MSLA FORUM   JANUARY 2015

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE BY JUDI PARADIS
JANUARY 11, 2015

Starting with the end in mind gets the best results, according to Stephen Covey; and we all know that backward design produces a great project. So, each year, I ask the MSLA Executive Board to sit down at our September meeting and set priorities for the coming year so that we have a strong focus for our work.

Last year, a strong focus on legislation led to the passage of a bill in the Massachusetts legislature this summer establishing a commission to evaluate school library programs. In addition, focused work by our Executive Board led to DESE accepting a rubric that administrators can use to evaluate school librarians using both teaching and program administration guidelines. We also worked hard to provide our members with a range of professional development offerings, including our annual conference, our first unconference this summer at Westborough High School, and a collaborative workshop with MassCUE in September. Finally, we set up a pilot ELL training course for school librarians that will be offered through EDCO in the Spring of 2015.

As we began the 2014-15 school year, the MSLA Executive Board met again to set priorities to guide our work. At our first meeting, we agreed that we would like to focus on four key areas:

Legislation: Representative Sean Garballey is chairing a commission this year that will evaluate the status of school library programs in Massachusetts. This is an incredible opportunity for school librarians and our students. The commission is charged with collecting key data about library staffing, hours, and collections. We have had lots of anecdotal evidence in the past decade that there is inequity from district to district in school library services. Collecting specific data will finally allow us to make a case for school library equity based on concrete facts. As the commission looks for assistance in collecting data, providing analysis, and lining up testimony, MSLA stands ready to provide assistance.

Membership: We want to make sure that members remain at the center of our work. Our advocacy committee and area directors intend to take a careful look at how to retain the members we have, reach out to those with lapsed memberships, and recruit those new to our field. As part of this work, we will look at how we can enhance the services and experiences we offer to our members.

Outreach: In a survey taken last spring, MSLA saw that members value the opportunities we provide for them to stay connected to one another such as the listserv and *Forum* newsletter. We are also pleased that members connect often through the MSLA Facebook page and Twitter feed. I am delighted that Jennifer Dimmick and Katherine Steiger have agreed to take on the *Forum* this year and I look forward to seeing it develop into another vehicle that we can all use to share great information and improve our practice.

Professional Development: MSLA wants to remain the first place school librarians go for professional development, and we want to make sure we get both the topics and delivery right. We are going to take a careful look this year at the options open to us. Our traditional annual conference and area director gatherings remain popular with many members. Yet, we also know that members have responded well to one-day workshops, unconferences, and informal sharing on Twitter. We also know that we have many natural partners for PD, from MassCUE to MLS to MLA. So, we are planning to look at the many ways we can offer professional development, the time and energy we have, and see if we can come up with a plan that makes sense for all of us.

Of course**, we do have an annual conference planned** on March 1 & 2, 2105. The theme "Fill Up Your Toolbox" speaks to the practical aspects of the event, which will focus on sharing tips and tools that you can implement in your own practice immediately. Holding the conference at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst also means we have access to some pretty wonderful speakers and settings, and you will certainly want to attend. Registration for the conference opens up on November 1.

Now this means that we need to hear from you. If you have any strong ideas or opinions on any of this, do let us know—we're easy to find (you can even comment on this, or any other *Forum* post!). It also doesn't mean we won't do other wonderful things—we

know there are opportunities and events that come up throughout the year and we're ready to respond to those that will make a difference for school librarians.

Judi Paradis is the President of MSLA and the librarian at the Plympton Elementary School in Waltham

THE INAUGURAL MSLA UNCONFERENCE BY LAURA D'ELIA
JANUARY 11, 2015

There was a buzz of excitement on the morning of August 21, 2014 as approximately 50 school librarians arrived at Westborough High School during summer break to participate in the very first MSLA Unconference. They came armed with their coffees, devices, and ideas, in preparation to connect, learn, collaborate, and network with fellow school librarians. Volunteers showed up early, too, to help the organizers set up the registration table, schedule board, and hang lots of signs. An unconference is just one of those informal kinds of events where everyone lends a helping hand if needed so if you were there and helped set up or clean up then "Thank you!" (especially Donna Miller, Kim Keith, Linda Kimball, Maria D'Orsi, Heather Lobenstine, Randie Groden, and Sharon Lux.)

Randie Groden
@randiegroden
🐦 Follow

Gas tank full. iPad charging. Getting ready for some F2F learning & fun at the #mslauncon #msla #tlchat

7:16 PM - 20 Aug 2014

Wendy Espinoza Cotta
@edtech2innovate
🐦 Follow

Lib unconference session ideas are posted! #mslauncon

10:05 AM - 21 Aug 2014

1 FAVORITE

By definition, unconferences are a day-long workshop that has no keynotes, no vendors, and no pre-approved sessions. They are participant-driven because we are our own best resources. They are full of conversations, not lectures. Unconferences and Edcamps are sweeping the country (and the world!) and redefining what meaningful professional development looks like.
Watch the video below about Edcamps to learn more:

As one of the organizers, I started the day with opening remarks and an introduction to the format which helped frame the day. A quick survey showed that there were quite a few participants who were new to the unconference format which, as a die-hard fan of unconferences, is always exciting to see. Then one of my favorite parts of the day happened: the building of the schedule. The suspense was tangible as the schedule slowly began to take shape from the blank board. What did everyone want to learn about today? What were the conversations going to look like? Some are unsure about leaving the building of the schedule to the participants because they worry that there won't be enough people who want to offer a session or facilitate a conversation. However, in all the unconferences that I have attended, this has never happened. Never. When given the opportunity to share and "talk shop," librarians and educators will always step up to the
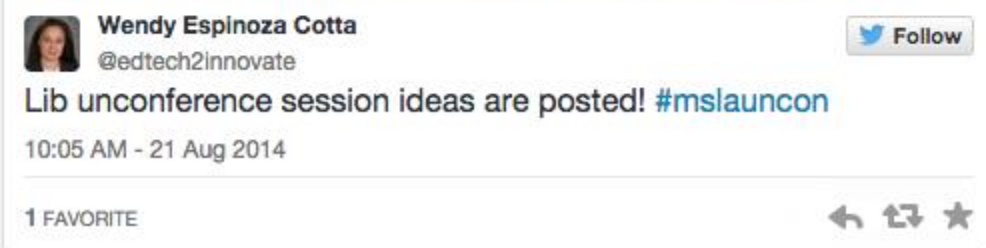
plate. The only problem is that there are typically too many great sessions to attend (which is a great problem to have!)

As a way to embrace the culture of sharing (and for those who were not able to attend), participants tweeted throughout the day with the hashtag #mslauncon. Here is the full list of archived tweets from that day. You just may find a new librarian (or two) to start following!

The session topics were as numerous and diverse as the library programs we manage, such as global collaborations, design thinking, assessments, RETELL, library newsletters, 1:1 environments, learning commons, DDM's, makerspaces, and ditching Dewey. To see what topics were on the schedule and to read the Google Docs notes for each session, click here.

Amy Short
@amyshort2

Detailed tech specifications for PARCC testing
parcconline.org/technology #MSLAuncon #edtech

1:25 PM - 21 Aug 2014

1 RETWEET 1 FAVORITE

One of the most important rules of an unconference is "Vote with Your Feet." This simple rule gives you the permission to leave a session if it is not working for you. Perhaps the session was different than what the title suggested, or the conversation went in an unexpected direction, or maybe (and this is the worst one!) the facilitator thought they were at a big conference and brought out his or her PowerPoint and started giving a formal presentation. For whatever the reason, if the session is not useful or inspiring or meaningful to you, you may get up to go find a better session or discussion. Part of this rule is that the facilitator does not get offended because he or she, too, knows that your time is valuable. Some of the best conversations I've had have happened because I voted with my feet and got involved in what is charmingly known as a "hallway session." I simply ran into another educator in the hallway and started a great discussion.

Arianna Lechan
@ariannalechan

Moved to discussion on library publicity. #mslauncon

10:45 AM - 21 Aug 2014

As the day progressed, I witnessed many wonderful things happening: I saw librarians helping each other brainstorm solutions to problems. I heard conversations about what good teaching looks like. I saw librarians sharing research strategies, tech tips, new tools, and project ideas. I heard discussions about innovative initiatives for library programs. I saw librarians working on their laptops feeling free to use the time to try something new they just learned about. Who needs expensive keynotes and workshops when we have each other?

At the end of the day, everyone joins back up together for the Smackdown and the prize give-aways. In the Smackdown, participants have two minutes to share a quick tip, such as a new online tool, web site, app, another way of doing something, or a resource. As participants share, an

organizer writes down everything and generates a list of great sources. The Smackdown list can be found on the original schedule or in a tweet. This is great way to share lots of tools without taking away from the valuable session time. Think of it as quick reference for resources in a format that is way more fun than an encyclopedia.

During the Smackdown, nametags were pulled for prizes. Thank you to Judi Paradis who came home from ALA with gobs of free stuff to give away to our participants! Free stuff makes everything better.

Before participants left, the organizers provided a survey to gather feedback on the day. Some things will need improvement like the noise level in each of the discussion spaces but, overall, the responses were overwhelmingly positive. Many found the format effective and would participate in another one again.

Don't forget! The MSLA Conference 2015 will host a mini unconference on Sunday, March 1. Here's your chance to participate again or try it for the first time.

On behalf of the MSLA Unconference organizers, Kathy Lowe, Judi Paradis, Anita Cellucci, Karen Sekiguchi, and myself, we look forward to seeing you at MSLA Conference 2015 or at the next MSLA Unconference!

Laura Beals D'Elia is the librarian at the Oak Hill Middle School in Newton @ldelia on Twitter

ACADEMIC COLUMN: SCHOOL LIBRARIES: HISTORICAL CONTEXT BY ROBIN CICCHETTI
JANUARY 11, 2015

School libraries and the profession of school librarianship have a rich history that reflects global changes in politics and culture. As we face the ongoing challenges of reduced budgets and mandated testing, school librarians and the critical information, media, digital skills and associated characteristics of citizenship that comprise out content area, are more stressed than ever. A quick overview of how school libraries evolved accomplishes two goals: reaffirming that we are an integral part of the dynamic and evolving story of U.S. education, and developing research-based strategies that will allow us to continue this story.

Schools and school libraries evolved in a series of waves that have reflected the transition of U.S. society at large. The first wave covered the transition from agricultural workers (production) to industrial workers (consumption) to the third wave that saw the shift to today's information society, labeled "prosumer," or one who both produces and consumes information (Martin, 2011). School libraries in the production phase began as storehouses of books and materials chosen to support the curricular goals of the school, and in the subsequent consumption phase evolved to more sophisticated sources of information that included digital, database, and multimedia resources. In the current prosumer phase the school librarian is a certified teacher of the information literacy skills required to locate, evaluate, and ethically use content to make and share new learning. The instructional role of the library teacher has gone from managing materials to instructing students in sophisticated information tasks that promote high level critical thinking (Loertscher, 2009).

School library studies traditionally focus on determining the impact of the school library program on student achievement. Within the environment of standards-based testing and increased teacher accountability it has been challenging for teacher librarians to assume effective leadership roles because test-based curriculum has squeezed out constructivist pedagogy (Eisner, 2013). The barriers to effective school library leadership have a number of roots, but the result is diminished effectiveness at establishing collaborative planning relationships with teachers, and diminished opportunities to provide information literacy instruction to students (Martin, 2011).

History of School Library Impact Studies

Research studies designed to determine the impact of school libraries on student achievement began in 1963 with the Gaver study (Callison, 2005). Gaver compared test scores of students in schools that had classroom-based libraries to students in schools with

separate libraries staffed by professionally trained librarians. The results showed that students from schools with professionally staffed libraries outperformed those from schools without libraries and qualified librarians. There were obstacles to the study that included the challenges of managing such large amounts of raw data and the inability to control for a wide range of variables such as community conditions. From the Gaver study through the 1970's and 80's impact studies took the form of literature reviews, with little original research.

In 1987 National Public Radio conducted an interview with William L. Bainbridge, a commercial vendor of school data (Callison, 2005). The topic of the interview was how parents who were relocating to another community could find data and identify the best school districts for their children. Bainbridge's company, School Match, conducted analysis of schools and school districts using a wide variety of data points, and had a deep databank of in-house analysis. When the interviewer asked what single factor had the greatest impact or influence on a schools performance Bainbridge immediately said spending on the school library was the greatest correlation to school performance and student achievement. This response created a surge of publicity and a new era of research. The era of research conducted in the 1990's reflects the early efforts of the Gaver study, and as a result of the School Match research, focused on quantitative research and analysis. The Colorado study in 1993 confirmed that students who attended schools with well-funded library media centers performed better on standardized reading tests, regardless of socioeconomic background (Martin, 2011; Callison, 2005). Building on numerous quantitative studies conducted in a number of U.S. states and Canada since then, the Ohio Study took a qualitative approach that explored the perceptions of students and teachers about the "help" they received from their school library and teacher librarians (Todd & Kuhlthau, 2004). It is important to note that participating Ohio schools were required to submit a self-assessment that determined whether their programs met the criteria of "effective" as defined by the study as adequately budgeted and staffed. This is crucial, because the findings of the study are tied to principal support in the form of adequate funding and staffing.

The results of the study validated the previous quantitative results, and confirmed that effective school libraries positively impact student achievement, regardless of other socioeconomic factors. The Ohio Study also established that perceptions of "help" contributed to the understanding of what it means to be an effective school librarian. The results of the many previous quantitative school library impact studies were confirmed by the results of the qualitative Ohio study on the positive impact of effective school library media programs on student achievement.

The quantitative studies of the 1990's and early 2000's have confirmed that schools with effective school libraries positively impact student achievement. The perceptions of "help" established by the qualitative Ohio Study confirmed the positive impact on student learning, but did not provide specific interventions for teacher librarians on how to transform their practice to improve their overall effectiveness.

The perceptions of principals and administrators have been identified as crucial in setting the staffing and budgetary conditions of the school library, as well as the opportunities for effective leadership (Castiglione, 2006). Research studies have been conducted on identifying the variables that influence the perceptions of principals; yet determining how these variables should be implemented remains to be addressed (Levitov, 2009). The perceptions held by building principals of their school libraries, and research-based strategies that can be used to influence those perceptions, will be addressed in the March edition of *The Forum*.

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DDMS: THERE AND BACK, A LIBRARIAN'S TALE BY ELENA SCHUCK

JANUARY 11, 2015

It all started with an email in the winter of 2014. Mandatory professional development was scheduled for January on how to use DDMs. Now I know you were all thinking the same as I, what does the *Dungeons and Dragons Manual* have to do with teaching? My questions were assuaged when I learned that DDM stands for District Determined Measures, an initiative mandated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), as part of the Evaluation system, which measures student learning growth. So how do I, a mild mannered middle school library teacher with an open schedule, implement this initiative? All I had to do was learn how to create, implement, and carry out an analysis of one critical Common Core standard (that I already teach!) that shows my students have made progress toward learning this specific concept or skill. Sounds scary, I know, but the feedback you get from your students' assessments does help to streamline your teaching and help you to excel as a teacher through self-reflection and data analysis.

In the winter of 2014, every educator was to pilot using DDMs, and our goal was to create one for each teacher or subject area team for that year. Sounds simple, right? As we all know, librarians at different grades teach different skills. However, we do have common threads that run through all of our grades. Research skills are essential at all levels, whether we are teaching what books to use for information, use of the best non-biased website, or interviewing a primary source. Also, my DDM had to be accessible to, and allow growth for, all of my students. This being said I could pick a couple of classes within one grade for my assessment; I did not have to use every grade 6 and 7 student.

First there was the question of how to focus on one explicitly taught skill. For many of us, this took time to hone. I chose English Language Arts (ELA), Writing standard 9 for grade 6 which, roughly stated, says students should be able to utilize nonfiction sources to gather relevant evidence forresearch. Next, I needed to create a plan to explicitly teach this, making it as narrow as possible, while creating a rubric to assess if all my students had made growth by the end of the year. I needed to teach how to recognize relevant information and how it is dependent on their research topic. For this skill, I decided to assess how well all students could access relevant information. Classes come into the library throughout the year for research, so finding classes to work with multiple times was no problem. Using RubiStar, an online rubric generator, I created a rubric to assess my student's work. In our district it was suggested that when creating a rubric, imagine that someone else is assessing your students. Also, the rubric should be able to determine which students had high, moderate, or low growth at the end of the year.

Next, I had to implement my plan. I started with a pretest to see what my students knew about finding relevant sources of information. There are many ways to do this. You could use paper and pencil, Google Docs to create a questionnaire, like I did, or utilize one of the following web-based/IPad-compatible tools: Socrative (quizzes, open response questions), Padlet (interactive forum for discussions), or Edmodo's Snapshot (specifically uses Core Curriculum standards in Math and ELA), just to name a very few. After the pretest, I noticed similarities in what the students were lacking and, using this information, I created my lessons. During my classes I utilized many of these resources to perform formative assessments to ensure fidelity and reliability of scores while at the same time giving me feedback on my lesson's effectiveness.

During April, I started collecting summative assessment materials to use with my rubric in order to determine if my students made growth during the year. I gave the same pretest that I had in January and looked for the percent of increase using my rubric. I did make changes to my lesson during this time, and the modifications were tried and retested. I had also started with a skill that was too broad and needed to narrow it down so that I was assessing only one skill.

Just a note that English and/or Math teachers in grades 4 to 8 are required to use at least one MCAS Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) as their DDM. This growth is obtained by comparing their students to other students in Massachusetts who, historically, have had similar assessment results. For teachers in all other subject areas, we can create our own DDMs and are encouraged to use assessments that we have in place, making changes so they will fit the DDM evaluation criteria.

We were fortunate when we began this pilot that our Office of Instruction was also new to this initiative, open to questions, and willing to help us through each step of the process. Starting this year, Teachers in all subject areas are asked to create two DDMs. If you are new to this, remember you are assessing skills that you already teach. So breathe deep and remember that all you learn from this will make you a better teacher and help your students to succeed. Is there any better reason than that?

Elena Schuck is the librarian at Mattacheese Middle School

COMICS CORNER COLUMN: INTERPRETING POLITICAL CARTOONS AS PRIMARY SOURCES BY EMILY TERSOFF

JANUARY 11, 2015

I have a confession to make: when I teach my seventh grade library/research class, I have a favorite unit. Don't get me wrong, I love citations and evaluation and note-taking as much as (some might say alarmingly more than) the next person! But it's always exciting when I realize we have time at the end of the quarter for even some of our media literacy unit.

The full unit, when I have time for it, takes about four classes. During the first two classes we read and discuss comics and political cartoons, breaking down how to interpret them and considering how they could be useful as primary sources. (The third and fourth classes focus on historic radio broadcasts.) I save it for the end of the quarter because it's something we can skip if we run out of time, but it's also a fun change of pace for what is otherwise a stressful time of year. More importantly, it's one of my few opportunities to focus on "reading" sources–and especially primary sources–that aren't based in text.

Today I want to focus just on that first lesson. There are two main ideas that I hope students take away with them:

1. Observation comes first; conclusions come after and are based on observation. If you jump right to making conclusions you can miss important details or make assumptions that get in your way.
2. Primary sources in general, but political cartoons especially, depend on context. The more you understand about the context and references an author or illustrator is making, the more meaning you can find in their work.

I start with a comic that should be approachable for all of my students:

Chan Lowe's political cartoon titled "How to Increase Voter Turnout . . .".
Lowe, Chan. Sun-Sentinal Blog. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Jan. 2015. <http://weblogs.sun-sentinel.com/news/politics/broward/blog/2008/05/political_cartoons_galore.html>.
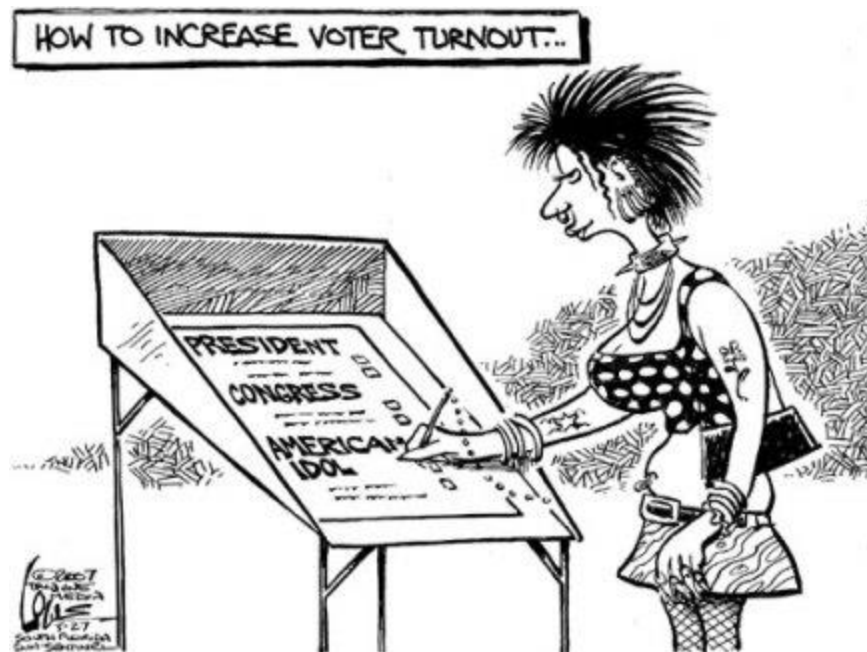
I begin by asking students to write down everything they notice, but to avoid value judgments: "she has weird hair" is not useful, I tell them, but "she has spiky hair" is. (Some students need more reminders about this than others.)

Once they've had a couple minutes to write down their answers I ask students to share one observation each. "She's wearing a really short skirt." "She has a lot of piercings." "She has tattoos." "She's wearing a necklace like a dog collar." "She's voting." Sometimes I'll prompt them, if there are important details no one mentions on their own: "Okay, so you pointed out she's voting, which is great — what is she voting for? What does it say on the ballot?" Only after we've discussed as many details as possible do I let them start drawing conclusions. I'll ask them how old they think she is. ("How old do you have to be to vote? Would you expect someone older or someone younger to dress that way?") I'll ask them why they think the ballot is written the way it is, and what it has to do with the heading "How to Increase Voter Turnout . . ." We talk about what a caricature is, about about who is being made fun of and who is meant to find it funny. But this is also, almost always, the part where I point out that before they jump to judgment they should remember that if we're just going by how many of her tattoos are visible, well, I have more tattoos than she does.

Our second comic tends to go faster, because our focus is more specific: cultural references. Now that we've all had some practice reading a political cartoon, I say, let's consider a second cartoon about Malala Yousafzai.

Lowe, Chan. Sun-Sentinal Blog. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Jan. 2015. <http://weblogs.sun-sentinel.com/news/politics/broward/blog/2008/05/political_cartoons_galore.html>.

Many students recognize her right away (some even before seeing her name), but often there will be one or two who don't know who she is, or who recognize her story but not her name. Few if any of them, though, know the NRA argument that the cartoon counters ("The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun, is a good guy with a gun."), so I supply that quote if none of the students is able to.

I have mixed feelings about using a cartoon that requires so much explanation on my part, but I've stuck with it because this is how cartoons, especially political cartoons, work: they rely on cultural references, and you need to understand the references they make in order to read them. And while this is especially true of political cartoons, it's also true of primary sources in general. In fact, I think that's one of the hardest things about working with primary sources. Any given primary source, whether it's a letter or a photograph or a radio broadcast or a political cartoon, gives one tiny snapshot of a time and place; it's only when we consider them all together that they become meaningful, and it takes a lot of background information to get to that point. That process becomes even harder when students assume a source must be text-based and end up looking past so much of what's out there without seeing it.

At the very end, if there's extra time, I'll ask students to try drawing political cartoons of their own. It's always interesting to see who is able to come up with a controversial topic right away (school lunches! snow days! too much homework!) and who struggles either to choose a topic or to express their ideas in pictures. On occasion I've received some very sophisticated, even moving, results.

All of this works on its own, and I've certainly done this as a stand-alone lesson (especially when, as I mentioned before, that's all we have time for). However, it also sets us up very well for our second day of comics. That lesson focuses more on the different ways artists can represent people and how that in turn affects our reading of older political cartoons, and I'll write more about that next time.

Emily Tersoff is the librarian at the Norwell Middle School.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND THE SCHOOL LIBRARY BY KAREN SEKIGUCHI
JANUARY 11, 2015

As of July 1, 2016, all Massachusetts educators will need 15 PDPs in teaching English Language Learners (and 15 PDPs in teaching students with disabilities and diverse learning styles) in order to renew a license or advance to another level of certification. These new requirements have caused confusion and consternation throughout the Commonwealth, but for librarians, it's pretty simple. Because we are not considered "core academic teachers," we do not need the 45-hour SEI (Sheltered English Immersion) endorsement course required for our colleagues who teach core subjects and who have English Language Learners (ELLs) in their classes. All we will need for renewing or advancing a license after July 1, 2016, is the 15 PDPs in teaching ELLs. For new teachers getting a core academic license for the first time, the SEI endorsement is required, and will be offered through approved teacher training programs.

The new program for educating English Language Learners is called RETELL: Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners. As of 2012, RETELL has changed the way the way teachers are trained and students are taught, and is the result of a ruling by the U.S. Department of Justice against the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. For students, RETELL means they will have access to ESL instruction by a certified ESL teacher, as well as sheltered content instruction in their regular classes. For teachers, RETELL requires training related to English Language Learners in demographics, socio-cultural issues, second language acquisition, teaching academic language, and literacy development.

The school library is an important place for students learning English as a Second Language (ESL), and it can play a significant role in ensuring their academic success. The obvious reason for its relevance in educating ELLs is the wealth of library resources that support the process of learning a new language: books, multi-media, databases, technology–the tools for learning. Developing a strong resource collection that reflects the multilingual, multicultural backgrounds of students is the first step librarians can take in sending a message of acceptance and inclusion to ELLs. Beyond physical resources, library programming can offer students and their families support in navigating a new language and culture. School libraries are finding innovative ways to include ELLs in library activities throughout the school day, and some libraries are providing after-school ESL classes and other outreach to families and the wider community.

In a workshop at the 2014 MSLA spring conference, members shared personal experiences about their work with English Language Learners in the school library. They offered suggestions for running successful programs that benefit both students and families, as well as strategies for assisting faculty members in their respective schools. These ideas, as well as helpful websites for ESL materials, games, and general information, are included in an MSLA ELL Resource List that can be shared with teachers and administrators in members' districts.

Understanding the linguistic and emotional needs of the ELL population, and learning ways to adapt library lessons for English Language Learners, are important skills for school librarians to develop– even though librarians are not considered "core academic" teachers. To build these skills, librarians need access to professional development that addresses the role of the library and the librarian in educating ELLs and assisting faculty.

Over the past year, MSLA has studied the issue of professional development for librarians with regard to ELLs, and has identified some key areas that should be covered in any training for library staff. In addition to a basic understanding of RETELL and its implications for teachers and students, librarians must also understand the role of the Common Core State Standards and the CCSS expectations for English Language Learners. In order to make the necessary adjustments to teaching practice required by both RETELL and the CCSS, librarians will need access to appropriate training. MSLA is working to support this effort by helping to plan both online and classroom-based courses that will fulfill the new PDP requirements for license renewal or advancement. The first 15-hour class for school librarians will run in March-April at the EDCO Collaborative facility in Bedford, MA.
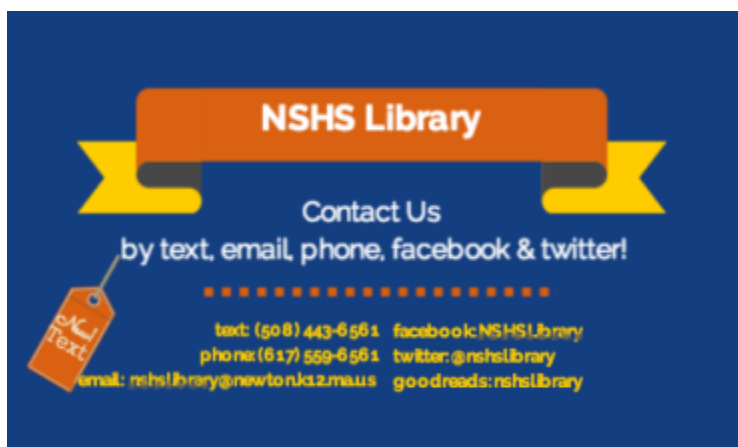
Whether a school has just a handful of ELLs or a significant ELL population, the library can play a critical role in smoothing the transition for these students. Because of its physical resources, its human resources (the awesome school librarian!), and its status as a "third place," the school library is in a unique position to support the academic, social, and emotional development of ELLs in schools. When we consider the unique needs of ELLs in our program planning, curriculum development, and teaching, school librarians and school libraries can make a powerful difference!

Karen Sekiguchi is the K-5 librarian for the Danvers Public Schools. She has an M.A. in teaching English as a Second Language, and has taught ESL in the U.S., the U.K., and Japan. She will be teaching the EDCO class, "English Language Learners and the School Library," in March of 2015.

COLUMN: TALKING TECH BY MARGARET SCHOEN
JANUARY 11, 2015

In this issue's tech column, we'll be talking about two new content creation tools that can be used for both library promotion and for student work: Canva and Adobe Voice.

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email: nshslibrary@newton.k12.ma.us   goodreads: nshslibrary

At Newton South High School we started using both of these internally this year to create promotional products and as teaching tools. But as we worked with them, we realized they would be great additions to students' toolboxes as well.

In our district, the library and IT departments have been exploring the SAMR model developed by Ruben Puentedura for transforming learning using technology. This model examines whether a technology use **s**ubstitutes, **a**ugments, **m**odifies, or **r**eplaces an existing lesson or assignment. With Canva, a design tool, the technology may simply be replacing the traditional method of creating a poster, or augmenting to add

collaboration. With Adobe Voice, students can create presentations that combine images, text, music and voice narration, which can be shared and saved for later review. This moves even further down the line into modification of a traditional poster and speech assignment.

ADOBE VOICE

Adobe Voice is an iPad only app that allows users to create "explainer videos" – short slide-show recordings that combine images, icons, text, music, and voiceovers. The tool has a built-in search feature for Creative Commons licensed images, icons, and music, and also allows users to upload their own pictures. With voiceover recording, the tool easily allows you to create guides and presentations that can be replayed as needed. Adobe hosts the final product online, so the videos can be shared with a link, or embedded in a web site.

We tried the video out first to produce our freshman orientation. Typically, this included a long speech by the library staff going over all of the rules and regulations about the library. It was tiring for us to do repeatedly, and not that interesting for the students. Our Adobe Voice video seemed to keep their attention a bit longer, and because we've saved it online, we can use it again for new students or to remind students about the rules.

Once we saw how easy it was, we realized this would be a perfect tool to promote the library. We recently underwent a major renovation, and wanted to show the all that work off to the PTO and the district administration. Adobe Voice allowed us to create an easily shareable video that could be played for a variety of audiences without needing special software or someone to run a slideshow.

While we were working on this, one of our foreign language teachers approached us about a project where students record themselves giving a presentation in Spanish. We'd used other iPad apps in the past for this project, or just recorded a presentation using a videocamera. Adobe Voice seemed like a natural fit. Students were already familiar with the slideshow format, and adding the voice language recording would solve the language teacher's need. The tool's simplicity meant that students could focus on the point of the assignment – writing and speaking in a foreign language – instead of getting caught up in technology. The teacher then had the ability to review and assess the project on his or her own time, and the final work could be shown off as evidence for evaluation. The student also had a final project that can be saved, shared with parents or peers, or used in a digital portfolio of their schoolwork.

We've tried it out now with a few classes, and it's been a big hit with students and teachers. After some revisions, we realized the most effective way to do this project is to have students plan their presentations in advance – creating a storyboard, finding images they want to use, and writing scripts. We used Google Drive to have students store their images, so they could simply be downloaded to the iPads on the day they came to produce their final project. Our blocks are about 50 minutes long, which has been sufficient to get the projects recorded, produced and uploaded.

CANVA

Canva is a digital design tool that allows users to easily create digital graphics in a variety of layouts and formats. Again, we first started using this tool internally, to create posters and web graphics for our library.

For non-artistic types (like me!), the tool is a godsend. It has pre-made layouts that you can adjust, or create free form designs. The site is basically free – some design elements or images have a fee, but there are dozens of free choices. Once you've created an image you can share it via a link, or download it as an image file to display online or as a PDF for printing.

Canva has become our go-to tool for image presentation. We've used it to create graphic elements for our web site and digital posters promoting our book club and NaNoWriMo.

It's great for printables as well: we used BlockPoster to turn small image files into large displays. We also combined a digital image with a QR code and old DVD and cassette cases to create physical "books" for our eBook collection, so we could include them in promotions and display them on shelves.

Once we started using this tool, we realized this would also be a natural for students. Several projects were going on where students were being asked to create display posters. We shared the tool with students as an option, and created a page demonstrating Canva, and a short screencast showing students how to create larger posters from their finished project. While Canva at first seemed like a simple substitution tool on the SAMR model, we realized it does offer some augmentation. Canva creations can be shared and edited by multiple students, aiding in collaboration. While students can collaborate on traditional posters, using the digital tool makes it easier for them to find time to do so, something the students appreciated.

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THE PERCEPTIONS OF PRINCIPALS BY ROBIN CICCHETTI
JANUARY 11, 2015

All school libraries are *not* created equal. There is one single indicator that predicts success, beyond community income levels or the skills and charisma of the teacher librarian. The academic research shows that single greatest factor in establishing an effective school library is the perception of the school principal toward the school library and the teacher librarian.

The literature indicates a persistent problem of perceptions among school administrators regarding the impact of teacher librarians on student achievement. A qualitative study followed the results of the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) that gave schools the choice of whether or not to employ school library media specialists. Ten years after KERA, principals from the 64 districts in 176 schools were surveyed, and indicated that they did not perceive the school library media specialists as essential to the success of their schools (Alexander, Smith, & Carey, 2003). This finding stood in contrast to the perceptions of school library media specialists in Kentucky who perceived their role as very essential to student achievement and the overall success of their schools. While teacher librarians may view themselves as indispensible, school principals often do not share that view. This discrepancy in perceptions is problematic because it explains the decision making of principals in determining staffing, budgeting, and instructional leadership that are foundational to a successful school library program.

The perceptions of school principals with regard to school librarians are determined by four factors: their own experiences as children where the school library was peripheral to the classroom, professional training that did not include the school library or informational literacy, the nature of the work of school librarians which is to empower others, and the overall low profile of school librarianship in educational literature (Hartzell, 2002). These perceptions are compounded by occupational invisibility within the school that is caused by under-staffing that prohibits the teacher librarian from leaving the library to attend collaborative planning meetings and other opportunities for leadership and professional growth (Johnston, 2012). The school community acknowledges discipline area teachers as having direct impact on student learning, but because instructional support and co-teaching with the teacher librarian is collaborative those contributions tend not to be recognized or collected as evidence-of-impact on learning, which further reinforces occupational invisibility (Martin, 2011).

The gaps that exist in the perceptions of principals can have a long-term impact on schools when it comes to hiring a teacher librarian, especially because of the solo-practitioner status of the position. A qualitative study was conducted that included school administrators, library school faculty members, and library school students that was designed to probe preferred characteristics based on five categories: education, experience, recommendations, involvement, and compatibilities (Roys & Brown, 2004). Results indicated that school library students had a better idea than library school faculty about the characteristics sought by school administrators during hiring, but that school library faculty had a better understanding of the skills and characteristics required of an ideal candidate. School administrators registered a very low understanding of the characteristics and skills needed in a teacher librarian to fill the role effectively. Principals don't really know what they want us to do, or what they should look for in a candidate. A mixed-methodology study surveyed principals in South Carolina on their perceptions of teacher librarians, their hiring criteria, the competencies they considered important, and levels of satisfaction with their current teacher librarian. The premise of the study was that the school library program relies profoundly on the support of the school principal in terms of budgeting, staffing, the role of the library in the overall school culture, and in providing leadership opportunities for the teacher librarian (Shannon, 2009). The conclusions of the study were that principals generally rated themselves as "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with their teacher librarian, and that their prime source of information about the value and impact on student learning of the library program came directly from the teacher librarian in his or her own building. The chief source of education on characteristics of effectiveness is the building-based teacher librarian, indicating a need for additional research on themes of the teacher librarian as an effective communicator, as having strong inter-personal skills, and the need to build strong relationships with building principals and school administrators.

The findings of a quantitative study on the ability of teacher librarians to expand their role as instructional leaders concluded that the single most important requirement was a supportive principal (Martin, 2011). The variables that were identified as indicators of support were determined to be the size and currency of the library print and digital collection, the hours of available service, the size of media and technology support staff, adequate library support staff, and the availability if a full-time certified LMS; all tied to budget decisions made by the principal (Hartzell, 2003, as cited by Martin, 2011). Developing strategies to disrupt and change the perceptions of principals is a high priority for teacher librarians seeking increased opportunities as instructional leaders with effective school programs.

It is necessary for teacher librarians to become more active in instructional leadership to facilitate the integration of information literacy and technology skills across all areas of curriculum. To achieve this goal it is necessary for teacher librarians to adopt new techniques, strategies and theories that will change the perceptions of principals and administrators, and create the conditions necessary for instructional leadership to take place (Castiglione, 2006; Johnston, 2012).

This is the time to assess the perceptions of our building principals towards the role of the school library in our schools, and take proactive steps to influence those perceptions. The research literature is clear that it is up to us to educate our principals through providing evidence of our impact on student learning, by sharing academic research that clearly states the critical role of effective school libraries on achievement, and to have goal-based budget discussions to improve library resources. (These goals should include adequate staffing in order for the teacher librarian to participate in curriculum planning instructional leadership opportunities.) If we don't work to influence the perceptions of our principals we will continue to see inequities in school library service for the students of Massachusetts.

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FROM WORDS TO PICTURES: COLLABORATION, CREATIVITY, & CURIOSITY: AN INTERVIEW WITH SHELLEY ROTNER BY SUZANNE MATHEWS

JANUARY 11, 2015
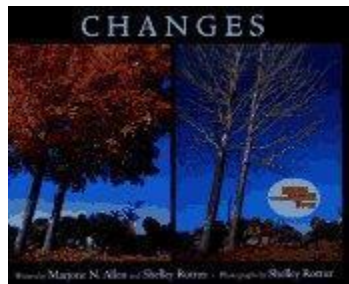
From composting to skin color, from seasons to adoption, from bees to A.D.D., Shelley Rotner has created more than thirty unique photographic journeys for children. With a career spanning over twenty years, her first book, *Changes*, was published in 1991, she currently has one title due out in fall 2014, and another expected in spring 2015.

Although Northampton is her home base, Shelley has traveled the world as a photographer for the United Nations and continues to work as a photojournalist. Even with so many children's titles with her byline, Shelley considers herself first to be a photographer. She intentionally seeks out images that represent the diversity of the world we live in and at times she says she has had to put her foot down with publishers to maintain her commitment to a multicultural portrait. Before entering the world of children's publishing, Shelley trained at Bank Street School of Education in New York City, earning dual degrees in early childhood and museum education. She worked briefly both in Manhattan and in Milton, MA as a kindergarten teacher. When her daughter asked for books she couldn't find in libraries or bookstores, she and Shelley began making their own books together.
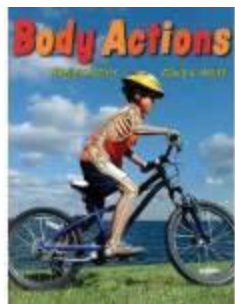
Not surprisingly, Shelley's natural creativity and curiosity lead her onto each new project. She stands on her head every day in order to get her creative juices flowing (perhaps something we should all try!) and although she describes five-year-olds as her sweet spot and the target audience for most of her books, she herself attended kindergarten for only one week until she was moved up to first grade.

Shelley prides herself on saying more with less. Her photos speak for her. Her text is usually minimal and poetic, allowing readers to make their own connections. Through the combination of words and pictures, Shelley Rotner's books accomplish that rare connection with the reader that few nonfiction texts do. Collaboration is key to her success, she says; she has collaborated on most of her titles. However, children's books are not her sole interest. Currently she is creating breathtaking artworks by painting in oils on her black and white photographs. Check out her website (www.shelleyrotner.com) to see these gorgeous images as well as to learn more about this prolific children's book creator. Shelley is available for school visits and loves interacting with children, especially the young ones.
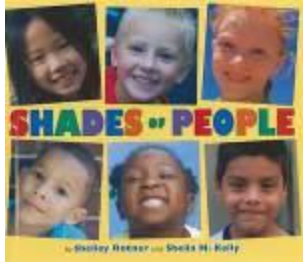
Suzanne Mathews is the elementary school librarian at the Trotter School in Boston

SECONDARY SCHOOL COLUMN: THE SOULFUL NATURE OF CHANGE BY CATHY COLLINS
JANUARY 11, 2015

NOTE: This article is reprinted with permission from the author. The original article appeared on MassCue's *On Cue Online* blog.
"If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's,
we rob them of tomorrow" – John Dewey

Over the past month, I have weeded (discarded) approximately 4,000 outdated, older books from our library's collection as part of current renovation efforts to create an updated, modernized, technology-rich environment for our students at Sharon High School. These renovation efforts were initiated several years ago by our Library Task Force of parents, teachers and students as we surveyed the wider school community to assess and prioritize necessary changes to our library's design in alignment with our school-wide and district-wide goals.

It's an exciting time for the library and library program as we work toward expanded possibilities that will meet students where they are today while also reinforcing traditional research skills. In order to prepare our students to thrive in a digital world that values collaborative team work, problem solving and creativity, our learning spaces need to foster those skills. In a world where information is instantaneously available through devices, we need to shift the focus toward teaching our students how to evaluate that information in order make new meaning out of it. The library as learning commons becomes a center of inquiry and beyond that, a hub of project-based learning, digital literacy, collaboration and creativity.

Nonetheless, even as a librarian who fully embraces the learning commons philosophy, I found myself in tears when I reached the poetry section and needed to discard the yellowed, dusty, older volumes of Frost, Dickinson and Yeats, to name a few. First and foremost, as a librarian, I am a lover of beautiful language, ideas and poetry. Essential Question: How to make peace with this process of change?

For many of us, books are sacred, soulful objects. They carry a symbolic weight that extends beyond their mere content and size. As physical objects, they are imbued with the gravity of the past and offer themselves to us as transmitters not only of knowledge but also, at times, of personal and collective history. As I discard the outdated copy of Yeats, I read with amusement the graffiti inside the cover, "John S. has the cutest buns in room 107." John is more than likely now a grandfather. Still, I am discarding a tiny, if insignificant piece of my school's history as I move that book to the discard pile. The ghost of my own father, a high school English teacher who wall-papered my childhood home with bookshelves lined with volume upon volume, is with me, and I feel the need to fully convince both of us that what I am doing is right.

What helps me is the knowledge that it is not about me and I don't dare take this personally. It's about my students, and what they need in order to succeed. They do not need moldy copies of yellowed, dusty books. Which is not to say that some of those classic poetry books don't need replacing. But perhaps, in addition, I can work with our English Dept. to collaborate on signing up some student teams for the national "Poetry Out Loud" competition, to bring the essence of those poems to life as performance pieces. Perhaps, students could also create videos of their poems as interpretive art through Animoto, incorporating music and sound to learn valuable visual literacy and technology skills as well as literary analysis. I am excited about these new possibilities that allow for the teaching of trans-literacies.

As I complete the weeding process, I look to models such as Brown University's Digital Scholarship lab: an amazing space designed specifically for collaboration, flexibility, and ease of use for scholars working on data-rich and visually oriented research, and at the high school level, Tenafly High School's Lalor Library in Tenafly, New Jersey.

Moving full circle between past and future, I also look to the writing on the inside cover of the last book my father gave me before he left this world, "They Made America: From the Steam Engine to the Search Engine: Two Centuries of Innovators," by Harold Evans. The handwritten page reads, "To Cathy- Here is your surprise Xmas present. It may, or may not, be useful, but it will certainly impress you, just as you have impressed me. Love, Daddy p.s. I hope it fits in your suitcase."

Reading these words, I am reminded that even my bibliophile father would have supported my efforts as a librarian to pave the way for an innovative learning space for students. He was first and foremost, a teacher who embraced unconventional teaching methods to engage his students.

The very large book did indeed fit in my suitcase and made its way along with several other treasured volumes from California to Kathmandu and back home to Massachusetts. Of course, their owner valued the knowledge inside the books more so than a few unnecessary pairs of socks or sweaters.

Perhaps, it is possible to be forward thinking, innovative, sentimental and impractical all at once. Answer to Essential Question:

> *"Come gather 'round people*
> *Wherever you roam*
> *And admit that the waters*
> *Around you have grown*
> *And accept it that soon*
> *You'll be drenched to the bone.*
> *If your time to you is worth savin'*
> *Then you better start swimmin'*
> *Or you'll sink like a stone*
> *For the times they are a-changin'."*
> *–Bob Dylan*

Cathy Collins is the librarian at Sharon High School

ADVOCACY & LEGISLATION UPDATE BY KENDALL BONTINI AND KERI MARTIN
JANUARY 11, 2015

BIG NEWS FOR MA SCHOOL LIBRARIES
MSLA is thrilled to announce the passage of school library Bill S.1906. The passage is BIG news for school libraries throughout the state; especially those that have long been plagued with severely understaffed and underfunded programs. Right now, a commission is being created that will take an in-depth and honest look at the status of school libraries throughout the state. Data on staffing, funding, materials, and access to technology will all be compiled, analyzed, and reported with recommendations to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. To keep up to speed with the work of the commission, follow the MSLA Legislative Committee on Twitter @MSLALegislation

TAKE ACTION
Speak Up to Increase Funding for MA School Libraries! There is a big opportunity in the works to increase funding for school libraries in Massachusetts. Over the next couple of months, the Foundation Budget Review Commission (FBRC) will be reassessing the Chapter 70 school finance law. Chapter 70 determines how much money school districts receive to deliver essential educational services. School libraries currently have no standing within the Department of Elementary and Secondary and are not mentioned explicitly in Chapter 70. Consequently, school libraries often get hit hard when state aid or local aid is reduced. MSLA is asking the FBRC to recommend that the revised law include professionally staffed and well-supported school library programs for all students in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Please consider lending your voice to this unique opportunity by doing the following:

1. **Submit Testimony:** MSLA Chapter 70 Testimony. Feel free to modify the testimony that MSLA has submitted to the FBRC and include personal anecdotes about why the school library is so important to students' in your community. Email testimony to the following: Jennie.Williamson@mahouse.gov
2. **Testify:** Over the next couple months, the FBRC is holding several public hearings throughout the state. Anyone can show up and testify. You can read directly from the MSLA Chapter 70 Testimony or include your own narrative. To find out when and where the hearings are being held, visit the MTA website.

Attend a Legislative Breakfast: Legislative breakfasts are laid-back, informal affairs that allow library teachers to strengthen their relationships with legislators and showcase the important work that they do on behalf of local constituents. You can attend a breakfast as an observer in the crowd or you can ask the host to be on the agenda and give a brief speech about school libraries. If you are interested in speaking at a legislative breakfast and are unsure of what to say, visit the Legislative Breakfast page on the MSLA Legislation website.

Legislative breakfasts are held throughout the state by both public and school libraries, and are organized and overseen by the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA). Breakfasts typically take place from 8-9am on Fridays, during the months of January-March. You are welcome to attend any breakfast you would like, including those held in public libraries, but it is important that you confirm your attendance with the host library at least several weeks in advance of the event. Check out the Library Legislative Breakfast Schedule on the MLA website to see which libraries (school or public) will be hosing an event in your neck of the woods! http://www.masslib.org/2015Breakfasts

For current information anytime, bookmark the MSLA Legislative Committee website:www.MSLALegislation.weebly.com

MSLA Legislative Commitee Co-Chairs
Kendall Boninti – Waltham High School
Keri Martin – Chelsea Elementary Schools

NEW YEAR'S REFLECTION BY CATHY COLLINS
JANUARY 11, 2015

"Educational change is not constrained by lack of technology but a lack of sociological imagination." — Diana Rhoten

As the new school year began and our high school library underwent a radical transformation in which outdated books were stripped from shelves and digital workstations were added, I found myself pausing to reconsider the role of technology in education, and how it might allow us to re-imagine and re-invent our current education system.

Truth be told, I've never been a "gadgets" kind of girl. Prior to day one of a summer Himalayan trek with students from my Sharon district, I chose to leave the trekking poles behind. I wanted my hands free and unencumbered by the weight of extra objects so that I could more fully focus on the beauty of the surrounding mountains.

However, unbeknownst to me, the highest passes were snow-covered due to atypical weather patterns in the Hampta Pass region. This made for slippery slopes. I needed to re-think my plan. I grabbed hold of the hand of one of the local Indian guides, who spoke little English but understood well enough the distressed look on my face and smiled back to reassure me that his hand would be there throughout the duration of that challenging journey.

At a certain moment near the highest point of our trek, I lost my grip on his hand due to gravity, fell on my posterior and slid many feet down the mountain, luckily wounding only my pride. As I looked up toward my guide's surprised face, and we both laughed with relief at the realization that I was okay, I felt a profound sense of gratitude for my new friend and his concern for my well-being. A trekking pole is no replacement for the touch of a human hand.

These days, it is all too easy to be side-swiped by the appeal of an ever-increasing array of educational gadgets, without giving thorough and deep consideration to their place in the overall scheme of things.

Technology is defined as "the use of science to invent things or solve problems," and/or "the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes."

As educators, how can we utilize technology to assist us in creating connections for young people, sparking their imagination, enabling collaboration, deep inquiry and practical problem-solving that relates to wider social, political and global concerns? How can technology assist us as educators in helping our students navigate the slippery slopes beyond strictly fact-based learning toward enhanced critical thinking skills? These are questions worth pondering at the start of this new year.

Cathy Collins is the school librarian at Sharon High School

TWITTER CHATS WITH MSLA BY KATHERINE STEIGER

MSLA has been holding monthly Twitter Chats for over a year — not counting a brief hiatus over the summer. These are typically held on the second Tuesday of the month from 8 – 9 PM. There is a topic for discussion posted in advance and the chats are moderated by Amy Short, Director of Library and Media Service for the Boston Public Schools. Recent topics include Read Across America (December), Collaboration (November) and Reading Culture (October). These Twitter Chats offer a great opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues without having to travel to a meeting. And if you can't make the Twitter Chat, you can still access all the great ideas through the Storify links provided by Amy Short shortly thereafter. The next Twitter Chat will focus on moving towards the Learning Commons model on January 13th, 8PM. Use #MSLA to join the chat that evening, or look for a link to the Twitter Chat Storify on the MSLA list serve. To explore the Twitter Chats from this fall, follow the links below:

December 2014 MSLA Twitter Chat – Read Across America
November 2014 MSLA Twitter Chat – Collaboration with Teachers & Collaborative Projects
October 2014 MSLA Twitter Chat – Reading Culture, Book Clubs & New Titles

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MSLA Forum Editors: Jennifer Dimmick (Newton South High School) and Katherine Steiger (Pollard Middle School, Needham).

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