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Getting Better to Meet the Future

Elizabeth "Betty" Marcoux and David Loertscher

There is so much that is shifting and very volatile in the field of teacher-librarianship.

We are not helpless teacher-librarians. We are helpful, but we also want to be needed and integral always. For instance, the CCSSI (Common Core State Standards Initiative) recently put out their latest draft for comment (<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.6c9a8a9ebc6ae07ee28aca9501010a0/?vgnextoid=e50b863754047210VgnVCM1000005e00100aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=759b8f2005361010VgnVCM1000001a0101aRCRD>). How many of us have taken the time to send in our comments? Is there time in our day that will allow us to do this? Will it even matter? The answer is a big resounding YES! We should want to have input in the standards that are close to being embraced by decision makers of school issues; we should want to contribute to the body of information that will affect not only how we work in the future but more important, how students learn (or do not).

The readiness standards for college and career (<http://www.corestandards.org/Standards/index.htm>) were released in September 2009. How do we have an effect on these readiness standards, and how does the draft of the Common Core standards affect them? What roles do we have in implementing them? How do we fit into this puzzle of everyone's expectations?

There are lots of initiatives in the world of teacher-librarians that are aimed at making us more visible, more viable, and more vital. For example, the Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) in Nassau County, NY, is working to define what professional development needs to happen and the best way to make it available to its members. The state of Washington is currently working on a teacher-librarian summit of words that will reinvigorate the field to levels so others in the field of education can make the connections between what they value and what teacher-librarians bring to this cause. The Londonderry School District (NH) Library Media & Technology program constantly works to align with current

educational thought and works to bring the practice of its teacher-librarians into complete synchronization with its overall strategic plan.

Neither of the above mentioned initiatives nor the articles in this issue of *Teacher Librarian* will say or do it all at once! However, what is essential is to do something. The way to define what to do is to take a good and hard look at what is happening—at each and every action—against the bigger picture of how what you do contributes to student learning.

In this issue you will find information about the best of things in our world. A survey of the 2009 NSLMPY winners is provided with substantiation for what makes an effective and exemplar school library program. Christina Bentheim talks about how to convert an elementary school library into a learning commons

that has teachers cheering. Nadean Meyer describes a collaborative partnership in Washington State that has resulted in closer alignment between the classroom, the school library, and the state's expectations of students. Kelly Brannock uses her observations of the television show "Survivor" to develop ideas of how to approach the concerns of teacher-librarian survivability. Megan Oakleaf and Patricia Owen make the point that by collaborating with higher education librarians there will be a significant increase in the 21st century skills students successfully bring to their studies beyond the high school. Kaye Dotson and Cynthia Grimes present information about an action research project that examined the roles of teacher, teacher-librarian, school staff, and community as North Carolina implemented a graduation project. Finally, Jami Jones

and fellow faculty encourage teacher-librarians to forge stronger relationships with those who teach special education students.

There are lots of lists, columns, and ideas in this publication; concepts about advocacy, research concerns, and curriculum approaches using new and engaging technology as well as approaches are explored. So, do not worry—within these pages are great ideas. Pick and choose what will work well in your situation. Risk, step out of your comfort zone and into the rich world to explore how to improve student learning.

Then, as *Teacher Librarian* also considers whether what we do improves student learning, we have chosen as our theme for the next volume year, *The Future is Now!*, and invites our readers to contribute to the discussion.

WRITE FOR *TEACHER LIBRARIAN*!

Teacher Librarian welcomes submission of articles for consideration for the 2010–2011 volume year. Submissions are accepted for consideration only if they have not been published or submitted for publication elsewhere. Stories usually range in length from 1,200 to 3500 words, but can be a shorter or longer depending on need.

Here are upcoming themes with deadline dates.

MONTH	THEME	COPY DUE DATE
October 2010	Moving to the Center of Teaching & Learning: Demonstrating It!	June 10, 2010
December 2010	The Challenge of New Standards <i>Common Core Standards, etc.</i>	August 10, 2010
February 2011	Technology and the School Library	October 10, 2010
April 2011	Best of the Best Includes 2010's top books, software, audio, etc.	December 10, 2010
June 2011	Curriculum/Intellectual Freedom	February 10, 2011

Write to editor@teacherlibrarian.com to express your interest and to request our publication guidelines.