

# The Editor's Notebook



Caroline Freibauer

## Making Noise About Being Quiet

I admit I wasn't thrilled with the notion of quiet in the school library, let alone building an entire edition of *The Teaching Librarian* around this theme. In this era of cuts to education, with many school libraries under stress and others virtually eliminated, it is difficult to stay quiet about the many benefits to student learning that a well-staffed, robust school library program can offer.

Although I do set aside quiet space in my school library for students who need it, usually the place is anything but quiet. We celebrate the many students collaborating, studying out loud, playing board games, chatting about books, debating various issues surrounding diversity and engaging in any number of activities. Quiet in our library is mostly a thing of the past.

But a member of *The Teaching Librarian* editorial board convinced me that the issue is important. She was adamant that we recognize and pay attention to the many introverts in our schools who are often overlooked. She reminded me that people who work in schools – staff and students alike – are all different. We need to respect those differences by listening. And, so, I listened to her.

To that end, we do have an in-depth article about introverts by Trish Hurley, who provides a close-up view of what it is like to be an introvert in a system that favours the gregarious. Her article reminds us how important it is to get to know all students and to vary our teaching methods to accommodate all learners.

But, mostly, the contributors to this edition of *The Teaching Librarian* took an ironic turn in their interpretation of the theme. We have an article on listening to music in the school library, another on loud clothing in the library learning commons and yet another on how important it is for us to speak up and share the good work happening every day.

And two articles, which at first glance don't appear to fit the theme at all, I would argue are the best examples of the importance of being quiet long enough to listen, to hear what others around us are saying. The first is Alanna King's account of her trip to Argentina, where she participated in three presentations to a large international audience. Yet, when I picture her at this conference on school libraries, I see her sitting quietly wearing headphones, concentrating on the simultaneous translation of other presentations. She was so energized by this opportunity that she is now learning Spanish.

And the second is the account of how a committee of school library professionals developed a better understanding of each other to help resolve growing tensions in our field. At the 2019 Ontario Library Association Annual General Meeting, some of them were engaged in a heated debate across enemy lines. But when this group came together, they were able to listen to each other and develop a plan to move forward.

I guess being quiet is not so bad after all. Maybe it's time for me to resurrect the shhh! ■

### ***The Teaching Librarian* is looking for contributors!**

Interested in writing for *The Teaching Librarian*? Here are themes and submission deadlines for upcoming issues:

“Data @ your library” Deadline: January 31, 2020

“Curriculum @ your library” Deadline: May 31, 2020

We are looking for articles of 150-250 words, 500 words, or 800-1,300 words with high-resolution images or illustrations. Please see page 5 for more information on submitting articles.