Journal Summarization

While school librarians do not have other school librarians to consult with at their individual

schools, school librarians have many highly useful, peer-written and evaluated resources at their

disposal. The following report evaluates five such resources by analyzing the resources themselves

concluding with an examination of a sample article from each resource.

PART ONE: THE RESOURCE

Knowledge Quest

Knowledge Quest is the official publication of the American Association of School Librarians

(AASL) of the American Library Association (ALA). Published bi-monthly from September through May,

Knowledge Quest costs ALA/AASL members around $20 a year included as part of their membership or

non-members can purchase it for $50-$60 (Jan/Feb 2011, pg.3). *Knowledge Quest* is written by school

librarians and educators for "building-level school librarians, supervisors, library educators and others

concerned with the development of school library programs and services in elementary and secondary

schools" (Jan/Feb 2011, pg. 2). With each article, the author's credentials are given. *Knowledge Quest* is

divided into three main categories: Features, Columns and Cameos, and Departments. Each issue also

has a unique central theme. This thematic approach is carried throughout in all of the featured articles

and regular columns. Featured articles are rather lengthy averaging between 6 and 10 pages, highly

involved containing many extra additives such as charts, additional related materials or suggested

readings, and mixed with advertising and/or other large graphics. Advertising consisted mostly of ALA

and AASL propaganda. The thematic approach of each issue makes *Knowledge Quest* a substantial

source of information and resources on a given topic all in one place. However, the layout of the journal

was distracting and did not lend itself to easy readability.

School Library Journal

School Library Journal is a monthly publication for school librarians. Published by Media Source,

Incorporated, *School Library Journal* costs approximately $137 annually (Aug 2011, pg. 2). Each issue

contains several feature articles relating to current issues in librarianship, technology-based articles,

monthly columns such as the editorial, nonfiction book-talk, gaming, and reviews all written and

reviewed by others in the school or public library forum. Similar to most magazines, *School Library*

Journal has vivid color and many advertisements.   An Index to Advertisers names 22 publishers and

suppliers hosting 35 ads in one issue (Aug 2011, pg. 2). Considerably more than half of each issue is

dedicated to reviews, pages 45 through 139(Aug 2011). The reviews are not limited to books. These

peer-written reviews are of multimedia material, digital resources, reference books, fiction and non-

fiction by age-level, and professional reading. Reviews are also indexed by author/illustrator as well as

by title making *School Library Journal* an excellent source of peer-reviewed book summaries.

School Library Monthly

School Library Monthly is written for school librarians focusing on teaching library and

information skills (Ulrich). Published eight times a year by Libraries Unlimited, *School Library Monthly*

costs $55 annually (Ulrich). Each issue contains a few (2-4) feature articles and its regularly monthly

columns. Interestingly, *School Library Journal* updated its format between its May/June 2011 issue and

its September October 2011 issue. Notably, the change took place in the Table of Contents. Regular

articles were categorized into 3 categories: Columns, Notes from the Field, and Into the Curriculum.

Color was used sparingly throughout to break up the main black and white format and not have a

monochromatic feel that would result from surprisingly, no advertising. Articles, in general, were short,

between one and four pages in length, and relevant to school library issues. These shorter articles,

without advertising, made *School Library Monthly* an easy and enjoyable read. Given the short amount

of time school librarians have, *School Library Monthly*'s format of shorter peer-written and reviewed

articles made it possible to read an entire article in a matter of a few minutes. As an extra benefit, 'Into

the Curriculum' articles gave peer-written and reviewed full lesson plans that would assist formulating

new lessons or complement existing lesson plans as another time saver for the school librarian. The lack

of reviews was the only noticeable deficit of this resource.

Teacher Librarian

 Teacher Librarian is a journal for school library professionals "committed to collaborative

partnerships for improved student learning through thought-provoking and challenging feature articles,

strategies for effective advocacy, regular review columns, and critical analyses of management and

programming issues (June 2009,pg. 6)." Published by Scarecrow Press by-monthly except for

July/August, *Teacher Librarian* costs around $54 a year (June 2009, pg.6). Each issue has peer-reviewed

articles, book and media reviews, technology coverage, new product information, and professional

reading suggestions, as well as a special poster. Advertising was minimal, only seven vendors (June

2009, pg. 84), all industry related with most advertising being done by the publisher and journal itself.

The layout of *Teacher Librarian* was tasteful. Articles were not over-run with advertisements and varied

in length. Book reviews were displayed throughout in peer-reviewed side-bar columns by regular peer

contributors.

School Library Media Research

School Library Media Research is online and an official journal of the American Association of

School Librarians (AASL) subdivision of the American Library Association (ALA). Its purpose is "to

promote and publish high quality original research concerning the management, implementation, and

evaluation of school library media programs (About SLMR)." Issues are published freely online on an

annual basis. Advertising is strictly for AASL and ALA. The online format is standard: side and menu bar

options to other links and resources, average graphics, and without pictures.   Contents are listed under

the volume number by title, giving the author and board approval date. Articles are extremely lengthy,

consisting of research-study findings and reports on numerous topics related to librarianship.

PART TWO: ARTICLE REVIEW

Ballard, Susan D. (Jan/Feb 2011). "L4L and the Jungonauts." *Knowledge Quest*, 39.3, 76-78.

Summary

Ballard explains how Learning for Life (L4L) is used with students today who are so highly reliant

on technology, mostly internet-based technology. The coined term 'jungonaut' derives from the Latin

phrase 'Cogito, ergo sum' which translates 'I think, therefore I am,' and the Latin word 'jungo' which

translates "loosely to join, to connect" to mean 'jungo, ergo sum' or 'I link, therefore I am' (pg. 76).

Students today learn "by doing, by experiencing, by reaching out to the crowd and participating with

them to create [their] own wisdom (pg. 77)." However, young people do not realize or anticipate real

dangers. Ballard cites the utilization of *Standards for the 21st Century Learner, Empowering Learners*,

and AASL's *Building Level Toolkit* as the evaluation, planning, and implementation systems school

librarians have to help learners make resources work for them, to spend their time and money wisely,

and "complete their quest and find their own personal Golden Fleece – and not get fleeced along the

way" (pg. 77). This also includes assuring that all learners, including those with disabilities (Knowledge

Quest's theme of the issue) have equal access. Ballard makes a claim that students have an unrealized

need for school librarians to help them navigate through technology (pg. 77). She also points out that

school librarians need to allow students to learn in their environment, which today, happens to be

internet-based (pg.77). Acknowledging the way students learn today is a key concept in instruction.

The article, while not saying so directly, implies the need for school librarians to be up-to-date on

internet-based environments that students frequent in order to help them have access they need as

well as the need to walk along with them sharing wisdom and instruction that provides insights to

further the learner's knowledge and intellectual freedom while helping to maintain a safe environment.

Evaluation

This article shows the relationship between school librarians and learners. While most of the

talk has been about collaboration, collections, and budgeting, the learner is the one who has the most

to benefit from in all areas of the library program. Understanding how students learn and being able to

guide them in that process on their terms is essential to the success of the school library program. Many

had probably not thought about it until Ballard expressed that we really don't have an answer to why

we warn them to beware of their internet-based learning other than we are concerned for their safety

that we really don't have any other reason (p. 77). Reminding everyone about AASL's materials and

their usefulness also helps school librarians in their navigation of this area of growing technology when

the uncertainly of the task may have overshadowed the path. Also, remembering and reminding

everyone that all students, regardless of ability, was also a subtle reminder to meet all users' needs.

Church, Audrey P. (2010). "Secondary School Principals' Perceptions of the School Librarian's

Instructional Role." *School Library Media Research,* 13, n.p. Retrieved from

http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume13/church.cf

m#findings

Summary

This is a study of Virginia secondary school principals on their perceptions of the role of

the school library media specialist as teacher and as instructional partner. Three hundred fifteen

middle and high school principals in sixty school divisions in the state of Virginia responded to a

34 question web based survey ("Method", no para.). A total of 108 principals completed the

survey along with all eight state superintendents ("Method", no para.). The results of the study

concluded:

> "Findings demonstrate that principals support the instructional role of the school library
> media specialist, that they expect the school library media specialist to be the primary
> initiator of collaboration with classroom teachers at both the individual teacher and
> school levels, and that they gain their knowledge of the instructional role of the school
> library media specialist from school library media specialists with whom they work as
> teachers and as administrators. These findings have significant implications for the

field—in the K–12 environment for practicing school library media specialists and in the higher education environment for school library media specialist preparation programs" ("Abstract").

As a result of the study, Church suggests "school library media specialists must demonstrate the difference that they make in student learning as teachers of information-literacy skills, collaborative instructional partners, and instructional leaders within their schools. School library media specialists must communicate with and work to build partnerships with principals so that principals fully understand the contributions that a strong library program makes to student learning" ("Conclusion," para. 3).   Based on the study's findings, Church also addresses that "Principals want school library media specialists who collaborate to teach twenty-first-century skills, who demonstrate knowledge of state curriculum standards, who connect library instruction with classroom instruction, who promote reading and literacy, who teach technology skills, and who provide staff development for faculty. They want school library media specialists who create welcoming learning environments in their libraries; who are approachable, enthusiastic, and innovative; and who interact positively, collaboratively, and proactively with the staff" ("Conclusion," para. 4).

Evaluation

This article clearly defines how principals see school library media specialists. It is without question that they want school library media specialists who create inviting learning environments in libraries as well as collaborate, instruct, promote literacy and teach technology. However, this article also made it explains that principals do not necessarily know what the school librarian does and it is the job of the school librarian to instruct the principal

("Significance of Work and Implications for Practice," para. 1). Many school librarians may not

be aware that their principal does not have an understanding of their role and that they need to

instruct their principal. This is an excellent article for the school librarian in regards to

advocating for their position and their program.

Colvin, Mallorie. (May/June 2011). Why Read Digitally?" *School Library Monthly*, 27.8, 18-19.

Summary

Colvin discusses why school librarians should explore e-book reading. Colvin approaches several

barriers that stand in the way of school librarians using e-book readers such as cost, brand differences,

and format. Colvin provides websites and free downloads and applications to be used that afford e-

book reading on a computer or mobile device. Lastly, Colvin approaches the issue of why school

librarians should be familiar with e-book reading. Colvin states "First and foremost, digital reading

should be important to us, as librarians and educators, because our students are interested in it. It is

also important that we have experience in this area before our students are asked to explore it on their

own" (pg. 19).

Evaluation

This article breaks down the barriers that make school librarians ineffective and outdated. Prior

to reading this article, I had no intention of ever considering e-book reading. I even hate to read articles

for class on my computer and would rather print them out. The point Colvin makes about digital reading

being important because our students are interested in it and we need the experience in order to assist

the student was well taken. The information regarding the differences between the types of e-readers and the free downloads and applications only assisted in selling her point. The more school librarians take this approach to new technology, the more effective and utilized the school library program and librarian will be.

Killeen, Erlene Bishop. (June 2009). "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: transitions of the work but not

the mission." *Teacher Librarian*, 36.5, 8-13.

Summary

Killeen reflects on the changes in school library programming through her career from 1974 – 2009. Killeen extrapolates reading, technology and research as the three areas that though have changed over the years remain the constant foci of school librarianship (pg. 8). Killeen states that "reading is the basis of our education system and the foundation upon which all learning builds" (pg. 9). For the school librarian, "the joy of reading is our message" (pg.9) in which "our efforts must focus on the excitement, availability, and necessity of information and ideas through reading" (pg. 10). Technology has changed considerably over the years, yet Killeen stresses that through technology the school librarian's mission is still the same – "that of providing quality of access to information" (pg. 10). The third area Killeen focuses on is research. "Regardless of the student's age, the teacher-librarian is the individual who helps define the need for research as well as the finding and using of sources" (pg. 10). Here collaboration leads to more innovative means for students to do research, "to help eliminate redundant assignments or repetitive aspects of work" (pg. 11). Killeen expresses that leadership is the umbrella that the three areas come together under in the role of the school librarian. Killeen concludes with the reflection that what she trained for in terms of how to do school librarianship has changed,

continued to change over the years, and will obviously continue to change in the future;   but has not

changed in terms of why she does it (pg.13).

Evaluation

This article reflects on the changes in school librarianship over the last 30-plus years. The point

that things do change in terms of how is obvious. Yet, the point that the reason, motivation, and drive

that make up the why has not changed is a good insight for new librarians. Killeen's summarized

message 'we teach the joy of reading to gain knowledge, use technology to enhance the learning

experience, and utilize the best resources available in research' is worth reviewing and reflecting upon

regardless of how long one has been in the profession.

Reeve, Philip. (August 2011). "The Worst is yet to come." *School Library Journal*, 57.8, 35-36.

Summary

Reeve states that "dystopias are grim, humorless, and hopeless – and incredibly appealing to

teens" (pg. 35).   Exploring the dystopian genre, Reeve explains that dystopias bring together where

teens are psychologically with the society in which they live in. "Predictions of catastrophe pervade

modern Western culture" (pg. 36) in which "politicians and media thrive on a culture of fear and love to

make our flesh creep by inflating remote threats like terrorism or swine flu to apocalyptic proportions"

(pg. 36). Reeve postulates that teens "stuck in those awkward years between childhood and full

adulthood bridling against the authority of parents and high school teachers, they [young adults] can

draw a bleak satisfaction from imagining adult society reduced to smoking rubble" (pg. 35). Reeve also

expresses the difference in the dystopias of today in comparison to H.G. Wells' *1984* for example is the

lack of satire (pg. 35) and that "the end of the world is just no fun anymore" (pg. 36). Reeve poses the question "What sort of future awaits a society whose young people are taught there's nothing to look forward to but decline and disaster?" (pg. 36). However, Reeve states they dystopian message is "that an individual can make a difference and that courage and ingenuity can triumph even in the most dreadful circumstances" (pg. 36).

Evaluation

Dystopian novels are grim, and they are highly popular right now. One example is Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* series in which children are put into situations that result in them being forced to fight to the death. Reeve suggests that the seriousness associated with this genre might need to be saddled with some "utopian" alternatives to brighten the message young adult readers are getting (pg. 36). The point may be that fiction may at times be too realistic. This article not only gave excellent insight into the genre but also into its appeal to young adult readers as well.

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