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Who are We Missing?: Conducting a collections diversity audit in a liberal arts college library

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Abstract:

In the spring of 2021, Thomas Tredway Library at Augustana College (Rock Island, IL)¹ undertook an audit of the library's print book collection to determine if there were gaps in representation of the voices of authors of differing races/ ethnicities; genders; or sexual orientations. With the results of this audit, Augustana librarians now have a better understanding of which voices and perspectives are missing and/or underrepresented in the print collection. This article documents the audit methodology; shares the results; and provides suggestions and a toolkit for other libraries to use in audits of their own.

Keywords: diversity audit; library collections; representation; sense of belonging; academic libraries

INTRODUCTION

“Collections are representations of what librarians (or faculty) deem to be authoritative knowledge and as we know, this field and educational institutions, historically, and currently, have been sites of whiteness.”²

-Leung, Whiteness as Collections

Support to students in academic libraries is often viewed through the lens of instruction, programming, workshops, research consultations, and other forms of direct engagement. However, viewing support through these lenses fails to fully account for ways in which library collections provide another avenue for such student support. The availability of an array of inclusive physical books, ebooks, periodicals, databases, zines, and more, can all contribute to a student's sense of belonging on their college campus and within the library; especially as faculty and librarians emphasize the importance of using authoritative and credible library resources in assignments and research. If underrepresented students do not see resources written by authors from similar backgrounds or identities to their own, it is implied that their voices and experiences are not viewed as authoritative and credible, and therefore do not belong in an academic library.

¹ Augustana College was founded in 1860 by Swedish settlers. It is a private, Lutheran, liberal arts college, and is a residential campus that is home to approximately 2,500 students annually. The college's library, Tredway Library, is located in the heart of the Augustana campus and houses over 100,000 physical books.

² Leung, Sofia. “Whiteness as Collections.” September 30, 2019.
<https://www.sofiayleung.com/thoughts/whiteness-as-collections>.

In the spring of 2021, Thomas Tredway Library at Augustana College undertook an audit of the library's print book collection - both general resources and the children's collections - to see if there were gaps in representation of the voices of authors of differing races/ ethnicities; genders, and sexual orientations. With the results of this audit, Augustana librarians now have a better understanding of which voices and perspectives are missing and/or underrepresented in the print collection, as well as how successful the library has been in meeting its goal of developing an inclusive collection of resources as set by the library's Strategic Plan. The goal of gathering this information was to help better select materials to not only assist Augustana students with their research needs, but also to provide materials that offer solidarity and increase their sense of belonging and representation in the library. As part of Tredway Library's mission to support the campus community at Augustana College, the researchers felt it was important to ensure that the Augustana library collection, specifically the physical collection, was representative of the college's student groups and the society they will continue to interact with after they leave Augustana College. It is vital that students hear a multitude of voices representing a variety of communities to see a multitude of thoughts and experiences that exist in the world around them. It is equally vital that students from marginalized communities see themselves represented in the library's physical collections in order to increase their sense of belonging in the library as a whole.

Before going further in this article, it is important to express how the authors of this article (who designed and led the diversity audit) identify as individuals. María identifies as a heterosexual, cisgendered, able-bodied, multiracial woman. Lauryn identifies as a heterosexual, cisgendered, able-bodied, caucasian woman. The authors think it is important to state their identities since they play a role in the influences and privileges in their lives, and show the lenses through which they designed the audit, made decisions, and worked through the challenges it presented.

While this diversity audit was done at a small, liberal arts college, the researchers believe that the audit can be adapted for use by different types of libraries and bigger library collections. At the end of this article, the researchers include suggestions for other libraries to consider if they want to conduct a similar audit.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Proctor (2020, 224) states that "Collections, as well as the way libraries classify and organize collections, need to reflect that libraries value content from and about multiple perspectives because they are important parts of the services libraries offer." Yet how librarians view their collections, as well as their role in developing collections that are inclusive of a plethora of perspectives, vary widely. In conducting a review of previous libraries who have chosen to

undertake a similar audit of their collections, the authors of this article ultimately discovered a variety of different processes of assessment; often varying based on the type of library, the type of collection being audited, or the strategic goals of a particular library. Nevertheless, the authors have identified two emerging considerations that all audits within the literature had to contend with in order to undertake such a review, specifically: considerations of how to choose the focuses of diversity audits; as well as considerations of how to form a methodology to effectively and accurately undertake such auditing processes.

Consideration #1: Choosing a Focus

Literature from public, academic, and school libraries were reviewed prior to the start of Tredway Library's audit, identifying authors with a variety of focuses within the audits of their collections.

Both Bogan (2019) at Great Valley High School Library and Jorgenson and Burress (2020) focused on auditing two factors within their collections - the authors themselves, as well as the main character(s) of books and other resources within their libraries. However, they focused on considerably different sample sizes. Bogan (2019) audited their entire school library collection, while Jorgenson and Burress (2020) audited just the top 100 checked-out titles. Mortensen (2019) from Skokie Public Library took a similar approach in focusing on both the author and the content of the work in their library's collection. However, they analyzed their collections based on items used in specific library programs that are popular in their library community, specifically story time, film screenings, and book discussions.

Librarians from academic libraries diverged more on the focuses of their audits; which the authors found to often be related to the author's librarian position, collection development areas, or even the size of the library's collections. Most of the audits from academic libraries were conducted at large institutions where it made sense to focus on smaller portions of the library's resources instead of the entire collection; especially considering many of these institutions were sizable enough to have resources distributed across multiple libraries.

Stone (2020), for example, limited their audit to the playwrights from the University of California Irvine library's play collection; while Proctor (2020) focused on auditing the Penn State University Libraries collections for LGBTQ subject headings and content, and chose not to look at the authors themselves. Kristick (2020), meanwhile, assessed their library collection at Oregon State University by comparing how many titles they owned to curated lists of titles that had won diversity awards; before then comparing their collections to those of peer institutions. This is commonly referred to as a reverse-audit, in which library collections are directly compared to curated lists of award-winning or otherwise notable books in a particular resource category and is a common means of conducting an audit on a smaller-scale.

Consideration #2: Determining Audit Methodologies

Just as there were different focuses on diversity audits, the authors found a variety of different approaches in methodologies for data gathering and assessment within the audit. A main concern in all of the literature reviewed was the libraries' desires to craft an audit that was manageable in terms of scope and time commitment for all participants. Additionally, many libraries were also interested in direct comparisons as a means of assessment - some compared their holdings of diverse titles to their peer institutions (Proctor, 2020; Kristick, 2020); while others looked at their student population to see how the audit results compared to their student body (Jorgenson and Burress, 2020).

Academic libraries had different approaches to generating the list(s) of titles they would ultimately audit in their studies from their broader library collections. As stated previously, focusing on specific library programs (Mortensen, 2019), or sections of their collections (Stone, 2020; Proctor, 2020; Bogen, 2020) were common tactics to create a more manageable audit; but many libraries limited their scope by more than one factor, often including things such as publication date or program dates (Stone, 2020; Mortensen, 2019); usage counts to assess only the most used items within a specific academic year (Jorgenson); specific subject terms (Proctor, 2020); publishers (Stone, 2020), or even specific genres (Jorgenson and Burress, 2020).

Kristick (2020) generated their list of titles by reviewing lists of diversity-related book awards and comparing their library's holdings to such lists as well as to their peer institutions. Part of the reasoning behind this was that they believed award winning books "...are more likely to be quality titles," (Kristick, 2020, 153). Proctor (2020, 230) has a very similar reasoning with their use of award-winning LGBTQ books, since it helped them to see if their library "held specific titles that had been recognized by established organizations as literature with value within the context of LGBTQ content." While this can be an interesting method of comparison between the library's collections and lists of award winners, the authors of this article took issue with this form of reasoning; believing that it may inadvertently imply that if diverse books are not award winning, then they are lacking in credibility, authority, quality, and value. If only award-winning books are considered the "must-haves" to include in a library collection, it further implies to underrepresented students that they only belong if they meet a certain threshold.

Once the auditing library had narrowed in its pool of resources to a manageable level, the next step was to determine what information would be assessed. For many libraries, this involved determining what information about the authors themselves would be assessed within the audit (Bogan, 2020; Jorgenson and Burress, 2020; Mortensen, 2019; Stone, 2020). Generally speaking, these audits tended to seek out author information in very similar ways, specifically by searching for sources that would contain information from the author directly (social media, blog posts, author websites, interviews, op-eds by authors, etc.); and occasionally secondary sources where the information could have been vetted and corrected by the author (college or university

profiles; organizational profiles; publishers websites, etc). Occasionally, third party sources such as critic reviews, Wikipedia, or obituaries were also used to learn about the identities of the authors, but in as limited of a capacity as possible. Many studies, this one included, chose to add additional categories of “unknown” when insufficient information was given from the author directly or a source close to the author (Stone, 2020; Jorgenson and Burrell, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

For Tredway Library’s audit, the researchers chose not to assess the collection for diverse *topics*, but instead focus on the authors and voices contained within the collection. It is important for the materials to cover a wide array of topics and relate to the college curriculum; however, if the majority of a library’s materials are from authors with similar experiences and backgrounds, it excludes other equally valid experiences and perspectives. Because of this, the researchers focused on the authors themselves to determine the extent to which Tredway Library had reached the goal of building an inclusive collection of voices within Augustana’s physical collections, as set by the library’s Strategic Plan; and to ultimately assess within the collection whose voices are available for students to use for their research and personal use.

Focus

The researchers decided that the Tredway audit would focus on three parts of an author's identity that may give them a unique perspective on the topic(s) they chose to write about: their gender, their sexuality, and their race and ethnicity. This audit did not include the many other layers of identity that could contribute to an author’s individual perspective, such as disability (visible and invisible), neurodivergence, socioeconomic status, religion, etc. The researchers of this article chose gender, sexuality, and race and ethnicity as identity components the authors would most likely self-identify; or would be available from secondary sources that the author could most likely edit.

It is important to note that the process of organizing humans into fixed categories from a third person perspective is a complicated process. It creates a lot of challenges and is also at times deeply uncomfortable. In addition to this, the very concept of labeling something or someone as ‘diverse’ is looking at them through a predominantly white lens. The authors and other audit participants endeavored to do the best they could with the information before them, but unconscious bias can and does play a part in this, which is why it is crucial to rely on author self-identification as much as it is available. These included primarily sources such as authors’ social media accounts; personal statements and dedications within the books themselves; personal blogs; speaking engagements; LinkedIn profiles; author interviews; etc. Occasionally, secondary sources were included if there was a reasonable likelihood that the author could have

changed the incorrect information, or it came from a source the researchers still knew to be close to the author: sources such as Publishers' author biographies, faculty biographies on college/university websites, organizational profiles, and so forth. A myriad of sources were consulted to determine if each author ever identified their gender pronouns, their race and ethnicity, and/or their relationships or sexuality. In particular, social media has made this process of self-identification much more common, so the researchers made particular use of features such as Twitter's Advanced Search to search for relevant terms across many years' worth of content posted by author(s) within Tredway's collection.

In order to make the audit manageable in terms of size, the researchers chose a portion of Tredway Library's total collection to audit. Using the criteria listed below, the total number of materials assessed within this audit was 6,465 items.

In order to be audited, the material needed to be:

- A physical book;
- Part of the library's permanent collection;
- Written by a single author; and
- Published 2000-present (no reprints).

This study did not audit:

- The reference collection;
- Leisure books³;
- Self-care books;
- Zine collection;
- DVDs;
- Works by multiple authors or edited volumes.

Reports of items that fit these criteria were created in the library's Integrated Library Software (ILS), which were compiled into a Google spreadsheet and distributed to invited participants.⁴

Auditing Process

While the authors of this article designed and led the audit, the librarians of Augustana College, one staff member, and four student workers ultimately helped complete the audit. An initial meeting was held before the audit took place among the participating librarians to discuss tactics

³ Tredway Library's leisure collection is leased as part of a McNaughton Lease Subscription Program from Brodart Books. While a certain percentage of these resources may be selected for addition into the permanent collection, most are only temporarily available to students and are rotated out. The items that have been purchased and added to the permanent collection are included in this audit, however, the majority of the leisure collection are not owned by the library and have been excluded from the audit.

⁴ For more information on the spreadsheet used, see the toolkit provided towards the end of this article.

and develop a consistent methodology that is detailed below. Student workers involved in the audit received additional training from one of the librarians to ensure consistency in data gathering, and the same librarian checked in with the students periodically to make sure they understood the process and to determine if they had any questions or concerns along the way. In the case of uncertainty, unclear records were noted and ultimately routed through the project leads for second opinion or final determinations. Everyone involved attended meetings held throughout the audit to discuss any problematic issues or questions that arose during the process.

Assessing Gender

The researchers prioritized making gender determinations based on the pronouns directly stated by the authors or used when referring to themselves. When pronouns were not directly available from the authors themselves, determinations would be made from secondary sources the author had a reasonable likelihood of being able to change if incorrect (i.e. College or University faculty bios, 'About the Author' bios from publishers, etc).

The researchers began the auditing process for gender by drafting a list of pronouns that could be anticipated in the collection, but deliberately built in flexibility to add additional pronouns to the data were they to encounter an author whose pronouns did not fit into the categories initially provided to those completing the audit. The category of "unknown" was also included for authors that did not have sufficient information to determine their gender or sexuality. If this information was unknown, then it can be assumed that the book was added to the collection without the identity of the author being part of the criteria for selecting the material. Author identity is an implied part of building an inclusive collection as set by the goals of the library's Strategic Plan.

An important note with the use of pronouns is that the researchers were unable at this point to further break down this statistic into determinations such as cisgender or transgender. This is an excellent example of the researchers' previous statements regarding the difficulties of organizing humans into fixed categories from a third person perspective. Pronouns were easiest to document, but pronouns do not signify if an individual is cisgender or transgender. If an author self-identified as transgender, this information was recorded separately within the audit.

Assessing Sexuality

Sexuality is fluid, and as such categories for assessing an author's sexuality brought about a significant amount of early discussion as the audit participants determined how to best assess this factor. Ultimately, the decision was made to base the assessment on whether the authors self-identified as being in an opposite sex relationship (OSR), a same sex relationship (SSR); or if they specifically identified as being part of the LGBTQA+ community. The researchers felt it important to separate the categories as such, since the author's identification of the gender of a

single partner does not necessarily indicate what they may consider their overall sexuality to be. Authors were therefore only further categorized into a more specific category (i.e. bisexual, asexual, pansexual), if they specifically self-identified as such. Nevertheless, the majority of authors audited did not indicate if they were in a relationship or how they identified their sexuality, in which case, they were placed in the “unknown” category. If this information was unknown or unavailable, the determination was made that the book was added to the collection without the identity of the author being part of the criteria for selecting the material.

It is important to note that the researchers relied on authors to self-identify in order to be categorized, and a considerable number of authors chose not to provide this information or chose to only indicate their relationship status. With this incomplete information, the possibility of erasure is high within the data - particularly for bisexual and pansexual authors. OSR and SSR declarations may imply heterosexual or homosexual identities, but individuals in either could easily fall into another sexual identity, hence why the researchers chose not to attempt to further classify beyond the OSR and SSR levels in these instances. This amounts to a considerable limitation in the conclusions that can be reached from the data available for this study.

Additionally, the results did not include any authors that self-identified as heterosexual, despite what the researchers believe to be reasonable assumptions that a large percentage of the authors in the collection are heterosexual. This further amounts to another erasure in the data, as these authors are likely either accounted for in the OSR results or in the ‘unknown’ category, rather than in a heterosexual category as would have been created if any of the authors had explicitly identified as such.

It is further important to note that the researchers included transgender authors in this section of this audit, despite the fact that transgender is not a sexuality. It is, however, grouped in the broader LGBTQA+ umbrella term. Transgender belongs more accurately in the gender category, however it was unable to be included in this category of the study since the researchers relied on pronouns to assess gender, which as previously stated do not often indicate whether an individual is cisgender or transgender. Meanwhile, transgender authors may prefer to broadly identify as LGBTQA+. Therefore, the researchers made the ultimate decision to keep transgender authors as part of the LGBTQA+ category, despite transgender not being a sexuality.

Assessing Race and ethnicity

To determine the race and ethnicity of an author, this audit again looked to see if the author self-identified their race and ethnicity in primary sources (their social media accounts, personal websites, blog posts, speaking engagements, or other similar contexts). If they did not self-identify, the audit participants looked for additional contextual clues from secondary sources.

As with all of the study categories, the audit participants made sure to not determine race and ethnicity solely from images. Sometimes authors can present as a particular race and ethnicity or gender but may identify as something else. Images are also where user bias would be most prominent, so it was essential that other context would be provided in addition to an image of the author.

The researchers categorized race and ethnicity into the following⁵:

- White (non-Hispanic or Latinx)
- American Indian/ Alaskan Native/ First Nations/ Native American
- Asian/ Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander/ South Asian/Southeast Indian
- Black/ Afro-American/ Afro-Caribbean
- Latinx/ Hispanic/ Chicano
- Middle Eastern
- Biracial/ Multiracial
- Unknown

It is important to include biracial and multiracial authors as their own separate category. The experiences of biracial and multiracial authors will be different from all of the other categories included and should be acknowledged for the experiences and perspectives they bring to the collection. A 2015 study by the Pew Research Center about multiracial Americans states that experiences for multiracial people “...differ significantly depending on the races that make up their background and how the world sees them,” (Parker et. al, 2015). Pew Research believes that 6.9% of adult Americans identify as multiracial; and according to the Admissions Office at Augustana College, 3.5% of students identified as 2 or more races in 2019. With more students identifying as biracial or multiracial, it is important to specifically acknowledge their identities and experiences.

This audit also included the category of “unknown” for authors that did not have sufficient information to make a decision about their race and ethnicity. If the author was unknown, then it was assumed that the book was added to the collection without the identity of the author being part of the criteria for selecting the material.

RESULTS

After having set criteria for inclusion in the study, the audit ultimately examined 6,465 books contained within the library’s permanent collection. This includes both the general collection and children’s books that are owned by the library.

⁵ The categories used for race and ethnicity, as well as those for gender and sexuality, were adapted from the Lee & Low Books survey of diversity in the publishing industry.
<https://blog.leeandlow.com/2020/01/28/2019diversitybaselinesurvey/>

Mention of the children's collection is important at this stage as the children's collection often differed from the trends seen in the broader permanent collection of the library; oftentimes representing the most diverse resources the researchers examined. As such, the results below will contain two representations of the data for each category. The first representation will be the total results of all resources audited (n = 6,465), and the second will be a side-by-side comparison of the results of the children's collection (n = 922) versus the rest of the general collection excluding children's resources (n = 5,543).

Unless their program of study involves working with children, many, if not most, college students are not likely to make use of the children's collection; and while children's books may have usefulness as academic resources, they are unlikely to be used in research or scholarship at the college. The researchers therefore view the results of the general collection audit minus the children's book collection as the greatest indicator of the distribution of the resources most likely to be accessed and used by students at Augustana.

Gender

Of the 6,465 books that fit the criteria for this audit, this audit determined that 4,155 (64.3%) were written by authors with pronouns of he/him.

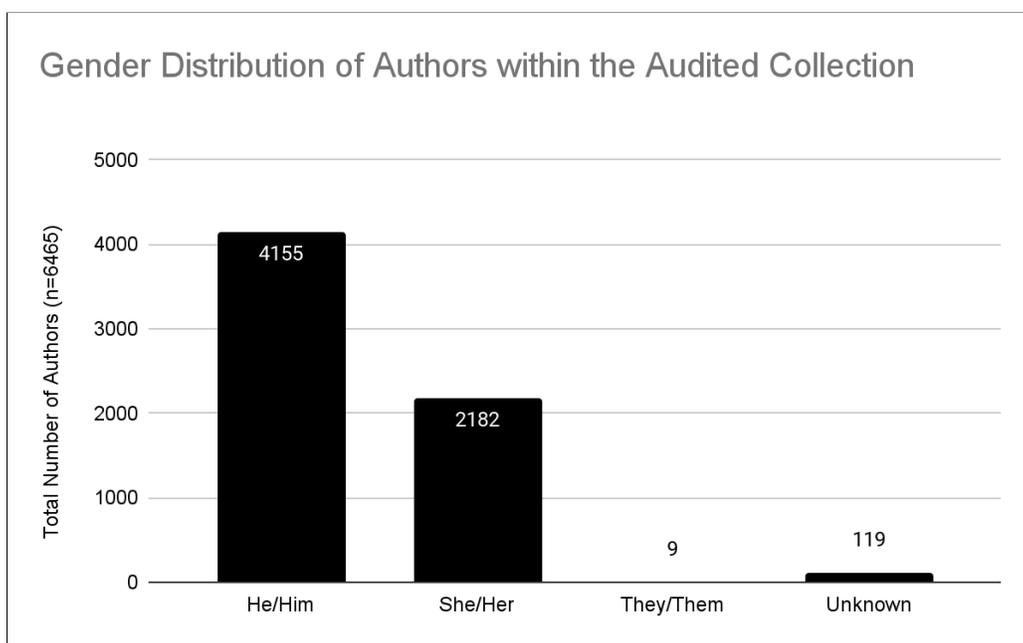


Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Authors within the Entire Audited Collection

A further 2,182 (33.8%) of the resources were written by authors with pronouns of she/her. Just 9 of the authors in the total collection were identified as having pronouns of they/them,

representing far less than 1% of the resources audited (0.14%); while a further 119 (1.8%) of the authors were not able to be identified due to insufficient information.

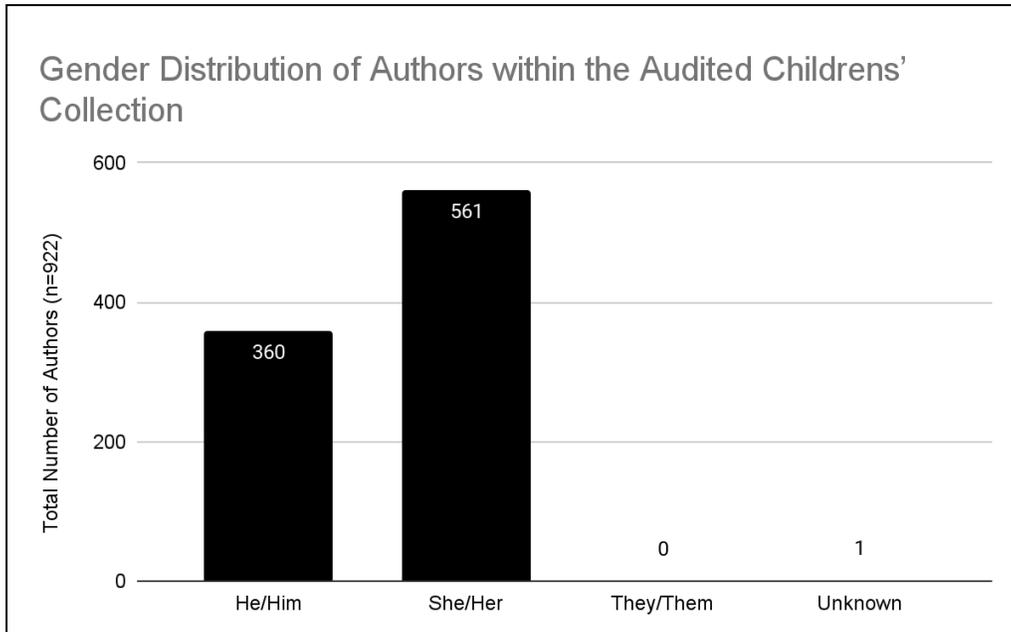


Figure 2a: Gender Distribution of Authors within the Audited children's Collection at Tredway Library.

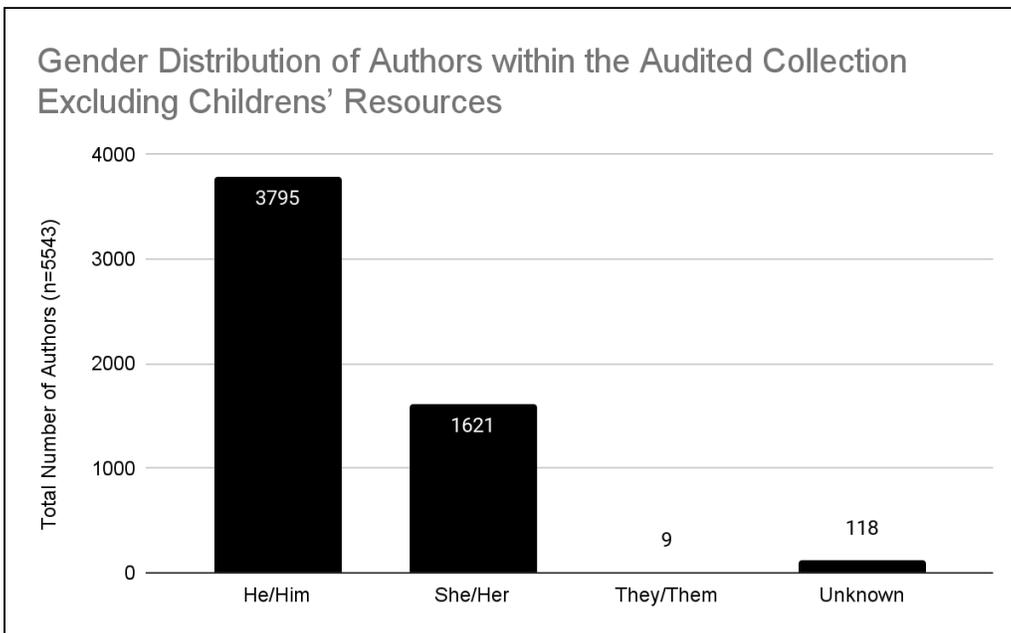


Figure 2b: Gender Distribution of Authors within the Audited Collection Excluding children's Resources

The gap between the total number of authors with he/him pronouns and she/her pronouns is lessened slightly by the influence of the children's book collection. The audit found that the children's book collection at Tredway library had significantly more representation of authors with pronouns of she/her than the rest of the collection, with 561 out of 922 (60.84%) authors having she/her pronouns. In comparison, the total number of authors with pronouns of he/him in the children's collection stood at 360 out of 922 (39.04%). However, there were zero authors with pronouns of they/them in the children's collection that were identified in this audit.

Excluding children's books, however, the library's general academic collection consisted of 5,543 items audited, 3,795 (68.4%) of which were written by authors with pronouns of he/him. 1,621 (29.2%) were written by authors with pronouns of she/her. All 9 of the authors identified with pronouns of they/them were in the general collection, representing 0.16% of this collection.

Sexuality

When it came to assessing diversity in the sexualities of the authors in Tredway's collection, there were significantly more authors for whom there was insufficient information. Of the 6,465 books audited, 3,970 (61.40%) were not able to be determined. Of the remaining authors, the audit further found that 2,363 (36.55%) were in an opposite-sex relationship.

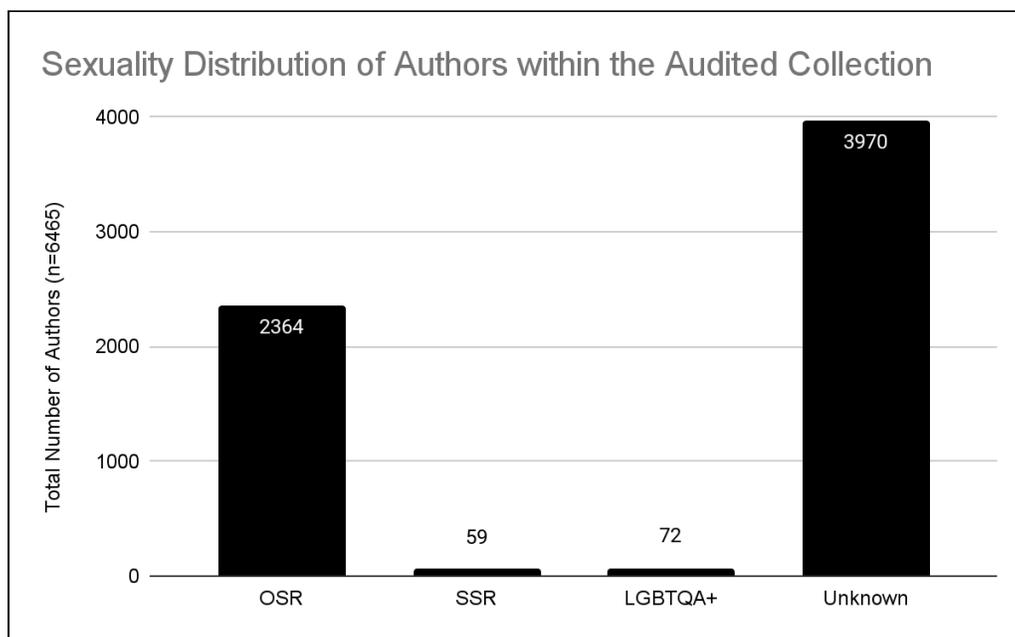


Figure 3: Sexuality Distribution of Authors within the Audited Collection

A total of 73 (1.13%) authors in the collection self-identified as being LGBTQA+. A further 59 (0.91%) of the authors were in a same-sex relationship, yet did not expressly self-identify as being LGBTQA+. As was the case with the gender distribution of the collection, the children's

books were slightly more diverse than the rest of the general collection, with 17 (1.84%) of the 922 children's authors identifying as LGBTQA+, and a further 15 (1.63%) being in a same-sex relationship without self-identifying as LGBTQA+.

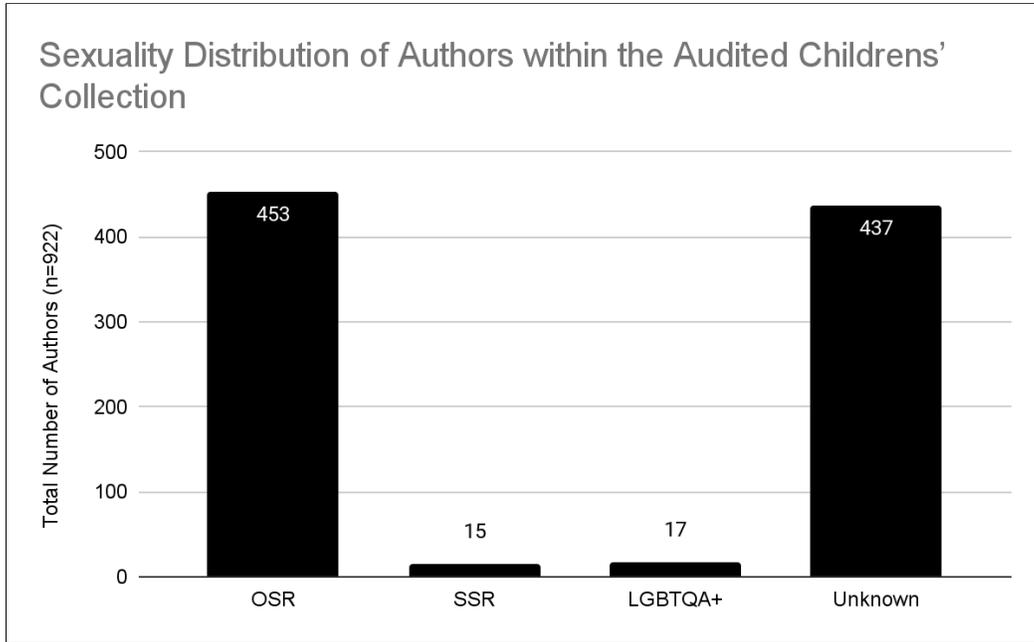


Figure 4a: Sexuality Distribution of Authors within the Audited children's Collection

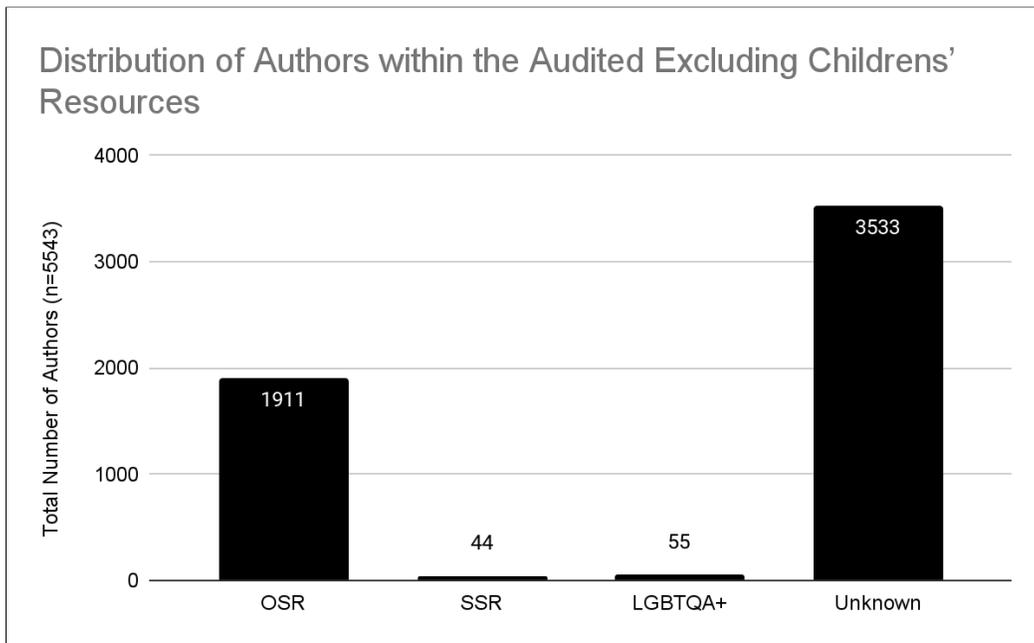


Figure 4b: Sexuality Distribution of Audited Collections, Excluding children's Collections

There were 922 authors audited within the children's book collections, 437 (47.40%) were unable to be determined. A further 453 (49.1%) identified an opposite-sex relationship, while just 15 (1.63%) identified a same-sex relationship. A further 17 (1.84%) identified as LGBTQA+.

Excluding the children's resources from the totals, the data showed that 3,533 (63.7%) of the 5,543 remaining authors were unable to be determined, while a further 1,910 (34.5%) of the authors were in opposite-sex relationships. Just 56 (1.0%) of the authors in the rest of the general collection identified as LGBTQA+ and an additional 44 (0.8%) of the authors were in same-sex relationships without this further self-identification.

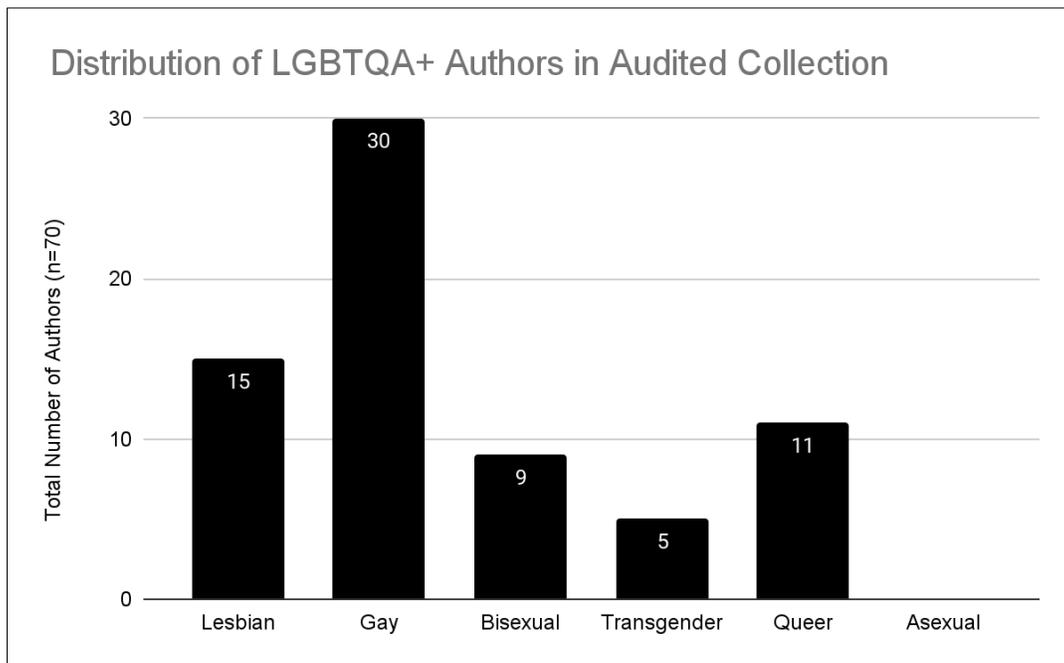


Figure 5: Distribution of LGBTQA+ Authors in Audited Collection

In considering the 73 LGBTQA+ authors in the total collection, 15 (0.23% of total) identified as lesbian and 30 (0.46% of total) identified as gay. There were 9 (0.14% of total) bisexual authors. There were 5 (0.08% of total) transgender authors. Additionally, there were 11 (0.17% of total) authors who identified as queer.

Race and Ethnicity

Of the 6,465 books audited in this study, the study found that 4,615 (71.38%) were written by white, non-Hispanic or Latinx authors. Meanwhile, 865 (13.38%) were written by Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), biracial, or multi-racial authors. A further 985 (15.24%) of the authors were unable to be determined due to insufficient information.

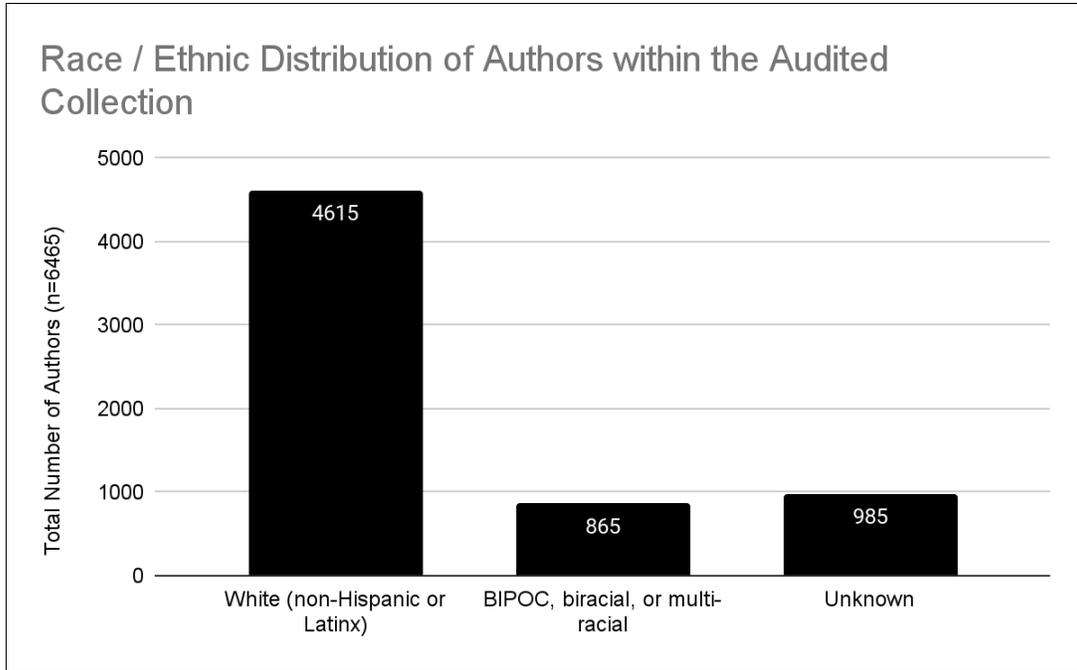


Figure 6: Race / Ethnic Distribution of Authors within the Audited Collection

As was the case with the rest of the collection, the children's resources were far more diverse than any of the other resources the researchers examined. Of the 922 children's resources contained within the previous total, 566 (61.39%) were written by white, non-Hispanic or Latinx authors. However, 205 (22.23%) were written by BIPOC, biracial, or multi-racial authors - a significantly larger percentage than in the general collection. Meanwhile, a further 151 (16.38%) of these authors were unable to be determined.

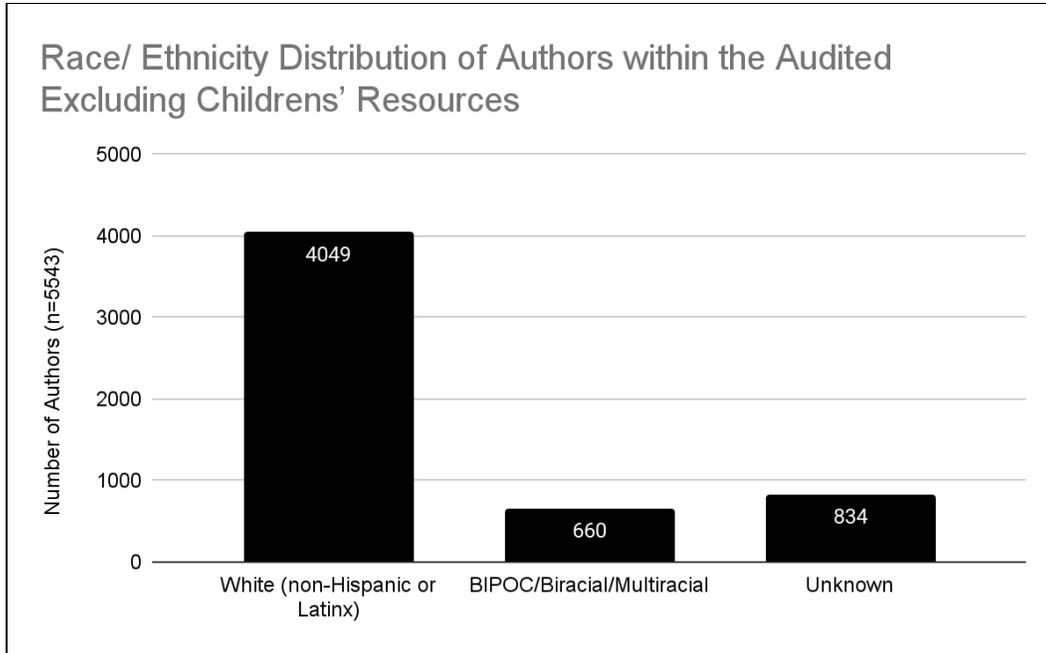


Figure 7b: Race/ Ethnicity Distribution of Authors within the Audited Excluding children's Resources

Excluding the children's resources from the general collection then, the study found that 4,049 (73.05%) of the 5,543 remaining resources were written by white, non-hispanic of latinx authors; while 660 (11.91%) were written by BIPOC, biracial, or multi-racial authors. 834 (15.05%) were unable to be determined.

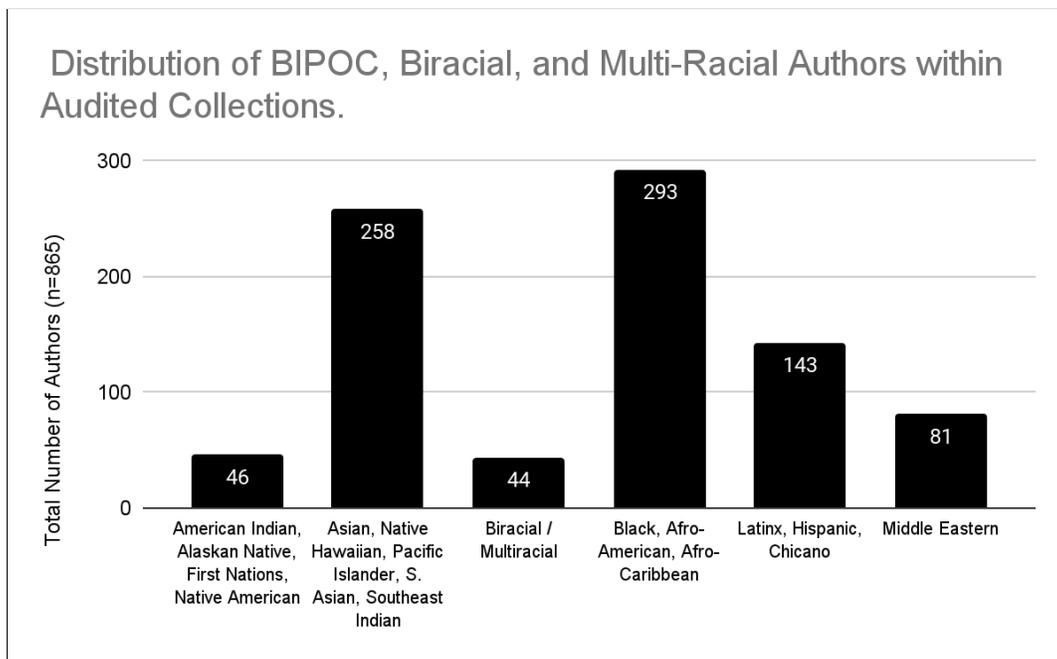


Figure 8: Distribution of BIPOC, Biracial, and Multi-Racial Authors within Audited Collections.

Taking the total collection's 865 (13.38%) BIPOC, biracial, or multi-racial authors into consideration, the researchers further sought to determine the distribution of the voices within this incredibly broad category to determine which perspectives were best or least represented in Augustana's collection. The study's distribution found that 293 (4.53% of collection) of the works audited were written by Black, Afro-American, or Afro-Caribbean authors; while a further 258 (3.99% of collection) were written by Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, S. Asian, or Southeast Indian authors.

There were 143 (2.21% of collection) resources in the collection written by Latinx, Hispanic, or Chicano authors; while a further 81 (1.25% of collection) were written by Middle Eastern authors. Works by American Indian, Alaskan Native, First Nations, or Native American authors numbered just 46 (0.71% of collection) in the collection; while works by Biracial or Multi-racial authors numbered 44 (0.68% of collection) of the collection.

TREDWAY LIBRARY'S WORK POST-AUDIT

The report identifying resources in the Augustana College library physical collection was first created on December 15, 2020. The diversity audit was completed between January and May of 2021. However, over the course of that time, Augustana librarians were continuing to purchase new materials for the library's collections, while simultaneously having their attention on this project. As such, the researchers thought it would be valuable to separately assess the distribution of the resources added since the start of this project, bearing in mind recent efforts by Augustana librarians to develop more diverse inclusive collections.

When taking into account the same criteria that was used to audit the original report, a total of 193 books were added to the collection between January and May of 2021 (for Augustana College, the spring semester ends in May).

Gender

Of the 193 newly added books, the study found that 101 (52.33%) were written by authors with pronouns of he/him, while 91 (47.15%) were written by authors with pronouns of she/ her. Just 1 (0.52%) of the resources added was written by an author with pronouns of they/them. This represented a considerably higher percentage of authors using the pronouns of she/her than in the original audit - approximately 13.35% higher. The percentage of authors using they/them pronouns was slightly higher in the new resources than in the original audit - approximately 0.38% higher.

Sexuality

As was the case in the larger audit, when it came to assessing diversity in the sexualities of the authors in newly acquired resources, there were still significantly more authors for whom the researchers had insufficient information. Of the 193 books added since the start of the audit, 107 (55.44%) were unable to be determined. A further 80 (41.45%) were in opposite-sex relationships.

5 (2.59%) of the works recently purchased were by authors who identified as LGBTQA+, with 1 (0.52%) of the additional resources being written by an author in a same-sex relationship. Of the authors who identified as LGBTQA+, 3 (1.55%) identified as queer, while one author identified as gay (0.52%) and another is transgender (0.52%). The total percentage of authors identifying as LGBTQA+ was only slightly higher than in the original audit.

Race and Ethnicity

Of the 193 books added, 106 (54.92%) were written by white, non-hispanic or latinx authors. Meanwhile, 76 (39.38%) were written by BIPOC, biracial, or multi-racial authors. A further 11 (5.70%) were unable to be determined due to insufficient information.

On the whole, the total representation of BIPOC, biracial, or multi-racial authors rose significantly in this time period - by as much as 12.01%. Of the 76 works written by BIPOC, biracial, or multi-racial authors, 49 (25.39% of total) were written by Black, Afro-American, or Afro-Caribbean authors. 9 of the resources (4.66% of total) were written by Asian, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, S. Asian, or Southeast Indian authors. 7 of the resources (3.63% of total) were written by biracial or multi-racial authors. There were a further 5 resources (2.59% of total) by American Indian, Alaskan Native, First Nations, or Native American authors; and a further 5 resources (2.59% of total) by Latinx, Hispanic, or Chicano authors. There was just 1 (0.52% of total) resource written by a Middle Eastern author.

DISCUSSION

The results of this diversity audit were intended to help librarians develop a better understanding of whose voices and perspectives are represented in Tredway Library's collections and whose voices may be missing and/or underrepresented. The results were intended also to provide insight as to whether or not the library was meeting the goal of its Strategic Plan regarding building an inclusive collection.

In order to answer this core question, we sought to compare the distribution of the voices in the collection to the U.S. population as a whole, using U.S. Census data from 2019. Census data is

not a direct or accurate overview to the U.S. population since it undercounts the Black and Latinx or Hispanic populations (Wang, 2019), as well as excludes certain populations such as Middle Eastern; however, it can give us a point of reference to see if the library’s collections approximately align with the nation’s population. We chose not to compare to Augustana College’s population because the researchers wanted the collection to be reflective of the society that many of the Augustana students would interact with after their college experience.

Nevertheless, Census data from 2019 shows that 60.1% of the U.S. population were White, non-Hispanic or Latinx; 18.5% identified as Hispanic or Latinx; 13.4% of the population identified as Black or African-American; 6.1% as Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; 2.8% as two or more races; and 1.3% as American Indian and Alaskan Native. Middle Eastern is not a category identified in the U.S. Census.

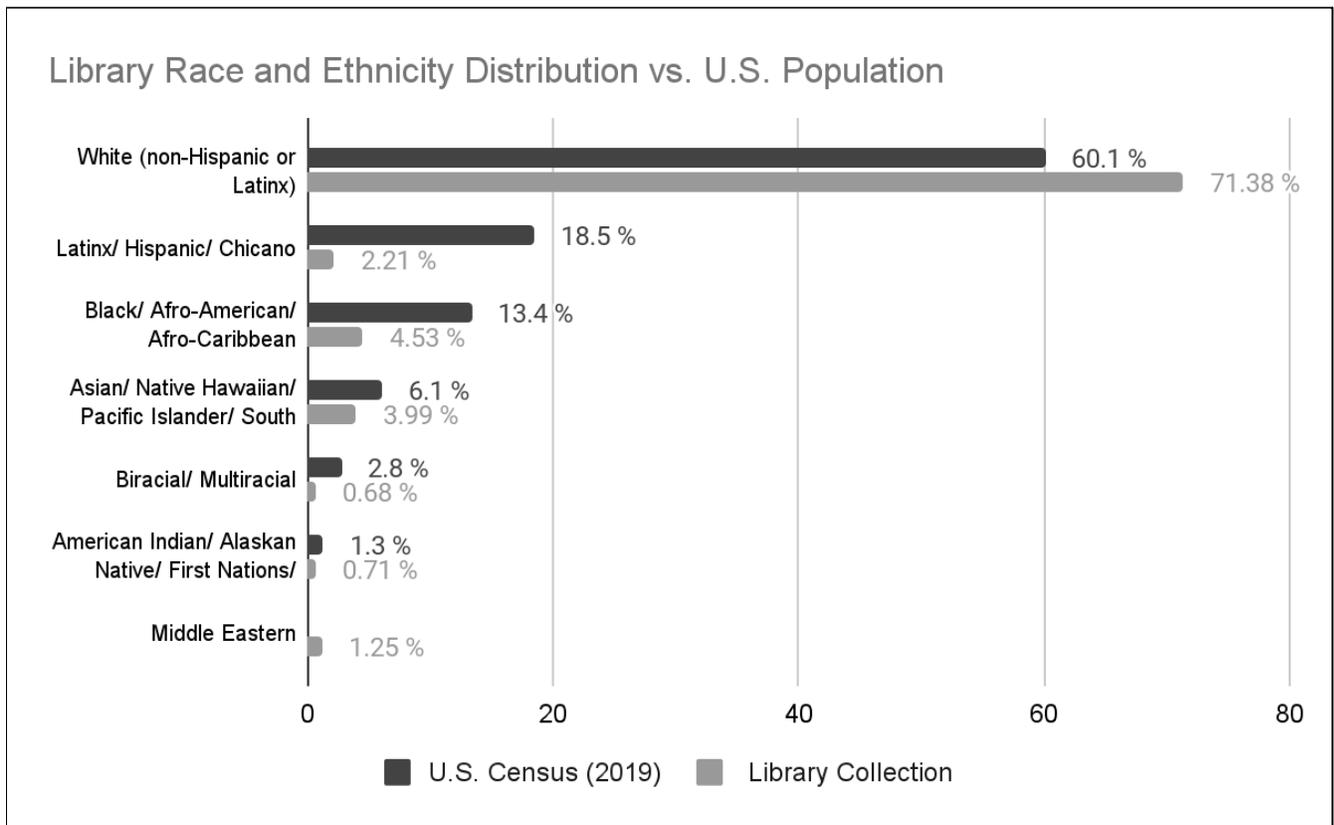


Figure 9: Tredway Library’s Race and Ethnicity Distribution Compared to U.S. Population (U.S. Census, 2019)

Census data at this time does not include information about a person’s sexuality. Nor does it contain information about gender beyond a binary of male or female. An equal comparison between U.S. Census data and Tredway Library’s collections cannot be made for this data. Nevertheless, the data shows that White, non-Hispanic and Latinx authors are overrepresented in

Tredway Library's collection compared to national populations. This was the only category in which Tredway's collection was equal to or higher than the national average.

In terms of collection development, this information provides data to help guide collection development priorities for the future. It provides a general overview of the distribution of voices within the collection, and an avenue for determining which areas need more representation and attention. However, this data is helpful not only for collection development, but also with other components of librarianship - such as instruction and outreach. Students are expected to research the authors of works they cite in their research, and libraries strive for students to enter the library and view the books in the physical spaces of the library. The availability of a variety of inclusive physical books, ebooks, periodicals, databases, zines, and more, can all contribute to a student's sense of belonging on their college campus and within the library; especially as faculty and librarians emphasize the importance of using authoritative and credible library resources in assignments and research. If underrepresented students do not see resources written by authors from similar backgrounds or identities to their own, it is implied that their voices and experiences are not viewed as authoritative and credible; therefore, the authors of these materials do not belong in an academic library. It also helps to ensure that a variety of voices are present from these variety of backgrounds and identities, since one voice alone will not necessarily speak for every person who shares that identity or who comes from a similar background.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work should not be done once, but instead woven into every part of librarianship. A diversity audit is just one example of this work, but it is one that can help continue to shape the library's DEI work in all facets of librarianship. Audits such as these lead to one fundamental question: How do libraries do better now and into the future?

Seeking Input from Outside of the Library

It is not a secret that both publishing industries and libraries are largely homogeneous spaces. In a 2019 survey of the publishing industry, 76% of the respondents identified as white, 74% identified as cis women, and 81% identified as heterosexual (Lee and Low Books, Jiménez, and Beckert, 2020). Meanwhile, according to the Department for Professional Employees (DPE), "Just over 83 percent of librarians identified as white in 2020," and "women accounted for 83.2 percent of all librarians," (DPE 2021). There is a severe lack of diversity in race and ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. As the report from Lee and Low Books so aptly stated, "The people behind the books serve as gatekeepers, who can make a huge difference in determining which stories are amplified and which are shut out."

The lack of diversity within both the publishing industry and libraries plays a major role in which books are published and which books are freely provided to the public via libraries. It is a system that has historically been responsible for the exclusion of marginalized voices; and often

continues to do so. Audits such as these demonstrate how vital it is to look beyond these largely homogeneous spaces, and to especially seek input from within the communities whose voices librarians are seeking to include in library collections. Librarians need to actively seek out materials recommended by and from within these communities

Social media alone provides ample opportunity to connect with these communities and to share resources, whether it be through diverse authors reading lists, hashtags on Twitter, connecting with diverse-owned bookstores, etc. In addition to this, academic libraries also need to be connecting directly with their students, campuses, and even the broader external community beyond their colleges and universities to ensure that they are seeking input from the people who know best what voices they need to see in the collections - the patrons themselves.

Collection Development Policies

Connecting with communities can help establish new directions for library DEI efforts but developing more robust collection development policies and practices can take these efforts a step further. It is not uncommon for collection development policies to contain DEI language that aims to ensure that multiple voices are consistently included in a library's collection. Several libraries either have diversity statements in their collection development policies; some examples are University of Maryland, San Diego State University, University of San Francisco, University of Northern Iowa, Columbia University, and Simmons University.

It is important to go beyond developing policies that contain DEI language and also take steps to ensure that these policies translate into measurable, accountable practices. Undertaking annual reviews of items purchased in a single academic year is one way to ensure that goals have been met regarding the distribution of the voices in the collection. Tredway Library is making it standard practice to record this data when cataloging new items, so that reports can be generated annually in the library's ILS. Other measurable ways to develop DEI practices related to collection management are to actively seek out community input on what is included in their library collection, as well as to look closely at things like deselection criteria for books by underrepresented authors. It is often common practice to look into things like circulation count for weeding of books from a collection. Books written by underrepresented authors may benefit from special consideration within these standard practices.

Ultimately, it is important to consider where librarians go to select materials to include in the library. Tools such as Choice Reviews and similar sources, library vendor recommendations, and more, are all commonly used for acquisition purposes and can be sources of valuable content for library collections. However, it is especially important to look outside of mainstream resources such as the ones mentioned. Tools such as Twitter are essential when considering new materials to add, in particular with fields that are predominantly white (i.e. STEM). Simply using Twitter's

Advanced Search feature to search in hashtags such as #blackinSTEM or #lgbtSTEM for recommended resources can be an easy way to discover resources outside of commonly used, homogeneous sources.

Assessment

Without assessment, it is impossible to quantify if libraries are meeting the library's goals. Audits such as this help us look critically at individuals' actions within a system that has always been inherently marginalizing. Reviewing collections and addressing the lack of inclusivity is something that takes time, intentionality, constant effort, and a willingness to see and improve upon one's own shortcomings; and must be incorporated into regular collection development workflows. Setting measurable DEI collection development goals to accomplish each year -- and assessing regularly to see if the goals have been met in a satisfactory way -- is the only way to determine if goals are being met and if these critical processes are successfully occurring. Assessment should not be viewed as a punishment, but rather as a way for growth and as a way to hold yourself accountable.

CONCLUSION

This audit provided Tredway Library with data representing what voices were present in its print, permanent, book collection at the end of the fall semester of 2020. The audit has shown a clear need for intentional collection development efforts to continue to build a more diverse and inclusive physical library collection at Augustana College. The authors see this work as an opportunity to ensure that students have access to materials that portray multiple perspectives and experiences, and that students see that all voices are considered equally valid. The book purchases made during the five months when the diversity audit was in progress show that with intentionality in acquisitions, as well as DEI language in the collection development policies and strategic plans, the overall distribution of voices in the collection can be improved upon.

The work done at Augustana College is only one way to conduct a diversity audit. Other libraries can adapt the audit to better fit their goals, collections, and target audience. All libraries should closely examine what is in their library's collection, what their collection priorities are, and adapt the current processes, policies, and plans to address the gaps and concerns of their library's collection and services. In this way, libraries can take one step towards creating a more inclusive space.

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SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

For more helpful tips and information, consult Tredway Library's Diversity Audit Toolkit: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/libscifaculty/14/>.

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