

# Critical Identity Literacy with Young Learners: Exploring Gender and Race at the Intersection of Social Studies and Visual Arts

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It is early November in Mrs. Ball's kindergarten classroom in a small, rural elementary school in the Midwest. For the past several months, Xiaoying and Christie, two early childhood researchers from a local public university, have been visiting the classroom to read books and discuss characters' identities. These "book clubs," as we came to call them, were preceded and followed by the children drawing self-portraits. On this particular visit, we invite a small group of children into conversation about gender and race. Ashleigh, Abby, West, and Graham (all names are pseudonyms) engage in a dynamic, critical conversation with us. Some comments from that conversation follow:

ASHLEIGH. I think if someone was not a boy or not a girl. I think they're both of them.

ABBY. If there was a boy with long hair, it would still be a boy and it could still be a girl too. There's different ways to be a boy and a girl. Boys can be girls too.

WEST. I kind of have two [skin] colors. On my hand it's different colors.

GRAHAM. Different [people] can be different shades of brown.

So how did we arrive at this depth of conversation with four five-year-olds? We believe that even the youngest learners are capable of engaging in dynamic and critical conversations in the pursuit of equity and justice, and that we must begin by affirming children's identities as we help them consider

perspectives and possibilities beyond them. We advocate for children to have an opportunity to explore gender and race openly so that they are aware of and embrace the diversities embodied in themselves and others. In this article, we share stories of how we laid the foundation for this conversation and others like it through intentional pedagogical considerations starting at the beginning of the school year.

We are early childhood teacher educators invested in criticality and the pursuit of equity and justice: Xiaoying identifies as an Asian, cisgender woman, and Christie identifies as a White, cisgender woman. We live and teach in a mid-sized university town in the Midwest. Our intention was to use the book club to impact young children's thinking about (self) representation in their artwork. We believe that the intersection of social studies and diverse children's literature is a rich site for interrogating assumptions and implicit biases about gender and racial identities with young learners. In this paper, we use *White* to indicate the racial identity and white as a color in visual art.

In our teacher preparation classes, many pre- and in-service teachers have expressed that while they wish to have conversations about gender and race with their young students, they are often unsure where to start. Plenty of literature shows that predominantly White female educators in early childhood settings must intentionally combat discourses such as childhood innocence, teachers as protectors, White fragility, color-blind pedagogy, and homo- and transphobia.<sup>1</sup> Drawing on intersectional feminist theory,<sup>2</sup> we call for educators working with young learners to invite critical discussions about gender and race simultaneously through arts-based readerly response in social studies.

## Children’s Identity Work and Social Studies

An important theme of social studies content is **INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY**.<sup>3</sup> According to the C3 Framework, College, Career, and Civic ready students “understand the variety of gendered, racialized, or other identities individuals take on over the life course.”<sup>4</sup> Young learners are developing and exploring their identities and expressions. In a society with prevailing racial and gender inequities and biases, they need to better understand their personal identities in relation to others and practice ethical principles, such as open-mindedness. NCSS’s position statement pinpoints that “young children take note of these [biases, discriminations, and inequities] early on, both through implicit and explicit means, throughout their daily experiences and interactions.”<sup>5</sup> Empirical studies also find that children are navigating racial and gender hierarchies in their everyday lives.<sup>6</sup> To educate

citizens-in-the-making for an equitable, inclusive democracy, social studies teachers ought to tap into children’s prior knowledge and experiences and have critical and open dialogues around gender and racial diversities. In particular, in homogenous communities where educators and families purposely or implicitly reinforce the dualistic gender and racial norms and perpetuate interpersonal biases and prejudices, social studies can and must provide spaces for critical identity work with young learners.

## Arts-Based Readerly Response as a Vehicle for Social Studies

Arts integration can be traced back to the progressive education movement at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> Since then, many social studies educators have integrated the arts into their work. Although typically part of the English

### Sidebar 1. Books We’ve Used for *Storying identity*

Denos, J. *Windows*. Illustrated by E.B. Goodale. Candlewick, 2017.

Derting, S., and S. R. Johannes. *Cece Loves Science*. Illustrated by V. Harrison. Greenwillow Books, 2018.

McClintock, B. *Emma and Julia Love Ballet*. Scholastic Press, 2016.

Mora, O. *Saturday*. Little, Brown and Company, 2019.

Tallie, M. E. *Layla’s Happiness*. Illustrated by A. Corin. Enchanted Lion Books, 2019.

#### Books with Positive Representations of BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ People

Baldacchino, C. *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*. Illustrated by I. Malenfant. Groundwood Books, 2014.

Barnes, D. *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*. Illustrated by G. C. James. Agate Bolden, 2017.

De la Peña, M. *Milo Imagines the World*. Illustrated by C. Robinson. GP Putnam’s Sons Books for Young Readers, 2021.

Ellison J. M. *Sylvia and Marsha Start a Revolution!: The Story of the Trans Women of Color Who Made LGBTQ+ History*. Illustrated by T. Silver. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2020.

Feder, T. *Bodies Are Cool*. Rocky Pond Books, 2021.

Greenlaw, S., and G. Frey. *The First Blade of Sweetgrass*. Illustrated by N. Baker. Tilbury House Publishers, 2021.

LaCour, N. *Mama and Mommy and Me in the Middle*. Illustrated by K. Juanita. Candlewick, 2022.

Lukoff, K. *When Aiden Became a Brother*. Illustrated by K. Juanita. Lee & Low Books, 2019.

Maclear, K. *It Began With a Page: How Gyo Fujikawa Drew the Way*. Illustrated by J. Morstad. HarperCollins, 2019.

Maillard, K. N. *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story*. Illustrated by J. Martinez-Neal. Roaring Brook Press, 2019.

Perkins U. E. *Hey Black Child*. Illustrated by B. Collier. LB Kids, 2019.

Pitman, G. E. *My Maddy*. Illustrated by V. Tobacco. Magination Press, 2020.

Pitman, G. E. *This Day in June*. Illustrated by K. Litten. Magination Press, 2014.

Pitman, G. E. *When You Look Out the Window: How Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin Built a Community*. Illustrated by C. Lyles. Magination Press, 2017.

Shraya, V. *The Boy and the Bindi*. Illustrated by R. Perera. Arsenal Pulp Press, 2016.

Thorn, T. *It Feels Good to Be Yourself: A Book About Gender Identity*. Illustrated by N. Grigni. Henry Holt and Co., 2019.

Wang, A. *Watercress*. Illustrated by J. Chin. Neal Porter Books, 2021.

Language Arts curriculum, readerly response lends itself to social studies spaces. Drawing on children’s multimodal sensibilities<sup>8</sup> and valuing the response as a site of meaning making, it is a powerful tool for engaging young learners’ burgeoning understanding of self and society. NCSS asserts that “in the early grades, young learners develop their personal identities in the context of families, peers, schools, and communities,” and that “exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals and groups are alike and how they are unique” are paramount to this development.<sup>9</sup>

Notably, some teachers take up a subservient approach,<sup>10</sup> simply using arts to add “spice” to learning, without having children apply high-order thinking skills or aesthetic qualities. We strongly believe that when students use readerly responses to story gender and racial identities, it can foster perspective-taking and critical thinking skills as they make mindful artistic decisions and enact critical identity literacy.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, when interacting with the art materials scaffolded by teachers, children can enhance their art-specific skills and sensitivities. This specific way to integrate art and social studies highlights the power of narratives, art materials, and aesthetic awareness so that students create tangible, humanizing, and artistic connections to one another.

**Visualizing and Disrupting Gender and Racial Norms through Arts-Based Readerly Response**

Even very young children are capable of having critical conversations about race and gender. Many literacy scholars have demonstrated using diverse, high-quality literature as a foundational space for having such discussions.<sup>12</sup> Please see Sidebar 1 for a list of books we have used in our work with children, including those that offer positive representations

of BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ people.

As multimodal meaning makers,<sup>13</sup> children can respond to literature through drawing, writing, speaking, and drama.<sup>14</sup> Different from typical arts-based readerly response where students are invited to represent their understanding of picturebooks as “aesthetic wholes,”<sup>15</sup> we used the de-gendered and de-raced texts of picturebooks, without the illustrations, to elicit gender and racial assumptions, biases, and preferences for group discussions. We call this method *storying identity*. We use generic terms such as *kid* and *friend* and the gender-neutral pronouns *they* and *them* to replace any gender or racial indicators appearing in the original texts. The result is de-identified characters who could be any gender and race. In this way, children’s explicit and implicit understandings of gender and race materialize in their artwork and conversations about it.<sup>16</sup> See Figure 1 for the steps we take as we invite children to story identity.

We encourage teachers to adapt the steps in the protocol to meet their own needs; we have used slight variations with fourth-grade children. The process remains the same, though the types of scaffolding we provide differ based on children’s ages, knowledges, and lived experiences. For example, with the kindergarteners, we used the terms boy and girl. With the fourth graders, we added another category, *other gender*. Our identity work with children has been fruitful, as we have interrogated complex understandings of race and gender in children’s art. The affordances of *storying identity*, which build on findings from a previous study,<sup>17</sup> are found in Figure 2.

In the following sections, we share the pedagogical considerations from our study as we integrated ELA and art practices with social studies and invited children to story identity/ies in response to literature.

Figure 1. **Protocol for Storying Identity**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Separate the written texts from the illustrations.</li> <li>2. De-gender and de-race the text; read this text to children.</li> <li>3. Invite children to create their own illustrations of the main book character(s) using both traditional and “people color” paper, markers, and/or crayons.</li> <li>4. Invite children to share their artistic decisions with the group, particularly those related to gender and race.</li> <li>5. Read the book in its original form and share illustrations with the children.</li> <li>6. Engage children in conversation wherein they react to the original texts and illustrations verbally.</li> </ol>
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Figure 2. **Affordances of Storying Identity**

For children:	<p>Engaging in self-reflection and identity work</p> <p>Valuing children’s emerging identities as authors, artists, creators, storytellers, and producers of knowledge</p> <p>Articulating and co-constructing non-binary understandings of race and gender with peers and adults</p>
For teachers:	<p>Making children’s assumptions visible, providing opportunities for open discussion and disruption of binaries</p> <p>Creating authentic spaces to have productive dialogues around gender and racial identities</p>

**Consideration 1. We invite children to author themselves into the story through readerly response.**

NCSS states that “personal identity is shaped by an individual’s culture, by groups, by institutional influences, and by lived experiences.” We believe that social studies is a rich site for affirming children’s identity development, such as when the children in our study authored themselves into each book as they made artistic decisions about how characters might look, based primarily on their own physical traits/characteristics. They *story their identities* into their interpretations of the written text. For example, when asked about her illustration, Abby explained her artistic rendering: “I think she looks like me. I *know* she looks like me.” Because the illustrations in the book were quite different from Abby’s interpretation, discussions about physical characteristics and personality followed. Similarly, many students take this opportunity to share their self-understanding, self-knowledge, and self-esteem.<sup>18</sup> For example, when Xiaoying asked Ruby, “Why do you think the character has this kind of hair?” Ruby replied, “When I’m done with my bath, my hair turns blonde and brown and blonde like this.” Additionally, when Milo described his drawing, he told Christie that he gave his character black hair “because I have black hair.” Children creating arts based on their own unique physical traits demonstrates their emerging self-image and individuality, which connects to the social studies theme of **INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY**.

**Consideration 2. We encourage children to resist gender binaries through creative questioning.**

The use of *creative questioning* can help students explore and accept diverse identities.<sup>19</sup> We acknowledge that we relied on the terms *boy* and *girl* as we worked with children, primarily because of the context in which this study was situated, and because of the classroom teacher’s concern about familial pushback. We acknowledge that “[language] is [binary], people are not”;<sup>20</sup> therefore, we recognize the limitations of reproducing binaried language in our conversations with the children. However, we were able to take up the practice of creative questioning as we pushed them to consider other possibilities. The following conversation demonstrates the use of creative questioning as a means of encouraging children to think beyond the binary.

CHRISTIE. So what might you say, if a kid said, “I’m not a boy or a girl.”

ASHLEIGH. You would just say that you’re a real person.

CHRISTIE. What if we all knew this kid and they came to school today and they said, “Today I’m a boy.” And then tomorrow they came to school and said, “Today I’m a girl.” What do you think about that?

WEST AND ASHLEIGH. They’re both.

CHRISTIE. How can you tell if a person is a boy or a girl? Do you have any ideas?

WEST. You can probably ask them in a nice voice.

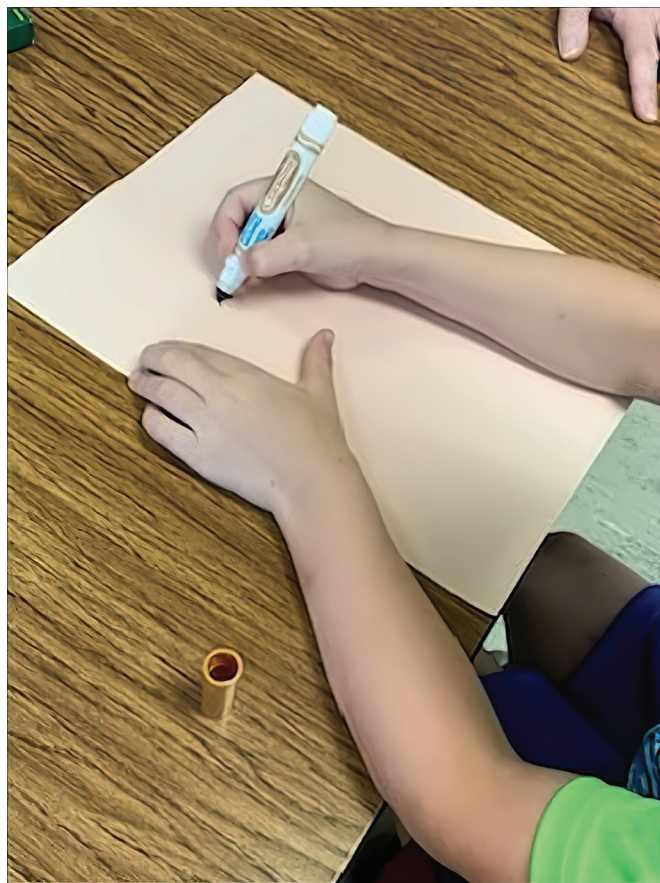


Figure 3. A child drawing on “people color” paper

Often, the first step in engaging critically is to question taken-for-granted assumptions about the world. In our work with children, asking “why?” has often been enough to get the conversation started. Because the children in our study engaged in disrupting gender binaries with support from adults, they were able to consider divergent possibilities for themselves and others. After many conversations using creative questioning, such as the discussion above, we saw this manifest as self-advocacy. For example, when West shared that he would soon be getting his ears pierced, Graham frowned. Abby interpreted, “Graham thinks that’s disgusting.” West responded firmly, “It’s not disgusting.” We believe that this moment was a result of previous conversations in which the use of creative questioning laid the foundation for West’s self-advocacy. Self-advocacy connects to the NCSS theme **INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY**, which emphasizes “the factors that influence an individual’s personal identity, development, and actions.”<sup>21</sup>

**Consideration 3. We urge children to inquire about race and skin tone.**

Previously the kindergarteners did not work with “people color” paper, they had been using white printer paper. When we introduced paper in shades of manila, salmon, light brown, brown, and dark brown, we asked them to hold the paper close to their forearms and find the paper that most resembled their skin tone (see Figure 3).

When choosing paper for self-portrait, all children chose either manila or salmon, which matched their light skin tones. In Week 1, only Abby requested traditional white paper and explained, “My skin is white.” Six weeks later, for the second self-portrait, she chose the salmon-colored paper. It is possible that after close observation and group discussions, Abby realized that she was not white like the paper, expanding her perceptions of skin tones across time. Like Abby, the rest of the children were able to differentiate White as a race and the varied skin tones White people could have at our final meeting. Take the following conversation between West and Xiaoying about his artwork (see Figure 4) as an example:

XIAOYING. What is the skin color of the son and the dad?

WEST. They both are White. His shirt is red, and the kid’s shirt is purple.

XIAOYING. But I see that their skin tones are kind of different, aren’t they?

WEST. They are different. This one is darker and this one is lighter.

By pointing out the subtle differences in the skin tones of White people, West recognized diversity within the racial group. Educators can tap into this knowledge to further young children’s deconstruction of racial categories—White, Brown, and Black—by clarifying that they are different from the colors white, brown, and black in visual arts and acknowledging that they fail to represent the variety of skin tones and complexions of all people. From our observations, most children did not immediately associate race with skin tone, which teachers can leverage as the children do not have to unlearn those rigid associations. It is imperative to teach children that we need to stay open-minded and cannot ascribe people’s race solely based on their skin tones, especially with the growing bi- and multi-racial populations.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, teachers can underscore the importance of being genuinely curious about how people identify themselves racially without making assumptions.

When describing the skin tones of the book characters that they imagined after listening to the de-raced texts, the five-year-olds already used rich skin tone vocabulary such as

brown, black, white, yellow, pink, red, and peach. But when not asked directly to describe the characters’ race and skin tone, they did not use specific racial categories or skin tone vocabulary. This suggests children’s emerging understanding of categories and vocabularies and great potential in having conversations about race and skin tone diversities. To deepen their understanding and normalize these conversations on a daily basis, educators may include people of color in their communities and in children’s literature (preferably authored



Figure 4. West’s artwork

by people of color), emphasizing the diversity within and across racial groups. As one of the foundational understandings for civic engagement, children need to appreciate the diversity in their immediate environment.<sup>23</sup> Including representations of people of color can address the social studies content **CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES**.<sup>24</sup> For White children living in predominantly White communities, it is significant to invite them to be more aware of diversities in their communities and in the larger society.

**Suggestions for Teachers**

We acknowledge the current political climate in the United States and how this climate directly affects not only our pedagogical decision-making but also the lives of children we teach. Bans of books by people of color and LGBTQIA2S+ authors, resistance to non-White interpretations of history, and challenges to anti-racist, anti-bias education put teachers in onerous positions—even (especially) those who are

committed to teaching for equity and justice. We encourage teachers to act courageously, as BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ people must be at all times. Although it is conceivable—even likely—that teachers will face pushback, we agree with Brandt and Hill who remind us that “[not addressing] gender [and race] issues can have dire consequences.”<sup>25</sup> Critical identity work is a process, one that certainly is not accomplished in three book clubs. Critical identity work must start with teachers’ reflecting on and confronting their own biases and deepening their understanding of how to educate justice-oriented citizens.<sup>26</sup> We believe that storying identity is a first step toward normalizing conversations around gender and race. This lays a foundation for further critical work by both teachers and children, especially in contexts where teachers are met with pushback from families and the community. See Sidebar 2 for resources for engaging in self-reflection and critical identity work.

The pedagogical moves we made yielded deep and dynamic conversations about gender and race with the kindergartners. Nesting arts-based readerly responses in social studies proved

to be a rich site for children’s burgeoning identity development and engagement in civic practices. We provide the following suggestions for teachers who wish to integrate social studies, art, and ELA through *storying identity*.

- Take time to explore the affordances of art materials. Get comfortable with materials that may be new to you, such as “people color” paper and crayons. For example, blending multiple skin color paints creates new shades. Grow your identity as an artist, then foster artistic identities in the children, knowing that both parties will explore along the way.<sup>27</sup>
- Use self-portrait as an invitation for young children to talk about physical differences related to gender and race. Teachers can facilitate these conversations through creative questioning by both affirming students’ identities and addressing common misconceptions children may have.

## Sidebar 2. Teacher Resources for Self-Identity Work

### Books

- Barker, M. J., and J. Scheele. *Gender: A Graphic Guide*. Icon Books, 2020.
- Derman-Sparks, L., and P. G. Ramsey. *What If All The Kids Are White?: Anti-Bias Multicultural Education with Young Children and Families*. 2nd ed. Teachers College Press, 2011.
- Emdin, C. *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y’all too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education*. Beacon Press, 2017.
- Kendi, I. X. *How to Be an Antiracist*. One World, 2019.
- Love, B. L. *We Want to Do More than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*. Beacon Press, 2019.
- Morris, M. W. *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*. The New Press, 2018.
- Muhammad, G. *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*. Scholastic, 2020.
- Oluo, I. *So You Want to Talk about Race?* Seal Press, 2019.
- Saad, L. F. *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*. Sourcebooks, 2020.

### Webpages

- Baum, J., and K. Westheimer. “Sex? Sexual Orientation? Gender identity? Gender Expression?” *Learning for Justice* 50, Summer 2015, <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/summer-2015/sex-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-gender-expression>.

“Racial Equity Tools Glossary,” *Racial Equity Tools*, 2021, <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>.

“Talking to young children about bias and prejudice,” Anti-Defamation League, October 30, 2012, <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/talking-young-children-about-bias-and-prejudice>.

### Podcasts

Broaden, S. “Episode 9: Gender Expression in Early Childhood w/Mr. Willy.” *Honoring childhood: The podcast*, March 19, 2022. Podcast. <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/honoring-childhood-the-podcast/id1562515072>.

Eakins, S. L. “LE 239: How Do We Value and Celebrate Diversity with UnSuk Zucker.” *Leading Equity Center*, 2022. <https://www.leadingequitycenter.com/239>.

### Videos

Amer, L. “Why Kids Need to Learn about Gender and Sexuality.” TED Conferences, May 2019. Video. [https://www.ted.com/talks/lindsay\\_amer\\_why\\_kids\\_need\\_to\\_learn\\_about\\_gender\\_and\\_sexuality?](https://www.ted.com/talks/lindsay_amer_why_kids_need_to_learn_about_gender_and_sexuality?)

Dass, A. “What Kids Should Know about Race.” TED Conferences, May 2018. Video. [https://www.ted.com/talks/angelica\\_dass\\_what\\_kids\\_should\\_know\\_about\\_race](https://www.ted.com/talks/angelica_dass_what_kids_should_know_about_race).

Tatum, Beverly Daniel. “Is My Skin Brown Because I Drank Chocolate Milk?” TEDxStanford, May 19, 2017. Video. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I\\_TFaS3KW6s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_TFaS3KW6s).

- As emerging thinkers, speakers, and artists, some children may need extra support articulating their reasoning for artistic decisions or need sustained engagement with this activity to represent their ideas in multiple modalities. Be patient! Remember, this is the work of weeks and months—every conversation about equity and justice contributes to children’s growing sense of themselves and others.

As Maya Angelou so eloquently reminds us, when you know better, you do better. We owe it to all children to constantly work at doing better.

## Notes

1. J. Bolgatz, “Revolutionary Talk: Elementary Teacher and Students Discuss Race in a Social Studies Class,” *The Social Studies* 96, no. 6 (2005): 259–264; L. B. Buchanan et al., “Positioning Children’s Literature to Confront the Persistent Avoidance of LGBTQ Topics among Elementary Preservice Teachers,” *The Journal of Social Studies Research* 44, no.1 (2020): 169–184; V. E. Evans-Winters and D. E. Hines, “Unmasking White Fragility: How Whiteness and White Student Resistance Impacts Anti-Racist Education,” *Whiteness and Education* 5, no. 1 (2020): 1–16; J. H. James, “Teachers as Protectors: Making Sense of Preservice Teachers’ Resistance to Interpretation in Elementary History Teaching,” *Theory & Research in Social Education* 36, no. 3 (2008): 172–205; P. Ramsey, *Teaching and Learning in a Diverse World: Multicultural Education for Young Children*, 4th ed. (Teachers College Press, 2015).
2. K. Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139–168; B. Davies, *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tails: Preschool Children and Gender*, rev. ed. (Hampton Press, Inc, 2003).
3. NCSS, *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Chapter 2—The Themes of Social Studies*, <https://www.socialstudies.org/national-curriculum-standards-social-studies-chapter-2-themes-social-studies>.
4. NCSS, *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Spring, MD, 2013), 79.
5. NCSS, *Early childhood in the social studies context* (National Council for the Social Studies, March 2019), <https://www.socialstudies.org/position-statements/early-childhood-social-studies-context>.
6. For example, see X. Zhao and C. Angleton, “Children’s Power Relations after the U.S. 2016 Election: A Diffractive Analysis,” *Emerging Voices in Education* 2, no. 2 (2021): 1–26; C. A. R. Brandt and J. Hill, “Young Learners Can Explore Gender Identity in Elementary Social Studies!” *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 34, no. 4 (2022): 19–25; J. R. Feagin, and D. Van Ausdale, *The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001); L. A. Hirschfeld, “Children’s Developing Conceptions of Race,” in *Handbook of Race, Racism, and the Developing Child*, eds. S. M. Quintana and C. McKown (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), 37–54; T. D. Sturdivant and I. Alanis, “‘I’m Gonna Cook My Baby in a Pot’: Young Black Girls’ Racial Preferences and Play Behavior,” *Early Childhood Education Journal* 49, no. 3 (2021): 473–482.
7. G. E. Burnaford, A. Aprill, and C. Weiss, eds., *Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning* (Routledge, 2013).
8. S. Brown and A. Allmond, “Constructing my World: A Case Study Examining Emergent Bilingual Multimodal Composing Practices” *Early Childhood Education Journal* 49, no. 2 (2020): 209–221; B. E. Smith, N. Amgott, and I. Malova, “‘It Made Me Think in a Different Way’: Bilingual Students’ Perspectives on Multimodal Composing in the English Language Arts Classroom,” *TESOL Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (2022): 525–551; S. V. Taylor and C. B. Leung, “Multimodal Literacy and Social Interaction: Young Children’s Literacy Learning,” *Early Childhood Education Journal* 48, no. 1 (2019): 1–10.
9. NCSS, *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Chapter 2—The Themes of Social Studies*, <https://www.socialstudies.org/national-curriculum-standards-social-studies-chapter-2-themes-social-studies>.
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11. M. Lewison, A. S. Flint, K. Van Sluys, “Taking on Critical Literacy: The Journey of Newcomers and Novices,” *Language Arts* 79, no. 5 (2002): 382–392; C. Angleton and X. Zhao, “Storying Identity through Arts-Based Readerly Responses: Fourth Grade Girls Represent Gender,” *Language Arts* 100, no. 2 (2022): 110–121.
12. See Angleton and Zhao, “Storying Identity”; Brandt and Hill, “Young Learners Can Explore”; M. Souto-Manning, “Negotiating Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Through Multicultural Children’s Literature: Towards Critical Democratic Literacy Practices in a First Grade Classroom,” *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* 9, no. 1 (2009): 50–74; J. Yi, “Reading Diverse Books Is Not Enough: Challenging Racist Assumptions Using Asian American Children’s Literature,” *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 34, no. 3 (2022): 8–13.
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14. J. S. Chisholm, J. Jamner, and K. F. Whitmore, “Amplifying Students’ Musical Identities, Meanings, and Memories,” *English Journal* 110, no. 4 (2021): 45–52; C. H. Leland, A. Ociepa, and A. Wackerly, “How Do You Draw Freedom?” Transmediation as a Tool for Thinking in a Third-Grade Classroom,” *The Reading Teacher* 68, no. 8 (2015): 618–626; K. G. Short, G. Kauffman, and L. H. Kahn, “‘I Just Need to Draw’: Responding to Literature across Multiple Sign Systems,” *The Reading Teacher* 54, no. 2 (2000): 160–171; K. F. Whitmore, “Becoming the Story in the Joyful World of *Jack and the Beanstalk*,” *Language Arts* 93, no. 1 (2015): 25–37; G. P. Wilson, “Supporting Young Children’s Thinking through Tableau,” *Language Arts* 80, no. 5 (2003): 375–383.
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