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## Creating an Effective and Diverse Classroom Library

Crista Adovnik

*Western Oregon University*

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# Creating an Effective and Diverse Classroom Library

By: Crista Adovnik

Professional Project submitted to Western Oregon University

Master of Education

May, 2022



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**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF  
WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED**

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Thesis

Professional Project

Titled:

Creating an Effective and Diverse Classroom Library

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Graduate Student: Crista Adovnik

Candidate for the degree of : Master of Science in Education: Reading

*and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment  
of the requirements of this master's degree.*

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## Chapter one

### Project introduction:

In 2020 I made the decision to go back to college to get my master's degree in education. In the process of getting my degree, there have been classes about diversity in the classroom and why that is important for students. My first term of classes, I took a class about creating a diverse classroom library and how to create one. The classes main focus was for teachers and their classroom library, while I believe having books for teachers to read to their students is important, I also believe having books for the students to read that are diverse as well are beneficial.

Over the last few years there has been talk about race and equity. Even in schools there have been a huge focus on equity and how to make sure everything is fair and equal. I know that having a diverse classroom library won't change the inequity in the world, it will help my students get a different view into other culture and parts of the world. "Literature introduces people to the worlds they have never set foot in, which is why it is so important for classroom libraries to be full of diverse stories that reflect students' background and cultures." (Blintt, 2020)

Teaching kindergarten is tricky. When the students come into the classroom they are young and don't have much life experience other than what they have seen in their own personal family and the close lives around them. It can also make things more challenging. All they know is what their parents tell them and what they see. So, if their parents feel a certain way about something, more often than not, that is what the students will think too. So sometimes when students come in that are different race and come from other cultures, there is always one student that asks why they are different.

In response to the questions I get about cultures of other students is to create a classroom library that reflects non-dominant cultures and their own to show that not all people live the same way and have the same experiences outside of school. Not only will students get to see in the lives of other cultures, but also of students that are differently abled. My first thought to help teach students about culture was to work on my personal teacher library in my classroom. When I was taking the class about diverse classroom libraries, we focused on a variety of books from chapter books to picture books. Since I teach kindergarten, I spent a large amount of time looking into picture books that showed a variety of cultures and background for students to get a better idea about what is happening around the world and the lives of other students. I was able to find a chapter book series that showed an elementary student and her family was from another country and showed some of the stuff that her family does different at home.

When selecting books for my personal classroom library, I was specific in the books that I chose. I wanted to make sure they were current books, they were colorful and fun, they were realistic and not too animated, they were factual, and included a variety of cultures and life experiences. These requirements were easy to follow because I am reading these books to the students. When finding culturally diverse books for my students to have in the classroom library isn't going to be a challenge. I can use the same requirements that I looked into for my library, but I want the students to be able to read them (or look at pictures) to understand them. When I was looking into creating a more diverse library, I found a blog that talked about 6 tips for helping to build a classroom library. The 6 tips are listed below. (Blakenship, 2021)

1. Identify Existing Books with Stereotypes
2. Include as Many Unique Perspectives as Possible
3. Consider the Stories That Feature Diverse Characters

4. Ask for help from Your Class
5. Know Where to Find Diverse Stories
6. Use Your School's Resources for Assistance

I also want to have books that are in more than just English and Spanish. I don't currently have other languages in my room, but I think that would be beneficial for students to see what writing looks like in other languages and cultures compared to how we write here. It is also important to note that having a diverse classroom library isn't just about making sure there are books about other cultures, but it is also about showing other children that are different abled than others and how their daily lives are different. These books will also show how students are the same as well.

Since I have looked into my own personal library, I now have a better understanding on what to look for in my classroom library for my students that will help them with diverse books in the classroom. Having more diverse books will give the students a window in to other cultures and the lives of others, even if they are just looking at pictures. They will be able to see how other students live and the different kinds of food, religion, home lives, and even how their schooling might be different than what they are used to seeing. This is important because giving students a view into other cultures because there are so many more different experiences around the world, that most students may not get to see or experience.

My project shows my knowledge and skills that I have acquired during my time here at Western and also through my own teaching and classroom experiences. The first goal talks about using the advances knowledge and educational technologies. I will be using educational technologies for a lot of this project. I will start with research, I will be using technologies to look into making my rubric and looking into research about why diverse classroom libraries are so important. I will also be using Google Docs to make a master copy of the rubric and to track

the data. Then I will also use Google Docs to create a list of books for the classroom to make the book selection more diverse.

The next goal is analyzing data and evidence to support learning. Analyzing data will be done throughout this whole project. I will be using the information and research to help me determine what a diverse classroom library looks like. I will then be tracking my classroom library book selection and other classrooms libraries to see where there are cultures or views that are missing from the libraries. By examining and tracking the data, that will give a better idea about where to start to rebuild or fix my classroom library.

The third step is applying theories and research in education. The research that I have been conducting is what is going to drive the information that I track. It will also help me to determine what my next steps will be. (I will add more to this section when I have more research)

The last goal is to demonstrate professional growth, dispositions and leadership. This goal will be accomplished by using the information I gathered from all of the classrooms and sharing the results with the classroom teachers and possibly even administration. The biggest way to show professional growth is by looking at my own classroom data to determine what my classroom needs and using that information to help myself grow by doing research and implementing the research to help my students.

This project will consist of me evaluating my classroom library for diverse books for my students. I will look through the classroom library and take a tally of the books that I have for students and what they are seeing when they look at the books. I will be using a rubric that I have created that will consist of evaluating the genre of books, level of books, library set up



(pandemic version which has less furniture and not much stuff for creating a comfortable space), and diversity of books in library collection. I will then determine whether or not my classroom meets the needs of the students in my classroom. I will also check other classroom libraries to see if they meet the needs of the student in their rooms. I will be checking the classroom libraries of two other classrooms, both will be kindergarten classrooms.

The first step in implementing my project is to create a rubric for myself to be able to follow. This rubric will have a set number of books that should be in the library, along with a set number of books about other cultures and not just focused on one specific race or culture. I will use research and readings to determine the number of books that should be in a classroom library and what that should consist of.

My next step for this project will be to use the rubric that I have created to assess my own classroom library for my students, then I will also assess my classroom library that I read to the students. From there I will check other classrooms in my grade level, to have comparable data to have more information about where my school is having equitable classroom libraries. Once I have the data to show what is in all our classroom libraries, I will be able to come up with next step on how to change what is happening in my classroom and how to help other classrooms boost up their libraries.

The next step in this project will be using the rubrics to determine what is happening in each classroom library I checked. I will see what races and cultures aren't represented in the classroom and what the next steps will be if books are needed. I believe that my classroom is lacking in the appropriate diverse books to help my students to get a good sense of other cultures and students that are differently abled. Once I determine what is missing and where I fall short, I

will ask for donations and possibly write a grant if that is what is needed to benefit my students the best I can.

The final and best step of this process will be going to back to the 6 tips for helping boost the classroom library. The three I would like to focus on are including perspectives, stories from diverse classrooms, and asking the students to help choose the types of books in the classroom. Once the students and I select the types of books we want in the classroom, I will then get to go out and select books to purchase for the classroom library.

The goal for this project is that students will get a window into the lives of other students, whether that be other cultures, family lifestyles, or students that are differently abled. Students will learn on their own by looking at books in the classroom library that they are interested in and find a love of reading. Once my classroom library is set up, students will be more in control of their learning during independent reading time.

## **Chapter two**

### **Literature review:**

When starting the research on creating a diverse classroom library, I wanted it to meet cultural and developmental needs of the readers in the classroom. I decided to first dig into the structure of a classroom library. If a classroom library is not set up and structured properly, it will most likely fail to meet the needs and interests of the students. The articles that I found range anywhere from 1993-2021. I know when you think about how long ago that was, it might seem like that information is outdated. I truly believe that even after all these years, those articles still pertain to what we are doing right now in the classroom with our classroom libraries.

### **Motivation and engagement**

Fractor et al. (1993) gives details and ideas about how and why to create a classroom library. This article is out dated, but the information and statistics are still valid and show why it is important to have a good classroom library set up. This article makes it very clear that students have more success in reading when they develop a love of reading in early grades. “For some children, reading habits and a love of books do begin at home; however, schools need to make the development of the child-book relationship central in reading curriculum and instruction because many children do not have this experience as a central part of their lives.” (Fractor et al. 477) When students read at home, they are reading books they enjoy with their families and when they are reading at school, that is typically for a purpose with an end goal. This article talks about creating a space that helps students foster a love of reading to help support their learning. To increase children’s voluntary use of books, it is thought that the classroom library needs the following features:

- Focal area

- Partitioned and private
- Comfortable seating
- Five to six books per child
- Books that provide a variety of genres and reading levels
- Room for five-six children
- Two types of shelves
- Literature-oriented displays and props
- Organized into categories

Gambrell (1996) writes about creating classrooms with culture and helping with students' motivation to read. In her study, she worked with first, third, and fourth grade classrooms trying to determine motivation in students and how to increase their motivation. Gambrell talks about a study that was conducted to encourage reading within these grades. The goal was for students to read 21 books during a 10-week period. While books were read, the students were given reading related incentives, such as bookmarks and upon completion they were able to choose a book to take home to their personal classroom library. Gambrell states the issue she noticed with a program like this, is that once the program ended, there was no more incentive for students to keep reading. However, the benefits from the program were far greater than not doing the program. "The results of this study provided compelling evidence that a motivational reading program can enhance the reading motivation and behavior of children from low-literacy achieving schools and can increase both the quantity and quality of family literacy practices." (Gambrell, 18) The study not only showed increase and motivation for students, but the motivation increase was also seen with the families as well.

McNair (2016) wrote an article about diverse classroom libraries from K-6.. This article is a great example of why diverse classroom libraries are important. Often when you hear about having diverse classrooms and classroom libraries right now, you think about race and how to incorporate those aspects into the classroom. While race is important in a diverse classroom, there is also race, class, religion, and disability that all factor into having a diverse classroom library. “Books have the potential to entertain, foster a love of reading, and inform while also affirming the multiple aspects of students’ identities and exposing them to the values, viewpoints, and historical legacies of others.” (McNair, 375) The article then goes into giving diverse book suggestions to add to your classroom library.

### **Functions and set up of a classroom library**

Coppens (2016) talks about the logistics of creating a classroom library. “Research shows that students that have classroom libraries available to them read 50-60% more than those who do not have access to classroom libraries (Morrow 2003; Neuman 1999).” (Coppens, 22) Coppens continues to talk about how having a classroom library helps students build their love of reading and their strength in reading. Then Coppens goes on to talk about having popular titles that are high interest and high quality will encourage student reading. Once the books are purchased, working on organization is the next step and figuring out how to set up the library by titles or authors. Her students are older, so she also has a check out system to help encourage literacy at home with families. “In addition to the benefits to students’ reading comprehension and background knowledge, I have also found that a classroom library creates a culture of reading that bring teachers and students together.” (Coppens, 25)

Nueman (1996) gives suggestions about the classroom library set up and the success it can have for students. There are a variety of things that go into creating a classroom library. A classroom library needs the following:

- 300-600 books
  - Varying from picture books to chapter books
  - Different genres
  - Range of difficulty
  - Attractive settings

“Recent research emphasized the importance of the classroom library, particular in children’s literacy development.” (Nueman, 2) Having a well-developed classroom library helps students develop independence in reading. The more students read and find the books they like, they will enjoy reading and find their love of reading.

An article from *scholastic.com* titled *Five Major Functions of the classroom Library* (Unknown Date) discussed how books in a classroom library can also be used as classroom resources and the other benefits of a classroom library. This article talks about the function of a classroom library. This is what started my interest in this topic because there are many different uses that I have seen from classroom libraries. The five major functions are as followed:

1. Supporting Literacy Instruction
2. Helping Students Learn About Books
3. Providing a Central Location for Classroom Resources
4. Providing Opportunities for Independent Reading and Curricular Extensions
5. Serving as a Place for Students to Talk About and Interact with Books

The success of the classroom library is also based on how the library is set up. If the library is not set up efficiently then the functions may not be met.

Catapano et la. (2009) discuss what is needed to make a good classroom library. The beginning of the article talks about new teachers and if they knew how to choose books and create a classroom library. “In general, however, they did not seem to have in mind a way to begin to build their library or any clear goals for the types of books they might select or how they might supplement instruction.” (Catapano et la. 60) This section of the article stuck out to me because I remember trying to figure out how to set up my classroom library, and I had no idea what to do. This article does a great job of laying out what a good classroom library looks like. They have a checklist of what should be seen in a classroom library and if you see it, or if that is something that needs to be worked on more.

<b>Physical Environment</b>	Solid	Needs work
Clearly designed library space in the room		
Space for 3-4 students		
Enough shelves or containers for my books		
Comfortable space with soft items		
Display area for ‘teacher recommended’ books		
Display area for ‘student recommended’ books		
Easy access to books		
Significant number of books displayed with covers forward		
Journal, log, or method for tracking text selection/ providing feedback		
Chart or place for student comments, voting on or rating books, ect.		
Additional literacy “tool” (bookmark, post-its, review clipboards, etc.)		
<b>Content of the collection:</b>		
An adequate number of books (at least 10 books per student)		
Many high-quality books		
A range of text formats		
A good mix of narrative, expository, and environment text		
A variety genre		
Books of appropriate for students reading at, above, or below grade level		
Many texts with characters that are about the same age as my students		

Many texts that are relevant to my student's culture backgrounds and communities		
Many texts that can be used to support content area instruction		
Enough texts appropriate for read aloud, book talks, literature circle sets		
<b>Organization:</b>		
Clear system for organizing the books is in place		
Texts are labeled or grouped by format, genre, level or topic		
All shelves or containers are labeled with the system		
Labels are developmentally appropriate		
Students know the systems of organization and are able to use it		
Students can find books at their level		
<b>Management:</b>		
A plan for rotating books in and out of the library		
An organized book check-out system		
The check-out system		
Students have most of the responsibilities to manage check out		
The system allows me to monitor student selection		
All aspects of the library allow children to be self-sufficient		
I am able to schedule regular times for read aloud and book talks		
My students have independent reading time regularly		
I am able to provide regular opportunities for students to share what they are reading independently		

(Catapano, et al, Page 65)

Deringer (2015) researched many ways to help build classroom libraries, while I know this is not a scholarly article I found it to be helpful in finding ways to set up my classroom library. In this article, she lists 18 ways to find books to add to your classroom library. I have used a few of these and they are fairly easy to find books. I made an *Amazon Wishlist* for my personal family to be able to donate books to my classroom. I try to do themes, so the first time when I was taking my first master's class back here, I had to buy books that were diverse, so that was my first theme for my family. Another one I have used is *Scholastics*. This is a great program to use in the classroom because when parents in the classroom buy books to read at home, the teacher gets points to buy for the classroom. The books on *scholastic* are also pretty affordable. I also found a lot of books at bookstores and parent donations.



Blintt (2016) wrote a blog that focuses on how literature can show people a world they are not used to seeing. Students get an introduction into different worlds, engagement with text, and show empathy to other lives. Giving the students an introduction into another world is something students don't get to see often. "Having students take turns in sharing their favorite books and current reads not only introduces the entire class to different authors, genres, and books but also gives you insight into where students are and what they like to read." (Blintt, 2016) Doing this also allows the students to make connections to the stories in their own lives and the lives of their peers, which will allow them to make connections and build more relationships with students.

Henderson et al. (2020) talks about three classroom teachers that reviewed their classroom library to determine whether or not their classroom library had enough diverse books. They wanted to make sure that all students are able to see themselves in books. Their finding showed that none of the classrooms had adequate classroom libraries that showed gender, cultures, ability, and sexual orientation, language, family structures, and social significant topics. Developing readers by letting them see into the lives of others and see their own lives in books to know that they aren't the only people living a certain way or experiencing things.

The research and reading that I have done all show the same thing. The importance of a diverse classroom library and the benefits it has for their students. When students have a large selection of books, that are at appropriate levels, that also have the students interests, and that give students a window into the lives of others besides what they see in their own home and daily lives. Based on the reading I need to change and update parts of my classroom library to meet the needs of my students both as diverse readers and to help build their love of reading.

## Chapter 3

### Project Design and Methods

#### Instructional Context

I work in Lincoln County School district in Newport, Oregon. There are about 5,138 students in 16 public schools and four charter schools. I teach at Yaquina View Elementary which has 450 students with at least half speaking Spanish or Mam. There are many different dialects (ways of speaking a language) from Guatemala, Mam is one of them and a language that is spoken often in the area I am in. I am a kindergarten teacher with 18 students in my classroom. Some students know how to read and write in English, but some are in the beginning stages of learning English. I have seven English Language Learners (ELL) students in my class that are pulled for English Language Development (ELD) four days a week. I have two students that receive speech services which are pulled two to three days a week.

Due to the pandemic, our class sizes went from 26 students per classroom to 18 students per room. Everything else is pretty typical. I usually have around seven ELL students. I usually have at least five-six students receiving special education services, with three to four of those being speech.

In this chapter, I explore in detail the process I went through to accomplish my goal of creating a diverse set of literacy resources to support my learners. I began my research into creating a diverse classroom library by reviewing a variety of articles and information on classroom libraries and how to set them up in a way that is most beneficial to students. Which looks at how the library is set up, from genres to the placement of furniture and books in the library. Thinking about the community members in the district I am currently in there is a diverse population between cultures, abilities, languages, family structures, and social topics. I worked in

my library, as well as two other teacher's classroom libraries. My goal is to create a diverse classroom library that will meet the needs of our students and give them a window into other family dynamics as well as seeing their own community reflected in books.

### **Creation of a classroom library**

The creation of a diverse classroom library will benefit my students by showing them how other students live, family styles, cultures, language, social topics, and ability. Knowing the uniqueness of the lives of the population of the students in our district, showing their lives and a window into other lives will give students relatable references while learning about others. I worked with two other kindergarten teachers and assessing the diversity of our libraries. One kindergarten teacher is new to the profession and this is her first-year teaching. The second teacher is more experienced and has been teaching in this area for 10 years. The intention of looking into the classroom libraries in our school is to determine whether or not our libraries are meeting the needs of our students. When students go into our classroom libraries we want them to see a diverse set of views represented in the books because there is so much world around them. "Having a diverse selection can support all students in finding title that they can read and connect with on some level while affirming their own culture identities and hopeful developing important positive insights about others. (McNair, 2016) In kindergarten they only get a small piece of the world from their family and what they are taught in school. We also want students to pick up a book and be able to see themselves in them and their lives, cultures, and experience.

During the research for this project, I have found many different articles and research topics that would support creating a classroom library and more successful ways to create a diverse classroom library. The primary focus of the articles I have found is about classroom library set up like furniture, shelves, book organization, number of books, and even how many

kids are ok to be in the library were in some of the articles. I found the information to be helpful, but I was looking for information on creating a diverse classroom library, the information on setting up a successful classroom library will help when I have met my goal of a diverse classroom library. I then researched the best ways to get more diverse books in the classroom, I hope to create a classroom library that makes my students successful and find a love of reading.

I will use the research and the information gathered from my graduate classes and the classes for my reading endorsement to complete this project and enhance my classroom library to make sure that it meets the needs of my students. I started by conducting research and reading articles about creating a classroom library that meets the needs of my students to create a love of reading and a diverse classroom library. Once the research was completed, I assessed my classroom library by taking a tally of the books, such as cultures, animals as main characters, languages, different abilities, non-fiction, and leveled readers.

### **Classroom library set up- Step one**

The first step in completing this project is to complete a physical environment checklist list by Catapano et al. I found this step to helpful in determining the class effectiveness of the classroom library because if the classroom library isn't set up to help the students to be successful, the number of diverse books and the contents of the library won't matter.

<b>Physical Environment</b>	Solid	Needs work
Clearly designed library space in the room		
Space for 3-4 students		
Enough shelves or containers for my books		
Comfortable space with soft items		
Display area for 'teacher recommended' books		
Display area for 'student recommended' books		
Easy access to books		
Significant number of books displayed with covers forward		
Journal, log, or method for tracking text selection/ providing feedback		
Chart or place for student comments, voting on or rating books, ect.		
Additional literacy "tool" (bookmark, post-its, review clipboards, etc.)		
<b>Content of the collection:</b>		
An adequate number of books (at least 10 books per student)		
Many high-quality books		
A range of text formats		
A good mix of narrative, expository, and environment text		
A variety genre		
Books of appropriate for students reading at, above, or below grade level		
Many texts with characters that are about the same age as my students		
Many texts that are relevant to my student's culture backgrounds and communities		
Many texts that can be used to support content area instruction		
Enough texts appropriate for read aloud, book talks, literature circle sets		
<b>Organization:</b>		
Clear system for organizing the books is in place		
Texts are labeled or grouped by format, genre, level or topic		
All shelves or containers are labeled with the system		
Labels are developmentally appropriate		
Students know the systems of organization and are able to use it		
Students can find books at their level		
<b>Management:</b>		
A plan for rotating books in and out of the library		
An organized book check-out system		
The check-out system		
Students have most of the responsibilities to manage check out		
The system allows me to monitor student selection		
All aspects of the library allow children to be self-sufficient		
I am able to schedule regular times for read aloud and book talks		
My students have independent reading time regularly		
I am able to provide regular opportunities for students to share what they are reading independently		

(Catapano, S, Fleming, J., & Elias, M., 2009, Page 65)

I took the physical environment checklist into my classroom library and the other two kindergarten classrooms libraries to check the set-up of each library. I used this tool in all the classrooms. Due to the pandemic teachers that are new to the profession may not know how to set up their classroom library. There have been so many restrictions on what and where items in the classroom can be placed that setting up a library can be stressful. The *Ready School Safe Learners* recommended that furniture and items that cannot be wiped down were removed from the classroom. Having a tool like this will help the successfulness of their library for their students when libraries are able to be set up again.

Based off of the physical environment checklist, I determined where to help and give suggestions or resources that might need to be made. The section that has more “needs work” checked off is the area I recommended the focus of change. I will give resources based off of what I have researched for this project to help rebuild or restructure their library.

### **Classroom library tally- Step two**

The second step in my research project is to go into the three kindergarten classrooms and check the books that are in each classroom. The six categories that I selected to look for in the classrooms were: cultures, differently abled, other languages, animals as characters, non-fiction books, and leveled readers. I went into each classroom and took tally of each book that is in each category.

Classroom tally checklist:

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Number of students\_\_

Book total:

Cultures: different cultures and that are seen in books	
Differently abled: seeing people that have different abilities.	
Other languages: books that show other languages such as Spanish, Chinese, etc.	
Animals as characters: Books that show animals as main characters instead if people and other	
Non-fiction: Books that are non-fiction	
Leveled readers: Books that are different levels for the students to read.	

I chose to look for these specific types of books because I want diverse classroom libraries for students. Books that show other cultures are important because students are able to see other cultures which show lives of others and they are able to see their lives as well. In other cultures, they are able to see types of food, the different ways holidays are celebrated, and family structures and roles, life views and perspectives on work, health, relationships, etc.

The next category of books I will be looked for in classroom libraries were characters that are *differently abled*. These kinds of books show people/students in wheel chairs, hard of hearing, blind, speech/ communications, dyslexia, and students with autism. These books will show the lives that people with disabilities have and give them a window into something they may not know much about.

The next category is books that represent linguist diversity in our library by including texts in non-dominate languages. When students come to school with another language I want them to know that their home language is equally important, so I want them to have access to books in their language, as well as be able to see other languages.

The next category in books I looked at was the number of non-fiction books. These books are informational books that are true and show real world. These could be about animals, cultures, education, cooking, and other things seen around the world.

Then checking for level-readers is to make sure there are books that are at the student's level for them to have access to independently read if that is what they choose. Because my students and the students in the two classrooms are kindergarten students, it is important to check the levels and make sure they are appropriate for students to be able to read. There are picture book options as well, but having leveled readers gives students the opportunity to read if they choose.



The last category of books that I thought would be important to focus on, is the number of books where animals are seen as main characters. This category of book I thought was important because when students are looking at books, it is more challenging for them to relate to a turtle that is being bullied by a beaver. It is easier for students in kindergarten to find books with animals as main character more enjoyable than older students, but it is important to see real people in books too.

In their research, Henderson (2020) discussed when they conduct their research in the three primary classes how one of the three classes had a significant number of books in one of the classrooms didn't have people in the illustrations. Then they went on to talk about how books should focus on human characters no matter the genre of text that way they are getting a mirror into people, not animals. When selecting each type of book that I wanted to tally in the classroom, I took my time to think about ways to track diverse books and the six categories listed above are good to see how many were in each library to determine whether or not the classrooms library is diverse in their book options.

### **Rating scale- Step three**

For the rating scale, I decided to go with a four-point rating scale. The reason I chose a four-point rating scale is because it is a clear layout of points. You can clearly see if the classroom meets the needs or they don't. The classroom will score something from 1-4 based on how diverse their classroom library is. Due to there being no rubric created to assess a classroom library for diverse books, I created my own. I am also the one that will be scoring the classroom libraries based on my findings. Follow the rubric below to see the guide.

Diverse classroom rubric:

Score/ expectations	1	2	3	4
Diverse library	Classroom library does not meet the needs of the students and has little to no diverse books.	Classroom library has a minimal number of diverse books available to students.	Classroom library is effective and has a good number of diverse books for the students.	Classroom library exceeds the expectations and has a large number of diverse books for the students.

I took the tallies and information gathered from checking the classroom libraries and determine whether or not they meet the diverse needs of the students. From there I determined the next steps. If the classroom library is at a 4 in the rubric, they exceed the needs of their students which means they have a large number of diverse books for the students to choose from. That means that more than half of their library has diverse books. If the library receives a 3, they meet the needs of their students and they don't need more books. That means 1/3 of their classroom library consists of diverse books. If the classroom library scores a 2, they do not meet the needs of their students and will require more diverse books for their students to have access to. Which means less than 1/3 of their books are considered diverse. If the classroom library receives a 1, that means they have no diverse books in their classroom library and will need to acquire more for the classroom. That means there are very few or no diverse books in their classroom library.

In conclusion, the goal of this project is to assess classroom libraries to see if they have diverse books and appropriate library space to benefit their students. At some point I would like to complete this with the other three kindergarten classroom at my school then maybe have other

teachers in other grades participate. I think this project will be beneficial to my students and future students in our school because students will be able see themselves in books, as well as learn about other people and their lives.

## **Chapter 4: The project**

**Diversity:** The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic background and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.

**Physical environment checklist:**

<b>Physical Environment</b>	Solid	Needs work
Clearly designed library space in the room	X	
Space for 3-4 students	X	
Enough shelves or containers for my books	X	
Comfortable space with soft items		X
Display area for ‘teacher recommended’ books		X
Display area for ‘student recommended’ books		X
Easy access to books	X	
Significant number of books displayed with covers forward	X	
Journal, log, or method for tracking text selection/ providing feedback	X	
Chart or place for student comments, voting on or rating books, ect.		X
Additional literacy “tool” (bookmark, post-its, review clipboards, etc.)		X
<b>Content of the collection:</b>		
An adequate number of books (at least 10 books per student)	X	
Many high-quality books		X
A range of text formats	X	
A good mix of narrative, expository, and environment text	X	
A variety genre		X
Books of appropriate for students reading at, above, or below grade level	X	
Many texts with characters that are about the same age as my students	X	
Many texts that are relevant to my student’s culture backgrounds and communities		X
Many texts that can be used to support content area instruction	X	
Enough texts appropriate for read aloud, book talks, literature circle sets	X	
<b>Organization:</b>		
Clear system for organizing the books is in place	X	
Texts are labeled or grouped by format, genre, level or topic		X
All shelves or containers are labeled with the system		X
Labels are developmentally appropriate		X
Students know the systems of organization and are able to use it		X
Students can find books at their level	X	
<b>Management:</b>		
A plan for rotating books in and out of the library		X
An organized book check-out system		X
The check-out system		X

<b>Physical Environment</b>	Solid	Needs work
Clearly designed library space in the room	X	
Space for 3-4 students	X	
Enough shelves or containers for my books	X	
Comfortable space with soft items	X	
Display area for 'teacher recommended' books		X
Display area for 'student recommended' books		X
Easy access to books	X	
Significant number of books displayed with covers forward	X	
Journal, log, or method for tracking text selection/ providing feedback		X
Chart or place for student comments, voting on or rating books, ect.		X
Additional literacy "tool" (bookmark, post-its, review clipboards, etc.)		X
<b>Content of the collection:</b>		
An adequate number of books (at least 10 books per student)	X	
Many high-quality books	X	
A range of text formats	X	
A good mix of narrative, expository, and environment text	X	
A variety genre	X	
Books of appropriate for students reading at, above, or below grade level	X	
Many texts with characters that are about the same age as my students	X	
Many texts that are relevant to my student's culture backgrounds and communities		X
Many texts that can be used to support content area instruction	X	
Enough texts appropriate for read aloud, book talks, literature circle sets	X	
<b>Organization:</b>		
Clear system for organizing the books is in place	X	
Texts are labeled or grouped by format, genre, level or topic	X	
All shelves or containers are labeled with the system	X	
Labels are developmentally appropriate	X	
Students know the systems of organization and are able to use it	X	
Students can find books at their level	X	
<b>Management:</b>		
A plan for rotating books in and out of the library		X
An organized book check-out system		X
The check-out system		X
Students have most of the responsibilities to manage check out		X
The system allows me to monitor student selection		X
All aspects of the library allow children to be self-sufficient		X

<b>Physical Environment</b>	Solid	Needs work
Clearly designed library space in the room		X
Space for 3-4 students	X	
Enough shelves or containers for my books	X	
Comfortable space with soft items	X	
Display area for ‘teacher recommended’ books		X
Display area for ‘student recommended’ books		X
Easy access to books	X	
Significant number of books displayed with covers forward	X	
Journal, log, or method for tracking text selection/ providing feedback		X
Chart or place for student comments, voting on or rating books, ect.		X
Additional literacy “tool” (bookmark, post-its, review clipboards, etc.)		X
<b>Content of the collection:</b>		
An adequate number of books (at least 10 books per student)		X
Many high-quality books	X	
A range of text formats	X	
A good mix of narrative, expository, and environment text	X	
A variety genre	X	
Books of appropriate for students reading at, above, or below grade level	X	
Many texts with characters that are about the same age as my students	X	
Many texts that are relevant to my student’s culture backgrounds and communities		X
Many texts that can be used to support content area instruction	X	
Enough texts appropriate for read aloud, book talks, literature circle sets	X	
<b>Organization:</b>		
Clear system for organizing the books is in place	X	
Texts are labeled or grouped by format, genre, level or topic		X
All shelves or containers are labeled with the system		X
Labels are developmentally appropriate		X
Students know the systems of organization and are able to use it		X
Students can find books at their level		X
<b>Management:</b>		
A plan for rotating books in and out of the library		X
An organized book check-out system		X
The check-out system		X
Students have most of the responsibilities to manage check out		X
The system allows me to monitor student selection		X
All aspects of the library allow children to be self-sufficient		X
I am able to schedule regular times for read aloud and book talks		X
My students have independent reading time regularly		X
I am able to provide regular opportunities for students to share what they are reading independently		X

Adovnik is picture 1

Teacher 1 is picture 2

Teacher 2 is picture 3

Checking the physical space of the classroom library is important because if it is set up properly, the students will be able to interact with the books they enjoy and be able to use the space appropriately. “In classroom that contain well-designed library centers, children interact more with books, demonstrate more positive attitudes toward reading, choose reading as a leisure time activity, spend more time reading, and exhibit higher levels of reading achievement (Applebee, Langer, & Mullis, 1988).” (Fractor, pg. 480)

Based on the physical environment checklist, there are areas each teacher’s classroom library needs to work on. Refer to the table above to compare all the information. One area I noticed all three teachers were lacking was having an area to display teacher and student recommendations. My recommendation would be that teachers have their book choices displayed because students will be able to see what their teacher likes to read. I think students’ choices should be displayed as well because it is good for other students to see what their peers like. “Children (a) become acutely aware of available books, (b) get to know the book-choice process, (c) begin analyzing literature by leading an engaging in book discussions, (d) gain confidence about the book-choice process and the library organizational system, and gain respect for books, and (f) read more books and try new genres.” (Jones, pg. 580) When students have a say in what books and resources are in their classroom library there is more success and independence in the library. Teachers could find a basket or shelf where they can display their book recommendations and then another basket or shelf for student recommendations.



I notice there are other areas that each teacher could spend some time working on, but I think working on one thing at a time would help the teacher from getting stressed and trying to change too many things at one time.

**Classroom library book tally:**

Grade Kindergarten

Teacher Adovnik

Number of students 19

Total books: 190

Cultures: different cultures and that are seen in books	32
Differently abled: seeing people that have different abilities.	2
Other languages: books that show other languages such as Spanish, Chinese, etc.	3
Animals as characters: Books that show animals as main characters instead if people and other	97
Non-fiction: Books that are non-fiction	4
Leveled readers: Books that are different levels for the students to read.	52

Grade Kindergarten

Teacher Teacher 1

Number of students 17

Book total: 744

Cultures: different cultures and that are seen in books	<b>77</b>
Differently abled: seeing people that have different abilities.	<b>92</b>
Other languages: books that show other languages such as Spanish, Chinese, etc.	<b>38</b>
Animals as characters: Books that show animals as main characters instead if people and other	<b>272</b>
Non-fiction: Books that are non-fiction	<b>139</b>
Leveled readers: Books that are different levels for the students to read.	<b>126</b>

Grade Kindergarten

Teacher: Teacher 2\_

Number of students 17

Total books: 413

Cultures: different cultures and that are seen in books	<b>17</b>
Differently abled: seeing people that have different abilities.	<b>23</b>
Other languages: books that show other languages such as Spanish, Chinese, etc.	<b>8</b>
Animals as characters: Books that show animals as main characters instead if people and other	<b>102</b>
Non-fiction: Books that are non-fiction	<b>101</b>
Leveled readers: Books that are different levels for the students to read.	<b>162</b>

Each classroom library has an extensive number of books for each student to read and interact with. The most popular category in each classroom is animals as main characters then leveled readers. An area each classroom needs to work on, is adding more diverse books to each library and books with other languages. “Access to culturally diverse children’s literature in classroom instruction and libraries is critical for literacy achievement and motivation...” (Henderson, 748)

**Classroom library rubric:**

Adovnik-

Score/ expectations	1	2	3	4
Diverse library	Classroom library does not meet the needs of the students and has little to no diverse books.	Classroom library has a minimal number of diverse books available to students.	Classroom library is effective and has an adequate number of diverse books for the students.	Classroom library exceeds the expectations and has a large number of diverse books for the students.

Teacher 1-

Score/ expectations	1	2	3	4
Diverse library	Classroom library does not meet the needs of the students and has little to no diverse books.	Classroom library has a minimal number of diverse books available to students.	Classroom library is effective and has an adequate number of diverse books for the students.	Classroom library exceeds the expectations and has a large number of diverse books for the students.

Teacher 2-

Score/ expectations	1	2	3	4
Diverse library	Classroom library does not meet the needs of the students and has little to no diverse books.	Classroom library has a minimal number of diverse books available to students.	Classroom library is effective and has an adequate number of diverse books for the students.	Classroom library exceeds the expectations and has a large number of diverse books for the students.

The information gathered from each classroom library has given me a lot of information I needed to help determine the strengths and needs of the classrooms involved. Then could potentially give me a guess about what other classrooms look like since my goal is to get this completed in other classrooms and grade levels. Two of the three classrooms did not meet the needs according to the rubric I created. Their classroom libraries had some successful elements with their physical environment, but they need more diverse books for the students. This is a list of recommended diverse books for a primary classroom. These are just personal recommendations, they are in no way the only diverse books out there for classrooms.

### Annotated bibliography

Bell, C. (2014). *El Deafo*. Amulet Books.

This book is about a little girl (bunny) that's gets sick when she is young and loses her hearing. *El Deafo* fits as a diverse book because it directly shows an inclusive classroom and what it looks like from a student's point of view.

Boelts, M., & Jones, N. Z. (2009). *Those shoes*. Candlewick Press.

*Those Shoes* is a book about a little boy that goes to school every day and sees how everyone in his school has the same cool pair of shoes and he wants to have them too, but his family doesn't have the money for them. This book fits as a diverse book because it shows that not all families are able to have the same things and that each household is different.

Díaz Junot, & Espinosa, L. (2019). *Islandborn*. Findaway World, LLC.

*Islandborn* is a beautifully vibrant book about a little girl who learns about the island that her family comes from. This book fits as a diverse book because it shows a culture that other students may not know about and describes a family and how they grew up in their culture.

Loomis, I., & Pak, K. (2020). *Ohana means family*. Holiday House.

*Ohana Means Family* is a book about the Hawaiian culture with vocabulary, food, and other aspects. This book fits as a diverse book because it shows a culture that other students may not know about.

Maillard, N., & Martinez-Neal, J. (2019). *Fry Bread: A native american family story*. Roaring Brook Press.

*Fry Bread* is a book that describes what you need and how to make fry bread. It also talks about the Native American culture. This book fits as a diverse book because it shows a culture that other students may not know about.

Martinez-Neal, A. (2018). *Alma and how she got her name*. Candlewick Press.

This book is about a little girl who thinks her name is too long, she talks to her dad and find out where each part of her name comes from. This book fits as a diverse book because each culture has different way of naming their children and this book does a good job of showing part of the Hispanic cultures way of going about it.

Parr, T. (2001). *It's okay to be different*. Spotlight, a division of ABDO.

*It's Okay to be Different* is a book that shows all the kinds of differences that people could have, but it reassures them that it is all okay to be different. This book fits as a diverse book because it talks about inclusion and to show kindness to everyone

Reeves, A., & Kirk, P. (2018). *Roxy the raccoon a story to help children learn about disability and inclusion*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

*Roxy the Raccoon* is book about a raccoon that is in a wheelchair and wants to play with her friends, but everything her friends are playing, she isn't able to do. Her friends come back and change what they are doing or how they are playing to make sure Roxy can play. This book fits as a diverse book because it shows how friends can change their game to make sure everyone can be included even if they are differently abled.

Tonatiuh, D. (2014). *Separate is never equal: Sylvia Mendez and her family's fight for desegregation*. Harry N Abrams.

*Separate is never Equal* is a kid friendly book that shows the desegregation of public schools in California. This book fits as a diverse book because it shows how Hispanic students were able to join the same classrooms as their peers.



Woodson, J., & López Rafael. (2018). *The Day you begin*. Penguin Young Readers Group.

*The Day You Begin* is a book about a school that everyone seemed different. Through the book you see that there are similarities and differences in everyone. This book fits as a diverse book because it shows the difference and similarities between students. It also shows a diverse classroom.

Woodson, J., & Ransome, J. (2015). *Visiting day*. Puffin Books.

*Visiting Day* is a book about a little girl that goes to prison on visiting day to visit her father. This book fits as a diverse book because it shows that all students home lives are different, it gives the students a window into other families.

## **Chapter 5 Reflection**

Throughout this project I have learned so much valuable information about creating a successful classroom library with diverse books. While researching classroom libraries, I learned about all the different aspects that go into creating a successful classroom library that will benefit students the most. I also conducted research into why it is important to have diverse books in your classroom library and how to choose books for your own classroom. In my own classroom library, I did not focus on how my classroom library was set up and the books that were put in there other than they needed to be children books. Taking the time to look into research on the physical space of a classroom library and classroom library contents benefit me and how I will be able to set up my classroom library in the future. When I first began teaching, my thought was to create a cute and welcoming classroom library and to just make sure there are children's books for student access. Now that I have completed readings and conducted research, I understand the importance of setting up a classroom library space with books that are diverse and with a good library space.

This project allowed me time to make my classroom library planning a priority by looking into research that is supported and to help foster a love of reading so my students choose to read and are not forced to read. In my research I learned how to set up a classroom library by making sure the physical space is meeting the needs of the students, making sure the content is appropriate for the students in the classroom to show a diverse set of books for students, and that organization is suitable for students to be able to access. I have a better idea about how to set up my classroom library for my students and to make sure they feel included in what they

are seeing in the library since they are the ones that are going to be using that space as a place to read and a place to learn.

This project influenced my professional development in multiple ways. Like I stated previously, setting up my classroom library was never something I put a lot of thought into, but now that I know more about setting up a classroom library I can be more purposeful. “However, just having books available is not enough. A classroom library must be well designed to entice children to read when given the opportunity of selecting from a variety of classroom activities...” (Fractor et al. Pg. 477) I learned that there needs to be more than books and a nice-looking library, the library should also include the following physical features as well from the Fractor et al. article on page 478.

- Focal areas- nice for the students to see. Somewhere that looks fun.
- Partitioned and private- A small area in the classroom that is kind of blocked by shelves. Kind of similar to a reading corner.
- Comfortable seating- Such as nice chairs or pillows
- Five to six books per child- There should be enough books for students to look at without having to trade with people and keep their attention.
- Books that provide a variety of genres and reading levels- This means that students should have different types of books like books that show culture, diversity, leveled readers, and picture books.
- Two types of shelving- open shelves with books that face the students and that display the spine of the books.

- Literature-oriented displays and prop- students and teacher chosen books for the shelf.

Then comfy stuffed animals or interactive boards.

Overall, this project I would say I was able to complete the project like I planned with just a small change. I was able to evaluate my classroom library, as well as two other classrooms and check the books that were in their classroom libraries. My original plan was to go into each room and tally the different types of books that were in each library. Once I started conducting the research into diverse classroom libraries, I realized that there were so much more that went into creating a successful classroom library. That is when I went back into each classroom library and conducted the physical environment checklist. I knew evaluating my classroom library space was going to be a helpful piece, so I added it to the project because if the students do not have a good space to read, the books that are in the library will not matter.

Something I would do differently for this project is, I would do the physical environment checklist in each classroom first. It is important for teachers to know the set-up of their classroom library and what will make their students more successful. I would also have my team be more involved in the process. We could each go through our own classroom library then meet and discuss what we noticed and what we think the next steps would be for our classrooms. Because of the pandemic students have not had access to classroom libraries, so having this as a tool so set up classroom libraries will be helpful in the reset up of their classroom libraries.

Next year, I would like to implement this with my kindergarten team. I want to start with my team because we are a close group of teachers and I know they will give honest feedback in the process and give valuable suggestions for later implementation. Once my team and I have

completed the project I would like to give school wide professional development to share my project and research with the school then have them complete both check lists and their tallies. Once we give each room a set amount of time to complete the checklist and tallies, they will bring their data back and share their findings.

In conclusion this project helped me grow as a professional and an educator by growing my knowledge of classroom libraries to make successful libraries with a good collection of books. After the research and readings, I have conducted, I have much more confidence in setting up the physical space, books on display, and diverse books in the classroom. We are always looking for ways to interact with students, creating a successful classroom library with a diverse set of books is an important way to do that. I cannot wait to set up my classroom library that allows my students to succeed and want to read as well as see diverse views in the library.

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