

professional reading for the information leader

TEACHER TEAMS THAT GET RESULTS:

61 STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINING AND RENEWING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Gayle H. Gregory and Lin Kuzmich

I have reviewed in this column a number of books dealing with professional learning communities because they seem to provide the best hope for a faculty to work as a team to achieve a united goal. Now comes a remarkable volume by two authors who understand what a collaborative school is and how to make it work. The title is correct: There are 61 strategies described in this book to get collaboration started, maintain the conversation, and fix the problems if there is a breakdown. I have not seen so many strategies for adult learners assembled in one place before, and the good thing is that they take into account the learning styles of adults. The strategies are grouped in a number of themes: creating a growth-oriented culture, sharing knowledge and skills, building resilience and creating solutions, determining priorities and creating excellence, and putting it all together. For teacher-librarians who continue to knock at the door of the classroom to get in and make a difference, here are some excellent strategies for working with a group of teachers. (Corwin Press, 2007. 280 pp. \$39.95. 978-1-4129-2613-3.)

Bottom line: This is a must-purchase. It is a book to use and use and use, and it is a solution to administrators who dream the collaborative culture replacing a totally political, warring, and insular climate.

SSR WITH INTERVENTION:

A SCHOOL LIBRARY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

Leslie B. Preddy

My stand-up cheer for Leslie B. Preddy is, wow, awesome, great! This book is a wonderful model. Here is a teacher-librarian who is challenged by her principal to do a piece of action research alongside all the teachers; so, Leslie and a few other teachers huddle. They worry that sustained silent reading (SSR) has been given a bad name by the National Reading Panel, and they want to test it for themselves on their teen students. They invent a simple method in which students have response journals of what they read; they provide lots of choices, include nonfiction, set a few procedures, and monitor the program; and in 3 months of experimentation, they cannot get students or teachers to stop the program. The results? Various measures send up a green flag—and higher test scores. Leslie's book gives full details, the story, and various forms to use to duplicate her program. But the biggest measure is, teacher-librarians make a difference, and here is the evidence! Now for the rest of us, "Go and do thou likewise" keeps ringing in this reader's ear. (Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 168 pp. \$35.00. 978-1-59158-460-5.)

Bottom line: This book is a keeper that offers an action plan.

FACILITY PLANNING FOR SCHOOL LIBRARY AND TECHNOLOGY CENTERS, 2ND ED.

Steven M. Baule

This second edition by Steven M. Baule joins the excellent *School Library Media Facilities Planner* (2005), by Thomas L. Hart, to help those designing or remodeling library and technology spaces. Baule's volume covers the territory, from the planning phase through the completion, with lots of helpful suggestions, drawings, samples, and so forth. I noticed that Baule does not take the facility totally into the world of wireless technology but provides the options and the advantages of both wired and wireless facilities. Which book should you buy? Both. The cost for these two excellent sources, with their complementary ideas and differing opinions, are essential when you

are faced with the renovation of an existing center or new facility dreams (headaches). These experts can help you to successfully navigate the murky waters of facility planning. (Linworth, 2007. 134 pp. \$39.95. 978-1-58683-294-0.)

Bottom line: Highly recommended.

COLLABORATING TO MEET LITERACY STANDARDS: TEACHER/LIBRARIAN PARTNERSHIPS FOR GRADES K-2

Toni Buzzeo

If you want a detailed version of how teachers and teacher-librarians teach together, Buzzeo provides just such an outline. She first spends a whole section describing the collaboration process, which can serve as background reading for the participating team members. Then, she provides 15 fully fleshed-out units. Language arts standards and information literacy standards are listed, showing how the goals of the classroom teacher and the teacher-librarian are being met as the unit progresses. Activities are then described, some in the classroom and some in the library; some are done by the teacher alone and some are team-taught. Various assessment strategies are given, as well as handouts to be used for the unit activities.

The value of this collection is in its detail for those who have not experienced collaboration. In the detail, it demonstrates the merger of library and classroom. In actual practice, teachers and teacher-librarians might follow one of these units as written but then evaluate together, not just the strategies of teaching, but also the collaborative process itself. The partners should then push out from the prescription and be creative to build a collective style of what happens in the library classroom combination. (Linworth Books, 2007. 271 pp. \$39.95. 978-1-58683-189-9.)

Bottom line: Valuable as a collaboration starter for the younger set who will love the experience in both the library and the classroom.

GRAPHIC NOVELS: A GENRE GUIDE TO COMIC BOOKS, MANGA, AND MORE

Michael Pawuk

This major annotated bibliography of 2,500 graphic novels and related genres provides an advanced guide for building large collections

for teens and adults. The author lists and annotates hundreds of titles under each of the following genres: super heroes, action and adventure, science fiction, fantasy, crime and mysteries, horror, contemporary life, humor, and nonfiction. With the entire genre growing so rapidly, this is not an attempt at an exhausting guide; rather, it goes far beyond most other recommended collections that have been published to date. It is for the serious collector and the serious librarian whose knowledge of this popular area must reach for the expertise of the patrons who browse the collections. Its purpose is not to provide a "safe" collection or a noncontroversial range of titles, so it is not a list to use as an automatic order source. Not for the beginner, this guide is recommended for the serious selector who reads and reads and reads this material and knows it and discusses the works with patrons. (Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 672 pp. \$65.00. 978-1-59158-132-1.) **Bottom line:** Recommended for the serious selector.

YOUTH INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOR 2: THEORIES, MODELS, AND ISSUES

Mary K. Chelton and Colleen Cool, Eds.
For their first volume, published in 2004 (*Youth Information Seeking Behavior: Theories, Models, and Issues*, Scarecrow Press), Mary K. Chelton and Colleen Cool collected a number of various research reports dealing with teens. Now they continue this collection in the current volume. This volume and its predecessor do the world of teen professional literature a real favor by advancing knowledge of teens and their information-seeking behavior. Here are 10 research reports on wide-ranging topics, including everyday information behavior of teens, the information-seeking behavior of urban teens, teen needs for information about sexual health issues, the information seeking of queer youth's coming-out experiences, teens and pleasure reading, online information and teens, virtual libraries for teens, digital references for teens, web portal design for teens, and causes of information-seeking failure. The research reports are just that and are couched in research language. The audience is the serious reader and the researcher. (Scarecrow Press, 2006. 416 pp. \$45.00. 978-0-8108-5654-7.)

Bottom line: Recommended for the thoughtful research crowd.

THE BIG 6 IN MIDDLE SCHOOL: TEACHING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Barbara A. Jansen

If you are a fan of the Big 6 method of teaching research skills, then Jansen's book for middle school teacher-librarians will be of interest. The book begins with an introduction to the model and to technology applications recommended for use in teaching research. Then, the author provides a variety of sample units of instruction that illustrate the various stages of the model, from task definition through evaluation.

It is obvious that Jansen has used the model in a variety of curricular areas and that is both a strength and a weakness of this collection. There seem to be two ways that information literacy is taught in schools. The first is to teach the research process using the classroom assignment with the teacher, who either stays back in the classroom or comes to the library but interacts very little with the teacher-librarian. The second method is the team teaching of the research process so that both educators are striving to reach every student in the group.

Jansen's work can be interpreted either way. I wish that she had elaborated on the classroom segue into the unit and then on why it is important at the end of the research to summarize the entire learning experience. Such descriptions, even though brief, provide a global picture of an integrated curriculum rather than one that is compartmentalized. Creeping into the units is the suggestion of using more and more Web 2.0 and social networking technology. Applications such as these are often banned in many school districts as safeguards against imagined dangers, but it is time for all teacher-librarians to begin taking a stand for the inclusion of this new-world technology into their teaching. (Linworth, 2007. 226 pp. \$39.95. 978-1-58683-215-5.)

Bottom line: Appropriate for Big 6 aficionados.

LITERACY COACHING: THE ESSENTIALS

Katherine Casey

After interviewing several literacy coaches to inquire what it is they are doing and how they are contributing to teaching and learning, I have found that their experiences sound more than

vaguely familiar. "You are trying to do what? Really? Trying to get into the kingdom of the classroom? Facing a little resistance are you? Hey, let me give you a few lessons." Seriously, the model for literacy coaching and the collaboration strategies of the teacher-librarian are so similar that the two specialists should join forces as a team and administrators should set expectations of collaboration with the classroom teachers. That is why I am reviewing this title here. There is one major difference between the literacy coach and the teacher-librarian, and that is the responsibility of the warehouse, although many literacy coaches have data management as their mud puddle. My recommendation for this book is to purchase it, ask the literacy coach to read it, and then have a heart-to-heart conversation with him or her about a true partnership of library and literacy rather than a competition for attention. The recommendations in this book are sensible, and there are enough unique ideas to be a good read—even for a coach with a little experience. So, try the discussion and dreaming route with this new breed of specialist in your school. (Heineman, 2007. 224 pp. \$23.00. 978-0-325-00941-4.) **Bottom line:** Worth a try.

CREATING STANDARDS-BASED INTEGRATED CURRICULUM: ALIGNING CURRICULUM, CONTENT, ASSESSMENT, AND INSTRUCTION, 2ND ED.

Susan M. Drake

The phrase "getting your act together" comes to mind when reading through this book. Susan M. Drake provides a good introduction for how to take the many ideas about the structure of education and blend them to meet educational standards and provide a relevant education for the students at hand. The normal array of current concerns—such as understanding by design, differentiation, assessment, standards, or any other movement that cries out for attention—can cause a school to get on a single track and emphasize one idea at the expense of all others. For teacher-librarians who do not yet have a firm grip on the concepts of curriculum and how many ideas—including their information literacy, reading, and technology programs—can interconnect into a whole school plan, this book is an easy-to-understand explanation worth reading and talking about. It is a good homework book



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> WEB SITES

SIMPLE MACHINES FOR TEACHERS

Science SeeSaw and Simple Machines

www.sciencetech.technomuses.ca/english/schoolzone/machines.cfm

The Canada Science and Technology Museum offers educators lessons and activities to teach the basic principles of simple machines and how they function. This site offers further explanations than do many sites by answering questions such as "Why do we use simple machines?" Teachers can also download reproducible worksheets for use in the classroom.

The Math of Bicycles: Wheel Figure This Out

www.pbs.org/teachersource/mathline/concepts/neighborhoodmath/activity4.shtml

PBS provides this teacher resource for use in grades 7-10 to apply the use of wheels and axels to riding a bicycle. This site has a similar lessons appropriate for grades 3-7.

Simple Machines Printables

<http://homeschooling.about.com/od/freeprintables/ss/machineprint.htm>

This site provides six printable activity sheets, including a word search, vocabulary activity, crossword puzzle, and alphabetizing activity.

for teacher-librarians before engaging in a serious professional learning community discussion. (Corwin Press, 2007. 240 pp. \$32.95. 978-1-4129-1506-9.)

Bottom line: Here is a smart pill for instructional leaders. Recommended.

AUTHORS IN THE PANTRY: RECIPES, STORIES, AND MORE

Sharon L. McElmeel, with

Deborah L. McElmeel

Here is a fun collection about children's authors that contains stories about their lives, lists of their books, and several recipes connected to the books that they have written. The following are a few of the 47 authors included: Sue Alexander, Berthe Amoss, Marsha Diane Arnold, Roger Bradfield, Marlene Targ Brill, Craig Brown, Don Brown, Joseph Bruchac, Betsy Byars, Elisa Carbone, Nancy Carlson, Penny Colman, Diane DeGroat, and Norah Dooley. (Libraries Unlimited, 2007. 280 pp. \$32.00. 978-1-59158-321-9.)

Bottom line: If you cook with children as they sample their literature, this is a good addition to your recipe collection.

ART IN STORY: TEACHING ART HISTORY TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN, 2ND ED.

Marianne C. Saccardi

When money is tight—even under the No Child Left Behind Act—art programs in elementary schools seem to become scarce. Saccardi has come to the rescue by creating a wonderful guide to art history of many cultures from around the world and by providing art activities that reflect these cultures, which can further the objectives of other parts of the curriculum. She covers the ancient world, the Middle East, Greece, Asia, Africa, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, Europe, the United States, and Mexico. Each country begins with a story from its culture, which teachers can read to the students, followed by a cultural art project, along with integrative activity suggestions and a bibliography of useful resources. This is a major collection of ideas for art teachers, teacher-librarians, and classroom teachers who want to enrich learning beyond the drag of drill, drill, drill. (Teacher Ideas Press, 2007. 484 pp. \$35.00. 978-1-59158-359-2.)

Bottom line: Highly recommended.

DIGITAL AGE LITERACY FOR

TEACHERS: APPLYING TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS TO EVERYDAY PRACTICE

Susan J. Brooks-Young

The National Educational Technology Standards has been around for a decade and is currently under revision by the International Society for Technology in Education. These standards are designed to indicate the level of proficiency that teachers have or should have to use technology to enhance learning experiences and, in doing so, boost achievement. Susan J. Brooks-Young provides a guide that can be used by preservice teachers or a professional development class in a district to gauge the level of proficiency of the teachers. Each standard is stated, followed by (a) a description of what a teacher should know to achieve that competency, (b) ideas for resources to help that competency, and (c) an evaluative assessment handout where teachers can describe how they meet the standard.

This guide is disappointing because it constantly lectures teachers about what they should do, and I cannot imagine that teachers will improve with this run-through of yet another competency they are to achieve. Although the guide might be interesting because it elaborates on the soon-to-be revised standards, professional developers who are using it as a guide to various sessions of instruction are likely to fail because, although the framework is there, the practical application is not. I am alarmed that the role of the technology leader in the school has been ignored. There is no mention of a technology leader's or a teacher-librarian's teaming with a classroom teacher to build learning experiences that incorporate technology. For example, if students were pulling materials on a topic from various web sites or databases and then putting them onto a wiki so that collaborative evaluation of the information could take place, the technology leader or teacher-librarian could teach the teacher the wiki technology alongside the students. It is not that difficult to learn, but more important, the teacher would understand the value of a technology where collaborative storage and use of information leads to higher-level thinking. It just seems that following this guide is the same old method of teaching skills in isolation of actual use. It does not work. (International Society for Technology in Education, 2007. 132 pp. \$39.95. 978-1-56484-229-9.)

Bottom line: Not recommended.

COLLABORATING WITH ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT STAFF

Lesley S. J. Farmer

Articles and books on collaboration for teacher-librarians have always focused on the partnership between teacher-librarians and classroom teachers and have not dealt specifically with other collaborative opportunities in the school. In this new book on collaboration, Lesley S. J. Farmer concentrates not on teacher-librarians and classroom teachers but on the potential collaborative relationships between teacher-librarians and other school personnel: administrators, specialist teaching staff (such as special education teachers and reading specialists), and educational support staff (such as counselors, athletic coaches, and technology specialists). In the preface, the author asserts that teacher-librarians must become more involved in student achievement and that, to do so, they need to partner with a range of professionals and paraprofessionals in their school community. Farmer's stated purpose is to show teacher-librarians how to reach out to this group to create collaborative interdependent relationships.

Farmer structures the book into four sections. Part 1, "Exploring the Basics," takes a systems approach to analyzing how schools work, examines the teacher-librarian's role in the organization of the school, and provides an explanation of the nature of collaboration. Part 2, "Collaborating With Administration," provides an explanation of the different types of administrators at school and district levels and outlines tips for successful collaboration with administrators. Part 3, "Collaborating With Key Service Personnel," covers partnering with specific types of specialist staff, notably, reading specialists, special education teachers, academic and personal counselors, physical health specialists, and co-curricular staff. Each chapter provides explanations of the role of the particular specialist and offers techniques for establishing collaborative relationships between the school library and the specialist area. The concluding section, Part 4, "Measuring the Impact of Collaboration," examines various ways to measure the success of collaborative efforts by looking at student achievement, and it ends with a chapter on becoming a collaborative leader.

The book has a textbook-like approach, and it attempts to cover all the bases by

providing a comprehensive survey of collaboration with other specialists in the school, which is both its strength and its weakness. By choosing to discuss a variety of support specialists rather than concentrate on a few, Farmer does not provide the depth and the solid, detailed practical strategies that school library practitioners require (especially in the section on working with reading specialists and special education teachers). In fact, those two areas themselves can provide the subject matter for an entire book. The tips and strategies that are briefly offered are those that seasoned practitioners are already doing, and

they offer little that is new.

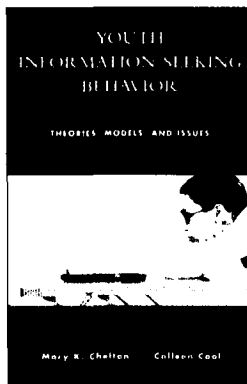
This book is likely intended as a textbook for students in a library media specialist degree program and, as such, is a useful survey text. However, for current school practitioners, it is a beginning survey of the topic that does not go far enough in providing practical, detailed, useful strategies for collaborating with administrators and other specialist personnel in the school. (Neal-Schuman, 2007. 217 pp. \$65.00. 978-1-55570-572-5.)

Bottom line: Recommended with reservations.—Review by Esther Rosenfeld

Understand Your Students' Inquiring Minds

◆ FORTHCOMING ◆

YOUTH INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIORS II CONTEXT, THEORIES, MODELS, AND ISSUES Mary K. Chelton and Colleen Cool



January 2007

352 pages

0-8108-5654-9 \$45.00 paper

Mary K. Chelton and Colleen Cool continue the work of their earlier volume published by Scarecrow in 2004. This recent collection includes an introductory article providing context for the studies that follow, and which persuasively and passionately argues for a new research agenda for this rapidly developing area of study. Ten contributed chapters provide a snapshot of the current research agenda, providing a useful place to start exploring this topic and serves as an excellent resource to support information behavior and youth services courses. The collection exemplifies, in one convenient place, many important researchers and research projects. Five chapters focus on everyday life information seeking (ELIS). These include the everyday information behaviors of children nine to thirteen years of age; a similar study of urban teenagers fourteen to seventeen; the need for sexual health information; information seeking during "queer" youth coming-out experiences; and teen reading, book purchasing, and library use patterns. Included as well are four chapters that address the information seeking of youth in their role as students. These studies are a must-read for researchers in the field and for students with an interest in the information seeking behaviors of youth.

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