Intentional Inquiry: Vision, Persistence, and Relationships

Examples where educators have intentionally created a vision and a plan to support change in student learnings

Tracking Teacher Librarian Effectiveness Using Digital Portfolios

Guidelines for compiling digital portfolios

Data Literacy Strategies

Three high-leverage data literacy strategies that can help educators prepare students to interpret data

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Ready for Summer

Deborah Levitov and Christie Kaaland

❝Summer afternoon—summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language.❞ Henry James

Ah, summer, when you have the luxury of time to reflect, refresh, and renew before the school year begins once again. Summer offers a chance for self pampering, perhaps to indulge in reading whatever you want. It is also a time to step back and reflect in order to prioritize what needs to be accomplished in the coming school year. In this way you can return in the fall renewed, with vigor to incorporate the professional trends, research, and ideas that you encountered over the summer.

This issue of *Teacher Librarian* offers some well-informed ideas for professional reading and contemplation over the summer, which are befitting for a fall list. As Leslie Maniotes assrts in her article, you too can become "change savvy" in your school library program, which can then extend to your school, district, and/or community. Are you ready to work with teachers on implementing the inquiry process for teaching and learning? Consider how you can involve others in moving this forward.

Do you have a professional digital portfolio underway? Summer is a great time to cull through the professional accomplishments of the past year and either begin a portfolio or add material to an existing one as evidence of your teaching effectiveness. As Keller establishes in her article, a digital portfolio is an effective way to present your teaching role and the importance of the school library program to student learning.

How about launching literature events for the next year that promote intrinsically motivated reading for your students? The research-

OERs, Collaboration, and the Library Learning Commons

David V. Loertscher

The world of Open Educational Resources (OERs) has emerged sufficiently to open a huge potential for teacher librarians to move into the center of teaching and learning by creating cotaught online sessions, units, and whole courses of instruction.

This may already be a part of your repertoire as a teacher librarian, but my experience with my graduate students at San Jose State University recently has pushed the boundary of possibilities. We would like to share.

Perhaps you are a TL with more than one school, or, you are part time, or, you have a number of TLs in your district or region who keep reinventing the wheel for common units of instruction in the school, district, or even the state. We notice that those who have multiple schools or whole districts as the only professional TLs, spend a great deal of time on management, but wishing they had the benefit of placing a fulltime professional TL in every school. We'd like to demonstrate that the library learning commons is much more than just a warehouse; more than just a place to consume information and resources. It is the central place in the school where knowledge can be created.

We'd like to demonstrate as a group of 30 graduate students, the idea that by working collaboratively, professional TLs can and could create a wide variety of super, virtual, and engaging learning experiences that can be cotaught by the classroom teacher and the TL. If we combine efforts; we can push the possibilities of great instructional designs that will make a difference in our schools.

Together, we selected the most common topic in the elementary schools of California - California History at the fourth grade level - and developed a year long course using OERs to support the brand new California Social Studies Framework adopted in 2016.

Take a look at it here: https://sites.google.com/site/cahistoryforkidsgr4

Our "hook" page is addressed to the children: What Do We Already Know About California? **What Would We Like To Find Out? Can We Make Our Own History?**

Right out of the chute, we are challenging the children to create history as well as study it. On the left hand sidebar, you see the nine major topics of CA history recommended in the new Frameworks. What you might not notice is that this entire curriculum is a Google Site; actually, 12 Google Sites linked together in order to have space enough to include the resources.

Another major difference is that all the main pages to the nine topics are created for the kids, rather than the teachers. Notice on Topic 1: Geography, that each page has three columns. The left column is for resources children can use; the middle column contains project ideas; and the third column is for actual work by fourth graders that have been submitted via a Google Form found at the top of this column.

At the bottom of each page, students and teachers can submit ideas and comments as well as examples of student work in order to make this curriculum site participatory rather than directive.

The resources column on the left (above) was curated by groups of graduate students looking for connections to libraries, museums, government agencies, organizations, non-profits, and quality resources that 4th graders could use from the general Internet.

The center column contains project "teasers." Here, the idea is to suggest a tool, a video, a data source, or some other repository with an intriguing question designed to hook the interest of the student. Throw the bait out there and you just might stimulate a passion, curiosity, and an engaged learner.

In putting this project together, we discovered that many young students are already putting their work and projects up on YouTube for the world to admire. Most of them are impressive, like the virtual tour of a California Mission done in Mindecraft. Perhaps such project demonstrations can raise the bar of California students toward excellence and deep learning. The submission tool, the Google Form, allows the owner of the site to be selective

of what will actually get posted rather than a free for all posting place.

TEACHER PAGES

When a topical page is open, you will see a subpage, which lists resources

for the teacher and the teacher librarian.

The nine resource pages have two columns: the first, for sample unit and lesson plans and the second, the full text of the Californian Social Studies Framework for that particular topic.

The sample units and lesson plans have been created by our graduate students and are high level instructional designs that are meant to be cotaught by the classroom teacher and teacher librarian. This will no doubt be an eye opener for many classroom teachers who have never considered teacher librarians to be anything except resource providers and teachers of databases.

Some of these units/lesson plans are short; others are longer, more developed experiences. Some are straight social studies; others, interdisciplinary; still others, exhibiting very creative uses of technology. All have significant culminating activities that replace the common serial presentations, turning passive presentations into much deeper learning across what individuals and groups have been able to create. After it is all over, students, teachers and teacher librarians engage in a Big Think that requires them to reflect on what they know and how they learned it, and how they can do better the next time.

Finally, at the top of the left column, is an invitation to teachers to share lesson plans with others. Again, it is a way of making the entire curriculum participatory. Like the student invitation, the sharing is monitored in order to choose the best of the crop to add to the collection.

THE FUTURE

We hope this extensive sample will stimulate interest across the profession in more collaborative construction of cotaught teaching experiences. There seem to be hundreds of thousands of sample lesson plans on the Internet, though few mention the library or the teacher librarian. Perhaps every state school library organization could organize a committee to construct, collect, and publish common topical units centered in the idea that the library learning commons is *the* place to build, deliver, and demonstrate what real and deep learning really looks like and its impact on great teaching and learning. It is the place to discover the best of the best OERs that can bring a much richer learning environment compared to the traditional textbook/lecture method.

As for this California website, another group of summer graduate students will continue to develop and refine the site, so that it will be in even better shape for the 2016-17 school year. We will be adding units that are examples of each of the six contributions Teacher Liberians can make to enhance or provide "light" to a learning experience. See the LIIITE Model at: https://sites.google.com/site/learningpostersgallery/the-liiite-model

AFTERWORD

This California curriculum website joins a number of other free models and templates for use in the creation of a virtual learning commons. These have been explained and used in previous What Works columns by the author but are reiterated here for convenience.

The Virtual Makerspace uses a Symbaloo webmix to present over 50 tools for K-12 students who want to build, construct, and create. At: http://www.symbaloo.com/mix/virtualmakerspace

Templates that can be used to create a virtual learning commons:

Elementary school: https://sites.google.com/site/templatevlcelementary

Middle school: https://sites.google.com/site/templatevlcmiddle

High School: https://sites.google.com/site/templatevlchigh

Knowledge Building Center template that can be used to create a cotaught unit or lesson. At: https://sites.google.com/site/knowledgebuildingcenter/

The Book2Cloud template that assists in helping students understand complex texts by dividing it into chunks, making sense out of the pieces, and then putting the whole back together again. At: .https://sites.google.com/site/book2cloud/