School Library eBook Providers and Spanish Language Equity: A Replication Analysis of eBook Collections Available to School Libraries

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Abstract: *The goal of this study is to revisit and contrast the original data from a previous publication entitled, "School Library eBook Providers and Spanish Language Equity: An Analysis of eBook Collections Available to School Libraries." The original study examined the collections of eBooks in Spanish provided by vendors of library resources to school libraries to determine if there are equitable offerings of eBooks in Spanish relative to the Spanish-speaking school population in the United States. The processes in that study were replicated where possible and expanded upon for shared understanding.*

Introduction: Equity for Spanish speaking Students

When Spanish-speaking students who are able to read in their native language come into our libraries, it is our professional responsibility to meet their information needs (AASL, 2009). Our hope is to provide services that are equitable to those of our English speaking students. We want them to access information and check out books; however, the challenge is to identify the need and what resources are a positive fit for the student. Collections may not be able to meet the exact prescriptive student need. How do we meet the need for quality literature to support our Spanish speaking student needs? When we think about instant access to resources in support of student need, our thoughts naturally turn to the world of eBooks, with their myriad of formats and titles.

Statement of the Research Problem

The goal of this study is to reexamine the evolving needs of Spanish speaking populations and the collections of eBooks in Spanish provided by vendors of library resources to schools. This reexamination will compare and contrast demographics and explore the impact of the changes. As part of this study, the researchers will conduct a replication study of the content analysis of eBook offerings from the collections of top eBook providers to school libraries, and use national demographics to determine the extent to which the needs of the Spanish language readers in the United States are being met in the digital domain.

Methodology: Demographic and Content Analysis

In this replication study, content analysis will be used to examine eBook collections of selected providers to school libraries by language and subject matter to determine the extent to which the collections reflect equity between Spanish resources and school population demographics. Content analysis research design begins with identifying the unit to be analyzed and then breaking down the units for analysis and reporting (Beck & Manuel, 2008; White & Marsh, 2006). For the purposes of this study, the units identified for research are the collections of major vendors of eBooks to school libraries with databases that may be searched by language (Spanish/English) and subject area.

Literature Review

The practice of targeting collection development activities to meet community needs is a long standing practice in school librarianship (Mardis, 2016; Bishop, 2007). "National and international library standards for collection development suggest that demographic data be collected so that resources and services can be provided to meet community needs, with special consideration for the preferred language of minority groups" (Paganelli & Houston, 2013, p. 103). In particular, IFLA guidelines state that, "the school library needs to provide access to a wide range of physical and digital resources to meet the needs of the users and reflects their age, language, and demographics" (2015, p. 33). IFLA School Library Guidelines (2015) also state that the collection should reflect the curriculum, user's interests and cultures, and the diversity of society outside the school. According to AASL National School Library Standards, "Ensuring equity in the school library begins with an ongoing reflective analysis of the library's existing digital and print collection, outreach programs, and user services to assess diversity" (2018, p. 80). Guidelines for developing multicultural collections established by the American Library Association (ALA) are similar to AASL and IFLA guidelines in stating the need to provide culturally relevant materials that meet the needs and interests of Spanish-speaking library users (2008).

Findings

Overall, we have noted an increase in the eBook options available in this replication study. The vendors were noted as having offerings that supported Spanish-speaking populations but at differing levels with multiple complicating factors. According to a recent publication by *Tech & Learning*, the availability and use of eBooks in the school library is on the rise (Ofgang, 2022). The challenge of the current educational environment has made school librarians hyper aware of growing demand for eBooks in their schools and are acutely aware of their responsibilities to meet the resource needs of all students. However, providing appropriate resources for Spanish speaking students has been a challenge, because many school librarians lack experience in the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world and familiarity with appropriate materials for this student population. As eBooks are becoming an increasingly significant part of school library collections, making resources available to meet the needs of Spanish speaking students will be an issue of growing importance.

Discussion

Currently, as was the case during our prior research the eBook landscape is full of complexity. Access to eBook titles range from consortiums, to licensing arrangement, to files in the public domain available for downloading, to outright purchase of eBooks, with limitations on the number of times the books can be checked out (Lonsdale & Armstrong, 2008; Pappas, 2009). Because the eBook collection offerings and platforms for school libraries are constantly changing, it is difficult to get a clear picture of what resources are available to schools at any given time. When considering the offerings of eBooks available in Spanish, the picture becomes even dimmer. It is for this reason that the researchers have chosen to analyze the eBook collections of the major vendors to school libraries to determine if the resources provided to Spanish-speaking students is equitable, given the growing presence of both eBooks and Spanish-speaking students in our schools. This picture has become of increased importance with the explosive rise of eBook use during the pandemic.

Implications and Conclusions

The methods employed in this study do have limitations that may affect the results. Primarily, the vendor collections change daily as additional eBook titles are added and others are weeded from the collection. This study is a snapshot of the titles available at the time of

searching and the numbers and percentages are subject to change. Additionally, each vendor's online catalog has unique search tools and filtering options to view and purchase titles. Finally, factors which may drive the overall availability of Spanish-language titles in eBook collections, such as the book vendors' databases, presented the availability of Spanish-language eBooks differently. Search results for eBooks showed different kinds of licenses and formats that had to be filtered further to determine the best approximation of Spanish-language eBooks per title. The translation issues and overall market demand for titles in Spanish were not addressed, as this would unduly widen the scope of the study.

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Biographies

Andrea Paganelli is an associate professor at Western Kentucky University in the Libraries, Informatics and Technology in Education program and has experience as a school library media specialist. This 20 year of experience fuels her passion for education and libraries that is expressed through publication. Dr. Paganelli has authored the book *Power Up Your Read-Alouds: Building Reading Excitement Through Technology,* two book chapters and multiple articles. Her researched areas of interest include librarians' emotional response to change in the workplace, makerspaces, diversity in eBooks, educational technology, Breakouts for learning, gamification in the learning environment, children's literature, digital storytelling, digital read-aloud, personal embedded librarian, and learner agency.

Samuel Northern is a National Board Certified Teacher-Librarian and adjunct professor at Western Kentucky University in the Libraries, Informatics and Technology in Education program. He has a Masters of Science in Library Media Education and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from WKU. In 2014, Dr. Northern was selected for the Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminars Abroad Program, where he spent four weeks in China studying its history, culture, and education system. Since then, he has voyaged to Antarctica as a National Geographic Grosvenor Teacher Fellow and worked aboard a research vessel on the Atlantic Ocean as a NOAA Teacher at Sea. From January to April 2018, he studied inquiry-based learning in Finland as part of the Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Program. Dr. Northern has been named a Library Journal Mover & Shaker, an NEA Foundation Global Learning Fellow, and a Kentucky Educational Television All-Star. He is a past president of the Kentucky Association of School Librarians.