

# LiveBinders: Free Yourself!

Saskatchewan School Library Association

THE MEDIUM – SPRING 2013

Tracy Woodward  
Warman Elementary School



# LiveBinders: Free Yourself!

---

## Saskatchewan School Library Association

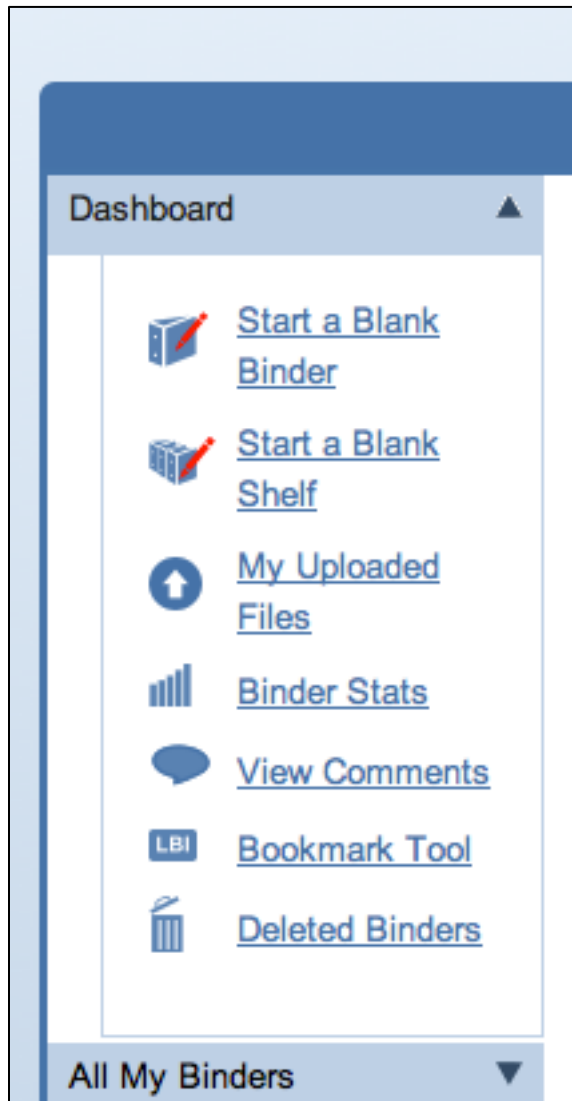
If you are like me and have been teaching for a few years, you have prepared a wide assortment of lessons and units. This is especially true if you were assigned new courses every year! Also, having worked in a small school, it was not uncommon to be teaching two or three grades at one time. To organize all of these courses, I invested in binders – lots of binders. At first, I had a binder for every course: Grade 7 English Language Arts, Grade 8 Health etc. After tiring of lugging the big binders around, I invested in smaller binders to store different units: Romeo and Juliet, French Revolution etc. Soon, there were numerous binders cluttering my shelves and each time I moved schools, I needed a half-ton truck to haul those binders!

As time went on, and I began using more digital resources, the binder pages became decorated with sticky notes containing lists of videos and web pages links to supplement the lessons. Unfortunately, using this method, if I ever lost a sticky note or forgot to write some information, a great resource was lost forever! Fortunately, I am now free from moving with a half-ton truck. I am free from walls of shelves to store my lesson and unit plans. I am free from writing out long links on sticky notes! I am free – for I now use [LiveBinders](#)!

[LiveBinders](#) is an easy-to-use online tool that allows you to create and make virtual binders! As a curation tool, LiveBinders allows you to collect and organize all of your resources including website links, videos, pictures, Word documents and PDFs. LiveBinders also has an app for iPads, Androids and Google Chrome. While LiveBinders is an online tool, it is important to note that the LiveBinder you create does not have to be accessible to the public since you have the choice to set the privacy settings as private or public. As well, if you want to search LiveBinders and find materials that others have created and made accessible to the public, you do not need to have a LiveBinders account.

### Creating a LiveBinder

Creating a LiveBinder is very simple. Once you have registered an account, the page will open with a **Dashboard** on the left hand side of the screen:



Click “**Start a Blank Binder**”.

This opens a new screen where you choose a binder name, tags and the privacy settings:

## Create New Binder

Please name your binder here:

Description:

Tags (comma separated):

Category: Personal

☐ **Public** - Everyone can view your binder  
☒ **Private** - Only you, and the people you choose, can view your binder

**Access Key** - give this key to people when sharing this private binder:

Use Google search to fill a binder ☐ Yes ☐ No

\* required

Create New Binder

The first page will appear as follows:

+

+

Copy/Move

Add

Tab

Binder

S

↶

Tab

Subtab

Tab

Content

Settings

Settings

Save

Undo

### Practice

Binder Author: [TracyLWoodward](#) | [Details](#) | [Comments 0](#)

Tab 1

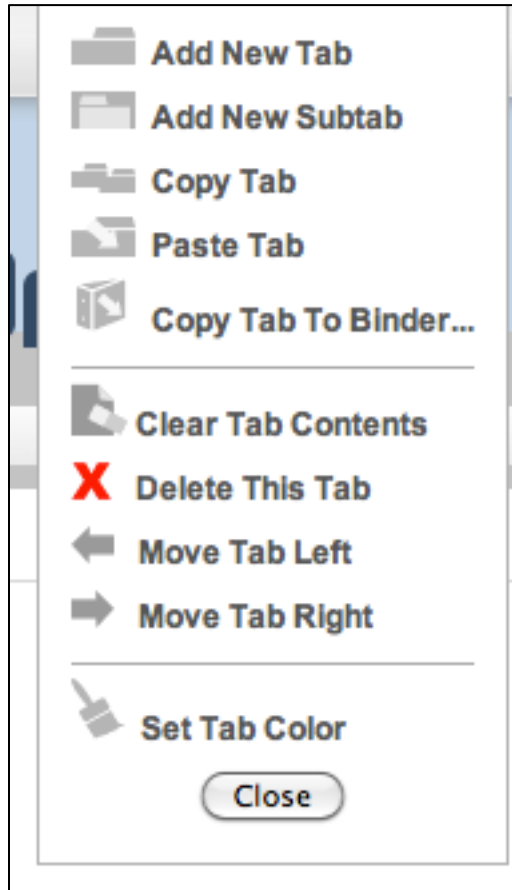
Tab 2

Tab 3

Enter a URL:

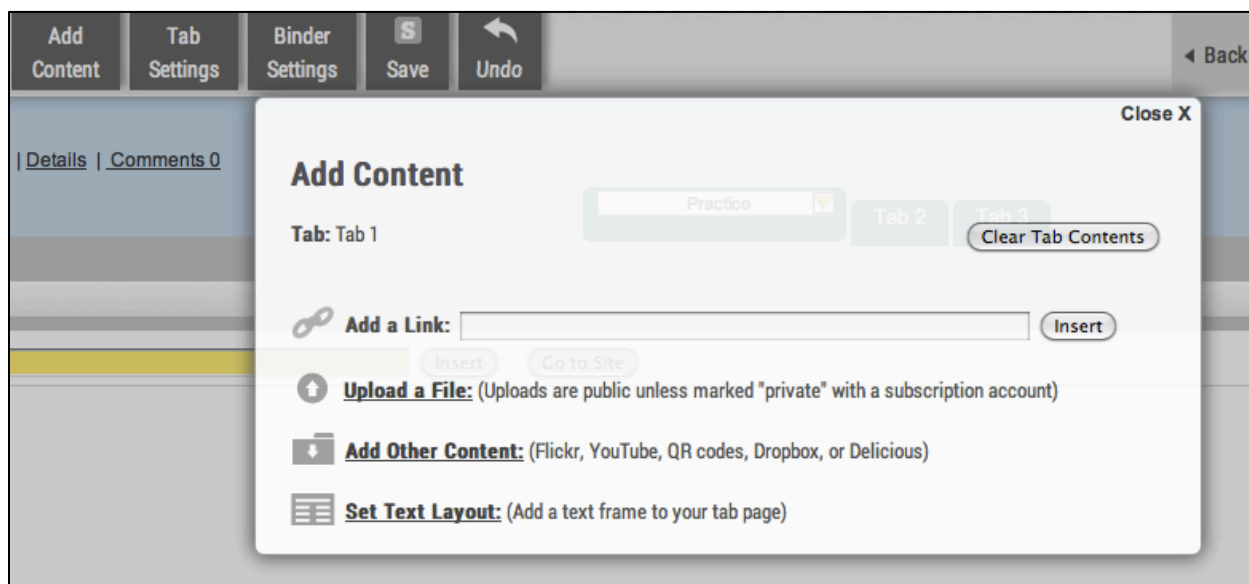
Insert Go to Site

After naming the tab, select the **yellow drop-down arrow** on the end of the tab to have the following options:



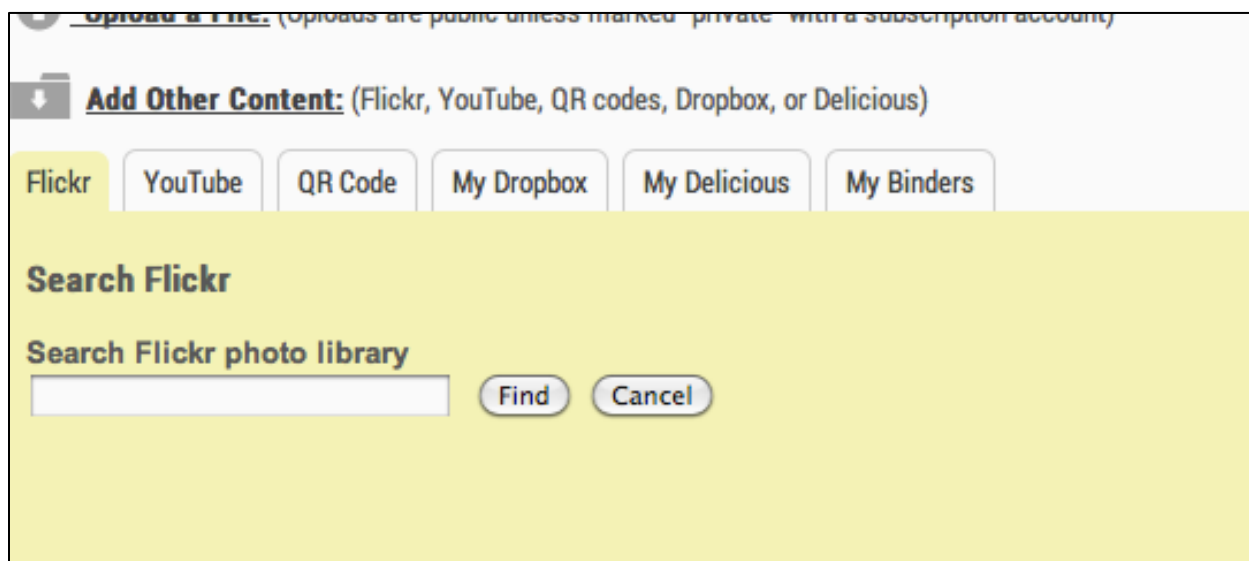
The most commonly used options are “**Add New Tab**”, “**Add New Subtab**” and “**Move Tab Left/Right**”. (The option to move the tabs is extremely useful when you are in your final phase of organizing the virtual binder, as it allows content to be placed to ensure the best flow without being concerned about losing the information.)

After creating the virtual binder and a tab, it is time to add information. Clicking on the “**Add Content**” button, the following menu will appear:



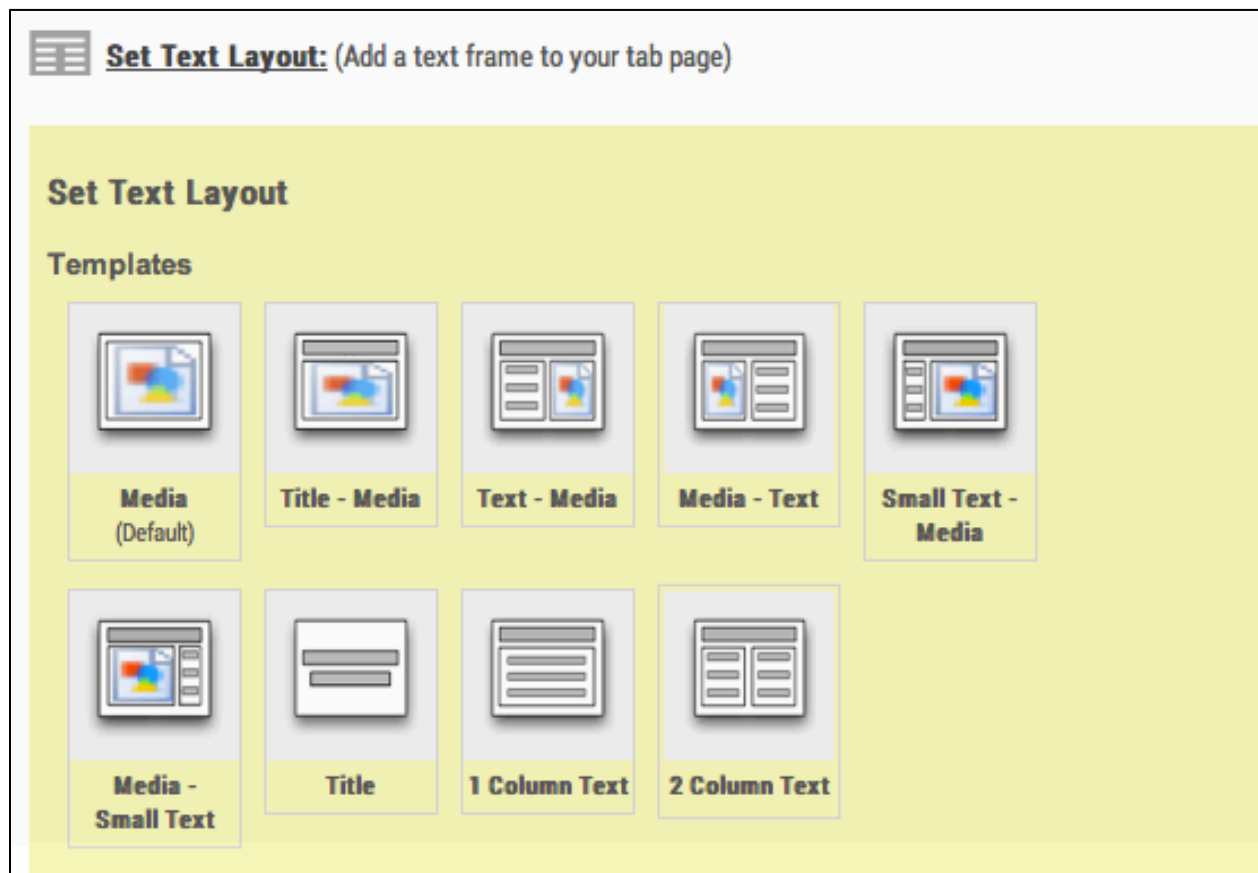
Adding a link and uploading a file are similar to other applications you have used.

For me, one of the most powerful features of LiveBinders is found in the “**Add Other Content**” file, as shown below:



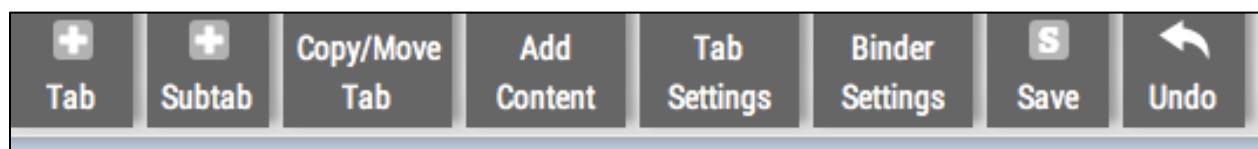
With LiveBinders it is very easy to embed a Flickr photo (with automatic citation and link to the original photo), a YouTube video, a QR Code, a Dropbox, a Delicious account or other LiveBinders.

Text and/or media can also be added to a page by selecting the “**Set Text Layout**” button:

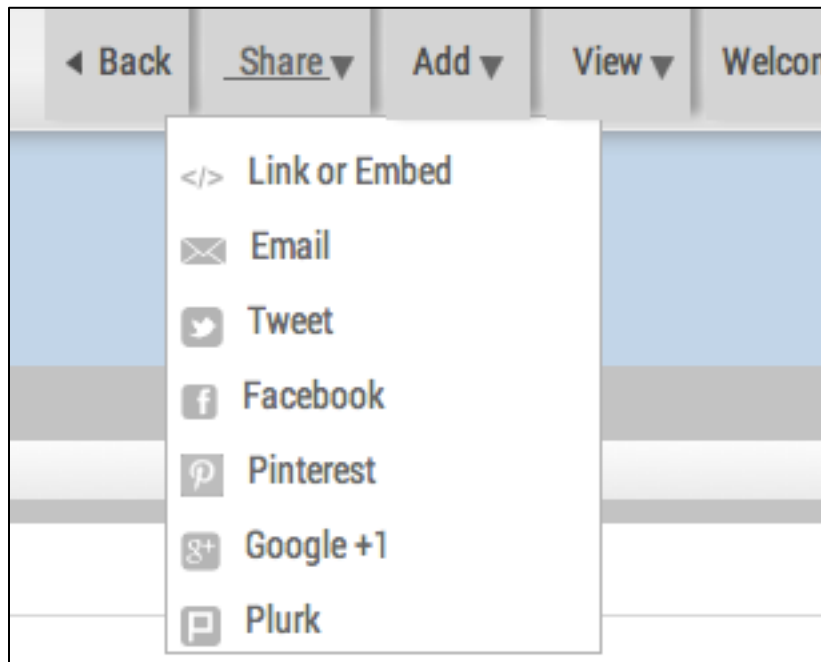


This allows the option of having text, media, or text and media on the page.

As a person becomes fixated designing and organizing the numerous pages under the various tabs within a virtual binder, there is one word of caution: remember to hit the “**Save**” button! Unfortunately, if you forget this step, you will lose any changes you have made; in fact, I recommend hitting the button regularly as it will save you a lot of time and frustration! Trust me!



Finally, LiveBinder makes it extremely easy for you to share your work with others. On the upper right corner of the screen, the “Share” button gives you a quick and easy way to embed, tweet, pin, or otherwise, share your work:



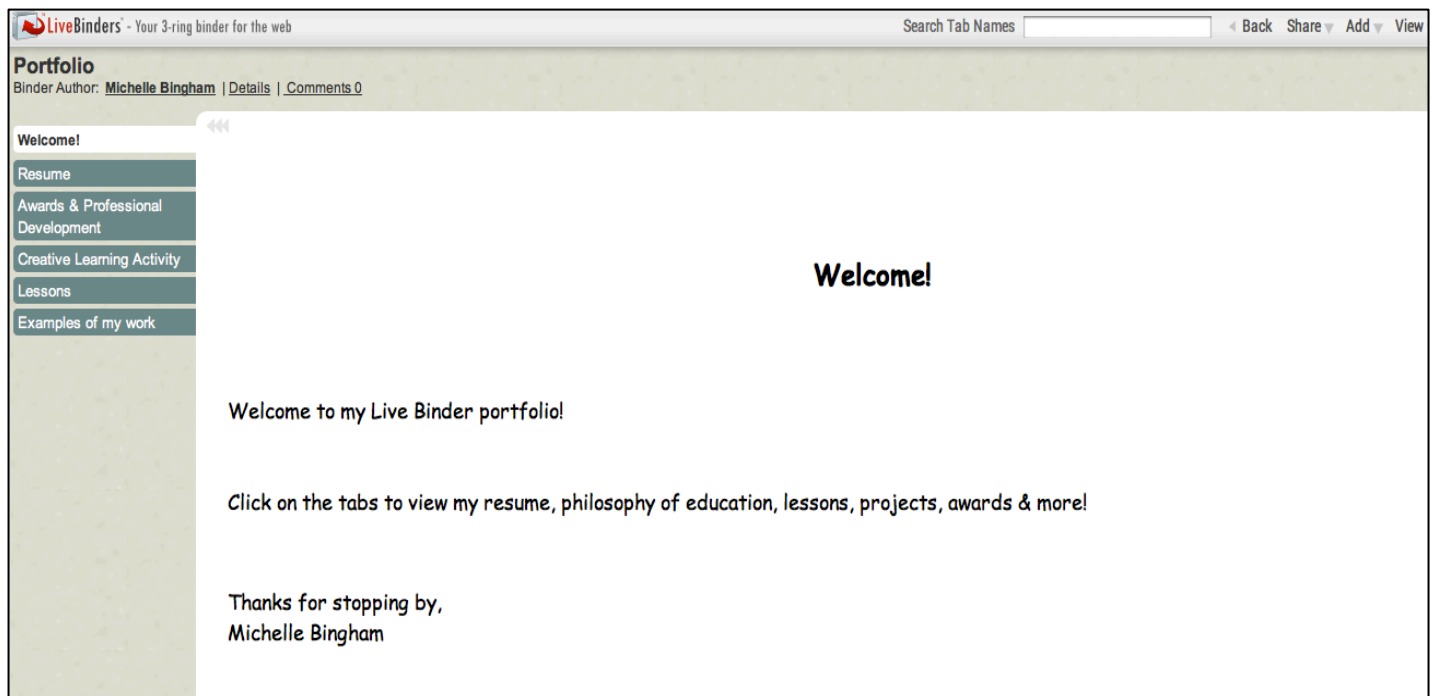
Other useful information for creating a LiveBinder:

- 1) It is possible for your subcategories to also have subcategories. For example, you could have a Grade 2 Science binder with subcategories for Life Science: Animal Growth and Changes, and then organize the materials you have (video, PDF, Word, links to URLs) under each category in any way that suits you: lesson (Day 1, Day 2, etc), outcome (Analyze growth and development of familiar animals, Compare growth and development of humans to familiar animals, etc.) or even by format (videos, photos, etc.).
- 2) Think carefully about what you include; it should be the best of the best or there's a good chance your binder will become too unmanageable.

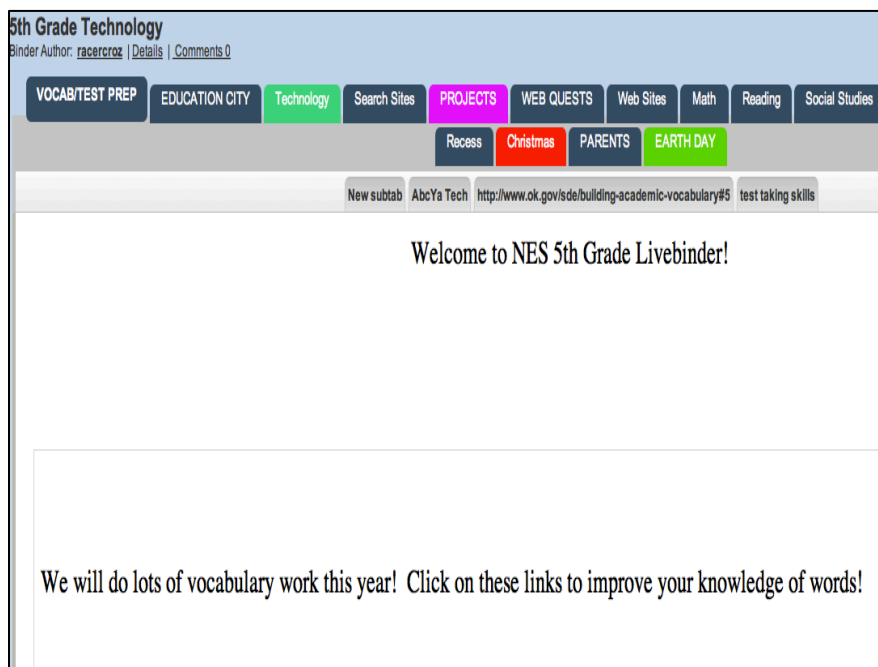
### **LiveBinders as a Presentation Tool:**

LiveBinders has many more applications than simply storing resources. LiveBinders can also be a presentation tool or a tool students use to work collaboratively on a project, access class assignments or create their own personal portfolio. For example, [Student Portfolio Guide](#) shows how one teacher set up the online portfolio for her students. As well, a LiveBinder can also be a format for your own [professional portfolio](#) as in the screenshot below:





Some teachers also use LiveBinders for all their class information. For example, the LiveBinder [5<sup>th</sup> Grade Technology](#) has information for various subject areas, information for parents, and acceptable sites for students to use at recess.



LiveBinders is also a very effective presentation platform. Having used it myself, I not only appreciate that all the information I want to show is collected and organized in one easy place, but it also makes sharing that information with participants very easy!

For example, I recently had to create a presentation for my colleagues about [Mo Willems](#). This presentation was something participants were going to use on their own time. LiveBinders allowed me to structure it in a way that they could use it in the order I designed or simply select the aspects they wanted to explore based on the tab titles.

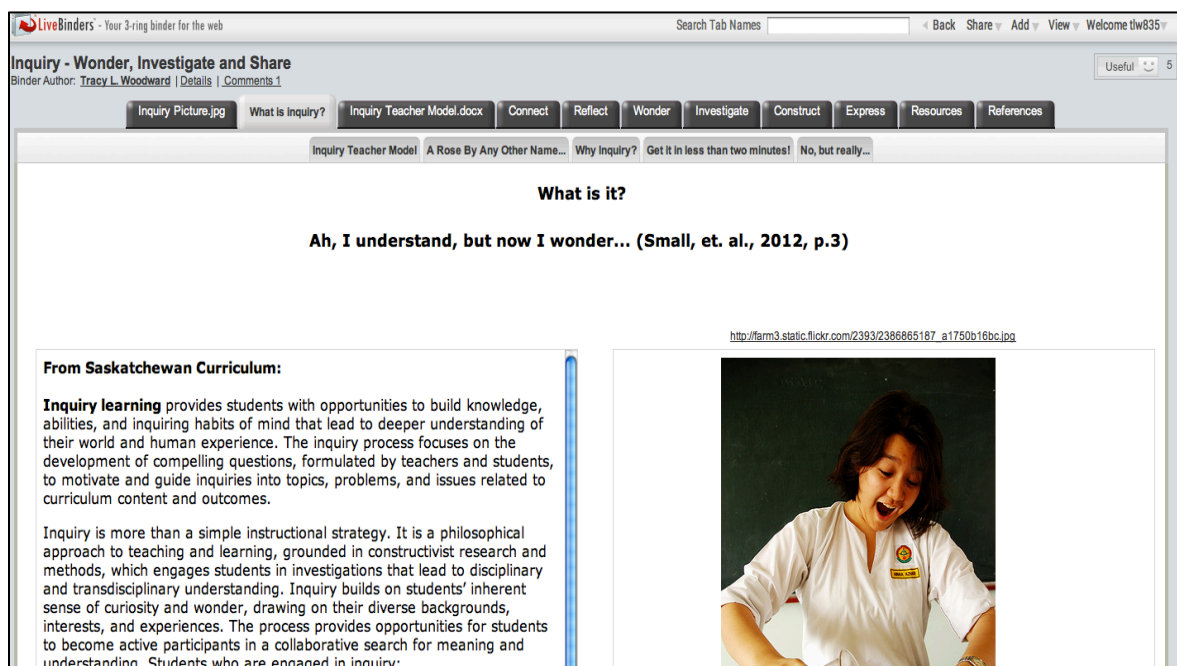
### LiveBinders as a Search Site:

LiveBinders are also an extremely valuable source for finding teaching materials; in fact, I use the site as a search site more than I do to create binders! To find useful LiveBinders however, it is important to understand how to open them.

For example, the screenshot below is the cover of a LiveBinder titled **“Inquiry – Wonder, Investigate and Share”**. When you open this binder, the first page is this cover page, although I find many binders do not have a cover page. The dark grey tabs are the sub headings. The first dark grey tab is titled **“What is inquiry?”**



Below is a screenshot of what is seen when the “What is Inquiry?” tab is selected:



You will notice that the “**What is Inquiry?**” tab is a light grey which indicates that is the page currently open; however, you will also notice that below the dark grey tabs is another row of tabs in a lighter grey. These are the sub-categories for this topic: “**Inquiry Teacher Model**”, “**A Rose By Any Other Name...**” etc. You must click on any of these tabs to see what information or resources the author has stored there. When I began using LiveBinders, I was not aware that when I clicked on the first tab and it opened to a blank page, the page wasn’t really blank! The lighter grey links at the top of the page were what was actually stored on the page!

A few of the LiveBinders that I have found useful as a teacher-librarian are listed below:

#### [Teacher-Librarians: Supporting Reading Literacy](#)

Description: This binder supports the teacher-librarian with reading literacy.

#### [Teacher-Librarian Guides by Joyce Valenza](#)

#### [Do You Read Me?](#)

Description: Reading resources for elementary and middle school teachers and librarians.

#### [Your eLibrarian](#)

Description: Resources, tools and supporting literature for extending classroom learning with a librarian.

#### [Mrs. Eason’s Library Favorites](#)

Description: Stuff to help librarians do a better job and not have to go looking everywhere else.”

Having used LiveBinders for many years, the benefits to me are numerous and impressive:

- It allows the creation of a virtual binder to store and organize resources!
- It is an online tool so it is accessible 24/7 from any computer!
- It allows a teacher to share materials (students, parents, colleagues, the world!) or not!
- It can be used to create impressive presentations for students, colleagues and employers!
- It is a search site to discover resources curated by other educators!

LiveBinders are also fun to design and, I promise, once you begin to convert your hard copies over to LiveBinders, you will feel free!