

Lucy Calkins Classroom Libraries Video Interview Transcript

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Question: *What are some of the ways TCRWP Classroom Libraries meet the needs of diverse learners?*

Mary Ehrenworth: I want to tell you a few things about the Classroom Libraries that I think make them extraordinary resources for children. All over the country there are kids who don't see themselves in the libraries at their schools. There are kids who want to see themselves in books but don't. This country has a changing demographic. The biggest thing we see from district to district is that there's new immigration. We are so lucky to have the kind of country that takes people in from around the world. We work also in some of the most impoverished places around the world and it's a great gift that this country offers. But that means that we have to be careful to make sure that kids see themselves in the libraries. So you'll see that one of the things we thought about is figuring out kids from different ethnic diversities, cultural backgrounds, kids with different histories, kids with different identities that they're still growing into, will be able to see themselves in the Classroom Libraries.

There are basically a few different ways kids might be able to see themselves in the libraries. First, they might see themselves in the read-aloud books and some of the picture books. So our curators made sure that picture books were not all representing the same kinds of families, but actually show a lot of different ways that families might look, a lot of different ways that kids might be growing up. Secondly, kids will also be able to see themselves in the independent reading books; there's a sense that kids can be looking through a book and say, "wow, this book feels like I could be in it," and that is an incredible gift to give kids. And frankly, a gift for teachers as well, because it's really hard to take the time to do that work—it takes a lot of reading. You have to read books and ask yourself if the book displays a partial representation or a holistic one. You also have to ask "Is this the kind of representation that's actually not really going to be helpful for kids to see because this is a story of hate or sadness?" The goal was to have books that really celebrate the incredible rich diversity that we have in this country and even the country that we're going to be 10 years from now. So one of the things you might notice when you're looking at the libraries is that these libraries are making a real effort to have all different kinds of representation in them.

To learn more about the TCRWP Classroom Libraries, browse representative titles, and order shelves, visit calkinslibraries.com