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Harada, Violet & Hughes-Hassell, Sandra (Eds.). (2007) *School reform and the school library media specialist*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Pp. xxiii +204 \$40 ISBN 978-1-59158-427-8

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February 22, 2008

In the current climate of school reform, most recently influenced by No Child Left Behind (2001), Violet Harada and Sandra Hughes-Hassell have assembled a work that serves several critical purposes for school library media specialists, administrators, and educators of both. Comprehensive school reform efforts may be developed at the local level, or may be implemented using a “packaged” reform initiative, developed by outside consultants, modified to meet local needs. Regardless of which approach to reform is selected by a school or district, there are implications for the school library media program. The authors of the works compiled here address the contribution of the media program and media specialist to the mechanisms and goals of school reform, i.e., change agency, student achievement, literacy, student diversity, and professional development. While the reviewer connects principles from the text to reform legislation in the United States, the reforms discussed in this book are universal, applicable to school reform in many countries. This book does not address the implications of specific reform initiatives or packages, i.e. if implementing this reform, then do such-and-such. Each of the eleven chapters included in the five sections explains a theoretical foundation for change, and includes practical strategies for initiating reform through the library media program. The media specialist who embraces the principles in this text will better understand and be able to implement reforms through the library media program that contribute to improved student achievement. The administrator will find that the media program and media specialist can be the driving agent of improved teaching and learning, and therefore, student achievement, on a campus. The educator of teachers, librarians and administrators will find a text that provides foundational principles of school reform for students, and a springboard for discussion of practical applications of those principles. This scholarly work, written by revered researchers in school media programs and education, would be beneficial in whole or part to media specialists, school administrators and instructors in professional education and library preparation programs.

The first section, a single chapter addressing change agents, written by the editors, describes some of the psychological and practical aspects of the change process. The authors have included a table enumerating key attributes of effective change agents, and questions for self-examination, by

which the reader is able to evaluate his or her own capacities for and attitude toward being an agent of change. The authors identify five aspects of the position of media specialist that contribute positively to the change process: a global view of the school community, experience in collaboration, flexibility and time to model effective teaching strategies, engagement in continuous learning, and the position of the media specialist as peer to teachers. The authors use the Concerns-Based Adoption Model developed by Hord, Rutherford, Huling and Hall (2006) to suggest strategies for the media specialist acting as an agent of change.

School reform in the current age is centered on student achievement of desired learning outcomes, and the second section of this work is focused on change processes that impact student achievement. Marjorie Pappas provides a brief history of standards-based education. Then, she moves on to explain the major tenets of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), and discusses positive and negative implications for library media programs. This chapter is particularly valuable to media specialists who need a basic understanding of the legislation and its implications both for the media program and school community.

Continuing the focus on student achievement, Barbara Stripling addresses the processes and practices that facilitate student understanding. A notable inclusion in this chapter is the explication of steps in the process of designing inquiry-based learning. A media specialist adept at designing inquiry-based learning has opportunities to perform in the role of instructional partner with teachers, for whom design of this type of instruction may be a departure from standard practice.

Ross Todd challenges media specialists to move from advocacy, i.e., telling community stakeholders that the media program is good for student achievement; to designing and conducting research that demonstrates a concrete contribution to student achievement. Todd provides a thorough description of the evidence-based practice movement in education, and the genesis of evidence-based librarianship. According to Todd (2007), the practice of evidence-based librarianship is focused on knowledge and practice of research-based methods, desired learning outcomes, evidence-generating strategies that integrate local and global learning outcomes as a basis for an improvement plan, and the dissemination and perpetuation of evidence-based outcomes. Evidence-based librarianship, as the author describes it, is a continual, active process whereby current strategies and outcomes are evaluated and revised toward the goal of improved practice and student learning.

Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning (American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications Technology, 1998), the standards document for effective school media programs and information literacy, places primary emphasis on the professional commitment to ensuring information literate school community members. In school reform legislation, literacy is stressed in programs such as Reading First, Early Reading First, and Even Start Family Literacy (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). The editors have gathered works by authors dealing with traditional print literacy and the additional literacies needed in our information-rich society, regarding reading on the web, and the skills needed to function in digital environments. As legislation acknowledges the need to prepare children for school through family literacy grant programs, Mackey and Pitcher describe ways in which the library media specialist can develop and operate programs in support of increased family literacy. The authors address print literacy, and also provide suggestions for increasing literacies involved with computer use, an important consideration in schools where a large proportion of students do not have computers at home.

Literacies involved with technology are addressed in two chapters, the first of which elucidates some of the differences in reading and understanding text from the World Wide Web, as opposed to reading and comprehending print materials. Understanding and planning to accommodate the differences in student responses to web material is critical for library media specialists, because teachers typically address only reading skills relevant to printed text. The complex nature of web

materials and the process of navigation require the development of comprehension strategies different from understanding printed informational texts. The authors include a table to help the media specialist understand the differences involved in print and web comprehension strategies, in order to be able to teach students to successfully understand web information.

Pam Berger brings together the various definitions of digital literacy, and further explains some of the competencies necessary to become literate in a digital environment. Then she reviews seven programs, or projects, which are current efforts to provide educators with information and communications technology (ICT) standards, research, tools and assessments for use in ICT reform. Knowledge of these projects provides a media specialist with a foundation upon which to base a campus-level reform effort to ensure students and staff are competent information technology users. Finally, the author lists six practical steps of action a media specialist can take in leading ICT reform. These concrete steps, which include several substeps each, provide a media specialist with a clear answer to the question, "How do I accomplish this on my campus?"

Recognizing that reform initiatives may focus on an entire school, or on a specific student population, the editors have included two pieces focused on special populations: students who qualify for education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and students with limited English proficiency. The chapter addressing exceptional populations is particularly valuable to media specialists who may have had little training or experience in exceptional student education. The authors differentiate between mainstreaming and full inclusion, in which students requiring special services to benefit from education receive all of their instruction in the general educational setting. The media specialist has the opportunity to participate in the education of exceptional students through collaborative planning with regular and special education teachers. The authors describe eight interactions between teachers and media specialists in which media specialists can participate and positively contribute to student learning outcomes. In addition to collaborative planning, the authors describe collaborative teaching of exceptional students, in which all professionals assume responsibility for the learning of all the students, exceptional and otherwise. Provision of appropriate resources in appropriate formats, and providing physical access to media center resources are important considerations for the media specialist, as well.

No Child Left Behind (2001) stresses providing research-based learning opportunities for students with limited proficiency in English. In addition, the legislation mandates more frequent and comprehensive testing of progress toward language proficiency of English-language learners. These learners have the hurdles of not only unfamiliar language, but an unfamiliar cultural context which must be overcome to become proficient in understanding academic English. The authors provide strategies library media specialists can employ to help English language learners be successful in the process of learning. These include creating a culturally diverse and accessible collection, promoting use of multicultural resources across the curriculum, and orienting the students to library resources, particularly those that contribute to development of personal identification with unfamiliar cultures. In addition to helping students with learning activities, library media specialists are in a position to help English language learners in the socialization process by ensuring that the media center is welcoming, has a culturally diverse collection and environment, and by promoting equity and respect of all persons.

The value of professional development activities in ensuring teacher quality is underscored through the provision of professional development fund grants in No Child Left Behind (2001). Professional development activities are a requisite component of any reform program funded by a government grant. The editors include two informative articles related to professional growth of the media specialist, and media program.

"Action research" is a term often used in education literature, and Carol A. Gordon discusses several definitions, providing clarification of the term. Action research is usually planned and conducted at the local level, for a campus or classroom application, and, although it follows

established research methodologies, the results are not usually generalizable to the larger population. In the context of a library media program, action research involves the processes of evaluating an aspect of the media program, and then, applying the results to practice, toward the goal of improved or more effective practice. The author points to the existing attributes of effective media programs that make them suitable for action research projects, including established pathways of collaboration, global perspective of school, and workday practices into which research methods can be integrated with little disruption. The author recommends leading students to use action research for their own projects, describes the benefits to students involved in the process, and explains how to conduct action research as part of authentic teaching and learning.

The final chapter, *Professional Development through Communities of Practice*, focuses on developing skills of reflective practice for the purpose of improved teaching and student achievement. The authors address a rationale for professional development as a component of school reform. They cite research findings that change "agency" begins at the level of the practitioner, rather than the administrator, and propose that reflective practice of professionals, working in collaborative groups, leads to effective change. Such collaborative groups, or communities of practice, share common goals, share ideas and work together to design effective teaching strategies. Reflective practice on the part of the community members provides a vehicle for professional learning and improvement. A three-level model of the learning process that occurs in communities of practice is presented and explained. Then, the authors describe a university course conducted at the University of Hawaii during 2004-2005, in which teacher-media specialist teams were instructed in teaching techniques of inquiry-learning. Teams planned collaboratively in the summer, and then taught using the inquiry process during the following school year. Teams were monitored and mentored throughout the process. Teaching strategies were constantly evaluated and revised throughout the year, based on assessments of student learning that were built into the teaching process. Through the growth experiences afforded by reflective practice within the teams, and the larger cohort of course participants, the teaching behaviors of teachers and media specialists were changed, resulting in a positive influence on student learning. Included are comments from participants in the course, and guidelines for sustaining learning in a reflective community of practice.

A school library media specialist or administrator, about to implement a school reform initiative, might open this book with hope of finding steps to be followed in support of the initiative, or at least, hope to find suggested activities to carry out as part of the reform. The editors and authors here, however, provide no such lists or easy fixes. In fact, they go much deeper than the surface issues of lesson plans and activities. This work contains principles of reform leadership and practice, that, when understood and acted upon, lead the media specialist and media program in making a significant contribution to student achievement.

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About the Reviewer

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