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Diversifying and Transforming a Public University's Children's Book Collection: Librarian and Teacher Education Faculty Collaboration on Grants, Research, and Collection Development

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Diversifying and Transforming a Public University's Children's Book Collection: Librarian and Teacher Education Faculty Collaboration on Grants, Research, and Collection Development

Shortened Title: Diversifying a University's Children's Book Collection

Abstract (100 words)

An education librarian and faculty member collaborated on research grants to study teacher education student's experiences with diverse books and to develop library collections. This study explores the development of internally grant-funded linguistically and culturally sustaining children's book collections and assesses the impact of the grants with a model that analyzes research guide use, library instruction sessions, and reflection on grant-funded research, among other components. Intentional collection practices, including grant-funded collection development; faculty partnership; nontraditional bibliographic tools; and alternative forms of access, discovery, and shelving led to a vital and linguistically and culturally sustaining collection which reflects education student's diverse identities.

Keywords (5-7)

Diverse children's books, collection development, grants, culturally responsive and sustaining practice, faculty-librarian collaboration, assessment model, teacher education

Introduction

As the United States is becoming increasingly diverse, with 40% of youth under age 16 identifying as Latinx, Hispanic, or Black (Frey 2020), teacher education programs are preparing teachers who will teach students with diverse identities and socio-cultural backgrounds. In considering relevant books for children, Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) has argued that children need books that both serve as mirrors by providing reflections of the children's identities, and books that provide windows to discover the experiences of others. Teachers who consider the identities, interests, and languages of children when they select books for children support literacy engagement (Henderson et al. 2020), promote their learning, and support reading fluency (Hughes-Hassell, Barkley, and Koehler 2009). Books used in these ways can be considered linguistically and culturally sustaining, and this has implications for academic librarians who manage children's collections.

A linguistically and culturally sustaining children's book collection in an academic library can be used as a teaching resource to offer children's literature experiences to teacher education students, so they can become familiar with diverse children's authors, illustrators, and their books. As teachers, they will need to acquire knowledge of children's literature in order: 1) to be able to develop their own classroom libraries; 2) to share books with students during read alouds; 3) select books for literacy instruction; 4) to serve as advocates for linguistically and culturally sustaining children's books; and 5) to be able to increase their competence in children's literature, so they can respond to children in the classroom when asked, "What should I read next?"

Diversifying an academic children's collection in an urban public university with limited collection development funds is both a necessary and challenging endeavor. It is necessary because of the benefits that access to linguistically and culturally sustaining books offer teacher education students (De Groot 2007; Cremin et al. 2008; Lehner-Quam, West, and Espinosa 2020; Altun 2018) and the children they teach. It is a daunting endeavor given limited resources available at an urban public university. Academic librarians need to think creatively about funding the development of such a collection. It is also a challenging endeavor because books in these collections need to be intentionally sought out and selected because there is a current, as well as a historic, lack of published Indigenous, Black or African, Latinx, and Pacific Islander authors and illustrators of children's books (CCBC 2020; IBCBulletin 2020; Larrick 1965).

Given the sense of how critically important it is for teacher education students to have access to diverse children's books, a research partnership developed between a school of education early childhood faculty member and an education librarian to study diverse children's books usage at their City University of New York four-year college and at a nearby elementary school. The student body at the college is very diverse, with 51% of undergraduate students and 37.9% of graduate students identifying as Hispanic and 32.1% of undergraduate students and 31.4% of graduate students identifying as African American. Nevertheless, prior to the grants in this study, the children's collection was not reflective of the composition of the campus community. Library budget expenditures on children's books had been limited to annual award winners and, if funds allowed, selected honor books. Beyond award winners, the collection only grew through donations. At the beginning of the study, the collection of 10,000 books was dated and in need of weeding. The balance of the collection was heavily weighted toward what might be considered classic children's literature, which typically lacks diversity. At a glance, the children's collection appeared to have limited current linguistically and culturally sustaining books for the college's diverse student body. Consequently, the education students rarely visited the college library to look for children's books.

Grants

The study in this article addresses a five-year period, 2015-2020, during which the education librarian and faculty member received three internal university research grants (Research Foundation CUNY 2020) over three grant cycles. This grant-funded research explored the use of linguistically and culturally sustaining children's literature in early childhood classrooms and in teacher education communities. The grants also served as an effort to diversify the library's children's book collection.

The first grant (2016-2018), titled *Children's Literature for Latino and Bilingual Children: Mirrors and Windows*, engaged children in a school setting with multimodal experiences with linguistically and culturally sustaining (Spanish/English) children's books purchased for the library collection. There were also workshops held on campus for education students and parents that featured bilingual books that served as mirrors from the collection. A research guide was developed using Springshare's LibGuide platform to highlight the grant workshops and collection (<https://libguides.lehman.edu/MirrorsandWindows>).

The second grant (2018-2019), titled *Affirming Identities: The Power of Diversity in Children's Literature*, included a survey of the reading experiences of teacher education

students. The researchers intended to learn more about student's identities, to discover their reading experience strengths, and to identify potential areas for growth. An initial review of the surveys resulted in a library book selection process based on student identities. Workshops introduced students to the collection using a teaching strategy focused on identity. A resource was created to expand on the Mirrors and Windows guide (<https://libguides.lehman.edu/ChildrensBooksThemes>). This new guide highlighted both collections within the context of school subject areas and themes of interest to children and teachers.

The third grant (2020-2021), titled *Discovering and Discussing Authentic Authored Nonfiction Children's Books: Reflecting on Our Responses*, is ongoing and expands the researchers' knowledge of children's literature. This grant focuses on nonfiction children's books by diverse authors, and research includes documentation of book discussion sessions between the two researchers on their explorations of this nonfiction collection. Our goal is to develop and study a collection of children's nonfiction books that offer a variety of perspectives and voices, particularly those voices that have been absent or overlooked in nonfiction children's literature.

The study in this article explores the development of the grant-funded linguistically and culturally sustaining children's book collections through the lens of the education librarian collaborator. The impact of the grants is analyzed with the Impact Assessment Model that was developed by the author to address the following questions:

- How can librarians and faculty members work together to support the diversity of the library collection?
- How can what is learned through grant-funded research inform the collection, its use, marketing, and future collection growth?
- What impact can grant-funded children's collection development in academic libraries have on children's book instruction?

Literature Review

Culturally relevant, culturally responsive, and culturally sustaining practice

Since academic children's collections serve college education programs, using a framework that addresses diversity in education is appropriate. Aronson and Laughter (2016) note that college education programs have adopted foundational ideas from the theories and practices of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings 1995), culturally responsive teaching (Gay 2000), and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris and Alim 2014). These ideas have been adopted and put into practice at the K-12 level (NYSED 2020a; Johnston, Montalbano, and Kirkland 2017). Librarians can review these theories of practice when they develop collections both as a way to connect library collections as well as collection development practice to teacher education faculty and students. Gay (2000) states that the "fundamental aim of culturally responsive pedagogy is to empower ethnically diverse students through academic success, cultural affiliation, and personal efficacy" (111). One way to do this, according to Gay, is to connect curriculum content with specific student communities. "In some instances, this means validating their personal experiences and cultural heritages; in others, it means teaching content entirely new to students" (112). There are clear parallels between culturally responsive teaching and in seeing books as mirrors and windows (Bishop 1990).

Paris suggests that culturally sustaining pedagogies go beyond connecting to personal experiences by supporting “young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence” (Paris 2012, 95). The *Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework* includes related ideas about selecting and using materials that reflect student identities and have diverse authorship (racial, cultural, and linguistic) (NYSED 2020b). Academic library collection development processes can support these practices and frameworks by providing both a student and community-centered approach to collection development by researching and knowing the community served by the library, collecting materials created by diverse authors, and supporting the languages spoken in the community (ALA 2020a).

Review of academic library diversifying collection efforts

Researchers have identified a lack of diversity in specific academic library collections, specifically LGBTQ+ (Matheson, Tait, and Reynolds 2020), Hispano-American (Olivia et al. 2020), and most relevant for this study, academic children’s book collections (Williams and Deyoe 2014). To rectify this situation, Berthoud and Finn (2019) emphasize the value of critical reflection in developing a diverse collection. Alexander (2013) suggests that authorial perspective is important in the case of developing collections to support Indigenous studies; for example, collecting material that is endogenous—generated from inside Indigenous cultures, rather than exogenous—from the outside. Both critical reflection on the collection process and consideration of the authorship of the materials collected inform the Impact Assessment Model for this study.

Librarians may focus their attention on a specific subject area to improve the diversity of their collections, such as art, design, and architecture (Manuell, McEntee, and Chester 2019), Africana materials (Berthoud and Finn 2019), or Indigenous materials (Meyer 2011). Librarians developing these collections seek out “content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups,” one of the collection development requirements specified in the American Library Association’s *Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights* (ALA 2020a). Librarians are also taking a community-focused approach to ensure that collections are reflective of and useful for specific communities, such as the Somali collection at Minnesota State University (Schomberg and Grace 2005). This community focus is articulated in the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) *Diversity Standards Toolkit* which states, “Librarians and library staff shall develop collections and provide programs and services that are inclusive of the needs of all persons in the community the library serves” (ACRL 2020). Both the development of a tightly focused subject collection and a collection that serves a diverse community reinforces the process of developing a culturally sustaining children’s book collection through knowledge of an academic library student body.

Collection funding and sustainability

Librarians must address issues of funding and sustainability when they develop a new diverse collection. Many of the studies in the literature employ creative sources of funding, such as book fairs and rewards programs (Buchanan and Fox 2019) and crowd-funded projects like DonorsChoose (Henderson et al. 2020) to fund diverse collections. Other collection projects are funded by more traditional grants (Schomberg and Grace 2005). It is notable that after the research projects documented in the articles concluded, the initial funding evolved in some cases

to more stable sources of funding, such as a budget for book purchases (Buchanan and Fox 2019) and administrative funding support for diverse classroom libraries (Henderson et al. 2020). Some research projects led to additional grants, like the American Library Association Carnegie-Whitney grant, which funded the production of a bibliography of Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast and Inland Plateau materials for youth (Meyer 2011). In addition to sustainability through funding, there are also sustainable work processes in libraries. Stone (2020) recommends changed workflows to make collecting diverse works more routine.

Collection development strategies and acquisitions

Researchers suggest new ways of developing collections and acquisitions to improve diversity. Buchanan and Fox employ shared power in collection development decisions. They concur with Braden and Rodriguez (2016), advancing that “it is easy to gloss over the role of power in arriving at any collection, including collections in teacher education, but the decision-making process is essential to whether the dominant discourse is perpetuated or disrupted through children’s literature” (Buchanan and Fox 2019, 197). Manuell, McEntee, and Chester (2019) have employed a crowd sourcing strategy to discover relevant titles for their Equity Collection in design. These very intentional processes exemplify a community-focused approach to material selection.

Developing a diverse collection requires new relationships with a wider variety of publishers and suppliers, also recommended in *Diverse Collections* (ALA 2020a). Berthoud and Finn (2019) and Alexander (2013) offer developing new relationships with smaller presses and recommend reevaluating suppliers. Ciszek and Young (2010) caution that published bibliographies of diverse books might be dated. As an alternative, they propose using vendor-created tools and book award sites. Websites, such as diverse children’s literature focused blogs can be helpful to keep up with the field. Stone (2020) used professional theater websites as resources to increase diversity in a script collection. Intentionality in collection development requires also being intentional about the tools used to find and acquire diverse materials.

Meyer contends that some selection tools can serve as resources to assist in deselection as a way to identify books that are not factual or might misinterpret tribal knowledge (2011). Buchanan and Fox (2019) advise that books should be reviewed for stereotypes and deficit perspectives. Guides such as Derman-Sparks’s (2013) *Guide for Selecting Anti-bias Children’s Books* can be used to measure and evaluate books for bias. Intentionality in making choices about what to acquire, and what not to acquire, is very important.

Collection access

Another area of responsibility identified in *Diverse Collections* (ALA 2020a) is “evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed.” Once the books have been acquired, librarians might encounter issues of bias and usability with the tools intended to help students find books. Researchers cite challenges with Library of Congress Subject Headings, noting inherent bias in classification schemes and dated subject heading vocabulary (Berman, 1993; Alexander 2013; Matheson, Tait, and Reynolds 2020). Additionally, students may not be familiar with subject headings and classification schemes. Hays’s (2020) survey of College of Staten Island students enrolled in courses in the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program

indicates low student familiarity with library tools, such as relevant call number ranges, subject terms, and databases to help them discover LGBTQ materials.

Partnerships with faculty and the community can increase awareness of diverse collections (Buchanan and Fox 2019; Matheson, Tait, and Reynolds 2020). Research guides provide guidance on how to find materials and a means to feature diverse authors and new books (Matheson, Tait, and Reynolds 2020). With both functions, guides provide another tool for discovery of diverse material.

Collection-focused instruction

Shipman (2014) addresses collection development efficiencies for the purchase of award-winning children's books to expand children's book offerings in the library through a collaborative process with the school of education at Auburn. Shipman observes that his partnership effort with the school of education and the library led to an increase in instructional classes. At the start of the project, children's book-focused library instruction did not exist, but over the course of the collection development project, faculty requested library instruction sessions around the new collection.

Germek (2016) demonstrates how a small university with a limited budget can create a small special collection, in this case a collection focused on the history of the book, to improve instruction offerings. After a demonstration project using existing older books from the library collection as primary sources, an outreach effort to faculty requesting letters of support for the development of a collection led to college funding. After several semesters of one-shot library visits in classes, a partnership with the school of English led to the development of a 3-credit course focused on the history of the book. In both of these studies, new library collections led to increased library instruction.

Collection assessment

Researchers use assessment strategies to evaluate the diversity of existing collections as well as assess the development of new collections. Cizek and Young (2010) note that assessment approaches can be either collection-centered or user-centered, and may be quantitative (circulation and use statistics, diversity codes, and comparison to bibliographies) or qualitative (diversity subject specialist, collection development statement, focus groups, and surveys). They highlight two strategies relevant for this study. They observe that librarians who manage academic children's book collections may have a close relationship with the collection's users, which puts them in a fortuitous position to do qualitative assessments that are collection and user centered. The other strategy focuses on enhanced cataloging records, which can help identify diverse books, provided that the tags or codes are consistently applied.

One strategy for collection diversity assessment focuses on the diversity of the authors and illustrators whose works are collected (Manuell, McEntee, and Chester 2019). Kristick used twenty-two author-focused diversity book awards to examine the diversity of books in an academic library collection (2020). Williams and Deyoe's comparative study also used book awards to develop a list-checking method to assess the diversity of a collection. The researchers developed their own diversity checklist, using the Coretta Scott King, John Steptoe, Pura Belpré, APALA (Asian Pacific American Library Association), and AILA (American Indian Library

Association) Awards (Williams and Deyoe 2014). These awards require that the author or illustrator identifies as African American (Coretta Scott King), Latinx (Pura Belpré), Asian/Pacific Islander American (APALA), or Indigenous (AILA).

There is much to be learned from these assessment approaches. Considerations of both qualitative and quantitative approaches and user-centered and collection-centered measures (Ciszek and Young 2010) are valuable for this study because grant-funded projects have the potential to impact an array of library activities through collection development and research. Diversity measures of the collection also need to be considered (Kristick 2020; Williams and Deyoe 2014) as does the impact of the collection on the community (Shipman 2014; Germek 2016). Therefore, measuring the impact of grant-funded collections requires a multi-faceted assessment model.

Methodology: Impact Assessment Model

An Impact Assessment Model (Figure 1) was developed from elements in the literature review studies to assess the collective impact of the research grants on the library. The model was also used to guide data collection. It is comprised of five components related to each other and, when considered together, provide direction for future grants and research.

- Component 1: Grant-funded Collection Size and Budget is a measure of the size of the collections which includes grant-funded titles and those titles subsequently added to the collections.
- Component 2: Author and Illustrator Diversity is an assessment of the diversity of the collection by reviewing the identities of the authors and illustrators listed in the library's children's book research guide: <https://libguides.lehman.edu/ChildrensBooksThemes>.
- Component 3: Research Guide Usage includes a user-centered assessment of the frequency of page views of the children's book research guide.
- Component 4: Children's Book-focused Instruction is an analysis of the number of children's book instruction sessions in relationship to the grants timeline.
- Component 5: Critical Reflection is an objective review of the grant-funded research results and the collaborative collection development process.

These areas comprise the Impact Assessment Model (Figure 1), which was used to assess the overall impact of the grants on the library. This multi-faceted and culturally relevant and sustaining model provides a way to measure the diversity of the grant-funded collections over time and a way to look at the impact of the grants on the library community through instruction and collection-focused research guide usage. Critical reflection on the grant research informs future collection development and research directions.

Figure 1. Impact Assessment Model.



The collection book totals (Component 1) were run by the library's head of technical services in the library's former cataloging system and reflect the collection totals prior to migration to the library's new library services platform in August 2020. Each book purchased with grant funds was tagged in the catalog record with the name of the grant so all books from that grant could be retrieved together in a search. The names are: "PSC-CUNY Bilingual-Bicultural Literacy Collection" and "PSC-CUNY Identities Collection." Those library items added to the collections and not funded by the grant were given the following names, "Bilingual-Bicultural Literacy Collection" and "Identities Collection." Since the collection name was duplicated, a search for "Identities Collection" also pulled up items funded by the grant with the name "PSC-CUNY Identities Collection." This made it easy to calculate the collection total.

The grant-funded collections were developed using the diversity definition from We Need Diverse Books. They "recognize all diverse experiences, including (but not limited to) LGBTQIA, Native, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities" (2020). For this study, the identity of diverse authors and illustrators included in the library's children's book research guide author and illustrator list was examined over the grant time periods (Component 2). The list at the start of the study reflected authors and illustrators familiar to the education librarian. Subsequently, authors and illustrators who had more than two books in the grant-funded collections were added to the list, which included links to their websites. Authors without websites were not listed. To ensure data trustworthiness when addressing diversity, the identity of the author or illustrator was determined by visiting the author or illustrator's website to see how they identified themselves. The site was

reviewed to see if the author or illustrator was awarded the Coretta Scott King Award (EMIERT 2020) or Pura Belpré Award (ALA 2020b) as another way to determine identity.

The number of research guide views (Component 3) and children’s book-focused instruction sessions (Component 4) were measured during the years of the grant-funded collections. Children’s book research guide views were calculated from an estimated first day of the academic year (August 26) and an estimated last day of the summer semester (August 25). Research guide views were calculated using LibGuides (<https://springshare.com/libguides/>) statistics. Children’s book instruction sessions were calculated using the library’s instruction calendar in LibCal, through which librarians reserve instructional space and document library classes.

The fifth component of the Impact Assessment Model is a critical reflection on the scholarship and collection development process as a result of the grants. The studies funded by the first two grants were IRB-approved, as they involved human subjects. The first grant research activities took place in an elementary school with K-2nd grade children, and the bilingual-children’s book-focused lessons were co-developed and co-taught by both researchers. The research included a pre- and post-survey given to teacher education students before and after a library instruction session with the bilingual books from the collection. The second grant studied the diverse reading experiences through a survey of new education students at the college, as well as a pre- and post-survey given to students who participated in the library class session using books from the Identity Collection. Reflection on grant-funded research and collection development was ongoing and informed the focus of the next year’s research grant.

Results

Component 1: Grant-funded collection size and budget

The initial collection budget came from the research grants. The first two grants used a portion of the grant budget for the collection, and the remainder of the budget for a project assistant to transcribe research interviews and class sessions, and code survey data. In addition to grant-funded book acquisition, books were pulled from the existing children’s book library. The collections continued to grow after the grant period primarily through gifts, targeted acquisitions, and purchases of award-winning books. Books purchased with the grant funds comprised 43% of the Bilingual-Bicultural Collection and 34% of the Identity Collection (Table 1). Evidently the grants served as a catalyst to organize subsequent collecting in these areas and as a way to highlight books already in the collection.

Table 1. Component 1: Grant-funded collection size and budget.

Grant-funded Collection	Grant Period	Grant Total	Books Budget	Total Books Purchased	Size of Collection in October 2020
Bilingual-Bicultural	2016-2017	\$3,500	\$2,950	260	611
Identity	2018-2019	\$3,500	\$1,960	152	450
Nonfiction	2020-2021 (as of 10/2020)	\$3,500	\$3,500	In process	In process

Component 2: Author and illustrator diversity

The names on the author and illustrator research guide list featured authors and illustrators whose books were added to the Bilingual-Bicultural and Identity Collections. The analysis of the authors and illustrators on the list focused on their identities (Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and White). This list started with 33 authors or illustrators, 45% of whom were BIPOC. By fall 2020, the list had tripled in size and 75% of the authors and illustrators on the list were BIPOC (Table 2).

Table 2. Component 2: Author and illustrator diversity in research guide author/illustrator list.

Grant funded-collection	Period Measured	Total Authors or Illustrators Added	Total/ Percentage White Authors or Illustrators	Total/ Percentage BIPOC Authors or Illustrators
	2015-2016	33	18/ 55%	15/ 45%
Bilingual-Bicultural	2016-2018	15	3/ 20%	12/ 80%
Identity	2018-2020	23	4/ 17%	19/ 83%
Nonfiction	2020-2021 (as of 10/2020)	39	2/ 5%	37/ 95%
Totals		110	27/ 25%	83/ 75%

Component 3: Research guide usage and Component 4: Children’s book-focused instruction

A children’s book research guide was created to highlight the linguistically and culturally sustaining books in the collection and to serve as an alternative way to discover these books in the library. The guide has grown to include the following sections: Content Areas: Social Studies, Math, Science, Literacy, Art, and Music; Themes: New York Stories, Friendship, Families, Sports, Tough Conversations, Food, Transportation, and Nature; Books for Specific Age Groups: Early Readers, Chapter Books, and Middle Grades; Latinx and Bilingual Books; Identity; Author and Illustrator Websites; and eBooks and Digital Books. Books from the grant-funded collections were featured in all sections of the guide. The Bilingual section of the guide highlights books from the Bilingual-Bicultural collection and an Identity section was created during the Identity grant year. A nonfiction section consisting of books by diverse authors will be created after the books in the grant-funded collection are ordered and cataloged. Each year the guide has experienced greater number of views. The guide was the third most viewed guide of the education subject library guides in academic year 2018-2019, which was its first full year, the second most viewed guide in academic year 2019-2020, and the most viewed guide of all of the education subject guides in academic year 2020-October 2020 (Table 3).

Table 3. Component 3: Research guide usage.

Grant Year	Academic Year	Number of Views	Notes

	2017-2018	648	(1/2 year, created in January)
Identity	2018-2019	1,056	Added Identity section mid-year
	2019-2020	1,879	Added Digital Book section in spring due to remote instruction
Nonfiction	2020- (2 months)	2,673	Fall only, all remote

Children’s book instruction grew as the linguistically and culturally sustaining books purchased from the grants were added to the collection (Table 4). Instruction in the physical library took place in a seminar room adjacent to the children’s collection and focused on browsing since the children’s book stacks were nearby. For each class, books related to the class session and to the recent grant were displayed in the seminar room and were either organized by author/illustrator or theme.

Table 4. Component 4: Children’s book-focused instruction.

Grant Year	Academic Year	Number of Classes	Notes
	2014-2015	0	
	2015-2016	2	
Bilingual-Bicultural	2016-2017	10	Including 3 bilingual grant research workshop sessions
	2017-2018	7	
Identity	2018-2019	18	Including 4 identity grant research workshop sessions
	2019-2020	20	Included 3 online classes due to remote instruction
Nonfiction	2020- (3 months)	10	Fall only, all remote instruction

Research guide usage and children’s book-focused instruction (Components 3 and 4) became deeply integrated during the pandemic. From mid-March 2020 through fall semester 2020, all education instruction was conducted remotely due to COVID-19. With remote instruction, the children’s book research guide served as a stand-in for in-person exploration of children’s book displays and stacks browsing, and offered a means to experience the grant-funded children’s collections. A comparison of the children’s research guide views for the same period of time (August 26-October 29) in 2019 and 2020 showed 516 views of the guide in fall 2019, compared with 2,673 views in fall 2020, over five times the number of guide views. This dramatic growth demonstrated how integral the guide was to diverse children’s book library instruction during this period.

Component 5: Critical Reflection

Critical reflection on the grant-funded research experiences and on the collection development process was integral to future collection and grant directions. Reflection clarified the education librarian’s growth in understanding about linguistically and culturally sustaining children’s

books and their impact on K-2nd grade children and on teacher education students. Critical reflection helped the researchers determine which aspect of the collection needed attention, sparked questions that led to the next research agenda, and informed library instruction strategies. Research collaboration between the education librarian and the school of education faculty member benefited from each member bringing discipline knowledge, their unique perspectives on their professions, and their experiences with children's literature, resulting in ongoing conversations informed by research questions, research findings, and their varied experiences.

Limitations

Measuring the diversity of the authors and illustrators listed in the research guide may not represent all authors and illustrators included in the collection because authors and illustrators were only included on the list if they had a website. Authors and illustrators without a website or with a social media presence only were not included.

Data that would have been helpful were children's book circulation statistics since these indicate how many students checked out books from the grant-funded collections and the specific books that circulated. Unfortunately, the research took place during a transition to a new library services platform, a time when the legacy system didn't allow for local access to circulation data.

Discussion

The discussion will focus on the three research questions, the Impact Assessment Model and collection sustainability, and implications for future research informed by the data from the Impact Assessment Model components.

How can librarians and faculty members work together to support the diversity of the library collection?

The librarian and education faculty member offered diverse perspectives and experiences that benefited the co-developed children's book collections. The collaboration began when the education faculty member proposed working together on a research grant on bilingual books. Collaborative collection development activities included sharing with each other diverse children's book resources, such as articles from the professional literature, children's book-focused blog-postings, publisher materials, and vendor information, all of which are similar to the kinds of book selection resources recommended in *Diverse Collections* (ALA 2020a) and identified in the literature (Berthoud and Finn 2019; Alexander 2013; Stone 2020). Shared power in the collection development process helped ensure that the collection developed was relevant to the community. The co-development and analysis of research projects informed collection development through seeing books in action in the hands of children and education students, through greater knowledge of the teacher education students, and through shared discussion about books. Scholarly activities, such as writing and presenting together at both education, library, public school, and children's book-focused conferences and events provided introduction to new scholars, authors, illustrators, and led to knowledge that could support linguistically and culturally sustaining children's book instruction. Both partner's involvement in collection development led to a deeper knowledge of the library's children's book collection at the school of education. This greater faculty awareness of the collection was indicated by an increase in

faculty member's requests to have library instruction sessions that focused on the newly developed collections.

How can what is learned through grant-funded research inform the collection, its use, marketing, and future collection growth?

While the education faculty member is an expert in bilingual education, the education librarian, who had little knowledge of bilingual children's books prior to the collaborative grants, was introduced to bilingual books through the first grant, *Children's Literature for Latino and Bilingual Children: Mirrors and Windows*. Through the research with K-2nd grade children in the classroom, the education librarian facilitated and observed children's interaction with books from the collection. The librarian learned about authors in the field, about different types of bilingual book formats, and the various ways that languages appear on the page. She learned about publishers who specialize in bilingual books, vendors who sell them, and publishers who produce simultaneous versions of children's books in English and Spanish. She saw K-2nd grade children enthusiastically respond to bilingual books (Spanish/English), and she observed and helped those children create their own bilingual books as part of the research process (Espinosa and Lehner-Quam 2019). All of these experiences supported the development of a linguistically and culturally sustaining collection and provided the librarian with a deepening knowledge of Latinx authors and illustrators.

Research activities funded by the second grant, *Affirming Identities: The Power of Diversity in Children's Literature*, focused on the exploration of the cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and reading habits of students early in their teacher education program. This led to the creation of the Identity Collection, a collection of books by authors whose identities could be reflected in the teacher education students. The languages in the collection expanded from English and Spanish to include bilingual books in Bengali, Arabic, Creole, and Urdu in an effort to serve students on the multilingual campus. The list of specialized vendors to supply books increased. Most of the books added to the collection focused on realistic fiction, with a wide range of nationalities, cultures, multiracial backgrounds, and religions depicted in the book's characters. Stories with single-parent households, LGBTQ characters, and blended families were sought out and selected for the collection.

Research questions for the *Affirming Identities* grant developed from the librarian's and education faculty member's observations in class and during library instruction of education student's interactions with children's books and from a curiosity about student's experiences with children's literature. The research findings from the *Affirming Identities* research show that education students who learned about "diverse and bilingual books were likely to share [diverse and bilingual books] with their students" (Lehner-Quam, West, and Espinosa 2020, 25) and that those who reported enjoying "specific books as children are likely to share those books they remember reading with their students" (Lehner-Quam, West, and Espinosa 2020, 26). Both findings suggest that education students could benefit from linguistically and culturally sustaining children's book instruction.

The impact of seeing children respond to bilingual books in K-2nd grade classrooms and learning about the reading experiences of education students increased the urgency in the education librarian and school of education faculty member to expand the linguistically and

culturally sustaining children's book collections (see Table 2) and to offer instruction around them. Research for the third grant, *Discovering and Discussing Authentic Authored Nonfiction Children's Books: Reflecting on Our Responses*, is in process, and will address nonfiction children's books by diverse authors.

With a culturally sustaining collection development practice, we were able to refocus the children's collection, which seemed to have lost value for the community and was not highlighted by faculty as a source of relevant children's books for study and fieldwork prior to the grants. The grants also provided an opportunity to feature relevant children's books already in the library holdings. The education faculty member suggested shelving the books together, so they could be easily found by students. Two ranges of shelves were cleared at the entrance to the education section of the library for the Identity Collection, and two ranges were cleared at the entrance to the children's collection for the Bilingual-Bicultural Collection. These prime shelving locations made for easy discovery by students as they entered these areas of the library. Books for purchase and books in the collection by diverse authors have been identified for the new nonfiction collection. The education faculty member expressed surprise at how many nonfiction books by diverse authors were already in the library holdings and were relevant for this new collection. This response echoed the discovery challenges for finding diverse books and the need for research guides (Table 3), special shelving locations, and library instruction to feature new collections. The grants provided a way to identify and highlight linguistically and culturally sustaining books already in library collections, and the children's book research guide provided an alternative discovery tool for students.

What impact can grant-funded children's collection development in academic libraries have on children's book instruction?

In line with themes in the literature, one would expect a culturally sustaining collection development practice with a strong focus on the needs of the local community to lead to more collection focused instruction. The impact of the grants-funded collections in this area was strong. In a five-year period, the library went from zero children's book instruction sessions in an academic year to 20 (Table 4). These sessions were highly interactive, incorporated both information about the grant-funded collections and offered time for students to browse and read books. Additionally, requests for children's book instruction have expanded to other areas of the college. The campus Speech and Hearing Clinic now includes a library children's book session as part of their speech clinician practicum orientation each semester.

The Impact Assessment Model and collection sustainability

The Impact Assessment Model (Figure 1) of the partnership grants offers a critical lens to assess the overall impact of the grants. This model can inform the development of future grants and can serve as a way to assess the impact of other grant projects. The components of the model offer culturally relevant and sustaining practices by both measuring the number of diverse authors and illustrators featured in the collection, and by measuring the impact of the collection on a community through evaluating collection-informed instruction and research guide usage. All of these components are impacted by critical reflection on the research conducted by the grants, which have offered deeper knowledge of the diverse communities served by the library.

The Impact Assessment Model supports collection sustainability, an issue for collections funded by grants. As the literature review illustrates, some collection development projects saw

increased budget or grants after research projects (Buchanan and Fox 2019; Henderson et al. 2020) and some received national grants as a way to extend the research (Meyer 2011). A look at the size of the grant-funded collections (Component 1) in this study shows that the linguistically and culturally sustaining collections grew from the initial grant purchase, so that less than 45% of the collections were purchased through the grant (Table 1). The grants functioned as a catalyst, and subsequently the collection grew through donations, award winning titles, and through targeted use of library collection funds to purchase new titles. In addition, the grants provided an opportunity to highlight books that were already part of the collection. Impact Assessment Model components 2, 3, 4, and 5 demonstrate growth in the diversity of the authors featured in the library research guide, increased use of the guide, and ways that instruction has grown and been changed due to research. The Model demonstrates the value of the collections to the campus community, which can support an argument for increased funding for the children's collection moving forward.

Future research and implications

The Impact Assessment Model (Figure 1) has potential for academic librarians wishing to diversify their children's collections by offering a way to assess the impact of collection-focused research grants on their libraries. All components play a role in the multifaceted model. In particular, Component 5, critical reflection on the research, informs the direction of future collection-focused research grants since reflection on past research leads to development of future research questions, thus continuing the cycle of the Impact Assessment Model. The Model can strengthen future grant proposals by framing funding assessment, reporting, and by serving as a way to advocate for funding decisions.

An interrogation of the Impact Assessment Model can inform Model modifications or enhancements, such as student usage of the grant-funded collections. Looking forward, librarians could enhance the Model by adding a sixth component, a review of collection usage data to inform community use of the collection. This is just becoming available at the college through the new library services platform. Collection usage data could inform instruction, collection marketing and access decisions, and future collection development.

Conclusion

The collections developed by the grants through culturally responsive and sustaining practices offer greater connection to school of education faculty and students, and therefore to the K-12 community. There is a synergy when librarians embrace the same practices being employed in schools of education and in K-12 settings. These practices can be observed in the collaborative ways collections are developed, increased awareness of the identities of education students, the linguistically and culturally sustaining materials collected, in the ways that instruction happens around the collections, and therefore, in the culturally responsive and sustaining ways that the impact of the grant-funded collections are assessed.

The impact of librarian/school of education faculty partnerships on collaborative research grants used to develop linguistically and culturally sustaining library collections cannot be underestimated. Research into the community, such as teacher education student's identities and local school children's experiences with bilingual books informs the collection development process to ensure that books that are relevant to the students are available in the library.

Collaborative research impacts library instruction around the diverse collections and offers deeper knowledge of students and their responses to library classes focused on diverse books. A shared collection development process assures that the library collection is developed through multiple perspectives, both librarian and faculty member. This is an impactful, culturally sustaining practice.

The collection-focused grants open up opportunities to demonstrate the need and impact of intentionally developed diverse collections. Intentional because developing diverse children's collections requires non-traditional methods and resources for acquisition of books, and for making these books visible and findable in the library. The grants made a dated collection current and vibrant, offering teacher education students linguistically and culturally sustaining resources with which they can increase their knowledge of children's books to extend into K-12 classrooms and support their own culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy.

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