CSI Equity: Catching Issues in the Curriculum

A Grounding:

Many teachers who do not have difficulty releasing old ideas may still be resolutely attached to the old ways of teaching ... **even those of us who are experimenting** with progressive pedagogical practice **still are afraid to change**.

- bell hooks

What gets in the way for you?

Objectives

1. See and Practice: Identifying inequities in curriculum

2. Planning Ahead: Naming barriers and identifying strategies for resistance to change

**3. Application:** Tools and resources to support equity in the curriculum

Key Tenets of Equitable Curriculum

- Enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, problems, and experiences from multiple perspectives

- De-centers dominant narratives and is broader than teaching the values and stories of the powerful and privileged

- Recognizes the impact of the hidden curriculum and biases present in academic standards and curricular materials

- Rejects deficit views regarding difference

- Is reflective of and relevant to the dynamic identities of our students and human diversity

Based on the Key Tenets: How close are we to providing an equitable curriculum for our students? What is your evidence?

Systems and Structures:
Outside Forces Driving Curriculum
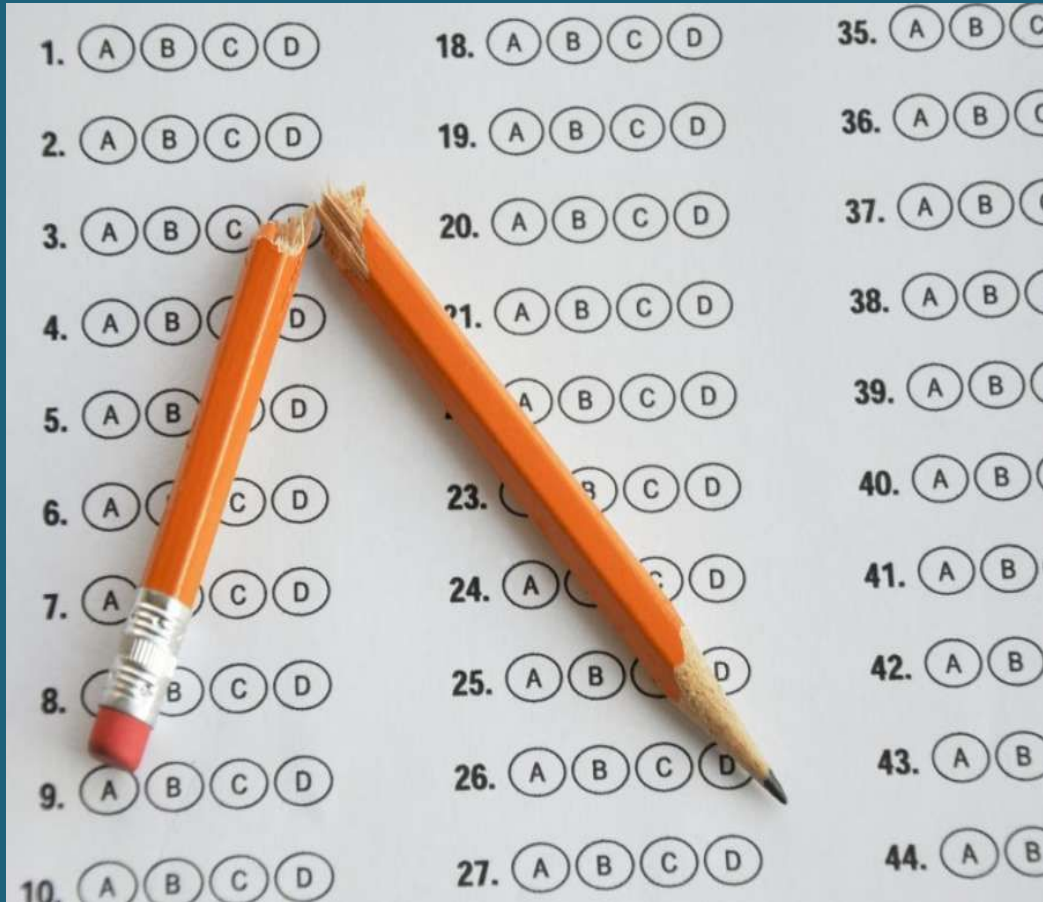
SCHOOL MISSION
What is our school committed to ensuring students know and can do when they graduate?

STANDARDS/COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS
What do we think students need to know and be able to do in post-secondary life?

Community Values and Assumptions that Reinforce Status Quo in Curriculum

TRACKING

Who has access to high status curriculum and who does not? What gatekeeping is in place and who does it dis/advantage?

"RIGOR"

What knowledge and skills are considered "rigorous" or "hard"? What knowledge and skills are considered "easy" or "soft"?

PRESUMPTIONS

What does the curriculum presume students to know, need, or have experienced? Which students are dis/advantaged by these presumptions?

Content of the Curriculum
(explicit and implicit)

NORMALIZATION: What do we present to students as "normal" or "common sense"?

IDEALIZATION: What problems do we deny, avoid, or obscure?

HEROIFICATION: Who do we teach students are responsible for change and what do we teach about them?

Pedagogy must be equity-centered, too!

Rodriguez & Swalwell, 2021

"I have a dream that one day little black boys and girls will be holding hands with little white boys and girls"

7089

Name: _____
Directions: Color

I have a Dream

I Have a Dream...
By _____

Our world

The top of the world

The Americas

Africa

Europe

Russia and Central Asia

Asia

Australia and the Pacific

The bottom of the world

Reference

Two art students are touring Paris. They each buy a one-day museum pass for $14. Each student also buys a ticket to the Eiffel Tower for $11 and a boat ticket for $3. How much do the two students spend altogether? Explain.

WHAT IDEAS ARE BEING NORMALIZED IN OUR SCIENCE TEXTS?

Draw a scientist.

3%

1900–1999   88%   9%

2000–2018   67%   25%   8%

0   20   40   60   80   100

Scientists in college biology textbooks (percent)

■ White men   ■ Women   ■ People of color

Brookshire, 2020; Terada, 2019
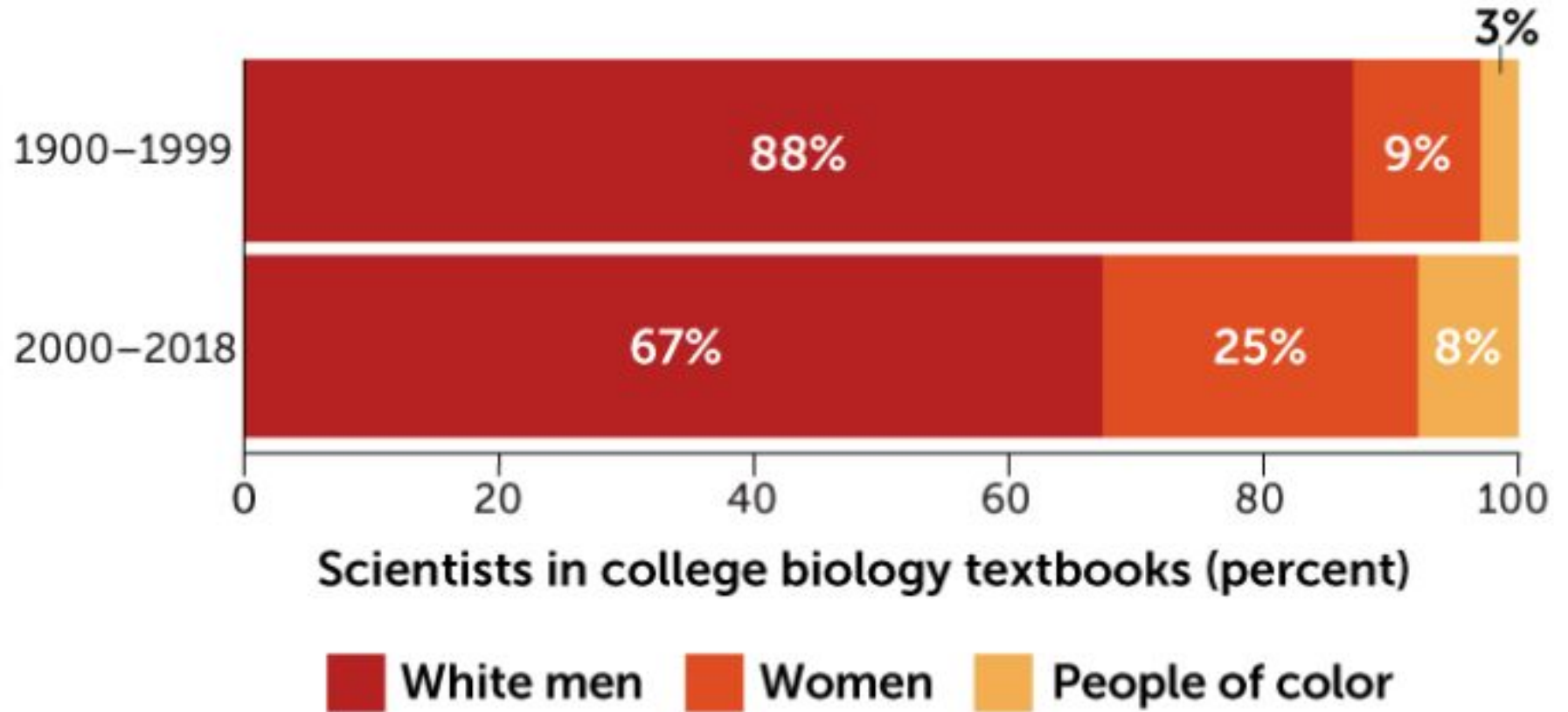
WHAT IDEAS ARE BEING NORMALIZED IN CHILDREN'S LIT?

DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018

Percentage of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds based on the 2018 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison: ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp

23 BOOKS	170 BOOKS	218 BOOKS	301 BOOKS	684 BOOKS	1,558 BOOKS
1%	**5%**	**7%**	**10%**	**27%**	**50%**
American Indians/ First Nations	Latinx	Asian Pacific Islander/Asian Pacific American	African/ African American	Animals/Other	White

The CCBC inventory includes 3,134 books published in 2018. This graphic would not have been possible without the statistics compiled by the CCBC, and the review and feedback we received from Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Horning, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner. Many thanks.

Illustration by David Huyck, in consultation with Sarah Park Dahlen
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Cooperate Children's Book Center, 2018

Would you want to take a drug that builds your muscle mass, increases your strength, reduces your body fat, improves your endurance, and makes you feel powerful? All these effects are produced by the male sex hormone called anabolic steroids. Many people especially athletes of both sexes, find the positive effects of steroids appealing. But adding more hormones to the body's normal level unbalances hormonal regulating cycles and may lead to health problems.... Would you want to take steroids if you knew that they can also result in shrunken testes, reduced sperm count, breast enlargement and impotence in males, and menstrual irregularities, breast reduction, masculine features, and sterility in females. In addition steroids can lead to acne, mood disturbances, and increased risk of disease of the heart, liver, and kidneys in both sexes (p. 196).

Bazzul & Sykes, 2011

WHAT IDEAS ARE BEING NORMALIZED IN THE ENGLISH CANON?
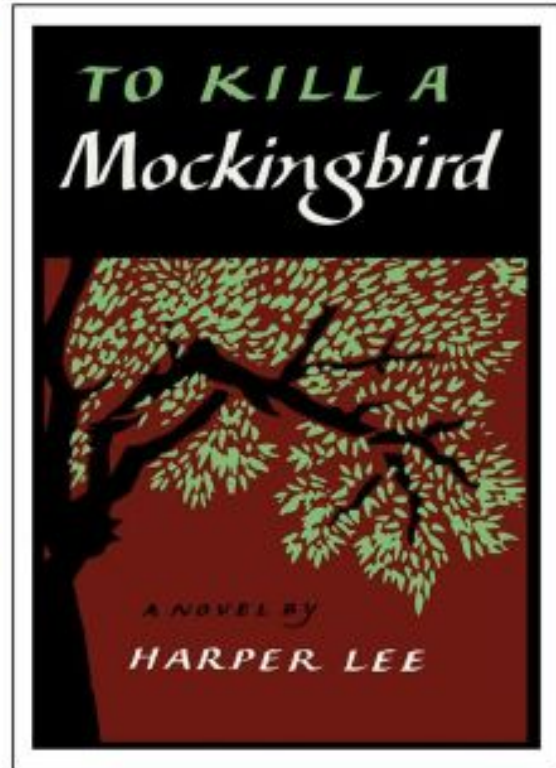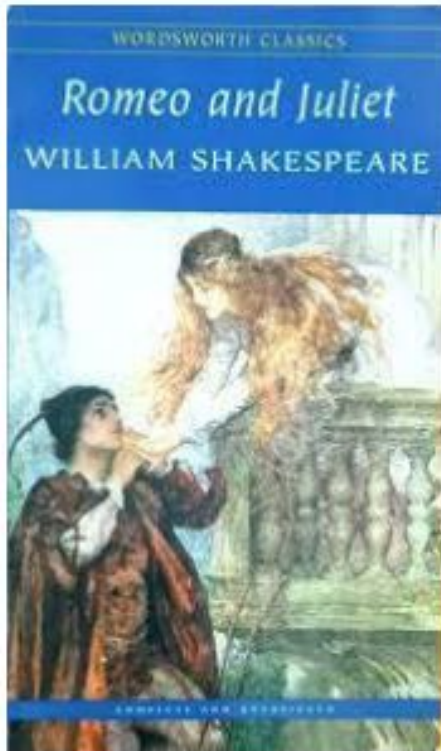
10 Most Taught (Gr. 9-12)

- ☐ 1. Romeo and Juliet (84%)
- ☐ 2. Macbeth (81%)
- ☐ 3. Huck Finn (70%)
- ☐ 4. Julius Cesar (70%)
- ☐ 5. To Kill a Mockingbird (70%)
- ☐ 6. The Scarlet Letter (62%)
- ☐ 7. Of Mice and Men (56%)
- ☐ 8. Hamlet (55%)
- ☐ 9. The Great Gatsby (54%)
- ☐ 10. Lord of the Flies (54%)

Anderson, 2019; Chang-Bacon, 2015

What realities/problems does this framing obscure?

"Ruby Bridges needed protection because she was harassed on her way to school."

"White parents organized to harass Ruby Bridges as she entered school."

Pause for Conversation

- Which content and pedagogy problem do you *already* know shows up most frequently in your curriculum? How does it show up? How might you disrupt it?

- Which content and pedagogy problem are you most eager to review your curriculum for and why?

- Which content and pedagogy problem gives you the most anxiety? Why?

Common excuses for not transforming curriculum to be more equitable

TRADITION

"We've always done it this way!"

"We are known for this project."

COLLEGE PREP

"Students need to get into good schools."

"Colleges expect us to teach this."

TESTING & STANDARDS

"Our school's reputation depends on high scores."

"Students need to score high to be competitive."

Common excuses for not transforming curriculum to be more equitable

EFFICIENCY

"I don't have time to make changes."

"I don't have time to learn something new to teach it."

CONTROL

"If I open it up, I won't know what students might do or say."

"I know what to expect with this curriculum."

INSECURITY

"I don't know this content very well."

"I'm afraid I will offend someone or say or do the wrong thing."

Common excuses for not transforming curriculum to be more equitable

INAPPROPRIATE
"My students are too young for this."
"My content area isn't related."

FEAR OF PUSHBACK
"In this political climate, I know parents will complain."
"Administrators or colleagues won't support changes."

RELIANCE ON CANON
"Other stuff is interesting, but this is the most valuable knowledge."
"I barely get through the textbook already."

What do I Say When…? Curriculum Edition

What Do I Say When…? Curriculum Edition

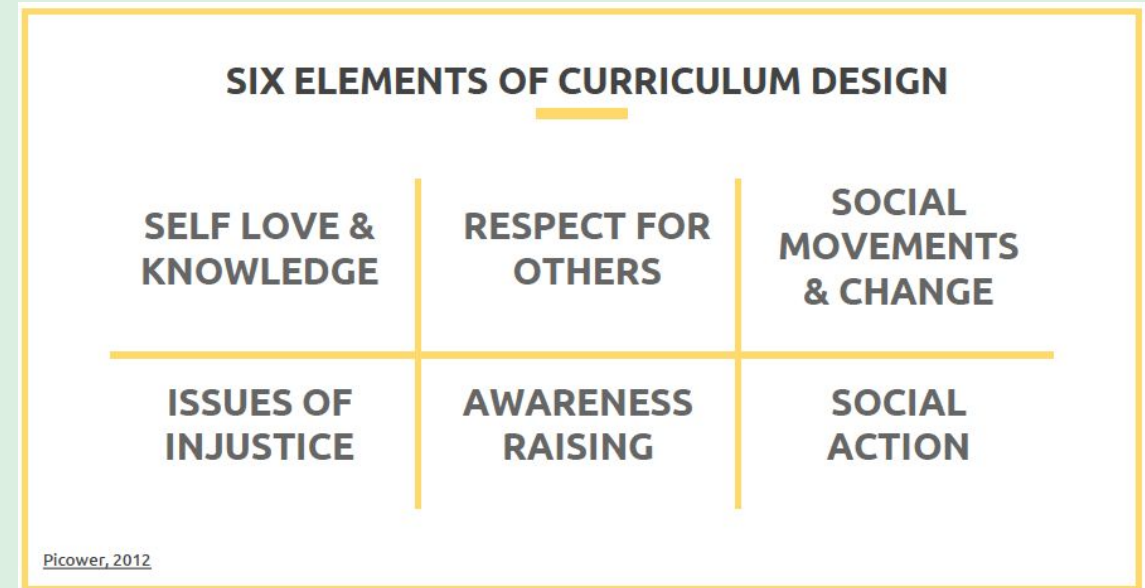| …someone says…	My response:
Tradition "We've always done it this way!" "We are known for this project."	
College Prep "Students need to get into good schools." "Colleges expect us to teach this."	
Testing & Standards "Our school's reputation depends on high scores." "Students need to score high to be competitive."	
Efficiency "I don't have time to make changes." "I don't have time to learn something new to teach it."	
Control "If I open up, I won't know what students might do or say." "I know what to expect with this curriculum."	
Insecurity "I don't know this content very well." "I'm afraid I will offend someone or say or do the wrong thing."	
Inappropriate "My students are too young for this." "My content area isn't related."	
Fear of Pushback "In this political climate, I know parents will complain." "Administrators or colleagues won't support changes."	
Reliance on canon "Other stuff is interesting, but this is the most valuable knowledge." "I barely get through the textbook already."	

Resources!

EQUITY & CURRICULUM

Curriculum Audits

1. Review curriculum individually and collectively

2. Seek student and family feedback

3. Determine what needs to be scrapped, what needs modification, and what is worthwhile

4. Make a plan for the roadblocks/excuses

SIX ELEMENTS OF CURRICULUM DESIGN

SELF LOVE & KNOWLEDGE	RESPECT FOR OTHERS	SOCIAL MOVEMENTS & CHANGE
ISSUES OF INJUSTICE	AWARENESS RAISING	SOCIAL ACTION

Picower, 2012

Unit/Lesson Planning with an Equity Lens (Template)

dueeast.org/resources-printables

Planning and Preparation

Standard/Benchmark Questions to Consider:
- What basic assumptions are present in this standard regarding *what* is important to understand and *who* is important to read or learn about?
- What implicit standards are present?
- How does this standard affirm that multiple cultures, histories, and perspectives are important for a comprehensive education? What perspectives are absent?
- How do the standards addressed by this unit or lesson need to be expanded or modified?

Learning Target
- How does this unit or lesson reflect the students who are learning the content?
- How is this unit or lesson relevant to students who are learning the content?
- How will you adjust the unit or lesson to balance the dominant narrative with traditionally absent narratives?

Vocabulary/Academic Language
- What biases, misrepresentations, or dominant narratives are present in this unit or lesson?
- How will you adjust the unit or lesson to eliminate biases and misrepresentations in the language or narrative?
- How will you bridge the language of this unit or lesson with student language?
- How are you explicitly teaching reading, writing, and speaking for this discipline in this unit or lesson?

Knowledge of Students
- How do you ensure that your students are not invisible or misrepresented in this unit or lesson?
- How does this unit or lesson validate students' lived experience as experts to contribute to their own and their classmates learning?
- How does this unit or lesson utilize student interests, perspectives, and academic strengths?
- How does this unit or lesson honor and utilize family expertise?

Evidence of Learning - Checking for Understanding
- What are the different ways this unit or lesson amplifies student voice?
- How does this unit or lesson ensure that all voices & student learning are equitably validated?
- What academic language needs to be explicitly taught so as not to be a barrier to assessment?
- What opportunities do students have for self-reflection/evaluation?

Routine/Procedures/Expectations
- How do the routines, procedures, and expectations in this unit or lesson adapt to and validate varied ways of being and learning? (ex: *idea exchange rates, task/relationship focus, clock time/cyclical time, restrained/expressive emotion, direct/indirect communication, individualism/collectivism, internal/external locus of control*)

Where can I go for help?

shorturl.at/bfpL0

"We must *want* to do the right thing by our students, even if that means we have to struggle to learn more and seek feedback from students about the impact of our curricular choices. We should want to review and revise our existing lessons to ensure we're not wreaking havoc on our students' emotional and intellectual lives. We do this so that we can begin the process of educational reparations– wherein we repair the harm that we have done to children by reconstructing curricula that have failed them."

–Stephanie Jones, Ph.D. 2020. "Ending Curriculum Violence" in *Learning for Justice* magazine

Thank you!
Good luck!

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