

Abstract

The process of completing this undergraduate honors thesis was one of the most challenging endeavors I have ever pursued. What began as a simple desire to explore the diversity gap in children's literature quickly blossomed into a multi-part study that surprised even myself with the extent of its breadth and depth. Not only did I use many of the tools I had acquired from my psychology degree to create and run an experimental study, but I also tapped into skill sets that were previously foreign to me, such as intense photoediting and conducting demographic content analyses of books. The high levels of patience, determination and persistence required by this project helped me grow immensely as a person. On nights in which all of the work I still had looming in front of me seemed too much I really found within myself the ability to dig even deeper and push on. This was especially true when I found myself confronted with the daunting task of finding and logging the race of the main characters in the 380 book titles I had received from the public libraries. Overall, despite the challenges along the way I found myself falling in love with the process of research. For me this research was one of the many avenues through which I could explore racism, colorism and prejudice in our world today. I see my research, and other studies like it, as a way to unearth and bring to light some of the diversity issues we still have in our society today. I view the results of my research as an opportunity to raise awareness regarding these issues, after all it is only by honestly discussing the state of race and diversity in society that we can ever hope to grow.

Honors College  
Ball State University  
Muncie, IN 47306