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University of Northern Iowa. Division of School Library Studies.

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June 2018



A School Library Studies Alumni Newsletter



A barrel of laughs

Tiffany Ahrens was invited to speak on humorous books at the 50th Annual Elementary Literacy Conference at UNI on April 13. She shared an extensive [bibliography](#) and encouraged teachers to have fun and share books with enthusiasm. “The books I remember best from my childhood were the ones that made me laugh,” said Ahrens. Some of her favorite new funny books are *The Terrible Two* by Mac Barnett and Jory John, *Ben Franklin's In My Bathroom!* by Candace Fleming, and *Fake Mustache* by Tom Angleberger.

Ahrens earned a B.A. minor through the School Library Studies program and has been a teacher librarian at Cedar Heights Elementary School in Cedar Falls for 12 years.



Reading, ramps and puppies

The library at Crestview School of Inquiry in Clive, Iowa, is bursting with hands-on opportunities including books, building materials, a wind tunnel and more. “Our library is open to change and bringing something new and different to all our learners on a daily basis,” explained teacher librarian **Ann Reynolds** (M.A. 2010).

While students focus on literacy during their library class time, they also come to the library with their classroom teachers to extend learning by building simple machines or creating seed dispersal models in the **makerspace**. “I hope to continue to blend literacy with the makerspace through conversation and displays,” said Reynolds.

Reynolds also gives students at the 1:1 school a chance to pet and read to Akita puppies through a therapy dog training program that started in January 2018. (Photo: Iowa Department of Education)



Stars among us

Congratulations to Chelsea Sims and Shannon McClintock Miller, new **AASL Social Media Superstars!** **Chelsea Sims** (M.A. 2012) was honored with the Sensational Student Voice award. A teacher librarian at South East Junior High School in Iowa City, Sims (right) uses her **social media accounts** to share students' work and show the impact of the library on student growth. “Receiving this award is humbling for many reasons - not only because so many of my students and colleagues wrote endorsements on my behalf, but also because I feel that sharing the opportunities students have when a school has a strong library program is an essential part of my job,” said Sims.



Shannon McClintock Miller (M.A. 2010) was honored with the Leadership Luminary award for her tireless leadership through social media. Miller (left) is a teacher librarian, author, speaker and consultant who advocates for student voice in education, school libraries and technology integration. Connect with Miller on [Twitter](#) or through her [Library Voice](#) blog.



Digital citizenship for the masses

Ballard High School teacher librarian **Jen Dovre** (M.A. 2013) and technology integrationist **Jody Kelley** shared their process for implementing a building-wide [digital citizenship curriculum](#) at the Iowa 1:1 Institute on April 4. “When we give a device to every student, it is important that we also help students understand how to use the devices appropriately,” explained Dovre. “But digital citizenship gets pushed to the side because teachers don’t consider themselves experts.”

During the long design process, they utilized data (Clarity Bright Bytes Data through Heartland AEA); involved teachers throughout the school; and connected with local resources including the police and a county attorney. Dovre and Kelley found that “taking it slowly and involving more voices” was crucial to creating buy-in with the high school faculty.



Training the next generation

Robin Moeller (B.A. minor, M.A. 2001) is training new teacher librarians as an associate professor of library science at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Moeller was a high school teacher librarian in Kansas City for four years. Then school library studies professor Barbara Stafford prompted Moeller to continue her studies by sharing an opportunity for teacher librarians to pursue a doctoral degree at Indiana University.

Her research now focuses on visual representations of information, particularly graphic novels, and how they are used by youth and schools. Moeller encourages teacher librarians to advocate for the library program and “gradually create an environment in which stakeholders think, ‘how would we be able to do (fill in the blank) without the teacher librarian?’”

School library studies

The UNI School Library Studies M.A. program prepares teachers to become K-12 teacher librarians. The program is primarily delivered online. It also features one on-campus session in which students work with their cohort group and develop a network of colleagues throughout Iowa.



School Library Studies

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For more on the School Library Studies M.A. program visit: uni.edu/sls