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THE PUPIL INVESTIGATOR MODEL: A DULL DAY IN A FIFTH-GRADE CLASSROOM

Scott L. Hunsaker and Rebecca Haslam-Odoardi, authorities in the field of education for the talented and gifted, present a unique perspective on inquiry which the Common Core Standards has brought to the fore. The authors present a scenario which includes close collaboration between teacher librarians and classroom teachers.

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ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE HERITAGE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS LEARNING COMMONS

Pippa Davies provides insight into the melding of the virtual and physical learning commons and the philosophy underlying them. Her experience (and success) is inspiring and offers many guideposts for others to follow.

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EXCITING TIMES -- A TRANSFORMATION OF MEDIA CENTERS, MEDIA SPECIALISTS, AND LEARNING: A DISTRICT'S PHILOSOPHY

Joanne Sobolik, Elizabeth Russell, Holli Klatt, Debbie Thompson, Kim Jones, and Stephanie Wieczorek, teacher librarians in the Kettle Moraine School District, offer a district-wide look and program to turn school media centers into 21st century learning commons. Elementary, middle, and high schools were included in the planning and execution of a great team/district plan.

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Christina A. Bentheim continues her series of articles recounting her yearlong effort to transform her middle school library into a vibrant learning commons. This installment also offer some great ideas for activities, collaboration, and curriculum.

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THE BADGE OF EXCELLENCE: WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF WINNERS?

TL coeditors Elizabeth "Betty" Marcoux and David V. Loertscher address some of the aspects of excellent programs through a look at some schools named exemplary by the Partnership for the 21st Skills. They also present some from a teacher librarian whose students have excelled in the prestigious Intel science competition.

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CURATION OF DIGITIZED ARTIFACTS IN THE STUDY OF HISTORICAL FICTION

Ewa McGrail and Kevin Powell note the virtually endless amount and types of information available today, including such digital artifacts as texts, photographs, and video clips of tools and objets d'art of the past. Citing the need for curation, the authors offer high-quality websites with digitized artifacts online; recommend social bookmarking sites that can be used to curate online collections of artifacts; and recommend projects that can encourage authentic research and thinking about artifacts and connect their students to the historical fiction and nonfiction they read.

On the cover:

Students work in the learning commons at Heritage Christian School, Kelowna, BC. See p. 16 for article.

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Excellence

David V. Loertscher and Elizabeth "Betty" Marcoux

This issue highlights many great educational opportunities for students today and illustrates how teacher librarians can make a difference in the quality of students' learning experiences.

This issue isn't about having a large budget or a large infrastructure—it is about what can be done in your particular situation. There are illustrations to help you decide what might work, as well as suggestions for how to improve education for students.

We hope you will take the time to read about the various award winners discussed in these articles and consider what part of their programs you might want to incorporate into yours. We show you how to start small and start friendly and include examples of what might happen if you do. We discuss individual school progress and exemplary programs, as well as district programs. We take you through all of the grades in schools today and even have examples of how things might look in both private and public education. These professionals are just like all of us—they work hard at what they do, and some even get recognized for that hard work. Many of us don't, but we still work hard.

Hunsaker and Haslam-Odoardi present us with an inquiry model that they use in their work with gifted and talented students. It is a model that works well with all students and the Common Core. The scenario they present involves concerted collaboration between the classroom and the school library.

Davies takes the concepts of the virtual learning commons and the physical learning commons and meshes them together into one philosophical understanding. She shows us how to do this by sharing her successful experiences.

Bentheim has a well-illustrated article that is the next in her series of articles about her yearlong effort to transform her traditional library setting into a learning commons setting. She offers ideas about encouraging collaboration, participating in activities, and examining the curriculum in general.

Six teacher librarians from the Kettle Moraine School District in Wisconsin describe their district-wide effort to transform traditional school libraries/

The Library Learning Commons Collection Is Core—Or Is It?

David V. Loertscher

There is renewed interest in the idea that students should be more engaged in inquiry and experience problem-based learning. The engagement of learners in real problems as they attempt to argue for various positions and defend those positions is something teacher librarians everywhere are being asked to rethink regarding their information collections. So whether you are a Common Core state in the United States or are pursuing any other major initiative designed to raise the bar on higher-level thinking and learning, let's step back for a moment and ask some basic questions about the time-honored practices of collection building. And as we do that, we appreciate Sara Kelly Johns' recent reminder: "The library *is* core."

Our heritage is the building of book collections, so for decades, we have worried about:

- A standard size: How many books per student should we own?
- A balanced collection: How many books should there be in each Dewey Decimal category?
- Selection policies: Are we choosing the best of the best that is published each year?
- Intellectual freedom: Can we defend the choice of books we own and circulate?
- Collection currency: What is the average age of our collection of books, and what should it be?
- The purpose of the collection: Is the main purpose of the collection to build fluent and avid readers of fiction?
- Collection maintenance: How do we keep the book collection maintained, circulated, repaired, and weeded?
- Budgets: How can we possibly have a viable collection when money is so tight?

In a recent white paper I was reading, the authors gave examples of wonderful papers that had been written by students tackling major issues and using wide-ranging information to support their positions. I was most interested in the bibliographies of these models of inquiry. Three of the four papers had used only articles found in Wikipedia.

Does that strike as much fear and trembling in you as it did to me? Perhaps anger and frustration are appropriate. Then calm down and ask, "So what?" and "What's next?"

I teach a collection-development class at San Jose State University and have all types of prospective librarians interested in libraries

in my classes. I ask each of them to study a real library, and in each virtual class session we examine what is going on in each of their studied libraries, stand-alone libraries, libraries by type, and then across various types of libraries. And then we ask, "So what?" and "What's next?" It is amazing the number of libraries that are still on the traditional track but also gratifying to discover those where collection development has taken a whole new direction. A number of years ago, I wrote a book on collection development and in revising that book recently, I have had to ask myself—as you have—about what direction collection building should take in the face of the current and future information world and the emergence of technologies designed to access that information. And I always start with myself: When faced with an information need, what is my own behavior? What is yours? What behaviors do our students and teachers have?

What shifts should be considered from traditional collection development practices to reinvented functions that will attract major funding because that new focus becomes essential in teaching and learning? Suppose we consider the following changes:

- From ownership to "access to"
- From balanced collections to focused collections
- From what the critics prefer to what users prefer and will use
- From librarian selected to collaboratively selected
- From tight budgeting to focused budgeting by curricular need
- From an isolated collection to a networked collection
- From static holding to elastic responsive collections
- From availability from a central place to access 24/7/365
- From single format to multiple formats on preferred devices
- From controlled cataloging to curated crowd tagging
- From central storage to distributed storage and retrieval
- From only commercially published to student and teacher created
- From down the hall to the hand-held device
- From classified collections to tagged and mobile collections
- From general collections to chunked collections supporting specific curricular targets
- From book budgets to collection chunks supported from a variety of sources
- From bloated textbook budgets to well-supported information blocks where the library *is* the common core
- From hoping to make a difference to measures demonstrating impact on literacy and curricular understanding

It would be great to have an international digital conference that thinks, dreams, and tests a wide range of ideas that would really put the school library learning commons at the center and indispensable. Wouldn't it be wonderful to read a new white paper from a major organization that puts up models of great inquiry research projects where the bibliographies exhibit substantive, high-quality sources of many types? And what if we encountered a paper that had a note of appreciation to "the librarian and teacher whose contribution to this research was appreciated." Would we faint, or just die of "natural causes" related to satisfaction and joy?