

# Does Your Library Reflect the Hispanic Culture?

## A Mapping Analysis

By Lea Bailey

Many schools are experiencing substantial growth in the Hispanic student population. These students need books written in Spanish and in English as well as bilingual books. We have seen high circulation of our existing Spanish collections and a great demand for more materials. Most of us have the mind set that we will take anything in Spanish. However, there is no standard or guideline which prescribes just how much of your collection should be in the Spanish language. Let's just recognize that there is a need to have more books in Spanish that fit our community.

We also need books in English which reflect the Hispanic culture not only for the Spanish speakers, but also the English speaker and other language speakers. The focus of this article is analyzing the content of the books in the collection, whether in English or Spanish. Standards discuss that the diverse needs, multicultural community, and learning differences should be considered in the development of the collection though no quantitative measure is suggested. Other ethnicities could be targeted in a similar manner.

So, how well does your library collection reflect the Hispanic community? This collection mapping tool offers a way to determine how this ethnicity is being reflected in the collection. It gives you a feel or grounding to what you have available for your students.

### THE MAPPING TOOL

Take a look at the tool (also online at [www.irvingisd.net/bailey](http://www.irvingisd.net/bailey)). The three parts give you three slightly different filters on the content of your collection. Take each of the parts and see what results are produced by searching your library collection. Make notes to yourself on the form. This completed tool will direct your collection development in this area.

**The first part is a list of Hispanic authors and illustrators. (Figure 1)**

Analyze or map your library collection in terms of Spanish/Hispanic authors, topics, and holidays. What do you find? Are there some gaps that may need to be considered when ordering resources?

**Figure 1. Hispanic Authors/Illustrators:**

You might want to see what other books have been printed by these authors and illustrators to determine other titles you might consider for your collection.

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR	# BOOKS	CONSIDER MORE/ SPECIFIC TITLES
Alma Flor Ada		
Ann Jaramillo		
Arthur Dorros		
Carmen Tafolla		
Francisco Jiménez		
Gary Soto		
George Ancona		
Gwendolyn Zepeda		
Isabel Allende		
Isabel Campoy		
Joe Hayes		
Juan Felipe Herrera		
Julia Alvarado		
Julia Alvarez		
Lucía González		
Lulu Delacre		
Luis Rodríguez		
Margarita Engle		
Melissa de la Cruz		
Nancy Osa		
Pablo Neruda		
Pam Muñoz Ryan		
Pat Mora		
Pura Belpré (should see her name as a translator as well)		
Raúl Colón		
Richard Rodríguez		
Rudy Gutierrez		
Sandra Cisneros		
Tomas Rivera		
Victor Martínez		
Viola Canales		
Yuyi Morales		

The list of names, words, and famous people is by no means exclusive or a must-have list. It is a starting point by which to look at your collection.

The list is not all inclusive nor should it be taken as a “must-have authors” list. It is a map or guide. Go through the list and see which authors you have represented in your collection. For example, do you have books in your collection by Isabel Allende? Should they be included in your collection? What titles has she written?

Are they appropriate for your school? For many collections the answer is no as her books are for older students.

As you identify authors and illustrators not represented in your collection or ones for which you should consider acquiring additional titles, mark them. Later, take these names to review sources and see what additional titles they have published. Would any of these books that a particular author has written be suitable for your

library collection? Is it necessary to buy everything they have written or illustrated? Probably not. This is a working list. Share with colleagues when you find a new Hispanic author or illustrator, or you learn of one that has been overlooked or missed by this list.

**The next part of the mapping tool has keywords that reflect the Spanish influence. (Figure 2)**

Consider these like tags for Hispanic holidays, food items, Spanish terms that have been

## Figure 2. Hispanic Topics/Keywords

These sometimes have a worldwide connotation. Sift through the results on the \* entries to focus only on those with a Spanish or Hispanic focus. Searching for the Spanish word also helps to identify gaps in Spanish content. Check your library collection for:

TOPIC/KEYWORD	# BOOKS	CONSIDER MORE/ SPECIFIC TITLES	TOPIC/KEYWORD	# BOOKS	CONSIDER MORE/ SPECIFIC TITLES
abuela and/or abuelo			mariachi		
arroz			masa*/tamales		
Aztec (related to Mexican culture)			Mexican American		
barrio			Mexican cooking		
béisbol			Mexican Independence		
Carnaval			Mexico, Puerto Rico, Columbia*, Chile, etc.—particularly focus on countries represented at your school		
Cinco de Mayo			migrant workers*		
charro			Navidad		
Día de las Muertos/ Day of the Dead			pinata		
dinosaurio			posada		
empanadas			Quinceanera		
familia			Rio Grande		
Fiesta*			salsa		
Folklorico			soccer* or futbol		
frijoles			Southwest		
gato			Spanish speaking* (without Indians only books)		
Hispanic American			Three Kings Day/El Día de los Reyes		
immigration*			Tejano		
Incas			tia/tio		
Lady of Guadalupe			tortillas		
Latino/Latina			vaquero		



incorporated into English, etc. Search for these keywords or tags in your collection. Note not only the quantity of books but whether the books you find about that keyword are in English or Spanish. Can you locate a translation of an English title in your collection, or vice versa?

As you work through the list, some topics will not be represented in your collection. Do you need books on that topic? Are there books that

even cover that topic? The answer will not always be yes. But for some of the topics, like The Day of the Dead or Three Kings' Day, you most definitely need to find books. It is not necessary to find a book on all of these topics. If you have most of them, you are reasonably covering the cultural aspects involved. If you find that you have very few of these topics covered, this gives you a focus when searching for new book titles through reviews or your vendor.

Or, perhaps you know a certain book really does cover or involve a certain topic, yet it does not appear when you are searching. Perhaps a tag needs to be assigned to that book (if your library automation system supports tagging), that keyword needs to be included in the summary statement, or a subject heading needs to be added to that MARC record. Fine tuning the cataloging may provide better access to the books we already have in our collections.

### Figure 3. Biography Books

How many biographies are there that focus on Hispanics? (Look up Mexican Americans-Biography, Hispanic Americans-Biography)  
(Does one of these subject headings need to be added to other books?)

How many collective biographies are there that focus on this group?

Is a biography about this Hispanic person, or collective biographies including this person, accessible through keyword searching in the PAC?

TOPIC/KEYWORD	# BOOKS	CONSIDER MORE	WHO IS THIS?	TOPIC/KEYWORD	# BOOKS	CONSIDER MORE	WHO IS THIS?
Alberto Gonzales			attorney general US	José Feliciano			singer
Antonio Banderas			actor	José Martí			artist
Antonio Novello			female surgeon general of US	Juan Gonzalez			Sports
Benito Juarez			former President of Mexico; revolutionary leader	Juan Seguin			Texas Independence
Bobby Bonilla			baseball	Juana Ines de la Cruz			poet
Calderón Hinojosa			President of Mexico	Judy Baca			artist
Cesar Chavez			migrant revolutionary leader	Lee Trevino			sports
Christina Aguilera			singer	Linda Ronstadt			singer
Diego Rivera			artist	Miguel Hidalgo			priest; father of Mexican Independence
Ellen Ochoa			astronaut; scientist	Nancy Lopez			woman golfer
Enrique Iglesias			singer	Oscar de la Hoya			boxer
Fidel Castro			Cuban leader	Pancho Villa			Mexican revolutionary; outlaw
Frida Kahlo			artist	Ricky Martin			singer
Henry B. Gonzalez			politician	Roberto Clemente			sports
Henry Cisneros			politician	Roberto Goizueta			businessman (Coke)
Jaime Escalante			math educator	Sandra Cisneros			poet/writer
Jennifer Lopez			singer; actor	Selena Perez			entertainer
Joan Baez			singer	Simon Bolivar			Venezuela revolutionary leader
Jose Antonio Navarro			Texas Independence	Vicente Fox			former President of Mexico
José de San Martín			Argentinian general				

**The third part of the mapping activity involves looking at the biography books in your collection. (Figure 3)**

Use the information provided and search through the review journals, other library's holdings, jobbers or Baharona, ([www.csusm.edu/csb/](http://www.csusm.edu/csb/)) for possible titles to add to your collection. Then determine if those titles meet the selection policy.

## AWARD BOOKS:

Which Pura Belpré Award books do you have? Should you purchase some of the others? [www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/belpremedal/belprmedal.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/belpremedal/belprmedal.htm)

What about the Tomas Rivera Award books? [www.education.txstate.edu/departments/Tomas-Rivera-Book-Award-Project-Link/Winners.html](http://www.education.txstate.edu/departments/Tomas-Rivera-Book-Award-Project-Link/Winners.html)

What about the Americas CLASP Award? [www.uwm.edu/Dept/CLACS/outreach/americas.html](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CLACS/outreach/americas.html)

What about books on the Tejas Star Award reading list? [www.esc1.net/tejasstarbookaward](http://www.esc1.net/tejasstarbookaward)

## OTHER QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How many Spanish nonfiction books do you have? Have they been updated like the English counterparts?
- How many Spanish ebooks do your students have access to?
- What Hispanic focus or Spanish magazines do you have?
- What online resources are available in Spanish? Is the person on the list represented in your collection? Do they need to be? For example, if your library is in California or New York, do you need a biography on Henry B. Gonzalez, the first Hispanic U.S. Representative from Texas? Who would be more representative of your locale?

Also look to see if you have too many books about some of these people. Look particularly at your biography books on Roberto Clemente, Diego Rivera, and Cesar Chavez. If you have more than three or four on these men, keep only the best ones in the collection. Should you purge those biographies published in a hurry to fill a need but are not well written? Are the entertainers represented current and popular? Are the sports biographies up-to-date? A biography of Lee Trevino will not have much appeal to students

today. This list is a work in progress and should change in the future. A few years from now other people may need to be added to this list and some removed to keep the currency of the biographies up-to-date.

## GETTING HELP FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES

As you map your library collection with this mapping tool, look also at what other libraries in your district have on the topics. Search other library collections in communities with a substantial Hispanic community like Dallas schools ([www.youseemore.com/dallasisd/](http://www.youseemore.com/dallasisd/)), Irving schools ([www.youseemore.com/irvingschool/school.asp?schooltype=all](http://www.youseemore.com/irvingschool/school.asp?schooltype=all)), Ysleta schools (<http://yesmlib.yisd.net/>), and the Los Angeles Public Library ([www.lapl.org/catalog/](http://www.lapl.org/catalog/)). What titles do these larger library systems have that might enhance your collection? Perhaps you can borrow a copy of a title to review and evaluate before ordering for your collection.

Take a look at the books winning awards related to Spanish language or culture. Do you have the more recent Pura Belpré Award winners ([www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal/index.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal/index.cfm))? What about the books on the Tejas Star Reading List ([www.esc1.net/tejasstarbookaward](http://www.esc1.net/tejasstarbookaward))? Those lists often identify new authors and illustrators that should be watched for future works.

This mapping tool provides you a way to analyze your collection's content through these three filters. Like a map it gives you some direction to focus your collection development to better serve not only the Hispanic students but all of your students.



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