

# ECET2 Maine 2017

*The Danger of a Single Story:  
Exploring Identity, Power and Bias in Curriculum*



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# Collaborative Work Space: Padlet

<https://padlet.com/tdemarest/qzpqy0wbve80>



Identity



WHO ARE YOU?



# The Danger of a Single Story

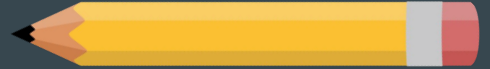


# The Danger of a Single Story

“Show a people as **one thing**, as only one thing, over and over again and that **is what they become**” – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



Quick Write: 1 minute



Has someone ever told a single story about you? Have you ever told a single story about someone else?

*(judgement-free zone~ try to reflect honestly & openly)*

# Identity: Classroom Libraries and Social Justice

How do we make sure kids have access to books that act as...

- Mirrors (reflecting their identity)?
- Windows (giving insight into different perspectives/cultures/worldviews)?
- Doors (exposing students to the world and all it has to offer)?



Power:

A structure for determining who is superior (physical power, social power, intellectual power)

What power dynamics can exist in: families? government?  
education?



A hand is shown in the lower-left corner, firmly grasping a bundle of sharp, white, triangular objects that resemble shards or needles. The background is dark and textured, with some faint, light-colored patterns. The overall mood is serious and contemplative.

Power

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person.

Chimamanda Adichie @ Ted(on the single story) 365DaysofTed via websiteconfetti.com

**How are single stories harmful?**



# Power: Classroom Libraries and Social Justice

- What power dynamic does this text present?
  - Who has the power?
  - Why?
- Am I telling a definitive story about a person/ group of people through this text?

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person.

**Bias:** Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Reflect on the biases you may have when you hear...

Appalachia

Africa

Immigrant

Liberal

Therapist

Black Lives Matter

Snowflake

Socialist

Conservative

Union

Rural

Urban

Free-Reduced Lunch

# Bias

Schema helps us make sense of the world. But sometimes our schema overgeneralizes and misinterprets things. This is how unconscious bias works.



# Bias

## Harvard Implicit Bias Test

*“[O]ur attitudes towards things like race or gender operate on two levels. First of all, we have our conscious attitudes. This is what we choose to believe. These are our stated values, which we use to direct our behavior deliberately . . . But the IAT [Implicit Association Test] measures something else. It measures our second level of attitude, our racial attitude on an unconscious level - the immediate, automatic associations that tumble out before we've even had time to think. We don't deliberately choose our unconscious attitudes. And . . . we may not even be aware of them. The giant computer that is our unconscious silently crunches all the data it can from the experiences we've had, the people we've met, the lessons we've learned, the books we've read, the movies we've seen, and so on, and it forms an opinion.”*

— Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*

# Classroom Libraries and Social Justice

Why is it essential to think critically about identity, power & bias in curriculum/  
classroom libraries?



# Classroom Libraries and Social Justice



Look through the texts on the tables and think about the following:

- ❑ Do you see many different characters/people/regions represented by the **main** characters (fiction) or people (non-fiction)? (i.e. Gender, Ethnicity, Social Class, Sexual Orientation)
- ❑ When books have characters/people with similar identities:
  - ❑ Are stereotypes reinforced? (i.e. girls that need saving, Latinx characters living in cities, etc.)
  - ❑ Are different human experiences shown? (In one book a white character is rich; in another, a white character is poor)

\*Great Resource Alert\* [8 Steps to Creating a Diverse Book Collection](#)

# Classroom Libraries and Social Justice

Classroom Application (As a team or individually): *Choose 20 books randomly from your classroom library. Look through the texts and ask yourself these same questions:*

- ❑ Do you see many different characters/people/regions represented by the **main** characters (fiction) or people (non-fiction)? (i.e. Gender, Ethnicity, Social Class, Sexual Orientation)
- ❑ When books have characters/people with similar identities:
  - ❑ Are stereotypes reinforced? (i.e. girls that need saving, Latinx characters living in cities, etc.)
  - ❑ Are different human experiences shown? (In one book a white character is rich; in another, a white character is poor)

[8 Steps to Creating a Diverse Book Collection](#)



"Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity."

- *Chimamanda Adichie*



# References

See [Padlet](#) for resources used to support this presentation.