

2020

## Tackling Reading From Many Sides

Karen M. Perry  
*Old Dominion University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/stemps\\_fac\\_pubs](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/stemps_fac_pubs)



Part of the [Education Commons](#), and the [Information Literacy Commons](#)

---

### Original Publication Citation

Perry, K. M. (2020). Tackling reading from many sides. *Knowledge Quest*, 48(5), 6-7.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the STEM Education & Professional Studies at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in STEMPS Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@odu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@odu.edu).



*We believe in reading and in creating student readers, because reading is the foundation for competence after formal schooling ends.*

## Tackling Reading from Many Sides

**Karen M. Perry** | [kperry@odu.edu](mailto:kperry@odu.edu)

When I was in my first year of school I came down with the chicken pox. I was kept home for two weeks until all signs of the disease were gone. When I came back to school, my class of forty-one students had taken up reading. I was so excited! However, I learned that my classmates had learned exactly two words: *look* and *school*. I wondered, *What about the rest of the words?* I was so disappointed. My mother laughed when I told her the story. “They are not all like you, chomping at the bit to read.”

I have always been “chomping at the bit” about reading. It has been my passion and my strength when taking all those standardized tests that depend on vocabulary. It has been my passion and my weakness when confronted with the many checklists of life, when I was more absorbed in reading than doing. Many of you are like me. You probably list your love of reading as one of the reasons you became a school librarian.

The authors in this issue of *Knowledge Quest* address the topic of reading from many sides, from keeping students reading to the education of new school librarians. School librarians are bolstered by Common Belief 4: “Reading is the core of personal and academic competency” (AASL 2018, 13), and the belief that we as school librarians can help students achieve not only competence, but also joy through the wondrous act of reading.

For those students who are “chomping at the bit” about reading, Dr. Sara Churchill considers reading from the perspective of the gifted student, although her research

---

*As school librarians, we are often asked to become confidant, soother, and listener of student problems. It always helps to have a good book to suggest. Dr. Kasey Garrison shares teen and preteen graphic novels and graphic memoirs that can smooth over some of the bumps in life as students look for help in dealing with growing pains in our fractious world.*

---

has implications for all learners. Gifted students make up a considerable part of our student populations, and we need to pay more attention to supporting them in their reading choices. They are our future leaders and those for whom reading is already a joy. Celebrate them!

As school librarians it is our job to promote a reading culture in our school. However, we sometimes struggle in maintaining this culture when we must close our school libraries. School librarians Rachel Grover and Stacy Gilbert discuss how to keep students reading when the

---

*School librarians are more than the gatekeepers for books. We are the motivators and purveyors of good reading, the support for teachers and parents in supporting the gifted, the reinforcing agent who can offer reading practice in a non-threatening environment.*

---

school library is closed. Their suggestions will help you find ways to keep a reading culture going when school life seems focused on other agendas.

As school librarians, we are often asked to become confidant, soother, and listener of student problems. It always helps to have a good book to suggest. Dr. Kasey Garrison shares teen and preteen graphic novels and graphic memoirs that can smooth over some of the bumps in life as students look for help in dealing with growing pains in our fractious world.

It is important to reinforce reading skills when teaching reading. It's what we do as school librarians, although you may not recognize it as formal instruction. School librarian Tammy Gruer and I look at the actions school librarians take every day to reinforce reading skills and suggest other ideas to incorporate technology tools. Share this list with your principal.

How will new school librarians be trained to work in the area of reading? Dr. April Dawkins, Dr. Mary Ann Harlan, and Dr. Kimberly Gangwish address how reading is addressed in the education of future school librarians within the structure of the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation, the accreditation body of library schools that prepares school librarians. They conclude that school librarians will be trained less as reading instructors and more as reading motivators and leaders in literacy of all modes.

School librarians are more than the gatekeepers for books. We are the motivators and purveyors of good reading, the support for teachers and parents in supporting the gifted, the reinforcing agent who can offer reading practice in a non-threatening environment. We believe in reading and in creating student readers, because reading is the foundation for competence after formal schooling ends.

---

**Karen Perry** is currently an instructor in the Library Science Department at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA. Karen served as a school librarian and public library children's librarian for more than thirty-four years. She is currently serving on the US Board on Books for Youth, representing AASL. She has served on several awards committees for ALSC and YALSA, as well as the AASL National Conference planning committees for 2015 and 2017.

### **Work Cited:**

AASL. 2018. *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. Chicago: ALA.

Copyright of Knowledge Quest is the property of American Library Association and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.