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INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION'S 2020 WHAT'S HOT IN LITERACY REPORT FINDS BARRIERS IN EDUCATION, SUPPORT NEEDED FOR EDUCATORS

Newark, Del. (Jan. 22, 2020) — A new report released today by the International Literacy Association (ILA) reveals that only 34% of teachers surveyed felt equipped by their teacher preparation programs with the skills needed for effective early reading instruction. The differences in how teachers are prepared carries a price tag, according to respondents; the majority point to the variability of teacher knowledge and effectiveness as being among the greatest barriers to equity in literacy education.

The ILA 2020 What's Hot in Literacy Report provides a snapshot of what 1,443 literacy professionals from 65 countries and territories deem the most critical topics to advancing literacy worldwide over the next decade. In addition, it identifies top challenges and supports needed by those in the field.

Early literacy skills and equity emerged as top critical topics from those surveyed; access to high-quality books and content, professional learning opportunities and effective instructional strategies for struggling readers rounded out the top five.

The findings regarding teacher preparation and the variability of teacher knowledge and effectiveness relate directly to current conversations in the field regarding which instructional methods are included in preservice programs—and how much emphasis they are given. This lack of effectiveness also points to the need for more ongoing professional learning opportunities, a critical topic cited by respondents throughout the survey.

For example, though the majority of teachers reported that both phonics and phonemic awareness were covered in their preservice programs, the percentage who said their program did an “excellent” or “very good” job of preparing them to use these methods was low—27% for phonics and 26% for phonemic awareness. In addition, 30% of those surveyed indicated a desire for more professional development and/or a greater understanding of explicit and systematic phonics instruction.

More than a quarter of teachers said they need support in both creating a professional learning network and pursuing professional learning opportunities. In addition, 50% of respondents believe the topic of ongoing professional learning needs more focus and attention from education policymakers.

“Overwhelmingly, we learned that educators in the literacy field are in need of support,” said ILA Executive Director Marcie Craig Post. “This survey helps us to identify where that support is needed so, as a professional organization, we can provide solutions.”

Another area in which the majority of respondents expressed the need for support is research. A whopping 93% cite research as the backbone of effective literacy instruction, and staying current on research was cited as a top three responsibility of literacy educators by 50% or more of teachers, literacy consultants and higher education professionals. In addition, 44% said this is an area in which they needed more support. And most—85%—agreed that academic experts and professional associations should provide that support.

The full survey findings are available in the ILA 2020 What's Hot in Literacy Report, available at literacyworldwide.org/whatshot. Join the conversation on Twitter by using the hashtag [#ILAWhatsHot](https://twitter.com/ILAWhatsHot).

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. It is published by the International Literacy Association and comanaged by YouGov, a global market research firm. The 2020 survey received 1,443 responses representing 65 countries and territories.

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 146 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught and evaluated. ILA's Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017 provides an evidence-based benchmark for the development and evaluation of literacy professional preparation programs. 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.

About YouGov

YouGov is a pioneer in online research with offices throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. YouGov's custom research specialists conduct a full spectrum of quantitative and qualitative research, providing comprehensive market intelligence to the world's leading businesses and institutions. YouGov was recently named one of the world's top 25 research companies by the respected American Marketing Association Top 25 Report and has a proven, published record of uniquely accurate data and actionable insights informing political, cultural and commercial organizations around the globe. For more information, visit research.yougov.com.

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