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In This Issue . . .

8 Everybody's Teacher:
Administrators' and Teachers'
Perceptions of School Librarians
Findings from the South Carolina
Association of School Librarians
Impact Study

Karen Gavigan and Keith Curry Lance

12 From Library to Learning Commons:
Our Crescent Heights High School
Experience

Lisa Mueller

18 Piloting the Learning Commons:
Coteaching and Collaboration
between a Classroom Teacher and a
Teacher Librarian

Esra Murray

25 Repurposing for the Future: A Library
Story

Susan Wolfe and Linda Reuling

30 Washington State School Library Impact
Study: The Backstory, How School
Library Impact Studies Happen

Christie Kaaland and Craig Seasholes

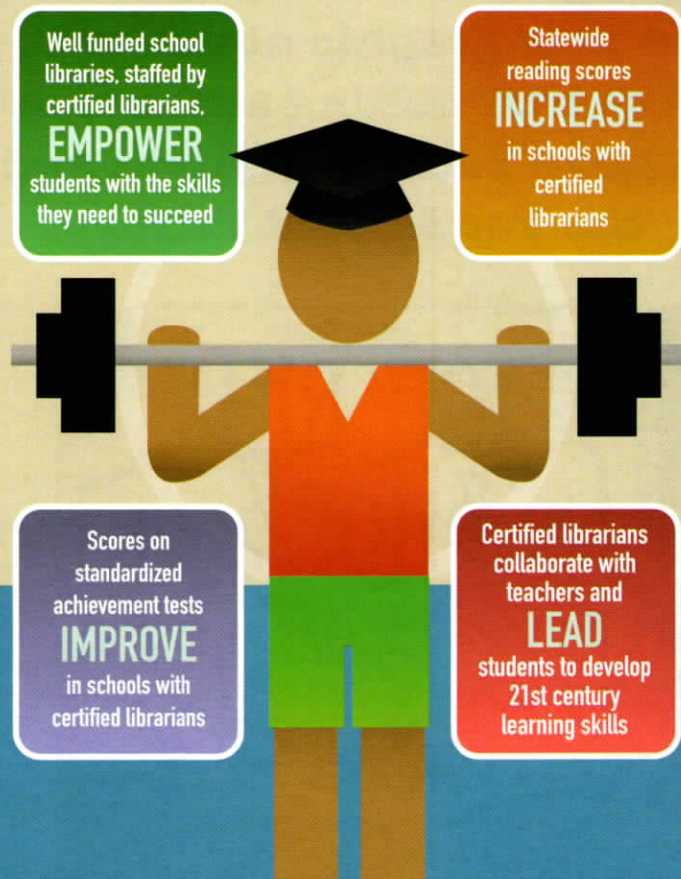
36 Using Research in Talking Points and
Elevator Speeches

Debra Kachel

**School Library Impact
Learning Commons
Collaboration
Coteaching
Advocacy**

SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL LIBRARIANS MAKE SCHOOLS STRONGER

The SC School Library Impact study conducted by RSL Research Group reveals that SC school librarians positively impact student performance in South Carolina schools



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CONT

Volume 43
Number 1
October 2015

FEATURES

8

EVERYBODY'S TEACHER: ADMINISTRATORS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS FINDINGS FROM THE SOUTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS IMPACT STUDY

Karen Gavigan and Keith Curry Lance provide the findings of Phase Two of the 2014 study on the impact of school libraries and librarians in South Carolina. The article presents views of 273 administrators and 917 teachers who responded to surveys done as part of the study. Among other findings, the article describes administrators' and teachers' perceptions of the school librarian's role in collaborative teaching and leadership activities.

12

FROM LIBRARY TO LEARNING COMMONS: OUR CRESCENT HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Lisa Mueller offers a first-hand account of the transition from a traditional library to Learning Commons at her high school in Calgary, AB. She provides significant detail and guidance in creating both a physical and virtual Learning Commons.

18

PILOTING THE LEARNING COMMONS: COTEACHING AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN A CLASSROOM TEACHER AND A TEACHER LIBRARIAN

Esra Murray, a third grade general education teacher in Greenwich, CT, recounts her discovery of her school's new Learning Commons and the opportunities it presented for collaboration and coteaching with the teacher librarian to address the needs of 21st century learning.

25

REPURPOSING FOR THE FUTURE: A LIBRARY STORY

Susan Wolfe and Linda Reuling, a gifted and talented teacher and a teacher librarian, respectively, describe their exploits in collaboration and coteaching as they transform the school library into a 21st-century center of wonderment for their students, including a STEAM room, makerspace, and much more.

30

WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL LIBRARY IMPACT STUDY: THE BACKSTORY, HOW SCHOOL LIBRARY IMPACT STUDIES HAPPEN

Christie Kaaland and Craig Seasholes, two of the principals involved in the Washington State School Library Impact Study, present a fascinating look at the conception, planning, and execution of a state library impact study. Interspersed in the history of the study are interesting insights into advocacy and lobbying. The authors provide much information with many different uses.

36

USING RESEARCH IN TALKING POINTS AND ELEVATOR SPEECHES

Debra Kachel provides a good lesson in informal advocacy, often the most effective. You never know when you will meet a school board member in the checkout lane of a grocery store or the PTA president at a soccer game. That may be your opportunity to share a compelling talking point or an elevator speech about why students need strong school library programs with certified staff. Kachel shows us how to do it.

EVENTS

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BESTBUYS

34 Poster

41 **Professional Reading**
David V Loertscher and
Elizabeth "Betty" Marcoux
**Resources for the Teacher
Librarian**

44 **Apps and Websites**
Annette Lamb
**An Eclectic Mix for Educators and
Students**

BOOKMARKIT

14 **Junior Nonfiction**
Sara Catherine Howard

17 **YA Nonfiction**
Sara Catherine Howard

22 **YA Fiction** Kathleen Odean

23 **YA Fiction** Kathleen Odean

28 **Picture Books**
Erlene Bishop Killeen

42 **Junior Fiction** Betty Winslow

48 **Junior Fiction** Betty Winslow

DEPARTMENTS

6 **Notebook**
Treasure Mountain Streamed Live!
David V. Loertscher and
Elizabeth "Betty" Marcoux

50 **What Works**
David V Loertscher
**The Virtual Makerspace: A New
Possibility?**

52 **From the Brain Trust**
Fran Kompar
**Moving from Vision to Reality: The
Library Learning Commons**

58 **Primary Voices**
Erlene Bishop Killeen
**Who's Going to a Book Festival?
InfoTech**

60 **InfoTech**
Annette Lamb and Larry Johnson
**From Sea to Shining Sea: Online
Resources for States Projects**

64 **Personal Computing**
Reid Goldsborough
Putting Your Emotions on Screen

65 **School Library Tech Ideas**
Elizabeth "Betty" Marcoux
**Technology and the Learning
Commons**

67 **Our Columnists**

67 **Advertiser Index**

is committed to collaborative partnerships for improved student learning through thought-provoking and challenging feature articles, strategies for effective advocacy, regular review columns, and critical analyses of management and programming issues.

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NOTEBOOK



Treasure Mountain Streamed Live!

David V. Loertscher and Elizabeth "Betty" Marcoux

An upcoming event will stimulate much thought and discussion on how to change from the "traditional" mechanics of the school library to that of the forward-thinking Learning Commons concepts. It is David Loertscher's professional retreat, Treasure Mountain, to be held the day before the AASL (American Association of School Librarians) conference which runs November 5- 8 in Columbus, Ohio. The articles in this issue are some of the great ideas that will be heard at this conference. For the first time, Treasure Mountain will be streamed live and available for all who wish to attend virtually. The retreat will be streamed at <https://sites.google.com/site/treasuremtresearchretreat/>.

Don't miss this important event, even if you can't attend it in person. Many of the authors of various articles in this issue will be present and speaking as will authors of articles in previous issues and many leaders of the profession.

In order to legitimize much of what is said, the lead article in this issue is the Phase 2 findings provided by Gavigan and Lance. While the study was done in South Carolina, its findings resonate with all school libraries and schools. Consider what it shows us about the perceptions of the teacher librarian in schools. Mueller offers a first-hand account of how she transitioned a traditional school library to a Learning Commons in Canada. This article offers significant information about how to create both a physical and virtual Learning Commons. Murray, an elementary teacher, shows us in her article what the Learning Commons means to her, her classroom, her school, her students. She talks about the issue of collaboration between a classroom teacher and the teacher librarian. Wolfe and Reuling take this work even further with an article that follows about how the collaboration between a classroom teacher and the teacher librarian move their "traditional" school library to something relevant and exciting to learning.

The Kaaland/Seasholes article is another significant study—conducted in Washington State—about the value of the teacher librarian. This article presents information about its value, and how to use it with advocacy work as well as lobbying. Washington has taken this to heart – they take this information forward to establish how meaningful a school library and its professional can be in the learning life of a student. Kachel notes the importance

The Virtual Makerspace

A New Possibility?

David V. Loertscher

The excitement over creating makerspaces in school and public libraries continues to grow as the library transforms into a learning commons. However our patrons can get to our library learning commons, they can now find a myriad of things to do, make, construct, build, discover, and collaborate with others in a project-based environment. Suddenly, we are in a world of self-directed learning as opposed to a constant stream of young people just trying to compete. It is a breath of fresh air for students as they realize that discovery is actually possible at school.

As setting up a physical makerspace provides its own set of challenges, including expenses and even facility redesign and renovation, it often progresses at a slower pace than any of us would like. Master's degree students at San Jose State University and I would like to introduce to you a concept that can be implemented much more quickly while the physical space is developing. We call it the Virtual Makerspace.

We envision a virtual environment where students and adults can create, build, and invent and where all the other creative, informal, educational self-directed learning passions can develop.

You mean that it would be a 24/7 virtual space that is not part of an assignment? Something I would not be tested on? Something that might be an antidote to boredom? A place where I am in command of my own learning?

Unheard of.

In pursuing the idea, we discovered there already are a plethora of such apps, tools, or experiences—whatever you want to call them—begging for an audience of children, teens, and adult users. Best of all, many are free or low cost. We set to work developing templates that could be used with various grade levels and interests and that could work on a variety of devices. We thought that if you see how a template works, you will get the idea and then have the whole school participate in the construction of such a virtual environment. It would not replace the need for a physical makerspace, but it would enhance opportunities over and above what could happen and should happen right now.

To grasp the idea, we first did some thinking on a T chart. Here is a starter chart; you can add to it.

From Consumption	To Creation
Read a book	Write a book
Play a game	Create a game
Use an App	Create an App
Listen to music	Compose music
Watch a YouTube video	Create and publish a YouTube video
Over to you...	

In the past several years, the students and I have created free Google templates for teacher librarians to replace their library websites with a Virtual Learning Commons. To access them, use the following links.

The general virtual learning commons template: at: <http://sites.google.com/site/templatevlc>

An elementary school virtual learning commons at: <http://sites.google.com/site/templatevlc/elementary/>

A middle school virtual learning commons at: <http://sites.google.com/site/templatevlc/middle/>

A high school virtual learning commons at: <http://sites.google.com/site/templatevlc/high/>

You can see one of the real virtual learning commons products created by Julie Chambers and team at: <http://tinyurl.com/n5tk46b> There are others if you google them using the term “virtual learning commons.”

Since Julie and team's example, our class has added what we call a Design Hall to each of the templates above. These are the virtual rooms in which the virtual makerspace can reside, and we predict that by placing it there, it will draw traffic to your VLC site as a whole.

In the Design Hall, you will be pointed to a Symbaloo group of webmixes that are public. We have created webmixes for K-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12, by Interest, and Adult. Each webmix was created by a team of students. Then the entire group offered suggestions and revisions. When you find a webmix you like, you can first create your own and then transfer the tiles you like from our webmix, add some of your own, and you are up and running. We have included links to Google documents that explain the idea.

In order to include more tools/apps, we created “groups” of tiles like folders in Google Drive, under a category, complete with a link to an instructional sheet. Our categories include: coding, book making, music, video production, game creation, and 3D modeling just to name a few.

You should, of course, create your own categories if you like that style. You also can separate each grade level out into its own independent webmix rather than having all the grades together as we have done.

There is a growing chorus of experts writing and presenting across the world on the need for creativity and self-directed learning. Many schools respond by having genius hours connected to fab labs or makerspaces in the school, at the public library, or in the community. We find, however, that the concentration is on physical and hands-on learning and there is certainly nothing wrong with that. Add a virtual makerspace on top of the physical one and you have something that does not require a hall pass or a class visitation schedule to enjoy. And, groups of students can choose one or several tools, link them to each other and do some kind of independent project collaboratively as they simulate the real world of business or industry.

In your virtual makerspace, we recommend a wide variety of tools that range from easy to challenging for the target audience. It is all about choice that matches skill level or, in educational jargon, differentiation. While teachers might include the virtual makerspace in a “curriculum project,” we recommend that this not be its focus. To connect formal with informal learning just might kill the latter.

In order to sell the concept of a virtual makerspace, we suggest that you print out a copy of the uTEC Maker Model created by David Loertscher, Leslie Preddy and Bill Derry at: <https://sites.google.com/site/learningpostersgallery/>

If studied carefully, this model, including the dispositions listed at the bottom, provide a pathway leading into the use of inventions and technology toward the creation of new ideas and inventions. Such an experience seems to be central if students of all ages are to prepare and compete successfully in a networked world. Working in a virtual makerspace can lead not only to personal skills but also to cooperative work habits that lead to the development of collaborative intelligence.

The secret to a successful virtual makerspace, we believe, is not to “build it for them.” Rather, if they help build it, they will use it. Thus, for every webmix you create, you will want to have an editorial team of students helping, listening to friends, and searching for the latest fasci-



inating tools and apps out there. Yes, we know that the AASL committee on the best websites of the year publish an annual list, but many of those sites are geared at teaching content connected to the curriculum. Perhaps their focus is to divide into two sections. We have not seen lists devoted purely to creating, making, and discover, but no doubt they are out there.

One of the core ideas of the library learning commons is to honor the idea of the consumption of knowledge as our traditional role, but now to add a second and equally important piece: the creation of knowledge. We believe that this central idea will give new life to the library concept that has been squashed in many schools and in decline elsewhere. The most progressive in our field seem to be branching out beyond just a role for teaching the love of reading and the skill of inquiry. Perhaps the virtual makerspace is a whole new world of inquiry far beyond the writing of reports and term papers. After investigating the possibilities, what do you think?

For even more ideas on the creation of both the physical and virtual library learning commons, we recommend the following publications:

The Elementary School Learning Com-

mons by David V. Loertscher and Carol Koechlin. Learning Commons Press, 2015. (available from LMCsource.com)

The Secondary School Learning Commons by David V. Loertscher and Carol Koechlin. Learning Commons Press, 2015. (available from LMCsource.com)