Literary Genre Bibliography: Empathy

Grades K-2

**Summary:** A boy learns the importance of accepting those who are different from him. When a town's residents struggle to complete the highest section of a mural welcoming visitors, a boy's grandfather suggests that the local giant will come to the rescue. The very next morning, the boy is terrified when he stumbles upon the giant working on completing the mural. He instantly regrets his unfriendly behavior, and is determined to make things right. He and Grandad come up with a plan to reassure the giant that he's a welcome member of the community.

**Curricular use:** This book is perfect for learning about community, an all school project, practicing inclusion and friendship building, and completing an impossibly frustrating task.

**Audience:** This appeals to teachers who observe tight friendship groups in their classrooms and want to encourage a more welcoming social community, students involved in an all school project, students learning to be inclusive, students active in a SAIG group (Social Academic Instructional Group).


**Summary:** This wordless book opens with a family of four burying their family dog, Sascha. The young daughter picks and lays golden flowers on top of the rock that marks Sascha's grave. When the family leaves for their vacation at the beach, the child is sad that her pet will not be accompanying them. A major shift in time occurs at this point in the book to millions of years ago when a golden meteorite is seen flying toward Earth. The meteorite takes on many shapes and serves many purposes as it is transported to various countries across the globe through several eras, and eventually comes to the girl. What was originally a large golden sphere is greatly reduced in size yet still serves an important purpose: to help acknowledge a young girl's grief over the loss of her pet.

**Curricular use:** School counselors would use this book as a discussion starter for topics of death and dying, defining variations of a family, and discussing defining moments of childhood. Sixth grade teachers will enjoy the allusions to ancient civilizations.

**Audience:** This is a wonderful book for everyone. There are connections to death, heartache, acknowledgement and ritual in the burial process, ancient civilizations, the cycle of life, and the idea of a family being companions on a meaningful vacation.

Grades 3-4

**Summary:** This follow-up to *Chicken Sunday* features Miss Eula and Trisha, based on Polacco's childhood self. Polacco describes Trisha's loss of her beloved Babushka who tells her before she dies that stars are holes in the sky that lead to heaven, and that she promises to send her a sign. After a move to a diverse neighborhood in drought-ravaged California, Trisha befriends a boy named Stewart. His grandmother is the exuberant, loving Miss Eula. Despite the drought, Eula grows a magnificent garden using recycled water, and Trisha is inspired to bring that beauty to a mourning neighbor. In this autobiographical story,

**Curricular use:** This book is a perfect addition to an author study on Patricia Polacco. This is also a sequel to Chicken Sunday. This autobiographical book lends itself to topics of grief, community, diversity, and studying the state of California.

**Audience:** This book is ideal for students who are new to school, dealing with death in the family, or moving to a new neighborhood.

**Summary:** This is an illustrated collection of twelve short stories about each of Ecuador's six remaining Amazon indigenous groups. It is told from the point-of-view of the indigenous children themselves. These stories offer a rare perspective on these indigenous peoples whose culture and way of life are continuously being threatened by outsiders and the forces of modernization. They portray the way of life of the people who live in Ecuadorian Amazonia known for its forest, exotic animals, and indigenous towns. After traveling to this little-known region and meeting the people who inhabit it, Iturralde studied their way of life, observed their culture, and then wrote these imaginative entertaining stories remaining faithful to these tribes and their world.

**Curricular use:** This is a perfect connection to animal research, pollution, modernization, industrialization, and rainforest destruction. This anthology is ideal for discussions of mindfulness, finding importance in nature, and forming community.

**Audience:** This book appeals to teachers striving to form community in the classroom, students studying environmental issues, animals, rainforest, biomes, cultural identity, and purpose.

**Grades 5-6**


**Summary:** When 12 year old Lucy was struck by lightning, she gained extraordinary math skills. Her grandmother, who raised Lucy after her parents’ death, has homeschooled her ever since. Lucy is content to fill her hours with online college classes and chats on math forums where no one knows her real age, but her grandmother decides that Lucy needs to experience a world outside of a computer screen. If Lucy goes to middle school for one year, Nana promises, she’ll be allowed to apply to college. At first, her germophobia and mild obsessive behavior make a difficult situation more difficult. Eventually, she acquires two friends, finds useful work to do at an animal shelter, and has her life changed by a little dog she calls Pi.

**Curricular use:** This book includes themes of friendship, depression and obsessive compulsive disorder, savant, dogs, death and illness. There is a math connection, since one dog is named Pi and Fibonacci numbers are included in a conversation.

**Audience:** The book would appeal to boys and girls who are learning about death, making new friends, and preparing for junior high.


**Summary:** It all starts when six kids have to meet for a weekly chat--by themselves, with no adults to listen in. There, in the room they soon dub the ARTT Room (short for "A Room to Talk"), they discover it's safe to talk about what's bothering them--everything from Esteban's father's deportation and Haley's father's incarceration to Amari's fears of racial profiling and Ashton's adjustment to his changing family fortunes. When the six are together, they can express the feelings and fears they have to hide from the rest of the world. Together, they grow braver and more ready for the rest of their lives.

**Curricular use:** This would make a great read aloud, book club selection, or literature circle selection for students who want a glimpse of the drama, fears, and feelings in the lives of children in high pressure situations. Morning meeting, sage groups, and small groups coordinated by the school counselor may use this book as a connection for learning to communicate about emotions.

**Audience:** This book appeals to students interested in interpersonal communication. This makes a perfect book club book for upper elementary students, their parents, and teachers.