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DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS AND PROJECTS

Gender Stereotypes and Representation of Female Characters in Children's Picture Books

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Abstract

Studies since the 1970s have found that many female characters are stereotyped and underrepresented in children's picture books. This dissertation updated a study by Hamilton, Anderson, Broaddus, and Young (2006) to examine whether stereotyping and female underrepresentation changed over the past decade. The book sample included 3 Caldecott Medal/Honor books and 48 bestselling picture books published in 2010. The study, a quantitative content analysis, utilized 6 library media specialist book raters and the coding schema of Hamilton et al. (2006). Most measures of stereotypes and underrepresentation improved since the Hamilton et al. study; however, measures that declined significantly included more male than female authors and illustrators, more anthropomorphized male main characters and illustrations, and no female characters in assertive/aggressive characterizations.

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inaccurate generalizations of the male and female attributes. Since each person has individual desires, thoughts, and feelings, regardless of their gender, these stereotypes are incredibly simplistic and do not at all describe the attributes of every person of each gender. While most people realize that stereotypes are untrue, many still make assumptions based on gender. There are many stereotypes we may all be guilty of, such as assuming Stereotypes about gender assume that there are in fact only two genders: male and female. They also assume that all men and women are heterosexual and that gender is determined by or related to a person's sexuality. Source for information on Gender Stereotype: Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender: Culture Society History dictionary. A gender stereotype is a predetermined set of attitudes and behaviors that is believed to be typical of all men or women. Stereotypes about gender assume that there are in fact only two genders: male and female. They also assume that all men and women are heterosexual and that gender is determined by or related to a person's sexuality. Gender issues in books for children and young adults. In S. Lehr (Ed.). *Battling dragons: Issues and controversy in children's literature*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. Lakoff, G. (2008). *The political mind: A cognitive scientist's guide to your brain and its politics*. The image of males and females in literature—from a child's first picture book to adult best-sellers—can influence the way in which males and females see themselves and, thus, can influence their communication (CG, 135). Imbalances in gender representation and overall gender stereotypes in children's literature may influence girls to undervalue themselves and teach boys to strive for a skewed sense of masculinity. See full transcript. Key Enlightenment...Key Enlightenment PhilosophersWWKey Enlightenment P...