Editorial

In this special issue of School Libraries Worldwide, “Research Around the World,” you can look forward to learning more about schools and school libraries in Israel, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the United States.

To begin the issue, Suzanne Monroe takes us on a journey through children’s literature. She explores a variety of fiction and non-fiction titles that highlight librarians and libraries. If you are anything like me, you will want to start your own collection of these books.

Next we move to Hong Kong to look at the learning of grade 4 students as they complete inquiry-based learning projects. In their article Sam Chu, Ken Chow, Shek-kam Tse, and Carol Collier Kuhlthau highlight the importance of teachers’ and teacher-librarians’ collaboration when designing projects. It also demonstrates that there was an improvement in the knowledge and skills of the students. Also interesting are the students’ and parents’ perceptions of the project, as it was a move away from more traditional methods of teaching. Studies like these are important as we work toward more inquiry-focused schools and classrooms.

Next we move to the eastern seaboard of the US to look at a high school summer reading program. Although I was familiar with summer reading programs through public libraries, this type of program was new to me. Ya-Ling Lu and Carol Gordon explore ways to promote reading while also engaging students in using technology as both a presentation and a communication tool. I believe that Web 2.0 tools can be powerful learning tools for this type of assignment. A virtual book club using Shelfari (shelfari.com) or Library Thing (librarything.com) would be a way to engage students in real-life sharing and discussion of a book. The bonus is that this discussion can be saved and shared with teachers in September to demonstrate new understandings.

The next article takes us to northern China, where we can learn about a project involving school libraries and how they are trying to reach out to communities with no public library service. First, Geoffrey Z. Liu provides background research about the possibilities and challenges of school-public libraries as a model for community library service. He then explores how several school libraries take up the challenge of providing books to their communities. The school-public library model is an interesting one when developing library service in communities where no library service currently exists.

Next we move back to colonial times in what is now Singapore to explore the development of schools, school libraries, and book publishing in the region. Lim Peng Han takes us on a journey through the historical record to bring to life the documents and policies of the times. I was fascinated by the history of this time, and this article makes me want to read more about early missionary publishing companies.
and their role and influence on schools in general and school libraries in particular.

From historical understandings of school libraries, we move to digital libraries for the 21st century and to Israel. Snunith Shoham and Zehava Shemer-Shalman explore the state of the art of 78 school library Web sites in Israel. This article provides us with an exploration of the possibilities of the school library Web site as well as the effect of such Web sites on teaching, learning, service, book promotion, and access to information.

I hope you enjoy this special issue as we move around the globe to explore school libraries from a variety of perspectives. I think it is wonderful that this journal will reach out globally using the Internet to our current members as well as to future members.

Jennifer L. Branch
Guest Editor