Table 1. Selected Texts.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text (n=10) | Generation of Main Character/s | Home Country of Main Character/s and/or Parents | Age of Main Character/s |
| *Return to Sender* (Alvarez, 2009) | 1.5 | Mexico | 12 |
| *Fitting In* (Bernardo, 1996)  (Collection of 5 stories with different main characters) | 1st and 1.5 | Cuba | Middle School |
| *Loves Me, Loves Me Not* (Bernardo, 1998) | 2nd | Cuba | 15 |
| *Ask Me No Questions* (Budhos, 2006) | 1.5 | Bangladesh | 14 |
| *Call Me María* (Cofer, 2004) | 1st | Puerto Rico | High School |
| *Fresh Off the Boat* (De la Cruz, 2005) | 1st | Philippines | 14 |
| *Born Confused* (Hidier, 2002) | 2nd | India | 17 |
| *Skunk Girl* (Karim, 2009) | 2nd | Pakistan | 16 |
| *Finding My Voice* (Lee, 1992)  (First book in a series of two) | 2nd | Korea | High School Senior |
| *Wait for Me* (Na, 2006) | 1.5 or 2nd | Korea | Between Junior and Senior Year |

Table 2. Content Analysis.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Text | Immigration Issues | Adolescent Girl Issues |
| *Return to Sender* | I1: Although Mari speaks English very well, she often does not understand idioms.  I2: She translates for her father with his employer.  I3: Her family is undocumented and constantly fearsimmigration authorities. They have many legal problems and are eventually deported to Mexico.  I4: She is ridiculed by classmates due to her race and immigration status. | A2: Mari develops a special friendship with a ranch owner's son and his grandmother.  A3: When her parents are arrested and sent to jail, she gains the courage to come forward to the authorities about her legal status and explain her family's situation. She reunites her family and saves her parents from further jail time. |
| *Fitting In* | I2: Sari is embarrassed to translate for her grandmother.  I1: Tere is teased because of her Spanish accent.  I1: Mari does not understand her assignment because of language issues.  I5: Tere feels different than the American girls. | A1: Sari is excited to go to her first dance with Jim.  A2: Chari must choose between being a good friend and being popular.  A3: Chari learns the true meaning of her name, charity, and makes the decision to live up to it. |
| *Loves Me, Loves Me Not* | I1: Maggie is concerned her Spanish accent will be stronger when she is nervous.  I4: She has a crush on a White boy who belittles her and her Cuban mother. | A1: Maggie discovers her crush is not the right boy for her and begins a relationship with the new boy in school.  A2: Her relationship with her best friend is tested by their relationships with boys.  A3: She confronts racism and prejudice while remaining proud of her Cuban heritage. |
| *Call Me María* | I1: María is in ESL classes and struggles to lose her accent.  I4: She perceives students to judge her as being less intelligent because of her Spanish accent.  I6: She feels caught between being Puerto Rican or a “barrio” girl. | A3: María learns to define herself as a writer. She makes peace with her dual cultures. |
| *Ask Me No Questions* | I3: Nadira and her family seek asylum in Canada after 9-11, but are denied and her father is put in a detainment center for their undocumented status.  I4: She realizes how Americans prejudge her Muslim family after the events of 9-11. | A3: Nadira steps out of her “perfect” older sister’s shadow to save her family from their legal problems. She begins to see herself as an intelligent individual capable of going to college. |
| *Fresh Off the Boat* | I3: Vicenza’s family entered the country on tourist visas and stayed. They support themselves by operating a black market video company.  I5: She struggles being the only Filipino girl at her private school.  I6: She wants to be American, but cannot escape her Filipino family. | A1: Vicenza is in love with a boy who likes her friend then discovers the boy who was there all along is more than she realized.  A2: She develops a close friendship with a new student who brings her out of her shell.  A3. She becomes honest about her life with her family, her best friend in the Philippines, and herself. |
| *Born Confused* | I5: Dimple is self-conscious because she does not look like her American friends.  I6: She has spent her whole life separating herself from her parents’ traditions, but now wants to reconnect. | A1: Dimple’s traditional Indian parents set her up with a “suitable Indian boy.” Although she initially rejects the idea, she discovers love can appear where you are not expecting it.  A2: She feels her best friend is trying to steal her love interest.  A3: She learns to be proud of her Indian heritage. |
| *Skunk Girl* | I4: A boy rudely mocks Nina's culture in school. People in her town refuse to do business with her father because he is Pakistani.  I5: She always feels left out because her parents do not let her date, go to sleepovers, or parties due to their religion. She is self-aware when she must wear pants and everyone else is wearing shorts.  I6: She wants to please her Pakistani Muslim parents and be like her friends at the same time. | A1: Nina has a crush on a popular boy throughout the novel.  A2: When she feels everything in her life is going wrong, her friends raise her spirits with a surprise birthday party.  A3: She finally stands up to a bully at school and begins to feel proud of her Pakistani heritage as she makes her first trip to her parents' country. |
| *Finding My Voice* | I4: Ellen receives many racial slurs from her classmates for being Asian.  I5: HHHer family has different rules and expectation than her American friends' families. | A1: Ellen has a crush on a jock who eventually becomes her boyfriend.  A2: She leans on her friends to overcome discrimination.  A3: She finally stands up to the girl who called her racist names. |
| *Wait For Me* | I6: Mina’s mother wants her to be the perfect Korean girl which she must balance with her own desires. | A1: Mina falls in love with her parents’ employee, a Mexican immigrant boy.  A3: She learns her life cannot be a lie and stands up to her mother so she can truly be herself. |

Immigration Issues: Adolescent Girl Issues:

I1: Second language acquisition A1: Boys

I2: Language brokering A2: Friendship

I3: Legal problems A3: Finding one’s voice or identity

I4: Discrimination or racial prejudice

I5: Not fitting in due to cultural differences

I6: Living in two cultures

**Relevant Adolescent and Young Adult Texts for Immigrant Youth**

Alvarez, J. (2009). *Return to sender* (1st ed.). New York: Knopf.

After his family hires migrant Mexican workers to help save their Vermont farm from foreclosure, eleven-year-old Tyler befriends the oldest daughter, but when he discovers they may not be in the country legally, he realizes that real friendship knows no borders.

Bernardo, A. (1996). *Fitting in*. Houston, TX: Piñata Books.

A collection of stories about young girls who as Cuban immigrants to the United States grow in confidence and spirit as they confront painful challenges, meeting them head-on.

Bernardo, A. (1998). *Loves me, loves me not*. Houston, TX: Piñata Books.

While trying to win the attention of a high school basketball star who already has a girlfriend, Maggie, a Cuban American, learns painful lessons about romantic young love.

Budhos, M. T. (2006). *Ask me no questions* (1st ed.). New York: Atheneum Books for Young

Readers.

Fourteen-year-old Nadira, her sister, and their parents leave Bangladesh for New York City, but the expiration of their visas and the events of September 11, 2001, bring frustration, sorrow, and terror for the whole family.

Buss, F. L., & Cubias, D. (1991). *Journey of the sparrows* (1st ed.). New York: Lodestar Books.

Maria and her brother and sister, Salvadoran refugees, are smuggled into the United States in crates and try to eke out a living in Chicago with the help of a sympathetic family.

Canales, V. (2005). *The tequila worm*. New York: Wendy Lamb Books.

Sofia grows up in the close-knit community of the barrio in McAllen, Texas, then finds that her experiences as a scholarship student at an Episcopal boarding school in Austin only strengthen her ties to family and her "comadres."

Castilla, J. M. (1999). *Emilio*. Houston, TX: Piñata Books.

A young immigrant from Central America finds it difficult to learn English and adjust to life in the big city of Houston, Texas. (First chapter is great for a read-aloud. This book deals with immigration, bullying, making and keeping friends, being an adolescent, and finding an area to achieve success and turn around your life. Math is Emilio's vehicle to overcome.)

Cofer, J. O. (1996). *An island like you: Stories of the barrio*. New York: Puffin Books.

Twelve stories about young people caught between their Puerto Rican heritage and their American surroundings.

Cofer, J. O. (2004). *Call me Maria: A novel* (1st ed.). New York: Orchard Books.

Fifteen-year-old Maria leaves her mother and their Puerto Rican home to live in the barrio of New York with her father, feeling torn between the two cultures in which she has been raised. (Beautiful prose and poetry.)

Danticat, E. (2001). *The butterfly's way: Voices from the Haitian dyaspora [sic] in the United*

*States*. New York: Soho Press.

This compilation of essays and poetry brings together Haitian-Americans of different generations and backgrounds, linking the voices of those for whom English is a first language and others whose thoughts and dreams will always be formed in French and Kreyol.

Danticat, E. (2002). *Behind the mountains* (1st ed.). New York: Orchard Books.

Writing in the notebook which her teacher gave her, thirteen-year-old Celiane describes life with her mother and brother in Haiti as well as her experiences in Brooklyn after the family finally immigrates there to be reunited with her father. (Brings to light historical events in Haiti during the late 1990's when there was much political unrest. Shows how people sometimes have no means of getting a better life in their countries so they must come to America. Her father comes for many years before the rest of the family and she deals with reaquainting herself with her father.)

De la Cruz, M. (2005). *Fresh off the boat* (1st ed.). New York: HarperCollins.

When her family emigrates from the Philippines to San Francisco, California, fourteen-year-old Vicenza Arambullo struggles to fit in at her exclusive, all-girl private school. (Fun read. Chick-lit at its best.)

Desai Hidier, T. (2002). *Born confused* (1st ed.). New York: Scholastic Press.

Seventeen-year-old Dimple, whose family is from India, discovers that she is not Indian enough for the Indians and not American enough for the Americans, as she sees her hypnotically beautiful, manipulative best friend taking possession of both her heritage and the boy she likes. (Mature content.)

Gallo, D. R. (2004). *First crossing: Stories about teen immigrants* (1st ed.). Cambridge, MA:

Candlewick Press.

Stories of recent Mexican, Venezuelan, Kazakh, Chinese, Romanian, Palestinian, Swedish, Korean, Haitian, and Cambodian immigrants reveal what it is like to face prejudice, language barriers, and homesickness along with common teenage feelings and needs. (First story is very gripping and

Ho, M. (2003). *The stone goddess* (1st ed.). New York: Orchard Books.

After the Communists take over Cambodia and her family is torn from their city life, twelve-year-old Nakri and her older sister attempt to maintain their hope as well as their classical dancing skills in the midst of their struggle to survive. (Nakri's older brother is also a main character. They come to America as refugees.)

Jaramillo, A. (2006). *La línea* (1st ed.). New Milford, CT: Roaring Brook Press.

When fifteen-year-old Miguel's time finally comes to leave his poor Mexican village, cross the border illegally, and join his parents in California, his younger sister's determination to join him soon imperils them both.

Jiménez, F. (1997). *The circuit: Stories from the life of a migrant child = Cajas de cartón* (1st

ed.). Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

The story begins in Mexico when the author is very young and his parents inform him that they are going on a very long trip to "El Norte." What follows is a series of stories of the family's unending migration from one farm to another as they search for the next harvesting job.

Jiménez, F. (2001). *Breaking through = Senderos fronterizos: Continuación de Cajas de cartón*.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Having come from Mexico to California ten years ago, fourteen-year-old Francisco is still working in the fields but fighting to improve his life and complete his education.

Jiménez, F. (2008). *Reaching out = Más allá de mí*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Leaving his home in a migrant community, Francisco sets off for college, carrying memories of years of poverty and prejudice.

Johnston, T. (2001). *Any small goodness: A novel of the barrio*. New York: Blue Sky Press.

Arturo and his family and friends share all kinds of experiences living in the barrio of East Los Angeles--reclaiming their names, playing basketball, championing the school librarian, and even starting their own gang.

Karim, S. (2009). *Skunk girl* (1st ed.). New York: Farrar Straus Giroux

Nina Khan is not just the only Asian or Muslim student in her small-town high school in upstate New York, she is also faces the legacy of her "Supernerd" older sister, body hair, and the pain of having a crush when her parents forbid her to date.

Lee, M. G. (1992). *Finding my voice*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

As she tries to enjoy her senior year and choose which college she will attend, Korean American Ellen Sung must deal with the prejudice of some of her classmates and pressure from her parents to get good grades.

Lee, M. G. (1994). *Saying goodbye*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

In this sequel to "Finding My Voice," Ellen Sung explores her interest in creative writing and in her Korean heritage during her freshman year at Harvard.

Lee, M. G. (1996). *Necessary roughness* (1st ed.). New York: HarperCollins.

Sixteen-year-old Korean American Chan moves from Los Angeles to a small town in Minnesota, where he must cope not only with racism on the football team but also with the tensions in his relationship with his strict father.

Na, A. (2001). *A step from heaven* (1st ed.). Asheville, NC: Front Street.

A young Korean girl and her family find it difficult to learn English and adjust to life in America. (The story is presented in short vignettes that start in Korea and continue for about 15 years to when she graduates high school in America. It is very sad to see the negative effects of displacement take a hold of her family yet she overcomes through education.)

Na, A. (2006). *Wait for me*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

As her senior year in high school approaches, Mina yearns to find her own path in life but working at the family business, taking care of her little sister, and dealing with her mother's impossible expectations are as stifling as the southern California heat, until she falls in love with a man who offers a way out.

Namioka, L. (2006). *Mismatch*. New York: Delacorte Press.

Their families clash when a Japanese-American teenage boy starts dating a Chinese-American teenage girl.

Nye, N. S. (1997). *Habibi* (1st ed.). New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

When fourteen-year-old Liyanne Abboud, her younger brother, and her parents move from St. Louis to a new home between Jerusalem and the Palestinian village where her father was born, they face many changes and must deal with the tensions between Jews and Palestinians.

Osa, N. (2003). *Cuba 15*. New York: Delacorte Press.

Violet Paz, a Chicago high school student, reluctantly prepares for her upcoming "quince," a Spanish nickname for the celebration of a Hispanic girl's fifteenth birthday.

Perkins, M. (2005). *The not-so-star-spangled life of Sunita Sen: A novel* (2nd ed.). New York:

Little Brown.

When her grandparents come for a visit from India to California, thirteen-year-old Sunita finds herself resenting her Indian heritage and embarrassed by the differences she feels between herself and her friends.

Ramos, J., & Cordero, K. (2005). *Dying to cross: The worst immigrant tragedy in American*

*history*. Carmel, CA: Hampton-Brown.

Through interviews with survivors who had the courage to share their stories and conversations with the victims' families, and in examining the political implications of the incident for both U.S. and Mexican immigration policies, Jorge Ramos tells the story of one of the most heartbreaking episodes of our nation's turbulent history of immigration.

Ryan, P. M. (2000). *Esperanza rising* (1st ed.). New York: Scholastic Press.

Esperanza and her mother are forced to leave their life of wealth and privilege in Mexico to go work in the labor camps of Southern California, where they must adapt to the harsh circumstances facing Mexican farm workers on the eve of the Great Depression.

Shea, P. D. (2003). *Tangled threads: A Hmong girl's story*. New York: Clarion Books.

After ten years in a refugee camp in Thailand, thirteen-year-old Mai Yang travels to Providence, Rhode Island, where her Americanized cousins introduce her to pizza, shopping, and beer, while her grandmother and new friends keep her connected to her Hmong heritage.

Villaseñor, V. (1994). *Walking stars: Stories of magic and power*. Houston, TX: Piñata Books.

Autobiographical stories about growing up as the son of Mexican immigrants in California.

Yang, D. J. (2000). *The secret voice of Gina Zhang* (1st ed.). Middleton, WI: American Girl.

When her extreme shyness makes her unable to speak at her new American school, twelve-year-old Jinna, newly arrived from China, retreats into her own fairy tale world.

Places to find diverse adolescent and young adult literature:

Notable Books for a Global Society

Skipping Stones Honor Awards

Wolds of Words

Coretta Scott King Book Awards

Pura Belpré Awards

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