

# Book Review

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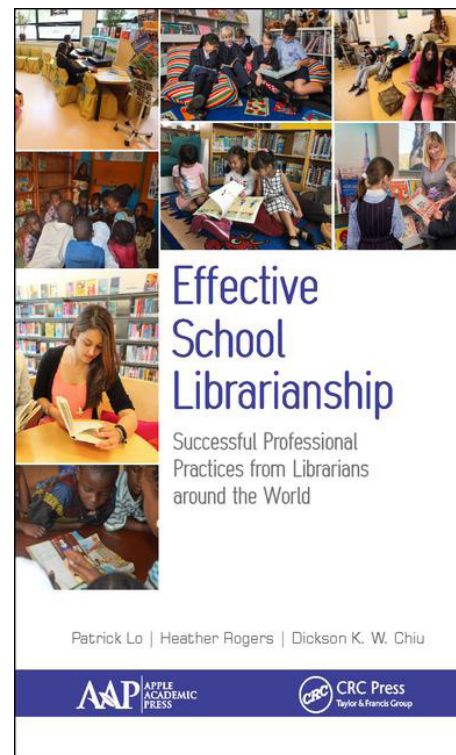
**E**ffective School Librarianship, Volumes I and II: Successful Professional Practices From Librarians Around The World by Dr. Patrick Lo, Heather Rogers, and Dr. Dickson K.W. Chiu, is the first in a series of book that is designed to inspire school librarians by providing “interviews with individual school librarians discussing their practices, challenges, as well as a variety of topics related to their professional practices” (p.xxi). The audience for this volume is clearly practicing school librarians, but its multiple interview/case study approach will appeal to school librarianship education program faculty as well as researchers in the area.

The volume begins with a series of forewords from luminaries in the international school librarianship: In Dr. Helen Boelens’ piece, she emphasizes the need for school librarians to look outside of their immediate communities for instrumental practices and affirmations. Dr. Daniel Churchill points to school librarians’ importance in helping learners to build new literacies that reflect the embedded nature of technology in contemporary learning. Dr. Daisuke Okada describes the critical role of school librarians in helping learners make sense of the broader world around them. Dr. Fadekemi Oyewusi’s forward points to the importance of school librarians’ professional preparation in achieving strong, dynamic school libraries that reflect learners’ needs. These four leaders set the scene for a powerful series of stories from practitioners who impart strategies and experiences which reflect the themes of global connectedness, international community, and the impact of digitally mediated information and technology upon school librarianship’s practice.

The resounding value of this two volume work is in the rich stories it contains. The stories are geographically grouped: the volume in the series contains cases from North and South America; the second

volume contains cases Africa and Asia. I’ll just share a few highlights: In Chapter 1, “Using Zombie Comics to Motivate Students to Read,” American Janet Kanady discusses school librarianship from the perspective of agricultural education in a rural community. She details her transition from “copy girl” responsible for teachers’ duplication needs to a respected member of her school community. This transition centered on her ability to make connections with reluctant readers through comics, allowing these learners to indulge in world other than their daily routines. Janet Kanady stresses the importance of listening to learner voices and reflecting their desires in school library programming. Chapter 7, “A Resource Center in the Struggling Latin America,” contains an interview with Carlos Diaz, a school librarian in Venezuela. Mr. Diaz relates his accidental entry into school librarianship, but his joy in discovering his passion. He points to socioeconomic and cultural gaps that drive variations in school library access as a challenge, but points to the need to support key curricular goals such as strong writing and technology fluency as ways in which school libraries and school librarians will become increasingly important.

Volume II also contains compelling stories. In Chapter 1, “A School Library in a Place Where There Has Never Been One Before! Building a Reading Culture in DR Congo,” school library director Katherine Shaw addresses her school library’s role in educating future civic leaders. The approach she uses is very learner-directed, thus allowing them to focus on their passions and the skills necessary to pursue those interests. She further explains how she has built these competencies in an Internet-free environment. In Chapter 6, “Bringing the Concepts of US Public Librarianship to a School Library in Hong Kong,” Jun Niu, Tammy Ng, and Joli Moore discuss their approach to building a library culture in a school. Taking a cue from the busy programming schedule and offerings



of many US public libraries, these school librarians created a series of programs for their school library that offered something for every educator and learner. They also discuss the challenges to creating a relentless approach!

Every story in the two volumes is important, timely, and valuable. This is a unique and powerful work sure not only to benefit working school librarians in expanding their view of what is possible in their practice and providing ideas of how to maximize any situation, it is also a direct contribution to research and education in school librarianship because it captures in-depth scenarios of professional decision making, advocacy building, and learner support that have heretofore been uncollected. I highly recommend this outstanding work and commend the editors and contributors for sharing it to further strengthen the international school librarian community.