

THE Teaching Librarian

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association
ISSN 1188679X

Learning to celebrate introverts

Balancing between introversion and
extroversion

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Tips for
Attending
Super
Conference

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Sharing Day of School Libraries internationally

Alanna King travels to Argentina to learn about
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Integrative thinking helps craft bylaw change

A group of OSLA members was tasked with identifying
tensions in the membership before crafting a new
bylaw amendment

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quiet @ your library

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THE Teaching Librarian

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quiet @ your library

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TingL Mission

The Teaching Librarian

The Teaching Librarian (TingL) is the official magazine of the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA). It is published three times a year to support OSLA members in providing significant and effective library programs and services. *The Teaching Librarian* promotes library programs and curriculum development that furthers exemplary educational objectives. The magazine fosters effective collaboration within the school library community and provides a forum to share experience and expertise.

TingL References

The Teaching Librarian is a general magazine for OSLA members and not a scholarly journal. If your article does require citation of sources, please provide them within the text of your article or column with as much or as little bibliographic information as necessary for identification (e.g. book title, year). If you feel that the works you are citing require full identification, please provide a bibliography at the end of your piece, formatted according to the latest Chicago Manual of Style (16th edition) or APA Style.

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TingL Submission Guidelines

Please Note: Themes are subject to change.

May 2020 V. 27, Issue 3	"Data @ your library" Deadline: January 31, 2020
September 2020 V. 28, Issue 1	"Curriculum @ your library" Deadline: May 31, 2020
January 2021 V. 28, Issue 2	"Diversity @ your library" Deadline: September 30, 2020

Articles of 150-250 words, 500 words, or 800-1,300 words are welcome. Articles, when approved, should be accompanied by high quality images and/or graphics whenever possible. Text must be sent electronically, preferably in a Microsoft Word (or compatible) file. Images or graphics must be sent separately in a digital format, such as .jpeg, .png, .tiff, or .ai. The minimum resolution must be 1000 px at 150 dpi. With photos that contain a recognized individual, please secure the individual's permission in writing for the use of the photo. Photos taken at public events or crowd shots taken in a public place do not require permission from the subjects. All submissions are subject to editing for consistency, length, content, and style. Journalistic style is preferred. *The Teaching Librarian* adheres to Canadian Press Style. Articles must include the working title, name of author, and email address in the body of the text. OSLA reserves the right to use pictures in other OSLA publications unless permission is limited or denied at the time of publishing.

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The Editor's Notebook



Caroline Freibauer

Making Noise About Being Quiet

I admit I wasn't thrilled with the notion of quiet in the school library, let alone building an entire edition of *The Teaching Librarian* around this theme. In this era of cuts to education, with many school libraries under stress and others virtually eliminated, it is difficult to stay quiet about the many benefits to student learning that a well-staffed, robust school library program can offer.

Although I do set aside quiet space in my school library for students who need it, usually the place is anything but quiet. We celebrate the many students collaborating, studying out loud, playing board games, chatting about books, debating various issues surrounding diversity and engaging in any number of activities. Quiet in our library is mostly a thing of the past.

But a member of *The Teaching Librarian* editorial board convinced me that the issue is important. She was adamant that we recognize and pay attention to the many introverts in our schools who are often overlooked. She reminded me that people who work in schools – staff and students alike – are all different. We need to respect those differences by listening. And, so, I listened to her.

To that end, we do have an in-depth article about introverts by Trish Hurley, who provides a close-up view of what it is like to be an introvert in a system that favours the gregarious. Her article reminds us how important it is to get to know all students and to vary our teaching methods to accommodate all learners.

But, mostly, the contributors to this edition of *The Teaching Librarian* took an ironic turn in their interpretation of the theme. We have an article on listening to music in the school library, another on loud clothing in the library learning commons and yet another on how important it is for us to speak up and share the good work happening every day.

And two articles, which at first glance don't appear to fit the theme at all, I would argue are the best examples of the importance of being quiet long enough to listen, to hear what others around us are saying. The first is Alanna King's account of her trip to Argentina, where she participated in three presentations to a large international audience. Yet, when I picture her at this conference on school libraries, I see her sitting quietly wearing headphones, concentrating on the simultaneous translation of other presentations. She was so energized by this opportunity that she is now learning Spanish.

And the second is the account of how a committee of school library professionals developed a better understanding of each other to help resolve growing tensions in our field. At the 2019 Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, some of them were engaged in a heated debate across enemy lines. But when this group came together, they were able to listen to each other and develop a plan to move forward.

I guess being quiet is not so bad after all. Maybe it's time for me to resurrect the shhh! ■

***The Teaching Librarian* is looking for contributors!**

Interested in writing for *The Teaching Librarian*? Here are themes and submission deadlines for upcoming issues:

"Data @ your library" Deadline: January 31, 2020

"Curriculum @ your library" Deadline: May 31, 2020

We are looking for articles of 150-250 words, 500 words, or 800-1,300 words with high-resolution images or illustrations. Please see page 5 for more information on submitting articles.

President's Report



Jenn Brown

Being Quiet is Not the Best Course of Action

As I near the end of my year as OSLA President it would be easy to reminisce about the speed at which time has passed and take a moment of quiet reflection to consider all that OSLA members have encountered in 2019. Quiet and reflection often present themselves as natural partners at the turning of the year. Pausing to consider the past and look to the great unknown of what the future holds for myself, OSLA and school libraries in Ontario would seem to be an obvious connection to the theme of this issue.

But if the year as your OSLA President has taught me one important lesson, it's that being quiet isn't always the best course of action. For those who know me personally, they can attest to the fact that being quiet is not exactly a strength for me. It is a skill I have fought hard to develop over my years as an educator, a learner and a parent. Listening to the experiences, feelings, and thoughts of OSLA members has been an important aspect of my time as both VP and president. Shifting myself from the centre to amplify the voices of others has become a major focus of my leadership journey and is still an area of growth for me.

While knowing when to be quiet is an essential skill, we also must recognize the importance of speaking up, of answering calls to action, of putting our name to something publicly despite the risk of pushback, of standing up beside those who need support and volunteering our time and expertise.

So, I ask you to consider NOT being quiet as we transition into 2020 and you welcome your new president, the incredible Maureen McGrath. This is my call to action for all OSLA members:

- Get loud – let us know what you need and how we can support you.
- Get involved – all the roles in OSLA are voluntary and diversity of perspectives around the table can only lead to stronger action.

- Get political – we know that school libraries need strong government support so, no matter which political party is in power, we must not be complacent or silent around advocacy.
- Get boastful – shout from the rooftops about the amazing learning and programming happening in your library learning commons because if you won't do it, who will?
- Get brave – I am rarely, if ever, the most knowledgeable person in the room, but somehow, I am brave enough to ask the questions that reveal how little I actually know. This can be scary, but almost always leads to deeper questions and new understandings.

And finally,

- Get emotional – this may seem like a strange final addition to my call to action but we know that all OSLA members are passionate and dedicated to their work, their students and their staff. On more than one occasion I am the one in the room fighting back tears as I speak on behalf of the school library sector. I have come to understand this is not weakness. This is strength. This is the power of us all coming together. We can use all our emotions, whether they start with years of hurt or decades of opportunity, to stand up for the future of school libraries in Ontario.

Taking time for our own quiet reflection is important for self-care and for fuelling our minds and bodies to give all that we can to our school communities. I encourage you to do this as often as you can. The work of the OSLA is only effective if our members feel valued, engaged, and voiced. Let's ensure that we all feel included in this work by resisting the urge to stay quiet and commit to coming together to make the OSLA the best it can be for the sake of the students we serve in our library learning commons each day. ■

Opinion and Miscellany

Letter to the Editor

*From Diana Maliszewski,
past The Teaching Librarian Editor-in-Chief*

I wanted to commend the editorial board of *TingL* for a visually stunning and informative edition of the magazine – Volume 27, Issue 1. The author testimonials were heartwarming. The infographics were effective. (Who deserves credit for creating them? I understand that People for Education provided the data, which is helpful, but there is someone who took that data and made it come alive. That person needs honouring too.) The vignettes about school libraries around the province were illuminating. I was delighted to see that Glenn Turner’s acceptance speech was reprinted because waaay back in Volume 15, Issue 1 (“People @ Your Library”), Glenn had written an article called “Anybody Home? Who’s really left in Ontario’s School Libraries.” Glenn undertook the research behind his article in 2006-2007 and it’s unfortunate to see that there have been further decreases in staffing since then. My only criticism about this wonderful issue is that my Twitter handle was incorrectly written – I’m not @MizzMolly, but @MzMollyTL (and the TL stands for teacher-librarian). Thank you again for producing an excellent resource for school library personnel of all types and stripes, and a tool for us to share with others in the business of education and beyond. ■

(Editor’s Note: Lauren Hummel, OLA’s Manager, Marketing and Communications, is responsible for all of the wonderful design work for *The Teaching Librarian*, including the State of School Libraries edition.)

It’s All Fun and Games

From Kimberly Senf

I can check THIS out?”
“There are games in the library!?!”
“I didn’t know the library had Bananagrams!”

These are all statements I have overheard in the library over the past few years as the board games in the collection have gained popularity amongst students. Libraries have been known to lend out items besides books – laptop chargers, headphones, museum passes – so the arrival of games in the school library is not unexpected. Board games are a great addition to school libraries, as they hold lots of appeal for students that want to take part in a social activity at lunch.

The first games added to the collection at my library were Scrabble (Harry Potter edition, of course), Sushi Go, Anomia, Bananagrams, and chess. The idea is to have games that are quick to play (under 30 minutes) and can be adapted if a piece or part wanders off. Quite simple, but it keeps the masses happy.

Some students come to the library for the games, others serendipitously encounter them in the library. The interesting aspect of having board games in the library is that students are remarkably respectful of the space and tend to play (relatively) quietly. Having the games available to students, the favourable responses I’ve gotten certainly outweigh a few noisy moments or a few missing Scrabble tiles. If you don’t already have a few board games in your library, it is worthwhile to add a few in a high traffic area and see what comes of it. ■

Quiet at the Library

From Alice Jupe, Library Technician

The library as a quiet place has disappeared. Especially in high school, it is now a lively destination for students to meet up and socialize, collaborate on school projects, use the computers, and text or play games.

But at a time when more people have access to more information than ever before, there is an assumption that young people can just look it up on the multitude of devices that they have available to them. Realistically, they don’t. This is the void where fake news and misinformation run riot like rumour and gossip.

Now it is the staff who must be loud, by curating thought-provoking displays that inform and provide insight on everything from current events, world issues, and human rights, to celebratory days and inviting students into conversations so that they can discover why these issues are relevant to them. Put into business terms, library staff must work the floor — selling ideas, thoughts, and yes, even books. ■



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Meet the Author

Vikki VanSickle

Angela Thompson

Vikki VanSickle is the author of the acclaimed Clarissa books, including *Words that Start with B*, *Love Is a Four-Letter Word* and *Days that End in Y*. Vikki's most recent middle grade novel, *Summer Days, Starry Nights*, was a finalist for the Red Maple Fiction Award. When asked whether libraries are "quiet", she responded that a library is a space "where there is generally a low level hum of activity at all times." Read on to find out more about Vikki.



TingL: How did your writing journey start? Is there an event or inspiration that you are able to pinpoint?

VV: I have been writing since I was able to spell out words, and a storyteller long before that. I loved books and stories so much that I wanted to be part of that world. As a child I entered a lot of writing contests and my writing assignments were always much longer than required. I took a brief detour into theatre in high school and university, but it was at UBC that I decided I wanted to write professionally for children. From 2005-2007 I was part of the MA in Children's Literature program and I took a writing for children course and everything just clicked into place. There I discovered that my natural writing voice was much more suited to children, and I've been writing seriously for kids of all ages ever since.

Are there any routines or habits that help you focus on your writing?

Yes, routines are very important to my process. So much of writing (and finishing) a book is setting aside the time and forming a habit. I have a full time job in publishing which limits my writing time, so I get up early to write before work and also set aside a larger block of time to write on weekends.

My process varies a little from book to book, but in the beginning I ruminate on an idea for a long time, making notes by hand in my journal. Eventually I get to the point where I have to start writing, and then I move to the computer, where I write all my drafts. I don't write from an outline and I don't write in order, so my first drafts are extremely messy, ungainly creatures. Once I finish a novel I usually take 3-6 months before I start another one. I need the time to decompress and get out of the voice of the novel before I can move on.

Picture books I can work on—off and on—for years, or in a very short amount of time. I can only work on one novel at a time, but I'm often tinkering away at a picture book or two at the same time.

What do you enjoy most about writing picture books? Books for young adults?

Novels are where I feel the most comfortable. I love getting lost in a character and their world and writing my way through it. I don't use an outline or do much pre-planning, so much of the process is about discovery and following my imagination. For me, writing picture books is more of a structured process than novel-writing. I am much more aware of pace, the impact of a page turn, and how much of the narrative lives in the text versus the art. I have a Honours B.A. in Drama and writing picture books reminds me of writing a play. In most cases, the playwright is not responsible for directing, casting, costuming, or designing the production, so the play is almost a framework or structure to build upon. A picture book text functions much the same way.

What can you tell us about your upcoming projects?

I have two picture books coming out over the next two years. In January 2020, Tundra Books will be publishing *Teddy Bear of the Year*, illustrated by Sydney Hanson. I've always loved *The Teddy Bear's Picnic*, and the idea of stuffed animals meeting in the forest enchanted me from a young age. I wanted to explore a world in which teddy bears not only go to picnics, but they have associations and service awards. Ollie is a young teddy and the book is all about his first experience at the Teddy Bear's Picnic, and his concerns about whether he is good enough at his job to be worthy of any of the service awards. I wanted to demonstrate the importance of small acts of kindness, emotional intelligence, and so-called soft skills that I think get lost sometimes in these times of big actions and big drama.

In 2021, Tundra books will be publishing *Anonymouse*, illustrated by Anna Pirolli. *Anonymouse* is a sort of mouse Banksy—an anonymous artist who creates street art for the animals in the city. I have lived in Toronto for twelve years now and one of the things I love about the city is street art and the creative ways people beautify the city. But I also wonder about the animals in the city—how they live, what they eat, whether it's safe—and this book combines those two things with truly spectacular art from Anna.

I've also just completed a draft of a middle grade novel about witches and the human child they adopt to act as their front in the human world, but that's a bit further off.

What compels/inspires you to craft stories?

I write because I have to; it is integral to my sanity, my soul, and how I exist in the world. I am at my lowest when I am not writing, and often in the fallow season between writing novels I go a little squirrely because I don't feel like myself, even if I know I'm not ready to start something new.

I can be inspired by almost anything, but often my ideas stem from something I have been interested in or loved since childhood. All of my books are love letters to things that I have loved or were important to me at some point. I love ensemble casts and exploring "what if" scenarios. My books often feature what I like to think of as small acts of bravery, or smaller-scale stories. I have a lot of respect for whimsy and humour, and how both of those things foster wonder and a love of reading.

Is there any advice that you could give to aspiring writers?

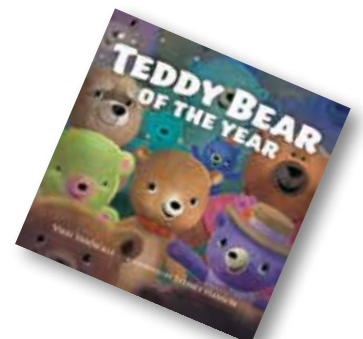
There are three very simple tips I like to give writers of all ages. The first is probably the most fun: read as much and as widely as you can. Absorbing story and narratives and language will strengthen your own writing. Secondly, make your writing a habit. Whether you decide to sit down three times a week and write for 20 minutes, or write first thing every day, or write until you have 100 words, discover which habit works for you and stick with it. Lastly, find a writing buddy or a group. Writing can be very solitary and it's easy to think your work is bad, but other writers will help you stay on track, provide support, and can offer editorial advice.

In our modern day and age, is a library space really "quiet"?

Most of my library time is spent in the children's section, where there is generally a low level hum of activity at all times. Personally, I like the sounds of children sounding out words, or a librarian giving book recommendations, or giggling drifting over from story time. It's comforting and reminds me that I am in a place that for many people is a safe space or a place of wonder.

Any final thoughts, shout outs, words of wisdom?

I've been lucky to be surrounded by a number of champions as a writer, from friends and family to publishing professionals and teachers and librarians who have supported my work. I am so grateful for that support. Any writer who thinks they can make it on their own needs to give their head a shake! Writers are just one part of a community of people who bring books to kids and the world. ■



Leah Kearney

TVO in the Classroom

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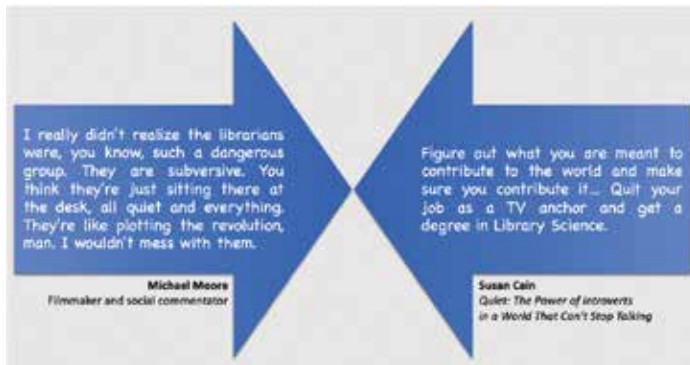
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Quiet People Making Noise for School Libraries



These two quotes are known to practically everyone who works in libraries. On first look they present completely opposing views. In fact they present different aspects of the same idea: the librarian as introvert.

I am an introvert. That doesn't mean that I am shy and socially anxious. I am not a delicate flower. It does mean that I am generally quiet, reserved, and introspective. The "quiet" part of this description may surprise those of you who have seen me present, or tried to get a word in edgewise when I extemporize on a favourite topic. The fact is that, like many quiet people who are driven by passion, I have developed some extroverted tendencies.

Do you recognize yourself in the Michael Moore quote? I do. Isn't plotting the revolution part of the job description when you work in libraries? Aren't we all driven by the fundamental belief that libraries and everything they embody can change people's lives? So why are we quietly plotting at our desks?

On first reading, Susan Cain's quote appears to be a shocking stereotype of the shy and retiring shushy-bunhead librarian. But let's fill in the rest of the paragraph, which focuses on passion: "Figure out what you are meant to contribute to the world and make sure you contribute it. If this requires public speaking or networking or other activities that make you uncomfortable, do them anyway."

And when it comes to quitting your job as a TV anchor to become a librarian, Cain qualifies this by saying, "But if TV anchoring is what you love, then create an extroverted persona to get yourself through the day." School libraries are not the domain of the quiet, as we all well know. Substitute teacher-librarian, library technician or whatever job you have for TV anchor, and Cain may have a point.

Of course we're not all introverts. Far from it. But there is something about working in a school library that keeps us quiet, professionally speaking. We may thrive in the lively atmosphere of the modern school library learning commons, but struggle to have our voice heard in the education world.

I so often hear the complaint that nobody understands what we do. Of course they don't! They don't have the professional knowledge and training that we do. How can we expect them to understand what we are capable of, and most importantly, how that capacity can help them achieve their own goals? It's up to us to help others understand the unique value of the library learning commons.

If we want people to understand the positive impact of the school library and school library professionals, then we need to speak up. Get on the agenda, write that annual report, get active in online networks! Explicitly share how you and the library program help students succeed and the school achieve its goals.



Need some ideas? *Leading Learning* can help. Find yourself on the continuum and decide on your strategy. Be a positive influencer. We can all find our voice. ■

DRAWN TO THE FORM

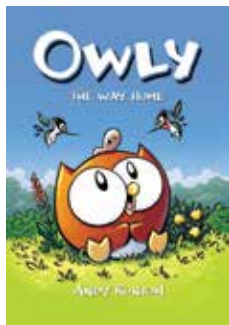
Wordless Comics

Diana Maliszewski
and the Staff of The Beguiling

Wordless comics may appear quiet to those uninitiated into the wonderful world of graphic novels – after all, how do you conduct a read-aloud with one when there are no words? It's actually doable. Wordless comics are absolutely amazing, chock full of great topics and themes, and appropriate for all ages.

School library professionals should not shy away from sharing wordless comics. Some tips for sharing with groups include:

- Ensure the audience can see the illustrations closely
- Use a document camera and interactive white board to enlarge the images if the group is particularly big. But do not scan and save every page. This infringes on copyright!
- Describe what you see, as if you were making the visual media accessible to users with visual impairments.



My favourite comic of this type is the incomparable *Owly* series by Andy Runton. I have the originals and enjoyed reading them together with my son when he was younger as part of our bedtime ritual. They pack such an emotional impact. I remember him weeping because he connected so deeply with Owly, the titular character, during a particularly poignant scene.



I realized that, although I possess several wordless comics in my school library collection (e.g. *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan), I may be unaware of other great titles. I turned to my friends at the The Beguiling, a Toronto bookstore featuring comics, manga, original local art and a diverse selection of graphic novels, for some expert advice and recommendations. Here, some of the staff

share a few of their personal favourites, and dispel some myths about wordless comics. They aren't as "quiet" as you think!

Bettina Krebs, the resident library technician at The Beguiling, recommends *The Hole* by Oyvind Torseter. Ever though it's a silent text, Bettina tells me:



"This book is incredibly affecting and explores themes of curiosity and existentialism in a way that is charming and accessible to children. It expresses itself in a unique way and engages children through its physicality, while also remaining largely simple in its design. It really sticks with you and sparks new thoughts and feelings with

every 'read' through."

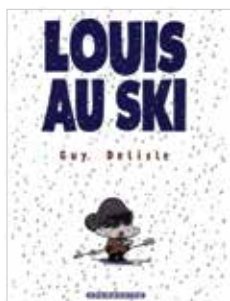
Christine Rentschler, one of The Beguiling's collection development specialists, drew my attention to a title that opens with an extended wordless section:



"In Ben Hatke's *Little Robot*, a little girl (and amateur engineer) discovers an abandoned robot in a garbage heap, makes friends with it, and the two set off on some wild adventures! *Little Robot* is a great book for early and reluctant readers because it starts with a wordless narrative that invites the reader in.

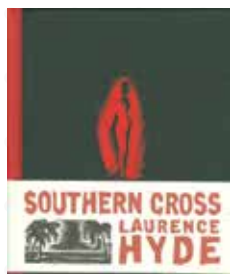
As the reader progresses through the story, increasingly more words are added through dialogue between the characters, as well as sound effects. With this book, readers can visually read a complex, 133-page story with very few language cues. *Little Robot* also is a good pick for diversifying your library since the protagonist is a person of colour!”

Peter Birkemoe, proprietor of The Beguiling, dug even deeper into the repertoire with his two picks. He suggests French-Canadian cartoonist Guy Delisle’s 2005 book *Louis au ski*, noting that:



“Wordless storytelling abounds in the European comics scene, some relying on pictographs, for speech, others do without entirely. Guy Delisle, best known for his travelogues (*Jerusalem, Pyongyang*) uses his skills as an animator to tell a tale of his young son’s adventurous day at a ski hill with elements of a great silent film comedy.”

Wordless graphics are not a new phenomemon, and Peter also recommended Laurence Hyde’s *Southern Cross*, originally published in 1951, but still very relevant (and still in print!) today. He explains:



“Long before the graphic novel as we know it was conceived, artists tried their hand at sequential picture narratives using woodcuts and engravings. One of the last of these, and the only Canadian example, is Laurence Hyde’s moving story of the displacement of the indigenous inhabitants of the Bikini Island atoll prior to the atom bomb tests.

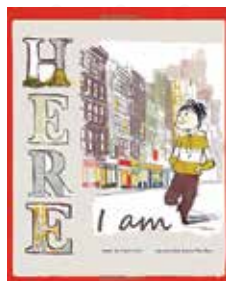
Suitable for high schools or mature middle school students.”

Finally, I asked Andrew Woodrow-Butcher, director of The Beguiling’s library services department, if he had any wordless picks. His first suggestion was the series of wordless *Hello Kitty* stories by Jacob Chabot et al, from VIZ Media.



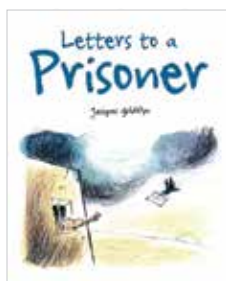
“These small books feature a recognizable character and each contain several short adventures. The comics use ideographs and other non-verbal signs to help young readers decode the narratives. Though wordless, the cartooning is quite dense and definitely requires complex reading skills. Plus, these books are both cute *and* fun!”

He also offered up a wordless title similar to *The Arrival* but built for even younger readers.



“*Here I Am* by Patti Kim and Sonia Sánchez is a wordless story of a kid who moves to a new city where they don’t speak the language. In free-form panels Kim and Sánchez articulate the loneliness and confusion that can affect many newcomers. In the end, it becomes a story of finding new friendships, even without a common language.”

Wordless stories also can tackle other kinds of tough, complex issues, too! Woodrow-Butcher showed me two issues books that could be good springboards for classroom discussion.



“Published by Owl Kids, *Letters to a Prisoner* by Jacques Goldstyn was inspired by Amnesty International’s global Write for Rights campaign, and looks at political prisoners from the perspective of a child. This book has important things to say—without using a word—about freedom of speech and the press, protest, and the carceral state.”



“Mel Tregonning’s *Small Things* visualizes the anxiety that affects the protagonist, gradually demonstrating that many of the people around us—kids and grown-ups alike—face similar challenges, and shows the values of empathy and vulnerability. Anxiety is a big theme for many kids’ graphic novels lately (think Telgemeier’s *Guts or Hale* and Pham’s *Best Friends*), and *Small Things* can be

an entry point to these discussions for readers of any level or language.”

After these conversations with the various experts from the Beguiling, I’m reminded that I shouldn’t keep quiet about comics! I need to continue to converse with knowledgeable people about the latest comic offerings being published. For instance, I knew that *Owly* was being republished after being out of print for a while, but I was unaware, until Andrew told me, that the new 2020 Scholastic editions will have words added to them. (I’m not sure how I feel about that!) Cultivate those relationships with local vendors and show how much you appreciate their expertise and advice by purchasing from them. You can’t get this kind of guidance from certain online-only retailers! 📖

TREASURE MOUNTAIN CANADA AT SUPER CONFERENCE 2020

Participatory Learning in the Library Learning Commons

Treasure Mountain Canada (TMC) is a research symposium and think tank exploring themes relevant to school library commons practice in Canada. The sixth biennial symposium (TMC6) is taking place as part of Super Conference 2020. Canadian School Libraries (CSL) extends a special invitation to OSLA members to attend as part of your Super Conference experience.

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FRIDAY:

TMC6 Keynote Speaker: Eric Walters

Super Conference School Libraries Spotlight: Shakil Choudhury

SATURDAY:

TMC6 Spotlight: Garfield Gini-Newman

TMC6 Spotlight: Deborah Dundas

TMC6 Spotlight: Leigh Cassell

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Trish Hurley

Introverts and Extroverts

Library Learning Commons are changing across Ontario. They are becoming school hubs with movable furniture, boisterous students collaborating, and literally the nucleus of schools. As the teachers of 21st century learners, we are encouraging creativity, critical thinking, communication, information, media and technology literacy, and most interestingly, collaboration. In a world and school system that praises group work, what happens to introverted students?

The words introvert and extrovert are often used by people to explain shy and outgoing people respectively. Where collaboration and group work are expected, the more shy or quieter students can often fall through the cracks. Many psychologists who specialize in personalities generally agree on the “Big 5” traits. They include extroversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism. They believe that all people have these traits in varying degrees and each trait has a range between two extremes. For example, extroversion is on a sliding scale from extreme extroversion to extreme introversion. Most people lie somewhere in between the two sides of the scale. While extroverts enjoy starting conversations, meeting new people, having a wide circle of friends, and often say things before thinking about them, introverts prefer solitude, become exhausted if they have to socialize a lot, do not like making small talk and ponder what to say before they say it.

The Ontario College of Teachers includes specific Standards of Practice in Education that all teachers strive towards. Commitment to students and student learning includes the concept that teachers treat “students equitably and with respect and are sensitive to factors that influence individual student learning.” This statement, therefore, includes both extroverted and introverted students.

Is a shy student necessarily an introverted student? The answer is no. Sophia Dembling, author of *The Introvert’s Way: Living a Quiet Life in a Noisy World*, says, “You have to differentiate between an introverted and shy student. It’s all about how motivated you are to engage. For example, a shy student may look at a group and want to participate with them and not know how. An introverted student may see the same group and prefer to go off on their own and read a book. They won’t try to be part of that group because they are content to be on their own.”

continued on page 18

Shy, outgoing, introverted or extroverted, the question becomes, how do we, as teacher-librarians, help all students learn? How do we ensure spaces are created for everyone?

Jessica Honard, author of *Introversion in the Classroom: How to Prevent Burnout and Encourage Success*, gives a simple explanation of introverts: “Introversion is all about energy and where you get your energy from and where you spend it. I like to compare it to currency ... if you go to the mall and it’s really busy and loud and there are a lot of bright lights and noises and it’s a very active environment, you don’t necessarily have to talk to a single person, but if you are introverted you may still get drained from that because there’s external stimulation.” That external stimulation is a factor teachers and teacher-librarians need to consider when creating classrooms “for the 21st century learner” in which furniture is movable, louder collaborative groups are common and makerspaces are noisy. The library’s quiet hum is lost, and some introverted students have no space for solitude.



The library’s quiet hum is lost, and some introverted students have no space for solitude.

Dr. Archie Kwan, senior psychologist with the Peel District School Board, suggests that “teachers may want to further explore the introversion-extroversion concept to develop a deeper appreciation for the fact that modern classrooms, where the focus is on high stimulation and interactive learning involving oral performance for class participation, can be challenging for the more quiet and introverted student, and understanding of how these personality traits can impact not only a student’s learning but his/her ability to fully demonstrate his/her knowledge and skills.”

While teachers can vary assessments, many boards are looking at 21st century competencies and introducing STEM/STEAM, robotics, makerspaces and alternative ways to demonstrate knowledge. Peel teacher and self-described introvert, Christine Kohse, wonders if we should study the impacts of new governmental or board policies before implementing them.

“Like any initiative with any board, we jump and perhaps do not study the impact enough. We do not always reflect on what is working and what we need to tweak. For some kids, we shouldn’t change everything just because it benefits some. You have to ask the question, ‘Why are we doing this and who does this benefit?’”

Kohse brings up an interesting point. As we change libraries and modern teaching concepts, do we think about long-term consequences?

Michael* (not his real name) is a Grade 5 Peel District School Board student. He explained his thoughts on group work: “I don’t like it when I have to work in a group. I focus better when I work independently, and I get more work done.” However, group work is often necessary. One thing Michael suggested is that “it feels better when I have someone else to work with in the group, someone I’m familiar with.” This is not just the case of a child who is being picky and wants to work with his friends. This is a child who may shut down and be unsuccessful in the group because he is more introverted and uncomfortable with group work. Michael adds, “I wouldn’t be happy if I had to work with new kids all the time in groups. I find it difficult and it makes me mad or anxious. Knowing someone makes it easier.”

It is not just the group work that can cause an introverted student to shut down. Kwan worked with a student who remembered when “she was in Grade 3 and she took a chance and raised her hand and gave the correct answer, ‘KILOmetres.’” Several classmates laughed and said it’s called “kiLOmetres.” The student recalls being “mortified.” Although her teacher was kind and supportive, the power of the peer group encouraged her to keep quiet for the rest of the year. While a small example, it is one that is more than likely never far from this student’s personal fears when it comes to class participation.

Dembling explains why group work can be challenging. Introverts “will not fight to be heard. They don’t push themselves into competition. Given the opportunity, they have plenty to say, but they will not fight their way in.” Dembling says that introverts can do well in classrooms if “they have advanced warnings and they know group work is coming up. They get their brains in gear.” She suggests teachers give students a heads-up that group work is coming. This gives an introvert time to adjust to the idea. Dembling adds that when picking roles in a group, introverts can be good leaders, but are not often chosen by their peers. She suggests that teachers can help by picking introverts as leaders.

How does this impact our school libraries? As libraries are not necessarily the quiet havens they used to be, setting up a quiet area where students can read, or unwind and regroup is helpful. When classes come to work in the library learning commons, ensure there are choices for all students. If group work is a necessity, create jobs within the group, so each person can complete one aspect. Or, assign specific jobs within the group. Michael says he can work in a group and still have an individual job to complete. “I feel better working independently. I won’t have to worry about other stuff like if kids are actually working or not and whether they will finish the task. If we all have our own jobs and bring it all together, it works better for me.”

Dembling echoes Michael’s feelings. “Extroverts feed into competition. Introverts work well in teams or groups. When introverts go into a meeting and have their own piece and fulfil that, rather than collaborating the whole way through, they are more successful. Introverts can contribute to the team

or group and fulfill the assignment and bring it back.”

Ella, a Grade 3 student with the Halton District School Board, finds group work difficult. “Sometimes it’s just too loud and too many people are talking. I can’t get my ideas heard in a group. When that happens, I just shut down and don’t offer anything.”

As introversion/extroversion is a specific personality trait, teachers cannot expect to change a student and make them “more extroverted.” Dembling brings up a strong point: “Introverts have been brought up to believe there is something shameful about their behaviour and that they are inferior. Instead, we should be discussing differences between learning and students, and stop necessarily valuing the qualities of extroverts. One is not better than the other. Introverts are used to being expected to behave in a way that is counterintuitive. Every interaction can lead to failure. Introverts are told you have to live like an extrovert. It can cause them to be anxious. If they come in thinking I have to be someone else, they will just shut down.” Having students “shut down” has never been the point of education. Educators need to be more aware of introverted students and help set them up for success.

Honard believes that “if you are an introvert and a teacher you kind of have a special job of being an advocate for your introverted students.” Kohse, is just that, a self-described introvert and teacher. She explains: “Relationship building wasn’t as important in the beginning of my career as I see it now. I have had to adapt and change to connect with the students. I can’t be a stand-offish person; I have to connect with them.” Kohse realizes that “once I get to know the interests of students and where they are coming from, I offer flexible work areas, make sure that when I notice things are getting a little loud that I ask people to consider and think about what other people need and we might just need to quiet down and have thinking time. I also ensure that there isn’t always just group work, and sometimes I say, you can work just by yourself.”

What does this all mean? It means that libraries need to be set up with intent. Intent to allow for noisy collaboration, quiet reflection, and individual space to work independently. Group work needs to be considered more carefully. Teachers need to vary assessment methods, use technology as a way to assess class participation – consider apps such as Kahoot, Socrativ, G Suite for Education – as opposed to always looking at the students who raise their hands.

All students’ needs must be considered when we follow the latest and greatest concepts in education.

“There is a perception of extroverts as high energy and pippy, so then introverts become unvalued. Letting kids and other teachers know that extroversion is not better – it is just different – is key,” said Dembling. “As kids begin to understand that there are just differences between learning styles, they will naturally start reaching out to introverts.” ■

Tips To Help Teachers Work With Introverts

By Archie B. Kwan, Ph.D., C.Psych., Senior Psychologist, Peel District School Board

Teachers often devote time at the beginning of the school year using various activities (online surveys, copies of questionnaires/surveys, etc.) to explore a student’s learning style (e.g., visual versus auditory being one dimension often explored) and to capture goals, aspirations for the year. The inclusion of surveys/materials to highlight the concept of introversion-extroversion can be utilized at that time and periodically throughout the school year, especially when group work is expected. I think this is a perfect opportunity for all students to better understand and appreciate the individual learning styles of peers and open the dialogue for respectfulness and expected code of conduct in the classroom (e.g., no bullying, no sarcasm or mean comments when peers are speaking, etc.).

Oftentimes, more extroverted students are quicker to express themselves and “take over” group activities. Therefore, it’s helpful to promote equal participation by defining clear expectations for group work (e.g. “everyone needs to contribute and here’s a list of possible jobs each member is responsible for” – possible roles: timekeeper, recorder, presenter/spokesperson, researcher, etc.)

Limiting the number of group members to less than five so all members are seen and can’t “hide.”

Consider allowing students to submit privately to the teacher, a list of students they are most comfortable working with in a group (as introverted students will be more likely to withdraw if they feel uncomfortable with certain peers).

Try to balance group activities/work with time for reflection and independent time.

Consider grading practices that balance group performance and individual work (having each student submit a short paragraph/essay on the topic).

Student self-evaluation and reflection can be enhanced by adding a rubric focused on group work performance and the student’s own performance in that group.

Work on creating a classroom climate where students feel safe to take a chance to participate orally. This is where clear rules for respectful behaviour towards peers combined with verbal encouragement from the teacher can go a long way to foster this positive and supportive climate.

During class activities requiring oral participation, give all students time to prepare and reflect on a response/answer.

Mary Chisholm

Sometimes You Need to Shush Yourself



Karen Murray, a teacher-librarian at Eastside Secondary School in the Hastings Prince Edward District School Board, demonstrates some easy stretches to help release tension during the day.

The stereotype of a stern librarian with the severe bun and icy glare, with finger on lips expelling a harsh “shhhh,” is one that we have worked hard to overcome. School library learning commons are busy, exciting, and often noisy places to be. Whether it be an enthusiastic sing-along, squeals of delight over discovering a new favourite book, beeping robots, or the sounds of building and creating, these hubs are often anything but quiet. Even during times of quiet, independent reading, there are lots of demands on your attention. Moments of true quiet are rare and often brief. To take advantage of these opportunities to recharge, sometimes you need to shush yourself.

Shushing, or quieting yourself for a couple minutes, is an investment in your own well-being. There are lots of ways that you can do this, such as looking out the window, drinking water, meditation, or even closing your eyes. I find the following three activities helpful when I only have a couple of minutes between classes: planning, desk stretches, and deep breathing.

During a hectic day I’m tempted to multi-task, jumping from one duty to another, and feeling like I’ve accomplished little. I like to use a few minutes of quiet for planning. I prefer to

do this on paper and give my eyes a rest from the computer monitor. It helps me to prioritize tasks and feel good about what I’ve already checked off the list. Having a planner you like and really nice pens help to make this an enjoyable screen-free activity.

Speaking of taking a break from the computer monitor, it’s amazing how much tension is carried in the neck and shoulders, especially if you spend a lot of time at the computer. A few minutes of stretching, right in your chair, can make a big difference, and, also help you be more mindful of your posture throughout the day. Students regularly walk past the library and see me with my arm up. If you work with someone else in your library learning commons, you can take a quiet stretch break together.

Along with stretching, deep breathing can help you relax and be refreshed. I didn’t realize how shallow my breathing was until I recently joined a choir and was led through deep breathing exercises as part of the warm-up. There are lots of free apps and exercises online to practise deep breathing. Or you can embrace the librarian stereotype for a minute and simply hold your finger to your lips. Breathe in deeply through your nose and give yourself a nice long “shhhh.” ■

Heather McTavish

Loud Style, (Not So) Quiet Library

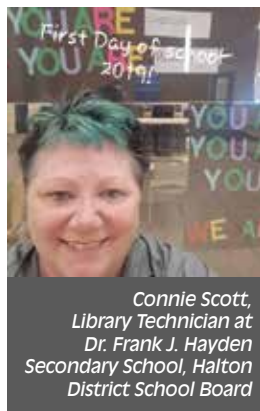


From left to right: Holly Armstrong - Library Technician (floral top), Christina Niro - Teacher-Librarian (red pants), Jonelle St. Aubyn - Lead Teacher-Librarian (dress) of Louise Arbor Secondary School, Peel District School Board.

Vibrant clothing, “loud” sneakers, and colourful hair sometimes donned by elementary and secondary library staff send unspoken messages. They are a conversation without words—a visual welcoming, inviting students to come into the library space. They have the power to convey ideas of positivity, about self-expression and inclusivity, and the ability to make us more approachable, mitigating some of the library anxiety often felt by learners in our libraries, quiet or loud.

Teacher-Librarians and library technicians shared what it means to dress “loudly” in their library spaces, illuminating what they hope their style conveys to students at their respective libraries.

The staff at the library learning commons at Louise Arbor Secondary School, part of the Peel District School Board, couple their fearless fashion with fun colours that match their body language. Lead teacher-librarian Jonelle St. Aubyn shares that by dressing the way they do, the library team communicates that they “are not afraid to have fun with fashion.” Importantly, their “bright colours and big smiles make [them] approachable to students and staff alike.” She also connects fashion to the space itself. “Our library space isn’t typically quiet, so our vibrant style compliments our vibrant space!”



Connie Scott, library technician at Dr. Frank J. Hayden Secondary School in the Halton District School board, and Diana Maliszewski, teacher-librarian at Agnes Macphail Public School in the Toronto District School Board, said that although they work in different school boards and in different settings, they both enjoy transforming their hair into loud, vibrant or uncommon shades. Between them, their hair has been blue, pink, purple, red, yellow, black and silver.

“I get a little bored with my regular colour so I like to change

it up,” said Diana. “It also makes a great teaching opportunity. I can talk with the students about stereotypes that surround hairstyles and shades. Just because someone has silver hair, that doesn’t mean they are grandparents! Just because someone has purple hair, that doesn’t mean they cannot be in a leadership position or position of authority!”

“Last year, I even dyed my hair in front of the students as part of our media unit. They were shocked by how long the process is and asked many questions!”

Connie said she is always asked why she dyes her hair so many colours. “I’m going to be real – I started to dye my hair because I felt I was invisible in my personal life. I thought colouring my hair a different colour might make people notice me and I wouldn’t feel as alone as I was.

“First, I cut my hair short and dyed it red. Turns out, I’m not a redhead, but I started to notice that I was a little more outgoing. Over the years I tried different colours – they didn’t always feel right. I even let all the colour go and went grey!! Grey really didn’t suit my personality!”

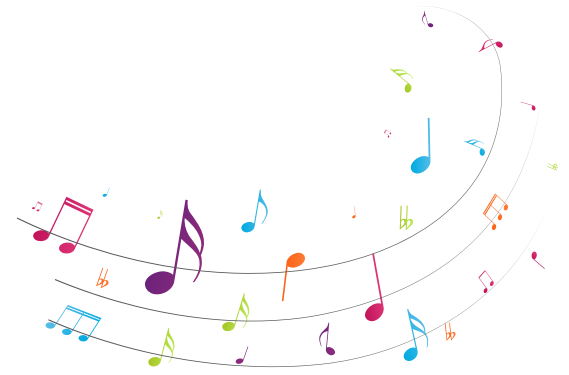
“I dye my hair blue-black and colour a front patch either teal or a vibrant blue now. With every colour change, I began to become more me, or more the person I wanted to be,” said Connie.

“I still feel invisible at times, but my coloured hair has helped me become the gregarious, outgoing and friendly person I wanted to be. I now get to be a role model for teenagers. I get to show the students in my school that no matter how old you are – I’m 55 – no matter your size, shape, colour or what your job is, create who you want to be on the outside to show who you are on the inside! Am I the person I truly want to be, not 100%, but every day I get to hang out with amazing teenagers, who show me courage and strength to keep going!

“Plus, I love my blue hair. It matches the Doctor Who or Marvel T-Shirts I wear to work!” ■

What's that sound?

Ambient Music in Your School Library



For most of us, the outdated stereotype that libraries must remain silent is just that: an outdated stereotype. With an increase in collaborative makerspaces, shared community spaces, and student engagement, the library is no longer functioning only as a silent space to do independent research. Four years ago, our library team decided to play instrumental music in our high school library to help make our space more inviting, and to distance ourselves from the outdated stereotype. Here are some of the things we considered before (and after) we began playing ambient music in the library.

Picking the right kind of music

Everyone has their preference for music, and we wanted to make sure that the music we were going to play wouldn't be distinctly off-putting or distracting to students or staff. The first thing we agreed on was no lyrics! We knew that playing music with lyrics could be very distracting to students who did use our space to study or complete homework. We wanted to start with well-known classical music that students would be familiar with, like Beethoven's *Symphony No. 8* or Tchaikovsky's *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies*. We also decided to include other instrumental music that had a moderate tempo and up-beat feel to create an inviting and calm space that did not make students and staff too jumpy or too sleepy. We were aiming for music that would make our patrons smile when they entered the library, even if they weren't familiar with (or fans of) instrumental music.

Choosing our music

Digging in our personal music collections, we found some great instrumental music. We brought together some Spanish-style guitar music, a CD with 100 classical song recordings, the soundtrack from *Riverdance*, a series of themed modern instrumental music, and two CDs with instrumental music mixed with nature sounds. This was the start of a music collection that would grow to include over twenty instrumental CDs, including a *Harry Potter* soundtrack, original guitar songs from our music teacher, the jazz stylings of Miles Davis, and traditional Indigenous music. We worked to include music from different genres, cultures, and eras to round out our growing collection.

Playing the music

When we first began playing music, we would play it all day. We noticed, however, that during our busiest times it became difficult to hear the music. After a bit of observation and discussion, we decided only to turn on the music when we were at about half capacity or less. This was an easy compromise, since it meant that we were still able to create a specific

atmosphere in the library without increasing the overall noise level during busy times. This also helped us keep the music at a reasonable volume that did not reach the back of the library, so that students who did wish to study or work in near silence were still able to do so.

Breaking our own rule

There were only two instances where we would play music with lyrics. We had a few CDs with both instrumental and lyrical songs that were low-key enough that we felt comfortable interchanging these with the instrumental music. We also would play music with lyrics during the Christmas season. As we are in a Catholic school, we opted to play *A Charlie Brown Christmas* and other Christmas-themed music during the last two weeks before winter break. This was, in part, to support other school-wide celebrations. Playing music with lyrics was something we chose to do to increase the variety of music we played without creating an off-putting atmosphere. When choosing to play music with lyrics, we wanted to ensure that the songs would be familiar or calm enough that they would somewhat blend into the background – we didn't want to play music with lyrics that would be overly distracting to students.

Deciding to not play music

After three years, we significantly decreased the amount of time we played music. We had acquired quite a few CDs with many variations in style, tempo, and genres. However, it began to feel repetitive and intrusive. We realized, also, how valuable silence was. After failing to restart a CD one day, my colleague came out of her office and remarked on the tranquility of the near silence (we have a large fish tank that provides soothing water noises). We started to discuss the possibility of not playing ambient music during certain times. Eventually, we agreed that we would continue to play music during some events held in our library, such as the art show, staff meetings which allow for collaborative work, or parent-teacher interview night. We also continued to play music at non-peak times when there were enough students working that the music would not sound overtly loud or out of place, but could help increase concentration or cover distracting conversations.

The decision to play ambient music in your school library is not always going to be an easy one. We had numerous students and staff remark on how welcoming and calm the space felt with the music, and a few even lamented its loss when we stopped playing it as frequently. Finding the balance between mood, volume, and effectiveness was the most difficult thing for us to do, though we believe the decision to play music in the library was successful and well-received. ■

Holly Dickson

Silent Message in the Stacks

At the age of ten, I fell in love with L.M. Montgomery's *Emily* trilogy, identifying strongly with the protagonist's love of nature and writing, her strict upbringing, and with her best friend, Ilse, who had blond hair and tomboyish ways, like me. Rural P.E.I. during the early 1900s was not like suburban Brampton during the '80s, but certain aspects of my childhood world aligned with Emily's fictional one and these stories offered me a lens through which I could explore facets of my own life and identity.

When authors create lively characters surrounded by austere relatives, blooming gardens, irritating neighbours and captivating friendships, young readers willingly surrender themselves again and again to fictional worlds that become as real and familiar as daily life. Author Jesmyn Ward writes in her book, *Well-Read Black Girl*, "[Writers]...build vividly rendered worlds for readers to fall in love with and fall into...they create characters that are so real, distinct, and familiar to the young reader that the reader has space to imagine him or herself in that world during the reading and after they are done."

This is the experience that launches children in the primary grades towards a passionate, lifelong addiction to books. Every day in my job at an Ontario library, I converse with patrons whose lives are not only enriched by books, but also made more coherent as they explore their own feelings and experiences through the lens of story.

Many young readers readily access a rich selection of books that help them to validate and scrutinize their own experiences and identities. Others, though, have to look harder. Classics like *Anne of Green Gables*, *Charlotte's Web* and *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* feature Caucasian children in a society that is entirely white. Race, for me, was never an issue, because all the characters I read about as a child shared my skin colour. It never occurred to me that some of my classmates explored beginning readers like Mr. Mugs and picture books like *Alice in Wonderland* without ever encountering characters who resembled them.

Jesmyn Ward shares the struggle of many of my peers, who failed to find themselves in the pages of books they read as young students. She writes, "I was never privy to the parting gift of immersion that some books afford readers after turning the final page. I could not exist in their worlds because no one who even looked like me spoke or walked or sang in those worlds – not even peripherally." (*Well-Read Black Girl*, 5)

The early reading experiences of black and Indian peers who grew up with me in Brampton differed from my own. These children went through hundreds of books before finally (if ever) encountering a protagonist who looked like them.

Decades later, there is more diversity in the titles filling our library shelves. Still, teachers and librarians need to intentionally ensure that all readers find themselves in literature.

I recently wandered through the stacks in my workplace, eyeballing displays, and noting a stunning lack of diversity. The demographics of the city I live in now differs from the cultural mosaic found in Toronto and the GTA, but this doesn't matter; all libraries are for everyone.

It's important for those who work in every library, even those in remote or rural communities, to intentionally select display materials and additions to the collection, which reflect our belief in the value of hearing different voices and highlighting work by representatives of all community members. Allowing one group to dominate sends the tacit message that books, reading, learning, and research are primarily the domain of some, while others, absent in posters, displays and the collection are of less importance.

Helping students discover mentors in the form of authors they connect with at a very personal level is the first step towards inspiring them to find their own voices and write their own stories. Let's spark a whole new generation of young readers and writers who are confident that their words have value and their experiences are worth writing about; there is a place in the literary canon for their thoughts and their characters. The library is for them! ■

Using Design to Control Volume in Your Library

Over the past ten years, our libraries and learning commons have changed their policy on how patrons are using the space, especially when it comes to volume. No longer do we quiet our patrons as they talk, work and plan with friends and colleagues. Quiet individual work has evolved into collaborating in groups as innovative ideas are discussed. Yet a balance is needed when we are trying to control volume.

How do we create a space that is welcoming, accessible to everyone, allows people to talk and discuss in groups and yet not be so overwhelming in volume that it disturbs other patrons. Obviously using study or group rooms does help with this situation for those libraries that have that option. Many smaller schools and libraries which do not have the space for extra rooms need other low-cost options.

Redesigning your floor plan to include collaborative zones or small niches will help break up the space. Once a group is set up in a small contained area or collaboration zone, the group, now in a defined space, will keep their volume to suit the space. A room that is wide open sends a signal to your patrons that loud work is what is needed to fill the space. A small zone however, being smaller but not necessarily completely closed, signals to the group to keep the volume lower to fill a small space.

“Furniture layout signals the intent of a space. As with zoning, furniture plays a role in cueing behavior by either encouraging or dissuading various activities within a given space.” (“Create a high-functioning library,” 81)

So how do we arrange our space to include various zones for collaboration and individual work? Placing your furniture or shelves in an “L” or circular pattern helps define spaces within your library.

“Physical space has always been and always will be an essential asset of the library. As books, periodicals, and reference collections become available online, those shelf spaces formerly filled with these items can now become spaces for people to meet and work. Space will remain an effective multisensory, emotional and interactive tool for socializing and learning.” (“Creating a high functioning library,” xii)

Other material may be used to hang from the ceiling to make a barrier or visually signify a specific area. Make sure there aren’t any sensors that could be set off with something hanging.

Always make sure you have one or two tucked away areas for a single person to work or read. It is easy to forget this area with all the talk of collaboration zones and makerspaces. To create this space use shelves, furniture, netting or other material to help separate this area. It does not need to be completely hidden but some netting or shelving partially hiding the area, gives the illusion of being alone.

“Aligning a space’s functional requirements with the design and locations within a building created an implicit understanding of how users should conduct themselves within the space.” (“Creating a high functioning library,” 77)



Diagram I – St. Gabriel School Library

Note how the furniture is running down the middle of the room all together. This set up sends signals to the students for loud playing and climbing as it seems like a park playground. The two tables at the back are blocking the entrance to the library and made for a crowded workspace.

Diagram II – St. Gabriel School Learning Commons

The space now has small collaborative zones for group work. The students were now able to exchange ideas without the distractions of all the other groups. The computer bar is compact and not blocking the doorway, making a space for five students. We design these spaces by arranging furniture and shelving in such a way to create barriers from other groups working. Smaller zones helps keep students' enthusiasm and ideas contained so more is accomplished.

“Reconfiguring the physical relationship is a powerful signal that participation is truly welcome. The result is that you get better ideas out in the open where they can grow” Kelley, David (as cited Doorley et al. 5)

When redesigning a space, things to consider besides furniture placement include: transition ways, colour, lighting, signage and accessories. A clutter-free library, meaningful but simple signage, warm accent lighting, area rugs and bright, fun colours on the wall, all help give your library an inviting, welcoming space. All these areas need to be considered with intent and purpose in recognizing the needs of the patrons who use the space. ■

Resources

- Baker, P. (2018). *Creating a Learning Commons for the 21st Century with design thinking*. Ottawa: Patricia Baker Publications.
- Hart, D. (2018). *Creating the High-Functioning Library Space: Expert Advice from Librarians, Architects, and Designers*. Marta Mestrovic Deyrup, ed. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Libraries Unlimited, 2017.
- Doorley, S., Witthoft, S., & Kelley, D. (2012). *Make space: how to set the stage for creative collaboration*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

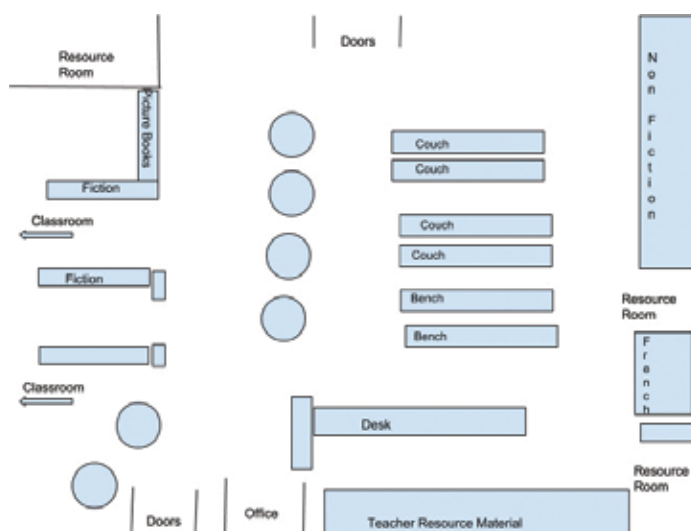


Diagram I – St. Gabriel School Library

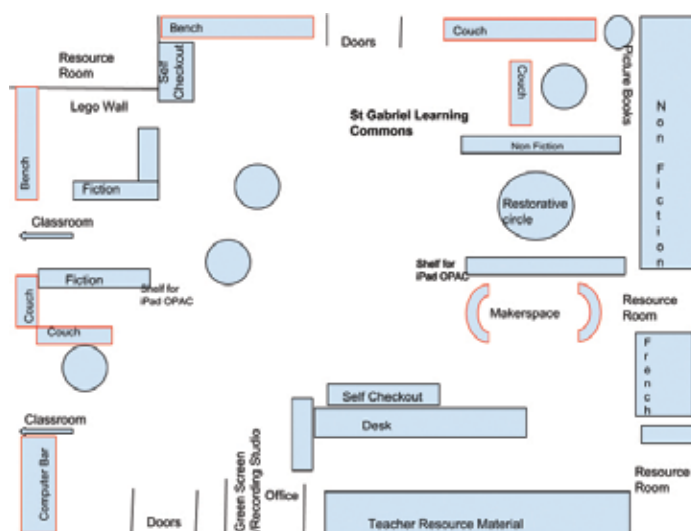


Diagram II – St. Gabriel School Learning Commons



Alanna King

¿Donde esta Alanna King? **Sharing School Library Strategies in Buenos Aires**



I am sitting in an auditorium in Buenos Aires, Argentina wearing headphones and a team of translators is converting every Spanish word spoken on stage for my benefit. This is the first ever Jornada de Bibliotecas Escolares (Day of School Libraries) where library stakeholders from primary to post-secondary share successes, talk about overcoming challenges and learn from each other.

As exciting as it was to be asked to keynote just two weeks before my departure, the real privilege is to be a part of this event. The audience is filled with stakeholders from school libraries, faculties of education, all levels of government, and university experts in library, literacy, education and digital technology. I am surrounded by murmurs and each participant has a glimmer of excitement in their eyes as they scramble to record notes.

The event was initiated by the Buenos Aires Ministry of Education and Innovation, which reached out to UNESCO in Montevideo, Uruguay and the International Federation of Libraries Association (IFLA) for help to find international presenters. UNESCO represents the areas of science, education and culture for the United Nations. Working on the key tenets in education and technology for their global Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, this event aimed to show how developing school libraries could have real impact on global literacy and digital fluency. Through my volunteer work in school libraries, I met Joanne Plante, who is the Canadian representative on the IFLA school libraries committee. Knowing my background in school libraries and educational technology, Joanne first contacted me in August to see if I'd be interested in going. I was immediately speaking with Stephen Weber of IFLA in Paris, and then the Uruguayan branch of UNESCO to make this quickly come together.

The day ran from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with intense presentations, and only one formal break for lunch. Other than my two presentations, I spent the rest of the day in silence, listening intently to what others were presenting. I was trying to both understand the context that I had landed in, as well as gather the provocations that each speaker was putting forward. School librarians at the elementary level are teachers, but school librarians at the secondary level are library

science graduates. My task was to bring a dynamic 30-minute presentation addressing four pieces of the challenge to improve digital fluency in schools: the emergence of digital media, the physical changes needed to allow for new learning models, the infrastructure that has allowed for change, and how to create this change over time. I also was given ten additional minutes to speak on the role of the school librarian as pedagogical agent as part of a four-person panel.

I was the only native English speaker and with my dismal attempts at speaking Spanish, I soon had a translator with me at all times. In the auditorium of over 700 participants, every one of them was offered headphones for translation while I was speaking. There were other foreign presenters as well from Spain, Colombia, Uruguay and Mexico and we formed a little group, getting to know each other better at each meal. We quickly abandoned small talk, realizing the precious gift we were given to be sitting together, experts in our fields with different perspectives. From my presentation, what really resonated were two things: the cycle of design thinking and the triangulation of assessment to include observation and conversation.

I tried to summarize the ideas of design thinking by handing each participant a simple piece of colourful paper and asking them to use empathy to relate to the needs of a book user. In other words, we were going to make the ultimate bookmark. Through this simple idea, we tackled the ideas of individualization (adding your own initial), safety and security (rounding the corners to avoid paper cuts), and innovation to take the bookmark to the next level of functionality (adding a tassel). I explained that this simple task is part of our high school orientation, when we invite students into the design thinking mindset and show them the different tools at our makerspace—greenscreen and digital library—that will allow them to work through each of their school inquiry projects. Soon our students aren't just designing bookmarks, they're problem-solving global issues like fair voting, cleaning up oil spills, and preparing for natural disasters. In each case we use the same design-thinking cycle. Despite our language and cultural differences, I could see light bulbs going off as the theory of design-thinking percolated.

Secondly, the ideas in the pedagogical strategy known as Triangulation of Assessment resonated with this audience. I recalled for them how as a teacher, my thinking shifted when I started to understand that I couldn't always see my students be successful in their final

continued on page 28



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products, even though I knew they were capable, and I had watched them demonstrate my expectations in class. I began to use the Triangulation of Assessment, capturing and valuing my observations and conversations during the process, and treating them as important as the final product. As a teacher-librarian, this strategy allows me to help assess students through conversations and observations by having predetermined criteria constructed in collaboration with the teacher. Being an enthusiastic participant in assessment and having a bank of ideas for capturing criteria has made me very popular for collaboration. Having real tools that the library staff could take away for observation and conversation appealed to this audience of school library stakeholders.

It would be difficult to spend any time in Buenos Aires without having some understanding of the history that has kept this country from moving into the world ranks of economic stability. I did a quick three-hour tour on the day I arrived to try to get a feel for the place. Spain first made contact with this part of the continent in the early 1500s, and the evidence of Spanish colonialism is everywhere, making Buenos Aires feel like a European country. The architecture is ornate and regal, a loaf of Italian bread is served at every meal, and the wine is decadent. The ostentatious government buildings stand in stark contrast to the numerous homeless in the city. Giant gates surround each historic building and armed guards are everywhere. Currently there are many people from Venezuela, Bolivia and Chile who are seeking a better life in Buenos Aires.

The Argentinian people are passionate. I joked that my cheeks were worn out from all the kisses. Their presentations were passionate too. The audience really responded when Walquiria Salinas (her name translates to Valkyrie as her father was a huge fan of Wagner), the director of school libraries, spoke passionately about the need for change and also the need for fresh resources and infrastructure. When she finished, the audience stood and shouted their appreciation for her fiery speech.

After 30 hours of travel, and barely four days in Buenos Aires, I'm no expert of the issues they're faced with or the barriers they need to overcome to make change possible. But the cultural opportunities for sharing ideas were so rich, I couldn't get enough. If I could work like this every day in this environment, I would never retire. So, I'm going to try to make myself even more valuable to UNESCO and IFLA. I've signed up for a Spanish class. ■

For More Information:

IFLA's School Library Committee: ifla.org/school-libraries

UNESCO's Work in Sustainable Development Goals:
sustainabledevelopment.un.org

UNESCO's Media about the Event:

- unesco.org/new/es/media-services/single-view-tv-release/news/argentina_proposes_to_transform_its_school_libraries_into_in
- unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/more_than_500_school_librarians_convened_around_the_transfor

Design Thinking Through a Bookmark

By Alanna King

Supplies:

- Cardstock (plain and patterned) cut into 2"x 6" strips
- Hole punch
- Various stickers
- Alphabet stickers
- Corner rounder
- Ribbons, embroidery floss, yarn, beads, charms, etc.

Instructions:

1. **Empathy:** In design thinking, we always start with empathy for the user/client first. Think of someone who needs a bookmark. What do they like? What kind of reader are they? What are their interests? Use your answers to make each choice.
2. **Define:** Discuss the function of a bookmark and how many different bookmarks people have seen.
3. **Prototype:** Select two pieces of cardstock – one printed, and one plain. Stick these together so that the desired faces are facing out.
4. **Ideate:** Next, how can this bookmark be further improved for the user experience? Perhaps the corners are sharp and can be rounded.
5. **Prototype:** Perhaps, the bookmark will fall into the pages so add a tassel or ribbon to help mark the place of the user's reading place.
6. **Prototype:** Individualize the bookmark with initials or stickers to set their bookmark off from others in a personal way.
7. **Test:** Give the bookmark to the user you intended it for and get their feedback.

Bylaw 2 Committee Integrative Thinking Fosters Inclusive Vision

It was the best attended Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting in recent memory. The 2019 lunch-time session was crowded with teacher-librarians, school library technicians, and anyone interested in the school library sector. Everyone was ready to debate a motion to amend the Ontario School Library Association Bylaw, which called for all language referring to teacher-librarians to be removed and replaced with the term “library worker.”

Teacher-Librarians were convinced such a move could mean the end of the school library. Other school library staff, including library technicians, informationists and MLIS librarians, felt it was time to acknowledge everyone who works in school libraries.

Tensions ran high during the passionate debate, with people on both sides lined up in front of microphones to make their views known. Then an amendment was supported to defer the resolution to a committee, which would be responsible for coming up with a new resolution for the 2020 annual meeting. A striking committee was chosen, people were invited to apply and an eight-member Bylaw 2 committee representing library technicians, teacher-librarians, MLIS librarians and public librarians was selected. Kerry Badgley, OLA past president, was asked to chair the session. He was joined by Ruth Hall, a retired teacher-librarian from the Toronto District School Board, Peggy Thomas, a former teacher-librarian who now works as an MLIS librarian at the Toronto Public Library, Kasey Whalley, a library technician with Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, Mary Chisholm, a library technician with Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board, Linda Wells, an MLIS school library co-ordinator for London District Catholic School Board, Sara Olsen, a teacher-librarian from the Durham District School Board and Jess Oakman, a library technician from the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

Thomas said she wanted to participate on the Bylaw 2 committee because she is passionate about school libraries.

“I feel, even though I have moved to the public library sector, that there are still ways that I can contribute, and ways that I can build bridges in the community through my experiences,” she said. “As well, we need to be more mindful of ways that we can

collaborate professionally both within the school library sector and more broadly, within all of the sectors of librarianship.”

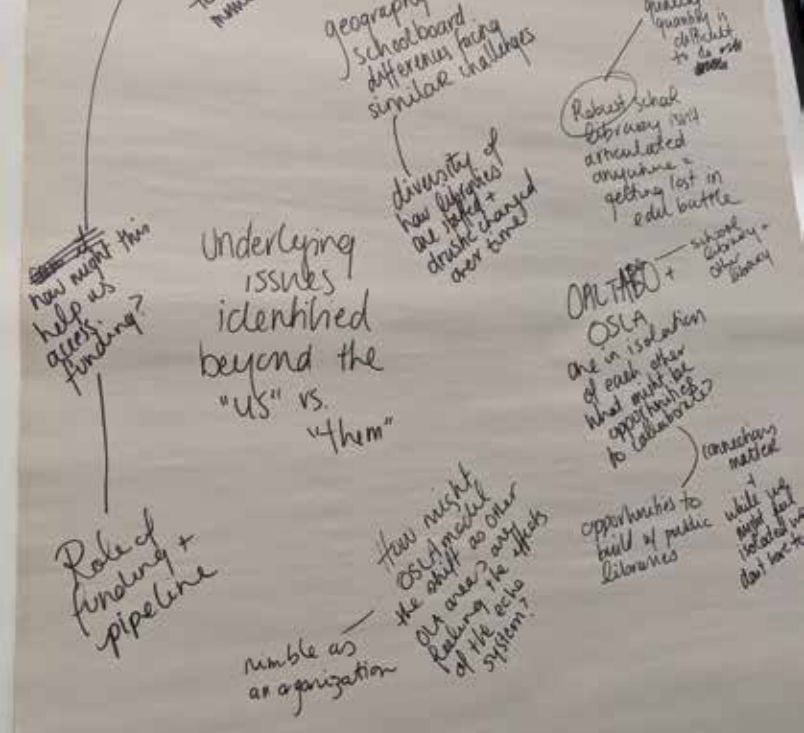
Whalley acknowledged that conversations around school library staff qualifications and designations can be intense. “I wanted an opportunity to work collaboratively and constructively on a resolution that could ease that tension,” she said. “I was really looking forward to making progress and hearing representation from a variety of sectors in a safe and open forum – especially one that was focused on finding a resolution.”

To address the deep-seated tension building among OSLA members, it was decided to use an integrative thinking process to identify the growing challenges, find ways to address them and recommend a change to the resolution language. Nogah Kornberg, associate director at I-Think, a non-profit that helps bring real-life problem-solving to classrooms, agreed to facilitate the two-day workshop. In preparation for the August session, there were a few conference call meetings. All participants were asked to read about integrative thinking, which is defined as the ability to hold in tension two opposing ideas and, instead of choosing one over the other, generate a creative resolution in the form of a new idea that contains elements of the opposing ideas but is superior to both.

They began the day by developing a guiding question: “How might the OLA ensure all roles are collaborating in service of being a strong, united voice for school libraries?”

A four-stage process was used to addressing the guiding question:

1. Articulating the models: Identifying two extreme and opposing models or “answers” and identifying the benefits of each.
2. Examining the models: Identifying similarities, points of tension, assumptions and elements to keep or discard.
3. Exploring the possibilities: Creating a new model from elements of each.
4. Assessing the prototypes: What would have to be true to make this work?



The Bylaw 2 committee divided into two groups of four, each working separately as Kornberg guided them through the process. All committee members approached the challenge with a positive and open mindset, respectful of other people's positions and asking questions when confused. And each group quickly concluded a new vision for school libraries is needed.

Badgley said "the spirit of co-operation and keen sense of mission that all displayed in working toward a resolution" is what stood out for him.

"There was a lot of emotional labour over the course of the two days. It was exhausting," said Chisholm. "I was surprised by how quickly we all got to the meat of the issues, but, on the flip side, how long a process it was to really chew on the grisly bits."

Wells was surprised that school boards' notions of what adequate library support looks like varies so widely across the province. But she was happy that, despite everyone's diverse backgrounds, "we were all speaking a common language, which doesn't necessarily come across at meetings and conferences."

Olsen also was surprised by the diversity of staffing models across the province. "We have a large community of library professionals in our school libraries throughout the province and, although everyone feels their role is important, we must embrace the diverse roles among our association and respect what everyone brings to the table."

Oakman wanted to be a part of the process because OSLA Bylaw's existence made her feel that she didn't belong to that division of OLA. She wanted to help bring about a positive, inclusive change.

"The process was surprising, frustrating and enlightening for sure, as well as mentally exhausting," said Oakman. "We

might only have been eight people on the committee but we felt the presence of the rest of the membership not in the room relying on us to put forth the best option for their consideration and vote at the next AGM."

In the end, the recommendations centred on the idea of creating a new and inclusive vision for school libraries in Ontario:

- Renew and revitalize the vision for school libraries using a consultative and collaborative process
- Learn how different school boards deliver a school library program
- Honour local flexibility while providing the framework, programs and services to help people deliver the best school library program.
- Ensure Ontario's school libraries have credibility and people care about them
- Recognize the evolution of school libraries by making this a living document

The Bylaw 2 committee recommended changes to the objects of the OSLA Bylaw, which maintained the integrity of the teacher-librarian role while acknowledging all school library professionals. The revised bylaw amendment was endorsed by OSLA council and, at time of writing, OLA was working to seek input from members before presenting it at the 2020 AGM.

"I feel very positive about both the process and outcome. Whether we can translate this to the broader audience will be the issue," said Thomas. "It is a long road ahead, perhaps with many bumps in the journey, but if we can stay focused on the positive interactions that happened in the two-day meeting, we are set for success." ■



Proposed Changes to the OSLA Bylaw:

Current:

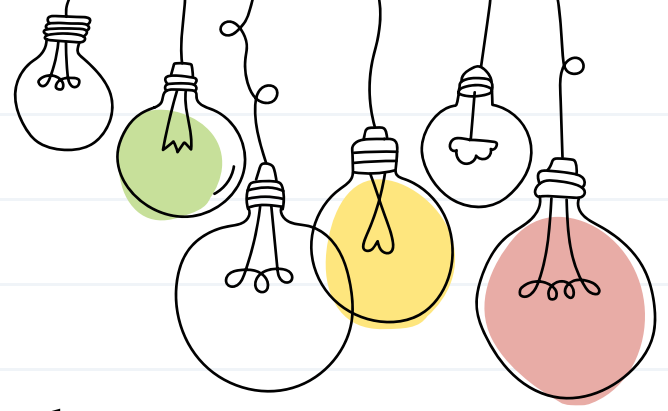
The objects of the Division are:

- to further the development of school library programs and school libraries in Ontario,
 - to strengthen and unify the voice of teacher-librarians as curriculum leaders,
 - to work with the full library community on shared issues and programs,
 - to represent the profession of teacher-librarianship as a subject association recognized by the Ontario Ministry of Education
 - to provide professional development opportunities for teacher-librarians and other qualified school library staff, and
 - to promote research related to effective school libraries.
-

Revised:

The objects of the Division are:

- to further the development of school library programs and school libraries in Ontario,
- to strengthen and unify the voice of qualified library staff as library program facilitators and supporters of the curriculum,
- to work with the broader library community on shared issues, opportunities and initiatives,
- to be the subject association recognized by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Ontario Teachers Federation,
- to provide professional development opportunities for qualified school library staff,
- to promote research related to effective school libraries,
- to advocate for the significant role of school libraries in contributing to student achievement.



Insights from the Integrative Thinking Facilitator

Nogah Kornberg is a social entrepreneur committed to building capacity in organizations for insight-driven problem solving. She pulls from the toolboxes of Integrative Thinking, Business Design and Strategy to design and facilitate problem-solving sessions and professional learning, as well as a consultant for organizations such as the Ontario Library Association. Recently, she has worked with IFEX and Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. Nogah is the Associate Director at I-Think, a non-profit making real-world problem-solving core to every classroom. Prior to this, she was the Executive Director of the Young Social Entrepreneurs of Canada and a high school social science teacher with the Toronto District School Board.

She shepherded the Bylaw 2 Committee through the Integrative Thinking process to help the team revisit the proposed Ontario School Library Association Bylaw amendment. Here are some of her thoughts on the two-day session.

Can you briefly explain the integrative thinking process and how it was applied in this situation where the committee was ultimately trying to write a new bylaw?

Integrative Thinking is a problem-solving methodology created on the insight that opposing models are an opportunity for innovation, not an obstacle to it. It recognizes that each of us create our mental models that cannot, by necessity, include everything. As a result, when we come across a different or opposing model, it is an opportunity to be curious instead of becoming entrenched in our point-of-view.

Once the opposing models have been identified, the goal is to understand the value of each model towards a better answer. We do this by exploring the benefits of each model for different stakeholders. This provides the food for thought that leads to insights. Those insights inspire new possibilities.

We used Integrative Thinking as the methodology because it allowed us to open the process with an acknowledgement of the diverse perspectives present. Furthermore, it positions those perspectives as necessary for innovation and honours those perspectives as valid, interesting and useful to creating a new and better path forward.

What is your role as the facilitator in this process?

As a facilitator, I design the problem-solving process and support the groups as they go through it. That support looks like offering a guiding question, synthesising the conversation and asking the group to react to its accuracy and noticing nuances in thinking between the groups.

What did you think of the outcome?

I observed two outcomes, both of which are important. The first is a clear mandate for the OLA on how to address the challenge. The group landed on a couple recommendations that provide the OLA with a path forward on how to build cohesion for its membership.

The second outcome was community building. The team did a remarkable job of slowing down their thinking and listening to each other. It might seem obvious, but when we care about something and are invested in it, we are more likely to assume everyone else thinks like we do and we stop listening to others.

That everyone was heard and valued, coupled with recommendations, made for good outcomes of our time together.

Did you find anything surprising?

I was grateful that everyone was willing to engage in the process. One challenge with insight-driven problem solving is that we don't know what our insights will be or when we will have our ah-ha moments. This makes parts of the process harder. The team was generous with their thinking and self-reflective on how their understanding is changing. That engagement is what made the process successful.

What stands out for you at the end of this two-day session?

The clarity of next steps with still having space for the larger community to shape the ideas.

Do you think that we needed more time?

Solving a problem and implementing the solution requires more than two days. For the goals of the session, two days was a good amount of time. (Though I wouldn't have said no to a couple more hours!) ■

KEEP YOUR OSLA MEMBERSHIP CURRENT

As an OSLA member, you become a part of a collective voice that advocates on behalf of school libraries across the province.

When you renew, you are supporting this provincial advocacy, ensuring we are able to continue to fight for equitable access to school libraries.

You receive special rates for the 2020 Super Conference. Treasure Mountain Canada is part of this year's Super Conference on Friday and Saturday.

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Do you love to read? Do you love Canada? On February 19, 2020, you can celebrate both on I Read Canadian Day.

Participate in the first-ever **I Read Canadian Day** by taking 15 minutes — wherever you are — at home, at school, or at the library to read a Canadian book on February 19.

Celebrate the richness, diversity, and breadth of books in Canada. Our authors and illustrators are telling *our stories*.

Parent and teachers, you can join in the fun too. Sign up your kids, school, or library at ireadcanadian.com/day and find tips and tricks to help you celebrate and share your excitement about Canadian books.

A new nationwide initiative that celebrates the richness, diversity, and breadth of Canadian literature is here.

SIGN UP READERS FOR FREE: ireadcanadian.com/day



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du Canada

Book and
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PLANNING TO ATTEND

Super Conference?



HERE ARE SOME TIPS FROM VETERAN ATTENDEES!

COMPILED BY MARY CHISHOLM

Karen Morrow, Teacher-Librarian at Bayside Secondary School (Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board), has two pieces of advice.

1. If you have signed up for a session and it's not meeting your needs, then leave and try another or go to the Expo. Time at the Super Conference is precious and presenters will understand.

2. Bring a spouse or friend so you have two extra suitcases for books. But, seriously, I would recommend that participants regularly check the Expo author schedule so that they may prioritize what authors they would like to meet and which books they would like to acquire. As well, Super Conference is a good opportunity to connect with authors. Emailing an author often results in an opportunity for a brief meeting during the conference and that kind of networking is so beneficial.

Kate Johnson-McGregor, Teacher-Librarian, Assistant Dept. Head, English, Coordinator, BCI Laurier Program at Brantford Collegiate Institute and Vocational School (Grand Erie District School Board), says there are so many awesome things to do at Super Conference. And as OSLA co-planner, she has lots of ideas. Here are her top five:

1. Chat with the people sitting next to you in a session, standing in line at the bar at the All Conference Party, or browsing in the Library Marketplace (the onsite store) – especially if you're new to Super Conference. If you see someone you "know" from Twitter or a presentation, definitely strike up a conversation! The human connections are what make libraries (and the Super Conference) awesome!

2. Attend a session presented by someone outside your stream! It's amazing how much we can learn from one another. The ideas and challenges in other kinds of libraries are often still very relevant.

3. Volunteer to convene a session. It's a great way to begin to get involved with the OLA and session conveners are always needed!

4. Bring your administrator for FREE if you're working in a school library. The Super Conference is a fantastic way to help admin learn about the incredible value of a properly staffed, properly resourced library learning commons in a school.

5. Wear comfortable shoes. The convention centre is huge and you'll easily get in 12,000 steps a day!

Diana Maliszewski, Teacher-Librarian at Agnes Macphail Public School (Toronto District School Board), is an OSLA co-planner, and some of her conference advice reinforces what already has been said, but some is slightly contradictory. It's up to you to experiment! Her tips are:

1. Wear comfortable shoes and have layers of clothes you can add or remove.

2. Go over the program and make note (in whatever way works best for you) of the sessions you want to attend.

3. Don't beat yourself up if you cannot attend every session you hope to see. Some things occur at the same time. Although you are allowed to leave a workshop for whatever reason, session hopping because you want to "catch it all" can be risky because it sometimes means you just get bits and not the full experience. Also, do not underestimate the learning that happens in casual conversations in the hall, on the Expo floor, or at the social events. Sometimes the learning there is even richer or more personal!

4. Capture or document your learning (and your connections made) somehow. You will need to advocate or demonstrate why it was worth all that money for you to attend. ■

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