

Advocating for supplementing curriculum to ensure diverse voices should be on everyone's radar. Not only does supplementing curriculums help students of color connect with what they are learning but it also demonstrates equity in the school. This specific issue would help close the gap of division that has existed for many years in the school environment. The division of race amongst literacy is the biggest concern. Students of color, black, biracial, Latin, Asian as well as indigenous are not represented in a positive way in text, at times they are nowhere to be found in the text. The concern comes as the students who are being left out of society cannot draw any connection or build bridges with role models that resemble them. Our early childhood students continue to read books from long ago, with character who are mainly white or characters that are animals, there is no in between. There are very little to no books in classrooms that tell the story of black kids and their families, or of biracial families, there are not windows, mirrors of sliding glass doors they can build. By having literature in classrooms that only reflect or represent one group of students it creates nonverbal oppressions to those who's identities are being shut down.

Due to the gap that exist, young black boys and girls do not get the same motivation or admiration for others that look like them. It is difficult to imagine that they too can be represented or that they are just as important. Often times, parents are left to answer difficult questions or comments their young children may have regarding race and why the character in their story books do not look like them. This not only creates pressure for parents but also creates a big barrier they have to break, reassuring their kids that they are important even if there's no book that speaks directly at them. This issue also creates negative thoughts between the student of not being able to achieve the same positions or goals as their white peers, who tend to shine in kids' literature. The inequity that is created leaves students wondering if they will ever have the

opportunity to read a story with character that share the same skin color, hair texture, or even just the same family dynamic. In order to have equity in a school more attention needs to be put in the literature young students interact with. Communities with higher number of people of color suffer immensely due to the non-verbal segregation that seems to exist in early childhood literacy. It draws an imagine to their children of not being able to do better or have goals and dreams.

With so many injustices our country is experiencing with the black and brown communities strongly demonstrated the time to take action is now. Now is the time to bring in books showing or student of color that there are amazing role models they can look up to. Mainly to affirm them that they can be represented in a positive way, and not just be part of negativity. There has to be action taken to motivate our students of color that there is more to their life, the places they can go, the footsteps they can follow of those who loo like them. In order to make this change in schools Administration have to be the first ones to take a stand and make the change of supporting all of their students. If the school's Principal can see the drastic division there is, there is a greater chance they will use the power they have to make adjustments. The changes of rolling in new books into classroom with a diverse group of character and modifying lessons to better reach all students can be taken. With the power of the Principal lays the opportunity of growth and new transitions. Not only does the Principal have the capabilities of making arrangements but also to bring this specific topic to groups lead by parents but they are also my target audience. Within the Principals position they hold the power of having professional development workshops for their staff on how to have equity in the classrooms, in more aspect than one.

Aside from having the school's Principal be my main target, parent led groups also tie into my small advocacy action, as do parent lead groups. These groups such as the PTA or Parent Equity Committee are a great alliance to have in order to aid the changes needed. To start small, I would display charts with books currently being read in class, listing all the books with white characters and the ones with characters of color. Even this small gesture makes a big difference in how students of color are not being represented in the classroom. This helps others understand and visualize the disconnect that exist within the school community. It demonstrates just how small the library for our students of color is, it shows the lack of importance they are given.

In order to get others on board with my action into applying equity in school, I would present a chart with demographics that show how low income and students of color are being affected by the exclusion in literacy. Additionally, I would provide them with the same data to show demographics of white students in wealthier neighborhoods to compare how both are affected. These demographics work in a way to show why students of color may be falling behind in reading, leading back to my advocacy topic.

Therefore, videos of a students would be provided, as they answer questions regarding books in their classroom. White students would be asked how they would feel if maybe 1% of the books in their classroom represented them, what impact would it have on them. For students of color, we would ask how they feel when there are books read to them that don't have any character that look like them, how does this impact and affect them. The videos work as another window for outsiders to see the inequity that is taking place, and why supplementing curriculums to ensure diverse voices are so important. Finishing up the presentation is where teachers, parents, school leader, and community member can play a positive role in making changes. This large group of individuals can plan ways to raise money in order to provide every classroom with

a more diverse library. By doing so they can arrange bake sells, used book sales, auction off student's art, set up car washer or even a carnival at school to raise funds. The funds raised can be put towards books, posters even to help facilitate workshops on how to have an equitable classroom and school. The larger group of targeted audience can grow and began to advocate for the community and other schools experiencing the same concerns.

Jaleel R Howard a former classroom teacher draws 5 main conclusions on how we as educators can care, support, empower and help black students. Howard list crucial tips and tools that should be taken and adopted in schools. Making sure curriculum's represent black students positively is one way to support those students. Howard states, "Black people must be equally represented across all disciplines to ensure that Black students feel included in the learning environment" (Howard 2020). By exploring and given importance to black history, authors and providing students with the support they need, begins to create a classroom where they feel important and included. Asking black students for feedback is another way of connecting with our students. By starting conversations with our students, we can, know how they are feeling and how they are experiencing their classroom (Howard 2020). The more we educate ourselves and our students about racism the more we can engage in difficult conversations. Howard points out we should attend anti-racist workshops, and read anti-racist literature, to help up support our black student emotionally and gain understanding of what, and how racism looks. As we connect further with our black students, we build trust with each other. It is important to believe them and trust in what they say, often times, they are automatically stereotyped due to their skin, making their voice not valid or be unheard. By sharing how they feel at school it gives a different outlook when new school policies are put in place, such as school climate, discipline and how the curriculum is taken by them. Students should be demonstrated that educators also care to connect

with their families, it creates a strong firmer connection. The connection made with black students' caregivers not only shows them but also their families the amount of interest we take. All of the authors ideas come back to the main topic of equity in schools, how to approach them and how to make the classroom a more welcoming and braver environment for black students. I mainly decided on this article as it list incredible tips on how to better support black students in the classroom, as well as listing tips on how to connect with them or questions we should be asking them and ourselves.

Kaylee Domzalski, a video producer has been focusing on telling impactful stories, one of them being students of color seeing themselves in Science. Domzalski focuses on the main topic of showing black and brown students they can break the stigmas and barriers that exist, especially in science (Domzalski 2020). She interviews Sprinavasa Brown, who mentions, "We wanted to create an environment that kids could start to learn science early, and to start to debunk that notion that Black and brown children aren't scientists" (2020). The STEMS program helps bring awareness to black and brown students of the possibilities they can and goals they can achieve. One way they are doing this is by, by bringing in educators who are Black and brown, and [providing] unique opportunities" ( Domzalski). By bringing educators of color that are part of the science field give students a clear view into windows and mirrors by being able to see themselves in them. It allows them to visually see that their skin color is not a form of any barrier that can't be broke, if anything it provides students with a positive view in education. Their goal is to reach more black and white students to join their STEM program and provide them with the same opportunities. This article is very important in the way it advocates for black and brown students, not only by providing excellent opportunities but also allowing students to connect with black and brown adults that are part of the Science field. It demonstrates the

possibilities they have; these possibilities are shown to them by using role models they can connect with, not just for their love of science but also because of their skin color. This article gives me insight I different ways I can better support students of color. It gives me the opportunity of learning and noting different approaches that can be taken in the classroom to connect our students with different fields of work they maybe never thought about.

Advocating for supplementing literature to ensure diverse voices in early childhood is important to me because I want all students to feel importance, feel seen and feel they matter. It is important for students of color to be able to see themselves in books that are in their classrooms, to build their confidence, resilient and to keep persisting. This topic is close to me as it is something I experienced as a young student, I was never able to make connections to characters in books that looked like me, unless they were the maids, drivers or care givers. I never had a positive outlook on books, mainly due to the fact that I knew the character would not be like me or have similar stories, even language was a barrier. Advocating for this topic is impacting me to start drafting and creating my diverse library for my classroom. It is also impacting me to look for books now that I can share with students, books whose characters, authors and illustrators represent them. The biggest impact is having on me as an early childhood educator is being aware and not color blind to the effect that inequality in literacy has.

## Works Cited

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