The Booklist Project

Focus: Veronica Chambers
Author Study
Developed by: Cassandra Lucena
SU I 2012
Author Study Book List
Veronica Chambers
Grades K-12
Veronica Chambers

Veronica Chambers was born in Panama and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She is a graduate of Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. She is the author of a variety of fiction and non-fiction ranging from picture books to her *Amigas* series for middle and high school children. She also writes novels for adults. Veronica’s work often reflects her Afro-Latina heritage.

Veronica spent two seasons as an executive story editor for CW’s hit series *Girlfriends*. She has also written and developed projects for Fox. Veronica has contributed to several anthologies. She has been the recipient of several awards including the Hodder fellowship for emerging novelists at Princeton University and a Nation Endowment for the Arts fiction award. She speaks, reads and writes Spanish, but she enjoys code-switching. She lives with her husband and daughter in Hoboken, New Jersey.

For more information on Veronica Chambers, visit:

http://www.veronicachambers.com

In this beautifully illustrated picture book Celia, a poor young girl growing up in Havana, Cuba can sing like a bird. Every night she sings her brothers and sisters to sleep. As she gets older she is torn between following her dream of becoming a famous singer or doing what her father says and becoming a schoolteacher. Even when people try to bring her down, Celia is determined to achieve her goal. This book was written loosely around the life of the famous salsa singer, Celia Cruz. There are some words and phrases in Spanish throughout the book. Some of the words are translated within the text but there is also a glossary at the end of the book.

This book is great for ELLs because it talks about moving from Cuba to the USA and having to adapt to change. A lot of ELLs can relate to that process. It also has a great message that even though something is hard you should never give up on what you believe in. This book provides wonderful illustrations to accompany the words, making it easier for ELLs to decipher the text.

WIDA Proficiency Level: High Developing w/ support
Reading Level: 5.1
Ages of Interest: 5-9
Available Formats:
- Hardcover
- Paperback
- Audio CD
Online Resources:


http://www.celiacruz.com/
[ ISBN: 0152018034 ]

A young man named Singbe is captured in Sierra Leone on the coast of West Africa and transported to Cuba on a ship called *Amistad* where the Cubans quickly change his name to Joseph Cinque. He is determined to survive and not become a slave so he rebels and fights for his life, for his family, and for his freedom. The entire story is in English except for the ships name, *Amistad*. Which is quickly explained to mean “friendship” in Spanish.

ELLs could relate easily to this book because of the emotions it brings out. There is frustration with being forced to move to a strange place, being scared because you don’t know what to expect, and not being able to communicate with the people around you because you don’t speak the same language. This is a great book for an open discussion about how ELLs feel having to adapt to a new culture and language.

WIDA Proficiency Level: Bridging and up
Reading Level: 5.7
Ages of Interest: 8-13
Available Formats:
• Hardcover
• McGraw-Hill Companies *Reading* (Grade 5, Unit 6)
Online Resources:

http://www.hollenbeckms.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=167298&amp;type=u&amp;REC_ID=video&amp;showMore=1&amp;titleREC_ID=10986

http://www.lessonplanet.com/search?keywords=amistad+rising&amp;media=lesson

This book encompasses the Harlem Renaissance, one of the greatest cultural outpourings in American history. Each chapter describes a different aspect of the movement, how it began all the way to when it ended, as well as focusing on some of the important members. This book shows the contributions that were made to art, music and literature in a period when the United States was entrenched in segregation and racial violence.

This is a great book for ELLs because it shows that there are people in America who have struggled, just like in other countries. They may be able to share stories if they came from a country with a lot of hardship and brutality. This book also shows a lot of actual pictures from the 1920’s, making it easier than most chapter books for ELLs to understand.

WIDA Proficiency Level: Bridging and up
Reading Level: 8
Ages of Interest: 12-15
Available Formats:
- Hardcover
- Paperback

Online Resources:

http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/harlem-renaissance-retrospective-connecting-252.html

Marisol and Magdalena are best friends who live in Brooklyn. Both girls come from families that are strongly attached to their Panamanian cultural roots. Both families think the girls are too Americanized and Marisol’s mother sends her to live in Panama with her grandmother hoping she will learn more about her heritage. There are a lot of Spanish words used in the dialogue that are not always explained to the reader.

This chapter book is a great book for ELLs because the story line is very relatable. Marisol has never met her father, which can attract any child who is living with a single parent. Also, she is torn between two very different cultures and isn’t sure how to fit in, which is what a lot of ELLs are struggling with as well. The Spanish words and phrases within the book will also draw in a lot of Spanish speaking ELLs.

WIDA Proficiency Level: Expanding and up
Reading Level: 5.2
Ages of Interest: 8-12
Available Formats:
  • Hardcover
  • Paperback
  • E-book
Online Resources:


http://dailybooth.com/hmofiom/21788861

In the sequel to Marisol and Magdalena, the girls are making plans for their quinceanera parties but Marisol’s family doesn’t know if they have enough money to have one for her. Also, during Marisol’s year in Panama, Magdalena made two new friends that Marisol doesn’t get along with and she isn’t sure if maybe her and Magdalena have grown apart for good. There are also a lot of Spanish words used in this chapter book that are not always explained.

This sequel is just as good for ELLs as the first book because of the story line. ELLs lose a lot of friends when they move to a new place. They are also forced to make new friends. This book could become a source of comfort to them, knowing that this happens to other children as well.

WIDA Proficiency Level: Expanding and up  
Reading Level: 5.2  
Ages of Interest: 8-12  
Available Formats:  
  • Hardcover  
  • Paperback  
  • E-book  
Online Resources:

http://holidays.mrdonn.org/quinceaneras.html

http://www.teachersdiscovery-foreignlanguage.com/ads/new/Quinceanera/

This fun and easy to read book is a tribute to the unique sport and pastime of double dutch (jump roping). This picture book is filled with the author’s own personal memories of girlhood and jumping rope, along with poems, interviews, songs, history, quotes, rhymes, and photographs. This entire book is in English.

ELLs at any level can read through this book because there is a lot of picture support for what is written. Jumping rope is something universal and bonding that any child can relate to, regardless of their culture. This is a great book to use to initiate interest in an ELL.

WIDA Proficiency Level: Beginning and up
Reading Level: 5.7
Ages of Interest: 3-7
Available Formats:
- Hardcover
- Paperback

Online Resources:


[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0a3jbQ5Edvo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0a3jbQ5Edvo)
[ ISBN: 978-1423123620 ]

Set in Miami, Florida, this is the first book of a teen series called *Amigas*. It is summer time and Alicia gets an internship at the mayor’s office where she meets Sarita, a new girl in town. Alicia ends up volunteering to help plan her quinceanera without realizing how much work it will entail. There are some Spanish words throughout the book, but most times they are explained in English right after.

This is a great book specifically for teen ELLs because of the topics. Every teenager deals with peer pressure, issues with friends, a first crush, etc. These topics are relatable no matter what language you speak. This book would also be good for teenage Latino ELLs because some of the book is in Spanish.

WIDA Proficiency: Higher Bridging/ Reaching
Reading Level: 5.1
Ages of Interest: 11-18
Available Formats:
- Paperback
- Kindle
Online Resources:

[http://laquinceaneradocumentary.com/]

The fifth book in the *Amigas* series takes the reader through the story of Carmen. Carmen really wants to go to a special school but it costs a lot of money that her family doesn’t have. On top of worrying about that she has to figure out how to get along with the girls who are helping her put the school dance together as well as plan two quinceanera parties for cousins. This book has a lot of Spanish words and phrases in it.

This book is good for ELLs because when being exposed to a new environment they may have trouble making friends and adjusting. Reading about how to get along with other students can be helpful. Also, many Spanish ELLs would enjoy this book because it has a lot of familiar topics, like quinceanera parties and some Spanish language.

WIDA Proficiency Level: Bridging/Reaching
Reading Level: 5.1
Ages of Interest: 11-18
Available Formats:
- Paperback
- Kindle
Online Resources:

http://www.goodcharacter.com/BCBC/Friendship.html

http://www.pbs.org/inthemix/educators/lessons/schoolviol2/
In the second book, Alicia, Jamie, Carmen and Jaz start their own business planning quinceanera parties for girls in town. Carmen is turning 15 and the girls are excited to plan the party for her. When the group is asked to take part in a reality show featuring quinceanera parties the group starts to fall apart, fighting, worrying and feeling left out. This book has a lot of Spanish words and phrases in it. The storyline in this book is good for ELLs because the friendships of these girls are based around quinceanera parties, which is something all Spanish ELLs know something about. Also, anyone can relate to fighting with friends and feeling left out.

WIDA Proficiency Level: Bridging/Reaching
Reading Level: 5.1
Ages of Interest: 11-18
Available Formats:
  - Paperback
  - Kindle
Online Resources:

http://www.goodcharacter.com/BCBC/Emotions.html
In the last book in the *Amigas* series, all the girls are finally graduating high school and deciding what they want to do with the rest of their lives. Alicia doesn’t know if she should follow her heart or her head while Carmen and Jamie know exactly what they want to do. The girls receive a call to plan one last quinceanera party, while also preparing for the SATs and trying to find younger people in town who would want to take over their business. There are a lot of Spanish words and phrases in this book.

This book is helpful for ELLs because it is about having to make changes, which a lot of ELLs do when coming from another country and having to learn a new way of living. It is also helpful for Latino ELLs because there are a lot of cultural references and Spanish words.

WIDA Proficiency Level: Bridging/Reaching
Reading Level: 5.1
Ages of Interest: 11-18
Available Formats:
• Paperback
• Kindle
Online Resources:

http://www.bbblocks.samhsa.gov/educators/lesson_plans/topsyтурвy.aspx

http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Dealing-with-Change-6011400/
The Booklist Project
A Project of the
M.Ed. In TESL Program,

Feinstein School of Education and Human Development
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