

WRITING ARTICLES FOR NON-LIBRARY PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS

Contributed by Doug Johnson, June 2014

Doug Johnson makes the suggestion for teacher librarians to publish articles in general educational publications in order to showcase what libraries are doing but he also provides suggestions for strategically tapping into the prevailing concerns of schools and education.

Teacher librarians could collaborate on an article together or with a classroom teacher from their school.

Why do we librarians just talk to each other and not to others in education?

While I do not do so enough, I've been lucky to get some articles about the impact of libraries and project-based learning in a number of non-library educational publications including Educational Leadership, Kappan, Principal, InterEd, DesignShare, NASSP Bulletin, School Administrator, and others. Maybe one in 10 or one in 20 of my articles are published in journals outside the library or technology field. Not enough for sure.

First, I appreciate *anyone* who writes for professional publication be that publication library/tech or for general ed or for the general public. It takes time and courage. Thank you. We need to keep each other formed about best practices in our field.

And let's face it - getting published in Kappan or Educational Leadership is a lot more competitive than some of our own journals. But more librarians could publish in general education if they kept these things in mind:

1. **Remember your audience.** Why should a principal be interested in libraries anyway. What's in it for the reader? Use non-technical language. Don't impress - inform and convince.
2. **Don't put "library" in the title.** Sorry, don't talk about libraries in general. Speak of them in relationship to other programs that may be important: 1:1, literacy, differentiation,

21st century skills, etc.

3. **Have a co-author who is a member of the group for whom you are writing.** If you are writing for a professional development publication, get your PD coordinator to co-author. If you are writing for an association publication, get a member of that association to co-author.
4. **Don't advocate for libraries or librarians.** Always, always, always frame your arguments in terms of how libraries benefit students, staff, and your community. Library users.

I'm glad Kachel's article was published in SLM. Smart, proactive librarians will find ways to get it in the hands of their admins and teachers regardless of where it was found. Not only will copies go in principals' (e)mailboxes, but conference time will be scheduled to actually discuss the piece.

But we do need more library professionals writing for educators, parents, and the general public about how library programs can be good for kids. Make your next article one for non-librarians.

Doug Johnson
Director of Media and Technology
Mankato Area Public Schools
Box 8713, 1351 S Riverfront Dr.
Mankato MN 56001-8714
Phone (GV): 507-407-0077
E-mail: doug0077@gmail.com
Web: www.doug-johnson.com
Blue Skunk Blog: <http://doug-johnson.squarespace.com/>
Twitter: blueskunkblog