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We lead the charge in adapting to the ever-changing world of education, equipping learners to navigate the challenges of tomorrow. This issue serves as a compass for where we think school libraries are headed and offers insights on how librarians can proactively prepare for this future.

Navigating the Future of School

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“Libraries really are gates to the future.”

—Neil Gaiman

In the past, libraries were considered a space for reading and academic work. Today, we find ourselves amidst a transformative educational landscape, shaped in part by the pandemic and rapidly advancing technology. The question arises: What lies ahead for school libraries?

Welcome to the May/June 2024 issue of *Knowledge Quest*, where we embark on futurecasting for school libraries. As technology continues to revolutionize how information is accessed and consumed, librarians are emerging as pioneers of innovation in education. We lead the charge in adapting to the ever-changing world of education, equipping learners to navigate the challenges of tomorrow. This issue serves as a compass for where we think school libraries are headed and offers insights on how librarians can proactively prepare for this future.

Barbara Kay Stripling and Brandi Veal, our content editors for this issue, examine the evolving role of school libraries. They explore a shift from a traditional emphasis solely on reading and information skills towards embracing a comprehensive, whole-child approach. The adoption of this approach empowers librarians to actively contribute to the development of these skills and foster growth for learners over time. Stripling and Veal showcase matrices and continuums, providing practical tools for librarians to intentionally plan the progression of these skills over time.

The future for school libraries may appear daunting, presenting challenges that can often feel overwhelming. However, it is precisely these challenges that make being a librarian exciting. While we may not possess the ability to predict the future, we can certainly equip ourselves and our learners with the necessary skills and mindset to effectively navigate and confront whatever it may hold.

Leanne Ellis envisions the future of reading, analyzing how emerging technologies can enhance literacy skills. Librarians will need to continue to advocate for formats that aid learners in cultivating reading skills, such as graphic novels and audiobooks. Fostering an environment that promotes reading engagement through initiatives like book clubs will support learners in their reading as well as socio-emotional skills. Lastly, artificial intelligence (AI)

can boost learners' information literacy skills, if how to properly use the available tools are taught and modeled to them.

Dustin Hensley reminds us that while technology can offer us tools for learning, the basis of education is still the human connection. He explains how he uses the design thinking process to empower learners to tackle community issues within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. By guiding learners through the inquiry process, they can not only identify an issue and develop a solution but also showcase their understanding in ways that go beyond memorization. Hensley's methods allow students to take ownership of their learning and build on the skills that Stripling and Veal discuss in their article.

Recognizing the concerns that educators have about the repercussions of AI, Alexandra Cornejo takes an optimistic perspective on the collaborative potential of this technology with the library. Beyond simplifying a librarian's tasks, AI presents an opportunity to educate learners and lead professional development on the ethical use of AI in schools. A shift towards recognizing the potential of AI rather than focusing solely on its challenges becomes imperative for librarians as we navigate the future.

Similar to Hensley, Martha Bongiorno has adopted the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a cornerstone for her library, emphasizing the cultivation of a global mindset in students. Drawing from her experiences in the library, Bongiorno showcases how centering the library program around the SDGs has enabled learners to engage in inquiry projects encompassing information skills, reading, and science, technology, engineering, and math. The article's Idea Sparks provides practical suggestions for librarians to seamlessly integrate the SDGs into their library programming and lessons. Inspired by her insights, I am already contemplating the adoption of her Mindful Maker Mondays in my own school!

Our final article is from Joyce Valenza, sharing her insights on developing an innovator's mindset to address the needs of the school. Framing problems as opportunities has allowed the library to act for whole-school change and directly meet the needs of both the school and its learners. Emphasizing the role of communication, Valenza highlights the need to engage with learners, classroom teachers, and administration to identify issues and create goals for the library to provide solutions. In her interview with Lisa Koch, Valenza

explores the significance of aligning with the principal's vision and creating a shared plan for the library—an approach that I can personally vouch for, having followed Koch in my current position!

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