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Visit <http://knowledgequest.aasl.org> to read this online exclusive.
“Successful booktalking by school librarians can help provide the intrinsic motivation students need to read independently during the months they are out of school.”

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A few months ago I talked about AASL’s new strategic plan. Along with it, the staff has developed an operational plan that helps keep the association on track to accomplish our mission and goals. I wanted to let you know what has been accomplished in this short time as we implement the strategic plan.

**Association Relevance**
The first issue identified in the strategic plan is association relevance. How do we determine the impact of educational and technical trends within the changing societal context, and how can we best respond? I am sure you’ve heard the news that AASL was invited by the U.S. Department of Education to join the coalition for Future Ready Schools. Some of the other partners include AASA (the school superintendents association), International Society for Technology in Education, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Education Association, National PTA, National School Boards Association, and more. We are in the midst of some pretty powerful groups, and being part of this coalition is significant; we are recognized as players at the national level, important to the preparation of future ready students.

Another facet related to this first issue is the need to continue the school library research that the AASL IMLS CLASS Research Forum began. As part of our operational plan, I have appointed a Community of Scholars that will continue this work. We continue to pursue funding for our school library research.

The second goal related to association relevance is to be a stronger voice for school librarians and the profession. Our standards and guidelines are linked to this goal, and to work toward this goal AASL’s Executive Committee has appointed a seven-person editorial board to revise our standards and guidelines. We had a wonderful group from which to choose, and any of the applicants would have been an excellent member, but we tried to assemble a group of people who had complementary strengths. It was like solving a puzzle to determine whose experiences brought something to the table that someone else might be missing. Our goal is to have the revised standards and guidelines announced at the 2017 AASL National Conference in Phoenix.

**Membership Development**
The second critical issue we identified is membership development. We have begun to deliberate on how to achieve our goal of strengthening our relationship to the state affiliates and other communities in ALA. My
presidential initiative is to work with members of the Affiliate Assembly during a leadership summit before the ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco. We began the work at the ALA Midwinter Meeting with Ken Stewart leading a community conversation about what the affiliates see as the aspirations, obstacles, and solutions of the association. Using this information and more, the task force headed by Ann Marie Pipkin and Lisa Hughes is planning an all-day event at the June conference—a day that will be fun and informative. I’d like to thank ALA President Courtney Young for helping to fund the travel stipend and food for the attendees.

At the ALA Midwinter Meeting, the ALA Executive Board liaises with groups across the association. This year AASL’s Advocacy Awareness Campaign was on board members’ agenda, and they helped spread the word about how school librarians transform learning. Each board member was presented with five “Ask Me How” buttons and five messaging cards. The task was to give four buttons away and spread the message. Buttons were given to all ALA Council members, all AASL Board of Directors members, and all Affiliate Assembly attendees. The difference between this campaign and earlier campaigns was that all of ALA was involved. We can talk and talk and talk to ourselves about how we are so important, but it is much more powerful for academic, public, and special librarians to spread this message. Some school librarians feel that ALA doesn’t represent their issues, but we have a great deal of support from our parent association. This campaign is just one example.

In addition to advocacy awareness throughout the profession, another thing that you will be hearing a great deal about in the next few months is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). ALA’s Washington Office will ask for all ALA members to contact their legislators to push through the legislation with school libraries and school librarians included in the bill. How powerful will it be for academic librarians to tell their members of Congress that they need school librarians to help students be ready for college? Or trustees from public libraries telling their legislators that we need an educated workforce and that the skills students learn in school libraries are essential for our democratic society to survive?

Goal two under this issue is to build the school librarian’s professional community, and one of the greatest things since sliced bread is the new Knowledge Quest website <http://knowledgequest.aasl.org> designed to foster this community. I am so impressed with the bloggers that give us tidbits each week. You can comment on the blogs. (Please do!) These bloggers are librarians who know their stuff. Knowledge Quest is going to be your go-to site for all school library issues. I love the up-to-date news from our profession, and the site will include additional articles that support the print version of KQ. I can almost guarantee that you will bookmark this site to pop in every day. Thanks to our wonderful staff at AASL for getting this up and running, especially our fabulous editor, Meg Featheringham.

**Association Governance and Leadership**

The third and final critical issue identified in the strategic plan is to create a more effective and efficient governance structure in our association. To work toward this goal, a committee review task force was created to look at the current committee structure. Some difficult decisions about committees may be ahead—or the task force may find us completely efficient and effective.

To keep ideas flowing with everyone in the loop, we have instituted monthly conference calls for members of AASL’s Executive Committee. We also have quarterly contact—either face-to-face or by conference call—with AASL’s entire Board of Directors. This frequent communication has already been proven effective as shown at our board meetings at the Midwinter Meeting. The board members were well informed prior to their arrival; and decisions were made in a timely manner. The board meeting minutes are available at <www.ala.org/aasl/about/board/minutes>. We also welcome members to our meetings, so join us if you are in San Francisco for the ALA Annual Conference. You will see dedicated volunteers and staff, and seeing the team at work may make you want to become a board member!

**Thank You!**

This is my last column as president of AASL. Thank you so much for your support and for giving me the opportunity to serve as your leader. Thank you to those who have volunteered to serve on committees, and thanks to all of you who make this a great organization.

**Terri Grief** is president of the American Association of School Librarians. She is one of the school librarians at McCracken County High School in Paducah, Kentucky. In 2013 she received the Barby Hardy Lifetime Achievement Award from the Kentucky Association of School Librarians. She also authored the chapter “Big Games at Reidland High School” in Teen Games Rule! A Librarian’s Guide to Platforms and Programs (Libraries Unlimited 2014).
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ometime every March, I come to the realization that I am not going to get everything done before the end of the school year. That’s when I start my summer project list. This list is a combination of personal and professional tasks. On the personal side are projects like organizing all my photographs and reading that stack of books sitting on the floor by my bed. On the professional side are tasks such as cleaning up my e-mail and reading the other pile of books on the floor by my bed. By the time summer comes, my list is so long that I’m overwhelmed and I never get it all done.

This year, instead of working on that project list, I think I will follow some of the suggestions offered in the articles of this issue of Knowledge Quest. The authors offer a variety of ways to spend your summer, from preparing to work with your teachers and students in the coming school year to participating in learning activities for your own gratification.

I know this time of year is very busy, wrapping up one school year and getting ready for the next. But take some time to read this issue. It may totally change how you spend your summer.

The authors offer a variety of ways to spend your summer, from preparing to work with your teachers and students in the coming school year to participating in learning activities for your own gratification.

Tina Genay, winner of the 2014 Innovative Reading Grant Award, tells the story of how she saw the need for her students to have access to books during the summer. How she went about meeting that need is truly innovative and inspirational.

Jennifer Colby jumped in feet first and created an opportunity for her students to have a coding experience. She has paved the way for many of us to experiment with coding and helped us to see that we can do this for our students.

Jeff Whittingham and Wendy Rickman give us some tips on how we can help our students avoid the “summer drift” through booktalking. If you need convincing that booktalking can motivate summer reading, they provide plenty of research to show how successful it can be.

Wendy Rickman also presents a study on collection development behaviors in school librarians. It is a real eye-opener and certainly gives us something to think about as we make decisions on what to add to our collections in the coming year.

Suzy Groff gives us a different take on the summer book mobile. Her story demonstrates how, with few resources and lots of creativity, it is possible to give your students a great summer reading experience.
Susan Ballard gives us some great resources for planning Banned Books Week and Banned Website Awareness Day activities. You know you need it; those events come so soon in the school year.

Rebecca J. Morris gives some great advice on how to welcome new teachers into your building and turn them into collaborative partners.

Teri S. Lesesne examines summer reading programs and offers a strategy for improvement through choice, access, soliciting responses, and providing models of enthusiasm.

Julie Marie Frye and Vaughn Nuest introduce several National Park Service sites and offer seven benefits a school librarian can gain from visiting one or more of these sites this summer.

Aaron J. Elkins urges you to play. He recommends several games that foster 21st-century literacies school librarians should explore and resources to support gaming in school libraries.

Jil’Lana Heard describes how she engages her students in recreational reading through book clubs. You’ll get lots of great ideas from her article.

Sarah Couri gives a different perspective in her article on summer reading clubs at the public library. She highlights a number of ways school librarians can partner with public librarians on these programs.

And in her online exclusive article, Jessica Klein tells a compelling story of how her community, Rockaway Beach, New York, came together in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy using social media.

I know this time of year is very busy, wrapping up one school year and getting ready for the next. But take some time to read this issue. It may totally change how you spend your summer.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Knowledge Quest Editorial Board for giving me the opportunity to be a guest editor. It was great fun to take the theme of Summer Learning and build an entire issue around it. I felt a little bit like a detective tracking down authors who had something to say about this subject. But I couldn’t have found them all without the help of friends and colleagues who recommended topics and authors. So, thank you.

Cassandra Barnett is program advisor for school libraries at the Arkansas Department of Education. An active member of AASL, she has been a member of numerous committees and served as 2009–2010 AASL President. She co-chaired the 2003 National Conference Committee in Kansas City and co-chaired the task force that wrote the Standards for the 21st-Century Learner.
Why Books on Bikes?

As the Quarles Elementary School librarian in Winchester City, Virginia, I saw a need for students to have access to reading materials over the summer. In the past I have struggled to get books into students’ hands, even though I open the school library during the summer. During these open library times, students have the opportunity to check out backpacks that contain books based on a theme or by a single author. For example, a popular backpack contains only books written by Mo Willems. I also have established a little lending library in front of the school so that students can access books at all times. However, I know students have difficulty getting to the school to take advantage of these opportunities. I needed a way to get books into the students’ communities. I realized that I could combine my love of bicycles and books by creating a bike bookmobile program.

Existing Programs

After research, I was able to find three existing bike bookmobile programs in the United States. Because of a fellowship from Fund for Teachers, this past summer I was fortunate enough to see these programs in action. My journey started in Denver, Colorado. After a tour of the Denver Public Library, I met up with Zac Laugheed, who, with Jen Morris, started DPL Connect. The day I visited, DPL Connect was stationed inside a convention center during a comic convention. I was able to observe the custom-built bike bookmobile and enjoyed seeing the brightly colored signage surrounding it. Seeing this signage and discussing it made me aware of the importance of using signage to communicate with the public about the program.

Visiting with DPL Connect, I observed the powerful impact that the bike bookmobile has on the public. People attending the convention approached the bookmobile and were excited to learn more about the program and to check out books. DPL Connect has a checkout system for cataloged material that requires a form to be filled out; the info includes the catalog number of the book.

In Seattle I met with Jared Mills and learned about his Books on Bikes Program. I met up with Jared at the Seattle Public Library. This program goes to community events like farmers’ markets. Not only did I get to see the past year’s bike bookmobile, but I also saw the
two newest bookmobile additions to the program. These carts are lightweight to aid staff members’ hill climbs in the city. Like the Denver trailer, these bookmobiles also used signage and displayed the books in an eye-catching way. Jared and his colleagues use Wi-Fi and an app to check out books.

Visiting with DPL Connect, I observed the powerful impact that the bike bookmobile has on the public.

These two programs are similar in that both are services of a public library and are focused on providing a library presence at special events. Both programs support issuing new library cards on the spot and checking out books. Non-cataloged books are also brought to events for patrons who could not obtain a library card. Both programs charge fines for overdue or lost materials checked out from the bicycle bookmobile. These programs also require patrons to return books at the library, not to the bookmobile. Both promote their programs and use social media to publicize the locations of the stops.

Next I was able to visit Street Books, a program in Portland, Oregon, that serves people living outside. This program goes out every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday on a set route in search of patrons. I really enjoyed seeing Laura Moulton’s bicycle cart because it was attached to the front of the bike and was handicapped accessible via a pull-out drawer. This nonprofit program does not require a public library card. There are no restrictions on checking out books and no fines for overdue or lost material. A traditional pocket and card system is used; the librarian notes the borrower’s name. The bookmobile “driver” also gives patrons cards to remind them what day of the week the bookmobile will visit again so that patrons can return or check out more books. If patrons are willing, the librarian takes their pictures with their selected books.

Prior to visiting with Street Books, I had almost no interaction with people living outside. At first I was uncomfortable in this new setting. But as I biked along with Street Books that day, my attitude changed. By observing Laura’s kind interactions with her patrons I learned a lot about the impact...
positive interactions can have on self-esteem. Laura not only treats each patron with respect, each patron treats Laura as a welcomed acquaintance. Patrons who had used Street Books in the past were happy to see the librarian visit again. Patrons who were new to the program and unsure whether to get involved warmed up during the mutual discussion of books. Seeing Street Books in action reaffirmed my belief in the power of books.

Though the three programs had different target audiences, all the bike bookmobiles that I observed generated excitement and interest in reading. Public interest for each program was high. People were curious about all the programs. Librarians involved with these programs talked about the importance of funding and grants. Seeing the three bike bookmobile programs in person and meeting the passionate creators of each program were very inspiring experiences.

My Books on Bikes Program
My experience visiting with the three bike bookmobile programs inspired me to take what I learned from these programs and integrate this new knowledge into a bike bookmobile program for my school. I was able to get my program, Books on Bikes (BoB), started during the summer of 2014. About 90 percent of our school population is eligible for free and reduced-price lunch; many of my students don’t have books in their homes. Because of a lack of reading material, our students experience a “summer slump” during which reading scores decline between spring testing and students’ return in the fall. BoB allowed me to get books into the hands of the students to help prevent this summer slump and to promote the love of reading.

With AASL’s Innovative Reading Grant sponsored by Capstone, I was able to purchase 740 new paperback books. I chose to purchase paperback books because the light weight makes them easier for me to transport by bike. The grant allowed me to provide students with high-quality books of interest to them. For checkout I used cards in the back of the books. To borrow books students or their parents would write their names on the cards, and I would collect the cards. In addition to the grant, I also received support from Winchester’s Bicycle Outfitters; they provided bike maintenance and a high-quality bike trailer. I chose to use a colorful bike of my own and attach the trailer for the books.

This summer I checked out 336 books! My goal was to check out at least fifteen books during each bookmobile outing, but as students got accustomed to the program and the times that I would be in the neighborhoods, the number of checkouts greatly increased. I also shifted my original times for the bookmobile program. Originally, I was going to leave school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. However, because of the heat in Virginia during the summer days, very few students were outside in the

As weeks passed and students got used to the program, eager readers started to stand outside their homes waiting for the bookmobile.
afternoon. I changed the schedule to leave school at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. I followed a biking route that I had made up using a map of our school zone. As weeks passed and students got used to the program, eager readers started to stand outside their homes waiting for the bookmobile.

I had students call my name from their windows, asking me to stop. I had students waving at me from a block away. Excitement was high as students saw the bike bookmobile coming! At one apartment complex I had at least ten children around me eager to get books.

As I rode my bike bookmobile through my school’s service area, if I came across children too young or old to attend my Pre-K–4 school—or from a different school—I still checked books out to them. Getting books into children’s hands was more important to me than getting all the books back. The cost of unreturned books was considered to be part of the expense of running the program. Not only did this program positively impact the students at my school, it also affected the community.

BoB promoted a love of reading as no penalties were given for students who didn’t return a book. All students were welcome to select and check out another book. When students did return a book, they were able to select a small prize, such as a bookmark or an eraser. Students were eager to select new books and excited about the collection to choose from. Students would run out of their homes when they saw the bookmobile. BoB generated more excitement from students than the ice cream truck! Not only were students interested in the bookmobile, but by the end of summer people in the community were offering warm greetings as I biked past.

Because of the excitement of BoB, I was fortunate to have seven volunteers cycle along with me at various times to learn more about the program. These volunteers included teachers from other schools who are interested in starting a similar program. I also had two volunteers who are English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers. These teachers were major assets. Many of the families that I encountered spoke only Spanish. I was able to communicate that I had free books, but beyond that I was limited. The ESL teachers were fluent in Spanish; they made the families feel comfortable and the bookmobile more approachable.

To reduce expenses, I did not have a custom cart constructed; I used a cart intended to hold a child, filled the cart with books, and pulled it behind my bike. Having seen the three very differently constructed bookmobiles, I would like to have a cart like the one Street Books uses to allow easy access for all. Students were often reluctant to rummage through the BoB trailer to select a book. Also, I would like the books to be more easily accessible as a student on crutches and a student in a wheelchair had trouble accessing the books in my cart. At the time of this writing I am working on funding to be able to purchase a new bookmobile for summer 2015.

My entire community benefits as I bike books to students. Not only am I spreading the love of reading, but I am also showing the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

from Cannondale Bikes, I was able to purchase four new bikes and helmets for use at Quarles Elementary School. Last summer many of the students who checked out books were interested in my bike; they didn’t have bikes of their own but longed to be able to ride. Students who had bikes were often riding incorrectly, and very few wore helmets. Because I was able to obtain bikes and helmets students are now able to stay after school for the bike safety program. I look forward to observing students riding their bikes safely and for students’ love of biking to grow.

As I continue with BoB, I hope to inspire others to create their own programs. The greatest reward is knowing that students have access to reading material and are on their way to becoming lifelong readers.

Tina Genay is the librarian at Garland Quarles Elementary School in Winchester, Virginia. She is a National Board Certified Librarian and a member of AASL. She received the 2014 AASL Innovative Reading Grant sponsored by Capstone. She was also awarded a Fund for Teachers Fellowship in 2014.
2,445 Hours of Code: What I Learned from Facilitating Hour of Code Events in High School Libraries

Jennifer Colby
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In 2013, as a long-term substitute school librarian at Dexter High School in Dexter, Michigan, I knew that expecting my principal to give me the go-ahead to coordinate an Hour of Code event for the entire student body was wishful thinking, but that is exactly what happened. Using what I learned that fall in Dexter I was able to coordinate a larger event in 2014 at a different school.

Hadi Partovi of Code.org conceived the Hour of Code “to get ten million students to try one hour of computer science” (Partovi 2013a). Organized by Code.org (a non-profit 501c3 organization supported by Microsoft, Amazon, Google, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and others), the goal of Computer Science Education Week (CSEd Week) is to bring awareness of the value of including computer science in school curricula, increasing future job opportunities for students worldwide (CSEd Week 2013a). Many online computer programming portals, including Tynker, Lightbot, Codecademy, Scratch, and Khan Academy, provide free online tutorials to teach students (ages 4–104) basic programming concepts in one hour (CSEd 2013b).

Planning and Prep

Having signed up with Code.org, I received an e-mail in October introducing the Hour of Code event; I immediately decided that facilitating an event at my school would provide a unique opportunity for my students to be exposed to computer programming—most for the very first time. I also hoped that an Hour of Code event would increase awareness among administrators, teachers, students, and parents of the value of a computer science education and create a demand for more computer science education in my district. My first step was submitting an enthusiastic proposal to my administrators. After discussing the benefits of the opportunity and the possible restrictions of our particular situation (including computer availability, curriculum support, teacher participation, and time available) we decided to give our teachers the opportunity to volunteer their classes for a one-day event.

I was pleased with the various promotional materials—posters, statistics, and videos—that Hour of Code provided to help introduce the event. The resource webpage also provided helpful answers and links to help facilitators promote, organize, and run the event. An online forum for questions also helped me understand how other organizers were dealing with some of the same problems I was attempting to solve.

One week prior to the event I presented the idea to the entire faculty at a staff meeting. I was concerned that such short notice wouldn’t give teachers time to adjust their lesson plans, but the second question I received about my event was, “Have you shared the sign-up yet?” Why were teachers so excited about this opportunity? Most schools don’t offer computer science classes (Towns 2014). Not enough students are exposed to computer programming—at Dexter High School and around the country. Teachers were excited because I was offering an opportunity for all of our students to try coding. My hope was that through involvement students and teachers would see the benefits of knowing how to program a computer, and the event would spark an interest in computer programming students and staff never knew they had.

Students should be exposed to computer programming (preferably much earlier than high school) because by 2020 there will be one million more U.S. jobs in computing than people to fill those positions. Sixty percent of all projected math and science occupations will be in computing jobs. Computing occupations are among the highest-paying jobs for new college graduates (CSEd Week 2013c). These statistics are compelling, and after my staff presentation I had fourteen out of eighteen slots filled for my Hour...
of Code event and a waiting list for some class periods.

<>Students should be exposed to computer programming (preferably much earlier than high school) because by 2020 there will be one million more U.S. jobs in computing than people to fill those positions. </>

I wanted to give more students the opportunity to participate in my event. This is where I ran into a small snag. I had planned to contact the school district’s technology department to confirm that the server would be able to handle up to ninety students logging into the same website at the exact same moment to access the coding tutorials, but I didn’t ask the question until the week before my event. This caused a problem; I did not follow the chain of command. Word got back to the head of the technology department, and I explained how many students would be logging in at the same time. He told me that it wouldn’t work. I needed to come up with a remedy—two school days before my event.

There is nothing like someone saying that something can’t be done to motivate me to figure out a way to make it work. To decide if my event could even proceed, my wonderful tech-support person was sent to discuss options with me. During our discussion we talked about ways to limit the stress on the district’s server. The concerns of the technology department were the amount of available bandwidth our district shared with other school districts in our county and whether or not the server would crash. I was more than willing to adapt my plans—and we came up with a solution that I believe made the whole event even better. It was suggested that we pair students on each computer to immediately cut the demand in half. Brilliant idea! Why didn’t I think of it? Not only did the solution make sense on the technology side, but it also made sense from an instructional perspective. I had recruited a small group of volunteers to help me with the event (a few students from the University of Michigan’s School of Information and a few of our high school’s computer science students), but giving students the opportunity to help each other as they worked through the tutorial would reduce frustration and encourage cooperation.

Another solution was to pick a single tutorial for students to complete. Because students would have varying coding experience I thought each student should choose which tutorial to complete. The problem with this idea was that some tutorials included an explanatory video, which used too much bandwidth. It became my task to choose one tutorial that would be appropriate for all students regardless of their coding experience. This limitation also turned out to be a good thing, not only for reducing bandwidth usage, but also for my small group of volunteers. After I had picked a tutorial, I experimented to ensure that my volunteers and I would be able to troubleshoot issues for students. The chosen tutorial taught students how to code in JavaScript to write a program that would animate a word (Codecademy 2013). To understand the roadblocks students would experience accessing and completing the tutorial I ran through the tutorial myself multiple times in different browsers on both desktops and laptops to discover and fix problems before students encountered them. I also asked my student library aides to complete the tutorial to see how long it would take individuals with varying levels of coding experience to complete the tutorial. By having students complete the selected tutorial, I was able to better prepare myself and my volunteers to effectively help students.

Event Day

My introductory presentation explained the Hour of Code event: why learning to code is important, a quick explanation of how to work through the tutorial, and how to submit completion of the tutorial to the Hour of Code organization so that students’ participation would be counted. The kick-off video (Code.org 2013b) created by Hour of Code set the tone for the importance of the experience and was carefully cast to feature people with whom students could identify, including Ashton Kutcher, Macklemore, Shakira, and President Obama. Students were excited. So was I!

During each class period throughout the day of my event, at any one time, 33 to 82 ninth- through twelfth-grade students worked together in pairs. Every time a new class entered the school library with their teachers, I gave my presentation, and then asked students to find a partner and go to the tutorial’s website to begin. Knowing that I had a student to teacher ratio of up to 30 to 1, I encouraged students to do three things before they raised their hands for help: check their code for typos, look at the instructions provided on the tutorial, and then ask someone nearby. This strategy worked extremely well. Students first
2,445 Hours of Code: What I Learned from Facilitating Hour of Code Events in High School Libraries

This JavaScript will animate your desired message....Cool...isn't it???.......keep coding and learning!
helped participants to understand that there are many ways to tell a computer what to do, but some options are simpler and more elegant than others. Students thought through the process: “What am I telling the computer to do?” “What is the tutorial asking me to do?” “What can I do differently to tell the computer to do what the tutorial is asking me to do?”

There were a few glitches with the tutorial I chose. It worked well, but sometimes the instructions were misleading. Students consistently had a problem with an instruction that encouraged them to use the “length” command to measure the number of characters in a string (data that is usually represented in text rather than numbers and is enclosed in quotation marks). Instructions were written in full sentences, and, sometimes, when the code to be entered was at the end of the sentence, students thought the period to complete the sentence was part of the code. Another problem was that even if a student’s code for a specific command was correct (that is, it would work), it might not have been what the tutorial was asking for. Another minor issue was that sometimes students tried to coast through the tutorial without following the instructions. The tutorial would prevent this from happening, but some students accidentally found themselves starting a different tutorial. These problems were easily rectified, as I was able to adjust my presentation to address these issues as the day progressed. However, having volunteers was extremely valuable to provide extra hands-on help to keep everyone progressing through the tutorial.

One of the most interesting moments was when a Spanish class came to the library. As I was about to present my introduction to the students, their Spanish teacher reminded her students that the next
day they would be required to tell her “en Español” about their coding experience. Remembering that some tutorials are available in different languages I told the class that we were going to try a different Hour of Code tutorial and they would be completing it in Spanish. The “Angry Birds” tutorial had an option to choose one of twenty-four other languages (Code.org 2013a). This suggestion resulted in the collective groan of thirty-three Spanish 3 students who were hoping just to play around for an hour. After a few false starts and a group effort to understand the initial instructions, every student was able to complete the Spanish version of the tutorial and their teacher announced that they would not have to report on their experience “en Español” during the next class after all. Afterward, the teacher asked me to provide her with more tutorials that could be completed in Spanish because she had never before seen her students so engaged in an activity. Overall, teachers were so pleased with the experience that I extended the event an extra three days.

More Successes

As a result of my initial experience facilitating an Hour of Code event, I had no qualms asking my principal last fall to allow me to facilitate an Hour of Code event at my new school, Huron High School in Ann Arbor, Michigan. My first Hour of Code event (at Dexter) had 580 participants, and this past year my second Hour of Code event (at Huron) had 1,865 participants. At both schools most students were trying computer programming for the very first time. Computer programming can be taught at any grade level—and the sooner the better. Last spring, through the Hour of Code website, I introduced coding to kindergarten students at Deerfield Elementary in Novi, Michigan—and to my delight most of those five- and six-year-old students were able to code to direct the Angry Bird through the maze.

My biggest takeaways from facilitating Hour of Code events will be to focus next year on recruiting participants from one subject area, most likely math. Also, now that all students at my high school have experienced an Hour of Code I intend to invite only ninth-grade students to next year’s event. Because the goal of the Hour of Code is to introduce students to computer programming, both of these changes would limit repeat participants during an event and, thus, retain the element of novelty and keep excitement building.

To date over 100,000,000 students worldwide have participated in the Hour of Code (CSEd Week 2014). The movement became so powerful that Apple announced that every Apple retail store in the U.S. would host “Hour of Code Youth Workshops” for children and teenagers during Computer Science Education Week (Partovi 2013b). President Barack Obama encouraged all students to not just “play on their phone,” but to “program it” too (Code.org 2013c). It is my hope that my events sparked an interest in my students, encouraging 2,445 participants to continue learning computer programming to become highly qualified for a job in computer science.

I encourage all school librarians to introduce their students to computer programming in any capacity. Check out the CSEd Week Hour of Code website this summer <csedweek.org> and consider hosting your own Hour of Code event next year in December. I know I will.

Jennifer Colby
the school librarian at
Huron High School in
Ann Arbor, Michigan.
She is the author of the
elementary-level informational text series
Plants from Cherry Lake Publishing. At the
Michigan Association of Computer Users in
Learning Conference in March she presented a
Lightning Talk about how to facilitate an Hour
of Code event. She is a member of AASL.

Works Cited:


Booktalking
Avoiding Summer Drift

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Why Booktalk?

Summer drift, otherwise known as loss of reading comprehension skills or reading achievement, has been a well-known and well-documented phenomenon of public education for decades. Before the 1980s researchers focused on the loss of reading achievement occurring during the academic school year. Since the 1980s, multiple studies have shown that literacy scores for economically advantaged students remain the same or show minimal increases during the summer months while students in low socioeconomic areas demonstrate a decline (Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson 2007; Allington and McGill-Franzen 2003; Allington et al. 2010; Cooper et al. 1996; Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson 1997; Hayes and Grether 1983). Summer drift has been identified as the culprit for lowering reading achievement levels.

Attrition of literacy levels for low socioeconomic and low-achieving students mostly occurs during the summer break. Research has shown a loss of up to 1.5 grade levels attributed to summer drift from first grade through fifth grade (Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson 2007). A three-year study by Susan Roman and Carol D. Fiore demonstrated that when left to voluntary participation, fewer students who received free and reduced-price lunches participated in summer reading programs. The study further indicated that students who did participate in summer reading programs demonstrated higher reading achievement scores both at the beginning of the school year and in the following spring, as well as increased confidence in the classroom (2010).

Studies from the late twentieth century to the present have demonstrated a slowdown in summer drift attributed to specific summer reading programs addressing motivation through student choice, student ownership, and teacher/parent scaffolding. Scaffolding, or support given to students during the learning process, includes activities such as booktalks, vocabulary development, reading ladders, book groups, and anything else providing support for students’ independent reading. Specifically, the most successful slowdown of summer drift happens with the combination of matching student interests and providing continuous scaffolding. According to research by James S. Kim and Thomas G. White the missing ingredient for effective summer programming is student interest matching and teacher/parent scaffolding (2011). Further, Sherri L. Horner and Craig S. Shwery have noted that through various methods of coaching and scaffolding teachers can help students develop self-regulated reading skills; this improvement, in turn, helps
students become motivated in their reading (2002). One very useful tool to address student interest and provide scaffolding is the use of booktalks.

Independent reading is important during the summer months when students are not being extrinsically motivated by grades or guided toward reading by teachers or school librarians. In the summer, reading requires intrinsic motivation. Successful booktalking by school librarians can help provide the intrinsic motivation students need to read independently during the months they are out of school. Pamela K. Dahl reported that students being presented with booktalks increased the number of pages read independently (1988). Her study indicated that the absence of booktalks led to decreased numbers of pages read independently. School librarians wishing to motivate students to read during the summer should consider using booktalking as a tool.

In today’s society filled with the Internet, social media, and instant gratification, it is important to remember that students of all ages are constantly bombarded with information (Diamant-Cohen and Levi 2009). Because of this constant barrage of information—and distraction—school librarians must work to get the attention of their patrons. Well-planned and executed booktalks are one way in which school librarians can get this attention.

What to Include
Deb Aronson has told us that “in booktalking, a teacher or librarian provides an oral introduction, or sales pitch for a handful of books. Each pitch lasts just one or two minutes, but long enough to make students want to pick up the book and try it out” (2012). It is important to keep booktalks short so that students do not experience fatigue that might cause their interest to wane. Joni Bodart believes the first and last sentences of a booktalk are the most important. She has suggested that, to avoid losing the audience, booktalkers get to the most important part of the story by the second sentence. She also believes the last sentence should grab the audience’s attention by implying something important is going to happen and they will miss it unless they read the book (1980).

Selecting appropriate books for a booktalk requires attention to detail. While booktalks often highlight new additions to the library collection, booktalks can also motivate audiences to read good books that might be overlooked in a well-developed collection (Schall 2005). School librarians’ booktalks are frequently aimed at reluctant readers and focused on easily accessible text that fosters independent reading on a very narrow band of ability and interest. School librarians should remember that enthusiasm expressed in a booktalk can develop interest and motivate students to read material more advanced than the learners’ nominal reading levels (Rochman 1987).

Successful booktalking by school librarians can help provide the intrinsic motivation students need to read independently during the months they are out of school.

How to Booktalk
Once audience-appropriate books have been selected, following a few simple guidelines can make booktalks successful:

- Always read the books you plan to booktalk. Your audience will recognize an imposter.
• Do not oversell the books. Give the audience just enough and leave the rest to them.
• Make connections. If you connect to the book, then chances are the audience will too.
• Never give away the ending! Leave the audience wanting more.
• A booktalk is not a review. Give the audience the facts and let readers form their own opinions.
• A booktalk is not a plot summary. Give just enough detail to hook the reader.
• Keep it short. Give the facts and move on.
• Practice the booktalks. You will feel more relaxed and enthusiastic, increasing listeners’ engagement.
• Have fun! Your audience will not be motivated unless they enjoy the presentation.

Following these guidelines will help you conduct successful booktalks.

When to Present

School librarians must think about when and how students will access summer booktalks. To build a foundation for summer reading, booktalks can be presented near the end of the school year. Alternatively, the talks can be part of a summer reading program. Additionally, school librarians might create booktalks using free web-based screen-recorder sites such as Screencast-o-matic.com or Screener.com. Recorded booktalks can then be posted to the library’s website throughout the summer.

No matter the format, delivered personally or electronically, booktalks used for scaffolding can motivate independent reading and foster interest in books beyond what students ordinarily read during the summer. This motivation and interest can, in turn, help avoid the summer drift experienced by many students.

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FEATURE

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT BEHAVIORS IN SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

LGBTQ BOOKS AND RESOURCES

2.5 MILLION TEENS
Introduction

The average age for gays and lesbians to come out in the United States is now sixteen (Martin and Murdock 2007; Huegel 2003; Savin-Williams 2005). Family constructs often are composed of same-sex parents or with LGBTQ family members as active family participants. These social changes are apparent in every level of society and in each state of the union. For all students in our public and private schools, the need to search for themselves in books and other resources is real and ever-growing.

As school librarians it is our responsibility to both develop and maintain our collections to be responsive to the curricular goals of our districts and the recreational and informational reading demands of student populations. This message is one that is repeated in school librarian post-graduate programs across the United States. Through surveys of students, surveys of teachers and other faculty, conversations, circulation statistics, collection mapping and analysis, curriculum mapping, awareness of book awards, professional-organization recommendations, professional reviews, professional development, and organizational conferences, we find out what is missing, what is needed, what is overlooked, and what is no longer needed. We must be mindful of the fact that pedagogical choices made are political statements (Wink 2001).
Review of Literature

Selection is of prime importance in collection development—second only to de-selection. A choice must be made. What will present the most value to the collection and the needs of the curriculum and students? With about two and a half million LGBTQQ teens in the U.S., the weight of selection choices that reflect the needs and interests of all students is real (Rauch 2011).

Within the school library, students often undertake searches to understand themselves and their surroundings. Students seek others with whom to identify—others, fictional or real, similar to themselves—or search for factual information necessary for this understanding. For LGBTQQ students high depression and suicide rates correlate with unfulfilled information needs (Rauch 2011). Informational needs or LGBTQQ students are represented in searches for community services, coming-out stories, and information about health issues and safe sex.

In an essay from School Library Journal, Brent stated:

I TURNED TO MY SCHOOL’S LIBRARY. HONESTLY? IT WAS PATHETIC.

When I set out to find more LGBT titles, I turned to my school’s library. Honestly? It was pathetic. There was not one single LGBT novel. But oh, of course the librarian went out of her way to buy books about gangs, drugs, and teen pregnancy. When I asked her about that, she replied, ‘This is a school library. If you’re looking to read inappropriate titles, go to a bookstore.’... There are tons of gay teens struggling to find a group to fit into. LGBT YA lit helps us realize that no, we aren’t alone and no, we aren’t worthless. It helps us discover that we are part of the LGBT group, which includes tons of brilliant people, doing brilliant things. (2010)

Survey Questions

The study requested responses to several different question areas:

Demographic Information: Gender, self-identification, age, and ethnicity.

Demographic Information: Licensure, grade levels served, number of years as a school librarian, currently under an additional licensure plan (ALP), and if currently enrolled in a graduate school librarian program and where.

Do you invite student input or conduct student surveys regarding the collection?

Do you invite teacher input or conduct teacher surveys regarding the collection?

Do you invite school counselor input or conduct school counselor surveys regarding the collection?

Do you have any nonfiction books or other resources dealing with LGBTQQ (Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning) topics or issues including, but not limited to health, political issues, religion, social issues, parenting, and/or bullying?

If yes, have you had any reconsideration/challenge requests regarding these items?

Do you have any fiction books or other resources dealing with LGBTQQ characters, themes, story plots, authors, and/or award winners?

If yes, have you had any reconsideration/challenge requests regarding these items?

Do you have any books or other resources dealing with LGBTQQ topics or issues including, but not...
limited to diversity, integration, health, political issues, religion, social issues, parenting, and/or bullying in the professional collection?

If yes, have you had any reconsideration/challenge requests regarding these items?

Do you purchase books that have been winners and/or honor books from the ALA Stonewall Award for Children and Young Adults?

Do you purchase books that have been included in the ALA Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table annual Rainbow List for children and young adults?

Do you attend professional development sessions/workshops covering LGBTQQ issues/topics?

If yes, where?

Do you have any LGBTQQ self-identified students at your campus?

If no, do you feel as though there are LGBTQQ students who have not yet self-identified?

Do students request LGBTQQ books and/or resources for purchase in your school library?

Does your school or campus have a PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) or another student group for LGBTQQ students and their allies?

Do you feel that LGBTQQ students at your campus feel safe?

Do you feel that LGBTQQ students at your campus feel safe in the school library?

Have you witnessed bullying of LGBTQQ students in your school?

If yes, was it instigated by: students, colleagues, administration, support staff, parent/guardian, other?

Please provide details of the incidents.

Have you witnessed bullying of LGBTQQ students in the school library?

If yes, was it instigated by: students, colleagues, administration, support staff, parent/guardian, other?

Please provide details of the incidents.

Have you felt reluctant in purchasing LGBTQQ books and/or resources for the school library?

Have you been harassed about LGBTQQ books and/or resources for the collection?

If yes, was it instigated by: students, colleagues, administration, support staff, parent/guardian, other?

Please provide details of the incidents.

Participants

Participants surveyed were among the 715 members of the Arkansas Association of Instructional Media (AAIM), a state organization for school librarians and school technologists. The survey instrument was shared via AAIM’s listserv. Participation was voluntary with consent acknowledged by responding to the survey. Participants were aware of the topic of the survey as the topic was provided in the survey notification.

Institutional review board (IRB) paperwork was completed with the researcher’s university. IRB approval for the study was received.

Procedures

Participants completed the survey during the two-month window the survey was accessible. Twice during the survey window members of the AAIM listserv were reminded of the opportunity to complete the survey. Responses were analyzed at the close of the survey window. Of the thirty-
seven participants, thirty-five completed the survey in its entirety.

Findings

The survey results provided the following information. The majority of participants were Caucasian heterosexual women under the age of fifty-nine. Additionally, a significant majority were already licensed school librarians; three were currently under an ALP and attending graduate school. Respondents were fairly evenly divided between elementary and secondary schools. Most participants have been school librarians ten years or less.

While the majority of participants do solicit student and teacher input regarding the collection, only 75 percent invite the school counselor’s input.

Participants indicated that most do have fiction books dealing with LGBTQQ characters, themes, and story plots, or by LGBTQQ authors, or that were winners of relevant ALA awards, and have had few challenges. Most do not have nonfiction books or other resources related to LGBTQQ-specific issues. Of those that do, only one indicated that a reconsideration/challenge request was put in motion. A large majority also do not have books or other resources dealing with LGBTQQ topics or issues in the professional collection.

Ten participants indicated purchase of ALA Stonewall Book Award winners and honor books for children and young adults for their collection. Five responded that they had purchased items from the ALA GLBT Round Table annual Rainbow List for children and young adults. The majority have never purchased items from among the ALA Stonewall Award recipients nor from the ALA Rainbow List.

The majority of respondents, 91 percent, have never attended professional development (PD) sessions/workshops covering LGBTQQ issues/topics. The three who had attended such PD sessions did so at professional organization conferences. None of the professional development was provided by a school district.

Most responded “no” to the question of LGBTQQ self-identified students at their campus. When asked if respondents felt that there were LGBTQQ students who had not yet self-identified, the majority responded “yes.” Two participants indicated that their campus or school did have a PFLAG group or other group for LGBTQQ students and allies.

When asked about LGBTQQ students’ safety at school and in the school library, significant minorities responded “yes.” They also responded that they had not witnessed any bullying of LGBTQQ students at school. The respondents who had witnessed bullying stated that mostly other students instigated it. One stated that an administrator had instigated the bullying. Only one respondent had witnessed bullying of LGBTQQ students in the school library, bullying that was instigated by a fellow student.

The majority of participants indicated reluctance in purchasing for the collection books and resources for LGBTQQ students. Most had not been harassed when they did purchase such items for the collection. However, one or more students, an administrator, and a parent had harassed some of the respondents who had purchased LGBTQQ-focused items. Several respondents noted that living in the Bible Belt made them very reluctant to purchase items relating to issues of particular interest to LGBTQQ students.

Further analysis of responses indicated significance around the strength of exposure to professional development. A correlational significance was present between participation in professional development about LGBTQQ student populations and the purchase of both nonfiction and fiction books and resources for the school collection. Another strong correlational significance can be deduced: there has not been enough professional development on LGBTQQ resources and how to respond to LGBTQQ student informational needs. School librarians demonstrated reluctance in purchasing LGBTQQ books and resources regardless of whether or not school librarians participated in professional development.
Conclusions

This study demonstrated both a lack of resources available for the LGBTQQ student population in the state and an acknowledgment of the need for resources. Whether through professional development offered by schools or state organizations, the recognition of the informational needs of this particular student population is very scarce.

While school librarians in Arkansas are required by legislation to hold Master’s degrees in school librarianship and obtain sixty hours of professional development each year, it is evident that the skills and significance of diversity integration and importance of responding to students’ needs via the collection in school libraries are not continually reinforced outside of educational training.

Limitations

Limitations to the study were several. Arkansas is a rural, conservative, southern state well entrenched in the Bible Belt. The majority of respondents were heterosexual and female. Over 700 listserv members were invited to participate in the survey, but only thirty-seven responded. (One participant of the study self-identified as gay, and another self-identified as bisexual.) A participant e-mailed the researcher stating that homosexuality had nothing to do with collection development.

Recommendations for Further Study

A nation-wide study regarding LGBTQQ resources in school libraries would be a logical next step. An additional look at the curriculum of each of the state’s school librarian post-graduate programs would provide further evidence of positive or negative collection-development tenets of the state’s school librarians.

Awards and Other Resources

A few sources available for locating fiction and non-fiction resources for children and young adults are listed below:

- ALA Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT): <www.al.org/glbtrt>

Wendy Rickman is an assistant professor at the University of Central Arkansas. She was awarded the 2014 Pat McDonald Outstanding Individual Achievement Award from the Arkansas Association of Instructional Media. A member of AASL, she is also the immediate past-chair of the Arkansas Association of School Librarians.

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ALA Stonewall Book Awards List: <www.ala.org/glbtrt/award/honored/>

Association for Library Service to Children Newbery Award: <www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberymedal>

Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children’s and Young Adult Literature Award: <www.ala.org/glbtrt/award/honored/>

I’m Here. I’m Queer. Now What The Hell Do I Read: <www.leewind.org>

Lambda Literary: <www.lambdaliterary.org>
FEATURE

A BULLDOG

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Sometimes great initiatives in education start with just a glimmer of an idea and a belief that building a foundation under that idea can effect change. That glimmer of an idea came to Bandera Independent School District (BISD) from a middle school English teacher who attended an International Reading Association Conference and heard about teachers who, in the summer, brought tubs of books to students from low-income families. The BISD English teacher shared with a middle school colleague the idea of promoting summer literacy. Together, they approached BISD superintendent Regina Howell, who encouraged them to put together a group to explore the idea further. Eventually, a group that included district librarians, teachers, and campus administrators decided to apply for a grant to pilot a summer bookmobile. After almost a full year of planning, BISD’s Bulldog Mobile was born in the summer of 2014. With a borrowed truck and trailer, plus a generous $2,000 grant from the Bandera Independent School District Education Foundation, the mobile literacy center was intended to provide free literacy materials to encourage summer reading and to decrease a slide in reading skills over the summer. This “summer
slide” often results in widening the achievement gap that manifests when disadvantaged students lose academic ground over successive summers.

Located in the Texas Hill Country, Bandera ISD is a rural district that encompasses over 400 square miles. BISD buses travel 2,758 miles per day to transport students to and from the district’s two elementary schools, middle school, and high school. Sixty percent of BISD students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, and many do not have Internet access at home. While two community libraries serve children in the district, most BISD children do not live within walking distance of those public libraries, so access can be difficult.

With a borrowed truck and trailer, plus a generous $2,000 grant from the Bandera Independent School District Education Foundation, the mobile literacy center was intended to provide free literacy materials to encourage summer reading and to decrease a slide in reading skills over the summer.

The Bulldog Mobile pilot was definitely a community effort. The middle school librarian facilitated the organizational aspects of launching the Bulldog Mobile, including purchasing new books and procuring donated materials from teachers and one of the community libraries. She created a Doodle (a free scheduling tool by Google) to recruit and schedule BISD employees to volunteer. She conducted a district-wide contest to name the bookmobile and to design the bookmobile’s logo. The name and final logo reflect elements of contributions by both middle school and elementary students. A parent donated her expertise to convert the logo to magnets to display on the side of the Bulldog Mobile. A library assistant tagged the books with Bulldog Mobile labels, sorted books according to audience and genre, and stored the books in plastic bins; she marked books with colored tape that corresponded to a color on the bin’s label so that volunteers could easily return the books to the correct bin: picture books, early chapter books, sci-fi, fantasy, etc. One of the campus administrators worked with the district’s transportation director to reserve a district-owned F250 truck for the Bulldog Mobile’s use, and the high school band allowed the Bulldog Mobile to use its instrument trailer to function as the bookmobile for the summer.

The Bulldog Mobile ran once a week for five weeks during the summer of 2014. It made four stops on a sixty-mile route: the middle school, an elementary school, the Boys and Girls Club Teen Center, and a community pool. Books were circulated on an honor-system basis. Current BISD students accessed Accelerated Reader and took AR tests on iPads borrowed from Bandera Middle School with Internet connectivity provided through a Verizon wireless mobile hotspot. For each book returned to the Bulldog Mobile, the student patron received a ticket to be included in a drawing at the end of the summer for age-appropriate prizes, including backpacks, zippered binders, and school supplies. If students missed returning books to the Bulldog Mobile in the summer, they could return them to any BISD library after school started. The Bulldog Mobile was staffed entirely by BISD employees who volunteered their time. Snacks were available for students who visited the Bulldog Mobile. A head count was taken at each Bulldog Mobile stop, but circulation records were not kept.

BISD partnered with Bandera Boys and Girls Club; this partnership allowed students who attended Boys and Girls Clubs at BISD facilities to visit the Bulldog Mobile. Boys and Girls Clubs had, as part of summer programming, a reading activity called “Readcess” and access to the bookmobile generated additional excitement about reading. Jackie Tharp, a director of one of the elementary units, said, “I saw kids leave games and ask if they could go and read their books. Some kids even asked us to read their books to a group [because] they wanted to share what they had read.” According to Bandera County Boys and Girls Club director Greg Parker, “This past summer, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bandera County participated in a program curriculum structure titled ‘Summer Brain Gain.’” Summer Brain Gain is a summer learning loss prevention program developed specifically for Boys and Girls Clubs and composed of one-week modules with themed activities for elementary school, middle school, and high school students (BGCA n.d.). Parker
added, “The bookmobile really became one of those weekly activities that helped our mission succeed. This structure and philosophy really concentrated on summer learning loss prevention, making sure kids weren’t falling behind the ten weeks they were out of school but rather keeping them on schedule or even moving them ahead. Weekly Bulldog Mobile visits enhanced our program.”

The Bulldog Mobile logged more than 450 visits in five weeks. The Boys and Girls Clubs provided attendance sheets for the days that the Bulldog Mobile visited. To identify students who had visited the Bulldog Mobile at least one time during the summer, those lists were combined with lists of students whose parents had brought them to Bulldog Mobile locations. The attendance lists were cross-referenced with end-of-year and beginning-of-year reading test results. Traditionally, disadvantaged students lose three months of growth over the summer break (Ya-Ling and Gordon 2007). Data from the end of year test at BISD was compared to the beginning of year tests to determine if access to the Bulldog Mobile made any impact on preventing students from losing ground or helping them gain ground over the summer months.

According to my calculations made in preparation for our second-year grant proposal, nearly 67 percent of the children who visited the Bulldog Mobile at least once either maintained their reading skills or gained reading skills. Parker said, "The best result is when we received testing data that showed the majority of our members read at or above their grade level when they returned to school in the fall. Mission accomplished for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bandera County, and it was a success because of the dedication of Bandera ISD Book Mobile leadership and volunteers!"

The Bulldog Mobile has received funding through a BISD Education Foundation grant to continue for summer 2015. The plan for summer 2015 is to expand service to more stops, and to plan a literacy activity for each visit. While the idea of starting a bookmobile may seem daunting, BISD’s experience was truly an example of building a solid foundation under the glimmer of an idea by starting small and using what you have: willing volunteers, a generous education foundation, support of a community organization that works with students, a truck, a trailer, a hotspot, borrowed iPads, and bins of books. Simple ingredients that, when combined, make a difference to students and their families.

To access more information about the Bulldog Mobile, view an infographic at <http://my.visme.co/projects/c561b9>.

Suzy Groff, an ALA and Texas Library Association member, is school librarian at Bandera (TX) Middle School. She is also an MLS student at Texas Woman’s University (graduation in December 2015). As a former ELA teacher, she has more than twenty-four years of experience sharing books, technology, and learning with secondary students. Follow her on Twitter: @SuzyGroff. She blogs at <http://banderamiddleschoollibrary.weebly.com/around-bms>.

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According to my calculations made in preparation for our second-year grant proposal, nearly 67 percent of the children who visited the Bulldog Mobile at least once either maintained their reading skills or gained reading skills.
THE CHALLENGED, THE BANNED & THE FILTERED

coming this fall to a school library near you

Susan Ballard
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Important happenings related to the concept of intellectual freedom (IF) coincide with the annual back-to-school ramp up. Now is the time to consider how to use the summer hiatus to develop learning opportunities related to these events.

Banned Books Week

First up is Banned Books Week (BBW), which is celebrated at the end of September. The BBW website states that this event was “launched in 1982 in response to a sudden surge in the number of challenges to books in schools, bookstores and libraries.” BBW is supported by various organizations, including the American Library Association and the Freedom to Read Foundation, as a means of bringing “together the entire book community—librarians, booksellers, publishers, journalists, teachers, and readers of all types—in shared support of the freedom to seek and to express ideas, even those some consider unorthodox or unpopular.” It’s an opportunity for conversation, discourse, and many a teachable moment.

While the 2015 BBW theme is pending as this issue of *KQ* goes to press, here are some resources for observing the week:

- **Banned Books Week website** [www.bannedbooksweek.org](http://www.bannedbooksweek.org):
  The Banned Books Week website provides updates and information as well as links to the supporting organizations and resources specifically designed for types of participants such as artists, teachers, students, writers, etc.

- **ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom site** [www.al.org/books/bannedbooksweek]:
  ALA’s Office for Intellectual Freedom site offers additional resources celebrating the freedom to read. Ideas and calendars of events are highlighted as well as ALA’s list of frequently challenged books and a free press kit to help you publicize IF-themed events. The page is also linked to the ALA Store, where you can find promo items, such as tee-shirts, buttons, bookmarks, and posters.

- **Book focused on freedom to read** [www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=10943]: Banned Books: Challenging Our Freedom to Read by Robert Doyle is available at the ALA Store and contains lots of ideas for observing BBW.

Banned Websites Awareness Day

As expected in the digital age, the reliance by students and teachers on access to digital resources has increased exponentially. While subscription, fee-based, and membership-based resources are vetted by school librarians, both students and educators have a continuing need to access free and open Web resources that are ever more participatory in nature. Schools have found themselves grappling with the requirements of the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) as well as responding to local parental concerns about safety, privacy, and related intellectual freedom issues. In response to input received about rushed and arbitrary filtering reactions by school organizations, AASL established Banned Websites Awareness Day (BWAD) in 2011. Specifically, BWAD aims “to raise awareness of the overly restrictive blocking of legitimate, educational websites and academically useful social networking tools in schools and school libraries.” The observation is incorporated as a designated day during BBW, and AASL asks school librarians and other educators to promote awareness of how overly restrictive filtering impacts student learning. AASL maintains a website (quoted above) at [www.ala.org/aasl/advocacy/bwad] where you can access information about the event, a complimentary webinar “How to Be a Ninja Warrior Filter Fighter!” and a link to additional resources you can use when informing your school community. Of particular note is an AASL white paper *Educational Technology in Schools*, which addresses filtering, acceptable- and responsible-use policies, apps, social media, and BYOD policies.

**Editor’s note:** The URL for this white paper and information about other recommended resources are at the end of this article.

**Voices Carry—Three Perspectives**

Wanting to provide more ideas and suggestions, we spoke with Helen Adams for her take on BBW, BWAD, and the general issue of IF and filtering. In addition to being

*“School librarians can turn BBW around, having the observance focus on the patriotic theme of the ‘freedom to read’ vs. just banned books and incorporate all types of books into a display or event.”*  

— Helen Adams
"THOUGHTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, AND SKILLFUL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS THE ULTIMATE 21ST-CENTURY SKILL, AND WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR KIDS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT THEY ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT AS WELL AS HOW TO NAVIGATE SAFELY IN TURBULENT WATERS."

— MICHELLE LUHTALA

a former AASL President, Adams is a former chair of AASL’s IF Committee, has served on the ALA IF Committee, been a member of the ALA Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) Advisory Board, and is a current member of the Board of Directors of the Freedom to Read Foundation. She is also the author of several seminal books related to IF and privacy, especially as they relate to students.

In addition, we tapped into the expertise of Michelle Luhtala, a recipient of AASL’s National School Library Program of the Year Award and currently a member of AASL’s Board of Directors. Luhtala helped plan and launch BWAD and is the current chair of the BWAD Committee.

Also, aware of the 2014 release of a policy brief from the ALA OITP and the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) titled "Fencing Out Knowledge: Impacts of the Children’s Internet Protection Act 10 Years Later," we checked in with Christopher Harris, then chair of the OITP Advisory Committee and a current OITP Fellow, for his thoughts on this important report. The study identified an "overreach in the implementation of CIPA—far beyond the requirements and intent of the law—that affects access to information and learning opportunities for both children and adults, and disproportionally impacts those who can benefit most from public internet access—the 60 million Americans without either a home broadband connection or smartphone" (Batch 2014. 5).

Informed from his dual perspective as a school librarian and school administrator, Harris provided another written perspective on the report in his must-read "Fight the Fight, But Pick Filtering Battles Carefully in K-12," which is his reflection on the subject and underscores the fact that as school librarians we must be ever-vigilant and alert to what is happening in this area.

Here are the insights shared by Adams, Luhtala, and Harris on what school librarians can do to develop programs to observe BBW, BWAD, and deal with filtering issues as well as ensure the development of school communities that value the concepts of intellectual freedom.

KQ: What’s your advice to a school librarian (SL) seeking to promote intellectual freedom and observe such events as BBW and BWAD, but who is a little skittish about local politics?

Adams: School librarians can turn BBW around, having the observance focus on the patriotic theme of the "freedom to read" vs. just banned books and incorporate all types of books into a display or event. Likewise, on BWAD have students and teachers contribute the URLs of sites that they have been blocked from by the school’s filter as a display in the library—this activity helps to personalize and localize the issue, and is something that engages the kids.

KQ: How can an on-the-ground SL help educate a school community about issues like censorship, privacy, and filtering in order to build support and a culture that values
intellectual freedom before the censors come?

Adams: Considering BBW or BWAD as a single observance isn’t enough. Everyone should use an advocacy plan for IF and think of a monthly activity to keep it on the forefront. I suggest creating an IF calendar for the year with a specific target area of focus for each month. For example, in August meet with the principal and administrative team to review your collection development policy and ask for five minutes at the first faculty meeting to remind everyone of the reconsideration process. I provide additional monthly ideas on page 221 of my 2013 book Protecting Intellectual Freedom and Privacy in Your School Library, or you can access a similar calendar I provided as part of the Intellectual Freedom @ Your Library column in School Library Monthly.

KQ: What are the plans for BWAD 2015, and how can AASL members assist or participate?

Luhtala: Planning is still in progress, but we have a goal to get a major spokesperson to help us increase awareness of the observation. We may continue with a previous theme inspired by remarks made by Keith Krueger, the executive director of CoSN (Consortium for School Networking), “Let the kids be the filter.” This accurately states the main thrust of BWAD activities, and members can focus on helping students learn to be thoughtful and responsible users of digital resources rather than over-regulating access and making students more vulnerable to problems down the road because they have not had the opportunity to learn how to regulate themselves.

KQ: What are some of the best ideas you have seen for observing BWAD?

Luhtala: Crowd-sourcing BWAD so that it is an experience that is inclusive of many voices, but especially student voices. The best thing is anything that empowers kids and allows them the opportunity to articulate what they can and cannot do because of restrictive filtering. This increases their buy-in on the learning process and also their understanding and level of commitment to crowd-sourcing as a means of learning. Thoughtful, responsible, and skillful use of social media is the ultimate 21st-century skill, and we have an obligation to provide opportunities for kids to learn more about what they are passionate about as well as how to navigate safely in turbulent waters. So by crowd-sourcing BWAD beyond our local landscape and getting many voices in the conversation we are modeling the value of something we often deny our kids.

KQ: In Fencing Out Knowledge what are the big takeaway recommendations for dealing with overly restrictive filtering in schools?

Harris: The first thing to realize about CIPA is that the law doesn’t say what most people in school technology departments think it says. The actual text of CIPA requires filtering, but only for three specific types of images. The law is silent on anything text-based.
The three types of images that must be filtered are those deemed obscene, child pornography, or those deemed harmful to minors. The third type, which is the most ambiguous, is further defined in the law as "sexually explicit images that are constitutionally protected for viewing by adults but lack artistic, literary, political, or scientific value for minors aged 17 and under."

There is nothing in CIPA that says schools must block social media; nothing about blocking image sites; nothing about blocking online word processors simply because they might be used to upload an image.

The other big takeaway is that educational groups like the National School Boards Association and CoSN actively support a more balanced approach to filtering that emphasizes educating students on responsible use as opposed to blocking sites. Sharing documents like the CoSN’s Making Progress report with school administrators can help swing the conversation towards educational use as opposed to just blocking.

**KQ:** How can SLs in situations with overly restricted access engage their school administrators, as well as IT personnel, in meaningful conversations to address the issue of over-filtering?

**Harris:** The best way to engage with administrators around the issue of filtering is to acknowledge the concerns and then to shift the discussion to a student-focused review of educational impact and use scenarios. Advertising from companies trying to sell filters to schools is becoming increasingly militarized; the filtering companies talk about neutralizing threats and protecting networks from rogue attacks. These “threats” are our students—our customers—without whom there is no purpose to even having a school network. We need to stop talking about neutralizing threats and start talking about helping children learn to use the Internet responsibly.

**KQ:** What’s the most pressing intellectual freedom issue confronting SLs today?

**Adams:** It’s hard to pick just one, especially given the landscape where there are more and more organized censorship attempts from various pressure groups. But, first and foremost, I am concerned that there are fewer SLs to educate school communities and defend the students’ rights to read and privacy. Within that context is the variable that where there still is a school librarian, job security issues may lead to cautious selection or self-censorship.

Restrictive filtering and privacy as it relates to technology are other areas of concern. I recommend school librarians become familiar with the K–12 School Service Provider Pledge to Safeguard Student Privacy at <http://studentprivacypledge.org/?page_id=45>, as well as consider the implications of cloud computing and ensuring privacy in use of e-books.

**Luhtala:** One ongoing challenge, especially with the participatory nature of learning, regards the revision of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) as it relates to the online collection of personal information from children under thirteen. The rules spell out what a website operator must include in a privacy policy, when and how to seek verifiable consent from a parent, and what responsibilities an operator has to protect children’s privacy and safety online. How does a school organization reconcile that with app-driven learning with tablets where you may have student privacy impacted by geo location, photo access, video access, etc.?
How do you negotiate and teach participatory skills? I find that the higher the level of filtering the further away we move from meeting the learning need.

Harris: A critical issue that keeps bubbling up is anonymous messaging. Apps like Yik Yak and After School make use of mobile networking and mesh communication (phones connecting directly to each other as opposed to going through a central server) to provide untraceable and, increasingly, unblockable communication platforms. These have been used for bullying and revenge porn (sharing explicit images after a break-up). It was great to hear that some schools and school librarians were working with students on a more proactive approach. Students got together and pledged to avoid the apps and to not engage in bullying.

Wrap-Up and Focus on the Future

Finally, a visit to AASL’s Intellectual Freedom page should be on everyone’s summer to-do list so you can return to school refreshed in your knowledge of this foundational issue of our profession. Download the brochure on intellectual freedom specifically related to school libraries; it contains numerous links to additional resources about IF. As for the future, as Harris noted, “Being proactive and finding the non-technical solutions by working with students on responsibility, accountability, and other issues of ethical use are the key areas for school librarians moving forward.”

Susan D. Ballard is a school library, media, and technology consultant and educator. She is currently developing a school library preparation program at Granite State College of the University System of New Hampshire. A member of AASL, Susan is a past president of the organization and is currently serving as the chair of the AASL Policy Review Working Group and a member of AASL’s 65th Celebration Task Force. She is also a member of the ALA Nominating Committee for the 2016 election.

Work Cited:

Recommended Resources:
YOU'RE HIRED!

Welcoming New Teachers to the School Library

Rebecca J. Morris
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It can be a wonderful and scary thing to begin a new teaching position. For novice teachers, stepping into a new classroom is an exercise in trust as much as it is a demonstration of classroom management, curricular knowledge, and instructional capability. Administrators, school boards and community members, fellow teachers, parents and caregivers, and, of course, students place great trust in new teachers. New teachers are trusted to make significant leaps from training programs to classroom positions, and they are expected to perform to a high level on the job. New teachers place (and at times probably question) trust in themselves, too: in their skills, their confidence, and their career choice. Ideally, they can find trust in supportive colleagues, and that’s where our school library enters the picture.

In this article, I’ll discuss the needs of new teachers and review some components of induction programs for new teachers. Building from this examination of new teachers’ needs, I’ll suggest five strategies for welcoming new teachers to the school library. Reaching out to new teachers is a professional gesture that stands to provide much-needed collegial support, as well as open doors to collaboration, effective teaching, student learning, and growth for the school library program.

New Teacher Induction
The routes to becoming a teacher today are many, and new teachers enter the profession from a range of academic and professional backgrounds, across a spectrum of face-to-face teaching experience, from very little to extensive practice. But wherever and whatever the training, a common circumstance for new teachers is limited on-ramp time between getting hired and getting in front of a class. H. Jerome Freiberg has described a three-part framework that addresses the needs of new teachers: 1) organizing strategies, such as lesson planning and classroom management; 2) instructing strategies, especially more practice with student-centered learning; and 3) assessing strategies, including a range of student assessments as well as professional self-assessment (2002).

A popular, but widely varying, approach for strengthening these areas is the new-teacher induction program. Induction is a professional development program that may last for the first two to five years of teaching, involving varying district personnel guiding teachers in such areas as routines, teaching practices, understanding of the community, teamwork, and mentoring (Wong 2002; Wong, Britton, and Ganser 2005). Maureen Killeavy described the following rationale for new teacher induction: “an extension of knowledge and skills to the practical arena through continuous learning while teaching, professional socialization, and commitment to whole-school improvement and the profession” (2006, 169).

As a school librarian, I read this rationale for induction, and I notice a rather precise alignment to the key tenets of school librarianship. Collaboration between librarians and teachers to design and teach reflects induction’s orientation toward continuous learning while teaching. School library programs are a vital component of whole-school improvement, serving students and teachers across grade levels, contributing to literacy development and academic achievement in all subject areas. As leaders, school librarians demonstrate commitment to the profession of education. What powerful partners school librarians can be for new teachers, during and beyond induction!

Strategies for Reaching Out to New Teachers
Here are some ways you and your school library program can welcome new teachers and, perhaps, shape some new advocates along the way. As you consider what might work for you and your school, know that you don’t have to be everything all at once for your newbies. First, aim to integrate these suggestions within any existing programs.

Reaching out to new teachers is a professional gesture that stands to provide much-needed collegial support, as well as open doors to collaboration, effective teaching, student learning, and growth for the school library program.
Try not to overwhelm new teachers. Introduce them to the school library over time, build on small interactions, and don’t get discouraged if the teacher isn’t receptive right away. Be positive, and model professional collaboration and partnerships with new and veteran teachers.

at your school, and consult with your administrative team to help introduce new ideas and initiatives. You might find a chance to piggyback on an existing plan or enjoy an opportunity to promote the school library program (and you) as a valued resource.

TIP #1 induction

Offer to present at the back-to-school or ongoing induction program. If an induction program is planned as part of the back-to-school training and orientation for faculty, ask to be placed on the agenda. You might work with district librarians or even librarians at the county or regional level to pool resources. I planned my induction presentations around a new theme every year; Movies, Olympics, and Broadway were a few favorites. For each, I made a top-ten list and accompanying handout with catchy descriptions of go-to library resources and services, and I jazzed up the same basic format and content according to the theme. For the Broadway year, the title of the talk was “Live on Stage: Your School Library! Playing to sellout crowds of students and teachers!” Here are two examples from the resource list, with generic titles inserted.

SHOW TITLE: [name of your online catalog]
AKA: Beauty and the Beast

CRITICS SAY: “Be our guest” and search for books, periodicals, and media from your school library and regional libraries. Librarian also uses [catalog name] for circulation.

THEATER: Library computers, classroom computers, from home or mobile device via school library website

GET TICKETS: Click the [desktop icon] to search. Ask the school librarian or a student helper to help you check out or reserve.

WORKING TITLE: NoveList K–8
AKA: Phantom of the Opera

CRITICS SAY: "All I ask of you" is that you use this to find literature connections, book summaries, book lists, teacher tools, and author and series information.

THEATER: Regional Consortium Databases Portal

GET TICKETS: Sing your way to the school library website.

I also included sections for The Cast (the district librarians) and a Curtain Call (a brief note of welcome and library philosophy). To capture the attention of the participants, try a theme that you like, and follow up your presentation with an invitation to observe you teaching in the school library.

TIP #2 prepare

Prepare a collection of resources at the ready, in print (folders at library desk or school office) and online formats (link from school library website), for those basic instructions that can make a person more comfortable and ready to use the library. Some items you might include are:

• Recorded video welcome
• FAQs
• Passwords for databases
• Catalog/OPAC tips
• Lists of professional resources
• Library map (Ask students to video a tour!)
• Schedule, policies, hours
• Teacher and student guides that include your mission statement
• Services (Every school is different:
  Is the laminator in the library?
  Printers? Devices to sign out?
  What are the procedures?)

Show interest and attention to the needs of new teachers. Make it a point to ask about them, rather than only feeding information. Ask directly in a morning coffee talk or on hall duty, or offer an inventory form to gather questions, interests, and information on resources they might need. Offer open-ended and checkbox-style items, since new teachers may not know what the school library has.

Give curricular support. Identify resources for a lesson or unit from the teacher’s grade level, and give the resources to the teacher to use in the classroom. Highlight a curricular correlation that you’ve taught recently or are planning to teach, perhaps with a ready-to-go note for the teacher to share with students’ families.

Communicate with cooperating teachers or college supervisors of student teachers and interns. Offer to host their afterschool meetings or seminars in the school library. Speak or join a panel at a topical seminar or webinar about transliteracy, technology integration, reading, intellectual property, social media, or other library-related topics. Encourage these new and pre-service teachers to seek out the school library when they get a professional position, and convey to them and their college supervisors the vision of today’s school library programs.

Conclusion
Overall, aim to be a reliable and supportive connection across needs and contexts. Even in simple ways, you can offer your school-wide expertise. For instance, help answer questions about, “How do we do things here?” For instance, how does the library support parent conferences or open house? Maybe your collection has a parent section, or you want to remind teachers to send parents to the school library as part of open house. Does the library maintain any data that would be useful for teacher evaluations, like class-visit data or student learning products? What are school or community resources and services that new teachers may not know about or consider? A few examples might be inviting the cafeteria/nutrition staff, counselors, or student athletes into classrooms to present information or read a story. Talk about public library services or community grant opportunities.

All of this advice and support reflects a different kind of mentoring, outside the purview (and scrutiny) of more explicit classroom instructional mentoring. To help keep things manageable and successful, set limits. Know what support makes sense for your expertise and time. Try not to overwhelm new teachers. Introduce them to the school library over time, build on small interactions, and don’t get discouraged if the teacher isn’t receptive right away. Be positive, and model professional collaboration and partnerships with new and veteran teachers. Remember new school librarians in your district, too, and reach out to them. Finally, be sure to turn to these “not so new” teachers in a few years and recruit their help in welcoming the next wave of new teachers to the school library!

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North Carolina at Greensboro, where she teaches school library curriculum, youth resources, and digital media production. Rebecca has a professional background as an elementary classroom teacher and middle school librarian. She is the chair of the Knowledge Quest Editorial Board and chair of the Educators of School Librarians Section (ESLS) of AASL.

Works Cited:
Summertime and the Reading Is Required?

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School’s out for summer! Unfortunately, for some students, summer is simply an extension of the school year when it comes to reading. Summer reading programs (SRPs) abound. To be sure, the concept of an SRP is a good one. We know that students lose learning over the summer; this phenomenon has been labeled the “summer slide.” Researchers, in their meta-analysis of numerous studies, concluded that students can lose anywhere from one to three months of school learning over the course of the summer. Losses were noted in both math and reading (Cooper et al. 1996). The effects of these losses can be far reaching (Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson 2007). The importance of reading, even over summer vacation, is not disputed. Thirty years ago a report from the Commission on Reading found that the amount of reading students did outside of school correlated with their reading achievement (Anderson et al. 1985). So, if reading over the months between school sessions is beneficial, why do SRPs often fail to engage students and help them improve—or, at least, maintain—their reading skills? Better yet, what can we do to make SRPs more successful for all our students? I suggest the answer to the latter question is that we must CARE about readers. Choice, Access, Response, and Enthusiasm are key factors that might solve some of the problems with SRPs.

Consider the two lists offered in tables 1 and 2. These titles come from lists from various states and were aimed at students who would be entering ninth grade in the fall; both lists contain works that are part of the traditional canon. Can you spot the differences? Let’s begin with date of publication, which is rather obvious. The other discernible difference is, of course, that the Pre-AP titles are all adult titles, and the titles in table 2 are all YA and/or children’s titles. Although many students could benefit from reading all the works listed, I do not favor either list because of their common element: the choice is too narrow. If we provide readers with a handful of choices, we are still saying, in effect, that only we know the good books and that students cannot be trusted to find any. Referring readers to longer lists would offer more choice. Giving links to Best Fiction for Young Adults lists <www.ala.org/yalsa/best-fiction-young-adults> or the Outstanding Books for the College Bound lists <www.ala.org/yalsa/outstanding-books-college-bound> is preferable. Readers will be more likely to read and to be engaged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Books required of ninth-grade pre-AP students over summer.</th>
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<td>The Crucible</td>
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<td>A Farewell to Arms</td>
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<td>Cannery Row</td>
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<td>Siddharta</td>
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<th>Table 2. Books required of ninth-grade students over the summer.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Speak</td>
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<td>The Witch of Blackbird Pond</td>
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<td>Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Outsiders</td>
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<td>The Chocolate War</td>
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Better yet, what can we do to make SRPs more successful for all our students? I suggest the answer to the latter question is that we must CARE about readers. Choice, Access, Response, and Enthusiasm are key factors that might solve some of the problems with SRPs.
Access

Many researchers (Anderson et al. 1985; Allington et al. 2010; Krashen and Shin 2004; McGill-Franzen and Allington 2004) point to the need for readers to have easy access to books at all times. Lack of access is a significant factor for readers who do not live close to a library and who do not have books in their homes. Stephen Krashen and Fay Shin have asserted that a good predictor of student achievement is the number of books students have in their homes. The best way to guarantee access is to form partnerships (Krashen and Shin 2004). Schools and public libraries seem a good match for collaboration. Offering some summer hours at the school library and, perhaps, even bus transportation would be ideal. Richard L. Allington et al. have proposed permitting students to check out books over the summer from classroom library collections. Yes, books might be lost, but the gains in reading should serve to reduce concern about the loss. Perhaps local businesses and/or the PTA could sponsor a book drive so that all readers could take home a stack of books for easy access over the summer. A book drive for this purpose might be an effective service project for schools, as well.

Scholastic has made available an interesting white paper about the importance of access <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/face-new-pdf/research-compendium/access-to-books.pdf>. However, access has a secondary meaning: even when students have the books in hand, those students need to be able to access the content of these texts on their own. Consider the nature of an SRP. Readers are forced to encounter text with little or no introduction. There is no teacher talking about the texts students are reading. Imagine encountering Antigone without any prior knowledge of its milieu or the form and format of the play. While I consider myself an avid and adept reader, when I pick up a manga novel after being away from the format for a while, I need time to re-situate myself as a reader. Now, imagine having no frame of reference whatsoever and consider how well—or not—students can access works in this situation. Books should be ones our readers can access intellectually, morally, culturally, and socially without assistance from an adult.

Enthusiasm

An often overlooked factor is that of having models of readers who are enthusiastic about books and reading. All too often, readers are given the assignment to read without any sort of attempt made to engage them in reading. Offering booktalks before the launch or at the outset of an SRP makes sense. Here is another opportunity for school folks and public librarians to collaborate. Tag-team booktalking is one of my...

Response

Let’s assume we clear the first two hurdles of choice and access. A potentially huge stumbling block remains when it comes time to account for participation in the SRP. All too often there are forms to fill out (reading logs) or quizzes to take (AR or Read 180, for example) or essays to write when students return to the classroom in the fall. A fine balance must be sought between holding readers accountable for their reading and making that accountability an onerous task. Several years ago, a student in one of my undergrad children’s lit classes complained about keeping a reading log. When questioned, I discovered that she was having to stop at the end of every chapter and record thoughts, feelings, and a summary. Unfortunately, the book she was reading was Out of the Dust by Karen Hesse, a novel in verse format. This student was pausing after each poem to complete her log. Is it any wonder that she complained?

Think about your own reading. I do pause and jot notes when I read. Perhaps I note a phrase or sentence that is elegant. Or I might pose a question I have at that point in the narrative. But I do not write much because I want to focus on the reading itself. How can we make that focus and flow work for our readers in an SRP? We need to think about the accountability piece of any SRP—perhaps even test it with a small group before we head into the summer.
favorite activities. My colleagues and I allow ourselves a set period of time to booktalk. (Fifteen to thirty seconds per book is about right.) We take turns, alternating titles and moving through them quickly so that we can talk about fifty books in about thirty minutes. This activity could be broken into smaller increments. For best results, at the outset give readers a list of the books you will talk about; students can circle or check off titles as they listen. Otherwise, students will come up after the talk and ask about a book using the color of the cover but not be able to give much information about the content of the booktalk.

Being enthusiastic also means that I am an active participant in the SRP. I read books and report what I have read. Each month, I participate in a Twitter chat called #titletalk. Organized and run by Donalyn Miller and Colby Sharp, hundreds of educators join in discussing the topic for the month. The final minutes of #titletalk are given over to a sharing of books we are reading. Many of us follow #titletalk with our Goodreads and Amazon wish lists open so we can enter titles that sound interesting. Could we fashion something similar for our students? A Google hangout, a Goodreads forum, a Facebook page? Social media afford us so many opportunities to connect with students, even over the summer. Of course, I can also share my blog URL with readers so they can see what I am reading.

If You Build It, Will They Come?

This past summer, one of the school districts in the west suburbs outside of Houston put together an SRP that seemed to me to include the elements I have outlined here. Katy ISD offered lists for those who might find them helpful. Educators in the district offered online forms students could complete if they wanted to be entered in a drawing. However, students were not required to keep track of reading. The coordinators offered a reminder (using Remind apps) for students to log books, but, again, this logging was voluntary. Parents were also encouraged to be a part of this SRP. Learn more about this exemplary SRP at <http://elasummerreading.weebly.com>. I think it is a good place to begin when planning your own SRP, one that readers will find engaging and motivating. If we are to prevent that summer slide, we need to be certain to offer choice, access, response, and enthusiasm.

Teri Lesesne
(rhymes with “insane”) teaches literature for children and YA readers in the Department of Library Science at Sam Houston State University. She is the author of three professional books and numerous reviews and articles about books and reading.

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THE MOUNTAINS ARE CALLING’ & YOU MUST GO

SPENDING PART OF YOUR SUMMER AT A NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SITE
This summer, why just live vicariously through books to transport you to those marvelous, if not magical, places? Why not also visit some of the more than four hundred locations operated by the United States National Park Service (NPS)?

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When people ask school librarians why they entered the profession, many point to their love for reading or their interest in children’s literature (Shannon 2008; Jones 2010). In spite of shifts in the profession’s focus to technology, programming, instructional design, and information literacy (Bogel 2011), a love for reading remains a top reason why people go to library school (Watson-Boone 2007). Much of school librarian rhetoric related to reading is about where reading takes the reader: the beach, the mountains, underwater, or even to another world (Jones 1997; Lu and Gordon 2007; Lumry and Hurwitz 2008). This summer, why just live vicariously through books to transport you to those marvelous, if not magical, places? Why not also visit some of the more than four hundred locations operated by the United States National Park Service (NPS)? These are your national treasures, after all, since NPS lands are owned by the people. In this article, we highlight seven reasons why we think school librarians should start planning and packing for an adventure at an NPS site in the near future.

When Americans envision the properties that are under the care and management of the NPS, many tend to think of the national parks “proper”—those signature, iconic locations such as Yellowstone, Yosemite, or the Grand Canyon. While our national parks are certainly the crown jewels of our parks system, the NPS also manages national historic sites, national monuments, national parkways, national seashores, national lakeshores, national recreation areas, national scenic riverways, national scenic trails, national memorials, national heritage areas, national reserves and preserves, and national military parks. United States NPS sites are in every state and most U.S. territories.
1. View Wonders of the Earth

For generations, Americans have been traveling to the national parks to marvel at the wonders of the Earth. From glacier walks at Mount Rainier or Kenai Fjords to sea kayaking in Acadia; from an airboat trip through the Everglades to experiencing “America’s Serengeti” in the Yellowstone–Grand Teton region; from treks into the otherworldly landscapes of Utah’s Canyonlands or California’s Lassen Volcanic National Park to a hushed, awe-inspiring journey through the rain forest at Olympic National Park—visitors can explore the landscape with park ranger guides and interpreters or on their own.

Recent studies (Selhub and Logan 2012) reveal that natural landscapes—found in national parks and other areas under the jurisdiction of the NPS—improve mental clarity, minimize stress, and enhance the efficiency of physical exercise. These wonders of the Earth provide ample opportunities for visitors to hike, bicycle, climb, swim, horseback ride, and paddle. This summer, don’t just read about people riding a mule down a trail in the Grand Canyon, or watching islands being formed at Hawai‘i Volcanoes, or exploring the underground wonders of Mammoth Cave, Carlsbad Caverns, Timpanogos, or other cave sites. Go see for yourself.

"Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that ... parks ... are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life” (Muir 1901).

2. Walk in the Footsteps of Change Agents

As school librarians, we are among the few educators in our schools who teach every child in our buildings. As such, our potential for impact on student learning is great.

The ways in which we accomplish our teaching goals are more flexible than the methods of our teaching partners in English language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science; thus, it is easier for us to design and implement social justice curricula that meet our standards. As we consider ways to empower our students to combat racism, sexism, homophobia, poverty, and other forms of injustice, we can spend our summer days walking in the footsteps of change agents and be inspired by those who took stands against injustice.

In Alabama, the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail inspires visitors with the stories of citizens who sacrificed and marched for equal voting rights for all, and, at interpretive sites along the trail, connects visitors with the stories of the marchers. In Arkansas at Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site the inspiring story of the persistence and bravery of nine American school children seeking a better public education is preserved and interpreted.

The important role of Cesar Chavez in improving the lives of America’s vital farm workers is demonstrated at the national monument in California named in his honor. In upstate New York, the story of the first convention that met to address and improve the lives and rights of American women is told at the Seneca Falls site where that first convention took place in 1848. The stories and impact of other notable agents of change in our nation are preserved and told at national historic sites around the nation: Martin Luther King, Jr. (Atlanta), Frederick Douglass (Washington, DC), Franklin D. Roosevelt (Hyde Park, NY), revolutionaries at Independence Hall (Philadelphia), John Brown (Harpers Ferry), and revolutionaries and abolitionists (colonial Tea Party and African Meeting House sites in Boston).

These preserved sites where culturally significant events took place and the NPS staff who interpret them provide a combination of inspirational resources that could inform our curricular choices.
3. Travel Back in Time

Stories of time travel and its power to transform human spirits—such as Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*, Mark Twain’s *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, and H. G. Wells’s *A Time Machine*—have been on school librarians’ reading lists since our official organizational beginning in 1914. Perhaps even more thrilling than the transport provided by science fiction books, comics, and movies is visiting NPS ancient sites as a mode of travelling back in time.

Visit the remains of a city that was the center of an ancient world in Chaco Canyon (New Mexico). Climb into the remaining ancient cliff-hugging pueblos and discover what life was like for the cliff dwellers who lived in a breathtaking setting for more than seven hundred years at what is now Mesa Verde National Park (Colorado). Walk in the steps of those who explored and passed through the Boca Negra Canyon (New Mexico), and ponder the messages they left behind on the rocks throughout the canyon at Petroglyph National Monument (Albuquerque, NM).

History also comes alive in modern times with living history and period-inspired presentations and interpretations. At the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial (Indiana), a living history presentation of an 1820s farm can be experienced on the site of Abraham Lincoln’s boyhood home. At Bent’s Old Fort (Colorado), historians take visitors back to life in the 1840s, especially existence at an old adobe fort on the Santa Fe Trail. In California visitors are treated to a colorful presentation on why a palatial home, Scotty’s Castle, was built in what is now Death Valley National Park.
4. See Wildlife in Natural Settings

Have you ever heard a bison slurp? Or smelled a whale’s breath? Or watched a mother brown bear teach her children how to catch salmon?

While a great majority of our ancestors lived in proximity to native plants and animals in natural settings, in modern times industrialization and the increase in the percentage of people in large, city-based populations have separated many of us from animals in their native habitats. Too many see animals now only in displays in zoos, on the other sides of fences, or even displayed in cages.

But experiencing wildlife can be much more than viewing them as objects on display. Scientists remind us that other vertebrates can also be our “dialogical partners,” those with whom we can communicate (Bradshaw 2010, 409). Experiencing wildlife in natural settings can give us perspective about how other species live in—and off of—our shared natural settings. Observing what they eat, how they interact, with whom they assemble, where they seek shelter, and even how they express their emotions can connect the human species with the common pursuits that all species share.

We have a historic kinship and codependence with many living creatures. We live in and share the same physical environments. Watching other species and interacting with them help us better understand and appreciate our place among them and our obligations to other living creatures and the same planetary environments that sustain both our lives and theirs. Ultimately, we can take these lessons learned back to our students.

For great wildlife viewings in their natural settings, consider:

- Channel Islands National Park (California): seals, sea lions, whales, dolphins, foxes, deer, mouse, skunk
- Denali National Park (Alaska): caribou, wolves, bears, moose, sheep
- Everglades National Park (Florida): hundreds of bird species, alligators, crocodiles
- Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (Alaska): whales, orcas, Dall’s porpoise, sea otters
- Glacier National Park (Montana): elk, big horn sheep, grizzly bear, mountain goats
- Grand Teton National Park (Wyoming): moose, elk, bison, pronghorn
- Isle Royale National Park (Michigan): wolves, moose
- Katmai National Park and Preserve (Alaska): bears, wolves, wolverines, moose, caribou, foxes, seals, sea lions, otters
- Olympic National Park (Washington): giant slugs, mink, salamanders, marmots
- Yellowstone National Park (Wyoming, Montana, Idaho): bison, gray wolves, mink, elk, moose, bears, swans, pika, marmots
5. Celebrate Human Accomplishments

Although curriculum scholars challenge school librarians to move beyond the curriculum of the mainstream (Banks and Banks 1993), many well-known American accomplishments are worthy of being taught to our students. This summer, learn in depth about Americans who represent minority and majority populations by visiting sites that celebrate their outstanding accomplishments.

You can visit the spot where the golden spike was driven into the Utah ground to connect the two lines of track that completed this nation’s first transcontinental railroad. Or you can see the bicycle shop (Ohio) where the Wright Brothers were inspired to dream and experiment with flying aircraft or visit the Wright Brothers National Memorial on the wind-swept hills of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, to see where their dream was realized. Be inspired by a visit to the laboratory and home where Thomas Edison, perhaps America’s greatest inventor, dreamed, created, and crafted inventions that changed the modern world (New Jersey).

The life and works of renowned nineteenth- and twentieth-century agricultural scientist, educator, and former slave George Washington Carver are explored at the national monument and interpretative exhibits located at the place of his birth in rural Missouri. Or visit a museum in his honor at the Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site (Alabama).

The Effigy Mounds National Monument (Iowa) and Hopewell Culture National Historical Park (Ohio) preserve a diverse array of mounds and interpret their cultural and historical significance, as well as the lives of the Native American people who built them.

Playwrights, poets, and authors like Eugene O’Neill, Edgar Allan Poe, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Carl Sandburg are honored, interpreted, read, and celebrated at the Park Service’s national historic sites that bear their names in California, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and North Carolina, respectively.

Marching Bear Mound Group at Effigy Mounds National Monument. Photo Credit: National Park Service

6. Consider the Benefits of Integrating Archival and Genealogy Research into Your School Library Program

Our colleagues in academic libraries have found positive correlations between students’ archival research and their acquisition of information-literacy skills (Daniels and Yakel 2013). While most school libraries do not have print archival collections, some NPS sites provide an opportunity to explore archives of historical or cultural significance. If you prearrange your visit with a park ranger and explain that you are a librarian, most NPS sites will provide you with access to their archival collections. (Some NPS sites have freely accessible digital libraries as well.)

While you are visiting an archive, consider the benefits of integrating archival and/or family research into your school library program. Studies point to numerous benefits to our students, including cultural revitalization, primary source appreciation/education, and critical-reading skills improvement (Thorpe and Galassi 2014; Dupont and Yakel 2013).

When we facilitate our students’ ability to find and use objects, images, and artifacts that represent their family histories and integrate their stories and voices into all-group instruction, we reach for the highest level of multicultural curriculum reform outlined by James and Cherry Banks (1993).

From the personal (artifacts that immigrants brought with them from their home countries through Ellis Island) to the public (Statue of Liberty models used as fundraisers to pay for the statue), Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty National
Monument (New York City) have an impressive collection of artifacts and archival records. At Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (Virginia) and Gettysburg National Military Park (Pennsylvania) wonderful history collections inform researchers on a variety of historic subjects. At Yellowstone National Park extensive archives are housed within the park.

Many NPS sites have free online image archives on their websites; others have digitized their historic documents, and some even have sound recordings. (For access to online collections and lesson plans, go to <nps.gov>.)

7. Create Partnerships
Creating educational partnerships with NPS rangers, educators, historians, and scientists has great value to students. Many NPS employees who are hired to educate the public and interpret sites have a depth and breadth of knowledge about their areas of interest that can be compared to the knowledge base of professors. While it would be ideal for school librarians to plan future visits with/for students (perhaps as part of an inquiry project or a place-based research project), this ideal isn’t always attainable because of school schedules or reduced school budgets.

Alternatively, school librarians can visit NPS sites to co-design meaningful and relevant distance education programs with NPS staff. A number of NPS sites promote their distance education capabilities, and most programs are affordable or free. Educators at the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site (Kansas) are well-known for their dedication to their distance education collaborations. In fact, one park ranger raced to his house to Skype when a school’s H.323 video-conferencing equipment did not properly function. He saved the collaboration, and his primary-source visual presentation was stirring.

In addition, some sites have live webcams set up for students’ observation of species or even monuments, while others have air-quality webcams for STEM education.

If you have not recently been to Manzanar National Historic Site (California), the recently remodeled...
visitors’ center exhibits may entirely alter your approach to teaching. Even without using much technology, the exhibits get visitors intimately involved in daily life at the relocation center during World War II in a way that is brilliantly carried out and deeply connective. School librarians may want to establish pedagogical mentorships with the staff at Manzanar.

Do It All!

This issue of *Knowledge Quest* features a number of wonderful things to add to your summer to-do list. Visiting United States NPS sites could be the one way you can do it all: from (re)create to collaborate. If it’s your Do It All! United States NPS sites could be

Knowledge Quest features a number of wonderful things to add to your summer reading list that is holding you back from visiting an NPS site, why make the decision a case of either/or? Take audiobooks with you for the drive or flight and augment your professional development reading list with audiobooks on topics related to the site that you are visiting.

“The mountains are calling” and you must go (Muir 1873)!

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is a recent graduate of Indiana University’s Curriculum and Instruction doctoral program and has served public schools, libraries, and universities as a teacher, librarian, grant writer, and professor. She is a 2015 recipient of an Association for Library and Information Science Education research grant that will allow her to study bilingual reference desk transactions in Spanish-speaking communities. One of her life goals is to visit every National Park Service site in the United States; so far she has visited more than one-fourth of them. She is a member of AASL.

**Vaughn W. Nuest**

is the building head for Indiana University’s premier Ruth Lilly Auxiliary Library Facility, and he serves as a high-density storage facilities consultant for academic and public libraries. Vaughn’s life and consciousness was changed by listening to his grandmother’s national park travel stories while he flipped through corresponding View Master slides. One of his life goals is to visit every National Park Service site in the United States—and he has only thirty-two left on his list.

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**Works Cited:**


LETS

WHY SCHOOL LIBRARIANS SHOULD EMBRACE GAMING IN THE LIBRARY

Aaron J. Elkins
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This summer you should play some video games to get ready for the upcoming school year. Games aren’t just for young males and have tremendous potential to enhance 21st-century literacies, including critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. Playing games will not only help you see how these skills can be developed, but also give you a shared experience that can lead to deeper interactions with your patrons.

You Might Be a Gamer If…

Although in popular images gamers are typically presented as young males, the demographics are changing; currently, more adult women play games than do young males (Santovec 2011). With the rise of mobile technology, games are more accessible than ever; your smartphone or tablet likely came with several games installed. Games are also available through social media sites like Facebook. You may have played some of these games, such as Bejeweled, Candy Crush, FarmVille, or Mafia Wars, or helped friends who play by giving them “life” or gifts, or watering their virtual crops. Although these games may not have the kind of rich complexities that foster 21st-century literacies, they do still have the potential to change behavior; research has shown that people who play games in which they help others are more likely to help other people in real life (McGonigal 2011).

Games Facilitate Learning

Libraries have a long history of including games, puzzles, and toys in their collections (Nicholson 2013). Learners develop skills in both formal and informal learning environments (Moline 2010). Games are some of the oldest instructional media, and digital games provide engaging and information-rich environments in which players can work with a variety of information objects; these game environments typically include learning supports, allowing players to focus on developing their understanding (Neuman 2011). Games encourage learners to be actively engaged rather than passively receiving, and with a low price for failure, gameplay allows learners to gain experience by taking more risks at lower cost than in real life (Gee 2008).

Online games can encourage the development of 21st-century skills (Galarneau and Zibit 2011), including critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and information and media literacy. The ability to play and learn in an online environment fosters the creation and analysis of media (Hobbs and Rowe 2011). Multi-player gaming develops players’ abilities to work collaboratively. This collaboration also extends outside of the game environment as gamers work together to create mods (modifications of the original game to add or enhance content or gameplay), develop tools and...
Providing gaming in the library program is a way to help socioeconomically disadvantaged children who may not have the same opportunities as more affluent students to develop 21st-century literacies.

strategies to facilitate play, and even write strategy guides (Gee 2003, 2005, 2012; Gee and Hayes 2010). Gamers also engage in creative writing and storytelling, and even develop mathematical models centered on their gameplay (Steinkuehler and King 2009). Additionally, gamers—only because of their love of gaming—have used information and technology literacies to create countless hours of gameplay videos and thousands of wiki pages.

Incorporating gaming into your school library program can help foster a love of reading and learning (Mashriqi 2011). More importantly, providing gaming in the library program is a way to help socioeconomically disadvantaged children who may not have the same opportunities as more affluent students to develop 21st-century literacies. James Paul Gee has argued that just as school libraries provide access to print materials to foster traditional literacy, libraries should also provide access to these digital media—as well as the mentoring to be able to fully engage with them—to foster 21st-century literacies (2012). In short, to better serve their patrons, school librarians should get their game on.

What to Play?
Many games can be used to enhance 21st-century literacies, but not all are easily accessible to a novice gamer. Playing the games may require a console (such as an Xbox One, PlayStation 4, or Wii U), and games can be somewhat expensive to purchase, even if players already have the required platform on which to play. The following list of games may be more accessible to a new gamer; they don’t require a console to play and are either free or inexpensive to purchase. They also address a particular aspect of 21st-century literacies and are games you could recommend to (or play with) children and young adults. Available gameplay videos can give you an idea of what the game is about; you can decide if you’re interested in playing. Also, if you get stuck while playing, you can watch to see how to navigate through a difficult part of the game.

**The Cave (2013)**
ESRB Rating: T
Platform: PC ($15), Android ($5), iOS ($5)
You choose three (out of seven potential) adventurers to explore a mysterious cave, in the process testing your critical-thinking and problem-solving abilities. Each adventurer has different abilities (like breathing underwater, hacking terminals, or phasing through barriers), and the adventurers you choose also determine which areas of the cave you can explore, a feature that builds in replay value.

**Cogs (2009)**
ESRB Rating: E
Platform: PC ($10), Android ($3), iOS ($2)
Demo: Available on Android and PC
A virtual take on classic slider puzzles, you’ll need to use critical-thinking, problem-solving, and spatial-reasoning skills to
manipulate tiles into their proper places in order to turn gears, ring bells, or inflate balloons. The levels become progressively more difficult as the number of surfaces you have to play on increases.

**Monster Loves You! (2013)**
ESRB Rating: unrated
Platform: PC ($10), Android ($3), iOS ($3)

You direct the life choices of a monster as it grows from a morsel in the spawning vat through adolescence, adulthood, and the end of its life. This game allows you to be an actor in a moral universe: the actions you choose as your monster grows up and develops have implications not only for your character but also for the entire monster and human communities. You can replay the game many times, making different choices for your monster each time.

**Spaceteam (2012)**
ESRB Rating: unrated
Platform: Android (free), iOS (free)

You collaborate with one to three other players, and each player has a console with different controls displayed on the screen. You need to carry out the commands that appear as the ship flies itself through space, but the necessary actions may not be on your control console, so you’ll have to call out what to do as you and your partners work together as a space team. According to the developer, accessibility features to control the difficulty and support for ESL learners are coming.

**World of Goo (2008)**
ESRB Rating: E
Platform: PC ($10), Android ($5), iOS ($5)
Demo: Available on Android and PC

This game requires critical thinking, problem solving, and spatial reasoning as players are challenged to build structures out of a variety of goo balls with the goal of getting other goo balls to the collection pipe. As you progress through the levels, you begin to understand more about what is really happening in the story as it is being told by the mysterious sign painter.

**What’s Next?**
If you’re ready to incorporate gaming into your school library program, there are a few things to consider when getting started.

**What kinds of gaming materials do you want to add to your collection?**
In addition to the games themselves, consoles, controllers, and even strategy guides could join your school library collection. Game consoles can cost hundreds of dollars, and games and accessories are typically between $20 and $60 dollars. Each platform (Android, iOS, PC, PlayStation 4, Wii U, and Xbox One) has its benefits and drawbacks, so you’ll need to do some research before deciding which you’d want to offer.
Strategy guides related to gaming are somewhat cheaper and more in line with the traditional fare offered in libraries, so they may be a good entry point for you if you want to add some gaming materials to your collection. These guides might also be a good way to draw in some reluctant readers and gauge interest in programming related to gaming.

How will you circulate these materials? Being printed materials, strategy guides probably won’t require any special circulation policies. If you do choose to incorporate games, accessories, and/or consoles in your collection, you’ll need to figure out what modifications your circulation policies will need, including loan periods, transportation (must parents come in and pick up the materials?), and liability in case of damage or loss.

What kind of programming can you support? A variety of different options could be offered to your patrons, from simply providing space for game enthusiasts to meeting and discussing games to organizing and hosting gaming tournaments. As with any other element of your library program, what you may choose to offer will depend upon the resources at your disposal and the needs and interests of your patrons.

How can I learn more? While several aspects must be taken into consideration, incorporating gaming into your library program doesn’t have to be an insurmountable challenge. You can start small and work your way forward as you give gaming the opportunity to flourish in your school library. If you’re really serious about incorporating gaming into your library but aren’t sure how to take that first step, here are a few great resources to help you learn more and get started.

Game On! Gaming at the Library by Beth Gallaway. Gallaway’s is a well-rounded guide that details nearly every aspect of starting up a videogaming program at your library, including recommended collections and sample forms.

Gamers…in the Library?! The Why, What, and How of Videogame Tournaments for All Ages by Eli Neiburger. Although primarily oriented toward gaming tournaments, this book contains some practical advice on several other important topics like marketing and setting up technology.

Everyone Plays at the Library: Creating Great Gaming Experiences for All Ages by Scott Nicholson. Another useful guide that includes information on how to set up gaming programming for all types of games in addition to video games.

Capitalizing on Learners’ Interests
Gaming isn’t just for young males and is a great way to enhance 21st-century literacies. School librarians should familiarize...
themselves with what gaming has to offer by playing some games themselves. By playing games, school librarians can share common experiences with some of their patrons, and use this shared experience to develop stronger relationships with them. Gaming may also help school librarians understand how to capitalize on learners’ interest in these highly motivating informal learning environments to further develop those learners’ information-literacy skills.

Works Cited:


Being concerned about the decline in recreational reading among adolescent students, with several colleagues I began brainstorming ideas on how to better promote reading. One of the ideas that kept recurring was hosting a book club for our kids. Since the focus would be on reintroducing the idea of reading for pleasure and not just for academic purposes, I decided to hold the meetings during lunch so I could create a comfortable, welcoming environment.

I planned an initial interest meeting just to see how many kids might want to participate. I was expecting between twenty-five and thirty students for each lunch period; however, I had more than one hundred kids show up. This turnout raised an excellent question: With this large number of interested kids, how was I going to fund my club? Initially, I wrote grants, sought out corporate sponsors, and did some fundraising; however, my district saw the success of my project and began to fund the entire club. One reason I needed funds was to provide...
a book for each participant. I wanted students to not only have the book while we were reading it, but also to be able to keep it. Because it was theirs, they could share the book with friends or family; they could build their own libraries or read it again and again.

When planning a book club, there are several things to consider. First, what books will the club read? Second, how will meetings be organized? The first question was easy to answer. I knew I wanted to read young adult literature that was popular and current, and the Twilight phenomenon was just getting started. I have used many series in my club over the years, but I usually read only the first book to pique students’ interest, and then they can finish the series on their own.

Once I had the first title selected, the next question that needed to be answered was about the organization of the meetings. Our lunch periods are thirty minutes each. Students need time to get to the cafeteria, get their lunches, and get to the library. To expedite this process I designed

I HAVE USED MANY SERIES IN MY CLUB OVER THE YEARS, BUT I USUALLY READ ONLY THE FIRST BOOK TO PIQUE STUDENTS’ INTEREST, AND THEN THEY CAN FINISH THE SERIES ON THEIR OWN.
“front of the line” lunch passes for all those involved in book club so we could have as much time together as possible. Because of the time of the club and the fact that we had lunch together, our club became known as the Brown Bag Book Club. I planned on meeting three times for each book. Initially, we would meet, and I would introduce the book; interested students would then sign up to read the book. We would meet two more times to discuss the first and second halves of the book. The time between the first and second meetings varied, depending on how long it took for the books to arrive. Once students had stopped in the school library to pick up the books, I gave them at least two weeks to read before we discussed the first half of the book. Before our third meeting, they had another two weeks to read the second half.

Making Connections
Because I wanted to promote recreational reading, the last thing I wanted my club to feel like was another English class analyzing text. I wanted the students to make connections to the books we read, so I used discussion questions, games, and activities to achieve the goal of making reading fun. Below is a list of some books we have read and examples of activities we did with each text.

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins. Students were broken up into groups and were given twelve cards, each showing a different item needed for survival. Working together, students had to prioritize the items from most important to least important and justify their answers.

Divergent by Veronica Roth. Students came in and “joined” a faction by choosing to sit at particular tables marked with colors and symbols. Participants played a game called “Get to Know Your Faction” by deciding which faction a selection of famous people would belong to. For example, Mother Theresa would be part of the Abnegation faction because she was so selfless.
Fallen. Author Lauren Kate (see figure 1) visited and shared with the students her inspiration for the story. Since each student had received a copy of the book, everyone was able to get her autograph.

Peak by Roland Smith. To introduce the terminology of the story, I invited a veteran mountain climber to school to share his experiences and talk about his climbing equipment. His visit gave students the background knowledge necessary to understand the story.

Fearless: The Undaunted Courage and Ultimate Sacrifice of Navy SEAL Team SIX Operator Adam Brown by Eric Blehm. For this nonfiction text, I partnered with another local book club to do a combined read. The school librarian and assistant at the neighboring school were both former military personnel. For our first meeting, they dressed in their fatigues and held an unofficial military briefing, similar to what Adam would have experienced preparing for his mission.

Wonder by R. J. Palacio. For one of our meetings the students discussed the precept, “When given the choice between being right and being kind, choose kind.” Each student was given a “Wonder” button. They filled in the following sentence: __________ is a wonder because _______________. Each student was then able to give the button to the person the sentence was about.

Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys (see figure 2). Because the story has roots in the author’s Lithuanian history, the best way for students to connect to the story was to hear from Ms. Sepetys herself. She Skyped with us and shared her personal journey that eventually became the fictionalized story.

Branching Out
In the eight years I have been running the Brown Bag Book Club, I have worked with my district school librarians to extend the book club...
up to the local high school and down to the middle school, meaning students in grades 6 through 12 have the option to participate in a book club. We have hosted a teachers’ book club and a school-wide read, and collaborated on a nonfiction title with a neighboring district’s book club. This year I decided to expand into more specialized book clubs, so I started a Chick Lit book club and a Manga book club.

When selecting the books we are going to read in the Brown Bag Book Club, I try to select a variety of genres, with both male and female protagonists, take student requests, and try to appeal to a broad range of readers. When I decided to start specialized book clubs, I knew that the groups would be smaller but would appeal to readers with a passion for some very specific types of literature. Chick Lit selections are stories with strong female protagonists or emotional themes and have included If I Stay by Gayle Forman and Birthmarked by Caragh O’Brien.

When thinking about starting the Manga book club, I knew some challenges would have to be addressed. For example, a manga book can be read in a very short period of time; discussion would be brief if all students read the same book. I decided to order the first book in eight different manga series, mainly because I wanted to encourage students to branch out and sample authors and, perhaps, subgenres new to them. Students in the manga club were each allowed to select a book they wanted to read. This book would be theirs to keep. However, I observed that the kids enjoyed swapping books with each other; this swapping allowed club members to sample a wider selection of books. Students could continue with a series by checking out the remainder of the books from the school library (two books at a time).

Since the students may not all be reading the same book, I focus on other topics for our meetings. The club has learned about the Japanese culture, and members were able to spend some time with students from Hanamaki, Japan, when they came for a visit (see figure 3). Club members and the visitors loved asking each other questions and talking about the art of anime and manga.

For two of our other meetings, I taught the kids how to make candy sushi and they practiced using chopsticks (see figure 4). The art of anime and manga is another popular topic with the kids. I turned their original creations into buttons they used to decorate their school-issued lanyards. The buttons were a great way to personalize their school identification cards.

The success of book clubs is apparent in the number of books (3,495) I have put into the hands of students, as well as the expansion into multiple types of book clubs. When the students ask, “When is the next book club?” or “What are we reading next?” I know that I have helped them appreciate the joys of recreational reading, as well as having positively impacted their learning environment.

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FEATURE

TRANSFORMING SUMMERS

LESSONS FROM PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Summer reading clubs at public libraries have been around for a long time, and we all have a general perception of what they involve: a theme shared with other libraries in the system, a recommended reading list or two, a reading log, prizes, and many arguments about how to get prizes—tracking time spent reading? Tracking number of pages read? Total books read? In a school library we might send our students off for the summer with a reading list of our own (my school does this), and that list might—but probably doesn’t—correspond with the public library theme/reading list. But in recent years, public librarians have been trying new approaches to the summer reading club—and there are lessons that school librarians can learn from these new approaches.

To be fair, summer reading clubs (SRCs) at the public library have been changing for a while. I worked at a public library five years ago, and while the official recommended practice involved themes, lists, and logs, people on the front lines in the branch had different priorities. Happily, in 2012, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) conducted a year-long forum to assess library services to teens and to formulate recommendations for the future. In late 2013 YALSA published the report *The Future of Library Services to and for Teens*. As a part of the assessment, the report reminds us that the field is experiencing a “seismic shift” due to technological innovation. The report notes that libraries are grappling with diminishing resources while struggling to meet the needs of a changing teen population.

Many of these changes stem from technological developments and innovation; the report describes how finding and using information—learning—has changed, and how libraries need to adapt as a result. One of the major coping strategies the report suggests is actively partnering with community organizations, thus increasing library outreach opportunities and programming possibilities.

The YALSA *Future* report is subtitled “A Call to Action” because the report lays out a very clear path for teen library services. It is imperative that librarians look for times and spaces for teens to develop critical skills for the workforce, to take on leadership roles, and to see learning and research as a collaborative activity with real-world implications. The bottom line of the *Future* report is that deep learning depends on it being connected learning: “Young people learn best when that learning is connected to their passions, desires, and interests” (YALSA 2013, 8).

**What Does This Finding Mean for SRCs?**

The SRC of the past—the carefully chosen theme, the reading lists, the recommended authors, the reading charts, the themed events—
is gradually evolving. Instead of a text-centric library experience, summertime learning is a great opportunity to explore many different kinds of literacies—visual literacy, critical literacy, media literacy—and to engage in intriguing, new activities. As Erin Downey Howerton, children’s manager at Wichita Public Library, put it:

I used to design summer reading activities for teens that connected deeply with the CSLP [Collaborative Summer Library Program] themes, trying to create something really coordinated. But honestly, teens care less about a wonderfully themed activity than they do about authentic experiences that they can connect with—experiences that fuel their curiosity about the world, or connect with other teens in their community that have similar passions, or that help them open a window to new information that they didn’t know existed. (Howerton 2015)

To expand the variety and depth of events that they host, many public librarians have been working with community partners to create STEM- and STEAM-based learning opportunities for students. In fact, the most obvious program changes show up in the technology used; 3D printers, Arduinos, cameras, and other devices make it easy to see people using libraries in new (or new-ish) ways. Movies are being shot and edited! Code is being written! Robots are being built!

But beyond the accessories, what are the deep and abiding lessons that public librarians have found in their redesigned SRC experiences? The first is probably not going to be news to school librarians: deep learning is ideally a structured experience.

Linda Braun, youth and family learning manager at Seattle Public Library (and one of the authors of the YALSA Future report), says, “We are focusing as much as possible on series programming instead of one-offs. We want teens to have an experience that is scaffolded and is more than a one-time fun event” (2015). Successfully challenging play requires time and planning on the part of the facilitator; it doesn’t happen by accident.

Howerton points out that hands-on activities are key to SRC success: “When you do something, you remember the concept a lot longer.” Leslie Spring, a library associate at Saint Paul Public Library (SPPL), adds that bringing hands-on, interactive events to the summer schedule has meant that some programs had age and attendance limits, but everything was “designed to encourage further engagement with the library as well as to be active and healthy” (2015).

If public libraries are sometimes seeing fewer participants, how can they gauge success? Peter Borgen, librarian and chair of the summer program at SPPL, says, “Our measures of success are twofold, numerical (how many participants) and subjective measures (participant feedback, anecdotal observations about participation)” (2015). Seattle Public Library is looking beyond numbers as well. “We are working with staff to move beyond the outputs and to look at the impacts... We are very interested in what teens and others come away with beyond reading and/or attending a program” (Braun 2015). For Braun, success can be measured in participants’ stories.

Megan Egbert, youth manager in Meridian Library District (MLD), makes a point of asking, “What is the actual goal?” For MLD summertime focus has shifted from doing what they’ve always done to “keeping kids and teens engaged in their community and their education” (Egbert 2015). Nick Grove, teen specialist at MLD, points out that “evaluation is difficult. The quantitative stuff can be done. We need to boost qualitative stuff, and understand why teens like or dislike events” (2015).

Meridian staff members made another foundational shift in their view of outreach. For their librarians, outreach has taken on a primary role; as a matter of fact, they are encouraged to serve on community committees. In this way, outreach becomes two-pronged; it’s about reaching individuals and promoting programs, but it’s also about reaching a broader audience and bringing a library perspective to the larger community. For Egbert, this philosophical shift translates to asking MLD librarians to “become embedded in the community” (2015). For Grove, that embedded approach means heading into the school, being a presence and connecting with school librarians; outreach opportunities then become service to the school throughout the year (2015).

Braun points to another fundamental change: teens taking on leadership roles within the SPL’s Summer of Learning (SoL) activities:

We are in the midst of transitioning from a teen volunteer model—where teens tend to volunteer to do menial tasks in branches—to a teen service learning model. This summer we are piloting the teen service learning in a few branches. Teens will be given training and more responsibility in leading a
variety of initiatives. We expect that next summer teens involved in service learning will be the driving force in developing, supporting, and implementing the SoL program—for their peers and for younger children and families. (Braun 2015)

The Future report makes a clear case: students need opportunities to gain workforce skills. These leadership roles are perfect chances to work on their collaboration, leadership, and inquiry skills.

OK, Great—But What Does This Shift Mean for Schools?

Public librarians are finding new ways to describe what’s going on in their spaces. Rather than focusing entirely on statistics, they’re asking patrons about their experiences, and using these reflections as a means of measuring, by story, the learning and growing that happens during the summer. In a school library, we are a space of both formal and informal learning. Administrators and fellow faculty members are very familiar with formal learning and what that looks like but are not always as comfortable with informal learning situations. If we can find out from students about the informal learning they do in the school library, we will be better equipped to describe all the learning students are doing.

At my school students have long lunch hours and a spacious school library to enjoy. These circumstances mean that they have time to decide for themselves how they will spend a significant (comparatively significant, anyway) portion of the day, and lead to the happy problem (for me) of a crowded and often loud library. Students are playing video games, playing cards, having club meetings, and talking—to each other, to

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me, and to other faculty members. Although it can look like chaos, these moments are all opportunities to make connections. By checking in with students, I have opportunities to do reader’s advisory, to help with research, or just to find out what’s going on. My fellow teachers enjoy the same chances to connect with students. Our Writing Center is actually a part of the library, and the writing coordinator can seek out students, find out what they’re writing about, and invite them to join her in the Writing Center space. When teachers complain about the noise level in the library, it’s helpful to be able to point to these noisy times as favorable moments rather than problems.

School library spaces are safe spaces for students to play; as noted above, play in these safe spaces can look like chaos. But it’s a particularly beneficial form of chaos, one that the library field is starting to embrace. In this case, “play” means a chosen set of behaviors; it’s about picking what you will do, when you will do it, how you will do it, and why you’re doing it. Within the realm of play, means are valued, not ends. And playing requires an active, alert, and non-stressed mindset so that imagination and creativity can reign (Gray 2008). The connections between this definition and YALSA’s Future report are clear. Practitioners in the library field need to help users make meaningful connections, be active in their own lives.

The role of student choice can’t be overstated. Last fall, a teacher blogged about shadowing students for two days, and eloquently described the experiences that led to her three conclusions: “1) Students sit all day, and sitting is exhausting. 2) High school students are sitting passively and listening during approximately 90 percent of their classes. 3) You feel a little bit like a nuisance all day long” (Wiggins 2014). Is it really any surprise that, given even a few minutes of downtime, students choose to decompress? As educators, we need to find more—and better—ways to encourage choices of what students do to “play.”

But what about changing measurements for formal learning? When we host classes (or visit a classroom), we often use the work students produce to show what we’ve taught. But it is also possible to have students tell their own learning story after working on a project. Research skills are so embedded in the learning process that they can be hard to assess. Asking students to reflect on their learning and tell us about their processes might be one way to bring to the surface the story of this learning.

The changes that Braun is striving to make at Seattle Public Library—creating the teen service learning model—is particularly fascinating and also challenging in most school environments. Proponents of this model are very opposed to the top-down approach that plays out in almost every classroom. What would happen if students functioned as active, equal partners in their own learning? Just as we use our outreach skills to partner with teachers and help to shape their curriculum, we can bring the library perspective to administrators and other major decision-makers. An embedded school librarian can and should have a voice that reaches up as well as laterally. As supporters of both formal (classroom) learning and informal (student-led) learning, our perspective is critical to the field of education and to our local institutions.

Public librarians are looking for active partners to brainstorm events, find resources, and share knowledge. If you want to transform your summer programming but aren’t sure where to start, a conversation with a public librarian might be just the ticket; it’s simple and quick, but can have lasting effects. For Leslie Spring at Saint Paul Public Library, teaming up with a summer-school session started fairly simply: students got public library cards and had any pre-existing SPPL fines cleared. Public librarians were also able to come into classes and present public library resources—databases, e-books—to both students and teachers. Teachers and school librarians learned about SPPL resources and programming, were invited to set up field trips, or send students who needed cards. Spring says:

This collaboration built some professional relationships that have continued to the present day….My advice to school
Braun concurs. Through a grant from Google, Seattle Public Library has the opportunity to offer training this summer to teachers and school librarians so they can work with Finch Robots. SPL will then be able to circulate the Finch kits to classrooms “so that teachers can work with their students in learning coding and other digital life/literacies” (Braun 2015). To facilitate more partnerships like this, Braun says, “Public and school library staff need to be listening to each other year round and find out what needs there are and then help each other fulfill those needs... Relationships [are] the way to learn what we each have to offer” (2015).

Creating homegrown, community-based solutions is as easy as a visit to the public library. We absolutely can support the hard and inspiring work that our public library counterparts are doing, but only if we know what they are working on—which means asking! But it’s not a one-sided relationship. We can get (and give) support, inspiration, and lessons from our public library peers.

Conclusion
The summer reading club has changed—into largely hands-on activities that spark and stimulate users’ interests. Public librarians are working to establish inquiry as a collaborative process for their users. Public librarians are striving to connect user learning to user passions and interests, and to measure this process quantitatively and qualitatively. They are establishing outreach to stakeholders as a mutually beneficial service.

As school librarians, we can do a better job of supporting our peers in public libraries by reaching out to them, finding out what’s going on, and connecting public librarians with our students. The public library outreach to us can become a service for both institutions as we troubleshoot solutions for problems we are all trying to solve. We can also learn from the work public librarians are doing; they may have already found a solution we’ve been looking for. The bottom line is that we will be able to send our students off for their summers, knowing that they’re going to find fabulous learning opportunities and will be supported in creative ways.

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An Oculus Rift beta share space supports sharing programs and trying out new activities on headset devices. Not only will students delve into program and app design, but their work can be shared with peers—a level of empowerment rarely achieved.

Oculus Rift?
So you might be wondering, what is Oculus Rift? What is 4D? More than likely you have already encountered virtual reality (VR), another term that can occur in this conversation. Oculus Rift is a headset device that goes over the eyes; created with immersive gaming in mind, the Oculus Rift gives the user a four-dimensional experience. This isn’t the same as watching 3D television; this is a headset created to take peripheral vision into account. One hundred percent of the wearer’s field of view is covered; every turn of the head is calculated, and the encounter is totally engaging (Oculus VR 2015).

The prototype was created by eighteen-year-old Palmer Luckey in his basement, using money he earned by fixing friends’ iPhones (Herold 2014). John Carmack, whose company created the game Doom, purchased the early prototype, and in 2014 Facebook bought the most recent high-definition prototype for two billion dollars (Rubin 2014). Needless to say, leaders in the gaming and tech industries believe Oculus Rift and other 4D contenders are something to invest in. What about us in libraries and education?

Technologies
Virtual reality is not new. But 4D systems are making this type of gaming and learning both fun and exciting. The user experience is very realistic, and the possibilities are wide open. There are multiple options in the 4D realm. Oculus Rift is new, and applications are still being built. The development kit, which consists of a headset, as well as a camera for tracking, is available. At the time of this writing, the Oculus Rift headset is available for those who would like to program and create visuals in 4D, an excellent opportunity for students interested in programming, game building, design, computer science, and much more.

For a fairly inexpensive 4D experience on the opposite end of the price spectrum, students can
try Google Cardboard. Using a Google phone with 4D apps, users can purchase a virtual-reality do-it-yourself cardboard kit from companies like DODOCase (<www.dodocase.com>) and I Am Cardboard (<www.imcardboard.com>). Prices range from approximately $9.00 to $50.00, depending on the case. Students, teachers, and librarians can also make their own headsets using plans and designs freely available at the Google Cardboard site (<www.google.com/get/cardboard>). Once the Google Cardboard headset has been put together, the phone slips in, and users have an instant virtual-reality experience. If cardboard is too flimsy, Google sells plastic versions for a nominal fee. Among the apps available at the time of this writing are the Hobbit VR experience, a virtual roller coaster, and an exploration of protons.

More technology leaders are working in the virtual reality and 4D arena. As this gaming and learning format grows in popularity more companies will join in to offer further options.

Ideas for Libraries and Classrooms

Four-dimensional tools and virtual reality can be used in a multitude of ways in school libraries and classrooms. The first is using the apps with students for exploration. Reviews and news of emerging apps, activities, and games are available at the Rift Arcade (<www.theriftarcade.com>). Users can engage with new apps that are being built on a continuous basis for Oculus Rift. These are not just games; these are fully immersive experiences. How about exploring molecules in a first-person virtual-reality experience? There is an app for that. With virtual reality 4D headwear users can see what it’s like to be a surgeon or a cook. Oculus Rift can be partnered with Minecraft, and students can explore in 4D the worlds they are building. When students, teachers, or librarians partner Oculus Rift with gaming systems like Xbox, new games and programs, such as a simulation of space exploration, have been created. Wherever a student’s head and hands move the device “follows.” Virtual field trips and science experiments are another idea. Overall, the 4D experience is quite amazing.

If you have students interested in developing their own experiences, building programs and apps is an excellent idea. The most recent version of Oculus Rift has been released with that very idea in mind. An Oculus Rift beta share space supports sharing programs and trying out new activities on headset devices. Not only will students delve into program and app design, but their work can be shared with peers—a level of empowerment rarely achieved.

Naysayers

Can a virtual-reality experience replace a live experience? Of course not. Universities are starting to create virtual campus tours for Oculus Rift and other 4D devices. These virtual tours would enhance students’ exploration of colleges but never take the place of visiting college campuses in person. A doctor would certainly need to work with a live patient; simulations of people are not the same as the real thing.

What virtual reality and systems like Oculus Rift can do for game development, programming, exploration, and learning design remains to be seen, but it is exciting to think about the possibilities. Some people see the integration of virtual reality and 4D technologies in education as disruptive, but many teachers and students are already using these types of technology outside of education; finding successful applications for these innovative devices in classrooms and libraries is worth exploring (Psotka 2013).

This type of technology may be new and seem a little bit daunting, but integrating it into libraries and education is certain to lead to student discovery and excitement!

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For all children, but maybe especially for those whose curiosity and imagination are squelched as often as nurtured, stories can swing open locked doors.

I t’s easy to miss how our neighbor- hood has changed. The rambling old houses still work their charm. Magnanimous oaks still shade us in summer, and on winter evenings most windows burn with warm yellow light. We’ve lived here over thirty years, and when I turn down our street, I still sigh.

Still mostly with pleasure, but now with some sorrow, too. The house across the street from us steadily fell into such disrepair the city threatened to condemn it, and the extended family living there disappeared in the night. Another house a few doors down suffered a major fire. That family had to move in with relatives. They love their house, as does everyone on this street, and hope to restore it. Meanwhile, thieves have managed to strip every bit of copper pipe. The school at the end of the block, the one our daughters walked to, closed a couple of years ago.

This is the street where they grew up, where they ran wild yet safe. My husband taught school in the next town over, another inner-ring suburb, and I’ve worked in the children’s room of the local public library for many years. We know this place. So the Brookings Institute report that suburbs have become home to the country’s largest, fastest-growing poor population was no surprise to us. Over the years, we’ve seen this once-stable world tilt, and families lose their footing. Things are especially rough here in the Rust Belt, but it’s happening all over—vanishing jobs, foreclosures, bare food-pantry shelves, a rising drug problem.

I’ll go out on a limb here and say that, while many people worry about this situation, those who work with kids worry a little harder. At the public library we see more and more children shouldering responsibilities and worries beyond their age. Small heroes—that’s how I think of them. Most have even-younger siblings or cousins to look out for. They often stay in the library for hours on end, sneaking bags of chips behind the biographies, asking us for school supplies, falling asleep. Their parents are doing the best they can, but no one’s guaranteeing what tomorrow will bring.

On top of it all, these kids—our kids—spend their days anxiously preparing and drilling for tests in “low performing” schools under the state gun. Reading for
pleasure—reading fiction at all—has pretty much disappeared from their classrooms. At an age when life should brim with possibility, too many children live in worlds small and pinched.

"We don't want children to suffer," Maurice Sendak once said. "But what do we do about the fact that they do?" (Setoodeh and Romano 2009).

What librarians yearn to give them: good jobs for their parents, homes they won't lose, healthy food, stimulating classrooms. What's actually on hand: books. Some days, that seems unforgivably paltry.

One morning not too long ago I sat at my writing desk, trying to work on my novel. The words weren't coming; the story had bogged down. A little fresh air, that's what I needed.

To my delight, I discovered someone had chalked a line on the sidewalk in front of our house. The line stretched as far as I could see, and of course I had to follow it. At first the chalk was yellow, but it soon gave way to blue, then pink, then green. The slate sidewalk was bumpy and cracked, but the line persevered. It skirted a puddle, got distracted by a squashed bug, hung a left at the corner, and kept on going. So did I. When at last I looked up, I found myself back outside my own house. Some child, some determined child, had lassoed my world! This made me grin. Drawing a ring around the known world—isn't that what I try to do when I write? Hurrying back inside, I got straight to work.

To know and be known—it's what we want from stories. When I write, I try to make my world my reader's, too. Discovering that an author has spied into my heart—that she's felt just the way I do, been as afraid or surprised, thrilled or mortified—this is the gift I look for as a reader, and what I yearn to give as a writer. Stories make us less alone. They make us feel recognized and linked to something bigger. They can make us feel, It will be all right. A word that often comes up in reviews of my books is "comforting," and the idea that children might find another home inside my pages makes me very happy.

Comfort and reassurance—these are fine things. But so is discovery. A book can take a child's hand and lead her outside that known circle, into new, dazzling places. For all children, but maybe especially for those whose curiosity and imagination are squelched as often as nurtured, stories can swing open locked doors. In his powerful memoir, Black Boy, Richard Wright wrote, "Whenever my environment had failed to support or nourish me, I had clutched at books... It was not a matter of believing or disbelieving what I read, but of feeling something new, of being affected by something that made
A word that often comes up in reviews of my books is “comforting,” and the idea that children might find another home inside my pages makes me very happy.

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