A CASE FOR THE CALDECOTT: LIBRARIANS TELL THE STORY

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Abstract

With the weight and hype being put into winning these "heavy medals" as referred to by School Library Journal Blog (Mroczek-Bayci, 2023) plus the rising conflicts centered around book banning across the nation, how are school librarians selecting these titles, specifically the Caldecott winners, when adding them to their library collections? Are librarians utilizing Book Industry and Standards and Communications (BISAC) codes to aid in their curation or are they following the masses and clicking the add to cart and purchasing button, or is there another means of decision making happening? This study was guided by a qualitative narrative methodological approach (Polkinghorne, 1995). The purpose of this study was twofold. First, I wanted to better understand how school librarians make curation decisions centered on books for their collection, specifically related to incorporating Caldecott Medal winning titles. Second, I wanted to determine how if librarians' selection decisions were centered on elements of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as defined by Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014), Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy as defined by Paris (2012) and Critical Librarianship (Drabinski, 2019).

Keywords: Caldecott Medal, children's literature, BISAC codes, public elementary school librarians, narrative research, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, Critical Librarianship

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Thank you. Sundays. Being a fulltime school librarian, part-time instructor and curator, wife and mother was challenging to say the least to make all these aspects of my life work. I like to think I did an "okay" job at juggling all my responsibilities, but I'm ready to focus on choosing a few and doing them really well. I'm grateful for my Sundays to allow for space and clarity for the tasks at hand.

This dissertation is the result of the collective efforts of all those mentioned above, and I am deeply grateful for their contributions. I understand the great privilege that I've had in my life to allow this all to happen.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all the first-generation graduates out there. You can do hard

things; you can do what you love just because you love it.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction

"I have a special section for them in the library…" *"Tammie"*

Every year at the end of January, the American Library Association (ALA) announces their Book, Print and Media Awards. There are 80 annual awards given from the Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal, which represents the best nonfiction in American children's literature to the most senior John Newbery Medal (most distinguished contribution to American children's literature) and Randolph Caldecott Medals (most distinguished American picture book for children). The Newberry and Caldecott Medals have longevity; the Newberry was established in 1923 and celebrated its hundredth anniversary in 2023 and the Caldecott was established in 1938. The awards specific to youth and children's literature have gained popularity in the United States and carry prestige in multiple contexts such as classrooms, libraries, publishers, and bookstores.

In this study, Caldecott curation was examined in public elementary school libraries. Appendix A presents a timeline and snapshot of the scope of the ALA awards. The awards presented in this timeline were selected as a point of historical context and overview of how the progression of these awards seek to represent our community's libraries. Only the Youth Book and Print and Media Awards are showcased since this study revolved around children's literature.

There is a prestige in winning the Caldecott award, and the phenomenon named after winning the Caldecott is entitled the "Caldecott Effect" (Smith, 2013, p. 9). Smith wrote of the "Caldecott Effect" as being the aftermath of winning the award, as each winning title experiences a spike in sales upon the award being announced and receives better than average

royalty checks (p. 9). In fact, librarians across the nation speculate on the outcomes of ALA

Awards such as the Caldecott for months leading up to the official announcement. Literary based

Instagram influencers hold mock award brackets and postulate the outcomes. Significant

anticipation and excitement surround these announcements and builds this "Caldecott Effect"

(Smith, 2013, p. 13). It is not possible to get an exact measurement of the effect a single

Caldecott Medal has had on the long-term fortunes of any individual winner as there are many

variables, including story, artistic aesthetic, theme, difficulty of text, age range of audience,

renown of author or illustrator, and geography epoch. Any one variable can skew whatever

measurement one chooses whether it is library circulation or unit sales. In response, publishers

and people associated with the book industry have reported book sales begin to elevate and more

attention is directed to the possible winners. Maughan (2011) wrote that the receipt of these ALA

awards have contributed to some of the lore to many now well-known publishers. For example,

in 2003 and 2004, the new and upcoming publisher Roaring Brook Press solidified its position in

the industry by receiving back-to-back Caldecott Medal for *My Friend Rabbit* (Rohmann, 2002)

and *The Man That Walked Between the Towers* (Gerstein, 2003).

It's important to discuss diversity related to Caldecott, including when the first primary

characters of color, illustrators of color, and other underrepresented groups surfaced, because

these discussions contribute to a more comprehensive understanding and evolving landscape of

children's literature. Examining milestones and achievements in diversity within the Caldecott

Medal can foster awareness, appreciation, and advocacy for inclusive narratives, ensuring that a

wide array of voices and perspectives are celebrated in the world of children's books. Table 1

reflects significant moments in the Caldecott Award as presented by ALA (2024). By

acknowledging the contributions of diverse children's literature creators, we can inspire positive

change, encourage equitable representation, and create a more inclusive and enriching literacy environment for our young readers (Moffet, 2016).

Table 1

Milestones in the Caldecott Medal History

Date	Milestone
1938	Dorothy Lathrop - first woman and recipient of the Caldecott award.
1963	First appearance of an African American primary character in an award winning title.
1976	Leo Dillon - first Black artist to win the Caldecott award
1977	Diane and Leo Dillon- the only illustrators to consecutively win the Caldecott award.
1990	Ed Young - first Asian American to win the Caldecott award.
2016	Yuyi Morales - first Latina to win the Caldecott award.
2021	Micheala Goade - first Native American to win the Caldecott award.
2024	Vashti Harrison - first Black woman to win the Caldecott award.

Personal Connection to this Study

As an elementary school librarian of 20 years, I enjoy these yearly celebratory announcements and relish in the fact that I have met or hosted many award-winning authors and illustrators in the schools I have served, including Javaka Steptoe, winner of the 2017 Caldecott medal for *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*. My passion is picture

books. I am an avid follower of contemporary children's literature and have been privileged to share my love and craft with learners of all ages from five-year-olds beginning their schooling career to adult students whom I have taught at the university level. There is nothing better than a lively, back and forth discussion with a group of students seated around me on the carpet of my library during a read aloud, as we read the text and analyze the illustrations for syncopation with the written word, or when a student points out an upbeat quirky tidbit, or having a metaphorical discussion with more mature students about what they think the illustrator was thinking or trying to convey with their art in the pages of the picture books they created. Priceless describes my feeling when a student asks me to read the book again or if they can check it out.

Additionally, picture books were an integral part of my personal history as a child, as a classroom teacher, and now as a librarian. Eyes wide with wonder, I can still picture my second-grade teacher reading *Gila Monsters Meet You at the Airport* (Sharmat, 1990), and thinking could Gila monsters really show up on an airport runway and greet you? I also have fond memories of my dad reading *The Poky Little Puppy* (Lowrey & Tenggren, 1970) and *The Monster at the End of This Book* (Stone & Smollin, 2004) before bed. As a parent, some of my fondest times with my children have been with them curled up in my lap reading books that represented the holidays from Valentine's Day to Christmas. Although my children are teenagers now and have outgrown bedtime story rituals, those books live in my loft in color coded bins (pink for Valentine's Day and red for Christmas) in hopes that they will come alive again someday in the hands of my grandchildren.

I share all of this because adults are the sentinels of books in the lives of young children. Parents are the sole providers of books to small children and school librarians are the decision makers of the books that make it onto the library shelves and into the hands of students. We can

also discuss the impact and importance of what teachers share and do not share in their classrooms. What professors introduce to students in teacher education programs, this notion of adults being the sentinels of children's literature and how adults are the decision makers for their students, were the focuses of this study.

Statement of Problem

With the weight and hype put into winning these "heavy medals" as referred to by School Library Journal Blog (Mroczek-Bayci, 2023), and the rising conflicts centered around book bannings across the nation, how are school librarians selecting titles, specifically the Caldecott winners, when adding them to their library collections? Are librarians utilizing Book Industry and Standards and Communications (BISAC) codes to aid in their curation or are they following the masses and clicking the "Add to cart" and purchasing buttons, or is some other means of decision making happening? Are librarians thoughtfully reflecting on the communities they serve to incorporate award winning books on their shelves or are they succumbing to nostalgia? Why is it important for librarians to be thoughtful in their book selections? Lycke and Lucey (2018) found that the use of controversial books such as banned books helped preservice teachers incorporate critical thinking into their classrooms and a larger sense of community with their learning spaces.

Librarians are the gatekeepers of the books that make it into the hands of students. Much like today's classroom teachers, librarians must be responsive to the changing school climate in US public schools. Not only have racial demographics shifted in schools across the United States, but factors such as ability levels and cultural identities influence how librarians navigate and select books for their schools. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 2020 reported that the US student racial demographics were 46% White, 15% Black, 28% Hispanic,

5% Asian, 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 5% Two or More Races; data for Pacific Islanders was not included because the percentages were lower than 1%. These data are reflective of both elementary and secondary schools based on 44.9 million students enrolled in public schools (NCES, 2020). This is especially important in considering the literature librarians curate for their library collection as students need/must see themselves in the books they read.

NCES 2020 report also stated that 87.6% of public schools, secondary and elementary, have a library media center on premise. NCES (2020) defined a library media center as an organized collection of printed and/or audiovisual and/or computer resources, which is administered as a unit, is located in a designated place or places, and makes resources and services available to students, teachers, and administrators. A library media center may be called a school library, media center, information center, instructional materials center, learning resource center, or any other similar name (NCES, 2020). School librarians are the point of access to all students enrolled in public schools across our nation to obtain literature that is reflective of themselves as well as allowing them ways to see the world at large beyond their immediate surroundings and experiences (Jackson, 2023).

Defining the Field of Study

The following section provides defined key terms relevant to my study.

Role of School Librarians

In describing the role of school librarians in this study, it is important to note the racial demographics of licensed personnel in this large urban school district in the southwest United States; licensed personnel include public school librarians. In 2022-23, of the 18,142 licensed personnel employed in a large urban school district in the southwest of the United States, 64.6% are Caucasian, 8.4% are Black/African American, 8.5% are Asian, .6% are Native American,

13.4% are Hispanic/Latino, .6% are listed as other, 0.7% are Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and 3.3% are Multiracial (Clark County School District, 2023). Although specific racial demographics are not available for school librarians, this data showed that teachers in this large urban school district in the southwest of the United States are primarily White. This is important because the librarians in this study did not reflect the demographics of their student populations in eight of the 10 cases (NCES, 2023).

Elkins (2018) stated that the role of a school librarian can vary depending on the needs and size of the school and student population, but some common responsibilities include: (a) Managing the school library: This includes selecting, acquiring, organizing and maintaining the library's collection of books and other text based materials; (b) Assisting with research: School librarians can help students and teachers find and access information for research projects, papers and assignments; (c) Promoting literacy: School librarians can encourage students in reading and literacy by promoting books, running reading programs and creating displays and activities to engage students in reading; (d) Teaching information literacy skills: School librarians can teach students how to evaluate information sources, how to cite sources correctly, and use technology to access and organize information; (e) Collaboration with teachers: School librarians can work with teachers to develop curriculum-related resources and activities and can help them integrate technology and digital resources into their lessons; and (f) Providing a safe and welcoming environment: School librarians can create a warm, welcoming and safe space where students can study, read and work on projects (p. 96). McPherson (2020) suggested that school librarians provide four personal attributes that are essential to leaders in the field of librarianship to be successful: leadership skills, communication skills, collaborative skills, and interpersonal skills.

Overall, the role of a school librarian is to support the education and information needs of the school community and to promote a love of reading and learning among students (Elkins, 2018).

Randolph Caldecott Medal

This particular study centered on how librarians curate the Caldecott Award and thus it is essential to share the history of these awards and specifically address who Randolph Caldecott was, the time period in which he lived, the way in which the award winner was/is selected, and of whom the selection committee is composed. The first Randolph Caldecott Medal was awarded in 1938 to a picture book entitled *Animals in the Bible* (Fish & Lathrop, 1937). The award was the creation of publishing visionary Frederic G. Melcher (Marcus, 2001), a long-time collector and admirer of illustrator Randolph Caldecott. In 1922, Melcher created the John Newbery Medal in conjunction with the ALA and had his eyes on creating a similar award for picture books but waited to secure the funding before implementing its creation (Marcus, 2001).

Randolph Caldecott rose to fame as the father of children's illustrations in the late 1800's. He illustrated classics such as *The House that Jack Built* (Caldecott, 1878) and *The Diverting History of John Gilpin* (Caldecott, 1878). During this time, Caldecott worked in the printing industry and saw a need for supporting the publication of books for children with the upwardly rising population of children in Britain's middle class. Middle class children were large in number and had the means to purchase entertainment (Marcus, 2001).

Caldecott originally wanted to be an artist but resisted pursuing this dream due to his father's distaste for the profession. The world in which Caldecott's picture books came of age similarly resembled our current technology stratification, with new advances happening every day in the way we work, travel, and communicate with each other (Marcus, 2001). In November 1878, when Randolph's first picture book, *The House that Jack Built* (Caldecott, 1878), was

published and sold in shops and rail station bookstalls across Great Britain, it became an instant success, sold out, and had to be reprinted several times (Marcus, 2013). His books became so popular between 1878 and 1885, he published two books per year (Marcus, 2001). This was a milestone in children's focused publishing, where previously literature published for children were Bibles or instructional materials for schooling (Smith, 2002).

Caldecott's artistry was noted for his ample use of white space within his illustrations as an open invitation to the reader to imagine the rest of the scene (Marcus, 2013). In 1885, during the height of his success publishing illustrated books for children, Caldecott moved to Saint Augustine, Florida. He sought a healthier environment as he was a long-time sufferer of then, so-called organic heart disease or, as we know it today, tuberculosis (Marcus, 2013). Upon his arrival to the United States in October 1885, Caldecott planned to travel to California via train and illustrate his experiences in a picture book and continue his career in the states, but he succumbed to his disease in February of 1886 (Marcus, 2001).

The ALA is the guardian of the Caldecott Medal. Each year the ALA receives applications from individuals interested in serving on the Caldecott Award Committee. The previous year's committee reviews applicants and selects the new members; applicants are often teachers, librarians, or professors.

The committee adheres to the following terms to select the award. The terms are published on the ALA website, however, the committee's justifications for selection are not published. The criteria defined by ALA (2023) were:

1. In identifying a distinguished picture in a book for children:

(a) committee members need to consider excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed, excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme or concept,

appropriateness of style of illustration to the story, theme or concept, delineation of plot,

theme, character, setting mood or information through pictures.

(b) committee members must consider excellence of presentation in recognition of a child

audience.

2. The only limitation to graphic form is that the form must be one which may be used in

a picture book. The book must be a self-contained entity, not dependent on other media

(e.g., sound or film equipment).

3. Each book is to be considered as a picture book. The committee is to make its decision

primarily on the illustration, but other components of a book are to be considered

especially when they make a book less effective as a children's picture book. Such other

components might include the written text, the overall design of the book, etc.

Note: The committee should keep in mind that the award is for distinguished illustrations

in a picture book and for excellence of pictorial presentation for children. The award is

not for didactic intent or for popularity. (p. 1)

Book Industry Standards and Communications (BISAC) Codes

An additional component of this research evaluated the Book Industry Standards and

Communications (BISAC) codes and thus it is important to articulate their history and their

influence in curating library collections. These codes were created in 1976 and their aim was to

mirror the subject codes one might browse in a bookstore, making titles more accessible to the

common reader (Olenick, 2021).

BISAC codes were created in 1976 by the Book Industry Study Group (BISG) to

standardize a system of codes used in the publishing industry to categorize and classify books

based on subject matter (BISG, 2023). The BISAC codes are used by booksellers, librarians, and

publishers to identify and locate books more efficiently. These category codes cover a wide range of subjects, including but not limited to fiction, nonfiction, and children's books. BISAC codes are an important tool for authors and publishers to ensure that their books are categorized accurately and reach the appropriate audiences. They also help booksellers and librarians organize and display books in a reader-friendly manner, making it easier for consumers of literature to find the books for which they search. Since BISAC codes are assigned before the book wins the award, it is the first point of access for the title to get into the hands of the reader. Upon winning the Caldecott Medal, the BISAC codes oftentimes become secondary.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was twofold. I examined how, if at all, public school elementary librarians utilized library classification systems such as the BISAC codes in their curation decisions, specifically pertaining to the Caldecott Medal winning books. Second, I examined if these librarians (from the initial purpose) considered culturally relevant pedagogy theories when making these decisions. Table 2 provides the research questions for this study.

Table 2

Research Questions

Research Questions
RQ 1: How, if at all, do librarians use BISAC codes to determine curation decisions of the Caldecott Medal winning books?
RQ 2: Are librarians considering culturally relevant pedagogy when making decisions about their collections?

In this chapter, I defined the problem, significance, and purpose of the study. Chapter II presents a review of pertinent literature that guided the study design including the theoretical framework. Chapter III defines the methods used for data collection and analysis. Chapter IV describes the data analysis process used for this study and the findings for both research questions. Finally, Chapter V summarizes the key findings of the dissertation and discusses the implications and the limitations of this study.

Review of Literature

Chapter II presents the literature that guided this research. First, I explore the history surrounding the Caldecott Medal. Next, I define the Book Industry Standards and Communications (BISAC) codes and the research behind them and the practices of libraries in regard to collection development policies. Then I define the Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) and the Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) theoretical frameworks that guided the research and study. Finally, I introduce the theory of critical librarianship and its links to CRP and CSP.

This literature review used a scoping review technique by which I assessed the scope of empirical research on the topics related to my study (Grant & Booth, 2009). The scoping review identified existing literature on my research topic and was helpful in determining the gaps in the literature related to my study (Grant & Booth, 2009). After my initial research using databases the Universities' libraries, e.g., Library & Information Science Abstracts (LISA) and Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), I consulted a research librarian at the specific institution and had three virtual meetings where we reviewed the findings; the findings helped me search deeper into the topics discussed in this literature review.

My search included keywords including Caldecott Award, elementary librarian, public school librarian, children's literature, diversity analysis, multicultural analysis and BISAC.

Research on the Caldecott Award

In Chapter I described the significance of the Caldecott Award and its impact on the book industry and school libraries. Notably, studies have centered on the diversity of the Caldecott

award recipients, the history of the Caldecott, and critiques of the Caldecott Award committee (Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Davis et al., 2021; Koss et al., 2018).

Analysis of Award Recipients

The studies of Davis et al. (2021), Koss et al. (2018), Johnson and Martinez (2018), and Crisp and Hiller (2011) attempted to define diversity in a variety of ways, such as race within character representations and race representation in the winning illustrator. Questions have arisen over the lack of diversity represented within the author and illustrator recipients and characters depicted within the stories.

In their study, Davis et al. (2021) examined how often and in what ways Black males were portrayed in Caldecott Medal and Honor books and involved in the creation of books with Black male characters; this research analyzed Caldecott books published from 1995 to 2020. Davis et al. (2021) concluded that although they have many fond memories of books that were presented to them in their childhood classrooms, there was an obvious disconnect between the lives portrayed in the stories and their lives. Davis' critical analysis of the diverse portrayal of characters in picture books and the creators (authors/illustrators) of the books concluded that it is important to ensure identities are represented. This allows such representation to create windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors that lead to culturally relevant and diverse literacy experiences for all children, including Black males (Davis et al, 2021). Although the lack of representation is present among the Caldecott Medal winning books, some caution about creating an illusion by including examples of tokenism within the pages (Davis et al., 2021). It is not enough for students to always view themselves as secondary or background characters. Cultural backgrounds, interests, and lived experiences are essential in children's education, especially in the books they read (Davis et al., 2021).

Koss et al. (2017) wrote literature can be a vehicle for helping children learn about who they are and where they fit into their wider world--when teachers and librarians put the right books in their hands. Koss et al. (2017) noted findings of a 33% projected increase of Latinx students in the United States by the year 2022. Looking at these statistics increases the awareness of the representation of diverse ethnicities in the books we share with children so that they see a reflection of themselves and their worlds (Koss et al., 2017).

Koss et al. (2017) also found that approximately 87% of author and illustrator recipients of the Caldecott Medal have been white, as are the characters in the books. Koss et al. (2018) suggested that just as we have used cartography for decades to navigate our way through the world, children's literature, especially popularized titles such as Caldecott winners, can provide a guide towards more culturally inclusive titles. Koss et al. (2018) hoped that their content analysis research would serve as a road map to the publishing industry to provide more opportunities for children's book publishers to seek out, publish, and promote racially and ethnically diverse illustrators and authors and literature that contains diverse populations. If books featuring diverse populations are not published, such books cannot be purchased and thus they cannot receive awards such as the Caldecott Medal (Koss et al., 2018).

Koss et al. (2017) also believed it is critical for professionals from diverse backgrounds, especially Latinx professionals, to be actively involved in professional communities that select award-winning books. The authors stated the need to be increasingly vocal in calling for publishers to seek out and publish books by Latino authors and illustrators and books that reflect the contemporary Latinx population and experience. In addition, they insisted that booksellers take the initiative to showcase these books by talking about and promoting them, and for educators to bring these books into our classrooms and get them into the hands of our students. If

books are not published, sold, and shared, they will never win awards nor make a difference in the lives of child readers (Koss et al., 2017).

Therefore, as the author of this research and supported by the above research (e.g., x, y, z), I am hopeful that the findings of this study will guide librarians to curate collections that reflect the students whom they serve. Need another sentence or more details here.

Gender Representation

Crisp and Hiller (2011) examined for representatives of gender in the Caldecott winners from inception to 2011. They looked at the main characters and the creators of the winning titles for explicit mentioning of male or female gender types and, if no specific mention was made, the character or creator was labeled as ungendered. Allowing for space of ungendered characters, gives picture book creators and the readers more room to find themselves in the pages of these award-winning books. Their analysis found that the number of male characters significantly outweighed female characters and only 10 of the Caldecott Medal winners used in this study represented a non-gendered character; those 10 non-gendered characters were represented predominantly by animal characters (Crisp & Hiller, 2011). Crisp and Hiller (2011) found this data to be particularly interesting because books that do not assign gender identities to characters can be particularly powerful tools, allowing one to gauge how individual readers interpret these characters. If a reader assigns a specific gender identity to an ungendered character, a productive conversation could include interrogating what ultimately led the reader to that gender assignment. Ultimately the study concluded that there is a need for wider representations of diverse gendered identities in all children's literature (Crisp & Hiller, 2011). Although it is not the aim of the Caldecott Medal to be awarded for diverse gender presentations, these books reach an array of learners and can profoundly impact the readers. These books can legitimize and

validate experiences, providing spaces that allow readers to locate images of themselves and the people they love. The power of such narratives cannot be paralleled. Awarding the prestigious Caldecott Medal to books that provide wide-ranging depictions of what it means to self-identify or resist identification as ''male'' or ''female'' may work to position readers to acknowledge the existence of the range of people who represent gender in all its complexity (Crisp & Hiller, 2011).

History of the Caldecott Medal

In reviewing the literature there is a lack of librarians' understanding of the history of the Randolph Caldecott Medal (Koss et al., 2018). Discussions have occurred regarding changing the name of the Caldecott Medal to someone who was American, since one of the criteria for the award is its presentation to an illustrator who is an American citizen or resident of the United States (ALA, 2023). For example, many librarians and teachers do not know that Randolph had traveled from England to live and work in the United States before his death in 1886 (Koss et al., 2018). People familiar with the book industry have no idea of his attempt to move his career to the states; after his death, his body lay buried in a worn and also unmarked grave due to age, weather, and lack of maintenance (Rockman, 2013). Although the popularity of the Caldecott Medal has risen over the past 85 years, the grave of the medal's namesake went largely unattended for 80 years after his death. Marcus (2013) reflected upon writing biographical articles on Randolph Caldecott, that, although many librarians are aware of the medal in his name nor would they not be able to recount his history.

The history of Caldecott was an integral part of my research as he was an innovator of his time. Koss et al. (2018) wrote of the importance of topography and analyzed the need for the metaphor between maps and children's picture books. Picture books, especially Caldecott Medal

winners, can provide insight into some of the forces that shape a landscape, both natural and

human made, and, like maps, they may need to be redrawn over time. As a map is a specific

representation of the landscape at a particular time and place, so too are Caldecott books.

Caldecott books are "written artifacts that convey cultural messages and values about society and

help children learn about their world" (Koss, 2015, p. 32). Thus, it is critical to understand the

historical underpinnings of the Caldecott Medal and the direction it has taken over the years in

shaping and recognizing excellence in children's book illustrations. This knowledge not only

enriches librarians' appreciation for the award, but also provides valuable insights into the

evolving landscape of children's literature and the impact artistic contributions have on our

young readers.

Critiques of the Caldecott Award Committee

Studies (Gauch, 2013; Horning, 2013; Smith, 2013) have indicated that people in the

children's literature industry have concrete feelings about the Caldecott committee's award

decisions, and how the committee is bound to by a confidentiality clause and is unable to release

details about their decision-making process (Horning, 2013). Researchers (Gauch, 2013;

Horning, 2013; Smith, 2013) have expressed dissatisfaction with the annual decisions.

Horning (2013) noted that past committee members were white, middle aged men who

did not make decisions geared towards children, but rather bolstered the career of a mentor as in

the case with *Hey Al!*, the winner of the 1987 Caldecott medal. Horning (2013) labeled this a

quirky choice and upon further investigation, found the award was given to one of author

Maurice Sendak's apprentices, an active indicator of partiality on the committee's part. Although

librarians heavily anticipate the winners of this distinguished award, sometimes the winner

comes to a surprise to all. Horning (2013) stated that after 75 years of awarding the Caldecott

Medal, we are still discussing how we define the term picture book, who the audience is, whether the Caldecott winners will or should stand the test of time, and whether the choices are driven by politics, among other issues. These issues have led to questioning the award terms, definitions, selection process, committee composition, and the meaning of distinguished. The Caldecott Committee is a group of humans and humans can be influenced by their surroundings as was suspected to be the case in the awarding of the Caldecott Medal on the 50th anniversary of the award (Horning, 2013).

With much speculation every year surrounding the ALA Book, Print and Media Awards, there are bound to be unexpected winners, which draws attention to the fact that choosing the most distinguished American children's picture book is a subjective act. Gauch (2013), a children's picture book art editor, stated that the Caldecott decision making process is a "felt thing". Gauch (2013) served on the editorial team for three Caldecott winning books and knew those books had a winning formula as the text and the illustrations matched perfectly. She noted "ecstatic moments within picture books, little moments in the art that rise above visually and emotionally, and that we recognize by the catch in our own breath when we encounter them" (Gauch, 2013, p. 24). Also, Gauch (2013) stated, "I have always wanted to touch young readers profoundly, whether it was with humor or pathos or transformation" (p. 24). Gauch (2013) indicated it was never her responsibility to be on the lookout for Caldecott winning books; her responsibility was, when the artist was faced with a new story, to help him or her "discover his vision", "to let the book unfold." It is important to mention that Gauch also mentioned that

> For most of us who create children's books, we are wise enough to remember that even
> now as adults, we live with the picturebooks we loved best: the characters, the rhymes
> and rhythms, the wit, the stories of our earliest years. They remain with us as clearly as

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any part of our history, actual or literary. (2013, p. 28)

Additionally, Smith (2031) referenced that wins of the Caldecott Medal can secure both literary immortality and a better-than-average royalty check for the foreseeable future. The winner joins a continuum of excellence that rewards the creation of excellent narrative art for an audience historically undervalued by society as a whole. It is not possible to get an exact measurement of the effect a single Caldecott Medal has had on the long-term fortunes of any individual winner as there are simply too many variables, including story, artistic aesthetic, theme, difficulty of text, age range of audience, renown of author or illustrator, geography, epoch, and so on. Any one variable can skew whatever measurement one chooses, whether it's library circulation or unit sales (Smith, 2013).

Smith (2013) addressed that publishing is a business, and businesses run on the bottom line and not only can medal winners contribute to a publisher's bottom line, but they can also help make a publisher a valuable property in itself. With some disappointment she stated that libraries do not typically commit themselves at a written policy level to purchase, retain, and replace Caldecott winning titles, acknowledging the truth that each book is individual and may or may not meet the needs of their specific communities (Smith, 2013), publishers, librarians, picture book lovers, and children can look back at the canon established over the past 75 years and see that the Caldecott Medal has more than fulfilled its implied purpose (Smith, 2013). In sum, though immediate and individual Caldecott Effects may vary, taken as a whole the Caldecott Effect is a momentous, industry-invigorating one (Smith, 2013). Illustrators

In conclusion, many studies (Crisp & Hiller, 2011; Davis, Pearce & Mullins, 2021; Gauch, 2013; Horning, 2013; Koss, Johnson & Martinez, 2018; Smith, 2013) of the Caldecott Medal have been conducted surrounding a variety of subsets, and yet work remains to be done in

ensuring diversity among the representation of characters and illustrators. Although that responsibility falls on many shoulders, I discovered the elements that were missing were understanding how librarians engage with the Caldecott Medal and make decisions regarding acquisitions.

Research on BISAC Codes

There is limited scholarly research about the use of BISAC codes in librarianship. The keyword search BISAC yielded minimal information, but it was mainly a descriptor for a tool librarian's use and not the focus of the article. The three articles presented here were research focused.

BISAC Codes as Search Criteria

Some research has been done on the labeling of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer (LGBTQ) themes in literature and if students are discouraged from reading the book by labeling the book with a reflective BISAC code (Moeller & Becnel, 2019). For example, when attempting to genrefy a library collection librarians may look to vendor guides or industry categorizing guides, such as the BISACs, to determine where to organize books, such as "horror" for scary books or "romance" for books about love. When books that contained themes of LGBTQ themes were singled out and not incorporated into the general categories, however, readers were less likely to engage with them, even when the book had elements of "romance" and LGBTQ categories. It is important to note that there is no current common system of genres for school librarians to use when reorganizing and reclassifying their collections (Moeller & Becnal, 2019); whatever tool a librarian decides to use to organize collections, it is imperative that they are reflective of the readers. When using industry tools such as BISAC codes, including whether or not they are common, who decides what is a genre, and who is included in which

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genres are questions that should be considered as school librarians move forward with genrefication (Moeller & Becnal, 2019). Excluding one subset from a general genre could cause harm and could consist of physical or psychological damage or negative consequences toward individuals, groups, or entities. Results could vary from actions, behaviors or even events that could compromise well-being, safety, or the normal functioning of an individual or group.

BISAC Codes Trends

Hoffert (2020) examined the popularity of best-selling book genres of mystery, thriller, romance, literary fiction and women's fiction, and used the BISAC codes to further break down the reason for their popularity. The number one search for BISAC code at the time of this analysis was for the genre of mystery and subgenre of woman sleuths (Hoffert, 2020). One can speculate that the popularity of these genres was based on events happening in popular culture at xthe time. The analysis also concluded that searches do have direct correlation with the environment in which they were searched; for example, in areas with a higher density of conservative populations results were high for searches in Christian fiction. Conversely the data noted a trend given current controversies (Hoffert, 2020). Hoffert (2020) said it was heartening, giving the current controversies to the researchers when comparing the 20 romance subgenres to see multicultural/interracial romance ranking in the top half in terms of sales; disheartening and a little surprising was that LGBTQ sales ran at the bottom of the pack, both in romance and low-profile erotica. Lesbian romance outsold gay romance, and both lesbian and gay titles did better as their own fiction genres (Hoffert, 2020). Many trends were reported in the data analysis including notations of how readers' appetite for select genres had rapidly changed from the previous decade (Hoffert, 2020).

BISAC Code Limitations

Gregory (2022) cited that a librarian was facing diversity at their institution and how patrons were able to use the BISAC codes to help narrow searches and find the gaps in their collection. The act of creating labeling and classifying systems is inherently biased because the systems are in essence created by humans. It is critical to conduct thorough research and analysis on these systems to ensure that the whole picture is represented within the keyword searching of library patrons. Gregory (2022) specifically found the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) narratives were largely absent from these searches creating a biased look at the results. When the labeling of BIPOC narratives does not exist, the patron may rely on their own bias and thus skew the information they are uploading. According to Gregory, the librarian interviewed in this research questioned,

> I would be interested to see how that would be teased out. If all of the stories returned about anyone who is not white include narratives that they are poor, or urban, or in prison, it's really doing a disservice to the tool, a disservice to users, and I would be interested to see if they could pull that out. (2022, p. 31)

Furthermore, Gregory (2022) called for the systematic analysis of the information classification tools used to search in our libraries, whether they are BISAC codes, Library of Congress headings, or subject codes used in MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging) records. Diving deeply into these classification systems is essential for comprehensive understanding of how information is organized and accessed within library searches.

The use of the BISAC codes is prevalent in research concerning librarianship, however, there was not an abundance of articles from which to pull (Gregory, 2022; Hoffert, 2020; Moeller & Becnel, 2019). It should be noted that there is limited research in this area, and further exploration and research are warranted to delve deeper into the implications and potential

advancement that may arise from a more extensive studies of the use and impact of BISAC codes in the field of librarianship.

Collection Development Policies (CDP)

My study, incorporated research specific to better understanding how or if Collection Development Policies (CDP) factor into curation decisions made by public school libraries. As such it is important to review literature centered around CDP and the ways in which librarians use them. Limited research is available on this subject. Articles reference CPD as a tool for librarians, but this particular study was not centered around this concept.

It is common practice for libraries to have a statement of collection development or selection policies (Elkins, 2018). These statements are foundational and drive curation decisions based on the context of the library. For example, a law library would have a statement of collection development or selection policy as to what to include or exclude from the library collection. A law library may not have any use to incorporate Caldecott Medal winning books in their collections as it would not fit the mission statement of the role of the collection within the community that the library serves. Maintaining a CDP is one of the essential duties of a librarian, including the public elementary school librarians interviewed in this study.

CDP for Library Administration

Frempong-Kure (2021) noted that CDP is crucial to establishing norms in the criteria used in selection, weeding, acceptance of donations, and the general management of the library. It is also a document that needs to be reviewed periodically to ensure effectiveness and consistency. Challenges that can affect the effectiveness of the name the document such as lack of adequate funds, lack of space and limited and inadequate qualified library staff, and the reluctance of faculty members to submit recommended titles (Frempong-Kure, 2021).

Need for CDP Review

Cabonero and Mayreno (2021) echoed this in stating that CDP are working documents that require annual review to allow for the incorporation of new policies; this need for annual review should be stated in the actual document itself. They reported that collection development policies should be presented to the administrators for approval and full implementation in libraries to ensure quality, relevant, and up-to-date materials for the students and faculty as well to meet their changing needs and demands (Cabonero & Mayreno, 2021). Other current practices should be accounted for in the collection development policy of the library such as selection, acquisition, donation, weeding, preservation, loss and replacement, and copyright laws. Cabonero and Mayreno (2021) also reported that a CPD is a significant library document with an intention of building its collections based on some standards and aimed to support the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the parent institution.

CPD as a Working Document

Feng (1979) said that the "heart of the library lies in its collection, and collections have to be built continuously" (p. 39). This statement referred to what Frempong-Kure (2021) and Cabonero and Maynero (2021) reiterate about the written collection development policy facilitating a consistent and balanced growth of library resources; a dynamic policy is one that evolves as the institution grows. It is cautioned not as a substitution for selection decisions but as a means to provide the courage to the decision maker to use their own judgment on whether to incorporate certain titles into the library collection. In my study all public elementary school librarians interviewed used a common collection development policy created by their shared school district. A sample copy of the collection development policy that informed this study can be found in Appendix B.

Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the two theoretical frameworks that guided this research. Gloria Ladson-Billings' (1995) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) framework and the Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) framework of Django Paris (2012) guided the data collection and practice of the study, and helped to define how librarians engage in pedagogy regarding cultural relevance and sustainability. Critical Librarianship is also introduced to incorporate thoughtful and socially aware framework into this study, and thus foster an environment that not only values information dissemination but actively engages the issues of social justice, inclusivity, and ethical considerations within the realm of library services and information management.

This dissertation focused on the growth and development of public-school librarians, specifically librarians' understanding of how book selection impacts children's access to picture books that are reflective of their young lives and experiences. Scholars (Harris, 2007; Moeller, 2016; Oxley, 2006) and practicing educators have recognized the value of Bishop's (1990) seminal work centered on the concept that books can be "windows and mirrors" for K-12 students (p. 1). Selecting the lenses of CRP and CSP and incorporating the notions of critical librarianship to guide this particular study assisted in a better understanding of the approach school librarians take or do not take in curating their collections.

While much has been done to diversify the field of children's literature, the work should not end with children seeing themselves and others in the books they read (Bishop, 1990). Bishop's (1990) work centered on literature and the representation of diverse experiences, while Ladson-Billings' (1992, 2014) work focused more broadly on pedagogy and systemic issues of equity in education. As such this study was guided by CRP as defined by Ladson-Billings (1992):

I have defined culturally relevant teaching as a pedagogy of opposition not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment. Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order. (p. 160)

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)

Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) approach to teaching recognizes the importance of culture in learning and seeks to create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Using the CRP framework to drive the reasoning behind librarians' decisions to include or exclude certain titles, such as Caldecott Medal winning books, could result in a more culturally relevant library collection that is driven by incorporating and emphasizing students' cultural backgrounds, experiences and perspectives (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The goal of incorporating CRP into library collection decision making is to help the students it serves to feel more connected to their own cultural heritage and to promote a greater understanding and appreciation of the cultural diversity that exists within the classroom and the broader community (Schmeichel, 2016). When students feel more connected to their own cultural heritage, they are more likely to engage, be motivated learners, and more likely to develop positive relationships with teachers and other students, which can contribute to a positive learning environment (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Ladson-Billings' (1995) CRP included these five essential elements to ensure accuracy: (a) identity and achievement, (b) equity and excellence, (c) developmental appropriateness, (d) teaching the whole child, and (e) examining student/teacher relationships. These five essential

elements guided the analysis of my findings in questioning public school librarians on their practices of curating their library collections and are detailed more in the methods chapter (Chapter III) of this this dissertation and each element is individually discussed and provides details to how it applied to this particular study.

Identity and achievement are critical in CRP. CRP is crucial to know your students and use that information when creating and delivering curriculum to your students (Gulati & Singhal, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995). These scholars (Gulati & Singhal, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995) also suggested that it is an educator's duty to learn behaviors, backgrounds, and challenges our students face so we are better equipped to address them. Library collections are not relevant without the added voices of their patrons. For all public schools, the students can vary from school to school. Librarian must get to know the students they serve on their individual campuses and make curation decisions using this information. For example, if there is a large population of Spanish only speaking families it is important to include Spanish language books for the students.

Equity and excellence speak to checking our own biases. Inherent biases are relevant in education on conscious and subconscious levels and can lead to flawed thinking when evaluating students and their thoughts about themselves (Gulati & Singhal, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995). These authors (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gulati & Singhal, 2021) suggested that educators should be cognizant of the fact that we all have biases that will not change, but it may help us to make more informed decisions and value differences from various perspectives, so we are not perpetuating inequality. For example, if a librarian at an at-risk school that is serving an economically disadvantaged community and has low literacy rates makes the assumption that the students and families attending that school do not value education, those biases could reflect the

decision made in library curation at that school. All students should be afforded the opportunity to succeed and thrive without stipulations on the environment in which they are schooled.

When considering developmental appropriateness, educators need to examine the students in their classes and take into account their schema on topics being presented (Schmeichel, 2016). It is challenging to teach subjects when foundational knowledge is lacking. This includes not only simple knowledge such as basic math facts, but additionally historical and social contexts to our teaching. Secondary considerations to developmental appropriateness are the consideration of how students are assessed and how meaningful the methodology was used to present the knowledge (Schmeichel, 2016). Educators should provide a variety of different approaches for information acquisition that ultimately lead to a student's assessment of knowledge and provide meaningful, firsthand evidence of the priority of the knowledge (Gulati & Singhal, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995). An example of this in the elementary school library would be only to include books to serve the kindergarten through fifth grade student population; to include books geared for students in high school would not consider developmental appropriateness and should be reflected in the collection development policy.

Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gulati and Singhal (2021) stated that each student comes to the classroom with a set of behaviors, beliefs, and characteristics that make that student unique. Coupled with this are the value systems, languages, religious beliefs, and ways of life that also contribute to their self-identity, which leads to Ladson-Billings' (2014) essential element of teaching the whole child. Students have more layers than what is represented on the surface and. have a multitude of experiences that speak to their being before stepping foot into our classrooms. Teaching the whole child coupled with identity and achievement is critical in understanding the whole student and not the singular skills they possess. In the elementary

classroom, for example, students are not only representative of the ethnic data represented in their school; students come to school with different interests that do not always stem from their racial identities.

The final CRP element is examining our student/teacher relationships. The student/teacher relationship does not end with the student and the teacher. Especially in elementary school, it is crucial to understand our students in relation to the families and communities from which they come and including those entities into our pedagogy to provide a more well-rounded education that extends beyond the four walls of a classroom. Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gulati and Singhal (2021) explained that including families in successes and failures can bridge dialogue with parents about community or support resources to strengthen schools; that can lead not only to increased awareness but can also build the community relationships that are necessary to support students.

Ladson-Billings (1995) has been vocal about how her CRP framework has and has not been used well by other scholars, and she remains adamant that it is the work of all, privileged or not, to ensure that each student receives a quality education. Librarians are an essential part of ensuring equity and excellence in the books to which students have access. Moreover, they advocate for teaching the whole child through books and the library collection and the future curation decisions that are reflective of the students and the school community they serve.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP)

Like CRP, culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) emphasizes the importance of understanding and valuing students' cultural backgrounds and experiences in the classroom (Paris, 2012). CSP goes beyond simply recognizing and incorporating students' cultures into the curriculum; however, and aims to actively sustain and revitalize their cultures. Culturally

sustaining pedagogy can also be viewed with five key essentials: (a) critically centering on dynamic community languages, valued practices and knowledge; (b) student and community agency and input; (c) "historic sized" content and instruction; (d) capacity to contend with internalized oppressions; and (e) ability to curricularize all of this in learning settings (Paris, 2012, p. 96).

Students' languages, literacies, and cultural ways of being are centered meaningfully and consistently in classroom learning instead of being considered as "add-ons", a way of critically centering on dynamic community languages, valued practices, and knowledge (Paris, 2012, p. 96). Students come to the classroom with varying ways to deliver their thoughts through spoken word. Some students are new English Language Learners (ELL) and some students use "nonstandard English" vernacular language (Bateman, 2021). Buffington and Day (2018) advise that to make systemic changes within education, we believe that teacher preparation programs need to radically shift to encompass a wider range of pedagogical approaches, including CSP and Hip-Hop pedagogy. Regardless of the approach to pedagogy, it is the educator's role to provide value to the students' input regardless of how it is delivered.

Student and community agency means the schools are accountable to the community. Educators and schools should be in conversation regarding the communities' desires of schooling and education and how they want to sustain these ideas. Including the community's input is crucial to extending the values of education beyond the classroom and school building (Paris, 2012). Community agency empowers individuals and fosters a sense of belonging, collaboration, and self-efficacy, ultimately contributing to the well-being and resilience of the whole community (Warren, 2018).

"Historicized" content and instruction is considered the practice of bringing in a variety of diverse accounts in response to presenting history rather than focusing on a singular narrative (Alisaari et al, 2019; Paris, 2012; Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016). Single narratives have the power to influence and shape influence. In the past, singular narratives have not focused on marginalized communities, which has permitted the omission of diverse retelling of all stakeholders. Expanded narratives allow for alternate viewpoints and a more comprehensive understanding (Alisaari et al, 2019). Contextualizing historical content that presents diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic communities both locally and nationally can deepen the knowledge of our students and contribute to culturally sustaining pedagogy (Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016).

Paris (2012) cautioned that these essentials to CSP can be challenging when students are faced with accessing sustaining cultural and linguistic practices in a dominant culture. Teaching students to have the capacity to contend with internalized oppressions is critical. Internalized oppressions can and do influence the ways in which students access materials in schools and in the classroom. The challenge lies in ensuring barriers are eliminated or challenged at a minimum. The dominant culture, whether white, middle class, standard English speaking or another, can often be and is a barrier to achieving a culture of sustaining pedagogy in the classroom.

These essential elements to CSP do not stand alone. The fifth essential element is the ability to curricularize all of this in learning settings (Paris, 2013). To achieve the essential elements of culturally sustaining pedagogy, educators must have the capacity to integrate all of these elements into the curriculum and into all educational settings, including the library.

Notably, CSP also emphasizes the importance of centering students' voices and perspectives in the classroom, and creating a learning environment that is responsive to their needs and interests (Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016). This can involve integrating cultural practices

and traditions into the classroom and creating opportunities for students to share their stories and experiences (Alisaari et. al, 2019).

Like CRP, CSP is grounded in critical theory and a commitment to social justice (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). It recognizes that education is not neutral, and that teachers have a responsibility to challenge systemic inequalities and empower their students to be agents of change in their communities (Buffington & Day, 2018).

Overall, both CRP and CSP share a focus on empowering students from diverse backgrounds and recognizing the importance of culture in shaping students' experiences and identities (Alisaari et. al, 2019; Bateman, 2021; Buffington & Day, 2018; Paris, 2012; Seely Flint, 2022; Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016; Warren, 2018). Books are an avenue for students to feel empowered and recognize characters from diverse backgrounds. As the recipients of books, students should be included in the decision-making process (Paris, 2012).

Critical Librarianship

The notion of organization is at the core of understanding critical librarianship. This does not refer to organization as categorizing literature, although that is a key aspect of the profession that is librarianship. Critical librarianship according to Drabinski (2019) is referred to as an idea of organizing our practices to analyze and communicate the way libraries and librarians consciously and unconsciously support systems of oppression. Critical librarianship centers around five key principles: (a) interrogating the work of power in structures and systems; (b) acknowledging the social, economic, and political context of library policies and processes; (c) critical librarianship surfaces hidden labor; (d) articulating the infrastructures that enable some lines of inquiry and not others; and (e) knowing that the world could be different (Drabinski, 2019).

Librarians often do not have a stay in the structures and systems that supervise their work. School librarians are the managers of the library but answer to the building administrator, who answers to an area superintendent, who answers to another higher authority and so on; they are also held accountable to the decision-making of the school board and community at large. When the chain of command is extensive, creating change is challenging. Akers (2015) referred to school librarians as serving two masters. School librarians are often put at odds within education because the systems in charge do not fully understand librarians' roles. Jones and Bush (2009) addressed that students look for a person who will exhibit dispositions of care, trustworthiness, and respect for them. These dispositions are not always something that you can teach aspiring librarians through education and policy making (Akers, 2015).

As librarians practice critical librarianship, and it is the librarian's professional responsibility to challenge the assumptions of a universal patron or a universal librarian, understanding that there are social complexities in place at the establishments we serve and that they directly affect the experience students may have while utilizing the library (Drabinski, 2019). Patrons come to us with varying degrees of knowledge and background, and we are tasked with the role of getting to the heart of their needs and assisting them. Librarians must advocate for underrepresented populations, differentiated learners, and intellectual freedom. This can be done through actions and decisions as well as words. Supporting an inclusive learning community involves developing collections that have windows and mirrors for all readers and providing access to tools and resources for all students (Croma & Burns, 2019).

Additionally, school librarians straddle two professional fields: education and library science (Croma & Burns, 2019). Patron needs may be centered around some power structures, such as needing to cite articles correctly. If the requirement from the teacher exists but the

teacher has not explained and/or taught this concept, there can be a feeling of discontent or disconnect between the student and the teacher, and this could carry over to the librarian. It becomes the librarian's job to break down that barrier and build a favorable relationship between the librarian and student.

Another key premise of critical librarianship is the acknowledgement that there are social, political, and economic contexts that affect the decision making of the structures that implement the policies and processes under which the library functions (Drabinski, 2019). Our student populations are growing and changing and there is much hidden labor in addition to the workloads that the general public sees, such as checking out books to students and creating and delivering lessons to address the required standards. Figueroa (2017) stated that diversity, equity, democracy, and privacy are areas that have long been under attack and will continue to be so. Librarians must continue to organize our patrons, and our institutions.

Librarians who practice critical librarianship believe that their work and profession makes a difference in our world, through the organization of coming together and making decisions that benefit the time, place, and population.

Connecting CRP, CSP, & Critical Librarianship

These theoretical frameworks emphasize the student as a whole and go beyond how they represent on the surface. Ladson-Billings (1995), Paris (2012), and Drabinski (2022) call on educators to consider entities beyond the classroom, such as school communities, to be stakeholders in the experiences and knowledge building of students. Using these three frameworks in unison can result in a synergy of educational settings and library practices that focus on equity, diversity, and social justice. Librarians can connect culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy to critical librarianship by curating resources that reflect diverse

perspectives, and by celebrating different cultures through the organization of events and

ensuring that library services are accessible to all patrons while maintaining a welcoming

environment.

Figure 1

Intersections between CRP/CSP/Critical Librarianship

Critical Librarianship

Aims to critically examine and challenge traditional library practices

Inclusive and equitable learning

Affirmation of diversity and cultural

Social Justice, Equity and Community

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

Emphasizes the importance of student cultural identity

Aims to sustain, while building on the key aspects of CRP

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Focus on making connections between students and cultural backgrounds and curriculum

Aims to increase student engagement and academic

In summary, by integrating CRP and CSP with the practices of Critical Librarianship, educators and librarians can create a learning environment that not only values diversity but

actively engages students in understanding and challenging societal norms and structures. This

approach contributes to the development of informed, socially conscious individuals who can

positively impact our communities.

Significance

This particular study helped determine whether librarians considered CRP and CSP in

curation and collection development decisions and in acknowledging and incorporating the key

principles of critical librarianship in school libraries. This particular study also provides support

for curation decisions that are centered around CRP, CSP, and Critical Librarianship as tools for

librarians who may not have considered them in their practices. Additionally, this study also

examined the impact that the "heavy medals" have on influencing the decisions of librarians.

Librarians are the curators of collections for our students, and they have the power to provide, or

not provide, access to books that are reflective of their student populations.

Conclusion

Chapter II began with a review of the literature and specifically looked at the history of

the Caldecott Medal. It included studies focused on the analyses of character and picture book

creators, the history behind the decision-making policies surrounding the award and the changing

"topography" of the field of librarianship. The presented literature review demonstrated the

complexity of the BISAC codes and how they may use them as tools whilst categorizing library

collections. The final section of this chapter presented the theoretical foundations of this

dissertation that were grounded in Ladson-Billings' (1995) CRP framework and Paris' (2012)

CSP framework. These frameworks offered a lens to observe how elementary public-school

librarians make curation decisions, while also considering the key principles of critical

librarianship. Chapter III addresses the methodology of this study

Chapter III: Methodology

Methodology

In chapter III, I describe the methodology used to explore how Book Industry Study Group Assigned Codes (BISAC) codes are used in the curation decisions of school librarians, and whether culturally relevant pedagogy CRP is used when making collection development decisions about the acquisition of the Caldecott Medal winning books. I review the significance of the study and describe the methodological design, which was a narrative methodological approach (Polkinghorne, 1995). I describe this approach, the research design, the researcher positionality and role, data collection, trustworthiness (Hays & Singh, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), data analysis, and the approach for triangulation of the data analysis (Connelly, 2016).

The purpose of this study was twofold. The first purpose was to better understand how school librarians make curation decisions about books for their collection, especially in relation to Caldecott Medal winning titles. The second purpose was to see how and if librarians' selection decisions were centered on notions of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) as defined by Ladson-Billings (1995, 2014), Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) as defined by Paris (2012), and Drabinski's (2019) Critical Librarianship.

Significance

This study centered on understanding the potentially transformative nature that the reflective practices of public elementary school librarians have on the curation decisions they make for their libraries. Since students rely on the decision-making practices of the adults responsible for incorporating titles into the library, it is crucial that those decisions and the decision makers reflect the community of learners they represent (Drabinski, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012).

Librarians confront many challenges in their profession, navigating obstacles that range from pushback against their curation decisions to the persistent struggle with insufficient funding to fully realize their collection development policies (Elkins, 2018). These challenges can significantly impact a librarians' ability to curate a diverse, inclusive, and timely collection that meets the evolving needs of their community.

Review of the Research Questions

As stated, the purpose of this study was twofold. I examined how, if at all, public school elementary librarians utilized library classification systems such as the BISAC in their curation decisions specifically pertaining to the Caldecott Medal winning books, and to what extent were these librarians considered CRP theories when making these decisions. The research questions that guided this study were: (a) How, if at all, do librarians use BISAC codes to determine curation decisions of the Caldecott Medal winning books? and (b) Are librarians considering culturally relevant pedagogy when making decisions about their collections?

Narrative Research: A Qualitative Approach

Narrative research is a qualitative research tradition that focuses on collecting and analyzing stories or narratives to gain insight into people's experiences and perspectives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). In narrative research, the researcher collects data in the form of stories or accounts told by individuals or groups, and then analyzes the stories to identify common themes, patterns, and meanings (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004; Polkinghorne, 1995). This methodology typically involves collecting data through interviews, observations, and document analysis (Hays & Singh, 2012; Polkinghorne, 1995).

In this dissertation, school librarians were asked to tell stories of how they made curation decisions for the school's library collection, specifically in reference to Caldecott Medal winning

books. Librarians are the keepers of stories in libraries and thus, in selecting research

methodology, they are in the best position to tell the story. Clandinin and Connelly (2004)

expressed the importance of narrative research being told through practitioners in their respective

field, because researchers can often be out of touch with practical problems. They also stated that

"narrative research is the study of experience, and experience, as John Dewey taught, is a matter

of people in relation contextually and temporally" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, p. 2).

As the primary researcher, I used two primary data sources of artifacts, which included

BISAC codes and collection development policy through the use of photovoice (Wang & Burris,

1997), and semi-structured individual interviews (Esterberg, 2002) to explore how the librarians

made sense of their decision-making process centered on their library collection and to uncover

underlying themes and meanings within their stories.

Artifacts such as photovoice, can be symbols provided by the participants to further

describe beyond the words spoken in the individual interviews to get to the heart of their

message (Dahl & Haskins, 2022). Photovoice can be photographs or images that are taken or

"found" as determined by the researcher (Hays & Singh, 2023). Wang and Burris (1997) found

that sometimes research participants struggle to put words to their feelings and may need an

image to help represent their ideas. Despite its popularity, photovoice has its challenges when it

comes to methodology, one of them being data analysis (Tsang, 2020). Tsang (2020) suggested

two approaches to analyzing photovoice: critical and phenomenological. For this study, a

phenomenological approach was used to analyze the artifacts (e.g., photovoice, CDP) provided

by the participants. The phenomenological approach elicits meanings the participants have given

to their images (Tsang, 2020). Following the individual interviews, the participants were asked to

provide images to express their thoughts, views, and feelings about two prompts. Those prompts were:

1. This is what Culturally Relevant Pedagogy/Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy looks like in my library.

2. How I feel when I hear the words "book banning".

These photovoice images were used with the two prompts to create triangulation (Wang & Burris, 1997) between them and the interview transcripts.

By conducting individual interviews, there was flexibility in scheduling; the format also had low financial cost (Hays & Singh, 2023). Additionally, including artifacts as a primary data source allowed the researcher to better understand and contextualize the study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Every attempt was made to maintain the same flow of the individual interviews by strictly following the interview protocol. Assumptions were made in the school librarians fully understanding what CRP/CSP means and ways to represent what it "looks like" through their photovoice. Since their coursework leading toward the library endorsement does not include these concepts, further time should have been spent explaining these concepts to the participants before the interview ended.

Research Site

Although a particular physical site was not used in this study, for the individual interviews, Google Meets was used for recording and storage (Gray et al., 2020). While a physical site and in person interviews offer many benefits (e.g., convenience, no cost for travel), this study responded to the needs of the library participants and considered equitable access and transportation. With this in mind, the Google Meets platform was selected to conduct the online

interview, as it was an approved and free online platform available for all librarians in this study.

Through this online platform, access to the meeting events were secure and were only accessible

by individuals who had the direct link. Additionally, this platform was accessible and familiar to

the librarians which also limited challenges to navigation for the study participants. Using

Google Meets allowed for an initial auto-generated transcription of the interviews that was later

used for data analysis.

Table 3

Required Coursework for School Library Media Specialist Endorsement

Materials Selection for the School Library	Explore research-based practices and methods of assessing and selecting school library materials to meet curricular needs, standards, and reading interests and abilities of students. Methods of acquisition include design and implementation of collection development policies and survey of bibliographic tools use in the selection of K-12 materials
Reference Methods and Resources	Study research-based practices and methods of the school library's informational curricular support function including the role of the school library specialist as an information resource consultant, teacher, and instructional partner. Examines selected print and electronic reference tools including dictionaries, encyclopedias, yearbooks, periodicals, indexes, and subject area references.
Technology in the School Library	Introduce research-based practices and methods relating to identification, evaluation, management and use of all electronic educational technologies and resources and electronic information sources in the creation of an information-ally literate PreK - 12 environment. Assignments include an overview of the uses of computers in education including productivity applications, multimedia and presentation software, cognitive tools, administrative utilities, and web-based learning resources, including web authoring
Organization of School Libraries	Introduce the principles, practices and trends of organizing information in the school library including the classification, cataloging, and processing of materials for effective access and retrieval.

Administration of the School Library	Study of research-based principles and strategies for planning, organizing and administering school library programs and practices related to policy development, budgets, personnel, public relations, facilities planning, and systematic program planning and evaluation in the K-12 school library setting.
Supervised Library Practice	In conjunction with a supervised practicum in the school library this course will explore current issues in the library regarding the collection, selection and administration. This course will provide participants with the opportunity to design and implement an extensive action research project in collaboration with a supervised library practicum under the direction of professional librarians in school settings.
Children's & Young Adult Literature	Explore, evaluate, select and share contemporary literature (published in the last ten (10) years) for children and young adults. This course will provide participants with the opportunity to read, enjoy, become familiar with, and discuss a wide variety of children's literature. Participants will also explore numerous authors, illustrators, response strategies and theories of children's and young adult literature.

Context of the Sample

After the Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission was obtained, and prior to conducting the interviews for the study, librarian participants were recruited from a large urban district located in the southwest United States. The criteria for recruiting the school librarian participants for this study were: (a) Utilizing a listserv of school librarians from a large urban school district in the southwest of the United States to create a list of potential participants, and (b) Narrowing the list to elementary schools. In reference to theory development and verification, these purposefully selected school librarians were based on criterion (Hays & Singh, 2012). A recruitment flier was posted on a professional school librarian association listserv in October 2023. Librarians who were interested in participating in the study contacted me via email listed on the flier. Fifteen librarians expressed interest in participating in the study. For inclusion in the study, librarians needed (a) to be currently working as an elementary school librarian, (b) endorsed by the state as a school librarian media specialist, (c) have at least five years' experience serving as an elementary school librarian. Table 3 list the coursework needed

to obtain an endorsement to be a school library media specialist. As a result, of the 15 librarians, five of the librarians did not meet the study inclusionary criteria because two were librarians at the high school level and three of the librarians were elementary school librarians and did not meet the required years of experience.

Once participants were selected via purposive and convenience sampling (Hays & Singh, 2012) and they consented to participate (see Appendix B), the individual semi-structured interviews were scheduled. Each interview was allotted approximately one hour; additional time was able to be scheduled if there were follow up conversations and questions. All of the librarians in this study met with me after their contractual work hours as assigned by their school district. Most of the interviews took place after the school work day. As the lead researcher, it was my responsibility to arrange the interviews at a time that was convenient for the participants.

The participants in this study were recruited based on their expertise (Hays & Singh, 2012), especially in the context of a school librarian. The goal was to recruit and interview 10 to 12 public elementary school librarians in a large urban school district in the southwest of the United States. Hess (2023) recommended recruiting more participants than needed to adjust for the unexpected. Furthermore, Renwick (2023) suggested starting with five participants and increasing the number of participants by five for more complicated subject matter. Based on these methodological recommendations for narrative research, the aim of the research was to recruit and interview 10 to 12 participants (Hess, 2023; Renwick, 2023).

Case Participants

Purposeful sampling was employed to recruit 10 to 12 librarians as participants for this study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). In total 10 librarians met the participation criteria and were interviewed for this study. Details pertaining to the context of the participants are in Table

4 (Hayes & Singh, 2012) including race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual identity, which were self-reported using short answers. All demographic information in table 4 was reported using the exact verbiage, capitalization, and grammar that participants self-reported in the demographics survey. Some participants identified as white while others self-identified as Caucasian. This was also noted in sexual identity; some participants self-identified as straight, heterosexual, or female. The highest degree was reported using a multiple-choice option which included masters, doctoral degree, education specialists, or other.

Table 4

Context of Sample

Librarian	Age	Race/ Ethnicity	Gender Identity	Sexual Identity	Highest Degree
Fiona	49	white	female	straight	Masters
Beckie	60	white	female	straight	Masters
Grace	49	white	female	heterosexual	Masters
Tammie	47	white	female	heterosexual	Masters
Alice	55	Caucasian	female	heterosexual	Masters
Sally	54	white	female	female	Masters
Debbie	53	Caucasian	female	heterosexual	Masters
Mia	57	white	female	straight	Masters
Wendy	51	white	female	heterosexual	Masters
Sadie	52	mixed race	cis-female	straight	Masters

This sample of participating librarians was indicative of the majority of librarians in a large urban school district in the southwest; though is not representative of the vast diversity of students in the school district the librarians represent. The sample is homogeneous in all the categories as represented in the demographics survey. The ages ranged from 49-57; participants were predominantly white, all female, heterosexual and all maintained a Master's degree as their highest completed level of education. As per the criteria of this study, they all had a library endorsement on their teaching license and were all currently serving as a public elementary school librarian. Not included in the demographics survey but gleaned from the individual interviews, the least experienced librarian worked seven years in the school library and the most experienced librarian was currently employed in their 20th year.

Purposeful sampling was employed to recruit 10 to 12 librarians as participants for this study (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) noted that purposeful sampling allows the recruitment of participants who have similar characteristics. When purposefully selecting participants, Patton (2002) suggested requiring the development of specific criteria prior to entering the field. To be included in this study, participants were required to and met the following criteria. Information was gleaned from the demographics survey.

1. Participants must currently be working as a public elementary school librarian in this large urban school district in the southwest of the United States.

2. Participants need to be endorsed by the state that oversees the large urban school district in the southwest of the United States as a School Librarian Media Specialist.

3. Participants must have had at least five years' experience serving as a public elementary school librarian.

Data Collection Procedures

The following sections discuss the criterion for selection of participants and how the

sample was representative of public elementary school librarians from a large urban school

district in the southwest.

Consent Process

In accordance with the research and the particular institution's IRB, informed consent

forms were provided to participants prior to their participation in the individual interviews (see

Appendix B). The informed consent described the purpose of the research study and provided

information about the researcher, the extent of participation, the limits of confidentiality, and any

foreseeable risks and benefits of participation and nonparticipation and emphasized the voluntary

nature of participation (Hays & Singh, 2012). All of the participants agreed and signed the

required informed consent forms prior to conducting the research and interviews; this included

audio recording for the purpose of transcripts.

Data Collection

Prior to contacting the participants to schedule the interviews, I conducted an analysis of

the BISAC codes of the Caldecott Medal winners from 1938-2023. It was important that I had a

comprehensive understanding of the trends in BISAC codes throughout the 86-year history of the

award before discussing it with the participants. This analysis was provided as an artifact during

the individual interviews. BISAC codes were discussed with participants during each interview

(see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Caldecott BISAC Code Analysis (1938-2023)

vs. Common Themes
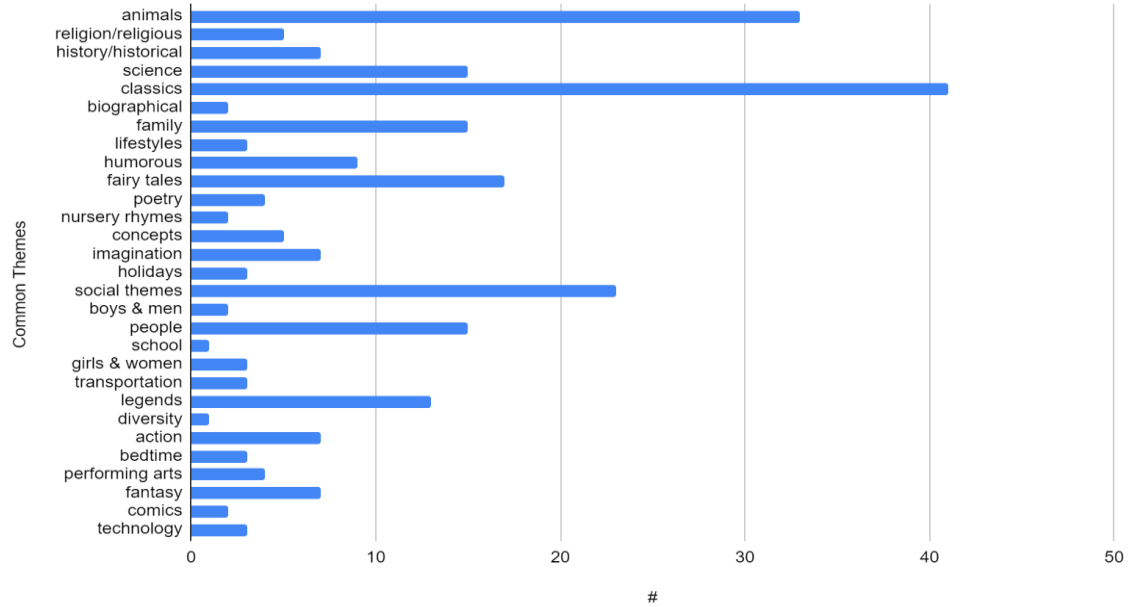
After the analysis, I contacted the participants via email to solicit participation in the study. In my recruitment flier, I articulated that I would conduct an individual semi-structured interview that would be scheduled at a convenient time for each participant. I also informed the participants that I would be requesting artifacts (e.g., school selection policy and Caldecott collection reports) as these artifacts would help to contextualize their interviews.

Table 5

Data Collection Procedures

Time Frame	Data Collection Method	Description
Prior to Individual Interviews	Request artifacts (collection development policy) via email and saved in a Google drive	Participants were contacted via email for invitation to participate in the study
Data Collection	Semi-structured individual interviews	Participants were invited to participate in an hour long semi-structured recorded interview that sought to understand how librarians make curation decisions
Ongoing Data Collection	Researcher notebook	Researcher kept a notebook to record memos during interviews
Document Analysis	Artifacts Analysis	Researchers analyzed artifacts such as (collection development policies, photovoice)

Data Sources

     Multiple data sources were collected for each participant including a demographics sheet,

audio recorded semi-structured interviews, artifacts (e.g., collection development policy,

collection reports), and photovoice. Specifics for each data source are detailed in the next section.

Demographics Sheet

To understand each participant's demographics a Google Forms survey was used to gather and organize the data. The Google Forms survey specifically addressed the participants' experience level as a school librarian and other personal demographic information e.g., gender, racial identity.

Individual Interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews are widely used for qualitative data collection methods (Nunkoosing, 2005; Sandelowski, 2002). Polkinghorne (1995) stated that collecting interview data is beneficial in qualitative research since it allows for the natural voice of its participants to tell the story. Interviewing has guided much of the early theory in education and continues to be the preferred option for unexplored and underexplored social phenomena (Hays & Singh, 2012). Individual interviews typically consist of five to ten questions and generally take about 30 minutes to an hour to conduct (Hays & Singh, 2012). Semi-structured interviews typically involve the use of an interview protocol (Hays & Singh, 2012). However, once the interview starts the participants' responses help guide the process and therefore the sequence may change and additional questions may be asked (Hays & Singh, 2023). According to Hays and Singh (2000), a well-developed interview protocol can increase trustworthiness of the research. Appendix C represents individual interview questions for this study that were designed to incorporate several categories of questions no matter the research tradition (Patton, 2002; Snow et al., 1982). Questions from each of the categories included background or demographic information, behavior or experience, opinion or value, knowledge, feeling, and sensory questions

(Hays & Singh, 2012). Although an hour was allotted for each interview, they typically lasted 25-30 minutes.

As I completed each interview, I generated transcripts using the artificial intelligence (AI) tool provided in Google Meets. To ensure accuracy of the AI auto-generated transcripts I read and reread all transcripts to check for errors, and corrections were made for accuracy (Hayes & Singh, 2012). Hayes and Singh (2012) noted that when transferring audio or visual recordings to writing sentence content issues can occur, such as confusing words or phrases for others. This was particularly important in this study because words were inaccurately transcribed by AI and needed to be corrected. For example, AI transcribed Caldecott as "call the cobs". The process of checking AI transcripts for accuracy was completed for all the semi-structured interviews.

Artifacts

Artifacts served as a rich source of information for the construction of participant's narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In this dissertation, participants were asked to share several artifacts (e.g., collection development policies, collection reports). Additionally, participants were asked to use photovoice at the conclusion of the study to illustrate what CRP/CSP looked like in their library. As suggested by Hays and Singh (2012) photographs can be "found" or taken, as instructed by the researcher. Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) is a well-known qualitative data collection strategy using photography as a way to document visual information. Participants were asked to create a photovoice based on two statements: (a) This is what CRP/CSP looks like in my library and (b) How I feel when I hear the words "book banning". They were asked to share two photographs with an explanation as a jpg attachment through a follow-up email at the end of the interview. Most of the participants were expedient in returning the photovoice prompt, however a few had to be reminded.

Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using a paradigmatic narrative analysis approach to create a narrative story by which the researcher relates events and actions to one another (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dahl & Hoskins, 2022; Hays & Singh, 2012; Polkinghorne, 1995; Wang & Burris, 1997). Paradigmatic analysis of narratives seeks to locate common themes or conceptual manifestations among the stories collected as data (Polkinghorne, 1995). Polkinghorne's (1995) description of paradigmatic narrative analysis allows the researcher to gather stories for its data and then allows for the categories to present the common elements across the database to emerge. The data sources used for this paradigmatic narrative analysis included transcripts from the individual interviews and artifacts (e.g., photovoice). The following section details the narrative analytic approach for the study.

Data Coding Process

Drawing on Polkinghorne's (1995) paradigmatic data analysis approach, coding was done in cycles. Each of these cycles is described in detail beginning with the process of coding interviews and then discussing the analysis of the participants' photovoice. Additionally, Polkinghorne (1995) noted that paradigmatic analysis is not used simply to discover categories but rather to look for relationships between them. As such my analysis sought to identify relationships between both sets of data interviews and photovoice.

Semi-Structured Interviews

To begin the paradigmatic data analysis process, precoding took place during my reflective note-taking in which I identified key phrases stated by the participants (Polkinghorne, 1995; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016). I also used preliminary jottings as a part of the noting-taking process, during data collection to identify key phrases evident in the transcripts, during

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observations, and in my field notes (Polkinghorne, 1995; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016). In this phase, codes such as connection, reflection, timeliness, and traditions emerged and were identified.

Interview Coding Process

Once interviews and transcripts were completed, I applied an inductive coding method, which is characterized as flexible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I coded the interview transcripts using a first and second cycle style coding process (Polkinghorne, 1995; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016). In the first cycle of coding the data, I used a technique referred to as theming the data (Saldaña & Omasta, 2016). In thematic coding, the researcher looks at the data according to extended phrases or sentences and examines the meaning or the essence of the statement. After the cycle of initial coding, the coded transcripts were given the examples of themes through their statements (Polkinghorne, 1995; Saldaña & Omasta, 2016). In the first cycle of this coding process the data was used initially to summarize segments. Some of the initial summaries included broad concepts of trust, connection, the students' needs versus what the administration required, and the feelings supplied by the librarians.

The second cycle of the coding process used Polkinghorne's (1995) method for a second look at the data, a second level of analysis, in which relationships between and among the established categories are identified. More specifically, Saldaña and Omasta (2016) referred to this second level of analysis as pattern coding, which is a second look of the overall data for shared common themes, categories, or concepts. Whereas the first cycle focused on segmented data, the second cycle generated connections or relationships between all the data, allowing common themes to emerge and looking forward to conceptual manifestations of the data (Polkinghorne, 1995). Pattern codes are in essence inferential and allow for "bigger picture"

thinking pulling together the codes gathered from the first cycle and allow for more meaningful analysis (Saldaña & Omasta, 2016, p. 7) and for the identification of relationships between these categories [codes].

Once the second cycle of coding was completed the themes of critical context, cultivating culture, and creating connections were named. The interview transcripts were reviewed again and color-coded spreadsheet was created with the themes and key phrasing that was representative of the theme. This process was valuable to the findings in two ways. First, it was a more convenient way to access the data in a spreadsheet rather than searching through pages of interview transcripts; second, certain codes became more substantial in representation than others, which will be discussed in my summary of findings. This paradigmatic narrative analysis of data allowed for the participants' stories to move to common elements and then those commonalities moved back to the reporting of the findings (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Next, the help of a research partner was enlisted to help minimize and to embrace subjectivity (Hays & Singh, 2012). This research partner was a former mentor whose work centers on children's and young adult literature. Additionally, they are emerita faculty and years of education and research experience. For this study, the research partner was asked to help with the coding due to their expertise, as well as their years of experience in education, teaching, and the evaluation of texts. The support of a research partner allowed for increased rigor of the study as they coded data to minimize variation in interpretation of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also, using a research partner to assist in verification of the analysis of the artifacts and transcriptions of the individual interviews allowed for the process of peer debriefing and for the proposing of alternative interpretations of the investigations to take place (Morrow, 2005). We discussed the coded data, where 85% agree was reached on both the themes and subcategories

that I had identified in my initial and secondary cycles of data analysis (Saldaña & Omasta, 2016).

Paradigmatic analysis was employed to not only discover but also to describe the categories that identified particular occurrences within the data but also to note the relationships among themes and subcategories (Polkinghorne, 1995). Chapter IV reports on the themes and subcategories from this study.

Photovoice

In addition to the interviews, the participants were asked to provide a photovoice artifact to the following prompts upon the conclusion of their individual interviews. The prompts were:

1. This is what CRP/CSP looks like in my library.

2. How I feel when I hear the words "book banning".

I used the two photovoice images to create triangulation between them and the interview transcripts. The photovoice images are incorporated into the findings chapter to visually assist in explaining the librarians' answers to the questions. Mitchell and Allnut (2008) stated that incorporating found images provided by participants is a tool to assist in the further development of the answers provided in a traditional interview. By providing photovoice, participants have the opportunity to provide context to their answers without having to verbally explain them.

Triangulation of Data Analysis Sources

Triangulation, in regards to data analysis, refers to the use of multiple approaches and tools used for analyzing data to increase the credibility of a study (Hastings, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, YEAR). The triangulation of data analysis sources outlined in this study increased the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings that are presented in Chapter IV because it utilized multiple ways of interpreting the data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

To increase rigor in this study, the use of multiple data collection points was selected (e.g., individual interviews and artifacts analysis) (Dahl & Hoskins, 2022). Rigor in *narrative research* design includes inclusion of a paradigm in the design process, such as social constructivism (Dahl & Hoskins, 2022). The following specific strategies were employed to increase rigor: (a) use of an audit trail; (b) triangulation of data sources (e.g., individual interviews, artifacts); (c) member checking through review of transcript following the interview; (d) thick description; (e) simultaneous data collection/analysis; and (f) field notes/memos (Hays & Singh, 2012). To better visualize this process in connection to the research questions, Table 6 depicts the data collection timeline, data sources, and data analysis process (Hayes & Singh, 2012), and reflects criteria and strategies of trustworthiness for this study (See Appendix B).

Table 6

Data Analysis Table for Research Questions

Research Questions	Data Collection	Data Sources	Data Analysis
RQ1: How, if at all, do librarians use BISAC codes to determine curation decisions of the Caldecott Medal winning books?	Fall/Winter 2023 Collection of artifacts prior to and during study, semi-structured individual interviews scheduled in summer and fall, codebook and researcher notebook, photovoice image submitted at the conclusion of the study	Transcribed individual interviews, artifacts, researcher memos, codebook, photovoice image	Transcription and triangulation of data sources using paradigmatic narrative analysis.
RQ 2: Are librarians considering culturally relevant pedagogy when making decisions about their collections?	Fall/Winter 2023 Collection of artifacts prior to and during study, semi-structured individual interviews scheduled in summer and fall, codebook and researcher notebook, photovoice image submitted at the conclusion of the study	Transcribed individual interviews, artifacts, researcher memos, codebook, photovoice image	Transcription and triangulation of data sources using paradigmatic narrative analysis.

Application of Frameworks

This study used the two theoretical frameworks of CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and CSP (Paris, 2012). For each lens, I established a set of criteria based on the tenets of each lens:

1. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

    a. Are students being seen in the literature?

    b. Are the students being encouraged to think critically about issues such as social justice?

2. Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

    a. How are student voices being centered in your collection development decisions?

    b. How are students being empowered to be agents of change in their communities?

Ethical Considerations and Positionality

To ensure that all participants in this study were properly informed about the study and gave consent, a consent process was outlined and was followed to ensure all human subjects were protected and that procedures were in compliance with the IRB. This study presented minimal risk for participants as it drew on data that was natural and normal in the daily routines and job description of the librarians. Potential minimal risks for these participants included the emotional effects of reflecting on their practice. To protect participant anonymity, pseudonyms were used for all participants.

Before explaining my role in this study, it is important to provide background information about my career. As an elementary school teacher, I spent three years as a second-grade classroom teacher and the past twenty years as a public elementary school librarian. I have served as a public educator in four different schools in a large urban area in the west. All of the schools I have served have been in the suburban areas of a city. My most current school is a Title

I, tier one school with a diverse student population. According to the Department of Education of this large urban school district in the southwest of the United States, the total student population of approximately 750 students reflects 32% Hispanic, 25% White, 16% Black, 14% two or more races, 12% Asian and 1.5% Pacific Islander ([State] Department of Education, 2023). These school demographics are important as they are reflective of the schools located in this large urban school district in the southwest of the United States. I also acknowledge that I am a white woman and due to my social position and privilege, may unintentionally perpetuate and reinforce systems of oppression towards marginalized groups, particularly people of color (Goodman et al., 2015).

Another aspect of my career is my role as an instructor for this large urban school district in the southwest of the United States Regional Professional Development Program (RPDP). For the past 10 years, I have been instrumental in the creation of the school library endorsement program. This is an endorsement for a licensure program that allows teachers in large urban school districts in the southwest of the United States to fulfill the role of a school librarian. It may be my limitation that I expect teachers entering into the field of school librarianship to be well versed in the roles of the librarian including the creation of a school library selection policy that benefits and outlines the needs of their students. I hold this assumption because one requirement for the librarian endorsement for licensure is to have taken and passed the Selection of Materials course offered by the RPDP program. In this class, teachers are taught the importance of maintaining a collection development policy for their schools that are reflective of their schools' population. This is an area of deep contemplation in my position as a school librarian and as an instructor for school librarian candidates. I wonder if librarians are being purposefully thoughtful in their decision-making practices when incorporating Caldecott Medal

winning titles reflective of their student population, or is the choice simply a book's popularity within the book industry.

My role in this study was multifaceted. I began by analyzing artifacts (e.g., BISAC codes, collection development policies). As an experienced librarian, it is important for me to examine these artifacts first as they directly impact the participants' library curation decision-making process. I then led semi-structured individual interviews with school librarians to better understand their decision-making processes to include or exclude the Caldecott Medal winners in their library collections. In narrative research the interviewer (or researcher in this study) is often an active participant and engages in the interview process itself (Hays & Singh, 2023). As such, I took great joy in understanding the thought process that fellow school librarians used regarding their curation decisions.

Realties and Limitations

In holding semi-structured individual interviews with school librarians, there was a possibility that their answers would not be reflective of their actual practices. Furthermore, potential pitfalls were technology shortcomings or unplanned events that prevented the selected participants from participating (such as a work/family emergency). Another reality was that the school librarians chosen were not familiar with culturally relevant pedagogy or did not support it as a way to make selection decisions.

As noted in Table 3, there are seven required course for a teacher to obtain a school library media endorsement for their license. After further review of the course descriptions for each required course, I determined that the participants in this study may not be familiar with CRP, CSP and/or critical librarianship. I determined a misprobe in my individual interview

questions, when I ask the participants to provide "what CRP looks like to in their libraries". I should have explained CRP, before requiring this task of my participants.

Conclusion

Chapter III revisited the significance of this study and the guiding research questions. Additionally, this chapter provided a description of and rationale for the sample, site, narrative research, a qualitative approach to methodology, the data collection and analysis processes, and the ethical considerations of this research. This study sought to contribute to the educational community's understanding of the curation decisions of public elementary school librarians and if CRP was used in making these decisions. It also sought to understand if librarians utilized BISAC codes as a tool to aid in their curation decisions. Chapter IV provides a detailed outline of the data analysis process, presents the data displays and analysis, and describes the findings of this study. Chapter V summarizes the key findings of this study and discusses the implications of these findings for school leaders and teacher educators.

Chapter IV: Analysis

Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings of the data collected and analyzed for the two research questions of (1) How, if at all, do librarians use BISAC codes to determine curation decisions of the Caldecott Medal winning books? and (2) Were librarians considering culturally relevant pedagogy when making decisions about their collections? These research questions explored the curation decisions of librarians based on culturally relevant pedagogy and use of BISAC codes. The sample for this study included 10 public school elementary librarians who were each individually interviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of their curation decisions regarding the Caldecott Award winning books. These librarians were located in an urban city in the southwest United States.

For this study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, field notes, and artifact collection (Hays & Singh, 2012; Polkinghorne, 1995). Data collection totaled four weeks in the fall of 2023. The interviews ranged from 25 to 30 minutes and occurred from November to December of 2023. The participants were asked to answer a series of eight questions. Interviews were transcribed, then read and reread. The data in this study was then analyzed using a paradigmatic narrative analysis approach to create a narrative story by which the researcher relates events and actions to one another (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dahl & Hoskins, 2022; Hays & Singh, 2012; Polkinghorne, 1995; Wang & Burris, 1997). Paradigmatic analysis of narratives seeks to locate common themes or conceptual manifestations among the stories [interviews and photovoice] collected as data (Polkinghorne, 1995). Using a paradigmatic approach for data analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995), initial codes were identified, and a code book was created. After I made memos, I analyzed the interviews and artifacts and made additions and

revisions to the codebook, identified broad themes, emergent codes were sorted into themes, and subcategories were created in collaboration with my research partner.

BISAC Code Findings

It is important to note that when responding to the first research question, How, if at all, do librarians use BISAC codes to determine curation decisions of the Caldecott Medal winning books?, all participants stated they were unaware of what a BISAC code was. The following are their responses:

- "I am embarrassed to say I don't know what BISAC is." "Alice"

- "I don't know what a BISAC code is." "Beckie"

- "I don't think I know what that means." "Mia"

- "What is it?" Tammie

- "Are we talking about the codes that are off to the side?" "Grace"

- "They're not important at all." "Sally"

- "What was the term you used? I don't know that term." "Debbie"

- "Not at all." "Fiona"

- "I don't know what that means." "Wendy"

- "I don't have any idea what that is." "Sadie"

No further analysis was not needed pertaining to this interview question.

<center>**Main Themes**</center>

Through paradigmatic analysis three main themes, creating connections, cultivating culture, critical context, and 13 subcategories were identified in response to answer research question two: Are librarians considering culturally relevant pedagogy when making decisions about their collections' critical context, cultivating culture and creating connections?

Subcategories were identified within each of these themes. The following figure illustrates the themes and subcategories. Each of these subcategories are defined in each section of analysis.

Table 7

Example of Codes and Categories from Codebook

Creating Connections	Cultivating Culture	Critical Context
Authors, curriculum & text, diversity, enjoyment, students	Family, school, community	Time, funding, timeliness, administration, collection development policy

This research was guided by the theoretical frameworks of CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and CSP (Paris, 2012). For each theoretical lens, I established a set of criteria based on the tenets of each lens:

1. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

    a. Were students being seen in the literature?

    b. Were the students being encouraged to think critically about issues such as social justice?

2. Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

    a. How were student voices being centered in your collection development decisions?

    b. How were students being empowered to be agents of change in their communities?

These criteria helped narrow the focus when analyzing the data based on the theoretical framework and limited the focal point of the study to curation decisions centered on the Caldecott Award.

This chapter reports the findings collected with the aim of answering the research questions that guided this study: (1) How, if at all, do librarians use BISAC codes to determine curation decisions of the Caldecott Medal winning books? and (2) Were librarians considering culturally relevant pedagogy when making decisions about their collections? Using the paradigmatic narrative analysis approach, 10 elementary public school librarians shared their thoughts and experiences as part of this study, and I told their stories through my paradigmatic analysis and findings (Polkinghorne, 1995). The following paragraphs define the themes and subcategories in this study.

Creating Connections

One aspect of being online during the pandemic was, I felt like I really got to know those kids because I saw them in their home setting. I got to see them in their rooms. I got to see what their bookshelves look like. I got a really good sense of who they were. So it's fun to still have those connections with the kids that are still at our school from those years. Since the pandemic I think I've made a huge effort in realizing that I can still make those connections even though I don't get to see inside your home. Sally

Creating connections is defined as establishing meaningful links, relationships, or associations between various elements, ideas, or individuals (Kahn, 2007). Sally spoke of her experience with creating connections with her students before and after the pandemic. Creating connections refers to the process of building relationships, establishing rapport, or forming interconnections between different concepts, people, or entities. Creating connections often

implies fostering understanding, collaboration, or synergy to enhance communication, cooperation, and the overall interconnectedness of the elements involved. In various library contexts, creating connections contributed to building networks, facilitating information flow, and promoting a sense of community or unity. Ladson-Billings (1995) emphasized the importance of building student teacher relationships, focusing on caring relationships, interactions, and classroom atmosphere that validate and confirm student identities.

In this study the following subcategories were identified for the theme Creating Connections: children's literature creators (authors/illustrators), curriculum and texts, diversity, and reading for enjoyment and students. Each of these subcategories is defined in relation to the broad theme of creating connections.

Children's Literature Creators

The subcategory creators is defined as any reference from the participants in this study to connections with children's literature creators (authors and/or illustrators). Many of the librarians told stories of meeting or listening to children's literature creators and that helped to forge a connection. Many librarians referenced positive experiences they have had with children's literature creators at book festivals or reading conferences and in turn shared these experiences with their students.

Curriculum and Text

The subcategory curriculum and text is defined as a connection to content required to be taught in the general classroom. Many of the librarians in this study shared examples of connections created with students and colleagues because of the collaboration between the library and the standards required in the general education curriculum.

Reading for Enjoyment

The subcategory reading for enjoyment is defined as connections created from conversations about reading for enjoyment; examples centered around when a student trusted the librarian enough to discuss the books they were interested in reading. Examples of creating connections and student connections were examples provided by the librarians where they made specific decisions about their library collections because of the input of one student.

Diversity

The subcategory of diversity is defined as the presence of a wide range of individual differences, characteristics, and identities within a group, community, or society. These differences included but were not limited to demographic factors, cognitive and experiential differences, diversity of perspectives, and professional and skill diversity. The librarians in this study explained connections that formed due to acknowledgement of the various types of diversity.

Students

This subcategory of students is defined as the individuals in attendance at each individual school site. The students referenced in this study are in grades ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade. The librarians in this study make reference to their students as patrons of their libraries. The curation decisions that the librarians make are centered around the student they serve.

When considering the theoretical frameworks in this study, community, social justice, and equity concepts overlapped. Drabinski (2019) spoke to critical librarianship as the process of bringing social justice and critical theory to library work. Ladson-Billings (1995) emphasized the importance of equity and excellence in education and demanded high expectations for all students. Student and community agency are key elements highlighted in Paris' (2012) work.

These facets work together to foster curatorial decision making. Throughout chapter IV, the librarians in this study tell the stories behind their collection development decisions in their individual school communities. Their photovoice images are weaved throughout their stories to provide triangulation. As the three frameworks in this study converge in the findings, they are readdressed in the chapter V summary.

Critical Context

Where to find the time to weed with a fine-tooth comb like go over my entire collection and try to pull enough out. And also try to weigh how much money I'm given in order to make the collection still timely. Sometimes I feel like it's (collection) a bit older, but don't do anything about it because I don't feel like I have a lot of time. Grace

The theme critical context refers to the surrounding circumstances, conditions, or factors that are essential for a comprehensive understanding and evaluation of a particular subject, idea, work of art, or piece of information. In a critical context, librarians in this study considered the broader implications, historical background, cultural influences, and other relevant elements that contribute to the interpretation and analysis of the surrounding circumstances, conditions, and factors that are essential for a comprehensive understanding of their schools. Critical context is crucial in making informed judgments and interpretations that go beyond surface-level observations. Thinking critically about culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and critical librarianship, CRP and CSP stress the importance of validating the student, and in Critical Librarianship challenges traditional library practices. The librarians endeavored to create connections with their students while also facing some challenges of the profession that contribute to the critical context. Time, funding, timeliness, administrative, and collection development policies subcategories emerged about critical context.

Time

The subcategory time referred to critical context as it related to time and was directly referenced by the study librarians to their cumulative experience in their positions as librarians and/or education professions. The study librarians had a wealth of experience in education, specifically while serving in the library, however, new librarian hires do not have the same breadth of experience. These discrepancies in time and experience filter to the students the librarian serves.

Time also referred to the lack of time librarians have during their professional day to accomplish tasks of their job requirements. All of the librarians expressed the desire to have more time during their day to address other aspects of their job besides their role as educator. They are responsible for managing the school library and, as in Grace's quote at the beginning of this critical context section, sometimes tasks go unattended and unfinished.

Funding

The subcategory of funding is defined as references to funding and includes examples of the amount of monetary funding the school has to offer the library for resources and/or the monies the librarian has acquired by fundraising efforts. Librarians in this study addressed funding as an aspect of making curatorial decisions. Some stated that the only money they received to fund their libraries came from their fundraising efforts. This is concerning as the schools did not have monetary equity. Often most of the fundraising efforts for an elementary school library come from holding book fairs. The incentive structure dictates that schools must sell a certain amount to be eligible for monetary support for their library programs. If this goal is not reached, libraries are limited to choosing resources from a catalog published by the book fair

company. Schools in socioeconomic disadvantaged communities potentially have less resources from which to draw.

Timeliness

The subcategory timeliness is defined as the appropriateness of library resources within the broader considerations of the individual schools that this study's librarians represented. While many of the librarians believed it was important to curate older titles in their library for comparison and seminal purposes, they also believed in adding newer titles that spoke to the current social themes. The librarians in this study also recognized that the publishing industry advances its representation of book characters and book creators, i.e., authors and illustrators.

Administration

The subcategory of administration is defined in this study as references to management that oversee the school library. The librarians in this study provided examples of how administration impacted their decision making in the library. Administration referred to the school or district level management. The school librarians in this study were responsible for managing their school libraries, but also were accountable to the building administration. Some schools had three building administrators, including one principal and two assistant principals to whom the librarians reported. These building administrators in return were responsible for reporting to the area superintendent and so forth until the chain of command ultimately reached the district superintendent and stakeholders. The study librarians had limited autonomy regarding making decisions for their school libraries.

Critical context relations to collection development policies were instances in which the school librarians referred to their collection development policies document when making library curation decisions. The librarians in this district utilized a mandated standardized collection

development policy created by their school district; many of them referenced this document (see Appendix A) as a great resource in terms of making curation decisions. They expressed that the document served as a protection when making decisions and they thought that it might be controversial for nonstandard depiction of characters such as LGBTQ representation.

Cultivating Culture

> Well, I don't ignore books that are on sensitive topics, but I feel that as the librarian I have to know my student population. There is a book for instance *Pictures of Hollis Woods* (2002) which is I don't know if you're familiar with that book but she was a child who went through the foster system and art was her avenue for pain. That book was often left in my library office for mature readers. I knew my students who were ready for these topics that I think might be challenged or a little inappropriate for our age group. Fiona

Cultivating culture refers to the deliberate and ongoing efforts to nurture, shape, and develop the shared values, beliefs, behaviors, and traditions within a group, organization, or community. It involves fostering an environment that encourages a particular set of attitudes and practices, often with the aim of creating a positive and cohesive atmosphere. Cultivating culture includes initiatives such as promoting collaboration, establishing clear values, encouraging open communication, and supporting the development of a collective identity. It is about librarians actively shaping the cultural norms and characteristics that define the ethos of a specific group or entity. Cultivating culture in this study is referred to through school, family, and community.

School

The subcategory of school is defined as the physical school site of which the librarians in this study were in charge. The librarians served one school and their examples referenced only the school site they served at the time of the interviews. The librarians described their school

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demographics in terms of racial diversity and ethnicity make up, but the schools were composed of facets other than diversity. In the creating connections section, the diversity of the schools' diversity was discussed. Each one of these schools was different in terms of the students they served, however, there were commonalities.

Family

The subcategory of family is defined as the specific families whose children attended the schools that the librarians served. Family exists in different ways in all the schools and is not always indicative of a nuclear family consisting of a married couple with biological children. Many of our students were adopted or live in temporary foster homes, have parents who are incarcerated, or parents who are deceased and they are raised by extended family; the examples are endless and ever changing. Getting to know students on their level and understanding what family represents to them individually is a task for which educators are responsible, especially young students who are not able to be responsible for themselves.

Community

The subcategory of community is defined as the area directly surrounding the schools in which the librarians served. This incorporates the public services that aid in the area of the school, such as public libraries. Community also includes the businesses that are willing to sponsor events or create opportunities for the students and families who attend the school. Community is an overlapping ideal when considering CRP, CSP and Critical Librarianship which focus on bridging the home to school and community gap (Ladson-Billings. 1995). Paris (2012) called for community to agency and input in the policies of education as our students grow and become community members. Drabinski (2019) advocated for what is needed in the

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community at large and for how educators and community stakeholders can come together and actively question existing structures, standards, and workflows.

The following sections and Table 8 report the specific findings of this study and address three common themes of (a) creating connections, (b) critical context, and (c) cultivating culture and the subcategories that support. I include photovoice figures provided by my participants; upon the conclusion of their individual interviews, each participant was asked to provide an image (either taken or found) that portrayed their reflective response to the following prompts:

- This is what Culturally Relevant Pedagogy/Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy looks like in my library.
- How I feel when I hear the words "book banning."

Twenty images were submitted to me. Thirteen of them were included in data analysis and findings for triangulation of the common themes; triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Patton, 2002). To maintain anonymity, seven of the images were excluded from the reporting of the findings due to identifiable information present in the image.

Table 8

Definitions of Common Themes and Subcategories

Themes

Creating Connections	**Critical Context**	**Cultivating Culture**
Refers to establishing meaningful links, relationships and/or associations between ideas and/or people	Refers to the surrounding elements, factors, and/or circumstances that contribute to comprehensive understanding and evaluation of the whole	Refers to the deliberate and ongoing efforts towards creating synergy centered around a specific group of people

Subcategories

Creating Connections	**Critical Context**	**Cultivating Culture**
Children's literature creators e.g., authors, illustrators	Time references the experience of the librarian or lack of time they have to complete tasks	School refers to the specific school site the librarian serves
Curriculum and texts e.g., curriculum required to be taught in the general classroom	Funding references to the financial support or resources dedicated to the initiatives of the library	Family refers to the families who have children that attend the school
Diversity e.g., wide range of individual differences, characteristics, and identities within a group, community, or society	Timeliness refers to quality or characteristic of being done, completed, or occurring at the r appropriate time	Community the area at large that supports the school
Reading for enjoyment instances in which a student trusts the librarian for reading advice	Administration refers to the multifaceted layers of management, this is be directed to school level management or district level	
Students examples of curation decisions centered around one center	Collection development policy refers to a document that outlines guidelines, procedures of acquisition, maintenance, and removal of materials in library	

Creating Connections

Upon the completion of the 10 individual interviews and the coding process, librarians shared creating connections as a critical part of their decision making when determining whether to curate Caldecott Medal winners into their library collections. The theme creating connections in this study was defined as establishing meaningful relationships and/or associations of ideas that help to form interconnections among all entities including the subcategories in this study. In my findings I examined instances of this in the librarians' stories relating to interactions with children's books creators such as authors and illustrators, specific mentions of curriculum and/or texts used in instruction within the library, acknowledgment of diversity, and reading for enjoyment and specific student examples. The themes and subcategories are presented in the overview Table 9 with samples from the interview transcripts.

Table 9

Overview of Creating Connections

Creating Connections	Librarian	Quote
Children's literature creators	Mia	I say books can break your heart but then they teach you how to mend them
	Sally	platform for us to talk about things that are hard to talk about picture books are getting better and better and better
	Debbie	The illustrator of the Caldecott honor book called *Knight Owl* and I just had a great conversation with him. I told him the school where I'm from our mascot is the knights and so I made that kind of connection with them and talked to them about his illustrations…
Curriculum and texts	Sadie	I had 10 years in the English classroom as my background
	Grace	I'm always trying to incorporate the content into my

		lessons
	Wendy	Talk with the teachers about their needs based on their lessons
Diversity	Alice	23 24 26 27 and if I remember correctly, it's probably 23% Asian 24% African American 1 26% Hispanic and 27% white. My school is the most linguistically diverse school in the state!
	Fiona	We have a very diverse mixture of African American students and students who come from African countries, such as Ethiopia. We have many students who come from Asia. The Asian population is very high in our school. I would have to say 25% probably don't speak English and the students that do speak English could be from Brazil and also speak Portuguese or they could speak Spanish. There are several different languages that are spoken at our school. We service kindergarten through 5th grade we also service two primary autism classes and two intermediate
		everybody comes with so many different backgrounds and likes and dislikes
	Beckie	We are more diverse this year than it's ever been. With good 85% white or white passing. Before this year, we could count the number of our African American students on two hands, but that's doubled
	Sadie	this year. We do have a lot of LDS families.
Reading for enjoyment	Tammie	my priority is for the kids to love reading and to appreciate books and to be valued
	Fiona	becoming lifelong readers
Students	Alice	when the kids trust me enough to ask for my opinion on what they could read next
	Grace	I am all about right now diversifying the collection and making sure all the kids are feeling like they are represented within the books as well pushing a lot of limits
	Alice	I almost feel like all of my curating is emotional because it's tied to thinking of a child like oh this kid might like this or this kid might like this

Children's Literature Creators

My findings included 14 examples of how librarians said meeting or listening to a children's literature creator assisted in creating connections between them and the students. Sally reported that she was thankful for children's literature creators because the authors/illustrators provided a platform to discuss things that were hard to talk about, such as food insecurity. For example, Sally was able to introduce the social theme of food insecurity by using the book *Maddi's Fridge* as a read aloud in their library. Several librarians agreed that children's literature has improved during their librarianship tenure and afforded them the ability to discuss their students' social themes through the lens of a picture book. In conjunction with Sally's example above, Mia stated that, "books have the ability to break your heart but also can teach you how to mend them." Mia referenced allowing their students the space to feel hard emotions such as loss of a loved one. Mia used the book *Finn's Feather* to open up conversations in the library about how to deal with loss. The story is about a young boy who is dealing with the loss of his brother. The character connects feathers falling from the sky as a remembrance and acknowledgment of his deceased brother. Mia realized that not all of our students have dealt with loss during their young lives and when presenting this story, there was an opportunity to elicit heavy feelings. She teaches the students to give respect and space to all emotions.

> *Finding Winnie* (2015) I think is probably my all-time favorite because when you look at it it looks a little overwhelming because there's so many words on the pages. I love the reaction of the kids when I get to a part where they're like "oh so this is a nonfiction book?" They can't believe it because in their minds all picture books are fiction and that one is not. Alice

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Alice shared this experience about her students' interactions with the book *Finding Winnie* (2015), and the point when her students realized that nonfiction books are represented in different ways. The creators of this book, Mattick and Blackall, told the true story of the creation of the beloved story book creator Winnie the Pooh in the form of an illustrated narrative nonfiction book.

Several of the librarians reported that meeting and listening to authors and/or illustrators discuss the reasons behind the creation of their stories connected to their curation decisions further influenced their decisions to share books and authors' stories with the students in their libraries. Librarians brought these author/illustrator stories back to the students and shared them. Debbie reported meeting Christopher Denise, the illustrator of *Knight Owl*, at an educator conference. Debbie mentioned to the illustrator that the school she served had knights as their mascot:

> We just had a great conversation. I shared this with my students, and they absolutely embrace his book**.** We have some autographed copies in the library. He was just very humble and kind and really just grateful for the honor that he was given as an [Caldecott] honor winner and he wasn't even the winner.

The students at Debbie's school created a connection with the illustrator of *Knight Owl* and the illustrator virtually visited the students at that school. Debbie said years later that book is still one of the top circulating books at their school because of the experience with the illustrator and the connection to their school mascot. When students understand that many of the stories, they read come from the real-world experiences of the creators' worlds, they are given autonomy to create stories that are reflective of themselves.

Beckie shared a story about not being excited about the selection of the 2016 Caldecott

Honor book *Last Stop on Market Street* (2015) by Matt De La Pena. She shared her personal bias

and just didn't believe it was a valid recipient choice. "I think that one (*Last Stop on Market

Street)* just really stood out because that was one, I didn't really think should have won." At a

book festival Beckie heard author de la Pena and illustrator Christian Robinson speak about the

story and illustrations being reflective of their experiences growing up with grandmothers as

caretakers, navigating a city on bus, the diverse representations of humans on the bus, and the

characters' journey through daily life within the story. Beckie said, "Listening to Matt speak

about it and Christian speak about his role in that, it kind of changed my opinion about it." This

experience with the book's creators gave Beckie a different entry point to the book and a

perspective other than her own, and it quickly became one of her favorite books to share with

students. Because Beckie had this shared experience with the creators of this book, this book is

now widely shared with the students at her school.

Figure 3

Photovoice provided by Beckie

Photovoice Triangulation

Beckie supplied the previous figure to represent the prompt "This is what culturally relevant pedagogy looks like in my library." This figure is a triangulation of the data, because it elicits the theme creating connections through children's literature creators and sums up the example above about the book *Last Stop on Market Street* (2015). Beckie shared the story about prejudging the book and how she found value in the book after listening to the book creators speak about the reasons behind creating it. Beckie said in reference to *Last Stop on Market Street*, "They talked about each other and the process. I think that one just really stood out because that was one I didn't really think should have won." Because a librarian is unfamiliar with a narrative or cannot relate to it does not mean that it is not representative of the students at their school. This book almost did not make it into the hands of the students based on the prejudgment of the librarian. It is critical to note that not all the students whom librarians serve share the same demographics and experiences as the librarians responsible for the library they use.

Curriculum and Texts

The subcategory curriculum and texts refers to the connections between the curriculum the school and classroom are required to teach and how that curriculum is taught through texts in the library setting. Fourteen examples of this were coded in the data found in the individual interviews with the librarians.

In all 10 individual interviews, the librarians shared that they had previous classroom experience before the library teaching and were familiar with the standards and curriculum required. Sadie stated, "I've been in the library for 16 years now and I came from the English

classroom where I had 10 years in the English classroom as my background." This is beneficial because the librarians in charge of making curation decisions had experience teaching in the classrooms to which they were ultimately responsible for providing materials.

Grace said, "I feel like I'm always trying to incorporate the content into my lessons and especially with our learning intentions right now." Learning intentions were a new district initiative at the time of this study. Librarians were also responsible for understanding district initiatives and finding ways to incorporate them into the library curriculum and collections. As discussed in chapter I, one of the many responsibilities of a school librarian is to collaborate with teachers (Elkins, 2018). Elkins (2018) posited that school librarians should work with teachers to develop curriculum-related resources and activities and help them integrate technology and digital resources into their lessons. School librarians and libraries should be included in the decision-making process and not be considered separate.

When Wendy was asked, "How do you use this knowledge (about diversity) in your book selection process?", she answered that she talked to the teachers and based decisions on the lessons being taught at their school. She said, "I talk to the kids a lot about what kind of books they want or with the teachers also based on lessons." This is critical as it calls on book publishers to ensure there is a diverse representation of material that delivers curriculum-based information. All students were asked to master the same set of standards, but if singular narratives were represented in the skills for which students were being asked to be accountable, gaps in underrepresented groups are obvious.

Photovoice Triangulation

In Figure 4, we see Alice's response to the prompt "This is what CRP looks like to me." Alice's figure displays one of the many resources available to educators suggesting diverse

children's literature. She said, "I feel like kids don't read as much and maybe if they all of a sudden started seeing themselves in books that might be more motivating to them." Sadie supported this saying, "I thought that book *Rebellious Read Alouds* was great. I appreciate that our Library Services provides things like that for us because in all the things we do we might not necessarily have that time you know to go and search those things out so I appreciate you guys for that." *Rebellious Read Alouds* is a teaching resource that provides lists of diverse children's literature to invite meaningful conversations about race, identity, and social injustice in the classroom (Ahiyya, 2022). Resources such as this are critical because librarians need current children's literature that reflects the growing diversity of their school populations. It is a disservice to students to use outdated literature to teach standards that all are responsible for mastering and that does not reflect the diversity of the school. This can lead to marginalization, where a person is made to feel insignificant.

Figure 4

Photovoice provided by Alice

Diversity

Diversity examples were vast in the findings of this study. The librarians shared 21 examples of diversity in their interviews; these examples support research question 2, Are librarians considering CRP when making decisions about their collections? Representations of the following forms of diversity were present: demographic factors, cognitive and experiential differences, cultural and linguistic diversity, diversity of perspectives, and professional and skill diversity. Ladson-Billings (1995) and Paris (2012) stressed the importance of seeing the whole child including their community languages, multiple perspectives, and developmental appropriateness.

Examples of demographic factors of diversity were identified as differences within the population based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, and religious beliefs. In all 10 interviews, the librarians referenced that each of these diversity factors were represented within their school communities. For example, Alice reported, "23. 24. 26. 27. If I remember correctly, it's probably 23% Asian, 24% African American, 26% Hispanic and 27% white." As reported in chapter I, the majority of librarians serving the schools in this study were middle aged, white females; these librarians were making curation decisions for 75% of the student population who did not reflect their demographic. It is imperative that school librarians know their school community and make decisions about their collections that are reflective of the entire student body. Ladson-Billings (1995) said that all instruction is culturally responsive, but we have to be cognizant of which culture is the focus.

The study librarians all use the mandated standardized collection development policy that was created by their school district. It is important to note that reflected in the mandated standardized collection development policy there was verbiage stating that: (a) a wide range of

school library resources which present different points of view of all levels of difficulty will be provided, (b) school library resources selected for use in schools will accurately portray contributions made by our society by persons from diverse backgrounds and (c) school library resources shall be culturally and historically responsive and reflective of individual student needs, linguistic backgrounds, interests, socioeconomics, maturity and academic levels, as well as encourage growth in literary knowledge, aesthetic appreciation, and ethical standards (Jones, 2022).

Within their reporting there was also evidence of diversity of cognitive and experiential differences, including various ways of thinking, problem-solving approaches, educational backgrounds, and life experiences. Fiona reported:

> We have a very diverse mixture of African American students and students who come from African countries, such as Ethiopia. We have many students who come from Asia. The Asian population is very high in our school. I would have to say 25% probably don't speak English and the students that do speak English and are from Brazil and also speak Portuguese or they speak Spanish. There were several different languages that were spoken at our school. We service kindergarten through 5th grade. We also service two primary autism classes and two intermediate.

Fiona's statement reflects a mixture of diversity representation including demographic factors, cognitive and experiential differences, and cultural and linguistic diversity. Demographic factors were prevalent and addressed the differences in African American students who were native to this country versus students from other African countries who recently immigrated to the US. Cognitive and experiential learning differences were noted in the servicing of our students who were neurodiverse, such as autism, and the dynamic differences in students learning the English

language. This is not limited to one secondary language; the 10 librarians reported many languages spoken within their schools. Alice even noted that her school was "the most linguistically diverse in the state!" with languages, such as Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Amharic, Serbian, Ukrainian, and the unique languages of our nonverbal students.

It is important to discuss the diversity in perspectives such as religion. Sadie noted that there was a large Church of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) population at her school. "A lot of our families come from the same religious organization. We do have a lot of LDS families." This is important as historically the LDS church has skewed conservative in their beliefs and decision-making; however, this is stereotypical thinking and not all families in the LDS faith think in unison. Beckie shared, "Everybody comes with so many different backgrounds and likes and dislikes", which is also reflective of diversity of perspectives. Librarians are tasked with knowing their school community, which comes with boundless diverse aspects and limitations on time that will be discussed within the theme of critical context and sub theme of time.

Photovoice Triangulation

Sadie's Figure 5 was an email response to the prompt of what culturally relevant pedagogy looked like in her library.

> I had a different idea for the culturally responsive pedagogy question, but then this happened and I HAD to snap a photo. I overheard a group of third grade students choosing which character they were in this illustration. 'This is me, no wait, I'm this one.' In this image, we have four students, from four very different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, finding themselves and their commonalities in a library book.

In this photovoice we see students in CRP's identity development. Sadie was asked about the topic of the book and she said they were reading a Disney princess book and choosing which princess with whom they identified. She noted, "We have more diversity now than we ever had but it's a fairly white school." In regards to CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995), affirmation of diversity is key. Figure 5 illustrates that the students were from various cultures and the picture book that they were discussing affirmed their individual identities as they were making connections to the princesses in the illustrations.

Figure 5

Photovoice provided by Sadie

Reading for enjoyment

Participants shared 14 examples of reading for enjoyment as one of their primary goals in their library programs. Since all of these public elementary school librarians taught all students in the school from kindergarten to fifth grade, they witnessed the progress and transformations of their students as readers. Fiona stated that the number one priority in their

library position was to get their students to "become lifelong readers". She said that she did not care what the students were reading; they were reading and making selections based on personal preference and enjoyment. Tammie also stated that it's "my priority for the kids to love reading and to appreciate books and to be valued". Both of these librarians emphasized the importance of reading not only as a utility but as a pleasure. When thinking about the theme of creating connections, the librarians in this study focused on solidifying this skill in the early years of a student's life so that it grew as they grew.

Photovoice Triangulation

The figure provided by Tammie provides an example of students growing into lifelong learners. The hands and arms creating a growing tree is symbolic of their growing minds and bodies. There is an array of different colored books on the bookshelf in the background representing all the different ways a student reads. They self-select something that they will enjoy and from which they will learn. Tammie said the main reason she became a librarian was:

> Okay well the reason I became a librarian was because of this storytelling festival my daughter was in. It was so fun so I decided that was what I wanted to do. I love being in front of the kids reading or storytelling and getting them involved in those things. It is my favorite part of what I do. I love encouraging the love of reading!

Figure 6

Photovoice provided by Tammie

Students

The librarians in this study cited 24 examples of their professional obligation and personal inclination to get to know their students and build a relationship with them. Alice said there is nothing better than that moment "when the kids trust me enough to ask for my opinion on what they could read next". She said that this is not an occurrence that happens without recognition; the readers have to have built up enough trust in the librarian to feel comfortable asking this question that oftentimes are in an intimate, private conversation. Alice also stated, "I almost feel like all of my curating is emotional because it's tied to thinking of a child like oh this kid might like this or this kid might like this." Creating connections with students is important to fully understand and fulfill their needs as lifelong learners and readers and remembering that these needs were evolutionary. In fact, Grace shared a story about a student who was questioning

identifying as nonbinary and asked the librarian if there were any books in the library that had

nonbinary characters. Grace introduced the student to a book that was on the list for a district

reading competition called Battle of the Books; *City of Thieves* by Alex London (2021) in the

Battle Dragons series has a nonbinary character. This character is a dragon caretaker in the

fantasy fiction series. Although nonbinary, the plot does not center around this character's truth;

it is simply a detail in a grander story. This helped Grace to identify the need for these stories in

her collection and to seek out more titles with nonbinary characters and/or creators that met the

needs of an elementary school setting. Grace said, "I am all about right now diversifying the

collection and making sure all the kids were feeling like they were represented within the books

as well pushing a lot of limits."

Photovoice Triangulation

Figure 7 was provided by Sally in response to the prompt of what CRP looked like in her

library. She provided following explanation in an email along with the photo:

At the beginning of the school year our principal always starts the year with a theme or

idea. This year she had us decorate these dream jars and place our dream, goal, hope for

this school year. This year I wrote 'Get to know the students better' My thought was to

ask more questions, listen better, and really invest in the students that I get to spend time

with. When you asked me this question, this is what I thought about, my year long

journey to 'DREAM BIG' and know my students better! When I know who I am

teaching I have a much better chance of meeting their needs. This jar sits on my

circulation desk and is a constant reminder to focus on the kids.

Drabinski (2023) stated that libraries need to be a welcoming space to the communities

that join us. Librarians cannot choose the students who join them in their school libraries, but it

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is their professional obligation and, as noted by the librarians in this study their personal goal, to get to know the students who attend their schools and forge relationships with them to better serve them and to guide them to be lifelong learners.

Figure 7

Photovoice provided by Sally
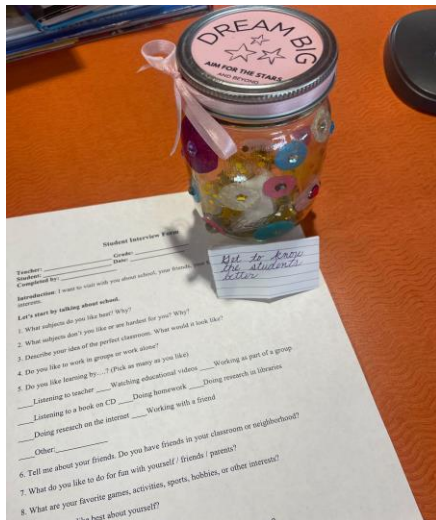
In summary, the librarians in this study explained the various ways in which creating connections was central to their role as public school librarians. From listening to an author or illustrator explain their reasoning behind creating a book to being trusted enough by their students to provide advice on what to read next, daily these professional librarians navigate the process of building relationships, establishing rapport, and forming interconnections between different concepts, people, or entities.

Critical Context

Critical context surfaced as a significant part of the librarian's decision-making when determining whether to curate Caldecott Medal winning books into their library collections. Critical context in this study referred to surrounding circumstances, conditions, or factors that were essential for a comprehensive understanding and evaluation of a particular subject, idea, work of art, or piece of information.

In my findings I examined instances of this in the librarians' interviews through their stories relative to time, funding, timeliness, administration, and collection development policies. Samples from the interview transcripts the theme of critical context and subcategories are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Overview of Critical Context

Critical Context	Librarian	Quote
Time	Alice	10th year as a librarian
	Mia	32nd year in teaching
	Sadie	our time is very limited
	Wendy	I don't have the same kids every day, all day. Sometimes I don't feel like I have the connections that I did when I had just my own classroom.
	Fiona	We are under a specific time limit of how long they're able to be in the library. We don't have the ability to make more time for them.

	Grace	I don't feel like I have a lot of time. I'm always trying to find time to weed.
Funding	Wendy	I do not have a budget so if I do buy books it's from my book fairs.
	Grace	I have to weigh how much money I'm given in order to make the collection timely.
	Beckie	They weren't giving her money…
Timeliness	Sally	I feel like maybe in the last 5 years I feel like they've (books) even gotten better because we are having these hard conversations with these kids. These kids are growing up in a totally different life than you and I grew up in for sure and they are challenged with things that we never even thought about.
	Tammie	What is current at the time in the news, in our culture, what are some of the themes that are happening just in our society so I wonder if the Caldecott committee looks perhaps a little more at some of the titles that may deal with those social themes?
	Fiona	You're looking at books that kids are gravitating towards because these are the social problems.
	Sadie	I believe in providing really diverse books...the population that I serve is not terribly diverse but I want them to be exposed to diversity and different ideas and different you know the way different families look and that kind of thing.
	Alice	It seems to me there's more (books) written by people of color and books about people of color that aren't just putting them in the stereotypical roles of athlete performer or activist.

Administration	Alice	I hate grading!
	Beckie	Well, we do AR (Accelerated Reader) and I don't jive with the AR mentality. I have my difficulty with AR because kids might not even really care about the book. It just fits in their AR range.
	Sally	My most challenging year was last year. I was given double kinder and our kinders had 30 each! The challenge is finding admin that realizes the importance of what we can do if we're given the room and the appropriate number of kids to do it with. I feel like it's the difference between being a teacher and being a babysitter.
	Sadie	Honestly, the sheer amount of students we have right now. Our classes are really big!
Collection Development Policy	Alice	I'll go from there (Amazon) and read some of the reviews from like Horn Book, Kirkus or Booklist. I have a solid book selection policy that is consistent with my district's guidelines and I have the full support of my building Administration as well as District administration.
	Tammie	I do not censor. I only focus on age-appropriate materials.
	Mia	Nobody's removing books from my library. They will follow that policy, if somebody has the audacity to walk into my room like they've done in Florida.

Time

        Time was considered in two different respects in this study: (a) the experience of the librarian or (b) lack of time they have to complete tasks. Fourteen examples of time were represented in this study. Collectively the sample of participants in this study had 50+ years of experience in the public-school elementary library. All ten of the librarians in this study had at least five years of library experience. All the participants had master's degrees in education. Mia reported that this was her 32nd year in teaching and Alice reported that this is her 10th year serving as a school librarian; it was her 28th year in education having previously served other schools as a grade level teacher and educational strategist. The immense experience this group of librarians had in the field of education was respectable. These librarians had much experience, but it can also be detrimental if growth is not made in their field.

        The subcategory of time also referred to the lack of time as the librarians discussed being unable to accomplish tasks that were required in their jobs. They reported in their interviews that they just did not have enough time to account for all the tasks that their jobs require. Grace said, "I don't feel like I have a lot of time." Sadie said, "Our time is very limited." It is important to note that the librarians in this study were used at their respective schools as preparation relief, meaning they took the students in their schools during a 50-minute time period to provide preparation time for their general education teachers. Although a required curriculum is provided for the librarians, the original purpose for requiring library times in the specialist rotation that included other classes (e.g., music, physical education, art and humanities classes) was to provide a preparatory period for classroom teachers. Some of the librarians in this study saw their classes on a standard Monday through Friday weekly rotation and others served at larger populated schools where the students' schedules were spread out through a rotating seven-day schedule; this meant they only saw their classes every seven school days, and some sometimes

classes were only seen every two weeks. Wendy reported, "I don't have the same kids every day, all day. Sometimes I don't feel like I have the connections that I did when I had just my own classroom." This is important to critical context because this circumstance of the librarians' jobs was beyond their control. Fiona expressed time being a concern for them and an aspect of their job they were unable to control, saying, "We are under a specific time limit of how long they're able to be in the library. We don't have the ability to make more time for them." Grace stated, "I don't feel like I have a lot of time. I'm always trying to find time to weed."

As previously discussed, the role of a school librarian is multifaceted and depending on the size of the school and student population, includes but is not limited to the following: (a) Managing the school library: This includes selecting, acquiring, organizing and maintaining the library's collection of books and other text based materials; (b) Assisting with research: School librarians can help students and teachers find and access information for research projects, papers, and assignments; (c) Promoting literacy: School librarians can encourage students in reading and literacy by promoting books, running reading programs, and creating displays and activities to engage students in reading; (d) Teaching information literacy skills: School librarians can teach students how to evaluate information sources, how to cite sources correctly, and use technology to access and organize information; (e) Collaborating with teachers: School librarians can work with teachers to develop curriculum-related resources and activities and can help them integrate technology and digital resources into their lessons; and (f) Providing a safe and welcoming environment (Elkins, 2018).

Photovoice Triangulation

Figure 8 provided by Grace demonstrated the frustration librarians felt trying to incorporate all aspects of their jobs. She said, "I don't feel like I have a lot of time." As stated

above, the role of a school librarian is multifaceted, and it is met in opposition with the limitations of time allowed to accomplish the tasks required of them. This figure echoes the responses provided by the librarians in this study. Although they all had an abundance of experience in their positions, they still struggled to find the time to fulfill all aspects of their positions.

Figure 8

Photovoice provided by Grace
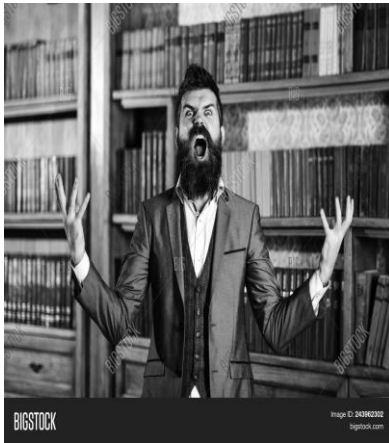
Funding

Although the participants in this study were from the same school district, their responses about their individual libraries funding varied. The only commonality was that they thought their libraries lacked funding; four examples were reported in this study. Wendy reported, "I do not have a budget so if I do buy books, it's from my book fairs." It is of concern that the subcategory that follows funding is timeliness.

The librarians' ability only to purchase books from the selections offered in their book fairs was limiting as the fairs are organized by a single publisher, Scholastic. Wendy continued, "I do not have a budget so if I do buy books, it's from my book fairs. I try to like buy the new books from series they like, like No-Brainer (Diary of a Wimpy Kid series) or you know like the latest and the greatest but I don't have a lot of money to just have at it and spend a little bit of time thinking about diversity." When librarians must make curation decisions based on convenience or lack of funding, some of the school community may be marginalized and equitable access to books that reflect the students who read them may be negatively impacted. Grace stated, "I have to weigh how much money I'm given in order to make the collection timely." Grace responded with this when asked what was one of the biggest challenges she faced in her job:

> That there isn't a lot of time allotted to go over titles in my collection with a fine-tooth comb to make deselection decisions and I have to weigh these decisions with how much money I'm given from year to year to replace or update the titles that were deselected.

Grace also expressed that having a timely collection was important to her, but often this cannot be idealized because of funding constraints. This is problematic because holding onto books in a library collection to maintain quantity versus quality also leads to marginalization.

Beckie stated that she recently entered a new school as the librarian and had conflicts with some of the collection decisions that were made. For example, Beckie discussed a book title that was on a previous year's book selection list with her students. She believed this was a customary title to have in one's library collection.

> We didn't have any of the (state list) young reader books. I wasn't sure if it was due partly due to Covid, or partly because of the librarian before me. Maybe that wasn't her

thing or they weren't giving her money I don't know; I don't know why but I have gone

back through and added them. I think it's important we talk about the Caldecott. We tried

to do a mock Caldecott. I think that's another way of getting them to read books and be

excited about it and so I will always try to at least have a representation of the books in

our library.

Beckie was shocked that this particular title was not in the collection as she thought it was a

staple selection. Beckie questioned this choice and was curious if "they weren't giving her

money". Librarians often make decisions based on their predecessor and if there are

discrepancies or updates that need to be made, it is essential for a successful library program that

these needs are met.

Photovoice Triangulation

In Figure 9, Wendy showed the responsibility and relationship the school librarian has

with the whole school community. "My favorite part of the job is seeing the entire school," she

said. New book titles were being released and students were aware of them. If they trust the

librarian enough to request book titles it is imperative that school librarians were able to fulfill

these requests. As mentioned in the creating connections theme, building relationships with

students so they have trust in their librarian and seek out reading requests for enjoyment is

crucial to the success of the library program and the deepening of relationships. Resources

cannot be acquired without some sort of monetary funding resource.

Figure 9

Photovoice provided by Wendy

Timeliness

Timeliness in this study refers to the quality or characteristic of being done, completed, or occurring at the right or appropriate time. It emphasizes the importance of being relevant in a given context such as the library. Timeliness is often associated with efficiency and effectiveness, as actions or events that occur in a timely manner are more likely to achieve their intended objectives. Sally stated:

I feel like maybe in the last 5 years I feel like they've [books] even gotten better because we are having these hard conversations with these kids. These kids are growing up in a totally different life than you and I grew up in for sure and they are challenged with things that we never even thought about.

Sally further explained that in curating Caldecott winning books it is important to incorporate conversations about older versus newer titles and the diversity that has developed throughout the years. For example, she noted that 2024 was the first year that a black woman won the Caldecott medal. Did that mean this is the first time a black woman has ever illustrated a

children's book? No, but librarians have discussions about diversity with students and make them aware of social injustices so that as they grow, they can make informed decisions about their world and how to become part of the solutions. Tammie reflected:

> What is current at the time in the news, in our culture, what are some of the themes that are happening just in our society so I wonder if the Caldecott committee looks perhaps a little more at some of the titles that may deal with those social themes?

Fiona echoed Tammie's statement with, "You're looking at books that kids are gravitating towards because these are the social problems." Kids are naturally curious about their world and want to see their lives reflected in the characters about whom they read. They seek answers in the actions of the characters on the pages in front of them. When librarians do not or cannot incorporate timely materials into their collections, this reflection may be lacking. Sadie stated that although she did not serve a diverse student population, she strove to incorporate diverse literature into the school collection.

> I believe in providing really diverse books ... the population that I serve is not terribly diverse, but I want them to be exposed to diversity and different ideas and different you know the way different families look and that kind of thing.

> Alice shared an encounter that she had with a colleague "requesting books about African Americans for a biography project" that their students were going to do. Alice answered that she had a number of these resources available in the library, but the colleague quickly said they did not want any books about African American athletes, performers (e.g., singers and rappers) or activists.

> After speaking with a friend of mine in fourth grade, she wanted some African American books and I was like absolutely I've got blah blah blah like hundreds of them. She was

like all right now I want you to take off anybody who's an activist or an athlete. At that

point I'm like oh I've got to start beefing this up.

This encounter caused Alice to pause and contemplate her collection of African American

biographies and to dig deeper and broader to provide a more well-rounded perspective of what a

famous African American was, and not a stereotypical representation. Alice reflected on her own

biases and pushed her expertise in terms of library acquisitions to fulfill this colleague's request

and ultimately better serve her students. Alice said, "It seems to me there's more [books] written

by people of color and books about people of color that aren't just putting them in the

stereotypical roles of athlete performer or activist." Alice also noticed the lack of Asian

American characters represented in their early reader chapter books and was finding some series

that addressed that need in her school.

Photovoice Triangulation

Beckie's photovoice in Figure 10 projects that like our Earth that is constantly rotating on

its axis, so are our students. Every year, school librarians welcome a new school year and along

with that school year come some familiar students, but also there are new students and new

challenges that arise; like the Earth our services in public education are required to be consistent

for all students. Beckie explained, "That to me, is where I would think we would be in our

current setting of our world where we're headed towards more."

It is critical for school librarians to make choices about their library collections in

response to our changing school communities and to be able to make these changes happen.

Beckie also provided this insight: "My favorite part of being a librarian is, I love really it's just

finding that book that clicks with each individual."

Figure 10

Photovoice provided by Beckie

Administration

The librarians in this study overwhelmingly agreed and provided 14 examples that administration impacted their decision making in the library. Administration in this study is referred to as school or district level management. This aspect of critical context involved factors over which the school librarians' position have no control. It also received the most emotionally heated responses from participants.

- Alice- "I hate grading!"

- Beckie- "I don't jive with the AR mentality."

- Sally- "My most challenging year was last year. I was given a double kinder and our kinders had 30 each!"

- Sadie- "Our classes are really big!"

- Grace- "There is not enough time to manage the collections!"

- Debbie- "There are so many standards."

- Wendy- "Behaviors are getting worse."

Alice stated that grading is the hardest part of her job and she quoted, "I hate grading!" A grading system of E, S, and N is a district requirement for the librarians in this study. The

grading system represents respectively: (a) E is representative of the student exceeding the standard, (b) S is representative of satisfactory performance regarding the standard, and (c) N is representative of needing improvement in regards to the standard. The librarians indicated that they were responsible for nine state standards created in conjunction with the American Library Association (ALA, 2023); ALA is the same organization that is responsible for selecting the Caldecott medal.

School librarians were responsible for maintaining an electronic gradebook for all the students they served and were required to measure the progress of the nine standards. The largest school represented in this study had a student population of a little over 950 students ranging from kindergarten through fifth grade. That particular librarian was required to record 8,550 grades every school year, in addition to the other tasks required of their position. Sally shared that 2022 was her most challenging year in her career. Her administration scheduled double kindergarten classes for her. They also pulled her library aide for lunchroom duty during this scheduled time, so Sally was responsible for 60 kindergarten students in the library.

> I feel like that's a disservice. It was a huge disservice to me. I didn't know any of those kindergarteners by the end of the year. I didn't know what their favorite books were. It was sad. I mean I went to my principal. I was like this is not what we're supposed to be doing. We're not able to do our job when you ask us to do this. I literally was like do I leave the library? Do I leave the school which I love? What do I do? I needed a change. Fortunately for us they hired another specialist, and we are not doing the double scene with kindergarten this year.

Wendy shared "we definitely have a lot of diverse needs, and the behavior is getting worse." She also commented that the students notice when administration is or is not involved in

the day-to-day routines. "They also notice a lack of administrative presence." She said

sometimes she has to take on the role of building administrator when they are not around "but it's

not as effective."

Accelerated Reader (AR) is a computer-based program that schools use to monitor

reading practice and progress (Rosen, 2024). It is often used to help teachers and librarians guide

students to books at their individual reading levels. The students then take short quizzes after

reading each book to check for comprehension. This reading program is not mandated across the

school district; it is a school site-based decision from the school's administration. Three of the 10

school librarians interviewed mentioned using AR at their school sites. Beckie stated, "Well we

do AR [Accelerated Reader] and I don't jive with the AR mentality. I have my difficulty with

AR because kids might not even really care about the book. It just fits in their AR range." Beckie

stated that promoting AR at her school was contradictory to her personal philosophy of reading

for enjoyment.

> Although again with AR, these kids don't look at the book they look at that AR number
>
> they selected. So that's where I have my difficulty with AR because they might not even
>
> really care about the book; it just fits in their AR range. So, it's something I'm trying to
>
> navigate around but I still have to buy books that have an AR number because otherwise
>
> they sit on my shelf, and no one checks them out.

Beckie also did not open this school and the program was instituted at the school before

her tenure started. Beckie said she holds contests that make it engaging for the students to excel

in AR but does not think it is the best way to get students to become lifelong readers. She said,

"the families, it seems to be important to them. They participate in all the craziest library things

that I put out there and they love AR. They want to know where their kids' levels are." This is simply a requirement of Beckie's school site, and every effort is made to comply.

Another component of administration in terms of critical context is the size of some of the schools. This school district in this study situated in the southwest part of the United States is one of the most rapidly growing urban areas in the nation according to Earth Resources Observation and Science Center data (EROS, 2024); this affects the student population in the schools. As mentioned earlier, the largest school that is represented in this study has a population of approximately 950 students. Administration at the district level is responsible for zoning changes and leveling student populations, an aspect of the librarian's job that is not controllable. School librarians were responsible for meeting the needs of the students who attend their school; however, large student populations have proven to be challenging. Sally provided the following thoughts:

My most challenging year was last year. I was given double kinder and our kinders had 30 each! The challenge is finding admin. that realizes the importance of what we can do if we're given the room and the appropriate number of kids to do it with. I feel like it's the difference between being a teacher and being a babysitter.

Not feeling worthy is detrimental to job performance; people want to feel appreciated and valued. Being responsible for 60 five to six-year-old students involves being responsible for them, and for the librarian, getting to know each one of them and assessing them accurately. Sadie echoed Sally's thoughts by stating, "Honestly, the sheer amount of students we have right now. Our classes are really big!"

Photovoice Triangulation

Figure 11 provided by Debbie repeats the thought that the conversation on administration in discussing critical context is emotionally charged. Debbie said, "I get so fired up you know! It's certainly a hot topic right now." Many of the concerns the school librarians had with administration were factors that they were unable to control. The frameworks used in this study underscore the immense responsibility that is placed on our educators. The responsibilities for librarians continue to grow and it appears that nothing will be taken off their plates.

Figure 11

Photovoice provided by Debbie

Collection Development Policy

In this study all of the librarians interviewed used a standardized district mandated collection development policy that their school district provided to them; the mandated standardized collection development policy can be reviewed in Appendix B. The six references

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to this document in the interviews pertained to making curation decisions for individual libraries because it is a district mandated document and all librarians were expected to follow the guidelines outlined. Alice explained their process of incorporating titles into her library:

> I'll go from there [Amazon] and read some of the reviews from like Horn Book, Kirkus or Booklist. I have a solid book selection policy that is consistent with my district's guidelines, and I have the full support of my building administration as well as district administration.

Much previewing and research is done before making purchasing decisions. Horn Book, Kirkus, and Booklist are book selection review tools that are available to all librarians and have long been a staple of materials selection, helping librarians decide how to spend their resources. Alice continued:

> I'll read some of the reviews from like Horn or Kirkus or Booklist and I try to match like what's popular with what I think they'll like. I'm always putting my readers first, but I want the books to be circulated. I'm spending a lot of money on them, and I don't want them collecting dust on the shelves.

Each journal has its specialty concerning the types of materials they cover, in what quantities and when, to capture the timeliest, relevant, and vetted materials patrons will want to borrow (Campbell, 2018).

Tammie stated that she does not consider choosing books for her library as censoring. "I do not censor. I only focus on age-appropriate materials." This consideration is critical to elementary school librarians and their curation decisions because their target audience is students from kindergarten to fifth grade. Although the ages of students in these grades vary, consideration of maturity level is considered in materials selection; developmental

appropriateness is also a key consideration in CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Mia stated "Nobody's removing books from my library. They will follow that policy, if somebody has the audacity to walk into my room like they've done in Florida." Mia believed that her thoughtful process of book curation was sufficient and was not open to community analysis. She also fully supported the decisions of families.

> I have very strong opinions about book banning, but I would immediately support any mom, any mom who's trying to make decisions about what happens at her home. So, if she doesn't want her child to read a book, I can support her. I will put a special note on the account. I can do that, but she doesn't have a right, no one has a right to come in and tell me what another student can or cannot read. Mia

> In summary the school librarians in this study were prideful in regards to their mandated standardized collection development policy and its inclusive language. They felt supported and confident in their selection decision making.

Photovoice Triangulation

Figure 12 provided by Alice includes four books that commonly wind up on challenged or banned book lists across the United States. The meme in the center says "You've got to be 'kitten' me." Alice also believed:

> Yes. Mom and Dad come first. I've had and I'm very disappointed with people who in the name of 'Liberty' say that they want to make schools safer for children and that your kid doesn't get to read that book. But you don't get to tell me what my kid can and can't read. I get to do that as a parent.

The next section discusses cultivating culture and how it incorporates the stakeholders of school, family and community.

Figure 12

Photovoice provided by Alice

Cultivating Culture

During the interviews and revealed by the coding process, the librarians reported

cultivating culture as a critical part of their decision making when determining whether to curate

Caldecott Medal winners into their library collections. Cultivating culture in terms of this study

relates to the deliberate and ongoing efforts to nurture, shape, and develop the shared values,

beliefs, behaviors, and traditions within a group, organization, or community. It involves

fostering an environment that encourages a particular set of attitudes and practices, often with the

aim of creating a positive and cohesive atmosphere. Cultivating culture includes initiatives such

as promoting collaboration, establishing clear values, encouraging open communication, and

supporting the development of a collective identity. It's about actively shaping the cultural norms

and characteristics that define the ethos of a specific group or entity and, in this case the school.

Paris (2012) stated that culturally sustaining educators find ways to connect with their students

and bring histories of the neighborhoods and communities they belong to into the classroom.

In my findings I examined instances of this in the librarians' their stories relating to

interactions within the school, with families of students attending the school, and the community

that immediately surrounds the school. The themes and subcategories are presented in the

overview Table 11 with samples from the interview transcripts.

Table 11

Overview of Cultivating Culture

Cultivating Culture	Librarian	Quote
School	Debbie	I get to interact with all different age levels from 5 to 12 years old.
	Sally	If you don't know your kids and you don't know your population, you're doing a disservice to that school.
	Tammie	There's a lot of different cultures and we kind of create our own like we have what we have the characters the pillars of character.
	Beckie	You need to know your demographic and then you build your collection that way.
	Grace	Nobody should be able to come into my library and tell me what's best for my community and my students and my kids without actually even understanding the entire global perspective of the school.
Family	Sally	I know it sounds crazy but I kind of miss the one aspect of being online and doing a year

		online. I feel like I really got to know those kids because I saw them in their home setting.
	Sadie	same families year after year It scares me that parents don't trust librarians to make those decisions at their schools.
	Alice	Mom and Dad come first.
	Mia	Immediately I would support any mom, any mom who's trying to make decisions about what happens at her home.
	Debbie	I believe that parents 100% have the right to censor what their kids read, especially at the elementary level. But they have no right to censor what other kids read.
	Wendy	I think a lot of parents' judge books just based on the title. I think the dad did not like the word sissy so he automatically thought it should be out of the library.
Community	Tammie	I definitely look at my books more carefully now than I ever have before.
	Debbie	If I know it (book) is a hot topic. I definitely take that extra deep breath as I placed the order.
	Fiona	Well, I don't ignore books that are on sensitive topics but I feel that as the librarian I

		have to know my student population.
Alice		Books are supposed to be windows, mirrors into our lives and doorways and stuff like that. So, if they're considering what the climate is in the country and trying to select the best books that go with that, I think we're going to get a more well-rounded selection of winners.
Beckie		A little surprising to me just because of how our world is and the direction we seem to be going in … I think that that's (diverse books) been a push for the last eight or nine years and so we've got some catching up to do and I think that is a big deal.
Sadie		We are the number one school in the state my friend. I don't even know what all that means but based on all the special numbers they put in we are. I really think we have a culture of readers. We have a culture of supportive families and teachers that work their butts off every day for their kids. A lot of our parents have college degrees.
Mia		Because of our school's namesake I am going to be devoted to books that show diversity. I am going to be devoted to books that show civil rights and critical race theory.

School

All of the school librarians in this study served at public elementary schools in a large urban district in the Southwest; they referenced their individual schools on 19 occasions throughout the interviews. These schools served students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Debbie reported that getting to interact with all the students is one of her favorite parts of the job. "I get to interact with all different age levels from 5 to 12 years old," she said.

The schools had differing student population sizes, ranging from smaller schools averaging around 500 students to larger schools averaging around 900 students. Some of the schools reported diverse student populations; Alice claimed her school to be the "most linguistically diverse school in the state". Other schools were described as "not very diverse, ultra conservative, with a large population of LDS families," according to Sadie.

Understanding the student population and the needs of those students is an important aspect of the school librarian's job. It is also reflected in the CRP and CSP frameworks (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012), supporting the need to build caring relationships between teachers/school staff and students that create a nurturing and positive atmosphere. The librarians made the following statements in support of this thinking:

- "If you don't know your kids and you don't know your population, you're doing a disservice to that school." Sally

- "There's a lot of different cultures and we kind of create our own like we have what we have the characters the pillars of character." Tammie

- "You need to know your demographic and then you build your collection that way." Beckie

- "Nobody should be able to come into my library and tell me what's best for my community and my students and my kids without actually even understanding the entire global perspective of the school." Grace

Reflecting on these statements, one can deduce that the librarians in this study believed in the pillars of CRP and CSP and were diligent in their actions to understand the student population they served. Ladson-Billings (1995) identified the pillars of CRP as a focus on student learning, cultural competence, and critical consciousness that center on the following: (a) student teacher relationships; (b) teaching whole child-skill dev. In cultural context, bridging home, school and community; (c) developmental appropriateness; (d) equity and excellence; and (e) identity and achievement. Paris (2012) identified the pillars of CSP as a foundation that builds on the works of Ladson-Billings (1995) but focused on sustaining the following: (a) critical centering on dynamic community languages, valued practices and knowledge; (b) student and community agency and input; (c) historicized content and instruction; (d) capacity to contend with internalized oppressions; and (e) the ability to curricularize all this in learning settings.

Photovoice Triangulation

Grace's Figure 13 supported the statements of the librarians on creating connections. Grace said that she had the professional obligation to obtain a "global perspective of the school." Creating connections was discussed previously and as was the subcategory of diversity. Diversity has many different facets, and it is not limited to racial or ethnic identity. Sally described the diversity as her school as:

We are not Title I but we were last year. We are Title One lite or whatever the lowest tier is without being Title I. I'd say the two biggest populations are going to be African-

American and White but we have a very large Russian population. We have Pacific

Ocean for sure like Philippines, Hawaiian all that. We don't have a high Hispanic

population but with that being said we do have some kids that speak Spanish. I try to find

books that show kids have Autism and Downs syndrome because we have these kids. We

have kids with feeding tubes here. Do I look for books for these kids? Absolutely. Do I

feel like it's important that we show representation for all? Yes. I do. I have a whole team

that is on board with me so it's not another challenge for me.

Diversity considers cognitive and experiential differences, educational backgrounds and life

experiences, cultural and linguistic differences, perspectives, and professional and skill diversity

(Banks, 2015).

Figure 13
 Photovoice provided by Grace

Family

Without families our schools would not have students to serve. It is important to understand our students but also the lives and families from which they come. The participants referred to families 12 times in the interviews.

CRP/CSP (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012) also support the notion of understanding and centering students' culture in education. It is important to note that the concept of family is a social construct and presents differently to many people (Harris, 2008). Although the school librarians in this study had collective knowledge and experience, and had confidence in their collection decisions, many of them held value in family first decisions and trust and acknowledged a parent's right to censor or make decisions about what their child is reading. They all did not support, however, the concept of book banning or censorship. Alice, Debbie, and Mia stated their support of parental decision making for their children.

- "I believe that parents 100% have the right to censor what their kids read, especially at the elementary level. But they have no right to censor what other kids read." Debbie
- "Mom and Dad come first." Alice
- "Immediately I would support any mom, any mom who is trying to make decisions about what happens at her home." Mia

Wendy questioned the motive of one of her parents. "I think a lot of parents, judge books just based on the title. I think the dad did not like the word sissy so he automatically thought it should be out of the library." Wendy discussed a conversation with a parent at her school when one of her students checked out *Oliver Button is a Sissy* by Tomie DePaola (2017). Wendy addressed the parent's concerns and asked the parent if they had read the book in its entirety. The parent admitted they had not read the book and was offended by the word sissy on the front cover. Wendy and the parent agreed that their student was not allowed to check out that

particular book from the school's library; Wendy noted the parent's request in the student's personal account to ensure the parent's request was honored throughout the student's schooling. Wendy said she was "kind of surprised." These personal account notes carried over from school to school within the district this study was administered.

Sadie appreciated that she worked at a school with a low transiency rate; she gets to know the "same families year after year". Sadie shared, however, that "It scares me that parents don't trust librarians to make those decisions at their schools. It worries me for our kids, it worries me for their families, the stories that are not being able to be shared." Sadie supported families in their ability to make decisions for their children but had trepidation about the stories the students were not allowed to read.

Sally valued the school to home connection and offered the following reflections about the families at her school site during the COVID pandemic. Note: From February 2020 through the spring of 2021 the school district adhered to virtual distance learning in response to the COVID pandemic. Although the time presented many struggles and challenges for educators and families alike, Sally reflected on one advantage of this situation.

> I know it sounds crazy but I kind of miss the one aspect of being online and doing a year
>
> online. I feel like I really got to know those kids because I saw them in their home
>
> setting. I don't think kids get enough books when they're young.
>
> CRP/CSP (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012) support understanding the culture of our

students, but librarians are only privy to what families are willing to self-share. Sally stated that the lack of students experiencing books at an early age predated her employment into school, but there may have been circumstances of which the school librarian was unaware and prevented the students from experiencing books and stories before their first day of school.

The figure below provided by Fiona includes the words "Don't ban books. Teach your children how to self-censor. Think for yourself and let others enjoy the privilege to do so, too." The quote is attributed to Voltaire, the French philosopher and writer from the 1700's. Fiona and all of the librarians in this study supported the families' rights to make decisions for their children, but not for all children at a school site. They believed that families should be tasked with the responsibility to teach their children what is right and wrong or valued within their households.

Figure 14

Photovoice provided by Fiona
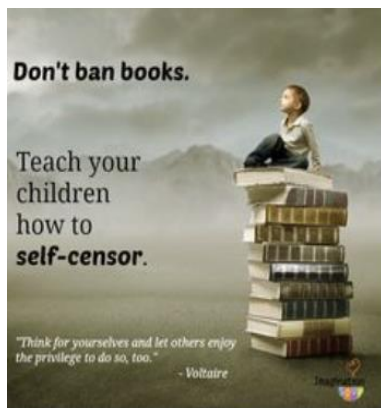
Community

Community in relation to cultivating culture means the community surrounding the school. Community was the most referenced subcategory in this study with 27 references. CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995) articulated the need for teaching the whole child and within this idea is

the notion of bridging home, school, and community. The study librarians reported their support for the communities that surrounded and supported the schools they serviced. It is interesting that even within the 10 librarians interviewed for this study there were socioeconomic status discrepancies in schools based. For example, Sadie reported:

> We are the number one school in the state my friend. I don't even know what all that means but based on all the special numbers they put in we are. I really think we have a culture of readers. We have a culture of supportive families and teachers that work their butts off every day for their kids. A lot of our parents have college degrees.

Sadie continued that the majority of the families whose children attended her school were college educated and had the financial resources to seek early interventions for their children. "Because our families are a little more affluent they're able to know and get those diagnoses early."

Other librarians reported circumstances specific to their school sites. Mia said, "Because of our school's namesake I am going to be devoted to books that show diversity. I am going to be devoted to books that show civil rights and critical race theory." Critical race theory has been at the center of an emotionally charged discussion through the United States since the 1980s (Fortin, 2021). Mia understood that thinking presented challenges within her school community but was also committed to these concepts and believed her collection development policy fully supported them in her decision making. Other librarians in this study were honest in their responses that making some of these curation decisions did cause them apprehension. The following statements were evidence of this:

- "I definitely look at my books more carefully now than I ever have before." Tammie
- "If I know it (book) is a hot topic. I definitely take that extra deep breath as I placed the order." Debbie

- "Well, I don't ignore books that are on sensitive topics but I feel that as the librarian I have to know my student population." Fiona

Whereas some of the librarians were optimistic about the diverse representations presented in children's literature and they were making the necessary changes in their curation decisions, Alice shared:

Books are supposed to be windows, mirrors into our lives and doorways and stuff like that. So, if they're considering what the climate is in the country and trying to select the best books that go with that, I think we're going to get a more well-rounded selection of winners.

Alice trusted that the Caldecott committee was cognizant of their choices of winning titles regarding diversity. Alice was also aware of the climate of the United States on hot topics such as book banning and conservative agendas. Beckie shared:

A little surprising to me just because of how our world is and the direction we seem to be going in … I think that that's [diverse books] been a push for the last eight or nine years and so we've got some catching up to do and I think that is a big deal.

Beckie reflected that she was concerned about the amount of progress the children's book industry was making and entities that were pushing back. Alice believed that libraries need to be reflective of the changing global dynamics. Sadie said, "My general population within my school community is ultra, ultra conservative." Even though this is the truth of their school community and families, Sadie believed in incorporating titles of all diverse factors because of the lack of diversity at her school:

I want diverse books. I want different cultures and religions and genders represented in my library. I feel that it's important. I know that's not always popular to a lot of people

out there right now and I definitely put books in the library that I think are 100% appropriate and great for the age levels that I teach.

In summary, it is critical to understand schools, families, and communities at large, but the curation decisions of the school librarians were not limited to representations within those entities. In fact, the opposite sense was present in the thinking of the school librarians. They reported the need to have books that reflected their student populations but also understood the need and obligation to introduce diversity to their students.

Photovoice Triangulation

Figure 15 provided by Debbie represents the need for understanding the community from which our students come. It supports further investigation and consideration of what presents on the surface. Sadie stated:

> I want diverse books. I want different cultures and religions and genders represented in my library because I feel that it's important. I know that's not always popular to a lot of people out there right now and I definitely put books in the library that I think are 100% appropriate and great for the age levels that I teach. I am always waiting for the other shoe to drop, waiting for a challenge from my school community.

Looking at the children presented in the figure below does not provide a broad enough scope of the complexities of these students, complexities such as but not limited to diversity mentioned earlier in this chapter and personal reading likes and dislikes.

Figure 15

Photovoice provided by Debbie

In chapter V, I provide a discussion and summary of the study findings as they relate to the research questions that guided this study. The implications for librarians are discussed, and recommendations for further research in the area of curation decisions are provided.

Chapter V: Summary and Discussion

Summary

In chapter V, I provide a summary of my findings from chapter IV and discuss the implications, future research, limitations, and conclusions of this study. The librarians in this study were passionate about their craft in the library profession, compassionate about diverse student representations in their curation decisions, and committed to the broader school community they served. Their commitment manifested in the library collections that served their students' ever diversifying needs and lives. This study aimed to understand the curation decisions librarians made in regards to the Caldecott Medal winners and asked the following research questions:

Table 12

Research Questions

Research Questions
RQ1: How, if at all, do librarians use BISAC codes to determine curation decisions of the Caldecott Medal winning books?
RQ 2: Are librarians considering culturally relevant pedagogy when making decisions about their collections?

BISAC Codes

"What is it?" -Tammie

In response to first research question that guided this study, it is noted that the 10 school librarians reported no knowledge of BISAC codes. However, after further explanation during the semi-structured interviews all agreed the BISAC codes could be helpful in curation decisions. For example, in the chapter IV findings, Sally stated she was thankful that children's literature creators gave her the opportunity to have some tough conversations with her students about social themes. She shared the example of using the children's picture book *Maddi's Fridge* to introduce food insecurity to her students. The BISAC codes for this book title include: (a) friendship, (b) homelessness and poverty, (c) girls and women, (d) humorous stories, (e) self-esteem and self-reliance, and (f) beginner readers. If, Sally referenced the BISAC codes, she could unlock a variety of additional children's literature that focuses on food insecurity and similar topics and thus provides a breadth of children's literature resources relating to the topics presented in *Maddi's Fridge*.

Moreover, this is important information that librarians could utilize to guide curation decisions and to build the library collection. I discuss the professional development instruction on the use of BISAC codes to inform librarian's curation decisions further in this chapter. As reported in the chapter IV findings, none of this study's school librarians was aware of BISAC codes and they did not use them in their curation decisions.

Curation Decisions

"It's not my story that everybody lives and I think kids need to see themselves in these stories." -

Beckie

The second research question was more challenging to answer, but in doing so provided valuable information for current and future librarians, teachers, and researchers. The second research was: Are school librarians considering CRP to make curation decisions? The short

answer is, kind of. However, in more detail and by further discussing the key points librarians considered, the response is more complex. First, the librarians in this study were committed to developing trusting relationships with their students, which proved to be challenging due to the limited time they had with each student and the large population sizes of some of the schools. The participating librarians also took developmental appropriateness into consideration, were thoughtful about equity and excellence, and considered multiple perspectives. They set high expectations for all their students.

Based on the findings from my study, I argue that the component of CRP for which librarians strive and in which they are confident, but may be falling short, is teaching the whole child. I believe that attempts are made to accomplish this, but this requires connecting home to school cultural context. CRP centers on teaching the whole child, and bridging home, school, and community into cultural contexts within the classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 1995). As the researcher and current librarian, I argue that librarians are not at fault here. Complexities of the school librarians' position often create obstacles. With a schedule determined by administration, school librarians see the students infrequently, possibly once a week or once every two weeks. Interactions between the school librarian and the families of the students are inconsistent. It is important for the classroom teachers and entities such as school counselors to include school librarians in the happenings of students' lives. School librarians can provide a source of comfort through literature when they are knowledgeable about their students.

The following theoretical frameworks were used in the examination of the research questions: CRP (Ladson-Billings, 1995), CSP (Paris, 2012), and Critical Librarianship (Drabinski, 2019). There were commonalities among the three frameworks as shown in the Figure 16. Comparisons were made across the three theoretical frameworks and Figure 16

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provides a visual display similarity and overlapping common tenets. This figure is used as a

reference to summarize the commonalities of CRP, CSP, and Critical Librarianship as they relate

to issues of social justice, equity and community in the findings of my study.

Figure 16

Intersections of CRP/CSP/Critical Librarianship
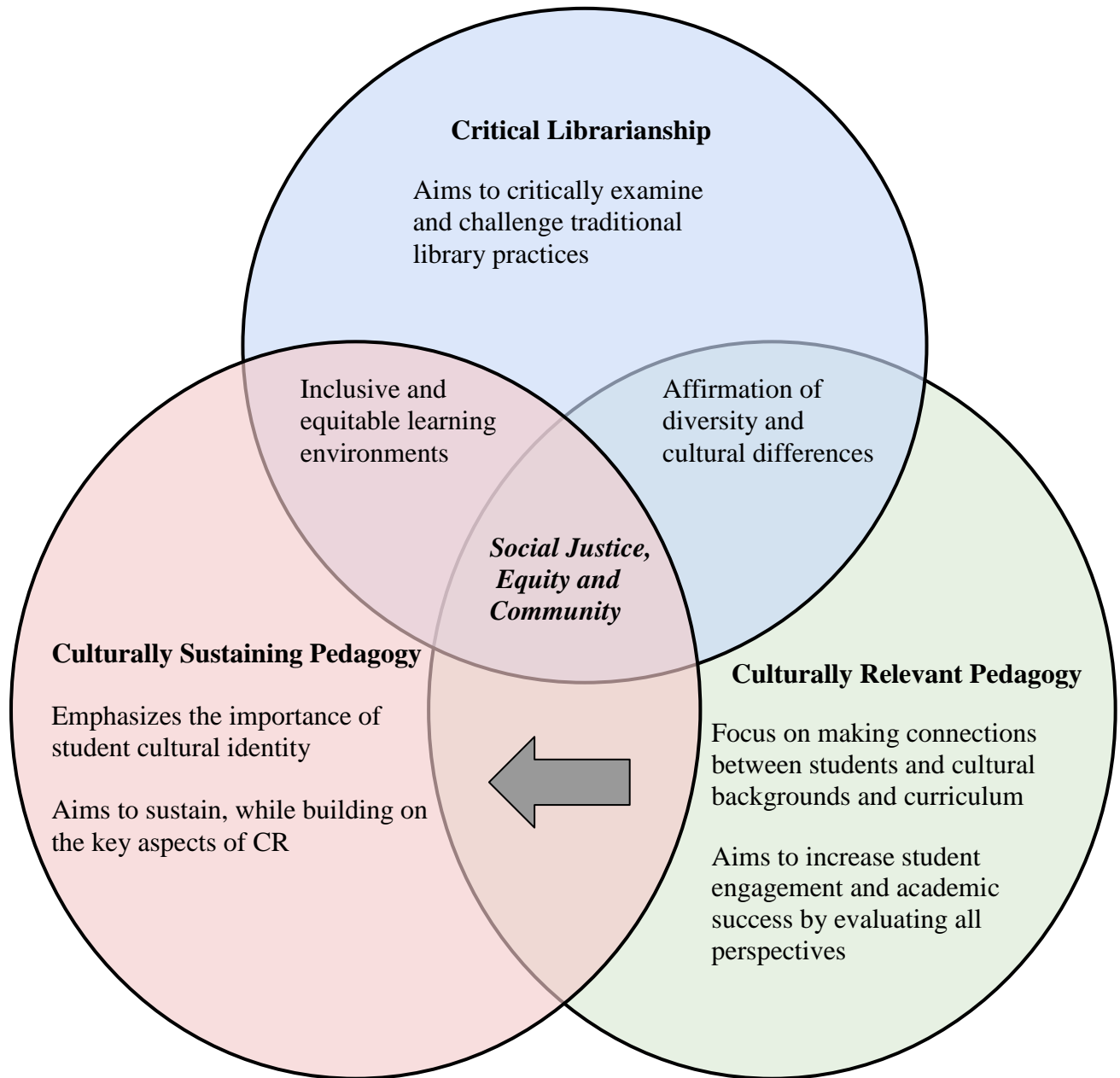
Centering Students, Families, the Community

"Nobody should be able to come into my library and tell me what's best for my community, my students and my kids without actually even understanding the entire global perspective of the school." -Grace

Social justice centers on the idea that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights, and opportunities; in simpler terms, it is a concern for people's needs. Equity is concerned with fairness and community is described as a group of people with a particular characteristic in common. Social justice aims to guarantee fair access to opportunities for communities to participate in the context of self-interest, for example the library. CRP, CSP, and Critical Librarianship have shared philosophies in terms of social justice, equity, and community (Drabinski, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). In support of CSP, Paris (2012) emphasized the need for student and community agency and input. CRP calls attention to teaching the whole child in terms of cultural context and bridging the home and community when making decisions at the school (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Drabinski (2019) emphasized community and critical librarianship actively questions the existing structures, standards, and workflows that are present in libraries and making decisions based on the communities they serve. CRP calls for equity and excellence, emphasizing the need for high expectations for all and equal access (Ladson-Billings, 1995). CSP relies on the same tenets of CRP and critical librarianship aims to bring social justice and critical theory to library work (Drabinski, 2019). Drabinski (2023) stated that libraries need to be a welcoming space to the communities that join us. As noted in the findings in Chapter IV, we witnessed discrepancies or issues of social justice, equity, and community in many of the thematic subcategories such as funding, timed and administration.

Given the funding, time, and administrative support, school librarians can and do desire to work towards a social justice-oriented approach to their curation decisions. As noted, this study suggests that they believe in teaching the whole child through the lens of connected literature.

Funding

Critical librarianship calls for actively questioning existing structures, standards, and workflows in terms of funding. The librarians in this study expressed limited and inequitable budgets to create timely collections for the students they serve and inadequacy in the amount of time they had to fulfill the requirements of their jobs. The money they had to spend on their student population came from librarian-run fundraisers such as book fairs or electronic fundraising campaigns. As discussed in chapter I, Elkins (2018) detailed the role of the school librarian, however, nowhere in his explanation does he mention the school librarian campaigning for money. This is concerning because the idea of "hidden labor", as described by Drabinski (2019), is prevalent throughout the librarians' stories. The concept of "hidden labor" brings awareness to the many jobs school librarians and educators face daily that are above and beyond their job descriptions; these include the tasks that are implied as part of the job but not explicitly stated in their contracts. The school librarians in this study were asked to do more with less, such as maintaining diverse representations in their library collections, often with no financial assistance to make this happen.

While the participating librarians agreed with the need for representation in their library collections, supported the tenets of CRP by affirming diversity and cultural differences, and further emphasized the importance of student cultural identity, there was limited and equitable access to funds to make these ideals come to fruition (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris, 2012). The

inequities central to library funding is concerning because, as noted in the findings, funding directly affects librarians' ability to ensure their collections are reflective of current issues and are timely. Libraries are meant to be reflective of the population that utilizes them. Some of the librarians reported zero budget monies offered by administration to make curatorial decisions specifically in support of their student population, while other librarians were granted $30,000 to spend on library materials. When librarians are forced to make curation decisions based on convenience or lack of funding, some population of the school community will be marginalized and equitable access to books that reflect the students who read them will be negatively impacted.

Time

Critical librarianship calls for actively questioning existing structures, standards, and workflows in relation to time. It is clear that the librarians in this study lacked time to make all the facets of their positions thrive. Sally stated she struggled, "Finding time and patience for having all different types of kids in the room at the same time." If we consider how the school day looks for an elementary public-school librarian and rethink how they can be of assistance to our students and school communities, we can make more positive changes. At the time of this study, the librarians were contracted daily from 8:10am to 3:21pm. They served students all day in 50-minute increments and were provided a daily preparation period of 50 minutes without students and a 30-minute lunch break. Their time beyond working with students was truly limited.

Coupled with providing standards-based lessons for their kindergarten through fifth grade students, librarians are also responsible for the a variety of job related tasks (Elkins, 2018) including: (a) Managing the school library; (b) Assisting with research (c) Promoting literacy;

(d) Teaching information literacy skills; (e) Collaborating with teachers to develop curriculum-related resources (f) Providing a safe and welcoming environment where students can study, read and work on projects. These six job tasks seem overwhelming. This is another example of critical librarianship and exposing the "hidden labor" school librarians' face when actively questioning existing structures, standards, and workflows (Drabinski, 2019). Although school librarians in this district have always worked under this structure, this system does not have to remain. In fact, CSP suggests "historicized" content; the research of the origins of this time block structure would be interesting (Paris, 2012).

The following questions should be considered when evaluating time: Are all of the students serviced by the school librarians in this study receiving equitable access? How can they be? There are discrepancies in the experience levels of the librarians (i.e., time spent in the position of librarian), the student population sizes, the diversity represented within each school, and among the families and communities that surround and support the schools. One school librarian servicing the needs of many is a formidable task.

Administration

Critical librarianship calls for actively questioning existing structures, standards, and workflows in relation to administration. Administrators need to prioritize librarians in their schools. They need to collaborate with school librarians to provide for the needs of the library and the students that it serves. Sally said one of her struggles with administrations "was finding admin that realizes the importance of what we can do if we're given the room and the appropriate number of kids to do it with. I feel like there's a difference between being a teacher and being a babysitter." This is yet another aspect of social justice for school librarians, the overarching tension with the differences in administration. Although school library management is in the job

description of a school librarian, their decision making is filtered through the building

administration and the administration in charge of the building administrators and so on (Elkins,

2018). There is little autonomy for the school library and librarian. Although the librarians in this

study fully supported the tenets of CRP and CSP they did not have the resources needed to make

all of the decisions.

One notable aspect in this study specific to administration tension was student population

and size. Librarians do not get to choose the students who join them in their schools, but it is

their professional obligation to know them and guide them to be lifelong learners. We saw

examples of the school librarians in this study attempting to get to know their students

individually and also helping them fit into the mold of the school community. The concept of

bridging the gap between home and community and school is a key tenet of CRP (Ladson-

Billings, 1995). In fact, CSP also supports bringing the students' culture to the table and not

leaving it behind to fit into a new culture (Paris, 2012). This is also central to tenets of critical

librarianship of bringing social justice and critical theory to library work (Drabinski, 2019).

Critical librarianship delves into the needs of the community it serves and uses a critical lens in

providing services. Librarians served schools with a population of 950 students or more, whereas

other librarians in this study served schools half that size. Regardless of the student population

size all school librarians are expected to perform the same job tasks without extra compensation.

Both CSP and CL reference welcoming environments as a contributing factor to student

success, yet some librarians are given more access to funds than others, creating huge gaps in

materials accessible from the library. It is difficult to create an authentic, welcoming

environment as the sole librarian when serving 60 five-year-old's. Ladson-Billings (1995)

emphasized that one of the indicators of student success is the caring, fostered relationships

between teacher and student. Although the librarians in this study shared some personal experiences of their time with their students, some students must slip through the cracks because of decisions made by administrators.

Implications

"Our time is very limited." -Sadie

There are implications for the key findings presented in this study. These will be discussed in this section, especially identifying how the findings impact administrators, students and librarians.

Gatekeepers

When we think about the concept of gatekeeping, we think of someone who controls access to things. In our society this can often be viewed negatively. School librarians are modern day gatekeepers. They control the access students have to materials in their collections. After compiling my findings, I have concluded that the librarians have no malicious intent in their curatorial decisions. In fact, I believe the exact opposite is true: they are doing their best. I heard librarians tell stories of connections they made with students and the books that live on the shelves of their library. They indeed referenced their collection development policy to include stories that represented multiple perspectives and were thoughtful of their school communities. School librarians are required to work within limiting parameters that have been set for them by their building administrators and the library administrators who supervise them, and so on. With limited time as a school librarian's day, some facets of their jobs go unattended. When that lack of attendance involves curating diverse children's literature, our students suffer.

In summary, librarians are the modern-day gatekeepers of literature to the students at the schools they serve. If librarians do not experience real life connections to books through their

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encounters with the children's literature creators, some important books would not make it into the hands of young readers. Beckie gave the example of *Last Stop on Market Street*; if she had not had the opportunity to hear creators De La Pena and Robinson speak on the reasoning behind creating this book, it may not have found its way onto the shelf in her library. Librarians must experience children's books through a lens other than their own as they serve our schools and do not necessarily reflect the vast diversity of students within the schools; readers deserve to see themselves reflected on the shelves in their libraries.

Arguably, the true gatekeepers of school libraries are the administrations, which was evident in discussing the librarians' top down decision making responses. Administrators are in charge of each school's funding, which directly affects the curatorial decisions that the school librarians make. This filters down to the books on library shelves available to the students at each school. Administrators need to know and understand where the gaps are in the collection in the school libraries, the inequities in funding, and the need for a library collection that reflects the students accessing it. These stakeholders also need to be more cognizant of the "hidden labor" present in the school libraries. Librarians need preparation time to fulfill the many facets of their jobs as do classroom teachers.

Collection Development Policy

Although all the librarians in this study were grateful for a standardized collection development policy created for their school district, my work supports that work needs to be done to further develop this document to include the key components of CRP, CSP and Critical Librarianship. Specifically, I advocate for targeted language that addresses issues of social justice, equity, and community in the mandated standardized collection development policy. Seeking the assistance of stakeholders such as administrators to be involved in refining the

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document will assist in more reflective practices. Then true gatekeepers will be more educated about and apprised of the curation process and thus more supportive of granting access to additional equitable funding for school libraries.

Professional Development

I believe that school librarians are "kind of" considering CRP in their curatorial decisions; I believe that more work can be done with professional development. As this district was structured at the time of the study, educators were required to attend several staff development days throughout the school year. Most of these required days were focused on practices and strategies that support classroom teachers and general education environments. Notably, only one staff development day per school year was dedicated to targeted professional development for school librarians to help hone and advance their craft and often the day was taken away due to a mandated district training. The findings in this study indicate that there is a need for school librarians to receive more frequent and targeted professional development pertaining to their library position, such as BISAC code training to more accurately filter curation decisions specific to their school sites.

Moreover, professional development that focuses on CSP and CRP specific to supporting social justice, equity, and community in school libraries is needed and necessary. This especially as crucial because as noted in my study the librarians' in this large district do not have access to CRP, CSP or CL in their current coursework for their library endorsed. Unless, librarians have taken additional course work beyond their endorsement focused on social justice, equity and community there is no guarantee the have access to frameworks for analyzing and making curatorial decisions.

Librarians also shared their need for more timely books in their library collection. They reported that there just is not enough time to allow for all the facets of their position and providing professional development on contemporary children's literature and how it can be used in the school library would benefit librarians.

School librarians are also in need of professional development surrounding the rising cases of book banning throughout our nation and supports they can utilize if faced with this challenge. Research should be included in this professional development so that school librarians have the support they need to respond in their communities.

Concept of Hidden Labor

"My favorite thing is getting to see them grow into books and their excitement for books."

-Sally

School librarians engage in much "hidden labor" in their jobs. Sally spoke of her favorite aspect of her job as a librarian was to help her students build an excitement for books and to grow into readers. Becoming a lover of reading is not a singular, instantaneous action. Much behind the scenes work that goes into building a successful library program.

One suggestion to combat the concept of "hidden labor" is communication and collaboration. If earnest conversations happen between administrators and school librarians, "hidden labor" would be minimized. Drabinski (2019) referenced "hidden labor" as the invisible work that librarians do in regards to their jobs. Library users do not have an understanding of how books end up on the shelves of their libraries. Patrons are not aware of the research that precedes book selection and their incorporation into the collections. Evidenced in this study, the librarians referenced getting to know their students and finding books that were of interest to their school communities. They consulted book review sources and researched trending, popular

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titles. These actions take time, time for which there is no allotment for in the school library where the majority of the day is dedicated to providing coverage for classroom teachers during their preparation periods and teaching students the library standards. Librarians in this study used their own time, time not contracted to them to make these decisions. Drabinksi (2019) stated that, regarding "hidden labor", as a society we need to start having conversations about what different kinds of labor are worth valuing. Is the work of incorporating diverse literature into our library collections valuable? If so, there need to be structural changes for this to happen.

Future Research

This study presents an opportunity for continued research. Future research should focus on the curatorial decisions of school librarians in respect to CRP/CSP/Critical Librarianship, specifically exploring how this type of pedagogy impacts students' attitudes and beliefs about school and learning. This research of the school librarians' decisions could be enhanced with an exploration of the impact of a pedagogy characterized by the school librarians' decisions. A study focusing on all or either of these perspectives would offer insight into the effectiveness of this type of liberating pedagogy.

This study also presents the opportunity to analyze the language used in collection development policies. As stated in chapter I, Feng (1979) said that the "heart of the library lies in its collection, and collections have to be built continuously" (p. 39). Collection development policies are documents that grow and evolve over time. It would be interesting to examine collection development policies of large, urban school district school libraries and refer to what Frempong-Kure (2021) and Cabonero & Maynero (2021) said about the written collection development policy facilitating a consistent and balanced growth of library resources, and that a

dynamic policy is one that evolves as the institution grows. CRP/CSP and critical librarianship tenants should be included in this critical document.

Analysis of school library allocations in large urban school districts would be an enlightening topic for further research. It would be interesting to look at disparities between school communities. Ladson-Billings (1995) called for equity and excellence, demanding equal access and high expectations for all students. In this study, I observed the inconsistencies in funding within one school district. I would be interested in comparing similar urban school districts and the way they fund their school libraries.

Limitations (Realities)
"They're [students] not really interested." -Fiona

In holding semi-structured individual interviews with school librarians, there was a possibility that their answers would not reflect their actual practices (Dahl & Hoskins, 2022). Additionally, potential pitfalls were technological shortcomings or unplanned events that prevented the selected participants from participating (such as a work/family emergency). Another reality was that the school librarians chosen were not familiar with CRP or did not support it as a way to make selection decisions. Language to support CRP should be included in the district mandated collection policy and supported through continuing professional development focused around the research.

This study was limited in several ways. First, the sampling used purposive and convenience sampling. Although, necessary for this study and the research questions, it is a limitation due to the criteria set for this study. The sample of school librarians was also limited in terms of diversity and was indicative of the diversity present, or lacking, in school librarians. It is the reality of research to try and have diverse samples, but here, I am limited to who is willing

and able to participate. Therefore, while all participants were female, there was racial, religious, socioeconomic, and ethnic diversity in the groups of students they represented.

Other limitations of this study were my role as a stakeholder in the library profession as a school librarian and the role I play as an instructor in the teacher to school librarian classes I teach, which had the potential to influence my data analysis. Therefore, I partook of the assistance of a research partner who did not have the stakeholder role that I had in this study and allowed for subjectivity (Hays & Singh, 2012). To ensure that biases did not interfere with data collection or analysis, I coded the data individually and then compared codes with a second researcher to come to the most trustworthy patterns, themes, and findings.

Conclusion of Study

To conclude this study, I would like to share the following "restorying" of the 2024 Caldecott Medal winning book *BIG* by Vashti Harrison (Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016). In 2024, Vashti Harrison became the first African American woman to win the Caldecott Medal.

Figure 17

BIG by Vashti Harrison
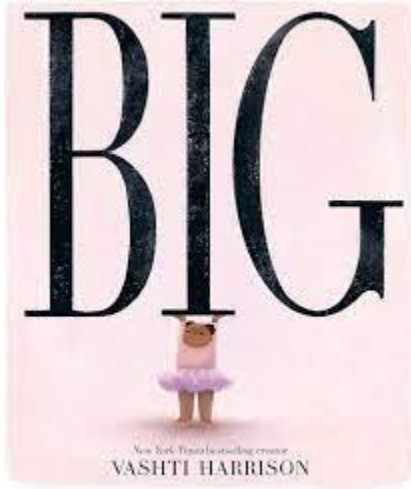
Once there was a BIG school library…

She had a healthy budget,
a wonderfully diverse student population,
and high expectations of success for all her people.

She loved and lived to serve her people.
"She is the heart of the school." the school would say.
It was good.

Her collection grew and developed and evolved
and grew and grew and grew.
And it was good…
until it wasn't.

One day something big happened.
Her budget was slashed,
she was no longer in charge of curation decisions,
her library person was tugged and pulled in every which way,
that took time away from her.

Her doors were slammed shut and she felt small.
She found it hard to shake off all the harsh words.

She began to feel not herself,
out of place,
exposed,
judged,
yet invisible.

Everyone had advice,
"Let's turn her into a STEM classroom."
"We can use her as a computer lab."
"She doesn't need her library person anymore."
 but that kind of hurt, too.

One day she finally let it all out…
and learned to advocate more clearly.

She decided to make more space for herself…
and was able to see a way out.

She gave the gatekeepers back their words.

Not everyone understood or even listened.
Some tried…
but they still couldn't see,
that she was a library.

And she was good.

Appendix A:

IRB Approval

ORI-HS, Exempt Review
Exempt Notice

DATE: October 11, 2023

TO: Sophie Ladd
FROM: Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects

PROTOCOL TITLE: UNLV-2023-515 A Case for the Caldecott: Public School Librarians Tell the Story
SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial

ACTION: Exempt
REVIEW DATE: October 11, 2023
REVIEW TYPE: EXEMPT
REVIEW CATEGORY: Category 2. (i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

This memorandum is notification that the protocol referenced above has been reviewed as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45 CFR 46 and deemed exempt under Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:
The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

PLEASE NOTE:

Upon final determination of exempt status, the research team is responsible for conducting the research as stated in the exempt application reviewed by the ORI – HS, which shall include using the most recently submitted Informed Consent/Assent and recruitment materials.

If your project involves paying research participants, it is recommended to contact HSComp@unlv.edu to ensure compliance with the Policy for Incentives for Human Research Subjects.

Any changes to the application may cause this study to require a different level of review. Should there be any change to the study, it will be necessary to submit a Modification request for review. No changes may be made to the existing study until modifications have been approved/acknowledged.

All unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others, and/or serious and unexpected adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

Any non-compliance issues or complaints regarding this protocol must be reported promptly to this office.

Please remember that all approvals regarding this research must be sought prior to initiation of this study (e.g., IBC, COI, Export Control, OSP, Radiation Safety, Clinical Trials Office, etc.).

If you have questions, please contact the Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects at IRB@unlv.edu or call 702-895-2794. Please include your study title and study ID in all correspondence.

<div align="center">

Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects
4505 Maryland Parkway. Box 451047. Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1047
(702) 895-2794. IRB@unlv.edu

</div>

Appendix B:

Demographics Survey/Consent

Here is the link to the form:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScu7Se9ZhXx75ZsPUAe5ZPgr6uUGHnQJDxgfobxIUrL9vm8Jg/viewform

It does not copy well as a PDF.

Title of Study: A Case for the Caldecott: Public School Librarians Tell the Story

Please reference the linked Exempt Research Information Sheet-Informed Consent and should you consent to participate in the presented study proceed to fill out the demographics survey below.

INVESTIGATOR: Nicole (Nikki) Bylina-Streets (PhD candidate)

For questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Nicole (Nikki) Bylina-Streets at nicole.bylina-streets@unlv.edu or by phone at 702-521-1177.

For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted, contact the **UNLV Office of Research Integrity-Human Subjects at 702-895-2794, toll free at 888-581-2794 or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.**

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is twofold. First, to better understand how school librarians make curation decisions centered around books for their collection, specifically related to incorporating Caldecott Medal winning titles. Second, to see how, if at all, librarians' selection decisions are centered around notions of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP).

Participants

You are being asked to participate in this study because you meet the following criteria:

1) Participants are currently working as an elementary school librarian in Southern Nevada.

2) Participants are endorsed by the state of Nevada as a School Librarian Media Specialist.

3) Participants have at least five years' experience serving as an elementary school librarian.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: participate in an interview with the researcher and answer a series of questions regarding curation decisions centered around books in your library collection. At the culmination of the interview you will be asked to provide a photovoice that represents your selection decisions centered around notions of CRP/CSP.

Benefits of Participation
There may be no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study other than reflection on your curation decisions centered around books for your library collection and selection decisions centered around notions of CRP and CSP.

Risks of Participation
This study includes only minimal risks.

Cost/Compensation
The study will take approximately one hour of your time. You will not be compensated for your time.

Confidentiality
All information gathered in this study will be kept confidential as possible. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored on a password locked computer at UNLV for up to 7 years after completion of the study. After the required storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with UNLV. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Participant Consent
I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have been able to ask questions about the research study. I am at least 18 years of age. Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time necessary to think it over.

nicole.bylina-streets@unlv.edu Switch account

*Indicates required question

Email*

Your email

Signature Section-Please read carefully

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your selection indicates that you have read the information provided above, you have had all your questions answered, and you have decided to take part in this research study.

Please select "yes" below if you consent to participate in this research. Select "no" if you do not consent to participate in this research. *

yes

no

Q1 What is your age?*

Your answer

Q2 What is your race/ethnicity?*

Your answer

Q3 What is your gender identity? *

Your answer

Q4 What is your sexual identity?*

Your answer

Q5 Please select the highest degree completed: *

   MA/MS/MSEd (Masters

   PhD/EdD (Doctoral)

   EdS (Education Specialist)

   Other

Q6 If "other" was selected in Q5, please specify:

Your answer

Q7 What relevant licenses and certifications do you currently have?

Your answer

Q8 What is your current job title? *

Your answer

Q9 Are you currently working as a public school elementary librarian in Southern Nevada? *

yes

no

Q10 Do you currently hold an endorsement from the state of Nevada for School Library Media Specialist? *

yes

no

Q11 Have you been serving as a public school elementary librarian for at least five years? *

yes

no

End of Survey

I thank you for your time spent taking this survey. Your response has been recorded.

Appendix C:

Individual Interview Questions

These questions were asked during individual interviews and are representative of the suggested

categories for comprehensive interviews: background or demographic, behavior or experience,

opinion or value, knowledge, feeling, and sensory according to Hays & Singh (2012).

Thank you for joining me today. I will be asking you several questions related to your role as a

librarian. Let's get started!

1. Tell me a little bit about who you are as a librarian.

    a. (Probe) Can you speak to what your favorite part is?

    b. (Probe) What do you struggle with?

2. When I say Caldecott Medal winners, what comes up for you?

    a. Tell me about your knowledge of the selection process of Caldecott Medal
       Winners.

    b. What concerns do you have, if any, about the selection process?

    c. Can you recall a special moment you had with a specific Caldecott Medal
       winning book? Tell me that story.

Thank you for sharing that with me. We are going to shift gears just a bit. As you know an

important part of your role is selecting literature for your library. I want to spend some time

talking through this process with you and how you might go about selecting the books you add.

3. How valuable are the BISAC codes, if at all, while selecting books for your library?

    a. How can BISAC codes be more beneficial, if at all, to your selection process?

[Share BISAC code findings with participants. Allow time for reading and discussion.]

4. Tell me about the diversity of the student body at your school.

    a. How or do you use this knowledge, if at all in your book selection process?

b. How would you define the culture of your school?

5. Tell me about the Caldecott Medal Winners in your collection.

    a. (Probe) Think about the how and why process that led you to acquire these. Tell me a story, if you have one, about a time that you chose to add a Caldecott Medal winner to your selection.

6. Tell me about the emotional response you have, if any, when selecting books for your school library?

7. Now, tell me about the emotional response you have, if at all, upon hearing about cases of book banning?

    a. Tell me about the last time you heard about a book ban?

    b. How does book banning affect your decisions about curating titles into your school library, if at all?

8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

As we wrap up today, are you willing to participate in the second part of this process? I am asking you provide me with two photographs via email, each based on the following prompts:

    1. This is what Culturally Relevant Pedagogy/Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy looks like in my library. [If participants aren't familiar with these terms, share a brief definition.]

    2. How I feel when I hear the words "book banning."

These two photographs could be a photo you take, or an image you find online that represents the thoughts or feelings related to the statement. Be creative! If you want to provide any additional thoughts on the photographs, please include them in your email to me.

Thank you for taking your time to speak with me today. In the coming days, I will be sending you a transcript of our interview today for you to look over and see if you have any additional thoughts or points of clarification. I appreciate your time!

Appendix D:

Timeline of Annual American Library Youth Book, Print and Media Awards

Award	Description of Award
John Newbery Medal (1923)	Awarded to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.
Randolph Caldecott Award (1938)	Awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.
Children's Literature Legacy Award (1954)	Honors an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, have made, over a period of years, a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children through books that demonstrate integrity and respect for all children's lives and experiences.
Mildred B. Batchelder Award (1966)	Awarded to an American publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originally published in a foreign language in a foreign country, and subsequently translated into English and published in the United States
May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Award (1969)	Awarded to a unique collaboration between several groups of people—the committee, the chosen Lecturer, the ALSC staff and Board of Directors, and the host site coordinators. The result is an exciting opportunity to celebrate and add to the knowledge and scholarship in the field of children's literature
Coretta Scott King Book Awards (1970)	Annually recognize outstanding books for young adults and children by African American authors and illustrators that reflect the African American experience. Further, the Award encourages the artistic expression of the black experience via literature and the graphic arts in biographical, social, and historical treatments by African American authors and illustrators.

Stonewall Book Awards - Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children's & Young Adult Literature Award (1971)	Are presented to English language books that have exceptional merit relating to the LGBTQIA+ experience.
Margaret A. Edwards Award (1988)	Honors an author, as well as a specific body of his or her work, that have been popular over a period of time. It recognizes an author's work in helping adolescents become aware of themselves and addressing questions about their role and importance in relationships, society, and in the world.
Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Children's Video (1991)	Honors outstanding video productions for children released during the previous year
Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe Award for New Talent (1995)	Established to affirm new talent and to offer visibility to excellence in writing and/or illustration which otherwise might be formally unacknowledged within a given year within the structure of the two awards given annually by the Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee.
Pura Belpre Award (1996)	Presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth.
Alex Award (1998)	Awarded to ten books written for adults that have special appeal to young adults, ages 12 through 18.
Michael L. Printz Award (2000)	Awarded to a book that exemplifies literary excellence in young adult literature.
Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal (2001)	Honors the most distinguished informational book published in English in the preceding year for its significant contribution to children's literature.
Schneider Family Book Award (2004)	Honors an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences.
Theodor Seuss Geisel Award (2006)	Awarded annually (beginning in 2006) to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most

	distinguished contribution to the body of American children's literature known as beginning reader books published in the United States during the preceding year.
Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production (2008)	Awarded to the producer of the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults, available in English in the United States.
William C. Morris Debut YA Award (2009)	Honors a debut book published by a first-time author writing for teens and celebrating impressive new voices in young adult literature.
Coretta Scott King - Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement (2010)	Presented in even years to an African American author, illustrator or author/illustrator for a body of his or her published books for children and/or young adults, and who has made a significant and lasting literary contribution.
Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults (2010)	Awarded to the best nonfiction book published for young adults (ages 12-18) during a November 1 – October 31 publishing year.

Appendix E:

Mandated Standardized Collection Development Policy

Sample School Library Resources Selection Policy

School Mission Statement
The mission of ABC Elementary school is to prepare our students to become lifelong learners through an innovative, science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) focused, inquiry-based learning curriculum.

Objectives of Evaluation and Selection
The objectives of evaluation and selection of school library resources at ABC Elementary School are guided by Clark County School District (CCSD) Policy 6161, School Libraries, and CCSD Regulation 6150, Instructional Materials.

Clark County School Policy 6161, School Libraries, provides the vision for an effective school library. One of the components of an effective school library is a collection of school library resources that meets the needs of all learners. CCSD Policy 6161 includes the following guidelines for the selection of the school library collection:

"2. The school library provides resources, programs, and services that meet the needs of all learners, represent various points of view on current and historical issues, and provides support across a wide range of interests. The resources are diverse and inclusive, providing opportunities for all learners to recognize themselves as members of a global learning community."

4. The school library offers a professionally curated collection of resources selected based on their authority, currency, relevance, scope, and relationship to other items in the collection. An effective school library is guided by a selection and evaluation plan for collection development and the school allocates funding for the enhancement of the school library collection."

CCSD Regulation 6150, Instructional Materials, states, "The library-media center in each school shall have a written policy for the selection of school library resources supportive of the school instructional program." Furthermore, the guidelines for which school library resources shall be selected at ABC Elementary School, in accordance with Regulation 6150, are outlined as noted throughout this document.

The proliferation, broad range, and varying suitability of all forms of school library resources which are available for purchase require careful evaluation before they are selected for use at ABC Elementary School.

Responsibility
CCSD Regulation 6150, Instructional Materials states, "The principal, in consultation with the teacher-librarian and the library-media center committee, is responsible for the selection of library materials within each school. Each school shall have a library media-center committee to serve in an advisory capacity in the selection process for school library resources. The committee

will be appointed by the principal and will include the teacher-librarian, three teachers, two parents/guardians, and the principal or designee." The teacher-librarian uses this school library resources selection policy to guide in the selection of new school library resources to be added to the school library collection at ABC Elementary School.

Criteria for Selection
As per Regulation 6150, Instructional Materials, "School library resources shall be selected on the following basis:

A. The library-media center in each school shall have a written policy for the selection of school library resources supportive of the school instructional program.
B. The principal, in consultation with the teacher-librarian and the library-media center committee, is responsible for the selection of library materials within each school. Each school shall have a library-media center committee to serve in an advisory capacity in the selection process for school library resources. The committee will be appointed by the principal and will include the teacher-librarian, three teachers, two parents/guardians, and the principal or designee.
C. A wide range of school library resources which present different points of view at all levels of difficulty will be provided.
D. School library resources selected for use in schools will accurately portray contributions made to our society by persons from diverse backgrounds.
E. School library resources shall be culturally and historically responsive and reflective of individual student needs, linguistic backgrounds, interests, socioeconomics, maturity, and academic level, as well as encourage growth in literary knowledge, aesthetic appreciation, and ethical standards.
F. Requests from students and the professional staff will be considered."

In addition to the guidelines outlined in CCSD Regulation 6150, Instructional Materials, directly above, ABC Elementary School will select school library resources in accordance with the following criteria:
A. In order to best support the school's mission and the STEM program at ABC Elementary School, school library resources will be selected to support and enhance the teaching and learning of STEM.
B. School library resources will support the needs of each content area.
C. Care will be taken to select school library resources of high quality in presentation, physical or electronic format, educational significance, readability, authenticity, accuracy, artistic quality, literacy style, and factual content. Construction should be durable, manageable, and attractive.
D. When selecting electronic works, the platform through which the work is accessed must be considered and all school library materials must be accessible via Destiny.
E. The value of any work must be examined as a whole. The impact of an entire work will be considered, transcending individual words, phrases, and incidents.
F. Materials will be purchased in a variety of formats, including book formats, graphic formats, and electronic formats.
G. Gift materials will be evaluated by the criteria outlined above and shall be accepted or not accepted in accordance with those criteria.

Procedures for Selection

Working with the principal and the library-media center who serves in an advisory capacity, the teacher-librarian uses this school library resources selection policy to guide in the selection of new school library resources to be added to the school library collection at ABC Elementary School. In coordinating this process, the teacher-librarian will do the following:

A. Arrange, when possible, for firsthand examination of the school library resources to be selected.

B. Use reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection tools when first hand examination of school library resources is not possible. Among the sources to be consulted are:

a. Booklists

b. The Horn Book Magazine

c. Kirkus Reviews

d. Reading Teacher

e. School Library Connection

f. School Library Journal

C. Consider recommendations from students and the professional staff.

D. Purchase duplicates of extensively used school library resources.

E. Consider electronic formats when demand will be high, or 24/7 access will be required.

F. Purchase replacements for worn, damaged, or missing materials basic to the school library collection.

G. Use preventative maintenance and, to the reasonable extent possible, repair school library resources as needed.

Deselection or Weeding

The school library collection will be continuously reevaluated in relation to the needs of the students, staff, school community, evolving curriculum, new formats of school library resources, and new instructional methods. Lost or worn materials of lasting value should be replaced. The ABC Elementary School Library uses the Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding (CREW) method, consisting of six criteria (also known as MUSTIE), when evaluating school library resources to decide whether they should be removed from the school library collection.

A. Misleading and/or factually inaccurate

B. Ugly (worn out beyond mending or rebinding)

C. Superseded by a new edition or a better source

D. Trivial (of no discernible literary or scientific merit)

E. Irrelevant to the needs and interests of your community

F. Elsewhere (the material may be easily borrowed from another source or is available online)

Challenged School Library Resources

Regulation 6150, Instructional Materials, states, "A forum for public or staff reaction to any supplemental textbooks, school library resources, or procedures will be provided. A review of the material or procedure may be initiated by completing the Request for Review of Supplemental Textbooks, School Library Resources, or Procedures form."

The following, per Regulation 6150, Instructional Materials and found on page two of the

Request for Review of Supplemental Textbooks, School Library Resources, or Procedures, CCF-400, form, provides the guidelines and procedures for challenged school library resources. "A challenge to a supplemental textbook, school library resource, or procedure is initiated if a completed Request for Review of Supplemental Textbooks, School Library Resources, or procedures form is received by the school principal or designee.

The library-media committee shall serve in a review capacity for challenged supplemental textbooks and school library resources. It is at the discretion of the principal or designee to include a teacher from the school with content area knowledge aligned to the challenged material for input as needed. Suitability of the material shall be determined through examination, checking of available reviews, and consulting standard evaluation aids. Opinions should be based on the material as a whole without judging passages out of context."

References

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<div align="center">**Curriculum Vitae**</div>

<div align="center">Nicole (Nikki) Bylina-Streets</div>
<div align="center">nbylinastreets@gmail.com</div>

Education

2021-present **PhD ABD, Curriculum & Instruction**, anticipated graduation Spring 2024
Emphasis: Literacy
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2006 **Masters of Arts, Library and Information Science**
University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

2003 **Masters of Education, Curriculum & Instruction**
Emphasis: Library Science
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2001 **Bachelors of Science, Elementary Education**
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada

Licenses

Professional All Elementary Subjects, Grades K-8 (Nevada, #37245)

Professional School Library Media Specialist, Grades K-12 (Nevada, #37245)
Nevada Highly Qualified Teacher in Elementary Education

Higher Education Experience

2016-present *Part-Time Instructor, Children's Literature in the Elementary School Curriculum (EDRL 401 & CIL 501)*
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2012-present *Part-Time Instructor, Children's and Young Adult Literature (RPDP 580)*
Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program

2012-2022 *Part-Time Instructor, Supervised Library Practicum (RPDP 576)*
Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program

K-12 Professional & Professional Experience

2020-present *School Librarian, Abston Elementary School*
Clark County School District (CCSD, August 2020-present)

| 2019-2020 | **School Librarian**, *Vassiliadis Elementary School* |
| | Clark County School District (CCSD, August 2019-June 2020) |

| 2004-2019 | **School Librarian**, *Goolsby Elementary School* |
| | Clark County School District (CCSD, August 2004-June 2019) |

| 2001-2004 | **Second Grade Teacher,** *Ober Elementary School* |
| | Clark County School District (CCSD, August 2001-June 2004) |

2018-present **Lead Book Curator**, *Poetry, Humor & Verse Vertical*
Bookelicious

Awards & Recognition
| 2005 | Southwest Region Shining Star Recipient |
| | Clark County School District |

| 2016 | Heart of Education Finalist |
| | Clark County School District & Smith Center, Las Vegas |

| 2017 | Distinguished Service Award (15 years) |
| | Clark County School District |

| 2017 | Nominee for I Love My Librarian Award |
| | American Library Association |

| 2022 | Distinguished Service Award (20 years) |
| | Clark County School District |

Invited Presentations & Workshops
Looking Through the Lens of Nonfiction Text: Linking Text to Content Area Literacy. The 2022 Summit on the Research and Teaching of YA Literature. June 11, 2022. UNLV.

Girl-on-Girl Hate, Judgment & Disrupting Shame. The 2022 Summit on the Research and Teaching of YA Literature. Virtual. Presented with: Gae Polisner (author), Erin Bronstein, Chea Parton, Sarah Donovan

Writing with Communities panel. March 25, 2022. Writing Our Way Forward-SNWP and RPDP Writing Conference.

Building a Community. CIL 618. Virtual. Presented my community writing project to the new cohort. February 16, 2021.

LGBTQ+ Book Groups: Books & Talk on Love & Activism. NCTE 2021. Virtual. Presented with: Dr. Sarah Donovan, Summer Samano, Dillon Graham, Jessica Arl, Katrina Morrison, Kristy Self, Robin Pelleteir, Dr. Sarah Fleming, Alexander Villasante
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHdl5tYkD6E

Middle Grade Books for Every Reader. Moderated panel. October 2021. Las Vegas Book Festival. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHdl5tYkD6E

Putting an Elementary Twist on the YA Summit. June 2021. YA Summit. University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Sharing the Joy of Reading: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math. October 1, 2020. Professional Development, Clark County School District

What's New in Children's Literature. March 9, 2017. Professional Development, Clark County School District

Publications
February Weekend Pick YA book curator for Dr. Bickmore's YA Blog. 2022.
http://www.drbickmoresyawednesday.com/weekend-picks-2022/weekend-picks-february-25-2022
http://www.drbickmoresyawednesday.com/weekend-picks-2022/weekend-picks-february-18-2022
http://www.drbickmoresyawednesday.com/weekend-picks-2022/weekend-picks-for-february-11-2022
http://www.drbickmoresyawednesday.com/weekend-picks-2022/weekend-pick-for-february-4-2022

Blog Post for The Current: November 2021
https://thecurrent.educatorinnovator.org/what-the-world-needs-now-is-empathy-sweet-empathy

Service & Leadership
2022-current   Served on the Nevada Reading Week Planning Committee with the Nevada
                Department of Education

2022-2023   Guest curator for Dr. Bickmore's YA Wednesday Blog (responsible for posting
                picks in February, May, August & November 2022, February, May 2023)

2020-2023   Member of the Literary Planning Committee for Las Vegas Book Festival
(planned 2020 virtual festival, 2021 in person/virtual festival, 2022 in person
festival, currently serving to produce the 2023 in-person festival)

2009-present Volunteer for the Las Vegas Book Festival
Duties included: hosting invited authors, emcee speaker tents, general operations

Professional Affiliations and Memberships
Clark County School Library Association (CCSLA)
American Association of School Libraries (AASL)