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Psy 324-02

2/27/12

Project 2: List of Children's Books

1) Martin Jr., Bill and John Archambault. *Knots on a Counting Rope*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1987. Print.

In this story, a Native American grandfather sits by the fire with his grandson retelling him stories of the boy's birth and events in his childhood. As the grandfather tells the stories, he ties another knot on the boy's rope marking the boy closer to maturity. This young boy is blind and learning to find confidence. In a classroom, reading this story would be helpful to teach students that children who are blind can see in different ways- with hands and other ways of feeling and by hearing as the Native American boy demonstrated in his race on horseback. Blind children are capable of overcoming many obstacles caused by their blindness, demonstrating the common virtue of courage all people hope to possess.

2) Lears, Laurie. *Ian's Walk: A Story about Autism*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Company, 1998. Print.

Julie takes her brother who has autism for a walk to the park and is embarrassed by how he behaves. After losing sight of Ian, she is relieved when she finally finds him. On the way home, she doesn't concern herself with his differences and tries to view things through Ian's point of view. This book can be used to illustrate the idea that children with autism hear, smell, feel, and taste things differently. They can be a handful for siblings to look after, but family members still love them. I thought the book portrayed autism in a realistic light; no drastic

improvements in his disability were made, but just the appearance of a small smile was special to his sister.

3) Thompson, Mary. *Andy and His Yellow Frisbee*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House, Inc., 1996. Print.

This book also takes a look at autism. Andy is a boy with autism who likes to spin his yellow frisbee around and around during recess. A new girl, Sarah, notices him and one day brings a pink frisbee to try to get Andy to open up and show her how to spin a frisbee. He doesn't, but Andy's sister, Rosie, is impressed that Andy lets Sarah get so close, and soon she and Sarah are playing catch with Sarah's pink frisbee. This story is helpful by portraying autism realistically; no miracle cures happen. Andy still was quiet and withdrawn, but there was a sense of hope that he would be able to take the small step in the future and show Sarah how he spins his frisbee. It also explains to students how an autistic child might behave: they may keep to themselves, have a hard time with words, and get upset around strangers. I think it's important for children to begin to understand that children with autism do behave differently, but it is no reason to shun them or think poorly of them.

4) Kraus, Robert. *Leo the Late Bloomer*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1971. Print.

Leo is a tiger who cannot write, read, draw, or talk like the other kids can. His father is worried about Leo's developmental delay, but his mother reassures him to give him time. After a while, Leo is still behind the other children. Finally, there comes a day when Leo is able to write, read, draw, and talk, and he and his parents are proud he made it. This story about developmental delays teaches that not everyone "blooms" right away. Some kids require more time to catch on, which requires patience from the kids and their parents. The story can teach

students to have empathy, for the late bloomer may feel sad to be behind his peers. Ultimately, however, a late bloomer can catch on and achieve, so no one should give up on him.

5) Wright, Betty Ren. *My Sister is Different*. Milwaukee: Raintree Childrens Books, 1981. Print.

Carlo is embarrassed by his sister, Terry, who has mental retardation. One time while shopping at the mall, he loses track of her and cannot find her. After worried searching, he finds Terry cheering up a baby whose mother could not get him to stop crying. Carlo begins to realize his sister, though she has mental retardation, can be loving and generous. This book could be helpful to siblings of children with MR by showing them it's not unusual to be frustrated by siblings with special needs. The story highlights that children with MR possess special gifts, because people with MR are people too. Students learn to discover these children's talents and human qualities which all people share, including children with MR.

6) Dodds, Bill. *My Sister Annie*. Honesdale, PN: Caroline House Boyd Milss Press, Inc., 1993. Print.

Charlie struggles with several challenges as he begins middle school. He wants to join the cool club called the Bombers, go to the dance with Misty, and win the baseball championship. Most of all, Charlie has to come to terms with his sister Annie who has Down syndrome as he realizes he can't separate his life with Annie from his life with his friends. This book could be of use to other siblings of children with Down syndrome as it relates the story of a boy struggling to accept a sister who is different. Siblings may be able to identify with Charlie and learn how he was able to come to terms with his sister's disability.

7) Betancourt, Jeanne. *My Name is Brain Brian*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1993. Print.

Brian's sixth-grade teacher detects Brian's problem with dyslexia and begins a support program for him at school and home. Brian also deals with problems with his father who may also have dyslexia. He is able to change his attitude toward school and forge a new friendship with Isabel who also undergoes a transformation. This book could be used in a classroom to show students that those with dyslexia are not lazy, stupid, or just trying to be funny; they are hard workers and sometimes have a hard time recognizing they have done something incorrectly. People with dyslexia can still be intelligent; they just need to learn a different way. Students see a rounded character, Brian, through his relationships and not just through his disability. Children who have learning disabilities would be able to identify with Brian as well.

8) Wolff, Virginia Euwer. *Probably Still Nick Swansen*. New York: Simon Pulse, 2002. Print.

Nick knows he's different; he is in SPED because he has minimal brain dysfunction, and he is insecure because of it. He still decides to ask Shana to prom, but when she backs out he is crushed. Nick also has to come to terms with the death of his little sister. This story captures the maturing and identity searching Nick goes through as he faces his challenges. This book would be good in a classroom to draw adolescents in to a struggling teenager so they can understand the social stigmas and struggles SPED students face as they, too, just want to be like everyone else. The story stresses the similarities between Nick and other teens rather than their differences, which is good for students to read.

9) Caseley, Judith. *Harry and Willy and Carrothead*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1991.

Print.

Harry is a boy born without a left hand. He wears a prosthetic hand and is very self-assured despite his physical disability. Harry stands up for a redheaded boy named Oscar when

Willy calls Oscar “Carrothead.” Eventually, all three boys become friends. This book would be good to use in a classroom to show that children with physical disabilities are just regular kids who like doing what other kids like to do; Harry’s disability doesn’t keep him from playing baseball or from being a good friend. It can also help those who have physical disabilities to be encouraged by a character who seems so capable and self-assured.

10) Millman, Isaac. *Moses Goes to a Concert*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998.

Print.

Moses and his classmates attend a school for the deaf and communicate via sign language. Their class takes a field trip to a concert where the percussionist is also deaf. They get to meet her after the concert, and she lets them play her drums. This book can introduce hearing children to American Sign Language as the book shows how to sign some of the key words. Students can learn that children who are deaf enjoy many of the same activities through their other senses, even if they can’t hear. Showing that children can enjoy music despite deafness removes one more difference between those who can hear and those who cannot.

The common theme all these books have in their classroom use is to help students see children with disabilities, not through those disabilities, but through the struggles, relationships, and abilities that make the children people just like them. Stories can be used to promote empathy and understanding towards those who live with disabilities by portraying them as realistic human beings- the disability being only one of many character traits.