

the professional literature in transition: make it a thinkathon summer

ARE TEACHER-LIBRARIANS NOT THE SMARTEST PEOPLE IN THE SCHOOL? THEY HAVE READ EVERYTHING IN THEIR COLLECTIONS AND KNOW EVERY GOOD WEB SITE AND DATABASE AND THEY ARE THE FONT OF THE BEST EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE. WE ARE JUST WAITING FOR JAY LENO TO TRY HIS STREET WALKING OUT ON TEACHER-LIBRARIANS AND JUST DARE TO SHOW OUR BRAINY ANSWERS ON TV. HE NEVER HAS, AND FOR GOOD REASON!

But just assume you were one of those street interviewees and were asked to match major educational writers with their ideas:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Robert Marzano | a. Cognitive Development |
| 2. Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe | b. Constructivism |
| 3. Carol Ann Tomlinson | c. Differentiation |
| 4. Howard Gardner | d. Multiple Intelligences |
| 5. John Dewey | e. Professional Learning Communities |
| 6. Richard and Rebecca DuFour | f. Understanding by Design |
| 7. Jean Piaget | g. What Works Research |
| 8. Lev Vygotsky | h. Zone of Proximal Development |

Answers: 1:g; 2:f; 3:c; 4:d; 5:b; 6:e; 7:a; 8:h

Not being able to stump you on that score, Jay then wants to know who you follow in the world of technology. Here is a starter list and perhaps you can add to it.

1. Alan November
2. Will Richardson

3. David Warlick
4. Bernie Dodge

Next, Jay wants to know what the major documents are in teacher-librarianship, technology, and educational excellence and you cite the following and others you have read carefully and studied:

1. ISTE NETS (latest editions)
2. Route 21 (Partnership for 21st Century Learning)
3. AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner (2007)
4. Revisions of Bloom's Taxonomy (Marzano/Kendall; Anderson/Krathwohl/Bloom)

Absolutely amazed, Jay wants to know how you keep up. Of course, your first response is that you read the Professional Reading column in *Teacher Librarian* each month, you read the "Best Professional Books of the Year" in the April issue every year, and you plan to have your own thinkathon this summer that pushes you into the center of teaching and learning. So, here is our prescription—a few current titles you can use as a starter summer list.

Tip: Before going to the beach, take the paper covers off a few trashy novels and put them on a few of the ten plus

by david v. loertscher

titles below, and while soaking up sun, put your sponge mind in warp speed. This is *TL's* starter list but we are sure there is a stack of others already on your bedside table.

1. *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell (Little Brown, 2008. 320 pp. \$27.99. 978-0-316-01792-3). An entertaining read about the factors that seem to be associated with extraordinary success in many fields. For educators, it makes us wonder what support we are giving to kids who are developing expertise far and beyond those mediocre test minimums.

2. *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* by Sir Ken Robinson (Viking, 2009. 288 pp. \$25.95. 978-0-670-02047-8), and his earlier title *Out of Our Minds* (Capstone, 2001. \$34.95. 978-1-84112-125-3). Take a look at creativity and innovation that is sorely needed in the current global economy. Robinson defines

"element" as the conjunction of your natural aptitude with your passion. His many stories in education remind us all to stimulate the creativity in every child and in ourselves as adults. He helps us all understand that we are creative and teaches us how to unleash our passion rather than stifle ourselves in mass mediocrity. Can teachers in the current testing craze still be creative in the classroom or is it uniformity that will drive student performance?

3. *Five Minds for the Future* by Howard Gardner (Harvard Business Press, 2008. 224 pp. \$14.95. 978-1-4221-4535-7; originally published in 2006). Gardner sees that those ready to compete will: have expertise, be able to synthesize, be able to think outside the box, be respectful of both diversity and similarity, as well as work and live ethically. How do we develop these characteristics in classrooms, the learning commons, and in the school as a whole?

4. *Making Learning Whole: How Seven*

Principles of Teaching can Transform Education by David Perkins (Jossey Bass, 2009. 272 pp. \$24.95. 978-0-470-38452-7). Perkins, the head of Project Zero at Harvard provides seven major ideas to transform learning. At the risk of over simplification, they are: (1) begin a unit by giving learners a glimpse of the completed puzzle picture before dividing it up into separate pieces; (2) help the learners develop genuine interest in the topic; (3) when learners get to the hard parts, they will have to exert themselves and practice; (4) learners will need to test what they think they understand in new settings (transfer their learning); (5) deep understanding requires being able to see beneath the surface (Perkins calls this the hidden game); (6) learn with small groups and mix that with what other groups know; (7) reflect on learning how to learn and keep getting better and better. Perkins uses lots of stories to bring out his points but for teacher-librarians and classroom

Subscribe now to



and keep up to date on

- Canadian resources for children and young adults
- Professional resources for teachers and teacher-librarians
- The latest Award-Winning Canadian literature

Resource Links has reviews of a wide variety of current Canadian resources for the pre-school to young adult level, written by experts in the field from British Columbia to Newfoundland.

News about awards, events related to children's literature and feature columns addressing specific topics are also included.

Published
5 times per year

\$45.00
+ GST

Bulk pricing also available.
Please call or e-mail for
information.

Resource Links

P. O. Box 9, Pouch Cove, NL A0A 3L0

Phone: 709-335-2394

Fax: 709-335-2978

E-Mail: resourcelinks@nl.rogers.com

Web: www.resourcelinks.ca

teachers who are co-teaching, are the seven principles at work?

5. *Why Don't Students Like School: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means and What It Means for the Classroom* by Daniel Willingham (Jossey Bass, 2009. 192 pp. \$24.95. 978-0-470-27930-4). There are many brain-based learning books. This one comes from an expert in an entertaining read with lots of practical tips. He settles the argument between those who advocate surface learning and those who promote deep understanding. As teacher-librarians, what is our position on such matters?

6. *Change Wars* edited by Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan (Solution Tree, 2009. 304 pp. \$34.95. 978-1-934009-31-4). What are the major agendas and ideas floating around education from a national and international perspective? And, why should it matter in my school? Teacher-librarians who sample the major ideas set forth in this volume can gain a perspective about the directions being taken in their own schools. They can provide the best of these essays to principals and superintendents who need a broader vision. When teacher-librarians realize that only they and the principal see what is really going on in school change, what should the teacher-librarian do with this perspective?

7. *The Obama Education Plan: An Education Week Guide* (Wiley, 2009. 240 pp. \$14.95. 978-0-470-48209-4). According to this book, the basic elements of the Obama plan include: investment in early childhood education, reform of No Child Left Behind, expand choice and innovation, make math and science national priorities, address the dropout crisis, recruit and retain and reward teachers, and improve college access and affordability. This publication contains a great deal of advice on how to accomplish these goals from a wide variety of educational leaders. Of course, as the various monies begin to be distributed with their accompanying rules, the possible roles of the library/learning commons will begin to appear. What are you going to do as a teacher-librarian to get yourself at the table as programs are developed and funds dispersed?

8. *Pyramid Response to Intervention: RTI, Professional Learning Communities, and How to Respond When Kids Don't Learn* by Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos, and Chris Weber (Solution Tree, 2009. 225 pp. \$27.95. 978-1-934009-33-8). If RTI has not been discussed by your faculty, particularly the special education teachers, then it will soon because of the new law passed during the Bush administration years. RTI intervenes with learners in moderate trouble rather than waiting for severe problems to develop before giving special assistance. It is a conversation teacher-librarians can help with because of our attitude and resources/technology designed to work with every individual. This is one of the best and very widely-read titles on the topic. However, our problem with the philosophy here is that it strives to bring every learner to a minimum. Our choice would be a push toward excellence for every learner. What do you think and how are you responding to this challenge as a teacher-librarian?

9. *Designing and Teaching Learning Goals and Objectives* by Robert Marzano (Solution Tree, 2009. \$24.95. 978-0-9822592-0-7). Fans of Marzano's *The Art and Science of Teaching* will recognize this book as the first of a series of books Marzano intends to publish that expands each chapter of the former title. Marzano has switched publishers from ASCD to Solution Tree, so look for his newest titles here. When teacher-librarians are co-planning with teachers on a learning activity, are both partners including both topical and learning skill objectives like intertwining flavors on a twisty cone?

10. *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World* by Don Tapscott (McGraw-Hill, 2009. 384 pp. \$27.95. 978-0-07-150863-6); and, *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives* by John Palfrey and Urs Gasser (Basic Books, 2008. \$25.95. 978-0-465-00515-4). If as a teacher-librarian you need any convincing that it is not business as usual with this current generation of young people, then these two titles and many other articles and research studies ought to raise our consciousness. You know Tapscott as the author of *Wikinomics* and both are readable and convincing thoughtful analyses based on

solid evidence and research. What major changes have teacher-librarians made to accommodate an entirely new patron? Are we still relevant?

11. *The next 100 years : A forecast for the 21st century* by George Friedman (Doubleday, 2009. 253 pp. \$25.95. 978-0-385-51705-8). If you look up this subject on Amazon or the Library of Congress, you will find lots of prophetic books of the same subject written in various decades of the last century beginning with one written in 1936. And, while it would be fun to read them all and comment on their predictions, we thought this title might be a good summer read just to tickle the imagination. Our predictor, a respected author looks decade by decade at politics, technology, population, and various countries. In his eyes, Mexico and China loom large...but we spoil the fun.

12. *The Wikipedia Revolution: How a Bunch of Nobodies Created the World's Greatest Encyclopedia* by Andrew Lih (Hyperion, 2009. 272 pp. \$24.95. 978-1-4013-0371-6). We could not resist this title to end with. Is *Wikipedia* the enemy or a friend to teacher-librarians? Is *Wikipedia* the beginning or end step in a student's search for good quality information? Whatever the answer, it is good to know what the "enemy" or friend is up to. And this is an entertaining read that introduces the many problems the creators have had to face. If you have tried to add an article to *Wikipedia* or edit an existing one, you know that the relatively easy task of a few years ago is now quite complex. What is your policy regarding this elephant in the room? Is "just saying no" to the use of *Wikipedia* any solution at all?

