

Karla M. Schmit and Bernadette A. Lear

Frog and Toad's ongoing journey

Cooperative acquisition of award-winning children's and young adult titles at a multicampus university

Frog and Toad were reading a book together.

"The people in this book are brave," said Toad. "They fight dragons and giants, and they are never afraid."

"I wonder if we are brave," said Frog.

—*Arnold Lobel, Frog and Toad Together*¹

Two years ago, we reported the beginnings of a collaboration between Education librarians at two locations within Pennsylvania State University Libraries (PSUL): the Education Library at University Park and the Penn State Harrisburg Library. We described our methods of cooperative purchasing of PreK–12 textbooks and instructional materials, which represented substantial costs and challenges to both locations.² Since then, we have explored additional ways of sharing collection development tasks, while retaining much of the autonomy that librarians within PSUL prize. This article focuses on our efforts with our juvenile literature collections.

Juvenile literature collections within a multicampus system

Few, if any, research articles document the usefulness of children's and young adult (YA) literature collections within academic libraries. Nonetheless, anecdotal evidence suggests that they can be heavily used, especially if the parent institution offers an Education program and its faculty strongly encourage library use. While many college libraries have been collecting juvenile items for decades, there is still room for innovation. Selection tips abound, but they seldom address the complexities of

developing collections within multicampus universities.³ As "one library, geographically dispersed," PSUL is well-positioned to experiment with better methods of distributing materials and workflows across campuses. For many years, we have enjoyed a shared public access catalog, centralized technical services, and expert librarians who are willing to work together.

At Penn State, Education-related collections and services, in particular, are good candidates for coordination. Six of our campuses offer baccalaureate Education programs: Abington, Altoona, Berks, Erie, Harrisburg, and University Park. In addition, Penn State's World Campus offers a master's program in children's literature. At University Park, the Curriculum and Instruction Ph.D. program includes an emphasis in children's literature. Also, Harrisburg's American Studies master's and Ph.D. programs attract students with interests in youth culture.

Besides the locations already mentioned, at least five others—Brandywine, Fayette, Great Valley, Lehigh Valley, and York—have collected children's or YA items at some point in their history. In addition, our juvenile and curriculum materials are widely used by area educators, homeschoolers, and local families. In

Karla M. Schmit is interim head, education library and director, Pennsylvania Center for the Book at Penn State University Park Library, email: kms454@psu.edu, and Bernadette A. Lear is behavioral sciences and education librarian at Penn State-Harrisburg Library, email: bal19@psu.edu

© 2018 Karla M. Schmit and Bernadette A. Lear

other words, Penn State provides a variety of holdings for more than 100,000 constituents who wish to obtain children's and YA titles for course work, scholarly research, lesson plans, and pleasure reading.

While much easier to obtain and process than PreK–12 textbooks and instructional kits, children's/YA literature also presents certain challenges. Over the past decade, "best book" lists have proliferated, not only within ALA, but also among educational associations, advocacy organizations, and other groups. Checking dozens of lists on an annual basis and purchasing every wanted title is labor-intensive and expensive. Ironically, limited budgets, expertise, and time compel many academic librarians to rely heavily on ALA's recommendations, resulting in substantial duplication of effort and purchases among libraries.

For example, a Newbery medal winner such as Jacqueline Woodson's *Brown Girl Dreaming*, which is held by five Penn State locations, represents, at minimum, the toil of five selecting librarians who checked their libraries' holdings and submitted orders for that particular title.

Improving distribution of review and gift copies

In the past, University Park and Harrisburg used approval plans to ensure they would receive books that had won major awards. However, automatic acquisition of titles often proved unnecessary because librarians and Education faculty at University Park and Harrisburg frequently serve on award committees and thus receive review items. For example, Karla M. Schmit at University Park served on two national book award committees in 2014: the Sibert Committee for best nonfiction published in a given year sponsored by ALA,⁴ and the Phoenix Award,⁵ sponsored by the Children's Literature Association and given to a book published 20 years ago that did not receive a national award in the year of publication but has stood the test of time. Additional Penn State colleagues have served on the Newbery

(best writing),⁶ Caldecott (best illustrations),⁷ Geisel (best easy reader),⁸ and other committees. Furthermore, University Park's Education Library is the home of the Pennsylvania Center for the Book (PACFTB), which is an affiliate of the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress.⁹ Education Library faculty and staff have dual responsibilities in promoting literacy initiatives across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. To that end, the PACFTB administers three books awards, A Baker's Dozen—13 best books for family literacy,¹⁰ the national Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award for Children,¹¹ and the Lynd Ward Graphic Novel Prize.¹²

Administrative copies of publisher submissions for each of these awards have long been part of a pool of children's/YA titles that are shared with other Penn State campuses. University Park typically keeps three copies of every winning title among the awards that it manages. One copy goes to the Education Library collection, another goes to the PACFTB collection, and a third, working copy is housed at the PACFTB in case it is needed for the many speaking engagements and promotions that faculty at University Park participate in on a regular basis.

To dispense with additional, unneeded duplicates, University Park maintains a prioritized list of campus recipients. The order of this list is flexible and can change depending on the needs of each location. For example, Harrisburg was once near the top of the list, but when its faculty members began donating large numbers of juvenile titles on an annual basis, regular donations from University Park to Harrisburg ceased. Furthermore, certain locations prefer to receive picture books and lower-level nonfiction, instead of YA titles, because they offer degrees in early childhood/elementary rather than middle school or secondary education. Acquisitions and cataloging staff are well-aware of these priorities and forward materials accordingly. Meanwhile, review copies donated by Harrisburg faculty are typically added to the Harrisburg library's Juvenile Literature Collection, while unneeded items are forwarded to the York campus, the

Penn State location nearest to Harrisburg that has an interest in children's books. Thus, University Park and Harrisburg have distributed additional copies to each other and other locations for many years.

Coordinating catalog checks and title purchases

Despite the fact that redistributing review copies has saved significant funds and effort, we remain eager to identify other opportunities for efficiency. Repeated discouragement of duplication by PSUL administrators prompted Bernadette A. Lear at Harrisburg to rethink how Penn State selects juvenile award titles. With various channels for obtaining books in mind, some campuses wait a year before ordering new materials, hoping that desiderata will appear in the gift pipeline. Yet, sooner or later, a significant amount of duplicative effort and purchasing occurs as each location checks its holdings and orders needed items. Although every location wants (and probably should have) Newbery and Caldecott winners, we believe other honorees could be acquired cooperatively and selectively.

In the winter of 2014–15, after returning from a yearlong sabbatical, Lear tasked an assistant with checking Harrisburg's holdings for various 2013 and 2014 award titles that were not purchased while she was on leave. Due to local faculty interest in multiculturalism, this effort included the International Reading Association's Notable Books for a Global Society,¹³ the United States Board on Books for Young People's list of international books,¹⁴ trade books recognized by the National Council for Social Studies,¹⁵ and more than a dozen others. Knowing that additional locations might be interested, Lear contacted other PSUL colleagues with an offer to report their holdings of each recommended book. She then instructed her assistant to print a copy of each list, consult the library catalog, and handwrite the cataloging abbreviation of each location that owned each title. When completed, Lear scanned and e-mailed these lists to the other campuses. She also noted systemwide trends in holdings. For

example, we found that PSUL only had single copies of most titles on the Amelia Bloomer Project list, endorsed by ALA's Feminist Task Force. Harrisburg pledged to order any needed second copies.¹⁶ Also, a quick tally showed that PSUL was completely lacking about half of the items on the recently established Rainbow and Stonewall (LGBT) literature awards lists.¹⁷ University Park and Abington committed to purchasing them. Harrisburg has continued to search juvenile award holdings on the system's behalf, and this has helped to ensure that at least two copies of important titles are available within Penn State, while reducing effort and allowing some locations to specialize their collections.

Conclusions and next steps

Within multicampus universities such as Penn State, there is great potential to share the burden of collection development tasks, reduce unneeded duplication, and ensure that the system as a whole offers comprehensive resources for a large and diverse student body. This is particularly true for coursework in Education, which is commonly offered at several locations.

When University Park and Harrisburg Education librarians began to collaborate more than eight years ago, we found that matching the right person to each task was essential for success. This lesson remains true. Regarding the handling of children's/YA materials, University Park's Education Library receives the largest inflow of review items. It already has technical services staff and well-established procedures for cataloging and sending materials to other locations. Thus, it is the obvious choice for coordinating the distribution of review and gift copies. However, owing to its larger size, Penn State-Harrisburg Library has a greater number of assistants and student workers. Such employees may not be able to select or catalog juvenile materials, but they can be tasked for holdings checks. Thus it makes sense for Harrisburg to coordinate that activity.

While we have accomplished a great deal, we continue to hunt the "dragons" in

our midst. Most recently, Penn State's recent adoption of Springshare's LibGuides content management system has prompted us to rethink responsibility for Education-related guides, which had always been handled by librarians at University Park. Unlike print materials that were the focus of earlier bibliographies, digital resources are just accessible (and thus, potentially familiar) to librarians throughout the system as they are to those at the main campus. So it is conceivable that librarians working at other Penn State locations could develop sufficient expertise to create LibGuides for the entire system. While it sometimes seems daunting to address such staffing issues within a "giant" like ours, we no longer wonder whether we are as brave as Frog and Toad.

Notes

1. Arnold Lobel, *Frog and Toad Together* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 42.

2. Bernadette A. Lear and Karla M. Schmit, "Frog and Toad Make Friends: Cooperative Development of PreK-12 Collections at a Multicampus University," *College & Research Libraries News* 76, no. 10 (2015): 534-43.

3. For a recent, helpful primer, see Virginia K. Williams, "Building and Evaluating Juvenile Literature Collections in Academic Libraries," *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 18 (2011): 58-76.

4. Association for Library Service to Children, "Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal Home Page," accessed June 7, 2017, American Library Association, www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/sibertmedal.

5. Pennsylvania Center for the Book, home page, accessed June 7, 2017, Pennsylvania State University Libraries, <http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/>.

6. Association for Library Service to Children, "Newbery Medal Home Page," accessed June 7, 2017, American Library Association, www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/newberymedal/newberymedal.

7. Association for Library Service to Children, "Caldecott Medal Home Page," accessed June 7, 2017, American Library As-

sociation, www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecottmedal.

8. Association for Library Service to Children, "(Theodor Seuss) Geisel Award Home Page," accessed June 7, 2017, American Library Association, www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/geiselaward.

9. Library of Congress, "Library of Congress Center for the Book," accessed June 7, 2017, Library of Congress, www.read.gov/cfb/.

10. Pennsylvania Center for the Book, "Introduction to A Baker's Dozen," accessed June 7, 2017, Pennsylvania State University Libraries, <https://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/awards-contests/introduction-bakers-dozen>.

11. Pennsylvania Center for the Book, "Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award," accessed June 7, 2017, Pennsylvania State University Libraries, <https://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/awards-contests/lee-bennett-hopkins-poetry-award>.

12. Pennsylvania Center for the Book, "Lynd Ward Graphic Novel Prize," accessed June 7, 2017, Pennsylvania State University Libraries, <https://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/awards-contests/lynd-ward-graphic-novel-prize>.

13. Children's Literature and Reading Special Interest Group, "About NBGS," accessed June 7, 2017, International Reading Association, <http://clrsig.org/nbgs.php>.

14. United States Board on Books for Young People, "Welcome to USBBY," accessed June 7, 2017, USBBY, www.usbby.org/HomePage.asp.

15. National Council for the Social Studies, "Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People," accessed June 7, 2017, NCSS, www.socialstudies.org/notable.

16. Feminist Task Force, "Amelia Bloomer Project," accessed June 7, 2017, Feminist Task Force, <https://ameliabloomer.wordpress.com/>.

17. Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table, "Rainbow Book List," accessed June 7, 2017, American Library Association, 2014, <http://glbtrt.ala.org/rainbowbooks/archives/1103>, and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table, "Stonewall Book Awards," accessed June 7, 2017, American Library Association, www.ala.org/glbtrt/award/stonewall. 