

WINDOWS, MIRRORS AND DOORS: CULTURALLY RELEVANT RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM

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ABOUT

UNM LATIN AMERICAN & IBERIAN INSTITUTE (LAI)

At the LAI, we promote greater awareness and understanding of Latin America. This includes working with K-12 educators to support their work in the classroom and build their capacity to teach about the region. We provide a range of professional development opportunities and supporting resources. Our approach emphasizes not just global content, but culturally relevant teaching. Literature and literacy are recurrent themes in our effort to promote students' cultural competency regarding Latin America and Latinx in the United States. All of our programs are available at no cost.



Standards-Aligned
Curriculum



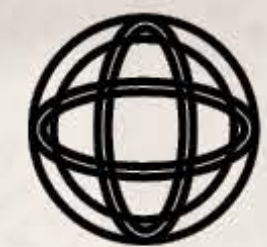
Lending Library of
Books and Artifacts



Author Visits
In-Person and Online

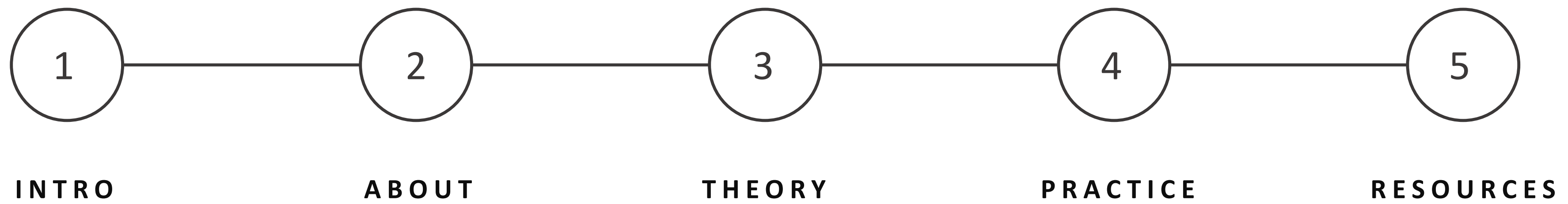


Workshops and
Book Group



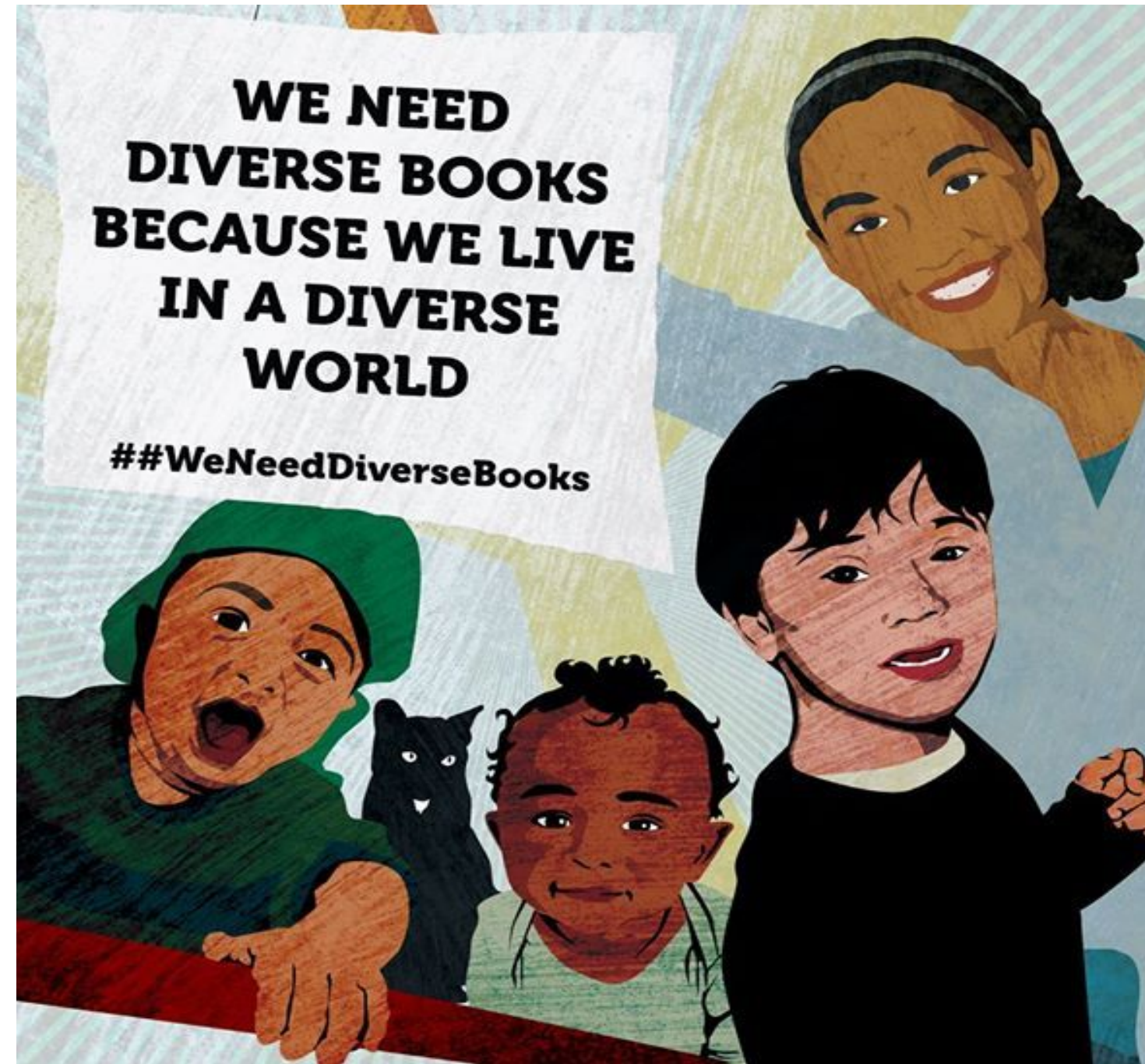
Blog w/
Reviews & Biblios

INTRODUCTION



ABOUT

WHY WE NEED DIVERSE BOOKS: SOCIAL MEDIA TO SOCIAL MOVEMENT



THEORY

BOOKS AS WINDOWS

They offer views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange.



THEORY

BOOKS AS MIRRORS

In that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience.



THEORY

BOOKS AS DOORS

Readers have only to walk through them to become part of the world the author has created.



THEORY

Reading then becomes...a means of self affirmation and of seeing the world.



THEORY

THE RISKS OF SEGREGATING LITERATURE



Kwame Alexander

“When we segregate literature, we focus only on mirrors. Certainly, seeing yourself in books is necessary and crucial to the **development of identity**. . .but not allowing those same books to serve as windows into the lives of others will most certainly **limit imagination and possibility**.

The mind of an adult begins in the imagination of a child.

If we don't give children books that are literary mirrors as well as windows to the whole **world of possibility**, if these books don't give them the opportunity to see outside themselves, then how can we expect them to grow into **adults who connect in meaningful ways to a global community**, to people who might look or live differently than they. You cannot.

Am I saying that poetry and literature are the answer to Baton Rouge and Dallas and Orlando and Charleston? No. **But their capacity to entertain, enlighten and empower — all at the same time — is an answer**, and without them, we most certainly obstruct our children's vision. And, as Christopher Myers wrote in these pages, we fail to provide a more expansive landscape upon which children can dream. **You can't know what you don't know**, my father always says.”

THEORY

BUILDING EMPATHY

Empathy can be defined as “the ability to perceive a situation from the other person’s perspective. To see, hear, and feel the unique world of the other.”

(Ivey, Pederson, & Ivey, 2001)

Empathy research shows that **successful leaders** demonstrate empathy; empathy is correlated to academic and professional success; empathy reduces aggression and prejudice and increases altruism.

Children are the most receptive to learning perspective taking skills.

THEORY

SHAME OF INVISIBILITY

“Invisibility is about **disconnection and powerlessness**. When we don’t see ourselves reflected back in our culture, we feel reduced to **something so small and insignificant that we’re easily erased** from the world of important things. Both the process of being reduced and the final product of that **process—invisibility—can be incredibly shaming.**” (Brown, 2008)

THEORY



TYPES OF DIVERSITY IN LITERATURE

LANGUAGE

HISTORY

GENDER

ORIENTATION

PHYSICAL

ETHNIC

RACE

BELIEF SYSTEMS

VALUES

EXPERIENCES

ECONOMIC

RELIGION

AGE

CULTURE

THEORY

CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY



Gloria Ladson-Billings

In *Dreamkeepers*, an ethnographic account of teaching, Ladson-Billings offers the following insights into how **culturally relevant pedagogy**:

“...**empowers students** intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.”

“...**incorporates student knowledge and experience** into the official content of the classroom and prepares students to effect change.”

“...**produces students** who can **achieve academically**, demonstrate **cultural competence** and can understand and **critique the existing social order**.”

THEORY

DIVERSITY IN PUBLISHING



THEORY

DIVERSITY IN PUBLISHING

37% of the US population are of color

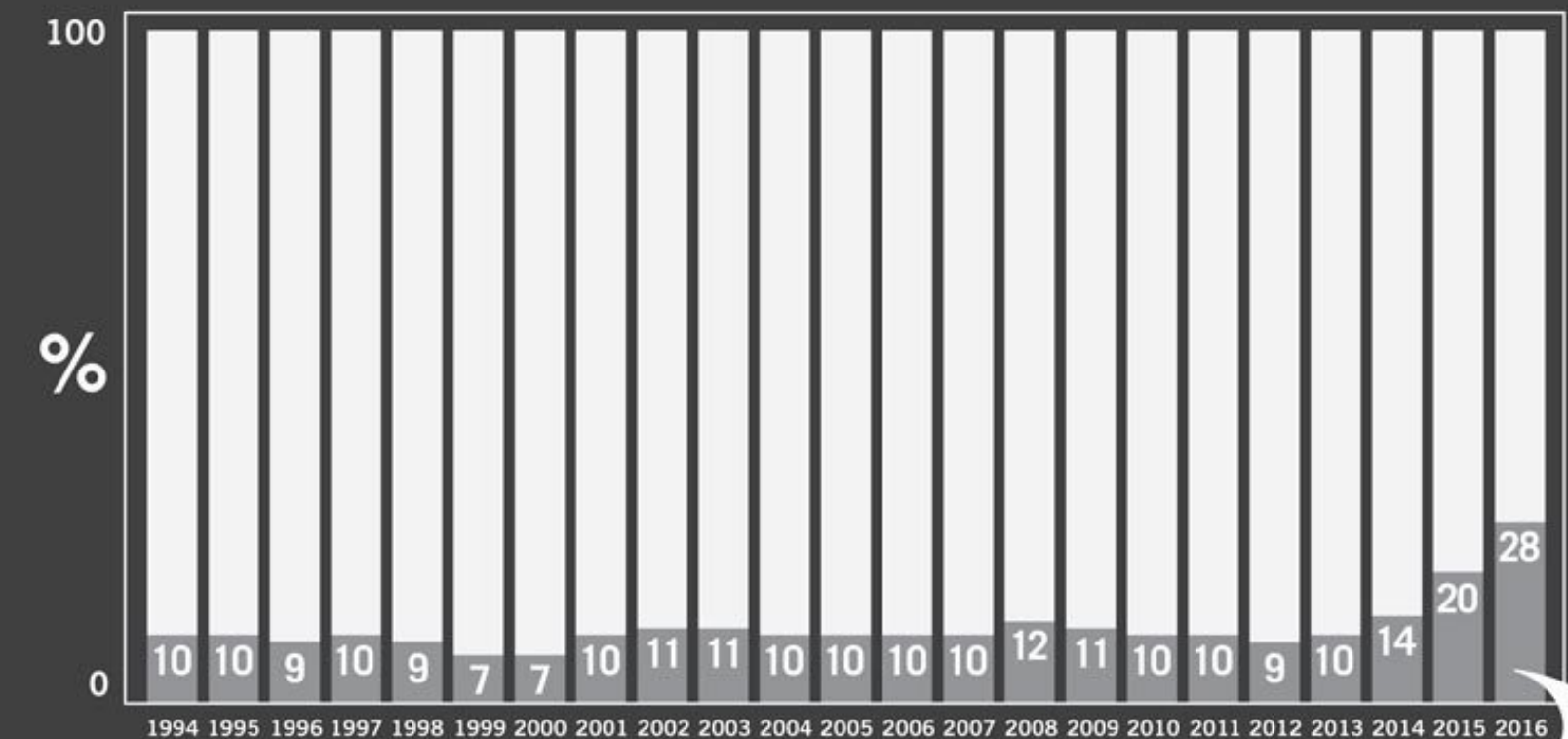
11% of children's books in the past 23 years contain multicultural content

<6% Less than 6% of the new children's books published in 2016 were written by Black Latino, and Native authors combined

THE DIVERSITY GAP IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

23 YEARS ★ 1994 – 2016

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS BY AND/OR ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR



37% OF THE US POPULATION ARE PEOPLE OF COLOR **11%** OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN THE PAST 23 YEARS CONTAIN MULTICULTURAL CONTENT

DID YOU KNOW?

BLACK, LATINO, AND NATIVE AUTHORS COMBINED WROTE LESS THAN 6% OF THE NEW CHILDREN'S BOOKS PUBLISHED IN 2016.

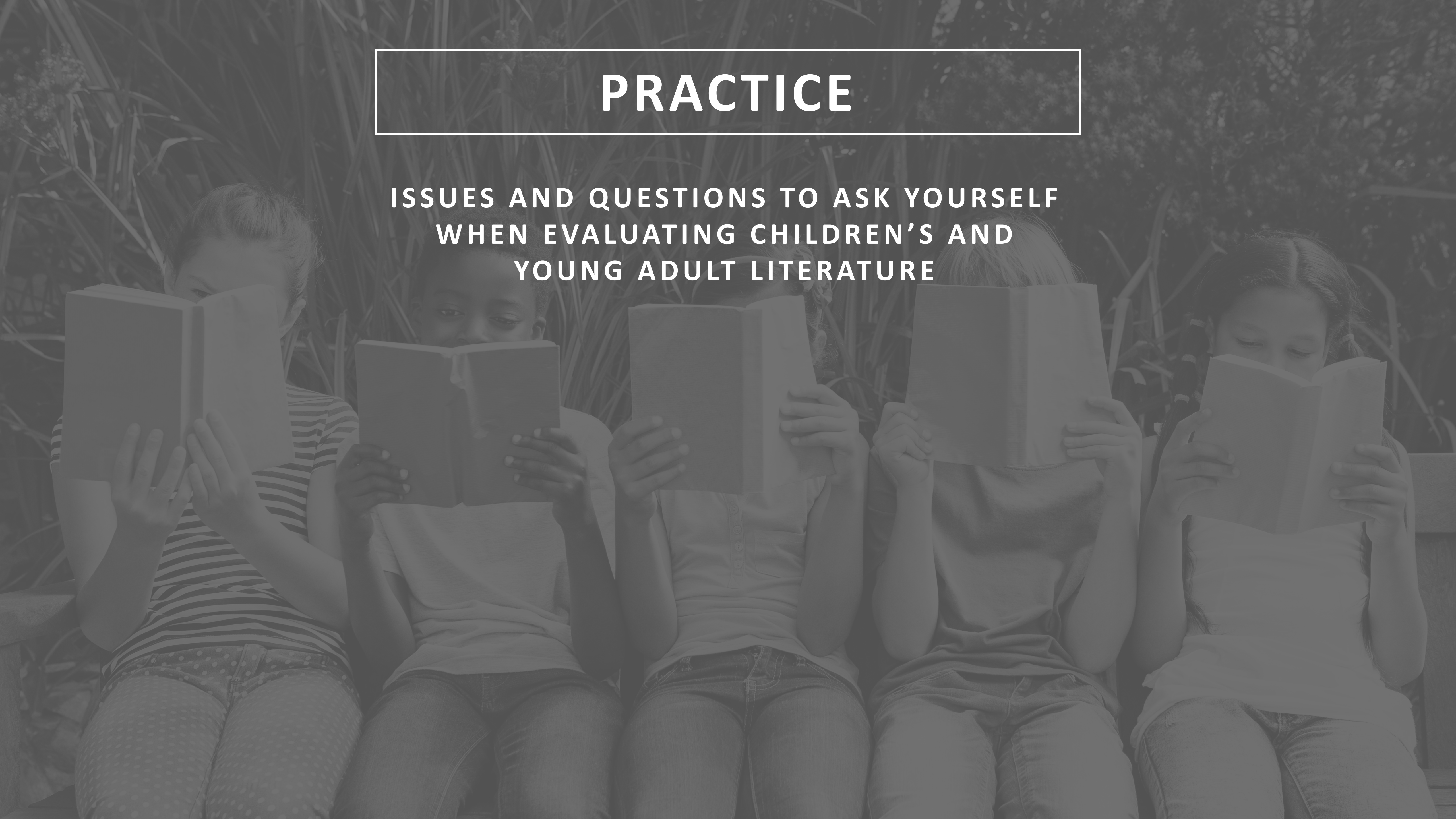
6%
215 of 3400



ABOUT EVERYONE • FOR EVERYONE for more conversations on diversity, visit blog.leeandlow.com

PRACTICE

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF
WHEN EVALUATING CHILDREN'S AND
YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE



PRACTICE

CRITERIA TO CONSIDER WHEN EVALUATING CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

1

AGENCY

2

REPRESENTATION

3

CULTURE

4

LANGUAGE

5

PURPOSE

PRACTICE

AGENCY

What causes conflict and how is it resolved?
Which characters change? Which ones do not? Why?

Who makes the decisions? Who follows orders? Who speaks and who is silent or silenced?

Whose interests are served? That is, who is privileged by the story?
Does the problem get resolved by assimilating to social norms? Whose broad social interests are served? (i.e. social groups)

PRACTICE

REPRESENTATION

What roles are given to women, people of color, the working class and poor, and the differently abled? Is this problematic?

What roles are given to characters representing dominant groups? Are they shown as being made aware of their privilege and exclusionary practices? Is this problematic?

PRACTICE

CULTURE

What areas of the world are illustrated?

Are the regions homogenized (i.e., does the book discuss Latin America or Colombia? Africa or Sierra Leone?)

Does the text resist romanticizing or stereotyping the cultures?

Does the story present “fakelore,” or, in other words, an “original” story set in the culture of a generalized region?

Or does the story actually have deep roots in the history and traditions of a given people?

PRACTICE

LANGUAGE

Does the book mock language and culture? In other words, does the language help create a certain image or representation of a people?

Or does the book promote respect for the language and the culture?

Is the dialogue forced and clunky with literal, non-idiomatic translations that would be confusing to a native speaker?

Or does the language flow naturally, in both the original and translation?

Does the book suggest that fluency in English is more valuable or important than fluency in the native language?

Or is fluency in English presented more realistically as a tool?

PRACTICE

PURPOSE

What could this book help students understand?

What are the limitations of this book? What could the teacher do to move beyond the limitations of the text?

PRACTICE



RESOURCES

REGIONAL AND CULTURAL BOOK AWARDS

AFRICAN:

Children's Africana Book Awards (CABA)

www.africaaccessreview.org/aar/awards.html

AFRICAN-AMERICAN:

Coretta Scott King Award

www.ala.org/emiert/cskbookawards

AMERICAN INDIAN:

American Indian Youth Literature

ailanet.org/activities/american-indian-youth-literature-award

ASIAN/PACIFIC:

Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature

<http://www.apalaweb.org/awards/literature-awards/>

South Asia Book Award

<http://southasiabookaward.wisc.edu>

CARIBBEAN:

Burt Award for Caribbean Literature

<http://burtaward.org>

LATIN AMERICAN and LATINO/A:

Américas Award

claspprograms.org/americasaward

Pura Belpré

www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal/belpreab_out

Tomás Rivera Mexican-American Children's Book Award

www.education.txstate.edu/c-p/Tomas-Rivera-Book-Award-Project-Link.html

MIDDLE EASTERN:

Middle East Book Award

<http://www.meoc.us/meoc/book-awards>

RESOURCES

WEBSITES AND ORGANIZATIONS

(* denotes lesson plans)

De Colores: The Raza Experience in Books for Children: <http://decoloresreviews.blogspot.com/>

American Indians in Children's Literature: <http://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/>

Open Book*: <http://blog.leeandlow.com/>

Rethinking Schools*: <http://www.rethinkingschools.org/index.shtml> or <http://rethinkingschoolsblog.wordpress.com/>

Teaching Tolerance*: <http://www.tolerance.org/>

Latin American and Iberian Institute's K-12 Outreach*: <http://www.laii.unm.edu/outreach/index.php>

LAll Vamos a Leer*: <http://teachinglatinamericathroughliterature.wordpress.com/>

We Need Diverse Books: <http://weneeddiversebooks.org/>

Teaching for Change*: <http://teachingforchange>

RESOURCES

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