



Digging Deeper Into Evaluating Children's Literature

Cultivating Students' Critical Consciousness

Kayleen Jones | University of Minnesota Duluth

LOEX 2024





Agenda

- **Background and context**
- **LESSON 1: Children's Literature and the Publishing Industry**
- **LESSON 2: Looking Beyond the Surface of Representation in Children's Books**
- **Outcomes**
- **Reflection and Q&A**

University of Minnesota Duluth

9,350 students

73.87% identify as
white

UMD Office of Institutional
Research [All Student Profile](#)
Fall 2023



DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018

Percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds based on the 2018 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison:
ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp

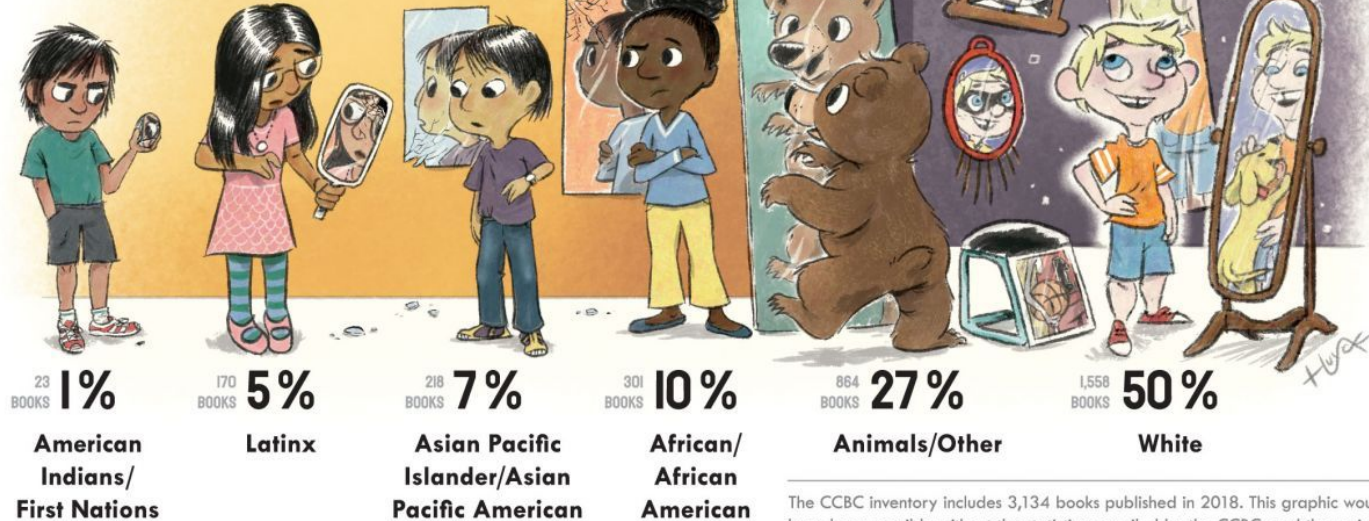


Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen
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The CCBC inventory includes 3,134 books published in 2018. This graphic would not have been possible without the statistics compiled by the CCBC, and the review and feedback we received from Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Horning, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner. Many thanks.



Antiracist Literary Advisory Board (A-LAB)





Critical Information Literacy

“...a theory and practice that considers the sociopolitical dimensions of information and production of knowledge, and **critiques the ways in which systems of power shape the creation, distribution, and reception of information**” (Drabinski and Tewell, 2019)

INFORMATION LITERACY ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How can we know what we don't know?

What factors shape how easy or difficult information is to find and use?

What is the value of curiosity in research and in our everyday lives?

Why can't we freely access all information?

Why is the research process iterative?

How can we recognize authority?

Who is believed and who is questioned? Why?

Why is scholarly conversation relevant?

Why are some voices amplified and some voices silenced in scholarly conversations?

How is the creation process reflected in a final product?

How do we show that we value others' work in our own?

What rights should we have as information users, owners, and creators?

How do we decide how to share our work?



Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The development of a sociopolitical or **critical consciousness** (Ladson-Billings, 1995)

“...the ability to take learning beyond the confines of the classroom **using school knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems**”
(Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 75)



Critical Consciousness

“...*conscientização* refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to **take action against the oppressive elements of reality**” (Freire, 2018, footnote 1, p. 35)

Lesson 1



Publishing Industry Demographics and Representation in Children's Literature





Activities

- Discuss, critique, and reflect on publishing industry demographics and statistics about BIPOC representation in children's literature
- Explore children's literature resources to find books with diverse representation



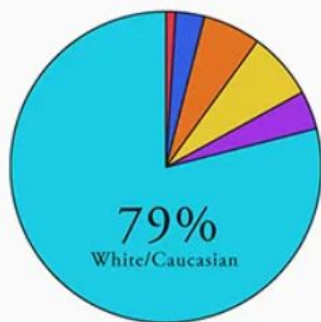
Reflection

We're going to look at the demographics of the publishing industry, focusing on race.

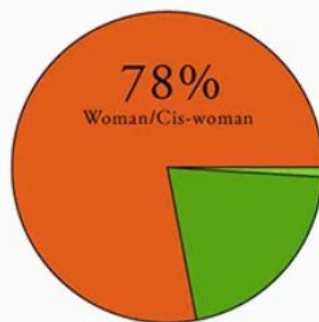
What do you think we'll see? What systems and structures are in place that make you think that?

INDUSTRY OVERALL

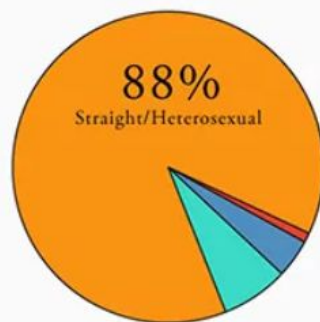
RACE



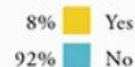
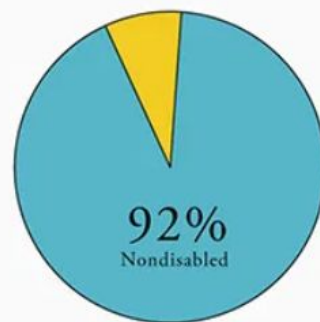
GENDER



ORIENTATION

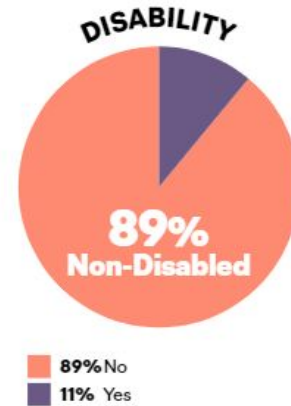
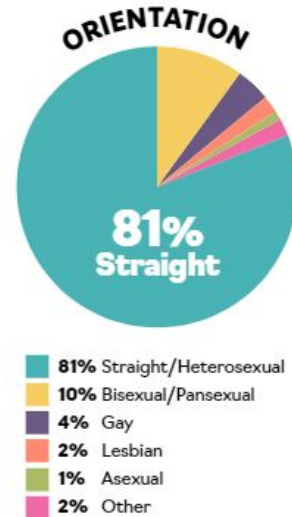
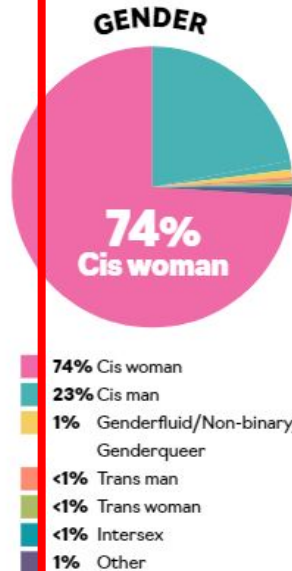
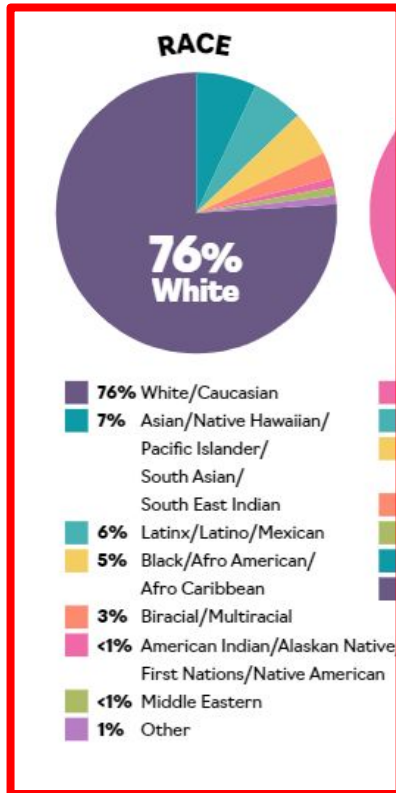


DISABILITY



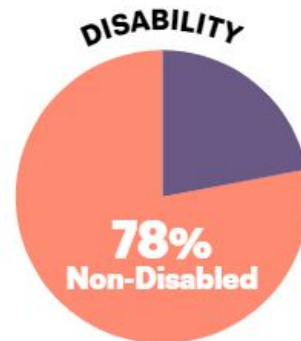
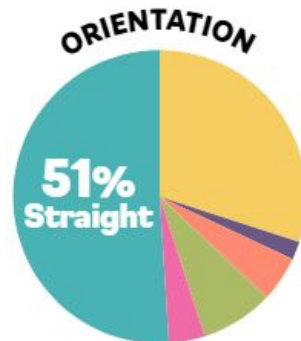
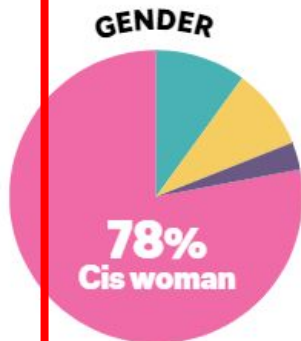
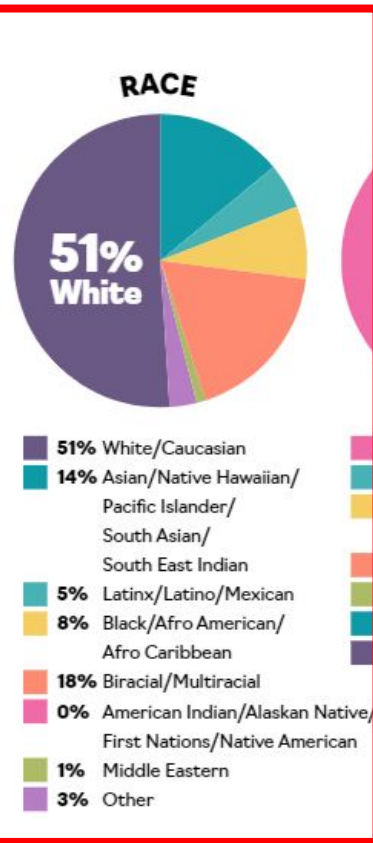
Diversity in Publishing 2015
Diversity Baseline Study
by Lee & Low Books
blog.leeandlow.com

Industry Overall



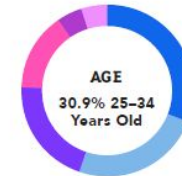
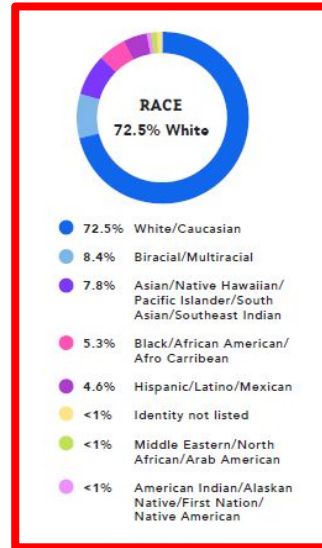
Diversity in Publishing 2019
Diversity Baseline Survey 2.0
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Interns

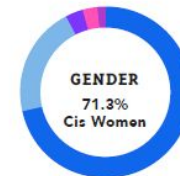


INDUSTRY OVERALL

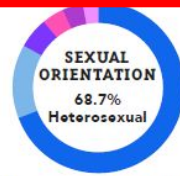
2015	79% white
2019	76% white
2023	72.5% white



- 30.9% 25-34 years old
- 24.5% 35-44 years old
- 20.2% 45-54 years old
- 14.7% 55-64 years old
- 4.9% 18-24 years old
- 4.8% 65+ years old



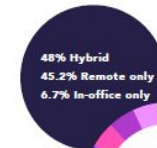
- 71.3% Cis woman
- 20.6% Cis man
- 3.4% Choose not to disclose
- 2.6% Nonbinary
- 1.6% Genderqueer/Gender expansive



- 68.7% Straight/Heterosexual
- 14% Bisexual/Pansexual
- 5.8% Choose not to disclose
- 4% Gay
- 3.8% Asexual/Demisexual
- 3% Lesbian



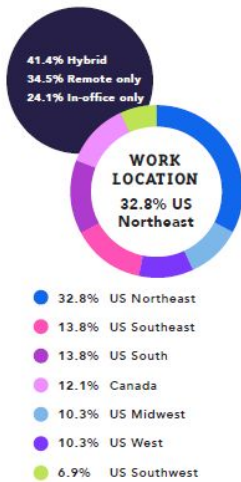
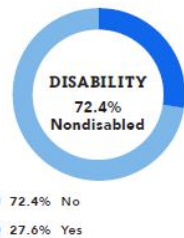
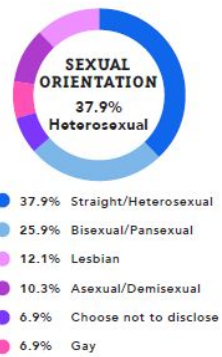
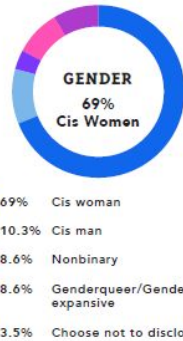
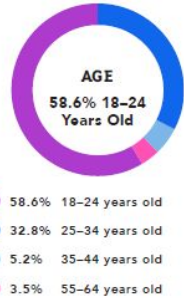
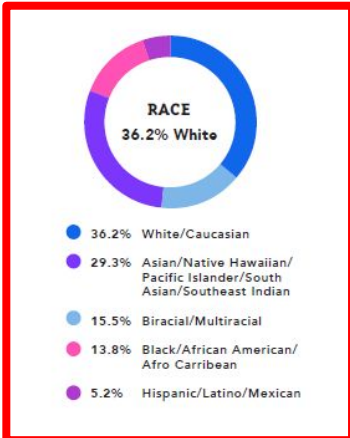
- 83.5% No
- 16.5% Yes



- 58.7% US Northeast
- 15.1% US Midwest
- 9.3% US West
- 5.1% US Southeast
- 4.9% US South
- 4.8% Canada
- 1.9% US Southwest
- <1% North American Arctic

INTERNS

2019	51% white
2023	36.2% white





Reflection

We're going to look at statistics about BIPOC representation in children's books.

What do you think we'll see? What systems and structures are in place that make you think that?

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/pcstats.asp



0.9%
American
Indians/
First Nations

2.4%
Latinx

3.3%
Asian Pacifics/
Asian Pacific
Americans

7.6%
African/
African
Americans

12.5%*
Animals, Trucks, etc.

73.3%**
White

Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen & Molly Beth Griffin
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* 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.

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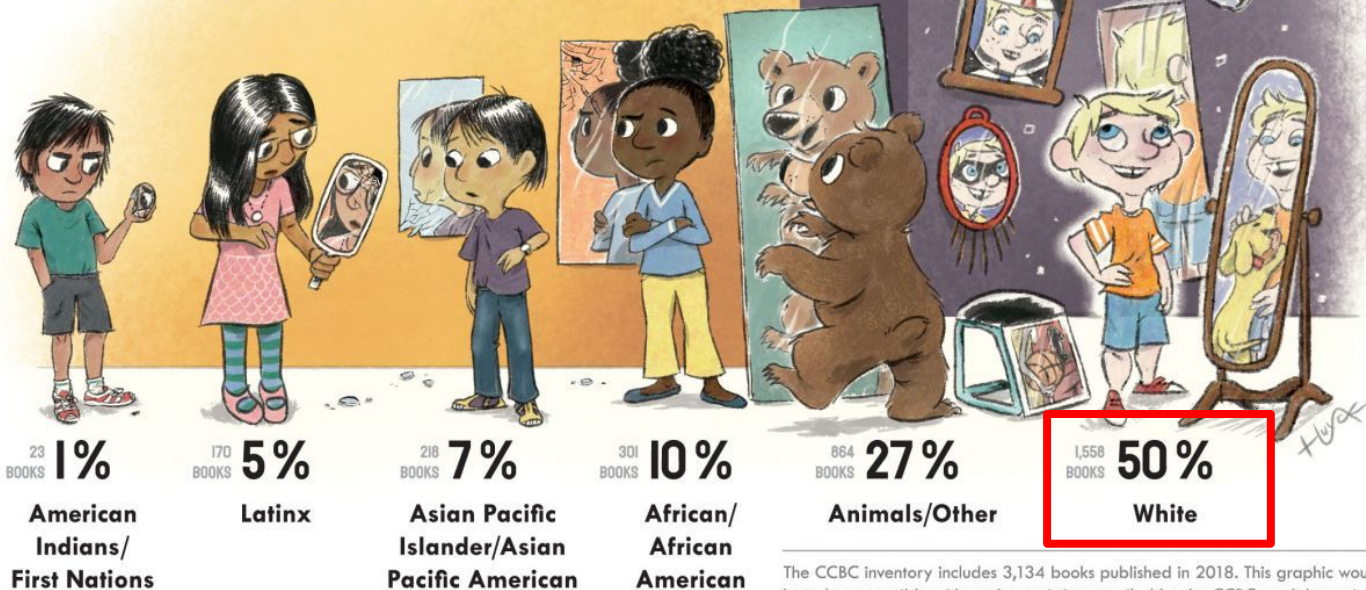
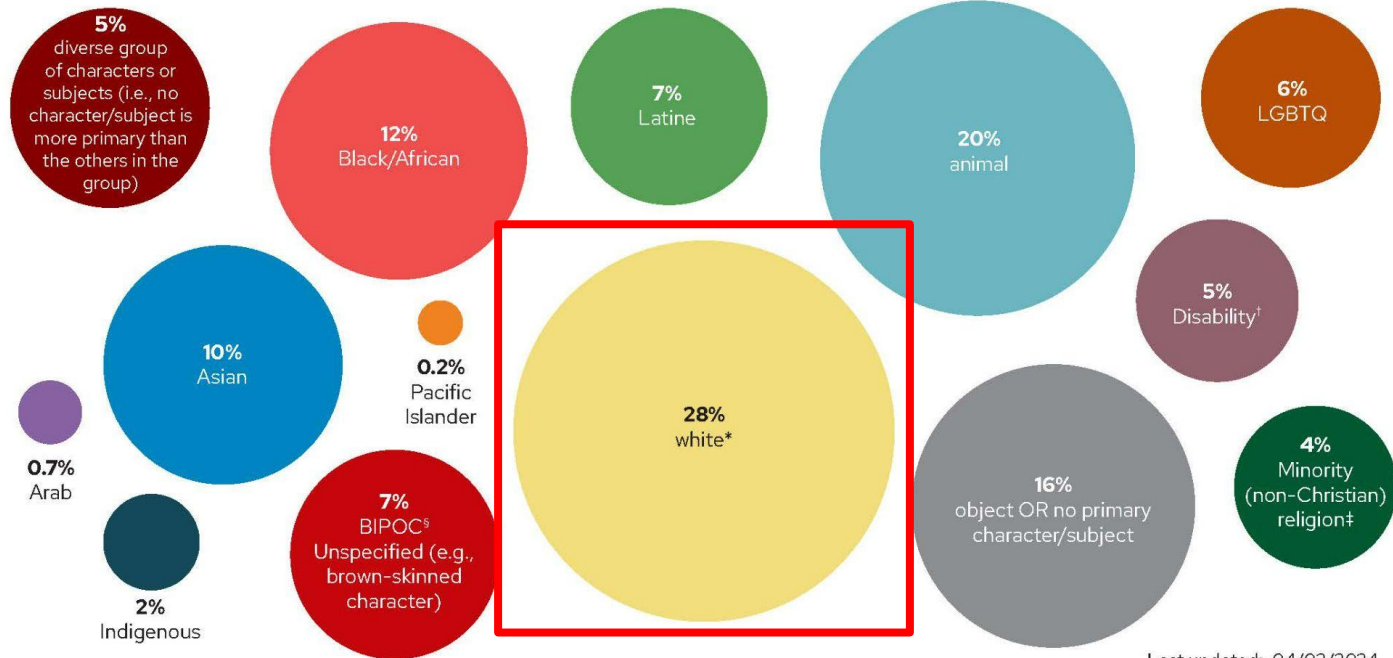


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2023 CCBC Diversity Statistics: PRIMARY CHARACTER/SUBJECT

Race/Ethnicity, Disability, LGBTQ, Religion



40% of 3,491 total books received have at least one BIPOC[§] primary character (fiction) or human subject (nonfiction).

Individual books with multiple primary characters/subjects or primary characters/subjects with multiracial or intersectional identities will be counted in all applicable categories. Percentages are not mutually exclusive and cannot be combined to calculate a total of the whole.

CCBC

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Please see our media kit to access the most recent version of this image, and for additional information about our work documenting diversity. The most recent version of this image available can be used without permission as long as it is reproduced in its entirety.

Last updated: 04/02/2024

* "White" is not counted for multiracial characters/subjects so as not to misrepresent a BIPOC[§] individual as white.

† "Disability" includes physical, cognitive, neurological, and psychiatric disabilities.

‡ 2% Jewish, 1% Muslim, 0.3% other minority religion

§ Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

The top corners of the slide feature decorative illustrations of various green leaves. On the left, there are several overlapping leaves in shades of green and brown. On the right, there are more leaves, including one with prominent veins and another with a striped pattern. The background is a light green with a subtle pattern of small white dots.

Why Does This Matter?

“The book industry has the power to shape culture in big and small ways. The people behind the books serve as gatekeepers, who can make a huge difference in determining which stories are amplified and which are shut out. If the people who work in publishing are not a diverse group, how can diverse voices truly be represented in its books?”

From [Lee & Low 2019 Diversity Baseline Survey Results](#)

Think + Pair + Share for students

- What feelings are coming up for you about this information?
- What stands out to you?
- How can teacher candidates and teachers use this information?



Think + Pair + Share for librarians

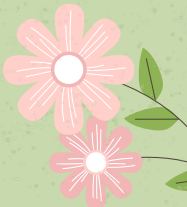
- What feelings are coming up for you about this information?
- What stands out to you?
- How could librarians use this information in instruction?



Explore + Discuss + Share for students



1. Open the IESE 3331 Research Guide:
z.umn.edu/iese3331 (bookmark this!)
2. Explore the resources on the Research Guide
3. Discuss with your group how the Research Guide resources will be helpful to you as teacher candidates (think both about your time at UMD and your time after UMD)
4. Share with the class what your group talked about



Lesson 2



Looking Beyond the Surface of Representation in Children's Books



The slide features a light green background with decorative elements in the top corners. On the left, there are several overlapping leaves in shades of green and brown. On the right, there are more leaves, including a prominent one with a circular pattern in green and brown. The title "Why Does This Matter?" is centered at the top in a bold, dark green font.

Why Does This Matter?

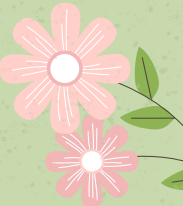
In the world of picture books currently featuring BIPOC characters:

- Which racial/cultural groups are represented and how?
- Are there patterns in these representations?
- If so, what are the messages they send about Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color?

From [Diverse BookFinder](#)

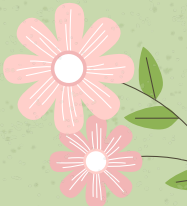
Categorizing Activity

1. Find a partner
2. Read through the Diverse BookFinder Categories
3. Read a book with your partner and circle the category/categories that apply to the book

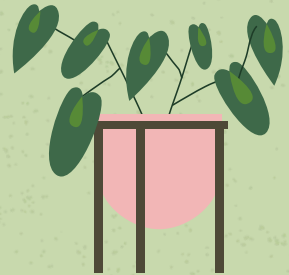
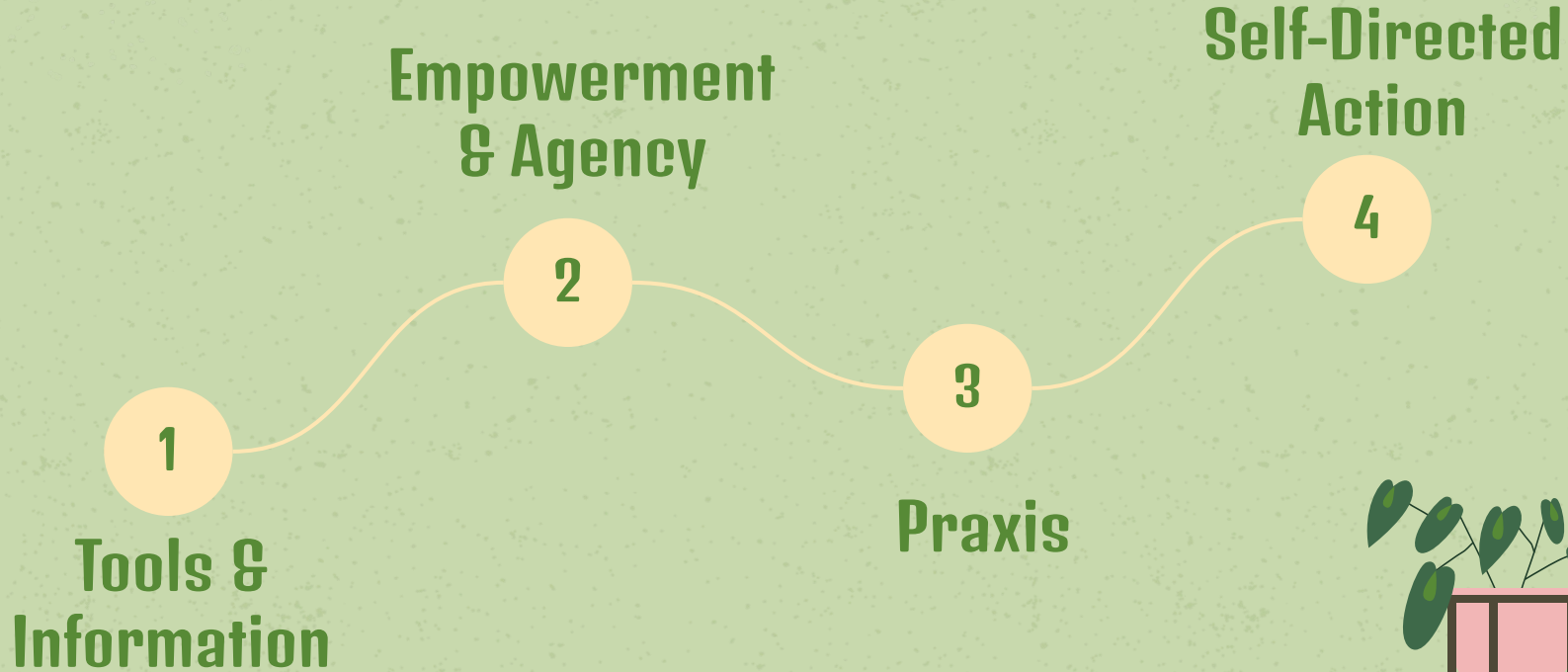


Discussion

- Does anyone want to share about their book?
- What did you notice about this work?
- How could you apply these categories to your work?



My Reflection on Critical Consciousness Development



B

Presented for her hometown's equity, diversity, and inclusion committee about representation in children's books

J & H

Student teachers working with classroom teachers to review classroom libraries

OUTCOMES



J, F, & M

Created events at UMD and in Minnesota schools based on what they learned

L, H, J, & J

Co-presented at education and library conferences about this work

Closing Reflection

How could you use or adapt these lessons for your own context?





Questions?

Kayleen Jones

Email: jone1913@d.umn.edu

Slides and handout:
z.umn.edu/loex2024





References

- Drabinski, E., & Tewell, E. (2019). [Critical Information Literacy](#). In *The International Encyclopedia of Media Literacy*.
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- Pittman, K., Conerton, K., & David, M. (2019). [Information Literacy Essential Questions](#). ACRL Framework for Information Literacy Sandbox.

Lesson 1 References

[“Books by and about Black, Indigenous and People of Color.”](#) *Cooperative Children’s Book Center*, Accessed 4 Apr. 2024.

Huyck, David, Sarah Park Dahlen, Molly Beth Griffin. [“Diversity in Children’s Books 2015 infographic.”](#) *sarahpark.com*. 14 Sept. 2016. [Statistics](#) compiled by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Huyck, David and Sarah Park Dahlen. [“Diversity in Children’s Books 2018.”](#) *sarahpark.com*. 19 June 2019. Created in consultation with Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Horning, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner. [Statistics](#) compiled by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin–Madison.





Lesson 1 References Continued

["Where Is the Diversity in Publishing? The 2015 Diversity Baseline Survey Results."](#) *Lee & Low Blog*, 26 Jan. 2016.

["Where Is the Diversity in Publishing? The 2019 Diversity Baseline Survey Results."](#) *Lee & Low Blog*, 28 Jan. 2020.

["Where is the Diversity in Publishing? The 2023 Diversity Baseline Survey Results."](#) *Lee & Low Blog*, 28 Feb. 2024.

Lesson 2 References

[Learn How We Categorize Multicultural Picture Books.](#) (n.d.). Diverse BookFinder. Retrieved April 29, 2024.





Thanks!

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