
Editorial

Making the Case for Diversity in School Library Research

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Diversity is an essential part of our professional vocabulary. Teacher-librarians make great efforts to choose and maintain diverse resources for a balanced school library collection that supports students and classrooms. Materials are selected that include characters and illustrations of persons of various racial, ethnic, and gender groups as well as texts that present diverse social and political perspectives. One of the great benefits of IASL membership is the opportunity to interact with diverse members of the international school library community.

But what about our research? Is it diverse? Are international voices represented? Unfortunately, overwhelming evidence confirms that it is not. Since becoming co-editor of *School Libraries Worldwide* in 2011, I have been fortunate to review and publish outstanding research from around the world. However, that “world” is heavily slanted towards the U.S. with Australia and Canada a distant second and third. In the sixteen issues that have been published from 2011-2018, over half of the articles were written by U.S. authors as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: First Author of Origin for Articles in *School Libraries Worldwide* 2011-2018 (N=115)

Author Origin	Frequency
USA	68
Australia	7
Canada	6
Germany	4
Nigeria	4
UK	4
Jamaica	3
Japan	3
Kuwait	2
Slovenia	2
New Zealand	2
Brazil	1
France	1
Hong Kong	1

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India	1
Israel	1
Malawi	1
Netherlands	1
Philippines	1
Singapore	1
South Africa	1
Total	115

Earlier research by Branch-Mueller and Beesoon (2015) examined school library research published in *School Libraries Worldwide* as well as *School Library Research* and other sources and also found that it was predominantly conducted in the USA (Table 2).

Table 2: Geographical locations of research 2009-2015 (N=100) (Branch-Mueller and Beesoon, 2015)

Country	Frequency
USA	77
Canada	5
Australia	4
UK	2
Hong Kong	2
Brazil	2
Nepal, Honduras, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Kuwait, Philippines, Nigeria, Slovenia, Lebanon (one each)	8
Total	100

It is a bit more encouraging in Mardis' (2011) analysis of research articles presented at the IASL Research Forum over a ten-year period (Table 3). The USA still leads all countries followed by Canada and Australia, but there are significant contributions from researchers located in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Israel, New Zealand and South Africa. Perhaps the less restrictive publication requirements of the forum compared to *School Libraries Worldwide* lead to more diversity there.

Table 3: First Author of Origin for Research Articles Presented at the IASL Research Forum 1998-2009 (N=199) (Mardis, 2011)

Author Origin	Frequency
USA	60
Canada	24
Australia	21
Hong Kong	11
Taiwan	11
Israel	10
New Zealand	9
South Africa	7
Iceland	4
Portugal	3
Botswana	3
France	3

Japan	3
Malaysia	3
UK/England	3
UK/Scotland	3
Brazil	2
Croatia	2
Jamaica	2
Denmark	1
Finland	1
Indonesia	1
Italy	1
Netherlands	1
New Guinea	1
Spain	1
Sweden	1
UK/Wales	1
Total	199

We would like to encourage many more contributions from researchers throughout the world and offer some suggestions towards that goal:

- Rework IASL Research Forum papers for *School Libraries Worldwide*. There may be a misconception that this is forbidden but actually there is no policy against it in our organization.
- Prepare and send draft papers to peers before submission to increase the chances of paper acceptance.
- Collaborate with colleagues.
- In papers that have been published elsewhere, choose a different focus but use the same data for another paper.
- Examine previous articles in our newly created archive:
<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/slw/index.php/slw/issue/archive>

Some changes at the administrative level may make submissions more straightforward. In the coming weeks we will be developing a template that will clearly define the format for articles and we are updating our online submission system. There are many options to choose from when submitting your research, but please consider *School Libraries Worldwide*.

References

- Branch-Mueller, J., & Beesoon, G. (2015). School library research rocks: An examination of five years of school library research. In L. H. Das, S. Brand-Gruwel, J. Walhout, & K. Kok. (Eds.). *The School Library Rocks: Proceedings of the 44th International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) conference 2015, Volume II: Research Papers* (pp. 22-41). Heerlen, Netherlands: Open Universiteit.
- Mardis, M. A. (2011). Evidence or evidence based practice? An analysis of IASL research forum papers, 1998–2009. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice* 6 (1): 4– 23.

Author Note

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