

Common Core, Book2Cloud, PARCC, and Acting NOW!

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The best defense for our profession right now is a major offensive initiative to move teacher librarians, teacher technologists, and other specialists in the school to the center of teaching and learning.

Shaking off the old stereotype of warehouse, book lover, and teacher of library lessons has never been more important. Just check out this video from Ontario Canada and created by Anita Brooks-Kirkland before reading further:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0F0vR4WG1g&feature=youtu.be>

Right now is the very best time to elevate the learning commons program from "nice to have" to indispensable. Why? Much is changing on the state and national stage and we can be there to lead, guide, understand, and make things happen.

I refer to a study just done by EPIC¹ that compares the U.S. Common Core Standards with other major standards documents from California and Massachusetts state standards, the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards, the Knowledge and Skills for University Success, and International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme.

"The study address three research questions:

To what extent are the knowledge and skills found in the comparison standards the same as or different from what is described in the Common Core State Standards? (match)

What is the cognitive complexity level of the Common Core State Standards and to what extent are the matched comparison standards at a higher or lower level of cognitive complexity? (depth)

How broadly do the matched comparison standards cover the content of the Common Core State Standards? (breadth)"

On all counts, the study finds Common Core comparable with any of the major documents already out there. So, for any teacher librarian, if you become familiar with the Common Core on top of whatever other Standards documents your school or school district is following, you are in a good position to lead adoption and integration with school improvement initiatives either already underway or in the planning stage.

Common Core sets up expectations for students in language arts and math, but also in all disciplines being taught in the school. States adopting Common Core will then match the standards with a new assessment system. One of the major assessment construction initiatives is from PARCC and you can already see the framework on which the assessments appearing in 2014 will be based at: <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-content-frameworks> Make sure as teacher librarians, you keep up with the news on the common cores. For example, Robert Rothman² in the *Harvard Educational Review*, discusses five myths about the standards at: <http://hepg.org/hel/article/513>.

The emphasis in the next few years will be on helping kids and teens prepare for college and careers. We emphasize the word careers because that idea encompasses all kinds of trades as well as the development of personal expertise both in formal and informal education.

The standards are tough. Expectations, high. And, it is satisfying to know that AASL, P21 and ISTE have their own standards in place that put us at the center if we only reach out and grab the opportunity, NOW.

So, how does Book2Cloud fit in, and what is it?

On the website at <http://sites.google.com/site/book2cloud>, we find the following short essay:

A Book2Cloud is an attempt to redefine an ebook from a static transfer of text from one medium to another. By text, we mean a body of thought, whether in textual form, audio, or video or any other remix of thought into a capsule idea. The Book2Cloud seeks to turn content into context in order to develop deeper meaning as we develop our skill of learning how to learn. It becomes the development of what I can understand from a text but at the same time join with others to develop collective understanding or col-

1 "The Common Core State Standards Studies," Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC). Retrieved Nov. 7, 2011 at: <https://www.epiconline.org/CommonCoreStateStandardsStudies>

2 Fleming, Nora. "Common Core Found to Rank with Respected Standards," *Education Week*, Nov. 7, 2011. At: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/10/26/10standards.h31.html?tkn=WSYF0%2B%2Bha7hnuMrQHWHuKREJzrly5T8Xb58cmmp=ENL-EL-NEWS1>

3 Rothman, Robert. "Five Myths about the Common Core State Standards," *Harvard Education Letter*, vol. 27, no. 5, September/October, 2011. Retrieved, Nov. 8, 2011 from: <http://hepg.org/hel/article/513>

laborative intelligence. It is developing the personal expertise in a way that contributes to the study group that is constructing and creating on the shoulders of every participant.

Thus, the *Book2Cloud* has a simple structure with a participatory challenge. It presents an original text and then invites the individual and the group to play with the ideas and create. Create what? Build what? Remix what? Building So what? Whats next?

Such ideas are in line with the work of John Seeley Brown in his book: *A New Culture of Learning* and by David Weinberger in his forthcoming book: *Too Big to Know among many other thinkers about the present and future of education in a new age of information and technology.*

The *Book2Cloud* challenges the teacher to become a coach; to incorporate PLAY and TINKERING of ideas in a study group where we may fail, fail, fail, but after some practice we create and epiphany; a cognitive transformation. The emphasis is on creative construction of new perspectives that drive not only thought, but doing and action. One of the approaches to this process is digital curation promoted by Joyce Valenza in her blog and presentations.

Book2Cloud is one building block of Knowledge Building Centers that replace teacher assignments with inquiry and project based learning guided by classroom teachers, teacher librarians, teacher technologists and other specialists in a school. In these Knowledge Building Centers, learners are constructing their own Personal Learning Environments. And in turn, all these building blocks constitute the restructuring of a school library into a Learning Commons. This string of ideas is constructed in the book: *The New Learning Commons: Where Learners Win! 2nd Edition* by David V. Loertscher, Carol Koechlin, Sandi Zwaan and Esther Rosenfeld. Learning Commons Press, 2011. Available at: <http://lmcsource.com>

The first few examples of *Book2Cloud* such as the Gettysburg Address, The New Colossus (Give me your tired your poor...), Romeo and Juliet, The Tell Tale Heart, Cinderella, and others take the topic so fre-

quently mentioned in the Common Core Standards – “Complex Texts,” and creates a virtual room where kids and teens are building understanding and learning how to learn around that text. In the room with the students are their adult coaches ranging from the classroom teacher, to other specialists in the school such as teacher librarians, teacher technologists, reading specialists, and any one else. In such a collaborative environment, everyone is working, helping, creating, developing critical thinking, and many other skill called for in the standards.

Take a look at *Book2Cloud* as a method to put you into the center of a learning experience. How could you coach learners studying a complex text? What difference could you make? How would you measure that difference? How would you know that two adult coaches are better than one? How would you spread the success of such in-depth learning experiences?

Finally, construct and share *Book2Cloud* environments with others in the profession. They are not hard to construct and if every reader of *Teacher Librarian* would develop just one, we would all have a “Wikipedia” of collaborative projects ready to go. As Vi Harada has said about our role in learning: “It is a journey worth leading.”



PICTURE BOOKS

PICTURE BOOK LIVES

Diego Rivera: His World and ours. Duncan Tonatiuh. Abrams. 2011. \$16.95. 978-0-8109-9731-8. Grades 3-5. Along with brushing in the major high spots of the great Mexican muralist's career, Tonatiuh invites readers to think about what Rivera might paint today—drawing parallels in strong, stylized illustrations done in a Mayan folk style and inspired by Rivera's work—between his street scenes of ancient Tenochtitlán and modern views of busy streets, between workers in factories and modern students at computers. More information about Rivera's art and its links to Mexican folk culture and traditions closes this imagination stretcher.

Jim Henson: the guy who played with puppets. Kathleen Krull. Il. Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher. Random House. 2011. \$16.99. 978-0-375-85721-8. Grades 3-5. A clear, coherent account of the relatively short but entirely brilliant career of the creator of the “weirdly appealing” Muppets—focusing particularly on his unflinching eagerness to experiment, to try new things, to be one who “made a difference in this world.” Painted illustrations pair him with Kermit, Miss Piggy, and many more of his unique puppets.

Me, Frida. Amy Novesky. Il. David Diaz. Abrams. 2011. \$16.95. 978-0-8109-8969-6. Grades 3-5. A companion to the biography of Diego Rivera, above. Rather than highlight the influences that shaped Kahlo's art, the author and illustrator focus on her 1930 stay in San Francisco, during which she created the first painting in that distinctive style and took her first steps out of her more prominent husband's shadow. Diaz's shimmering acrylics add rich visual notes to this tale of artistic self-discovery.