May 2022 Volume 29, Issue 3

THE Teaching Librarian

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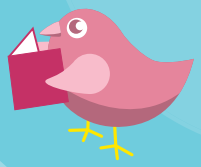

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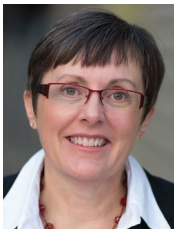

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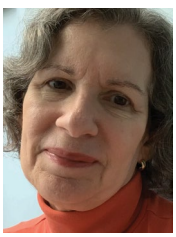

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TingL Mission

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.

September 2022 V. 30, Issue 1	"Back @ your library" Deadline: May 31, 2022
January 2023 V. 30, Issue 1	"Literacies @ your library" Deadline: Spetember 30, 2022
May 2023 V. 30, Issue 2	"Censorship @ your library" Deadline: January 31, 2023

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**

Kasey Whalley

Leadership is one of those words that can trip us up. We often imagine leadership in one way, only to discover that it can look or feel very different in our day-to-day lives. When I thought about who the leaders in my life are, I started to notice that there was a wide range of people who would fit the definition, and all of them with distinct leadership qualities.

The thing that I love most about leadership, as a concept, is its variety. There are loud leaders, brave leaders, and strong leaders. There are also quiet leaders, shy leaders, and leaders who show weakness. Leadership, I'm coming to realize, can look like many different things. Great leaders can be outspoken and quiet, brave and unassuming, strong and vulnerable – a veritable tangle of juxtapositions. The best part is that many often have, and fully utilize these wonderful contrasting traits.

The articles we gathered for this issue look at leadership in many different forms. Leadership as an experienced practice is explored in the President's Report and Shelagh Straughan's piece. Both the CSL feature and Highlights from the OLA Super Conference provide insight into professional development opportunities that foster leadership and learning to support our school library communities.

In "Equity Leadership in the School Library Commons," committed leadership in the LLC is presented as a crucial element to creating equity in the school community and the broader education landscape. The article by Cheney and Wander, "The LLC as Home Base for Establishing a Reading Culture," presents ways in which school library professionals can harness their leadership positions and skills to support a culture of reading.

When we look for leadership in the school library learning commons, we can see it in our program development and goals. We've gathered three articles together ("The Moccasin Identifier Project," "Upping Students' Verification Skills with CTRL+F" and "Libraries of Your Lives") as a preview of programming that can support the goals of school libraries and create an avenue for leadership in our schools. The author's showcase on Misty Paterson also gives great inspiration for leading innovative LLC programs.

Leadership is often difficult to pin down, probably due to the variety of leaders that we encounter in our personal and professional lives. Look at how leadership can be fostered and embraced in "The Quality of a Leader," "School Libraries, the Learning Commons and Places of Belonging" and "Advocacy and Ad Hoc Committees as Leadership." This conversation is further explored in "VoicEd: Start the Conversation." Understanding our strengths and leveraging opportunities means that we can continue to develop our amazing leadership skills and support our students.

We've also included a beautiful profile on David Loertscher. He has been a leader in libraries for decades, and his insights and humour are wonderful to read about. You can delve further into the world of mentorship in "Leading Through Mentorship" and its accompanying piece. Both articles examine the impact our predecessors and contemporaries can have on our journey to becoming incredible leaders for change, understanding, and advocacy.

This issue was a big one – not just in terms of material, but in concept. I think this is a true testament to the power of school libraries, and the impact they have on a wide range of people.

Often, we quietly lead by example. Yet, there are also times that we must raise our voices and speak loudly for equity, resources, and a deep understanding of our work. We must stand together as leaders – quiet, loud, strong, vulnerable, shy, brave and anything in between – to strengthen and celebrate the remarkable work we do every day in our school libraries for our students.

I believe that when you lead with compassion, perspective, and resilience it will lead to greatness.

I'm happy to announce that Caroline Freibauer will be returning to her role as Editor-in-Chief for our September 2022 issue. I will remain on the editorial board as Associate Editor and look forward to working with new contributors in the coming issues. I want to thank the editorial board and our readers for this opportunity to lead The Teaching Librarian; it has been an immeasurable pleasure and honour. Thank you.

President's **Report**

Beth Lyons

> **"I get angry about things, then go on and work."— Toni Morrison**

Leadership. That's a big word and a big idea. I think when we break it down there is uppercase "L" *Leadership* and lowercase "L" *leadership*. School library professionals often occupy both spaces within a school community. The role naturally creates a space where the school library professional is seen as a position of uppercase "L" Leadership. The role calls for the curation of the library collection, sparking inquiry-based learning and a maker culture within the school, introducing new technological skills and much more. However, there's also a great deal of lowercase "L" leadership in the day-to-day interactions between school library professionals and the stakeholders within the school community. As we move forward out of the pandemic and embrace the (re)gathering of groups within the education system and the library learning commons, it's imperative that we, as school library professionals, embrace our role as system leaders and use our collective voice to advocate for the needs of all stakeholders.

In preparing for my new role as the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) President, and the writing of this report, I worked to watch as many of the 2022 Ontario Library Association Super Conference (OLASC) Keynotes and Spotlights as possible. I was struck by Priya Parker's keynote and sought out other spaces in which I could hear more of her work (and of course, began reading her book.) On Brene Brown's podcast, "Dare to Lead," Priya said that we must have "[t]he courage to name what we are facing." This struck me as a vitally important reminder of the power of voice. As leaders within the education system, we must use our voices and our platforms to name what is happening to school libraries across our province – the lack of funding, the ongoing removal of full-time, qualified library professionals from the space, and the increased need to ensure the needs of a diverse array of stakeholders are represented within our collections.
In his OSLA Spotlight, author Lawrence Hill shared with us his love of the "power and playfulness of words" and his belief that "libraries are a sacred thing." As school library professionals, we see first-hand the power of the school library space to nurture students' love of reading, and their ability to ask questions and take risks. As system leaders, school library professionals are often in the driver's seat of innovation. We have the opportunity to use our roles as lowercase "L" leaders to nudge our fellow educators to take risks with their pedagogy and innovate with their students. In her TEDx talk, "How To Manage For Collective Creativity," Linda Hill spoke a great deal about innovation and leadership and said that "[o]ur role as leaders is to set the stage, not to perform on it." Our school libraries set the stage for collective innovation through table provocations, intentionally curated book collections, culturally responsive and relevant read alouds, makerspace sparks and collaboration with classroom educators. Hill said "[i]nnovation is not about solo genius, it is about collective genius" and, as school library professionals and educational leaders, we need to come together through the OSLA #ONLibChats, Twitter discussions and other opportunities to advocate and raise our voices for the stakeholders of our Ontario school libraries.

While we had an opportunity to gather at OLASC to talk about our collective #SchoolLibraryJoy, it's now time, as Toni Morrison said, "to go on and work." It's time to get loud, to share our voices and our stories, to advocate and demand open and fully funded school libraries for all students in Ontario. It's time to use our positions as school library professionals to set the stage and ensure our students get the school libraries they deserve.

Library Professionals Invited to Share Voice at National Symposium

Canadian School Libraries (CSL) is very pleased to be hosting the seventh biennial **Treasure Mountain Canada** (TMC) **Research Symposium**, in partnership with the British Columbia Teacher Librarians' Association (**BCTLA**). The symposium will take place in New Westminster, British Columbia on Friday, October 21 and Saturday, October 22, 2022. BCTLA's Fall Conference will be on Friday, October 21, and TMC7 will kick off that evening and carry on Saturday, for the full day.

CSL would like to take this opportunity to invite members of the Ontario School Library Association to participate in TMC7. OSLA and OLA have been key TMC partners, co-hosting TMC4 in 2016 and TMC6 in 2020 with CSL, both held as part of the Super Conference. OSLA has supported other symposiums and sponsored representatives to attend. Most importantly, OSLA members have been major research contributors and attendees at TMC from the very first symposium held in Edmonton in 2010.

What is TMC?

Treasure Mountain Canada is a participatory learning experience designed to bring researchers and practitioners together to discuss and debate current Canadian research and scholarly writing which has an impact on the role of school libraries vis-à-vis educational strategy and transformation. The goal is to foster "made in Canada" academic and action research into school library learning commons practice and to make that body of research available to the world through the CSL Research Archive. Each symposium has a thematic focus that is relevant to the current context, and the goal is to build on what we learn. For example, TMC2 in 2012 focused on working towards national standards, and the outcome was the publication of *Leading Learning: Standards of Practice for School Library Learning Commons in Canada* in 2014.

How It Works

We invite practitioners and academics ahead of the symposium to conduct their research and submit papers. Papers are accepted even if the contributor is unable to attend the actual symposium. You do not have to submit a paper to attend the symposium, but we do expect to hear your voices. Papers are shared on a collaborative platform well ahead of the event and participants are encouraged to study them, ask questions and add comments, thus building a community and collective knowledge before meeting in person. The symposium itself

> **"It sounds dramatic, but this one action – made in a moment of excitement ("pick me coach!") was a pivotal moment in how I started to view my professional learning network (PLN), its importance in my practice, and my place in it. In that moment, I had made my first connection with something bigger than my school or district. It was the beginning of me believing that despite my newness to the role of a TL, I had something worthwhile to contribute, and that the doors were open in this community to share learning, expertise, and experience."**
>
> **Lila Armstrong (2020). TMC6 Changed My Life. *CSL Journal***

Anita Brooks Kirkland

TMC6 was held in partnership with OSLA, TALCO and the OLA Super Conference. You will notice many OSLA colleagues participating!

is very participatory, with a schedule built around deep discussion of what we have learned and exploring potential outcomes.

Our experience with the Treasure Mountain model has rejuvenated interest in conducting research into school library practice in Canada. TMC has inspired teacher-librarians from across the country to take initiative locally, integrating action research into their own practice. The symposium is so very important as a vehicle for bringing people from across the country together with a common goal of learning from that research. The whole experience has proven to be very rewarding for all involved. We recognize the outstanding contributions many of you are making to teaching and learning in Canada. Your work needs to be recognized by the greater education community – and documented so that it can become part of the debate.

How Can You Participate?

We need everyone's voice at the table. The time is right for school libraries to take a lead in the future of education in Canada. We know that after two years of the pandemic, school library programs have been challenged in many ways. However, we have observed that through all the restrictions and shutdowns, school library professionals have been amazingly resilient and creative. Your determination to provide the best possible support for students and teachers during this crisis inspired our theme for TMC7.

TMC7 Theme: Post-Pandemic Library Learning Commons: From Crisis to Intervention

TMC7 Sub-Themes:

- Increasing development of the virtual LLC and the development of innovative participatory learning opportunities
- Ensuring infusion of digital literacy skills and global competencies
- Continued growth in diversity awareness and action such as collection development, with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion
- Attention to how the library supports wellness for both staff and students
- Expanding the engagement of students in making and doing in the physical and virtual LLC
- Outreach to the school community to inspire reading and learning

TMC7 Call for Papers

Please consider contributing a paper to TMC7. Consider the interventions you developed during the pandemic to enable you to reach your school library community. Are there some innovative practices that you hope to continue and build on? How can you document what you learn? For help getting started visit the CSL Research Toolkit. Explore TMC7 Resources to Get You Thinking for inspiration. You might also enjoy browsing past TMC symposiums in the CSL Research Archive, where you will discover over 10 years' worth of homegrown research on school library learning commons in Canada.

Whether you contribute a paper and/or plan to attend the symposium, CSL looks forward to seeing contributions from OSLA members, who have always been, and remain, leaders in school library program innovation.

Learn more about TMC7
TMC7 Call for Papers
TMC7 Resources to Get You Thinking
Subscribe to the CSL Newsletter and follow CSL on Twitter for updates about TMC7, including registration information when it becomes available.

The Buzz

Joanne Sallay

Get Students Excited about Writing with Annie's Project

Libraries are special places that inspire students to read, learn and grow. It's also a space where educators encourage and cultivate curiosity and creativity in children of all ages. If you are looking for a collaborative leadership project to introduce to your colleagues and students, read on about Annie's Project.

The Story Behind Annie's Project

When new restrictions in Ontario were added at the end of December 2021 to long-term care residences to put a pause on social visits, six-year-old Annie came up with a novel idea. Let's draw them a picture and write them a nice message to cheer them up. She started on her own with the help of family and friends. It's no surprise that her mother is an elementary school teacher who supported this endeavour and helped to deliver cards to seniors living at Baycrest in Toronto.

Reviving the Lost Art of Handwriting

After noticing the initial request for cards I wanted to get involved and help spread awareness. This project resonated with me personally and professionally. As both a parent and president of Teachers on Call, I am a big believer in teaching children to write in addition to all the amazing technology available to them. It's an essential skill for kids to learn self-expression, cognitive development, and fine motor skills. I also know the value of having a special senior to write to. When I was a child, my grandfather and I wrote to one another since we lived in different provinces. This is something that students are now experiencing through Annie's Project.

Student and School Participation

Through word of mouth, the idea grew, as Annie's network of friends and classmates wanted to help. This grassroots project grew with the help of teachers and parent councils who introduced this initiative to their students. A special mention to Brown Junior Public School and Oriole Park Junior Public School in the Toronto District School Board who delved in with heart and soul, as well as to all the grandparents who contacted my office to drop off cards made with their grandchildren.

The Community Impact

I had the immense pleasure to chat with Rachel Gavendo, a Therapeutic Recreationist at Baycrest. She shared, "We handed out and posted on unit walls all the cards provided to us. Residents were very grateful to receive the lovely and thoughtful cards. It certainly brightened their day!" Remarkably, the idea of a six-year-old has sparked this community initiative that has brought so much joy to seniors and nursing staff with drawings and messages of hope.

Advice on What to Write and Guidelines

I asked Rachel for tips for students on what the residents like to see in letters. She shared that residents love to hear about students' daily lives and what they are doing. Handmade cards and drawings are also coveted, although digital messages are still very much enjoyed and appreciated. In terms of guidelines, she recommends not including last names or personal numbers.

How your School can Participate

Do you want to help Annie exceed her goal of 500 pictures and messages? It doesn't matter where in Ontario you are located or the age of your students (adults welcome as well). Your contribution will brighten and bring happiness to seniors and the nursing staff who care for them.

Cards and letters can be mailed to the Teachers on Call office and we will get them over to Annie to distribute on your behalf – check out www.teachersoncall.ca – or e-mail directly to the project at cardsforltc@gmail.com. Every single card will be sure to bring smiles. Happy Writing!

Meet the Author
Misty Paterson

Angela Thompson

Creativity is often a dialogue between concept and material. The process of artistic creation is not just a question of thinking of an idea and then finding a way to express it. Often, it's only in developing the dance, image, or music that the idea emerges at all.
(Ken Robinson, 2001)

Misty Paterson is a Vancouver-based educator and consultant, but her Pop-up Studio concept and philosophy have taken her around the world. With a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction, a certification in Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction (CBCI), and over 20 years of teaching experience, Misty's passion for life-long learning makes her an inspiration and a leader in educational design. Let's meet Misty.

TingL: What inspired you to create Pop-Up Studio?

When I reflect on the most memorable and significant learning moments in my formal education (Pre-K to now PhD studies), I can see that they're all rooted in an aesthetic experience with hands-on materials that invited me to make sense of something authentically interesting to me.

In 2005, well before makerspaces were popular in classrooms, I was introduced to the Reggio Emilia philosophy as a teacher of middle schoolers and vice-principal of a kindergarten to Grade 7 school. This reawakened a desire and argument within me that all children, regardless of age, deserve playful, artful learning that honours and extends their cultural experiences. I began exploring the role generalist teachers have in inviting beauty and community into the classroom. Serendipitously, I began a Master of Arts class in Living Inquiry (Meyer, 2008). I learned that every day is a site for inquiry that can be taken up in critical yet life-honouring ways that develop awareness (both conceptual ideas and a feeling, as Maxine Greene says, of being 'wide awake'). Students found new meaning in their lives through observing, journaling, and other literary practices alongside artful representation. This was so exciting! I had my own classroom and could work with existing furniture and materials to document and play with the ideas I was being exposed to. I had a fair bit of autonomy and the support of being at an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program school where inquiry is the primary methodology.

In 2010, I had the privilege of flexible teaching in a variety of contexts but, no longer did I have an autonomous

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space. I needed to learn to share and be a gracious visitor. I wondered how to bring aesthetic learning into formal classroom spaces in respectful, sustainable ways on the go. In 2015, my colleague, Janice Novakowski (@jnovakowski38), came into the classroom I shared as part of a Reggio-inspired mathematics project. She brought her suitcase full of thrift store bowls, glass gems, buttons and seashells to set up a math studio experience. Children explored patterning using loose parts and a variety of graphics. The meaning, wonder and delight were palpable. Students was so animated and insightful as they explored: attuned and curious, surrounded by caring, attentive adults. It was an important reminder that real, firsthand experiences with conceptual lenses spark authentic inquiry. Further, this kind of pedagogy doesn't require a big budget for materials or furniture, or individual classrooms! We can pop it up wherever we find ourselves. This is when the concept of Pop-Up Studio was born.

Because I found myself facilitating a lot of professional learning around that time, Pop-Up Studio became part of my professional learning design. Through experimentation and improvisation, I found that immersing teachers and leaders in direct experience provided a platform for fast-track application. I'd wake up to emails following workshops expressing how excited the teachers were to make a Pop-Up Studio and how engaged the students were in meaning-making as a result. So, I brought my own suitcases of materials and set up studio-like stations everywhere I could! Each teacher I worked with experienced a concept-based, competency-driven curriculum model in their own way.

Briefly explain the philosophy behind the Pop-Up-Studio approach to learning.

As educators of Generation Alpha and Gen Z, we are shaping the most materially endowed, most digitally connected, most culturally diverse and most knowledge-rich generation to date—at a time when all of us are the most physically disconnected (McCrindle, 2020). As educators, we know that our positive influence resides in our ability to respond: the way we take up young people's questions, ideas and dreams.

Pop-Up Studio is a responsive approach for awakening caring and creative relationships to the materials in our lives, to the ideas we've inherited and, ultimately, to each other and the natural world. Whether at the kitchen sink, around a classroom desk, at the microscope or under a tree, the world is a studio if we take up our lives as sites for inquiry (Snowber, 2016).

So, imagine teachers and learners working shoulder to shoulder in hands-on learning that resembles the work passionate experts do. Take content creators, scientists, geographers, mining engineers, painters, chefs, etc.: each is experimenting, iterating and creating, hopefully with the goal of bringing something new into the world that brings fresh light to old problems (Godin, 2021). Pop-Up Studio is an artful process and platform for creating hands-on experiences to help learners playfully generate and transfer ideas with agency, artistry and understanding wherever they find themselves. The approach is not new, nor does it represent new knowledge. Learning from direct experience, in spontaneous and intentional ways that shape our being-in-the-world, is something that comes from our oldest ancestors. I have tried to articulate how I'm experiencing the interplay of concept, inquiry, and play-based approaches coming together holistically.

This philosophy is obviously applicable and relevant to young learners. How do you see it functioning with young adults, in the high school environment and beyond?

The kind of pedagogy that grounds Pop-Up Studio is not new. It's found in makerspaces, automotive and woodworking shops, in demo kitchens, science labs and art rooms. It lives in places where students are deeply engaged in the experimentation of creating something new (to them, to their peers, or to the world). Pop-Up Studio offers frameworks and prompts to enact this kind of energy and movement, the kind that experts in their fields have, across the curriculum in intentional and scaffolded ways. It is helpful in the corners where students need and want to feel seen and their work to feel meaningful. The beauty is that the processes and models are simple, flexible and responsive. I find they help with how we think about, design and facilitate 21st century learning.

What are the roles of:

The teacher/adult: The teacher is positioned as an artist and a marveller. They may serve as a curator who helps to gather materials and offer them in a way that invites critical, creative and conceptual thinking. They may be a provocateur who

asks questions to open up new perspectives. They may also be marvellers, working from a strengths-based approach, to help students find the joy, wonder and magic in what they are doing. Overall, teachers guide and scaffold the learning process so it helps students move beyond what they thought possible or what they could do independently. It's an act of mentorship.

The learner: The learner is the protagonist in the learning experience. They may be the lead designer or a co-designer. For example, I have worked with children as young as five years old to create Pop-Up Studios for community members to (re)cognize important concepts within the child's thinking.

You as author/expert: My favourite introduction was by a dear colleague who called me her Possibility Unleasher! I love to be a thinking partner with students, teachers and everyone in the school community who wants teaching and learning to be meaningful, memorable and simply marvellous.

What advice do you have for educators who are interested in designing a Pop-Up-Studio experience or sustained environment?

It really starts with YOU. I wrote *Pop-Up Studio* in response to a recurring question: How do we engage today's learners meaningfully and sustainably? I don't believe that the answer is a beautiful classroom or another worksheet or app—it's us, as teachers. Pop-Up Studio guides readers on how to be the curiosity and ingenuity they want to foster, wherever they are.

In a practical sense, connecting the why to the how is critical. I always start by asking: why this topic or concept, why now and why with these learners? The answers often invite us to discover new, sometimes more authentic, contexts from which to teach.

One of my favourite planning questions to ask is: Where does the concept we are studying already exist in the child's world? Drawing upon that context really makes learning pop for kids (and adults too). When we start with the familiar, we start with meaning.

Next, I'd curate some content-neutral materials. I have a materials list in my book; you can use it as a thrift store scavenger hunt. Loose parts like buttons, shells, glass gems, corks, etc. are fabulous because they can be used metaphorically to represent ideas, retell stories, build characters and more. Use a document camera and microphone to make sharing each other's work samples more visible and accessible to all. Display pictures and videos of experts working in the field alongside visible thinking questions. Offer opportunities for the children to try out being an expert in their own setting, with your guidance. For instance, if they are studying architecture, maybe have some modelling materials nearby and some blueprint paper. Construction sites sometimes let you repurpose their safe waste materials! Consider inviting the children to bring in beautiful, sharable treasures and creating a shelf of loose parts.

Are there any projects or extensions of this thinking that are in the works?

I'm in the early stages of a Ph.D. and am excited to go much deeper into the ideas and expand the work. I'm curious about the aesthetics of everyday life and its impact on pedagogy, leadership and mentorship.

Any final words? Shout outs?

My biggest shout out is to YOU! Teaching and learning is a dialogue that can spark beautiful transformations. That's why I believe we are better together. Please reach out and connect with me. I love to hear from you. From coaching to workshops, to guides and a book club kit (to make any content more meaningful, memorable and merry), you can access everything Pop-Up Studio at www.popupstudioed.com.

Testimonials from teachers who have worked with Misty and her Pop-Up Studio revealed these findings:

- **Feels natural and even therapeutic**
- **Supports mindfulness**
- **Aligns with the rights of children, such as the right to play, access to the arts, and an education to help them serve the world**
- **Reflects current neuroscience, and**
- **Frames the teacher's role as a pedagogical artist (as a fresh and empowering perspective)**

Shelagh Straughan

Leadership in the Library

When thinking about the idea of leadership in the library, I considered it from a variety of angles — my approach, that of my colleagues and that of my students. After mulling and conferring, I realized that for me, it comes down to three critical actions: letting go, pushing through and keeping up.

Letting go

We are a profession of people who take care in planning and preparation, which in my case can lead to a bit more rigidity than is needed in service of my students!

When touring school libraries before a renovation a few years ago, I was amazed by a school that allowed for fresh possibilities by demonstrating flexibility in new furniture placement. When their new items were delivered, they placed them all in the middle of their library and let the students move them where they wanted. They agreed that it might look messier and less photogenic but was far more creative and functional than they could have imagined.

In this spirit, I've tried to exercise my flexibility muscle. In our annual reading marathons, I focus more on having enough comfortable furniture and less on where it goes. Students have enjoyed creating their own reading nooks (with the odd blanket fort) and it's less strain on my achy-breaky back. In general, I try to worry less about setting furniture straight and focus more on how awesome it is that students feel comfortable enough to move furniture in our space.

Additionally, and with the nudge of COVID-19, I'm embracing the opportunity to reimagine programming. It's been exciting to see the resurgence of pleasure reading in our students. This has resulted in more interest in our book club, but our members' schedules haven't aligned. To address this, we created two different book clubs based on student availability, which led to a Battle of the Book Clubs. Students decided on a book list in November and each club has committed to reading three to five of the titles; students are now planning a week of friendly competition including trivia contests, book cover redesign, playlist creation, costume parade and a cooking competition. This student-generated initiative should be a lot of fun this year, and I'm grateful for my self-enforced flexibility that allowed them to run with it.

Pushing through

I know I'm preaching to the choir when I say that leadership can involve a whole lot of "fake it 'til you make it." The longer I serve in this profession, the more confident I become about admitting ignorance or fear. For example, one of the very best ways of connecting with our student body is by making a chapel announcement. We start our day in chapel four mornings a week, and even though capacity was reduced due to COVID-19 policy-related limitations, standing at the front of a large, formal Anglican sanctuary is still daunting, even when not at the usual 500-person capacity.

However, having a captive audience is too good of an opportunity to pass up for messages that are timely and significant, like the recent Freedom to Read Week. What kicked this message up a notch was featuring students who pushed through their nervousness to join me. Wow was I ever glad I did! Students shared books that are meaningful to them — *All the Bright Places*, *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Maus*, *Speak*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* — all books that have been challenged in other schools. They were sufficiently surprised and concerned that there may be schools or libraries without these books; they agreed to speak about why they felt this would be a loss for that community's readers.

Here is an excerpt from the follow-up email our headmaster sent to the students who spoke:

> "Important. Timely. Relevant. Sensitive. Personal. I would also say, 'authentic'. The critical piece of getting any message across. It was so raw. So real. So you. And it required you to be vulnerable, in your own manner. You spoke from the heart. You did not read notes. Your personality and sincerity were so evident…I was so impressed."

It took a fair amount of nudging to have these students speak, but they were so happy they did. The same is true for me; how annoying but true that pushing through my discomfort is a good thing! Whether it's speaking at staff meetings to talk about copyright or highlight a new database (I've learned to swallow my fear and go for it) or learning new a technology (I still feel wobbly when setting up two laptops with camera and

microphone for hybrid), the payoff is always worth the initial discomfort.

Even, or especially, when pushing through can result in stumbling. Some of the most effective leadership I've seen shines through messiness: an adult tearing up about a sobering current event in front of a group of students or someone making a sincere public apology. Being impactful leaders means role modeling how to fail. On a lighter note, I'm pretty good at laughing at myself and have stopped trying to hide my "goofs" – when I mess up in class, I acknowledge it, fix it, and move on, and I encourage my students to do the same.

Keeping up

If you're reading this, you value professional development (PD) and lifelong learning as I do. I am intrigued and invigorated by journals, blogs and social media dealing with issues affecting libraries and schools, but I work to ensure that I push myself out of this familiar and comfortable space into areas where I need to grow.

Some of that is related to me as a professional. At my independent school, I am unique in the faculty for the responsibility I have for both people and budget; I have supportive mentors, but too often focus on library and teaching PD rather than some practical training I should attend to. I often feel like I'm learning on the fly when hiring, supervising and crunching numbers, so I keep in close touch with my finance department, asking questions about everything I don't understand. When it comes to my team, I really appreciate blogs and social media that relate to relationships; for example, last issue I mentioned Seth Godin, who writes about business, marketing but most importantly people, and of course there's Brene Brown, a researcher and author focused on humanity and connection.

Which brings me to the learning I need to do as a person. I've diversified my Instagram feed and value a variety of contributors for teaching me a lot about what I don't know, including data journalist Mona Chalabi, Indigenous activist Shina Nova and the RA feed of chronic illness warrior Jennifer Tewnion (also a young alum of my school). Keeping up with my profession is only going to be successful if accompanied by my growth as a person.

I often think of the person I was when I began my career; I defined leadership much more narrowly and formally than I do now. Whether you're stepping into a new role or continuing as a leader, may I suggest that you reflect on how you're letting go, pushing through and keeping up? It's helped me immensely.

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Chey Cheney and Pav Wander

The Library Learning Commons as Home Base for Establishing a Reading Culture

A culture of reading goes beyond the reading program that exists within the four physical classroom walls. It encapsulates not only the love of reading – the desire to consume informative and relevant content through a variety of written and oral texts – but also captures the subtleties and nuances of what it means to be *able* to read. At the heart of reading, whether for the tales or the capacity building, are the sources of the content we read: the books; these that contain the information which potentially ignites fire and the desire to continue to learn and grow.

Establishing a culture of reading in a classroom or a school is a vital piece of the foundational puzzle of education. All stakeholders in a learning environment must buy into the idea of investing in a culture of reading, one that takes into consideration the science of reading as well as the balanced literacy approach.

With the *"Right to Read Report"* by the Human Rights Commission just at our heels in Ontario, we know and understand that reading is not a privilege, and that for many children, it is a real and fundamental challenge, whether it is in decoding or phonemic awareness, or comprehension of the text (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2022). Simply immersing ourselves in stories, informational texts and newspaper articles might be beneficial for some students in establishing a lifelong love of reading, but for many others, it is overwhelming and burdensome and can seriously affect further progress in education and later in life.

Retired educator and author Dr. Ilene Winokur speaks of these often-silent obstacles in a post entitled *"Reading Culture or Reading Program?"* So often it appears that children are excelling with reading because they enjoy it, but they may not be fully extracting the knowledge to comprehend the deeper messages within the texts. When this happens, we are creating a serious gap in learning that we must actively work to resolve, and this is often where the greatest challenge lies (Winokur, 2022). With this challenge, we can actively work to involve the help of the Library Learning Commons (LLC) and the teacher-librarian.

As classroom teachers, we know and understand how difficult it can be to implement this strategy — developing and maintaining a true culture of reading, one that is rich with texts that are of high interest to the readers, filled with wonder and excitement, and also establishing an individualized approach and program that lays the foundational building blocks of decoding and comprehension strategies. Oftentimes, the resources and knowledge base may not be readily available to us, or we encounter difficulty in accessing what we need in our personal spaces.

We discussed the wealth of knowledge that is held within the Library Learning Commons space, as well as with the teacher-librarian, with Beth Lyons, OSLA President and teacher-librarian for the Peel District School Board in Episode 75 of *The Chey and Pav Show*, "The Power of Stories" (Chey and Pav Educational Services, 2021). Beth reminds us that stories provide us with connection, depth and understanding and

give us so much rich learning that extends past the tales but also in appreciation of the text forms. The expertise of the qualified teacher-librarian helps to build that vital capacity that is crucially needed for literacy to be of the highest calibre and quality, and it cannot be trivialized.

How can the teacher-librarian and the LLC support a culture of reading?

The school library has always been a hub of great learning. Filled with wonder and fantasy, the walls that make up this central space continue to create excitement for many students that accept the challenge of exploring the imagination. This eagerness and enthusiasm can also be exhibited by teachers if we are looking for the right things in the library space.

For starters, the teacher-librarian holds within them a huge wealth of information that, in our opinion, is not tapped into enough. Apart from having a strong understanding of the content available within the physical library space, teacher-librarians are well-versed in the newest reading resources that are available, from books to supporting tools for all educators. As teachers, we were unaware of the professional development opportunities, the conferences, and the professional learning communities that librarians are deeply entrenched in. It has been exciting to be welcomed into this new world and be shown what beauty is held in this vast space that contains such vibrant learning opportunities.

From the latest books touching upon relevant and responsive social justice themes to accessing the authors that write them, teacher-librarians provide entry points to the texts that will bring learners in, and at the same time, provide teachers with huge foundational support that allows for scaffolding and building upon.

> "Teacher-librarians, once primarily managers of school resources, can become instructional leaders, supporting and collaborating with every teacher in the school, promoting inquiry-based learning and fostering a thriving reading culture." (Hayes, 2014)

On top of providing access to a variety of texts, the LLC has become a central space for housing an array of learning tools and opportunities, all of which can be brought back to the content of the books we expose students to. If we are working towards creating a true culture of reading, we must be actively working at tying reading into all that unfolds in the school environment, and sometimes *reading* doesn't look the traditional way we were brought up with.

The LLCs have become an essential and central space in many schools for building and making, with the introduction of makerspaces and building zones. Providing opportunity, and more importantly, a physical space, for innovation and design within the school environment has allowed for greater reach in creating connections for all learners. With a lack of classroom resources, common access makerspaces provide differentiation and universal design for learning opportunities which, in turn, benefit all students.

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Many LLCs have invested in mobile computing to be housed or supplemented in the space, making it a hub for research as well. Computing in the library space is not a new concept; as the evolution of research within the library continues, and as technology continues its trajectory of growth, we are now able to introduce more tools to connect the tech to other aspects of the curriculum, like coding or robotics, for example. These opportunities allow us to connect our reading to the math or science curriculum, all within the LLC space.

Digital storytelling is another way that we have been able to integrate technology with reading and reading culture. Although it may seem to be a bit of a no-brainer, we can now turn and create our own stories through the resources and learning opportunities available in the LLC using the computing and technology available in the space. Exploration of photography, recording devices and equipment, graphic design tools, all combined with the physical makerspace, now allow students to develop their own stories, representative of their identities and fully reflective of *who they are*, using the tools that they have been exposed to as a way to support and supplement reading.

All of the aforementioned resources are tools many teachers consider when developing a vibrant learning space for students in their classrooms. If we take into consideration all that the library space has to offer, it begins to open the walls of the learning environment to more than the isolated space that the classroom can be sometimes. Creating this centralized base takes time and a large effort, not only by the teacher-librarian but the administration and the system as a whole.

With these foundational components in place, it becomes imperative that teachers take on the responsibility of fully utilizing this abundant resource, along with the knowledge and space that comes with it, to bring the wealth of reading into their daily practice. Often in the noisy and busy reality of a school setting, resources and opportunities to bring increased learning tools can be lost. Teachers must be intentional in accessing these resources to enhance their learning environment.

To facilitate this, the school system must take on the responsibility to foster this collaboration. The investment in the LLC is a commitment to embed professional development and release time for teachers to fully immerse themselves in the space and to be able to connect with the teacher-librarian. Organic growth and connection are ideal, but the school system cannot ask teachers to shoulder the burden on their own to build capacity and maximize all that the LLC has to offer.

The old *Field of Dreams* adage of, "if you build it, they will come," holds much truth, in that, if we want to create a culture of reading that will support all the students in the school, we must build and support a space that allows for all that to happen. Classroom teachers become aware that the students that need that support the most will find those comforts within their ideal learning environments. It becomes a world where the relevant and responsive texts are there for us to immerse ourselves in, and the nourishment that we need to be successful with reading, building, creating, making and learning is available and in place for us to enjoy ▮

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Rabia Khokhar

Equity Leadership in the School Library Learning Commons

As a former teacher-librarian in Toronto, and of course one always in my heart, I have had the opportunity and privilege to witness the power of the school library learning commons (LLC) and the impact they can have on the lives of different stakeholders in various contexts such as students, educators, administrators, families, and the community. My experiences in the school library have helped me understand how it is the heart and center of the school community, connecting students, educators, books, resources, technology, and spaces with each other in new and creative ways.

The positionality of the LLC as the heart and center of the school community allows it to function as a space that is accessible, models great teaching practices and ensures equitable outcomes for all students throughout their entire school experience. I am learning that to truly achieve this goal, the LLC needs to be a place where we frame our work as teacher-librarians through an equity lens and stance: this is the way to center and build our leadership within this space. To center an equity leadership lens in the LLC, we need to begin to understand and deconstruct what equity means, and can look like, in the LLC and its relation to it.

In the past, libraries have often been positioned or seen as being somewhat like museums in that they are seen as holders, keepers and safe guarders of important information. The information is the stories, histories, and ideas that people have deemed important for the specific time period and society. Oftentimes, libraries have perpetuated stories and experiences that center on a white cisgender, heteronormative and Eurocentric worldview and lived experiences. The stories that have been positioned as the truth have centred on specific points of view, highlighted specific lived realities and experiences and created specific norms in our society. These stories have become the foundational cornerstones of our communities locally and in a global sense.

An equity stance towards leadership in the library recognizes that libraries and the stories within them have often perpetuated stereotypes, misinformation and single stories about people and communities. It recognizes certain stories and people that have often been centred, amplified and highlighted in these powerful spaces while others have been silenced and erased. An equity stance to leadership in the library recognizes that libraries also have the power to change the narrative, disrupt stereotypes and amplify voices that are reflective and responsive to the communities that are being served. Thomas King in his book, *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* states, "Want a different ethic? Tell a different story" (King 2008). I take his words as a call to action for us in the library field to critically consider the stories our libraries have told and to ensure that the ones we are curating and telling are reflective, responsive and representative of the time, place and communities we are serving. The equity work in our libraries needs to be contextual. While there will be collective similarities, each of our spaces will also have its individual needs and responsibilities. An equity stance to leadership recognizes these interconnected and intersectional elements of the work and the impact it can have on the communities we serve.

During my journey of thinking about equity leadership in the school library, I've discovered some elements I considered to ensure that I was bringing theory into practice in my library space. They are not necessarily in any order or checklist but rather big ideas that interconnect in flexible and fluid ways. These are some ways to consider an equitable leadership lens to the books, stories and spaces we curate.

It is important to recognize and understand that we have positional power in our library space.

To some degree, we have the opportunity and privilege to impact the stories that are curated in the library space. To do this work well we need to be aware of our own identities and the parts which give us privilege and advantages, and those which may not due to systematic structures. How can these identities impact the ways in which you see certain issues, experiences and the world? We need to be aware of our own implicit biases (since we all have them) and be critical of how they may show up. When we do this individual identity work it helps us lead with an equity lens in the library space. It also helps us consider how we are using our positional power in this space in a way that honours the space and the communities we are serving.

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When I was curating books for Black History Month, I was thinking critically about the stories I was selecting; were the stories only showing a single story, or were they amplifying Black authors, illustrators and diverse and dynamic authentic stories? Was I also just displaying these stories during Black History Month or were these stories visible, accessible, and highlighted throughout parts of the school year? Similarly during to Women's History Month, was I only centring specific women, or was I expanding who my students saw and learned about? All these questions are hinge on understanding and thinking critically about our individual choices and how they then impact the broader community we are serving.

It is very important to recognize the power and positionality of the library.

The reality is that there is racism, discrimination, and hate that is rampant in our local and broader socio-political contexts and communities. Libraries can work to counter, disrupt, and dismantle hate by centring, highlighting, and amplifying stories that show different identities, lived experiences, and communities. Our schools and students do not operate in a vacuum rather they are part of this world. Students need books and spaces to make sense of their experiences. Our library spaces have the potential to be relevant, responsive, and contextual. A library is a place that can make a change in our local, broader, and global communities. Libraries are spaces that need to be relevant, responsive, growing, changing, evolving, and alive.

An element of equity leadership is for us to expand the ideas around the word and term diversity.

This is something I am working on myself since it is easy to default to binaries. Often, the word diversity is used to represent any identity that is not white, thus creating a binary. I am inspired by Chad Everett who says the following about the term diversity and what it means in the library concerning stories:

> **I do not give out *diverse* book lists**. Here is my reason why: **there are no diverse texts**. It is in the transaction (Rosenblatt, 1986) between the reader and the text that a text's diversity is realized. **The way we have framed the word diversity creates a binary—diverse or non-diverse**. Using the word diverse to describe texts also creates a

> **default position**, because one must ask **diverse for whom or diverse from what?** The word diverse as it is currently used **centers heteronormative whiteness as the default**. We also lose sight of the big picture. Any *diverse* book list would have to have a variety of races, abilities, gender, etc. represented. So, if you find yourself holding a book list and notice that the creators have simply compiled a list of non-white authors, know that you are not holding a diverse book list (Everett, 2017).

In the library, I think it is important to have books that represent various identities and lived experiences in a variety of universal experiences that are entry points for all students. Our books should affirm and expand all students' ideas and frames of reference. It is important how we categorize, label and display books as well. What are the terms we are using when we display them? Do we have a specific section with 'diverse' books or are they part of our entire collection found in all parts and spaces of the library? How and when do we display certain stories and voices? How are we also creating space to center the voices of our students in the library space? Why is it important to have different types of books represented all the time and then take some time during different parts of the year to spotlight and highlight different voices? I think that if we go about things in this way we are working towards representing more universal experiences rather than just defaulting to additive approaches.

An equity lens and stance on leadership in the library also recognize the importance of representation.

It is important to consider issues of representation because they are critical to how and what we curate in our spaces. Beverly Daniel Tatum says the following about representation:

> Imagine we're in a meeting and somebody is going to take a group photo. And at the end, we're each going to get a copy of that photo. What's the first thing you're going to do when you get your copy of the photo? You're going to look for yourself, of course. Our learning environments are like that, too. Students enter these environments and they look for themselves. And some students can find themselves easily—they can see themselves in the reading material, they can see themselves in the person standing at the front of the classroom, they can see themselves in the history they're learning. But there will be some students who rarely, if ever, see themselves.
>
> […]
>
> Once you find yourself in the photo, the next thing you're going to do is consider how you look, right? Are your eyes open? Is your tie straight? In the same way, every student wants to see themselves not just in the picture, but in the picture looking good. (Rebora 2019)

The importance of this quote about representation is that our work is not just to have many books that show different people and experiences but rather to find books of quality that are written and illustrated by people of various identities and experiences. It is not just about checking off the box for representation; we all need to "look good" within the representation which means this can only really happen if the representation is coming from the community who we are amplifying and supporting. This work takes time, rapport and relationships.

An element of equitable leadership in the library is the continued and ongoing need for weeding our collection.

Weeding is an important way to ensure that the collective stories our collection tells are relevant and responsive. Equity is about the actions we take, and weeding is one of the ways we can create systemic change within our spaces.

Equitable leadership is an important element of being a teacher-librarian and a library professional. We can mobilize the positionality of the library to create ripples of change that will impact all those we serve through the intentional action and choices we make and take. This work will take time and requires rapport and relationships with a community of experts and leaders. ▮

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Caroline Freibauer

Loertscher: A Life in Libraries

News of David Loertscher's retirement has been greatly exaggerated.

In the fall of 2021, former colleagues were convinced that Loertscher, after a long and prolific career as a researcher, educator, and leader in the school library world, was going to retire. They organized tributes from collaborators in both Canada and the United States. The Canadians were effusive with their praise.

There was this tribute from Anita Brooks Kirkland, chair of Canadian School Libraries: "David, you are larger than life, and have been a larger-than-life influence on my career."

Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan, long-time book and workshop collaborators, expressed their gratitude for the countless hours spent writing and presenting. "You have been so generous with your time and energies investing in the advancement of the library learning commons vision and implementation here in Canada," they wrote.

"David Loertscher reminded us of the continuing role we have to play as mentors ourselves, even as some of us approach retirement," Richard Beaudry, chair of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations Intellectual Freedom Committee, wrote of his experience with Loertscher at the Symposium of the Greats conference in 2019.

Meanwhile, Loertscher, 81, has just published a book aimed at helping young adults take charge of their learning, is teaching two courses at the University of San Jose's School of Information and may be applying for a grant to launch a global project to provide supports for school library professionals. He didn't understand why his colleagues thought he had retired, although he conceded that he may finally pack it in at the end of this year.

"I've had a great career," he said. "Opportunities fell in my lap."

Loertscher was vice-president and senior acquisition editor at Libraries Unlimited for 10 years, worked as editor of Teacher Librarian magazine, served as president of the American Association of School Librarians, and helped launch Treasure Mountain, a school library think tank founded in Park City, Utah.

He has worked as a teacher-librarian, a professor, and a program director and, without exaggeration, has presented at hundreds of conferences, schools and universities in Canada and 48 of 52 U.S. states.

He has produced dozens and dozens of academic papers and books. In many instances, he was the sole author, but, more often, he preferred to collaborate.

"Individually you can do much and together you can do more," he said.

Blanche Woolls met Loertscher in 1970 when they began their doctoral studies in library science at Indiana University. Loertscher moved from Idaho, where he was a teacher-librarian, and Woolls moved from New Mexico, where she was a coordinator of school libraries. They were the only two in the program who came from school libraries, so they naturally began working together. It's a partnership that continued throughout their careers.

"While David and I spent those three years in our doctoral program at IU, we started giving programs together. It was so natural," said Woolls. "During our long working together, we have always asked the other person to join on projects. This began the first year after we graduated."

Woolls speculated that their partnership has worked so well because they agree on the major issues of school librarianship. "We have always been interested in what was best for the profession, and focused, agreeably, on just what that track, attack, plan should be."

Koechlin's collaborations with Loertscher began with an unexpected phone call in 2001. He had read *Info Tasks*, the Pembroke publication Koechlin co-wrote with fellow teacher-librarian Zwaan. He was so impressed with the way they embedded information skills in the curriculum that he wanted them to write a book for Hi Willow, the publishing house he ran out of his garage. A year later they published *Build Your Own Information Literate School* and that was the beginning of

a long and fruitful partnership. They went on to co-present at many conferences and schools, as well as co-authoring several books – some with Zwaan – including: "Coteaching and collaboration: how and why two heads are better than one."

"The reason we had such a successful run together is because David is a master collaborator," said Koechlin. "He knows how to work a team and build trust. He has the ability to draw the best from everyone and provide feedback that really raises the bar."

They didn't always agree and many of their meetings ended in lively debates, with Loertscher always appreciative of new ideas. "I remember one writing session at my dining room table," said Koechlin. "He laughingly said: 'When working with you Canadian gals, I have to park my ego under the table!'"

Loertscher was especially interested in "Partners in Action," a 1982 document on collaboration in the library resource centre produced by the Ontario Ministry of Education which promoted the notion of partnerships between the teacher-librarian and teachers. "It changed everything I thought about a school library," he said.

Koechlin said Loertscher was desperate to build on teacher librarian partnerships. "This notion remained at the heart of all our work and of course was fundamental to designing the learning commons model for school libraries, only the idea stretched to partnerships within the entire school – teacher-librarians, teachers, administration, students and the larger community," she said. "David's motto for the learning commons is: 'You help me; I'll help you. And together we will get better and better."

Loertscher grew up one of four children on a dairy farm near Park City, Utah. The hospital where he was born was later converted into a public library. "I am the only librarian in the world who was born in a library," he says.

His love for teaching developed when, at 13, he was asked to teach five-year-olds at Sunday school. "It was the best thing that ever happened to me. I was in charge of eight, nine, 10 five-year-old's and I learned that if I loved them, they would love

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me back. I am 81 and still benefiting from that simple idea."

He learned to trust children's creativity. "They start out asking a million questions, but we beat the creativity out of them. What I learned from the very beginning was to follow what they wanted to know."

Loertscher's love for libraries came later when he pursued an undergraduate degree at the University of Utah and needed a minor. He decided to try library science and immediately fell in love with the profession. He did a stint as Library Media Specialist at an elementary school in Elko, Nevada, and then worked in a high school in Idaho Falls, Idaho, before making the jump to teaching university-level students.

His passion for technology and innovation evolved from his drive to continually make things better. When he went to teach at San Jose State University's School of Information, he had a student assistant who came into his office with the news that it was possible to attach a document to an email. "Find out how to do it and teach me!" he told the student. Loertscher said it took six or seven steps to do it, but suddenly the world changed. No one came to his office anymore and he became a teacher 24/7.

Then came the Google document. "The first time I saw people writing together on a single digital document, tears came to my eyes," he said, calling it a historic moment in innovation. Years later, when he and Koechlin came to my high school to run a workshop for teachers, he was outraged to discover that my school board blocked everything to do with Google. "This is a crime against education!" he railed.

Koechlin recalls Loertscher sitting at her dining room table during one of their collaborations, calling her over to see what was happening on his computer screen. "It was awesome to see the spreadsheet building with comments and questions from his students who were located all over the world," she said.

"David was so happy; tears were streaming down his face! I will never forget his excitement. Now we take collaborative technologies for granted but only because pioneers like David tested them out and made them mainstream in learning."

Loertscher went on to use Blackboard, an online learning environment, and now uses Zoom to facilitate co-construction of learning. His students were recently working together online to create trust triangles featuring the teacher-librarian, the administration, and the classroom teacher. "I soon learned that I got more out of my students online – more learning in less time. People stuck in the text world haven't got a clue."

Technology also has been tremendous support for him personally. For the past 10 years, Loertscher's vision has been steadily declining, a consequence of macular degeneration. Now legally blind, he relies on his computer to read everything to him. San Jose University has provided a graduate student to help with the courses he teaches from Utah, where he lives in an assisted living home with his wife, Sandra. They met while on a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints mission and married shortly after they returned. Together they raised nine children – one was adopted – and now have 30 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. The families are scattered across the United States but three live relatively close to Loertscher.

As he begins to wind up his career, Loertscher reflects on all that has been accomplished in the school library world and how things are changing now. "You can't look back," he said, even as the program he established at the University of Arkansas has disappeared, hundreds of teacher-librarian positions are being lost across the United States and he still finds San Jose School of Information students who only want to move into school libraries to teach a love of reading and to sign out books.

"You can't look back. You make a difference while you can," he said.

Despite talk of retirement, Loertscher continues to look for ways to make a difference. It's part of his commitment to the profession, said Woolls.
"He is so willing to share and to finance efforts to make things better for school librarians and for the students in our schools. He doesn't like it when he sees human efforts being used for minor projects," she said. "Case in point, when he and Sandra moved into their assisted living quarters, they were invited to all sorts of "activities" which David did not see as being very interesting and not very rewarding, so he got materials to make baby quilts and gave the residents something that would help others as well as be interesting for them to be doing."
Loertscher remains convinced that teacher-librarians can be school leaders. Those who have the "I can change the world" vision, need to know how to build trust in that vision. "Success only moves as fast as the speed of trust with administration, students and the teachers they work with," he said.
"We have the key if someone will just collaborate with us because we know how."

OLA SUPER CONFERENCE 2022

LIVE FROM THE Twitterverse

#OLASC

vikkivansickle @vikkivansickle · Feb 1

Co-hosting the #OLASC spelling bee tomorrow with @citybrarian. My only experience with spelling bees is being a superfan of THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE, what could possibly go wrong?eventscribe.net/2022/OLA/Searc...

CARL / ABRC @carlabrc · Feb 7

Great to see so many sessions last week on misinformation at #olasc from @ddale8, @joeschwarcz and others. Combatting misinformation is an important issue facing all Canadians, and was a major part of @heritagecanada recent online harms study canada.ca/en/canadian-he...

OLA @ONLibraryAssoc · Feb 4

Everybody Gather Around! Did you have your screen break? Search "Gather Here" on Spotify or spoti.fi/3o3zWWN for the #OLASC official playlist. Have a song recommendation? Let us know and we'll add it!

Selena Horrell @mme_h · Feb 5

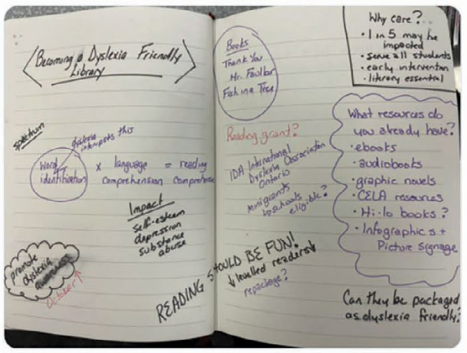
Delighted to spend time this morning with Lawrence Hill - brilliant, intentional, deft, funny, loving. Beatrice and Croc Harry is so good!! It navigates complex questions of identity with joy & humour. Thank you for this. #ONSchoolLibraries #OLASC @oslacouncil @ONLibraryAssoc

elizabeth o-k @urbaninfogirl · Feb 6

Honestly, having conference sessions available for a few months post-conference is so, so valuable. Can't wait to dive back in! #OLASC

Megan Venner @atlanticwriter · Feb 3

Rethinking my #schoollibrary space and how we can make it dyslexia friendly with #OLASC. Would love to talk more about how the principals apply to schools. @IDIOntario @OCDSBLibrairies



Joseph Jeffery @JosephJeffery1 · Feb 4

Time for a "Programming Brain Hurricane" at #OLASC now. Hoping to get some new ideas to share with #sd57pg TLs

Sarah Roberts @roberts_sarahe · Feb 5

Day 5 of #OLASC and enjoying seeing all the familiar faces showing up in the chat. Thanks @AnitaBK, @mariamartella and Rick Wilks for putting together this panel!

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FEBRUARY 1-5, 2022 | ONLINE

Leading in the LLC is something we can all do with the right motivation and programs. Providing our students with relevant experiences, resources and tools means we're able to foster resilient, inquisitive and compassionate leaders of the future. The three articles featured here present programs that can help school library professionals expand their LLC programming to incorporate emerging and responsive pedagogies into their practice. These programs can offer inspiration or be used as a roadmap for leadership in your LLC.

The Moccasin Identifier Project

Do you know the real history of Ontario?

Moccasin Identifier is a great first step to learning more about the history of this land.

Formed in 2011 by former Chief Carolyn King, C.M., the Moccasin Identifier is a reconciliation tool, to help Non-Indigenous Canadians understand whose land they're on, and to understand the Indigenous people that were here for millennia prior to colonization. Inspired by the life and vision of Nahnebahwequay, a 19th-century AnishinaabeKwe (Mississauga Credit) Indigenous Rights Leader, Carolyn stated that "If we as First Nations People don't get a marker on the ground today, we'll be lost forever!"

It was Nahnebahwequay's (English name; Catherine Sutton) homestead that was slated to be developed that prompted Carolyn and others, concerned over the loss of this important figure's history, to develop a marker on the land to preserve awareness of Indigenous history on the landscape. It took Carolyn three days to determine a culturally appropriate marker - our footwear! From there, the Moccasin Identifier was born.

Reflective of culture and Indigenous diversity in design, moccasins' footprints have always covered the landscape. The concept of footwear led to the Bata Shoe Museum, where, by invitation, Carolyn visited the world's largest private circumpolar collection of Indigenous footwear. Afterwards, renowned Anishinaabe artist Philip Cote took photos of the century-old moccasins and created stencils from the collection's Anishinaabe, Cree, Seneca and Huron-Wendat moccasins. These moccasins stencils represent the linguistic diversity of Ontario and are incorporated into the Moccasin Identifier kit, available for sale online, where all the proceeds go towards sustaining the non-for-profit initiative.

Since 2018 Moccasin Identifier has grown from a grassroots initiative to major milestones and is continually growing each month.

Please help us cover Canada in Moccasins! For more information, The Moccasin Identifier kit contains two components: the curriculum and the stencils. The curriculum aims to educate children through easily accessible lesson plans and activities from grades 1 to 8. This curriculum was created in accordance with Ontario provincial curriculum standards. Each grade also contains a listing of resources for teacher use. The stencils are meant to serve as a fun interactive activity for children to ground their learning. The curriculum is available to download for free on the Moccasin Identifier website.

The vision is to cover Canada in moccasins. The first meaningful step to achieving this vision is to get a Moccasin Identifier kit in every school in Ontario so that children will grow up with more than just a colonial reference to land in their lives and instead have a deeper understanding of the land they live on, and what it means to be in relationship with the land, and with each other, as Treaty partners. This is the Moccasin Identifier's hope for reconciliation in the future.

Join us in achieving our vision to realize a future for reconciliation through education. As stated by Murray Sinclair, it's education that got us into this mess and it's education that will get us out of it!

Visit www.moccasinidentifier.com or visit The Moccasin Identifier's Twitter and Facebook accounts to learn more.

Melanie Howard

Libraries of Your Life

Introductions and Relationships

Libraries are many things to many people. From a warm place to walk off the street and read today's paper to the space where you spent endless hours studying and writing the essays of your education.

How many different libraries do you have a relationship with? How did you end up there?

I arrived at and created abundant memories of the *libraries of my life*, because of the adults who brought me there. My kindergarten teacher walked us down the hall to the sunken library with the orange carpet and towering bookshelves. I relish the times spent sitting crossed-legged listening to stories and vividly remember my librarian teaching us how to neatly print our names on the lines of the library checkout card! My parents regularly took me to public libraries and introduced me to inviting spaces with never-ending books, huge staircases and other families milling about the colourful children's section.

For many students across our province, their school library is the only library they know. In the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board, where I work as a Learning Support Coordinator for school libraries, our students are supported by and welcomed into our Library Learning Commons (LLC) spaces by secondary teacher-librarians and elementary library technicians. Our schools house beautiful LLCs' spaces with warm and friendly adults who want nothing more than to engage with students and foster their positive relationships with books, libraries, and the love of reading.

The provincial lockdown that closed schools and left educators scrambling to reach students on digital platforms, shone a light on the importance of accessible texts for students. The return to school in September of 2020 still posed challenges for our system's libraries with COVID-19 protocols forcing creative thinking to safely deliver books to classrooms while physical library spaces remained closed to students. This unique time when students were not permitted into our vibrant learning spaces reminded educators of the urgency for access to digital materials even when students were physically in school.

As librarians and teachers struggled to get books circulating safely, I engaged in conversations with my colleague Matt Charles, an Assistive Technology Coach in our system, about the need for accessible digital texts beyond the pandemic. Our shared belief that all students have the right to access eBooks and audiobooks to support their learning became the fuel for our journey toward facilitating a public library card for every student in our system!

A serendipitously timed email came from the Prince Edward County Public Library Educational Resource Contact, Julie Lane-Yntema. The timing could not have been better as this email was the first of many conversations that led to a working partnership between our school board and the Prince Edward County Libraries.

The goal for our team was to ensure students not only received a public library card but were active patrons. What's the point of having those magical library card numbers if students and their families weren't borrowing library books or engaging with programming?

Naturally, early on in our work, we realized the importance of sharing the "why" with students, their families, and the school teams. We articulated the possibilities of scooping up reluctant readers by engaging them in eBooks and audiobooks through apps like Libby and Hoopla.

An audiobook enthusiast myself, we emphasized with students that adults enjoy listening to books too. Normalizing the ways we read and access content was a big focus in our work with students and educators. Some educators may feel that audiobooks "let students off the hook" when it comes to reading. We believe that there is a place for audiobooks in our classrooms. If a teacher can look at their lesson and determine that the learning goal is not about the reading skills used to decode text, then students should be able to listen to an audiobook to access critical thinking skills that support reading comprehension.

Further to that, we believe that students deserve the opportunity to enjoy reading without guiding questions or a task to complete. With students able to access both school

and public library resources we increase the possibility of introducing students to their future favourite author, genre, or series of books!

Facilitating students receiving a public library card takes a team that includes school administrators, educators, families, and librarians at both the school and public libraries. The job is not easy nor is it a simple process, but the end goal is worth the effort! If a book isn't available in-house or it isn't in a format that the student prefers as a reader, we invite students to search the public library catalogue. More often than not we can track down what the student wants! With dwindling school budgets, the ability to turn to the public library's catalogue is invaluable. We believe that an engaging school library coupled with the additional perks of programming, clubs, and digital resources through the public library are the ultimate level of support for our students and their families.

Our work connecting students with public library cards across our system is ongoing. Giving students library cards is like giving students a key to unlock the door to additional opportunities and multiple possibilities for their future. Public libraries are important partners for schools when it comes to supporting lifelong learning and the love of literacy. I'd encourage anyone reading this to consider your relationship with the *libraries of your life* and the impact of having those spaces to create, learn and dream. I believe that introducing students to school and public libraries is both a privilege and a responsibility as an educator.

Have you shared the magic of a library with a student or child in your life?

Lori Richards

Upping Students' Verification Skills with CTRL-F

With the recent rise in the proliferation of false and misleading information, it is increasingly difficult for students to assess the credibility and reliability of information online. This is true for us educators as well.

As a school lead librarian, I have felt a strong need to 'up our game' in supporting students in critically consuming online information, particularly with the social and political divisions in the world during COVID-19.

Early in the pandemic, I was introduced to CTRL-F: Find the Facts, a verification skills module from civic education charity CIVIX. Named for the keyboard shortcut for 'find,' CTRL-F helps students learn simple research skills to come to informed conclusions about information. Our students had recently pivoted to online learning, which created new challenges and obstacles in teaching and learning and put our students at an even greater risk of being susceptible to faulty information.

The CTRL-F program is unique in that it teaches the same 'lateral reading' techniques professional fact-checkers use to quickly locate key context about online sources and claims.

Before CTRL-F, when teaching credibility, we had been using the C.R.A.P test, which asks students to check for currency, reliability, authority, and purpose (or point of view). Using these 'vertical reading' strategies, students stay on the page to investigate and reach conclusions about reliability. However, we were finding that the analytical strategies that may have worked elsewhere were not sufficient when applied online, where key context and information are often missing. By using the CTRL-F lateral reading strategies, students have been learning to leave the website or page and 'dig deeper' to further investigate the source with improved efficiency and success.

The CTRL-F program provides educators with an extensive website of lessons and resources influenced by information literacy experts across North America. The lesson series is divided into four parts, focussing on three key strategies: Investigate the Source, Check the Claim, and Trace the Information. Learning is supported by short expert videos and lots of hands-on practice using current examples.
In summer 2021, CIVIX invited me to participate in a program evaluation to learn what students typically do when asked to evaluate online information and to understand the impact that CTRL-F has on their skills. As our school's teacher-librarian, it was a natural fit. But I was also motivated by the opportunity to learn, collaborate, and network with a group of dynamic educators and experts who shared the same goal to empower our students with the tools and skills needed to tackle the online misinformation epidemic.

I was one of 80 middle- and high-school teachers across Canada who took students through CTRL-F as part of the study, after participating in a workshop given by information literacy expert Mike Caulfield from the University of Washington's Center for an Informed Public, who also co-created the CTRL-F materials.

Being given a new set of lateral reading strategies, critical assessment tools and training, we were armed and ready to test run the pilot program from our home schools.

From my own experience delivering the CTRL-F lessons, students were actively engaged, interested and enthusiastic about the material. It was exciting to witness our students learning and obtaining new skills. Students were now going lateral and 'leaving the page' to investigate the source of the information, website, or association and any background information they could find about its creator. Their investigations led to some shocking discoveries about the information they were viewing.

For example, one extremely official-looking website we viewed called the 'Heartland Institute for Climate Change' was created by an American political group to promote climate change denial. At the end of one lesson, a student commented on the way out the door: "I actually learned something useful today." I also started to hear students adopting the new vocabulary they had learned and beginning to challenge each other with comments such as "What's your source for that?"

When participating in the CTRL-F study, we gave our students a pretest before beginning the program and a comparable post-test a week after finishing. On each test, students were asked to

indicate their level of trust in four different sources and claims and to explain their answers.

The data was collected nationwide from the 80 participating educators and their classes, and the results indicated a vast improvement across the board in our students' ability to critically evaluate online information after participating in the CTRL- F lesson series.

The pretest results show the extent of the problem. Most of the students (79%) used close-reading strategies, which didn't serve them well. For example, 70% of students discounted a true claim just because it didn't sound plausible.

On the post-test, students did much better. Only 11% left the page to conduct research on the pretest, but 59% did so after going through the program. And doing this research helped them to reach an accurate conclusion and to offer more sound reasoning in their responses.

Where students on pretest supported their (often incorrect) answers with references to signals such as site's appearance, topicality of information, and presence of contact information, on post-test their responses were much more likely to be correct and were informed by their research.

With the documented results of the pilot project and my classroom observations, it was a 'no brainer' to take the leap and incorporate CTRL-F: Find the Facts into our library information literacy skills lessons series.

Intending to reach all our students, this fall we invited our grade nine and 12 classes to our library to participate in a "find the facts" misinformation lesson workshop. We are inviting the remaining grade 10 and 11 students to participate in the program this coming spring semester.

From a student's perspective, the lessons are organized in a very non-threatening and participatory, "I do, We do, You do" approach, with an opportunity to demonstrate their new knowledge by completing a Google check-in form after each of the three skills are presented. Also, if a student needs additional concept reinforcement the Google Form provides a helpful strategy to assist them. Post lessons, the Google Forms provide educators with considerable data to determine the next steps to support student learning.

The additional bonus for teacher librarians is that students see their librarians in an 'active teaching' role that helps reinforce the perception and credibility of the school librarian as an 'information literacy expert' and a 'go to' person for support, information, and resources. As a lead teacher-librarian, I found these lessons provided me with an opportunity to advocate for our library space and bring awareness to the support, services, and resources that we can provide to the school. I was able to use these teaching resources to mentor and model some engaging and effective teaching and assessment strategies that teachers can take away and incorporate into their professional practice toolkit.

All in all, participating in CIVIX's CTRL-F professional development, pilot project and teaching series have been an extremely positive and rewarding experience and, quite frankly, has added a new 'spark' to my enthusiasm for teaching.

It has provided me with a new set of skills and strategies for my information literacy teaching toolkit. It's given us the chance to foster and re-build collaborative relationships with our staff and students as we begin to re-enter our library classroom spaces, and most importantly our students are now armed with a set of powerful lateral reading strategies and skills to navigate and combat the ongoing misinformation pollution problem.

CTRL-F: Find the Facts is available free with registration at ctrl-f.ca. *The resources are designed for students in grades seven to 12 and are available in English and French. Full results from the CTRL-F study were published in "The Digital Media Literacy Gap," available at* ctrl-f.ca/report.

Johanna Gibson-Lawler

Advocacy and Ad Hoc Committees as Leadership

When I was asked by the editor to write an article on "leadership in your library" and to write specifically about my advocacy work, I said yes with some trepidation: I sort of feel like a fraud or a phoney lately as, while I do consider myself a full-time teacher-librarian, the pandemic had me redeployed with teaching almost everything *but* the library. So much for my advocacy work! I'll admit that it's been hard to find #SchoolLibraryJoy these past two years, but I also think that light is coming for all of us.

During the first full school year of the COVID-19 pandemic, I played the role of Brooks from the movie *Shawshank Redemption* and peddled library books on a cart up and down the school hallways with a second cart for signing out library books with my laptop. My library was closed to students. I also taught grade three science and social studies, English Language Learners (ELL/ESL), full-day kindergarten prep, and special education prep. My entire year was spent in teaching positions that weren't in the library. I know that many of you did the same, and I wasn't alone in this struggle.

This year, while some of my teaching in the school library has been restored, not all of it has been. It's hard to feel like a leader in the library when you aren't back to the way it was before the pandemic, focusing on all the wonderful things that make students fall in love with reading. So, I continue to advocate, because I know that what's best for kids is having a qualified full-time teacher-librarian (ideally paired with another library professional), in a fully stocked library – spaces where the work continues evaluating resources with an anti-oppressive and anti-racist lens, where students feel safe to be themselves, where minds are stretched as we question resources and the media, where students can learn and research through inquiry or use their hands to build and tinker and read with abandon. I choose to continue to advocate because it's needed now more than ever.

One of the strategies that have had the greatest impact on library advocacy for me is to have a Library Ad Hoc Committee started with my local federation. Our local Greater Essex ETFO Library Hoc Committee has done some great work supporting our teacher-librarians with professional development and with raising the profile of teacher-librarians within our school board. For the last two years, for example, our committee has financially supported the attendance of 30-40 teacher-librarians and ETFO teachers from Greater Essex to the Ontario Library Association's Super Conference. We have also created book talks and annual events, like Librarypalooza, for our teacher-librarians.

Recently, we developed a comprehensive survey for our ETFO teacher-librarians to obtain some data on the impact that the pandemic has had on libraries, teacher-librarian staffing and library budgets. The results were as shocking as we expected, but this has led our local released ETFO officers into some discussions with our school board and some continuing work on rectifying this current reality. We will be meeting as a committee with one of our superintendents to further discuss our survey results and hopefully offer some suggestions and solutions.

A few years back, I was also on the Provincial ETFO Library Standing Committee and remembered a conversation that I had that stuck with me. I was told that if we want to protect school libraries and specialist teachers, like teacher-librarians, we should work to have language around this position in collective agreements and constitutions. Our Library Standing

Committee and our Local Library Ad Hoc Committee have continually crafted motions that have gone before ETFO's Annual General Meetings to be voted on by the membership. This is how we got into ETFO's Building Better Schools document, with an endorsement that every school should have a teacher-librarian and other specialist teachers.

The next step on my advocacy journey was to run for an elected position on my local ETFO Executive, Collective Bargaining Committee, and our Table Team. Once there, I participated in negotiations with the school board for our last collective agreement, which was signed in the summer of 2020. Guess who brought forth language about school libraries and teacher-librarians? While the language wasn't ultimately accepted with that collective agreement, this conversation at the table opened a variety of opportunities to have superintendents and principals listen to the school board's position; they believe in school libraries and teacher-librarians for our students in Greater Essex. We will continue to advocate for library language in our agreements! It's a process.

Where do you start?

Start by harnessing the power that your local federation has: you pay union dues so ask them to speak on your behalf as a teacher-librarian or other library professional; start up this conversation with your local leaders and released officers and follow the road map above; ask to speak to your local's Executive and inquire about starting up a Library Ad Hoc Committee; ask to get on the next executive agenda and get some teacher-librarians in your board to join the conversation with the local union chapter.

Ad Hoc Committees generally do not need constitutional changes and are easy to get started. Once you have been rolling for a few years, ask an executive member to help your committee introduce language to get your ad hoc library committee to be permanent in your constitution.

Starting up a Local Library Ad Hoc Committee is critically important for several reasons. The first is that each board allocates library funding in different ways since the funding isn't currently enveloped by the Ministry. Funding is calculated as one teacher-librarian per 763 elementary students and one teacher-librarian per 909 secondary students. Teacher-Librarian members need to have this committee to keep their Locals in the loop regarding the working conditions they are facing. This is so that Local released officers and the school board can work together to make sure that students receive access to school libraries, teacher-librarians, and high-quality resources for both teachers and students.

Having a Local Library Ad Hoc Committee also informs the Provincial ETFO Library Standing Committee by helping to amplify teacher-librarian voices from around the province thus, supporting ETFO's vision of Building Better Schools. Finally, why not start up a local committee to support teacher-librarian members or other library professionals? The needs, PD, and supports are somewhat unique for these specialized teachers and staff. All union members need to feel supported, both locally and provincially in the end.

We need more locals in ETFO to take up the charge and we need other affiliates, such as CUPE, OSSTF, and OECTA to harness the power of these unions to help advocate for the future of school libraries and school library professionals. Our students depend on it. Let's work together as school library leaders to let in the light!

Many of you might remember an article that I wrote for this publication in the fall of 2018 entitled "An Advocacy Story." In it, I spoke about some strategies that you can employ to help you advocate for school libraries:

"So, what can you do to help advocate for our common cause? Consider tweeting about the great work that you are doing in your library or harnessing the power of other social media sites. Offer to present to your parents' club or council about what the school library and your program offer their children. Get on the docket to speak with your board's trustees about the importance of libraries and programming. Enquire with your local federation about the possibility of starting a Library Ad Hoc Committee to support other teacher-librarians in your Local. Make sure that your school library is a stop on any school "open house" event, such as a kindergarten open house or a Grade 9 night. Have a 30-60 second elevator speech at the ready as you never know who you will run into in the community that could help advocate and support school libraries. Invite your school administration to accompany you to OLA Super Conference — their attendance is free on the day that they attend. The possibilities to help advocate are endless."

"An Advocacy Story", *The Teaching Librarian*, 2018 Sept.

Mary Doyle

Leading through Mentorship

How Experienced School Library Workers Can Support Those Early in their Careers

When one thinks about a leader, often what springs to mind is the outgoing, gregarious personality that attracts the spotlight and many followers. While this type of leadership certainly has a place, leadership also happens in quiet, deliberate conversations that occur in an environment of trust and mutual respect. These types of conversations can happen anywhere but can become even more meaningful when they are facilitated through a formal mentoring program, such as the Ontario Library Association (OLA) MentorMatch.

I spoke with two teacher-librarians who have participated in the MentorMatch program to discuss their experiences and what it has meant to them as leaders. Lynn Goodwin and Beth Lyons both became mentors out of a desire to share their knowledge and experience. With over 25 years of experience, Goodwin wanted to give back but found that it also provided her with an opportunity to grow and gain a new perspective on her learning. Lyons came to MentorMatch with a lot of experience both as a mentor and a mentee. She attended workshops and training sessions with Bruce M. Wellman and MiraVia to be a trained NTIP (New Teacher Induction Program) mentor in Ontario schools. Being part of MentorMatch meant Lyons could support new teacher-librarians in the same way that she had been supported. She explains, "New teacher-librarians are often seasoned educators with many years in the classroom but moving into the teacher-librarian role can be a solitary endeavour. I wanted to ensure that a new teacher-librarian had a support system available to them as they navigated their new role."

In a mentoring relationship, it is important to set boundaries and goals for the relationship early on. Both Lyons and Goodwin approached the relationship from a place of mutual respect and professionalism and discussed what the mentee hoped to achieve through the process. Lyons worked with her mentee to create a list of topics they might want to cover. Both mentors met with their mentees about once a month, be it by email, phone, text, or video call. Meeting virtually outside of work hours can help with managing conflicting schedules and priorities during the school day.

Rather than a teacher or a trainer, what many mentees are looking for is a sounding board. The mentoring conversations are driven by the mentee, with the mentor being an active listener and asking guiding questions. When it comes to sharing personal experiences and stories, Lyons says, "I try to only share 'stories' of what I'm doing in my space when directly asked rather than overshare, which may lead a mentoring partner to feel the need to change what might work for their community to what I am doing in mine, as all school libraries serve their school community in different ways."

In conversation, the question that Lyons always asks mentees, and herself is, "Is this what's best for students?" Every mentoring conversation connects back to this question, making sure that the students and their needs are always the priority. Goodwin's approach is "more of a collegial, friendly, supportive dialogue." Topics of dialogue include the importance of the work of diversifying school library collections, being "people leaders" and managing staff issues through challenging times like the pandemic. In this back-and-forth exchange, Goodwin says, "We traded ideas on how to keep all of the balls in the air as we juggle multiple priorities and demands, both professionally and personally."

Being a mentor has been a positive and joyful experience for both Lyons and Goodwin. Goodwin found joy in the interactions and sharing with the mentee. "I could feel the excitement and interest that the mentee brought to each meeting. It was good to hear about the progress, skills, and choices that the mentee was making on their own career journey." Lyons found it a delight to speak with her mentee. She enjoys the pedagogical dialogue and how it challenges her thinking. She says, "I find that explaining my thinking process for certain tasks or programs within the school library helps me to better understand my own rationale for decisions, and questions from my mentoring partner continue to help me learn forward as I think and rethink how the school library can best serve the school community."

When asked how being a mentor has helped develop their leadership skills, both mentors say they found the perspective of another teacher-librarian outside of their sphere to be refreshing and helped them to understand different school communities and their unique needs. Lyons explains, "While being a mentor is a leadership position, it's also a co-learning

position, and in my opinion, the best leaders continue to learn alongside those within their community." This has helped Lyons to be more confident about her ideas and speak out about other issues to the wider school community. Goodwin echoes that saying mentoring is more about "being a cheerleader, a trusted friend to bounce ideas off, someone to turn to when you have those 'big' questions." For Goodwin, this has helped to continue with the development of soft skills and self-awareness.

Mentors and mentees have an opportunity to grow and learn from each other. Lyons also adds, "As educators, we know that it isn't about having all the answers but knowing where to look to get help to find the answers that lead to more questions and deeper learning. As school library professionals we are models for inquiry-based learning and collaboration and so we must view the mentoring relationship as a formal inquiry into our craft." Thinking about becoming a mentor, but feeling a little shy? Goodwin has this advice, "I would say that everyone is a leader; we're all really good at different things, and shy people often bring the skill of effective listening that is so important to leadership. Leadership skills can be learned by anyone. Step forward and shine!"

Ontario Library Association (OLA) MentorMatch Program

Yvonne Patch

What is a good way to describe a mentor? Ideally, it is someone who can provide guidance, support, advice, and motivation to another person. The mentor responds to the needs and goals of the person being mentored. The mentor shares experiences and skills with the mentee in a confidential and safe environment.

MentorMatch

OLA recognizes a need to support members in the areas of careers, networking, and professional development. The annual OLA Super Conference supports conference participants and members by providing a Career Centre. The Career Centre offers an opportunity for one-on-one chats about library careers and learning opportunities, as well as a cover letter and resume critiquing. The OLA MentorMatch program was developed to provide OLA members with a one-on-one mentor relationship throughout the year. Through the MentorMatch program, the OLA Mentoring Committee offers OLA members a free six-month mentor/mentee session.

Every six months OLA members can apply to be either a mentor or mentee or both. Registration is promoted through the OLA website and on several social media platforms.

Once registration is completed, mentors and mentees are matched based on information, needs and goals submitted in the application form. Mentors and mentees are representative of every library sector. However, if a mentee is unsure of the desired library sector, we can find a mentor who has had experience in several different sectors. Once mentors and mentees are sent contact information, the relationship begins. There are many support resources including an "agreement" document which allows the mentor pair to articulate goals for the session.

What are our mentees looking for?

Some mentees are preparing for library positions and need guidance with cover letters, resumes, and interviews. Others are looking for a new or different career path. Still, others are in new positions and need some support navigating a new workplace and culture.

Through the MentorMatch program participants can find out about transferable skills, effective cover letters and resumes/CVs and interview preparation. They can discover how to develop leadership skills to move up in their organization or move on to a different library. Some sessions focus on creative and strategic ways to work in a current position. The program provides a self-awareness checklist to help evaluate their personal and work styles with a view of focusing on preferred work environments. Participants can count on the mentor connection to focus on their strengths and find the best way to leverage these strengths. Most often the program allows for confidence building and professional strategies to succeed.

Contact the OLA Mentoring Committee with any questions about the program and join the OLA LinkedIn Connections group for library networking opportunities and resources. Stay in touch with ongoing career-related events and activities on the OLA website.

Dr. Ilene Winokur

School Libraries, The Learning Commons, and Places of Belonging

I have many fond memories of school libraries from my childhood. I've been an avid reader ever since I can remember. Books were a way for me to escape to another world, learn about the world and go on adventures with the characters in my favourite books.

When I became a teacher in 1996, I carried that love of school libraries or media centers as they were called back then. I wanted to transfer my love of reading to my grade three students who were learning English as a second language. Although the school didn't have a large selection of books at the time (since it had just been established the year I was hired), there were enough books to keep us busy all year. Each classroom was on the weekly library schedule and the teacher-librarian gladly read aloud to the students before they looked around the shelves. I encouraged my students to take a book home each week and we kept a log of the stories they read. Sometimes, they created book reports as part of their classwork, but mostly, reading was for pleasure. I wanted to instill in them the same love of reading that I have. Since the students I was teaching are from an oral storytelling culture, pleasure reading isn't emphasized at home, so I felt I had a big responsibility.

After I became elementary principal at the school, I continued to allocate budget and support purchases for our library and created a corner for teachers and teaching assistants with resources they could access to support their professional development. I even donated some of my personal resources to it. Our library was also a space for activities and after-school meetings. It was truly a common: "land or resources belonging to or affecting the whole of a community." I also like to think of it as positively affecting the community.

In 2010, the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) described the need for a space that could be used to offer a variety of activities and modalities to students that would teach them transferrable skills. They noted,

> A Learning Commons is a vibrant, whole-school approach, presenting exciting opportunities for collaboration among teachers, teacher-librarians and students. Within a Learning Commons, new relationships are formed between learners, new technologies are realized and utilized, and both students and educators prepare for the future as they learn new ways to learn. (p. 3)

We often hear about 21st-century skills like communication, collaboration, problem-solving and critical thinking. All these skills have been a central part of libraries for years. Knowing how to sift through information and identify reliable sources has always been a part of what teacher-librarians have taught students. They have also supported teachers by making book recommendations and supporting classroom lessons with resources and information. My experience with my school library was the same. It makes so much sense that it has become an important part of the Learning Commons and it creates a safe space where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

The addition of makerspaces to school libraries is another way libraries have expanded their mission as a place of belonging. Schools need to provide ways for children to explore and discover their talents, strengths, and passions. One way to do this is by offering them a safe space and an opportunity to be agents of their own learning. Making is a perfect way for students to solve local and global problems with their inventions. It instills empathy and compassion for others.

The library often takes the lead in creating a true Learning Commons by promoting intercultural competencies through a wide variety of books and literature that broadens the perspectives and views of students as well as teachers. These resources support teachers who may lack them in their classrooms. Having a variety of books to select from the shelves of our school libraries, ensures that our students feel seen. In today's world, schools need to be inclusive, accepting, and offer a diverse number of voices. One of the best ways to do that is through books. Teacher-Librarians are essential members of the school staff because they have expertise in technology and research skills that support the efforts of classroom teachers. In the September 2021 issue of *The Teaching Librarian*, Jenn Giffen created a sketch note that highlighted 8 Ways School Library Staff Virtually Saved the Day During the Pandemic (p. 44). They produced podcasts, created screencasts, curated e-books, and provided help with technology to name a few.

There are other ways the library has become a center of learning and that is something I mentioned earlier in this article, professional development for teachers, support staff, and teacher-librarians. The school library, as a Learning Commons, can become a center for Professional Belonging, a term I mention in my recently published book, *Journey to Belonging: Pathways to Well-Being*. Belonging is a human need that originally appeared in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and has since been supported by recent neurological and psychological research. The need to belong is innate because humans are relationship seekers. Those relationships can be personal or professional. Feeling a sense of professional belonging is a basic need in any institution, including our schools. When we feel accepted and validated by our administration and our colleagues, we feel a sense of professional belonging.

The Learning Commons is a perfect example of professional belonging because it provides a safe space for everyone in the school building, including parents, to learn and collaborate by meeting, communicating, and building strong relationships that are the foundation of belonging. Humans have an instinctive need to belong and that is supported by Abraham Maslow's research as well as other psychologists. We need to ensure there is a focus on creating safe spaces and feelings of belonging in our schools and the school library is a key player in modelling it. Teacher-Librarians are already leading the way as an example of social and emotional learning, culturally responsive teaching, and media/digital literacy.

Unfortunately, some schools and school districts around the world don't value libraries and teacher-librarians. I believe those who lead these schools are missing a vital and vibrant part of their institutions as a result. The more we hear about book banning, minimizing library budgets, and marginalizing the role of the teacher-librarian, the more likely our students, teachers, staff, and school leaders will feel marginalized. Without this vital resource in our schools, it is very difficult to create a sense of belonging. Let's take a broader view of the value that libraries and teacher-librarians offer and focus on how their roles can be enhanced rather than minimized.

I will always be grateful to my school library for helping me learn about myself and the world without ever having to leave home.

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Additional Resources
https://wke.lt/w/s/2Wmhmq

Nahid Azari

The Quality of a Leader in the LLC

Working in a variety of library settings has provided me with the opportunity to observe many leadership styles. Moving from a public library setting to a school library setting has taught me that leadership has many different dimensions. Specifically, I've noticed that successful leaders take challenges as opportunities to grow and develop their skills. With rapid changes impacting our school library learning commons (including technology, economy, and social responsibility), I believe a successful LLC leader analyzes the organizational culture and context of the library to meet the needs of our students, colleagues, and community.

I've noticed that leaders need to see things through different perspectives, while embracing the organizational vision and mission. Leaders can make a remarkable difference just by giving the people they work with or serve freedom and choice in decision-making. This act of acknowledgement can increase pride and provides mutual respect and trust. This is true between colleagues and for the students who enter our space. In addition, this autonomy can create a greater sense of accomplishment for those who are willing to act on opportunities and take initiatives.

Between colleagues, this style of positive leadership draws out the best of everyone, allowing everyone to solve problems using the knowledge they have gained through training opportunities and experience. For students, this style of positive leadership draws out their confidence, and teaches them how to change direction when a decision doesn't work out.

Effective leaders also need to provide resources and focus on the tools and knowledge that someone would need to be successful. Micromanagers can create a culture where colleagues and students feel redundant or disengaged, which can erode confidence or productivity. Unfortunately, leaders like this often have selfish motivations, and their behaviors are based on what they want, not necessarily what is best for the library, our students, or our colleagues; these tend to be positional leaders, attaining authority simply from being in a particular position.

I've found that servant leaders empower coworkers and students and encourage talent development while keeping in focus the main goals of the broader school community. Enhancing the development of all staff and students gives a sense of ownership and fulfilment; since school library professionals often work with the whole school, this fulfillment can be supported through the library learning commons. As well, servant leadership takes advantage of the collaboration, diversity and collective brain power that exists within the school.

Anyone can develop leadership skills if they are eager enough to face challenges and to practice strategies for everyone's greater growth. Taking initiatives, looking for opportunities to grow, developing new skills, exploring and experimenting and learning how to inspire people are ways to open up the leadership horizon for our students and the people with whom we work. Above all, leaders who thrive when serving people, while anticipating changes and build a diverse network, are successful in shaping their school and help create an effective library learning commons.

Trish Hurley

voicEd: Start the Conversation

Stephen Hurley taught for 30 years in Ontario's public school system. He was a classroom teacher, a curriculum consultant and a teacher educator. Although retirement called, he didn't hang up his hat. Hurley is the brains behind voicEd Radio and the voice! He is an Education Consultant, a husband, a father and very passionate about music and the educational landscape across Canada. He wants to start conversations that move the educational needle.

TingL: What is voiceEd Radio?

VoiceEd Radio was set up to encourage provocative and respectful conversations that open new ways of thinking about something within education. Its mission is to "broaden and deepen the way we talk about schools, teaching and learning in the 21st Century. It's our theory of change. It's our call to action!" voicEd's mandate is to intentionally start conversations designed to get us out of our comfort zones. We like to listen for the obvious topics that people are talking about, but we're also attuned to the barely audible murmurs that could affect education policy and practice in the future.

Most educators look forward to retirement. Clearly, you didn't take that path, what drives your passion?

One of the reasons I'm still working is that I have a 15 and a 13-year-old and my wife is still teaching. The other reason is I have the freedom to keep doing this. When I retired, there were so many questions and so much work still to do. So, in 2011 I started voicEd.ca which was designed as a multi-author blog space. What I was going after was a way to solve, cure, and address some of the polarization on social media around education. I thought if we could get people writing together and talking about these things, gathering around themes and ideas, it would lead to incredible discussions. However, it didn't really work. Then, in 2017, based on my lifelong love of radio, I started voicEd. I wanted to be on the radio. Now the purpose is to create conversations and engage people in conversations that they might not normally have.

What is the most burning issue for you right now in education?

It's the word *all*. That is likely the most important word in our lexicon right now. It's easy to say *all* but difficult to implement. When we say success for *all*, opportunities for *all*, who is *all*? Who is it really? Are we reaching *all* in a publicly funded system? The other major question that we must address is the word

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success – what does it mean? When we talk about student success, we have a narrow definition of success. I think we need to do a lot of deep thinking around and broadening of that definition. What does it mean at graduation when we stay a student is successful?

It has been a tough few years in many ways. How do we fix the system right now? What can we do?

The big thing for me, and others, is that we need to have a deep conversation. This conversation is not just for school districts and school communities about what we mean about public education. You have to ask yourself, who is the public? What does it mean to value public education? Right now, there is a tension between educating 'my' children and 'our' children. As parents, we want the best for our kids. Parents of privilege will do whatever they can do to get the best they can for their children. However, when we talk about public education, it should be a different conversation. It should not be about the success of my children, it should be about the success of all our children, our communities and everyone in it. That conversation is what is most important right now. There are lots of issues in public education, we can't address them all at one time, but this one is important. We have to start the conversation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a large impact on the school system. What are your thoughts about this?

When we look at some of the current tensions in school, we must look at the roots. What and where are the roots? I think there's a growing tension between being an individual versus being part of a community. When was the last time a parent was allowed inside a school building? How have any newcomers to the country engaged in the school system? There is no engagement, they have not been able to share their story or who they are. I think this contributes to the huge identity crisis in public education.

What do you think public education should mean?

That is a major question — what is the purpose of public education? There are many part answers, and I am finding it is becoming more and more geared toward getting a job. Is that what we want schools to be — job training sites? We want schools to be about the public good, which is a philosophical concept. Look at our other public good services like health care and the legal system. They are all under stress. We have to have some serious conversations about this! We stand at a perfect time to engage in these conversations. Nurture them.

In elementary school, I was often cited for daydreaming in class. I like to think that it was time well spent as it allowed me to develop what I have come to know as one of my most important assets: IMAGINATION. I'm still very committed to being involved in those conversations and initiatives that will help us to imagine more creative and innovative ways of thinking about education – ways that extend well beyond the bricks and mortar of the traditional schoolhouse.

Do we need teacher retraining?

This comes down to the theory of education versus the reality of it. Our teachers do not need to be retrained, but we do need to have vibrant conversations. Real work is changing the infrastructure and the support that current and future teachers have to do the job they want to do. The system has beaten some teachers down, and unless we look at why and look deeply at the structures of schools, we will not be able to fix anything. We are living in a compliance-based system with demands on teachers, principals, and students. This doesn't work in a job that requires teachers to bring their authentic selves to work every day.

You talk a lot about conversations. What would push the needle on public education?

A Public Inquiry or a Royal Commission on education. In the past, the very process of calling a Royal Commission has created a buzz – a sense of energy. We had Hall-Dennis in the 1970s and *For the Love of Learning* in the 1990s. It's time for another.

The process and documentation, the research that is done and the submissions made will help create change. We need a forward-thinking politician with passion and energy for education. The real change is going to come when we engage the public in the conversation; that means the public – as

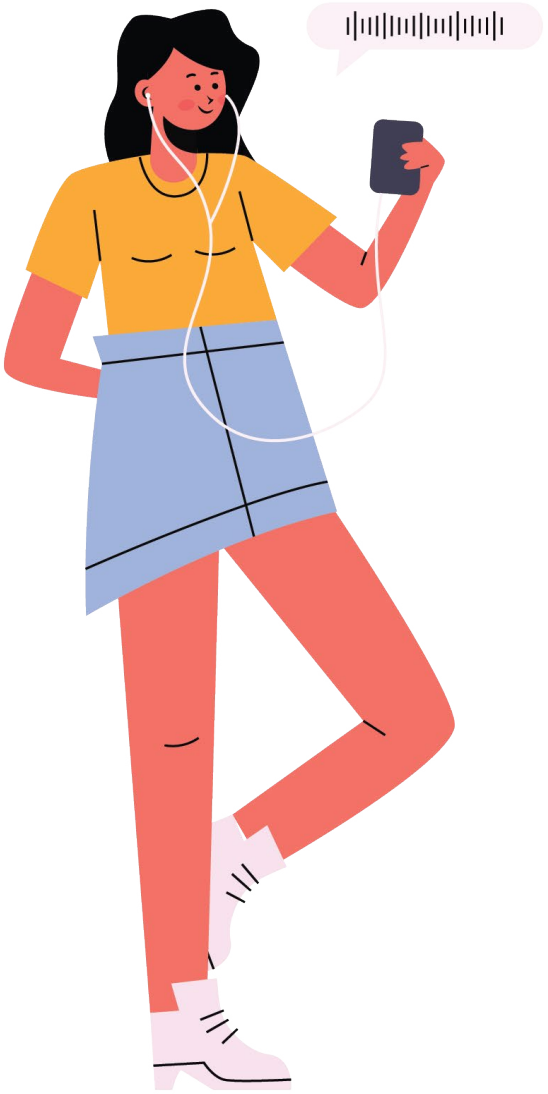
in everyone. This would have to be well designed and have some teeth. It would be a message back to the government that THIS is the public speaking. Historically, if you look back at the most creative and imaginative times we have had, they usually come from contentious, tragic or life-changing events. From World War II to Sputnik to Kennedy's Moon Shot, they were times of inventions, innovation, and those times energized the imaginations of a generation.

What would you say to new teachers today?

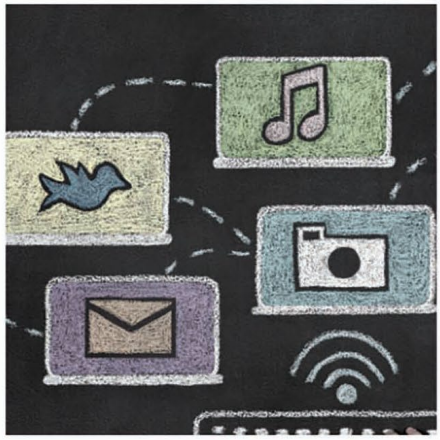
I want new teachers to see education as a place for their imagination and creativity and the imagination and creativity of their students. While I'm sure that the need for change and improvement will always be important, I happen to believe that there are many, many examples of high-quality learning taking place right across this country and around the world. I also believe that, with the right amount of imagination and creativity, every school can become a place where meaningful and connected learning takes place for all students.

When I reflect on my early teaching, I would like to tell the new teachers to make it less about them and more about the students. When I began, I had no idea what Special Education was, and I had no diversity training. I took my white Catholic perspective into the classroom every day. I would want to go back as someone who was more self-aware and reflective. That's what I would suggest to new teachers – to be more aware of the students they are entrusted with teaching.

You can catch voiceEd Radio live every morning at https://voiced.ca/listen-live-popup/ *or, you can go to* https://voiced.ca/podcasts/ *and peruse the content on-demand. Contact Stephen at* stephen.hurley@symaptico.ca.



LEADING THE LLC



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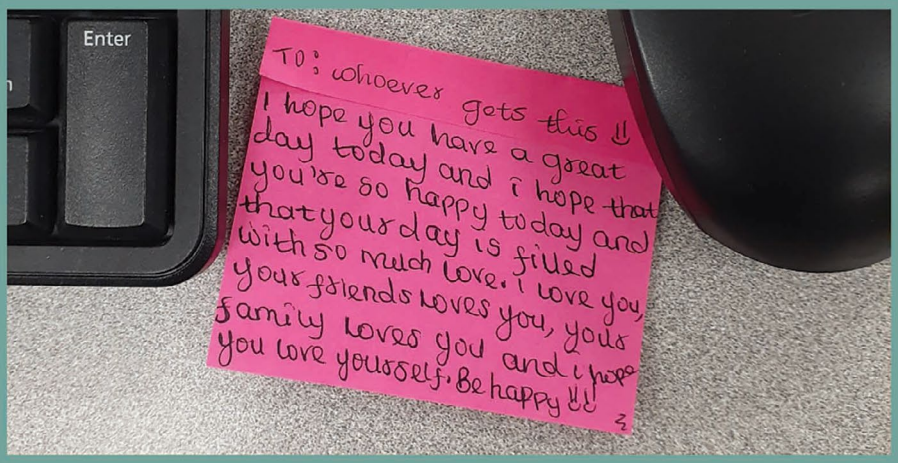

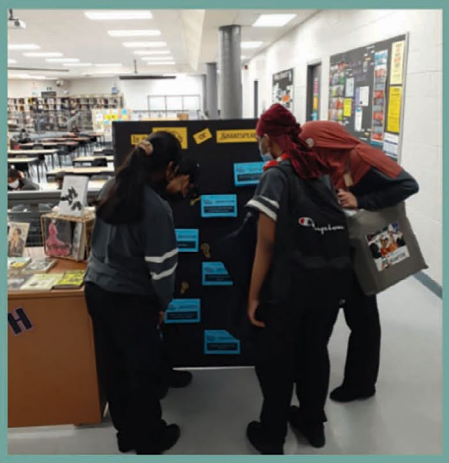

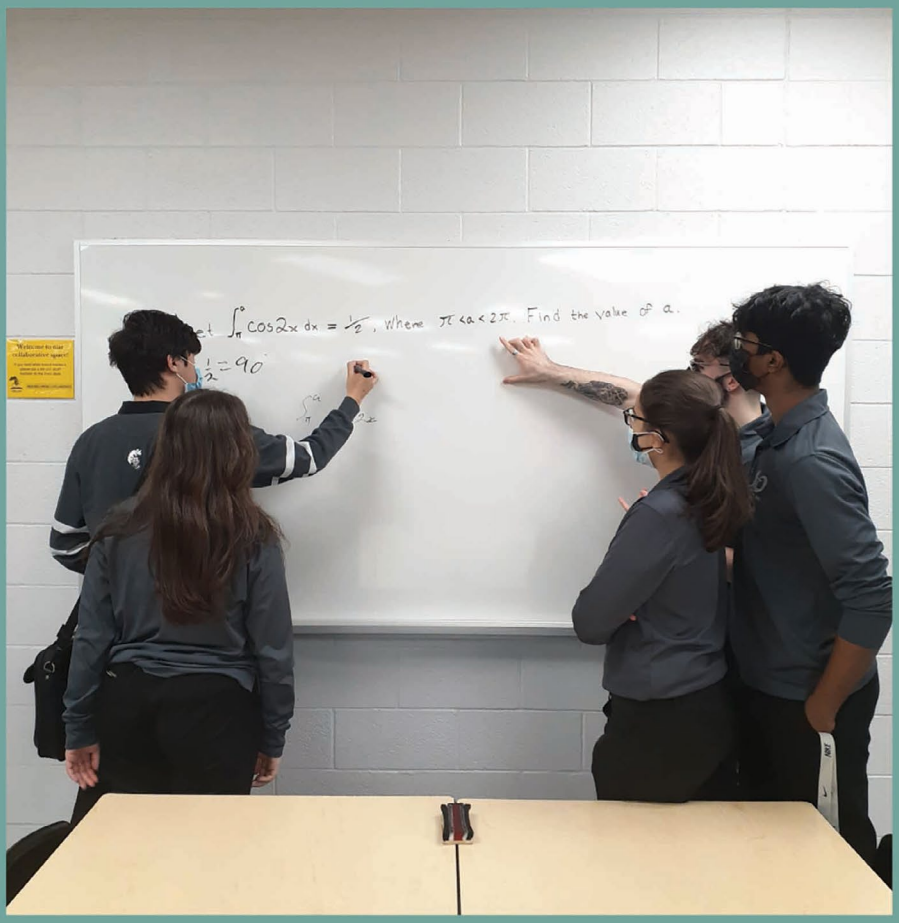

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