Georgia Children’s Picturebook Award 2014-2015 Nominees: Connecting to Children and Curriculum

2014-2015 Children’s Picturebook Award Committee Members (in alphabetical order)

1. Eric Carpenter, 1st Grade Teacher, Westside Atlanta Charter School, Atlanta, GA
2. Jean Edwards, Media Specialist, Marietta Sixth Grade Academy, Marietta, GA
3. Michelle Fitzgerald, Media Specialist, Hightower Trail Elementary School, Conyers, GA
4. Jennifer Graff, Associate Professor, Language & Literacy Education, University of Georgia
5. Jennifer Lewis, Media Specialist, Indian Knoll Elementary School, Canton, GA
6. Dera Weaver, Media Specialist, Winterville Elementary School, Winterville, GA

Group 1: (Jennifer and Jennifer)


Summary: This biography of Albert Einstein shows how Einstein’s curiosity led him to become one of the world’s great scientists who furthered our understanding of the universe. In this book, Einstein’s theories are presented in a manner that is accessible for young readers.

Connecting to Children and Curriculum

- Older students may wish to further explore the life of Albert Einstein after reading this book. After researching, have students discuss Einstein’s most important contributions to the fields of math and science.
- Discuss Albert Einstein’s character traits that enabled him to become successful in his field despite the obstacles he faced as a young boy.
- This book would work well as an introduction to teaching the scientific method. Einstein’s curiosity and constant questioning provided him with different hypotheses to test.


Summary: Bored by a city life that always requires proper behavior, Mr. Tiger shocks his friends and returns to his wild side. But he becomes lonely by himself in the jungle. Mr. Tiger eventually discovers the best way to express himself while still retaining his place in the city in this celebration of individuality.
Connecting to Children and Curriculum

- Kids may enjoy imagining themselves going wild. Ask students to draw a picture of themselves at a time when they did something different or unordinary.
- The text in this book lends itself to teaching sequencing. Have students retell the story using the “first, next, then, last: format.
- Discuss with students how the colors in the illustrations change as the story unfolds.


**Summary:** This illustrated tale of tested friendships involves Fish and Snail, a dynamic duo in the aquatic underworld. Each day ends with a story shared by Fish; although one day Fish wants Snail to be more involved in the storytelling. An argument ensures which leads to both adventure and a reunion. Readers may connect Fish and Snail with other metafictive texts.

Connecting to Children and Curriculum

- This book invites discussion about what makes a story, the predictive elements of stories, and invitations to “flip the script.” Have students identify which narrative patterns exist in the story and consider ways in which such patterns can be changed for an equally satisfying story.
- Have students hypothesize which books Fish and Snail often “read” based on the descriptions provided.
- Text features such as font size, type, and boldness lend itself well for dramatic readings. Consider using this book—as is or adapted—for some reader’s theatre.


**Summary:** Ah! Can we ever “own” an animal or might animals lead us to believe in the possibility of “ownership? Oliver Jeffers humorously offers such a philosophical question through the experiences of Wilfred, a young boy who claims to “own” a moose named Marcel. Guided by a long list of “rules on how to be a good pet,” Wilfred and Marcel partake in many adventures, especially when more people “claim” Marcel (aka Rodrigo or Dominic). The message, while mature, is presented in ways which will elicit laughter and contemplation.

Connecting to Children and Curriculum

- Invite discussion about which animals could be or could not be considered “pets.” Explore this concept on a global scale, considering cultural conceptions of animals and the roles they play in humans’ daily lives.
- Consider the multiple possibilities this book could be a mentor text for writers’ craft. How might one write in third person and still remain conversational? How might one include dialogue in a distinctive and engaging way (thanks [Two Writing Teachers](#))?
• Discuss the role of the string that begins on the end pages and travels with Wilfred until a pivotal moment in the book. Discuss the symbolism of the string and its importance.
• Like many other books on the list, various typeface styles and sizes lend themselves to discussing how to convey the tenor of the storyline.


**Summary:** William Kamkwamba’s Malawi village was hit by a drought in 2002, and crops started to fail. As a result, William’s family didn’t have enough money for him to attend school or even to eat. William had an idea to build a windmill that would generate electricity for his village, and he spent his days at the library learning how to accomplish this goal. This powerful story shows how William succeeded in helping his family and village.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**

• Pair this book with texts about other inventors. Students can describe the difficulties inventors face and how they are able to persevere despite challenges.
• This book is an excellent introduction to a study of energy or electricity. As an extension, William Kamkwamba’s TED talk provides additional information for older students.
• Ask students to create a list of character traits that describe William Kamkwamba and use evidence from the text to support their answers.


**Summary:** George Ella Lyon’s poetry and other notable books have continually tugged at our heart strings and our consciousness as global citizens. Such is the case with *All the Water in the World*. This nonfiction book in poetic verse not only illustrates the water cycle but also advocates for water conservation and environmentally friendly habits. The rhythmic text will resonate in readers’ hearts and heads.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**

• This poetic picturebook serves as a great dramatic read—with or without images. The alliteration enables a fluid and engaging read and invites deeper consideration of how powerful language can be. This book would also be a wonderful companion text for Joyce Sidman’s or Douglas Florian’s poetic nonfiction focused on ecosystems as well as other science concepts.
• This book would be an accessible introduction to the water cycle and can help extend our understandings of relationships in nature, including humans’ relationship with nature.
• Varied font sizes, text placement, and overall book design will be text to use for students (and teachers) visual literacy capabilities. It also is a great way to incorporate the arts into your daily curriculum.


**Summary**: Ganesha has the head of an elephant and the body of a boy. He also has a sweet tooth. When Ganesha bites into a jawbreaker, one of his tusks breaks off. Ganesha is upset, but when the poet Vyasa asks Ganesha to help him write the epic poem the *Mahabharata*, Ganesha realizes how his broken tusk can be quite useful.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**

• Ganesha is a Hindu deity, and the book is a very loose retelling of an Indian myth. This book lends itself to a discussion of mythology from various cultures.
• The *Mahabharata* is an epic poem. Introduce students to the terms “epic” and “epic poetry.”
• Students may enjoy reading another version of the myth in which Ganesha helps Vyasa write the *Mahabharata* and comparing and contrasting the two.


**Summary**: This book is a biography of Bill Traylor, a former slave and sharecropper who started drawing in his 80s. Traylor drew inspiration for his art from his life experiences on the farm and from the city he moved to later in life.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**

• Bill Traylor is considered an “outsider artist,” meaning that he is an artist who lived without connection to the mainstream art world. Discuss the terms “outsider art” and “folk art.”
• Throughout the book, the author repeats the sentence, “Bill saved up these memories deep inside.” Ask students to describe the significance of this sentence and explain how Traylor’s memories served as inspiration for his art.
• Read the book *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave* by Laban Carrick Hill, written about another former slave turned folk artist. Compare and contrast the lives of Dave the Potter and Bill Traylor.
Group 2 (Dera and Eric)


**Summary:** In this beautifully illustrated wordless picture book we follow a lonely, young heroine as she magically travels through a variety of exceptionally detailed worlds on an adventure of both creativity and excitement.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**
- Students will lose themselves within *Journey*, inspecting even the smallest details of each stunningly beautiful spread. Becker’s expressive use of color helps guide the reader through a memorable adventure that will have readers returning again and again.
- *Journey’s* exciting narrative makes it the ideal title for teaching students the techniques required for reading wordless picture books.


**Summary:** In this stunning biography of the early twentieth century African American artist Horace Pippin, readers will discover an inspiring portrait of an artist overcoming challenges both physical and societal. Sweet’s illustrations bring brightness and fun into what is often a dark story. Carefully researched by both Bryant and Sweet, *Splash of Red* includes extensive backmatter for those wishing to learn more about Pippin’s life or art.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**
- Students studying social injustice will find the life of Horace Pippin a fascinating case of perseverance and determination.
- This expertly written and researched biography can stand as a mentor text for any student learning about both research and biographical writing.


**Summary:** Elliott’s father is kind and supportive, but a bit absent-minded. After a day at the aquarium, he fails to notice that Elliot’s backpack contains the smallest member of the penguin display. Once Elliott begins trying to meet his penguin’s needs at home, the chaos that swirls around the household is totally invisible to Elliott’s dad. Children will enjoy the fun of Elliot’s ability to keep his penguin a secret from his father without really trying, and the relationship
depicted between father and son is warm and loving.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**

- A perfect addition to any research study of penguins or almost any animal: Elliot’s research instincts are excellent, as he even takes his penguin Magellan to the library, and “Mrs. Stanbridge didn’t blink an eye”--she just helped Elliot find the information he needed!
- Magellan, Captain Cook, the Galapágos Islands, Argentina: these particulars could be woven into a theme of exploration and discovery from distant lands.


**Summary**: A great-grandfather’s precious memories, each connected to an everyday item saved in individual matchboxes, bring his great-granddaughter an understanding of her family’s history in America: emigration from Italy, the indignities of Ellis Island, life as migrant workers in America, even a first baseball game. The sepia-toned drawings of the past evoke old photographs, while the child and her great-grandfather in his book-filled home are in warm, rich color.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**

- This book is almost a timeline of a particular period in American history, yet no dates are ever given. Students could research elements of the great-grandfather’s story and create an actual timeline of his life and experience.
- The story is told without dialogue tags for either speaker, yet the reader has no difficulty in understanding which character is speaking. Writing this kind of dialogue can enrich students’ abilities to move a story forward through dialogue alone.


**Summary**: The pairing of Fleming’s engaging text and Rohmann’s exquisite art come together to form a perfect read aloud. With its use of repetition, onomatopoeia, and surprise students are instantly engaged during both the initial reading and the many repeated read alouds that are sure to follow.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**

- *Oh, No!* presents an original story that serves as a great example of writers can borrow from tropes and techniques from traditional folk tales and oral storytelling.
• Young students will doubtlessly enjoy practicing their prediction skills as more and more animals crash, tumble, and fall into the deep, deep hole.


**Summary:** John Leep is a miserly, nasty man. On a moonless October night, he sets off on his horse to evict the widow Mayes from one of his rental houses. As he rides through the windy night, he hears the sound of another rider behind him. *Clip. Clop. Clip. Clop…* Tension builds, as does the eerie wind, and the lawyer becomes more and more terrified. This is a classic ghost story, and the final page provides a satisfying “Gotcha!” A perfect read-aloud for those darkening days in autumn.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**
• Comparisons with variations on the headless horseman folktale and Dickens’ Scrooge will come easily. Students might experiment with writing their own scary tales featuring a mysterious stalker or an evil character getting his or her comeuppance.
• This one will be one of your most satisfying read-alouds. With the right audience, the headlong “clippityclopityclippityclopity” refrain at the height of story will have listeners on the edge of their seats!


**Summary:** *Lucha libre*, the professional wrestling of Mexico and many other Spanish-speaking countries, features masked wrestlers with colorful backstories. Using his everyday toys and a vivid imagination, Niño defeats a variety of imaginary luchadors until he is faced with the biggest challenge of all: *Las Hermanitas!* Although not a graphic novel, the book reads very much like a comic book; Niño and his opponents are drawn in vibrant color and fairly leap off each page.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**
• The book is written in a wonderful blend of Spanish and English; readers in both languages will be eager to translate the splashy exclamations (“Slish!” “Ay Ay Ayúa!”).
• The art invites comparisons to American pop artists like Roy Lichtenstein and provides a gateway into the exploration of the comic book style.

**Summary:** In *The Dark*, Snicket’s trademark subversive humor creates a chilling tale of a boy overcoming his fear. Klassen’s brilliant use of color, contrast, and scale allows the story to balance the delicate line between chilling and frightening. This is a perfectly executed and easily enjoyed book which will have readers seeing their worlds a bit differently.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**
- Any discussion of fear will certainly be enhanced by a reading of *The Dark*. By relaying the necessity of darkness, Snicket and Klassen open up numerous avenues for fruitful discussion.
- With this book as a master class in layout and design, students with an eye for art will want to spend hours deciphering Klassen’s choices. Klassen’s graphic use of negative space, contrasting text, and placement of light source create an incredible piece of storytelling art.

**Group 3 (Jean and Michelle)**


**Summary:** This fun alphabet will be enjoyed by more than the lower grades. The story starts before the title page with the irrepressible moose lifting the curtain, showing the reader a glimpse of the alphabetic line up. The excited moose shows up early (letter D) hoping it’s his turn. The Zebra holds him off as long as possible but will Moose ever recover from being passed over?

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**
- Subjects: Alphabet, Humor, Conduct of Life
- Great story of friendship and patience. Can be used as a starting point for students to create their own alphabet books.


**Summary:** This is a biography about Henrietta Leavitt a woman who was fascinated by the stars, studied the stars, and worked at an observatory. Unfortunately her work at the observatory rarely allowed her to gaze through the giant telescope. Her job was to record, measure and calculate, no thinking necessary. Henrietta noticed the changes in the photographs of the stars; she saw patterns in the brightness and made important discoveries.
Connecting to Children and Curriculum

- Subjects: Astronomy, Women, Biography, Common Core, STEM
- This book ties in nicely with fourth grade astronomy. Can also be used with biography units and women’s history.


**Summary:** As the only panda at the zoo plans his birthday party, he must keep expanding the guest list. Inviting only the bears leads to inviting all the mammals, then the marsupials, birds, reptiles, and so on, until all are invited. Ultimately, no one’s feelings are hurt because they were excluded.

Connecting to Children and Curriculum

- Subjects: Zoos, Animals, Manners, Kindness, Courtesy
- This book would be useful in a unit about animal taxonomy or zoos; also, for illustrating courtesy and kindness, thoughtfulness versus rudeness.


**Summary:** In 1903, President Roosevelt and naturalist John Muir went camping together among the redwood trees of the Yosemite wilderness. Their discussions led to the establishment of the National Park System, which saved thousands of acres of American land from development, so they can be enjoyed by the public. That idea is renowned as one of America’s greatest contributions to the world.

Connecting to Children and Curriculum

- Subjects: National Parks, Theodore Roosevelt, Conservation, Environment, Nature
- This book can be used in language arts as a biography, in a science unit about the environment or conservation, and in social studies to introduce the historical concept of the National Parks.


**Summary:** One day in a Washington, DC subway, violinist Joshua Bell stood playing his Stradivarius for one thousand passersby. Only seven people stopped to listen, including a little boy who was enchanted by what he heard, but whose mother would not be
delayed. Later, the boy heard the same music on the radio, leading to a teachable moment for his mother and a dance with her.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**
- **Subjects:** Music, Violins, Stress, Appreciation
- Taking time to appreciate the beauty around us is important for our health. This book can be used to initiate reflective writing about slowing down, enjoying oneself, and easing the stress of everyday life.
- A YouTube video of a music experiment [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnOPu0_YWhw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnOPu0_YWhw) would be a nice digital pairing with this book.


**Summary:** The young boy is being watched by his older sister who isn’t paying him much attention. He wants her to read his tiger story to him, the best he gets is his soup heated up. The details in the illustrations are imaginative, beginning with the tiger that emerges from the steam from the soup and the R-O-A-R spelled in the alphabet letters.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**
- **Subjects:** Brothers and Sisters, Babysitters, Books and Reading
- The boy wearing a strainer helmet holding off the tiger with the claw foot chair is a great story starter. It would also be great to see what details students would include in their own illustrations.


**Summary:** This true story by Caldecott Honor artist Melissa Sweet is about Tony Sarg, the little-known person who invented Macy’s famous giant puppets. Tony’s ideas developed from his childhood fascination with puppets, and eventually became the iconic helium balloons in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade.

**Connecting to Children and Curriculum**
- **Subjects:** Holidays, Inventions, Thanksgiving, Common Core, STEM
- This entertaining book celebrates an artist’s curiosity, inventiveness and problem-solving. It will be very popular in November, informing children about how one component of our modern holiday rituals happened to evolve.
- Consider sharing this YouTube video of the Macy’s Parade balloons being inflated [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9ZwER7L8-A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9ZwER7L8-A)