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Basic Reading Log

Nellen, T. (1999). Morphing from teacher to cybrarian. *Multimedia Schools*, 6 (1).

In this article Ted Nellen describes his evolution from standard—issue English teacher, to Chapter 1 teacher with technology, to full-fledged ‘cybrarian’. He cites convincing statistics to show that technology-based instruction is effective in increasing student achievement, and also shares some affecting stories, such as one about an immigrant girl who contemplated suicide before finding increased support through ‘telementoring’. It’s interesting that the study questions ask what the days of the article writers are like, and whether there are sex roles involved here. I’m an older lady English teacher, probably in many ways like the one who wrote Mr. Nellen the cranky note, and, to be frank, I found Ted pretty irritating at first. As the article went on, I was much mollified by his enthusiasm and passionate advocacy for his exciting strategies, because I’m actually very positive about change and technology, but the first impression was negative in a relevant way. He’s chatting up the harried receptionist; he’s bounding up those stairs, able to free himself from family encumbrances courtesy of someone and arrive early. He’s got a whole class set of computers of his own! He’s got an office! With coffee! He just sounded like a very privileged male, and an incredibly lucky teacher. I love the idea of the connected classroom—how I would love to routinely be able to base my lessons on peer-reviewed work that all students could see and edit, or give a complex search and respond assignment! I, however, am the poor teacher (minus the incompetence which depends on student assistance—I think most of those people are retiring...) who has to walk my kids over to Mr. Nellen’s territory for my one period every few weeks or so of full-class technological access. In my real world, where there is no Mr. Nellen grant-paid to maintain his old computers, at least half of them will be broken when I get there. It’s not realistic to dismiss this concern as just an excuse or a passing phase of development—in many schools, access to technology is getting worse, not better. Also, when his kids don’t “proofread”, too bad for them! He leaves their work unedited until he is hugely assisted by that cranky old English teacher, with her ‘old-school’ sense of responsibility to respond in detail to her students’ work. Mr. Nellen says that her comments embarrassed the students into editing, which implies that they had the skills but chose not to utilize them. Usually it is a long process of direct instruction, endless practice, teacher editing, writing conferences and careful revision before students begin to move their writing toward the college level. So, yes, I’m a little ambivalent toward Ted. I want my students to be engaged, curious, and challenged, but I also want them to be highly literate—this I have not seen happening as a happy byproduct of technology. Now, on to something I am excited about—the increased ability to publish student work and projects is one amazing Web 2.0 ability that I have been able to use, and Ted is right—it can be transformative for students. This use increases student pride in and engagement with their work, *and* it is well suited to the teacher who has only intermittent access to technology.

Anderson, M.A. (1999). Finding time. *Multimedia Schools*, 6 (1).

This article by an experienced media specialist does great job of highlighting, using suggestions generated by a group of media specialists at a Midwest conference, a list of tasks which are not worth the librarian's time. It's so funny that Anderson says she used to be offended when teachers instructed in information literacy skills, and now wants to encourage teachers to take responsibility for some of this curriculum. As a high school English teacher and Debate coach I've always done all of this kind of instruction in all my classes, and it never actually occurred to me that the librarian might want to do it. I've certainly never heard her offer to provide any instruction. Wow, I can't believe I haven't thought about this before. The article also makes me think about our librarian from a new perspective—I think she has a half-time clerk, and she herself is 80%. Maybe that's why she doesn't do a lot of the things we think she ought to be doing—research instruction, reading encouragement programs, etc. I actually don't know what she is doing all day on her computer. Wasting time on useless work is a shame, but the article brings up more important concerns involved in setting our work priorities. Anderson made a great point about how accepting certain tasks as proper to your sphere will define the status of your job (This is something teachers should think about, especially at the end of the year when we have to clean up our own classrooms!) This consideration shows the importance of putting the teacher-librarian at the center of curriculum, as Dr. Loertscher repeats. What role do neatly shelved books actually play in increasing student learning in the age of accountability, and how could a school board not fail to notice that this work could be done by a sixth-grader? Better to find ourselves an indispensable professional role!

Loertscher, D. V. (2004, November). Extreme makeover. *School Library Journal*, 50 (11).

It's almost 2010—I hope they hurry up with my daily information tickets! This article by our instructor envisions a 'classroom of the future' based on 4 crucial principles: collaboration between teachers and 'knowledge specialists' to create challenging, student-centered instruction, the crucial importance of reading and of information literacy, and finally the benefits of technology in enhancing student learning. In this scenario the teacher librarian has not only become more central and effective in the library—the library has in fact absorbed the classrooms and the teacher librarian is in charge. Every day that I enter my little box of a classroom, stacked above and beside other little boxes, I always think, "What dumb factory owner came up with this idea for a school? This is crazy! If we could design a school from scratch, it would never look like this!" It's sad that many of the instructional practices encouraged by NCLB seem to reinforce the little box model, and it would be exciting to be part of a more flexible and dynamic arrangement. I do have to say, as much as I like so many aspects of this vision, it would live in a very wealthy world.

Loertscher, D. (2008, November 1). Flip this library. *School Library Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6610496.html>

This article brings the dream of the future pod classroom back into the current world, except that it still does not acknowledge the crippling handicap that lack of funding can be to a school. However, the article has many ideas that a teacher librarian could start using immediately. The article describes how the library webpage can be made interactive, so information can flow both ways 24/7. It talks about how teacher professional development can be centered on the library, moving the library, now the learning commons, to the center of business in a school committed to improvement. The learning commons can also serve as a laboratory and observation venue for experimental educational practices. In fact, the article encompasses the main ideas of our class. I'm still working on envisioning the Learning Commons—if there were going to be 5 classes simultaneously working on book blogs, there would have to be 150 computers—whether they were laptops or desktops--available at once, but I suppose they could be in different areas of the school. I really long to rearrange the library at my school. It is absolutely a mausoleum in there during class time. Even though I would not have the money for laptops or tech support, I could have every student set up an igoogle page, and could also help teachers add RSS feeds to their already existing web pages. That way, even if a student does not have a computer at home, he/she can access assignments and communication from the public library or other classrooms at school. In fact, I am the Senior Project coordinator, and I am going to try to implement some of these ideas within that domain.

American Association of School Librarians. (2007). *Standards for the 21st-century learner*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/learningstandards/standards.cfm>

This is a very comprehensive and idealistic set of standards for learners in the library. I am interested in the continuing thread of self-assessment, which includes not only revising and adapting behavior based on the outcome of the students' choices in using information (or reading?), but also some ethical issues, such as copyright awareness. Copyright seems to be a very controversial issue, both in and out of library science, and certainly it does seem that many students do not hold the same views on this matter as the AASL. It would be an excellent thing if these standards were adopted by schools. In California we have very high-level state standards for grade level curriculum, but they do not include a position on what type of instructional approach will increase student learning most effectively. These standards are as much or more about *how* to learn as *what* to learn. The expectation is that learning is active, inquiry based, collaborative, and integrates technology. When these standards were formulated, I wonder what programs or employees the AASL specifically hoped to guide or influence—teacher librarians, of course, but beyond that, what is the plan or vision for implementing these standards and methods in schools? Ideally, if we were finally able to create national standards, the AASL would participate in that process and these standards would be integrated.

American Association of School Librarians. (2009). *Empowering learners: Guidelines for school library media programs*. Chicago: American Association of School Librarians.

This book is similar to the framework that accompanies our State learning standards. *Standards for the 21st-century learner* lays out what a student should know and be able to do as a result of learning through the ‘Information Commons’; *Empowering Learners* gives specifics on the role of the library media center and specialist in supporting that learning. For instance, a student learning standard says students shall read widely for pleasure, personal growth, and to make connections to the world and other learning. *Empowering* lists actions to be taken by the library media specialist such as modeling reading strategies, developing initiatives to encourage reading, and involving families in reading.

Some thoughts during the first 30 pages:

It’s an ‘aha’ moment—how can we achieve this goal schools are striving toward—to join the various curricula under the auspices of modern technology, to increase inquiry based learning supported by technology, while at the same time freeing more adults to aid truly struggling learners? This could and should happen through the library. It seems strange that an extra plank in this platform of library media specialist duties is the job of advertising herself. The teacher librarian, in all the activities we are learning to offer, is always having to make a convert, or create a demonstration to get the attention of a department. I wonder why more of the administrators, desperate to increase achievement, don’t look to the library as support and show an expectation of participation to teachers.

P. 7 talks about how the librarian has the opportunity to be the essential member of the school team, as I discussed above. I believe the current librarian at my school jeopardizes the existence of the library in these difficult economic times. P. 8 says she should be collaborating, instructing, and leading at school, and because she doesn’t, I think a budget committee might look at the library and ask how the school would really be changed if the library doors were closed.

P. 9 talks about the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. Of course, they are probably all concerned about the quality of their future employees and of the citizenry in general, but it’s still kind of worrisome that almost all the members of this group sell computers. I also always worry about the agenda of the business world in education, since it often seems that commerce has an interest in the creation of complacent consumers who are cooperative workers with a high tolerance for repetition. They don’t really need a large number of brilliant leaders. I also have reservations about several of the books listed on the side of this page, which have been discussed in serious media as poorly supported popularized sociology. This is in contrast to most of the ‘Delve Deeper’ lists, which have already been valuable resources for me in my school research.

P.16 Here is one of the places where we see how much action library media specialists find necessary to preserve their jobs and respect. It is as if, as an English teacher, I had to go to Science and Math and explain that I wanted to help their students develop literacy, and those teachers were free to say that they could not spare the time. The California

State Standards on information literacy ought to be strengthened so that administrative planning will budget the time and money for the work of the LMS.

p.32 Well, here I start to learn why our librarian might be doing less than seems optimal. She has nowhere near the requisite support or time to do the work expected in the guidelines.

General thoughts so far: I already expressed concerns that we are allowing our library to appear irrelevant. It now occurs to me that I need to look in all the guiding documents of my school and District—Strategic Plan, WASC report, etc, to see how the role of the library is envisioned and included. I don't remember reading much about it.

After completing *Empowering Learners* my original impression that it is a very idealistic document is strengthened. When I use the word idealistic, I don't mean it as any sort of criticism, holding some implication that the document is unrealistic or out of touch. I mean that these are goals to strive for, even if circumstances currently prevent their achievement, or individuals fall short of meeting their challenges. In this document, the school library media specialist sounds like a confident community leader who interacts with powerful and influential people to further the goals of her institution. He or she is a professional who is a model for the entire school community. The Library media specialist is keeping watch over equity in access to technology and learning. This is a really important and tremendous job. Wow, give that librarian a raise. Sigh, the guidelines also say the library media center has sufficient funding (p.35). So, we fall short of some of these goals, but we still have here the model for what is the right thing to do on the part of the librarian, the school, and the supporting community. I thought the two AASL documents were inspiring.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills. (2007). *Welcome to route 21*. Retrieved from <http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/route21/>

I spent an interesting 45 minutes poking around on this site, which was constructed by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the group I wrote about when reading *Empowering Learning*. For my subject, English, the amount of content was less than for other core areas. I did see a very good communication rubric from an Arizona school district, which assessed oral, written, and presentation skills. Also, there was content that was cross-curricular that an English teacher could adapt. I followed several links which led to material from *Edutopia*, to which I subscribe, and which I read thoroughly each month. One of the main conclusions I always draw from *Edutopia* was reinforced on reading this website: smart boards are sooo cool and I really want one. I am actually the only teacher I know at my site who has seen one in person (at a conference), which shows something about the digital divide, I think. I was glad to see, on the *21st Century Support Systems* page, that this organization supports multiple measures for assessing student learning; I hope that message from such an influential group might have an effect on our legislatures as we look to them to reform NCLB.

I read with great interest the organization's white paper, *21st Century Learning Environments*, and found myself alternating between nodding my head enthusiastically

and growling with irritation. I know I am stuck on this point, but the gap between my everyday reality and the goals and plans advocated by academic and industry leaders produces an unhealthy cynicism among teachers. The white paper calls for innovatively designed green construction schools. It mentions the new technology which will need to be phased in to further the integrated goals. It acknowledged an increased need for collaborative planning time and professional development hours for teachers. At my high school, as is true in the whole county, there is not even money to buy a new ink cartridge for a printer, let alone a new printer, should that device break down. I would like to see a paper that focused on what innovative, technology based ideas could be implemented in a real school, with very few resources.

Setting aside my ongoing reservations about non-profit technology advocacy groups with government ties which are heavily underwritten by a computer manufacturer, the website of the International Society for Technology in Education is a very high quality source of information and inspiration for educators such as myself who aspire to use technology in innovative ways to increase student learning, both in a specific subject and in cross-curricular skills. I was happy with the ISTE website from the start because it had an *Essential Conditions* page listing the minimum resources and support which need to be available for programs such as they describe to succeed. This is a much more realistic starting place than is seen in some of the literature we have been reading. The site holds the National Education Technology Standards, which have been ‘refreshed’ in the past few years. There are separate standards for students, teachers, and administrators. The standards for teachers and administrators are analogous in many ways to the ALA standards for learners and guidelines for library media centers. I like the NETS because they are very succinct—each fitting on one page, which I could (and will) print out and post in my classroom. There is a rich supply of resources on this website: training opportunities, podcasts, rubrics, and example projects. In another portion of the site I watched a video made by the George Lucas Foundation which showed an IB Chem class in Utah as they monitored pollution from a nearby aircraft manufacturing plant. They were wading in streams, measuring limpidity with probes attached to a computer, and reporting enthusiastically on their process. They were so clearly engaged and having so much fun. I thought about what I could take away from that example to my own class, populated with struggling, impoverished students who are still working to acquire the school skills the Utah students used so proficiently as they read graphs, manipulated expensive equipment in a responsible fashion, and articulately reported their results. In an English class, ‘hands on’ means you’re reading and writing yourself instead of just sitting there, but when students say they want to learn ‘hands on’, they often mean by doing something instead of reading and writing. Some good principles to transfer from what I saw on the site: the presence of technology makes any lesson more engaging to students; a real-world connection makes the purpose of learning clear. Finally, don’t skip that last step: publishing or publicizing student results, products, or conclusions—that is my next big emphasis in what I want to learn about technology.

Williams, R. T., & Loertscher, D.V. (2007). *In command!* Salt Lake City, UT: Hi Willow Press.

After reading 1-30, I stopped to set up a blog for my Forensics [Speech and Debate] students--the book inspired me to use this technology to reach out to my students where they are spending their time. Setting up the blog was easy. I designed some assignments based on responses to assignments posted on the web, and was also able to post some time-sensitive debate bills up on the blog days before I would actually have met with those students. So far, so good. Then I tried to set up a feed to my igoogole page. Every time I clicked on Posts/Atom, it said that I was not authorized to view my own blog. Much re-reading of the text ensued. After hours of struggle I discovered (by googling the problem), that you can't do an RSS feed from an invitation only blog, which is what I had set up. In my case I did it because the debate material is for competition, and we don't want assiduous researchers from other high school crawling our stuff, but I would think teachers would often prefer for many reasons to have a limited access page. I wish *In Command* recognized more the challenges facing teachers who may be very excited about integrating technology, but must deal with the restrictions imposed by blocking software, legal requirements, and control freak tech people!

31-100

Today I decided just to keep reading without stopping to try things, so now I have a big backlog of things to experiment with—nings, teacher librarian gadgets, video captures. For my hypothetical student page, I definitely want to give them 5 trusted sites for debate research, so I'll have to think about what those might be and how I might vary them depending on topic. As a debate teacher I particularly like the Chapter 9 idea, where students collaborate to uncover a 'big picture' or common themes, in many good sources on a controversial topic. In the past we have often done: basic research—what's the situation? then formulating arguments—pros and cons, lastly specific searches in support of the contentions. Now I'm thinking there should be more directed research, more narrow but deeper, from which all the arguments should arise. I am also really happy to see here the reference to 'crayola curriculum'. I keep telling my students that 10 sentences and 5 pictures doesn't make a high school semester presentation just because it's on PowerPoint. It should now be that we're all over PowerPoint (which I also find exhausting. Nothing like having someone hand you a photocopy of the PowerPoint they are showing which they are also reading to you aloud!), and looking for content that shows learning, but unfortunately, some teachers are still really impressed just by the fact that the presentation exists.

I really liked Prof. Irwin's guidelines on p. 19. Useful for my students, but also for me—first just get it done!

McKenzie, J. (1999). Waste not, want not. *Educational Technology*, 8(5).

This older article, though it has some dead links and a pre-CIPA, pre-social networking focus, is still, unfortunately, a pretty accurate list of what school administrations do to limit the uses of the Internet in the name of protection. If they were worried in 1999, imagine how they feel about Facebook! In my own district in the years after CIPA a fairly aggressive filter was installed, certainly lending credence to McKenzie's concerns about censorship, it was one of those early versions which censored selectively; Democratic Party or Communist Party websites would be censored, but not Republican,

etc. The blocking software improved, but still indiscriminately blocked image-rich sites, including our school yearbook and photo class pages. Now, at least at the high school, the District seems to have a sort of “Don’t ask; don’t tell” policy going on. I had to unblock a site with images on it for a kid just yesterday, but I also saw in my room at lunch that students can now get on their Facebook accounts. I know from the sidebar on Elluminate during class that this kind of benign neglect is not yet the norm—apparently LA is particularly restrictive—but as more administrators and tech people come from the ranks of ‘digital natives’, surely these policies will have to change. Another problem that McKenzie discusses which I experience is storage. A fearful tech person put deepfreeze on all the computers in my room, which are used to deliver the tech component of a reading program for part of the day. So now the rest of the day none of the kids or myself can save anything on those machines. Everything has to be emailed off—it’s very irritating. The whole thing with student-centered learning and new technology is that there has to be some trust and respect on the part of adults to make it work, even if that trust is sometimes betrayed. In my debate classes I have seen this work: act like the student is smart, capable, and trustworthy, and they’ll start to act like they are, and suddenly they really are. It’s the ‘fake it till you make it’ school of education. You just keep expecting great things, even if they don’t end up happening every time. What McKenzie describes are technology policies based on the constant expectations that students will do the worst things possible, and make the stupidest choices. How can that policy exist side-by-side with us telling kids they can all excel and they can all go to college? The tech policies are revealing to students the school’s real opinion of them.

The article actually did not mention the perhaps pedestrian but very important #1 academic use of email at our school—to move files around. With on-site shared folders not available from home, and flash drives now outlawed because of virus epidemics, email is the primary transfer device.

Loertscher, D.V., Koechlin, C., & Zwaan, Sandi . (2008). *The new school learning commons: Where learners win!*, Salt Lake City, UT: Hi Willow Research and Publishing.

The words on p.1 are so fundamentally true: “...there is a disconnect between the personal use of technologies and most educational practice”. What I do myself technologically and learn to do in SLIS is so much more than I have yet been able to incorporate into my everyday lessons—and here I’m not talking about the limitations imposed on me by access to technology. In “Extreme Makeover” the instructor imagined a future which included new technology and funding—I propose a similar scenario. It is 2014. Students will not return to the bricks and mortar school till October 1st. During that time local district technology workers, using government education support funds and money save from the month-long school closure will be visiting the homes of students in the district who do not have internet or computers and providing the students with these basic 21st Century necessities, just as we now provide breakfast and lunch for students who qualify for the assistance. All students during this time will be participating in online education ensuring they are prepared for school—reviews of basic skills, advanced research technique challenges, participation in Web 2.0 sites to showcase and respond to

their work generated by problems posed in the online program. During this month, teachers will be at school every day. First, trainers will ensure that every teacher possesses basic 21st Century technological abilities, and will set up ongoing support and a series of assessments for teachers who do not. Teachers who possess the basic abilities will have time to revise their plans for the year, redesigning assignments so that they are active, student centered, and use the benefits of modern technology. In both teacher and student work, narrated Powerpoints will become You Tube postings of creatively assembled film, video, and still images. Quick-writes on binder paper in a box will become blogs. Stand-alone research papers will become culminating products of active and online research into a local problem. Even though not every school will have the resources to create a Learning Commons as envisioned in the book, every school will make enormous progress in transforming instruction. It could happen. We just need a little time where we are free to stop doing what we are already pressured to do and build something new instead. It will be National Get With the Program Day.

I don't agree with all of Thomas Friedman's conclusions in *The World is Flat*, but his point about learning how to learn should be central to our plans and goals for kids. As a proficient learner, I am constantly encountering blocks of knowledge that I know I will need very badly when I actually run a school media center, but that I don't have the time or need to completely absorb right now. I husband that information on selection tools or weeding. I know where to access it later, what it is for, and am able to comprehend and apply it when I retrieve it. Some things we need kids to know right now—decoding English text, or basic formulae for Algebra. Other things we need them to know how to find and use later. Most of all, we need them, as this book says, to have that confidence won through experience that they are smart, and well able to teach themselves new things as new needs arise. When we plan instruction, we should always be asking ourselves if we are fostering in our students this kind of justifiable self-confidence.

What behaviors am I seeing in learners that encourage me to rethink current practices? An assortment—some specific to a percentage of the population, some general.

- Second language learners who have been in the educational system for many years whose English development is stalled. I observe that they communicate and use media in Spanish most of the day.
- Fewer students are enthusiastic about reading for pleasure, although I observe that reading seems to be becoming more acceptable for girls as it becomes less acceptable and palatable for boys.
- Students text incessantly. It is their #1 technological activity. They hardly ever talk on the phone; their phones don't ring (or ringtone). Only old people's cell phones ring.
- Students spend a huge percentage of time on social networking sites.

What am I doing in response to these observations?

- Thinking about what technology can do for those stalled language learners, especially about what I can do to increase their access at school, since there is often none at home.

- Researching high interest books for boys. I'm not the teacher librarian. But imagining how we might promote a school-wide read using a book and programs that would draw boys in through technology.
- Sending batch homework reminders to freshmen on phones. Encouraging Seniors to hook phones to Twitter to receive my Senior Project reminders

P.15 In my school library the main client side thing is that the database, learning paths, and catalog can be accessed from anywhere 24/7. There is no interactive portion of the website though, no feedback or response. At lunch there is a group of students who use the small cluster of computers for simple gaming, social networking, or homework; at lunch the librarian has a break and the affable support person is in charge. The library is clearly a refuge for them. On the whole, I feel our library is being abandoned by the students, so it is always quiet, empty, and tidy, except for the lunch bunch. If I were a District administrator in these budget crisis times, I would be salivating to chop the place.

p. 20. I love the Thinking Models. These are structures I can use right now to reinvent some of my past assignments. Looking at these helps me realize why my debate students so clearly learn more than do some of my English students—these structures are dictated by the nature of the subject and its competitive format. I have thought for some time that I should just turn my class for struggling readers into a debate class: online research on a really controversial topic, a well-written brief of the evidence and main arguments; articulate speeches composed, revised, and rehearsed, and then a debate, in front of an audience, with a prize for the winners and praise for all. Plus I could convince them all to wear ties instead of giant pictures of Snoop Dog's face. Thinking Models, yes! Very good for a presentation to our faculty, which I probably will be making soon—a step toward an Experimental Learning Center!

p. 23 Another step toward the Experimental Learning Center would be Kuhlthau's model of organizing teachers into teams. The professional learning community work at our school currently takes place mostly within departments. There is a pilot freshman team, but they are still concentrating on mutually reinforcing desirable behaviors, such as homework completion. The guided inquiry model utilizes cross-curricular teams. With struggling students, the duplication of effort and time investment required when there are major projects in both History and English is so discouraging. If the English and History teacher assigned one shared research project, students could be required to put in just as much effort, but it would be concentrated and support would be reinforced. We actually have a common planning time at our school, when *The Guided Inquiry's* requirement for allocated time could be met. I also like the way she says clear roles for each team member must be defined. When projects like this have been proposed in the past, sometimes the History Dept. (all male), has proposed that they would do the analytical critique of the papers' content, while the English teachers (95% female), would edit and proofread all the errors, not a popular plan with the English teachers, needless to say. This sort of effort could start small—2 teachers could plan and carry it out together, perhaps with at least minimal involvement from a supportive administrator. If they had good success and shared it, others would be encouraged to make the change.

p.25 As the coordinator of a graduation requirement Senior Project at our school, I have had some good experiences working with teacher-experts. The teacher-librarian prepares a student guide to the latest MLA updates for teachers and English teachers every year, and then presents the update to student groups, also posting the guides on the library website. In the spring, when both a poster and an oral presentation are required, the art teacher and the drama teacher hold workshops during a period when students can sign up to attend. Students always report that these are very helpful, and success in those portions of the assignment has clearly increased. Next step—put the workshops on YouTube!

p. 35. I love the Bookbag program! What could we do like this for high school students? Colorful folders of controversial articles? A website with links to art, writing, or science competitions? It needs to be something that shows trust, extends a privilege, and affirms the importance of that learning activity in the eyes of their community. Hmm...Kindles for all! That would be the equivalent of the book bag! It would be over 400 thousand for my school. Step up, Amazon! What's it worth to you to build a nation of future readers?

p.37 I don't hear much about student blogging unless it's an assignment—everything is on Facebook. Blogging seems easy for a teacher to assign and interact with; Facebook is challenging. One of my debate girls wanted me to see a picture of our team. Since I don't have an account she sent it to my son's Facebook and asked him to show me (I know, why not just email it, right? But a lot of kids don't seem to use email much at all—their minds don't turn to it). It was a cute picture, but most of the kids in it were tagged and linked elsewhere, and pretty soon laid out in front of me was a whole array of images that I absolutely did not want to be responsible for having seen—I need a close in school safe use of Facebook for educational purposes!

How does a school connect reading skills with fun? Not very well, most of the time! I have heard of schools that held “Big Reads”, the way some cities and states have done. I would love to try that at my school, especially with a book boys might like. I have thought of using a hard-boiled crime book, for example. You could do a lot of fun things—scavenger hunts, costume contests, sleepovers, game sessions. You could post photos of the favorite janitor reading the book. You could get the principal blogging about the book. I hope I get the chance to try. With girls, there has been a lot of fun around the Twilight books, which schools ought to be able to tie into. Many of my students drove to San Francisco and stood in line for hours to buy a copy of the newest release, and the movie was the big girls' night out. In the future as a teacher librarian I would like to do more with the local bookstore. Our sophomore English teachers have done a very good job in the past of providing speakers in relation to their texts, and although they have not been of the light-hearted sort of fun, students have been excited and engaged by them. A recent example was Melba Beales of the Little Rock Nine, who kept students fascinated with her stories of what it's like to risk your life for a good education.

P. 41 talks about replacing commercial products with free 2.0 applications. Yes! Since I have been taking this class and learned more about google apps, I have been wondering why our school has this dumb website program, which is very primitive looking and

inflexible, and, I'm sure, expensive, when every teacher could easily create her own page, with way better features and appearance, and just throw a link up on the school web page, besides requiring all her kids to RSS link to it from their own igoogole pages!

p. 43. The igoogole page is doable right now. I will take all my own classes to a lab and set this up. For Senior Project next year I think the required components should be revised to include technological literacy, and a personal digital workspace could be one requirement. Even if the student had no computer access at home, he/she could still access this page all over campus, at friends' houses, the Boys and Girls Club, and at the public library. This should be a school-wide next step.

p.45. The US FTC guide is another great poster-ready printout that I'm going to do for my classes. Many of our students really are not yet prepared to function responsibly in online spaces. One element on this page that I harp on with debaters all the time, and try to introduce in any instruction involving research is "Who is saying what to me, for what reasons, and for what gain?" This is a huge area where our students are in need of support, as the line between advertisement and other information blurs, and as content is provided by a multiplicity of biased sources. For strengthening our democratic society, right now this might be the most crucial instruction after basic literacy.

p.51 Moving into the safe but open web 2.0: As a high school teacher, I don't really want to be in one of these limited environments, although it would be much better than having no web access or far more limited access. I want students to learn to screen emails, control their impulses, and take responsibility.

After reading 1-30, I stopped to set up a blog for my Forensics [Speech and Debate] students--the book inspired me to use this technology to reach out to my students where they are spending their time. Setting up the blog was easy. I designed some assignments based on responses to assignments posted on the web, and was also able to post some time-sensitive debate bills up on the blog days before I would actually have met with those students. So far, so good. Then I tried to set up a feed to my igoogole page. Every time I clicked on Posts/Atom, it said that I was not authorized to view my own blog. Much re-reading of the text ensued. After hours of struggle I discovered (by googling the problem), that you can't do an RSS feed from an invitation only blog, which is what I had set up. In my case I did it because the debate material is for competition, and we don't want assiduous researchers from other high school crawling our stuff, but I would think teachers would often prefer for many reasons to have a limited access page. In general I feel that In Command is very cavalier about the challenges facing teachers who may be very excited about integrating technology, but must deal with the restrictions imposed not only by blocking software but also by the real necessity to keep distance between school connected Internet use and the quantity of inappropriate or irrelevant content available on the web.

54-64 The benefits of collaboration are so clear. Adding to the wheel on p. 57 I would place: building common experiences that forge co-worker bonds; seeing colleagues as people in ways that enrich staff discourse; finding unknown abilities or talents in coworkers; developing interpersonal skills such as tolerance, patience, and sense of humor; sharing knowledge of specific students, as just a few. However, as discussed in

these pages, time needs to be given for this collaboration to occur. A few years ago I went with a cross-curricular team of administrators and teachers to a Dufour training/conference. During the day we worked in the training classes and gatherings; in the evenings we discussed our school and started formulating plans that are still being realized in our school today. Once we returned, we've barely had a chance to meet. Much of our provided 'common planning time' is used for business—book ordering, bell schedules, or planning benchmark grading, etc. The Library Media Specialist can often schedule her own day; few of the teachers she should be meeting with have that luxury. The solution mentioned in the text for new teachers—teaching one fewer class so there could be collaborative meetings—should also be extended to brave souls willing to work with the Library Media Specialist to pioneer cross-curricular teams centered around an embryonic Learning Commons.

p.61. I notice how the exciting and creative learning in "A Day in the Life Of" could finally occur when the testing had lifted its foot off the school community. What sort of activities were they doing before? Aren't there inquiry-based learning experiences that will improve test scores?

P 73. I'm so glad the book finally talked about the actual realities of library financing. The 'school bus without wheels' analogy is exactly apt.

p. 75. Exactly what I was thinking! Start small by moving professional development into the library. Everyone at my school hates the professional development experiences, which are en masse, all day, and never chosen by teachers. No one is a stakeholder as far as implementation; no one is territorial about professional development. A teacher-librarian who could serve as a coach to younger teachers, providing curricular support and resources could be a great asset. I wonder if the teacher-librarian might be able to serve as BTSA (California mandated Beginning Teacher Support Network) mentor for a small group rather than just the usual 1-1 with an overburdened teacher, possibly saving \$\$ AND doing a more effective job.

P. 94 to end: This a great collection of resources and ideas to ponder, many of which, like Marzano's strategies that work, Webquests, Krashen's work, PLC's differentiated instruction, Backwards Design, Critical Thinking and 5 Intelligences, are already either big influences or operating procedures at my school. Looking at the pages on ideas which were more new to me, such as Alan November's, Will Richardson's, or brain-based learning made me want to read their actual books to learn more about how these ideas might influence my operation of an LMC. It also made me realize that, except for those by Marzano and Gardner, I have not actually read entire books by these education experts, but have been a sort of 'cut and paste' learner myself, absorbing the content incompletely through handouts, seminars, and blitzkrieg one-day trainings. This concluding section makes a good reading plan for professional development!

Loertscher, D.V. (2000). *Taxonomies of the school library media program*. Salt Lake City: Hi Willow Press.

P. 6. Darn! I missed the retirement wave!

p. 8 There you go. Why isn't the Library Media Specialist accountable for student learning as core teachers are? Some might ask, why aren't PE teachers, or shop teachers also responsible for raising academic achievement. Orally they are; site-wide they may be, but under government testing, which now drives the public schools, they are not. With the Librarian, I guess the accountability will come in the form of her job. People will start to notice if the library does nothing to raise student achievement, and pretty soon there won't be a library any more, as the scarce resources are moved somewhere where results are obtained.

p. 15: The Four major Elements of the LMC:

COLLABORATION

READING LITERACY

LEARNING THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

INFORMATION LITERACY

p. 21: Looking at the elements of the LMC I think I see why our current librarian seems unsatisfactory (besides the fact that she doesn't like teenagers). She doesn't have very much help, and she's giving priority to levels 1-5, with not too much emphasis on 5. She is not full-time, and her clerical support is not full-time.

p. 23: I'm excited to turn the page and read the character traits for a library media specialist: What if I don't have them?

p. 25: I'm pretty close. I was worried about the "Be organized". I am ultimately organized, but I'm not tidy, and I have a high tolerance for the disarray of others. I'm more of a basket organizer than a separate labeled files organizer. Anyway, "organized" is not on the list of traits found by researchers in successful library media specialists!

p.61 There is accountability in all the 4 parts of the LMC program.

At our school the library is used very little; reading these first 70 pages helps me to see why. It is indeed mostly a "repository of books". I have not heard of a limit on how many books on a subject can be checked out. Why would there be? No one checks them out? There are only a few computers in the library. Most of them are in an adjacent computer lab, which the librarian does not keep open because she does not want to oversee it. It is only open when teachers bring their classes there. English teachers take their classes there to do a freshman research paper, and junior American history teachers do the same thing. When the classes have an appointment the librarian makes herself available to answer questions, assist, and show students where things are, but she doesn't provide any direct instruction. On the teacher taxonomy (p.42), probably most staff would be below 30% on items 1-5, and would have nothing on 6-8. On the student taxonomy (p. 46), most student interaction with the school LMC would be limited to 1-3—No involvement/Spontaneous Involvement/Assistance Requested, with a little 5—Utilization Skills thrown in.

A few years ago in the last big budget crisis our school board proposed cutting way back on library time at all grade levels. There was a big uprising by more affluent parents which resulted in a successful campaign to fund libraries through donation. This was a positive thing, of course, except that in some ways the effort cemented the idea of libraries as a luxury add-on, and also because the advertising and images used to support the campaign portrayed libraries to the public mostly in terms of p. 15's #2—reading, especially for pleasure. Though I in no way discount the central importance of this role, the library campaign did not reflect a concept of the library as a collaborative system for teaching and learning that was centered on technology. When I look at the Principal's taxonomy on p. 58, I see a Principal who is functionally at #1. Although her heart is in the right place, she sees the library as a place that must be given lip service support because the community has valued it in the past almost as a status item, but she doesn't see it as central to the achievement of the school's daunting goals. She is like the teacher who likes her students, but has very low expectations for them—it's friendly, but it's insulting, and not helpful in encouraging growth.

p. 76 I really don't like to keep criticizing our poor librarian, but can't help comparing what I learn to what I am seeing at school, and this description captures her very well. I would not call her "Madam Hitler", because she is very calm and courteous to everyone, but she is always doing something at her desk, and if a student wants to talk to her they have to interrupt what she is doing. She even has an office that's separate from the open library, and if the support person is there, she sometimes goes in that office, where even teachers can't get to her. I think the writing on this page is accurate—she feels like a victim of budget cuts, and that what she might have to offer is scorned by many teachers, especially in math and science classes. In reading the personality traits on p. 77 I would add humor to ease flexibility and human relations. Good human relations skills are a must for any librarian, but for being a high school LMS, maybe there are some more specific relationship skills. High school librarians have to enjoy teens—their irreverence, their mercurial natures, their mutating language and pop culture concerns. They have to be persistent and forgiving, constantly expecting the best from kids even in the face of frequent disappointment. They absolutely have got to use and enjoy humor, and finally, I think they should be playful people, who enjoy games, creative approaches, and trying new things. Our librarian might be perfect in an archive where quiet, dedicated adults use material very carefully, or in an academic library. She might be a good librarian, but doesn't seem to remember the "teacher" part of her title I for one am certainly "breathlessly awaiting" her retirement.

The chapter on collaborative planning is an example of knowing how to learn. Right now my chances to apply this are limited, but I know where this material is and have absorbed its main points, so I can go back to it when I need it.

p.102. Many of the suggestions given here for changing the structure of a project are very good for language learner student. Although we certainly want to give them many opportunities to write strong English prose, it is also good to provide ways to demonstrate knowledge that don't rely on writing skills. Knowledge of a science principal can be very effectively demonstrated, as p. 102 suggests, through a video rather than a worksheet.

The variety of activities suggested by the teacher librarian also allows for individualizing the expectations and choices available to students at many different levels.

p.103. I use the jigsaw all the time for knowledge gathering. This is a great suggestion: to pool the gathered expertise for application to a new, higher level question.

P.109. If I were newly hired as a teacher librarian, I'm sure my first thought would be that I had to "get the place in shape", so I appreciate the advice on this page. "Mending a hundred books in the first month" sounds at first like a great achievement, but it's not a very healthy priority in education at a school.

p.111. This is what I was trying to express. If even the donating parent supporters see the library as icing on the cake, when every school is crying for bread there will be no cake, let alone icing. Isolation will lead to extinction. I'm looking at the proposals on p. 115—these are some steps our librarian could be taking to save her job! I know she feels that she should refuse extra tasks because she is not full time, but she could re-prioritize so that in some of her 80% she got involved with our efforts to redesign our ELD program, or involved the library in our growing study of school restructuring. A library media specialist who made those choices would help her school and herself at the same time.

Chapter 9: I am glad to see this reading research gathered in one place. In spelling, grammar, vocab, comprehension, and writing, AMOUNT COUNTS! There is a big move in schools to use anthologies with snippets of longer works and brief articles, similar to the excerpts provided on the standardized tests. I have students using a reading program from a major publisher, and, although it is a great program in many ways, I have noticed that these freshmen, accustomed to the 2 page articles or 1 paragraph excerpts used in the program, are very daunted by the lengthy pieces included on the Standardized test reading comprehension.

p.124. Some years ago we had an SSR program at our school. Many teachers tried to implement it faithfully, but a few were known to ignore the practice. It was never adopted school-wide, by administrators, custodians, etc., as is ideally done, but in spite of imperfections, the next year school wide reading scores rose. What would be the logical outcome? Well, we got rid of it, because some teachers said they had no way to control student misbehavior during that time. It has never returned, and reading scores have dropped each year. This does remind me also of the importance of reading aloud—I even started a book with my freshmen, and then forgot it—Monday I will start again! I really like the reminder about the importance of expository fiction. It is a rich way to build academic vocabulary, and often a better choice for reluctant reader boys.

p.125. As a teacher who has been building up a classroom library through book sales and donations for years (finding, of course, that certain titles must be replaced annually), I'm delighted with the idea of rotating class collections. It never occurred to me that this could be done. I went in the library last week and browsed their fiction; I was very surprised at how up-to-date and varied it was. I'm running an "All Booked Up" reading assignment from my class—why shouldn't some of the library resources be there?

p.126. When I look at all the things a Library media specialist might be expected to do, I wonder again why the current librarian has prioritized the way she has, because having reading events and organizing book groups sounds like so much more fun to me than

researching database deals or writing grants for them. You would think she'd be tempted to neglect those duties in favor of designing new activities!

p.138 There is food for thought in the quote "...theorists are abandoning the idea of mixing technology into traditional teaching methods. Instead they are insisting that the very act of integration of technology into education pushes practice toward constructivist ideas". Just a few weeks ago I saw a newsletter from our County Office of Ed. There had been a presentation on stalled second-language learners telling teachers that only direct instruction in grammatical principles would move these kids forward. This after 20 years of Dr. Krashen training every teacher in the state that direct instruction in grammar doesn't work! It seems, right now, when the technology makes possible so much exploratory learning possible, the response of schools is to pull back to 'drill and kill'. The Federal Government, in a neat balancing trick. Seems to advocate equally for both kinds of instruction! Constructivist ideas are much more engaging to students, and create a feeling of success and self-confidence. I guess there might be a little tendency in inquiry-based learning to (like Ted Nellen, way back in the first weeks) leave the little details of grammar and syntax to take care of themselves, which they just don't always seem to do. But isn't it better to supplement the inquiry learning with ad-hoc specific instruction (this would be what the text calls "just in time"?), rather than to replace the inquiry with the old style delivery?

p.141 I am really glad to see the text address my concern with the mixture of self-interest and public spirit which is found in many supporters of technology in education. I wrote about this a lot when I was reading the earlier articles. Lots of administrators do seem to have this kind of magical thinking discussed on p. 142: Student achievement can be expected to rise magically because we have now purchased many computers. That didn't happen when they all received pencils and paper, and it won't happen now.

The end pages of the chapter make me notice something. Earlier in the assignment the instructor asked about gender roles. The vice-principals and district-wide tech officers who currently have the kind of authority to design, plan, and implement technological change are all men. The librarian, who is actually very proficient technologically, even able to write code, etc., is not involved with this part of the work at all. The library as it was envisioned by those fund raising parents, where stories are read and favorite novels are found, is stereotypically run by a female. The job described in the end of Chapter 10 sounds like a man's job, speaking in old stereotypes. The list a few chapters ago of characteristics of successful library media specialists included a preference for avoiding conflict. When it comes to being a tech leader, I wonder how often there is some gender battle underlying change.

Last month some of my debaters (some of the higher achieving students in the school) researching legislation on in-vitro fertilization followed a link from a webpage to an ad for a private fertility clinic. They then used quotes from the clinic in support of their argument. I went back to the first page with them. The link to the clinic was near the top of the page, differentiated from the links to articles, though in a fairly subtle fashion. They had not observed the difference at all. I asked them if they had ever wondered why Target comes up in almost every Google search with an item name, even if Target doesn't actually carry that thing. No, they had not wondered that. It is one of the main

jobs of the library media specialist to instruct students in being discerning users of information.

Ch.11 Information Literacy

p.157. “The Keystone to lifelong learning”.

p.163. At our school freshmen take an “Introduction to Technology” class. It’s keyboarding, word-processing, and spreadsheets. I would like, instead, for this class to encompass these basics plus information literacy and basic research, all centered around the research paper currently done in freshman English. A whole semester just on simple skills—waste of time!

p. 172 has a useful discussion of what students should actually do with information once they find it. This is a very important piece of instruction. Students who haven’t earned to navigate text often seem to think (much like the administrators when they purchase the computers and think they’re done) that simply printing the article will magically provide knowledge of its contents. A good source may be dense and sophisticated—students need strategies for mapping out the contents, choosing what is useful, checking for comprehension, and also interpreting the agenda of the writer. This is another type of skill that won’t just happen through increased access to technology for research, but that might be made more relevant and obviously useful when discussed in conjunction with the student’s own project.

p. 177. I like the idea of students, empowered by knowledge, rising up and demanding their rights as learners. Oh how I wish. I don’t see schools as the big villains in trying to keep students docile and dependent. I see us in a war with the consumer and TV culture, which for most students also encompasses most of their Internet use. Those forces actively and very successfully encourage indiscriminate passivity; school is often a lone voice in the wind.

p.179-end. These are pages I will note to return to when I actually get a teacher librarian job!

p. 180. mentions mid mapping. This is a big focus in our district at the elementary level, but I don’t really know very much about what it is. I will look into it if there isn’t more in the book

p. 181. I don’t know how our librarian’s schedule works. I don’t think she has a prep period like a teacher does. If she were really doing all this planning, adapting, creating, conferring, it would be so time consuming She would have to have some time in the day when she wasn’t available in the library so she could do this work. I always notice that our librarian goes home carrying only her lunch bag, which to someone whose shoulder bag contains 85 pounds of papers looks pretty attractive. Now I realize though, that’s just because she’s not doing many of the things discussed in the text.

Direct Services Part 3

p. 185-190. Our librarian does provide direct service to anyone who makes a request, and she is very thorough, patient, and helpful about it too. Her reference interview that I have observed seemed skilled to me—once they began. I do think the repeated process for their beginning—where a student must walk across an empty space and approach her where she is already looking busy at her desk probably discourages a certain percentage of students. Once the student does approach, however, she gets up from the desk, walks

with them to the relevant area, asks a lot of interested and supportive questions, and steers them to a variety of materials. She knows the collection very well. For teachers, sadly, what she is very good at and often does is tracking down the source of essays which it is feared are plagiarized. She is also very good about ordering, as funds allow, material which specific teachers tell her would be useful for their curriculum. As a part of the mental health support, I do not think our teacher librarian interacts with students in personal ways, though she does provide a very good assortment of up to date material on depression, gender identity, etc., and displays it well in accessible places around the library. The library aide seems to have good relationships with the small group of mostly boys who spend their lunch time in there, but, as I've said, most kids aren't going in there. It's another benefit of that idea of an "almost Starbucks" commons—a place where there is a familiar adult who isn't directly supervising 30 other students, who maybe the student knows shares her fondness for certain manga or music, in whom that student might be more likely to confide.

p.205. More depressing thoughts about school economy. The page says when there's money, those who can pay want to know what extra value they get for their expenditure. Fair enough. Now, however, schools might feel like everyone is looking for the results without being willing to pay for any of the process at all. 134 full-time adults working on library and technology services for 2 thousand students? Unimaginable riches, and interesting to think about in terms of our concerns about the 'digital divide'. The text clearly implies that the students from the 13 library staff school will outperform students in a less well-supported school such as mine, but in fact, our highest achieving students will claim their places at exalted schools at much the same rate they would have in the wealthy school, because our deficits will be compensated for in their homes. It's the achievement of the kids who don't have the support at home which may prove to be heart-breakingly different. It would be interesting to look at the data and see if this is in fact the case.

p.208: Information Collection Principles:

COLLECTION APPROPRIATE TO THE LIBRARY COMMUNITY
 PLAN IN PLACE FOR CURRICULAR SUPPORT COLLECTION
 CURRICULAR PRIORITIES IN ACQUISITION
 EACH TYPE OF MEDIA IS A SYSTEM—EQUIPMENT, ETC.
 COLLECTION NEEDS CONSTANT CHANGE TO STAY RELEVANT
 INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES!

p.218-221. One of my favorite things is rearranging furniture, and there is nothing I love more than imagining what I would do to our school library should I suddenly be out in charge of it. After reading this section, I actually walked down there and started imagining creating a book café area, a place for kids to work in groups without being shushed, and yet another place for quiet study. I tried to figure out whether there was a way to move the computers out of that technology lab that's often locked and into little clusters around the library. They are so big and old—laptops would be so much better, but it might be possible. Our librarian does put up some student art which the art teacher brings down, and it looks great. I would like to see other kinds of student work also displayed—I have never seen our school literary magazine in there, for example, or the bilingual picture books the Spanish 3 students create and have printed and bound online.

p.226. The chart on this page is a good check for the administrators who, especially when lured by a sponsored special price which looks like a great deal, always seem to imagine they can close the achievement gap by buying more computers.

It's also true, as discussed on p. 227, that frequently there is no maintenance budget for these acquisitions. Just as I experience as a teacher of class tied to an extracurricular activity, the teacher librarian finds that she needs to be fundraising to cover her own job necessities. Our school librarian is a very experienced grant writer, and in fact I think this is what she works on most of the time. She also makes herself available to teachers who want support in applying for grants. I appreciate the 'bottom feeder' suggestion. I got a 1,000 field trip grant from Target last year, and it was not very much work at all.

p. 232. The portion of the text about cataloguing is scary, because I don't know how to do this yet, and even though I keep hoping our librarian will quit and I will get her job, it better not happen this year, because I know very little about cataloguing! But I am confident I can and will learn!

p. 233. "If you were charged with contributing to the education of a minor, would there be enough evidence to convict?" Wow, great question. I am the negotiator for my union local, and I deal with the question of teacher evaluation all the time, but even though the librarian is in my bargaining unit, I do not know how she is evaluated. If she is evaluated using the same Instructional Standards based forms as other teachers, what will the administrator look for in those one to one exchanges? Does the principal look to assess Area #3, the warehousing routines (p. 237); if so, how does the work of the technician factor into that? Are other people at the school who access the library services asked for feedback on their experiences there? I'm very curious about this

p. 238: For each program area: GROW

Goals

Resources

Operations

Worth/Results/Impact

Question/Technique to use in meeting goal or solving problem.

The end of the book is a fairly complex discussion of how the library media specialist can keep and use data to analyze the performance and plan for improvement of the library media center. In Anderson's article, she reminded library media specialists to question whether some records are useful to keep, but clearly, some data is very helpful. It's just important to imagine the possible future uses of the data before spending time gathering and maintaining it.