Be Seen, Be Heard and Be Represented: The Impact of Diverse Literature in Classroom Libraries Through a Windows, Mirrors and Sliding Glass Door Approach

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SPRING 2024

A thesis submitted to the Honors Program at Southern New Hampshire University to complete HON 401, and as part of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program

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ABSTRACT

Classroom libraries are a foundational part of elementary classrooms. Traditionally, what is referred to as children's literature has lacked both content and form. As the 21st century evolves, the growing changes in literature, education and societal norms necessitates a change in the dynamics of what constitutes a classroom library. Rudine Sims Bishop's educational concept "Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors" has helped influence the field of education and literature since the early 90's (Bishop, 1990). Based on her concept, it is common practice that children should feel represented and included when reading books from their library. Classroom libraries should reflect the demographics of the classroom and school population. The terms diversity and representation have grown to incorporate a variety of sub genres including education, political belief, family, language, religion, age, economic status, gender, disability, race, and many others (Hampton, 2021). An educational study of classroom libraries in New Hampshire elementary schools provided insight into the actual demographic of classroom libraries. By analyzing the components of current elementary classroom libraries, educators can be better informed on how their classroom collection aligns to the best practices of representation in literature. Becoming aware of the demographics of classroom libraries can help educators become well versed in the topic of literature representation when expanding or creating a classroom library. With literature and classroom libraries being a critical component of elementary classrooms; it is crucial that these collections are diverse in ways that allow the student population to feel represented and included.

Keywords: literature, diversity, classroom libraries, windows- mirror-and sliding glass doors

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people that I would like to acknowledge and thank for their support with this thesis. This research would not have been possible without the incredible support and mentorship of Professor Linda Whitmore and Dr. Lowell Matthews of Southern New Hampshire University.   The Honors Program at SNHU has been a tremendous support throughout my years as an undergraduate student. Thank you, Professor Whitmore, for being a voice of reason and for putting up with the three years of in-depth conversations and never-ending questions. You have been a wonderful mentor and have taught me so many things that I will forever be grateful for. I would like to thank the education department for everything they have done to support me throughout my years at SNHU.

I also would like to say a tremendous thank you to my parents and my boyfriend, Diego. Diego, thank you for always being my rock and supporting me when I needed it most. You always believe in me, even when I don't believe in myself. To mom, thank you for being my sounding board when I wasn't sure what the right path to take was. The late-night phone calls, questions, and rant sessions helped make this thesis a success. To dad, thank you for reminding me every day what I am capable of and pushing me to be the best version of myself. Your support and feedback have always meant the most to me, and I can always hear your voice in my head reminding me "you got this". You taught me that I am my own worst critic and that I can do anything I put my mind to. So, thank you.

Introduction

In almost every elementary classroom around the country, there is a rendition of a classroom library. Different from a public or school library, classroom libraries are found within each individual classroom and are composed of books that teachers have added to their collection over time. They can include a range of books but are created and maintained by individual teachers. Teachers add books to their individual collections through grants, donations, and their own funds. In elementary school, reading and books are used in every subject and are found everywhere. At such a young age, reading is a critical part of childhood development which is why classroom libraries are integral in helping to develop student's reading ability and interests. Books that are found within classroom libraries help the academic and social development of a child. It is important to consider the contents of the collection when creating and maintaining a classroom library due to the library's impact on development.

By definition libraries contain books and literature that are accessible to groups of people to utilize and reference (Oxford University Press, 2023a). Each library is unique as no two collections will contain the exact same books and media. This also applies to classroom libraries as teachers are responsible for building their own unique collections. In 2020, 92 percent of public schools had a library media center, but the number of individual classrooms that contain libraries is much lower (The NCES Fast…, n.d.). There are over two million students who attend schools where libraries are not available for them to use regularly (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Movements that deal with censorship and banned books are adding to the decrease in classroom libraries and literature available for students. While books are critical for

academic development and creating a productive learning environment, classroom libraries are becoming less common and are including fewer books.

The contents of classroom libraries have a direct influence on children, as they absorb what they are reading. The content they absorb helps direct their academic and social development. Diversity and representation in literature involves having a wide range of topics and content represented. It requires the books to include a wide variation more than just a range of genres. The diversity of the classroom library should reflect the learners in that students can find books that relate to them and their peers. The educational concept "windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors" demonstrates that students should be represented by the literature they are exposed to (Bishop, 2015). To be most effective, the makeup of classroom libraries should reflect the demographics and characteristics of the students in the room to make them feel included and represented in a diverse world.

Classroom Libraries

Classroom libraries are a common characteristic of an elementary level classroom. While classroom libraries can be found at higher grade levels, traditionally they are included in kindergarten through fifth grade. Many teachers are individually responsible for expanding and providing books for their own classroom libraries. There are rare circumstances where schools help create and fund classroom libraries, but frequently it is the responsibility of the individual teachers. Teachers use their own funds, grants, and donations to increase their collection. They take the time to build their collections because classroom libraries have the "potential to increase student motivation, engagement, and achievement and help students become critical thinkers,

analytical readers, and informed citizens" (National Council of Teachers of English, 2021). Classroom libraries have a positive and direct impact on student academic achievement, social skills and can drastically increase their literacy and literary ability as well as their enjoyment of reading.

Every classroom library is different as there is not a set list of books that make up their composition. In recent years, there has been an increase in some communities and schools regarding the removal of certain books from libraries but that is not found in every school across the country. The classroom libraries will differ depending on the grade level that will be utilizing the collection as well as the resources and funding available for teachers. What might be found in a kindergarten classroom will be very different from the longer and more difficult books that are in a fifth-grade room. The reading program Fountas and Pinnell suggests that an average classroom collection should have at least 300-600 books if not more located in it (Neuman, n.d.). While this is just a suggestion the goal is that the collection is large enough that every student is able to find books that will interest and suit them. Not having enough books can limit a student's choice in what they read and create obstacles in their literacy journey. It can cause students to avoid reading, especially if they do not feel represented in the collections available to them.

Teachers commonly add books into their collection based on their popularity with students. The literature's popularity is a result of the content as well as how the book relates to an audience. The characters found within a novel are one of the biggest influences on how children relate to a story. Characters that are easily identified with, and are loved, or hated help young readers relate to a book and can increase its popularity (Master Class, 2021). Commonly, these characters are viewed as weak, young, unusual and are generally considered underdogs

(Common Characteristics, 2021). The characters perform well under pressure and achieve their goals against great odds, which sparks interest and hope in the readers. How a book is written can also have an impact on the popularity of a text. Books that draw readers in, tend to have fast paced storylines with simple and relatable themes (Maloney, 2016).

Teachers consider what genres and books students gravitate towards and tend to add them to their collection overtime. They also will add in books that they think are good influences on students and promote positive messages and subjects. When writing, authors sometimes capture "the ideas in the air at the time and puts them into words" and capture them in the contents of their books (Harvey, 1953). Students can typically relate to a book when the subject matter is something they are familiar with or see in their daily life. Each classroom library is built by individual teachers, with support from parents and the community. They may add books that they feel represent the diversity of their students and will include books that pique student interest based on subject matter and writing style. The books within a classroom collection are collected by individual teachers, but classroom libraries share a common characteristic of multiple genres and subject matters within the literature.

Genres

In literature, there is a variation among books that results in different subject matters making it easier to classify and identify books. This classification is known as genres. Genres each have their own characteristics and trends that make the category easily definable. The characteristics of genres include length, characters, setting, viewpoints, plot, moods, and themes (Cabag, 2021). These characteristics allow people to have a sense of what they are reading

before they pick up a book. It also creates a sense of predictability. In a classroom library, genres help with organizing the collection as well as creating a diverse range of books for students to access. Having a range of genres in a classroom library allows students to be able to differentiate the books they are reading. It also ensures that there is something for every student in the classroom. Different genres provide variation in the books in a collection and increase the type of books students are exposed to.

Genres can be organized into two main categories: fiction and nonfiction. Nonfiction books are ones that are based on real facts, real people, and real events. Fiction on the other hand is based around fabricated ideas and things that stretch the truth. According to the California Department of Education, there are about eighteen genres that fall into the topic of fiction. Some of the most popular ones include fairy tales, fantasy, historical fiction, mystery, realistic fiction, and science fiction (California Department of Education, 2023). This is not an extensive list as there are always other genres that can be considered as well and multiple sub genres. These fiction genres help differentiate between books and help teachers and students be able to group and select them based on their characteristics.

The nonfiction category can also be broken down into genres. Since it is based on real facts and events, it can be broken down into several smaller genres. Examples of genres within nonfiction include biography/autobiography, narratives, speeches, essays, and nonfiction itself (California Department of Education, 2023). The genre of nonfiction focuses on informational text regarding certain subjects such as sports, movies, people, and animals. These books can be sorted by the genres or by the subject matter.

In an elementary classroom library, it is important to incorporate a variety of fiction and nonfiction genres as it provides opportunities for students to explore different subjects and ideas.

It creates a variety in the books that students are exposed to and can help them feel represented in their classroom collection. Different genres provide students variety in their reading experiences and can help them identify likes and interests. In addition, by having both fiction and nonfiction genres in a collection, students have the opportunity to learn about a plethora of topics and to learn the text features associated with the different genres. Variation in genres not only increases the topic and content that is displayed in books, but it can change the format and medium of literature.

Multimedia Literature

The term literature can incorporate more than printed texts and books as it can also be applied to multimedia literature. There is a range in the different types of digital mediums that can span across books, videos, and interactive literacy websites. The goal of digital literature is to be created and consumed on a screen or in an entirely electronic format. The 21st century is centered around the use of technology and electronics. In elementary school, there is a rising increase in the use of technology in a classroom. Depending on the funding and the economic status of the school, students commonly have access to chrome books or laptops that they utilize for coursework. They may read or access their reading curriculum online or have to log a certain number of electronic reading minutes a week on different platforms. Technology as a method for curriculum instruction has become more common and has increased the usage of multimedia literature.

Within multimedia literature, there are generally five different categories that can be identified. These categories include e-stories, linear e-narratives, interactive stories, hyper-text

and hyper-media. E-stories are a combination of words and auditory aids that read stories orally to students to help them decode texts and model pronunciation. Linear e-narratives are very similar to physical books, just found on a digital screen. This type of literature is often referred to as e-books. Interactive stories provide additional information to linear e-narratives through pictures, links, descriptions, videos, as well as other items that are not found in a printed copy of the text. This can include literature that is dependent on the reader's interaction to build the story. Another category, hypertext narratives add in hyperlinks within the text to display additional information. With this category, there are no videos or pictures added in the text. The final category hypermedia expands on hypertexts, but it incorporates videos, images, and interactive activities (Unsworth, 2006). Knowing the differences between the categories of electronic media can help teachers incorporate different types of multimedia literature within their classroom and their library.

The increased reliance on technology within the classroom has opened the door for the usage of e-texts and platforms that promote electronic literature. While these are alternative forms of literature, many times increase student excitement and promote their literacy development through interaction. There are options for multimedia literature to help those with specialized needs to access literature as well as those who need items in other languages. School curriculums are incorporating more and more technology into the classroom as students must use laptops to reach goals on electronic platforms. Teachers can find ways to successfully incorporate multimedia literature into their classroom library by having a list of educational electronic literary platforms that may be separate from the technology within their curriculum. Through extra enrichment or alternative reading methods, students' literary experience can change, and it can create diversity in what they are exposed to.

Diversity

Diversity is an overarching term that incorporates multiple different topics and classifications. The term diversity traditionally included age, race, ethnicity, and socio-economic background. In recent years the term has been broadened to reach a much larger group of subtopics. These include education, political belief, family, organizational role, language, income, religion, appearance, work, race and ethnicity, age, gender identity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, and disability (Hampton, 2021). This extensive list covers all the current categories that fall under the term diversity, but it is subject to change as the current terminology grows and changes. John Hopkins University has developed research on the different areas of diversity and has created a graphic explaining the categories of diversity (see appendix A) that is used in many other publications (Carey Task Force…, 2021). The areas that are found within diversity help provide context for people to understand the differences among each other. The categories of diversity make it easier for people to identify different aspects of their lives and put names to the characteristics. It is evident that not everyone is alike, and that people have their own unique differences.

Some of the other terms that are associated with the topic of diversity are representation, identity, and inclusion. No matter what term is used, diversity is a cultural norm that is included everywhere. Everyone is uniquely different, and societies celebrate those differences. For many people, the 21st century is centered around the celebration of different cultures and people's individual demographics. This celebration of diversity is often expressed through two very common expressions: *the world is a melting pot blending together cultures* or that *the world is a salad bowl tossed full of different cultures*. Many people are a mix of different cultures, beliefs,

characteristics; blending many types of diversity to create their own identity. Each person may fit into one or more aspects of the sixteen categories of diversity, identifying with multiple or all of the categories. These different components of diversity are what make people unique.

Disabilities

Disabilities is one of the sixteen categories of diversity that has a large impact on classrooms. The term disabilities refer to students who receive special education or accommodations because of atypical development or mental status. Many times, when people think of disabilities, they picture people who have a low IQ or are severely physically impaired. This negative assumption is a harmful stereotype of the category of disabilities. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), a disability is "any condition of the body or mind {impairment} that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities {activity limitation} and interact with the world around them (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020)." Disabilities can range from an impairment in movement to altered mental states in people.

A subtopic of disabilities is the category of neurodivergence. The term neurodivergent does not apply to everyone with disabilities but it directly applies to those whose neurological function is not typical and has unique characteristics. Neurodivergence covers a wide breath of disabilities and terms and can include people on the Autism spectrum to those who have obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) or Schizophrenia. The neurodivergent umbrella demonstrates the range in terms and classifications that fall under disabilities of neurodivergence

(see appendix B). Since there is a range in disabilities, it is important for those who fall into this category to see themselves represented in society and literature.

In elementary schools, it is extremely important to show the diversity of disabilities in books as a large portion of students are impacted by disabilities. In the state of New Hampshire, over 19% of students received special education services during the 2021-2022 school year (NH School Funding Fairness Project, 2023). With so many people receiving specialized education, students are aware of people's differences and when they may have a disability. By supporting disabilities within schools and withing classroom literature, teachers can create a welcoming and accepting environment for everyone. Literature that includes characters with disabilities not only helps educate those who are not as informed, but it allows those with disabilities to feel represented within their classroom.

Implicit and Explicit Factors

With the subject matter of diversity comes the unconscious and conscious stereotypes that are formed about people. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a stereotype is "a preconceived and oversimplified idea of the characteristics which typify a person, situation, etc." (Oxford University Press, 2023b). Society and individuals do not always realize when they are making prejudicial comments or actions towards another person or concept. The unconscious nature of stereotypes and biases make it difficult to recognize them and adjust to counteract the effects they have. Many times, people's opinions are formed by what they are exposed to at a young age. They are influenced by those around them and the material they have access to. Children tend to form their bias and assumptions, which turn into stereotypes, as young as two

years old. Students as young as preschool level can have already developed assumptions of

people that are around them especially towards the subject of race (Adam, 2021). The implicit

and explicit stereotypes that are formed by individuals have a lasting effect on their viewpoints

the older they become.

Similar to the implicit and explicit nature of stereotypes, racism is "any prejudice against

someone because of their race" and many times those opinions are reinforced by systems of

power (Spencer, 2022). Racism can be brought about as a strong stereotype that is reinforced

through hierarchical systems and impacts the way that people act towards certain situations. The

narratives of books can echo the viewpoints and voices of the sociocultural world. Information

found in books can easily resemble societal viewpoints and the author's opinions about current

issues and can incorporate conscious and unconscious stereotypes. Although it may not be

obvious, books can negatively and positively influence the readers based on the subject matter,

writing style, and diversity including potential stereotypes or racism.

Literature can provide an implicit or explicit influence on readers in relation to

sociocultural norms and stereotypes. Depending on the content, literature can either increase

negative assumptions or reduce them to counteract stereotypical associations. Books have been

shown to reduce misconceptions about people through positive exposure of content. The

proximity to books with positive viewpoints towards diverse groups of people and the exposure

of the content can reduce negative assumptions or bias (Region 8 Comprehensive Center, 2020,

pg. 3). The availability of books within a classroom that have positive images of the different

categories of diversity can have an influence on the classroom and the students' development.

Diversity of books is important, but representative collections require positive images to have a

beneficial influence. Studies show that children can internalize constructive associations that are

used to counteract stereotypical associations as young as ten years old (Region 8 Comprehensive Center, 2020). Therefore, having access to books in the classroom not only benefits reading development, but it can help create positive associations that are used to reduce negative stereotypes and racial bias.

Diversity in Books

Diversity is found in all aspects of society but can have a large impact on selecting collections of literature within schools. The sixteen categories that are encompassed within diversity can be applied to the content, genre, and style of books in a classroom library. The purpose of a diverse library is to reflect authentic experiences, mirror identities, and counter act stereotypes by providing a range of content and diversity (Michigan Department of Education, n.d.). Having a range in the books available in a classroom allows students to have a choice in what they read and exposes them to content. It broadens their exposure and can provide relevant content that can help to provide representation of cultural differences. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational approach that provides methods and instruction that works for every learner. It is not a one-size fits all approach, instead it creates a flexible learning environment that is adapted for individual needs (Huisinga, & Cook, 2019). Classroom libraries that follow a UDL approach adapt to what the students need and provide the diverse content that benefit classrooms.

There are innumerable books that are published throughout the world and that can be included in elementary classrooms. All books are not created equally, and some books represent the sixteen categories of diversity better than others. Books that are considered multicultural

literature embrace different cultures and incorporate it into a key part of the story (Brown, n.d.).

They represent the sixteen categories of diversity accurately and negate harmful stereotypes

about topics. Diverse bookshelves in a classroom should not only have different categories of

diversity, but there should be intersectionality of the content and categories of representations

(Kleekamp, & Zapata, 2018). Students should be able to pick up a book and not only see one

unique topic of diversity but several different ones within the same text. Literature should

contain more than the traditional content and characters. For example, if someone were to pick

up the children's book *Broken Crayons Still Color* by Toni Collier, they would read about a

young African American girl who wears glasses and deals with strong emotions of fear and

anxiety (Collier, Bak, & Vasilica, 2023). This book would resonate with a variety of people as it

covers many different representations of a person such as race, appearance, age, and emotions.

As a new book, there are many opportunities to highlight the sixteen categories of diversity

whereas books written previously typically did not provide opportunities to demonstrate

diversity in the content.

Historically children's books have been lacking diversity in their content and form.

Children's books have been around since the early 18th century but gained popularity and mass

production in the mid 20th century. While there has been an increase in the publication of

children's books, much of the content of them has remained stagnant. According to a

publication in *Issues in Teacher Education*, since the 1960's over 85% of all children's books

have a dominant white protagonist (Spencer, 2022, pg. 116). By having books that solely feature

one specific type of main character, there is an omission of representation within the content.

Due to the fact that children's books historically did not feature black, indigenous, and people of

color (BIPOC) the category of race in children's books has been lacking representation. There is

a need for an increased awareness of the insufficient number of diverse children's books. As a result, teachers and educators should be made aware of the need for diverse bookshelves within a classroom library to provide a variety of literature for their students. This can be achieved by having literature that accounts for multiple perspectives and diversity characteristics.

When identifying the diversity of books and creating a classroom library, there are a series of characteristics to look for within books. Diverse books should identify and counteract stereotypes and incorporate multiple perspectives. They should also incorporate diverse characters and be built through incorporating the opinions of students and the community (Blankenship, 2021). A criteria checklist created by the organization *Seed the Way* provides a good resource to refer to when creating a diverse classroom library (See Appendix C). There are many resources available to help educators create and expand a diverse classroom library and improve their existing collection. Diverse books require incorporating a wide range of subject matter, writing styles, genres, and types of texts within a classroom library to promote equity and representation.

Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors

An educational concept by Rudine Sims Bishop was created in 1990 that focused on diversity and representation in literature. The theory titled "Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors" was a unique idea that changed the way society looked at the content within literature. It is still relevant today and has become a founding ideal for classroom libraries and diverse literature. Rudine Sims Bishop originally stated:

Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of a larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books. (Bishop, 1990)

Bishop crafted this original concept that provided guidance for how books should be written, and which types of text were beneficial to a classroom collection. Her ideas were centered around the analogy Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors.

According to her concept, books should be windows such that when people read a piece of literature, they are able to view and understand worlds and ideas that do not directly relate to themselves. People should be able to investigate the contents of a book and see the world around themselves. In addition to a window, literature should also serve as a mirror, reflecting a person's own experience and ideas back to them. Books should represent a person's unique diversity and allow them to see pieces of themselves in the literature at hand. The final piece to this analogy is creating circumstances that allow books to become sliding glass doors and transpose the boundary between mirrors and windows. A sliding glass door in literature allows for readers to not only see themselves in the content but see others and the relationship between them (Michigan Department of Education, 2023). Readers can have the chance to have unique opportunities and choices regarding diversity and their own experiences. The open sliding glass

door bridges the boundary between seeing your own experiences and understanding other people's experiences to create a humancentric yet diverse experience.

Being represented within the literature in a classroom library is critical to a student's development. Not being reflected in the literature can lead to negative attitudes and create a feeling of not belonging in the classroom and society (Bishop, 1990). Classrooms are designed to be a welcoming environment for everyone and should be a place that embraces cultures along with the sixteen categories of diversity: highlighting and celebrating everyone. Diversity in a classroom (and society) should be centered around everyone, individually and collectively, not just those who are in power or underrepresented. With the sliding glass door approach, in an idealistic world diversity goes both ways (Bishop, 2015). People have their own differences. They want to be accepted by others and they attempt to accept other people's differences, too.

Methodology

Hypothesis

This thesis seeks to investigate the relationship between classroom libraries, diverse literature, and representation in the classroom. The hypothesis is that having diverse literature in the classroom library reflects the demographics of the classroom population and creates potential benefits, such as a positive classroom environment and a feeling of representation among the students. Diverse literature includes a variety of genres, reading levels, formats, and different content matter that fall under the sixteen categories of diversity. An educational survey was

conducted as part of this thesis to identify the plausibility of the hypothesis and to provide insight into current elementary classrooms.

Participants

The survey conducted focused on New Hampshire elementary classroom teachers and specialists such as Title 1 teachers. All the teachers surveyed are current educators who voluntarily chose to participate in the study. Two districts were utilized as populations for the survey, with a total of three elementary schools being used. A third district was contacted as a potential population but was not utilized in the project due to district policies and situations occurring at the school. District one is a large urban district that has a total of 21 schools in the district. Two elementary schools were used in this district. District two is a small rural district that only contains two schools. Within the three schools, a total of eighteen educators chose to participate in the survey. Sixteen of these responses were utilized with two being removed due to the incompletion of the study and withdrawal of consent. The participants have been in the field of education ranging from two years to thirty-five years as shown in the figure below.

Figure 1

Years in Education
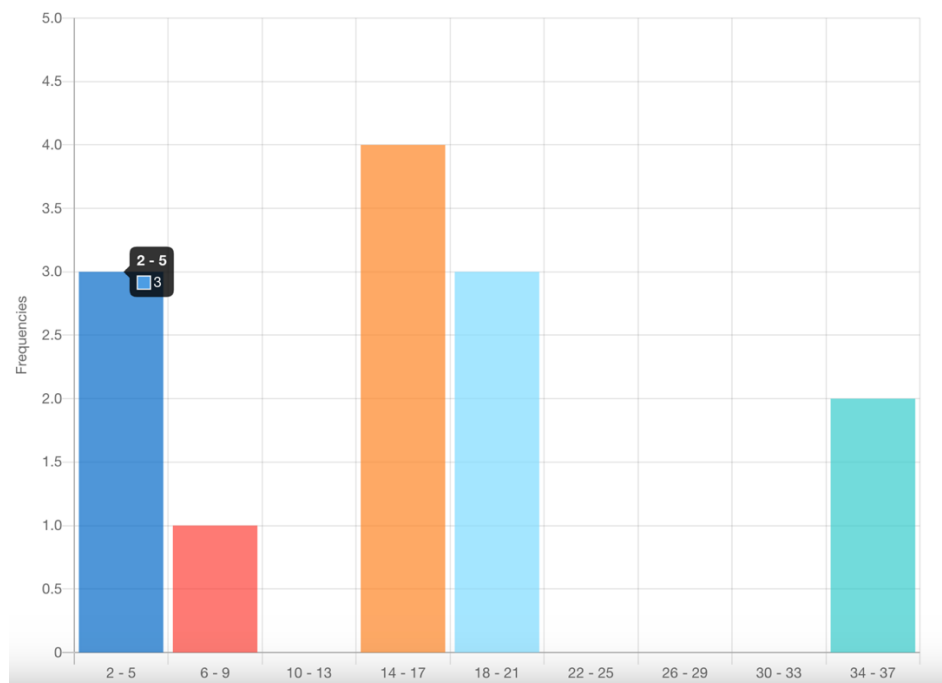
Note: This figure shows the number of years the participants have been in the field of education.

The participants in the study hold a range of educational certifications. These include certifications for elementary education, general special education, curriculum admin, principal, specific learning disabilities, emotional behavioral disabilities and speech and hearing certifications. While grade taught was chosen to not be a question in the survey, all participants teach within the span of kindergarten to sixth grade based on the demographics of the three schools used. Over 80% of the participants reported that they have been in their current position for less than half of the time they have been in the field of education. Those who have been in their position the entire time they have been teaching, have been in the field of education for less than 5 years. Based on the results of the survey, the participants have a range in the number of

students in their classroom or on their caseload which spans from around 10 students up to 30 students.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to distributing the survey to the two school districts, the study was reviewed through an ethical review board. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) reviewed all procedures of the study and the questions that would be asked to each participant. This was to ensure that no harm would occur to the participants or no negative outcomes would occur. IRB ensures participant safety, as well as adherence to ethical standards and making sure that the study follows institutional policies. To ensure the study follows ethical guidelines, the study conducted collected data anonymously and allowed participants to withdraw consent at any point during the survey. Adhering to IRB policies, before completing the survey, participants read and agreed to a statement of consent. The statement described the purpose of the study, how data would be collected and stored, as well as the notion that there is no obligation to finish the survey. The statement of consent that was used can be found in Appendix D.

Survey

The survey conducted was composed of 30 questions that range from multiple choice, ranking statements, as well as short answer responses. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix D. Focused primarily on teacher perception of diversity and representation of the

classroom library, the questions also investigated educator's knowledge of windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors and how well they thought their collection represented their students. The survey was created and distributed using the online platform Qualtrics, an online survey and analysis database. Populations for the survey were contacted through an email with the principal being the main source of contact for each school location. The survey was distributed to the school by the principal using a hyperlink that was included in an email describing the project (See Appendix E). Each school was also asked to send a reminder email about the survey two weeks after the original date it was sent out. This was to help receive responses for the questionnaire. The survey's goal was to help collect data of real classroom libraries in New Hampshire and identify if the collections are representative of the student population.

Results

The survey conducted provided insight into elementary level classroom libraries within two New Hampshire school districts. The sixteen participants had a range of years of experience in education and held many different certifications. Of the population of teachers that participated in the survey, 80% of them have a classroom library within their classroom as shown in the figure below. The other 20% who indicated they did not have a classroom library, several said they utilize their school library.

Figure 2

Do you have a classroom library figure.

Do you have a classroom library?
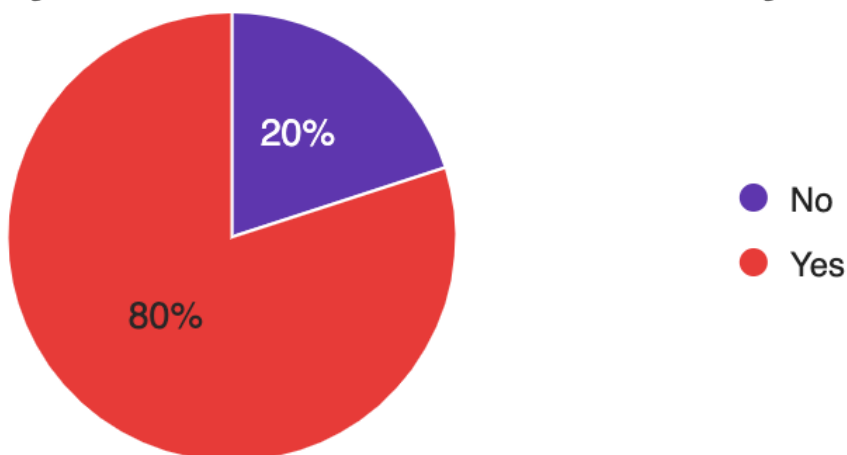
Note: This figure shows the data collected from the survey.

While 80% of the participants indicated they had a classroom library, there was a range in the number of books located within the collections. Some collections included in the study had as few as 50 books while others had over 1,000. The average amount of books in a classroom collection according to the responses is around 300 books. While the participants are all elementary level educators, their reading levels included in the collections ranged from kindergarten to fifth grade. Most of the participants indicated that their collection overlapped several grade levels such as spanning grades K-2 or 4-5.

Additionally, when asked about ways participants used their collection, many stated that their collections are used for read-alouds, independent reading time, as supportive resources in the classroom, and as part of homework.   Two responses indicated that they had some opportunities to use the classroom library, but due to a rigid school schedule provided by the

district they did not feel there was adequate time to use their collections. When questioned about

the languages and genres that are used in their collections, many responses indicated that there

was a range in genres utilized. However, many of the participants indicated that they only have

literature written in English available to their students, while two participants stated they had

some Spanish books available to their students. On the topic of electronic literature, 81.8% of

the responses indicated there were options in the classroom for multimedia literature as shown in

figure 3. Those who indicated they had opportunities for electronic literature reference sites such

as Storyline online, YouTube, Epic Books, Read Works, iPads, Clever, and other resources

available with their school curriculum. However, responses also indicated there is not enough

time in the school day or within a strict curriculum to use the electronic literature that is available

to them.

Figure 3

Opportunities for Electronic Literature

Opportunities for Electronic Literature

none
18.2%

some options
81.8%
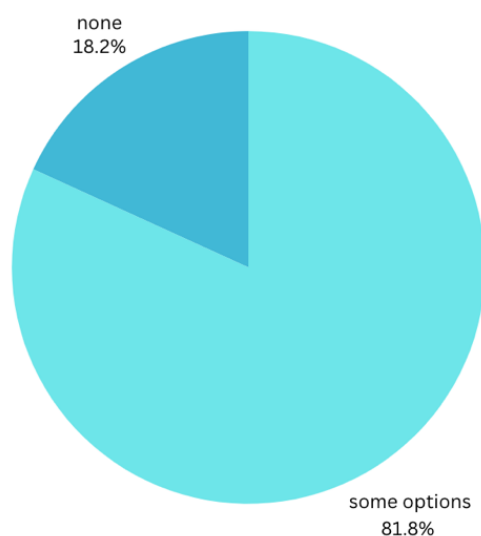
Note: This figure shows the data collected from the survey.

A central focus of the survey was identifying what educators believed the concept of diversity meant in their own words. Many of the participants had various definitions of diversity, but they all centered around the differences that people have. Diversity was defined as a cultural mix within communities, the differences among people including language, race, gender, and age, and the multiple backgrounds of students. One participant defined diversity as "a word that describes a heterogeneous group of people that had a wide variety of differences. They could have different ages, genders, races, ethnicities, cultures, speak different languages, and be from different regions of the world." This description provided a holistic representation of the responses and the trends in the survey.

When asked to identify the topics that came to mind related to diversity, the common trends included: education, family, religion, economic status, gender identity, mental and physical ability, and race/ethnicity. The topic that was related to diversity the least was the category of age; only five participants identified age as a category of diversity. The trends related to the topics of diversity are shown in figure 4. Participants were later asked to rank 13 categories of diversity. These categories included education, political belief, family, language, religion, appearance, age, class/economic class, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental/physical ability, race/ethnicity, and other. The category of other was included in the selection of categories to allow participants the opportunity to share another topic that was not included in the scope of the research. No additional concepts were included in the survey as part of the other category.

Figure 4

Concepts of diversity

Q9 - What topics come to mind when you think about diversity? (Select all that apply) - Selected Choice
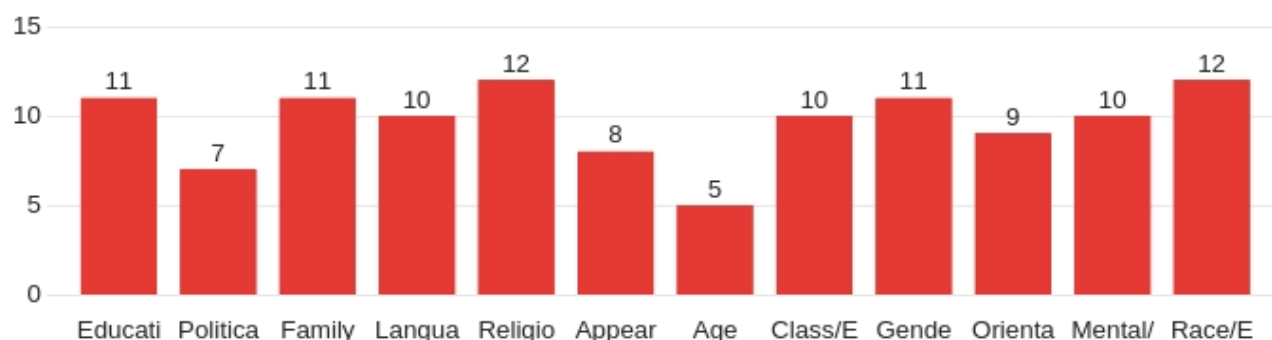

Note: This figure shows the data collected from the survey.

When ranking the thirteen categories of diversity several trends occurred. Race/ethnicity was ranked as the top category with three people ranking it in this place. Overall, seven people ranked race and ethnicity in the top three which is significant as it is over half of the responses. This is evident in figure 5. Another trend showed that appearance was commonly reported in the last three categories, with seven participants ranking it in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth ranking. In the survey results, an outlier in the data is the topic of 'other'. It was ranked last by over eight participants; however, this was not considered significant as they did not incorporate any comments in the answer box. The program required the category to be included in the ranking which can be accounted for it being ranked last. Some other information to note is language was consistently ranked third with four votes, religion fourth with four votes, education fifth with four votes, gender ninth with four votes, appearance eleventh with four votes, and political belief twelfth with four votes. Ranking the information consistently helps indicate a

relationship between categories of diversity and the perception of their importance. The figures below display visual representations of the data collected from ranking the categories of diversity.

Figure 5

Ranking the Categories of Diversity 1-3
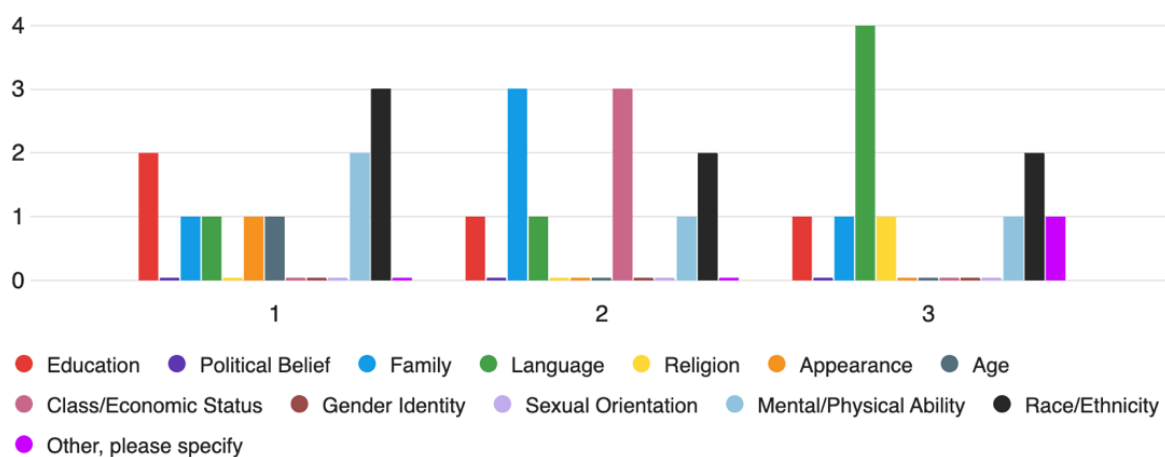
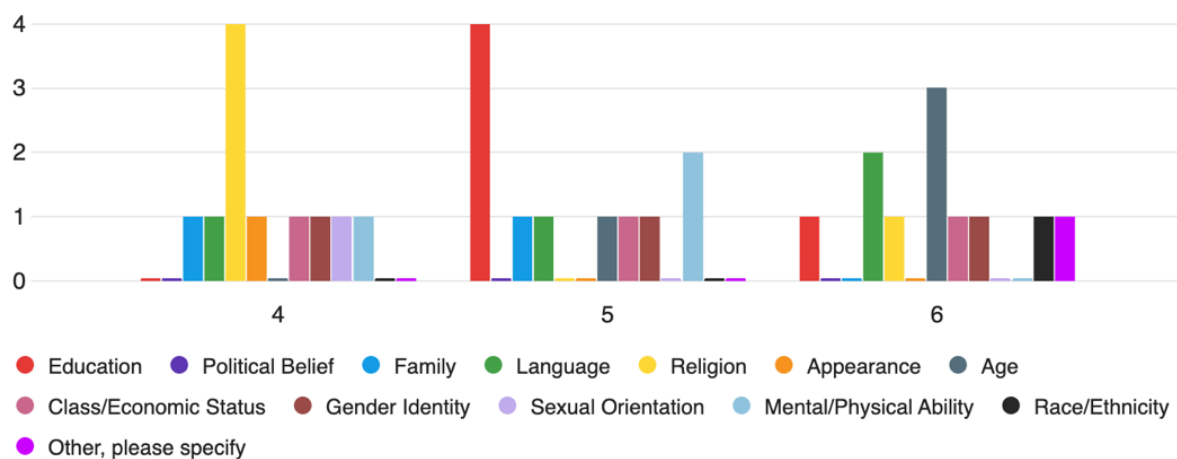*Note: The figure shows data from the survey of ranks 1-3.*

Figure 6

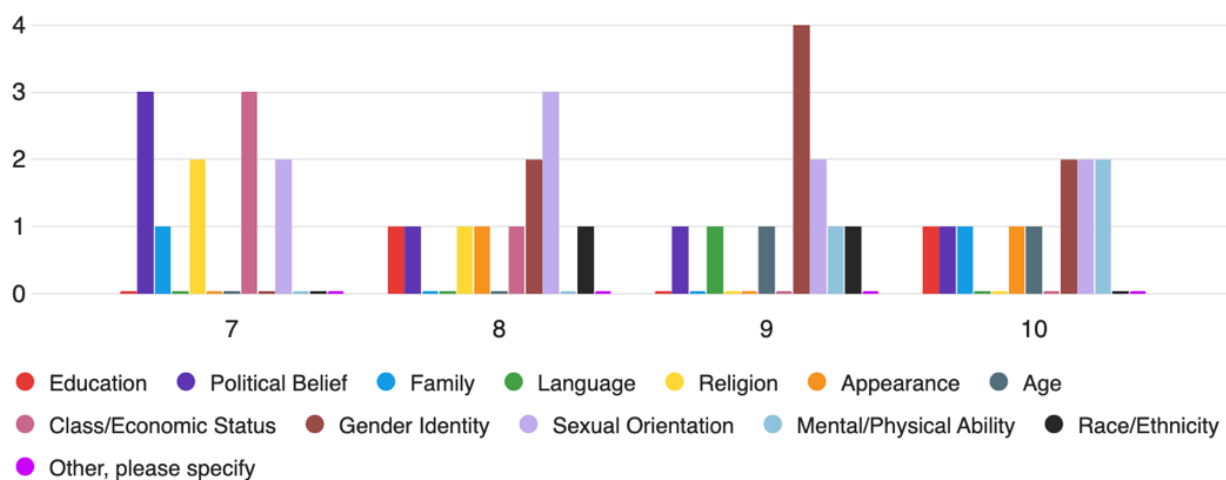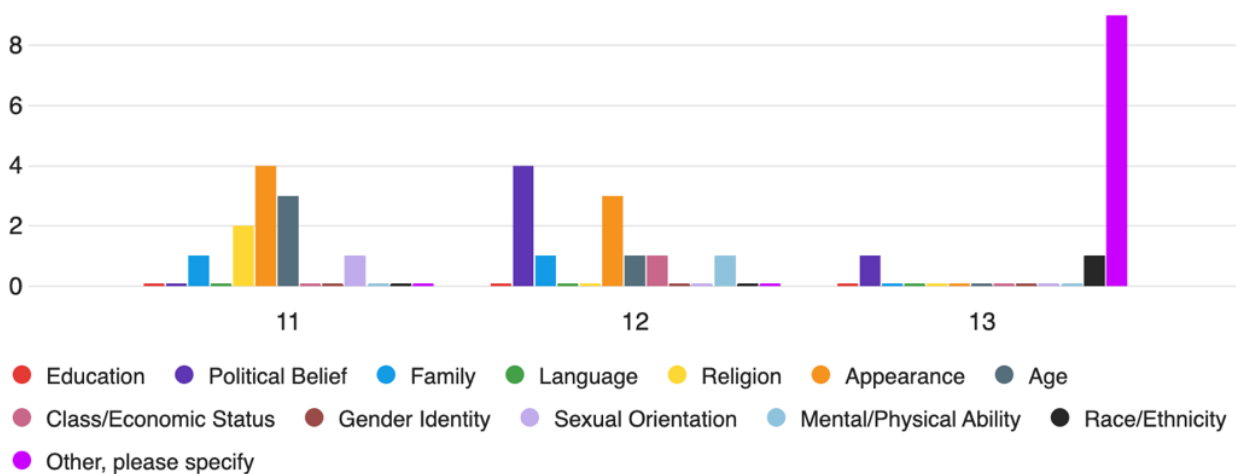*Ranking the Categories of Diversity 4-6*

Note: The figure shows data from the survey of ranks 4-6.

Figure 7

Ranking the Categories of Diversity 7-10

Note: The figure shows data from the survey of ranks 7-10.

Figure 8

Ranking the Categories of Diversity 11-13

Note: The figure shows data from the survey of ranks 11-13.

The survey investigated teachers' perception of their classroom libraries and how the collection represents their students. Participants reported they felt as though they have diverse classrooms and a wide range of backgrounds. Nine participants reported they feel their classroom is between 30% and 100% diverse. The individual perceptions of diversity of a class are shown in table 1. While there was a perception of a diverse population of students in the class, the makeup of a classroom library was reported to not reflect the diversity of the classroom. Teachers reported that the books within their library on average only represented around 5-15% of the individual categories of diversity. When analyzing the books they possess, teachers found they did not have enough representation in the library to constitute categories such as religion, gender, political belief, etc. When later asked in the survey what areas they would like to improve on, topics included all areas of diversity, gender, and language. Participants identified their classroom was diverse, however their collections did not provide an accurate representation of their students.

Table 1

Summary of diversity in the classroom

Response	Percent of diversity in the classroom	Additional notes
Response 1	50%	
Response 2	40%	
Response 3	100%	There are many differences among my students.
Response 4	75%	

Response 5	30%	
Response 6	50%	
Response 7	100%	"All of my students have a learning disability, I have ½ boys and ½ girls. My students all come from different economic and family situations."
Response 8	50%	
Response 9	50%	

Note: the data in the table was pulled from the responses to question 12 in the survey

Data showed that there is a small correlation between how diverse a participant's library was and the number of years they have been in education. The fewer number of years they had been teaching, the more diverse their library was reported to be. This can possibly be accounted for the courses they took to become an educator and the professional development they were provided. While the results of the study showed many of the teachers who have been teaching for less than ten years had the highest percentage of diverse books in their collection, there is not enough statistical evidence to fully support this trend. With further investigation and additional research, there may be a statical significance, but the scope of this study could not statically prove one.

A final topic investigated within the survey, was the participants familiarity with the educational concept of Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors. Twenty-five percent of the survey responses indicated that they were familiar in some capacity with this education concept by Rudine Sims Bishop. However, over 50% of the responses stated they had no familiarity or understanding of this topic. These findings are shown in figure 9. Those who were familiar with the theory, either knew exactly what it meant or had a general understanding of the topic.

Responses described the theory as "an education idea related to diversity" and "children being able to see themselves through literature." Being unfamiliar with the concept of Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors reduces a teacher's ability to create a classroom collection that is centered around having a holistic representation of the student population in a classroom.

Figure 9

Are you familiar with windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors?
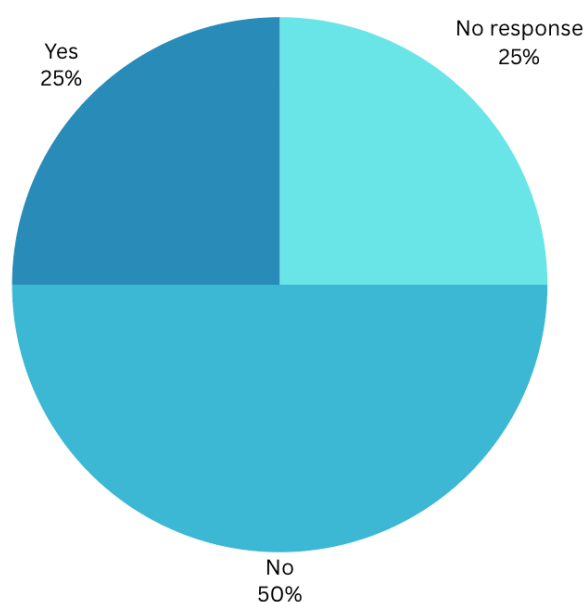
Note: This data is pulled from the results of question 11 in the survey.

Discussion

The survey results helped provide evidence that diverse literature within a classroom library promotes the representation of the students and can lead to inclusive environments for positive educational learning. Based on the results of the study conducted, the hypothesis that diverse literature reflects the classroom demographics and can create potential benefits was

supported with minimal margins. The data showed that the population of New Hampshire classrooms surveyed, have diverse classrooms with 80% of the participants having classroom libraries. These collections have different genres, content, and opportunities for electronic literature. With 100% of the participants reporting a range of genres in their collections and 81.8% reporting opportunities for electronic literature, the data supports the hypothesis. This is also supported by the previous research about genres and electronic literature available for classrooms.

Participants reported diversity in their classroom and opportunities for diverse content, there was limited representation of specific categories of diversity within the collection. Educators demonstrated there are books in their collection that provide intersectionality for their students, but there is not a significant amount of these books in their libraries. It is important to note however, that participants were not required to identify specific titles that fell into categories of diversity or count the actual number of books that pertain to the topic. There is a possibility that the percentage of the collection per each category of diversity is over or underrepresented. The information from the survey demonstrates that there are books available within classrooms to represent the student population and the books' ability to benefit students based on previous research.   There was no evidence that libraries do not contain any diverse content or that this content negatively impacts the classroom diversity.

The information gathered in this survey was limited to a select few classrooms and their collections within New Hampshire. Results supported the idea that there are limited opportunities for variation among curriculum and use of diverse literature within the classroom. Participants discussed the lack of time available to diverge from the given curriculum to incorporate their library into the teaching practices. In addition, there was a common trend of a

lack of resources available or known to the participants to increase or diversify their collections.

Teachers are also responsible for supplying a large portion of their collection as funds are not

readily available to pay for literature. This can impact the use of a classroom library and the

books found within it as there are limited funds and limited known resources. These results lead

to the conclusion that a lack of funding, time for non-curricular lessons, and limited information

can negatively impact the ability for a collection to be representative of the classroom

demographics.

Conclusion

Diverse literature in a classroom should not only reflect the demographics of the students,

but it will create a positive classroom environment, a feeling of being represented, and other

potential benefits. In a society that celebrates differences among people, there is a need for

having literature that mirrors the diversity of society. Literature can represent this diversity

through a variety of reading levels, genres, forms, and content that falls into the categories of

diversity. This thesis is supported by an educational survey that was conducted with New

Hampshire elementary teachers as well as relevant scholarly research. The survey focused on

elementary educators' opinions on how they felt their classroom library represented their

students and the effects of it. Through a combination of research and the conducted survey, the

data supports the idea that classroom libraries that represent the diversity of the classroom

population create many benefits and allow students to feel represented.

The educational theory window, mirrors, and sliding glass doors by Rudine Sims Bishop

supports the idea that classroom collections should reflect the demographics of the student

population. A window, in literature, provides opportunities for students to look in and begin to understand the experiences and characteristics of others. The mirror portion of this concept creates the idea that students can look into a given book and see themselves and their own unique characteristics reflected back on them. It is important for students to feel represented in the literature that they read. The final part is a sliding glass door which creates the opportunity to transpose the idea of a window and mirror. The sliding glass door concept allows students to walk in each other's shoes and have experiences that relate to their own diversity as well as their classmates. With this theory, the goal is for a classroom to become the priority characteristic or group. The classroom is made up of individual, diverse identities, but they come together to make a community. A classroom library ideally is a representation of this diverse classroom community. It is a collection of individual titles with diverse characteristics that come together to create a collection. With a range of genres, modalities, and content representing the sixteen categories of diversity, a classroom collection shows the range in characteristics that mirrors the students in the room.

Diversity describes the differences and similarities that represent individuals and groups of people. The term incorporates the subtopics of language, organizational role, income, religion, family, appearance, work, education, political belief, race/ethnicity, age, gender identity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, and disabilities (Hampton, 2021). The diversity wheel found in appendix A created by John Hopkins University demonstrates these sixteen categories that are encompassed in the term diversity. The categories of diversity not only apply to the demographics of individuals, but it can be applied to literature to create a collection that is representative of the population. Applying diversity to literature helps ensure a collection that

follows the Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors approach and ensures that classrooms

benefit from having a diverse library.

The data collected through this thesis helps to shift the procedures and methods for

creating and expanding a classroom library.   In the 20th century diversity in literature was not as

prominent, and as a result classroom libraries created during that time typically did not represent

the demographics of the students. This led to a lack of representation within the classroom.

Based on newer research and data, when creating or expanding a classroom collection, teachers

should consider their students' demographics. By considering them beforehand, educators are

better able to create a collection that is diverse and representative. Developing a classroom

library with diversity of content, genre, format, and level in mind creates a best practice that is

beneficial for all educators. This research is important because it will help educators better

understand how to develop their classroom library to benefit their students. In addition, it will

help them improve their classroom environment, their teaching strategies, and become a more

culturally inclusive educator.

As there is a need for more diverse classroom libraries, there are many resources

available to help teachers to not only expand their collection but take stock of what their library

currently contains. To create a diverse library, change does not need to occur overnight, taking

small steps can go a long way. Diverse libraries are a best practice in teaching and should be in

every elementary classroom. By purposefully and intentionally adding literature that represents

and extends a classroom's population, classroom libraries will become a resource that benefits

both students and educators. It is recommended that teachers take three main steps in order to

improve the diversity of their classroom library: they can inventory their collection to identify

gaps, they can utilize many different scholarly resources to become better informed, and they can add new and diverse books.

Recommendations

Inventorying a Collection

Inventorying a collection allows educators to identify the actual books they have available to their students and figure out gaps in their collection. When working to expand or add on to a collection, inventorying is one of the first steps that should be taken. Inventorying involves compiling a list of all of the titles found within the library and identifying not only their genre but key elements including the diversity categories it encompasses. By having this information, it is easier to identify aspects that might be missing from the library. This can include but is not limited to genres, modalities, and diversity topics that are underrepresented. Knowing what information is missing makes it easier to address the gaps by directly choosing books to create a unified collection. Inventorying can help improve the diversity and types of books in a classroom library.

Teachers can individually inventory their classroom libraries, however there are many tools created to help ease the process. Many of these resources are checklists or questionnaires to help educators ask themselves questions about the diversity and makeup of their collection. For example, *Seed the Way* created an equity audit to help identify a libraries' strengths, needs, patterns, and next steps. This equity audit is found in appendix C. It looks at inclusivity of characters, storylines, stereotypes, families, and authenticity (Seed the Way, n.d.). Another tool that can be used to inventory a classroom library is the Classroom Library Questionnaire by *Lee*

& Low Books (See appendix F). This checklist allows educators to rank their library on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree for many different questions (Lee and Low Books, 2017). It identifies many different races and ethnicities that may or may not be in a collection as well as types of characters that books contain.

A resource to help look at individual books within a library and identify their potential use with students is a tool by *Student Achievement Partners*. This checklist allows teachers to look at the complexity of a text as well as the opportunities for usage it has. The tool looks at point of view to identify potential stereotypes, being able to be a window and a mirror, and the benefits of using this book (Achieve the Core, n.d.). The checklist can be found in appendix G.

Reading Diversity Lite is another resource that can be used to inventory a library. It is created by *Teaching Tolerance* and brings attention to important questions about a book's diversity with a specific interest in windows and mirrors (Teaching Tolerance, 2016). It is located in appendix H. These resources provide guidance for educators when they are inventorying their classroom libraries. There are many more tools and checklists available online, these four are just a small sampling of ones that focus on diverse literature. As each of them look at different questions and subtopics, teachers may use a variety of tools to help them identify the strengths, needs, and gaps in their libraries.

Diverse Literature

After inventorying a collection, it is easier to identify areas in a classroom library that require support and more inclusive literature. Educators can add more books to their library that are diverse and represent the demographics of their students. These books can range from books

about diversity, alternative fairy tales, and books that have different viewpoints. In addition,

educators can add alternative forms of literature to their library such as electronic literature.

Great websites that provide electronic books and texts include Tar Heel Reader,

Readworks, and Vooks. These websites can provide differentiated literature to a classroom and

help introduce students to new books and interactive reading activities. Some are free to use, and

some require subscriptions for schools to utilize. Many of these sites can be adapted to fit the

needs of many learners and can be paired with assistive technology devices. For a larger list of

electronic media platforms, please see appendix I.

A great recommendation for classrooms with students from other countries and whose

native language is not English is to incorporate cookbooks into the library. Cookbooks can

provide students that may not have a strong English language background the opportunity to look

at pictures along with informational texts. The content can spark interest in students as they may

be able to identify dishes that resonate with them and get them engaged in the book (Walker &

Walker, 2018). Cookbooks can create a great home-school connection as students can see parts

of their culture which helps students feel represented. Literature has a powerful effect on

students' academic learning, reading, and comfortableness in school. There are many books that

can create a home-school connection and can help students feel represented in the literature that

surrounds them.

When adding to a library, there are an innumerable number of books that can help

provide diverse perspectives and content to a collection. Books that may be added to a collection

can help address gaps that are identified while inventorying and can be helpful for representing

the demographics of the student population. Teachers may want to consider adding books that

cover alternative fairytales that do not end in happy endings, books that cover disabilities and

appearance, books in other languages, and books that show other categories of diversity. While

it is impossible to provide a list every book that can help create a diverse library, an extensive list

is provided in Appendix J. Librarians can be a great resource for suggesting new and diverse

literature, but there are many websites that are dedicated to spreading awareness and information

about diverse literature.

Increasing Awareness

Resources are widely available to help teachers improve the diversity of their classroom

library. Websites and online resources dedicated to literature and promoting representation

through the Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors approach are widely available to

educators. Depending on the need, websites range from book lists and inventorying strategies to

sites that focus on advocating for diverse literature. Teachers can use these resources to find

diverse literature and become better informed on the subject matter of diverse classroom

libraries. Many of these websites focus on specific areas of diversity, but when combined can

help create a representative collection. For example, the *Diverse Book Finder* has a collection of

picture books that focus on featuring Black and Indigenous people and People of Color

{BIPOC} (Diverse Book Finder, 2018). This website is a great tool to find books to help

provide the perspective of BIPOC students.

Another resource to locate diverse books is *A Mighty Girl*. This website has hundreds of

book titles that focus on topics such as girl empowerment, history, personal development, and

social issues (A Mighty Girl, n.d.). A compilation of additional resources to improve a

classroom library can be found in Appendix K. Many other websites are available for educators to learn about inventorying, diverse classroom libraries, and diverse literature.

Diverse classroom libraries reflect the demographics of the student population and can create a feeling of being represented which allows for a positive classroom environment and other potential benefits. In a world that celebrates differences, there is a need for the literature that surrounds elementary classrooms to allow students to feel represented, grow appreciation for other diverse populations, and interact with peers who are very much alike and different from one another. Following the ideas of Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors educational approach, teachers can provide opportunities for students to have a diverse literary experience. There are many resources available for teachers to access in order to become better informed on the topic and to locate new titles of diverse literature.

This thesis combines research and findings from an educational survey to support the idea that diverse literature benefits a classroom and the students. Diverse classroom libraries should provide students opportunities to be represented in the books they read, be exposed to all categories of diversity, and facilitate experiences for diverse interconnections. As Cassandra Clare, the author of many young adult novels once said, "One must always be careful of books and what is inside them, for words have the power to change us" (Goodreads, n.d.).

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Appendix A

Diversity Wheel by John Hopkins University
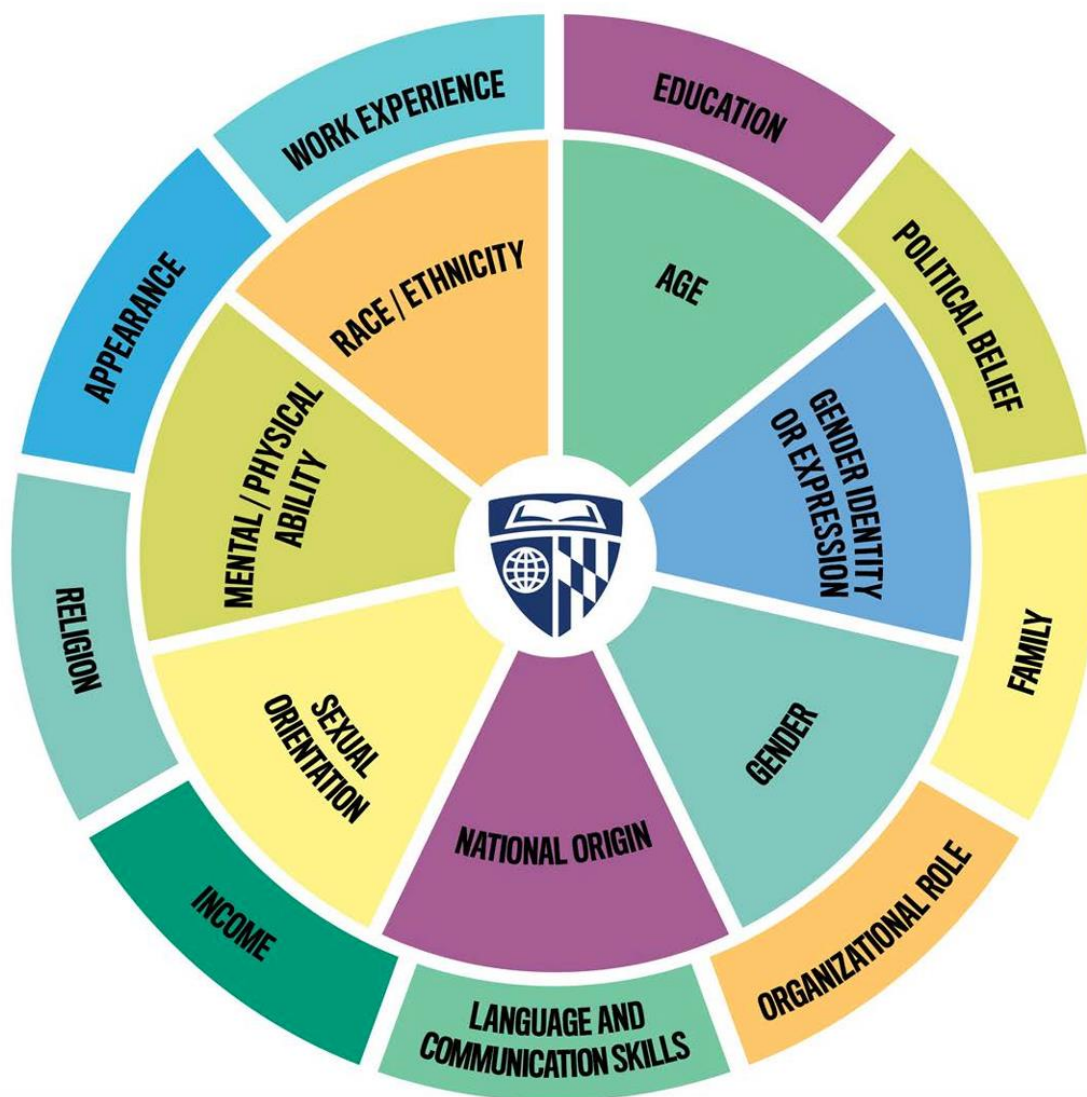
Note: This image is from Carey Task Force for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, 2021.

Appendix B

Neurodivergent Umbrella

Note: This image is from Fischer, 2023.

Appendix C

Seed the Way Checklist

Equity Audit:
Self-Assessing Your Classroom Library

Use the following guide to evaluate your library's strengths, needs, and patterns, as well as to inform your next steps. Take a sample of your library collection, maybe a theme bin like 'fairy tales,' an author collection, or another text set. To what extent does your library collection reflect the following criteria?

SECTION 1: Inclusive Representation

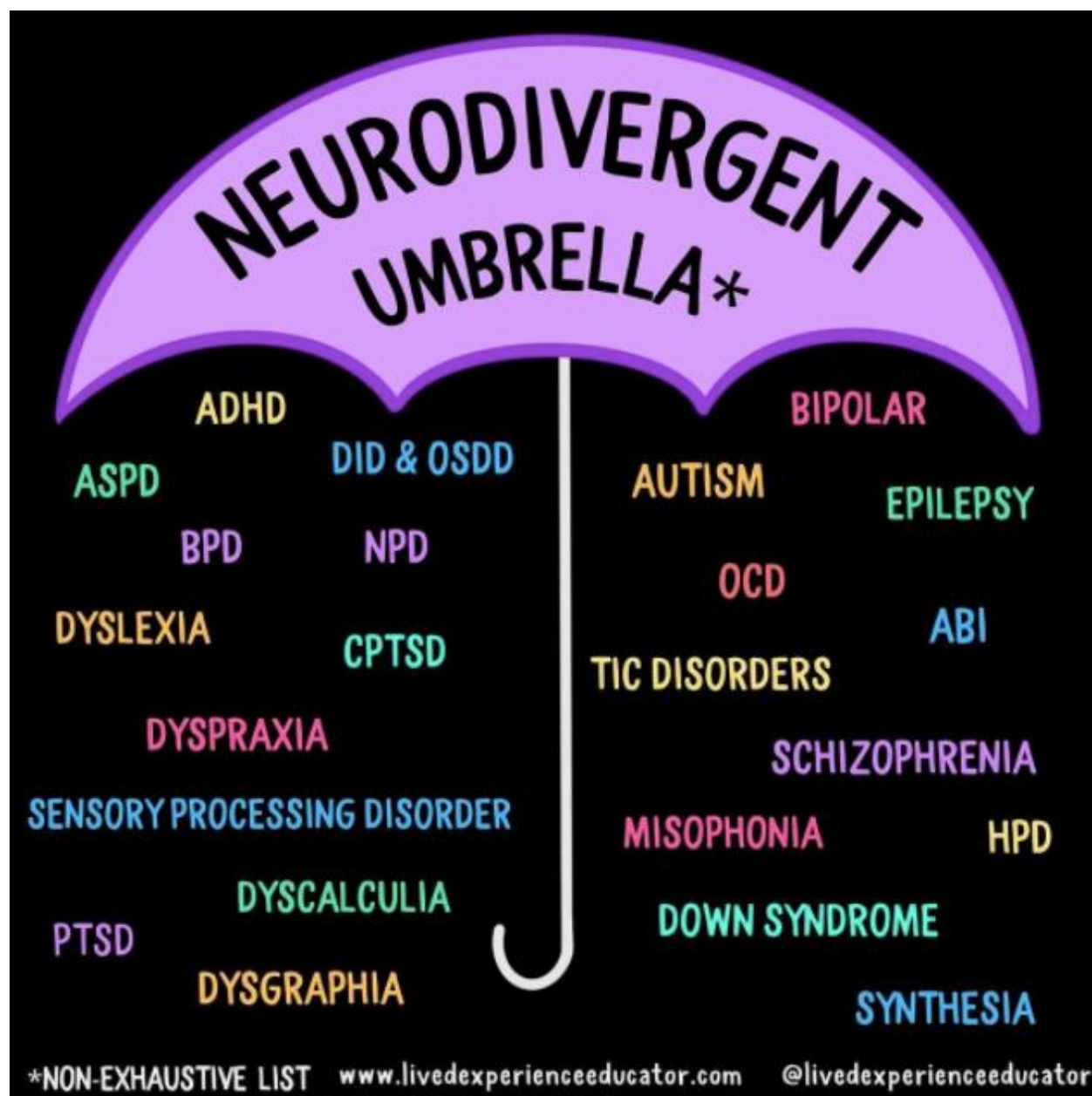| My collection contains books that include positive and affirming representations of	1 None or Almost None	2 Some	3 Many or Most	4 All
1. main characters who are White				
2. main characters of color				
3. main characters of color with very dark skin				
4. main characters who are bilingual or multilingual				
5. main characters who are immigrants, migrants, or refugees				
6. main characters who are LGBTQIA+				
7. main characters with physical or cognitive disabilities				
8. main characters who practice diverse religions or traditions				

SECTION 2: Female and Women Identified Characters

My collection portrays women and female identified characters in the following ways	1 None or Almost None	2 Some	3 Many or Most	4 All
1. Their achievements are based on their own intelligence, initiative, and efforts. As strong, confident leaders and problem solvers				
2. Their achievements are based on their appearance, sex appeal, or relationships with males				
3. As needing to be rescued or saved by someone else. As fearful.				
4. As having aspirations limited to love, marriage, and raising children				

Seed the Way, LLC (2018)   1

5.	As having healthy relationships and friendships with one another				
6.	As loud, obnoxious, bossy, or overbearing				
7.	Older or unmarried females are portrayed in a negative manner and assumed to be bitter, unfulfilled, crazy, or boring				
8.	Their physical appearance is overemphasized by the author or illustrator				

SECTION 3: People of Color

In my collection, people of color are depicted as	1 None or Almost None	2 Some	3 Many or Most	4 All
1. Heroes, main characters, protagonists, positive historical figures				
2. Villains, criminals, prisoners, antagonists				
3. Ancillary, insignificant characters in supporting roles				
4. Slaves or survivors of slavery or oppression; or victims who are suffering and in need of saving				
5. Characters in books that are specific to holidays or a specific heritage month; Characters in books specifically ABOUT cultural or racial diversity				
6. Characters in books that are NOT ABOUT cultural or racial diversity and instead are presented as normal people doing regular things				

SECTION 4: Families

My collection includes families who are	1 None or Almost None	2 Some	3 Many or Most	4 All
1. Nuclear				
2. Multigenerational/extended (grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles)				
3. Blended (remarried, step families)				
4. Single-Parent or unmarried				
5. Multiracial				
6. Adoptive, non-biological				
7. Temporary (foster parents, state custody, group homes)				

8.	Legal Guardians, Caregivers other than parents				
9.	LGBTQ+				
10.	Otherwise "non-traditional"				

SECTION 5: STORYLINES

The storylines or emphases of the books in my collection are	1 None or Almost None	2 Some	3 Many or Most	4 All
1. Focused on the deficit or problems related to holding a certain identity (ex. race, disability, social class, gender)				
2. About dominant characters rescuing, saving, fixing, or being the benefactors to their less privileged counterparts				
3. About the conditions facing oppressed people as a result of systemic or societal inequity				
4. About the conditions facing oppressed people as a result of their own laziness, fault, or innate deficit				
5. Advocating for the passive or unquestioned acceptance of inequity				
6. Advocating for social justice and equity				

SECTION 6: Stereotypes

My collection includes books that depict harmful stereotypes about	1 None or Almost None	2 Some	3 Many or Most	4 All
1. White people				
2. People of Color				
3. LGBTQ+ people				
4. People based on their gender (female, male, another gender)				
5. People with physical or cognitive disabilities				
6. People based on their religious beliefs				
7. Immigrants, migrants, and refugees				
8. People whose first language is not English				
9. People experiencing poverty or homelessness				

10.	People based on their age				
11.	People based on their body type				
12.	People based on their occupation/career				

SECTION 7: Authenticity

My collection includes books that present	1 None or Almost None	2 Some	3 Many or Most	4 All
1.	Misrepresented or inaccurate information about a group of people (i.e. are Indigenous or First Nations people from one group shown wearing the hair styles, clothing, or jewelry of another tribe?)				
2.	Over-generalizations about a group of people (i.e. lumping all Asians together ignoring differences in ethnicity, nationality, immigration history, language, culture, or historical conflict)				
3.	Oversimplified or tokenized depictions of a cultural group or other identity group (i.e. mascots, costumes)				
4.	Quaint, cutesy, or exoticized depictions of people				
5.	A genuine, authentically credible perspective and insight into the lives and experiences of characters in books due to the author/illustrator's own identity, experience, research, or role in a specific community				
6.	Relevant, up to date information, language, and perspectives published within the last 20 years				

Findings:

Action Steps:

Resources:

Lee and Low Books

We Need Diverse Books

Social Justice Books

Teaching Tolerance Classroom Resources

Rethinking Schools

Child Peace books for Anti-Bias Education

Adapted with permission from Lee and Low Books (2017). *Classroom Library Questionnaire.* Retrieved from https://www.leeandlow.com/uploads/loaded_document/408/Classroom-Library-Questionnaire_FINAL.pdf

Note: This chart is located from Seed the Way

Appendix D

Survey provided to Participants

You are being invited to participate in a research project about the diversity of classroom libraries conducted by Abigale Hurd, who is an undergraduate student at Southern New Hampshire University. You will be asked to complete a survey questionnaire that will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. The potential risks associated with this study are sensitive questions relating to diversity and harmful stereotypes. It is expected that the project will benefit educational classrooms and the makeup of classroom libraries. If you have decided to participate in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time with no penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason with no penalty.

In addition, your individual privacy will be maintained in all publications or presentations resulting from this study. This survey will not collect any names or identifiable information. All information collected from this questionnaire will be kept confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. After three years, all information gathered from this survey will be deleted. If you have any questions regarding this project, you may contact the researcher at abigale.hurd@snhu.edu. If you have questions regarding your rights as research participant or any concerns regarding this project, you may report them – confidentially, if you wish – to the University Campus Institutional Review Board Chairperson at IRB@snhu.edu.

By clicking the agree button below, you consent for the anonymous use of survey responses in an honors thesis research project. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time with no penalty.

○ I agree

Classroom Demographics

Are you a classroom teacher?

○ yes
○ no

What is your role?

What how many years have you been in the field of education?

How many years have you been in the field of education?

How many years have you been in your current position?

What school are you located at?

What certifications do you hold?

How many students does your classroom have in a typical year?

Diversity

In your own words, what does diversity mean?

What topics come to mind when you think about diversity? (Select all that apply)

☐ Education   ☐ Class/Economic Status

☐ Political Belief   ☐ Gender Identity

☐ Family   ☐ Sexual Orientation

☐ Language   ☐ Mental/Physical Ability

☐ Religion   ☐ Race/Ethnicity

    Appearance   Other, please specify

☐   ☐

☐ Age

When dealing with the areas of diversity, how would you rank the areas of diversity from most important to least important? To respond to the question, drag the topics to arrange them in order of priority.

Race/Ethnicity

Gender Identity

Other, please specify

Sexual Orientation

Language

Age

Appearance

Religion

Education

Class/Economic Status

Mental/Physical Ability

Family

Political Belief

What are your experiences with the educational concept windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors?

What percentage of your classroom do you believe is represented by a diverse culture?

Classroom Library

Do you have a classroom library?

○ Yes
○ No

About how many books do you have in your classroom that are available to students?

[   ]

How often do you find that the books are used?

[   ]

In what ways do you use your collection?

[   ]

What areas or genres do students gravitate towards in the collection?

Overall, what percentage of your collection reflects issues in diversity?

[   ]

Based on each category of diversity, on average what percentage of your collection reflects the specific content of diversity?

Education [   ]

Political belief [   ]

Family [   ]

Language [   ]

Religion [   ]

Appearance [   ]

Age	
Class/Economic Status	
Gender identity	
Sexual orientation	
Mental/Physical Ability	
Race/ethnicity	
Other	

Which areas of diversity would you like to expand in your collection?

Does your collection have any books that contain

characters who are:

	Response
Black, Native/Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC)	
LGBTQIA	
Disabled	

What languages are incorporated into your collection?

Does your collection feature books that might contain harmful stereotypes? If so, what stereotypes? In what manner do you address these stereotypes?

How often are diverse books selected for read alouds and curriculum content?

How do you feel the texts in your collection mirror the identity of your students?

What resources do you use to locate diverse materials?

Appendix E

Communication to participants

Dear Educator,

My name is Abigale Hurd, and I am an honors undergraduate elementary and special education student teacher at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). As part of my culminating experience at SNHU, I am working on writing an Honors thesis. My Honors thesis centers around the representation and diversity of classroom libraries and the uses of the books. As you know, classroom libraries are a critical part of a student's educational experience and based on current research of educational best practices, the books found within that library should represent the diversity of the classroom and school. The educational concept of 'Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors' has been a main influence for my research and a framework for an educational survey.

I am looking for individuals to participate in an educational survey about the diversity of classroom libraries. If you are interested in participating, please click on the link below which will bring you to my Qualtrics survey. The survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. If you decide to participate in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time with no penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason with no penalty. No identifying information will be collected, and all information collected from this questionnaire will be kept confidential and will only be used for academic purposes.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact me at abigale.hurd@snhu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Through your participation, the data gathered will help me gain insights of real classroom libraries in New Hampshire and further develop my Honors thesis.

Link to survey: https://snhu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0f7EgEWhQe2HA10

Thank you,

Abigale Hurd

Appendix F

Classroom Library Questionnaire

Classroom Library Questionnaire

LEE & LOW BOOKS · 30 Years · P

Educators, how culturally responsive and diverse is your classroom library? Use the following questions as a guide to analyze your classroom library book collections and determine where there are strengths and where there is room to grow.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. The classroom library contains multiple books that include . . .

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
non-human, anthropomorphic main characters (e.g., talking animals, talking trucks, talking vegetables, imaginary or science fiction creatures, etc.)					

2. The classroom library contains numerous books that include . . .

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
main characters who are Black, Native/Indigenous, or people of color					
main characters who identify as LGBTQIA					
main characters with disabilities					

3. The classroom library contains numerous books that . . .

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
are written or illustrated by a person of color or a Native/Indigenous person					
feature a person of color or a Native/Indigenous person on the front cover					
feature contemporary diverse characters and storylines					
feature a range of family structures and family configurations					
feature characters with different types of gender identity and gender expression					
feature a Black main character					
feature a Latinx main character					
feature an Asian or Asian American main character					
feature a Middle Eastern and/or Muslim main character					
feature a Native American/Indigenous main character					
Are set in diverse regions of the world, including contemporary Asia, Africa, Europe, Central/South America, Oceania, and Native/First Nations/Indigenous regions					
are reflective of my students' cultures and heritages					
explore different socioeconomic backgrounds					
explore religious diversity					
are set in different geographic settings (urban, rural, suburban)					
are written in languages meaningful to my students' backgrounds or the community in which they live (e.g., Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog)					
teach about immigration to the United States beyond the Ellis Island-narrative					
teach about Black/African American contributions to the United States beyond the Civil Rights Movement					
feature diversity throughout the year, not just in heritage and observance months (e.g. Black History Month, Native American History Month)					

4. The majority of books featuring people of color or Native/Indigenous people . . .	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
are only about issues of race, prejudice, or discrimination					
are only culturally specific (e.g., flags, foods, festivals)					
are only culturally neutral or contain incidental diversity					
are written by white authors					
are nonfiction					

5. The classroom library contains some books that include . . .	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
harmful stereotypes about a group of people					
inaccurate/outdated information about a group of people					
generalizations about a group of people					
misrepresentations of a group of people					
discriminatory content about a group of people					
non-authentic stories about a group of people					

6. The classroom library reflects the diversity of my students and the community in which we live (e.g., gender, race, family structure, language, culture, socioeconomic background, etc.)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

What Now? If your classroom library is not as diverse and culturally responsive as you want it to be for your students . . . you are not alone!

Learn how others have built diverse library collections and where you can find diverse children's books here: **www.leeandlow.com/educators/grade-level-resources/classroom-library-questionnaire**

Contact us at educators@leeandlow.com for more information on building customized classroom libraries or book collections for your students.

LEE & LOW BOOKS · 30 Years

Find us online at leeandlow.com

Note: This checklist is from Lee & Low Books (Lee and Low Books, 2017).

Appendix G

Student Achievement Partners Checklist

STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT
PARTNERS

Initial Considerations for Complexity and Cultural Relevance

This tool is intended to support your analysis of anchor texts for both complexity and opportunities for culturally relevant pedagogy[1] to determine whether/how to use a text and to prepare for instruction. First, read to yourself the full text you are considering (or the text included in your instructional materials you are required to teach), all the way through.

Text:

Key Ideas of this Text:

Move forward with analyzing this text and considering for use with students?

	⛔	Text contains harmful content, such as stereotypes and/or inaccurate representation. DO NOT USE.
	⚠️	Text has one or more cautions about the way this content is presented or how this story is told that will take careful teacher planning. MOVE TO ANALYSIS, TENDING CAREFULLY TO PLANNING FOR CAUTIONS THROUGH TASKS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.
	✅	No initial concerns about the way this content is presented or how this story is told; for example, this text is affirming of the characters/topics it portrays. MOVE TO ANALYSIS; USE WITH INTENTIONAL PLANNING.
Notes:		

Consider what you bring to this text, what your students could bring, and how you'll prepare for instruction.

Locating Myself within This Text: Are the identities,[2] ideas, perspectives, and content of this text close to or far away from my own?	**Locating Students within This Text:** Are the identities, ideas, perspectives, and content of this text close to or far away from students? In what ways and for which students?

Research & Reflection:
💬 What do I need to know more about before engaging more deeply with this text?[3]

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[1] Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory Into Practice, 34*(3), 159–165.
[2] In considering identity, you might think about any of the following: ability, age, body type, ethnicity, gender, home language, immigration status, socio-economic status, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc. For more, see Let's Talk, Facilitating Critical Conversations with Students, Learning for Justice, p. 6
[3] For example, you may want to learn more about a historical event, a cultural practice that is unfamiliar to you, or accurate pronunciations of proper nouns.

Now that you have read through the text once, identify 1) potential rationales for using this text with your students and 2) the quantitative level (e.g., Lexile) as an initial gauging of this text's grade-level complexity.

Why Read This Text with These Students?

Identify the potential rationales for reading this text by highlighting any of the possible relevant purposes in the table. Add additional rationales as needed. Read more about these three pillars of culturally relevant pedagogy from Gloria-Ladson Billings here.

Academic Success	Cultural Competence	Critical Consciousness
Builds academic language	Connects to (some) students' identities or lived experiences	Provides accurate representation
Reads text with rich thought and/or ideas	Teaches (some) students about other cultures, identities, or experiences	Connects to current events and/or topics that matter to students
Builds knowledge about a topic, perspective, or event	Shows joy, agency, creativity and/or resilience of non-dominant or historically marginalized identities	Explores power, equity, justice, or injustice
Connects to content knowledge of a unit of study	Provides opportunity for multilingual learners to leverage their existing language resources and/or vocabulary from content under study	Sparks critical conversation
Other:	*Other:*	*Other:*

Quantitative Level[4]

Will this text give students the chance to interact with a complex, grade-level text?

Grade Band	Lexile Ranges
PK–2 Read-Aloud	420–1010 L
2–3	420–820 L
4–5	740–1010 L
6–8	925–1185 L
9–10	1050–1335 L
11–12	1185–1385 L

Quantitative Measurement & Associated Grade Band:

Note that in order to fully determine grade-level complexity, **qualitative** demands (meaning/purpose, knowledge, language, structure) must also be considered.

Initial Text Reflections

Based on your initial read, do you see **potential rationales** for reading this text with students? Is this text **within the quantitative grade band**? If not, does it have another relevant purpose for reading with your students?

Note: Don't reject a text for simply not being within the grade-level quantitative band, but be thoughtful about the purpose for reading. Consider the fact that over the course of a school year, all students should have ample learning opportunities with rich and complex text and language.

Notes for Future Planning

If using this text, what do you want to keep in mind for future text selection?[5] Consider how this text contributes to the volume of texts students will read with you over the course of the school year.

---

[4] A quantitative tool, such as a Lexile level, is one piece of information to gauge a text's overall complexity. This computer-generated numerical value is based on features such as sentence length and vocabulary complexity and is one way of ensuring that your students are regularly interacting with rich reading material. To find a text's Lexile, visit https://hub.lexile.com/find-a-book/search; you may also paste in portions of a text to get an approximation.

[5] For example, how might you balance the perspectives offered in this text or ensure a variety of identities are represented?

Note: This tool is from Achieve the Core (Achieve the core, n.d.)

Appendix H

Reading Diversity Lite

READING DIVERSITY LITE (TEACHER'S EDITION): A TOOL FOR SELECTING DIVERSE TEXTS
Use this checklist to enhance reading diversity in your classroom.

Title _____ Author _____ Grade level _____ Lexile score _____

1. What voices does this text include in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, ability, religion, place, immigration status or LGBT identity? Do the identities or experiences of the author(s), illustrator(s), character(s), speaker(s) or narrator(s) contribute to students' diverse reading experiences?	YES ☐	NO ☐
2. Does this text accurately reflect lived experiences in terms of setting, characters, speakers, events, language and illustrations?	YES ☐	NO ☐
3. Consider the author's attitudes, beliefs and point of view. Do they promote inclusion and equality?	YES ☐	NO ☐
4. Does the content perpetuate or rely on stereotypes, generalizations or misrepresentations? (Note: A text may address a stereotype without relying on it.)	YES ☐	NO ☐
5. Consider the gaps and silences. Are certain people or groups left out or given only a silent or insubstantial role?	YES ☐	NO ☐
Are certain questions or issues related to the topic omitted?	YES ☐	NO ☐
6. Does this text pair well with other texts that students encounter at school, home, in the media and through cultural transmission?	YES ☐	NO ☐
7. Consider the historical, social and cultural context in which the text was written. Is the text relevant now?	YES ☐	NO ☐
8. Does this text mirror the identities and experiences of my students?	YES ☐	NO ☐
9. Might this text be a window into the identities and experiences of people whose lives are different than my students' lives?	YES ☐	NO ☐
10. Does this text connect with the interests and concerns of my students?	YES ☐	NO ☐
11. Does this text relate to and build upon the knowledge my students bring with them?	YES ☐	NO ☐
12. Does this text work toward goals within the four domains of anti-bias education: **Identity:** Promote a healthy self-concept and exploration of identity	YES ☐	NO ☐
Diversity: Foster intergroup understanding	YES ☐	NO ☐
Justice: Raise awareness of prejudice and injustice	YES ☐	NO ☐
Action: Motivate students to act by highlighting individual and collective struggles against injustice	YES ☐	NO ☐

13. How might this text motivate, engage or enable my students?
_____

I will use this text in my instruction to [indicate task].
_____

I will not use this text in my instruction because [indicate reason].
_____

tolerance.org/reading–diversity   UPDATED 1.22.16   **TEACHING TOLERANCE** TOLERANCE.ORG

Note: This tool is from Teaching Tolerance (Teaching Tolerance, 2016).

Appendix I

Electronic Media Platforms

Platform	Website link
Tar Heel Reader	https://tarheelreader.org/
Epic!	https://www.getepic.com/
Vooks	https://www.vooks.com/
Tumble Books Library	https://www.tumblebooks.com/
Hoopla	https://www.hoopladigital.com/
Novel Effect	https://noveleffect.com/
Bookshare	https://www.bookshare.org/cms/
International Children's Digital Library	http://www.childrenslibrary.org/index.html
Readworks	https://www.readworks.org/

Appendix J

Book List Recommendation

Title	Author	Type of Book
Interrupting Chicken	David Ezra Stein	Picture book
Paper Bag Princess	Robert Munsch	Picture Book
Cinderella and the Furry Slippers	Davide Cali	Picture Book
The Very True Story of the Three Little Pigs	Jon Scieszka	Picture Book
The Frog Prince Continued	Jon Scieszka	Picture Book
The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales	Jon Scieszka	Picture Book
The Three Ninja Pigs	Corey Rosen Schwartz	Picture Book
Ninja Red Riding Hood	Corey Rosen Schwartz	Picture Book
The Princess and the Petri Dish	Sue Fliess	Picture Book
The Three Little Wolves and The Big Bad Pig	Eugene Trivizas	Picture Book
Verity Fairy and Sleeping Beauty	Caroline Wakeman	Picture Book
Rapunzel's Revenge	Shannon Hale	Graphic Novel
Not All Princesses Dress in Pink	Jane Yolen	Picture Book
The Three Little Pigs and the Somewhat Big Bad Wolf	Mark Teague	Picture Book
Part Time Princess	Deborah Underwood	Picture Book
Sleeping Bobby	Mary Pope Osborne	Picture Book
Hansel and Gretel	Bethan Woollvin	Picture Book
Genesis Begins Again	Alicia D. Williams	Chapter Book
Orbiting Jupiter	Gary D. Schmidt	Chapter Book
Maniac Magee	Jerry Spinelli	Chapter Book
Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry	Mildred D. Taylor	Chapter Book
Ghost Boys	Jewell Parker Rhodes	Chapter Book
George	Alex Gino	Chapter Book
Maybe He Just Likes You	Barbara Dee	Chapter Book
The Crossover	Kwame Alexander	Chapter Book
The Lions of Little Rock	Kristin Levine	Chapter Book
A Good Kind of Trouble	Lisa Moore Ramee	Chapter Book
Inside Out and Back Again	Thanhha Lai	Chapter Book
Other Words for Home	Jasmine Warga	Chapter Book
Bayou Magic	Jewell Parker Rhodes	Chapter Book
A Long Walk to Water	Linda Sue Park	Chapter Book
Wonder	R. J Palacio	Chapter Book
The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Temple Grandin	Julia Finley Mosca	Picture Book

Kami and the Yaks	Andrea Stenn Stryer	Picture Book
A Boy and a Jaguar	Alan Rabinowitz	Picture Book
Lovely	Jess Hong	Picture Book
All Are Welcome Here	Alexandra Penfold	Picture Book
The Colors of Us	Karen Katz	Picture Book
Night Job	Karen Hesse	Picture Book
Dreamers	Yuyi Morales	Picture Book
Bedtime Bonnet	Nancy Redd	Picture Book
Saturday	Oge Mora	Picture Book
Drawn Together	Minh Le	Picture Book
The Proudest Blue	Ibtihaj Muhammad and S.K. Ali	Picture Book
A Kid's Book About Racism	Jelani Memory	Picture Book
Breaking News	Sarah Lynne Reul	Picture Book
Don't Touch My Hair	Sharee Miller	Picture Book
Hidden Figures	Margot Lee Shetterly	Chapter Book
Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation	Duncan Tonatiuh	Picture Book
We are Water Protectors	Carole Lindstrom	Picture Book
Let the Children March	Monica Clark-Robinson	Picture Book
Just Ask: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You	Sonia Sotomayor	Picture Book
Shaking Things Up: 14 Young Women Who Changed the World	Susan Hood	Picture Book
Broken Crayons Still Color	Toni Collier and Whitney Bak	Picture Book
Gina Kaminski Saves the Wolf	Graig Barr-Green	Picture Book
The Buddy Bench	Patty Brozo	Picture Book
Who Am I?	Julie Buchhollz	Picture Book
You Are the Color	Rifk Ebeid	Picture Book
We Are Family	Patricia Hegarty	Picture Book
Last Stop on Market Street	Matt de la Pena	Picture Book
Paper Wishes	Lois Sepahban	Chapter Book
Drita, My Homegirl	Jenny Lombard	Chapter Book
Little Leaders: Bold Women in Black History	Vashti Harrison	Chapter Book

Appendix K

Resources for Diversity

Name	Link
Diverse Book Finder	https://diversebookfinder.org/
Celebrating Authors of Color	https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/Literacy/Equity-in-Literacy/Celebrating_Authors_of_Color.pdf?rev=f27bf94e29854f039de09676d17278ed
Cooperative Children's Book Center	https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/
We Need Diverse Books	https://diversebooks.org/where-to-find-diverse-books/
Social Justice Books	https://socialjusticebooks.org/
Disability in KidLit	https://disabilityinkidlit.com/
Disability Visibility Project	https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/
Here Wee Read	https://hereweeread.com/2022/02/the-2022-ultimate-list-of-diverse-childrens-books-copy.html
A Mighty Girl	https://www.amightygirl.com/