Gender stereotypes and representation of female characters in children's picture books

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Date
10-2011

Department
School of Education

Degree
Doctor of Education (EdD)

Chair
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Primary Subject Area
Education, General; Gender Studies

Keywords
Children's picture books, Gender bias, Gender stereotypes, Sex typing

Disciplines
Education

Recommended Citation

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.