

Cutting it Out: Curating Diverse Classroom Libraries

Esmeralda Mora, EdD; Stacy Witkowski, MAT; Kristi Lentz, MSED

Friday, November 21st, 2025, 4:30 PM CST - 5:15 PM CST
Ernest Morial Convention Center, Room 213



Goals for this session

- 1 Get to know a little bit about each other.
- 2 Discuss reasons to curate an inclusive & diverse classroom library.
- 3 Explore a web resource that features reviews of language learner literature from perspectives of social justice.
- 4 Evaluate a short text in English through lenses of social justice.
- 5 Consider how to apply these tools to evaluate texts in classrooms.
- 6 Reflect on takeaways.

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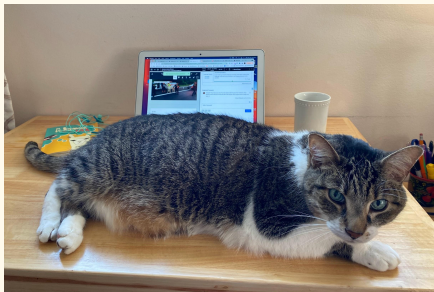
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Kristi Lentz, MSED

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Spanish and English Teacher / Member of LLLAB

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Minnesota, USA



Who is in the audience?

What language(s) do you teach?

What level(s) do you teach?

Where are you in your teaching career?

Do you have a classroom library?

Who decides what is in your classroom library?

- 1** My boss / administration / school board dictates what I use.
- 2** I work together with my department to decide.
- 3** I'm given guidelines, but I have some freedom.
- 4** I'm free to make all my own decisions.
- 5** I'm the one who makes decisions for others.



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Why is it important to curate an inclusive and diverse classroom library?



<https://tinyurl.com/ACTFL25Libraries>

Password: ACTFL25 (case sensitive)

Reasons to curate an inclusive and diverse classroom library (inspired by Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop)

- **Mirrors:** Students can see that they belong in this language and in this classroom.
- **Windows:** Students can read about the lives of people different from them, and grow empathy.
- **Sliding Glass Doors:** Students can imagine themselves entering the worlds they read about.



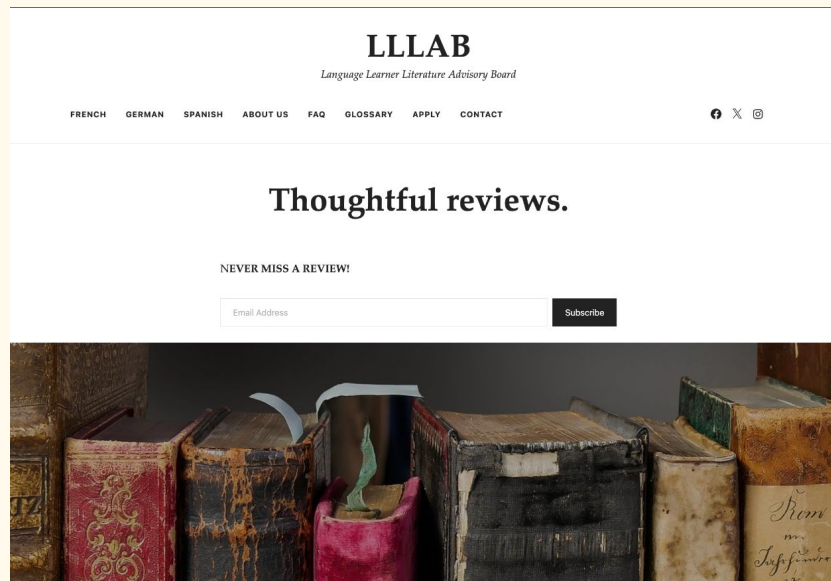
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Language Learner Literature Advisory Board (LLLAB)

WeAreLLLAB.org

- Dedicated review teams
- Consistent normed approach and process
- Reviews of readers in Spanish, French, and German



Explore LLLAB Website



WeAreLLLAB.org



Discussion

- Which review(s) did you explore?
- What are your takeaways?

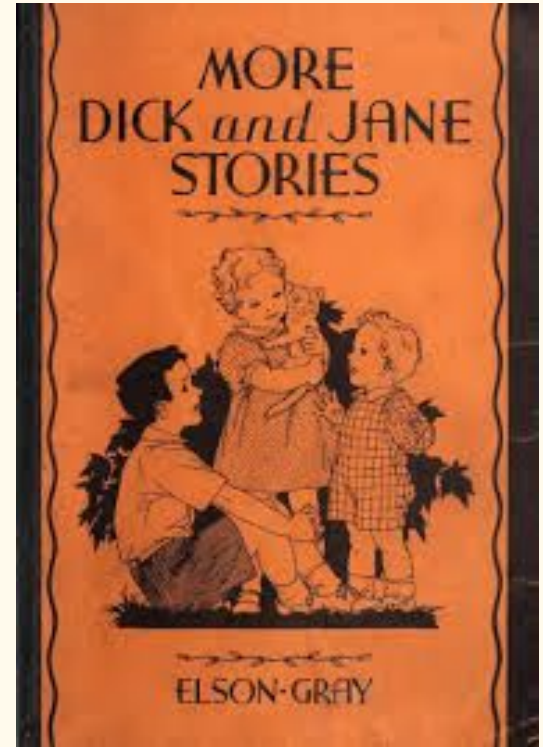


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Evaluate a short text in English through lenses of social justice.

Stories begin on
pages 18 & 38



<https://tinyurl.com/DickAndJaneStories>



Spot and the Cookies

"Come! Come!" said Dick.

"Cookies and candy!

Good cookies and candy!

Candy dogs!

Candy kittens!

Candy chickens!"

18



"I want some candy," said Jane.

"I want candy dogs."

Dick said, "Here is one."

"Oh," said Jane.

"I want two candy dogs.

And I want a candy chicken."

"Here they are," said Dick.

19



"Cookies! Cookies!" said Baby.

"Baby wants cookies."

"Here, Baby," said Dick.

"Here is a big one for you.

It is good."

20

Optional: Click [here](#) for the full text.



Jane said, "Here is Spot.
He wants some cookies."
Dick said, "Run away, Spot.
Cookies are not for dogs."

21



Jump! went Spot.
And away he ran!
Away went two big cookies.
"Oh, oh!" laughed Dick and Jane.
"Spot is a funny dog."
"Oh, oh!" laughed Baby.

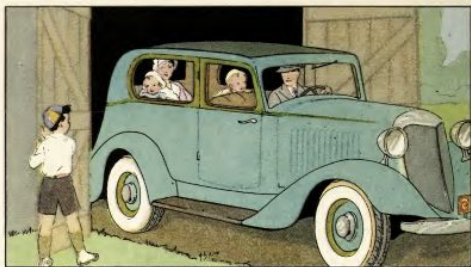
22



"Come here, Spot," said Jane.
"Bow-wow," said Spot.
"I will not come.
Cookies make a good dinner.
Thank you. Thank you.
Good-by."

23

Optional: Click [here](#) for the full text.



Grandmother and Grandfather

"Away we go!" said Jane.
 "Away we go to see Grandmother.
 Away we go to see Grandfather."
 Baby said, "Go, go, go!"
 "Jump in, Dick," said Father.
 Away they went!

38



"Hello," said Grandfather.
 "Here are Dick and Jane.
 And here is Baby.
 We are happy to see you."
 Dick and Jane said, "Hello.
 Hello, Grandfather.
 Hello, Grandmother."
 Baby said, "Hello, hello."

39

"Come in," said Grandmother.
 "Come to dinner."
 "What a good dinner!" said Dick.
 "Thank you, Grandmother.
 Thank you for the good dinner."
 "Thank you," said Jane.
 Baby said, "Good dinner!
 Thank you, thank you."

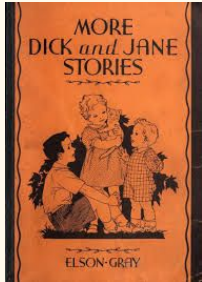


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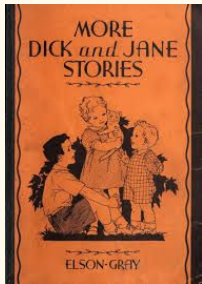
Optional: Click [here](#) for the full text.

Identities Framework for Auditing Classroom Reading Materials	Languages spoken	Sex and Genders	Social classes
Sexual Orientations	Religions, Syncretism, and Spirituality	(Dis)Abilities	Ages
Family, Relationships	Body Descriptions	Neurotypes	Races Ethnicities Nationalities

Identities Framework for Auditing Classroom Reading Materials

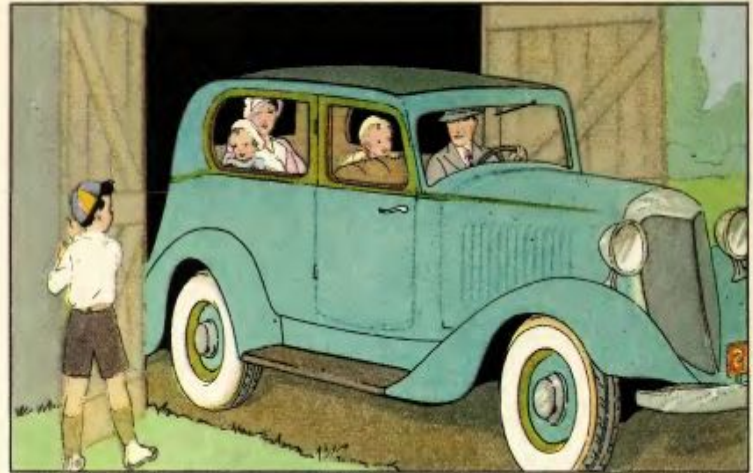
Races Ethnicities Nationalities None mentioned in text	Languages spoken None mentioned in text	Sex and Genders Female Non-binary Gender-fluid Transgender Male Intersex Other None mentioned	Social classes Poor Upper class Working class Other Middle class None mentioned in text
Sexual Orientations Asexual Heterosexual Bisexual Lesbian Gay Queer Other None mentioned in text	Religions, Syncretism, and Spirituality → Cultural manifestations → Personal faith identities None mentioned in text	(Dis)Abilities Disabled (Specify) Impaired Non-Impaired Non-disabled Other None mentioned in text	Ages Child: Adult: 0-6 Young 18-35 6-12 Mid-life 35-65 Teen 13-18 Senior 65+ None mentioned in text
Family, Relationships Extended family Communal Homoparental Heteroparental Single parent Multiparental Guardian/foster care None mentioned in text	Body Descriptions Plus-size Straight-size Other (special physical traits) None mentioned in text	Neurotypes Neurodivergent Neurotypical None mentioned in text	

Identities Framework for Auditing Classroom Reading Materials

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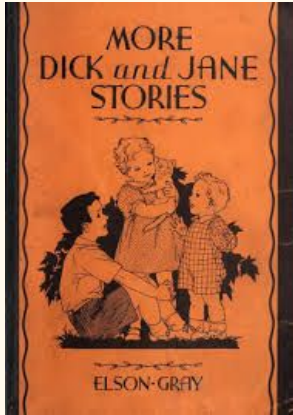
Illustrations

To what extent
do the illustrations present
positive and/or thoughtful
representations of
identities?



What **tropes** might be present in the text?

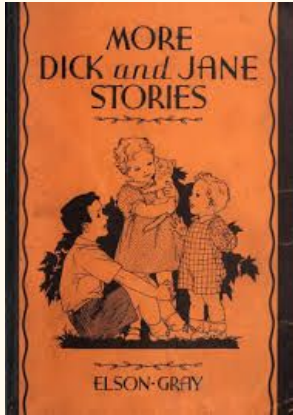
(drawn from Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard)



1. Problems faced by characters with an identity belonging to a marginalized group are resolved through the benevolent intervention of a white person, a male, a straight person, a body-abled person, etc. (saviorism)
2. Characters of color are assumed to have low family wealth, low educational attainment and/or low income.
3. The text (including illustrations) upholds gender stereotypes.

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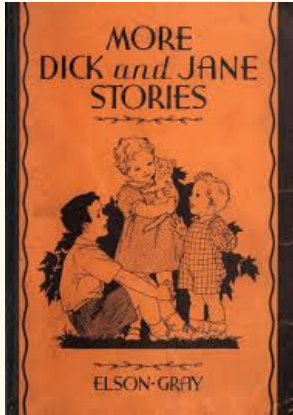
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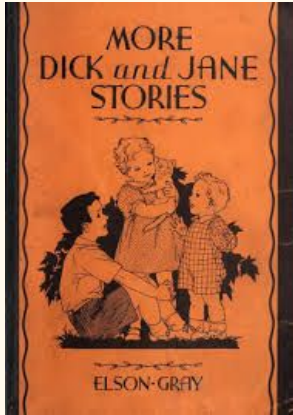
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4. Social situations and problems are seen as individual problems, not situated within a societal context.
5. Characters of diverse backgrounds are represented stereotypically, or presented as foreign or exotic or are tokenized.
6. Certain people or groups are left out or given roles that don't enable them to be heard.

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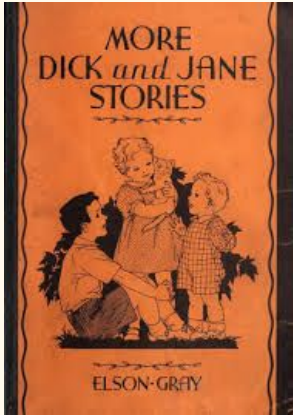
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What **Social Justice Standards** might be met by the text?

(from Learning for Justice's anti-bias framework)



1. **Identity:** Promote a healthy self-concept and exploration of identity.
2. **Diversity:** Foster intergroup understanding.
3. **Justice:** Raise awareness of prejudice and injustice.
4. **Action:** Motivate students to act by highlighting individual and collective struggles against injustice.

Recommended Resources



- [Language Learner Literature Advisory Board \(LLLAB\)](#)
- [Social Justice Standards](#) from Learning for Justice
- [Culturally Responsive ELA Curriculum Scorecard](#) from NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools



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Consider how to apply these tools to evaluate texts in classrooms

- Think** Please reflect silently on how you might evaluate texts you use in your own classrooms, using the principles we have discussed.
- Pair** Please discuss in small groups how this process relates to your selection of classroom texts.
- Share** Time permitting, we will invite responses to share with the entire group.



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Reflect on takeaways.

Exit Ticket:

Please write your key takeaways and action steps.





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Thank you!

Feel free to contact: WeAreLLLAB@gmail.com

Where we're coming from / More information

- [Stephen Krashen](#) – Reading facilitates language acquisition.
- [Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books](#) by [Social Justice Books](#) (a project of [Learning For Justice](#), formerly known as Teaching Tolerance)
- [Guidelines and questions to use when selecting inclusive and identity-affirming content](#) (from website The Conscious Kid)
- Dorie Conlon – [Dissertation](#): “Meeting the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages through Comprehensible Input Readers in Level 1 Spanish, A Comparative Analysis of Teachers’ Perceptions”