



Mirrors and Windows



Goals of this seminar:

- Identify international statistics surrounding the effects of illiteracy.
- Discuss the impact of diversity, equity and inclusion in books on readers holding marginalized identities.
- Research the greatest need within the local community in regard to literacy.
- Develop a plan to support the greatest need identified.

Fraternity Values:

- Philanthropic Service to Others
- Personal and Intellectual Growth

Suggested Facilitator: Vice President Community Relations, Director Diversity and Inclusion, Director Service and Philanthropy

Room setup/materials needed:

- May need a projector depending on the options chosen within the seminar.
- Members can be seated comfortably as the room allows. Room setup should allow space for members to form small groups and have a discussion as suggested in the program.

Getting started:

- The facilitator should walk through this seminar prior to presenting it to make sure they're comfortable with the material.
- Talking points are indicated with normal font and in quotation marks. Please use these as speaking guidelines but be sure to make the presentation your own.
- Facilitation instructions are indicated with italicized font. These are hints you might find helpful when administering the material.
- Most importantly, have fun! The more excited and engaged you are, the more participants will be.
- If you are holding this workshop during a chapter meeting, or another time where cell phones aren't usually allowed, let participants know they will need them for this activity.

☰ Introduction: Mirrors and Windows

☰ Part 1: Mirrors and Windows

≡ Part 2: Mirrors and Windows

≡ Conclusion: Mirrors and Windows

≡ Participant Activities

Introduction: Mirrors and Windows

Literacy

“ Welcome and thank you for joining me for our Leading with Values seminar – Mirrors and Windows! Before we get started, I ask that everyone do the following three things today:

1. Be respectful. Moments shared during the seminar today should not leave this room. Stories stay and only lessons learned from those stories leave.
2. Listen as if you're the only other person in the room. Give those speaking your undivided attention and an opportunity to share what they're ready to share.
3. Share the knowledge and resources you gain today and see how you can address inequity by promoting literacy.

As a Pi Phi, you may have heard us share that in the United States, one out of every four children grows up unable to read. What else do we know? I'd like to share some literacy facts with you that may or may not surprise you. If anything, I hope they inspire you! ”

Before reading this list of facts to participants, select which ones you think are most relevant to your chapter members, community and the area you're serving.

Literacy facts provided by the Library Journal, First Book and ABC Life Literacy Canada.

1

“ Around the world, 781 million people have low or no literacy skills. Of those 781 million people, 43 million are Americans.

2

43% of adults with the lowest literacy levels live in poverty.

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the official poverty rate in 2018 was 11.8%, down slightly from 2017. But 17.6% of people who identified as Hispanic and 20.8% of people who identified as Black were classified as living in poverty, much higher than the average, and both groups saw an increase from 2017.

3

72% of children whose parents have low literacy skills will likely be at the lowest reading levels themselves.

4

Three out of five people in prison have low or no literacy skills, and 85% of youth offenders struggle to read.

- A study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that providing general education to people in prisons reduced recidivism by 7%.

5

English language learners (ELLs) face additional barriers to academic achievement. Only 63% of ELLs graduate from high school, and of those who do, only 1.4% take college entrance exams.

6

In the United States, literacy is closely tied to socioeconomic status, generational poverty and the achievement gap — the differences in academic achievement between students with economic advantages and students from underserved populations.

- Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress shows 78% of fourth-grade students from low-income areas are not reading at grade level, compared to 48% of their peers from higher-income areas.

- Research from the Annie E. Casey Foundation shows this disparity has widened by 20% in the past decade and disproportionately includes children of color.
- Standardized test scores from 2017 indicate that 81% of Black and 79% of Indigenous fourth-graders are reading at levels below proficiency, compared with 54% of white students.
- Research cited by our literacy partners at First Book emphasizes that lack of access to books and educational resources is a major contributor to educational inequality — and these resources are often scarce for the children who need them most.

7

48% of adult Canadians have literacy skills that fall below a high school level. 17% function at the lowest level, where they may, for example, be unable to read the dosage instructions on a medicine bottle.

8

First Book also shares that books and educational resources are scarce in low-income households, schools and communities in Canada.

- Approximately 30% of Canadian children in Grade 3 lack basic literacy skills.
- Almost 25% of Canadian households don't have a single book, and many schools in economically disadvantaged communities can only afford one new library book per year for every three students. ”

“ That's a lot of information and it's not even scratching the surface. ”

OPTION 1: LITERACY FACT DISCU...

OPTION 2: RESEARCH FOR ACTION

This option may be better for chapters looking for discussion.

“ Discuss what stood out to you among the literacy facts. Have you seen these statistics present in your life or the lives of those around you? Do you see any of this at play in our community? ”

Ask for three to five members to share their thoughts on the literacy facts shared with the larger group. If you're having a hard time getting members to engage, ask them to pair up with a partner to discuss their thoughts first and then ask for them to share with the larger group.

OPTION 1: LITERACY FACT DISCU...

OPTION 2: RESEARCH FOR ACTION

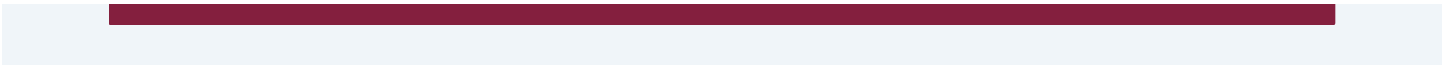
This option may be better for chapters looking to take action.

Have members form small groups of three to five members.

“ Knowing these are international and national statistics, it would be helpful to know what is happening in our community. We're going to spend five minutes researching statistics about literacy levels in our local community or state. Once you've found some good information to share, talk within your small group about what you've learned. Then we'll share some key takeaways with the larger group. ”

Ask for three to five groups to share their findings.

CONTINUE



Part 1: Mirrors and Windows

Young Readers

“ I want you to think back to your childhood or teenage years and answer the following questions: ”

- 1 What was your favorite book?
- 2 Who were the characters?
- 3 Did you relate to them?
- 4 Why was this your favorite book?
- 5 Did it teach you anything significant?

OPTION 1: LARGE GROUP DISCUSS...

OPTION 2: SMALL GROUP DISCUSS...

This option is better for small- to medium- sized chapters who may be able to have a large group discussion.

“ Share your reflections with someone sitting next to you, and then we'll share a few out loud with the larger group. ”

Members can use the online Leading with Values module to reference each question they need to discuss. Send them the link to this seminar and direct them to the "Participant Activities" tab on the left side. There, they will find the prompts.

Ask for three to five members to share their reflections.

“ Thank you for sharing! Did we see any patterns? Did your favorite books have characters that look similar to you? Were their stories relatable to your life? ”

Ask for three to five members to share their thoughts.

“ How would it feel to not have access to books that held a storyline similar to your life? For example, what if you went to the library, excited to pick out a new book and couldn't find one that featured a young girl in a wheelchair or one that featured a child in foster care? How would that have shaped your childhood? Keep this in mind as we discuss why representation matters. ”

OPTION 1: LARGE GROUP DISCUSS...

OPTION 2: SMALL GROUP DISCUSS...

This option is better for medium- to large- sized chapters where a large group discussion may be harder to execute.

“ Break into small groups of three to five members and share your reflections with your group members. We'll share a few reflections out loud after five minutes in our small groups. ”

Members can use the online Leading with Values module to reference each question they need to discuss. Send them the link to this seminar and direct them to the "Participant Activities" tab on the left side. There, they will find the prompts.

Allow five minutes for small group discussions, then ask for three to five members to share their reflections with the larger group.

"Thank you for sharing! Did we see any patterns? Did your favorite books have characters that look similar to you? Were their stories relatable to your life?"

Ask for three to five members to share their thoughts.

"How would it feel to not have access to books that held a storyline similar to your life? For example, what if you went to the library, excited to pick out a new book and couldn't find one that featured a young girl in a wheelchair or one that featured a child in foster care? How would that have shaped your childhood? Keep this in mind as we discuss why representation matters."

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Part 2: Mirrors and Windows

Representation

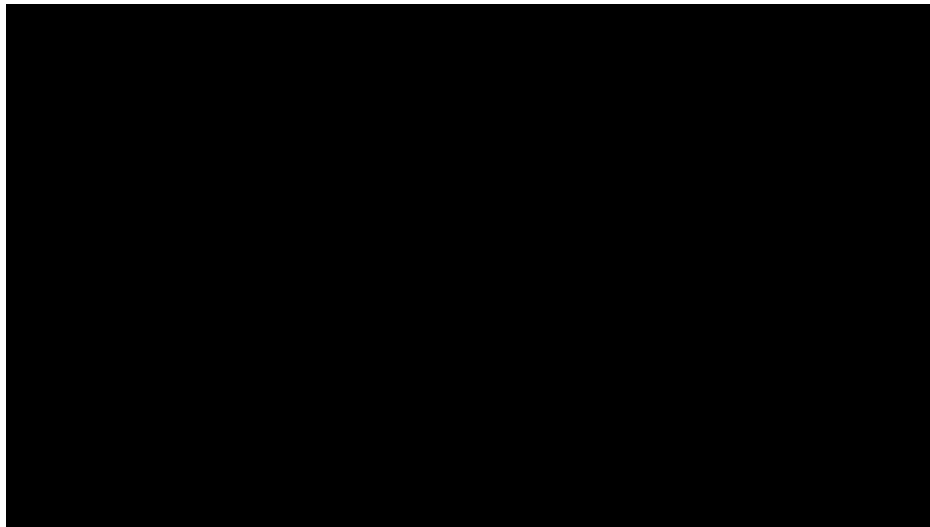
“ Can anyone tell me what it means when I say representation matters? ”

Ask the group if they know what that phrase means. If not, provide them with this definition: When people with marginalized identities are featured in movies, books, music, TV shows, leadership roles, etc., it can provide the feeling of validation, inspiration or being understood. Additionally, it can provide others outside of that group, an avenue to understand and learn about those in marginalized groups as well as help normalize their existence in those spaces.

“ This brings us to the idea of mirrors and windows. Mirrors and windows originated with Emily Style of the National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Project. Emily shares, “A mirror is a story that reflects your own culture and helps you build your identity. A window is a resource that offers you a view into someone else’s experience.” What do you think of this idea?”

If your chapter has access to a projector or TV, show this video as a supplemental explanation to the idea of mirrors and windows.

 YOUTUBE



Windows and Mirrors: The Importance of Diversity in Children's Books

Short project done with Emily Spooner showcasing the importance of diversity in children's books. Inspired by The Atlantic article, "Where Is the Black Blueb...

[VIEW ON YOUTUBE >](#)

Ask for a few people to share their thoughts after hearing this analogy.

“ Think about an identity you hold that is important to you. Imagine you had a book as a child or teenager that spotlighted this piece of your identity and helped you understand it more. How would that feel?

Alternatively, did you read books about other cultures or identities when you were younger? How do you think that could have shaped your life and the knowledge you hold now? How about the way you interact with others?

Ultimately, why is it important to have representation for marginalized identities in books? ”

OPTION 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSS...

OPTION 2: PARTNER DISCUSSION

This option may be better for medium to large chapters.

“ Discuss those questions in your small group. We'll share out loud with the larger group in five to seven minutes. ”

Members can use the online Leading with Values module to reference each question they need to discuss. Send them the link to this seminar and direct them to the "Participant Activities" tab on the left side. There, they will find the prompts.

After they've had time to share in their small groups, bring everyone back together and have three members share their responses out loud with the larger group.

“ Thank you for sharing! What do you think we can do to help students, children, young adults or anyone feel seen and understood? Is this the greatest need in our community right now? How do we go about identifying that need? ”

Ask for responses from a few members.

OPTION 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSS...

OPTION 2: PARTNER DISCUSSION

This option may be better for small to medium chapters.

“ Discuss those questions with a partner. We'll share out loud with the larger group in five minutes. ”

Members can use the online Leading with Values module to reference each question they need to discuss. Send them the link to this seminar and direct them to the "Participant Activities" tab on the left side. There, they will find the prompts.

After they've had time to share with their partners, bring everyone back together and have three members share their responses out loud with the larger group.

“ Thank you for sharing! What do you think we can do to help students, children, young adults or anyone feel seen and understood? Is this the greatest need in our community right now? How do we go about identifying that need? ”

Ask for responses from a few members.

CONTINUE

Conclusion: Mirrors and Windows

Take Action

“Representation is just **ONE** way literacy can address inequity. There are so many more ways it can impact those around us! What can we do with the knowledge and resources we have to make a difference in our communities?”

OPTION 1: GROUP REFLECTION

OPTION 2: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTI...

This option may be better for chapters wanting to work as a group to make an impact on the community.

You will spend this time creating an action plan for how the chapter will address the greatest need in your community, if it has already been identified. This could have been identified if your chapter chose option 2 in Part 1 where you researched the need in your local community. This could have also been identified by talking with community leaders before the seminar. Remember, it's important to work with those in the community to help determine need. This would be a good time to brainstorm what the chapter can collectively do, then a chapter representative can have a conversation with those in the community you hope to serve to determine your chapter's next steps.

“Let's brainstorm ways we can make an impact in our community through literacy. Keep in mind, we'll have a conversation with the groups we choose to support to make sure they're the main decision makers with regard to the need we hope to serve. First, let's get ideas flowing on what we can do as a chapter. Any ideas?”

Ask members to share their ideas. Someone should be taking notes so all ideas are captured and can be reflected on. If time allows, narrow your ideas down to 2-3 goals you believe you can accomplish in the next year.

OPTION 1: GROUP REFLECTION

OPTION 2: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTI...

This option may be better for chapters that already have a plan established and want to embrace individual action.

“How can you individually serve the community? Reflect for a few minutes, then we'll share ideas with the larger group to wrap up!”

Allow members five minutes to brainstorm individual ways members can give back to the community.

Ask members to share their ideas. Encourage them to share these opportunities with other members and keep the chapter updated in their journey to reach their individual goals.

“Thank you all for your participation in the seminar today. I appreciate you all being open to learning more about the concept of representation and mirrors and windows. I hope we're able to make a difference in our communities with the action items we've laid out!”

Survey

Provide the following link to four members of your chapter, one from each class. You and those four members will complete the Leading with Values seminar survey to provide feedback to Pi Beta Phi.

pibetaPhi.org/lwfeedback

References

- ABC Life Literacy Canada <https://abclifeliteracy.ca/literacy-at-a-glance/#:-:text=Adult%20Literacy%20in%20Canada,and%20in%20their%20personal%20lives>
- First Book <https://firstbook.org/the-need/>
- Library Journal <https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=How-Serious-Is-Americas-Literacy-Problem>

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Participant Activities

Part 1 Discussion Questions

- 1 What was your favorite book?
- 2 Who were the characters?
- 3 Did you relate to them?
- 4 Why was this your favorite book?
- 5 Did it teach you anything significant?

Part 2 Discussion Questions

- 1 Think about an identity you hold that is important to you. Imagine you had a book as a child or teenager that spotlighted this piece of your identity and helped you understand it more. How would that feel?
- 2 Did you read books about other cultures or identities when you were younger? How do you think that could have shaped your life and the knowledge you hold now? How about the way you interact with others?

Thank you for engaging in this seminar, today! Please fill out this survey to give feedback on this *Leading with Values* seminar: Mirrors and Windows

[Complete the Leading with Values survey.](#)

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