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Gender stereotypes in children's literature

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Gender stereotypes in children's literature

Abstract

This research paper focused on the creation of nine professional development sessions using critical literacy practices in order to analyze and examine gender stereotypes in children's literature addressed in the classroom. This professional development grew out of an in-depth examination of the research over the past 40 years addressing gender stereotypes and gender representation in children's literature, as well as, the literature on critical literacy practices and issues of social justice. The professional development sessions were designed around three major goals: to enable teachers to independently analyze children's literature for gender stereotypes; to help teachers understand the four components of critical literacy; and have teachers enact critical literacy practices in the classroom in order to create a gender-fair literacy curriculum.

GENDER STEREOTYPES IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

GENDER STEREOTYPES IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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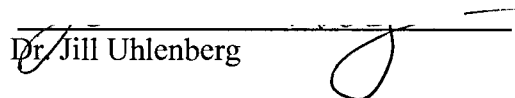
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Keywords: gender stereotypes, children's literature, critical literacy, gender-fair literacy instruction, professional development

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Gender Stereotypes in Children's Literature

Nothing in education is neutral, including the texts we use with students (Kuby, 2013; Lewison, Flint, & Sluys, 2002; Vasquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013). Children's books rarely show marginalized groups but rather continue to promote the values of the *mainstream* culture (Taylor, 2003). While students are learning to read, they are also learning about the social world around them. Therefore, they need to be able to read a variety of texts with a critical eye. This comes from experience using critical literacy practices (Kuby, 2013; Vasquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013). If education is preparing students to be global citizens, they should be able to consider the world beyond their limited experiences (Moller, 2012). Creating global citizens means moving beyond college and career readiness and working with students to challenge existing injustices in order to create a more democratic society. One way to do this is to include literature with a variety of characters that are not tied into stereotypes of race, gender, or socioeconomic status (Chick, 2002). While text selection is important, the real transformation happens when educators step out of their comfort zones and open spaces for children to identify and discuss systemic injustice (Moller, 2012).

Personal Connection

My interest in helping teachers open spaces for critical literacy comes from my own experience working with students. Last fall, I began this journey of using texts with characters that do not conform to gender stereotypes. The texts selected for the examination of gender nonconformity included *Oliver Button is a Sissy* (dePaola, 1979) and *The Princess Knight* (Funke, 2004). These texts were presented to a small group of

third grade students in my reading intervention group as interactive read alouds. I wanted to provide these students with examples of both boys and girls who challenge existing gender stereotypes.

DePaola's (1979) work follows a young boy, Oliver, who enjoys drawing, dress up, dolls, and dancing. Oliver doesn't enjoy sports because he is not good at them. The boys at school constantly tease Oliver for being bad at sports. He pursues his interest in dance, which his father reluctantly agrees to, only because he wants Oliver to get exercise. Oliver's new love of dance is more ammunition for the boys at school. They even write, "Oliver Button is a sissy!" on the wall. Through all the teasing, Oliver continues to practice dancing until one day his teacher asks him to be in the talent show. He thinks this will be his opportunity to show everyone his talent as a dancer. He hopes showcasing his talent and winning the talent show will make the teasing stop. Oliver performs a wonderful tap dancing routine but the routine was not good enough to win the talent show. Oliver doesn't want to go back to school for fear the teasing will be even worse. What a pleasant surprise when Oliver returns to school to see that the previously vandalized wall now reads, "Oliver Button is a Star!" (dePaola, 1979, p. 42).

After observing the boys in my reading group tease each other about gender role non-conformity, I decided I wanted to bring literature to the classroom that honored the individual instead of placing students into strict gender roles. *Oliver Button is a Sissy* (dePaola, 1979) did a nice job of showing a boy who had interests in areas that are generally considered to be *girly* such as drawing, dancing, and dress-up. This text also

raises awareness to the teasing and tormenting experienced by children who find themselves challenging traditional gender roles (Gender Spectrum, 2015).

In order to move beyond the gender binary, I paired *Oliver Button is a Sissy* (dePaola, 1979) with an example of a girl who also challenged the gender roles and character traits traditionally associated with females. *The Princess Knight* (Funke, 2004) is about a young princess, Violetta, who is raised by her father after her mother dies during childbirth. The King decides to raise Violetta the same way he raised his three boys. Violetta's small stature makes it difficult for her to keep up with her brothers. Her nursemaid suggests Violetta pursue useful activities such as embroidery or weaving. This unacceptable to Violetta, so she sneaks out each night to practice her sword skills in order to be as good, if not better, than her brothers. As Violetta's 16th birthday approaches, her father plans to hold a jousting tournament for men to compete for Violetta's hand in marriage. Violetta is outraged by her father's idea. Her brothers offer to solve the problem and win, because she obviously can't marry them. Violetta refuses their help and therefore devises a plan on her own. On the day of the jousting tournament, Violetta dresses up as a knight and wins the whole competition. The victory proves that Violetta will not be the "prize", but rather she has the power to choose her own partner instead of being objectified.

The story ends with an afterthought which reads, "And who *did* she marry? Well, if you must know, many years later, she married the rose gardener's son and lived happily ever after" (p. 28). While Violetta does get married to the rose gardener's son

this is strategically placed at the end and not a main event of the story. Once again, proving that marriage does not have to be the resolution of every fairy tale.

The Princess Knight (Funke, 2004) challenges many of the elements of traditional fairy tales. The heroine of this story does not need to be saved by men. She possesses many character traits that are traditionally associated with male characters such as independence, perseverance, and willingness to take risks (Diekman & Murnen, 2004). Violetta is active and shows physical strength at the end of this book. This contrasts greatly to traditional fairy tales when the woman is "saved" by the man. In traditional fairy tales, women are obedience, beautiful, gentle, and marriage is the main goal of their lives. I chose the book to pair with *Oliver Button is a Sissy* (dePaola, 1979) because I wanted to show both males and females who challenge existing gender stereotypes.

Before reading these books with students, I read the texts critically numerous times. I developed think alouds that modeled my reactions to events in the stories. I also planned strategic stopping points and questions that I felt could spark transformative group discussion. The lessons I created were carefully planned and therefore, I felt prepared as I led my students in critical conversation about gender issues in text and in society.

However, there have been many times where I was caught off guard as issues of race, gender, or class appeared in text. This is not uncommon for educators (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002; Vasquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013). The feeling of being caught off guard sparked my interest in researching more about critical literacy practices, specifically those dealing with issues of gender-equity. My research has a two-part focus.

First, I examine gender representation in children's literature. Then, I outline the components of critical literacy and discuss ways teachers can use critical literacy practices with students in order to challenge existing stereotypes and bias present in literature.

Methodology

The article, *Learning to be Little Women and Little Men: The Inequitable Gender Equality of Nonsexist Children's Literature* (Diekman & Murnen, 2004) was the first article to shape this research project. Diekman and Murnen's article provides information about the current trends in children's literature regarding gender representation and gender stereotypes. However, something was missing. In order to gain a true understanding of gender representation in children's literature over time, past research-based articles needed to be examined. Gaining information of past trends was critical in putting together a historical framework for understanding the essential question "How are males and females represented in children's literature?"

The following search terms were used to locate articles *children's literature + gender*" "gender equity + literacy education" "gender representation + children's literature." After locating Ya-Lun Tsao's (2008) *Gender Issues in Young Children's Literature*, the reference list was used to locate additional readings. This technique, called snowballing led to work of Frank Taylor (2003) and Kolbe and La Voie (1981). Paterson, Bender, and Lach (1990) were also found from using the search terms listed above. Again, after this article was read, the reference list was used to select more articles, leading to the work of Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, and Ross (1972).

Once articles were selected, I discarded those that did not meet my search criteria. The search terms led to some articles that focused on *gender nonconformity*. It was important to sort out the differences between the terms gender stereotypes and gender nonconformity. Gender nonconformity generally relates to transgender populations, which were not the focus of this study.

In addition to the key terms used in the literature search, the following faculty members at the University of Northern Iowa also contributed to the selection of articles. Youth Service Librarian at the University of Northern Iowa, Katelyn Browne, served as a resource, leading me to an article written by Joy Worland (2008). Another faculty member, Catherine Hunter, suggested looking into Karla Moller's work (2008) with social justice and literature discussion groups.

After reading Moller's work, it became clear that *critical literacy* needed to be examined as part of this research project. The goal of this professional development project is to provide educators with the tools to have thoughtful and transformative conversations with students around the issues of gender stereotypes, gender equity, and social justice. Therefore, experts in the area of critical literacy (Hade, 1997; Kuby, 2012; Moller 2012; Sano, 2009) were used in this literature review to gain insight as to why examining gender stereotypes is important and how teachers can address these issues through discussion.

Literature Review

This literature review focuses on critical literacy and the impact of gender stereotypes on both males and females, the trends in children's literature over time, and ways to foster a gender-fair literacy curriculum.

Critical Literacy

Critical literacy is a field of scholarly work that draws upon many perspectives and practical applications. Kuby (2013) states, "Critical literacy is a living, inquiry process, where people ask questions about life, texts, language, and interactions with others and act on new, just ways of being together" (p. 14). It is through critical literacy that readers are able to see beyond their narrow scope of lived experiences and begin to notice and act on social injustices in text and in the world around them.

Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) outline four dimensions of critical literacy. They suggest critical literacy is comprised of disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple viewpoints, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action to promote social justice. Disrupting the commonplace involves readers beginning to question what they believe to be true. Readers must first become aware that each person has different lived experiences. Once readers are aware of this, then they can begin to consider other viewpoints critically. This is called interrogating multiple perspectives. These conversations around interrogating multiple perspectives should be framed by providing students an understanding of the sociopolitical issues that impact one's power relationship in society. The last dimension of critical literacy, as defined by Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002), is taking action and promoting social justice. Lewison et al.

(2002) state, "This dimension is often perceived as *the* definition of critical literacy- yet one cannot take informed action against oppression or promote social justice without expanded understandings and perspective gained from the other three dimensions" (pp. 383-384).

Vasquez, Tate, and Harste (2013) also recognize the dimensions of disrupting the common place, interrogating multiple perspectives, and examining sociopolitical issues. However, they center their understanding of critical literacy as developing *justice-oriented citizens* (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004 as cited in Vazquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013). Justice-oriented citizens are individuals who are able to use literacy as a way to examine their own lives. They understand positions of power and privilege and work to elicit change in their communities. This is not an isolated event, but rather an ongoing process for justice-oriented citizens. Teachers can help develop justice-oriented citizens through the use of critical literacy practices (Moller, 2012; Vazquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013).

There are varying definitions of what counts as critical literacy. However, at the heart of each definition is the idea that readers must critically examine the texts they read. Through critical literacy, children examine viewpoints from the perspective of others, to determine which voices are represented and which voices are silent (Leland, Harste, & Clouse, 2013). Students use this knowledge to develop understanding of power relationships and work to take a stand in promoting social justice beyond the classroom (Behrman, 2006; Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002; Moller, 2012). Critical literacy allows students to examine issues of race, class, and gender in order to promote a more just society (Lewison, Flint, Van Sluys, 2002; Moller, 2012).

Impact of Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes in literature contribute to self-identity and self-image development in young children (Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, & Young, 2006; Paterson & Lach, 1990; Taylor, 2003; Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, & Ross, 1972; Ya-Lun, 2008). Gender stereotypes are societally constructed and ingrained into children at a young age (Chick, 2002; Worland, 2008). Not only do children accept these stereotypes without question, they are also more likely to internalize gender stereotypes because of the emphasis on illustrations and repeated readings (Chick, 2002; Weitzman et al., 1972). Ultimately, this literature can impact the behavior of young children (Kolbe & La Voie, 1981).

Historically, gender has divided males and females in many ways including, but not limited to occupation, personality, and leisure activities (Diekman & Murnen, 2004; Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, & Young, 2006; McKoy Lowery, 2002). The former strict gender roles of females are transforming as females are beginning to adopt what have been traditionally considered male traits and roles (Diekman & Murnen, 2004). However, existing children's literature is lagging behind in terms of the female success and empowerment that is being seen in society (Ya-Lun, 2008).

Current Trends with Gender Representation and Stereotypes

It is important to analyze the gender representation trends in children's literature, both past and present. Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, and Ross (1972) provide an analysis of characters and illustrations that are still relevant today (NCTE, 2015). The Weitzman et al. study (1972) provides a starting point in examining gender representation and gender

stereotypes in children's literature and will be important in understanding the developments that have taken place over time in the field.

Weitzman et al. (1972) focus on early picture books and what they call *sex-role socialization*. Weitzman et al. state, "By the time the child enters kindergarten he or she is able to make sex-role distinctions and express sex-role preferences" (p. 1125). The authors suggest that it is important to analyze even the earliest picture books for gender representation, as young children are especially vulnerable to internalize the effects of gender stereotypes.

The sample of children's picture books in the study by Weitzman et al. (1972) include a collection of Caldecott winners, Little Golden books, Newberry Award winners, and etiquette books. In order to analyze the overall representation of female characters, the authors examined the illustrations to see if females were even present. They found for every 11 illustrations of male human characters, only one female human character was presented. The discrepancy in representation was also present in the titles. For every eight titles with males, only three titles featured females.

There were a limited number of females represented in this sample. Most of the females were minor characters, with limited speech. When the female characters were analyzed, Weitzman et al. (1972) found three major themes. First, they noted females are portrayed as passive characters who are often shown indoors. Additionally, females in the text take domestic roles in the home, providing for the males in the family. Finally, illustrations of females show them wearing attire that is not suited for adventure or physical activity.

Most notably, Weitzman et al. (1972) point out the relations that females have with other characters in the text. While in the real world, it is common for females to have groups of females with whom they interact, in the selected literature it appeared that women could only exist for a man. This portrayal was true for young girls represented in the text as well as the grown women. Mothers were portrayed doing many acts of service for men and children. However, the work that mothers were doing appeared light and non-challenging. The story line often limited a mother's role to simple housework and did not show many of the chores that are involved. The authors and illustrators of this time failed to represent a *real mother*. Weitzman et al. (1972) define a real mother:

Real mothers drive cars, read books, vote, take children on trips, balance checkbooks, engage in volunteer activities, ring doorbells canvassing, raise money for charity, work in the garden, fix things in the house, are active in local politics, belong to the League of Women Voters and the PTA, etc (p. 1141).

By representing mothers as prisoners of the home, children are not able to see the other dimensions of motherhood. This representation perpetuates strict and stereotypical gender roles to a young population that is especially susceptible for internalizing the words and illustrations as they make meaning about the world around them.

Kolbe and La Voie (1981) conducted a comparison study to the work of Weitzman et al. (1972). Kolbe and La Voie (1981) used 19 Caldecott Medal winners to gather data regarding representation of male and female characters. In addition, they analyzed the characters on the following dimensions: expressive vs. instrumental characters, significant vs. insignificant characters, stereotyped vs. non-stereotyped

characters. Kolbe and La Voie found that while there was an increase in the frequency of female characters present, the characters themselves were still conforming to traditional gender roles and character traits for their gender. However, this is not always the case, especially when specific award winning literature is examined.

In 1990, Paterson and Lach studied a random sample of Horn award winning selections of children's literature. Overall, they chose a small sample of award winning literature. The sample may be bias due to the selection process for the award winners. While the findings did not reach statistical significance, they found nearly equal numbers of males and females in main character roles. This is in contrast from the literature of the 1970s. They also found main female characters were accepting roles outside of the home setting as well as adopting character traits that were traditionally reserved for males, such as being adventurous. Yet, when a wider selection of text is included in the sample, it appears that these advances for females are even less significant.

Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young (2008) conducted a study to analyze gender bias on top-selling children's literature. Texts selected for their study included both Caldecott award-winning texts, as well as children's books on New York Times and Amazon's top-selling lists that had not won awards. The rationale for this methodology was to select books that were being purchased and likely read by children. However, they did not choose only award winning literature. They also consulted library lists for notable children's books. Hamilton et al. (2008) analyzed gender representation in four areas: pictures, character's behaviors, settings, and character's personality. Males and females were counted in order to determine levels of mere representation. Books were also coded

for gender bias by coding characters in each scene as either active or passive.

Additionally, adult character's occupations were coded for their level of traditionalism.

Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young (2008) found an underrepresentation of female characters in both the award-winning and top-selling children's books. This was true for adult characters, main characters, and child characters. Findings from the occupational coding suggest that more male characters were portrayed as working outside of the home. In addition, males also had a wider range of occupations as compared to female characters.

While it is important that females are equally represented in children's literature, the progress of gender equity should not be measured simply by representation of females in literature (Clark, 2000; Worland, 2008). Worland (2008) urges educators to look more closely at how progress for gender equality is being measured. Simply having more representation of females is not enough because those representations may still perpetuate stereotypes. "Another facet of the inequity in literature is that many characters are not shown as multi-dimensional human beings with strengths as well as weaknesses" (NCTE, 2015, para. 2).

Boys and gender equity. Diekman and Murnen (2004) found progress for women in literature through more flexible gender roles but they note men are still confined to act in roles prescribed by their gender identity. Gooden and Gooden (2001) found that literature is beginning to promote female characters adopting male-stereotypical roles but rarely are males portrayed in female-stereotypical roles (as cited in Diekman & Murnen, 2004).

McKoy Lowery's (2002) work with preservice teachers is further proof that progress is being made for females but non-conforming gender roles for males are still taboo. Her students experienced more discomfort discussing boys who were portrayed as "sissys" as opposed to females who were "tomboys." These findings show that educators must not only use strong females as a way to achieve gender equity but they must also look for ways to promote gender nonconforming boys into the books they use with students.

McKoy Lowery (2002) states, "Gender equity is not a girl issue; it affects us all" (p. 30). The use of literature with strong female characters is just *one* part of achieving gender equality. Educators must also examine character traits of males in order to free them from their strict gender roles. True gender equity would mean that both females *and* males have access to the same opportunities and are free to be themselves instead of being forced to conform to societally constructed gender roles (Leland, Harste, & Clouse, 2013; McKoy Lowery, 2002; Weitzman et al., 1972; Worland, 2008).

In her article, Chick (2002) recognizes that boys are not immune to gender stereotypes and that they struggle with book selection for fear of choosing "girl books." Teachers must recognize that gender equity is not just a girl issue and that critical examination of the texts is imperative in challenging the traditional gender roles of *both* males and females and creating equity between the sexes (Chick, 2002; Weitzman et al., 1972).

Continuing to use gendered stereotyped literature is crippling for both genders (Chick, 2002; Watson, 2014; Weitzman et al., 1972; Worland, 2008). It is restrictive and

places people into rigid categories of masculine and feminine (Weitzman et al., 1972; Worland, 2008). Non-sexist literature recognizes the ways both genders are traditionally placed into strict categories of what constitutes as *male* and *female*. In her 2014 address to the United Nations, Emma Watson highlights how gender equity must include a focus on freeing men from gender stereotypes.

We don't often talk about men being imprisoned by gender stereotypes but I can see that that they are and that when they are free, things will change for women as a natural consequence. If men don't have to be aggressive in order to be accepted, women won't feel compelled to be submissive. If men don't have to control, women won't have to be controlled. Both men and women should feel free to be sensitive. Both men and women should feel free to be strong. It is time that we all perceive gender on a spectrum instead two opposing sets of ideals. If we stop defining each other by what we are not and start defining ourselves by what we just are - we can all be freer and this is what HeForShe is about. It's about freedom. I want men to take up this mantle. So their daughters, sisters and mothers can be free from prejudice but also so that their sons have permission to be vulnerable and human too - reclaim those parts of themselves they abandoned and in doing so be a more true and complete version of themselves (Watson, 2014, 8:20).

The same can be true of the literature used with children. It is through the use of children's literature featuring strong female characters that children may begin to question these stereotypes (Leland & Harste, 2013). By exposing children to a variety of

masculinities and femininities teachers can begin to create space for students to become who they want to be instead of the strict roles prescribed by society (Chick, 2014).

Gender-fair Literature Selection and Instruction

While schools have perpetuated a standard that values white, middle-class, males, they also have the opportunity to elicit change (Kuby, 2013, Moller, 2012). Paterson and Loch (1990) state,

We have an obligation and the power, through the educational process, to employ children's literature in a way that demonstrates to every child the world of our dreams and visions, a world which challenges all children and maximizes their potential to grow up fully human and fully alive (para. 36).

Educators can begin to maximize their students' potential by carefully selecting and analyzing literature for gender stereotypes.

Children see educators positioned in place of authority and therefore educators have a responsibility to promote social justice and gender equity (Chick, 2002; Sano, 2009). Chick (2002) stresses the importance of selecting quality literature that does not perpetuate gender stereotypes, but rather raises awareness and causes students to challenge the gender roles that exist in society. The following are her guidelines for selecting gender-fair literature.

First and foremost, the literature must be of high quality and of high interest to children. Additionally, the characters should be positive role models. It is through the characters development that children can see women taking a stand for ethical, social, and moral issues. The literature should cross many different genres. This is particularly

important as teachers will want to use informational texts to present facts about women who shaped history. In addition, teachers can also pull in rewritten folktales in which women, or girls, are the ones who save the day. Chick (2002) emphasizes that the books should present historically accurate representations of girls, both past and present. Furthermore, it is important that the female characters are not replacements for male characters and that female characters retain some of their femininity. Chick argues females should display characteristics that have been traditionally associated with males such as perseverance, courage, independence, and resourcefulness. Chick's last suggestion is to select books that highlight women in traditional and nontraditional professions.

The suggestions Chick (2002) provides for selecting literature with strong female characters are similar to the examples of common guidelines for selection of multicultural literature as discussed by Ching (2005). Ching states, "Selection criteria for multicultural literature typically promote cultural awareness, and sensitivity, and often overlook the control, deployment, and management of power" (p. 129). When choosing literature, educators are searching for tangible traits, such as historical accuracy and positive portrayal of diverse characters. However, tangible traits do not promote action for social justice. It is through the examination of inequitable distribution of power among the represented groups that students can begin their journey into advocacy (Ching, 2005). The majority of the suggestions provided by Chick (2002) address the tangible traits to look for in selecting texts. She does suggest that educators use non-fiction texts to provide information about how women have shaped history. This may provide an

indirect way to address inequitable distribution of power if teachers are selecting informational books about topics such as women's suffrage, unequal pay, and women in the workforce. However, this point must not be overlooked. Examining inequitable distributions of power causes discomfort for many people and that discomfort causes them to take action (Ching, 2005).

While text selection is critical in breaking stereotypes of cultural, class, and gender, teachers cannot assume that mere exposure to diversity will lead to transformation with our students (Chick, 2002; Ching, 2005; Hade, 1997). To introduce literature that challenges gender stereotypes and not follow up with conversation feeds into what Hade (1997) describes as the tourist view of multiculturalism. It would be easy to skip discussion because discussion causes discomfort for both students and teachers alike (Moller, 2012). However, staying silent does students a great disservice and promotes injustice (Diekman & Murnen, 2004; Hade, 1997; Moller, 2012). Teachers must step out of their comfort zones in order to start a dialogue with students that challenge the mainstream ideals of society (Kuby, 2013; Moller, 2012). It is through these conversations that children begin to be transformed and are able to challenge gender bias (Chick, 2002; Hade, 1997; Moller, 2012; McKoy Lowery, 2002; Schall & Kauffman, 2003).

Teachers can use literature to start dialogue that exposes injustice. Chick (2002) goes one step further in suggesting that teachers collaborate to develop thoughtful questions intended to shift existing patterns of thinking and behavior. This is particularly

important, as adults should collaborate with each other in order to challenge their thinking before attempting to engage students in a transformative dialogue.

While Chick (2002) addresses some of factors that contribute to gender inequity, her article neglects to mention other issues that perpetuate gender stereotypes. First, the text selection guidelines she provides focus on tangible traits instead of an examination of the inequitable distribution of power among males and females in society. Another missing piece in Chick's article about creating gender equity is the idea that males must also be freed from strict gender roles. In recent history, females are adopting many male stereotypical traits but males are rarely portrayed as sensitive, tender, and affectionate (Diekman & Murnen, 2004). If challenging gender stereotypes in order to create equity among the sexes is the goal, then educators must look for literature that portrays males in non-conforming gender roles as well.

Analysis of literature for gender-stereotypes. Teachers need to examine new texts with a critical eye, as well literature that already exists in their classroom libraries. While analyzing literature, it is beneficial to perform both qualitative and quantitative analysis of gender stereotypes. The following are important factors to consider during an analysis of gender stereotypes. Teachers can start to examine literature for gender stereotypes by looking at the illustrations (Weitzman et al., 1972).

Illustrations are common in children's literature. While illustrations can provide support to struggling readers, they can also perpetuate gender stereotypes (Weitzman et al., 1972; Worland, 2008). Teachers should carefully consider the following ways that female characters can be limited by the illustrations. Teachers should ask themselves the

following questions. What is each gender wearing? Are females limited by dresses or wearing clothing that would not be functional for the activities in the text? Do the illustrations have the female characters inside or outside of the house?

As mentioned, the setting of a story often sends readers a message about rigid gender stereotypes (Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, & Young, 2006; NCTE, 2015; Taylor, 2003; Weitzman et al., 1972; Worland, 2008). The setting can be found in both the illustrations and embedded into the words of a text. As teachers select literature, they should look for texts where the illustrations and words place women outside of the home.

As Weitzman et al. (1972) noted females are often portrayed as mothers, but not *real* mothers. Character's employment should be analyzed for a variety of career options.

An analysis of only text illustrations would not be complete. Teachers must also analyze the words and messages of text. Character trait analysis is an important part of scanning texts for gender stereotypes. Weitzman et al. (1972) found that a vast majority of children's book center around adventurous male protagonists. Weitzman et al. (1972) went further to say "...females are simply invisible" (p. 1128). In recent years, Diekman and Murnen (2004) found an increase in the representation of females in children's literature. However, representation is just one item to be examined. Educators must go further to determine whether these are accurate representations of females or if they continue to perpetuate gender stereotypes (Worland, 2008).

Figures 1 and 2 provide a framework for analysis of character traits and behaviors. Figure 1 provides educators with character and personality traits in a checklist form. Teachers can use this checklist as they analyze each character in a text. A

completed checklist for the characters in a book will help teachers identify patterns in the way gender impacts character development. Figure 2 provides common gender stereotypes and can be useful as teachers question whether or not characters in a text are being stereotyped.

Semantic Gender and Character Analysis	Personality Characteristics															Behaviors												
Character's Name & Gender	Courage	Independence	Leadership	Intelligence	Assertiveness	Caring, Kind	Risk Taker	Weak	Passive	Aggressive	Gentle	Active	Emotional	Different	Being with Family	Travel	Reading	Sports	Playing	Attending Concert, Church	Art, Music, Dance	Pursuit of Worthy Cause	Eating, Drinking	Helping Others	TV/Radio Computer	Affection, Emotion	Cleaning, Cooking	Fighting, Aggression

Figure 1: Semantic Gender and Character Analysis (Chick & Corle, 2012, as cited in Chick, 2014 p. 17)

Coding Frame: Female Gender Stereotypes		Coding Frame: Male Gender Stereotypes	
Submissive	Dependent	Dominant	Independent
Unintelligent	Emotional	Intelligent	Rational
Receptive	Intuitive	Assertive	Analytical
Weak	Timid	Strong	Brave
Content	Passive	Ambitious	Active
Cooperative	Sensitive	Competitive	Insensitive
Represented as a sex Object	Attractive due to physical features	Sexually Aggressive	Achievement-oriented

Figure 2: Analysis of personal characteristics and behaviors (adapted from Taylor, 2003, p. 309)

Practices to Foster Gender-fair Literacy Instruction

“To even begin to help children rethink their views and learn the value of challenging their own stereotypes will take considerable work on the part of sensitive and understanding teachers and administrators” (Chick, 2014). One way that Chick suggests rethinking views is to engage in stereotype *graffiti art* (as cited by Rose-Colley, Bechtel, & Cinelli, 1994). In this exercise, teachers are asked to think about common gender stereotypes and record them. This helps teachers guide conversations gender stereotypes and creates spaces for discussion of multiple masculinities and femininities.

While many school districts dictate the curriculum and materials teachers use in their classrooms, teachers can still be sure they are creating a gender-balanced literacy curriculum by following the guidelines established by National Council of Teachers of English (2015) for a balanced language arts curriculum.

Diekman and Murnen (2004) caution educators “The intent should not be to ruin the joy of reading for boys and girls but to build their skills as critical consumers of written word” (p. 382). Using texts with gender stereotypes should not take away from the story, but rather allow students to dig deeper with their thinking and discuss the stereotypes, gender segregation, and status inequality. Teachers can turn to the following guidelines as they work to achieve gender-fair literacy instruction.

The National Council of Teachers of English, NCTE, (2015) provides suggestions for teachers as they begin to design a gender-fair literacy curriculum. First, it is suggested that teachers begin to select materials written by, about, and for females. The materials should include both print and non-print resources. These materials and texts should be

used across content area and be representative of females of different races and social classes. Selecting texts with female protagonists is important. However, analysis is critical in building a gender-fair curriculum. Females should be portrayed as successful in their efforts. When selecting literature, teachers should carefully examine the activity of both males and females. Traditionally, males are seen as active characters and females passive. However, teachers should look for examples where males and females break out of the traditional stereotypes for each gender. It is critical that teachers look for opportunities for both males and females to show passivity and activity. Furthermore, teachers should note the occupation of each gender. Select texts where children are interacting with adults that step outside of traditional occupations for their gender. For example, teachers should note texts with male teachers or female doctors. Select supplemental resources that show adults and children interacting in ways that does not only promote traditional gender stereotypes

The NCTE (2015) recognizes that at times teachers are limited to using traditional texts as part of their district's literacy curriculum. When using classic literature, teachers can work to pair stories with similar themes but with protagonists of different sexes. Traditional texts can be rewritten and examined through a lens of the opposite sex. These traditional texts provide teachers an opportunity to start a conversation with students about gender-bias in the text and in the world around them.

Teachers have an obligation to open spaces for critical conversations about literature in order to disrupt the commonplace and identify the voices that are represented and those that are missing (Kuby, 2013; Moller, 2012; Vasquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013).

Educators can use literature to help children look at the world through different a different lens (Moller, 2012). It is through the reading of literature that teachers may start a conversation about issues of gender inequality (NCTE, 2015).

Using critical literacy practices. In order to lead students through the dimensions of critical literacy and promote social justice work in the classroom, teachers themselves must self-reflect on their own belief systems in order analyze the way they are situated in a system of power and privilege (Kuby, 2013; Vasquez, Tate, Harste, 2013).

Using social issues books is one way to address the dimensions of critical literacy practices in the classroom (Lewison, Flint, Van Sluys, 2002; Moller, 2012; Vasquez, Tate, Harste, 2013). Social issues texts are one way to disrupt the commonplace in order to have students read about new experiences and worldviews. The discussions that take place through the use of social issues texts often lend themselves to examining multiple perspectives. This also provides an entry point for teachers to raise discussion about the sociopolitical issues and develop justice-oriented citizens.

Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) conducted a study to examine what critical literacy looks like in classrooms. The authors categorized teachers as either *newcomers* or *novices* based upon their familiarity with critical literacy practices. Newcomers were teachers who, based upon conversations with the researchers, had little to no experience with critical literacy. These newcomer teachers shared their excitement in trying out critical literacy practices in the classroom. Novice teachers were categorized as teachers who had some knowledge of critical literacy practices. Many of the novice teachers had

done some reading about critical literacy and understood the basic tenant of critical literacy as reading texts critically and interrogating multiple perspectives.

Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) found newcomers spend the most time on the first two dimensions of critical literacy, disrupting the commonplace and interrogating multiple perspectives. On the other hand, it was noted that novices spend significantly more time having students examine power relationships and advocate for social justice. Teachers can be supported as they begin to use critical literacy in the classroom by hearing about successes and challenges of those using critical literacy practices in the classroom (Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys, 2002). Lewison et al. (2002) also found that professional development surrounding critical literacy made the most impact adults were organized into small groups. These small groups provided the teachers an opportunity to use and discuss social issues texts in literature circles, similar to the way social issues texts would be used in the classroom.

Educators have a responsibility to help create individuals who fight injustice and seek to bring voice to those who are marginalized. Therefore, pedagogy must accommodate learning how to read race, class, and gender (Hade, 1997). This requires teachers to step out of their comfort zone and open the floor for contrasting viewpoints that may challenge existing thoughts about the people represented in literature (Hade, 1997; Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys, 2002; Moller, 2012). Gender stereotypes must be included as a part of critical literacy, as gender

The goal of this professional development is to provide teachers with the information and tools needed to analyze literature critically for gender bias. In addition,

teachers will have an opportunity to practice using critical literacy with small groups of adults in order to prepare themselves for the application of critical literacy in the classroom.

Project

This professional development plan will take place during one full school year. An elementary staff is the audience for this professional development. There will be nine, sixty-minute sessions. All certified staff will participate in this professional development.

Table 1
Overview Professional Development Sessions

Session #	Title of Session	Session Focus
1	Unpacking our Backgrounds: Moving Beyond the Binary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping teachers unpack their own backgrounds • Teaching about the impact of gender stereotypes • Critical literacy teacher survey • Outlining the learning goals for the professional development sessions
2	Gender Equity: Not just a "Girl Issue"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further examination of gender stereotypes • Reviewing the NCTE's guidelines for Gender-Fair Literacy Instruction
3	Analysis of Literature for Gender Stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing examples of stereotypes in daily life • Read aloud and text analysis
4	From Theory to Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing and contrasting texts • Emphasis on character analysis for gender stereotypes • Planning read alouds to raise awareness of gender bias in text
5	Critical Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlining the components of critical literacy • Emphasis on interrogating multiple perspectives
6	Sociopolitical Issues in Children's Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the elements of critical literacy • Emphasis on sociopolitical issues in children's literature
7	Take a Stand: Moving Towards Social Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on implementation of social issues texts • Group work to look at gender inequality

8	Curriculum Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on implementation of social issues texts • Examination of curriculum • Planning for critical literacy in the curriculum
9	Celebration of Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing curricular plans • Review of learning from previous sessions • Critical literacy survey

Professional Development Session #1: Unpacking our Backgrounds, Moving Beyond the Binary

As teachers embark on their journey of critical literacy, they must first examine their backgrounds. By examination personal backgrounds, teachers will gain a deeper understanding of the ways their backgrounds positions them in a place power and privilege within society (Kuby, 2013; Vasquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013). The first activity is taken from Vasquez, Tate, and Harste (2013). Teachers will be expected to use nametags to express their multiple identities and participate in self-reflection on their backgrounds.

The nametags will say “Hello my name is...” (Figure 3). On one nametag, teachers will fill out the names or labels with which they self-identify. The other nametag will be a space for teachers to fill out the names with which they do *not* identify.

I will model the activity for the teachers so they know what is expected (Appendix A). Teachers will be responsible for completing the naming labels independently. Instead of providing a written reflection about each label, teachers will share their ideas with a small group of two to three other teachers.

After the naming activity, teachers will add to their labels using words from Figure 2 (Taylor, 2003). However, these behaviors and characteristics will not be in frames as listed above. Instead, they will be arranged randomly in a list with both male and female characteristics.

Once teachers have added to their label, I will reveal the characteristics that are associated with females and the characteristics associated with males. I will ask if anyone selected all “pink” words or all “blue words.” It is unlikely that teachers will identify *all* characteristics from their own gender. This will lead into a discussion of what the teachers noticed about their descriptors. The goal of this activity is to show teachers how gender stereotypes are rigid. People do not fit into a single box of gender expression as “male” or “female.” Therefore, we must teach students how to read texts critically in order to determine if the author is perpetuating gender stereotypes. Not only will this activity allow for teachers to examine their own backgrounds, it will also help colleagues learn about each other in new ways. This will ultimately contribute to a professional learning community.

Teachers will draw their own conclusions after the activity as to why teaching only to the gender binary may be a concern. This will lead us into examining the trends in gender representation and gender stereotypes in children's literature over the past 40 years.

To conclude session one, teachers will be asked to complete a survey on their knowledge of critical literacy and critical literacy practices (Appendix B). Teachers will take this same survey during session nine of the professional development in order to

track the changes in their understanding of the topic. These surveys will be completed individually but will also help me to tailor my instruction to the group of educators in the session. For example, if teachers have had experience using critical literacy practices and can identify the components, then we will spend most of our time focusing on the advocacy piece of critical literacy. If most teachers are unfamiliar with the topic the sessions will address disrupting the common place and interrogating multiple perspectives. Finally, instructional goals for the following sessions will be established.

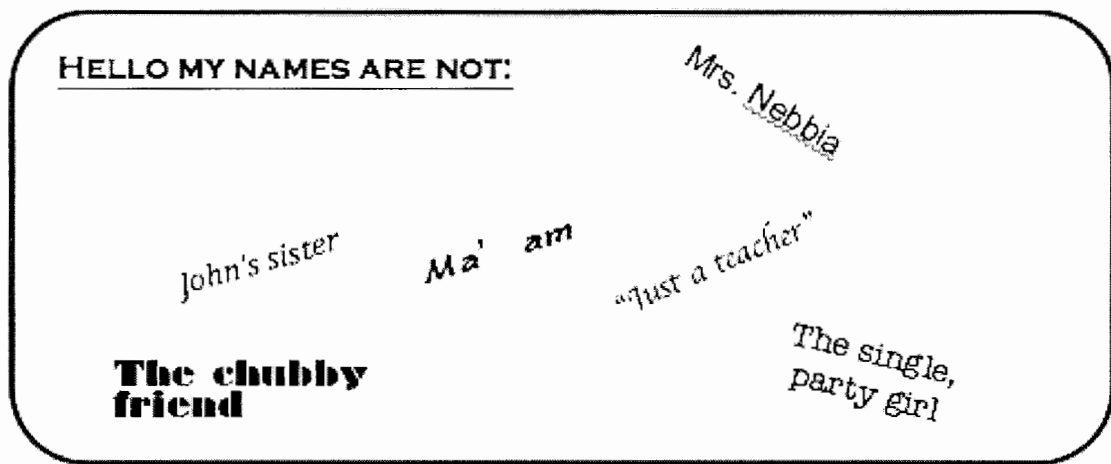
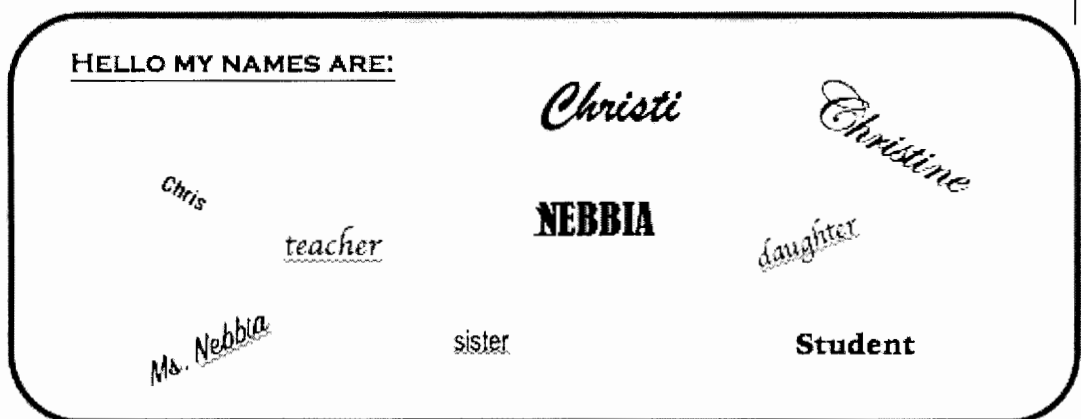


Figure 3: Nametags for Labeling Activity

Professional Development Session #2: Gender Equity: Not Just a “Girl Issue”

The second session will begin with an activity, “He Says, She Says” that can be used with students, as well as teachers. This activity is adapted from NCTE (n.d.). Teachers will choose the gender with which they identify and complete the following sentence, “Being female means...” or “Being male means...” After teachers have completed the sentence, they will discuss their responses with their tablemates. Two charts will be posted, one for each sentence starter. Then, each table will be responsible for posting one response. Since there are generally more female educators than males, it is possible that there may not be men in this particular professional learning community. Therefore, I will have some male stereotypes ready to add to the chart, if necessary. As a group, the responses will be read aloud.

The group will discuss which statements they find to be true. Every person is different; there will likely be disagreements about what statements accurately portray males and females. The goal is for teachers to consider how gender stereotypes are often broad statements that do not represent a full sample of the population, but rather gross generalizations that cannot be used as blanket statements.

This will lead into a video clip of Emma Watson’s 2014 HeforShe speech. Due to the length of this clip, only a portion will be shown. [7:22-9:26]. This clip emphasizes the need to see gender on a spectrum instead of rigid categories. It also emphasizes the importance of freeing women *and* men from stereotypes. After presenting the video clip, teachers will be asked to brainstorm for one minute. I will display some bullet points to guide teachers as they reflect on the video clip. The suggestions include prompts to

respond to new thinking, surprises, disagreement, and agreement. After brainstorming, teachers will share out with their tablemates and volunteers will share out what they noticed with the whole group. This will segue way into a conversation about the gender-fair literacy instruction guidelines as taken from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

The session will end with a takeaway assignment. In order to become more aware of gender stereotypes and their impact on our daily lives, teachers will be asked to bring in an example of gender stereotyping that they encounter. They will need to be prepared to discuss how the stereotype places people into strict categories of gender expression. I will provide a model by presenting the recent BuzzFeed article, *21 Things Women Can Finally Buy*. (Misener, 2016). This article displays items that have been advertised and marketed using gender stereotypes. Items, such as pens, that are used by both genders are marketed as “for her” because they are produced in the colors pink and purple. This model will provide a support for teachers as they complete their takeaway assignment of locating examples of gender stereotypes in everyday life.

Professional Development Session #3: Analysis of Literature for Gender Stereotypes

As teachers come in, they will be asked to sit with new tablemates. Sessions one and two placed emphasis on deconstructing personal backgrounds and examining gender stereotypes in our own lives. These sessions were filled with many opportunities for table talk. In order to continue to move forward and examine diverse perspectives, teachers will need to sit with colleagues who they have not interacted with yet in this professional development.

At each table, teachers will share out examples of gender stereotypes that they found in their own lives. This was the homework from session two. As groups, they will identify themes or commonalities between their artifacts. Tables will share out what they noticed with the group as a whole.

Session three will focus most heavily on text analysis. To begin, I will conduct a read aloud of *Rosie Revere, Engineer* (Beaty, 2013). I will model how to analyze the text for gender stereotypes using the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis table (Appendix C). I have seen *Rosie Revere, Engineer* (Beaty, 2013) promoted by school and public librarians. I have heard colleagues share their excitement about this feminist text. However, after careful analysis it becomes clear this text is full of rigid gender stereotypes. Everything from the illustrations to the plot is embedded with the message that females are delicate, emotional beings that cannot accomplish things independently. During the read aloud, I will provide stopping points and add to the analysis table. While reading, I will stop, sharing my thinking, and check off the boxes that relate to the major and minor characters (Appendix D). Afterwards, I will use the words from the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis table to write a brief paragraph outlining my findings. This will be done in a GoogleDoc.

After modeling how to analyze texts for gender stereotypes, teachers will have an opportunity to analyze texts in small groups. Each table will have one book. See Appendix E for a list of the texts that will be used in this activity. Teachers will be allowed to move about the room and select the table with the text they wish to analyze. At that table, teachers will be asked to use the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis

table (Appendix C) in order to consider character traits and actions. Then, the table will summarize the characters using descriptors from their analysis. This summary will be typed into the GoogleDoc with my example. This document will serve as a reference for teachers to choose from as they selected texts for their classrooms. As groups are finishing up, teachers will come up to the SmartBoard and fill in the semantic character and gender analysis chart for the whole group to see.

Tables will come up and share their summaries with the group. Finally, we will look at the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis table. Teachers will be asked to speak to the patterns they see displayed on that chart. Are characters, as a whole, locked into the rigid definitions of male and female? In which texts are characters stepping out of those roles?

As a homework assignment, teachers will be asked to do two things. First, teachers will use the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis table from the session to analyze one read aloud that has already been used with their class this school year. Teachers will also be asked to select a read aloud book that they have not yet used with their class this year. They will need to bring these texts to session four.

Professional Development Session #4: From Theory to Practice

Upon entering session four, teachers will refer back to their homework assignment. As mentioned, teachers were asked to independently analyze a favorite read aloud book that has already been used in the classroom. Teachers will be asked to reflect upon what they discovered about the texts they have already used with children in the classroom. There will be bullet points to guide their thinking such as “Did you have any

new thinking? Were there any surprises? Would you continue to use this book? Why or Why not?" Teachers will be asked to share what they learned with the whole group after this individual reflection.

Then, I will do a read aloud of *The Most Magnificent Thing* (Spires, 2014). During the last group read aloud, I provided stopping points to share my thinking and complete the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis table. During this read aloud of *The Most Magnificent Thing*, teachers will be asked to take note of gender stereotypes and independently complete the stereotype table. Then, groups will talk about their reactions. I would like tables to talk to see if individuals checked off the same boxes. After a brief table discussion, I'll show the group my analysis to see if we have similar reactions to this text.

Finally, I will ask teachers to carefully think about the read aloud from last session, *Rosie Revere, Engineer* (Beaty, 2013) and compare that to *The Most Magnificent Thing* (Spires, 2014). Teachers will be asked to jot down their answers to the following guiding questions. How does Rosie differ from the main character in *The Most Magnificent Thing*? Which character seems to adhere to stereotypical gender roles? Why do you think so? Which text do you believe promotes a positive message free from stereotypes? Why do you think so?

In the next part of the session, teachers will introduce the title of the text they brought to analyze in class. Teachers were asked to select a book that they have not yet used with their class as a read aloud. The purpose of the analysis during this session is to help teachers decide how this text can be used with students. Teachers will be paired up.

In partners they will share why they selected the text they did. Perhaps it is a classroom favorite or they find students actively engaged in the plot. Then, the teachers will engage in text analysis with their partners. They will also plan stopping points for a read aloud that address some of the character traits outlined in their analysis. Once teachers have analyzed and planned their read aloud, they will find a different partner and practice this read aloud in order to be prepared to take the text back to the classroom.

Teachers will be expected to implement this read aloud plan into their classrooms prior to the next session. In addition, teachers will be asked to complete a reflection log. This reflection log will be shared at the end of session four. Teachers should bring their completed reflection about the implementation of this read aloud text to session five (Appendix F).

Professional Development Session #5: Critical Literacy

To begin session five, teachers will be asked to share their reflections regarding the implementation of their read aloud text from last session. Teachers will respond to the following questions: How did your views of this particular text change? How did you modify the way you used this text in the classroom? Would you use it in your classroom again? Why or why not?

As a final piece of this reflection process, teachers will be asked to share out successes and challenges in implementing this read aloud text. These will be noted on a t-chart. These comments will be important as the group moves forward with implementation of critical literacy practices. Sharing successes and problem solving challenges with colleagues will build a stronger community of professional learners.

This is the first session that focuses on critical literacy. Therefore, I will provide a brief overview of the four components of critical literacy: disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple perspectives, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and promoting social justice. The focus of sessions one through three was to disrupt the commonplace of the teachers in this group. I will ask teachers how their commonplaces have been disrupted through the work we've done together thus far.

The rest of session five will focus on how to interrogate multiple perspectives in order to read texts critically. One book that is often referenced when teaching point of view is *Voices in the Park* (Browne, 2001). This book will be used as a reference tool to help teachers link their understanding of point of view to the concept of multiple perspectives.

The session will end with an example of how teachers can interrogate multiple perspectives focusing on gender. One way of examining multiple perspectives is to provide narratives and counter narratives. Since the goal of these professional development sessions is to use critical literacy foster conversations about gender stereotypes, I will be using *My Mom* (Browne, 2004) and *My Dad* (Browne, 2001) in order to examine stereotypical gender roles and how they impact our perceptions of parenting. Both texts will be read aloud to teachers. During the read alouds, I will not offer many comments for literature analysis. This is because literature analysis has been covered in previous sessions. However, teachers will be encouraged to take notes of what they notice in regards to gender roles in parenting.

However, after both texts have been read I will open discussion to teachers with the following prompts, "What existing gender stereotypes usually surround typical parenting roles? How does Browne address these stereotypes with *My Mom* (2004) and *My Dad* (2001)? What stereotypes are left unaddressed in these texts?"

Professional Development Session #6: Sociopolitical Issues in Children's Literature

Session six will move teachers into the next dimension of critical literacy, examining social and political issues in children's literature. As teachers move further into their understanding of gender stereotypes and gender representation in literacy, they will be asked to enact critical literacy practices in the classroom. I will start with a quote about using dialogue to foster social justice. The quote reads, "...dialogue can enhance understanding of the complex and insidious nature of racism and injustice and that deeper understanding can lead to action" (Moller, 2012, p.29). I want teachers to keep in mind promoting only gender-fair literature does not solve these problems. Instead, they need to create spaces that foster discussion about injustices and help students take action within the classroom and beyond.

In order to keep social and political issues at the forefront of this session, we will quickly review what it means to examine social and political issues in literature. Examining social and political issues means looking at social injustices on a larger scale in order to examine power structures. This also requires teachers to consider their own power and privilege in society and how that impacts their daily life.

In order to model ways of looking at the sociopolitical issues in children's literature, I will do a read aloud of *My Name is Not Isabella* (Fosberry, 2010). Again, the

read aloud will not be disrupted with my think alouds. Instead, teachers will have the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis (Appendix C) to jot down what they notice about Isabella's character. By this time, teachers should be fairly independent in analyzing children's literature for gender stereotypes.

At the end of *My Name is Not Isabella* (Fosberry, 2010) the author provides a brief summary of all of the women Isabella identifies as in the text. On each table, I will have a biography of the women discussed in the text. Just as in session two, I will have one book on each table. Teachers will be allowed to move about the room and select the biography they wish to use for this activity. Teachers will read the biographies in small groups. In their groups, teachers will be asked create questions to guide discussion with students. While they do this, teachers should consider this question "Why did this woman become famous?"

Finally, teachers will come up and share out the questions they developed to foster discussion about social injustices with students. As homework, teachers will be asked to select a piece of nonfiction that focuses on social injustice, either race, class, or gender to read to their class or small group of students. After implementation, teachers will need to complete a reflection log (Appendix G).

Professional Development Session #7: Take a Stand: Moving Toward Social Action

Professional development session seven will begin with teachers sharing with colleagues about the sociopolitical discussions they had with their students. The reflection log (Appendix G) will guide their table discussions. The questions from the reflection log include, "List the questions you posed for discussion. Reflect upon two

comments from students that show their level understanding of larger social systems and social injustice. What are your next steps in helping students examine sociopolitical issues through literature and text discussion?

Then, as a whole group, we will share out successes and challenges and document them on a t-chart. I will model some of my personal challenges with critical literacy practices. For example, one challenge is carefully planning open-ended questions that foster discussion, rather than literal questions from the text that may only elicit surface level discussion. Dialogue between colleagues in regards to personal successes and challenges of critical literacy implementation will help teachers troubleshoot problems that may arise as they move forward in future sessions. In addition, this space for discussion will provide teachers with a collegial system of support as they continue to implement critical literacy practices into their instruction.

Session seven will focus on how educators can foster students to take action in response to the social injustices they've been exposed to in text. In order to do this, we will start to read texts that are considered more controversial. The sessions have building up to this with guided practice and reflection in the following areas, analyzing text, interrogate multiple perspectives, and fostering discussion to frame issues of inequality into a historical context. While all of this knowledge is important, the end goal is that they have laid a foundation for students and teachers to take social action.

During this session teachers will be split into two groups. Teachers will have the choice to join a group based upon the interest they have in the texts. The texts selected for Group A include *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* (Baldacchino, 2014) and

Jacob's New Dress (Hoffman & Hoffman, 2014). Both of these texts follow young boys who enjoy creative play and wearing dresses. The texts address the teasing and bullying the boys go through, as well as the support they receive from their families and teachers. Group B will read *Piggybook* (Browne, 1990) and *The Giving Tree* (Silverstein, 1964). Both of these texts send a strong message about the hardships of motherhood when traditional gender roles are present in the home.

Since groups will be larger than in previous sessions, group members will take on specific roles in their groups. The roles include readers, note takers, graffiti artists, summarizers, and speakers.

Each group will need two readers, one for each text. The readers will read the texts aloud to the group. There will also be note takers. The note takers will jot down things they notice about the gender roles of the characters in the text. This role requires the note takers to analyze the gender stereotypes in the text.

The remaining group members will be graffiti artists. Each group will have two large pieces of paper. In the middle of the paper, the artists will write the title of the book. Then, they will jot down "graffiti." The graffiti should be thoughts or reactions people had to the text while reading. The entire group will use the graffiti art to guide them as they develop discussion questions that address the social inequalities in text.

Once groups have read the texts aloud, analyzed the characters, and developed questions for discussion, we will present. Some of the group member roles are ones that involve sharing. For example, the summarizers will come up and share a brief summary of each text. The graffiti artists will display their artwork and touch on some of the big ideas that

jumped out at them while reading. Finally, the speakers will read the questions that groups developed to foster critical discussions with students.

The session will conclude with information on how teachers can use literature, such as the texts read during this session, to get students thinking about inequality in their own lives. Teachers will be asked to go back into the classroom and use a book that addresses issues of race, class, or gender. Just as they have practiced, teachers will need to develop questions that will foster critical discussion about these injustices. In order to start developing an action plan for social justice, teachers are required to ask their students about fairness in their own lives with the following questions: "What is fair in your own life? What is not fair? What about in this classroom? How can we make it a more just classroom, school, or community?" After the read aloud and discussion, teachers will complete another reflection log (Appendix H). This log will be used in session eight to move teachers into their action plan.

Professional Development Session #8: Curriculum Review

To begin session eight, teachers will be asked to share their reflections about the social issues text they implemented with students. The reflection log questions (Appendix H) will be used to guide teachers during this time of sharing. Teachers will discuss what their students identified as unfair in their own lives. These ideas will be put on chart paper. Once the group's findings are posted, teachers will be asked to look for themes among these ideas. Additionally, there will be time for teachers to brainstorm ways to address these injustices with their students.

In order to prepare for session eight, teachers were asked to work with their grade level teams to decide upon a subject area in which they would like to infuse critical literacy practices. They were asked to bring along the chosen subject area curriculum to professional development session eight.

First, teachers will have five minutes for independent examination of the curriculum. A handout (Appendix I) will be used as teachers examine the curriculum and plan for future instruction. They will begin by listing the problems they have with the selected curriculum as it is now. Once teachers have had a time to form their ideas independently, they will be asked to discuss their thoughts with their grade level team. Teachers will look for common problems that other teammates also identified.

Then, grade level teams will each share what they find as the major problem(s) of the selected curricular area. To close session eight teachers will be asked to look at the table on page two of the handout (Appendix I). There will be a square for each component of critical literacy: disrupting the commonplace, examining multiple perspectives, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and promoting social justice. In order to make future planning more successful, teachers will jot down ideas they have to enhance the curriculum using these four components of critical literacy.

Teachers will be using the ideas listed on table in order to help them plan for future instruction. The takeaway assignment for the teachers is to work with grade levels teams to make plans for the selected curricular area using the components of critical literacy. During the last session, grade levels will be sharing out their plans for implementing critical literacy into the existing curriculum.

Professional Development Session #9: Celebration of Learning

As the takeaway assignment from session eight, teachers were to work with grade level teams to develop ways to foster critical literacy within their selected curricular area. Session nine will begin with grade levels sharing their plan with the whole group. The following questions will guide teachers as they share their plans. What subject area did you pick? What were the main problems with this curriculum in terms of race, class, or gender? What changes did you make to the curriculum? What areas of critical literacy will you address with these changes?

Upon sharing plans for future instruction, the group will have an opportunity to reflect and celebrate the knowledge they have gained throughout this yearlong professional development. First, the instructional goals from session one will be posted. Teachers will have a chance to review those goals as they think about their journey during this year-long professional development. A timeline will be presented which will show the focus of the previous eight professional development sessions. Then, teachers will be asked to share personal highlights of their learning regarding gender stereotypes and critical literacy.

This final session will end with teachers completing the critical literacy survey (Appendix F). This survey was given during session six. The purpose for retaking this survey will be to help teachers reflect upon their own learning. Additionally, it will provide me with an informal post-assessment to determine the effectiveness of the series of professional development sessions.

Summary Implications

This research will impact the education community at large, specifically practicing teachers. Through these professional development sessions, teachers will learn how to analyze text for gender stereotypes. Teachers will also gain knowledge of the components of critical literacy and how to use those components with existing curriculum. If teachers carefully select gender-fair text and discuss social injustices, students will benefit. Gender-fair literacy instruction will expose children to the vast opportunities available to them, instead of only being exposed to traditional gender roles (Chick, 2002; NCTE, 2015). Overall, this will impact quality of life for students. When critical literacy practices are infused into the literacy curriculum, children will also have an opportunity to see the world through others' perspectives and be more prepared and equipped to take action against social injustice (Moller, 2012). All of these components lead to the development of global citizens (Vazquez, Tate, & Harste, 2013).

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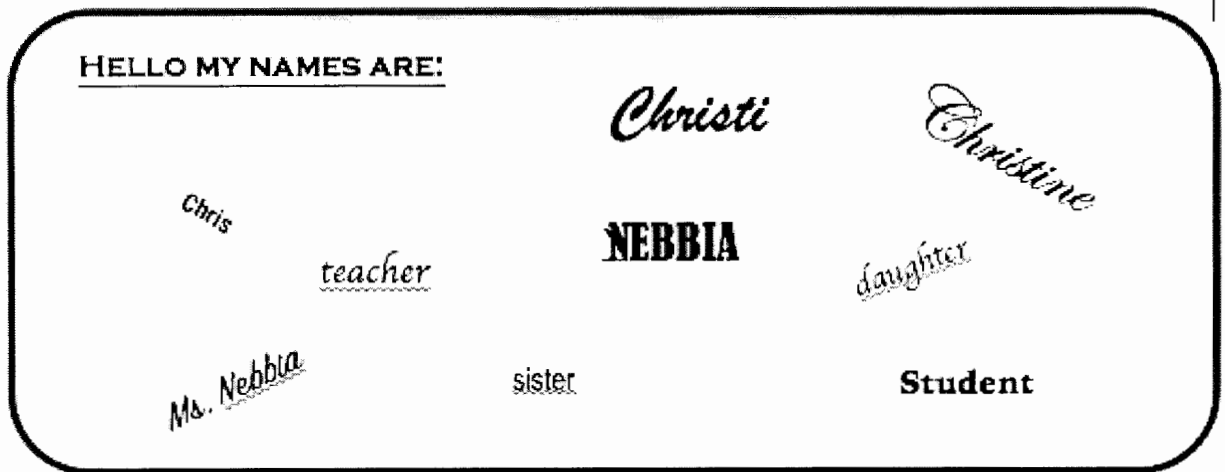
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Appendix A

Nametags for Labeling Activity

Nametags for Labeling Activity



Ms. Nebbia (Teacher) : My students call me Ms. Nebbia. This positions me a teacher. The “Ms.” represents the formality in our school systems and the respect that is expected between students and teachers.

Student: I am a student currently pursuing a Master’s degree. My access to education beyond both high school and undergraduate studies could be seen a sign of privilege.

Nebbia: Co-workers often call me Nebbia, as do some close friends. Being called by my last name doesn’t bother me but it brings me back to the days of being **forced** to play sports. I was never athletic and did not enjoy the competitive nature of basketball, volleyball, or softball. I enjoyed the social nature of these activities. I preferred the fine arts, where I excelled and found a creative outlet for what could be described as teen angst. Dissecting this specific label has shown me that I was given many opportunities by participating in a variety of activities such as music, sports, and the arts. These experiences are not always accessible for every family.

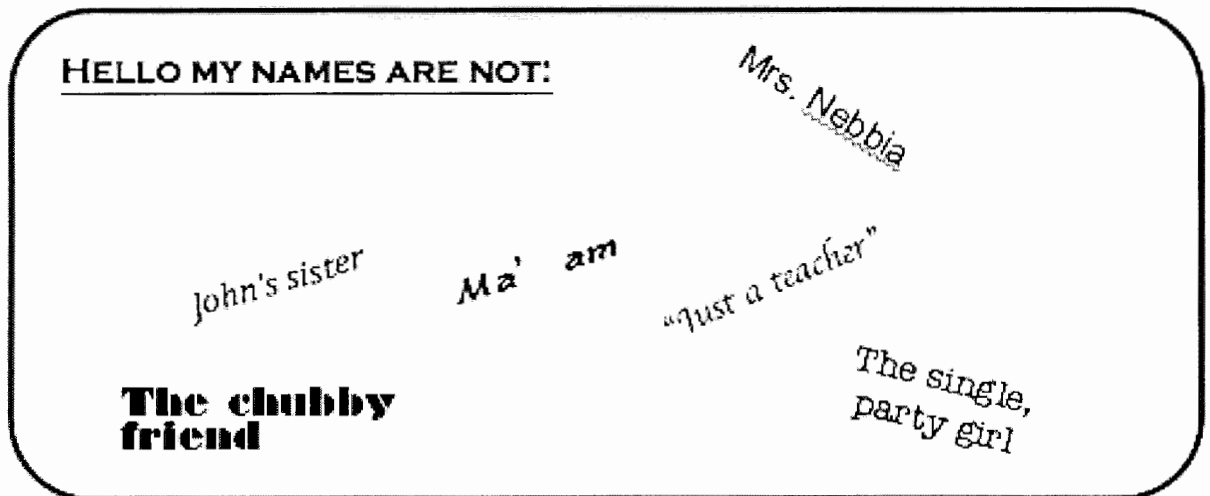
Daughter: I grew up in a typical two-parent family where both parents were college educated and worked full time. The family structure I was part of is typical for the white, middle-class neighborhood where I grew up. However, this was not typical for many of the students with whom I worked as a teacher in Waterloo.

Sister: I have one younger brother. According to birth order theories, I am a typical first born.

Christine: My formal name, used by my parents when I was in trouble as a child. Also, my paternal grandmother’s name.

Christi: The name I prefer to be called by friends, co-workers, and acquaintances.

Chris: My immediate family and some members of my extended family call me Chris. As a child this used to really bother me because I saw "Chris" as a boy's name. (It's interesting that at age 5 I already had a pretty strong concept of socialized gender stereotypes.) I don't mind this nickname anymore. I find it almost endearing that just a select few people use this name, as they are the people who are closest to me.



Mrs Nebbia: A minor detail, but Ms. Nebbia and Mrs. Nebbia are two different people. I am unmarried. My mother is Mrs. Nebbia. I've strongly considered keeping my last name if, or when, I get married. I am the last Nebbia female in my bloodline. I'm proud of the family and as mentioned, I do strongly connect with my last name. Until I become married and make my choice about my last name I prefer the prefix Ms. Nebbia.

Ma'am: It bothers me when I get called ma'am. I associate this label with older women. I know it is respectful to address people as ma'am or sir but I guess a get a bit "age conscience" when people use this label.

"Just a teacher:" I have heard this phrase over and over and it really upsets me. However, I also catch myself using this phrase when introducing myself after my brother, (the engineer) or after my friend, Emily, who works in Washington, D.C. analyzing court cases and crime statistics. I need to make a conscious effort to rephrase the language I use. If I am asking for respect from others, I must start with myself.

John's sister: Yes, I do have a brother, but I am my own person. John and I are very different. I am musical. I enjoy singing, and dancing. John has a mathematical mind. He spends his time determining ultimate truth. I enjoy spending time examining the "gray" area in life instead of simply seeing things in black and white. I enjoy reading and staying

indoors. I value consistency and comfort. John values adventure and seeks opportunity to take risks.

The single, party girl: I recently reconnected with a group of childhood friends, all of whom are married and live in the suburbs. When they began to speak about married life, I noticed I struggled to connect. They asked me about my life and I shared counts of my weekend activities going to comedy clubs, concerts, trying new restaurants, finding local tap rooms throughout the city of Chicago. While our lifestyles are very different, I am more than my weekend activities and current relationship status. The slight digs and jokes about being the only single one at the table can quickly grow old.

The chubby friend: Of my friends, I am one of the heaviest. Many of my friends would be considered petite while I would be considered plus-sized. I often feel self-conscious about my size when I am with them. I don't every want to be defined by my weight. I am more than a number on a scale.

Appendix B

Critical Literacy Survey

Critical Literacy Survey

1. What does critical literacy mean?
2. How have you used critical literacy practices?
3. Describe your level of comfort in implementing critical literacy practices in the classroom.

Appendix C

Semantic Gender and Character Analysis

Semantic Gender and Character Analysis	Personality Characteristics														Behaviors															
Character's Name & Gender	Courage	Independence	Leadership	Intelligence	Assertiveness	Caring, Kind	Risk Taker	Weak	Passive	Aggressive	Gentle	Active	Emotional	Different	Being with Family	Travel	Reading	Sports	Playing	Attending Concert, Church	Art, Music, Dance	Pursuit of Worthy Cause	Eating, Drinking	Helping Others	TV/Radio Computer	Affection, Emotion	Cleaning, Cooking	Fighting, Aggression		

(Chick & Corle, 2012, as cited in Chick, 2014 p. 17)

GENDER STEREOTYPES IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Appendix D

Read Aloud Plan for *Rosie Revere, Engineer* by Andrea Beaty

Read Aloud Plan for *Rosie Revere, Engineer* by Andrea Beaty

Pg. 2 Point out the female teacher in a dress, heavy makeup.

“Rosie sat shyly, not daring to speak.” Mark off the boxes *weak* and *passive* on the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis table.

Pg. 8 Rosie is with her aunts. Mark off the box “*being with family.*”

Pg 12 Rosie gives a gift to Uncle Fred. She is *caring* and *kind*. Check these boxes.

Pg 20 Rosie says “Not ever again will I try to build with a lever, or a switch, a gear. And never will I be a great engineer.” Again, Rosie is crippled by self-doubt.

Pg 23 Aunt Rose celebrates Rosie's success. Once again we see the importance of family to Rosie.

Pg 25 Aunt Rose tells Rosie “Only true failure can come if you quit.” While this is positive message but Rosie is not coming to this realization on her own. She's not independent. We cannot check that box.

Pg 27 Point out the illustration of the Aunt Rose with a large chest. disconnect between the images and what we would think of the message; nearly all the little girls in dresses.

Other things to point out

The pictures show women all in dresses, with the exception of great-great-Aunt Rose who is dressed in all denim with a red bandana, resembling Rosie Revere.

While there are both males and females in Rosie's class, only one of the young females wears pants. Only two women in the entire story wear something other than dresses. All of the women have heavy makeup and their chests are a focal point. This falls into the stereotype of seeing women as sex objects.

Summary Paragraph

At first glance, this text would appear to show females moving beyond gender

stereotypes. However, text analysis is critical with this story as it is clear that it is

embedded with gender stereotypes in the plot and in the illustrations. Rosie is a young

girl who is creative and imaginative. Rosie is shy and secretive about her desire to be an

engineer. Rosie works alone in the attic on her inventions. After failed inventions, Rosie

is crippled with self-doubt. While Rosie is *kind* and *caring*, she is also *weak* and *passive*.

Rosie does not have any self-discovery. The narrative changes when Rosie's aunt comes to town and helps her see her full potential. The illustrations also carry gendered messages that females are sex-objects who should be delicate in dresses and heavy makeup.

Appendix E

List of Texts for Semantic Gender and Character Analysis

List of Texts for Semantic Gender and Character Analysis

Nana in the City by Lauren Castillo
Drum Girl Dream by Margarita Engle
Sylvia Jean Drama Queen by Lisa Ernst
The Gingerbread Girl by Lisa Ernst
Olivia by Ian Falconer
My Name is Not Isabella by Jennifer Fosberry
Lily and the Purple Plastic Purse by Kevin Henkes
Purplicious by Victoria and Elizabeth Kann

Appendix F

Read Aloud Reflection #1

Read Aloud Reflection #1

1. How did your views of this particular text change?
2. How was the read aloud of this text different from how you previously used it with students?
3. Would you use it in your classroom again? Why or why not?
4. What were some challenges you experienced while using this text with student

Appendix G

Reflection on Sociopolitical Issues

Reflection on Sociopolitical Issues in Literature

1. List the questions you posed for discussion.
2. Reflect upon two comments from students that show their level understanding of larger social systems and social injustice.
3. What are your next steps in helping students examine sociopolitical issues through literature and text discussion

Appendix H

Reflections on Moving Toward Social Action

Reflections on Moving Toward Social Action

1. What text did you use with students and why?
2. List the questions you posed for discussion.
3. What did students identify as unfair in their in lives?

Appendix I

Curriculum Review

Curriculum Review

Grade Level:**Subject Area:****Curricular Problems:**

Disrupting the Commonplace	Interrogating Multiple Perspectives
Examining Sociopolitical Issues	Taking Social Action

Appendix J

Professional Development Session 1: Gender Stereotypes in Children's Literature

Professional Development Session 1: Gender Stereotypes in Children's Literature

Gender Stereotypes in Children's Literature



Professional Development
Session 1

Example: I AM...

HELLO MY NAMES ARE:

Chris
teacher

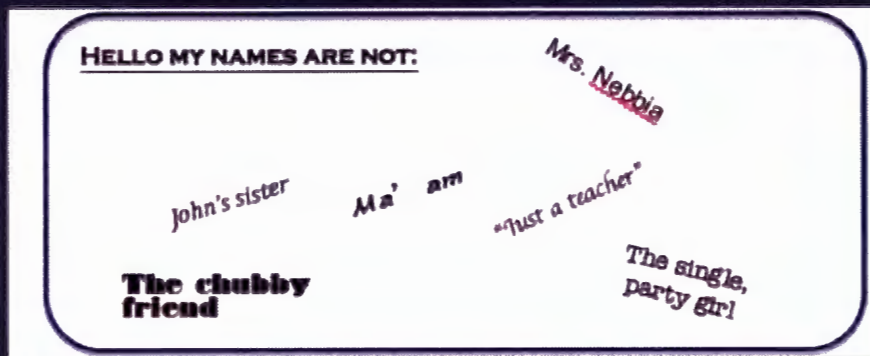
Christi
NEBBIA

Christine
daughter

Ms. Nebbia
sister

Student

Example: I am NOT



Once you have determined your names...
Choose from the following descriptors

weak	sensitive	assertive
intelligent	passive	submissive
receptive	competitive	strong
analytical	rational	ambitious
content	active	brave
unintelligent	cooperative	intuitive
timid	dominant	independent

Did anyone have ALL their descriptors come from ONE gender?

submissive
receptive
weak
content
sensitive
cooperative
dependent
emotional
intuitive

unintelligent
timid
passive

dominant
intelligent
assertive
strong
insensitive
ambitious
competitive
independent
rational

analytic
brave
active

What does this activity show us?

Naming : Why is it important?

Self-reflection comes before leading students to reflect

Analyze our beliefs

Realize our positions of power and privilege

Gender is not binary

Impact of Gender Stereotypes in Literature

Contribute to self-identity and self-image development

Students are likely to internalize due to repetition and illustrations

Impacts behavior

Historical Journey

70s (Weltzman, Eifler, Hokada, & Ross, 1972)

Examined Caldecott Winners

1 human female represented for every 11 human males

More notable with animal characters

Females that were passive characters, stayed indoors, tasks involved housework only

80s (Kolbe & LaVole, 1981)

Increase in representation of females

Focus on character analysis

Traditional gender roles

Historical Journey

90s (Paterson & Lach, 1990)

Horn winning literature

Equal numbers of male and female main characters

Females accepting more roles outside of the home

Females are shown adopting traditionally male traits

Small sample, none reached statistical significance

2000s (Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young, 2008)

Various award winning texts

Underrepresentation of female characters

Males have wider range of occupations, working outside of the home

Historical Journey

2000s (Diekman & Murnen, 2002; McKoy Lowery, 2002)

Women are in more flexible gender roles

Men are not shown in female-stereotypical roles

Non-conforming gender roles for males are still taboo

Continuing to use gendered stereotyped literature is crippling for both genders!

Critical Literacy Survey

Instructional Goals

Teachers will...

Independently analyze children's literature for gender stereotypes

Understand the four components of critical literacy

Enact critical literacy practices in the classroom in order to create a gender-fair literacy curriculum

References

Chick, K.A. (2002). Challenging gender stereotypes through literature: Picture books with strong female characters. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 28(2), 19-24.

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Appendix K

Professional Development Session 2: Gender Equity: Not Just a Girl Issue

Professional Development Session #2: Gender Equity: Not Just a Girl Issue

Gender Equity: Not Just a “Girl Issue!”

...

Professional Development Session #2

He Says... She Says

Choose the gender with which you identify and finish the following sentence.

Being female means...

Being male means...

Taken from:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/said-said-analyzing-gender-287.html>

One person from each table should add their response to the chart paper.

Which of these statements ring true for you? Which do not?

Emma Watson

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkjW9PZBRfk&t=7m22s>

Reflection

1 minute brainstorm, what were your thoughts?

New thinking

Surprises

Disagreement

Agreement

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Guidelines for Gender-Fair Literacy Instruction

1. A balance of literature by and about both women and men should be included whenever possible.
2. Materials should be chosen to emphasize gender equity and to show males and females in traditional and nontraditional roles.
3. Noninclusive texts and classic pieces can provide a focus for discussion of gender roles and gender equity. They should be placed in proper historical context and should be balanced by other texts that show gender-fair roles and assumptions.

NCTE Guidelines for Gender-Fair Literacy Instruction

4. Trade books, texts, videos, and other media resources should be chosen to show females and males actively participating in a variety of situations at home, work, or play.
5. In organizing lists of materials and educational activities, avoid separation by gender. Choose headings and activities that do not assume stereotypic male and female interests.
6. Present gender-equitable examples by alternating male and female names and by avoiding the use of stereotyped gender roles. When discussing roles traditionally held by males, use examples of females in those roles; use examples of males in roles traditionally held by females.

Gender Stereotypes in Everyday Life

[Gender Stereotypes in Advertising](#)

Homework

For next session, be prepared to share an example of gender stereotyping as we discussed in the past two sessions. It can be from a book, magazine, commercial, billboard, online post, etc.

What stereotype does it address and how?

What are your reactions?

References

Misener, J. (2016, April 6). *21 things women can finally buy*. Retrieved from BuzzFeed:

https://www.buzzfeed.com/jessicamisener/ask-your-husband-if-you-can-use-his-credit-card-first?utm_term=.rePM9QGFWis-ny71nVKm9r

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Appendix L

Professional Development Session 3: Analysis of Literature for Gender Stereotypes

Professional Development Session #3: Analysis of Literature for Gender Stereotypes

Analysis of Literature for Gender Stereotypes



Professional Development Session #3

Sharing

What stereotype did you notice?

How does it place males or females into rigid categories?

dominant
intelligent
assertive
strong
ambitious
competitive
independent
rational
weak
content
cooperative
emotional

analytic
brave
active
insensitive
submissive
unintelligent
timid
receptive
passive
sensitive
dependent
intuitive

Rosie Revere, Engineer by Andrea Beaty

1. Use your Semantic Gender and Character Analysis Handout.
2. Refer to the GoogleDoc for the text summary



Your Turn

1. Roam around the room and select a table with the book you want to analyze
2. With your tablemates complete the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis form
3. Use those words to create a summary and place it on the GoogleDoc

Table Sharing

Homework

1. Select a favorite read aloud that you have *already* read this year. Complete the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis and be ready to reflect in at our next session.
2. Select a favorite read aloud book that you have *not* read to your class yet this year. Bring this book to our next session!

References

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Appendix M

Professional Development Session 4: From Theory to Practice

Professional Development 4: From Theory to Practice

From Theory to Practice



Professional Development Session #4

The Most Magnificent Thing

By Ashley Spires



- How does Rosie differ from the main character in *The Most Magnificent Thing*?
- Which character seems to adhere to stereotypical gender roles? Why do you think so?
- Which text do you believe promotes a positive message free from stereotypes? Why do you think so?



Homework

Think about the read aloud you've already read and analyzed. What thoughts crossed your mind after your analysis?

New thinking

Surprises

Would you continue to use this book?

Would you modify your instruction at all when using this book?

Table Sharing

What text did you bring along?

Why did you select this text?

How do you usually use this in your classroom?

Read Aloud with Partners

1. Read your text aloud with a partner
2. Complete the Semantic Gender and Character Analysis together
3. Using the completed analysis, plan some strategic stopping points or questions to pose after reading

Find a New Partner!

Read aloud your text to your partner and include your stopping points for discussion

Reflection Log

Available on the GoogleDoc

Read Aloud Reflection #1

1. How did your views of the particular text change?
2. How was the read aloud of this text different from how you previously used it with students?
3. Would you use it in your classroom again? Why or why not?
4. What were some challenges you experienced while using the text with students?

Homework

1. Use your read aloud plan with students
2. Complete the reflection log and bring it to next month's professional development.
3. Be prepared to share out with colleagues during session five

References

Chick, K. A. (2014). The Making of a Man: Rethinking and Challenging Stereotypes. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 50(4), 175-180.

Appendix N

Professional Development Session 5: Critical Literacy

Professional Development Session #5: Critical Literacy

Critical Literacy



Professional Development Session #5

Reflection and Sharing

How did your views change regarding the text you used for your read aloud with students?

How did you modify the way you used this text in the classroom?

Would you use it in your classroom again? Why or why not?

Any particular successes or challenges?

Critical Literacy

1. Disrupting the commonplace
2. Interrogating multiple perspectives
3. Focusing on sociopolitical issues
4. Promoting social justice

Components of Critical Literacy

Disrupting the Common Place

Conscious awareness regarding race, class, and gender

Thinking about the author's bias

Teachers considering their role, not passive transmitters of knowledge

In what ways have our activities so far disrupted commonplace thinking?

Interrogating Multiple Perspectives

Considering other's viewpoints

"Which voices are represented, which voices are silenced?"

Pairing texts in strategic ways in order to address marginalized groups

Components of Critical Literacy Continued

Focusing on Sociopolitical Issues

- Examining structures of power in society
- Looking at social injustices on a larger scale
- Power and privilege
- Considering how daily life is impacted based upon a person's race, class, or gender

Promoting Social Justice

- Taking action against issues of injustice
- Within the school community and beyond
- Using personal power to advocate for marginalized groups

Interrogating Multiple Perspectives

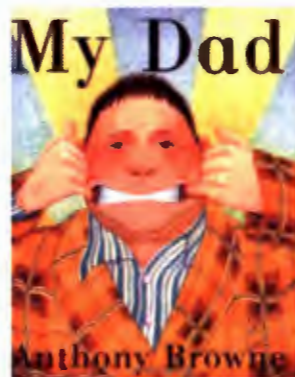
*standing in the shoes of others to
consider other viewpoints*



Multiple Perspectives on Parenthood
My Mom by Anthony Browne



Multiple Perspectives on Parenting
My Dad by Anthony Browne



At your tables discuss...

What existing gender stereotypes usually surround typical parenting roles?

How does Browne address these stereotypes with *My Mom* and *My Dad*?

What stereotypes are left unaddressed in these texts?

References

Browne, A. (2000). *My dad*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.

Browne, A. (2004). *My mom*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.

Lewison, M. Flint, A.S., & Van Sluys, K. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language Arts*, 79(5), 382-391.

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Appendix O

Professional Development Session 6: Sociopolitical Issues in Children's Literature

Professional Development Session #6: Sociopolitical Issues in Children's Literature

Sociopolitical Issues in Children's Literature



Professional Development Session #6

Karla Moller (2012) states,

“...dialogue can enhance understanding of the complex and insidious nature of racism and injustice and that deeper understanding can lead to action” (p.29).

Review of Critical Literacy Components

1. Disrupting the commonplace
2. Interrogating multiple perspectives
- 3. *Focusing on sociopolitical issues***
4. Promoting social justice

Focusing on Sociopolitical Issues

Examining structures of power in society

Looking at social injustices on a larger scale

Power and privilege

Considering how daily life is impacted based upon a person's race, class, or gender

Read Aloud
*My Name is Not
Isabella*

Historical
Perspective

Sally Ride

Marie Curie

Annie Oakley

Rosa Park

Elizabeth Blackwell

Sociopolitical Issues

My Name is Not Isabella

Biographies

1. Move around the room and find the nonfiction book that interests you
2. With your group read this nonfiction text aloud
3. Come up with some questions that you think would foster discussion about sociopolitical issues with students

“Why did this woman become famous?”

Sharing of Discussion Questions

Final Thoughts

"Addressing social justice through literature and dialogue is a long-term commitment that asks educators to commit to knowing history, knowing literature, knowing our students, and knowing ourselves" (Moller, 2012, p. 34).

Homework

1. Select a nonfiction book that places issues of race, gender, or class into a sociopolitical context
2. Develop questions that will promote students to think about issues of injustice on a larger scale
3. Read this text aloud and guide students in discussion
4. Complete the [reflection log](#).

References

Fosberry, J. (2008). *My name is not Isabella*. Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks.

Lewis, M. Flint, A.S., & Van Sluys, K. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language Arts*, 79(5), 382-391.

Moller, K. J. (2012). Developing understandings of social justice: Critical thinking in action in a literature discussion group. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 38(2), 23-36.

Appendix P

Professional Development Session 7: Taking a Stand: Moving Towards Social Action

Professional Development Session 7: Taking a Stand: Moving Towards Social Action

Take a Stand: Moving Toward Social Action



Professional Development Session #7

Reflection on Implementation

Use your *reflection log* to discuss

1. List the questions you posed for discussion.
2. Reflect upon two comments from students that show their level understanding of larger social systems and social injustice.
3. What are your next steps in helping students examine sociopolitical issues through literature and text discussion?

Sharing

Successes and Challenges

Vasquez, Tate, Harste (2013)

"Instead, we should aim for nothing less than sending forth justice-oriented citizens" (p. 8).

Promoting Social Justice

Taking action against issues of injustice

Within the school community and beyond

Using personal power to advocate for marginalized groups

Choose a Group

Group A

Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress by Christine Baldacchino

Jacob's New Dress by Sarah and Ian Hoffman

Group B

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

Piggybook by Andrew Browne

In your groups....

You will need the following roles

Reader (2)- Read the texts aloud to the group

Note taker (more than 1): Jotting notes, specific to gender representation and gender stereotypes

Graffiti Artists (2): Write down the thoughts and reactions of group members during the read aloud

Summarizers (2): Summarize the text for the whole group during sharing

Speakers (2): Present info to everyone during sharing

Once you have your roles...

1. Readers will read the two texts assigned to your group
2. Graffiti artists will use the chart paper to graffiti thoughts and reactions while reading
3. Note takers will take note of issues surrounding gender representation and gender stereotypes.
4. Come up with discussion questions to address the social inequalities in the text

Sharing in the large group

Summarizers will provide a quick summary of the two texts your group read

Graffiti Artists will share out some of the big ideas on your graffiti artwork

Speakers will share the discussion questions your group developed to address issues of social injustice

Into Social Action

Start with students' own lives

What is fair in your own life? What is not fair?

What about in this classroom?

How can we make it a more just classroom, school, or community?

Connect it back to the literature

How can you use these texts to have children promote social action?

What ideas do you think they may pick up?

Can you anticipate some things they may see as fair or unfair in your classroom?

Back to the Classroom- Homework

Read and lead discussion of another book that addresses issues of either race, class, or gender

Raise questions in order to challenge your students to think about fairness in their own lives and/or what was fair or unfair in the text

Complete the [reflection log](#)

In your grade level teams, decide on a subject area in which you would want to apply critical literacy practices.

Bring this curriculum to session 8

References

Chick, K. A. (2014). The Making of a Man: Rethinking and Challenging Stereotypes. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 50(4), 175-180.

Baldacchino, C. (2014). *Morris Micklewhite and the tangerine dress*. Toronto, Canada: Groundwood Books.

Browne, A. (1990) *Piggybook*. Decorah, Iowa: Dragonfly Books.

Hoffman, S. & Hoffman, D. (2014). *Jacob's new dress*. Chicago, Illinois: Albert Whitman & Company.

Lewison, M. Flint, A.S., & Van Sluys, K. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language Arts*, 79(5), 382-391.

Silverstein, S. (1964). *The giving tree*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Vazquez, V., Tate, S., & Harste, J. (2013) *Negotiating critical literacies with teachers: Theoretical foundations and pedagogical resources for pre-service and in-service contexts*. New York: Routledge.

Appendix Q

Professional Development Session 8: Curriculum Review

Professional Development Session 8: Curriculum Review

Curriculum Review



Professional Development Session #8

Vasquez, Tate, & Harste (2013)

"To read passively is to read a text uncritically. To see 'comprehension' as the goal of our literacy program is not longer good enough. We need to create a critically literate citizenry; and critically literate citizens need to be able to unpack the underlying systems of meaning that operate in a text" (p. 64).

Reflection Logs

1. What text(s) did you use with students and why?
2. List the questions you posed for discussion.
3. What did students identify as unfair in their lives and in the text?

List what students are seeing as unfair in the world or at school?

What are some themes that are emerging?

Do you have any ideas for addressing these issues?

—

Critically Examining Curriculum

1. *Independent Examination (5 minutes):* Use your [handout](#) to take notes.

2. *Group Examination:* Discuss your personal examination. As a group what are you noticing? Where are the problems with the curriculum?

Reflect on the following:

Where are the problems with your current curriculum? *Consider race, class, and gender*

In what ways can you embed critical literacy practices into your existing curriculum?

Keep in Mind

Components of Critical Literacy

1. Disrupting the commonplace
2. Interrogating multiple perspectives
3. Focusing on sociopolitical issues
4. Promoting social justice

Sharing by Grade Levels

What are you noticing as major problems with the curriculum?

Homework

With your grade level teams making plans for the chosen curricular area using the components of critical literacy.

During our last session, grade levels will be sharing out their plans for implementing critical literacy into the existing curriculum.

References

Vazquez, V., Tate, S., & Harste, J. (2013) *Negotiating critical literacies with teachers: Theoretical foundations and pedagogical resources for pre-service and in-service contexts*. New York: Routledge.

Appendix R

Professional Development Session 9: Celebration of Learning

Professional Development Session #9 : Celebration of Learning

Celebration of Learning



Professional Development Session #9

Sharing of Curriculum

In your grade level teams share the following with the whole group

1. What subject area did you pick?
2. What were the main problems with this curriculum in terms of race, class, or gender?
3. What changes did you make to the curriculum?
4. What areas of critical literacy will you address with these changes?

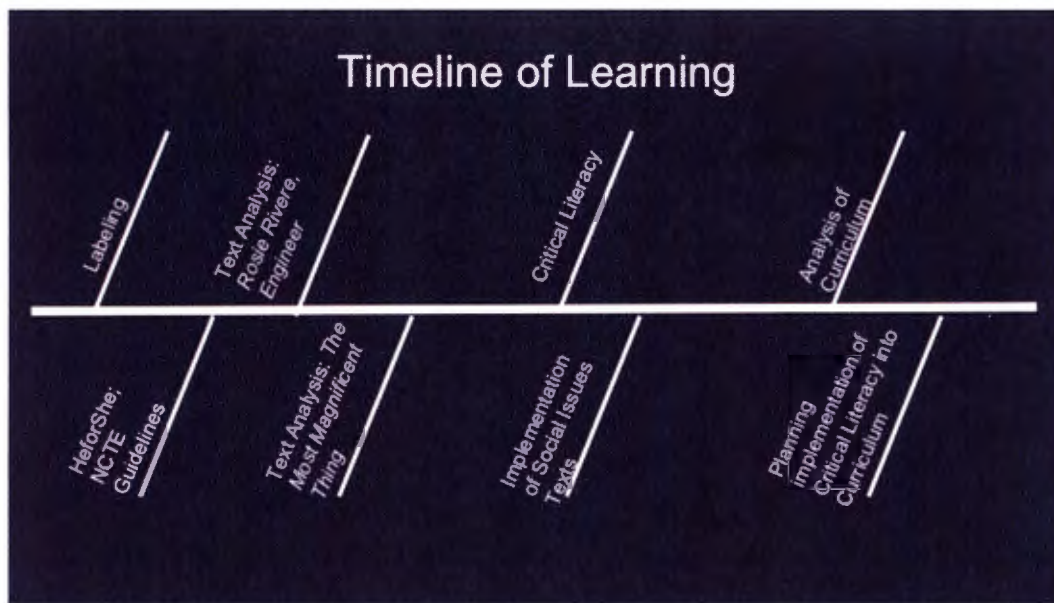
Review of your learning!

Instructional Goals from Session 1

Independently analyze children's literature for gender stereotypes

Understand the four components of critical literacy

Enact critical literacy practices in the classroom in order to create a gender-fair literacy curriculum



What were some of your personal highlights?

Final Survey of Critical Literacy