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PROBLEM STATEMENT AND MATRIX

CLARIFIED PROBLEM STATEMENT (PS):

I plan on pursuing an Action Research Topic on **diversifying Valley Elementary School's library collection**. The goal of this Action Research project is to curate a library collection which allows all 459 students in grades PK-5 to feel empowered by seeing their lives reflected in the library collection while also fostering empathy and understanding within the learning community by allowing students to experience others' perspectives and life situations. How will we at Valley Elementary, ensure all students feel represented in the library collection and that students are growing in empathy and in their understanding of how others' perspectives and life situations?

THE DATA COLLECTION MATRIX

Research Question(s)	Data Source 1	Data Source 2	Data Source 3
How will the quarterly promotion of diverse books affect circulation?	Quarterly circulation reports of diverse books which were promoted	Quarterly chart recording promotion activities for diverse books	Observations of students interacting with book promotions in the library
How can the school community be sure each student's life is represented in the diverse library collection?	Exit survey for students	Online survey of parents	Archival data on diverse books in the library
How will we know if students are developing more empathy by learning about others' lives and perspectives through reading stories from a diverse library collection?	Student reflection logs	Interview with staff	Literature circles with discussion questions

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Each of my research questions have three data sources. By triangulating the data, similar results should be observed in each of the three data collection points. If this is so the information is both valid and reliable. Howard and Eckhard—in their text *Action Research: A Guide for Library Media Specialists*—defines validity as referring to the “truthfulness in the data...collected (46). In other words, does the collected data answer the question. The authors define reliability as referring to the “accuracy of the data...collected” (46). The validity and reliability of data collection determines the trustworthiness of the gathered information.

For my first question, “Are diverse books effectively promoted quarterly?” the following data resources include: quarterly circulation reports of the diverse books that were promoted, a quarterly chart recording promotion activities for diverse books, and observations of students interacting with book promotions in the library. The three data sources make it possible to determine if the promotion activities for diverse books resulted in students interacting more with these books and ultimately culminated in students checking them out.

My second question, “How can the school community be sure each student’s life is represented in the diverse library collection?” will be addressed in three ways. The first will be via a student exit survey, the second will be through an online survey of parents, and the third will be a thorough analysis of archival data on diverse books in the library. Through these three data points, I seek to determine if students and parents feel that the current books in the library collection represent the students in the school.

The question, “How will we know if students are developing more empathy by learning about others’ lives and perspectives through reading stories from a diverse library collection?” will be addressed in the following ways: I will utilize student reflection logs, conduct interviews with staff, and moderate literature circles in which related discussion questions are discussed. The three data points will also be considered to determine if students are changing and becoming more empathetic from the books they read. If students are truly changing and growing in empathy and thinking more about others’ lives and others’ perspectives, then it should be evident in all three data points.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1- ARE DIVERSE BOOKS PROMOTED EFFECTIVELY QUARTERLY?
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QUARTERLY CIRCULATION REPORTS OF DIVERSE BOOKS WHICH WERE PROMOTED AND QUARTERLY CHART RECORDING PROMOTION ACTIVITIES FOR DIVERSE BOOKS

The school librarian will promote diverse books in a variety of ways each quarter. According to the school librarian, Brittany Nuse is unable to run a report for diverse circulation books. Therefore, Nuse will use the circulation reports of the specific books promoted through the promotion activities. Since different books will be promoted through each promotion activity, it will be simple to know which promotion activity led to specific book check outs. From these reports, she will tally the number of checkouts which correspond with each promotion activity. The chart below presents a sample of promotion activities which may be incorporated over the quarter.

Promotion Activities of Diverse Books	Tallies of Checkouts of Diverse Books After Promotion Activities
Shelf Talkers	
Displays	
Book talks from teachers/staff	
Book talks from librarian	
Book talks from students	

OBSERVATIONS OF STUDENTS INTERACTING WITH BOOK PROMOTIONS IN THE LIBRARY

The school librarian will conduct an observation on how students interact with the diverse books/materials that are being promoted in the library. The school librarian will passively conduct the observations during the last ten minutes of every class period during book check out time. She will have a pre-defined checklist for every class through which she tallies: how many students browse the promoted diverse books, how many students per class check out the promoted books, and how many diverse books per class have been checked out. She will be able to conduct this observation from the book check out kiosk, from which she can observe students as they interact with the books on the bookshelf promoting diverse books. She can also observe whether or not those students then check out the books. These tallies will inform the school librarian's AR research question: Are diverse books being effectively promoted quarterly? The

information gathered will help the school librarian understand if the promotion activities are attracting students to those diverse books and if those students then decide to check out the promoted books. The chart below demonstrates the recording sheet used for the observations.

Grade:	Class:	Date:
Observations		Tallies
How many students browse the featured diverse books?		
How many students per class check out promoted books?		
How many diverse books per class are checked out?		

RESEARCH QUESTION 2- HOW CAN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY BE SURE EACH STUDENT'S
LIFE IS REPRESENTED IN THE DIVERSE LIBRARY COLLECTION?

EXIT SURVEY FOR STUDENTS

All 459 students PK-5 at Valley Elementary School will have the opportunity to take this survey during media classes. It is desired that at least 75% of the student population—or n=345 which is 76.66% of student population—completes the survey. The school librarian will read the questions out loud and it should take only two minutes for students to complete the survey. Students will be told not to put their names on the top of the survey, in order to protect their identity and to ensure they answer the questions honestly. She will collect these surveys. The purpose of this exit survey is for the school librarian to determine if the students feel represented in the library collection. The sample exit survey is located on the next page.

Hi, Valley Students! I need everyone in the school to help me. I want to make sure we have books with stories similar to the students in our school. Take this 2-minute survey and help me create a library collection that represents everyone. You don't have to put your name on it. This way you can be very honest about your thoughts. Thank you!

When I look for books in the library, I look for books about characters that look, act, or think like me.



Yes



I don't care



No

When I look for books in the library, I look for characters that **do not** look, act, or think like me.



Yes



I don't care



No

When I look for books in the library, I look for books written by authors that look, act, or think like me.



Yes



I don't care



No

When I look for books in the library, I look for books written by authors that **do not** look, act, or think like me.



Yes



I don't care



No

I think there are lots of books in the library with characters **like me**.



Yes



I don't care



No

I think there are a lot of books about **other people** in the library.



Yes



I don't care



No

I would like more books about _____ in the library.

ONLINE SURVEY OF PARENTS

All Valley Elementary School families will receive an online survey through a Frederick County Public Schools Find out First email. They will be asked to take this anonymous survey in order to help the school library curate a more inclusive library collection that represents all students in the VES school community. It is desired that every student at VES be represented and accounted for, which means that families with multiple children will need to take to repeat the survey for each child. The goal is for at least 75% of the student population to have parents who responded to the survey. The desired # of responders to complete the online survey is n=345, which is 76.66% of student population. McDaniel students Jamie Thompson, Michele Greco, and Nikki Williams all took the survey. The Word documents survey is located on pages 7 and 8. The online survey maybe viewed in the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1jpG47RcckJmGjf4vur8PWR9sMB_G_69iOQNpSYfMX04/edit

Diversity in the Library Collection Survey

Greetings from Valley Elementary School's Library! At Valley Elementary School, our desire is to create a library collection through which all students can see themselves in the library materials. We believe that when students see themselves reflected in literature, they feel heard and are empowered. We also believe that students grow as global citizens by reading about others' lives and perspectives. The goal of this survey is to understand if your child feels represented in the school library collection. Students could feel represented in the library collection if they find library materials with authors, characters, or themes with similar racial, cultural, religions, abilities or disabilities, family and life situations, physical or health conditions, or socio-economic backgrounds as your child. The term "library materials" refers to books, e-books, audio books, CDs, or databases in our library collection. We understand your time is valuable. This survey should take no longer than ten minutes to finish. The results from this survey will inform our book orders for the library. Please take a survey for each of the children you have at VES, that way each child is represented in the collection and in the forming collection. Thank you for helping Valley Elementary create a library that reflects the lives of all our learners.

Questions	Possible Answers	Responses
1. My child is in ____ grade. (Cognitive)	a. pk b. kindergarten c. 1 st d. 2 nd e. 3 rd f. 4 th g. 5 th	
2. My child checks out library materials from Valley Elementary School's library. (Cognitive)	a. often (every week) b. sometimes (twice a month) c. seldom (once a month) d. rarely (quarterly) e. never f. I don't know.	
3. On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being the least and 4 being the most, rate how your child feels about checking out library materials from the library. (Affective)	1- My child is never interested in checking out library materials. 2- My child is sometimes interested in checking out library materials. 3- My child is often interested in checking out library materials 4- My child is eager to check out library materials.	
4. Over the past year, my child or I have gone to the Valley Elementary School Library Media Center homepage online and accessed either LS2 Kids or LS2 PAC to find library materials by specific authors similar to my child or about specific themes that relate to my child. (Cognitive)	a. Yes, and we found the authors or themes searched for. b. Yes, and we did not find the authors or themes searched for. c. Yes, but we are disappointed in the resources found. d. No, because we were unaware of this service. e. No, because we are uninterested in using this service. f. Does not apply.	

Questions	Possible Answers	Responses
5. Over the past year, has your child checked out books by <u>authors</u> similar to your child? (Cognitive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No, because there are not authors in the library with backgrounds similar to my child. c. No, because my child is more interested in other library materials. d. I don't know. e. Does not apply. 	
6. Over the past year, has your child checked out library materials portraying <u>characters</u> similar to your child? (Cognitive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No, because my child cannot find library materials with characters similar to my child. c. No, because my child is more interested in other library materials. d. I don't know. e. Does not apply. 	
7. Over the past year, has your child checked out library materials with <u>themes</u> similar to your child's experiences? (Cognitive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No, because my child cannot find library materials with backgrounds similar to my child. c. No, because my child is more interested in other library materials. d. I don't know. e. Does not apply. 	
8. How well does Valley Elementary School's Library provide library materials that reflects your child's life? (Attitudinal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. My child is represented in the library collection in all areas of his/her life. b. My child is represented in the library collection in some areas of his/her life. c. My child is not represented in the library collection at all. d. I do not know if my child is represented in the library collection. 	
9. Choose the diversity topic(s) you wish to see more of in Valley Elementary School's library? (Attitudinal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. racial b. cultural c. religious d. LGBTQIA+ e. gender f. disability/health conditions g. socioeconomic h. life situations i. family situations j. other k. none 	
11. If you chose a diversity topic in the question above, please be more specific about the topic you desire to see in our library collection. (Attitudinal)	Short answer	
12. Do you have any other questions or comments about adding diversity to the library collection? (Cognitive, Attitudinal, and/or Affective)	Please leave a comment below	

ARCHIVAL DATA ON DIVERSE BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY

For my archival data, I will use the diversity report from school librarian Brittany Nuse's Follet Titlewave account to address the research question: How can the school community be sure each student's life is represented in the diverse library collection? The Follet Titlewave report defines diverse books as books which "support an environment that values and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion" and includes both aggregated and dis-aggregated data. The report's aggregated data shows that Valley Elementary School's media center houses 3,093 diverse books which makes up 27% of the total collection. The report provides dis-aggregated data by dividing these diverse books into 28 sub-groups. In each sub-group, the report includes the average age of the book and the number of fiction, nonfiction, other, and the items in the sub-group. The 28 sub-groups include: African American, Asian American, Cultural Studies, Discrimination & Prejudice, Diverse Families, First Nations People of Canada and the United States, Folklore, Gender Studies, Holidays & Traditions, Homelessness, Human Rights & Civil Rights, Immigrants & Refugees, Jewish American, Latinx/Hispanic Americans, Learning Disabilities, LGBTQIA+, Mental Health, Muslim American, Mythology, People & Places, Physical Disabilities & Special Needs, Political Science, Poverty, Racial Discrimination, Religion, Rural, Urban, and Women's Studies.

The school librarian and I will use this report to see what books are in the library in each of these sub-groups and to see which sub-groups need to be weeded and replaced with more current materials. This report is vital in creating a known baseline of where the collection currently stands and how we need to cultivate the collection. We can use both the survey and this report to see if there are any diverse groups which are not currently represented in the collection and which should receive priority attention when looking for new books to order. We can also look at the average age of publication in each sub-group to see if any of the messaging is too antiquated and does not reflect current information.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3- HOW WILL WE KNOW IF STUDENTS ARE DEVELOPING MORE EMPATHY BY LEARNING ABOUT OTHERS' LIVES AND PERSPECTIVES THROUGH READING STORIES FROM A DIVERSE LIBRARY COLLECTION?

STUDENT REFLECTION LOGS

During media classes, before book check-out time, the school librarian will promote books with diverse themes, characters, or authors. The school librarian will share various book promotional activities throughout the quarter. Specific books will have accompanying reflection logs.

Students will be informed that the school librarian would like to know how they think and feel about specific books. These reflection logs will be anonymous so students will feel free to respond honestly about the book. In the chart below are sample questions for students to answer in their reflection logs.

Questions for Student Reflection Logs
What did you think about this book?
Which character are you most like in the book?
Which character are you different from in the book?
Do any of the characters remind you of anyone you know?
What was surprising or uncomfortable in the book?
Did your thoughts and feelings change about people or issues after reading this book? If so, how did your thoughts or feelings change?

INTERVIEW WITH STAFF

The school librarian will interview seven teachers— one classroom teacher from each grade level including PK and K— in order to answer the research question: How will we know if students are developing more empathy by learning about others' lives and perspectives through reading stories from a diverse library collection? The interview questions will be sent by email to every classroom teacher. The classroom teachers will be asked to discuss these questions with their grade level team members and to have one grade level representative sign up for a fifteen-minute interview with the school librarian in the library during either their planning period, lunch, or before or after school. The school librarian will have an interview form printed for each teacher interviewed and will record their answers. The school librarian will look at the data collected to determine whether or not students are becoming more empathetic by learning about others' lives and perspectives from reading diverse stories. The chart on the next page displays the interview questions for staff.

Interview Questions for Staff

1. What types of books do your students like to check out from the library? (Attitudinal)
2. Have you noticed your students reading books with diverse themes or written by diverse authors? (Cognitive)
3. Are you using library resources in the classroom which address diversity and discuss others' lives and perspectives? (Cognitive)
4. How do your students react when they encounter characters, authors, themes or topics that are different from themselves or experiences? (Affective)
5. Do you notice changes in your students' interactions with others after they read books about others' lives and perspectives? (Affective)
6. Do you notice changes in your students' opinions after they read books about others' lives and perspectives? (Attitudinal)
7. Do you notice students growing in empathy towards others after reading books about others' lives and perspectives? (Affective)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR LITERATURE CIRCLES

There are a variety of options from which the school librarian could choose regarding using literature circles to foster empathy development through a diverse library collection. The school librarian could moderate literature circles during her enrichment blocks, her planning period, her book check in time, or her lunch time. The featured diverse book and the opportunity to be part of the literature circles will be promoted during media classes. Students would sign up during media time if they are interested. If more than ten students per grade level are interested in being part of the literature circle, the participants names will be pulled out of a hat and the remaining names will be added to a list to participate in future literature circles. Due to schedule constraints, only two grades could be featured at a time. Since the literature group is open to all students regardless of test scores, all students will be allowed to participate in this enriching experience at some point of the year if he or she desires.

For students in grades K-2, the school librarian will read a picture book and lead the discussion with focused discussion questions. Students could draw pictures sharing how they felt while hearing the story, their reactions to the story, or the most impactful part of the story. The school librarian will collect their pictures as evidence of the change in student thinking. The school librarian will record the answers to the questions below on a group reflection chart on the promethean board.

For grades K-3, the school librarian will provide the participating students with the questions for the first chapter of the selected book on the first day the group meets. The school

librarian will provide guidelines for how the discussion group will run. She will provide subsequent discussion questions for the remaining chapters on the day they meet. Students are expected to read the chapters and to answer the questions before coming to the meeting. The school librarian will obtain extra copies of the books through the county's interlibrary loan system. The school librarian can collect data by collecting student reflection logs and by making notes of the circle discussions in a logbook.

The chart below displays the discussion questions for literature circles:

Discussion Questions for Literature Circles	
Grades K-2	Grades 3-5
What do you think this story is about?	What backgrounds or lifestyles are presented in this chapter?
How do you feel listening to this story?	What stereotypes did the characters face in this chapter?
How are the characters in this story different from you and similar to you?	What are the characters' problems in the chapter?
How have your thoughts changed about people who are different than you?	Are your thoughts changing about people who are different than you?
Why is it important to read about people who have different lives than yours?	

CONCLUSION

The aim of this Action Research project is to diversify Valley Elementary School's library collection. Three research questions were devised to determine how to find the answers needed to diversify the library collection. These three research questions required that there be specific data collection tools created in order to find the answers to these questions:

- Are diverse books effectively promoted quarterly?
- How can the school community be sure each student's life is represented in the diverse library collection?
- How will we know if students are developing more empathy by learning about others' lives and perspectives through reading stories from a diverse library collection?

In order to gain information from three different data sources for each research question, and to triangulate the data to ensure validity and reliability, nine data collection tools were

created. After employing these data collection tools, the school librarian will gain an understanding whether or not diverse books are being promoted effectively in the library, how students are currently represented in the collection, and whether or not diverse books are fostering empathy in the school community. After the data is collected the school librarian will have a better understanding of how to diversify Valley Elementary School's library collection.

WORKS CITED

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