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### **Race and Racism in Collection Development: Socialization, implicit bias and decision making, and why it's important for youth collections to include books with diverse characters**

Lisa A. Gooden

*University of Missouri - Kansas City, School of Law, lagooden@umkc.edu*

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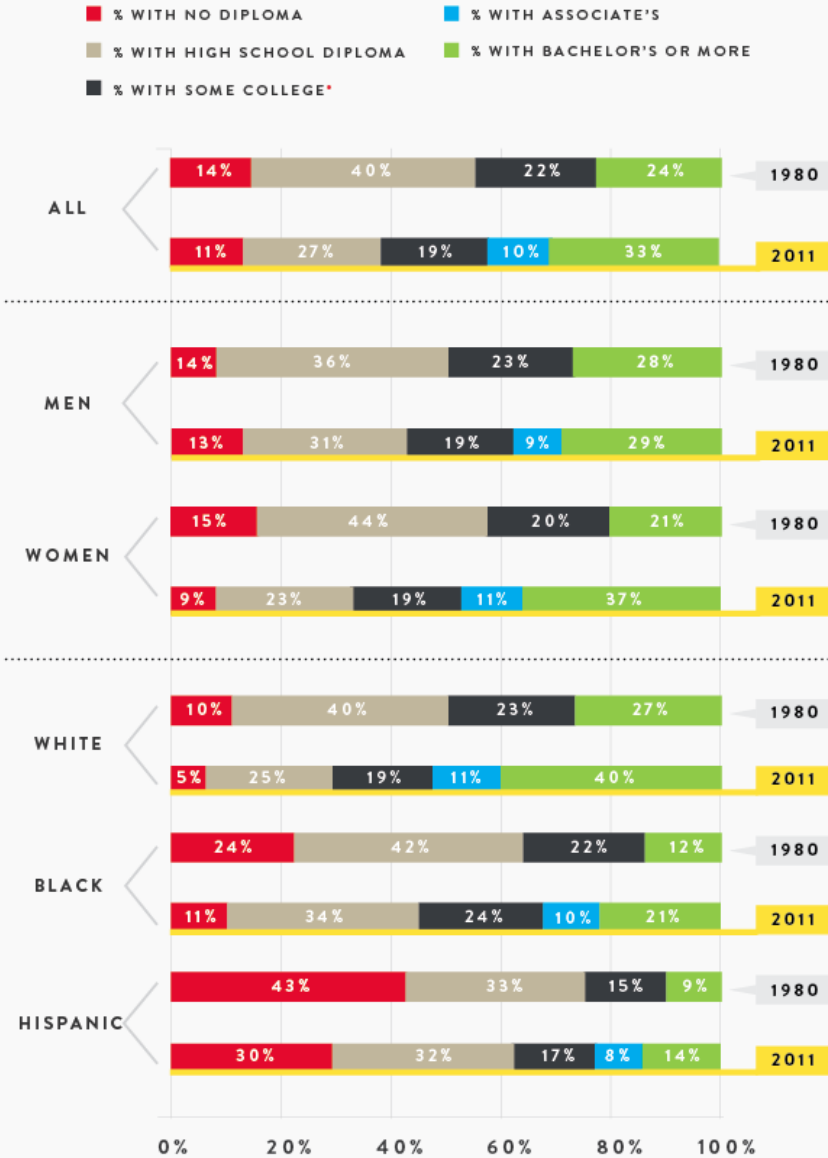
# Race and Racism in Collection Development

Socialization, implicit bias and decision-making  
and

Why it's important for youth collections to include  
books with diverse characters

Lisa Gooden, Kansas City Public Library [lisagooden@kclibrary.org](mailto:lisagooden@kclibrary.org)

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, AGES 25-34 BY RACE/ETHNICITY



\* Due to limitations in the data, "some college" includes associate's degree-holders for 1980  
 SOURCE: Dēmos Analysis of Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement

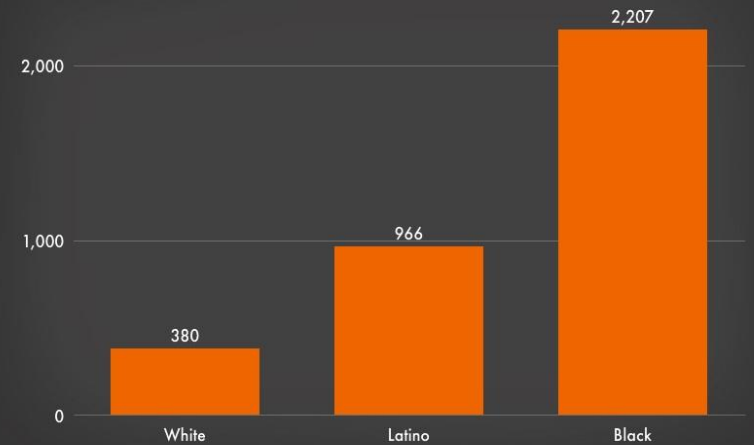
Dēmos

## U.S. Poverty Statistics - Race

	All Americans In Category (Millions)	Americans In Poverty (Millions)	Poverty Rate
White, not Hispanic	195.3	17.0	8.7%
Black	42.5	9.0	21.2%
Asian	19.5	2.0	10.0%
Hispanic, any race	59.1	10.8	18.3%

## United States incarceration rates by race and ethnicity, 2010

(number of people incarcerated per 100,000 people in that group)



Source: Calculated by the Prison Policy Initiative from Bureau of Justice Statistics, Correctional Population in the U.S., 2010 & U.S. Census 2010 Summary File 1.

# SYSTEMIC RACISM EXPLAINED



Click to watch the video :

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrHIQIO\\_bdQ&](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrHIQIO_bdQ&)



# What is our Role of the System?

- In publishing
  - In libraries
  - In children's books
- 



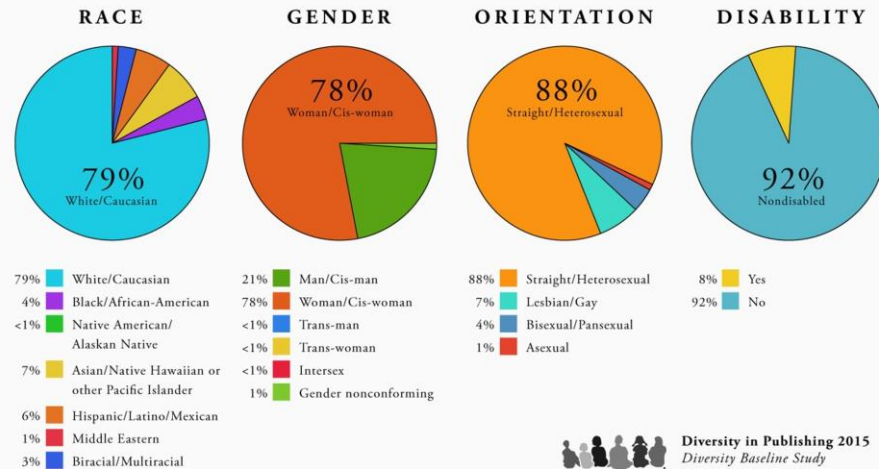
# DIVERSITY IN PUBLISHING

## Diversity Baseline Survey (DBS) 2015

Publishers surveyed: Abrams, Albert Whitman, Annick Press, Arte Publico Press, Beacon Press, Bloomsbury Publishing, Candlewick Press, Capstone, Charlesbridge, Chronicle Books, Cinco Puntos Press, Clean Reads, Dancing Lemur Press, L.L.C., Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Groundwood, Hachette Book Group, Holiday House, Just Us Books, Kids Can Press, Lee & Low Books, Lerner Publishing Group, Macmillan, Mango Media, Newfound, Owlkids Books, Peachtree Publishers, Penguin Random House, Pomelo Books, Sasquatch Books, Scholastic, Second Story Press, Tilbury House Publishers, Tradewind Books, Workman; Journals surveyed: Bayviews, Booklist, Foreword Reviews, Horn Book, Kirkus Reviews, Library Journal, Publishers Weekly, School Library Journal

Survey planning by Jason Low, Lee & Low Books, Publisher/Co-owner; Hannah Ehrlich, Lee & Low Books, Director of Marketing & Publicity  
Administered between April 9, 2015, and December 11, 2015

## INDUSTRY OVERALL

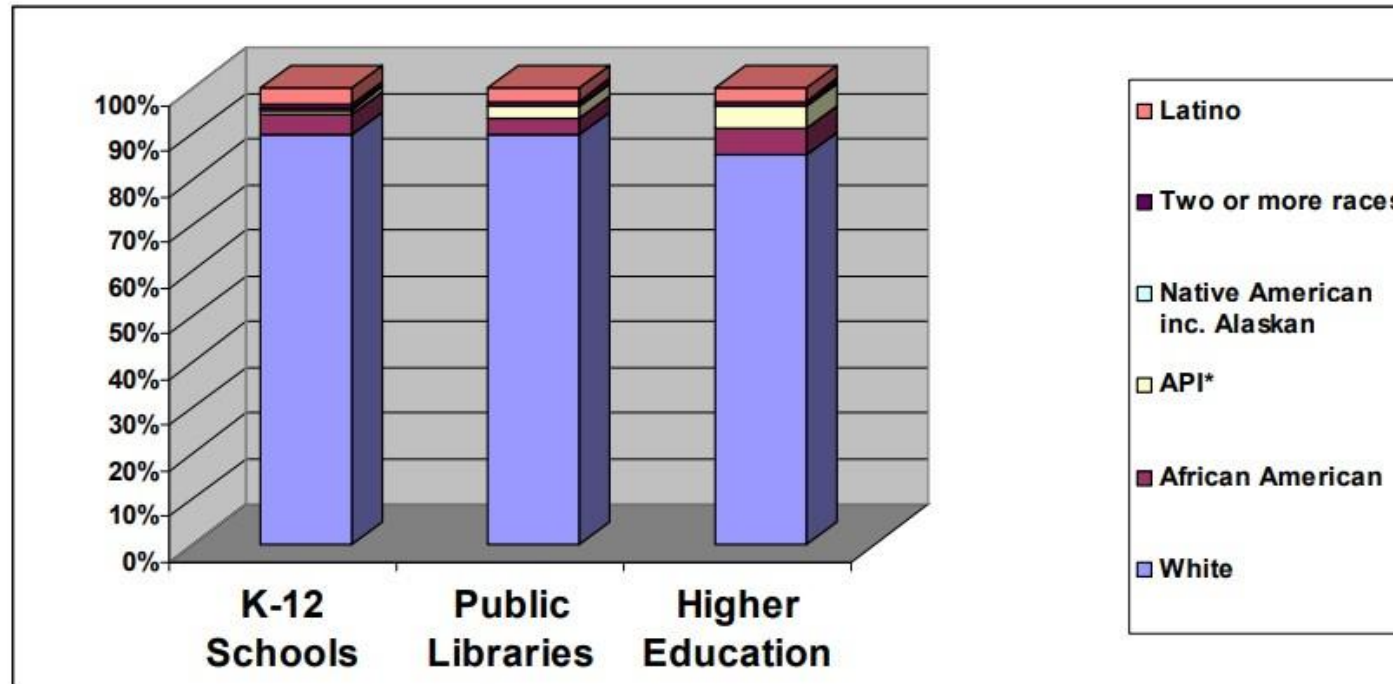


**Diversity in Publishing 2015**  
Diversity Baseline Study  
by Lee & Low Books  
blog.leeandlow.com

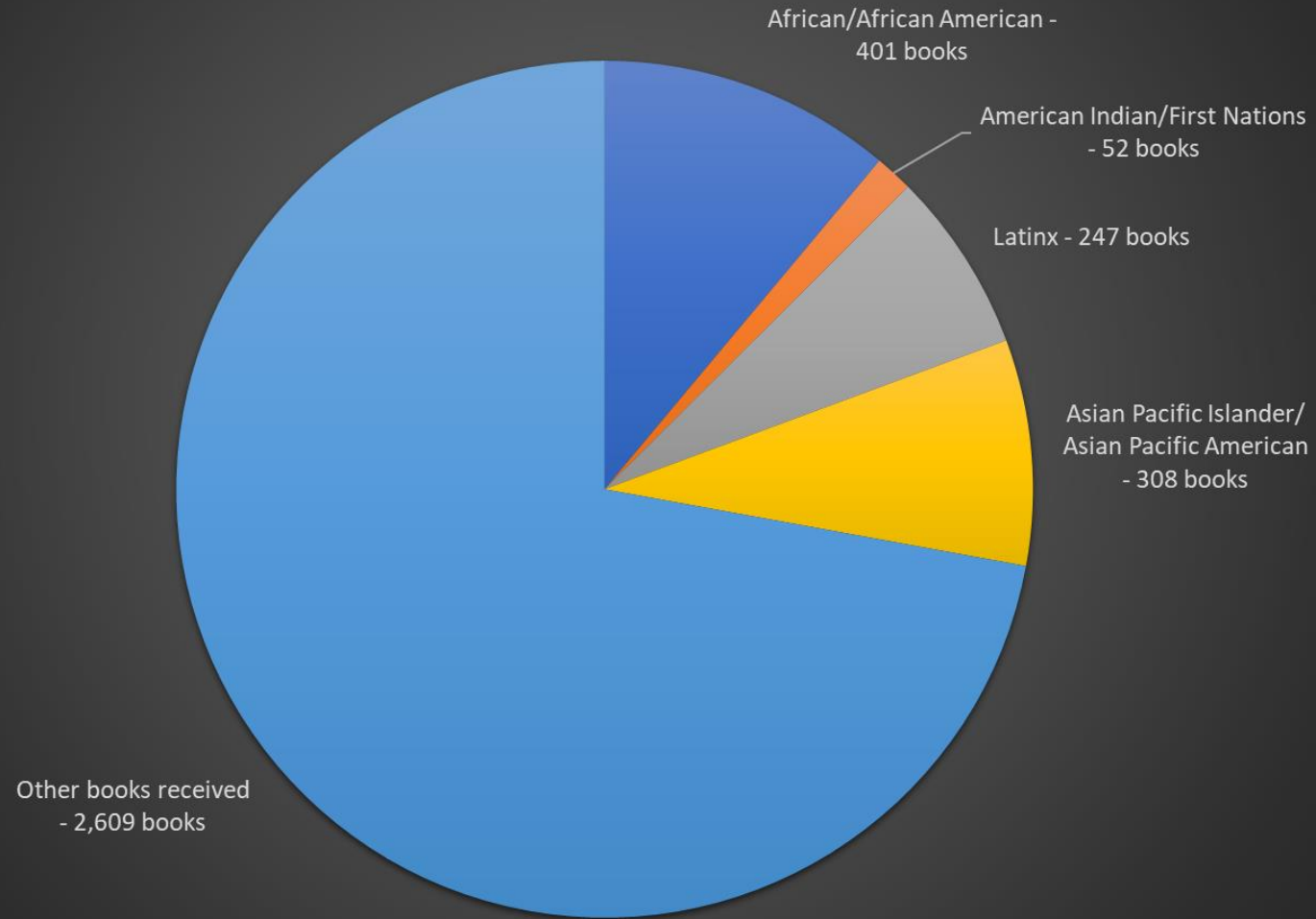


**diversity counts**  
Office for Research and Statistics  
Office for Diversity

## Percent Librarians by Type and Race/Ethnicity, ACS 2001-2005 Average



## CCBC received 3,617 books in 2018 Children's Books About People of Color and First/Native Nations







# Representation Matters

## In publishing

- ▶ 79% of publishing staff are white
- ▶ 2015 Lee & Low Books Survey of 34 publishers and 8 review journals

## In libraries

- ▶ 89% of librarians are white
- ▶ 2007 ALA Diversity Counts Survey

## In children's books

- ▶ Over 3,600 books received in 2018 by the Cooperative Children's Book Center
- ▶ 28% of the titles received were about people of color
- ▶ 21% of the titles were by authors or illustrators of color



# What are the Implications?

- ▶ Homogenous staff in the publishing and library industry
- ▶ Implicit or unconscious bias is effecting our collections
- ▶ More books are being published by white authors and featuring white characters, than by authors of color or featuring characters of color.
- ▶ Higher numbers of white librarians are selecting materials than black and brown librarians.
- ▶ Underrepresentation due to historical design and socialization over many generations.
- ▶ Lack of diversity means fewer students view these careers as viable professions.



# What is Implicit Bias?

- We think in the ways we have been socialized or conditioned to think.
- 

System 1 Thinking = Fast

System 2 Thinking = Deliberate

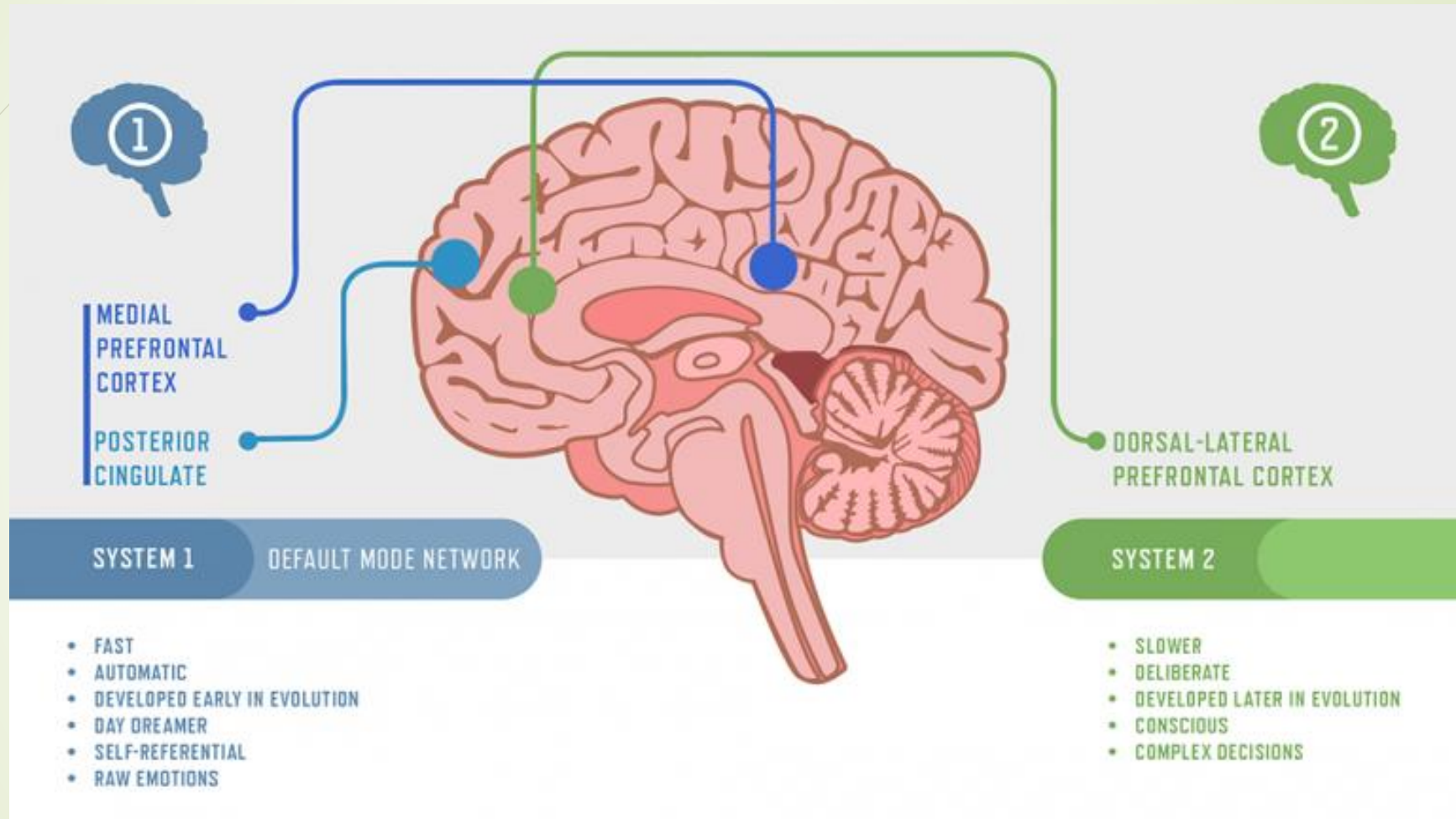
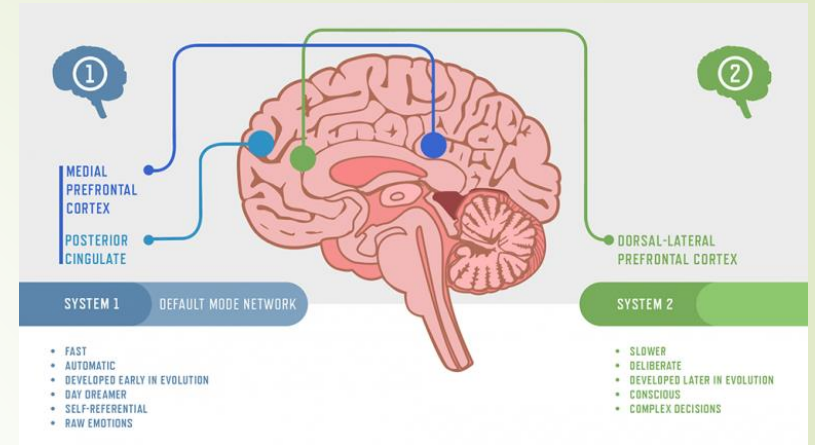


Image from MindSciences.com

# System 1 Thinking = Fast



Fight or Flight

First impressions

Repetitive decisions

Default mode

Governs 95%+ of decisions

Efficient decisions



# System 2 Thinking = Deliberate



Slower

Core values

Used less frequently

Problem solving

Reasoning

Reflection



System 1 Thinking = Fast

System 2 Thinking = Deliberate

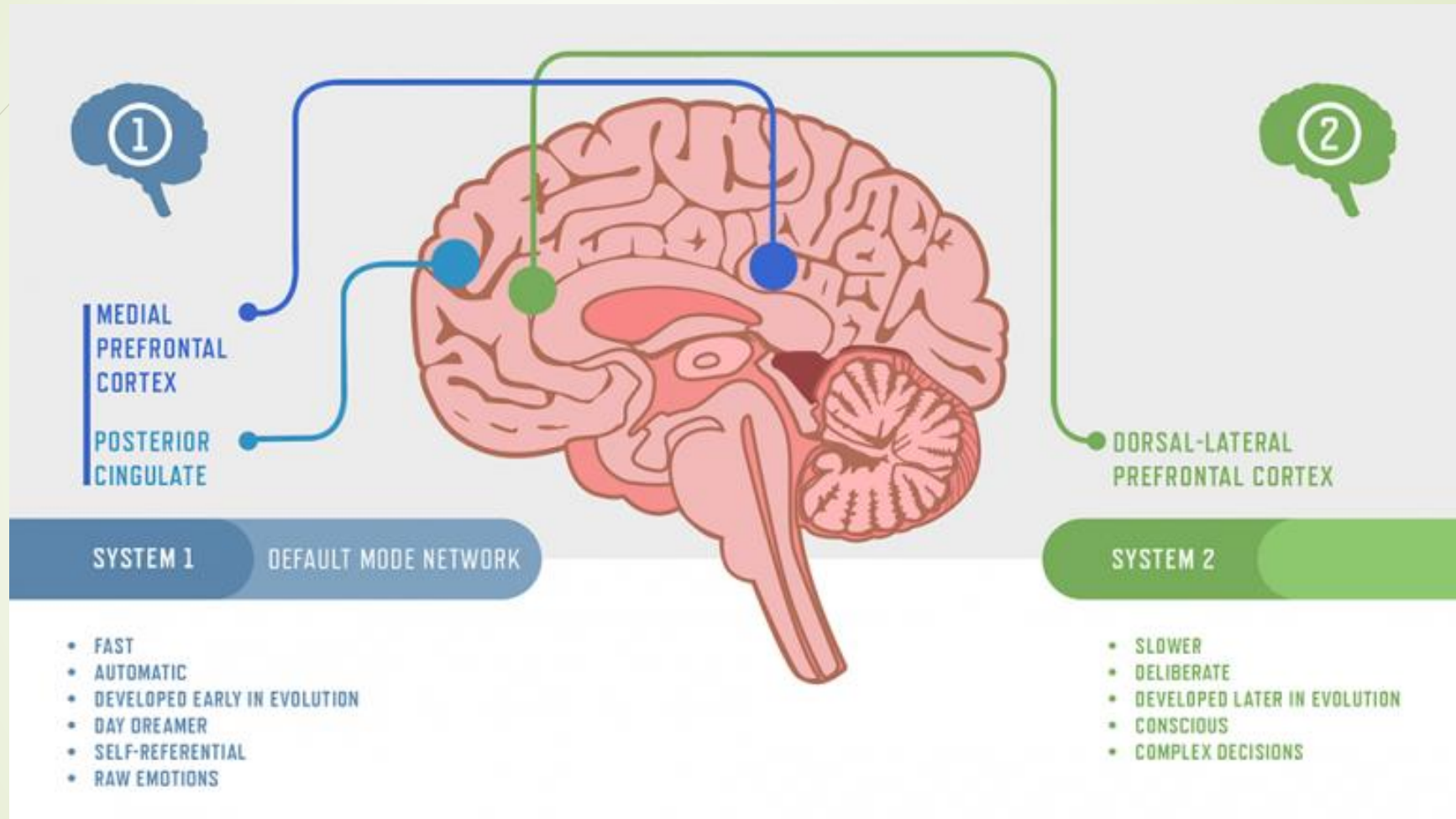



Image from MindSciences.com



# Socialization, implicit bias, and decision-making

- We think in the ways we have been socialized or conditioned to think.
- Unconscious associations and beliefs (implicit bias) govern 95-97% of our “fast brain” behaviors and decisions.
- Deeper thinking is more deliberate, slower, and activated less often.
- The result is we continue to select more of the same kinds of books.
- If we want to disrupt that cycle, we have to consciously seek to train our brains to make other decisions.

System 1 Thinking = Fast

System 2 Thinking = Deliberate

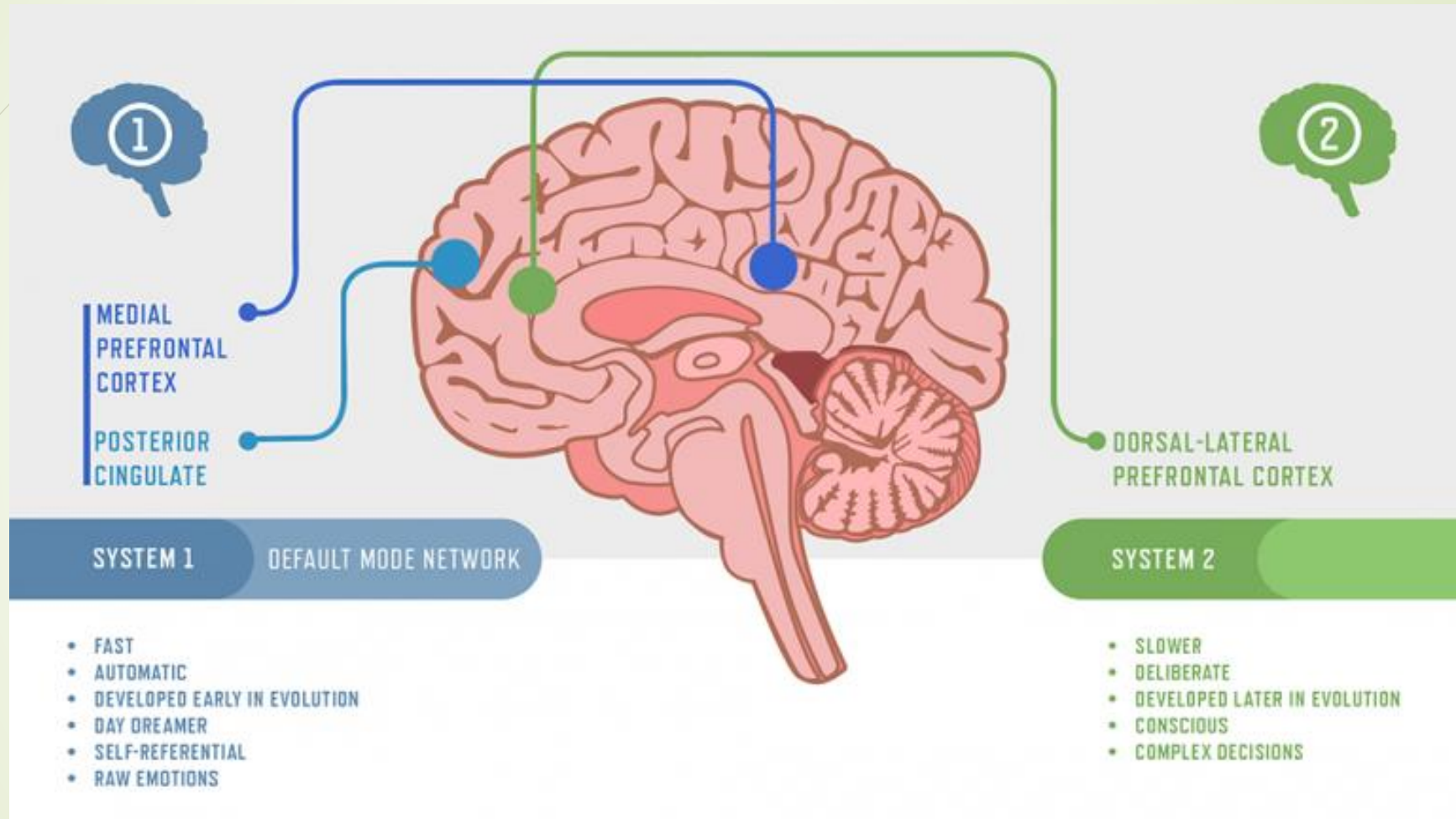
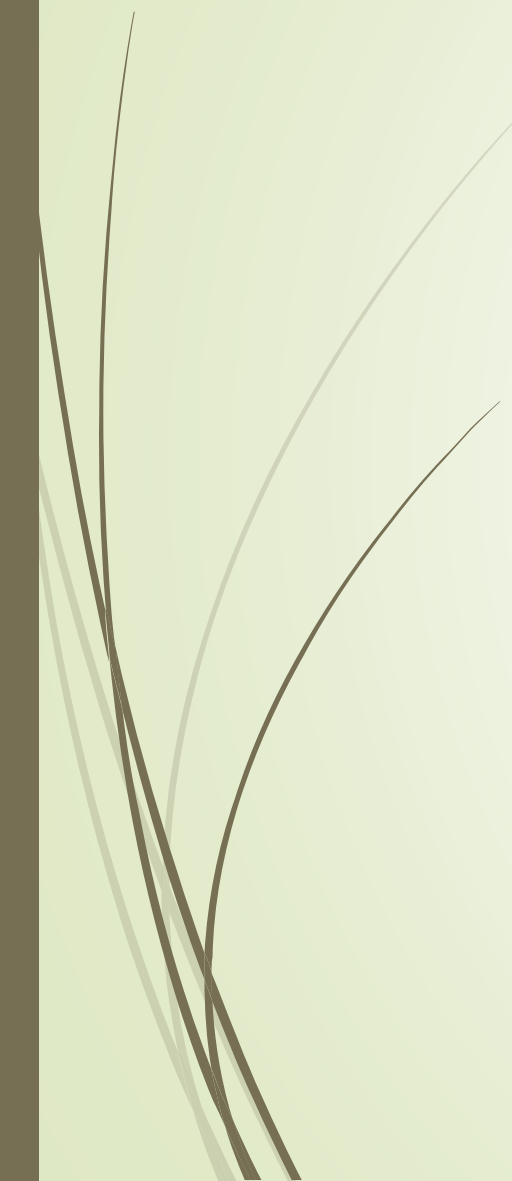



Image from MindSciences.com



# Why it's important to include books with diverse characters

- Benefits for Black, brown, and indigenous children
  - Benefits for White children and children from dominant social groups
  - Promotes deeper learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- 





Windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors  
- Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop

“Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience.”

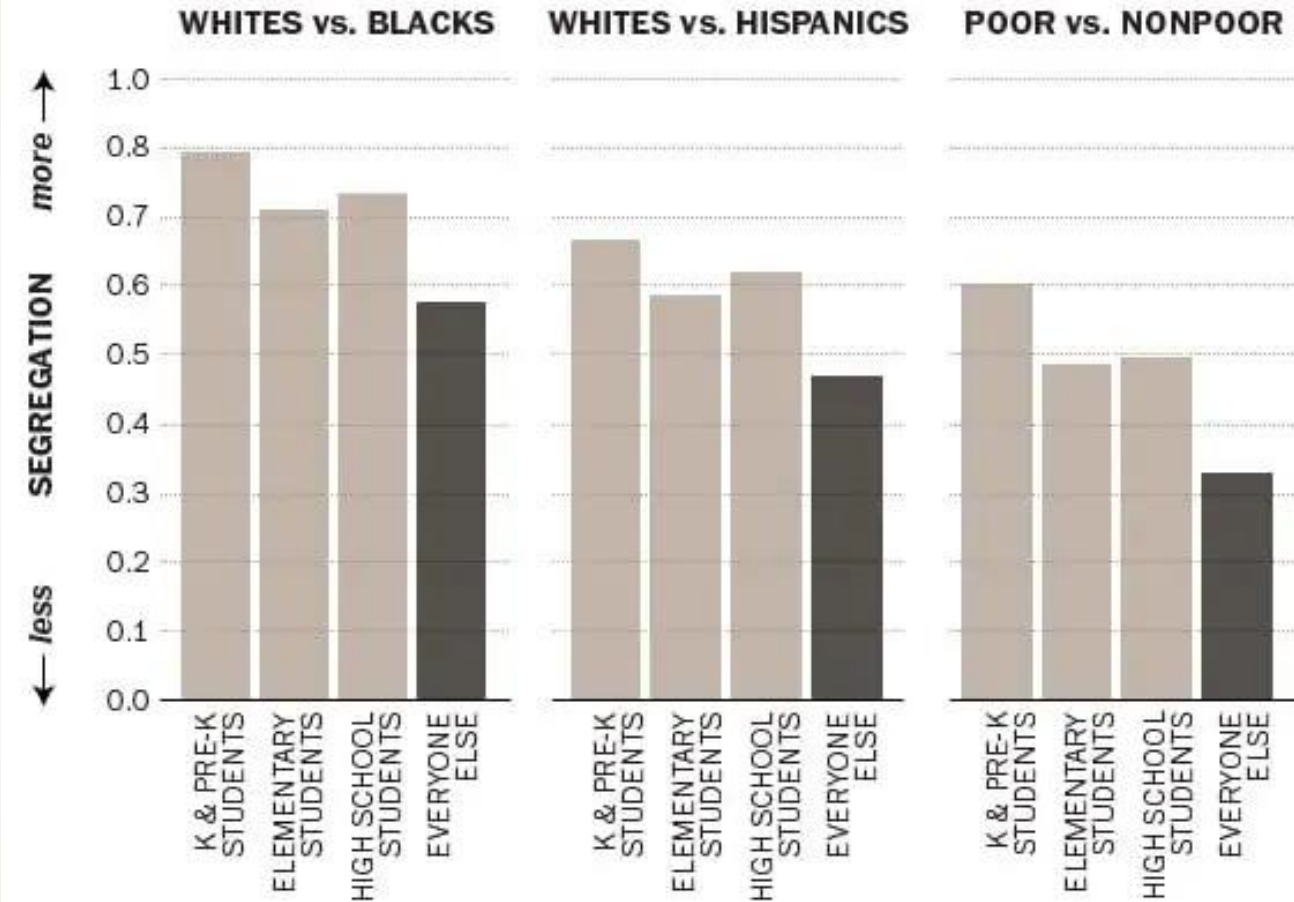
“When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part.”

# Students' exposure to other races at school 2011-2012




## Students experience more segregation than everyone else

Residential segregation, 2007 to 2011



SOURCE: Analysis by Paul Jargowsky using American Community Survey data.  
GRAPHIC: The Washington Post. Published May 14, 2014

Image from Washington Post



Windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors  
- Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop

“They need the books as windows onto reality, not just on imaginary worlds. They need books that will help them understand the multicultural nature of the world they live in, and their place as a member of just one group, as well as their connections to all other humans.”

“Books may be one of the few places where children who are socially isolated and insulated from the larger world may meet people unlike themselves. If they only see reflections of themselves, they will grow up with an exaggerated sense of their own importance and value in the world, a dangerous ethnocentrism.”



# Why it's important to include books with diverse characters

Benefits for Black, brown and indigenous children:

- ▶ Children see themselves reflected in books
- ▶ Validates their experiences
- ▶ Provides a richer understanding of their possibilities

Benefits for White children:

- ▶ Segregated communities
- ▶ The average White student attends school where 77% of students are White
- ▶ Literature is a way for White children to learn about the experiences of children of color and other marginalized communities

For all children:

- ▶ Promotes deeper learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.





# We are gatekeepers of literature in our communities

- ▶ How do you grant or deny access to diverse books?
  - ▶ Purchasing
  - ▶ Recommendations
  - ▶ Displays
- ▶ Our unconscious choices can harm if they:
  - ▶ deprive children of the opportunity to read books that reflect their own lives
  - ▶ deprive children of the opportunity read books that reflect different lived experiences



# Practical Advice

- ▶ Set aside time to specifically look for diverse titles. Do not assume you will come across them automatically in your review journals.
- ▶ DiverseBookFinder.org – Includes a collection analysis tool and list of diverse book awards. Check your collection against their dataset and seek out recent winners and honor titles from diverse book awards.
- ▶ Follow #WeNeedDiverseBooks - advocates for changes in the publishing industry to produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of all young people. <https://diversebooks.org/>
- ▶ Reviews are getting better at mentioning the different kinds of representation in books. Find reviews that indicate character traits and prioritize books with diverse protagonists, and not just secondary characters.

### SLJ Reviews 2019 April

... Sarell's simple illustrations, which depict Frankie as an African American girl, accentuate the book's realistic tone. VERDICT Perfect as a tie-in to STEAM curricula and for readers who enjoy Betty Birney's "Humphrey" series and Cleary's "Ramona." Highly recommended.—Tara Kehoe, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, NC. Copyright 2019

### PW Reviews 2019 April #2

...this sensitively told tale, and she offers a nuanced, normalizing portrayal of Jesse's autism spectrum disorder alongside her other qualities. Between the charming protagonist, the engaging mystery, and a compelling emotional arc, the result is wholly satisfying. Ages 8–12. Agent: Erin Murphy, Erin Murphy Literary Agency. (May) Copyright 2019

### Kirkus Reviews 2019 April #1

Twitch has brown skin while almost everyone else is either undescribed or clearly white, but even the villains in this 1930s American town seem inexplicably oblivious to race. A beautifully written fantasy allegory with comic grace notes. (Fantasy. 9-11) Copyright 2019

### Kirkus Reviews 2019 April #2

His frequent black-and-white pictures add humor and depict August's family (both living and dead) as white. A tantalizing start to a delightfully macabre new series. (Supernatural mystery. 8-12) Copyright 2019

### Booklist Reviews 2019 April #2

...examines the complexities of having a parent with a mental illness and the responsibilities that kids sometimes must shoulder. Themes of trust and LGBTQ romance are incorporated into this weighty but hopeful story. Grades 4-7. Copyright 2019 Booklist Reviews.

### Kirkus Reviews 2019 March #1

...Ella, the lone dark-skinned character depicted, lives part-time in Colorado with her ranch-hand father and with her mother in Florida. Light fare for emergent chapter-book readers who've exhausted the Magic Tree House series. (Adventure. 7-10) Copyright 2019



# Practical Advice



- Start a list of new and favorite authors and illustrators who create books featuring characters of color. Check your collection for their previous books and remember to seek out new releases.
- Keep a list of older quality titles or award winners that may be lost and need to be replaced.
- Look for more current covers or paperback editions that can make older Juv and YA Fiction titles look new again.





# Practical Advice

- ▶ We do not have to purchase every book.
- ▶ Diverse books are not competing for space with other books.
- ▶ There is room in our collections for:
  - ▶ books with characters of color and that reflect the lives of other marginalized groups, AND
  - ▶ books with White characters and those from other dominant social groups
- ▶ **We do not sacrifice anything when we create a diverse collection!**



# Resources & Citations

Diversebooks.org

<https://diversebooks.org/resources/where-to-find-diverse-books/>

DiverseBookFinder.org

<https://diversebookfinder.org/>

Lee & Low. Multicultural children's book publisher

<https://www.leeandlow.com/>

Kansas City Library Bibliocommons

Resource List: Race, Equity and Inclusion

<https://tinyurl.com/kclibraryrei>

Diversity in Publishing: Diversity Baseline Survey 2015

<https://blog.leeandlow.com/2016/01/26/where-is-the-diversity-in-publishing-the-2015-diversity-baseline-survey-results/>

ALA Diversity Counts Report

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/diversitycounts/divcounts>

Cooperative Children's Book Center

<https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp>

"What Happens Before? A Field Experiment Exploring How Pay and Representation Differentially Shape Bias on the Pathway into Organizations."

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2063742](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2063742)

Evidence Of Racial, Gender Biases Found In Faculty Mentoring.

<https://www.npr.org/2014/04/22/305814367/evidence-of-racial-gender-biases-found-in-faculty-mentoring>

Whitened Resumes: Race and Self-Presentation in the Labor Market

<http://www-2.rotman.utoronto.ca/facbios/file/Whitening%20MS%20R2%20Accepted.pdf>

Thinking Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/kahneman-excerpt-thinking-fast-and-slow/>

Choosing Segregation: Racial Imbalance in American Public Schools

<https://s4.ad.brown.edu/Projects/usschools/reports/report4.pdf>

The Return of School Segregation in Eight Charts

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/the-return-of-school-segregation-in-eight-charts/>

Housing segregation is holding back the promise of Brown v. Board

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/05/15/housing-segregation-is-holding-back-the-promise-of-brown-v-board-of-education/>

"Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors"

<https://scenicregional.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Mirrors-Windows-and-Sliding-Glass-Doors.pdf>