



Who's Missing From Your Library?

(Grades 3-5, Long-term project)



Learning Objectives/Outcomes

National Association for Gifted Students Standards 3.5, 4.4

Students examine the contents of their school or public library to identify which populations are not represented or underrepresented in the library books. Students will understand how to:

- Organize and represent data.
- Plan and carry out an investigation.
- Identify characters, authors, and illustrators and the population groups they belong to.
- Examine library holdings from a diverse and multicultural perspective.

Materials

- Library
- Access to library holdings catalog
- Computer with internet access
- Paper and pencils

Preparations

1. Brainstorm every population group possible and create a list of these groups.
2. Take a guided tour of the library.

Lesson

Students need access to diverse resources, like books representing different populations, to be successful in a diverse society. By discovering which groups are not represented or underrepresented in their library, students can identify holes in their own resources.

Introduction

Students will evaluate the book characters, authors, and illustrators in one or more sections of the library to assess which populations are not well represented.

1. Choose a variety of fiction and nonfiction books to use as examples in showing kids how to determine which populations are represented by the author, illustrator, and/or characters.
2. Explore library search tools to aid students in their research.

Activity

1. Students choose to evaluate the entire library, one large section such as picture books, or one small section such as early readers.
2. Students choose a data collection method such as a checklist that includes all the populations you brainstormed as a larger group.
3. Students collect data from the library using library search tools to see how many books represent authors, illustrators, or characters from specific population groups.
4. Students use their data to identify populations not well represented in the library collection.
5. Students research and identify books for that section that represent the populations they identified as underrepresented.

Assessment

Discuss results with the entire class. Did each student's research identify the same groups as underrepresented? Which groups were most underrepresented? Why are these groups not well represented in your library? How can you ensure all groups get good representation in your library in the future? Teachers can evaluate research methods and results.