

RESEARCHING BIASES IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

by

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THESIS

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family, friends, and the faculty and staff of the University of Houston at Clear Lake.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I wish to acknowledge my Creator, for giving me the supernatural strength to go forward when all my natural inclinations urged me to lift my hands in surrender.

Thank you, Ricardo and Corwin, my two wonderful sons, for putting up with my frustration that was often evidenced by displays of impatience and intolerance. Most of all, thank you for the words of encouragement.

"Thank you" seems so inadequate as an acknowledgement of the constant prayer and support provided by my mother, Mrs. Hannah Proctor. Thanks, Mom! Thanks also go to my sister, Leah, and my brothers, A.W., Joe, and Alvin and their wives, Della, Mary, and Mickey, respectively.

Special thanks also go to my very dear friend, Sharon Howard and her family, for praying and helping me through some of the most trying times of my life.

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Joyce, thank you for being a constant source of encouragement.

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Finally, I wish to acknowledge and thank everyone who played a part in helping me attain this goal.

Thank you all, and may God richly bless each of you!

July, 1995

ABSTRACT

RESEARCHING BIASES IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT

**Geraldine Proctor King, M.S.
The University of Houston Clear Lake, 1995**

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The purpose of this study is to provide additional research documentation in support of the claim that bias exists in some curriculum and instructional content. The researcher analyzed the content of selected literature and social studies textbooks, and curriculum guides that have been used or are currently used in some Texas public schools. Grade levels ranged from 4-8. Publication dates range from 1970-1993.

The study determined that bias does exist in some instructional materials and tools used in some of the public schools in Texas. Analyses of the literary selections indicate that mainstream representation far outweighed that of nonmainstream representation. Mainstream representation, by percentage, was 80%, compared to a mere 20% for nonmainstream.

The social studies graphics content showed that mainstream and nonmainstream groups were represented proportionately: 29% for mainstream, 28% for nonmainstream.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It has been the established findings of several formal, documented research studies that curriculum and instructional content often reflect biases, specifically racial, gender, and socioeconomic biases (Bader and Eyia, 1993). Underlying the increased interest and subsequent research on this topic is the recognition of the very significant differences among academic achievement scores of students from the mainstream culture and those from nonmainstream backgrounds. These differences have been an area of concern for many educators and parents for a considerable period of time, but the issue has come under intense scrutiny over the past decade or more. The heightened focus on this problem has resulted in a significant amount of research on the topic. The general findings of research reviewed point to the cause of the problem as being the type of curriculum and instructional content used in many of our schools, rather than with student ability, as many educators and parents have previously theorized (Frager and Vanterpool, 1993).

If educators are to sufficiently provide equal opportunities for successful learning for all of their students, then they must exert every possible effort to ensure that instructional tools reflect the student diversity in their classrooms. This is especially true for literature and literary selections, which constitute a major portion of the academic curriculum suggested for junior high and high school students. However, elements of significant diversity are often omitted or underemphasized in these disciplines, and many school systems continue to fail to recognize the significance of this lack. The majority of literacy instructional materials is geared toward the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the American mainstream culture--middle-class whites (Bader and Eyia, 1993).

Purpose and Statement

This study was conducted to determine whether bias is present in some of the textbooks and curriculum guides that have been used or are being used in some of the school systems in the state of Texas.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Background of the Study

In reviewing literature focusing on the biases found in some school curricula and instructional tools, it was discovered that most of the research findings were expressed in qualitative form rather than in quantitative form. So shall they be expressed in this thesis.

The consensus of the studies reviewed is that there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that bias does exist in some of the instructional components used in the education of our children, specifically textbooks, literary selections, curriculum guides, and even in some teachers. Much of this bias involves race, gender, and socioeconomic status, as indicated by content analyses of some books in an elementary literature series (Bader and Eyia, 1993).

Biases in Literary Selections

Gillespie, Powell, Clements, and Swearingen (1994) note that literature plays a major role in the comprehension and value assessment of each student's cultural heritage. The research group concedes that while it is impossible to evaluate the multicultural content of all books, it is possible to evaluate some of the popular collections found in public and high school libraries.

The Gillespie group evaluated forty-three books in the Newbery Medal collection. They were analyzed to determine the ethnicity of the characters by role designations of main, minor, and mentioned. The group's analyses yielded the following results for ethnicity and role designations: Four African Americans, five Hispanics, five Asian Americans, four Native Americans, and seven whites that were not of Anglo-Saxon descent. The remaining characters were identified as occupying minor roles or were merely mentioned, and they were representative of the ethnic groups mentioned above.

The study excluded books with white Anglo-Saxon males as the main characters. The authors explained this exclusion:

Our purpose is not to isolate the Newbery Medal winners with characters from ethnic backgrounds, but rather to draw attention to them. (p. 41)

Bader and Eyia (1993) conducted an earlier comprehensive study on adult remedial readers. A key component of the study was an analysis of the reading material used in an elementary literature series. The analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which these literary materials included gender and racial minorities. The researchers reported that of the 120 stories analyzed, 72 of them contained themes that were outside the mainstream profile--white, middle-class males.

While this degree of inclusion is encouraging, it still remains that the most frequently occurring protagonist is a white, young adult male with a middle-class socioeconomic background.

Bader and Eyia (1993) suggest that this lack of identity for nonmainstream groups in literacy materials may well be a significantly contributing factor in the lack of interest often exhibited by minority students, especially in literature courses. The two researchers hold that reading materials should coincide with learners' backgrounds and interests to activate prior knowledge and motivate further learning. They assert:

In our diverse culture, major characters who exemplify achievement motive should be role models with whom all [not just mainstream] children can identify. The presence of a female or [nonmainstream ethnic group member] in a story is not enough;...the values represented are also very important. (p. 215)

Biases in Textbooks

Textbooks have proved to be invaluable instructional tools in many instances, and although a significant amount of instruction is now being carried out through the use of com-

puters, textbooks are managing to hold their own in the domain of instructional tools. Since textbooks hold such a position of prominence in the education process, it stands to reason that those who compile, edit and publish them would exercise the greatest care to ensure that textual and graphic content are relevant to all users. Sadly, this is frequently not the case. Although greatly improved over their predecessors of the pre-integration era, textbooks on the whole continue to be sorely lacking in an equitable inclusion of content that is relevant to minority concerns. This is especially true in middle and high school textbooks. Frager and Vanterpool (1993) concluded that textbooks, as single sources of knowledge, are unlikely to provide the variety of contexts that are needed by students of diverse backgrounds to encourage learning.

Biases in School Curricula

Textbooks and literary selections are usually reflective of requirements and suggestions found in the curriculum guides of school systems. By design or inadvertently, many many of these requirements and suggestions, as mentioned previously, continue to center around the attitudes, beliefs, and values of middle-class whites (Bader and Eyia, 1993).

Review of the research literature suggests that a primary cause for Anglo dominance in literacy materials, especially in literature courses, can be largely attributed to the longstanding practice of excluding nonmainstream groups from those literary selections that have been deemed most important for study by educators and literary critics (Harris, 1992). Assigning a narrow range of literature has been, and continues to be, a standard practice in many high school curricula.

Applebee (1989) conducted a study which analyzed the core literature used in many U.S. high schools. He compared the results of his study with those of a study conducted by G.W. Tanner in 1907. He concluded that core literature has remained remarkably unchanged for more than eight decades. It continues to focus on traditional British and American authors and their works, chief among these being Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn. From the information gathered, he compiled a list of more than 50 authors whose works were most often studied. Only two African American authors, Lorraine Hansberry and Richard Wright, appeared on the list. No other nonmainstream groups were mentioned.

While there is absolutely nothing wrong with including such popular mainstream works as those mentioned above, curriculum developers would do well to remember to include a

variety of nonmainstream authors and works in their lists of required and suggested readings. Doing so would be a positive step toward helping students and teachers recognize and appreciate--not merely accept and tolerate--the diversities that are so evident in their surroundings, especially within the classroom.

The Role of Teacher Biases in Literary Selections

Another key component of the education process--perhaps the most important--is the teacher. A majority of teachers come from mainstream backgrounds and can more readily identify with students from similar backgrounds (Grant and Miller, 1990). This sense of identity may account for the types of literature some teachers select for their students to study. Nonetheless, teachers have a responsibility to be cognizant of the fact that minority students do not possess the same background and knowledge of the world as their mainstream counterparts. This should be a major consideration when selecting and assigning reading materials. These selections should reflect sensitivity toward the mainstream students in the classroom.

Educators who are truly concerned with providing equal opportunities for academic success for all of their students, should exert sincere and significant efforts to acquaint themselves with the content of the materials they use in their instruction--to determine if these materials meet the needs of relevance and inclusion for all of their students.

Fortunately, many state education agencies now require multicultural studies as a part of teacher education and certification programs. Such requirements ensure that a greater number of educators with mainstream backgrounds will gain knowledge of and develop sensitivity toward the needs of the nonmainstream students in their classrooms.

Summary

The consensus of the literature reviewed for this study is that significant bias does exist in some instructional materials, perhaps more so in books of literature than in any other material. It was not determined whether this bias is by design or is inadvertent. How the bias occurred is not the issue. That it exists is the key concern. Research results conclude that bias is evident in textbooks, especially in books of literature, school curricula, and even in some teachers.

The research indicates that many of the problems often associated with minority learners--lack of motivation, unsustained interest, limited comprehension, and unsatisfactory performance on regular and standardized assessments of academic knowledge--may be largely attributed to the failure of many instructional materials to accommodate the elements of relevance and inclusion for those students outside the mainstream.

Recognition of the potential effects that biased instructional content may have upon its users is not enough. Concerted and sincere efforts to eliminate, at best diminish, such bias is crucial to the provision of equal opportunities for academic success for all learners. This provision is a constitutionally-sanctioned right. Failure to comply with this right is tantamount to sanctioning the continued exclusion or underemphasis of those groups outside the mainstream.

Stated Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that some textbooks, literary selections, and curriculum guides that have been used or are in current use by some Texas schools, contain significantly fewer representations of nonmainstream groups--specifically racial gender, and socioeconomic groups--than mainstream groups.

Operational Definitions

To facilitate comprehension of this study, the following terms are clarified:

1. bias - prejudice, slanted view
2. mainstream - refers to or is representative of the dominant culture (in America, whites, mostly middle-class).
3. multicultural - refers to or is representative of the variety of cultures that exist in a geographic area.
4. multicultural inclusion - the inclusion of those groups or cultures that are contained within a geographic area (includes mainstream and nonmainstream).
5. nonmainstream - refers to or is representative of cultures that fall outside the dominant culture of a geographic area.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Pilot Study

The basis of this research is founded in a content analysis conducted on a single literature textbook. The analysis was part of an assignment in a multicultural studies course taken at the University of Houston at Clear Lake in the spring semester of 1994. The methodology and coding for this thesis are primarily derivative of the pilot study.

Materials

This study analyzed the content of nine textbooks and four curriculum guides that were selected from a convenient sampling of instructional materials available through the Curriculum Library of the University of Houston at Clear Lake. The textbooks, in the disciplines of literature and social studies, range from grade levels 7-12. Publication dates range from 1970-1993. The curriculum guides range from grades 6-12. They date from 1974-1985.

Procedures

Literature and social studies are the two targeted disciplines for textbook content analysis. These two disciplines

deemed appropriate for rendering a fair sampling for the purposes of this study.

Five literature textbooks were selected simply by pulling them from the shelves housing books in the discipline. To diminish personal bias in the analysis, the books were not opened to examine the contents until the actual research began.

The four social studies textbooks were selected in the same fashion as the literature textbooks. However, before removing them from the library, the table of contents in each was examined for chapters that indicated multicultural inclusion. This was done because these types of books contain information on a variety of subjects, many of which do not relate to this research. Therefore, it was deemed prudent to determine if these books contained chapters that were relevant to minority inclusion before using them in the research of this topic.

Four curriculum guides from four area school districts were selected in the same fashion as the literature and social studies textbooks.

From each literature textbook, three stories were selected through systematic sampling (every fifth story). They were read and evaluated, using a chart that lists these categories pertaining to each main character: (a) ethnicity (b) gender (c) socioeconomic status (d) author's ethnicity and gender.

As each story was read, the categories in each chart were filled in, and comments were written at the bottom of the chart, to refer to when composing the thesis.

From each social studies textbook, two chapters that, by their titles, indicated multicultural inclusion, were selected for analysis. These chapters were selected based on the following criteria: (a) minority inclusion (b) extent of inclusion (c) depiction of mainstream society (d) depiction of nonmainstream society (e) context of graphics (f) context of textual content and (g) factual accounting.

The curriculum guides (literature and social studies) were examined for multicultural inclusion in their stated objectives and selected readings.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

LITERATURE

Materials

Three stories were selected from each of five literature textbooks by systematic sampling (every fifth story). This section discusses these selections with regard to the ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status of the main character(s). A synopsis of each story is also provided.

Janson, K. & Welsh, C. (1989). Literature: Silver. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

"Accounts Settled" (47-52)

The author of this story is Paul Annixter. The main character is a sixteen-year-old white male named Gordon Bent, who was forced to take over his father's fur-trapping business, when the father became ill. The story tells of the fear he experiences as he ventures into a section of the woods that he describes as dark and forbidding, haunted. It recounts a series of experiences that heighten his fear. However, the story is not about fear alone. It is a story that tells of the transformation of a boy into a man.

The socioeconomic status of the main character was not indicated. The researcher detected no bias in this story.

"Gentleman of Rio en Medio" (87-89)

The story's author is Juan A.A. Sedillo. The main character is an impoverished elderly Mexican gentleman called Don Anselmo, who owned some choice property, but was seemingly unaware of its value.

He agreed to sell his house and property to an American company for twelve hundred dollars. The company realized that the property was worth more after a survey included an orchard of fruit trees. When he was offered a higher price, he refused, explaining that he had planted a tree for each child born in the valley. Therefore, the sale included his house and the eight acres of land surrounding it, but it did not include the trees. He said they were not his to sell.

This is a story about a simple and honest man, a man of integrity. It contains no graphic or textual content that can be labeled as prejudicial.

"The Land and the Water" (119-126)

The author of this story is Shirley Ann Grau. The main character is a young, white girl of middle-class status. She is the story's narrator and no name was given for her. She recounts events of life with her family in their summer home along the sea. The key action in the story centers around the

drowning deaths of a neighboring family. They were trying out a new sailboat when a major storm quickly developed and tore apart their boat, throwing them into the choppy waters. The drownings brought on a series of introspective musings on how being dead must feel (by the narrator).

From descriptions provided by the narrator, all the characters in the story were from a background similar to her own.

The story held no prejudicial graphic or textual content. It simply related a story centered around a tragedy.

Smith, R.J. & Schulz, M.F. (1986). Journeys: A reading and literature program. Dallas: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. "Nearly Perfect" (69-74)

This story is written by A.A. Milne. The story is told by a narrator named Coleby. The main character of the story is a young, white male in his thirties, named Julian Crayne. Julian, himself, was not wealthy, but he had a wealthy uncle named Marius Crayne. Let it suffice to say that Marius did not possess any qualities that would endear him to many people. Julian was no exception. However, Marius had told Julian that all of his wealth would go to him at his death. So, when Marius asked Julian to move into his home, Julian accepted.

The story relates how Julian conceived a plot to murder his uncle. Although he did want the money, it was not his sole motive. Marius was an intolerable bore, and was constantly attempting to show how adept he was at solving murder mysteries.

Julian wished to rid himself of Marius' boasting of his cleverness. Julian committed the murder and would have gotten away with it, but he was a bit too clever in his plotting. He became a victim of his own trickery. The story contained no semblance of bias--graphic or textual.

"Murphy's Law"(118-132)

This story is written by Dan Halacy. Its main character is a young, white middle-class male. His name is Paul Murphy, and he is described as "still tanned and fit from a hiking vacation in Colorado."

Paul was beginning a new job as a co-pilot patrolling a pipeline from Canada to the United States. On his first patrol, the plane went down. He and the pilot, Harris Wheeler, went down with it. According to Murphy's Law everything that can go wrong will go wrong, and in the eyes of Paul Murphy, it seemed that it did. However, he remembered O'Toole's comment on Murphy's Law: "Murphy was an optimist!" So was young Paul Murphy. The story recounted how Murphy solved each problem

that developed to deter him in his efforts to get help for the pilot, who was injured. He overcame each obstacle and succeeded in getting them rescued. This story contained no bias either in textual or graphic content.

"I'll Give You Law" (190-196)

Molly Picon is the author of this story. It is narrated by a young girl named Molly. It is surmised, but is not known, that this is an autobiographical account of an event from the author's childhood.

The main character is Molly's grandmother, Mrs. Ostrow. The characters are white and from a lower socioeconomic class. Mrs. Ostrow is a widow, apparently subsisting on her husband's pension.

This is a story about a little girl's grandmother who was a staunch believer in "Honesty is the best policy." She found an expensive necklace and turned it in to the police's Lost and Found department. Ninety days passed and no one came forth to claim the necklace and it was given to Mrs. Ostrow. However, a week later the police showed up with the owner. Mrs. Ostrow relinquished the necklace, although it was legally hers.

No prejudicial elements were detected in the graphics or in the text of this story.

Farrell, J. & Christensen, L.J. (1989). Discoveries in literature. Dallas: Scott, Foresman.

"One Night Stand" (29-34)

This story is written by Louis L'Amour. Its setting is in the old west. Its main character is a young, white man named Stephen Malone, who was an actor. The acting company's disreputable manager had skipped town, taking all of the funds with him and leaving Stephen and the rest of the company stranded. The story relates how the young man used his acting talent to solve the dilemma in which he found himself. There was no detection of bias in the graphic or textual content of this story.

"The Circuit" (73-78)

This story is an autobiographical account of Francisco Jimenez' life growing up as a member of a migrant Mexican family.

The story told of how difficult it often was for all of the family's school-age children to attend school at the same time. Because of the seasonal status of their livelihood, they often had to register in school late in the school year. They also had to change schools frequently, which allowed little time for meaningful relationships to develop or continue.

This story was told without any attempts to "dress up" the poverty of this family. It is a straightforward telling of the life of an impoverished migrant family, who happened to be Mexican. The researcher could detect no bias in this story.

"Hunger" (183-186)

This is an autobiographical account of an event from the life of Richard Wright, a black writer from the South.

It tells of an impoverished black, single-parent family living in the early 1900s South. The father had long-since abandoned the family, making it necessary for the mother to work outside the home. This left Richard and his siblings alone to raise themselves.

There is no prejudicial content in this story, neither graphic nor textual. It is a simple telling of events in the life of a young black boy and his family, forced to grow up in a hostile environment.

Hendry, D.D., ed. 1989. Adventures in reading. Dallas: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich..

"The Musgrave Ritual" (46-60)

Written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, this story is about a popular middle-class character created by Doyle, Sherlock

The story recounts the exploits of Holmes in a tale involving a strange ceremony. It merely showcases the super sleuth's exceptional deductive reasoning abilities. The researcher detected no bias in the story.

"The Cask of Amontillado" (95-100)

This story is written by Edgar Allan Poe. It is told by a narrator named Montresor. He shares the main character spotlight with another character named Fortunato, a noted wine connoisseur. Both are white (Italian), with middle-class backgrounds.

The setting is in early Italy, presumably in or near the Renaissance era and is written in typical Poe style--chilling and diabolical. While it may be easy for many readers to identify with Montresor, regarding the desire to seek revenge on those at whose hand we have suffered humiliation or some other injurious act, it is hoped that none of them would respond as Montresor. The researcher could detect no bias in the graphic or textual content of this story.

"A Summer's Reading" (146-151)

This story is written by Bernard Malamud. The main character is George Stoyanovich, a young, white male of Polish descent. He is a high-school dropout and is unemployed and impoverished.

The story centers around George's having lied about reading 100 books to aid in his education. He lied to gain dignity in the eyes of the people in his neighborhood. The story tells of the inner turmoil George experiences as he attempts to deal with his lie.

The story mentions George's sister, Sophie, several times. She does have a job, but it could be perceived as being a job that has been traditionally assigned to women-- a waitress.

Discussion of this story would probably spark a lively debate over George as a person, but would probably not cause any ethnic or socioeconomic-based conflicts. The one foreseeable instance of possible gender-based conflict lies in the type of work assigned to Sophie.

Reactions to George's plight will probably depend largely upon the backgrounds of the readers. While some will undoubtedly exhibit little or no tolerance for his aimlessness in life, others may be able to identify with his economically-depressed neighborhood and agree with George that it was the neighborhood that was responsible for his difficulties.

Other than the type of work assigned to the character, Sophie, the researcher found no indications of bias in this story.

Ackley, Elizabeth et al, eds. (1989) Appreciating literature.

California: Glencoe Publishing.

"Bridging" (45-51)

The story is written by Max Apple. The main characters are the narrator (unnamed) and his daughter, Jessica. They are members of the white middle-class.

The narrator's wife has died recently, leaving him without a wife and Jessica without a mother. This story has content with which a student who has lost a loved one can identify. The fact that the family now consists of a father and daughter may be another point of identity for those readers with family structures that are far and away from the stereotypical families traditionally found in literature--two parents and two children with a middle-class background.

The story tells of the difficulties father and daughter face in struggling to adjust to the death of their loved one. The key point of conflict arises when the father becomes active in his daughter's girl scout troupe, taking the mother's place. His presence at the meetings embarrasses Jessica and she tells him so.

The story also mentions a handicapped character and an obese character, representations of two other groups of

nonmainstream society. Both are mentioned in a positive way, with no stereotypical subterfuge clouding the picture. One Greek female character (the babysitter) was mentioned. One Hispanic female character (the housekeeper) was mentioned. A possibility exists for prejudicial interpretations of the types of jobs assigned to these two characters. It could be said that they are stereotypical not only in the types of jobs assigned to female characters, but also in the ethnic groups to which they were assigned, especially regarding that of the housekeeper, a position that is often occupied by Hispanic and black women in Texas.

The content is relevant to Texas readers, for its setting is in Houston, and many of the area landmarks that are mentioned are familiar to most Texans.

Regarding prejudicial content, the researcher could not detect any that could be interpreted as socioeconomic. However, as mentioned above, some of the content could be open to interpretations of gender and ethnic biases.

"The Woman Who Had No Prejudices" (83-85)

This story is written by Anton Chekhov. The main character is a white Slavic male, named Maxim Kuzmich. He was born into a poor family and during his growing years and young adulthood, was forced, by economic circumstances,

to become a beggar, a peddler, and a clown, all in order to survive. He was made by society, it is inferred, to feel inferior because of these circumstances. Nonetheless, he triumphed in the end, when he fell in love with and married a beautiful young woman of royal parentage. Maxim's social status did not matter to her. She was in love with the person he was, and appreciated him all the more for the things he had endured in order to survive an impoverished environment.

The text itself is not biased. The author uses it to remind us that some segments of society do exhibit prejudicial attitudes toward the less fortunate, but that not everyone is guilty of this social discrimination. However, the researcher still sees cause of concern in the content, for while it is true that the author uses the text to convey an important positive message, conversely, it could be interpreted by students on both extremes of the socioeconomic scale, that being poor somehow makes one inferior as a person.

Again, as stated previously, the researcher could not detect any bias in the textual or graphic content of the story itself.

"Quality" (109-113)

This story is written by John Galsworthy. Its main character is a white German male, named Mr. Gessler, who is an impoverished bootmaker. His poverty is not derivative of a lack of orders, but rather of the amount of time he spends on each order. He is more quality-conscious than quantity-conscious.

Mr. Gessler is described in a form that some may call stereotypical, but the description is not presented in a manner that could be misconstrued and labeled as offensive. He is described as having crinkly, reddish hair with a matching beard and a guttural monotoned voice. The researcher could find no prejudicial elements in this story.

Summary

Of the fifteen stories read and analyzed during this study, two could possibly be perceived as having biased content: "Bridging" and "A Summer's Reading." The former could be perceived as containing bias regarding the types of jobs assigned to the two ethnic minority women; the latter for the type of job assigned to a gender minority. However, it should be noted that the bias is not readily evident, and it may well be that it would not be perceived as bias by anyone other than members of nonmainstream

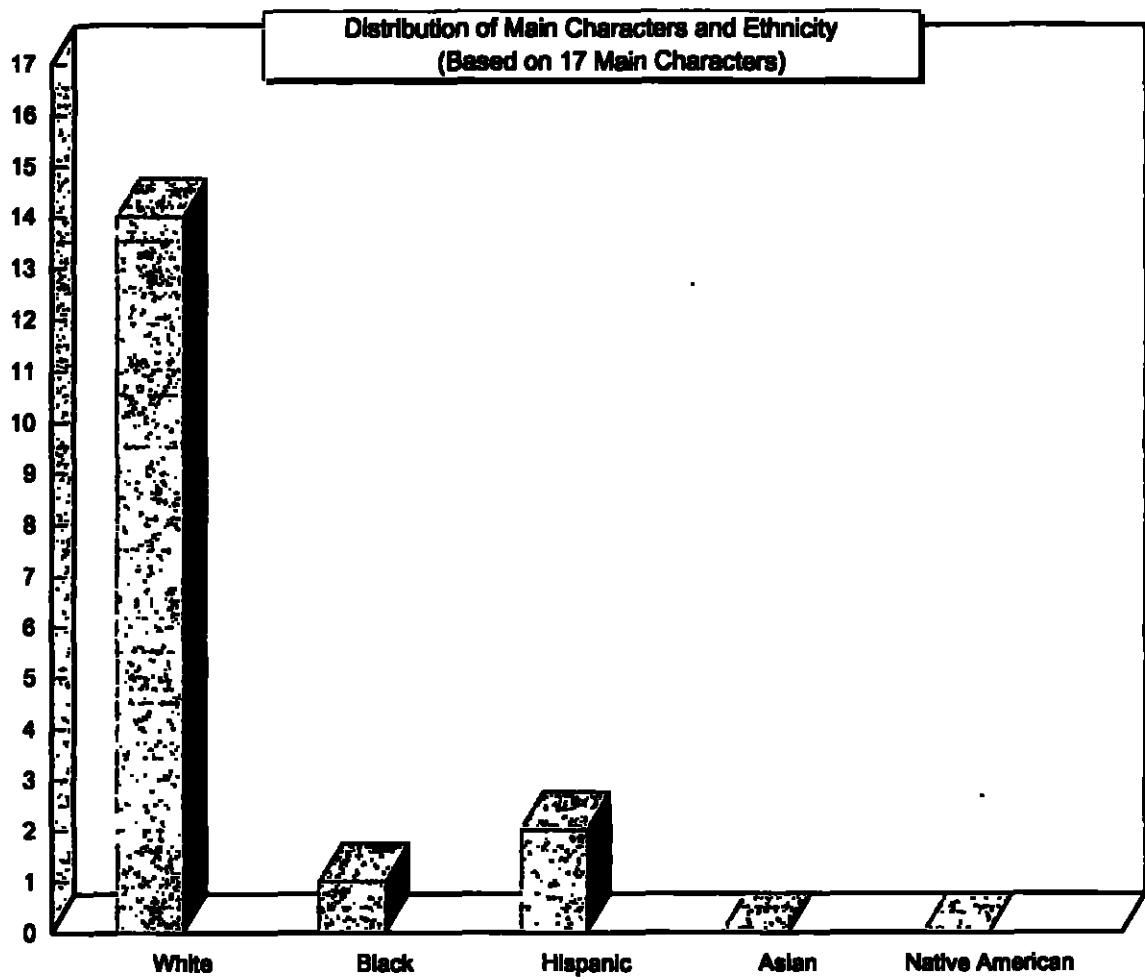
segments of society, in this instance, women and racial minorities, specifically Greeks and Hispanics, the two mentioned in the story.

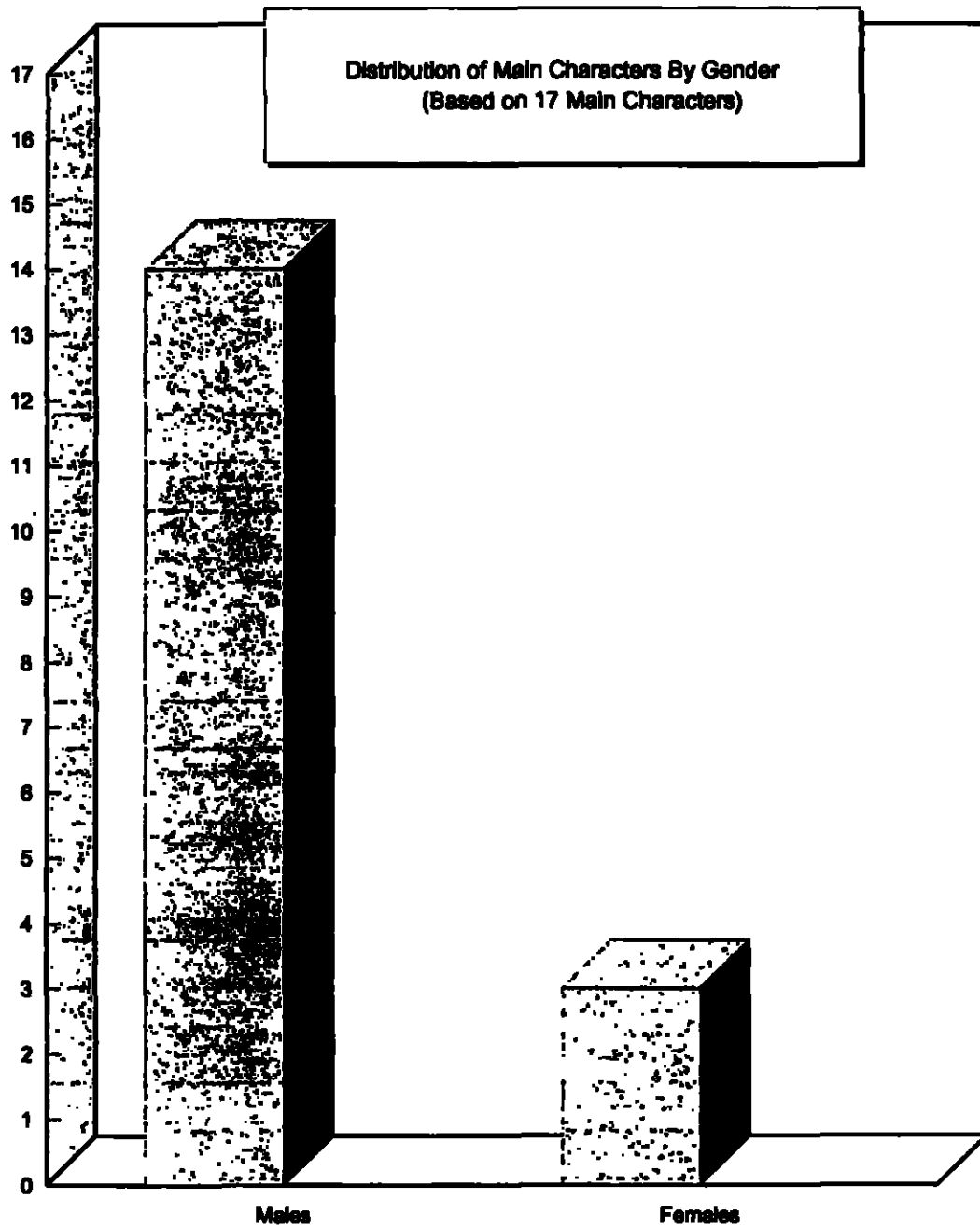
Of the seventeen main characters, (two stories had two main characters) six represented nonmainstream society: two Hispanics, one black, and three females (all white).

Among fifteen authors, five represented nonmainstream society: two Hispanics, one black, and two females. Ten authors were white males.

Tables 1-4 illustrate the numerical distributions of main characters by ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Table 1





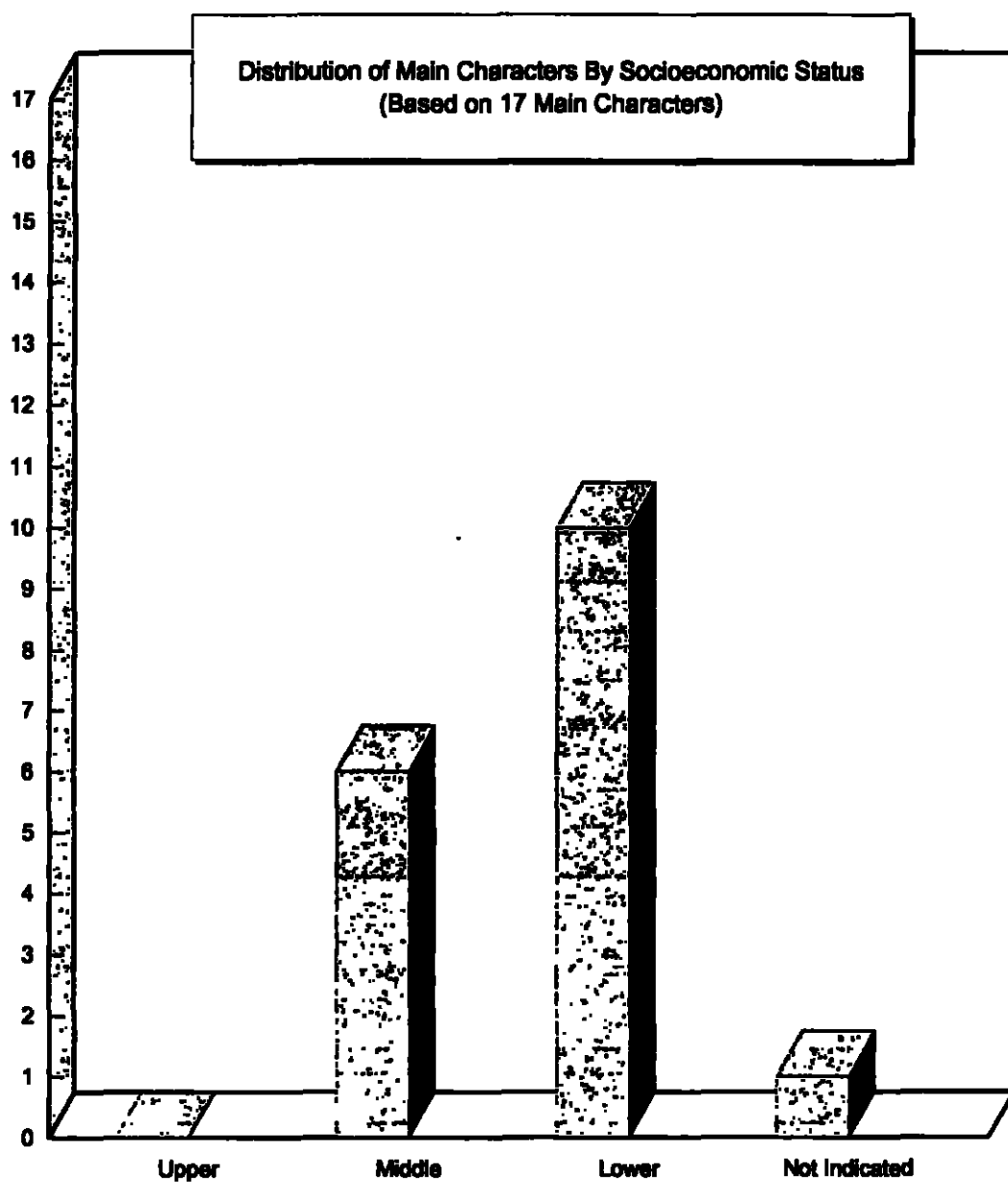
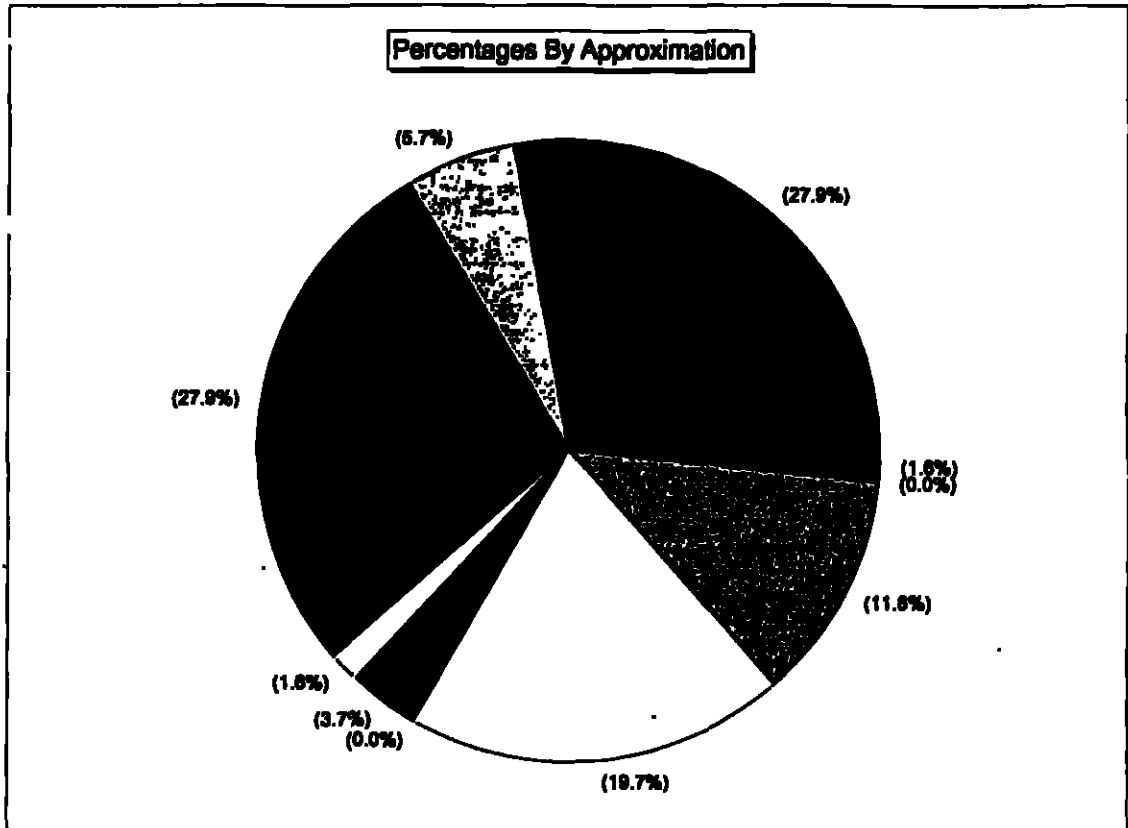


Table 4

Composite Statistics



Male	27.3
Female	5.6
White	27.3
Black	1.6
Hispanic	3.6
Asian	0
Native American	0
Lower	19.3
Middle	11.6
Upper	0
Not Indicated	1.6
Total	97.9

CONTENT ANALYSIS

SOCIAL STUDIES

Materials

Eight chapters were selected from four social studies textbooks, based on whether their titles indicated multi-cultural inclusion. This section discusses these chapters with regard to minority inclusion.

McClenaghan, W. (1993), ed. Magruder's American government.
New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

"The Constitution and the Right to Vote," Unit II, Chapter 6, pp. 129-151.

This chapter addresses an issue that was of major interest to ethnic minorities, specifically to African Americans, during the early 1960s--the right to vote.

The textual content could be perceived as offensive by some whites, but only because it makes no attempt to disguise the malicious acts committed by whites against blacks in their attempts to keep blacks from exercising their right to vote.

The textual content is presented in the context of factual accounting, without regard to what may be viewed as unsettling to the mainstream culture. Graphic content is presented in the context of illustrations of some of the key

information contained in the text of the chapter, such as charts that display figures on voter turnout from 1936-1992 and how specific racial groups tend to vote, with regard to political parties.

There are 16 graphics in the chapter. There are three of mainstream society only; three of nonmainstream society only; four of the two groups mixing, (mainstream and nonmainstream) and six are charts and graphs.

"Diversity and Discrimination in American Society," Unit V, Chapter 21, pp. 544-567.

As with the previous chapter, this chapter presents its content--graphic and textual--in an unbiased manner. Should anyone wish to argue that the proliferation of nonmainstream representation is in itself prejudiced against mainstream society, one need only to point out that this particular chapter is focused on nonmainstream concerns, therefore, it stands to reason that there would be a greater representation of nonmainstream society than of mainstream society.

Again, as with the previous chapter discussed, there was no attempt on the part of the writers and editors to soft-pedal their approach to a topic that is controversial by its very nature.

The researcher did not detect the presence of any bias in the textual or graphic content of the chapter. From the researcher's perspective, the writers and editors simply related factual information.

Garraty, J.A., ed. (1992). The story of America: 1865-to the present. Dallas: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
"National Politics and Culture, 1867-1896, Unit I, Chapter 4, pp. 156-191.

The graphic and textual content of this chapter is biased in favor of mainstream America. However, in all fairness, the researcher urges readers of this study to remember the context in which the information is written. The time period covered in this section is the United States from 1867-1896. This significantly affects the content. Minority issues were as yet, unperceived as we know them today. Therefore, it can be somewhat rationalized in terms of the period, regarding an explanation for the omission of Blacks and Native Americans, two nonmainstream groups that were visible in society at the time, although their stations in life were assigned to that of the sub-socioeconomic class.

The chapter contains 36 graphics. Thirty depict mainstream society only, two depict nonmainstream society only,

none depict a mixture of the two groups, and four are of graphs and charts.

"Modern Times," Unit V, Chapter 14, pp. 552-583.

While the content of this chapter is greatly improved over that of the previous chapter, it contains information that was slanted in its presentation. One such biased presentation was that of the brief discussion on affirmative action, a controversial issue from its origin more than two decades ago, and it remains so today. The text described affirmative action as the government's incentive program targeted at mainstream America to encourage the increased hiring of minorities in more high-profile jobs. It mentions the white backlash concerning the action, but it failed to include why such an action was deemed necessary. It did not explain that affirmative action was developed as an attempt to right some of the wrongs accorded to blacks and other minorities in the nation's work places, which were and still are, largely owned and operated by whites.

Neither was there any mention of the program's introduction having a possible political base. More and more minorities, especially blacks, were registering to vote and exercising their voting power at the ballot box. Politicians needed votes to gain or remain in office. Therefore, it was

beneficial to white politicians to endear themselves to minority voters. Thus, the push to provide incentives to minority voters to cast their political ballots. However, the researcher concedes that there were quite possibly, some politicians who were motivated by altruism rather than by self-interest.

This chapter also addresses the issue of forced busing. However, whites were not the only ones who were concerned about and protested against this action. Many blacks, especially in large urban areas, vocally opposed such action, arguing that it took their children too far away from home, and most importantly, there was the fear that their children would be venturing into unsafe areas, areas predominantly occupied by already-hostile whites, who were surely to be even more hostile toward these black students who were forcing their way into their society, even though legally sanctioned.

However, in the interest of fairness, it is noted that the chapter does not exclude the bombings and other attacks on buses bringing blacks into previously all-white school districts. Neither does it exclude the reason why busing was deemed necessary--to equalize educational opportunities for all school children.

The chapter frankly discusses the rampant poverty and other social inequities found in nonmainstream American society, and it attributes many of the ills plaguing those groups, to these clearly-visible inequities. It details some of the key factors leading to these social inequities--discrimination in the job markets, in education, and in housing.

A particular instance of perceived bias is contained within this statement: "Many more African Americans [are] taking their rightful place in society, free from the stigma of racial discrimination" (p. 563). This is a biased statement by its failure to acknowledge that as long as we have among us, those individuals who believe and operate on that belief, that the color of one's skin makes him or her superior or inferior to others, minorities will never be free of the stigma of racism. Espousing the opposite is an exercise in deception. In order for social education to be viable, it must be factual in its presentation.

There are a total of forty-three graphics in the chapter. Fifteen of them depict nonmainstream society. A numerical analysis of the graphic content of all eight chapters is provided in Table 5.

Hanna, P., ed. (1970). Investigating man's world. Illinois:
Scott, Foresman, & Co.

"Groups of People," Unit III, Chapter 3, pp. 65-74.

This textbook targets grade levels 4-8. This chapter presents a passive recounting of the interactions among cultural groups. While this passivity may be preferable for the lower grades--where we valiantly and justifiably strive to protect our young from some of the world's harsh realities--it is not a very prudent position to take regarding our older students. Older students tend to question most things that are set before them as established truths. They are no longer satisfied with such stoic responses as: "That is the way it is." We must provide them with answers that they can ruminate and apply to their world, and draw logical conclusions based on the unbiased facts presented to them.

This chapter explains what racial differences are from an anthropological perspective. It does not address the social problems that often develop when the races of man do not interact harmoniously. It does state that there are elements of social inequity among the races. It fails to elucidate what these inequities are, how most of them occur, and what has been or is being done in an attempt to correct them.

Students must be made aware of the various aspects of social concerns so that they can develop a viable framework from which they can begin to understand, accept or reject certain viewpoints, and decide what, if anything, they can contribute in the way of formulating tentative solutions to these problems.

"The Study of Culture Regions, Unit X, Chapter 1, pp. 225-236.

This chapter names and briefly describes the early culture regions of the United States. The people comprising these regions were described in terms of the types of homes they lived in, what they did to carry on their livelihood, and the types of land on which they resided. Names denoting ethnic groups were not mentioned in the chapter. However, two of the eleven graphics were representative of Native Americans and one of the Spanish-speaking cultural groups. The Native American culture regions were mentioned only briefly. African American, Hispanic, and Asian cultures were not even mentioned. However, again, the researcher urges readers to remember the context in which the text was written and published--twenty-five years ago.

Oliver, C. & Sobel, R., eds. (1974). People in a changing world. Illinois: Laidlaw Brothers. .
"Business, Labor, and Government in the American Society,"
Unit IV, Chapter 4, pp. D60-D70.

The text of this chapter is not perceived as containing prejudicial content, except, perhaps, by underemphasis. The graphic content is clearly biased toward the mainstream. There are sixteen graphics in the chapter, eight of them contain elements of mainstream society only, one contains elements of nonmainstream society only, none represent elements of interaction between the two society groups, and seven are charts and graphs.

The mainstream graphics primarily relate to private business employers and employees and to workers in union settings. No minority representation is evident in these pictures. By this omission, one might logically think that minorities were not visible in these areas at this time--1974. The opposite was true. More blacks than ever before in history, were employed. Granted, not many were in highly visible positions, but they were viable components of the labor force and should have been included in the graphics.

Again, as must be the case with any type of content analysis, readers of this study are cautioned to remember the

context in which the textbook was written and published. At the time of publication, the United States were still trying to adjust to the changes brought by Civil Rights actions, and it was still hurting from the not-yet-ended Viet Nam War. It is conceivable, therefore, that editors and publishers deemed it prudent to avoid topics that might lead to even more controversy that could possibly adversely affect the nation. "People and Their Cultures," Unit III, Chapter 1, pp. A1-A26.

This chapter is prolific in its graphic and textual content regarding nonmainstream cultures in our society. In fact, the mainstream is virtually nonexistent in this chapter. Of the thirty-one graphics contained in the chapter, only one depicts mainstream society only, while twenty-one depict nonmainstream society. No illustrations show an interaction between mainstream and nonmainstream groups. Nine graphics are charts, graphs, and maps.

The chapter suggests for its indepth study section, reading about the effects of social classes and family structure upon our perceptions of others within society. While this is a viable objective, the educational benefits would have been greater if class discussions of these perceptions--and the problems that can develop when the validity of these perceptions is challenged by a discerning student--were included.

Summary

Eight chapters selected from eight social studies textbooks were analyzed in this study. Content (textual and graphic) was found to be prejudicial in six of the eight chapters. Most of this bias was by omission and underemphasis of information on controversial issues that have confronted our nation.

When comparing the total number of graphics, 184, with regards to mainstream and nonmainstream representations, the percentages were proportionate: 29% for the mainstream and 28% for the nonmainstream.

Again, the researcher urges caution to readers of this study, to remember the context in which these textbooks were written and published. The ones that exhibited more biased content were written and published in 1970 and 1974 respectively. The other two were written and published in 1992 and 1993 respectively, and contain less biased representation. The researcher asserts that the progress indicated in these two books are indicative of the increased awareness by textbook writers, editors, and publishers, of the importance of making instructional content relevant to all its users.

Table 5

Analysis of Graphic Content From Four Social Studies Textbooks

Chapter	Mainstream Only (#)	Nonmainstream Only (#)	Mainstream and Nonmainstream (#)	Graphics, charts, etc. (#)
<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>21</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>14</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7</u>
Total:	<u>55</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>61</u>

Overall percentage of mainstream depictions: 29%

Overall percentage of nonmainstream depictions: 28%

Overall percentage depicting interaction between
the two groups: 8%

Overall percentage depicting charts, graphs, etc. 33%

Total Graphics = 184

CONTENT ANALYSIS CURRICULUM GUIDES

Materials

Four curriculum guides from four area school districts were selected in the same fashion as the literature textbooks. They were examined for the inclusion of minority concerns. They are discussed in this section.

Curriculum Guide 1: Literature

This guide is representative of an eighth grade literature curriculum of the Goose Creek Independent School District at the time of its publication in 1984. The official textbooks of the district, at the time of publication, were Building English Skills (Chapter 16 - "Understanding Literature"), Adventures for readers, and counterpoint in literature.

Time limitations prevented the researcher from locating the above-mentioned books and conducting content analyses to determine whether they contained biased representations. However, a review of the information provided in the guide revealed no specific accommodations for nonmainstream learners. All of the objectives were written from a mainstream perspective.

Curriculum Guide 2: Literature

This guide is representative of the literature program for grades 6-12 in the Barber Hill Independent School District, at the time of guide publication in the fall of 1985. This guide clearly recognizes the diversities within Texas public schools. The recognition is evidenced by its inclusion of the following objective: "To recognize cultural attitudes and customs in literary selections" (p.1). Another objective that indicates multicultural inclusion is stated as: "To appreciate our varied heritage" (p.2).

This guide recognizes--by its inclusion of discussions on slang and idiomatic expressions--that other forms of English are spoken other than standard form. It is the way in which it refers to standard English--in its labeling and suggested usefulness--that the researcher finds highly objectionable. The guide described standard English as "front door" English, and intimated that by its usage, one has a distinct advantage for social and employment success (p.3). This stance says to the researcher that anyone failing to employ this concept of "front door" English is almost certainly destined to failure in social and career settings. That there is some truth in the concept does not make it any less offensive, especially from a minority perspective. This

objective displays an obvious lack of sensitivity toward nonmainstream segments of society.

Curriculum Guide 3: Literature

This guide is representative of the literature curriculum of Clear Creek Independent School District for grades 6-8, at the time of guide revision and publication in the summer of 1981.

This guide accommodates a variety of learning patterns. It states as a general objective to include "any additional selections to fit the needs of the class and the individual" (p.17).

The works on their list of required and suggested readings numbered approximately 100. Many of the authors and works were not known to the researcher. The number was too great to research for verification of nonmainstream elements. However, the list contained at least thirty authors and works that were readily identifiable as being representative of racial and gender minorities.

Curriculum Guide 4: Social Studies

This guide is representative of the social science program for grades 7-12 in the La Marque Independent School District at the time of publication in 1974.

Six of 21 objectives pertained to minority concerns, and some of them are questionable. For instance, one objective

referred to Native Americans as Indians and as being one of the "problems" that had to be solved before the Northwest Territory could be settled (p.23). There was no indication of admission that the Native Americans became a problem out of rebellion against the white man's encroachment upon land that belonged to Native Americans, until the white man came to fight them for it, eventually conquered the land and the landowners, then parcelled them off to reservations, making them prisoners in their own land.

There's only a cursory mention of slavery, one of the most heinous and controversial systems found in the annals of American history. The objective states that personal viewpoints of Southerners and Northerners clouded the interpretations of the factors that led to the Civil War, and that slavery was one of these factors.

This guide does little in the way of accommodating minority concerns. However, the researcher again cautions readers of this study to keep in mind the context in which this guide was written and published--over two decades ago.

Summary

The four curriculum guides reviewed included three in the discipline of literature and one for social studies. Two of the three literature curriculum guides made

provisions to accommodate the different learning styles often indicated in minority students. These two guides also made serious and successful efforts to include minorities in their required and suggested readings. Two guides were almost totally lacking in any clearly-evident efforts at minority inclusion and content relevance. These two guides were published in 1974 and 1984 respectively. While not attempting to excuse minority exclusion and underrepresentation in either publication, a plausible explanation can be provided for the former curriculum guide--it was compiled and published over two decades ago. No such explanation can be offered for the latter. It was published eleven years ago, barely more than a decade. Too many events and changes have transpired over the past decade regarding minorities, to have them virtually ignored in this publication. However, the researcher concedes that in all probability, this guide has undergone revision since 1984. The selection process may have precluded the updated versions, if there are any.

Of the four guides analyzed, the social studies guide displayed the greatest degree of bias toward the mainstream in its suggested realm of instructional materials.

However, this guide was compiled and published more than two decades ago. The very structure of the Texas Education Agency--with its mandatory multicultural course work for those aspiring to be teachers--and the state's textbook adoption process, make it highly unrealistic to believe that this guide has not been reformulated in twenty-one years.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to determine whether selected textbooks and curriculum guides contained fewer representations of nonmainstream groups than of mainstream groups. To facilitate this determination, content analyses were conducted on five literature textbooks, four social studies textbooks, and four curriculum guides. All of the preceding were made available through the Curriculum Library of the University of Houston at Clear Lake.

The analyses focused on ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status, with regard to textual and graphic content. A comparison of data, descriptive and numerical, which was obtained by reading and analyzing each item carefully, indicated a greater representation of mainstream society than of nonmainstream society. In the literary selections, the mainstream outweighed the nonmainstream 80% to 20%; in social studies, the results were proportionate: 29% mainstream, 28% nonmainstream. Of the four curriculum guides, two or 50% included nonmainstream representation, the remaining two or 50% were geared toward the mainstream.

DISCUSSION

The researcher holds great concern for the degree of bias contained within the materials analyzed. While some can possibly be explained, but not excused, because of the date of publication--some were published more than two decades ago--others cannot. Some have publication dates as recent as 1993. Yet, they failed to provide equitable inclusion of minority groups. However, in an effort to be fair, the researcher does concede that the social studies textbooks exhibit a far greater effort toward inclusion than do the literature textbooks. This is especially true of the two social studies textbooks that were published in 1992 and 1993 respectively. They show an increased awareness of and efforts toward recognizing and including those groups that fall outside the American mainstream. Still, there is much room for improvement.

The literature textbooks were sorely disappointing. The researcher fully expected to find a fairer and more proportionate minority representation in the textbooks in this discipline than in the social studies textbooks. The opposite was the case. The literary items analyzed indicated an overwhelming bias toward the mainstream. Of the 15 stories that were selected through systematic sampling, 12

or 80% pertained to the mainstream, while only 3 or 20% pertained to the nonmainstream. Considering the fact that many of these textbooks were targeted for Texas schools--in which exists a myriad of cultures, it was both surprising and disappointing to discover such disproportionate representation of one group over the other, especially in today's diverse academic society.

The researcher concedes that fifteen stories are not proportionately representative of all stories contained within the books. They were, however, sufficient to render the findings of this study that conclude, in concurrence with other studies, specifically Gillespie, et al (1994) and Bader and Eyia (1993), that bias toward the mainstream exist in some instructional materials.

It is hoped that more textbooks will go the way of the two social studies textbooks that were published in 1992 and 1993, which show a fairer representation of those groups outside the mainstream.

Comparison of Results With Previous Studies

The results of this study are similar to at least two others: Gillespie et al (1994) and Bader and Eyia (1993). The Gillespie group focused on 43 books of the popular Newbery Medal collection. Their goal was to determine and compare the ethnicity of characters with regard to the status of their role assignments: main, minor, and mentioned. The results were: Four blacks in main roles, ten in minor roles, and four mentioned. Hispanics held five main roles, two minor roles, and none were just mentioned. Asians held five main roles, two minor roles, and none were just mentioned. Native Americans held three main roles, five minor roles, and five received mention.

Nonmainstream society was clearly represented in the Newbery Medal collection. However, the status of their roles may denote some degree of bias.

In the Bader and Eyia study (1993), the focus was on determining the extent of nonmainstream inclusion in selections from an elementary literature series used in an adult remedial reading program. The researchers concluded that 72 or 60% of the 120 stories they analyzed, contained themes that were representative of nonmainstream society--more than a fair representation. Research patterns indicate

that a greater number of items to be evaluated yields a higher percentage of numerical data. The fact that 120 stories were evaluated by Bader and Eyia probably accounts for the high percentage of nonmainstream representation.

The results of the analysis on which this thesis is based, indicate that mainstream representation was far greater than that of nonmainstream representation. Of the fifteen authors represented, ten of them were from the American mainstream--white, middle-class males. The remaining five were representative of Hispanics (two), blacks (one), females (two). However, when graphic content of the social studies chapters were compared, it was discovered that the percentages were proportionate for both groups.

All three studies indicate that there is sufficient evidence to support the claim that bias toward the mainstream culture does exist in some curriculum and instructional content.

Limitations of Study

Although the results of this study may indeed be meaningful, the researcher cautions readers or emulators of this type of study, that it does impose limitations. The method of selection of materials, the availability of

materials, publication dates of materials, and the ever-present possibility of personal biases seeping through, all pose noteworthy limitations on the study. Still, the pursuit of the results can be most interesting and high informative.

The major limitations of this study lie in the number of items analyzed and the number of persons analyzing the content. One can only analyze a portion of the instructional materials used in our public school classrooms. Those selected for analysis may not be sufficiently representative of the whole range of materials in use. Too, the researcher alone, analyzed these materials. The information and ensuing results are those formulated by the researcher. Multiple reviewers, making the same observations and arriving at the same results, would have provided a greater degree of reliability.

Suggestions for Future Research

The focus on multicultural concerns is especially evident in the area of public education. The growing number of research studies being conducted on the topic are proof of this interest. Conducting content analyses on instructional materials is one method by which to gather relevant data on the topic. An extension of this process may include a comparison between textbooks before the integration of public schools and textbooks of today. Another suggestion to consider is a comparison of

instructional materials used in different regions of the country. The researcher realizes that such an undertaking would be costly in time and money. Still, it holds the promise for some interesting and significant research data.

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