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Online audiobook reference guide for Iowa elementary school librarians

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Abstract
One of the American Association of School Librarians' (AASL, 2007) common beliefs purports that reading is a window to the world and that students can read through any format. However, access to audiobooks in school libraries remains limited due to difficulties with funding and accessibility. The purpose of this research project was to provide a resource for teacher librarians using audiobooks for the first time or who are seeking assistance with purchasing, borrowing, or connecting to audiobooks. It is also for experienced users seeking a complete guide to the variety of audiobooks available through Iowa libraries. the research project includes a guide to navigating Bridges (Iowa's elibrary), a beginner's guide to using audiobooks, equipment information, sources for education and popular audiobooks, promotional materials, and funding possibilities. This project will be shared with Iowa school librarians.
ONLINE AUDIOBOOK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR IOWA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LIBRARIANS

A Graduate Research Project
Submitted to the
Division of School Library Studies
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by
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This Research Project by: Kerry LeWarne
Titled: Online Audiobook Reference Guide for Iowa Elementary School Librarians

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

One of the American Association of School Librarians’ (AASL, 2007) common beliefs purports that reading is a window to the world and that students can read through any format. However, access to audiobooks in school libraries remains limited due to difficulties with funding and accessibility. The purpose of this research project was to provide a resource for teacher librarians using audiobooks for the first time or who are seeking assistance with purchasing, borrowing, or connecting to audiobooks. It is also for experienced users seeking a complete guide to the variety of audiobooks available through Iowa libraries. The research project includes a guide to navigating Bridges (Iowa’s elibrary), a beginner’s guide to using audiobooks, equipment information, sources for educational and popular audiobooks, promotional materials, and funding possibilities. This project will be shared with Iowa school librarians.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Jane smiles when she realizes her 3rd grade teacher is going to read a story. This is her favorite part of the week. She can sit back, listen to her teacher’s soothing voice, and imagine the story’s characters and setting in her head. Down the hall in John’s 3rd grade class, he hears the dreaded words, “Okay class, get out your free reading book.” Ironically, it is his friend’s favorite time of the day and his worst. John hates to read. As soon as he reads the first line, his mind wanders. So, he rereads the line and once again, he struggles. John pretends that he is reading so he will not get in trouble. Little does John’s teacher know, he stares at the same word for 10 minutes.

Problem Statement

For many years, educational leaders have been acknowledging the link between listening to audiobooks and/or listening to read aloud books and enhanced literacy skills such as fluency, comprehension, and increased vocabulary. Common Core State Standards (NGA, 2010) not only focus on math, science and reading, but also speaking and listening. Specifically, ELA-Literacy Speaking and Listening Standard K.2 states that kindergarteners should, “Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood” (para. 4). In addition, ELA-Literacy Speaking and Listening Standard 3.2 states that third graders should “determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information
presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally”

(para. 6)
One of the American Association of School Librarians’ (AASL, 2007) common beliefs purports that reading is a window to the world and that students can read through any format. The International Society for Technology in Education (2015) Standards for Students supports AASL’s beliefs as demonstrated by their Standard 3: “Students apply digital tools to gather, evaluate and use information” (p. 1). Reading is multi-faceted, looking different in each classroom and with each student. For this reason, each school library should have the resources necessary to serve every student.

Since reading is a fundamental and foundational skill in all content standards, and auditory learning supports the acquisition of literacy, librarians and other teachers must provide students access to a variety of reading and listening materials. The American Association of School Librarians’ Position Statement (AASL, 2009) reiterates this by stating, “School libraries provide students, staff, and families with open, non-restricted access to a varied high quality collection of reading materials in multiple formats that reflect academic needs and personal interests” (para. 6).

The CCSS support auditory learning, and audiobook collections are a means for meeting these standards. Audiobook publishing is a billion dollar industry with thousands of titles available. According to the Audio Publishers Association (2015), “2012 saw six million more audio books sold than in the year previous” (para. 1). In Publisher’s Weekly, Meyer (2014) overviews her interview with Cheryl Herman, marketing director for Penguin Random House’s Books on Tape & Listening Library, affirming,

Our library sales for digital audio are up nearly 30% over 2013, we’re offering more and more titles on audio, and we’re not alone in that. There are also more players entering the market, and more titles overall being published than ever before. (para. 10)
As a result of the increase in audiobook sales and availability, it should be possible for every auditory learner to have access to a variety of audiobook titles. However, this is often not the case - availability, access and cost are three common reasons audiobooks may not be widely available to students through their school libraries. Johnson (2003), assistant professor of reading education at the College of William & Mary, writes in *Reading Online*,

One reason more audiobooks are not finding their way into classrooms is availability. Public libraries usually have a good quantity of audiobooks, but most school libraries have a limited number – audiobooks are expensive. Schools typically do not budget funds for such purchases. (para. 8)

Likewise, publishers also recognize the cost barrier. *Publisher’s Weekly* (2014) reports that pricing is a concern, since bargaining remains an issue.

In addition to the issue of availability and cost, many students struggle with how to access and use audiobooks. According to Learnoutloud.com (2015), there are 108 audiobook publishers and retailers. Many offer monthly subscriptions, whereas others provide online free access to specific titles. Most school libraries rely on their area education agencies to provide access to audiobooks. In Iowa, Heartland Area Education Agency (AEA) 11 serves over 147,000 youth and close to 10,000 teachers. This agency offers a variety of free services and resources including audiobooks and Playaways (hand-held audiobooks). Audiobooks and audio recordings can be found through AEA paid services such as Mackinvia, Bookflix, Trueflix and Tales2Go. Even though thousands of audiobooks are at their fingertips, sifting through numerous websites can be difficult and time consuming for students. Similarly, teachers and teacher librarians also
lack the time needed to navigate through various sites for audiobooks and learn the formats and usage procedures of each one in order to recommend them to students. Teacher librarians, teachers, and students alike will benefit from an online reference guide that includes assistance for many of the aspects that might otherwise deter audiobook use: navigating Bridges (Iowa’s elibrary), beginner’s guide to using audiobooks, equipment information, sources for educational and popular audiobooks, and funding possibilities.

**Summary of Problem Statement**

Increased availability of audiobooks in school libraries is a promising possibility due to connections to learning standards, understanding of auditory learning, library support structures, and widespread increases in publisher availability. However, access to audiobooks in school libraries remains limited due to difficulties with funding and accessibility.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this research project is to create an online reference guide for Iowa teacher librarians to support all students’ access to audiobooks throughout the state.

**Research Questions**

1. What level of detail should be included in the online reference guide?

2. What menu options should be implemented for intuitive navigation?

3. Would an online reference guide offer audiobook support to teacher librarians and teachers?

4. How should the reference guide be distributed and shared with teacher librarians?
Assumptions and Limitations

The first assumption is that libraries have difficulty promoting and organizing audiobooks in their collections. The second assumption is that school librarians, in particular, struggle with audiobook availability. A third assumption is that the cost of audiobooks is prohibitive for most school libraries and/or they are not a high budget priority; thus a guide to using audiobooks provided through statewide purchasing efforts is important.

This project represents Iowa elementary libraries that utilize Area Education Agency (AEA) resources. This study focuses on the needs of elementary students K-5, but may not represent all situations and needs in this age range. This project also supports Iowa teacher librarians who have access to the basic shared resources such as Bridges and statewide Iowa AEA Online resources.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research project is to create an online reference guide for Iowa teacher librarians to support all students’ access to the audiobooks already available to students throughout the state. To support this project’s purpose, this literature review discusses the following themes: audiobooks’ positive impact on literacy skills, audiobooks’ positive effect on student attitudes, and funding and accessibility issues in school libraries.

Positive Impact of Audiobooks on Literacy Skills

Audiobooks encourage reading and improve reading skills such as fluency, decoding, and comprehension. Anderson et al. (1985) and The Commission on Reading of the National Academy of Education created a document entitled, *Becoming a Nation of Readers* as a policy statement for the instruction of reading and to show that reading out loud and listening to audiobooks increases students’ reading abilities. The study concluded that the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children. This report has been cited and used as support in many subsequent reading studies.

Stone-Harris (2008) affirmed the aforementioned policy statement in her dissertation. Her study investigated whether or not reading comprehension scores for students who listen to audiobooks increased. Exactly 100 students in grades two and five were randomly chosen to participate. Each student took a Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading pretest to determine reading levels. Students were separated into two groups; one group reading print books and another group reading via audiobooks. The
results showed that the second grade students who listened to audiobooks made some gains in their STAR posttests.

Similar to Stone-Harris’s (2008) study, Esteves and Whitten (2011) examined how audiobooks influenced reading fluency and attitude. However, Esteves and Whitten’s population included upper elementary students with reading disabilities. Specifically, they sought 20 participants from five different schools in a Midwestern suburban school district. To be included in the study, the student needed to be currently under an individualized education program (IEP) for reading. This study had two groups; one read using audiobooks and the other read traditional print books. Students read via their traditional print books or through audiobooks four to five times per week over an eight week time period. Students were interviewed before, during, and after the intervention. Results indicated the audiobook group far outweighed the traditional print book group in Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) tests. DIBELS was used to quantify the number of words read correctly per minute and the ERAS test was used to test reading attitude. Through the DIBELS test, researchers observed an increase in number of words correctly read per minute. In addition, the participants’ reading attitudes showed a slight increase in scores via the ERAS test. This research affirms that audiobooks increase students’ literacy skills including increases on their state and local test scores. However, teachers and teacher librarians must not ignore the importance of students’ attitudes towards reading. Strong literacy skills are important, but so is eagerness and willingness to read.
Audiobooks’ Positive Effect on Student Attitude

Teachers, parents and librarians are constantly looking for ways to motivate struggling students to read. They want their students to choose a variety of genres, read independently, and discuss their favorite parts of stories. Some students enjoyed reading earlier in their lives, but as they grew older became uninterested or struggled with difficult vocabulary. To explore the issue, Barbara Marinak (2013) of Mount St. Mary’s University conducted a research study that examined the effects of an elementary motivation intervention. Participants included 33 fifth grade girls and 43 fifth grade boys, from two elementary schools in two suburban school districts. The Motivation to Read Profile (MRP) survey was used to measure the reading motivation of students in treatment and control groups. This tool, through interviews and surveys, assessed two areas: self concept as reader and value of reading. The intervention included utilizing the Jigsaw reading strategy and book clubs to support students’ silent reading. However, the most powerful parts of the interventions involved teacher read alouds. The teacher book talked numerous books for future read alouds. These books were added to a check out book basket. Teachers stated that there was an increase in student checkout (out of the classroom basket) and positive attitude towards the books that were book promoted and read aloud. In regard to the research question, the MRP survey indicated higher reading motivation when compared to control classrooms who did not implement the intervention.

Likewise, Whittingham et al. (2013) conducted a research study to determine if the use of audiobooks in an audiobook club could be directly related to the improvement in reading attitude. To answer these questions, researchers interviewed 21 students in grades
four and five at the beginning, middle, and end of a year long study. The participants were asked two questions centered around their reading interests and whether self esteem was connected to their reading abilities. Students met with the researchers weekly via an audiobook club held in the library. During their meetings, they discussed story elements, background connections, and reader motivations. Following the study, the students scored significantly higher on their state reading exam and commented that reading audiobooks in a club made a difference in their lives because they felt more motivated to read.

Unlike the previous studies, Boltz (2007) focused on the differences and similarities of reading motivation among boys and girls. Participants included 35 North Carolina fifth grade boys from different homeroom classes. Students were asked over 20 questions focused on reading interests and attitudes. The researcher found that most boys do not read for enjoyment or self fulfillment. Boys indicated that they would read if the subject were something they were interested in versus an assigned or graded reading. Many felt little confidence when it came to reading, however they didn’t see themselves as poor readers. In regard to one particular question, “Do you have a favorite book or author?” Boltz stated,

More than half of the students, after having been readers for five years and having been read to for at least six years by their teachers, did not have a favorite book, and almost two-thirds could or did not name a favorite author. These numbers are troublesome. (p. 12)

In addition to the interview, 29 of the 35 boys participated in a second part of the study (Boltz, 2007). They were asked to free write on this prompt: “If you could read anything you wanted for your next reading assignment, what would you read and why?”
Nonfiction was a clear favorite since 16 of the 29 boys indicated they would like to read nonfiction over fiction. Over 34% stated they would like to read an information book, another 30% said they wanted to read something “interesting,” and the rest would read something “cool” (p. 15). In addition, many boys stated they did enjoy read alouds or reading out loud in pairs. Researchers agreed that teachers should offer choices of how students read, not only what they read.

Funding and Access in School Libraries

Adding digital readers and books can be expensive, housing the collection can be difficult, and easy access to the collection can be challenging. The number of studies on funding and user access to information technology is on the rise, however, there are few studies specifically focused on audiobooks. The following studies focus mainly on ebooks in libraries.

Rabina and Peet (2014) examined how New York Public Library (NYPL) met user needs in regard to borrowing ebooks. NYPL is the largest library in the United States, so many believe that they are a model to the industry. Researchers investigated two questions during the research: 1) How well does the e-book borrowing procedure meet users’ needs, and 2) How well does the offsite request procedure meet users’ needs. The study participants were Library and Information Science students taking a general Master's reference course in New York City from January 2012 to December 2013. Graduate students were asked to download two books in different digital formats (ebook or audio). During this process, students complained of limited choices of materials available, lack of immediate access to wanted titles, the large number of commercials, and poor quality and
limited online tutorials. Some students did not own e-readers, so they were also in need of checking out appropriate readers for their choice book. As far as off site requests, many students stated they did receive their requests within the promised timelines. However, once they realized that the requested items had to be read in the library, many found this to be challenging. They were aware that the challenges they were experiencing would be similar to those their own patrons may experience.

Since librarians have numerous roles including teacher, collaborator, professional educator, collection manager, and administrator, the librarian must understand how to use all materials including digital readers. Hussong-Christian, Nichols, Bridges and Weinraub Lajoie (2013) became interested in librarians’ attitudes toward digital reading services. They composed a year long study utilizing 30 Oregon State University librarians. Their study’s purpose was to learn if librarians had positive attitudes in connection to e-readers, would these attitudes in fact result in stronger e-reading services. Specifically, the researchers were interested in user challenges, how e-reader adoption decisions are influenced, and how e-reader technology training could or would lead to better library training. Participants took part in four interviews before, during, and after the study. The pre-study interview focused on their background related to e-readers, expected challenges, predictions, and current feelings towards digital readers. The two interviews conducted during the study explored challenges, knowledge of e-readers, and user data. Lastly, the post interview refocused thoughts about the e-reader’s role, how their services may or may not change, and user preferences. The findings of the study included librarians’ preference towards e-readers for free reading. Researchers discussed many challenges experienced by
the participants including searching and using content, difficulty with reading instructions, and device functionality. In conclusion, after the study these Oregon librarians felt the need to produce an online e-book catalog that was easy to navigate.

Ease of access is certainly important, however without adequate and dedicated funding, digital readers and books will not exist. Gray and Copeland (2011) looked specifically at e-book funding. Their study’s purpose was to provide insight into format usage so that librarians could best allocate funding towards required, wanted and needed resources. They compared print and e-book circulation data for popular titles, cost per title, and hold counts. Their study concluded that print copies were less expensive than the e-book copy. However, since most e-books are leased, versus purchased, the study found the average cost per circulation of an e-book is less expensive when both purchased and leased print circulation rates were combined. The study also found that popular titles typically had four times more print copies versus e-book licenses. Thus, many patrons wanted to “check out” an e-book, but were forced to put it on hold.

**Summary**

These studies suggest that audiobooks encourage students to read while improving their attitudes in connection to reading (Anderson et al., 1985; Boltz, 2007; Esteves & Whitten, 2011; Marinak, 2013; Stone-Harris, 2008; Whittingham et al., 2013). Whether it is through audiobook book clubs, classroom read alouds, or through various digital audiobook formats, it is a librarian’s duty to offer and encourage audiobook use for both boys and girls. Similarly important, researchers found that school testing scores increased through the use of audiobooks and read aloud groups (Esteves & Whitten, 2011;
Stone-Harris, 2008; Whittingham et al., 2013). However, as the studies suggest, school library audiobook access remains limited due to difficulties with funding and accessibility (Gray & Copeland, 2011; Hussong-Christian et al., 2013; Rabina & Peet, 2014). This project will provide support for teacher librarians who are new to audiobooks’ importance, as well as information regarding top resources, equipment needed and funding strategies.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

A great volume of research supports the use of audiobooks in school libraries due to connections that can be made to learning standards, increased understanding of auditory learning, library support structures, and widespread increases in publisher availability. Nonetheless, school library audiobook access remains limited due to difficulties with funding and accessibility (Anderson et al., 1985; Boltz, 2007; Esteves & Whitten, 2011; Marinak, 2013; Stone-Harris, 2008; Whittingham et al., 2013). The purpose of this project is to create an online resource to assist teacher librarians with providing access to audiobooks. This online reference guide has links, infographics, and literature to help librarians navigate the world of purchasing, borrowing, and connecting to audiobooks. This guide will be shared statewide (and beyond) with multiple audiences through various venues including the University of Northern Iowa School Library Studies Program cohorts, members of the Iowa Association of School Librarians and teacher librarians in the Des Moines (Iowa) area.

Description

This project is a resource for teacher librarians utilizing audiobooks for the first time or seeking assistance with purchasing, borrowing, or connecting to audiobooks. It is also for experienced users seeking a complete guide to the variety of audiobooks available through Iowa libraries. The research project includes a guide to navigating Bridges (Iowa’s elibrary), a beginner’s guide to using audiobooks, equipment information, sources for educational and popular audiobooks, and funding possibilities.
**Audience**

This online reference guide was created for Iowa elementary teacher librarians and teachers with a focus on the greater Des Moines (Iowa) area, using regionally available tools. These teachers utilize their area education agency and Bridges (Iowa’s elibrary) resources. Additionally, the resource also serves Iowa teacher librarians through its provision of tips for using audiobook resources available statewide.

**Procedures**

Google Sites was used to create the online reference guide. The researcher produced an introductory page discussing the positive impacts of audiobooks and the purpose of the resource. Clear, easy to identify pages were added to the navigation menu at the top of the page including the following: Home (Introduction to guide), Positive Impact, Equipment, Physical Audiobooks, Digital Audiobooks (Bridges and Area Education Agency Resources), Spread the Word (Promotion and Curriculum Connection), and Ways to Pay. Subpages were added that include descriptions, purposes and resource information.

In order to validate the elements included in and the arrangement of the resource, the researcher sought first hand input from four professionals in the field: two teacher librarians, a public librarian and a regional school media consultant. Data was collected from the four professionals through Google Form surveys and interviews. For the teacher librarians, the researcher used a Google Form survey (see Appendix A). Several months later, the teacher librarians took a second survey after the online guide had been developed and the participants had a chance to view it online. Throughout the research process, the researcher utilized a Google Doc table titled, Tracking Audiobook Online Resources (see
Appendix B) to bookmark and link any beneficial websites or resources. These resources were categorized under the following headings: Introduction, Beginner’s guide to Bridges, Equipment, Educational and popular audiobook sites, and Ways to pay. In addition, the researcher also conducted two interviews (see Appendix C) with a West Des Moines public librarian and a regional school media consultant. The author collected information about their organizations’ audiobook resources, including both free resources and subscriptions for Iowa patrons. Lastly, pictures of each primary project page was added for librarians to see an overview of the project (see Appendix D).
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH PROJECT

The purpose of this research project was to provide a resource for teacher librarians using audiobooks for the first time or who are seeking assistance with purchasing, borrowing, or connecting to audiobooks. It is also for experienced users seeking a complete guide to the variety of audiobooks available through Iowa libraries. The research project includes a guide to navigating Bridges (Iowa’s elibrary), a beginner’s guide to using audiobooks, equipment information, sources for educational and popular audiobooks, and funding possibilities. It was created for Iowa elementary teacher librarians and teachers with a focus on the greater Des Moines (Iowa) area, using regionally available tools. The electronic version is located at

https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/. Appendix D is a printed version of the primary pages of the website.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the American Association of School Librarians’ (AASL, 2007) common beliefs purports that reading is a window to the world and that students can read through any format. However, access to audiobooks in school libraries remains limited due to difficulties with funding and accessibility. The purpose of this research project was to provide a resource for teacher librarians using audiobooks for the first time or who are seeking assistance with purchasing, borrowing, or connecting to audiobooks. It is also for experienced users seeking a complete guide to the variety of audiobooks available through Iowa libraries. The research project includes a guide to navigating Bridges (Iowa’s elibrary), a beginner’s guide to using audiobooks, equipment information, sources for educational and popular audiobooks, and funding possibilities. This project will be shared with Iowa school librarians.

The following research questions guided this project: what level of detail should be included, what menu options should be implemented for navigation, in what ways would an online reference guide offer audiobook support to teacher librarians and teachers, and how should the guide be distributed and shared with teacher librarians.

In response the first two research questions, to insure an adequate level of detail and the creation of intuitive menu options, the researcher provided clear headings and side navigation pages. The researcher understood it was important to keep the project navigation simple, yet filled with usable, easy to access content. The site contains the
following digital resources to support this community in understanding, promoting and funding audiobooks in their school libraries.

**Introduction (Home)**

The introduction was placed at the beginning of the guide for quick and easy access. This page includes the purpose and vision of the project. In addition, the researcher included the American Association of School Librarians’ Position Statement (AASL, 2009), “School libraries provide students, staff, and families with open, non-restricted access to a varied high quality collection of reading materials in multiple formats that reflect academic needs and personal interests” (para. 6).

**Positive Impact**

The positive impact page was created to not only offer important facts and support for audiobooks, but also an area to provide videos and an infographic for future use. The Audio Publishers Association created an infographic that included facts and support for audiobook reading comprehension, fluency and retention. Secondly, Audio Publishers Association’s (2014) three minute video, “Students react to audiobooks,” showcases a girl who discusses her personal reading challenges. She talks about how audiobooks give her the option of listening and reading. Another student talks about how fast he reads; listening to audiobooks offers him pace and structure in his reading. Other students discuss how audiobooks are great for car rides, understanding dialects, etc. Lastly, Dr. Rose Black discusses how audiobooks have helped her as a librarian.
**Equipment Needed**

The equipment needed page was included for librarians to consult in order to determine whether they have the proper equipment needed for a functional and successful audiobook collection. Headphones, digital readers, Wi-fi connection, and digital user agreements are discussed. The user agreement was created by the researcher for her own school’s digital reader lending program. Eleven guidelines are covered in the agreement along with a student signature area. This user agreement is linked in the project for librarians to use in their own schools.

**Physical Audiobooks**

The ‘physical audiobooks’ page, was created to explain the types of physical audiobooks currently on the market. Even though this format is becoming outdated, it was important to cover all audiobook formats available today. Playaways and compact discs are described and the guide offers librarians quick and easy links to companies where these items may be purchased. Playaways, specifically, are defined and described as a format that is lightweight, non-distracting and is a preferred format of many teachers. In contrast, compact discs were found to be difficult to use and distracting in a whole class environment. A video from Playaway corporation was added to the page for further information.

**Digital Audiobooks: Bridges, Statewide AEA Resources, and Heartland AEA Resources**

The Digital Audiobooks section was separated into three subpages: Bridges, Statewide AEA Resources and Heartland AEA. With hundreds of audiobook sites from
which to choose, the researcher sought opinions from a regional library consultant, a West
Des Moines public librarian, and two teacher librarians. Each librarian urged the
researcher to minimize the amount of resources explained on the site. They believed
numerous websites would be too confusing, whereas focusing on two websites would
achieve success for all school librarians in the area served by their AEA. Bridges and AEA
resources were selected due to the following features: app based, easy to navigate, free,
and availability of thousands of titles.

The Bridges subpage was separated into three sections: what is Bridges, how to add
Bridges, and support and promotional materials. The first section defined the Bridges
program as a free service offered by Iowa public libraries that lets users borrow ebooks,
audiobooks, and more from their digital collections. The research participants discussed a
need for how-to manuals and video tutorials. Therefore, for the second section, the
researcher provided a question/answer area linked to tutorials on how to add the app and
use necessary devices. The last section, titled “support and promotional materials” was also
indicated by the school library research participants as a need. Getting the word out to their
community, parents and students about audiobooks and available resources was described
by participants as a challenge since it takes a great deal of time to gather relevant
information and to compose promotional materials. Also, the teacher librarians themselves
were not aware of all the features that audiobooks include and so support material was also
helpful for them professionally. During the public librarian interview, the researcher
learned of many promotional materials on the Overdrive website and added the links to this
section. Some of the materials included the following: getting started guides, posters,
large hanging banners, flyers, stickers, bookmarks, bookshelf signage, summer reading promotional flyers, and magazines and newspapers bookmarks.

The Statewide AEA subpage included a table that lists the other eight Iowa Area Education Agencies: AEA 267, Grantwood AEA, Great Prairie AEA, Green Hills AEA, Heartland AEA, Keystone AEA, Mississippi Bend AEA, and Prairie Lakes AEA. Under each AEA listing, the researcher linked their available audiobook resources for quick access. The researcher added supplemental pages for each resource that included support videos, navigation tips, links and other important access information.

The Heartland AEA subpage discusses the resources Heartland AEA can offer by including a video created by the creative services department at Heartland AEA. Next, the researcher described, defined and offered support for the five main audiobook databases: BookFlix, TrueFlix, Fable Learning, MackinVia, and Tales2go. By offering simple, specific descriptions partnered with support videos, teacher librarians will feel educated and informed throughout their learning process.

**Spread the Word**

The sixth section titled, “Spread the Word,” was created in response to feedback from the research participant interviews. They discussed a need for support and promotional materials for audiobooks. Using digital readers is still a new concept for the participants, therefore they encouraged the researcher to add as many marketing materials as possible. The researcher searched the internet using terms such as: audiobook month, audiobook marketing, audiobook needs, audiobook promotion and audiobook flyers. The research identified the following resources and events that could be used to promote
audiobooks: June is audiobook month, family literacy events, teen tech week, social media marketing tools, and Heartland marketing tools. These events and resources were added to the researcher’s “spread the word” section. Each area included a description, resources, linked sites, and videos.

Two separate subsections were added to the main “Spread the Word” section: promote through displays and curriculum connection. The first subsection, “promote through displays”, focused on showcasing the physical and digital audiobooks in the physical library. The researcher searched the internet using the following keywords: audiobook displays, audiobook marketing, audiobook promotion, audiobook bulletin boards, and audiobook shelving. Through the research, I found suggestions for promoting audiobooks that could work for any size library: shelving audiobooks next to books, creating a separate audiobook area, and promoting audiobooks through an interactive display.

The “curriculum connection” subpage was created after the researcher came across a website titled, Listening Library (2016). This website offered the researcher not only promotional materials about audiobooks’ positive impact, but also annotated bibliographies of audiobooks that are connected to Common Core standards. The website also offered lesson plans and lesson training videos.

Ways to Pay

Teacher librarians stated that one of the reasons they do not order and supply audiobooks through their collections is due to dwindling funding; thus, the last section, “Ways to pay” was added. Two areas to assist in combating their funding issues include
“fundraise” and “grants”. The researcher added a few of her successful fundraisers into this section including: Scholastic Book Fair, 100th day, Box Tops for Education, Take Charge of Education (Target), and out of uniform special days. I included a self-designed “100th day fundraiser” flyer for teacher librarians to use in their outreach supporting audiobook use. Additionally, I researched a variety of school library grants for potential funding: U.S. Department of Education, Laura Bush Foundation, and Dollar General. Lastly, I discussed asking parent organizations for extra funding.

Support for Teacher Librarians and Teachers Using this Guide

A second area of the research questions guiding this project revolved around how to better support the teacher librarians and teachers using the reference guide. Table 1 outlines questions that teacher librarians may encounter and the resources and links that may assist them. This table in the form of Frequently Ask Questions (with the links) will be included for teacher librarians on the website.

Table 1

Questions and Answers Regarding Audiobooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions Regarding Audiobooks</th>
<th>Links to Resources and Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does Common Core support audiobooks as a reading format?</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dYh-GV8kTVp1pL4YXCEuGXu-OQIVdbgo8SiszBQUvCo/edit#">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dYh-GV8kTVp1pL4YXCEuGXu-OQIVdbgo8SiszBQUvCo/edit#</a> (page 8-10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do audiobooks promote literacy?</td>
<td><a href="https://www.audiopub.org/education/sound-learning">https://www.audiopub.org/education/sound-learning</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>URL</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does listening improve reading comprehension?</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/viewer?a=v&amp;pid=sites&amp;srcid=c2FpbnRmcmFuY2lzc2Nob29sLm9yZ3xhdWRpb2Jvb2tzfGd4OjExYzZkODdlNDMxOGI2ZTA">https://docs.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/viewer?a=v&amp;pid=sites&amp;srcid=c2FpbnRmcmFuY2lzc2Nob29sLm9yZ3xhdWRpb2Jvb2tzfGd4OjExYzZkODdlNDMxOGI2ZTA</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do some students prefer audiobooks?</td>
<td><a href="https://www.audiopub.org/education/sound-learning">https://www.audiopub.org/education/sound-learning</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I need to purchase headphones or digital readers?</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/equipment">https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/equipment</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can anyone share their school’s <em>Digital User Agreement</em>?</td>
<td><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XfJCLfWVQLqI_ozTfY8qDaWft6BmuOPnqRaMmRKXsI/edit">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XfJCLfWVQLqI_ozTfY8qDaWft6BmuOPnqRaMmRKXsI/edit</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should I purchase physical audiobooks for my library?</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/purchasing">https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/purchasing</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is a Playaway?</td>
<td><a href="https://vimeo.com/findawayworld/playaway-bookpacks">https://vimeo.com/findawayworld/playaway-bookpacks</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was visiting the public library and saw a sign for borrowing audiobooks. Can my students gain access to these audiobooks at school?</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/digital-audiobooks/overdrive">https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/digital-audiobooks/overdrive</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tried to borrow a book from Bridges, but it was already held. Where else can I look?</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/digital-audiobooks/heartland-aea-online-resources">https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/digital-audiobooks/heartland-aea-online-resources</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our students love audiobooks, but my parents and teachers need more information. Where can I find promotional and training materials?</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/spread-the-word/common-core-connection">https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/spread-the-word/common-core-connection</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I shelve the books with the rest of my print collection?</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/spread-the-word/how-to-organize-your-space">https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/spread-the-word/how-to-organize-your-space</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How else can I display audiobooks?</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/spread-the-word/how-to-organize-your-space">https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/spread-the-word/how-to-organize-your-space</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love teaching with audiobooks, but I</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/spread-the-word/how-to-organize-your-space">https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/spread-the-word/how-to-organize-your-space</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>need more ideas.</td>
<td>hool.org/audiobooks/spread-the-word/common-core-connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My administrators just cut my funding in half and I don’t have enough money for my print collection. How can I possibly afford audiobooks?</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/home/ways-to-pay">https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/home/ways-to-pay</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to continue research on audiobooks’ impact on reading. Where should I start?</td>
<td><a href="https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/references">https://sites.google.com/a/saintfrancisschool.org/audiobooks/references</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students have requested audiobook titles that are not in the Bridges or AEA collection, how are these collections selected?</td>
<td><a href="http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/c-d/download/bridges/bridgesselection2015/view">http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/c-d/download/bridges/bridgesselection2015/view</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do we make a suggestion for purchase if we do not find a title we’re searching for?</td>
<td><a href="http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/c-d/download/bridges/bridgesselection2015/view">http://www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/c-d/download/bridges/bridgesselection2015/view</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That final research question was connected to how the guide would be distributed and presented to teacher librarians. This guide will be shared statewide (and beyond) with multiple audiences through various venues including the University of Northern Iowa School Library Studies Program cohorts, members of the Iowa Association of School Librarians and teacher librarians in the Des Moines (Iowa) area. It may also be presented at the IASL Conference. This type of guide will be ever evolving due to changes in audiobook formats and availability. The researcher will continue to seek new funding and promotional ideas to share. Any new information will be added to the online guide.

**Recommendations**

Two recommendations for future audiobook projects surfaced during the research. First, the information, resources, and links usually included information about ebooks.
Including ebooks in a future project would not only be informative, but it would be easy to include. Most databases include both ebooks and audiobooks, and it can be difficult to separate the two when discussing implementation plans.

Secondly, prior to research, the researcher should conduct a one month to a year audiobook pilot. Surveying students listening to audiobooks in class or student interviews would add to the authenticity of the project. In addition, the researcher plans to share this project with her community. Showing videos and interviews of her students using audiobooks would make the presentation stronger.

The online Iowa Schools Audiobook Reference Guide will continue to be updated and perfected. Just as technology changes, so will the world of audiobooks. Hopefully soon, both avid and reluctant readers will have choices in their reading or listening format. Audiobooks are a powerful reading format, and they are here to stay.
REFERENCES*
*Includes references for videos and resources used on the project website.


*Enriching the learning experience with audiobooks* (2014). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQRRsRup8oQ

for students with reading disabilities. *Reading Horizons, 51*(1), 21.


*Students react to audiobooks.* (2014). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw5kplQIS1w


APPENDIX A

AUDIOBOOK SURVEY FOR TEACHER LIBRARIANS

FIRST SURVEY:

1. What is your position?
   - K-5 Teacher Librarian
   - K-8 Teacher Librarian
   - Middle School Teacher Librarian
   - High School Teacher Librarian
   - Public Librarian
   - Associate

2. Have you purchased audiobooks for your library?
   - Yes
   - No
   - No, however, there are audiobooks in our collection.

3. If so, where are the audiobooks located/what are the formats?
   - Students must ask for access to CDs or Playaways
   - On the shelves (as CDs or Playaways)
   - We have purchased online audiobooks, accessible via the library website or online catalog
   - We have not purchased audiobooks

4. If you've purchased audiobooks, where did you purchase them from?
   - Follett
   - Another library resource
   - We have not purchased audiobooks

5. Do you currently have any audiobooks in your library catalog (from your school or AEA collections?) audiobooks catalogued?
   - Yes, only school purchased audiobooks are in our library catalog
● Yes, AEA provided audiobooks are in our library catalog, but we have not purchased any.
● Yes, both AEA and school audiobooks are in our library catalog.
● No, we do not have audiobooks in our catalog.

6. How do your patrons have access to audiobooks? (Explain)

7. What successes have you observed regarding your students using audiobooks?

8. Do you struggle with how to incorporate audiobooks in your library? Or what issues have you noticed with students accessing and using audiobooks? (Explain)

9. Would an online audiobook reference guide help you promote audiobooks? If so, what features would you want to see in the guide?
   - Would you want to see a site with information written for students that you could link to such as descriptions of resources with links to statewide available resources?
   - Would you want specifics about how to download various audiobooks to devices for offline listening?

SECOND SURVEY:

I have developed an online audiobook reference guide and I’d like to seek your feedback and suggestions for improvement. It includes the following areas of content: navigating Bridges (Iowa’s elibrary), equipment information, sources for educational and popular audiobooks, and funding possibilities.

1. What areas of content are the most helpful to you, your students and teachers?
   ● Positive Impact
   ● Equipment information
   ● Physical Audiobooks
   ● Bridges (Overdrive)
   ● Heartland AEA Online Resources
   ● Spreading the Word: Promoting through displays and curriculum connections
   ● Ways to Pay
2. In the Positive Impact section, do you feel that you understand how audiobooks can make a positive impact on student? Explain.

3. In the Equipment Information section, do you feel that you understand how to utilize and purchase the various equipment? Explain.

4. In the Physical Audiobooks section, do you feel that you understand how to find and purchase? Explain.

5. In the Digital Audiobooks section, do you feel that you understand how Bridges and AEA Resources work? Explain.

6. In the Spread the Word section, do you feel you understand how audiobooks can be promoted and their connection to curriculum? Explain.

7. In the Funding possibilities section, do you feel you understand how to fund quality audiobooks? Explain.

8. Has the site helped you utilize the available AEA online resources? If not, in what ways could I make it easier? Explain.

9. Do you like the guide’s color? If not, what colors would be more suitable? Explain.

10. Do you like the guide’s font choice? Explain.

11. Is the text (tabs and content) clear? Explain.
12. Do you have any overall navigation suggestions? What would make navigating easier? Explain.

13. Did the site encourage you to purchase audiobooks? Explain.

14. Any other suggestions or concerns? Explain.
## APPENDIX B

### TRACKING AUDIOBOOK ONLINE RESOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introductory Page (Home)</th>
<th>Beginner’s Guide to Bridges</th>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Educational &amp; Popular Audiobook Sites</th>
<th>Ways to Pay</th>
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Link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1X0vw5sZrsV4d-rjONctKn_mwlj_Y3C7lSLk5KyZZ

fbQ/edit
APPENDIX C
PUBLIC LIBRARIAN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Your name, title and location.

2. In your library, do you have playaways and physical audiobooks?

3. How do patrons gain access to these titles?

4. Where are they located?

5. How much time do they have?

6. How many years have you used Bridges?

7. Do you find school libraries utilize Bridges over purchasing single copies of audiobooks?

8. Can school librarians catalogue Bridges books?

9. How can students gain access to Bridges?

10. What are the strengths of this program?

11. What are the weaknesses?

12. How much does it cost for individual audiobook or playaway purchases?

13. How many do you purchase a year?

14. How do you keep up with the popular books?

15. Is audiobook lending popular? Do you have statistics?

16. How about playaways? In comparison, are audiobooks or playaways checked out more?

17. Do you think you’ll continue to purchase audiobooks? If not, why?
18. How do you make access to all audiobooks easy?

19. Do any patrons complain?

20. What can I provide via the online reference guide to assist students and patrons of school libraries?
Audiobooks are ONE way students are reading today!

Welcome! My name is Kerry LeWarne. I’m a teacher librarian and graduate student of University of Northern Iowa’s School Library Science program. This source was developed for Iowa teacher librarians seeking assistance with purchasing, borrowing, or connecting students to audiobook available through Iowa libraries and consortia.

The 2009 American Association of School Librarians’ Position Statement

“School libraries provide students, staff, and families with open, non-restricted access to a largest high-quality collection of reading materials in multiple formats that
Equipment Needed

**HEADPHONES**

For instant use, each Playaway, CD audiobook and/or digital reader device will need corresponding headphones. Headphones come in a variety of sizes and styles. Earbuds are smaller and can be easily stored.

**DIGITAL READERS**

For digital audiobook reading, students will need access to digital devices.

Below you'll see a list of options. If your school does not have access to these digital devices, consider allowing the students to bring their own.

**Wi-Fi Internet Connection**

Check to make sure you have appropriate bandwidth and Wi-Fi internet connections in your building. The more digital devices you have working, the more bandwidth you need.

---

**Physical Audiobook Collection Options**

**Playaways**
Digital Audiobooks

At first, downloading or borrowing audiobooks may seem confusing. No need to worry! To the left, click on BRIDGES, Statewide AEA Audiobooks and/or Heartland AEA Online Resources for information.

Spread the Word

On this page, you'll find a variety of ways to SPREAD THE WORD!

June is Audiobook Month --- Family Literacy Nights --- Teen Tech Week --- Using Social Media --- Heartland AEA Marketing Resources

June is Audiobook Month

Kids love celebrities. To kick off June as Audiobook Month, share the videos below. Gather students and the community together and spread the word. Audio Publisher's Association has tons of resources on their website to share: flyers, videos, and ideas. Their motto is, "A Good Audiobook Speaks Volumes!"
Ways to Pay

Funding an audiobook collection is one of the biggest challenges. This page is devoted to helping you find ways to pay for the audiobooks that are needed in every collection.

Ways to Pay

1. **Fundraise** - Raising money takes some time and creativity. Ask your parents and students for creative ideas and possible volunteer time.

Some ideas include, but are not limited to: Scholastic Book Fair, 100th day (students bring 100 coins), Box Tops for Education, Take Charge of Education - Target, Out of "Uniform" Day (hats, fun hair, etc.), etc.

*Scholastic Book Fair*