
This title targets school librarians, focussing on the principles of ‘Empowering Learners’ in alignment with ‘Standards for the 21st Century Learner’. It offers ideas, strategies and motivation to qualify for a national award such as the National School Library Program of the Year. While this may have some transferability to school librarians in other countries beyond the US, the constant references to US principles and requirements, tailor the work to a US readership.

Any programme must involve the whole learning community of a school, and Martin suggests that the book’s methods and the leadership philosophy are able to generate significant library/whole school change. The scope of the publication follows seven steps after first outlining a snapshot of an award-winning library. Essentially an award winning library is one that applies all the principles of ‘Empowering Learners’, including primacy of the needs of current learners, teaching for learning, building a learning environment and empowering learning through leadership. The author offers skills and discusses responsibilities, dispositions and strategies leading to lifelong learning. Add to this elements such as relevance, a vibrant environment, engagement, a visionary philosophy and advocacy to all stakeholders.

The seven steps to successfully reach the goal are then outlined. A team must be created and the task started. With an evaluation of the situation, relevant barriers must be recognised and strategies for overcoming these barriers devised. Training modules must be developed and advocacy plans enumerated. The final chapter outlines how a librarian can apply for a national (US) award. Each of these chapters is very detailed and offers a mixture of professional positive motivation and practical examples of implementation. One unique perspective is that the author feels that there should be two teams: library staff on one and the rest of the school on the other. Meetings of the teams must be thoroughly business-like with goals, agenda, procedures, minutes and excellent chairmanship. Throughout all the chapters the role of good leadership is paramount to achieve consensus in all the major platforms. Barriers to change are a common problem: the author identifies the barriers, uses brainstorming to find solutions, and discusses developing an action plan and the creation of tools. The emphasis is on quality leadership in achieving these outcomes.

The appendices contain valuable material which could be modified to suit schools outside the US. In Forms and Techniques (Appendix A) there are 14 proformas which would assist in many school library initiatives directed towards change, and this is followed by Workshop Plans (Appendix B) which would also be useful. All chapters have reference lists (both paper-based references and digital), and the work concludes with an index. For Australian and NZ practitioners this title
has some useful strategies for implementing change, despite its American context.

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