Creating Representation in ThinkGive Resources

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I am a senior at Smith College, majoring in Education and Child Study. I transferred to Smith from Bunker Hill CommunityCollege in the fall of 2019. After returning home to Boston in the middle of the spring semester because of the pandemic, I began to search for summer opportunities. Going into my senior year practicum, it was important for my summer experiences to be education-related. When I came across the posting for a ThinkGive intern, I was intrigued to see an organization creating lessons that focus on social emotional development within children. I have some experience working with preschoolers through the lens of SEL and literacy development, and ThinkGive was a great fit.

I am most proud of the work I have done finding multicultural resources for the revised ThinkGive curriculum. I understand how crucial it is to provide resources like videos, books, and activities that accurately represent students' many possible identities.

Growing up, I rarely saw individuals who looked like me, shared one of my identities, or had a similar family background. I felt I was not represented enough in the media, textbooks, or lessons I was given at school. The lack of representation I experienced, like many other students, resulted in a disconnect and made it difficult for me to relate to the materials I was being shown. I finally felt represented when I attended and subsequently graduated from Bunker Hill Community College, which had a large percentage of international students, people of color, and individuals from all different backgrounds.

I believe it does a great disservice to only represent and show one perspective and identity. Students whose identities are not shown can feel discouraged or inferior, while students whose identities are shown may be unaware of the underrepresented perspectives, which could lead to a lack of empathy.

Taking this into account as I searched for resources, I tried to incorporate a wide array of identities, some that matched my own and some that did not. I wanted ThinkGive's resources to accurately portray the range of experiences individuals can have being a part of a country, religion, community, ethnicity, or any other identity.

I had an amazing time looking for resources that touched on many identities, and imagined how a student could interact with, view, or discuss the resources. My perspective widened and my identity was reaffirmed as a result of attending a diverse community college. Hopefully, my work will provide a similar perspective on diversity to ThinkGive students.