



This issue of Knowledge Quest explores ways that our fellow superhero school librarians are forming powerful collaborative relationships.

School Librarians Are Collaboration Superheroes

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I grew up in the mid 1970s and early 1980s, the heyday of Saturday morning cartoons. As a child each weekend I would look forward to sitting down in front of the TV with my bowl of cereal to watch my favorite cartoons. One of my all-time favorite cartoon series was *Super Friends*. *Super Friends* was created by Hanna-Barbera Studios and was based on the DC Comics' *Justice League* comic books. The show starred Superman, Batman and Robin, Wonder Woman, and Aquaman, and it often featured other DC Justice League superheroes as guest stars. Although each superhero was a star in his or her own right, together they could defeat any evil and solve any problem set before them. Each had his or her special power and weakness, but they were stronger together than any individual member.

Like the Super Friends, school librarians are powerful and have skills that other educators may not have, such as specialized training in research and locating and using resources. We are skilled educators in our own right. However, it is when we join forces—collaborate—with other educators, learners, parents, and administrators

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that our powers are truly realized. In AASL's *National School Library Standards*, the Collaborate Shared Foundation is defined as “work[ing] effectively with others to broaden perspectives and work[ing] toward common goals” (2018). This issue of *Knowledge Quest* explores ways that our fellow superhero school librarians are forming powerful collaborative relationships.

Mary Catherine Coleman, this issue's content expert, shares how school librarians can be leaders in professional development in their schools. Her article, “School Librarians Take the Lead Collaborating on Professional Development,” describes how she and her school library department, made up of cross-divisional teachers, collaborated with her school's administrators to create a professional development day for the teachers in her school. She offers many great suggestions and resources for school librarians to use in planning professional development with and for their teachers and staff.

In “Collaborating to Transform Teaching and Learning,” Kathryn Roots Lewis and her research partners describe a collaboration between educators and school librarians involving Guided Inquiry Design (GID). They integrated GID with making to create a school climate in which collaboration, learner choice, and learner voice are encouraged. This research project was part of a three-year Institute of Museum and Library Services National Leadership Grant for Libraries. The grant included an elementary, middle, and high school in the Norman Public Schools district. School librarians and teachers collaborated to combine the GID inquiry method with

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making in the school curriculum. With the assistance of the school librarian, classroom teachers, a gifted resource teacher, and a reading specialist first-grade learners utilized inquiry circles to research and share what they discovered about animal adaptations and survival. Middle school learners used digital inquiry journals as they answered their questions about littering's effect on the environment and ways to reduce waste. The high school librarian and Algebra II teachers collaborated on a unit dealing with parabolas. Each grade-level inquiry unit demonstrates the power of collaboration among the various educators and among the learners.

Jennifer Sutton and Mariela Siegert outline how they brought multiple local middle schools and the high school together for a mini Comic Con. Their article, "Making the Comic-Con Connection: Using Student Interests to Foster Unique Opportunities for Collaboration," describes how they collaborated with other librarians, administrators, and the community to make it happen. They discuss the early beginnings of their mini Comic Con and how collaborations with various educators, administrators, and other stakeholders have helped it to grow into a vital program for the district's learners.

In "The Zine Project" Jillian Ehlers describes the collaborative lessons she learned during a case study at the Metropolitan Expeditionary Learning School. The case study involved learners researching and creating a zine (a short, self-published work) to demonstrate their learning. Learners selected and researched an issue in their community and then proposed a solution to solve the issue. They created a zine to share their issue and

solution with the community. Jillian provides tips for how school librarians can work with other educators on this type of project.

School librarians are skilled educators. Many of us hold bachelor's, Master's, or even doctoral degrees in subjects in addition to our library science degrees. It is when we collaborate with others—parents, learners, teachers, administrators, other librarians, etc.—that we become even more powerful. Like the superheroes from my Saturday morning cartoons, we are effective on our own, but the possibilities when we collaborate with others are limitless.

Melissa Gardner is the school librarian at Campbell County Middle School in Alexandria, Kentucky. She is a member of AASL and is currently a member of the Knowledge Quest Editorial Board and the AASL Practice Committee. She also serves as the constitution/handbook chair for the Kentucky Association of School Librarians (KASL) and is a past-president of KASL. In 2017 she was awarded KASL's Barby Hardy Lifetime Achievement Award.

Work Cited:

AASL. 2018. *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. Chicago: ALA.