

# Curation in School Libraries

## Abstract

*In chapter 4 of Library Technology Reports (vol. 50, no. 7), “Social Media Curation,” the authors present interviews with school librarians who describe how digital curation supports learning, serves as a learning activity for students, and contributes to the larger community.*

The school librarians featured in this chapter describe the value of curation to a school’s learning culture. Their efforts ensure that their investment in e-books, databases, and homegrown instructional content is scaled, embedded, and discoverable whenever students need it. Their efforts support flipped and hybrid learning. They use new strategies to display and juxtapose books and other media face-out in imaginative genre gatherings perhaps never before physically arranged. Most important, the school librarians we spoke with shared the importance of curation as a learning activity. They described helping learners connect more easily with appropriate resources and saving teachers instructional time. Their efforts afford students time to actually use the content they discover. They shared the importance of curation as a critical-thinking and learning activity and the value of creating a connected learning environment. Young curators participate. They develop digital portfolios to share their own curated work. They make decisions about authority and bias. They analyze, synthesize, and present for a real audience. When librarians model and guide curation, they build more independent, agile learners capable of building learning networks, telling powerful stories, and carving out their own information niches. Librarians who curate successfully not only build their brands, they contribute to their communities—students, faculty, administrators, and parents—as information professionals.

## Curation for Students

**Shannon McClintock Miller, Van Meter (IA) School (May 22, 2014)**

*Teachers and librarians see the value of developing and modeling the creation of dashboards of resources or launchpads for their learners. Symbaloo, Pearltrees, Live-Binders, LibGuides, Netvibes, and many other platforms could connect students to the content and tools they need on a regular basis. Shannon McClintock Miller, K–12 librarian at Van Meter (IA) School, with whom we spoke on May 22, 2014, presents well-established Symbaloo boards (figure 4.1) for the variety of projects learners of all ages undertake in her library. At her 1:1 school, students access these launchpads on desktops and personal mobile devices. Shannon developed Symbaloo webmixes for the school, for individual grades, and for projects to support student coding and makerspace activities.*

SMM: Symbaloo, the amazing digital social bookmarking tool, has become one that we cannot live without at Van Meter School. Two summers ago I had a huge “ah-ha” and realized that I could cut down on the amount of work I put into our library websites. Instead of continually editing and adding content to our websites, I just have to add a link or move things around a bit on the Symbaloo webmixes.

All of our students in kindergarten through 12th grade, teachers, parents, and others use the webmixes we set up for access to the library, technology tools, collaborative projects, online books, resources, and for showing student work. We make the webmixes accessible on all of our computers and our iPads, putting access to the material and tools we want learners to discover at their fingertips. With each grade level having their very own webmix, this ensures

students have access to the resources they need at school, home, and on the go.

**Ann Yawornitsky, Wilson School District, West Lawn, PA (February 25, 2014)**

*Ann Yawornitsky is a Southern Middle School librarian for the Wilson School District in West Lawn, Pennsylvania. We spoke with her on February 25, 2014.*

**BB: How do you define curation?**

AY: I see curation as the gathering of materials—print and nonprint, and Internet sources—for ease of use by students. Librarians have always had the responsibility to meet population needs. We've always discerned what our population needs. It's just that our point of service has shifted for getting it in their hands. My role is finding valid—suitable and accessible—authoritative materials for my middle school students.

*Ann recently changed from a more static school library web page to LibGuides. She shared that she initially perceived the use of a curation tool like LibGuides as unnecessarily doubling her work, believing she had already given her learners links to all of the tools.*

*Why reinvent the wheel? After using LibGuides to build highly specific compilations of online sites, subscription resources, and other tools specific to student needs, Ann realized that the subscription-based curation tool allowed her to build more directed collections that pinpointed and refined the resources so that students could focus more on the research (critical thinking, reading non-fiction, etc.) and less on the act of search itself.*

AY: The most important element of my curating effort is that students see the resources in specific instructional contexts. For instance, we have an annual social studies project on the Reformation and Martin Luther. Before I created a specific guide for the assignment, the teachers could count on a number of projects crediting the Reformation to Dr. Martin Luther King, simply because—despite teacher instruction—students were just grabbing whatever came up first in their Google searches. Presenting the resources in context helps students more quickly realize they have the wrong guy and the wrong historical period!

*Two other curation benefits Ann reported were statistics and increased online social presence. LibGuides's granular statistics show targeted use that she can directly correlate to dates of projects. Having a profile on each of the guides she creates increases Ann's online presence to the point that she believes students are now more willing to reach out to her for help. Her curation efforts offer a more accurate metric for library usage and services, as well as clear*



**Figure 4.1**  
Secondary Symboloo dashboard

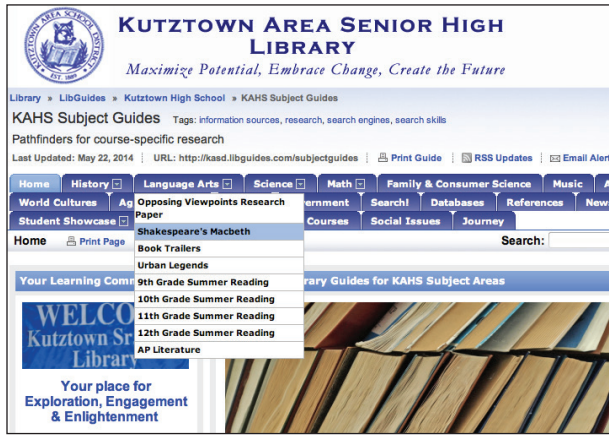
*evidence of her professional practice and contribution to the learning culture.*

## Curation for Students and by Students

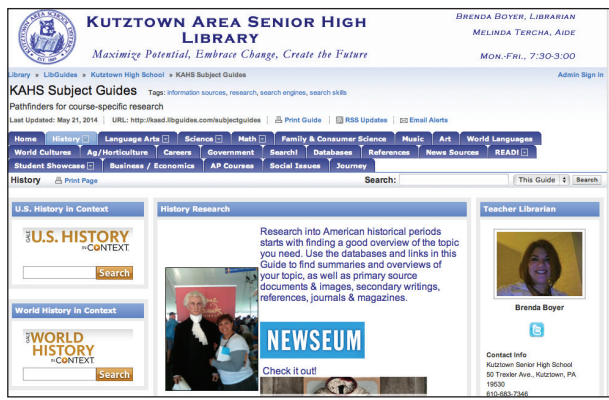
**Brenda L. Boyer, Kutztown Area Senior High Library, Kutztown, PA (May 30, 2014)**

*At Kutztown High School, Kutztown, Pennsylvania, LibGuides are the backbone of the virtual library (figures 4.2–4.6). It is a continually changing portal to the great stuff students need to answer questions, perform inquiry, and go exploring. Curated resources appear next to instructional tutorials and help boxes on subject-specific guides offering flipped instruction. The guides are designed to match the young adult learners' research workflow, scaffolding them through the inquiry process. The newly developed teacher resources page has become the one-stop shop for professional learning and sharing across district subjects and grade levels. Co-curation and collaborative design with faculty and students ensure fluidity of these virtual spaces. But curation is rapidly becoming so much more in this 1:1 laptop school.*

BB: Curation is becoming the main gateway to connected learning. Students now are curating their way through research projects and are enhancing their official digital portfolios with personal curations. Our ninth graders recently incorporated Smartifico curations on their career aspirations into their portfolios. To introduce themselves to visitors to their portfolios, they curated their interests into interactive images using ThingLink. These young adults get that curation is a way to connect, collaborate, and share their learning with the wider world. Their recently created iMovie tutorials and art projects were curated in new digital spaces where our entire school and learners everywhere can benefit from their work. Curation is how we empower kids.



**Figure 4.2**  
Kutztown Area Senior High School Subject Guides on LibGuides



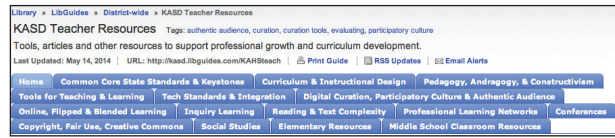
**Figure 4.3**  
Kutztown Area Senior High School Subject Guide for History

**Mary Clark, San Elijo Middle School, San Marcos, CA (February 26, 2014)**

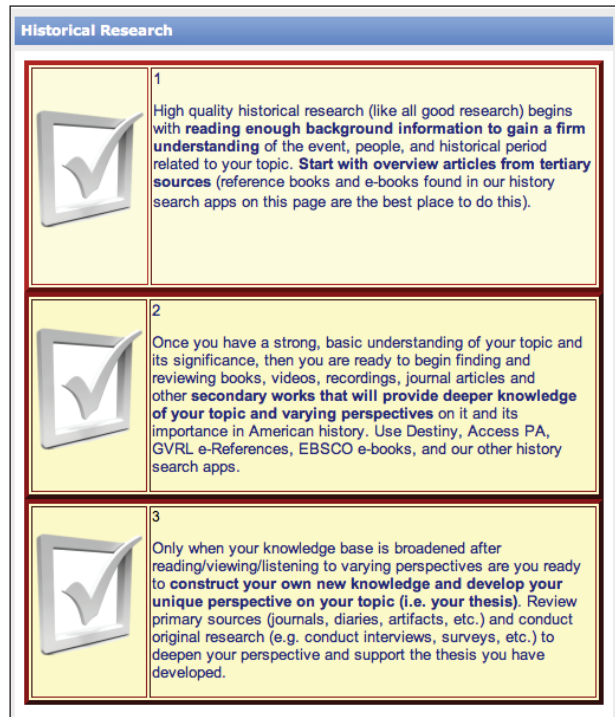
Mary Clark, a library tech at San Elijo Middle School in San Marcos, California, also sees curation as the antidote to student “Googling and grabbing.” By sifting out carefully chosen resources, curation provides a purpose to search. Mary sees teaching curation to students as important in developing critical thinking, as they must learn to discern what is valid and what is not. She is currently using LiveBinders as a platform. We spoke with her on February 26, 2014.

**BB: Why do you curate?**

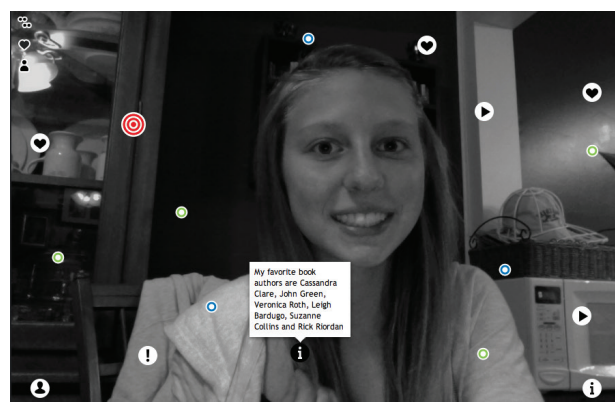
MC: Curation helps students see the larger purpose of their assignments and, most importantly, knowing how to filter and keep the best stuff helps to make them stronger digital citizens.



**Figure 4.4**  
Kutztown Area Senior High School Subject Guide for Teachers



**Figure 4.5**  
Instruction in historical research from the Kutztown Area Senior High School LibGuide



**Figure 4.6**  
Kutztown Area Senior High School student portfolio using ThingLink as a curation platform

**BB: How do you define curation?**

MC: Curation is the gateway to digital citizenship. Students should begin by curating related to what they



want to do in the future. In this way, we aid them in creating a digital tattoo and an online presence in a specific context. I use the term “curator” regularly, and I see curation as a major part of my role as a resource specialist and collaborator. Find teachers’ pain and help them fix it. Curating to meet their immediate instructional needs allows me to leverage my service into larger collaborations with colleagues, opening the door for co-designing of projects, overarching questions, and related assessments. Once collaborations are established, the door is opened for curation to become a shared responsibility among the professional team. The curations are now enriched by a wider set of perspectives.

### **Nancy White, Academy School District 20, Colorado Springs, CO (August 13, 2013)**

*Nancy White, a librarian by profession, currently works as a 21st Century Learning and Innovation Specialist for Academy School District 20 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She provides professional development, helping teachers to carry out the district’s 21st Century Learning Plan. Nancy served on an ad hoc team to help with the integration of twenty-first-century skills into Colorado’s revised content standards and coauthored the “Colorado Learner’s Bill of Rights.” (<http://colearnersbor.pbworks.com/w/page/16068430/FrontPage>)*

*In a March 9, 2014, Tech and Learning TL Advisor Blog post, Nancy describes working with an eighth-grade social studies teacher on a curation project relating to reform movements of the late nineteenth-century United States:*

*I am convinced that this is a strategy that not only helps to develop 21st century skills and address Common Core research standards; it also is a strategy that leads to personalized learning and motivates students to learn.<sup>1</sup>*

*We spoke with Nancy on August 13, 2013.*

#### **JV: How do you define curation?**

NW: I still struggle with defining it. To me, it’s using higher level thinking skills, following a path, distilling what you curate down to the essence. I liken it to what a museum curator does in that you are putting things in a specific order. You are probably rejecting more items than you keep. You are arranging them in such a way that you are storytelling. There’s a huge storytelling element to it and that’s the part that keeps coming back to me the more I delve into this. It’s doing this in a purposeful manner. It’s meeting a learning goal, and there is intent to share with an audience, as compared to a collector, who is not necessarily in an attempt to define or understand.

#### **JV: How do you curate for yourself and with teachers and learners?**

NW: The first tool I started using was Scoop.it, and I still love it. I invested a lot of time there. It meets my needs. In terms of curating to learn, that’s what I use. It didn’t catch on with my teachers in the same way. I gave them a choice. The majority of them ended up in LiveBinders. Some chose Diigo because they liked the ability to set up groups, host discussion around resources, and share easily. LiveBinders doesn’t really make that easy to do. It’s good for one person, but not for a group of people to contribute to the curation. I’ve dabbled in Learnist and have LessonPaths on my list. I can’t live without Evernote for personal use. It’s on my phone, my iPad, and my computer. I can push from Twitter and resources shared on Facebook. It’s very smooth.






#### **JV: What do you see as the connection between curation and learning?**

NW: I was in the middle of building my own definition of curation when I came across the *Workforce 2020* report, and I realized that just about every single skill—from novel and adaptive thinking, to virtual collaboration, to sense making—all of those skills were being put to practice while I was curating. It just hit me that I was on a task to define curating for our teachers, but it would be so much more powerful if we could take this complex higher order thinking task and give that to our students and, in that process, they would own that learning just a bit more. They’d be following their own curiosities. (See figure 4.7.)

#### **JV: Have you seen any successes with curating with students and their long-tail interests?**

NW: Our kindergarten teachers asked the kids to curate about themselves. They used their iPads to create curated books. We asked them, “What are the most important things you want to curate?” Yes, it looks a lot like storytelling, but the more I delve into curating, the more I come back to the idea that curating is a kind of storytelling. The second graders used Book Creator for iPad to build their own version of a social studies textbook chapter and were given the freedom to take that in the direction of their interests. The content came from what they learned in the class, from our databases, and from their print text. They retold and illustrated in their words.

One of the history teachers did a project where they had to plot a bicycling tour of New York City. They curated a pathway through and the different sites they would visit.

Criteria	Collecting	Curating
 Thinking Level	Classifying	Critical Thinking- Synthesis – Evaluation
 Process	Not a lot of depth in the selection process; somewhat random	"cherry-picked" Reading, Synthesizing, Interpreting, Evaluating for Theme & Context; Disciplined, purposeful, continuous process of inquiry
 Organization – How the resources are linked together	Thematic	Thematic AND Contextual – "real world" use, examples
 Value	Meets a personal interest – value to collector. Quantity matters.	Meets a learning goal...value to collector AND learners. Quality matters
 Audience	Not necessarily shared	Arranged, Annotated, & Published Somewhere – available to the general public – beyond the life of a particular "course"—Shared

**Figure 4.7**  
Nancy White explores differences in the learning value of collecting vs. curating content

### JV: What are you proudest of?

NW: I am proud of our emphasis on using Understanding by Design, on shifting the thinking to designing learning for transfer. Curation comes along in stage three. You identify learning goals first, how you know that they know it in terms of transfer, and then you think of what activities will reach that understanding and ability to transfer. Curating is a given. Teachers will usually start out with the core set of resources with the intent that students will continue.

### JV: Do students transfer these skills you teach to personal use?

NW: Maybe that's a next step. It could be happening. The initial emphasis was on creating a virtual library. But we wanted to transfer the responsibility from librarians and teachers to the students. We wanted to do more than merely push resources at students. We need to teach them how to fish. We need to go beyond building our spaces to encouraging students to see the richness social media contributes and how they might learn from each other.

### JV: So are you thinking that by building library curation efforts we do too much cutting students' meat for them? Is the best approach to help them create their own launchpads and start pages? Don't we have to model, to show them the options, perhaps as a master curator? Is that a form of guided curation?

NW: Maybe that's one of the many ways libraries and makerspaces intersect.

### JV: Maybe we invented a new term today—guided curation.

In her March 9 Tech & Learning post, Nancy shares how students used WordPress blogs as collaborative curation platforms after developing and refining questions inspired by nineteenth-century photographs. She mentioned that Miller Williams's poem "The Curator" helped learners understand the difference between collecting and curating.<sup>2</sup>

When asked to describe their understanding of curating, among the students' responses quoted in Nancy's post were these:

*A curator paints with words. They describe what they are talking about so well that it doesn't even have to be there for you to see it.*

*With curating, you are using heart. You use emotion and find passion to do that certain job or write about that certain topic.*

*A curator is someone who puts back the history into something and tries to find the story or background from where or what it is truly from.<sup>3</sup>*

When asked to reflect on their curation projects, student responses included

*Curating this project really got me thinking and allowed me to give my own opinion while staying on topic and informing others.*

*It taught me to take research, analyze, and organize it. I liked it because I had to collaborate and come to an agreement on what to post.*

*I liked learning new things that I had no idea about before. I liked showing off my talent and curating what I knew.*

*The only thing I would have liked to do differently would be given more time to learn even more about the topics.*

*This project has given me a new respect for bloggers who curate their research because it is hard.*

*My thinking on learning has changed a bit. I suddenly feel like learning isn't a chore, it's an opportunity that can open so many doors!<sup>4</sup>*

Nancy White's Innovations in Education blog  
<http://d20innovation.d20blogs.org>

Book Creator for iPad  
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/book-creator-for-ipad/id442378070?mt=8>

### K. C. Boyd, Wendell Phillips Academy High School, Chicago (March 4, 2014)

*K. C. Boyd is the library media specialist at the Wendell Phillips Academy High School, Chicago Public Schools. Four years ago, the staff at this urban, low-performing, turnaround school was tasked with changing its negative perception in*

the community. K. C. uses Pinterest as a tool for readers' advisory, school public relations, archiving of content, and encouragement of community presence and pride.

K. C.'s popular Black History board shares articles, lessons, and video, and she hopes to use it to extend interest well beyond the month of February. Other boards focus on community history, reading suggestions, and school culture. We spoke with K. C. on March 4, 2014.

#### **JV: Why curate?**

KB: We want to control our school's message, and we use a blend of social media for both recruitment and image building. Pinterest is one of the ways we get the message out. And we are beginning to use it for archival purposes—for pointing to the good that is taking place in the life and academic culture of our school. The students in our TV production class now curate a Behind the Paws News board.

This kind of work provides students a different perspective, asking them to consider how our school is represented to the community. They create the school announcements on their iPads, using Keynote and Pages. The students' posts to the boards automatically feed into the Phillips Twitter page. The tools work well together. The Behind the Paws board archives the student-produced video news.

#### **JV: Tell me about your work archiving the school's community history, your legacy project.**

KB: The Wendell Phillips Academy has a rich history in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood. As the first public school in Chicago to admit African American students, the school is considered a Chicago landmark going back to the Great Migration. Our new Pinterest Archive will be a learning tool that celebrates that history, sharing historical background and information about Phillips's former administrators and such notable alums as Nat King Cole, Gwendolyn Brooks, Sam Cooke, with current students and the larger community.

This project could have indelible impact. Pinterest is a different way to save material and tell your story. Our presence is emerging—not as established as some other schools, but we are investing so much feeling into it. We have a huge social media following, and we plan to use Pinterest to communicate with the general public. We're hoping it's going to grow into something very positive in the long run.

#### **Linda Hoiseth, American School, Doha, Qatar (February 24, 2014)**

Linda is the middle school librarian at the American School in Doha, Qatar, a nonprofit school sponsored by the US Embassy. The middle school and high school share the library space. The total school population includes

### **A sampling of K. C. Boyd's curation efforts for Wendell Phillips High School**

#### *Black History*

[www.pinterest.com/boydkc/black-history](http://www.pinterest.com/boydkc/black-history)

#### *Women's History Month*

[www.pinterest.com/boydkc/womens-history-month](http://www.pinterest.com/boydkc/womens-history-month)

#### *Historical Pictures and Videos*

[www.pinterest.com/auslwpahs/historical-pictures-and-videos](http://www.pinterest.com/auslwpahs/historical-pictures-and-videos)

#### *Behind the Paws*

[www.pinterest.com/auslwpahs/behind-the-paws](http://www.pinterest.com/auslwpahs/behind-the-paws)

#### *Wendell Phillips on Twitter*

@AUSLWPAHS

2,000 students of 73 nationalities, mostly kids of expats, as well as some Qatari students. We spoke with Linda on February 24, 2014.

#### **JV: Can you define curation?**

LH: For me, curation is gathering resources from many sources, making them usable and accessible for students, teachers, and other library patrons. Since March, I've used LibGuides as my means of sharing. I look to other librarians who I think are involved in what I call global curation. I look at you [Joyce] and Gwyneth Jones. I use Twitter as my forum for gathering information and seeing what's new.

#### **JV: So you use different tools for different tasks, at different stages?**

LH: Instapaper is my in-basket for stuff I know I'm going to need later but don't know what to do with yet. So when a project or a unit or assignment comes up, I take the resources that I found, databases, websites, books, etc., and gather them together in a LibGuide. I often grab things I think will have a purpose later. So Twitter is my current awareness tool and Instapaper is my in-box.

#### **JV: Why is curation important?**

LH: There's just so much information out there, so many sources. Google is too hard for my students. Sometimes my job is to teach them to find it themselves, to dig through the mess. Sometimes my job is to narrow things down for them and present what I like to think of as text sets. Sometimes the learning task isn't navigating all this stuff, it's getting the information and doing something with it. Students

don't always have time to do the *where do I begin* stage. So if I can take the huge mass of information out there and try to consolidate it, my kids will still have stuff to dig through without spending all their time doing the searching. They can spend more of their time on analysis and creation.

Because I make initial selections, preparing a LibGuide addresses the readability issue. But I sometimes wonder if I should create more structure. I wonder if my structural choices will help them navigate. I am working on creating a similar structure for each of my guides. At this point, access to the OPAC search is always in the top left corner. I am planning to watch a few students use our guides to see where they go and what they do, to see what they're attracted to and what they're not getting to.

Though my guides could be used outside the school, I am specifically creating them for my students, and I want everything they need for the project to be there.

#### **JV: Have you been successful?**

LH: One of my most successful attempts was a 7th grade, integrated, 2-week project on transportation. I created a separate tab for each of the core assignments. The guide was viewed 1,500 times in two weeks by the 170 kids in the grade. It became the central location for everything they needed to get the job done. It included resources, but also my instructional voice.

I like that LibGuides are recognizable as a library product. Students now have the expectation that for whatever they are doing in class, there must be a guide. Kids now come to me and say, "Our teacher didn't ask you for a guide for this one, but will you make one?" Or a teacher will come in and say, "The kids asked if you'd make a guide for this one." It's as much training the teachers as it is the students. So you'll see that some teachers are much more represented than others. Some have come to rely on them, and I am hopeful it will spread.

#### **JV: What feedback have you gotten?**

LH: When I took this job, my goal was to get people to say, "How did we ever do this before Linda?" In our school-wide 200-question survey two years in a row, teachers were asked if the library had what they needed. 100% agreed that the library had what they needed. 97% of the students responded that the library had what they needed. They recognize what we do and are hugely appreciative.

#### **Alida Hanson, Weston (MA) High School (March 3, 2014)**

*Alida Hanson's array of attractive Pinterest boards promote new books and videos, link to Goodreads reviews,*

*and take readers back to the Weston (MA) High School library catalog.*

#### **JV: Why have you chosen Pinterest as a platform?**

AH: Kids are so busy. Free reading often falls by the wayside. They're divorced from it. Because of that, our school has launched a sustained silent reading campaign to promote free reading, and students are responding to the boards big time.

They go on their phones and snap a picture of the QR codes that lead to our boards. It's a rare kid who knows exactly what he or she wants and will find it on their own. But now I have some kids come in and ask for every single book on the sports board. Our library stacks are not always appealing to browse through. Kids need a visual *pop*. Pinterest is just so appealing; you want to dive in. It's far less scary than facing the stacks. I am someone who didn't like Pinterest at first. Now I think about it as a search engine and a website builder.

One of my favorites is the Author Portraits board. If students find pictures of authors, especially pictures of them when they were younger, they are more likely to make a connection with them. And, for me, working on the board introduced me to so much I didn't know about world literature. It was a huge learning tool.

#### **JV: How has your faculty responded?**

AH: I maintain a World History Paper Book Suggestions board with a history teacher partner.

I've found that you learn a lot about your colleagues when you work together and send each other pins. Some teachers with Pinterest accounts follow the boards, some use the boards to promote free reading. When the English department chair got a look at the boards, she raved about what a great interactive tool they are to promote reading—during a school-wide faculty meeting!

Lots of teachers have no idea of what you can do with social media. Some thought it was silly at first, but they now see it as an easy and exciting way to present content.

*Weston High School Library Pinterest boards*  
[www.pinterest.com/westonhslibrary](http://www.pinterest.com/westonhslibrary)

*Author Portraits board*  
[www.pinterest.com/westonhslibrary/author-portraits](http://www.pinterest.com/westonhslibrary/author-portraits)

*World History Paper Topic Inspirations board*  
[www.pinterest.com/westonhslibrary/world-history-paper-book-suggestions](http://www.pinterest.com/westonhslibrary/world-history-paper-book-suggestions)



**Melanie Barker, Collegiate School, Richmond, VA (February 28, 2014)**

*Melanie Barker is the school librarian at Collegiate School, a coed, college preparatory independent school for grades K–12. After spending several years in rural America, Melanie is thrilled to be a resident of the city of Richmond, Virginia, and a part of the Collegiate School community. Her professional interests include the information-seeking behaviors of children and teens and graphic novel collections in libraries. When she is not immersed in the dissemination of information, Melanie reads, toils away on her new home, and attempts to write the great American novel—and she creates LibGuides. We spoke with Melanie on February 28, 2014.*

**DC: How do you define digital curation for your community?**

MB: Needs exist, and they are brought to the attention of the librarians through requests, casual conversation, or a theme on campus. Based on these needs, we gather digital and print resources and present them on LibGuides, Evernote, Scoop.it. Evernote is being rolled out per the requests of some teachers, both for teachers' personal use and for students to keep track of their research. I share my notebooks with teachers.

**DC: What are your platforms/tools of choice?**

MB: My favorite is Evernote for curating. I used LiveBinders until we got our subscription to LibGuides. I use Scoop.it and WordPress personally. I used wikis seven years ago. Pinterest and Tumblr are not used because they are blocked by our school's server. I am so motivated to stay on top of resources and tools that I have a bit of "app fatigue." There are so many choices that seem to do the same thing.

**DC: Why is it important for you as a librarian to curate?**

MB: It is important because it makes "sense" of the web for students, faculty, and staff. Who doesn't like things to be convenient? Sense-making is one big motivator to curate. We help clients navigate the information resources. We make their lives easier.

**DC: What is your role?**

MB: It's a mix of workday and evenings. I am a librarian 24/7 when browsing. When I come across a nugget, I curate. We have three other librarians. My colleagues contribute to their own subject-specific areas based on interest and expertise.

**DC: What feedback do you get from your users?**

MB: We created a LibGuide for a back-to-school professional development project on the topic of signals that determine where education is heading in the future, including a focus on the maker movement. Faculty members commented that they never realized these resources existed and were most appreciative. When we created a guide to support student research, one faculty member shared appreciation for our simplifying the research process and for significantly saving instructional time. Students appreciate not having to look at the database list and having to wonder which databases to use.

**DC: What are your plans for the future?**

MB: I plan to write up a proposal for a professional development grant to develop a mobile library web presence, to make the research experience more seamless. I plan to tap into the expertise of a neighboring university.

*Melanie Barker's Collegiate School LibGuides*  
<http://libguides.collegiate-va.org>

**Tracy Shaw, Squalicum High School, Bellingham, WA (March 5, 2014)**

*Tracy Shaw is the librarian at Squalicum High School in Bellingham, Washington. We spoke with her on March 5, 2014.*

**DC: How do you define digital curation for your community?**

TS: Digital curation is a repository of resources for specific information needs and wants. It is a compilation of documents, databases, websites, e-books, video, TED talks, all of which are housed in one particular spot accessible to students and staff for teaching specific content. For my students, I have curated—a lot of resources from Joyce Valenza—free resources, Creative Commons, things for them to find and use to do their work more easily and to enrich and enhance their curriculum. What is really important about digital curation is that the resources are accessible anytime and anywhere for staff and especially students.

**DC: What are your platforms/tools of choice?**

TS: I use LibGuides, Scoop.it, RebelMouse, and Learnist. We use Pinterest to advertise new books and as a portal to access reading materials and reviews by genre. As a school district, our secondary librarians



are compiling OER [open educational resources], but have not determined our final platform. We use the MackinVIA app for one-spot easy access to e-books and databases. We use Pearltrees and Google + to hunt down topics and follow information leads and Paper.li, the online newspaper, for its feeds for technology and library information.

**DC: Why is it important for librarians to curate?**

TS: It is our job to get the most current information into the hands of staff and students; this is the most important reason to curate. Equally important is for students to be knowledgeable of curation and curation tools; we have a wide variety of options so that when students go to college they will be at least aware of these tools.

**DC: What feedback do you get from your users?**

TS: I have people from around the country ask to use my digital curation resources. Students and teachers state, “I didn’t know that you had that!” People are amazed at the wealth of information out there. Students state that it was very helpful. The English department is very appreciative and directs their students to the sites. It’s nice for faculty and kids to be able to go to one spot for their studies and research.

**DC: What are your plans for the future?**

TS: Curation is addicting. Once you start it is difficult to stop! Curation is fun! Collaborating with other district librarians on curating OER per discipline and units of study is important.

*Squalicum High School Library Pinterest boards*  
[www.pinterest.com/sqhslibrary](http://www.pinterest.com/sqhslibrary)

## Beyond the Conversations

School librarians curate learning playlists, using tools like LessonPaths, List.ly, and BlendSpace. They archive tutorials on YouTube, SlideShare, and Flickr and add them to their guides. They curate and embed Twitter feeds relevant to breaking news for social studies classes, as well as curating online learning models to guide student research and inquiry in all disciplines. Working in collaboration with district curriculum developers, librarians carefully gather digital nonfiction text sets and design media-rich nonfiction interactive textbooks to meet diverse learner needs. Their knowledge of the digital information landscape is critical to this design process. In general, new curation platforms allow school librarians to creatively mash

up the tools and resources, in-house and outsourced, that students need for any given instructional unit or inquiry project, as well as the resources teachers need to teach effectively. All of these activities model behaviors that should inspire young citizens to manage their information worlds.

Resources to be aware of:

- CAST UDL Book Builder—“Create, share, publish, and read digital books that engage and support diverse learners according to their individual needs, interests, and skills.”<sup>5</sup>
- iBooks Author—“Available free on the Mac App Store, [this app] allows anyone to create beautiful iBooks textbooks—and just about any other kind of book—for iPad and Mac.”<sup>6</sup>
- Flexbooks—Enables teachers to assemble free interactive textbooks customized to meet state standards.

## Resources

*Curated by Library Media Specialists*

[www.bcps.org/digitalllearning/LibraryMedia/curated/index.html](http://www.bcps.org/digitalllearning/LibraryMedia/curated/index.html)

*Grade 6 Reading Research Portal*

[www.bcps.org/offices/lis/models/reading6/index.html](http://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/models/reading6/index.html)

*High School Research Course*

[www.bcps.org/offices/lis/researchcourse/index.html](http://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/researchcourse/index.html)

*K-12 Online Research Models*

[www.bcps.org/offices/lis/models/aboutmodels.html](http://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/models/aboutmodels.html)

*Joquetta Johnson’s Livebinder Shelf*

[www.livebinders.com/shelf/search\\_display\\_author?terms=Joquetta+Johnson](http://www.livebinders.com/shelf/search_display_author?terms=Joquetta+Johnson)

## Notes

1. Nancy White, “Student Curators, Powerful Learning,” *TL Advisor Blog*, Tech & Learning, March 9, 2014, [www.techlearning.com/Default.aspx?tabid=67&entryid=7296](http://www.techlearning.com/Default.aspx?tabid=67&entryid=7296).
2. Ibid.; Miller Williams, “The Curator,” Poetry Foundation, reprinted from *Curators of the University of Missouri, Adjusting to the Light* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), accessed May 21, 2014, [www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/176491](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/176491).
3. White, “Student Curators.”
4. Ibid.
5. CAST UDL Book Builder home page, accessed July 2, 2014, <http://bookbuilder.cast.org>.
6. iBooks Author page, Apple website, accessed July 2, 2014, <https://www.apple.com/ibooks-author>.