Multicultural Literature and Children’s Identity

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The Four Core Goals of Anti-Bias Education

• Goal 1: Each Child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities

• Goal 2: Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; deep, caring human connections.

• Goal 3: Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

• Goal 4: Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.
Defining Multicultural Literature

• Literature about the sociocultural experiences of underrepresented groups. This literature includes those who fall outside the “mainstream” of categories such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, and language.
Children's Books By and About People of Color and First/Native Nations Received by the CCBC

*2002 -

See next chart for count of books from U.S. publishers only

Last Updated: March 8, 2019

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Defining Children’s Identity

• John Dewey, Theory of the Social Individual
  • Race
  • Ethnicity
  • Gender
  • Family Structure
  • Socioeconomic Status
  • Religion
  • Language
  • Special Needs
In 2015-16, there were an estimated 3,827,100 public school teachers in the United States. Slightly more than 80 percent of them were white, while less than half of students were white. Source: National Center for Education Statistics
School Enrollment Percentages by Race and Hispanic Origin

K-12

- White, non-Hispanic: 50.9%
- Hispanic: 21.1%
- Black, non-Hispanic: 13.9%
- Asian, non-Hispanic: 5.1%
- Other, non-Hispanic: 3.6%

College

- White, non-Hispanic: 54.7%
- Hispanic: 19.4%
- Black, non-Hispanic: 14.5%
- Asian, non-Hispanic: 6.4%
- Other, non-Hispanic: 3.1%

www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html
Rudine Sims Bishop, “Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors”
Mirrors

• “When children cannot find themselves reflected in books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part. Our classrooms need to be places where all the children from all the cultures that make up the salad bowl of American society can find their mirrors.”
Windows

• “Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange.”

• “Children from dominant social groups have always found their mirrors in books, but they too, have suffered from the lack of availability of books about others. They need the books as windows onto reality, not just imaginary worlds.”
Sliding Glass Doors

• “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.”

• The Sliding Glass Doors concept provides us with two way passage into immersion in the cultural worlds of the children’s peers. It is the goal of Anti-Bias Education by NAEYC that children view themselves as active participants in denouncing prejudice and unfairness, rather than as visitors and spectators. The entrance through the Sliding Glass Door encourages involvement in all of the cultures that make up our society.
  
  • Examine “A Triangle for Adaora” by Ifeona Onyefulu vs “The Name Jar” by Yangsook Choi
Engagement/Reflection

• Is your book a Mirror, Window, or Sliding Glass Door? More than one?
• Consider your book in relation to the four NAEYC Anti-Bias Education goals
• Develop open-ended questions to share with children during your read-aloud
• Plan a response activity for your children
• Imagine transforming the activity into a Sliding Glass Door engagement
Resources

• Lee & Low Books: Multicultural Children’s Book Publisher (http://www.leeandlow.com)
• Mirrors Windows Doors (www.mirrorswindowsdoors.org)
• We Need Diverse Books (www.weneeddiversebooks.org)
Reference List


• NAEYC, “Anti-Bias Education”, retrieved from https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/anti-bias-education/overview