
Editorial

International perspectives on school library education: From face-to-face to distance

Guest Editors

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School Libraries Worldwide last focused on education for school librarians in 2000 (see volume 6, number 2) In the interceding years, much has happened in the world of school library education and school libraries themselves. Thus, we are happy to present this issue on the education of school librarians with the perspectives from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe and to North America, which makes this issue a truly international presentation with an emphasis on the impact of distance education.

Regardless of the geographic area, the challenges in the preparation of school librarians seem to be similar. Preparation programs struggle with the changing function of school libraries and the changing role of school librarians. The challenges of overcoming poverty abound, both in the schools in which prospective school librarians function and in recruiting the next generation of school librarians. Societal changes from 2000 are articulated as well, from assessment tools such as e-portfolios, and the use of social media to create community among diverse and disparate groups of students.

From Africa, we have two articles by Hart (South Africa) and by Boelens, et al. (sub-Saharan Africa). These two articles provide both an overview of school librarian education as well as evidence from the field in the Western Cape, South Africa.

Moving to Western Europe we have Shenton from Great Britain describing the changing school library and the importance of the school librarian to foster that change. From France, Lehmanns, and Cordier provide a discussion of the impact of changing educational philosophies on the provision of distance education programs for school librarians.

From North America and the North American region, we have five articles presenting perspectives on distance education featuring various concerns related to the delivery of education programs. Small, et al. describes an evaluation of the distance program from Syracuse University (New York) since its inception of a distance education program in 1993. Stewart provides a case study from the University of the West Indies and the restructuring of a Bachelor's program. Another case study is presented by Cahill and Richey, which focuses on teaching school librarians to focus on evidence-based assessment techniques in a school library management course. Jones, Downs, and Repman highlight the use of ePortfolios in school library education. Kymes discusses the advantages of distance education in reaching school librarians in rural areas. Kimmel, Dickinson, and Doll dissect the delicate issue of teaching dispositions - Finally, Farmer examines the role of professional associations and organizations on the professional development of school

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librarians in a cross-cultural study including California (North America), Brazil, Honduras, and Nepal.

This issue provides a needed benchmark in the research conversation surrounding school library education and preparation. More needs to be done in every aspect of the field, but much has been accomplished. We hope you will find this to be an interesting issue with many aspects of education to discuss and further research.

Authors Note

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