Editorial: Great Piles of Stuff or Piles of Great Stuff? Entrepreneurial Curation and the School Librarian

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Welcome to the 20th Anniversary issue of *School Libraries Worldwide*! For these last two decades, it has been our pleasure to bring you the finest school library research from across the globe. The theme of this issue, "Curation: Building the Learning Resource Base through Selection, Management, and Promotion of School Library Collections," was prompted by the fact that K-12 instructional planning is changing—and continues to change very quickly. Whereas teachers were once left to their own devices, and hopefully to their school librarians, to identify and integrate high quality learning resources, the recent past of federal educational initiatives has transformed instructional materials selection from one based on "pull" (i.e., resources gained from colleagues, search engines, and specialized digital libraries) to one based on "push" (e.g., resources presented to teachers in the context of a standards and assessment linked student data systems or a digital library). This fundamental change in the way teachers base their instructional plans in the United States stems from two main forces: shift to the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards and their accompanying shift high stakes testing based on students' aptitude for applying concepts. With these twin imperatives reinforced in federal education policy via the Elementary and Secondary Education Act authorization known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the related Race to the Top (RttT) initiative, school administrators are left to make tough decisions about how to shift financial resources to ensure that their teachers have sufficient means to implement high quality instruction as defined by federal guidelines.

Unfortunately, too often, school administrators have identified school librarians as surplus to their educational goals (Ellerson, 2012a; 2012b). Instead, they have relied upon commercial systems populated with fee-based resources to provide teachers' essential materials base (Maull, Salidvar, & Sumner, 2010a; 2010b). Some of these systems are operationalized as digital textbooks that represent assemblages of resources tailored to a specific learning goal, also known as digital textbooks.

Many digital textbooks are based on OERs, which are "teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others" (Hewlett Foundation, 2007, p.1]. School librarians are being eliminated at a time when their expertise in identifying, organizing, maintaining, and promoting (i.e., curating) high quality Open Education Resources (OERs) could provide the content and support upon which teacher and student achievement could be based.

Perhaps as a result, compliance with federal encouragements to embrace OERs has been piecemeal and slow (Porcello & Hsi, 2013).

Certainly, identifying and aggregating OERs and other digital resources are two key aspects of 21st Century collection development. However, due to the sheer number of these items, curation is crucial to ensure that evolving definitions of quality are reflected in the collection (Rosenbaum, 2013).

I posit that curation is an entrepreneurial activity. As Goldstein and Rodriguez (2012) pointed out, entrepreneurs are innovative problem solvers. The heritage of librarianship is inherently translational in that librarians take the position of layering information resources onto possible solutions for problems in just about any discipline. The librarian's approach is constantly fresh, constantly reinventing, and constantly injecting expertly selected information into potentially insurmountable quests for knowledge. In this way, LIS education fosters information entrepreneurialism through the development of the resource expertise enacted through curation.

Moreover, the growing array of resource types demands expertise not only in identifying high quality or trustworthy resources, but also curation means recommending the right resource in both content and format. The levels of discernment required by curators are unprecedented and lead to niche expertise tailored to a particular information market and the needs of a unique audience (Rosenbaum, 2013).

School librarians are often stuck with a stereotype of picture book reading milquetoasts ever on the alert to squelch chatter and overdue materials in the library. As with most stereotypes, this depiction was probably never true and at best is hopelessly out-dated. In fact, research has shown that school librarians are technology leaders, often driving schools toward greater integration of digital learning and supporting teachers' professional learning (Everhart, Mardis, & Johnston, 2011).

School librarians lead in the context of very specialized libraries in which collections are curated to reflect the curriculum mandates, community norms, learning extension, and personal enrichment of the school's very specific population. The deep involvement of a variety of stakeholders including students, teachers, administrators, and parents, ensures that the collection meets these needs and that shifting values and needs are reflected in library materials (Mardis, ElBasri, Norton, & Newsum, 2012). While school libraries have traditionally been print based, the collection and management of digital content has become equally as important, and the continuing reliance on OERs will only increase the need for onsite curation of existing and locally created material (AASL, 2009).

Teachers and students rely on digital resources as well as the devices that convey them every day. Many members of both groups admit to engaging in satisficing behavior, using resources of uncertain provenance, or inadequately referencing content (Project Tomorrow, 2011). Calls in educational community cite the "great pile of stuff" that is comprised of accessible learning resources be transformed into "piles of great stuff" (Zia, 2005, para. 1) that is current, content rich, authoritative, and effective in communicating learning concepts.

School librarianship may be a bellwether for issues that will soon face education as a whole (Mardis, 2009). This issue's authors just may inspire change in the way library practitioners and educators, especially school librarians, position the value and purpose of collection development. By understanding, embracing, promoting, and preparing to undertake the important and entrepreneurial role of curator of OER as well as other instructional materials in schools, librarians can be meaningful contributions to their organizations

In This Issue

In this issue, we are proud to bring you eight excellent papers from five different countries, all with a different take on the curatorial enterprise. In our occasional column entitled Researcher's Perspective, Judy O'Connell gives us an update on Australia's teacher librarians and their quest to remain educated and agile to stay on the forefront of curation and technology integration. Casey Rawson explores the school librarian's role in science learning and the importance of a strong science, technology, engineering, and mathematics resource base. Hilary Hughes offers a rigorous review of the studies relating to the differences school librarians make to student learning, including but not limited to the power of an expertly crafted collection. Then, Patrick Lo provides us with a unique and extensive comparative review of school libraries and school librarian working conditions in five Asian locations. A team of researchers led by Kasey Garrison take a an unexpected but wonderfully spot-on approach to curation—by tracing the word back to its Latin roots in *curare*, "to care," this paper explores the extent to which the moving titles that have received the Batchelder Award reinforce the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of Children (DRC). Staying in the collection, Karen Gavigan examines graphic novels and the various ways in which they are consumed in competing high schools. Fadekemi Oyewusi and Alirat Olawumi Ayanlola take the collection mobile and look at how teens in Nigeria are using their mobile phones to read for pleasure and school work. Finally, David Streatfield and colleagues "go the extra mile" to report on a second round of analysis of the results of a national survey of UK school libraries, involving self-reported activities and priorities of school librarians. His big takeaway: when we proactively use our collection to promote our work, we are powerful!

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