

Where Are the Latinxs?: Diversity in Caldecott Winner and Honor Books

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ABSTRACT: This content analysis of Caldecott books from 1938 to 2015 focused on the ethnicities of the books' illustrators and authors, as well as the ethnicity of the human main characters. Findings revealed that White authors and illustrators have created approximately 87% of the Caldecott books, and the large majority of main characters have been White. Taking a more nuanced look at the Latinx books, we found that most of the Latinx authors and illustrators did not create stories about their own cultures while many of the Latinx main characters were created by authors and illustrators from other cultures.

Keywords: Caldecott Award, content analysis, Latinx representation, children's literature

Where Are the Latinxs?: Diversity in Caldecott Winner and Honor Books

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. Sims Bishop (1990) offers a metaphor that helps us think about the types of books we need to share with children. She argues that children need mirrors in which they see themselves, windows through which they see the lives of others, and sliding glass doors through which they can traverse between groups and worlds and be changed by the experience. In this article we highlight the importance of literature serving as a mirror in which children see their lives and experiences reflected. Willett (1995) has noted that “[w]hen children cannot identify with a book or see their lives celebrated through stories, it may have a negative impact on their self-image. The message they get is that their lives and their stories are not important” (p. 176).

In this article we present the results of an investigation that looked at the ethnicities of authors, illustrators, and human main characters of Caldecott winner and honor books since the award was first given in 1938 until the present day. We then take a closer look at the representation of Latinx in these books.

Students in Today’s Classrooms

Our contemporary classrooms reflect a diverse student population. According to the 2014 National Center for Educational Statistics (Hussar & Bailey, 2014), 51% of students in the United States are White. Of the remaining 49%, 16% are Black, 24% are Latinx, 5% are Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% are American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 3% are two or more races. Dramatic shifts are projected between now and 2022. The Center predicts a decrease of 6% for students who are White, a 2% increase for Black students, a 20% increase for Asian/Pacific Islander students, a decrease of 5% for American Indian/Alaskan natives, and an increase of 44% for students who are of two or more races. Of particular note is the 33% projected increase of Latinx students in the United States. Looking at these statistics, it becomes increasingly necessary to consider the representation of diverse ethnicities in the books we share with children so that they see themselves and their worlds reflected.

Caldecott Books: Critical Sites of Investigation

Caldecott winners and honor books are often recommended for inclusion in school settings because it is understood that they have been reviewed by committees and honored as quality pieces of children’s literature. In addition, researchers confirm that these books are prevalent in educational settings (Brown, 2001; Chamberlain & Leal, 1999; Moen, 1990; Norem, 1991). Even with limited budgets for school and classroom libraries, it is likely that Caldecott award-winning books will be purchased. Hence these books can have a tremendous influence on children’s experiences with literature. In light of this, we believe that Caldecott books are an important corpus for close examination.

The Randolph Caldecott Medal is awarded annually to the "most distinguished American picture book for children" by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). The award was established in 1937, when the ALSC Board of Directors was charged with identifying and honoring the most distinguished American children’s picture books annually. They decided an award was needed to honor the illustrators of outstanding books. According to the original ALA definition, the Caldecott Medal

"shall be awarded to the artist of the most distinguished American Picture Book for Children published in the United States during the preceding year. The award shall go to the artist, who must be a citizen or resident of the United States, whether or not he be the author of the text" (American Library Association, para. 3).

Research focused on Caldecott winner and honor books is important given the attention these books receive in classrooms, libraries, and homes. Teachers have an important responsibility to select books for use in their classrooms. In making these decisions, they must consider literary quality, reader interest and developmental level, as well as the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the children they teach. As educators, it is their responsibility to choose the best books they can find. Given that many teachers choose to use books bearing Caldecott medals, it is important to understand what these books depict and reflect about society.

Research Questions

Our investigation was undertaken to develop a clearer understanding of the diversity in Caldecott Medal books since the inception of the award. The broader study focused on an array of diversity representations (e.g., ethnicity, gender, age, disability) in all Caldecott books. (We use the term 'Caldecott books' to include both winner and honor books.) In this article we present a portion of the findings. In particular, we address the following questions: (1) What are the ethnic backgrounds of the illustrators and authors of Caldecott books, and have there been changes across time? (2) What are the ethnicities of the main characters in Caldecott books, and have these representations changed across time?

Methodology

This study is a descriptive content analysis of Caldecott winner and honor books from 1938-2015. Beach et al. (2009) state that, "content analysis is a flexible research method for analyzing texts and describing and interpreting the written artifacts of a society" (p. 129), noting that this approach adds "a particular theoretical perspective" to a quantitative content analysis (p. 130).

Coding System

We compiled a database of the 327 Caldecott winner and honor books. Utilizing systematic content analysis procedures as described by Cohen et al. (2007), an *a priori* coding system was developed to analyze the books (Weber, 1990). The coding system we used was based on the system developed by Koss (2015), and was modified to reflect the parameters of the Caldecott award.

Each book was coded for both illustrator and author ethnicity. Ethnicity was coded as White, Black, Asian, Latinx, or Native American. Definitions for the ethnicity categories were adapted from Norton's *Multicultural Children's Literature: Through the Eyes of Many Children* (2013). In order to verify the ethnicity of authors and illustrators, we sought biographical information about each from a variety of sources. If no specific identifying information was found, the ethnicity of the illustrator or author was coded as Indeterminate.

In coding for the ethnicity of characters, we coded only for main characters that were human; non-human characters were typically not portrayed as ethnically based. We used the

same codes that were used for illustrators and authors—White, Black, Asian, Latinx, and Native American, and we added Biracial for characters. If we were unable to identify the ethnicity of a main character, we coded that character’s ethnicity as Indeterminate.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, we began by initially reading and coding 65 titles together. Using our a priori system, we read, discussed and coded each of the books, clarifying and refining definitions as needed. After working together, we began to work individually in the same location, stopping to ask clarifying questions of one another to establish inter-rater reliability. Upon completion of this initial coding process, we coded the remaining books independently. As part of our analysis, we calculated frequencies and percentages and constructed tables and graphs that we used to identify patterns across decades. For the purpose of the analysis, we grouped Caldecott books from the two years in the 1930s (1938-1939) with the 1940s. This study did not examine the cultural authenticity of main character representations, including stereotypes.

Findings Across the Caldecott Corpus

We first present our findings related to the ethnic backgrounds of illustrators and authors of Caldecott books, followed by our findings related to main characters. We then take a close look at the books written and/or illustrated by Latinxs, as well as the books featuring a Latinx main character.

Illustrators of Caldecott Books

Across the decades, White illustrators have dominated the Caldecott landscape, with 87.3% of all Caldecott winners having been illustrated by Whites. Blacks have illustrated 7.4% of the books, Latinxs 1.5%, Asians 3.3 %, and Native Americans 0.3%. We were unable to determine the ethnicity of one illustrator (See Table 1).

Table 1

Author and Illustrator Ethnicity Represented According to Total Number of Books

	Author	Illustrator
	Number (percentage)	Number (percentage)
White	299 (87.9)	295 (87.3)
Black	17 (5.00)	25 (7.4)
Asian	11 (3.2)	11 (3.3)
Latino	5 (1.5)	5 (1.5)
Native American	0 (0)	1 (0.3)
Indeterminate	8 (2.4)	1 (0.3)

White. Overall, 158 White illustrators have earned Caldecott recognition for 283 books. (Some illustrators have won more than once.) Across the decades, we found that only in the 1990s did representation of Whites fall below 80% (see Table 2). In all other decades, the percentage of White illustrators ranged between 82 to 94%. In the current decade, illustrators of White heritage stand at 81.5%.

Table 2

Illustrators Represented by Decade								
	1938- 1949	1950- 1959	1960- 1969	1970- 1979	1980- 1989	1990- 1999	2000- 2009	2010- 2015
	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)
White	57 (92.0)	47 (94.0)	30 (93.8)	34 (82.9)	35 (87.5)	32 (74.4)	36 (83.7)	22 (81.4)
Black	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (17.1)	4 (10.0)	7 (16.2)	7 (16.2)	2 (7.4)
Asian	1 (1.6)	2 (4.0)	2 (6.3)	0 (0)	1 (2.5)	3 (7.0)	0 (0)	2 (7.4)
Latino	2 (3.2)	1 (2.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (2.3)	0 (0)	1 (3.7)
Native American	1 (1.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Indetermin	1 (1.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Black. The first appearance of Black Caldecott illustrators did not occur until the fourth decade of the award (1970s). Of the 39 Caldecott books in that decade, 17% were illustrated by Blacks. This percentage dropped to 10% in the 1980s, then rose to 16.2% in each of the next two decades (see Table 2). In the current decade (2010-2015), this percentage dropped drastically to 7.4% with only two books illustrated by Blacks. These were *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave* (Hill, 2010) illustrated by Bryan Collier and *The Lion and the Mouse* (2010) by Jerry Pinkney. Across the decades, a total of 25 books have been illustrated by twelve different Black illustrators.

Latinx. During the first two decades of the Caldecott award, Latinx illustrators are represented, albeit in small numbers (see Table 2). Then, from the decades of the 1960s to the 1990s, no Latinx illustrators earned a Caldecott. In the 1990s, one Latino illustrator, David Diaz, was recognized with a Caldecott medal. During the first decade of this century (2000-2009), no Latinx illustrators were recognized by Caldecott award committees. In this most recent decade, *Viva Frida* (2015), written and illustrated by Yuyi Morales, is the only book by a Latina bearing a Caldecott medal. Overall, five Caldecott books have been illustrated by four different Latinx artists (David Diaz, Antonio Frasconi, Berta Hader, and Yuyi Morales).

Asian. In the first three decades, a total of five books illustrated by Asians received Caldecott recognition (see Table 2). There was no Asian illustrator representation in the 1970s. Recognition was minimal in the 1980s and 1990s, and there was no Asian representation in the first decade of this century. Since 2010, Dan Santat and Jillian Tamaki are the only two Asian illustrators whose books have been awarded Caldecott medals. Both were recognized in 2015. Overall, 11 Caldecott books have been illustrated by six different Asian artists (Plato Chan, Dan Santat, Allen Say, Jillian Tamaki, Taro Yashima, and Ed Young).

Native American. There has been only one Native American illustrator whose work has been honored with Caldecott recognition. This artist was Velino Herrera who illustrated *In My Mother's House* (1941), designated an honor book in 1942.

Authors of Caldecott Books

While the Caldecott award recognizes the work of illustrators, it is also important to acknowledge the contributions of authors. Across the decades, White authors have written a majority of the books bearing Caldecott medals. Of the 327 Caldecott books, 87.9% were written by White authors, 5.0% by Blacks, 1.5% by Latinxs, and 3.2% by Asians. None of the books were written by Native Americans (see Table 1). We were unable to determine the author ethnicity of eight books (2.3%). Of these eight, three were nursery rhyme collections.

White. Books written by White authors have dominated the Caldecott awards. There have been 288 books written by 196 different White authors that have received Caldecott recognition. From 1938 through the 1980s, the percentage of White authors ranged between 88 and 90% (see Table 3). In the 1990s, the percentage of White authors dropped somewhat to 77.3%, only to return to previous levels in the 2000s. Even though the 1990s reflected a rise in more diverse voices represented in Caldecott authorship, White authors continued their dominance in the Caldecott scene.

Table 3

Authors Represented by Decade								
	1938- 1949	1950- 1959	1960- 1969	1970- 1979	1980- 1989	1990- 1999	2000- 2009	2010- 2015
	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)
White	56 (90.3)	45 (90.0)	29 (87.9)	35 (87.5)	36 (90.0)	34 (77.3)	39 (88.6)	23 (85.2)
Black	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (7.5)	4 (10.0)	5 (11.4)	4 (9.1)	1 (3.7)
Asian	1 (1.6)	2 (4.0)	1 (3.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (9.1)	1 (2.3)	2 (7.4)
Latino	4 (6.5)	1 (2.0)	1 (3.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (3.7)
Native American	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Indeterm	1 (1.6)	2 (4.0)	2 (6.1)	2 (5.0)	0 (0)	2 (4.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Black. Relatively few books written by Black authors have earned Caldecott recognition. A total of 17 Caldecott books have been written by 13 different Black authors. No books by Black authors earned Caldecott recognition in the first three decades of the award (see Table 3). The 1970s was the first decade when books by Black authors received recognition of this award. After that, the percentage of Black representation climbed slightly and maintained at an average of approximately 10% until 2009. In the current decade, the percentage dropped to 3.7%, with only one Black author's book being recognized.

Latinx. In the first three decades of the award, Latinx authors were represented, but only minimally. From the 1970s until the current decade, there was no Latinx authorial representation for Caldecott books (see Table 3). In the current decade, one Latinx author, Yuyi Morales, has

garnered a Caldecott award. Overall, five Caldecott books have been written by four different Latinx authors (Aurora Labastida, Antonio Frasconi, Berta Hader, Yuyi Morales).

Asian. Asian author representation largely paralleled Latinx representation. Ten books written by seven different Asians have received Caldecott recognition. In the first three decades of the award only one or two books each decade were written by an author of Asian heritage (see Table 3). There was no Asian authorial representation in the 1970s and 1980s. The 1990s saw a slight increase with the inclusion of four titles written by Asians. There were no Caldecott books written by Asians from 2000 to 2009, and only two in the current decade (Dan Santat and Mariko Tamaki).

Native American. No book by a Native American author has been awarded a Caldecott.

Main Characters

In examining the ethnic representation of main characters, our analysis included only books with main characters that were human. We did not include books with only animal main characters. Overall, 191 Caldecott books had one or more human main characters for a total of 241 human main characters. Of these, 71.8% were White (see Table 4). Black main characters accounted for 11.2%, Asian 8.7%, Latinx 3.3%, Native American 2.9%, biracial 0.4%, and 3 books with indeterminate main characters at 1.7%. The one book with a biracial main character was *The Hello, Goodbye Window* (2005) illustrated by Chris Raschka and written by Norton Juster. Of the 173 White main characters (in 130 books), 55 were North American (USA and Canada), 66 were indeterminate, and the remaining 52 were European. Of the 27 Black main characters (in 22 books), 18 were North American (USA), while the others were from Africa, the West Indies, or were indeterminate. Of the 21 Asian main characters (in 14 books), *Umbrella* (1958) by Taro Yashima, recipient of the Caldecott honor in 1959, was the only North American (USA) main character. The remaining main Asian characters were primarily Chinese or Japanese. Of the eight Latinx main characters (in six books), four were North American (USA) and four were Mexican.

Table 4

Main Character Ethnicity Represented According to Total Number of Books

	<u>Main Character</u> Number (percentage)
White	173 (71.8)
Black	27 (11.2)
Asian	21 (8.7)
Latino	8 (3.3)
Native American	7 (2.9)
Biracial	1 (0.4)
Indeterminate	4 (1.7)

White. Across the eight decades of the Caldecott, the large majority of main characters have been White. However, we found three decades in which the relative percentage of White main characters dipped. The first occurrence was in 1960-1969 when only 68% were White, followed in 1970-1979 by 63.3% (see Table 5). While the percentage of White main characters rose to 77.1% in the 1980s, it dropped once again in the 1990s to 54%. However, in the current century, White main characters in Caldecott books rose to 75.9% from 2000-2009 and to 90.5% from 2010-2015.

Table 5

Main Characters Represented by Decade								
	1938- 1949	1950- 1959	1960- 1969	1970- 1979	1980- 1989	1990- 1999	2000- 2009	2010- 2015
	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)
White	27 (77.1)	24 (80.0)	17 (68.0)	19 (63.3)	27 (77.1)	18 (50.0)	22 (75.9)	19 (90.5)
Black	0 (0)	1 (3.3)	1 (4.0)	3 (10.0)	6 (17.1)	10 (27.8)	5 (17.2)	1 (4.8)
Asian	3 (8.6)	2 (6.7)	6 (24.0)	3 (10.0)	1 (2.9)	6 (16.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Latino	4 (11.4)	2 (6.7)	1 (4.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4.8)
Native American	1 (2.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (16.7)	1 (2.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Biracial	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (3.4)	0 (0)
Indetermin	0 (0)	1 (3.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (5.6)	1 (3.4)	0 (0)
Total	35	30	25	30	35	36	29	21

Black. There have been dramatic changes in the representation of Black main characters across the decades. In the first decade of the award (1938-1949), there were no Black main characters (see Table 5). In the next decade, there was one Black main character. This character appeared in *Henry-Fisherman* (1949) by Marcia Brown, a 1950 Caldecott honor book. Again, in the 1960s, there was one Black main character, Peter, who appeared in Ezra Jack Keats's *The Snowy Day* (1962). This was the first book with a Black main character to win the Caldecott medal. In the 1970s the percentage of Black main characters increased to 10%. This rise in Black main characters continued in the 1980s (17.1%) and the 1990s (27.8%). From the 1990s to the first decade of this century, we found a steep decline in the appearance of Black main characters in Caldecott books (17.2%). In the current decade, the decline has continued with only one Black main character (4.8%) in a Caldecott book, the 2011 honor book, *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave* (Hill, 2010).

Latinx. Since the inception of the Caldecott, there have been only seven Latinx main characters out of six books winning the award. In the first decade of the Caldecott, 11.4% of main characters were Latinxs (see Table 5). This percentage significantly decreased in the following two decades, 6.7% and 4.0% respectively. In the 1970s, there were no Latinx main characters. This dearth continued for the next four decades until 2015 when Yuyi Morales's *Viva Frida* (2015) was recognized as a Caldecott honor book. This is the only Caldecott book both illustrated and written by a Latina. Italian American, Leo Politi, wrote and illustrated three of the books with Latinx main characters.

Asian. The representation of Asian main characters has been something of a seesaw. In the first decade, 8.6% were Asian (see Table 5). The following decade (1950-1959), Asian main characters dropped to 6.7%, and in the decade of the 1960s, they rose to 24%, only to drop again in the 1970s. In the 1980s, the drop continued with inclusion of an Asian main character in only one book, *The Boy of the Three-Year Nap* (1988) by Allen Say, which was honored in 1989. The 1990s saw a slight rise to 16.7%, while in the 2000s (2000-2009 and 2010-2015) there were no Asian main characters. Five of the 12 Caldecott books with Asian main characters were written and illustrated by Asians. Three of these five were written by Taro Yashima. The others included *The Emperor and the Kite* (1967), illustrated by an Asian illustrator, Ed Young, and *Hush! A Thai Lullaby* (1996), written by an Asian author, Minfong Ho.

Native American. In the first decade of the Caldecott award, one main character was Native American (see Table 5). This character appeared in an honor book, *The Mighty Hunter* (1943) written and illustrated by Berta and Elmer Hader. There were no other Native American main characters until the 1970s when 16.7% were Native American. All of the Native American main characters in this decade appeared in folktales. Since then, one other Native American main character appeared in a Caldecott book, *Where the Buffaloes Begin* (1981), a folktale retold by Olaf Baker and illustrated by Stephen Gammell. None of the titles featuring Native American main characters were written or illustrated by Native Americans.

Looking Closer at Latinx Representation

As previously noted, the percentage of Latinx students in our schools has increased dramatically in recent years, and that increase is projected to continue. In light of these changes, we wanted to look more closely at the books written and illustrated by Latinxs and the books that feature Latinx main characters. Our reason for this is because Latinx authors and illustrators are best positioned to create culturally specific picture books that represent the lived experiences of Latinx children.

Latinx Illustrators and Authors

In looking closely at the books written and illustrated by Latinxs, we wanted to know the types of books they created. Did they include or depict Latinx main characters? We discovered that the majority of books written and illustrated by Latinxs do not feature Latinx main characters. From 1938 to 2015, four Caldecott books have been written and illustrated by four different Latinx artists: *The Mighty Hunter* (1943) and *The Big Snow* (1948), written and illustrated by Berta Hader, a Mexican born of American parents who became an American citizen and Elmer Hader, who is White; *The House That Jack Built/La Maison Que Jacques a Batie: A Picture Book in Two Languages* (1958), written and illustrated by Antonio Frasconi, a Uruguayan-American; and *Viva Frida* (2014), written and illustrated by Yuyi Morales. There were two books either written by or illustrated by a Latinx. *Nine Days to Christmas: A Story of Mexico* (1959) was co-written by Aurora Labastida, a Latina, and Marie Hall Ets, who is White, and *Smoky Night* (1994) was illustrated David Diaz. Of these five books, only *Nine Days to Christmas: A Story of Mexico* and *Viva Frida* feature Latinx characters, and both of these books are set in Mexico.

Main Characters

Most of the books noted above that were written and illustrated by Latinx do not feature Latinx characters. In *The Mighty Hunter* (1943), written and illustrated by Berta and Elmer Hader, the main character, Little Brave Heart, is a stereotypical representation of a Native American child. *The House That Jack Built/La Maison Que Jacques a Batie: A Picture Book in Two Languages*, (1958), written and illustrated by Antonio Frasconi, is the traditional cumulative rhyme and includes bilingual text (in English and French). The main character in this Caldecott book is a White farmer. *Smoky Night* (1994), illustrated by David Diaz, features a main character of indeterminate ethnicity. *The Big Snow* (1948), written and illustrated by Berta and Elmer Hader, did not include human main characters.

Since 1938, there have only been seven Latinx main characters in six different books. Four of these books were written and illustrated by Whites. *The Forest Pool* (1938) written and illustrated by Laura Adams Armer, features the fictional adventures of two Mexican children and their search for an iguana in the jungle. Little is known about Armer's experience in Mexico or with Latinx. *Pedro: The Angel of Olvera Street* (1946), *Juanita* (1948), and *Song of the Swallows* (1949) were all written and illustrated by Leo Politi, an Italian who became an American citizen. His art was influenced by time spent in Central America and his interest in the Mayan peoples. The illustrations in his books appear to reflect the Mexican costuming and performances of merchants on Olvera Street in Los Angeles in the 1940s, an area that catered to tourists interested in Mexican folk art.

Of the books featuring Latinx main characters, only *Nine Days to Christmas: A Story of Mexico* and *Viva Frida* were written by Latinxs. *Nine Days to Christmas: A Story of Mexico* is a fictional story of a young Mexican girl who anticipates her first posada and her first Christmas piñata. While this Caldecott book was written by a Latina, it was illustrated by a non-Latina who spent only limited time in Mexico. This may have resulted in inauthentic illustrations. *Viva Frida* was written and illustrated by Yuyi Morales who was born in Mexico. The book is a brief biography of the famous Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo, who lived in Mexico in the first half of the twentieth century. While these two books may reflect authentic experiences of their characters, it is noteworthy that both books are set in earlier eras. Today's young readers may not be familiar with these time periods and are not likely to see themselves reflected in them.

Discussion

We expect content analyses to yield information about what is found in the body of text(s). Yet our investigation is most insightful in terms of its revelations about what is *not* found in Caldecott books and who are *not* writing or illustrating these books. We began this article by discussing Sims Bishop's metaphor of mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. It is evident that children from diverse backgrounds are not likely to see themselves reflected in Caldecott books.

While there is value in books that serve as windows and sliding glass doors, we cannot underestimate the importance of children seeing their worlds (mirrors) reflected in the pages of a book. When the characters in a book are ones with which children can readily identify, then they are more likely to be pulled into the story world and to feel validated as they move through that story world. Further, as children read books created by authors and illustrators from their own cultures, they may be positioned to envision themselves stepping into those same roles.

Yet Latinx children who encounter Caldecott books will rarely have these experiences. Since the inception of the award, only a handful of Caldecott books have been crafted by Latinxs, and many of these books do not feature Latinx characters. Further, the Latinx characters that do appear in Caldecott books were too often created by authors and illustrators from outside the culture, calling into question the cultural authenticity of the characters and their worlds. In light of the ethnic makeup of today's classrooms, we are concerned that too many Caldecott books cannot function as mirrors for young readers.

Implications

In our investigation, we applied criteria that the Caldecott committees were never asked to apply. Caldecott books are artistically noteworthy, and we hope that teachers will continue to bring them into classrooms. Nonetheless, teachers and librarians have the responsibility to seek out books that will serve as mirrors for the children in their classrooms. To do this well, teachers must be cognizant of the increasing diversity of today's classrooms and will need to become familiar with awards that explicitly recognize quality literature by and about diverse populations, especially Latinx. Some of these awards include the Pura Belpré Award, given by the American Library Association, the Américas Award, sponsored by the National Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs, and the Tomás Rivera Award, given by Texas State University. It is incumbent on all educators to ensure that diverse literature is prominently represented in their instructional programs and in their school and classroom libraries.

We must also consider what it will take to reverse the recent negative trends reflected in the findings of this study. One promising grassroots movement is the We Need Diverse Books campaign that advocates for “essential changes in the publishing industry to produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of young people.” We Need Diverse Books is committed to the inclusion of “LGBTQIA, people of color, gender diversity, people with disabilities, and ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities” (We Need Diverse Books, para 2) in literature for children and adolescents. The importance of this movement cannot be underestimated for those dedicated to bringing diverse literature into classrooms. However, to bring about lasting change, researchers and educators need to be fully committed to this cause, addressing and acting upon the lack of cultural diversity in children's literature.

We believe it is critical for professionals from diverse backgrounds, especially Latinx professionals, to become actively involved in professional communities that select award-winning books. Further, we 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, we must insist that booksellers take the initiative to showcase these books by talking about and promoting them. And, we must make an effort 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 or make a difference in the lives of child readers.

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