FUTURECASTING

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How wonderful would it be to have a crystal ball and be able to predict the future? In these unsettling times, it would be great to know how it all turns out. Just think of the turmoil and unrest this ability could eliminate. But, I think there is a reason no one can predict the future—because it is up to us to determine the course the future takes.

I think the same is true about determining the future of school libraries. We have to take up the charge to chart the future of our profession. We have to be part of contacting our legislators and demanding they support school libraries. We have to articulate to parents what their child is going to miss out on if there is no school librarian or school library program.

We also have to take up the cause to create those 21st-century school libraries. The members of AASL have worked diligently to document what a 21st-century school library program should have and do. The Standards for the 21st-Century Learner, Standards for the 21st-Century Learner in Action, and Empowering Learners are the roadmap. These resources are the path we can follow to build the 21st-century school library programs our students need and deserve.

The ownership is ours at the building level. We can’t assume an administrator or a director or a superintendent is going to lead the charge. We have to be the change agents. We have to set a vision for our school libraries and then work to implement it. We will encounter roadblocks and obstacles that make success difficult, but we have to persevere.

The authors of the articles that follow in this issue have all considered current issues and tried to think in terms of what we as school librarians need to ponder and do in the future. This issue addresses so many things—from collection to instruction to services to technology. The door is wide open to so many possibilities for the future of our field. We have to seize opportunities to make the possibilities a reality for our school library programs and our students.

So how can you determine the future of your school library program? The first step is assessing where you are. Tools such as AASL’s Planning Guide for Empowering Learners is a good place to start. You have to have a clear picture of where your program is before you can begin to chart a course for moving forward.

When you have an idea of where you are, next you have to chart where you want to go. Empowering Learners and Standards for the 21st-Century Learner are great starting points. The ideal programs and outcomes described in those documents can help provide focus and ideas on where you want to go. Beyond those resources, read professional articles such as those in KQ, and look for blog and Twitter posts on school libraries. Such resources can help you begin to paint a picture of the program your students deserve.
But the school library program needs other advocates, too. Form a team to begin researching and discussing possibilities. Allow other stakeholders to help guide and develop the vision for the school library program. Their ownership in the project will encourage them to be advocates for implementing the plan. I had a colleague who wanted to implement flexible scheduling. She asked the administrator to put on her discovery committee some of the people most adamantly opposed. After conducting research, those same people became some of the strongest supporters.

Once you know where you are, have the vision, and have a plan to make the vision a reality, the next step might seem rather simple—although I’m certain it will be the most demanding of the entire project. Following the roadmap to reach your goals is the tricky part. During the implementation of your plan, creativity and ingenuity must come into play. This is where all the support you can muster will be needed. The road isn’t likely to be smooth and straight, but the journey is the part where we learn the most.

Whether you are just starting or have a well-established school library program, take time to sit and think about the future. Planning for how you keep moving forward is essential. In my mind, there never really is an end, just milestones along the way marking progress. One of my favorite aspects of this field really is that constant change, the constant “newness” of it all. I have yet to experience the same day twice in my entire career. We’re always looking ahead for different instructional strategies, projects, etc. Even when no major changes are in the works, the diversity in teachers and students make the program different every day.

I think we become good models for students when we are constantly learning and evolving with them. I can remember in high school we had a teacher who every day pulled out a binder from his desk drawer. The binder had to be twenty or thirty years old. It was being held together by duct tape. He would set it on his desk, turn to where he left off, and begin his lecture. These were the notes he had been using since he first began teaching the class. To me, this is not the model I want to follow. Instead, I want to pull out what I did last year, use the best parts of those projects, ditch the things that were less effective than I’d hoped they’d be, and then revise and make the program even better.

Our field is in a constant state of change. I think it would be impossible for school librarians who enter the field today to be doing the exact same things until they retire. I’m not even sure they will be doing the exact same things five years from now. Our world includes too many new tools, new sources of information, new instructional strategies, and new ways of incorporating this wealth of resources into our programs. As we reach out, learn, and grow, we can give our students the learning opportunities they deserve.

AASL continues to work diligently on the national level for our members. We have been very active in the last few months with trying to get the SKILLS Act included in the new ESEA language. We continue to keep working on providing resources and support for school librarians at the building level, as well.

I don’t know that I’ll ever have that crystal ball, and to be honest I don’t think I will ever need it, either. Instead, I have to take ownership to create my own future for my school library program. By taking ownership we can all design and implement school library programs that are going to endure far into the future.

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What is this thing called the future? In her novel *This Thing Called the Future* (2011), J. L. Powers has a powerful character Khosi, who recognizes her life’s path has been forged between two defining schools of thought. Khosi is torn between the ancestral world of her Gogo—filled with spirits, witches, and spells—and the modern world of her mother—filled with cause, effect, and disease. Khosi appreciates both worlds but has to make her own decision on where her path will lead.

School librarians encounter the same type of crossroads—some passed this intersection years ago, while the current economic situation has brought others to the point rather unwillingly. For the sake of this discussion, let’s think in absolutes. Therefore, school librarians see two paths diverging from the crossroads. One leads to the way things have been in school libraries and the other leads to a new landscape. While both paths lead to the future of school libraries, the authors who have been so kind as to lend their words to this issue of *Knowledge Quest* embrace the new reality as an exciting creature. Yes, a living, breathing creature born of changing times, resources, and needs.

The creature that is the school library of the future is technology-rich. The myriad of technological gadgets and gizmos become the appendages of the creature, allowing it to extend the reach of the school library program beyond the physical confines of a four-walled space. As I have worked in elementary and high school libraries and had the pleasure of teaching adjunct library and information science courses, I have enjoyed watching librarians cross the threshold to embracing their libraries as physical and virtual spaces. They use many of the same tools mentioned in this issue—Edmodo, Google Reader, Facebook, Polleverywhere, and countless others. The tools mentioned throughout this issue and most expressions of library scholarship these days exist to help make connections in new and exciting ways. Each school librarian’s path will be different as we prepare our students to learn in today’s world.

If the school library is the creature, then reading is its lifeblood. Today’s questions about what formats of reading will persevere into tomorrow are the cornerstone of blog posts, conference sessions, and more at the local, state, and national levels. Many of you routinely see online discussion board posts on how to grapple with the questions of e-book purchasing and licensing agreements for e-readers. AASL blog manager Wendy Stephens’s article offers some practical insight toward e-book usage in a high school library. Karen Gavigan and Heather Moorefield-Lang’s article raises thoughtful points on the integration of digital...
graphic novels into school libraries. Naomi Bates’s article on book trailers is a valuable how-to for book marketing, both physically and virtually. These conversations continue to help us connect our students to the texts that will change their lives.

As Wendy DeGroat and I worked on this issue, we’ve agreed that this conversation of how best to prepare for the future is one that should be examined routinely and frequently. We continue to hold that the future of school libraries exists in both physical and virtual environments. We hope the conversations in this issue will help you to earn your dual citizenship if you are like me and still wrapping your professional mind around what it means to be the best resource possible for your students in both spaces.

Tom Woodward’s article offers some compelling thoughts on goals school librarians could strive for as we head into the future. His words come from a non–librarian’s perspective as someone who works closely with school librarians—definitely worth a read. Lauren Mabry’s article describes an outstanding Henrico County (VA) Schools 21st-century skills-initiative that provides starting points for conversations and collaborations that many school librarians dream about. I mean, does it get more exciting than math in the library?!

If reading is the lifeblood of this new creature and it has to exist in multiple realities, the brain of the creature must be the school librarian. Regardless of the physical or virtual space, the school librarian provides the legs on which the vibrancy of the school library stands. This vibrancy is not only a new hairstyle for you, and a paint job and new wall art for your library—rather, it is a multifaceted process that must include creating and cultivating an environment of professional learning that is both physical and virtual. Lisa Perez’s article provides insightful ways to envelop ourselves in a culture of learning through tech tools and by learning how to shop for professional development. Carolyn Starkey’s article challenges you to use your personnel evaluation process as an invitation to raise your profile in your school and build stronger relationships with other instructional leaders at building and state levels. Using these professional development strategies will mentally challenge you to grow and develop into the strongest possible skeleton for the school library of tomorrow that many of our students need today.

A moment’s caution as we stare off into the eyes of this creature. This is not just “my new philosophy” as Sally would say in You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown (Gesner 2000). The future this issue is casting before your eyes is filled with ways to stay relevant, engaged, and vital to your students for years to come. Using Buffy Edwards’s can-do philosophy, school librarians can face the threshold of the future with a strong network of support to reach new heights of creative ingenuity.

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Visit Knowledge Quest Online at [www.ala.org/aasl/knowledgequest](http://www.ala.org/aasl/knowledgequest) to listen to a podcast of Steven and Wendy discussing this issue on Futurecasting! You will also find many additional resources such as exclusive online bonus content, webinars, essential links, and an electronic calendar.
Beware the "danger of a single story," novelist Chimamanda Adichie warned her audience at a 2009 TED conference in Oxford, England. She related how, as a child of seven, when she put pencil to paper in the sweltering heat of Nigeria, her stories featured white children eating apples and playing in the snow because British and American children's books had left her with the impression that children who looked like her lacked equally valid narratives.

Over time, novels by Chinua Achebe and other African writers affirmed for Adichie the validity of her own story. But later, when she wove stories with mangos and warm sun, an American professor criticized them as not "authentically African" because the teenage protagonist's wealthy, educated family sounded too similar to his own (Adichie 2009). Like seven-year-old Adichie, he had succumbed to the spell of a single story—in his case, a single story of Africa told and retold as if everyone in that continent's many nations lives in dire poverty, scarred by civil war.

In this issue of Knowledge Quest, Donna Gilton's article about multicultural literature reminds us that school librarians can steer students away from this danger by ensuring our collections reflect and honor students' diversity and the diversity of the future communities in which they will learn, work, travel, and live. Zorana Ercegovac emphasizes the continued importance of nurturing our students' love of recreational reading, a goal closely entwined with what they find in our collections. As we strive for school library collections and programs that serve an increasingly diverse student body, Sung Un Kim illustrates the opportunities school librarians have to impact the futures of immigrant students grappling to express their dreams in a new language. As these new Americans learn how to speak English, will the students they meet know more than one story of Africa? Mexico? China? India? School librarians can make a difference.

Despite the dizzying swirl of changes in the information landscape, the needle of our compass remains fastened to the same central mission: show all students their stories matter and empower students to tell the stories that matter to them.
The shifting landscape has changed how the danger of a single story may surface.

- RSS feeds, news alerts, and customized news magazine apps make it easy for students to immerse themselves in information streams from like-minded people, potentially impairing their ability to engage in civil civic discourse. School librarians can help students understand the value of listening to contrasting points of view.

- Unlike feed-driven technologies, some online tools filter by default, such as the way Google serves up different results to different users based on their search history and location (Pariser 2011). School librarians can raise students' awareness about the drawbacks of personalization and show them how to exert more control over these features. On Google, for example, adding “&pws=0” to a search disables personalization of those results (Cutts as quoted in Schwartz 2011).

- Free public domain e-books, attractive to schools and libraries as a money-saving solution, can take our progress in diversifying the literature our students read right back to 1923. If our increasingly multicultural students search these e-books for affirmation that their narrative matters, what will they find? For high schools, did The Souls of Black Folk by W.E.B. Du Bois make the download list? What about works by Rabindranath Tagore? How many women are represented? School librarians can apply a multicultural lens to e-book selections and supplement free e-books with additional resources that give voice to a wider diversity of writers and perspectives.

Several articles throughout this issue grapple with this challenge, including the imperative for school librarians to become storytellers, ones who wield the power of multiple formats to tell the story of libraries. Michelle Luhtala’s article provides a road map for how to “rock your library world” by telling your school library’s story.

The knowledge and skills students need to understand and tell stories will continue changing, most likely at an even quicker pace than in the last decade. Amid these shifting contexts, school librarians can capture at least a momentary sense of calm by centering on what hasn’t changed: Learning is still learning, and libraries are still about stories.

When school librarians and students harness the power of stories and amplify that power by leveraging the resources available in our increasingly “information-rich” and interactive global learning environments, students believe they can change the world. It’s as if they’ve discovered their wizarding powers, visited Ollivander’s in Harry Potter’s Diagon Alley, and now stand, each with his or her own special wand firmly in hand, ready to meet whatever challenges lie ahead.

As you read this issue, the insights and firsthand knowledge shared by these generous and creative colleagues will provide you with a spellbook of sorts, practical magic for making the most of whatever the future holds for school libraries—even if you aren’t hiding a wand and crystal ball behind the cire desk.

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FEATURE

RELEASING
YOUR INNER
LEADER
Spinning 21st-Century Standards-Driven Evaluations and Professional Development into Stronger School Relationships

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Simply put, professional development is evolving into something new and inspiring in the twenty-first century. Fired by lyrical portrayals of lifelong learning, our imaginations wallow in rich descriptions of how “participatory learning processes” are used in “collegial learning environments” by “personal learning networks” through “collaborative conversations,” all with the goal of enhancing teacher effectiveness and improving student achievement (see sidebar: The Lyrical Vocabulary of 21st-Century Professional Development). Professional development is becoming more relevant, more reflective, and, most importantly, more social.

The C-Factor-Promoting Abilities of Librarians

Socially united groups give rise to a collective intelligence that bonds the members into a more ordered community. Collective social intelligence can “sense its needs and that of its environment (stakeholders), generate choices that will satisfy those collective needs, anticipate the consequences of those choices, make choices that best serve the well-being of those affected by those choices, and learn from the consequences of those choices” (Cross 2007, 249). Surprisingly, a recent study by MIT scientists found that cohesion, motivation, and satisfaction are not good predictors of a group’s overall collective intelligence—called “c”—and ability to perform a wide variety of tasks, but instead the factors of social sensitivity and the way group members interact with each other are (Woolley et al. 2010).

In a study of school librarian dispositions, Gail Bush and Jami L. Jones (2010) identified “collaborating/collaboration” as among the top key dispositions of exemplary school librarians. The collaborating qualities of the school librarian as a team-builder, builder-of-partnerships, transformer of isolated learning, advocate of open dialogue, and promoter of positive professional and societal change (Bush and Jones 2010) and as a proprietor of the “conversation business” (Lankes et al. 2007) indicate that librarians possess c-factor-promoting abilities in abundance. By using these assets to lead their colleagues into a sharing of “values, perspectives,
Creating a collaborative culture involves removing barriers from among community members, effectively evolving the community far beyond the traditional command-and-control bureaucratic organization into a flexible society (Beyerlein 2003).

Pushing Librarian Leadership Roles in Collaborative Cultures

In the article “What Is a ‘Professional Learning Community’?”, Richard DuFour emphasizes that when building a professional learning community educators must first recognize their collective purpose and then create structures that will promote a collaborative culture (2004). Creating a collaborative culture involves removing barriers from among community members, effectively evolving the community far beyond the traditional command-and-control bureaucratic organization into a flexible society (Beyerlein 2003). When this intentional effort to create structures, cultures, forums, and practices that reinforce collaboration is fostered in a statewide framework, the resulting community of practice might be similar to that of the standards-driven formative evaluation system EDUCATEAlabama.

The structure of the EDUCATEAlabama Professional Learning Collaborative was collectively developed by a multitude of stakeholders. Within this evaluation system, the Continuum of Teacher Development, through its expectations and performance indicators for each of the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS), serves as the articulator of the shared vision and common purpose of the collaborative community, and guides educator reflection, self-assessment, and goal setting for professional learning and growth (EDUCATEAlabama 2009 and 2010). As Alabama’s school librarians revised the Continuum’s indicators and levels of performance to reflect the intent of the AQTS and the principles of AASL’s Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs and Standards for the 21st-Century Learner, as well as Alabama’s School Library Media Handbook for the 21st Century Learner, they took great care to strengthen the leadership expectations and indicators related to the role of the school librarian as a professional development facilitator and leader.

Because educators so often continue to plan in isolation despite best-practices research that indicates professional community collaboration is more effective (DuFour 2004), school librarians will have standards and evaluation-backed support for facilitating and leading professional development in their learning communities. For those school librarians who are less involved in the professional development of their schools, the evaluation standards will serve as a lure to entice them into leadership positions.

The Alabama Continuum for Librarian Development will serve to draw school librarians into the limelight of professional development leadership as well as consolidate the school library’s place as a focal point of learning in the school. The Continuum will strengthen the relationship of school librarians with their classroom colleagues and with instructional leaders on all levels of the collaborative. These relationships can only result in dynamic school library programs for all stakeholders.

Three Ways to Leverage Standards-Based Evaluation beyond Local and State Collaborative Cultures

So how do school librarians spin this visible leadership role in their local and statewide collaborative cultures into similar initiatives beyond the local and state levels?

Through promotion of the school librarian as a standards-based and standards-evaluated instructional position, school librarians can ensure their classification as a valued education profession.

Through promotion of themselves as an incubator of c-factor-promoting abilities, school librarians can create a higher profile for themselves in the design of formative collaborative cultures such as EDUCATEAlabama.

Through the promotion of ourselves as professional development consultants to other school librarians, we can foster the leadership and c-factor-promoting abilities in each of us.
Growing a Collaborative Culture: The Birth of the EDUCATEAlabama Professional Learning Collaborative

The origin of EDUCATEAlabama lies in the work of The Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching. Formed in 2006 by former Alabama Governor Bob Riley and chaired by 2003 National Teacher of the Year Dr. Betsy Rogers, the charge of the Commission was “to examine, recommend, and work to implement laws, policies, and practices affecting teachers and teaching effectiveness to ensure student success in Alabama” (Governor’s Commission on Quality Teaching 2006). The Commission significantly updated, rewrote, and/or developed the foundational documents of the teaching profession in Alabama, including the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS), the Alabama Educator Code of Ethics, and the Alabama Standards for Effective Professional Development. From these initial standards, stakeholders drawn from the teaching corps, instructional leaders, higher education, education policy organizations, and representatives of the Governor’s Office developed the Alabama Continuum for Teacher Development and the EDUCATEAlabama process.

Structure of EDUCATEAlabama

The framework scaffolding EDUCATEAlabama is comprised of the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS), the ideals through which Alabama educators strive to create a standards-driven professional teaching corps. The Alabama Continuum of Teacher Development, through its expectations and performance indicators for each of the AQTS standards, serves as the articulator of the shared vision and common purpose of the collaborative community, and guides educator reflection, self-assessment, and goal setting for professional learning and growth. EDUCATEAlabama is the system that provides the instrumentation and procedures for collecting and analyzing information about an educator’s current level of practice within the Continuum.

EDUCATEAlabama for School Librarians

However, the expectations and level of performance descriptions on the Continuum of Practice for Teacher Development focus on classroom teachers and do not align to school librarians’ responsibilities and practices. In the fall of 2010, twenty school librarians revised the Continuum’s indicators and levels of performance to reflect the intent of the AQTS and the principles of AASL’s Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs and Standards for the 21st-Century Learner as well as Alabama’s School Library Media Handbook for the 21st Century Learner. For more information, go to <livebinders.com/play/play_or_edit?id=93898>.

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STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS IN A TOUGH ECONOMY

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This article was adapted from the June 2011 edWeb.net webinar “Earning Recognition: If You Build It, Share It!” The webcast is available at the Using Emerging Technology to Improve Your School Library Program community’s landing page at <http://edweb.net/emergingtech>
It is no secret that since the fall of 2008, fiscal managers have been making tough decisions. The trend is consistent among economic sectors, including education. In their efforts to stem budget shortfalls, school administrators and business managers are cutting programs and eliminating teachers. School librarians in particular are struggling in this new environment. Even where positions remain secure, school librarians are juggling an increasing number of responsibilities as a byproduct of staff cuts and added duties. School librarians in more acerbic conditions are facing reassignment, teaching in multiple buildings and/or student populations, or outright attrition.

Fostering Optimism

Keith Curry Lance and Linda Hofschire published a preliminary study that drew correlation between school librarians and student achievement in reading (2011). While Lance has fastidiously researched and published on this topic for decades, it has never been more critical to disseminate his message: Well-staffed school library programs increase student achievement. But we can’t rely on a handful of experts to demonstrate our worth. We, as professionals, know that we make a difference. We have a collective responsibility to prove it.

It is a challenge to doggedly strive for programmatic recognition in this economic climate. Implementing instructional reform, often equated with rocking the boat, is not high on the list of priorities when administrators are trolling for the next position to cut. But there are subtle ways in which school librarians can garner the kind of evidence they need to demonstrate their impact on teaching and learning. Those in particularly dire situations should take heart. The most abysmal conditions offer the greatest capacity for growth and innovation. This is a fundamental principal in Clayton M. Christensen, Michael B. Horn, and Curtis W. Johnson’s book Disrupting Class (2008). Growth, measured against a given baseline, is all one needs to establish a program’s success. Clearly the first step is to establish that baseline.

Setting Realistic Goals

Regardless of a school library program’s standing on the spectrum of successful programming, it is important to set incremental goals for growth. Realistic goals are best—those that involve factors over which school librarians have enough control to influence change. For emerging programs, this can include the number of collaborations with teachers, the number of classes visited, circulation statistics, the number of professional development programs offered through the school library, collection analysis statistics, and

Establishing Priorities and a Baseline

The road to recognition starts with documenting the school library program and, where possible, student learning. When I first joined the New Canaan (CT) High School faculty in the fall of 2001, our library program was weak. In our first superintendent’s report, we wrote, “We’ve made great strides, and we should be right on track by 2009.” In a follow-up phone call, we were asked if the “2009” was a typo.
database usage. While these are fairly fundamental benchmarks, and they determine student interaction with the school library program, rather than information consumption—much less higher-order thinking—they do provide information about student exposure to the school library program, and that is a start. As the program evolves, it becomes easier to measure impact, as opposed to exposure.

Assessing Skills That Matter
Assessing fundamental information and communications skills from Michael B. Eisenberg and Robert E. Berkowitz’s Big6 is a good next step. Google forms and free survey tools are helpful for this. Assessing incrementally—a few skills at a time—increases learner participation, and embedding assessments into pathfinders helps to disseminate the assessments expeditiously. As instructional objectives move higher up Bloom’s taxonomy, so do the measured criteria.

AASL’s Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs (AASL 2009) recommends that library programs teach students and faculty to effectively use information and ideas. These encompass the more concrete Partnership for 21st Century Learning skills (see <www.p21.org>), but also more intangible Learning4Life (L4L) processes, like thinking, creating, sharing, and growing (see <www.ala.org/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/learning4life>). Curiosity is also worth measuring, but it is more a habit of mind. This is what needs to be embedded and assessed to demonstrate 21st-century teaching and learning.

Here are some questions to consider when establishing benchmarks. Does your program help learners do the following?

- Ask the right questions?
- Make the right decisions?
- Demonstrate digital citizenship?
- Use their right brain?

If the answer is yes, how do you demonstrate it to others? If not, how can you integrate these objectives? Can you think of examples where this is happening for kids? Can you collect exemplars of this? Is an assessment already in place? If so,
Tweets with a common hashtag into an easy-to-read (and grade) online publication. We also use Facebook groups for peer review. Watching students use the platform emboldened us to add contribution, collaboration, continuity, and growth to our research log rubric. (Examples of these and other lessons taught via mainstream participatory media are available at <http://bannedsites.info>.) Peer review teaches students to accept and embrace their shared responsibility in the teaching and learning process.

Lifelong learning sounds like a cliché, and it presents a serious challenge for assessment: “Can you check back in with us from your deathbed and let us know if we taught you to love learning your whole life?” But surveying alumni is a great way to measure a program’s impact. This is where social media are especially powerful. Once students graduate, their e-mail addresses change. Families often move, and/or forfeit their landline phone service. The only way to reach alumni is via social media. Typically, a graduating class will form a Facebook group for all members of that class. The group expedites communication about things like dances, yearbooks, senior t-shirts, outings, and group activities. Students often remain in those groups long after graduation. It is simple enough to ask a member to push out a link to a survey, questionnaire, or invitation to a face-to-face focus group when grads are home on break.

Our contact time with students affords us a chance to model good teaching and learning. The beauty of the twenty-first century is that contact time is not necessarily face-to-face time. In fact, online communication expands our instructional reach and our opportunities to assess learning.

To earn recognition, a program must foster an environment where everyone is a teacher, a learner, a producer, a contributor—one where digital and emerging technologies are embraced, where expertise is attributed democratically, where learners connect beyond physical boundaries. We can provide students with nontraditional responsibilities, and even reverse our teacher/student roles.

One idea is to have students curate multimedia resources to create a “NextBook,” a replacement for a traditional textbook. (That term was coined by New Canaan High School senior Hunter Van Vehgel.) Another flipped lesson might involve asking students to design assessments for an assured curricular experience—encouraging their focus on embedding creativity, innovation, problem solving, and higher-level thinking into the rubric. Students can then vote to select one (or more) assessment for the group to use.

**Shifting the Paradigm: Students as Teachers**

Teaching collectivism is a challenge in the 19th- and 20th-century school structure in which most educational facilities seem to be stuck. Schedules, classrooms, desks, chairs, and print textbooks are all designed for the individual, not collective, benefit. Even one-to-one initiatives neglect to teach students shared responsibility. (I anticipate reader protests to that remark, but it is one-to-one.) Getting students to feel like they are members of the teaching and learning team requires a serious paradigm shift. But challenges provide opportunities. Finding ways to embed and assess collaboration and teamwork will help promote that change. If the school library program can stimulate collectivist thinking and convince students to morph from passive to participatory learners, its visibility will increase exponentially.

To help students with this transition, we should encourage them to publish to real audiences their original ideas about what matters to them—preferably to audiences beyond the school community. This focus on a real audience increases student accountability and raises the bar on student performance. It helps them become better communicators, and it involves others in the assessment process. The school library has always been the place where students learn about the outside world. Traditionally, the connection transpired intellectually, through books or film. Now, students (should) have ample opportunities to connect with the outside world. (Schools are not necessarily encouraging these encounters.) The school library program naturally lends itself to orchestrating these connections. It is still the school library’s responsibility to connect students with the outside world; only we now live in a more reciprocal world. Connection is a two-way street. It is no longer enough to consume information; learners must contribute to the collective information pool. School librarians can and should play a role in facilitating that.

Visit Knowledge Quest Online at www.ala.org/aasl/knowledgequest to view Essential Links relevant to the theme of Futurecasting, including a link to the June 2011 edWeb.net webinar, “Earning Recognition: If You Build It, Share It!” that this feature story was adapted from.
Win-Win: Expanding Students’ Worldview While Advocating for Libraries

Last spring, district librarian and technology specialist Shannon Miller from Van Meter, Iowa, won the Connecting People Shorty Award for the impact she’s had on her community and the creative ways she’s used the social Web to connect people (Shorty Awards 2011). Miller uses Twitter, Skype, and blogs to connect her learners with experts from around the globe and to crowdsource for innovative instructional collaborations. This recognition demonstrates the impact of linking geographically isolated learners with the rest of the world. In the fall of 2010, Miller met John Schumacher, the librarian at Brook Forest Elementary in Oak Brook, Illinois. Since then the two school librarians—once isolated professionals in their schools—developed a co-teaching partnership in spite of the 337-mile distance that separates them. Their collaboration is documented in their shared blog Two Libraries, One Voice (Miller and Schumacher 2011). Connecting students with other teachers and learners achieves at least two objectives. Most importantly, it is a necessary step toward empowering 21st-century learners. But it is also easy to document, and thus a simple way to demonstrate the value of school libraries and librarians to the entire learning community.

Crowdsourcing Advocacy

Measuring learning is essential. But publishing the impact of instruction on student learning is what saves jobs. Documenting our work and progress has never been easier. Social media facilitates transparency and advocacy beyond our 20th-century imaginings. Whether school librarians perceive themselves as digital natives or immigrants, documenting and publishing how school library programs cultivate learning is now a fundamental component of the profession. Writing is only one vehicle for publication. We have so many others; video, audio, photography, art, animation, and music all make for engaging alternatives to writing. The obvious obstacle to publication is time. But there is no rule that mandates that school librarians themselves document the program’s success. In fact, nothing is more compelling than having learners articulate the program’s impact.

Many tools can help demonstrate the school library program’s impact, and they take very little time to use. Surveys, blogs, digital bulletin boards like Wallwisher or Posterous Spaces, video interviews, Twitter and companion publications like Paper.Li, polling software like Poll Everywhere, animation tools like Vokki and Xtranormal are just a handful of the tools available to document learning. The Daring Librarian, Gwyneth Jones’ blog, is a rich resource for dynamic and engaging applications for these and other learning and publishing tools. She compiled a list of her favorites in her “Gadget A-Go-Go” presentation for the 2011 ISTE conference. Joquetta Johnson also featured a formidable list of engaging online resources in a TL Virtual Cafe webinar last spring (Johnson and Jones 2011).

Guiding Teachers into the 21st Century, Too

It is not enough to teach students to effectively use information and ideas. We also have a responsibility to support faculty learning. Many school librarians facilitate professional development workshops in their districts and beyond, but few keep a running schedule of all their professional-development offerings. Embedding a simple Google Calendar in a website or blog lends itself to that task. Participant testimonials and praise from standard professional development evaluation forms can be incorporated into calendar entries. Organizing workshop resources online allows participants to revisit not only the material, but helps them also remember who taught it. Online presentation archiving portals like SlideShare and SlideBoom make for easy retrieval. We index our presentations in our school library management system,
Maintaining Our Focus
At its core, our job hasn’t changed much. We still teach learners how to interact with information. What’s changed is how hard it is to keep our jobs in this economic climate and in the face of misperceptions about modern developments on the role of school libraries. Part of our job now includes bridging the gap between industry failures to standardize e-tools and our learners’ need for standardization (i.e., citing websites, accessing e-books, database navigation). If we just collect, organize, preserve, and disseminate in all the traditional ways without adapting to the current information landscape, we risk losing our jobs or worse—causing others to lose theirs. Excellence is the standard to which we must aspire. Awesome school librarians save jobs. Save a school librarian. Rock your learning community.

Works Cited:


Sharing Successes
Share successes! Keep a distribution list of local media outlets and contact them often. Online dailies are desperate for stories, and they love featuring students. Maintain an online photo collection and share the link with the press. Reach out via social media. Facebook, Google+, and Twitter are excellent platforms for sparking conversations about success. Communicate with parents and administrators regularly.

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so patrons can readily access them through the online public access catalog. An extension of this service is to offer that cataloging service for all the district professional-development sessions. Ask workshop facilitators to upload content to the Web and forward the link. Serving as the professional-development archivist is a low-maintenance strategy to encourage the faculty to perceive school librarians as a professional-development resource.
In the October 2009 edition of *School Library Journal*, authors Joyce Valenza and Doug Johnson stated, "Librarians who don’t have PLNs, don’t attend conferences, don’t read cutting-edge professional literature—both from the library and the education worlds—are dragging our profession down. And good people are going with them." Harsh words? Perhaps. True? Very likely! PLNs—or professional learning networks—are now even more vital to maintaining the integrity of our profession than they were several years ago. To assume the role of technology leaders and information literacy specialists in our schools, we need access to the most current information. And, we do this by helping each other.

What are Professional Learning Networks (PLNs)?

There are many definitions, but PLNs involve sharing work-related ideas with a network of colleagues via various digital communications (and even face-to-face) for the betterment of one’s professional practice.
Five Reasons Why School Librarians Need Robust PLNs

1. Access to the thinking of colleagues: PLNs that include digital communications allow us to broaden our professional perspective to gain viewpoints from leaders in the fields of librarianship, education, and technology. In response to a Google doc survey in August 2011, Phil Goerner, the librarian at Silver Creek High School in Longmont, Colorado shared, “I really feel that all teacher-librarians need some type of PLN. Many of us are so isolated in our buildings it helps us keep up and is exciting to learn!”

2. Access to timely information: PLNs give us information, as it is happening, to support our information, literature, and technology leadership growth.

3. The ability to post questions and get responses: If two heads are better than one, hundreds of minds working together provide an unprecedented ability to help us support our students’ learning needs.

4. Collaboration with colleagues: Active PLNs help us to work more effectively with our peers and also help us to bring project-based learning activities to our students, enabling them to work with classes around the world. The “Two Libraries, One Voice” blog <http://twolibrariesonevoice.blogspot.com>, built by school librarians John Schumacher (AKA “John Schu”) in Illinois and Shannon Miller in Iowa, provides many examples of what is possible when PLN colleagues use various technologies to connect their students to others around literature and research activities.

5. Communicate about events: We can use PLN tools to share news about upcoming virtual events. For example, colleagues in the Illinois School Library Media Association Facebook group use the group’s event feature to inform members about upcoming webinars. Also, many conferences now use Twitter hashtags to allow people to communicate on a back-channel about the event, whether at the conference or not. In response to an August 2011 online survey, Erin Wyatt, the school librarian at Highland Middle School in Libertyville, Illinois shared, “Since the days I can go to conferences from school are limited, I find it really valuable to follow conference sessions (via a hashtag).”
PLN Game Changers

A robust PLN employs different technologies to network around different content types. Heavy-hitters include Twitter for micro-blogging (follow the #tlchat hashtag); Google Reader for aggregating blog feeds; FourSquare for geolocation to follow your colleagues at conference or other sites; professional networking sites, including FaceBook (join professional groups), Google+, and Edmodo (password-protected); and specialty sites, such as Diigo (bookmark sharing), Goodreads, Shelfari, and LibraryThing (book info sharing); or SlideShare (presentations) and Scribd (documents).

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管理小贴士

- 管理你的PLN积极参与。定期添加到你的网络中，新的人能激励你，而不要犹豫删除那些工作与你不合的人。
- 不要试图读完所有东西。每天花5到10分钟阅读，并从中挑选出可以与学生使用的几个好主意。不要因为没有时间而避免阅读。
- 不要隐匿；回馈他人。PLNs的最好功能是当每个人都能贡献他的智慧，花时间为自己的好主意留下时间。
- 展现你的个人资料。人们将会更可能跟随你，了解你，如果你知晓你是专业地。
- 分离你的私人和私人生活。虽然有点"混同"是可以的，但你必须决定你分享什么。Facebook和Google+允许你指定联系人。
- 发表专业评论。你的评论应该反映你学校的实际情况。
- 使用移动设备。移动设备将提供更大的访问。

与一个活跃的PLN，你从不孤单。开始吧。
To paraphrase Walt Kelly’s cartoon character Pogo, “We have met the future, and it is us.” Because we are our schools’ experts in the kind of learning the future will require—information-based learning—we have a unique and critical role to play in helping students acquire the knowledge and skills they will need to live engaged, informed, and satisfying lives. And despite the hype that has accompanied successive new pedagogical theories over the years—for example, teaching to various flavors of learning styles, invoking so-called brain-based learning, and addressing the current popular fascination with “digital natives” and how they learn—the act of learning itself has not changed. Then and now, learning is an information-based task.

The idea that information is the building block for learning is not new. In fact, it has been a core tenet of learning theory since the study of human cognition began. Behaviorists, developmentalists, cognitivists, and constructivists and neoconstructivists of all stripes have amassed reams of data demonstrating that learning is the integration of information in our minds in order to build a personal understanding of the world in which we live. Remember Jean Piaget’s notion that learning consists of accommodating and assimilating new information? It dates to the 1950s. Philip Johnson-Laird’s idea that knowledge consists of mental models of information? From the 1980s. Today, we surely have a deepened understanding that “learning” is what we do when we construct personal mental
representations of the world from our encounters with information and experience (Bransford et al. 2000). But we have known for more than half a century that, in some way, each of us builds our own learning from information—including the information that comes from schooling as well as from direct experience. Each of us brings our unique prior knowledge to each encounter with new information. And we use that new information to build new and highly personal understandings of the world. In the last analysis, the act of learning is the same whether we are digital immigrants, digital natives, or digital tourists.

So What’s New?

What’s new about learning in the twenty-first century is that various dimensions of information have changed—expanding in every conceivable way. Information is now a “24–7” phenomenon: It comes from everywhere, at every time, at every level of quality, and in every format imaginable. It bombards us. It requires us to sort through it to find what is credible, to evaluate it for accuracy and coherence, and to establish its validity. Learning in today’s information-rich environments requires our learners to have far more complex and sophisticated skills than pointing and clicking or copying and gathering: It requires them to be information experts who can extract meaning from a variety of presentation formats and who can create those formats themselves (Neuman 2011a). And because it is school librarians and media specialists who are their schools’ premier information experts, they are the ones to help students develop this expertise (Neuman 2011b).

As Knowledge Quest readers know, school librarians and media specialists understand more about information as an entity than anyone else in their settings. They know where current and accurate information can be found; how information is organized, stored, and presented; and how information can be used to foster deep and meaningful learning. Who better to take the lead in the information-based learning of the future?

Perhaps we see our importance most clearly when we look at 21st-century students’ approach to research. Every school librarian and media specialist knows how difficult it is to interest students in any research tool other than the most basic search engine on the nearest browser. Once on the Web, many students seem to think that all they have to do is click from site to site, and gather facts and factoids without regard to their relevance or accuracy. Students are drawn to the Web’s visual presentation but often lack the ability to extract meaning from those visuals—and to communicate visual information effectively. They see little if any difference between vetted information at the National Library of Medicine’s website and Miss Smithers’s blog on magic potions. Often, they lack an understanding of how to evaluate the information they find. Perhaps even more significantly, they do not always have an adequate understanding of how to put pieces of information together into coherent and reasonably accurate products (Neuman 2001).

On the Web—whose “resources generally come without the familiar tables of contents, chapter headings, and indexes that indicate the overall structure of ‘traditional’ documents . . . they must impose their own structures on the information they glean as they surf from one resource to another” (Neuman 2011a, 75). Synthesizing information rather than just finding, evaluating, and analyzing it is a key learning skill for the twenty-first century. It is an information skill our students will need the rest of their lives, as they gather and use information about topics as diverse as buying a car and choosing a career and planning for retirement. School librarians and
media specialists have a critical role in helping students understand the importance of this information skill and in developing it to a high level.

**But Wait… There’s More**

Information-based learning requires something more, too. It requires an understanding of how various information formats “work” in order to extract meaning from and create knowledge with all of them. As educators, we’re fairly comfortable saying that learners must know how to read and to write printed information. Today, however, reading and writing are only the tip of the learning iceberg. To make the most of their learning lives, our students must also know how to follow an auditory-only presentation of information (like a podcast), and how to write and perform one that uses things like sound effects and tone of voice effectively. They must know how to “deconstruct” the information presented in images—interpreting the camera angles and juxtapositions videographers use to convey information subtly (and not so subtly)—and how to use these techniques themselves to create attractive and compelling visual presentations. They must know how to use ever-changing digital technologies of all kinds to find and combine information in myriad and still-evolving ways. They must understand that information has characteristics related specifically to its format—whether presented through visual, audio, multimedia, or digital means—and that they can exploit these characteristics to create new and valuable information products themselves.

Take, for example, the classic animation of the circulatory system that virtually all of us have seen at some time. This “information presentation” is effective because one of its chief characteristics—animation—is ideal for showing the flow of blood and highlighting its direction and rate. Knowing how to decipher animation—and knowing how to use it in the creation of a report on tidal rivers or one on photosynthesis—are important information skills for 21st-century learners. Similar examples of how the nature of the medium affects its use can be found for every other format as well, and skills related to information presentation in each format are necessary for today’s learners. From knowing how to interpret the latest incarnation of the food pyramid (or plate) hanging on the classroom wall to knowing how to identify and analyze key information from digital problem-solving simulations, learners need to understand how to “read” information in all the formats in which it is presented. Moreover, they need to understand the possibilities and constraints inherent in the full range of information formats in order to “write” effective information presentations in those formats. In sum, they need to know both how to “read” and how to “write” all kinds of information.

**But Who Cares?**

Information professionals and educational technologists have pioneered in bringing information use to the fore as a learning tool: Think about the Information Literacy Skills for Student Learning in Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning (AASL and AECT 1998) and the suite of information-literacy guidelines promulgated by the Association of College and Research Libraries from 2000.
through 2011. (See <www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/index.cfm> for the full array of ACRL’s statements about information literacy.) AASL’s Standards for the 21st-Century Learner (2007) <www.ala.org/aasl/guidelinesandstandards> thread information-literacy skills throughout the document, while the 2007 revision of ISTE’s National Education Standards for Students includes “research and information fluency” as one of its six major categories <www.iste.org>.

Today, even educators outside these “traditional” information fields have joined the call for information-based learning; give and receive information but note the following as a “key design consideration”:

“To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas; to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems; and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and nonprint texts in media forms old and new. The need to conduct research and to produce and consume media is embedded into every aspect of today’s curriculum” (Common Core States Standards Initiative 2010, 4).

Our own field, of course, has been preaching the information-and-learning homily for years. Michael Eisenberg and Robert Berkowitz’s Big Six Information Problem Solving Skills (1990), and Carol Kuhlthau’s Information Search Process (1993) and her current work in guided inquiry (Kuhlthau, Maniotes, and Caspari 2007) are strong testimonials to our expertise in information and learning. Frances Jacobson Harris writes of the “vibrancy” of the school librarian who understands the breadth and depth of the information-use role in the schools (2011). My own new I-LEARN model (Identify, Locate, Evaluate, Apply, Reflect, and kNow) makes explicit the connection between information and learning—putting the application of information to create knowledge at the center of the model in its “Apply” and “Reflect” stages, and providing extensive guidance about both the theoretical and the practical aspects of helping students learn how to use information as a learning tool (Neuman 2011a and in press).

Unfortunately, conversations about learning don’t generally involve the word “information” unless the conversers are school librarians and media specialists. So we have
work to do. What is “creativity” if not the use of information in new ways? “Critical thinking” if not the analysis of information that is presented to us? “Problem solving” if not the application of information to resolve dilemmas? All these higher-level skills are grounded in the efficient and effective use of information—and thinking about the characteristics that make various information formats more and less effective for particular kinds of learning is key to these important cognitive tasks in the future. It is the wise school librarian who understands that learning is grounded in information use, and who makes that grounding evident to his or her students and colleagues and to those who make decisions about our schools. In spite of the difficult times school librarians and media specialists face today, our stock in trade is the currency of the future: information. What we have to offer that is unique to education is an understanding of how students (and others) can use information as the basic building block for learning.

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Visit www.ala.org/aasl/knowledgequest for additional futurecasting resources, including a link to the School Library Media Research (SLMR) paper, Exploration to Identify Professional Dispositions of School Librarians: A Delphi Study.

Works Cited:


Internet usage has grown exponentially, thanks, in part, to the increasing popularity of handheld devices, such as cell phones, tablet computers, and e-readers. Today’s 21st-century children and teens are surrounded by a mass media sphere of visual and textual resources. According to the Teens and the Internet report (Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project 2006, 2), over eleven million teens go online daily, compared to about seven million in 2000. Increasingly, whether it is through computers, televisions, cell phones, or gaming devices, children and teens are accessing online resources to meet their social, recreational, and informational needs.

Due to the development of new 21st-century technologies, the world of children’s and young adult literature is continually changing. For example, one of the fastest-growing multimodal formats that today’s visually literate youth embrace is the digital graphic novel. For the purpose of this article, digital graphic novels are defined as graphic novels produced on and/or accessed on some form of digital device, including computers, mobile devices, and e-readers. This engaging literary medium is expanding our definition of children’s and young adult literature, as well as the ways in which we teach.

Often referred to as online graphic novels, Web comics, or long-play comics, the digital graphic novel first appeared on the scene in the 1980s. Initially, the conversion from print to Web presented numerous challenges; however, the medium improved greatly in the 1990s with advances in Web 2.0 technologies. Since digital graphic novels are relatively inexpensive to produce compared to print novels, graphic novelists have more incentive to publish their work online, especially independent and beginning illustrators (Rousseau 2009, 206). Furthermore, publishing online enables graphic novelists to make their work accessible more quickly and to larger audiences. Some digital graphic novels and comics have since come out in print editions. For example, Gene Yang originally published American Born Chinese (2006) as a digital comic on the website Modern Tales before publishing the award winning graphic novel edition. Also, Americus by M.K. Reed and Jonathan Hill (2011) first began as the serialized Web comic, “Save Apathea”, part of the To Be Continued line of Web comics by First Second Comics. Americus is about a teenager’s quest to keep his favorite fantasy series, The Chronicles of Apathea Ravenchilde, from being banned from the Americus public library.

Why Use Digital Graphic Novels in Schools?

Although print graphic novels are an established literary format in school libraries and classrooms, digital graphic novels are a relatively new medium in school settings. The visual nature of digital graphic novels is the way many 21st-century learners prefer to read; therefore, it is important for school librarians and teachers to recognize the value of digital literacies for engaging student learners. Unfortunately, findings from the 2010 Speak Up National Research Project reveal...
a “persistent digital disconnect between the tech-intensive lives of students outside of school, and the unsatisfactory experiences provided by many schools to use technology meaningfully” (Project Tomorrow 2011, 3). For that reason, as E. Sutton Flynt and William Brozo noted, “We must design instruction that reflects the mediasphere in which children and youth live” (2010, 528).

Digital graphic novels provide new ways for students to experience reading, and/or learn new content, using the comic format. In terms of curriculum, the Common Core State Standards Initiatives include the following statement, “To be ready for college, workforce training, and life in a technological society, students need the ability to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and non-print texts in media forms old and new” (2010).
Through the use of multiple resources, such as digital graphic novels, school librarians and teachers can strengthen their lessons by teaching literacy skills, such as comparing and contrasting. Using digital graphic novels also enables educators to allow for differentiated instruction. In the words of John Shableski, president of Four Color Perspective and board member of Reading with Pictures, “We are in the midst of a cultural shift. Educators, librarians, publishers, and parents are beginning to realize that literacy has multiple access points and the comics medium, aka graphic novels and digital graphic novels, are opening doors for so many readers who traditionally have been overlooked” (2011).

**Apps and Digital Graphic Novels**

Digital graphic novels are still a relatively young medium, compared to digital comic books; however, subscription services and applications (apps) for digital graphic novels are on the rise. In 2010, IDW Publishing (a division of Idea + Design Works, LLC) introduced a digital graphic novel series available for use on iPads and other mobile devices. IDW’s digital graphic novels include the ever-popular Star Trek series, as well as James Patterson’s series Witch and Wizard: The Battle for Shadowland.

Furthermore, comiXology recently introduced Jeff Smith’s Bone and RASL graphic novel series as apps for the iPad, iPhone, iPod, and the Android. Additional comiXology digital graphic novel titles for children and teens include the Mouse Guard series (David Petersen), the Scott Pilgrim series (Bryan Lee O’Malley), The Walking Dead series (Robert Kirkman), and Return of the Dapper Man (Jim McCann and Janet Lee). Through partnerships with Marvel Comics, DC Comics, Archaia Entertainment, BOOM! Studios, Dynamite Entertainment, and Image Comics, comiXology hosts over 10,000 digital graphic novels and comics (some free) on its website <https://comics.comixology.com>.

Other companies that distribute comic apps and digital graphic novels include Cognito Comics, Comics, Comics+, ComicZeal, Graphicly, iVerse Media, Panelfly, Viz, and Yen Press. Please see the companies’ websites for a complete list of their apps and digital graphic novels, available platforms, and costs per volume. Several of these companies offer the first chapter or two of their products for free, in the hopes that consumers will return to purchase future chapters.

**E-Book Readers and Digital Graphic Novels**

E-book readers are joining the digital graphic novel bandwagon, adding titles for children and teens such as the Graphic Universe series (Lerner Publishing) on Amazon’s Kindle Fire, as well as the Archie Comics series and Sonic the Hedgehog series, both by Archie Comics, on the Barnes & Noble NOOK. Free Spirit Publishing and Electric Eggplant recently partnered to produce the app Be Confident in Who You Are: A Graphic Novel based on Book 1 of the award-winning Middle School Confidential series by Annie Fox and Matt Kindt. The series for middle school students addresses bullying and other social issues. Originally an app for the iPad, the digital graphic novel is now available on the NOOK Color Reader’s Tablet. Depending on the application, the price to download digital graphic novels currently ranges anywhere from $1.99 to $10.99 per title. As is the case with
comic and digital graphic novel apps, some of these titles are available for free to whet consumer’s appetites.

Online and Interactive
Along with digital graphic novels, which can be read online or through devices such as iPads, NOOKs, and Kindles, there is also a growing body of interactive Web 2.0 sites and apps that encompass the digital graphic novel style. These sites and applications take readers into a two-way interaction with the graphic novel, where the book may be read aloud to them; they can choose outcomes or options for the characters, help create stories as well as read them, or complete activities after reading Web comics. One option for sharing these sites is through the use of interactive whiteboards. John Shableski describes how they can be used with digital and interactive graphic novels for a great collaboration: “The best partnership possibility is via SMART Board applications… When the entire class can view the same images displayed on a screen, the interaction opportunities multiply ten-fold” (2011).

Inanimate Alice <www.inanimatealice.com> is a multi-chapter, interactive digital graphic novel set in the early years of the twenty-first century. Readers can interact with Alice’s adventures as she travels in search of her father throughout remote areas of northern China. Full of beautiful images and fun activities, Inanimate Alice not only will hook readers, but teachers and school librarians will be able to use the education packs and standard alignment pages on the site. (Grades 4–6, and possibly higher)

Toon Books <http://toon-books.com/rdr_one.php> will help emerging young readers in multiple languages through these interactive, fun-to-read comic books. The books come in three levels for grades K–3, and are available in five different languages. Students can read the graphic novels themselves, or have a Toon Books narrator read the comics to them by moving the mouse cursor over the words. Books can be read in each student’s chosen language. Available languages are English, Spanish, French, Chinese, and Russian. (Grades K–3)

Myths and Legends <http://myths.e2bn.org> is an interactive site for those who like a good story, and for those who enjoy telling a fine story. This resource not only lets students read stories based on folktales and fables from the British Isles, but it also has a separate section where users can create their own tales and share them. Teachers and school librarians can incorporate the resources page, as well. (Grades 3–6)
Digital Graphic Novels and Your Library

As stated in AASL’s Standards for the 21st-Century Learner, “Multiple literacies, including digital, visual, textual, and technological, have now joined information literacy as crucial skills for this century” (AASL 2007, 3). However, teaching 21st-century literacy skills through digital resources can be challenging for school librarians and teachers. Mark Siegel, editorial director of First Second Books, points out, “The Internet often changes the nature of connection between author and readers” (Brothers 2011). Therefore, it is important for school librarians to learn how digital graphic novels use image and text in multiple ways to produce meaning for children and teens. School librarians must also become knowledgeable about equipment and licensing issues pertaining to digital graphic novels. Then, by sharing their knowledge regarding digital graphic novels with fellow educators, school librarians can further establish themselves as technology leaders in their schools. Last, but not least, adding free digital graphic novels to their repertoire of digital resources can help school librarians expand their library collections during tough economic times.

Howtoons <www.howtoons.com> calls itself the world’s greatest Do-It-Yourself Comic Website. On Howtoons, students can read about the adventures of Tucker and Celine, and learn how to create useful (or silly but fun) projects from lists of everyday materials. School librarians can use Howtoons to get ideas for activities and science projects. Currently Howtoons is a read-only online comic strip; however, it will soon be available as an interactive e-reader app, as well. (Grades 3–6)

BB Brothers <www.blunderbrothers.com> (which is short for Blundernagging Brothers). This story is solely an iPad, iPod Touch, and iPhone application. The story, with gorgeous illustrations, is read to users by an expressive narrator. As with many comic book and graphic novel apps, the company gives readers the first three chapters (60 minutes) free and then requests payment to finish the story ($2.99 for the full story). Students will enjoy the narration and interaction with the story. (Grades 3–6)

Karen Gavigan is an assistant professor in the School of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina. A primary focus of her research is using graphic novels in schools. She is the author of the article “More Powerful than a Locomotive: Using Graphic Novels to Motivate Struggling Male Adolescent Readers” in the Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults. She and Mindy Tomasevich are coauthors of Connecting Comics to Curriculum: Strategies for Grades 6–12 (Libraries Unlimited 2011).

Heather Moorefield-Lang is the education and applied social sciences librarian at Virginia Tech. She is currently the chair of the AASL Best Websites for Teaching and Learning Committee. The focus of her work is on technology in libraries and arts in libraries. To read more of her work, see her website at <www.actinginthelibrary.com>.

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“Adding free digital graphic novels to their repertoire of digital resources can help school librarians expand their library collections during tough economic times.”

Works Cited:


In the rapidly changing globalized world, school librarians cannot prepare today’s students for every possible outcome, but we can give them the skills that will make them adaptable in 21st-century learning and work settings. The mission for school library programs is to ensure that students are effective users of ideas and information by being critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information (AASL 2007, AASL 2009, AASL and AECT 1998). School librarians, through their leadership, translate this mission statement into practice by engaging students in meaningful learning experiences, providing access to materials in a variety of formats, and instilling a love of reading.

A love of reading is just as essential to the future development of students as showing them how to research and manage information. Evidence from statewide studies has demonstrated that test scores correlated positively and statistically significantly with strong school library reading programs (Lance 2002). Unfortunately, reading books for pleasure, in terms of volume and enjoyment among adolescents, seems to be on the
Letting Students Use Web 2.0 Tools to Hook One Another

Reading for Pleasure
Addressing this question was the main focus of ReadReviewRecommend, a program that was created and carried out with middle school students in an urban secondary school in Los Angeles. Designed to be a safe and welcoming library program that provides expert guidance and allows students to choose what they want to read, ReadReviewRecommend connected reading and writing with widely popular social media and mobile devices, and made reading exciting and meaningful across different levels of reading comprehension, individual preferences, and technological competencies.

Eighty-four seventh graders enrolled in the Digital Media Literacy class during 2009 provided the initial participant pool for the program. Participation was entirely voluntary and grades did not depend in any way on students’ participation in the program. Nearly two-thirds of the students completed a one-page questionnaire on their use of mobile devices and social networking services, like Facebook and Twitter. Upon reviewing the responses, a blog was created for students to comment on their reading. In their early comments, students expressed excitement that they would be reading what they wanted and leading the project themselves (<http://readreviewrecommend.blogspot.com>). This data was triangulated with observations of students’ reading patterns in their school library and discussions among students, teachers, school librarians, and administrators in discussion groups.

Students encouraged library staff to expand “reading for pleasure” collections into different genres, expressions, and media. For example, some of the students who were accomplished musicians wanted more CDs and DVDs. Since the conversations were kept informal and were not linked to required readings, students felt free to discuss and share their insights. Being asked about their reading preferences also made students feel important.

The responses revealed that students read a lot, especially when reading was voluntary and they could read when they wanted with minimal guidance. As predicted, among the most widely given reasons for reading among middle school students was reading for assigned projects, finding factual information, and glancing over mass media reports of current events. For most of these required readings, students typically include specific types of sources, such as encyclopedias, books, journal articles, and RSS news feeds. Finding information on fashion, popular culture, places, and consumer goods was the predominant category of students’ self-motivated reading. Finding the voice that students could identify with was most often given as a response to the question, “I read because…”

When self-selecting reading materials, students often seek similarities with their own issues (perceptions others have formed about them, about bullying, fitting in, and teasing), family conditions, sexual orientation, self-esteem,
Connect Reading with Writing

We need to instill a love for reading as basic behavior, and as a prerequisite for critical and creative thinking, writing, and communicating. Earlier, I administered a summer reading program where students read from a preselected list of titles, and then wrote reports. I wanted to create a more flexible reading-for-pleasure program that incorporated blogging as a medium to support reading, writing, and sharing insights with peers.

Apply Reading Across All Content Areas

Alongside specific projects—such as slavery in the 17th-century colonies, 19th- and early-20th-century reformers—develop a lean paperback collection of non-required literary texts, posters, and multimedia. One example is Toni Morrison’s novel *A Mercy*, set in late 17th-century before slavery was legalized. Another example is a memoir written by Harriet Ann Jacobs, a freed fugitive slave and abolitionist. Some examples of classic works to use might include *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which highlights the social issues of 1930s Alabama. The idea is to align reading-for-pleasure collections with required texts that discuss global, national, regional, and personal concerns. The genres could be fantasies, science and historical fiction (along with subgenres like cyberpunk and humorous science fiction), and graphic novels. Topics might be equally varied ranging from friendship and relationships, families, gender issues, immigrant-related issues, and topics from the news, such as going green.

Develop Collections Across Different Expressions

Students are increasingly interested in having different expressions of the same work. Examples may range from adaptations of novels for films, to dramatized novels for a TV series. All these materials in different formats and media provide imagery and flesh out the content areas.

Connect Texts with Readers

Understanding students’ personal preferences and capacities will help them better connect with what they know and have an affinity for. One of the critical roles of school librarians is to provide an optimal medium for bringing readers and texts together. Customized services are especially important in secondary schools where learners develop unevenly, and have different intellectual and language needs. There is rarely an average student. Matching students’ preferences with perfect resources is the most exciting job of a school librarian.

Develop New Skills: Creators, Curators, and Consumers

The ReadReviewRecommend Program fosters students’ sense of authorial responsibility as reviewers. Students also act as curators of their new products by means of understanding the importance of assigning tags for the purposes of identification and discovery. These added responsibilities open up possibilities for new information-literacy skills that help students evolve from only efficient users of information into responsible creators and curators in the future.
As they become consumers and the fact that the students are identified and discovered.

- Research indicates that developing responsibilities in this more social facilitated students’ awareness of literacy programs in the future.

- Libraries. The “love of reading,” like those in social bookmarking sites del.icio.us, and photo and video Flickr for the purposes of identification and discovery.

The fact that the students are increasingly participating in every step of the information life cycle, acting as creators, curators, and consumers of online products, reaffirms the increasing importance of digital media literacy across all libraries. The “love of reading,” along with various means of developing it ought to become integral parts of digital media literacy programs in the future.

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**Works Cited:**


**Recommended Reading**


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Zorana Ercegovac is the founder and managing director of InfoEN Associates <http://infoen.net>, a consulting firm specializing in customized information literacy design and assessment programs. Having taught information literacy (IL) for upper level undergraduates (as well as graduate courses) at UCLA for years, she was convinced that developing IL skills should start earlier than at college level. She served as Library Department head at Marlborough School and Windward School, both in Los Angeles. She also continues to consult and teach graduate online courses at iSchool, Drexel University, in the areas of school library media programs, and information access and resources. For more information about her and her work, go to <www.cs.ucla.edu/Leap/zer>.
For those of us of a certain age, share a moment when electronic text became more useful to us than the equivalent in static print. We might have been using Gopher to retrieve R.E.M. song lyrics or reading Usenet forums to backchannel *The X-Files*, but whatever our information-seeking task, the ability to search an online document for a keyword or phrase was transformational.

We need to remember that incredible sense of potential as we evaluate the best e-book solutions for our particular libraries. With the introduction of more standardized multimedia file formats, the text has more potential than ever to provide a really robust experience, with the best products moving from discrete narrative literature to something altogether new and well beyond the page. A work is no longer confined to a single definitive version, as the reader can follow the author through the revision process, nor voiced by a single reader as now a range of theatrical and literary titans are accommodated with unlimited space for a variety of renditions. The coming revolution in our school libraries is not merely by virtue of the fact that text has morphed onto the screen, but asks also what we are able to do with text.

In this transitional moment, each school library is weighing how electronic its collection should be. In the case of my high school, we have examined existing usage patterns. The majority of our students check out fiction, either for leisure reading or to support the English curriculum. But a lack of recurring funding prohibited investment in subscription services for electronic versions of the most popular fiction, not all of which is available for library use, in any event. Also significantly, the evolving terms-of-service agreements for consumer e-book devices convinced us that a tenable paid-content solution was not yet in place for a library like ours.

**Devices and Content, Separate but Indivisible Issues**

While we were studying the way e-books would fit into the library and school, we began working with students with an interest in e-books, with a bring-your-own-device dispensation for certain classrooms, particularly those that required obtaining a lot of supplemental text. Students had been allowed to use their phones to record podcasts and respond to polling software, so it was a natural extension to show students how to load text on their own hardware. And they brought laptops, Kindles, NOOKS, inexpensive Android devices purchased at local drugstores, even first-generation iPods were repurposed as plain-text readers. Many students with their own personal devices are often unsure how to load a variety of compatible file formats to their readers or realize what they can achieve with file manipulation software like Calibre. We also began working with faculty, quick to grasp the valuable
academic potential of electronic search and annotation features, to brainstorm possible substitutions when a public-domain title could replace previously required reading still enjoying copyright protection.

**Purchasing Hardware but Not Electronic Files**

Consumers seem to think that e-books are inexpensive or expensive based on their own existing pricing schemata for reading materials, but even for librarians who are mindful of use per reader, the divergent price points that exist between print and electronic versions remain an issue. A hardback of *The Hunger Games* might cost more than $12, but Amazon’s Kindle version of the first book in Suzanne Collins’s trilogy can appear a bargain at less than $5. But locking it to one device, as Amazon’s terms-of-service dictates, results in a very expensive version of a single file, and, meanwhile, loading multiple files on a device effectively thwarted circulation of the other files for the checkout period in a way that would never happen with physical books. We did not want to end up with e-readers that were essentially $150 versions of $15 books.

The lack of available content models led to an examination of the potential for using public-domain works and teacher-created content on laptops and dedicated e-readers. Instructional applications were one area where public-domain works dominate to the point of a real savings potential. This realization, though, required some elaborate math. The majority of classroom sets in our English department book room are of public-domain works. Many of the mass-market paperbacks are available for a few dollars, but in the long term, shifting that money towards devices could exponentially increase the titles available for whole-class reading. And the adoption of the Common Core Standards by our state will give us many increased opportunities to use public-domain works. Given the availability of so many curricular titles and the limitations inherent in the models surrounding particular devices geared towards consumer use, we decided to invest in hardware rather than files.

**Hardware for the Journey**

We chose the simple NOOK, an e-ink reader, for a variety of reasons. The accounting challenges associated with Amazon’s recurring billing were trumped by an established relationship with the local bricks-and-mortar Barnes & Noble store. The lack of cellular-network connection for this basic model allayed any anxieties about Internet access and the mandate for filtering. Hose concerns had raised a red flag when students with their own devices began using browsers on their own e-readers to circumvent the local filters.

Another consideration involved the hardware’s durability itself, and its ability to remain charged for an extended period so students don’t have to keep track of cables or cords. A great deal of our equipment has been rendered unusable because chargers or cords have disappeared, and our students have a poor record of returning accessories, even the earbuds circulated with Playaways.

Right now, we are beginning with e-readers in two ways, as whole-class sets in the Freshman Academy and in the school library for in-house reading. The classroom sets are made up of twenty-five readers. Many of the challenges surrounding e-readers involve circulation. We decided that some of the e-readers wouldn’t necessarily leave the school library. For the in-library units, we are going to do some curation and load collections related to our quarterly cross-curricular literacy theme. For our first-quarter interdisciplinary unit “The Civil War,” we have included Project Gutenberg and Google Books e-pubs of Matthew Brady photography, titles related to the home front and women’s work in the Civil War, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee memoirs, and fiction by Stephen Crane. Between quarters, we plan to load some perennially appealing short fiction to encourage students to visit and linger with their reading.

**Literature on Demand**

Once demand for classroom use ebbs or we acquire another set of e-readers—enough hardware to allow the readers to circulate—students will be able to request books from Project Gutenberg and Google Books. In our desire to promote reading for pleasure and move towards a patron-driven acquisitions model, we have been paying more attention to student requests—those met with the existing collection as well as those we could not fill from our print holdings. The public domain works *The Art of War, The Prince, Beowulf*, and a Middle English version of *The Canterbury Tales* were all sought the first week of school. Often in the past, the students who read the most esoteric things were being shortchanged with old, yellowing editions, never weeded for condition because of light consultation; using the local collection often means access to a single translation, for the Chaucer in particular.

To better serve those students, we have proposed what we think of as a literature-on-demand model. A
Another phase will be partnering with our public library to provide access to books in their digital collection. The e-ink readers we have chosen offer relatively easy support and compatibility for our public library’s electronic collections. We are hoping this will help to supplement our recent fiction, acquisitions of which have been curtailed because of state-level funding cuts.

The coming revolution in our school libraries is not merely by virtue of the fact that text has morphed onto the screen, but asks also what we are able to do with text.

Digital Nirvana
But e-ink does not capture the electronic texts I would most like to share with my students and teachers. The really transformative e-book products, coming fast and hard over the last few months, tend to be app-based, and many of those are even limited to iPads, so the classroom carts of iPod touch units many schools bought won’t be much use for reading the enhanced versions of On the Road or The Waste Land. T.S. Eliot’s poem was the central feature top-grossing e-book app the week of its release, demonstrating the appeal of a public-domain work enriched with interpretations and elucidation, which bring us back to the real potential of e-books: to take the text and meld it into something really experiential. Apple’s iPads remain pricey, about four times the cost of an e-ink reader, and though that company has established an institutional voucher program to make acquiring and syncing applications in bulk a little easier, the management of Apple devices is still time-consuming and labor-intensive enough to spawn alternate software-based management solutions.

Any school library considering the electronic transition will have to make some decisions about the purpose of connecting students with a particular text. If it is to have an immersive and enriching experience in a fictive environment, many students may still prefer print. But I believe it is increasingly important to support digital and analog formats equally, as much as we can, according to each reader’s preference.

For the time being, the iPad offers the holy grail of interactive e-book experience, with iterations of audio, video, ephemera, and even a gallery of book covers from foreign language and historic editions of a work. However, indications are that Amazon and other retailers will soon be offering more robust tablet devices, supporting the multimedia files already embedded in many of the e-books they sell, adding another option to the already-crowded catalog of e-readers. Fortunately, there are solutions for each school setting. If I taught in an elementary school, I might have been tempted towards the color e-readers that render picture books so beautifully, or if I had more time and resources for training and support, might choose an inexpensive Android tablet with a color display and multimedia capabilities. But an e-ink solution seemed scalable and useful in perpetuity even if our school decides to invest in either more or different hardware. Situating the school library in the midst of the conversation about e-books is important to school librarians in order that they remain authoritative on both literacy and technologies. And the school librarian’s involvement will help underpin collaboration—and it will help the English department clean out their book room.

Wendy Stephens is a librarian at Buckhorn High School in New Market, Alabama, and a doctoral candidate at the University of North Texas.
THE FUTURE OF MULTICULTURAL YOUTH LITERATURE

Donna L. Gilton
Multicultural and ethnic literature is essential to people of all backgrounds and ages. It enables individuals from minority cultures to “learn, know, celebrate, and promote their own cultures” (Gilton 2007, 20), and it enables people from mainstream cultures to better understand diverse people. Almost one-third of Americans (30.6 percent) were people of color in 2005 (Banks 2008, 93). Forty-two percent of public school students are also from racial minorities, and this proportion is expected to rise to 45.5 percent by 2014 (Banks 2008, 13). Over their lifetimes, it is very likely that students from majority cultures who live in homogeneous areas will be interacting with more diverse people. This article will briefly describe past and present trends in this field, some predictions for the future, and resources that school librarians and teachers can consult to develop multicultural services, curricula, and collections.

Multicultural and ethnic children’s and YA literature did not emerge as a major force until the 1970s and later. Rampant discrimination in education resulted in children of color being excluded from schools or given inferior educations and in European immigrants’ being pressured to assimilate. Very few ethnic writers were being published, and books and other cultural materials about these populations were very stereotypical (Gilton 2007, 27–63).

This situation would gradually change because of the Civil Rights movement, the Library and School Construction Act, the War on Poverty, Nancy Larrick’s article “The All-White World of Children’s Books,” and the activities of the Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC). This organization published a newsletter, many articles, and several books on racism, sexism, and other issues in children’s literature. They created the first guidelines to evaluate children’s books for authenticity and gave the first prizes to encourage authors of color to write. Prize winners included Sharon Bell Mathis, Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, Mildred Taylor, and Walter Dean Myers; emerging critics were Doris Seale and Sonia Nieto.

Since the 1980s, there has been the development of many multicultural and ethnic publishers and distributors, review journals, specialized collections, prizes, and other institutions, organizations, and resources (Gilton 2007, 96–132). Many of these sources are listed in an appendix at Knowledge Quest Online <www.al.org/aasl/knowledgequest>.
All of this documentation is a real necessity because as of 2000, 10 percent of books for young people in the United States were on people of color and 5 percent by people of color. New ethnic writers have difficulty being published by mainstream presses and often start with multicultural and ethnic presses (Gilton 2007, 97; Muse 1997). Some multicultural and ethnic materials are published and distributed by mainstream companies, but people of color have formed their own publishing and distribution firms to get their materials out. Mainstream bookstores do not carry most of these titles.

In addition, a conflict may also arise between authors, editors, and reviewers who promote intellectual freedom, and teachers and school librarians concerned with how these materials affect and influence their students (Reese 2000, 51–53).

Issues likely to affect this field in the future include:

- Philosophical issues
- Activities of diverse people
- Multiculturalism and the west
- Learning about new groups
- General trends in youth literature
- Uncovering and discovering the history of this field
- Criteria in evaluating materials
- Applying multiculturalism at work using insights from multiple fields (Gilton 2007, 168–72)

Philosophical issues would include the purposes and moral aspects of multiculturalism, conflict resolution, and multicultural practices around the world.

Activities of diverse people would entail what they are thinking and doing, and why; how they pass on their cultures; how their activities relate to the development of literature for young people; and new paradigms that they may be developing.

Issues related to multiculturalism and the west would include relationships between multiculturalism and cultural literacy, how to combine the best of both worlds, and how to treat ancient civilizations. How much attention to pay in the school curriculum to ancient civilizations outside of Europe is a real issue.

Issues of learning about new groups include what to focus on and where to find new, supplementary information.

In regarding children’s literature in general, multiculturalists can consider the contributions of precursors and pioneers from diverse groups, especially in the context of their times.

Researchers who are uncovering and discovering the history of multicultural and ethnic youth literature can consider the contributions of precursors and pioneers from diverse groups, especially in the context of their times.

Issues in evaluating materials would include kinds of criteria to be used, how criteria should be used, and backgrounds of authors and illustrators. At least three kinds of criteria can be used to evaluate multicultural and ethnic children’s literature: traditional literary criteria, criteria related to cultural authenticity, and evolving ethnic criteria. Traditional literary criteria can be found in many textbooks on children’s literature. However, works of high literary quality can still stereotype cultures that they describe. Criteria that address cultural authenticity range in complexity from ’10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children’s Books for Racism and Sexism’ by the Council on Interracial Books for Children (1997) to the much more complex book Stories Matter, edited by Dana L. Fox and Kathy G. Short (2003). A good example of an emerging ethnic criteria set is ”The Black Aesthetic” by Addison Gayle (Gayle 1971; MacCann 2000, 212), which combines traditional literary analysis with general flexible guidelines to promote cultural authenticity. Another work combining these two approaches is “Multicultural Children’s Literature: Creating and Applying an Evaluation Tool in Response to

The lack of diversity in publishing, education, LIS, and bookstores is also related to the second major issue in this field—the question of authenticity. Scholars have been researching the whole issue of how to determine whether a work gives authentic and accurate information about the culture represented, and what qualifications are needed for authors to write about cultures not their own (Gilton 2007, 81–94). Questions can also arise about people describing their own cultures. Those writing for a broader audience must decide whether and how to describe problems and issues within their own communities (Miller-Lachmann 2010, 4–5).
School librarians should supplement their regular review sources with the *MultiCultural Review, Teaching Tolerance, Multicultural Perspectives, and Bookbird*, and other works described in the online appendix. Sherry York has published several lists of ethnic authors. Another very useful source is “Multicultural Children’s Authors” from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. School librarians should check out alternative publishers and distributors of multicultural materials listed in the appendix, as well as companies listed in *Small Presses of Color from the Cooperative Children’s Book Center* at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Knowing about the winners of various awards can be helpful; see the appendix for more information about awards to watch. To build collections on new groups or subjects, school librarians should also consult multicultural and ethnic bibliographies and, in some cases, catalogs of specialized collections. Materials on multicultural education and school media and alternative histories may also be helpful in developing school curricula.

Donna L. Gilton

is a professor of library and information studies at the University of Rhode Island. Her recent publications include "Information Literacy as a Department Store: Applications for Public Teen Librarians" (Young Adult Library Services, Winter 2007), *Multicultural and Ethnic Children’s Literature in the United States* (Scarecrow 2007), and “Culture Shock in the Library: Implications for Information Literacy Instruction” (Research Strategies 2007). Her new book *Lifelong Learning in Public Libraries: Principles, Programs, and People* will be published this year (Scarecrow Press).

School librarians should supplement their regular review sources with the *MultiCultural Review, Teaching Tolerance, Multicultural Perspectives, and Bookbird*, and other works described in the online appendix. Sherry York has published several lists of ethnic authors. Another very useful source is “Multicultural Children’s Authors” from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. School librarians should check out alternative publishers and distributors of multicultural materials listed in the appendix, as well as companies listed in *Small Presses of Color from the Cooperative Children’s Book Center* at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Knowing about the winners of various awards can be helpful; see the appendix for more information about awards to watch. To build collections on new groups or subjects, school librarians should also consult multicultural and ethnic bibliographies and, in some cases, catalogs of specialized collections. Materials on multicultural education and school media and alternative histories may also be helpful in developing school curricula.

**Works Cited:**


FEATURE
The number of linguistically and culturally diverse students has been rapidly increasing in the United States. English language learner (ELL) enrollment has increased more than 50 percent from 1995–1996 to 2005–2006, composing about 10 percent of the total number of Pre-K–12 enrollment (NCELA 2007). The U.S. Census Bureau projects that 40 percent of the student population in 2030 will be ELLs (Herrera and Murry 2005). However, schools may not be adequately ready to support this group of students for their academic success and postsecondary career preparation. Research recognizes “a chasm between research-based best practices and the available human and material resources in schools and colleges” (Rodriguez and Cruz 2009, 2386) to guide immigrant students through their career-planning process. Besides their low English proficiency, lack of access to college information and college-preparatory curriculum is considered a main barrier to the career and college preparation of immigrant students (Callahan 2005, Rodriguez and Cruz 2009).

This article is based on my observations and interviews with an English as a second language (ESL) teacher as well as ten immigrant students who did a research project about their career and college preparation in a high school in New Jersey. The immigrant students’ learning experience with the career and college research project shows how valuable the project was to them and demonstrates how school librarians can collaborate with ESL teachers for a similar project.

### Lesson Plan: Research Project for ESL Class

As part of the ESL curriculum, ten eleventh-grade students in the advanced-level ESL class were required to write a research paper on their career and college plan over four weeks (table 1). The students (five boys and five girls) ranged in age from sixteen to eighteen. Two were Asian; one was African American; seven were Hispanic and Latino students. All ten had lived in the United States for less than four years.

The paper needed to include (1) the student’s career goal, (2) higher education institutions for the target career, (3) financial plans, and (4) the college application process. The ESL teacher mainly guided the research process, and a school counselor from the guidance department held an instructional session for using a database specializing in college information.

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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>RESEARCH TASK</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Building vocabulary and background knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Research process overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Searching and making note cards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Making an outline, drafting a paper, and completing a final paper</td>
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Sung Un Kim

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The ESL class had a forty-two-minute session daily Monday through Friday for this project, twenty sessions in total. Although the school librarian was not directly involved in this project, the students’ challenges during each week reveal potential opportunities for school librarians to help immigrant students with their research project on postsecondary education planning.

**WEEK 1: BUILDING VOCABULARY AND BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**

Before the students started to do the research, the ESL teacher, with the aid of PowerPoint slides, taught basic vocabulary and background knowledge about careers and college life. The lessons included vocabulary about college, financial aid, different kinds of colleges/universities, vocational schools, and careers (table 2). Background knowledge included information on prerequisites for college, such as high school coursework and major college admissions tests, and important things to do for each grade level. The ESL teacher spent the whole week building up vocabularies and background knowledge. On the last day of Week 1, the ESL teacher distributed a research paper guideline to the students and asked them to think about their potential careers over the weekend as homework.

**WEEK 2: RESEARCH PROCESS OVERVIEW**

The ESL teacher provided an overview of the research process; the overview included lessons on how to use a variety of sources, how to take notes from sources, and how to compose an outline. In the middle of Week 2, a school counselor from the guidance department came to class to provide an orientation session on the database Family Connection, which is a web-based system designed to support the college- and career-planning processes. With the instruction and assistance of the counselor, students logged into the system and searched for college information for their careers. The ESL teacher sometimes interrupted the instruction from the counselor to explain college-relevant vocabulary and concepts used in the database.

**WEEK 3: SEARCHING AND MAKING NOTE CARDS**

Individually, students started to research their careers and college institutions, and made note cards with information found mainly at Family Connection and the websites of their chosen colleges. The ESL teacher provided printed materials such as books, newspapers, and magazines, and gave each student a customized list of additional websites. Each list included information about topics applicable to the student, such as financial aid available to undocumented students or particular ethnic groups.

Students had difficulties in searching when encountering unfamiliar English words. Most students needed help with difficult vocabularies; help came from the ESL teacher and from online dictionaries or translation websites.

Some students deemed finding specific information from the resources to be the most challenging part of the process, although the ESL teacher noticed that most of the students were good at online searching because they were accustomed to using the computer to keep in touch with what is going on in their cultures.

Also, students found it challenging to select the more important resources when they retrieved a wealth of information. Whenever they faced this situation, students asked the ESL teacher for help, and the ESL teacher told them which sources were most authoritative. Therefore, the students did not know how they should evaluate information by themselves the next time they encountered the same issue.

Students sometimes used their native languages when working with Family Connection and used Web search engines from their own countries to understand the concepts in their native languages before searching in English. Students also used resources from their countries of origin when searching for colleges, especially those in their own countries. For example, one student from China often used Baidu &lt;http://baidu.com&gt; to understand college-related concepts in Chinese first.

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**TABLE 2. EXAMPLES OF BASIC VOCABULARY RELATED TO CAREERS AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>VOCABULARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Vocabulary</td>
<td>acceptance, admissions office, award letter, Bachelor’s degree, campus,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>candidate reply date, college fair, community college, commuter student,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dormitory, ELPT, EOE, semester, TOEFL, transcript, transfer, trimester,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tuition, wait list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Vocabulary</td>
<td>FAFSA, federal aid, financial aid, free aid, financial aid package, gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aid, grant, loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinds of Colleges/Universities</td>
<td>public, private, four-year college or university, B.A. (Bachelor of Arts),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B.S. (Bachelor of Science), two-year college, A.A. (Associate of Arts),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A.S. (Associate of Science)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College and University Careers</td>
<td>doctors, lawyers, dentists, finance, designers, teachers, CEO, accountants,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Schools and Careers</td>
<td>vocational schools, military, mechanics, assistants, secretaries,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>electricians, cosmetology, cook, electronics technology, construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WEEK 4: MAKING AN OUTLINE, DRAFTING A PAPER, AND COMPLETING A FINAL PAPER

The writing phase of the research project started in Week 4. The ESL teacher used visual aids to remind students about the purpose of an outline and how to create one. She also provided handouts on the format of an outline and a final paper (e.g., title page, first page, and works cited). To practice spelling and grammar without corrections by word processing software, the students were required to write an outline and a draft on paper first. Then students began to type a final paper from the handwritten draft. They received instruction on how to do citations using the MLA format. This lesson also included information about the concept of plagiarism, the consequences of plagiarism, the benefits of citations, and originality-checking software Turnitin <http://turnitin.com>.

The ESL teacher explained that students had difficulty in performing a complicated research process with many steps and details. She said that because the students had developed writing skills the previous semester, that part was not especially difficult. However, citing sources was totally new and, therefore, hard for the students. She emphasized that acquiring background knowledge and the vocabulary of each research step (for example, the meaning of “works cited”), and vocabulary practice would be helpful in reducing the difficulty of the research process related to their lack of English proficiency.

At the completion of the research project, the students submitted their note cards, outline, and final paper to the ESL teacher. The ESL teacher graded the project based on the students’ progress considering the level of proficiency each had developed in the previous ESL class.

WHAT DID STUDENTS GAIN FROM THE PROJECT?

1. Students learned about the typical tasks in their planned careers and the required qualifications for those careers.

   “In computer science you have to create software that helps people make their lives easier.”

   “I learned about this major [astronomy]. You have to go to college for 8 years; you have to know about math and science. And you have to get a masters and a doctorate degree to be able to do this job.”

2. Students recognized the importance of planning for their careers and for college.

   “I think that having to search about your career and what college you want to go to is very, very important. I learned how college and your future are connected.”

3. Students developed their career and college plans, particularly about educational institutions, the application process, and sources of financial aid.

   “I learned about what I want to study and what is going to be my financial plan. In addition I liked this topic because I could find some institutions where I can study. Now I know a lot more about my career.”

4. This project made students seriously think about whether they would stay in the United States or go back to their own country.

   “I’m not sure I want to do college here. Maybe I’m going to do it in my country. I don’t know yet. But I’m really interested about this project because it’s going to help me to find out if I really want to stay here or not. Plus I’m going to know more stuff about college.”

5. Students gained research experience through the project.

   They had never written a research paper in their native countries and only a few had research experience in a lower-level ESL class in their current school. Through this project, the students learned how to search a database and how to create note cards, a outline, a draft, and a final paper with citations.

6. Students gained family support for their future plans.

   During their research, students talked to their parents and siblings about the project. Students could not get help from their parents because the parents do not know about the higher education system in the United States and do not speak English well. However, students felt their parents were excited to hear about the career plans. Also, immigrant students shared their career information with their siblings.
SCHOOL LIBRARIAN’S INVOLVEMENT IN THE IMMIGRANT STUDENTS’ EDUCATION

The ESL teacher who conducted this project said that the school librarian in her school worked closely with all the ESL teachers by:

- Providing reading materials at a variety of reading levels.
- Providing high-interest and age-appropriate reading materials with lower reading levels.
- Providing alternative books and materials such as picture books, comic books, and so forth.
- Providing video and audio materials.
- Asking the ESL teachers for suggestions on materials the school library could obtain for the ELL students.
- Being open to working with the ESL teachers.
- Always being accommodating by displaying ELL projects in the library.
- Most importantly, treating ELL students with the same respect with which the school librarian treats the mainstream students and interacting with the ELL students and coming into the ESL classrooms to work with them on projects when needed.

For this particular project on career and college preparation, the school librarian had previously worked directly with the ELL students to help them with searching, creating citations, and so on. However, this time she helped only the ESL teacher by providing new resources without direct interactions with the students for the following reasons.

- The school changed the college-information system from the one the school librarian had previously taught to Family Connection, which is managed by the guidance department. Therefore, this time a guidance counselor worked with the students for the orientation session on the main resource for the project.
- The lower-level ESL classes, where many students are new to the country, are more likely to work in the school library during their research project and get additional help from the school librarian in learning how to use the library and research sources; in contrast, the students from the advanced-level ESL class tend to be more independent during the research process.
- The students relied heavily on online resources, compared with print, because they had to find the most up-to-date information to prepare themselves for applying for college next year. Their ESL classroom was equipped with computers, so students did not need to visit the school library to find materials.
- The school librarian proposed to help the ESL teacher with citations via NoodleBib. However, this program had too many steps for the ELLs to follow. For that reason, the ESL teacher stopped using NoodleBib for her class. She said, “I have not found a simplified way to present how to do citations, footnotes, or endnotes. This is one area that needs improvement.”

If you are willing to help your ELL students but have seldom interacted with them, you may have issues similar to those
mentioned above. However, based on my observations and interviews, it seems clear that beyond the one-time orientation session about the college-information system, students need assistance from the school librarian in starting their research with appropriate resources and learning information literacy skills (e.g., finding specific information, evaluating information and sources) and research skills (e.g., citations) in a way tailored for ELL students.

To address immigrant student education through school-wide practices, including those in the school library, the following should be considered:

- A vision defined by the acceptance and valuing of diversity.

- Professional development characterized by collaboration, flexibility, and continuity with a focus on teaching, learning, and student achievement.

- Gradual or immediate elimination of policies that seek to categorize diverse students, and thereby rendering their educational experiences inferior or limiting for further academic learning.

- Reflection of and connection to surrounding community, particularly with the families of the students attending the school (Stritikus and Garcia 2003).

**CONCLUSION**

Because of ESL classes’ main focus on English language acquisition, research projects are rarely implemented there. However, I was amazed to see how beneficial and valuable the immigrant students felt the research project on career and college preparation was for their life decisions and planning. Although some members of the class had thought about their careers, no one had known about college options or planned in detail before doing this research project. Considering immigrant students’ limited access to college information, it is critical for schools—not just the ESL classroom—to provide appropriate resources and support college-preparatory curriculum to help immigrant students successfully prepare for college.

To make the lesson plan introduced above more successful and lessen students’ challenges during the research, I suggest school librarians, as teachers and instructional partners, reach out to ESL instructors and classes, and collaborate with the ESL teachers by teaching information literacy and research skills as part of a career and college preparation research project. Also, school librarians, as information specialists, can collect and provide recent resources about college/career options and sources of financial aid. Students’ research experience with the intervention of a school librarian will not only connect them to postsecondary careers, but also increase their research skills and information literacy competency.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The author would like to acknowledge the ESL teacher who led this project, Ms. Brenda Avila, for her generous support, and also thank her students for their time and excellent cooperation.

**Works Cited**


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CONCENTRATE ON WHAT YOU CAN DO
ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING
NEGATIVE TALK = NEGATIVE ACTION
DETERMINATION
OPTIMISM

S P I R I T
Facing the challenges of budget cuts
Statements like these sound all too familiar to many school librarians: “Due to higher student enrollment, the school library will be part of the rotation so all teachers are ensured a planning time,” or “School librarians are being cut across the board and paraprofessionals will serve in the school library.” In one large metropolitan school district, one school librarian serves five schools. It’s a tumultuous time for school libraries. At <http://maps.google.com>, the Google Map, “A Nation without School Libraries,” reflects that school library closings are not limited to the well-publicized cuts in California and Arizona, but are widespread across the fifty states.

These are the painful facts; now how do school librarians overcome these obstacles in the way of helping our students develop the skills they need? While some school library professionals take a closer look at retirement, others stand up to defend the profession they know has a strong positive impact on student learning. Many school librarians who weather similar difficulties do so by choosing to find energy in the challenges of overcoming these obstacles, looking at what can be done rather than dwelling on what cannot be done.

School librarians who have experienced drastic cuts in multiple positions recommend not blaming the administrations. Take a step back and depersonalize the situation. In reality, no one likes to make the difficult decisions of what programs to cut (Fontichiaro 2008). Anger toward decision makers may only paint a bleak professional picture of yourself and your library program. No one likes a constant complainer. What helped me to
move forward was opening my heart
to the reality of the state of school
libraries. I allowed myself time to
be angry but then moved forward.
Key decision makers respected me
for acknowledging the situation,
accepting it, and then focusing on
what is important—student learning!

“Attitude is everything” is a powerful
statement, and even in these
difficult times, much is under our
own control, including changing
the internal thought processes
we apply to the situation. It is
imperative that we focus on creating
the most positive outcomes we
can under the circumstances. For
example, we can take a practical
problem-solving approach to
adjusting day-to-day library
functions in light of budget cuts.
Realize that you may have to let go
of something. Be realistic—losing
your library assistant does not mean
you assume all her responsibilities
and fulfill all your roles as school
librarian. Doing all aspects of two
jobs is not physically possible.

What you can do is recognize that you
do not have to compromise all of the
quality components of your school
library program; this is a time to
prioritize. To help prioritize, create
two lists; one is what cannot be let
go, and the second is what can be let
go. For each item listed also include
the potential impact to the school
library program. This process was
very successful for me when library
assistants were cut in my district.

Staying focused on what can be done
is easier with a positive attitude.
Look at options that are effective
yet inexpensive. Get creative! When
thinking outside the box, you’ll
find the possibilities are endless.
Here are a few inexpensive ideas
that can help with library functions
and support student learning.

- Use custom screen savers
  on computers in the school
  library to promote students’
  reading. Feature student-
  recommended reads or
dedicate different computers
to showcase different genres.

- Obtain old picture frames of
  various sizes to display signs
  and messages throughout
  the library. Eight-by-ten-
  inch frames make wonderful
  additions to book displays.

- Use student aides who “adopt a
  shelf.” Students are responsible
  for shelving material and
  keeping their specific areas
  neat and organized.

- Teach younger children to
  separate materials for shelving by
  using call number information.
  Next, have older students put
  material in order on shelving
carts for the student aides
  mentioned earlier to shelve.

- Seek out parent and
  community volunteers. (Don’t
  forget to thank them!)

- Create electronic bookshelves
  for grade levels, genres,
  student groups, lunchtime
  reading groups, etc.

- Connect with a class in
  another state or country using
  free online communication
  programs. The cost is minimal
  for equipment (that you may
  already have!), and the benefits
  are enormous. My students in
  Oklahoma have partnered with
  a class from North Dakota, and
  they meet regularly using Skype.
  Students have gotten to know
  each other using online tools
  (Prezi, Glogster, PowerPoint,
  Google Maps, and others).
Integrate tools from the American Association of School Librarians Best Websites for Teaching and Learning (<http://www.ala.org/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/bestlist/bestwebsites>).

Network with colleagues using online collaborative tools. The Public Relations subcommittee of the Oklahoma School Librarians meets virtually, allowing participation of representatives from across the state.

Look for grant writing opportunities. Opportunities are everywhere; be willing to try because the money is going to someone, and it might as well be you!

School librarians have stories to tell! Be willing to share stories about students, projects, activities, and library-related events. Accept invitations or volunteer to speak at parent meetings, school functions, civic organizations, and other community functions. Step out of your comfort zone and use that voice to tell your story to anyone who will listen. Prepare "elevator speeches" that convey the importance and value of school libraries. These stories are wonderful public relations opportunities that result in creating library advocates. When school library advocates rally, the results are powerful. This power was evident with the impact of Fund Our Future Washington—three moms who wanted equity and excellence in Washington School Libraries (<http://fundourfuturewashington.org>.

Be optimistic that libraries can continue to be the heartbeat of the school. Reach out to others to avoid working in isolation. Network and rally with peers to share ideas and renew your energy. Organize brainstorming sessions to share tips and tricks, lesson ideas, shortcuts, and get support. Subscribe to listservs such as LM_NET where I have found excellent ideas, suggestions, resources, and strategies from school librarians across the country.

In spite of the budget crisis, be diligent about resource needs for the school library. At a large urban high school, library hours were extended by two hours two days each week because the school librarians justified the need. The high school principal found funding from other sources to fund the project, even though cuts were made in other areas of the school. Celebrate success, no matter how small, and remain determined. Stay grounded in why you became a school librarian and, on a daily basis, recall one reason: connecting students with books and instilling a love of reading; teaching children to become independent, critical thinkers; creating an active learning lab for students of all ages. One day we’ll look back at these trying years and wonder, how did we do it? We might not know the answer, but I bet we’ll all be glad we made the effort!

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**Works Cited:**


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In a world where the Florida Department of Education (2011) is in the process of committing to providing all K–12 content digitally by 2015, and where online education is increasing exponentially, schools are changing and so must school libraries and school librarians. Clearly, these are interesting times for all aspects of education. A variety of powerful forces are marshaling to change what K–12 education looks like. The combination of budget cuts, affordable electronic devices, and public pressures to modernize education are an irresistible tide. Whether these “interesting times” will be seen as a curse or an opportunity will be determined by what we do in the next few years.

I work in educational technology. I now lead a group of forty Instructional Technology Resource Teachers (ITRTs) who work with classroom teachers on how to use technology to improve learning. We are fortunate to have these ITRT positions in all of our secondary schools. In elementary, these positions are shared by three or four schools. This position gives us the ability to offer very powerful job-embedded professional development around 21st-century skills and technology integration. We have worked hard to maintain and increase our instructional focus as, too often, instructional technology positions end up being used for tech support. The ITRT often partners with and reinforces many of the skills focused on by our school librarians.

All of this occurs in a large district of around 50,000 students in Virginia. We are unique in that our district is in the eleventh year of a 1:1 laptop initiative. This environment has given me a few insights into the future of districts as they begin to shift towards digital content and ubiquitous digital devices in the hands of all students.

We can expect the following themes to impact schools and subsequently to shape the future of school library programs and the role of the school librarian.
Books will increasingly become digital. It certainly won’t happen overnight, but it will happen and happen at scale. Further divorcing the school librarian from the stereotypical “manager of physical books” will be even more important.

Online education will continue to grow. Florida Virtual School served over 122,000 students last year and has over 1,400 staff members but has, at this time, no virtual school librarian (Florida Virtual School 2011). The embedded librarianship model is uniquely qualified to provide value in these new environments.

Research and information fluency will be integrated into the core curriculum. As the bar to publishing and consuming information has dropped, the basic skills needed for students to be good citizens have risen. Outsourcing the teaching of these skills to the school librarian is no longer an option. The school librarian should play an increasing role in professional development for teachers integrating these skills into their curriculum.

Budgets will continue to shrink and testing pressures will continue to rise. The foreseeable economic future does not bode well for educators in general and seems even more ominous for those of us who do not work with content directly measured by high-stakes testing. Demonstrating the importance of school libraries in an ongoing and powerful way is going to become even more important.

I’m certainly not saying these things are going to occur overnight, but these pressures show no sign of weakening. Powerful social and economic pressures are bringing these changes to bear, and to dismiss them as fads is a serious mistake. Here are four places I’d focus my energy.
Work toward Obsolescence

It would be easy to grab onto what you have done, to focus entirely on the solid ways you’ve proven yourself over the years and to guard that turf. I believe that tactic would be a mistake. The advice I give my IRTT team is to work for obsolescence.

I’d encourage you to never give a basic-level research-paper “drop-off” lesson again. You know the one. The teacher walks in on the same week every year for the same lesson, and sits at the back of the school library and grades papers (or leaves) while you teach the lesson. This is not partnership; it is the offloading of a task. It’s easy to have that default visit, to record that lesson in your data as a good thing. The research paper is seen by many as a school librarian’s bread and butter, after all. This “drop-off” lesson isn’t a good thing. Neither the teacher nor the school librarian is getting anything out of this. The teacher gains no skills and does not have to look at how his or her curriculum could and should scaffold up towards this project. The school librarian ends up stuck repeating an annual lesson for which students have little preparation and even less motivation. As a result the lessons often never get beyond the very lowest levels of organization and basic research.

Model the research lesson if you have to, but push for team teaching and move quickly into a facilitative role. The goal should be to elevate teachers, to ensure they have the skills, to make sure they are looking at why the daily discovery and evaluation of information is an important part of their curriculum. School librarians’ elevating the overall integration and quality of research at the school level matters. If you’re doing this properly, you ought to see the demand for basic skills work decrease and the demand for next-level, interesting work increase. This model ought to make you happier. Props for basic skills can be removed, and people can be told to stand on their own. It’s much harder to justify removing bridges that allow people to keep moving forward.

Embrace “Nearly Now” Communication

School libraries have always been a place for just-in-time learning and just-in-time conversations. School librarians have always been there to guide students and to offer suggestions. But the limited time students have in the school library has lessened the impact of these conversations on the student body as a whole. These valuable interactions will become even more infrequent as schools shift towards blended and entirely online environments.

School librarians need to harness the communication media that span synchronous and asynchronous conversations—the “nearly now” space—with students. These are tricky spaces in certain ways, but they provide the virtual equivalent of the just-in-time conversation in a way that e-mail never can. These are also the spaces least supported in schools, and where our students are often most active in their own lives.

Microblogging, IM, and SMS are the most popular current methods. All of these can be purely broadcast media, but they are meant for conversations. Granted, putting something on Twitter or IM doesn’t make it any more interesting than posting it on a bulletin board or engraving it on a stone tablet, for that matter. The medium only matters as much as it allows ready access to, and communication with, your desired audience. Facebook matters now, but could very well be irrelevant a few years from now (think MySpace). Likewise, if you aren’t saying things that your audience values, then no trendy media platform will make people want to communicate with you. For this to work, you have to know your audience. Be active in the community. Look at what is popular. There are no surefire topics. Learn about the students you want to engage. Keep in mind that this environment allows you to analyze your communication in a formative way. Various services allow you to track how your message spreads and analyze the results across multiple social networks. The process will be trial and error, but you can make gains much faster if you use data to help guide you.

These simple-to-use technologies can provide students with access to school librarians when needed from wherever students are. The library at my own alma mater, the University of Richmond, offers to answer student questions via SMS, IM, e-mail, and phone, in addition to scheduled and walk-in visits. This range of options ought to be the norm in K−12 school libraries, and schools in general, for that matter, rather than the exception.

"If you aren’t saying things that your audience values, then no trendy media platform will make people want to communicate with you."
Do More with Data

Traditionally school librarians have tracked usage data—things like number of books checked out, walk-in visits, number of classes taught, that sort of thing. This data is usually reported to some committee as evidence that the school library is being used and that school librarians are doing good things. That works fine for some purposes, but it is limited in scope and application. Deciding which data to collect and doing more with it will become absolutely essential as budgets continue to dwindle.

School librarians need to track data in a way that informs their choices and communicates with a larger audience on a continuous basis. The school library of the future ought to track all the user interactions occurring in the card catalog software (in various levels of aggregate to address privacy issues). There ought to be trend data for searches, most popular checkouts, least popular authors, etc. I ought to be able to graph the checkout statistics for individual titles longitudinally. At a minimum, all the information I can get about a website for free from Google Analytics ought to be available. More importantly, this data must be analyzed and acted upon frequently. Yearly or quarterly reports aren’t going to cut it. This data ought to inform daily decisions and select elements ought to be published regularly to help tell the story of the school library program to the public at large.

Data can also be used to motivate students and provide data for metacognition. A lot about library data is ripe for gamification. In the same way that Google Reader provides charts about the number of posts I’ve read and on what days I read them, library catalog systems could provide an impressive wealth of information to students for their own analysis. Badges, leader boards, and other game-based reward systems could be integrated as well, all using data directly from your catalog software. Maybe you need a Harry Potter badge earned by students who have checked out the entire series. I know I’d love to see how many total pages I’ve read in the last year. Keep in mind, this isn’t meant to prove anything. Of course students could check out all the books and not read them. This is meant to be fun. The data is already in the system; we ought to use it.

The Future

This won’t be a smooth transition. There will be lots of bumps in the road, and many people will be unhappy no matter what happens. This is a time of change, and the change won’t be optional. I believe school librarians can and should play a key role in determining their own destiny, but those choices need to be made now. The future isn’t that far off.

Tom Woodward

works as assistant director for instructional technology in Henrico County (VA) Public Schools and as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Richmond. His personal blog on education and technology is available at <http://bionicteaching.com>. Comments and criticism of this article are welcome on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/twoodwar>.

Works Cited:


The use of electronic reading devices has proliferated in the last few years. These reading devices appear to be particularly popular with young readers. A generation of students that has grown up with computers, cell phones, iPods, and other high-tech devices is more likely to embrace electronic book technology for both their educational and recreational reading. Educators and school librarians enthusiastically support the use of these devices as a means of encouraging students to read and explore information. Increasingly, schools are offering textbooks online and diverting instructional funds to the purchase of electronic readers that can be used by students for school work and reading.

The prospects are exciting for students and educators alike. But,
educators and school libraries must also focus on the inherent privacy concerns associated with the use of these digital resources.

**Importance of a Privacy Policy**

Every library should have a privacy policy in place to govern disclosure of patron use information. The First Amendment generally protects citizens from governmental restrictions that place a burden on the right to speak or the right to receive information. In the library context, it is the right to receive information that must be protected. A governmental restriction implicating First Amendment rights in the library is unconstitutional if it is an outright ban on receiving information or impermissibly burdens the ability of a person to receive information. The First Amendment does not explicitly mandate privacy protections for library-use information. However, if privacy policies are not in place, the First Amendment rights of patrons will be violated because the possibility of release of patron information causes patrons to be chilled in the exercise of their free-speech rights. If patrons are inhibited when choosing library materials because their reading choices might be revealed publicly, then their free-speech rights are violated. In fact, virtually every state has enacted a law to protect library-use records. Legislators throughout the country have recognized the critical importance of maintaining the privacy of library users.

This privacy protection extends to minors as well. The Supreme Court long has recognized that minors enjoy some degree of First Amendment protection. The Court held in the landmark Tinker case (protecting a student’s right to wear an armband in protest of the Vietnam War) that students do not “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate” (Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District 1969). More recently, an appellate court considering the constitutionality of an ordinance restricting minors’ access to certain video arcade games echoed the Tinker court’s admonition that minors must have a broad range of information for intellectual growth. The court held that “[p]eople are unlikely to become well-functioning, independent-minded adults and responsible citizens if they are raised in an intellectual bubble” (American Amusements Machine v. Kendrick 2001). Courts have held that minors’ First Amendment liberties include the right to receive information and plainly extend the right beyond schools.

Most state statutes that provide privacy protection for library-use records do not differentiate between adults and minors. If a state statute generally provides protection for library circulation records, then that protection should apply to minors as well as adults. If a state...
has a general privacy protection for patron records, the library should not divulge patron information to anyone other than the patron. A few states allow parental access to the library records of their minor children but most do not explicitly provide that exception to the general requirement to maintain the privacy of library patron use records. Libraries should consult their legal counsel to determine the statutory obligations with regard to patron records in their own jurisdiction.

Seek Professional Advice and Cover All the Bases

Libraries also should consult with legal counsel when drafting a privacy policy. In general, the policy should state that it protects the privacy and First Amendment rights of its patrons. The policy should state further that the library will not release any personally identifying information about a particular patron’s use of library materials and resources without the explicit permission of the patron or an order of the court demanding release of the information. With the increased availability of library materials other than traditional hardcopy books, even libraries with long-standing privacy policies should revisit their policies to ensure that the privacy protections include patron-use information related to other materials such as e-books. Every aspect of library use should be covered by the privacy policy, including circulation of materials (whether in hardcopy or electronic), use of the Internet, processing of hold requests, and use of the library facility. Privacy protection should encompass patron-use information related to physical books, electronic books, videos, audiotapes, CDs, DVDs, and the Internet. As the library expands the availability of its information sources, it must ensure that its policy evolves to include the many ways that the community uses the resources in the library.

Special Concerns for E-Books and E-Readers

The increased use of electronic books raises additional concerns with respect to privacy. When providing patrons with the ability to read books in electronic formats, libraries must use the services of third-party vendors to supply electronic reading devices and to download the reading materials onto those devices. For example, a library might purchase from a vendor a number of e-book devices that allow the patron to download a book for a set period of time, similar to the time that the patron could borrow a physical text from the library collection. Based on research conducted by various digital privacy organizations, it appears that the third-party vendors have the capability to track patron data and use information on those digital devices, and to retain that information with the third-party vendor (see, for example, “2010: E-Book Buyers Guide to E-Book Privacy” prepared by the Electronic Frontier Foundation). Providers of electronic book devices and services can track book searches on their websites to track a user’s interest in certain reading material. The providers also can monitor how the reading material is used after it is downloaded, including pages read in a book and the amount of time spent on an electronic page. Additionally, 

Contractual provisions governing use of electronic reading devices by library patrons should ensure that the patron’s browsing of reading materials, downloads of reading materials, and reading habits will not be divulged to any other parties without the specific permission of the individual user.
potential disconnect between vendors’ and library’s policies

While the ability to track information is extensive, the privacy policy of the third-party vendor may differ substantially from the privacy policy in place at the library and may not provide the type of privacy protection that is encompassed by the library policy. For example, some providers have policies in place that allow them to share with outside sources data collected from electronic book devices unless the customer specifically opts out of the disclosure of that information. Patron use information may, therefore, be divulged by the third-party vendor in contravention of library policy as individual patrons may not be aware—or even able—to opt out of such information-sharing by that third-party vendor. Patrons using an electronic reading device through the library may not be aware that the library privacy policy does not apply to those devices. Students and parents may not realize that a third-party vendor is able to collect this information about the reading interests and habits of the students.

Libraries that offer e-book loans through third-party vendors should consult their counsel and add contract language to their third-party vendor agreements that extends the library privacy policy to the use of e-books. Library policies differ and a library’s own counsel will be best suited to ensuring that third-party vendors protect the privacy of library patrons. In 2002 the International Coalition of Library Consortia issued useful guidelines related to Web services used by libraries that provide guidance on the type of contractual provisions that should be considered by libraries entering into arrangements for the use of electronic devices. Those guidelines can be used by libraries and their counsel to craft contract provisions that extend protection of library-use information to electronic resources.

Contractual provisions governing use of electronic reading devices by library patrons should ensure that the patron’s browsing of reading materials, downloads of reading materials, and reading habits will not be divulged to any other parties without the specific permission of the individual user. Libraries should ensure that third-party vendors do not deny use of their product to an individual who opts out of the information-sharing. Contractual provisions related to electronic book usage also should address the issue of whether the third-party vendor will retain patron-use information permanently or whether a data retention policy mandates deletion of that information after some period of time. Contractual provisions should require the third-party vendor to share its privacy policy with the library and to publicize that policy on its website to allow patrons to access that information.

essential protection for students

Protection of patrons’ use information is a critical component in the exercise of First Amendment rights. Patrons use the library with the expectation that library personnel will take steps to protect their privacy. Patrons expect that the books they choose to read, the materials they select to borrow, the websites they visit, and the resources they use while in the library will not be made public. If privacy is not maintained by the library, patrons will be chilled in the exercise of their First Amendment rights. Fearing public disclosure, patrons will refrain from selecting certain reading materials based on their content. Patrons specifically will avoid materials that are considered controversial or sensitive. Students may refrain from seeking critical information, fearing that their particular reading choices could subject them to interrogation, public ridicule, or embarrassment. School libraries and educators should ensure that their library privacy policies protect their young patrons and extend to their use of electronic reading material.

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theresa chmara

is an attorney in Washington, DC. She is the general counsel of the Freedom to Read Foundation and a board member of the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression. She is the author of Privacy and Confidentiality Issues: A Guide for Libraries and their Lawyers (ALA 2009).
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

21st-Century Skills Contest Inspires Collaboration and Leadership

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In today’s struggle for recognition of the importance of school libraries, it is especially important to make it known that school libraries are essential components of education. In Henrico County (VA) Public School libraries, the American Association of School Librarian’s National Library Program of the Year, school librarians have taken a leadership role in an innovative county-level program called Henrico 21 (H21).

When I first heard of H21, I was a teacher new to the district and to the grade level. Between the regular demands of teaching and the additional requirements placed upon first-year teachers, I was swamped. News of the H21 competition arrived via e-mail, promising financial reward and recognition for the winners. I skimmed the announcement, searching for key words: mandatory or optional. When I found that participation was optional, I promptly deleted the e-mail. I didn’t spend another moment thinking about the program until fall of the following school year, when I was in a very different place professionally.

The second time that I heard of H21, I was sitting in a leadership meeting as a first-year school librarian. Our principal explained the gist of the competition: the goals of developing advanced cognitive and technological capabilities that are highly sought-after in the workplace, and reinforcing the philosophy that a 21st-century classroom is most effective when technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge overlap (HCPS n.d.-a). He went on to explain that lessons would be evaluated in four key areas: research and information fluency, problem solving and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, and creativity and innovation. Each category had been divided into three strands and within those strands, four proficiency levels: entry, developing, approaching, and target (HCPS n.d.-c). Teachers were required to submit lessons for evaluation by the leadership team—including me—at the school level.

The key areas of evaluation for H21 submissions are closely related to AASL’s common beliefs and standards for the 21st-century learner. The H21 categories of “research and information fluency” and “problem solving and critical thinking” (HCPS n.d.-c) are closely intertwined with the AASL’s first and second standards for the 21st-century learner, “inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge,” and “draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge” (AASL 2009a, 14). The third H21 category, “communication and collaboration” (HCPS n.d.-c) closely matches AASL’s third standard for the 21st-century learner, “share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society” (AASL 2009a, 14). The higher proficiency levels in each strand of the evaluation rubric, called the Teaching Innovation Progression Chart or TIP Chart (HCPS n.d.-c), target the dispositions outlined in AASL’s Standards for the 21st Century Learner in Action (AASL 2009b, 40–46). While they are not a perfect match, the H21 categories for evaluation and AASL’s standards are clearly and strongly related. This alignment is logical, given that both H21 and the common beliefs outlined in Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs (AASL 2009b, 12–13) focus on developing 21st-century skills in students. AASL’s standards produce learners who are skilled, responsible, and self-assessors of their work. School librarians who follow these standards during collaboration are the premier experts in our schools on the very skills that H21 promotes.

School librarians were and still are natural, integral components in developing and implementing H21.

Although I was confident in my qualifications as a leader for H21 implementation within my school, questions whirled through my mind about how H21 would change the professional climate of the school library and the school. Will teachers take this seriously? Will they hold me partially responsible for adding another portion of work to their already heaping plates? How will teachers respond to my judging their lessons? Will they actually recognize me as an expert in these areas? If so, am I going to be ambushed by teachers needing assistance? How much work is this actually going to be for me? The irony of the situation was not lost upon me—only the year before, I had deleted the H21 competition from my life in half a second; now, I was an integral part of it.
The leadership team shared the responsibility of carrying the H21 charge to various department meetings. When I presented the competition to the Language Arts Department, I was surprised to find that the teachers didn’t immediately grumble about extra work. I saw fire in some teachers’ eyes for a chance to win recognition and a cash prize for their exemplary work, and I saw other teachers’ eyes widen in trepidation when I talked about technology and submitting lessons for judging as part of a competition. Teachers had several months to prepare their submissions. Entry lessons had to be taught during the current school year but prior to the submission deadline.

Everyone practiced using the TIP Chart by grading several lessons together. This permitted teachers to self-evaluate their own lessons and to standardize scoring by the leadership team (HCPS n.d.–b).

Shortly after TIP Chart training, many teachers shared their realization that H21 was exactly what we did in the library. Others recognized that school librarians would be an excellent instructional partner for their H21 lessons.

By making 21st-century skills something actively sought out, H21 validated the school librarians’ areas of expertise and confirmed their role as educational leaders. When we collaborated with teachers, they were able to identify which 21st-century skills were developed by various facets of their lessons. The 21st-century skills aspect of instruction became essential rather than peripheral to the focus on state standards of learning. The TIP Chart also advanced the administrators’ understanding of what school librarians actually teach.

The H21 lesson gave teachers across grade levels and subject areas common ground to discuss teaching techniques and activities. It provided opportunities for dialog about strategies to share across all curricular areas. Copier talk began to include questions like, “So, what are you doing for your H21 lesson?” Since the copiers are located in the school library, these overheard conversations became natural jumping-off points for us to approach teachers and offer our services when they had a direct need. We found that this proactive approach made them more likely to be interested in collaborating.

At this point in the competition, I made a major curricular breakthrough. All year I had tried unsuccessfully to collaborate with at least one math teacher. We regularly had English, reading, social studies, and science teachers in the school library, but math collaboration proved to be elusive. No matter how many ideas I pitched to math teachers individually and in meetings, I just couldn’t get any takers. Shortly after announcing the H21 competition, a sixth-grade math teacher e-mailed me to request assistance with advanced search techniques for her H21 lesson about tissues. (Note: I did not press delete!). Her math students were to calculate the surface area and volume of tissue boxes from a variety of brands, research whether the companies used recycled fiber and the distance between manufacturing plants and the school, and then compare all of this information to determine which brand of tissues was the most eco-friendly and cost-effective. Then, she planned on having the students create commercials to advertise the brand that they selected (Woodard 2011). This lesson independently incorporated AASL’s standards for the 21st-century learner, but the teacher also recognized that school librarians had a place in the 21st-century math classroom. We decided to teach students Boolean search techniques using advanced Google search to meet their research needs.

When I visited her classroom, the students were surprised to see me—a school librarian—in their math class. What a perfect cross-curricular, teachable moment to explain to them that information literacy is important in every class and in their personal lives! Throughout the entire lesson, students engaged in learning and gainful technology use, helped each other, and exhibited genuine curiosity. As I collaborated with teachers across curricular areas on their H21 lessons, I noticed a positive change in student dispositions. This change was widespread and documentable in post-lesson student surveys.

In addition to broader curricular interest in collaboration, I also noticed that teachers were more willing to give additional class time for their H21 lessons to allow for deeper, meaningful instruction. The resulting close, sustained collaboration formed strong professional relationships.
between teachers and school librarians. Teachers who worked with us on an H21 lesson were more likely to return to the school library for additional instructional units because they realized how teamwork with school librarians enriched content and student learning. These relationships bridged the summer and resulted in a full collaboration schedule this fall.

Not all was glowing during the H21 process. Many teachers were frustrated by the extra work—and others were concerned because they were required to release control of learning in their classrooms. At higher levels of the TIP Chart, teachers become facilitators while students become increasingly responsible for their own learning. I saw one teacher in tears because the H21 lesson was so stressful for her. These were growing pains associated with challenging teachers to stretch their lessons beyond their comfort zones.

A significant portion of the entries were products of teacher–teacher, teacher–instructional technology resource teacher, and teacher–librarian collaboration. It was especially gratifying to see several teachers list our names on the lessons with their own, showing that they truly felt that the lesson was a product of collaboration.

The entry evaluation process was stressful for the leadership team because we had limited the window for judging in favor of giving teachers as much time as possible to produce the H21 lessons. Two members of the leadership team assessed and commented on each lesson, recognizing strengths, and noting ideas for how to improve weaknesses. I had worried that there would be a negative reaction from teachers who did not score well, but I did not receive even one complaint. During the judging process, I came to know the TIP Chart intimately and still find myself using it as a guide to planning lessons months later.

Before submitting the lessons to the county-wide H21 challenge, the leadership team asked teachers with the top-scoring lessons to review their comments and consider making improvements. On awards night, district librarians attended in force, given the close ties between their professional

This lesson independently incorporated AASL’s standards for the 21st-century learner, but the teacher also recognized that school librarians had a place in the 21st-century math classroom.
"curriculum" and the standards promoted by H21. It was a fabulous surprise when the math teacher with whom I had collaborated won an H21 award that evening!

In addition to evaluation by the leadership team at the school level, twelve teachers also participated in the Reflective Friends program. Neutral, external evaluators such as administrators from other schools and HCPS educational technology consultants evaluated twelve teachers, six selected and six random, prior to the H21 competition to provide a baseline evaluation. Those same teachers were evaluated after the H21 competition to give a school-wide measure of growth in 21st-century instruction. Both teachers and students were evaluated using the TIP Chart during each observation (HCPS 2009). All of the average H21 category scores for students and teachers increased to the third proficiency level between the fall Reflective Friends and the spring Reflective Friends except research and information fluency, which increased only to the second proficiency level. As research and information fluency is a school librarian’s expertise, this data confirms that school librarian involvement in teaching students directly and in collaborating with teachers is essential in developing not only students with 21st-century skills, but teachers who design lessons that target 21st-century skill development (AASL 2009a, 16–18).

School librarians, being experts in 21st-century skill instruction via Empowering Learners, can implement a similar program on a smaller scale at the school level if one does not exist at the county level. Ann Martin, Educational Specialist for Libraries in Henrico County Public Schools and a key partner in H21, recommends developing a one-page plan to present to decision-makers.

Ensure that a proposal such as this aligns with district and school missions and goals (Martin 2011). Your expertise in AASL’s standards for the 21st–century learner makes you qualified to be front-and-center in developing and implementing a 21st-century-skills movement within your own school or county. By developing such a program with your administrators, you will help them understand and appreciate what it is that you do and how invaluable your skills are to the faculty and students at your school. You will challenge teachers to teach beyond the county or state curriculum standards, outside of their tried-and-true strategies, and grow professionally as they help their students become self-sufficient learners (AASL 2009, 10). Student dispositions will improve as they are given the privilege and responsibility of guiding their own learning.

It is easy to think that one school librarian can’t do much to change how students are educated in your district, but in fact, grassroots advocacy and educational leadership starts with every librarian in every school. As we proceed into the future, it will take programs such as H21 to spur the necessary changes for meeting the challenges of educating the 21st-century learner, to cement the leadership role of school librarians in this transformation, and to help teachers evolve in their own profession.

In the future, I predict that similar programs will be created in more and more school districts across the country as school systems compete for state and national rankings and as the country promotes its learners in the global workforce. For school librarians to be thought of as indispensable to student learning by administrators and decision makers, it is essential that school librarians not only participate in this and future changes, but lead them.

**Lauren Mabry** is a school librarian at John Rolfe Middle School, Henrico County (VA) Public Schools. She is a 2008 Spectrum Scholar and recently won a Lowe’s Toolbox for Education grant for innovatively using a Promethean Board to build a student community of readers through online social media.

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**Works Cited:**


Weaving a Virtual Story — Creating Book Trailers 101

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Book trailers are fast becoming today’s marketing technique for newly published books. They have changed the way students select books, and trailers meet the expectations of today’s teens who have been brought up on graphic visuals. Book trailers are also quite new, starting as a trend only about four years ago. Since then, they have proliferated, hooking readers in a new and unique way.

Creating a book trailer may seem daunting, but the process is actually quite easy. Using simple tools like Movie Maker, iMovie, or other products that come with a computer, as well as web-based products such as Animoto, online resources for music and images, and a bit of creativity, you can transform a simple booktalk or even library displays into eye-catching creations to connect with readers.

As the first and foremost step, if you are a newbie at creating book trailers, begin by watching book trailers. The term book trailer can mean many things, from a person reading and/or reviewing a book, to a set of images and words, to completely professional videos. Viewing a slew of trailers will help guide you in the process of creating one to achieve your purpose and reflect your personal preferences. Video sites like YouTube or SchoolTube offer up a treasure trove of trailers, from amateur creations by students and educators to professional trailers created by publishers. For publisher sites in YouTube, try HarperTeen, Scholastic, or Egmont. For amateur trailers, look at ones published by YA Books and More, Teen Services Alhambra Library and M2Productions. To find these, search YouTube by channel, such as “YA Books and More Channel.”

Picking a Tool

As I mentioned earlier, several software tools are available for creating a book trailer. Animoto is an online application that allows you to input text and images while the animation of the trailer is done automatically, making it the easiest product to use. The caveat is that Animoto limits the number of characters to be displayed. This constraint can be limiting to some creators but has the advantage of preventing words from taking up too much visual space.

Photo Story for Windows would be the ideal product for a newbie because it walks you through a step-by-step process. For those who feel comfortable enough to step into a more involved process and product, Windows Movie Maker or Apple iMovie would be the prime choices. A new product now installed on PCs is Windows Live Movie Maker, which works very much like Animoto. (I prefer the older Windows Movie Maker, though, because of the options available.)

The last program I’m familiar with is Sony’s Vegas Movie Studio Platinum. This product has, by far, the steepest learning curve, but the video output is the best of all the products. Sony’s Vegas is best suited for veterans who’ve used other products and feel the need to try bigger and better—it’s not for trailer newbies.

Don’t Go Overboard

When using any of these products, with the exception of Animoto (which forces simplicity on the creator), restrain yourself. In all cases, simple is better. I’ve seen countless student videos where a lot of transitions and effects were used throughout the video. This “busyness” distracts from the aesthetics of the book trailer instead of creating that beautiful flow viewers expect. With so many special effects to
choose from, it’s easy to feel like your creativity can be unleashed, when in actuality, using simple effects will work so much better.

For effects, try using only two or possibly three for the entire video. I usually use only one effect, the “fade” option, when creating a trailer in Movie Maker. For transitions, I’ve found two to work best: “ease in” and “ease out.” This need for restraint is why watching many book trailers found online so important. By watching other creators’ trailers you’ll recognize the difference between trailers that offer too much and those that use just enough of everything—music, images, words, and special effects.

Now What?

Now that you’ve reviewed trailers and selected a tool, it’s time to start thinking creatively.

A useful technique is making notes before starting a trailer. This preparation gives a sense of direction for the trailer—a purpose. Finding images and music will take the most amount of time, but without notes, it’ll take even longer.

Using sticky notes in a book to locate quotes that jump out will also help. This planning helps solidify the trailer and puts everything into a more cohesive order when the hands-on creation begins.

Where to Find Images

The easiest type of trailer to create is one that incorporates static images with music and words. This can be done using online resources to find both images and music that are free.

Be aware that images and music must fall under a royalty-free or Creative Commons license, allowing users to incorporate the images and music in products. Always read and consult the terms of agreement and licensing terms available on each site. This is of particular concern, because although the Web is filled with images and music, many sites don’t grant users any permissions. It is up to you to find content with appropriate permissions and use the content accordingly. Public-domain images and music can be used at all times, and most images that fall under the Creative Commons license, which allows you to modify, adapt, and redistribute content, may be used for nonprofit book trailers.

For images, several sites can provide content available to use in a book trailer. The first is Flickr: Creative Commons <www.flickr.com/creativecommons>. Under the Creative Commons license this site offers millions of images that can be used for book trailers. Use the appropriate license, usually the “Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike,” to save your images, and always attribute the image—holder in the credits of the book trailer. This attribution can be done with either a simple MLA citation for the image or using the unique URL for that particular image. As the creator of the book trailer, make sure you follow the prescriptions of this particular license, which basically states that you are free to copy, transmit, distribute, and adapt the work as long as you credit the holder of the original image. Under the Creative Commons license, the work may not be used for commercial purposes, and if transformed or built upon, the new image can be distributed only under the same or similar license.

Another site that fits quite closely with Creative Commons is Wikimedia Commons <http://commons.wikimedia.org>. The images there also have licenses that allow the images to be used in book trailers if the dictates of the licensing agreement spelled out at the site are followed. Many of the images also come from the public domain. What is unique about this site is that it files images by subcategories, which could help you identify specific images you’d like to use.

I recently discovered and use another site for images: Morgue File <www.morguefile.com>. This site has thousands of images available that don’t necessarily need attribution, although crediting a source is always fitting. Although Morgue File offers a link to another website, if you are interested in free images that may be freely used, always stay within the Morgue File site when searching for images to add to your trailer.

Where to Find Music

Two websites I use offer high-quality music for book trailers without cost as long as proper attribution is maintained. Both of these sites offer downloads of their music and support searching for music by genre, a feature that helps you find the perfect song for a trailer. Chris Martyn, Geoff Harvey, and Mark Fildes created Purple-Planet Music <www.purple-planet.com>, offering royalty-free music. These pieces can be used as long as you put a link to this site in the credits.

Another site for music was created by David MacLeod, owner of Incompetech Music <http://incompetech.com/m/c/royalty-free>. He asks that you include the name of the song, his name, and his website. This site also allows searching by collections as well as for a specific piece. Another popular option is Jamendo <www.jamendo.com>, a community of music. The site contains over 100,000 original pieces of music that can be downloaded and used with a Creative Commons license.
Help!
Many other sites out on the Web make images and music available, and the search can be frustrating for those that don’t understand licensing. Most creators of multimedia works want a simple place to go to select images, music, video, editors, and other tools used to create a trailer. I’ve created a LiveBinder “Book Trailer Resources” that incorporates all of these tools into one location containing all essentials for book trailer production. Go to <http://livebinders.com>.

Now What?
Now that the images and music have been captured, it’s time to start putting together an effective book trailer.

The key factor in beginning to tell the story is to be succinct. There are several methods I use when beginning a trailer. Through the years, I’ve found some things that work and some that don’t. I’ll pass along techniques that have worked for me, but it is always up to the individual creator to find your own personal best practice. Keep in mind that a typical book trailer will take many hours to create. It’s not a difficult process to create a trailer; the problem is that your creativity will go into overdrive when confronted with so many possibilities! Most of my time is taken up finding images and music for a trailer because so many could be used, not only for the book trailer I’m currently working on, but also for another trailer I may do later.

Finding short quotes within the book that could be used to tell the story is a way to incorporate the book into the trailer. If you’re not sure what you’d like to write, incorporating quotes can tell the story just as effectively.

Most of the trailers I’ve created are from a first-person point of view, but third-person is also common. Using rhetorical questions near the end of the trailer captures the viewers. They want the answer, which the trailer won’t give them—hence the power of a book trailer. Never reveal the ending of the book. Watch any typical movie trailer; the same technique is applied there, too.

Along with voice, the type of font that’s chosen will help heighten the mood of the trailer. Want to differentiate between the personalities of two characters within a trailer? Use different fonts to convey their voices. We have so many to choose from, and simple Times Roman doesn’t capture viewers’ attention as well as a font that highlights and mirrors the theme or atmosphere that’s being conveyed.

Be careful to limit the number of text slides in a trailer. Trailers can become redundant when the creator not only uses words to tell the story, but has pictures that have the same effect. The trailers that tell the story through images without printed words look better, creating a smoother flow, while words on every slide seem to cut up the book trailer. Instead, try using several images together to tell the story. This reliance on images allows the viewer to make connections internally without having to read a word, an experience similar to viewing a picture book. Also keep in mind that sometimes one word can describe a scene better than a whole sentence.

Another important component is the length of the trailer itself. Too much, and you lose your audience. Too little, and the trailer doesn’t capture the book. Typically trailers run one to three minutes, but I have found that the best are found right in the middle at about two minutes. This duration includes the title and credits at the end of the trailer, not just the storyline itself.
Luring in Readers
Ready to start sharing the trailers you’ve created? You can find plenty of places to upload videos to be enjoyed in the library community and beyond. The most popular place to share book trailers is YouTube. It has not only amateur-creator channels for book trailers, but all of the major publishers have channels as well.

But YouTube isn’t the only place publishers and other creators upload their trailers. SchoolTube is another popular choice because it is unblocked by most school filters, whereas YouTube could be blocked.

Another site that is popular with school librarians is Book Trailers for All. Not only can you send a video to be uploaded, but downloading is allowed as well, a feature that the other sites don’t allow. (YouTube and SchoolTube allow only embedding a link.)

The most powerful place to upload book trailers is your own school library’s webpage. The trailers I’ve produced have their own spot on our school library’s webpage. I’ve found that, not only do book trailers draw in viewers, but as page owner, I have more customization options. The site can allow downloading, adding comments and feedback, and embedding links. Another reason why creating a place on the school library’s webpage for book trailers is important is that the trailers enhance the library’s online presence. School libraries today aren’t just about the physical walls and hardcopies on the shelves. They are about virtual spaces, and meeting the needs and wants of students in a medium they are constantly plugged into. Having trailers on the school library website allows today’s students to know that school libraries are evolving, changing, and refusing to become stagnant.

Jump In!
Now it’s time to start. For some, creating book trailers becomes a passion. For others, the payoff is a sense of accomplishment. The most important reason to take the plunge is that book trailers are a powerful tool to draw students to books. Who knows? You may inspire your students to create their own trailers!

A week ago, a former student who graduated three years ago came into the school library to interview me for a college paper he was writing. After the interview was done, he told me he was never a reader in school until his senior year, when he sat in on a booktalk I’d done that incorporated book trailers. One of those trailers caught his attention, and he said that was the turning point for him. Today, he’s a serial reader, reading anything he can find—and all it took was two minutes to hook him. That’s the power we all have within us to transform books, students, and the face of the school library. I encourage you to experiment with book trailer creation—quoting from the inimitable Mr. Spock on Star Trek, “Live long and prosper.”

Naomi Bates has been a school librarian for the past eleven years, working in both small and large high schools. She currently works at Northwest High School in Justin, Texas. She is also currently the chair of the Texas Association of School Librarians for the Texas Library Association and is the recipient of the Texas Computer Educator’s Association Library Specialist of the Year Award for her excellence in educational technology. For teachers and librarians, she conducts workshops about book trailers, and has spoken at state and national conferences about the creation and impact of book trailers.
Thinking Outside the Cover

Pendred Noyce

Our children are growing up in an ever more media-saturated world. According to a Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation report, in 2010 the average eight-to eighteen-year-old spent fifty-three hours a week connected to entertainment media—watching videos, playing electronic games, listening to music, and chatting with friends (Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts 2010). Often, young people are using more than one electronic tool at a time. Such heavy exposure gives kids a facility with new technology that many adults envy, but there are other, more worrisome effects. Teachers report that students let “text-speak” leak over into their written work. Time with electronics replaces time with friends, studies, physical activity, or books. Constant stimulation and multitasking may leave kids with a diminished capacity for deep, prolonged concentration and thought.

When kids can immerse themselves in collaborative 3D online games with fantastic artwork and nonstop action, a flat, solitary, black-and-white object such as a book can seem tame by comparison. Of course, it’s not. A book offers grand scope to the imagination. It exposes us to new ideas, connects us to people distant or no longer living, and gives us a sense of the beauty and structure of language. Most of all, it teaches us how to immerse ourselves deeply in thought.

Nothing can replace reading’s power to build language and thinking skills. A middle-grade novel offers more complex language than do television, movies, or the dinner table conversation of college-educated adults. How much kids read is a great predictor of their academic success. Reading builds vocabulary, understanding of sentence structure, and background knowledge—all of which help students understand more complex texts and makes further reading more rewarding.

Because librarians, teachers, and authors know these things, we conspire to connect children to books. First, we try to get books in their hands. Organizations like Reach Out and Read, and Reading Is Fundamental give books to children whose families don’t have the resources to buy them. I’m a supporter of Maine’s Raising Readers program, which gives twelve books by age five to every child born in the state. A bag of starter books and brochures on reading aloud goes home from the hospital with each new mother. At each well-child visit, nurses reinforce reading advice and give out a new, carefully selected book. To mark graduation from the program at age five, the child receives his or her very own library card. In 2010, perhaps as a result...
of the program, Maine had the highest rate in the nation of parents reading aloud to their children.

Once the child is immersed in the world of school, peers, sports, and electronics, recreating the sense of shared delight in reading becomes a challenge. I wrote my first children’s book, *Lost in Lexicon: An Adventure in Words and Numbers*, partly as a way to continue the reading connection with my youngest son. He loved word games and logic puzzles, so I created a world to entertain him. In the book, Ivan and Daphne travel to a magical land of word and number villages, where they must find clues to save the lost children of Lexicon, who have wandered off, following mysterious lights in the sky. My son and I laughed as we read the book together, and once *Lost in Lexicon* entered the wider world, I looked for a way to extend that joyful interaction to other adults and children.

Family math and science nights have been a feature of some schools for many years. With the dedicated leadership of a school librarian, a couple of teachers, and/or dedicated parent volunteers, a school cafeteria becomes for one evening a playground of ideas where parents and children interact as peers, playing math games or using paper chromatography to solve the mystery of who stole a stuffed animal. These events connect parents to school, demystify the curriculum, and allow children to witness their role models acting as learners. Besides, these events are fun.

Why not build similar events around books? As I pondered this question, I met Kirsten Cappy, a dynamic event creator whose motto is “Connecting Kids to Books.” Together we designed a Lexicon Villages event. For each event, I set up nine stations, or villages.
Each station presents an activity mirroring one of the challenges Ivan and Daphne face in the villages of Lexicon. Students invent metaphors for the Mistress of Metaphor’s pot; they feed synonyms to Emily the Thesaurus; they reproduce images using Tangrams; they work with Greek and Latin roots to build new words; they measure π and do a maze while looking only in a mirror. Kids love it, especially when parents staff the stations. Visiting all the villages takes kids and parents somewhere between a class period of forty-five minutes and an open-house evening event (with pizza) of two hours. I’ve held events in libraries, schools, museums, bookstores, and science fairs.

My experience with Lexicon Villages has convinced me that we can and should think outside a book’s cover to engage kids and their important adults in the adventure of sharing books. We can design events that celebrate reading while creating a sense of interaction and play to rival the electronic world. I plan to create similar events for the upcoming books in the Lexicon series, as my characters delve into lands of music, art, and myth. Meanwhile, I’ve joined with four friends to launch a new publishing company, Tumblehome Learning, where every book will be an event of its own. We plan to produce science-based mysteries, adventure tales, and biographies, each accompanied by a science kit and online supports so kids can extend their reading by exploring the science with friends, mentors, or parents.

Book events are one more tool school librarians can use to help books maintain their special place in children’s lives, even as those lives become crowded with iPods, movies on demand, and electronic games. The payoff is worth it: another generation fired with imagination, thought, and the love of fine language.

Works Cited:
Ty BURNS:

School Libraries Work! Strong Libraries, Strong Scores! Empowering Learners! @ Your Library! These themes strike close to my heart and remind me of the passion I have for school libraries and librarians.

Many people believe school librarians are at a crossroads and the journey looks rough no matter which path we choose. I believe we are at a defining moment in the history of our profession; a moment where we choose to build stronger connections and collaborations; where we choose to innovate our service to patrons; where we choose to advocate 21st century learning standards for students. AASL is the only professional organization that helps us be the school librarians our students need. I promise to do everything within my power to make this a defining moment for our students and for us; a moment that leads us to achieving the AASL Learning4Life mission.

Gail DICKINSON:

“A wild patience has taken me this far.”
— Adrienne Rich

The 21st century AASL needs to implement 21st century skills, must be nimble enough to seize opportunities to showcase creativity and innovation, model cultural competence in meeting diverse needs, and yet still honor traditions that exemplify school librarianship. Those traditions are based on the love of reading, the brilliant flashes of insight that spark knowledge, and the curiosity that both pulls and pushes a dogged search for information.

It’s not about libraries. It’s about learning. The challenge is to ensure that each child has what we want for all children; the thrill of walking into a strong school library where learning awaits, the confidence of knowing a skilled librarian is always there to feed that learning, and the unfettered access to tools for the using, producing, and sharing of the world of resources.