Mirror and Window Books

*Why and How*

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Mirrors, Windows, & Sliding Glass Doors

“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 the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books.”

-Rudine Sims Bishop, 1990
Why Mirror Books for Youth of Color & Other Marginalized Youth

• Validate their existence and lived experiences (Bishop, A. Tatum, B. Tatum)
• Connect them with their textual lineage & history (A. Tatum, Banks, B. Tatum)
• Counter the “single story” – the premises, myths, and stereotypes that are often held by the dominant culture (Delgado, Adichie, A. Tatum, B. Tatum)
• Support positive racial and ethnic identity development (A. Tatum, B. Tatum, Hanley & Noblit)
• Increase engagement with reading & other academic subjects (Edwards et al, B. Tatum, A. Tatum)
• Provide images of the achievement of members of marginalized communities (A. Tatum, B. Tatum, Banks)
• “Provide healing from the damages of living in a racist society.” (Barker, 2010)
Marginalized Communities Defined

• Communities that:
  • Have been traditionally relegated to an unimportant or powerless position in the United States
  • Systematically experience discrimination in education, employment, housing, and the judicial system

• Includes:
  • Youth of Color – Black/African American, Latinx, Asian, biracial/multiracial
  • Native or Indigenous youth
  • Immigrant and refugee youth
  • LGBTQIA youth
  • Youth with disabilities
Why Window Books for Members of the Dominant Culture

“When the only images children see are white ones...as long as children are brought up on gentle doses of racism through their books... there seems to be little chance of developing the humility so urgently needed for world cooperation.”

-Nancy Larrick, 1965
Why Window Books for Members of the Dominant Culture

• “Help us understand what life is like for others, and invite the reader into a new and unfamiliar world.” [Delgado & Stefancic, 1999, p. 141].

• “Cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority.” [Delgado & Stefancic, 1999, p. 144]

• Create a shared understanding and appreciation for the historical & current social, political, economic, and scientific contributions of marginalized communities to American society and the world
Why Diverse Books For all Youth

• Support prosocial development

• Provide a forum for youth to talk about race, ethnicity, gender identification, sexual orientation, and disability in a transformative way [Hughes-Hassell]

• “Help us understand when it is time to reallocate power.” [Delgado, 1989, p. 2415]
Creating and Using Diverse Collections
Diversity in Children’s Books 2015

Percentages of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds. Based on the 2015 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison:

ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/poetals.asp

0.9% American Indians/First Nations
2.4% Latinx
3.3% Asian Pacific/Asian Pacific Americans
7.6% African/African Americans

12.5%* Animals, Trucks, etc.
73.3%** White

* About a quarter of the total children’s books published in 2015 were picture books, and about half of those depict non-human characters, like animals & trucks.
** The remainder depict white characters.

Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dehien & Molly Beth Griffin. Released under a Creative Commons BY-NC-SA license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/
All Diverse Titles are Not Created Equal

- Reading While White
- Debbie Reese’s American Indians in Children’s Literature
- Malindo Lo Perceptions of Diversity in Book Reviews
- The Show Me Librarian Selection is Privilege
Resources for Creating Diverse Print Collections

- **We Need Diverse Books** which highlights newly-published titles—along with informational resources and reviews—across a broad definition of diversity

- Blogs such as [Disability in KidLit](#), [Latinx in KidLit](#), [American Indians in Children's Literature](#), [I'm Here, I'm Queer, What the Hell do I Read?](#), and [Rich in Color](#)

- Lists like the [African-American Reference Guide](#) that feature recent titles by and about African Americans

- Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) [searchable database](#)

- Publishers focused on diversity such as [Lee and Low Books](#)

- The We Need Diverse Book’s [Where to Find Diverse Books](#) page

- The Selecting Diverse Books Page from [LibEquity](#)

- Hashtags: #ownvoices and #WeNeedDiverseBooks
Resources for Creating Diverse Digital Collections

- International Children’s Digital Library
- 12 Multicultural Kids’ Book Apps Every Parent Should Know
- Diversity Programming for Digital Youth: Promoting Cultural Competence in the Children's Library (Jamie Naidoo, Libraries Unlimited, 2014)
Using Diverse Collections

- Picture your current displays. Are diverse titles present in each of them?

- Think about your diverse collection. Do they include titles other than:
  - Award-winners;
  - Historical Fiction;
  - Social Issue Books; or
  - Biographies?

Yes, of course, we need this.

But...we also need this!
Using Diverse Collections

- As our knowledge of diverse titles grows, we must be intentional in our efforts to incorporate these titles into our reader’s advisory—*with all youth*.

**Fantasy Lover?** These are examples of the books we should reach for...
Using Diverse Collections

Maybe post-apocalyptia is more popular in your library. Do you recommend these?
Intentional RA


Maybe your patron is a young teen who is graduating from the *Wimpy Kid* years? Hand him/her *The Great Greene Heist*. 
Book Clubs! Reading Lists! Read Alouds!

- Include diverse titles in book club choices, summer reading lists, book talks, read alouds, parent workshops, etc.

**Tools to help**

- Oakland Public Library’s [#BlackLivesMatter Resource Series](https://www.oaklandpubliclibrary.org/blacklivesmatter-resource-series) contains a host of ways we can use diverse books with teens, including using them to engage teens in discussions about issues related to equity.

- As librarians, we’re perfectly situated to engage in discussions about equity, race, or privilege as youth literature offers a way to open up this dialogue with all youth, not just youth of color and other marginalized youth.
Author Visits: Steinfirst Author in Residency Program

Charles R. Smith  Matt de la Peña
Add Diverse Perspectives to the Curriculum

- **Perspectives for a Diverse America, a K-12 literacy-based anti-bias curriculum** - Includes access to Teaching Tolerance’s Anti-bias Framework, nearly 300 texts and more than 100 literacy strategies

- **Local History Through Primary Resources** - Developed by SILS alumna Emily Yates, this site provides a unit on the Civil Rights Movement in Durham, NC

- **Where to Find Culturally Diverse Literature to Pair with Your Required Curriculum** - This blog post contains links to information about culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive texts, and lesson plans

**Dimensions of Multicultural Education**

James Banks

- **Level 4**
  **The Social Action Approach**
  Students make decisions on important social issues and take actions to help solve them.

- **Level 3**
  **The Transformation Approach**
  The structure of the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups.

- **Level 2**
  **The Additive Approach**
  Content, concepts, themes, and perspectives are added to the curriculum without changing its structure.

- **Level 1**
  **The Contributions Approach**
  Focuses on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements.

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Incorporate Nontraditional Texts

**The Curious Case of Trayvon Martin**

*By Charles M. Blow, Published March 16, 2012*

That’s how Sybrina Fulton, her voice full of ache, told me she found out that her 17-year-old son, Trayvon Martin, had died. In a wrenching telephone call, the boy’s father, who had taken him to visit a friend, told her that Trayvon had been gunned down in a gated townhouse community in Sanford, Fla., outside Orlando.

“He said, ‘Somebody shot Trayvon and killed him.’ And I was like, ‘Are you

**“We live in a generation of not being in love and not being together but we sure make it feel like we’re together, because we’re scared to see each other with somebody else.”**

-DRAKE
Leaders: Diversity + Education

Librarians must also remember to provide tools to help their staff and patrons understand marginalized youth’s cultures and how to capitalize on them.

- Get these must-have resources:
- Add books by Alfred Tatum, Lisa Delpit, Pedro A. Noguera, Beverly Tatum, A. Wade Boykin, Paul Gorski, Patricia Edwards, David Kirkland, Chris Edmin, and many others to your professional collection.
- Expand your own learning networks to include individuals like Jose Vilson, Rafranz Davis, Meeno Rami, @GregoryMichie, @Jess5th and organizations like Anti-Defamation League, Teaching Tolerance and GLSEN.
Selected Resources


Provides strategies that enable school and public librarians to transform their services, programs, and collections to be more responsive to the literacy strengths, experiences, and needs of African American youth.

Three-year Continuing Education Project grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to develop a comprehensive research-based professional development curriculum that includes a suite of blended PD experiences for school librarians, classroom teachers, and school literacy coaches that focuses on cultural competence, culturally relevant pedagogy, and equity literacy.

http://projectready.web.unc.edu/
Selected Resources

AASL: KQ themed issue explores the role of today’s youth services professionals in combating social justice issues and better serving our nation’s culturally and linguistically diverse children and youth.

YALSA: YALS Themed issue focuses on cultural competency.
Selected Resources

**Equity in the Library** ([http://libequity.web.unc.edu/](http://libequity.web.unc.edu/))
A web resource for librarians that provides information on equitable access and services, culturally-relevant programming and pedagogy, and diverse collections for youth in both public and school libraries.

**Building a Bridge to Literacy for African-American Male Youth: A Call to Action for the Library Community** ([bridgetolit.web.unc.edu](http://bridgetolit.web.unc.edu))
In addition to providing free downloadable copies of our report and additional information about the summit, our website includes many other resources including a bibliography of related research and lists of outside resources such as websites, blogs, book lists, and selection tools to help you.

**Libraries, Literacy, and African American Male Youth**
This free professional development resource is for school and public librarians to help them develop programs and services that will best meet the needs of African American male youth. This resource, developed by SIL alumna Amanda Hitson, is divided into ten modules that focus on research-based strategies for working with African American male youth in school and public libraries.
Selected Resources

**Culturally Responsive Library Walk** [http://bridgetolit.web.unc.edu/?page_id=842](http://bridgetolit.web.unc.edu/?page_id=842)
The Culturally Responsive Library Walk is designed to be a collaborative tool for school administrators, librarians, and teachers to assess the library’s responsiveness to the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students who attend the school. It is an observation and planning document that is informed by research on culturally responsive pedagogy and is based on the philosophy of creating a student-centered library program.

This list of 256 titles that feature black males was prepared by Jane M. Gangi, PhD (janegangi@snet.net) for the Summit.

**Building a Bridge to Literacy for Adolescent African American Males**
[https://sites.google.com/site/bridgetoliteracy/](https://sites.google.com/site/bridgetoliteracy/)
This website provides background information about Dr. Alfred Tatum’s research, and details the work we have done to bring his research to the attention of the library community.
Share how you are making your libraries inclusive! Email me or join the conversation by tweeting out your best practices using #libequity.

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References


References


