Editorial: Teacher Librarians as Central Figures, Heroes, and Key Players

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This theme of this issue of School Libraries Worldwide is “Celebrity: Teacher Librarians as Central Figures, Heroes, and Key Players.” Celebrities captivate our attention through the media and according to Gabler (1994), “Celebrity is a learning process toward self-actualization and realization…celebrity is about gaining attention and acknowledgment—about not being like everyone else (pp. 10, 13).” As the sole information practitioner in a school, teacher librarians uniquely exhibit their celebrity status through the work they do to help students and stakeholders expand their knowledge, refine their skills, and locate the “right” information among the vast amount of materials that are available.

Throughout the history of librarianship, we have many famous librarians, many of whom were politicians, authors and historical celebrities in their own right: Ben Franklin, Golda Meir, J. Edgar Hoover, Lewis Carroll, Beverly Cleary, Madeleine L’Engle, Marcel Proust, Joanna Cole and Jacob Grimm. Celebrity librarians Melvil Dewey and Nancy Pearl earned their status through their excellent professional service. While exemplary librarians can be found in every aspect of history, thousands of school and public librarians that have gained recognition for their inspiring educators and learners. In this issue, we celebrate school librarians and their contributions to their communities.

Becoming a Celebrity in Your School Library

School librarians are central figures in their schools; their reputations precede them when students, teachers, administrators, parents and staff enter the school library. According to Gabler (1994, p.14), “The celebrity narrative and the celebrity’s tangibility are about identification”; indeed, while a school librarian can be considered an effective educator outside of the school library, rarely is a school library considered effective without a strong school library. The school librarian’s narrative is one that includes supporting, inspiring, and guiding students’ development with expertise, resources, and ingenuity. The school librarians’ celebrity narrative is defined by excellence and when this narrative is one of exemplary service, everyone knows the school librarian’s name and capabilities: this person is in the spotlight.
The selflessness of this celebrity can be seen in so many ways. Almost all school librarians have those special students who seek refuge in the library and build a rapport around the enjoyable library atmosphere. This environment of information sharing, friendly debate, and a supportive adult is often not accessible elsewhere during the school day. The celebrity school librarian provides a safe haven for difficult questions and away from judgment or retaliation. A school librarian’s narrative that includes open communication, trust, honesty, and availability is a legacy that forever influences how everyone in the school community views the library.

In This Issue

In this issue, researchers from all over the world provided us with a range of papers that explore librarians in leadership roles; librarians and their use of technology; librarians marketing and promoting programs and materials; and librarians as agents of change and innovation.

We lead this issue of 10 exciting papers with a thought provoking contribution to our “Researcher’s Perspective” column by renowned researcher and writer Stephen Krashen. In “The Purpose of Education, Free Voluntary Reading, and Dealing with the Impact of Poverty,” Dr. Krashen implores school-based information professionals to promote, implement, and reinforce children’s love of reading in the face of sweeping international educational reforms that often affect available time to read.


The issue includes four researchers from Asia and Oceana. Peng Han Lim (Singapore) provides a historical look at leadership and advocacy in a Singapore multilingual school system post-colonial Singapore, 1960 – 1985. Mandy Lupton (Australia) examines principal’s perceptions of teacher librarians and reported the personal qualities principals valued in Australia in “Adding Value: Principals’ Perceptions of the Role of the Teacher-librarian.” Robin Spruce and Kasey Garrison (Australia) compare the perceptions and practices of self-regulated learning between National Board Certified teacher librarians and non-certified teacher librarians in the United States.

Turning to contributions from North America, Jennifer Branch-Mueller and Joanne de Groot (Canada) studied how teacher librarians in Canada viewed themselves as they transitioned from as novice to expert school librarian; their research provides a lens to examine pre-service and in-service teacher-librarianship education. Janice Newsum (USA) reviews the impact of technology on the evolution of materials and collection development for primary and secondary education in an urban school district. Mary Ann Harlan (USA) explores “Connected Learning,” a framework to access, evaluate, construct, and share information in an online environment. Ken Haycock and Cheryl Stenstrom (USA) provide an agenda for advocacy in “Reviewing the Research and Evidence: Towards Best Practices for Garnering Support for
School Libraries.” Finally, Sheila Baker (USA) develops a model for practice, research, and evaluation based in her proposed “Six Ts of Transformation in Technology Integration” framework.

We hope that you will enjoy these papers as much as we have enjoyed assembling them for you. Let this fine work lead you to reflect on your own “star” status and the way your celebrity impacts your learning community.

References

Author Notes
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