

Using Young Adult Literature to Provide Case Studies for Discussion of Bullying: An Analysis of the 2014 Pura Belpré Award Winner

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Abstract

*Analyzing Meg Medina's young adult novel *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass* (2013) through the lens of multidisciplinary research on school bullying provides a case study in using young adult literature (YAL) to stimulate high school discussions about bullying. Strategies for using anti-bullying YAL and recommendations of additional resources by and about Latinas/os are provided. Medina's novel, which earned the 2014 Pura Belpré Award recognizing excellence in the portrayal of the Latina/o experience, challenges teen hesitation to report bullying and demonstrates the need for peer and adult intervention in bullying*

The Problem of Bullying in Schools

School bullying is a recognized problem studied by psychologists, sociologists, and educators. Bullying can be defined as “aggression that is intentional, repeated, and characterized by an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the target,” while the harassment specific to cyberbullying “is perpetrated by using technology including the Internet and cellular phones” (Romero et al., 2013, p. 161). The overall prevalence of bullying is not known with certainty because some studies “indicate that approximately 20-25% of youths are directly involved in bullying as perpetrators, victims, or both” (Juvonen & Graham, 2014, p. 161), while other studies show that “between 6% to 13% of students report moderate or frequent involvement” in victimization or bullying (Peskin, Tortolero, & Markham, 2006, p. 468). The absence of a standardized measurement of behaviors and variation in questions complicates comparison of research. In addition, young adults often “do not want to admit that they have ‘bullied’ other students” even if they might admit to actions such as teasing,

shunning, and insulting them (Peskin, Tortolero, & Markham, 2006, p. 478).

One study of “urban, low socioeconomic Black and Hispanic middle and high school youth” in the Houston area found that “approximately 7% of students were bullies, 12% were victims, and 5% were bully-victims” (Peskin, Tortolero, & Markham, 2006, p. 474). A psychological study in 2009 data to uncover possible associations among bullying, cyberbullying, and suicide among Latina, primarily Mexican American, adolescent girls in Arizona differentiated between school bullying and online bullying (Romero et al., 2013). The study indicated that 18% of students admitted bullying others in school, and 18% admitted cyberbullying online, while 23% of students admitted being a victim of school bullying, and 26% admitted being a victim of cyberbullying (Romero et al., 2013, p. 168). The researchers suggest that “the statewide political climate of Arizona that has been increasingly anti-immigrant and anti-Latino” plays a possible role by impacting “the experiences of adolescents in terms of

stereotypes, discrimination, and racial profiling that can lead to victimization” (Romero et al., 2013, p. 170). Peskin et al. (2007) likewise stated that “for minority youth in particular, other stresses may exacerbate” peer victimization (p. 374).

The Significance of *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*

Teachers looking for quality fiction with Latino/a characters and written by Latino/a authors can rely on the Pura Belpré Award. This ALA (American Library Association) prize began in 1996 as a collaborative effort between The National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA) and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the ALA (Naidoo, Battle, & Garza de Cortés, 2011). The Pura Belpré Award recognizes excellence in the portrayal of the Latino/a experience in children’s and young adult literature. To be eligible, authors must be “Latinos,” defined for this award as “people whose heritage emanates from any of the Spanish-speaking cultures of the Western hemisphere,” and currently “reside in the United States” (Naidoo, Battle, & Garza de Cortés, 2011, p. 93). Each year, there is one author award winner for narrative and one illustrator award winner, with up to three more books designated honor books. Due to elevating awareness about new books and signaling quality, book prizes can help an author gain a place in school curricula.

In addition to the Pura Belpré Medal, Medina’s novel won the International Latino Book Award in the category of Best Young Adult Fiction in English. It was named a Commended Book for the Américas Award and earned a Cybils Award (Children’s and Young Adult Bloggers Literary Awards) in the YA fiction category. The novel was also on the Kirkus Best Books for Teens List and

the School Library Journal Best Books List in 2013. A Junior Library Guild Selection, *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass* was placed on the American Library Association’s Best Fiction for Young Adults List, Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Top Ten Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers, and the 2014 TAYSHAS Reading List from the Texas Library Association.

While previous Pura Belpré Award winners include incidents of bullying, Medina is the first winner to focus primarily on school bullying faced by the protagonist. Set in the present time in Queens, New York, the book can be categorized as a young adult (YA) problem novel that presents a social issue within a realistic work of literary fiction. Tenth-grader Piedad (Piddy) Sanchez’s mother moves them to a new apartment that seems better maintained and in which Piddy can finally have her own bedroom. But Piddy’s transfer to a new school results in a brutal bullying experience by female classmates who hurt her physically, academically, and psychologically. A videotaped beating circulates online and almost causes Piddy to drop out of school. Her goal of becoming a scientist who works with large animals, particularly elephants, gets threatened when she becomes unable to concentrate on schoolwork. Other conflicts include Piddy’s quest to learn more about her absent father, her wish to build a better relationship with her stressed mother, and her effort to develop friendships within her peer group.

The daughter of Cuban immigrants, Medina grew up in Queens, New York. Her mother was a teacher in Cuba, but after fleeing Cuba during the Revolution, she found employment in a transistor factory. Medina has known her husband since the age of five because his mother worked in the same factory. For Women’s History Month in

2014, Medina was named among the “CNN Ten: Visionary Women” as a “reading revolutionary” whose goals are to “examine the impact of bullying on Latina girls and show that biculturalism can foster resilience” (C. Rodriguez, 2014, p. 10). Medina has published three other books.

The bullying plot in *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass* (2013) has its origins in Medina’s life. As Medina stated in her speech accepting the Pura Belpré Award in June 2014:

With a single sentence in the seventh grade—a threat that someone was going to beat me up—I started on a downward journey that lasted for much of my teen years. I stopped liking school. My grades dropped. I felt lost from my family. It made me distrustful and sad, and brought me to choices that frankly I hate to remember, even today. (p. 1)

These words could equally describe Piddy. The novel’s autobiographical basis strengthens its emotional intensity. Medina (2014) said that her book is both about bullying and also “about how a Latina here in the United States stays connected with her culture and finds her *clave*—that unshakable sense of herself—so that she can dance over the world’s troubles no matter how heavily they are heaped on her” (p. 3).

The Effects of Bullying

Medina’s novel demonstrates all four main categories of bullying: “direct-physical (e.g., theft, assault), direct-verbal (e. g. threats, insults), indirect-relational (e. g. social ostracizing, rumor spreading), and cyberbullying” (Romero et al., 2013, p. 162). The indirect-relational and direct-verbal are the first stages Piddy experiences, then the bullying escalates to the direct-physical and cyberbullying categories. In each stage, peers and adults do not intervene

until the end of the book, and Piddy does not ask for help. Reading this book reveals the importance of speaking up by victims, bystanders, and family members.

The book’s opening line, “Yaqui Delgado wants to kick your ass,” is reported to Piddy by a classmate named Vanessa, who walks away before Piddy can ask, “Who is Yaqui Delgado?” (p. 1). Possible motives for Yaqui’s behavior include resentment that Yaqui’s boyfriend admires Piddy’s appearance and a wish to retain social dominance. Yaqui may think Piddy considers herself superior. When Piddy enters the cafeteria, she sees “the Latin zone” but does not sit there because she does not recognize anyone from class and because they seem “a rougher bunch” than Piddy is accustomed to at her previous school (p. 6). Piddy, whose mother is from Cuba and father from the Dominican Republic, never mentions any Latina students being nice to her, and several are mean in gym class (p. 6). In the cafeteria, Piddy sits with classmates from Physics.

Piddy’s newcomer position in the middle of high school means that she has not developed any friendships that will provide support. She reflects, “Since we’ve moved, I’ve had to start over” (p. 5). Piddy is on her own and vulnerable. The large institution, which has 2,500 students, does not help this transfer student make connections with classmates. This situation corresponds with risk factors described by psychologists Juvonen and Graham (2014)

We know that school transitions are risky times for most youths, but especially for victim-prone youths whose negative experiences might spike during those times. Preventive interventions that offer victims special support to navigate these turbulent transitions would be

worthwhile. The buffering effect of even one friendship is well documented in the victimization literature, and these underutilized findings could be incorporated into a preventive approach. (p. 177)

Piddy's only two quasi-friends at her new school are Darlene Jackson and Rob Allen. Darlene, who works as a student aide in the guidance office, is a gossip who gives Piddy information, such as calling to say Yaqui was caught stealing a cell phone (p. 95). Piddy tutors Darlene to get her to share Yaqui's schedule and cover for Piddy's absences. But Darlene's strategy is avoidance. After a hallway incident in which Piddy is hit in the head and her elephant necklace yanked off her neck, Darlene's response is: "You're not going to tell, are you? If you are, leave me out of it, for God's sake. I don't want to be a witness" (p. 72). Darlene walks away rather than standing up for Piddy or reporting the aggression. Darlene only gives Piddy some hope of an escape by handing her an application for J. C. McCleary, a science-oriented magnet school, and urging her to apply for admission.

Piddy is also given an application for the magnet school by Rob Allen, a classmate who is "crazy smart" but seems to have "not a single friend" (p. 5). Rob knows Piddy's fear of Yaqui because he has read the English essay in which she wrote about a Frankenstein-esque monster based on Yaqui. When their teacher unwittingly places Piddy's essay on the bulletin board, Rob sees Piddy's fearful expression and removes her writing to protect Piddy from Yaqui's gang (p. 139). Rob later becomes the only person to report the bullying and get adult intervention for Piddy. Rob does so primarily because Piddy showed caring for him by covering over the insults written on

his locker, for Rob is also a victim of bullying.

Worry about Yaqui dominates Piddy's thinking so she cannot concentrate on anything else. In class, Piddy wonders, "Could she have spies in this very room?" (p. 32). Whereas Piddy was previously an excellent student, now she dreads going to Daniel Jones High School:

DJ's a mind-erasing miasma, and it's eating my brain. I forget everything about velocity. I can't remember the reasons we were in World War I. Each period, I stare at the clock, thinking about getting from one class to the next without meeting Yaqui, like that's the real test. Sitting in class is just what I do in between. (p. 70)

Her downward spiral goes unnoticed. Piddy feels surrounded: "It's like everywhere I look there's a bully in my face" (p. 57). Piddy even changes her appearance and tries a *chola* makeup style so she can look like "a girl tough enough to face Yaqui" (p. 152), but she no longer looks like herself.

The Anti-Bullying Program

Medina exposes the school's ineffective actions toward stopping bullying. When Piddy sees a sign on the bulletin board that says "bully-free zone, Stand up. Speak out." the ridiculousness makes her "almost laugh out loud" (p. 75). The new Stand Up/Speak Out program, SUSO, appears to lack substance and involvement because there is no evidence of its existence except the sign. When Piddy sees the word "Homo" written on Rob's locker next to hers, Piddy thinks "Where's the bully-free zone now?" (p. 98) and uses a marker to cover the writing as a caring gesture. Because possession of a Sharpie-brand marker is "contraband per the student handbook" (p. 99), Piddy gets reported to the Dean of Student Discipline,

Mr. Flatwell, by a coach who sees her with the marker.

Teen readers will want to discuss how the school handles Piddy's "graffiti" while ignoring other problems such as anti-gay insults and peer violence. Mr. Flatwell gives no credence to Piddy's explanation, nor does he do anything to help Rob. Because Piddy sees Mr. Flatwell ignore what is happening to Rob, she has no confidence he would care about her or any other victim of bullying. Piddy even asks Mr. Flatwell, "This school is supposed to be a Bully-Free Zone, isn't it?" (p. 101), but he changes the subject. Pointing out her tardies and detention, he asks her, "Any reason you're having trouble getting to class?" (p. 101). His strict demeanor and mispronunciation of her name contribute to Piddy's alienation. Piddy feels, "If I tell him about Yaqui, everything will just get worse. Being a narc means you're too weak to take care of yourself" so she would become "even more of a social outcast," and it would be "open season for anyone to get after me" (p. 101). Piddy fails to take the chance to report Yaqui's bullying.

The fact that Piddy's minor act is treated as vandalism and punished with Saturday detention while more damaging situations are overlooked shows that this school has serious problems with creating a safe learning environment for all students. Medina develops a theme that students should not let themselves or others be bullied but also an acknowledgement that justice is not always served. Young adults can be assertive, not cowed by peers or authority figures. Piddy's skepticism and fear of retaliation are understandable, but lack of intervention allows Yaqui Delgado's bullying to worsen.

When Yaqui attacks Piddy, a video recording is posted online, which represents

cyberbullying. Near Piddy's own apartment, within sight of the high school, Yaqui takes photographs with her cell phone while she violently assaults Piddy. Yaqui grabs her hair, yanks her around, and throws her on the ground. Piddy tries to twist away and fight back, "but nothing stops [Yaqui] from toppling me and pressing my face into the pavement. She kicks me hard in the ribs" (p. 161). Yaqui pulls Piddy's shirt over her head, tearing it off of her, then rips her brassiere and pulls it off completely. Piddy is dressed only in her jeans, exposed to view. People drive by slowly and look. When Yaqui finally walks away with her crew, she grinds Piddy's elephant pendant into the pavement, symbolizing the destruction of Piddy's dreams (p. 162). Neighbor Mrs. Boika watches from her window but does nothing.

Bystanders—filling the third role in the bullying triad of bully, victim, and bystanders—can include "assistants, reinforcers, outsiders, or defenders" (Baer and Glasgow, 2008, p. 80). Yaqui's lunch table compatriots are her assistants and reinforcers. Vanessa and the other girls perpetuate the bullying violence because they support Yaqui, videotape the assault, and post it publicly online. Mrs. Boika and the people who drive by without stopping are blameworthy too. Moreover, all the people who watch the video and never report it become bystanders who allow bullying to be perpetuated. Only Rob reports it through an anonymous tip; while the Stand Up/Speak Out program is ineffective overall, it at least provides a way to submit a report.

The Need for Intervention

In Medina's novel, delay in notifying adult authority figures comes across as a wrong choice, and intervention improves the victim's circumstances. This is significant because, in a study of how selected YA

fiction portrays the role of adults, Jones, Dennis, Torres-OvRick, and Walker (2014) point out that some books portray adult intervention negatively; such literature might exacerbate bully victims' "hesitation to communicate the harassment to adults" and doubts that teachers or parents could help (p. 76). This novel represents but does not reward or endorse teen refusal to report bullying. Piddy's unwillingness to speak up is not presented favorably as the model for readers. Medina's book demonstrates further that peers and adult family members need to advocate for each other and assert rights to a safe education.

When Lila errs in not reporting the attack, she makes a mistake in her role as Clara's and Piddy's *comadre*. A *comadre*, the Latina term for a relative, godmother, or close woman friend who advises and cares for family members, is "someone who makes people into a family" (Canales, 2005, p. 5). Lila fills this role powerfully until she allows the beating to go unpunished. Lila sees Piddy's injuries firsthand because Piddy calls her for help after it happens. Lila honors Piddy's begging that Lila not to tell Clara because Piddy fears what she thinks will happen: "I'll get dragged to the dean's office with Yaqui to shake her hand and say sorry, because nobody ever gets expelled at DJ, no matter what they do" (Medina, 2013, p. 164). Lila motivates Piddy to return to work and school, but she appears to mistrust institutions and does not report the attack even when she is inside the school to get Piddy's absences excused. Piddy remains at risk of failing out of school and continuing to be a victim. Clara does not perceive that something is seriously wrong and assumes Piddy's falling grades are due to laziness. Clara accepts her daughter's claim that she has a black eye because she fell on the stairs. After the attack, Piddy secludes herself and thinks:

"Piddy's dead, Ma, I want to explain. Gone. *Adiós*. I picture myself like one of those Day of the Dead skeletons wearing a grin" (p. 168). Yet after a friend's mother in the old neighborhood gets beaten so severely that she is hospitalized, Piddy thinks, "Why didn't she just tell the truth? Why was she apologizing?" (p. 207). Piddy seems to sense a connection to her own situation of being a victim of assault, but she still neither reports it nor realizes that bystanders have some duty to try to help. When women do not see examples of authorities' fixing a broken situation, they become unwilling to speak up at all.

The report through the Stand Up/Speak Out program causes Mr. Flatwell to call Piddy into the Office of the Dean of Student Discipline. SUSO is run by Miss Castenado, a guidance counselor who seems to be the only Latina/o adult Piddy meets at Daniel Jones. Piddy finally acknowledges the bullying and names her attacker. Yaqui denies everything, but Piddy writes the web address of the videotaped beating on Mr. Flatwell's notepad as proof. The URL is burned into her brain because of how the video exposes her. She knows that "the whole school has seen it" (p. 218). Finally, Piddy reveals the truth to her mother. Clara and Lila go to school with Piddy to meet with Mr. Flatwell. His solution is for Piddy to leave by applying for "a safety transfer" back to her previous school (p. 253). Piddy agrees immediately. She and her mother choose not to report Yaqui Delgado's attack to the police, probably due to mistrust of institutions, fear of retaliation, and doubt that it would help. No justice for the battery of Piddy Sanchez is achieved.

The realistic ending demonstrates hope for Piddy's future without an over-simplified, easy resolution. The last chapter takes place in the spring when Piddy is back at her

previous school and has not “seen or heard from Yaqui or her crew” but remains “scared that Yaqui will be waiting for me again” (pp. 255, 256). In the closing scene, Piddy and Clara are with their family friends at Sal3n Coraz3n, where Piddy works on Saturdays. When Piddy reads her acceptance letter to the science magnet school, this signals that her goals are back on track. She will get to begin 11th grade in a new school that will help her prepare for a science career. The women play music and dance together. The conclusion is one of few optimistic moments in the novel.

Literature as Case Studies for Teaching and Learning about Bullying and Engaging in Literacy Skills

Case studies have traditionally been used as teaching and learning tools in medicine and business at the university level as catalysts for discussion on complex issues. Because case studies describe contextually rich situations that involve complex dilemmas, they provide opportunities for decision making from multiple perspectives with multiple consequences. According to Barbara Davis (1993), teachers should use case studies that are “complex enough to raise interesting questions” and “amenable to more than one solution” (p. 223). A good case study will have “emotional as well as intellectual involvement” so that “students identify with the characters and the problems that befall them” (Davis, 1993, p. 223.)

Using anti-bullying young adult literature (YAL) in school is part of changing bully culture. Literature against bullying can be utilized in ways that meet state standards, serve a positive social purpose, and deepen understanding from both a traditional literacy aspect and socially. R. J. Rodr3guez (2014a) argues that teachers should “embed” lessons that counteract bullying and hate

“into our English language arts curriculum and instruction,” using the multitude of print and online resources (Rodr3guez, 2014a, p. 91). The situations and choices in anti-bullying literature such as *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass* are complex and contextually rich cases, which merit conversation with young adult readers in an academic class, book club, or literature circle. Discussion of this novel can help address teen unwillingness to report and challenge bullying behaviors, as readers experience Piddy’s fear during victimization. Because empathy is “one of the factors associated with decreased bullying and increased student intervention” (Ansbach, 2012, p. 88), efforts to build empathy among students can help them feel the implications of their actions.

From Discussion to Writing

Writing persuasive texts to influence attitudes and actions of specific audiences is expected in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) throughout middle school and high school English Language Arts, and social issues raised in YA fiction can provide a basis for such writing. Persuasive essays related to Medina’s novel could be prompted by a question about who was most helpful to Piddy, how bystanders should respond when they see evidence of bullying, and how young adults can overcome being bullied. For instance, the “STOP and DARE” writing method, which uses a Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model, can help students at all developmental levels learn how to write opinion essays (De La Paz, 2001, p. 234). The mnemonic STOP denotes “Suspend judgment. Take a side. Organize ideas. Plan more as you write,” and DARE stands for “Develop your topic sentence. Add supporting ideas. Reject possible arguments. End with a conclusion” (De La Paz, 2001, p. 237). In addition to persuasive writing,

Medina's novel also provides the basis for literary analysis essays on other conflicts. Writers could address Piddy's relationships with her mother and her friends, interpret how her physical environment affects her, explore Piddy's quest to learn about her absent father, or analyze the women's supportive experiences in *Salón Corazón*.

Creative writing options with Medina's novel include emails or instant messages between characters, articles for the school magazine Rob edits, and alternate versions of events as narrated by other characters. Class members can create their own multimedia anti-bullying messages through social media and print media. These encouraging messages could link with the anti-bullying literature studied in class while also enabling text-to-world connections. Alternate assessment activities that vary traditional test and essay formats provide opportunities for audiences beyond the teacher, thereby increasing motivation for quality work. High school students "say that writing for real audiences makes them feel the assignment has more value to themselves and others" (Ansbach, 2012, p. 91).

English teachers have published about successful projects done in conjunction with reading realistic fiction against bullying, such as letter exchanges, process drama, and multi-genre writing (Almeda, 2012; Ansbach, 2012; Connolly and Giouroukakis, 2012; Baer & Glasgow, 2008). A cyber-bullying letter exchange involved audiences beyond the teacher, and "in researching and writing to inform their audience, the students taught themselves" about strategies to use when encountering cyberbullying (Connolly and Giouroukakis, 2012, p. 71). Process drama encourages the creation of unscripted scenes as participants "respond to problems from a given perspective in a specific situation" (Baer & Glasgow, 2008,

p. 83). A "Classroom Geographic" magazine that asks high school students to explore their own "microcultures through writing in the genre of magazine articles" helps students to "affirm their identities and the identities of their classmates and organically move away from bullying behavior toward acceptance and affirmation of others" (Almeda, 2012, pp. 82, 86). Ansbach (2012) has eleventh-grade students read multiple nonfiction texts about bullying and then craft poetry, stories, and posters using different perspectives. In discussion of anti-bullying novels, all three roles in the bullying triad can be explored—victim, bully, and bystander. Harmon and Henkin (2014) provide questions to prompt discussion of books on bullying.

More Recommended Anti-Bullying Novels about Latina/o Characters

While *Yaqui Delgado Is Going to Kick Your Ass* is the first Pura Belpré Award-winner to have school bullying as the primary conflict for the protagonist, many winners include incidents of bullying, for it is an unfortunate reality many Latinas/os experience. For instance, in the 2013 winner, which takes place in the late 1980s, Benjamin Alire Sáenz's *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (2012) portrays a close friendship that becomes love between two best friends in El Paso. At one point, Ari saves Dante's life from a car accident. Later, Dante, who is openly gay, falls victim to a violent attack that hospitalizes him. These books, and more, are recommended by R. J. Rodríguez (2013b) in his listing of YAL and other print and nonprint resources for teachers to use for prevention of bullying as they present the realism and complexity associated with effective cases.

Another novel set in Texas, the 2006 Pura Belpré Award winner includes two memorable bullying incidents. In *The Tequila Worm* by Viola Canales (2005),

Sofia Casas has an encounter in the middle school cafeteria with a girl calling her “Taco Head” (p. 37). Sofia’s soccer coach helps her to get through this by urging her to “kick with your head” through academic achievement and being her best (p. 39). The advice sticks with Sofia, for whom school success is a priority. The second incident occurs when a tenth-grade classmate insults Sofia with biased statements about Mexican Americans and public disrespect of Sofia’s Catholic religion. Other students do not condone the bullying. The peer support as well as self-assurance about her identity and abilities strengthens Sofia to avoid getting derailed from her goals.

While Medina’s novel reveals little about the personal circumstances of bully Yaqui Delgado, a new novel with a bullying subplot gives some insights into the perpetrator. In Estela Bernal’s *Can You See Me Now?* (2014), thirteen-year-old Mandy Silva, mourning the recent death of her father and her mother’s estrangement due to grief, gains new friends despite enduring insults from classmate Haley. After realizing Haley’s unhappy, broken home life, Mandy reaches out to Haley, confronting her while also sympathizing with losses each has faced. By the end, Mandy considers that she has great friends “and room for plenty more, maybe even for Haley” (p. 156). Redressing the bully’s situation is crucial, and many bullies are themselves victims at home or school, again presenting a complex case to study. Romero et al. (2013) urged exploration of “restorative practices that aim to heal both victim and bully” because they found, in addition to a correlation between suicide attempts and being a victim of bullies, that “suicide ideation and plans were also associated with being a bully” (p. 169).

R. J. Palacio’s *Wonder* (2012) is a bestselling book in which peers stand up for acceptance and against bullying. Raquel Jaramillo is the Colombian American author’s real name. Popular with all ages and suitable for readers in grades five and above, *Wonder* also earned recognition on the Best Children’s Books List for 2012 from *Kirkus Reviews*, *Booklist*, and *School Library Journal*. Told through multiple, alternating perspectives, *Wonder* describes the transition to school by Auggie, a ten-year-old with severe craniofacial anomalies. Auggie gains friends and self-confidence even while facing mistreatment by a few classmates at his private, preparatory school. The main bully leaves at the end of the school year.

New fiction with anti-bullying content can be found through listening to fellow teachers, librarians, and young adults, reading professional reviews such as those aggregated in the Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database, following blogs, and joining online communities for readers. A non-fiction resource is *Bullying Under Attack: True Stories Written by Teen Victims, Bullies, and Bystanders* (Meyer et al., 2013), which provides short, true accounts that can be read individually and are organized into categories including “Survive It” and “Friend or Foe?” R. J. Rodríguez (2013b) suggests current anthologies and media that provide support for preventing the bullying of Latina/o students (pp. 166-167). In addition, schools could invite input from parents and students when selecting a book with bullying content for an all-grade or all-school read, and analysis, and discussion, thus increasing buy-in.

Reading Meg Medina’s novel *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass* as a case study to understanding the complexity of

bullying is a positive step in the effort to reduce bullying in our schools. This book demonstrates that bully victims need to speak up, the complexities surrounding their hesitation to do so, and that adult family members must advocate for their children. Being a bystander is unacceptable because it allows violence to be perpetuated. Anti-bullying programs are only as effective as people's willingness to participate and use them.

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