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THE JOURNAL FOR SCHOOL LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS

february 2015

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VOYA Magazine



**Learning Commons
Professional Development
Administration
Collaboration
Booktalking
Inspiration**



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Number 3
February 2015

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Feature articles are blind refereed by members of the Advisory Board.

Guidelines for authors available online at: www.teacherlibrarian.com

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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Fax: 301-805-2192

E-mail: editor@teacherlibrarian.com

Web site: www.teacherlibrarian.com

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE

The YGS Group,
3650 West Market Street • York, PA 17404
717.505.9701

E-mail: info@theygsgroup.com

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Enterline Design Services, LLC
www.enterlinedesign.com

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

\$60 per year. Bulk rates to one address available.

Subscriptions, Teacher Librarian

Box 958 • Bowie, MD 20718-0958

Phone: 301.805.2191 • Fax: 301.805.2192

Subscription inquiries e-mail:

subscriptions@teacherlibrarian.com

Or subscribe online at: www.teacherlibrarian.com

Teacher Librarian is owned by
E L Kurdyla Publishing LLC.

U.S. POSTMASTER: Teacher Librarian (ISSN 1481-1782 USPS #9-407) (Publications Mail Registration Number 40028609) is published bimonthly except July/August for \$60.00 per year by E L Kurdyla Publishing LLC, Box 958, Bowie, MD 20718-0958. Periodicals postage paid at Bowie, MD, and at additional mailing offices.

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS: Send address corrections (covers only) to Subscriptions, Teacher Librarian, Box 958, Bowie, MD 20718-0958.

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NOTEBOOK



Year of the Learning Commons

David V. Loertscher and Elizabeth "Betty" Marcoux

In this issue of *Teacher Librarian*, we announce the Year of the Learning Commons that begins in April of 2015 and ends in May of 2016.

This initiative invites everyone interested in any aspect of the learning commons concept to celebrate, present, write, advocate for, and demonstrate how the transformed school library moves toward the center of teaching and learning in the school. Check out the website at:

<https://Sites.google.com/site/yearofthelearningcommons>

Transforming the traditional school library that is the center of resources and consumption into a vibrant center of knowledge creation, creativity, inquiry, and the center of high tech information and experimentation is a wonder to behold. As the transformation happens in schools we have visited, a whole new sense of excitement and interest arises from students, teachers, administrators, and the community. It becomes a model worth advocating for as this century of rich information and technology marches on.

Drs. Loertscher and Marcoux examine the state of the Learning Commons (LC) through their recent survey results. They report on what is happening presently in terms of the Learning Commons and offer suggestions for future work as a Learning Commons. The examples they offer can be customized as well as emulated when looking at your own Learning Commons. This feature article is followed by an elementary school's journey to become a Learning Commons. It is colorful, interesting, and full of amazing ideas about how to develop your own LC.

Of course any LC can't materialize without the partnerships and collaboration of many constituencies. This is not only evident in the aforementioned article by Steele, but reinforced emphatically by the subsequent article. Ellis and Jacobs-Israel talk about the New York School Library System and the benefits they receive as a unit rather than as individuals. They work under a mandate to not only provide relevant professional development offerings, but also work concertedly on communication with each other.

As the transformation happens in schools we have visited, a whole new sense of excitement and interest arises from students, teachers, administrators, and the community.

Collaboration is something that Heller and Storms talk about both in their article and when they present information to various audiences. They talk about a touchy subject and an especially vulnerable population – sex content and teens. What they have to say really helps when examining literature for its value and perspective.

Duvvoori, a freshman student, talks about how her world was enlarged even as she was working with an impoverished elementary school in rural south India, providing books and library services to students. Basically, she starts with nothing

and goes forward from there, a lesson we all can learn.

In this issue we provide you with a couple of articles that present VOYA's top books that have been reviewed throughout the preceding year. What a wonderful incentive to add many of these to your collection development agenda.

Dr. Loertscher is dedicating his "What Works" column to the Year of the Learning Commons. He explores what is happening in Finland and perceptively suggests that these and other ideas are totally possible in your school. The poster graphically

complements his column. Kurti introduces his new column this month about Makerspaces, a concept that fits very well with the concept of a Learning Commons. Dr. Marcoux addresses devices that can help you with your thoughts on how to move learning forward. Lamb's App and Software review column presents a wealth of sites and software to engage your students and yourselves.

This issue's "From the Brain Trust" column features veteran educator and expert, Dr. Blanche Woolls, who encourages us to move forward in all that we do, in spite of challenges.

Programs are constantly under development. From "traditional" to "non-traditional" activities of a school library, the student needs to be engaged and learning. That is the bottom line. We believe this issue will help you move in this direction.

WRITE FOR *TEACHER LIBRARIAN*!

The editors of *Teacher Librarian* welcome original manuscripts on any aspect of library services for children and young adults that will contribute to excellence in programs and improved support for their delivery. We are committed to collaborative partnerships for improved student learning through thought-provoking and challenging feature articles, strategies for effective advocacy, and critical analysis of management and programming issues

We invite you to share your knowledge, expertise, or research with the *Teacher-Librarian* readership and the greater teacher librarian community. We encourage articles from both practitioners and library educators. Submissions will be considered for publication only if they have not been published previously and they are not under active consideration by another journal. Articles usually range in length from 2000 to 3500 words, but can be longer or shorter depending upon the needs of the topic.

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