

Global Survey of Educators Reveals Gap in Literacy Priorities

Findings include parent engagement, access to books and content need more attention

Newark, Del. (Jan. 11, 2017) – The International Literacy Association’s (ILA) 2017 What’s Hot in Literacy survey findings, released today, reveal wide gaps between what educators across the globe consider important topics in literacy education and those garnering the most attention. Among the surprising results: Digital literacy, as well as assessment and standards, while widely discussed in educator circles, ranks lower in importance than other issues among more than 1,500 literacy leaders from 89 countries and territories surveyed.

Respondents were asked to score 17 topics in terms of how *hot* or *important* they are to literacy education at both their community and country levels. For survey purposes, hot topics were defined as those receiving the most attention in the classroom, in conversations with other educators, and in the media; important topics were defined as those most critical to advancing literacy for all.

“An analysis of survey findings from a cross-sector of literacy leaders from Argentina to Zambia indicates a need to redirect conversations around literacy with a focus on what is important to literacy educators,” says ILA Executive Director Marcie Craig Post. “Identifying these gaps, and then developing solutions to narrow them, will help the global community move the needle on literacy.”

Key survey findings:

- **Parent Engagement** should be a higher priority, according to survey respondents. It had the largest gap between hot and important ratings at the community and country levels.
- **Teacher Professional Learning and Development** is extremely valued by educators. Although it would be easy to label this both hot and important, that’s not the case, according to respondents. For instance, at the country level, only 47% rated it as very or extremely hot, while 71% rated it as very or extremely important.
- **Access to Books and Content** is more important than it is hot. In fact, educators were more than twice as likely to rate this topic as extremely important as they were extremely hot.
- **Digital Literacy** is trending in educator circles, as it ranked third in overall hot topics at a country level. However, it ranked lower in importance, coming in at No. 8 and lagging behind other topics.
- **Assessment/Standards** is viewed as a hot topic, but not as important to respondents. It ranked No. 1 among all hot topics at the country level, but it fell to No. 10 in terms of actual importance.

The full survey findings are available in ILA's 2017 What's Hot in Literacy Report, available at literacyworldwide.org/whatshot.

ABOUT WHAT'S HOT IN LITERACY

The What's Hot in Literacy survey takes the temperature of the literacy dialogue, identifies trending literacy topics, and helps drive conversations in the directions they are most needed. The survey provides a snapshot of what educators around the globe deem the hot and important topics in literacy education and helps to guide current research, professional development and conversations in teacher educator programs. For this 21st edition, the methodology expanded from a survey of 20–25 literacy professionals to a quantitative survey including 1,594 respondents from 89 countries and territories. Survey respondents were asked to rank 17 literacy topics—derived from one-on-one qualitative interviews with literacy educators, experts and leaders—in terms of whether they were trending or important in the respondent's community and country.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers, and experts across 75 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught, and evaluated. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather, and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices, and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students, and inform policymakers. ILA publishes *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, and *Reading Research Quarterly*, which are peer reviewed and edited by leaders in the field. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.

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