

# ***THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN***

The magazine of the Ontario School Library Association  
volume 16, number 2 ISSN 1188679X

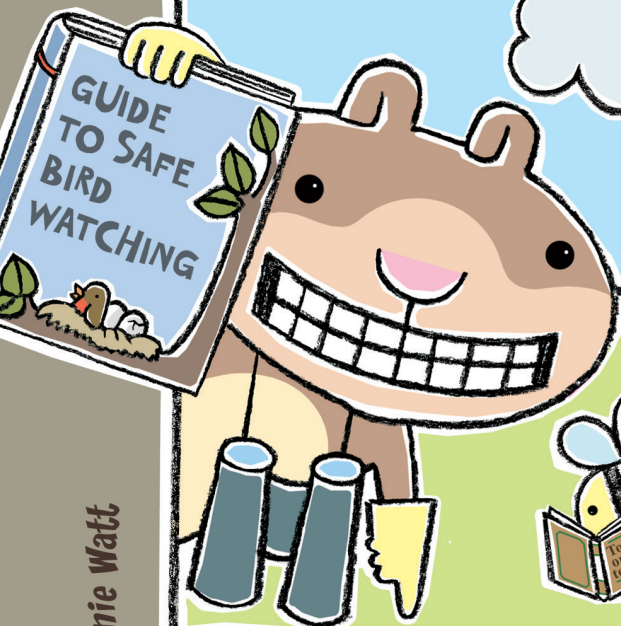
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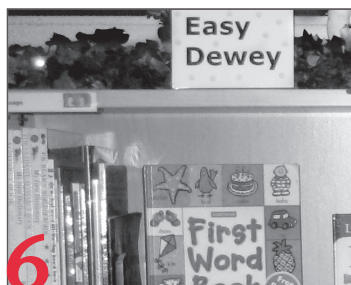
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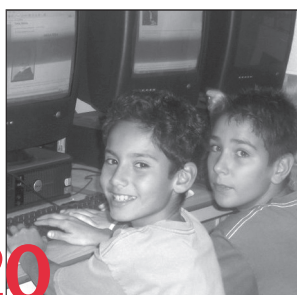
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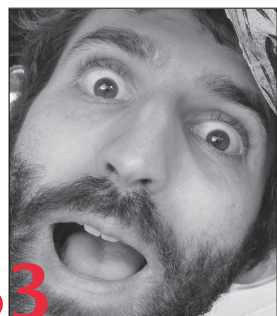
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## TL mission

### THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN

*The Teaching Librarian* is the official magazine of the Ontario School Library Association. It is published three times a year to support OSLA members in providing significant and effective library programs and services. *The Teaching Librarian* promotes library programs and curriculum development that furthers exemplary educational objectives. The magazine fosters effective collaboration within the school library community and provides a forum to share experience and expertise.

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## TL guidelines

- V. 16, no. 3 "Novel Ideas @ your library"  
Deadline: February 22, 2009
- V. 17, no. 1 "Collaboration @ your library"  
Deadline: May 11, 2009
- V. 17, no. 2 "Freedom @ your library"  
Deadline: September 21, 2009

Articles of 150–250 words, 500 words or 800–1,300 words are welcome. Articles, when approved, should be accompanied by good quality illustrations and/or pictures whenever possible. Text must be sent electronically, preferably in a MS Word (or compatible) file. Pictures can be printed or digital (minimum size and quality are 4" x 6" and 300 dpi, approximately 700 MB and in jpeg format if electronic). With photos which contain a recognized individual, please secure the individual's permission in writing for the use of the photo. Photos taken at public events, or crowd shots taken in a public place do not require permission from the subjects. All submissions are subject to editing for consistency, length and style. Journalistic style is preferred. Articles must include in the body of the text the working title, name of author, and email address. OSLA reserves the right to use pictures in other OSLA publications unless permission is limited or denied at the time of publishing. Any questions about submissions should be directed to the Editor of *The Teaching Librarian*:  
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## TL subscriptions

*The Teaching Librarian* is a benefit of OSLA membership. Non-members may subscribe for \$36.00 per year, plus GST.

To become a member or subscriber, contact:  
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Toronto, Ontario M5E 1C8  
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# Evaluation @ your library™



**Diana Maliszewski**

**H**ow well am I really doing?

My colleague received her notice from her principal that this was the year for her Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA). Mine isn't until next year, but this got me thinking about what the results would be if I were to be evaluated right now, and about evaluation in general.

Evaluation can take several forms, from a traditional pencil and paper test to observation and assessment of performance. No matter what the form, some people would rank being evaluated up there with going to the dentist or public speaking as their least favourite activity. Mention the word evaluation in a room full of educators and you'll hear words fly: assessment, nightmare, testing, report cards, rubrics, anxiety and so on.

Evaluation and assessment (and yes, there is a difference between the two but, for the purposes of this short introduction, I'll spare you the explanation) are not meant to be punitive. They are supposed to help us determine how well we are doing our tasks, how well we are doing with knowledge, thinking, communication and application. This, after all, is what we tell our students. It's what we believe as teachers. So, surely, it should be what we believe when we're the ones being assessed and evaluated! Assessment and evaluation provide opportunities for reflection and growth – and, when all is going well, for celebration. So let's consider evaluation @ your library. How do we participate in the assessment and evaluation of our students? How do we assess and evaluate our libraries and ourselves as teacher-librarians, library technicians and school library personnel? We need not wait for our turn at the TPA to think about evaluation!

And speaking of evaluation, *The Teaching Librarian* needed to examine and evaluate how it operates and the quality of what it prints. Last issue, we asked readers to give us feedback, using an online or print version survey ([www.accessola.com/osla/survey](http://www.accessola.com/osla/survey)). We still welcome your comments, but we've compiled the findings we have to date in a small article for your perusal.

Authentic, effective evaluation should prompt positive change, and one of the changes we've already made in the magazine is the addition of three new members to our editorial board. I want to welcome Julie Milan, Catherine Harris and Sandra Ziemniak to our fantastic team of editors. I also want to congratulate editorial board member Derrick Grose, who will be doing editing double-duty as the editor of the online journal for the Canadian Association of School Libraries. Here's to good things getting even better! ■





ONTARIO SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

# President's Report

**Lisa Radha Weaver**

**A**t the printing deadline for this issue, there are many things in the planning stages for 2009–2010.

However, some things are certain. I am happy to pass presidential responsibilities to Marilyn Willis, and I look forward to the 2009 nomination announcements for this year's council. The OSLA membership continues to grow and benefit from new opportunities to share resources with students!

In the coming months, OSLA members can look forward to announcements regarding Ministry funding and continued progress on the school library policy document; more details will follow on the listserv.

We continue to be supported as professionals by amazing resources from Knowledge Ontario. Through its participation on steering and working committees, the OSLA supports Knowledge Ontario, Ask Ontario and Resource Ontario as they continue to provide all publicly funded schools in Ontario with invaluable resources for libraries.

With the assistance of the dedicated staff and volunteers at OLA, we have had another successful year of registration for the Forest of Reading® programs, publication of *The Teaching Librarian*, and planning for the Super Conference. Other accomplishments have included the delivery of Education Institutes, the launch of Library Networking Group (LNG) and the sale of "I Support School Libraries" buttons!

Being involved with the OLA over the last few years has been an exceptional professional development opportunity for me. This organization offers unique opportunities to meet new people and to be exposed to many different views and experiences. The OLA is a learning organization that encourages its membership to participate fully and to guide its future directions. Having had the opportunity to represent more than 2,000 school library staff has been a great honour. Thank you for your support, your emails, and the sharing of ideas that continues. Together we are doing our best to promote the love of literacy and inquiry.

Moving forward, I have a clear idea of the myriad of challenges in Ontario school libraries and how they are similar to those faced in other school libraries around the world. I continue to be open to new ideas for libraries and to new resources and services that can be provided for OSLA members and their students. I happily anticipate continuing progress as a result of the collective efforts of everybody who provides leadership in the only provincial library organization that brings together all qualified library staff. We know that common objectives are more important than personal differences; we share the knowledge that we must work together to provide the best for our students. I am truly energized by the experience of working with others who are ready to face the challenges ahead, and I am grateful for the time we've had working together so far! ■

**I  
Support  
School  
Libraries**

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# How are we doing?

## The results of *The Teaching Librarian*

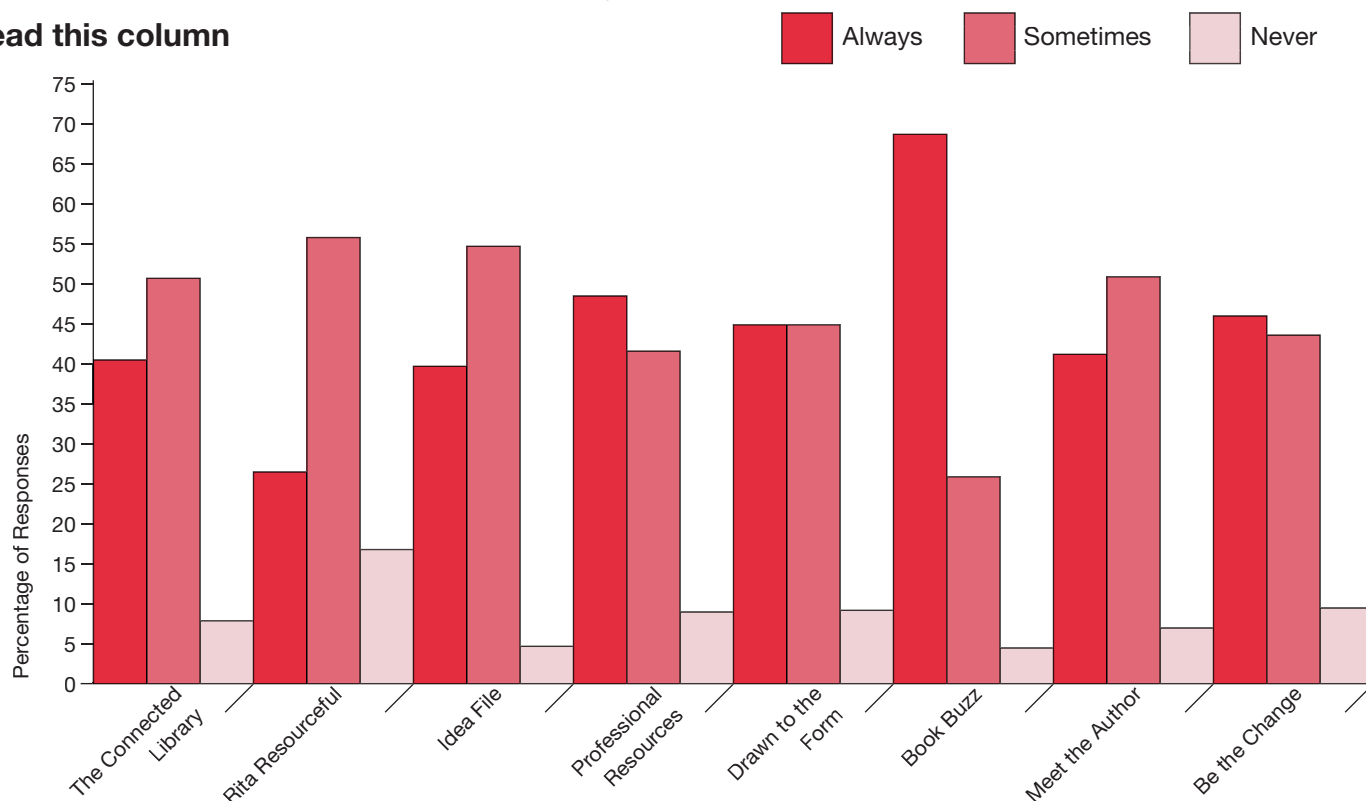
In order to get a sense of how successful we have been at meeting the needs of our readers, the editorial board of *The Teaching Librarian* ran a survey that was distributed online. It was also available in print form with Volume 16, Issue 1. We are grateful to the readers who took the time to complete the survey. The names of all respondents were entered in a random draw; congratulations to Joel Krentz, the winner of a gift certificate to The OLAStore for his participation. The editorial board would also like to express our gratitude to Jennifer Marriott from the OLA for her advice, which ensured that the survey would generate useful feedback.

The survey results indicate to us that OSLA members are generally satisfied with the magazine. Over 50% of respondents read most of the magazine and 19% read it from cover to cover. Many respondents commented on how the magazine “lessens the isolation we sometimes feel in our profession.” Another respondent said, “it creates a connection, gives school

library staff an opportunity to see models from boards other than their own, and allows opportunities to highlight excellence.”

On the flip side, one of the recurring themes noted in the responses had to do with a feeling of inadequacy. One of our readers urged us to “be real.” Someone else commented, “I often feel after reading that I am just not achieving all the wonderful things everyone else is. I am not moving mountains, or countries, or saving children.” The consensus at the editorial board was that we all share these feelings at times. We want to reassure our readers that we recognize the limitations which constrain many of us. The articles are supposed to inspire, not discourage or intimidate. We will make an effort to demonstrate how some of these strategies can be implemented in less-than-ideal situations (e.g. with few resources, part-time library allocation, etc.). At the same time, we should remember the words of Les Brown: “Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you’ll land among the stars.”

### I read this column





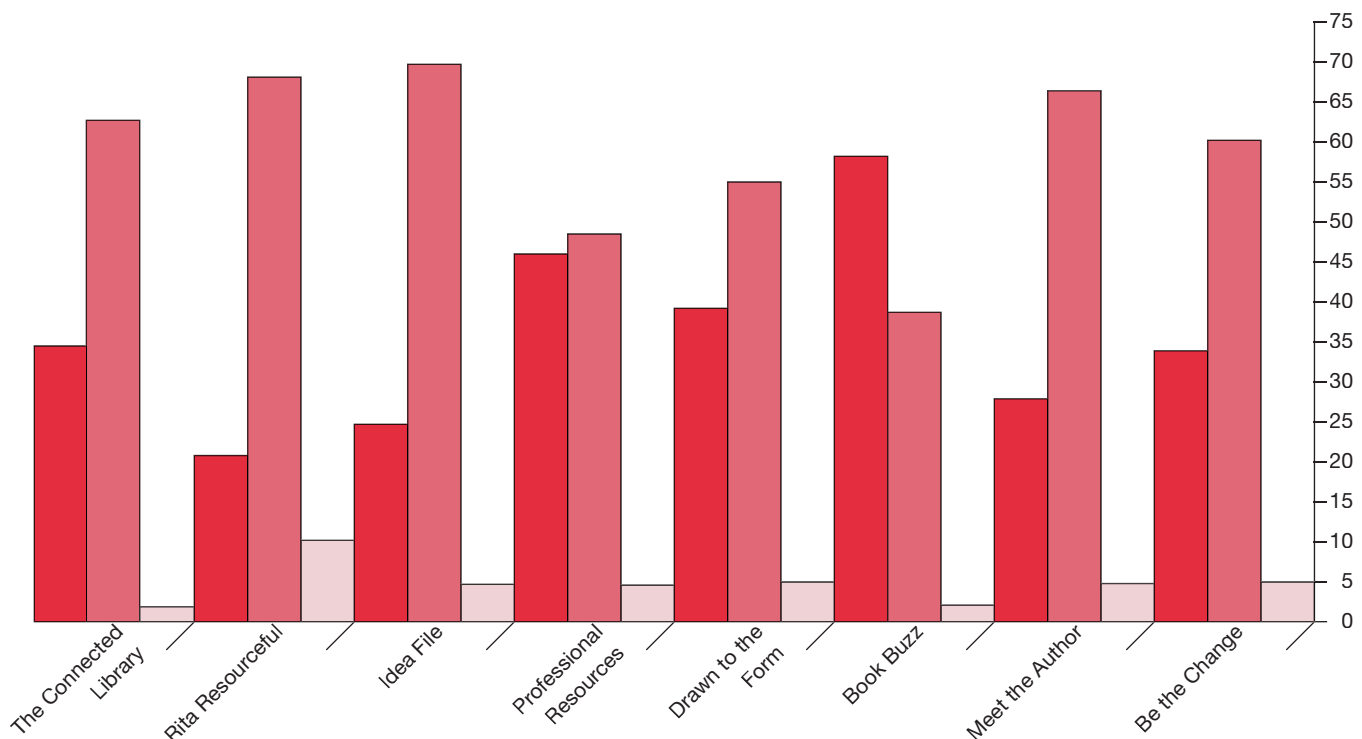
Sometimes it is hard to know whether or not the shot has hit the target. There were contradictory results on topics such as the balance between elementary and secondary focused articles. Some folks said there was too much elementary content; others said there was too much of an emphasis on secondary schools; still others said there was a nice balance of both. We try our best to solicit articles from a wide variety of contributors and to have balanced representation on our editorial board.

One thing common to both elementary and secondary school library staff is the lack of time. The most frequently repeated comment from our survey was that people found it difficult to find the time to read the magazine. In general, readers appreciated a shift towards shorter articles with a practical orientation. We wish we could add more free time to your day, but, alas, we cannot. What we have done, for your convenience, is make back issues of *The Teaching Librarian* available online at [www.accessola.com](http://www.accessola.com).

This survey has inspired us to take action in a variety of other ways. Some feedback expressed a concern that the magazine does not always adequately acknowledge the contributions of professional librarians and library technicians in schools. To rectify that perception, the editorial board rewrote the mission statement of *The Teaching Librarian* to make it more inclusive. We encourage all school library staff to share their knowledge and expertise by writing articles for the magazine.

Despite our desire to be responsive to our readers' feedback, some of the suggestions are not possible to implement. For instance, many readers want the magazine to be published more frequently. Time and money prevent us from fulfilling this wish. OSLA is the only division of OLA that has its own periodical and the editorial board thanks all of our readers for the advice, support and suggestions that will make the magazine even better. ■

## I learn from this column



# What kind of animal is Survey Monkey?

Catherine Harris

- ☐ freeonlinesurveys.com
- ☐ instantsurvey.com
- ☐ kwiksurveys.com
- ☒ surveymonkey.com
- ☐ surveypopups.com
- ☐ zoomerang.com

**T**o run a well-used library, you need to keep your finger on the pulse of your patrons' needs. You need to find out what your clientele wants and what they think about the library-based activities you have been running. Analysing differences between the genders when it comes to reading tastes and habits and collecting some information on popular authors to beef up the collection might also keep you more in tune with patrons' needs. But who has the time to survey?

There is a selection of web-based questionnaire builders available which make the survey process quick and painless. Zoomerang.com, instantsurvey.com, freeonlinesurveys.com, surveypopups.com and kwiksurveys.com are examples. SurveyMonkey.com, which has been around since 1999, is free and offers video tutorials to guide you through the basics of creating surveys with up to 10 questions and 100 responses. A sample survey allows you to see the array of 15 question and answer form choices including multiple-choice, dropdown menus, rating scales, short answer and yes/no. Templates provide convenient starting points, although you can customize fonts, colour and sizes, and brand your survey with your library's logo. The survey link can be pasted into your library webpage and data can be collected via a weblink or by email. The company claims to keep your data as secure as possible. One handy function is the ability to customize the language to access a specific population, ELL parents for example.

Perhaps the most powerful aspect of SurveyMonkey is that you can watch the graphs and charts develop as your data is collected in real time. It is also possible to observe individual responses or select a summary format for deeper analysis. Digital surveys can be printed and used in the ubiquitous Excel format.

Web-based questionnaires like SurveyMonkey can be very useful for ballot collections such as Forest of Reading® activities and other votes. Like setting exams, more complex surveys require careful planning. The most demanding and time-consuming portion of producing a meaningful survey remains identifying the kind of information you seek and designing the questions which will elicit useful answers! ■



**T**he theme of this issue of *The Teaching Librarian* is Evaluation @ your library. Evaluation @ your library has more than one meaning. There's evaluation **IN** your library, that is, participation by the teacher-librarian in the evaluation of student learning and achievement. There's evaluation **OF** your library, that is, evaluation of your facility, your collection, your program, and, ultimately, of your impact on student learning and achievement. Finally, we all face regular evaluation in the provincially mandated Teacher Performance Appraisal Program.

### Evaluation **IN** your library

#### *Ontario Curriculum Unit Planner: Resources*

<http://ocup.org/resources/index.htm>

The resources listed include several dealing with assessment and evaluation of student learning, including Growing Success, the brand-new working document! As teachers, we should be participating in assessing and evaluating student learning and achievement, so we must be up-to-date on both policy and best practice.

#### *The Teacher-Librarian's Toolkit for Evidence-Based Practice*

[www.accessola.com/osla/toolkit/intro.html](http://www.accessola.com/osla/toolkit/intro.html)

These practical, ready-to-use tools can help us put our knowledge into practice.

### Evaluation **OF** your library

#### *The Teacher-Librarian's Toolkit for Evidence-Based Practice*

[www.accessola.com/osla/toolkit/intro.html](http://www.accessola.com/osla/toolkit/intro.html)

This toolkit can help us assess and evaluate our school libraries and gather the evidence we need to demonstrate our impact on student learning and achievement.

#### *School Library Standards and Evaluation*

[www.sldirectory.com/libsf/resf/evaluate.html](http://www.sldirectory.com/libsf/resf/evaluate.html)

A specialized subject directory of online school library standards and evaluation tools. Note – our national standards are not available online.

#### *School Libraries*

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/schoollibraries](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/resourcematerials/schoollibraries)

Self-evaluation frameworks for primary and secondary school libraries, from the UK. Again, not our national standards, but could be an interesting exercise!

### Evaluation of the Teacher-Librarian

#### *Students' Information Literacy Needs in the 21st Century: Competencies for Teacher-Librarians*

[www.cla.ca](http://www.cla.ca)

Looking for a goal for your Annual Learning Plan?

This document from the Canadian Association for School Libraries is a great tool for reflection and self-assessment, and can help identify areas of need for professional development.

#### *Standards*

[www.oct.ca/standards](http://www.oct.ca/standards)

The Standards documents from the Ontario College of Teachers are another useful tool for reflection and self-assessment.

#### *How to Build Your Teaching Portfolio*

[www.oecta.on.ca/forteachers/portfolio.htm](http://www.oecta.on.ca/forteachers/portfolio.htm)

Useful resources to help you create that teaching portfolio we're all supposed to have to showcase our best practice and ongoing professional development.

#### *Teacher Performance Appraisal System*

[www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/appraise.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/appraise.html)

Information from the Ontario Ministry of Education about the Teacher Performance Appraisal system. ■



## Turning Literature Circles into Social Action

**T**here is a great lesson that can be found on the “Be the Change” website ([www.accessola.com/bethechange](http://www.accessola.com/bethechange)) called “Modified Literature Circles” for grades 6–9. While many teacher and teacher-librarians have been using literature circles for years, often the choice of books has more to do with what’s available on the shelves, rather than any particular theme or connection between the books. When I read this lesson plan, along with a previous article in the *Teacher Librarian*, I decided that this was a great opportunity to revamp the way literature circles were being taught and used in my school.

I approached a couple of teachers who traditionally used literature circles with this idea of transforming our literature circles into potential vehicles of social action. While we wanted our students to read great books with global issues and interesting topics of conversation, we also wanted to stimulate and motivate in our students the desire to take action based on the issues in their books. We wanted students to take on a project or activity that could, at the very least, educate other students about some of these global issues. At the same time, we also wanted to provide students with the opportunity to take bigger risks while perhaps stimulating them to actually initiate some form of social action.

While students were reading their novels and holding their literature circle discussions, the teachers shared examples of others who had “made a change” in the world. Students were introduced to such people as Mahatma Gandhi, Craig Kielberger and Ryan Hreljac as well as organizations such as Free The Children, the Ladybug Foundation, Kiva, Spread the Net and Room to Read.

Once students had read their books and completed their literature circle discussions, they were provided with a series of possible follow-up activities from which to choose. Before they began, we had a conversation with our students about the different ways in which students could take action – from personal research, to educating others, to donating money and resources,

to actually stimulating others to take action with them. We then asked them to set personal goals and identify which level of commitment they would like to challenge themselves to make.

Some of the possible classroom activities included:

- ◆ Create a Public Service Announcement that explains the realities of the lives of the children in your book to others in the school. Public Service Announcements will be shared at a school assembly.
- ◆ With permission from parents, post your Public Service Announcement on Youtube or Schooltube. Track the number of downloads and select 5 of the best comments made about your Public Service Announcement.
- ◆ Find five websites that highlight the major theme or issue of your book. Write a brief summary of what you can find at each website. Share and describe these websites in a class presentation.
- ◆ Find an organization that is trying to make a difference around the world. Describe this organization and what it stands for. Describe some of the possible actions the organization suggests you can take to make a difference.
- ◆ Hold an information fair in the school gym or cafeteria. Classes will be invited to visit the fair and learn about the issues discussed in the books and possible ways students can make a difference.
- ◆ Raise money or resources to support a website such as [kiva.org](http://kiva.org). Track each investment and profile where the money has gone and who it has benefited.
- ◆ Find two picture books that connect to the major issue of your chosen novel. Compare the similarities and differences between your novel and one of the picture books.
- ◆ Organize a guest speaker visit so the speaker can share knowledge of or involvement in a particular topic or issue.
- ◆ Create a video that could be entered in the “Be the Change! Share the Story” School Video Contest ([www.quantumshift.tv/schools](http://www.quantumshift.tv/schools)) Grand Prize is \$50,000 in cash and prizes for your school!

*“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”*  
 –Mahatma Gandhi



# THE CHANGE

Julie Millan

The results were quite impressive. Students thoroughly enjoyed taking their reading “to the next level.” The biggest improvement seemed to be in terms of educating themselves about the world around them and finding out more information about the particular issues in their books such as poverty and homelessness, child slavery, war, environmental issues, health issues and hunger. Students found many websites and organizations related to particular topics or issues and shared them with each other. Enrollment in existing clubs such as Free The Children increased significantly. Students organized more fundraising opportunities throughout the year as well. We did not, however, find that students were able to reach that level of stimulating others to take action – yet! In addition, so many teachers were impressed with the idea and the results that they have asked to participate in the literature circles this year.

In planning for this year, we realize that we need to do the literature circles earlier in the year, allowing students more time to investigate, share, participate, and organize opportunities for action within the school. We are also exploring changing literature circles units to information circles, and adapting a unit for use with students at many grade levels. Moving beyond just novels, we would introduce such resources as picture books, non-fiction articles, videos and websites. Finally, we realized that the language of global citizenship needs to be woven into our classroom (and perhaps even school) language all year long, continuously reminding students of their potential and the opportunities to “be the change you wish to see in the world.” ■

Grade: 6, 7, 8 and 9		Topic: Rehabilitation and Care Cared For/Education and Play Protection/ Survival and Development	
Curriculum Area: Language Arts all grades, Social Studies: Grade 6-Canada's Links to the World		Title: Modified Literature Circles	
<b>U.N. Rights of the Child Article(s):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect. (Article 39)</li><li>All children have a right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily. (Article 6)</li><li>All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities. (Article 31)</li><li>Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence (Article 19)</li></ul>		<b>Teaching Strategies</b> <p>These books are being recommended in this format to allow all of the students in one class to read different books around a similar theme. The purpose is to create awareness of the impact of war (and in the case of <i>Iqbal</i>, forced child labour) on children from many parts of the world.</p> <p>Placing the students into groups of 6, introduce the concept of the modified literature circle where everyone contributes to open-ended discussions (both in asking questions and exploring their opinions). All questions must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Be open ended, I wonder type of questions</li><li>Allow for the free exchange of opinions</li><li>Be based on the novel in question</li><li>Discussed by everyone in the group</li></ul>	
<b>Information Studies: Overall Expectations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>listen to, acknowledge and consider differing opinions in group work</li><li>work in teams to develop project outlines</li><li>demonstrate an understanding of probability in making appropriate conclusions and appropriate decisions</li></ul>		<p>To introduce the concept of open-ended questions, use the picture book <i>The Wolf Who Loved Music</i> (or <i>The Carpet Boy's Gift</i>). Stop at an appropriate spot in the book and model the questioning process. Make sure that your question provokes discussion, elicits opinions and sparks conversation. Model the process several times within the book. The ending leaves many unanswered questions. Break the students into groups of 4-6 and have them pose their questions and discuss opinions. This will be the process used for the literature circle. The groups will set their own reading targets, and each member will arrive with a question they want to discuss with the group. (See black line masters below). In essence, all of the participants will be "discussion directors".</p> <p>Once all of the groups have completed the novels and discussions, have the groups prepare a dramatic presentation of the thoughts, realities and conflict in the novel that had the greatest impact on them.</p> <p>To further augment the learning, a series of black line masters have been prepared for individuals to complete on their own. The package as a whole allows for the teacher and teacher-librarian to have reading, writing and oral language marks for assessment.</p>	
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Girl of Kosovo</i></li><li><i>Thura's Diary</i></li><li><i>Year of No Rain</i></li><li><i>Iqbal</i></li><li><i>The Breadwinner</i></li><li><i>Parvana's Journey</i></li><li><i>Mud City</i></li><li><i>The Heaven Shop</i></li><li><i>The Wolf Who Loved Music</i></li><li><i>The Carpet Boy's Gift</i></li></ul>		<b>Black Line Masters:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Contract</a></li><li><a href="#">Meetings</a></li><li><a href="#">Needs, Wants &amp; Dreams (2)</a></li><li><a href="#">Talking Props</a></li><li><a href="#">Journal Entry</a></li><li><a href="#">Decision Train</a></li><li><a href="#">Word Study</a></li><li><a href="#">News Connect</a></li><li><a href="#">Poster</a></li></ul>	
<b>Additional novels to consider:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Journey to Jo'burg</i></li><li><i>The Road to Chlifa</i> (Gr. 9-language issues, sexual awareness)</li><li><i>Sea Chase</i></li><li><i>The Mzungu Boy</i></li><li><i>The Diary of Ma Yan</i></li></ul>			
<b>BE THE CHANGE... Suggestions for Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tell 10 people (family or friends) what you have learned about the realities of the lives of the children in your book, or create a presentation to explain to others in your school</li><li>Write a letter or postcard to a <a href="#">world leader</a>, newspaper, or magazine outlining how this book and what you have learned has impacted you and why it is important that change occurs</li></ul>			

Modified Literature Circles  
[www.accessola.com/bethechange](http://www.accessola.com/bethechange)

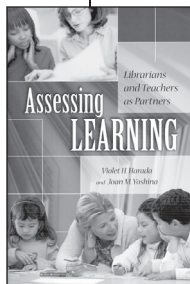
## Assessing Learning: Librarians and Teachers as Partners

Violet Harada and  
Joan M. Yoshina  
2005  
9781591582007

If you want to understand the nature of assessment, as well as how to assess student learning and communicate evidence of that learning, then *Assessing Learning* is the book for you!

In only 10 chapters, Harada and Yoshina cover all the basics and quite a bit more, including assessment in the school, assessment tools (checklists, rubrics, rating scales, conferences, logs, personal correspondence, graphic organizers), outcomes-based planning (with elementary, middle school and high school examples), student portfolios, and communicating evidence of learning. Each chapter begins with a list of essential questions and ends with a list of references. In between, chunking and graphics make information easy to find. A detailed table of contents which includes all the chapter headings and an index make it easy to find exactly what you're looking for.

*Assessing Learning* is essential reading for every teacher-librarian! As you will find yourself referring to it over and over, you will want easy access – either a school copy or a personal copy. In addition, every district professional collection should include this title.



## Enhancing Teaching and Learning: A Leadership Guide for School Library Media Specialists, 2nd Edition Revised

Jean Donham  
2008  
9781555706470

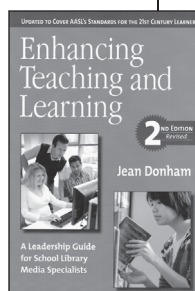
*Enhancing Teaching and Learning* would make a good textbook for part three of the school librarianship AQ course (supplemented, of course, with Canadian documents).

Although Donham covers a great deal of ground, chapters 12 and 13, "Assessment of Student Work" and "Program Evaluation," are of particular interest, given the theme of this issue of *The Teaching Librarian*. Donham provides a good introduction to student assessment and does a particularly good job with rubrics.

She also provides a solid introduction to program-focused evaluation of school libraries, with an extensive program evaluation rubric that, daunting as it might first appear, is a useful tool.

Highly recommended reading for any teacher-librarian looking for a solid grounding in school librarianship. Copies should be available in every district professional collection.

**Leadership for Today's**



## School Library: A Handbook for the Library Media Specialist and the School Principal

(Greenwood Professional Guides in School Librarianship)  
Patricia Potter Wilson  
and Josette Anne Lyders  
2001  
9780313313264

*Leadership for Today's School Library* is another general text with a focus on communication and collaboration, especially with the principal.

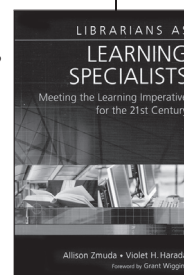
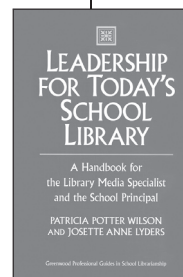
Chapter 4, "Assessing and Evaluating the School Library with the Principal's Support," is of particular interest. Wilson and Lyders deal with both quantitative and qualitative measures, as well as the use of standards, and emphasize both planning the evaluation with the principal and sharing the data afterwards.

Recommended reading. Should be included in district professional collections.

## Librarians as Learning Specialists: Meeting the Learning Imperative for the 21st Century

Allison Zmuda and Violet H. Harada  
2008  
9781591586791

Zmuda and Harada have written a book that emphasizes the teaching role of teacher-librarians and establishes teacher-



librarians as learning specialists.

In only 128 pages, the authors deal with reframing our mission, clarifying our role, designing instruction and assessment, and providing resources to support 21st-century learning. Chapter 4, "Providing Robust

Assessment and Feedback" is of particular interest given the theme of this issue of *The Teaching Librarian*. Not a book to be read quickly or superficially, *Librarians as Learning Specialists* is well worth the time and effort. This would be a wonderful shared text for a professional learning community.

Highly recommended reading for both teacher-librarians and administrators (the dual audience for whom the book is written). An essential purchase for district professional collections.

## Sharing the Evidence: Library Media Center Assessment Tools and Resources

Connie Champlin, David V. Loertscher, and Nancy A.S. Miller  
2007  
9781933170352

*Sharing the Evidence* provides a wealth of tools that can be used for program-focused assessment of the school library as part of evidence-based practice.



## Brenda Dillon

These tools have been pulled together from a number of earlier publications by these authors, updated, and supplemented with new material.

Some of the background material (for example, about triangulation of evidence), is reprinted from *We Boost Achievement*. Ideally, teacher-librarians will have access to both titles. If it's necessary to choose only one, then *Sharing the Evidence* might be the more practical choice.

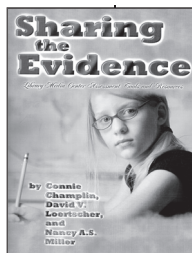
*Sharing the Evidence* is supported by a companion website at [www.lmcsource.com/evidence](http://www.lmcsource.com/evidence).

A practical and valuable tool for every teacher-librarian! You'll need easy access to *Sharing the Evidence* and will want a school or personal copy. In addition, every district professional collection should include this title.

### **We Boost Achievement: Evidence-Based Practice for School Library Media Specialists**

David V. Loertscher, with  
Ross J. Todd  
2003  
9780931510939

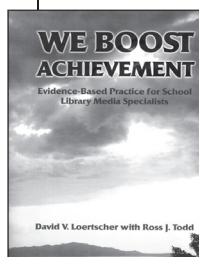
*We Boost Achievement* is a valuable tool for anyone interested in evidence-based practice. This involves both assessment of student learning, and the use of the resulting assessments to provide evidence of the role of the school library in student learning and achievement.



Todd provides the introductory chapter about the theory of evidence-based practice. Loertscher then provides seven chapters of practical information, tips, and tools to help

teacher-librarians turn theory into practice.

Essential reading and an invaluable tool for every teacher-librarian! A copy of *We Boost Achievement* for your personal or school collection is highly recommended because you will often want to make reference to it. ■



# ei WINTER 2008

## EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Educators deal with learning every day! Most of the time, this means student learning, but increasingly educators are engaging in professional learning: intentional, job-embedded, self-selected activities that appeal to inquiry-driven professionals.

The Education Institute is one ideal source of professional learning courses. Audio and web seminars are just one hour in length, and tend to focus on leading edge content delivered in small chunks to motivate, inspire and kick-start more in-depth study.

The price is reasonable, particularly when a group gathers together at one site for the same low price that an individual would pay! Technology requirements are simple, and therefore easy to prepare for in your busy work-day.

Consider these sessions coming soon!

### **Hidden Treasures:**

#### **English Language Children's Books Authored in Quebec**

Monday, January 26th at 4:00 pm ET

Audio Conference

With Carol-Ann Hoyte

This session would be a boon to collection development and building knowledge of Canadian YA and Children's literature. Carol-Ann has selected 10 important authors and illustrators on which to focus her talk.

### **Creating Personal Learning Through Self-Assessment**

Thursday, January 29th at 4:00 pm ET

Audio Conference

With Jean Donham

Practicing teacher-librarians will recognize Jean Donham's name! She is a regular contributor to *Teacher-Librarian*; an author of Information Literacy and Inquiry-based Learning materials and a frequent conference speaker. In this session, Jean will give us strategies to build life-long learners

### **How I Built a Website for \$16.00 in Chocolate!**

Tuesday, February 10th at 1:00 pm ET

Web Conference

With Laura Crossett

Use WordPress to build a library website! Your site will be pleasing, functional and easy to update.

### **Mother Goose on the Loose!**

Friday, February 20th at 1:00 pm ET

Audio Conference

With Betsy Diamant Cohen

Betsy's program combines music, stories, creative movement and drama based on current findings in brain research and learning theories.

### **Second Life for Newbies!**

Thursday, March 26th at 2:00 pm ET

Web Conference

With Jocelyn Phillips

You've promised yourself to explore virtual worlds, but just haven't taken the time to get started! Join Jocelyn for this session, intended to kick-start and guide new explorers in a new world!

### **Searching 2.0**

Friday, April 9th at 1:00 pm ET

Web Conference

With Michael Sauers

Learn how to apply "super-searching strategies" to Web 2.0 tools i.e. blogs, wikis, podcasts, mashups, kartoo and a host of other useful tools.

Liz Kerr, OLA Education Director

**To register or for more information visit**  
**[www.educationinstitute.ca](http://www.educationinstitute.ca)**



# EASY DEWEY

**A**s teacher-librarians, we're engaged in continuous evaluation of our libraries. Sometimes this evaluation is planned and systematic. Sometimes it's inspired. My creation of an Easy Dewey section in my library was the result of just such a "lightbulb" moment.

Two years ago, I was shelving Deweys and lamenting the fact that so many wonderful books in our collection would probably never find readers. What chance does a boy in grade 2 have of finding a 32-page book on Mars? Not much, given that the book is painfully squished in with dozens of books aimed at grade 6 students studying space.

In frustration, I rescued the book on Mars from its hopeless shelf spot – but where could I put it? Not in the picture book collection, but I didn't want to leave it in the regular Dewey section.... Then I realized there must be dozens of books suffering the same neglect. I began to comb the stacks, rescuing books on dinosaurs, ants, vultures, elk, teeth, jets, soccer... and much more. Easy Dewey was born.

I introduced an Easy Dewey section in the Story Corner area in the fall of 2006 and, although it remains a work in progress, it has certainly been a hit. In the first year, I devoted two four-shelf book cases to Easy Dewey. The

demand was so great that I had to control access. One week the boys could make selections from this area; the next week it was the girls' turn. Students always remembered whose turn it was, from week to week! In the fall of 2007, I expanded the section and opened it to all students every week.

Although both boys and girls love this section of their library, the most enthusiastic users are certainly boys. What do students find so exciting? I think that many of them are thrilled to find that books are "about something." Young students do come to the circulation desk excited to have found a "Franklin book" or an "Angelina book," but their pleasure rarely matches that of students who are clutching a book ABOUT SHARKS! ... or wolves or stars or hockey or horses.

My Easy Dewey section has signs proclaiming that it is the Easy Dewey section and the books have a tiny happy face sticker on the spine label (to aid sorting and shelving). The section is a mini-Dewey section, with numbers and pictures as shelf labels.

The principal users are students in grades K–3/4, and I turn to this section when teachers ask for easy books on various topics. While I haven't tried to teach primary students the Dewey decimal system, I've noticed that they're learning it because they're using it.





Paula S. Goepfert

## The Easy Dewey section is selective:

- 400s picture dictionaries, alphabet books, language play books
- 500s math, space, dinosaurs, plants, insects, amphibians, birds, mammals
- 600s health, machines, pets
- 700s sports
- 900s geography

The library literacy benefits for students are great. They learn that the library has books on topics they care about. They learn that books are organized in categories. They learn that if they can articulate a need ("I just got a goldfish and want to learn how to take care of it.") the teacher-librarian or a classmate can direct them to a little collection of books where they can browse and make a personal selection. They also learn that books don't have to be "placed in the bin on Tuesday" just because that's library day. Books can be renewed if the reader knows there's more to learn and enjoy, despite the fact that "it's Tuesday." This is a lesson most students come to when they move into chapter books and novels, but it's grand to see a six-year-old ask to renew a book on boats.

Interestingly, young students are not the only ones learning from Easy Dewey. I have seen my older library helpers have "ah ha" moments in Easy Dewey as it dawns on them that all the dinosaur books have 567 on the spine label. True, knowing that some books are shelved by number is not the same as grasping the underlying logic of the Dewey decimal system, but I knew I was making major headway when a couple of grade 8 boys were unpacking new books in June and I heard them saying, "Easy Dewey, Easy Dewey, chapter book, novel, Easy Dewey...."

The benefits for the teacher-librarian are great, too. I get a real-time lesson in student interests every day. I find myself engaged in genuine dialogues with students who reveal their passions and their literacy skills as they flip pages to show me awesome pictures and read the accompanying captions. I do not have to feel guilty for wanting to keep little ones away from thousands of Dewey books that are inappropriate for them (and a nuisance to keep shelved). And I watch students introduce themselves to the "big Deweys." At some point, they figure out that there is another vast section in the library that can satisfy their curiosity, and they prompt me to help them look there when the Easy Dewey section fails them.

My acquisitions have changed since I introduced Easy Dewey and began monitoring student response to the section. I'm on the look out for content-area reading that is suitable for younger readers. It's out there – and now I understand the need and the tremendous rewards that come from finding it. I'm enjoying watching students "graduate" from Easy Dewey to the Dewey collection. This year, I plan to further expand the physical space I devote to Easy Dewey, and I'll dig more deeply to find out what categories to add. I have found no better way to empower young students to exercise their developing literacy skills than to help them use and love the library. ■

# Teacher-Librarian

Aurora Galluzzo

**A**n eBook (electronic book) is a digital form of communication similar to a traditional paper book. Environmentally, the eBook is a welcome alternative to the printed text. eBooks are faster to produce, take up less space, and are often free. Though there are several negative attributes to eBooks this article is not intended to outline the pros and cons of an eBook. Rather, it is intended to introduce the educator to the possible positive influences eBooks may have on student success.

EBooks are becoming a very popular resource in today's school library. Due to increased emphasis on combining technology and reading, companies like Project Gutenberg ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)) and Tumblebooks ([www.tumblebooks.com](http://www.tumblebooks.com)) are capturing students' interest in reading by providing formats that combine read-aloud with synchronized highlighted text, vocabulary word helper, animation and music to their online collections. For young readers in elementary schools, an eBook is fun, different and implicitly reinforces reading skills and strategies. As a teacher-librarian in an elementary school, I came to the realization that having students listen to eBooks not only supports their success in reading, but also enhances writing and computer skills. It is from this "aha" moment, that the idea of having students create their very own eBooks was born.

The idea of having students create their very own eBooks is not unrealistic. With the collaborative support of a classroom teacher, creating eBooks in the library is very feasible. It provides opportunities to meet curriculum expectations in reading, writing, oral communication and media literacy, and offers an authentic opportunity for students to use technology (e.g. Smartboards, presentation software, the Internet, etc.)

At first glance, having students create an eBook appears to be a daunting task. There is help, however, and one site that I have come across and highly recommend is "Drscavanaugh – Educational Technology" found at [www.drscavanaugh.org/ebooks/creating\\_ebooks\\_with\\_powerpoint.htm](http://www.drscavanaugh.org/ebooks/creating_ebooks_with_powerpoint.htm). This site provides a step-by-step guide to creating eBooks using PowerPoint software. The instructions are clear and easy to follow. For the visual learner, it includes images to support the text, and the detailed instructions make it a highly recommended choice.

Once you, the teacher-librarian, have learned how to create an eBook, the next step is to collaborate with a teacher to turn the process into a teaching unit. In collaboration with a grade two teacher, I constructed a unit that we hope to use together. This is a broad overview of our plans for the unit and is based on a TLC (Teacher Learning Cycle) which occurs later in the school year. By then, students will have been introduced to developing a story map, the writing process and some typing skills.

Creating an eBook can be used as a tool to enhance student success and provide opportunities for differentiated learning. It introduces students to a new way of expressing themselves and empowers them to write and publish. eBooks tap into their creativity and imagination while enhancing computer skills. For the classroom teacher, this unit creates numerous opportunities for lessons and assessment. Both the teacher-librarian and teacher will benefit from the professional support of a colleague. Best of all, this is a fun activity that will foster lifelong learning within our students and ourselves. Give it a try! ■



# + Teacher = eBook

	Grade 2 Classroom	Library (weekly lesson)	Computer (weekly lesson)
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ KWL chart, in partners on the topic of fairy tales</li> <li>◆ Class web of knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Introduce students to word eBook (electronic book) and pBook (paper book) <i>*students listen to a pBook and then to the same story via an eBook</i></li> <li>◆ Brainstorm the differences/similarities they may find between the two book presentation using Venn diagram</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students log on to <a href="http://www.tumblebooks.com">www.tumblebooks.com</a>, to explore and listen to a picture eBook <i>* this is a great site where students listen and participate in activities that reinforce reading skills</i></li> </ul>
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Literacy centres for fairy tales (will run for the duration of unit)</li> <li>◆ During read a loud, teacher will continue to introduce traditional fairy tales, e.g. <i>Three Little Pigs</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Introduce fairy tales from different cultures</li> <li>◆ Have a class discussion about parts of the story (beginning/middle/end/character/plot/setting/problem/solution)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students may log on to Project Gutenberg (<a href="http://www.gutenberg.org">www.gutenberg.org</a>) to hear a fairy tale story (e.g. <i>Three Little Pigs</i>) <i>* if time permits students listen to another fairy tale story</i></li> </ul>
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast two of the versions of the <i>Three Little Pigs</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Mini-lesson on what is a story map</li> <li>◆ Hand out a story map template for students to complete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Present the class with fairy tale eBook created by teacher-librarian <a href="http://www.drscavanaugh.org/ebooks/creating_ebooks_with_powerpoint.htm">www.drscavanaugh.org/ebooks/creating_ebooks_with_powerpoint.htm</a>.</li> </ul>
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Introduction to writing activity (creating their own fairy tale)</li> <li>◆ Brainstorm elements of fairy tale e.g. good/evil characters</li> <li>◆ Brainstorm topic ideas e.g. mixed up fairy tales <i>* if time permits, teacher will hand out story writing map</i> <i>* during this week students will start the writing process in class</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Introduce students to power point</li> <li>◆ Walk students through the program (stick to the basic tools, e.g. how to add new slide, how to type in the slide, different text layout, insert icons/audio) <i>* if you have access to a Smart Board, this would be a great way to have the class explore the program and learn about the Smart Board</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Continue with previous lesson</li> <li>◆ Introduce students to the template created for the unit <i>* consider designing a different template for each class</i> <i>* for the audio button, you may want to have each class vote on an icon that would differentiate their class eBook</i></li> </ul>
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Self, peer, and teacher editing <i>* students who have completed the written portion begin drawing illustrations</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students start typing stories onto the template</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Continue with typing</li> <li>◆ Students who have finished their illustrations may start scanning the images <i>* classroom teacher's help required when students are ready to start scanning</i></li> </ul>
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Teacher is in the library assisting in completion of eBooks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students who are ready for their audio can start to record their voices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Continue with scanning and audio input</li> </ul>
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Completion of the KWL chart in class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ eBook presentations and assessment <i>* publishing students' works on a CD allows parents to view their child's achievement</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Continue with eBook presentations and assessment</li> </ul>



# Wikis Are Worth It!

## Implementing and Evaluating t

**W**hat do you do with 59 grade five students in a library? No, this is not the beginning of a corny teacher joke but the reality a colleague and I faced last spring in the library shared by Keele Street Junior Public School and Mountview Alternative School in Toronto.

While their grade six classmates wrote the EQAO test, grade five students from four different classes joined together in the library for a total of six mornings, supervised by the French teacher, Randy Doiron, and myself, the teacher-librarian. We considered many options for activities but finally decided to create a wiki – a collaborative website — with the students.

“I knew about wikis, like Wikipedia, but I didn’t know how to make one,” says Valentina Wilches, a Keele/Mountview student who took part in the project.

Websites that allow individual and groups to make free wikis include: Wikispaces ([www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com)), Wetpaint ([www.wetpaint.com](http://www.wetpaint.com)) and the one that we ultimately used at Keele/Mountview, PBWiki ([www.pbwiki.com](http://www.pbwiki.com)). For our project, the students had to research one person from history who made a meaningful contribution to the world. We called it the *People Who Made a Difference Project*. Instead of just typing up a biography or making a bristol board display about their chosen person, the students created a wiki page.

### So What’s Wrong with Bristol Board?

Let me emphasize there is nothing wrong with bristol board displays, but I had a few reasons for wanting to try wikis.



First, we needed something with a “cool, never-been-done-before” vibe to engage our 59 students initially and to keep them engaged.

Second, we wanted to give them something that was more current and useful. The web 2.0 world is their reality now. Wikis and other forms of online communication and collaboration are the tools they will use to move forward. We need to start teaching them now, even as young as grade five, how to use these tools effectively and responsibly.

Finally, creating a wiki is an authentic learning task that requires higher-order thinking as the students analyze, summarize, edit and evaluate information with their group members.

“A really cool feature of the wiki was the comments section. We could express our ideas about other people’s work, congratulate them and even give them tips on how they could make it better,” says Miles Avalos, another student who also worked on the wiki project.

Nikola Pupic adds, “I enjoyed working with my partner, Miles, on the wiki. We could edit it whenever we wanted at home or at school; it made working in a group really easy.”

With such a rich learning task, the teachable moments and mini-lesson possibilities are endless. Some of the lessons we gave included how to use the wiki itself – how to edit and save, insert graphics, and link to other web pages. Research lessons were also important. Students learned how to generate effective keyword searches and how to take useful jot-notes.

Wikis and other web 2.0 tools do require teaching in another area as well – social and ethical conduct on the Internet, generally known as “netiquette.” We talked about how to give constructive online comments to other wiki users, the ethical and legal reasons for only using public domain photos, and the importance of protecting your user name and password.

And of course, beyond the process-related learning, there was the content-related learning on the subject itself – making a difference in the world. “From researching Helen Keller, I learned that you can do anything that you set your mind to,” says Lana Jevremovic, a Keele/Mountview student.

# The World of Wikis

Lisa Taylor

## But How Do I Mark It?

With learning taking place on a number of fronts, the big question is whether Web 2.0 tools require new modes of assessment and evaluation – which brings us back to the theme of this issue of *The Teaching Librarian*. The great news is that current assessment and evaluation practices – verbal and written feedback and rubrics – can still be used. If anything, wikis make tracking student progress easier during the assessment phase. With paper projects, students can and do misplace their work, making assessment difficult. With a wiki, everything is online. You can check it at any point during the day and night. If groups are having difficulty, you can catch it sooner and provide guidance to get them back on track more quickly. Furthermore, the online commenting feature provides students with almost continuous feedback about their work. Not only were the students able to view and comment on each other's wiki pages at school and at home, but their classroom teachers and I were able to do the same. The students were then able to take our suggestions and incorporate them into their work almost immediately. The assessment-feedback loop occurs more frequently during wiki projects. This ultimately sets students up for greater success.

"It was so easy to go online and give feedback, and because everyone could see the comments, everyone could benefit," says Valerie Eisenhauer, a grade 5/6 teacher at Keele whose students participated in the wiki project.

In terms of wiki evaluation, rubrics are an excellent choice. The rubrics will be more comprehensive as wiki projects tend to integrate multiple subjects, including Media Literacy, Reading, Writing, and, depending upon the topic, Science, Social Studies or even Mathematics.

Evaluating the online social conduct can be slightly more difficult as the Ontario curriculum does not yet reflect this new communication forum, even in the Media Literacy strand. However,



for the *People Who Made a Difference* wiki project, we were able to evaluate the students' netiquette by applying and extending an expectation from the Oral Communication strand. We used Interactive Strategies 2.2 and added one small phrase: *Student demonstrates an understanding of appropriate speaking behaviour in small- and large- group discussions as well as online forums*. Although not speaking per se, the students did "talk" to and engage one another online. They needed to use appropriate social conventions to do so.

Overall, the Keele/Mountview *People Who Made A Difference* wiki project was a success. Beyond expanding their information literacy and technology skills, the grade five students were excited about learning. From the coolness factor to the multi-layered learning opportunities and the ongoing assessment and feedback, wikis and other web 2.0 tools are definitely new strategies to consider. Wikis are worth it! ■

***The web 2.0 world is their reality now. Wikis and other forms of online communication and collaboration are the tools they will use to move forward. We need to start teaching them now how to use these tools effectively and responsibly.***

# The Power of One

**D**o you find yourself continually hunting for resources to help you in your lesson planning? Have you often wished for an online site that would allow you to find resources that will engage and motivate your students? One tool that can help you with these quests is the Ontario Educational Resource Bank (OERB). The OERB, found at [www.elearningontario.ca](http://www.elearningontario.ca), is an online library of educational resources. Repositories like the OERB have sprung up internationally. What sets this one apart and makes it so important to the teaching and librarian communities in Ontario is that it contains content directly related to the Ontario curriculum. Teachers and teacher-librarians from around the province contribute. Grades, courses, strands and expectations are all browsable, making it a powerful resource for Ontario educators.

Most importantly, the OERB is a co-operative entity – you can use content from within it, but you can also feel free to share what you have created. If you have developed a resource that you are proud of and are willing to share with your colleagues, we encourage you to consider contributing your resource into the OERB. This give-and-take approach helps the OERB thrive as a valued educational resource.

## A Little History

The OERB has its roots with the Ministry of Education's Ontario Knowledge Network for Learning (OKNL). OKNL looked for ways to successfully integrate information technology and learning opportunities. OKNL has since been renamed e-Learning Ontario (e-LO) and has flourished to become the province's e-learning strategy. As well as the OERB, the overall strategy includes online courses and an online discussion environment. e-LO is geared towards supporting many important provincial educational priorities, including the Student Success Strategy, Learning to 18, the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and the Rural Student Success Program. For more information on the strategy as a whole, please visit: [www.elearningontario.ca](http://www.elearningontario.ca)

## The OERB Today

As of August 2008, the OERB held over 11,600 resources in both French and English. Resources take a variety of formats. There are lesson plans in MSWord or PDF form; there are also interactive Flash activities such as quizzes, games and glossaries. The Ministry of Education has facilitated the development of online courses; these courses are “deconstructed” and uploaded to the OERB, meaning there are entire units and activities that can be accessed.

## Some Examples

### *Shapes and Colours: Kindergarten*

This is an example of an interactive, drag and drop resource intended for kindergarten students. Students listen to instructions, then drag and drop the shape with the correct colour to the appropriate bear. Young children love this resource.

### *Relationships in an Aquatic Ecosystem*

This is an example of a grade 11 science resource. It allows students to conduct a virtual experiment, which examines the biological relationship between a snail and a plant in the same aquatic ecosystem.

## How Can You Use the OERB?

The OERB's uses are many and varied. For teacher-librarians who create their own lesson plans or partner with classroom teachers to do so, the OERB is a terrific resource to check for content that can be incorporated into lessons. Because the material is varied in terms of subject matter and is related to varying learning styles and teacher/learner strategies, you can be assured of finding resources that will facilitate differentiated instruction. Content in the OERB is meant to support online learning, as well as in-class efforts. It is also intended as a useful tool for blended learning situations. Regardless of the classroom context, you can use the OERB to locate helpful content. Once you have found a useful resource, you are free to modify it to suit your own personal classroom requirements. If you should

# Getting to Know the Ontario Educational



make changes to a resource, we encourage you to return your modified version back into the OERB. This allows resources to be enhanced over time.

Teacher-librarians are in a particularly strong position to contribute valuable content to the OERB. Teacher-librarians have crucial skills in the area of information literacy and research; many of you have created resources intended to teach students these concepts. By sharing resources that you have personally used to teach these skills in your libraries and classrooms, you can build on the wealth of knowledge that is available in the OERB. Rose Burton-Spohn, an e-LO staff member, has adopted the phrase, the “power of one.” If each teacher and teacher-librarian contributed just one resource to the OERB, the number of quality resources available would be truly amazing.

As a teacher-librarian, you can teach your colleagues, as well as your students, how to use the OERB, advancing awareness of a valuable electronic resource and tool. By integrating the OERB into your teaching practices, you can instruct students on how to search it to find relevant content, and how to critically evaluate the content they find. This can only serve to enhance their research skills.

### How Do You Search the OERB?

To find content in the OERB, you can either search or browse for content. Searching is a straightforward process. You enter your search terms into the search box and the search engine retrieves results if it finds your terms in one of three fields: title, keywords or description. Results can be sorted by date, title or relevancy. If you are trying to find a resource that relates to a particular level of the curriculum, it may be easier to browse. You can browse by grade, subject/course title, strand and expectation.

### How Do You Contribute Content?

The contribution process is structured so that there is an easy and logical workflow. An interface has been designed to make it as simple as possible for you to share your resource, with minimal time and effort required. The first step is acceptance of the release form. It is important to know that this form does not mean that you have waived copyright to your own content. What it does mean is that you are requested to: a) confirm that you have copyright over all content and b) acknowledge that other users of the OERB may use your resource and, in the process, edit or adapt it. After you have completed the release form, you are asked to upload the file(s) that make up your resource.

Following the file upload, you are asked to complete a template in which you provide basic descriptive and pedagogical information regarding your resource. On this template, you can link to multiple strands and expectations, allowing you to make cross-curricular connections to your resource. You can also link your resource to multiple learning styles and teacher-learner strategies. After you have completed your submission, the resource is passed to a cataloguer who completes a full catalogue record for the resource, including providing subject access via Library of Congress Subject Headings. Once the cataloguing is complete, your resource becomes searchable in the OERB.

### Evaluating Success

Back in the days of OKNL, focus groups and consultations were conducted across the province to find out from Ontario educators what was required in order to satisfy their needs related to online learning. The reports that resulted from that communication all reflected the wish for an online resource that was both searchable and directly linked to curriculum. The consultations were an excellent starting point: they directed our developmental team's energies towards a project that was clearly needed and requested by the educational community.

Since its first inception, the OERB has undergone considerable change in look and feel. The interface that is used to upload resources has been improved over time. This has been due to evaluative feedback received from site users. To populate the repository with initial content, a pilot project was conducted. This served as a valuable exercise. Not only was excellent content submitted with which to seed the repository, there was also constructive feedback and evaluative comments received from the educational community regarding the workflow and functionality of the interface. Based on this input, the design of the interface was tweaked to make the process more intuitive. The pilot project helped those of us on the development team check the viability of the project and gave us confidence that it was a worthwhile initiative.

Based on statistics, the OERB is a clear success. All provincial district school boards (both public and Catholic) have signed on to be part of the e-Learning

Ontario strategy. This means that all teachers and teacher-librarians have access to the OERB. The usage statistics show steadily rising access and use of content in the OERB. By March, 2007 3,198 students and 14,388 teachers had accessed the OERB. The cumulative figures up to June 2008 show that 45,438 students and 88,888 teachers have now accessed the OERB – a significant increase on the part of both students and teachers. In addition, comments from the field have been positive in terms of the resources' quality and the site's ease of use.

The OERB is a resource bank that you, as a teacher-librarian, can turn to for content linked directly to the Ontario curriculum. You can also get directly involved by contributing resources that you have developed. Teacher-librarians have a wealth of knowledge related to information and media literacy. Help enhance the OERB with your much-needed skills, and contribute your "power of one." ■

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# Ask Ontario Grows in Evaluating Its Services

Louise Slobodian

**A** student begins a chat session by asking about recent medical breakthroughs in children's health. The reference interview reveals it's for an essay, she's just getting started, she'd prefer articles to books, and she has a valid library card. She is directed to her public library website, to the resources section, to databases, and specifically to the Canadian Reference Centre. In the 16-minute chat session, the student is told how to access the database and about other databases that could help with her topic. The student is on her way!

As school library staff members know so very well, students don't always know how or where to start their projects or assignments.

The two real-time online help services of Knowledge Ontario's Ask Ontario project – askON and 4ReSrch – have been helping students get started for a year now. The askON service of public libraries that launched in January is available to help students from K–12 with their information needs. The 4ReSrch service funded by Ask Ontario through TVO's Independent Learning Centre is focused on the curriculum-based research needs of secondary school students (9–12).

From the outset, quality monitoring and evaluation have been built into the services. Instant messaging and chat services provide an opportunity for evaluation and learning not often found in face-to-face reference work where, traditionally, the interaction between the librarian and the information seeker is not recorded or reviewed.

## Evaluation as opportunity

The benefits of such routine and rigorous scrutiny are many. It allows the Ask Ontario project team to build the case for continuing and expanding the services by bringing qualitative and quantitative results to directors and funders. It serves our library partners by letting them know how the service is doing, how many visitors from their libraries are using the service and the level of quality that their visitors are getting. As our data is analyzed over time, including the transcripts of thousands of chat sessions, it may contribute to the pedagogical understanding of how students learn, how they interpret their assignments when they seek help, and how they use the four pillars of research method that is taught in schools and applied in services like 4ReSrch. Finally, evaluation is key to working with a large and growing cadre of people who staff the services.

4ReSrch has a roster of 12 teacher-librarians who work in shifts of two to cover four hours in the evening from Sunday to Thursday. AskON, which expanded in September to include 22 public library systems in Ontario, as well as 17 college and university libraries, now has a trained staff of over 300.

So what evaluation methods are used? Both services garner statistics on volume and traffic, week over week, month over month to track how busy the services are and who is using them. The services capture the questions posed and transcripts of the complete chat

## Where do I send my student?

	4ReSrch	askON	ONdemande
Hours	Sunday to Thursday 5:30 pm – 9:30 pm	Monday–Thursday 12:30 pm – 8:30 pm Friday–Saturday 12:30 pm – 4:30 pm	Monday–Thursday 3:30 pm – 7:30 pm Friday–Saturday 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm
Staff	teacher or teacher-librarian	library staff	bilingual library staff
Focus	Grades 9–12	K–12	K–12 French or French immersion students
Online Access	www.ilc.org and go to Ask a Teacher	from the websites of any of the 22 public libraries offering the service	from the public library websites of Sudbury, Welland, Cornwall, Windsor, Pickering and Stormont Dundas and Glengarry County



Transcript of a typical exchange  
(all identifying information has been removed)

Length of interaction	Visitor status	Question asked
0:15:41	Student, K-12	I need info on John Labatt and Tommy Burns
XX:45:35	info:	Please wait for askON staff to respond.
XX:47:11	info:	You are now chatting with 'askON Staff'
XX:47:33	Visitor:	Hi
XX:47:44	askON Staff:	Hi Visitor. Is this a school project?
XX:47:55	Visitor:	yes, I have to write an essay
XX:48:19	askON Staff:	A biographical essay on these two men? About their lives & what they did, that sort of thing?
XX:48:26	Visitor:	yes
XX:48:32	askON Staff:	What grade is this for?
XX:48:43	Visitor:	10 history
XX:49:XX	askON Staff:	And what kind of sources are you looking for? Books, articles, websites?
XX:49:30	Visitor:	anything
XX:50:05	askON Staff:	I'm not familiar with Tommy Burns, can you tell me a little about him so I know I'm on the right track?
XX:51:06	Visitor:	he was a Canadian boxing champ
XX:52:32	askON Staff:	Here is a good little biography of John Labatt, from a reputable source – I'll send the link
XX:52:39	askON Staff:	<a href="http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.sp?Biold=41619">www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.sp?Biold=41619</a>
XX:53:22	Visitor:	that's Labatt??
XX:54:13	askON Staff:	Is there a different Labatt you are looking for? This is the Labatt who established the brewery in London, ON
XX:54:31	Visitor:	no, I thought you were sending Tommy Burns
XX:56:05	askON Staff:	I'm still looking...
XX:56:12	Visitor:	ok
XX:56:59	askON Staff:	Can you tell me when your project is due?
XX:57:19	Visitor:	2 weeks
XX:57:49	askON Staff:	ok thanks.
XX:58:43	askON Staff:	Here is a link to a picture and brief description of Tommy Burns on another good website... not much info, but the picture could be useful...
XX:58:55	askON Staff:	<a href="http://www.collectionscanada.ca/05/0527/05270306">www.collectionscanada.ca/05/0527/05270306</a>
XX:59:26	Visitor:	yeah, that's good
XX:01:10	askON Staff:	I can't locate any books specifically on either of these men in your library catalogue. For book sources, I suggest visiting the reference section of your local library, and seeing what Canadian encyclopedias they have, or checking out Canada's Who's Who – these books have bios of Canadian people. Ask a librarian and they will be able to point them out for you. But I'm still looking for articles/websites – do you have time to wait while I search?
XX:01:55	Visitor:	no, that's good. I can go tomorrow. Thanks
XX:02:16	askON Staff:	Ok, good luck. And come back and ask again if you need more help later on!
XX:02:33	askON Staff:	Please tell us how we did today by taking our survey. Just click on the 'close' button in the upper right hand corner of the chat box to end the session and take our survey. You will be able to request a transcript of our session there.

interaction. Some of the questions are sweetly funny ("I need help getting answers from my textbook but I don't have it with me... can u please help; can u help me prove read my intro?") while others demonstrate a maturity and eagerness that is inspiring to the teacher-librarians who staff the service. Here's a smattering from 4ReSrch:

- ◆ *What does the term "economic apathy" mean?*
- ◆ *I am doing research on HPV aka human papillomavirus and I was wondering where I could get very detailed and legitimate information on this topic.*
- ◆ *I need help with finding good sites, which show info on what Canadian astronauts have said about planets as they viewed them from space.*
- ◆ *I have to talk about three different international agreements and why they are necessary to protect the environment. So one of them I was thinking of doing is Convention on Biological Diversity. However I'm having some trouble understanding the concept.*
- ◆ *I need help with citation if that's ok. They asked us to cite our essay using MLA so that includes in-text, 1. I've seen a lot of ppl use footnotes so I wanted to know if I can too (like is that also MLA) and if so if I'm doing it right.*

askON uses exit surveys at the end of help sessions and even commissioned a comprehensive outside examination of the quality of help offered.

*A Grade 8 student goes to his local library website and sees that askON online research help is available. The student has a speech in five weeks on fetal alcohol syndrome and it is clear he wants a book, not web articles. askON staff checks the local library catalogue and finds a book that looks helpful, *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome* by Amy Nevitt. The book is at a branch in another town so askON staff tells the student how to get a PIN number from the library so he can make an online request to have the book sent to his local branch.*

### Expert analysis

The guiding principle of askON is that it provides "better information than you could have found on your own." A formal evaluation of the pilot phase of the service (January 8–March 31, 2008) was released in June 2008. It was based on 500 random transcripts (333 from the college/university service and 167 from the public library service). The analysis found the service met its stated goal 72.5% of the time.

The key findings found that askON:

- ◆ Provides visitors with high quality service;
- ◆ Successfully helps academic visitors find better information than they could have on their own 75.4% of the time;

- ◆ Successfully helps public visitors find better information than they could have found on their own 69.7% of the time;
- ◆ Achieves 86.5% visitor satisfaction in the academic service; and
- ◆ Achieves 78.3% visitor satisfaction in the public service.

The evaluation report recommended three areas of further training to improve service – these recommendations have already been implemented and were part of the training received by new staff that came on in September.

### Recommendations lead to tools

Evaluation doesn't stand alone of course. It's a means to building and improving service and supporting staff. Some terrific tools have been built into the services and been improved based on results and feedback.

For instance, askON has a "backchat" which allows the staff covering a shift to check in with each other for suggestions, information sharing and camaraderie. The backchat channel in many ways mirrors the way that libraries and library reference staff have always worked. A similar tool is planned for 4ReSrch.

Another important resource is the Ask Ontario Knowledgebase. Built using del.icio.us, a web-based social bookmarking tool, the knowledge base is available to the staff of both askON and 4ReSrch. The knowledge base is a series of reliable, authoritative publicly-available websites that can be used to help information seekers get started. Organized by subject headings derived from the Ontario curriculum, it is constantly being added to and improved to reflect new sources.

A footnote for researchers, academics and students: askON and 4ReSrch produce thousands of session transcripts requiring analysis. It is one of our goals to have this data analyzed in the coming months. It is our belief that this primary data represents an opportunity to delve into how students understand the research process, how one-on-one tutoring can improve their digital literacy and research skills and could have a potential impact on how these skills are taught to students through the curriculum. We welcome inquiries from those who could benefit from a co-operatively conceived project, perhaps as an academic thesis or project. Please contact Virginia Roy, Ask Ontario Project Manager, at [vroy@knowledgeontario.ca](mailto:vroy@knowledgeontario.ca). ■

Ask Ontario is a project of Knowledge Ontario, which is funded by the province to unlock digital content.



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# IS YOUR SCHOOL LIBRARY MAKING THE GRADE?

## SUGGESTIONS

**Sandra Ziemniak**

If you were to ask your patrons for feedback on your own library, what would they say? Would they effortlessly list the many times they felt satisfied with their library experience? Or would they, perhaps a little too enthusiastically, rattle off an inventory of complaints and roll their eyes? As teachers and librarians, we assess our students all the time. With the face and function of libraries changing more quickly than ever, patron feedback and ongoing library reflection is necessary in helping us to focus on effectively serving our clientele in a meaningful and positive way.

The Canadian Association for School Libraries (CASL) identifies the school library as, “an essential component of the educational process, contributing to the achievement of educational goals and objectives through programs and services that implement and support the instructional programs of the school,” and points out that the role and responsibility of the school library, “lies in the development of resource-based programs that will ensure that all the young people in our schools have the opportunity to learn the skills that will enable them to become competent users of information.” In the current climate of measured goals and public accountability it is important to ask ourselves if we are truly meeting this responsibility.

One way to measure a library’s impact is through quality feedback from the students. When canvassing fellow teacher-librarians, I found that many already employ a wealth of strategies to keep their finger on the pulse of their patrons’ needs. They support OSLA’s guidelines by trying to address the area of the user’s competency in accessing, selecting and using information. They offer brief, anonymous paper surveys handed out at the beginning of a research class to garner information and point their efforts in the right direction. For examples of brief, generic surveys, see the CASL’s publication *Achieving Information Literacy*.

For some of the more tech savvy students, you might want to create an online survey using one of the many free and user-friendly software programs available such as SurveyMonkey.com. The traditional “suggestion box” can work as well if you avoid closed-ended questions and provide prompts for your patrons to complete such as, “I really find \_\_\_\_ useful when I am locating resources because it helps me to \_\_\_\_,” or, “I wish this library had \_\_\_\_.” I think this would be helpful in my research because \_\_\_\_.” Remember to make the survey as anonymous as possible to reduce the risk of dishonest answers and quell the student’s fear of upsetting the librarian. It is also helpful to include your contact information on all library communication to facilitate comments and promote an “open door” policy.



Surveys are just one example of measurable client feedback. Statistics gleaned from your library catalogue system can also help paint a picture of your library, and help you target resources that may need additional or revamped marketing strategies. Many librarians print out weekly or monthly reports and use the information to focus their energies in a meaningful way. Janis Apted, Teacher-Librarian at Heart Lake Secondary School in Brampton, uses her statistics on fiction and peak times to continue to build a strong and exciting relationship with her students, saying, "Happy readers are frequent readers." She also uses statistics on when and how departments are using the library for instructional time, so she can effectively support their resource and circulation needs. (J. Apted, personal communication, September 30, 2008).

And let's not forget the teachers, administrators and our community users. While teacher surveys can sometimes elicit less than majority participation, I have found that asking teachers to allow you 10 or 15 minutes at the beginning of a meeting to develop or discuss their departments' needs and wish list will certainly provide you with an abundance of ideas, as well as teacher appreciation at being included in the process. You can also canvass your School Council, asking for both suggestions for improvement as well as the possibility of funding to make it all happen.

Being proactive is key. Stephanie Alexander, teacher-librarian at The Woodlands Secondary School in Mississauga, plans to start a Library Advisory Council this year where she is hoping to involve the students and teachers in brainstorming sessions and the decision-making process regarding policies and resources. Once in place, she hopes to continue to develop the library's goals in support of increasing information competency and begin a dialogue with the "non-users" in her school. (S. Alexander, personal communication, September 30, 2008).

Documenting feedback, measuring your responses and progress and staying in constant touch with your patrons will enable your school library to stay current, meaningful and in line with CASL's Standards of Practice. If, as the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child, school libraries must increase awareness of the importance of raising a literate child who is skilled in the use of a wide variety of information resources, a child that is well equipped and confident in his or her ability to successfully navigate the barrage of information they encounter daily. ■

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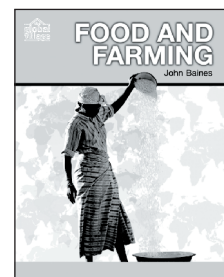
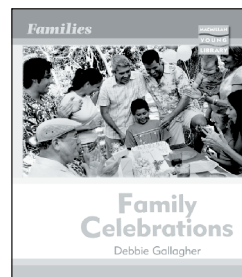
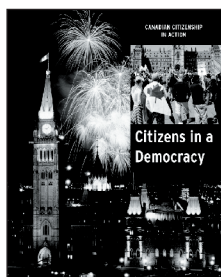
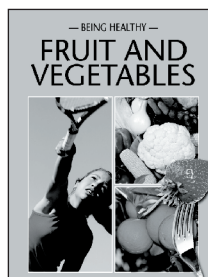
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# Teacher-Librarians Assessment and Evaluation

**S**tudents from K–12 are all expected to participate in rich models of inquiry and learn the necessary steps to research and communicate their learning. It is important for teacher-librarians to not only be part of the planning, development and delivery of an inquiry project, but to also take part in developing and applying assessment strategies with clear, directive feedback to support summative evaluations.

Assessment, diagnostic or formative assessment is continuous throughout the teaching-learning cycle as students demonstrate their level of understanding, thinking, communication and application of the subject expectations. Overall curriculum expectations are graded or evaluated for a mark that “counts.” However, the process and assessment along the way are equally – if not more – important.

In essence, as we guide students through the stages of research, we are actually assessing. Conferencing with students, questioning and providing rich feedback that moves students to further understanding are all forms of formative assessment. What we need to do is formalize these steps to provide students, teachers and parents with the documentation for reporting this progress.

The performance task or culminating activity is an inquiry model which both elementary and secondary teachers and teacher-librarians use to address and meet curricular expectations. The first part generally introduces a scenario, which places students within a problem-solving situation requiring in-depth research to find an answer or solution to the problem. Issues and concerns with surface inquiry questions, incomplete projects, poor use of resources or problems with plagiarism can be avoided with proper assessment strategies throughout the project.

A well-designed performance task or culminating activity can be directly related to high student achievement on a summative evaluation. The project should address overall Ministry expectations with unit lessons clearly linked to specific expectations. The final evaluation can be created and shared with students in the form of a rubric used to evaluate overall

expectations. With levelled criteria, students will be able to determine the targets or goals of a project, which will give them greater control over their learning and may increase their motivation to learn and work to the best of their abilities.

It is recognized that not all situations will allow for full-time partnering or a collaborative model where a teacher-librarian is able to work with the classroom teacher to develop, plan and deliver all parts. Nevertheless, in whichever stage the teacher-librarian has an entry point, they should ensure that they have assessment strategies ready to inform their own teaching as well as pass on their assessment data to the classroom teacher.

Opportunities to offer diagnostic and formative assessment and summative evaluations within the research process could include the following:

- ◆ Before the official start of a performance task or culminating activity, the teacher-librarian should do a quick diagnostic with the classroom teacher and the students to determine where the students are in their overall understanding of the research process and what level of familiarity they possess about the school library in general. This could be a fast question and answer session, email or general discussion. This information will assist with the entry point for the library visit. Perhaps a library orientation lesson will be needed to familiarize the students with the various resources available.
- ◆ In Stage One of the research process, teacher-librarians can use a variety of tools to collect data to inform their teaching. Diagnostic assessments can be done in the form of a KWL chart, pen/paper questionnaire, oral questioning, or response technology (clickers), which can be used to activate prior knowledge and inform the teacher-librarian of the skills or content information, that need to be taught.
- ◆ During the development of an inquiry question, students should be given explicit feedback on their overall question, for example,

# as Partners in evaluation

Karen Beutler & Katina Papulkas

*"Your inquiry question can be answered with a yes or no answer. What other words might you use to make it richer and broader? Have you thought about using the prediction and imagination sections of the Question Matrix?"*

By offering specific feedback and suggestions for improvement, they are allowing the student to take ownership for their learning and improve their chances of achieving a greater mark on their final evaluation.

- ◆ In Stages Two and Three, a variety of formative assessment strategies along with explicit feedback can be utilized to bring students to the next level: checklists, rating scales, anecdotal notes, tracking sheets and conferencing. The number of prompts or suggestions in feedback will be dependent upon the student and the steps needed to move them forward.

*"Your list of resources is current and will guide you in answering your inquiry question. Have you considered reviewing a resource with an opposing viewpoint?"*

For struggling students, ESL or Spec. Ed., you may want to simplify the language and be direct in the feedback.

*"Instead of the Venn diagram to process your information, a comparison chart will help you to organize it."*

- ◆ In Stage Four, the final stage of the research process, students transfer and share their learning. It is at this point that students use the rubrics provided for self and peer assessment of their final products with the opportunity to revise their work. During the conference, the classroom teacher will share the final evaluation with the student and give prompts for self-reflection and improvement. It is the student's responsibility to review the feedback and self-reflect in order to set goals for future projects. Teachers, together with the TL, must remember that only the evaluation by the classroom teacher is recorded for academic purposes.

## Final Thoughts

Assessment should be meaningful and connect to the criteria on the final evaluation; therefore, it should be structured with purpose. Ask yourself these final questions: "Why are we assessing?" "What are we assessing?" "Who should perform the assessment?" and "What tool is most effective?"

Assessment will inform teachers about lesson delivery and practice – when to move ahead, or identifying the need to go back and review. However, assessment and explicit feedback together will empower students to take responsibility for their learning and ensure the summative evaluation demonstrates their true level of achievement. ■

Below are our references that you may consider adding to the professional section of your resource centre.

Brookhart, S.M. (2008). *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students*. Virginia: ASCD.

Fisher, D. and Frey, N. (2007). *Checking for Understanding – Formative Assessment Techniques for Your Classroom*. Virginia: ASCD.

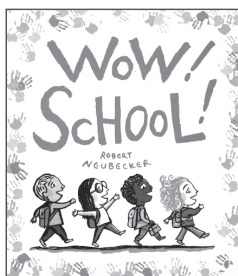
Lew, L and Shoemaker, B.J. (1998). *Great Performances – Creating Classroom-Based Assessment Tasks*. Virginia: ASCD.

Popham, J. (2008). *Transformative Assessment*. Virginia: ASCD.

Wormelim, R. (2006). *Fair Isn't Always Equal – Assessing & Grading in the Differentiated Classroom*. Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.



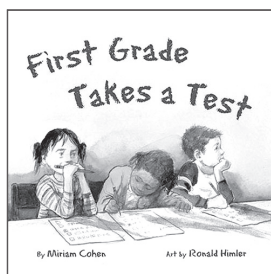
**S**chools are all about evaluation, especially in these days of standardized tests. It naturally follows that this issue's theme, "Evaluation @ Your Library," brings school stories to mind. These titles (some familiar, some new) are sure to get your kids buzzing about school.



**Wow! School!**  
Robert Neubecker  
2007  
9780786838967

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Primary Visual Arts  
Primary Media Literacy

**Summary:**  
It's Izzy's first day of school and, wow! She's excited! Bright, bustling illustrations paired with simple text make it a joy to follow Izzy through her special day. This is a great book to share with emergent readers who will love to read along and spot familiar objects, activities and books which include *No, David!*, *Madeline*, and the author's own *Wow! City!*

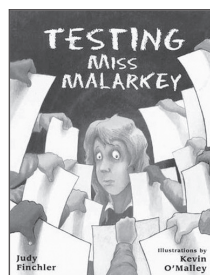


**First Grade Takes a Test**  
Miriam Cohen  
Illustrated by Ronald Himler  
2006  
9781595720542

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Kindergarten: Personal and Social Development  
Primary Language Arts: Reading

**Summary:**  
Originally published in 1980, this newly-illustrated version merits a second look. When a test comes to the first-graders from the principal's office, the children have a little trouble. The answers don't seem quite right. After the test, a student goes to a special class based on her high score. Name-calling and unrest follow, until the teacher explains that there is more to school and being a good person than tests.

This book emphasizes the importance of all types of learning. Cohen's sensitivity to the feelings of children, and Himler's perceptive illustrations make this a must-have for any library.

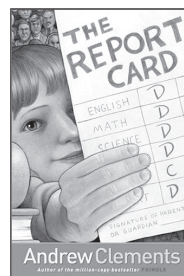


**Testing Miss Malarkey**  
Judy Finchler  
Illustrated by Kevin O'Malley  
2003  
9780802776242

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Grade 3 Language Arts:

Media Literacy  
Grades 3-6 Language Arts: Reading

**Summary:**  
Miss Malarkey's school year is off and running. Unfortunately, preparing for standardized testing isn't far behind. Teachers, students, and parents alike are preparing for "The Test" (think EQAO!) and the school is in chaos. The school staff and parents insist "The Test" is not important, but the bedtime story pop quizzes and "brain food" in the cafeteria suggest otherwise. The illustrations contribute to the over-the-top humor and provide fodder for discussion. Who is "The Test" really testing?



**The Report Card**  
Andrew Clements  
2005  
9780689845246

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Junior Language Arts: Reading

**Summary:**  
Nora Rowley is a genius. But she doesn't want that information to be too public since she's got a problem with grades... and testing. Ds and Cs make her happy because it makes her friend, Stephen, happy. She doesn't like how tests and grades make him feel dumb, so she hatches a plan to sabotage

test scores as the teachers prepare the kids at school for the state achievement test. This book highlights the timely topic of standardized testing and provides plenty of opportunity for lively discussion.

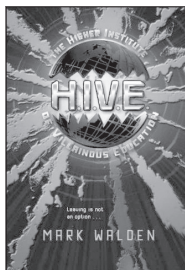


**The Mysterious Benedict Society**  
Trenton Lee Stewart  
Illustrated by Carson Ellis  
2008  
9780316003957

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Junior Language Arts: Reading  
Intermediate Language Arts: Reading

**Summary:**  
Are You a Gifted Child Looking for Special Opportunities? Reynie Muldoon is, so he answers this curious newspaper advertisement. After a series of mysterious tests, Reynie and four other kids are chosen by Mr. Benedict to infiltrate the "Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened" to sidetrack a plot to take over the world. Stewart's inventive use of common themes (orphans struggling against evil forces, abandonment, family, loyalty and facing one's fears) make this a joy to read and will make for an exciting read-aloud.

## “Must Have” purchases for your school’s curriculum needs



### H.I.V.E.: The Higher Institute of Villainous Education

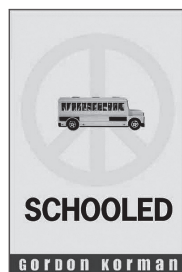
Mark Walden  
2008  
9781416935728

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Junior-Intermediate Language Arts: Reading  
Grade 9 English: Reading and Literature Studies

**Summary:**  
The home base of H.I.V.E. (“The Higher Institute of Villainous Education”) is a deserted volcanic island in the middle of a distant ocean. It’s run by a wicked, dastardly organization. Think Hogwarts for bad guys. Otto Malpense believes he and his fellow students are being held against their will until they graduate. Otto isn’t a

brilliant mastermind for nothing, however. He and his friends hatch a plan to pull off something that has never been successfully attempted before – they’re going to escape from H.I.V.E.!

Kids who love superhero stories will not want to put this down. There’s also a sequel, *The Overlord Protocol*.



**Schooled**  
Gordon Korman  
reprinted 2008  
9781423105169

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Grade 7 and 8 Health and Physical Education:  
Healthy Living  
Intermediate Language Arts:  
Reading

**Summary:**  
13-year-old Capricorn (Cap) lives on an alternative farm commune and is being raised by his grandmother, Rain. After an accident hospitalizes Rain, Cap is taken in by a social worker and is sent to middle school. How will Cap deal with the huge changes ahead of him after living in virtual isolation his whole life?

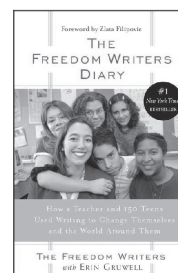
The story is told from varying characters’ points of view, which Korman handles beautifully. A definite must-have.

**The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them**  
The Freedom Writers  
1999  
9780385494229

**Sample Curriculum Links:**  
Grade 9 and 10 Individual and Family Living: Self and Others  
Grade 9 and 10 Individual and Family Living: Personal and Social Responsibilities

**Summary:**  
Dear Diary, Tomorrow morning, my journey as an English teacher officially begins...

When first-year teacher, Erin Gruwell, found that most of her students in a high school in Long Beach, California had never heard of the Holocaust, she was shocked. She used first-hand accounts of people like Anne Frank and Zlata Filipovic (who told of her life in war-torn Sarajevo) to teach her students not only English, but tolerance as well. Inspired, the students began to chronicle their own lives, showing the violence, homelessness, and racism that made up their reality. Calling themselves “Freedom Writers,” the students shared their stories in this book. ■

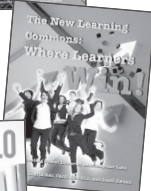


## WHAT’S NEW AT The OLASore★



### **Building Info Smarts**

Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan ★ Pembroke Publishers ★ 9781551382265 ★ 2008 ★ \$12.95  
This innovative flip book shows students how to identify their learning style as they build important information literacy skills. The book explores strategies learners need to be successful when working with digital media, as well as global and more traditional literacies.



### **New Learning Commons: Where Learners Win! Reinventing School Libraries and Computer Labs**

David V. Loertscher, Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan ★ LMC Source ★ 9781933170404 ★ 2008 ★ \$33.60  
Rethink everything about the function and role of school libraries and computer labs. The Open Commons is not only a flexible access space; it is a flexible physical and virtual space where teaching and learning is demonstrated for all to see.



### **Redefining Literacy 2.0**

David Warlock ★ Linworth Publishing ★ 9781586833332 ★ 2008 ★ \$41.94  
This seminal work on what literacy truly means in the 21st Century is filled with big, meaningful ideas. The purpose of this book is not to replace the three Rs, but to expand them to a model for literacy that applies to classrooms which are shape-shifting under the pressures of converging conditions. This is a must-read for all educators!



# Meet the Author

## Catherine Harris

**J**eff Szpirglas' books incorporate unknown facts, readers' fears and hilarious jokes. In 2008, *Fear This Book*, was a Silver Birch Non-Fiction nominated title. Jeff shares some insight into his creative influences and thoughts about reading and writing.

**Catherine:** As a child, did you read a lot and what kind of books were you drawn to?

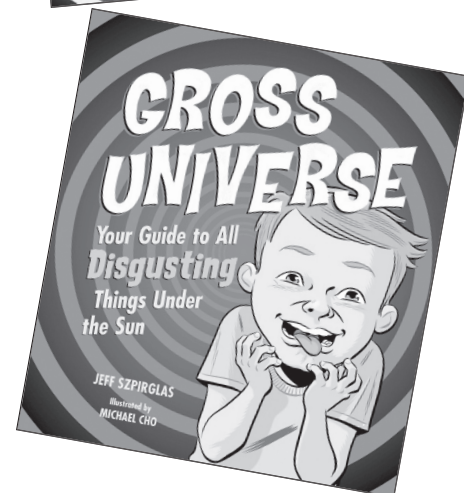
**Jeff:** I was an enthusiastic reader, though not necessarily a voracious one. My nose was parked in front of the TV as often as it was in books. Things that tended to grab my attention were usually funny and/or scary, which meant just about anything by Roald Dahl. Mordecai Richler's *Jacob Two-Two Meets The Hooded Fang* was a childhood favourite, as were the *Fighting Fantasy* series of role-playing books, which had the best titles (*Forest of Doom*, *Citadel of Chaos*, etc.) as well as lurid illustrations of monsters and dungeons and gore

– everything a growing boy needs.

**Catherine:** What prompted your interest in becoming a writer?

**Jeff:** I've wanted to be so many different things: herpetologist, forensic scientist, horror filmmaker, rock star, and the TV character Dr. Who. A combination of these would probably be my ideal job (although I must admit there's never a dull moment in my current life as a classroom teacher). With writing, I get to dabble in all of these professions and fantasies, if only vicariously.

Needless to say, I've been writing since I can remember. In elementary school, I used to cut up pieces of 8.5" × 11" paper and make my own comics and books about reptiles. By the time I hit high school, I was fortunate enough to have a few really good English teachers who suggested I try this writing racket as a career. (It took





me a while to realize that I'd need a day job as well.) It gives me a chance to process the random thoughts running through my head in a controlled way, and in a quiet environment... except for when I've cranked up my stereo to blast orchestral film scores or AC/DC albums for inspiration and/or rocking out to power chords.

**Catherine:** Your books have attention-grabbing titles, how do you come up with the subject of your books?

**Jeff:** Of the three books I've written for Maple Tree Press, only *They Did WHAT?!* was my original idea. *Gross Universe*, the first in the series, really began when I finally realized that Maple Tree published non-fiction, so I should stop submitting stories and focus on something they might actually have a need for. (It generally takes me a while to clue in to obvious things like this.) *Fear This Book* was initially going to be my kid's guide to science fiction, but Maple Tree thought that a book on fear would be better – and it gave me the chance to delve into all of the horrific and gruesome things that fascinated me as a kid.

The sensibility of *Mad Magazine* and Gary Larson's *Far Side* were a big influence on shaping the style of the books, as well as my experience working on college papers at York University, particularly when I would get frustrated with writing facts and want to come up with goofy jokes. A favourite recurring gag in the books is to use a "black square" on the page – in *Gross Universe*, it's a bona fide "Dandruff Landing Pad," while in *Fear This Book*, it's a sample of "Pure Dark." The fun is getting away with having a substantial section of the page without any actual text on it, although providing the

context for each of these black squares means I usually end up writing twice as much as I would normally. But it's worth it for the joke.

**Catherine:** You obviously do thorough research. Do you have a plan at the beginning of the research process, or does it evolve?

**Jeff:** There's always a plan, but I find the best ideas emerge more organically. As you can tell from my answers to these questions, I naturally go off on tangents. Research tends to begin with a fairly rigid structure, but I have the most fun when I veer completely off-course and stumble across a fact or idea that wasn't in the original plan.

Generally, my editor and I establish the number of spreads a book will have, and how many bits of text will appear on a given spread. Usually 5 or 6 paragraphs on various subjects can flesh out a page, once you factor in design and art. The goal is then to come up with a spread on the theme of the book with enough interesting facts to warrant it in the first place. Sometimes this is a breeze – with *Gross Universe*, I had to double up the pages on vomit and urine due to the wealth of material.

As I collect facts from various sources (public and university libraries, the Internet, magazines, and other media), I get a sense of how much to concentrate on a specific area. But the writing process isn't simply a cut-and-paste job. Often the best pages are the most spontaneous ones. For *Gross*, I ended up contacting a paleontologist at American Museum of Natural History who was so enthusiastic and had so many interesting things to share with me that it led to an entire spread on various gross facts from prehistory.



# Jeff Szpirglas

**Catherine:** How do you approach editing?

**Jeff:** Thankfully I have a good editor who can put up with me! The non-fiction texts are fairly easy to play around with once we've established the template to work from. I'm fairly meticulous when it comes to keeping notes. Generally any one given paragraph for a book has several sources that I embed in the text that's sent to my editor. I'll keep a hard copy of my research on hand, and will try to find an expert in the field to verify as much of the information as possible. This can be a rigorous process but I usually get in touch with some pretty interesting people from around the world – from professors who research slime moulds to people who sit in bathtubs full of live rattlesnakes.

The trick is to find a different way to spin the facts in a new and interesting way. Inserting a fart joke here and there usually does the job. I'm also really careful to word the facts as carefully as I can – sometimes the smallest of changes can alter the entire meaning of the fact, so it's tricky business. By the time we've arrived at the final copy, I go through the text word-by-word to make sure the manuscript is as accurate as can be.

**Catherine:** Does teaching inform your decisions as a writer?

**Jeff:** It does to some degree. I've been working with Junior students, who the majority of my books and projects have been aimed at. Certainly I get a sense of what students respond to, what's popular, and the level of engagement a variety of learners have with different texts. But I do write best by removing my teacher hat and putting on my writer hat, which is less analytical and more instinctive.

**Catherine:** You are known for non-fiction children's books; are you tempted to delve into fiction?

**Jeff:** Yes, please! I've been writing fiction ever since I could manipulate a pencil – I always loved coming up

with stories to amuse my classmates and myself. One of the first forays into writing beyond the confines of a classroom was through fan-fiction stories based on the old *Dr. Who* television series, which hinted that there might actually be people interested in reading my work besides teachers and peers. I'm only now reaching the point where I've sold some stories for actual cash, and have a few novels in development as well. Hey, do any publishers read this magazine?

**Catherine:** Has technology altered the writing process?

**Jeff:** It's made my life infinitely easier. I've got a bad left wrist (it shattered a few years ago – although not of its own free will), so the ability to type, backspace, and alter my text with few encumbrances allows me to write more or less at the speed I can come up with words. Also, I dig the green underline that appears in Microsoft Word informing me I've made a grammatical error. How many green lines did my responses to these questions have before I sent them to you? Don't ask.

**Catherine:** How can a school library staff member best encourage student reading?

**Jeff:** I think we're on the right track recognizing students' legitimate reading experiences that aren't traditional texts, such as on the Internet as well as other media that have their own conventions that need to be followed in order to make sense – comics and graphic novels quickly come to mind. While it's important to ensure that students are reading at grade-appropriate levels, the biggest draw to reading is having material that grabs the reader's interest – even those above and below level. We've also got a number of great reading programs out there for students, such as OLA's Forest of Reading® program, that puts ownership on students and empowers them to make choices about the books that THEY like.

Also, all libraries should stock at least 20 copies of *Fear This Book*. ■



# Essential Canadian Content for Schools From EBSCO Publishing

## ■ **Canadian Reference Centre™**

*Canadian Reference Centre* combines Canadian magazines, newspapers, newswires and reference books to create the largest collection of regional full-text content available to Canadian libraries. This database includes leading Canadian periodicals and international (US and UK) periodicals in full text; full-text reference books; 84,000 full text biographies and an Image Collection of 341,655 photos, maps and flags.

## ■ **Canadian Literary Centre™**

The *Canadian Literary Centre* consists of book and reference content from Essays on Canadian Writing Press (ECW Press). ECW Press also provides several individual monographs and biographies, essays and literary criticism. The database includes book reviews, essays, author biographies, and much more.

ad

## ■ **Canadian Points of View Reference Centre™**

This is a full-text database designed to provide students with a series of essays that present multiple sides of a current issue. The database provides information on 100 key topics of interest to Canadian researchers, each with an overview (objective background/description), point (argument), counterpoint (opposing argument), and *Critical Thinking Guide*. Some of the topics covered include: the Environment, Health, Human Rights, Crime, Race, Technology, Substance Abuse, and more.

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# *How to Convince Teachers to Collaborate With You, the Teacher-Librarian*

**Kelly Dawson**

**S**o school is in full swing and you have your elementary school library up and running, but no matter how hard you try, you can't talk the classroom teachers into taking some time out of their busy schedules to plan a unit or two with you. You've read the research: a qualified teacher-librarian, working in conjunction with classroom teachers, can have a positive influence on student achievement and learning. How do you get started? Here are some tips to help you woo teachers into planning with you.

◆ **Be visible and accessible!**

The seeds for collaborative growth need to be planted long before the end of the first month of school. The staff needs to see you as someone who is approachable in the staff room, in the hallways, or in the mailroom. Never skip out on social opportunities (like weekly recess treats) for developing open and friendly relationships with your colleagues. Who wants to plan with someone who is cold and reclusive outside of his/her domain?

◆ **Share something at every staff meeting!**

It could be a fantastic website for that new Media Literacy strand, or a fabulous print resource to support Character Education, or a Power Point presentation on "How to Avoid Plagiarism." Remind teachers that you can help implement all-of-the-above. You can make their jobs easier!

◆ **Use a "hook"!**

Show that you are technologically savvy by introducing a new technology, a new program or a

new website to one class. News travels fast! If the children are excited about the activity, they will share with their friends. Perhaps your school has a Smart Board that is under-utilized... make yourself the "expert" and invite one class at a time to come to the library for a demonstration lesson. Teachers will be more willing to "buy in" if you can show them a different way to engage their students.

◆ **Advertise!**

Let people know what you are doing! Establish a bulletin board of exciting library activities. Make announcements over the PA system to highlight these events. Update your library link to the school website to keep the community up-to-date. Always have a corner in the school monthly newsletter. Teachers will be more likely to connect with you if they can see that you make a difference.

◆ **Demonstrate your leadership skills!**

Make sure that you're involved in all the literacy initiatives in the school. Plan an evening event for your community, like a "pyjama reading night" for primary students, or a school-wide literacy evening. Show the staff that you are capable and knowledgeable. You are a person who can provide professional advice to others!

The bottom line? If teachers see you as approachable, well organized, professional and – most importantly – able to save them time and effort, they will be more likely to collaborate with you. ■

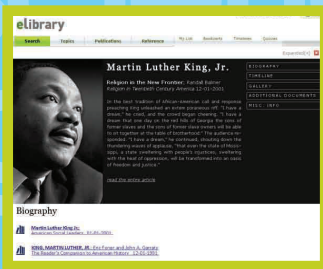
*Start with one tip and build upon it.  
The students will thank you for it.*

# The all new eLibrary. One word doesn't say it all.

history mathematics books art  
literature science 21st century  
reading poetry



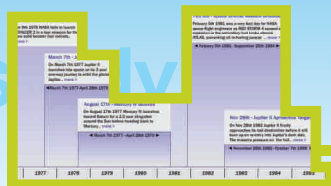
Classroom Connections



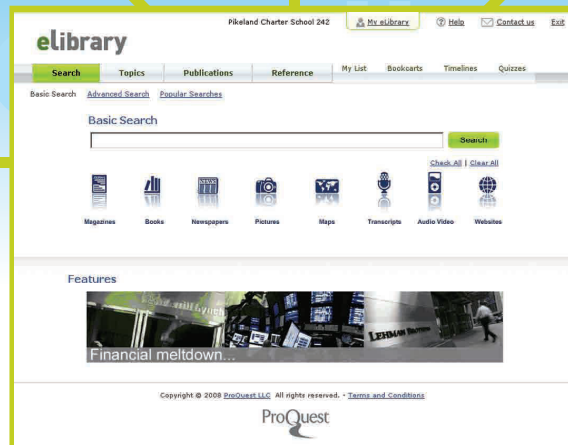
Smart  
Content



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- Save time and stay safe with more than 300,000 instructional tools, learning resources, and school-friendly images, hand-selected for safety and academic relevance.
- Results are automatically organized by grade and reading level and aligned with your provincial outcomes and expectations.

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- Deliver content appropriate for every child's individual learning needs with exclusive netTrekker d.i. tools: Read-Aloud Support, Customized content for ESL, Dictionary/Translation Hot Key.

#### Organize

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#### Integrate

- netTrekker d.i. works seamlessly with many programs already in place in your district to maximize the value of your technology investment, in areas such as: Assessment, Learning/Curriculum Management Systems, Library Automation, and Interactive Whiteboards.

You **inspire** learning.  
We provide the tools  
for **success!**



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