



Technology in Education

The Role of Teacher-Librarians and Media Specialists in Promoting Academic Honesty

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We live in an age where access to facts and information via technology threaten to drown students in information overload. Students who are overwhelmed with information are often tempted to take shortcuts to achieve their academic goals. Committing plagiarism not only erodes students' integrity and critical thought, but it erodes the values and ethics necessary for human progress in our overpopulated, highly competitive, global, late-modern world.

Teacher-librarians and media specialists are, by the very essence of their role in schools, integral resources to 21st century education. The primary responsibilities of library media specialists are to collaborate with teachers, promote reading literacy, enhance learning through technology, and promote information literacy, as illustrated by Tony Buzzeo in his 2007 book, *Collaborating to Meet Standards*. By developing partnerships and collaborating with teachers, a librarian media specialist develops the library and media center as the nexus of the academic environment – connecting the facets of reading and information literacy with technology.

School libraries and media centers host technology to help students and teachers. Teacher-librarians provide access and help students and teachers with best practices for using research databases, education technology websites/online tools, and an organized catalogue of print and digital

sources. By providing reference assistance training for library and media center resources, teacher-librarians exemplify 21st century philosophies of learning. An established library media center program reaches the information technology and literacy needs of all students and teachers. Teacher-librarians who establish themselves as leaders in the school environment may participate with administration in curriculum development, which facilitates promoting academic integrity and combatting plagiarism.

Examples of how teacher-librarians can assist students and teachers with writing, research, and academic integrity through technology are numerous and diverse. Beginning at the start of the school year, and scaffolding instruction throughout all grades, teacher-librarians should focus on demonstrating the best-practices of searching library catalogues, using research databases, and instructing academic honesty. Emphasizing the consistent use of online plagiarism checking software – like *Turnitin.com* – to teachers and students further establishes a school culture of taking academic honesty seriously. Furthermore, the teacher-librarian should take a leadership role in developing school policies relating to academic honesty, and assume the responsibility of tracking cases of plagiarism for analysis of trends in the school.

Examples of how teacher-librarians and media specialists can support technology for primary and secondary students is by

promoting (or teaching) gamification in education and teaching coding. Games like using Minecraft – a 3D “sandbox” game – allow the user to create three-dimensional structures and has elements of basic command-coding. Benefits to having students use Minecraft include unlimited creativity with building projects and models – particularly valuable for social studies teachers. Similar to Minecraft, teaching coding empowers students to learn from existing examples and projects and to take ownership of their creativity. When students take ownership of their own creative work they intrinsically learn the value of respecting others' creative work. Respecting others' work and projects helps students understand the value of their own creative work, which, in turn, helps them to not plagiarize.

Teacher-librarians and media specialists are integral to the school environment because of their potential to educate students and teachers in reading, technology and information literacies by promoting academic integrity. As 21st century educators, our responsibility is to foster academic honesty and integrity for the future generations.

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