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Strategies for Adopting Children's Refugee Literature in the Multicultural Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Although many studies currently detail refugee experiences about famine, war, and frightening events like the holocaust, little research about the portrayal of the refugee experience in children's literature exists (Hope, 2008). This lack of research or gap creates a problem of understanding for educators and students in the multicultural classroom. These refugee children have had little or no formal education and this has created a major learning block for them in American classrooms. This study seeks to answer the question: what are examples of refugee children's literature and effective strategies to help children better understand and appreciate one another and their cultures? A book review of selected refugee children's literature and an analysis of pedagogy of effective instructional strategies were the methodologies used in the study. Study findings indicate four refugee children's books represent similarities and the uniqueness of the literature and identify effective instructional strategies and activities to enhance greater understanding of the refugee experience. Policy implications from the study suggest strategies that educators may employ to adopt children's refugee literature in the multicultural classroom. The path to embrace, to enhance, and to celebrate the life experiences of refugee children may be accomplished through the implementation of these effective instructional strategies in the multicultural classroom to help children better understand and appreciate one another and their cultures.

Key words: Celebrate the culture, Effective strategies, Multicultural education, Refugee literature.

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1.0 Introduction

A rich exposure to quality literature offers both teachers and students great opportunities to broaden understandings about the world; yet a research gap in the literature currently exists. Little research about the refugee experience has been conducted for the multicultural classroom. Additional research is needed to help both teachers and children alike to better understand this unique experience and to allow them ways to better understand the people in their classroom and the world around them. When young children enjoy literature that helps them identify their culture, they gain a better understanding of people from other countries and ethnic backgrounds. This article focuses on refugee children's literature and the effective strategies that help children better understand and appreciate one another and their cultures. This is an important understanding for children because reading quality literature about people from other cultures will enhance positive attitudes toward children of all backgrounds (Boles, 2006). No matter their reason for coming to the U.S., be it war, persecution, famine, political unrest, restricted speech, or poverty, this article posits that the life experiences of refugee children must be embraced, enhanced, and celebrated through multicultural education in today's classroom. The path to accomplish this is through a study of refugee children's literature and the effective instructional strategies that help children better understand and appreciate one another and the culture from which they have come.

Hope (2008) reported that there were as many as 14,000,000 refugees worldwide in 2007 and argued that there were stories dealing with war, such as the holocaust, but there had been little research about the portrayal of the refugee experience in children's literature. Additionally, in 2009, the World Refugee Survey reported that there were more than 13,000,000 refugees worldwide (World Refugee Survey, 2009), while other estimates top 15,000,000 refugees. Whatever the true number of refugees may be in the U.S. today, studies concur that many of these refugee children occupy our American classrooms. Children's refugee literature should be adequately introduced as a way of celebrating this diversity in the classroom.

According to data released in 2011 from the Office of Refugee Resettlement, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in years past, the majority of refugees were settled mostly in the states of California, Florida, and New York, but in the last ten years, ten percent of all refugees in the United States are settling in Texas (Freemantle, 2012). In fact, in the area known as the Texas Panhandle, a large majority of refugee children are settling in Amarillo, Texas. Catholic Family Services, a nonprofit organization that receives federal funding to assist newly arrived refugees has been settling refugees in Amarillo for more than 30 years, since the fall of Saigon in the mid-1970s (Zerby, 2012). "A blend of peoples from around the world [now] dwells in Amarillo, from Myanmar and Somalia to Iraq and Cuba. Some move to Amarillo willingly, but for others, the city is simply a destination chosen for them" (Zerby, 2012). Due to the increased number of refugees coming into the Texas Panhandle in recent years, Catholic Family Services has opted "to take in no more than 200 arrivals per year, down from 400 in previous years" (Ranaivo, 2012. *Catholic Family Service to aid fewer refugees*). In 2012, "roughly 800 to 900 of the 1,100 refugee students enrolled in Amarillo [public] schools had little to no formal schooling when they arrived in the U.S. and that has created a major learning block" stated Kevin Phillips, executive director of student performance for the Palo Duro High School cluster. Phillips maintains that in some of Amarillo's schools, more than 50 languages are spoken in school with many of those dialects from the same language. In 2013, the state will require all students to take the year-end state assessments, regardless of their English proficiency.

No matter the reason for coming to the U.S., there is simply no doubt that the life experiences of refugee children must be embraced, enhanced, and celebrated through multicultural education in today's classroom. As previously stated, the path to accomplish this is through a study of refugee children's literature and the effective strategies that help children better understand and appreciate one another and the culture from which they come.

The article presents an introduction to the study, the methodology used, a book review of the selected children's refugee literature, teaching themes in children's refugee literature, instructional strategies for adopting refugee literature in the classroom, activities for each of the four refugee stories presented, strategies for the individual refugee student in the classroom, and a conclusion that includes policy implications for classrooms in the future.

2.0 Methodology

In this book review study, four books were thoroughly examined to present the effective strategies for class, including *Four Feet Two Sandals* (Williams & Mohammed, 2007), and *The Lotus Seed* (Garland, 1993), *Gleam and Glow* (Bunting, 2005), and *Brothers in Hope: Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan* (Williams, 2005). The characters in these stories provide children opportunities to identify with the experiences of the characters and to help them gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of other cultures. An analysis of pedagogy of effective instructional strategies in the study suggested a variety of ways that teachers can implement these strategies to enhance children's understanding of the unfamiliar cultures of their fellow classmates and how to adopt refugee children's literature in their classrooms. The study suggested a variety of instructional strategies that teachers could use in their multicultural classrooms to contribute to the children's understanding of different types of refugee children's experiences through the selected literature. Various prediction activities such as the use of role-play and drama, independent research, and service project were presented for the classroom to engage children in cultural awareness as a daily activity. The study also presented the practical strategies for the individual refugee student to utilize the explicit and systematic approach in a structured literacy framework.

3.0 Book Review

Four selected books represented some things in common and some uniqueness. The setting of the book, *Four Feet Two Sandals*, was in Afghanistan while the story, *The Lotus Seed*, took place in Vietnam. The story, *Gleam and Glow*, occurred in Bosnia and the setting of the book, *Brothers in Hope*, was in Sudan. These children's refugee books demonstrated the distinguished portrayal from other multicultural literature characteristics in the special circumstances that the main characters had to run away from their countries, due to war or other involuntary reasons.

3.01 Four Feet Two Sandals

The story is about two refugee girls waiting at a refugee camp in Afghanistan in hopes to go to America. Ten-year-old Lina was thrilled when she found a sandal that fit her foot perfectly, until she saw that another girl had the matching shoe. When Lina and Feroza met, they decided that it was better to share the sandals than for each to wear only one. They formed a friendship in the process of sharing the sandals while waiting to see their names on the list for America.

They found out that Lina's name was on the list, but Feroza's was not. Feroza decided they should each keep one sandal to remind them of their friendship with the hopes that someday they could share their shoes in America together.

3.02 The Lotus Seed

A young Vietnamese girl, Ba, saves a lotus seed and carries it with her everywhere to remember a brave emperor and the homeland that she has to flee. Throughout all of the trials and changes in her life, she cherishes that seed until one day the grandson takes the seed and plants it near their home. Ba is grief stricken when she hears the story because the grandson cannot find the spot where it was planted.

Come spring, the seed blooms and Ba shares a seed with each of her grandchildren and explains the symbolism of the seed, "It is the flower of life and hope, no matter how ugly the mud or how long the seed lies dormant, the bloom will be beautiful. It is the flower of my country." The family grows in their new country, but continues to pass their roots and heritage to the next generation.

Figure 1: The cover page of *Four Feet Two Sandals*

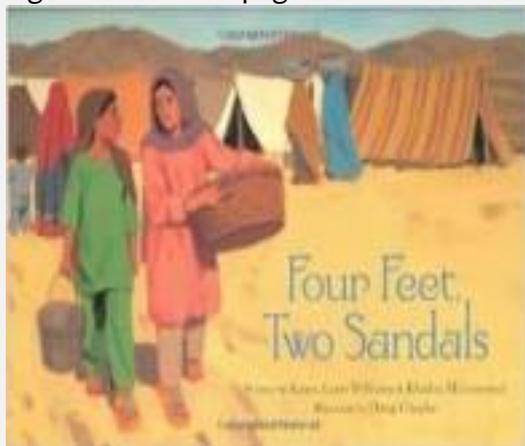


Figure 2: The cover page of *The Lotus Seed*

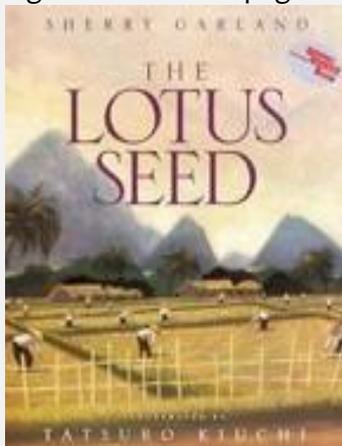


Figure 3: The cover page of *Gleam and Glow*

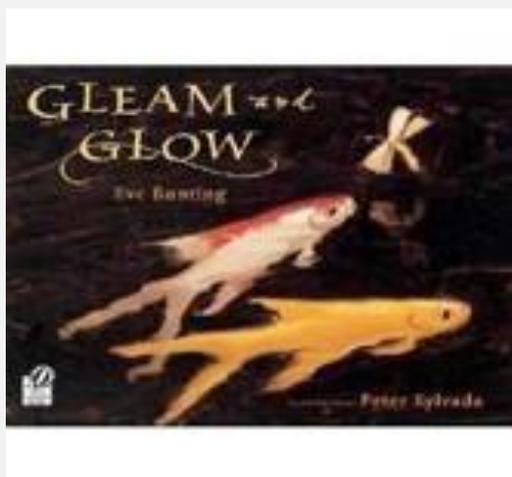
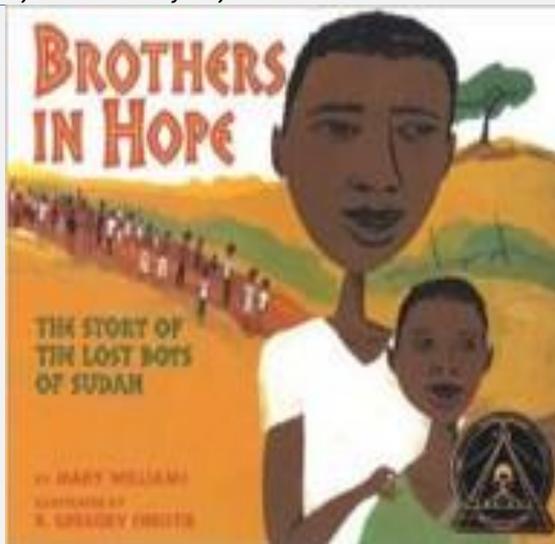


Figure 4: The cover page of *Brothers in Hope: Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*



3.03 Gleam and Glow

Gleam and Glow is about a family in Bosnia who has to leave their country because of the coming war. The father of this family has already begun fighting with the Liberation Army to help save Bosnia and his family is about to leave their home and belongings behind for the safety of a refugee camp. Before the family leaves their home, they are given two fish to take care of until they leave. The fish are named Gleam and Glow, and become a symbol of hope for the family.

3.04 Brothers in Hope: Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan

Eight-year-old Garang is tending cattle far from his family's home in southern Sudan when war comes to his village. Frightened but unharmed, he returns to find everything has been destroyed. A young boy unites with thousands of other orphaned boys to walk to safety in a refugee camp in another country. The boys face numerous hardships and dangers along the way, but their faith and mutual support help keep the hope of finding a new home alive in their hearts.

4.0 Teaching themes in the children's refugee literature

Generally, multicultural literature applies to all books by and about people of color. All children deserve books in which they can see themselves and the world in which they live reflected. Students from a minority background feel recognized when their culture is acknowledged. And students from the mainstream culture learn that there are other perspectives and ways of doing things differently through quality literature. Multicultural literature enhances awareness about other cultures and other ethnic groups (Inglesia, 2008). It can increase the sensitivity level of the majority groups for those who are different from them, while improving the self-esteem of the ethnic minority children and make them feel accepted in the society. It often portrays characters in a positive and non-stereotypical way (Irwin, 2011).

According to Boles (2006), the themes in the stories must be consistent with the values, beliefs, traditions, and conflict of the culture. Multicultural literature teaches children about their heritage and the pride of their past. The illustrations, gender roles, and the language of the group should be accurate to represent the culture appropriately. The instructional approaches in the general multicultural literature often portray the celebration of the diversity of traditions, foods, music, and dance. Usually, the important themes in African-American literature involve self-awareness, the concept of families, interracial friendships, and a relationship to the community. The themes in Asian-American literature traditionally include the process of immigrating to America, learning the language, acceptance by their peers, and the values that they bring.

In addition to the general themes of the multicultural literature, the themes in the children's refugee literature include extended elements, such as hardships, survival, compassion, empathy, justice and respect for human rights in the face of difficult circumstances, due to physical exhaustion, psychological confusion, and emotional disturbance in the process of escaping from the danger. Children in the refugee stories may cross borders to escape and travel thousands of miles in dangerous conditions. Reading these refugee stories help children not only to understand the different ways of life and how hard things can be, but also how they can overcome obstacles.

The characters in the four selected stories of the study were forced to leave their homes. On top of the traditional components of settling down to a new country and going through hardships, the characters in the stories also demonstrated additional messages. In the story, *Four Feet Two Sandals*, the author expressed a bond of true friendship and sharing. This is a great lesson to give students hope and courage no matter what the circumstances. It is important for children to see there might be other things in life that count. Humanity is going to be a vital part of our future and we must show students how to have compassion for one another.

Even in the terrible situation in Vietnam, the story, *The Lotus Seed* tells that keeping good memories and tradition are precious. This lesson would be that someone's treasures really have meaning. It is peaceful to think even something as small as a seed brought so much comfort to someone and that person can pass down that tradition to the generations following.

In the story, *Gleam and Glow*, the family had to leave some items behind in the native country. The girl in the story had to leave two little goldfish behind in their pond. When she comes back home, although the land is destroyed, the pond is brimming with shimmering goldfish. It would be a good lesson to teach the topics, such as family, heritage, and keeping hope. It is not clear to the reader what will happen to the family after they leave their home. Therefore, it is a great book to keep the reader motivated until the end.

Brothers in Hope is a story of enduring courage and an amazing testament to the unyielding power of the human spirit. The boys face numerous hardships and dangers along the way.

However, their faith and mutual support help keep the hope of finding a new home alive in their hearts. Courage, survival, overcoming adversity, hardships of war, and faith are all integrated in the story very memorably.

5.0 Instructional strategies for adopting refugee literature in the classroom

Prediction activities are excellent ways of activating students' prior knowledge when using any type of multicultural literature in the classroom. Tompkins (2015) indicated that eliciting prior knowledge was the critical factor that impacted students' comprehension skills and motivation. Several different ways of the prediction activities might be adopted, including the prediction by the title and the cover page illustration, creating a story by the picture walk, and using hands-on activities, such as the air bubble prediction and the prediction chart.

Monitoring strategies are also effective by reading short passages in the story, then, stopping and monitoring their comprehension. Pre-teaching vocabulary can be used together to increase students' understanding of the story. Visualization strategy, using graphic organizers, sketches, highlighters or post-it notes all still work for introducing the refugee literature in the classroom.

Some additional activities such as the use of role-play and drama, independent research, and service project are excellent ways for the class to engage in the cultural awareness lessons. Students may see the world through other people's views by placing them in the situation of the main characters in the story. By playing the role of the main characters, it will facilitate the empathy, compassion, and respect for human rights in a meaningful context. The class may extend the role-play activity to experiment how it feels to live in the tent at the refugee camps, which items I would take if I were only allowed to pack the most prized possessions, etc. The simulated journal writing can be adapted to the activity by describing their feelings when they had to leave some items behind.

Independent research is also appropriate for using children's refugee literature. After reading and discussing the book, students start researching newspapers or magazine articles that have to do with war. This will help students gain a better understanding of how war can drastically change peoples' lives. The point is to have them see that the world has not been a kind place for many demographics of people, but to try to instill in them that hope can come when least expected. This will teach students not to give up, even during the toughest of times. This activity can naturally lead to further activities across the content area subjects, including geography, social studies, history, and others.

Service project is another suggested activity to empower students with responsibility, engage their compassion, and offer them the chance to affect the lives of others. The students will begin distinguishing the differences between wants and needs by categorizing items into wants or needs. Students will learn that many times refugees are without basic needs. The class can plan a service project to benefit refugees or other people in need. This activity may be extended to a "story quilt" creation about their service project as a reflection.

6.0 Activities for the story *Four Feet Two Sandals*

Before the class introduced the story, one of the prediction activities can be presented to get students' attention. By looking at the title and the cover page illustration, students are allowed to empower their imagination and predict the story. If students had no knowledge about the setting of the story, they may predict that the people live in a desert and make sandals for a living. Or, in a very poor area of the world, two women cannot afford shoes, so they shared. Interestingly, they may predict that the story was about a camping trip with two best friends and they shared a pair of sandals because they did not have enough money. The prediction activity before reading is always powerful in terms of motivating

students to read. Once students made their prediction, they will make sure if their prediction came true at the end of the story.

Another prediction activity with the picture walk can be followed by connecting the pictures together and to create their own story. This is an excellent way of appreciating how powerful the visual tools are to comprehend the story. This strategy also works for ESL students and other special needs learners. The class will complete the prediction chart as shown below and share with the class.

Figure 5: Sample prediction chart with the story *Four Feet Two Sandals*

I predicted	What really happened
This is a story about two friends from a very poor family that lived in the desert.	The setting is a refugee camp.
One day a girl who lives in a concentration camp decided she wanted some new sandals.	The two girls are washing their clothes in a river.
The story is about the adventure of two best friends. They were getting just one sandal and plan to escape from the village.	They decided to take turns wearing the sandals.
The girls were getting ready to sleep in the tent during the camping trip.	The girls shared their hopes and dreams at night.

The visualization strategy may be applied to this story as the class visualizes the situation of how it must have felt to live in the tent at the refugee camps. The use of role-play and drama can be effective as the class is involved in the acting out as one of the main characters in the story. If the teacher has students who lived in a refugee camp prior to coming to the U.S., offer them opportunities to tell their “coming to America” stories. Invite parents or community members who had the same experience to share their stories. This would be a good lesson to have children research more about refugee camps or have students wear one shoe all day.

In the story, the girls were not able to attend school while the boys are. This can lead the class discussion about the differences in the educational systems, comparing with systems today. After the discussion, children may write a journal about their thoughts. How would you feel if some kids could go to school when you were not allowed to? Do you have any solutions or suggestions for this concern?

Some lessons may be extended across the other content area subjects such as Art when the class may design a sandal, cut the two sandals apart, mix them up, match the sandals and display their sandals in the classroom. For teaching environment and recycling, teachers may find website, such as www.hollowtop.com/sandals.htm to demonstrate that many people in third world countries wear sandals made out of old tires. The class may involve an interesting discussion about the materials used to make shoes, such as shoes made of rice straws, wood, and silk.

7.0 Activities for the story *The Lotus Seed*

The air bubble activity is an alternative approach for both the vocabulary lesson and the prediction strategy, using the air bubbles and the dot stickers. Students are asked to write 5-6 vocabulary words that might be in the story by looking at the illustration on the cover page and the title. As the teacher reads aloud, students will review their word choices on the dot sticker and pop up the air bubbles when they hear the words in their sticker list. This hands-on activity will become a fun attention-getter and enhance the motivation to read. As an extended activity, students may create a different ending or develop a new series, using their left over words on the air bubbles. This type of an action game is always practical because students will attentively listen to the story and easily become excited about being involved in the lesson.

<http://www.theartsjournal.org/index.php/site/index>

Figure 6: Air bubble prediction with *The Lotus Seed*



Students may predict the last story, *The Lotus Seed*, as that the farmers of the lotus flower are unable to have a successful crop until new seeds are found. Or, a group of people work hard to plant seeds before the rain comes and they know that the best time for it to rain is right after planting, so this family was trying hard to beat the rain. Another creative imagination may involve the story of a boy who lives on a plantation farm and has so many responsibilities, including taking care of his sister.

Besides the prediction activity, the monitoring strategy may be used in the story as the class reads the short sections out loud, stop and monitor their understanding, using sketches and post-it notes. The teacher may select unfamiliar vocabulary words to pre-teach. The activity called 'Save the Last Word' can be introduced to the story, using note cards by asking students to find three or four quotations that they consider particularly interesting or worthy of comment (McLaughlin, 2010). On the other side of the cards, the students write comments about their chosen quotations and then share them with the class.

In Social Studies, students may study family and heritage in class and have a Family Heritage Day where parents can come and share their experiences with the children. Students may bring their cultural artifacts to class and demonstrate them in the 'show and tell' event. In Science, research the lotus flower, dissect the flower in a scientific way to see the seeds, and plant the seeds in the classroom. Students will watch the flowers grow and keep a weekly journal. Assign responsibilities for watering and recording the plant's growth. Also, learn about parts of lotus that are used for food, such as seeds used in desserts, stems used in salads, leaves used for flavoring, and roots that are eaten. If there is a local garden that has lotus flowers, take a field trip to see the plants.

8.0 Activities for the story *Gleam and Glow*

Welcoming Committee is an activity that the class can demonstrate a simple act of kindness. It will help the class create a classroom community that would be welcoming to all students. Students would begin to realize everyone wants to be welcomed by others no matter what country they are from. Students will brainstorm how they can make refugee students feel welcome in school. After brainstorming; students in groups of four will create posters, paintings, banners, or power point welcoming new refugee students.

Visualizing details works in this story as well by requesting students to visualize what they have read. Having them close their eyes and visualize the setting, characters, etc. as if they themselves were actually there. This can be extended to the Story Map activity with setting (the time and place the story happened), main characters (the persons the story is about), and problem (the challenge the main characters faces, which it is his or her goal to solve). It can also be extended with solution (the attempt that finally pays off in solving the problem or the event that otherwise puts an end to the action), and consequences (how things are for the characters at the end, including what the events of the story meant for them).

Summarizing strategy can be introduced as the class makes the summary of their discussion verbally or writing in a journal. In the journal writing, students can create a list of items that they would take if they were only allowed to pack their most prized possessions. They also can create a simulated journal

describing their feelings when they had to leave those items behind.

9.0 Activities for the story *Brothers in Hope*

Pre-reading focus questions can initiate the activity before introducing the book by having students discuss some of the questions, including: What is the hardest thing you have ever done?

Have you ever been lost? How did you feel? What did you do? Who helped you? What is a refugee? What causes people to become refugees? What does it mean to be brave? Why is it important to be able to make good decisions?

A K-W-L chart may be applied to activate prior knowledge in the story by allowing students to complete filling in the three columns (What do you know about the refugee? What do you want to know about it? What did you learn about the refugee after reading the story?)

Vocabulary words can be introduced before reading. Write the words from the story on the chalkboard such as *attacked*, *destroyed*, *dangerous*, *scared*, *huddled*, *fleeing*, *aching*, *fear* and *anxiously*. Remind students that these words are related to war and have mostly negative connotations. After discussing the meaning of the words and how they relate to the story, have students make word webs showing events, synonyms, and feelings related to each word. Then challenge students to try using each word in a sentence with a positive meaning.

Literature Circle is another activity that the class can enjoy. During reading time, students are given different roles in a group. When there are six members in the group, then they may include the questioner, the passage locator, the illustrator, the connector, the summarizer, and the investigator. The questioner might develop several questions from the story and the passage locator looks for passages that indicate the main character's feelings at different points in the story. The illustrator might draw scenes from the story in a different style or medium while the connector finds other stories set in Africa. The summarizer might provide a brief summary of the group's reading and discussion points for each meeting when the investigator finds more information about Lost Boys who have come to the United States (Tompkins, 2015).

Reader's Response (McLaughlin, 2010) can be employed as well, using the guided questions as shown below. Suggest that students respond in reader's journals, oral discussion, or drawings. For example, the teacher may ask children the following guided questions: 1) Would you have made the same decisions Garang (the main character) did? Why or why not? 2) What did you learn about war in this book? What did you learn about courage? 3) What survival skills did the boys use? What other survival skills do you know that might have been helpful? 4) What kinds of skills do you think a refugee worker like Tom needs? Would you like to have a job like this? Why or why not?

Activities across other content areas may involve geography as the class integrates the lesson by using a map of Africa and asking where Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya are located. The class may research the weather, the distance between countries, and other interesting facts about the countries. The jigsaw puzzle can be utilized as a group activity by allowing students to choose a different topic and become an expert. At the end, students will present what they learned to the class. In Science, students may research to find out how war affects the environment and the ecology of an area. Have students present their findings in a visual format to the rest of the class. Also, the class can discuss what the Lost Boys ate on their travels and in the refugee camps.

In Music, ask students to find examples of music and sound effects that they think go with different parts of the story. For example, students might find audio that represents tending cattle in peaceful fields, the sounds of war, crossing a river, living in a refugee camp, and so on.

10.0 Strategies for the individual refugee student in class

Many refugee children may not have had an opportunity to attend school and learn basic skills in their own language. Students with interrupted formal education simply need an opportunity to learn basic skills and receive very skilled and intentional instruction to accelerate their learning.

To support refugee students, the school must establish a welcoming atmosphere to ensure the refugee students and families feel welcome when they arrive (Robertson & Breiseth, 2008). Help students feel included by getting to know the students' culture and customs and encourage students to share their personal stories. Assist the families to find resources they need and consider what works best for the families. Be sure to have bilingual support, food, and childcare (Hope, 2008). Students may be under a lot of stress. Look for signs of stress and work with school social workers or counselors and the family to develop a plan to help the student reduce anxiety.

For refugee students, schools must develop a more nurturing environment that will promote sensitivity and positive thinking towards refugee students from their peers. Mutual respect for all individuals will allow educators and students to create an improved environment for learning. As Bennett (1999) indicated, the school curriculum should value human dignity and universal rights, acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity, responsibility to the world community, and reverence for the earth.

Robertson & Breiseth (2008) suggested that the classroom teachers integrate the students' cultural information into weekly classroom routines by increasing exposure to language in having simple English phrases and pictures posted around the room at school. The teacher also needs to teach refugee students the importance of the structure of English. According to Moats (2010), an explicit and systematic approach must be employed to any students who struggle or begin to learn English as a new language. This can be accomplished through demonstrations, tutorials, drill, practice, and simulations on a regular basis.

The use of active, engaging, and hands-on activities is always effective for refugee students who are developing skills for learning a new language. Concepts must be developed in the context of student-teacher interaction and activities designed to encourage reflection about the language that they are learning. Students may write something on the white board and say the word as they spell. They may use manipulative letters, trays and letter cards, and play games to learn a new concept. Keeping students engaged is very important in learning.

The use of a multisensory structured approach is yet another strategy that reinforces refugee students to develop their literacy skills by simultaneously combining auditory, visual, and tactile learning strategies. The teacher may offer refugee students audiotapes or CDs of textbooks, e-books, recorded books, or multimedia. For the visual learners, different colors and highlighters might be allowed for the children to use. A variety of manipulatives, visual mnemonics, and graphic organizers should be employed to strengthen all different types of learners.

It is imperative that teachers include a variety of literature that offers all students opportunities to make connections in order to see self, family, and culture in stories (Landt, 2011). The refugee students also need to experience more exposure to the text by being read out loud to them. Moats (2010) argued that the most effective programs included daily exposure to a variety of texts and practice would help children build reading fluency. Children's literature plays a critical role in shaping young children's perspectives of various cultures and provides many opportunities to gain broader understandings about the world.

Multicultural literature builds bridges. Students naturally learn that differences and rich diversity make the classroom strong. It provides an opportunity for students of different cultures to be proudly

represented in the classroom atmosphere. In an optimal learning environment, students appreciate differences and uniqueness to enhance their learning. Teachers must be proactive to change in meeting the needs of our growing diverse populations in schools. Keeping balance in reading instruction is a crucial role for teachers through teaching daily a range of components directly and explicitly and steadily supplying rich literature in a meaningful context (Moats, 2010).

Through the building of strong bridges with multicultural literature, the classroom provides a uniquely supportive environment for young learners to view the world through different lenses and to reflect upon their experiences in a new light (Dolan, 2014). Interestingly, Hope (2008) argued that such literature provides an ideal context for sharing the stories, feelings, and fears of refugee children. However, simply increasing students' access to multicultural literature is not sufficient in itself as a strategy for engaging with global and justice perspectives. Teachers must continue to discover additional and meaningful strategies to enhance their classroom instruction and to positively augment student learning.

11.0 Conclusion

This article discusses issues relating to multicultural literature through examples of children's literature about refugee experiences and the strategies that teachers may implement in their classrooms. Multicultural literature embraces the refugee experience, serves the education of all learners about experiences of seeking refuge, and reassures young readers that there is new life and hope for the future in their adopted country (Dolan, 2014).

Policy implications from the study suggest strategies that educators may employ to adopt children's refugee literature in the multicultural classroom. The path to embrace, to enhance, and to celebrate the life experiences of refugee children may be accomplished through the implementation of these effective instructional strategies in the multicultural classroom to help children better understand and appreciate one another and their cultures.

Additional research is needed to fill the research gap in refugee children's literature in the multicultural classroom and how effective instructional strategies will continue to equip teachers to help children better understand their experiences, the experience of their fellow students, and the new world in which they live.

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