Book Review:
The New Learning Commons:
Where Learners Win

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Reinventing School Libraries and Computer Labs

By David V. Loertscher, Carol Koechlin, and Sandi Zwaan

This short, coherent professional book provides a renewed vision of school libraries and computer labs that responds to new curriculum, new learners, and the integration of information and technology into learning environments.

The book starts with the premise that we can view our school library world as either a Microsoft Model (meeting the needs of the organization and controlled) or a Google Model (client driven and on demand). The book then builds the Learning Commons on the Google Model where everyone wins. Teacher-librarians are accepted as the information coaches in the schools.

The model moves next to a combined Learning Commons which includes an Open Commons and an Experimental Learning Centre. These two aspects of the Learning Commons provide an information-rich environment in which classroom teachers collaborate with teacher-librarians, learning resource teachers, and other specialist teachers to provide the services needed for students – just in time, not just in case!

The model expands to look at the leadership roles needed in the school to activate the Learning Commons in Partnership Teams – for Learning, Organization, Learning Literacies, and Technology.

In this type of school organization, the centre is around key program elements: knowledge building, learning literacies, learning with technologies, and collaboration. In the next four sections, each one of these program elements is examined through the lens of three indicators: what students can do, what they learn about learning, and what they know and understand.

Knowledge building provides a focus on inquiry processes and "need to know" information skills. The term "literacies" is given a broad meaning including reading, writing, communicating, and

listening, as well as encompassing information, media, visual, and other emerging literacies. The technology section of the book focuses on administrative computing and instructional computing used in a collaborative environment.

The final section of the book consists of one page summaries of selected contemporary theorists and researchers on school renewal, school libraries, and new learning issues. These summaries give the key ideas of the particular individual's work and explain how it connects to the Learning Commons.

Each section of the book includes diagrams that summarize the key ideas. Connections to both the teacher and the learner are expressed. Each chapter ends with a Resources section including – foundational ideas, professional organizations, and professional resources. These can lead readers to enhance their understanding of the concepts and expand their knowledge.

The Learning Commons: Where Learners Win gathers current knowledge on school libraries and provides a compelling argument to organize schools according to the renewed vision of the teacher librarian role. Readers can further investigate the topics in this book by joining The New School Learning Commons discussion wiki at http://schoollearningcommons.pbworks.com/ .

Resources

Loertscher, D. V., Koechlin, C., & Zwann, S. (2008). *The New learning commons: Where learners win!.* Salt Lake City, UT: Hi Willow Research & Publishing.