

Developmentally Appropriate, Engaging, and Relevant Resources in the Language Arts Classroom

1

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Rationale

The district is concerned about new teachers not being able to choose appropriate curriculum resources. Teachers are concerned about following a resource guide with fidelity, which does not allow for independent professional opinions.

Review of Literature

Differentiating on a localized level based on community input is a well-regarded idea, but it was Jerome Bruner (1966) who first argued that “if a curriculum is to be effective in the classroom it must contain different ways of activating children, different ways of presenting sequences, different opportunities for some children to ‘skip’ parts while others work their way through, different ways of putting things” (p 71). Clearly, the educational field is aware that an effective curriculum demanded a variety of instructional tools to reach different children. Curricular trends have grown to include not just local expectations, but also individualized opportunities. However, the idea of differentiating learning *based on cultural differences* through materials and resources is not yet present, as evidenced by a survey of what resources are available on a school-wide level. Bruner was speaking of different learning styles and processing speeds, not necessarily different backgrounds.

Study Design

Data collection:

Part I: A survey was sent to all teachers in the Language Arts Department at Albuquerque High School. This SurveyMonkey asks the following:

1. What is the most important factor in choosing a good resource?
2. Rate the following in order of most to least important:
 - a. Lexile range
 - b. Publication date
 - c. Proximity to local school (Anaya vs. Alexie)
3. How much money do you personally spend on resources in a given year, including magazine or newspaper subscriptions, sources like TeachersPayTeachers, novels, and professional development activities?

Part II: Survey of Available Resources at Albuquerque High School

Findings

Part I: Based on the data collected, most teachers are highly concerned about a resource’s relevance to their students’ community and culture. 66% of teachers rated it at least moderately important to their curricular resource decisions. 72% of teachers spend upwards of \$150 in a school year of their own money to meet this need.

Part II: At the 9th grade level, only three books focus on Latinx characters (House on Mango Street; Bless Me, Ultima; House of the Scorpion). Of these, only one represent a Latinx character in New Mexico. At the school level, the picture is even more bleak. Of 129 titles, ten have non-hegemonic

characters, including titles representative of Nigeria, China, and Afghanistan.

Recommendations

Albuquerque High School serves a diverse student population. According to data available on AIMS, my classroom has a population of 60-70% who speak a language other than English at home. My classroom also has a similar population of 60-70% who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Based on the teachers surveyed, as well as the available resources in our bookroom, we do not currently have a locally saturated resource pool. Recommendations based on this study are as follows:

- Invest in resources written by local Southwestern authors.
- Retire resources that no longer contain cultural relevance and replace with texts, both fiction and informational, that relate to our students.
- Provide training and professional development to Language Arts teachers on how to use these resources and how to find additional resources that relate to our students.

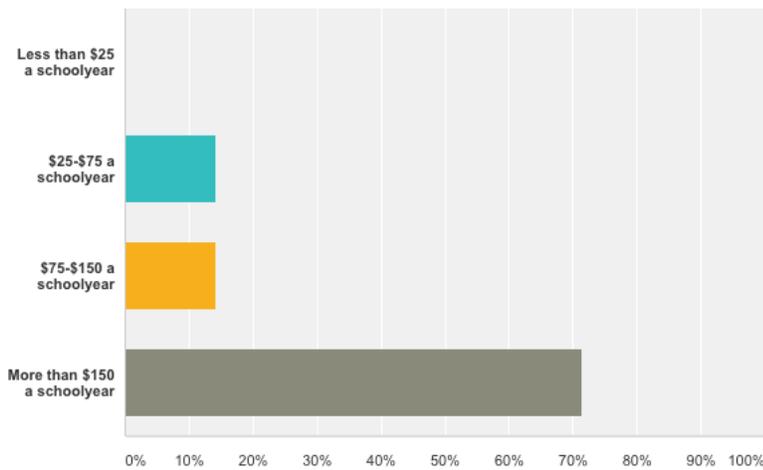
Bibliography

Bruner, J. (1966). *Toward a theory of instruction*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University.

Appendix

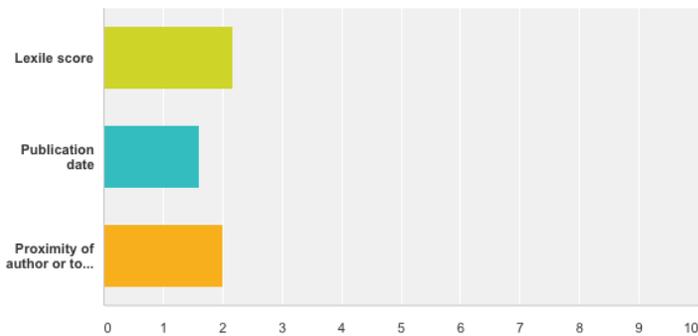
How much money do you personally spend on resources in a given year, including magazine or newspaper subscriptions, sources like TeachersPayTeachers, novels, and professional development activities?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



Rate the following from 1 (most important) to 3 (least important). When choosing a resource, what is the most important factor?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 1



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What is the most important factor when considering a resource for your classroom?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

