The Library Collection Plan (Project 1 / Part 2)

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LIBS 678: Selection, Evaluation, and Utilization of Materials NK-12

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<u>The Library Collection</u>

      The King George Middle School library is comprised of a large open room that is located as the center hub of the Language Arts, mathematics, and social studies classrooms. Each of these classrooms border the outside of the library and connect to the library through doorways scattered along the perimeter of the room. When one arrives to the main doors of the library, the circulation desk is immediately to the right. Two computer stations provide students with twenty computers, and a large computer lab is located inside the library, which houses thirty additional computers. The library collection is housed on tall and short bookcases arranged along the perimeter of the room and jutting into several rows in the middle of the space. A scattering of chairs and bean bags are provided as seating, along with a half dozen small tables and plastic student chairs. As one visually scans the room, one may notice the lack of décor in the space. The two bulletin boards permanently attached to the walls are blank, except for a row of old, tattered border. There is a lack of signs in the library, so it is difficult to figure out where each section is located.

      According to the current librarian, who uses the Follett-Destiny cataloging system, the school's current collection includes 17,778 books. There are 100 DVDs which include only professional materials (DVDS that teachers can check out for instructional purposes, not entertainment). Our school library also houses 162 video cassettes even though we no longer provide VCR's in the classrooms. There are 124 CDs for student and teacher use. Most of these CDs correspond to literature that is used in the Language Arts classrooms. There is one computer file that was purchased with library funds. It is used to assist students in reading nutritional labels in their

physical education/health classes. While the school library has 96 digital books, we do not have any e-readers on inventory. These books can be read on the computers in the library, however.

The library does not currently subscribe to any periodicals. With the current budget, the librarian prefers to buy books with her funds. Approximately twenty years ago, the library budget included $1000 for just periodicals, but the library no longer has such a large budget.
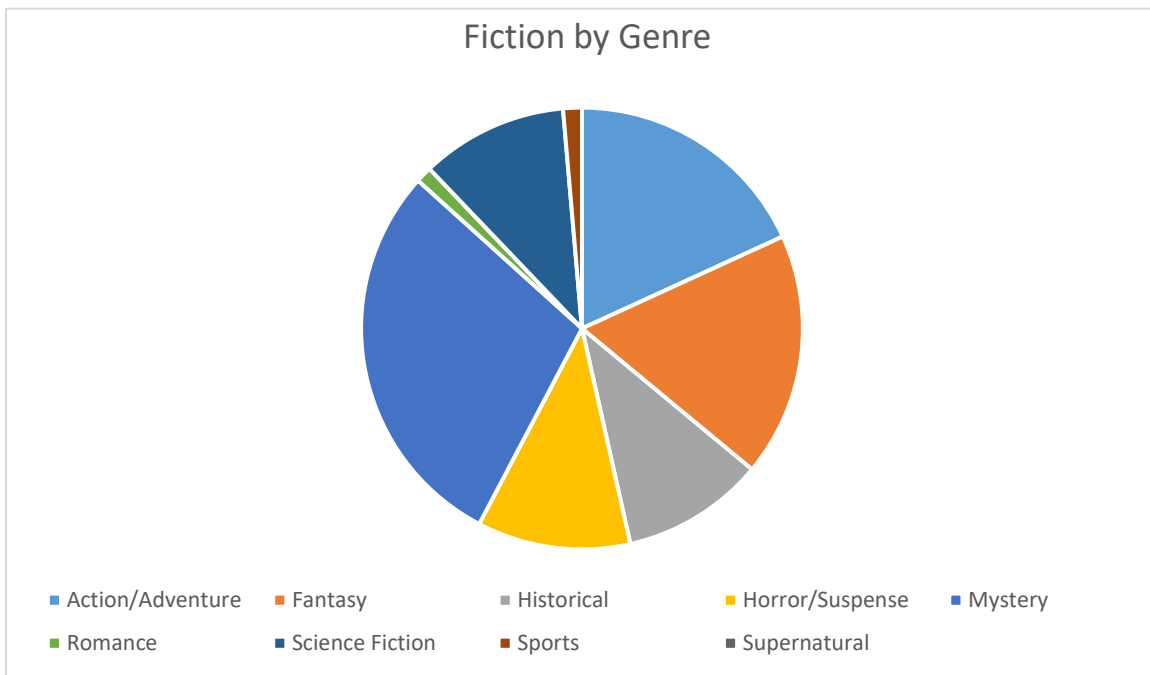
The library budget also provides for several computer programs, such Destiny-Follett, the online card catalog. The library has also purchased cobblestoneonline.net, a computer resource for history and social studies classes. The program Grolier Online Passport, which was created by Scholastic, is also available. We have three versions of the World Book Encyclopedia available online: World Book Advanced, World Book Kids, and World Book Students. For our ESL (English as a Second Language) students, we provide "Enciclopedia Estudiantl Hallazgoes", a research program in Spanish.

According to my faculty handbook, the library's mission is as follows: "The library is considered to be the most important of all instructional aids. To insure full benefits of its services, teacher should become well acquainted with all aspects of the library early in the year." While this appears to be more of an instruction for teachers, it is as close to a mission statement as I have been able to find at my school.

The following guidelines are also set forth in the faculty handbook, pertaining to faculty and student use of the library:

- Teachers who wish to have students check out books must sign up to bring in their entire class for no more than 30 minutes. If students wish to use the library services during lunch time, they must sign out in the cafeteria and report to the library for the entire lunch period. They may not bring food into the library.

- Teachers who wish to use the library for student research must sign up with the librarian.

- Teachers are expected to stay with their classes the entire time that they are using the library.

- Unless a student is accompanied by a teacher, all students are required to have a pass in order to enter the library. If they leave the library, they will need another pass to re-enter the library.

- The librarian is available to collect research materials and send them to a teacher's classroom on a cart for use in the classroom. The teacher must alert the librarian well in advance and must also inform the librarian when they are finished with the cart so that the books can be re-shelved.

- Teachers who send their students to the library to make up quizzes and tests must understand that students will be on their honor. The librarian cannot act as a monitor for those students.

- Encyclopedias and all research materials can only be used in the library.

The fiction and nonfiction collections are both labeled with the following information: genre, call number, and Lexile score according to the SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory). The Lexile score is readily visible so that students know if a book is appropriate for their reading level, according to the librarian. However, this practice is in direct conflict with the recommendation of the American Library Association, which states that "labeling and shelving a book with an assigned grade level on its spine allows other students to observe the reading level of peers, thus threatening the confidentiality of students' reading levels" (ALA, 2011). It is recommended by the ALA that students' reading levels be known only by the teachers, the specific student, the parents and the librarian (ALA, 2011). The fiction collection is organized into the following genres:

Fiction by Genre

■ Action/Adventure   ■ Fantasy   ■ Historical   ■ Horror/Suspense   ■ Mystery
■ Romance   ■ Science Fiction   ■ Sports   ■ Supernatural

Book Genre	Number of Books in Library Collection
Action/Adventure	937
Fantasy	921
Historical	540
Horror/Suspense	579
Mystery	1495
Romance	61
Science Fiction	555
Sports	71
Supernatural	235

The library's budget has been dwindling over the past decade. Fifteen to twenty years ago, the budget was a high of $18,000 and this past year, the 2014-2015 yearly budget was just $3500. From that budget, the librarian was responsible for purchasing the online resource programs, new books, and library supplies. My school's current library budget puts my school below the 50th percentile according to the AASL: School Libraries Count! data. The middle school average budget, according to the data report, is more than double my school's library budget--$7,641.

According to the librarian's purchase reports on Destiny-Follett, the following graph shows how many books have been purchased over the past fifteen years:
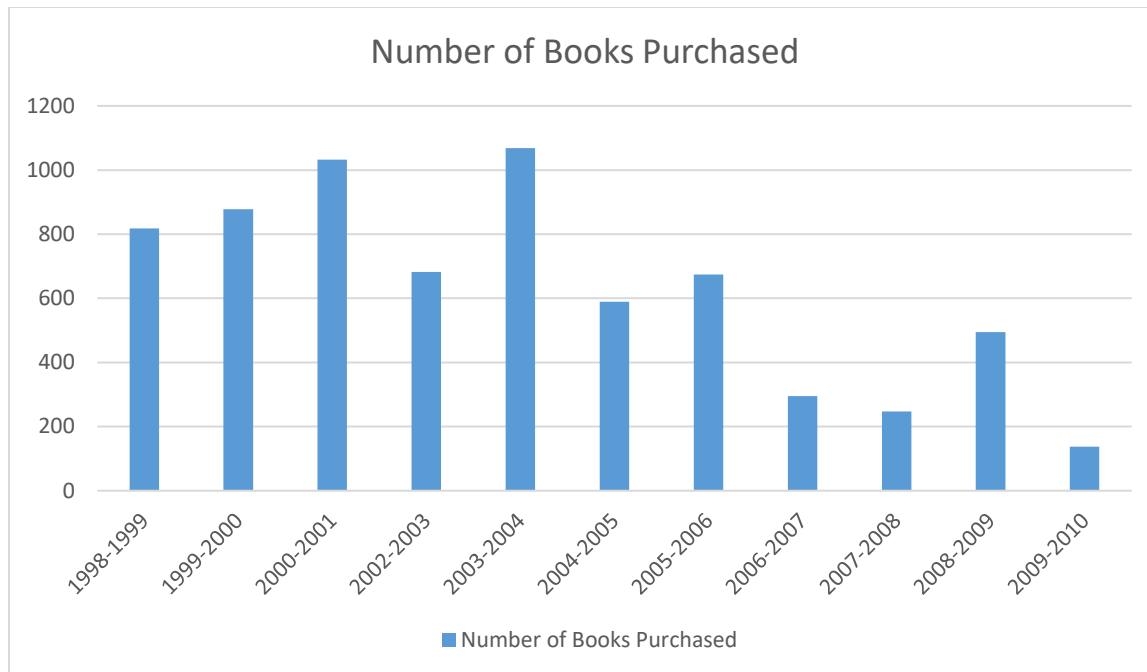
Random Sampling

In order to complete a random sampling, I followed the instructions from the class lecture. Because I wanted to complete my random sampling on biographies, I first used Destiny-Follett to find out how many biographies are in the library's collection. Once I found out the total number of resources (1419), I divided that number by 40 and got 35. I located the middle of the biography section (letter "M" in the call number 92 section), and starting at that point, I counted forward 35 books. After I finished the biographies from "M" through "Z", I went back to my starting point and started counting backwards by 35 books at a time until I reached the beginning of the collection. As I looked at each book in my random sampling, I wanted to see whether the book was about a female. In total, I sampled 32 books and found that 14 books were about females and 18 books were not about females. When I take number of biographies that did feature a female (14) and divide that number by 40, I found that 35% of the biography collection matched the criteria. I was actually

surprised that I found so many biographies on females in the collection. I expected to find a very high percentage of biographies that featured males.

Policies and Procedures of the Library

The library catalog is available in an online program on all of the computers in the middle school. Students can access it through a folder called "library links" on the main desktop, and the folder contains the card catalog and shortcuts to several online research programs that are supported by the library funding. One of the benefits of the catalog, which is supported by Destiny-Follett, is that it provides internet links for any topics or keywords that a student is searching for in addition to books. Students are able to find information in print form and online at the same time with one search.

Students are allowed to check out two books at a time, which is a school procedure created by the librarian. The "two books only" policy is not a district wide policy, nor is it stated in any manuals. The books can be renewed twice, which means that they can have a book for a total of 6 weeks. Library fines are 3 cents per day past the two-week checkout period. The library fine has not increased at all since the school's opening in1968. The librarian said that she feels very strongly that a fine should be charged to help teach responsibility; currently, fines are not charged for overdue items at the county's elementary schools or high school. The librarian pointed out that the public library charges a fine so she thinks that kids need to know at some point that they need to get their things back on time.

At my middle school, students visit the library with their Language Arts teacher twice a month. The students mill around the library, glancing at book titles, poking each other, and generally hanging out until their teacher calls them back to line up at the library doors. Only a handful of students religiously check out books, and these students often visit the library during arrival time in the morning or during their lunch period. As you can see in the graph below, the number of books checked out by students each month varies widely depending on schedule, weather, holidays, required testing, and class assignments. For example, there were 415 books checked out in September of 2014, which is a busy month for the library. All of the Language Arts classes visit the library for a tour and the students are encouraged to check out a book so that they can see the circulation process in action. There were only 114 books checked out in January, which could be due to inclement weather, school closings, and the end of the semester (mandatory testing). We saw a rebound with 516 checked out books in April which is understandable because the Language Arts classes all had a mandatory project due that included reading five books of different genres.

Books Checked out in KGMS Library 2014-2015
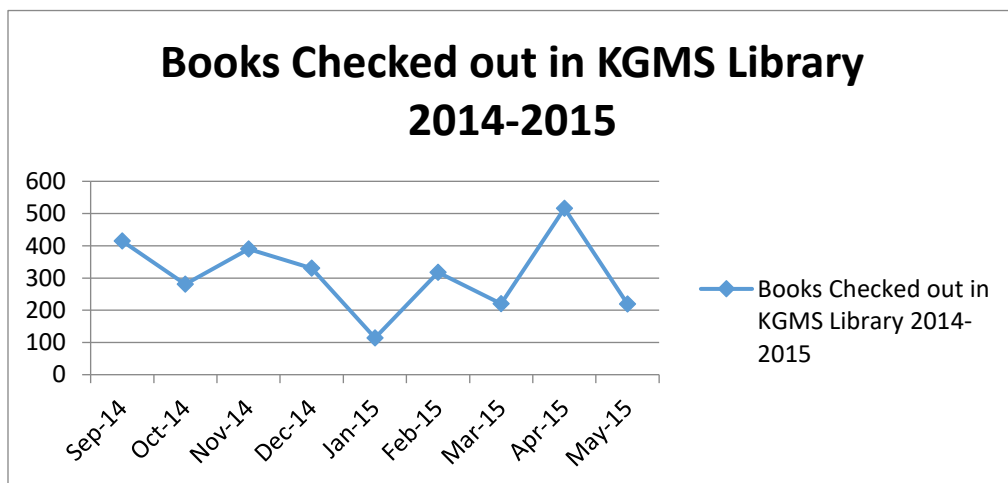
The school district's library/media center's policy is as follows from the policy manual available on the

school website:

Each school shall maintain an organized library media center as the resource center of the

school and provide a unified program of media services and activities for students and teachers

before, during and after school. The library media center shall contain hard copy, electronic

technological resources, materials, and equipment that are sufficient to meet research, inquiry,

and reading requirements of the instructional program and general student interest. Each

school shall provide a variety of materials and equipment to support the instructional program.

Adopted: June 22, 1992

Revised: August 9, 2000, March 23, 2005, May 13, 2013

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Legal Ref.: 8 VAC 20-131-190.   (http://www.kgcs.k12.va.us/sbo/policy_manual/PolicyI/IIBD.pdf)

A board-approved selection policy provides criteria which should be considered

when purchasing books for the school library. The library policies were quite eye-

opening when I was finally able to find them. I have arranged the current policies and

actual practices into a chart below for comparison:

Current policy according to the school district	Actual practice at KGMS
A schedule that provides for library use by all students	The librarian follows this policy by creating a schedule that includes a bi-monthly visit by each of the Language Arts teachers. Students are also able to visit the library before school and during lunch.
• A regulation for the selection, evaluation, withdrawal, and disposal of all instructional materials purchased by the School Division, with	The librarian informed me that she is able to buy any books that she likes and has almost no input from the Language Arts teachers or

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clearly stated procedures for handling challenging, controversial materials;	administration. The librarian currently chooses to make a mass purchase from the "Virginia Reader's Choice" collection and receives 100-150 books from the publisher that are pre-selected for our grade levels. She said that this is much easier and quicker than going through multiple websites or publishers. There is currently a form for challenging materials, as seen below.
• Cataloging of all library media in the school, which promotes accessibility and ease of retrieval;	The library collection is cataloged and the card catalog link is available on all school computers.
• Included are a functional loan system, an annual inventory of materials and equipment, and a procedure for screening and discarding media	Each teacher is required to perform a yearly inventory of all materials, including the librarian. When I asked the librarian how she chooses which books will be weeded out each year, she told me that it's an ongoing process and she basically runs a report of which books are oldest and checked out the least often. She also visually inspects the shelves to see which books are in disrepair.
An information file that reflects curriculum needs and contains pamphlets, clippings, pictures, and information about local resources;	This information file is not available in the library. There is a rack in the front office that offers information on local resources.
• A minimum of two complete sets of encyclopedias, one of which has been copyrighted within the last five years;	We have online access to over three different sets of online encyclopedias. This information is constantly updated.
• An unabridged dictionary and abridged dictionaries;	We no longer have print dictionaries on the library because of the abundance of dictionary programs online.
• Newspaper subscription(s) providing daily, local, state, and national news;	One local newspaper—"The Freelance Star"—is delivered every day for use in the classrooms.
• Fifteen subscriptions to periodicals for elementary schools and 25 subscriptions for middle and secondary schools. These subscriptions are pertinent to the school program;	The middle school currently has zero periodical subscriptions.
• A current and accessible educational professional library in each school, or in a centralized instructional media center in the School Division;	The library is available to all students and teachers in the building. It is centrally located for use.
• Materials such as prints, charts, posters, recordings, (disc and tape), filmstrips, multimedia kits, models, study prints, slides, transparencies, videotapes, videodiscs, computer software, and	The library only purchases videotapes and videodiscs. The other materials listed on the policy are the responsibility of the content area teachers.

maps and globes that are carefully selected to meet the needs of the instructional program;	

The policy also states that "collection requirements (20% of which may be non-print instructional material) for each library media center shall be as follows:

• Ten books per student in elementary schools;

• In middle and secondary schools, a basic collection of 1,000 well-selected titles. (In schools with more than 150 students there shall be a minimum of seven books per student);

• Fifty percent of the minimum basic collection shall be available for circulation during the first semester in a new school.

Our middle school library is well above the prescribed collection of 1,000 well-selected titles with our current collection of over 17,000 books. In our collection, over half of the books were published before 1995, according to Destiny-Follett data. At the policy's minimum of 7 books per student, our collection should have at least 4508 books (644 students x 7 books), which we greatly exceed. The problem with the size of our collection is that many of the books are clearly outdated, in disrepair, or are rarely checked out. The majority of our circulating books are nonfiction, as shown in Destiny-Follett. The most recent additions to our collection usually receive the most attention, and therefore, are the most often checked out by students.

Percentage of Circulation by Category in 2014-15
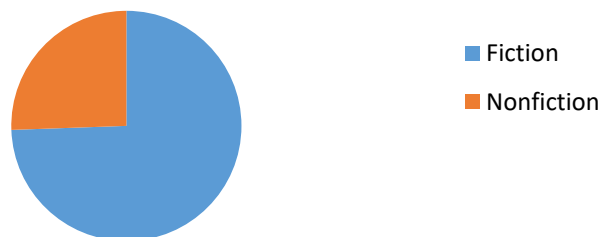
For challenged materials, I was able to find a form in the school board policy manual that was created in 1992 and last modified in 2005. The form states the following:

The staff member initially receiving a complaint about instructional materials will refer the complaint to the building administrator. The complainant will be informed of the particular place the questioned materials occupy in the educational program and their intended usefulness. The administrator may involve appropriate district personnel in the explanation of the materials selection procedure, criteria, and the qualifications of those persons selecting the materials. In the event the person making a complaint is not satisfied with the initial explanation, he/she may complete a review request form and file it with the Superintendent. All formal complaints to instructional materials must be made on this form and filed by a resident of the School Division. Within 10 business days, the Superintendent, or persons designated by the Superintendent, will file the form with the review committee. The Instructional Materials Review Committee will meet in open session and distribute copies of the completed complaint form; distribute copies of the challenged materials as available; give the complainant or group spokesperson an opportunity to talk about the complaint; and provide reputable professional views of the materials, when available. At a second or subsequent meeting, the committee will make its recommendation in open session. The committee's final recommendation may be to take no removal action or to remove all or part of the challenged materials from all or part of the school environment. The

written recommendation and its justification will be forwarded to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will consider the committee's recommendation and make a decision. The Superintendent's decision will be forwarded to the Board. Upon review by the Board, the Superintendent will notify the complainant by letter of the Division's action. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Division's decision, he/she may request that the matter be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board will decide at that time whether it will conduct a hearing or abide by the original decision. Questioned materials purchased through normal selection procedures will usually remain in use throughout the review process. In exceptional circumstances the instructional materials review committee at its initial meeting may temporarily suspend use of the materials pending final determination by the committee, Superintendent and the Board. File: IGG-R Page 2 The Review Committee will be made up of the following members: director of instruction, two students selected by the high school building principal (if high school materials are involved); one teacher, one media specialist, one building principal, five community members--all appointed by the Superintendent. The chairperson of the committee will not be an employee or officer of the Division. Issued: June 22, 1992 Reissued: March 23, 2005

This policy seems very similar to other policies that I researched while finding information for this assignment. The 10-day requirement to file a complaint forms seems to be a norm in the school community as well as the creation of a review committee and the requirements of its members. When I asked my

librarian about challenged materials, she said that she had only had one formal complaint made in her 36 years of working at KGMS. She said that several parents email her during each school year to ask that their child not be allowed to check out certain books, but there was only one formal complaint that went all the way to review.

Curriculum Map

Because my county does not have curriculum maps for its content areas, I am using the curriculum maps from the school district where I did my student teaching. Spotsylvania County is a neighboring county approximately forty minutes away from King George County, and their curriculum maps are available on their county website. I chose two separate grade levels and subject areas to complete this section: second grade social studies and middle school life science. The Spotsylvania County Schools' curriculum maps are set up in a similar fashion: the top of the paper includes the VA SOL title and number and the rest of the map is a series of boxes that contain information on the essential questions, essential understandings, essential core vocabulary, resources, and extension activities (SPCS). Here are the specific SOL areas below:

- Civics STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT {SS2.12a) Essential Understandings/Questions: ♣ Virginia cities and counties have elected state and local government officials. - How are state and local government officials elected?

- VA SOL: LS.2 The student will investigate and understand that all living things are composed of cells. Key concepts include a) cell structure and organelles; b) similarities and differences between plant and animal cells; c) development of cell theory; and d) cell division.

I used the Destiny-Follett online catalog to search for books that pertain to each SOL. For the Civics SOL, I found 23 books that included the key words "state government" or "local government". By refining my search, I was able to find four books that were specifically written about Virginia government. I feel that the library collection is certainly adequate to meet the needs of this specific SOL area if they were being used by a small group of students. To support research for a typical class of 15-25 students, more books would have to be purchased for the collection. A quick search on Amazon for books about Virginia government yielded over 10,000 results, so there is certainly room for improvement. I also looked through our DVD collection and found 3 videos: two from School House Rock and one entitled "School Government for Children".

For the life science SOL, I was able to find 17 books when I searched for the keywords "plant cells" and "animal cells". When I visited the shelves to find the books, I found that many of the books I found were actually about just plants or animals, but did not go into much detail about either at the cellular level. When I tried to find books that included information about the organelles of each type of cell, I was disappointed to only find six books. If I was trying to use the library to do research on this particular SOL, the students would be very frustrated by the lack of research material. On the other hand, if I was just researching different types of

plants and animals, there was an abundance of books on specific species.   I was also able to find several DVDs on plants and animals, including ones by Bill Nye, Jeff Corwin, and National Geographic.

   In terms of lenses, the materials I found were organized within the nonfiction section by Dewey Decimal numbers and were print based for the books (no e-books for either SOL were found). Reading levels were found to be on grade level for each book (grades 6-8) and were published within the last fifteen years. I found the science books to be more appealing visually because of the colorful illustrations and diagrams. The history books on government were less appealing to me because of the amount of text and lack of illustrations. As a science teacher, I am probably more partial to science material, anyway.

Definition of a 21st Century Library Collection

   The mission of the school library is to function as a comfortable, safe, and student-centered location to facilitate 21st-century learning. The library seeks to promote an appreciation for literature and understanding of traditional print, periodicals, and reference materials as well as the skills necessary to be technologically savvy during schooling, career, and beyond. "The library seeks to ensure that our students acquire the necessary information literacy skills they will need to become productive learners with skills and knowledge necessary to lead successful meaningful lives in the 21st century" (Pingry). The school library has an essential role in leading students to become competent users of information in responsible and creative ways.

A "library", in the traditional sense, brings forth the image of a silent tomb where rows upon rows of books are neatly arranged next to tables of students silently reading and working. It is very much a place for individuals and lends itself towards solitary work. In comparison, a "learning commons" or "media center" serves a "unique purpose in the school as a bridge between educational philosophy being practiced and the real world" in terms that it "serves the school curriculum but also is known as a place for experimenting, playing, making, doing, thinking, collaborating, and growing" (Loertscher and Koechlin, E3). A learning commons supports 21st century learning skills with a focus on collaborative team work, student discovery, technology and skills that can be imperative to a future career. Although a learning commons may be implemented in different ways in different school settings, "it must be the center of inquiry, digital citizenship, project-based learning, collaborative intelligence, advanced literacy, as well as the center of creating, performing, and sharing" (Loertscher and Koechlin, E4). While the traditional school library performed the same singular function for all students, the beauty of a learning commons is that it can do many jobs for different groups—"it would be a place to make learning visible, allow groups and classes to meet and use the space, be flexible…" (Stephenson and Stone, 4).

The current collection in my school's library is very close to meeting the criteria of 21st century library collection in terms of variety, student interest, multimedia, and technology. Our collection of over 17,000 books encompasses so many genres and subject areas. With the addition of online resources in the past several years, students at the library are able to use traditional texts and online

information to research a topic from many angles. One area where we are lacking is the availability of e-readers. If my library was able to offer e-readers, student could access the 96 electronic books we have purchased and also access books that are available through the book-share program with the local public library.

When I reflect on the students that I observed in my environmental scan, I first think about the students' immediate needs: socialization and a safe environment to hang out. When you consider that a traditional library can morph into a media center or learning commons, one of the main attractions of making this change is the idea of increased collaboration and team work. While the library does not currently serves as a learning commons, changes could be made to create a space where students would want to spend their free time. Many schools have included "teen hang out" areas and even snack bars in their libraries in an effort to increase patronage. While I do feel that my library's collection accurately reflects the diversity of the student population, I fear that students find the library to be a cold, silent room that doesn't allow them to express themselves.

Priority Areas for Improvement

The first area of the library that needs improvement is weeding the collection. Not only do the 17,000+ books in our library include many outdated, incorrect, and broken books, they are taking up space that could be filled with modern and more relevant material. The fact that the library still houses video cassette tapes and audio cassette tapes is a big eye-opener to how much material needs to be cleared out. I intend to weed out over 25% of the collection in the first three years of

working as a librarian. According to the School Library Journal's "Spending Survey 2009", "historically, the size of a school library's book collection has correlated positively with grade level and student enrollment. Elementary school LMCs have roughly 12,000 books on their shelves, middle schools offer around 13,000 titles, and high schools weigh in with 13,636 titles." The survey also noted a trend towards not specifying a specific recommended number of books per students, but instead clarified a need for a well-established collection. The survey showed that an average of "19 books per pupil for middle/junior high schools" was used to fine total number of books in the library's collection (Farmer and Shontz, 2009). The figures shown in the survey would reflect a library total of 12,236 books for my school's enrollment of 644 students (644 students x 19 books). Weeding has become a priority for many librarians. "School librarians have opted for "lean and clean" collections. Fewer items have been added and more weeding means less outdated material. Media specialists are subscribing to fewer databases, or at least are being more selective about them" (Farmer and Shontz, 2009).

Another area that needs improvement is our lack of e-readers. I would like to see a small collection of e-readers be used by the book clubs and Language Arts classes and then expand our number of devices. The idea would be to purchase ten e-readers with our technology budget for the first year of implementation. Based on student input and use, we would expand our e-readers to make a class set of 30 in a recharging storage cart the following year. Students will want to use the library more often if they were instrumental in choosing the books for the new e-readers.

A priority area of particular concern is the need to change procedures in terms of economic access. Students are assessed fines for overdue books. It's a nominal fee of three cents a day, but for some students, it can add up quickly. A student is unable to check out any other books while there is a library fine, so this can prevent a student from utilizing the library at all during the school year. For many students, the fine becomes an excuse to avoid the library altogether.

To summarize:

Year	Problem	Justification	Encouraging Use
Year 1	-Collection contains too many outdated, incorrect, and damaged materials.	-"Weeding is necessary to remain relevant to our users and true to our missions" (Kelly & Hibner, 2015).	-We will increase room on the shelves to display important books -Decrease student frustration in finding books of interest without looking through thousands of choices
Year 2	-Lack of technology to support digital books/ lack of e-readers for student use	- Some reasons to buy e-readers by Brad Moon, portable electronics expert: (1) portability; (2) less damage to books; (3) multiple students can access same book at the same time; (4) electronic books often cost less than their paper versions; (5) online research features, such as dictionary	-We will purchase a starter set of e-readers to be used by library visitors (such as a lunch book club) to introduce the products to the students. -More books will be added to the digital library as student demand increases. -Library and technology departments will collaborate to increase number of e-readers

			available to students.
Year 3	-Increase economic access to library for all students	-Students should not be penalized by economic means when using the library's resources.	-Eliminate late fines for students to encourage library use. -Eliminate the stigma of late materials by extending check out times for students.

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