

# Everybody's Story: Investigating Character Diversity in Reading Australia's Picture Books

Is it possible in Australian classrooms to display diversity in the books we share with students, reflecting their diverse worlds and the worlds of others?

This session will focus on my project as the 2025 Reading Australia Fellow. My project investigated the diversity of main characters in Reading Australia's Picture Book collection. Reading Australia aims to promote the use of Australian Literature in Australian classrooms by publishing teaching resources that match Australian texts. Using a multimodal analysis, I analysed the Participants in Reading Australia's picture book collection. My analysis investigated how picture books in this collection provide for diverse classrooms, in terms of culture, gender, age and ability. Picture books are key in the identity development of children, empowering voices and conveying messages about culture, society and inclusion. My analysis of Reading Australia's picture book collection revealed the breadth of this collection and opportunities for further development. Pairing my text analysis with semi-structured interviews and surveys with educators around Australia extended this project. The inclusion of teachers' voices in this project enabled inquiry, not only on the resources available, but on the needs of Australian teachers and classrooms. This presentation will leave you with reading lists, resources and ruminations on the diversity of Australian picture books.