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For Rhyme and Reason: Multiculturalism and the Study of Library Poetry Collections in Ethnically Diverse Elementary Schools

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Courtney Blair Minton. For Rhyme and Reason: Multiculturalism and the Study of Library Poetry Collections in Ethnically Diverse Elementary Schools. A Master's paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. April, 2012. 99 pages. Advisor: Sandra Hughes-Haseell.

The steady rise of multicultural children's poets in the twenty-first century has provided children more opportunities to see themselves and others reflected in authentic words and images. Unfortunately, poetry collections in school libraries are often neglected in regards to collection development, circulation, and promotion. This study examined the poetry collections in the school libraries of 26 ethnically diverse elementary schools in the southeastern United States to determine how well they reflected a diverse community of learners and supported the notion of multiculturalism. Although each school library contained an average of 19.71% of multicultural poetry books, these resources were collected in fewer numbers compared to other poetry books, and many cultures were underrepresented within collections. Based on these results, it is recommended that elementary school librarians serve as change agents by enriching poetry collections to include additional multicultural resources and, ultimately, by promoting collections for use in the classroom and beyond.

Headings

- Children's literature -- Authorship
- Children's poetry
- Elementary school libraries -- Collections
- Multicultural education
- Multiculturalism
- Poetry (Literary form)

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Abstract

The steady rise of multicultural children's poets in the twenty-first century has provided children more opportunities to see themselves and others reflected in authentic words and images. Unfortunately, poetry collections in school libraries are often neglected in regards to collection development, circulation, and promotion. This study examined the poetry collections in the school libraries of 26 ethnically diverse elementary schools in the southeastern United States to determine how well they reflected a diverse community of learners and supported the notion of multiculturalism. Although each school library contained an average of 19.71% of multicultural poetry books, these resources were collected in fewer numbers compared to other poetry books, and many cultures were underrepresented within collections.

Based on these results, it is recommended that elementary school librarians serve as change agents by enriching poetry collections to include additional multicultural resources and, ultimately, by promoting collections for use in the classroom and beyond.

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