Editorial

Story: International common ground in school librarianship

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The lure of the story is what often attracts us to the profession of school librarianship. Early childhood memories of hearing stories at bedtime and around the campfire, being read to, attending story times in the public and school library, and choosing and owning our first books, are powerful and enduring. Listening to stories even has the capacity to alter our consciousness and place us in what researcher Brian Sturm (1999) calls a “storytelling trance.” Simple storytelling, with its origins in primitive times, can form a foundation for an interest in reading and lifelong learning. The enhanced recognition of modern storytelling is evidenced in an array of professional storytellers who make the rounds to schools and libraries, conferences dedicated to storytelling, and even the popularity in the U.S. of two television series based on childhood stories. Grimm is a police show whose characters are inspired by Grimm’s Fairy Tales and Once Upon a Time uses fairy tale characters transported to the modern world.

Storytelling also unites us as members of IASL. In school libraries throughout the world, whether they are well resourced or meager, stories are capable of being told by school librarians and teachers and being enjoyed by children. Nothing is required other than an imagination, a willingness to speak and a desire to listen. However, the rich array of articles in this issue of School Libraries Worldwide attests to more far-reaching capabilities of story to that of a teaching and motivational method and even a research technique.

Linda Cooper employs the sophisticated theories of Vygotsky, Bruner, and Dervin to develop a teaching strategy whereby children are asked to remember stories about themselves to support language development and movement towards greater self-knowledge supporting their choices of material in the school library. Linda notes that, “Each child that comes to the library has a myriad of stories within his or herself. These are the stories that make up the experience of that child and shape his or her understanding and perspective of new information encountered.”

Moving from storytelling into actual reading, Adetoun Oyelude conducted a study to assess the reading habits and the use of library among the teachers and students of primary and secondary schools in Iddo Local Government area in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria and find out if the use of library helped in improving reading habits.

Digital storytelling, a modern update of the oral tradition, is the focus of two articles in this issue. Lucy Santos Green capitalizes on students’ interest in technology and the wide application of digital storytelling to motivate students whose native language is not English.
storytelling Web 2.0 technology also provides a platform to engage in collaboration with English as a Second Language Teachers. Green posits that as school librarians, when we introduce English language learners to digital storytelling, we expand their tools for artistry and communication. Rebecca Morris found that during the construction of digital storytelling projects, students fluidly and independently shifted roles from creator to “listener-viewer” and back again which is vastly different from roles in traditional storytelling. These dual roles students assumed as creators and viewers in the formative, or work-in-progress, stage of digital storytelling afford opportunities for self-assessment, a key skill for school librarians to support and teach.

Stephanie Jones and Sue Kimmel employ story as a research methodology. This method is more formally referred to as narrative research. Jones utilizes narrative inquiry and analysis to examine the occupational choice of school librarians and collects data life story interviews. Why do we become school librarians in the first place? Our stories tell why. Kimmel capitalizes on teachers’ universal knowledge of the story, Stone Soup. The metaphor of a soup where everyone contributes became way to conceptualize collaboration to frame the question to teachers: “If collaboration with the school librarian is like Stone Soup, what ingredients does the school librarian bring to the soup?”

Like the recipe for Stone Soup, our authors bring their own rich ingredients to this issue on Story. We hope you find something that you would like to taste!

**Reference**


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