a neighborhood barbershop everyone knows one another. When Mrs. Williams sees Solomon she tells him that he looks handsome, to which he replies "Yeah, its gravy." Alton, who is cutting Solomon's hair, quickly lets him know that his reply is impolite, and Solomon thanks Mrs. Williams for the compliment.

Even with limited vocabulary, the author Juwanda Ford creates an authentic African American barbershop atmosphere. In the *Meet the Author* section she explains that she loved going to the neighborhood barbershop when she was young, and when she left she felt as if she had "been to a good friend's house." She also notes that when she met her husband, "he had just started working at the real All Star Barbershop in Brooklyn, New York" and she often spent time there. She comments that she noticed that after their visits to the barbershop, the young boys left "feeling confident and happy." The traditional African American barbershop is a place where the barbers and regular customers are involved with the young males, show interest in what they are doing, treat them as adults, are friendly, but also guide and correct them.

Although none of the other beginning readers portray the sense of camaraderie and caring found in close knit African American communities nor are infused with African American culture and language as extensively as *Shop Talk,* several of the books in the *Just for You!* series are interspersed with African American culture and language. Two books with male African American protagonists are *Stop, Drop and Chill* (Barnes, 2004) and *Sunday Best* (Ford, 2003). *Stop, Drop and Chill* is a Level 2 book in which the author uses the phrase "Stop, drop and chill" in the story to encourage a young boy to control his anger. Despite being written in a rhyming format and using a limited vocabulary, Barnes weaves elements of AAVE into the story. An example of this is the comment that Wendy Woo "thinks her jokes are funny. (Don't tell jokes about my momma!)" (n.p.). This is a reference to 'yo momma' jokes which Smitherman (2000a) notes have been "part of the Black Oral Tradition for generations" (p. 223). This culturally specific story would doubtless appeal to many young boys, not just African Americans, and could be used to teach anger management and self-control.

Sunday Best (Ford, 2003), which is also told from the perspective of a young African American boy, is a Level 3 book about a loving, hardworking family of four. Many young African Americans will be able to identify with the descriptions of typical Sunday activities, which include going to church where the narrator knows he must be on his best behavior and not talk during the service. Sitting still during the service is a challenge, but he loves when it is time to sing and clap as loud as he wants. Sunday is usually when the family relaxes and does things together. Dad makes "his famous Sunday best barbeque and everyone comes over" or they visit relatives. Most of all he enjoys spending time with his mother, father and sister. The

illustrations have the realism of family photographs and the descriptions are illustrative of some African American churches.

Some of the *Just For You!* Books are written from the perspective of a young African American girl. *A Mom Like No Other* (Taylor-Butler, 2004) and *Never Finished, Never Done!* (Brooks, 2004), both Level 2 Books, emphasize a close relationship between a mother and daughter. In the *Meet the Author* section of *A Mom like No Other*, Taylor-Butler notes that the story is based on the special relationship she had with her own mother. Despite the limitations of controlled vocabulary and rhyming words, the author manages to weave cultural content into the text as the main character compares herself to her mother, noting how their likes and dislikes are different. She likes to "listen to rap music" but "Mom dances to pop" (n.p.). Her mom "adores soul food" and "serves greens and cornbread" (n.p.), but the young narrator prefers Chinese food. Two pages include authentic comments about African American hair. One page compares her mother's "short Afro" (n.p.) to the young girl's many braids. On another page the narrator states that even though she and her mother are the best of friends, her mother is "not my best friend / during corn-rowing sessions" (n.p.). This is a reference to the fact that corn-rowing can be a lengthy and sometimes painful process when hair is pulled tightly while braiding it into cornrows.

Never Finished, Never Done! (Brooks, 2004), which is also narrated by a young African American girl, describes the frustration many children feel when they have to do chores before they are allowed to play. Although the activities are ones with which all children can identify, the dialogue includes authentic AAVE comments such as Shayla's mother saying "Girl, you must have been hungry!" (n.p.) when Shayla quickly eats her breakfast. Other comments that many young African American children may recognize include being told: "Don't show me that lip" and "Fix your face" (n.p.). Once again there is a reference to hair when Shayla's mother tells her to pick out the beads and "I'll braid your hair" (n.p.). After completing countless tasks, the story ends with Momma showing Shayla a list of chores with a star beside each, one indicating she has completed all of them and they are ready to "go have some fun" (n.p.). The AAVE dialogue and references to braiding hair and decorating it with beads provide culturally specific content with which African American girls can identify.

Two Level 3 books that provide information about African American culture and heritage are *Jumping the Broom* (Black, 2004) and *Singing for Dr. King* (Medearis, 2004). Although the

main characters in the other *Just for You!* beginning readers are African Americans and the books include authentic illustrations that depict a variety of skin tones, body types, and contemporary hairstyles, ethnicity is incidental to the stories and the content in all of them is generic. Many of the Level 1 books are about ordinary, everyday activities that are not necessarily specific to African Americans and that take place in a very short time period of a few hours or during the span of one day. See Appendix J for a list of beginning readers with cultural content.

Generic Stories in Rhyme and Poetry

Stories in rhyme are books that include rhyming words, usually at the end of alternating lines, to tell a story. For the purposes of this study they are combined with poetry, which may or may not rhyme. Appendix K lists the books in generic stories in rhyme and poetry category. As indicated in Table 4.1, there are 40 books in the category that combines stories in rhyme and poetry. Twenty-four (60%) of the books are generic. Several books continue the escapades of Shanna the young African American girl featured in the *Shanna First Reader Series* described earlier. The five books *Shanna's Ballerina Show* (2002), *Shanna's Teacher Show* (Marzollo, 2002), *Shanna's Doctor Show* (Marzollo, 2003), *Shanna's Princess Show* (Marzollo, 2002), and *Shanna's Lost Shoe* are all written in the same format and provide information about various occupations. With the exception of the clue review section, which might be considered a type of call and response (a form of traditional African American communication), there is no cultural content in the books.

I Can Do It Too (Baicker, 2003) and *You Can Do It Too* (Baicker, 2005), which are illustrated in bold, simple bright colors by Ken Wilson-Max, are both suitable books for preschoolers. *I Can Do It Too* introduces the reader to the young African American girl who narrates the story. She names tasks that different members of her family can perform, such as pouring juice, and demonstrates that she can do it too. In *You Can Do It Too*, the same narrator encourages her brother to copy things that she can do, such as draw and paint. The story ends at bedtime when the tables are turned and she copies what her younger brother can do, which is bend down and look through his legs. She tells him "Look at what I'm doing now! / I'm so proud you showed me how!" (n.p.). There is no cultural content in either of the books.

Some of the books in this category are books that are part of a series about the same character. Nikki Grimes has written three books about Danitra Brown, two of which are included in this study. One of them, *Danitra Brown Class Clown* (Grimes, 2005), lacks the cultural content of the earlier books. *One of the Problems of Everett Anderson* (Clifton, 2001) is one of a series of books written about an African American protagonist named Everett Anderson. This book delicately handles a situation in which the main character, Everett, gradually realizes that a classmate is probably being physically abused. Ann Grifalconi's delicate charcoal and pastel chalk illustrations realistically portray Everett. An awareness of the other stories in this series, some of which contain cultural content, might tempt the reader to classify this book as one with cultural content. However, if one removes the illustrations and analyzes the text, Everett Anderson discusses a subject that is universal. Both Everett and Greg could be replaced with illustrations of a child of another ethnicity without changing the story.

Some of the books in this category consist of simple plots in which the main character is illustrated as Black. They include *Rhyme Time, Valentine* (Poydar, 2003), *Once upon a Farm* (Bradby, 2002), and *The Way the Storm Stops* (Meadows, 2003). Some stories in rhyme, such as *Tickle, Tickle* (Hru, 2002), *Busy Fingers* (Bowie, 2003), *Snowflake Kisses and Gingerbread Smiles* (Parker, 2002), and *Sweets and Treats* (Parker, 2002), consist of minimal text and no plot. The latter two celebrate holidays with beautiful photos of African American children. Although they provide positive realistic photographs with which very young African American children can identify, they contain no African American cultural content in the text.

The theme of celebration is also evident in some of the other stories in rhyme. *Black All Around* (Hubell, 2003) celebrates the color black and *Girls Hold up This World* (Pinkett, 2005) celebrates being a female. On the back jacket flap of *Black All Around* (Hubbell, 2003), the author, who is not African American, states the purpose of the book is "to celebrate the color black and encourage readers to experience its beauty in the world around us" (n.p.). The main character is African American; and as the title suggests, the book provides examples of things that are black that a young girl sees everywhere. Although it does include "the braided hair of a stately queen" (n.p.) depicted as a Black woman with braided hair, the story does not contain African American cultural content. However, when one habitually hears phrases such as "the black sheep of the family" and "black mark against me" which have negative connotations, it is refreshing to read a book that presents the color black in a positive way by referring to it as

"wonderful color black" and describing it as "sleek and jazzy, / warm and cozy. / Beautiful black, / Black all around.

Girls Hold Up This World (Pinkett, 2005) celebrates being a female, but not necessarily African American. The book focuses on empowering females regardless of "color, age, and size" (n.p.) and stresses the need for females to unite to make the world a better place. This book about a universal topic portrays the majority of the people as African American or People of Color with only a few Caucasians.

Music is a popular topic for a number of books in this category, including *Bring on That Beat* (Isadora, 2002), *Jazz Baby* (Weatherford, 2002), and *BeBop Express* (Panahi, 2005). Although the books are about jazz, none of them contain cultural content in the text. Even though *And the Winner Is* (Cool J., 2002) is not about music, it includes music in the form of a CD with rap music. The book is part of the "Rap & Read along with HipKidHop" series that consists of books with a social message. The Hipkidhop Series is written for older elementary children and combines rap with reading. According to Sally Lodge (2003) in an article in Publishers Weekly, the series, which currently consists of 6 titles, aims to counteract the negative public perception of hip hop and rap music. Readers are encouraged to rap along with an accompanying CD sung by a hip-hop performer. *And The Winner Is…*(Cool J., 2002) may entice some young African American males to read it because it features well known rapper L.L. Cool J, who raps about the importance of learning to win and to lose gracefully. However, the text does not contain any African American cultural content.

Stories in Rhyme and Poetry with African American Cultural Content

Sixteen (40%) books in this category contain African American cultural content (See Appendix L). Those classified as poetry cover diverse topics that include the thoughts of six fictitious third grade students, a young girl's admiration for Langston Hughes, and a book written from the fictional perspective of Langston Hughes. Other poetry books describe a young boy's admiration for his father, a celebration of the beauty of African American hair, a book of poems written in Gullah dialect and one about music.

Speak To Me: (And I Will Listen Between The Lines) (English, 2004) is a book of free-verse poems by fictitious African American students Lamont, Tyrell, Malcolm, Rica, Neecy, and Brianna, who all have very different personalities. The poems, several by each student, indicate how third grade students in an inner-city school class might behave and feel through their

perspectives on the school day. The reader knows that the students who wrote the poems are African American not only from the illustrations, but also from names such as Tyrell, Lamont and Neecy, which are culturally authentic. The text also includes references to the fact that Malcolm is African American. Following a lesson on slavery he writes, "I come from the ones chained in dark scary places. In hot, choking air/ starved, beaten. / Terrified and alone/ Torn from their homes/ But lived" (n.p.).

The well-known African American poet Langston Hughes would have been 100 years old on February 1, 2002. To celebrate his life and work, several books were published. They include two books of poetry, both written from different perspectives. *Love to Langston* (Medina, 2002) written by Tony Medina as if Langston had written it, is a fictionalized biography that provides details of some of the key events of Langston's life from his childhood and struggle with Jim Crow laws to Alice Walker bringing him oranges as he was dying. Notes at the end of the book provide additional information. The 14 poems provide insights into Langston Hughes' life and poetry. The author Tony Medina, who the back jacket-flap indicates lives in Harlem, admired Langston's work. In his *Introduction,* Medina notes that Langston Hughes' S*elected Poems* was one of the first poetry books he ever read. Even if the reader does not know that the well-known poet Langston Hughes is African American, it is obvious from the free verse poems, some of which describe experiences with prejudice and racism, especially during his school years in Kansas. In the first poem the reader learns "the white kids chase me / cause of the color of / my skin / said the white kids chase me / cause of my brown brown skin" (n.p.). In addition to references to events in Langston's life, the second poem alludes to the oral tradition as it shares stories his grandmother told him about slavery, the Underground Railroad, and fighting for freedom. One poem describes the comfort he found in libraries, and how books were his companions.

Like many artists, writers and musicians during the Harlem Renaissance, Langston traveled but still loved to return to Harlem, which using Langston's style, Medina describes as "the capital of my world / black and beautiful and bruised / like me" (n.p.). There are many references to Langston's pride in his heritage. He describes Harlem as "a bouquet of black roses / all packed together and protected / by blackness and pride" (n.p). There is a poem about jazz, which the Notes at the back indicate influenced Langston's work and inspired him to incorporate its rhythms into his poetry and read his poetry to jazz.

Visiting Langston (Perdomo, 2002) begins by informing the reader that "Langston Hughes was born on February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri" (Perdomo, 2002, Author's Note) and provides a few easy to read sentences about this great African American poet. Langston's poems have inspired the young narrator to write poetry about the things she likes. Pride in her heritage is indicated by the following lines:

> Ask me where I'm from
> I'll say Harlem world
> Ask me who I am
> I'll say I'm a Harlem girl. (Perdomo, 2002, n.p.)

The book ends with the titles of poems written by Langston Hughes attractively arranged in a variety of fonts. Bryan Collier, who also lives in Harlem, illustrated this book with bold fabric collage backgrounds of different textures. The poem contains cultural content. Although any child can admire Langston's work, only an African American can claim his world as part of their heritage.

In contrast to the admiration of a famous poet, *When Daddy Prays* (Grimes, 2002) illustrates a young boy's admiration for his father. This collection of poems describes how a young boy watches and imitates his father as he observes the influence that prayer has on his father's life. The oil painting illustrations authentically depict African Americans throughout the book. In addition to the illustrations, the text also creates an authentic picture of a young African American boy's interaction with his father. The poem *Baby Brother* includes references to skin color. When the narrator's baby brother is brought home from the hospital he comments "They sent him home half-finished, / still scrunched up / like a brown package." (n.p.). Throughout the book the reader sees the words "Father, Lord, Jesus, and Sweet Jesus" which are not always used in prayer, but also in daily conversation. References to traditional African American food such as rice and beans, turnip greens and oxtail soup are also woven into the poems.

Several of the books celebrate and admire qualities or aspects of the African Americans described in them and remember with admiration African Americans who have gone before them or celebrate various aspects of African American heritage, such the blues. Some, such as *Remember the Bridge: Poems of a People* (Weatherford, 2002), celebrate aspects of African American heritage such as men and women who fought for freedom or events that have inspired music known as the blues. Others, such as *Under the Christmas Tree* (Grimes, 2002), which is a

collection of poems about Christmas, describe an African American family preparing for Christmas

Crowning Glory (Thomas, 2002) is a collection of poems that celebrates the beauty of African American hair. The poems describe different ways of caring for and styling African American hair such as braiding, wearing dreadlocks and wearing one's hair naturally. Many of the poems include different members of the narrator's family, her mother, grandmother, cousin and an aunt. In addition to describing different hair textures, the poems negate the perception that only long, straight hair (especially blonde) is beautiful. An Author's Note indicates the pastel illustrations include portraits of her daughter and seven granddaughters. The book describes the close relationships that develop when mother and daughter, grandmother and daughter, or even aunt and niece spend time together combing and styling hair.

New Year Be Coming (Boling, 2002), which opens with an introduction entitled *About the Gullah people,* also contains cultural content. The reader learns that the Gullah people are

> African-Americans who live mainly in the "southern 'Lowcountry' in the South Carolina and Georgia coasts and the Sea Islands offshore. They are descended from slaves brought from West Africa beginning as early as the seventeenth century (n.p).

Some picture books categorized as poetry do not contain a plot but convey a message that, in spite of the limited text, can be thought provoking. Three such books are *Be Boy Buzz* (2002), *Skin Again* (2004) and *Homemade Love* (2002) by Bell Hooks. The 3 books describe abstract concepts in the confines of limited text. The illustrations of *Skin Again* (Hooks, 2004) complement the few simple yet powerful words with a thought-provoking message. The book emphasizes the fact that individuals are "all made up of stories, present, past, future, some true to life and others all fun and fantasy, all the way I imagine me"(n.p.). Like many of Hooks books, *Skin Again* makes a political statement about race and identity and entices critical thinking because it is difficult to read it without delving into the meanings behind the words.

Another thought-provoking book is *Be Boy Buzz* (Hooks, 2002), which is dedicated to Bell Hooks' brother and focuses on what it means to be an African American boy. With minimal text in a variety of large fonts and a few simple illustrations it presents various aspects of being a boy. The boy in the story is affirmed no matter whether he is "beautiful" (n.p.) or "all / bad / boy / beast" (n.p.). One double page declares he is "All Boy," which is then defined by telling the reader "I be boy running. I be boy jumping" (n.p.). In contrast to the physical aspects, the

emotional side of a boy is also unveiled as the reader learns "I be boy / laughing / crying / telling / my story, talking / way too loud" (n.p.). One sees an acceptance of this young African American boy, whether he is full of energy or sitting quietly. No matter what, at times, he still wants to be hugged and loved, and at other times he needs time to be alone.

Even with limited text, Hooks manages to weave in African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Rickford and Rickford (2000) in their book about African American Vernacular English, or what they refer to as 'Soul Talk', explain the mainstream English equivalent of AAVE phrases such as "He be running" (p. 119). Based on their explanations, the sentence "I be boy running" (n.p.) best translates into "I'm a boy who is usually running." In other words, much of the time he is energetic and active. *Homemade Love* (Hooks, 2002) is another book of celebration. Even though it lacks plot and action, it conveys the unconditional love a little girl's family bestows on her. This book celebrates the relationship between African American parents and their daughter. The little girl describes how "My Mama calls me girl pie/ Her Sweet/ sweet." She is also "Daddy's / honeybun / chocolate / DewDrop" (n.p.). Despite minimal text, there is at least one implied reference to skin color in the above reference to chocolate.

This section includes two books about Kwanzaa, an African American celebration. *It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Kwanzaa!* (Perry, 2004), a book in the Jump at the Sun Holiday Classics collection by Hyperion Books for Children, is a small inexpensive paperback that mimics the song *It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christma*s. Like many stories in rhyme, there is more emphasis on rhyming words at the ends of the lines than on providing content. The book contains cultural content and mentions traditional food such as collard greens, yams and catfish, and includes vocabulary specific to Kwanzaa. However, it fails to provide information about the meaning and use of the kinara, which is mentioned in the text; and it does not discuss the seven principles of Kwanzaa. There is no real plot and the characters, which are not developed, serve as props for relaying minimal information about Kwanzaa. *Santa's Kwanzaa* (Thomas, 2004), which imitates Clement Clark Moore's "*The Night before Christmas*," also focuses more on rhyming text than on content. Although it weaves the names of the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa into a more enjoyable story, it does not provide much explanation about the Kwanzaa celebration.

Another book that weaves some cultural content into the story is *Did I Tell You I Love You Today?* (Jordan & Jordan, 2004). The story opens with a mother praying by her son's bed in the morning before he wakes up. The story continues with other references to praying - praying for guidance in raising him to be the best that he can be and praying that she has done her best to let him know that she loves him every day. The book focuses on the importance of taking time to tell a child that he or she is loved and includes the culturally authentic term of address "child" as the mother talks to her son.

Danitra Brown Leaves Town provides the reader with more information about the character Danitra Brown and her continuing relationship with her friend Zuri. It contains a series of letters written in a combination of rhyming verse and blank prose. Not only do Cooper's realistic illustrations depict the two best friends as African American, their letters describe traditional cultural activities such as gatherings in which the extended family participates that include block parties and barbecues with soul food, music and dancing. A positive reference to skin color is included when Zuri, referring to her mother, describes how she loves "the pretty brownness/ of her eyes and face / glistening in the light / of the late-night/ fireworks" (n.p.). The story includes AAVE and verbal repartee in which many African Americans are proficient. An example of this is when Danitra says "Now my mother taught me to use my head for more than a hat rack" (n.p.).

Historical Fiction

Historical fiction is set some time in the past and can be categorized as fictional family history which develops from stories that have been passed down from one generation to the next, family memoirs which are based on the author's own experiences and stories that are based on research. As shown in Table 4.1, there are a total of 45 books in the historical fiction category. Appendix M lists the historical fiction books with cultural content in this study and Appendix N lists the generic historical fiction books in this study

Fictionalized Memoirs with African American Cultural Content

The time period for the setting of most of the fictionalized memoir picture books about African Americans in this study is somewhere between the 1940s and 1960s. The subjects most frequently addressed involve segregation and race relations; the struggle for equality and the Civil Rights movements; the importance of education and family relationships.

There are 15 books in the memoirs section of historical fiction and all of them contain African American cultural content. Eight of the books in this section concern race relations, particularly in southern states, and illustrate how segregation impacted the characters and how they dealt with it. Some of the characters in these stories stand up for their rights by participating in organized protests and sit-ins, such as those described in *Freedom on the Menu* (Weatherford, 2005) and *Sweet Smell of Roses* (Johnson, 2005). Others, such as the characters in *Grandmama's Pride* (Birtha, 2005), *Goin' Someplace Special* (McKissack, 2001), *Fishing Day* (Pinkney, 2003), *Freedom Summer* (Wiles, 2001), *The Other Side* (Woodson, 2001) and *Going North* (Harrington, 2004), handle segregation and discrimination in more individual ways.

Sweet Smell of Roses and *Freedom on the Menu* are both set in the South in the 1950s and early 1960s, during the era of mandatory segregation in the states in which the stories take place. They include family members who are involved in organized protest and center on organized protest such as marches and sit-ins. *Sweet Smell of Roses* is set in the 1950s and 1960s. Most of the action takes place in a predominantly African American community during one of Dr. Martin Luther King's marches. The story demonstrates pride in African American heritage and provides an accurate portrayal of the civil rights marchers and the solidarity inspired by Dr. King. On the Dedication page the author notes the book is dedicated to "brave boys and girls who - like their adult counterparts – could not resist the scent of freedom carried aloft by the winds of change" (n.p.). This reference to the "scent of freedom" is alluded to throughout the book, which suggests freedom is carried by the winds of change and the sweet fresh smell of roses after a rain.

Freedom on the Menu is based on the sit-in protest by four African American college students on February 1, 1960 at Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Although Weatherford lived in Baltimore, Maryland, when she was growing up in the 1960s, she did experience discrimination and writes with the feelings she imagines a young African American girl living in the South during this era might have felt. A note on the back jacket flap indicates Weatherford "remembers drinking strawberry floats with her mother at what was once a segregated department store lunch counter" (n.p.). She merges memories of her own childhood spent in Baltimore, Maryland during the 1960s into the story of a young African American girl growing up in Greensboro, North Carolina. The story picture book weaves details of the Civil Rights struggle into a context that young children can easily understand.

Freedom on the Menu contains cultural content such as authentic language for the era and situation, and weaves religion into the story. An example of this is Connie's belief that God is on the side of the Civil Rights movement because her Mama says "Amen" when Dr. King finishes his speech. Additionally, when the protests are shown on TV, Mama says "I just pray there's no trouble." The illustrations and text combine to create a realistic representation of the era in which the story takes place and the dilemmas faced by many law abiding African Americans. The dark impressionistic illustrations are blurred just as memories are often hazy, and indicate how one often remembers specific thoughts and feelings about certain incidents but not visual details. Mixed emotions are apparent and include Connie's father being proud that his own children and other students are standing up for the right to be treated fairly, but also concerned about what could happen to them.

The subject of *Freedom Summer* (Wiles, 2001) and *The Other Side* (Woodson, 2001) is interracial friendship during the era of segregation. *Freedom Summer*, which opens with the sentence "John Henry Waddell is my best friend" (n.p.), is not just a story about friendship. Because it is set in the South as the South is desegregating, it is also about segregation and race relations. In a Note about the Text the author, who indicates that she is White, states the story "grew out of my feelings surrounding that time. It is fiction, but based on real events." The real events she refers to are the summers she spent with her relatives in Mississippi. The title of the book stems from the term "Freedom Summer," the name of the movement of volunteers who went to the South to help register Black Americans to vote. In her preface to the story, Wiles describes how:

> that was the summer I began to pay attention. I noticed that black Americans used back doors, were waited on only after every white had been helped, and were treated poorly, all because of the color of their skin…and no matter what any law said. I realized that a white person openly having a black friend, and vice versa, could be a dangerous thing (Wiles, 2001, Preface).

Wiles wondered what life was like for a Black child her age, wanted to change things, and did not know how. She recalls when the Civil Rights Act was passed, the town pool, roller rink and ice-cream parlor all closed. Like many other southern businesses, they closed their doors in protest, rather than lawfully giving Blacks the same rights and freedoms as Whites. Some of them never opened again. Examples of the cruelty of segregation include Joe going into Mr.

Mason's General Store alone to buy two ice pops because his friend Joe was not allowed in the store because he is Black. Even worse is the time they rushed to the town swimming pool to swim there together for the first time because a new law had just passed allowing everybody to use the same pool, only to find that it was being filled with tar. The story ends with Joe and John Henry, their arms around each other, entering Mr. Mason's store to buy an ice pop and the reader is left wondering if they will both be served, or if the law will be ignored.

With minimal words, *The Other Side* (Woodson, 2001) conveys the senselessness of racial segregation with the powerful feeling of yearning for change. Even without the beautiful realistic oil paintings by E. B. Lewis, the reader learns that the narrator is African American on the first page where she indicates "that summer the fence that stretched through our town seemed bigger / We lived in a yellow house on one side of it / White people lived on the other" (n.p.). Mama's caution not to climb over the fence because it isn't safe further reinforces the fact that the fence provides more than a physical barrier; it represents the division between the White and the Black community.

In an Author's Note in *Fishing Day* Andrea Davis Pinkney explains that even though she grew up in the state of New York, she has encountered prejudice and discrimination first hand. Although segregation was not mandated by law, when she was about seven, she began to notice that all the Black children and all the White children did not play together. This segregation along racial lines can be the result of laws and institutional racism, or a coping strategy that results in self-segregation. Beverly Tatum (1997) discusses self-segregation in schools and the reluctance to discuss racial issues in her book, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* Pinkney recalls how she used to go fishing with her uncles and cousins around the same time that her parents and relatives began to talk to her about prejudice. So she chose to incorporate fishing into a story about segregation. The story centers on the reactions of two families, one Black and the other White, as they try to catch fish. Their actions are connected to the way Jim Crow laws prevented Black and White families from interacting or speaking to one another. The actions of all the characters are plausible for the time in which the story is set.

According to *A Note from the Author* at the back of the book, *Going North* (Harrington, 2004) is based on the author's experiences of moving with her family "from Vernon, Alabama, to Lincoln, Nebraska, during the summer of 1964." Harrington cites the longing to escape segregation as her family's motivation to leave the South in the hopes of not just a better life

financially, but one in which they did not have to be concerned about which water fountain, restroom, or park they could use, or which restaurant or store would serve them. Years later when she thought about the move, she compared her family and other African American families who went North to pioneers who "faced dangers, and started new lives, hoping for a better future" (n.p.). In just a few pages and with few words, the reader quickly begins to understand why African American families would be willing to leave their extended families in search of a better life. In the North they would not have to endure segregation and hoped the sacrifice of leaving their families and homes behind would be worth it. Many also hoped that once settled, they could send for other family members.

Pride and determination in the face of discrimination are major themes in *Grandmama's Pride* (Birtha, 2005) and *Goin' Someplace Special*, both of which are wonderful fictionalized memoirs rich in cultural content. The subject of *Grandmama's Pride* is not only segregation, but also family relationships. At the back of the book, Birtha indicates it is "a fictional story based on real events and memories of the 1950s, when segregation kept black and white Americans apart in the southern United States" (n.p.). Birtha provides authentic details about the Jim Crow era. At the end of the book she explains that during the 1950s Black passengers traveling in the South had to ride at the back of the bus and were not allowed to ride in the front. Additionally, if the bus became full, Black passengers had to give up their back seats to White passengers that got on. Birtha brings the conditions in the South to life for readers by providing details about the effects of segregation on African American families.

Grandmama's Pride not only provides historical information about the harsh reality of segregation, but also focuses on positive aspects of Sarah Marie's childhood that include a warm, loving close, family who would not be trampled down. Throughout the story there is African American cultural content that including references to food and religion. The importance of religion is illustrated when Grandmama tells Sarah Marie "some grown folks don't seem to understand that we're all of us, God's children" (n.p.).

In contrast with *Grandmama's Pride*, the protagonist in *Goin' Someplace Special* (McKissack, 2001) is not a grandmother, but a young girl named 'Tricia Ann.' An Author's Note indicates the story is based on fictional childhood memories of growing up in the segregated south, this time in Nashville, Tennessee. McKissack recalls that even though schools, buses, and theaters were segregated, in the late 1950s Nashville's public library board voted to integrate the

libraries. This resulted in the downtown library not only being one of the few places that did not have Jim Crow signs but also a place that provided a welcoming environment for African Americans.

There are many similarities between Tricia Ann's grandmother, Mama Frances' determination and that of the grandmother in *Grandmama's Pride* (Birtha, 2005). As she rides the bus, Tricia recalls her grandmother telling her "Those signs can tell us where to sit, but they can't tell us what to think" (n.p.). The story illustrates the love and support of an African American family and how the community shares a sense of solidarity and encourages Tricia Ann to be proud and determined. Whether short or tall, old or young, they all share a cultural history and their fight to prevent the ugliness of segregation and prejudice from undermining their pride and self-esteem binds them together.

Fictionalized Memoirs about Family Relationships

Five books with African American cultural content portray the love and bonds between family members in this section. *Grandmama's Pride*, which is also discussed in the previous section, depicts a warm, loving relationship between a grandmother and her two granddaughters. *Little Cliff Goes to School* (Taulbert, 2001) and *Little Cliff and the Cold Place* (Taulbert, 2002) focus on the love between Little Cliff and his great grandparents. *Hard Times Jar* (Smothers, 2003) and *Coming on Home Soon* (Woodson, 2004) portray a mother and daughter relationship, and *Janna and the Kings* (Smith, 2003) illustrates the love between a granddaughter and her grandfather and how she copes with his death.

Little Cliff's First Day of School and the sequel *Little Cliff and the Cold Place* illustrate the love and relationship between great grandparents, Mama Pearl and Poppa Joe, and their six-year-old great grandson who lives with them. Little Cliff's parents are not mentioned in either story, but it is not unusual for extended family members in African American communities to care for children whose parents are unable to do so. The jacket flap of both books indicates that the stories are based on Taulbert's own childhood as he grew up in Glen Allan, Mississippi. The stories illustrate the importance of family and community. Although it is not specifically mentioned in the text, it is obvious from the illustrations and from Taulbert's memoir, *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored* (Taulbert, 1995), that Glen Allan was a segregated community. Authoritarian discipline, which was the most frequently accepted method of

parenting for African Americans during this era, is evident in the story. An example of this can be seen when Little Cliff runs away and hides under the house. In no time "Mama got on her knees and called, 'Cliffy boy, you'd better git here this very minute. I told Miss Maxey you'd be at school and true to my word, boy you gonna be that if I have to load you on my back. Come on outa thar right now'" (n.p.). Little Cliff immediately obeyed Mama Joe because he knew when he heard "right now" that Mama Pearl "meant business" (n.p.).

The language used throughout the book is authentic and contains numerous examples of AAVE. Terms of endearment frequently used in African American communities include calling Little Cliff "baby" or "Poppa's little man" (n.p.). Various aspects of African American culture are portrayed in the story. The sequel to *Little Cliff's First Day of School* (Taulbert, 2001), *Little Cliff and the Cold Place* (Taulbert, 2002) focuses on the warm relationship between Little Cliff and his great grandfather, Poppa Joe and also builds on what Little Cliff is learning in school. Poppa Joe's interest and concern for Little Cliff and his education can be seen in the way he interacts with him. This includes encouraging him to get more details about the Arctic by looking it up in a big book, probably an encyclopedia he has at home. Taulbert's text and Lewis's realistic watercolor illustrations combine to not only capture the naïveté of childhood, but also provide cultural details such as Poppa Joe's warmth and caring and the camaraderie in Glen Allan.

Hard Times Jar (Smothers, 2003) is based on the author's childhood memories and life experiences. At the back of the book, Smothers dedicates the book to "Mrs. Julia Parker Miller of Winter Haven, Florida – a teacher who taught me more than math and science" (n.p.). The language is authentic with instances of AAVE that include the use of zero copula. One example is when Mama asks Emma Jean "You keeping an eye on the little ones?" (n.p.). Traditional African American family values and a strong work ethic are evident in the book, which depicts the whole family working together in the orchard. Additionally, Emma, the oldest child who is only eight years old, has the responsibility of watching her younger siblings. The family understands the importance of education and is willing to sacrifice Emma's help with the fruit picking, so that Emma can go to school.

Even though Emma's mother insists the money in the hard-times jar is only to be used for essentials and "no extras"(n.p.), her love for her daughter, admiration of her honesty, and pride in her daughter being able to read and write so well leads her to make a slight exception to her rule.

When Emma takes a book from school without permission, Emma's mother understands that it "must have been hard" for Emma to admit to Miss Miller that she borrowed the book. So she gives Emma money for the "hard time," knowing it will be used to buy a book. Other cultural content includes the mention of food such as red beans, rice and cornbread, and also the statement that "Mama's head was already wrapped for work," a reference to the widespread practice among African American women of tying a scarf around their head to prevent their hair from becoming difficult to comb.

The back jacket flap indicates that this is Holyfield's first picture book and his illustrations work well to support the text. For example, his illustration of a slim young girl with her hair in neat cornrows shown lying on her stomach, elbows on the floor, one hand on her cheek, the other holding a pencil, coincides with the text "Emma rolled belly-flat" (n.p.) and reinforces Emma's love for writing as well as reading, which is indicated throughout the story. The story provides insight into what life was like for African American migrant workers and how the love and respect for family members helped them face hardships.

Although the theme of love between a mother and daughter and a grandmother and granddaughter is universal, *Coming on Home Soon* (Woodson, 2004) is a story with cultural content about a situation that impacted African Americans differently than it did European Americans. The setting is winter during World War II, in a rural area somewhere south of Chicago. The war created food shortages and hardships resulting in family separations for everyone, but it also provided work for many African American women that otherwise would not have been available. The demand for men to go off and fight the war opened up opportunities for women, in particular "colored women" (n.p.) to do jobs such as wash the railroad cars. The dialogue is culturally authentic, as is the name Ada Ruth, the terms of address used by Mama and Grandma and the reference made to "hiring colored women. Examples of AAVE include Grandma telling Ada Ruth "Don't go getting attached now" (n.p.). When Grandma is talking to Ada Ruth about the kitten, she tells her "can't get much uglier now, can it".

According to the back jacket flap, the inspiration for Patricia Smith's first picture book, *Janna and the Kings* (Smith, 2003) was "childhood memories of Saturdays spent at the barbershop with her father (n.p.). Cultural content is evident throughout the story, which is set in Janna's home and the barbershop she visits with her grandfather. Examples of cultural content include jumping "double dutch," which was a very popular pastime for many African Americans

a few decades ago and resulted in many culturally specific jump rhymes. In addition to Boyd's realistic illustrations, which include a variety of hairstyles worn by African Americans, the text indicates that Mama worked "the tangles out of her hair and twisted it into two neat braids." Since many African American girls have hair with a texture that requires a great deal of care, references to a mother spending time combing and styling it are frequently found in books with African American cultural content.

Another story that is based on an author's own childhood experiences is *Don't Say Ain't* (Smalls, 2004). Although it is set in the late 1950s, the book focuses on a situation that continues today, which is the stigma frequently attached to speaking AAVE. It also highlights how many African Americans are bidialectal, or code switch and adjust their speech to suit the situation. Many use mainstream English in formal situations, but switch to AAVE when with family and friends. The sentiment that using Standard English and getting a good education leads to a better job is included in this story and still felt today. Before Dana moved to the integrated advanced school, she used to meet her friends Ellamae and Cindybelle at the corner of the street on her way to school and they walked to school together. When Dana goes to the advanced school she has to walk alone and Cindybelle and Ellamae are no longer as friendly. Cindybelle tells Ellamae "She thinks she's better'n us cause she's goin' to that advanced school now" (n.p.). One suspects the author Irene Smalls probably went to an integrated school and encountered similar reactions as those in the story. All the other girls are wearing pleated skirts and sweater sets, and they look at Dana who feels she looks out of place in her party dress. She feels self-conscious about her speech and misses the "running jive and banter" she shared with her friends at the segregated school. When Mrs. Middleton, Dana's teacher hears Dana saying "ain't" at recess, she asks her not to say it at school.

Cultural content is woven throughout the story, which includes numerous examples of AAVE. Godmother drops the final consonant when she pronounces "child" as "chile" and she pronounces "th" as "d" when she says "Thing's ain't like dey was when I was a chile" (n.p.). Other examples include the practice of dropping the final "g" in words with two syllables such as when Cindybelle tells Ellamae "she thinks she's better'n us cause she's goin' to that advanced school now (n.p.). The story spotlights the dilemma still facing many African Americans in school today. When they speak mainstream English and articulate every word as Dana did when she raised her hand and said "the answer is two hundred and eighty-seven," they risk being

ridiculed, as Dana was when the reaction of one of her classmates was to say "Huh?" when she articulated the words.

In addition to the language, the jump rope chants are culturally authentic and the names of the dances the girls are doing on the sidewalk, the Bop, the Slop, and the Mashed Potato are African American dances of this period. Mrs. Middleton speaks Standard English when she is teaching, and insists her students do so too; but when she visits Dana's godmother she feels comfortable enough to use AAVE. Many African Americans use Standard English in their professional life, but switch to AAVE in more comfortable surroundings. Mrs. Middleton's comment to Godmother "Honeychile, I ain't gonna eat more than one piece of your famous peach cobbler" (n.p.) indicates she feels at ease with Dana's godmother and demonstrates a shared group identity. Even the references to food illustrate a shared cultural heritage. A note on the back book jacket flap indicates that the illustrator, Colin Bootman, also experienced the dilemma of trying to speak "proper" English. When he moved to the United States from Trinidad at the age of seven, he spoke with a Trinidadian accent. This wonderful story illustrates the pride this African American author has in her culture and her familiarity with AAVE. She is obviously writing from an insider perspective and has a wealth of knowledge about the values, norms, language, and habits of African Americans.

One book in the fictionalized memoir section of historical fiction that contains African American cultural content focuses on a friendship. The front jacket flap and a note on the back page of *Pictures of Miss Josie* (2003) state that it was written to honor the memory of Josephine Carroll Smith, who was known as Miss Josie. Information at the back of the book informs the reader that Mrs. Smith, one of eight children born to slaves, spent her life in Washington, D.C. Miss Josie had no children, but opened her home to many young Black men throughout her life. This story is a fictionalized account of her relationship with one of them. Miss Josie exhibits the sense of responsibility and enjoyment in guiding youngsters and helping them to make good choices that is frequently found in African American communities. Miss Josie's greeting "Come over here, young man, and give me a hug!" (n.p.) is authentic, and so is her comment "I've been waiting a long time to have this baby in my arms" (n.p.) even though the illustrations portray him as about five or six years old. African American adults frequently use the term "baby" when referring to children who may be old enough to go to school. When the narrator goes away to college, Miss Josie not only invites him to dinner, but also to church with her. The description of

the church indicates it "burst with words and music," and the illustration includes many African American ladies wearing hats, a widespread practice. After the sermon, Miss Josie told everyone "He's the son of one of my boys. Now he's my boy, too." Even though they are not related, Miss Josie's relationship with both the narrator and his father is nurturing and maternal. During the years he was in college, Miss Josie and the protagonist developed a strong, loving relationship. She provided support and encouragement as she urges him to fulfill his dreams, even though his father thinks that spending so much time on art is not a good idea.

Fictionalized Family History with African American Cultural Content.

All of the 6 books in the fictionalized family history section contain African American cultural content. Most of the books are a blend of stories passed down to the authors by older relatives that include great aunts and great uncles, aunts and uncles and grandmothers. *Show Way* is rooted in the stories of family members that have been handed down for generations. *The Leaving* is based on stories told by a great aunt and great uncle. *Just like Josh* is based on a story told by the author's grandmother. *A Bus of Our Own* is a blend of stories told to the author by her uncles and cousins as well as people who rode in or contributed to the bus in the story. *Dance y'all,* (Stroud, 2001), which focuses on intergenerational relationships, is rooted in stories from grandparents, aunts and uncles. The settings date back as far as the era of slavery in *Show Way* (Woodson, 2005), the 1860s in The *Leaving (*Stroud, 2001), the 1900s in *Sweet Potato Pie* (Lindsey, 2003), and the 1940s-1950s in *A Bus of Our Own* (Evans, 2001) and *Just like Josh Gibson* (Johnson, 2004). The unidentified era of *Dance y'all* (Stroud, 2001) is probably mid 1900s.

All of the stories are set in rural communities, primarily in the South; and one of the themes that run through many of them is that of determination. *Show Way,* which traces the author's family from the present day back to slavery, demonstrates the determination not only of slaves to escape but also to make a better life for themselves. *The Leaving,* which takes place on a plantation in 1868 after the Emancipation Proclamation, demonstrates the determination of African Americans who, even though they were legally no longer slaves, were still being kept against their will. Mable Jean, the young African American protagonist in *A Bus of Our Own* is determined to not only get an education, but also to find a way to provide a bus to take her and the other African American children in the community to school. The family in *Sweet Potato*

Pie, which is set during a drought in the early 1900s, is determined to find a way to avoid losing their farm. The narrator's mother makes "two freshly baked sweet potato pies" to cheer them up and suddenly gets the idea to make and sell sweet potato pies at the Harvest Celebration in town. A recipe for sweet potato pie, an African American delicacy, is provided at the end of the book.

Just like Josh Gibson, which is set in the 1940s, not only illustrates the determination of the narrator's grandmother to play baseball when girls were not allowed on a baseball field with boys, it also portrays the pride and adoration of African Americans when one of their own is successful. The success of one African American can have far reaching effects, not only on that person's family and community, but also on others who share the joy of the success of a fellow African American. An example of this admiration can be seen in the story *Just like Josh* in which Joshua "Josh" Gibson's influence is apparent even though he is not a character in the story. Joshua Gibson was known as "the Babe Ruth of the Negro Leagues" and his election into the Hall of Fame in 1972 inspired many African Americans. All of the fictional family history stories contain cultural content that includes realistic and authentic dialogue that is appropriate for the setting and era of the stories. In addition to the use of realistic language, some demonstrate the importance of family and the significant role that church and religion play in the African American community. They provide insight into ways African American families and communities worked hard, and together were able to overcome obstacles that would have been insurmountable if faced alone.

Historical Fiction with African American Cultural Content Based on Research

As shown in Table 4.1, there are 26 books in the historical fiction based on research category, nineteen of which contain African American cultural content. Some of the books based on research are stories set during the slavery era. The motivation and inspiration for these stories about slavery include journals, oral histories of slaves, non-fiction books and a rag doll collection. The content of the books is greatly influenced by the ethnicity of the author and also the research sources. Some of the books about slavery such as *Up the Learning Tree* (Vaughan, 2003) and *Alec's Primer* (Walter, 2005) focus on the determination to learn to read and write and the importance of education. In an Author's Note, Vaughn informs the reader that the oral histories of slaves who risked their lives to learn to read and write was her inspiration to write the book. Books such as *Up the Learning Tree* (Vaughan, 2003) are more likely to tell a story from

an African American perspective and create a realistic portrayal of what life was like for a slave because they are based on the oral histories of slaves. Although she is not an African American, in *Alec's Primer* (based on the true story of Alec Turner) Vaughn attempts to depict how a young slave might have felt. Information for the book was provided by the Vermont Folk Life Center, which houses materials such as photographs, audio recordings and video recordings about the Turner family supplied by Alec's daughter Daisy, who lived from 1883-1988.

Many of the books based on research are about running away from slavery. They include *Almost to Freedom* (Nelson, 2003), *Liberty Street* (Ransom, 2003), *Under the Quilt of Night* (Hopkinson, 2001) and *Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom* (Stroud, 2005). Some of the books, such as *Under the Quilt of Night*, *Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom* and *The Secret to Freedom* (Vaughn, 2001), focus on the role that quilts played in helping African Americans escape from slavery. Although written by different authors, *Patchwork Path* and *The Secret to Freedom* cite the book *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad* (Tobin & Dobard, 1998) as one of their sources. This is an excellent resource for information about the role that quilts played in helping slaves to escape and describes quilts that have been handed down from one generation to the next. Some of the settings and events in the stories have been influenced by information provided in Tobin & Dobard's book. For example Tobin and Dobard note that slaves tried to run away on a rainy night when it was difficult to be seen and more difficult for dogs to pick up the scent. In the book *The Secret to Freedom*, there is a storm on the night that Albert and Lucy run away. The Afterword of this story also lists two books about the Underground Railroad and two about slavery, one of which includes interviews with former slaves as sources of information. Not only are the harsh conditions and incidents involving the cruelty of the overseers and patrollers woven into the story, so too is the slaves' determination and faith in God.

Although *Circle Unbroken* (Raven, 2004) includes information about slavery, it begins and ends in the present as it traces the history of sweet grass baskets back to Africa. The author's admiration for the Gullah culture permeates the book, which is based on extensive research that includes twelve resources listed in a selected bibliography at the end.

Two books that do not provide information to indicate that they are based on research, but probably involved some research are *Joe-Joe's First Flight* (Tarpley, 2003) and *I Dream of Trains* (Johnson, 2003). Both books are also about the dreams, desires and aspirations of the

young African American boy who narrates the story. An Author's Note at the back of *Joe-Joe's First Flight* (Tarpley, 2003) informs readers that during the early 1900s the field of aviation was segregated, "Blacks were not accepted at American flight schools, nor were they eligible to receive U.S. military flight training" (n.p.). Despite this, Black men such as John C. Robinson succeeded in founding a Black flying club in Chicago in 1930 and building the first airstrip "in the black township of Robbins, Illinois"(n.p.). According to Tarpley, Cornelius R. Coffey started the Coffey School of Aeronautics in Illinois, and as a result of the successful training of black pilots at the Tuskegee Army Field in Alabama, "provided an incentive for the United States government" (n.p.) to eventually desegregate the armed forces in the 1940s. The information provided in the Author's note and throughout the story aims to inspire readers to make their dreams come true.

As in many of the stories in this study, a warm, loving relationship between a father and his son emerges, which counteracts the stereotypical portrait of African American fathers frequently portrayed in the media. When his father leaves for work, he lifts Joe- Joe, whose arms are outstretched, into the air and spins him around before setting him on the ground like a plane. When he returns in the evening they watch the planes land together. Joe-Joe's father and his friends are proud to be the first Black men to work at the airport. They "name themselves the All-Original Flying Men" (n.p.) and anticipate the time when they will be allowed to fly. But that time never comes. Joe-Joe's father tells him that prejudice and discrimination causes the people in the town of Blind Eye to despair more every year and this creates a "cloud over the town" (n.p.) through which moonlight and stars cannot penetrate.

The dialogue is sparse, but authentic. When Joe-Joe asks his father when he will get to fly, he replies "Well, son, I ask the man, and I keep on asking. But all he says is 'in due time.' Seems like the time is *never* due" (n.p.). The reference to his White employer as "the man" is appropriate vocabulary for the time period when Whites were often referred to as "the man." Joe-Joe's father's comment "But you just wait. Our chance is coming" (n.p.) makes reference to the fact that his father and the other African American men in the story were hoping to eventually be able to get trained as pilots and be allowed to fly commercial airlines. Despite the gloom, Joe-Joe's father and friends continue to hope that things will change for the better. The story provides an example of segregation and discrimination not often portrayed in picture books. It extends the impact of Jim Crow laws beyond the effect they had on schools,

restaurants and transportation into the area of employment and jobs that were closed to African Americans because of their race. It provides an opportunity for children to look at the way things were, discuss how things have changed and encourage dreams of future improvements.

A note at the back of *I Dream of Trains* (Johnson, 2003) indicates that at the beginning of the twentieth century, during the period known as the Great Migration, many African American sharecroppers left the south in search of a better life in northern cities. Some of those sharecroppers worked in cotton fields beside the route of the railroad tracks, and one of those cotton fields is the setting for this story. The nameless narrator, a young African American boy, is the son of a sharecropper who works in cotton fields in the Mississippi delta. As he picks cotton in the hot sun, the young boy dreams about leaving and trains, especially about the train that was driven by "Casey Jones and his fireman, Sim Webb" (n.p.). Information about John Luther "Casey" Jones, who lived between 1863 and 1900, is provided on the back book jacket flap. Although the story does not include cultural content such as traditional foods or music, it conveys the feelings of yearning that were prevalent during the Great Migration.

Not all the historical fiction picture books about the importance learning to read and write or getting an education are set during the era of slavery. Papa in *Papa's Mark* (2003) written by Battle-Lavert and illustrated by Colin Bootman, is a free man in the story that takes place in a rural, African American community in Lamar County, in an unknown state somewhere in the South. Papa is a free man. The story accurately depicts the way African Americans were torn between wanting to vote and fearing that their families may be hurt by reprisals by Whites who did not want them to vote. Similar stories undoubtedly took place in many towns throughout the south as African Americans were finally able to vote following the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. The characters are realistically portrayed with oil paints used to advantage to create subtly different skin tones, hair textures, and facial features among the African American men. The characters are not one dimensional, but have positive attributes such as determination, pride, adoration, bravery, courage, and compassion tempered by reluctance, hesitancy and fear. Language is appropriate for the era. For example, Samuel T. Jones tells the storekeeper, "Thank you kindly, Mr. Jones." When the men get together at Samuel T. Jones' house, one of them comments "Some folks don't want us colored voting." to which papa replies "Freedom don't come easy." On Election Day, when they go to town to vote and people are out in the street, the reader is told, "Simms' didn't recognize their hard faces." No further explanation is offered, but

one suspects that many of the citizens had not indicated their true feelings toward African Americans until Election Day. This reference is to the fact that many Whites did not show their true feelings. Many did not want African Americans to be able to vote, and this shows on their hard faces.

Freedom School, Yes! (Littlesugar, 2001), which is set in 1964, also focuses on the importance of education. The protagonist is Jolie, a young African American girl who lives with her mother and younger sisters Luanne and Sairy. When her mother is the only one to volunteer to let one of the Freedom School teachers, Annie, a nineteen-year old White girl from up north, come and stay at their house, Jolie is afraid and wishes the Freedom School had never come. She knows that many White people disapprove of the Freedom schoolteachers coming to Chicken Creek to try to change things.

This story provides historical information and references to African American heroes such as Harriet Tubman and renowned artists and poets such as Countee Cullen. The language is authentic with statements such as the one Uncle Shad makes when he says "this here Freedom School ain't gonna be like no ordinary school" (n.p.) or when Mama tells Jolie to "stop fidgetin'" (n.p.). The realistic illustrations provide wonderful character portrayals that complement such phrases. Additionally, forms of address such as "Mama" and "Sis" are realistic. Uncle Shad's sentiments about not being able to sit beside a White man even though he had risked his life and got injured saving a White man are appropriate and indicative of the way many African American servicemen felt during this era. So are his thoughts about the importance of the younger generation trying to change things. A cohesiveness and determination within the community is indicated throughout this story, which includes numerous references to religion and the church, which is the center of this small community During their conversations, characters frequently refer to a higher power with statements such as "Lord, child" and "Praise God".

Some very interesting stories about African American cultural customs, traditions and contributions have been written that are based on research. The topics include the tradition of dancing the ring shout which is described in *Dancing the Ring Shout* (Siegelson, 2003), and the tradition of making sweet grass baskets woven into *Beauty, Her Basket* (Belton, 2004) which were both brought over from Africa by slaves. *Dancing the Ring Shout* (Siegelson, 2003) is the first picture book for children about the ring shout tradition (back jacket cover). In an Author's

Note, Siegelson provides brief background information and a list of five sources she used when writing the book. The researcher checked out these sources and others for additional information about the ring shout, which Floyd (1999) describes as a dance in which Africans pay homage to their ancestors.

Many of the stories in this section have musical connections. One such story is *Rent Party Jazz* (Miller, 2001), which incorporates the popular tradition of hosting rent parties in African American neighborhoods in the South during the 1920s and 1930s. Rent parties were fund-raising events originally organized by the church to provide a way to collect money to pay the landlord and avoid a tenant's belongings being thrown out on the street. According to Miller (2001, Afterword), rent parties not only provided a way for a tenant in financial trouble to raise money, they also gave young musicians such as Louis Armstrong a chance to play in front of a live audience. Rent parties became social events where entry fees were charged and food was sold. Miller notes that rent parties also "inspired numerous jazz compositions and works of literature, many by well-known musicians and writers such as Duke Ellington and Langston Hughes" (Miller, 2001, Afterword).

The songs mentioned such as "*Bourbon Street Rag*" and "*When the Saints Go Marching In*" are appropriate for the era and setting. Although Miller is not African American, his description of the community pulling together to help one another is realistic, as is the food served at the rent party. Most of the dialogue seems authentic with comments by Mama such as "I'll find me that job to keep us goin'" (n.p.) and "well, I'll be." However, when Mama says "You stay in school and learn everything you can-everything, so things will be better for you," the researcher suspects she would not have used the future "will," but would have said "so things be better for you."

Other stories, three of which are set in New York City, include *Happy Feet: The Savoy Ballroom Lindy Hoppers and Me* (Michelson, 2005), *Sweet Music in Harlem* (Taylor, 2004) and *Looking for Bird in the Big City* (Burleigh, 2001). *Sweet Music in Harlem* (Taylor, 2004) is based on a photograph taken in 1958 by Art Kane, a young photographer on his first assignment for Esquire magazine. The musicians invited to pose for the photograph included great musicians such as Charlie Mingus, Thelonius Monk, Dizzy Gillespie and Count Basie. The story was inspired by a T-shirt that Debbie Taylor's husband sometimes wore. On the front of the T-shirt was a reproduction of Kane's photograph and this prompted Taylor to research the

photographer and the story behind it. Information about *Sweet Music in Harlem* (Taylor, n.d.) indicates that Taylor "researched some of the jazz musicians in Art Kane's photography by watching videotapes, reading transcripts of interviews, and reading and listening to their music." Taylor decided to write a story about a young boy searching for his uncle's missing hat so he could wear it for that famous photograph.

According to Taylor, (personal email) one of the greatest challenges was limiting the number of places the protagonist would visit. She even imagined herself in Harlem, listening to the conversations. She decided the protagonist would visit a barbershop, diner and club, all of which were important locations in an African American community at this time. The barbershop was, and still is in many communities, an important part of an African American community. It often serves as a place where customers can discuss their problems and their dreams, and it also often distributes news and local gossip faster than the local newspaper. Customers at a diner in an African American community know that they will not be turned away nor forced to stand while Whites sit and eat, so there is a feeling of comfort that also comes from the home cooked food. The inclusion of a club was essential to the story since music was a vital part of Harlem.

The aspects that Taylor notes she likes best about the story are those related to cultural content. She comments that "what she likes best is the way that C.J. is encouraged to grow and pursue his endeavors" and she indicates that she identifies "closely with the spirit of camaraderie and community." The camaraderie, strong feeling of community, and the importance of encouraging other members of the community, especially young ones, to work hard and pursue goals, are evident throughout the story. Frank Morrison's acrylic artwork complements the story, because as the back jacket cover indicates, his work focuses on music, family and spirituality. This is Taylor and Morrison's first picture book and they have not only captured the essence of what it was like to live in Harlem during this period, but also the camaraderie and support found in close knit African American neighborhoods. The repartee and bantering and names such as C.J., Mattie Dee, Big Charlie Garlic, and Canary Alma and the terms of address such as Miss Alma are authentic.

A complete change of pace is provided in *Mim's Christmas Jam* (Pinkney, 2001), which weaves details about how African Americans and Irish and Italian immigrants worked to construct the New York City subway at the beginning of the twentieth century into a story about the love and pride connected to Mim's homemade jam. Upon reading *Mim's Christmas Jam*

(Pinkney, 2001), the reader might assume the story is based on recollections from childhood. However, the story is included in the research category because a note on the back jacket cover indicates the book's author and illustrator, Andrea Davis Pinkney and her husband Brian Pinkney, live in Brooklyn, New York and often visit the New York Transit Museum with their two children to learn about the subways. In addition to the illustrations which depict a warm loving African American family, the importance of family and pride in cultural heritage is indicated when Mim suggests making her traditional belly-hum jam. She tells Saraleen and Royce "the recipe for belly-hum has been in my family since slave time" (n.p.). Pride in family is evident as she continues "Nobody but my very own blood-kin can give the jam the special thing that makes it sing inside your belly. Family pride and love we have for one another are the main ingredients" (n.p.). Mim's jam plays an important role in the celebration of Christmas because it is also a celebration of cultural heritage and family traditions.

The dialogue includes some of the phonological features of AAVE including the pronunciation of the consonants "ng" at the end of two syllable words. In two syllable words such as drilling, pounding and blasting the "ing" is pronounced "in". There are other examples of AAVE such as Saraleen telling her brother "But he *ain't* here," (n.p.) when he complains that they are not able to go out and chop down a tree. Pinkney has infused the story with cultural content in the dialogue and values of the characters. The illustrations which the title page indicates are "done with luma dyes and acrylic on scratchboard" depict the characters with clothes and hairstyles suitable for the period in which the story is set.

Happy Feet: The Savoy Ballroom Lindy Hoppers and Me (Michelson, 2005) is a story about lindy hopping, which was popular in Harlem during the late 1920s and early 1930s that is based on research. The author, R. Michelson, indicated that his research, which included studying "old books, newspaper accounts and dance programs from that time period," was done primarily "to get the speech patterns down" (personal e-mail correspondence May 16, 2008). Michelson was successful in doing so. The author met Frankie "Musclehead" Manning, who was then in his 90s. "Manning told him that he "got the lingo 'just right, and he felt like he was back at the Savoy." (personal email dated May 19, 2008). Not only is the grammar and pronunciation authentic, so too is the style and rhythm.

Although he is not African American, the family Michelson created for the story is based on his own experiences. The story portrays feelings between a father and son that are universal,

yet Michelson succeeds in creating a story that includes cultural content. In an article about the book, Michelson notes the story is about a father who sacrifices his dreams of being a dancer to provide a stable life for his son. Michelson states this is similar to the way his father also made sacrifices for him (Michelson, 2006). In the story, love and admiration between father and son is obvious as the father picks up his son, spins him around and flips him in the air, while reminiscing about the night he was born.

The language is realistic with descriptions of the line waiting to get into the Savoy described as "snakin' down Lenox" (n.p.). This is a reference to Lenox Avenue, a well-known street in Harlem. The boy "waves to Stretch and Shorty" and thinks he may also see Musclehead, a lindy hop dancer. The narrator describes how Whitey sings "when folks are swinging, ain't nobody bettern than nobody," an example of the double negative. The description of Whitey "muggin' as he gives me some skin" is authentic language and refers to a greeting similar to a handshake. When a person greets another with "give me some skin," he holds out his hand flat with palm facing upward and the other person puts his palm on top of the greeter's palm and slides it towards himself, moving his palm along the palm of the other person from the wrist to the fingertips. The realistic soft muted watercolor illustrations by E. B. Lewis bring the story to life and accurately reflect the era.

One of the books about slavery that is based on research is written in a format specifically for very young children. The front jacket flap of *Jalani and the Lock* (Pace, 2001) indicates the book is based on the story of the lock that was used to shackle his great-great grandfather, Steve Pace. The lock was passed down and presented to the author at his father's funeral in 1991. The story traces his grandfather's capture in Africa, journey in shackles to America, life as a slave, and finally his death as a free man. It is based on Pace's great grandfather's biography and written with minimal text of one sentence or less on alternating pages containing very simple full-page color illustrations.

Generic Historical Fiction Based on Research

Not all historical fiction stories contain cultural content. Table 4.1 shows there are 6 books in the historical fiction based on research category that are classified as generic. Researching events that focus on African Americans does not guarantee that the story will contain authentic cultural content. In fact, two of the generic books in this category are written

by African American authors. However, sometimes books also lack African American cultural content when they are written from an outsider perspective by a writer who is unaware of cultural nuances. In the Afterword, Murphy, the author of *I am Sacajawea, I am York: Our Journey West with Lewis and Clark* (Murphy, 2005) indicates the story is written from the perspective of York, an African American slave and Sacajawea, an American Indian who was considered to be the property of a trader named Charbonneau. However, it is based on Lewis & Clark's journals of their expedition and the text contains nothing to indicate that it is written from the perspective of a slave. Rather it reflects the things that Lewis and Clark might have noticed such as the Nez Perce people calling York "Burnt Man" and petting him because they had never seen an African American before.

Unfortunately, nothing in the book indicates that *The Battle of New Orleans* (Evans, 2005) is based on research. However, upon contacting the author Freddi Williams Evans, a teacher's guide provided the answer to many unanswered questions about whether the story had been handed down from one generation to the next or was based on research. The Teacher's Guide includes an Author's Note that the publisher chose not to include in the book. In it, Evans provides information about the War of 1812 and the series of battles that took place and led to the Battle of New Orleans in 1815. Research for the story includes a handwritten autobiography by Jordan B. Noble, known as Old Jordan in the book. Thirty-six years later, he participated in the free veterans of Color parade and continued to participate in the city parades in New Orleans. Noble and his fife and drum core provided entertainment at city events and one of his drums is exhibited at the Louisiana State Museum (Teacher's Guide). The guide lists useful websites and books.

The story begins some time in the late 1800s but also includes Old Jordan's recollections of the Battle of New Orleans, fought on January 18, 1815. Noble was only fourteen years old when he "summoned the troops to action during the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815" (Teacher's Guide). Although it is written in the form of a poem, the story is included in the historical section. It provides a little information about the Battle of New Orleans and includes a glossary at the back with words such as "redcoats". However, it is a generic book that provides little if any indication, other than the illustrations, that any of the main characters are African American.

In the Afterward of *Looking for Bird in the Big City*, Burleigh informs the reader that it is a fictionalized account of the time when Miles Davis, then a "teenage music student," tried to find the saxophonist Charlie Bird Parker. Even though Burleigh does not cite any sources, the researcher classified *Looking for Bird in the Big City* (Burleigh, 2001) as historical fiction based on research because it is not a fictionalized memoir and the author, who is non African American, does not indicate that it is fictionalized family history of an African American relative. The back jacket flap notes Burleigh has "loved jazz music all his life," which may explain his desire to write a fictional story about jazz musicians. The story bears no resemblance to original footage of both Charlie "Bird" Parker and Miles Davis on PBS and the dialogue of the book does not reflect the way both jazz musicians talked. The story may have been more authentic if the writer had thoroughly researched and documented the research as Michelson did for his book *Happy Feet* (2005), described earlier in this section. Nothing in the text reveals that it is set in Harlem during the early 1940s. Were it not for the names Miles Davis and Charlie Parker and the illustrations, the reader would not know the story is about two African American jazz musicians. The illustrations provide some cultural content in their depiction of this era in Harlem by including billboards outside clubs named *New Café* and the *Three Deuces*, promoting not only Charlie Parker but also Lady Day and Dizzy.

Bark & Tim: A True Story of Friendship (Vernick & Gidaro, 2003), which is based on the paintings of Tim Brown, is not written from an African American perspective and does not contain cultural content in the text. According to the summary, the story is based on the paintings of Mississippi African American artist Tom Brown. Information about Tim Brown provided at the back of the book indicates he hopes people will look at his paintings and "think about how life was for a young black child growing up in the 1920s and 1930s" (n.p.). Unfortunately, nothing in the text reveals what it was like growing up as an African American during the 1920s and 1930s. Tim's paintings could easily be replaced by paintings with a young White boy and the text could remain exactly the same because there are no references to things such as the food he ate or the way his race shaped his life. Perhaps one of the reasons is because communication between the authors and Tim Brown were limited to correspondence and there were no movies that they could watch to gain information about what life was like for Tim Brown as there were for Michelson when he researched the lives of lindy hoppers for his book *Happy Feet: The Savoy Ballroom Lindy Hoppers and Me* (Michelson, 2005).

Another book based on research that lacks cultural content, even though it received the Coretta Scott King Honor for its illustrations, is *Rap a Tap Tap* (Dillon, 2003). The publisher, Blue Sky Press, indicates that it "tells the life story of a ground-breaking African-American tap dancer, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, who was one of the most popular entertainers of the 1920s-30s" (n.p.). However, the text, which is undoubtedly limited by the use of short simple sentences that alternate with the refrain 'Rap a tap tap – think of that!' has no plot. Most of the information about Bojangles comes from the Afterword, which indicates that Bill Robinson was an African American who lived from 1878 to 1949 and "is known as the greatest tap dancer of all time." During the depression era of the 1930s he was the "highest paid black entertainer." With the exception of the text indicating that Bojangles helped less fortunate friends and neighbors, it provides negligible information about Bill Bojangles. The repeating rhyme and simple illustrations of New York City during the 1920s and 1930s may inspire teachers or children to find out more about Bojangles who "made art with his feet" (n.p.).

Fictional Biographies with Cultural Content

Fictional biography may be contemporary or historical. Although the character is a real person, events and dialogue in the story are fictional. This study includes three fictional biographies, two of which contain cultural content (See Appendix O for a list of fictional biography books with cultural content and Appendix P for the name of the generic books). *Talkin' about Bessie: The Story of Aviator Elizabeth Coleman* (Grimes, 2002) is a fictionalized account of an African American female who followed her dreams, written in a series of poems. Using a variety of sources, each poem was created to represent a fictional account of her life written from the imagined perspective of family, friends and others who knew her. Even if the reader does not know Bessie Smith was an African American and did not look at the illustrations, many of the poems include references to things specific to African American culture. The introduction and additional notes at the back of the book informs the reader that Bessie Coleman was born in Atlanta, Texas in 1892. Bessie followed her dreams from the cotton fields of Texas to Chicago and France before returning to the U.S and doing what she always dreamed of doing – flying planes.

The recollections of one of her customers, a White woman, aptly depicts the disdain, if not outright hatred that many Whites had toward African Americans, or "Coloreds" as they were

referred to during this era. The customer praised Bessie's work and acknowledged that despite having to walk five miles to pick up and return the laundry, she was always reliable and delivered it every Saturday. However, the verse below illustrates the chasm between the two races and the sense of superiority of the White customer. Referring to Bessie, she recollected:

> She'd come to the back door, like they were supposed to in those days.
> But when I opened it, there this Colored girl would be standin',
> lookin' me straight in the eye, like we were just any two people
> meeting' on a street in town. You know, like we were *equals*.
> It was odd, I don't' mind tellin' you. (n.p.).

What seemed "odd" to this White customer was Bessie's determination that not only she, but also other African Americans, be treated as equals.

It is not surprising that this book won countless awards, including the Coretta Scott King Awards Honor Book for Author Nikki Grimes and also for Illustrator E.B. Lewis in 2003. Using a variety of sources, some of which are listed at the book of the book, Grimes transforms twenty individual free verse poems into the story of an African American female who despite hardship and discrimination, refused to give up her dream. She not only worked to attain her own dreams, she also lectured to inspire others to fulfill their dreams. E.B. Lewis's full-page light muted watercolor illustrations enable the reader to step back in time.

The other fictionalized biography with cultural content is also about a famous African American, this time an artist. *Me and Uncle Romie* (Hartfield, 2002) is an account of events that could have possibly taken place in Romare Bearden's life. The author, Claire Hartfield took basic facts about the life of a renowned African American and wove them into a believable story. The story contains cultural content not only because it is based on the life of Romare Bearden, a renowned African American artist, but also because of some of the details in the story. Out of all the places that James visited with Aunt Nanette, the area that he liked best was Harlem where he "played stickball with the kids," ran through the water spraying from the fire hydrant, and listened to street musicians. James loves the "people, the music, the rooftops, and the stoops," eating barbecue on a rooftop, and says that he "could *fee*l Harlem – its beat and bounce." James became close to his aunt and talked about his rituals with her. They included baseball games, train-watching, and his mother's lemon cake.

There are 46 historical fiction books in the study. Thirty-nine (85%) of the historical fiction books contain cultural content. There has been an increased interest in picture book tributes to artists and performers of the Harlem Renaissance, including stories about famous tap dancer Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, artist Romare Bearden, and lindy hoppers such as George Ganaway and Frank Manning who are mentioned in Michelson's book *Happy Feet: The Savoy Ballroom Lindy Hoppers and Me.* These tributes to famous African American Americans are a refreshing change to books about slavery.

Generic Fictional Biographies

Elizabeth's Song (Wenberg, 2002) is a fictionalized account about Elizabeth Cotton, an African American guitarist, folk singer and songwriter who wrote the popular song *Freight Train* when she was only eleven years old. In an Epilogue, the author provides a brief biography of Elizabeth and her unique way of playing the guitar upside down and left handed. The story tells how Elizabeth combined thoughts about her brother and the sound of the train which both inspired her to write the song *Freight Train*. Wenberg depicts how a warm, hard working, loving African American family entertain themselves and their neighbors by getting together to "play banjo, fiddle and guitar" (n. p.). The story, which is based on research, is written by a non African American, and not from the perspective of an African American. Some of the language such as the deletion of "g" in two syllable words ending with "ing" such as "shakin" (n.p.) and "goin'" and comments such as "I wait until that ol' Number 9 gets close" seem realistic. However, the researcher doubts that Mr. McDougal, the White owner of McDougal's Dry Good and Sundries, would have been so friendly to African Americans in the early 1900s. He greets Elizabeth and her mother with "What can I do for you fine ladies," which seems to be an unrealistic greeting for a White shopkeeper to give to an African American during this era.

Contemporary Realistic fiction

Contemporary realistic stories are set in a time and place that could exist and contain characters that resemble real people. Realistic fiction provides an opportunity for readers to see themselves reflected in literature and also to see different lifestyles. Although realistic fiction can be categorized by genre or topic, stories can often be classified into more than one category. There are 75 contemporary realistic picture books included in this study, 25 (33%) of which contain cultural content.

Contemporary Realistic Books with Cultural Content

The titles of contemporary realistic fiction books with African American cultural content can be found in Appendix Q. Some of the contemporary realistic books with cultural content in this study provide details about African heritage and convey information about customs and traditions rooted in Africa. This includes a focus on the heritage and pride associated with the experiences of growing up Black in America. Some are limited to celebrating holidays such as Kwanza while others, especially picture books about family and everyday experiences such as going to the barbershop, delve deeper into and portray the heart and soul of African American life and culture.

Four books in this section provide information about customs, traditions and heritage. *Grandma's Ashanti Cloth* (McNaught, 2003) and *Missing You* (Vision & Vision, 2004) focus primarily on heritage whereas *The Baby on the Way* (English, 2005) and *My First Kwanzaa* (Katz, 2003) focus more on traditions. *Grandma's Ashanti Cloth* (McNaught, 2003) includes a note on the back page stating the author hopes "this book will be an inspiration for our children" and "that they will learn all they are able to, about their proud and ancient heritage." The focus of the story is the main character, Malik using a piece of kente cloth given to him by his grandmother to trace his roots to Ghana.

The authors of *Missing You* (Vision & Vision, 2004) indicate that it is about a young girl "trying to live a righteous life" (Vision & Vision, 2004, back jacket flap). The story highlights the fact that family members are connected to one another and how personality traits and characteristics are passed from one generation to the next. The main character is a young African American girl whose younger sister is "intelligent, determined and strategic" (n.p.), just like her grandmother, and whose oldest sister is "articulate and knows how to communicate in a wise uplifting way" (n.p.), which is also a reflection of her grandmother's temperament. The story alludes to spirituality throughout the book. One example is when the young girl's father refers to all of his children as "gifts of God" who "bring pieces of his mother to life everyday" (n.p.). Although death and spirituality are difficult concepts for young children to understand, this book shows young children that other youngsters have many unanswered questions.

The Baby on the Way (English, 2005) begins with the protagonist, Jamal, asking his grandmother if she was ever a baby. The significance of the African American oral tradition that preserves and celebrates heritage is evident as several family traditions surrounding the birth of a

baby are woven into the story. The protagonist's name Jamal is culturally specific and forms of address such as Big Sis' and 'baby,' which is how Grandma addresses Jamal even though he is at least 4 or 5 years old, are examples of authentic cultural content. Information about traditions is provided as Grandma explains that Aunt Nannie," the unofficial midwife, delivered all of Grandma's brothers and sisters with the help of her "birthin bag full of secret things" (n.p).

My *First Kwanzaa* (Katz, 2003) is the first in a series of picture books intended to introduce very young children to the way different cultures celebrate holidays. The brief text introduces the reader to Kwanzaa, a celebration observed by some African Americans, by explaining traditions such as the use of the kinara or candleholder in which a candle is placed for each day of Kwanzaa. The book, which is written for very young children, provides limited information about Kwanzaa.

Three books in this section *Bippity Bop Barbershop* (Tarpley, 2002), *No Bad News* (Cole, 2001) and *Hot City* (Joose, 2004) provide information about the community and the feeling of solidarity and friendship in the urban locations in which the stories take place. Two of the stories, *Bippity Bop Barbershop* and *No Bad News* demonstrate the sense of camaraderie and community found in an African American neighborhood barbershop. Although *Bippity Bop Barbershop* is illustrated with oil paintings and the media for *No Bad News* are black and white photographs digitally enhanced with additional color, both books exemplify the ambiance of many local African American neighborhood barbershops. The author of *Bippity Bop Barbershop*, Natasha Tarpley tells readers "I wore my hair in a short natural – about an inch long all around – for several years" (Tarpley, 2002, Author's Note). Even though few women went to the barbershop, Tarpley sometimes went there to get her hair cut and enjoyed watching what she describes as "the rituals surrounding our hair" (Author's Note). So she decided to capture the bond she saw between the men at the barbershop. The result is a sensitive story filled with cultural content that depicts a warm and loving bond between a father and his son and the feeling of community and camaraderie within the barbershop.

The barbershop in both stories is a meeting place where they just 'hang out' with other customers playing checkers, watching television or just talking to one another. The atmosphere is inviting and the customers feel as if they are at home. The terms of endearment in both stories are similar. *Bippity Bop Barbershop* opens with Miles' father asking "You up Little Man? In *No Bad News* a man on the street addresses Marcus as "Hey, lil man". The use of AAVE is evident

in both barbershops and includes comments such as "What's going on?" when Miles enters the barbershop in *Bippity Bop Barbershop* and "Why the long face? It must be 'cause he's gonna miss all his hair" in *No Bad News.* The names Miles and Keyana in *Bippity Bop Barbershop* and Marcus in *No Bad News* are also authentic. So too, are references to the tools of the trade such as using a pick (a comb used on African American hair) and the names of hairstyles such as fade' and 'wave' on pictures hanging on the wall displaying different hairstyles.

A very different everyday life experience is portrayed in *Hot City* (Joose, 2004), which contrasts the "sizzlin' hot" streets of a city in summer time with the cool of the library. Minimal text restricts the opportunities to fully develop the characters and to use the text to indicate the main characters are African American. Aside from the illustrations, there are few indications that Mimi and Joe are African American. AAVE is blended into the dialogue in the pronunciation of huffing and nothing as 'huffin' and 'nothin' (n.p.), but no other examples of it are included. Because there is more emphasis on the heat, the relationship between Mimi and her brother Joe is not given as much attention as it is in other books that focus on family relationships. Although there are no in-depth details about the library, the reader senses the welcoming atmosphere, which provides a place to not only escape the heat, but also the boredom of a hot summer day.

Although many of the picture books with African American cultural content include family relationships, they dominate the seven books described below. A young girl named Hope is the main character in *Family* (2001) and *Blackberry Stew* (2005), which were both written by Isabell Monk. *Family* is Monk's second book about Hope, who was introduced to readers in Monk's first book about her entitled *Hope* (Monk, 1999). In the first book readers learn that Hope's mother is African American and her father is Caucasian but comments by relatives such as "is the child mixed?" are not included in subsequent books (Monk, 1999, n.p.). Although Hope is the protagonist in all three stories, Aunt Prudence, also known as Aunt Pogee, is also essential to both stories in this study. Aunt Pogee's farm is the setting for *Family* and is where the loving bond between Hope and Aunt Pogee is developed. Their relationship continues in *Blackberry Stew,* which also includes memories of Hope's Grandpa Jack. The setting for *Blackberry Stew* is Grandpa Jack's funeral, for which the family had all gathered. Hope's love for her grandfather is obvious as she and Aunt Pogee recall the time they went blackberry

picking with Grandpa Jack last summer. Aunt Pogee even makes blackberry stew to eat after the funeral, in Grandpa's memory.

Both stories include cultural content that includes references to traditional African American food. When Hope's cousin Gregory, who likes to be the center of attention, volunteers to say the grace before the meal he says "Good greens, good meat, good grief, let's eat!" This gets him in trouble with some of the adults and cousin Celestine says a more appropriate grace before the meal. Celestine prays "May we continue to be blessed with good times, good food and loving family." This sentence sums up the whole book, which illustrates a warm, loving family enjoying each other's company and the food each one has brought. The language is authentic with comments such as Aunt Pogee telling Hope's father "Come on over here, David, and give me some sugar." She does not mean sugar literally, but is referring to hugs and kisses.

Another story about a relationship between a niece and her aunt is *Auntee Edna* (Smothers, 2002), which the front jacket flap appropriately describes as a "warm story about kinship and family heritage." It is the author's first picture book and succeeds in creating an entertaining story illustrating the importance of family. As Tokee and Reba prepare to visit their Aunt Edna, their mother warns them not to call her old-fashioned, which is what they think she is because she does not have a television set. The reason their mother gives them for the visit is "you need to get to know your people" (n.p.). Although many of the aspects of this story are universal, some culturally specific content is subtly woven into the story. Learning about one's heritage is especially important to African Americans, most of whose ancestors arrived here as slaves. Unlike European Americans, many cannot pinpoint the specific country from which their relatives came; only that it was on the continent of Africa. Relationships between young and old are especially important to many African Americans. With more African American families moving to the suburbs, fewer families live in the same neighborhood. This necessitates more planning to nurture intergenerational relationships, which is perhaps the reason Tokee's mother arranged to have the girls spend the night with their aunt. By the end of the story, the girls have enjoyed the simple pleasures of baking teacakes and getting their hair curled with paper bag rollers. As they wonder what they will do tomorrow, they think "old-fashioned stuff wasn't too bad after all. Neither was Auntee Edna" (n.p).

The *Jones Family Express* (Steptoe, 2003) portrays a relationship between a nephew and his aunt. African American cultural content is subtly woven into this story that depicts a warm,

loving and realistic relationship between members of an extended family. There are references to Granddad and his "secret barbecue sauce that everybody knows the secret to" (n.p.) and the reader learns that "Granddad liked to tell long stories" (n.p.) which undoubtedly involved tales of when he was a young boy and stories that keep the African American oral tradition alive. When Aunt Carolyn sees Steven, who is old enough to go to the store and buy a present, the language includes the culturally authentic greeting "How's my little man doing?"(n.p.). Although he has previously won a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award, this is Javaka Steptoe's first book as an author. He is the son of the late John Steptoe, a pioneer in children's books about African Americans and the author and illustrator of *Stevie* (1969), one of the books in Sims study.

The title of *Gem* (Kallok, 2001) is significant because it is not only the name given to the narrator's baby sister when she is born, it is also the name that Bluesy Walker, the next door neighbor, gives to the songs he composes on his saxophone. The story centers on the relationship between an unnamed girl and her mother who is about to give birth. Just like Hope in *Family* and *Blackberry Stew* discussed earlier, the young unnamed protagonist in this story is biracial. In this story the girl's father is African American and her mother is Caucasian. Most of the cultural content in the story is provided by Bluesy Walker, who the narrator describes as a "tall, tall black man" (n.p.). Bluesy's language includes comments such as "Girlfriend! Put it there!" (n.p.), an authentic African American greeting and he also greets her with a "high five." Later in the story Bluesy and the young girl's father greet each other with a "special handshake," another authentic greeting in African American communities.

Although *Grandma Lois Remembers* (Morris, 2002) is about a relationship between a grandmother and her grandson, the story also includes cultural heritage, customs and traditions as Grandma Lois passes on information to 8 year old Erick about what things were like for her when she was growing up. Grandma likes to share her photo album with her grandchildren and tell stories about the family. She remembers growing up in Birmingham, Alabama and having to "ride in the back of the trolley" (n.p.). She tells her grandchildren that she remembers the time when Blacks were not allowed to live in the same neighborhoods or go to the same schools as Whites. She recalls they were not allowed to "mix with Whites" in restaurants, on buses, trains or trolleys, and had to drink at separate water fountains. Grandmother Lois describes how her family went to church on Sundays, which were special days for her. After church, they ate traditional African American food consisting of fried chicken, sweet potatoes, collard greens,

corn and sweet potato pie. At dinnertime on Sundays, the house was always full of people. Grandma loved to help her mother cook and still makes her special sweet potato pie, especially during the holidays. The book not only includes a recipe for the sweet potato pie, but also the lyrics to *Amazing Grace*. This story exemplifies the importance of oral tradition and how information about family traditions and cultural history is passed from grandparents to grandchildren. The story also provides information about what life was like during the era of segregation in the south and the important role that religion, community and traditional foods played.

Another book about a relationship between a grandmother and grandchild is *My Nana and Me* (Smalls, 2005). This time the grandchild is a girl and the two enjoy playing tea parties and hide-and-seek. The young girl also enjoys combing and plaiting her Nana's hair and dressing up in "Nana's Sunday hat and shoes" to put on a show. Cultural content includes references to combing and plaiting her Nana's hair and Nana calling her "baby girl" even though she is big. The story celebrates the love between Nana and her granddaughter and the book is dedicated to Irene Small's own Nana, "who taught me 'I love you Black Child.'" A similar book, *Honey Baby, Sugar Child* (Duncan, 2005) is also limited by minimal text and describes a warm loving relationship that focuses on the love of a mother for her child. It is another book with cultural content that includes references to religion, in lines such as "Honey, baby, / Sugar Child, / Lord knows / I love you so" (n.p.). Some of the language includes dialect such as: "I wanna/ squeeze ya, / kiss ya, / till the sugar's gone. / yo smile is my sunshine. I see them cheeks, / them eyes, that grin." Later she writes "Sugar Child, / Sweet Puddin' n' Pie, / Lord knows/ it's true what I say." The illustrations, which include oil painted scenes of an African American mother and son with realistic skin tones and hair textures, depict them happily playing, eating, running and jumping together.

As early as the middle of the eighteenth century, when books published for children began to include realistic fiction, most of the protagonists were White and middleclass (Temple et al., 2002). It was not until the 1970s that children's books began to focus on social problems such as parents facing drug addiction, gang warfare, poverty, and racism. Temple et al. (2002) credit Shelton Root with introducing the term "New Realism" to describe realism that no longer avoided or tried to hide some of the harsher realities of life. Since the 1990s, books have increasingly depicted disturbing social situations, with characters facing problems that are not

solved by the end of the story, and may never be solved. Five books in this study depict a variety of social problems. They include a mother who is bipolar (*Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry*, Campbell, 2002), a daughter visiting her father in jail (*Visiting Day*, Woodson, 2002), and a grandmother with Alzheimer's (*Singing with Momma Lou*, Altman, 2002). *Our Gracie Aunt* (Woodson, 2002) is about a brother and sister removed from their home by social services and *Stars in the Darkness* (Joosse, 2002) is about living with a brother who joins a gang. All of these stories deal with difficult, poignant situations and are about children leading unhappy lives. Although none of the stories hide the harsh realities of the situations experienced by the protagonists in them, they also demonstrate the tenacity and determination of the characters in the stories.

Two of the stories are about mental disorders. *Singing with Momma Lou* (Altman, 2002) is about Alzheimer's and *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry* (Campbell, 2002) is about bipolar disorder. *Singing with Momma Lou* delicately handles the difficulties encountered by a family dealing with the universal problem of a devastating illness. According to the back jacket flap, this poignant story that portrays the destruction and cruelty of Alzheimer's disease is based on the author's own experiences of her mother suffering this debilitating, age-related disorder, for which there is no cure. Even though Alzheimer's is not a disease that primarily afflicts African Americans, like sickle cell anemia, cultural content is woven throughout the story.

The terms of address, such as addressing or referring to Tamika's grandmother as "Momma," are authentic. The language, which includes comments such as "You're skinny as a stick, child. Folks not feeding you?" (n.p.) is appropriate. Cultural details, such as the music mentioned, are identifiable as part of African American culture. Although others may sing it, the song "*We Shall Overcome*," an anthem of the civil rights movement, holds a special significance for African Americans. When Momma Lou sings it, the rest of the family and many of the nursing staff, nursing home residents, and their visitors join in. This brings back memories of the civil rights movement and reminders that the fight for equality continues. When they visit her, gray haired Momma Lou sits with her chin resting on "gnarled hands" (n.p.), singing "hymns and spirituals, blues and soul." (n.p.). She sings "They call me skinny, but I'm really just doggone tall…" which she tells Tamika is 'Skinny Blues,' a song she wrote when she used to sing in the bands and choirs. Because Alzheimer's tends to wipe away short-term memory more than long term, Momma recalls events from her past such as participating in civil

rights rallies and listening to Martin Luther King speak, as if they happened yesterday. Throughout the story references are made to those and other events that hold great significance for African Americans.

Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry (2002) by the late Bebe Moore Campbell is a poignant story that combines the amazing talents of Bebe Moore Campbell with the beautiful soft, subdued watercolors of E. B. Lewis. In her Author's Note, Campbell states that the book "was written to address the fears and concerns of children who have a parent who suffers from mental illness." She hopes that the book "offers children an opportunity to develop resistance by introducing or reinforcing coping strategies." When Deirdre Donahue of USA Today interviewed Campbell the week that *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry* was released (Mommy tackles an adult topic article retrieved from www.usatoday.com/life/books/news/2003-09-29-campbell_x.htm on 20 July, 2008), Campbell told Donahue she "wanted to write a book for 'outsider' children – children who don't have happy childhoods." Additionally she noted "mental illness for people of Color is even more devastating. This is another stigma; they often end up not in hospitals but in prison or homeless." This book is invaluable for children facing similar problems with a relative suffering from a mental illness. The story demonstrates resilience under adverse conditions with the support of her grandmother. It also illustrates the important role that hair plays in African American culture. Either by coincidence, but probably by design, the special bond that develops when Annie's mother brushes her hair is depicted in the illustrations. On the title page Annie is shown brushing her own hair, but on the last page her mother is combing her hair during a visit.

The special bond that develops between an adult and child during the hair care process is also depicted in *Visiting Day* (2002) written by Jacqueline Woodson and illustrated by James Ransome. A double page illustration with no text shows Grandma combing and braiding her granddaughter's hair as they prepare to visit the girl's father in prison. The little girl faces a problem that many children face, that of visiting a close family member - a father, uncle, or even mother - in prison or jail. Unfortunately, the percentage of young African American children dealing with this situation is much higher than that of non African American children. In 2006 Blacks were almost three times more likely to be incarcerated than Hispanics and five times more likely than Whites to be in jail (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d).

Although statistics are changing, matriarchal families in which the grandmother holds the family together are prevalent in the African American community. According the 2000 U.S. Census, which reported over four and a half million living in grandparent headed-homes, thirteen percent of all African American children were living with grandparents compared to eight percent of Hispanic children and four percent of all Caucasian and Asian children (Goyer, 2006). The characterization of Grandma is realistic. In the Authors Note, Woodson indicates that she is a lot like her own grandmother. Even though visiting her son must be painful for her, Grandma tries to keep her spirits up and prepares food for the long trip. When the story opens she is frying chicken at 6:00 a.m. Traditional African American food is significant in this and other books in this study. During the bus trip, the little girl notes they are "all passing around fried chicken, cornbread, and thick slices of sweet potato pie, until maybe we think we were going to pop." The food provides more than nourishment; it helps to make the journey bearable by sharing not just food, but also conversation. All the passengers on the bus are African American, possibly all going to the prison to visit family.

Another book by Jacqueline Woodson describes a different social problem faced by family members. Many of Woodson's books are about issues seldom addressed in picture books and *Our Gracie Aunt* (Woodson, 2002) provides insight into a situation with which many children are familiar. It is the problem of being removed from their families by social services. *Our Aunt Gracie* is the story of two children taken from their mother because of abuse or neglect and placed with Aunt Gracie, their mother's sister who they have not seen for a long time. The story opens with Bernadette, whose nickname is Beebee, "in the kitchen making sandwiches" (n.p.). When there is a knock at the door, Beebee tells her younger brother "Don't open that door, Johnson" (n.p.). The story includes examples of authentic vocabulary, grammar and syntax. For example, when Miss Roy returns the next day and tells them they must open the door, Beebee replies "Not for strangers, we don't" (n.p.). Later when Johnson and Beebee are talking about the possibility of being taken into foster care, Johnson asks "They have toys in foster care, Beebee?" (n.p). Aunt Gracie provides not just physical comfort, but also emotional support as she tells the children it's good to cry because "crying washes you out inside."

There is not a 'happily ever after' ending. Just as the walls of self-protection are gradually coming down, especially for Beebee who is more reluctant to accept Aunt Gracie's love and affection, Miss Roy arrives and takes them to visit their mother. No details are given to

indicate where the mother is, other than "Miss Roy drove us to a tall building" and told them "You go right in there to the first room." One suspects it is a residential treatment center for drug or alcohol abuse, or possibly a mental health center. Although *Our Gracie Aunt* includes culturally conscious language, it also depicts feelings with which non-African Americans in foster care can identify and children who have no experience with child protective services can empathize.

The soft, realistic watercolor illustrations contribute to the cultural authenticity of the story. Although hair is not mentioned, when the story opens Beebee's hair is sticking out on either side of her head and does not look as if much time has been spent caring for it. After the children move in with their Aunt Gracie, Beebee's hair is shown braided and by the end of the book is worn in cornrows; a hairstyle that requires considerable time to style that indicates someone is spending time caring for Beebee.

A different social problem is presented in *Stars in the Darkness* (Joosse, 2002), which Joosse explains stems from conversations with a young man named Richard who was in a gang (2002, Author's Note). Joose states that she wrote a picture book, rather than a novel, because she wanted to "reach the little brothers and sisters. They're the ones 'who know what they know.' They are the stars in the darkness" (Joose, 2002, *A Note from the Author*). The title of the book is based on the way in which the young unnamed boy and his mother try to imagine they are the moon when they hear sirens sound and shots fired. They pretend the lights are the stars, the sirens are howling wolves and gunshots are "stars crackin' the darkness" (n.p.).

The terms of address, dialogue and vocabulary are realistic. Mama's conversations with Richard include questions such as "Boy, where you been?" when he returns home after staying out all night, and "What's with you hangin' with Oscar and Cisco?" (n.p.), indicating her concern that he is associating with gang members. When the narrator finds the ball in his room, referring to the basketball he asks "Whose rock is that?" (n.p.). Various phrases illustrate the authentic use of AAVE such as when mama tells Richard, "We're having us a talk" (n.p.) or the narrator writes "Richard don't come home at night. And he's walkin' that walk, like he's King Stuff" (n.p.). While the topic is an unusual one for a young child's picture book, there are many children who live in environments where gangs dominate the neighborhood and countless young children witness their brothers and sisters enticed into gangs. A list of resources, including various websites that provide information on gang protection, is included at the back of the book.

It is a good book to use when talking with young children who are encountering similar problems with gangs in their neighborhoods, or older brothers or sisters no longer abiding by parental or societal rules.

Two aspects of physical beauty that are important in a young African American girl's self concept are hair and skin color. Skin color and hair are frequently discussed in adolescent fiction, but skin color it is seldom mentioned in picture books. In contrast, not only do picture books include references to hair, it is sometimes the topic of the story. Although several books about hair are currently on the market, only one realistic contemporary picture storybook about hair, *Of Corn Silk and Black Braids* (Johnson, 2005), and one book of poems, *Crowning Glory* (Thomas, 2002) were published during the period of this study. Written by a pediatrician who also enjoys writing, *Of Corn Silk and Black Braids* begins with Sarah, a young African American girl, who has got her hair wet while playing in the rain. Although getting one's hair wet seldom creates problems for children with straight hair, for many African Americans it results in the hair being very difficult to comb and becoming "like a sea of stiff wire" (n.p.). Sarah's mother tries to remedy the situation by braiding Sarah's hair. When Sarah sees her reflection in the bedroom mirror, she is not happy with the braids, which she thinks look ugly with so many strands of hair sticking out.

The importance of hair in African American culture can be seen when Aunt Lubelle visits the next day and spends all afternoon fixing Sarah's hair for her. During this ritual Sarah tells Aunt Lubelle how much she hates her hair and how she wishes she had hair like Mary Beth, a young Caucasian girl. Aunt Lubelle finally finds the right hairstyle for Sarah when she makes tiny "braids in little rows hugging her scalp from front to back and then hanging down to her shoulders". The cornrows, which are a traditional style that originated in Africa, are created by tightly braiding the hair very close to the scalp. Sarah finally thinks she looks beautiful when she sees the little beads at the end of the cornrows.

When Sarah sees Mary Beth Sarah, she is surprised to learn that Mary Beth also has problems with her hair and her mother has often talked about getting it cut shorter. In addition to the illustrations, which inform the reader that the characters are African American, braiding hair into tiny cornrows with beads at the end is more culturally specific to African American girls than it would be a young Caucasian girl. Additionally, children are less likely to talk about having "good hair" unless they are African American. Although skin color is not mentioned,

references to her ethnicity are included when Sarah's aunt is described as "A tall, sassy African American woman." Other cultural content include the use of the word 'baby' when Aunt Lubelle asks her sister, Sarah's mother, "Sylvia, what have you done to my baby?", even though Sarah is probably in elementary school.

There is one contemporary realistic picture book about music that has cultural content. *Jazzy Miz Mozetta* (Roberts, 2004) weaves several elements of culturally conscious content into the story which begins with Miz Mozetta opening the parlor window of her apartment and declaring "An extraordinary evenin', if I do say so!" and deciding to "take a stroll" (n.p.). Hats are very important to many African American women, especially hats worn to church. They make a statement and there is frequently a story behind them. Hats are important to Miz Mozetta. After looking at her numerous dresses, she picks a bright red dress with a hat to match, aware that "*this* hat is *sayin'* something.

The story is culturally authentic and illustrates the community spirit and camaraderie of a close-knit neighborhood where people have grown up together. Neighbors do not hide themselves in their apartments, but sit outside, drinking lemonade and playing checkers. Terms of address and names such as Mr. Willie, known as Wildcat Willie and Miz Lou Lillie are authentic, as is the dialogue that contains comments such as "makes me want to dance, too" and "let's cut a rug!" Names such as the Fat Cat Band and the Blue Pearl Ballroom conjure up stories about Harlem in the 1920s. The bright, bold, exaggerated illustrations complement the story.

The contemporary realistic picture books category includes several books about friendships. *Hot Day on Abbott Avenue* (English, 2004), which takes place on a hot summer day in an urban setting, is a story of friendship that has its ups and downs. The African American cultural content enables the reader to experience the sense of community that is present where Renee and Kishi live and to feel the involvement of the neighbors. The text indicates that Renee and Kishi's behavior is the concern of everyone in the community, including Miss Johnson, Mr. Paul and the mailman. The idea that child rearing extends beyond the nuclear family is customary in many African American neighborhoods. Although Miss Johnson is not officially babysitting the girls, there are indications that she spends a great deal of time on her porch watching them play together, and would not hesitate to intervene if she saw them doing

something dangerous or inappropriate. When she sees that Renee and Kishi are mad at one another, she tries to help them solve the problem.

Although the story is realistic, the collage cut and paste illustrations are not. They are too exaggerated and not very attractive, over accentuating characteristics such as the girls' broad noses and thick lips. However, it would be easy for young girls to identify with the main characters' argument about something trivial to others but important to them. The author is a second grade teacher who has a good understanding of how second graders think and act and knows how easy it is for young girls to quickly become friends again. Culturally authentic language is evident when Miss Johnson asks the girls if they are still mad, and instead of using the auxiliary verb "to be" as it is used in mainstream English, says "You girls still mad?" (n.p.). Later she tells Kishi and Renee "Come on over here and help me with my crossword puzzle. You know how long it takes me when I don't have you-alls help" (n.p.) Jumping double dutch is a favorite of many young African American girls, especially with the jump rope chant *Miss Mary Mack* sung by the girls, a long time favorite of many African Americans.

Fly (Myers, 2002) is the story of a friendship that develops when the protagonist Jawanza meets an old man on the rooftop of his apartment. *Fly* is one of very few recently published picture books that describe skin color positively in the text. When Jawanza sees Mr. Montgomery caring for pigeons on the rooftop, the reader learns that "he is wearing a white hat" (n.p.) and "his skin is dark brown, the color of church wood, and sharp at the edges" (n.p.). Unlike some imagery used to describe skin, there are no references to food, but the reference to church is a positive one. The allusion to sharp edges, although not a positive description, reflect Mr. Montgomery's personality, which is not smooth. An analysis of the text reveals authentic dialogue between Jawanza and the old man in this story about a friendship that gradually develops between two lonely people. As a conversation about the pigeons develops between them, the dialogue includes comments by Mr. Montgomery such as "In general, they're good peoples" (n.p.). Other authentic comments include telling Jawanza "Boy, you need to learn how to listen with your mouth closed. We don't need to flap our lips to communicate."

The name Jawanza is an African name that means "dependable." The terms of address are authentic and include the old man referring to Jawanza as "Young blood" and addressing him as "Mr. Joe-wanza" or "Boy" (n.p.). Signs of a developing friendship are indicated in the way they address one another. When he addresses Jawanza as "Boy" he is lecturing; but when he

calls him Mr. Joe-wanza, he is being facetious about the name Jawanza, yet at the same time, giving respect by the use of the term "Mr." AAVE is apparent not only in the vocabulary and terms of address, but also the phrases and proverbial sayings, such as the expressions "flap our lips"(n.p.) and "God gave you two ears and only one mouth, because he wants you to listen more than you talk!" (n.p.). Other authentic language includes descriptions of a pigeon named Newk. The old man tells Jawanza that "Newk's got bebop in his blood. He be boppin' his head up and down when he walks" (n.p.). The old man's manner is gruff and not very approachable; one can understand why he may not have many friends. The potential for a long-term relationship developing between this lonely old man and lonely young boy is suggested. They both have few friends for different reasons, but begin to share a common interest in the pigeons. Myers grew up in Harlem and is cognizant of some of the circumstances in the story, such as a mother who has to work and a young boy confined to his apartment because of the unsafe environment in which they live. Unable to venture out alone for fear of gangs and drug dealers, he has few opportunities to develop friendships outside of school. The rooftop is his only escape.

Contemporary Realistic Generic Books

Of the 67 contemporary realistic books included in this study, 45 (67%) are generic. (See Appendix R for a list of generic contemporary realistic fiction books). The 45 generic contemporary realistic picture books cover a range of topics, including stories about every day life, friendships, music, and humorous fiction. They are primarily about family, friendships and everyday life. Some generic picture books such as Little Bill books were discussed in the Beginning Reader and Board Book section, but others do not fit either of those categories. Excluding the Little Bill books previously discussed in the board book section, there are 11 additional Little Bill books based on the TV series of Little Bill. Little Bill was created by Bill Cosby and is part of the Nick Jr. series shown on TV on the Nickelodeon network. The subjects include everyday experiences, such as a thunderstorm, going to the dentist, the hospital, a farm, and dad's office. Other topics include apprehension about having a new substitute teacher, writing an imaginary story, searching for Little Bill's pet hamster named Elephant, cleaning up the house and being afraid of noises in the night. There is also a book about Valentines Day, one about Halloween, and another about Sports Day at school. There is little cultural content in the Little Bill books.

Even though 'African American' is listed in the subject index of many of the books included in this study, several books portraying African American protagonists are classified as generic. The protagonists include Jabari in *Has Anybody Lost a Glove?* (Johnson, 2004), David in *David's drawings* (Falwell, 2001), and Daniel in *Candy Shop* (Wahl, 2004). Some of the protagonists are unnamed, such as the African American boy who explains what the various cars of a freight train are carrying in *My Freight Train* (Rex, 2002) or the young African American male protagonists in *Yesterday I Had the Blues* (Frame, 2003), *Setting the Turkeys Free* (Nikola-Lisa, 2004), and *Christmas Makes Me Think* (Medina, 2001). One of the books that depicts family relationships is *Hickory Chair* (Faustino, 2001) which is a touching story about the close relationship between a young African American boy, named Louis, who has been blind since birth and his grandmother. The boy's blindness is essential to the story, but the ethnicity of the characters is not. *Ghost Story* (Crews, 2001) is an interesting story that is illustrated with photographs depicting a relationship between an uncle and his nephew.

Young African American girl protagonists are also portrayed in generic picture books. They include Ruby in *Rhyme Time, Valentine* (Poydar, 2003), Brianna in *Brianna Breathes Easy* (Kroll, 2005), which is a story about asthma, and Cutie La Rue in *Sleeping Cutie* (Pinkney, 2004), which is about a young girl's dream. *In the Heart* (Turner, 2001) and *What Does the Sky Say?* (Carlstrom, 2001) both feature an unnamed girl. Books depicting family relationships include Daisy in *Squashed in the Middle* (Winthrop, 2005), which as the title implies is about a middle child and *Two Old Potatoes and Me* (Coy, 2003) which is primarily about growing potatoes, but includes a father and his daughter. *Think Cool Thoughts* (Perry, 2005) is set on the rooftop of an apartment in a large city and the main characters are Angela, her mother and her mother's sister, Aunt Lucy. *Lulu's Birthday* (Howard, 2001) focuses on how Laura and Matthew celebrate their Aunt Lulu's birthday. Even though the illustrations depict an extended African American family, there is nothing in the text to indicate that the family is African American and it is a universal story.

Flower Girl Butterflies (Howard, 2004) describes the events leading to Sarah's Aunt Robin's wedding. Although this book is written by Howard, who has written many books with African American cultural content, the illustrations portray a diverse African American family, but the text does not contain cultural content. *Bear Hug* (Pringle, 2003), which is the second book about the same African American family, describes a camping trip taken by Jesse, his sister

Becky and their father, includes no cultural content. Some of the picture books in this section focus on interracial friendships. One such book is *Brianna, Jamaica, and the Dance of Spring* (Havill, 2002). This is the sixth book in a series of books about Jamaica, a young African American girl who attends an ethnically diverse ballet class and lives in a multiethnic neighborhood. The focus in this story is more on Brianna, an Asian American girl than it is on Jamaica; and the story contains no cultural content. Another picture storybook with an interracial relationship, this time between a principal and a troubled student, is *Mr. Lincoln's Way* (Polacco, 2001), which takes place in a school and emphasizes learning to be tolerant of differences. *Mr. George Baker* (Hest, 2004) is also about a relationship between an adult African American male and a young White boy. Mr. George Baker, who is one hundred years old, is the young boy's neighbor and the two have become good friends while riding the school bus together. Another book about a relationship between an adult and a young child is *Destiny's Gift* (Tarpley, 2004). Although Tarpley has written several culturally conscious books, in *Destiny's Gift* most of the evidence of African American culture comes from the illustrations, rather than the text. The story is set in a bookstore and many of the books on display are by or about African Americans and Africa. They include books such as *Sweet Potato Pie* (Lindsey 2003), which is included in this study, and books about Malcolm X or subjects such as braiding hair and African dances, but no African American cultural content in the text.

Country Kid, City Kid (Cummins, 2002) is a story about a friendship between Ben who lives in the country and Jody who lives in the city. It is reminiscent of Aesop's fable *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* (Watts, 1998). The primary purpose of this book seems to be to explain to readers that people can be friends despite their differences. *Loki and Alex* (Smith, 2001) also deals with friendship, but this time it is the friendship between Alex, a young African American male, and his dog Loki. Even though Smith, the author and photographer, and Alex are African American, the story meets the criteria for a generic picture book because the fact that Alex is African American is not essential to the story. Some generic picture books written for very young children, providing positive images of African Americans engaged in every day activities, contain a limited number of words, often no more than five or six words on a page. A minimal number of words makes it difficult to create a book with African American cultural content in the text. Examples of such books include stories in which the main characters are African American toddlers such as *Peekaboo Morning* (Isadora, 2002), *Please, Baby, Please*

(Lee & Lee, 2005), and *Please, Puppy, Please* (Lee & Lee, 2005). Many of the generic picture books have no story line, contain no African American cultural content in the text, and consist of photographs of very young African American children. Three books, *Sweets & Treats* (2002) and *Snowflakes and Gingerbread Smiles* (2002), both written by Toni Trent Parker, and *Look at the Baby* (2002), which is Kelly Johnson's first book for children, are examples of such books. *Busy Fingers* (Bowie, 2002) uses realistic pastel chalk illustrations to depict children of various ethnicities, but includes no African American cultural content in the text.

As music is often considered a universal language, it is perhaps not surprising that five of the generic picture books in this study are about music. The stories include *My Family Plays Music* (Cox, 2003), *Violet's Music* (Johnson, 2004) and *Got to Dance* (Heldorfer, 2004), in which the protagonist is a young African American girl. Only one of the books in this section includes the Library of Congress subject descriptor 'African American' and that is *Got to Dance*. Not only does the text give no indication that the main character is an African American girl, even the illustrations make it difficult to discern that she is African American. *John Coltrane's Giant Steps* (Raschka, 2002) concentrates on describing Coltrane's music rather than providing information about his life. If the reader did not already know it, neither the text nor the illustrations indicate he was African American. Some books feature an African American protagonist; but the story is not only generic, it has little to do with the protagonist and is not a story, but a celebration of nature or other subject. An example is *It Is the Wind* (Wolff, 2005). The main character is a young African American boy living in a rural area, but the story is about sounds the boy hears the wind making. Nothing in the book provides African American cultural content and the main character could have been a child of any ethnicity.

Five of the generic picture books in this study, including *Makeup Mess* (Munsch, 2001) and *Up, Up, Down* (Munsch, 2001) are humorous stories. All 5 stories are illustrated with cartoon-like caricatures and with the exception of *Let George Do It,* written by former heavyweight boxing champion, George Foreman, all the protagonists are young girls. *Makeup Mess* is a story about Julie, a young girl who along with her brother is illustrated as Black, while her mother and father are White. On his website, the author, Robert Munsch who is White, indicates the story is about his daughter Julie Munsch, who is not White. *Up, Up, Down* is a story of three unnamed sisters who, on his website, www.robertmunsch.com, Munsch indicates are named Anna, Java, and Chandra James, who live near Munsch. Unlike the author, they are

also not White but are not necessarily African American. However, their ethnicity has no impact on the story and there is nothing in the text to suggest that the children are African American. *Lauren McGill's Pickle Museum* (Nolen, 2003) does not list "African Americans" as the subject. Although the illustrations depict an African American protagonist, there is no African American cultural content in the text or dialogue. *Lauren McGill's Pickle Museum* is about a young girl's school trip to a pickle museum. Another humorous story in which the main character is a young African American female is *School Picture Day* (Plourde, 2002), which focuses on the antics of Josephina Caroleen Wattasheena the First, a student in Mrs. Shepard's class. Josephina is depicted as an African American with overly exaggerated features and hair sticking up out of her head. The story contains no African American cultural content.

Summary

This chapter categorizes the picture books in the study as beginning readers, stories in rhyme & poetry, historical fiction, biographical fiction and contemporary fiction. Books in the historical fiction section are subdivided into fictionalized memoirs, fictionalized family history and books based on research, which includes fictional biography. Books in some of these categories are grouped and discussed according to subject matter. For example, the main focus of books in the historical fiction - memoir category is race relations, family, and friendships. Books based on research are primarily about slavery, education or cultural customs. The major topics of contemporary realistic fiction are heritage, customs & traditions; everyday life, family, social problems, self-concept, music and friendships. The cultural content contained in the books is discussed throughout the various categories and subdivisions and a section about generic picture books is also included. Chapter 5 will discuss findings, compare similarities and differences between the books in Sims' study and those in this study, and compare a few individual books from Sims' study with comparable books in this study.

CHAPTER 5 - FINDINGS

Introduction

The researcher's experience teaching, taking graduate classes with other teachers, and volunteering in the classroom, has confirmed that some teachers and school librarians are unaware of the differences between picture books with African American cultural content and generic picture books. Despite good intentions, few seem cognizant of the attributes or features of African American culture contained in picture books with African American cultural content. Consequently, they frequently use books that are generic. Some seem reluctant to use multicultural literature and feel uncomfortable using African American children's literature. Books about African Americans are still primarily identified by the illustrations and teachers seldom scrutinize the text for details that represent the diversity of African American culture.

When teachers are aware that there is a difference between generic books and books with African American cultural content, they can choose books for their classrooms that allow African American students to make connections between home and school as well as provide non African American students with information about African American culture. Some teachers are unaware of the importance of providing mainstream students with books that contain African American cultural content. Using Bishop's (2008) metaphor of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors, books with African American cultural content not only provide a mirror for African American children to see themselves in the characters in books with African American cultural content, they also provide a window for non African American children to see the culture of an ethnic group with which they may otherwise have no contact. The findings from this study will assist teachers, educators and others who work with or care for young children by creating an awareness of the difference between generic books and those that contain African American cultural content. This content analysis of the text of children's picture books with African American characters, published between 2001 through 2005, describes and provides examples of African American cultural content contained in the books. The descriptions of African American cultural content in books in this study provide examples that teachers can use when analyzing

books for use in their classrooms. The analysis will help teachers to determine whether a book contains African American cultural content or is a generic book.

Types of African American Cultural Content

Research Question 1: What African American cultural content is included in the text of children's picture books published during the years 2001-2005?

The African American cultural content contained in books in this study was found to be described by seven categories: (l) language (including names, nicknames and terms of address), (2) family relationships, (3) physical characteristics of African American identity (including references to skin color and hair), (4) African American historical and cultural traditions, (5) African American traditional food, (6) religion, (7) sense of community based on a shared heritage and common bond

As described in Chapter 3, the categories were not predetermined, but were allowed to evolve as the study progressed. Similarities between recurring features of African American cultural content in this study and African American cultural content discussed in Sims' (1982) survey are shown in Table 3.1. Ninety of the 199 books (45%) analyzed in this study contain African American cultural content. Some books contain only a few features of cultural content while others contain cultural content in almost all of the areas listed. Consequently the number of recurring features totals more than 90. Table 5.1 provides a breakdown indicating the recurring features of cultural content contained in the books in this study and the number of books in which that feature occurred. The subsections that follow provide additional detail on each category of cultural content.

Table 5.1 Cultural Content Contained in Books in this Study

Language	Family Relationships	Physical Characteristics	Historical & Cultural Traditions	Food	Religion	Sense of community
71 (78%)	65 (71%)	32 (35%)	78 (86%)	29 (32%)	33 (36%)	18 (20%)

Language

As indicated in Table 5.1, one of the most frequently recurring feature of African American cultural content in the portrayal of African American culture is the use of language, in particular AAVE. The use of grammar, pronunciation, rhetorical devices, and terms of address specific to African American culture is evident in 78% of the books that contain cultural content. The amount of culturally specific language included in a book may be no more than the use of a few names and terms of address or the entire book may be written in AAVE. Grammatical features of AAVE, as described in Chapter 4, are evident in many of the picture books.

Family Relationships

Another recurring feature of African American culture is the way in which African American families are portrayed in picture books with African American cultural content. A variety of family relationships, especially between different generations, are portrayed in the picture books with African American cultural content. As shown in Table 5.1, 65 books (71%) with African American cultural content include portrayals of relationships between two or more family members. In at least one third of the books with African American cultural content, the relationship between the family members is the main focus of the story. In other books, family members are included, but the relationship plays a less significant role. Some stories with African American cultural content portray relationships between an aunt or uncle and their niece or nephew. Others focus on the importance of relationships between a grandparent and grandchild, or even a great grandparent and great grandchild. The most frequently recurring family relationship portrayed in the picture books with African American cultural content in this study is that between a grandmother and her granddaughter, which is depicted in 8 of the books with African American cultural content.

Physical Characteristics of African American Identity

Cultural content is sometimes woven into the text of picture books in allusions to physical attributes, such as hair and skin color. Thirty-two of the 90 books (35%) with African American cultural content contain references to skin color and hair. Most of the references to skin color are neutral such as the reader's introduction to Emma, the main character in *The Hard Times Jar* (Smothers, 2003). The first line of the story begins with "Emma rolled belly-flat. Chocolate-brown feet stuck up over pots and pans." (n.p.). However, there are few positive

references to skin color in the books in this study with African American cultural content. Since the late 1990s there has been an increase in the number of books that include references to African American hair in children's literature. Not only are there references to hair but also hair care products, preparations and tools used to style African American hair. Many of the products that African Americans use on their hair are different from those used by European Americans. Some contain a great deal of oil, and some even have a unique aroma such as smelling like coconuts. A reference to the texture of many African Americans' hair and the importance of viewing one's hair positively is included in several of the books with African American cultural content in this study. Finally, some of the picture books in this study indicate that getting one's hair braided is not always a pleasant experience.

African American Historical and Cultural Traditions

African American historical and cultural traditions encompass a variety of subjects, some of which are discussed in other categories. For example, the language category includes the use of certain terms of address. As shown in Table 5.1, 78 picture books (86%) with African American cultural content make references to diverse historical and cultural traditions, many of which can be traced back to Africa or the era of slavery. Many African and other cultures do not use the written word to hand down historical and cultural information. This oral tradition was especially important for African Americans during the era of slavery when slaves could be punished for learning to read or write. The importance of storytelling is evident in many of the books in this study, not only in books categorized as non historical fiction based on memoirs but also books in other categories. At least 15 books are set during the era of slavery or mention slavery in the text. African American music that has its roots in Africa and is often a blend of African and European influence is mentioned in 18 of the stories with African American cultural content. This includes music as diverse as jazz, blues, spirituals, soul, and rap music. Closely related to African American music are dances rooted in Africa and sometimes influenced by European traditions. Four of the books with African American cultural content in this study provide information about the Gullahs. The Gullahs live in the Low country of South Carolina and Georgia and can trace their ancestors back to the coast of West Africa when they were captured and brought to America during the 1700s and 1800s.

African American Traditional Food

As indicated in Table 5.1, African American traditional food is a recurring feature of African American cultural content that emerged during the research. Food is an aspect of African American culture that is woven into both adult and children's literature and references to it are woven into 29 of the picture books (32%) with African American cultural content in this study.

Religion

Many of the picture books with African American cultural content in this study demonstrate the resilience and strengths of African American families and the importance of religion. Most references to religion are in historical fiction books in this study, but some are also woven into books in other categories. Thirty-three of the books (36%) include at least one reference to religion or the belief in a higher spiritual power (see Table 5.1).

Sense of Community Based on a Shared Heritage and Cultural Bond

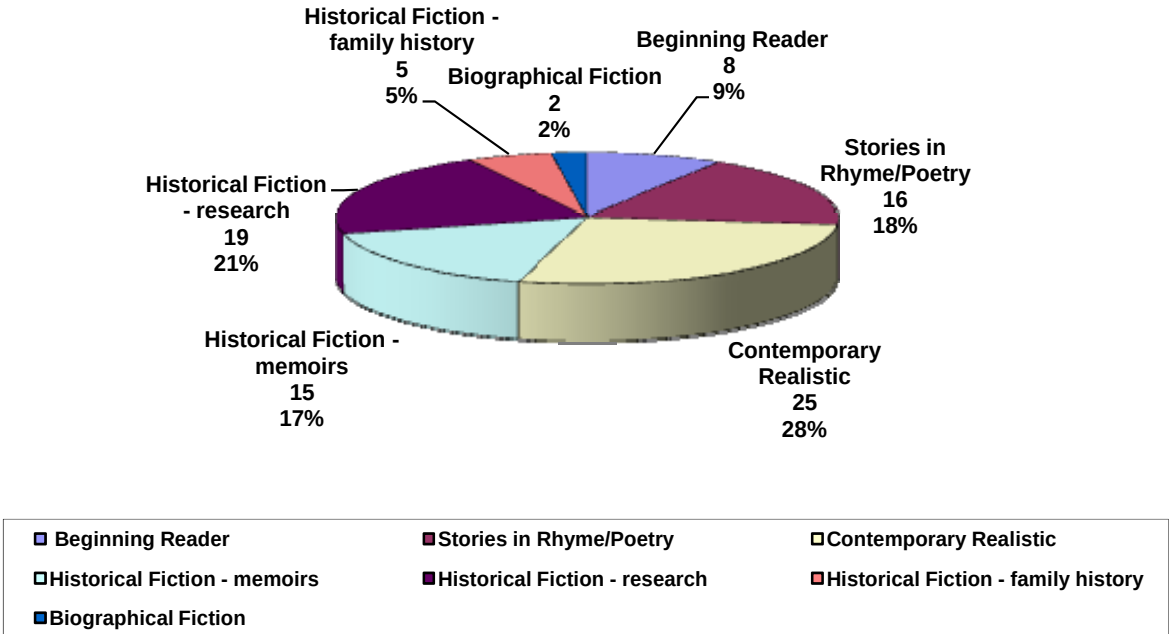
Another less tangible aspect of African American culture is the important role that the sense of community plays in the lives of many African Americans. Eighteen books (20%) of the picture books with cultural content depict the sense of a shared heritage that can create a sense of community among African Americans. One of the themes that can be found in a number of books with African American cultural content is that of celebrating African American community. Some of the books in this study that contain the most African American cultural content are those set in a close-knit African American community. The solidarity of an African American community is portrayed in a number of books with African American cultural content in this study.

Methods Used to Integrate African American Culture

Research Question 2: How is African American cultural content woven into the picture books in this study?

The elements of African American cultural content that are woven into some of books in this study and the way the cultural content is incorporated into the books in the study is frequently shaped by the category of the picture book. Figure 5.1 shows the breakdown of books in the various categories of picture books included in this study.

Figure 5.1 Books in this Study with African American Cultural Content by Category



As illustrated in Figure 5.1, the category of picture books with African American cultural content that contains the most books in this study is Contemporary Realistic Fiction (27%). Historical Fiction- Research (21%), Stories in Rhyme/Poetry (18%), and Historical Fiction - Memoirs (17%) also account for a substantial number of picture books that include African American culture. Beginning Readers (9 %), Historical Fiction- Family History (5.5%), and Biographical Fiction (2%) account for the least percentage of picture books that include African American cultural content. African American cultural content can be woven into the setting, the plot and storyline, the characters, dialogue and theme. Although the focus of this research is a textual analysis, in many picture books the setting is provided by a combination of illustrations and text. The setting is extremely important in historical fiction, and in many of the stories the setting provides much of the cultural content. Settings used in this study include stories that took place during the era of slavery, deal with the impact of racial discrimination, or take place in close-knit African American communities.

In other cases, the African American cultural content is an inescapable part of the plot and storyline. If the family in *Grandmama's Pride* (Birtha, 2005) were not African American,

for example, Grandmama would not need to invent reasons to walk instead of riding the bus, and Mama would not need to create reasons why sitting in the back of the bus is better than sitting at the front of the bus. Both Mama and Grandmama shield their children and grandchildren from the cruel reality of segregation, but at the same time impart something to their children that segregation tried to take away, which is their pride.

In some stories the African American cultural content is provided by the characters. Determination and pride in the face of racial discrimination is evident in Grandmama's character in *Grandmama's Pride* (Birtha, 2005). Sometimes the cultural content is intermingled in the relationships among characters. The African American tradition of respecting older members of the family and community is evident in stories such as *Singing with Momma Lou* (Altman, 2002) and *Janna and the Kings* (Smith, 2003). Sometimes the characters' names also indicate that the characters are African American, or possibly African. Using African or Islamic names became popular with some African Americans during the Civil Rights era, and certain names were prevalent in some African American communities. Examples of this are names such as Jawanza, Kishi, and Tanisha. In *Sometimes My Mommy Gets Angry* (Campbell, 2003) the young main character gives her bear the culturally specific name B.B. King.

As indicated in Table 5.1, African American cultural content is woven into the language of 71 books in the study, usually in the dialogue. Informal vernacular, pronunciation, specific phrases, syntax, and nicknames or the terms of address can inform the reader that the characters are African American. The language and dialogue is an essential element of many of the stories with African American cultural content in this study. The use of terms of address such as "Little man", "Li'l man", "Girl", and "Baby" which provide African American cultural content in the books in this study, have already been discussed earlier in the chapter in response to the first question. So too have examples of signifying and verbal repartee which is woven into some of the stories with African American cultural content.

In 65 books with African American cultural content in this study, the central theme focuses on interactions between family members and intergenerational relationships. Even the titles of some of the books such as *Family* (Monk, 2002), *Singing with Momma Lou* (Altman, 2002), and *Grandma Lois Remembers* (Morris, 2002) indicate that the story is about family life. Some stories intertwine aspects of African heritage that includes the language and craft of the Gullahs in books such as *New Year Be Coming: A Gullah Year* (Boling, 2002), *Circle Unbroken*

(Raven, 2004) and *Beauty, Her Basket* (Belton, 2004). Other themes that run through many of the picture books is the importance of freedom, not just from slavery, as in stories such as *The Patchwork Quilt: A Quilt Map to Freedom* (Stroud, 2005), and *Liberty Street* (Ransome, 2003), but freedom to choose where one sits, eats, or drinks in stories such as *Freedom on the Menu* (Weatherford, 2005), *Sweet Smell of Roses* (Johnson, 2004), and *Going North* (Harrington, 2004). Other stories that weave themes of freedom include *Stars in the Darkness (*Joosse, 2001) in which the young unnamed narrator longs to be free from the gang violence that surrounds the neighborhood where he lives.

Comparison between African American and non African American Authors

Research Question 3: When comparing African American and non-African American authors, what differences, if any, are evident in the books categorized as generic or books with cultural content?

Table 5.2 Comparison of Content of Books by African American and Non African American Authors

Category	African American Author	Non African American Author	Total Books
Generic Books	47 (43%)	62 (57%)	109
Books with Cultural Content	78 (87%)	12 (13%)	90
Total Books	125	74	199

As indicated in Table 5.2, 78 (87%) of the picture books in this study with African American cultural content were written by African Americans. This is not surprising because it is difficult for authors to write outside of their own culture. Those who are successful research their subject, have strong ties with African Americans, or ask an African American to provide valuable input. Of the twelve books with African American cultural content written by non African Americans, the setting for four books is the researchable subject of the era of slavery. Two books are about Kwanzaa, also a researchable subject. Two stories *Hot City* (Joosse, 2004) and *Stars in the Darkness* (Joosse, 2002) are set in a city. *Stars in the Darkness* is about gang violence and the impact that it has on a family when one joins a gang. It is based on a true story and in the Afterword Joose tells the reader that she met the gang member upon whom the character Richard is based and she wrote the story for the siblings of gang members. Deleting

the ‘g’ to indicate the pronunciation of words such as cooking (cookin’) is used by several non African American authors to incorporate African American expressions into the books in this study.

In an article about language, Nikola-Lisa (1995), who is not African American, describes his interest in African American expression and praises the way Virginia Hamilton, uses grammatical structure, idiomatic expressions and folk imagery to incorporate the rural South into her work. In *Summer Sun Risin’* (Nikolai-Lisa, 2002) the only African American cultural content present is the inclusion of words such as sleepin’ and fishin’ in which the ‘g’ is omitted. The limitation of writing in rhyme, especially when it consists of a four-line verse with no more than four or five words to a line on each page, makes it very difficult to create a book with African American cultural content.

Most of the remaining picture books with African cultural content written by non African Americans are on researchable subjects about which authors of children’s books have not previously written. In *Circle Unbroken* (Raven, 2004), the author shows her admiration for Gullah culture. Numerous resources are listed in the bibliography at the end of the book, which suggests the author thoroughly researched the subject. A researchable subject not previously written about in children’s picture books is the focus of *Rent Party Jazz* (Miller, 2001). In his Afterword, the author provides details about how informal rent parties became popular in African American neighborhoods in the South during the 1920s and 1930s. Michelson, another non African American, successfully weaves cultural content into the story *Happy Feet: The Savoy Ballroom Lindy Hoppers and Me* (Michelson, 2005). Michelson researched background information and even contacted Frankie “Musclehead” Manning, one of the lindy hoppers included in the story, to ask him if the language was authentic. He acknowledges watching old movies of the lindy hoppers and seems to have absorbed some of the mannerisms and language of the lindy hoppers and included it in his book. With significant research and knowledge of African American culture it is possible for a non African American to write authentically and include cultural content in the text.

As shown in Table 5.2, 62 out of the 109 (57%) generic picture books are written by non African Americans. Some of them are by well-known authors, such as Marzollo and Munsch who write about universal experiences. For whatever reason, the main characters in some of their books are Black, although not necessarily African American. They include books such as

the books in the Shanna series. Sometimes the characters may be African American because the author worked in partnership with an African American illustrator. In this study, 6 of the 68 generic picture books written by non African Americans are illustrated by African Americans who may have chosen to illustrate the characters as African Americans even though the story was not written with that intention. In contrast, 8 of the 12 books with African American cultural content written by non African Americans are illustrated by African Americans.

It would be inaccurate to assume that all the generic picture books in this study are written by non African Americans. Forty-seven of the 109 (43%) generic books in this study were written by African Americans. Of this number, 12 are minimal text or are stories in rhyme, which reduces the opportunities to include African American cultural content. They include books such as *Please, Baby, Please* (Lee, 2002), and *Snowflakes and Gingerbread Smiles* (Parker, 2002), both of which contain limited opportunities to weave African American cultural content into the stories but sometimes incorporate it in the illustrations. Some generic picture books are written by African American authors such as Nikki Grimes, Virginia Hamilton, and Anastasia Tarpley, who also write stories full of African American cultural content.

A Comparison of Sims' Survey and Nephew's Study

Research Question 4: How do the findings of this research compare with the findings of Sims' 1982 survey of books published during the years 1965-1979?

Although this present study, referred to as Nephew's study, was inspired by the book *Shadow & Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction*, written by Rudine Sims (1982), there are differences as well as similarities between the two studies.

Both studies began with similar purposes. The intent of this study is to explore African American cultural content reflected in the texts of recently published picture books, specifically children's picture books published between 2001 and 2005. Its purpose is to assist teachers, educators and others who work with or care for young children by creating an awareness of the difference between generic books and those that contain African American cultural content. Sims' intention was to indicate the "range of values and attitudes to be found in modern children's fiction about Afro-Americans (Sims, 1982, p. vii) and to "provide classroom teachers, librarians, and teacher-educators in the field of children's literature with information that will

enable them to make better informed selections of literature for and about Afro-Americans" (Sims, 1982, p. vii).

Differences in methods make a direct comparison of the two studies impossible. This study was limited to picture books, Sims' survey was not limited to picture books and only 65 culturally conscious books, (73% of the 89 culturally conscious books in Sims' survey) are picture books. The picture books included in Sims' survey are listed in Appendix S. In contrast, all of the books (199) in Nephew's study are picture books and 90 (45%) of those include African American cultural content. This study classified books according to the literary genre to which they belong and also classified them as either generic or books with African American cultural content. Sims classified the books in her study by theme and also classified them as social conscience, melting pot and culturally conscious. As indicated in Table 5.3, the social conscience category of Sims' study, which does not correspond to any of the categories in this present study, contains only one picture book. The melting pot category in Sims' survey, which is very similar to the generic category of books in this study, contains 35 of the 65 picture books (54%) in her study. The culturally conscious classification used by Sims is interchangeable with the cultural content classification used in this study. The books in Nephew's study as (see Table 4.1) are classified into 5 categories. These categories are (1) beginning readers, (2) stories in rhyme and poetry, (3) historical fiction which is subdivided into historical fiction based on family history, historical fiction based on memoirs, and historical based on fiction-research, (4) fictional biography, and (5) contemporary realistic fiction. As described in Chapter 3, Sims classified the culturally conscious books (which were not limited to picture books in her survey) into seven categories. They are (1) African and "down home" heritage and traditions, (2) common everyday experiences, (3) surviving racism and discrimination, (4) living in the city, (5) friendships and peer relationships, (6) family relationships, and (7) growing up and finding oneself.

Table 5.3 Picture books in Sims' Survey

Book Category	African American Authors	Non African American Authors	Total
Social Conscience	0	1	1
Melting Pot	6	29	35
Culturally Conscious	21	8	29
Total	27	38	65

Both studies classified the recurring references to African American cultural content in the books. Table 5.4 below shows the similarities between the recurring features in this study and those in Sims' survey. The recurring features in Sims' survey (1982) were (1) language, (2) relationships between young and old, (3) extended families, (4) descriptions of skin color, (5) names, nicknames and terms of address, (6) Afro-American historical and cultural traditions, and (7) religion and other belief systems. The categories in Nephew's study were not predetermined, but were allowed to evolve as the study progressed. The most visible recurring features in the text of picture books with African American cultural content in this study were: (1) language, (2) family relationships, (3) physical characteristics of African American identity (4) historical and cultural traditions, (5) African American traditional food, (6) religion, and (7) sense of community based on a shared heritage and cultural bond.

Table 5.4 Comparison of Recurring Features of Cultural Content in this Study and in Sims' Survey

Recurring Feature of Cultural Content in this Study	**Recurring Feature of Cultural Content in Sims'(1982) Survey (see note)**	**Comments**
Language including Names, Nicknames & Terms of Address	Language (Sims p. 68-69) Names, Nicknames, terms of address (Sims, 1982, p. p. 71)	The recurring features of Language and Names, Nicknames and Terms of Address were merged into one in this study.
Family Relationships	Extended Families- (Sims, 1982, p. 69-70)	In comparison to Sims' survey, this study includes mother/daughter and father/son relationships. Sims focuses on non-parental relationships.
Physical Characteristics of African American Identity including Hair and Skin Color	Descriptions of Skin Color (Sims, 1982, p. 70-71)	This study includes hair as a physical characteristic, while Sims' makes a reference to hair in her African and "Down Home" Heritage and Traditions group (1982, p.52).
African American Historical and Cultural Traditions – includes oral tradition, significance of quilts, traditional respect for older people, pride and determination in the face of racism and discrimination	Afro-American Historical and Cultural Traditions (historical traditions and contributions e.g. music, escaping slaves (Sims, 1982, p. 51-53) Relationships between Young and Old (Sims, 1982, p. 69)	
African American traditional food	not included	Although not specifically mentioned in Sims' survey, it may be considered a "down home" tradition
Religion	Religious and Other Belief Systems	
Sense of Community based on shared heritage and cultural bond	not included	

Note: Sims' survey included seven major groups and identified various recurring features of cultural content.

As shown in Table 5.1, the most frequently recurring features found in the text of picture books with African American cultural content in this study involved historical and cultural traditions (85% of the books), and language which included culturally specific names, nicknames, and terms of address (78% of the books). Family relationships, including many intergenerational relationships, were included in 71% of the books. Fewer books (35%) included descriptions of skin color or hair. This study includes 16 books in which hair is a significant part of the story or references to hair are woven into story. In contrast, the subject of hair is the focus of only one book, *Cornrows* (Yarbrough, 1979) in Sims' survey and hair is mentioned in very few of the books in Sims' survey.

As Table 5.4 illustrates, the category 'African American traditional food' is one that emerged as the study developed. African American traditional food was not a category in Sims' survey, although she does include "down home" traditions, of which food can be considered a part. However, few picture books in Sims' survey mention food in the text. Twenty-nine books (32%) of the books in this study include references to traditional African American food. Some of these references not only include the food served, but also the memories, feelings of togetherness, and group identity associated with the food.

Another emerging feature of African American cultural content is the sense of community based on shared heritage and cultural bonds category that also emerged from reading the books in the study. This category represents an abstract concept that is in the text of a number of the books in this study. It includes descriptions in the text that portray this sense of camaraderie and community as 'seen and felt' in locations such as the local barbershop or downtown Harlem. This almost intangible element can be experienced by African Americans from all walks of life. It can be as simple as the man outside the liquor store drinking from a bottle wrapped in brown paper bag saying "Hey, li'l man!" in *No Bad News* (Cole, 2001) or the camaraderie evident in the barbershops in *Bippety Bop Barbershop* (Tarpley, 2002) and *Janna and the Kings* (Smith, 2003). The bond can also be seen and felt in African American communities in locations such as barbershops and segregated urban neighborhoods where the solidarity can provide protection against the harsh realities of life.

Time and space do not permit comparing all the picture books in Sims survey with all the books in this study, but a comparison of two books about the same subject, one from each study,

may provide insight into the similarities and differences. *Crowning Glory* (Thomas, 2002), which is included in this study, and *Cornrows* (Yarbrough, 1979) from Sims' (1982) survey, both celebrate African American hair and describe different ways it can be styled. Despite the passage of more than two decades between the publication of *Cornrow*s and *Crowning Glory*, both of which are narrated by African American girls, common threads are immediately evident.

In *Cornrows,* the interaction is primarily between the narrator, Shirley Ann, her mother and her Great Grammaw. The narrator, Shirley Anne, called Sister by everyone, describes some of the wonderful stories that Grammaw and her mother tell as they braid hair. The text intertwines religion, authentic language, and pride in African heritage. It weaves references to the accomplishments of great African Americans such as W. E. B. DuBois and Aretha Franklin into the story, illustrates close bonds between grandmother and granddaughter as well as mother and daughter, and demonstrates the importance of the oral tradition.

In the book '*Crowning Glory',* the title is a reference to African American hair, which the poems describe positively as "my crown" or "halo of a crown." The text and illustrations seem more personal as they portray the bond that develops when female relatives of different generations get together to style hair. The opening poem, entitled *Tenderness*, tells how the narrator's mother, a hairdresser, used to hum when she plaited her hair as a little girl. The second poem describes her mother "Stirring the roots with knowing fingers" and using a hot curling iron to curl her sister's straightened hair. Descriptions of the narrator's great grandmother, who teaches her how to use black twine "winding the thread / through the hair on her head," to strengthen the hair and to "keep the loose ends together" are included. One poem describes how her aunt liked to add color by wrapping "the cloth tightly / around her head" (n.p.). Family relationships and ideals of beauty and concepts of identity are woven into the poems. One of the fourteen poems in the book raises the question of good hair versus bad hair as the young narrator asks her father "what is good hair" but before he answers, her mother replies "if it's on your head it's good," an affirming statement for all young African American girls who think their hair is "bad" if it is not long and straight. For some African Americans, hair is considered 'good' when it closely resembles Caucasian hair, is easy to care for, long, and straight. [Ironically, the day the researcher was writing this section of the study, she took her eight year old daughter to get her hair trimmed. When the stylist, who is African American, finished cutting her daughter's hair, she commented. "She's got good hair". This comment

brought to mind the fact that almost every time an African American makes comments about her daughter's hair, they use the term 'good hair' but when Caucasians make comments they use the word 'pretty'.

Crowning Glory not only provides descriptions of hairstyles, but also includes a poem about Glory's Beauty Shop and one about the wig worn by her grandmother. The topic of hats, which holds a place of reverence for some African American women, is also the subject of one of the poems. Complete books have even been written about the importance of hats to African American women. There is more focus on the narrator celebrating the joy of being an African American female than on the historical significance of cornrows. An Author's Note indicates the pastel illustrations include portraits of her daughter and seven granddaughters. The book does more than describe different ways to wear or decorate hair. It also celebrates not just the hair and hairstyles, but the experiences that create relationships when mother and daughter, or grandmother and daughter, or even aunt and niece spend time together styling hair.

The books in Sims' survey include very few references to religion and other belief systems. The exception is the book *Scat* (Dobrin, 1971). The main character is Scat, and when his grandmother dies he visits her grave and recalls how she told him "to listen to the spirit, not the letter!" (an allusion to words in the Bible). At her funeral "there was a lot praying" and later as he remembers his grandmother he again recalls how she told him "The Bible says to follow the spirit – not the letter". Scat's grandmother disapproved of jazz music and said "a jazz funeral is the Devil's work". Apart from the references to religion in Scat and in *Cornrows* (Yarbrough, 1979), the books in Sims' study do not contain remarks such as "Praise the Lord", or "Lord have mercy".

There have been changes in the format and content of some children's books since Sims conducted her survey. Board books and beginning readers with African American characters are now available that provide positive images with which very young African American children can identify. Many of them use the illustrations to celebrate African American beauty, but some also use words such as 'honey' 'licorice' and 'ebony' to positively describe skin color. Subjects that may have been taboo during the 1960s and 1970s are now included in children's books published since the new millennium. They include the difficulties encountered by a protagonist whose grandmother has Alzheimer's disease, a main character whose mother has bipolar disorder or a young girl visiting her father in prison.

Books are frequently influenced by the era in which they are written and this is apparent in some of the content in the books in Sims' survey. The books in Sims' study were written during the mid 1960s to the late 1970s, which was a time of turbulence and change for many African Americans. Some books included in Sims' survey include references to Black Power, the Black Panthers, and the Black Muslims. In *Uptown* (Steptoe, 1970), John and Dennis go to 135th Street and stop to look the dashikis and kufti (traditional Islamic attire) in the window of a bookstore. The man who works there talks to them about Black people and Black pride. He teaches them how to say "Al-salam Alaykum," a traditional Muslim greeting that means peace, which sometimes loosely translated into the equivalent of "what's happening." Although the term Black Muslims is not used, given the location and the era, the man is more than likely a Black Muslim. None of the books in Sims' survey focus on events related to the civil rights movement, but the text in one of the books includes references to Dr. Martin Luther, Jr. In *My Brother Fine with Me* (Clifton, 1975), eight-year-old Johnetta is glad when she thinks her brother Baggy has run away. She says "I felt just like Dr. King say, free at last."

The setting for many of the stories in this study was the civil rights movement era, which would have been considered contemporary fiction during the period of Sims' study. Several books in this study focus on the impact of the civil rights era. They include books such as *Sweet Smell of Roses* (Johnson, 2004), *Freedom Summer* (Wiles, 2001), *Singing for Dr. King* (Medearis, 2004) and *Freedom on the Menu* (Weathers, 2004). The picture books in this study do not include references to Black Power or Black Muslims. The books in this study include more allusions to the sense of camaraderie and community encountered in locations such as the barbershop. The settings in the books in this study include more examples of friendships between young children and their adult neighbors such as in *Hot Day on Abbott Avenue* (English, 2004) or *Little Cliff's First Day of School* (Taulbert, 2001). The dialogue includes more greetings such as "Hey, Little man" and bantering that indicates a sense of family within the community.

A feature that was the subject of three books in this study and one that appears to be gaining in popularity since the 1990s is writing about the Gullah culture, which was not a topic for the picture books in Sims' survey. The Gullahs can trace their heritage back to the first African slaves brought to the Low Country area around Charleston, South Carolina. Because of the location, they had less contact with their White owners and retained much of their language,

culture and traditions. Interest in the Gullahs has increased during the last decade and includes one or two television programs about their history and culture, in addition to several books for adults. The books in this current study that celebrate the Gullah culture are *New Year Be Coming; A Gullah Year* (Boling, 2002) *Beauty, Her Basket* (Belton, 2004) and *Circle Unbroken: The Story of a Basket and Its People* (Raven, 2004).

Implications

This research indicates that there are differences in the content of generic books and books with African American cultural content. Many teachers do not realize the importance of using books with African American cultural content with non African American children in mainstream classrooms. Using books with African American cultural content in the classroom is beneficial for African American students and for non African American students. It is vital that future teachers and seasoned teachers understand the benefits of using books with African American cultural content and learn to identify such books. If teachers and librarians are to provide books that contain African American cultural content in the classrooms and libraries, they may need guidelines or examples to help them to identify such books. This study provides numerous examples of African American cultural content and demonstrates how it is woven into some of the books in this study. Teachers should be cognizant of the differences between generic books and books with African American cultural content and able to identify such books. One way to ensure this is to provide discussion and information on the topic in classes for pre-service and in-service teachers and librarians. School librarians could compile lists of books with African American content and generic books for teachers. Lists of books that contain African American cultural content as well as lists of generic books would be beneficial and should be available. Although generic books do not provide rich cultural details, their inclusion in a classroom or library is preferable to having no books with African American characters. If generic books are so identified, teachers will know which books are generic and can avoid erroneously thinking they are using books about African Americans when they are simply using generic books with pictures of African Americans. They can then remedy the situation by using books with cultural content. Books with African American cultural content can be used to validate the culture of African Americans in the classroom and allow them to connect their life experiences to classroom activities. Books with African American cultural content can also be

used to encourage students to celebrate and value diversity. Teachers should be encouraged to become knowledgeable about the ethnic backgrounds of their students and their interests. They should recognize that in addition to similarities, there are also differences and those differences should be acknowledged and treated with respect. Multicultural literature such as African American children's literature should be provided for African American students and also for non African American students to encourage understanding and respect for differences.

Future Research

Suggestions for future research include the following:

1. Extend the study to include picture books fitting the same operational definition to include books published in the first decade of the twenty first century.
2. Extend the study to include other genres such as fantasy, fairy tales, folk tales, etc., and do not limit the publication date.
3. Extend the study to include discussions about the significance of the illustrations in picture books with African American cultural content. When illustrations are included in the classification of a book as 'generic' or 'contains African American cultural content' how does this impact the classification of categories?
4. Concentrate on one genre and provide ways to incorporate the books into lessons in the classroom. For example, books with African American cultural content that are based on the lyrics of songs could be used in music lessons.
5. Extend the study to include non picture book fiction.
6. Conduct similar studies with books focused on other ethnic groups.
7. Conduct a study to provide empirical evidence on the subject of culturally responsive teaching by investigating any differences in interest or response when books with African American cultural content are used with African American students.
8. Conduct a study to see if the use of books with African American cultural content with African American students impacts their academic success.

Limitations

Meaning is construed from engagement between reader and text (Rosenblatt, 1995). This study was not designed to ascertain whether or not the inclusion of African American cultural content affects how much a child engages with the text or how much engagement it encourages. The effectiveness of the data collection instrument was limited by the rater's knowledge and understanding of African American culture and by the rater's experience reading with or to children. Raters who are knowledgeable about African American culture and who are most capable at providing details on the data coding instrument are also better qualified to identify books with African American cultural content without using a data collection instrument. Raters who are knowledgeable about multicultural literature or about African American culture would also probably be able to identify African American cultural content in a book without the use of a data collection instrument. Numerous examples and explanations of African American cultural content may be more beneficial for teachers or lists of books indicating whether they are books with cultural content may also be useful. The descriptions of various categories of cultural content in the books in this study may be more useful in assisting educators in choosing books with African American cultural content.

Summary

The content and format of picture books suitable for children from preschool and younger through primary school has expanded since the time period covered by Sims' 1982 study. This expansion has created changes in the number of genres that portray African American characters. Picture books now depict African Americans in board books and toy books suitable for babies and toddlers, books with minimal text that include just a few words on each page, and beginning readers that once were monopolized by non African Americans. Two hundred and six books met the criteria for inclusion in this study. However, when generic books were removed from the list of picture books with African American characters included in this study, the number of picture books with African American cultural content was reduced to 90 books. These 90 books were examined in terms of African American cultural content. The findings were similar to but not identical to those in Sims' 1982 survey. In addition to culturally authentic illustrations, the content that most frequently defined African American culture includes descriptions of family relationships, references to African American history and culture written from an African

American perspective, celebrations of African American heritage and identity that incorporate details about attributes such as skin color and hair, and authentic language. The appropriate use of AAVE frequently delineated the difference between a generic book and book with African American cultural content. In some books, the only tangible elements in the text to indicate the characters are African American are the names of the characters and terms of address such as "little man" or "boy" deftly woven into the dialogue. Some books incorporated traditional African American food, which is cherished by many African Americans, into the story as part of their heritage. Sometimes the cultural content in recently published books was less tangible and was woven into the stories in the portrayal of close family bonds. At other times, references to religion seldom found in children's books about non African Americans, was subtly incorporated into a story to indicate the important role that religion has played in African American history and its continuing role in contemporary America.

This description of African American cultural content contained in the picture books in the study is deemed relevant to classroom teachers, librarians, those working with young children and educators of pre-service teachers. The resultant annotated bibliography is a by-product of this research and has a direct benefit to classroom educators. The criteria used to distinguish generic books from picture books with African American cultural content, and the examples of African American cultural content can be used by teachers when choosing books for their classrooms.

It is hoped that this study will inspire teachers to look beyond the illustrations in picture books and search for additional characteristics and features with which African American children in their classrooms can identify. Although the emphasis in this study has been on picture books with which African American children can identify, the importance of providing culturally authentic African American children's literature to all children cannot be overlooked.

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Appendix A - African American Children's Literature – Previous Research

Year	Author	Title of Work
1924	Braithwaite	The Negro in literature. *Crisis, 28,* 204-210
1933	Brown, Sterling	Negro character as seen by White authors. *Journal of Negro Education*
1941	Rollins, Charlemae	We build together: A reader's guide to negro life and literature for elementary and high school use. Chicago: National Council of Teachers of English. A pamphlet about writing and selecting books about African Americans.
1948	Rollins, Charlemae	We build together: A reader's guide to negro life and literature for elementary and high school use. (2nd ed.). Chicago: National Council of Teachers of English
1965	CIBC	The Bulletin of Interracial Books for Children
1965	Gast, David	Characteristics and concepts of minority Americans in contemporary children's fictional literature. Dissertation AAT 6606092
1965	Larrick, Nancy	The All-white world of children's books. *Saturday Review, 48* (September 11, 1965).
1967	Rollins, Charlemae	We build together: A reader's guide to negro life and literature for elementary and high school use. Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English
1968	Deanne, Paul C.	The persistence of Uncle Tom: An examination of the image of the Negro in children's fiction series. *Journal of Negro Education,* 37 (2) 140-145.
1969	Thompson, Judith & Woodard, Gloria	Black perspective in books for children.
1971	Baker, Augusta	The Black experience in children's books. Bulletin of the New York Public Library, 75, (March 1971).
1972	MacCann, Donnarae	Black American in books for children: Readings in Racism. Woodard, Gloria, Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow
1972	Parks, Carole A.	Good-bye Black Sambo. *Ebony*, November 1972. pp. 60-70
1972	Lattimer, Bettye	Starting out right; choosing books about black people for young children, pre-school through third grade. Madison, WI: Department of Public Instruction.
1973	Broderick, Dorothy	Image of the Black in children's fiction. New York: Bowker.
1975	Baker, Augusta	The changing image of the Black in children's literature. Horn Book 51 (February 1975) pp. 79-88.

1975	Muse, Daphne	Black children's literature: Rebirth of a neglected genre. Black Scholar 7 (December 1975) pp.11-15
1976	Kiah, Rosalie Black	Content analysis of children's contemporary realistic fiction about Black people in the United States to determine if and how a sample of these stories portrays salient experiences of Black people. Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University DA 37:3781A.
1979	Chall, Radwin, French, & Hall	Blacks in the world of children's books. *Reading Teacher* 32 (February 1979) pp. 526-33.
1980	Council on Interracial Books for Children	Guidelines for selecting bias-free textbooks and storybooks. New York: CIBC
1982	Sims, Rudine	Shadow and substance: Afro-American Experience in contemporary children's fiction. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
1983	Banfield, Beryle	The Black experience through White eyes-the same old story once again.
1984	Marshall, Barbara	Assessing the authenticity of the African American experience in children's fiction books. Dissertation AAT 8410310.
1985	Gibson, Evelyn	The image in children's fiction: A content analysis of racist content, Black experience and primary audience in children's books published between 1958-1970 and 1971-1982. Dissertation AAT 8521083.
1987	Norton, Terry L.	The changing image of childhood: A content analysis of Caldecott award books. Dissertation
1989	Harris, Ruby	A survey and content analysis of the Black experience as depicted in contemporary fiction for children. Dissertation AAT 8922284.
1990	Johnson-Feelings, Dianne	Telling tales: The pedagogy and promise of African American literature of youth.
1992	Cobb, Jeanne	Images and characteristics of African Americans and Hispanic Americans in contemporary children's fiction. Dissertation AAT 9306619
1994	Tucker, Mary	Images of African American males in realistic fiction picture books for children. Dissertation AAT 9422690.
1994	Hall, Mary	Content analysis of the portrayal of African American males in realistic fiction picture books for children. Dissertation AAT 9607200.
1994	Tucker, Brenda	Images of African American males in realistic fiction picture books 1971-1990. Dissertation
1995	Scott, Margaret	The portrayal of literacy in children's picture storybooks about African-Americans: A content analysis. Dissertation AAT 9526753
1995	Phillips, Kathryn Bednarzik	A comparative content analysis of illustrated African American children's literature published between 1900-1962 and 1963-1992. Dissertation AAT 9532360.
1996	Sutton, Valerie	Characterizations of African Americans in contemporary realistic picture books. Dissertation AAT 1384878.

1996	Johnson-Feelings, Dianne	The Best of the Brownies Book.
1998	MacCann, Donnarae	White supremacy in children's literature: Characterizations of African Americans 1839-1900.
1998	Frost, Sharon	Images of African-American girls in picture books. Dissertation AAT 9940641.
1999	Berry, Rubin	Contemporary portrayal of African Americans children's picture books. Dissertation AAT 3031407.
2000	Gordon, Jennifer	Case study of 4 male African American fifth graders' response to African American children's literature using culturally-focused response prompts.
2004	Martin, Michelle	Brown Gold: Milestones of African American children's literature 1845-2002. New York: Routledge
2004	McNair, Jonda	'Yes, It'll Be Me': A comparative analysis of 'The Brownies Book' and contemporary African American Children's literature written by Patricia McKissack. Dissertation AAT 3124370.

Appendix B - African American Vernacular English Chart

The information below provides a few of the structural rules of AAVE and examples of idioms.

African American Vernacular English	**Comments**
You girls still mad?	Are you girls still mad (The auxiliary verb (to be) is not used)
Carry yo'self proud.	Carry yourself proud (Be proud) Vowel blends 'ou' are pronounced as 'o'
He busy. He be busy.	He is busy (for the moment or right now) He is busy (on a steady basis, not just right now)
Your ole grandma	Your old grandma (final consonant is dropped in 2 consonant cluster)
Singin' and prayin'	Singing and praying (the nasal sound, velar nasal 'eng' which is formed with the back of the tongue raised toward the back of the mouth is replaced with alveolar nasal (en) sound which is formed with the front of the tongue raised behind the upper teeth.
Give me some sugar	An expression that means give me a kiss.
Let's cut a rug	An expression that means let's dance.

The above examples of AAVE are taken from the books in this study and the explanations stem from sources such as Haskins & Butts, (1993), Rickford & Rickford (2000) and Smitherman (2000a).

Appendix C - Titles of Books Deleted from CCBC Lists with Reasons for Deletion

Author	Book Code	Title	Reason for deletion
Angelou, M.	2004Ang01	Maya's world: Izak of Lapland	Main character is Sami, set in Lapland
Angelou, M.	2004Ang02	Maya's world: Renee Marie of France	Main character is French, set in France
Angelou, M.	2004Ang03	Maya's world: Angelina of Italy	Main character is Italian, set in Italy
Angelou, M.	2004Ang04	Maya's world: Mikale of Hawaii	Main character is not African American
Aston, D. H.	2004Ast+	When you were born	Unable to determine ethnicity of main character
Babbitt, N.	2001Bab	Elsie times eight	Fantasy
Baker, K.	2001Bak	Brave little monster	Main character is a monster, set in Canada
Barbour, K.	2001Bar	Mr. Williams	Non fiction biography
Bang, M.	2003Ban	Ten, nine, eight	Reprint – originally published in 1984
Bartoletti, S.	2001Bar	The Christmas promise	Main character is Caucasian
Blackaby, S.	2005Bla	Bess & Tess	Main characters are dogs
Brown, M.W.	2004Brow	Where have you been?	Reprint – originally published in 1952
Bunting, E.	2001Bun	Peepers	Main characters are Caucasian
Carter, D.	2002Car	Heaven's all-star band	Fantasy
Cline-Ransom, L.	2002Cli	Quilt counting	No main characters – concept book
Cline-Ransom,	2001Cli	Quilt alphabet	No main characters – concept book
Cooke, T.	2003Coo	Full, full, full of love	Main character is British, set in England
Crews, D.	2001Crew02	Inside freight train	No main characters
Crews, N.	2004Cre	The neighborhood Mother Goose	Anthology of nursery rhymes
da Costa, D.	2001daC	Snow in Jerusalem	Main characters are Jewish & Muslim, set in Jerusalem
Daly, N.	2002Dal	Old Bob's brown bear	Main characters are Caucasian
Dawes, K.	2005Daw	I saw your face	No main character – children of African descent around the world
DuBurke, R.	2002DuB	The moon ring	Fantasy
Falwell, C.	2003Fal	Christmas for 10	Reprint – first published in 1998
Farmer, B.	2002Far	Isaac's dreamcatcher	Set in Canada
Fitzgerald, E.	2003Fit	A-tisket, A-tasket	Lyrics
Ford, B. G.	2005Ford	First snow	Main characters are rabbits
Francis, D. & Reiser, B.	2002Fra	David gets his drum	Main character David is Caribbean descendent
Gillard, D.	2001Gil	Music from the sky	Set in Canada

Greenberg, P.	2002Gre	Oh Lord, I wish I was a buzzard	Reprint – originally published in 1968
Greenfield, E.	2003Gre	Honey I love	Reprint – first published in 1978
Greenfield, E.	2005Gre	Me & Neesie	Reprint – originally published in 1975
Hamilton, V.	2004Ham	The Winnie Witch's skinny: An original African American scare tale	Original folk tale
Hester, D. L.	2005Hes	Grandma Lena's big ol' turnip	Tall tale
Hill, S. L.	2002Hil	The house that Mack built	Main character Jack is Caucasian
Hoffman, M.	2002Hof	The color of home	Main character Hasan is from Somalia
Hooks, B.	2002Hoo	Happy to be nappy	Reprint – originally published in 1999
Hudson, C. W.	2003Hud	Hands can	No main character – hands only
Inches, A.	2002Inc01	Wake up, buttercup	Main characters are Caucasian
Johnson, A.	2001Joh	Those building men	No main characters
Jump at the Sun (Editor)	2001Jum	The Jump at the Sun treasury: An African American picture book collection	Anthology of nursery rhymes
Keats, E. J.	2002Kea	Keat's neighborhood	Anthology – reprint of stories originally published in 1970s & 1980s
Khan, R.	2003Kha	Ruler of the courtyard	Set in Pakistan
Kurtz, J.	2005Kur	In the small, small night	Main character Kofi is from Ghana
Lester, J.	2002Les	Why heaven is so far away	Folktale
Lewis, E. B.	2005Lew	This little light of mine	Lyrics
Lyons, M. E (story collected by Zora Neale Hurston)	2005Lyo	Roy makes a car	Tall tale
McKissack, P.	2005McK02	Where crocodiles have wings	Non human characters
McKissack, P. C.	2005McK01	Precious and the boo hag	Original folk tale
Morrow, B. O.	2003Mor	A good night for freedom	Main character Hallie is Caucasian
Myers, W. D.	2003Mye	Blues journey	Not suitable for preschool-4th grade
Neasi, B.	2001Nea	Listen to me	Reprint – originally published in 1986
Nelson, K.A.	2005Nel	He's got the whole world in his hands	Lyrics
Nolen, J.	2002Nol	Plantzilla	Main character Mortimer is not African American
Nolen, J.	2003Nol02	Thunder Rose	Tall tale
Nolen, J.	2005Nol	Hewitt Anderson's great big life	Tall tale
O'Connell, R.	2003O'Con	The baby goes beep	Main character is Caucasian
Pattison, D	2003Pat	The journey of Oliver K. Woodman	Main character is made of wood
Pinkney, A.D.	2002Pin	Ella Fitzgerald: Tale of a vocal virtuosa	Main character is a personified cat named Scat Cat Monroe
Pinkney, B.	2003Pin02	Thumbelina	Fairy tale
Pinkney, G. J.*	2005Pin01*	Music from our Lord's holy heaven	Lyrics – lullaby

Pinkney, S.L.	2005Pin	Shades of black	Reprint – first published in 2000
Powell, A.	2003Pow	America's promise	Main characters are bear cubs
Ringgold, F.	2004Rin	O Holy Night: Christmas with the Boys Choir of Harlem	Lyrics
Sampson, M. & Martin, B. Jr.	2002Sam	Caddie the golf dog	Main character is a dog and other characters are Caucasian
Samuels, A.	2001Sam	Christmas soul: African American holiday stories	Anthology
Schneider, C. M.	2002Sch	Saxophone Sam and his snazzy jazz band	Fantasy
Smith, C. R. Jr.	2002Smi05	Perfect harmony: A musical journey with the Boys Choir of Harlem	About music theory, not African Americans
Smith, C. R. Jr.	2001Smi02	How sweet it is	Lyrics
Smith, C. R. Jr.	2001Smi03	I'll be there	Lyrics
Smith, C. R. Jr.	2001Smi04	My girl	Lyrics
Smith, C. R. Jr.	2002Smi01	Ain't no mountain high enough	Lyrics
Smith, C. R. Jr.	2002Smi02	Pride and joy	Lyrics
Smith, C. R. Jr.	2002Smi03	The way you do the things you do	Lyrics
Smith, C. R. Jr.	2002Smi04	You're all I need to get by	Lyrics
Smith, C.R. Jr.	2001Smi05	Sugar pie, honey bunch	Lyrics
Suen, A.	2005Sue	Red light, green light	Main character is Caucasian
Sunami, K.	2002Sun	How the fisherman tricked the genie	Traditional tale – set by Arabian Sea
Swados, E.	2002Swa*	Hey you! C'mere: A poetry slam	Book of poems
Tauss, M.	2005Tau	Superhero	Fantasy
Thomas, J. C.	2004Tho	The gospel Cinderella	Fairy tale
Thomas, J. C.	2001Tho01	The angels' lullaby	Lyrics
Uhlberg, M.	2005Uhl	Dad, Jackie, and me	Main character is Caucasian
Vander Zee, R.	2004Van	Mississippi morning	Main character James is Caucasian
Velasquez, E.	2001Vel	Grandma's records	Main character is Puerto Rican
Whelan, G.	2005Whe	Friend on Freedom River	Main character Louis is Caucasian
Williams, S.	2003Wil	101 trucks	No African American characters
Williams, S.	2002Wil	Imani's music	Narrator, main character is a grasshopper
Wilson-Max, K.	2001Wil	Max's starry night	Fantasy

Appendix D - Books in Study

Author	Title	Year	Publisher
Altman, L.J.	Singing with Momma Lou	2002	Lee & Low Books
Baicker, K.	You can do it too!	2005	Handprint Books
Baicker, K.	I can do it too	2003	Handprint Books
Barnes, D.	Stop, drop, and chill	2004	Scholastic- JUST FOR YOU!
Barnes. D.	The low-down, bad-day blues	2004	Scholastic- JUST FOR YOU!
Battle-Lavert, G.	Papa's mark	2003	Holiday House
Bearden, R.	Li'l Dan, the drummer boy: A civil war story	2003	Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
Belton, S.	Pictures for Miss Josie	2003	HarperCollins/Greenwillow
Belton, S.	Beauty, her basket	2004	Greenwillow
Bergen, L.	A visit to the farm (Little Bill book)	2003	Simon Spotlight
Berger, S.	Nighttime noises (Little Bill book)	2002	Simon Spotlight
Bermiss, A.L.	I hate to be sick	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Birtha, B.	Grandmama's pride	2005	Albert Whitman
Black, S. W.	Mommy's bed	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Black, S. W.	Jumping the broom	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Boling, K.	New year be coming!: A Gullah year	2002	Albert Whitman
Bowie, C. W.	Busy fingers	2003	Charlesbridge/Whispering Coyote
Boyd, D.	Only the stars	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Bradby, M.	Once upon a farm	2002	Orchard books
Brooks, R.	Never finished, never done	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Burleigh, R.	Lookin' for bird in the big city	2001	Silver Whistle/Harcourt
Campbell, B. M.	Sometimes my mommy gets angry	2003	G. P. Putnam's Sons
Carlson, L.	Sports day (Little Bill)	2003	Simon Spotlight
Carlstrom, N.W.	What does the sky say?	2001	Eerdmans, William B, Publishing
Clifton, L.	One of the problems of Everett Anderson	2001	Henry Holt
Cole, K.	No bad news	2001	Albert Whitman
Cool J, L.L.	And the winner is…	2002	Scholastic
Cox, J.	My family plays music	2003	Holiday House

Coy, J.	Two old potatoes and me	2003	Alfred A. Knopf/Random House
Crews, N.	A ghost story	2001	Greenwillow Books
Cummins, J.	Country kid, city kid	2002	Henry Holt & Co
Dillon, L.	Rap a tap tap: Here's Bojangles, think of that	2002	Blue Sky Press
Duncan, A. F.	Honey baby, sugar child	2005	Simon & Schuster
English, K.	Hot day on Abbott Avenue	2004	Clarion Books
English, K.	Speak to me (and I will listen between the lines)	2004	Farrar, Strauss Giroux
English, K.	The baby on the way	2005	Farrar, Straus Giroux
Evans, F. W.	The battle of New Orleans	2005	Pelican Publishing
Evans, F. W.	A bus of our own	2001	Albert Whitman & Company
Falwell, C.	David's drawings	2001	Lee & Low
Ford, B. G.	Hurry up!	2003	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Ford, B.	Don't hit me	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Ford, J. G.	Sunday best	2003	Scholastic-JUST FOR YOU!
Ford, J. G.	Shop talk	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Foreman, G.	Let George do it	2005	Simon & Schuster
Frame, J. A.	Yesterday I had the blues	2003	Tricycle Press
Fraustino, L. R.	The hickory chair	2001	Arthur Levine Books
Fremont, E.	A visit to the dentist	2002	Simon Spotlight/Nick Jr.
Fremont E.	The big day at school	2003	Simon Spotlight/Nick Jr.
Fremont, E.	Cleanup day (Little Bill)	2002	Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing
Fresh, D. E.	Think again	2002	Scholastic (HipKidHop series)
George, O.	The bravest girls in the world	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Giovanni, N.	Girls in the circle	2004	Scholastic: JUST FOR YOU!
Grimes, N.	When daddy prays	2002	Eerdmans Books for Young Readers
Grimes, N.	Under the Christmas tree	2002	Harper Collins
Grimes, N.	Talkin' about Bessie: The story of aviator Elizabeth Coleman	2002	Orchard Books
Grimes, N.	Danitra Brown, class clown	2005	Harper Collins/ Amistad
Grimes, N.	Danitra Brown leaves town	2001	Amistad/Harper Trophy
Grimes, N.	A day with daddy	2004	Scholastic- JUST FOR YOU!
Harrington, J. N.	Going North	2004	Melanie Kroupa Books

Hartfield, C.	Me and Uncle Romie-a story inspired by the life and art of Romare Bearden	2002	Dial Books for Young Readers
Havill, J.	Brianna, Jamaica, and the dance of spring	2002	Houghton Mifflin
Helldorfer, M.C.	Got to dance	2004	Random House Children's Books Doubleday
Hest, A.	Mr. George Baker	2004	Candlewick
Hooks, B.	Skin again	2004	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion
Hooks, B.	Homemade love	2002	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books
Hooks, B.	Be boy buzz	2002	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion
Hooks, G.	Three's a crowd	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Hooks, G.	The mystery of the missing dog	2004	Scholastic- JUST FOR YOU!
Hopkinson, D.	Under the quilt of night	2001	Atheneum Books for Young Children
Howard, E. F.	Flower girl butterflies	2004	Greenwillow/Harper Collins
Howard, E.F.	Lulu's birthday	2001	Greenwillow Books
Hru, D.	Tickle, tickle	2002	Roaring Brook Press
Hubbell, P.	Black all around!	2003	Lee & Low Books
Hudson, W.	What do you know SNOW!	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Hudson, W.	Two Tyrones	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU1
Hyman, F.	An adventure with Captain Brainstorm	2001	Simon & Schuster/Nick Jr.
Inches, A.	Corduroy's Garden	2002	Viking Beginning Reader Level2
Isadora, R.	Bring on that beat	2002	G. P. Putnam's Sons/Penguin Putnam Books for Young
Isadora, R.*	Peekaboo morning	2001	G. P. Putnam's Sons/Penguin Putnam Books for Young
Johnson, A.	Sweet smell of roses	2004	Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
Johnson, A.	I dream of trains	2003	Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
Johnson, A.	Just like Josh Gibson	2004	Simon & Schuster
Johnson, A.	Violet's music	2004	Dial
Johnson, G. F.	Has anybody lost a glove	2004	Boyds Mills
Johnson, K.	Look at the baby	2002	Henry Holt & Company
Johnson, V. L.	Of corn silk and black braids	2005	Marzetta Books
Joosse, B.	Stars in the darkness	2002	Chronicle Books
Joosse, B.	Hot City	2004	Philomel

Jordan, D. & R. M. Jordan	Did I tell you I love you today?	2004	Simon & Schuster
Kallok, E.	Gem	2001	Tricycle Press
Katz, K.	My first Kwanzaa	2003	Henry Holt & Company
Kroll,	Brianna breathes easy: A story about asthma	2005	Albert Whitman and Company
Lee, S. & Lee, T.	Please, puppy, please	2005	Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
Lee, S. & T. L. Lee	Please, baby, please	2002	Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers
Lindsey, K. D.	Sweet potato pie	2003	Lee & Low Books
Littlesugar, A.	Freedom School. Yes!	2001	Philomel Books
Lukas, C.	Who's hiding, Little Bill?	2001	Simon Spotlight/Nick Jr.
Lukas, C.	Super Detective Little Bill: A dial-the-answer book	2002	Simon Spotlight/Nickelodeon
Marzollo, J.	Shanna's lost shoe	2004	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for children
Marzollo, J. & Evans, S.	Shanna's party surprise	2004	Jump at the Sun/ Hyperion Books/Shanna's Readers
Marzollo, J. & Evans, S	Shanna's hip hop hooray	2004	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Book/Shanna's Readers
Marzollo, J.	Shanna's doctor show	2001	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children
Marzollo, J.	Shanna's princess show	2001	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children
Marzollo, J.	Shanna's teacher show	2002	Jump at the Sun/ Hyperion Books for Children
Marzollo, J.	Shanna's ballerina show	2002	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion
Marzollo, J.	Shanna's animal riddles	2004	Jump at the Sun
Marzollo, J.	Shanna's pizza parlor	2004	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books/Shanna's Readers
Marzollo, J.	Shanna's bear hunt	2005	Jump at the Sun/ Hyperion Books
McKissack, P.	Goin' someplace special	2001	Simon & Schuster
McKissack, R.	Try your best	2003	Harcourt
McNaught, M.	Grandma's Ashanti cloth	2003	African American Images
Meadows, M.	The way the storm stops	2003	Henry Holt
Medearis, A. S.	Lights out!	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Medearis, A. S.	Singing for Dr. King	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!

Medina, T.	Love to Langston	2002	Lee & Low Books
Medina, T.	Christmas makes me think	2001	Lee & Low Books
Michelson, R.	Happy feet	2005	Gulliver/Harcourt
Miller, W.	Rent party jazz	2001	Lee & Low Books
Monk, I.	Blackberry stew	2005	Carolrhoda Books
Monk, I.	Family	2001	Carolrhoda Books
Morris, A.	Grandma Lois remembers	2002	Millbrook Press
Morton, H.	Yay!, A snow day	2002	Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing
Munsch, R.	Make up mess	2001	Scholastic
Munsch, R.	Up, up, down	2001	Scholastic
Murphy, C. R.	I am Sacajawea, I am York: Our journey west with Lewis and Clark	2005	Walker
Myers, C.	Fly	2001	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children
Nelson, V. M.	Almost to freedom	2004	Carolrhoda Books
Nikola-Lisa, W	Summer sun risin'	2002	Lee & Low Books
Nikola-Lisa, W.	Setting the turkeys free	2004	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion
Nolen, J.	Lauren McGill's pickle museum	2003	Harcourt
Pace, L.	Jalani and the lock	2002	Power Kids
Panahi, H. L.	Bebop express	2005	Harper Collins
Parker, T. T.	Snowflake kisses and gingerbread smiles	2002	Scholastic
Parker, T. T.	Sweets and treats	2002	Scholastic
Perdomo, W.	Visiting Langston	2002	Henry Holt & Co.
Perry, E.	Think cool thoughts	2005	Clarion
Perry, R.	It's beginning to look a lot like Kwanzaa!	2004	Hyperion Books for Children/Jump at the Sun
Pinkett, J. S.	Girls hold up this world	2005	Scholastic
Pinkney, A. D.	Mim's Christmas jam	2001	Harcourt
Pinkney, A. D.	Sleeping Cutie	2004	Gulliver/Harcourt
Pinkney, A. D.	Fishing day	2003	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children
Plourde, L.	School picture day	2002	Dutton Children's Books
Polacco, P.	Mr. Lincoln's way	2001	Philomel Books
Poydar, N.	Rhyme time, valentine	2003	Holiday House

Pringle, L.	Bear hug	2003	Boyds Mills Press
Ransom, C.	Liberty Street	2003	Walker & Company
Raschka, C.	John Coltrane's giant steps	2002	Atheneum Books for Young Readers
Rau, D. M.	In the yard	2002	Compass Point
Raven, M. T.	Circle unbroken	2004	Farrar, Strauss & Giroux
Reid, R.	The big storm	2002	Simon Spotlight/Nick Jr.
Rex, M.	My freight train	2002	Henry Holt & Company
Ringgold, F.	Cassie's word quilt	2002	Alfred A. Knopf
Roberson, K.	My shoelaces are hard to tie	2004	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU Level 1
Roberts, B. C.	Jazzy Miz Mozetta	2004	Farrar, Straus Giroux
Scull, R.	Happy Valentine's day!	2002	Simon Spotlight/Nick Jr.
Siegelson, K. L.	Dancing the ring shout	2003	Jump at the Sun
Smalls, I.	Don't say ain't	2004	Charlesbridge Publishing
Smalls, I.	I can't take a bath!	2003	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Smalls, I.	My nana and me	2005	Little, Brown
Smith, C. R. Jr.	Loki & Alex: Adventure of a dog and his best friend	2001	Dutton Children's Books
Smith, D. K.	A wild cowboy	2004	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children
Smith, P.	Janna and the kings	2003	Lee & Low Books
Smothers, E. R.	The hard-times jar	2003	Farrar, Straus & Giroux
Smothers, E. F.	Auntee Edna	2002	Eerdmans Books for Young Readers
Stephens, H.	Glittery garden	2003	Little Brown
Steptoe, J.	The Jones family express	2003	Lee & Low Books
Stroud, B.	Dance y'all	2001	Marshall Cavendish
Stroud, B.	The leaving	2001	Marshall Cavendish
Stroud, B.	The patchwork path: A quilt map to freedom	2005	Candlewick
Suen, A.	The clubhouse	2002	Puffin Books Viking Easy to Read Level 2
Suen, A.	Loose tooth	2002	Puffin Books, Viking Easy to Read, Level 2
Tarpley, N. A.	Bippity bop barbershop	2002	Little, Brown
Tarpley N. A.	Destiny's gift	2004	Lee & Low Books
Tarpley, N. A.	Joe-Joe's first flight	2003	Alfred A. Knopf

Taulbert, C.L.	Little Cliff's first day of school	2001	Dial Books for Young Readers
Taulbert, C.L.	Little Cliff and the cold place	2002	Dial Books for Young Readers
Taylor, D. A.	Sweet music in Harlem	2004	Lee & Low Books
Taylor-Butler, C.	No boys allowed!	2003	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU!
Taylor-Butler, C.	A mom like no other	2004	Scholastic-JUST FOR YOU!
Thomas, G. E.	Santa's Kwanzaa	2004	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books for Children
Thomas, J. C.	Joy	2001	Jump at the Sun/Hyperion Books BOARD BOOK
Thomas, J. C.	Crowning glory	2002	HarperCollins
Thorpe, K.	Let's go, Little Bill	2002	Simon Spotlight/Nick Jr.
Turner, A.	In the heart	2001	Harper Collins
Vaughan, M.	Up the learning tree	2003	Lee & Low Books
Vaughn, M.	The secret to freedom	2001	Lee & Low Books
Vernick, A. G. & Gidaro, G.	Bark & Tim: A true story of friendship based on the paintings of Tim Brown	2003	Overmountain Press
Vision, D. & Vision, M.	Missing you	2004	Soul Vision Works Publishing
Wahl, J.	Candy shop	2004	Charlesbridge
Walter, M. P.	Alec's primer	2004	University Press of New England/Vermont Folklife Center
Watson, K.	Elephant on the loose (Little Bill book)	2001	Simon & Schuster Nick Jr. Series
Watson, K.	The Halloween costume hunt (Little Bill book)	2001	Simon & Schuster
Watson, K.	Just like dad	2001	Sagebrush Education Resources
Watson, K.	A trip to the hospital (Little Bill book)	2001	Simon & Schuster
Weatherford, C. B.	Freedom on the menu	2005	Dial/Penguin
Weatherford, C. B.	Jazz baby	2002	Lee & Low Books
Weatherford, C. B.	Remember the bridge: Poems of a people	2002	Philomel Books/ Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers
Wenberg, M.	Elizabeth's song	2002	Beyond Words Publishing Inc
Wiles, D.	Freedom summer	2001	Atheneum Books for Young Readers
Winthrop, E.	Squashed in the middle	2005	Henry Holt
Wolff, F.	It is the wind	2005	HarperCollins
Woodson, J.	The other side	2001	G, P. Putnam's Sons

Woodson, J.	Our Gracie aunt	2002	Hyperion Books for Children/Jump at the Sun
Woodson, J.	Visiting day	2002	Scholastic
Woodson, J.	Coming on home soon	2004	Putnam's Penguin Press
Woodson, J.	Show way	2005	Penguin/Putnam Juvenile

Appendix E - Data Collection for Books in Sims' Study

Book Code _____

Author _____ African American_____

Illustrator _____ African American_____

Title _____

Year published _____ Reprint _____

Age/grade _____

Publisher_____

Library Subjects_____

_____

Summary _____

_____

_____

_____

Setting _____

_____

African American main character		yes	no	
Male/female main character		male	female	both
Old/young main character		old	young	both
Old/young relationship				
Social conscience	yes	no	A.	School
			B.	Getting along with others
Melting pot	yes	no	A.	African Americans in stories about non African Americans
			B.	Integrated setting
			C.	Black child, Black family
			D.	Cultural differences
			E.	Nuclear family

Data collection Instrument for Books in Sims' Study - page 2 **Book Code_____**

Culturally conscious	yes	no	A.	African "Down Home"
			B.	Everyday experiences
			C.	Surviving discrimination
			D.	Living in the city
			E.	Friendships
			F.	Family relationships
			G.	Growing up

Generic/Neutral OR Culturally Specific

Cultural content

Community	yes	no
Every day life	yes	no
Extended family	Yes	no
Family relationships	yes	no
Food	yes	no
Gullahs	yes	no
Hair	yes	no
Historical/cultural	yes	no
Language/dialogue	yes	no
Music	yes	no
Religion	yes	no
Skin color described	yes	no
Name/terms of address	yes	no

Illustrations

Reflections

Appendix F - Data Collection Instrument for Books in Nephew's Study

Data Collection Instrument for Books in Nephew's Study – page 1

Section A (completed by researcher)

Book Code _____

Author _____ African American_____

Illustrator _____ African American_____

Title _____

Year published _____ Reprint _____

Age/grade _____

Publisher _____

Library Subject_____

Summary _____

_____

_____

_____

Setting _____

_____

Section B – Book Genre (completed by researcher)

Beginning Reader _____ Story in Rhyme _____ Minimal Text _____

Fairy Tale _____ Fantasy _____ Concept Book _____

Tall Tales _____ Board Book _____ Poetry/Song _____

Historical Fiction_____ Type of historical fiction_____

Realistic Fiction _____

Data collection instrument for Nephew's study - Page 2 **Book Code _____**

Section C

Please circle all that apply.

Is the main character:

African American?	yes	no	
male or female?	male	female	both
adult or child?	adult	child	both

Using the descriptions of generic picture book and picture book with cultural content, please circle the word you think best describes the book you have just read.

The book is: generic OR contains cultural content

What are your reasons for classifying the book as generic or contains cultural content?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please indicate by circling yes or no if you think the book contains cultural content in the following categories and provide examples or descriptions of the cultural content.

Language/dialogue yes no

Example _____

Family relationships yes no

Example _____

Intergenerational relationship yes no

Example_____

Friendships yes no

Example

Data collection instrument for Nephew's study - Page 3 **Book Code _____**

African American identity (e.g. hair, skin color described) yes no

Example _____

African American historical content (e.g. segregated restaurants, civil rights marches) yes no

Example _____

African American cultural traditions (e.g. Kwanzaa) yes no

Example _____

Music yes no

Example _____

Food yes no

Example _____

Religious and other belief systems yes no

Example _____

Camaraderie & community yes no

Example _____

Gullahs (first Black inhabitants of the Low country in South Carolina) yes no

Example_____

Name/terms of address yes no

Example _____

Additional comments:

Appendix G - Data Collection Instrument References

The data collection instruments were developed by incorporating information from the following sources:

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Appendix H - Information from Inter-rater Data Collection Instruments

Book Title: Goin' someplace special **Book Code:** 2001McK **Author** Patricia McKissack

Genre: Historical Fiction

	Rater T	**Rater Y**	**Researcher H**
Synopsis of Rater Information	Rater T is a White retired 50+ female born in France (English is her second language).	Rater Y is a biracial professional female in her 30s	**Rater H is a White 60+ Elementary School counselor.**
Do you teach in educational environment?	No	No	**Yes**
Do you have experience reading to children?	My experience reading to children is limited to reading to my children and grandchildren.	I am a reading volunteer with kindergarten and lst grade children.	**I've read to my school children, my own children, and my grandchildren. I've given books for Christmas and birthday gifts as well.**
Do you have experience with African American culture?	I was married to an African American (now deceased) for more than 40 years, my 4 children are biracial and I have spent time in African American communities in different states in the U.S. including time in the South when interracial marriages were not accepted.	I am African American and I live and work in a predominantly African American neighborhood.	**Other than teaching self-contained classes with African Americans, I have had little experiences with African American culture.**
1. Is main character African American?	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Sex of main character	Female	Female	female
3. Main character is child or adult	Child	Child	child
4. Book is generic – with reasons for classification.	No	No. .	No
5. Book contains African American cultural content – with reasons for classification	Yes. I have heard similar stories told by family members who are African American.	Yes. References to segregation on the bus and in public places	Yes. The book contained an African American major character, held a traditional Afrocentric worldview about family (grandmother/granddaughter's close relationship), respect for elders, information about African American history, appropriate dialogue and narrative, and sense of

			community, just to name a few.
6. Book contains African American language/dialogue Examples	Yes – African American language that includes Sothern language and humor. e.g.1. - the comment about Jesse Lee's brother's cooking e.g. 2 - when Tricia Ann said "Why, I wouldn't sit up there even if watermelons bloomed in January". e.g. 3 Tricia Ann's conversations.	Yes. hold yo' head up (hold your head up), b'long to (belong to), 'froe (before)	Yes. e.g. "I'll trus you'll be particular." and "Carry yo'self proud."
7. Story portrays family relationships	Yes - grandmother	Yes – grandmother – referred to as "Mama"	Yes
8. Story portrays intergenerational relationships	Yes	Yes	Yes
9. Story portrays friendships	Yes – the vendor, John Willis the doorman and Mrs. Grannell	Yes. Tricia Ann (the main character) knew the other bus passengers and street vendors.	Yes
10. Text includes references to African American identity	Yes		Yes
11. Text contains African American historical content?	Yes – All are welcome at public library. It shows segregation	Yes. The Jim Crow Laws, Colored and Whites Only	Yes e.g. riding the bus, walking into the segregated hotel, signs posted about Coloreds
12. Text contains African American cultural traditions?	Not answered	Yes	No
13. Text contains references to music?	No	No	No
14. Text contains references to food?	Yes – pretzel, coffee, BLT	No	No
15. Text contains references to hair?	Yes – at the Southland Hotel – famous man with black shining hair	No	No
16. Text includes references to religion and other belief systems?	No	No	No
17. Text features a sense of community among African Americans.	Yes. Because of the Jim Crow Laws	Tricia Ann (the main character) knew the other bus passengers and street vendors.	Yes e.g. Mrs. Grannell on the bus, Jimmy Lee the street vendor, Mr. John Willis, the hotel doorman, and Blooming Mary, the lady with the garden.
18. Text contains information about Gullahs?	No	No	No
19. Text contains African American names/terms of address?		Yes - Mama	Yes e.g. Mama Frances, Blooming Mary
20. Would you read this book to children? Why/why not?	Yes. I would read the book to children.	I would not read the book to a class because I don't think this generation would understand it. It would depend on the class. I wouldn't read it to White kids because they wouldn't get it. I probably would read it to Black kids but they probably would not understand the significance. I would probably read it to the children I read to at school because they are Black.	Yes. I believe it has excellent historical content about segregation and Jim Crow days. It is well illustrated (characters are life-like and the colors are attractive to young children). It is an excellent jumping point to talk about celebration of differences, needless hurting for a group of people (segregation), and respect fo elders (the bus scene).

Additional comments:

Young children don't see color.

I liked the ending because the place was a library where everyone is welcome. I would feel uncomfortable using the language as I am not used to using it. I've been exposed to it through family but I haven't ever spoken it and wouldn't feel comfortable using it in public.

Book Title: Goin' someplace special **Book Code:** 2001McK **Author** Patricia McKissack

Genre: Historical fiction

Synopsis of Rater Information	**Researcher** The researcher is a 50+ White female who is not currently teaching but has taught kindergarten in public schools in Texas, Kansas and the Department of Defense Dependents School system in Germany.
Do you teach in educational environment?	No.
Do you have experience reading to children?	Yes. I have read to my children, children in my classroom, and as a volunteer in the classroom.
Do you have experience with African American culture?	Yes. My husband of more than 30 years is African American, our children include two biracial daughters and an African American son. We have frequent contact with all of my in-laws, almost all of whom are African American, attend African American celebrations, museums, etc.
1. Is main character African American?	Yes
2. Sex of main character	Female
3. Main character is child or adult	Child
4. Book is generic – with reasons for classification.	No
5. Book contains African American cultural content – with reasons for classification	Yes.
6. Book contains African American language/dialogue Examples	Yes. There are several examples including when Mrs. Grannell tells 'Tricia Ann to "carry yo self proud". Also the comment by Jimmie Lee about his brother Jesse who is a cook at Monroe's Restaurant and is allowed to enter Monroe's because he works there, while Jimmie Lee is not. Jimmie Lee makes light of the situation by saying "Not that I'd want to eat anything Jesse cooks. The man can't even now scald water". This seemingly derogatory remake about his brother's cooking is an example of
7 Story portrays family relationships	Just a little – Grandmother and 'Tricia Ann
8. Story portrays intergenerational relationships	Yes – Mrs. Grannell and 'Tricia Ann, Mama Frances and 'Tricia Ann
9. Story portrays friendships	Yes – Mrs. Grannell and 'Tricia Ann
10. Text includes references to African American identity	Although there are no overt references to the characters' skin color, it is obvious that the color of their skin is why they are denied entrance into the Monroe Hotel, etc.

11. Text contains African American historical content?	Yes. There are references to segregation and its impact on the daily life of African Americans – e.g. on the bus, in hotels, at the theatre.
12. Text contains African American cultural traditions?	The relationship between Mama Frances and her granddaughter 'Tricia provides an example of the way extended African American family members were an integral part in child rearing.
13. Text contains references to music?	No.
14. Text contains references to food?	Only to Jimmie Lee's cooking which is not described
15. Text contains references to hair?	Not African American hair
16. Text includes references to religion and other belief systems?	No
17. Text features a sense of community among African Americans.	Yes. Collective social responsibility frequently found in African American communities is indicated by the way many of the African Americans 'Tricia Ann sees on her way to the library are supportive and encourage her to be proud and determined in the face of constant reminders that because she is Black there are places that she cannot go and things she cannot do. They echo her grandmother's reminder that "Those signs can tell us where to sit, but they can't tell us what to think". E.g. Mrs. Grannell tells 'Tricia Ann to "carry yo self proud". The people 'Tricia Ann meets demonstrate a sense of solidarity
18. Text contains information about Gullahs?	No
19. Text contains African American names/terms of address?	Yes. Mama Frances,
20. Would you read this book to children? Why/why not?	Yes. But I would first discuss the social conditions that existed in the period that is the setting for the story. I think it is very important that children understand that the behavior of the White people in the story is an example of the way some White people behaved during this period but it was wrong then and is not acceptable now. I think all children need to understand the difficult conditions faced by many African Americans during this period, and how their pride, determination, and solidarity that made life more bearable. I would also talk about the way libraries often provided a place where African Americans were welcome at a time when they were refused entry to many other places.
Additional comments:	

Inter-Raters' Evaluation/Comments

Book Title: Bippety Bop Barbershop **Book Code:** 2002Tar **Author** Natasha **Author:** Anastasia Tarpley

Genre: contemporary realistic

	Rater S	**Researcher**
Synopsis of Rater Information	Rater S is a White first grade teacher in her early twenties. She has been a teacher for 3 years.	The researcher is a 50+ White female who is not currently teaching but has taught kindergarten in public schools in Texas, Kansas and the Department of Defense Dependents School system in Germany.
Do you teach in educational environment?	Yes	**No**
Do you have experience reading to children?	Yes	**Yes**
Do you have experience with African American culture?	Rater S wrote n/a for her experiences with African American culture but the researcher knows that she has had several African American children in her first grade class the last two years. This is the only experience she has had with African Americans.	No Yes **Yes**
1. Is main character African American?	Yes	Yes
2. Sex of main character	Male	Male
3. Main character is child or adult	Child	Child
4. Book is generic – with reasons for classification.	No	No
5. Book contains African American cultural content – with reasons for classification	Yes. There were a few phrases that were said in the book that made me classify it that way.	Yes. The setting for the story is an African American barbershop where African Americans go not just to get their hair cut, but also to socialize. There is a strong sense of community within the barbershop and the text includes examples of AAVE.

6. Book contains African American language/dialogue Examples	Yes – "thick dreadlocks", "afro", "Jazz"	Yes. Examples include Miles' father asking him "you up Little Man" at the beginning of the story and greetings in the barbershop such as "Hey, there, Little Man" , "What's going on?", Comments by the men watching a basketball game include "Come on, man, shoot the ball! What're you waiting for?" and "Whew, that boy can fly!"
7. Story portrays family relationships	No	Yes. Between Miles and his father
8. Story portrays intergenerational relationships	Yes	Yes – between Miles and his father and also Miles and the barbers in the shop.
9. Story portrays friendships	Yes	Yes – barbers in the shop
10. Text includes references to African American Identity	No. (Rater indicated yes, and then changed it to no).	Yes – there are references to African American hairstyles e.g. the text indicates that "another man has long, thick dreadlocks". `
11. Text contains African American historical content?	No	No
12. Text contains African American cultural traditions?	No	Yes – sense of shared community
13. Text contains references to music?	Yes	Jazz music is playing at the barbershop and Miles "hums a happy, proud song" when they leave the barbershop.
14. Text contains references to food?	No	No
15. Text contains references to hair?	Yes	Yes – throughout the story
16. Text includes references to religion and other belief systems?	No	No
17. Text features a sense of community among African Americans.	Yes. They go to a barbershop where everyone is African American.	Yes. The customers and barbers at the barbershop greet Miles and his father as if they are family and/or friends. The customers go to the barbershop not only to get their hair cut but also to watch TV, chat, and play chess. It is almost like a community center.
18. Text contains information about Gullahs?	No	No
19. Text contains African American names/terms of address?	No	Yes. "Hey, Little Man",
20. Would you read this book to children? Why/why not?	Yes. I think it is a good book and I like the idea of bringing another culture (one not talked about enough) into the classroom.	Yes. I read it to a 2nd grade class and the response and reactions were very gratifying. Not just the text, but also the illustrations prompted reactions from the students, one of whom called out "Hey – he's got a box (which is the name of an African American hairstyle). The student also called out "Look at that 'Fro". The children were spellbound during the reading.

Inter-Raters' Evaluation/Comments

Book Title: Mr. George Baker **Book Code:** 2004Hes **Author** Amy Hest
Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction

	Rater W	**Rater M**	**Researcher**
Synopsis of Rater Information	Rater W is a White 40+ female school librarian who reads to children daily. She is currently working on an M.S. in Library Science and at the time of rating, was taking a class in multicultural literature.	**Rater M is an African American 40+ female who teaches at a HBCU (Historically Black College & University).**	The researcher is a 50+ White female who is not currently teaching but has taught kindergarten in public schools in Texas, Kansas and the Department of Defense Dependents School system in Germany.
Do you teach in educational environment?	Yes	**Yes**	No
Do you have experience reading to children?	Yes. Prior to becoming a librarian I was a teacher. Reading both picture books and novels was always a significant part of my classroom.	**I read to my three children who are now grown.**	Yes
Do you have experience with African American culture?	My experiences are not out of the ordinary. I've taught African-American children, had friends who were African American and worked with various people who were African American.	**I am African American and spend mo sot my time primarily with African Americans.**	Yes
1. Is main character African American?	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Sex of main character	Male	Male	Male
3. Main character is child or adult	Both	Both	Both
4. Book is generic – with reasons for classification.	Generic – The main character is an African American adult male and the story portrays a relationship between an adult and a child but no family members. Overall this book is about illiteracy. There is a small reference to Mr. Baker being a famous musician. Illustrations show him in a jazz band, but the words could easily apply to any race.	Generic – This book is classified as generic because: 1. It does not recognize differences of an ethnic group. 2. The dialogue is plain. 3. The characters indicate the context to be of major family aspects.	Generic – Without the illustrations, there is nothing in the text to indicate that Mr. Baker is African American.
5. Book contains African American cultural content – with reasons for classification	No	No	No

6. Book contains African American language/dialogue Examples	No	No	No
7 Story portrays family relationships	No	Yes The story portrays a relationship between an adult and child and between Mr. Baker and his wife.	Mr. Baker and Harry
8. Story portrays intergenerational relationships	Yes	Yes	Yes – Mr. Baker
9. Story portrays friendships	Yes	Yes	Yes
10. Text includes references to African American identity	No	No	No
11. Text contains African American historical content?	No	No	No
12. Text contains African American cultural traditions?	No	No	No
13. Text contains references to music?	Yes – "Mr. Baker is a drummer man, and some people say he's famous".	Yes	Yes. Mr. Baker and Harry
14. Text contains references to food?	No	No	No
15. Text contains references to hair?	No	No	No
16. Text includes references to religion and other belief systems?	No	No	No
17. Text features a sense of community among African Americans?	No	No	No
18. Text contains information about Gullahs?	No	No	No
19. Text contains African American names/terms of address?	No	No	No
20. Would you read this book to children? Why/why not?	Yes. It is a fabulous story of a man who the book claims is 100 years old riding a school bus with the children and learning to read.	No. Because the wording of the story does not follow. There are some passages that have rhyming endings, but too strong for young children to understand.	Yes. Even though it is a generic book, it is an interesting story about the relationship betweer an old African American man and a young White boy who are both trying to learn to read.
Additional Comments:	The text hint at Mr. George Baker's ethnicity, but the name, environment and story line could apply to any race.	No additional comments.	I think it would have been nice to weave some historical information about African American into the story – perhaps in an explanation abou why Mr. George Baker had not learned to read when he was a child.

Appendix I - Beginning Readers – Generic

Author	Book Code	Title	Publisher	Summary
Barnes. D.D.	2004Bar02+	The low-down, bad-day blues	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 1	On a day when everything seems to be going wrong, from cloudy skies to the cancellation of a favorite cartoon, a boy discovers what a difference his attitude can make. Includes activity ideas.
Bermiss	2004Ber+	I hate to be sick	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level l	A young boy wakes up with a sore throat, cough, sneezing and a fever, but knows he will soon get better if he eats well and rests. Nephew
Black, S. W.	2004Bla02*	Mommy's bed	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level l	A family of mother, son and two daughters enjoy talking and playing games at bedtime. Nephew
Boyd, D.	2004Boy*	Only the stars	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 2	A young girl and her grandmother enjoy watching the stars at night. Nephew
Ford, B. G.	2004For*	Don't hit me	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 1	When best friends get mad over a game of chess, one strikes out and the other reminds him that they should use their words, not their fists when they disagree. Includes activities
Ford, B. G.	2003For*	Hurry up!	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level l	A young boy gets up in the morning, goes to school and returns home to eat, play, and goes to bed.
George, O.	2004Geo+	The bravest girls in the world	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 3	In a new neighborhood, Toshi is reluctant to go out and make friends because she is afraid of dogs.
Giovanni, N.	2004Gio+	Girls in the circle	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 2	Three girls have fun playing dress-up at their grandmother's house, even painting their toenails, but then they have nowhere to go. Includes activity ideas for parents and children.
Grimes, N.	2004Gri+	A day with daddy	Scholastic- JUST FOR YOU! Level 2	A boy enjoys every moment of a special day with his father, as they play in the park, share french fries, and see a movie together.
Hooks, G.	2004Hoo03	Three's a crowd	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 3	Keisha is very unhappy when Val spoils their Saturday fun by brining along Mya, a new girl in their neighborhood, but soon realizes that three is not such a bad number after all.
Hooks, G.	2004Hoo02+	The mystery of the missing dog	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 1	Alex's search for his missing dog, Jet, leads him to a tea party in his sister's room.
Hudson, W	2004Hud02*	What do you know SNOW!	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 2	On a snowy Saturday, Sydney is excited to be the first one on her street to go outside, and she has even more fun when her brother joins her in scooping, crunching, packing, and playing in the snow. Includes activity ideas for parents and children.

Inches, A.	2002Inc02	Corduroy's garden	Viking Beginning Reader Level 2	When the beans that Lisa has planted are dug up by a dog, Corduroy reseeds the garden that he was supposed to be watching, but he and Lisa are in for a surprise when the "beans' finally appear on the vines.
Marzollo, J.	2004Mar02 *	Shanna's lost shoe	Jump at the Sun Hyperion Books for Children Shanna's Readers Level l	Shanna's lost shoe takes her near and far to find her pink shoe with one star. Can Ducky, Dinah, Shane, and Tiger help Shanna find her missing shoe?
Marzollo, J. & Evans, S.	2004Mar04 *	Shanna's party surprise	Jump at the Sun Hyperion Books Shanna's Readers Level l	Shanna and her friends are planning a big surprise birthday party for Shane.
Marzollo, J.	2004Mar05 *	Shanna's pizza parlor	Jump at the Sun Hyperion Book Shanna's Readers Level l	Shanna's friends can't decide what sort of pizza they want from her menu.
Marzollo, J.	2005Mar	Shanna's bear hunt	Jump at the Sun Hyperion Books Shanna's Readers Level l	Shanna and friends hunt for the bear and it is scary.
Marzollo, J.	2004Mar01	Shanna's animal riddles	Jump at the Sun Hyperion Books Shanna's Readers Level l	Shanna dresses up as the animal answer in these easy-to-read riddles.
Marzollo, J. & Evans, S.	2004Mar03 *	Shanna's hip hop hooray	Jump at the Sun Hyperion Book Shanna's Readers Level l	Shanna and her friends put on a musical rap show.
McKissack, R.	2003McK	Try your best	Harcourt	When Ann worries that she is not good enough to participate in Sports Day, her teacher encourages her to try her best
Medearis, A. S.	2004Med*	Lights out!	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 1	At bedtime, a young child enjoys looking out of her window and then creates a puppet show with shadows on the wall.
Rau, D. M.	2001Rau	In the yard	Compass Point	As the seasons change, a family shares both fun and chores in their yard
Ringgold, F.	2002Rin	Cassie's word quilt	Alfred A. Knopf	Names the people and objects that make a girl's New York City apartment, school and neighborhood special.
Roberson, K.	2004Robers *	My shoelaces are hard to tie	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU Level 1	A young girl finally learns to tie her shoelaces when her older, patient brother teaches her how to do it. Nephew
Smalls, I.	2003Sma01 *	I can't take a bath!	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 2	In this rhyming story, a young African American boy tries to avoid taking a bath, but once inside the tub, he discovers that he likes it.
Suen, A.	2002Sue01	The clubhouse	Puffin Books Viking Easy to Read, Level 2	Peter, Amy, Archie, Lily and Louie work together to build a clubhouse in a vacant lot

Suen, A.	2002Sue02	Loose tooth	Puffin Books, Viking Easy to Read, Level 2	Peter can't decide if he wants his tooth to fall out because if it falls out, he will have a gap in his smile for the school pictures, but money from the tooth fairy will help him buy a new basketball.
Taylor-Butler, C.	2003Tay*	No boys allowed!	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 3	Everyone knows jumping double dutch is only for girls. Or is it? What if you're a boy who loves to jump?

Appendix J - Beginning Readers – Books with Cultural Content

Author	Book Code	Title	Publisher	Summary
Barnes, D.D.	2004Bar01+ CC	Stop, drop, and chill	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 2	A young boy learns to control his anger by using a mnemonic phrase. Nephew
Black, S. W.	2004Bla01 CC	Jumping the broom	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 3	When Erin wants to get a special wedding gift for her sister Simone, but does not have much money, Nana helps her make a special gift. Nephew
Brooks, R.	2004Broo* CC	Never finished, never done	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 2	Shayla is frustrated because she has to do chores before she can go to the park. Nephew
Ford, J. G.	2004For02+ CC	Sunday best	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 3	Every day of the week is busy for a hardworking family of four except for Sunday which the young boy in the family loves best - Nephew.
Ford, J. G.	2004For01* CC	Shop talk	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 3	Solomon visits the barbershop. Nephew
Hudson, W.	2004Hud01 *	Two Tyrones	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 3	Tyrone Rashon Williams' excitement about the first day of the new school year wanes when he sees that everyone is wearing the same new sneakers he is so proud of, but it gets worse when a new student arrives who has his exact same name.
Medearis, A. S.	2004Med CC	Singing for Dr. King	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 3	In 1965, third grader Sheyann Webb and her friend Rachel West change America by singing and marching for civil rights with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Taylor-Butler, C.	2004Tay02 + CC	A mom like no other	Scholastic JUST FOR YOU! Level 2	Despite their differences, an African American mother and daughter enjoy a special relationship.

Appendix K - Stories in Rhyme and Poetry – Generic Books

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary
Baicker, K.	2005Bai	You can do it too!	A girl and her younger brother share a variety of activities throughout their day
Baicker, K.	2003Bai	I can do it too	Supported by her family, an African American girl is self confident about what she can do and in turn supports a younger family member.
Bowie, C. W.	2003Bow	Busy fingers	A playful list of some of the many things that fingers can do, from counting and poking to waving and squishing.
Bradby, M.	2002Bra	Once upon a farm	Illustrations and simple rhyming text recall life on a family farm.
Clifton, L.	2001Clif	One of the problems of Everett Anderson	Everett Anderson wonders how he can help his friend Greg, who appears to be a victim of child abuse.
Cool J, L.L.	2002Coo	And the winner is…	A young basketball player learns the importance of both winning and losing gracefully
Grimes, N.	2005Grim	Danitra Brown class clown	In this story told in a series of rhyming poems, Zuri faces her fears about starting a new school year with the help of free-spirited best friend, Danitra.
Hru, D.	2002Hru	Tickle, tickle	A baby boy has lots of fun when his father plays with him.
Hubbell, P.	2003Hub	Black all around!	An African American girl contemplates the many wonderful black things around her, from the inside of a pocket, where surprises hide, to the cozy night where thee is no light.
Isadora, R.	2002Isa01	Bring on that beat	Illustrations and rhyming text evoke the rhythms of jazz music.
Johnson, K.	2002Joh	Look at the baby	Pictures and a simple rhyme celebrate babies, from their tiny toes to their round cheeks.
Marzollo, J.	2001Mar01	Shanna's doctor show	Shanna gives five clues that explain how she knows that she is a doctor and what she does in her job.
Marzollo, J.	2001Mar02	Shanna's princess show	Shanna gives five clues that explain how she knows that she is a ballerina.
Marzollo, J.	2002Mar01	Shanna's teacher show	Shanna gives five clues that explain how she knows that she is a teacher.
Marzollo, J.	2002Mar02	Shanna's ballerina show	Shanna gives five clues that explain how she knows that she is a ballerina
Meadows, M.	2003Mea	The way the storm stops	A mother soothes her child to sleep during a thunderstorm

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary
Panahi, H. L.	2005Pan	Bebop express	A rollicking rhythmic express train takes passengers on a jazzy journey that celebrates the United States and its unique musical culture
Parker, T. T.	2002Par01	Snowflake kisses and gingerbread smiles	Young children delight in all the joys Christmas brings.
Parker, T. T.	2002Par02	Sweets and treats	Illustrations and rhyming text describe the fun of trick-or-treating on Halloween.
Pinkett Smith, J.	2005Pin	Girls hold up this world	Relates how girls are unique individuals, possessing self-esteem and discipline, and able to work with other girls to make the world a better place.
Poydar, N.	2003Poy	Rhyme time, valentine	Ruby's homemade valentines blow away while she is walking to school, but she figures out a way to give everyone a valentine anyway.
Smith, D. K.	2004SMi	A wild cowboy	On the way to grandmother’s house, a young boy imagines he’s a cowboy and they are heading out West.
Weatherford, C. B.	2002Wea01	Jazz baby	A group of children move and play, hum and sleep to a jazz beat

Appendix L - Stories in Rhyme/ Poetry – Books with Cultural Content

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary
Boling, K.	2002Bol CC	New year be coming!: A Gullah year	Verses written in the Gullah dialect of the southeastern seacoast describe the months of the year and activities that characterize each.
English, K.	2004Eng01 CC	Speak to me (and I will listen between the lines	Describes events of one day at a San Francisco Bay Area school as perceived by different third-graders, from the observations of first to arrive on the playground to the walk home.
Fresh, D. E.	2002Fres CC	Think again	Zack and John took a long time to be friends in school because one was White and one was African American
Grimes, N.	2002Gri03 CC	When daddy prays	In this collection of poems, a child expresses love and affection for Daddy and reflects on the many times daddy talks to God.
Grimes, N.	2002Gri04* CC	Under the Christmas tree	Written from a child's perspective, this collection of 23 poems describe universal sights, sounds and feelings that surround Christmas – Irene
Grimes, N.	2002Gri01 CC	Danitra Brown leaves town	Recounts, in a series of poems and letters, Danitra's summer at her aunts house in the country and her best friend Suri's summer at home in town.
Hooks, B.	2002Hoo CC	Be boy buzz	Celebrates being Bold, All Bliss Boy, All Bad Boy Beast, Boy running, Boy Jumping, Boy Sitting Down, and being in Love With Being a Boy.
Hooks, B.	2004Hoo CC	Skin again	Celebrating all that makes us unique and different and being happy.
Hooks, Belle	2002Hoo03 CC	Homemade love	A girl who is Girlpie to her Mama and Honey Bun Chocolate Dewdrop to her daddy savors the warmth and love of her family.
Jordan, D. & R. M. Jordan	2004Jor CC	Did I tell you I love you today?	A mother describes the many ways that she shows her love for her child throughout the day.
Medina, T.	2002Med AP CC	Love to Langston	A series of poems written from the point of view of poet Langston Hughes, offering an overview of key events and themes in his life.
Nikola-Lisa, W	2002Nik	Summer sun risin'	As the sun rises, a young African American boy wakes up and begins his busy, enjoyable day on the family farm.
Perdomo, W.	2002Per CC	Visiting Langston	A poem to celebrate the African American poet Langston Hughes, born on February 1, 1902.
Perry, Rex	2004Per CC	It's beginning to look a lot like Kwanzaa!	A family celebrates Kwanzaa
Thomas, G. E.	2004Tho CC	Santa's Kwanzaa	Celebrate Kwanzaa with Santa and his family and friends

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary
Thomas, J. C.	2002Thom CC	Crowning glory	A collection of poems including "First Braids," "Grandma's Way and "Mama's Glory," in which an Afro-American girl celebrates herself, her family, and her heritage.
Weatherford, C. B.	2002Wea02* CC	Remember the bridge: Poems of a people	Twenty-nine original poems, taking the reader on a journey of over 400 years on the African American road to freedom. Weatherford's poems create portraits of captured Africans, slaves on the auction block, heroes of freedom, craftsmen and storytellers.

Appendix M - Historical Fiction – Books with Cultural Content

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary	Category
Battle-Lavert, G.	2003Bat	Papa's mark	After his son helps him learn to write his name, Samuel T. Blow goes to the courthouse in his Southern town to cast his ballot on the first election day ever in which African Americans were allowed to vote.	Research
Belton, S.	2003Bel	Pictures for Miss Josie	When his father takes him to meet Miss Josie, a young boy is somewhat intimidated by her, but through the coming years he comes to treasure her friendship and support and passes on his love of her to his own son. Based on the life of Josephine Carroll Smith.	Research
Birtha, B.	2005Bir*	Grandmama's pride	While on a trip in 1956 to visit her grandmother in the South, six-year-old Sarah Marie experiences segregation for the first time but discovers that things have changed by the time she returns the following year.	Memoirs
Evans, F. W.	2001Eva	A bus of our own	Although she really wants to go to school, walking the five miles is very difficult for Mabel Jean and the other Black children, so she tries to find a way to get a bus for them the same as the White children have. Based on real events in Mississippi.	Memoirs
Harrington, J. N.	2004Har*	Going North	A young African American girl and her family leave their home in Alabama and head for Lincoln, Nebraska, where they hope to escape segregation and find a better life.	Memoirs
Hopkinson, D.	2001Hop	Under the quilt of night	A young girl flees from the farm where she has worked as a slave and uses the Underground Railroad to escape to freedom in the North	Research
Johnson, A.	2004Joh03*	Sweet smell of roses	Two African American young girls sneak out of their house and join the other men and women marching for civil rights and justice.	Memoirs
Johnson, A.	2004Joh01	Just like Josh Gibson	A young girl's grandmother tells her of her love for baseball and the day they let her play in the game even though she was a girl.	Family History
Johnson, A.	2003Joh	I dream of trains	The son of a sharecropper dreams of leaving Mississippi on a train with the legendary engineer Casey Jones	Research
Lindsey, K. D.	2003Lin	Sweet potato pie	During a drought in the early 1900s, a large loving African American family finds a delicious way to earn the money they need to save their family farm.	Family History

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary	Category
Littlesugar, A.	2001Lit*	Freedom school, yes!	When their house is attacked because her mother volunteered to take in the young White woman who has come to teach Black children at the Freedom School, Jolie is afraid, but she overcomes her fear after learning the value of education.	Research
McKissack, P.	2001McK	Goin' someplace special	In segregated 1950s Nashville, a young African American girl braves a series of indignities and obstacles to get to one of the few integrated places in town: the public library	Memoirs
Michelson, R.	2005Mic	Happy feet: The Savoy Ballroom lindy hoppers and me	A young boy who loves to dance listens as his father retells the story of the night he was born, which coincided with the opening of the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem.	Research
Miller, W.	2001Mil*	Rent party jazz	When Sonny's mother loses her job in New Orleans during the Depression, Smilin' Jack, a jazz musician, tells him how to organize a rent party to raise the money they need.	Research
Nelson, V. M.	2003Nel	Almost to freedom	Tells the story of a young girl's dramatic escape from slavery via the Underground Railroad, from the perspective of her beloved rag doll.	Research
Pace, L.	2002Pac	Jalani and the lock	In this story based on true events, Jalani, a freed slave, gives the lock that held him in chains to his eldest child as a symbol of enslavement.	Research
Pinkney, A. D.	2001Pink	Mim's Christmas jam	When Pap goes away to build the New York City subway in 1915, his family sends him Mother's special jam which works magic in returning him home to celebrate Christmas.	Research
Pinkney, A. D.	2003Pin01	Fishing day	When Reenie and her mother, who are African Americans, go fishing, Reenie decides to share the secret of their success with their needy White neighbors.	Memoirs
Ransom, C. F.	2003Ran	Liberty Street	Young Kezia is a slave, living in nineteenth-century Fredericksburg, VA, until her mother helps her escape. Includes historical notes.	Research
Raven, M. T.	2004Rav	Circle unbroken	A grandmother tells the tale of Gullahs and their beautiful sweetgrass baskets that keep their African heritage alive.	Research
Siegelson, K. L.	2003Sie	Dancing the ring shout	It is the first year that Toby is old enough to attend the Ring Shout, a celebration when the hard work of harvest is done, but he cannot find an object that makes a noise which will speak from his heart to God's ears.	Research
Smalls, I.	2003Sma02	Don't say ain't	In 1957, a young girl is torn between life in the neighborhood she grew up in and fitting in at the school she now attends.	Memoirs
Smith, P.	2003Smi	Janna and the kings	Janna loves the Saturday visits that she and her grandfather make to the local barbershop where she becomes a princess, but after he dies, Janna feels as though her world has changed.	Memoirs

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary	Category
Smothers, E. F.	2003Smo	The hard-times jar	Emma, the daughter of poor migrant workers, longs to own a real book, and when she turns eight and must attend a new school, she is amazed to discover a whole library in her classroom.	Memoirs
Stroud, B.	2001Stro01	Dance y'all	With the help of his grandfather and his sleepwalking cousin, Jack Henry overcomes his fear of the long coach whip snake he’s seen in the barn.	Family History
Stroud, B.	2002Stro	The leaving	In the days following the end of slavery, a young girl helps her family escape from a cruel plantation owner.	Family History
Stroud, B.	2005Stro	The patchwork path: A quilt map to freedom	While her father leads her toward Canada and away from the plantation where they have been slaves, a young girl thinks of the quilt her mother used to teach her a code that will help guide them to freedom.	Research
Tarpley, N. A.	2003Tar	Joe-Joe's first flight	Forbidden to fly because of their color, Joe-Joe and the men who clean and repair airplanes in the 1920s are so discouraged that the moon cannot even shine, until Joe-Joe's determination lures the moon back. Includes a history of African American pilots.	Research
Taulbert, C. L.	2001Tau	Little Cliff's first day of school	Little Cliff is terrified of starting school, but with Mama Pearl's encouragement, he is able to overcome his fears.	Memoirs
Taulbert, C. L.	2002Tau	Little Cliff and the cold place	When Little Cliff hears about the cold Arctic in school and wants to go there, his Poppa Joe finds an ingenious way to satisfy his curiosity without leaving their small town.	Memoirs
Taylor, D. A.	2004Tay01	Sweet music in Harlem	C.J., who aspires to be as great a jazz musician as his uncle, searches for Uncle Click's hat in preparation for an important photograph and inadvertently gathers some of the greatest musicians of 1950s Harlem to join in on the picture.	Research
Vaughan, M.	2003Vau	Up the learning tree	A young slave boy risks his life to learn how to read, and with the unsuspecting help from a teacher from the North, begins to realize his dream.	Research
Vaughn, M.	2001Vau*	The secret to freedom	Great Aunt Lucy tells a story of her days as a slave, when she and her brother, Albert, learned the quilt code to help direct other slaves and, eventually, Albert himself, to freedom in the north.	Research
Walter, M. P.	2004Wal	Alec's primer	A young slave's journey to freedom begins when a plantation owner's granddaughter teaches him how to read. Based on the childhood of Alec Turner (1845-1923) who escaped from slavery by joining the Union Army during the civil War and later became a landowner in Vermont.	Research
Weatherford, C. B.	2005Wea	Freedom on the menu	The 1960 civil rights sit-ins at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C., are seen through the eyes of a young Southern Black girl.	Memoirs
Wiles, D.	2001Wile	Freedom summer	In 1964, Joe is pleased that a new law will allow his best friend John Henry, who is colored, to share the town pool and other public places with him, but he is dismayed to find that prejudice still exists.	Memoirs

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary	Category
Woodson, J.*	2005Woo*	Show way	The stirring story of generations of women who inspired each other with their strength, family traditions and determination to be free.	Family History
Woodson, J.	2001Woo	The other side	Two girls, one White and one Black, gradually get to know each other as they sit on the fence that divides their town.	Memoirs
Woodson, J.	2004Woo	Coming on home soon	After Mama takes a job in Chicago during World War II, Ada Ruth stays with Grandma but misses her mother who loves her more than rain and snow.	Memoirs

Appendix N - Historical Fiction – Generic Books

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary	Category
Bearden, R.	2003Bea*	Li'l Dan, the drummer boy: A civil war story	When a company of Black Union soldiers tells Li'l Dan that he is no longer a slave, he follows them, and uses his beloved drum to save them from attack.	Research
Burleigh, R.	2001Bur	Looking for Bird in the big city	A fictionalized account of the time, when as a teenage music student, trumpeter Miles Davis spent many hours trying to find Charlie Parker in the big city.	Research
Dillon, L.	2003Dil*	Rap a tap, tap: Here's Bojangles, think of that	In illustrations and rhyme, describes the dancing of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, one of the most famous tap dancers of all time.	Research
Evans, F. W.	2005Eva*	The Battle of New Orleans	"Old Jordan" tells how, when he was a little boy he used to drum to summon General Andrew Jackson's troops into action in the 1815 Battle of New Orleans.	Research
Murphy, C. R.	2005Mur	I am Sacajawea, I am York: Our journey West with Lewis and Clark	Story of Lewis & Clark's expedition. Nephew	Research
Vernick , A. G. & Glassman, E. G.	2003Ver*	Bark & Tim: A true story of friendship based on the paintings of Tim Brown	A look at the life and times of folk artist, Tim Brown and his dog named Bark.	Research

Appendix O - Fictional Biography – Books with Cultural Content

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary	Category
Grimes, N.	2002Gri02	Talkin' about Bessie: The story of an aviator	A biography of the woman who became the first licensed Afro-American pilot.	Fictionalized Biography
Hartfield, C.	2002Har*	Me and Uncle Romie: A story inspired by the life and art of Romare Bearden	A boy from North Carolina spends the summer in New York city visiting the neighborhood of Harlem, where his uncle, collage artist, Romare Bearden, grew up. Includes biographical sketch of Bearden and instructions on making a story collage.	Fictionalized Biography

Appendix P - Fictional Biography – Generic Book

Author	**Book Code**	**Title**	Summary	Category
Wenberg, M.	2002Wen	Elizabeth's song	A fictionalized account of how an eleven-year-old girl, Elizabeth "Libba" Cotton, saved to buy her first guitar and composed the popular folksong, "Freight Train."	Fictionalized Biography

Appendix Q - Contemporary Realistic Books with Cultural Content

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary
Altman, L.J.	2002Alt*	Singing with Momma Lou	Nine-year-old Tamika uses photographs, school yearbooks, movie ticket stubs, and other mementos to try to restore the memory of her grandmother, who has Alzheimer's disease.
Belton, S.	2003Bel CC	Beauty, her basket	While visiting her mother in the Sea Islands, a young girl hears about her African heritage and learns to weave a sea grass basket.
Campbell, Bebe. M.	2003Cam	Sometimes my mommy gets angry	A little girl copes with her mother's mental illness, with the help of her grandmother and friends.
Cole, K.	2001Col	No bad news	On his way to get a haircut, Marcus is dismayed by the bad things he sees in his urban neighborhood but, after hearing his friends in the barbershop talk about the many good things in their African-American community, he finds that on the way home he sees nothing but good news.
Duncan, A. F.	2005Dun	Honey baby, sugar child	A mother expresses her everlasting love for her child in this warm, poetic picture book. Alice Faye Duncan's playful, affectionate text and Susan Keeter's tender paintings will touch your heart and soul. I'm gone always be yo sweet Ma' Dear, and you gone always be my baby.
English, K.	2005Eng	The baby on the way	A young boy asks his grandmother if she was ever a baby; she tells him the story of how she was born.
English, K.	2004Eng02*	Hot day on Abbott Avenue	After having a fight, two friends spend the day ignoring each other, until the lure of a game of jump rope helps them to forget about being mad.
Johnson, V. L.	2005Joh	Of corn silk and black braids	After one bad hair day, Sarah doesn't feel good about herself. Aunt Lubelle brings soothing comfort, a gentle touch, and ideas for a new hairstyle as Sarah discovers her deep down beauty.
Joosse, B.	2004Joo	Hot city	Mimi and her little brother Joe escape from home and the city's summer heat to read and dream about princesses and dinosaurs in the cool, quiet library.
Joosse, B.	2002Joo02*	Stars in the darkness	A small boy joins with his mother to find a creative way to save his older brother from the dangers of gang violence
Kallok, E.	2001Kal	Gem	Soon after her saxophone playing neighbor composes a special song, a young girl's baby sister arrives and receives an appropriate name.
Katz, K.	2003Kat	My first Kwanzaa	A girl describes how she and her family celebrate the seven days of Kwanzaa.
McNaught, M.	2003McK*	Grandma's Ashanti cloth	Young Malik is starting second grade, and finds he has to do a project on his family tree. He learns from his Grandmother about is heritage and where a special treasured cloth came from.

Monk, I.	2005Mon	Blackberry stew	When her Grandpa dies, Hope remembers the time she went with him to pick blackberries and she realizes that he will continue to live in her and in her memories.	
Author	**Book Code**	**Title**	**Summary**	**Category**
Monk, I.	2001Mon	Family	Hope’s new and unusual dessert blends with the traditional dishes prepared by her cousins and Aunt Poogee at their annual summer get-together.	
Morris, Ann	2002Mor*	Grandma Lois remembers	An African American grandmother relates family and cultural history to her grandson in their Queens, New York apartment as she tells of growing up in segregated Birmingham, AL . Includes a recipe and words of Amazing Grace.	
Myers, C.	2001Mye	Fly	On the roof of his building, lonely Jawanza meets a homeless man who teaches him how to make friends with the sparrows and pigeons up there.	
Roberts, B. C.	2004Rob	Jazzy Miz Mozetta	On a beautiful evening, Miz Mozetta puts on her red dress and blue shoes and dances the jitterbug just like she did many years before.	
Smalls, I.		My Nana and me	A young girl and her grandmother enjoy a day filled with tea parties, hide-and-seek, stories and plenty of love.	
Steptoe, J.	2003Step	The Jones family express	Steven tries to find just the right present for Aunt Carolyn in time for the annual block party	
Tarpley, N. A.	2002Tar*	Bippity bop barbershop	A story celebrating a young African American's first trip to the barbershop.	
Thomas, J.C.	2002Thom	Crowning glory	A collection of poems including "First Braids," "Grandma's Way and "Mama's Glory," in which an Afro-American girl celebrates herself, her family, and her heritage.	
Vision, D. & Vision, M.	2004Vis*	Missing you	Because she feels so closely connected to her family and ancestors, especially her grandmother, a young African American girl honors them by trying to live a righteous life.	
Woodson, J.	2002Woo01	Our Gracie Aunt	When a brother and sister are taken to stay with their mother's sister because their mother neglects them, they wonder if they will see their mother again.	
Woodson, J.	2002Woo02	Visiting day	A young girl and her grandmother visit the girl's father in prison.	

Appendix R - Contemporary Realistic Generic Books

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary
Bergen, L. R.	2003Ber	A visit to the farm (Little Bill)	Little Bill and his classmates enjoy a trip to the farm.
Berger, S.	2002Ber	Nighttime noises (Little Bill)	Little Bill tries to find the cause of the noises he hears at night. Nephew
Carlson, L.	2003Car	Sports day (Little Bill)	Little Bill discovers that playing with friends and being supportive is just as important as winning. Nephew
Carlstrom, N.W.	2001Car	What does the sky say?	A child watches the sky in changing seasons and in all kinds of weather and learns to listen to its voice.
Cox, J.	2003Cox	My family plays music	A musical family with talents for playing a variety of instruments enjoys getting together to celebrate.
Coy, J.	2003Coy	Two old potatoes and me	After a young girl finds two old potatoes at her father's house, they plant and tend them to see if they will have new potatoes in September.
Crews, N.	2001Cre01	A ghost story	When Uncle Pete comes to visit, he listens to Celeste's singing and helps Jonathan get rid of the ghost that's been causing so much trouble.
Cummins, J.	2002Cum	Country kid, city kid	Although Ben lives on a farm in the country and Jody lives in an apartment in the city, when they meet at camp they find they have a lot in common.
Falwell, C.	2001Fal*	David's drawings	A shy African American boy makes friends with his classmates by drawing a picture of a tree.
Foreman, G.	2005For	Let George do it	Five brothers named George, along with Mrs. George, get ready for Big George’s party.
Frame, J. A.	2003Fra	Yesterday I had the blues	A young boy ponders a variety of emotions and how different members of his family experience them, from his own blues to his father's grays and his grandmother's yellows.
Fraustino, L.R.	2001Frau	The hickory chair	A blind boy tells of his warm relationship with his grandmother and the gift she left him after her death
Fremont, E.	2002Fre02*	A visit to the dentist (Little Bill)	After a visit to the dentist, Little Bill decides that he would like to be a dentist. Nephew
Fremont, E.	2003Fre*	The big day at school (Little Bill)	Little Bill is nervous about the new substitute teacher until he remembers how scared he was when he first started kindergarten
Havill, J.	2002Hav	Brianna, Jamaica, and the dance of spring	When her sister Nikki gets sick, Brianna hopes to play her part as the butterfly queen in the Dance of Spring, but then another disaster strikes.
Helldorfer, M.C.	2004Hel*	Got to dance	A young city girl dances away the summer time blues with her grandfather.

Author	Book Code	Title	Summary
Hest, A.	2004Hes	Mr. George Baker	Harry sits on the porch with Mr. George Baker, an African American who is one hundred years old but can still dance and play the drums, waiting for the school bus that will take them both to the class where they are learning to read.
Howard, E. F.	2004How	Flower girl butterflies	Sarah is both excited and nervous about being the flower girl in her aunt's wedding.
Howard, E.F.	2001How	Lulu's birthday	Laurie and J. Mathew plan a birthday surprise for Lulu. Includes a recipe for "One-Two-Thee-Four Cake".
Hyman, F.	2001Hym	An adventure with Captain Brainstorm (Little Bill)	Little Bill helps Captain Brainstorm save the Space Explorers who are trapped on planet Yubby by a giant robot.
Isadora, R.	2002Isa	Peekaboo morning	A toddler plays peek-a-boo throughout the day.
Johnson, Angela	2004Joh02	Violet's music	From the days she banged her rattle in the crib, Violet has been looking for friends to share her love of music.
Johnson, G. F.	2004John	Has anybody lost a glove	Jabari sets out to find the person who has lost the blue glove he finds when he and his mother leave the subway.
Kroll,	2005Kro	Brianna breathes easy: A story about asthma	Brianna is excited about playing the lead in her school's Thanksgiving play, but when a terrible coughing fit sends her to the emergency room the Friday before the show, she learns that she has asthma and how to control it
Lee, S. & Lee, T. L.	2005Lee&Lee	Please, puppy, please	Watch two toddlers try to take care of a puppy who has no plans of letting up.
Lee, S. 7 lee, T. L.	2002Lee	Please, baby, please	A toddler’s antics keep her mother busy as she tries to feed her, watch her on the playground, give her a bath, and put her to bed.
Medina, T.	2001Med**	Christmas makes me think	A young African American boy reflects on the spirit of Christmas and thinks of ways to share what he has with others.
Munsch, R.	2001Mun01*	Make up mess	Hoping to be beautiful as a movie star, Julie excitedly buys and applies various kinds of make-up, but the people around her do not react the way she expects.
Munsch, R.	2001Mun02	Up, up, down	Despite the warnings of her mother and father, Anna persists in trying to climb things, eventually ending up in the top of a tree and refusing to come down.
Nikola-Lisa, W.	2004Nik	Setting the turkeys free	When a sly, hungry fox threatens a flock of turkeys, the young artist who drew the birds must find a way to save them.
Nolen, J.	2003Nol01	Lauren McGill's pickle museum	A class field trip to the local pickle factory puts Lauren McGill's love of pickles to the test, until she realizes her true calling is to create a museum dedicated to pickles.

Perry, E.	2005Per	Think cool thoughts	On the hottest night of the hottest part of a very hot summer, Angel, her aunt and mother drag their mattress to the rooftop to sleep and hope for cooler weather.
Pinkney, A. D.	2004Pin	Sleeping Cutie	Cutie LaRue is perfect in nearly every way, but her sleeplessness causes problems for her parents until they send her a new toy that introduces cutie to the Dreamland Nightclub.
Plourde, L. 2003 in CCBC	2002Plo (2003 in CCBC log)	School picture day	Everything goes wrong when Josephina fidgets and fiddles as she tries to find out how the photographer takes the school pictures.
Polacco, P.	2001Pol	Mr. Lincoln's way	When Mr. Lincoln, "the coolest principal in the whole world," discovers that Eugene, the school bully, knows a lot about birds he uses this interest to help Eugene overcome his intolerance.
Pringle, L.	2003Pri	Bear hug	"Whoopee! Jesse and Becky are going camping with Dad. They've never done this before, so they're excited--but a little scared, to…"
Raschka, C.	2002Ras	John Coltrane's giant steps	John Coltrane's musical composition is performed by a box, a snowflake, some raindrops, and a kitten.
Reid, R.	2002Rei*	The big storm (Little Bill)	When a storm knocks out the lights so Mama cannot read Little Bill a story, all the family help to solve the problem. Nephew
Rex, M.	2002Rex	My freight train	A little boy, living out his fantasy of driving his own freight train, describes the different cars, what each carries, how they are connected, and more.
Scull, R.	2002Scu*	Happy Valentine’s Day!	Little Bill makes valentines for the people that he loves.
Smith, C. R. Jr.	2001Smi01	Loki & Alex: Adventure of a dog and his best friend	Photographs and text from the points of view of both a young African American boy and his dog tell the story of their trip to the park.
Tarpley, N. A.	2004Tar+	Destiny's gift	Destiny's favorite place in the world is Mrs. Wade's bookstore, so when she finds out it may close she stirs the community to help out, then works on a special gift of her own to encourage Mrs. Wade
Turner, A.	2001Tur	In the heart	A girl describes the important parts of her day, from the warmth of the morning sun to the moon overhead at night.
Wahl, J.	2004Wah	Candy shop	When a boy and his aunt find that a bigot has written something on the sidewalk outside the candy shop owned by a new immigrant from Taiwan, they set out to comfort the owner.
Watson, K.	2001Wat01	Elephant on the loose (Little Bill)	Little Bill cannot find his pet hamster, Elephant, and talks the whole family into helping him to look for Elephant.

Watson, K.	2001Wat02	The Halloween costume hunt (Little Bill)	When Little Bill is invited to a Halloween party, he has to come up with his own costume, and young readers can join Little Bill in his quest to find the perfect costume by lifting the flaps.
Watson, K.	2001Wat03	Just like dad (Little Bill)	From Bill Cosby's Nick Jr. Series comes this story of Little Bill as he goes to work with Big Bill. Wearing a tie and white shirt, Little Bill is ready for his big day at the office.
Watson, K.	2001Wat04	A trip to the hospital (Little Bill)	Little Bill breaks his arm and has to go to the hospital.
Winthrop, E.	2005Win	Squashed in the middle	When Daisy, a middle child, is invited to spend the night at her friend's house, her family finally pays attention to her.
Wolff, F.	2005Wol	It is the wind	At night the sounds of various animals lull a child to sleep.

Appendix S - Picture Books in Sims' Study

Book Code	Author	Illustrator	Title of Book	Sims' Classification
1962Kea	Keats ,Ezra Jack	Keats, Ezra Jack	The snowy day	MP
1964Kea	Keats, Ezra Jack	Keats, Ezra Jack	Whistle for Willie	MP
1965Gri	Grifalconi, Ann.	Grifalconi, Ann.	City Rhythms	MP
1965Sco	Scott, Ann Herbert	Lewis, Richard W.	Big Cowboy Western	MP
1966Hor	Horvath, Betty	Rocker, Fermin.	Hooray for Jasper	MP
1966Lov	Lovelace, Maud	Fetz, Ingrid	The Valentine box	MP
1966Pal	Palmer, Candida	Hall, H. Tom	A ride on high	MP
1966Udr	Udry, Janice	Mill, Eleanor	What Mary Jo shared	MP
1967Hill	Hill, E. S.	Grossman, Nancy.	Evan's corner	MP
1967Kea	Keats, Ezra Jack	Keats, Ezra Jack	Peter's chair	MP
1967Sco	Scott, Ann Herbert	Shimlin, Symeon	Sam	MP
1968Bour	Bourne, Miriam Anne	Morton, M.	Raccoons are for loving	CC
1968Des	Desbarats, Peter	Grossman, Nancy	Gabrielle and Selena	MP
1968Gre	Greenberg, Polly	Aliki	Oh Lord, I wish I was a buzzard	CC
1968Kea	Keats, Ezra Jack	Keats, Ezra Jack	A letter to Amy	MP
1968Kem	Kempner, Carol		Nicholas	MP
1969Bur	Burch, Robert	Freemon, Don	Joey's cat	MP
1969Kea	Keats, Ezra Jack	Keats, Ezra Jack	Goggles!	MP
1969Ste	Steptoe, John	Steptoe, John	Stevie	CC
1970Ale	Alexander, Martha	Alexander, Martha	Bobo's Dream	MP
1970Bal	Baldwin, Anne. Norris	Grifalconi, Ann.	Sunflowers for Tina	CC
1970Hei	Heide, Florence Parry	Longtemps, Kenneth	Sound of sunshine, sound of rain	SC
1970Hof	Hoffman, Phyllis	McCully, Emily Arnold.	Steffie & me	MP
1970Kea	Keats, Ezra Jack	Keats, Ezra Jack.	Hi, Cat!	MP
1970Ste	Steptoe, John	Steptoe, John	Uptown	CC
1971Ale	Alexander, Martha	Alexander, Martha	Sabrina	MP

Book Code	Author	Illustrator	Title of Book	Sims' Classification
1971Dob	Dobrin, Arnold		Scat!	CC
1971Gla	Glasser, Barbara	Morton, Lee Jack	Leroy, OOPS	MP
1971Kli	Klimowicz, Barbara	Kamen, Gloria	When shoes eat socks	MP
1971Lex	Lexau, Joan M.	Weaver, Robert	Me day	MP
1972Cav	Cavin, Ruth	Loup, Jean Jacques	Timothy, the terror	CC
1972Kea	Keats, Ezra Jack	Keats, Ezra Jack	Pet show	MP
1972Kin	King, Helen H.	Byard, Carole	The soul of Christmas	CC
1972Mye	Myers, Walter Dean	Rockwell, Anne	The dancers	CC
1972Ste	Steptoe, John	Steptoe, John	Birthday	CC
1973Bre	Breinburg, Petronella	Lloyd, Erroll	Shawn goes to school	MP
1973Cai	Caines, Jeanette	Kellogg, Steven	Abby	MP
1973Cli01	Clifton, Lucille	Steptoe, John	All us come cross the water	CC
1973Cli02	Clifton, Lucille	Ness, Evaline	Don't you remember	MP
1973Cli03	Clifton, Lucille	Turkle, Brinton	The boy who didn't believe in spring	CC
1973Pra	Prather, Ray		Anthony & Sabrina	CC
1973Tho	Thomas, Ianthe	DiGrazia, Thomas	Lordy, Aunt Hattie	CC
1973Wei	Weil, Lisl	Weil, Lisl	Fat Ernest	MP
1974Cli	Clifton, Lucille	Douglas, Stephanie	Three wishes	CC
1974Gra	Gray, Genevieve.	Shimin, Symeon	Send Wendell	CC
1974Gre	Greenfield, Eloise	Steptoe, John	She come bringing me that little baby girl	CC
1974Mye	Myers, Walter Dean	Barnett, Moneta	Fly, Jimmy, fly	CC
1974Pra	Prather, Ray		No trespassing	MP
1975Cli	Clifton, Lucille	Barnett, Moneta	My brother fine with me	CC
1976Gre	Greenfield, Eloise	Barnett, Moneta	First pink light	CC
1976Ros	Rosenblatt, Suzanne	Rosenblatt, Suzanne	Everyone is going somewhere	MP
1976Tho	Thomas, Ianthe	Barnett, Moneta	Eliza's daddy	MP
1977Cai	Caines, Jeanette	Himler, Ronald	Daddy	MP
1977Cal	Calloway, Northern J.	Maclean, Sammis.	I been there	CC
1977Cli	Clifton, Lucille	DiGrazia, Thomas	Amifika	CC

Book Code	Author	Illustrator	Title of Book	Sims' Classification
1977Gre	Greenfield, Eloise	Cummings, Pat	Good news	CC
1977Isa	Isadora, Rachel	Isadora, Rachel	Willaby	MP
1977Jen	Jensen, Virginia A.	Strugnell, Ann	Sara and the Door	MP
1977Sha	Sharmat, Marjorie.	Hoban, Lillian	I don't care	MP
1978Lit	Little, Leslie Jones & Greenfield, Eloise	Byard, Carole	I can do it by myself	CC
1979Isa	Isadora, Rachel	Isadora, Rachel	Ben's trumpet	CC
1979Tho	Thomas, Ianthe	Toulmin-Rothe, Ann	Hi, Mrs. Mallory!	CC
1979Yar	Yarbrough, Camille	Byard, Carole M.	Cornrows	CC

Key:

SC = Social conscience

MP = Melting pot

CC = Culturally conscious