

You Already Are a Storyteller

I've never really thought of myself as a storyteller. I have had the pleasure of hearing many storytellers over the years with their fantastic stories from all sorts of cultures and experiences. They were so excited about their story, and there was so much emotion in their stories that could pull the audience in just like we were there with the teller. We've had the honor of having a few storytellers visit students in my libraries. One pair had a story that connected perfectly with our curriculum, so they came and told it every year to that grade level. Even though I probably heard that story fifteen times, I loved to listen to it again every year.

But, then I got to thinking about this column, and I realized I had been a storyteller and telling stories for many years without realizing it. My stories were about school libraries and what happens in them every day. What's important is to think about who is listening to those stories and whether they are passing them along. Stories are powerful advocacy components. Numbers are all well and good, but a story can have an impact on the heart, which is a powerful thing.

The Principal

When I thought about the stories I shared with my principal, I wasn't just making sure to get good marks for my evaluation. I wanted him to know what was happening in the library. I wanted him to know about the impact we were having on the school. I was hoping that as he had conversations with others, that he was passing on these stories. Principals love to talk about what is happening in their schools, so if my story could become part of his story, the power of the library was going to spread.

The Teacher

Telling teachers stories about the library can spark ideas! "Oh, you did that with Mrs. A? Well, can you do that with my class, too?" We want teachers to see all the potential of what our school libraries can do. They are some of the main characters in the stories I share, and I'm always looking for new ones. Teachers may also help to spread the library's stories to parents. So, that's another way to get the library story out there.

The Student

Hopefully students are telling other students about all they can do in the library. We want them to talk about how helpful the library is, how welcoming the library is, how full it is of the resources and materials they need, and how the library is one of the most important parts of the school. The lessons we teach are an opportunity for students to create stories about their experiences.

My Library Students

Today I teach graduate classes in school librarianship. It dawned on me as I was writing this column that the way I teach is with stories. I share my experiences. I share my successes and my failures. These are all told through a variety of stories in class. I think my students appreciate the stories because they know I am talking from real-life experience. It's kind of the been-there done-that attitude, but I think it shows the power of a story. We know what when they graduate and leave us they'll be creating their own stories, and we can't wait to hear them!!!

Our Readers

Finally, readers, I realized that through this column you have heard my stories. Stories from my days in a school library, stories from my experiences with my nieces and nephews, and stories about my time here at the university. Each column has been a story of some part or another of my life. Our authors in this issue, and all the other issues, are sharing tales from their libraries and experiences. I hope you find them useful to help spark your stories and maybe one day you'll want to share your story here! While I love to tell stories, I love hearing other stories even more!

About the Editor

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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.

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