Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

Volume 14 Number 3 Fall 2016 ISSN 1542-9806

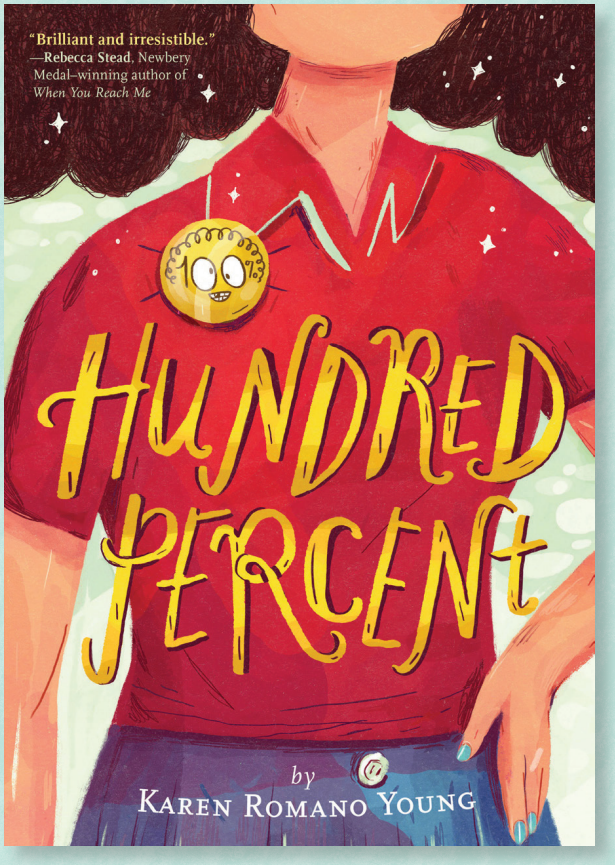
Association for Library Service to Children

ALSC CELEBRATES ITS 75TH YEAR

Trends: Librarians Look Ahead

Controversies: The Battlefield of Children's Books

Inspiration: Pat Mora's Joyful Arbuthnot Lecture



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★ ★ ★

It's Tink's last year of elementary school, the year before middle school. And Tink, by the way, is a nickname she's always had, but these days it's just not feeling right. She's too tall for it now, or too big, or too old. Too something. So—who is she, then?

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ON THE COVER: Storytime at John H. Vohr Elementary School Library in Gary, Indiana, circa 1955. Photo courtesy of the American Library Association Archives, image ALA0002371. The holder of copyright for this image is unknown. Please contact us if you can help identify the copyright holder.

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Editor's Note
Pages of Our Past

By Sharon Verbeten

Take a good look at the photo on this issue's cover. Does it look anything like your storytime? If your library is anything like mine, it doesn't. OK, to be fair, there are probably still librarians wearing high heels and skirts and sitting in rocking chairs. (And that's perfectly fine!) But chances are your children aren't sitting quite so, well, rapt and quiet—carefully in their rows.

But I love this throwback photo for the window it provides into the history of library service to children—the special focus of this issue, which celebrates the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Division of Libraries for Children and Young People (a predecessor of ALSC), approved by the American Library Association (ALA) Council in 1941. The division was then made up of the American Association of School Librarians (formerly the School Libraries Section, which had its first meeting in 1915), the Children's Library Association (formerly the Section for Library Work with Children, which had its first meeting in 1901), and the Young People's Reading Round Table (which first met in 1930).

Further evolution, restructuring, and name changes took place in the ensuing years, and finally at the 1977 ALA Annual Conference, the name "Association for Library Service to Children" was approved.

So ALSC has a rather verbose history in the way groups and organizations were named. But its mission likely was the same as it was way back in the early twentieth century—providing quality library services and materials to all children.

Sure, over the years the books and their contents have changed. The world and, thankfully, too, our books have become more diverse. Controversies continue to ebb and flow. But we're all still proud to do what we do best. And it's still the greatest feeling of all to have a child look up at storytime, engaged in a story, bound by a book—taking away the delight that only libraries can bring.

Whether you're a long-timer or newcomer to children's services, you know just what that feeling is—especially when you're the one delivering it. And chances are you, like most of us, got that feeling the first time you remember being at a library as a child.

After I received my Master's in Library Science had worked in the "trenches" for a few years, I returned to my first love—journalism. But I'm so glad I returned to my roots as a children's librarian seven years ago.

My storytimes don't look anything like the idyllic cover image, and I wouldn't have it any other way. No matter what your library, storytime, or clientele looks like, thank you for what you do. Let's hope we have many more successes to report seventy-five more years from now. &

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Statement of Purpose

Children and Libraries is the official journal of ALSC, a division of the American Library Association. The journal primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with children, which showcases current scholarly research and practice in library service to children. It also serves as a vehicle for communication to the ALSC membership, spotlighting significant activities and initiatives of the Association. (From the journal's "Policies and Procedures" document adopted by the ALSC board, April 2004, revised, 2014.)

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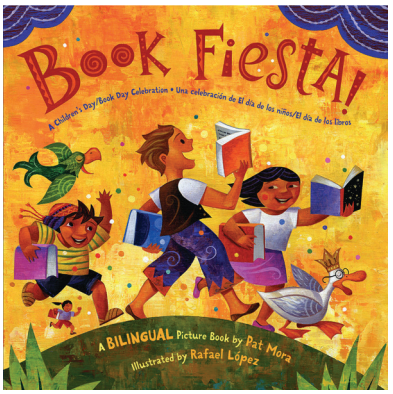
2016 May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture

Bookjoy, Wordjoy: *Alegría en los Libros*

PAT MORA



On September 29, 2014, I received a special email. It was from friendly Hannah Ehrlich at Lee & Low Books who forwarded a lovely and affirming message from [2016 Arbuthnot Committee Chair] Julie Corsaro. I was speechless and so grateful at what Julie had written.

No, she wasn't going to bring me a coconut cake, nor a carrot cake—which might also have put a smile on my face. Julie was informing me that I'd been chosen to deliver the 2016 May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture. I sat in my small Santa Fe atrium feeling stunned. Me? Initially, I couldn't even share the news. I just sat there with my house plants who are used to, and very tolerant of, my ways. (Silently, those plants can also be demanding.)

Many people deserved thanks for creating the special Arbuthnot Lecture in Santa Barbara. Such presentations are opportunities for me to meditate, reflect, ponder. *Muchísimas gracias*, to the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), an active Día partner, and to the Arbuthnot Committee.

I began keeping a scribbly journal the afternoon of September 29, 2014, reminders of ideas I wanted to include in the lecture and this essay.

We are a community, thinking together about the importance of children, all our children, bundles of promise, who deserve and need to become readers for their sake—and ours. In one sense, that doesn't seem such a lofty goal for the world's most powerful nation. We have impressive national educational and library systems and a long tradition of aspiring to serve families in all our states and to be exemplars of the power of small and huge libraries, creatively and responsibly serving their patrons.

The Arbuthnot Lecture is an invitation to ponder the complex world of children's books now, a very different world from that of May Hill Arbuthnot, but I think she'd be excited by our challenges. Sounds and feels like a heavy load, but what joy we have to share, bookjoy, *alegría en los libros*. Think with me about *your* bookjoy story while I briefly tell you mine.

I was born and grew up in El Paso, Texas, an area once part of Mexico, the neighboring country visible across the Rio Grande. I am the oldest, and three might have said the bossiest, of four children. Do not believe everything they say. My parents were hard-working, bilingual, wonderful. Dad was born in Mexico and came to El Paso at a young age with his family, just walking across the border fleeing the Mexican Revolution. Years later, he opened his own small optical company, the United Optical Company, and Mom, born in El Paso, fabulously articulate in English and Spanish, helped as she could but devoted most of her energies to her children. None of my grandparents spoke English. Due to the Depression, neither of my parents had the opportunity to attend college, *but* Mom was a reader.

Author and literacy advocate ***Pat Mora*** *has written more than three dozen books for young people that represent the Mexican American experience. She is the founder of El día de los niños/ El día de los libros (Children's Day/Book Day), or "Día." She delivered the 2016 May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture April 15, 2016, at Santa Barbara City College's Garvin Theatre. Her lecture coincided with the 20th anniversary of Día.*

Young Pat Mora in El Paso.

Many of our children have wonderful parents, but not all read nor *can* read in any language. They may be illiterate; they may not as children have experienced the magic in books or libraries. Such parents need our help.

As you think about your life-journey, relax into your early reading memories. I hope you have some; not all adults do. Mine are delicious.

I'm in the room I shared with my sister, Cissy, in the rock house my father had built instead of taking mom on a honeymoon. Whoops! I'm perhaps in second grade and home from school with a slight cold. My dear maternal grandmother, Mamande, brings me a bowl of Campbell's tomato soup and oyster crackers. She sits and pats the hand of her first grandchild, *moi*.

Extremely comfortable in my bed years ago, I open one of my favorite books, Volume 1, *Poems of Early Childhood* in the Childcraft series. I turn the pages enjoying the illustrations and delighting in the words, in language. I read "The Little Turtle," "Sing a Song of Sixpence," and oh! "The friendly cow all red and white/I love with all my heart . . ." And, I was loving that cow in the desert, remember. Although Robert Louis Stevenson might have seen a red and white cow, I certainly hadn't—and haven't.

The wonder and joy of words, sounds, images. I was transported and hope you have been too, year after year. I'll have that delicious experience again tonight and tomorrow night—*sans* tomato soup. I've been reminded that reading is a *privilege*; reading in two languages, a double privilege. The joy of words, languages.

I've smiled at Virginia Woolf's words, "When the Day of Judgment dawns and people, great and small, come marching in to receive their heavenly rewards, the Almighty will gaze upon the mere bookworms and say to Peter, 'Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them. They have loved reading.'"

We probably think we're a bit hip to be "bookworms," today, but readers know what Woolf means.

It may have been in 1996, when I was writing my family memoir *House of Houses* (the same year we started Día), that I decided to purchase a used set of the Childcraft books, copyright date 1947. Some I'd favored more than others. For the first time, I skimmed the Preface and saw the name May Hill Arbuthnot in the list of those thanked for their assistance. I'm grateful too.

The words describing the Arbuthnot Lecture, "significant contribution to the field of children's literature," have weighed on me. I tried to distract myself with the word "field" which could take me back to the pastoral scene, "the cow all red and white," to the *pleasure* of reading as a child, and to the pleasure of having adults read to me.

The aunt who is the star of my first children's book, *A Birthday Basket for Tía*, that turns twenty-five next year, came to this country with her maternal family during the Mexican Revolution. No one spoke English, and yet, by the time my sister and I were young readers, that beloved aunt would sit us one on each side and read us Nancy Drew mysteries. The power of love.

You and I firmly believe that words and languages offer us both pleasure and *power*: the power to express ourselves, defend ourselves and others; the power to do research and teach ourselves skills, to entertain ourselves, to tease others, to understand human and environmental complexity, to increase our knowledge, and ideally, our wisdom. Readers know there can be wealth in books. What power we find in the small symbols on the page in all languages, wealth that as readers many of us want to share. We need to continue to explore how best to do that.

Words Free As Confetti

Come, words, come in your every color.
I'll toss you in storm or breeze.
I'll say, say, say you,
Taste you sweet as plump plums,
Bitter as old lemons.
I'll sniff you words, warm
as almonds or tart as apple-red,
feel you green
and soft as new grass,
lightwhite as dandelion plumes,
or thorngray as cactus,
heavy as black cement,
cold as blue icicles.
Warm as *abuelita's* yellowlap.
I'll hear you words, loud as searoar's
purple crash, hushed
as *gatitos* curled in sleep,
as the last goldlullaby.
I'll see you long and dark as tunnels,
bright as rainbows,
playful as chestnut wind.
I'll watch you, words, rise and dance and spin.
I'll say, say, say you
in English,
in Spanish,
I'll find you.
Hold you.
Toss you.
I'm free too.
I say *yo soy libre,*
I am free
free, free,
as confetti.[1]

In 1945, the Chilean author, educator, diplomat, and international advocate for children and women, Gabriela Mistral, was the first Latin American woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. She used her prize to buy a small home in Santa Barbara. Gabriela Mistral also wrote for children and said of children's poetry, *"poesía que si no se canta, podría cantarse."*[2] (Poetry that if not sung, could be sung.)

When I speak to audiences about the need for quiet to develop our creativity, I see apprehension, but it's hard to think, write, or read deeply without quiet, and ours can be a noisy media world. Music or TV always on, the emphasis on celebrities and consuming, working too much and then being addicted to plugging in and zoning out. I see fewer adults reading at airports, reading books, that is, in any format. Sound bites seem awfully popular. *Hmmm*. Who is going to be setting our critical national priorities and policies?

I wonder if, like the Environmental Movement and the Healthy Foods Movement, in the spirit of Día, we need an exciting and excited reading movement in the United States today, a movement with a sense of urgency, a reading or bookjoy movement or initiative with a compelling vision—and action: *Let's Read* or *America Reads* or *Reading Rocks*. Might a new administration provide a grand opportunity? Might the American Library Association want to lead gathering collaborators and funders for the common good?

It has become an important part of my life to think with librarians and educators about children and books and how vital literacy and bookjoy, the enjoyment of books, are to children's future. The context for our work is complex. I have never been asked to be ashamed of speaking English, but in subtle and not so subtle ways, I've been nudged to be ashamed of speaking Spanish, of being of Mexican descent. Spanish is the second most spoken language in our country, and languages are cultural wealth. Of our twenty million children under five, one out of four is Latino.[3] Of course, we want all of our children to speak English well and to savor reading in English. We also want them to be proud of their home languages, as we are.

Think of the wonderful Russian nesting dolls. (You may choose your gender.) Our adult bodies often, though not always, protect our young selves inside. For a few moments, connect with yourself in first grade, all that vulnerability. We have armor, some more than others, but the children we are thinking about don't.

I began writing children's books when, in reading to my three children, I fell in love with the form, in many ways connected to poetry, my favorite genre whether I'm writing for children or adults. It's a thrill to see a child or family enjoy a book I wrote. The journey has not been easy, and yet I feel extremely fortunate that some of my manuscripts have been published and that I'm able to celebrate languages and words. Yum! I wish I were trilingual.

I've been a mom, teacher, university administrator, and writer, but I never expected to become a literacy advocate. By 1996, I was beginning to realize how many children had no books and no connections to libraries nor to our library tradition. I was realizing that what I'd taken for granted, such as enjoying the public library and joining the Summer Reading Club, were foreign and intimidating to some children and families. I also knew that I wouldn't be me without books, and I wanted, as you want, that reading pleasure for children as we want them to be fed, safe, healthy, and enjoying the outdoors.

We care about the well-being of our diverse kiddos. We want them to have a fair chance to develop and contribute their talents, to lead fulfilling lives. The poet Mary Oliver says she had an insufficient childhood. Is that what we want for any of our young? No. We want our young to thrive as I want my Austin granddaughter Bonny to thrive.

This year, for Día's twentieth anniversary, I wrote a gift poem of short verses, presently available on my site, that I hope will be published as a book, "Twenty Ways of Looking at a Child." Here are a couple of the verses related to books,

> Page after page,
> the child relaxes,
> friendly predictability.
> Pointing at pictures,
> the child confidently tells
> her grandmother the story.
> Bookjoy! ¡*Alegría en los libros*![4]

Twenty years ago, when I learned about the Mexican celebration of April 30 as *El día de niño*, the day of the child, I proposed that in this country we celebrate all our children, and, that we link them to books, bookjoy bundles. We now know that our children need to be active readers by the third grade, or they will struggle in schools. We know that failing cycle, the embarrassment of not being able to read, and, of course, many families feel that embarrassment also. Luckily, there is growing interest in the importance of early literacy—although not always the budget to support this essential work.

Pat Mora, second from left, with her children Cissy, Bill, and Libby.

The Día journey has taught me many lessons, including the price of being an advocate and the importance of persistence. In the spirit of May Hill Arbuthnot, of ALSC, and of Día's twentieth, I want to focus on the need to be active advocates for *significantly expanding our community of young readers.*

This is important for children's individual lives, for their families, communities, *and* important for this country that needs the talents of future generations. If more and more of our children don't develop their talents, what a loss to them—and to us.

It sounded like such a simple idea—celebrating all our children and linking them to bookjoy, and my friends in REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, quickly supported the concept. Ever the optimist, I assumed that when people heard about the idea, they would think, "Well, yes, we have Mother's Day and Father's Day, we need *El día de los niños, El día de los libros*/Children's Day, Book Day."

Was that the snag, proposing the celebration in two languages and soon in all the languages our children speak? Children's Day, Book Day, is often known as *Día,* which means "day," to remind us of the daily-ness of our commitment and as the acronym DÍA for Diversity in Action. Humans need reminders, and although we say that every day is Día, we also need culminating April celebrations. Not all of our children are celebrated, and they deserve to be. My dream remains that this becomes an annual tradition, an April part of our national calendar. Like Mother's Day in May and Father's Day in June; Children's Day, Book Day, Día, can be celebrated in April at homes, schools, libraries, child care centers, colleges and universities, parks, and community centers.

I often smile when I see publicity about Día around the country with lots of music and dancing. Fun is fun. I also stress, though, that we want to show children and families in all languages how much fun books and book activities can be. I want children to have the daily tactile experience of holding and savoring books. (I want that for adults too.)

Humans need reminders, and although we say that every day is Día, we also need culminating April celebrations. Not all of our children are celebrated, and they deserve to be.

We are building excitement about the reading habit. We want to clap for our young, all our young, and share with them our enthusiasm about being readers. We are creating a new tradition for some families, a meaningful tradition. Ideally we are also collaborating with other literacy advocates. Given the challenge we face, we need all the help and zip we can get.

If we agree that reading is a privilege, pleasure, and a source of power, and we agree that many librarians and educators work to expand, and I mean significantly expand, the community of young readers—think of ripples expanding— what else can we do since we know that too many of our young in this country are just not developing necessary literacy skills? That half the students in our public schools live in low-income homes[5] is part of the context for our work. Such daily challenges.

Literacy is essential in our democracy. Voters need to be informed rather than merely swayed by advertising. Día unites communities because of the celebration and because readers tend to be more engaged in community life, more likely to be volunteers.

We believe that reading is important for all, but hard as we work, are our strategies and efforts to nurture young readers as effective as they need to be?

Reading: a privilege, a pleasure, a power. I propose that nationally as well as locally, more of us need to creatively and courageously, yes courageously, establish new collaborations with those locally, regionally, at the state level, and nationally who share our goals.

We need librarians, teachers, professors, child-care workers, foundations, business people, families, and publishers working together, daring to create new networks because we so believe in our cause.

"More work?" You may fairly ask. "But have you seen my calendar?"

The more I ponder the challenge in 2016, though, the more I think that we won't succeed in expanding the community of young readers unless we expand our community of allies, broadening our view of ourselves. We need new strategies, to leave our silos, good as the work in those silos may be.

Relying on, "But that's how we've done things," or "That's not how we do things," can be polite impediments to vibrant and necessary change. Surely, the tensions in our nation proclaim the importance of growing a reading public.

Given this significant challenge, don't we need to expand the group committed to this work? What are the impediments to collaboration? Time. Money. Wariness about the results, but what is our alternative if we are committed to this expansive reading vision? At the local level, first steps can be an exploratory meeting—librarians, feeder schools, a beginning. We each start where we are, and together, we grow the connections.

Recently at a campus conference, I reminded future educators how important it was that they be readers themselves. (Reading needs PR agents.) When I asked the organizers if they'd invited the local librarians, some were surprised by my question. If we

intentionally establish ties with our literacy colleagues, think of the impact we can have.

Among our necessary allies are our colleagues and friends in the publishing industry who donate books and create book and literacy awards for young readers. Unless a publisher is a non-profit, publishing is a business, a fact we may too often forget. Maurice Sendak in his Arbuthnot Lecture mentions publishing corporations. Like consumers in any field, we can participate in supporting what is published, a power we can use more consciously.

I can be dense. Let me admit that it took me a quarter of a century to realize that if I'm in book marketing and need to sell books, I need to advertise in publications with readers who buy books. If I'm an editor, and I publish diverse authors, and the books only sell modestly, what happens to my job?

How can our friends and colleagues in publishing join us in nurturing new readers, in exploring nontraditional markets, meeting potential consumers where they are? Much is cleverly marketed to children and families. We need a diverse publishing community that can explore new strategies for inspiring all our children and their families to see books as wise investments. The movement We Need Diverse Books is contributing to this conversation.

We believe in the power of story and in the power of books. Imagine a rich array of our children holding hands in a circle. If we could also see around us all the children's books published in this country last year, also a complex and beautiful array, what is the *story* that array tells our children about themselves? Do they see themselves and their families? Do our children's books, so deeply important—a legacy—affirm that *all* our children matter?

Surely, we believe that there are amazingly talented US Latino writers and illustrators, including African American, Asian, and Native American writers and illustrators, yes? And, we know, for example, that we have a growing Hispanic population. Yet, in 2015, of the thirty-two hundred books by US publishers, only fifty-six were by Latinos.[6] Breaks my heart.

Those who work with underserved families might have ideas for promoting books to them, but can publishers invest in listening, given the pressures of the industry? People in this country have ideas and answers, but often they are not people we are used to listening to. I think of the pre-school teacher who recently said it made her sad when, after exciting her students about books, a shy girl said to her, "But my mother never reads me books."

*We believe in the power of story and in the power of books. Imagine a rich array of our children holding hands in a circle. If we could also see around us all the children's books published in this country last year, also a complex and beautiful array, what is the **story** that array tells our children about themselves? Do they see themselves and their families? Do our children's books, so deeply important—a legacy—affirm that **all** our children matter?*

You and I know that her mom may be illiterate and may never have been read to. The context for our work. We could have spent this entire evening on collaborative strategies for coaching and supporting families who are not readers nor familiar with our libraries. We need allies and we can begin now in our own cities, regions, and national organizations. We have important work to do for our young and for this country. The challenge is to be persistent year after year. Our work is both patriotic and humanitarian.

In 2008, I was named an honorary member of the American Library Association. What a surprise. I had been a teacher but never a librarian. Thanks to Día, however, for twenty years, I have gotten to know amazing librarians. I am a bit of a groupie. Many librarians do not speak Spanish, but many so want to help other language speakers feel welcome. Día became an easy bridge.

The Bookjoy Bridge

Together, *cada día*, every day,
we're building the bridge to bookjoy.
Young and old stroll across it chatting night and day.
Together, *cada día*, every day,
in many languages, library families say,
"Reading. A happy habit we enjoy!"
Together, *cada día*, every day,
You and I build the bridge to bookjoy.[7]

I think of a librarian at a school in Texas years ago who was so excited that a group of Spanish-speaking students was coming to visit her library. She had everything ready but was nervous. She greeted the children in Spanish which made them smile. After the program, I asked her why she was willing to do that. She said, "When I was a little girl in Kentucky, I could hear music coming from the library. I didn't have shoes, so I would hide outside and listen to the music. I'm happy to make a fool of myself to help children feel welcome at my library."

I have met so many warm and generous librarians. Twice a week, I read ALA's online newsletter, "American Libraries Direct," so I am somewhat aware of all the digital and social media changes, the innovations. I still wonder, though, if the lure of technology can distract us a bit from our mission, creating a national literacy community.

Recently in Santa Fe, US Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor spoke about the importance of reading when she was growing up. I'm not convinced apps, although entertaining, will have the same impact. Many parents need our guidance.

Within our Día work, twice a year, at the beginning of the academic year and again in January, we reach out to our network with reminders. Next year, I'm going to encourage our Día community to involve other local and state literacy professionals and funders in their planning.

With ALSC, we encourage family book clubs, seldom a challenge for private schools or middle-class schools, but half of the students in our public schools come from low-income families with time and resource challenges. We cannot fully do our work of growing a nation of readers without the families. I'm delighted that First Book has joined our Día community.

What progress will we have made when, a year from now, some of you will enjoy the next Arbuthnot Lecture and the wonderful Jackie Woodson?

We are all "mutts," if you know what I mean. We all have ethnicities and cultures. We are *all* multicultural. Throughout history, civilizations have had power elites based on family, religion, skin color, physical prowess, language, gender, wealth, education. Our United States, however, was founded with the stirring concept that humans are created equal. (Lady Gaga and many celebrities probably disagree.) As our society works through its assumptions, habits, and prejudices, we who work with children and care deeply about their futures can illustrate that we respect and value our differences in our collaborative work.

Librarians and educators create classics. What you use in story times, as examples and themes in programming, in displays, as exemplar texts for new librarians and students, in workshops and classes—librarians and educators create classics. I believe in your commitment to all our children.

Last June, I was fortunate to be on a panel to honor Walter Dean Myers at a Marion Wright Edelman Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools Training in Knoxville. The event was high energy, and repeatedly in that conference center, thousands of diverse young people would burst into, "Good job! Good job! GOOD JOB, good job, I said good job!"

What Marion Wright Edelman and her team of trainers were doing is building excitement about the challenges ahead—and I think, in our own style, we need to do that too if we want together to invigorate our literacy initiatives. The event reminded me of the importance of celebrations and of motivating others.

Born in the American Southwest, I live in a beautiful place, Santa Fe. Cold, but beautiful. Santa Barbara was also a beautiful place to visit. A child of the desert, I always find the ocean—all that water!—a source of fascination.

I have many loves: family, laughter, the natural world, and I love words—reading them and playing with them on the page and in my presentations. Ashley Bryan, who creates wonderful art and text for children, reminds us to savor poetry out loud. In the spirit of Día and Ashley, enjoy some bilingual fun out loud.

Jazzy Duet: Dueto de jazz

Play
juega
with sounds.
con sonidos.
Improvise!
¡Improvisa!
Slide into the river
of music,
Resbala a un rio
de música,
slish, slosh,
rurro, rorro,
a duet
un dueto
with tree's leafy rhyme
con la frondosa
rima del árbol,
with cricket's castanet clicks,
con las castañuelas del grillo,
with coyote's moon croon.
con la copla lunar del coyote.
Sing too.
Canta tú.
Sing. *Canta.* Sing.
Canta. Sing! *¡Canta!*[18]

Unique and different as we each are, many of us want in our own way to share our love of reading. Imagine what the readers in this country could do together!

Such different challenges we face in 2016 than May Hill Arbuthnot and her fellow teachers and writers faced as we strive to expand the diverse community of young readers. Together, remembering the privilege, pleasure, and power of reading, and our personal and collective power to enrich our country, may we annually promote Children's Day, Book Day, creatively and courageously collaborate with our fellow literacy partners locally and nationally, and may we celebrate all our children and link them to *alegría en los libros*, bookjoy!

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Won't Someone *Please* Think of the Children?

Seventy-Five Years on the Battlefield of Books for Kids

BETSY BIRD

Tell it to me straight. If I mention the title *A Birthday Cake for George Washington* to you, does it happen to ring any bells? Odds are, it probably does. Unless you've been living under a very comfortable and well-supplied rock you're aware that this particular book by Ramin Ganeshram is the most controversial children's book released by a major publisher in the past year.

The New York Times articles, magazine articles, even late night talk shows have discussed, debated, mocked, and talked about the book, to say nothing of the folks on social media. Coming close on the heels of debates surrounding books like *A Fine Dessert* by Emily Jenkins and other recent publications, one could be forgiven for thinking that we live in a world where people are far more critical of children's literature than they've been in the past.

Not so.

From the moment children's books became more than mere didactical teaching texts, they have been recognized for what they truly are—some of the most influential modes by which to teach and inform children of every age. What power! And, if Spider-Man has taught us anything, with great power comes great responsibility.

So it is that controversies have *always* erupted over children's books. Some years these debates have been small and contained. Other years they have exploded, sometimes with good results and sometimes with bad. And if we are to assess the current debates, aided and abetted as they are by social media, it is absolutely essential to look to our past. In the past seventy-five years, ALSC has seen fascinating discussions and debates on the appropriateness and inappropriateness of children's books. I think it is safe to say there's no stopping it anytime soon.

To clarify, there are two particular types of children's literature controversies—those discussed within the community of people who work with books for kids and those discussed by a public with no professional connections to children's literature. Internal discussions may be hot and heated, but they carry with them at least a thin veneer of respect and understanding. We're all in this together.

Discussions (a polite word) outside of the children's literature community have the capacity to spin out of control. They are not hampered by an understanding of a child's right to read. They are informed instead by a steel-like certainty that children must be protected and that the book in hand is harmful. Most times, these objections manifest in a typical book-banning situation, but from time to time, they spread above and beyond that. Let us then consider the debates by the community of children's book professionals first.

Betsy Bird *is the Collection Development Manager of Evanston (IL) Public Library. In addition to running the* School Library Journal *blog A Fuse #8 Production, she reviews for Kirkus and is the author of the picture-book* Giant Dance Party *(Greenwillow, 2013) and co-author of* Wild Things: Acts of Mischief in Children's Literature *(Candlewick, 2014) with Julie Danielson and Peter Sieruta. Follow Betsy on Twitter @FuseEight.*

Internal Discussions

Censorship, as defined by *Webster's Dictionary*, says that to censor is "to examine in order to suppress or delete anything considered objectionable."[1] Children's librarians, as part of their jobs, select the books that appear on their library shelves. Selection and censorship, at their best, stay far away from one another. Yet there's no denying that children's librarians must use their own personal and professional judgment (informed by reviews) to determine what children will be able to access on their shelves.

Influential librarians also have a great deal of influence, and few in our history were quite as influential as New York Public Library's original Superintendent of the Department of Work with Children Anne Carroll Moore.

Because of her strong opinions and schoolmarmish looks, Moore has long since been delegated the historical villain of children's literature. Never mind that she was the original #WeNeedDiverseBooks librarian, making a concentrated effort to bring to New York Public Library's branches not just children's books but international children's books in a wide variety of languages, for the kids pouring into the city.

Unfortunately, it's much more fun for folks to recall the books Moore didn't like than the ones she did. During her time, she was instrumental in keeping series books, Little Golden Books, and books that straddled the line between literature and toys (*Pat the Bunny* for example) off of library shelves. Like many children's librarians, she had a distinct feeling for what would and would not work in a children's book.

Her dislike of *Stuart Little* is one of the better known cases. Communicating regularly with the writer E.B. White, Moore was greatly disappointed when she read his first foray into children's literature. Likewise she was not much taken with the books of Margaret Wise Brown. The state of children's publishing being what it was, these views were not seen as particularly controversial. It was only decades after her decisions that people would begin to challenge notions taken, by some, as the norm.

As the state of children's book publishing flourished post-World War II, it reflected the needs and state of our nation. And as the Civil Rights Era came into existence, so too did people begin to notice the sheer lack of diverse children's books. *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats was all well and good, but it was one little book about a dark-skinned child in a sea of white. For years, librarians had attempted to bring some notice to books about children from diverse backgrounds (which, for the record, may explain why *Secret of the Andes* by Ann Nolan Clark beat out *Charlotte's Web* for a 1953 Newbery Award). Now authors and illustrators were publishing books in the same vein.

Amongst the librarians, there existed a great deal of active interest in children's books. People today might pooh-pooh these women (and they were mostly women) for old-fashioned attitudes, but to a large extent this is a myth. Even the controversies surrounding children's books that we later believed to exist, didn't really. For example, in her 2012 *School Library Journal* article, "The Naked Truth: Librarians Stood by Maurice Sendak, No Stranger to Controversy," K.T. Horning confronted the longstanding rumor that a vast number of children's librarians objected so much to Maurice Sendak's naked-as-a-jaybird Mickey in *In the Night Kitchen*, that they would paint tiny underpants on him.[2] In truth, when Horning looked into just how common it was for librarians to diaper Mickey, she found only two documented cases.

Librarians, as it happens, have been stalwart defenders of Sendak from the start, though as in the case of Anne Carroll Moore it is much more fun for the public to think of them as stodgy and out of touch.

There is, however, one case in which librarian selection was equated with censorship, and it involved a little picturebook called *Jake and Honeybunch Go to Heaven*. Published in 1982, the book follows an African American worker and his mule as they are hit by a freight train. Its author, white Caldecott winner Margot Zemach, then proceeds to portray what *School Library Journal* called "a zesty, irreverent look at heaven and its habitues."[3] However, when the library systems of San Francisco, Chicago, and Milwaukee declined to add the book to their collections, *The New York Times* got involved, demanding to know why.

It was the coordinator of children's services for Chicago Public Library who explained that this depiction of black heaven by a white illustrator, "would offend many people and that it reinforced many stereotypes which are not offset by a wealth of children's literature portraying the black experience."[4] Publisher Farrar, Straus, and Giroux (FSG) fought back, calling the situation "insidious."[5]

Zemach had spent eight months researching black culture, which provided her sources.[6] *The Wilson Library Bulletin* backed up the librarians' concerns, however, saying the book was, "designed to make white audiences laugh at alleged Afro-American childishness and instability."[7]

Roger W. Straus, company president of FSG, was confident in the book just the same. "Fifty years from now . . . this book will still be enjoying a long, fruitful life in most of the libraries of America."[8] *Special note: We're now thirty-three years along since the debate raged. Is it on your shelves?*

In all these cases, debates were kept relatively contained. However, in cases where the greater public was involved, controversies have always had a tendency to spiral a bit out of control.

External Outrage

Plenty has been written about books that have been traditionally banned over the years. From *Bridge to Terabithia to Diary of*

a Young Girl to A Wrinkle in Time, if you can think of a popular children's book that takes any kind of a risk, you can bet it's been challenged by an angry parent somewhere. Far more interesting are the discussions that occur when these challenges spark a larger debate.

In 1998, when Ruth Sherman, a white teacher, read her classroom of Bushwick, New York, third-graders the book *Nappy Hair*, written by African American author Carolivia Herron with the express purpose of celebrating rather than shaming black hair, Sherman had little idea how the situation would look to the concerned parents of her children. For many who had been taught over the years to view the term "nappy hair" as a racial slur, the discovery that the new white teacher of their kids was throwing that very phrase in their children's faces was intolerable. The outraged response from the community caught the teacher off guard and ultimately resulted in her transfer to a different school.

The situation was little helped by *Washington Post* articles labeling the community "a gritty black and Hispanic neighborhood in Brooklyn notorious for drugs and graffiti" and saying that Sherman had come in "to turn things around, really make a difference."[9] Editorials too were quick to blame the parents, saying this situation was more about "many African-Americans' enduring discomfort with some of the physical features of blackness than about the book."[10] In this complicated issue, few were sympathetic to the black and Latino parents who objected to the title.

In other cases, the question of cultural appropriation has raised its ugly head. In 1999, when Ann Rinaldi wrote *My Heart Is on the Ground* as part of the "Dear America" diary series, people took great issue with many of the factual errors and liberties taken by the book. Amongst some of the most egregious liberties was the fact that the names of the characters had been taken from the gravestones of real children outside the Carlisle Indian School. Rinaldi writes in her Author's Note: "Although many of these children attended Carlisle at dates later than that of my story, I used some of their names for classmates of Nannie Little Rose. . . . I am sure that in whatever Happy Hunting Ground they now reside, they will forgive this artistic license, and even smile upon it."[11] As nine women writing in the Summer 1999 edition of the periodical *Rethinking Schools* put it, "That these children might smile upon Rinaldi from their 'Happy Hunting Ground' is the epitome of white fantasy: that Indian people will forgive and even smile upon white people, no matter the atrocities past and present."[12]

A case similar to the *Nappy Hair* incident happened not long after, in 2005. For a time, Gary Soto was the most prominent, and one of the very few, male Latino authors of children's books. Little wonder that he was, in time, tapped by Mattel to write the books to accompany Marisol, the new Latina American Girl doll released by the company. As Soto writes in his 2015 collection of essays, *Why I Don't Write Children's Literature*, the deal was pretty straightforward. Soto would write some early chapter books, Mattel would pay him, and that was that.

He was told he could set the books in either Chicago or New York so he selected Chicago, specifically, the Pilsen neighborhood. And so, in the first book, Marisol's mother explains to her daughter that they'll be moving away from their neighborhood because the parents think it's too dangerous. The editor gave the thumbs up to the book, it went to press, and then all hell broke loose.

Andrew Herman of *The Chicago Sun-Times* was the first to report on what he interpreted to be a slight on the Pilsen neighborhood. Says Soto, "The first of nearly hundreds of calls began, calls from the mayor of Des Plaines, aldermen, Chicano activists, an art director, *Time*, the *BBC*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, NBC's 'Today Show,' ABC's 'World News Tonight,' a journalist from Spain, students, professors—all because I had written a controversial piece of dialogue uttered by Marisol's mother."[13]

All this before the age of Twitter. In the end, Soto gave up writing books for kids altogether. On his *Horn Book* blog "Read Roger," current editor Roger Sutton took issue with Soto's exit, though he pointed out that, "If your book is sexy or foul-mouthed or anti-authority, you have no better friends than the American Library Association and its adjacent professions. They will—and they should—stick up for you. But get accused of racism (or, more euphemistically, 'cultural insensitivity') and you're on your own."[14]

What these two pre-social media moments have in common is the good intentions that accompanied them. Intentions that prevail and continue when we look at the controversies surrounding *A Fine Dessert*, *A Birthday Cake for George Washington,* and any number of titles retelling American Indian myths without consulting the myths' respective tribe members. The controversies that we prefer (if indeed we prefer controversies at all) are the clear cut cases where a parent wants *Captain Underpants* removed from the shelf for overuse of the word "poopy." We have a great deal more difficulty knowing how to handle accusations of, as Sutton so eloquently put it, "cultural insensitivity," even though we have seen and dealt with these issues for decades.

In ALSC's first seventy-five years, our children's books have grown in wisdom and understanding. Classics old and new belong on our library shelves. In the next seventy-five years, we will see far more of these debates, as we navigate the heady waters of appropriation, appreciation, and good old-fashioned discussions. I have faith that as much as we like yelling about how angry we are about something, we'll enjoy *talking* about why they do and do not work even more.

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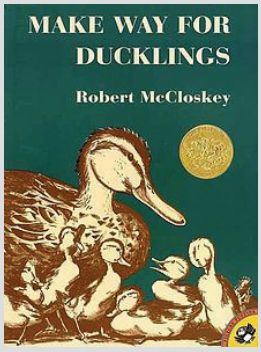
Carle Museum Presents Art of Robert McCloskey through October

The work of Robert McCloskey will be featured in Americana on Parade: The Art of Robert McCloskey at The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, MA, through Oct. 23. In celebration of the 75th anniversary of McCloskey's most famous and enduring tale, *Make Way for Ducklings* (1941), The Carle's retrospective will include much of the original art from this beloved book.



The recipient of two Caldecott Medals and three Caldecott Honors, McCloskey was a major force in twentieth-century children's literature, despite working on fewer than twenty titles during his lifetime. He wrote and illustrated eight books of his own and illustrated ten stories by other authors—including *Journey Cake, Ho!* (1953), written by his mother-in-law Ruth Sawyer. "I'm not prolific," he once said. "It had to be right, and it often was."

The exhibit will feature more than ninety original artworks, ephemera, and rare preliminary book materials. While the exhibition centers on *Make Way for Ducklings*, it also considers McCloskey's entire career ranging from *Lentil* (1940), *Homer Price* (1943), and *Centerburg Tales* (1951), which recall the artist's youth in Ohio, to the family-based stories set in his adopted home state of Maine, such as *Blueberries for Sal* (1948) and *Time of Wonder* (1957).

Curated by H. Nichols B. Clark, founding director and chief curator emeritus, the exhibition also showcases a selection of independent work—watercolors and paintings that connect McCloskey to such prominent American painters as Thomas Hart Benton and Edward Hopper.

McCloskey, born in 1914 in Hamilton, Ohio, won a scholarship to study art in Boston after high school. Legendary children's book editor May Massee was the aunt of one of McCloskey's high school classmates. Reviewing his portfolio of drawings and ideas about Pegasus, Spanish galleons, and other exalted literary subjects, Massee counseled the fledgling artist to focus on what he knew. McCloskey went home to Ohio and took her advice to heart. In 1939, he presented Massee with a highly-rendered dummy for *Lentil* (1940), a partially autobiographical story about a boy whose harmonica-playing talent "saves the day" for a big event in a small Ohio town. Massee enthusiastically acquired the story for Viking Press, thus laying the first stone of a new career path for McCloskey.

McCloskey often expressed bemusement at his fabled career. He claimed he didn't know anything about children's literature: "I think in pictures," he said. "I fill in between pictures with words. My first book I wrote in order to have something to illustrate."

It was a story McCloskey heard about a family of ducks that stopped traffic in the streets of Boston that piqued his interest and led to the book that would catapult him to fame and firmly establish his vocation. He showed a preliminary dummy to Massee, who advised him that he needed to learn more about ducks in order to draw them well.

He spent two years studying mallard specimens at the American Museum of Natural History and consulting an ornithologist. Eager to accurately capture their movements and personalities, he bought sixteen ducks that came to live in his small Greenwich Village apartment and serve as models. McCloskey hoped to illustrate the book in watercolor, but Massee declined, concerned about the high cost of color printing. *Make Way for Ducklings* was printed in warm sepia; incredibly, McCloskey drew the final images on zinc lithographic plates backwards. McCloskey died in 2003, at the age of 88, at his home on Deer Isle.

For more information, visit www.carlemuseum.org

Playing with the Future

Library Professionals, Trends, and Looking Ahead

MIGUEL A. FIGUEROA

In the preface to his book *Futuring: The Exploration of the Future,* Edward Cornish, a founder of the World Future Society, notes that futurists recognize that "the future world develops out of the present world. Thus, we can learn a great deal about what may happen in the future by looking systematically at what is actually happening now."[1]

Cornish goes on to clarify the importance of monitoring trends—"long-term, ongoing shifts in such things as population, land use, technology, and governmental systems"[2]—as signals that point toward the future. With this direction in mind, ALA's Center for the Future of Libraries (www.ala.org/libraryofthefuture) has worked with librarians and library professionals to more intentionally monitor the trends that will affect the future of libraries and the communities we serve. This monitoring requires that we look beyond our own immediate environments to explore changes happening in other sectors—including society, technology, education, the environment, politics and government, economics, and demographics.

Any future-focused effort should be a learning process and over the past two years, the work at the Center for the Future of Libraries has provided several opportunities to re-tailor approaches and discover new opportunities. There have, however, also been some obvious insights that are worth noting.

Librarians and information professionals, by nature of our interest in information and our skill in synthesizing and making connections across sources, might be particularly well-suited to this future-focused trend scanning. But our skills are only useful in so much as we are intentional in scanning outside of our environments and actively thinking through these trends' implications for our work.

Our professional values (diversity, education and continuous learning, equitable access, intellectual freedom, literacy, etc.) and the values we advance in communities (creation and expression, democracy, discovery, place, preservation, privacy, public discourse, etc.) play an incredibly important role in our trend work. Our goal in monitoring trends should not be to accept trends as answers, but rather to consider these trends in light of our values.

We can identify trends that advance our values and with which we might align our efforts. We might identify trends that defy or jeopardize our values and we can introduce efforts to help redirect these trends toward more preferable ends. And we can be inspired by trends to adapt our existing physical and virtual spaces, services, and collections to continue to advance our values. It shouldn't just be spotting trends, but seeing trends through our shared professional context.

Because we are integrated into the communities we serve—in cities and towns, on campuses, or in organizations—we have tremendous first-hand access to the trends that are influencing our users, our administrators and funders, and our partners. And, it's worth noting here especially, library professionals who serve

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children, young people, parents and families, and educators, are particularly close to a regular stream of signals and trends that point to their communities' future needs and interests.

When we activate our minds to look for trends in the news sources that we review, in our day-to-day experiences outside the library, in our conversations with colleagues, and in our professional interactions with children, their families, and our community partners, it becomes easier to identify opportunities to innovate and adapt services to maintain relevance with the changes happening around us.

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Thinking about Trends

Library professionals regularly identify new opportunities in their communities and adjust or invent services to address those opportunities. This is, at its core, an awareness of trends and an integration of those trends into library services. We can observe trends in the work that we are already doing—the use of maker spaces, connected learning, and digital badging in our summer learning programs or instruction. We can also think about trends by observing related professions, like journalism and education, to better understand the future information formats that our users will use to construct their worldviews. And we can look at the products and services marketed to our communities, to understand how expectations might be changing and how vulnerabilities might be exploited.

Maker Movement, Connected Learning, and Digital Badging

One of the societal trends that libraries have capitalized upon, and in many cases helped accelerate, is the maker movement. Technologies and new channels of communication have helped do-it-yourselfers, tinkerers, and hackers lead a movement away from consumption and toward production. Individuals can now prototype, make, produce, and repair goods for their personal or their communities' benefit.

The maker movement has paired with growing appreciation for connected learning that is "highly social, interest-driven, and oriented toward educational, economic, or civic opportunity and hands-on production."[3] Connected learning has provided library professionals with an important opportunity to assert the value of the social and interest-driven learning that has always happened in libraries and to refocus our attention to the productive value of library use ("less about what they have for people, and more about what they do for and with people").[4]

And as both of these trends have moved forward, there has also been a growing trend to help recognize the range of learning that happens across environments. Libraries, cultural institutions, and community organizations have begun to explore digital badging as an opportunity to recognize the learning that happens outside the classroom. These digital badges help learners document the skills they acquire in libraries, museums, parks departments, theaters, and other spaces.

Virtual Reality

For many years, virtual reality has been observed as a future-focused technology that was just around the corner. Through 2016, there have been several signals that indicate its growing accessibility. In its "Viewing the Future: Virtual Reality in Journalism"[5] report, The Knight Foundation notes three related categories within virtual reality's expanding role—"virtual reality," which creates environments that allow people to be present in an alternative environment; "augmented reality," which starts with the real world and overlays virtual objects and information (think Google Glass, Microsoft's HoloLens, or the much-discussed Magic Leap); and "spherical" or "360-degree" video, which captures an entire scene in which the viewer can look up, down, and around.

While higher-end and higher-priced equipment (Oculus Rift, Samsung Gear VR) helps drive virtual reality, spherical and 360-degree experiences have become more accessible for everyday consumers, including for uses in storytelling and education.

As part of its promotion for the feature article, "The Displaced," *The New York Times* delivered more than one million Google Cardboard[6] viewers to Sunday edition subscribers in October 2015. With the viewers, readers could go beyond the print story to experience a 360-degree account of refugee children.

The New York Times and other news organizations continue to produce 360-degree enhanced content that provides readers with expanded information beyond the words and pictures of traditional journalism.

Google has helped accelerate consumers' interest in 360-degree content by collaborating with partners like *The Lion King* on Broadway and Abbey Road Studios to create 360-degree experiences for its Cardboard viewers. And Google Education's Expeditions program[7] brings 360-degree experiences into the classroom, integrating content into curricula. At its 2016 I/O

developer conference, Google announced more than 50 million Cardboard-related downloads from its Google Play Store.[8]

Additional signals that we might collect? Mattel relaunched its classic View-Master toy with a virtual reality refresh. The viewer now works with a smartphone and individually sold content packs that explore space, the oceans, destinations, and wildlife with immersive 360-degree visuals. And Samsung's prototype Bedtime VR Stories is designed for parents to share and interact in a virtual reality story with their children, even if they are separated by great distances.

If virtual reality continues to evolve and engage consumers, library professionals may have several opportunities to align and innovate services to respond to this trend. From an information perspective, we might need to consider how to organize and retrieve the valuable information content in virtual reality experiences. As virtual reality and 360-degree content becomes more accessible, the technologies to produce such content might also become more accessible—and library professionals may be called upon to support individuals interested in creating and disseminating content. And as virtual reality provides more immersive experiences, library professionals may play a key role in translating virtual reality into real, live public discourse and engagement, using virtual storytimes as launching pads to peer-to-peer discussion or virtual reality tours as group conversation starters. As we continue to think about the trends in virtual reality, we will find additional opportunities to make our work relevant with this changing sector.

Interactive Toys

A new crop of interactive toys, which take advantage of trends in machine learning, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of things, could have a significant influence on the future of play and learning for young people. Available signals for this emerging trend can be found in the announcement of Hello Barbie[9] during the 2015 holiday season. Hello Barbie utilizes a microphone and speaker to allow two-way conversations between the child and Barbie. When connected to the Internet, Barbie transmits these conversations to servers at a company named ToyTalk, Mattel's Hello Barbie partner, that convert audio into text and utilize artificial intelligence software to extract keywords from the conversation so that Barbie can improve her conversations with personalized questions, phrases, jokes, and stories incorporating the child's likes, dislikes, and personal details.[10] As we read this, we recognize the privacy concerns inherent in such a product. But we might also recognize some of the opportunities in such products—for developing responsive, educational devices that integrate learning and play.

More recently, Povi has been introduced as an interactive toy that uses machine learning and an "emotional intelligence content platform" to deliver an evolving collection of stories and conversational recordings to help children with expressing their emotions, facing challenges, and problem-solving.[11] Povi's content is curated by experts in psychology, education, and child development. Povi is Bluetooth-enabled and allows parents to connect with Povi via an app that provides discussion prompts and continuing conversations with each set of stories as well as data analytics and algorithms to help parents better understand their child's progress through specific EI skills.

With less focus on monitoring a child's speech and greater involvement from educational professionals, Povi could be a move in the right direction for interactive toys and could be useful to libraries as a tool for storytelling or as a possible partner in developing content related to the work we do.

And, in another more recent announcement, Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit producers of *Sesame Street*, recently announced a partnership with IBM's Watson, the company's natural language processing and machine learning platform, to develop new consumer apps, toys, or even educational tools for preschoolers and preschool educators. Given the trust and reach of Sesame Workshop and the power of IBM's Watson, this could be a strong indicator that interactive toys will only become more popular among consumers.

Now What?

At her 2016 SXSWedu keynote, noted gamer and futurist Jane McGonigal proposed four steps for thinking like a futurist:

- Collect signals from the future
- Combine signals into forecasts
- Create personal foresight
- Play with the future.[12]

Collecting those signals from the future requires activating our trend-spotting skills and thinking about how users are changing with their environments. Based on our professional positions, our inherent perspectives, and our acquired experiences, we have the potential to identify a range of changes across sectors.

As we think about those trends and how they will play out in the future, we begin to develop forecasts—thinking about how they will change user expectations; our own collections, services, and programs; and even how they might create new systems in the larger environment.

Based on our professional values and ethics and the value that we provide to society, we can begin to create personal foresight. Personal foresight allows us to think through how we can leverage elements or aspects of specific trends for our professional benefit or how we might need to align our work to stymie negative or less preferable trends to protect our work and the communities we serve.

That final step, playing with the future, invites all of us to think creatively about what might come in the future. How can we put these trends and signals together to make exciting futures for

our communities? Freed from the normal restraints of budget, time, spaces, or even our current skill sets, what creative solutions would we propose for the future?

Playing with the future can free us enough to come up with big ideas—and then begin the hard work of identifying the funding, partners, skills, and tools that we would need to make those visions a reality.

The brilliance of McGonigal's approach is that it invites all of us to think about and learn with the future. The process of identifying trends and signals, thinking about their potential in our environment, and proposing solutions based on those trends, is something that we all can do from wherever we work in the library environment.

As we work together to think about the future, we can ensure that our libraries remain relevant, no matter what changes might develop in our communities.

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Storytime-Palooza!

Racial Diversity and Inclusion in Storytime

ANNA HAASE KRUEGER AND TAMARA LEE

Ten Little Darling Babies flannel pieces

If librarians truly believe the "Every" in Every Child Ready to Read, then they need to ensure that the materials and programming offered in storytimes are racially diverse, equitable, and inclusive. All children need to see themselves reflected in storytime adventures and see others who are different from them represented with equal importance.

Diversifying storytimes may seem like a logical practice in intentional storytime planning; however, too often librarians rely on the "Five F's—food, folklore, fashion, festivals and famous people," reducing vastly diverse cultures to a singular event.[1]

Apathy, ignorance, and racism are all possible reasons for avoiding the inclusion of racial diversity in storytimes; however, from our experience, we have found that most often it is fear that holds librarians back—fear of being wrong, of not knowing the right things to say, or fear of pushback from the community. Antiracist work is difficult work, and too-often politicized. Many librarians fear that in order to have racially inclusive storytimes they need to turn storytime into a class about why racism is wrong or delve into history and politics. While that is important work that our society needs, that is not what's needed to create a more inclusive storytime environment; however, creating racially diverse storytimes is crucial as the demographics in the United States are rapidly changing. The 2010 census data analysis by the Annie E. Casey Foundation shows us that of the 74.2 million children under the age of eighteen in the United States, 46 percent of them are children of color and Native children.[2] While this demographic has been changing, the demographics for librarianship have not. Librarianship remains a majority white, female, English-speaking profession.[3] While these facts may contribute to the average youth librarian's unfamiliarity with diverse cultures and fear of making mistakes, there are still many relatively risk-free ways to add racial diversity to storytimes.[4]

Through educating themselves and the careful selection of books, activities, and props that authentically reflect children of color and Native children, librarians can ensure that racial diversity becomes a part of every storytime. While there is little to no monetary cost for this kind of planning and programming, there is a high cost to society if we continue to ignore the reality of our increasingly diverse world.

Anna Haase Krueger *(left) is a children's librarian for the Maplewood branch of Ramsey County (MN) Library and reviewer for* School Library Journal *who has been working in the field since 2009 and is passionate about early literacy and racial equity.* ***Tamara Lee*** *(right) is the children's librarian for the New Brighton branch of the Ramsey County (MN) Library and has been working in the field since 2008. She is an ALA Spectrum scholar and is passionate about racial equity in the field of librarianship, early literacy, and diversity in children's literature.*

As librarians who are passionate about social justice, we have always tried to include racial diversity in each of our weekly storytimes. Through our experiences in graduate school, our work, and our involvement with colleagues through the Minnesota Library Association, we have noticed that while many librarians speak of a desire to create more inclusive storytimes, they don't feel confident in their ability to do so in an authentic way.

Every year the Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA), a regional library system promoting cooperation among eight Twin Cities metropolitan area library systems, offers "Storytime-Palooza," an event where local children's librarians can gather to share best practices and learn from colleagues.

Since we were observing librarians failing to incorporate racial diversity into otherwise quality storytimes, we approached Kathleen James, youth services and project manager for MELSA and coordinator of this annual event, to see if we could share some of our ideas and strategies. She was enthusiastic about centering the 2015 Storytime-Palooza around the theme of racial diversity in storytime, and we set to work planning the two-hour workshop.

We asked Assistant Professor Dr. Sarah Park Dahlen, at St. Catherine University's Master of Library and Information Science Program in St. Paul, Minn., to provide an authoritative voice regarding the current state of diversity in children's literature and to discuss why this is a much needed focus for storytime and library programming for children in general.

The second part of the workshop consisted of demonstrations, successes, and failures we have experienced as we have worked to create inclusive storytimes. Finally, participants were given time to browse approximately eighty diverse books we identified as a good fit for storytimes, and to share their successes and ideas.

Librarians rely on Every Child Ready to Read 2 to make sure that storytime plans are literacy-rich and educational, taking care to incorporate elements of talking, reading, writing, singing, and playing into every program. We suggest that librarians think of diversity and inclusion as a sixth factor to evaluate when planning storytime.

Book Selection

Book selection has the strongest impact on creating diverse storytimes. This seems obvious, but it's easy to overlook unless planning is intentional. Stop to evaluate the plan and think about who is being represented in each storytime. Are all the books showing white main characters? If you keep track of your storytime plans, look back at the last five weeks. How many of those storytimes were racially inclusive?

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Consider that diversity is about more than just skin color; many books with anthropomorphized animals are still culturally depicting whiteness. On the surface, it might seem neutral to present a storytime about dragons. But whose dragon myths are being presented?

Most of the dragon-themed picture books available are based on the idea of the fire-breathing European dragon, but the Chinese dragon has an equally long and important history which shouldn't be erased or ignored in a dragon-themed storytime. Even acknowledging that there are different kinds of dragons is a step in the right direction. In Ramsey County Library, Minn., we have created a set of Chinese Dragon flannels to use, and families are always intrigued by them. In order to have diverse storytimes, you have to be aware of your own biases and cultural positions. It is hard to know what you don't know, but asking yourself questions and listening to others are great ways to start.

Once you have decided to incorporate more diverse titles into your storytimes, the next step is identifying what books to use. There are many wonderful lists to be found of quality, anti-bias, multicultural children's books, and that is a great starting point, but it is important to *practice* evaluating all the titles you use in storytimes (and offer in your collection) yourself. Revisit Kathleen T. Horning's *From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books*[5] and Louise Derman-Sparks' *Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books*.[6] Evaluate everything that comes to your hands in the course of your work, and soon it will be automatic.

It can be particularly difficult to find universal or everyday contemporary stories featuring people of color and Native people that work for storytime (topics such as bedtime or losing a tooth), since the cataloging doesn't necessarily reflect racial diversity unless it is an "issue" book. Some blogs and websites we have found useful for general reading are Reading Is Fundamental,[7] The Open Book,[8] Cynsations by Cynthia Leitich Smith,[9] Teaching for Change,[10] CBC Diversity,[11] The Cooperative Children's Book Center,[12] and De Colores.[13]

Another resource, created specifically for children's librarians, is The Everyday Diversity Project, an online resource that specifically aims to identify and highlight great storytime books that

Anna Haase Krueger sings "Ten Little Darling Babies" at Baby and Me storytime

feature racially diverse protagonists.[14] The Everyday Diversity Project suggests diverse books for common themes and strives to make it easier for librarians to find great materials for every storytime.

Picturebooks tend to go out of print very quickly, and it can be difficult to keep lists up to date. Fortunately, public libraries often have access to books that have long been out of print. If your system policies permit it, keep high-quality inclusive books in your storytime collection rather than weeding them so that you can continue sharing them in your community.

Themes

Often, librarians only think about racially diverse programming during holidays or awareness months. This is dangerous because it compartmentalizes groups of people and sends the message that the only time minority groups matter is one month or day of the year. This encourages feelings of "otherness" between groups of people.[15] When we use minorities as a theme for a white audience, we are treating groups of people like a tourist destination.

Instead, try to include diverse books in every theme. While there is definitely a significant dearth of racially diverse picture books,[16] with intentional planning and thoughtful effort we can make the most of what's available.

Doing a dog theme? Try using *Please Puppy Please* by Tonya Lewis Lee and Spike Lee, *Here Comes Trouble* by Corinne Demas, or *A Vacation for Pooch* by Marian Cocca-Leffler. If your theme is bedtime, include titles such as *Monster Trouble* by Lane Fredrickson, *Can't Sleep without Sheep* by Susanna Leonard Hill, or *Marc Just Couldn't Sleep* by Gabriela Keselman. For a dance storytime, consider *How Do You Wokka-Wokka?* by Elizabeth Bluemle, *I Got the Rhythm* by Connie Schofield-Morrison, or *My Friend Maya Loves to Dance* by Cheryl Willis Hudson.

Some suggestions for board books for baby storytime are *Where's Lenny* by Ken Wilson-Max, *Besos for Baby* by Jen Arena, *I Know a Lot* by Stephen Krensky, *Leo Loves Baby Time* by Anna McQuinn, *My Heart Fills with Happiness* by Monique Gray Smith, or *Whose Knees Are These?* by Jabari Asim.

Hosting storytime guests and facilitating cultural community collaboration are great ways to add diversity; such guests provide authentic voices and can be a resource when you have few options in other media that reflect a certain race or culture. They may also relieve the anxiety that goes along with intentional storytime planning outside of your cultural comfort zone.

Songs/Props/Activities

Although books might be the most significant way to add racial diversity, there are lots of other ways to have an impact. Using our earlier example of the dragon-themed storytime, there may not be a book depicting Chinese dragons that works for your storytime, so that's where we rely on props, flannels, and songs to add diversity.

One simple way to make a big impact is by applying resistant reading to commonplace songs and nursery rhymes already used in storytime. Resistant reading pushes back against the dominant culture that assumes whiteness. For example, when sharing "Mary Had a Little Lamb," use clip art showing Mary as a girl with dark skin. Colorado librarian Melissa Depper has an excellent post about fun, literacy-rich ways to use purchased clip art sets to share nursery rhymes in her blog post "Early Literacy Storytime: Mixed Up Mother Goose."[17]

From left, Tami Lee, Sarah Park Dahlen, and Anna Haase Krueger at Storytime-Palooza

When you make flannel stories or other props, take the opportunity to show kids of all colors and make non-white children the central figure—not just one of a crowd. Flannel Friday is a fantastic online resource with hundreds of ideas for making props, flannels, games, and other storytime activities.[18] Many of the ideas there are already diverse, and looking through the lens of racial diversity, you might be inspired to adjust others to be more inclusive. You can browse the Flannel Friday Pinterest boards[19] or view round-up archives at the Flannel Friday website.

Another simple yet powerful way to make storytime more inclusive is by paying attention to the names used during storytime. When you do an activity, create a character, or sing a song that uses children's names, use names not typically associated with whiteness, like Diego, Shanice, or Nahee. There's no reason that the child fixing the wagon in Raffi's "Bumpin' Up and Down"[20] can't be Precious rather than Emily.

While we have not collected formal feedback on the effect of racially diverse storytimes, we do have anecdotal evidence from families and professional colleagues. Families of color will often approach us after storytime requesting the book titles that we used, stating that they "love" the book or that the lead protagonist "looks just like me." Colleagues have thanked us for the encouragement, support, and ideas that we have given them in incorporating racial diversity in their storytimes.

There is no question that intentional storytime planning that includes racial diversity is an important endeavor that benefits children of all races. But more than just a lofty goal, it is the policy of the American Library Association that libraries and professional librarians make "efforts to include diversity in programs, activities, services,"[21] while providing "equity of service and access to all communities."[22] Simply put, making sure that all storytimes are racially diverse, equitable, and inclusive is every youth librarian's job.[23] &

DO:

Focus on contemporary stories set in the United States that reflect everyday life.

Bring in people from other cultures and backgrounds to share their own stories.

Share folk and fairy tales that show non-European versions of the stories.

Practice evaluating books and materials for bias/inclusiveness.

Ask advice and seek help; other librarians, staff, community members, and scholars such as professors of children's literature can all be great and supportive resources.

DON'T:

Be afraid to try; it's better to try and risk not getting it quite right than to do nothing.

Limit racial diversity to holidays, life in other countries, or historical fiction.

Make whole storytime themes about specific groups or cultures only a few times a year.

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PEER-REVIEWED

Taking Time to Look Back

Reflective Practice in Librarianship

JAN CONNELL

What makes a children's library program successful? What measures indicate success? Is attendance evidence of success? Is making a difference in the lives of program participants and facilitators evidence of success?

We often use numbers to measure success, but what does "success" really look like? I asked these questions after facilitating a new program called Accidental Art: For Children of All Abilities at the Library. Reflection on the experience led to an integration of theory in practice, and programming hasn't been the same since.

Accidental Art: For Children of All Abilities at the Library

In 2014, the Youth Services Inclusive Programming Committee of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library was formed to explore programming for children of all abilities. We had some experience in this area: our inclusive preschool program, offered jointly with the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities, was well attended. Consequently, two pilot programs for school age children were proposed, one at a branch location and one at Main Library.

In preparation for the program at Main Library, I consulted families with children of all abilities who regularly visit the library. They were enthusiastic about our focus on inclusion; however, one family recommended targeted programs for children with specific conditions. While not aligned with the committee's vision of programs that encouraged an appreciation of differences and fostered acceptance, the family's input was important.

To honor the family's recommendation and simultaneously fulfill our mandate, elements of a program series from Barbara Klipper's book, *Programming for Children and Teens with Autism Spectrum Disorder*, were incorporated in our plan.[1] The series' sensory art activities and its focus on creativity and physical accessibility recommended it for use with children of all abilities.

Our program plan, which featured the children's book *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Saltzberg, emphasized Saltzberg's message that mistakes can be opportunities to create.[2] Art making was limited to two simple activities: ripped paper collage and dropper painting using watercolor and pipettes. A social story was developed and a picture schedule was included in the program's digital presentation to help children transition between activities. Interpreters were available for children with hearing impairments. Program registration was limited to fifteen children and welcomed family participation. Two library staff members were assigned for adequate coverage. The room setup described in Klipper's book was reviewed with our staff to ensure accessibility.[3] The program was publicized, and fliers were emailed for distribution to seven community organizations involved in serving children with disabilities.

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Twelve children and five adults attended the program. They listened to the story, interacted, and created collages and paintings. One family asked if we were going to offer similar programs. The supply receipts were submitted for reimbursement and program statistics were entered into the program database. Most of the artwork was left behind; the participants did not borrow the featured book, and program attendance was below capacity. I wondered if our program was successful.

As children's librarians, we are not taught reflective practice as a matter of course. We often find ourselves charging into the next round of programming with only cursory reflection on the programs we just finished. We collect a wide variety of program data to prove our worth to employers, library communities, funding sources, and to ourselves, but do we pause to critically consider our experience?

The program room was set up to provide easy access to materials and content.

Reflective Practice

Reflective practice is an intentional thought process undertaken to examine experience and improve action. Donald Schön identified two types of reflective practice: "reflection-in-action" and "reflection-on-action."[4] Reflection-in-action occurs during an experience and reflection-on-action is done afterward, to learn from experience.[5] Reflection-on-action involves reflecting on what has happened; reflecting on your feelings about the experience and the role you played; examining your assumptions, knowledge, and the context of your practice; and synthesizing this information to improve future action.[6] Healthcare and social work educators and professional organizations adopted the theory of reflective practice as a way to develop new and experienced professionals.[7]

Char Booth identified the importance of reflective practice in the preparation and development of library educators. "*Reflective practice* is the first element of instructional literacy, and is focused on pursuing instructor development as you teach or train."[8]

Reflections on a Program

Reflection may follow a discomforting situation.[9] A quick recording of program data seemed an inadequate means of examining the success of our Accidental Art program. A framework to reflect on what had happened and evaluate the program's worth was needed.

In her article, "Measuring Outcomes for Teen Technology Programs," Johannah Genett recounted how Hennepin County Library used outcomes to evaluate its established Teen Tech Squad program.[10] The Institute of Museum and Library Services promotes the use of Outcome-Based Planning and Evaluation (OBPE) as an important way to both plan and evaluate programs.

"OBPE goes beyond documenting *what* you did and measures *what difference* you made in the life of your audience—how has your audience changed."[11] These changes involve changes in behavior, attitude, skills, knowledge, conditions, and status.[12] The OBPE logic model could be used to evaluate our program's merits and limitations and, if the process proved enlightening, it could guide program planning in the future.

Applying OBPE

The first step in OBPE is to identify the audience.[13] Our identified audience was children of all abilities, ages five to twelve, their families, and caregivers.

The second step in OBPE is to identify the audience's needs and design activities to meet those needs.[14] The Inclusive Programming Committee believed that all children needed access to library programs. Families with children of all abilities concurred and one family's expressed need for targeted programs was noted for future consideration. Activities were designed so children of all abilities could participate successfully. The program plan included a number of accommodations to improve access to activities.

OBPE next considers resources dedicated to or used by a program. These are called inputs.[15] The program's inputs included a total of twenty-nine staff hours of planning, program development, technical services, marketing, custodial, and presentation/cleanup. The program was held in our children's program room and the cost in materials was minimal because existing supplies were utilized. Eight copies of *Beautiful Oops!* were

Our marketing department created a colorful flier that emphasized inclusion.

added to the library's collection at a cost of $70. The program's cost in staff time initially raised concerns about its efficiency, but it was a pilot and future programs would require less staff planning time and leftover materials could be reused.

OBPE then examines program outputs or program products expressed numerically and used to evaluate productiveness.[16] One program was presented, and twelve children and five adults attended. One online program listing was posted, and sixty-four fliers were distributed. Seven emails with attached fliers were sent to community schools and agencies.

At first glance, the program's inputs seemed disproportionately large compared to its outputs, but the next step in OBPE, determining outcomes, would measure benefit. Outcomes are what participants take away from a program and are evaluated by "a change in a target audience's skills, attitudes, knowledge, behavior, status, or life condition brought about by experiencing a program."[17] That change, measured by percentage, is an indicator of outcome.[18]

Reah Joyce Rubin identified a continuum of library program outcomes: "Awareness of service, Participation/Use of service, Satisfaction with service, Perceptions/Feelings, Attitudes/Values, Community connections/Social networks, Knowledge, Skills, Behavior, and Condition/Status."[19] Outcomes were not identified during the planning stage, but our program goal of providing an accessible library program for children of all abilities, ages five to twelve, corresponded to Rubin's first two outcomes: "Awareness of service" and "Participation/Use of service."

To raise awareness of service, the program was publicized to children of all abilities, ages five to twelve, their families, and caregivers. If marketing efforts were successful, a 50 percent publicity response rate was deemed a reasonable indicator of success; that's 50 percent of participants reporting they heard about the program or saw our fliers and came to the program.

Unfortunately, a participant feedback survey was not developed to measure this outcome; however, only one of the seven community organizations responded positively to the event flier email. This highlighted the importance of collaborating earlier in the planning process. If the aim is to include children of all abilities, it will take the efforts of many service providers to make that happen. That being said, the participants included children of all abilities and families, despite our planning lapses.

To encourage participation, many program elements were included to ensure accessibility. If the program was accessible, a 70 percent participation rate was deemed a reasonable indicator of success. Ten of the twelve children, or 83 percent, attended the reading and discussion of *Beautiful Oops!,* and the same percentage participated in both art activities.

The plan produced an accessible program for the majority of our participants; however, two children did not fully participate. One child arrived late with his parents and missed the book portion of the program. He participated briefly in the art activities, but was observed to resist his parents' help. He interacted with other children with his mother's assistance.

The second child also had difficulty focusing on the discussion and art activities. He found other ways to interact with his peers. These observations supported the need for programs targeting specific populations, just as the family had suggested prior to program implementation.

Rubin's third outcome on the continuum is "Satisfaction with service."[20] It was not possible to evaluate our participants' satisfaction with service without a participant feedback survey. Participant feedback is essential to measure whether certain outcome indicators have been met, to determine program effectiveness, to plan future programs, and to justify services for funding.

Unexpected Outcomes

The outcomes listed at the top of Rubin's continuum—changes in knowledge, skills, behavior, and condition/status—are more difficult to influence than the previous three outcomes discussed.[21] Rubin warns us to consider our role in changes as contributory. "The outcomes reflect the library's contribution to a goal. But outcomes cannot be attributed to the library alone."[22] Three meaningful interactions were observed that indicated the program contributed to a change in the participants' knowledge and behavior. These changes were not planned for and were unexpected.

The first interaction occurred during the reading of *Beautiful Oops!* A child asked, "What is imagination?" Other children offered answers and ideas spontaneously. This discussion was evidence of participant engagement with the program and with other group members and demonstrated transfer of information. The children accepted each other's input as it was given.

The second interaction occurred during the art portion of the program. A group of children became curious about a boy who used a walker, and one girl asked his mother why he couldn't talk or walk unaided. His mother explained and taught them how to sign, "Thank you." She then led introductions and her son smiled at his new friends.

No other children or family members were asked to explain their abilities, and the facilitators did not assume an informational role. This interaction could have been emotionally hurtful if the boy's mother hadn't offered information and introductions. Curiosity about abilities may arise in future programs and should be anticipated.

The third interaction occurred several weeks after the program when this boy and his family returned to the library. The girl who asked about him during the program was also present. She approached, smiled, and greeted him by name.

The boy's mother responded warmly and prompted the boy to greet her. The boy expressed happiness. The girl asked his mother how to sign the word "Hello." The mother laughed and said, "You just wave!" The girl made eye contact with the boy, waved, and said, "Hello!" They stayed together for some time before going their separate ways.

These were meaningful, spontaneous interactions between children and a parent who may not have interacted otherwise. The girl's continued interest in talking to the boy in a way he could understand indicated that she was now aware of an alternative way to communicate and her question indicated that she saw the boy's mother as a source of information. The boy's patience, his happy responses, and his mother's obvious pleasure with these connections indicated engagement in new relationships.

The significance of these interactions wasn't fully understood until the OBPE logic model was used to analyze the experience. We all share stories about the effects our programs have on children's lives and feel good about our efforts, but without planned and measurable outcomes, it isn't possible to objectively determine a program's value.

Reflective practice enriches library service for children, their families, and caregivers. It promotes critical thinking about children's librarianship. Reflective practice and the application of the OBPE logic model led to a rigorous, prescriptive understanding of the merits and limitations of our inclusive program. Although OBPE was not used to plan and implement this program, using it to evaluate the experience generated vital questions about community needs, collaboration with community partners, program planning, and standards for success. We can now confidently decide if we want to repeat this program and, if so, what modifications are required.

Future inclusive program planning should include early and ongoing collaboration with community partners involved in providing services to children of all abilities, as well as the community members intended to be served; the identification of community needs and library activities to meet those needs; and a determination of outcomes and evaluation methods to determine if outcomes have been met.

We may not be able to analyze every program this thoroughly, but we can practice reflection-on-action to help make future programs meaningful. We simply need to pause, step back, and ask ourselves questions about our last program:

"What did we do?"

"Why?"

"For what audience?"

"For what benefit?"

This simple reflection could change the way we practice.

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The Impossible Child Scholar

Crafting a Digital Exhibit with the Kerlan's Melissa Sweet Collection

EMILY MIDKIFF

Photos courtesy of the Kerlan Collection, University of Minnesota Libraries, used with permission of artist Melissa Sweet.

In those years when I simultaneously worked on a children's literature English master's degree and performed as a puppeteer and improvisational children's performer, countless colleagues commented on how those two activities must inform one another.

In reality, they rarely interacted. Children's literature scholarship, in many ways, remains isolated from experience with actual children. This distance especially pervades children's literature archives, where the pricelessness of the materials often prevents the risky touch of young hands.

In this article, I offer my experience with crafting a digital exhibit as one method of increasing children's access to archived children's literature materials. In spring 2015, I was enlisted by Lisa Von Drasek, curator of The Kerlan Collection at the University of Minnesota, to select and arrange the archival materials for Melissa Sweet's award-winning *Balloons over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade* into a digital exhibit.

The exhibit, titled "Balloons over Broadway, Melissa Sweet, and the Engineering of a Picturebook," was meant to depict the process of creating a nonfiction biographical picturebook that highlights parallels between Melissa Sweet's experimental creative process and the topic of engineering experimentation within the book's content. The goal was to make the content of the archive more widely accessible—especially to children. This article discusses some previous scholarly comments on children's literature archives and then moves into how I planned the exhibit as an attempt to break down those patterns. I also offer an example of how children could be guided through a complex study of children's literature, using the materials provided in the exhibit.

Why Is This New?

Children's literature archives endure a fraught relationship with the actual inclusion of children, echoing the issue within most children's literature scholarship at large. In "Unpacking the Archive: Value, Pricing, and the Letter-Writing Campaign of Dr. Lena Y. de Grummond," Emily Murphy argues that children's literature collections like the de Grummond Collection—a peer of the Kerlan Collection—are valuable to children's literature scholarship not only for their research potential, but also for historically giving value to children's literature, childhood, and children's involvement in their own literature.[1]

Murphy's most pertinent point addresses the involvement of children in the de Grummond collection as well as in children's literature scholarship: children come second. Marah Gubar notes the disciplinary "assumption that children and adults are categorically different from one another: adults are involved in

Emily Midkiff *is a PhD candidate at The University of Minnesota, where she studies children's literature. Her research focuses on picturebooks, graphic novels, fantasy, and science fiction. The digital exhibit is open access and can be found at: http://gallery.lib.umn.edu/exhibits/show/balloons-over-broadway.*

the production of children's literature; children are not."[2] The same could be said for the scholarship and archival collecting of children's literature. Even for Dr. de Grummond, collecting was prioritized over children. Murphy writes of the librarian and collector de Grummond: "Having convinced authors of the importance of their original children's materials, she began to focus more on the ideals that had motivated her to collect archival material in the first place."[3] The ideal, Murphy states, was "making her economically valuable collection accessible to children."[4] Despite de Grummond herself reportedly wanting to include children from the start, this focus played second fiddle to years of collecting and assessing the materials.

The involvement of children in children's literature and research archives is indicative of a larger framework of idolizing children and children's materials. In *The Child, the Scholar, and the Children's Literature Archive*, Kenneth Kidd ultimately scrutinizes the scholar's interaction with the children's literature archive.[5] The difficult question he asks is whether, by holding up the value of archival research and teaching it to children's literature graduate students and as an idealistic source of information and scholarship, we continue the deceptive developmental chronology of the book-loving child growing into the obsessed collector of children's books and then "progressing" to the serious scholar.

Murphy's article discusses the sidelined inclusion of children, while Kidd's tackles the danger of removing childishness from children's literature archival work; meanwhile both articles exemplify those very trends. Even within her piece, Murphy gives precedence—and the majority of the word count—to the development and value of the de Grummond collection rather than to the topic of children. Kidd's chronology, as well, does not address the possible inclusion of the child *as* scholar. He discusses the conflation of book-loving collector and scholar, but never the possibility that a child could look at these secluded, precious materials with an emerging understanding of the research value of archived materials.

As Marah Gubar explains, "The critical story we have been telling about children's literature rules out the possibility that young people can function as artistic agents, participants in the production of culture."[6] While Gubar is more focused on the production of the books, her kinship model of childhood suggests that children can also study their own literature in a similar way to adults. This model does away with the idea that children are lesser or immensely different than adults. Instead, it posits that "children and adults are akin to one another, which means they are neither exactly the same nor radically dissimilar."[7] Therefore, children should be quite capable of performing their own versions of children's literature scholarship in scholarly archives.

What I Did About It: The Exhibit

My challenge in the *Balloons Over Broadway* exhibit, then, was to bridge the gap between archives and children and make the materials not only accessible to children, but stimulating enough to engage them in the type of appreciation and scholarly use that de Grummond would have wished for and that Kidd laments as only possible for removed and romanticizing adult scholars. My intention is not to transform children into Kidd's concept of supposedly detached scholars. Rather, the goal is to bring together an opportunity for children to combine their own sense of open wonder and appreciation with the scholar's attention to the value and analytic uses of archival materials.

To meet this goal, I needed more than just a webpage full of images. I turned to children's museum design research. Leslie Power and Jennifer Pace Robinson's "Exhibit Development with Schools in Mind"[8] is one valuable model that describes how the authors designed and tested a children's museum dinosaur exhibit with the goal of catering to both school groups and individual/family use.

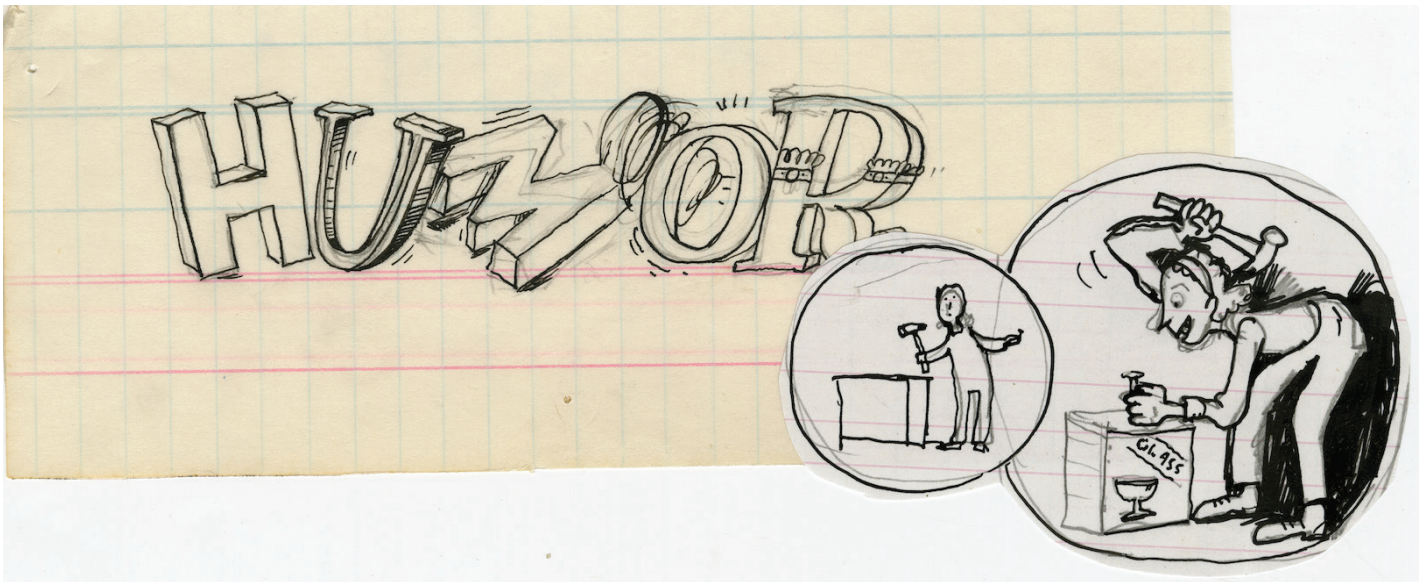
While the needs of a digital exhibit are different, I found Power and Robinson's study to be useful in considering how to make the exhibit engaging to a wide range of viewers, including classrooms and young people. Power and Robinson describe many practical considerations, but one design success that stood out was their use of scattered professional "interpreters"—employees who asked questions and engaged in conversation with patrons—instead of a tour guide with prepared speeches for a series of stops.

This approach, the authors claim, increased positive reactions in both student and family groups. With this design, for example, guests "can visit in an unstructured manner and 'happen upon' interpretation instead of relying on a closed gallery and a guided tour."[9] In a digital exhibit, the nature of the design inherently includes this kind of unstructured, meandering approach to the materials; there is no linear path through the exhibit or overall tour-like narrative. Power and Robinson noted that the questions and conversations sparked by these employees directly impacted the holding power of an area of the exhibit. This approach, I thought, might better engage children in more active thinking about the materials.

Of course, I could not plant actual employees for conversations, but this led me to organize the exhibit into thematic units. I also planted "Engineer a Thought" questions on several pages of the exhibit to prompt viewers to mentally engage with the material rather than simply view it.

My organizational efforts addressed de Grummond's desire to place children in the forefront, with access to the materials. To more robustly address Kidd's distance between scholar and child, I needed to provide content that could be thought about in a substantial, scholarly way. The display needed to be ripe for real scholarly investigations by both scholars and children in order to allow children the tools to conflate the concepts of book-loving child and detached scholar.

With this in mind, I looked for topics within the materials that I thought I, as a graduate student, could pursue in a scholarly



Sketch of "humor."

fashion. In other words, I used myself as a test subject for scholarly topics. I then made sure to place those materials of scholarly interest within the exhibit, and not limit it to "children's" interests. The selected materials I provided are not above the ability of children pursuing research at home, in the classroom, or a library, and they also have real scholarly interest to the field.

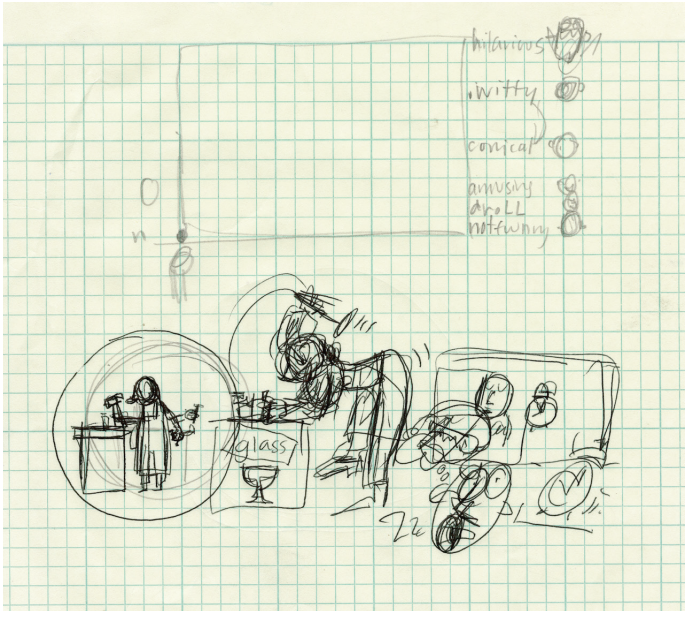
What You Can Do: A Case of Humor

One example of an in-depth investigation that could be pursued with children under the guidance of educators or librarians concerns Sweet's use of humor in *Balloons over Broadway*. The trial-and-error section of the exhibit includes materials about a "humor" page that Sweet ultimately dropped from the book.

The exhibit section displays how she contemplated making Tony Sarg's humor into an overt theme in the biography. This exhibit page—while at face value serving as an example of trial-and-error and as a parallel between art and engineering—can also lead to deeper conversations about what is expected and acceptable within children's literature genres—a favorite topic among children's literature scholars.

These conversations, depending upon the age group, would require guidance but could result in a rich project about themes and genres. To guide the discussion with children, the adult would compartmentalize the investigation into several phases of examination and comparison between the finished book with the draft materials.

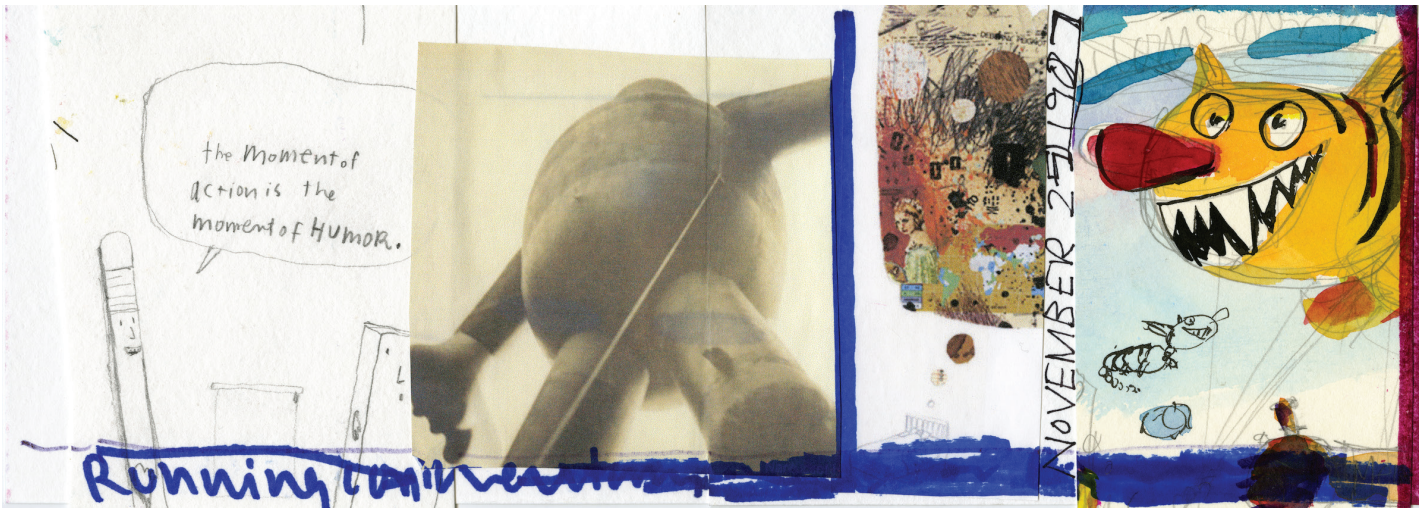
First, of course, the child scholar would have to read the published book or have it read to them. In the final version, Sweet decided to include the humor theme subtly in the illustrations. As she explains in an interview for the exhibit, "I wanted so badly to convey that people found him humorous. He was lighthearted, whimsical and a little mischievous. But in the end, I let the art say that."[10] Sweet notes, in the same interview, a few places where



Funny rating graph.

she sees the humor reflected in the illustrations. The "Engineer a Thought" prompt on the humor page encourages the viewer to find other visual examples of humor in the book. This would be an excellent place to begin discussing humor as a theme. Older children could even read the interview for more examples of the author's perspective on humor in the book.

Interestingly, the art is the only place where the humor theme remained in the final book. The word "humor" or related words like "funny" or "silly" never appear in the published book. In fact, the text is not particularly funny at all. This would be an opportunity to have students compare the pictures to the text. They could contrast the words or sentences with the humor suggested by the pictures. At this point the guiding adult could turn the children's attention to the materials on the exhibit page. These materials contain several sketches and notes about humor, including sketches of a "laugh-o-meter" or similar



Early book dummy with humor quote.

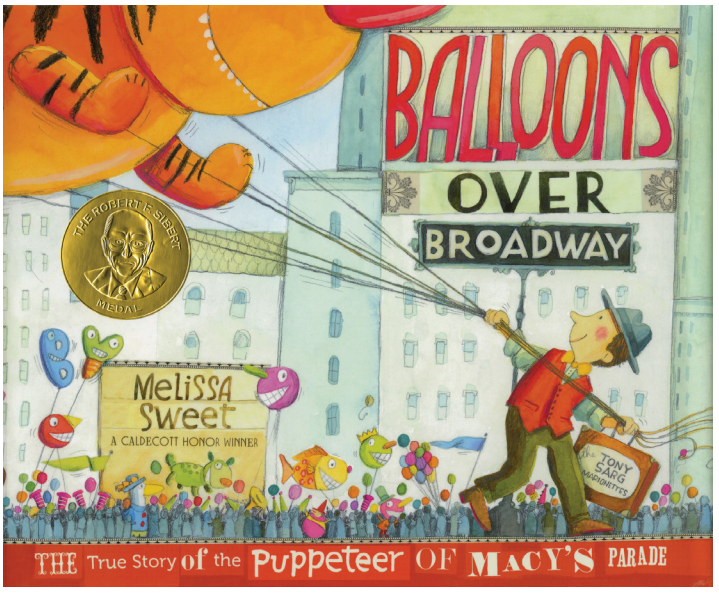
funny-measuring devices.[11] Students could be encouraged to create their own humor-measuring graph or system and then evaluate and compare the humor in the book's pictures and words through their own metric graphic.

An analysis of two pieces of text would be another approach. In these same notes and sketches, Sweet jotted the following quote from Sarg, "The moment of action is the moment of humor."[12] Sweet did not include this quote in the final book. Instead, the featured quote by Sarg in the book is "Every little movement has a meaning of its own."[13] This choice reflects a shift from discussing "humor" in movement to discussing "meaning" in movement. Students could compare the two quotes and discuss what each of them seems to be about.

The book's working title suggests another discussion topic. The initial focus on humor was so essential to Sweet that it was reflected in one early working title: "Serious about Play: The Art of Tony Sarg."[14] This alternative title is depicted on a thumbnail sketch available on the "Life of a Page" exhibit page.

The final title, *Balloons over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade*, is far more serious. It reflects a concern with the events, the person, the truth of the matter; it directs the reader toward a journalistic focus on "who, what, when, how" questions. The working title, on the other hand, directs the reader toward contemplating how serious one is allowed to be about playing, or whether play can or should be serious. With guidance, a comparative discussion could tease out some of these differences. Especially in light of the previous investigation into humor, children would be well equipped to recognize the difference in "fun" levels between the two titles and to consider why Sweet made the choice that she did.

This humor theme intersects with the qualities of biography as a genre. Genre is a topic that many teachers begin introducing between third and fifth grades. The Common Core State Standards expect that by the end of fifth grade, students should be able to compare themes between stories of the same genre.[15] After a thorough introduction, students could consider



ABOVE: Draft of final book cover. BELOW: Final book, proudly wearing its Sibert Medal.

how humor and playfulness has been historically suppressed in biographical picturebooks. In 1980, Leonard Marcus commented with disappointment on "the relative lack of humor in children's picture book biographies. With certain exceptions, humorlessness has generally been the rule for such books—an instance of *un*changing values. Setting an example for the young, children's biographers seem to have agreed, is 'serious business' to be conducted accordingly."[16]

Sweet's original concept for humor completely overthrew this admittedly dated, yet relevant, complaint; her final implementation does as well, but quietly and within the interpretable arena of pictures. To her, the book differs from old biographies through the pictures. "When I was growing up," she notes in the exhibit interview, "an illustrated biography meant two photographs and maybe some black-and-white line drawings. It was really more about the words."[17] It is interesting then that she didn't put Sarg's humor in the words—the more traditional part of biographies to her—but rather in the newer and more radical picture component. This would be a fruitful arena for children to discuss what belongs in a genre and how pictures play a role in expanding or defining genre boundaries and norms.

The lesson ideas outlined above may not incorporate complex theoretical texts as one would expect from a scholar's work, but they do address scholarly topics through the use of archival materials. The materials required in order to host these discussions, from Sweet's interview comments to Sarg's quote about humor, are all available in the exhibit display.

I have tried to set the stage for children to engage in scholarly conversations *alongside* reading and loving the book however "childishly" they wish. By connecting the poles of Kidd's distinction between child and scholar, I have attempted to create a loop rather than a one-way timeline. Teachers, librarians, and other adults must take the next steps to actually enact this inclusion of children in scholarly investigations with the archival materials.

In the end, this exhibit is merely one way to approach the gap between children as the audience and children's literature archives. As another method, the Kerlan Collection invites school trips to view the materials and tour the caverns where they are stored. This is, however, a relatively rare behavior for children's literature archives. More archives may be comfortable with the option of a digital exhibit of materials.

Furthermore, not all classrooms and children are within range of an archive. Digital exhibits aimed at children and enabling their capability for scholarly investigations can increase the accessibility for children while not jeopardizing the materials. They can also help slowly remove the perception that only emotionally removed adult scholars can appreciate and study children's literature archives.

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Flippin' for Books

A Library/University Collaboration

JONGSUN WEE

Photos courtesy of Jongsun Wee

Cassie marched into Winona Senior High School with her big sister and a brother. Her parents followed with Cassie's baby sister in the stroller. As soon as Cassie stepped into the building, she took off her coat and stood in line for a free book. Cassie saw many books to choose from at the greeting table. This is Cassie and her family's third year attending Flippin' for Books.

Flippin' for Books is a community event for young children coordinated by the children's librarian at Winona (MN) Public Library (WPL); this year is the twelfth anniversary of this event, held on a Saturday in November at a local high school.

Originally, it was established with a grant from the Winona Early Childhood Initiative (WECI), and they remain a sponsor; their grant money ($200 annually) pays kitchen staff to prepare a breakfast each year. Breakfast foods are almost entirely donated by local businesses, and the giveaway books also have been donated by the library book vendors. WPL also seeks the grant from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's (SMIF) BookStart program.

Flippin' for Books also has been supported by the WPL budget. Children's librarians and WPL staff start planning Flippin' for Books in August, but they reserve the school facility one year in advance.

Even though this free and well-advertised event targets children ages five and under, all children are welcome. In fact, many elementary students attend with their families.

In addition to a free pancake breakfast, attendees can attend storytime, play games at the gym, or participate in crafts. Local vendor stations offer information on early childhood education and health. For example, a nutritionist from a local grocery store talks about healthy snack options for children, a local school explains their class activities, and a local daycare displays information about their services.

College Class Collaboration

While Cassie and her siblings enjoyed their pancakes, a university professor who coordinated craft activity stations explained the different stations available. Cassie was interested in trying different crafts; her brother wanted to visit the gym activities.

Since 2012, the children's literature class at WSU has participated in Flippin' for Books. The increasing number of attendees shows the success of the partnership. In the past, about 200 people attended. Attendance has risen every year, and last year, 770 people (450 children and 320 adults) participated.

The university students were undergraduate education majors who aspired to become teachers. WPL Children's Librarian Lezlea Dahlke and Jongsun Wee, WSU professor of children's literature, worked collaboratively. Lezlea met with the students

*Formerly a classroom teacher from South Korea, **Dr. Jongsun Wee** teaches children's literature and language arts classes at Winona State University in Minnesota.*

several weeks before the event when Jongsun brought them to the public library.

In the library, Lezlea showed the students activity samples from previous years. She also consulted with the students about possible activities for them to do and purchased materials. Jongsun introduced the book play activities, explained the event, formed small groups, scheduled the library visit and supervised students at the event.

Cassie gave her mom all the things that she made at the craft tables, and as Cassie's mom greeted Jongsun again, she offered a heartfelt "thank you" and promised to return next year.

Everyone agrees that the collaborative work between the library and the university supports each other—the library needs volunteers to provide children with fun craft activities related to picturebooks, and the university needs a placement opportunity for future teachers to interact with young children. &

30 Ways in 30 Days

A Month of Entry Points for Living and Loving Advocacy

Jenna Nemec-Loise

Jenna Nemec-Loise *is Member Content Editor, ALSC Everyday Advocacy Website & Electronic Newsletter. Contact her at everyday-advocacy@hotmail.com with comments and ideas for future topics.*

Thirty days. They're a pretty good measuring stick for whether or not something works for us, right? At least that's what all those infomercials would have us believe.

I mean, think about it: Everywhere you look there's a thirty-day risk-free trial or money-back guarantee. If you're not completely satisfied, simply return your purchase for a full refund (less shipping and handling). There's no commitment, and you can cancel at any time.

Except the companies making these offers hope you won't cancel. No, they're hoping that long before your thirty days are up you'll fall in love with their product and wonder how you ever lived without it.

That's their hook, and now I'm going to use it, too.

Try Everyday Advocacy risk-free for thirty days. I promise you'll broaden your understanding of what it means to learn, share, and make a difference in your library community. You'll see real results—strengthened relationships with colleagues and community partners; improved communication about the value and importance of strong youth services; and increased self-confidence in taking your next steps with ease.

Here are thirty ways to incorporate Everyday Advocacy seamlessly into your work. Try one each day. If you're not living and loving advocacy by the end of your risk-free trial, just call or write me. (We'll find another way to get you hooked.)

1. Write "You are an Everyday Advocate!" on a sticky note and place it somewhere you'll see it often, like a computer monitor, planner, or bulletin board.

2. Talk up the Everyday Advocacy website[1] with a colleague, supervisor, or administrator. Better yet, have a sit-down and explore it together.

3. Take fifteen minutes to chat with your supervisor about your advocacy role within the library. Be sure to ask questions, clarify expectations, and define parameters.

4. Use value-based language (VBL) to write an elevator speech[2] about a program or service you offer youth and families. Try out your elevator speech with a colleague.

5. Talk with a parent or caregiver about the critical role libraries play in early learning, student achievement, and adolescent development.

6. Designate an advocacy wall in a communal staff space at your library. Encourage coworkers to contribute their success stories on sticky notes or on a white board.

7. Start a database of library stories that demonstrate the value of youth

services in your community. (Trust me—you will come to treasure this resource.)

8. Share a meaningful interaction you had with a child, parent, or adult caregiver at your library's next all-staff meeting. (See #7.)

9. Send a note of appreciation to your library's Board of Directors or Friends group. Be specific about how their efforts help you make the library awesome for kids and families.

10. Learn more about your library's annual budget process and how you can assert the importance of strong line items that support youth services.

11. Plan to attend the next meeting of a school board or local school council in your library community. Listen and learn.

12. Reach out to a local teacher or principal and ask about getting on the agenda for an upcoming faculty meeting. Be prepared to talk about the ways you and your library support twenty-first-century learning.

13. Visit the alderman's office to introduce yourself and your role at the library. Drop off fliers for upcoming programs and ask for a list of upcoming ward nights, when constituents can meet with their aldermen to discuss neighborhood issues.

14. Invite a local policymaker to your library to see firsthand how you create a better future for children through libraries. (Opportunities to attend children's programs and meet constituents are both huge draws.)

15. Participate in the next Take Action Tuesday challenge. Watch ALSC-L and Twitter for the details.

16. Sign up for the next Everyday Advocacy Challenge (EAC).[3] Challenges are offered quarterly in September, December, March, and June.

17. Submit the Share Your Advocacy Story[4] webform.

18. Contribute a feature, success story, or news item for an upcoming issue of the *Everyday Advocacy Matters*[5] e-newsletter.

19. Use social media and #TakeActionALSC to share an advocacy story with colleagues, family, and friends.

20. Read the most recent ALSC Blog[6] post from the Advocacy and Legislation Committee. (Heck, why not read 'em all?)

21. Fill out the ALSC Committee Volunteer Form[7] and mark your preference for an appointment in Priority Group I: Child Advocacy.

22. Subscribe to District Dispatch,[8] the official blog of the ALA Washington Office.

23. Check out the ALA Legislative Action Center[9] and learn how you can take action for libraries by contacting your elected officials.

24. Mark your calendar for Virtual Library Legislative Day 2017, which takes place May 1–2. Plan to participate from your very own library community.

25. Explore the resources available through Advocacy University,[10] a clearinghouse of top-notch tools and resources from ALA.

26. Visit the I Love Libraries website.[11] Be inspired.

27. Connect with an Everyday Advocate whom you admire. Ask what inspires and motivates him/her.

28. Email everyday-advocacy@hotmail.com and request a Creating a Better Future button to use in your advocacy efforts. (Supplies are limited, so act now!)

29. Introduce yourself to someone by saying, "Hi, my name is _____, and I'm an Everyday Advocate for children and libraries." Feel empowered.

30. Spread the Everyday Advocacy love. (See? Your satisfaction was 100 percent guaranteed.) &

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The Evolution of Preschool Storytime Research

Betsy Diamant-Cohen and Annette Y. Goldsmith

Betsy Diamant-Cohen *is Executive Director of Mother Goose on the Loose, Baltimore, Maryland.* ***Annette Y. Goldsmith*** *fills in this issue for Tess Prendergast while Tess concentrates on her doctoral studies. Goldsmith is a lecturer at the University of Washington Information School, where she teaches courses on storytelling, materials for youth, and libraries as learning labs in a digital age.*

Since most children's librarians regularly present preschool storytimes, here's a look at some of the research on the topic and how it has developed over time.

In 1992, Virginia A. Walter published *Outcome Measures for Public Library Service to Children*, providing "standardized procedures for collecting, interpreting, and using quantitative data to measure the outputs of library services for children and teens."[1]

In 1997, Frances Smardo Dowd published an article in *Public Libraries* that called for more research on the impact that preschool storytimes have on children's early literacy skills. Suggesting the use of a pre-test and post-test, Dowd also discussed scoring instruments and data analysis.[2]

A 2003 *Library Trends* article by Virginia Walter described still-existing gaps in research about public library services for children and young adults and challenged readers with questions needing answers.[3]

Since then, the call for research has been responded to in a variety of ways. Below is a selection of some books and articles of interest.

Finding Ways to Conduct Research

Since many common methods used in public library research (interviews, questionnaires, surveys, and focus groups) were not suitable for research with young children, Lynne McKechnie devised new procedures for studying the library behavior of children without strong oral and written language skills. By observing natural actions and recording the naturally occurring talk of thirty preschool girls in the public library, McKechnie introduced ethnographic observation as a unique way to reflect the perspective of preschool children in the public library. A later study did the same with babies and toddlers.[4] [5]

In 2006, Eliza T. Dresang, Melissa Gross, and Leslie Edmonds Holt published the book *Dynamic Youth Services through Outcome-Based Planning and Evaluation*, providing ways to collect, evaluate, and use data to adjust planning of children's programs and services. Step-by-step procedures illuminate methods for finding what public library visitors want and interpreting those findings to create new programs or improve existing ones.[6]

Integrating Research into Storytime via Developmental Tips

In 2003, Ellen Fader wrote about using developmental tips to share research findings with parents during preschool storytimes. "How Storytimes for Preschool Children Can Incorporate Current Research" gives examples of techniques for translating research findings into easily understandable tips and behavior that librarians can model for parents.[7]

Which Storytime Configuration is Best for Active Engagement?

Did you ever wonder if it was better for storytime children to sit in a cluster or in a circle? "Student Engagement in Classroom Read Alouds: Considering Seating and Timing" is a study of approximately one hundred preschool students and their five teachers, in which Katie Paciga and her colleagues found that cluster seating resulted in more attentive students. "Students sitting *close* (less than 5 feet from the teacher) exhibited higher levels of nonverbal and verbal engagement than students seated *far* (more than 5 feet away)." Because more students (50 percent) were physically close in the cluster seating than in the circle seating (30 percent), a higher number of children sitting in the circle formation were less engaged.[8]

NOTE: This does not apply to baby and toddler programs, where the children are sitting WITH their parents or caregivers!

Does Reading Aloud Cause Physical Changes in the Brain?

Does reading aloud to children really make a difference in their brains? This longitudinal study with nineteen three- to five-year-olds used blood oxygen level-dependent functional magnetic resonance imaging and whole-brain regression analyses to study the relationship between a child's home reading environment and brain activity while listening to stories being read aloud. John S. Hutton et al. concluded that preschool children who hear stories read aloud to them at home have more positive neural activation, stimulating areas of the brain responsible for supporting mental imagery and narrative comprehension.[9]

How Do Children's Reactions Differ When Digitized Books Are Used in Storytime?

The International Children's Digital Library (ICDL) gives free access to hundreds of full-text, children's picturebooks from around the world (http://en.childrenslibrary.org). Research conducted by Lauren Collen with thirty-two four-year-olds in two groups compared their behavior and reactions to two books that were read in storytimes in their traditional form and in digital form via ICDL. Videotapes that recorded the dialogue and behavior of the children during the storytimes were later transcribed and coded. Collen encouraged combining the best features of digital communication with the best features of paper and print books, concluding that "digital picture book storytimes can enhance story understanding, especially that which depends on 'reading' the illustrations in a picturebook during group storytime."[10]

The Latest Storytime Research

Valuable Initiatives in Early Learning that Work Successfully (VIEWS2) is the first public library-based research study that validates what we already know: storytimes can provide many opportunities to help children develop early literacy skills. In the recently published *Supercharged Storytimes*, Kathleen Campana, J. Elizabeth Mills, and Saroj Nadkarni Ghoting describe the storytime planning and delivery approach developed through VIEWS2, which emphasizes intentionality, interactivity, and community. This research project was led by the late Dr. Eliza T. Dresang at the iSchool at the University of Washington and now her team is continuing this

Find Out More

If you enjoy learning what research has to say about storytime, there are plenty more articles and books. Here are a recommended few.

1. Elaine Czarnecki, Dorothy Stoltz, and Connie Wilson, "Every Child Was Ready To Learn! A Training Package For Home Childcare Providers That Produced Proven Results in Early Literacy Outreach," *Public Libraries* 47, no. 3 (May/June 2008): 45–51. This article describes the Emergent Literacy Training Assessment Project (ELTAP) in Carroll County, MD, one of the first experimental research projects undertaken by public libraries focusing on early literacy for preschoolers.

2. Marie H. Slaby, "Children's Public Library Use and Kindergarten Literacy Readiness in the State of Maryland" (MLS thesis, College of Information Studies, University of Maryland College Park, 2014), http://drum.lib.umd.edu/handle/1903/15473, accessed May 27, 2016. In her 2014 thesis, Marie H. Slaby examines the connection between public library services to young children and their caregivers in Maryland and children's Kindergarten readiness, based on literacy assessments.

3. Sandra Lennox, "Interactive Read-Alouds—An Avenue For Enhancing Children's Language For Thinking and Understanding: A Review of Recent Research," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 41, no. 5 (2013): 381–89. For a more detailed review of recent research, check out Sandra Lennox's *Early Childhood Education Journal* article.

important work.[11] *To read more about the study, which won the 2015 Washington Library Association President's Award, visit: http://views2.ischool.uw.edu/welcome-librarians-educators.*

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THE LAST WORD

I'm Late, I'm Late!

Matt Krueger

These little rabbits sure don't look late to any tea party! In fact, they look like they're having a great time, and that's on purpose.

These charming little bunnies, my pets Harry and Otto, take center stage in this photo—shot for a calendar project.

My co-worker and Children's Librarian Amy Holland and I are both members of the Youth Services Section (YSS) of the New York Library Association (NYLA) and members of the Publications committee, which is tasked with putting together a library-themed project to sell at each year's NYLA conference. Last year, we sold author notecards.

Amy had the idea for incorporating pets into the project, and when the Youth Services Section board requested a sample photo, we brought my rabbits on board. For the photo shoot, my husband, Jonathan, helped create the scene with Amy's husband, Arthur, who took the pictures while Amy held the lighting and I served as bunny wrangler! We hid some snacks in the tea cups to entice the bunnies toward the table.

We also put out a call for submissions from other NYLA and YSS members to contribute to the calendar with their animals either reading books or in a literary tableau. &

Matt Krueger *is Teen Services Librarian at Irondequoit Public Library in Rochester, New York.*

Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books? A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send your Last Word to Sharon Verbeten at CALeditor@yahoo.com.

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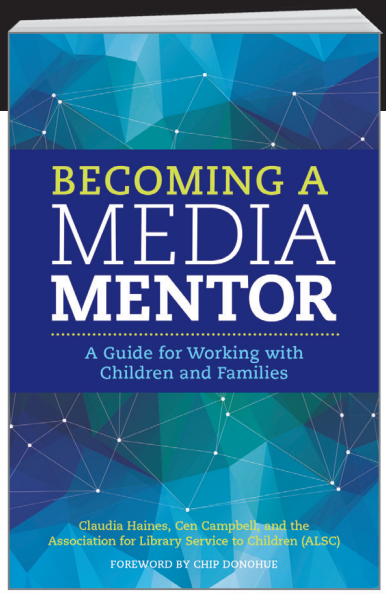

BECOMING A MEDIA MENTOR

A Guide for Working with Children and Families

Claudia Haines, Cen Campbell, and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC)
Foreword by Chip Donohue

In a time of rapidly changing technologies, the role of the youth services librarian has expanded to include the realm of digital media. Supporting children's literacy now means serving as a media mentor. This book empowers youth services staff to confidently assist families and caregivers as they navigate the digital world, guiding them towards digital media experiences that will translate into positive and productive lifelong learning skills, regardless of format.

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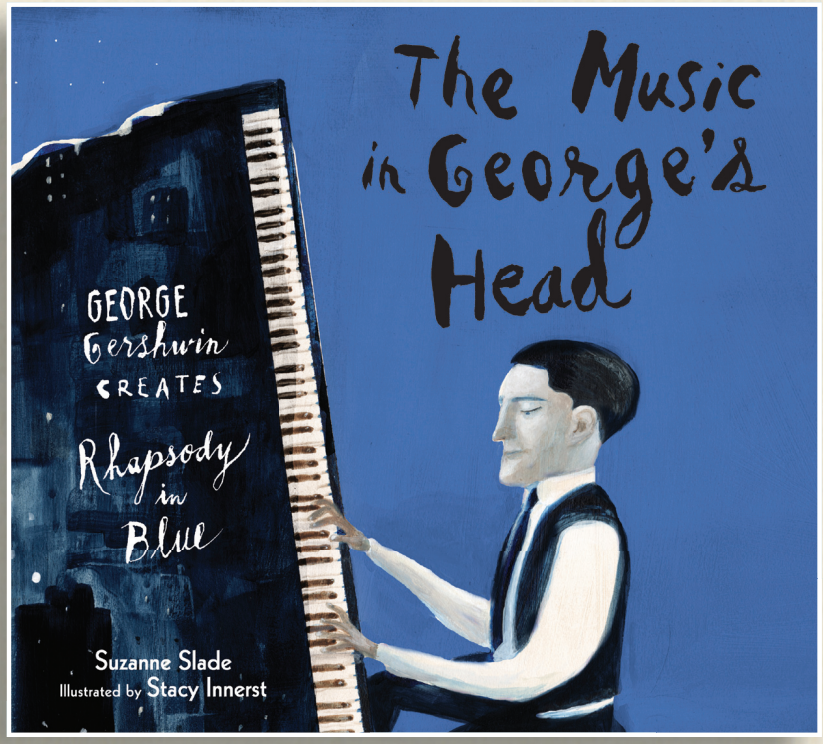

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—***Booklist***, starred review

★ "Innerst's acrylic spreads are almost entirely done in blue and gray tones, with broad brushstrokes, scanned textiles, and paper adding texture; each scene is striking. Slade's narrative is highly readable and lightly peppered with musical onomatopoeia. . . . readers will get a glimpse into Gershwin's mind and find the music within. Highly recommended."
—***School Library Journal***, starred review

★ "Slade illuminates George Gershwin's creative process, from inception to premiere of 'Rhapsody in Blue.' . . . Innerst's acrylic-on-paper compositions, in a striking palette of indigo, sepia, and white, whimsically evoke both the period and the composer's creativity. . . . Bravo!"
—***Kirkus Reviews***, starred review

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