

Middle Grade and Young Adult Books with Black, Indigenous People and People of Color: Where are they?

The University of Florida (UF) in partnership with Bates College (Bates) and California State University (CSU) Fresno, with promotional support from state library associations, seeks \$427,100 to enhance the discoverability of middle grade (MG) and young adult (YA) novels featuring Black and Indigenous people and People of Color (BIPOC) characters. The two primary goals of this project are to: 1) create a database that identifies not just who are included in MG/YA books featuring BIPOC characters, but how they are represented and 2) to create a freely available analysis tool that can easily be used by librarians to analyze the diversity of their own MG/YA novel collections during the three-year grant period. This partnership builds on the picturebook [Diverse BookFinder](#) (PB DBF), a collection and an organization that has cataloged and analyzed thousands of trade picturebooks featuring BIPOC characters published or distributed in the US since 2002 to surface and create a one of a kind resource that includes: 1) [A Unique Circulating Collection](#); 2) [A Search Tool](#); 3) [A Source of Critical Data](#); and 4) [A Collection Analysis Tool](#) (the CAT). A majority of librarians (95%) consider having diverse books for children and teens “very important” or “important”; 50% have set inclusive library goals for their collections (2018, SLJ). The most frequently asked question about the PB DBF is, “What about middle grade and Young Adult titles? Where are they?” To address this need, George A. Smathers Libraries (led by Education Library librarians) and Center for Children’s Literature at UF, with Bates College (founder of the PB DBF), and CSU Fresno’s Center for the Study of Children’s Literature will leverage existing yet untapped partner assets to adapt and expand the metadata behind the PB DBF to include MG/YA novels, and incorporate information about book quality. Specifically, this project will: 1) Adapt the PB DBF metadata so that it is appropriate for MG/YA books; 2) Add metadata to describe book quality and content; 3) Create and support a Communities of Practice (CoP) that places metadata application (book tagging) in the hands of library professionals, deepening their engagement in a way that centers and amplifies their voices, provides professional development in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and supports the growth of national networks; 4) Ensure project sustainability through increased promotion, participation, collaborative infrastructure, and continuous access to participant training materials; and, 5) Draw MG/YA metadata into all aspects of the PB DBF, including the CAT.

1. Statement of National Need Justification

Diverse books support the development of positive identities among BIPOC adolescents and young adults (Myers, 2014), which is essential for academic success (Chavous, et. al., 2003). And, diverse books introduce young people to characters’ emotional states through internal dialogues, struggles, motivations and intentions, making them better able to imagine emotional states in the real world where they will encounter complicated people and situations (Batson, 1998). Thus, reading diverse books can increase feelings of interpersonal closeness (Wright et al., 1997) and improve overall interpersonal and intercultural competence (Aronson et al., 2016; Cameron et al., 2006). Currently, no comprehensive source or systematic methodology exists for pinpointing psychological and racial themes using an exhaustive list of diverse character demographics found in MG/YA titles featuring BIPOC characters for library collection inclusion. This proposal is designed to meet these needs by expanding the PB DBF, to include MG/YA books.

A. MG/YA Fiction and BIPOC Representation

According to US Census Data (American Community Survey: 2019), those classified as members of BIPOC groupings account for 28% of the national population, however among school-aged children (ages 5 to 17), members of these groups account for 33.3% of the national population. Availability of age-appropriate fiction with themes salient in young people’s lives is recognized by librarians and K-12 educators alike as contributing to the development of reading comprehension and lifelong self-concept as readers. Fiction for MG (defined as readers aged 8-12) and YA (defined as readers aged 13-17) audiences accounts for a significant and growing driver of national book sales. In the first half of 2018, publishers reported 80.9 million YA fiction books sold.

Precise, aggregate sales figures for MG are hard to come by, as reported by *Publishers Weekly*: “The major book sales-tracking companies and, subsequently, many bestseller lists do not break out middle grade as a category, so it’s difficult to get a precise handle on how many books are being purchased. But sales of children’s books in the US in 2017 were up 3% from 2016” ([Maughan, 2018](#)). Due to differing library collections’ policies, circulation figures are similarly difficult to pin down by category; however, the growing number of public libraries developing MG/YA special interest collections suggests that this is likewise growing. Research on the representation of BIPOC groupings in library collection development practices is hampered by the absence of comprehensive and consistent metadata classifying books according to the identities of characters represented. For example, a study analyzing Asian-American representation in YA fiction acquisitions within a single “midwestern urban public library system with a sizable Asian American population,” had to replicate the early-stage methodology that the PB DBF had developed—Library of Congress Subject Headings’ (LCSH) subject searches, followed by cross-checking of the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) list. Through this approach, the project team were able to find that, in 2010, only 11 (2% of 544 titles) of the library system’s YA fiction acquisitions featured Asian or Asian-American protagonists, with this figure increasing to 53 (7.9% of 671 titles) by 2016. Likewise, the team express concern about what, qualitatively, is lurking underneath the quantitative aggregates of LCSH data: “In a situation where a library decides to explicitly label their books with specific keywords, we also wonder about the extent to which catalogers have taken courses in cultural competence, diverse literature, et cetera. Subject headings have historically been biased toward a white, Western, male bias” (Backman et al., 2018).

The PB DBF project developed metadata schemas that supplement LCSH while attending to in-group self-descriptions, intersections of multiple and diverse identities, and differentiating among types of books in ways that correspond to the developmental experiences of young readers. By extending and adapting these schemas to MG/YA books, the proposed project will create a corpus that will enable similar studies and self-studies focusing on other library systems and/or representation of other groups, while looking qualitatively not only at how many books there are, but whether these collections enable the multidimensional depiction of cultures advocated by librarians and scholars such as Junko Yokota in her work *Asian Americans in Literature for Children and Young Adults* (Yokota, 2009).

B. Contextualizing the Picturebook DBF: A Look at the National Landscape

Other existing resources for discovery of diverse children’s literature serve overlapping but distinct purposes, to which the PB DBF is complementary. The Cooperative Children’s Book Center ([CCBC](#)) of the School of Education of the University of Wisconsin-Madison receives donations of new titles each year from publishers. The Center “has been documenting books it receives annually by and about BIPOC characters since 1994,” from which they compile annual [CCBC Diversity Statistics](#). These statistics are the primary data that drive the discussion about the numbers of books representing BIPOC characters in the children’s book field. Their comparative numbers over 26 years are invaluable in showing trends. The initial research forming the PB DBF’s corpus, now consisting of nearly all picturebooks featuring BIPOC characters published since 2002, used CCBC’s listings as an important starting point. However, in the process of building the PB corpus, developers found approximately 200 picturebooks with BIPOC characters annually were not in CCBC picturebook lists. Consequently, it was inferred that gaps exist in CCBC’s MG/YA book count as well. While a valuable aggregate overview of the children’s literature field the CCBC listing is incomplete for specific age groupings.

Considering another powerhouse in the diverse children’s book world, [We Need Diverse Books](#) (WNDB), founded in 2014, “is a grassroots organization of children’s book lovers that advocates essential changes in the publishing industry to produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of all young people.” The organization’s platform has arguably created the tipping point for recognition of the essentiality of books representing all children. Its areas of advocacy include awards, recommended lists of titles, mentorships, book donations, and published anthologies. Like WNDB the PB DBF’s mission includes promoting the essentiality of diverse books for all children, focusing assets and outreach to specific communities—WNDB on creators (authors/publishers), and the DBF on users (librarians, educators, and parents).

The DBF is, and will continue to be, more focused on providing concrete resources and tools for librarians, educators, and parents, with science-based data about the messages different categories of books send to young readers. The CCBC and WNDB (paid subscription) now provide book search tools, the work of the PB DBF will remain free and takes a deeper dive into the body of picturebooks with BIPOC characters, providing more books and more granular information, including greater specificity regarding who is in the book, delineating a set of terms that can be used to describe character heritage (See Appendix B for more details). In addition, the descriptive vocabulary utilized in the PB DBF incorporates terms to describe what the book is about, leveraging the [nine categories](#) identified by Aronson, Callahan and O'Brien (2017) through content analysis. (See Appendix C for a side-by-side comparison of PB DBF, CCBC, and WNDB search results.) Neither the CCBC nor WNDB provide a circulating collection or collection analysis resources.

C. Finding What We Already Have: Lessons from Picturebook DBF for Building MG/YA DBF Metadata

The importance of MG/YA fiction in developing self-concept as readers suggests that as the narrative complexity of books increases in tandem with the developmental needs of the readers to whom they are directed, MG/YA stories will likely combine categories that are mutually exclusive in picturebooks. Examining the literature related to adolescents and adults developed within the context of race/culture and identity, for instance, cross-group stories or storylines have strong relevance. Their form, however, as detailed in MG/YA fiction and nonfiction alike, will likely shift in focus and complexity. Likewise, expressions of identity are likely to be more complex, with more than one aspect being represented at a time, including both explorations of feelings of connection and group belonging, as well as positive or negative feelings about group membership, and evolving understandings or explorations about how a group might be perceived from the outside, as in Angie Thomas's 2017 award-winning YA novel *The Hate U Give*. This is consistent with identity formation research in older BIPOC children and adolescents, (e.g. Aronson et. al. 2008).

It is anticipated therefore that coding reports will be not just simple labels but more narrative in form, more like a book review than a chart, possibly including text citations as evidence, in order to describe different sections of a story or the arcs of different characters. More so than picturebooks, novels may require multiple categories to describe their multi-faceted stories; for instance, a single book with a variety of story-telling modes might be coded as Beautiful Life, Oppression & Resilience, Cross-group, and Folklore. Whereas the "kind" or thematic content of most picturebooks can be captured by one, two, or at most three categories that apply to the entire book, with novels we are likely to be compiling a list of elements that can be found like threads weaving in and out of the book.

The project team emphasizes these new challenges in order to underline the needs of the more advanced audience, however we expect, based on preliminary surveys of the field that the typologies developed by the PB DBF will carry over relatively robustly into MG/YA titles. For example, the "Beautiful Life" category, in which cultural particularities are celebrated in a non-folkloric manner, is well represented in recent YA titles, such as Thomas's *On the Come Up* and Elizabeth Acevedo's *The Poet X*, as well as recent MG titles, such as Naomi Shihab Nye's *The Turtle of Oman*. Yet these same titles also help illustrate the comparative complexities—*On the Come Up* also features narrative elements characteristic of "Oppression & Resilience," while *The Turtle of Oman* focuses on its main character's relationship with her grandfather in a very "Any Child" manner. This extends to other aspects of coding as well. Whereas most picturebooks focus on one to three main characters, character coding for MG/YA books may need to expand to reflect the diversity and range of a book with multiple points of view and/or significant actors. Genres will need to expand to a longer list (Fantasy, Futuristic/Dystopian, Realistic Fiction). And, content coding will need to expand, to record common themes in literature for youth; hobbies and activities (music, arts, sports); or types of oppression - police violence, micro-aggressions, sexual harassment, etc. - to enhance discoverability of titles.

D. A New Critical Measure for the MG/YA DBF: Book Quality

The MG/YA DBF proposal will collaboratively and transparently develop a set of evidence-based criteria that can be used to define quality in books featuring BIPOC characters. Once created, these criteria will

be translated into a coding scheme that can be applied to newly acquired picturebooks, MG, and YA in the DBF, so that users will be able to have overall quality information about each title when making decisions about purchase or programming, much like the “What parents need to know” section of a [Common Sense Media](#) book review, but targeting features essential to quality within the context of books featuring BIPOC characters. Once finalized, this information will be represented on the expanded MG/YA DBF website.

To speak to the reader in a manner that will effect empathy, reduce anxiety and increase interpersonal closeness, a book must have a compelling story, worthy themes, vivid language and well-developed characters living authentic lives or depicted in realistic situations. For multicultural books this means that the depictions must be accurate (Noll, 2003) and depict values consistent with those of the group or culture being represented. An accurate story is one that conveys its contemporary relevance (or lack thereof), expressing the dynamic, evolving and enduring nature of what any society considers worthy of acceptance and belief, rather than portraying the values of a group as fixed, unchanging or antiquated (long ago and far away; Mo & Shen, 2003). In this way the absence of stereotypes is also essential. All of these features define good writing and the characteristics of literature associated with positive outcomes (Guevara, 2003; Kidd & Castano, 2013).

Despite widespread agreement regarding the importance of overall quality within the context of literature, multicultural or not, there is no consensus on how to differentiate between high- and low-quality books. How can practitioners who want to put research into action tell whether a book is of high quality or not? Researchers have used award status as a proxy, citing “difficulty in precisely quantifying literariness” (Kidd & Castano, 2013). Are practitioners meant to believe that all award-winning books are literary? Further, award-winners are a tiny fraction of published titles; how are all other books to be qualitatively evaluated?

There are several existing online guides for evaluating the quality of multicultural books. Often proposing checklists, these tools are fragmented, offering guidance for specific groups one at a time (e.g. [Native American](#), [Latinx](#)) or about specific issues (e.g. [racism and sexism](#)). Unfortunately, this targeted approach is not pragmatic because it requires that any user trying to build an inclusive collection locate, consult, learn, and effectively implement multiple methodologies, which can feel overwhelming. White paper guides for the selection of multicultural books (not specific to any one racial or cultural group) also offer checklists to help guide book selection (e.g. [Ten Tips for Selecting Multicultural Books for Reading Instruction](#)). Although seemingly simple, these lists share qualities that require knowledge or training typical users may not have. In addition, many multicultural quality checklists call users to assess what qualifies authors/illustrators to write about the subject of the book, again something that can be intimidating for users with limited time or expertise. As a first step in moving research into practice, the proposal project team and advisors will define and make accessible features of quality as applied to books depicting BIPOC characters broadly defined.

If awarded, this project will develop and define essential criteria for book quality in MG/YA books, as well as the framework for what would constitute a high, medium, or low reflection of these criteria. The final product will not only provide a framework for at a glance information for each book, but will also provide a set of operational definitions for each area so that users can become more familiar, as well as the development of skill in this area for those in the CoP, through training and repetition.

E. What This Means for Librarians: The Collection Analysis Tool (CAT) & Use Case for the MG/YA DBF

The CAT conveys several pieces of information important to collection development: the number and titles of diverse titles and their percentage of the overall whole; what groups are depicted within these titles and their relative percentage; and, how groups are depicted. [Click here](#) to see a sample report for BIPOC characters in picturebooks. Using the CAT, library professionals can examine a collection to identify dominant themes in books portraying each racial/cultural group, compare the representations of and messages sent to various segments of the community served, and track growth and change over time. An elementary school teacher, proud of a classroom collection including award-winning Native Americans books that have been well-reviewed by cultural experts, for instance, can currently use the CAT to discover that not a single one of those titles portrays contemporary Native people. With the creation of a corpus of contemporary MG/YA books, the scope of these reports can be extended to the full collection of fiction for the school aged reader.

This will meet an urgent need for children’s librarians in public and school library contexts. There is currently no good way for librarians to track diversity in their picturebook and MG/YA book collections, once they are ordered and cataloged. While a “Best of” or “Suggested titles” list can be useful, it does nothing to consider what is already in a library collection or help identify gaps in representation.

2. Project Design

A. Project Deliverables: 1) Metadata capturing the who and the how within MG/YA BIPOC books; 2) Metadata to describe book quality; 3) Inclusion criteria and collection development protocols for MG/YA books; 4) Redesigned DBF website that draws MG/YA metadata into all aspects, including the CAT; 5) Communities of Practice (CoP) that place collection development and metadata application (book tagging) in the hands of library professionals; 6) A training model, training materials, and an initial cohort of trained librarians to sustain the project beyond funding; and, 7) Marketing and promotional networks to increase awareness about the project during and beyond the funding period.

B. Project Structure: Project PI Rachael Elrod, EdD, (UF) Director of Education Library, will be responsible along with Co-PIs Krista Aronson, PhD, (Bates) Professor of Psychology and Associate Dean of Faculty and Brittany Kester, MLIS, (UF) Education Librarian for overall completion of project deliverables. Elrod will be responsible for leading project team members at UF and direct supervision of the proposed project manager. Building on the PB DBF organization comprised of 26 members and alumni, this work will be expanded significantly to include nearly 30 new members from more than 10 institutions (academic and non-academic) across the country. Four Advisory Groups (AGs) will focus on the following topics, with leadership as follows: 1) Collection Development (Cappy) - will develop inclusion criteria and process and oversee a Collection Development CoP; 2) Metadata (Tomaras) - will assist with metadata development; 3) Community of Practice (CoP) (Aronson) - will create training materials, conduct training, and oversee the Metadata CoP groups; 4) Marketing (Kester) - will promote and disseminate information and set policies and practices.

C. Timeline (See Appendix D, Diagram of Activities and Deliverables, and Schedule of Completion)

Year One -- Metadata Development for MG/YA books: Work will start at UF through the English Department and [Center for Children’s Literature and Culture](#), and at California State University, Fresno to prepare curriculum for planned academic courses. Mirroring the process used to create PB DBF metadata, two purposefully designed undergraduate courses taught at UF by Drs. Kenneth Kidd and Aronson, and at CSU, Fresno by Suzan Alteri through the [Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children’s Literature](#) will serve as incubators, exploring the nexus of academic (e.g. children’s literature, librarianship), and lay discourses to create metadata structures for MG/YA books that integrate academic and non-specialist views. The curriculum and syllabi for these courses will be built in the fall for courses during the spring 2022 semester.

- These courses will be structured similarly to a supervised lab course in the natural sciences, with students both collaborating and pursuing individualized research. Enrollment will be capped at 15 in each class and restricted to upper-division students. Students will receive training in practices that will be used in the identification and annotation of texts. At this point, the class will read at least one MG and one YA novel together as case studies in applied theory and coding, to encourage a consistent strategy for analysis. Courses will subsequently be devoted to individual reading and grounded theory analysis. Each student will read, analyze, and provide information about 10 diverse titles of their choosing (from a pre-identified list), for a total of 300 MG/YA books.
- Although the courses will be led by Kidd, Aronson, and Alteri, the Metadata AG will play an integral role. Mirroring the grounded theory process outlined above, this group will identify and define a universe of themes as a starting point for the class. The class will then engage in group and individual readings, in the same way Aronson originally did with her Bates students, with the goal of identifying a set of relevant, identifiable, and exhaustive themes. During the semester Kidd and Aronson will update the Metadata AG regularly around class progress, seeking feedback as needed, and meeting with the group once a month. At

the end of the semester, students will present findings to the Metadata AG, after which the Metadata AG will make final decisions around themes and definitions. Most active in the first year, the Metadata AG will meet periodically throughout the grant period to address or respond to metadata feedback following implementation online and through the Metadata CoP groups.

Inclusion Criteria Development for MG/YA books: The Collection Development AG will identify collection inclusion criteria for MG/YA books and will select a list of 150 quality MG/YA books to be used in the undergraduate courses. This group will focus on MG/YA books published since 2019. The Collection Development AG will translate inclusion criteria they create into collection development policies/practices and training materials to be utilized by the Collection Development CoP.

Foundation for Communities of Practice: The CoP AG will create a [Community Sourcing](#) plan and begin recruitment with the goal of reaching approximately 120 CoP members, with a commitment to including a diverse group with at least one library professional from each of the 50 states. This will occur through outreach and networking with the support of our partners and the Marketing AG. Once recruited, members will be divided into groups of 20. One group will be supported by the Collection Development AG and will be devoted to identifying books for inclusion. The Metadata CoP groups will be trained to tag and upload books to the MG/YA DBF. These groups will be supported by a member of the CoP AG.

Promotion of the DBF: The Marketing AG will plan and manage the building of awareness and recruitment to the existing PB DBF user community to promote the DBF and the CAT. The group will use a two-pronged approach: 1) take an inventory of promotional opportunities (e.g. professional listservs) through [organizations associated with this project](#) and beyond, and conduct outreach and disseminate content; 2) continued presence on social media (established for the PB DBF), through the work of interns and a creative director who will be overseen by Kester. The Marketing AG will: 1) meet monthly during the first six months of the project, then quarterly throughout the grant period with focused work occurring between meetings; 2) create policies and best practices for social media posts and marketing materials, including guidelines for inclusive and culturally competent design, language, and visual literacy standards; 3) establish new and verify current connections with professional organizations and news outlets for promotion; 4) coordinate the creation of a blog post at least once a month; 5) contribute one blog post/year on the topic of their choice; and, 6) solicit and review outside submissions. The interns (see Appendix F for position descriptions) will be offered opportunities to contribute to the blog. Blog pieces will be used to curate a quarterly newsletter which has attracted over 2,000 picturebook subscribers.

Year Two -- This phase will focus on creating a Community Sourcing database and website redesign, including generating customized training materials (e.g. manual, white papers, and videos) and protocols, along with piloting of these materials. Once finalized, all materials will be housed on the DBF website.

Website Modifications: Bates website/metadata consultant for the PB DBF will develop additional MG/YA specific data elements and administrative pages for the redesigned website and community sourcing database. In parallel to data collection, changes to the front-end display and search will be implemented and tested.

Collection Development: The Collection Development AG will shift focus to developing a Collection Development Master List to guide book acquisitions, and from which Metadata CoP members will look to identify books to read and tag. This AG will create training materials and provide oversight and training of a Collection Development CoP (10 members). Using the training materials, members of the Collection Development AG will develop and hold at least two training sessions for Collection Development CoP members focused on how to identify books for inclusion in the collection (mirroring those procedures currently used by the PB DBF for collection development), present three support sessions, and answer questions via email as needed. Based on the PB DBF experience, this will provide sufficient support for the Collection Development CoP to identify relevant titles and build the title database for tagging by the Metadata CoP. Training sessions will be recorded for use by future Collection Development CoP groups. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of MG/YA books featuring BIPOC characters published annually for the reasons outlined in section 1A, estimates from the CCBC indicate that 794 titles were published in 2019 and

University of Florida, Bates College, and California State University - Fresno

2020 that include at least one BIPOC character. In their communication regarding these numbers, the CCBC acknowledges that they are based on book donations and are likely incomplete, but that they represent the current best estimate. Using these lists as a base, the Collection Development CoP will apply what they learned in training to identify the full set of MG/YA titles published since 2019 for use by the Metadata CoP group. These books will form the foundation for the launch of the MG/YA DBF.

Metadata/Tagging: The CoP AG will utilize the metadata identified in year one to develop MG/YA book coding training materials to be utilized during training webinars for Metadata CoP members. These training webinars (twice per semester) will be recorded for future reference and use. Both the conceptual (tags) and technical (data entry) aspects necessary for library professionals will be included in these trainings. With regards to the technical side, it is important to note that the PB DBF has already developed an easy to use and intuitive interface that allows users to enter data directly into WordPress, which drives the website and search function resources. In addition to training and data entry, recruitment for the Metadata CoP group will continue as needed during year two. As mentioned earlier, following large group training sessions, each CoP AG Member will continue to supervise and support a group of 20 Metadata CoP members towards the goal of informed, consistent, and reliable metadata entry and professional development. Noting the estimate of MG/YA books published since 2019 featuring BIPOC characters, each Metadata CoP member will be responsible for reading and tagging approximately 20 books during year two of funded work. Allowing that additional titles will likely be identified during the collection development process, this number may reach up to 30 titles per Metadata CoP member.

Marketing: The Marketing AG will promote the expanded MG/YA DBF through previously established contacts. Current DBF social media, blog, and newsletter content creation and publication routines will continue. A campaign will be planned and executed to launch the redesigned website including MG/YA books.

Year Three -- Year three will see the finalization of grant funded collection development work, metadata tagging, and updates to the MG/YA DBF with MG/YA information. The MG/YA DBF will go live with over 1,000 books that will be accessible on the expanded DBF. The CAT will be completed to include MG/YA titles, allowing review, testing, and refinement.

Transition and Sustainability of Advisory Groups: The Collection Development AG will continue to monitor and support the Collection Development CoP and address any feedback. Trainings and/or support sessions will be presented as needed. This group will create, document, and model a process to continue on a smaller scale beyond the grant period to support ongoing collection development (approximately 10 Collection Development CoP members per year with one leader previously trained and active in the Collection Development CoP). The Metadata AG will continue to address or respond to metadata feedback following the CoP database and website redesign launch and through the CoP. The CoP AG will continue to present trainings twice per semester. Recruitment for the CoP groups will continue. The goal of the CoP groups will be to process all MG/YA books published during the grant period and create and document a process that can be continued on a smaller scale after the grant period (approximately 25 CoP members per year with two leaders who were previously trained and active in the Metadata CoP). The Marketing AG will expand to identify conferences for presentations, webinars, and speaking engagements to be attended by the Co-PIs and other interested AG or CoP members. Content creation will continue on social media and through the blog and newsletter, specifically highlighting the expansion of the CAT after its completion. Like the Collection Development and CoP AGs, the Marketing AG will be charged with creating documents and training videos to allow smaller groups of library professionals (approximately five) to take on this work with support from an experienced group leader.

D. Project Assessment: The project team will use formative and summative assessment methods to ensure reliability and validity while determining levels of success.

Summative methods will occur for multiple deliverables to: 1) Assess the appropriateness, scope and volume of the metadata created by the undergraduate classes for MG/YA titles; 2) Employ aggregated organizational CAT account data to create benchmarks for the number of diverse MG/YA titles held to monitor and share growth and change in

University of Florida, Bates College, and California State University - Fresno

BIPOC children's collections nationally and internationally, by library type and by materials budgets; 3) Monitor use of the CAT and database for usage segmented by library profiles (types, # of registered users, # of branches/units and community demographics to determine the impact of the tool on collection development. Other summative measures will include: 4) A pre and post DEI concept awareness survey of the undergraduate classes to determine the intervention value of metadata development for BIPOC children's materials in experiential learning; 5) Assess the CoP DEI concept awareness pre and post-project; 6) Assessment of the representation of states and diversity makeup of the CoPs and AGs; 7) Analyze evidence of the CoP contributing to sustainability including presentations at library conferences; 8) Measure DBF usage/expansion, especially in partnership states; 9) Monitor increased number of agreements with other states/territories to engage DBF researchers in the CAT training uses of reports made available to participating institutions; and, 10) Evaluate the makeup of AGs and CoPs.

Formative assessment will include: 1) Examine reliability of the metadata and coding protocols created to describe MG/YA literature by undergraduate classes. ([Cohen's Kappa](#)); 2) Assess reliability of the application of metadata to the titles read and described by the CoPs (Cohen's Kappa); 3) Assess customized training materials/activities designed for the CoPs; 4) Continuously assess the productivity, efficiency and quality of the AGs and CoPs based on the charge of each group; 5) Google Analytics and Google Analytics reports will track website use, including the search function, to inform future development; 6) Targeted on-going user surveys will collect user experiences, satisfaction ratings, and open-ended suggestions for improvements of the MG/YA databases and the CAT; and, 7) Potential users will be surveyed through emails to professional organizational listservs through the work of the Marketing AG. Assessment results will be used for modification of the DBF website and the CAT as needed.

E. Project Team and Advisory Group Participation (See Appendix E, Organizational Chart)

Rachael Elrod, EdD, (UF) Director of Education Library. **Role:** project PI, leading UF personnel, collaborating with Dr. Krista Aronson to complete project deliverables, and supervising the project manager.

Krista Aronson, PhD, (Bates) Professor of Psychology/Associate Dean of Faculty. **Role:** project Co-PI, offering PB DBF model leadership and expertise, and Leader, CoP AG.

Brittany Kester, MLIS, (UF) Education Librarian. **Role:** Co-PI, Leader, Marketing AG.

Suzan Alteri, MLIS, (CSU, Fresno) Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature Librarian, **Role:** CoP AG and co-lead undergraduate courses.

Michael Anderson, (Holotype Design) Bates IT Consultant **Role:** website development/metadata programming.

Todd Digby, MLIS (UF) Chair, Library Technology Services **Role:** troubleshoot collaborations and technology.

Haven Hawley, PhD (UF) Chair, Special and Area Studies Collection **Role:** collection development consultant.

Kenneth Kidd, PhD, (UF) Department Chair/Professor of English and Associate Director of Center for Children's Literature and Culture. **Role:** teach undergraduate course, and advise project team.

Laura Spears, MLIS, PhD, (UF) Director of Assessment and User Experience. **Role:** lead/perform assessment.

Xuan (Lily) Pang, MLIS (UF) Director, Access and Resource Sharing Services **Role:** manage book distribution and return through interlibrary loan.

Laurie Taylor, PhD, (UF) Senior Director of Library Technology and Digital Strategies. **Role:** guide the creation of CoPs, and troubleshoot collaboration strategies and technology.

Marianne Williams (Bates) Humanities Librarian **Role:** Ladd Library liaison, and benchmarking CAT reports.

Proposed Project Manager (UF - TBD) **Role:** coordinate and manage MG/YA DBF project day-to-day activities; work with project team, Advisory Groups, CoP members, and consultants; and support recruiting, training, and communication with the CoP and Advisory Groups. (See Appendix F for position description)

Christina Bell, MLIS, (Glendale Community College, AZ) Public Services Librarian **Role:** Marketing AG.

Advisory Group

Stephanie Birch, MLIS (UF) African-American Studies Librarian **Role:** Creative Director on Marketing AG.

Lisa Campbell, MLIS (UF) Instruction and Outreach Librarian **Role:** Marketing AG.

Alexandrea Glenn, MLIS (UF) Student Success Librarian **Role:** Marketing AG.

Jane Harrell, BA ('cause Digital Marketing) President and Founder **Role:** Marketing AG.

April Hines, MLIS (UF) Journalism & Mass Communications Librarian **Role:** Marketing AG.

University of Florida, Bates College, and California State University - Fresno

Chelsea Johnston, MLIS, (UF) Scholarly Publishing and Repository Librarian, **Role:** Marketing AG.

Ginessa Mahar, MA, PhD (UF) Anthropology Librarian **Role:** Marketing AG.

Michelle Nolan, PhD (UF) Chemistry Librarian **Role:** Marketing AG.

Alan Asher, MLS, DM (UF) Music, Theatre, and Dance Librarian **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Ann Baird, MFA, (UF) Design Librarian **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Meaghan Bonnaghan, MLIS, (Alachua County Public Library, FL), Media & Instructional Materials Supervisor. **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Kirsten Cappy, BA, (I'm Your Neighbor Books) Executive Director **Role:** Leader, Collection Development AG.

Suzanne Chapman, PhD (UF) Professor, School of Teaching and Learning **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Laura D'Elia, MLIS, Elementary School Librarian, Westborough, MA **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Patty Duval, MAE, (Alachua County School District, FL), District Media Specialist directing 41 sites. **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Danling Fu, PhD (UF) Professor, School of Teaching and Learning **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Megan Koppitch, MLIS, (PK Yonge Developmental Research School) Librarian/Media Specialist. **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Cicely Lewis, MLIS, (Read Woke, and Gwinnett County Public Schools) School Librarian and 2020 National Librarian of the Year. **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Ann Lindell, MLIS, (UF) Chair of Departmental Libraries. **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Marcia Mardis, PhD (Florida State University) Associate Dean for Research, Director of Information Policy, Management and Use Institute, and Research Faculty in the Institute for Digital Information and Scientific Communication. **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Marcela Peres, (Lewiston Public Library, ME) Library Director **Role:** Collection Development AG.

Andrea Breau, PhD, (Former Coordinator of PB DBF Project). **Role:** CoP AG.

Andrea Jamison, PhD, (Illinois State University) Assistant Professor of School Librarianship. **Role:** CoP AG.

Anne Sibley O'Brien, Children's book author/illustrator/communications manager. **Role:** CoP AG.

Poushali Bhadury, PhD (Middle Tennessee State University) Assistant Professor of Children's Literature **Role:** Metadata AG.

Twanna Hodge, MLIS, (UF) DEI Librarian. **Role:** Metadata AG.

Xiaoli Ma, MSIS (UF) Metadata Librarian **Role:** Metadata AG.

Daniel Minter, Co-Founder of Indigo Arts Alliance, 2020 Caldecott Honor recipient and 2013 Coretta Scott King Book Illustrator Honor recipient **Role:** Metadata AG.

Deborah Tomaras, MLIS, (Marist College) Metadata & Resource Librarian. **Role:** Leader, Metadata AG.

3. Diversity Plan

The proposed project centers diversity, equity, and inclusion within every aspect of the project. This includes the obvious diverse nature inherent to the books being purchased for analysis which is the central theme of the work proposed. Beyond this, to ensure diversity, the MG/YA DBF project has: recruited a diverse and inclusive grant team and AG members from across the nation; engaged diverse, professional networks of librarians and educators for dissemination of resources and recruitment for building out a national representation within the CoP; committed to recruiting diverse CoP members from across the country; and, developed a plan to integrate the analysis and efficacy of diversity and inclusion within assessment activities.

Products generated by this immersive focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion will impact library collections throughout the country. Moreover, the proposed project centers library professionals in defining challenges (building on current PB DBF user feedback, and continuing to survey users and potential users), and directly involving them in creating and implementing solutions through the AG and



University of Florida, Bates College, and California State University - Fresno

CoP. The CoP will be built out through an application process and will consist of library professionals from all 50 states, from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and age, religious, regional, political, and professional (e.g. public and school librarians) backgrounds. The AG includes similarly diverse lenses, with broad gender and racial/cultural representation.

The expanded MG/YA DBF will be a service freely available to anyone with the internet. The current marketing partnerships will enable expedient engagement with library professionals in all 50 states to promote the MG/YA DBF and the CAT to ensure awareness among diverse and underserved communities. By giving librarians the tools to analyze their collections and find books to fill the gaps in their collections, the project provides the means for the field of librarianship to actively demonstrate its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The CoPs offer the opportunity for ongoing professional development during and beyond the grant period. Broad outreach to libraries nationwide and their welcome feedback will enhance the commitment to including a diversity of perspectives. Finally, the diversity of the project grant team, AGs, and CoP strengthens our ability to produce national impact.

4. National Impact

IMLS Goals: This project will establish a central location where library professionals can search for children's books featuring BIPOC characters appropriate for all developmental levels of school-age children, and receive feedback on and track growth and change in their collections. Deliverables (see page 5) will increase the diversification of children's book collections, and enhance libraries' capacity to improve well-being in their communities through professional development offerings ([IMLS Strategic Goal #2](#)). By facilitating access to diverse books, librarians will develop positive self-images and intercultural competence among patrons, thereby contributing to their lifelong learning ([IMLS Strategic Goal #1](#)).

National Representation: By building and supporting a national CoP, this work amplifies librarians' voices within equity and inclusion spaces, while improving communication, professional development, and collaboration on this topic. Further, there is the potential that CoP members will carry their learning to others through local and state networks. Finally, the new training tools and processes created will outlive the grant period, cementing the sustainability and development of individuals and cohorts well into the future.

Professional Development: Workshops and presentations at conferences, and smaller events will disseminate DBF methods and results, and service offerings. Bates has committed to continuous maintenance of the DBF website, and the CAT, insuring stability and long-term retention of project deliverables. To ensure deliverables are sustainable and adaptable, all MG/YA DBF documentation will be made publicly available via the [UF Institutional Repository](#). The team will reach out to national library organizations recommending the inclusion of the PB/MG/YA DBF and the CAT within their resource offerings. And, each of the AG groups will be charged with conducting their work in a way that establishes protocols, materials, and leadership to squarely place this work in the hands of dedicated library professionals at the end of the grant period.

Future Funding and Sustainability: Although the PB/MG/YA DBF resources, including the CAT, will remain free for use libraries, at this writing, the PB DBF team is developing a consulting arm to allow publishers to purchase CAT reports and receive consulting on their backlist's strengths and opportunities for growth. Bates funding has enabled planning for this entrepreneurial service. Proceeds will support the minimal software subscriptions used in marketing (Hootsuite, Mailchimp, etc.), necessary book purchases, and, potentially, as honoraria for library professionals involved in ongoing CoPs. Consulting services will provide yet another mechanism for centering the voices of librarianship in the types of book acquisitions publishers make moving forward. To be clear, ongoing collection development, tagging, and marketing that new trainees will take over after project completion will form the backbone of DBF sustainability. Furthermore, the UF/CSU-Fresno partnership contributions lay the foundation for long-term engagement with Bates in the DBF collection and organization. Eventually, as more librarians and educators use the DBF for collection building and analysis, the more it will influence a shift in the books that make it into the hands of children and young adults. The impact will be seen in the windows and doors opened for children and young adults who read these books which will in turn strengthen the possibility of initializing change within themselves, their communities and beyond.

Schedule of Completion

Project Team		Technical Tasks		CoP Advisory Group		
Collection Development Advisory Group		Editorial/Marketing Advisory Group		Metadata Advisory Group		
Activities, Responsible Parties/Institutions, and Expenditures	Year 1 Fall/Spr		Year 2 Fall/Spr		Year 3 Fall/Spr	
MG/YA Books identified and purchased, UF						
Librarians' awareness of picturebook DBF survey assessment, UF						
Advisory Groups (AG) to complete roles and agendas/responsibilities, UF/Bates						
UF course curriculum and syllabus building, UF						
Collection Development AG identifies collection criteria and identifies list of 150 books for use in courses, UF						
Courses take place, complete grounded theory analysis, create metadata deliverable, UF/Bates/CSU, Fresno						
Project Manager hired and trained, UF						
Collection Development AG support Courses, UF						
Metadata AG support Courses, Bates						
CoP AG develops Community Sourcing Plan, Bates						
CoP AG begins recruitment of CoP members, Bates						
Editorial/Marketing AG writes/publishes CoP recruitment ads, UF/Bates						
Editorial/Marketing AG verifies organizations for promotion, UF						
Interns hired and trained for Editorial/Marketing AG social media, UF						
Assessment of efficacy of courses, UF						
Assessment of efficacy/quality of AGs and CoP						
Assessment of user data using DBF website & Google Analytics, UF						
Social media interns: social media posts/week + quarterly newsletter, UF						
Collection Development AG develops Master Book List, UF						
Collection Development AG develops training materials for CoP, UF						
Metadata AG evaluates class deliverables and finalizes metadata, Bates						
CoP AG develops book coding training materials, Bates						
Editorial/Marketing AG outreach to organizations for promotion, UF						
CoP AG supervises and continues recruiting for CoP groups, Bates						
CoP AG training webinars for CoP: 2/semester, Bates						
Collection Development AG training webinars for CoP: 2/semester, Bates						
AG and CoP assess efficacy of trainings, UF						
Technical spec development for adding MG/YA books, Bates						
Programming development + live sites, MG/YA DBF, Bates						
Website redesign/metadata enhancements for MG/YA books, Bates						
Community sourcing website beta test/launch picturebook/MG/YA, Bates						
Website data populated/move from development to live site, Bates						
Collection Analysis Tool expanded for MG/YA books, Bates						
Assessment of user experience and complete modifications as needed, UF						
Presentations at conferences, host webinars for CoP expansion, UF/Bates						
Collection Development AG ongoing monitoring and support, UF						
Metadata AG ongoing monitoring and support, Bates						
AGs create documentation and training videos for project sustainability, UF/Bates						



DIGITAL PRODUCT FORM

INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is committed to expanding public access to digital products that are created using federal funds. This includes (1) digitized and born-digital content, resources, or assets; (2) software; and (3) research data (see below for more specific examples). Excluded are preliminary analyses, drafts of papers, plans for future research, peer-review assessments, and communications with colleagues.

The digital products you create with IMLS funding require effective stewardship to protect and enhance their value, and they should be freely and readily available for use and reuse by libraries, archives, museums, and the public. Because technology is dynamic and because we do not want to inhibit innovation, we do not want to prescribe set standards and practices that could become quickly outdated. Instead, we ask that you answer questions that address specific aspects of creating and managing digital products. Like all components of your IMLS application, your answers will be used by IMLS staff and by expert peer reviewers to evaluate your application, and they will be important in determining whether your project will be funded.

INSTRUCTIONS

If you propose to create digital products in the course of your IMLS-funded project, you must first provide answers to the questions in **SECTION I: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS**. Then consider which of the following types of digital products you will create in your project, and complete each section of the form that is applicable.

SECTION II: DIGITAL CONTENT, RESOURCES, OR ASSETS

Complete this section if your project will create digital content, resources, or assets. These include both digitized and born-digital products created by individuals, project teams, or through community gatherings during your project. Examples include, but are not limited to, still images, audio files, moving images, microfilm, object inventories, object catalogs, artworks, books, posters, curricula, field books, maps, notebooks, scientific labels, metadata schema, charts, tables, drawings, workflows, and teacher toolkits. Your project may involve making these materials available through public or access-controlled websites, kiosks, or live or recorded programs.

SECTION III: SOFTWARE

Complete this section if your project will create software, including any source code, algorithms, applications, and digital tools plus the accompanying documentation created by you during your project.

SECTION IV: RESEARCH DATA

Complete this section if your project will create research data, including recorded factual information and supporting documentation, commonly accepted as relevant to validating research findings and to supporting scholarly publications.

SECTION I: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND PERMISSIONS

A.1 We expect applicants seeking federal funds for developing or creating digital products to release these files under open-source licenses to maximize access and promote reuse. What will be the intellectual property status of the digital products (i.e., digital content, resources, or assets; software; research data) you intend to create? What ownership rights will your organization assert over the files you intend to create, and what conditions will you impose on their access and use? Who will hold the copyright(s)? Explain and justify your licensing selections. Identify and explain the license under which you will release the files (e.g., a non-restrictive license such as BSD, GNU, MIT, Creative Commons licenses; RightsStatements.org statements). Explain and justify any prohibitive terms or conditions of use or access, and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms and conditions.

A.2 What ownership rights will your organization assert over the new digital products and what conditions will you impose on access and use? Explain and justify any terms of access and conditions of use and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms or conditions.

A.3 If you will create any products that may involve privacy concerns, require obtaining permissions or rights, or raise any cultural sensitivities, describe the issues and how you plan to address them.

SECTION II: DIGITAL CONTENT, RESOURCES, OR ASSETS

A.1 Describe the digital content, resources, or assets you will create or collect, the quantities of each type, and the format(s) you will use.

A.2 List the equipment, software, and supplies that you will use to create the digital content, resources, or assets, or the name of the service provider that will perform the work.

A.3 List all the digital file formats (e.g., XML, TIFF, MPEG, OBJ, DOC, PDF) you plan to use. If digitizing content, describe the quality standards (e.g., resolution, sampling rate, pixel dimensions) you will use for the files you will create.

Workflow and Asset Maintenance/Preservation

B.1 Describe your quality control plan. How will you monitor and evaluate your workflow and products?

B.2 Describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital assets during and after the award period. Your plan should address storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, and commitment of organizational funding for these purposes. Please note: You may charge the federal award before closeout for the costs of publication or sharing of research results if the costs are not incurred during the period of performance of the federal award (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.461).

Metadata

C.1 Describe how you will produce any and all technical, descriptive, administrative, or preservation metadata or linked data. Specify which standards or data models you will use for the metadata structure (e.g., RDF, BIBFRAME, Dublin Core, Encoded Archival Description, PBCore, PREMIS) and metadata content (e.g., thesauri).

C.2 Explain your strategy for preserving and maintaining metadata created or collected during and after the award period of performance.

C.3 Explain what metadata sharing and/or other strategies you will use to facilitate widespread discovery and use of the digital content, resources, or assets created during your project (e.g., an API [Application Programming Interface], contributions to a digital platform, or other ways you might enable batch queries and retrieval of metadata).

Access and Use

D.1 Describe how you will make the digital content, resources, or assets available to the public. Include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools in order to use the content, delivery enabled by IIIF specifications).

D.2. Provide the name(s) and URL(s) (Universal Resource Locator), DOI (Digital Object Identifier), or other persistent identifier for any examples of previous digital content, resources, or assets your organization has created.

SECTION III: SOFTWARE

General Information

A.1 Describe the software you intend to create, including a summary of the major functions it will perform and the intended primary audience(s) it will serve.

A.2 List other existing software that wholly or partially performs the same or similar functions, and explain how the software you intend to create is different, and justify why those differences are significant and necessary.

Technical Information

B.1 List the programming languages, platforms, frameworks, software, or other applications you will use to create your software and explain why you chose them.

B.2 Describe how the software you intend to create will extend or interoperate with relevant existing software.

B.3 Describe any underlying additional software or system dependencies necessary to run the software you intend to create.

B.4 Describe the processes you will use for development, documentation, and for maintaining and updating documentation for users of the software.

B.5 Provide the name(s), URL(s), and/or code repository locations for examples of any previous software your organization has created.

Access and Use

C.1 Describe how you will make the software and source code available to the public and/or its intended users.

C.2 Identify where you will deposit the source code for the software you intend to develop:

Name of publicly accessible source code repository:

URL:

SECTION IV: RESEARCH DATA

As part of the federal government's commitment to increase access to federally funded research data, Section IV represents the Data Management Plan (DMP) for research proposals and should reflect data management, dissemination, and preservation best practices in the applicant's area of research appropriate to the data that the project will generate.

A.1 Identify the type(s) of data you plan to collect or generate, and the purpose or intended use(s) to which you expect them to be put. Describe the method(s) you will use, the proposed scope and scale, and the approximate dates or intervals at which you will collect or generate data.

A.2 Does the proposed data collection or research activity require approval by any internal review panel or institutional review board (IRB)? If so, has the proposed research activity been approved? If not, what is your plan for securing approval?

A.3 Will you collect any sensitive information? This may include personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information. If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect the information while you prepare it for public release (e.g., anonymizing individual identifiers, data aggregation). If the data will not be released publicly, explain why the data cannot be shared due to the protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, and other rights or requirements.

A.4 What technical (hardware and/or software) requirements or dependencies would be necessary for understanding retrieving, displaying, processing, or otherwise reusing the data?

A.5 What documentation (e.g., consent agreements, data documentation, codebooks, metadata, and analytical and procedural information) will you capture or create along with the data? Where will the documentation be stored and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the data it describes to enable future reuse?

A.6 What is your plan for managing, disseminating, and preserving data after the completion of the award-funded project?

A.7 Identify where you will deposit the data:

Name of repository:

URL:

A.8 When and how frequently will you review this data management plan? How will the implementation be monitored?