Diversity Through Representation of Characters with

Differing Gender Roles, Sexuality, and Accessibility in *Arthur*

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Abstract

This paper examines the way diversity is represented in the animated children's television show *Arthur*, based on the work of Marc Brown. The objective of this study was to analyze *Arthur'*s diversity, as a whole, by investigating key episodes; this was best done qualitatively because they sought an exploration in understanding. Previous research indicates the connections between children's development and the television shows they watch, including the links between gender roles in television programs and children's perception of their gender (Aubrey & Harrison, 2004), the relationships between children and the relatability of their favorite characters (Rosaen & Dibble, 2008), the relationship between perspective-taking and moral judgement (Cingel & Krcmar, 2019), the ways in which cartoons influence children's behavior depending on age (Schiau et. al., 2013), and gender stereotyping in children's television and advertisements (Anuradha, 2012). The researchers conducted a qualitative textual analysis of eight different episodes that focused on gender roles, sexuality, and accessibility. The analysis was conducted through viewing the episodes and taking note of the quotes and descriptions that were found pertinent to the concepts of diversity, using Hesse-Biber & Levy's definition of a holistic approach to qualitative research. The researchers found that these concepts were all introduced to viewers in ways that normalize the behaviors, traits, and qualities associated with these concepts of diversity, in a way that worked toward encouraging the acceptance of diversity. Because the positive reception of differences is processed and accepted by the characters, children who watch the show may be more likely to accept these differences and others in their lives.

Introduction

It is a fact of life that children watch television. Children are more easily influenced than adults by the world around them and have the ability to learn skills from the media they consume (Cingel & Krcmar, 2019), so representation of differences in gender roles, sexuality, and accessibility can encourage acceptance (Aubrey & Harrison, 2004; Cingel & Krcmar, 2019; Rosaen & Dibble, 2008). This project examines how the visibility and acceptance of gender, sexuality, and accessibility is represented in the children's cartoon television show *Arthur*.

Researchers have taken an interest in the interactions between children and television, examining the relationships between children and the relatability of their favorite characters (Rosaen & Dibble, 2008), the links between gender roles in television programs and children's perception of their gender (Aubrey & Harrison, 2004), the relationship between perspective-taking and moral judgement (Cingel & Krcmar, 2019), the ways in which cartoons influence children's behavior depending on age (Schiau et. al.,2013), and gender stereotyping in children's television and advertisements (Anuradha, 2012).

This research altogether suggests that television programs have a strong influence on children and that it is important to include positive values that teach acceptance to their audiences. This paper is concerned with diversity representation in characters. Knowing the background of representation in shows, especially children's shows, this research would like to analyze this past research and apply it to *Arthur* because it is a progressive show that is common enough for children to watch during their formative years to make a positive impression in terms of teaching this inclusivity.

Arthur is a children's television show that was created in 1996 based on the books by Marc Brown (IMDB, n.d.). It focuses on Arthur Read, an aardvark, and his various anthropomorphic animal family and friends (fandom.com, n.d.). It is a show that "explore[s] issues faced by children such as cancer, bedwetting, etc." (fandom.com, n.d.). It also discusses issues of sexuality, gender roles, and accessibility, as well as many more. It has always focused on contemporary issues that are relevant to the lives of a diverse range of children and families, in many ways because "Mr. Brown thinks of Arthur as 'Everychild...who experiences all the milestones, those things that are so important in the lives of children,'" which allows the show to cover all these issues (Collins, 1996). *Arthur* received a Peabody Award "for its easygoing attitude, embracing intelligence and encouragement of self-empowerment and further learning for children everywhere" (peabodyawards.com, 2000).

Literature Review

There is little scholarly research dedicated specifically to the *Arthur* television show, although Bowers et. al.'s "The Arthur Interactive Media Study: Initial Findings From a Cross-Age Peer Mentoring and Digital Media-Based Character Development Program" (2016), found that an interactive online game based on the show gained positive responses: the children in the study enjoyed the game, while the adults approved of the content's organization and inclusive content. The research that does exist on children's television programs is based, as stated before, on a number of representations and relationships. Rosaen and Dibble (2008) examine parasocial relationships between children and characters, concluding that not all children are always attracted to the characters that are the most realistic, but that the older a child grew, the more they preferred more "realistic" characters (meaning characters with more human appearance and

more relatable traits). They did find that characters with realistic elements of personality and emotion were more relatable.

Other elements in children's television included the role of gender depiction and self-perception in relation to race and in the context of a study conducted with young black and white boys and girls, finding that television programs tended to uplift the white boys while making a negative impact on the self-perception and self-esteem of the white girls, the black girls, and the black boys (Aubrey and Harrison, 2004). In addition, the effects of educational television programs on children were examined, with the conclusion that children mimic the behavior they see in their cartoons (Schiau et. al, 2013). It is important to continue the research in this field in order to examine the role of children's television in having an impact on children's perspective on life and perception and acceptance of other people.

The literature on children's television in relation to self-image and worldview ranges from topics of gender roles and sexuality to age and realism. Anuradha (2012) discusses the issues and effects of representing boys and girls with gendered products and imagery in commercial advertising. Although this was more specific to products portrayed in commercials, the children's stereotypical associations were similar to this analysis of the perception of gender and gender roles as part of self-perception. The study was particularly relevant regarding the examination of "the features of the television commercial content designed for children as to whether it is gender-stereotypical in nature" and its foray into "whether children understand the gendered nature of commercial content" (Anuradha, 2012). The study used content analysis to examine the commercials' content, and focus groups to glean opinions and level of understanding from the children. The study found that 71% of the commercials analyzed were aimed at one specific gender (either boys or girls), with about half only being aimed at children

and the other half being aimed also at the parents. There was an in-depth analysis of not only the content, but how it was conveyed; this included analysis of camera angles and shot duration. The sum of this analysis points to very gendered depictions of certain products, with conclusions such as activity being associated with boys and passivity being associated with girls.

Gender-related content is persistent in research about children's television. Aubrey and Harrison (2004) discuss two studies, one context analysis and one survey, on the topic of the depiction and associations of gender in television shows and how that related to and influenced children's self-perception. It is important to note that the shows analyzed were children's cartoons; the article mentions several other sources where the analyzed programs included more than cartoons. The content analysis concluded that male characters were shown twice as much as female characters, and the article indicated that as a cause of this, "children might perceive this trend as an indication that women and girls are less important than men and boys" and that girls might be more likely to pick male role models just based on the frequency of their on-screen presence (2004). The analysis also found that personality traits and activities were not necessarily dictated by gender but that male characters more often achieved a goal than female characters. However, this analysis also found that there was less stereotyping of female characters than there was of male characters, and it acknowledged that this could be because children pay more attention to male characters and their stereotypes than to female characters and their stereotypes because this is how they are conditioned. The two studies together found that boys had preferences for male characters who valued hard work and humor because those were considered male traits; in addition, what is referred to as "female counter-stereotypical" traits were preferred by both boys and girls, which meant that when females acted more like males in the shows, they were more preferred by both boys and girls. Girls were found to be

attracted to both female counter-stereotypical characters and gender-neutral content, meaning

that as long as the female characters did not exhibit what could be called "overly feminine"

traits, the girls liked them as characters. In application to *Arthur*, this study shows implications of

the consequences of gender perceptions and trait displays as well as their effects on boys and

girls, leaving room for the application of a gender-neutral, stereotypical, or counter-stereotypical

model to the characters.

Cingel and Krcmar (2019) also discuss the effects of perspective-taking in relation to

morality. The perception of morals and their transferability to real situations they experience, and

the study revealed that children who viewed the "moral message" in the television shows were

more likely to be able to apply it to situations and dilemmas they faced in their lives. The study

used two episodes of *Arthur*: "When Carl Met George" (Season 13, episode 6) as the treatment

episode, which had a character with Asperger syndrome (and therefore relates to accessibility),

and "Looking for Bonnie" (Season 13, episode 10) for the control episode. This research relates

to the accessibility subcategory in our research study because it can be applied to the perception

of diversity traits in that the more children who view diversity traits, as presented in shows like

Arthur, the more likely they are to be tolerant and accepting of these traits in their own lives.

Schiau et. al. (2013) also found that television influences children's lives. This study,

conducted in focus groups, interviews, and a survey, found that children's cartoons do influence

children, mostly on a language-learning level (although this did depend on the age groups). The

researchers claim that "Since children watch cartoons from early ages, they tend to naturally

adhere to the behavior they see and consider it normal" (Schiau et. al 2013). This is encouraging

in the face of the positive representation shown in *Arthur*: because the positive reception of

differences is processed and accepted by the characters, children who watch the show may be

more likely to accept these differences and others in their lives. The study also claims that some

cartoons have negative effects on gender perception and roles (Schiau et. al 2013). However,

these effects are attributed to the lack of gender representation and what is called "exception

from the norm" (as related to sexuality) (Schiau et. al 2013). Since the presence of some of these

traits portrayed in a positive and accepting manner in *Arthur*, this show could be said to avoid

these specific negative effects.

As stated earlier, Rosaen and Dibble (2008) examine the relationship between traits of

characters in children's television shows and the realism of their depiction and how that

influences whether children prefer more "realistic" characters. Rosaen and Dibble define

"realistic" as "how likely a show's characters and events are to occur in the real world" (2008).

The results of the study concluded that the older the children, the more realistic traits they

preferred in a character (including physical appearance). This increased sociality of the character

made a child more likely to form a parasocial relationship with that character; meaning that the

child will treat that character as a "friend" without receiving any friend-feedback other than the

displayed sociality of the character. It could be claimed that the less-realistic qualities (animated

and animal-centric characters with the occasional human celebrity appearance) of *Arthur* makes

the show less likely to appeal to audiences of older children on the basis of realism and

parasocial relationships, but younger children are more likely to be able to relate to the characters

and therefore follow their examples of acceptance and tolerance of differences.

Since the aim of this study is to collect data in a way that can be interpreted as a whole

and from different perspectives, Hesse-Biber & Levy's (2011) definition of a holistic approach to

qualitative research was used. The content analyzed looks at not only the individual occurrences

of diversity, but at the context it occurs in and the audiences it appeals to. This process allows for

not only the application, but also the exploration of the concepts explored in *Arthur*, as well as permitting a more in-depth analysis of the content than a quantitative approach would offer.

RQ: How does the children's television show *Arthur* teach and encourage the acceptance of diversity through representation of characters with differing gender, sexuality, and accessibility?

Methods

The researchers conducting this study used a qualitative ideological textual analysis to gather their data. The text at hand being analyzed was the children's television program *Arthur*. This show was chosen by the researchers because it portrayed gender roles, sexuality, and accessibility, which are the topic of this study. *Arthur* is an American/Canadian-made animated series, released in 1996. Marc Brown has been the creator of every episode of *Arthur,* which is made up of 22 seasons, with more in the process of being created. This show was ideal for the study because of its large audience and its amount of time it has been aired on television. These two factors make it popular and culturally current with the language and views within the past 20 years.

An ideological textual analysis was chosen for this study because the content being watched is more effectively studied from analyzing the text directly then learning anecdotal reactions to the text. Interviews, focus groups, and surveys would have been easily skewed given the demographic in the area where the researchers are conducting the study. They did not have access to an audience of children that watch *Arthur* and felt that if they surveyed adults that had watched it as children, they would not be able to constructively analyze the behaviors in the show an in-depth.

The researchers looked for meaning and symbolism to analyze, similar to *The Gender-Role Content of Children's Favorite Television Programs and Its Links to Their Gender-Related Perceptions,* where the researchers watched television programs and observed the behaviors of characters (Aubrey, J. S., & Harrison, K. 2004). In this past study, their use of textual analysis was successful in providing data that aided in a detailed reflection of what the shows were conveying to the viewers. Through a textual analysis, the study dove deep into individual episodes, examining specific quotes that supported or opposed the research question. This analysis falls under the category of ideological because it examines the texts and its representation of the culture's dominant ideals.

The qualitative approach in this study collected non-numerical data points to aid in the analyzing of the text. The material gathered focused on actions, quotes, plot lines, and behaviors from the characters in the text. The researchers chose a qualitative approach because the inductive reasoning method of taking observation and creating paradigm allowed them to find meaning in the patterns in question. The objective of this study was to analyze *Arthur'*s diversity as a whole by investigating key episodes; this was best done qualitatively because they were seeking an exploration in understanding.

The three subcategories being explored in this study were gender roles, sexuality, and accessibility. These topics were chosen for three reasons. First, they all are common self-identifiers that children growing up are influenced by. Second, these are all identifying traits with a history of controversy in media. Third, they all appear more than once in the television series being analyzed. The conceptualization of the subcategories that the researchers used were as follows: when looking for gender roles in episodes, they looked for scenes and conversations that focused on where boundaries are placed on someone's behavior because of their stated gender;

while looking for data on sexuality in episodes, the researchers focused on the minority sexual

orientation, members of the LGBTQ+ community, being represented; when looking for

accessibility, the researchers looked for characters who had visible or non-visible differing levels

of accessibility; for example, having a wheelchair or a stutter. These subcategories all contribute

to making a show diverse.

The sample for this study is an array of episodes from the children's television show

Arthur. The researchers went through a list of all the seasons and episodes, reading the

descriptions and making a list of the episodes that were relevant to the three subcategories. From

this list they selected a final ten episodes to study in-depth. From these ten they labeled each in

relation to which subcategory they represent. However, one chosen episode was unavailable,

which accounted for a limitation, so it was removed from the list, leaving nine episodes to be

analyzed. The researchers used purposive sampling because they needed episodes that applied to

the research question in order to collect data. See appendix A for the list of episodes and their

corresponding subcategory. See appendix B for important quotes and scenes from the episodes

sampled.

The operationalization the researchers used to break down these episodes was asking

themselves three questions measure how diversity played a role.

Q1: What diversity trait is being represented? (gender roles, sexuality, and accessibility)

Q2: How important is the diversity trait to the plot line?

Q3: How do the characters react to the diversity of the individual?

To build intercoder reliability, each researcher watched the episodes individually, noting

the scenes exhibiting diversity, then came together to discuss quotes/conversations that

specifically related to the subtopics of this study. The researchers also watched for *how* diversity is brought up in relation to the plot. More importantly, they saw if it was understood by the other characters or explained for the audiences' benefit.

The reliability of our research should be consistent across how many times this study is done and by how many times the text is observed. No matter how many times the shows are watched, the content will not change; each time they are watched they will provide consistent data. The sample of episodes stayed the same in the studies, with both researchers watching the same episodes, so the only margin for error is the researchers' discretion on the conceptualization of our subcategories. The researchers had complete judgement on responding to their observation questions, so it was up to them to be consistent to the set definition in their study.

The validity of research studies like this are conceptualized differently because of their qualitative paradigm principles (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). The more patterns of behaviors that are identified in the study, the more the claim is supported. The results of gender roles, sexuality, and accessibility being represented will reflect how *Arthur* teaches and encourages diversity. This validity of this study is strong, because the observations and data collected were directly connected to evidence of diversity being shown in each episode.

Results

This study found that differences in gender, sexuality, and accessibility were both normalized and celebrated in the television show *Arthur*. The textual analysis focused on elements of dialogue and imagery to provide evidence of diversity representation.

In "Postcards from Buster: Sugartime" (Season 1 episode 33), sexual identity is brought forward with the representation of lesbian parents. Buster discussed Mother's Day present ideas with his friends who showed him a photo of their two moms together. Buster's response of saying "That's a lot of moms!" thinking about how they must get two Mother's Day presents normalizes lesbian relationships. This episode takes into account the fact that children are curious and often ask questions while still encouraging diversity through using Buster as a role model of acceptance. The episode also displays pride flags in several locations (both inside and outside the house), which Buster does not question. When he is introduced to Tracy and Dinah, another lesbian couple, he does not question either. This shows his acceptance after his initial "that's a lot of moms" statement and further encourages acceptance for the malleable minds of young viewers.

The "Popular Girls" episode (Season 3 episode 8) focuses on gender roles and the way society expects people, including children, to conform to them. *Arthur* subverts this expectation by having the characters expose the boundaries of gender roles and the reasons they should be confronted. When Francine finds her older sisters "Popular Girls" magazine, she shares it with her friends to take quizzes on how likable they are. The magazine quiz reinforces stereotypes while giving "helpful" tips to change behavior that people might not like. The way the characters respond to this reveals the harmfulness of these stereotypes, with some characters denouncing the content of the magazine as being silly, which provides an avenue for viewers to see the negative effects of the stereotypes. At one point, Muffy says, "I can't wait until I'm older so I can do exactly what they do to be just like [the popular teenage girls]." This exposes the mechanism through which social expectations of gender roles have been carried through generations. In addition, Fern's reaction to the magazine's advice was that, "[Being so quiet I'm

invisible] is my worst nightmare!" and its continuation into her imagination where she is literally

invisible to her classmates and teachers is extremely telling as to the effect media has on

children's self-perception. On the other end of the spectrum, the magazine tells Sue Ellen to

"tone it down." This relates heavily to the underrepresentation of women in media and the dual

expectation that women must speak up for themselves even though they are expected to be quiet,

and if they do express themselves and have talents that they are 'too much' and need to scale

themselves back to an 'acceptable' level.

In "When Carl Met George" (Season 13 episode 6), George and Carl become friends and

show the viewer a character who is on the autistic spectrum. George recalls the story of how they

met and shares how interacting with someone who has an intellectual or learning impairment can

be different. When George shows Carl, his wooden talking giraffe toy, Carl is triggered into a

panic attack. George fears he did something wrong, but Carl's mom explains "Carl has Asperger

Syndrome and sometimes has trouble being around people because his brain works a little

differently." Brain tells George about how his uncle also has Asperger's and explains appropriate

ways to communicate with Carl. The next time George and Carl hang out George brings him a

book on something he is interested in and learns that he should "speak quietly, be clear, and not

take it personally if [Carl] ignores me". This episode teaches the viewer how to be friends with

someone who is on the autism spectrum and normalizes behaviors of those with differing levels

of accessibility.

In "The Wheel Deal" (Season 14 episode 1), accessibility is the main focus. After an

injury, Brain finds himself having to use a wheelchair for the first time and believes he will be

unable to compete in a basketball competition. The audience learns with him just how

inaccessible every day can be for someone in a wheelchair and how able-bodied individuals do

not notice this. Lydia, the captain of the wheelchair basketball team, is quick to point out the

ableism of others, making her a good role model for viewers, both for able-bodied and people

with differing levels of accessibility. For example, she says, "I was born without the use of my

legs, not my brain," indicating that people (including Brain) tend to assume people in

wheelchairs cannot function in all the same ways. The humorous nature of her statement also

makes the comment more memorable. When Brain realizes that sidewalks and the doors to the

ice cream shop are not accessible, he realizes he "never noticed that before." Lydia responds

with "a lot of places are not," indicating that although it is a hardship, she is used to it because

able-bodied folks do not think about those who have different accessibility situations. In the end,

Lydia teaches Brain how to play basketball from his wheelchair, and he uses the winnings from

the competition to make ice cream shop accessible, showing viewers that making things

accessible is possible and emphasizing the importance of doing so in order to foster acceptance

for those of all abilities.

In "Muffy Takes the Wheel" (Season 16 episode 2), gender roles are further explored in

relation to familial expectations. When Muffy asks her father for help, he ends up taking over the

whole project bit by bit. This points out the stereotype that men overpower women and use their

experience as expertise in the role of a leader. However, Francine points this out, saying "You're

getting your dad to do the whole project for you!" This makes the issue more visible to viewers,

but it also adds to the stereotype of women feeling the need to step back when men take over.

Muffy also imagines that she'll make her father feel inadequate if she tells him to stop helping,

envisioning that the supposed emotional burden she would put on him would make him sad and

make him give up his passion. The episode ends with a healthy line of communication between

Muffy and her father confronting their gender role expectations. This normalizes talking about gender roles and questioning boundaries on behaviors.

In "Maria Speaks" (Season 19 episode 6), the subtopic of accessibility is a focus when the main character brings to light the struggles of living with a stutter. The character Maria is known as being quiet and not speaking up in class. It is revealed that she is afraid to speak in front of her friends because she has a speech impediment, this is shown through nightmares of them finding out. When Maria is casted as the lead reporter on their school's news reporter show she tells her best friend that she must hide her stutter in order for her friends to still like her. This conversation highlights the shame society has placed on being different. Mr. Ratburn, Maria's teacher, comes forward about how he used to have a stutter when he was younger; he validates Maria's embarrassment and reassures her to not be ashamed. He admits, "I didn't want to seem different from everyone else", which reinforces the stigma and pressure in children's developmental society. Mr. Ratburn encourages her to work with a speech pathologist and to still be the lead reporter in the school news channel. Despite Maria's stutter, she speaks in front of all her friends telling a story about what it is like to live with a speech impediment. She receives support from her friends and educates them, so they are more accepting and aware.

In "Little Miss Meanie" (Season 19 episode 8), gender roles and accessibility are both explored with in the behaviors and dialog of the characters. A beauty pageant comes to town called 'Little Miss Crocus', where young girls are judged on looks and performances. Muffy and Lydia are two characters that compete against each other to win the prize. Muffy voices that she wants Lydia to drop out since she is in a wheelchair; she feels it gives Lydia an unfair advantage because the judges will "give her the sympathy card." Lydia talks about how she wants Muffy to drop out because, since Muffy is rich, she thinks Muffy will bribe the judges. These initial

feelings expressed by Muffy and Lydia are toxic on many levels because pageants pin girls

against each other to be the prettiest. Society has taught Muffy that beauty is the most important

quality for a woman, making her not only turn on her friend Lydia, but also making her belittle

Lydia as competition because she is in a wheelchair. Muffy's friend Francine calls her out on her

ableism by saying, "Did it ever occur to you that Lydia might actually win because she deserves

to, she is smart, funny, and an amazing athlete." This opens Muffy's eyes up to what is really

important, which is supporting friends and for them to do the best they can do. In the end of the

episode they talk about pageants, and how young girls have a lot of pressure on the way they

look and that the Little Miss Pageants are never 'Little Miss Scientist' or 'Little Miss Algebra'.

This speaks a lot to the boundaries that girls face where priorities of beauty are pushed on them

more than intelligence or careers.

In "The Princess Problem" (Season 21 episode 6) a group of DW's friends are all playing

with princess dolls and watching princess movies, when their friend Lydia expresses her distaste

for princesses. DW and her friends dress up as the princesses they look the most like, but Lydia

says, "The truth is, I've just never seen a princess like me...I've never seen any movie princess

who's in a wheelchair, or blind, or deaf or disabled in any way! No offense, but I'll go to a

princess movie when one of them looks like me." This episode develops the theme of

representation in movies being important for children growing up because it validates their

identity. DW's friend points out that "a princess is supposed to be perfect, that's what makes

them princess." This is discriminatory against anyone with a differing level of accessibility.

Lydia and DW do research on real-life princesses in the library and find one who was blind in

one eye and wore an eye-patch. The teach their friends that princesses look all different kinds of

ways, just like people. This encourages acceptance of diversity and representation, as well as teaching children to call out ableism when they see it.

In "Mr. Ratburn and the Special Someone" (Season 22 episode 1) the researchers analyzed the representation of a gay married couple in the episode. Sexual identities that are in the minority or in the LGBTQ+ community are underrepresented in media; this takes away the opportunities for viewers to learn and feel represented. This episode starts with announcing that Mr. Ratburn is getting married and that all his students are invited. The students see Mr. Ratburn with a strict, unfriendly woman, and they fear that is his fiancé and decide it's their job to break up the couple. In learning that this is *actually* his sister and that Mr. Ratburn is marring a man that makes him happy, the students stop their plans to break them up. They observe their teacher in a healthy relationship and are unphased by the fact that it is with a man. This addition to the show normalizes gay relationships and shows it is appropriate and understandable for children. This episode also brings to light the assumption of heteronormativity in today's society. It is also important to note that the children's priority was not to stop the wedding due to Mr. Ratburn's sexual identity, but their concern with his happiness with who he was marrying.

Conclusion

Arthur displayed widespread acceptance throughout each sampled episode. The encouragement of acceptance of differences in sexualities and abilities, as well as the emphasis on the issues raised by gender roles, was a main focus of each episode. *Arthur* teaches and encourages the acceptance of diversity through representation of characters with differing gender, sexuality, and accessibility: instead of refusing to question the differences, the show uses

those childlike questions for the characters to gain understanding, which in turn fosters

understanding in impressionable viewers. This suggests, alongside other research, that since

children relate to their favorite characters and use them as role models, characters who

demonstrate acceptance of diversity are likely to foster acceptance in children who watch the

shows. For this reason, shows like *Arthur* should continue to air; their diversity-accepting lessons

should continue to encourage generations of children as representation grows.

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APPENDIX A: Episodes Sampled

Season	Episode	Title	Subcategory
1	33	Postcards from Buster	Sexuality
3	8	Popular Girls	Gender roles
13	6	When Carl Met George	Accessibility
14	1	The Wheel Deal	Accessibility
16	2	Muffy Takes the Wheel	Gender roles
19	6	Maria Speaks	Accessibility
19	8	Little Miss Meanie	Accessibility/Gender roles
21	6	The Princess Problem	Accessibility
22	1	Mr. Ratburn and the Special Someone	Sexuality

APPENDIX B: Quotes and Scenes

Season	Episode	Title	Subcategory	Supporting Quotes
1	33	Sugartime: Postcards from Buster	Sexuality	- Buster: "That's a lot of moms!" After Emma explains that Gillian is her stepmom - Pride flag in the basement, Buster doesn't comment on it - Tracy and Dinah, another lesbian couple, mentioned - Buster doesn't comment on it
3	8	Popular Girls	Gender roles	- Muffy: "I can't wait until I'm older so I can do exactly what they do to be just like them." - Fern: "[Being so quiet I'm invisible] is my worst nightmare!" - Magazine tells Sue Ellen to "tone it down"
13	6	When Carl Met George	Accessibility	-*character having panic attack* George: "what did I do wrong?" "Nothing-Carl has Asperger syndrome sometimes he reacts this way to unfamiliar situations" -Brain's uncle has Asperger's too "he has trouble being around people sometimes...his brain just works differently" -"he taught me how to speak quietly, be clear, and not to take it personally if he ignores me"
14	1	The Wheel Deal	Accessibility	- Lydia: "I was born without the use of my legs, not my brain." - Brain (realizing the sidewalk and doors are not accessible: "I never noticed that before." Lydia: "A lot of places are not" - Money from competition used to make ice cream shop accessible
16	2	Muffy Takes the Wheel	Gender roles	- Muffy: "Can you help me?" Dad: "Sure, but first...[takes over entire project]" - Francine: "You're getting your dad to do the whole project for you" - Muffy imagines she'll put her dad out of business if she tells him to stop helping
19	6	Maria Speaks	Accessibility	- Maria: "I have to hide my stutter" - Everyone congratulates Maria even though they (esp. Francine) were critical of her before - Mr. Ratburn: "I didn't want to seem different from everyone else"

19	8	Little Miss Meanie	Accessibility / gender roles	-Francine: "her love of beauty pageant eww-vapid, cheesey, and shallow." -Muffy: "She is in a wheelchair-she will win-she will get the sympathy vote" Francine: "Did it ever occur to you that Lydia might actually win because she deserves to, she is smart, funny, and an amazing athlete." -Muffy/Lydia: "Why doesn't anyone ever have a 'Little Miss Rocket Scientist' or 'Little Miss Algebra'
21	6	The Princess Problem	Accessibility	- DW's friends: "They're gonna run rings around her!" - Lydia: "The truth is...I've just never seen a princess like me - Lydia: "I've never seen any movie princess who's in a wheelchair, or blind, or deaf or disabled in any way! No offense, but I'll go to a princess movie when one of them looks like me" - Emily: "How could a princess escape from one of. those towers if she can't walk?...That's just not how it works. Princesses are perfect, that's what makes them princesses"
22	1	Mr. Ratburn and the Special Someone	Sexuality	- Francine: "Mr. Ratburn and Miss Turner are a perfect match! They both love books and libraries...we just have to make him see that she's a much better fit for him than Miss Meanie"