

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE MINAS GERAIS

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**CATALYSTS OF CRITICAL MULTICULTURAL LITERACY: USING
MULTICULTURAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN A BRAZILIAN EFL
CLASSROOM**

Belo Horizonte

2017

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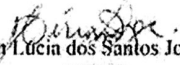
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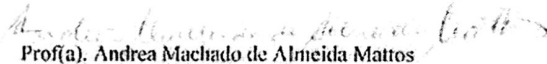
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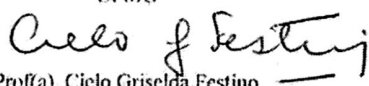
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*To all those who “tell other stories,
fight secret wars, limn out all sorts of
debates blanketed in their texts”.*

-Toni Morrison, 1992, p. 4

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ABSTRACT

According to Naiditch (2009), it is imperative to rethink teacher education programs in order to produce critically conscious educators capable of working in increasingly diverse school environments. Furthermore, Morgado (2010) contends that schools should actively seek to incorporate children's literature into the school curriculum with the objective of preparing students to live in multicultural societies radically transformed by globalization. Although multicultural children's literature is an excellent vehicle to achieve the aforementioned goals, it is seldom used in Brazilian public schools due to the absence of public educational policies calling for its use. This absence consequently ignores the potential linguistic benefits of multicultural children's literature but also represents a missed opportunity to integrate critical multicultural literacy into the English curriculum. For this reason, the research described in this thesis seeks to understand how multicultural children's literature, through the attitudes and actions of the teachers and students, can promote critical multicultural literacy in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Brazilian public schools. The study was a qualitative, ethnographic case study divided into two stages. First, I offered a mini-course at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) to public school English teachers in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais to discuss the importance of using multicultural children's literature with a critical multicultural literacy orientation. As a part of the mini-course, the participants created lessons based on multicultural children's books that would then be carried out in their respective schools. In the second stage, I selected and accompanied one teacher as she developed her activity in order to gain greater insight into how critical multicultural literacy manifested itself in her classroom. The results indicate that critical multicultural literacy was fostered in both stages and both the teachers and the students were encouraged to question unequal power relations and to take action to promote educational equity and social justice for all students. Finally, the results also point to the suitability of multicultural children's literature for EFL classrooms and the necessity for its inclusion in teacher licensure programs at Brazilian universities.

Keywords: Applied Linguistics, Critical Multicultural Literacy, Multicultural Literature, English as a Foreign Language, Teacher Education

RESUMO

De acordo com Naiditch (2009), é necessário repensar a formação de professores de forma a produzir profissionais conscientizados, capazes de trabalhar em ambientes acadêmicos cada vez mais diversos. Além disso, Morgado (2010) afirma que as escolas devem buscar de maneira ativa a incorporação da literatura infanto-juvenil no currículo escolar com o objetivo de preparar os alunos a conviver em sociedades multiculturais radicalmente transformadas pela globalização. Embora a literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural seja um veículo excelente para alcançar os objetivos acima mencionados, raramente é utilizada nas escolas brasileiras devido à ausência de políticas públicas educacionais que visam seu uso. No entanto, essa ausência ignora o potencial linguístico da literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural e também representa uma oportunidade perdida para integrar o letramento multicultural crítico no ensino de inglês. Por este motivo a pesquisa descrita nessa dissertação busca compreender como a literatura infantil multicultural, por meio das atitudes e ações dos professores e alunos, pode promover o letramento multicultural crítico no ensino de inglês como língua estrangeira (ILE) nas escolas públicas brasileiras. Essa pesquisa foi um estudo de caso etnográfico, qualitativo, dividido em duas etapas. Primeiramente, foi oferecido um mini-curso na Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UMFG) à professores de inglês da rede pública mineira para discutir a importância do uso da literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural para ensinar a língua inglesa na perspectiva do letramento multicultural crítico. Como parte do mini-curso, os participantes elaboraram atividades baseadas em livros infanto-juvenis multiculturais, que depois desenvolveriam nas suas respectivas escolas. Na segunda etapa, uma professora foi escolhida e acompanhada à medida que ela desenvolveu sua atividade, a fim de obter uma visão mais profunda de como o letramento multicultural crítico se manifestava em sua sala de aula. Os resultados indicam que o letramento multicultural crítico foi propiciado em ambas as etapas e, tanto os professores quanto os alunos, foram incentivados a questionar as relações de poder desiguais e a tomar a iniciativa para promover a equidade educacional e a justiça social para todos os alunos. Finalmente, os resultados também apontam a necessidade da inclusão da literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural tanto nas aulas de ILE quanto nos cursos de licenciatura em Letras nas universidades brasileiras.

Palavras-Chave: Linguística Aplicada, Letramento Multicultural Crítico, Literatura Multicultural, Inglês como Língua Estrangeira, Formação de Professores

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

ESL – English as a Second Language

CBC – Basic Curriculum Contents (Currículo Básico Comum de Conteúdos)

PCN – National Curriculum Parameters (Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais)

OCEM – National Curriculum Guidelines for High School (Orientações Curriculares para o Ensino Médio)

BNCC – National Common Curricular Base (Base Nacional Comum Curricular)

ConCol – Continuing Collaboration (Continuação Colaborativa)

ETA – English Teaching Assistant

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH CONTEXTUALIZATION

*“Let us pick up our books and pens.
They are our most powerful weapons.
One child, one teacher, one book, and
one pen can change the world.”*

-Malala Yousafzai

1.1 Rationale

While many readers of this thesis will undoubtedly be familiar with the current state of the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Brazilian public schools, there are also likely to be those who are unfamiliar. Recently, the quality of English language education in Brazilian public schools has been called into question after the creation of several largescale internationalization programs, notably the Brazilian Scientific Mobility Program (*Ciências sem fronteiras*). The Brazilian media was quick to seize the opportunity to criticize the teaching of English in the country, pointing out that study of English in public schools rarely translates into language proficiency (CHAGAS, 2013). Colasante (2006) and Xavier (2014) further point out the underappreciation of the English language in public schools as well as English language teachers themselves, citing some of the predominant attitudes such as “*a gente só aprende o verbo to be*” (we only learn the verb to be) or “*inglês não serve para nada*” (English isn’t useful). Despite these feelings, many Brazilians maintain an interest in learning English, seeing it as an important tool for social mobility. Taking this into consideration, what justifies the inclusion of multicultural children’s literature in the EFL classroom?

1.1.1 Literature and Brazilian Educational Policies

In order to better understand the importance of using multicultural children’s literature in the teaching of EFL in Brazilian public schools, it is necessary to first contextualize the teaching of literature through an analysis of the principal government documents regulating the teaching of

foreign languages in the country. Due to the fact that the research described in this thesis was conducted in the Southeastern Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, I focused my analysis on this state's Basic Curriculum Content (CBC)¹, in particular the foreign language curriculum proposal. The analysis was further complemented by an examination of the federal foreign language guidelines, the National Curriculum Parameters² (PCN), published in 1998, and the National Curriculum Guidelines for High School³ (OCEN), published in 2006.

According to Lourenço (2011), neither state nor federal educational public policies explicitly encourage the teaching of literature in foreign language classrooms. Moreover, Lourenço argues that the problem lies not in the lack of explicit attention given to literature, but rather in the fact that literature from English speaking countries is never mentioned in government guidelines, despite the status of English as a mandatory school subject. While Lourenço concentrates on the PCN and the state curricular guidelines for the state of Paraná, I discovered this absence can also be seen in the OCEN and Minas Gerais' CBC. Interestingly, one common theme present in most of these documents is an emphasis on the importance of developing reading skills in the English language. Yet, as Colasante (2006) states, the attention paid to discussing the importance of reading is rarely sufficient to justify the incorporation of literature in the classroom. Through its failure to include literature in educational policies, both the state and federal governments indirectly send the message that literature does not need to be taught in the EFL classroom. This ultimately results in its extremely limited use, not only in schools but also in teacher education programs at Brazilian universities. Furthermore, this lack of attention, in the minds of some individuals, confirms a number of myths surrounding the teaching of literature, namely that comprehension of literary texts is unattainable, and that they are demotivating and distant from the realities of Brazilian students and schools (YAMAKAWA, 2013, p. 172). This complicates the already precarious situation of literature in teacher education programs since

the courses of literatures in English are given little space, squeezed between courses in linguistics, Portuguese, English, literary theory and Portuguese language literatures, besides those that are specifically didactic and those that are required by Brazilian legislation. From time to time, colleagues from other areas will question even this reduced space, claiming that the students, future

¹ In Portuguese, *Curriculum Básico Comum de Conteúdos*.

² In Portuguese, *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais*.

³ In Portuguese, *Orientações Curriculares para o Ensino Médio*.

English and Portuguese teachers, will not teach what they learn in courses of literature in English as primary and secondary teachers (CARBONIERI, 2016, p. 122, my translation).

As a result, government guidelines and teachers subsequently focus on the acquisition of purely linguistic features of the English language, with literary texts being thought of as one of a myriad of discursive genres that can be used to accomplish this objective (LOURENÇO, 2011).

At the time of this writing, Brazilians were engaging in debates concerning the adoption of a new common curriculum standard, the National Common Curricular Base⁴ (BNCC), as a part of the Ministry of Education's national education plan. In theory, the BNCC is an attempt to standardize public education across Brazil by updating and supplementing preexisting federal educational policies, including the PCN and the OCEM. Unlike its predecessors, the BNCC references literature in the foreign language classroom, using the terminology *práticas artístico-literárias* (literary and artistic practices) to refer to one of six fundamental social practices. This category

refers to the participation of students in activities involving aesthetic enjoyment, creativity and reflection about themselves and the groups they belong to, their relationship with others and the environment, change, personal conflicts and challenges, based on literary and artistic texts. Discursive genres of focus include literary and artistic texts in a foreign language, in their original or recreated forms (versions for new readers, adaptations in the form of films, songs, paintings, comics, fanfictions etc.), from foreign or local cultures (BRAZIL, 2016, p. 126, my translation).

Additionally, the BNCC includes the teaching of texts belonging to literary and artistic practices in foreign languages in every grade, starting in the sixth grade, when the study of a foreign language becomes mandatory. Initially the explicit inclusion of literary texts appears to be an important advancement in the teaching of literature in the EFL classroom, but, upon further investigation, it becomes evident that literary texts are superficially discussed. For example, each grade-level includes vaguely worded objectives like “interact with artistic and literary texts, appropriating artistic, literary, linguistic-discursive and cultural resources to understand representations of reality and relate to ways of life in different times and places” (BRAZIL, 2016, p. 373, my translation). Throughout the document, whenever artistic and literary texts are mentioned in relation to foreign languages, specific literary genres and their defining elements are never mentioned nor are examples provided to clarify what these otherwise ambiguous objectives

⁴ In Portuguese, *Base Nacional Comum Curricular*.

entail. It is important to clarify, however, that the BNCC's vague language does not diminish the fact that it is among the first Brazilian public policies that directly mentions the teaching of literary texts in English language classes.

1.1.2 The Role of the Literary Text in EFL Classrooms

In Brazil, there is a pervasive, albeit false notion, that adolescents do not actively read of their own volition and only do so when forced, for example in their Portuguese classes at school. Therefore, there is little justification for the wider teaching of literature in Portuguese, let alone English classes. Yet, in May of 2011, the magazine *Veja* published an article entitled “A Generation Discovers the Pleasure of Reading”, calling attention to the literary habits of young Brazilians. Bruno Meier writes that

many times during the end of the last century, the death of books and the reading habit were foreseen. The advance of movies, television, videogames, the internet would all make reading obsolete. In Brazil at the dawn of the 21st century, this prediction seemed reasonable: a clearly declining education system with a tradition of failing in its mission of creating readers, the lack of value given to education as a fundamental social value and even very practical data such as the lack of and the low quality of public libraries and the high prices of printed books all conspired (and still conspire) so that the number of Brazilian readers declined in an irreparable way. However, against all expectations, a new and robust generation of readers is appearing in Brazil, moved by global successes such as *Harry Potter*, *Twilight* and *Percy Jackson* (2011, p. 100, my translation).

The article goes on to cite rising sales in a number of prominent Brazilian bookstores showing that, while many Brazilians still don't read for pleasure, an increasing number, especially young adults, are beginning to make literary texts a part of their daily life. Interestingly, the article points out that a number of adolescents read not only best-sellers but also books considered to be classics by many, such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Oscar Wilde's *The Portrait of Dorian Grey*. In both categories, many of the books being read were originally published in English and a number, such as *Harry Potter* and *Twilight*, are books whose target audiences are children and young adults. This article serves to not only invalidate the argument that Brazilian adolescents don't read, but simultaneously justifies the inclusion of children's literature in the English language classroom as these individuals are already consciously reading these texts, although in a translated form. Yet, despite the presence of literature in the lives of Brazilian adolescents, many teachers still maintain that there is no space in the English classroom for literary

texts because the majority of students will find them difficult, incomprehensible and irrelevant (FLORIS, 2004).

The criticisms and negative attitudes toward the greater use of literature in the foreign language classroom may potentially stem from an unfamiliarity about literature as well as a simultaneous unease regarding how to incorporate it into the curriculum. Yamakawa (2013) cites Collie and Slater (1987), arguing that

the use of literary texts in the English language classroom offers students an array of immeasurable possibilities that can be explored by the teacher in order to increase the students' linguistic competence, as well as broaden their knowledge of the world, building a cultural identity and an intercultural mindset, motivating the students to interact with other cultures that interfere with their relationship with the world (p. 179, my translation).

In this sense, literature can be a window into the culture of the other, providing insight into cultural nuances that could be difficult to ascertain from course textbooks. Not only can it be a window, "literature is probably one of the best ways to understand the culture and traditions of the target language, especially in those cases in which a visit or a stay is virtually impossible" (BOBKINA; DOMINGUEZ, 2014, p. 251). Using this same line of thinking, Festino (2008) conceptualizes literature in the foreign language classroom as a meeting of cultures, but one in which difference is taken into consideration. Floris (2004) summarizes the potential of literature in the EFL classroom, arguing that it offers opportunities for linguistic and cultural enrichment, it is authentic material and it allows students to become personally involved with the language. In addition to having the power to promote cultural awareness and intercultural dialogue, Colasante (2006) maintains that

literature in foreign language classrooms serves to demystify the foreign cultures, ultimately stopping the reproduction of stereotypes. Additionally, the study of literature could help Brazilian students to stop idolizing the cultures of "first world" countries and to valorize Brazilian culture more (p. 321, my translation)

Based on these functions of literature in the foreign language classroom, a space can be found for literature in the teaching of English in the New Literacies (LOURENÇO, 2011). This is because literature in the English classroom, in the perspective of the New Literacies, creates spaces for multiple interpretations and variety of perspectives that wouldn't be the same when read individually, it allows for reciprocal cultural exchange through contact with the other and promotes

the development of critical worldviews (WIELEWICKI, 2002). As a result, since the OCEM are based principally in the New Literacies (MATTOS, 2014), they implicitly endorse the use of literature in the EFL classroom in Brazilian public schools.

Finally, it would be imprudent not to mention the importance of Antônio Candido's theories about the important role literature plays in society. Candido (1972) says that literature has a humanizing function, playing an essential part in identity formation as it allows the reader to be more open and understanding. Moreover, he states that literature helps a person understand not only the relationships between individuals, but also, in a broader sense, the relationships that individuals have with society. Yamakawa (2013) and Colasante (2006) both maintain that this humanizing aspect of literature is fundamental for creating socially aware and critically conscious individuals who are capable of unmasking the problems that plague society, such as racism and chronic poverty. The critical consciousness literature evokes permits students to exercise their citizenship by evaluating and critiquing the world, developing a questioning spirit that allows them to reflect, form opinions and challenge the status quo (COLASANTE, 2006, p. 321). In this sense, by using literature in the EFL classroom, teachers can integrate another principal objective outlined by the OCEM, citizenship education (MATTOS, 2011).

1.1.3 Why Children's Literature?

In order to justify why children's literature should be used in the EFL classroom, it is important to clarify exactly what is meant by this term. Although children's literature is a frequently recognized literary genre, there is a surprising amount of debate surrounding its definition. In essence, children's literature refers to any literary text whose intended audience is children, yet these texts are often enjoyed by a variety of age groups as is the case with books, such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Harry Potter*. Taking this into consideration, in the words of Gopalakrishnan (2010), "the most important point that distinguishes children's literature from other types of literature is that validates all children's experiences" (p. 5). For the purposes of the research presented in this thesis, children's literature is taken to mean any literary text that uses a combination of written language and pictures to tell the story of a child or group of children, thus validating their lived experiences.

There are a number of reasons that justify the use of children's literature in the EFL classroom. Lee (2015) argues that

of all the forms of literature, children's literature is generally recognized as an effective teaching tool owing to a few basic characteristics: (1) uses simplified natural language; (2) is widely available at schools, libraries and online; (3) contains colorful pictures, which underprivileged readers may find informative or at least enjoyable, and (4) presents appealing and sometimes mature stories that **learners of all ages can appreciate**" (p. 67, my emphasis).

In this way, children's literature can be thought of as an exceptional tool to promote literacy, not only in L1 classrooms, but especially in L2 classrooms. Mirroring this sentiment, Birketveit (2015) asserts that since

picture books have at least one picture on each double spread, these texts come with ample visual support that will enable learners of English to cope with more advanced texts than they usually would. By reading picture book, they are exposed to authentic stories and authentic English offering a wider vocabulary than course books or graded readers do (p. 1).

In essence, children's literature contains a built-in support system that can be utilized by the student when the text proves to be beyond their linguistic capabilities. In the context of Brazilian English classrooms, these books directly contradict the belief that the reading of literary texts is an advanced task that students will not be able to comprehend. Furthermore, in the context of the EFL classroom, the term children's can be considered a misnomer as any student, independent of their age, can have a meaningful interaction with a children's book. This means that these texts are appropriate not only for elementary aged students, but they may also be used with high school classes since "picture books exist for all ages, and they are an art form that challenges readers on all competence levels...The children will understand the texts at their level whereas the alert adult reader will perceive a deeper meaning to the stories" (BIRKETVEIT, 2015, p. 2).

Not only is children's literature an outstanding tool for teaching a foreign language, it also helps to prepare students for life. Morgado (2010) describes how children's books can be used by schools to help their students live in societies radically transformed by globalization that are increasingly multicultural and interdependent. She continues, saying that this is due in part to the educational potential of children's literature to promote intercultural dialogue and the development of critical consciousness which in turn promotes tolerance toward those perceived as different and solidarity with those who are marginalized by society at large (MORGADO, 2010, p. 18). As a

result, children's literature appears to be particularly well suited to the EFL classroom, an educational context that is inherently multi/intercultural as well as an agent of globalization and internationalization.

Despite these educational benefits, there is still resistance to using children's literature to teach foreign languages. In Brazil, this resistance may be the result of a variety of factors, principally when considering issues such as accessibility to children's books written in English, the cost associated with acquiring these materials and a lack of preparation to effectively use the materials. With this in mind, it appears that the situation may be more complicated than meets the eye because, even when these other criteria are met, "language teachers resist using children's literature so that they do not offend adult learners who likely have good education and a high maturity level" (LEE, 2015, p. 74). Jane Appelt believes that many teachers ignore the influence they have in the classroom and that "in the long run, the question really is whether or not you are comfortable with picture books yourself. If you are, then your students will be too and together you will find a whole new world of books" (1985, p. 74). Without more attention given to children's literature in teacher education programs and in government documents, it doesn't seem likely that the unease many teachers feel toward using children's literature will disappear any time soon.

1.1.4 Why Multicultural Literature?

In order to justify using multicultural literature in the EFL classroom, it is important to first define multicultural literature and discuss how it differs from other types of literature. According to Gopalakrishnan (2011), multicultural literature refers to

books that represent the sociocultural experiences of previously underrepresented groups of people. Books whose themes, language, characters, illustrations, and content validate these groups' experiences, including those experiences occurring because of differences in language, race, gender, class, ethnicity, identity, religion, and sexual orientation (p. 249).

In this sense, multicultural literature is not itself a separate literary category, but due to the hierarchies and power structures that continue to privilege certain writers in detriment to others, it becomes seen as a distinct set of texts that gives a voice to groups that would otherwise be silenced. It is important to stress, however, that "the term multicultural does not designate the multicultural nature of a single work, but that of a group of works used to break the monopoly of the mainstream

culture and make the curriculum pluralistic” (CAI, 2002, p. 4). Often multicultural literature is misleadingly described as the antithesis of canonical literature or, simply put, as non-canonical literature because its main function is to challenge the predominantly male and white literary canon. Yet, this division subtly deprives multicultural literature of the perceived characteristics of canonical literature, further marginalizing texts that already exist on the fringes of literature. The literary canon and multicultural literature are not mutually exclusive literary categories as evidenced by reverence shown toward writers such as Toni Morrison and Chinua Achebe. However, as Cai (1998) states, “multicultural literature is still a much needed separate category of literature, for its existence poses a challenge to the domination of all-white literature” (p. 316). Along the same lines, Festino (2007) cautions that multicultural texts should not be introduced into the school curriculum at the expense of the traditional literary canon and educational professionals should pay close attention to the ways in which multicultural literature is being used “so as not to re-affirm their marginal status” (p. 6). It is not enough to simply use more multicultural literature in the EFL classroom and it becomes necessary to determine the best methodological approaches to appropriately incorporate these texts.

Although Brazil is a racially and ethnically diverse country⁵, its society remains racially stratified, despite being perceived as a racial democracy (JORGE, 2012). In an effort to address the racial inequality present in the country, the Brazilian government has taken action to promote the cultures and contributions of underrepresented groups, principally Afro-Brazilians and the numerous Indigenous peoples. The passing of law 10.639 in 2003 (subsequently referred to as the Law) represented an important advancement in the march toward racial equality, when the teaching of African history and Afro-Brazilian culture become mandatory in all Brazilian schools, both public and private. By passing this law, the federal government directly recognized the importance of multicultural education in Brazilian schools. With this in mind,

the use of multicultural literature in the classroom has a lot to add. In addition to helping develop an understanding about universal issues, especially with regard to different peoples and countries, it also provides the student with the opportunity to develop a sensitivity to differences and critical consciousness about the issues addressed (NAIDITCH, 2009, p. 26, my translation).

⁵ According to the 2010 Brazilian Census, 47.7% of Brazilians identified themselves as white, 43.1% identified as *Pardo* (a racial category that refers to individuals of mixed ethnic ancestry), 7.6% identified as Black, 1.1% identified as Asian, 0.4% identified as Indigenous and the remaining 0.1% gave no response (IBGE, 2010).

Multicultural literature is an extremely useful tool that can be used to further the aims of the Law in all subjects, including the teaching of English. Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie's now famous TED talk entitled "The Danger of a Single Story" gives a stirring defense of the importance of multicultural literature, especially for racial minorities and other underrepresented groups. She states

So I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books. I was also an early writer, and when I began to write, at about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obligated to read, I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading: All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out. Now, this despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria. I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to. My characters also drank a lot of ginger beer, because the characters in the British books I read drank ginger beer. Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was. And for many years afterwards, I would have a desperate desire to taste ginger beer. But that is another story. What this demonstrates, I think, is **how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children**. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books by their very nature had to have foreigners in them and **had to be about things with which I could not personally identify**. Now, things changed when I discovered African books. There weren't many of them available, and they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books. But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. **I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature**. I started to write about things I recognized. Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. **But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature**. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: **It saved me from having a single story of what books are** (ADICHE, 2009, my emphasis).

This segment of her speech shows the overwhelming power that literature has not only to affect our perceptions of the world, but also to change those perceptions. Using literature written by African writers about their histories and cultures undoubtedly has a place in the Brazilian English classroom because it has the ability to educate about the richness of Anglophone African cultures, thus complying with the Law as well as contributing to redefining the idea of the native speaker of English. Moreover, it enhances the opportunity for Brazilian students, the majority of whom are non-white, to personally identify and interact with the books they read. Numerous scholars (CAI, 2002; COLBY & LYON, 2004; LANDT, 2006; NAIDITCH, 2009) stress the necessity of inclusion of multicultural literature in schools in order to validate the experiences of marginalized groups. Festino (2007) and Carbonieri (2012; 2016) note that the majority of literary

texts read in teacher licensure programs at Brazilian universities tend to be from North American and British literary canons and rarely include books written by minorities or authors from outside of Kachru's (1992)⁶ inner circle. In the case of children's literature, few Brazilian universities even offer courses devoted to this literary genre and, complicating matters further, those that do rarely have a multicultural component (SOUSA, 2005).

Rewriting the curriculum to include multicultural literature in this way, however, presupposes that Brazilian English teachers have the appropriate education and training to not only sensibly use these materials, but to also effectively address any reactions that they might provoke. For this reason,

educating teachers that are prepared for the needs of a multicultural classroom is, without a doubt, one of the biggest challenges facing teacher education programs today. Furthermore, these teachers need to be prepared to teach groups of students that are increasingly diverse in all senses, from language and culture to race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual preference, religion, social class and economic power (NAIDITCH, 2009, p. 27, my translation).

Therefore, in order to effectively incorporate multicultural literature into the English curriculum, it is important to first begin with the teachers themselves, providing the necessary training so that they are prepared to teach in multicultural contexts. According to Sleeter (2001), most teachers, whether experienced or pre-service, are unaware of the impact that their attitudes and beliefs have in the classroom and the fact that teaching is never neutral but always ideological. As a result, teacher education programs must prioritize culturally responsive pedagogies that stimulate the development of cultural sensitivity, helping educational professionals recognize and erase their prejudices in order to create classroom environments that are inclusive, tolerant and critical (NAIDITCH, 2009).

With the passing of the Law in 2003, some scholars have sought to measure its impacts on the practices of Brazilian publishing houses. Immediately after the Law took effect, there was a temporary rise in the publication of books whose main themes included Afro-Brazilian and African

⁶ Braj Kachru created a model of three concentric circles to illustrate the spread of English around the world and the creation of subsequent World Englishes. The innermost circle consists of those countries where English is the native language of the majority of the population (ex. The United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland etc.). The second concentric circle is termed the outer circle and comprises the countries colonized by the inner circle and where English is a lingua franca but not necessarily the most widely spoken language (ex. Nigeria, India, South Africa etc.). The outermost circle refers to those countries where English has no significant status, but may be learned as a foreign language (ex. Brazil, Russia, China).

cultures, although publications began to steadily decline beginning in 2012 (PEREIRA, 2016). According to Sousa (2005), this is due in part to the unwillingness of a large number of publishers to print books about ethnic or racial issues as they feel that there is no market for such books. Similarly, Sousa (2005) argues that

the publicizing of the books is another concern. Often children don't read these books because educators, parents and the community in general do not know of their existence. In general, access to these works by educators and readers is also hampered due to financial constraints in acquiring them, and because of the absence of public policies affirming ethnic and racial diversity in official programs distributing books of this nature (p. 200-201, my translation).

As previously mentioned, the OCEM, at least as they pertain to the teaching of foreign languages, are grounded in the theories of the New Literacies and, as a result, they subtly endorse the use of literature in the EFL classroom. When it comes to multicultural literature, the OCEM create a space through their emphasis on critical literacy. This is because in reading activities "...that seek critical literacy, representations and analyses of difference such as race, sex, gender and questions about who wins and who loses in certain social relations are emphasized" (BRAZIL, 2006, p. 116, my translation). Moreover, both the OCEM and the BNCC, mention the importance of multiculturalism in foreign language education, although only superficially. The terms multicultural and multiculturalism appear three times in the OCEM, as it relates to the teaching of foreign languages, and only once in the BNCC. Additionally, neither document specifies what is understood by these terms and it appears that they are used only to supplement descriptions of the effects of globalization. This is potentially problematic because, depending upon the perspective of multiculturalism being used, the definition of multiculturalism could contradict the principles of critical multicultural literacy. The theoretical underpinnings of multiculturalism, critical literacy and critical multicultural literacy will be discussed in the next chapter.

1.2 Objectives

The previous sections present and discuss a number of limitations that impede the wider use of multicultural children's literature in the Brazilian EFL classroom. Despite these potential problems, the benefits of using literature, especially of a multicultural nature, outweigh the challenges associated with its use. As a result, the main objective of this research is to understand how multicultural children's literature, through the actions of both teachers and students, can favor

the promotion of critical multicultural literacy in English language classes in Brazilian public schools. Moreover, more specifically, this research aims to:

- Discuss the importance of using literature, especially multicultural children's literature in the teaching of English as a foreign language.
- Investigate how multicultural children's literature can be approached in order to promote critical multicultural literacy in the EFL classroom.
- Understand the attitudes of teachers and students toward the use of multicultural children's literature.
- Discuss the important role of critical multicultural education in the development of student-citizens.

1.3 Research Questions

After reflecting on the troubling status of multicultural literature in the Brazilian EFL curriculum and taking my research motivations and desired objectives into consideration, I began to develop research questions that would guide my research design. These questions were framed based on the reviewed literature as well as by input provided by my advisor in an effort to design a study that would further the development of the critical consciousness of the participants and their continuing citizenship education.

- What are the possible benefits of including multicultural children's literature in EFL classrooms of Brazilian regular schools?
- What methodological approaches are most appropriate for incorporating multicultural children's literature in the perspective of critical multicultural literacy in the Brazilian EFL classroom?
- How do teachers and students react when exposed to multicultural literary texts produced specifically for children and young adults?
- What actions by teachers and students favor the development of student-citizens?

These questions, while similar to the objectives, contemplate the responses that both the students and teachers will have to the texts used in the study as well as how these responses,

manifested through their actions and attitudes, are instrumental in fostering critical multicultural literacy.

1.4 Motivation

One of my first formal experiences teaching came during my last year as an undergraduate, when I began to volunteer as an English teacher at a local community outreach center. This center provided services principally to the Latino community, although any individual was welcome to attend the classes. Since I was only just beginning my teaching career, I co-taught with a retired and more experienced English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. All of our students were adults, mainly young mothers who would attend classes when their children were at school and their spouses were working. Soon, we started to notice attendance dwindling and we eventually learned that many mothers had no choice but to miss class when they were unable to find someone to care for their children. These mothers also felt that they shouldn't bring their children with them to class as it could be distracting to the other students. In order to encourage our students to continue participating in the class, we decided to offer split English courses, one for the parents and another for their children. In an effort to maintain continuity between the two classes, we decided to use a bilingual children's book with the ultimate goal of having the parent's read sections of the book to their children and having the children do the same with their parents. Overall, the activity was a great success and I was able to clearly see how literature can be used as effective and engaging teaching material.

After finishing my undergraduate career, I participated in a six-month volunteer program where I taught English in a Chilean public school. In my assigned school, my co-teacher and the administration heavily emphasized and used the textbook, giving relatively little space to other teaching materials. I found that my students were, at times, disinterested in doing the activities because they were mechanical in nature and distant from their realities. Because of my background in Spanish and Latin American literature, I decided to bring selections from Junot Diaz's award-winning book *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. The book was published in English but there are frequent instances of codeswitching due to the author's Dominican heritage. The students were able to use the Spanish to help make sense of the text when they encountered new vocabulary words, and they frequently commented on the differences between Chilean and Dominican Spanish. Since many literary texts are written in the past tense, the students were able to practice

verbs in the past tense and learn about and share opinions regarding the Latino experience in the United States. The unit culminated in the students either reenacting scenes from the book in English or writing their own role plays based on the themes present in the book. Finally, since many of my students were first or second generation Bolivian or Peruvian immigrants, the book stimulated discussions about the immigrant experience in the United States as well as in the Chilean context.

Both of these experiences showed me how literature, especially of a multicultural nature, can be used in the teaching of foreign languages. My undergraduate background in literature together with my current studies in the field of applied linguistics inspired me to carry out research involving these two, often antagonistic, fields. Furthermore, my graduate work in the field of new literacy studies led me to choose critical multicultural literacy as the theoretical perspective to guide my research. For these reasons, I decided to investigate the relationship between multicultural literature and critical multicultural literacy in the EFL classroom.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters, including an introductory chapter and a chapter for final reflections. In Chapter 2, I review the literature on critical literacy and critical multiculturalism, discussing their theoretical underpinnings and how they relate to the teaching of multicultural children's literature in the EFL classroom. Due to the fact that these two theories share many common characteristics and educational objectives, I propose that they can be seamlessly combined into critical multicultural literacy. Additionally, I discuss the connection between critical multicultural literacy and multicultural children's literature, devoting special attention to some of the resulting educational implications.

Next, in Chapter 3, I present the questions that guided my research design and the methodology that I employed in an attempt to answer them. Due to the fact that the study presented in this thesis is of a qualitative and ethnographic nature, I take special care to describe in detail the participants, my methodological choices and data generation instruments so as to provide a more complete picture of my research journey. I also present the corpus of children's book used in the study along with some criteria of how to select quality multicultural children's literature.

The analysis and discussion of data is separated into two thematic chapters, covering both research phases. The decision to divide the analysis into three separate chapters was made together

with my advisor as we felt it would facilitate the reading of this thesis and help maintain the unity and coherence of the analysis chapters, a feat that is more difficult to achieve when presented in one larger chapter. With this in mind, Chapter 4 is dedicated to discussing the role of multicultural children's literature in the Brazilian EFL curriculum, focusing on the benefits and challenges of its use in the classroom as well as in teacher education programs. Next, in Chapter 5, I examine the ways in which the use of multicultural children's literature promoted critical multicultural literacy both among the teachers and the students who participated in the research. Finally, in Chapter 6, I draw some conclusions based on the data analyzed and I present some implications for future studies, devoting special attention to the field of teacher education.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

"I insisted that we needed new theories rooted in an attempt to understand both the nature of our contemporary predicament and the means by which we might collectively engage in resistance that would transform our current reality."

bell hooks, 1994, p. 67

In this chapter I present the theoretical foundations that guided the research described in this thesis. I begin by examining the concept of literacy, attempting to highlight its inherent complexity and to show it as a social practice. Next, I continue the discussion by dissecting what it means to be critical and how critical theory and literacy theory come together to form critical literacy. I then go on to present some of the debate surrounding the term culture in order to subsequently analyze multiculturalism, paying particular attention to the theory of critical multiculturalism. Finally, I propose the term critical multicultural literacy as the convergence of the educational objectives of critical literacy and critical multiculturalism and discuss its suitability to working with multicultural children's literature.

2.1 Understanding Literacy

It would be imprudent to discuss critical multicultural literacy without first analyzing its constituent parts, beginning with the concept of literacy. According to Magda Soares, defining literacy represents a unique challenge since it can be considered "a multi-faceted and extremely complex phenomenon" (1992, p. 3). The difficulty associated with defining literacy is the result of the failure to recognize its dichotomous nature, as it comprises two dimensions, one individual and one social (SOARES, 1992). Simply put, the individual dimension of literacy refers to the degree to which a person has the capability to code and decode language or, in other words, whether an individual can read or write (SOARES, 1992). In this sense, literacy may be thought of as a skill that one either possesses or does not possess which leads to subsequent classifications of literate or illiterate. Conversely, the social dimension of literacy refers to "what people **do** with

reading and writing skills and abilities, in a specific context, and how these skills and abilities relate to social needs, values and practices” (SOARES, 1992, p. 7, emphasis in the original). Unlike the literacy binary that the individual dimension presents, the social dimension recognizes that literacy is a social practice that varies according to context, therefore establishing a continuum where literacy, illiteracy and functional literacy coexist. Put another way, a person may be able to read and write in one social context yet unable in another, or, even more strangely, be entirely unable to read or write and still navigate situations which require the use of written language. Moreover, according to Soares, the social dimension of literacy further subdivides into a liberal, weak version as well as a revolutionary, strong version. She states that

in the liberal, progressive view (the “weak” version) literacy is defined as a set of skills necessary to cope with social practices in which reading and writing are required, in the radical, “revolutionary” view literacy cannot be seen as a neutral “thing” to be used in social practices when required, but it is itself the set of socially constructed practices involving reading and writing, which are shaped by wider social processes and are responsible for reinforcing **or** challenging values, traditions, patterns of power found in social settings (SOARES, 1992, p. 8, emphasis in the original).

Mattos and Valério (2010) highlight an important difference between the weak and strong versions of the social dimension stating that the weak version seeks to first teach the target language to then use it, whereas the strong version reverses the process by teaching language through its use. It is important to take this difference into consideration in the teaching of foreign languages because the choice between one or the other will directly influence the approach a teacher will take to teaching literacy skills. For example, according to these same authors, the strong version not only favors a communicative approach but it also recognizes the possibility of linguistic diversity and the importance of context when developing literacy skills.

Street (1984; 1993a) also acknowledges the dualism inherently present in literacy, christening the autonomous and ideological models. In the autonomous model, Street describes “literacy in technical terms, treating it as independent of social context, an autonomous variable whose consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic character” (1993a, p. 5). Essentially, the autonomous model conceptualizes literacy as reading and writing skills that an individual acquires and consequently employs indiscriminately in a variety of social contexts. Like Soares’ individual dimension, Streets’ autonomous model categorizes individuals as literate or illiterate. In contrast to this model, Street proposes the ideological model of literacy which

considers “literacy practices as inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society, and [recognizes] the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts” (1993a, p. 7). It is clear that, not only is literacy complex and multifaceted but it is also socially constructed and variable. In essence, literacy must always be seen as social practice because only then can it be truly understood and an attempt may be made at defining it.

Finally, seeing literacy as a social practice opens up new possibilities for its theorization. According to Lankshear, Snyder and Green (2000), “literacy should be seen as having three interlocking dimensions or aspects of learning and practice – the operational, the cultural and the critical” (p. 30). The authors clarify, however, that these three dimensions are neither sequential nor of differing levels of importance and that they should all be simultaneously integrated. The operational dimension is most similar to the individual dimension and the autonomous model, in that it is principally concerned with knowing formal conventions of written language and being able to effectively put them to use in different contexts. In the cultural dimension, literacy must always be thought of in relation to something else, as language is always produced within specific contexts. Moreover, in this dimension, being literate is more than just knowing how to read and write but rather knowing how to create meaning in different practices. Lastly, the critical dimension refers to the knowledge that all literacies are socially constructed and influenced by power relations. Furthermore, being literate in this dimensions means that an individual is capable using literacy practices to become active participants in a given society. Thinking about literacy in terms of three overlapping dimensions “complements and supplements technical competence by contextualizing it, with due regard for matters of culture, history and power” (LANKSHEAR; SNYDER; GREEN, 2000, p. 31). This in turn makes it possible to begin to think about other intersectional forms of literacy, like critical multicultural literacy, to be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

The importance of recognizing literacy as social practice is fundamental in order to begin to understand how it becomes possible to conceive other types of literacies. Furthermore, due to the inherent complexities of literacy and the resulting difficulties in developing a truly encompassing definition, Street (1984), Soares (1992) and Lankshear et. al. (2000) argue that it is more sensible to pluralize literacy and speak of literacies rather than a singular literacy. As a result, pluralizing literacy allows for the creation of the so-called New Literacies, including critical multicultural literacy.

2.2 From Literacy to Critical Literacy

Having examined the complexity of the concept of literacy, it is necessary to examine the process by which literacy becomes critical literacy and ultimately critical multicultural literacy. In order to accomplish this objective, this section analyzes what it means to be critical before tracing the historical foundations of critical literacy. Lastly, I present some of the important divergences between critical reading and critical literacy in an effort to justify using a literacy approach, instead of a reading approach, in my research.

2.2.1 Being Critical

Clarifying what is meant by the adjective critical is of fundamental importance to understand the differences and similarities between terms like critical thinking, critical pedagogy, critical reading, critical literacy, critical multiculturalism and critical multicultural literacy, among others. While critical can appear to be overused to the point of saturation, there are important subtleties that underlie each of these terms and different understandings of what it means to be critical. Marins-Costa (2016) affirms that, in educational contexts, the qualifier critical possesses a positive connotation and is something to be desired. This could help explain the plethora of terms displaying this terminology, but it does little to contribute to a deeper understanding of what critical means. As a result, we must ask ourselves, what does it mean to be critical? Furthermore, why is it important to be critical? In this section, I attempt to answer these two questions before moving on to a more in depth discussion of critical literacy.

According to Luke (2004), until recently, “the term critical referred to higher order reading comprehension and sophisticated personal response to literature” (p. 21). Due to the expansion in the usage of the term critical, it has since taken on new meaning and is now not so easy to define. For example,

The reference to being critical allows for several understandings. Two of them are discussed here...One of the most frequent understandings associates critical development with schooling, based on the premise that the critical is located at higher levels on the education scale. The other refers to the ability of critical perception that citizens have about the society in which they live, an ability not necessarily linked to high levels of education (MONTE MÓR, 2013, p. 33, my translation).

Monte Mór attributes part of this divide to the difference between the terms criticism and critique, with the former being preferred by specialists in artistic and literacy contexts, while the latter does not depend on education and can, in theory, be freely exercised by any individual. Luke (2004) mirrors this line of thinking arguing that the critical is double-sided and it can be understood “as an intellectual, deconstructive textual and cognitive analytic task and as a form of embodied political anger, alienation and alterity” (p. 26). Based on these ideas, it appears that one understanding considers the critical to be a learned skill of higher level thought while the other sees it as a reactionary impulse that all human beings possess. However, thinking about the critical in these terms creates some problems and Monte Mór (2013) questions whether individuals who fail to achieve certain levels of education can be capable of criticism.

Luke (2004) and Marins-Costa (2016) trace the use of critical back to the Frankfurt School’s critical social theory which arose in interwar Europe in response to rising social inequality. The theorists and scholars belonging to this school saw these social inequalities and class struggles to be the direct result of historical factors rather than as a naturally occurring phenomenon (MARINS-COSTA, 2016). Critical social theory emphasizes “the alleviation of human suffering and the formation of a more just world through the critique of existing social and political problems and the posing of alternatives” (CERVETTI; DAMICO; PARDALES, 2001, no page). Monte Mór (2013) contends that, “within this sense of critique, the need for reconstructing the understanding of social institutions and practices and the ideologies present in them is accentuated” (p. 40, my translation). In other words, one of the first uses of critical foregrounds issues of power in society and the struggle by unequal groups for access to materials and it is consequently essential to rethink social norms in order to bring about change. The premises of critical social theory have been widely adapted and applied to other areas, although I will only review critical thinking and critical pedagogy.

According to Burbules and Berk (1999), in critical thinking, “to be critical basically means to be more discerning in recognizing faulty arguments, hasty generalizations, assertions lacking evidence, truth claims based on unreliable authority, ambiguous or obscure concepts” (no page). In other words, an individual who is capable of thinking critically is able to analyze and classify arguments according to the rules of logic. Furthermore, as these same authors argue, many people go through life without questioning or analyzing everyday assumptions and occurrences, thus justifying the necessity of critical thinking skills. Many philosophers and scholars have long

recognized the importance of clear, precise and analytical thinking and, as a result, the development of critical thinking skills is often a key learning objective (MARINS-COSTA, 2016). Returning to Monte Mór's arguments about the development of criticality, it can be understood that critical thinking is more related to criticism than to critique. This is due to the fact that, as a skill, it is associated with school contexts and it generally becomes progressively more complex with educational advancement.

Differently from critical thinking, the critical in critical pedagogy

regards specific belief claims, not primarily as propositions to be assessed for their truth connect, but as parts of systems of belief and action that have aggregate effects within the power structures of society. It asks first about these systems of belief and action, **who benefits?** (BURBULES; BERK, 1999, no page, emphasis in the original).

In this sense, critical pedagogy appears to be much more concerned with power relations than critical thinking and less concerned about analyzing the logic of rational thought. This emphasis on power is not only the result of the influence of critical social theory, but also of Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed which "makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation" (FREIRE, 1970, p. 48). The purpose of critical pedagogy, according to Paulo Freire, is the *conscientização* of the individual, in other words, the development of a critical consciousness. When a student becomes critically conscious, they are liberated from the oppressive ideologies circulating in society as they are now capable of unmasking them (JORDÃO, 2013). In other words, according to critical pedagogy, a critical individual is able to not only recognize injustice, but they also feel empowered to provoke change (BURBULES; BERK, 1999). This type of criticality appears to be similar to the notion of critique that Monte Mór (2013) and Luke (2004) mention since it is more reactionary and political and not so strongly associated with educational attainment.

Finally, although critical thinking and critical pedagogy have different objectives, they both agree that being critical "requires that one be moved to do something" (BURBULES; BERK, 1999, no page). Furthermore, as Freire (1970) argues in his landmark work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, criticality requires praxis, meaning the combination of both reflection and action. In sum, being critical necessitates both mental and physical action. This may come as the result of academic achievement or it may come as the result of societal distress but it most certainly will result in the

change of the status quo. It is this sense of criticality that is understood in the term critical multicultural literacy.

2.2.2 Critical Literacy – Foundations

As evidenced at the beginning of this chapter, both Soares' revolutionary, strong version of literacy and Streets' ideological model open the door for the development of critical literacies as they recognize the socially constructed nature of literacy. The epistemological underpinnings of critical literacy can be traced back in large part to the revolutionary tenets of critical social theory, poststructuralism and Freirean pedagogy (CERVETTI; PARDALES; DAMICO, 2001). According to Cervetti, Padales and Damico (2001), critical social theory influenced critical literacy through its concern for the human condition as it relates to the continuing social and political struggles for resources. As a result of these struggles, language is shaped by the power relations present in society and therefore must always be considered contestable and a vehicle of ideology. Complementing this vision, critical literacy borrows poststructuralism's view of texts as socially and ideologically constructed entities, devoid of a universal meaning and something that can only be understood when bearing the larger socio-cultural context in mind (CERVETTI; PARDALES; DAMICO, 2001). In this way, critical literacy recognizes the possibility of multiple perspectives as well the fallacy of neutrality.

Although Paulo Freire is widely considered to be the father of critical pedagogy, he made many significant and influential contributions to the field of literacy studies. For example, Mattos and Valério (2010) call attention to critical literacy's conception of language as an empowering element, a conception directly tied to Freire and Macedo's (1987) famous mantra of reading the word to read the world. This same idea is expressed by Hilary Janks when she says that "essentially, critical literacy is about enabling young people to read both the word and the world in relation to power, identity, difference, and access to knowledge, skills, tools and resources. It is also about writing and rewriting the world" (2013, p. 227). When language empowers a student, when they are able to read the word and the world, it means that they have successfully internalized the language so as to deconstruct and create new meanings from it, completing a process of social transformation. Critical literacy, therefore, focuses on the way power manifests itself in language and an understanding of how this occurs is necessary in order to take action to promote social justice. Additionally, this emphasis on transformation indicates the centrality of the student,

making them active participants in the learning process, unlike, what Freire calls, the traditional banking model of education. The banking model, as a teaching model, is heavily criticized by Freire (1970) as an authoritarian model for education that sees students as empty vessels, waiting to be filled with knowledge by the omniscient teacher. Due to its inherently passive nature, the banking model is incapable of producing critical students as affords no opportunities for reflection and action.

According to Mattos, while “the ultimate aim of critical literacy is to challenge existing power relations and to provoke social change...the instructional objective of critical literacy is to develop learners’ critical consciousness” (2012, p. 194). The development of a critical consciousness allows for critical literacy to challenge

the status quo in an effort to discover alternative paths for self and social development. This kind of literacy - words rethinking worlds, self-dissenting in society - connects the political and the personal, the public and the private, the global and the local, the economic and the pedagogical, for rethinking our lives and for promoting justice in place of inequity (SHOR, 1999, no page).

In accordance with Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys’ (2002) four dimensions of critical literacy, the development of critical consciousness can occur through disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on the sociopolitical and taking action to promote social justice. These four dimensions do not need to be introduced linearly and often occur simultaneously as each dimension is in some way dependent upon the others. While Lewison et. al. (2002) do not intend these four dimensions to be a pedagogical model, I believe, based on Hayik’s (2012) verification questions, that they can be used to help determine an activity’s propensity for promoting critical literacy. The four dimensions and sample verification questions are presented in table 1.

Table 1 – The Four Dimensions of Critical Literacy

4 Dimensions Framework (LEWISON; FLINT; VAN SLUYS, 2002, p. 382-384)	Sample Questions (HAYIK, 2012, p. 78-80)
1st Dimension – Disrupting the Commonplace	
“In this dimension, Critical Literacy is conceptualized as seeing the ‘everyday’ through new lenses” (p. 382-383).	• Are the students making the unconscious conscious through introspectively examining their beliefs and assumptions? • Are they challenging taken-for-granted practices? • Are they critiquing what is considered normal/status quo? • Are they viewing the world through new lenses? • Are they problematizing reality and visualizing a different one? • Are they examining the social norms that popular culture communicates and how these messages position individuals/groups and shape their identities?
2nd Dimension – Considering Multiple Viewpoints	
“Imagine standing in the shoes of others – to understand experience and texts from our own perspectives and the viewpoints of others and to consider these various perspectives concurrently” (p. 383).	• Are the students becoming cognizant of the voices of the silenced or marginalized? • Are they concurrently trying to understand experience and text from others’ viewpoints in addition to their own perspective? • Are they reflecting on and making sense of multiple perspectives of a problem, scrutinizing competing narratives, or writing counternarratives to the dominant discourses? • Are they asking “whose voices are heard and whose are missing?” • Are they making difference visible?
3rd Dimension – Focusing on the Sociopolitical	
“In this dimension, we attempt to step outside of the personal to interrogate how sociopolitical systems and power relationships shape perceptions, responses, and actions” (p. 383).	• Are students moving beyond the personal realm? • Are they becoming more aware of historical practices and cultural systems of meaning? • Are they questioning the legitimacy of unequal power relations? • Are they investigating oppression, privilege and status? • Are they using literacy as a means to participate in the politics of daily life?

4 th Dimension – Taking Action to Promote Social Justice	
“This dimension is often perceived as the definition of critical literacy – yet one cannot take informed action against oppression or promote social justice without expanded understanding and perspectives gained from the other three dimensions” (p. 383-384, emphasis in the original).	• Are students reflecting and acting upon the world to transform it into a better one? • Are they using literacy to compose their own narratives, counternarratives, letters, essays, reports, poems, commercials, posters, plays and webpages to promote social change? • Are they using the arts to express critical understandings and get messages of justice and democracy out into the world? • Are they rewriting their identities as social activists who challenge the status quo and demand change?

2.2.3 Critical Literacy and Critical Reading

Considering that this thesis uses multicultural children’s literature as the impetus for the research described throughout, it is necessary to highlight some of the important differences between critical reading and critical literacy. Furthermore, by examining some of these differences, I intend to make it clearer as to why I chose a literacy approach instead of a reading approach for this study. According to Cervetti, Pardales and Damico (2001), critical literacy and critical reading should not be thought of as synonyms as they are rooted in distinct theoretical traditions. Moreover, they differ in four main areas: knowledge or epistemology, reality or ontology, authorship and instructional goals (see table 2).

For these authors, critical reading is based in liberal-humanist theory in which an interlocutor infuses written language with their thoughts and intentions which are subsequently decoded by the reader through rational and critical reasoning. By learning to read critically, a student can interpret a text, using skills such as differentiating between opinion and fact to discover authorial intention. Cervetti et. al. (2001) problematize this logic because it depends on the assumption that there is only one correct interpretation of a text. While critical reading unearths implicit meanings and encourages students to read between the lines, it does not sufficiently encourage them to question power relations or to challenge the status quo. Critical literacy, on the other hand, considers the act of reading to be an instance of social critique that makes the student aware of the ways that discourse circulates both in the context of textual production and also how it manifests itself in the text. According to McLaughlin and Devoogd (2004), “critical literacy views readers as active participants in the reading process and invites them to move beyond

passively accepting the text's message to question examine, or dispute the power relations that exist between readers and authors" (p. 14). In sum, meanings are constructed in critical literacy by considering the socio-historical context of a text, the power relations present in it as well as the author's intentions. Returning to Monte Mór's (2013) understandings of criticality, critical reading can be more closely associated with criticism while critical literacy can be more closely associated with critique.

Table 2 – Differences Between Critical Reading and Critical Literacy

Area	Critical Reading	Critical Literacy
Knowledge (epistemology)	Knowledge is gained through sensory experience in the world or through rational thought; a separation between facts, inferences, and reader judgments is assumed.	What counts as knowledge is not natural or neutral; knowledge is always based on the discursive rules of a particular community, and is thus ideological.
Reality (Ontology)	Reality is directly knowable and can, therefore, serve as a referent for interpretation.	Reality cannot be known definitively, and cannot be captured by language; decisions about truth, therefore, cannot be based on a theory of correspondence with reality, but must instead be made locally.
Authorship	Detecting the author's intentions is the basis for higher levels of textual interpretation.	Textual meaning is always multiple, contested, culturally and historically situated, and constructed within differential relations of power.
Instructional goals	Development of higher level skills of comprehension and interpretation	Development of critical consciousness

Source: CERVETTI; DAMICO; PARDALES, 2001, no page

2.3 (Critical) Multi(cultural)ism

In this section of the chapter, I will breakdown the concept of culture in an effort to show its complexity and its relation to other theories such as multiculturalism. I then proceed to discuss the theoretical foundations of multiculturalism, devoting special attention to its three main perspectives with the ultimate goal of demonstrating why critical multiculturalism is the most appropriate for this research.

2.3.1 Understanding Culture

For the purposes of this thesis, my understanding of culture is based on Maher's definition of culture as "a shared system of values, of representations and of action: it is culture that shapes the way we see and make intelligible the things around us; it is culture that guides the way we act before the world and its happenings" (2007, p. 261, my translation). That being said, the title of this subsection perhaps lends itself to the misguided notion that it is possible to understand culture in a singular, all-encompassing way. The reality is that culture, like literacy, is also extremely complex and multifaceted and, therefore, subject to debate by scholars from across the disciplines. Brian Street (1993b) recognizes the difficulty associated with defining culture arguing that

in fact 'there is not much point in trying to say what culture is...What can be done, however, is to say what culture does'. For what culture does is precisely the work of 'defining words, ideas, things and groups...We all live our lives in terms of definitions, names and categories that culture creates'. The job of studying culture is not of finding and then accepting its definitions but of 'discovering how and what definitions are made, under what circumstances and for what reasons'. These definitions are used, change and sometimes fall into disuse'. Indeed, the very term 'culture' itself, like these other ideas and definitions, changes its meanings and serve different often competing purposes at different times. Culture is an active process of meaning making and context over definition, including its own definition (p. 25, my emphasis).

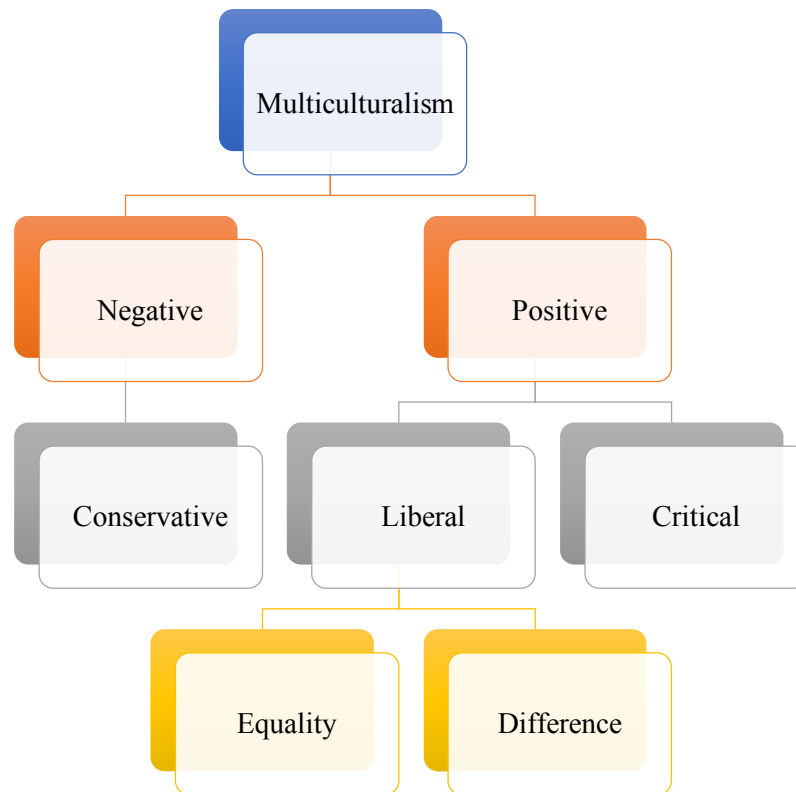
In this sense, Street argues in favor of thinking about culture as a verb, as something one does, as something that changes according to the context of use and as something that has a past, present and future. Similarly, according to Maher (2007), the biggest challenge is necessarily not defining a culture in terms of this group's beliefs and behaviors, but rather it is trying to understand the logic behind these beliefs and behaviors. By conceptualizing culture as a verb, it becomes possible to more clearly see how culture influences an individual, shaping their perspectives and their actions and how they make sense of the world around them.

Gorski (2016), like Street, is also less concerned about defining culture and argues that it is more important to recognize that culture plays a fundamental role in identity formation. Furthermore, he contends that “culture can reflect a composite of other identities and life circumstances, such as regional location, ethnic heritage, religion, and home language, or the implications of these identities and circumstances” (p. 223). In other words, different social identities inform our individual understanding of culture and it is essential that we are aware of these identities. In this way, we can avoid essentialization and understand that a “culture is not automatically shared by all of its members: culture does not form a single, coherent, integrated and homogenous group (MAHER, 2007, p. 262, my translation). In this regard, individuals should never be taken as representative of a culture in its entirety.

2.3.2 (Critical) Multiculturalism – Foundations

At this point, having briefly discussed the concept of culture, I shift my focus to the deconstruction of the concept of multiculturalism in order to explain its relation to both critical multicultural literacy and multicultural literature. As the name suggests, those who champion the cause of multiculturalism cannot be neatly categorized in a single perspective because there are multiple interpretations of what multiculturalism means (MAHER, 2007). For McLaren (1995) and Kubota (2004), multiculturalism can be divided into three different theoretical perspectives: conservative, liberal and critical. Maher (2007), while using this same categorization, simultaneously defends that multiculturalism has both a positive and a negative orientation. She associates conservative multiculturalism with the negative side of the binary while critical and liberal multiculturalism fall on the positive side. Maher’s conception of multiculturalism further subdivides, with liberal multiculturalism breaking into two principal focuses: one that emphasizes equality while the other paradoxically emphasizes difference.

Figure 1 – Perspectives of Multiculturalism



Source: Author's creation based on Maher (2007)

Conservative multiculturalism, according to McLaren (1995), refers to the absence of multiculturalism in the sense that followers of this perspective reject multiculturalism in favor of the status quo. This status quo, at least in Western society, values Eurocentric reasoning and favors the continued subjugation of racial and ethnic minorities by the white majority (MCLAREN, 1995). In his opinion, there is no shortage of reasons why this viewpoint should be rejected. First, because it aims to create a homogenous culture through assimilation and the use of a common language, preferably English. Secondly, because it will subsequently devalue the teaching of foreign languages and, finally, because it seeks to impose societal standards of success that favor the white, middle class. Maher further states that those who subscribe to this worldview believe that multiculturalism and its objectives “encourage social schisms and conflicts” (2007, p. 259, my translation). The connection she makes between multiculturalism and negativity can clearly be seen, but with a double meaning: negative as in the absence of multiculturalism and negative as in the continued tyranny of the white, upper class. Conservative multiculturalism as a whole has been

widely criticized and has fallen into disfavor due to its imperialistic and discriminatory undertones as well as being seen as incompatible with the needs of a global society.

Liberal multiculturalism, on the other hand, recognizes the diversity present in society, although often in a superficial way. This is due to the fact that many individuals who adopt this theoretical perspective focus on the decontextualized universal human experience, ignoring the impacts that racial, cultural, socioeconomic and gender differences have for different social groups (KUBOTA, 2004). For Kubota, this way of thinking creates a host of problems that actually undermine the good intentions many liberal multicultural educators have. As previously mentioned, while it is possible to understand liberal multiculturalism singularly, it can also be subdivided into two contradictory focuses: equality and difference (MAHER, 2007). According to Maher, the focus on equality produces racial colorblindness as well as a belief in meritocracy, two viewpoints that ignore the power structures that are responsible for the creation of cultural, racial and gender hierarchies. In this way, it can be argued that liberal multiculturalism dismisses race as non-existent, therefore failing to promote the development of a critical consciousness due to its inability to acknowledge social and economic disparities between cultures. In contrast to the focus on equality, the focus on difference creates another set of problems because, while cultural differences are recognized, they are frequently essentialized and overlook the fact that culture is always socially and historically situated (MCLAREN, 1995).

Finally, critical multiculturalism “aims for social transformation by seeking social justice and equality among all people rather than merely celebrating differences or assuming a priori that all people are equal” (KUBOTA, 2004, p. 37). Furthermore, critical multiculturalism “has an intellectual alliance with critical pedagogy that aims to raise students’ critical consciousness about various forms of domination and oppression and to help students become active agents for social change” (KUBOTA, 2004, p. 37). In critical multiculturalism, therefore, difference is not only recognized but systematically analyzed and deconstructed, inviting students to question why some cultures are celebrated in detriment to others. Differently from the other perspectives, critical multiculturalism examines the definition of culture itself, viewing it as “diverse, dynamic, and socially, politically and discursively constructed” (KUBOTA, 2004, p. 38). When incorporated into educational contexts, critical multiculturalism causes students and teachers to position themselves actively in order to “critically reevaluate the taken-for-granted conceptions about cultural groups, Self or Other and understand how these conceptions are produced and

perpetuated” (KUBOTA, 2004, p. 45). This is especially important in the EFL classroom, as it is often falsely believed that, simply because students are exposed to other cultures that they are receiving a multicultural education. Critical multiculturalism requires action on the part of students and teachers as it is impossible to be a passive participant and still be critically multicultural. This is due to the fact that questioning, reevaluating and problem posing all inherently imply taking initiative. Finally, according to Kubota (2004), critical multiculturalist perspectives in the EFL classroom contribute to breaking deeply seated beliefs such as the association of whiteness with native English speakers, deconstructing the idea of ‘legitimate’ English and bringing marginalized cultural and linguistic norms to the forefront.

Considering the perceived failings of conservative and liberal multicultural perspectives, May (2003) proposes four essential components that any multicultural approach must encompass in order to be considered critical:

1. Theorize Ethnicity – Recognize, without essentializing, how ethnicity and culture come together to form individual and group identities.
2. Acknowledge unequal power relations – Understand how ethnicity determines choices and access within a given society.
3. Critique constructions of culture – Recognize how culture, discourse and power intersect to elevate or suppress distinct cultural knowledges.
4. Maintain critical reflexivity – Recognize that “our cultural and historical situatedness should not set the limits of ethnicity and culture, nor act to undermine the legitimacy of other, equally valid forms of identity” (p. 211).

According to May (2003), when these four elements come together, critical multiculturalism can address “both structural and culturalist concerns – linking culture to power, and multiculturalism to anti-racism” (p. 211). These four characteristics are essential to understanding critical multicultural literacy, which I discuss in the next section.

2.4 Connecting the Criticals: Critical Multicultural Literacy

At this point, having thoroughly discussed both critical literacy and critical multiculturalism, it becomes necessary to highlight the ways that these complementary perspectives can be combined into a different concept: critical multicultural literacy. As previously

shown, critical literacy and critical multiculturalism both foreground the development of a critical consciousness and questioning issues of power. Where the two perspectives differ, however, is in the principal mechanism through which their respective objectives are achieved; in critical literacy, it is linguistic understanding whereas in critical multiculturalism it is cultural understanding. Yet, according to Brown (1994), language and culture are inseparable as “a language is a part of a culture and a culture is part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture” (p. 165). Furthermore, Locke states that “critical literacy and critical multiculturalism are discursive bedfellows” (2010, p. 95) since critical multiculturalism is not about using language and texts representative of hegemonic and dominant cultures. Explaining the connection between critical and multicultural, Botelho and Rudman (2009) state that

“critical” demands reading beyond the text and making connections between the local and sociopolitical/global and the personal and the political, all grounded by historical analysis. It calls attention to the power imbalance in society as well as its organization. “Critical” implores us to pay attention to the social work of language because how we use language shapes perceptions and social processes. “Multicultural” acknowledges the multiple histories among us; the dynamism, diversity, and fluidity of cultural experience; and unequal access to social power (p. 5).

With this in mind, critical multicultural literacy considers how language and culture are shaped by the power relations and biases present in society, and how these factors limit access of individuals and groups to resources. In other words, critical multicultural literacy is the recognition and subsequent challenge of social and economic inequalities by understanding the role language plays in perpetuating these injustices along racial, cultural and ethnic lines. In critical multicultural literacy, language cannot exist separate from race, social class, religion, sexual orientation, gender among other categories, because individuals are constantly being privileged and subjugated based upon these groupings. In essence, critical multicultural literacy can be thought of as the ideological child of critical literacy and critical multiculturalism, a way of seamlessly integrating the instructional objectives of both theoretical perspectives.

In practice, Stevens and Brown (2011), basing their ideas on Ukpokodu (2008), state that “critical multicultural literacy instruction that challenges discrimination and intolerance, as embodied in language practices specifically, becomes increasingly crucial to promote educational equity and social justice for all students” (p. 32). In this sense, not only does critical multicultural literacy prepare students for life outside the classroom, it also advocates for them inside

educational settings, seeking to diminish the educational gap that is often seen in ethnic and linguistic minorities. This is reflected when Stevens and Brown claim that “critical multicultural literacy educators focus not only on curtailing bias and inequity in the classroom, but also on promoting social justice in society at large” (2011, p. 32). In order to achieve this pedagogical objective, critical multicultural literacy must have

a commitment to recognizing the relationship between theory and practice in pedagogy aimed at constructively creating a praxis that promotes dialoguing, analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing issues of relevant historical and contemporary multicultural concerns (WEIL, 1993, p. 211).

Furthermore, Weil (1993) also argues that this may all be accomplished “by creating relevant problem-posing activities that allow students to confront the challenges offered by the diversity of the reality of everyday life” (p. 212). When designing these activities in the perspective of critical multicultural literacy, there are three important tenets that should be taken into consideration. These tenets and some sample actions that can promote them are summarized in table 3.

Table 3 – Tenets of Critical Multicultural Literacy

Tenet	Sample Actions
1. Educational Equity	• Seek diverse teacher recruitment and training. • Make education relevant by personalizing education. • Maintain and strengthen bilingual education for newly arriving immigrants. • Involve parents and the community in the struggle for social equity.
2. Prejudice Reduction: Creating opportunities for fair-minded critical thinking within different cultural points of view on contemporary and historical issues	• Question Eurocentric approaches to historical and contemporary reality. • Question the tourist approach to multicultural issues or ‘minority of the month’.
3. Reasoning multiculturally to understand the common struggle for human dignity and the logic of oppression	• Help students to critically examine and analyze differences and similarities in the historical struggle for self-determination, personal freedom and social justice. • Dialectically reason within different cultural points of view in the interest of human unity. • Understand the voices of struggle and oppression that comprise the political, social and economic reality of our human history to enhance critical consciousness.

Source: Weil, 1993, p. 212-217

The tenants outlined in the table above support Weil's argument that critical multicultural literacy "seeks to link the best features of multiculturalism, critical pedagogy and critical thinking" (1998, p. 22-23). Yet, considering that the research described in this thesis concerns the teaching of foreign languages, it is necessary to more strongly emphasize the literacy component of the term. As discussed earlier in this chapter, while critical thinking and critical literacy are not necessarily dissimilar, they also cannot be thought of as synonyms. In his definition, it is more appropriate, in the context of applied linguistics, to substitute critical thinking with critical literacy to acknowledge the important role of language. For this reason, I adapted Weil's (1993) tenets of critical multicultural literacy, endeavoring to establish some elements that come together with Lewison et. al's (2002) four dimensions of critical literacy and May's (2003) four characteristics of critical multiculturalism. Moreover, I supplemented these elements with other relevant theories taken from the fields of critical literacy and multiculturalism.

- Multiculturally read the word and the world by using a critical stance to question everyday occurrences and to begin to examine culture as a complex, contested and sociohistorical construct (CAI, 1998; FREIRE; MACEDO, 1987; KUBOTA, 2004; LEWISON; FLINT; VAN SLUYS, 2002; MAY, 2003; MCLAUGHLIN; DEVOOGD, 2004; WEIL, 1993);
- Use cultural perspective-taking as a transformative practice in order to recognize, without essentialization, the fundamental role that culture plays in shaping individual perspectives and identities (LEWISON; FLINT; VAN SLUYS, 2002; MAY, 2003; MCLAUGHLIN; DEVOOGD, 2004; THEIN; BEACH; PARKS, 2007; WEIL, 1993);
- Challenge unequal power relations by investigating the connection between culture and language and seeking to understand how these two factors influence access to and choices within sociopolitical systems (GEE, 2008; LEWISON; FLINT; VAN SLUYS, 2002; MAY, 2003; WEIL, 1993);
- Promote and sustain social and educational equity for all students by using literacy as a mechanism to increase awareness about social injustices perpetuated along cultural and ethnic lines and to involve the community in

the pursuit of justice (GORSKI, 2016; LEWISON; FLINT; VAN SLUYS, 2002, MAY, 2003; WEIL, 1993).

I believe that these four elements represent the core characteristics of critical literacy and critical multiculturalism and useful for creating a critical multicultural literacy framework. Similarly to the four dimension framework of critical literacy, these elements are not linear and do not necessarily have to be developed in this order as each one depends upon the other three. Considering that “critical literacy needs to be continually redefined in practice” (COMBER, 1993, p. 82), I found that by refining it as critical multicultural literacy, I could better meet the objectives of this research. This is due in part to the suitability of a critical multicultural approach to multicultural children’s literature, the focus of the next and final section of this chapter.

2.5 Critical Multicultural Literacy and Multicultural Literature

As discussed in the previous chapter, multicultural children’s literature can be used by teachers and educational policy planners “to destabilize the dominant culture and to correct the canons of what should be read” (MORGADO, 2010, p. 22, my translation). While multicultural literature makes visible and validates the experiences of marginalized cultural groups, not all literary texts do so in the same way. In order to provide criteria for selecting quality multicultural literature to be used in classroom settings, it is necessary to take a critical multicultural approach to examining these texts. For this reason, Botelho and Rudman (2009) argue in favor of a critical multicultural analysis of multicultural children’s literature, which is

grounded in the historical silence of underrepresented groups, keeping this history of underrepresentation at the center, while bringing the interrogation of the complexities of power relations into the fold. It is grounded in a definition of multiculturalism that affirms diversity and resists the “comfort zone of multiculturalism” by going beyond affirmation and difference, and by examining hegemony and issues of social power. Critical multicultural analysis of children’s literature examines the complex web of power in our society, the interlocking systems of race, class, and gender and how they work together. It focuses on the process of analysis rather than the simple presence of characters who are people of color (p. 89).

Performing textual analysis in this way can certainly contribute to the development of critical multicultural literacy skills of students because are able to perceive the ideologies and power systems present in the text and recognize that they are inseparable from other social

constructions such as race and gender. In theory, any multicultural literary text can be used to accomplish this task, but not all literary works stimulate critical multicultural literacy in the same way.

Bishop (1982) established three categories to evaluate the level of multiculturalism present in children's literature: Melting pot books, socially conscious books and culturally conscious books. While these categories were originally established to analyze the representation of African-Americans in children's literature in the United States, Gopalakrishnan (2011) argues that these categories can be expanded to encompass all multicultural children's literature. The first category, melting pot books,

are multicultural insofar as giving outsider, universalist perspectives that may show differences in class, personal experiences, and points of view in the content. The resolution of the story is often one that celebrates sameness as opposed to uniqueness. These books do not engage us in critical dialogue about the content (GOPALAKRISHNAN, 2011, p. 33).

Morgado (2010) explains that these books oversimplify the complexity of the issues a particular group faces and presents the group as no different than any other cultural group, a depiction which blatantly ignores reality. While these books may only superficially explore the underrepresented group, the fact that they portray characters and realities that break with the dominant culture means they cannot be completely disregarded. Literary texts in this category roughly correspond to the equality branch of liberal multiculturalism in that they focus on the universality of human experience which exists independent of cultural or ethnic backgrounds.

The second category of multicultural literature, socially conscious books, refer to texts that are "culturally generic in the sense that they may include or be about people from any background, color, race, or ethnicity, but by experiencing similar social occurrences or events that are unique to their groups, they become multicultural" (GOPALAKRISHNAN, 2011, p. 32). While these books begin to explore cultural issues in greater depth, according to Morgado (2010), they are often written from an ethnocentric point of view, showing the experience of the Other as exotic and different. Because of this emphasis on unique cultural experiences and the subsequent exotification of the minority group, it can be argued that this category roughly corresponds to the difference focus of liberal multiculturalism. Pedagogically speaking, these texts still serve a purpose in the EFL classroom in that they can be used as catalysts for critical multicultural

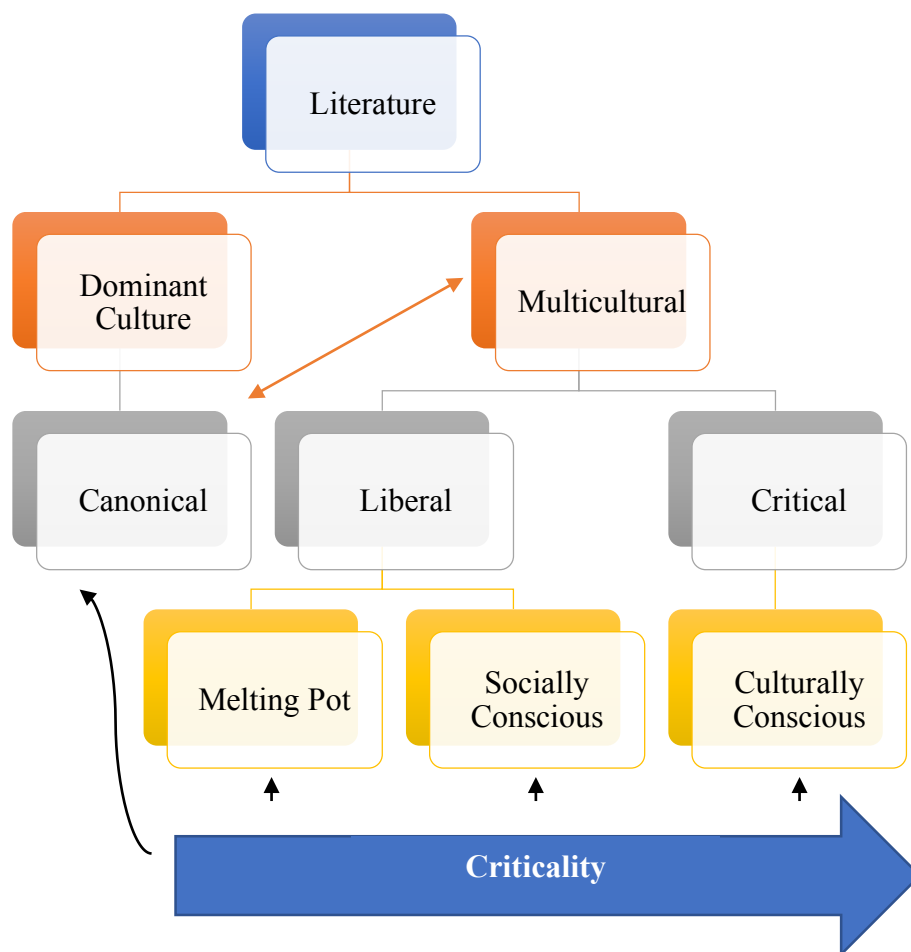
discussions that deconstruct “superficial aspects of culture, such as artifacts, festivals and customs, [that] are treated in decontextualized and trivial manners divorced from the everyday life of people and the political struggle to define cultural identity” (KUBOTA, 2004, p. 35). In this sense, socially conscious books can be thought of as falling into the difference branch of liberal multiculturalism for recognizing differences that exist on cultural and ethnic lines but that fail to probe how this difference relates to unequal power relations.

Culturally conscious books, the third category established by Bishop (1982), are those that give “insider perspectives that really teach us about specific nuances of cultural conflict that help us engage in critical dialogue in order to question larger power relations” (GOPALAKRISHNAN, 2011, p. 33). Furthermore, Gopalakishnan claims that “these books are the most multicultural, in that they talk specifically about cultural aspects that are unique to certain groups, thereby giving us a glimpse into the lives of people who are from this group” (2011, p. 32). What separates these books from socially conscious books is that they systematically and authentically represent a group, without oversimplifying the very real issues this group faces on a daily basis. Because these books are written by members of the cultural community, they perhaps are the best suited for the EFL classroom, especially when the teacher is less familiar with the culture being discussed. For these reasons, culturally conscious books can be associated with critical multiculturalism in that they foreground and contest unequal power relations and promote equity among cultural and ethnic lines.

Gopalakrishnan (2011) maintains that these categories represent distinct levels of multiculturalism, with melting pots books being the least multicultural, occupying the border between culturally dominant literature and multicultural literature. Each category represents a progression toward greater authenticity and criticality, furthering the development of a critical consciousness with the ultimate goal of recognizing and questioning power relations present in the books and promoting action in service of social justice. This is not to say, however, that it is only desirable or advantageous to read culturally conscious books and that the literary canon and the other two categories should be treated as less valuable or disregarded for not being as multicultural or less critical. This line of thinking unnecessarily undermines the worth of these literary works and goes against the principles of critical multicultural literacy. As mentioned in Chapter 1, multicultural literature does not exist in opposition to canonical literature and literary texts that are considered multicultural may simultaneously be regarded as canonical. Cai (1998) maintains that

any text can and should be read multiculturally, meaning that a text is read with the intent of enhancing multicultural awareness through the detection of the underlying cultural issues. Put differently, it is fundamental that any work of literature, independent of its categorization, be read both critically and multiculturally so as to promote equity and pluralism in the curriculum.

Figure 2 – Categories of Multicultural Literature



Source: Author's Creation

The figure shown above attempts to summarize the arguments made in the previous paragraph. Figure 2 is an adaptation of figure 1 (see page 41) in which the categories of multiculturalism have been substituted for the categories of multicultural literature. This is due to the fact that there is a great deal of similarity between the three perspectives of multiculturalism and the categorization of multicultural literature, albeit with some important differences. For example, canonical literature, or the literature of the dominant culture, should not be thought of as

equal to negative or conservative multiculturalism since these texts do not actively reject multiculturalism. Rather, canonical literature is in this position due to its maintenance of the status quo, generally privileging white, male and Christian writers and Eurocentric modes of thinking. Furthermore, the line separating canonical literature from multicultural literature is not impermeable and rigid and it is possible for a literary work to be simultaneously canonical and multicultural. On the other hand, Bishop's three categories of multicultural literature can be more closely associated with the positive side of the divide. In other words, melting pot texts correspond to the equality branch of liberal multiculturalism, socially conscious texts correspond to the difference branch of liberal multiculturalism and culturally conscious texts correspond to critical multiculturalism. It should be noted that, although Gopalakrishnan (2011) argues in favor of progressive criticality across these multicultural categories, no literary genre or category is entirely devoid of criticality. This is due to the fact that, as Jordão (2013) maintains, teaching a foreign language in the perspective of critical literacy, and by extension critical multicultural literacy, is more than just reading texts or discussing topics that show societal oppression, but rather it is the attitude of the participants involved that facilitates critical thinking. In other words, being critical requires action and the texts themselves do not confer critical thinking skills. In this sense, any category of multicultural literature or canonical literature can be used to promote critical multicultural literacy as long as the teacher and the students take action to achieve this objective.

It is undeniable that multicultural children's literature is an excellent impetus for critical multicultural literacy in the EFL classroom. In order for texts belonging to this category to promote critical multicultural literacy, it falls upon both the teacher and the student to act in such a way that they are able to recognize how power structures shape the representation of the cultural group in question. Specifically, Esau (2014) claims that "successful integration of multicultural literature starts with the classroom teacher. The teacher must introduce learners to concepts of justice, fairness, equality and living in harmony with others who might not have similar backgrounds or even ideas" (p. 71). Thus, the introduction of multicultural children's literature must coincide with the introduction of the principles of critical multicultural literacy. For the teacher to be able to accomplish this task, it is necessary that their education and pre-service training programs reflect the same concern for multicultural literature and critical multicultural literacy.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I endeavored to provide an overview of the principal theories that I used to ground my research. Due to the inherent similarities and educational objectives between critical literacy and critical multiculturalism, I believe that, for the purposes of this research, it is more appropriate to combine them into critical multicultural literacy. When I began my research, I discovered a dearth of studies investigating how multicultural children's literature can be used to promote critical multicultural literacy in the EFL classroom. As a result, I adapted the theories outlined in this chapter in order to plan my research, seeking to use texts that made the stories of under-represented groups visible and to address relevant questions and issues with both the teachers and their students.

In the next chapter I present my research methodology, including my rationale for structuring the mini-course and the selection of multicultural children's books based upon the principles of critical multicultural literacy. Furthermore, I describe the research site, the participants and data generation methods.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

“The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react.”

- Gloria Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 79

In this chapter, I describe my research methodology and data collection methods through an overview of qualitative research and its various approaches, focusing on case studies of an ethnographic nature. In an effort to recognize my biases as a researcher and clarify my position as the researcher, I present my stance before proceeding to a detailed explanation of my research questions and design. In accordance with the principles of qualitative research, I endeavor to provide a thorough description of my rationale, illustrating my research development and justifying my methodological choices. Finally, I present some important limitations of the research design and data collection process that are necessary to more fully comprehend the participants and their realities.

3.1 Qualitative Research

According to Croker (2009), qualitative research can be thought of as an umbrella term that encompasses a number of research methodologies, approaches, techniques and data collection methods. The field of qualitative research, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe, has passed through numerous epistemological and ontological shifts and phases over the course of its existence. While these perspectives are still present today, the current phase, the “fractured future”, aligns well with the objectives of this research. In the “fractured future” moment, “the social sciences and the humanities become sites for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom, and community” (DENZIN; LINCOLN, 2005, p. 3). Moreover, the authors assert that qualitative research must seek a connection with “the hopes, needs, goals, and promises of a free democratic society” (p. 3). In this way, it may be argued that qualitative research can be an ideal methodology for studies with critical approaches seeking to address issues of inequality and social injustice.

While qualitative research may be influenced by different theories and may depart from different ontological and epistemological standpoints, in practice, it seeks to comprehend social practices and processes through data collection in naturalistic settings, examining the phenomenon in question through interpretative analysis (CROKER, 2009). In the field of applied linguistics, where this research is grounded, qualitative research often seeks to make sense of how language is learned and used by both students and teachers in a variety of sociocultural situations, including but not limited to, the classroom, the home or the workplace (DUFF, 2008). Moreover, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005),

Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives. Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand (p. 3-4).

This multiplicity of data collection methods and research techniques helps to guarantee a rich and contextualized understanding by examining a phenomenon through multiple angles and perspectives. In this way, subjectivity and diversity are key components of qualitative research, meaning that the individuals involved in study (researcher, participant, or other observer) may view and interpret the findings differently (DUFF, 2008). For this reason, it is imperative that the researcher utilizes a vast array of data collection methods so as to maximize the documentation of different perspectives, as well as enabling the triangulation of the findings “in order to produce converging or diverging observations and interpretations” (DUFF, 2008, p. 30). Furthermore, the triangulation of data can be a useful strategy to cope with the enormous volumes of information that qualitative research produces. In sum, qualitative research foregrounds the study of social phenomenon in context through interpretive materials and practices whose analysis can provide greater understanding of the phenomenon in question.

Based on the aforementioned characteristics and considering that the research described in this thesis seeks a greater understanding of the ways in which multicultural children’s literature can promote critical multicultural literacy in the EFL classroom, it is appropriate that its methodology is of a qualitative nature. Yet, as numerous authors mention (NUNAN, 1992; DENZIN & LINCOLN, 2005; DUFF, 2008; CROKER, 2009), there are a plethora of qualitative

approaches and the choice of one, or a combination of many, depends on the event being investigated and the objectives of the researcher. After careful consideration, it was determined that a case study of an ethnographic nature was the most appropriate methodological approach for this research. In the following section, I define and describe case study research in greater detail while simultaneously addressing how it can acquire ethnographic characteristics.

3.1.1 Case Study Research

A singular all-encompassing definition of case study research is difficult to achieve, but it may be thought of as a methodological approach that seeks “to gain a thorough understanding of [a] phenomenon being studied, of which the case is an exemplar” (DUFF, 2014, p. 5). Similarly, Nunan (1992) conceptualizes a case study as an “instance in action” whereby the researcher “selects an instance from the class of objects and phenomena [they are] investigating and investigates the way this instance functions in context” (p. 75). In an attempt to summarize the various definitions of the case study, Duff (2008) states that “most definitions of case study highlight the ‘bounded’, singular nature of the case, the importance of context, the availability of multiple sources of information or perspectives on observations, and the in-depth nature of analysis” (p.22). These characteristics are apparent in Hitchcock and Hughes’ (1995, p. 317) list of case study features:

- A concern with the rich and vivid description of events within the case.
- A chronological narrative of events within the case.
- An internal debate between the description of events and the analysis of events.
- A focus upon particular individual actors or groups of actors and their perceptions.
- A focus upon particular events within the case.
- The integral involvement of the researcher in the case.
- A way of presenting the case which is able to capture the richness of the situation.

The case study as a research approach is broad and unstandardized, and since its design can vary greatly based on the case being investigated, the qualities listed above may be useful in designing a study and determining which methods and tools are most appropriate to collect data. Furthermore, because the flexible nature of case studies inherently relies upon an array of data

collection techniques, the selection of one or more of these techniques depends on the researcher's objectives (HOOD, 2009).

Various authors (DUFF, 2008; HOOD, 2009; NUNAN, 1992) caution that case studies and ethnography, although similar, are not synonyms and therefore should not be confused. Duff (2008) asserts that

one main difference between case study and ethnography is that, whereas the former focuses on the behaviors or attributes of individual learners or other individuals/entities, the latter aims to understand and interpret the behaviors, values, and structures of collectivities or social groups with particular reference to the **cultural** basis for those behaviors and values (p. 34, emphasis in the original).

In other words, while case study research is more narrow and individual, ethnographic research tends to be much broader, investigating groups and emphasizing the fundamental role of culture during the data collection and analysis phases (HOOD, 2009). Yet, in applied linguistics, “because case study research seeks to provide a thorough documentation and exploration of the phenomenon under investigation, it can be important to examine the interplay of linguistic, social, **cultural**, political, and affective dimensions of experience and performance” (DUFF, 2014, p. 5, my emphasis). In this sense, depending upon the phenomenon being investigated and the research aims, a case study may take on ethnographic qualities in order to provide a more detailed analysis and fulfill its objectives.

Using Duff's (2008) quote about the difference between case study and ethnography and considering the primary objective of the research described in this thesis, I considered a case study of an ethnographic nature to be a suitable approach. Not only did I seek to document the teachers' and students' attitudes and behaviors toward using multicultural children's literature in the EFL classroom, I also strove to understand and interpret them. For this reason, my data collection strategies involved document analysis in order to better understand the reality of my research context as well as the underlying forces affecting the teaching and learning of foreign languages through literary means. Furthermore, my research involved observation manifested in meticulously written field notes, questionnaires, introspective reports and analysis of the material produced by the students during their involvement with literature. All of these methods emphasized cultural processes and as such, according to Duff (2014), my research can be thought of as a qualitative case study with ethnographic qualities.

3.2 Researcher Stance

In qualitative research, due to the primacy of the researcher, “it is important for researchers to be constantly aware and systematically reflect on their own personal identity and impact on the participants and research setting” (CROKER, 2009, p. 11). Over the course of the data collection period, I was simultaneously a cultural outsider and insider. Having been born and raised in the United States, I was therefore not a member of the same society as my research participants and, despite having learned a great deal about Brazilian culture during the past four years, there are still small cultural nuances that I fail to grasp. Conversely, because the majority of the books used in the mini-course were specific to the culture and history of the United States, I was a cultural insider as the culture and history of my country were reflected in the pages of the books. As a result, during the class observations in the second phase of data collection, I took special care to not let my status as a cultural insider and native English speaker overshadow the work of the teacher in the classroom. Allowing my presence in the classroom to dominate would have undermined the credibility of my data and compromised my objective of understanding how the attitudes and actions of public school English teachers and their students promote critical multicultural literacy through work with multicultural children’s literature.

Hood (2009) contends that the researcher’s “role must be made transparent, [their] bias confronted, [their] agenda and beliefs explicitly stated, and the precise nature of [their] interaction with the study’s participants meticulously described” (p. 71). As a researcher, teacher and practitioner of critical multicultural literacy, I heeded Locke’s (2010) warning that “while [critical literacy] espouses pupil empowerment as a goal, in practice it may be the ideological axes of teacher that are heard grinding away in classrooms. A critical literacy teacher can still be authoritarian rather than authoritative” (p. 95). As a result, I was cognizant of my own voice as a teacher, researcher and observer and I sought to subtly encourage the research participants to question the ordinary, consider multiple perspectives, dialogue about sociopolitical issues all in the pursuit of social justice. Furthermore, because critical multicultural literacy recognizes the contested nature of meanings, that language and discourse are never neutral and inherently imbued with power relations, I tried to be aware of how my biases and worldviews manifested themselves in my words and actions to not overshadow the participants’ views.

3.3 Research Design

Having decided upon an ethnographic case study as the most appropriate research approach, the next logical step was to determine the boundaries of the study in terms of the participants and the research context. As previously mentioned, because of the lack of attention given to literature in Brazilian educational public policies and literature's subsequent exclusion from pre-service teacher education programs, it was decided that with high school English teachers at public schools in the context of continuing education. Additionally, the research and the data collection were divided into two stages. The first stage comprised a mini-course that sought to contribute to the continuing education of English teachers by discussing the ways in which multicultural children's literature can be incorporated into the EFL classroom with a critical multicultural literacy orientation. For the second stage, one mini-course participant was selected and accompanied as they carried out the activity elaborated during the mini-course, based upon a multicultural children's book of their choosing.

The decision to give preference to high school (*ensino médio*) students was twofold. First, of the Brazilian public policies analyzed, the OCEM provides the theoretical underpinnings necessary to incorporate multicultural children's literature into the English curriculum in the perspective of critical literacy and critical multiculturalism. As previously stated, this is due to the document's foundations in the new literacies and its emphasis on socially transformative teaching, looking to educate students who are able to freely and independently exercise their citizenship. Second, by working with high school aged students, this research seeks to invalidate the false notion that adolescents are too mature for children's books and are therefore unlikely to be interested in reading them.

Due to my previous experience teaching English in the project *Continuação Colaborativa* (ConCol)⁷, I entered into contact with the coordinator in order to ask for permission to offer a mini-course about using multicultural children's literature to teach English as part of the project's regularly scheduled activities. Besides my previous involvement with this project, the decision was made to work with ConCol due to its emphasis on working predominantly with public school English teachers at both the primary and secondary levels in the context of continuing education.

⁷ Website of the Project (in Portuguese):
<http://150.164.100.248/CMS/index.asp?pasta=concol&path=2013224161758.asp&title=Apresenta%E7%E3o%20do%20Projeto&id=57> Access on Oct. 17th, 2016

Furthermore, ConCol is loosely structured because of its focus on collaboration, conversation and continuance and, therefore, is ideally suited to a mini-course whose objective is to contribute to the continuing education of public school English teachers. Upon receiving the enthusiastic confirmation of the project's coordinator, I began to elaborate the mini-course's syllabus. The mini-course consisted of six classes, combining both theory and practice with the ultimate goal of the participants creating activities based on multicultural children's literature. At the end of the mini-course, one participant was selected for accompaniment and observation so as to gain a better understanding of the process.

3.3.1 Mini-course Participants

To better understand the teachers participating in the mini-course, the participants were given an initial questionnaire that sought important background information concerning their current and previous experiences as English teachers, their personal and professional experiences using children's literature, their understandings of children's and multicultural literature and their attitudes toward using children's literature in the EFL classroom. The questionnaire was given at the beginning of the first class of the mini-course and was responded to by twelve teachers. The results of the biographical and background sections of the questionnaire are summarized in the following table.

Table 4 – Summary of Mini-course Participants

Pseudonym	School	Grades Taught ⁸	Years of Experience as an English Teacher
Bruno	Public (City) ; Language Institute	Ensino Fundamental II ; Varied levels at the language institute.	5-10 years
Maria	Public (State)	Ensino Médio	More than 15 years
Paula	Private	Ensino Fundamental II ; Ensino Médio	10-15 years
Juliana	Public (State)	Ensino Fundamental II	More than 15 years
Ana	Public (State)	Ensino Fundamental II ; Ensino Médio	10-15 years

⁸ Comparing the equivalency of grades between the Brazilian public school system and the public school system in the United States, Ensino Fundamental I corresponds to the 1st through 5th grades, Ensino Fundamental II corresponds to the 6th through 9th grades and Ensino Médio corresponds to the 10th through 12th grades.

Isadora	Retired – Used to teach in a public school and a language institute.	Other: Private tutor for children, teenagers and adults	More than 15 years
Fernanda	Public (State)	Ensino Fundamental II ; Ensino Médio	5-10 years
Karina	Public (City)	Ensino Fundamental II	1-5 years
Matheus	Private	Ensino Fundamental II	5-10 years
Veronica	Public (State)	Ensino Fundamental II	10-15 years
Laura	Public (City and State)	Ensino Fundamental II	5-10 years
Carla	Private	Ensino Fundamental I ; Ensino Fundamental II	1-5 years

Concerning their personal and professional experiences using multicultural children's literature and their attitudes toward using literary texts in the EFL classroom, the following information was gathered.

- When asked whether children's literature had been used in their elementary, middle or high school classrooms, eleven responded affirmatively. Furthermore, ten of the eleven indicated that children's literature was only used in Portuguese classes. One participant responded that children's books were used in both Portuguese and English classes.
- Concerning the teaching of children's literature in their pre-service teacher training programs, the majority (nine) of participants answered that children's literature was neither used nor taught. One participant responded that while children's literature was absent from the curriculum, literature for adults was present in the course. The remaining three responded affirmatively.
- In response to whether or not they currently read children's literature, three participants responded affirmatively. In a follow-up question asking for them comment on the reading contexts, all three answered that they read children's literature for educational purposes and for potential use in the classroom.
- Eight of the twelve participants responded that they currently use children's literature in some capacity in their classrooms.

As a result of this questionnaire, it is possible to see the heterogeneity of participant experiences, not only in terms of teaching contexts and experience but also in terms of exposure to and work with children's literature. Furthermore, it is possible to ascertain that the majority of the participants have received little formal instruction using children's literature prior to the mini-course. Interestingly, despite this lack of formal instruction, the majority of the participants actively use children's literature in their classrooms. In other words, children's literature is already being used to teach English which, consequently, indicates a potential opening for a more systematic teaching of children's literature both in teacher education programs and in the EFL classroom. This data, as well as other data not presented here, will be examined and discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

3.3.2 Mini-course

As previously mentioned, due to the omission of literature in Brazilian public educational policies, resulting in its scarcity in teacher licensure courses, it was decided that the first step in the research process would be to offer a mini-course to public school English teachers discussing how multicultural children's literature can be used in their classrooms. The mini-course presented a brief overview of the theoretical foundations of critical literacy and critical multiculturalism with the aim of stimulating conversations about their place in the English language curriculum in Brazilian schools and how to use multicultural children's literature within these perspectives. The participants also discussed how multicultural children's literature can contribute to the furthering the discussion about the importance of providing multicultural education in Brazil. Finally, as the mini-course was both theoretical and practical, it culminated in the elaboration of activities based on multicultural children's books and grounded in the theories reviewed. In total, six three-hour classes were planned as a part of the mini-course, with the possibility of additional meetings if required. Originally, five of the six meetings were to be held in March and April of 2016, with the final meeting, in which the participants present and reflect on the activities they produced, occurring during the last week of May. Due to unforeseen complications, which are explained in greater detail in the limitations section of this chapter, the mini-course began on March 18th, 2016 and finished on June 17th, 2016.

During the planning stages of the mini-course, I sought to incorporate the criteria established by Davila and Souza (2013). The authors (2013, p. 1217, my translation) recommend that teacher educators do the following:

- Provide plentiful opportunities for teachers to read children's literature about controversial topics in continuing or in-service education programs.
- Help teachers to question their own criteria for selecting children's literature.
- Make sure the teachers have the necessary cultural knowledge to critically interact with a multicultural children's book.
- Ensure that the teachers continue developing their identities as critical readers and as culturally responsive educators through children's literature about controversial topics.

My rationale for using these criteria was that, upon the completion of the mini-course, the participants might feel more comfortable and prepared for dealing with potential debate arising from activities based on one of the books used in. Table 5 presents a summary of the content of each class as well as a justification for this subject matter.

Table 5 – Summary of Mini-course

Class Topic	Date	Content
1 – Children's Literature in the English Language Classroom	March 18 th , 2016	Description – Discussion of the importance and utility of using children's literature for all age levels in the EFL classroom. Initial questionnaire and participant informed consent form distributed. Justification – Present and contextualize the research, explain its motivations and its significance. Understand better the participants' past experiences with (multicultural) (children's) literature.

2 – Critical Literacy and Foreign Language Education	April 1 st , 2016	Description – Define and discuss critical literacy and the ways in which it fits with children’s literature in the EFL classroom. Justification – Due to the OCEM’s theoretical foundations in New Literacies studies coupled with multicultural literature’s propensity for promoting critical literacy, it is important to familiarize the participants with critical literacy theory.
3 – Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education	April 8 th , 2016	Description – Discussion of the importance of using children’s literature of a multicultural nature as well as the importance of using a multicultural approach to the teaching of English in Brazilian schools. Justification – Brazil is a multicultural and multiracial country whose social institutions continue to perpetuate social inequalities on racial, gender and socioeconomic lines. Fostering critical multicultural education through work with multicultural literature can help to break down these barriers. This is especially important given that many public-school students are members of at least one marginalized group.
4 – Lesson Planning Workshop 5- Lesson Planning Workshop	May 13 th , 2016 June 3 rd , 2016	Description – Workshop about how to create activities based on multicultural children’s literature. Special attention is devoted to criteria for the selecting quality multicultural literature. Justification – Given the lack of attention devoted to literature in teacher licensure programs, it can be argued that few teachers feel sufficiently prepared to work with literature in the EFL classroom. For this reason, it is necessary to provide strategies and suggestions for lesson planning based on multicultural children’s literature.

6 – Presentation of Activities and Reflection	June 17 th , 2016	Description – Students present their activities using multicultural children’s literature. Justification – In keeping with ConCol’s collaborative spirit, by sharing and presenting their activities, the participants may collectively discuss, critique and propose solutions for potential problems.
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In the first meeting of the mini-course, the importance and utility of using multicultural children’s literature to teach English to students of all ages was discussed. I presented an overview of the mini-course, including my motivations, and I invited the teachers to participate in the research, distributing the informed consent form. Furthermore, in this meeting, the teacher-participants responded to a questionnaire about their previous experiences with children’s literature, attitudes about children’s literature and knowledge of about critical literacy and critical multiculturalism. Finally, at the end of the class, the children’s books being used in the course were shown to the participants so that they could begin to decide which books they would like to use to plan their activities. These books are presented and summarized in greater detail in table 3.

The second mini-course session was devoted to defining critical literacy, reviewing its theoretical underpinnings and a discussion about its place in the EFL classroom. Sample activities, both of my own creation as well as others I encountered during the literature review process, were presented and analyzed by the teachers to see how multicultural children’s books can be used to promote critical multicultural literacy.

In the third class, the concept of critical multiculturalism was addressed so as to start a conversation about the importance of using a critical multicultural approach to the teaching of English in Brazilian public schools. The teachers also debated about the benefits of using multicultural literature, attempting to define this literary category and establishing their own criteria for deciding whether or not a text can be considered multicultural. More formal strategies for evaluating multicultural literature were presented during the lesson planning workshop in the fourth and fifth classes. These criteria are explained in greater detail in the next section.

The fourth and fifth meetings were lesson planning workshops to provide the teachers with some strategies for selecting quality multicultural literature and for planning lessons based on multicultural children’s books. At this point in the mini-course, each participant had read and was familiar with each of the eleven books made available to them. As a large group, the teachers

brainstormed potential activities and lessons for each book in order to help other undecided participants. As a part of the workshop, I met with each participant individually to talk with them about their selection and their ideas for an activity, answering any questions they might have. Each participant was to design a sequence of up to four activities that would be carried out over the course of four fifty minute classes, the typical length of an English class in Brazilian public schools. The activities should promote the development of at least two language skills (speaking, reading, listening or writing), have at least one grammatical focus and should incentivize the students' creativity in some way. Finally, the assignments should be grounded in the theory of critical multicultural literacy, aiming to further the students' social awareness.

In the last meeting of the mini-course, each participant would present their ideas for lessons to the others for comments, critiques and suggestions, in keeping with ConCol's collaborative spirit. At the end of the class, there was time for reflection about future work with multicultural children's and what can be done to increase the viability and success of literature based activities in Brazilian public schools. The end of the class consisted of a conversation about the mini-course with the participants commenting on its weak and strong points and whether or not similar courses should be offered to a wider audience.

The next two sections are devoted to summarizing the criteria presented in the mini-course for evaluating the multicultural qualities of a literary text as well as for presenting the corpus of multicultural books I made available to the teacher-participants. Finally, at the end of this chapter, some important limitations and issues regarding the mini-course are discussed.

3.3.3 Criteria for Selecting Books

A fundamental aspect of the research design was the establishment of some criteria for selecting multicultural children's literature, especially when the teacher is not familiar with the culture being represented. Using a number of academic texts (YOKOTA, 1993; LANDT, 2006; GOPALAKRISHNAN, 2010), I compiled a list of the main criteria for the teachers participating in the mini-course, which we then used in the workshops to evaluate the books I made available to them. Table 6 presents a summary of the principal criteria for determining the quality of multicultural children's books.

Table 6 – Summary of Criteria for Evaluating Multicultural Children’s Books

Summary of Criteria for the Selection of Multicultural Children’s Literature according to LANDT, 2006 and YOKOTA, 1993	Sample Verification Questions (adapted from GOPALAKRISHNAN, 2010, p. 39 ⁹)
I. Cultural Accuracy: Cultural Accuracy can be thought of as the most important factor when determining the quality of a multicultural text. In fact, Yokota (1993) considers it to be an umbrella term that encompasses all other criteria. Cultural accuracy refers to the portrayal of a specific group in a culturally congruent way, thus reflecting the core values and beliefs of the group in question. This includes not only physical aspects of a culture such as clothing, food and music but also intangible aspects such as speech patterns and relationships.	• Which cultural group is being represented? • What do I already know about this cultural group? • Who is the author? Who is the illustrator? Are they cultural insiders or outsiders? • What qualifies the author to write about this topic/cultural group? • Is cultural accuracy reflected in the illustrations, characterization and the story line?
II. Richness in Cultural Diversity and Details The portrayal of a culture occurs through the subtle and natural use of cultural details to explore cultural variations and distinctions that would otherwise be difficult to perceive. Furthermore, cultures should not be represented homogenously nor stereotypically, but rather in a way that highlights diversity of the cultural group.	• Are the characters multifaceted and complex? • Do the illustrations stereotype the characters or culture in any way? • Are the characters and/or the culture presented in a way that shows diversity and multidimensionality? • Is the plot and setting believable? Will the reader think this story is true and realistic?

⁹ Gopalakrishnan adapted her verification questions from the brochure “Ten Quick Ways to Analyze Children’s Books for Racism and Sexism”, created by the Council on Interracial Books for Children and available at <http://www.chil-es.org/10ways.pdf> access on Nov. 19th, 2016.

III. Authenticity of Dialogue and Relationships Oral traditions of a culture are accurately reflected in the speech patterns of the narrator and characters. Words not belonging to the text's publication language are both spelled and used correctly.	• Are the adjectives used to describe the character and/or culture “loaded”, meaning they carry overtly negative connotations? • Do the characters speak in authentic, non-stereotyped ways? • How are the family relationships shown?
IV. Realistic Representation of Social Issues The most important social issues faced by a cultural group are foregrounded in the plot. These social issues should be shown realistically and accurately so as to avoid oversimplification, thus encouraging the reader to make informed opinions.	• How is the social problem presented, developed and resolved? • Are the social issues shown in the context of social injustice? • Are the social oppressions presented as unsolvable (that's just the way it is) or are they explained? • What are the characters' attitudes toward the social oppressions in the text? Passive acceptance or active resistance? • Are benevolent whites necessary to solve the problems facing the minority group?
V. Purposeful Inclusion of Minorities Characters, no matter their degree of importance, are shown as unique individuals, connected to and shaped by their culture. Furthermore, minority characters are leaders in their communities, capable of solving their own problems not dependent on or subservient to white characters in the text. Minorities are not included for the purpose of complying with quotas, avoiding tokenism.	• Do the illustrations depict minority characters as similar to the dominant culture? In other words, are they shown as the same but different? • Do the minority characters look all the same in the illustrations? • How are the minority characters shown in the text? Are they shown as leaders or as subservient to whites?

Determining Cultural Accuracy/Authenticity

I. Specific Cultural Literary Awards

When one is unsure of the cultural accuracy or authenticity of a text or does not know where to begin, it can be useful to consult lists of books that have one specific cultural awards. These awards identify and honor literary texts that authentically portray various underrepresented cultures and/or groups (LANDT, 2006).

Award¹⁰	Group Represented
Amelia Bloomer Award	Feminist
American Indian Youth Literature Award	Native Americans (of the United States)
Américas Book Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature	Latin America, the Caribbean and Latinxs in the United States
Arab-American Book Award	Arab-Americans
Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature	Asian/Pacific Americans
Batchelder Award	Books originally published in another language and translated to English for publication in the United States
Coretta Scott King Book Awards	African-Americans
Jane Addams Children's Book Awards	Children's books that promote peace, social justice, world community, racial and gender equality
Lambda Literary Award	LGBTQ
Pura Belpré Award	Latino/Latina
Schneider Family Book Awards	Disability
Sydney Taylor Book Awards	Jewish

¹⁰ Adapted from the Michigan State University Library Guide for Multicultural and Diverse Children's Literature, available at <http://libguides.lib.msu.edu/c.php?g=96613&p=626686> access on Nov. 3, 2016.

Determining Cultural Accuracy/Authenticity

II. Websites Devoted to Multicultural Literature¹¹

In the technological age, a number of websites exist that catalogue or list quality multicultural literature in order to facilitate the selection process (LANDT, 2006).

- A World of Difference Recommend Multicultural and Anti-bias Books for Children:
 - Maintained by the Anti-Defamation League, this searchable catalogue lists books by topic, reading level and suggested age level. A broadly focused database that emphasizes bias reduction, diversity enhancement and social justice.
- The Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC):
 - This comprehensive center is located at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The center continuously updates its website, providing a selection of quality children's and young adult literature, thematically categorized.
- Database of Award-winning Children's Literature:
 - Online database compiled and indexed by Librarian Lisa Bartle. Searches can be made based on suggested age, setting, historical period, ethnicity/nationality of protagonist or tale, language, format, genre, presence of multiculturalism, gender of the protagonist among other categories.
- International Children's Digital Library (ICDL):
 - Resource provided by the University of Maryland that freely and legally makes electronic versions of children's literature available. All copies are available in their original publication languages.
- Multicultural and Diverse Children's Literature Library Guide:
 - Resource made available by the Michigan State University Library. Information about identifying quality multicultural children's literature is provided.

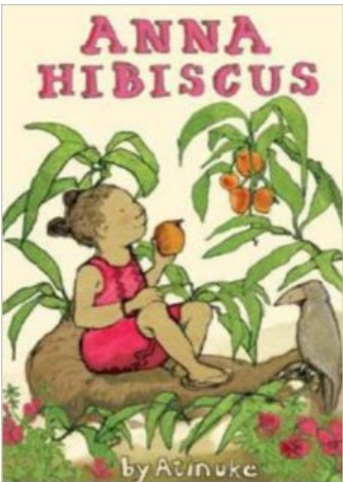
3.3.4 Multicultural Children's Books Corpus

One of my primary concerns during the planning stages of this research was legal access to a sufficient number of books that could be used by the teachers in the mini-course as well as by their students during the activity development stage. After careful consideration, and due to financial constraints, I determined that the most appropriate strategy was to make available, within the permissions afforded by the library, electronic versions of children's books that I had selected from the digital collection of my local public library in the United States. I would, however, like to register my concern about the relative lack of access to quality multicultural children's literature as well as the financial difficulties associated with acquiring these texts. This concern was frequently cited by the teachers in the mini-course as one of the greatest impediments to using literature in the EFL classroom in Brazilian schools.

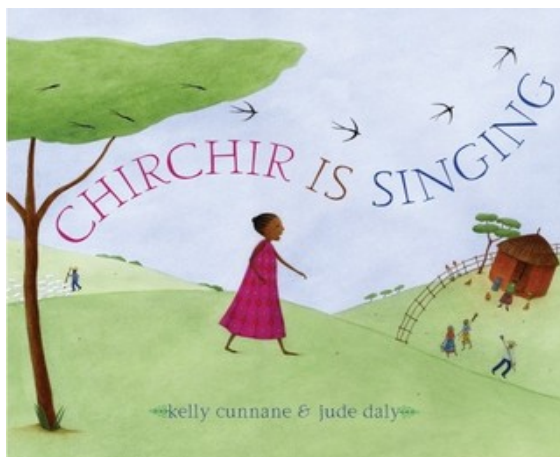
¹¹ Adapted from the Michigan State University Library Guide for Multicultural and Diverse Children's Literature, available at <http://libguides.lib.msu.edu/c.php?g=96613&p=626686> access on Nov. 3, 2016.

Below, in table 7, I have included the titles of the eleven books made available to the teachers participating in the mini-course. I have highlighted the book *The Story of Ruby Bridges* as it was the most frequently used book by the research participants in planning their activities, including by Maria, the teacher I accompanied after the conclusion of the mini-course. Other books that were used by participants to plan their activities were *The Last Stop on Market Street* and *Drum Dream Girl*.

Table 7 – Multicultural Children’s Books used in the Mini-course

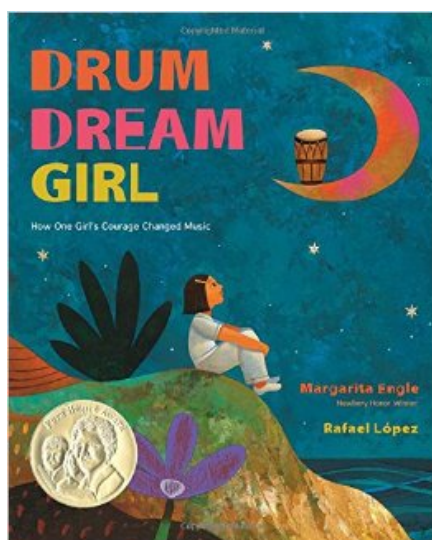
Book	Summary
<i>Anna Hibiscus</i> Written by: Atinuke Illustrated by: Lauren Tobia  The book cover for 'Anna Hibiscus' features a young girl with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a pink sleeveless top, sitting on a large, gnarled tree branch. She is holding a small orange fruit. The background is a lush green landscape with large leaves and more orange fruits. The title 'ANNA HIBISCUS' is written in large, bold, pink letters at the top. At the bottom, it says 'by Atinuke'.	<i>Anna Hibiscus</i> is an illustrated chapter book that tells the story of young Anna Hibiscus and her large and diverse family. Each chapter humorously tells a different story and each story focuses on the importance of family and issues common in the lives of African children living in contemporary urban environments. Anna Hibiscus, the title character of the book is a biracial girl (her father is a Black African and her mother is a White Canadian) whose middle-class family lives in a in a large African metropolis. Although Atinuke, the Nigerian born author, intentionally chooses to not name the country, this book offers a positive portrayal and affirmation of African identities that breaks with the dominant narrative present in the media. Finally, <i>Anna Hibiscus</i> is included in the Cooperative Children’s Book Center’s (CCBC) list entitled “50 Multicultural Books Every Child Should Know”.

Chirchir is Singing
 Written by: Kelly Cunnane
 Illustrated by: Jude Daly



Chirchir is Singing takes place in rural Kenya and is the story of Chirchir, a young Kalenjin girl who is having trouble finding her place in her family. The story is lyrical and poetic and its tempo increases as Chirchir begins to understand her role in the family, despite some early difficulties. While the author is not Kenyan by birth, she has lived and taught for a significant time in Kenya. Furthermore, she makes frequent and correct use of Kalenjin and Swahili words throughout the text, which she compliments with a glossary at the end of the book. Additionally, the CCBC commended the quality of the story line and the illustrations as accurate representations of Kalenjin culture. Finally, the Association of Library Service to Children (ALSC) and the CCBC included this book in their 2012 Notable Children's Book List.

*Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage
 Changed Music*
 Written by: Margarita Engle
 Illustrated by: Rafael López

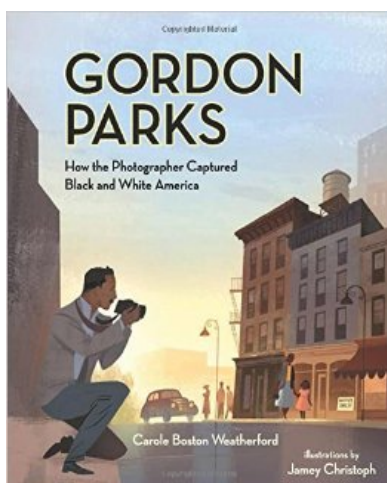


Drum Dream Girl is inspired by the true story of Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, a Cuban girl of Afro-Chinese descent who broke Cuba's social taboo against female drummers. This inspiring story teaches to never give up on one's dreams, even in the face of intense resistance. Winner of over 10 awards for multicultural literature, including the 2016 Pura Belpré Award for excellence in Latinx Literature, *Dream Drum Girl* problematizes pervasive and unjustifiable gender inequality and sexism.

*Gordon Parks: How the
Photographer Captured Black and
White America*

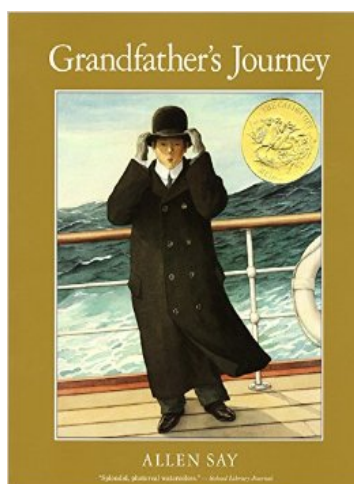
Written by: Carole Boston
Weatherford

Illustrated by: Jamey Christoph



This book tells the true story of the photographer Gordon Parks, who documented racial oppression in the United States through his photography. The author and illustrator retrace Parks' steps from his childhood Kansas to his landmark work Washington D.C. as he documented the stark racial divide that pervaded all parts of the country. True to Gordon Parks' vow to "lay racism bare", this book simply explains complex racial relations in the United States without oversimplifying them.

Grandfather's Journey
Written and Illustrated by: Allen Say

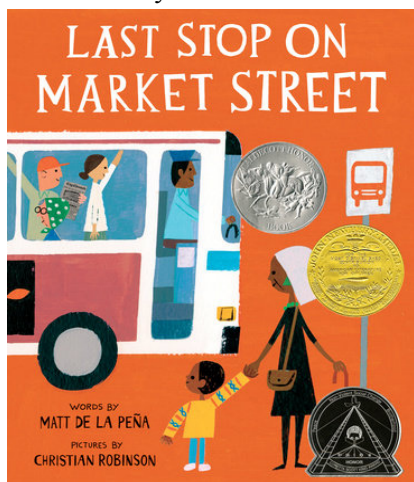


Grandfather's Journey tells the rich story of the narrator's grandfather, who immigrated from Japan to the United States at the beginning of the 20th century, ultimately returning to his native land. This book addresses issues of homesickness and identity as shown through the perspective of immigrants who feel connected to multiple countries. A recipient of the Caldecott Medal in 1993, *Grandfather's Journey* is routinely included on most lists that recognize quality multicultural literature.

Last Stop on Market Street

Written by: Matt de la Peña

Illustrated by: Christian Robinson

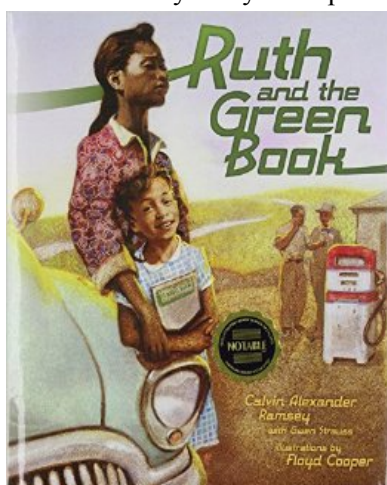


Last Stop on Market Street is the charming story of CJ who, every Sunday, takes the bus with Granny to work in a soup kitchen. CJ is a curious boy who, at every turn questions his grandmother about all sorts of topics, including poverty and social inequality. The eternal optimist, Granny answers, showing CJ that there is always beauty in the world, if you know where to look for it. *Last Stop on Market Street* won the 2016 Newbery Medal, was a 2016 Caldecott Honor Book and a 2016 Coretta Scott King Honor book, among other awards.

Ruth and the Green Book

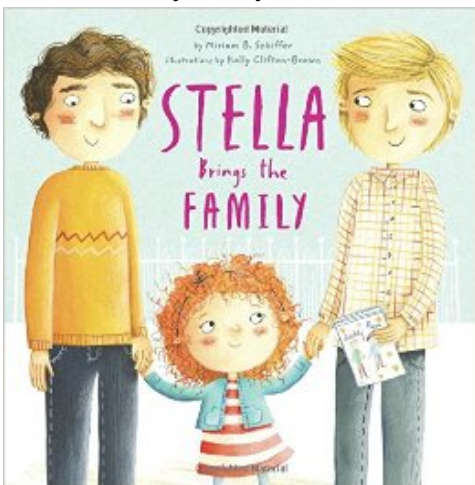
Written by: Calvin Alexander Ramsey and Gwen Strauss

Illustrated by: Floyd Cooper



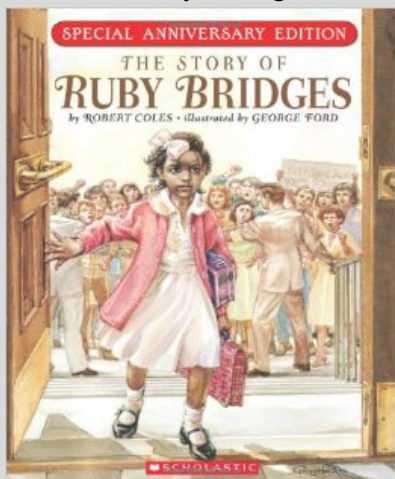
Set in the United States during the 1950s, *Ruth and the Green Book* chronicles Ruth's family's roadtrip from Chicago to Alabama. As they head further south, they continuously experience racial discrimination in the Jim Crow era south, making their journey difficult and, at times, dangerous. The book mixes fiction with the true story of the Green Book, a guide sold at southern gas stations providing African-American families with invaluable information about non-discriminatory hotels, restaurants and businesses. Recipient of the 2011 Jane Addams Children's Book Award and was included on the ALA Notable Children's Books List.

Stella Brings the Family
 Written by: Miriam B. Schiffer
 Illustrated by: Holly Clifton-Brown

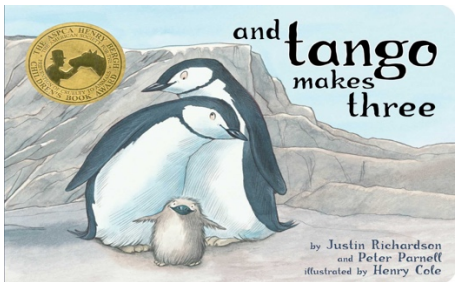
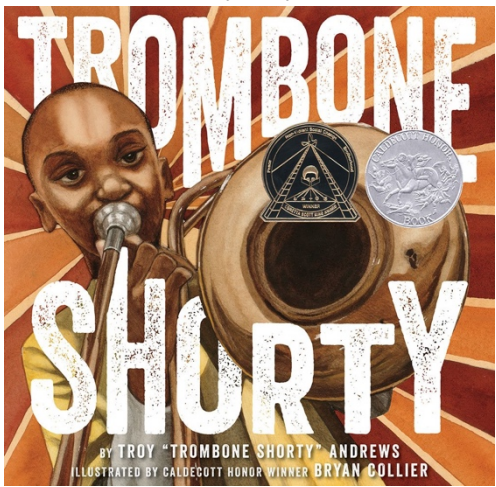


Stella Brings the Family is a heartwarming book about a young girl Stella who struggles with the decision of who to bring to her school's Mother's Day party. Stella doesn't have a mother but rather two fathers. In the end, Stella decides to bring her whole family to the party so that no one is left out. While not the most multicultural book, *Stella Brings the Family* is important for validating the experiences of the children of same-sex parents as well as children who live in "non-traditional" families.

The Story of Ruby Bridges
 Written by: Robert Coles
 Illustrated by: George Ford



The Story of Ruby Bridges is based on true events and recounts the difficulties and triumphs associated with Ruby Bridges' successful and courageous attempt at integrating New Orleans public schools in the 1960's. The book superbly treats issues of social and racial injustice and teaches about the importance of determination, courage, perseverance and tolerance.

<i>And Tango Makes Three</i> Written by: Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell Illustrated by: Henry Cole 	<i>And Tango Makes Three</i> fictionalizes the true story of Roy and Silo, two male chinstrap penguins at the Central Park Zoo in New York City, who became a couple and ended up hatching an egg and raising the chick named Tango. Although <i>And Tango Makes Three</i> has won or been a finalist for many awards including the Lambda Literary Award, it has also been highly controversial, often being censored for its focus on same-sex marriage, adoption and treating homosexuality as natural.
<i>Trombone Shorty</i> Written by: Troy Andrews Illustrated by: Bryan Collier 	<i>Trombone Shorty</i> tells the true story of Troy “Trombone Shorty” Andrews, a musical prodigy from New Orleans. He rose to fame, despite many odds, leading his own band at the age of six and is now an internationally recognized jazz musician. This is a story about the importance of following your dreams, the power of music and the rich cultural history of the city of New Orleans. <i>Trombone Shorty</i> is a 2016 Caldecott Honor Book as well as a Coretta Scott King Award Winner.

3.3.5 Teacher Accompanied

In an effort to better understand Maria’s attitudes toward using literature, especially multicultural and children’s literature, in the English classroom as well as to contextualize the research better, I asked Maria to provide some background information to help complete her profile. For the purposes of ensuring her privacy and anonymity, the name of the participant and the school where she teaches have been changed. Maria is 51 years old and has been an English teacher for more than 15 years. Maria is originally from the northeastern Brazilian state of Maranhão, having moved to Minas Gerais more than twenty years ago. She has a bachelor’s degree with a teaching certification in English, which she received more than fifteen years ago from a private Brazilian university. Since 2006, Maria had been actively engaged in continuing education

programs for language teachers, seeking to better not only her language skills but also to continually better her pedagogical practices. In the spirit of full disclosure, it is important to mention that Maria previously participated in my classes in 2013 when I was a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant (ETA) working with the ConCol program. Finally, exemplifying this commitment to continuing education, Maria, at the time of the writing of this thesis, was awaiting word about her acceptance to the Master's program in Applied Linguistics at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG).

In one of her initial reports, Maria contextualized her desire to work with literature by describing her educational journey with the English language. She states:

I don't remember my English classes in middle and high school. But, I saved my first English dictionary because it made me happy to have this dictionary. Since childhood, I've surrounded myself with books and magazines because of my own initiative and my father's encouragement, who bought me books, comic books and that English dictionary that I still have. The truth is that they didn't demonstrably teach me English. But, I did decide to enter a language school, all before going to college. But even after graduating, there was still something missing. I understood the grammar but speaking, reading and writing were skills that I still couldn't freely use. My first contact with literature in English was when I discovered these books in the library of my college and I saw my relationship with the English language progressing. I was charmed by the possibility of doing something that I always liked in the language I had chosen to teach (my translation).

In this sense, Maria recognizes the important influence that literature in English had on her language learning experience and she wants to bring this to her students in the hopes that maybe they will have a similar experience. Mentioning her work environment, she comments:

Today I work in a context of difficulties with discipline and disinterest in the majority of activities that demand concentration. We live in different times. I don't expect today's students to behave in the same way as those that I was able to involve in classes that had a common grammar focus. Even when I try to break out of this scheme, they are always stronger than me. Even planning more "interesting" classes...I have tried many times to break out of this grammar focus (my translation).

Yet, in spite of these attitudes, Maria still tried to involve literature in her classes, albeit in a superficial way. She says:

I always loved literature, in fact I have books, many books at home, a mini-library. I always took books and even comic books with Mônica in English to class, but with no

commitments. I would distribute them to those who were interested, to plant the seeds. Some took the books, but since there was no specific assignment, they just kind of hung in the balance... (my translation).

In this excerpt, it is possible to see that Maria's dedication to literature and her willingness to be a part of a research project that seeks the wider use of literature in EFL classrooms.

Finally, I felt it was important to mention that, based on my observations during my visits and conversations I had with her students, Maria is tremendously respected by her students. She is seen by many of them as one of the few teachers who cares, who dedicates themselves to their profession and someone who will go above and beyond to ensure their success. She is extremely involved in her school and her community, going so far as to invite non-students to participate in English activities, including the project with *The Story of Ruby Bridges*.

3.3.6 The Students and the School

In order to more fully comprehend the teaching realities of Maria and how they subsequently impacted her efforts to develop activities based on multicultural children's literature, it is necessary to contextualize this part of the research through a description of the school. The school where Maria works is public, belonging to the Minas Gerais state school system and is located in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Through conversations with Maria, her introspective reports and visits to the school, it was possible to understand her school context better. Speaking about the location of the school and the composition of the student body, Maria insists that

It's worth mentioning that the school community is composed of a large number of black students. Certainly, many have stories of prejudice experienced by them or those close to them. The very neighborhood where they live is known for being a "dangerous place", with many drug trafficking points. These issues come together so that some students, when they are not wearing the school uniform, are stopped and frisked by the police (my translation).

In regard to the predominant student attitudes toward learning English, Maria states the following,

For the most part, the students still resist learning English at school. They still think that grammar exercises are what make an "English lesson". Complete the task, get the points and finished (my translation).

Due to this predominant attitude, Maria initially experienced many difficulties working with literature not only from the students, but also from the school administration.

According to the 2014 school census conducted by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP), it was possible to verify the following information regarding Maria's school's infrastructure:

- There are 144 staff members at the school.
- The school receives middle and high school aged students, from the 5th grade through the 3rd year of high school (equivalent to the 12th grade in the United States).
- The school offers courses in the Adult and Juvenile Education (EJA) program, offered to individuals who did not complete their primary or secondary education. In total, there were 382 students in this program in 2014.
- In 2014 there were 1,666 students registered in the school, with 671 middle school students and 995 high school students.
- The school has a computer lab for student use complete with internet access. Additionally, it has a video room with a TV, DVD player, speakers, a projector among other multimedia equipment.
- The school also contains a library, a teacher's lounge, a kitchen, a lunch room, a patio for sports and an administrative office.

As previously mentioned, since I had experience working with Maria during my time as a Fulbright ETA, I was already familiar with her school, having visited in 2015. Furthermore, before the research period began, Maria had invited me to join the Facebook and Whatsapp groups that she uses to motivate the students to learn English.

3.3.7 Activity

Based on the orientations given over the course of the mini-course, Maria selected the book *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles to use with her students. When asked about her book selection, Maria responded that

the choice of the book is due to the fact that I have often worked with texts that focused on issues involving racism and the struggles of black individuals (my translation).

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, she highlighted the racial composition of the school and the socio-economic makeup of the neighborhood where the students live and study as other factors that influenced her decision. In this way, Maria says that working with *The Story of Ruby Bridges* can

help [her students] reflect on their problems but also show them that it is totally possible to overcome them with determination like Ruby and family (my translation).

Having made her selection, Maria then began to plan the activity she would carry out in her classroom, as outlined in table 8 below.

Table 8 – Summary of Maria’s Lesson Plan

Reading Project – <i>The Story of Ruby Bridges</i>
Objective – • Develop reading skills in English through the true story of Ruby Bridges in order to learn more about the English language and, at the same time, learn about the United States. Specific Objectives – • Integrate the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. • Learn more thoroughly the structure of the English language and diminish the degree of difficulty associated with learning the language. • Motivate the students to learn English. • Involve the students, through reading, in discussions about the topic of racism and Ruby’s experiences, helping them to form their own opinions. • Develop writing skills by answering the ten guided reading questions. • Learn new vocabulary and expressions. • Create posters to present messages, opinions and reflections about the topic of racism.
Strategies to achieve the objectives – • Motivate students to read the book through posts on Facebook and constant conversations about the benefits of reading. • Prepare a “vocabulary helper” to aid during the reading process. • Make support material easily available to all students online and at school. • Guide students during the reading process via Facebook and WhatsApp, spaces that are used to discuss matters related to school projects. • Encourage collaborative work among the students.
Evaluation – • Student evaluation will be carried out over the course of the lesson. This includes the reading process, responding to the guided reading questions and the creation of posters.

Maria began her working with *The Story of Ruby Bridges* shortly after the end of the mini-course in June. Due to the winter school vacations in July, the majority of the activity was done in August and September. My final contact with the students and visit to the school occurred on October 28th, 2016.

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Process

Originally, the data collection period was slated to start at the beginning of March of 2016 and finishing at the end of June of the same year, corresponding roughly to the first semester of the academic school year. While it was possible to begin the mini-course in March as planned, the data collection period lasted significantly longer, concluding at the end of October. Over the course of the data generation period, the following instruments and methods were used:

- Participant observation of the mini-course and direct observation of the activity in the classroom;
- Field notes stemming from both observation periods;
- Mini-course questionnaire (appendix B);
- Verbal and written reports by the teacher-participant;
- Material produced by the students as a part of the activity.

Although the mini-course and the classes observed in the second research stage were conducted primarily in the English language, there were many moments the teachers, the students and I used Portuguese. All excerpts used in this thesis that originally occurred in Portuguese are identified by the using the marking ‘my translation’. Furthermore, it can be assumed that all excerpts without this marking were made in the English language. For the purposes of maintaining accuracy, all excerpts are translated or transcribed exactly as they were spoken or written, without correcting grammar or vocabulary. In the following sections, I discuss the data collection methods in greater detail in addition to explaining the data collection process.

3.4.1 Observation and Field Notes

Observation, as a data collection strategy, is “an intuitive process that allows individuals to collect information about others by viewing their actions and behaviors in their natural

surroundings” (MCLURE, 2002, p. 5). Cowie (2009) asserts that, in applied linguistics research, observation is essential for four important reasons. First, observation permits the researcher to directly experience the reality of a teacher and their students, an experience that cannot be substituted by any other data collection strategy. Secondly, the author continues saying that classrooms and other educational settings are defined by routines, attitudes and beliefs and, by observing language learning in schools, it becomes possible to shed light on what is happening in schools and, ultimately, make sense of this new information. Thirdly, Cowie (2009) contends that observation is indispensable for data triangulation in qualitative research in applied linguistics as new perspectives on the phenomenon being observed may be obtained. Finally, as many researchers in applied linguistics are teachers themselves, they are already actively engaged in classroom observation as they endeavor to understand their realities on a daily basis. For these reasons, observation was considered to be a vital data collection method.

McClure (2002) classifies observation into two main categories: direct observation and participant observation. In applied linguistics, the first category refers to contexts in which the observer is a third-party, neither the teacher nor the student and someone who isn't inherently a part of the research context. The second category relates to research contexts wherein the researcher is simultaneously a participant and member of that specific reality, for example a teacher conducting research in their own classroom. Due to the nature of this research, teaching a mini-course and then subsequently visiting the school of one of the mini-course participants, both participant observation, in the case of the former, and direct observation, in the case of the latter, were used.

Observation as a research method in qualitative research necessitates the documentation of the experienced events, often, but not exclusively, in the form of field notes. McClure (2002) defines field notes as “direct, written observations (dialogue, impressions, or feeling) about what is occurring that contain rich, detailed information that creates a basis for the study” (p. 5). Furthermore, according to Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995), these notes should be thoroughly detailed in order to better contextualize the study, containing only information observed directly in the research site. In this sense, “careful attention to field notes prevents researchers from forming over-generalized impressions and interpretations, and allows them to describe the phenomenon or event observed more precisely” (HEIGHAM; SAKUI, 2009, p. 98). However, while field notes provide rich portrayals of the events being observed in context, they should not be thought of as

passive, chronological lists of happenings but rather “active processes of interpretation and sense-making: noting and writing down some things as ‘significant’, noting but ignoring others as ‘not significant’” (EMERSON; FRETZ; SHAW, 1995, p. 8). These decisions about what is noteworthy and non-noteworthy should be made after the period of observation is complete, during the stage in which the researcher begins to interpret the data represented in the field notes. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) argue that it is important for the researcher to devote special attention to the meticulous documentation of the observed events, people and places so that these momentary occurrences might be preserved for future analysis and study, either by themselves or other individuals.

Over the course of the research period, I utilized field notes to aid in the documentation of important occurrences. Additionally, the field notes were supplemented by audio recordings of both the meetings of the mini-course as well as the observations of the activity being carried out by Maria in her school. The intent behind the recordings, however, was not to transcribe them in their entirety, but rather to use them complete the gaps in my notes resulting from the difficulties associated with, for example, being a teacher and a researcher during the mini-course. Immediately after each mini-course session and class observation, I listened to the audio recordings, writing down any significant information or happenings that might have been overlooked or might have gone unnoticed. Finally, I used these audio recordings to selectively transcribe what I term critical moments, a term that refers to questions, comments and conversational exchanges that I deemed important in better understanding the actions and attitudes of the teachers and the students. I decided to transcribe only these critical moments as the majority of the recordings, especially those from the mini-course, were of me teaching and explaining the material and theories and were therefore not relevant to the objectives of this research.

3.4.2 Questionnaire

Generally speaking, “questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers.” (BROWN, 2001, p. 6). Furthermore, according to Dörneyi (2010), questionnaires have the potential to produce three types of data: factual, behavioral and attitudinal. Factual data refers to any question that elicits any number of demographic characteristics or background information that may be useful to understand the

phenomenon under investigation. Behavioral data is produced by questions whose objective is obtain information relating to current and previous experiences with the object of study. Finally, attitudinal data pertains to responses that indicate attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests or values regarding the phenomenon in question. Nunan (1995) and McClure (2002) assert that depending upon the desired response, the researcher will either make use of open- or closed-ended questions. These same authors further maintain that special attention must be paid when elaborating the questions so that they might be as objective as possible thus avoiding response induction and the revelation of researcher biases.

While there are a number of potential issues associated with data collection through questionnaires, there are also many benefits of its use. As McClure (2002) states, questionnaires may be simultaneously and anonymously administered to a large number of individuals, enhancing the possibility that the respondent will respond more accurately and truthfully. In terms of question types, both Nunan (1995) and McClure (2002) point out that closed-ended questions are easier to evaluate but caution that respondents might not encounter a selection that precisely matches their desired answer. Moreover, these same authors contend that open-ended questions offer the best potential for accuracy as the respondent may feel more freedom to answer in a way that better reflects what they think. For these reasons, the majority of the questions of the questionnaire were open-ended, using closed-ended questions only when more specific answers were required.

With the purpose of obtaining a more comprehensive overview of the mini-course participants, especially in relation to their previous experiences with multicultural children's literature, an initial questionnaire, in Portuguese, was administered to the mini-course participants on March 18th, 2016. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, with nineteen questions total. The first part was entitled personal identification (*identificação pessoal*), where the participants anonymously provided important demographic background information such as educational attainment and English teaching experience. The second section, experiences with children's literature (*experiências com literatura infanto-juvenil*), consisted of ten open- and closed-ended questions that sought to obtain information regarding their educational and professional experiences with (multicultural) children's literature as well as opinions and attitudes toward using children's literature in the EFL classroom. The final version of this questionnaire can be found at the end of this thesis, in Appendix B.

Before administering this questionnaire, a pilot version of the questionnaire was tested on five non-participants in an attempt to detect potential areas of concerns. The individuals who tested the pilot version indicated that wording of some of the open-ended questions could be problematic and possibly influence the answers of the respondents. These questions were subsequently modified in an effort to make them as neutral as possible. The questions that suffered modifications are shown below, in table 9.

Table 9 – Questionnaire Modifications

Original Question and Issue	Modification and Justification
1. In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge that impedes the implementation of literature in the teaching of English? - <i>Na sua opinião, qual é a maior desafio que impede a implementação da literatura no ensino de língua inglesa?</i> a. Issue – My bias as a teacher and a researcher manifests itself in this question through the presupposition that there will be challenges that make teaching English through literature difficult. Some respondents may not agree that there will be challenges.	• Modification – Divided into two questions: a. In the case of using (multicultural) children’s literature in the teaching of English, could there be challenges that impede its implementation? Explain. <i>No caso da utilização da literatura infanto-juvenil (multicultural) no ensino de inglês, poderia haver alguns desafios que impeçam a sua implementação? Explique.</i> b. In the case of using (multicultural) children’s literature in the teaching of English, could there be benefits? Explain. <i>No caso da utilização de literatura infanto-juvenil (multicultural) no ensino de inglês, poderia haver benefícios? Explique.</i> c. Justification – By splitting the original question in two and using modal verbs that express potentiality, these two questions allow the respondent to respond more freely through a consideration of both sides of the issue.
• In your words, what is multicultural literature? – <i>Nas suas palavras, o que é a literatura multicultural?</i> a. Issue – The wording of this question is imposing, potentially causing the respondent to not answer or to answer, for example, “I don’t know.”	• Modification – What do you understand by the term multicultural literature? <i>O que você entende por literatura multicultural?</i> a. Justification – The question was rephrased to be more inviting, enhancing the likelihood of a more accurate and truthful answer. Furthermore, the new question gives the impression that there is no correct answer and that a wide variety of answers are possible.

The responses obtained from this initial questionnaire proved useful to help plan and adapt the mini-course to the needs of the participants, making their involvement more advantageous. The responses to the questionnaire and the effect they had on the mini-course will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

3.4.3 Introspection and Reports

Since the research described in this thesis seeks comprehend both teacher and student attitudes and actions toward using multicultural children's literature, it was deemed appropriate to use introspective data collection techniques, such as verbal and written reports, since they "can be valuable in providing insight into the thought processes of language learners and teachers" (MCKAY, 2009, p. 220). Furthermore, according to Nunan (1992), introspection refers to "the process of observing and reflecting on one's thoughts, feelings, motives reasoning processes, and mental states with a view to determining the ways in which these processes and states determine our behavior" (p. 115). It is important to stress, however, that both McKay (2009) and Nunan (1992) state that reports, either written or oral, provide merely insights and cannot be thought of as mirrors of thought processes nor as explanations for behaviors. Nevertheless, as the activity was being carried out by the teacher-participant in her classroom, it was essential to consider her reflections and opinions regarding the activity in order to better understand her attitudes and actions.

According to McKay (2009), research participant's verbal reports in applied linguistics are sometimes criticized as they may interrupt the naturalistic research setting because it is "highly unnatural and obtrusive to verbalize one's thoughts" (p. 221). However, considering that ConCol is a program whose purpose is to encourage conversation and reflection about successful and unsuccessful activities previously carried out in the English classroom, it can be argued that this type of reflection is already a part of Maria's reality due to her active participation in the project. Additionally, preference was given to verbal and written reports instead of a written diary purely for pragmatic reasons given that Maria's high work volume, thus comprising her ability to dedicate the necessary time to the writing of a diary. Finally, a post-activity interview with Maria was not considered because

Although techniques such as surveys and interviews are effective in learning more about teachers and students and their behaviors and concerns, both of these techniques are limited in that there is often a significant time lapse between the phenomenon under focus and the data collection. Moreover, these techniques only provide researchers with what teachers and students **report** they do and think; they provide little assurance that this is what teachers and students **actually** do and think (MCKAY, 2009, p. 220, emphasis in the original).

In this way, over the course of the data collection period, three types of reports were used: verbal reports by the researcher recorded after each meeting of the mini-course, verbal reports recorded by the teacher-participant during the progression of the activity, and a final written and retrospective report written as soon as the activity was finished. It is important to stress, however, that all of these reports occurred immediately after the classes, so that the day's events were still fresh. Additionally, there was other informal correspondence via messaging and email platforms that may be considered introspective reporting, as they provided insights into the participants' thought processes. Both the participant's verbal and written reports were in Portuguese in order to make her both more comfortable and to not limit her ability to convey her thoughts and feelings about the activity.

3.4.4 Student Material

One of the objectives of Maria's activity was the creation of posters by the students, showing what they learned from reading *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. These posters, as physical academic productions, were gathered for analysis to aid in understanding the degree to which critical multicultural literacy might be present in them. Furthermore, the students prepared written reflections about working with literature and their thoughts and opinions about Ruby and her experiences. In total fifteen posters and fifteen written responses were gathered for analysis.

3.5 Methodological Limitations

While this study has the potential to make significant contributions to the field, it is important to underscore some of the limitations of the methodology that may impact the results. Perhaps the greatest limitation of the research design was the fragmentation of the mini-course. Apart from other previously scheduled activities in the ConCol calendar that affected the progression of the mini-course, there were also a number of holidays and school recesses interrupting the academic calendar over the course of the first semester of 2016. As a result, the

original course plan and syllabus underwent modifications and the mini-course lasted longer than initially planned.

Another limitation that impacted the research was the inconsistent attendance of some of the participants, arising from a number of factors. One of the main factors is that, in the words of Pastrana (2010), some of ConCol's participants are 'taxi teachers', working simultaneously in two or more schools in order to make a living. Because participation in ConCol is voluntary, some teachers may not receive authorization to participate in the meetings or they may have other activities occurring at the same time. Furthermore, not all of the teachers live in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, where the mini-course was offered, and some participants were unable to be present in every class. It is important to mention that the last mini-course class suffered particularly poor attendance, with only three participants present. Since this meeting was reserved for the presentation of activities, I emailed the teachers who were absent that day in an attempt to give them some feedback on their activities. Despite these challenges, seven of the twelve participants attended at least five of the meetings of the mini-course.

Finally, the last limitation concerns my observations of the activity being carried out in Maria's classroom. Originally, I intended to observe as many classes as possible, in an effort to more fully understand the process by which multicultural children's literature can favor the critical multicultural literacy in the EFL classroom. However, due to delays in the mini-course and unforeseen difficulties associated with the activity, it wasn't possible for me to visit Maria's school and observe the activities as often as I originally planned. The first attempt to observe one of Maria's classes was made on July 28th, shortly before the second semester of the 2016 academic year began. I communicated my concerns to Maria who kept me regularly informed about the progress of the activity through her reports. While there is no substitute for direct observation, it is important to mention that when I was able to observe the activity, what I saw confirmed what Maria had noted in her reports.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodology of the research described in this thesis, devoting special attention to the theoretical foundations of qualitative research and ethnographic case study research that guided my research decisions. Next, I explained my stance as the researcher before meticulously describing the research design in terms of its stages, the participants and the context.

Having considered contextualized the research and delineating its approach, the data collection instruments and procedures were introduced and justified in accordance with the objectives of this study. Finally, I discussed some of the limitations of the methodology as well as some of the issues that affected the data collection process. The next three chapters contain the analysis of the data generated over the course of the research period along with the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

“If native speakers of a language learn to read through rich immersion in authentic literature, should local EFL educators not also use the same literature-based reading approach?”

LEE, 2015, p. 66

Using the data generated during both phases of the research process, this chapter discusses the role of multicultural children’s literature in the Brazilian EFL classroom as well as in university teacher education programs. For the purposes of this chapter, I based my analysis on the initial questionnaire completed by the mini-course participants, my field notes from both the mini-course and from my time in Maria’s classroom and, finally, from Maria’s reports. In order to supplement my field notes and to better document certain critical moments from both data collection stages, I revisited the audio recordings from the mini-course and Maria’s classroom in an effort to transcribe important conversations and commentaries. The analysis and discussion presented in this chapter pertains exclusively to the role of multicultural children’s literature in both the EFL classroom and teacher licensure programs and the analysis and interpretation of findings relating to the promotion of critical multicultural literacy can be found in Chapter 5.

After the conclusion of the data generation process, I began to analyze and classify the information in two broad categories, critical literacy and critical multiculturalism, with the objective of consolidating them into critical multicultural literacy. First, I directed my attention toward the initial questionnaires, indexing the responses in a spreadsheet. This procedure was repeated with Maria’s reports as well as the critical moments identified in the field notes and transcribed from the audio recordings. While I was comparing and contrasting my findings, it became evident that I would need to supplement the previously mentioned categories with a third category relating to multicultural children’s literature and teacher education. I recognized that, in order to more effectively comprehend how the actions and attitudes of teachers and students could promote critical multicultural literacy, I also needed to understand their perceptions regarding the

place multicultural children's literature in the EFL curriculum, both in schools and in teacher education programs.

The first part of the chapter is dedicated to analyzing the potential benefits and challenges of working with literary texts as evidenced by the questionnaire responses and comments made by the teachers throughout the mini-course. Specifically, I address what the teachers consider to be benefits of using multicultural children's literature and what they see to be challenges to its wider implementation. Subsequently, in the second part of the chapter, I focus on the reactions of Maria and her students to the activity using *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, concentrating on how their opinions and remarks contribute to the larger issue of using multicultural children's literature as instructional material in the teaching of English. Through excerpts from her reports, I discuss the impact of the mini-course on her ability to carry out her activity, both in terms of its successes and challenges. Finally, I present some conclusions and observations about the possible impacts on initial and continuing teacher education courses.

4.1 Perceptions of Literature in the Brazilian EFL Curriculum: Challenges

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, Brazilian public educational policies do not explicitly encourage the teaching of literature in the foreign language classroom. While there are numerous possible explanations for this absence, it was important to hear the thoughts and opinions about literature's role in the EFL curriculum from the mini-course participants. To better understand their attitudes toward using literary texts in the classroom, the teachers responded to two open-ended questions on the initial questionnaire. The first question, attempting to gain insight into the potential issues associated with the use of literature, was "In the case of the use of (multicultural) children's literature in the teaching of English, could there be some challenges that impede its implementation? Explain.". Although four teachers did not respond or responded negatively, eight responded affirmatively, justifying their answers with a variety of different reasons. Furthermore, throughout the mini-course, there were a number of commentaries that provided insight into the participants' concerns about using a literature based approach to the teaching of English. For the purposes of analysis, I have classified the questionnaire responses and commentaries into three broad categories: institutional, sociocultural and linguistic.

4.1.1 Institutional Challenges

The most widely commented challenges were of an institutional and bureaucratic nature, principally access to literary texts and the capacity of teachers to use literature in the classroom. According to Cox and Assis-Peterson (2002), in Brazil, while many public school English teachers receive little to no support from their schools, municipal or state departments of education or even from local universities, they often hope for some sort of institutional support. Similarly, the British Council (2015) states that “with little institutional support, the planning and execution of classes depend excessively on the individual decisions and capacities of each teacher, who must search for new materials and teaching methodologies within their personal network” (p. 37-38, my translation). For these reasons, it is hardly surprising that both Bruno and Matheus mentioned the government and educational institutions as being important barriers impeding the wider use of literary texts. On the questionnaire, they write:

***Bruno:** Yes. Bureaucracies between the schools and governments and the training of educational professionals can be obstacles to its implementation (my translation).*

***Matheus:** The superficial experience as undergraduates and the lack of availability of materials and guidance of how to use them (my translation).*

Bruno’s and Matheus’ responses reveal that both place little faith in the government and educational institutions to make work with literature possible. Paradoxically, both teachers blame the two entities that should, in theory, be the ones making activities and projects based on multicultural children’s literature possible. Interestingly, both Bruno and Matheus qualify their responses by stating that mere access to literature or the conditions to carry out activities using literary texts is not sufficient and that this access must also be supplemented by the appropriate training, either in pre-service or continuing education courses. However, in order to make this training viable, the burden falls once again on the government and school administrators to rethink university curricula and provide more opportunities for teachers to participate in continuing education programs. In this sense, “in order for projects to thrive, they need the institutional support of the schools and departments of education themselves, creating the physical and material conditions for their realization” (COX; ASSIS-PETERSON, 2002, p. 23, my translation). This assertion is evident in Maria’s comment that it is important to have

... an environment that is favorable for the interaction between the reader and what is being read. This doesn't impede [working with literature], but it makes it more difficult (my translation).

This excerpt demonstrates that, not only is it important to have the materials and the appropriate training, without the physical conditions conducive to reading literature, it is doubtful that it can happen at all. Although the teacher plays a part in creating a favorable environment, the government and school administrators can undoubtedly contribute by making efforts to reduce large class sizes or improving classroom acoustics, physical and structural issues identified by Xavier (2014) that hinder the teaching of English in Brazilian public schools.

Similarly, another institutional challenge frequently mentioned in the questionnaires was the question of availability of literary texts in schools. While Bruno and Matheus both highlighted this issue, for Maria and Veronica it was the primary obstacle. Maria, perhaps due to her previous attempts at using literature in her classroom, saw the absence of literature, particularly of a multicultural nature, in Brazilian public schools to be the biggest hindrance. Maria states that

Initially the books [impede the implementation of literature]. Every student should have one to take home (my translation).

In this selection, it is possible to observe the value Maria places on having a sufficient number of copies, especially so that the students may read their copy at home. According to the British Council (2015), due to the fact that many Brazilian public schools lack instructional materials in English, many teachers often have to take the initiative to personally buy materials to use in their classrooms. In this sense, Maria would need to purchase the books for her students to read since her school is either unable or unwilling to provide the copies. Maria's insistence on having an appropriate number of books reappeared during the second meeting of the mini-course. In this situation, Carla began to share a previous experience working the book *Hotel for Dogs*. As Carla described the activity, she mentioned some of its successes, including the support she received from the school:

Carla: *The school was great, they made copies of the whole book for them.*

Maria: *[interrupting] That's what I was going to ask you.*

Carla: *The school provides support for this.*

...

Maria: *But it's important that we have some support from the school.*

Carla: And thank god I had it.

Maria: For example, in the school where I work, when I ask for copies, they don't make them. It's a problem.¹²

From this excerpt, it is once again possible to see the importance that Maria places on institutional support, albeit in the form of making copies of the books for the students. Due to the high price of literature in English in Brazil, it is unrealistic for the teachers to expect that their students will purchase the books that are being used in the classroom. As a result, in Maria and Carla's opinion, the responsibility for providing materials lies with the school, whether that be in the form of purchasing individual copies of the books or making photocopies to be distributed among the students. It is important to mention that Carla, unlike Maria, teaches at a private school and, as a result, the teachers have different expectations of what services their schools should provide. Moreover, from comments made shortly after the exchange between Carla and Maria, there appears to be a divergence between the public schools belonging to the state system of Minas Gerais and those belonging to the various municipal systems. This divergence is evident in the commentary made by Ana in relation to a previous activity she carried out based on children's literature:

The students had to pay to make their own copies because the school didn't pay, I don't know if municipal schools help, but the state schools don't do this (my translation).

Although Ana goes on to comment about the overall success of the activity, it's notable that her comment generated widespread murmurs and nods of agreement among the teachers present in the class. Certainly, it can be argued that these teachers believe the school plays a fundamental role in making literature accessible to students, although lack of support does not necessarily impede working with literary texts. This line of thinking mirrors Barbosa's (2011) observation that schools are one of the principal means of access to literature and it consequently falls upon them to provide opportunities for students to interact with different literary genres, especially given the difficulties the average Brazilian faces in acquiring literary texts.

Finally, the last institutional challenge concerns neither access nor school support but rather the larger school community, specifically the students' parents. Carla, due in part to her previous

¹² My translation.

experiences using literature and her reality teaching in a private school, was the only participant to mention this issue. At Carla's school, the parents are responsible for purchasing any materials, including textbooks, that their children might need. About this issue, she says:

Often what impedes [working with literature] are the parents who complain that they spend a lot of money on textbooks and English is considered to be a less important subject. For this reason, you can't ask them to buy the books. So, my school photocopies the books for the students and they read the photocopies. But all of this doesn't stop me from using literature (my translation).

Carla's response shows that the issue is more complex than mere institutional support. It is also necessary to have the support of the wider academic community, including the students' parents who may ultimately be responsible for purchasing the books or paying for the copies. What is clear from her remarks, however, is the inherent connection between lack of literary study in EFL classes and English's marginalized status as a school subject. Until English as a school subject becomes more widely valued by educational policy makers, school administrators and by society at large, the study of English language literatures will continue to be seen as trivial. Finally, the importance of involving parents and the school community is fundamental for the promotion of educational equity for all students, one of the elements of critical multicultural literacy to be discussed in the next chapter.

4.1.2 Sociocultural Challenges

After institutional and bureaucratic challenges, a frequently mentioned issue regarding the use of multicultural children's literature in the EFL classroom was the sociocultural context of the school. In other words, the mini-course participants seemed to indicate that, depending on the social and cultural backgrounds of the students, working with literature might be more challenging. For example, on the questionnaire Karina responded that the challenges

Depend on the social context in which the students are located. Public school students, for example, have many more difficulties learning foreign languages on a daily basis. I imagine that literature would be even more difficult for them. However, if we don't take the initiative, we'll never know the result (my translation).

In Karina's opinion, the challenges of using a literature based approach to teaching English vary depending upon the school and the students. She mentions public schools as a potentially

challenging setting, insinuating that private schools may present less difficulties for the teacher and the students. Although this logic is based on generalizations and stereotypes, she does qualify her response by saying that it is important to try using literature, independent of the sociocultural context. Similarly, Fernanda believes that the challenges

Depend on the type of student and the social and cultural context of which they are a part (my translation).

As evidenced by her response, Fernanda considers not just the sociocultural context to be important, but also the students' habits. Her commentary shows a concern about the contextualized nature of working with literature, that each student and each classroom is different. Moreover, when I asked the teachers if they thought literature was distant from the realities of their students, the overwhelming consensus was that it depends on the book. In this sense, some literary works may better reflect the sociocultural contexts of the students than others, potentially enhancing the interaction between the text and the reader.

One of the biggest sociocultural challenges teachers face is the oft-repeated mantra of “*os alunos não gostam de ler* (the students don't like to read)” almost as if it were a culturally ingrained habit. The problem with this type of thinking is that, as Soares (2005) asserts, the verb read, when understood as a social practice, is transitive and thus requires a complement. In this sense, the problem with arguing that “students don't like to read” is that it is not clear what the students don't like to read. In order to gauge whether or not the teachers participating in the mini-course subscribed to this generalized view of Brazilian students, I asked them if they believe that their students read in their daily lives. Below is an excerpt of the ensuing conversation:

Me: *Do you think your students read outside of school?*

[Silence]

Me: *No one thinks their students read outside of school?*

Isadora: *This generation doesn't like to read. Our students don't like to learn about literature. Literature is an opportunity for the students and if we don't have literature at the schools, I've noticed that they don't like to read. If you ask any of them if they read any book of literature they say no.*

Me: *Ok, so you think they don't read literature, like novels. But are books the only thing you can read?*

Matheus: *They'll read stuff they see on Facebook.*

Me: *In English? In Portuguese? Both languages?*

Matheus: *Both*

Carla: *They read the letters [lyrics] of music. I guess it's like poetry.*

This selection shows that, initially all the teachers were hesitant to acknowledge that their students read literature in their daily lives, outside of the classroom. Isadora attributes this disinterest in literature and reading to the lack of attention given to it in schools. In her opinion, if literature had a larger role in the classroom, then more students would read both in and out of class. In certain respects, Isadora's assumptions are correct considering that, as Lourenço (2011) states, schools are society's most important agent of literacy, including for the so-called new literacies. Among these new literacies is literary literacy which refers to the "set of social practices that use literary texts, understood as those whose main characteristic would be fictionality" (ZAPPONE, 2008, p. 53, my translation). Yet, Souza and Cosson (2011) maintain that "literary literacy needs the school to materialize, that is, it requires a specific educational process that the mere practice of reading literary texts cannot accomplish by itself" (p. 102, my translation). Finally, Lourenço (2011) believes that, "in the perspective of literary literacy, the works used are not considered 'superior' or 'inferior', rather all are narratives with literary elements that can be studied and worked with in English language classes" (p. 98, my translation). Based on these arguments, the excerpt above exemplifies some of the most basic characteristics of literary literacy. In other words, the reading of literature is made much more difficult without its presence in the schools, but the literature being read does not need to be restricted to more privileged literary genres or even to the literary canon, consequently making it possible to work with comic books, bestsellers or lyrics, as Carla states.

Lastly, it is important to mention that one of the teachers, Ana, responded that she did not think there were any challenges that would make working with multicultural literature more difficult. Ana continued, however, recommending that teachers work with literary texts "*that don't bring up so much debate*". Although Ana doesn't clarify what she means by "so much debate", it can be understood that she is referring to literature whose content addresses complex and potentially controversial topics. Davila and Souza (2013) consider attitudes like this to be the result of the lack of criticality present in many pre-service and continuing teacher education programs which, in turn, causes teachers to fear working with texts that deal with controversial social issues. Sometimes, however, the issue is not that the teacher is uncomfortable talking about the social issue themselves, but that they are fearful of not knowing how to address the issue if it comes up

during class discussion. For example, during a discussion about the book *The Last Stop on Market Street*, Isadora asked the following question:

*I have a question. When you talk to the students about poverty, and there are poor students in the class, **how can I do this without offending them?** (my emphasis).*

Interestingly, when Isadora asked me this question, I myself felt like I was put into an uncomfortable situation as I knew there was no easy answer to this question. I used her question, however, to spark a classroom wide discussion about strategies to reduce potential student discomfort when reading multicultural children's literature. Lewison et. al. (2002) point out that many teachers find it difficult to know how to respond to challenging student questions about social issues or to discriminatory comments made between the students. In the end, I tried to provide as many opportunities as possible for the mini-course participants to discuss these issues because, as Appelt (1985) maintains, if the teacher is comfortable with the picture book being used as well as the subject matter, then the students will be too. For this reason, it is imperative that teachers receive a critical education that puts them in contact with quality multicultural children's literature that is capable of promoting critical multicultural literacy in the classroom, as well as showing them how to select these books (DAVILA; SOUZA, 2013, p. 1213).

4.1.3 Linguistic Challenges

Interestingly, linguistic challenges were the least cited by the mini-course participants as potential impediments to working with literature. On the questionnaire, only Paula mentioned that the linguistic level of the students could be a potential challenge to using children's literature to teach English. Furthermore, during the first mini-course class, I asked the teachers whether or not they considered knowing a language well a pre-requisite to being able to read literature. Despite my vague wording, the majority of the participants emphatically agreed, indicating that they might consider reading literature in English to be appropriate for more advanced students. As a follow-up question, I asked the teachers if they believed if it was possible to learn a foreign language by reading literature, to which the majority responded affirmatively. These concurrent and contradictory positions are common among EFL teachers, especially those who may not feel adequately prepared for the task of using literature (FLORIS, 2004). According to the same author, this challenge is easily remedied by selecting texts suitable to the language level of the students. Floris' arguments manifested themselves in Carla's comments during the second meeting of the

mini-course when she described her desire to use literature in her classroom. She says that “*I tried to choose a book that was more accessible to the students with lots of pictures*”, showing her awareness that the students’ linguistic difficulties can be mitigated by using books with more pictures and simpler language.

Another linguistic challenge indirectly mentioned during the mini-course related to the translation of the literary text from English to Portuguese. This worry surfaced as Carla shared her experience working with the book *Hotel for Dogs*. During an exchange between Carla and Maria, Maria voiced her concern that students would insist on translating the text in order to be able to more fully comprehend what they are reading. This conversation itself originally occurred in Portuguese, but has been translated to English below.

Maria: Sometimes they [the students] are really worried about translating, right?

Carla: Right

Maria: And I’ve worked like this before, they think “oh I have to translate this to understand it”.

*Carla: That’s right, and I had to show them that they didn’t have to translate everything word for word and they started to understand.*¹³

Based on this selection, it is possible to see that Carla and Maria consider this emphasis on translation to be problematic for the students to more fully understand the book being read. This concern directly relates to the emphasis that Brazilian public policies place on the acquisition of grammatical structures, as discussed in Chapter 1. Carla and Maria’s students conceptualize the study of English through the lens of their mother tongue, although it can be argued that the other participants’ students think in a similar manner. In other words, they consider English to be an incomprehensible language that can only be understood when it has been translated into Portuguese. This insistence on translating texts as a part of the reading process stems from the predominance of a grammar-translation methodology, the dominant EFL teaching method in the region where these teachers work (XAVIER, 2014). Generally speaking, the use of the grammar-translation methodology is a coping mechanism employed by the teachers in an effort to deal with the conditions of many Brazilian primary and secondary schools. While the merits of using the students’ mother tongue in the EFL classroom is not the focus of this research, Richards (2012) makes it clear that the use of translation does little to further the students’ fluency in the target

¹³ My translation.

language. In the context of the study of literature, it is important that the students are able to go beyond an understanding at the sentence level to “understand and become broadly aware of the social, political, historical, cultural events happening in a certain society” (FLORIS, 2004, p. 2)

4.2 Perceptions of Literature in the Brazilian EFL Curriculum: Benefits

In spite of these challenges, the participants also commented on a range of benefits of including literature, particularly children’s literature, in the EFL curriculum. Similarly, like the challenges, it was possible to ascertain this information from answers to the questionnaire as well as remarks about previous experiences working with literature. The last question on the questionnaire endeavored to understand what the mini-course participants considered to be advantageous in relation to the role of literature in the EFL curriculum: “In the case of the use of (multicultural) children’s literature in the teaching of English, could there be benefits to its use? Explain.”. All of the teachers, at some point in the mini-course, indicated that there is some kind of benefit to using literature to teach English and that many times these benefits outweigh the challenges. The benefits mentioned by the participants mirrored those established by Collie and Slater (1987)¹⁴ and, as a result, I classified these benefits into three broad categories: personal, cultural and linguistic.

4.2.1 Personal Benefits

Although linguistic and cultural advancement might appear to be the most recognizable benefit of using literature in the second language classroom, a number of comments were made indicating that more personal gains could also result. For instance, at the end of the first meeting of the mini-course, I asked the participants about some of the benefits of using picture books as a form of instructional material in the EFL classroom. Carla was the first to respond, saying that “*if the book has interesting pictures, it can engage the students more*”. This is because, as Collie and Slater (1987) contend, literature provides opportunities for students to become involved with the literary text, moving beyond the rote memorization of vocabulary and acquisition of grammatical structures. Moreover, as the conversation progressed, all twelve teachers agreed that by reading literature it is possible to personally identify with the characters or to identify with different

¹⁴ Collie and Slater (1987) maintain that there are three principal benefits to using literature in the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL): Cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement.

storylines. By making personal connections to literary texts read in schools, students might be stimulated to develop a habit of reading literature for pleasure because “if the materials are carefully chosen, students will feel that what they do in the classroom is relevant and meaningful to their own lives” (LAZAR, 1993, p. 15).

When analyzing the responses on the questionnaire, it became clear that the majority of the participants answered that there are primarily cultural and linguistic benefits to using literature in the EFL classroom. While other teachers briefly mentioned that there could be some sort of personal enrichment, only one teacher focused entirely on the personal effects of reading literature. On the questionnaire, Fernanda, when asked if there could be benefits to using multicultural literary texts in the English classroom answered “*Yes. Besides incentivizing reading, I think that it would help to expand the student’s worldview*” (my translation). Although it isn’t clear exactly what Fernanda means, according to Perry and Mallozzi (2016), the complex concept notion of worldview is deeply personal, being composed of an individual’s cultural mindset, personal world and their perspective. Moreover, not only does literature help widen a students’ worldview, it contributes to the general development of the individual as a whole because “literature can shape; but not according to the official pedagogy...it is far from being an appendix of moral and civil instruction...it acts with the indiscriminate impact of life itself and it educates as life does” (CANDIDO, 1972, p. 805, my translation). In this regard, literature helps to shape students in real and subtle ways that are not always officially incorporated into the school curriculum.

4.2.2 Cultural Benefits

One of the most commented benefits of using multicultural literature in the EFL classroom were related to the unique opportunities for cultural immersion it affords. Most of the comments were general and superficial, in other words, commentaries made in passing about how reading literature exposes the reader to other cultures. In this line of thinking, the cultural benefits might seem obvious and relatively straightforward, of the three categories mentioned, this is perhaps the most complex. As evidenced by the discussion of culture in Chapter 2, when discussing the benefits of using the literary text in cultural terms, it is important to consider the definition of culture itself, which cultures are being elevated and which are being subjugated as well as the relationship between the target language and the culture or cultures in question. Although I

attempted to discuss these issues throughout the mini-course, at times it was difficult to devote a sufficient amount of time to this topic due to the short duration of the course.

Two specific comments that highlight the complexity of this debate were made at the beginning of the mini-course by Laura and Veronica:

***Laura:** Teaching literature, we are able to provide our students with greater cultural knowledge (my translation).*

***Veronica:** Society would be more literate and knowledgeable about the values of a specific cultural group (my translation).*

These opinions provided by Laura and Veronica are not incorrect, but I argue that they could be problematic as they view the relationship between language, literature and culture too simply. Broadly speaking, the act of reading literary texts contributes to the development of a number of different literacies and it does create opportunities to deepen knowledge about local and global cultures. Furthermore, various authors (COLLIE; SLATER, 1987; LAZAR, 1993) point out that, while reading literature provides greater cultural access to students, the texts being read should not be taken as mirrors of the cultures they depict. In this regard, teachers must be aware of questions like, “which culture is being represented?”, “what aspect of this culture is being represented?”, “How do I know?”, so as not to essentialize or exoticize the culture being discussed. In this regard, “our response to the cultural aspect of literature should always be a critical one, so that the underlying cultural and ideological assumptions in the texts are not merely accepted and reinforced, but are questioned, evaluated and, if necessary, subverted” (LAZAR, 1993, p. 17). In other words, reading multicultural literature does have cultural benefits, but it is important that these benefits are always seen through a critical lens. The purpose of this analysis is not to criticize Laura and Veronica for their statements, but rather it is an attempt to show the complexity of this issue and why it needs to be discussed in teacher education courses.

Similarly, during the class about multiculturalism and critical multicultural education, Karina made an astute observation by sharing what she learned in some of the courses she took about Brazilian literature. She states:

But remember when we studied literature, I mean Brazilian literature or even how to read, one of the things that the teacher would tell us is that through literature we can travel to

different worlds...it's the same with English. We travel the world but we don't need to move.

Her remarks garnered nods of agreement from the other teachers who remarked that, by reading literature their students would be in contact with the cultures of the English-speaking world in meaningful ways. This is because, as mentioned in Chapter 1, literature in the foreign language classroom “can be understood as a contact zone that raises not only linguistic but also cross-cultural awareness in the sense that the learner gets into contact with the different cultures where the target language is spoken (FESTINO, 2011, p. 55). As a result, Karina’s opinion is certainly valid but I would add that it is also necessary to be aware of the incredible cultural diversity present in the English-speaking world and that this literary travel should not be restricted to countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. Literature from other countries where English is a culturally or societally significant language is an excellent springboard to introduce students to and dialogue about these underrepresented cultures.

4.2.3 Linguistic Benefits

Given the fact that this research is situated in the field of Applied Linguistics and that the research participants were either teachers or learners of English as a Foreign Language, it is hardly surprising that the bettering of linguistic skills was considered the most advantageous aspect of using a literary based approach to teach English. For example, Bruno responded that

Of course there would [be benefits]. I think that the student would improve their literacy in English and this would also reflect in their mother tongue. In addition, the student can perfect their use of the language, making sense of it personally (my translation).

For Bruno, there is no doubt that there are benefits to reading literature in the EFL classroom, yet he chooses to focus his answer on the potential for linguistic advancement in both English and, in this case, Portuguese. This could be the result of, as he mentions, this personal connection that the student forms with the literary text being read. Lazar (1993) asserts that “literature is rich in multiple levels of meaning [and] focusing on a task that demands that students express their own personal responses to these multiple levels of meaning can only serve to accelerate the students’ acquisition of language” (p. 17). Similarly, Carla mentioned that by

reading literature, students are exposed to the “*diversity and richness of words*¹⁵” that leads to a significant “*increase in vocabulary*¹⁶”. It is worth mentioning that, over the duration of the mini-course, every participant commented on the linguistic benefits of using a literature in the EFL classroom. As a result, it can be argued that the teachers are aware of the potential of working with literary texts in that they provide opportunities for students to see “real language – originally intended for native speakers – and this allows them to become familiar with the target linguistic forms and communicative functions” (BOBKINA; DOMINGUEZ, 2014, p. 250). It is important, however, that the teachers are conscious of the importance of not overemphasizing a purely structural and grammatical approach to reading as this ignore the possibility to engage in rich discussions about themes underlying the text.

4.3 Maria and *The Story of Ruby Bridges*

At this point in the chapter, I shift my focus away from the mini-course and I focus more specifically on Maria’s experience carrying out the activity she elaborated based on *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. Using selections from her reports, field notes from my observations and comments from her students, I analyze the perceived successes and challenges of the activity in an effort to show how it relates to the wider conversation about the role of literature in the EFL classroom. Additionally, I frame my discussion of Maria’s activity in the context of her previous experiences working with literature as well as the impact of the mini-course on her teaching practices.

4.3.1 Impact of the Mini-course

As previously mentioned, since she began to study English, Maria has always cultivated a great passion for literature and, as a result, she has sought to incorporate more literary texts in her classes. Although she tried to make literature available to her students, she never systematically developed lessons based on literary texts. In her final report, she writes:

When I think about how reading greatly contributed to the development of my English language skills, I invest in working with literature in the classroom. To encourage my students to read, I took books of different reading levels to class, including comics (all in English). I would give a “mini-commercial” about the material and I would leave it on the desk. Some students would come up, look at the books and very few of them asked to borrow the books (this was the objective). I must say, I didn’t really know how to work with

¹⁵ My translation.

¹⁶ My translation.

literature because I thought it would only be possible if there were enough copies of the same book for everyone. Then it would be possible to accompany the students and propose activities from the book (my translation).

It is clear that, due to the impact reading literature had on her advancement as an English language learner, Maria considers literary texts to be potentially valuable instructional material in her own classroom. Unsure of where to begin and the best course of action, she simply brought books to her classroom in the hopes that their presence would spark an interest in her students. Furthermore, she believed that it was necessary for every student to have a copy of the text in order for her to plan activities. It appears, however, that her participation in the mini-course caused her to reflect on how she could integrate multicultural literature into her classes, given her current working conditions. She writes:

By participating in the mini-course, I was able to think about the value of working with literature and what could result from it. Until now, I had always thought about just learning the language. However, the suggested readings and your explanations made me think about learning that would go far beyond contact with the English language. However, for this to happen, it was necessary to structure the activity so that the students were made to think, to form opinions based on what they read (my translation).

As a result of the mini-course, Maria feels prepared to use literary texts in her classroom in a way that goes beyond acquiring grammatical structures of the target language, potentially creating opportunities to engage with the text in more meaningful ways. In order to do this, she argues that it is important to design activities that promote critical thinking and encourage the students to position themselves in relation to the literary text. In a sense, this criticality could be thought of as the missing element that impeded her from moving forward and planning more meaningful activities based on literature. In other words, by continuing her education through participating in the mini-course, Maria was able to further develop her lesson planning skills and fulfill a professional goal of working with literature in the EFL classroom.

4.3.2 Challenges of the Activity

The project Maria designed based on *The Story of Ruby Bridges* marked the first time that she taught an organized lesson based on literature that involved all students in the classroom. Naturally, many of the challenges and obstacles that slowed her progress were a direct result of

her relative inexperience working with literature. In September of 2016, toward the end of the activity, as Maria reflected on the experience, she said the following in one of her verbal reports:

It was hard. I experienced a lot of things that I couldn't have even imagined, all because of reading this book. But I also think that there were all of these problems because it was my first time and because, in the lesson plan, I didn't put some things that were necessary because I didn't know they would be necessary. So, during the project, I saw things I needed to do and I did them (my translation).

In this excerpt, it is possible to see that Maria attributes the difficulties principally to the unforeseen necessities resulting from her lack of experience, rather than to a lack of institutional support or any of the other challenges previously discussed. This is not to say, however, that a lack of institutional support, in terms of providing materials and encouragement, and the language proficiency of her students were not issues. Maria's main concern was her preparation for working with multicultural literary texts and knowing how to effectively use them in her classroom. Issues such as low proficiency levels and high indiscipline levels among students, as well as the marginalization of English have been problematic for years. However, due to her experience, Maria feels more comfortable in dealing with these obstacles. Maria's adaptability, determination and perseverance were evident as she adapted her lessons in the face of challenges caused by student motivation, access to materials and support from the school administration.

Considering the mainstream discourse about the quality of English language education in Brazilian public schools, it seems hardly surprising that Maria initially encountered resistance from her students who lacked confidence in their language skills. At the beginning, Maria herself had doubts about whether or not her students would be able to read an entire book in English. For example, in one of her reports she said the following:

*How are my students going to read a book given that, ok, they have Google translate to help with the reading but they don't have this ability, this enthusiasm, this desire to read a book? "Oh, I'm going to go and look up the meaning of this word." **No, they just look at the text saying I don't know anything. So, I had to deal with this, first, I don't know anything, I don't want to and it was a struggle.** So then, what did I think? I proposed a dictionary for the book. I made a dictionary. First, I typed up a page, a little dictionary of the book with expressions, with words and then I handwrote the rest, without typing, in a more personal way so that it wouldn't be just another typed sheet of paper in the classroom. I made it by hand, with pen. I wrote Ruby's name big and colorful and I made this material available to the students because they could take pictures on their cellphone, to help with the reading, you know? And so I started, but even today there are students who actually answered the questions without reading the book, just fishing for the answers by using the*

pictures or the translation on the internet. Oh well, they were in contact with English, in contact with a really interesting story... (my translation).

Maria is far from the first foreign language teacher to have students complain about the complexity of the language used in a text and who, as a result, become disinterested and demotivated. In Maria's teaching context, however, the question appears to be one of low self-esteem and lack of confidence rather than an actual disconnect between their language level and the reading level of the book. Based on this excerpt, Maria says that her students would rather passively copy and paste texts into an online translator instead of putting in more effort and manually searching for the definitions of new vocabulary. Without devaluing the contributions of tools like Google translate, it could be argued that this desire to avoid dictionaries stems from the students' inability, uneasiness or unwillingness to put their language skills to the test. Regardless of the reason, as Lazar (1993) claims, the relationship between a student's linguistic proficiency and their ability to read a literary text is complex and must be evaluated on a case by case basis. For this reason, Maria's decision to create a class dictionary that the students could use to help them during the reading process seems to be a reasonable remedy to overcome this challenge. Although Maria indicates that it is possible to use the illustrations to understand the text, she rarely ever mentioned in her reports or even during my visits to her classroom that the pictures could be used as a complementary meaning-making resource. As a result, it can be argued that, had she taken a more explicitly multimodal approach to the reading of the text, the students might not have had as many difficulties. In the end, she acknowledges, in a somewhat disparaging tone, that the pictures aided some students who found the answers by reading the pictures and not the text. The importance of visually reading a text must not be underestimated as the students will be able to "reflect upon what the pictures tell that the verbal text does not tell and vice versa (BIRKETVEIT, 2015, p. 17).

Some of Maria's students were initially very resistant to reading *The Story of Ruby Bridges* and did not want to participate in the activity. One such student was a 9th grade student named William who, when Maria first introduced the activity, responded flatly that he would not read the book. In Maria's reports, she stated that she didn't want to force the issue with William and that she hoped he would change his mind and start working with the other students. Eventually William did change his mind and, although he never explained what exactly led him to reconsider his position, he did offer this insight to Maria. He says:

*To tell you the truth, you always yelled at me and one day you said that you didn't want us to just copy in our notebooks, but you wanted to teach us so that we would learn. **I said, I don't even know Portuguese, am I going to learn English?** Then I stopped and thought, the teacher is there and she wants to teach me and I have the ability to learn. And I can start working and I can ask you questions. I'll learn little by little and soon I'll know a lot. **I'm tired of seeing teachers only wanting to see students copy. You're different. You want us to learn, so I'm going to learn. It's important to try** (my translation, my emphasis).*

William's comment reveals a common belief that many public-school students reproduce, that in their schools "they don't learn Portuguese, much less English" (MOITA LOPES, 1996, p. 63, my translation). For this reason, William decides that he is not able to learn English simply because he has internalized the idea that he does not know Portuguese. Although this demotivating fallacy is widely believed by many Brazilians, Maria's actions and attitudes as a teacher made the difference for William. Maria's willingness to go against the traditional and ineffective practice of copying showed William that it was possible for him to learn English and to read an entire book. In this sense, I believe that it was Maria herself that caused William to change his mind by simply demonstrating a readiness to help her student learn, no matter how laborious or difficult it might be. In the end, William became one of the most involved students and one of the most vocal about the merits of the project.

Around the same time that William came to Maria to express his interest in participating in the project, another student went to the school principal to complain about the activity and how difficult reading the book was. Due to this complaint, the principal decided to call Maria to his office so he could talk to her and to convince her to abandon the project. Later that day Maria recounted the event in her report:

*So, I talked to him [the principal]. Interestingly, when he called me to his office, I had the book *O professor pesquisador: introdução à pesquisa qualitativa* [The Teacher Researcher: Introduction to Qualitative Research]¹⁷ in my hands and he was staring at the book. And then I told him "I prefer [William's] statement rather than the student who came to talk to you, because I can talk to that other student. **The principal started to insist "teach them to really speak, make them repeat, make them copy."** And I told him no, they're not going to have this kind of teacher (my translation, my emphasis).*

¹⁷ The book *O professor pesquisador: introdução à pesquisa qualitativa* was written by Stella Maris Bortoni-Ricardo and published in 2008, and was required reading for the 2017 admissions process for the Master's program in Applied Linguistics at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), of which Maria was taking part.

In the initial stages of the activity, Maria did not have the support of the school's administration, who preferred to side with the students rather than with the teacher. Maria's determination to continue her education, as evidenced by the book in her possession, her resistance to the predominant teaching methodology and her overall autonomy appeared to come as a surprise to the principal, who was left unsure of how to respond. Maria had long professed and demonstrated her desire to end the cycle of poor teaching practices that permeate the school system in the region where she works. In her opinion, the power to end this cycle lay with her and she would have to take action to make a change, especially given that her teaching conditions were not always conducive to this type of change. The act of asserting herself and taking a stand was an important step toward deconstructing these power structures and ensuring that the work with multicultural children's literature could proceed.

4.3.3 Successes of the Activity

It is undeniable that Maria faced many adverse conditions when she began to work with *The Story of Ruby Bridges* in her classroom, but in the end, she considered the project to be a success. Many of the problems she initially encountered were able to be solved, aiding the students in comprehending the text and to overcome their hesitations about reading a book entirely in English. However, Maria felt like the activity was not as successful as it could have been, although she admits that many of the challenges she faced were unforeseen and, therefore, harder to combat. As a result, at the end of the project, Maria seems to emphasize the difficulties she came up against much more than the successes that resulted. In her last report, she dedicated only a short paragraph to the successes, writing:

After reflecting more about this experience with literature, I can say that some of the positive results were: increasing vocabulary, learning new grammar topics, writing and presenting an opinion about racial prejudice, and learning about the remarkable story of Ruby Bridges. Among these positive results, I would like to emphasize that, before, the contact that the students had with the English language was only with textbook texts or other loose texts that were brought to class for translation activities. So, I can say that the contact with the language in the book made the development of the activities much more meaningful. There was a character, Ruby, whose life story involved those students who actually read the whole book (my translation).

In this excerpt, it is possible to see that Maria considers the contact with the literary text to be the most important benefit of the activity. Overall, reading *The Story of Ruby Bridges* appears

to have contributed to the students' language development, but it also marked the first time that many of them had ever read an entire book in a foreign language. In this regard, although Maria does not explicitly say this, I would add that she succeeded in breaking away from the traditional approach of meaningless copying and rote memorization of vocabulary and grammatical structures. By bringing a literary text into the classroom, she demonstrated to the students and the school administration the importance of using other teaching materials to diversify the EFL curriculum.

During my last visit to Maria's school, the students shared some of their reactions to and opinions about the project using multicultural children's literature. Many of the students wrote down their reflections on pieces of paper beforehand so that they could share them with the class during discussion. Most of the students reflected on what they took away as a life lesson from *The Story of Ruby Bridges* while others also spoke about the impact of reading literature. One such student was Alice, whose written reflection is shared below:

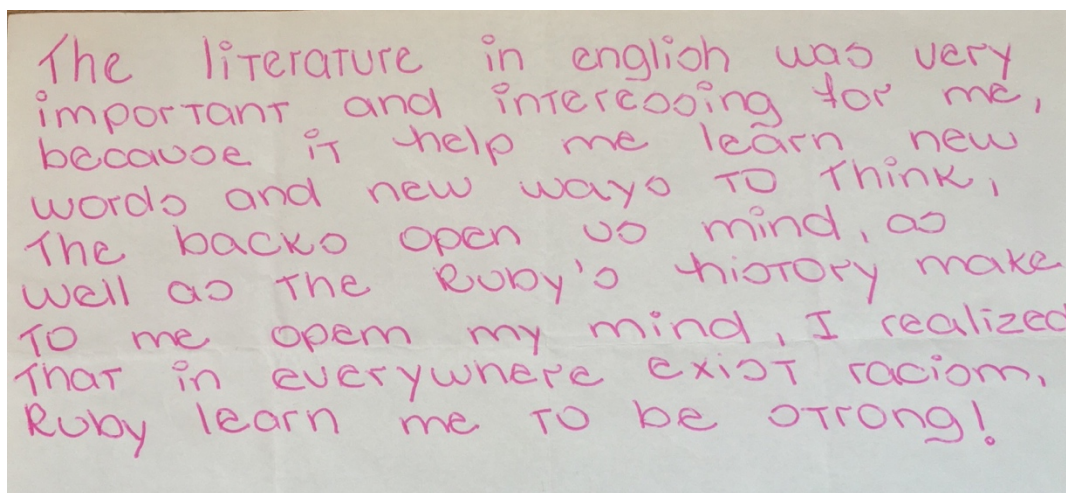


Figure 3: The literature in English was very important and *interesting* for me, because it help me learn new words and new ways to think, the *backs* open us mind, as well as the Ruby's history make to me open my mind, I realized that in everywhere exist racism, Ruby *learn* me to be strong!

In Alice's response, it is possible to see the positive influence that reading a multicultural children's book had on her experience as an English language learner. She cites her linguistic advancements by learning new vocabulary as well as the fact that this book helped her to be more open-minded and to think in new ways. Moreover, Alice was able to take a life lesson away from the book, realizing that, although this story took place more than fifty years prior, racism is still a

modern-day issue in both the United States and Brazil. Finally, Alice's positive reaction is evidence that multicultural children's literature can have encouraging results and that it is okay if these results are not what was expected. Alice's written response has its linguistic problems but, considering the context in which it was produced, it is remarkable. Many individuals would have doubted Alice's ability to read an entire book in English and then to use English to reflect on and give an opinion about the book all because she studies in an under-resourced public school located in an impoverished neighborhood. Results such as these are desired in many foreign language classrooms, illustrating that multicultural literature can produce real and significant language learning.

It is important to mention that, at the time of the writing of this thesis, Maria was in the process of planning another project based on another book used in the mini-course, *Anna Hibiscus*. This demonstrates that, despite the difficulties and challenges that she faced over the course of this research, she felt that the work she had done with *The Story of Ruby Bridges* was successful and that it was important to build off the enthusiasm of her students and transition to a new book. In her report, Maria justifies her decision:

At first, it really was hard. But now the work is flowing and I'm really excited about the possibility of doing more activities based on literature in my classroom. Now I know what I should do better next time and it should be easier. Our next book is going to be Anna Hibiscus (my translation).

Once she was able to overcome the issues that were hindering the activity, the work was able to proceed and Maria saw that it is possible to use multicultural children's literature to teach English. More importantly, she also learned from these challenges and feels confident that she will be able to overcome them, thus facilitating any future activities. In other words, although the initial attempt at using multicultural literature might be rough, the more literature is used, the smoother the process will be. To use Carla's words from the beginning of the mini-course, "*we can't be afraid to use literature...we need to get out of our comfort zone and explore different things*" (my translation).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to discuss the role of multicultural children's literature in the EFL classroom by presenting some of the benefits and challenges that could help or hinder its wider

implementation. The mini-course participants and the experience of Maria working with *The Story of Ruby Bridges* showed that this debate involves many factors and that there are no easy answers. However, their responses, comments and actions can be used to help identify pathways that will lead to the greater use of multicultural children's literature as an EFL teaching material. In the end, working with literary texts in English classes in Brazilian public schools is possible, but there needs to be support in the form of valorization in educational public policies, teacher education courses and by the school communities. In the next chapter, I discuss how the critical multicultural literacy was promoted in the mini-course and by Maria's activity by evaluating the presence of each of the four elements.

CHAPTER 5

PROMOTING CRITICAL MULTICULTURAL LITERACY

“When I liberate myself, I liberate others. If you don’t speak out, ain’t nobody going to speak out for you.”

- Fannie Lou Hamer

The data analysis presented in this chapter focuses primarily on the ways in which critical multicultural literacy was promoted in the mini-course as well as in Maria’s classroom. In order to carry out this analysis, I created a framework, in the form of verification questions, which helped me to understand how critical multicultural literacy was being encouraged in both research stages and which elements were present. In the first part of this chapter, I present this framework so as to provide insight into how I processed and categorized the data generated relating to critical multicultural literacy. Next, in the second part of the chapter, I discuss how the characteristics of critical multicultural literacy manifested themselves in the mini-course, using my field notes and the transcription of significant conversations and commentaries as evidence. In the third part of the chapter, I shift my attention to Maria’s activity, first analyzing its potential to promote critical multicultural literacy before examining the actual outcomes. In both of these sections, I relate my analysis back to the questioning framework shown at the beginning of the chapter. Finally, I present some brief conclusions that can be made based on this analysis.

5.1 Creating a Critical Multicultural Literacy Framework

Considering the fact that my research’s principal objective is to understand how multicultural children’s literature can promote critical multicultural literacy in the EFL classroom, I decided to create a framework, in the form of verification questions, that would help me better achieve this objective and make sense of the data generated. Using the elements of critical multicultural literacy presented in Chapter 2, I developed the questions (see table 10) to help facilitate my analysis by locating these elements in my data. While elaborating these questions, I

used Hayik's (2012) critical literacy questions as a base, making the necessary modifications so that they would be more compatible with critical multicultural literacy theory. Finally, it is important to reiterate that these questions are merely samples and they can and should be added to or modified depending upon the context in which they are used.

Table 10 – Critical Multicultural Literacy Sample Verification Questions

Element	Sample Verification Questions based on Hayik (2012, p. 78-80)
Multiculturally read the word and the world by using a critical stance to question everyday occurrences and to begin to examine culture as a complex, contested and sociohistorical construct.	- Are students challenging taken-for-granted definitions of culture? - Are they questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about other cultures? - Are the students examining their own cultural beliefs and assumptions? - Are they critiquing what is considered normal/status quo? - Are they viewing the world multiculturally? - Are they problematizing reality and visualizing a different one? - Are they examining the social norms of the dominant culture and how these messages position individuals/groups and shape their identities?
Use cultural perspective-taking as a transformative practice in order to recognize, without essentialization, the fundamental role that culture plays in shaping individual perspectives and identities.	- Are the students asking which cultural perspectives are being represented and which cultural perspectives are being silenced? - Are they concurrently trying to understand experience and text from others' viewpoints in addition to their own perspective? - Are they seeking to make under-represented cultures and groups visible? - Are they using other non-Eurocentric perspectives? - Are they recognizing diversity within cultures?
Challenge unequal power relations by investigating the connection between culture and language and seeking to understand how these two factors influence access to and choices within sociopolitical systems.	- Are the students beginning to move beyond the personal realm? - Are they becoming more aware of historical practices and cultural systems of meaning? - Are they investigating oppression, privilege and status along cultural and ethnic lines? - Are they investigating the role culture and language play in maintaining unequal power relations? - Are they questioning the legitimacy of unequal power relations caused by cultural and ethnic differences? - Are the students using literacy as a means to participate in the politics of daily life?

Promote and sustain social and educational equity for all students by using literacy as a mechanism to increase awareness about social injustices perpetuated along cultural and ethnic lines and to involve the community in the pursuit of justice.	- Are students using praxis to transform the world? - Are the students using literacy to involve the community in pursuit of social justice? - Are they using creative means to express critical understandings and to put out and sustain messages of justice and democracy in the world? - Are they rewriting their cultural identities as social activists who challenge the status quo and demand educational equity?
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Using these questions as the basis for my analysis, it became easier to comprehend how the mini-course and the activity were promoting critical multicultural literacy. Moreover, these questions helped to make it clearer how different actions and attitudes manifested themselves in the different elements of critical multicultural literacy. In the next sections, I present different comments, fragments of conversations and student activities that illustrate the presence of each of the elements.

5.2 Stage One: Critical Multicultural Literacy and the Mini-course

The first part of the analysis detailed in this chapter focuses specifically on the mini-course and how elements of critical multicultural literacy manifested themselves in the data generated. It is important to mention that, when I began to examine the data generated as a result of the mini-course, I initially planned to analyze the data according to the principles of critical literacy and critical multiculturalism. As the analysis progressed, however, I started to perceive the subtle ways that critical literacy and critical multiculturalism complement each other. As a result, I made the decision to reanalyze my preliminary results in order to achieve an enhanced understanding of the similarities between critical literacy and critical multiculturalism and how they coalesce as critical multicultural literacy.

The significance of the mini-course in this regard cannot be understated as it was the first moment that I was able to gain insight into the attitudes and opinions of the teachers toward using a critical multicultural approach to the teaching of English as a Foreign Language. The results obtained from this stage of the research process directly informed my observational techniques in the second stage as I was better prepared to recognize the characteristics of critical multicultural literacy when they appeared during the development of the activity. My field notes and the audio recordings of the classes proved indispensable as they clearly showed different moments where critical multicultural literacy was present.

5.2.1 Element One: Questioning Definitions of Culture

One of the most fundamental elements of critical multicultural literacy is its emphasis on the reexamination of the varied definitions of culture and how these definitions intersect with language to marginalize different individuals and groups. One of the first steps in this process is to confront our own understandings of culture so that we can subsequently question them. Reflecting upon Street's (1993b) theorization of culture being a verb and that it is perhaps more important to deconstruct the idea of culture, I decided it was important for the mini-course participants to engage in a discussion about this topic. After all, it is difficult to understand complex concepts like multiculturalism without first dissecting the term. At the beginning of the third meeting of the mini-course, I had the mini-course participants divide themselves into three groups of three and I posed the following questions to them:

1. How can we define culture?
2. How do you define your culture?

When the groups finished discussing these two questions, they presented their definitions to the class for discussion and debate. In response to the first question, each group answered the following:

Isadora, Veronica, Carla: "Culture is customs and legacies from civilizations that people acquire over generations."

Maria, Laura, Karina: "Culture is characteristics of people like religion, politics, ethnicity, typical foods and customs in different aspects of society."

Fernanda, Ana, Juliana: "A part of group identity, customs that are passed through generations"

After each group shared their definitions, I invited the teachers to comment on the other groups' ideas and to share anything else they considered relevant to defining culture. Juliana commented that this task was extremely difficult to accomplish in fifteen minutes and that they needed "*an hour, maybe a year*" to accomplish this task. Isadora noted that two of the definitions explicitly mentioned the idea of passing culture through generations, which in her opinion means that "*culture changes over time, it adapts*". Finally, Laura made a particularly astute observation saying that "*culture is very complex, that's why we have anthropology*". Regardless of the potential

issues of each definition, what is important is that the teachers appear to be cognizant of the difficulty and complexity of defining culture and the fact that there is no singular, all-encompassing definition. Furthermore, they also seem to recognize that culture is not static, but that it changes over time and in accordance with its sociopolitical location. Finally, the intent behind presenting these definitions is not to analyze and dissect their responses, but rather to understand the epistemological backgrounds of these teachers in an effort to better gauge how they will address issues related to culture in their own classrooms. In order to be effective critical multicultural educators, it is fundamental that these teachers are conscious of how they themselves define culture, how they can redefine culture and the impact that this (re)definition has on their students and teaching practices.

Equally as important as being able to understand how culture shapes individuals around the world is to be able to understand the ways in which our own cultures continue to shape us as socially and historically situated beings. This is the intent behind the second question that I posed to the teachers. Instead of having each group present what their culture is, I let the conversation develop naturally to allow for each participant to share their personal definitions. An excerpt of the discussion follows below:

Me: So, how do you all define your culture?

Carla: I think it is multiple, cultures with an 's'.

Maria: Yes, we are influenced by other cultures.

Laura: Some cultures are more influential than others.

Isadora: Brazilian culture was influenced by Portuguese people. Can I say that? Influenced by Portuguese people?

Me: Yes, you can.

Laura: I think there is more African culture than Portuguese culture.

Maria: Portuguese is about the language.

Juliana: And indigenous cultures!

Laura: I think it's about diversity of ethnicities.

Veronica: Alex, I have a funny story about this. About how we recognize Brazilian people outside the country. I was out of Brazil in January, and I was waiting in a line and I was wearing a leopard scarf. A guy looked at me and said "Oh are you Brazilian?" and I said nothing. And then I was like "yes, how do you know?" "Oh because all of Brazilians wear this kind of leopard scarf. And I said "really?!? I've never heard about that."

Me: Oh, so he saw the scarf and stereotyped you. People who wear leopard scarves must be Brazilians because Brazilians love wearing clothes with leopard print on it.

Veronica: I guess. But that isn't true.

Laura: You didn't want to be identified as Brazilian did you?

Veronica: No, well, we don't have a good reputation outside of Brazil.

Me: You think Brazilians don't have a good reputation outside of Brazil?

Veronica: In some places, they have stereotypes. Like corruption, the Brazilian “jeitinho”. It’s not good.

When it comes to defining their own culture, the task becomes more complicated. Every teacher immediately thought of culture in national terms, defaulting to their identity as Brazilians. Thinking about culture in a nationalistic way still unleashed debate about what Brazilian culture is, specifically the historical influences on Brazilian culture. There appears to be little question about the Portuguese, African and Indigenous roots of Brazilian culture, but the disagreement stems from the degree of influence that each has. In the end, what is important is that the teachers come away with an understanding that, no matter how they define Brazilian culture, it will never be a uniform definition that is automatically and equally shared by all Brazilians (MAHER, 2007). This is evidenced by Veronica’s story about the man who successfully identified her as Brazilian, albeit in a flawed and stereotypical way. For whatever reason, this man felt justified in associating leopard print clothing with Brazilian culture, an association that seemed strange and uncharacteristic of the culture of which Veronica is a part. Maher (2007) argues that when a culture is applied homogeneously to all members of a social group, it often becomes a conflict zone due to individual divergence and the fact that no single individual embodies the culture in question. Laura attributes Veronica’s reaction to the fact that she did not want her nationality to be identified for fear of being connected to negative characteristics like corruption, which she feels do not represent her as an individual. Conversations about culture like this one are important for the teachers to have, especially given that they will be in contact with the cultures of the English-speaking world on a daily basis. By confronting issues such as the heterogeneous nature of culture and stereotyping, they will perhaps be more cautious when dealing with cultural issues with their students, perhaps taking a critical multicultural approach.

These types of debates about the cultures of nation-states are, at times, easier than recognizing cultures that are not bound by geopolitical borders. As a result, one of the main objectives of discussing the idea of culture was to challenge the idea of culture as a national construct and to discuss multiculturalism in Brazil and its schools. In order to stimulate a conversation about this topic, I asked the teachers if they considered their schools and their classrooms to be multicultural.

Me: Do you think that your schools and classrooms are multicultural?

Isadora: I think that they are not because all the students are Brazilian, so it's the same culture.

Me: So, in your opinion, the schools are not multicultural because they are overwhelmingly made up of Brazilian students?

Isadora: Yeah.

Me: So, there's no other national cultures present in the classroom.

Isadora: Yeah, because in public school it's not common that the schools have foreigner students, so if they are Brazilian, the culture is the same.

Laura: No, I disagree with you, it's not just a country. I mean here in Brazil we have many cultures, the regions, because in my school I have a student from... "

Isadora: Oh ok, so you have students from other states... "

Karina: I would even say from different families... "

[increasing murmurs]

Fernanda: From different backgrounds!

Me: From different backgrounds. Maybe we need to think of culture not just in national terms.

The situation depicted in the selection above was one of the most significant moments in the mini-course, as it appears to have led to a shift in how some of the participants conceptualized culture. Isadora's immediate reaction was to negate my question by arguing that, due to the absence of foreign students, Brazilian public schools cannot be considered multicultural. Her response assumes that Brazilian culture is a monolithic entity that all students share without issue. But, as previously discussed, not only is this logic flawed, but it also denies the existence of, for example, regional, state or even family cultures. It does not appear that Isadora has any problems accepting the multiplicity cultures tied to physical locations, but rather those that result from social relationships.

Isadora: It wasn't clear to me when Karina said students come from different families.

Karina: I believe that family is the smallest group that would set this type of customs and rule. For example, if we make a bridge between the English class where we were taking about formality¹⁸, about writing an e-mail to a professor, so depending on your background, if this is a part of your family, this student won't have a problem to address the professor. But if this is not a part of the rules of that family, it's not that this is wrong, it's just not what would be expected in a formal situation. So, the way you celebrate birthdays, for example, might be different from the way I celebrate birthdays in my family. So, the ways we talk, the music we listen to might be different, completely different, **so the culture that my family has is different from yours. And then we bring this to the classroom. So this is really difficult for a teacher to please everyone because everyone**

¹⁸ As a part of the ConCol continuing education project, the participants have weekly English language classes. Their class that day, which occurred immediately prior to the mini-course, was about expressing different degrees of formality and informality in oral and written genres.

has their own customs and tastes and things. So that is why I strongly believe that we have multicultural classrooms everywhere. There is no possibility to have a monocultural classroom.

Isadora: So family is different customs, not education. Because I understand education to be one field and culture to be another field.

Karina: It is the way you bring up children. So, a family from doctors or a family from people who study Letras will teach their kids different concepts about life and things, they will have a different vocabulary. They will be different. But that doesn't mean they won't feel Brazilian or share the same big culture that would identify everyone.

In this selection, Isadora directly questions Karina about the concept of family culture, which Karina defends in a lengthy response. It is interesting that she considers the family to be the smallest unit capable of producing a culture and one of the most influential. While she problematizes the idea that all individuals have a distinct family culture due to their varied backgrounds and sociocultural experiences, she does not deepen her analysis by including how these cultures might have unequal access to opportunity and the important impact that class and race, for example, might have. Paradoxically, despite defending the variety of family cultures, Karina describes Brazilian culture in much the same way as Isadora, as a singular and uniform entity. In the end, however, it is important to call attention to the fact that all classrooms are inherently multicultural since both the students and the teacher come from an array of cultural backgrounds that could be the result of any number of different identities (NAIDITCH, 2009). Recognizing the complexity of the concept of culture as well as the multicultural nature of every classroom is an important step toward promoting critical multicultural literacy, especially in the context of teaching foreign languages.

5.2.2 Element Two: Cultural Perspective Taking

When it came to considering multiple perspectives the mini-course participants already had some experience due to the reflective and collaborative nature of ConCol, where the research took place. Due to the mini-course's emphasis on multicultural literature, I tried to stimulate critical conversations by having the teachers consider different cultural perspectives to that they could begin to understand how these shape individual identities. This mainly occurred in the fourth and fifth classes when we read and discussed each of the eleven books I made available to them. In the third meeting of the mini-course, however, during the discussion about the definition of culture and the characteristics of Brazilian culture, Juliana made the following comment:

*For example, with Guimarães Rosa, **people need background knowledge** to understand the text and what it is trying to teach. I guess what I mean is that everyone approaches a book differently. **What is multicultural to me might not be multicultural to you. Everyone brings different values and cultures when reading literature so they are going to interact with the text differently** (my translation, my emphasis).*

Juliana raises an interesting point with her comments about the necessity of providing relevant background knowledge to aid in the understanding of a literary text. This is especially important in the EFL classroom as some students may not be familiar with certain cultures or some of the sociocultural issues facing this group and will therefore have more difficulties engaging with the text. After all, it is impossible to view a situation from the perspectives of other cultures without first trying to understand how this culture shapes an individual's beliefs and behaviors. Juliana appears to be aware of this importance since she claims that each person brings their sociocultural experiences with them when they interact with a text. For this reason, it is fundamental that teachers and students are able to see that this multiplicity of interpretations is the direct result of "our beliefs and perspectives [that] arise from the historical, social, and cultural worlds in which we grow up and live" (THEIN; BEACH; PARKS, 2007, p. 57). Juliana's awareness of this fact signals her aptness to help her students and colleagues being to appreciate texts from other cultural viewpoints.

One issue, however, with Juliana's remarks is her assertion about the relativity of multicultural literature, in that what is considered multicultural in one context or for one person may not be in other circumstances. The problem with this thinking is that it "denies the necessity of creating a type of literature about various specific cultures, whether dominant or dominated" (CAI, 2002, p. 11). For this reason, Cai (2002) defends that all texts should be approached multiculturally in order to foreground and address these cultural issues. It is important to clarify, however, that reading and reasoning multiculturally is not the same thing as considering all literature to be multicultural. Considering all texts to be multicultural delegitimizes the very real contributions that multicultural literature makes to pluralizing the curriculum. On the other hand, as Weil (1993) states, "reasoning multiculturally is a dialectical process. It is to gain insight into ones' self and others through historical and cultural understanding, while at the same time developing an insight into history and culture through subjective self" (p. 212). After all, "...teaching multicultural literature must somehow be about changing students' cultural perspectives and helping students to better understand their lives and the lives of those around

them” (THEIN; BEACH; PARKS, 2007, p. 54). In other words, by using cultural perspective taking techniques and reasoning multiculturally, we can begin to understand why someone may or may not consider a text multicultural by investigating both their and our own backgrounds. It is this two-way thinking that I strove to incorporate in the mini-course so that the teachers would be prepared to use it in their own classrooms.

One of the most pertinent issues raised in the mini-course was the problem of being able to understand an issue from the perspective of another culture when one is not already familiar with the culture in question. While this concern was shared by all of the participants, it appeared to be particularly troublesome for Isadora. She questions

How can I help my students understand a culture if I don't know the culture? I can choose books that win awards, good books, but I need to know more to help my students.

Isadora's question has no easy answer and is one of the greatest challenges an EFL teacher could face when using multicultural literature in their classroom (BOBKINA; DOMINGUEZ, 2014). Furthermore, Landt (2006, p. 698) maintains that questions like Isadora's are “deceptively simple, with responses too complex and full of nuances” and they can unnecessarily deter teachers from using multicultural texts. This is not to say that Isadora's concern is meritless, but it is also unrealistic to expect an EFL teacher to be familiar with every culture present in the English-speaking world. McLaughlin and Devoogd (2004) contend that approaching a text from a critical stance will provide students and teachers with the tools they need to understand a text from different perspectives. Moreover, it will help them navigate a text as they begin to “experience tensions between the beliefs and perspectives they bring with them from their experiences and those they meet within text worlds” (THEIN; BEACH; PARKS, 2007, p. 55). In this sense, using criteria for selecting quality multicultural literature coupled with a critical stance has the potential to assuage a lack of precious cultural background knowledge.

5.2.3 Element Three: Unequal Power Relations

During the third mini-course meeting, after deconstructing different definitions and notions of culture, the conversation shifted to concentrate on the role of the English language in Brazil. Karina, in trying to make a connection between the teaching of multicultural literature and the English language, made the following comment in English:

Something interesting, connected to what [Alex] said, because we know that in Brazilian society, to have access to the English language, this would give you a kind of ticket for a better, wealthy life. So, if you consider that people often pay for better education or providing an education that would teach good English to them, you are giving them power because of the language. So, we as teachers of public schools, we have this power of giving them the same rights to have access to this culture, like to have access to this thing that is a differential thing in the market for success. So, we are the one who influence them. We are giving them the same thing they have over there. It's really powerful to have access to the English language.

Karina sees having access to the English language as something powerful and as a form of social currency that allows an individual to move up the rungs of the societal success ladder. She acutely recognizes, however, that not all Brazilian students have equal access to this social currency with some students paying to receive a better education that would provide a better English language education. Although she doesn't explicitly mention racial and socioeconomic disparities that are responsible for variations in English language access, by referencing public schools, she implicitly acknowledges that English remains mainly elusive to poorer students of color. Because public school students often do not have the means to pay for private schools, their socioeconomic backgrounds influence the choices they are able to make. Karina believes that, as a public school English teacher, she has the ability to empower her students through the English language thus ensuring equal rights and access to the culture associated with the language. In this sense, the view of English becomes aligned with Gee's (2008) concept of dominant secondary discourse in which competency in English is empowering and the means to achieve social and economic success. While this utopic vision of English language education is an admirable objective, other participants found that their realities directly contradicted Karina's arguments.

I understand, but for me it's difficult to think about it. How can I do this? Especially in my classroom. All the time I give them uhh, let's go, come on, to motivate them. You can understand, you can speak, it's important to learn English because of the world. But my students are like, "no" [throw hands up in defeat].

Laura's own sense of powerlessness shows some of the very real complications that English teachers face in trying to combat the inequality faced by their students. While Laura's response is problematic due to the apparent blame she places on her students, it nevertheless serves as a reminder of the public school English teacher's vulnerability and socially marginalized status. Laura mentioned that her students, perhaps due to their own marginalized status, are unable to see

how English is relevant to their daily lives and believe that only people who study or travel abroad, or those with socially valued jobs need English. They automatically exclude themselves from these two groups, seeing them as incompatible with their realities and unattainable because of the circumstances in which they grew up. After Laura finished speaking, Maria interjected to share what happened when one of the previous Fulbright ETAs visited her school:

That was the impact he had when he went to visit my school. The students saw a brown, Latino man, someone who looked like them, who spoke English and who was American. I think in that moment they could see themselves and thought, people who look like me speak English (my translation).

From this excerpt, it is possible to see the effects of the racialization of native speakers of English in that the students, before meeting the ETA, considered English to be something they could not identify with. Kubota and Lin (2006) point out that native speakers of English frequently are equated with whiteness, among other socially dominant and privileged categories. In order to combat this, Jorge (2012) argues in favor of a racialized approach to the teaching of English in Brazil, where teachers are cognizant of the effects of the representations of native and non-native English speakers in instructional materials. For this reason, multicultural children's literature, due to its visual and verbal emphasis on making under-represented groups visible, has much to contribute to Brazilian EFL classrooms by helping to deconstruct the image of the white, native speaker. It appears that the mini-course participants are developing of an increased awareness of the power of representation and how (in)visibility of cultural and ethnic groups affects their students.

Another instance of the teachers recognizing the convergence of culture and language in perpetuating unequal power relations came in the form of Isadora's questioning of the concept of multicultural literature. During the class in which we discussed the categorizations of multicultural literature and its connection to critical multiculturalism, I presented numerous definitions of multicultural literature including one by Mingshui Cai. Cai (1998) argues that it is fundamental that multicultural literature exists as a separate literary genre in order to pluralize the curriculum and challenge the domination the predominately white and male literary canon. In this moment, it became clear that this definition had provoked a reaction in Isadora. She asked:

When you say that it challenges the domination of all white literature, does that mean that black literature doesn't have the same value as white literature?

In response to her question, I asked the teachers to make a list of famous Brazilian authors, both classical and contemporary. After making this list, I then asked the teachers to identify which of these authors were members of minority groups and, if they were unable to identify any, to make another list of female authors and authors of color. Initially, the only female author mentioned was Clarice Lispector and the only author of color was Machado de Assis, although there was considerable debate about his race due to historical whitewashing attempts¹⁹. I continued to pose different questions to the participants, including asking if any of them could identify a famous non-white female Brazilian writer, a question which no one was able to answer. Finally, Juliana timidly cited Carolina Maria de Jesus, whose name garnered recognition among the other participants. At the end of the exercise, I asked Isadora if she felt all literature was valued equally to which she responded “*of course not!*”. At the end of the discussion, Juliana summarizes the discussion stating that

In Brazil, there aren't many famous black writers. Singers and songwriters yes, but writers no. People don't even want to believe that Machado de Assis, the most famous Brazilian writer, could be Black (my translation).

Juliana's blunt assertion coupled with Karina's question and the ensuing exercise help to prove Cai's argument and to make clearer the hierarchies present in literature. Juliana is aware of lack of famous Brazilian authors of colors as well as the whitening attempts that sought to erase the African roots of Machado de Assis. In this sense, the teachers are beginning to challenge unequal literary power structures by recognizing that the color of one's skin or an individual's cultural background are significant factors that directly influence the valorization of an author's work. While most of the aforementioned discussion concerned Brazilian writers, similar power relations are no doubt present in the literatures of the English language. For this reason, it is important that teachers are aware of these literary hierarchies so as to not legitimize these power relations and to not reaffirm the marginal status of multicultural literature in English (FESTINO,

¹⁹ Machado de Assis was born June 21st, 1839 to a Portuguese mother, from the Azores, and a biracial father, the son of slaves. Due to his status as one of Brazil's preeminent writers, his race has been the subject of much debate. One such example of this debate occurred in 2011 when the Brazilian bank Caixa Econômica Federal released a commercial which depicted Machado de Assis as a white man. The commercial in question generated intense public criticism and the bank pulled the commercial from the air. Caixa eventually re-filmed the same commercial, although this time using an Afro-Brazilian actor to play the part. The original version can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10P8fZ5I1Wk> Access on March 5th, 2017. The replacement version can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3F-S3VF2IY> Access on March 5th, 2017.

2007). By participating in the mini-course, as evidenced by these commentaries, I believe the teachers began to question the literary curriculum and why certain texts are favored over others in the classroom. This recognition, in turn, enhances the likelihood that these teachers will use multicultural texts in their classrooms, thus helping to foreground power relations that exist in the English-speaking world.

5.2.4 Element Four: Promoting Educational Equity

Of the four elements of critical multicultural literacy, the fourth was less evident compared to the other three. One of the few moments where there were indices of the fourth element present was during the lesson planning workshops when the teachers offered suggestions about different strategies to promote critical multicultural literacy in EFL classrooms. For example, Isadora mentioned that in a lesson based on the book *Drum Dream Girl* she would have her students create role-plays in which the students would create empowering stories relating to the gender gap. After sharing her idea, I asked how she intended to share this message with the community, to which she responded that she would invite other students at the school to watch the role-plays and potentially have the students perform them for their parents. Another teacher, Fernanda, offered a different approach to *the Story of Ruby Bridges* where she would have her students focus principally on bullying and on creating safe school environments, emphasizing racism less. Fernanda stated that her intention was to have the students share different school memories that were affected by bullying or other uncomfortable situations, independent of their role as the bullied, the bully or as a bystander. She would then use these memories to have the students engage in critical discussions about inequalities in schools and the importance of making sure that all students have access to safe learning environments. Fernanda didn't go on to say how she would involve the community in this effort or how the students would use praxis to promote social justice. What is clear from these potential activities, however, is that the majority teachers are making efforts to get "messages of justice and democracy out into the world" (LEWISON; LELAND; HARSTE, 2008, p. 12). Not all the teachers proposed lessons that would encourage educational equity, as some preferred to focus solely on the acquisition of grammatical structures or felt that creative activities like role-plays were unrealistic given their teaching realities.

I feel that it is important to stress that the intent behind the mini-course was to prepare the teachers to use multicultural children's literature in order to promote critical multicultural literacy

in their classrooms. Since this was only the first stage of the research and my intention was that each participant would carry out these activities in their own classrooms, I do not believe it is unreasonable for actions that would promote this element to remain in the planning stages. Maria's lesson is just one example, however, of how the working with quality multicultural texts can lead to the development of critical multicultural literacy. In the next section, I scrutinize the attitudes and actions that led not only to the promotion of educational equity and social justice but also the other three elements.

5.3 Stage Two: Critical Multicultural Literacy and *The Story of Ruby Bridges*

At this point in the chapter, having discussed how the elements of critical multicultural literacy was promoted in the mini-course, I shift my focus to analyzing Maria's activity and how it promoted critical multicultural literacy elements. I first consider the predisposition of Maria's lesson plan to accomplish this task before examining how each element manifested itself during the different stages of the activity.

5.3.1 Analysis of Maria's Lesson

One of the first steps in understanding how Maria's activity based on *The Story of Ruby Bridges* promoted critical multicultural literacy is by analyzing her activity to determine its propensity for accomplishing this task. For the purpose of the analysis, I examined both her lesson plan as well as the guided reading questions she initially distributed to the students to aid them during the reading process. In order to supplement this analysis, I include some of comments made by Maria both in her reports as well as in the mini-course.

Due to the physical and time constraints Maria was facing when she began the activity, she initially proposed ten guided reading questions that the students would use as they independently read the book at home. Maria eventually abandoned the at-home reading given the difficulties that the students were having, she continued to use the guided reading questions. In the mini-course, during the lesson planning workshops, I distributed a table created by Molden (2007), adapted from McLaughlin and Devoogd (2004), that presents some sample problem-posing questions that can be used to promote critical literacy.

Table 11 – Guided Reading Questions vs. Molden (2007)

Guided Reading Questions
1. What are some personal characteristics of Ruby? 2. What made Ruby have these characteristics? 3. What is the main theme in the story? 4. What is your opinion about this theme? 5. Is there are problem in the story? If yes, what is it? 6. How do you think Ruby feels? 7. Which of Ruby’s actions caught your attention the most? 8. Imagine that you were in Ruby’s position? What would you have done? 9. What does the author of the book want us to know? 10. What do the images show us?
Problem-Posing Questions Present (MOLDEN, 2007, p. 53)
• 2 – How are children, teenagers or young adults constructed in this text? • 9 - What does the composer of the text want us to know? • 10 - What do the images suggest?

Considering that the questions Maria elaborated were intended to be used to guide her students, it appears that she has two main objectives. First, as evidenced primarily by the first five questions, she sought to measure the students’ general reading comprehension and to make sure that they were actually understanding the book’s plot and other important literary components. The remaining questions start to become more critical in nature, encouraging the students to question authorial intention and to investigate the book from other perspectives. Of the ten questions, I was only able to identify three that had potential to promote a critical stance. Yet, since these questions are intended for the purposes of guided reading, however, it is also necessary for Maria to accompany the students, providing necessary background knowledge to aid in student comprehension of the text and questioning the students so that they begin to “seek out multiple perspectives, and become active thinkers who comprehend from a critical stance” (MCLAUGHLIN; DEVOOGD, 2004, p. 61-62). As an initial activity, I do not believe that the guided reading questions on their own can adequately promote critical multicultural literacy and they must be supplemented by other learning tasks.

In an effort to better understand the thought process behind the questions, I asked Maria why how she decided on these questions and what she hoped they would accomplish. She answered:

I thought about questions that put them in position to share their ideas about a variety of topics that can be addressed through Ruby’s story. For example, racism, segregation, strength, prejudice, rights, society etc (my translation).

From her response, it is possible to make some important observations. Maria's first thought is that, by answering these questions, the students would be able to position themselves in relation to a number of topics. She lists topics that are all important social issues and many of them have direct connections to important characteristics of critical multicultural literacy, such as racism, segregation and prejudice. Critical multicultural literacy asks students to take critical stances in order to reason multiculturally and question everyday occurrences. Furthermore, "in multicultural education, dialoguing about a text is as important as reading it (RICE, 2005), because dialogue is '[...] an initial action for self and societal critique that can lead to more complex actions such as discussions that challenge anti-democratic social injustices'" (BERCAW; COLLINS, 2007, p. 31 apud DAVILA; SOUZA, 2013, p. 1214, my translation). By taking a critical stance to these issues, the students will position themselves better to question these issues and take action to promote equity and justice. This is not to say, however, that just by reading the book and answering these questions that they will accomplish this task, it requires the thoughtful and active guidance of Maria throughout the other steps in the process.

When I examined Maria's lesson plan (see Table 8) to determine its propensity for promoting critical multicultural literacy, I identified some parts that were more suitable than others. For example, as a creative evaluative component, Maria suggested making posters to present messages, opinions and reflections about racism. This activity creates possibilities to explore all of the elements of critical multicultural literacy, especially the third and fourth elements. By using literacy skills to share opinions about social issues such as racism, the students are able to explore and potentially unequal power relations within sociopolitical systems. Furthermore, they could extend this understanding to other marginalized cultural and ethnic groups both in Brazil and in English-speaking countries. In relation to the fourth element, Hayik (2015) shows how creating posters about social issues can be a way of promoting social justice as it offers avenues for the students to become active rather than passive actors. It is important to mention, however, that this analysis corresponds to possible ways in which critical multicultural literacy could be promoted and not necessarily the actions that Maria took. In the following sections, I present some concrete ways in which both the students and Maria encouraged the development of critical multicultural literacy.

5.3.2 Element One: It isn't Fair!

In order to begin to see the world through a multicultural lens, it is necessary to have some kind of stimulus that recasts everyday occurrences in a new light. For Maria and her students, this stimulus came in the form of the book *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, prompting them to engage in critical conversations about important societal and cultural matters. As discussed in the previous chapter, Maria's students did not previously have the habit of reading literary texts in English, let alone of a multicultural nature. The main issue that Maria emphasized was racism as it was one of the more overt themes present in the book and, as a result, most of the class discussion revolved around this topic. For example, one 12th grade student named Daniela wrote the following as a reaction to the book:

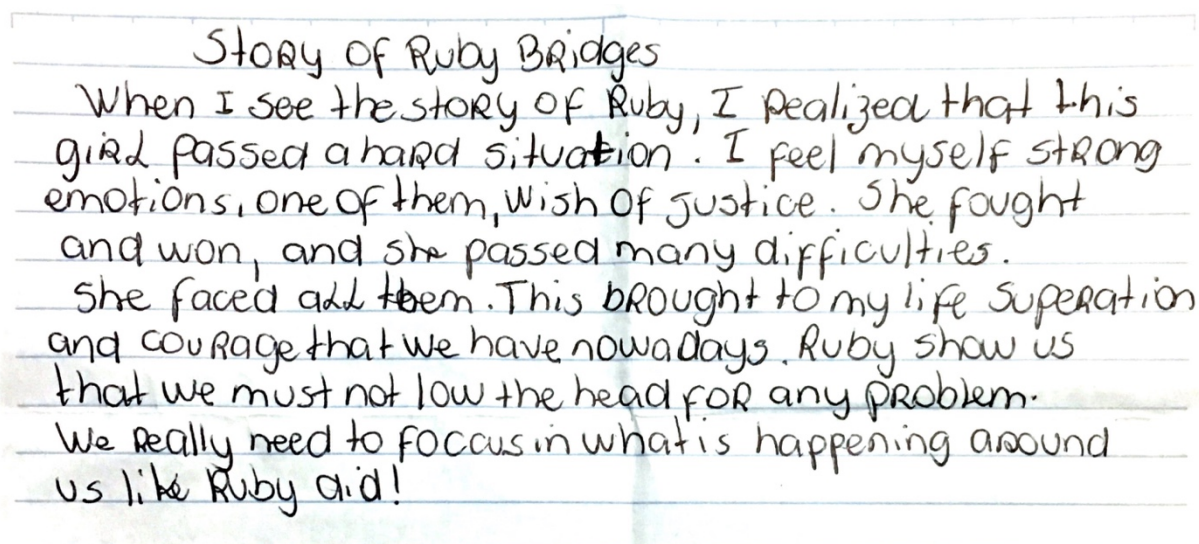


Figure 4 – When I see the story of Ruby, I realized that this girl passed a hard situation. I feel myself strong emotions, one of them, wish of justice. She fought and won, and she passed many difficulties. She faced all them. This brought to my life *superation* and courage that we have nowadays. Ruby show us that we must not low the head for any problem. We really need to *foccus* in what is happening around us like Ruby did!

Daniela's reaction includes a number components that are characteristic of the first element of critical multicultural literacy. For example, she stresses the importance of paying greater attention to our surroundings, in other words, begin to examine ordinary events and situations that could be problematic. Daniela encountered issues with the reality that Ruby faced and that others continue to face today, desiring an alternate reality where there is justice. She sees courage and determination as the fundamental keys to surmounting difficult social issues, namely racism.

Similarly to Daniela, Fernando and Vinicius also began to multiculturally question everyday occurrences through their reflections about racism that arose by reading the book. The poster they created at the end of the activity with their reflections is reproduced below:

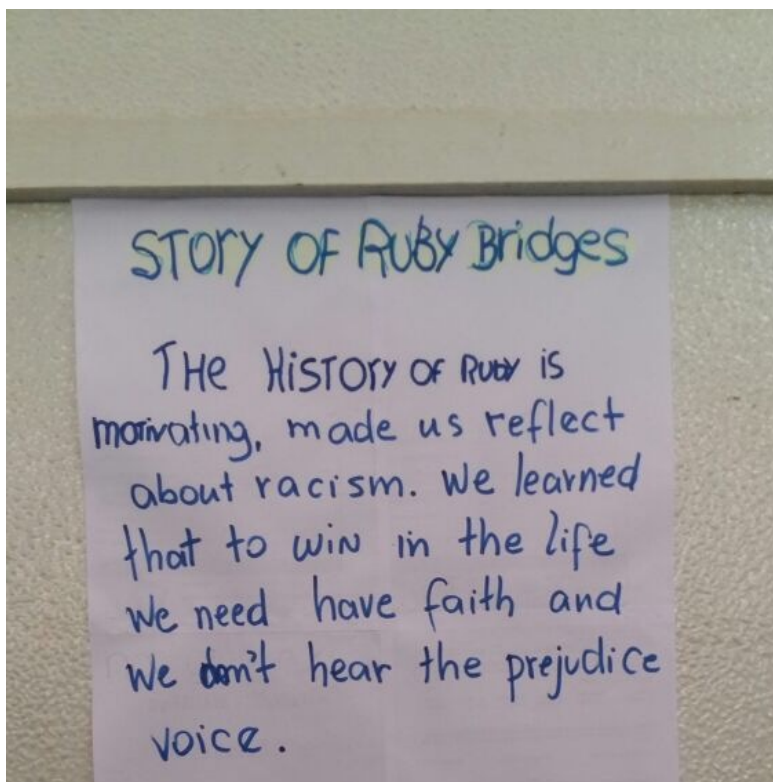


Figure 5 – The history of Ruby is motivating, made us reflect about racism. We learned that to win in the life we need have faith and we don't hear the prejudice voice.

Fernando and Vinicius, through their poster, start to imagine an alternate reality in which they have faith and are able to successfully ignore prejudicial attitudes. In this way, they are gaining expanded understandings about the social disparities that different cultural and ethnic groups face in their daily lives, understandings that will be essential for taking informed action in the other elements (LEWISON; FLINT; VAN SLUYS, 2002). Of course, the solutions that Daniela, Fernando and Vinicius propose are not the only ones and they might be supplemented with others as they begin to see the world with different perspectives and as they begin to investigate unequal power relations.

Another example of the presence of the first element of critical multicultural literacy resulted from the students' critical encounters with the text. According to DeNicolò and Franquíz

(2006), “critical encounters emerge when a word, concept, or event in a story surprises, shocks or frightens the reader or readers to such a degree that they seek to inquire further about the vocabulary or event” (p. 157). Many times, considering that that the book was read in an EFL context, these reactions were due to vocabulary questions, although the images occasionally sparked these reactions as well. One such example of a critical encounter follows below:

Vitor: Teacher, what does it wasn’t fair mean?

Maria: Não era justo.

Vitor: It wasn’t at all! But she’s determined!²⁰

The short excerpt above is an example of Vitor having a critical encounter with the text that results in him problematizing reality and questioning the status quo. In this situation, he was shocked by the fact that Ruby, as an African-American girl, was denied access to a quality education and was forced to study in substandard schools due to the color of her skin. This surprise manifested itself when he sought to understand the phrase “it wasn’t fair”, subsequently rejecting the situation depicting in the book by emphatically repeating back the same phrase. In yet another example, Alice had a critical encounter with the text when coming across the word “federal marshals”.

Alice: Teacher, are federal marshals like police?

Maria: They are like the federal police here in Brazil.

Alice: Wow, a six-year-old needed the federal police to take her to school? That’s absurd!²¹

In this situation Alice, having used clues from the images, deduces that federal marshals are a type of police, although she remains unsure of how they differ from the traditional police. When Maria confirmed that their Brazilian equivalent would be the federal police she incredulously responds, calling the entire situation absurd. Another student, Paulina, shares Alice’s sense of absurdity writing the following:

²⁰ My translation

²¹ My translation

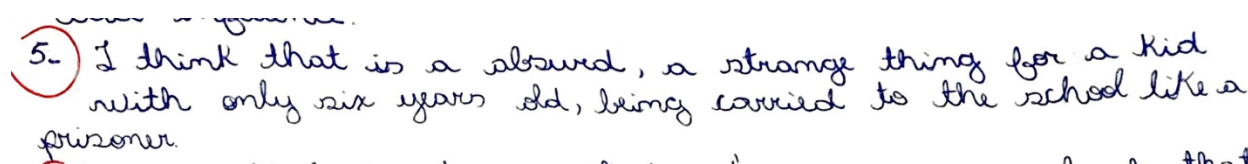


Figure 6 – I think that is a absurd, a strange thing for a kid with only six years old, being carried to the school like a prisoner.

For Paulina, the scene where Ruby is escorted into the school building by the federal marshals is ridiculous because it gives the impression that Ruby is the bad person, the prisoner. In order to follow-up on this response, I asked Paulina again why she thought this scene was so absurd to which she responded “*the white people are bad. Not Ruby. The only thing she want is go to school, an education*”. Both of these students question the dominant social norms that elevate whites and subjugate blacks, finding these norms to be illogical and worthy of being challenged.

5.3.3 Element Two: What Would I Do?

On the day of my last visit to the classroom, one of Maria’s former students, Lorena, joined the other students for the discussion. Although Lorena had graduated the year prior, in 2015, she frequently participated in the classes due to her close, personal bond with Maria. Many of Maria’s current students looked up to Lorena as a role model, principally due to her advanced level of English and because she is one of the few students from the school who have gone on to achieve success. Lorena saw herself as a motivator in the classroom, encouraging her former classmates to continue their studies and to serve as a visible example that it is possible to learn English in Brazilian public schools. At the end of the discussion, Lorena provided the following closing remarks:

*We are going to have more of these experiences, we are going to learn English, talk about literature, **we are going to be in contact with other cultures**, we are going to discuss these social issues because it’s really important that we do this. **Literature helps us change our perspective, transform us.** We are the future of society and it all starts here. We have to think big, think universally but act locally (my translation, my emphasis).*

In Lorena’s comments, she attributes the importance of reading literature to the inevitability of contact with different cultures and that literary texts have a transformative power that can help students learn about these cultures. Moreover, she simultaneously justifies the wider inclusion of literature in the EFL classroom by arguing that literary texts are an excellent vehicle for considering other perspectives, especially when other cultures are involved. After Lorena

shared her comments, I asked her, in Portuguese, if she felt that, after reading *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, she was able to understand the story and see the world from different perspectives. She responded:

First, I tried to put myself in Ruby's shoes and I thought, what would I have done if I were Ruby? But I was also curious about why the white people were so angry and what made them that way. What were their reasons for stopping Ruby? I also wondered what I would do if I were Ms. Henry. Would I have stayed to teach Ruby? (my translation).

From this excerpt, it is possible to see how Lorena investigated many competing narratives in the story to help her better understand the plot. Not only did she focus on the perspective of Ruby, but she also tried to understand why the whites hated Ruby and why Ms. Henry decided to stay and teach Ruby. Questions such as these have the potential to lead her to discover the sociohistorical influences that impacted and helped to shape each of these characters. Furthermore, by considering what she would have done in the same situations, she becomes more aware of the cultural influences that molded her identity and how these influences impact our choices in different sociopolitical circumstances. It is important, however, that Lorena doesn't begin to essentialize certain groups, such as the white protesters, thinking that all white southerners are racist. Taking a critical stance and using multicultural reasoning, however, helps to mitigate this risk.

Many of the students in Maria's class had previously suffered racism in both subtle and overt ways and they were easily able to put themselves into Ruby's shoes. They all seemed hyper-aware, however, that the racism that they experienced in Brazil did not compare to the racism that Ruby experienced in the United States due to sociohistorical differences. They nevertheless understood the effects that racism has on a person and understood the actions and decisions that Ruby took. For example, one student who strongly identified with Ruby was Taís. Speaking about one of the effects that the book had on her, Taís wrote the following:

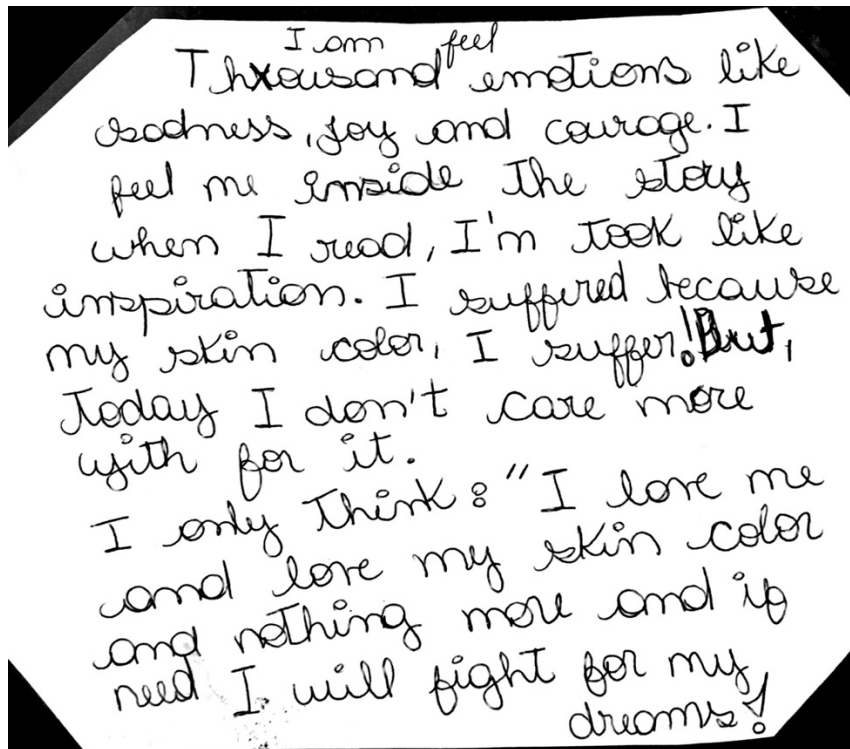


Figure 7 – I am feel thousand emotions like goodness, joy and courage. I feel me inside the story when I read, I'm took like inspiration. I suffered because my skin color, I suffer! But today I don't care more with for it. I only think: "I love me and love my skin color and nothing more and if I need I will fight for my dreams.

Taís says that she sees herself in the story and that she, like Ruby, suffered and continues to suffer as a result of her skin color. By reading the book, Taís is able to understand Ruby's difficulties by comparing her own personal narrative with Ruby's and she is unable to accept a reality where someone is discriminated against due to the color of their skin. She rejects this reality by saying that she no longer cares for it and, in the process, produces a new counternarrative in which she is a proud and determined black girl who will stop at nothing to achieve her dreams. The recognition of multiple cultural and ethnic perspectives is necessary for students to be able to question the acceptability of unequal power relations and to propose alternate realities. Finally, personal connections made by students help them to consider multiple perspectives on the way to taking action to promote anti-bias and educational equity (GOPALAKRISHNAN, 2011).

5.3.4 Element Three: Investigating Sociopolitical Systems

The third element of critical multicultural literacy was principally evident in comments made by the students in reaction to the text. These remarks were often made when discussing *The Story of Ruby Bridges*' role in the larger society and its potential impact. For example,

I loved this story. It is a big inspiration for the children of the world, mainly the black boys and the black girls.

Comments such as this were frequent throughout the development of the activity, an indication that the students are beginning to step out of their personal spheres to consider how other individuals might benefit from reading a text like *The Story of Ruby Bridges*. In a way, this comment implicitly recognizes that many children of color suffer discrimination and do not have access to the same opportunities as white children. Furthermore, by saying that black boys and black girls would benefit from reading this book, this student also seems to be partially aware of issues of visibility and representation of children of color, who often do not see themselves reflected in the pages of children's books (NAIDTICH, 2009). Molden (2007) consider questions such as "who benefits from the text" to be the type of problem-posing question indicative of a critical stance. Encouraging students to ask questions such as this when engaging with a text is an important strategy to develop critical multicultural literacy skills.

Another situation involving the third element of critical multicultural literacy was brought about partly due to my status as a foreigner. When I first arrived at Maria's school, many of her students were curious about my experience as a foreigner in Brazil and, in particular, why I chose to leave the United States to live in Brazil. One student went as far to say

But life in the United States is such much better than it is in Brazil. You left what so many Brazilians want. But I guess you are American, so things are easier for you here. Brazilians like Americans (my translation).

This student's commentary indicates that, albeit through a number of generalizations, Brazilians tend to see the United States in a positive light. Although this comment can and should be taken as the opinion of one individual Brazilian, other students repeated the same discourse in many of their questions and responses. Several students believed that many of the problems present in Brazilian society are not present or are, at the very least, only minor concerns in the United States. Furthermore, while this student does not explicitly state that there is a hierarchy of

immigrant acceptance in Brazil, her affirmation that Brazilians like Americans implies that there might be immigrants from other countries who are less accepted. Beliefs such as these converge to inflate the power of the United States and its culture in Brazil often in a way that oversimplifies and masks social issues present in both countries. However, by reading *The Story of Ruby Bridges*, some of the students started questioning this idealism of the United States. For example,

The problems don't stop with Ruby. The Black people have many problems today in United States. All the time we see on TV the police shoot and kill black people. They see a black person and think criminal.

Vitor's comment about the Black experience in the United States is important, especially given the previously described context, in that it breaks with the dominant thinking of the United States being a so-called better country. Vitor was able to use the story about Ruby Bridges to make connections with current events, namely the shootings of Terence Crutcher²² and Keith Scott²³ that happened a month prior and sparked protests around the United States. In this sense, Vitor is using his English literacy skills as a means to participate in the politics of daily life (LANKSHEAR; MCLAREN, 1993) and to begin to investigate unequal power relations in sociopolitical systems, emphasizing that this power imbalance is the direct result of one's ethnicity or racial background.

One of the most significant moments representing the third element of critical multicultural literacy came when Taís, one of Maria's 10th grade students, told us about the impact that this book had on her. She said:

What can I say? For me, this story was really captivating. It helped me a lot because it came into my life at the most marvelous moment. Before Maria showed us this book, I was already feeling kind of bad about [racism]. I was participating in some social movements with my cousin and I saw the power that black people have when they come together. Not just black people, but all people who suffer prejudice. When Maria showed me this book, I, I felt really, well at first I was really shaken, because unfortunately, or fortunately, I don't know, I put myself into Ruby's shoes and I know what she went through, because I have suffered racism myself. It hurts, it hurts a lot. And it's just so sad that society has got to this point, to the point where you aren't accepted for who you are. And it's not just black

²² Terence Crutcher was shot and killed on September 16th, 2016 in Tulsa, Oklahoma by a white police officer. Crutcher was reportedly armed and was shot next to his vehicle after police ordered him to raise his hands. No weapon was found at the scene.

²³ Keith Lamont Scott was shot and killed on September 20th, 2016 in Charlotte, North Carolina by a black police officer. Police encountered Scott when searching for a suspect in another crime. Police demanded that he leave his car with his hands up and, when it appeared that he was exiting the vehicle with a weapon in his hand, police shot him. The veracity of Scott having a gun is disputed by Scott's wife and other witnesses present at the scene.

people who feel this, but gays and transgendered people, people from different social classes and with different beliefs, I don't know, people who are just different (my translation).

The excerpt from Taís serves as a good example of how the third element of critical multicultural literacy was present in Maria's classroom. Taís' experiences participating in social movements together with her previous experiences with racism means that she is already aware of the racial disparities present in Brazilian society. It appears, however, that reading about Ruby Bridges cemented this conviction in her mind, helping her expand her understanding of unequal power relations to other marginalized groups, including the LGBTQ community, those of less prestigious social classes and those with non-mainstream beliefs. More specifically, these reflections caused her to be aware of the impact that one's skin color, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status have the access one has in different sociopolitical situations. Taís laments that, even in 2016, western society still struggles to accept those who are different from the dominant culture. Finally, reflections like Taís' are important for students to have as they are an important component of praxis and ways for the students to rewrite their identities as social activists, important aspects of the fourth element of critical multicultural literacy, to be discussed in the next section.

5.3.5 Element Four: Connecting to the Community

During my last visit to the school, Maria invited some former students who had been reading the book to participate in the discussion. While most of these students were recent graduates, there was one individual present, Marcella, who was older than the rest. Initially I did not know that Marcella was a former student and I assumed that she was another teacher in the school, as they occasionally looked in on the activities out of curiosity. Marcella was silent for most of the discussion and only spoke after Maria invited her to introduce herself to the rest of the students.

My name is Marcella and twenty years ago, I studied at this school and I was one of Maria's students. My daughter also attended this school and graduated two years ago. Since I still frequently see Maria around the neighborhood, she invited me to participate in this project. I have a degree in public relations and I work for the State health department but I also study journalism and advertising. I really identified with the story in this book. It makes me really emotional because I think I was strong like Ruby. I never let myself believe what others said, that I would never be able to achieve what I have achieved today because of the color of my skin (my translation, my emphasis).

A number of interesting points can be gleaned not only from this excerpt, but also from Marcella's mere presence in the school. According to Weil (1993), one important characteristic of critical multicultural literacy is its emphasis on educational equity, especially in the form of encouraging parents and community members to join the struggle for social justice. He argues that "parents need to be recruited...as decision makers in the critical construction of an equitable educational theory and practice designed to meet the needs of their children within a democratic life" (WEIL, 1993, p. 215). Maria's simple act of inviting Marcella to participate in the project is significant because, given the interest Marcella showed, it is likely that Maria would invite other parents or community members into her classroom. One of the most important first steps in stimulating educational equity, and thus critical multicultural literacy, is "mobilizing all adults in the school, at home, and in the community to promote critical academic and social skills for **all** students" (WEIL, 1993, p. 125, emphasis in the original). In this sense, I believe that Maria is beginning to advocate for her students both in and out of the school through the formation of a network of adults that will support them.

Another example of how Maria developed the fourth element of critical multicultural literacy with her activity was her decision to hang the posters the students created around the school. Hayik (2012) points to the creation of posters or using other artistic forms as a way for the students to "rewrite their identities as social activists who challenge the status quo and demand change, develop powerful voices and...speak out collectively against injustice" (LEWISON; LELAND; HARSTE, 2008, p. 12). Furthermore, hanging these posters around the school invites the other students and teachers to read their critical messages, potentially contributing the development of their critical consciousness. While this exposure is important, it likely will not contribute to sustaining dialogues about social injustice which requires further and continued action. To maintain continuity, the contact with the larger school community must be upheld so that "parents and students begin to see education as a life-long commitment to social responsibility, structural transformation and social action" (WEIL, 1993, p. 215).

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I examined how the four different elements of critical literacy manifested themselves in both research stages. In the mini-course, the first element was observed in the ways

that the participants questioned taken-for-granted definitions of culture, seeking to expand their understanding of what culture is and what it does. The second element was present in the teachers' discussions about the role culture plays in influencing our identities and how it impacts the ways we approach and make meaning from different texts. Moreover, the teachers examined the importance of having sufficient cultural knowledge to be able to critically engage with a literary text and consider the multiple viewpoints present in it. The third dimension was evident in the way that the teachers investigated the way that power relations shape their jobs as EFL teachers and how they can critically reshape the curriculum through the use of multicultural children's literature. Finally, although the fourth element appeared to a lesser extent compared to the others, the teachers still demonstrated an inclination to develop democratically oriented lessons that promote social justice.

Maria's lesson also contributed to the development of each of the four elements of critical multicultural literacy to varying degrees. The first element was present in the critical encounters provoked by the text in which the students took a critical stance to problematize reality and the status quo. In the second element, some students were able to put themselves into the shoes of Ruby and other characters in the book in order to better understand both the characters, and themselves, as socioculturally constructed beings. In the third element, the students used their English literacy skills to examine the impact of unequal power relations both in the real world and the world of the text. Last, the fourth element was brought about by the actions undertaken by Maria and her students to involve the wider school community in the pursuit of educational equity and social justice for all students.

Finally, it is important to mention that, when I began to carry out my research, I had grand expectations about how the students would engage with multicultural literature and take action to combat social injustices in their schools and communities. My idealism began to subside as the very real constraints of my research design and site set in, and I began to become disillusioned. I had to constantly remind myself

...that significant changes in beliefs and attitudes are rare and happen slowly, over the course of many years, we've come to understand that a different and no less powerful kind of change can be imagined when students read, discuss, and write about multicultural literature – a change that we define as an increased willingness to “try on” different perspectives (THEIN; BEACH; PARKS, 2007, p. 55)

While the authors found that transformative change in their classroom took the form of an increased willingness to “try on” perspectives, I would also argue that this transformative change can be expanded to include the four elements of critical multicultural literacy. Furthermore, I believe that the students used and learned both Portuguese and English in such a way that they were able to transform themselves and their communities (MATTOS; VALÉRIO, 2010). In the end, there is no doubt that the mini-course and Maria’s lesson involved the both the teachers and the students in critical conversations about important social issues that impact the lives of many of the participants on a daily basis.

CHAPTER 6

FINAL REFLECTIONS

“If there’s a book that you want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.”

-Toni Morrison

The research described in this thesis occurred in the context of continuing teacher education as well as in a public school located in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte. It sought to investigate pertinent issues relating to the teaching of EFL as well as to contribute to contemporary debates about critical new literacy studies and their pedagogical importance. The research was divided into two stages; a mini-course to prepare teachers to use multicultural literary texts in their classrooms and class observations to comprehend how multicultural children’s literature can promote critical multicultural literacy.

The first chapter contextualizes and presents a rationale for the research through an analysis of Brazilian educational public policies in an effort to show the absence of explicit encouragement of the teaching of literature in Brazilian public schools. Openings, however, are present in some documents, notably the OCEM and the BNCC, that make it possible to argue for the greater inclusion of literature, especially of a multicultural nature, in EFL classrooms. Finally, this chapter explains my motivations for using multicultural children’s literature in this research before presenting my objectives

In the second chapter, the theoretical foundations of the research are presented. I begin by unpacking the term critical multicultural literacy through explanations of its constituent parts. The concept of literacy is explored to show its inherent complexity as well as some of its principal theoretical models. Next, I trace literacy’s evolution to critical multicultural literacy, beginning with an examination of what it means to be critical before presenting some definitions of critical literacy. Because the research described in this thesis involves the use of literature, I devote special attention to explaining the epistemological and ontological differences between critical reading and critical literacy in an effort to more clearly show why a literacy, instead of a reading, approach

is favored. After discussing critical literacy, some definitions of culture are explored in order to analyze the concept of multiculturalism, especially critical multiculturalism. Considering the fact that critical literacy and critical multiculturalism are ideologically similar and share comparable educational objectives, I believe that they can be combined to form critical multicultural literacy. Finally, I define what I understand critical multicultural literacy to be before discussing its connections to different theories about multicultural children's literature.

The third chapter is dedicated to presenting my methodological choices and research design. I review relevant issues relating to qualitative research and ethnographic case studies before moving on to discuss the principal data generation methods used. I supplement these theoretical discussions by presenting the research participants, the corpus of multicultural children's books used over the course of the study and the procedure for collecting data. Finally, I consider other important methodological points such as the criteria used for selecting quality multicultural literature in both research stages.

The analysis of the data generation is divided into two thematic chapters that discuss the role of the multicultural literary text in Brazilian EFL classrooms as well as how multicultural children's literature can be used to promote critical multicultural literacy. The fourth chapter presents the results relating to the potential challenges and benefits of using literature to teach English. Moreover, it also discusses some issues that impeded Maria's ability to carry out her lesson as well as some of her activity's eventual successes. The fifth chapter is dedicated to presenting results that demonstrate the ways in which critical multicultural literacy was present in both research stages. Using a critical multicultural literacy framework composed of four elements, I discuss the extent to which each element was present in the comments, conversations and materials produced by both groups. In the end, it was possible to identify all four of the elements in both stages, although some elements were more evident than others.

The main objective of the research described in this thesis was to understand how multicultural children's literature could promote critical multicultural literacy in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Brazilian public schools. I sought this understanding by observing the actions and attitudes of the teachers and the students who participated in both research stages. In addition to this main objective, there were four specific objectives:

1. Discuss the importance of using literature, especially multicultural children's literature in the teaching of English as a foreign language.
2. Investigate how multicultural children's literature can be approached in order to promote critical multicultural literacy in the EFL classroom.
3. Understand the attitudes of teachers and students toward the use of multicultural children's literature.
4. Discuss the important role of critical multicultural education in the development of student-citizens.

Each of these objectives were contemplated and achieved over the course of the research and all are present in this thesis. Chapter four considers both the first and the third specific objectives while chapter five encompasses the second and fourth specific objectives. The results come together to show that, by actively reflecting on and proposing solutions to the social issues present in multicultural children's literature, it is possible to promote critical multicultural literacy in the EFL classroom. This research also demonstrates the importance of using literature to teach English as a foreign language and as well as a critical multicultural literacy perspective. Finally, although this research reached its objectives, it also raises other important issues that could have an impact of teacher education programs and related future studies. These two topics are the subjects of the following sections.

6.1 Implications for EFL Teacher Education Programs

One of the unintended consequences of this research was the realization of the fundamental importance of rethinking Brazilian teacher education programs to make working with multicultural literature possible in Brazilian schools. The participants of the mini-course brought up many relevant questions, and the results indicate some suggestions about how teacher licensure programs can address these concerns.

As discussed at the beginning of this thesis, Lourenço (2011) and Colasante (2006) call attention to the very instrumental nature of Brazilian public educational policies. These authors argue that these policies consider the primary aim of foreign language education in public schools to be the acquisition of grammar for the purposes of passing, for example, university entrance exams. While the principal objective of any foreign language course should be the learning of the

target language, an objective which naturally requires teaching grammatical structures, in public schools there are additional responsibilities and commitments, such as citizenship education. Both the PCN and the OCEM, for example, stress the important connection between foreign language and citizenship education but the theory of the public policies is often not put in practice in classrooms because, as Gimenez (2009) observes, they exist in two separate and parallel worlds. Gimenez continues, maintaining that many Brazilian curricular guidelines “do not address the pressing issues facing teachers and students, issues normally linked to teaching and learning conditions in schools (large classes, scarce resources, time, etc.)” (p. 43, my translation). In this sense, simply including multicultural literature in the foreign language curriculum is not enough. It is fundamental that government documents simultaneously take the very real institutional, sociocultural and linguistic challenges into consideration or else literature will be condemned to the parallel world of public policies where everything is said but nothing is done. Making the study of literature possible in Brazilian foreign language classrooms requires action by all involved, from those that write the policies to those that implement them in the schools.

Although formal pre-service or continuing education courses are necessary to help prepare teachers to appropriately use multicultural children’s literature in the EFL classroom, these courses must be supplemented by ample opportunities for the teachers to put what they are learning to use. For example, Maria stressed the fact that the mini-course gave her the confidence she was lacking to begin to formally work with literature, yet she also places great emphasis on what she learned as a result of actually trying to use a literary text in her classroom. It is impossible to account for every variation in teacher education courses and, as a result, it is necessary to prepare teachers so that they have the skills to address any potential obstacles. Furthermore, providing opportunities for collaboration and discussion in teacher education courses could help teachers solve their problems through collective dialogue with others experiencing similar issues. Finally, in order to approach the study of multicultural literature in a way that could help promote critical multicultural literacy,

teachers themselves need experiences as analytically critical readers of multicultural texts so that they can engage children in dynamic discussions about important issues and ideas. We acknowledge that is not possible for teachers to know everything about every culture. However, we believe that what is more important is that teachers themselves need to cultivate the habit of approaching literature with a questioning and wondering stance. A critical pedagogy must start with teachers thoughtfully engaging literature themselves and then sharing similar processes with their students (FU; FANG; LAMME, 2000, p. 273).

In this sense, working with multicultural children's literature is never a finished process. It is a process that continually transforms itself as teachers and students explore new and different multicultural literary texts. Grounding teacher education programs in different critical theories, like critical multicultural literacy, will give the teachers the tools they need to responsibly approach these texts with their students and will help to sensitize them to the needs of today's multicultural classrooms. Reiterating Naditch's (2009) arguments, classrooms today are multicultural as each student has a different cultural and ethnic identity that they bring to the classroom and it is fundamental that teachers are prepared to deal with this diversity.

6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

Given the fact that this research has a number of implications for EFL teacher educational programs, it is important that more research is carried out on how multicultural literature can be incorporated into teacher licensure courses at Brazilian universities. Numerous authors (FESTINO, 2007; CARBONIERI, 2012; 2016, XAVIER, 2014) all point to the need of pluralizing the literary curriculum in English to include the frequently silenced voices of authors from outside the inner circle of English-speaking countries and those who write about the experiences of marginalized communities in any English-speaking country. Studying the effects of using a pluralistic literary curriculum based in a critical multicultural literacy approach in pre-service teacher education programs would richly contribute to similar discussions happening in the field of applied linguistics.

Other related studies that could make invaluable contributions would be those that focus on using multicultural literary texts based in critical perspectives with students who belong to the dominant class and culture. Thein et. al (2007) argue that students of color or students from less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds inherently possess knowledge about the social issues present in multicultural texts because they live these experiences on a daily basis. Multicultural texts are no less important in validating the experiences of these groups, yet their potential for impact on students who do not often question the status quo and the privilege that benefits them is enormous. This impact is especially consequential in countries like Brazil, where class divisions are especially severe and having these types of critical conversations and encounters with texts

could lead to action and real change that promotes educational equity and social justice for all students.

6.3 Final Insights

Over the course of my research journey, I endeavored to understand how multicultural children's literature could be used to promote critical multicultural literacy in the teaching of EFL. Like Maria, for as much as I planned my research and for I much as I tried to account for every detail, new challenges always arose. Initially I thought that this research would cause immediate transformational change in the lives of the students, expectations that I now realize were overly idealistic. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that some change did subtly occur and I do believe that seeds were planted in the minds of the teachers and the students. Only time will tell the true impact of this research, but for now I consider it to be a success.

Finally, I would also like to it clear that this research had an enormous impact on me both professionally and personally. This research affected me in ways that no amount of data could measure as I took away many lessons from all of the teachers and the students who participated. This experience cemented in my mind the fact that teaching is always a two-way road and, for as much as we influence our students, they also have an enormous power to change us as teachers. Every time we enter a classroom we are one person, but we are never quite the same person when we leave. Maria and her students changed me in many ways and this change was all due to literature. There should be no question that multicultural literature is important, it is valuable and it has a place in EFL classrooms and, in the words of Maria, *"I'm excited about the possibilities of doing new work with literature!"*.

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APPENDIX A – Mini-Course Syllabus

Mini-course

Using Multicultural Children's Literature to Promote Critical Literacy in the English Foreign Language Classroom

March-June 2016
Fridays (14:00-17:40) – 24 credit hours

Instructor: Alexander Knoblock
E-Mail: knoblock9@gmail.com

General Overview

The purpose of this mini-course is to discuss the use of multicultural children's literature in the English Foreign Language classroom with a critical literacy orientation. This course will also present a brief overview of the theoretical foundations of critical literacy and critical multiculturalism with the aim of stimulating conversations about their place in the English language curriculum in Brazilian schools. Additionally, participants will discuss how multicultural children's literature can contribute to the furthering the discussion about the importance of providing multicultural education in Brazil. Finally, the nature of this mini-course will be both theoretical and practical, culminating in the elaboration of activities based on multicultural children's books and grounded in the theories reviewed.

Assignments

Each student will design a sequence of activities based on one multicultural children's book. This sequence should:

- Be comprised of 4 activities implemented over the course of 4 50 minute classes.
- Promote the development of at least TWO language skills.
- Have one grammatical focus.
- Incentivize creativity on the part of the students.
- Be grounded in the theories of critical literacy and critical multiculturalism, aiming to create more socially aware and active students.

Attention!

- This course will be conducted entirely in English.
- Due to the short duration of this course attendance is mandatory for all 6 sessions. Please plan accordingly.

Calendar

March 18th, 2016 – Why children's literature?

Discussion of the importance and utility of using children's literature for all age levels in the EFL classroom.

April 1st, 2016 – Critical Literacy

What is critical literacy and how does it fit with children's literature in the EFL classroom?

April 8th, 2016 – Multiculturalism

Why do the books used need to be multicultural? Why use a multicultural approach in Brazil?

May 13th, 2016 – Lesson Planning Workshop

Workshop for preparation of activities using multicultural children's literature

May 20th, 2016 – Presentation of Activities

Students present the activities using multicultural children's literature.

June 17th, 2016 – Discussion of Results

Class	Date	Content & Readings
01	March 18 th	Why use children's literature? Reading 1: MORGADO, M. Literatura infantil e Interculturalidade: "Preparar os Leitores para a Vida". <i>EducarEducere</i>, n.22, p. 17-36, 2010. Disponível em: http://www.ipcb.pt/images/IPCIB/imagens/CulturaIPCIB/EducarEducere/Educare_22.pdf Reading 2: GOPALAKRISHNAN, A. <i>Multicultural Children's Literature: A Critical Issues Approach</i>. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2010. P. 3-48. Reading 3: COLASANTE, R. C. O lugar do Texto Literário na Sala de Aula de Língua Inglesa. <i>Revista Ctop</i>, v.11, p. 317-323, 2006.
02	April 1 st	Critical Literacy and Foreign Language Education Reading 4: LEWISON, M.; FLINT, A. S.; VAN SLUYS, K. Taking on Critical Literacy: The Journey of Newcomers and Novices. <i>Language Arts</i>, p. 382-392, May 2002. Reading 5: MATTOS, A. M. A. Novos Letramentos, ensino de língua estrangeira e o papel da escolar pública no século XXI. <i>Revista X</i>, v. 1, p. 33-47, 2011. Disponível em: <http://ojs.c3sl.ufpr.br/ojs/index.php/revistax/article/view/22474>
03	April 8 th	Multiculturalism and Multicultural Education Reading 6: NAIDITCH, F. Literatura multicultural e diversidade na sala de aula. <i>Educação</i>, Porto Alegre, p. 25-32, jan./abr. 2009 Reading 7: KUBOTA, R. Critical multiculturalism and second language education. In: Norton, B. e Toohey, K. (orgs.) <i>Critical pedagogies and language learning</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 30-51.
04	May 13 th	Lesson Planning Workshop Reading 8: LANDT, S. M. Multicultural Literature and Young Adolescents: A Kaleidoscope of Opportunity. <i>Journal of Adolescent & Young Adult Literacy</i>, v. 49, n.8, p. 690-697, maio 2009. Reading 9: YOKOTA, J. Issues in Selecting Multicultural Children's Literature. <i>Language Arts</i>, v. 70, n. 3, p.156-167, mar 1993.
05	May 20 th	Presentation of Activities
06	June 17 th	Reflection and Discussion of Results

APPENDIX B – Mini-Course Questionnaire (Portuguese)

QUESTIONÁRIO

O breve questionário a seguir solicitará informações relativas à sua experiência com o uso de literatura infanto-juvenil no ensino-aprendizagem de língua inglesa. Este questionário faz parte de um minicurso intitulado "USING MULTICULTURAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE TO PROMOTE CRITICAL LITERACY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM" que objetiva discutir como a literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural pode favorecer o letramento crítico nas aulas de língua inglesa em escolas públicas brasileiras. Este minicurso compõe uma pesquisa de mestrado, orientada pela Profa. Dra. Miriam Lúcia dos Santos Jorge, no âmbito do Programa de Estudos Linguísticos da Faculdade de Letras da UFMG, e realizada pelo pesquisador Alexander Knoblock. O questionário está dividido em duas partes – “identificação pessoal” e “experiências com literatura infanto-juvenil”. O questionário NÃO toma muito tempo e deve demorar cerca de 20 minutos para ser respondido. Agradecemos imensamente por sua contribuição!

PRIMEIRA PARTE – IDENTIFICAÇÃO PESSOAL

1. Idade: _____
2. Sexo:
 - () Feminino
 - () Masculino
 - () Outro: _____
3. Autodeclaração de raça (Segundo classificação do IBGE):
 - () Negro
 - () Pardo
 - () Indígena
 - () Branco
 - () Amarelo
4. Qual sua maior titulação acadêmica?
 - () Ensino Médio
 - () Ensino Superior – Licenciatura em Letras
 - () Ensino Superior – Bacharelado em Letras
 - () Ensino Superior – Licenciatura em outro curso

- ☐ Ensino Superior – Bacharelado em outro curso
 - ☐ Especialização: Curso - _____
 - ☐ Ensino Superior – Mestrado
 - ☐ Ensino Superior – Doutorado
5. A resposta indicada na pergunta anterior ocorreu em qual âmbito educacional?
- ☐ Público
 - ☐ Particular
6. Há quantos anos você obteve o nível de escolaridade assinalado anteriormente?
- ☐ Há 2 anos ou menos
 - ☐ De 3 a 7 anos
 - ☐ De 8 a 14 anos
 - ☐ De 15 a 20 anos
 - ☐ Há mais de 20 anos
7. Você leciona em qual tipo de escola?
- ☐ Escola pública
 - ☐ Municipal
 - ☐ Estadual
 - ☐ Federal
 - ☐ Escola particular
 - ☐ Curso de idiomas
 - ☐ Outro: _____
8. Há quanto tempo você ministra aulas de língua inglesa?
- ☐ Menos de 1 ano
 - ☐ Entre 1-5 anos
 - ☐ Entre 5-10 anos
 - ☐ Entre 10-15 anos
 - ☐ Mais de 15 anos
9. Atualmente, você trabalha com quais níveis de alunos? (mais de uma opção é possível)
- ☐ Educação infantil
 - ☐ Ensino Fundamental I (1º ano a 5º ano)
 - ☐ Ensino Fundamental II (6º ano a 9º ano)
 - ☐ Ensino Médio (1ª série a 3ª série)
 - ☐ Ensino Superior

() Outro: _____

SEGUNDA PARTE – EXPERIÊNCIAS COM LITERATURA INFANTO-JUVENIL

10. O que você entende por literatura infanto-juvenil?

11. Quais livros infanto-juvenis em língua inglesa você conhece?

12. Em sua experiência como aluno(a) na educação básica, foi utilizada a literatura infanto-juvenil?

() Sim, mas apenas nas aulas de língua portuguesa

() Sim, mas apenas nas aulas de língua inglesa

() Sim, nas aulas de ambas as línguas

() Não

13. Durante sua formação para ser professor(a) de língua inglesa, foi abordada a literatura infanto-juvenil?

() Sim (Descreva brevemente o contexto)

() Não

14. Atualmente, você lê literatura infanto-juvenil?

() Sim (Descreva brevemente os contextos de leitura)

() Não

15. Você já usou (ou usa) a literatura infanto-juvenil nas suas aulas?

() Sim (Descreva brevemente suas ações, a(s) atividade(s), etc.)

() Não

16. Indique quais níveis você considera apropriados para usar a literatura infanto-juvenil para ensinar inglês: (mais de uma opção é possível)

() Educação infantil

() Ensino Fundamental I (1º ano a 5º ano)

() Ensino Fundamental II (6º ano a 9º ano)

() Ensino Médio (1ª série a 3ª série)

() Ensino Superior

() Outro _____

17. O que você entende por literatura multicultural?

18. No caso da utilização da literatura infanto-juvenil (multicultural) no ensino de inglês, poderia haver alguns desafios que impeçam a sua implementação? Explique.

19. No caso da utilização da literatura infanto-juvenil (multicultural) no ensino de inglês, poderia haver benefícios? Explique.

APPENDIX C – Mini-Course Informed Consent Form

Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido (Minicurso)

Caro professor(a):

Você está sendo convidado(a) a participar da pesquisa intitulada **“O uso de literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural para promover o letramento crítico no ensino de inglês”**, realizada pelo aluno do Programa de Pós-graduação (Mestrado) em Estudos Linguísticos da UFMG, Alexander Thomas Knoblock, sob a orientação da Profa. Miriam Lúcia dos Santos Jorge, da UFMG. O objetivo da pesquisa é compreender como a literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural, por meio das ações de professores e alunos, pode favorecer a promoção do letramento crítico nas aulas de inglês de escolas públicas brasileiras. Para alcançarmos nossos objetivos, precisaremos que você preencha um questionário inicial, realizar atividades ao longo do minicurso, e a disponibilizar outras informações, caso sejam necessários. É importante mencionar que os encontros do minicurso serão gravados somente em áudio. Além disso, é preciso que me permita observar algumas de suas aulas, a seu critério, no decorrer do semestre. Esclareço que, ainda que o material coletado possa ser utilizado por nós em trabalhos acadêmicos, as identidades dos participantes serão preservadas de quaisquer identificações, garantindo, portanto, o anonimato da escola, dos alunos e professores. Informamos que poderá ocorrer desconforto ao discutir os livros no minicurso por tratarem de assuntos polêmicos. Além disso, informamos que poderá ocorrer desconforto também no momento da gravação do minicurso; por esse motivo, é importante comunicar que a gravação será apagada após a defesa do meu mestrado, prevista para fevereiro de 2017.

Você não é obrigado(a) a participar da pesquisa. Assim, a participação é voluntária e você é livre, também para desistir de participar da pesquisa em qualquer momento considerado oportuno, sem nenhum prejuízo. Além disso, ao divulgar algum dado da pesquisa, o nome dos participantes não será utilizado, garantindo, portanto, o anonimato de todos. Caso surja qualquer dúvida ou problema, você poderá contatar a pesquisador responsável, Alexander Thomas Knoblock, no telefone: (31) 99169-2376, e-mail: knoblock9@gmail.com. Assim, se você se sentir suficientemente esclarecido(a), solicito a gentileza de assinar sua concordância no espaço abaixo. Uma via deste documento ficará com o(a) senhor(a) e a outra ficará com o pesquisador.

Eu, (seu nome) _____,
 confirmo estar esclarecido(a) sobre a pesquisa e concordo em participar dela.
 Belo Horizonte, _____ de _____ de 20 ____.

 Assinatura do(a) participante

 Alexander Thomas Knoblock (Pesquisador responsável)

Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa (COEP) da UFMG

Endereço: Avenida Antônio Carlos, 6627, Unidade Administrativa II, 2^o andar, sala 2005
 CEP: 31270-901, Belo Horizonte, MG, fone (31) 3409-4592, e-mail: coep@prpq.ufmg.br

APPENDIX D – Informed Consent Form (Minors)

Termo de assentimento do menor

Caro aluno,

Você está sendo convidado para participar da pesquisa **“O uso de literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural para promover o letramento crítico no ensino de inglês”**, que faz parte do curso de Pós-graduação em Estudos Linguísticos e é orientada pela professora Dra. Míriam Lúcia dos Santos Jorge da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. O objetivo da pesquisa é compreender como a literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural, por meio das ações de professores e alunos, pode favorecer a promoção do letramento crítico nas aulas de inglês de escolas públicas brasileiras. Seus pais permitiram que você participe. As pessoas que irão participar dessa pesquisa têm de 14 a 16 anos de idade. Você não precisa participar da pesquisa se não quiser, é um direito seu, não terá nenhum problema se desistir. Serão observadas as aulas nas quais você lerá um livro infanto-juvenil, discutir ela e participar de algumas atividades que sua professora desenvolverá. Por discutir assuntos que podem ser considerados polêmicos, você pode sentir desconforto. Caso aconteça algo errado, você pode nos procurar pelo telefone 31991692376 do pesquisador Alexander Thomas Knoblock ou no contato abaixo:

Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa (COEP) da UFMG

Endereço: Avenida Antônio Carlos, 6627, Unidade Administrativa II, 2º andar, sala 2005

CEP: 31270-901, Belo Horizonte, MG, fone (31) 3409-4592, e-mail: coep@prpq.ufmg.br

Mas há coisas boas que podem acontecer como a melhoria das aulas de inglês na escola e seu desenvolvimento linguístico, crítico e comunicativo através da participação nessas atividades. Além disso, você pode criar o hábito de ler mais literatura tanto em português quanto em inglês.

Ninguém saberá que você está participando da pesquisa, não falaremos a outras pessoas, nem daremos a estranhos as informações que você nos der. Os resultados da pesquisa vão ser publicados, mas sem identificar as pessoas que participaram da pesquisa. Quando terminarmos a pesquisa os resultados das atividades serão analisadas e discutidas para identificar os ganhos para você e seus colegas. Se você tiver alguma dúvida, você pode me perguntar. Eu escrevi o telefone na parte de cima desse texto.

Eu _____ aceito participar da pesquisa **O uso de literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural para promover o letramento crítico no ensino de inglês** que tem por objetivo compreender como a literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural, por meio das ações de professores e alunos, pode favorecer a promoção do letramento crítico nas aulas de inglês de escolas públicas brasileiras. Entendi as coisas ruins e as coisas boas que podem acontecer. Entendi que posso dizer “sim” e participar, mas que, a qualquer momento, posso dizer “não” e desistir que ninguém vai ficar furioso. Os pesquisadores tiraram minhas dúvidas e conversaram com os meus responsáveis.

Recebi uma cópia deste termo de assentimento e li e concordo em participar da pesquisa.

Belo Horizonte, ____ de _____ de _____.

Assinatura do menor

Assinatura do pesquisador

APPENDIX E – Informed Consent Form (Parents)

Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido

Caro pai/mãe/responsável:

Seu filho(a) está sendo convidado(a) a participar da pesquisa intitulada “**O uso de literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural para promover o letramento crítico no ensino de inglês**”, realizada pelo aluno do Programa de Pós-graduação (Mestrado) em Estudos Linguísticos da UFMG, Alexander Thomas Knoblock, sob a orientação da Profa. Miriam Lúcia dos Santos Jorge, da UFMG. O objetivo da pesquisa é compreender como a literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural, por meio das ações de professores e alunos, pode favorecer a promoção do letramento crítico nas aulas de inglês de escolas públicas brasileiras. Para alcançarmos nossos objetivos, precisaremos que seu filho(a) nos permita observar algumas de suas aulas, a critério de seu professor(a) de inglês, no decorrer do semestre. Precisaremos também que ele/ela disponibilize, por meio do(a) professor(a) de inglês, parte do material utilizado por ele/ela em sala de aula, incluindo atividades escritas e orais. Esclareço que, ainda que o material coletado possa ser utilizado por nós em trabalhos acadêmicos, as identidades dos participantes serão preservadas de quaisquer identificações, garantindo, portanto, o anonimato da escola, dos alunos e professores. Informamos que poderá ocorrer desconforto ao discutir o livro lido na aula por tratar de assuntos que podem ser considerados polêmicos.

Seu filho(a) não é obrigado(a) a participar da pesquisa, e sua participação (ou não) não terá influência na sua avaliação da disciplina de Inglês. Assim, a participação é voluntária e não influencia as notas na escola, nem mesmo em Língua Inglesa. Você é livre, também para desistir de participar da pesquisa em qualquer momento considerado oportuno, sem nenhum prejuízo. Além disso, ao divulgar algum dado da pesquisa, o nome dos participantes não será utilizado, garantindo, portanto, o anonimato dos alunos.

Caso surja qualquer dúvida ou problema, você poderá contatar a pesquisador responsável, Alexander Thomas Knoblock, no telefone: (31) 99169-2376, e-mail: knoblock9@gmail.com. Assim, se você se sentir suficientemente esclarecido(a), solicito a gentileza de assinar sua concordância no espaço abaixo. Uma via deste documento ficará com o(a) senhor(a) e a outra ficará com o pesquisador.

Eu, (seu nome) _____,
 confirmo estar esclarecido(a) sobre a pesquisa e concordo em participar dela.
 Belo Horizonte, _____ de _____ de 20 ____.

Assinatura do(a) pai/mãe/responsável pelo aluno

Alexander Thomas Knoblock (Pesquisador responsável)

Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa (COEP) da UFMG Endereço: Avenida Antônio Carlos, 6627, Unidade Administrativa II, 2º andar, sala 2005 CEP: 31270-901, Belo Horizonte, MG, fone (31) 3409-4592, e-mail: coep@prpq.ufmg.br

APPENDIX F – School Approval Letter

Carta de Anuência da Escola

Declaramos, para os devidos fins, que concordamos com a realização da pesquisa **“O uso de literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural para promover o letramento crítico no ensino de inglês”** de autoria do aluno do Programa de Pós-graduação (Mestrado) em Estudos Linguísticos da UFMG, Alexander Thomas Knoblock, sob a orientação da Profa. Miriam Lúcia dos Santos Jorge, da Faculdade de Letras da UFMG a ser desenvolvida nesta escola. O objetivo do projeto é compreender como a literatura infanto-juvenil multicultural, por meio das ações de professores e alunos, pode favorecer a promoção do letramento crítico nas aulas de inglês de escolas públicas brasileiras.

A aceitação está condicionada ao cumprimento do pesquisador aos requisitos da Resolução 466/12 e suas complementares, comprometendo-se a utilizar os dados materiais coletados exclusivamente para os fins da pesquisa.

Belo Horizonte, em _____ de _____ de 20____.

Nome, assinatura e carimbo do responsável pela Instituição.

Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa (COEP) da UFMG Endereço: Avenida Antônio Carlos, 6627, Unidade Administrativa II, 2 ^o andar, sala 2005 CEP: 31270-901, Belo Horizonte, MG, fone (31) 3409-4592, e-mail: coep@prpq.ufmg.br
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