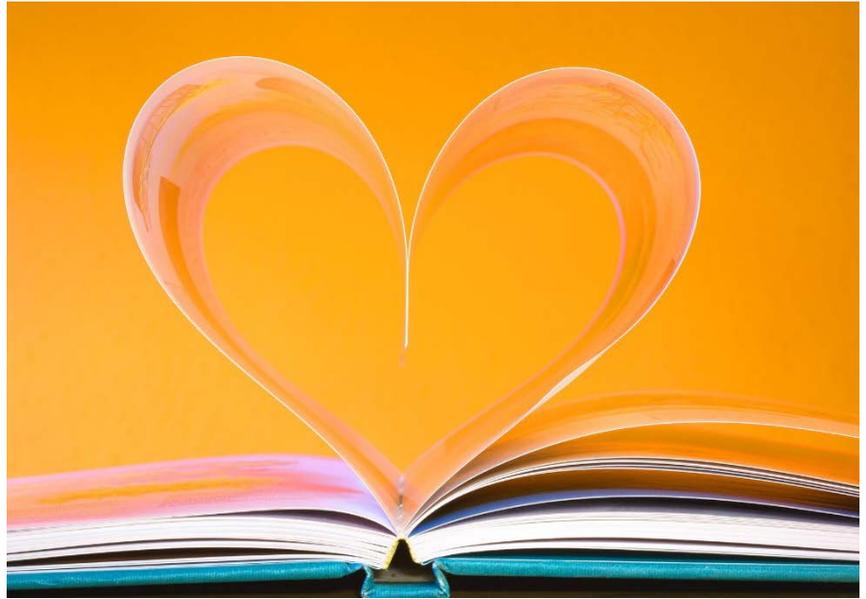


Students, Self-Identity, and Seven Experiences: 27 Books That Provide Mirrors and Windows

From gender fluidity, mental health, cultural customs, and norms; we're sharing 27 books that reflect and open understanding into students navigating their identities.



The [Seven Experiences](#) is a self-discovery journey that helps you gain a deeper understanding of identities unlike your own; a central tenant to an equitable, multi-level system of supports. By engaging both your head and your heart, you'll understand, affirm, and validate that some behaviors are cultural; and you'll gain the skills you need to bridge the differences between community and school.

One of the seven experiences you can use along your equity journey are books. Consider the books on this list for your seven experiences, classroom, or school library to help students and staff see positive representation of who they are in the pages of the books (mirror/reflection); and the opportunity for all to gain knowledge of ways to identify oneself (windows).

From gender fluidity, mental health, challenges, cultural customs, and norms; we're sharing 27 books that reflect and open understanding into students navigating their identities. *No budget? No worries. We've provided links to online read alouds where applicable.*

Preschool

[The Boy with Pink Hair](#) by Perez Hilton | [Video Read Aloud](#)

Life isn't easy when you are a boy born with pink hair. But when you have a best friend who appreciates your uniqueness and parents who are loving and supportive, you can do just about anything.

[Margaret and Margarita/Margarita y Margaret](#) by Lynn Reiser | [Video Read Aloud](#)

Margaret speaks English but not Spanish. Margarita speaks Spanish but not English. Can they still play? Of course they can! Join two robust girls who aren't about to let anything spoil their fun.

[I Love My Hair!](#) by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley | [Video Read Aloud](#)

In this imaginative, evocative story, a girl named Keyana discovers the beauty and magic of her special hair, encouraging black children to be proud of their heritage and enhancing self-confidence.

Baby Rattlesnake by Te Ata | [Video Read Aloud](#)

Adapted from a Chickasaw tale, this English-only version of this story-time favorite provides a witty lesson in the value of self-control that all young readers can relate to.

Mixed: a colorful story by Arree Chung | [Video Read Aloud](#)

There were three colors, all special in their own ways, all living in harmony—until one day, a Red says "Reds are the best!" and starts a color kerfuffle. A book about color, tolerance, and embracing differences.

Elementary: Kindergarten to Third Grade

The Ugly Vegetables by Grace Lin | [Video Read Aloud](#)

As a young girl, Grace Lin wished for a garden full of bright, colorful flowers instead of the bumpy, ugly vegetables that her Chinese mother would plant and eventually harvest to put into a soup for everyone to enjoy; showing that everything has its own beauty and purpose.

Show Way by Jacqueline Woodson | [Video Read Aloud](#)

Sonnie tells the tale of her great-grandma, who, sold into slavery when she was seven years old, created quilts called Show Ways, which were maps for slaves to follow to freedom.

A Different Pond by Bao Phi | [Video Read Aloud](#)

Early in the morning, Bao Phi and his father go on a special fishing trip in a small pond to catch fish for their family to eat. Between catches, Bao's father tells exquisite stories of a different pond.

I Am Latino: the beauty in me by Sandra Pinkney

Photographs and poetic text celebrate the beauty and diversity of Latino children.

Visiting Day by Jacqueline Woodson | [Video Read Aloud](#)

A young girl and her grandmother visit the girl's father in prison.

We Are America: a tribute from the heart by Walter Dean Myers | [Video Narrated Selection](#)

Poems explore the diversity in people, wealth, dreams, and desire that make up the United States and give it the unique character, charm, and beauty revered and respected all over the world.

All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold

Follow a group of children through a day in their school, where everyone is welcomed with open arms.

Elementary: Third to Fifth Grade

Amina's Voice by Hena Khan

Amina is an 11-year-old Muslim girl who tries to balance family, friendships, religion, aspirations, and her identity while contemplating changing her name to something that sounds more "American."

Eleven by Patricia Reilly Giff

Sam discovers a newspaper clipping stating he went missing many years ago.

Hiromi's Hands by Lynne Barasch

After begging her father to bring her to the fish market and to teach her how to make sushi, Hiromi grows up to become one of the first women in the male-dominated world of sushi chefs in this true story.

Step Up to the Plate, Maria Singh by Uma Krishnaswami

Maria Singh is a 9-year-old girl who wants to play softball in the first all-girls' team in 1945. Her Mexican Mamá and old-fashioned Punjabi Papi don't believe girls should play sports. As her family is subject to prejudice and discriminatory laws, Maria learns to step up and find her voice.

A Small White Scar by K. A. Nuzum

Fifteen-year-old Will attempts to venture out on his own, but Denny, his twin brother who has Down syndrome, finds a way to join him.

Jacob's New Dress by Sarah Hoffman and Ian Hoffman

This heartwarming story speaks to the unique challenges faced by boys who don't identify with traditional gender roles.

Middle: Fourth to Eighth Grade

Why Are You Looking at Me?: I Just Have Down Syndrome by Lisa Tompkins/ Ryan Eubanks

Lynn asks why everyone looks at her as different when she has so much in common with them.

Fish in a Tree by Lynda Mullaly Hunt

Ally hides her inability to read anyway she can until a new teacher discovers her incredible creativity.

The Awesome Miss Seeds: Her Courage Overcame Disabilities; Her Determination Changed Schools and Teaching by Dolores A. Escobar & Sandra R. Radoff/ Stephen Adams

Once Corinne's disabilities are discovered, she excels at school and becomes an educational leader.

High School: Ninth to Twelfth Grade

Afterward by Jennifer Mathieu

Ethan and Dylan, both former child abductees, struggle adjusting to a normal life with their family and friends.

Emma-Jean Lazarus Fell Out of a Tree by Lauren Tarshis

Seventh grader Emma-Jean, who might have Aspergers, observes her classmates with scientific detachment and tries to help a peer without recognition of the ripple effect it will have.

When We Collided by Emery Lord

Despite a difficult home and work life, seventeen-year-old Jonah strikes up a romance with Viv, who struggles with bipolar disorder.

The Wind Blows Backward by Mary Downing Hahn

Ever since Spencer witnessed his father's suicide, he has been troubled with thoughts that he would one day do the same.

Pinned by Sharon G. Flake

Autumn, a talented young athlete with a learning disability, wants Adonis, who uses a wheelchair, to be her boyfriend.

Quilted Landscape: Conversations with Young Immigrants by Yale Strom

When photographer Yale Strom traveled across the U.S. to meet members of this growing population, he discovered a rich array of faces, voices, and personal histories.