



From suggesting resources, to facilitating discussions, to nurturing rapport in the learning community, school librarians hold a unique and vital role as educators who must strive to practice and lead in culturally responsive teaching, particularly in literacy. As described by Dr. Sandra Hughes-Hassell and Casey Rawson, high quality literacy instruction for Black children and teens is a professional mandate for librarians and an issue of social justice.

This professional development kit builds upon their workshop, "Services for Black Youth," which reflects the authors' "asset-based approach that seeks to create positive change by identifying and building on the knowledge, skills and lived experiences of Black youth and their families." Hughes-Hassell identifies five elements of effective library programs and services that fulfill that asset-based approach, quoted here from her 2013 article, "[Designing Effective Library Services for African American Youth](#)":

- School administrators who provide the necessary infrastructure for developing and delivering library services
- Culturally competent and caring school librarians who interact with African American youth as individuals, set high expectations for them, and help them develop their sense of agency
- Library programs that connect literacy to the real world and enable African American youth to act in their own communities
- Library resources that nurture the resolve of African American youth
- Library spaces that are welcoming places for African American youth and enable them to increase and express their literacy (Hughes-Hassell et al. 2012).

This PD kit provides a framework and suggested resources for reflecting upon, learning about, and implementing these components of effective library instruction and services for racialized youth¹.

While this kit will focus on Black youth specifically, the theories discussed are widely applicable to students of all races and may also be relevant to students who are marginalized in other ways, such as LGBTQ+ or ELL students. However, it is critically important for SLC, and for facilitators and supervisors of professional development, to recognize that there is no handy solution or simple training that "fully" equips school librarians to understand, practice, and lead efforts toward equity and anti-bias in their libraries and schools. To be culturally competent in one's life and in one's school library practice is an ongoing process of critical self-reflection, empathizing, learning, relationship-building, and taking action.

With that in mind, this collection of professional development resources on "Equity and Anti-Bias in School Library Practice" encompasses five components.

Workshop Components:

- Part I: Introduction to Equity and Anti-Bias, guided prework to be completed by participants in advance of the first synchronous session, approximately 90 minutes
- Part II: Working toward Culturally Responsive Libraries, an interactive synchronous session of 60–90 minutes
- Part III: Self-Study: Next Steps of the Culturally Responsive Library Walk, a self-study segment comprising 4–6 hours over the course of a month or more
- Part IV: Cultural Responsiveness in Action at Your Library, a second synchronous session of 60–90 minutes
- Part V: Exploring Enabling Texts, ideas for continuing self-reflection and professional growth throughout the year

Each school district or system has its own priorities, needs, and circumstances, so we hope you'll consider these resources as remixable activities and ideas, ready for you to use and adapt to the needs of your school and community. Exercises described as "synchronous" can be implemented with the facilitator and participants together in an on-site location, via virtual spaces through video conference, breakout rooms, and collaborative digital tools, or with some tweaking, even in a blended format. All materials

are linked or provided in this kit.

Workshop Goals:

Note the use of the word "we" in each statement here, as an intentional word choice suggesting that all educators involved in the training are participants in this personal and professional growth. School librarians might employ this phrase in similar ways in student learning objectives, as a means of disrupting traditional power structures in the classroom.

- We will discuss the context and need for analyzing and improving library services and instruction for racialized youth
- We will practice strategies for delivering effective and intentional services for racialized youth
- We will self-reflect and work toward building cultural competencies in order to provide culturally responsive library services
- We will work to identify strengths, to discover areas that need improvement, and to develop a path to achieve a culturally responsive library program
- We will discuss equity in school libraries and library programs
- We will discuss qualities of enabling texts, view and read examples, apply criteria for enabling texts, and suggest enabling texts

Alignment with AASL National School Library Standards

School Library II. A. The school library supports balanced perspectives through resources and learning opportunities by: 1. Providing challenging and authentic opportunities that address the needs of the broad range of learners. 2. Offering diverse learning experiences that allow for individual differences in learners. 3. Providing a comprehensive variety of resources.

School Library II. B. The school library represents all members and their place in a global learning community by: 1. Establishing and maintaining a collection of reading and information materials in formats that support the diverse developmental, cultural, social, and linguistic needs of the range of learners and their communities. 2. Organizing facilities to enhance the use of and ensure equitable access to information resources and services for all learners. 3. Featuring learning opportunities that include diverse viewpoints.

School Library III. C. The school library facilitates opportunities to experience diverse ideas by: 1. Implementing solutions that address physical, social, cultural, linguistic, and intellectual barriers to equitable access to resources and services. 2. Promoting the use of high-quality and high-interest literature in formats that reflect the diverse developmental, cultural, social, and linguistic needs of all learners and their communities. 3. Constructing a learning environment that fosters the sharing of a wide range of viewpoints and ideas.

School Library III. D. The school library builds empathy and equity within the global learning community by: 1. Ensuring that all learning needs are met through access to information and ideas located in a diverse collection of sufficient size for the learner population and supported by reliable hardware and software.

School Library IV. B. The school library promotes selection of appropriate resources and tools for information use by: 3. Employing a dynamic collection policy that includes selection and retention criteria for all materials within the collection.

School Librarian II. A. School librarians direct learners to contribute a balanced perspective when participating in a learning community by: 3. Differentiating instruction to support learners' understanding of cultural relevancy and placement within the global learning community.

School Librarian II. B. School librarians establish opportunities for learners to adjust their awareness of the global learning community by: 1. Providing opportunities for learners to interact with others who reflect a range of perspectives. 2. Devising learning activities that require learners to evaluate a variety of perspectives. 3. Designing opportunities that help learners to illustrate diverse viewpoints.

School Librarian II. D. School librarians explicitly lead learners to demonstrate empathy and equity in knowledge building within the global learning community by: 1. Creating an atmosphere in which learners feel empowered and interactions are learner-initiated.

Alignment with ISTE Standards for Educators

2. Leader. Educators seek out opportunities for leadership to support student empowerment and success and to improve teaching and learning. Educators: 2.a. Shape, advance and accelerate a shared vision for empowered learning with technology by engaging with education stakeholders. 2.b. Advocate for equitable access to educational technology, digital content and learning opportunities to meet the diverse needs of all students.

4. Collaborator. Educators dedicate time to collaborate with both colleagues and students to improve practice, discover and share resources and ideas, and solve problems. Educators: 4.d. Demonstrate cultural competency when communicating with students, parents and colleagues and interact with them as co-collaborators in

student learning.

5. Designer. Educators design authentic, learner-driven activities and environments that recognize and accommodate learner variability. Educators: 5.a. Use technology to create, adapt and personalize learning experiences that foster independent learning and accommodate learner differences and needs.

Note

¹The phrase "racialized youth" acknowledges race as a social construct, historically thrust upon groups and later adopted as a means of developing and affirming a collective identity; read more in the editorial "Their Eyes Are Watching Us: Serving Racialized Youth in an Era of Protest" from the Equality vs. Equity issue of *Knowledge Quest*: <https://knowledgequest.aasl.org/explore-equity-diversity-youth-literature-libraries-beyond-januaryfebruary-issue/>.

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