Increasing Academic Achievement Through the Library Media Center:

A Guide for Teachers

David V. Loertscher
Douglas Achterman

Hi Willow Research & Publishing

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements 2
Introduction 5
The Changing Library Media Center 6
Successful Students in the Age of Technology 7
The Library Media Center as a Focal Point to Achieve Student Success 8
What the Research Says 9
National Standards and Guidelines 10

Teacher/Library Media Specialist Collaboration: The Other Half of Good Teaching 11
Teacher/Library Media Specialist Collaboration: What Is It? 12
Teacher/Library Media Specialist Collaboration: What It Looks Like 13
Collaborative Unit Planning Sheet 14
Teacher/Library Media Specialist Evaluation of a Collaboratively Taught Unit 15
Rating an Enhanced Learning Experience 16
Ban the "Bird Units" From the Library Media Center! 17
Building a Better Bird Unit 18
The "Fat Bird" Unit: One Step Up; Still a Ways to Go 19
Sample Better Bird Units to Try in the LMC 20
Integrating State Standards/Curriculum Goals in the Planning of a LMC Activity 21
Reading Your Way Through an Instructional Unit with the Help of the LMC 22
Rx for Cut and Clip 23
Pacing the Library Media Center Activity: It Can Make All the Difference 24
Building a Repertoire of Collaborative Projects with the Library Media Specialist 25
Why Keep Collaborating with the Library Media Center Staff 26
Getting Your Share: Working the LMC Schedule to Your Advantage 27
When the Library Media Specialist is Near Burnout: Or, First Aid for a Valuable Asset 28
Self-Assessment Page for Teachers: Collaborative Success 29

Building Avid and Capable Readers 31
Reading Research Linking Reading to Academic Achievement 32
If We Believe the Reading Research, What Should the Teacher...Provide to Learn to Read 33
If We Believe the Reading Research, What Should the Teacher...Provide to Read to Learn 34
Creating a Print-Rich Environment 35
Classroom Collections 36
When There Are Not enough Books in Your Classroom 37
Book Bags and Curiosity Kits: An Idea for the Early Grades 38
Accelerated Reader and Other Electronic Reading Programs 39
Two Ways to Promote Reading in Your Classroom 40
A Checklist for SSR 41
Assigning Outside Reading 42
Reading in the Content Areas 43
Pre-reading, Reading and Post-reading Activities 44
Linking English/Language Arts Standards and Library Media Center Reading Programs 46
Starter Sample of Library/Language Arts Program Links 47
Checklist of Successful Practices for Reading When Supported by the LMC Program 48
Signs of Danger to Reading When Not Supported Well by the Teachers or LMC Program 49

Enhancing Learning Through Technology 51
Everyone a Skilled User of Technology 52
Does Technology Enhance Learning? What the Research Says 53

Building a Repertoire of Successful Strategies... to Enhance Learning....54
Examples of Enhancing Learning Through Technology....55
Judging Glitz vs. Content in Hi-Tech Products....56
Idea for Teachers, Principals and LMS: Do an AAR on Technology With Students....57
Integrating Information Technology into the School as a Whole....58
Danger Signs Checklist When Technology Not Supported Well by the LMC Program....59

Creating an Information Literate Learner....61
An Organized Investigator....62
How to Help Students Become Organized Investigators....63
A Critical Thinker....64
Website Evaluation Guide: A Student Guide....65
WebQuests: Keeping Studnts on the Right Path Down the Information Highway....66
A Creative Thinker....67
An Effective Communicator....68
A Responsible Information User....69
Collaborative Teaching of Information Literacy: Possible Scenarios....70
The Battle Rages On! Shall we Teach Content or Process?....71
Methods of Teaching Information Literacy....72
How Would I Recognize Information Literacy If I Saw It in Action?....73

Building an Information Infrastructure....75
Staffing the Library Media Program....76
Why a Professional Library Media Specialist?....77
Do Collections and Information Resources Measure Up?....78
The Elementary Library Media Center Schedule: A Quandary....79
Dealing With Challenged Materials and Technologies....80
Can't Find a Professional Library Media Specialist? Become One!....81

Index....82

INTRODUCTION

The need to reconceptualize school libraries has never been greater. The rush of technology has caused some to ask, "Is a school library media center needed?" "Is any library needed?" "Isn't it all on the Internet?" Regular library and Internet users understand the benefits of integrating all forms of information technologies into a full-service organization with human interfaces as guides to the best and most practical information sources. In schools recently networked and upgraded for extensive technology use, teachers understand that the immense investment is only worthwhile if it translates into improved learning opportunities—and that key people make it happen! More and more emphasis is placed upon teachers to help every child achieve, every teacher must have the institutional support needed to carry out expected change. Demanding more does not make it happen.

This volume is designed to help teachers take the greatest advantage of what good library media programs can offer. It introduces teachers to the possibilities of meaningful collaboration and use of information resources that can improve the quality of instruction without necessarily increasing workload. It acts as a framework for teachers and library media specialists in working together toward the common goal of raising student achievement.

The book is divided into five main sections that discuss:

1. Collaboration between teachers and library media specialists in the design of learning.
2. Building avid and capable readers,
3. Enhancing learning through technology.
4. Creating an information literate learner.
5. Building an information infrastructure.

Within each section, pages have been designed in such a way that each can be used as a handout for a workshop, an interview, a planning session. Many pages contain checklists to stimulate thinking and planning. Feedback to the authors is appreciated at [DavidL@wahoo.sjsu.edu] or to the publisher.

How to Use This Book With Your Library Media Specialist

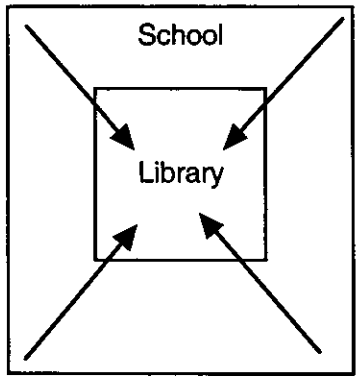
Find an idea you like? Photocopy the page and give it to your library media specialist with a cookie on top. Say, "I'd like to try this idea. When could we meet to discuss it?"

The Changing Library Media Center

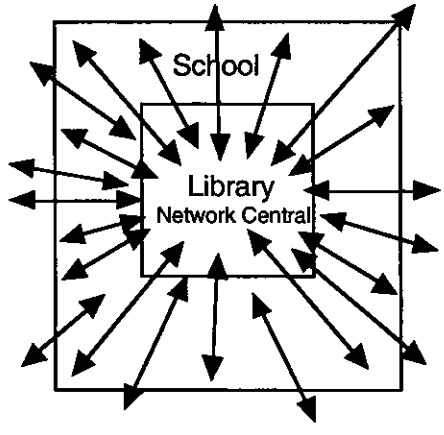
Twice in this century, school libraries have undergone a major redesign. The first was in the 1960s when book libraries had to be rethought to include a new wave of audiovisual devices and software. The second began in the 1980s with the proliferation of the microcomputer, computer networks and the Internet. The first redesign required only a shift in contents. The second requires an entire rethinking.

We have usually thought of the library as the "hub of the school," a place where everyone comes to get materials and equipment. Now, however, in the age of technology, the library media center becomes "Network Central" with its tentacles reaching from a single nucleus into every space of the school and into the home. Where we once thought of the library as a single learning laboratory, now the entire school becomes a learning laboratory served by Network Central. It becomes both centralized and decentralized at the same time.

OLDER LIBRARY CONCEPT



NEWER LIBRARY CONCEPT



Traditional	**New**
Print rich	Information rich in every format
Print and AV oriented	Multiple technologies
Centralized (one location)	Centralized / decentralized simultaneously
Rigidly scheduled	Flexibly scheduled
Single person staff	Professional and technical staff
A quiet, almost-empty place	A busy, bustling learning laboratory
Open during school hours	Online services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

With the advent of high technology and sophisticated networks, many schools have approached high technology as if it were separate and distinct from "the library." But after the networks are in and the equipment in place, it soon becomes evident that materials and information merely have new paths to take. The concept of a vast store of materials and information poised to serve teachers and learners remains intact no matter what it is named — the library, the library media center, or network central.

Successful Students in the Age of Technology

What type of person is likely to be successful in today's information-rich and technology-based world? What type of student is likely to be successful in the world of the future insofar as we can foresee that world?

When an exemplary library program is in place, every young person can be equipped with:

.

Reading Literacy ——→ 1. An Avid and Capable Reader.

Technology Literacy ——→ 2. A Skilled User of Technology Tools.
3. An Enhanced Learner.

Information Literacy ——→ 4. An Organized Investigator.
5. A Critical Thinker.
6. A Creative Thinker.
7. An Effective Communicator.
8. A Responsible Information User

Bottom Line:

The library media center program can help teachers prepare these types of learners.

Useful publications amplifying this vision:

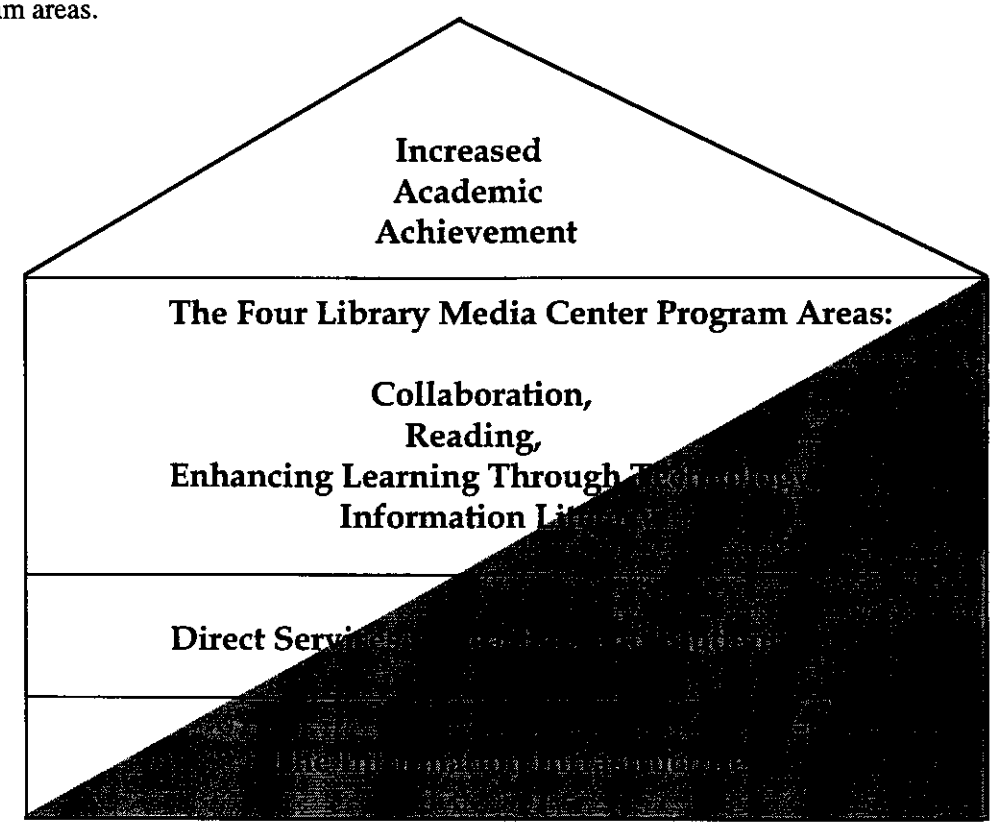
1. American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1998.

2. *National Educational Technology Standards for Students: Connecting Curriculum and Technology*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education, 1999.

3. Loertscher, David V. *Taxonomies of the School Library Media Program*. 2nd ed. San Jose, CA: Hi Willow Research and Publishing, 2000. This book contains a comprehensive treatment of all the program elements of the school library media program and can be considered an extension of this *Reinvent* book.

The Library Media Center as a Focal Point to Achieve Student Success

To stimulate all learners to reach their potential in the information world, the library media center staff concentrate on four major program areas sitting atop the school information infrastructure. These four central program elements are the foundation of increased academic achievement. As a teacher, you should expect your library media program to focus on the four program areas.



(white area = the professional role; gray area = the support staff role)

- **Network Central: The Information Infrastructure** in the library media center provides the technological foundation for delivering materials and information in all media formats. It is composed of the networking, the equipment, staffing, budget, facilities, repair and technical support for every kind of technology including print, multimedia, video, and digital.

- **The Library Media Center Program** is a tool for using all the technologies in such a way that teaching and learning are affected in major positive ways.

- **Increased Academic Achievement** is the outcome. In addition to academic achievement as a central thrust, there are a host of other personal benefits to a student and teacher who use technology and information well, such as becoming a lifelong reader, an independent learner, successful seeker of information, and a career builder, among others.

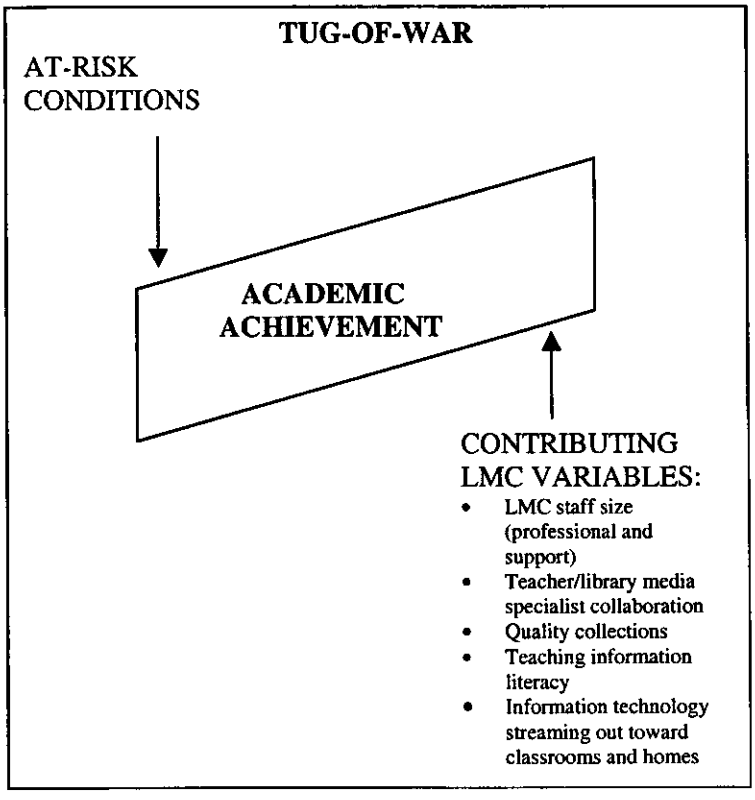
What the Research Says:

The Connection Between School Library Media Centers (LMC) and Academic Achievement

Three Major Studies done in 2000 in over 900 schools:
Alaska
Pennsylvania
Colorado
Plus two other statewide studies done in 2001:
Texas
Oregon

Strong school library media programs make a difference in academic achievement. This happens when the library media center has a high quality information-rich and technology-rich environment, easily accessible to students and teachers, and when there is both professional and support personnel who provide leadership and tireless partnering. Significant contributions happen in spite of the presence of at-risk factors.

The findings are quite consistent across the various states. The bottom line seems to be that a good school library media specialist collaborating with a teacher will transform information technology into quality learning experiences.

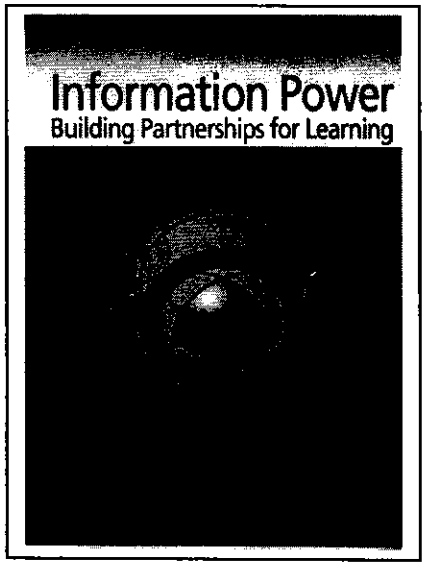


Sources

- The studies from Colorado, Alaska, and Pennsylvania are summarized in: Lance, Keith Curry and David V. Loertscher. *Powering Achievement: School Library Media Programs Make a Difference: The Evidence*. San Jose CA: Hi Willow Research & Publishing, 2001
- The Texas and Oregon studies are linked at http://www.lrs.org

National Standards and Guidelines

There are two nationally published documents by professional associations that can offer invaluable guidance in creating library media programs and technology initiatives in the school. Both associations make information available to teachers on a wide variety of issues related to libraries and technology. Are these documents available in your school? Are they used?

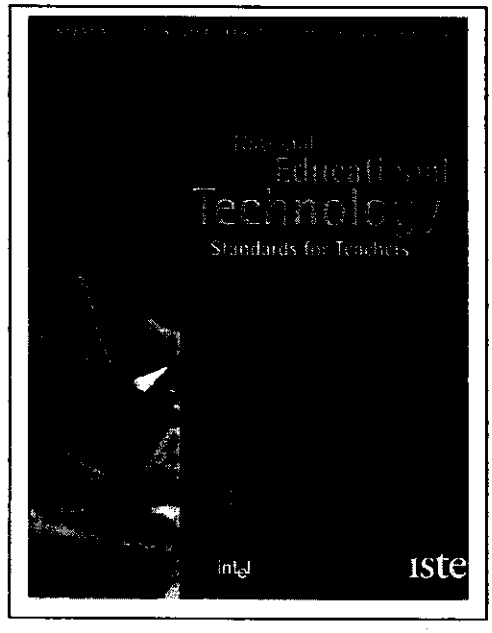


Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning

These national guidelines are a joint publication of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) published in 1998. The book not only describes a progressive and dynamic school library media program, but provides nine major standards for information literacy - the ability to find and use information – as a keystone of lifelong learning.

National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers

Prepared by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) in 2000, this is one of three publications covering standards for students, and teachers, plus a handbook containing many examples of instructional units that make use of technology to expand learning. These standards go far beyond the installation of equipment and networks.



Increasing Academic Achievement Through the Library Media Center: A Guide for Teachers; 800-873-3043

Teacher/Library Media Specialist Collaboration: The Other Half of Good Teaching

Feeling Overwhelmed?

Confused by all those standards?

Demands too great?

Students doing less well than you'd like?

Consider new ways the library media program can help!

The first section of this book concentrates on the collaborative process of the teacher and the library media specialist to plan, implement, and evaluate improved learning experience that will result in more learning.

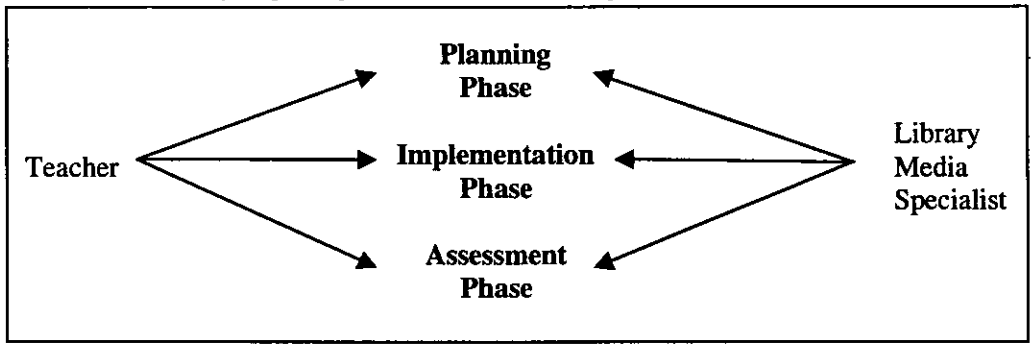
Teacher/Library Media Specialist Collaboration: What Is It?

Two partners, the teacher and the library media specialist, team to exploit materials, information, and information technology to enhance a learning activity.

Together, they:

- Plan goals and objectives of the unit.
- Complete preparations for the unit.
- Jointly teach the learning activities.
- Utilize technology to achieve learning objectives.
- Assess learning and the learning process.
- Assess the materials, information, and information technology used.

Such collaborative learning experiences can be a few days in length, several weeks, a semester, or even a year-long project. The teacher might be a single person, a small group of teachers, teachers from several disciplines, a subject department, a grade-level team, or the faculty as a whole. Other specialists and the students themselves may be participants in the collaborative process.



Why is a professional library media specialist an essential part of collaboration?

The library media professional has:

- Knowledge of the curriculum, teaching, and learning.
- Education (this person often holds teacher credentials plus a library media credential).
- Experience working with teachers, learners, and materials.
- Tools and materials expertise (knows the right tool and information source for the right person at the right time).
- Knowledge of techniques for using technology to enhance learning.
- A repertoire of successful practices with a wide variety of teachers, students, and technologies—thus serving as an idea fountain.
- Knowledge of student achievement over time.

The bottom line:
When two professionals are delivering a quality learning experience, the odds of success are doubled.

Teacher/Library Media Specialist Collaboration: What It Looks Like

If teachers and the library media specialists are collaborating successfully to build quality learning experiences, what would an observer see:

Teachers and library media specialists are:

- ❑ Brainstorming a curricular unit.
- ❑ Developing plans, activities, and assessments for a learning experience.
- ❑ Choosing the materials and technologies to support instruction.
- ❑ Working side by side as the unit activities happen.
- ❑ Jointly evaluating the success of the unit.
- ❑ Engaging in staff development to refine the collaborative process.

Students are:

- ❑ Working in a bustling, learning lab atmosphere, on projects, problem solving, portfolios, presentations, and assignments.
- ❑ Using a wide variety of information sources and information technologies from print to multimedia to digital.
- ❑ Sharing their findings in group-related activities.
- ❑ Engaging in learning with interest and excitement.
- ❑ Working by themselves quietly on projects or research.

Library Media Center Facilities are:

- ❑ Functioning to support individuals, small groups, and large groups for quiet individual study, information gathering, busy production activities, group work, and presentations as the collaborative process begins to produce results.
- ❑ Rarely empty.

Library Media Center Networks are:

- ❑ Brimming with **quality** information streaming throughout the library media center, into the classrooms, and into the home.
- ❑ Being used and used and used.
- ❑ Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- ❑ Reliable.

Collaborative Unit Planning Sheet

Teacher or team: _____
Library Media Specialist: _____
Content area: _____
Unit of Study: _____
Unit planning began (date):_____ **Unit ended (date):**_____

Goals and Objectives / essential questions of the Unit:

Proposed Learning Activities and Products:

State Academic Standard:

Information Literacy Skills:

Integrated Technologies:

Responsibilities: (for each, mark T= Teacher, LMS= Library Media Specialist; SP = Specialist; S = Student; A = All)

How Will We Assess Learning?

What Happened? (list activities as they occur)
Example: mini-lesson on how to judge currency of information (teacher and LMS taught)

Print p. 14 and 15 back to back and then attach additional sheets if needed, or p. 14 and 16, your choice.

Teacher/Library Media Specialist Evaluation of a Collaboratively Taught Unit

(TO BE FILLED IN AS A TEAM)

Unit title: _____

Total time spent by LMS:_____ **# Students affected:** _____

What worked well in the unit?

Suggestions for improvement:

(Time spent on Info. Lit. Teaching:_____**)**
(as a subset of the total time listed above)

How well were state academic Standards met?

Information literacy skills learned:

Technology impact:

From both the teacher's and library media specialist's points of view, was this unit enhanced through collaboration?

❑ Yes ❑ No Why?

Was the unit successful enough to warrant doing it again in the future?

❑ Yes ❑ No Why?

How well did the library collection support the unit objectives?

Scale: 5 = excellent; 4 = above average; 3 = average; 2 = below average; 1 = poor

_____ Diversity of formats (books, multimedia, electronic)?
_____ Recency (books and other materials up to date?)
_____ Duplication (enough materials for the number of students taught?)
_____ Reading/viewing/listening levels meet students' needs?
_____ Average of above ratings

What materials/technology will we need if we are planning to repeat the unit again?(add a list)

This page could be the back of p. 14

Rating an Enhanced Learning Experience

Select a learning experience that both the teacher and library media specialist agree was an improvement over what would have happened had the unit remained in the classroom without the benefit of LMC resources and staff. Check characteristics that improved.

- ❑ Learners more motivated
- ❑ Two professionals helped
- ❑ Quality information used
- ❑ Learner's content knowledge improved
- ❑ Information literacy skills improved
- ❑ Technology well integrated
- ❑ Learners did lots of hard thinking
- ❑ Standards met
- ❑ Successful collaborative model
- ❑ Student products improved
- ❑ Memorable for learners
- ❑ Every learner improved
- ❑ Worthy of repeating
- ❑ Classroom/LMC facilities functioned well
- ❑ Technology (equipment, networks, etc.) worked as planned
- ❑ Enjoyable / Fun
- ❑ Learners learned more in the same amount of time
- ❑ Learners read a lot
- ❑ Critical thinking raised
- ❑ Special needs met
- ❑ Parents involved
- ❑ Worthy of publicity
- ❑ Learners more efficient
- ❑ Worth the time & effort

Enhanced Learning Experience

Unit title: _____

Dates taught: _____

Teacher/library media specialist who teamed: _____

Other comments:

Improvements needed if taught again:

How well were state academic standards met?

Information literacy skills learned:

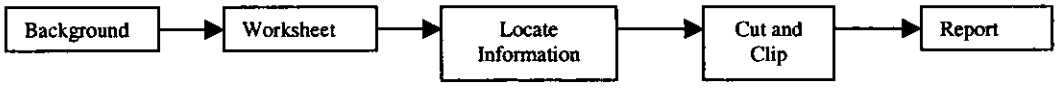
Technology Impact:

This page could be on the back of p. 14

Ban the "Bird" Units From the Library Media Center!

There are certain uses of the library media center that contribute little or nothing to learning. Teachers should recognize such low-level activities and re-design to build achievement

What is a "bird" unit?



A common pattern:

1. The teacher provides background to a topic in the classroom (could be birds, presidents, countries, states, people, etc.).
2. Textbook work is done.
3. The teacher asks class to do a project in the library media center and provides a worksheet for data collection. The worksheet contains fact questions.
4. Students pick a "bird" to research and go to the library media center where the library media specialist introduces them to a few resources.
5. Students copy information from information sources onto their papers.
6. Students report back to the class or turn the papers in for a grade.

Why is a "bird" unit generally a disaster?

When the emphasis of research work in the library media center is merely the cutting and clipping of information into some sort of report and then presenting those facts, little learning takes place. In the age of technology, students can easily cut and clip megabytes of information from the Internet or electronic sources and turn them in as a report. Obviously, time in the library media center is wasted and little progress toward educational achievement is made. In fact, assignments like these encourage plagiarism.

What is to be done?

1. Re-design the activities so learners must THINK ABOUT the information they collect in the library media center, thus increasing learning and achievement.

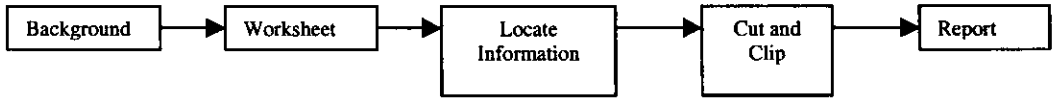
2. Re-design so that learners must DO SOMETHING with the information they collect such as sense-making, performing, trying out, acting, building, etc.

3. Keep redesigning until number one and number two happen.

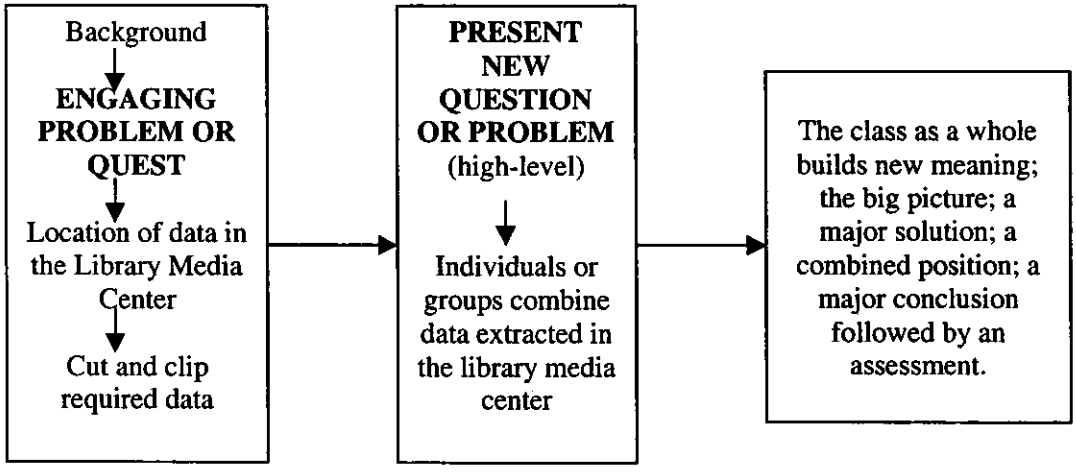
Building a Better "Bird" Unit

Generally, a small change in the structure of a unit plan can do wonders for learning. Here is one example to consider. Can you and the library media specialist create an even better one?

Old "bird" unit:



Better pattern:



In the above pattern, students are required to combine, manipulate, or rearrange the data they collect, causing them to think about what they have collected in order to solve the problem at hand. In other words, they fit the puzzle pieces they have collected into a large puzzle to discover what the whole picture looks like.

The challenge for the teacher and the library media specialist is to construct the two questions or problems that cause higher-level learning to happen. And if the report time of the old unit is eliminated, the reconstructed unit should take about the same amount of time to teach.

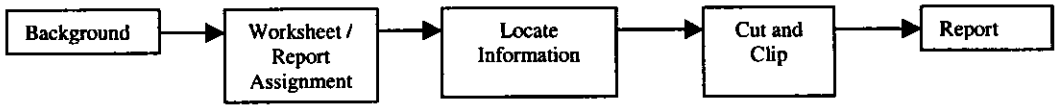
Challenge

Develop and re-design a learning experience until it becomes a super learning experience. Discuss this experience with other faculty and administrators.

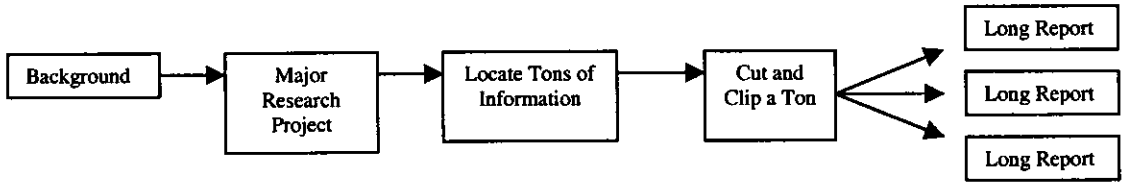
The "Fat Bird" Unit: One Step Up; Still a Ways to Go

One improvement on the old bird unit is to increase the amount and depth of research done in the library media center? Instead of a work sheet or short report, learners would do the "fat bird unit" by doing in-depth reports or term papers as pictured below.

Old "Bird" Unit:

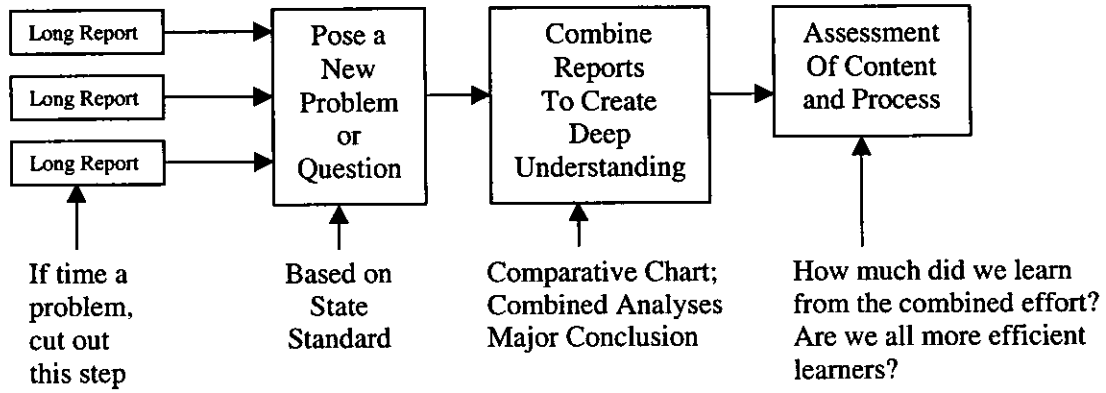


The "Fat Bird" Unit (one step up):



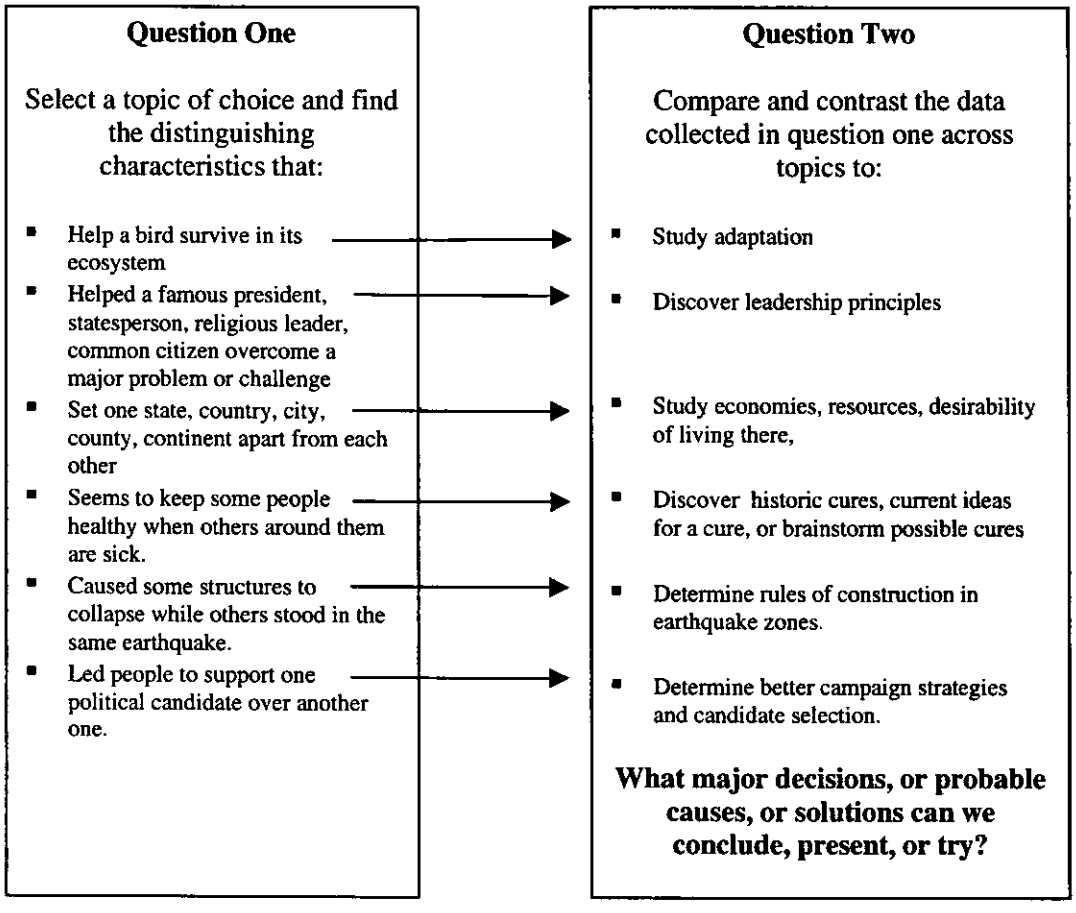
So what's wrong with the "fat bird" unit? If students are serious about their major topics and research, they end up knowing a lot about one aspect of the original topic as a whole. Examples – a lot about robins, little about birds in general; a lot about Abraham Lincoln, little about presidents as a group; a lot about a favorite poet, little about poetry. In other words, they may know a great deal about one aspect of a state standard but not a deep understanding of the standard as a whole.

One solution: Create a Bird Banquet:



Sample Better Bird Units To Try in the LMC

Using the pattern on the previous page, here are a few possibilities to try.

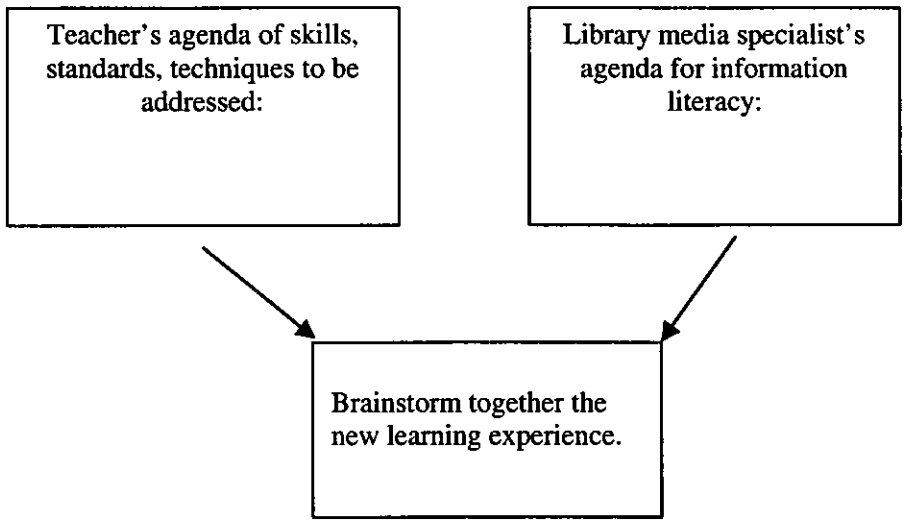


Challenge

Collaborate with your library media specialist to improve on the ideas here.

Integrating State Standards/Curriculum Goals in the Planning of a Library Media Center Activity

Every year, it seems that another agenda, list, skill, directive, standard is required to be integrated into the various units of instruction taught without increasing the amount of time. At times it seems overwhelming. Realistically, in most schools, there will only be a few occasions during the year to plan in-depth with the library media specialist. Try the following approach:



Challenges:

1. How can we overlay both agendas without increasing the amount of time for the learning experience?
2. What activities have we done in the past that could be streamlined or eliminated?
3. Can we redesign in such a way that motivation and engagement are heightened?

Tips:

1. Can information-finding time in the library media center be compressed?
2. Can student reports be compressed, eliminated, or transformed into more meaningful learning activities?
3. As learners read, view and listen, can they not only take notes but mind map as they go (forcing them to focus on the major ideas)?
4. How can the amount of time creating the hi-tech product be compressed so learners concentrate on content, not the technology? Sometimes low-tech products might be more efficient.

Reading Your Way Through an Instructional Unit With the Help of the LMC

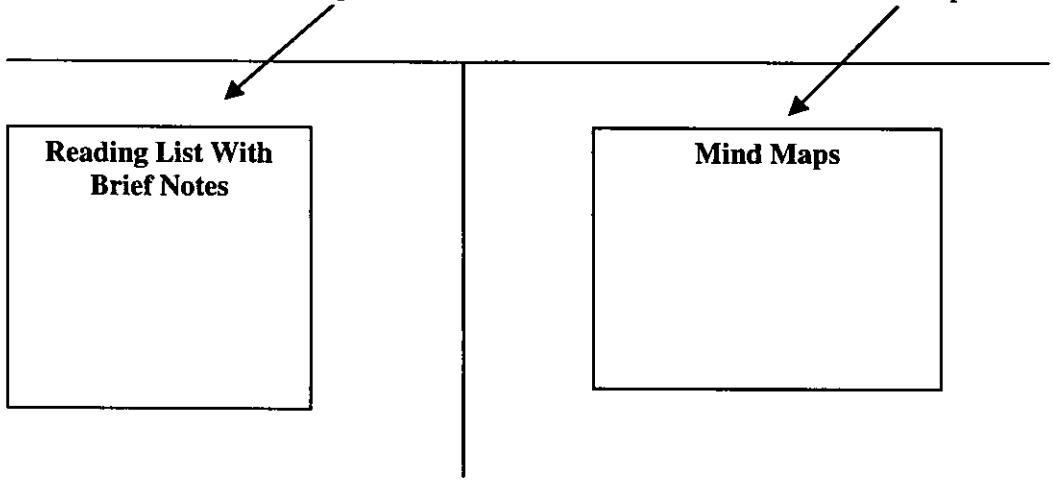
Problem: Many learners in the class either do now know English well or do not read well.

One idea to test: Have students read their way through a topical unit.

Step one: With the library media specialist, present the major question, standard, concept the learners should understand.

Step two: Introduce tons of reading, viewing, and listening materials (book talks, descriptions, annotated bibliography) Make these materials available in the classroom and on line. Be sure that these materials are non-standard, i.e., including many pictorial sources, high interest-low vocabulary, timelines, comic book-type resources, charts, graphs, maps, models, realia, fascinating web sites, faction (fictional treatment of factual topics such as historical fiction), etc.

Step Three: Spend a chunk of time (2-3 full class periods or more) having everyone read, view or listen. As they do so, have them keep brief notes and at the last 10 minutes do a mind map.



Alternate Step Three: As students read, they might keep notes such as:

Major Concept in My Reading	Why It Is Important	My Reaction

Step Four: Hold a discussion, an exploration, a compare/contrast challenge on a high-level question reflective of the major standard or concept of the unit.

Step Five: Do the normal assessment. How do learners perform? How did the poor readers or low-English learners do?

Rx for Cut and Clip

Problem: Are learners cutting and clipping facts, paragraphs, articles, whole term papers from library books, periodicals, Internet sites and turning them in as their own work? Perhaps they have become creative and "dress up" the appearance of whey they find and then turn it in. The bottom line is that they do very little thinking or learning. A zero educational experience.

Rx: With the library media specialist, build better questions for learners; have learners build better questions for themselves. The definition of a better question is one that cannot be answered through cut and clip mentality.

Examples:

Invitations to cut and clip:

- A list of fact questions to answer.
- An assignment where the "answer" is easily located in a periodical article, a book, or a web site.

Challenges to think:

- Compare/contrast two opinion pieces.
- Insert extracted data into a larger matrix, chart, diagram, mind map for analysis.
- Look for trends across extracted sources.
- Build in-class timelines, then look at the meaning, cause/effect.
- Take on the persona of an important character; re-enact an event.

Ideas for Other Opportunities and Challenges

Suggestions when teachers and library media specialists collaborate:

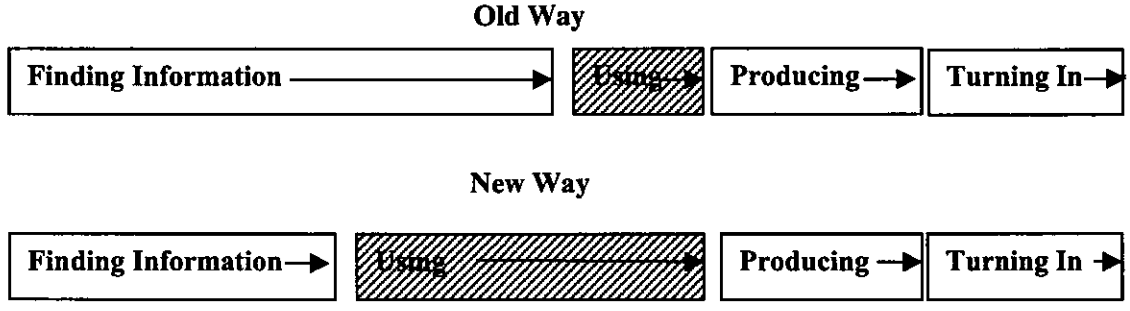
- Create good and clear assignments so students can begin immediately and stay engaged.
- Include creative uses of technology that will contribute both to learning and interest.
- Require a wide variety of information sources to help students explore the rich world of information across the media.
- Build the research process into the whole project so that students keep making progress toward becoming independent and more sophisticated learners over time.
- Build in reflection along the way to help students assess what they know, and how efficient their strategies are.

Activities Likely to Fail

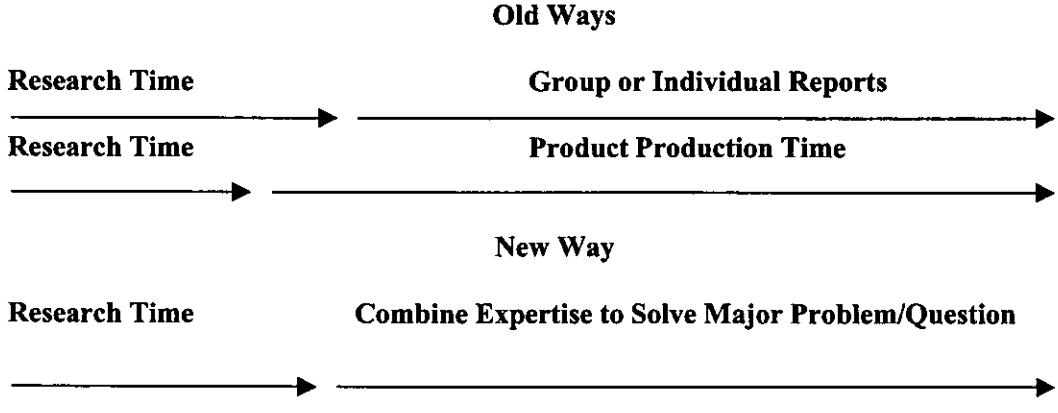
- Spur-of-the-moment activities with little notice given to the library media staff.
- Unclear assignments or directions to learners, causing them to waste time, become behavior problems, or wander in a state of stupor.
- Competition for scarce information resources (when every other teacher is having students research the same topic your students are and at the same time).
- Assignments that do not require evaluation of information sources (you will get back information copied from the first hit on an Internet search, facts copied from an out-of-date reference source, and other nonsense mindlessly regurgitated).

Pacing the Library Media Center Activity: It Can Make All the Difference!

Pacing a learning activity is critical if deep learning is to be elevated. We are all familiar with searching, retrieving, procrastinating, and doing the final project the night before it is due. Helping learners manage the learning task focuses emphasis on reading, analyzing, synthesizing, concluding, and metacognitive tasks. Building checkpoints can help change the schedule as illustrated below.



Another streamline of the learning activity as a whole might be to look for certain activities that consume time without retuning significant learning and replacing that time with an activity holding more promise. Consider the suggestion below:



Building a Repertoire of Collaborative Projects With the Library Media Specialist

Let's face it, there are many teachers and few library media specialists. If every unit were jointly planned, implemented, and assessed as a team, the library media specialist would burn out in a week. Nevertheless, teachers will want to take every opportunity to collaborate. One strategy for the library media specialist to stay alive is to collaborate, release; collaborate, release. Consider the following:

First Time a Topic is Taught:

Plan Together ⟶ Team Implementation ⟶ Assess ⟶ Revise

Second Time Around:

Shorter Planning⟶Teacher More/LMS Less Implementation Time ⟶ Assess

Third Time Around:

Teacher-directed with minimal need for library media specialist
Teacher and library media specialist tackle another unit for redesign
Etc., Etc., Etc.

Consider a second model designed to spread the library media specialist's services:

Use model one except ask the library media specialist to collaborate with a group of teachers rather than an individual (a grade level, department, existing team, etc.).

Warning: All planned units get stale!

- **Poor**: Plan once, teach many times.
- **Better:** Plan once, teach a few times; revise and rejuvenate

Why Keep Collaborating With the Library Media Center Staff

What are the essential reasons for the teachers and the library media staff to keep working together, building good relationships, retrying when relationships may become strained, and just building consistency over time?

Checklist:

- ❑ Every time we collaborate there is a lower teacher/pupil ratio for the unit.
- ❑ Collaboration capitalizes on twice the teaching experience.
- ❑ There is a peer available to "evaluate" plans.
- ❑ We combine creative ideas with a realistic sense of what will work.
- ❑ Collaboration maximizes productivity.
- ❑ We split the work load.
- ❑ During collaboration, we encourage each other when things get tough.
- ❑ We provide support if and when needed.
- ❑ When there are funds for materials and information resources, collaborative partners usually get higher priority.
- ❑ It would be difficult to do worse than if either collaborative partner tried to "go it alone."
- ❑ We can draw upon each other's native abilities and strengths.
- ❑ Discipline problems are cut in half.
- ❑ If students don't do as well academically as we thought, we redesign until we get the results we expect.
- ❑ There is more time to deal with individual student differences, abilities, learning styles, etc.
- ❑ We can devote more time to helping each student succeed.

Getting Your Share: Working the LMC Schedule to Your Advantage

Not all units of instruction lend themselves to an information-rich high-tech environment. The teacher is wise to choose a few learning experiences where collaboration is likely to maximize learning. Consider the following questions designed to help select the best units for collaboration.

1. What units would flourish in an information-rich environment?

2. What units are better taught in depth rather than breadth?

3. Which topics lend themselves to "two heads are better than one?"

4. How can I space the collaborations across the year to provide the best variety of learning experiences for my students? Would four times a year (twice a semester) be a good first goal?

Sample topics that might be better in the library media center:

- **A topic where issues, opinions, or positions are central to the main concept.** (human cloning, Arab/Israeli conflict, community issues, state or national elections, what foods help prevent heart disease?)

- **Topics where the textbook coverage is so sparse that learners cannot develop enough background knowledge or depth of knowledge to count for anything.** (rain forest, Vietnam War, why a particular novel was a landmark of its time, the impact of scientific learning on culture, What causes people such as the Pilgrims to embark on huge journeys?, Why did it take mathematicians 400 years to figure out how to calculate longitude? (trick question), How does art seem to reflect the society of its time?)

- **Topics where lots of individual learner choice in exploration would increase motivation.**(Learners can read a wide variety of materials on a topic – at their level; a favorite dinosaur can be explored in depth; my own career interest can be explored in depth; my interest in particular sports and sports figures can be pursued; issues I feel strongly about can be illuminated.)

- **Topics lending themselves to creative expression.** (recreating a period drama to get the historical setting right, retelling the Cinderella story from many cultures, comparing performances of a piece of music across time as we create our own interpretation, recreating cultural artifacts)

When the Library Media Specialist is Near Burnout, Or, First Aid for a Valuable Asset

Some schools do not have a professional library media specialist. Others have a professional managing a million-dollar collection/technology system with little or no help. Still others might have a professional who is less than helpful or difficult to work with.

Issues related to library media centers and technology are often difficult because there is only one person fighting for improvement/change; one voice in a union contract negotiation, only one voice in major policy negotiations, one person to present to the school board. A chorus of one is not usually deafening.

Consider a few suggestions:

- Appreciate a talented, over-worked professional. There are ways to make both the classroom and the library media center a better learning environment by brainstorming new ways of handling old problems. "The way we have always done it" is often a major enemy to progress.

- Fight for clerical and technical staff. There will be much more time for the professional to collaborate with you in raising your learner's scores when the library media specialist can do professional work.

- Fight for additional professionals. Large schools require more than one professional if the library media program is expected to raise the quality of learning experiences.

- If the library media center staff is really not contributing to the quality of learning in the school, help seek solutions including new staffing, infusion of funds to rejuvenate old and outdated collections, or turning print-oriented collections into multi media and high-tech information systems.

If you are a great teacher, consider becoming a library media specialist. It is the toughest job you will ever love; ever changing; creative, people-rich; a chance to influence many more young people; a high-tech turn-on; an opportunity to affect the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school; and a leadership opportunity. Find a 21st century library media educational program either near you or by distance education and take a class or two. Even if you did not become a library media specialist, a master's of library and information science would help you become an even better teacher!

Self-Assessment Page for Teachers: Collaborative Success

Classroom teacher/library media specialist collaboration does not happen automatically. Both partners must work at developing sound collaborative strategies that result in higher quality learning experiences. Library media centers and technology are very expensive tools that can be ignored, abused, or used to benefit learners. Check your own progress toward exploiting this major tool:

Collaboration Checklist for the Teacher

- ❑ I seek ways to create a solid collaborative working relationship with the entire library media staff.
- ❑ I encourage professional development opportunities that include the library media staff so we have "excuses" to plan together and both learn new techniques.
- ❑ I seek for time to plan with the library media staff, including encouraging administrators to account for this in their all-school planning.
- ❑ If collaborative planning sessions are not productive, solutions are sought until they become effective.
- ❑ My collaborations with the library media staff include evaluations and retooling of learning activities.
- ❑ There are incentives for collaboration to occur.
- ❑ The best collaborative activities are spotlighted for parents and the community.
- ❑ I have examined progress in academic achievement in areas where collaboration is taking place.
- ❑ The collaboration process with the library media staff is one mark of success on both the teachers' and library media specialist's annual evaluation.
- ❑ The library media specialist is on major governing councils and at curriculum meetings so they are included in curriculum decision making.
- ❑ I give time to the library media staff to prepare activities, facilities, and information networks in advance so learners have a productive experience.
- ❑ I create assignments beyond the "cut and clip" syndrome and "beyond the bird unit" so that the library media program can really contribute to academic achievement.

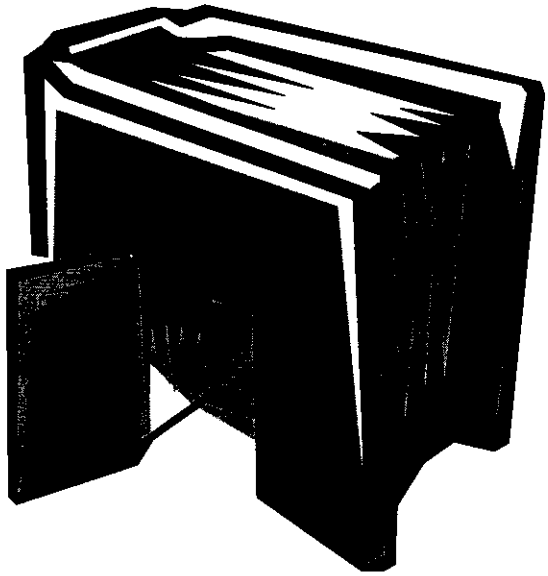
Notes on Collaboration

BUILDING AVID AND CAPABLE READERS

The Case for Readers in the Age of Technology

The necessity of building a strong reading program in an information world is more critical today than ever before. Systems such as the Internet do not discriminate by ethnicity or social status, but they do require excellent basic literacy skills; otherwise, another uncrossable gulf opens to divide the haves from the have-nots. Each young person needs to be literate as well as logged on! There is no substitute.

> Literacy *is* a problem to throw money at, but we have to aim carefully by pouring money into library books and then making sure they get read.
>
> **—Stephen Krashen**



Reading Research Linking Reading to Academic Achievement

Research completed by Ann E. Cunningham and Keith E. Stanovich, Stephen Krashen, and Jeff McQuillan plus the latest NAEP research from the U.S. federal government link the amount young people read with their scores on academic achievement. The message is clear:

For Everyone: Amount Counts! One hundred years of research supports the notion that free voluntary reading (the kind of reading you want to do, not have to do) — lots of it — is the best predictor of seven essential achievement basics:

Comprehension, Spelling, Grammar, Vocabulary,
Writing Style, Verbal Fluency, General Knowledge

For English Learners: Amount Counts! Research also demonstrates that the fastest way to get anyone—child, teenager, or adult—to learn English is to have them read a lot in English! (P.S.: this also works with anyone learning a foreign language.)

Reading vs. Television and Adult Conversation. Consider this: 1) Children's books have 50 percent more rare words in them than adult prime-time television, and 2) Popular magazines have roughly three times as many opportunities for new word learning as prime-time television.

The Sources and Must Reads:

The Power of Reading by Stephen Krashen (Libraries Unlimited, 1993).[1]

The Literacy Crisis by Jeff McQuillan (Heinemann, 1998).

"What Reading Does for the Mind" by Ann E. Cunningham and Keith E. Stanovich (*American Educator*, Spring/Summer, 1998, p. 1-8).

The Nation's Reading Report Card: Fourth-Grade Reading 2000 by the National Center for Education Statistics, The Center, 2000 (Known popularly as the "NAEP Report").[2]

NAEP Results 2000

Fourth graders in the United States do better academically when they:

- read more pages in school
- read more pages as homework
- have more books, magazines, newspapers, and encyclopedias in their homes
- report they read for fun every day
- discuss what they read

Do Your Own Preliminary Test: In any group of children or teenagers, ask those who consider themselves avid readers to identify themselves (they read regularly both in and out of school). Compare these students' achievement scores with those who don't consider themselves avid readers.

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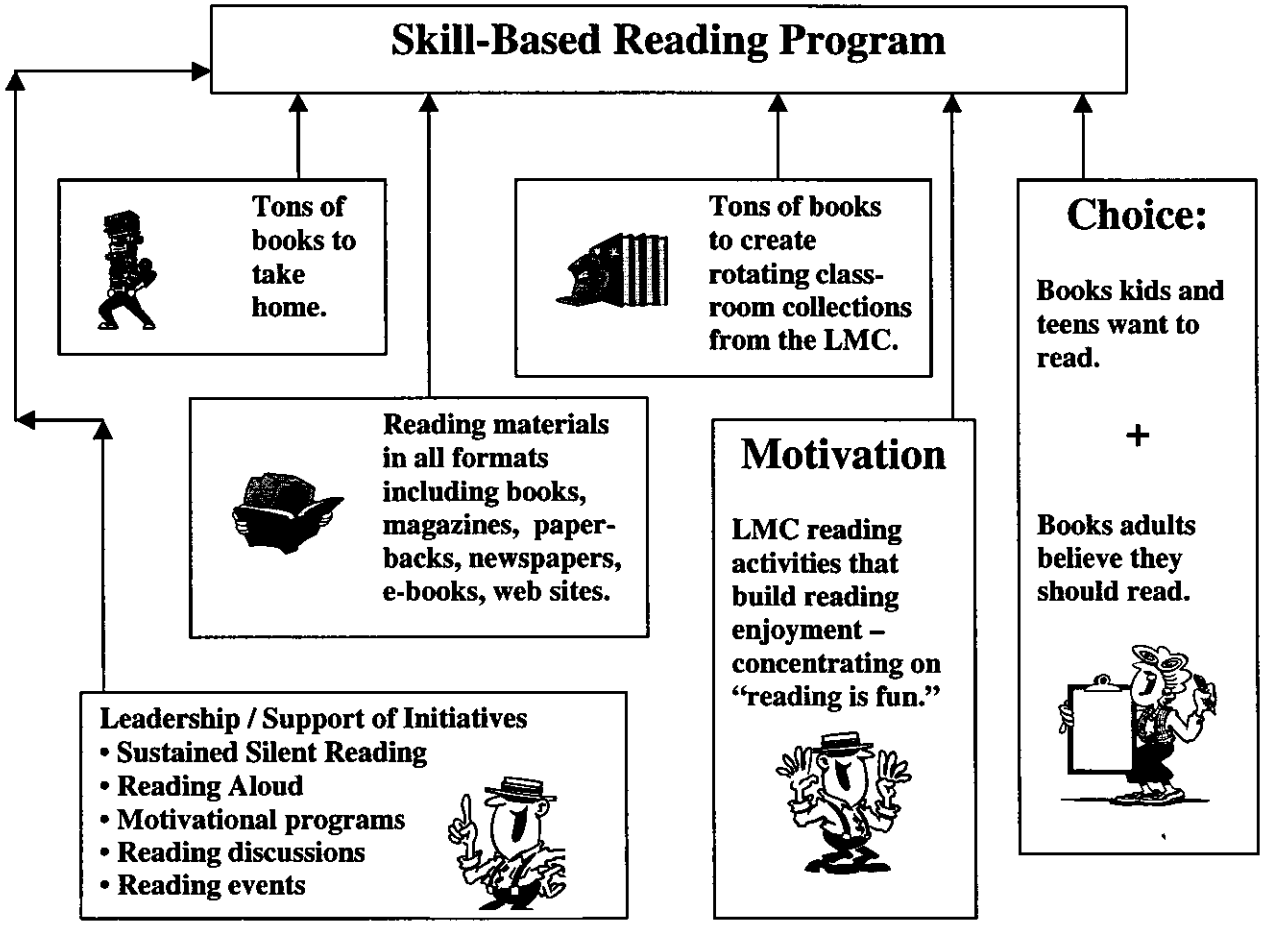
[1] Both Krashen and McQuillan books are available from Language Education Associates, PO Box 3141, Culver City, CA 90231; 800-200-8008; web address: http://www.LanguageBooks.com

[2] The NAEP report is available on the web at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/sitemap.asp or by doing a web search for the "naep report 2000"

If We Believe the Reading Research, What Should the Teacher and the Library Media Center Provide to: "Learn to Read"

If a school community really believes the research saying that "amount counts," then the library media center should have an extensive collection of reading materials young people want to read. So many school libraries in the nation have outdated, ragged, and uninteresting reading collections that young people ignore them. When reading collections are large, current, attractive, and easily accessible, good things happen. The best results of library media contributions to reading should be most noticeable when young people have few reading materials in their homes, and when they are in the lowest quartile of reading scores. Is your school library media center program providing the following:

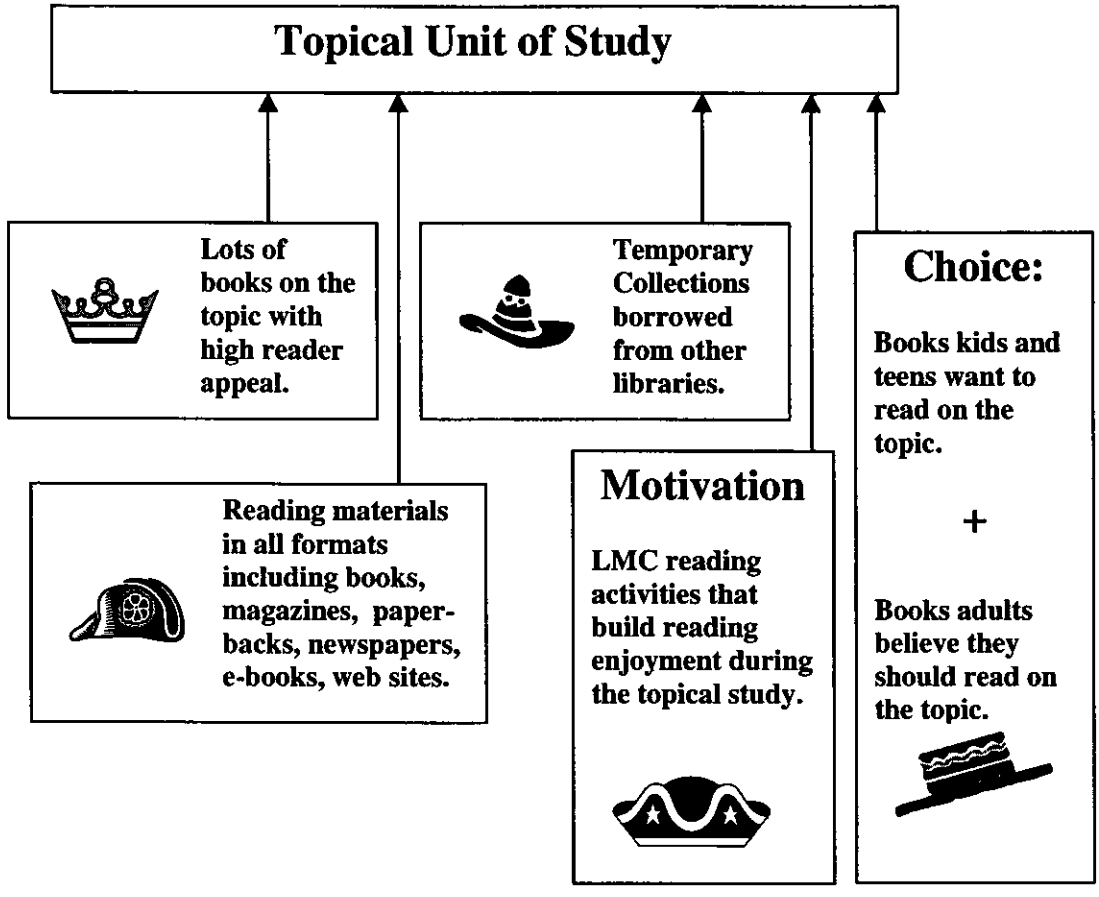


Bottom line: The LMC contribution to reading should plug the holes in whatever skill-based program exists toward the goal of 100% avid and capable readers. Does your school's LMC reading program measure up? Are you as a teacher taking advantage of the LMC's resources?

If We Believe the Reading Research, What Should Teachers and the Library Media Center (LMC) Provide to:

"Read to Learn"

As skill in reading builds, the concentration of the reading program shifts to using reading as a tool to learn as well as reading for enjoyment. The library media program has much to contribute to all subject disciplines as content knowledge is expected to mushroom. This will be particularly true in middle schools and high schools where reading is integrated into the entire curriculum and into all departments.



Bottom line: The LMC contribution to reading in the topical areas should stimulate more expository reading and thus more in-depth knowledge and understanding. Does your school's LMC reading program measure up? Are you as a teacher taking advantage of the LMC's resources when planning your lessons?

Creating a Print-Rich Environment

In addition to maintaining a robust central collection, the library media specialist can help you create a print-rich environment in your classroom. The more students are exposed to a variety of print materials, the more they will read.

Ways to create a print-rich environment in your classroom:

- Ask the library media specialist to help you put together a large classroom collection of fiction and non-fiction materials related to your current unit of study. Ask for picture books, magazines, short stories, novels, poetry, drama, and non-fiction, including biographies, histories, and primary source documents. Don't forget online sources. Showcase these materials and provide extra incentives for students to read them.

- Read aloud from the materials in this temporary collection. Choose an excerpt from a novel, a poem, or a passage from a high-interest non-fiction piece to share at the beginning of class to set the stage for your lesson.

- Incorporate materials from the classroom collection into your unit. Suggestions:
  - Assign high-interest reading to groups and have them create a readers' theatre or other dramatic activity that presents the piece to the whole class.
  - Have students select material to read independently, then create a graphic to be posted in class that communicates the important ideas from the selection.
  - Find a range of reading selections related by theme (Your library media specialist can help you with this). Form groups to read and discuss selections using guided (but open-ended) questions. Have groups report back to class on the reading and the discussion.
  - Allow each student to select a short passage to read and then recreate for the class in another format. Turn prose into poetry, song, dance or drama; rewrite as a children's story; create a video documentary, cartoon, animation, etc.

- Make the materials in this collection easily available for students to take home, and encourage them to do so.

- In addition to selections related to your own course of study, fill the classroom with other kinds of reading materials, too, including high interest fiction and non-fiction, magazines and newspapers.

- When you get new materials in your room, spend a few moments showcasing them.

- Working with your library media teacher and other teachers, **ROTATE** the collection so that it always remains fresh and attractive to students.

- Take photos of your students while they're reading and post them in a special display under the heading, "Get Caught Reading," or "Read to Succeed."

Classroom Collections

Classroom collections have become quite popular in the last few years. The notion is that books and information should be at hand in addition to the repository down the hall in the library media center. Sometimes conflict develops over who owns what, inventory, and other matters. Resolution of such conflicts is not difficult when the larger vision of a school-wide print-rich environment is presented and implemented. In the age of technology, the conflict disappears as electronic sources go online.

Advantages of Print Classroom Collections

- Print-rich = more reading
- Close at hand
- Close at hand
- Close at hand

Disadvantages of static (i.e. permanent) classroom collections

- Interesting to students the first few weeks of school and not thereafter.
- Too small to have any significant variety.
- Cannot contain any in-depth information needed for research on various reading levels and in a variety of formats.
- Take up too much room as the collection grows.
- Another management problem for the teacher.

Solution: ROTATING Classroom Collections

- Working with the library media specialist, create rotating classroom collections using the LMC as the warehouse.
- The rotating collection should be as large as the classroom can handle.
- Some items might be semi-permanent; others rotating every few weeks.
- The collection would contain materials for free voluntary reading chosen by students.
- The collection would contain materials to be used in a curricular unit.
- Materials could be circulated from the classroom to the home.
- The collection would contain materials in many kinds of formats including books, paperbacks, magazines, newspapers, multimedia, etc.
- Every room collection would also contain electronic resources, databases, selected Internet sites, and other digital information and multimedia items flowing from the LMC into the classroom and into the home.
- The electronic classroom collection would contain links to the central LMC collection, local, district, and national resources.

Tips for Managing the Classroom Collection

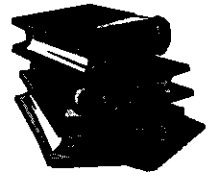
- Work with the library media specialist to develop check-out and return policies. A student who checks out a book from the classroom could return it to the library, and another title could be sent from the library to replace it, helping keep the collection interesting and fresh.
- Assign students to manage check-outs.
- Have students periodically weed the classroom collection, returning books to library and selecting new books for the classroom collection.
- Access, loss and replacement policies must not hinder the existence or use of the collection; some loss would be considered the cost of doing business.
- Mobile teachers can assemble classroom collections using book carts.
- Classroom collections can be augmented through collaboration with public libraries.

When There Are Not Enough Books In Your Classroom

"Classrooms where reading diversity is celebrated have at their foundation immersion in rich language that is used for a variety of purposes and audiences." [1]

Is your classroom filled with a wide variety of print resources?

- ❑ Newspapers
- ❑ Magazines
- ❑ Novels representing a range of reading levels
- ❑ Nonfiction that answers and invites interesting questions
- ❑ Books on tape (fiction and non-fiction)
- ❑ Poetry
- ❑ Student writing
- ❑ Picture books (regardless of student grade level)
- ❑ Speeches
- ❑ Stories that connect to students' lives
- ❑ Art and music
- ❑ Interactive computer software
- ❑ Links to lively and relevant web sites



Ways to build your classroom collection:

- Work with your library media specialist to develop a rotating classroom collection from the library collection (rotate a group of titles at least every few weeks).
- Work with your local PTA to raise money to purchase reading materials for the classroom and the library media center (You have more when you pool resources with the library media center and then rotate them in and out of your classroom).
- Work with department chairs, instructional and curriculum leaders, and principals to allocate money to the purchase of classroom reading materials as a normal curricular expense in the budget.
- Offer book club opportunities such as Scholastic or TAB in which students select their own books for purchase at a discount, and you receive free books based on their orders.
- Write letters to community groups telling them you need support to buy reading materials for your classroom. Ask for donations for specific items, such as subscriptions to magazines like Sports Illustrated, Time, or Teen. Have your students donate items.
- Find used book sales, garage sales, library duplicate sales to find the right books for your collection at ridiculously low prices or for free. Have poverty written on your face.

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[1] Allen, Janet. *Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4-12*. Stenhouse Publishing, 2000.

Book Bags and Curiosity Kits: An Idea for the Early Grades

Goal:		Result:
Each child from kindergarten through 2nd grade reads **500+** books per year		Every reader will read at or above grade level and have a reading habit.

Try Book Bags. Each classroom acquires enough canvas book bags (either from commercial sources or by making them) for each child in the classroom, plus a few extras. Each book bag is numbered and can be decorated. Once a month, the class goes to the LMC, where the children help select the books for the book bags. Into each book bag goes a book that children can "read for themselves" (a wordless picture book, an alphabet book, books with a few words, highly illustrated books, etc.) and one book that can be read to the child by an older sibling, parent, friend, or caregiver (a good read-aloud picture book, a folktale, a nonfiction animal book, etc.). Back in the classroom, the book bags are hung on hooks or in cubby holes. Each day as the children go home they take a different book bag, rotating throughout the month. The teacher keeps a list on a clipboard to record the book bag number next to the child's name. The homework for a kindergartner through second grader is to read two books a day. If the child forgets to bring the book bag back, the spares can be used. In no case is a child denied access to a book bag, because reading practice is considered essential. The management of this program is considered a success when both the teacher and the library media specialist agree that the system requires very little monitoring. At the end of the month, the class revisits the LMC, where the books are exchanged for new ones. Books in the book bag program are checked out to the room. No individual circulation records are kept for these books.

Schools using this system report extremely low loss rates and damage, counting the cost of either as the cost of doing business. In addition to using the book bags, the class comes to the library once a month to choose books for the classroom collection (a minimum of 100 books at a time). And the students make other visits during the month to select their own personal books to take home in addition to the book bags. The typical kindergartener, first or second grader should have read a minimum of 500 books during the school year and then linked into the public library system for regular reading during vacation periods.

Curiosity Kits. A variant on the book bag program is the creation of curiosity kits where each child creates a book bag filled with 2+ books on a theme that they think other members of the class might be interested in: whales, riddles, drawing books, hobbies, paper airplanes, kite flying, etc.

Theme Bags: During a month when the teacher will be studying a topic, children fill a third or half the bags with books on the topic.

Accelerated Reader and Other Electronic Reading Programs[1]

Electronic reading programs like Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts are relatively new tools becoming more widespread in the quest to create avid and capable readers. These programs vary greatly in cost and effectiveness, with Accelerated Reader (AR) leading the pack in popularity. AR is a curriculum-based reading program in which students select a book from the titles on the Accelerated Reader list. Each book is assigned a point value based on the number of words it contains and its reading difficulty, as derived from a formula based on a readability index. When ready, students take a computer-based comprehension test before moving on to another book. The tests provide feedback to students and teachers and allow teachers to monitor the quantity and quality of reading students do.

Before your school adopts Accelerated Reader or another electronic reading program, classroom teachers, administrators, and library media teachers might consider the potential uses and abuses:

Uses. When properly implemented, these programs can:

- Provide structure in building reading skills
- Provide students a mechanism for finding books at their own reading ability.
- Give students instant feedback on their progress
- Provide a way to track whether students actually read and comprehend their books, and to encourage them to adjust their reading levels as appropriate.
- Help teachers identify at-risk children and help them get back on track quickly.
- Increase motivation and achievement (although the research is inconclusive on this point)

Potential Abuses. Some of the ways such a system can be abused include:

- Linking results to students' grades. Studies have shown this has a negative effect on intrinsic motivation.
- Linking achievement to extrinsic rewards like food, toys, or play activities, or money. Such rewards may detract from the goal of fostering lifelong reading.
- Public posting of students' results. While this may motivate high achievers, it can be disastrous for slow learners.
- Restricting curricular or library collection development based on what books are available within that reading program.
- Substituting the computer-based reading program assessments for reading activities that foster critical thinking. Most of these electronic reading program only tests basic plot in determining whether students read and understand.

Suggested Fixes. (since machines should never get in the way of literacy):

- All books in the library media center should be "AR" books. (Figure out how!)
- If a young person wants to read something for which there is no test, have that child develop the test.
- While most of what is read might be "at grade level," children should be allowed, even encouraged, to stretch and read anything they are motivated to read.

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[1] Helpful articles about AR include: Topping, Keith. "Formative Assessment of Reading Comprehension by Computer." *Reading Online*, posted November, 1999. available at: (http://www.readingonline.org/critical/topping/index.html) and Labbo, Linda. "Questions Worth Asking About the Accelerated Reader: A Response to Topping." *Reading Online*, posted November, 1999. available at: (http://www.readingonline.org/critical/labbo/index.html)

Two Ways to Promote Reading in Your Classroom

Regardless of your experience as a classroom teacher, there are two strategies you can implement right away to improve both performance and attitudes toward reading.

Start SSR (sustained silent reading)

As students progress through school, they spend less and less time reading independently during class. However, many students do not make up for this by increased time reading independently at home. SSR (sustained silent reading) is a response to this reality that holds myriad benefits.

Ten Reasons to Start SSR Today:

1. Increases the amount students read. Amount counts.
2. Builds vocabulary through exposure to words in context.
3. Offers students an opportunity to read materials of their own choice.
4. Leads to more reading outside of school.
5. Provides on-going opportunities for adults to model reading behavior with students.
6. Increases fluency in second language learners.
7. Helps develop reading as a habit.
8. Broadens and deepens students' knowledge base.
9. Places value on reading for pleasure.
10. Fosters a love of reading and a love of learning.

Read Aloud

Many teachers and administrators feel reading aloud is a poor use of instructional time, particularly at the secondary level. In fact, reading aloud is so effective it should be done every day in classes K-12.

Benefits of Reading Aloud to Your Students

- Builds vocabulary and background knowledge.
- Establishes the reading-writing connection.
- Introduces the nuances of language.
- Helps promote a love of reading.
- Helps introduce types of reading students may not discover independently.
- Provides risk-free opportunities for students to enjoy the richness of written language.

Library Media Teachers Help Teachers Read Aloud By

- Locating high interest literature selections for teacher.
- Reinforcing good modeling by reading aloud to students during booktalks, promotions, and other library visits.
- Locating selections relevant to the classroom teacher's specific curriculum.

"The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to students."[1]

[1] Anderson, Richard C. Elfrieda Hiebert, et al. *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading.* Washington, DC: National Institute of Education, 1985.

A Checklist for SSR

Janet Pilgreen has identified eight factors critical for successful sustained silent reading programs. Here's a checklist to help plan or revise SSR in your own classroom[1]:

Access

- ❑ You work with the library media teacher to create a classroom library collection with high-interest reading materials.
- ❑ The library media teacher works with you to do special presentations for specific classes so they know where to find their favorite materials in the library.

Appeal

- ❑ Your classroom collections offer a wide range of readability levels in a variety of genres and formats, including magazines, newspapers, picture books, biographies, short stories, drama, poetry, and light reading materials like comic books, romances, and teen magazines.
- ❑ You really do allow students to make their own reading choices and only offer advice when they ask for it.

Conducive Environment

- ❑ Students have enough room at desks or tables to sit without feeling cramped.
- ❑ There is a low-risk atmosphere in which students are comfortable with what they're reading and how fast or well they can read.
- ❑ SSR is quiet, sacred time that is valued by you and students alike.

Encouragement

- ❑ You and the other adults on your campus model your enthusiasm for reading by modeling the reading process.
- ❑ When asked, you help students find books that are right for them, and match not only reading level but subject matter and theme.
- ❑ You receive support from administrators and parents in valuing free reading.

Staff Training

- ❑ You have received adequate training to understand the philosophy behind an SSR program and ways to implement one successfully.

Non-Accountability

- ❑ You refrain from graded activities related to SSR.
- ❑ Students feel as though they are free from being evaluated for their performance in SSR.

Follow-up Activities

- ❑ You provide students with opportunities to share their enthusiasm and reading discoveries with others, and they do so.
- ❑ Students have the voluntary opportunity to collaborate on projects that celebrate reading, including student magazines, author visits, and readers' theater.

Distributed Time to Read

- ❑ SSR is done on a regular and distributed basis, preferably daily for 10-20 minutes.

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[1]This checklist is based on Janice Pilgreen's *The SSR Handbook: How to Organize and Manage a Sustained Silent Reading Program.* Boynton/Cook, 2000.

Assigning Outside Reading

Another way to boost the amount your students read is through extended reading. Such assignments go beyond the normal curriculum, building on students' core knowledge to raise their interest level and exercise their critical thinking skills.

Ideas for outside reading (Ask your library media specialist for more):

Connections to the Real World:
Students search for newspaper or magazine articles connecting themes you're studying with events going on today (don't forget the library databases!). Students can clip articles, provide a brief summary and an explanation of how the articles connect with class themes.

Connections to History:
Students read historical documents, biographies, and historical novels that connect the theme you're studying to ideas that came before it in history. Ask the library media specialist for a list of the best.

Connections across the Curriculum:
Students read articles, biographies, web pages, etc., about how another discipline of study is related to what they're studying in your class. Students add postcard-sized displays of their information to a bulletin board entitled "Connecting (Your subject) to (choose one or more: History, Science, Math, the Arts, Literature, Sports, etc.).

Hall of Fame/Hall of Shame
Students read biographies of famous contributors to the development of the theme you're studying. They make graphic displays for a Hall of Fame or Hall of Shame for that topic.

Another Point of View:
Students read articles, books, or web pages offering an alternative view to the accepted version of the topic you're studying. Students look for reasons the alternative view is not more widely accepted or explain the faulty reasoning for the alternative view.

Poetry, Short Stories, Drama, Novels:
Students read fiction about the topic and write their own fiction in a similar style. The library media specialist will have tons of lists.

Extending the Lesson
Encourage students showing a keen interest in a topic to read about it more extensively. Provide trade books or articles on the topic or refer the student to the library media specialist for more resources.

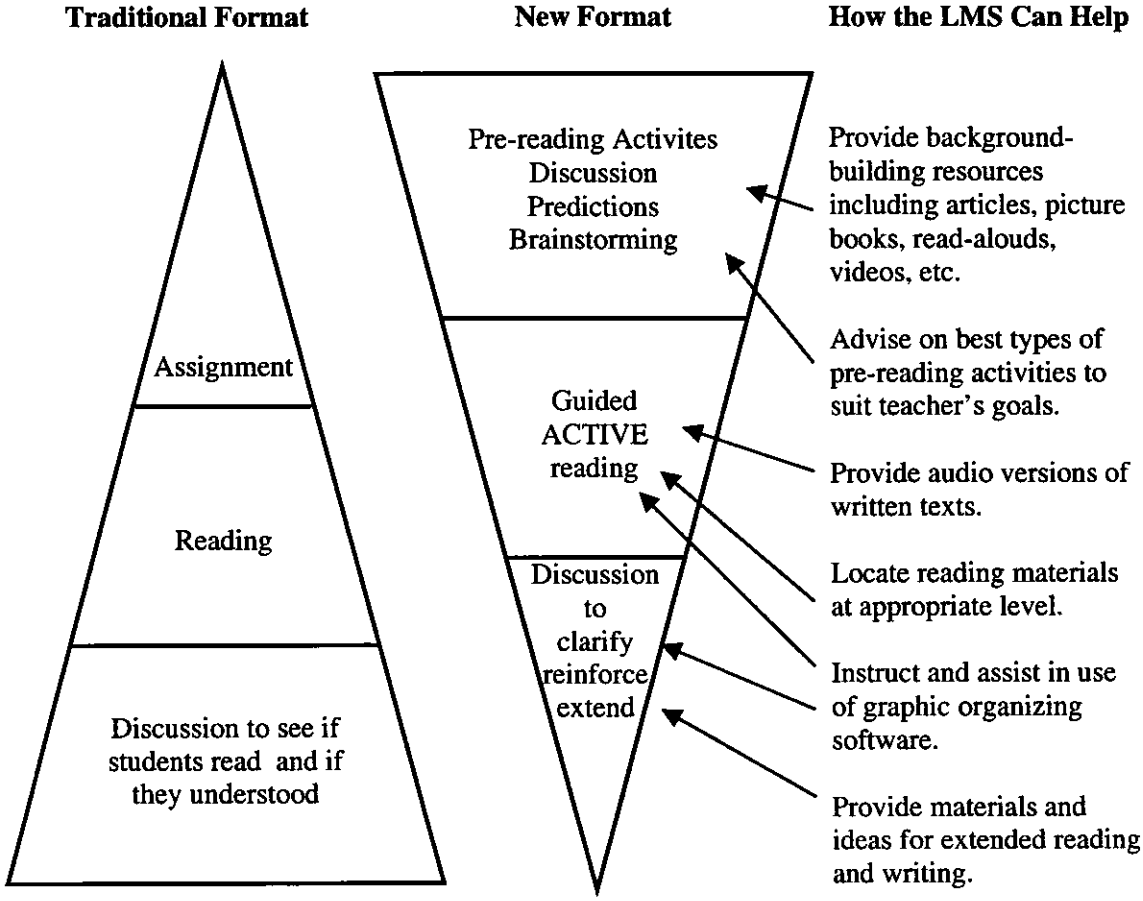
Have a Special Theme SSR Time
Ask the library media specialist to help assemble a temporary classroom collection on the theme for SSR time during a unit.

Reading in the Content Areas

All classroom teachers are reading teachers. Your instruction, modeling and support of your students' reading development will also aide in building content-specific knowledge. Here are some approaches that might help your students become avid and capable readers:

Turning tradition on its head:

Research suggests that rather than giving a reading assignment first, followed by study and discussion questions to check for comprehension, it's more effective to engage students in pre-reading activities such as brainstorming, discussion, KWL charts, and prediction-making to prepare students for what they'll read[1]:



[1]Spires, Hiller. "Research Suggests a New Format." Available at http://courses.ncsu.edu/classes/eci541001/handouts/lessonformats.html

Pre-reading, Reading and Post-reading Activities

Language Arts teachers call this taking students "into, through and beyond" the reading. This approach involves reading activities of three types:

a. activities before the reading to prepare students by
   - activating prior knowledge
   - building background knowledge
   - helping create a personal connection to the reading
   - building skills that help students attack the reading

b. activities during the reading that
   - focus students on key concepts
   - foster critical thinking
   - help students tackle difficult concepts

c. activities after the reading that
   - extend the lesson
   - synthesize, organize or evaluate information
   - affirm personal connections to the reading
   - require reflection on the process

Sample Pre-Reading Activities	The Library Media Specialist Can:
K-W-L: In a three-columned chart, have students brainstorm everything they know about a topic, followed by questions they have about the topic. As they're reading or when they're done, have them try to answer their own questions and add other important ideas they learned from the reading. **Prediction**: Students predict what will happen in the reading. Use this during the reading, too, revising predictions as students proceed; after reading, compare predictions with outcome. **Vocabulary building:** Students create word maps illustrating words, write definitions in own words, provide synonyms and antonyms for difficult vocabulary. **Quick write**: Propose to students a situation similar to the one in the reading. Have them quickly jot down their thoughts and feelings about the situation, what they'd do, etc. Share a range of responses. **Common writing structures**: Show students the pattern of writing in the text (topic/support/conclusion; chronological order; order of importance, etc.). As they're reading, have them outline by according to these parts.	Provide background-building resources, including books, periodical resources, videos, picture books, vocabulary building resources, etc. Facilitate and/or teach K-W-L activity, identify needed resources in response. Teach common writing structures of commonly used resources. Advise teachers on pre-reading strategies for specific texts.

Sample Reading Activities	The Library Media Specialist Can:
Oral reading: Students follow along while teacher reads aloud. This takes pressure off students, models good reading, allows teacher to provide additional clues through emphasis.	Read aloud to students in the LMC.
Selective underlining: Students highlight or underline key passages or concepts in text. Helps students look for a key focus in the reading.	Teach selective underlining and other note-taking skills.
Reader response: Student divides page in half. Left side is used for note-taking or copying of key passages during reading. The right half is used for reactions and questions.	Teach and facilitate use of graphic organizing software.
Reciprocal teaching: Reading done in small groups in which each student plays one of these roles: summarizer, questioner, clarifier, or predictor. Allows each student to focus on a single task while reading. Provides peer support	Facilitate group processes during reading activities in the LMC.
Graphic organizers: Provides visual organizational schemes for students to follow as they read. These include venn diagrams, concept maps, cause/effect diagrams, story maps and problem/solution charts.	Schedule multi-class presentations by students in the LMC.
Readers' theatre: Students (or teacher) rewrite a portion of text as a play, then perform it for class or wider audience.	Reinforce classroom reading strategies when students are reading in the LMC.

Sample Post-Reading Activities:	The Library Media Specialist Can:
Predictions: Predict implications of newly learned material: What will happen next? What does this mean for our school, city, country, world?	Provide resources and ideas for extended reading and writing.
Silent dialog: Students assume a role and conduct a silent conversation on paper with their partners. Students write a line of conversation and pass it to partner, who responds. After several rounds, students read aloud or submit it to the teacher.	Participate in students' reflections on their learning.
Sum it up: Summarizing activity in which students are limited to a certain number of words, as in a classified ad or headline for a newspaper article.	Evaluate lessons with teacher to adjust resources, information literacy goals.
Reflections: Students write reactions about content they learned, how it fits into what they already know, what they learned about their own reading and learning process.	

Linking English/Language Arts Standards and Library Media Center Reading Programs

Many states have set out academic standards for the teaching or the language arts. These standards often do not mention the word "library." One presumes a strong library media program if the standards are to be implemented effectively. Together, library media specialists and teachers develop plans to strengthen the language arts program at all ability and grade levels.

- **Idea: Hold a Language Arts Summit**

- **Who:** Principal, reading specialists, teachers, library media specialists, community representatives, other guests as invited.

- **Engaging Problem:** How can the library and the language arts program complement each other to create a school-wide community of readers?

- **Worksheet:**

List of Major Language Arts Standards and Elements	How the Library Media Program Can Respond

List of the Major Library Media Center Reading Program Elements	How the Language Arts Program/Teachers Can Respond

Could print p. 47 on the back of this sheet.

- **Task:** Create a collaborative and integrated language arts/library media center program plan.

- **Resources:** What do we already have? What do we need? How will we get what we need?

Starter Sample of Library/Language Arts Program Links

List of Major Language Arts Standards and Elements	How the Library Media Program Can Respond
Phonemic Awareness (1st grade): Students understand the basic features of words. They see letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent (smooth and clear) oral and silent reading.	▪ In storytelling, reading aloud, the library media specialist selects stories where word sounds are a natural part of the whole. ▪ Word and letter sounds are a fun part of storytime. ▪ The library media specialist furnishes an ample supply of books where word sounds are a natural part of the literature. ▪ Parent program exists to help on letter sounds.
Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text (8th grade): Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They describe and connect the essential ideas, arguments, and perspectives of the text by using their knowledge of text structure, organization, and purpose...	▪ The library media specialist arranges for online databases and selected web sites to provide students the variety of information they need that matches their level. ▪ The library media specialist teaches text structure as students encounter a variety of information sources. ▪ The teacher and the library media specialist team as the learners interact with the information.

List of the Major Library Media Center Reading Program Elements	How the Language Arts Program/Teachers Can Respond
▪ The library media specialist notices that in social studies, many learners cannot understand the chapters in the textbook because they are too difficult or the learners do not speak English very well. The library contains a plethora of materials on the topic at hand.	▪ The teacher and the library media specialist work together to choose reading materials on many levels and provide the learners with a wide choice in what they should read on the topic. ▪ Discussion and other activities done by the teacher and library media specialist insure that every learner has a deep understanding of the content knowledge.
▪ The library media specialist has acquired site licenses for word processing and outlining software to help learners both organize their thoughts and make the writing process more efficient.	▪ The teacher and the library media specialist team to teach the new tools including data collection and organization when a major writing project is due.

Note: Sample standards on this page come from Indiana Language Arts Standards.

Checklist of Successful Practices for Reading When Supported by the Library Media Center Program

- ❑ Our reading program is based on the research of Cunningham & Stanovich, Krashen, and McQuillen (see p. 32).
- ❑ My classroom has a print-rich environment (see p. 35).
- ❑ I have a rotating classroom collection (see p. 36).
- ❑ I have "enough" books in my classroom collection (see p. 37).
- ❑ I use book bags or curiosity kits if in K-2 (see p. 38).
- ❑ If I use Accelerated Reader, I use it properly (see p.39).
- ❑ I link language arts standards into my reading program, regardless of what I teach (see p.46-47).
- ❑ A sustained silent reading program in every classroom once a day, K-12 (see p. 40-41).
- ❑ A program to read aloud to every student once a day, K-12. This includes storytelling as well as oral reading (see p.40).
- ❑ A motivational program to encourage reading—challenges are preferable to contests.
- ❑ A program to involve parents in the total school reading initiative.
- ❑ A program to build a school-wide community of readers.
- ❑ Use technology assists to reading as long as those assists actually increase reading time and amount read (educational television, CD-ROM, computer programs, computerized reading motivators).
- ❑ Celebrate reading regularly as milestones are reached.
- ❑ Create the sense that reading is fun! Cool! Something I enjoy!
- ❑ Other:

Signs of Danger to Reading When Not Supported Well by the Teachers or Library Media Center Program

If *any* of the following describe or approximate what is going on in your school, red flags should be raised.

- ❑ Students would not list reading on any list of fun things to do. Reading is *not* cool.
- ❑ Book collections in the library media center are old, worn out, and unattractive.
- ❑ Budgets are so small that the number of new books purchased each year is insignificant.
- ❑ Books available don't match what children or teens would enjoy reading.
- ❑ Students only check out one or two books a week from the library.
- ❑ Classrooms contain few reading materials beyond textbooks.
- ❑ Classroom collections are small, outdated, too limited, or stagnant.
- ❑ Classroom collections and library collections are not connected and are funded separately.
- ❑ Reading aloud, particularly as students get older, is sporadic or non-existent.
- ❑ There is wide concern that high school students are not good readers, but there is no school-wide effort to do anything about it.
- ❑ Teachers of science, social studies, physical education, art, and math don't feel they have any responsibility to teach reading.
- ❑ Science, social studies, or other content areas require little or no reading beyond the few textbook paragraphs on a topic.
- ❑ No program of sustained silent reading exists in the school; or, it has been tried but has been considered a failure.
- ❑ Reading motivation "events" or programs are one-time or annual events of brief duration or non-existent.
- ❑ There are very few books in students' homes.
- ❑ Students do not have bed lamps or safe places to keep library books in the home.
- ❑ Parents, care givers, or siblings do not read aloud to younger students on a regular basis.
- ❑ Other:

Notes on Reading

ENHANCING LEARNING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Technology is not going away. It will change, evolve, adapt, ebb, and flow. The only question is how much we can force it to contribute to enhanced learning in education. Taxpayers have spent billions of dollars equipping the schools with the hope that a major return would be forthcoming. Results thus far are mixed, but the true impact can be judged in each teacher's classroom and school.

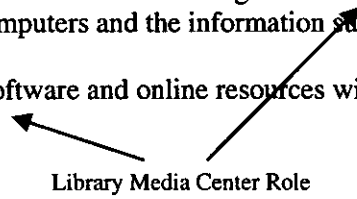
Technology leaders in most schools worry about networks, capacity, hardware and software upgrades. Library media specialists worry about what's on the networks in terms of quality information. Together, both specialists are poised to partner with teachers in the effort to enhance learning. It's a win, win situation.

Consider the following points as you make plans to use technology in your classroom:

- Technology is a tool, not an end in and of itself.
- Technology is neutral; it can be used to advantage or abused.
- Technology provides a wide variety of new channels for accessing information.
- Technology provides new ways to match student's learning styles.
- Technology provides amazing new channels for communication
- Technology is extremely difficult to justify if it lies unused or becomes outmoded.

National Educational Technology Goals

1. All teachers and students will have modern computers in their classrooms;
2. Every classroom will be connected to the information superhighway;
3. All teachers in the nation will have the training and the support they need to help all students learn through computers and the information superhighway; and
4. Effective and engaging software and online resources will be an integral part of every school curriculum.



Library Media Center Role

Source: http://www.ed.gov/technology

Everyone a Skilled User of Technology

In a sea of technological devices, upgrades, and new software versions, the list of skills everyone needs has grown exponentially:

- Equipment operation and care
- Software and materials care
- Word processing, database construction, and spreadsheets
- Layout and graphic design for presentations and communication in print, video, and multimedia formats
- Internet and information system searching and use
- New versions and upgrades of software and hardware

Few if any can claim expertise on all machines and information systems. Likewise, keeping a wide array of technologies operational requires a community of supportive and helpful users. Hence the critical compact between adults and students:

You Teach Me
I Teach You
We Teach Each Other
We All Help Keep It Working
In a Safe and Nurturing Environment

Questions for my Classes and Classroom:

1. Are the computers in my room up to date and hooked into the library media center network?
2. Can I take my whole class, individuals, or small groups to a location where there are reliable computers hooked into the library media center network?
3. Is there a wireless network and bank of computers that can be sent to my room when all my students need a computer for an assignment?
4. Do I and the technical staff of the school provide "just-in-time" instruction in either software or hardware operation as needed?
5. Have I designated various students to be "coaches" as we proceed into a computer assignment?
6. Do we talk often about the "helping" atmosphere as we all use the high-tech networks?
7. Do we talk about ethical use of information?
8. Do we have rules and help each other avoid potentially dangerous problems in the Internet world?

Does Technology Enhance Learning? What the Research Says

Numerous organizations including the federal government have probed the state of technology in U.S. education and its impact.

Some of the better reports were done by the Milken Educational Foundation.[1] However, this foundation changed its focus in 2000 and will not be issuing any more materials.

The federal government is currently doing a number of evaluative studies on educational technology that will be released in late 2001-2002.[2] They also publish a number of statistical studies detailing access to technology in the public schools.[3]

Many of the studies concentrate on availability and the uses of computer technology suggesting:

Access

- **Access to computers in library media centers and classrooms continues to improve (although we know little about the age of those computers, their capabilities, and the state of software)**
- **Access to the Internet both in library media centers, classrooms, and in the home continues to improve.**
- **There is still a digital divide based on affluence and high minority concentration.**

Use

- **Approximately half of the teachers report use of computers for classroom instruction.**
  - **Word processing**
  - **Spreadsheets**
  - **Internet research**
  - **Practicing drills**
- **Teachers with better training use technology more.**

The question of whether computer technology is actually enhancing learning experiences and thus, academic achievement, is more elusive.

- Research done on school libraries and academic achievement seems to point to the idea that the closer quality information gets to the elbow of the student through the school networks, the better students do (see p. 9).
- Whether technology makes a difference depends on how it is used by the teacher.

Technology seems to be a neutral element. A tool. Not an end in itself. Thus, the best suggestion is for each school to build a repertoire of excellence in enhancing learning through technology. (see p. 54).

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[1] Check their web site at www.milkenexhange.org for numerous documents and research studies.

[2] See a list of their commissioned research at www.ed.gov/OFFICES/OUS/PES/edtech.html

[3] The best way to keep up to date is to monitor the National Center for Education Statistics web site at http://nces.ed.gov. Their report: *Teachers' Tools for the 21st Century: A Report on Teachers' Use of Technology* was published in September, 2000 and was updated by the report "Internet Access in U.S. Public Schools and Classrooms: 1994-2000 published in May, 2001.

Building a Repertoire of Successful Strategies Using Information Technology to Enhance Learning

Many times, a simple set of flash cards is just as good as a $3,000 machine — and more reliable. Technological sophistication is not automatically the answer. Theoretically, technology should help students learn more and more efficiently.

Numerous publications tout effective ways to enhance learning through technology. In reality, they are idea starters. Each teaching team, library media specialist, and student group should, through trial and error, test a variety of techniques and showcase the best. Emphasize technology-based projects where substance is more important than glitz; deep learning over surface learning. Consider the following strategies as a starter list:

Collaborative Data Collection and Analysis - Various student groups in the same school, in the community, state, nation, or internationally, collect data to solve an engaging problem.

Real Problems - Numerous technologies allow students to handle "real" data to solve real problems. The data can be historical, contemporary, or obtained instantly through sensing devices.

A Transparent Learning Tool - When technology is properly used, it often becomes transparent to the learning task at hand. It becomes a true learning tool, not an end in itself. Matching the appropriate technology to the learning task helps them ensure that transparent match.

The Novelty of Technology - Enduring a steady diet of the same teaching strategies is boring. The use of a new technology or a fresh approach to an older technology can stimulate interest both in the technology itself and also in the subject matter to be mastered. Implementing new teaching strategies matched to appropriate technologies keeps the learning fresh.

Capitalizing on Media Characteristics - Each different kind of technology has its own unique characteristics that can contribute to learning. Films have motion and color; books allow easy skimming and scanning; the Internet allows worldwide, almost instantaneous communication; or online databases often allow full-text searches; distance education allows participation from afar. When teachers and students use a particular medium for its strengths, concept delivery and understanding are likely to be enhanced.

Multiple Data Sources - The Internet, online databases, books, periodicals, video sources, and connections to other libraries help students experience a wide variety of information on the topic or question they are seeking. There is something for every student at every level.

Simulations – Simulations, including simulation gaming, provide a way to come close to reality without encountering the dangers, the impossibilities of traveling in time or space, the "what ifs," or the risks.

Communication Beyond the School - The Internet, the amplified telephone, and e-mail allow students to communicate around the world, to other schools, experts, governments, agencies, libraries, museums, businesses and a host of other sources. This communication supports the learners as they explore ideas, concepts and important issues.

Background Building - Before students can deal intelligently with an engaging problem, they can build the needed background knowledge from a wide variety of media and technology sources in a relatively short period of time.

Efficient learners - Because of technology assists, students write more, produce better products, edit their work more carefully, use more information resources and integrate them into their work. Using the technology to gather as well as organize information and data helps the learner bring order and relevance to the subject matter.

Examples of Enhancing Learning Through Technology When Supported by the Library Media Program

Which of the following, or some variation thereof, would be likely to happen in your school?

- ❑ The library media specialist provides a valuable technology tool to a teacher and helps that teacher understand how to use the tool. (Example: A math teacher uses a technology to help students understand a difficult concept. The library media specialist introduced that tool to the teacher.)

- ❑ A video about Tibet obtained through the library allows students to experience this country, its culture, the environment, and its fascination in ways a few paragraphs in a textbook could not possibly deliver.

- ❑ In a joint English teacher/library media specialist/student discussion, students agree that a book is superior to the filmed version for a variety of reasons.

- ❑ Students stumped about a problem they are trying to solve consult with the library media specialist and are able to talk with an expert by e-mail who point them in the right direction.

- ❑ Classroom resources and connections were insufficient to get materials for a project, but a visit to the library media center solves student information access problems.

- ❑ The make-and-take workshop corner in the library allows a small group of students who were having difficulty in the classroom to succeed with their multimedia project under the guidance of the library media specialist.

- ❑ In the foreign language classroom there were almost no resources. Working with the library media specialist, the classroom teacher is able to stock the classroom with more than 1,000 titles of interest to English learners, CD-ROM programs, comic books, newspapers, and a host of bookmarked Internet sites for "Sustained Silent Reading/Viewing/Listening Time" each day in class.

- ❑ The science department, social studies department, and the library media center collaborate to investigate how technology has had an impact on post WWII global society. Students present their small group findings in a variety of formats ranging from PowerPoint presentations to multimedia projects to web pages.

Judging Glitz vs. Content in Hi-Tech Products
Assessment Rules for Teachers and Library Media Specialists

Overheard in the halls:

Ah, I just dress it up – turn it into a flashy web site or digital video and my teacher never notices that I didn't learn a thing. It's an instant "A."

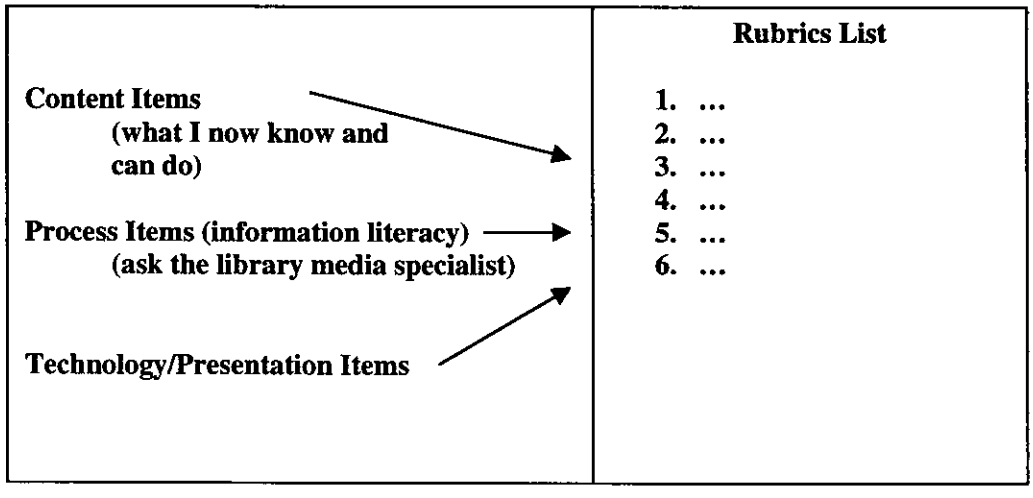
It is easy to be impressed with the glitz of technology particularly when the student knows more about computers or other high-tech than we do. But glitz does not substitute for deep learning.

Thus the first two commandments of the ten commandments of technology in education:[1]

1. Thou shalt give a grade on the substance of the product or project first.
2. Thou shalt notice technological expertise second.

As students begin projects, construct a rubric that sets content before format; rewards learning over presentation; process over product.

Construct rubrics over time and student experience that raise expectations for the sophistication of both content and presentation. The library media specialist will also want statements in the rubrics that test the "process" of the assignment (see the information literacy section of this book)



[1] What are the other eight commandments, you follow? Ask your library media specialist and technology leader.

Idea for Teachers, Principals and LMS

Do an AAR on Technology With Students

What is an AAR?
AARs or After Activities Review is a common technique in the military to determine "how things went" with leaders and soldiers — everyone involved in a training exercise.

Who Would Conduct the AAR?
A mix of the teacher, principal, and/or the library media specialist, plus the students themselves.

When to Conduct an AAR
- After a learning activity where technology was used heavily as a major learning tool.
- After the grades are in. (Students should feel free to speak up.)

Major Questions of an AAR
- How well did a certain technology help you as a learner?
- What information sources seemed to help you the most?
- What problems did you encounter with either a technology or an information source?
- What could we do to make sure that technology and information sources serve us better in our next projects?
- Did the technology really help you learn?
- How could students help? Leaders help?

How to Conduct an AAR
Make up your own AAR review sheet listing questions you want to ask and technologies and information sources your school implements.

Sophistication of the AAR
Tailor the AAR to the maturation level and student experience using technology.

What to Do After an AAR
Meet with the other adults involved to plan any changes in program.

Technologies Used Checklist
- ❑ Library media center catalogs
- ❑ Stand-alone computer stations
- ❑ Internet access
- ❑ E-mail systems
- ❑ Word processing/publishing stations
- ❑ Video production equipment
- ❑ Audio production equipment
- ❑ Multimedia production stations
- ❑ Facilities for use of technology
- ❑ Library facilities access

Types of Information Sources Accessed
- ❑ Books (fiction or nonfiction)
- ❑ Books (Reference)
- ❑ Magazines (printed)
- ❑ Magazines (electronic)
- ❑ Newspapers (printed)
- ❑ Newspapers (electronic)
- ❑ Online databases
- ❑ Computer tutorials
- ❑ Simulation games
- ❑ Internet information sources
- ❑ Museums or field trip sites
- ❑ Visiting experts
- ❑ Other libraries

Possible Problems Encountered
- ❑ Accessibility
- ❑ Inoperative systems
- ❑ Lack of training on a system
- ❑ Lack of assistance during use
- ❑ Breakdown of group process
- ❑ Too little time to work on technology

Bottom Line Questions

- What is the sophistication level of the students in their use of technology?
- Is the use of technology really enhancing the learning experience?

Integrating Information Technology into the School as a Whole

When information technology is integrated into the total school community, what might an observer notice by touring the school, the library media center, sports facilities, or special areas of the school?

Student behaviors:

- ❑ Students are interested/engaged in learning projects using technological devices and print resources.
- ❑ Students are using technology purposefully rather than as recreation.
- ❑ Students who are usually disinterested in schooling are engaged.
- ❑ Students are pursuing their own interests as a part of learning activities as opposed to pursuing only topics teachers demand.
- ❑ Because students are handling multiple data sources, they seem naturally headed in the direction of a problem-solving mode of learning.
- ❑ Students seem to be at ease using a variety of presentation technologies.
- ❑ Students are more focused on using the technology as a tool to further their learning than to "dress up" their projects.
- ❑ Other:

Facilities:

- ❑ Students can find whatever technologies they need in a variety of locations throughout the school and are able to get their work accomplished without long waits in line.
- ❑ Configurations of technology allow for simultaneous use of technology by individual students, small groups, and large groups.
- ❑ Students report that, for the most part, the technologies they need are working almost all of the time.
- ❑ Print and computer technologies are integrated into libraries and classrooms.
- ❑ Technology is available to students before and after school, and at noon, in addition to the regular school hours.
- ❑ Other:

Adults:

- ❑ Teachers and library media specialists obviously have buy-in to a technology-rich environment and feel comfortable teaching in that environment.
- ❑ Teachers and library media specialists are in the coaching stance rather than being the principal mechanism for information delivery.
- ❑ Other:

Danger Signs Checklist When Technology Not Supported Well by the Library Media Center Program

Students:

- ❑ Regularly use technology for playing games/hacking/surfing.
- ❑ Use technology to glamorize projects, but there is little substance.
- ❑ Cut and paste information together for projects—learning very little.
- ❑ Spend so much time in tech-production there is almost no time to learn content.
- ❑ Are careless and destructive with equipment, software, and lack respect for other students' work.
- ❑ Download and print pages and pages but never read them.
- ❑ Go to the Internet first when there are other better print sources at hand.
- ❑ Consider electronic information always superior to print information.
- ❑ Other:

Teachers:

- ❑ Seem afraid and helpless in the face of technology.
- ❑ Know how to use technology, but don't.
- ❑ Have outdated equipment in their rooms compared to most of their students at home.
- ❑ Tell students they can use the Internet but provide no guidance.
- ❑ Don't require students to evaluate or document their information sources.
- ❑ Reward legibility over content.
- ❑ Other:

Technology:

- ❑ The failure rate (equipment, software, networks, and the Internet) is so high that teachers and students will not risk the time investment.
- ❑ No one person is responsible to see that the equipment, networks, and software are in good repair and operational.
- ❑ There is no technology plan in actual operation, or, it is ignored.
- ❑ Other:

Notes on Technology

CREATING AN INFORMATION LITERATE LEARNER

Definition:

Information literacy has been defined in a variety of ways, and while some details vary, the central substance has not.

Information Power, the major standards document of the school library field, defines information literacy as the effective users of ideas and information.[1] Another popular definition is "the ability to access, evaluate, and use information from a variety of sources."[2] A review of the research on information literacy looks at many models and their application with children and teenagers.[3]

For this publication, the information literate student possesses five qualities of mind and skill:

An Organized Investigator
A Critical Thinker
A Creative Thinker
An Effective Communicator
A Responsible Information User

One of the major agendas of the school library media profession is to assist students as they are introduced to an information rich environment and provide them with the research skills they need to survive. Library media specialists are interested in a certain quality of mind, a broadened capacity of information handling, an internalized model of personal research, and an ability to be a good citizen in the information world.

Library media specialists also know that the best way to teach the research process is to collaborate with teachers and teach the process "just in time" when learners must do projects assigned in the classroom.

Because information literacy is a newer, but key concept in education, the balance of this section covers this concept in more depth.

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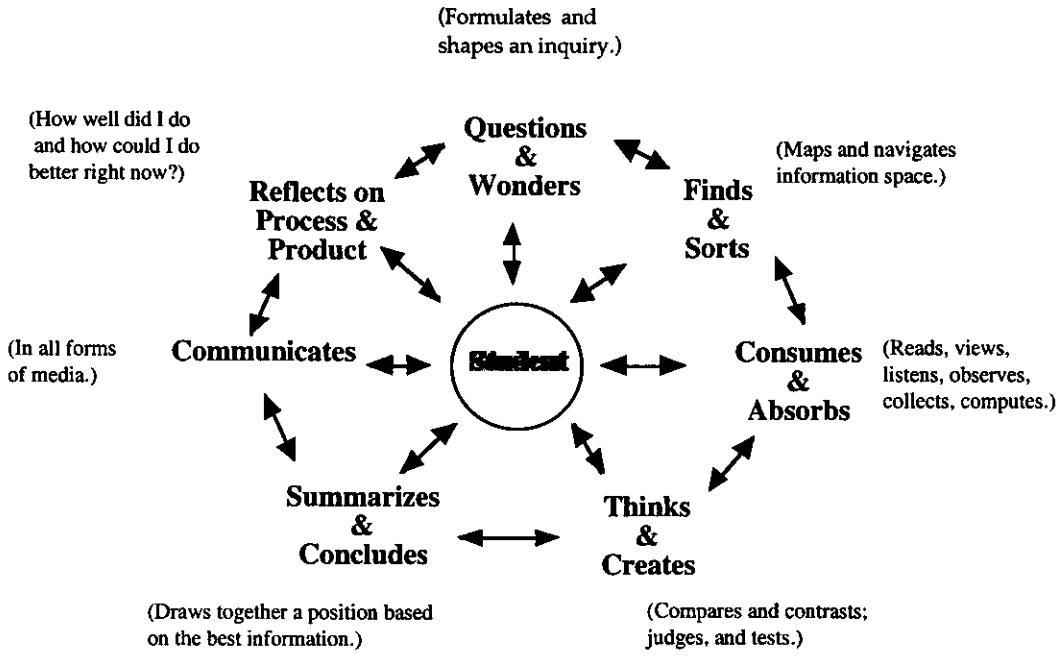
[1] American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1998.
[2] Doyle, Christina S. *Information Literacy in an Information Society: A Concept for the Information Age*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Information and Technology, June 1994.
[3] Loertscher, David V. and Blanche Woolls. *Information Literacy: A Review of the Research*. 2nd ed. Hi Willow Research and Publishing, 2002.

An Organized Investigator

Traditionally, students have done little "research" or investigation until high school. However, the advent of constructivist principles plus the advent of rich information environments allow all students the opportunity to develop investigative strategies and become problem solvers and meet state standards at the same time.

Beginning inquirers need some guidance in developing a process for doing research. Each student can be introduced to a research process model adopted by the faculty for the school. Popular models include the Eisenberg & Berkowitz Big Six Skills, the I-Search Process created by K. Macronie, *Information Power* (1998 ed), and the California School Library Association Information Literacy Model.[1] A sample information literacy model is presented below.



After several research experiences using a research model, students can then develop their own model to match their individual learning style. The library media specialist should have numerous examples of research process models available for consideration by the faculty and can take the lead in teaching this concept to the faculty as a whole. An effective activity with faculty is to present them with numerous information literacy models and then challenge them to develop their own in an hour-long professional development session. This gives them not only a sense of their own investigative style, but also a much clearer notion of what information literacy is and how it can be used in the classroom. Ask the library media specialist to conduct such an activity in your school.

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[1] One of the best sources for information literacy guidance is: *From Library Skills to Information Literacy*, 2nd ed. (1997), authored by the California School Library Associaton and available from LMC Source, P.O. Box 720400, San Jose CA 95172-0400. Another valuable publication from the same company containing many information literacy models is *Information Literacy: A Review of the Research* by David Loertscher and Blanche Woolls. 2nd ed. Hi Willow, 2002.

How to Help Students Become Organized Investigators

Children and young adults at any age can begin learning the techniques of conducting inquiries and solving the problems they meet. Rather than concentrate on a scope and sequence chart with rigid requirements at the various grade levels, adults can recognize student sophistication levels. Students may be beginners, intermediates or sophisticated information literates no matter the age, gender, cultural background, or principal language spoken. It is not difficult to recognize the difference in sophistication.

Beginners
- Frazzled
- Lost
- Can't pick a topic for research
- Can't find information
- Desperately needs help
- Needs help constantly
- Distracted
- Uninterested

Intermediate
- Self-starting
- Still a roller-coaster experience
- Needs support
- Has moments of insight
- Interested
- Somewhat systematic
- Will take advice

Advanced
- Independent learner
- Knows where to go and how to get there
- Asks advice to monitor progress

Instead of regimenting the teaching of investigative strategies, the classroom teacher and the library media specialist might try the following with a whole group, small groups, or individual learners:

- Teach a research model as a whole several times at varying intervals. Students will proceed through a problem in a step-by-step fashion and discuss each step as the investigation proceeds and is completed.
- After a research project or inquiry, reflect on the model students have used. At an appropriate time, have students create their own information literacy model. Models will vary since learning styles vary.
- Teach students that real research is generally a very messy process—there are many false starts, problems encountered, progress, backtracking, and enough hassles to require a great deal of patience and hard work.
- Have students test their own model on a second project. Refine.
- When students complete a project, assign a grade for both the process and the product. Students should know in advance, via a rubric, that both the process and the product will be assessed.

A Critical Thinker

Library media specialists see critical thinking as one of the major components of the information literate person. But instead of advocating an add-on to the curriculum—a new scope and sequence or curriculum to be taught— critical thinking is best integrated into the subjects and projects at hand.

Teachers and library media specialists should teach critical thinking strategies within the context of content-area projects, lessons, and information use. The objective is to create neither students who are sponges (believing everything they read, view, and hear), nor cynics (believing nothing they read, view, and hear), but healthy skeptics (using evidence and authoritative sources to judge believability).

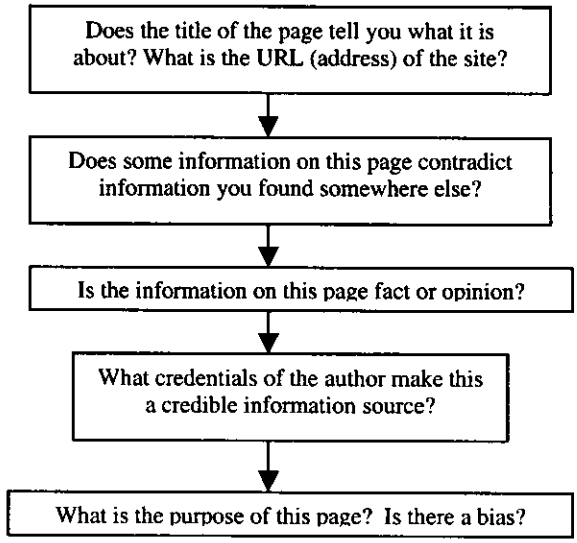
CRITICAL THINKING CONTINUUM

Sponges - - - - - - - - - - Healthy Skeptics - - - - - - - - - - Cynics

A Major Challenge: Evaluating Information on the Internet

One of the major challenges, for example, is to educate students to evaluate information they find on the Internet. Teachers and library media specialists should work together to teach students these evaluative skills developmentally. Very young users may simply be asked to decide whether a site seems to be on the right topic or whether it is easy to understand. As students develop cognitively and become more sophisticated in their use of online resources, teachers and library media specialists should respond with increasingly sophisticated lessons about authority, bias, currency and accuracy.

As Students Become More Sophisticated, So Do the Questions We Ask of Them



Resources for Web Evaluation

1. "Critical Evaluation Information," by Kathy Schrock. Available: http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/eval.html
2. Cyber Guides, by Linda Joseph. Available: http://www.cyberbee.com/guides.html
3. Infopeople's "Evaluating Internet Resources." Available: http://infopeople.berkeley.edu/how to/bkmk/select.html
4. "Teaching Critical Evaluation Skills for World Wide Web Resources," by Jane Alexander and Marsha Tate. Available: http://www2.widener.edu/Wolfgram-Memorial-Library/ webevaluation/webeval.htm

On the following page is a web evaluation guide. Work with your library media specialist to adapt the guide to fit your students' needs and create a lesson that helps them learn how to use it. Integrate that lesson into a broader research unit. Teach information literacy in context!

Website Evaluation Guide for Students

Use this guide to help you decide whether or not the web pages you are viewing are reliable sources for research. Need help? Ask your library media teacher!

Author:	Based on the information you found about the author, rate this source:
Who is the author? (Can't find a name? Look at the top and bottom of the page. Click through other pages on the site looking for an author).	**Credible**
What makes the author an expert on this topic? What do you learn about the author's **occupation**, years of **experience**, **education**, or other facts that make him an expert?	
List any **connection the author has to a university, research laboratory, governmental agency, or other reputable organization** related to the topic.	**Not Credible**

Purpose:	Based on what you found out about the purpose, rate this source:
What is the **purpose of the website**? To **sell** something? To **provide information**? To **convince** you of something? What does the **domain name** (.com, .gov, .org, .edu, .info) tell you about the purpose of the site?	
If only **one side of the argument** is presented, what side is left out?	**Biased**
What is **another resource** or type of resource that might provide the **other side** of the story?	**Not Biased**

Accuracy:	This information is
Note any **obvious errors** on the page, including **spelling** or **grammar** errors. What does this suggest about care in producing the page?	**Accurate**
How does the **information factually compare to information from other sources** you've already read?	**Not Accurate**

Content and Currency:	This information is
If statistics are provided, **how old is the data**?	**Current**
How **recent is the other information** on the page? Does this make the information more or less valuable?	**Cited**
When was the page **written**? **When** was it last **revised**?	**Not Current**
Does the author provide a **bibliography, Works Cited page or footnotes** that tell us where he got the information?	**Not Cited**

Summary:	The best reasons for using or rejecting this website are:

WebQuests: Keeping Students on the Right Path Down the Information Highway

Three of the biggest obstacles students face during research projects:

- No solid sense of the research process
- Too much time spent finding information, not enough time analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing it.
- Indiscriminate use of information sources without evaluating them.

One of the solutions to these obstacles:

WebQuests

WebQuests are web-based assignments that engage students in interesting and preferably real-world problem solving. By planning according to a set of specific steps and pre-selecting online resources, teachers and library media specialists guide students through the research process and help them focus their energies on analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing information and on creating final products that reflect such thinking.

Elements of a WebQuest:

- An introduction that sets the stage and provides some background information.
- A task that is achievable and engaging.
- A set of information resources (online, print, etc.) selected by the teacher and library media specialist needed to complete the task.
- A description of the process the learners should go through in accomplishing the task.
- Some guidance on how to organize the information acquired.
- An evaluation, often a rubric, designed to measure results.
- A conclusion that brings closure to the quest, reminds students of what they've learned, and encourages them to extend the experience.

Why WebQuests Work:

- Promote critical thinking with emphasis on essential questions.
- Work well with cooperative learning
- Structure complicated research assignments
- Take advantage of online resources without leading students on a wild goose chase.

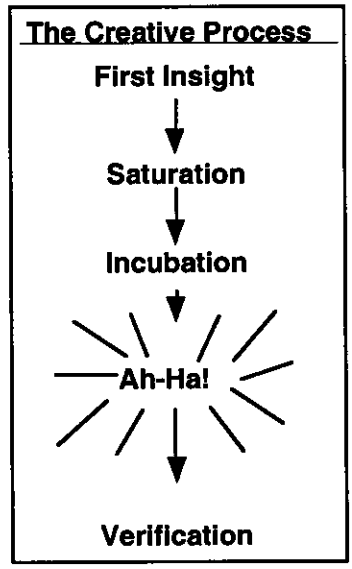
How the Library Media Specialist Can Help:

In every way. Partner with the LMS to plan, find resources, suggest organizational strategies and use of technology, guide students through the process, and evaluate the success of the project.

Key Resource: Bernie Dodge's Webquest Page, http://edweb.sdsu.edu/webquest/webquest.html

A Creative Thinker

Learning is often so regimented with students receiving points for molding projects to exact specifications that creativity is penalized. Recognizing and rewarding creative thinking even when the student might act like Jim Carey or Robin Williams is a major challenge. Is it being encouraged in your classroom and in the library media center? Consider the definition of creativity at the right[1] and a advertising poem used by Apple Computer.[2]



To the Crazy Ones

Here's to the crazy ones.
The misfits.
The rebels.
The troublemakers.
The round pegs in the square holes.
The ones who see things differently.

They're not fond of rules.
And they have no respect for the status quo.

You can praise them, disagree with them, quote them,
disbelieve them, glorify them or vilify them.
About the only thing you can't do is ignore them.

Because they change things.
They invent. They imagine. They heal.
They explore. They create. They inspire.
They push the human race forward.

Maybe they have to be crazy.
How else can you stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art?
Or sit in silence and hear a song that's never been written?
Or gaze at a red planet and see a laboratory on wheels?

We make tools for these kinds of people.
Because while some see them as the crazy ones, we see genius.

And it's the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world,
who actually do.

Think different.

c. 1997. Apple Computer Inc.

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[1] The creative process is Getzel/Kneller's description in von Wodtke, Mark. *Mind Over Media: Creative Thinking Skills for Electronic Media*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993, p. 115.

[2] © 1997, Apple Computer, Inc. Used by permission.

An Effective Communicator

Students should be able to express themselves and communicate their findings successfully in a wide variety of media including:

- Written reports
- Term papers
- Web sites
- Multimedia presentations
- Video presentations
- Graphic charts, diagrams, transparencies, PowerPoint presentations, etc.
- Real and constructed objects
- Reenactments, drama, oral presentations
- Portfolios

Student products not only should span the various types of media but should become increasingly sophisticated as experience with technology increases. Student products should be evaluated by some form of rubric. Here is a sample partial rubric:

My product:

- Reports clearly the question or quest.
- Reports the various information sources I used.
- Draws from excellent information sources.
- Reflects my thinking about the topic covered.
- Is a summary of what I have learned.
- Uses technology well.
- Is neat and organized.
- Is presented well.

Student products should be a part of exhibitions to parents, teachers, or might have utilitarian value for other students. Such events encourage students to demonstrate deep learning vs. surface learning—an expectation that encourages a behavior teachers would like to maximize.

For the most part, students should be taught how to communicate in the various media at the time when they need the skill. For example, they can be taught to use the digital camera before a field trip where they will be taking pictures to integrate into a multimedia presentation. In this case, a few students can be taught the skill, and they can be assigned the responsibility to train others—to "check them out" before handing over an expensive piece of equipment.

In addition to using the library media center for its information resources, remember that it can be exploited as a make-and-take center. Most library media centers have large tables, quiet rooms, and a wealth of production tools from scissors and tape to computers and video editing equipment.

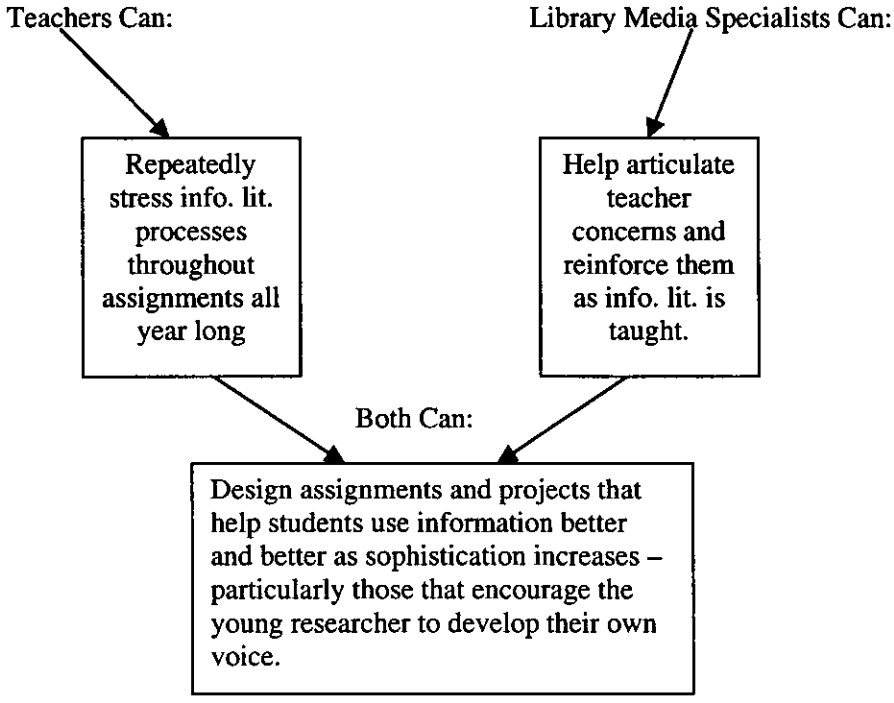
A Responsible Information User

When only a textbook, some note paper, and a few library reference books were available as the chief student information sources, the need to teach responsible information use was not a common part of education. Now, however, as the information pool deepens, students of all ages handle vast quantities of information resources and with this opportunity comes more responsibility. Consider the following checklist:

Information Responsibility Checklist

- ❑ Students should be ethical and responsible users of information and information networks.
- ❑ Students should respect other students' work on information systems and equipment as it develops.
- ❑ Students should understand plagiarism and the cut and clip mentality – avoiding both.
- ❑ Students understand and practice the concepts of the district's acceptable use policy when using the Internet.
- ❑ Other:

Other Actions to Take



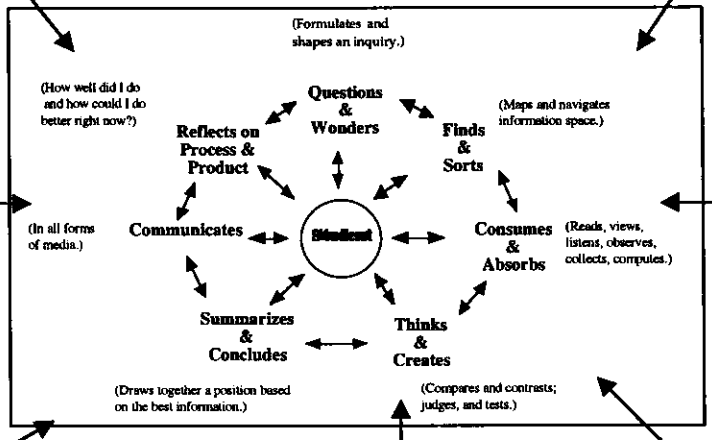
Collaborative Teaching of Information Literacy: Possible Scenarios

As soon as learners become comfortable with an information literacy model, they are encouraged by both teacher and library media specialist to modify the model to suit their own learning style.

Teachers and library media specialists agree on an information literacy model to be taught throughout the school.

During the first research project of the year, the library media specialist teaches the model (or reviews it) while teacher listens and learns the model.

Learners may first apply the info. Lit. model in language. arts, then apply it in a social studies project and later a science project.



Teachers and library media specialists assess whether learners are becoming more sophisticated over time and plan accordingly.

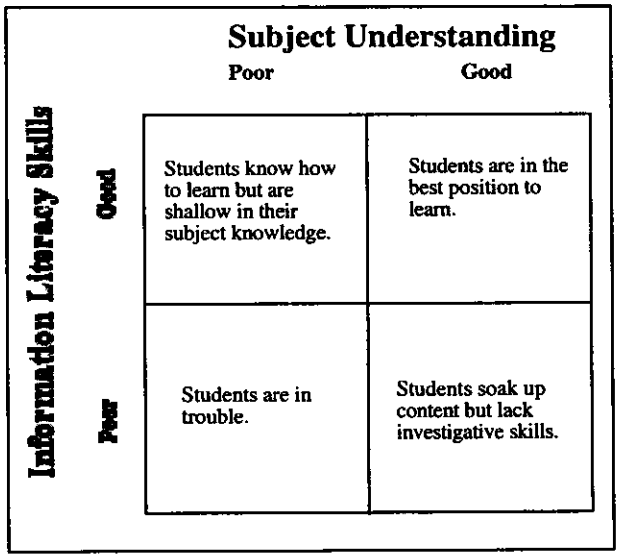
Teacher inserts aspects of the information literacy model in classroom projects without the library media specialist.

Library media specialist might assess the process part of a project while the teacher assesses the content. Future plans are made depending on how well learners have done with both aspects.

Both the teacher and library media specialist might teach a piece of the model just in time for learners to use that skill during their research project.

The Battle Rages On!
Shall We Teach Content or Process?

Under the gun to have learners score high, teachers often ask: "What kind of young learner is best able to do well on achievement tests and meet state academic standards?" "Is it the young person who gorges on content: learning the facts, acting like a data sponge?" "Or is it the person who "knows how to learn" (the information literate; the process learner; the problem solver)?" Note the diagram below:



Behaviorists are certain that subject understanding is paramount. On the other hand, constructivists insist that information literacy or knowing how to learn will equip students for the world in which they must compete. The solution of educating a person with both information literacy skills and subject understanding seems to be a sound course, yet many are not sure such a middle road is possible.

Research seems to be indicating that when teachers and library media specialists combine to teach both content and process, good things happen.[1] That is, an integrated approach is "worth the perceived risk."

The Position of National Standards and Guidelines.

Both *Information Power* and the *National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers* (see p. 10) are decidedly in the constructivist camp. Both documents are stressing the teaching of process as the best way to expect information and information technology to impact learning. In a standards-based environment, both documents are easily integrated into practice.

A Clear Message to Teachers.

Library media specialists are saying to teachers very plainly: Work with us to develop avid and capable readers plus allow us to integrate information literacy into your assigned projects and scores will increase.

[1] Lance, Keith and David V. Loertscher. *Powering Achievement*. LMC Source, 2001.

Methods of Teaching Information Literacy

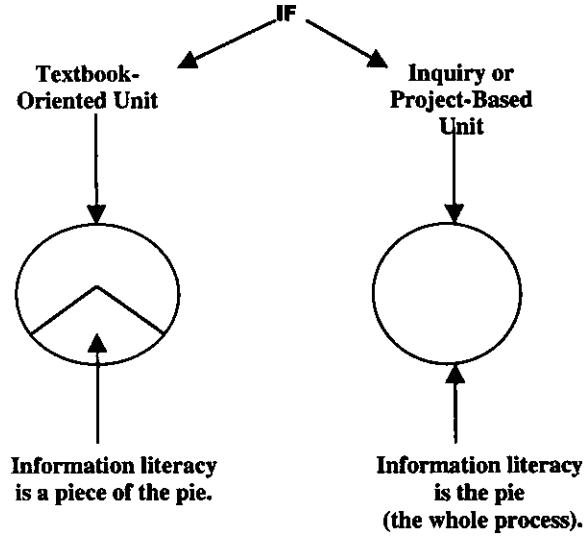
Library media specialists teaching information literacy have sometimes succumbed to the temptation of teaching those skills as a course of instruction or "library lesson."

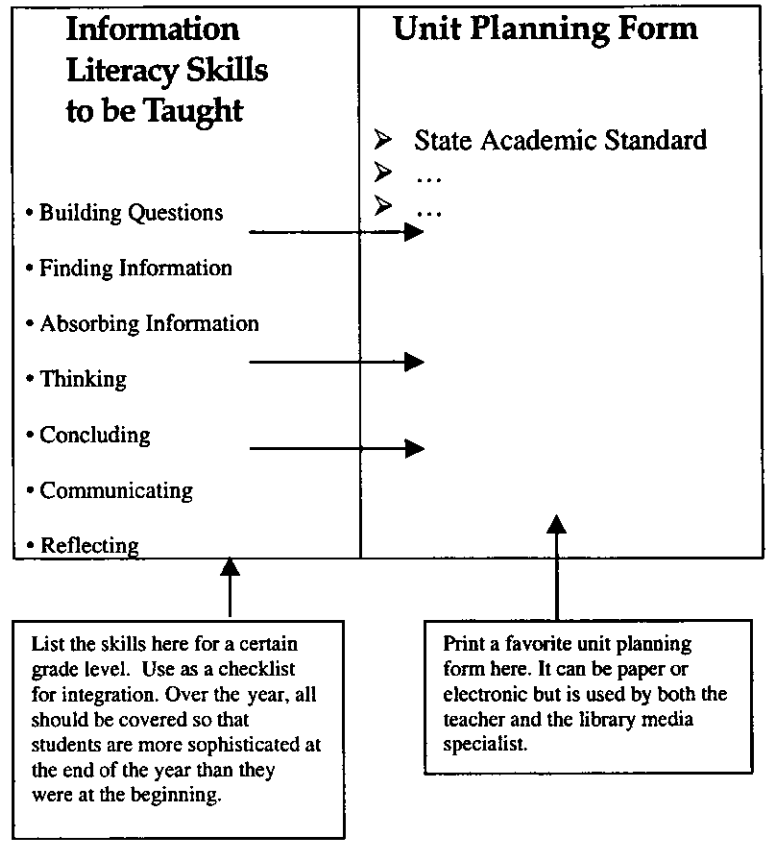
Such an approach has been rejected as time consuming and inefficient. Rather, the professional literature recommends the integration of information literacy skills at the point when students will use them.

As the illustration at the right shows, sometimes this teaching will take place as a mini-lesson when students are assigned a project and come to the library media center to do research.

However, if the teacher is doing an inquiry unit or a major project, the information literacy teaching will form the scaffolding of the entire research process. There will be a number of information mini-lessons as the research progresses.

In either method, the illustration at the right shows how the two agendas are co-mingled to insure accountability for both educators.





How Would I Recognize Information Literacy If I Saw It in Action?

If I walked by the library media center or briefly walked in for an observation, I might see at a cursory glance whether the library media center was full of students or empty, whether it was quiet or noisy, and whether the students were engaged. However, without a deeper probe, the significance of what was going on might well be elusive. The following observational checklist might help.

If teachers were interviewed, signs that information literacy skills are being taught might include:

- ❑ A lesson plan would have information literacy skills included.
- ❑ The teacher would have had a planning session with the library media specialist in advance of the time in the library media center
- ❑ The teacher would be aware of an information literacy model being taught to all students in the school.
- ❑ The teacher would understand what information literacy is, and that the library media program is taking the leadership in this activity.

If students were interviewed, their knowledge about information literacy might include:

- ❑ Recognition of the term "information literacy"
- ❑ Knowledge about a helpful process or a procedure of doing research.
- ❑ Knowledge about how the library media center and the technology of the school helps them in their learning projects.
- ❑ Recognition that both the teacher and the library media specialist guide them in the research process.
- ❑ Knowledge that they are getting more and more particular about the quality of information they are finding.
- ❑ Compliments for the information technology systems and their contribution to their education.

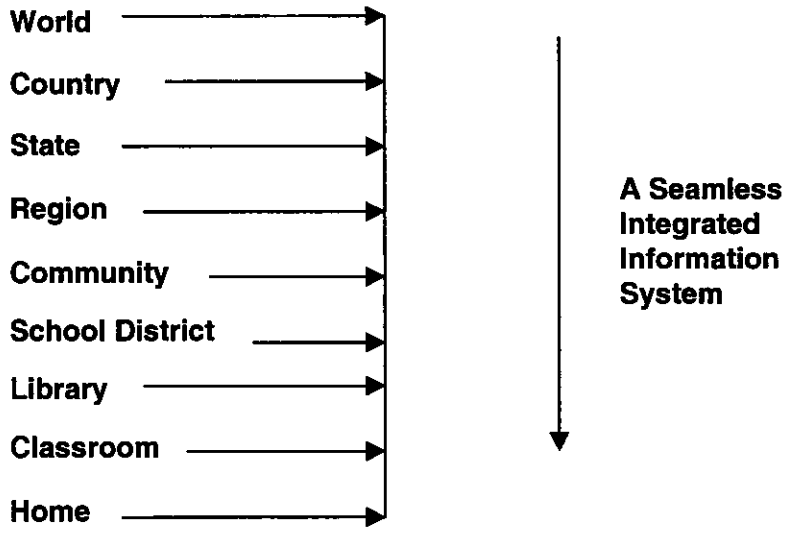
Bottom Line:

Everyone in the school is aware that information literacy is a natural part of the learning process.

Notes on Information Literacy

BUILDING AN INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Schools and homes everywhere are fast becoming a part of a worldwide seamless integrated information system positioning every participant to enjoy an immense array of information, data, culture, and knowledge. But it comes at a price — not just in creating the system (admittedly costing trillions), but at a heavy cost of information overload, information pollution, information manipulation, and a host of other ills. Adults, awash in an information glut, tend to turn it off.



Will children fare any better than adults in an ocean of information technology? We are beginning a grand experiment. Teachers and library media specialists will and are having a giant role in shaping the destiny and impact of this experiment. Some assume that linking up and logging on is the goal. It is only the beginning.

The final section of this book looks at factors affecting the organization of a library media program from the perspective of the teacher. There are issues needing teacher attention if progress in achievement will be made in your classroom.

Staffing the Library Media Program

After the networks are in, the computers set up, the books purchased, the magazines ordered, the Internet connections made—suddenly the reality comes that machines and materials do not transform themselves automatically into learning enhancers—it takes people!

In times past, school libraries were thought to be manageable by a single individual. Now, the idea that a single individual can manage a multi-million dollar, time-intensive organization is ludicrous. Realistic staffing of a complete information technology learning plaza requires:

- Professional expertise
- Technical expertise
- Classified staff
- Volunteers (students and adults)

➢ A full-time library media specialist in every school transforms information technology into academic achievement.

➢ A professional technology coordinator creates the information infrastructure and keeps it current, updated, and operational. Coordinators who lead, join teachers and library media specialists in enhancing learning through technology.

➢ A full-time technician keeps the component parts of the information systems operational and in good repair.

➢ Support staff ensure that the warehouse/laboratory systems work for the benefit of the students and teachers.

➢ Volunteers provide assistance in so many ways that help the professionals and support staff accomplish the most important tasks with learners.

Schools that have become very expensive operations yet lack the professional vision and leadership a full-time library media specialist provides have little prospect of enhancing academic achievement. A few of the faculty in a typical school will adopt new technologies as early experimenters, but the wholesale adoption of technological change requires continual professional encouragement, collaboration, and support.

Bottom Line:

Work to have a full library media staff in your school. It's to your own benefit.

Why a Professional Library Media Specialist?

Teachers in today's classrooms are under intense pressure to perform; to produce a miracle. They face:

- An ever-increasing amount of information in every discipline to teach in the same period of time.
- Intense pressure to have students perform on tests.
- A quandary of teaching to the test vs. trusting their creative instincts.
- A fast-paced change in the technology and information systems available to them as tools.
- A finite amount of money available to accomplish the task at hand.

The question in every school is what mix of support each teacher needs to best accomplish the demands of various pressure groups. Administrators, boards, teacher unions, and community members question what mix of support to provide over and above a teacher in a classroom and a textbook. For example, given enough money in a school to hire one person over an above one-teacher-per-classroom, what type of person would help the teacher the most? A counselor? A nurse? A music teacher? An art teacher? Any one of the above as long as each teacher has a planning period during the day?

Consider the argument in favor of having a professional library media specialist who has a 21st century vision and who has the resources to:

- Partner with teachers to create capable and avid readers.
- Collaborate to build, teach, and assess high quality learning experiences in an information-rich and technology-rich environment.
- Teach every learner to be information literate (organized investigators, critical thinkers, creative thinkers, effective communicators, and responsible information users).

The research on school library media programs (p. 9 of this book) done in Colorado, Pennsylvania, Alaska, Oregon, and Texas all show the stimulus that a library media professional gives to a school's academic achievement scores. That is, school communities who care enough to support the teacher with a library media professional find good things happening.

The assumption is that today's high technology and information-rich environments are so filled with potential, yet so complex and ever changing, that teachers would make an effective choice in favor of a professional person. Learners today deserve more than a closet full of books down the hall; a baby-sitting room called the "library" that tends children once a week for a period of time; a "nice" but ineffective service somewhere in the school.

Teachers have powerful voices. How and what will you choose?

Do Collections and Information Resources Measure Up?

Teachers need information resources in all formats that match what they must accomplish in the classroom. Library media specialists have money varying from meager to plentiful. During their education, library media specialists learn that the support of curriculum is the number one priority for spending. Thus their collections should look much different than a public library collection that is much broader in scope.

Library media specialists draw priorities based on curriculum needs and the input of teachers. Most have faculty advisory committees who help set the direction spending will take. The message seems clear enough: wise teachers who invest interest, time, and encouragement, often reap great rewards.

Many library media specialists are most willing to build collections and banks of information resources when they know these resources will be well used by teachers and the learners they serve. They look askance at large investments that reap little when demands across the school are great.

How to Help the Library Media Specialist and Strengthen Your Curriculum at the Same Time

Follow these simple steps:

1. Briefly define the major units of study that do or could benefit from additional print, online, audio, video and multimedia resources.
2. Visit the library and examine the resources currently available for those units (your library media specialist can help you with this).
3. Recommend which materials should be removed (too easy, too difficult, outdated, worn out, etc.).
4. Recommend types of materials, or even specific titles, that should be acquired. Recommend multiple copies of the same title if you're sure they'll get used.

If you actively assist the library media specialist in this process, you'll find that your curricular units may receive higher priority when funding decisions are made. More resources for your units mean more learning opportunities for your students.

The Elementary Library Media Center Schedule: A Quandary

Ask elementary school library media specialists in the United States to identify their biggest problem and they will say that once-a-week scheduled visits prevent them from having a major impact on academic achievement. Library media specialists often have their jobs because they are funded or are under union contract as planning time for elementary teachers. In many schools, the weekly visit schedule ties up the most expensive laboratory space in the school almost the entire week. Individuals, small groups, and other classes needing to use the facility for curricular activities are denied access. The profession advocates the abandonment of "rigid schedules" in favor of flexible ones. That is, the library media center should be open all day every day. Individuals and small groups can come at any time. And classes can be scheduled for research when teachers and library media specialists want to collaborate.

What are the advantages of the flexible schedule?

- The LMC becomes a learning laboratory available to everyone throughout the school day.
- Library media specialists have time to collaborate with teachers to create enhanced learning experiences – something that the research shows is the best predictor of increased academic achievement.
- The LMC responds to the curriculum, not the curriculum to the LMC.
- Library media specialists teach information literacy at the point of need rather than a less effective "course of instruction" – another factor showing greater increases in achievement.
- Teachers can schedule the "learning lab" to fit into their unit schedule – sometimes every day for several days and not at all other days. And they can schedule the library media specialist, their partner teacher, for projects when two teachers would be better than one.
- Students can get to the LMC when they need it – not just once a week.

If you absolutely must retain the weekly schedule:

- Demand that individuals, small groups, and large groups can use the LMC whether or not a scheduled class is there. Arrange the LMC facility so this can happen.
- Consider having classes scheduled every other week rather than once a week to free up the LMC schedule for collaborative units.
- Consider having the scheduled class do sustained silent reading (SSR) and book checkout during their scheduled visits. The library media specialist would be working with other classes simultaneously on research projects. Have support staff supervise the SSR activity.
- See that more and more information is available on networks to classrooms and homes.

What if flexible scheduling is not working?

- Send a library media specialist and a group of teachers to a place where it is working for a day of analysis and planning.
- Pilot the new plan with a few teachers first, then the school as a whole.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The library media center is a very expensive investment that must pay its way.

Locking it up through rigid schedules negates its impact.

Dealing With Challenged Materials and Technologies

Fears from parents and organizations about what students are being taught or exposed to can bring on individual, group, or whole community battles. Pornography on the Internet is just one of a number of concerns currently being discussed widely.

When students are exposed to a wide variety of information sources, they will automatically encounter good information, opinionated information, unpopular ideas, and seditious ideas. There are risks in the world of free ideas and the argument generally revolves around the question: "At what age should children be allowed to encounter various types of ideas?" Consider a few major principles:

- Free speech and ideas found in books, periodicals, the Internet, and from personal contact have always been dangerous to the status quo.
- Controversy generally arises in the areas of politics, religion, sexuality, and foul language.
- There is no such thing as a non-controversial book, movie, or Internet site.

❑ **Each school administration, faculty, and library media specialist needs to anticipate controversy and be prepared to deal with it. Waiting until objections arise is not a sound plan!**

❑ **Preparations checklist:**

❑ We have a selection policy covering all materials and information technologies, including the Internet, adopted and in force. This policy covers both the library media center and the classroom.

❑ Our selection policy includes an acceptable use policy covering student behavior on information networks that follow state guidelines.

❑ Our selection policy includes a process for dealing with challenges (written complaints, review panels, rulings, follow-up policy consideration).

❑ The entire faculty has been educated about the selection policy; the acceptable use policy, and how to apply it in day-to-day situations. They know what to do when someone complains.

❑ Every faculty member is equipped with training and parent permission requirements for using sensitive materials in the classroom.

❑ When someone complains, we remember we have a selection policy! We apply it when challenges occur.

❑ Other:

Can't Find a Professional Library Media Specialist? Become One!

The position of a library media specialist is one of the most challenging and tough jobs you will ever encounter.

- Want a day filled with variety?
- Want to work with everyone in the school?
- Enjoy being creative?
- Want to be on the leadership team?
- Enjoy working with learners of all ages?
- Love technology as well as books?

Consider becoming credentialed or certified according to the laws of your state.

Here's how:

1. Check with your state or ask a library media specialist what the current requirements are in your state for becoming a certified library media specialist.
2. Most states require a teaching credential before being eligible for a library media specialist credential (Why? Because you spend a great deal of time teaching and working with teachers.).
3. Some states will allow you to get an emergency library media specialist credential so that you can work in a library media center while getting your education.
4. Find a quality program that will give you a 21st century education in library and information science. Consider carefully programs that are accredited by the American Library Association. That recognition will give you mobility in the library and information field.
5. You may be able to find programs using distance education with some visits to a campus or almost none. Choose a quality program that fits your learning style.
6. If you will be moving, check the requirements of the state in which you will work so that transition will be as painless as possible.

Idea

A master's degree in library and information science will help you become a better teacher – particularly in the age of information and technology. It's a good choice even if you never work in the field.

P.S. Because the field of library and information science has changed so much in the last decade, you cannot assume that what a long-term professional has done in your school is the role you will assume in an information-rich and technology-rich society.

INDEX

AAR (after activities review), 57
Academic achievement, 8
Accelerated Reader, 39
After activities review (AAR), 57

Behaviorism, 71
Bird units – 17-20
Book bags, 38
Books
    challenges to, 80
    for classroom collections, 35-37
Burnout (of library media specialists), 28

Censorship, 80
Challenged materials and technology, 80
Classroom collections, 36, 37
Classrooms – skilled technology users, 52
Collaboration
    assessment of, 15-16, 29
    definition of, 12
    elements of, 13
    planning sheets for, 14-16
    reasons for, 12, 26
Collections (of the LMC), 78
Communicators – effective, 68
Constructivism, 71
Content vs. glitz judgments, 56
Content vs. process teaching, 71
Content-area reading, 43
Creative thinking, 67
Critical thinking, 64
Cunningham, Ann E., 32
Curiosity kits, 38
Cut and clip, 23

Danger signs
    of reading, 49
    of technology, 59

Effective communicator, 68
Electronic reading programs, 39
Elementary LMC schedules, 79
English/language arts standards, 46-47
Evaluation of web information, 64, 65

Fat bird unit, 19
Flexible schedules (LMC), 79

Glitz (in technology products), 56

Information infrastructure, 75
Information literacy, 7
    collaborative teaching of, 70
    definition of, 60
    methods of teaching, 72
    models, 61
    recognizing it, 73
Information responsibility checklist, 69
Information users – responsibility of, 69
Infrastructure (of the information in a school), 75
Inquiry and information literacy, 72

Kristen, Stephen, 32
KWL, 43

Learn to read – help for, 33
Library Media Center
    changing concept, 6
    collections, 78
    program of, 8
    role in technology, 51
    schedules, 27
    research about, 9
    staffing of, 76
    standards, 10
Library media specialists
    becoming one, 81
    burnout of, 28
    importance of, 12
    reasons to have, 77
    methods of teaching, 72
Literacy, 7

McQuillan, Jeff, 32
Models of information literacy, 61

NAEP Report, 32
National Educational Technology Goals, 51
Network central, 8

Organized investigators, 61
    helping students become, 63
Outside reading, 41

Pacing (of instructional units), 24
Plagiarism, 23, 69
Planning sheets (for collaboration), 14-16
Post-reading activities, 44-45
Pre-reading activities, 44-45
Print-rich environment, 35
Process vs. content teaching, 71

Questions – building of, 18

Read aloud, 40
Read to learn – help for, 34
Reading
    amount of, 32
    as a part of a unit, 22
    assessment of reading program, 48
    assigned, 41
    case for, 31
    danger signs, 49
    in the content areas, 43
    learning to, 33
    pre-and post-reading, 44
    print-rich environment, 35
    promotion of in the classroom, 40
    read to learn, 34
    research for, 32
    standards, 46-47
    successful practices, 48
Reading literacy, 7
Repertoire (of technology strategies), 54
Reports – student products, 68
Research – technology, 53
Research (on reading), 32
Research and the LMC, 9
Responsibility (information users), 69
Rigid schedules (LMC), 79
Rubrics, 56

Schedules of the elementary LMC, 79
SSR, 40, 41
Staff of the library media center, 76, 77
Standards, 71
    (English/language arts), 46-47
    (for the LMC), 10
    meeting state standards, 21
Stanovich, Keith E., 32
State standards, 21
Student research products, 68
Students – success of, 7
Sustained silent reading, 40, 41

Teachers
    becoming library media specialists, 81
    building supporting collections, 78
    working the LMC schedule, 27
Technology
    challenges to, 80
    danger signs of, 59
    enhancement of learning, 51
    examples of enhanced learning, 55
    integration into the school, 58
    repertoire of successful strategies, 54
    research about, 53
    skilled users, 52
    standards for, 10
Technology literacy, 7
"To the Crazy Ones," 67

Unit planning
    new structure, 17-20
    pacing activities, 24
    reading, 22
    repertoire of, 25

Web evaluation, 64, 65
WebQuests, 66
World wide web – evaluation, 64, 65

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