



Sometimes we need to reaffirm that we have the tools, the know-how, and the expertise to maintain dynamic school libraries. Each one of us strives to create a welcoming environment through our actions and our collections.

Back to Basics on Collection Development

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The pages of this issue of *Knowledge Quest* are filled with amazing, incredibly helpful, thoughtful, and practical information on collection development. School library collections have been under attack in Texas and elsewhere across the United States. The hashtag #FReadom has trended on Twitter as school librarians promote the value of providing an inclusive and diverse collection for their students. And while this trend of book challenges is incredibly disheartening, when a district or school has a strong collection development policy and procedure and an up-to-date and relevant collection, challenges to a collection often fail. We must continue to promote inclusive and diverse collections—which is the heart of this issue.

This entire issue is part of a *KQ* series of issues that will focus on what the editorial board has nicknamed “back to basics.” Why back to the basics? It’s simple: sometimes we need to reaffirm that we have the tools, the know-how, and the expertise to maintain dynamic school libraries. Each one of us strives to create a welcoming environment through our actions and our collections.

In their feature “Why Collection Development Is Important,” the content experts for this issue, Liz Philippi and Becky Calzada, discuss that to be effective in our collection development we must first understand our “why” and we must always start with our standards.

In a powerful essay, both share how their experiences as members of the queer community have shaped their lives and how shining a positive light on LGBTQ+ books and authors can help students find the power to be themselves.

The best practices shared in this article will inspire, engage, and reaffirm your current school library practice.

Lauren Lynn and Casey Grenier pen a powerful article on the use of data, student voice, and auditing in their article “Revealing the Reality of Our Collections.” Together, they share how they approach collection development while engaging students to share what they would like to see in their school library collections. Lauren talks about how collection development is as much about purchasing new materials as it is about deselecting materials that no longer serve the community’s needs. Casey shares how she developed a spreadsheet and conducted a diversity audit of her picture books.

The school librarians also discuss the impact of the right book at the right time in the right student's hands, sharing inspiring stories.

She writes about how investing the time in handling each book opened her eyes to the surprising lack of diversity on the shelves. (She also shared with me how physically touching each book is time consuming, but is important to the process, even if her allergies went haywire from the dust!)

Rachel Altobelli and Nancy Jo Lambert provide us with the language school librarians need to engage with the school community to support our LGBTQ+ students and families in "LGBTQ-Inclusive Collections: School Librarian Self-Reflections and Collection Development Guide." They discuss the importance of LGBTQ+ books and authors that serve as windows and mirrors as well as provide vital information that students may not have access to elsewhere. In a powerful essay, both share how their experiences as members of the queer community have shaped their lives and how shining a positive light on LGBTQ+ books and authors can help students find the power to be themselves. With the challenges happening around the country surrounding books with LGBTQ+ themes and content, this article is timely. It's an important read for all school librarians. Most valuably to me, the authors address why LGBTQ+ collection development is essential at ALL levels of school library.

Manga are the books all students want, but we sometimes struggle to find books that are appropriate for our grade levels. Jillian Rudes shares the inside scoop on all things manga. When you finish reading this article, you will feel well versed in understanding the what, why, and how of manga. Jillian also provides guidance on selection, evaluation, and withstanding challenges to manga titles. The best part of this article was that I now feel like I have an opening to talk with students about manga—I was always too shy about my lack of knowledge before reading this. Thank you, Jillian!

Finally, this issue contains a Q&A with school librarians across the United States. Content experts Liz and Becky surveyed Jacob Gerding, Maegen Rose,

Suzanne Sannwald, and Nicole Cruz to get their views on their approaches to collection development and how they're preparing for book challenges. The school librarians also discuss the impact of the right book at the right time in the right student's hands, sharing inspiring stories. Each comes from a very different background, but the themes and ideas they share transcend geography and schoolhouse level—it is a testament to our profession.

Thank you to all the authors and the content experts for bringing us "back to the basics" of collection development. I finish up this column with this incredible quote from writer Carlos María Domínguez: "To build up a library is to create a life. It's never just a random collection of books" (n.d.). What we do is intentional, and our collections matter.

Works Cited:

"Carlos María Domínguez Quotes: Quotable Quote." n.d. Goodreads. <www.goodreads.com/quotes/130721-to-build-up-a-library-is-to-create-a-life> (accessed Dec. 11, 2021).

Jennifer Sturge (*she/hers*) is the specialist for School Libraries and Instructional Technology for Calvert County Public Schools in Prince Frederick, Maryland. She authored the "Think with the Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards" chapter in *Include (ALA 2021)* and coauthored the "Relationships" chapter in *Core Values in School Librarianship: Responding with Commitment and Courage (ABC CLIO 2021)*. Jennifer was awarded the 2019 Ruth Toor Grant for Strong School Libraries, and her school district libraries received the 2021 National School Library of the Year Award. She is past-president for the Maryland Association of School Librarians (MASL) and co-chair of the professional development committee for MASL. She is a member of AASL and serves on the Knowledge Quest Editorial Board.