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FACULTY RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Common Core, Informational Texts, and the Historical (Mis)Representations of Native Americans within Trade Books

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Abstract

State and national initiatives have repositioned elementary teachers' emphases. These mandates increase the frequency with which teachers utilize informational texts and students' exposure to diverse perspectives of the same event or era. In short, history and social studies content will likely have a more prominent position within the incorporated literature in English/reading class. Teachers will intentionally supplement age-appropriate, engaging tradebooks with relevant, interrelated informational texts, like primary source material. To guide interested elementary teachers, we focused on tradebooks that centered on Native Americans, an oft-included topic in elementary curricula. We evaluated the tradebooks for their historical representation (and misrepresentation), located germane primary source material, and proffered discipline-specific activities.

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Common Core prescribes intensive readings of informational texts within both English/language arts curricula and history/social studies at the elementary level (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the term Native Americans will be used when referencing the general populations. When appropriate, specific names of tribes will be employed. With regards to Columbus' initial European contact with Native Americans, and the Columbian Exchange, researchers have conducted six different content

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