Top 10 Topics and Trends
Virginia Educational Media Association
November 2011

1. BYOD
      Norris and Soloway predict a 180 degree turnaround in the next four years! They consider bringing your own device the only practical 1:1 initiative, address the heterogeneity challenge, and assert that the BYOD future is inevitable. They also assert that it will lead to truly self-directed learners.
      “While a wide array of devices exists in schools today, more and more mobile devices, specifically smart phones, are showing up in classrooms with kids as young as eight, so there is plenty of consternation to go around…taking advantage of the technology that is already attached to the hips of their students makes sense” (pp. 22-23). This article explores both the pros and cons of allowing students to bring their own technology to school.
      “Smart phone access for middle and high school students jumped 42 percent from 2009 to 2010…when data is analyzed for differences based upon school demographics such as qualification for Title I funding or community type there is relatively little or no difference in the data results” (p. 4).

✓ “The school librarian integrates the use of state-of-the-art and emerging technologies as a means for effective and creative learning” Empowering Learners action II.III, p. 23.

2. E-books
      Prepared by the ALA Office of Information Technology Policy, while directed at public librarians, answers 35 questions that school librarians may ask as well, from “What are e-books?” to “What advantages do e-books offer over traditional print books?” to “What is the difference between Overdrive and vendors like Follett?”
      Sanborn explores collections of e-books available for purchase for high schools (ACLS Humanities E-books, NetLibrary, ebrary, Electronic Book Library, Overdrive) as well as those from free sources and upcoming sources. Her conclusion: e-books serve students well and save libraries money.
c. Polanka, S. (Ed.). (2011). No shelf required: E-books in libraries. Chicago: American Library Association. Topics addressed include e-books on the Internet; e-books and student learning; e-books in the school library; acquiring e-books, etc. NOTE: No shelf required 2 (also edited by Sue Polanka and published by ALA) will be available Winter 2011. “Included in this valuable resource are *guidelines for performing traditional library processes such as cataloging, weeding, archiving, and managing e-book accessibility for patrons with special needs *explorations of topics such as the e-book digital divide and open-access publishing *case studies from an array of academic, public, and school libraries, offering firsthand accounts of what works, what doesn’t, and why *discussions of the emerging model of the electronic-only library and the rich possibilities of enhanced e-books” Retrieved from http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=3525

3. Evaluation--Student Assessment
   a. Harada, V. H., & Yoshina, J. M. (2010). Assessing for learning: Librarians and teachers as partners. 2nd ed., revised and expanded. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. Harada and Yoshina discuss assessment, explain various tools useful in authentic assessment (checklists, rubrics, rating scales, conferences, logs, graphic organizers), give an elementary, a middle, and a high school example, and discuss how to communicate evidence of learning. This new revised edition has chapters on assessing for critical understanding, for dispositions, and for technology-related learning.
   c. TRAILS (Tools for Real Time Assessment of Information Literacy). Retrieved from http://www.trails-9.org/ “TRAILS is a knowledge assessment with multiple-choice questions targeting a variety of information literacy skills based on 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 12th grade standards. This Web-based system was developed to provide an easily accessible and flexible tool for school librarians and teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses in the information-seeking skills of their students. There is no charge for using TRAILS.”

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The school library program is guided by regular assessment of student learning to ensure the program is meeting its goals” Empowering Learners guideline, II.V, p. 27.

4. Evaluation--School Librarians

   Teachers will be evaluated on seven performance standards (objectives):
   Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge
   Performance Standard 2: Instructional Planning
   Performance Standard 3: Instructional Delivery
   Performance Standard 4: Assessment of and for Student Learning
   Performance Standard 5: Learning Environment
   Performance Standard 6: Professionalism
   Performance Standard 7: Student Academic Progress (which counts for 40% of the teacher’s rating, with standards 1-6 each counting 10%)

   *School divisions must implement this by July 1, 2012, but may do so earlier.


   “This system is based on a continuous cycle of assessment and evaluation within four domains of teaching responsibility…Planning and Preparation, Library Environment, Instruction, Professional Responsibilities.”


   Moreillon has developed a one-page self-assessment tool based on Empowering Learners that librarians can use to evaluate themselves as leaders, instructional partners, information specialists, teachers, and program administrators.


   Owen identifies the benefits of developing a librarian evaluation form and provides a three-step solution. She also gives ideas for sample evidence documents.

The school library program is built by professionals who model leadership and best practice for the school community” Empowering Learners guideline, IV.I, p. 45.

5. Gaming
These educators collaborated and “put together a lesson that integrates technology and content with pretzels, Twizzlers candy, and an online game reminiscent of Whack-A-Mole” (p. 35). The authors walk you step-by-step through the lesson that fully integrates technology, teaches content, and engages students.

Based on the belief that games are an important part of educational development, the Genesee Valley (NY) Educational Partnership “has developed a collection of games appropriate for use in school libraries.” They’ve identified games for all levels—PreK-K to high school—and aligned board games to the AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner. They even offer a sample MARC record for cataloging games!

“Though the focus on gaming in educational settings now centers on technology formats, room still exists for library-skills games that require movement, interaction among peers, and use of library resources” (p. 19). Siderius discusses how to create games and offers some game adaptations to get you started...book bowling, hot potato, stump the school librarian, and more.

Crews asserts that “by using games to support the curriculum, we can give students opportunities to experience play, while at the same time promoting student achievement” (p. 10). She describes successful board game use in high school science and middle school math classes and offers suggestions for starting your own board game collection.

Mayer and Harris reintroduce board games, discuss games for 21st century learners, share information regarding games in school libraries using the Genesee Valley Model, and recommend top games for elementary, middle, and high schools.

✔ The school librarian stimulates critical thinking through the use of learning activities that involve application, analysis, evaluation, and creativity.” Empowering Learners action, II.IV, p. 25.

6. Leadership

Empowering Learners lists “leader” as one of five roles for today’s school librarians. “Leadership is integral to developing a successful 21st century school library program” (p. 16).

“In most buildings we are the only professionals involved with the consumption and production of knowledge” (p. 18). Stephens asserts that we should set great expectations, demonstrate that we impact every student, and be sure to look toward the future.

Coatney acknowledges that this is a challenging time for school librarians but suggests that hard times provide opportunities for visionary leadership.


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“In clear, simple, and practical language, this book empowers school librarians by helping them understand what other stakeholders in a school need and want. Demonstrate their importance to administrators, teachers, and parents. Plan strategically in both their personal and professional lives. Master important tools like advocacy and marketing.”

✓ The school librarian is a visible and active leader within the school community”

_Empowering Learners_ action, IV.I, p. 45.

7. Parents


   Whelan relates the story of the three Spokane moms who successfully advocated for school libraries in Washington state.


   This toolkit is directed at parents and gives them seven steps to “follow for improving reading, creative thinking, problem-solving skills and information literacy education in your schools.”


   Deskins states, “One of my most important goals as a school librarian is to inspire my students to become lifelong lovers of reading. I recognize that I cannot do this alone, and one of my most powerful partners is a parent (feel free to insert grandparent, guardian, or other caring adult)” (p. 34). She gives practical hints for sponsoring family literacy nights and family book clubs.


   One of a series of four brochures “that allows each stakeholder group to visualize a model school library program from their perspective. Each brochure outlines goals and key questions specific and important to that audience helping school librarians lead unique conversations, set goals and expectations for the program and the stakeholder, and maximize the potential of the school library program.”

✓ The school librarian encourages parents and community members to support learners by volunteering in the library, participates in PTA/PTO or other school-based parent groups, encourages visits to and use of the library by parents…”

_Empowering Learners_ actions, III.VII, p. 41.

8. QR Codes


   In this book “for information professionals and librarians who want to reach out to their users with the tools of Web 2.0 wisely,” chapter 5 addresses Mobile life and QR Code. “QR Code barcodes are square, with blocks of black and white pixels arranged in such a way that a mobile phone’s camera can recognize them, align them, and pull data from them…which then loads as a web page, or a text message, or an image.”

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Quick response codes allow marketers to provide interactive content in an otherwise static environment. For example, want to know more about the book you just picked up? Use your smartphone to scan the QR code to watch a book trailer from the publisher. Dobbs describes how easy it is to make a QR code and shares numerous ideas for using them in our libraries.

From the Educause “7 things you should know about” series, learn what QR codes are, who is using them, how they work, why they are significant, what are the downsides, where are they going, and what are the implications for teaching and learning.

✓ “The school library program includes flexible and equitable access to physical and virtual collections of resources that support the school curriculum and meet the diverse needs of all learners” *Empowering Learners* guideline III.III, p. 33.

9. STEM
Kimmel shares numerous ideas for ways to use math and to reinforce math concepts in library lessons.

In this article, Toomey highlights the extensive free resources available from the NSDL to support STEM. He describes NSDL as “an all-encompassing, reliable, and trusted online library of information that can certainly help any educator save time and effort when looking for teaching resources” (p. 56).

Chen asks for ideas for a workshop she is conducting for her teachers but, in doing so, also shares links to good resources.

✓ The school librarian supports educational and program standards as defined by the local, state, and national associations and stimulates critical thinking through the use of learning activities that involve application, analysis, evaluation, and creativity” *Empowering Learners* actions, II.IV, p. 25.

10. Transliteracy
“Transliteracy is the ability to read, write and interact across a range of platforms, tools and media from signing and orality through handwriting, print, TV, radio and film, to digital social networks. The definition of transliteracy continues to be expanded and refined, but… Basically, transliteracy is concerned with what it means to be literate in the 21st century.”

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Jaeger defines transliteracy, relates it to the Common Core standards, and asserts that it crosses the curriculum. She addresses reading print vs. reading online and suggests that transliteracy can revitalize our library programs.

Valenza has created a poster depicting the skills needed “for success in new and emerging information and communication landscapes.”

“Transliteracy and the School Library Program is designed to help school librarians develop strategies for integrating transliteracy skills into subject areas across the curriculum. Transliteracy is the ability to read, write and interact across a range of traditional and modern platforms, tools and media.” The fall forum will be held October 12-13, 2012, in Greenville, SC.

✓ “The school library program provides instruction that addresses multiple literacies, including information literacy, media literacy, visual literacy, and technology literacy” Empowering Learners guideline II.III, p. 23.

“The mission of the school library program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. The school librarian empowers students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information...” Empowering Learners, p. 8.


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