This dissertation examines the use of a culturally relevant curriculum in my art classroom. I embarked on this journey in my classroom as an answer to a problem of engagement and motivation for many of my Black students. As a result of completing this emotional journey I have discovered a drastic change in both my students and myself. The journey has been marked with successes and failures, and is one that is ongoing. First I discuss how the importance of knowing yourself as a teacher allows you to open up to and get to know your students. Next in chapter two, relevant literature is analyzed. "For example, students who rated places and experiences as culturally relevant for a text had higher critical evaluation and connection scores in response to that text. When researcher cultural relevance ratings were higher for a text, children's word recognition and literal comprehension scores were higher when reading that text." According to the study, these findings highlight the need for teachers to not only use culturally relevant books but also to have students judge their cultural relevance. "It is critical for students to know the differences of cultural and cultural relevance in order to be successful and effective teachers in their classrooms. Therefore, students can be successful in determining the success of culturally relevant books by utilizing their own experiences and knowledge of cultural relevance." 

Culturally relevant books: Connecting Hispanic students to the curriculum

Minority students in the United States (US) need to connect with the curriculum in order to have a meaningful schooling experience. This paper promotes the integration of culturally relevant books into the bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) curriculum for Hispanic English language learners (ELLs). A study was conducted with bilingual and ESL pre-service teachers who learned about the benefits of using culturally relevant books in their teacher preparation program. Pre-service teachers realized that culturally relevant books connect Hispanic ELLs to the curriculum and engage them in reading. Through the study, participants gained confidence working with ELLs and expressed a desire to use culturally relevant books in their teaching.