Inquiring Minds

Let's start with the notion that our school libraries should be on a trajectory of continuous improvement. We should be always looking for new resources, new instructional strategies, new collaboration opportunities, and new programs for our students and staff. We want our students to be curious and ask questions; and as school librarians, we also have to do that when it comes to keeping our libraries moving forward. Let's take makerspaces, for example. As they become more talked about in schools all over the country, where would you go to learn more?

Standards

The AASL standards are a great place to start. As a school librarian, you can explore these standards and make connections to what should be happening with makerspaces in your library. There are some clear links to providing resources and instruction for students to make and discover.

Friends

Let's face it, we always learn from our friends. Conversations with other librarians in our district or local area can be more then beneficial in finding ideas, inspiration, and logistical information for making things successfully.

Journals

Journals, like SLC, are another valuable resource. This whole issue is about makerspaces and inquiry, but there have many articles at all different levels that you can find in online at https://schoollibraryconnection.com/. There are countless ideas, strategies, and recommendations for how to best utilize the opportunities a makerspace provides. Beyond articles, there are online workshops and other resource there to support you.

Books

There have been many books written about makerspaces. In her article in this issue, Jennifer Tazerouti she shares some of them. Purchase or borrow them and explore the ideas set forth in them. Consider how they could help you in building your own makerspace.

Social Media

You can find conversations on Twitter, Facebook, etc. where librarians are talking about makerspaces, sharing images of their successes and failures, and asking questions about what they should do. There is great potential in social media. Of course, one thing to keep in mind is just because you read it online, doesn't mean it is a good idea.

Your Own Experiences

After you've explored the tools out there, it comes time for you to synthesize all of you've read. I've never been able to take something someone else has done and implement it exactly in my program. The key variable that is different is YOUR students. You know them, you know their needs, you know their wants, and you know how to best work with them. So, after I reading and learning about all these ideas, the next step for me is to consider how I see them working with my students. Which ones will be most successful? Which ones can I adapt? Which ones aren't going to work? Once I've done that, then I can plan for moving forward.

This is just exactly what we'd hope our students would do when they explore a topic they are interested in. In this instance, we are modeling a good inquiry process that answers our question about what makerspaces should look like for our school. Time spent learning, exploring, and educating yourself about the topic can only help to make whatever you implement successful.

About the Editor

Carl A. Harvey II, MLS, MS, is assistant professor of school librarianship at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. Harvey received his master's degree from Indiana University and is the author of six books, most recently *The 21st-Century Elementary School Library Program: Managing For Results, 2nd Edition*. He is a past-president of the American Association of School Librarians, and his school has been the recipient of the National School Library Program of the Year.

E-mail: charvey@schoollibraryconnection.com

Twitter: @caharvey2

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