
Editorial

Research in School Librarianship: Confirmations and Challenges

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This issue of *School Libraries Worldwide* is a rich blend of research that confirms previous studies, challenges our previous beliefs and findings, and brings together new and established voices from around the world.

One new author is Melanie Lewis. In her study, she sought to develop an understanding of why school administrators distribute instructional leadership responsibilities to either instructional coaches or teacher librarians. Interestingly, administrators considered instructional coaches to be extensions of themselves as instructional leaders and teacher librarians to be resources that they can call upon to provide occasional instructional support. A mutually supportive relationship that was focused on achieving a common vision was found to enable the successful distribution of instructional leadership. Intentional building of trust and regular communication were considered essential to establishing mutually supportive relationships. What can teacher librarians do to position ourselves with principals as “extensions of themselves”?

Sarah Crary, another new author, found that there are many factors that influence collaboration between teachers and teacher librarians. It is not as simple as the “willingness” to collaborate. Her study revealed that the organization of schools impacts openness to change and teacher expectations. Schools organized grades 7-12 are more open to change than those organized as 9-12. And small districts are less open to change but those larger than 100 students are more open. The expanded grades may result in increased adaptability to change and a culture of community to ensure all the tasks are completed. The small district could be less open to change as they already teach several different courses, sometimes in different content areas, and most likely have other duties assigned such as coaching and supervision that overwhelm them, so they view change as requiring more time than they have. Teachers who are occupied teaching numerous courses need to be encouraged the most. Sarah also found that schools with a full-time school librarian experienced the least impediments to change as compared those who have a part-time or no librarian.

Experienced researchers, Kasey Garrison, Lee FitzGerald, and Alinda Sheerman challenge our beliefs of research and inquiry. The students in their study, “showed frustration and cognitive dissonance in taking on the independence and responsibility of their own learning, a strong component of inquiry learning, and skills identified in the literature about 21st Century learning.” Their findings brought out conflict within students of wanting to be able to research and complete an assignment their own way - utilizing choice and the strategies they find most effective - to also

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wanting to have their teacher beside them giving them constant and consistent guidance along the way. They found that students wanted teachers to assume a more active role in their inquiry, and to jump back and forth from the roles of being a guide to directly teaching.

Zakir Hossain, Yasmine Hashmi, and Muhammad Mezbah-ul-Islam studied ICT (Information and Communications Technology) facilities and literacy in Bangladesh revealing that few facilities exist and that school library professionals also lack 21st century ICT skills necessary for a robust school library service. They make recommendations to rectify the situation vis-à-vis efforts that should be made by a combination of policy and non-governmental initiatives to equip school libraries with ICT facilities. In addition to this, they advise further development in building the capacity of school librarians to ensure robust library services across the country

Lucy Santos Green and Melissa Johnston have developed a core body of research investigating teacher librarianship in various cultures. Their most recent study reports on their experiences in Russia where they found that teacher librarians around the world struggle with strikingly similar challenges despite varied contexts and socioeconomic situations. Their study concluded that the themes of a) collaboration, b) information literacy, c) instruction, d) technology integration and e) learning environment, though replicable among Russian teacher librarians, were uniquely influenced by and interpreted through the lens of Russian political and cultural history, as well as linguistic differences. Green and Johnston note that “Examining international teacher librarianship enables our profession to build partnerships that will help teacher librarians and school library researchers continue to uncover the institutional factors that impact school librarianship. These partnerships are crucial as we learn from one another, benefiting 21st century students the world over.”

This issue will be the last one before the conference in Croatia. A large component of that conference is sharing of research. Please note that is perfectly acceptable to submit conference research papers to *School Libraries Worldwide* as well. Consider reworking your presentation as a paper for this journal. This gives members who were unable to attend the conference to learn from your results.

Author Note

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