



**THE IMPACT OF
A DIVERSE
CLASSROOM
LIBRARY**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

First Book Research & Insights, the dedicated research arm of the nonprofit First Book, conducted a nationwide study to understand: 1) the importance of diverse classroom libraries from the educator perspective; and 2) the importance of diverse classroom libraries with respect to student outcomes. Through this intervention study, participating educators selected and added diverse books to their classroom libraries, and completed bi-monthly tracking surveys to gauge the impact of those diverse books. Among the findings: the pilot study revealed that **increasing access to diverse books in the classroom environment increases the amount of time that children spend reading, and positively impacts students' reading scores.**

STUDY RATIONALE

Limited research exists regarding the impact that diverse books have in classrooms and on student learning. While there is ample research linking student choice and reading engagement (Allred & Cena, 2020; Gabriel et al., 2012; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Morgan & Wagner, 2013) and some research demonstrating that access to diverse books in the classroom and at home results in greater self-confidence (Bishop, 1990; McNair & Edwards, 2021), empathy (Adam, 2021; Bishop, 1990), cultural awareness (Harper & Brand, 2010; Kim et al., 2016), and literacy (Naqvi et al., 2013), this research was often conducted within a single classroom.

Understanding the impact of diverse books is particularly critical for the children First Book serves: the more than 27 million children ages 0-18 who are growing up in economically disadvantaged communities. The lack of diverse books has been a critical issue for First Book, a nonprofit social enterprise dedicated to furthering educational

equity, and its community of 575,000 educators serving children in low-income communities nationwide. In previous surveys conducted by First Book Research & Insights, 90 percent of educators responding indicated that their students would be more enthusiastic readers if they had access to books with characters, stories, and images that reflect their lives.

While access to books at home and in the classroom is one of the strongest predictors of school success, students living in low-income communities too often grow up in “book deserts” where books and other print resources are scarce. This historic disparity is exacerbated by the reality that the students most likely to live in book deserts – students of color in low-income communities – are also the least likely to be represented in books.



ABOUT THE PILOT STUDY

To support educational and racial equity, it is critical to develop a clearer understanding regarding the impact and role of diverse books. Does having access to diverse books matter in terms of increasing student reading or learning outcomes? What can we learn from a nationwide study of classrooms, instead of a single classroom?

First Book set out to answer these and related questions in a nationwide intervention study on the importance of diverse books. **Understanding the impact of diverse books has become an even more pressing educational issue today due to a convergence of factors: the increasing diversity of the nation and the pandemic’s impact on learning.**

- The 2020 U.S. Census reveals that 53 percent of the U.S. children’s population are children of color and more children than ever before identify as multiracial, yet the books that children see do not yet reflect that level of diversity. Out of 3,450 children’s books published in the U.S. in 2022 and reviewed by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, 493 (14 percent) have a Black/African American primary or significant secondary character (fiction) or human subject (nonfiction), setting, or topic; 369 (11 percent) feature an Asian primary/secondary human subject, setting, or topic; 293 (8 percent) feature a BIPOC primary/secondary human subject, setting, or topic; 238 (7 percent) feature a Latine primary/secondary human subject, setting, or topic; and 60 (2 percent) feature Indigenous peoples as a primary/secondary human subject, setting, or topic. These numbers are improving – but not fast enough and not enough to combat decades of under-representation.
- While pandemic-related learning disruptions impacted all children, children of color were particularly affected. The Annie E. Casey Foundation reports that in 2022, 84 percent of Black fourth graders, 82 percent of Indigenous fourth graders, 80 percent

of Latine fourth graders, and 63 percent of students who identified as two or more races were not proficient in reading. By comparison, 59 percent of white fourth grade students were not proficient in reading.

This pilot study is designed to understand educators' perspectives on diverse books, and examine the impact that increased access to diverse books has on educators' ability to teach and on students' ability to learn. First Book plans to adapt and scale this study to further understand and document the empirical impact that diverse books have on students and the educational environment.

STUDY DESIGN

First Book Research & Insights developed the pilot study to address two primary objectives, to understand: 1) the importance of diverse classroom libraries from the educator perspective; and 2) the importance of diverse classroom libraries with respect to student outcomes.

Conducted over the course of the 2022-2023 school year, the six-month, longitudinal study consisted of two phases.

PHASE 1

In Phase 1, First Book invited interested educators who work at Title I or Title I eligible schools and who are or became registered First Book members to apply to participate in the study.

Nearly 4,000 educators volunteered to participate in this Phase 1 research. Educators from all 50 states expressed interest in participating in the study and served children ranging from early childhood (0-3) to high school age. First Book selected a nationally representative sample of 592 of those educators for the study (see page 23 for Methodology); a total of 437 educators completed Phase 1. Demographic information regarding study participants is on pages 25-27.

Study participants were each provided with \$250 to purchase diverse books from the First Book Marketplace¹, selecting books that would meet the needs of their students, would support classroom learning objectives, and would build or add to their classroom libraries. Educators were able to choose any of the titles from First Book's Stories for All Project™, a collection of books that feature characters, storylines, languages, and cultures that serve as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors². The study protocol enabled educators to select and purchase 48 diverse books per classroom, on average, with the books arriving in classrooms in early January 2023.

During Phase 1, both prior to and after receiving the books, educators were asked to track their students' reading behaviors and their own insights as educators, recorded through bimonthly, quantitative online surveys from December 2022 to May 2023.

PHASE 2

To further delve into educators' perspectives, during Phase 2, First Book conducted video interviews with educators who had fully completed Phase 1 and volunteered to be interviewed. Interviewees were selected to ensure broad representation across the larger sample with specific focus to geography and the ages of children each educator served. A total of 415 educators volunteered for an interview. First Book conducted interviews with 15 educators from Phase 1 (see page 23 for Methodology).

LIMITATIONS

This pilot study was not without limitations and its findings will be replicated and validated with a larger sample and a control group in the future. Full limitations are discussed on page 24.

¹ Books on the First Book Marketplace are made available to schools and programs serving 70 percent or more children in need either for free or at an average cost of 61 percent less than Manufacturers Suggested Retail Price (MSRP). This enabled study participants to use their \$250 for the study to access \$400 - \$500 worth of books.

² Bishop, R. (1990). "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors." Ohio State University. Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom, 6(3).

KEY FINDINGS

Students' Reading Scores Increased After Educators Added Diverse Books to Their Classroom Libraries.

Increased access to diverse books positively impacted student reading scores. Educators reported gains in reading assessment scores for each bimonthly survey period. The increases were 3 points higher (+9) than nationally expected average yearly gains. Gains were greatest for the lowest scoring students (+11). Among age groups, classrooms serving students ages 4-6 had larger gains (+13) than classes serving students in other age groups (+9).

Classrooms that added bilingual titles and titles representing the LGBTQ+ community had the greatest improvements in student reading scores and reading engagement. For every 1 additional bilingual book that educators added to their classroom library, student reading assessment scores improved by 7 points on average. For every 1 additional LGBTQ+ book that educators added to their classroom library, student reading assessment scores improved by 4.5 points on average.

Students Spent More Time Reading After Educators Added Diverse Books to Their Classroom Libraries.

Over the course of this study, student reading time increased by 4 hours per week on average after educators added new diverse books to their classroom libraries.

In Phase 2 interviews, educators' comments underscored the above finding that having a wider collection of diverse books contributed to students' higher interest in reading.

Allowing Students to Choose Which Books They Want to Read Positively Affects Outcomes.

Student choice is another important factor impacting student reading time and learning outcomes. In fact, qualitative input from educators revealed that students who had been reluctant readers, or had previously engaged in "fake reading" — pretending to read when they actually

weren't reading — started reading when given the opportunity to choose from among the diverse books.

Educators Believe That Diverse Books are Important, but Diverse Books Are a Small Percentage of Their Classroom Libraries.

First Book conducted pre-surveys to gauge the perceived role of diverse books as well as factors such as the current availability of diverse books in classroom libraries. Pre-survey insights revealed that 99 percent of educators agreed that having a diverse classroom library is important, and 75 percent of participants reported serving predominantly children of color. Additionally, 58% said their current classroom library adequately reflects their students' identities. However, diverse titles comprised only 28 percent of educators' libraries, revealing a difference in perception on this topic.

Resources (lack of funding, lack of time, etc.) remain a challenge for educators when teaching diverse groups: only 45% said they have the resources they need to teach a diverse student population.

A Majority of Students Chose to Read Diverse Books That Serve as Mirrors, Where They Can See Themselves.

Educators reported that both prior to and after expanding their collection of diverse books, students more often chose books to read that served as mirrors (70 percent), in which they could read about characters and experiences that reflected their own lives and experiences. Forty-one percent of educators reported that students chose books to read that serve as windows, where they can learn about others.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that increasing access to diverse books in the classroom environment increases the amount of time that children spend reading, and positively impacts students' reading scores. It also reveals that while educators almost uniformly believe that a diverse classroom library is important, most classroom libraries fall far short of representing or reflecting the current diverse student population. Given these initial findings from our pilot study, additional research is needed to further understand the impact of diverse books.

The full report follows, which includes additional data and comments from educators.

ABOUT FIRST BOOK RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

First Book Research & Insights regularly gathers qualitative and quantitative data regarding the barriers to educational equity for children in low-income communities by directly surveying educators working with children in historically marginalized and underserved communities. This research drives First Book's models, the resources it provides, and its partnerships. In addition, educator insights benefit the public, private, and social sectors, enabling input from educators to inform the design and refinement of programs, products, and strategies. This can increase resource effectiveness and adoption rates to better support both educators and children growing up in poverty, which disproportionately impacts children of color.



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The longstanding disparities faced by socioeconomically and racially marginalized students in the United States continue to be a major source of educational inequity. Culturally relevant pedagogical interventions like diverse classroom resources, such as books that feature diverse characters and cultures, have narrowed these equity gaps. However, accessibility issues, lack of diversity within the publishing industry, resource and finance constraints at the organizational level, and local, state, and national challenges to books and curriculum only continue to exacerbate disparity.

The inherent value in tailoring instruction to students' experiences and identities and the reality that early exposure to dual language and multicultural books improves students' reading proficiency and respect for cultures different than their own is known, but under-documented empirically, particularly with respect to cause and generalizability. In addition, many educators and school districts lack the physical resources to engage in culturally responsive pedagogy, failing the diverse student populations they are meant to serve.

First Book set out to better understand how increased access to diverse and inclusive children's titles can change students and teachers, beginning the process of collecting much-needed longitudinal data on the impact of diverse books. This one-year longitudinal study examined how educators build and curate diverse classroom libraries and how those diverse classroom libraries impact students and their teachers through the facilitation of culturally responsive pedagogical practices, like using books as windows and mirrors. Findings will identify best practices and policy changes that promote inclusion in the classroom and support a robust and diverse classroom experience outside standardized curriculum.

Findings will also contribute new empirical knowledge to disrupt the dominant discourse on the educational issues at the core of this study, which typically frame inclusion as incompatible with established standards or as an add-on, rather than core, to the lived experiences of marginalized students.

PROBLEM #1

LACK OF ACCESS TO BOOKS IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

Over 27 million U.S. children living in low-income families.

Fifty-one percent of public school students are from low-income families, often coming to school without their basic needs met.

60,000 Title I schools in the U.S.

These schools are under-resourced and cannot meet the needs of their students.

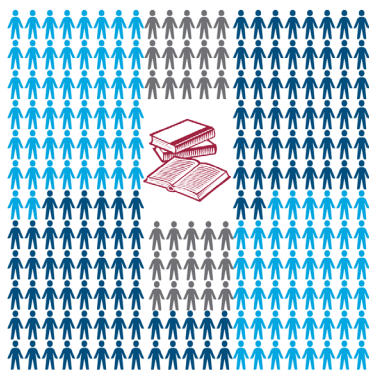
Teachers are under siege.

They need support, resources, and access to experts on critical topics.

The issue of lack of books and resources affects ALL of us. The economic impact of inequitable education is the equivalent of a permanent national recession.

Low Income:
1 book per every 295 kids

More Affluent:
1 book for 5 kids



Citation: Neuman, S. B., & Moland, N. (2019). Book deserts: The consequences of income segregation on children's access to print. *Urban Education*, 54(1), 126-147.



PROBLEM #2

LACK OF DIVERSITY IN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Fifty-three percent of school-age children are children of color.

Multicultural content is rare in children's books.

Children lack access to diverse books.

Diversity in children's books does not reflect the diversity of the readers.

LACK OF DIVERSITY

Diverse characters are scarce in kids' books. In a survey of 3,450 titles published in 2022:

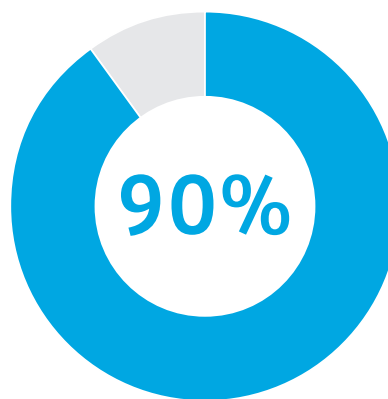
14% were about the
BLACK COMMUNITY

11% were about the
ASIAN COMMUNITY

7% were about the
LATINE COMMUNITY

2% were about the
INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

Source: Cooperative Children's Book Center



OF OUR EDUCATORS SAY THEIR STUDENTS WOULD BE MORE ENTHUSIASTIC READERS IF THEY HAD ACCESS TO BOOKS WITH CHARACTERS, STORIES, AND IMAGES THAT REFLECT THEIR LIVES.

Source: First Book Member Survey, 2015. N = 2,063

GUIDING QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES



OBJECTIVE 1

To understand the importance of diverse classroom libraries from the educator perspective

How do educators feel about classroom libraries?

Do they have the resources they need to cultivate classroom libraries?

What do educators' classroom libraries look like?

How do educators decide what titles to select for their libraries?



OBJECTIVE 2

To understand the importance of diverse classroom libraries with respect to student outcomes

Does having more diverse books in the classroom affect students' interest in reading?

Does having more diverse books in the classroom affect students' assessment scores?

Do any specific types of books influence students' reading engagement or assessment scores?

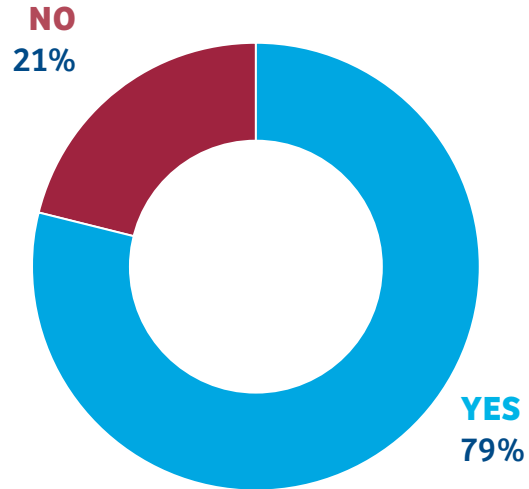


MOST PARTICIPANTS HAD BOTH LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS AT THEIR SCHOOL

Presence of Libraries in School

QUESTION

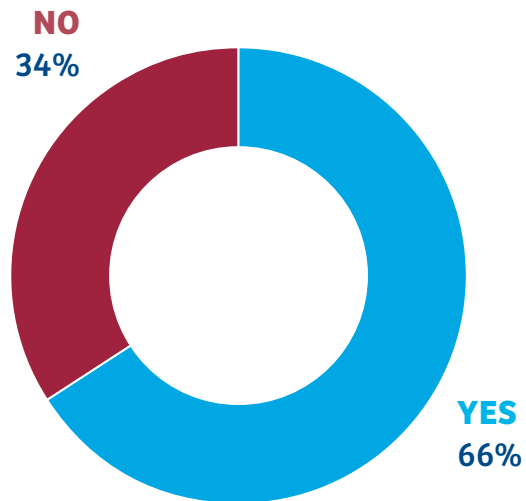
Do you have a library in your school?



Presence of Librarians in School

QUESTION

Do you have a designated librarian in your school?



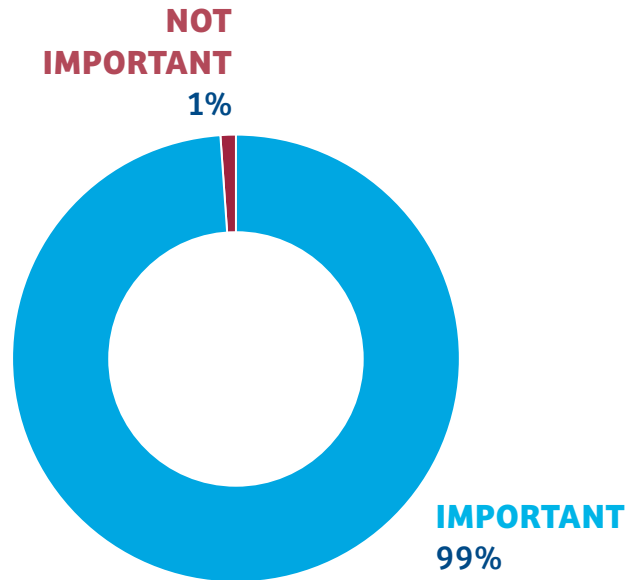


PARTICIPANTS UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSE CLASSROOM LIBRARIES PRIOR TO THE STUDY

Access to a Library with Diverse Books

QUESTION

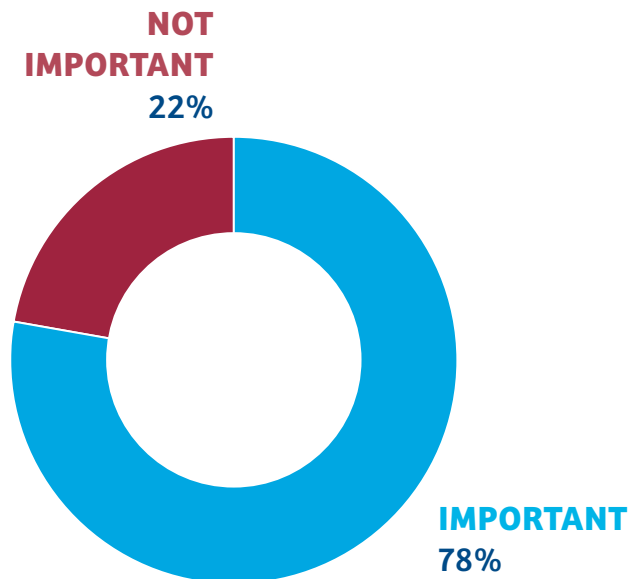
How important is it for students to have access to a classroom library that includes diverse books?



Access to Books by Diverse Authors and Illustrators

QUESTION

How important is it for students to have access to books authored and illustrated by diverse authors and illustrators?



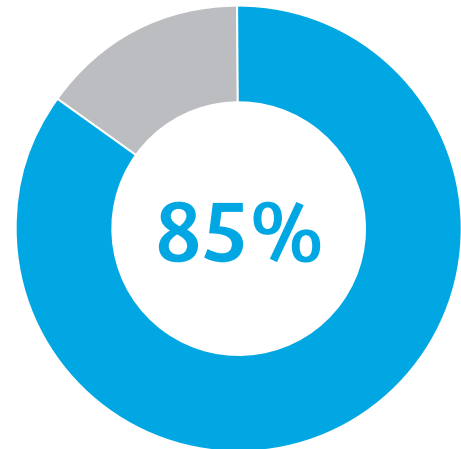


FEELING COMFORTABLE TEACHING TO A DIVERSE GROUP OF STUDENTS WAS NOT A CHALLENGE FOR MOST EDUCATORS AT ANY TIME POINT DURING THE STUDY

Teaching to a Diverse Group of Students

QUESTION

How comfortable do you feel teaching students whose gender, racial, or ethnic identity differs from your own?



VERY OR EXTREMELY COMFORTABLE

TAKEAWAY

Unsurprisingly, the average response across all timepoints was **85 percent of participants feel very or extremely comfortable** teaching a diverse class of students whose gender, racial, or ethnic identity differs from their own.



OVER HALF OF EDUCATORS REPORTED HAVING ADEQUATE REPRESENTATION IN THEIR LIBRARIES, BUT STILL LACK THE RESOURCES THEY NEED TO EFFECTIVELY TEACH THEIR STUDENTS

Diversity of Current Classroom Library Evaluation Statements

QUESTION State your agreement with the following statements.

My classroom library adequately reflects my students' identities



My students are able to learn about the lived experiences of people who are different from them through their classroom library



I have the resources I need to teach a diverse student population



■ Agree/Strongly Agree



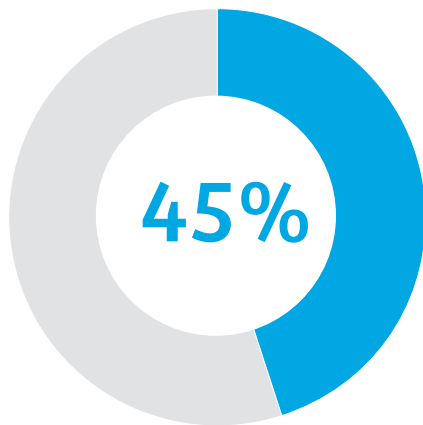


EDUCATORS KNOW THE VALUE OF A DIVERSE CLASSROOM LIBRARY BUT NEED MORE RESOURCES

More Resources Are Needed

QUESTION

Do you have the resources you need to teach a diverse student population?



HAVE THE RESOURCES

“

EDUCATOR INSIGHT

My school hasn't had a librarian in twenty years. It's up to me to be the librarian.

Josie, a veteran third grade teacher in Michigan

TAKEAWAY

99 percent of educators agreed that having a diverse classroom library is important but only 58 percent say they have a classroom library as diverse as their classrooms.



STUDENTS ARE GENERALLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT READING, BUT ARE MOST EXCITED ABOUT READING BOOKS THAT REFLECT WHO THEY ARE

Diversity of Current Classroom Library Evaluation Statements

QUESTION State your agreement with the following statements.

My students are interested and enthusiastic about reading



My students are engaged in classroom activities outside of reading



My students more often choose Mirrors when reading



My students more often choose Windows when reading



Agree/Strongly Agree

0 20 40 60 80



“Windows”

are books that allow children to see into the lives of those different from them, affording them glimpses into experiences they have not and may not have.



“Mirrors”

are books that allow children to see themselves and their culture reflected back at them, helping them build identity and affording them the knowledge that their experiences are shared and valid.

(Bishop, 1990).



EDUCATORS GENERALLY BELIEVE THEY HAVE THE RESOURCES THEY NEED TO TEACH THEIR DIVERSE STUDENTS, BUT WHEN PRESSED, GAPS ARE IDENTIFIED

Inventory of Classroom Books on 1-5 Scale

QUESTION

How diverse are the books in your classroom library?



How would you describe the physical condition of books in your classroom library?



How current and up-to-date are the books in your classroom library?



EDUCATOR INSIGHT

A lot of it is donated, it's not current, it's not modern, and it's not inclusive.

Heather, a veteran teacher in Ohio



523

IS THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF BOOKS PARTICIPANTS HAD IN THEIR CLASSROOM LIBRARIES AT THE START OF THIS STUDY.

EDUCATORS ON AVERAGE BELIEVE THAT

28%

OF THEIR CLASSROOM LIBRARIES ARE MADE UP OF DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE TITLES.



EDUCATORS LOVE THEIR CLASSROOM LIBRARIES BUT NEED NEWER AND MORE DIVERSE BOOKS EVERY YEAR



200

books was the median number reported in classroom libraries. Educators participating in this study ranged from having

0 BOOKS
in their classroom to
THOUSANDS.



EDUCATOR INSIGHT

If a kid takes a book home and they don't bring it back it's probably because they don't have another book at home. If they need a book I would prefer that they have a book at their house and that I have to buy another book instead.

Elizabeth, fifth-year teacher in West Virginia

Participants were able to order an average of 48 books through this study.

WHAT DID EDUCATORS ORDER?



45%

of books ordered represented a **BLACK CATEGORY**



10.8%

of books ordered represented a **LATINE CATEGORY**



9.2%

of books ordered represented an **AAPI CATEGORY**



1.92%

of books ordered represented an **LGBTQIA CATEGORY**

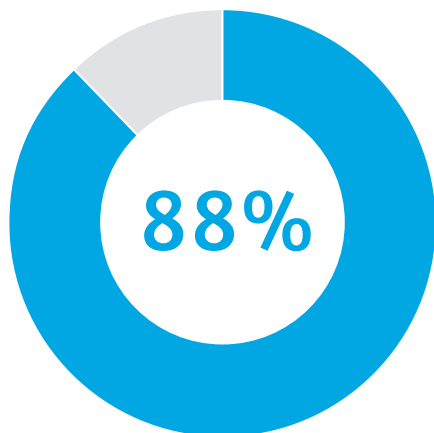


0.5%

of books ordered represented an **INDIGENOUS CATEGORY**



EDUCATORS CURATE THEIR CLASSROOM LIBRARIES USING THEIR DISCRETION BUT DO CONSIDER STUDENTS, PARENTS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AS NEEDED



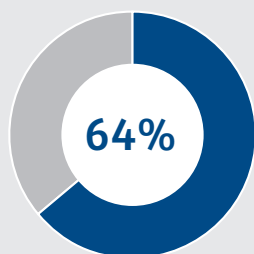
OF EDUCATORS SAID THEY ASK THEIR STUDENTS FOR INPUT WHILE CURATING THEIR CLASSROOM LIBRARIES.

EDUCATOR INSIGHT

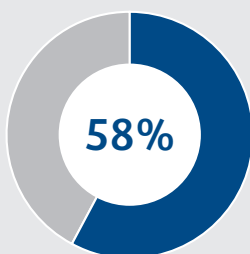
“We would shop together. I’d put the [First Book] website on the big screen, and they’d vote. And they’d get so excited when the books came in the mail!

Maia, second-year teacher in California

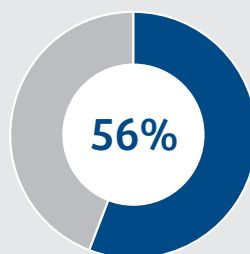
WHO ELSE DID EDUCATORS CONSIDER OR CONSULT?



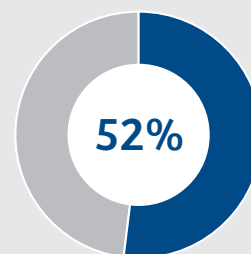
of educators consider the SCHOOL COMMUNITY



of educators consult their STUDENTS' PARENTS



of educators consult their COLLEAGUES



of educators consult their ADMINISTRATION



STUDENTS READ MORE WHEN THEY HAVE ACCESS TO BOOKS THAT THEY CAN SEE THEMSELVES IN AND ARE EXCITED ABOUT



+4 HOURS

PER WEEK IS THE ADDITIONAL AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME CLASSROOM READING INCREASED AFTER ADDING NEW DIVERSE BOOKS TO THE CLASSROOM LIBRARY.

(p < 0.005)

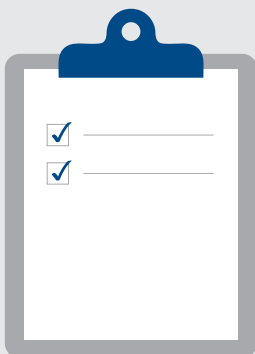


EDUCATOR INSIGHT

Kids are just willing to read for a longer time when they have access to the right books. Whether it's a character they're familiar with or just a topic or story that reflects their interests ... there are a lot of ways to grab kids' attention. And if they want to learn more, they want to read more books.

Katie, 25-year veteran teacher in Minnesota

WITH MORE DIVERSE BOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM, STUDENTS' READING SCORES IMPROVED ABOVE NATIONAL AVERAGES



Educators reported **GAINS IN READING ASSESSMENT SCORES** across each time point, which were 3 points higher than nationally expected average yearly gains (+9).

GAINS WERE GREATEST FOR THE LOWEST SCORING STUDENTS (+11).



SPECIFIC BOOK TYPES DRIVE ENGAGEMENT AND LEARNING GROWTH



BILINGUAL BOOKS MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE

for ELL students and students who speak multiple languages.

For every 1 additional bilingual book educators added to their classroom library, student reading assessment scores improved by 7 points on average. (p < 0.05)



EDUCATOR INSIGHT

My students love graphic novels. They get them excited about reading. And what do they love even more? Graphic novels in Spanish.

Cassandra, 15-year teacher in California



EDUCATOR INSIGHT

I've had a lot more vocal LGBTQ students in recent years. That's been a revelation! I'm like, 'I need more books like this!' So, I went out and bought them.

Keren, 15-year teacher in Texas

I have all boys, so they won't say they want an LGBTQ book, because that's dangerous socially. But I'll buy an LGBTQ book, and I'll see it get checked out.

Heather, 20-year teacher at a juvenile correctional facility in Ohio



REPRESENTATION MATTERS

For every 1 additional LGBTQ book educators added to their classroom library, student reading assessment scores improved by 4.5 points on average (p < 0.05).

Student engagement with reading, as measured by the hours students read each week, also rose.



CLASSROOM LIBRARIES ARE AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR STUDENT AND TEACHER GROWTH

“

EDUCATOR INSIGHT

Turning reading into fun is the goal. I struggled with reading early on and I got better, and I just want it to be fun. The more you pick up a book and are interested in learning about something, the more you learn. Every time I learn about a new person or a new story or a new holiday or new folklore. **I'm constantly learning too.**

Cassandra, 15-year teacher in California

“

EDUCATOR INSIGHT

I've learned a lot about myself and my own biases. And my thinking. And how my culture and worldview has influenced that thinking. I've spent a lot of time thinking about how I don't know everything and how I'm probably not right and that has made me a better teacher. And that's kind of a mantra.

Keren, 15-year teacher in Texas

“

EDUCATOR INSIGHT

I make choice reading a priority in my classroom every day. Every single day they come and sit and read. Part of it is combatting the 'I'm not a reader' identity some kids have. A lot of our students just don't see themselves as readers. Even apathetic students are more engaged in reading than they otherwise would be because they get to pick what they get to read. I've seen a big change in 'fake reading.' Way less. And they have time in class! And I have kids that are like 'I look forward to this time because I can just be quiet and read.'"

Nancy, 20-year teacher in Illinois



CLASSROOM LIBRARIES WORK, BUT ARE NOT WITHOUT THEIR CHALLENGES



FINDING AND STOCKING DIVERSE BOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM CAN BE A SECOND JOB



FUNDING AND STORAGE ARE CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATORS



EDUCATOR INSIGHT

You think \$1000 of books will be a lot. It's not a lot.

Cassandra, 15-year teacher in California



EDUCATOR INSIGHT

First Book has the diversity I was totally lacking – not only racial but ethnic and religious and geographic – it's hard to find these books by yourself all the time. First Book curates them. Not only are they cheap but they're curated in a way – you have a whole section! Awesome!

Josie, veteran third grade teacher in Michigan



SURVEY METHODOLOGY

PHASE 1:

LARGE SCALE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

Target Audience:

First Book's network of over 575,000 educators serving children in need (Title I Eligible or 70 percent+ of children served come from low-income backgrounds).

Participant Selection:

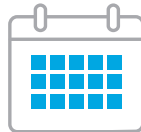
Educators from all 50 states expressed interest in participating in the study and served children ranging from early childhood (0-3) to high school age. First Book selected a nationally representative sample of 592 educators for the study.

LENGTH OF SURVEY:

20
questions



The survey was conducted via an Online Questionnaire via Qualtrics XM.



Data was collected bi-monthly, from December 2022 to May 2023.

RESEARCH APPLICANTS:

3,682

SELECTED PARTICIPANTS:

592

FINAL PARTICIPANTS:

437

PHASE 2:

QUALITATIVE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Target Audience:

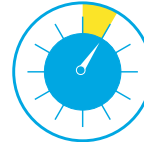
First Book members who participated in the quantitative survey and opted in for an interview experience.

Participant Selection:

415 educators indicated interested in participating in an interview about their experience in the study. Interviewees were selected to ensure broad representation across the larger sample with specific focus to geography and the ages of children each educator served.

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:

1 hour



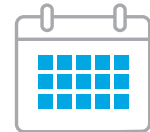
The interviews were informal and were conducted virtually via Zoom.

RESEARCH APPLICANTS:

415

INTERVIEWEES:

15



Data was collected at the end of Phase 1, in June 2023.

LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations, which impact how results should be interpreted to advance practice and research in this important area. First, like other classroom-based studies, we were unable to control for a wide variety of variables that may have improved the low R-squared values for our models and may have better explained the impact of diverse books in the classroom. While we will never be able to control for every variable that influences classroom outcomes, particularly with respect to student-level variables outside of the classroom, future work will include greater attention to these variables where possible. We also recognize that our relatively large sample size may have made minor differences in variables that were available appear statistically significant while contributing relatively little explanatory power to the model. Future iterations of this study, in terms of replication, sample scaling, and alterations to data collection that could explain greater variance (a greater focus on what was purchased and how it was used, a discrete cataloging of educators' classroom libraries prior to the study, etc.) will attend to this.

Like all survey research, this study may have also been vulnerable to various types of nonresponse bias. The survey's overall 78 percent response rate is relatively good and the subsequent overall lack of missing data helpful for analyses. Unfortunately, because there was no discernible pattern in which educators failed to respond at all time points (reasons for response noncompliance may include time and resource constraints, loss of access to the survey due to changes in their professional environment, and a finite time window for each survey administration), missing data was missing predominantly at random. Any pernicious effects of nonresponse bias could emerge as active nonresponse – deliberately choosing not to take the survey – which could be attributed to the relatively low opportunity cost of nonresponse (participants received the incentive for their participation prior to the administration of the post-intervention surveys). Additionally, nonresponse could be attributed to busyness, as well as concerns about confidentiality.

Finally, our study was limited by the lack of a control sample (educators who did not receive the intervention and subsequently did not add diverse books to their classroom library) and the general selection bias inherent to any research sampling from an interest target population. Because we sampled predominantly from the First Book Network, comprised of educators who are theoretically invested in the betterment of their classroom and who subsequently receive significantly more marketing and communication regarding the importance and utility of diverse books in the classroom, our sample may have been biased due purely to selection bias at the participant level. Future research may consider a non-First Book sample or a completely randomized control trial.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



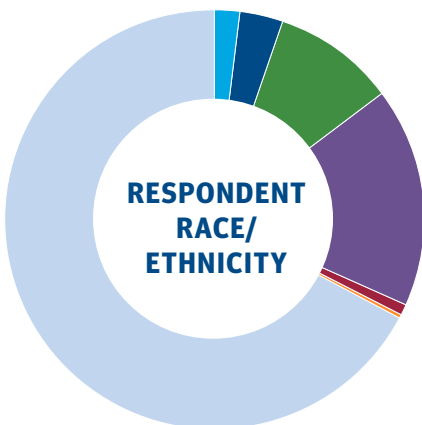
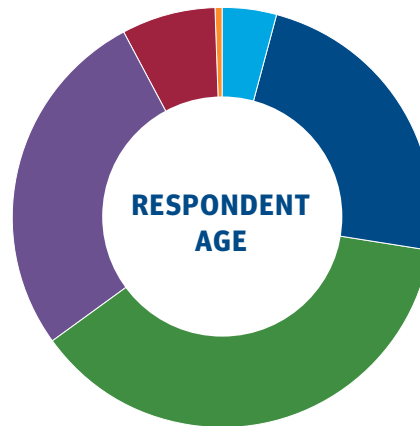
ORGANIZATION TYPE	%
School	95.8%
Early childhood program	4.2%

AGE

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 +

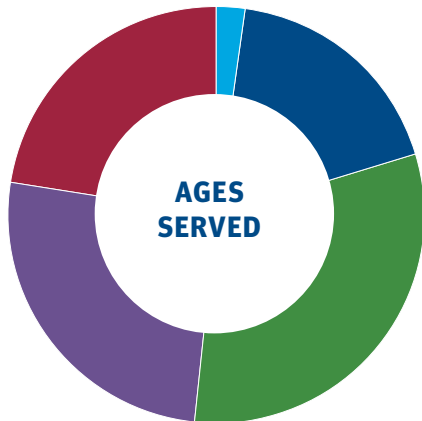
%

- 4.3%
- 23.4%
- 37.3%
- 27.3%
- 7.1%
- .5%



RACE/ETHNICITY	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.4%
Asian	3.6%
Black or African American	10.7%
Hispanic, Latine, or of Spanish origin	18.6%
Middle Eastern or North African	1.2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.2%
White	74.7%

CLASSROOM/PROGRAM DEMOGRAPHICS

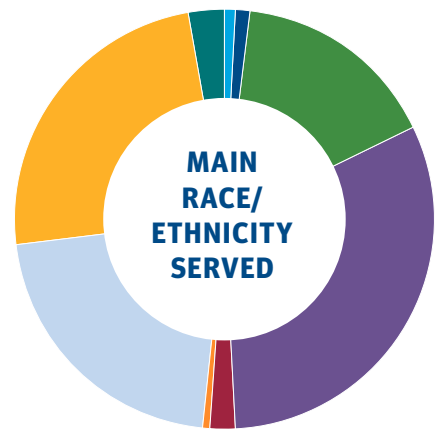


AGES SERVED	%
Early Childhood (ages 0-2)	2.4%
Preschool (ages 3-4)	18%
Elementary School (ages 5-10)	31.5%
Middle School (ages 11-13)	25.7%
High School (ages 14-18)	22.4%

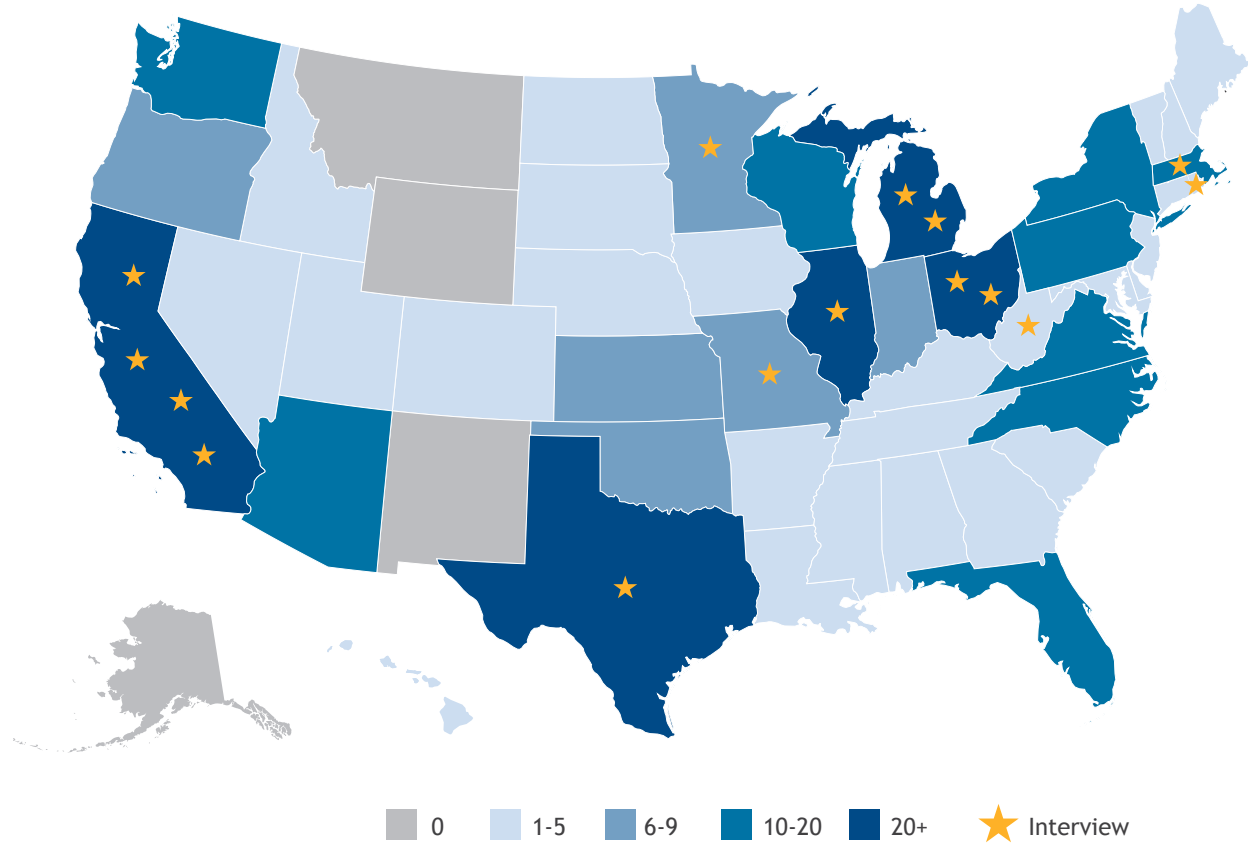
MAIN RACE/ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS SERVED

(The student I serve are predominantly...)

MAIN RACE/ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS SERVED	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian	1.1%
Black or African American	16.2%
Hispanic, Latine, or of Spanish origin	31.7%
Middle Eastern or North African	2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.7%
White	21.8%
The students I serve comprise a diverse population with no predominant ethnicity	24.5%
I don't know/prefer not to answer	2.6%



BY STATE



STATE	COUNT	STATE	COUNT	STATE	COUNT	STATE	COUNT
Alabama	3	Illinois	22	Montana	0	Rhode Island	2
Alaska	0	Indiana	7	Nebraska	2	South Carolina	5
Arizona	16	Iowa	1	Nevada	3	South Dakota	1
Arkansas	2	Kansas	7	New Hampshire	2	Tennessee	4
California	76	Kentucky	1	New Jersey	4	Texas	25
Colorado	3	Louisiana	3	New Mexico	0	Utah	4
Connecticut	3	Maine	2	New York	13	Vermont	1
D.C.	1	Maryland	1	North Carolina	12	Virginia	12
Delaware	2	Massachusetts	13	North Dakota	1	Washington	10
Florida	12	Michigan	31	Ohio	35	West Virginia	1
Georgia	5	Minnesota	7	Oklahoma	6	Wisconsin	14
Hawaii	4	Mississippi	3	Oregon	7	Wyoming	0
Idaho	2	Missouri	7	Pennsylvania	10		



ABOUT FIRST BOOK

EDUCATION TRANSFORMS LIVES

First Book is building a world where every child has access to a quality education. We work to remove barriers to education and level the playing field for kids in need. At the heart of our work are the 575,000 members of the First Book Network, the largest online community of educators and professionals dedicated to children in need across North America. This Network is the key to creating systemic change. We conduct research studies that aggregate their voices to identify barriers to equitable education and inform strategic solutions. To address their needs, we provide free and low-cost books, resources and access to leading experts. We use aggregated buying power to influence what is published or created to support this underserved community. Founded in Washington D.C. in 1992 as a nonprofit social enterprise, First Book is dedicated to eliminating barriers to learning and inspiring young minds.

Imagine a world where every child experiences the benefits of a quality education.

We're on a mission to ensure that all children, regardless of their background or zip code, can succeed – by removing barriers to equitable education.

HOW WE DO IT

A leading force for education equity, First Book reaches an average of five million children in under-resourced communities every year. We work to level the educational playing field for kids in need through:

First Book Network, 575,000 educators dedicated to serving children in need at schools and programs across the U.S., is North America's largest and fastest growing community of its kind. First Book members work

in classrooms, after school programs, summer or early childhood programs, shelters and health clinics, libraries, community programs, military support programs, and other settings serving a majority of children in need.

First Book Marketplace, a nonprofit eCommerce site, delivers a wide range of professionally curated diverse, culturally relevant books and resources – all offered at the lowest costs possible, or for free. We use aggregated buying power to influence what is published or created to ensure we are meeting the needs of educators serving children in need. Since our founding in 1992, we have distributed more than 225 million books and resources in total, with 13-16 million books distributed annually.

First Book Research & Insights drives meaningful change by aggregating and amplifying the needs, market power, and voices of the educators in our Network. Through First Book’s extensive quantitative and qualitative research, this community of educators provides insights guiding the design of programs, partnerships, and the resources we offer. Research & Insights informs how to develop products, curriculum, and digital resources that will be most relevant and impactful for all serving under-resourced educators and children.

First Book Accelerator collaborates with public and private partners, translating best-in-class expertise into actionable educational strategies to support learning for kids in need. We collaborate with field experts, publishers, corporations, foundations, fellow nonprofits, leading academics, and individual donors to address the critical needs expressed by educators. These mission-driven alliances fuel our ability to expedite resources to those who need them the most.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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MY CLASSROOM LIBRARY IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF MY IDENTITY AS A TEACHER. IT'S WHERE I FEEL MOST CONFIDENT HELPING STUDENTS FIND THEIR OWN READING IDENTITIES.

Miriam, fifth-year teacher in Rhode Island

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