

Literacies, Learning & Libraries



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From the Editor's Desk



Do you know anyone who likes to be on the cutting edge? Maybe even the bleeding edge? For some educators, that place is just too scary. For others, it can be downright exhilarating! If you watch closely, you'll see that the cutting-edge folks tend to be the first on staff to welcome new thinking, new technology and new ways to practise the craft of teaching. And they love to share their excitement with anyone who will listen. Their willingness to engage in this often harrowing activity finds them reaching toward a new and richer understanding of what learning can be for both students and teachers. They are willing to risk change.

Trained teacher-librarians tend to be the sort who enjoy that weird combination of fear, challenge and exhilaration. They are ethical and astute thinkers and doers. They are lifelong learners. There is never a dull moment for them and, despite setbacks, they continue to inch their way forward on the 21st-century teaching-learning continuum.

This issue of *Literacies, Learning & Libraries* is chock-full of shared ventures and the wisdom gained by teacher-librarians willing to research and work at the leading edge of educational change. They have tried everything from creating virtual school libraries and incorporating Web 2.0 tools into daily teaching practice, to embracing evidence-based practice through methods such as action research projects to determine what works best in their particular learning and teaching environments. They have even managed to convince Alberta Education that school libraries deserve a policy for guiding future implementation and development in Alberta schools.

As I write this, Canada has just celebrated another birthday. Last night, as I oohed and aahed over the spectacular fireworks display, I thought about how those thrilling sparks of multicoloured light were like the energy and enthusiasm for learning that can explode in a school that has a teacher-librarian.

So grab a cup of your favourite brew, sit back and enjoy the show! I know you'll find inspiration here that will help keep you on the cutting edge for another school year. ✂

—Diane GallowaySolowan

President's Message

Every once in a while, a unique positioning of the sun, moon and stars occurs, with an awe-inspiring result. I believe that for us in school libraries, the time is now. Certain celestial bodies have aligned and are poised to increase equity of access for our students (as well as teachers and parents) and to strengthen school library programming across the province.

Alberta Education is releasing a new school library policy this fall, after two years of meetings with a wide array of stakeholders. What will this mean for school libraries across our province?

As a starting point, I highly recommend reading Judith Sykes's recent report, *Transforming Canadian School Libraries to Meet the Needs of 21st Century Learners*, which can be found at http://education.alberta.ca/media/1293749/slsi_research.pdf.

The report summarizes what a 21st-century school library should aspire to be:

Ideally, a school library learning commons provides seamless access to library services for all students, acting as "learning central" or the "heart" of a school's reading and inquiry activities that are intentionally connected with curriculum. These school library learning commons are interactive, lively learning environments in which professional learning teams collaborate. As a result, students achieve learning outcomes as they interact with knowledge in its variant forms—fiction or nonfiction, print or digital—to access, evaluate, dialogue about and construct new knowledge, and reflect on what they have learned. For many students experiencing physical, emotional or cognitive learning challenges, the learning commons can personalize independent learning success. (p 1)

The report also contains a helpful summary of recent and relevant research on the impact of quality school library programming on student achievement and literacy development. Also included is an overview of the current Alberta context—the results of last year's principal survey on school library services.

My question to you is, How can you help guide, facilitate and empower the successful implementation of the new school library policy?

May I suggest that you start with your own principal, administrative leaders and superintendent? Research indicates that active principal support is a key factor in the implementation of effective school library programs or information literacy programs (Henri, Hay and Oberg 2002a, 2002b; Asselin, Branch and Oberg 2003; Haycock 2006).

Zmuda and Harada (2008) note that principals may be unaware of teacher-librarians' role as learning leaders. The principal's duty "is to construct a meaningful role for this position in the architecture of the school leadership team" (p 24).

Share Sykes's report with your principal, as well as articles that focus on the essential leadership role of the teacher-librarian.

Please take time to ponder this statement by Zmuda and Harada (2008, 31) and how it might shape this year's work in your school library:

The goal is not to increase collaboration but to improve student performance. The goal is not to force staff to attend professional development; the goal is for them to improve their practice in order to improve student performance. The goal is not to garner more respect for the learning specialists; the goal is for the interactions between learning specialists and staff to help the system improve its overall performance.

We can help each other by sharing our knowledge, experience and passion for school libraries through posting comments, links and cool ideas on the Alberta School Library Council (ASLC) wiki (<http://albertaschoollibraries.pbworks.com>).


We can help recruit the next generation of teacher-librarians from within the teaching ranks by encouraging those who demonstrate the necessary leadership skills, scholarly aptitude and determination to pursue graduate coursework and to become qualified professionals capable of leading change and innovation within a learning commons landscape.

We can encourage our principals to share with their colleagues stories of how school libraries are making a difference in our schools.

We can embrace the challenge of creating 21st-century school libraries, being mindful to collect data along the way to ensure that the changes are indeed making the difference we envision for students.

The hallmark of a school library in the 21st century is not its collections, its systems, its technology, its staffing, its buildings, but its actions and evidences that show that it makes a real difference to student learning, that it contributes in tangible and significant ways to the development of . . . meaning making and constructing knowledge. (Todd 2001, 4)

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—Betty-Lou Ayers

The Virtual School Libr@ry: A Necessity for Today's School Library Program

Joanie Proske

The virtual school library can support today's school library program as a dynamic conduit to digital resources, online instruction and customized learning spaces. Paramount to its development is the professional guidance of the teacher-librarian, who recognizes the needs of the school community and works in collaboration with staff and students. When combined with instructional support, a school library website has the potential to develop into a portal that actively promotes the information literacy requirements of the school.

My Inquiry into the Virtual School Library

Becoming a Secondary School Teacher-Librarian

Sometimes I wonder what I was thinking when I left my cozy niche as an elementary school teacher-librarian to become the teacher-librarian at the largest secondary school in our district.

Armed with a diploma in teacher-librarianship, lots of energy and the support of the school's principal, I found myself facing the almost overwhelming challenge of overhauling the outdated library to create a more vibrant secondary program. I spent most of the summer immersing myself in secondary school culture by voraciously reading professional library journals, asking questions of my more experienced colleagues, creating a library action plan and preparing long to-do lists.

September arrived and, despite my groundwork, I was well out of my comfort zone in the unfamiliar secondary setting. I struggled to find something tangible I could do while I observed and learned.

I began by tackling the appearance of the library, remaking it into a more appealing and welcoming space for students. I also channelled my passion for books into encouraging students to read for leisure and into updating the fiction collection, with great results.

Fortunately, by the second year I had a much better grasp of the secondary curriculum and was more at ease interacting with the students. My new library technician partner and I thoroughly weeded the library's dated nonfiction collection, modernized the computer resources and established a service-centred focus. The library was now a busier centre in the school and circulation had improved, but I could still identify significant and troubling shortcomings that needed to be addressed.

Identifying Library Program Concerns

From my professional reading, I recognized that our secondary school library program was woefully out of step with models of best practice for 21st-century learners. Teachers continued to independently design library research projects, with no true collaborative planning or technology integration. Also, our students lacked skills in using digital resources, ignored the databases, and relied heavily on Google and Wikipedia. Without library lesson collaboration with teachers, opportunities to offer information literacy instruction were nonexistent.

As the teacher-librarian, I knew it was my responsibility to create a more effective library program, but I lacked both the foundational knowledge and the confidence in using current technologies needed to take the next step. I decided to take an education leave and enrol full-time in the University of Alberta's Teacher-Librarianship by Distance Learning program.

Discovering My Interest in the School Library Website

Because of my school's specific needs, the university courses that proved the most pertinent were those on technology instruction, inquiry-based learning and leadership in information literacy. However, throughout all the coursework, my existing knowledge of library practices was constantly challenged and extended. I came to better understand my responsibilities as a leader in promoting the new information literacies. I identified areas for future focus in our library program, such as introducing graphic novels and database resources, and the challenge of taking on a leadership role in schoolwide improvement.

A major feature our library lacked was a website. My preliminary investigation revealed that a school library website, also known as a virtual school library, could serve as a digital showcase for organizing online databases,¹ curriculum resources, bibliographical information and forms, and for featuring new resources and literature.

Exploring the Nature of the School Library Website

During my School Library Information Services and Materials course, instructor Diane GallowaySolowan encouraged me to further investigate establishing a library website.

I began my inquiry by searching for practical how-to information, hoping that those suggestions would help me design the perfect Web presence for our school library. At first I focused on specific features to include, tips for creating the site and the commonalities of exemplary websites.

Then I came across Pappas's (2005) article "Inquiry and Digital Learning Centers," in which she writes,

School library media center websites can be designed as more than a collection of resources. These websites have great potential to be digital learning centers, providing resources for information and tools that become a scaffold in the process of gathering and using that information. (p 21)

Reading this passage was enlightening—one of those bolt-out-of-the-blue experiences when suddenly a missing piece clicks, shifting thought in a new direction. That a school library website could evolve beyond a passive collection of useful resources to become an active vehicle furthering the missions of the library program was an exciting insight and a galvanizing

possibility. I abandoned my broader, practical focus and launched a deep, recursive exploration into the existing research on library websites.

Through this narrowed lens, I searched widely for specific information on how a teacher-librarian could use a library website as a learning tool to connect students with quality resources and also support instruction. As the sole teacher-librarian in a secondary school with over 1,800 students, I was motivated to learn how a virtual school library could increase my effectiveness, especially in establishing greater information literacy.

Also extending my perception was the emerging concept of a student-centred approach to developing the virtual school library. Valenza (2007, 216) recommends that the virtual school library "be constructed by examining the needs of learners, their learning priorities, and the mission of the organization." This call for end-user involvement led me to establish a student library advisory council at my school, as well as to create and administer a schoolwide survey to identify student needs and interests.

As I delved further into the current literature, I came to appreciate the importance of having a library mission statement to direct and permeate all decision making related to the website's development. I drafted a guiding mission statement for our library, with the assistance and approval of other teachers, the administration and the students on the library advisory council.

The virtual school library is a relatively new concept, and finding pertinent research was a challenge. I examined research on academic and public virtual libraries as additional support. Also, directly observing students in the library confirmed the research findings—such as the need for information literacy instruction for today's teens.

The literature on virtual school libraries refers to using these digital portals to support inquiry learning, encourage critical thinking, plan collaboratively with teachers and provide an avenue for teacher-librarian leadership. The digital school library can also serve as an important intellectual and cultural venue for the entire school.

Structuring My Investigation

My research was guided by this inquiry question: Why might the virtual school library be considered a necessary feature of today's secondary school program? The following questions emerged during the investigation:

- How can a virtual school library further the learning priorities of today's school library program?

- In what specific ways can the virtual school library actively promote library program objectives?
- What considerations make for an exemplary virtual school library?

As Christopher Robin advises in A A Milne's (1926) *Winnie-the-Pooh*, "Organizing is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it's not all mixed up." I had examined many examples of virtual school libraries—some worthy of international awards and others little more than cluttered one-page bulletins. I realized that creating a digital presence that reflects and extends the library program and the needs of the school community is an ambitious undertaking that requires a strong framework of understanding. I am hopeful that this article will encourage other teacher-librarians to reflect on their own foundational and organizational priorities in order to construct websites that actively address the information literacy needs of today's students.

Current Understandings

Changing School Libraries for 21st-Century Learners

Libraries have long served as institutions of culture, learning and knowledge, and their traditional practices are currently undergoing revision. The delivery of contemporary school library services reflects a shift toward the new possibilities of technology, with a focus on offering a more client-based, customized approach to meeting the information needs of patrons.

School libraries are being transformed from *places* for locating resources to customized *spaces* for learning. In these new library spaces, students receive help with creating and exploring their own inquiry questions, and they are encouraged to create deeper understandings and new critical knowledge that is relevant to their lives.

The students in our classrooms today have been dubbed the Net Generation—the first generation to have grown up surrounded by Internet technologies and constantly changing digital possibilities. Current instructional practices must align with this reality, with educators forging meaningful connections to students and their hard-wired world. Information technology experts, library practitioners and educational consultants urge teachers to incorporate current technologies into purposeful lesson design to engage students.

Teacher-librarians are responding to this shift by exploring ways to integrate information technologies and digital tools (such as Web 2.0) into school library programs. Quality print resources are now joined by a host of new virtual resources, such as electronic periodicals, subscription databases, video streaming and e-books. As Schmidt (2006, 58) writes, today's school library is "the online doorway to information in any format stored at many different locations."

The perception of the school library as an access point to quality information has led to the development of various digital manifestations, such as the school library website (or virtual school library), which serves as a way to organize Web-based resources and offer assistance in an online environment. Shoham and Shemer-Shalman (2008) draw upon their extensive work in library information studies, acknowledging the advent of the virtual school library as an indication of how "the digital environment is changing how school libraries work" (p 87).

Although the virtual school library is quickly becoming an established model for delivering information to 21st-century learners, a Google search reveals that not every school library has an online presence. Clyde (2000b, 99) suggests that the question is not whether to create a website but, rather, "What kind of web site should we have?" Practitioners and researchers caution that school libraries that select status quo traditional library practice risk obsolescence. Teacher-librarians are urged to transform their school library programs to reflect the changing informational landscape and the needs of the Net Generation.

Defining the Current Role of the Teacher-Librarian

In the current model for exemplary school libraries, teacher-librarians emerge as school leaders with the challenge of nurturing schoolwide improvement. They collaborate with teachers to improve student learning and achievement, promote important new digital literacies (in addition to the traditional literacies), and disseminate best practices in information technology among the wider school community. As champions of information literacy, they are responsible for ensuring that both students and staff become effective and discerning users of information.

Leading voices in librarianship have noted troubling concerns about the Net Generation's ineffectiveness in locating and evaluating relevant Web-based resources in an ocean of information. A British research study by

Rowlands and Nicholas (2008) examined the information-seeking practices of college students, and reported that search engines were much preferred over information searches initiated from a library website or assisted by library staff.

Teacher-librarians, as experts in knowledge management, are uniquely placed to address ineffective search practices by reorganizing and categorizing the Web for students. Google and Wikipedia can serve as natural segues into introducing the critical considerations of authority, scope, accuracy, currency and bias. When guided to question the popular information sources on which they rely, students may conclude that the school library offers more reliable and accurate information than their favourite search engines. Valenza (2005, 8–9) addresses the teacher-librarian's role as information literacy leader when she advises, "It is critical that we equip this first generation of computer-savvy students with the knowledge and habits of mind they need." Certainly, students who do not acquire critical literacy skills will struggle to achieve success in our digital-based and information-rich world.

The literature acknowledges the school library website's potential as an interactive tool that assists the teacher-librarian in connecting students to quality resources and extending information literacy instruction beyond the library's walls. Todd (2008, 24) emphasizes the leadership role of teacher-librarians in creating the interface of such digital portals, urging them to "re-imagine and reshape not just instructional practices, but also rethink access practices" as they design useful information spaces for patrons. Boyce (2006, 22–23) laments that in some instances "cybrary web pages are no more than a digital reconstruction of 19th-century institutional print mores," and challenges librarians to explore more innovative means of "exploiting the digital flow of networked space." Koechlin (2010, 23) urges teacher-librarians to go beyond the passive school library website and envision the collaborative creation of a virtual learning commons, or "active learning sphere," to "drive the changes needed to bring schools into the future and sustain improvement." Valenza (2007, 207) aligns traditional library practices with the future, noting that "virtual school libraries allow teacher-librarians to apply their traditional skills for collection development, collaboration, reference, and instruction in powerful new ways in highly populated, new information landscapes."

Teacher-librarians may worry that these digital services will keep patrons from using the physical

school library. Although academic libraries providing digital services have seen reduced use of their physical library space, Shoham and Shemer-Shalman (2008) report that no corresponding findings on the use of school libraries have been noted. Blowers and Bryan (2004, 16) believe that providing Web-based services strengthens the library's value and helps the teacher-librarian connect with new users "who might not otherwise walk through the library's doors." With regard to the need for libraries in this Internet age, Johnson (1998, 48) supports the power of incorporating new technologies, arguing that "adding technology to a [library] media center is like a strip mall adding a new store—all the stores get more traffic and higher sales."

Defining the Virtual School Library

The evolving use of online technology within the constructs of the traditional library model is reflected in various attempts at definition. Schmidt (2002) defines a *cybrary* as a library that reflects a blend of "real and virtual information resources, physical facilities and cyberspace and service delivery in person and online." Kapitzke and Bruce (2006, xxvi–xxvii) take exception to the use of *cybrary*, *digital space* and *virtual space* because of the implied emphasis on technology; they have coined their own term—*libr@ry*—to denote the insertion of technology into the library's long-established information practices. Burbules (2006, 4) views the library's virtual space as a separate manifestation, describing it as "a distinct experiential domain itself, real in its own way . . . and having the capacity to support significant educational possibilities once we regard it seriously as a space, and not just as a delivery system." Most of the literature also treats the library's online presence as a unique entity, describing it as the *school library website* or *virtual school library*. The two terms are used in the literature interchangeably (which is the approach I have taken in this article).

The purpose of the virtual school library also varies. Shoham and Shemer-Shalman (2008) did not find any clear guidelines for the contents of a virtual school library. Blowers and Bryan (2004, 46) focus on the customization possibilities, describing these digital portals as "one-stop shopping web page[s] . . . [providing] a method of reorganizing and presenting information to make it easier for an individual to use." Braxton (2004, 52) describes a curriculum focus, explaining that "the school library is the hub on which the wheels of classroom programs turn, providing the human, physical, print, pictorial, electronic and digital resources necessary for curriculum delivery."

O'Connell (2002, 23) is more encompassing, noting that "a virtual library can provide a framework for curricular goals and resources, instructional practices, assessments, and customized learning opportunities for all learners." Clyde (2000b) observes that while a school library website may reflect a variety of unique purposes, these are likely parallel to those of the physical library, and it is possible to reflect the needs of several patron groups in one website. Koechlin (2010) also recognizes the client-based focus, noting the unlimited access to a variety of resources and support.

Joyce Valenza, a master teacher-librarian and international presenter whose own library website won the International Association of School Librarianship's (IASL) Concord School Library Web Page Award, describes virtual school libraries as "multipage online resources devoted to the needs of their specific learning communities. From a home page, users access search engines, databases, references, and general library and school information" (Valenza 2005/06, 54). In her study of virtual school libraries, Valenza (2007, 210) states,

Though researchers continue to disagree over terminology, this study will use the term virtual library to describe a customized, structured online learning environment/community, developed by a teacher-librarian to improve and extend the services and mission of the library program to the learning community.

Extending the Physical School Library to Include a Virtual Presence

Regardless of the terminology used, or whether the school library's virtual presence exists as a single webpage or a sophisticated hyperlinked repository, an effective school library website is more than a passive online collection of resources. It is a communicative tool that actively promotes library program goals.

The virtual library can support an effective school library program by following basic library tenets, such as those described in the Canadian Library Association's position statement on effective school library programs in Canada,² specifically that students should have "access to resources in a variety of formats and in sufficient breadth and number to meet the demands of the curriculum and the varied capabilities and interests of the students." It can also help the teacher-librarian extend information delivery services beyond the library's physical space through offering a range of reference, curricular and just-in-time information literacy instruction to more students on a 24/7 basis.

Whether students access the virtual school library in the library or from home, it "offers young people both independence and intervention, guiding learners through the complicated and often overwhelming processes of finding and using information" (Valenza 2005/06, 54). More specifically, the virtual school library can give the teacher-librarian opportunities for instruction; help students discover quality digital resources not accessed by their favourite search engine; provide "a venue for higher-level thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, and creativity" (O'Connell 2002, 23); and serve as a tool for collaboration with students and teachers. O'Connell summarizes these benefits: "A virtual library can provide a framework for curricular goals and resources, instructional practices, assessments, and customized learning opportunities for all learners" (p 23). Shoham and Shemer-Shalman's (2008) study of school libraries in Israel and worldwide concluded that digital portals are changing the delivery of school library services by offering a host of new opportunities for learners. Koechlin (2010) recognizes the potential of the virtual school library as an enhancing element in the pedagogical shift toward a learning commons model for school improvement.

Clyde's (2000a, 2000b, 2004) classic longitudinal research studies document the development of the school library website since its first appearance in the mid-1990s. Her findings indicate a range of purposes for the library website (Clyde 2000a):

- To serve as an archive for curriculum support and selected online resources
- To showcase student work
- To promote the school library (an "electronic brochure")
- To serve as an access portal to databases and other online information
- To host the library's online catalogue

Additionally, the website may be used for advocacy, to promote the physical library or even as a public relations tool to create "an image of the school as a technologically sophisticated, innovative, and progressive environment with high standards and exciting programs" (Logan and Beuselinck 2001, 20). Braxton (2004, 52) suggests using the virtual school library as a direct portal to online learning programs for use by staff or students.

Since a virtual school library can be developed for many unique purposes, establishing a focus that best communicates the school community's goals and requirements (information, reference, instructional or a

combination thereof) is essential. Not all of the library literature recognizes the instructional opportunities afforded by the school library website, and many articles offer advice on the website's construction as a repository without any discussion of its intent.

The instructional possibilities of the virtual school library emerge when it is considered as more than a Web directory. The potential to create a comprehensive and interactive portal that supports the goals of the school library program, and possibly advances school-wide improvement goals, is documented in the research. Referring to her own library website as an example, Valenza (2005/06, 57) describes it as the "school's instructional archive, . . . shar[ing] collaboratively developed lessons, WebQuests, rubrics, handouts, organizers, and research scaffolds," as well as online lessons, "organizers for preparing speeches, debates, presentations on current events; . . . tests for determining whether a student has developed a solid thesis; and professional development presentations."³

The Benefits of Collaboration

The active involvement of the teacher-librarian in developing the school library website is essential; the website should reflect school and library goals, as well as the teacher-librarian's beliefs about student learning and libraries. Clyde (2002, 26) advises,

Even if a consultant or other specialist is used [such as an information technology specialist on the school staff], the school library personnel should be the ones who decide what information should go on the school library's web pages and how that information should be organized to promote learning. They are the school's information specialists, the people who know the information needs of their school community.

Through interviews with Israeli school librarians, Shoham and Shemer-Shalman (2008, 90) found that "in 50% of the cases, the initiative to build web sites came from the librarians themselves." This does not mean that the teacher-librarian should create the site without support. Enlisting the advice, ideas and active involvement of the entire school community and professional colleagues will increase the appeal, relevance and usefulness of the website. This collaborative involvement with end-users speaks to the ownership nature of Web 2.0, as the website evolves into what Lamb and Johnson (2008, 69) describe as "an ongoing, virtual connection with students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members." Warlick (2005, 14)

also recommends drawing on the resources of the school community: "No professional accomplishes his or her goals alone. It happens when a community (small or large) behaves in ways that lead to success."

There is compelling evidence that school libraries, when staffed by qualified teacher-librarians, enhance student achievement. With more school libraries establishing a Web presence, promoting student learning has extended to the digital setting. The virtual school library can play an integral part in the development of students' skills through a multifaceted focus on research, information literacy, current technologies and literature. It can guide users toward appropriate resources and support classroom instruction, and help teachers "create and craft meaningful learning experiences for their students . . . within the context of a contemporary information environment" (Warlick 2005, 13). Certainly, an emphasis on collaborative, schoolwide involvement illustrates the dynamic possibilities of the virtual school library.

Connecting Students to Quality Resources

The need to connect students to quality resources is a common reason for establishing a virtual school library, but as Loertscher (2008, 46) writes, these websites are probably "the last things on most kids' minds." Research shows that the most capable students do not necessarily excel at research tasks, and that they are content to rely on mediocre resources that *satisfice* their information needs (Kirkland 2009; Loertscher 2007; Valenza 2005, 2007).⁴

As networked as students are, their information-seeking behaviours "show little improvement in information literacy capabilities such as evaluating the relevance, accuracy and authority of information, and developing effective search strategies" (Todd 2008, 24). Asselin and Doiron (2008, 3) note that teens "rely exclusively on Google as their search engine," "use natural language as search terms," "spend little time reading the source" (using "skimming and scanning" instead), and use "cutting and pasting rather than rewording and recording" when taking notes.

Although students may not be savvy searchers, Todd and Kuhlthau (2005) document that students rate highly the access to information technology and the assistance provided in the school library. Hay (2006) reports trends that reflect "an increasing dependence on, and demand for, a school library facility that provides students with access to 'state of the art'

technologies, resources and services to support their learning.”

Meyers and Eisenberg (2008, 12) note additional concerns about the search habits of teens, which indicate future directions to explore: (1) library portals are seldom used unless specifically directed by the assignment, and (2) students underutilize databases and periodicals because they do not recognize that they have been taught to use them. Harris (2003, 218) explains that isolated exposures are not internalized by teens and, “like critical thinking skills, information literacy skills must be taught and practiced in multiple ways and in a variety of settings over time.” Asselin (2005) and Harris (2003) advocate that teacher-librarians show greater leadership in information literacy instruction, by enlisting staff support through collaborative lesson design and by stressing the importance of repeated skill practice in using information literacies.

The virtual school library can guide students through the process of selecting and evaluating resources, and this capability is enhanced further when combined with instructional support. Valenza (2005) interviewed prominent educators—including Pam Berger, Debbie Abilock, Peter Milbury and Frances Jacobson Harris—about the effective search methods they use to connect students with quality resources. Berger, an educational technology consultant, observes that teens desire a level of independence, interactivity, collaboration and customization when searching for information. Scaffolding support, provided through work with students and the careful development of the library website and assignments, is invaluable. Abilock, who developed one of the first virtual school libraries, notes that a school library website, with its subscription databases and support resources and links, should be organized to reflect the school’s curriculum objectives. She recommends library-based instruction in the use of citation makers, website evaluation, pathfinders and a variety of search tools to introduce and support the information available through virtual portals. Founder of LM_NET and winner of the first IASL Concord award for best school library website, Milbury is adamant that teacher-librarians learn to locate and organize valuable online websites for use by students. He lists curriculum-related pathfinders on his library website and demonstrates to students how to access these quality resources. Harris, a high school librarian and associate professor in library administration, designed her school’s website to push students toward the use of valuable subscription databases. Each of these professionals views the virtual school library as

an effective means of linking students to valuable information sources.

Church (2005, 9) summarizes the challenges for teacher-librarians in helping students locate quality-rich resources in an information-rich world:

There is so much good information out there, and it is our job as library media specialists to point our students to it! There is so much bad information out there, and it is our job to teach students how to evaluate what they find.

Teacher-Librarians as Leaders in Information Literacy Instruction

To address information literacy shortcomings, teacher-librarians must help students develop the critical tool kit necessary to confront and make sense of the reams of digital information they encounter. Asselin and Doiron (2008, 7) have identified critical thinking, technological literacy, creativity, inquiry and problem solving, and ethics and social responsibility as “the multi-modal, multiple literacies that will enable full literacy development for today’s learners” and lead to success in 21st-century contexts.

Asselin (2005, 19) found that while information literacy outcomes are integrated into provincial core curricula, “there is little research that examines how information skills in a school’s literacy programs are being considered and implemented.” Teacher-librarians are well positioned to assume the information leadership role in the school, especially when supported by the administrators. Asselin and Doiron’s (2008) transformative visions for today’s schools require teacher-librarians to promote information literacy objectives through meaningful collaboration with teachers, to promote critical thinking as opposed to lower-level fact gathering, and to guard against the decline of the school library website into a glorified Internet reference library.

Meyers and Eisenberg (2008, 13) urge teacher-librarians to “develop ways of delivering credible, relevant, useful information to students that they can access easily and incorporate readily into their work” and to “instruct students in the value of these resources.”

Promoting Successful Information-Seeking Behaviour

Assisting all students in meeting their informational needs, especially in a large secondary school, is a formidable task for the teacher-librarian.

Savvy professionals can begin by determining the priorities of the community, through observation or a schoolwide online survey. They can then consider how to meet the just-in-time requirements of as many patrons as possible, perhaps through grade-wide lessons in particular subject areas. With administrative support and the agreement of teaching colleagues, a schoolwide collaborative plan can be developed to ensure that all students are exposed to the breadth of resources available. This scheduled, informed library instruction allows the teacher-librarian to introduce digital resources, to discuss current literacy issues (such as copyright and the use of technology tools), to share effective search strategies, to demonstrate the capabilities of a variety of search engines, and to show students where to retrieve this information from archives in the virtual school library on a 24/7 basis.

Valenza's (2005) interviews with library professionals again offer insights into promoting information literacy. Abilock says that "students don't know a web page is garbage until they've examined a good one and seen the difference" (p 40). Berger notes that opportunities for student reflection, mind mapping and discussion of effective search strategies can reinforce library-based lessons. David Barr, a National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) leadership team member, believes that challenging students to think about the new information-seeking skills they are exploring supports their learning. Encouraging active participation by students is key to engaging them and to integrating effective search strategies into their own habits of practice.

Students who experience success using the virtual school library may be more apt to return to the site, modifying their existing information-seeking behaviours. Although they may need guidance in accessing new resources, proven usability, with answers a few clicks away, encourages students to visit again and to develop habitual use of the features on the website. Pathfinders on curriculum topics can be developed to direct students to quality resources, freeing the teacher-librarian to help other classes. While its purpose can be chiefly informative, Wisniewski and Fichter (2007) believe that the school library website should also be designed as a welcoming and intuitive space—a reflection of the physical library. To become an accepted part of students' daily lives, the site must be user-centred, strategically designed and easily navigated.

To encourage more-proficient student searches, teacher-librarians should consider not only the ease of

pathfinders but also the content of the information included in the virtual school library. The same high standards used in selecting print resources should be applied when deciding which online resources to post; not every link is worthy of inclusion. To create a useful online collection, the teacher-librarian should use selection tools such as review journals, website annotations in professional library journals and colleagues' recommendations—all filtered through the evaluative measures of scope, accuracy, authority, currency and bias. Within the framework of a constructivist approach to learning, students require a greater depth and breadth of resources to support their personal inquiries. This requirement for quality information sources can be supported through the addition of a current digital collection. Paired with quality content is the need for purposeful and thoughtfully designed research tasks created by the teacher-librarian and teachers as a collaborative team.

The instructional potential of the virtual school library as a vehicle to encourage information literacies has been demonstrated; however, Clyde (2000b, 104) observes that "there is no point in having a Web site if no one visits it." The teacher-librarian can promote the virtual school library's online resources to teachers during collaborative library-based research assignments, as well as through formal and informal professional development opportunities. Krueger, Ray and Knight (2004, 285) note the problem in academic libraries of spending more library dollars on digital resources that are not adequately shared with patrons because of library staff cutbacks. When staff have limited time available for direct instruction, use of the virtual school library can be encouraged (and, to a lesser degree, supported) through promotional tools (bookmarks, announcements, posters) or current technologies (social networking tools, blogs, videos).

Supporting Differentiated Instruction

The customized nature of the virtual school library offers alternatives to students with differentiated needs. Supplying learning scaffolds, enrichment opportunities and access to resources that move beyond the traditional curriculum can benefit students with disabilities, learning difficulties or visual processing problems; students in specialized programs; and gifted learners. Specialized software can determine how well the website's interface supports students

with hearing, vision or other challenges. Just-for-me information can be customized to an individual's age and ability and accessed through the school's virtual portal. Web 2.0 collaborative tools open up new possibilities for communication and creative projects, as well as virtual field trips and gallery visits. A passion for reading can be fostered through hosted blogs, online book clubs, reading lists, reviews, and links to author sites and literature databases.

Academic aids—tutorials, writing templates, instructional videos, English language support, and specialized reference tools (pronouncing dictionary, visual thesaurus, video streaming)—allow differentiated learners to achieve success in meeting individualized learning outcomes. Links to homework help centres and e-mails to the teacher-librarian offer interactive communication possibilities for students.

Pappas (2005, 23) suggests that the possible applications for this digital medium are "limited only by the [teacher-librarian's] creativity and web-design skills." Valenza (2007, 224) believes that through its role in supporting teaching and learning in both the physical and digital realms, the virtual school library illustrates how students can successfully operate and learn within "a hybrid environment," especially one customized to meet their specific learning needs. Schmidt (2006, 70) notes the ever-changing, transitory needs of library clients and concludes that "there will be an ongoing need to develop and provide new services in a seamless digital environment."

Additional Benefits of Establishing a Virtual School Library

A virtual school library can both provide and support a wealth of learning experiences for all students and staff.

Valenza (2005/06) recognizes the virtual library as "an integral part of the instructional culture of the school" (p 57) and notes that in her school "the virtual library has become students' and teachers' starting point for research—their access to rich and meaningful resources and learning" (p 59). Its organizational nature assists learners who feel overwhelmed by too much information or whose weak searching skills may lead them to inappropriate information. Pappas (2005) notes that the wider scope of quality digital resources allows the library website to be used as a tool to promote inquiry, allowing students to deeply investigate their questions and powerfully enhancing student learning.

Posting student projects (with permission) on the website illustrates its potential as an electronic bulletin board. This platform allows students to celebrate their work through sharing with a wider audience, thereby strengthening the learning process through feedback and reflection and encouraging greater traffic to the website. Teacher-librarians can involve students in posting book reviews, developing wikis archiving recommended reads, and hosting interactive blogs devoted to literature and writing. The virtual school library also allows the teacher-librarian to showcase library initiatives, develop successful collaborative ventures with teaching colleagues, and strengthen his or her leadership role in the school. Warlick (2005) suggests that teacher-librarians consider how this virtual representation can be extended to overcome shortcomings apparent in a school's physical library.

Shoham and Shemer-Shalman's (2008) research is one of the few directly pertinent studies of the impact of digital libraries on current school library programs. They found that student involvement in the website led to "more cooperation between students and the library" (p 95). Students also showed greater independence in solving their information needs in school libraries with websites. Sites offering an electronic reference service received fewer in-person requests from patrons, and the in-person reference queries were more succinct. This, however, did not translate into more free time for teacher-librarians; increased website-related tasks and instruction filled the void. International schools involved in the study saw an 18 per cent increase in parent communications, which the researchers suggest may have been related to the opportunities for dialogue and home use afforded by the website. In addition, the researchers observed renewed staff involvement in the library, especially in the area of website curriculum content.

Despite the progressive change in the delivery of school library services, the majority of school libraries involved in Shoham and Shemer-Shalman's (2008) study have continued to focus on traditional practices, despite the many opportunities available through current technology. "This is evidenced by a total ban on using the site for e-mail, games, or chats . . . [and] one of the most obvious is the emphasis placed by librarians on using the school library web site to expand reading encouragement activity" (p 96). This finding reflects a trend commonly observed in the initial integration of new technologies, and underscores the need for teacher-librarians to reflect on best practices in delivering today's library programs.

Creating an Exemplary Virtual School Library

Creating an effective school library website requires forethought, careful planning and attention to detail. Burbules (2006, 11) states that such “knowledge spaces” should be created with consideration so they “are not just archives or receptacles for information. Designing these with an eye toward making them places, and not just spaces, involves a number of decisions and balancing acts,” especially a focus on the needs of the school community. Establishing a vision for the website is key. The literature advises the teacher-librarian to use the school library’s mission statement to communicate the overall vision of the virtual school library.

Valenza (2005) interviewed Barr to determine the specific features of an exemplary virtual school library. Barr’s response emphasizes purpose:

I would look for search sites that make their purpose clear, that encourage the use of multiple search strategies, that provide really useful online help, that provide tools to aid thinking, and that challenge students to learn while they are searching. . . . Our site is designed to provide learning tools. Our purpose is learning support, not performance support. (p 77)

While staff and students may visit the website for a set purpose, Kirkland (2009, 29) maintains that “the visual design of a site can invite them in and provide a clear path to learning.” For this reason, the library’s virtual spaces “need to be even more engaging than . . . physical spaces” (p 28). Shoham and Shemer-Shalman (2008) take a more functional perspective, concluding that “the content of the pages on the school library site should be the flagship of the library” (p 96). Logan and Beuselinck (2001) support both function and appearance as essential ingredients of a website. Boyce (2006, 22–23) suggests that teacher-librarians explore new avenues by developing virtual libraries that venture away from the traditional “ordering of knowledge in the ‘real’ library . . . and redesign digital library services in a way more in keeping with the social logic, ecology, and culture of online, networked space.” Koechlin (2010, 23) advises teacher-librarians to “make use of all the free tools and workspaces available to build a virtual Learning Commons” and to make this place as inviting as possible.

The range of possibilities for the virtual school library should be considered in light of what best reflects the requirements of a particular school community.

Existing Websites as Exemplars

Since the first appearance of school library websites in 1994, Anne Clyde (2004, 166) notes, they have evolved from simple webpages to “electronic information gateways.”

As former chair and webmaster of the IASL, Clyde undertook comprehensive studies of school library websites from 1996 to 2002, attempting to descriptively categorize common features and purposes with a view toward creating a list of quality indicators for assessment use by teacher-librarians. Her ongoing research was not completed due to her untimely death, but Clyde’s (2004) efforts at analysis noted the diversity of school library websites and established a baseline for future research.

Clyde’s findings also contributed to the establishment in 1999 of the IASL’s annual Concord School Library Web Page Award (Clyde 2000a, 52). Encouraging the development of exemplary sites, this award (with a plaque and a cash grant) was given “to a school library web site, from any country, that [met] the selection criteria” as set by IASL (p 52).⁵ Clyde (2000a) implies that the following IASL award selection criteria could be used as a critical assessment tool when developing or assessing a school library website:

- Evidence of school library and/or teacher librarian involvement in page/site development;
- relevance of the page/site to the goals and objectives of the school library;
- visual appeal, including layout, choice of images, type face and style;
- organization of the information on the page/site;
- quality of the writing and use of language (and proof-reading);
- ease of use of the page/site, and navigational features;
- educational, information, or public relations value of the page/site;
- appropriateness for the needs of users;
- currency, evidence of update policy, and the provision of current information and/or links;
- technical quality (note that this is interpreted as the appropriate use of technology, not necessarily leading-edge technology);
- value of the page/site as a model for other school libraries and/or teacher librarians. (pp 52–53)

The development process can begin by first examining school library website directories to view examples and determine which approach to website design best suits the needs of a particular school. Virtual school libraries

that reflect 21st-century standards for best practices are listed in the directories established by Peter Milbury and Linda Bertland.⁶ Practical assistance in website design is available from Joyce Valenza and Bonnie Skaalid.⁷ These resources offer suggestions for teacher-librarians and their collaborative teams, and illustrate that there are many approaches to creating an exemplary virtual school library—some good and some not.

Teacher-librarians who want to design an exemplary website can also consider Clyde's (2000b) step-by-step strategic planning approach, which draws upon her considerable experience as IASL webmaster. Her comprehensive article includes a strategic planning cycle diagram; describes the step-by-step process; and addresses important considerations, such as writing for the Internet, types of navigational tools, how to best mount the website, promotion and evaluation.

It becomes clear from the articles, books and website directories on the topic that creating a school library website can be overwhelming, partly because of the limitless scope of its virtual landscape. Logan and Beuselinck (2001, 14) suggest that teacher-librarians "start with a small, high-quality site. Pinpoint a few high-priority web pages. Focus energies and resources on making sure they are useful and excellent."

Blowers and Bryan (2004, 108) note that "libraries are places of constant change, and their web sites should reflect that." It is important to recognize that the virtual school library is dynamic and that it will undergo various revisions. The site should be constantly updated: its appearance and content will motivate users to return, and negative experiences (such as broken links) will discourage return visits. The teacher-librarian should invite students and staff to offer descriptive feedback to fuel the redesign process. George (2008, xii) urges that involvement of the end-users will help create a site that "users will continue to use to access . . . information resources."

Implications

Information Literacy Instruction

Teaching information literacy in the physical library presents enough of a challenge in itself, never mind in a digital setting. In a school like mine—where an information literacy curriculum has never been introduced, where there has been no established culture of teachers working collaboratively with the teacher-librarian, and where digital resources have never been formally promoted—embedding the virtual school

library into the instructional culture of the school is a daunting task. However, the realities of our technological and information-rich world cannot be denied, and teacher-librarians must find ways to make information literacy an essential learning outcome.

Barron (2001) asserts that "information literacy is *not an innate knowledge*. It must be developed." A carefully developed school library website begins with determining the information literacy shortcomings of the community, perhaps through conducting a schoolwide survey. The results frame an opportunity to organize and present Web resources in ways that encourage the specific information-seeking behaviours students (and staff) need to acquire. Which databases will be introduced to support curriculum research projects? Which links to bibliography help and citation makers would be most helpful? Which examples should be archived to best teach students how to differentiate between a good website and a less credible one? How can issues of social responsibility, such as plagiarism and copyright, be modelled and taught? Supported by the opportunities for direct instruction that accompany collaborative teaching, information literacy skills can be introduced, developed and reinforced through the virtual school library. I can now appreciate how a virtual school library can address many of the shortcomings apparent in our secondary school's library program.

Supporting School Library Goals Through Information Literacy Instruction

When I began my master's educational leave, I was focused on learning more about how to create a scope and sequence for information literacy; however, my enthusiasm for creating an information literacy plan was sidetracked by other aspects of teacher-librarianship. I can now envision how promoting information literacy through the school library's website can assist in achieving the library program goals I have since developed—such as introducing inquiry learning and a common research inquiry plan, incorporating greater technology use into lesson design, and encouraging true collaborative teaching.

I am encouraged by Harris's (2003) comments about information literacy. She notes that students have been shown to better achieve information literacy skills when those skills are embedded in other initiatives than when those same skills are taught in isolation:

In terms of information literacy and student learning, Kuhlthau [1999] found that the most significant

improvement occurred in schools where other reform efforts were taking place as well, specifically efforts related to more constructivist approaches to learning that emphasized inquiry in the research process. (p 219)

I now appreciate how the virtual school library develops as a reflection of both the teacher-librarian's vision for the library and the school's established goals—especially when they have been carefully considered as part of the website's purpose. Incorporating the interests and needs of others further enhances and customizes the website.

The Virtual School Library's Role in Knowledge Management

Citing Todd (1999), O'Connell (2002, 25) describes the process of creating a website as knowledge management: "Knowledge management needs to be taken seriously as an issue by school librarians; researched, understood, and evaluated in order to ensure effective development of library services and the role of the school librarian." Teacher-librarians are considered knowledge management experts, and they should display leadership by keeping up with constantly changing digital technology and information sources and by finding ways to disseminate this information among others. This may translate into searching out quality digital resources, exploring Web 2.0 tools, investigating new trends, reading professional literature, attending or presenting inservice sessions, demonstrating best practices and exploring new ways to share this knowledge with others. This does not mean that teacher-librarians must have all the answers, but they should be able to model the process of how to go about finding the answers. Introducing a consistent schoolwide process for inquiry research is an example of how a teacher-librarian can help students and staff manage the acquisition of knowledge.

Through knowledge-related initiatives such as establishing the school library website, the role of the teacher-librarian will become more evident in the school community, and the work he or she performs will become, as Oberg (2007) puts it, "less invisible." The perception of the teacher-librarian as a dynamic and contributing school colleague will be strengthened as teachers recognize the teacher-librarian's interest in and support of classroom teaching. Administrators will also recognize the leadership role of the teacher-librarian as he or she integrates the library into school improvement goals. Students will come to appreciate

the teacher-librarian's abilities in helping them find information. These are important perceptions to develop—especially in these times, when advocacy for teacher-librarian positions and the value of school library programs is critical.

In my school, establishing my credibility with regard to knowledge management has taken time, but positive growth has been noticed. Citing Todd (1999), O'Connell (2002, 25) asserts that developing an effective website "takes strong leadership and active promotion of successes." I am encouraged by the realization that I can rely on the experience and knowledge of others to help develop the school library's website, while still maintaining my guidance role to ensure that each addition will reflect the site's overall purpose and serve to enrich this virtual space.

Information Literacy Plan with Administrative Support

Creating an information literacy plan begins with the teacher-librarian earning the support of the school's administration. Both Oberg (2007) and Zmuda and Harada (2008) emphasize the importance of teacher-librarians garnering respect through building professional credibility, aligning library goals with the principal's vision for the school, and providing successful communications. When Ken Haycock describes the need for establishing a schoolwide master information literacy plan developed with input from teachers and teacher-librarians, he explains that this will be more successful under the auspices of the school's administration (Valenza 2005).

The teacher-librarian can demonstrate leadership by identifying the information literacy skills in the prescribed learning outcomes for each subject or grade, or by obtaining a similar list developed by a provincial colleague. Through cooperative discussions with a staff committee, decisions can be made about which grades would be best for introducing particular information literacy strategies—such as effective search techniques, how to evaluate websites for authority or bias, how to locate and record citation information, and how to navigate a database. A valuable information literacy plan can be created to use as a reference for planning collaborative lessons. Setting up this schoolwide plan for information literacy instruction will ensure that all students have opportunities to be taught essential information literacy skills, and provided with the repetition necessary for strengthening them.

Creating a schoolwide initiative is difficult without principal support. Principals may provide the initial release time needed for consultation, but it is their ongoing encouragement in the use of information literacy that will support its success. I now recognize the importance of communicating to my administrator the need for a schoolwide information literacy plan and explaining the impact of the school library website on student learning. If I approach this conversation by illustrating how the library's goals can support the principal's schoolwide goals, I am sure that an action plan can be agreed on. For example, in our school, two areas the library's information literacy plan can support are integrating technology into lesson planning and providing greater access to quality digital resources.

Information Literacy Plan with Teacher Support

Valenza (2007) reports that her virtual school library is the first place staff and students visit to obtain quality information. I dream of the day when a student or a staff member writes a similar comment about our school library website on a feedback survey, because that will indicate that I have achieved a key vision for our library program.

Harris (2003, 219) describes information-literate students as "products of a coherent information literacy curriculum that features a process approach, course-integrated instruction, inquiry-based learning, and collaboration between teachers and [teacher-librarians]." Possibly my most pressing goal is to foster teacher collaboration with the school library. I believe that the school library website can support this endeavour.

Providing teachers with easy access to information that will assist them in their work is key to developing the credibility that will entice them to enter into collaborative practice with the teacher-librarian. If the virtual school library offers quality digital resources, subject-related pathfinders, archives of interactive banks of lessons, reference guides to information literacy practices and bibliographic assistance, it will soon prove an essential resource for teachers. Combining this support with instructional opportunities (such as offering to help teachers design lessons that incorporate essential information literacy skills), or providing class demonstrations on how to use a database, will foster collaborative relationships with teaching colleagues.

Beyond teaching the skills outlined in a schoolwide information literacy plan, other important outcomes include the construction of authentic knowledge and the development of students' critical-thinking skills. While the teacher-librarian is demonstrating new skills to students, the teacher is also receiving professional development instruction in current best practices. Harris (2003, 221–22) explains,

More than just knowing "how to use the library," we want our teaching to produce students who are independent seekers and thinkers. We measure our success by students who can approach each new type of information problem with flexibility and resourcefulness, who can navigate new information systems without losing themselves in the mechanics, and who are able to evaluate and synthesize the information they find. But outcomes like these require the work of many and take time to fully emerge.

Teacher-librarians cannot accomplish such goals without the collaborative support of their colleagues. Many opportunities to practise and reinforce information literacy skills should be provided, with time built into lessons to encourage student exploration and thinking. Students come to information-seeking activities with their own habits of mind, and they will need critical experiences to successfully shift their thinking patterns and searching practices. Scaffolding support archived on the school library website will assist with retrieval of this new knowledge. A teacher can also reinforce new information literacy understandings during classroom instruction and computer lab sessions, and through the design of thoughtful assignments and homework activities. Teachers will likely be more generous with teaching time if they are made aware of these understandings. The long-term goal is to encourage students to apply this new knowledge in their day-to-day lives, postsecondary learning (especially in light of the proliferation of online coursework), and future endeavours in the work world.

Collaboration: An Approach to Virtual School Library Integration

A major understanding I have acquired from my investigation is that developing and maintaining a virtual school library is not a one-person activity. It takes an entire school community to create an effective library website.

The teacher-librarian may initiate the project, but with opportunities for involvement and collaboration, the website can develop into a schoolwide venture

involving the talents and input of students, support staff, teachers, administrators and even the community beyond the school. Through each interaction and contact, the virtual school library develops into a stronger communicative and instructional portal that is slowly enhanced and built upon to reflect the interests and needs of its users. The library begins to extend its reach into classrooms and beyond the classroom into the home as its relevance is established through thoughtful, well-designed lessons.

Through this close connection to collaborative instructional activities, the virtual school library gradually becomes part of the fabric and culture of the school, as teachers come to depend on its resources in teaching their courses, as students begin to turn to it for information and timely assistance, and as the services of the physical library and the virtual library gradually combine to become a hybrid identity.

Reflections on My Journey Toward Creating a Virtual School Library

Poet Joseph Pintauro writes, "Once, we didn't know how to believe in a rocket ship or even a lawn mower. Make space in your brain for tomorrow's things." In this shifting, technology-inspired world, it is always wise to remain flexible and open to new possibilities.

In my own secondary school library, where I am still struggling to promote the use of databases and to encourage teacher collaboration, several ideas I have encountered in my research on the virtual school library seem almost visionary. However, through the process of inquiry, I have reflected on ways the virtual school library could encourage new interactive conversations, reveal new possibilities, and facilitate Web 2.0 communication and creation in our school. Although our library has made great strides toward current practice, I realize that it is still a quantum leap from the idealized learning environment envisioned in the current research on virtual school libraries.

A schoolwide survey has now provided important information on student needs and charted the direction for our library website—an integral first step. Kapitzke and Bruce (2006) have opened my eyes to new interpretations of the hybrid nature of the school library. I have come to identify with the term *libr@ry* and plan to incorporate this philosophy of fusion into my beliefs about how physical and virtual library services can be melded as the design process begins.

After this exploration and reflection, I am convinced that the virtual school library is a necessary part of a current school library program and an integral avenue to promoting the development of information-literate students.

Notes

To enhance this article's readability, I have taken the liberty of removing in-text citations, unless I have quoted or directly referred to a specific source. For those who want to refer to the original sources, a version of this article containing all citations is available at <http://tldl.pbworks.com/f/Proske.pdf>.


1. An example of an organized collection of online databases for use by teachers and students in Alberta is the Online Reference Centre at www.learnalberta.ca.
2. See www.cla.ca (under Resources).
3. Interested readers can view Valenza's updated virtual school library at <http://springfieldlibrary.wikispaces.com>.
4. *Satisfice*, a blended word combining *satisfy* and *suffice*, was coined by Simon (1957).
5. This award is described as a past award on the IASL website, with no winners after 2002.
6. See Milbury's School-libraries.net (www.school-libraries.net) and Bertland's Resources for School Librarians (www.sldirectory.com).
7. See Valenza's School Library Websites: Examples of Effective Practice (<http://schoollibrarywebsites.wikispaces.com>) and Skaalid's Web Design for Instruction (www.usask.ca/education/coursework/skaalid/).

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The Virtual Library as a Learning Hub

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In my last column, I talked about setting the stage for a truly inviting virtual library learning commons with good Web design principles. Now we need to explore what happens in the library's virtual learning commons that makes it far more than a mere website.

The library is a learning space. What makes the library different from any other classroom is the range and diversity of resources that it provides. The library program is about curiosity, exploration and sense making in a resource-rich environment. Let's start, then, by thinking about how the virtual library organizes and presents its resources to connect with students in a meaningful and helpful way.

Providing Signposts and Pathways

Our virtual library collections are diverse. Subscription databases range from online encyclopedias to indexes of peer-reviewed journals. We have readers' discovery tools, e-books, audio books and streamed video collections. The virtual library provides searchable access to our physical library collections. How we organize these multiple access points is crucial. If our students are confused by what they see, they will go elsewhere. The website design needs to help our students connect to the right starting point for their research, depending on their information need, their prior learning and their reading level.

Organizing resources by information type and describing them in plain English facilitates access. Listing databases by publisher and describing them in library lingo hinders access. Providing one single portal to password-protected content facilitates access. Complicated procedures for remote authentication hinder access.

Visually representing access points to library resources aligns with the way we read the Web. Students will likely not remember the name of a particular database, but they likely will remember that catchy green icon in the top right-hand corner of the page. We need to invite them in, not scare them away.

Tools Too!

Learning in the library goes beyond accessing resources. We support students as they sort through ideas and share their learning. The virtual library commons should connect students to the tools that they need to see their way through the research process. From sources for copyright-friendly images and music files to avatar-makers, the virtual library can bring together a tool box for learning.

Bring It In, Don't Send Them Out

A big shift is happening in how we can build access to Web resources. Traditionally we have selected and organized links that send our students out to other sites, and consequently out of the library. Now we can bring those resources in, and make them part of our virtual learning environment. This is a fundamental change, and has huge potential. How do you draw external resources into your library's Web space? Many sites now offer code to insert search widgets directly into your site. Students can search other sites' resources without ever leaving the virtual library. Taking this a step further, a Web utility such as Pageflakes (www.pageflakes.com) allows us to gather news and blog feeds, interactive maps, search widgets and all manner

of resources together in one place, drawing continuously updated information into the virtual library site. Students can even use these tools to construct their own flexible learning environment in the library. We are just entering this new construct, and it represents huge potential.

Providing Context

The virtual library learning commons puts this diverse array of resources, tools and strategies into the ethical context of academic honesty and good digital citizenship. It offers the opportunity to introduce learners and teachers to the new rules of intellectual property, authority and ethics of our networked culture.

Fostering Learning

So far we've talked about the information flow from the library to the student. Loertscher (2008) talks about information flowing "not just from teachers to learners but in multiple directions: among students, from students to classroom teachers, from teacher-librarians to classroom teachers and students." These learning conversations are enabled by Web 2.0 technologies, and keep the library doors open and the space active for around-the-clock learning.

Instructional Alignment

Over the past few years, I have seen many great examples of teachers and teacher-librarians using interactive Web technologies to extend the classroom online. Where this is successful is when the choice of platform is based on sound instructional goals, extending and improving already exemplary teaching practices. Where this is less successful is when the instructional purpose is not clear—the technology is used for the sake of using technology. Blogs, wikis, podcasts and Nings (www.ning.com) all foster collaborative learning, but all have unique characteristics that suit different learning needs.

The most important aspect of aligning library virtual learning is in making sure that the strategies we use and our expected outcomes align with the greater goals of our respective school systems. We need to make sure that we can explain this alignment, and we also need to make sure that we are diligent about collecting evidence to inform our own instructional practices and to help us advocate for our programs.

Just-in-Time Learning

The virtual learning commons can be not only a hub for virtual classrooms and resources but also the virtual "anchor chart" centre. From reminders of critical information skills and downloadable graphic organizers to short video tutorials, students and teachers can have 24/7 access to the tools that they need. Gone are the days when we expect students to remember, synthesize and apply complex ideas without reinforcement. The virtual library commons enables maximum flexibility—learning from school or from home, on computer desktops or portable devices, as frequently as desired.

Reach for the Clouds

What makes all of this possible, of course, is the wide range of free and easy-to-use online applications and tools that we have at our fingertips. An iGoogle approach to drawing information into the site is made easy by tools such as Pageflakes. Internet pathfinders can be made infinitely more useful and powerful by using collaborative bookmarking sites like Delicious (<http://delicious.com>) or Diigo (www.diigo.com). From literature circles built with an online blogging tool to collaborative research project wikis, there are many free tools that make creating virtual classrooms a viable option for educators. Joyce Valenza's newly reminted Springfield Virtual Library site (www.sdsl.org/shs/library/) provides an exciting example of bringing these technologies together into one huge and dynamic online learning space. Consider also how teacher-librarian Roger Nevin of the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board in Ontario uses Google Apps for Education (www.google.com/a/help/intl/en/edu/) to facilitate collaborative learning across his school. Students and teachers have access to online tools for everything from word processing to presentations, and can work individually or in flexible groupings as needed. No desktop applications are required beyond a Web browser, eliminating the compatibility problems that often undermine students as they negotiate school and home computing environments.

Be the Hub

The new vision of the learning commons sets the library as a hub of activity in the school—a magnet for a range of teaching professionals to connect with students and to extend their own professional learning

and practice. The teacher-librarian is a facilitator in this setting, coaching other professionals, connecting them with each other and with resources. The library's virtual space can be as much of a hub as the physical space, where resources, technology, user-focused design and innovative teaching practices mingle to empower learners.


Transforming Thinking

The concept of the library as a learning commons has the potential to be transformative, yet the challenges in getting there are significant. The role of the school library program and the effective use of technology both remain largely on the fringes of curricula and mainstream instructional practices. Thinking about technological infrastructure also needs some transformation to enable networked learning. We appreciate the efforts that have created safe, secure and supportable network infrastructures and desktop learning environments in our school systems. Twenty-first-century learning means access to robust and secure wireless networks, and mobile and ubiquitous computing. At some point, the needs of our already networked

learners will overtake any educational infrastructure that is not adapting to these changes in a strategic and supportable way.

We need to think about modelling the potential of the virtual library commons and also demonstrate how networked learning aligns with the goals of our respective educational institutions. Merely declaring our libraries to be learning commons without the alignment, infrastructure, and investment in resources and staffing needed to make it work effectively is not enough. Loertscher, Koechlin and Zwaan (2008, 73) state it most succinctly: "It is as if the school was to buy a school bus without wheels and then wonder why kids are not getting to school." It's time to get the wheels on the bus rolling again, as we explore the possibilities of the library as a true learning commons.

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My Vision as a New Teacher-Librarian

Tamzen Kulyk

Being a teacher-librarian in the 21st century means being an agent of change in the areas of leadership, information literacy, technology and advocacy. As a new teacher-librarian, I hope to support, assist, nurture and encourage change in my school library. Hughes-Hassell and Harada (2007, 4) suggest that change agents “do not necessarily *lead* the change process. Instead, they may act as caregivers, facilitators, coaches, enablers, negotiators, or catalysts.”

To be an effective change agent, I must first have a personal vision of what is important to me as an educator (Hughes-Hassell and Harada 2007, 6). To create this vision, I must grapple with the following questions: Why do I want to be a teacher-librarian? What gifts will I bring to my work? What will I stand for as a teacher-librarian? How will I accomplish my goals? What do I want my legacy to be?

Now that a teacher-librarian position could be in my near future, it is time to create an action plan to ensure that I become an agent of change in my future school library.

Step 1: Define My Purpose

After taking Introduction to Teacher-Librarianship, a course in the University of Alberta’s Teacher-Librarianship by Distance Learning program, I realize that the role of a teacher-librarian is much more than collaborating with other teachers and promoting lifelong literacy. School libraries play an important role in teaching and inspiring literacy, but they are also critical to student achievement and are leading the way in technology use and information literacy in schools.

Over my past four years of teaching, it has become evident that our schools and teaching must change if we are to move forward and exist in a knowledge society (Friesen 2009). I regularly challenge myself to critically examine what I teach in my classroom and why. I understand that “former conceptions of knowledge, minds and learning no longer serve a world

where what we know is less important than what we are able to do with knowledge in different contexts” (p 3). Our students are living in a world in which technology is at their fingertips, and information can be accessed anywhere and anytime. As a teacher-librarian, I would be uniquely situated to teach students the necessary skills to thrive in our constantly changing world.

Step 2: Articulate My Purpose

To fulfill my vision of being an agent of change in the areas of leadership, information literacy, technology and advocacy, I must clearly define my role as a teacher-librarian and seek to clarify the purpose of the school library.

Creating a school library mission statement is an excellent way to communicate the school library’s purpose and what it hopes to achieve in the future. A mission statement “drives the work of the school and creates strong internal accountability for student learning, and therefore must articulate the purpose of the school’s organization: to facilitate student learning as defined by a set of goals” (Zmuda and Harada 2008, 1).

Zmuda and Harada (2008, 14) list the following factors to consider when crafting or revising a school library mission statement:

- Existing school (or school system) mission statement
- Scheduling of time in the library (flexible versus fixed time)
- Existing cornerstone and summative assessment tasks that hold students accountable for information literacy learning
- Designed relationships between library media specialists and teaching staff (expectation for collaboration as demonstrated in practices, protocols, committee work, and staff development)
- Long-term educational vision of 21st-century learning (as evidenced in national, state/provincial, or local documents)

- The American Association of School Librarians' "Standards for the 21st-Century Learner"

In our Canadian context, we should also consult *Achieving Information Literacy: Standards for School Library Programs in Canada* (Asselin, Branch and Oberg 2003).

I will seek to design the school library mission statement in collaboration with administrators and staff. Doing so "legitimizes the [teacher-librarian's] professional role as a teacher-partner" (Zmuda and Harada 2008, 14).

Step 3: Communicate, Collaborate and Lead

I was once told that a teacher-librarian wears many hats, one of which is the instructional leader's hat. As an instructional leader, the teacher-librarian is responsible for collaborating with other teachers in a multitude of ways. Kohm and Nance (2009, 67) emphasize that "to accelerate positive change in your school, one must foster a climate of working together." Collaboration is an essential ingredient in implementing effective change in schools, and since teacher-librarians are experienced collaborators and facilitators, they are instrumental players in creating a collaborative school culture (Hughes-Hassell and Harada 2007).

I hope to extend my role as an instructional leader in the following areas: resources, resource acquisition, scheduling, instructional setting, teaching personnel, support staff, program planning and the facility (Tarasoff and Emperingham 1994). For this to occur, communication with staff and students will be crucial.

Communication and collaboration are essential for effective change agency, as "there is a ceiling effect to how much we can learn if we keep to ourselves" (Fullan 1993, 17). I hope to communicate and collaborate with my staff in the following ways, as outlined by Logan (2000):

- Anticipate upcoming units, themes and projects, and offer services to help teachers achieve outcomes and indicators
- Collect Internet links to share with teachers and administrators
- Involve teachers and students in selecting materials
- Become involved in other activities around the school
- Help teachers with new technologies
- Listen for openings and offer assistance through materials or actual involvement

The collaborative role of a teacher-librarian will put me in an excellent position to be a leader, and collaboration is essential for effective change to occur.

Step 4: Transform the Library into a 21st-Century Learning Hub

If we want our students to become information literate, we must become more than transmitters of knowledge; we must create dynamic learning environments in which our students can move beyond simply consuming information.

As a new teacher-librarian, I hope to build an inviting environment and a collaborative atmosphere in my school library. I want my students to have a comfortable place where they can work, relax, learn, create and do. Bookstores and public libraries have been exploring ways to make their spaces more comfortable and café-like. I will seek out ways to make changes and add subtle details to my school library; school libraries and classrooms are "most effective when they are literate and purposeful, organized and accessible, and, most of all, authentic" (Miller 2008, 23).

As we continue into the 21st century, we must examine what it means to teach and to learn in networked, technology-rich and digital environments. Schools and teachers must "thoughtfully and intentionally design learning environments and tasks, develop new images and acquire new expertise to design and facilitate meaningful learning with technology" (Friesen 2009, 3).

Communication technologies have drastically changed how learners communicate, receive, reflect upon and create knowledge. Therefore, the school library should be a place where students go to access programs, software and new technologies (such as laptops with Wi-Fi access, the iPod Touch and Flip cameras). Our 21st-century learners also need unlimited access to materials, information and advice. A virtual library can play an instrumental role in the instructional culture of the school (Zmuda and Harada 2008). A virtual library also allows students' learning to extend beyond the classroom into the larger community and the world. Making these tools and options available to our students would increase our production capabilities and our communication possibilities (Loertscher, Koechlin and Zwaan 2008).

Step 5: Integrate Technology into the Library

Formats, technologies, learning needs and our schools are evolving, and so are our students (Valenza and Johnson 2009). As a teacher-librarian, I must seek

out new and innovative strategies to engender and strengthen literacy in my school library.

Technology has changed how we teach and how our students learn, so why not use technology to promote literacy? Johnson (2010) claims, "Yesterday's libraries were all about books. Tomorrow's libraries will be all about readers." Therefore, I hope to move beyond promoting reading through displays, events, storytime and booktalks by creating a school library website or a wiki. This online space would contain or link to a blog, podcasts, RSS feeds, Twitter, book trailers, e-books, online book clubs and other Web 2.0 tools that promote literacy.

If I am to lead the way in information technology, it is imperative that I model how technology can be used to create engaging learning environments and powerful library programs, and how technology can allow readers to read in a variety of modes and formats. By doing so, I will be able to lead and collaborate with other teachers while helping them integrate new technologies into their teaching.

Step 6: Develop Information Literacy

The library should be a place where students and teachers can learn, test and share new knowledge and information. Asselin, Branch and Oberg (2003, 4) state that "the major learning outcome for the school library program is to develop students who are information literate." What does it mean to be literate when we are, as Kist (2010, 2) describes it, "experiencing a vast transformation of the way we read and write, and a broadening of the way we conceptualize literacy"?

"Never before have so many people, on their own, had the ability to find so much information about so many things" (Friedman 2005, 152). Thus, school libraries must rise to the challenge of developing information-literate students. As a teacher-librarian, I hope to provide numerous opportunities for my students to learn how to access, analyze, evaluate and create knowledge. As Asselin, Branch and Oberg (2003, 5) write,

If each school library were to have a teacher-librarian who taught children and youth the skills necessary to be effective users of information in all its forms, a powerful mechanism would be in place for enabling Canadian children and youth to be literate citizens, lifelong learners, and contributing adults in a learning society.

As a teacher-librarian, my role is to prepare my students for an unknown future. To achieve this, I must view teaching and learning as more than just the delivery and consumption of information. For this change to occur, the library must become a space where learning is a social process, where the learner is the primary focus, and where students interact with other learners and resources to create meaning (Hughes-Hassell and Harada 2007).

Step 7: Advocate Using Research-Based Evidence

Resource-rich libraries with qualified teacher-librarians are instrumental in promoting literacy and engaging students in meaningful ways. Despite empirical studies that confirm the measurable impact school libraries have on student achievement and their ubiquitous links to 21st-century learning, teacher-librarian positions are becoming obsolete. Haycock (2003, 9) reports,

The mounting empirical and anecdotal evidence indicates that Canada's school libraries are not at their best; far from it. Across the country, teacher-librarians are losing their jobs or being reassigned. Collections are becoming depleted owing to budget cuts. Some principals believe that in the age of the Internet and the classroom workstation, the school library is an artifact.

If administrators and school districts are in fact viewing the school library as an artifact, we must assert that the library program is an integral part of the school, and we must have evidence to support our claims.

Evidence-based practice is about "school librarians taking action—action that is informed by systematic research and guided by experience and wisdom" (Hughes-Hassell and Harada 2007, 76). It will be critical for me to communicate to administrators, staff and board members the current research on school library programs and their positive impact on student achievement. This evidence could be showcased on the school library website, with links to international, national, provincial, local and school-based documents that highlight the role of school libraries in student learning. The school library mission statement and goals for student learning must be communicated to all staff and should also be linked to current research.

Evidence-based practice is a "mindset and action orientation that strives to continuously improve on existing processes as times change, as things evolve,

and as research informs” (Hughes-Hassell and Harada 2007, 76). It is an opportunity for teacher-librarians to take action and to implement strategies to become a living solution for keeping school libraries alive. The time is now.

Conclusion

People have asked me why I am willing to leave my current role as an English language arts teacher for a teacher-librarian position that may be in jeopardy in the near future. My answer is simple: the changes in school libraries are not about jumping on the bandwagon; they represent the 21st century and shifts in the information and communication landscapes. I want to be part of this exciting and crucial movement in education. I want to seize this opportunity to lead the change by collaborating with staff, by transforming my library into a 21st-century learning hub, by integrating technology into my library program, by developing information literacy and by advocating for school libraries. I want to be part of the teacher-librarian team leading the change before our school libraries face irrelevance. If school libraries become obsolete, it will be next to impossible for our students to have equal access to information and to develop the necessary skills to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens. For the good of society, I am more than willing to take this risk.

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If You Give a School a Teacher-Librarian . . .

Heather Eby

With the teacher-librarian's instructional expertise, creativity, and willingness to collaborate with teachers and assess student progress, why don't more teachers see the value of regularly working with a teacher-librarian? Despite the numerous studies that indicate the advantages of working with a teacher-librarian, many teachers are still reluctant.

In this article, I will reflect on the benefits of working with a qualified teacher-librarian, using the circular story format found in the children's book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (Numeroff 1985).

If you give a school a teacher-librarian, she'll ask for teachers to collaborate with her.

Any learning specialist will tell you that collaboration is at the heart of the teacher-librarian's role. Unfortunately, many teachers are reluctant to enter into a collaborative relationship with the teacher-librarian, and the teacher-librarian's dilemma is how to get teachers to collaborate with her. Montiel-Overall (2007, 19) defines teacher-librarian collaboration for the 21st century as

a trusting working relationship between two or more equal participants involved in shared thinking, shared planning, and shared creation of something new. Through a shared vision and shared objectives, student learning opportunities are created that integrate subject content and information literacy through jointly planning, implementing, and evaluating student progress through the instructional process in order to improve teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum.

It's hard to believe that students and teachers wouldn't jump at the opportunity to benefit from a collaborative experience with a teacher-librarian. Many experts extol the benefits of collaboration; simply put, "it is the results of collaboration—improved learning and increased achievement—that make collaboration worthwhile" (Gross and Kientz 1999, 21).

When you give the teacher-librarian some collaborating teachers, she'll want to design instructional units or inquiry projects with them that include information literacy skills for their students.

The importance of developing students' information literacy skills, so that they can cope with the volume of information available to them, has made the teacher-librarian's role as information specialist a necessity in today's schools.

Teachers need to understand that teaching these skills is no longer optional. Too often I hear teachers say, "I just don't have time to go through the research process that thoroughly. I just need to get it done so I can report on it." What these teachers don't realize is that if students are going to be prepared to live and work in the 21st century, teachers must focus on the process of learning rather than on the content and the final product.

With the help of a certificated teacher-librarian who has additional training in information literacy instruction, "children and youth can be taught the skills necessary to be effective users of information in all its forms" and to become "literate citizens, lifelong learners, and contributing adults in a learning society" (Asselin, Branch and Oberg 2003, 5). As Zmuda and Harada (2008, 64) state, teacher-librarians "have more to teach than how to locate resources: we help learners connect the mastery of disciplinary knowledge with the processes of critical thinking."

As the students work on their projects, the teacher-librarian will want to help differentiate to meet the individual needs of all students.

Research has shown that learning is more powerful and effective if teaching is focused on the individual needs and abilities of the learner. The most effective instructional experiences and teaching strategies are tailored to suit the learning style or preferences of individual learners (Zmuda and Harada 2008).

Today's classroom has many challenges, including a diversity of learners, special education students, English language learners and multi-age classrooms, as well as increasing class sizes and diminishing budgets for resource assistance. Here is where collaboration between a teacher-librarian and a classroom teacher can reduce the pressure of differentiated instruction being placed solely on the teacher's shoulders.

On her website, Carol Tomlinson says that differentiated instruction is "an approach to teaching that advocates active planning for and attention to student differences in classrooms, in the context of high quality curriculums."¹ Who is better equipped to help meet students' individual needs than the teacher-librarian?

Koehler and Zwaan (2008) have written an exceptional article on ways a teacher-librarian can support a diversity of learners in the classroom. They demonstrate how a teacher-librarian can differentiate the content, the process, the product and even the learning environment. As Zmuda (2006, 19) writes, "The library media center has long been a beloved and specialized learning environment for students, a place rich with opportunities to pursue specialized inquiries, interests, and ideas. It is the most natural venue in schools for differentiation, integration of technology, and collaboration."

Differentiating for students will remind the teacher-librarian to assist teachers in assessing learning outcomes and providing feedback to students.

As Stripling (2007, 29) writes,

Assessment is a critical element of effective teaching. Library media specialists who are able to provide evidence that students have learned information fluency skills will be more successful in their teaching and more integral to the instructional program of the school. Through assessment, library media specialists have the potential to transform their role from invisible and unheard ghost to the most sought-after partner in the school.

You wouldn't think that teachers would turn away any help they could get with assessing their students—and they don't. In fact, offering to help teachers plan and complete assessment is one of the most effective ways for a teacher-librarian to entice a teacher into entering into a collaborative relationship. "The true point of collaboration begins with what the assessment

is designed to measure, which should be a combination of the learning specialist's goals and classroom teacher's objectives" (Zmuda and Harada 2008, 85). By working in partnership with a teacher-librarian, teachers benefit from the added knowledge of another professional in designing instructional units that will meet curricular outcomes and in measuring each student's success in achieving learning goals. Students benefit from this shared assessment because they are given more opportunities to receive feedback from different perspectives. They can reflect on that feedback to make improvements to their process and product and, thereby, are more apt to achieve their learning outcomes.

As teacher-librarians, we must be a part of "value-added assessment" in schools in order to make ourselves of value. "Value-added assessment provides critical feedback, stimulates self-assessment, and promotes schoolwide learning" (Harada 2007, 96). We need to make the connection between our library programs and the school goals, collecting the data and analyzing the progress from our assessment of students to prove our worth.

When students are working on their inquiry projects, the teacher-librarian will want to infuse technology into their learning and to introduce exciting Web 2.0 tools to develop their creativity and ICT skills.

Without a doubt, working with a teacher-librarian who has made technology integration a priority in teaching and professional development will create students who are prepared, motivated and ready to learn more.

Technology integration is about more than introducing and playing with the "bling" of the latest Web 2.0 tools. Today's learners need to be well versed in the information literacy skills that are tied to the use of technology. One example of this is learning how to "read the Web." Classroom teachers view this as yet another task that they have to incorporate into ever-growing curricular demands, similar to inquiry-based learning. However, as Hughes-Hassell and Harada (2007, 96) write, "The responsibility for teaching students to be effective and efficient Web readers belongs to all educators. A team approach allows students to benefit from the experiences and understandings of varied perspectives." Collaboration with a teacher-librarian who is trained in both reading and instructional technology benefits everyone as these

Web-literacy skills can be seamlessly integrated into the inquiry unit.

With the rapidly changing Internet, teacher-librarians have no choice but to keep on top of digital resources and tools, not only for their students' sake but also for themselves. Professional learning networks (PLNs) that include social networking sites, RSS feeds and online learning communities have allowed teacher-librarians to become the experts in technology integration in schools.

Valenza (2007, 105) describes the 21st-century teacher-librarian as follows:

You think Web 2.0 for learners. You know the potential that new technologies offer learners as information consumers and producers. You are exploring the pedagogical uses of digital storytelling, wikis, podcasts, streaming video, and student-produced learning objects as possibilities beyond paper and PowerPoint. You continually think about the best possible communication tool for a particular project and how you might use the new tools for teaching, practicing, and reflecting on information fluency.

Seeing teachers excited to be working with her will remind the teacher-librarian of the other aspect of her job—promoting literacy and the love of reading.

I would be remiss if I highlighted the benefits of collaborating with a teacher-librarian without mentioning one of the more traditional aspects of our job—sharing the love of reading and children's literature with students. Many classroom teachers have much knowledge on reading instruction and children's literature; however, it is the combined experience and expertise of the teacher-librarian and the classroom teacher that creates a literacy-rich learning environment for students.

Cart (2007, 262) describes the teacher-librarian as a "literacy leader" with the responsibility of modelling reading behaviour in the school, talking about books, knowing the students in order to develop collections that engage the reading community and believing in the benefits of powerful reading. Collaborating with their literacy leader benefits teachers and students in numerous ways: developing differentiated literature circle projects, communicating the needs of a reluctant reader, creating guided reading opportunities with the teacher-librarian and, most important, teaching

students to love and value reading as a lifelong skill and a source of pleasure.

Having so much fun collaborating, the teacher-librarian will remember the importance of gathering evidence of students' learning and sharing it with others in order to advocate for her job!

Unfortunately, this part of my story is deemed a necessity in today's economic times because of the lack of knowledge about the importance of having a qualified professional teacher-librarian in today's schools. Today's teacher-librarians need to do more than just collaborate with teachers; they need to take that work and turn it into evidence that what they do in schools matters. Teacher-librarians need to convince those who make staffing decisions that student achievement will increase if qualified teacher-librarians are employed.

After learning about evidence-based practice and having recently witnessed the demise of several teacher-librarian positions in Winnipeg, I no longer see advocating as optional; rather, it is a mandatory part of my job as a teacher-librarian. Not only do I need to begin documenting learning outcomes achieved, student progress and successful instructional practices of my own, but I also need to start keeping track of research on the effectiveness of school libraries. To increase my ability to be an advocate for teacher-librarians, I have begun reading articles, research studies and statistical surveys on the impact of teacher-librarians and school libraries on student achievement.

The report that has influenced me the most and that contains relevant and current data for Canadian schools is the Ontario Library Association's *Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario* (Klinger et al 2009). Several other studies on the many benefits of hiring and collaborating with a qualified professional teacher-librarian are being done in Ohio, Colorado and across the globe. These are the reports I must discuss with my administrators, parents and fellow teachers if I am to convince them of the importance of teacher-librarians in schools.

Will my story have a happy ending?

Hopefully, all the evidence and action research will remind the administration and collaborating teachers how valuable a teacher-librarian is to a school. Then every school will want a teacher-librarian!

If You Give a School a Teacher-Librarian . . .

If you give a school a teacher-librarian, she'll ask for teachers to collaborate with her.

When you give the teacher-librarian some collaborating teachers, she'll want to design instructional units or inquiry projects with them that include information literacy skills for their students.

As the students work on their projects, the teacher-librarian will want to help differentiate to meet the individual needs of all students.

Differentiating for students will remind the teacher-librarian to assist teachers in assessing learning outcomes and providing feedback to students.

When students are working on their inquiry projects, the teacher-librarian will want to infuse technology into their learning and to introduce exciting Web 2.0 tools to develop their creativity and ICT skills.

Seeing teachers excited to be working with her will remind the teacher-librarian of the other aspect of her job—promoting literacy and the love of reading.

Having so much fun collaborating, the teacher-librarian will remember the importance of gathering evidence of students' learning and sharing it with others in order to advocate for her job!


Hopefully, all the evidence and action research will remind the administration and collaborating teachers how valuable a teacher-librarian is to a school. Then every school will want a teacher-librarian!

Note

1. See www.caroltomlinson.com.

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Leading Through Learning: Web 2.0 Tools and the Teacher-Librarian

Franki Sibberson

The library, as we once knew it, may no longer be relevant. School librarians, as we once knew them, may no longer be relevant. And, yet, this is undoubtedly the most exciting time in history to be a librarian.

The future of the school library as a relevant and viable institution is largely dependent on us and how quickly we respond to change. (Valenza and Johnson 2009, 29)

The pressure for teacher-librarians to remain relevant and viable is complicated by the rapid emergence of new technologies that are changing our jobs. As someone who worked for two decades as an elementary teacher before becoming a K-5 teacher-librarian in 2008, I can understand why a teacher or teacher-librarian might feel overwhelmed (and often inept) when faced with demands to rapidly acquire new proficiencies in the use of ever-changing technologies.

The key to success for today's teacher-librarians may lie in Valenza and Johnson's (2009) words *relevant* and *viable*. *Relevant* is defined as "having significant bearing on the matter at hand," and *viable* is defined as "capable of growing or developing." In a world where technology and even the definition of what it means to be literate are changing rapidly, teacher-librarians can thrive only if we continually have new technologies quite literally in our hands. The more we use technology in multiple forms throughout our daily literate lives, the better we can understand the strengths and limitations of various tools. The more we use new tools, the better we can understand how they are changing the ways in which we learn, and the better able we will be to bring that understanding to students and teachers.

If we, as teacher-librarians, want to continue to be leaders in our schools and communities, we need to be risk takers at a higher level than ever before, being willing to experience failure and frustration as we grapple with hardware, software and different systems of information delivery. For teacher-librarians (who have long had the reputation of being accomplished readers, writers and educators), working with tools and technology that are difficult for us to understand and master—and sharing those struggles with our students and colleagues—takes a big leap of faith. Valenza and Johnson (2009, 30) ask,

How do we stay one step ahead of our staff and students in information accessing, evaluation, use, and communication in order to be seen as experts and collaborators? Do we know more about current information strategies than our school's technology coach? No excuses. We must! If we are truly information professionals, we need not only to keep up, but also be on the cutting edge of changes in the search and information landscapes.

I, too, believe that becoming authentic users of the new tools, forums and media available for gathering, using and creating information is no longer optional.

The Changing Faces of Schools and Literacy

Entering the field of teacher-librarianship in this era has been both exciting and overwhelming. It has become clear that school libraries are changing. How could they not be? The ways in which we gather information, create information and communicate in general are changing. We are in the midst of exciting

changes that are already having an impact on our entire educational system. According to Warlick,

For decades, education has been an easy institution to define. It consisted of a set of accepted literacy skills, a definable body of knowledge, and the pedagogies for teaching those skills to willing students who were arranged in straight rows. Today, for the first time in decades (generations of teachers), we are facing the challenge of changing our notions about teaching and learning to adapt to a rapidly changing world.¹

Not only is education changing but the very definition of literacy has also changed. The US-based National Council of Teachers of English (2008) states, "As society and technology change, so does literacy." This is especially true of information literacy. According to the American Association of School Librarians (2007, 3),

The definition of information literacy has become more complex as resources and technologies have changed.

Information literacy has progressed from the simple definition of using reference resources to find information. Multiple literacies, including digital, visual, textual, and technological, have now joined information literacy as crucial skills for this century.

The ways in which we learn and communicate, both in and out of school, are changing. Web 2.0 technologies are making information more available and are having an impact on how we find and use information. This, in turn, is having a huge impact on schools and student learning.

What Does This Mean for the School Library?

I have been doing a lot of thinking about what it means to be a teacher-librarian at a time when the ways we read, write and access information are changing so quickly. With all the new tools and the talk about 21st-century literacies, and with Web 2.0 tools and their impact on learners, I wonder what all of this means for school libraries.

I agree with many experts that our general mission as school librarians has not changed. If we look at the big goals of libraries and school libraries, they have been consistent. In an interview, library expert Doug Johnson explains,

For me, professionally, my mission has not changed since I started in library work over 25 years ago—

"Teaching people to effectively find and use information to meet their needs." For sure the tools have changed (print to electronic information sources), skill emphasis has shifted from finding to evaluating information, and the teaching role as opposed to the "providing" role of librarians has grown.

I'd also argue that some core values of librarianship are as important if not more important than ever: commitment to intellectual freedom; teaching respect for intellectual property; working toward information access for all citizens; the promotion of information as a basis for good decision-making; and that education is really about teaching people to teach themselves. (Johnson and Erikson 2006)

But with so many new tools, we can't offer the same things we offered even a few years ago. If we are to maintain our core values as teacher-librarians, we need to figure out how these new technologies fit into our mission. Asselin, Branch and Oberg (2003, 46) state,

New and developing technologies have stimulated opportunities for different and exciting approaches to teaching and learning. As well, the proliferation of information in our society and the huge impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) mean students must develop new information seeking skills.

My Own Journey with Web 2.0

I recently followed with interest a Twitter conversation that started with a question from Karl Fisch, director of technology at an American high school (Barack 2009; Fisch 2009). He asked, "Can a media specialist do their job now if they are not also a social media specialist?" Needless to say, the conversation that followed was heated and passionate. But it was a conversation that made me begin to reflect on my own use of Web 2.0 tools.

When I am honest with myself, I realize that I did not begin using Web 2.0 tools with any enthusiasm at all. After all, I am a book girl. I love books and bookstores, the telephone, yellow legal pads and pens. I did not really see the point of adding any new tools to my life.

I am almost embarrassed to admit how I entered the Web 2.0 world. My friend Mary Lee Hahn and I have a blog called *A Year of Reading* that we started over four years ago.² Mary Lee and I have a long-time friendship around books, and she suggested that we blog about our reading. Although I had no idea what a blog was, I agreed. And the journey began.

I didn't really understand the concept of blogging for the first several months, but once I did, I was hooked. Blogging helped me see the potential of networks in the 21st century. I started to learn from and with others who were interested in children's literacy.

From blogs, I expanded my network through Twitter and Ning. I taught myself to use Prezi by watching several video tutorials on the site. I experimented with reading on a Kindle. I've attended webinars and taken online courses. I now have a Goodreads account and a Delicious account. I keep my to-do list online at TeuxDeux. In writing this article, I am attempting to use Evernote to organize my notes.³

I agree with Warlick when he writes, "As we work in a time of rapid change, with students who are digital natives, from within a dramatically new information landscape, the best description of the 21st century teacher is Master Learner."⁴

Looking back, I realize that my own learning has been greatly influenced by the possibilities of new tools. My network has grown. I rarely use pen and paper.

I now know that people who blog have a passion about something, and they have a real audience. I know that most bloggers spend as much time learning from other bloggers as they do working on their own blog posts. I know that a presentation must be more than just bullet points, or the audience will become bored and the presentation tool will be useless. I understand the need for finding the perfect visual to support my point. I now find books to add to my to-read stack from people I've never met in person but whose tastes I know are similar to mine. More important, I know first-hand the frustration and problem solving necessary in using new tools. And I've also experienced the thrill of seeing the possibilities of a new tool.

Not only has my own learning changed but each learning experience has had an impact on my work with students and my collaboration with staff. The more tools I use, the better able I am to see the big picture of how information changes the ways in which I learn. I have realized that my goal is not to give students the skills to master any one technology, because that technology will likely be gone in a few years or will have morphed into something dramatically different. Rather, what I can give students is the mindset that helps them figure out the information they need; to match that need to potential tools; to develop a sense of how social networks can help them; and to be flexible and open to trying multiple tools,

networks and paths to meet their learning goals. And I can do much of that by mentoring through my own examples of how I use these tools and networks as a literate learner.

Teacher-Librarian as Leader

Returning to the question that Fisch (2009) asked on Twitter, I believe that teacher-librarians can do the job in the traditional sense, but we cannot be leaders without being experts on how new tools are changing information literacy. For me, being a leader means being a change agent. We cannot be change agents if we ourselves are not willing to change. According to Hughes-Hassell and Harada (2007, 6), "Change agents must . . . exhibit the habit of continuous learning." If libraries are to remain relevant and viable, change is key.

Technology should definitely be changing the work we do in libraries. But the ways in which we use technology must continue to support student learning. Without using new tools ourselves, we run the risk of having technology-rich libraries that have no impact on student learning. According to Hughes-Hassell and Harada (2007, 63), "In the context of school libraries and school goals and objectives, evidence-based practice means that the day-by-day work of school librarians is directed towards demonstrating the tangible impact and outcomes of services and initiatives in relation to student learning outcomes." Collaborating with teachers in ways that support student learning is still an overarching goal. Technology can help move our work forward in supporting student learning.

Reading the work of Joyce Valenza, Buffy Hamilton and other leaders who are in schools full-time has been inspiring.⁵ But it has become clear that they would not be making the difference they are making as leaders without first being users of the technological tools. Their work with students, their lesson designs and their collaboration with teachers all depend on their own understanding of the ever-expanding definitions of what it means to be literate. If we want our libraries to be places where students not only gather information but also collaborate and create information, technology must play a role. But the technology has to be used in ways that support student learning.

Through my own experiences as a learner, I have become convinced that we cannot fully understand these new innovations without using them authentically to support our own learning. If teacher-librarians

hope to be leaders in the journey toward school reform, it is critical that we become users of the Web 2.0 tools and that we use the learning we gain in our teaching. How else can we support students in using these new tools? How can we support them in finding and creating information, if we ourselves have not used the tools to find and create information? How can we now ask kids to problem solve through new tools if we ourselves are not willing to do so? How can we collaborate with teachers in making a difference in student learning if we continue to use the same tools we've used in the past when so many new and better tools are available?

When I think about the challenges and possibilities of our work as teacher-librarians, I realize that we can become overwhelmed and choose to do things as we always have, or we can accept the invitation to grow and change and use our own learning to have an impact on the learning of our students. I agree wholeheartedly with Valenza (2009) when she writes,

This is the best time in history to be a teacher-librarian. Major shifts in our information and communication landscapes present new opportunities for librarians to teach and lead in areas that were always considered part of their role, helping learners of all ages effectively use, manage, evaluate, organize and communicate information, and to love reading in its glorious new variety.

When I started my master's program at the University of Alberta, my biggest question was, Where do I begin to create a library of the 21st century? I now believe that one of the best places to begin is with my own learning and use of Web 2.0 tools.

Having my own experiences as a learner who uses these tools for authentic purposes is the best way I know to keep the work of the teacher-librarian relevant and to help students begin to use new information tools for their own learning.

Notes

1. See <http://davidwarlick.com/wiki/pmwiki.php?n=Main.OurStudentsOurWorlds>.


2. See <http://readingyear.blogspot.com>.

3. Twitter (<http://twitter.com>), Ning (www.ning.com), Prezi (<http://prezi.com>), Goodreads (www.goodreads.com), Delicious (<http://delicious.com>), TeuxDeux (<http://teuxdeux.com>), Evernote (www.evernote.com)

4. See <http://davidwarlick.com/wiki/pmwiki.php/Main/TheArtAndTechniqueOfCultivatingYourPersonalLearningNetwork>.

5. Visit Valenza's website at www.sdsc.org/shs/library/jvweb.html and Hamilton's blog The Unquiet Librarian at <http://theunquietlibrarian.wordpress.com>.

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Leading the Way: Implementing Evidence-Based Practice in School Libraries

Kelly Reiersen

How do you know that the students who come to your library are learning the informational skills they need? Can you show that your library program has had a positive impact on student achievement at your school? How is the work being done in the library preparing your students for the 21st century?

I wonder how many of us would answer these questions by telling our administrators and parents that “more than 60 studies have shown clear evidence of [the] connection between student achievement and the presence of school libraries with qualified school library media specialists” (NCLIS 2005). Would you bring out the research reports on school libraries and say, “Just look. These can tell you that I make a difference”? If this were all it took, the number of teacher-librarians in Alberta wouldn’t have dropped from 550 to 106 since 1978, and more than 10 per cent of Ontario elementary schools would have teacher-librarians (Haycock 2003, 11).

Instead of relying on outside support for our library programs, we need to begin looking at our programs and asking ourselves how we can show that teacher-librarians are not a drain on school budgets but, rather, a valuable resource. What do we need to do to ensure that we are positively affecting student achievement at the school level? How can we effectively assess the work we do so that we are developing the best program possible? And how can we share this evidence in a way that supports our programs?

According to Todd (2003a), the answer is evidence-based practice. By adopting the model of evidence-based practice, teacher-librarians move “from a ‘tell me’ framework to a ‘show me’ framework, from a persuasive framework to a declarative framework” (Todd 2007, 62). He states,

The hallmark of a twenty-first-century school library will be actions that show that it makes a real

difference to student learning, that it contributes in tangible and significant ways to the development of human understanding, meaning making, and knowledge construction. In essence, the focus of the professional practice of school librarianship revolves around learning outcomes of students—the knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills that students develop because of school libraries, and the demonstration of these dispositions—rather than around the information infrastructure, that is, resources, technology, and organizational processes. (p 62)

Moving toward evidence-based practice will not only give us school-level evidence to show that our library programs have a positive impact on student learning; it will also guide our work so we can develop best practices in the library.

Todd (2008b, 18–19) describes evidence-based practice as

an approach to professional practice in school libraries that systematically engages research-derived evidence, school librarian-observed evidence, and user-reported evidence in iterative processes of decision making, development, and continuous improvement to achieve the school’s mission and goals, which fundamentally center on student achievement, quality learning, and quality teaching.

We also need to make our libraries learner centres where our daily work is “directed towards demonstrating the tangible impact and outcomes of service and initiatives in relation to student learning outcomes” (Todd 2007, 63).

Todd (2007, 64) says that “evidence-based practice can be conceptualized as a framework of three interrelated and integrated phases: evidence *for* practice, evidence *in* practice, and evidence *of* practice.”¹

Evidence *for* practice means knowing the research (Todd 2007). This “goes beyond telling stakeholders

that it exists" (p 64), which we can all do. Instead, we must have "a deep and explicit knowledge of the complex array of findings, and [be] able to speak with confidence about how these findings shape [our] professional practice" (p 64). We need to develop our understanding of how students learn best by reading professional journals, following teacher-librarian blogs, being involved and keeping up with the latest library research. This will give us the information that will guide our work.

This research should be a starting point when we are planning our library programs. It isn't enough to just read the information; we need to take this new knowledge and use it in our own programs. In essence, we need to transform what we are doing based on the information we have read. We are then involved in applying what we have learned to our practice.

Now, how do we know that what we have done is working? This is when we are involved in evidence of practice. We are assessing the work we do by getting feedback and looking at the final results. This means becoming "practitioner-researchers" (Gordon 2007, 161).

To develop an evidence-based library program, we need to move from "information inputs to knowledge and skills outputs, such as mastery of curriculum content, critical thinking and knowledge-building competencies, mastery of complex technical skills for accessing and evaluating information, and using information to construct deep knowledge" (Todd 2008a, 43). We are asked to focus on the learning outcomes, which involves collaborating with teachers, disseminating the curriculum and assessing whether we are successfully meeting the outcomes. As Koechlin and Zwaan (2002, 22) urge us, we need to do the following:

Develop an action plan based on the research. Implement it and start recording all indications that you, your co-teachers and your students are experiencing success. Think about how and why they were successful. Keep in mind that assessment of student learning is not only to inform the student and parent of individual progress but also to inform us as educators so that we can improve our teaching and learning methodologies. When achievement is less than you had hoped for look for the areas of weakness and devise a way to provide students with experiences that will facilitate greater success next time.

Gordon (2007, 166) discusses action research as "a tool of evidence-based practice ' . . . where day-by-day

professional work is directed towards demonstrating the tangible impact and outcomes of sound decision making and implementation of organizational goals and objectives' (Todd 2003[b])." How are we evaluating our programs? Are we thinking only in terms of the number of books we have or how many students come through the door? We need to go beyond the numbers and begin looking at the impact we have on the learning in the library (Langhorne 2005, 35). We are teachers, and our goal is to improve student learning in our schools, so that is the evidence we need to focus on. When involved in action research, an integral part of evidence-based practice, teacher-librarians and classroom teachers "attend more carefully to their methods, their perceptions and understandings, and their whole approach to the teaching process. Importantly, they think critically about how to develop the targets for rigorous teaching and learning and how to assess and evaluate the achievement of these outcomes" (Harada 2003).

Once we have the evidence, we need to make it available to not only the administration but the entire learning community. The information can be shared through a newsletter, the school website, staff and parent council meetings, and even district publications. Todd (2007, 66) cautions teacher-librarians to "judiciously and carefully shape that communication to show how it is situated in and responsive to school goals, initiatives, and improvement agendas, and to provide ideas as to how the whole school community might begin to take action on the findings." He provides us with key questions to help us share our evidence:

- Does your school library Web site present key research findings . . . in a compelling way that is succinct, clear, and easily understood by various stakeholders?
- Are student learning outcomes the focus of your communications?
- Do your mission and goal statements for student learning in the school library link to key research claims?
- Do you have a collection of research resources available for teachers in each of the curriculum standards? (p 66)

Without evidence directly linked to student achievement, it is difficult to show how the work of teacher-librarians helps students. Teacher-librarians need to find a way to show administrators, principals and other teachers the impact school libraries have on student achievement (Todd 2003a). We need to go

beyond reports that list circulation and usage and start gathering and examining evidence. We need to go beyond quoting studies done in Australia and the United States. We need to become constructivists who “discover how to access and remediate students’ learning and critically evaluate” our library programs (Gordon 2007). We “need to think of data not only as inputs (how many volumes do we have, how many students come through the door, what is our budget amount), but as outputs—how do the resources we have available in the library impact student learning and support instruction” (Langhorne 2005, 35).

Adopting evidence-based practice will show the role we play in student achievement and will guide our practice. It “calls for school librarians to undertake the development and implementation of evidence-generating strategies that enable them to collect local evidence of student learning outcomes” (Todd 2008b, 20). Then, when we are asked what we do to improve student learning, we will be able to show the evidence. Actually, if we have been sharing the evidence as we are supposed to, then the question won’t even be asked. Let’s start leading the way with evidence-based practice.

Note

1. See Table 1 in Todd (2008b, 19).

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Leading by Example: Teacher-Librarians and Evidence-Based Practice

Rebecca S Wilson

Who do you talk to when you are excited about something that is working in your school library? Who do you go to for advice? Who cares about the library program the way you do? The school library should be a place of schoolwide ownership, with every student, support worker, teacher and administrator taking pride in the facility and the contributions library staff make to student achievement.

As teacher-librarians, we are responsible for many facets of the school library program. One of our priorities is to help students meet the curriculum's learning outcomes. Specifically, as Asselin, Branch and Oberg (2003, 4) state, "the major learning outcome for the school library program is to develop students who are information literate." In today's ever-changing landscape of information, it is imperative that students learn the skills to become lifelong learners.

By collaborating with classroom teachers to meet the needs of students, teacher-librarians make a valuable contribution to student achievement. Lance and Loertscher (2001, 6) note that "a growing body of evidence suggests that high-quality school library media programs can increase academic achievement scores by as much as 20%." This is a significant impact and should be celebrated by all.

How do you, as a teacher-librarian, determine what kind of effect your school library program is having on student achievement? Can you clearly articulate its impact to a friend, a student, a parent, a colleague or an administrator? Can you support your claims with evidence?

Evidence-Based Practice

What is evidence-based practice (EBP)? Simply, EBP means that "we should base what we do on the evidence of what makes a difference to student learning"

(Haycock 2004, 6). More specifically, EBP is "a systematic approach to increasing results by focusing on the effect of best practices on an individual patient, client, or student" (Dickinson 2005, 16). The EBP movement did not originate in education; rather, it "has its origins in the health care area, emerging strongly in the early 1990s in the United Kingdom in the fields of medicine and health care services" (Todd 2007, 58). However, the movement has spread to other professional fields, including education, and "the focus on evidence-based practice of school libraries has emerged strongly within the last five years" (p 62).

Why is there a focus on EBP? Kiefer (2008, 24) contends that "to be players in 21st-century learning, it is more important than ever that [teacher-librarians] do all we can to document how our programs are essential and vital to increasing real student learning across the curriculum." If we know which aspects of our library programs benefit student learning, we can safeguard those practices and work to improve others. We can also communicate those benefits to students, parents, colleagues and administrators. Best of all, "placing emphasis on systematically gathered evidence moves school library advocacy from a 'tell me' framework to a 'show me' framework" (Todd 2008, 21).

How can teacher-librarians begin to understand and apply EBP in order to improve their school library programs? Geitgey and Tepe (2007, 10) outline three steps to understanding EBP:

1. Know the research that demonstrates how school libraries affect learning.
2. Mesh this knowledge with your own wisdom to build student learning.
3. Work with your own school library to collect evidence that shows you do make a difference.

Todd (2008) describes these steps as "evidence for practice," "evidence in practice" and "evidence of

practice." Evidence *for* practice is akin to knowing the research. For Todd, it means focusing "primarily on examining and using best available empirical research to form practices and inform current actions, and to identify best practices that have been tested and validated through empirical research" (p 19).

Evidence *in* practice combines knowing the research with the knowledge of the teacher-librarian. Here, the focus is on

school librarians integrating available research evidence with deep knowledge and understanding derived from professional experience, as well as with local evidence, to identify learning dilemmas, learning needs, and achievement gaps to make decisions about the continuous improvement of the school library practices to bring about optimal outcomes and actively contribute to school mission and goals. (Todd 2008, 19)

Last, evidence *of* practice involves the collection of evidence, including "the measured outcomes and impacts of practice, [and] is derived from systematically measured, primarily user-based data. It focuses on the *real results* of what school librarians do" (Todd 2008, 20).

Further, Todd (2007, 64) provides six guiding principles for building an EBP framework in the school library:

1. Know the research, and know the research intimately;
2. Make visible the research foundations of your practice in your school;
3. Make student learning outcomes the center of your evidence;
4. Integrate evidence-generating strategies in your practice that focus on learning outcomes;
5. Mesh results of local evidence of learning outcomes with other evidence in the school, as well as with existing research to establish evidence-based claims, and to build a continuous improvement plan;
6. Disseminate, celebrate and build together on the evidence-based outcomes.

Knowing the research requires access to reliable sources of information. Having 24/7 access to current research is ideal. One way such research can be obtained is through online databases. If you do not have access to appropriate online databases through your school district, try accessing them through your public library or a university library. (Some university libraries offer community library cards for a small annual fee.) In addition, the Evidence for Policy and Practice

Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre), based in the UK, provides free online access to its Research Evidence in Education Library (REEL), and the General Teaching Council (GTC) for England provides research for teachers. Knowing where to find research quickly and efficiently will help you establish EBP.

Meshing the research with your own knowledge is also important. EBP does not ignore professional wisdom; rather, "it acknowledges that this wisdom plays a key role in the interpretation and integration of local circumstances, conditions, and constraints in the planning, design, delivery, and evaluation of instructional interventions" (Todd 2007, 61).

Action-Based Research

How can teacher-librarians collect evidence to show that they are, in fact, making a difference in student learning? Gordon (2007, 166) contends that "action research is well suited to the school library program."

What is action research? "Action research is a tool of evidence-based practice '... where day-by-day professional work is directed toward demonstrating the tangible impact and outcomes of sound decision making and implementation of organizational goals and objectives' (Todd 2003)" (Gordon 2007, 166). Action research uses qualitative methods to collect evidence: "interviews, focus groups, surveys, observations, and journaling" (p 163). Pappas (2008, 22) adds that "quotations from students' reflections might also be included in evidence folders, which could include examples of lessons, student work, sample logs, and examples of assessment tools."

The following free data-collection tools may be helpful:

- Tools for Real-time Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (TRAILS, www.trails-9.org) is, as the website says, a "Web-based system . . . developed to provide an easily accessible and flexible tool for library media specialists and teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in the information-seeking skills of their students."
- SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com) allows one to create surveys. The tool makes it easy to design, collect and analyze data; however, with the basic plan, you are limited in the number of questions and responses per survey.
- Google Docs (<https://docs.google.com>) is another viable option for data collection.

Once teacher-librarians have employed action research, it is important that they share the results with

the rest of the school: "When school librarians incorporate action research into their teaching and share action research with colleagues, collaboration becomes the context for leadership and change" (Gordon 2007, 167). One of Todd's (2007, 74) recommendations is to "develop an evidence-based practice portfolio that brings together the range of data collection instruments, careful summaries of evidences and conclusions drawn, illustrative examples, log book and journal entries, program data about instructional and reading initiatives, and reflective commentaries." Although a traditional portfolio will work, establishing an e-portfolio for the library may be better. One can be created through WordPress (<http://wordpress.com>).

EBP and Leadership

Once teacher-librarians are familiar with EBP, they have the opportunity to take a further leadership role within the school. By using EBP, teacher-librarians are already leading by example. However, they can also help classroom teachers incorporate EBP into their own teaching practices.

Evidence shows that classroom teachers, in general, face barriers to applying EBP. Emmons et al (2009, 142) believe that "one of the barriers to applying educational research is a lack of [information literacy] skills in a world where the complexity and amount of information available has grown exponentially over the past two decades." Williams and Coles (2007, 814) muse, "Could it be that teachers have not tended to develop the kind of information literacy or information attitude which would support evidence-based practice in its fullest sense?"

Teacher-librarians recognize that part of their mandate is to teach just-in-time information literacy skills to students. However, as a leader in the school community, wouldn't a teacher-librarian also be the best candidate to teach those same skills to classroom teachers? Emmons et al (2009, 148) assert that

collaboration between library and [education] faculty has the potential to increase the [information literacy] skills of teacher candidates. We believe that increasing [information literacy] knowledge and skills is a key component in effectively preparing teachers to develop, implement, and critically evaluate evidence-based practices in their classrooms.

Williams and Coles (2007, 814) add that "as the most locally available information specialists, could school librarians and centralised authority wide school library services . . . provide more targeted support for

evidence-based practice?" Teacher-librarians are in the unique position of being able not only to help students meet their learning outcomes but also to help classroom teachers achieve best teaching practices.

Opportunities to teach information literacy skills to colleagues may arise during school, district or provincial PD days. Short lessons could also be taught during regular staff meetings. In addition, teacher-librarians can help teachers locate relevant research by providing access to reliable sources of information—through links on the school library's website, for example.

Conclusion

Teacher-librarians can feel isolated in their profession, which is especially hard for new teacher-librarians. As teacher-librarians work toward building professional learning networks (PLNs), they can also work toward finding, evaluating and applying evidence-based research. For Dickinson (2005, 17), "the phrase *guided by evidence* means . . . that we are not alone, even in our isolated profession."

How will teacher-librarians know when they have mastered EBP? Geitgey and Tepe (2007, 10) quote Todd:

You will know [that] you have achieved evidence-based practice when you are able to provide convincing evidence that you know: "What differences do my school library and its learning initiatives make to student learning outcomes?" and "What are the differences, the tangible learning outcomes and learning benefits of my school library?"

The knowledge acquired through these means and the subsequent confidence teacher-librarians will have in their programs will help open the lines of communication between teacher-librarians, classroom teachers and administrators, thus helping teacher-librarians feel less isolated.

Schoolwide confidence in school library programs will facilitate further leadership opportunities for teacher-librarians in the school community. Teacher-librarians are ideally suited for leadership roles because they

work with every teacher and student in the building. They have a broad view of the curriculum, student learning needs, teaching styles, resources, and technology use. They are in a prime position to implement changes in a comprehensive and continuous manner, to identify concerns and problems, and to assist teachers and administrators. (Hughes-Hassell and Harada 2007, 9)

Alleviating feelings of isolation, opening the lines of communication and inspiring schoolwide confidence in the school library program are all benefits of employing evidence-based practice. However, helping students achieve the learning outcomes of today's curriculum is the best impact we can hope to have. After all, our students are our top priority.

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The Future of Education in the 21st Century

Joanne de Groot

In winter 2010 I had the opportunity to teach Information Technologies for Learning II (EDES 545), a course offered by the Teacher-Librarianship by Distance Learning program at the University of Alberta. This online course focuses on the integration of new information technologies into the K–12 curriculum to enhance student learning outcomes and to develop information literacy and critical-thinking skills. Students in EDES 545 consider issues related to technology in schools, such as privacy, intellectual property, 21st-century learning skills and filtering. They also explore issues related to the management of information technologies in schools and the provision of staff development programs in technology-related areas.

EDES 545 students complete a number of assignments, including presenting and leading a discussion on an issue related to integrating technology in schools; working in a small group to present a research paper on technology in schools; and writing a weekly blog post that synthesizes their reading and thinking. The final assignment asks students to articulate and present their vision of the future of education or school libraries. They are required to identify the key elements of their vision, drawing on the course readings and discussions, and then present that vision in some way. In the past, students have presented their visions of the future through wikis, blogs, PowerPoint presentations and Animoto videos.

The Winter 2010 section of EDES 545 was a particularly small one, with only seven students. A few of them knew each other from previous courses. This group came together in a cohesive and supportive way. They were scattered across Canada (and we even had a student in Korea), but they worked well together as they grappled with difficult questions and issues related to information technology in schools. As the instructor, I was thrilled to see the enthusiasm generated by this group, and every week they brought new

and interesting ideas to the class discussions and their individual blog posts. They made my job easy and very enjoyable!

At the beginning of the semester, I asked the students to think about and work on their final projects throughout the term. I encouraged them to brainstorm ideas on the class discussion site and to ask me questions. In the middle of February, I received the following e-mail from the seven students:

As some of us were talking on Skype this week, we came up with an idea for our final project. We have discussed it with all of the members of our class, and this is what we'd like to propose to you.

As Web 2.0 is all about collaboration, we were wondering if all the students in the class could work together on the final assignment, the vision of the future.

We thought that a wonderful project could be created by taking Joyce Valenza's Web 2.0 Manifesto and looking at how the items on her list are implemented in schools across Canada.¹ We have Mark in the north, Jackie from BC, Shirley and Cynthia from Alberta, Ruth from Saskatchewan and Dawn from PEI covered in the class. Natasha would be interested in looking at Saskatchewan (her home base) or representing the perspective of Canadians in an international school in Korea. Our initial thought is that we could incorporate photos, video and audio into a VoiceThread (though other presentation formats are still being discussed).

We think this would be an incredibly powerful presentation about the power of Web 2.0 in Canadian education. What do you think? Is this something that would work for a final project? We'd love to know your thoughts on this idea.

As I considered their request, I was intrigued by the idea of turning this assignment into a group project and excited to see what my students could produce by working together. I was also hesitant, because I wasn't

sure how I would evaluate a final group project fairly, and I was concerned about how the group would manage the logistics of a large project like this, given the time differences, their personal obligations and their busy schedules. However, before long, I decided to let them take their idea and run with it, regardless of the minor reservations I had.

For the rest of the semester, I watched from a distance as my students worked on their project. I set up Elluminate sessions for them so they could meet in real time in an online meeting space, answered questions as necessary and cheered them on from the sidelines. I was curious about what they were working on and excited to see the final project.

These adventurous students had taken on a big project (and probably made it even bigger than it needed to be). As the due date grew closer, a few of their e-mails indicated that there were challenges along the way (not the least of which was juggling incredibly busy lives and the demands of coursework and final projects). However, they persevered, supporting one another and cheering each other on so that they could successfully complete the project.

The final project submitted in April 2010 was presented in two parts. First was a wiki that they had created to serve as a collaborative bulletin board for sharing ideas, posting questions and brainstorming. Second was a VoiceThread slide show that allowed each person to explore the topic from both an individual and a group perspective.

Here is what they wrote on the front page of their wiki:

This wiki has been created by a group of seven teachers living in Canada and Korea. When our professor welcomed our desire to work on our vision of the future as a group project, we were delighted. We decided to use a VoiceThread in order to give a voice to our thoughts. However, we didn't know how best to organize our thoughts or which set of future skills we should use. We met in an Elluminate session and scrawled our thoughts on the whiteboard. It was only when one member recalled Henry Jenkins's paper on 21st-century skills and shared the eleven skills that the chatroom ignited. Everyone felt inspired to delve into one or more of the concepts. We decided to create a wiki as a storage container for our research. People can listen to the VoiceThread on each concept and then visit the wiki to dig into a concept on a deeper level. Take the time to listen to

our reflections on this learning journey on the second last slide of the VoiceThread.

Using Jenkins's (2009) work on 21st-century skills as the framework for their discussion proved to be a smart decision. It gave the project a solid structure and made it easier to divide the work between the seven members of the group. Jenkins focuses on participatory culture, which

shifts the focus of literacy from individual expression to community involvement. The new literacies almost all involve social skills developed through collaboration and networking. These skills build on the foundation of traditional literacy and research, technical, and critical-analysis skills learned in the classroom. (p xiii)

Jenkins outlines the new skills as follows:

Play. The capacity to experiment with [one's] surroundings as a form of problem solving.

Performance. The ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery.

Simulation. The ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes.

Appropriation. The ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content.

Multitasking. The ability to scan the environment and shift focus onto salient details.

Distributed cognition. The ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand mental capacities.

Collective intelligence. The ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal.

Judgment. The ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources.

Transmedia navigation. The ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities.

Networking. The ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information.

Negotiation. The ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative norms. (p xiv)

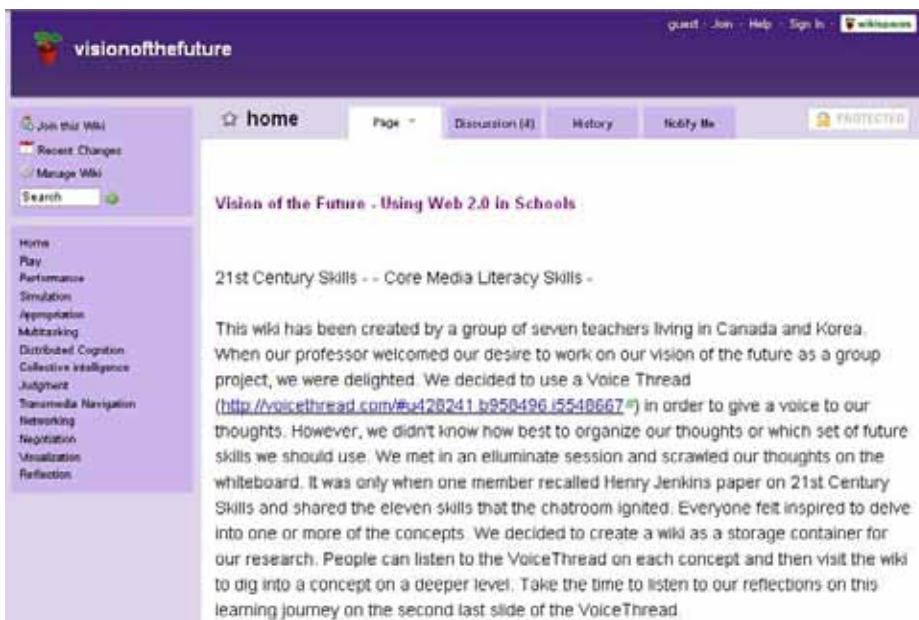
The VoiceThread my students created was a testament to the power of combining images, text and audio. The entire project was a testament to the power of what Jenkins (2009) describes as "collective intelligence." You can view the VoiceThread at <http://voicethread.com/#u14675.b958496.i5548667>.



I am proud of my students for adapting this assignment so that it became a meaningful learning experience. Their project did exactly what they set out to do—it highlighted what they each had learned about technology integration and Web 2.0, and demonstrated the collaborative nature of Web 2.0. They each brought their own skills and perspectives to the virtual table, and together they created a powerful vision for the future of education and school libraries.

I have no doubt that they invested more time and energy into this group project than they would have had they submitted individual assignments. I am also sure that there were times when they wondered why they took on an assignment of this magnitude. I encourage you to take the time to view their Vision of the Future VoiceThread and join the conversation by contributing your questions, comments and stories. Be sure to listen to their final reflections at the end of the VoiceThread, where you will hear how this project transformed them and changed their attitudes about technology, group work and education. I guarantee that you will be inspired to think about your own vision of the future.

The wiki, which provides background information and links to additional resources and videos, is available at <http://visionofthefuture.wikispaces.com>.



Notes

This article was inspired and informed by the work of the following students in the University of Alberta's Teacher-Librarianship by Distance Learning program: Ruth Elliott, Jackie Hancox, Mark Harewood, Natasha Hritzuk, Shirley Jorgensen, Dawn MacIsaac and Cynthia Peterson.

1. See [http://informationfluency.wikispaces.com/You+know+you're+a+21st+century+librarian+if+.+.+](http://informationfluency.wikispaces.com/You+know+you're+a+21st+century+librarian+if+.+.+.)

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Wired for Words Fosters a Culture of Reading

Linda Shantz-Keresztes

Linda Shantz-Keresztes is a teacher-librarian at Forest Lawn High School in Calgary. She has been with the Calgary Board of Education for over 30 years as a classroom teacher, a K–12 teacher-librarian, a curriculum leader, an evaluation and selection curriculum specialist, an AISI teacher-librarian consultant, a continuing education instructor, and a Wired for Words teacher-librarian consultant. She is a past president of the ASLC (then named the Learning Resources Council) and current president of the Canadian Association for School Libraries (CASL).

The award-winning Wired for Words website (www.wiredforwords.com) was launched over 10 years ago as a joint project between the *Calgary Herald*, the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) and key sponsors. The CBE Media Services Department later became the host and updated the site. Throughout the history of Wired for Words, a dedicated group of CBE teacher-librarians has provided the vision and content for the site. The current members of this team are Diane Gregson, Linda Shantz-Keresztes, Linda Steen and Jacque Vincent.

Wired for Words is an online book club featuring youth-friendly reviews of outstanding books for school-aged readers, suggested monthly by the teacher-librarian team. The site has been heralded by teachers and students alike as a wonderful place to learn about great reads in a wide range of genres. More important, students can write their own book reviews, displaying their love of reading through a digital interface.

As president of the Canadian Association for School Libraries (CASL), I attended the TD Reading Summit in Toronto, in the fall of 2009. The focus of this important event was to promote a reading culture in Canada.

Focus groups continue to work on behalf of this national initiative, with another summit to be held in 2011. The Wired for Words mission to support avid readership fits well with this goal.

How can teacher-librarians, teachers, school library support staff, parents and students use Wired for Words to foster a culture of reading in Alberta schools? Here are some ideas:


- Promote Wired for Words book selections by searching the site for great reads.
- Feature Wired for Words titles in your school library through displays, and mark book spines with a special coloured dot.
- Combine technology skills with the English language arts curriculum by having students search the website for books to read or review books themselves.
- Model for younger readers how to become a book reviewer. Select a Wired for Words book to read and review together. Older readers can write their own reviews.
- Start a Wired for Words book club at your school.
- Use the Wired for Words book selections to build a quality collection for your school library.
- Submit information about literary and reading events in your area to be featured in the What's the Buzz? section of the website.
- Create literacy challenges with students by posing questions whose answers can be found only by using the site.
- Hold a reading contest or challenge to see who can read the most Wired for Words books.
- Create digital crossword puzzles for students featuring Wired for Words titles, or have students create their own.
- Check out the featured author videos and set up your own author interview.
- Encourage students to read a wider genre of books by creating a reading wheel.

- Create your own blog, book trailer or online discussion group featuring Wired for Words titles.
- Using the Wired for Words monthly calendar as a template, create your own calendar of local literary events.
- Create a booktalk using reviews from the site.
- Feature Wired for Words books as prizes for school library contests.
- Organize an on-site or virtual visit from a favourite Wired for Words author.
- Check out other book and reading websites. Send suggestions for improving the Wired for Words site.
- Research which Wired for Words titles are available as e-books.
- Consult with your public library to see if it carries Wired for Words titles. Let your public librarians know about the website.
- Encourage your school book fair to sell Wired for Words books.
- Hold your own Canadian Idol Book Contest using the Canadian titles on the Wired for Words website.
- Organize a book donation program with a local bookstore featuring Wired for Words titles.

My article "Avid Readership: 'Wired for Words' On-Line Youth Book Club" (Shantz-Keresztes 2005) featured a conversation with Wired for Words teacher-librarian consultants. They discussed teacher-librarians' passion as reader advisors to students, the reading habits of students at various ages, how to bridge the gap between struggling readers and avid readers, and successful strategies for promoting the Wired for Words website to youth readers. Check the article for more Wired for Words ideas and information.

Please contact Wired for Words if you know of any individuals or organizations willing to sponsor the website on behalf of avid readership for youth. For information on Wired for Words conference or workshop presentations, contact Linda Shantz-Keresztes (lshantzkere@cbe.ab.ca) or Jacquie Vincent (javincent@cbe.ab.ca).

Reference

- Shantz-Keresztes, L. 2005. "Avid Readership: 'Wired for Words' On-Line Youth Book Club." *School Libraries in Canada* 25, no 1: 58-66. 

Virtually Ours: The EIPS Virtual Library

Jill Usher

The Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) virtual library (<http://eipsvlibrary.ca>) is the result of the hard work of a dedicated team of elementary school teacher-librarians and technology leaders. In addition to designing the website, John Lobe, Donna Griffin and Jill Usher sought feedback and promoted the website through a variety of professional learning opportunities. They are committed to the virtual library's continued development and hope to be responsive to the changing needs of teachers and students in the district.

Some Background

We at EIPS have found ourselves considering possibilities as we strive to push, pull or drag our services and district schools into the 21st century. Through directed funding, our more than 40 schools now have increased and improved technology infrastructure, as well as access to online resources to support teaching and learning. Smart Boards and digital projectors in classrooms, wireless Internet and laptop carts are becoming more the rule than the exception. How can we support this infrastructure with access to high-quality digital content?

September 2010 marked the first steps for our new Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS) Cycle 4 projects and the culmination of AIS Cycle 3 initiatives, with one key difference: an opportunity to sustain those initiatives that we felt could use continued support. Our three-year Focus on Inquiry project had been a great success with many EIPS teachers, as it provided students with meaningful projects and activities that fostered critical-thinking skills and deeper understanding. With school-based lead teachers no longer carrying the inquiry torch at each site, we needed to determine how we could continue to support the gains we had made.

The AIS inquiry project made obvious the inequitable access in the district to qualified and professional

expertise and to quality resources. Very few EIPS schools have access to qualified teacher-librarians, with elementary schools the most affected. Only one K–6 school and one K–9 school have even part-time teacher-librarian support. District schools lucky enough to have teacher-librarian time have excellent library websites to support ongoing inquiry. How could we share that wealth across the district?

These realities—combined with the latest research on 21st-century skills, which highlights the need for anytime, anywhere access to quality resources for students—gave birth to the idea of providing a virtual library space to complement the physical library space for all EIPS elementary schools.

The Virtual Library

Our team of three met to set the direction for the virtual library. Four key goals were identified. The virtual library was to provide

- continued support for inquiry in EIPS elementary schools,
- support for elementary schools with no teacher-librarian,
- an easy and effective interface for students, and
- access to current and quality resources.

Investigating several other virtual library spaces helped us determine what to include in ours. There are many excellent virtual libraries on the Web; unfortunately, most have been designed for secondary schools.

We want to acknowledge the tremendous work the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) has done with its own virtual libraries—in particular the collection of curriculum-focused links evaluated and selected by their team of library and curriculum professionals.¹ EIPS does not have an extensive team to provide the time and expertise for similar work, and why reinvent the wheel? EIPS negotiated an agreement with the CBE to connect with (and, where possible, add to) its

collection of links. We were given access to their Delicious bookmarks for our own virtual library. The generosity and collaborative spirit shown by the CBE serve as a powerful example of how educational institutions can and should work together.

The creative team considered many design possibilities. Our goal was to provide an elementary-friendly interface, so we selected an animal theme. The website

consists of six sections that highlight the key aspects of any effective library space, virtual or not.

The homepage welcomes visitors and shares current information and updates. The Quick Clicks sidebar provides quick access to key resources used by EIPS teachers and students. Featured Sites highlights websites showcasing important current events and issues and is meant to continually change.



All About Books is our nod to the important role literacy plays in all libraries. It includes an interactive WordPress interface so that students can add their own book reviews or comments. All comments are vetted (but not edited!) for appropriate content before they are posted. Titles nominated for the Young Reader's Choice Award are highlighted, as many of our schools participate in that program, and a link to the Rocky Mountain Book Award website is provided. The featured sites in this section are the literature-based databases found in LearnAlberta.ca's Online Reference Centre (ORC). Teachers and students appreciate the easy access to these databases from school (a username and password are required for home access).

All About Books

Posted on Jan 27, 2010 by admin

Student Book Review

Peter and the Starcatchers

Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson's book, **Peter and the Starcatchers**, is a fascinating read. It is full of magic and characters helping others. While some might find it unrealistic, I found it funny and I was unable to put it down. This book is a prequel to Peter Pan. It has a flying boy, Neverland, Captain Hook and a beautiful girl named Molly.



Peter gets sent on a boat to Rundoon by Saint Norbert's Orphanage. He meets Molly, who is also going there. Peter discovers that Molly is on a quest for "star stuff", which has unreal powers. He decides to help when a pirate ship attacks their ship looking for star stuff. Peter and the "Lost Boys" are stranded on Mollusk Island. The star stuff gets lost, turning fish into mermaids. Peter takes a dose of star stuff that should have killed him, but now he can fly and will never grow up! To find out the rest of the story, you will just have to read it. The next three books in the series are Peter and the Shadow Thieves, The Secret of Rundoon and Peter and the Sword of Mercy!

Kate, Grade 6

Swindle

A Man with a plan and a baseball card = TROUBLE.



A high tech. security system, a fully trained guard dog and not to mention a very, very secret hiding place. What is this all for – a baseball card? Correct. To be more specific, a Baba Ruth card worth over one million dollars!

When Griffin Bing plans on having a sleep over in



-  On The Web
-  Finding It
-  Using It
-  You Asked Us
-  VL Home

Featured Sites...

- Bookflix offers access to interactive fiction and non-fiction books organized by theme.

The On the Web page provides links to websites that support the core elementary subject areas at all grade levels. These links were provided by the CBE, with some recommended by our own EIPS teachers. This section of our virtual library has proved the most popular for teachers and students alike.

Web Resources

English Language Arts


Reading	Writing
Tools	Early Literacy
Poetry	Interactive Websites


Math


Number Sense (Div. 1)	Number Sense (Div. 2)
Patterns and Relations (Div. 1)	Patterns and Relations (Div. 2)
Shape and Space (Div. 1)	Shape and Space (Div. 2)
Statistics and Probability (Div. 1)	Statistics and Probability (Div. 2)
Interactive and Multi-Strand sites	French sites


Social Studies


My World (Grade 1)	My Family (Grade 1)	Local and Current Affairs (Grade 1)
Canada's Dynamic Communities (Grade 2)	A Community in the Past (Grade 2)	Local and Current Affairs (Grade 2)
Communities in the World (Grade 3)	Global Citizenship (Grade 3)	Local and Current Affairs (Grade 3)




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Finding It provides search tips and links for students. The featured sites are the ORC databases that are the most useful for students when conducting research or simply looking for answers to questions.

Finding It



Quick Search Tips!

1. Begin with a clear topic in mind.
2. Decide what type of resource will help you to learn more about your topic and answer your question.
3. Encyclopedias are a great first stop when looking for basic information on a topic. They will help you to better understand your topic and provide you with keywords to use as you search further. Encyclopedias can come in book or online formats.
4. Your library Online catalog (OPAC) will help you find a book by subject or keyword. Remember to use plurals when looking up topics (dogs instead of dog).
5. Internet websites contain information on almost any topic. REMEMBER: Anyone can put a site on the Web, and it is NOT illegal to put incorrect information on the Web.
6. Evaluate all sources. The information should help answer your original question

Additional information about searching and evaluating websites can be found at the following links:

[2Learn Research Checklist](#)
How to search on the web.

..... All About Books

..... On The Web

..... Using It

..... You Asked Us

..... VL Home

Featured Sites...

 **Culturegrams**

Using It focuses on resources that support digital citizenship and online safety.

Using It

Be an ethical user of information!

In our Information Age we have a responsibility to use information in an honest and legal manner. We can't copy and paste other people's words and research and claim that they're ours. It's important to give credit to the person who created the idea - cite the resources you use from any source.

Plagiarism means to steal the ideas or words of another person and use them as your own and not give credit to the person who wrote them. It is called LITERARY THEFT! To avoid plagiarism:

1. Keep a record of where you got your information from.
 - Record titles, authors, publishers, dates and other relevant information for citation purposes.
 - If you are using a website, also record the URL (web address) and the date you visited the site.
2. Paraphrase - put what you read into your own words.
3. Take jot notes - use keywords and phrases.

Use the links below to learn about information and how you can use it honestly and legally:

Education World ® - Student Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism

A student guide from Education World that includes a good summary of plagiarism, taking proper notes, citing sources, and writing papers



 [All About Books](#)

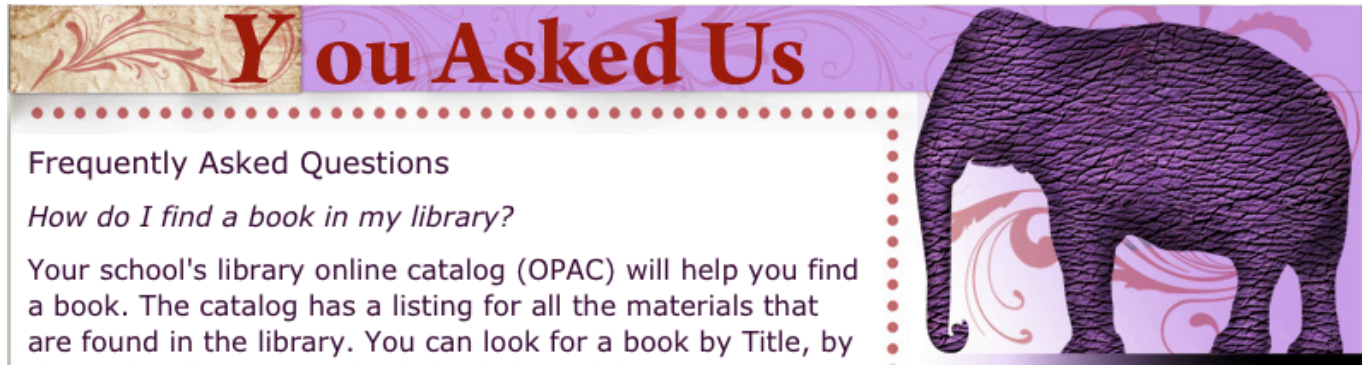
 [On The Web](#)

 [Finding It](#)

 [You Asked Us](#)

 [VL Home](#)

You Asked Us is meant to provide answers to the questions students frequently ask in our libraries. The jury is still out on the effectiveness of this section, and some changes may be made in the near future. Of course, the most effective option would be to make this section interactive, allowing students to ask questions as they arise and to have them answered by a library professional. Unfortunately, we don't have the resources to have a teacher-librarian on standby to provide this service.



You Asked Us

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I find a book in my library?


Your school's library online catalog (OPAC) will help you find a book. The catalog has a listing for all the materials that are found in the library. You can look for a book by Title, by the Author (Last name first), by Subject (the topic you are looking for) and the Keyword. To find a book on the shelf, you will need to know the **call number** (book's address) and the **title**.

Where can I find copyright information in a book?

A book has 2 important pages of copyright information, typically. The first is the inside title page where the complete title of the book and all of the contributors responsible can be found. On the back of the title page is the copyright information; including the name and address of the publisher and the last copyright date. This information is important when giving credit to information found in a book.

Can I access my school library's OPAC from home?

At present, all OPACs in Elk Island Public School libraries are not accessible from home.



- All About Books
- On The Web
- Finding It
- Using It
- VL Home

The Rollout

Getting the word out to school administrators and staff was our next important focus. We continue to seek opportunities to bring the virtual library to the attention of teachers, students and parents.

The virtual library was first rolled out at an elementary leadership meeting. Principals were provided with the rationale and a quick virtual tour of the space. They were asked to consider linking to the virtual library from their school website, particularly from the library page. The response to this request has been favourable, and many schools have in fact linked to the virtual library.

The virtual library was also presented to members of the school board and system leadership team, and received positive feedback.

Our team showcased the virtual library for elementary teachers at systemwide and school-based PD sessions throughout the 2009/10 school year. Those in attendance provided feedback and suggestions that have influenced many of the changes since made.

Our elementary library staff were introduced to the virtual library and updated on changes and additions throughout the year at PD and training sessions. Many of our libraries have designated the virtual library as the homepage on their library computers.

The members of our AISI tech team have done an excellent job of showcasing the website and using it in their work with elementary teachers in the schools.

Challenges

Of course, no new project is without its challenges, and the EIPS virtual library is no exception. We have encountered the following hurdles:

- The time required to continually update information and check that links are still active is an ongoing issue.
- The virtual library was designed using Dreamweaver proprietary software installed on our personal

computers. This limits access to a few individuals from a limited number of workstations.

- Getting the word out and keeping it out!
Encouraging student participation continues to be a key focus for us.


Next Steps

Our virtual library is an ongoing project requiring continual updates. Experience, feedback and emerging issues will influence our next steps and future directions as EIPS continues its journey into cyberspace. The possibilities include the following:

- Moving to an open-access interface that allows for anytime, anywhere access by more professional teacher-librarians.
- Some redesign of the site as we make the move, perhaps with the addition of a separate teacher or technology application page.
- Purchase of additional elementary-focused databases.
- Discussion and planning for another virtual library site to support secondary schools that have no teacher-librarian time. We hope to tap the expertise of a number of secondary teacher-librarians to make this dream a reality.

Through word of mouth, the EIPS virtual library is making itself known to educators throughout the province. We have received encouraging feedback and questions from interested individuals and groups. We are more than willing to share our experience and lessons learned with others who are considering venturing along this path—and to learn from their ideas as well!

Note

1. The CBE's elementary virtual library can be found at <http://schools.cbe.ab.ca/curriculum/library/elementary/elementary1.html>. 

MyLibrary: The Edmonton Public Schools Virtual Library

Kelly Reiersen

It all began when an Edmonton Public Schools (EPSB) principal asked the question, “Why do some high schools have virtual libraries loaded with resources while other high school libraries have nothing for their students?” This started an important conversation among high school teacher-librarians and principals across the district.

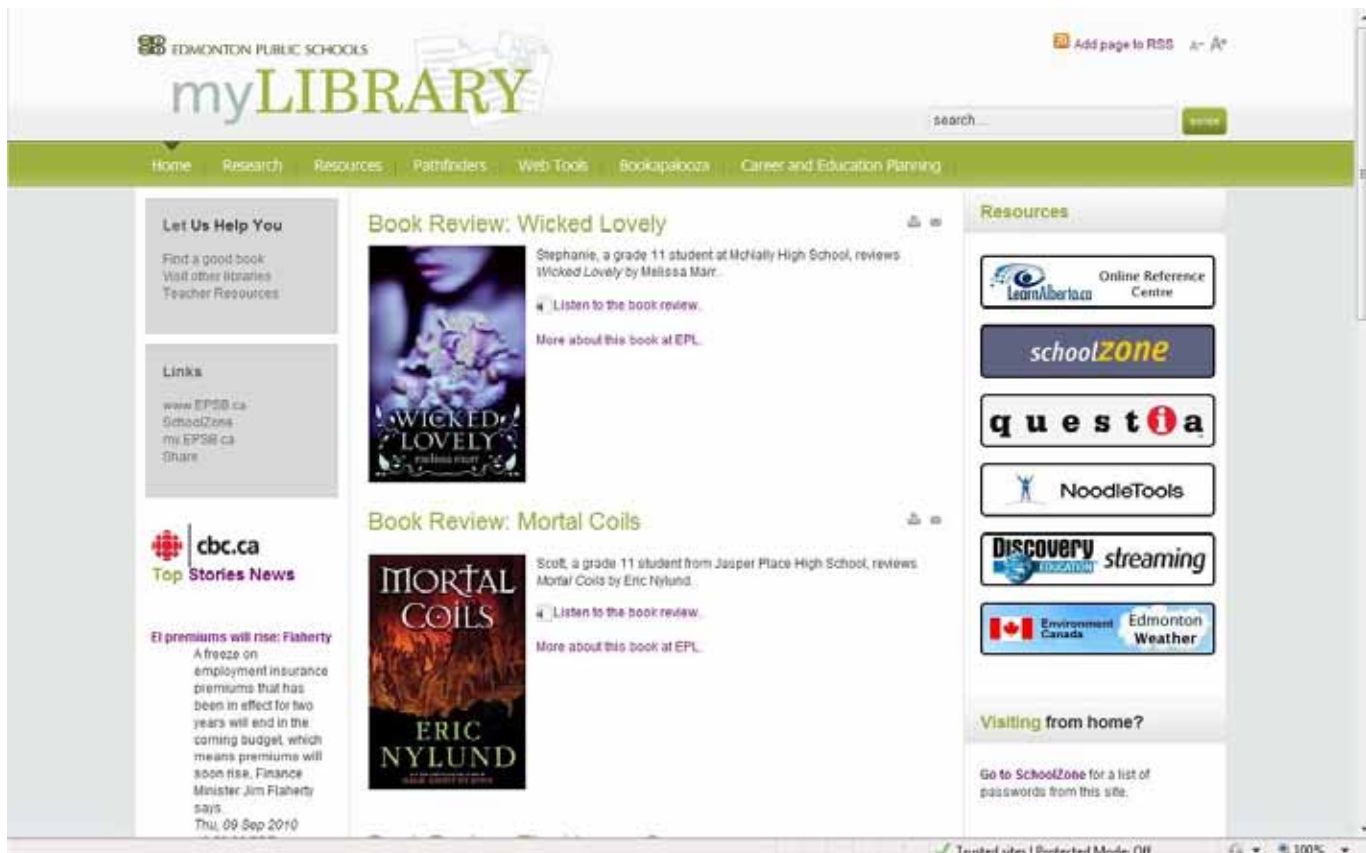
We had many questions: What needs to happen so that all EPSB students can have equitable access to the best online resources? How can we as teacher-librarians pool our knowledge on information literacy, online resources and Web 2.0 tools to create a virtual library

that high school students will find useful? How can we get principals to give funding to such a project?

A year and half later, MyLibrary (<http://mylibrary.epsb.ca>) was unveiled to EPSB high school students and staff.

It all sounds so easy now, but it was an immense amount of work and involved many conversations and much cooperation from all stakeholders.

The high school librarian consultant and the few high school teacher-librarians in the district met regularly to discuss the development of the website. Those who already had library websites were able to share their



experiences, and we spent hours looking at the sites other schools had created. We asked ourselves, What do we like? What do our students need? Can we create a space that allows students to contribute?

Once we decided on the framework, we invited a Web designer to our meetings. The designer had the huge task of making our vision a reality.

We already had access to the wonderful databases offered through the Online Reference Centre (ORC) at LearnAlberta.ca, so we began looking at what was available to students and teachers to support their curricula. Then we considered how we could supplement those resources.

We purchased district licences for three databases: Global Issues in Context, GREENR (Global Reference on the Environment, Energy, and Natural Resources), and the Literature Resource Center. We then purchased 25 e-books that support the high school curricula. The consultant, I am sure, would readily tell you that negotiating the best prices for these resources was frustrating and time-consuming; however, now when teachers and students go to the virtual library, they will find great resources to support their learning.

We also wanted to make sure that students could contribute to the site, so we included a section that highlights Web 2.0 tools and provides a space for showcasing student work. As well, student-created podcasts on the latest novels are featured on the homepage.

We also included a section where students can get help with their research. Every student and teacher in the district has been given a subscription to NoodleTools, a program that guides students through the entire research process, from finding accurate information to properly citing that information. Other features include a section on career and education planning for students, and resources to support teachers (including pathfinders).

There is still a lot of work to be done. The next steps involve inservicing teachers who do not have access to a teacher-librarian on how to use the resources on the site. We also need to put someone in charge of the site so that it is continually updated. Only time will tell if this virtual library will continue to be supported, but as one of the teacher-librarians involved in the project, I am optimistic. 🐾


SLSI Update

Judith Sykes

Alberta Education's School Library Services Initiative (SLSI) has worked with the School Library Stakeholder Advisory Committee, the Alberta Education Inter-branch Committee, and the Alberta Education Policy Development and Research Branch to prepare a draft revised school library policy. Consultation on the draft revised policy with stakeholder associations was held January 21 to April 6, 2010. The consultation report and the revised draft policy, guidelines and glossary are under review by Alberta Education for anticipated fall 2010 sharing with schools.

FAQs about the SLSI were announced in the December 2009 issue of the deputy minister's newsletter, *In the Loop*. Results from the June 2009 School Library Inventory Survey (of principals) were announced in the February 2010 issue. In June, Alberta Education presented SLSI information at the Canadian Library Association conference, as well as a report (*Transforming Canadian School Libraries to Meet the Needs of 21st Century Learners*) at the Treasure Mountain Canada school library symposium. The FAQs, survey results, presentation and report have been posted at <http://education.alberta.ca/departement/ipr/slsi.aspx>.

The current and future work of the SLSI involves four subcommittees: Digital Licensing, Seamless Access Strategies for Library Services, Implementation Supports, and In-Service. These subcommittees focus on developing supports for policy revision during the 2010/11 school year.

Digital Licensing continues to review the current state of digital content licensing in Alberta, and is considering other models, gaps and best fiscal recommendations. Seamless Access Strategies for Library Services reviews models that would facilitate seamless access for students in all scenarios, focusing on an overarching provincial library model, collaboration with all partners (community), exemplars of learning commons practice, lifelong learning, standards of service and accountability. Implementation Supports reviews or develops content that would facilitate a shift in learning and teaching, focusing on team roles and responsibilities (principals, teachers, teacher-librarians, library support staff, students), a glossary, and resource links for getting started. In-Service is exploring what resources are available and what needs to be created to enable student access to library services. 

ELN Meeting Minutes

Jennifer Cameron

The Education Librarians Network (ELN) meets in Edmonton twice a year, in April and November. The group is composed of librarians and teacher-librarians working in Edmonton-area schools and school districts; in public, postsecondary and government libraries; and in the ATA library. Participants share the current status of their libraries and events, and take turns hosting meetings. Generally, a guest is invited to speak on a current topic related to school libraries. The ELN is a great way to keep in touch with what is happening in the school library world. New participants are always welcome. If you are interested, please contact Diane GallowaySolowan at dgs@thealbertalibrary.ab.ca.

The following are the minutes of the ELN meeting held Friday, April 23, 2010, at the University of Alberta's Campus Saint-Jean.

- Attendees: Sandra Anderson, Christina Andrews, Elaine Atwood, Jennifer Cameron, Jan Colter, Diane GallowaySolowan, Magda Grzeszczuk, Teddy Moline, Fern Reirson, Tatiana Usova
- Regrets: Lorie MacArthur, Patricia Rempel, Judith Sykes, Josie Tong
- Meeting chair: Tatiana Usova
- Minutes: Jennifer Cameron

Library Updates and Round-Table Discussion

HT Coutts Library (U of A)

Jan Colter

- Jan discussed how the voluntary retirement program is affecting University of Alberta Libraries and the Faculty of Education. There have been multiple staff changes over the last few months in the Coutts Library, resulting in reduced hours of operation for the summer months.

- Jan mentioned the renovations to the library, which were completed a year ago. The library is much more welcoming, with soft seating, and students love it.
- The library hosted a coffee and cupcake day for students during final exams. The students were asked to vote for the best cupcakes.

MacEwan Library

Jennifer Cameron

- An information literacy librarian has been appointed to complete a one-year project. The project involves assessing MacEwan's information literacy program and providing a recommendation as to how the program should proceed.
- The library staff completed the first round of Project SAILS (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills) this fall and have received the student results. They are now reporting back to the faculties and schools. The tests will be repeated with the same students in their last year of study.
- Over the summer, the library is moving all subject guides on the library website to LibGuides, working with the U of A to update the Searchpath online information literacy tutorial for English students, and working on video streaming the most popular videos in the library collection.

ATA Library

Sandra Anderson

- Sandra is new to the ATA library and is working on weeding the collection and developing new programs, such as offering instruction for teachers on how to effectively search the Internet.
- Sandra is also working to promote the ATA library collections and services with library feeds on the ATA's Facebook and Twitter pages, poster and bookmark campaigns, and updated Web links on the ATA website.

Bibliothèque Saint-Jean (Campus Saint-Jean)

Magda Grzeszczuk

- Magda is providing instruction classes for education students that involve sending students into the collection to retrieve books. This instruction is particularly effective because the Bibliothèque Saint-Jean uses both the Dewey Decimal and the Library of Congress classification systems.
- Students rely on the curriculum collection even when they are out in schools doing their practicums. Many schools do not have enough textbooks to support student teachers.

Alberta School Library Council

Fern Reirson

- Fern discussed Alberta Education's School Library Services Initiative (SLSI). This group is working to revise the 1984 school library policy, and prepare new policies and guidelines for 2010. They hope to have the revised policy in place for September 2010. The initiative has also created four subcommittees to work toward developing supports for schools in the areas of digital licensing, student learning, seamless access to library services, and training for library staff.
- Fern also discussed the findings from the 2009 School Library Inventory Survey (of principals).
- Fern shared the training she has been doing with teachers in her school on ways to use the Smart Board in teaching.

Christina Andrews and Elaine Atwood

- Christina and Elaine are enjoying retirement and spending time with their families. Elaine is keeping her library skills sharp by acting as a research assistant for her daughter, who is beginning a doctoral program at the University of Calgary.

Bibliothèque Saint-Jean

Tatiana Usova


- The Bibliothèque Saint-Jean has completed the weeding of the curriculum fiction collection. Some items were sent to the U of A's BARD (Book and Record Depository), and 6,000 items were donated to schools and community groups.
- Tatiana is planning the orientation for education students at Campus Saint-Jean for the fall term. The University of Alberta Libraries website will be changed in May, and the U of A will have new branding in the fall.

Online Reference Centre (LearnAlberta.ca)

Diane GallowaySolowan

- There is a new CEO at The Alberta Library (TAL)—Maureen Woods.
- The Netspeed conference will not be held next year. In its place will be the Futures conference, with attendance by invitation.
- The Online Reference Centre (ORC) is now 10 years old. There will be no significant changes to the content this year. There are more than 500 people now on the ORC listserv. The ORC is moving toward IP authentication.
- Diane had been providing vendor sessions for teachers in Calgary and Edmonton. These will take place again in the fall. She also presented for the University of Calgary's Faculty of Education and will take part in the education student orientation in the fall.
- Tools for Teachers has moved to the LearnAlberta.ca website.

Afternoon Presentation

- Teddy Moline, from the U of A's Faculty of Education, presented her research project on preservice teachers' use of Smart Boards while at university and during their practicums.
- Next Meeting: November 2010 (TBA) 

Do One Thing for Your Own PD: Participate in the ASLC Wiki

Diane GallowaySolowan and Kelly Reiersen

For the past two and half years, Joanne de Groot has been the ASLC webmaster. She not only courageously launched the ASLC's new website (<http://aslc.teachers.ab.ca>) but also managed to create a great Web presence for us through the ASLC wiki (<http://albertaschoollibraries.pbworks.com>). Joanne and her family have recently decided to move to Montreal, to pursue career opportunities and be closer to family. We sincerely thank Joanne for taking ASLC to the Web, and we wish her and her family all the best in their new life in another province.

Kelly Reiersen, the teacher-librarian at Strathcona High School in Edmonton, has taken on the responsibility of maintaining the website and the wiki.

In case you haven't visited lately, they are more than worth the time it takes to check them out. Want to know what other teacher-librarians are reading? Want to quickly get your hands on the latest research on school libraries and student achievement? Planning to take some university courses to update your skills but could use financial help? Looking for a back

issue of *Literacies, Learning & Libraries* online? Need ideas for National School Library Day? Those are just a few of the things you can find with a mouse click on the ASLC wiki.


The ASLC wiki is where every teacher-librarian in the province can get the latest updates on ASLC activities, and find current and useful information that aids daily practice in our field.

Any teacher-librarian can contribute to the wiki. To start, click Request Access near the top right-hand corner of the page.



Professionally Speaking

Following the theme of this issue of *Literacies, Learning & Libraries*, it is vital that all teacher-librarians help lead the way professionally, as well as in the classroom. Promise yourself that you will do one thing for your own professional development this year by committing to checking and contributing to the ASLC wiki. For some, this might be their first foray into Web 2.0 communication; for others, it might

mean making good on previous intentions. The ASLC wiki is where it can all happen. It will be what you make it. See you there! 

The ASLC Wiki

<http://albertaschoollibraries.pbworks.com>

From the Regionals

South

The annual banquet of the South Regional, held June 9, honoured the contributions made to school libraries by teacher-librarians, administrators, library assistants and library technicians.

The recipient of the 2010 Bev Anderson Certificate of Merit for Administrators was Bev Whitworth, principal of Tuscany School, in Calgary. Bev was presented with this certificate by her nominator, Carol Hansen, the school's teacher-librarian.

The recipients of the Tom Colbens Certificate of Merit for Library Assistants/Library Technicians were Kathy Rae, library assistant at Hillhurst School, and Patti Cook, library technician at Tuscany School, both in Calgary. Kathy was nominated by Bruce Raddatz, teacher-librarian and assistant principal. Patti was nominated by Carol Hansen, teacher-librarian.

The annual banquet was also the occasion to honour the contributions of Maureen Haney, teacher-librarian at Lester B Pearson High School, in Calgary; Pat Ropchan, teacher-librarian at Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School, in Okotoks; and John Phillips, teacher-librarian for the Calgary Catholic School District. These long-time members of the ASLC retired at the end of June.

Congratulations to all the honourees!

—Jacquie Vincent



Bev Whitworth, recipient of the Bev Anderson Certificate of Merit for Administrators, and Carol Hansen



Erin Hansen, teacher-librarian, and Maureen Haney, retiring teacher-librarian



Kathy Rae (left) and Patti Cook, recipients of the Tom Colbens Certificate of Merit for Library Assistants/Library Technicians, with Tom Colbens, retired teacher-librarian

North



Shaunda Yeoman, principal of Thorncliffe Elementary School in Edmonton, receiving the Principal's Award of Merit from Cathie Bush, the newly elected regional secretary, at the North Regional annual general meeting on May 25



Betty-Lou Ayers, ASLC president, presents the Laurence G Wiedrick Award of Excellence to Elaine Atwood, recently retired ATA librarian



Dianne Oberg, professor at the University of Alberta



Hilda Mah, teacher-librarian at Parkdale School in Edmonton, and Kelly Reiersen, teacher-librarian at Strathcona High School and our new ASLC webmaster

—Todd Bekolay

2010 AGM Minutes

Janice Sundar

The following are the minutes of the ASLC's 2010 annual general meeting, held May 1 at the Jasper Park Lodge.

- The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM.
- It was moved by Janice Sundar, and seconded by Jill Usher, to accept the agenda as submitted. Carried.
- Greetings and opening remarks: Betty-Lou Ayers welcomed those attending.
- Betty-Lou Ayers introduced the 2009/10 executive.
- Fern Reirson moved that the minutes of the April 2009 AGM be approved. Diane seconded. Carried.

Reports

President's Report

Provided by Betty-Lou Ayers, as written

Past President's Report

Provided by Fern Reirson, as written

- In addition, please note a correction of 37 per cent response rate to the principals' survey. Info is available online. School boards can request the results for individual schools from their board's trustee.

Treasurer's Report

Provided by Donna Grove, as written

- Budget is balanced because of Kaleidoscope revenue.
- It was moved by Donna Grove, and seconded by Hilda Mah, that the budget be accepted. Carried.

PEC Liaison's Report

Presented by Greg Jeffery

- There has been a wide variety of responses from boards with regard to staffing next year. Boards are being asked by the education minister to maintain

staffing levels. The Alberta School Boards Association believes that the boards will eventually comply.

- There was a resolution at the ATA's Annual Representative Assembly regarding subgroup finances. Revenue Canada is concerned about money being held by subgroups. The resolution asks subgroups to reduce surpluses.
- The ASLC is asked to donate a door prize for the Canadian Teachers' Federation AGM.
- Greg will ask the executive secretary about the proposed Access Copyright fee of \$45 per student per year.

ATA Staff Advisor's Report

Presented by Andrea Berg

- The ASLC developed a strategic plan with the help of ATA staff officers (January 2010).
- The ATA's Professional Development program area is looking at different and creative ways to increase membership in all councils.
- Elaine Atwood, ATA librarian at Barnett House, has retired. The new librarian is Sandra Anderson.
- Summer Conference, for presidents and conference directors of specialist councils, will be held August 9-13 at the Banff Centre.
- The ASLC is asked to help distribute information on bursary money via PD postcards.

Publications Editor's Report

Provided by Diane GallowaySolowan, as written

- Another successful journal was published. Thank you to the University of Alberta and to others for their support.
- Copies of the journal will be delivered to Alberta principals in June.
- The next issue will have the theme "Leading the Way."
- AISI learning leaders are asked to submit written work with regard to promising practices. Is there a way to collaborate with them?

Alberta Education Representative's Report

Provided by Judith Sykes, as written

- Thanks to the council for reporting back on policy. Hopefully, the policy will be ready to share in September, with implementation a year later.

University of Alberta Representative's Report

Provided by Jennifer Branch, as written

- Currently, 60 students are enrolled in the master's program.

Webmaster's Report

Provided by Joanne de Groot, as written

- Information that needs to be shared must be added collectively.
- Regional content is welcome.
- There is excellent content on the ASLC wiki.
- Please feel free to contribute.

Conferences Report

Betty-Lou Ayers

- Kaleidoscope 10 (2012) is in the planning stage. We hope to have a chair to report at the next meeting. Next year we will host a conference with the Educational Technology Council (ETC). In May, the ETC is hosting the Google Workshop for Educators.
- Possibilities: We could look at having a drive-in workshop for the ASLC only, if the ETC does not have the ability to partner with us; we could consider a drive-in conference with council presenters; or we could ask the ETC to join us in April for a drive-in workshop.

Regional Reports

South

Provided by Anne Rogers, as written

North

Provided by Todd Bekolay, as written

- PD activities not mentioned in the reports are as follows: Sneed Collard presentations at schools and at the U of A for ASLC members; Ross Todd presentation at the U of A in December; the ASLC response to the proposed Alberta School Library Services Initiative.

Election of Officers

Betty-Lou Ayers

- Fern Reirson nominated Jill Usher as the 2011 conference chair, seconded by Hilda Mah. Carried. Jill Usher was elected by acclamation.
- Holly Huber was elected by acclamation to the position of secretary.
- Kelly Reirson was elected by acclamation to the position of webmaster.
- Donna Grove nominated Linda Davis as Kaleidoscope 2012 chair, seconded by Janice Sundar. Carried. Linda Davis was elected by acclamation.
- President-elect: vacant.

Awards

- The Award of Merit was presented to Donna Grove for her exemplary work as a teacher-librarian, leader and advocate for school libraries.
- The Laurence G Wiedrick Award of Excellence will be presented to Elaine Atwood at the North Regional AGM, on May 25.
- A motion for adjournment was made by Joanne de Groot at 5:20 PM.
- The next AGM will be held at the joint conference with the ETC in spring 2011. 🗨️



Donna Grove, teacher-librarian with the Calgary Board of Education and ASLC treasurer, receives the Award of Merit from past president Fern Reirson at the AGM.

\$3,000 Project Grants Available

The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to the professional growth of Alberta teachers. The Trust awards a number of grants of up to \$3,000 to help Alberta teachers or others involved in education and teaching to develop innovative resources that support curriculum, teaching or learning. Individuals or groups planning to undertake a project or conduct research must submit a detailed proposal on or before May 1, 2011.

In January of each year, the Trust posts application forms for grants and bursaries on its website. For details, go to www.teachers.ab.ca, and click on For Members; Programs and Services; Grants, Awards and Scholarships; and ATA Educational Trust.



AR-ETF-25 2010 09

\$300 ATA Specialist Council Grants

The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to the professional growth of Alberta teachers. For this grant program, interested teachers may enter their name into a draw for \$300 towards the cost of an ATA specialist council conference.

In January of each year, the Trust posts application forms for grants and bursaries on its website. The deadline for conference grants is September 30, 2011. For details, go to www.teachers.ab.ca, and click on For Members; Programs and Services; Grants, Awards and Scholarships; and ATA Educational Trust.



AR-ETF-23 2010 09

\$500 Bursaries to Improve Knowledge and Skills

The ATA Educational Trust is a charitable organization dedicated to the professional growth of Alberta teachers. The Trust encourages Alberta teachers to improve their knowledge and skills through formal education. The names of 40 (or more) eligible teachers who apply for this bursary will be entered into a draw for up to \$500 to be applied toward tuition.

In January of each year, the Trust posts application forms for grants and bursaries on its website. The deadline for bursary applications is May 1, 2011. For details, go to www.teachers.ab.ca, and click on For Members; Programs and Services; Grants, Awards and Scholarships; and ATA Educational Trust.



AR-ETF-24 2010 09

Guidelines for Contributors

Literacies, Learning & Libraries is published to

- enhance the competencies of school library professionals;
- increase knowledge, understanding and awareness of the role of school library programs in education; and
- stimulate thinking, explore new ideas, offer various viewpoints and share information about learning resources and school library programs.

Articles from all educators are welcome. Teacher-librarians are especially invited to write about aspects of teacher-librarianship and school library programs that interest them and to share ideas with colleagues. Submissions are requested that will stimulate personal reflection, theoretical consideration and practical application. Articles that present differing perspectives; innovative, cooperatively planned and taught programs; trends and issues in teacher-librarianship; research findings; or reviews or evaluations of learning resources in all media are appreciated. From time to time, the editor may identify specific themes or topics for special issues and invite submissions on these topics.

Manuscripts should be submitted by e-mail with an accompanying hard copy mailed to the editor. A cover page should include the contributor's name, professional position, degree(s) held, address, and telephone and fax numbers. A recent photograph and related biographical information are also requested.

Manuscripts may be up to 3,500 words long. References to literature made in the text of the submission should appear in full in a list at the end of the article. Literature not cited in the text but providing

background material or further reading should be listed similarly.

Photographs, line drawings, diagrams and other graphics are welcome. To ensure quality reproduction, photographs should be clear and have good contrast. A caption and photo credit should accompany each photograph, and people in photographs should be clearly identified on a separate sheet of paper submitted with the photograph. (Note: do not write on the back of a photograph or attach information to it in any way that could mark its surface.) The contributor is responsible for obtaining releases for the use of photographs. Only original drawings should be submitted, and the source of the drawings must be credited. Disks and photographs will be returned. Contributors whose manuscripts are accepted will receive two copies of *Literacies, Learning & Libraries* containing the published article.

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Name (signature of one author is required)

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Alberta School Library Council Executive 2010/11

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