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SLM 506

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**Collection Evaluation**

After completing an evaluation of the Life Sciences/ Insect section (the 570’s of the Dewey Decimal Classification System) at William Winchester’s school library, I found that an overwhelming majority of materials in this section are not in a professional selection source or Wilson’s core collection. All second grade students’ heavily use this section because the curriculum requires a unit on insects. At the end of this unit, it is necessary for students to put together a research project to demonstrate their understanding of insects and the use of nonfiction text features.

To support the curriculum, and adequately prepare students for the Science portion of the Maryland State Assessment, is its essential that students have access to a wide range of quality materials. To evaluate this section of the collection, I created a Collection Mini-Map, Collection-Centered Assessment and Use-Centered Assessment. These assessments were crucial because they allowed me to evaluate the materials based on Carroll County curriculum standards and professional selection resources.

**Collection Mini-Map**

School: William Winchester (With Collection Data from Laurel Woods Elementary)

Number of Students: 608

Date: 4-10-10

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dewey | # Items | Average Age | % Total Collection | Section Needs Work? |
| 000/Generalities | 237 | 6-10 Years | 2% | Yes |
| 100/Philosophy | 137 | 16-20 Years | 1% | No |
| 200/Religion | 109 | 20+ Years | >1% | Yes |
| 300/Social Science | 1,571 | 11-15 Years | 13% | No |
| 400/Language | 177 | 16-20 Years | 1% | No |
| 500/Science | 2,108 | 16-20 Years | 17% | Yes |
| 600/Technology | 590 | 11-15 Years | 5% | Yes |
| 700/Fine Arts | 563 | 16-20 Years | 5% | No |
| 800/Literature | 413 | 11-15 Years | 3% | No |
| 900/History | 418 | 11-15 Years | 3% | Yes |
| Easy Fiction | 3,392 | - | 27% | No |
| Fiction | 2,283 | - | 18% | No |
| Audio Visual | 380 | - | 3% | Yes |
| Total | 12,378 |

**Collection-Centered Assessment**

All second grade students use these materials for daily science instruction. At the end of the unit, students choose an insect they would like to learn more about, or one we did not have time to study. Students use databases and books to research information for a paragraph and poster presentation. Through my direct analysis I found that the media center lacked a scope of a variety of insects. There were about thirty books on this topic, but not all were age appropriate for second grade readers. Some books were at a very basic level with only 3-4 words per page. Most of the materials cover a very basic range of what an insect is, and lacks the details needed to research specific insects. In fact, ten books (one-third of the collection) is simply titled ‘bugs’ or ‘insects’, while seven books focus on identifying and finding insects, making it difficult for students to sufficiently find the most appropriate resources for their project. There were several books on butterflies and ants, however, other insects that students would be fascinated by such as ladybugs and cockroaches were lacking in a variety of titles. In fact, there were no books on termites, which is often a popular insect chosen to research. While looking at the copyright dates, many of these books dated back to the mid-90’s and to my surprise two books were copyrighted 1988! Thirty- nine percent of the books in the insect collection was past the recommended span for weeding the life science books. Several of these books have been rebound and feel flimsy to the touch. Others have yellowing or uninviting covers/illustrations.

Curriculum Map:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Dewey/Subject | Grade Level | # Of Titles | # Of Quality Titles | Teacher Level Required | # To Meet Curriculum Needs |
| 570/ Insects | Second | 31 | 7 | Instructional Level | 16 |

Life Science (570’s)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| # Of 2nd Grade Students | Average # of Students per class | # Of Insect Books | # Found in professional selection sources | # Of books per child | Average Copyright | Upgrade to one book per child in each second grade homeroom class. |
| 89 | 23 | 31 | 7 | .34 | 2000 | $540 |

Thirty-nine percent of insect books are over ten years old.

2000-2006

61%

Of the thirty-one books in the collection, only seven match a professional selection source.

Part of a

Core

Collection

22%

Not in a Professional Selection Source

77%

Scope of the Collection

Explorer Guides

23%

Books on Specific Insects

45%

General Insect Facts

32%

Of that forty-five percent, here is the range of insects covered.

**Use-Centered Technique**

The second grade science teacher uses books, databases and audiovisual materials each quarter. The books available in the media center are not adequate resources to support the second grade science curriculum. Students are given the opportunity to choose an insect for their research project; an opinion survey given to all second grade students would be the beneficial to gather information to see if the materials provided meet their interest and learning style.

|  |
| --- |
| Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Insect Survey**    Directions: In science this year you will be given the opportunity to research an insect of your choice. Answer the questions below to help me select materials that will be most helpful to you.   1. When searching for facts, would you rather read a book or look it up on the computer? Why? 2. What types of insects do you know a lot about? List those insects and what you know about them. 3. What insects would you like to learn more about? Why? |

**Analysis of the Data**

The data shows that the William Winchester Elementary school library 570’s are in *desperate* need of weeding. I would weed the majority of the older titles (unless they were one of the seven titles that were included in the Wilson’s core collection) and all books that were not in a professional selection source. Although the recommended shelf life for the life sciences is every ten years, these books are no longer visually pleasing and are not included in retrospective professional selection sources. The data also shows that this part of the library collection no longer meets the needs of the curriculum. Older children’s nonfiction texts lack nonfiction text features. Students are taught to look for these features to help them navigate through nonfiction books. It is also difficult to research a specific insect when most of the books provide just basic facts that apply to all insects, such as, three body parts, six legs, etc. This task becomes even more difficult when there is no table of contents or index.

This part of the collection is extremely valuable because all second grade students use it. Based on my Community Analysis, nonfiction books are popular with our elementary students. These books can provide high interest topics for lower level readers in the upper grades as well. Fourth and fifth grade students study a science unit on the environment and habitats, understanding how insects interact with the environment will build a foundation for future curricular topics.

The next steps would be to first weed out the material that is not part of a core collection and replace it with materials that have received at least two positive reviews. When selecting quality books, there should be a wide range of insects covered to provide more selection for students doing research. Below is a table of ten recommended books that should be added to the library collection.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Title/Author | Copyright | Part of a Core Collection |
| Termites-Hard Working Insect Families by Sandra Markle | 2008 | Yes |
| Ladybugs: Red, Fiery and Bright by Mia Posada | 2002 | Yes |
| Speedy Dragonflies by Molly Smith | 2008 | Yes |
| Wasps Up Close by Greg Pyers | 2005 | Yes |
| Hornets: Incredible Insect Architects by Sandra Markle | 2008 | Yes |
| Praying Mantises: Hungry Insect Heroes by Sandra Markle | 2008 | Yes |
| Hungry Cockroaches by Meish Goldish | 2008 | Yes |
| The Honey Bees Hive: A Thriving City by Joyce Markovics | 2009 | Yes |
| Focus on Flies by Norma Dixon | 2008 | Yes |
| Gut-Eating Bugs: Maggots Reveal Time of Death by Danielle Denega | 2007 | Yes |

**Reflection**

Although I focused on the books, teachers do have access to the collection of six videocassettes titled “Bug City” for classroom use. Students love to watch Dr. Arte and Bugsy as they explore the world of insects. The Sirs Discoverer database is available for students in the classroom and media center. This gives students an opportunity to search for facts online. Information is categorized by easy and hard to match a reader’s ability.

Having access to useful audiovisual materials and databases cannot substitute quality literature. The second grade ILA curriculum requires that students become familiar with nonfiction text features and that they know how to use them to gather information. This task becomes difficult when quality materials are not available. Since this is such a valuable part of the library collection, these assessments are an asset for a presentation in hopes of receiving possible funding from the PTA or the school board. The principal may look at the insect collection on the shelf and think that thirty-one books is an adequate amount for second graders. The Collection-Centered Assessment highlights the fact that quality should outweigh the quantity.

For this particular assignment, I chose to poll the students since I am the only teacher who teaches a unit on insects. However, when I become a media specialist, I think polling teachers would be the best way to go for the Use-Centered Assessment. I think it is essential to survey teachers each year to see if adequate materials are available, if the formats support the learning styles of the students and if the collection is balanced and covers a variety of topics needed to support the curriculum.

These assessments are extremely useful, however, they are very time consuming. It would not be practical to complete this type of evaluation on each category every year. As a media specialist, I would want to focus on one subgroup a year to complete all three assessments on. I would then be able to use this data to guide future ordering or present it to the principal as verification that more funding is needed.