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Volume 29, Issue 2

# THE **T**eaching **L**ibrarian

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association  
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for  
Innovation  
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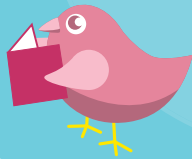
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**innovation @** your library



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**innovation @ your library**

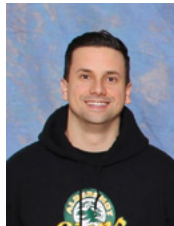
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Volume 29, Issue 2



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## TingL Mission

### *The Teaching Librarian*

*The Teaching Librarian* (TingL) is the official magazine of the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA). It is published three times a year to support OSLA members in providing significant and effective library programs and services. *The Teaching Librarian* promotes library programs and curriculum development that furthers exemplary educational objectives. The magazine fosters effective collaboration within the school library community and provides a forum to share experience and expertise.

## TingL References

*The Teaching Librarian* is a general magazine for OSLA members and not a scholarly journal. If your article does require citation of sources, please provide them within the text of your article or column with as much or as little bibliographic information as necessary for identification (e.g. book title, year). If you feel that the works you are citing require full identification, please provide a bibliography at the end of your piece, formatted according to the latest Chicago Manual of Style (16<sup>th</sup> edition) or APA Style.

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## TingL Submission Guidelines

Please Note: Themes are subject to change.

May 2022 V. 29, Issue 3	"Leadership @ your library" Deadline: January 31, 2022
September 2022 V. 30, Issue 1	"back @ your library" Deadline: May 31, 2022
January 2023 V. 29, Issue 2	"Censorship @ your library" Deadline: September 30, 2022

Articles of 150-250 words, 500 words, or 800-1,300 words are welcome. Articles, when approved, should be accompanied by high quality images and/or graphics whenever possible. Text must be sent electronically, preferably in a Microsoft Word (or compatible) file. Images or graphics must be sent separately in a digital format, such as .jpeg, .png, .tiff, or .ai. The minimum resolution must be 1000 px at 150 dpi. With photos that contain a recognized individual, please secure the individual's permission in writing for the use of the photo. Photos taken at public events or crowd shots taken in a public place do not require permission from the subjects. All submissions are subject to editing for consistency, length, content, and style. Journalistic style is preferred. *The Teaching Librarian* adheres to Canadian Press Style. Articles must include the working title, name of author, and email address in the body of the text. OSLA reserves the right to use pictures in other OSLA publications unless permission is limited or denied at the time of publishing.

When writers consent to having articles published in *The Teaching Librarian* magazine, permission is also granted to online distribution of the periodical through accessola.com and educational databases, without expectation of financial compensation. Ownership and copyright of the article is still retained by the original authors. Any questions about submissions should be directed to the Editor of *The Teaching Librarian*: teachinglibrarian@outlook.com.

## TingL Subscriptions

*The Teaching Librarian* is a benefit of OSLA membership. To become a member, contact:

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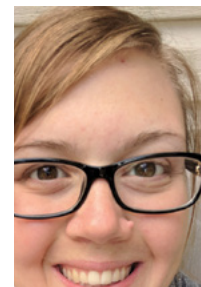
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# The Editor's Notebook



Kasey Whalley

**H**ello, I'm new here! Well, truthfully, I'm not new to *The Teaching Librarian*. I have been lucky to work with Caroline Freibauer (the person who usually writes this part of the magazine) on *The Teaching Librarian* and other library-related endeavours for several years; I hope to keep her Editor's seat warm while she is on a medical leave. I'm excited, and a bit terrified, to take on the role of Acting Editor and try something new.

For many, newness – a key element of innovation – can be scary. We become accustomed and comfortable with what we know. The unknown and untested can lead to failures or mistakes.

This is one of the biggest hurdles of innovation: allowing ourselves the room to do something new despite the risks. Taking on the role of editor-in-chief for the launch of our Innovation @ Your Library edition has shown me how exciting something new can be, but also how important it is to have a great foundation on which to grow. Caroline has been an immeasurable support during this transition, and has proven the value of collaboration, guidance and leadership, and creativity when tackling something new.

When I first sat down to write this entry into the Editor's Notebook, I felt an overwhelming wave of imposter syndrome. What was I doing?! Yes, I have experience being an editor and yes, I have a deep passion for school library learning commons and the amazing work being done in and through those spaces, but I can't write this column! I abandoned my first attempt, made myself an obscenely large cup of hot chocolate, and started to think: maybe I can approach this like an innovator. Innovation is, at its core, something new. So how do innovators deal with the scary part of trying something new?

The first thing I realized is that innovators look at things a little differently, tackle their projects bit by bit, and work collaboratively. The articles on make writing ("Make Writing Uplifting a Community of Learners" and "Leveraging Student Ideas Through the Use of Make Writing") based on the work of Angela Stockman provide insight into this bit-by-bit approach and collaborative work.

Innovators also depend on leadership and guidance to help bring their projects to life. These qualities help students build confidence and community ("Innovation in a Small Space") and refine their entrepreneurial skills ("Cultivating Young Creative Entrepreneurs"). It also provides a stable base on which these budding innovators can depend.

Crucial to the innovative mindset is creativity. Having access to a creative space ("Tinker Lab: A Model for LLC" and "Finding New Spaces: Changing Where We Make") means that innovators have the room to iterate ideas and make new things. A creative outlet gives innovators permission to express themselves and build their skills and ideas in a variety of ways.

Underlying all of these elements is the sturdy and supportive foundation of the LLC that gives innovators the confidence boost to try something new. This is how I beat my imposter syndrome when I began to write this column. I looked at it less like a daunting monolith of words I had to produce and worked out the concepts and ideas I wanted to express. I leaned on Caroline and professional resources ("Innovation in the LLC: Resources Help Promote Innovation in LLC") when I was stuck or needed guidance. I allowed myself to think of this column as a creative outlet to share my joy (and terror) at starting something new. I was much more successful at getting words on paper this time around.

Innovation can sometimes feel like it's beyond our reach, or that it may not fit with the stuffy stereotypes of libraries gone by. But innovation – newness – is an exciting and remarkable element of school library learning commons of today.

So, if this edition seems a bit daunting, don't worry; you too can think like an innovator and build the confidence to create (or try) something new. ■

# President's Report



Maureen McGrath

“

**“And then, I realized what you do with an idea...You change the world” — Yamada, Kobi, *What Do You Do with an Idea?***

”

**B**eing an OSLA council member is a volunteer position. Council members meet four times a year on Saturdays. These meetings used to be in person at the OLA office in Toronto, and now, like so much else, are virtual. At the end of the meeting, the rich discussion usually leaves us with some work to do: a committee to join, a further meeting to attend, an email to write and send. We all know how precious the weekends are, and how full all our plates feel, so what is the draw?

It's this: every time I leave a meeting, I've learned something new.

Isn't this at the heart of innovation? A simple search for synonyms for innovator uncovers an impressive list of verbs: builder, creator, developer, deviser, founder, generator, groundbreaker, introducer, inventor, maker, originator, pioneer, planner, researcher, and my favourite, dreamer. I bet many of these apply to you. I am in continual awe of all the innovators in this profession who are living the verbs. Innovation is at the heart of all our work in schools.

School library professionals lead the charge in their buildings as they continue to reinvent the space and its content to ensure both represent those whom we seek to serve. They bring new technologies to the fore, provide exciting and current opportunities for learning, keep the collection current and reflective of their student body and are constantly changing and adapting to the world our students are living in and preparing for. This is not a small or easy task, but we know how rewarding it can be, and at times, how challenging.

OSLA council wants to support you, and lift up your voices

so we can learn from each other and take strength from our shared belief in the power of the school library. We have had many collegial conversations and followed your social media posts as we returned to in-person learning and we noted that no matter how difficult the climate and circumstances were this fall, educators were thrilled to have students return to their spaces. OSLA wants to hold onto this feeling and focus on embracing joy! Some of the ways we are working to do this are:

- We are continuing our #ONLIBChats so we can connect with one another around topics of interest.
- We are hosting our next two workshops in our series with Andrew B. Campbell, a doctor of Educational Leadership, Policy and Diversity, to continue to be mindful of the work we all need to do around equity and diversity training.
- We hope to “see” you at our Super Conference session #schoollibraryjoy, to share with you the accomplishments and ideas from your colleagues. Follow our Twitter account @OSLAcouncil to share images and stories of your favourite resources, invitational moments, and innovations in your space.
- We also continue to advocate at the local and provincial level for the importance of staffing school libraries with trained professionals.

It has been an honour to serve a double term as OSLA President through these turbulent times, and I look forward to continuing my role on council in February as I move into Past President.

May your library continue to be a place of wonder for your students. ■

# The Buzz

## An Interview with the Right Honourable David Johnston How to Inspire the Next Generation of Innovators

Innovation in our country and how to plant the seed of interest in students to grow into great thinkers and problem solvers is on the minds of many leaders, teachers and parents. Amongst this group of stakeholders includes the Right Honourable David Johnston, the 28<sup>th</sup> Governor General of Canada (2010 to 2017), who is deeply committed to cultivating a growth mindset of innovation in today's youth.

When this issue's theme was proposed, I immediately thought of the two books Johnston co-authored with Tom Jenkins, *Ingenious* and *Innovation Nation*, published in time to celebrate Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. When I first read the adult title and young readers' edition, I knew these were books to save and share with my children when they were old enough to learn from them. Serendipitously, in the spring of 2017 I had the opportunity to meet Johnston while attending a fireside chat on youth and innovation to celebrate the launch of the Shad program at Ryerson University.

This fall I had the great privilege to continue this conversation with him by phone. Education is one of his core values, with too many academic awards and distinctions to list, as well as a deep respect for the profession with many teachers in his family. He told me with great feeling, "If we are to remember three words, it is to 'cherish our teachers.' Apart from our family they have the most important influence on the choices we make and the people we become."

For this very reason, I believe he was enthusiastic to participate in the interview below and share with our community of readers his views on how to support innovation at your library and inspire students to make the world smarter, smaller, kinder, safer, healthier, wealthier and happier.

**TingL: *Ingenious* and the companion title *Innovation Nation* are true celebrations of innovation in Canada. What inspired you and your co-author, Tom Jenkins, to write about this topic as well as a title aimed at students?**

Canada has a long tradition of welcoming new ideas and solutions and that has certainly been evident during this



pandemic. Yet, we don't often celebrate our country's achievements in innovation. Tom and I wrote this book to celebrate the history and spirit of creativity in Canada and to inspire all Canadians to think of themselves as innovators. Many stories of innovation that most people may not realize originated in Canada (e.g., light bulb).

**Which book idea came first, or were they thought and written about simultaneously?**

We started with the idea of creating a collection of innovation stories that illustrates the range and depth of innovations that Canadians have given the world. And let me tell you, it was difficult choosing the nearly 300 stories that went into the *Ingenious* book, which reflects how truly innovative Canadians are. The young readers' version, *Innovation Nation*, provides an introduction to 50 Canadian innovations that can be studied in the classroom in a variety of subject areas. Josh Holinaty provided the creative illustrations to appeal to a younger audience.



### What is your favourite innovation featured? Why?

Choosing from options that appear in both books:

- for kinder innovations: the Declaration of Human Rights and blue box recycling
- for safer innovations: the goalie mask
- for healthier innovations: insulin and Buckley's mixture
- for happier innovations: basketball and maple syrup

### Teaching students research skills is a key goal for teacher-librarians. How did you and Tom Jenkins collaborate with experts to collect this comprehensive research and make your books a reality?

We gathered these innovation stories with help from colleagues in industry, government, community organizations, universities and colleges, national institutions and, of course, from our circles of friends and family. Our partners in these books helped us to gather the facts for each story and even assisted with sourcing photos and images.

A few examples of our partners are the National Research Council and the Canada Science and Technology Museum.

### As your books were published in 2017, how have you been promoting your message since, and is there another title in the works?

The books were a starting point in a larger plan that would focus on strengthening our culture of innovation in Canada.

Back in 2016, we created the Governor General's Innovation Awards to recognize outstanding achievements in Canadian innovation annually. To date, 36 innovators and teams of innovators have received this award in a variety of fields – science, health, finance, community development, art language preservation and so on. They have remarkable stories of their journeys that can be found on our website.

In 2018, we held the first annual Canadian Innovation Week, which provides an opportunity each year in May to come together to celebrate and share stories of innovation. During the pandemic, this has been held on social media reaching nearly 60 million impressions throughout the week.

We also worked with Edelman Canada to develop the first ever Culture of Innovation Index. The most recent findings reveal important opportunities for Canada to build on unexpected outcomes from the pandemic.

It's heartening to see that Canadians continue to value innovation. In fact, 44 per cent of Canadians want innovation to drive economic growth, up five percentage points compared to last year. Specifically, many see it as an engine for the common good, fueling not only economic growth but also healthier people and a cleaner environment.

Canadians still lack exposure to stories of homegrown innovators and inventions. Nearly half say they don't hear stories about Canadian innovators and innovation in the media (47 per cent) or at school (46 per cent) – a challenge we must address if we're to inspire greater innovation moving forward.

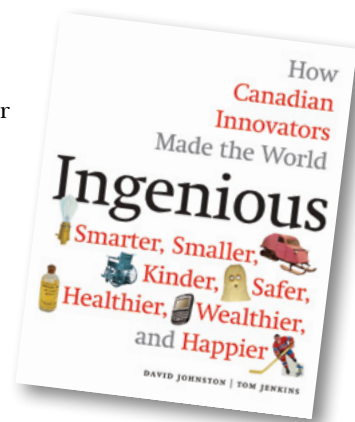
### Is there a recent innovation that you would want to include?

#### Canadian Shield ([canadianshieldppe.ca](http://canadianshieldppe.ca))

Jeremy Hedges, an establish tech innovator from Waterloo, recognized a need for PPE for healthcare workers early in the pandemic. With help from Waterloo's "barn raising" community, Jeremy's company has grown to become one of the largest manufacturers of medical-grade face shields and surgical masks in the country.

#### Vaccine Hunters Canada ([vaccinehunters.ca](http://vaccinehunters.ca))

A volunteer community, founded by Andrew Young, recognized that Canadians were having trouble booking vaccines. Back in March, they launched a Twitter account and quickly gained volunteers and contributors from coast to coast to provide information on available vaccines in hundreds of communities. It is estimated that they have helped over 1 million Canadians get their vaccines.



*continued on page 10*

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**All proceeds from *Ingenious* are directed to the Rideau Hall Foundation. For those hearing about this charitable organization for the first time, kindly tell us more about it.**

We established the Rideau Hall Foundation (RHF) as an independent national charity in 2012 while I was Governor General. Simply put, the RHF is focused on building a better Canada by igniting our shared potential. While fully independent from the Office of the Governor General, the RHF was established to amplify the values of the institution of governor general: to connect, honour and inspire Canadians.

These priorities are reflected throughout RHF's four areas of activity:

- Learning initiatives that strive for excellence and promote equality of educational opportunity – Catapult Canada, Queen Elizabeth Scholars, Indigenous Teachers Initiative
- Widening the circle of giving and volunteering – 30 Years of Giving research; Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers; Youth Volunteerism Initiative, GivingTuesday, WillPower
- Celebrating excellence in Canadian leadership – building awareness about and commitment to the country's multi-faceted democracy through the Forum for Young Canadians, Michener Awards in Public Service Journalism
- Strengthening Canada's culture of innovation – Governor General's Innovation Awards, Ingenious+, Canadian Innovation Week, the Arctic Inspiration Prize

**How can educators and teacher-librarians in particular best use your books as a tool and resource to inspire students of all ages?**

We recently did some survey work at RHF looking at how best to engage and inspire students and one of the major findings, which I'm sure will not come as a surprise to your membership, is that intermediaries and schools are critical.

The research also confirmed that students want to see success stories. Specifically, students want to hear from people who have done exactly what they themselves want to do (i.e., if I am an aspiring video game designer, I want to meet and hear from a gaming entrepreneur or engineer.)

While Tom and I were compiling the stories for the *Ingenious* books, we started working with Nipissing University's faculty of education to develop the Education for Innovation (E4I) teacher lessons plans. There are three resources guides: Early Learning to Kindergarten; Grade 1-8; and Grade 7-12.

They use the innovation stories from *Ingenious* and *Innovation Nation* and walk the students through the innovation cycle in a practical way. At the end, students can create their own innovations to showcase to their parents and families. The resource guides are bilingual and available for free at [canadianinnovationspace.ca](http://canadianinnovationspace.ca) and teachers who have access to the Brightspace platform can download the E4I resources into it directly.

**What does it take to be an innovator today?**

In the education field, the five Cs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning are often discussed and debated: collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking and curiosity. Tom Jenkins likes to add a sixth C: coding or computational thinking, and I think we should add compassion to the list, as that one makes sense now more than ever. These are all competencies that we want young people to develop as they prepare for their futures, especially if they aspire to become innovators.

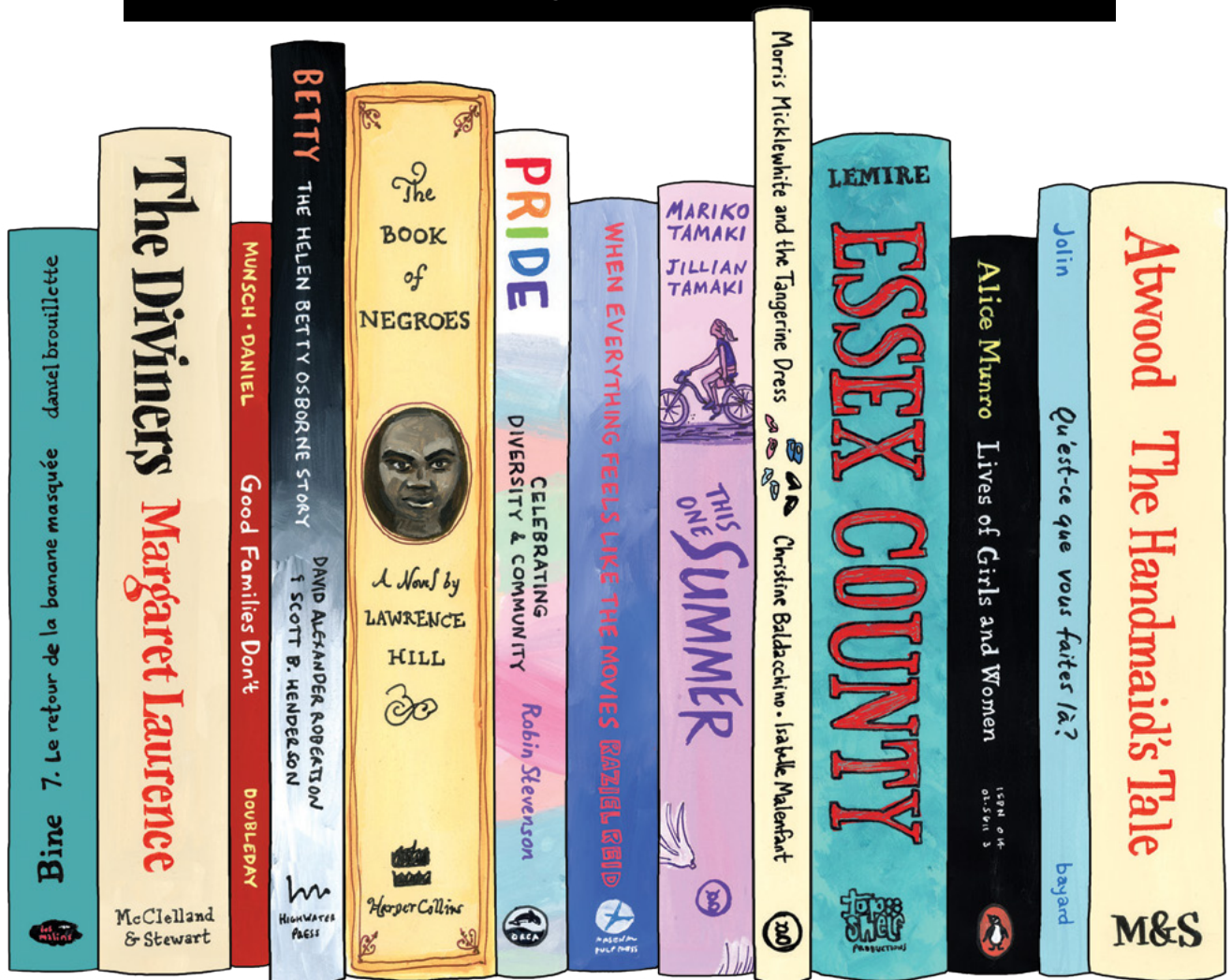
**In your opinion, what is the best way to encourage Canadian youth to continue to make the world smarter, smaller, kinder, safer, healthier, wealthier and happier?**

To inspire the next generation of innovation, we want to make sure there is equity of access to opportunity. Youth need more than financial opportunity – we can ensure that they are connected with mentors to help them turn their ideas and solutions into innovations that will have a positive impact on the world.

It's one of the reasons that we are launching a new national youth innovation challenge program, called Ingenious+. We want to encourage high school students from coast to coast to share their innovations by applying to receive up to \$10,000 in cash as well as mentorship opportunities. We're working with JA Canada and their network of regional charters to launch the program in mid-October at [ingeniousplus.ca](http://ingeniousplus.ca) and there will be regional and national awards in spring 2022. ■

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February 20–26, 2022



Jane Mount

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# Meet the Author

## Linda Bailey

Linda Bailey is an award-winning author of numerous books for children, including the *Stanley* series, *Carson Crosses Canada*, and most recently *Princesses Versus Dinosaurs*. Linda currently lives in Vancouver and has a three-year-old granddaughter named Lee, who is amazing, and who generously provides her grandmother with all kinds of fresh inspiration and ideas.



**TingL:** What advice would you give to aspiring writers?

My best tip would be: don't stop too soon. Sometimes you may have a great idea, but when you start to write it, it looks limp and pathetic on the page — a poor imitation of your idea. My suggestion is to keep writing. Sometimes it takes a while for an idea to “catch fire.” Maybe you just haven't found the spark! And if you finish your story, and it still looks limp and pathetic, don't give up then either. If you still like your idea, work on it some more. Sometimes a story doesn't look “good” until its third, fifth, or tenth draft.

Another tip? Put it away. Create a file in your computer that you call “Treasure” or “Vault” or some other name that shows it's important. Stick your half-baked story in that file for a few weeks or months. When you return, you may be surprised — it may look a whole lot better! Or if it doesn't, you may now see obvious ways to improve it. Work on it again, and repeat this process, for as long as you still like your idea. Some of my stories have taken years, and dozens of drafts, before they are finally good enough to become books.

**Animals, particularly dogs, figure prominently in your writing. What draws you to canine protagonists?**

Originally it was because I was living with a wonderful, goofy golden retriever named Sophie. She made me laugh, she puzzled me, and I wondered all the time what was going on in her doggy brain. Did she resent me for eating chicken while she ate kibble? Did she sometimes wish she could stay at the park with the other dogs after I had decided to leave? It wasn't a huge step from there to start writing from inside a dog's mind. And because I felt sympathy for my dog's relatively powerless position (the same kind of powerlessness experienced by a young child), I made my first canine protagonist (Stanley of the *Stanley* picture book series) into a rebel and adventurer. Stanley hosted a party, he tried skateboarding, he went to sea in a rowboat!



## Angela Thompson

My other canine protagonist was Carson in *Carson Crosses Canada*. Again, I was fascinated by the canine point of view. How would a dog see this country? Unlike his owner, Carson doesn't notice grand vistas as he crosses Canada. He's more interested in grasshoppers in a wheat field ... and if he could get his paws on a dinosaur bone, he'd be in heaven! I thought child readers might enjoy a dog's eye view of Canada.

**Are you working on anything right now that you would like to share with *Teaching Librarian* readers?**

Sure! The truth is, I'm always working on something. Following my own advice, I have a file in my computer that's called "Vault." It's filled with a whole lot of stories in various stages of development. Some are just bare ideas; others look like half a novel; others are theoretically finished but still lack ... something. Many will never be published. I generally work on the story I am most excited about!

As for upcoming books, I do have a few scheduled for publication in the next few years. One is a biography of a writer that's kind of a companion to *Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein*. Another is a humorous retelling of Cinderella and a third is a celebratory dinosaur book. One of them is already making me curious to see the art — the main characters are mittens!

**What are you most thankful for at this moment?**

The thing I'm feeling most thankful about these days is that I have had the chance, since 1992, to do the work I love. Before that time, my jobs were round pegs in square holes. Writing for children has always felt, and still feels, like a perfect fit. It can be a bit of a roller-coaster sometimes. Book to book, there are no guarantees, and it's never a sure thing. But somehow here I am, still writing and still being published, 30 years later, and honestly, I am grateful for that every single day.

**How has, or has, the pandemic changed how you approach writing or the stories you choose to tell?**

I don't think the pandemic has changed my writing life much. A writer's work is, of course, always a solitary endeavour in which you stay at home in your pajamas and stare at a

computer screen. (I've been living a "pandemic lifestyle" for decades!) Nor have I changed the kind of stories I choose to tell. I have always tried to write the kind of books that kids will reach for in the library. To me, that means tickling their funny bones, touching their hearts, and telling them the very best story I can.

**Any final words? Shout outs?**

Yes! Lots of gratitude to the book community! During these long, lonely, separated, turbulent, anxious months, it's been wonderful to be able to stay in touch with bookie people — writers, librarians, teachers, booksellers, publishers — through interactive platforms like Zoom. Seminars, conferences, festivals, launches — every week, there's something new going on to celebrate books, even when we have to stay at home. (People weren't so lucky during the 1918 flu pandemic.) So yes, lots of appreciation for books and for all the book-lovers out there who have kept those doors and windows open. ■



# New Resources from Canadian School Libraries

**C**anadian School Libraries (CSL) is very pleased to introduce two wonderful resources, designed to be immediately useful in your school library program.

## The Great Canadian Book Video Project



This wonderful collection of videos and lesson plans positions Canadian books for young people as valuable tools for teachers to engage with students. Canadian School Libraries partnered with TEACH Magazine and Bibliovideo to create this amazing resource, with funding from the Canada Book Fund.

The project introduces students from Kindergarten right through to Grade 12 to a wide range of Canadian-authored books related to three themes: Student Well-Being, Indigenous Voices, and Global Issues. There are eight wonderful short videos where members of the CSL writing team – teacher-librarians and other educators from across the country – introduce the books. The videos also introduce the themes and make connections to learning opportunities.

Each of the 23 lesson plans identify a learning focus and featured books. Creative learning provocations engage students in rich reading activities, extensions for making and

tinkering and culminating ideas for reflection and making connections.

All of the lessons suggest a range of adaptations for different learning environments. They also suggest more books based on the lesson's theme.

Not only does this project serve to introduce a wide range of Canadian books, it highlights the role of school libraries in bringing those books to teachers and students, with great collections and co-teaching opportunities.

Videos and downloadable lesson plans can be found on the TEACH Magazine website at: [teachmag.com/great-canadian-books](http://teachmag.com/great-canadian-books). The videos will also be available on the [Bibliovideo YouTube channel](#).

## CSL Collection Diversity Toolkit

Times are changing in Canada. School library activists are taking a critical look at diversity in collection development. There is a pressing need to make sure that our school library collections represent the diversity of Canadian society.

Who is represented in our collections? Can students see themselves reflected in what they read? What about our existing collections? Are the cultural practices of Canada's Indigenous peoples represented as historical anachronisms, or as part of lived, contemporary culture?

The CSL Collection Diversity Toolkit tackles these tough questions, providing a framework for building collections through an equity lens. The toolkit includes resources to support:

### Equity-informed Selection:

- Why is it important to select resources through an equity lens?
- How is equity-informed selection based on the ethics and values of librarianship?
- What does an equity-informed library collection look like?

### Equity-informed Weeding:

- Why is weeding an important part of developing and

## Culturally Relevant and Responsive School Library Learning Commons: Supporting schools in the work to build culturally relevant and responsive School Library Learning Commons

The CSL Collection Diversity Toolkit is a companion resource to The Canadian School Libraries resources for developing culturally relevant and responsive school library learning commons.

When schools consider planning for growth and actions to take to ensure their School Library Learning Commons is on the path to inclusive teaching and learning opportunities they should examine three key elements: Learning Environments, Instructional Approaches and Learning Partnerships. Leading Learning can be utilized as a guideline to chart growth and set goals and success criteria for the School Library Learning Commons to engage, model and lead in culturally relevant and responsive learning and teaching.

The following reflective questions can also be helpful catalysts for discussions and provide direction for addressing gaps.

**Learning Environment:** Upon entering the physical environment would others be able to identify our values and beliefs about how learners learn? Upon entering the virtual environment would others be able to identify our values and beliefs about how learners learn?

**Instructional Approaches:** Do all learners know that they are trusted and included through culturally relevant and responsive instructional strategies? Are the culturally relevant and responsive instructional strategies evolving and growing as we build relationships with learners, staff and community members?

**Learning Partnerships:** How do we use a collaborative approach to identify and address barriers to learning and commit to making a difference?

Find comprehensive resources on culturally relevant and responsive practice in the school library learning commons on the Canadian School Libraries website: [canadianschoollibraries.ca/relevant-responsive](https://canadianschoollibraries.ca/relevant-responsive)

*Adapted from Canadian School Libraries: Culturally Relevant and Responsive School Library Learning Commons*

Great Canadian Books: Lesson Plans by Theme and Grade Range				
Theme	K-3	4-6	7-10	11-12
Student Well-Being	Human Dignity, Water Security	Kindness, Respect and Storytelling	Mental Health and Empathy	Social Equity and Health
	Ableism, Equity, Respect	Self-Image and Identity		
Indigenous Voices	Facets of Courage	Inuit Lifestyle, Culture, and Traditions	Seven Sacred Teachings	Violence Against Indigenous Women
			Impact of Residential Schools	
Global Issues	Refugee Children	Gender Equality	Sustainability	Racism: Author Visit
		Migration	Refugee Experiences	Climate Change
	Access to Education	Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Homelessness	Housing Insecurity and Homelessness	LGBTQ2S+
				Cyber Security and Privacy

maintaining diverse collections?

- What are the specific equity issues that should be addressed through weeding?
- How can we make critical judgements about weeding potentially controversial materials?

Diversity Audits:


- What are the benefits of conducting a diversity audit?
- How do you do a diversity audit?

Guidelines and Procedures:

- How do library selection procedures support diversity and inclusion?
- How do selection and reconsideration procedures provide library professionals with confidence to develop diverse collections?
- Do you know the policies, procedures and guidelines for selection and reconsideration in your jurisdiction?

Recommended Book Lists and Review Sites:

- Book lists focusing on diverse resources from reliable, expert sources
- Links to specific vendors whose focus is on diversity

CSL is very excited offer this comprehensive and practical toolkit at: [canadianschoollibraries.ca/collection-diversity-toolkit](https://canadianschoollibraries.ca/collection-diversity-toolkit). 

Jovan Djurdjevic

# Tinker Lab: A Model for LLC

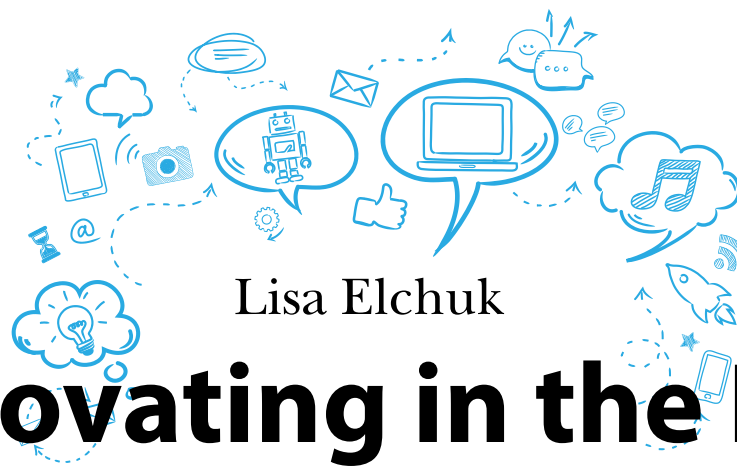
Inspired by Aldershot students' passion for innovation and design, a team of passionate Halton District School Board (HDSB) staff members undertook a project to totally revamp a significant section of the school library. Essentially, it is a tinker lab, but it has yet to be officially named as students are currently being polled for their input! Student voice is critical, and in this library, we don't shush anyone.

Our library has really adopted the learning commons model, and this is the most popular area of the school during breaks, we are pleased to announce! It is an open and inviting space where students are encouraged to build, tinker, collaborate, read, sign out books or just hang out in comfy chairs or seminar rooms and enjoy each other's company; perhaps even while playing an educational video game on one of our many laptops and desktops. With a fixed and limited budget, this space was renewed with careful planning. Some items were dropped off the list for purchase as they were not critical for opening day, while other pieces, such as the mobile whiteboard tables, stools, slatwall, supplies, and Lego wall with accessories, were must haves. Facility services were a great help in removing old features and installing the new ones. It takes a village!

If you would like to do something similar at your school, feel free to reach out to Aldershot's teacher-librarian, Jovan Djurdjevic (at [djurdjevicj@hdsb.ca](mailto:djurdjevicj@hdsb.ca)), or Jeanette Weatherill with Library Services. Meilleurs voeux! 🍀







Lisa Elchuk

# Innovating in the LLC

## Resources Help Promote Innovation in LLC

**T**o innovate these days is to be a school librarian. Whatever your library space looks like or how you engage with your students, we are constantly innovating.

Here are four resources I would like to share to help spark new ideas:

**#1** One of the first steps of innovation is to look at problems from different perspectives. In a library, we like to think of this as the user experience. In *Useful, Usable, Desirable: Applying User Experience Design To Your Library*, authors Aaron Schmidt and Amanda Etches provide readers with practical steps looking at different elements of libraries from the perspective of the user and, backed by research, give ideas on how to create a better user experience for them.

The book is presented in an organized fashion (they are librarians, after all!), and a workbook is included. I bought this when it was first released, and it has not left my professional collection.

It is [available to purchase](#) in The Library Marketplace from the Ontario Library Association.

**#2** In *Evaluating and Improving the School Library User Experience*, author and school librarian Hannah Byrd Little, uses her past professional experiences in academic libraries and applies this outlook to her school library users' experiences. This excellent article from the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) *Knowledge Quest* outlines what user experience elements genuinely are from a school library perspective. Little includes several helpful articles that further highlight the importance of user experience in the school library. From her list, I responded well to Suzanne Sannwald's *Practical User Experience Design For School Libraries*. Sannwald serendipitously refers to *Useful, Usable, Desirable* in her writing, too.

**#3** Human-centred design is all the rage these days, and with that, libraries are no exception. A great resource to learn more about this is [designthinkingforlibraries.com](https://designthinkingforlibraries.com).

While this site looks at design thinking from a public library

perspective, there are invaluable ideas to consider when thinking about your school library.

In this free resource, the teams from Aarhus Public Libraries and Chicago Public Library, with a grant from IDEO, share a toolkit, exemplars, reading lists and workshops to implement the process of design thinking for your library. If you are one of the few lucky ones involved in re-imagining your library space in your school, definitely give this a look!

**#4** "I'm too old for TikTok!" Well, I am not, at least from my school library perspective. Colleagues across the digital divide have been talking about TikTok, particularly BookTok, for a while, and I finally think my school library is ready.

If you have not taken the foray into TikTok but are willing to, a beneficial resource is the *Don't Shush Me* blog by Library Media Specialist Kelsey Bogan. In her post, "TikTok: 8 Ways Libraries Are Using It," Bogan lays out wonderfully simple steps a school librarian can take to start on TikTok to promote reader's advisory (my fav!), advocacy, community building and instructional tutorials, among many others.

In my efforts to meet my students where they are, this is the next logical step. Just don't expect to see me dancing anytime soon! A huge thank you to my friend and colleague, Pamela Roberts-Griffith from Rosedale Heights School of the Arts, for sharing this blog post with me. ■

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# Cultivating Young Creative Entrepreneurs in the Curriculum and Library Learning Commons

**T**here is a growing need for awareness, knowledge and understanding of what entrepreneurship is all about. Many secondary entrepreneurship programs do not exist anymore, which leaves no business competitions outside of the classroom targeted for youth. Many schools have cut business programs or they don't run as they are only considered elective courses. Students, especially student artists, do not know how to market themselves as entrepreneurs or to sell a product or service. I saw the potential to create curriculum resources that support high school educators and bring relevant and engaging content to two speciality schools in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB): Etobicoke School of the Arts (ESA), and the former Vaughan Road Academy. In my role as Assistant Curriculum Leader and teacher-librarian, I am constantly creating an innovative library and learning commons in the Etobicoke Collegiate Institute Library and Learning Commons.

I have implemented and written curriculum in the Arts Management and created the first business department at Etobicoke School of the Arts and have experience writing wellness curriculum with the Social and World Studies & the Humanities (SWSH) program within the Toronto District School Board. I have created and executed the first International Baccalaureate (IB) Business Program in TDSB, and I have previous experience being an advisor for the DECA club, Dance Team, Spoken Word Team, and the White Pine book club. At Etobicoke School of the Arts, I founded the DECA Club, the Junior Achievement Company Starter program, The Learning Partnership – Be Entrepreneurial and Dragon's Nest program, Make Your Pitch competition, Funny Money financial literacy initiative, RBC's It All Adds Up program and Ladies Who Lunch event, and brought students to the tdsbCREATES event. I have worked with and mentored students in writing professional business plans, in the creation of business prototypes and in the grant writing process resulting in a \$3,000 bursary and entrance into the Ontario Summer Company program.

While I was teaching entrepreneurship, I was also living it. I started up my own business in 2015. This experience of starting my own venture helped me inspire a new generation of students to take on challenges and apply for every business competition out there. The following is a profile of successful

youth entrepreneurs that I have fostered with a partnership between the library and business program.

## Maya

I taught Maya seven years ago and helped her develop her first business. Maya is a go-getter and will succeed at whatever her mind is set on. The first business she developed at 15 years old was a new driver sticker, and she won a \$3,000 summer company grant program. She is an amazing dancer and was athlete of the year but pivoted once she became an entrepreneur. She ended up pursuing business studies at Wilfrid Laurier University and won the top business competition there. She has since finished a Master's degree and is now starting a PhD program while continuing her movement business and consulting. She has four businesses to date, but that entrepreneurial spark never dies. Innovation and entrepreneurship changed Maya's world from studying kinesiology into studying a world of endless possibilities with movement!

## Ronnella

This next student still inspires me and is so humble. Ronnella was very passionate about raising funds to support research for retinoblastoma cancer. Her sister was diagnosed with this rare form of cancer when she was just two years old and her family, who lived in South America, had to seek medical attention in Toronto, at the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids). With the help of family, friends and the community, they were able to raise \$80,000 for her medical fees. Ronnella took the initiative to help bring awareness of retinoblastoma to her school and community by creating the Vision Bracelet. With every bracelet that was purchased, \$10 was donated to SickKids.

## Natasha

Natasha also wanted to bring awareness to an important cause. Her cause was autism, and at 17, she launched a T-shirt business called Art-toons with her little brother,





Joshua. Joshua was diagnosed with autism when he was three years old. Natasha created a digital children's book and is studying business at the Rotman School of Business. Her class project turned into a summer job, and she won a \$3,000 grant to use to run her own summer business.

### Sarah

Another success story comes from Sarah when she won The Learning Partnerships finale and won \$3,000 to start her own venture. She turned down that opportunity to start her business when a judge from the competition asked Sarah to be a summer student at the Bank of Montreal (BMO). To date, she is the youngest summer student ever hired by BMO.

### Astrid

Astrid create a Femme Fatale Film Festival that is still running annually in Toronto. She also created LEAP – a small batch magazine for Grade 12 students going into university. The goal was to create a magazine that acts as an accessible handbook for Grade 12 students with all they need to know to help this transition move more smoothly.

Using my library as a space to showcase student work in various initiatives has allowed students' voice and work to be

honoured and shared in show and tell/sell days: Grade 12 students were able to show their final product and services to the students and the greater school community to purchase or pre-order. The Cupcake Business day has been an annual success. Students created their own cupcake ventures, business plan, baked cupcakes and created a storefront in the library where they sold their cupcakes at lunch.

The library partnered with students to create ISBN numbers, published works in Young Voices magazine through Toronto Public Libraries (TPL), magazine, zines, tote bags, and a fashion sewing studio. My library will always be an innovate space for creativity, inspiration, innovation and passion!

Other programming has included the powerful Lest We Forget presentations from TPL that bring real artifacts from First World War for the students to use in research. The Poetry In Voice competitions and programming has been one of my favourite collaborations of all time! I have a new love for poetry and spoken word and I am amazed by the talent and the opportunity that this well-organized and curated competition provides students and teachers. I hope I have students that qualify again! The Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) Women Who Lunch program is an opportunity for two students to go to the RBC trading floor, shadow and lunch with one of their employees. I found that this program has inspired many female students to explore business-related careers. It is one of my favourite days of the year because I always feel empowered in a room full of females and by advice they share with the students.

As a former Assistant Curriculum Leader of Library & Technology at Etobicoke School of the Arts, I have provided leadership and cross-curricular support on a variety of school-wide initiatives, including the ESA Fashion Show, the Black History Month showcase, Grade 9 Moving On Up day, Wellness Unplug day, Grade 8 day, Wellness Week, Dance Night, Femme Fatale Film Festival, Film Talks Showcase, and Because I Am Girl productions.

I credit my success in the library in creating an exciting and innovative hub and studio for students to think outside the box. I have supported and guided students to be leaders in the school. ■

Klara Redford

# Make Writing: Uplifting a Community of Learners, Bit by Bit

One of the joys of being a teacher-librarian is the exuberant energy that students bring with them when they visit the library learning commons (LLC). As I was sitting in a circle with primary students in the makerspace of the LLC, I said to the students, “Over the next little while, we will be working on writing stories together.” All of a sudden, their demeanor changed. There was a noticeable shift in their energy and body language. There were audible sighs and even a student loudly commenting “but, I can’t write.”

I asked:

*What if I told you that we will not be using a pencil or any writing tool to start our story writing?*

*What if I told you we were going to build our story using Legos, beads, buttons and blocks?*

*What if I told you we were going to make our stories using robots and video?*

Cheers! Real live cheers, from groups of six-, seven-, and eight-year-olds.

In the opening to her book, *Make Writing*, Angela Stockman writes:

“Children begin to believe that they can’t write, and then they stop trying. Many children and adults will tell you that writing is beyond their grasp. They can’t wrap their hands around their ideas, and since they learn best by tinkering with things physically, writing remains literally out of their reach. Maybe the problem isn’t the writer. Maybe it’s the way we’re defining and teaching writing.” (p. 11)

As educators committed to reflecting on our practices, learning, unlearning and relearning with a goal of nurturing and developing confident and capable story creators and story writers, we decided we would take a position of co-learners, co-planners, co-creators and co-teachers as we embarked on this make writing experience with our primary students.

We decided we would begin our make writing journey in



Student researching about an animal that they will use for their “somebody” or main character for their story.



Students using loose parts to represent the Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then parts of their story.

January. We chose one of the Forest of Reading Blue Spruce books, *Sun Dog*, as our mentor text. We started with read-alouds over several periods and began to unpack story elements through the Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then framework (Beers, 2003; MacOn et al., 1991). It was clear that the students made personal connections with the animals in *Sun Dog* and were interested in further exploring animals as possible main characters in their own stories.

With voice and choice comes meaningful learning and strong and powerful engagement. We began co-creating an understanding of what research means and why we need to do research. Students chose non-fiction texts, as well as digital resources (e.g. Pebble Go) to explore non-fiction text





Students coding the ozobot robot to represent the emotions throughout the story.



Student using sticky notes to write the big ideas of their story.

features that helped students with their own research about their animal of interest. Students produced their own media text posters using Pic Collage to highlight their learning. This information was then used by the students to plan, create and make their own three-dimensional animal character using plasticine.

Students asked:

*When can I start writing?*

*When can I come back to the LLC to start my story?*

*Can we stay longer to work on this?*

Students now had a deep connection to their main character. The path was paved for our curious, capable and competent learners to start their make writing journey.

Our next co-taught experience in the LLC was the initial “tinkering” stage of our story making. Treasure chests of loose parts were available for our learners to think, imagine, connect with and represent ideas as parts of their stories. Continuing with our Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then story framework, students used a story map to begin to make their story. Throughout this part of the process, educator feedback was key. Students needed to not only think about their story, but how their story flowed together in a logical manner and not just random loose parts strewn together. For most of these students, this part of our learning journey took the longest. For many students, this was their first making opportunity to create a story beginning with loose parts to represent ideas, places and problems. We did a lot of co-learning where we scaffolded each other’s learning. We provided valuable feedback for each other. Students increasingly developed their skills at asking questions about each other’s stories to gain clarity and information, in turn providing opportunities for students to reflect and iterate their stories.

Every student was fully engaged and invested in the make writing process, not only as individuals, but as a collective community of story makers and story creators! It was an

empowering process to watch, elevating the voice and choice of all of our students, and allowing them to express themselves, their identities and their lived experiences through tinkering, collaboration and the make writing process.

Using the same story map, we engaged in conversation with students about connecting their stories with feelings and emotions. How did they feel as they told the story? How did their character feel? How did other characters feel? How could students leverage the use of technology to represent these emotions? Well, we handed over some Ozobot robots ([ozobot.com](http://ozobot.com)) to our capable, curious and competent learners who investigated how code could help them deepen their understanding of their own stories and continue to develop their stories even further.

Our writers were now deeply connected with their main character, their story and the emotions contained within it! Continuing to build confidence in our writers, we introduced writing in the process, bit by bit. The most significant tool we used – the sticky note! Yes. Buy lots of them. Lots and lots and lots of them. Give them away with all your heart and soul, for when you do,

“sticky notes enable makers and writers to generate and organize abundant ideas, making them immediately accessible. Writers can touch each other’s thoughts and hold them in their hands. They can move them around and break them apart. They can remix them, and when they do, their thinking will change. This is how writing is made.” (Stockman, p. 11)

In Grade 1, 2 and 3, the approach varied as educators were able to differentiate the writing process across the grade levels. For the most part, students used the sticky notes to write words to represent their main ideas for each part of their story.

When the story map was complete, we moved the sticky notes to a graphic organizer which provided opportunities for students to expand on their thinking, their ideas, their writing and their story development.

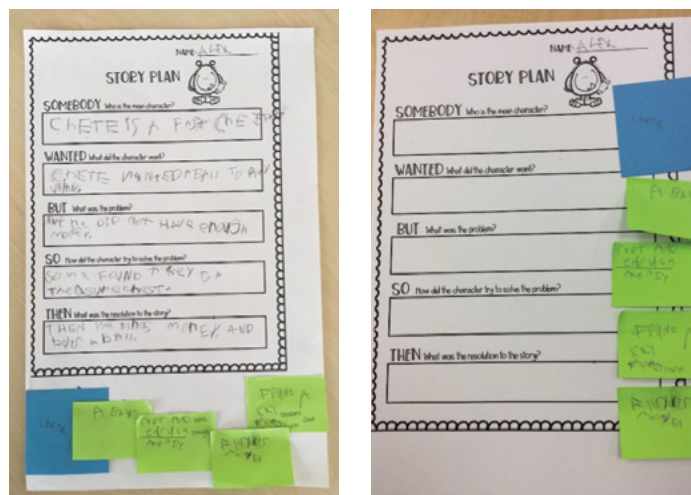
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As educators co-planning and co-learning in the make writing process with our students, we asked ourselves, how might assistive technology, like Google Read and Write, bridge the writing process for some of our most reluctant writers? How might we think about, plan and use Universal Design for Learning in the writing process? Though we did not have all of the answers to these reflective questions, we embarked on providing opportunities for our students to continue to have voice and choice in this process.

As we continued to reflect on the experiences the students were having, we engaged in conversations with our students on the purpose of their stories. We began to hear from our learners the importance they placed in the sharing of these stories with others, outside of their own classes. As we co-planned for next steps, we reflected on how we might use our oral and print storytelling experience and integrate it with technology using Stop-Motion Animation and Apple Clips as a way to bring these stories to life. Many students were excited to see their stories evolve in a way they never thought possible – from making, to print to film.

Finally, no process would be complete without a celebration of the incredible journey and final products that had been created. Students across the primary division worked on an advertising and marketing campaign, using print and digital media, to invite family members and friends to the school's first inaugural Make Writing Celebration. To say our hearts grew two sizes that day is an understatement. The LLC was packed with family and friends. Part of the library space was used for a screening room where students presented their stop motion films. Another part of the LLC was the author nook, where students shared readings of the hard copies of their stories. And, of course, the most crowded area was the make writing room, where students became the teachers and showed family members how to use loose parts to tinker, experiment, imagine, create and make stories.

Our journey was far from over. In fact, as educators it had just begun. As we reflected on our own understanding of writing and writers, we knew that privileging print inside the writing process was a point of view we needed to unpack in order to gain a better understanding of how writers communicate and how we can provide opportunities for multi-modal expression within our classrooms and within our curriculum. As Angela Stockman so aptly wrote, “(we) will continue to wonder how we might begin to honor the whole of the writers we serve, the compositions they create, and who we are within the profession. Writing is bigger than print, and writers need to know how to use multiple modes of expression if they really intend to be of influence in this world.” ■



Students develop their writing, bit by bit, using sticky notes and graphic organizers.



Using the sticky notes as her guide, a Grade 1 student chooses Google Read and Write as a tool to build her story with more details and evolving vocabulary. Each page of the story is printed and then illustrated by the student author.



A student works on creating a stop-motion animation film with loose parts from their initial make writing experience. These stop-motion animation films were uploaded in Apple Clips where students provided the voice over.



**I**t was the beginning of the year and I had a class of third grade students in my library learning commons. I was supporting students in their journey to become writers and was faced with a number of students who were struggling to get their ideas on paper. I modelled through shared writing, I used graphic organizers to help students organize their thinking, and I had spent time doing guided instruction in a small group for students who were feeling frustrated. It just wasn't working.

The significance of multimodal expression is paramount to building confidence in writers of any age. Burvall and Ryder (2017) explain why this is so important in their book, *Intention: Critical Creativity in the Classroom*: “When we allow students to choose a medium that plays to their strengths, we lower print barriers.” The purpose of make writing is to express oneself using multimodality – students use modes other than print to



construct their ideas. This might be a small collection of loose parts, or play dough, or even a set of magnets. It may mean that the students draw or sketch their ideas before putting them into print. It requires the understanding of multiple modes of communication and providing that opportunity first, for your writers. When we examine the components of what writing actually is, we uncover that writing consists of print, but also structure and meaning. When we understand these components, we realize that it isn't necessary to move into print right away. Furthermore, when we provide opportunities for students to construct their thoughts and ideas using tangible and playful means, we are providing them with the tools they need to communicate and lowering barriers to telling their story.



Adam<sup>1</sup> was a Grade 3 student who felt frustrated with communicating through print. He would often be found with his head down on his desk during independent writing times and never put any of his thoughts onto paper. Even the offer to scribe from the classroom educator was met with resistance, as Adam wanted to be independent and didn't want to be supported by the teacher. During class discussion and small group work, Adam had a number of ideas and contributed regularly. But, when it came time to write on his own, Adam "turned off" and found himself frustrated and unable to complete the task. My conversation with the classroom teacher taught me that she saw great potential in Adam, but didn't know how to build his confidence or how to reach him. Our work with that third grade class using make writing was

transformative for all of the students – especially for Adam.

After reading an expert text together (*The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires), we did a whole class brainstorm in response to the prompt, “What do you like to play?” In much of Stockman’s work regarding setting up processes for make writing workshops, she speaks to the power of establishing routine. The students independently wrote their ideas on sticky notes and placed them on the board for us to examine together. I spent some time modelling the create-label-caption process for the class, letting them know about my answer to the question. Students remained engaged and interested as I built the story of how I like to play baseball with my son and added additional details as I shared with them and answered their questions. Then, each student was given a small bag of loose parts to construct their answer. Adam went to work right away. He created an elaborate scene of him and his brother playing soccer at a field near their home in under 10 minutes. Then the students began to use sticky notes to label the parts of their build that explained their thoughts: my brother, me, soccer ball, goal, field. After sharing their thoughts with a partner, the students were invited to create a single sentence on a sticky note that would caption what they created. Adam immediately went to work writing in his writer’s notebook. “Look!” said his teacher, “This is the first time I have seen him write all year!” She was excited and intrigued. I went over to Adam and invited him to share his writing. With pride, he read aloud his caption, “This is me and my broter play soccer at field my huse.” I told him how thrilled I was at the details he included. As we continued this process, Adam continued to use making-before-writing to help him construct his ideas. So did the rest of the class. It changed everything.

While recognizing that there are many ways to make writing, Angela Stockman describes the ways in which providing loose parts for students gives them an opportunity to take risks that they wouldn’t otherwise: “This often results in the production of truly delightful, sophisticated ideas,” she explains. “And kids will hold onto them, even as we transition to print, if we allow them to put it down bit by bit rather than draft by draft” (Stockman, 2019). This has been true in my experience as well. So often, we as educators transition from rough draft to good copy and for many emergent writers, that means a whole lot of print production. On the other hand, providing smaller writing tools like sticky notes or cue cards can reduce the pressure because the space to write in feels manageable and attainable.

## The Case for Culturally Responsive Teaching

Zaretta Hammond (*Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*) speaks to the equity issues associated with prioritizing print. When we prioritize print in western culture, we overlook the fact that many of our students come from cultures in which other modes of communication are prevalent. For example, some cultures use oral storytelling as their primary mode of communication, while others might communicate through cultural dance and movement. Do all students need to learn how to use print? Absolutely. But when we focus

on print as the only mode of communication, we are not creating equitable classrooms. We are creating barriers to learning based on bias.

## Making a Mess

Stockman acknowledges that the process of make writing can be messy. She outlines the ways in which we need to scaffold our students’ learning by beginning with a mini lesson and using time limits for building. One of the most powerful things Angela has said (and there are many!) is that “We don’t make writing to evade print, we make writing to get there.” I see evidence of this as I have collaborated with educators in my school and across my school board. Not only has the learning been fun, it has been meaningful and purposeful. It is a carefully constructed process that gives students the opportunity to communicate their stories and their ideas in non-traditional ways. Not only does it build confidence, it is a process that students can rely on. In fact, Adam’s Grade 7 teacher approached me the other day and asked if I would explain why he asked for loose parts during a science test. “It’s to construct his thinking,” I responded. After the initial hesitation, we set a time to meet to co-plan a make writing lesson for her science class.

Just like with any change in pedagogy or practice, the implementation of the make writing process involves iteration in instruction as much as it does iteration for the students with their writing. By providing small scale tools, students can then move their thoughts and ideas around by moving sticky notes, for example. In essence, even the writing becomes a collection of loose parts to be arranged for a purpose. Perhaps when we move some things around, we might lower traditional writing barriers and uncover the brilliant and detailed stories of our most resistant writers. ■



From making to print – a Grade 3 student writes the important details from the personal narrative they used loose parts to build.



Adding important details in print using sticky notes.

<sup>1</sup> The student’s name has been changed to protect privacy.

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Kasey Whalley

# Finding New Spaces: Changing Where We Make

**A**t the beginning of this school year, the library team decided we wanted to extend our library program to include something exciting and interactive; students were back in our space after many long months, and we wanted to launch a program that celebrated creativity and engagement. A makerspace was something that we had dreamed about doing for the last few years, and it seemed like this year could provide us with a great opportunity to let our students' creativity shine. We quickly realized that an open-ended makerspace wasn't going to work: staff and students were still adjusting to the new schedule, and with the safety protocols and uncertainty around returning to in-person learning, we wanted to make our makerspace as stress-free, engaging, and easy for our students as possible. The idea of a makerspace quickly morphed in our Creation Station. We wanted to provide students with creative and appealing activities that engaged with skill-building, Catholic virtues, or a community initiative.

Two of our biggest hurdles were something we imagine other school library makerspaces have also had to battle: space and budget. We tackled space first. A makerspace is, obviously, a space. They are often contained in the library learning commons (LLC), but we weren't sure how that would work within our space. We have limited room, which was made even more constrained by current safety protocols. The library team discussed removing some shelving or furniture, but our LLC is a busy place, and we were hesitant to significantly alter parts of the library that were being used every day. We needed to flex our innovation muscles and figure out a way to incorporate a makerspace into our library program without eliminating space in our LLC that is frequently used. We finally landed on the idea of flexible, pre-packaged Creation Station that would run once a month.

The idea is to have individual creative packages that change each month that students can register to receive. These Creation Station packages would contain everything a student might need to complete the creative activity. Once we had

decided that our Creation Station was going to be on-the-move, we started to brainstorm ideas that quickly butted up against our second hurdle: budget. Since our Creation Station packages had to contain everything a student would need for their creation – and we didn't have a physical space like a traditional makerspace to host communal supplies – we had to, once again, flex that innovation muscle. In order to keep costs manageable, we chose to cap registration depending on the activity, pick activities that we could produce in bulk and look for ways to use recycled or upcycled materials. We also looked for activities that students could choose to alter and create something a little bit different than intended – we believe individual creativity is a key component to a successful makerspace.

Our inaugural Creation Station was friendship bracelets, and within a week of promoting the activity, we had filled our registration slots. Students jumped on the chance to try something new and let their inner creator free. Some students decided to pick up their Creation Station package and begin the activity in the LLC after school, where staff were able to help them solve any technical issues they encountered. For the two weeks following the release of the activity, students would come in and share their progress, ask for help, or send us pictures to post on our social media.

These in-person interactions made us realize how valuable it is to have both a mobile and fixed space where students can create in the library. Going forward, we intend to offer Creation Station pre-made packages, but also provide a space on pick-up day where students can begin working on their project with the support of our library staff. This temporary Creation Station space, coupled with the flexibility to create outside of the LLC, provides our students independence and support, gives us more flexibility in offering creative activities and allows us to connect with our students through a shared synchronous/asynchronous experience. We're hoping that our next few Creation Stations will be met with the same level of enthusiasm and participation as our initial activity. ■

# Innovation: A Collaborative Approach

## Working Together Leads to Innovation

**I**n an August 2019 blog post, teacher, author and entrepreneur Seth Godin explored the idea that intention is critical to innovation, stating that innovation need not be a formal organizational strategy; it can often be much more effective as an approach. Anyone else breathing a sigh of relief? Just me?

I love this – and take it as permission to define and redefine innovation as best fits my library. I find it far too easy to consider the idea of innovation as daunting, but less so when I recognize that our intentions can naturally lead us to innovation.

Think of how we already innovate! Eighteen months ago, we all began the pivot (hopefully) of the century, when moving to online learning. We made the most of existing digital resources and created digital connections to our collections, programs and services. Plus, we've been building, revising and reconstructing lessons in collaboration with classroom teachers for years.

This collegial approach often leads to an improvement in how we do what we do. At The York School in downtown Toronto, librarian Gemma Larcina has started a Library Leadership Team consisting of middle and senior school students. Sixteen enthusiastic members are responsible for promoting the library and its collections to all grades. They help set up themed displays (the Halloween decor sounds like it'll be off the charts!) and who, she's hoping, will suggest ideas for developing the library look and feel, as well as ideas for its mission and goals long-term. Most of this is still a work in progress and hasn't actually been carried out yet – they've been busy processing new books (some junior school books brought over for them to work on), de-processing weeded books and suggesting books to weed. Gemma says that "it feels very positive in that I'm getting the help I need to manage the library and involving the student body, which I've never done before in a library, on my own."

I too have found that drawing students into the fold can completely change my perspective, and often the result is something much more creative than I would have imagined. At Trinity College School in Port Hope, we have an increasing number of students interested in joining the book club this year, and my attempt to find book discussion time for everyone interested has led to two separate groups. Initial concerns about separating avid readers were blown away at the first meeting when one group developed a creative take on battle of the books. I've long wanted to have such an event, but attempts to partner with public or independent schools have been unsuccessful. No worries – one of the readers suggested we use having two groups to our advantage and the year-long Battle of the Book Clubs was launched. A small but well-received gesture is the laptop stickers we've offered to everyone who's on board.

Innovation can include significant challenges that can be embraced as opportunities. One is the fact that many of us in the library also wear other hats. Like many schools responding to COVID-19, the library at Kingsway College School in Etobicoke was repurposed into classrooms last year; school librarian Kendra Cutting and teacher and library specialist Keri Davis worked hard to continue with normal weekly visits to JK-Grade 8 classes, ran a full slate of Forest of Reading programs, hosted three unique virtual author visits and held a successful virtual book fair. Instead of having the students visit a library space, Kendra and Keri visited individual classes, carrying a carefully selected bag of books. Kendra notes that "by bringing books to the classrooms, it allows students voice and choice in their reading selection." The visits continue this year, and it's wonderful to see how excited the students are when they see Kendra and Keri arrive for their weekly visits.

Danny Neville at Bayview Glen in North York noted another obstacle on the road to innovation – technology. It's incredible to realize how much was possible to us with online learning due to digital resources already in place, but after so many

months of using some on the fly, this year has people working to finesse and fine-tune. Danny has been working on rolling out Sora ([soraapp.com](https://soraapp.com)) with students and faculty, using Flipgrid for library programming (as well as supporting teachers in their use of it) and pushing through the daunting back end of system integration. Never one to shy away from a challenge, he is working on integrating Destiny and Overdrive at the same time as setting up Single SignOn within Destiny; he says it “is proving to be much more complicated than simply turning it on in the back office. I’ve had to get our tech team involved with both processes...it’s definitely not as easy as it seems at first glance.”

Another stumbling block is ourselves. In the same blog post referenced earlier, Godin noted the risk inherent in innovation: “if failure is not an option, then, most of the time, neither is success.” As I’ve grown into my career (a euphemism for aging), I’ve become more willing to take some chances, and I am less harsh with myself when I fail. I cringe when I remember the poet-in-residence for whom we couldn’t drum up an audience, or a digital magazine subscription that I worked hard to budget for and promote but that fell flat on its face. As vulnerable as I feel sharing this, it is critical to recognize that trying something new means opening ourselves up to the possibility of failing. Scary stuff, especially when resources are limited. But failing with these two initiatives taught me much about program promotion, and even more importantly, about surveying my community to determine the right program at the right time. I’ve grown more confident in saying no to ideas that aren’t a good fit and more assertive when advocating for something a little bit different, a little more innovative. Hoping the same for you! ■



# Innovation In A Small Space

Shelby Wickham

**V**alleyview Public is a dual track, French/English, Kindergarten to Grade 6 school, nestled in the heart of the Northern wilderness in Kenora, Ontario. It has an enrollment of almost double the capacity of the building space, with roughly 350 students. A portaplex unit (a temporary building with four classrooms and bathrooms) had to be built, and there are still four stand-alone portable classrooms, which means we had to get creative with the library space since the library's former location was needed as a classroom. The stage was closed off from the gym, shelving was installed and a library was built on the stage. I lovingly refer to it as the-library-on-the-stage, similar to Harry Potter's cupboard-under-the-stairs. It may be small, but we have created an inviting space that students can't wait to visit.

As a mom of four boys, I have always enjoyed reading out loud and being read to. When I joined the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board as an elementary school librarian 10 years ago, reading aloud extended to the thousands of students who have come through the library doors for a story. It's heartwarming when the students get so involved in the read-aloud and, when I tell them that this is where we will leave it until next week, they groan and ask for just a few more minutes. It's one of my favorite parts of being a librarian! Fostering a love of reading is what I strive for, and when students haven't yet developed that love of reading, I rely on their imagination and creativity to get them started.

Reading is not easy for everyone, and writing can be difficult too, but most of our students love to draw! Just like in the book *The Dot*, by Peter H. Reynolds, I encourage our students to make their mark, start with the simplest thing and see where it takes them. Once they have an idea, the next step is putting it on paper. As a graphic designer, I have illustrated several children's books and enjoy sharing my knowledge and experience with our students. Once they discover that I have illustrated books, they want to try it too!

What is the first thing you need to make a book? An idea! Then you need something to put that idea in. We have an excellent long-armed stapler in the library that is perfect for making little folded booklets out of copy paper for students to write and draw in. There is always a basket with blank booklets for students to grab and start creating. Whenever there is free time in class, students can be seen thinking, writing, drawing, imagining and creating in these little booklets.



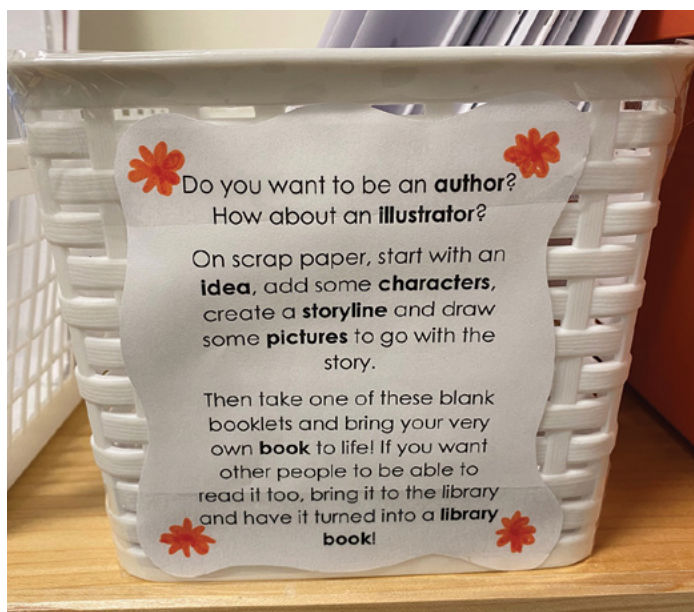
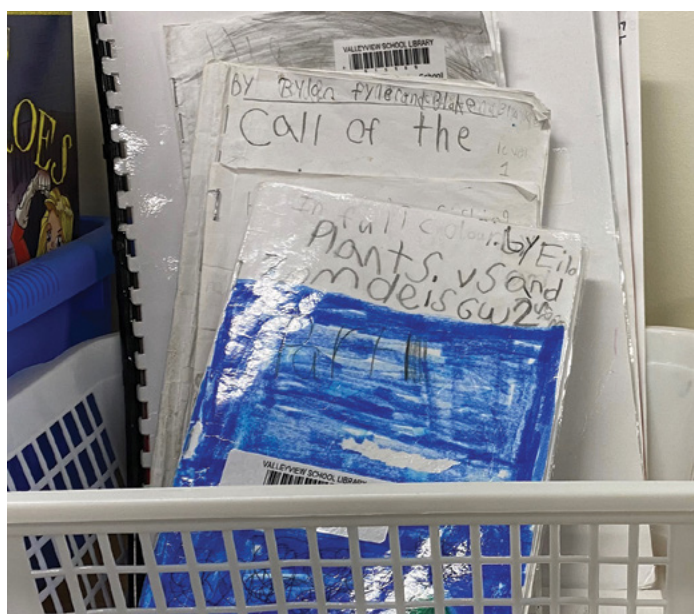
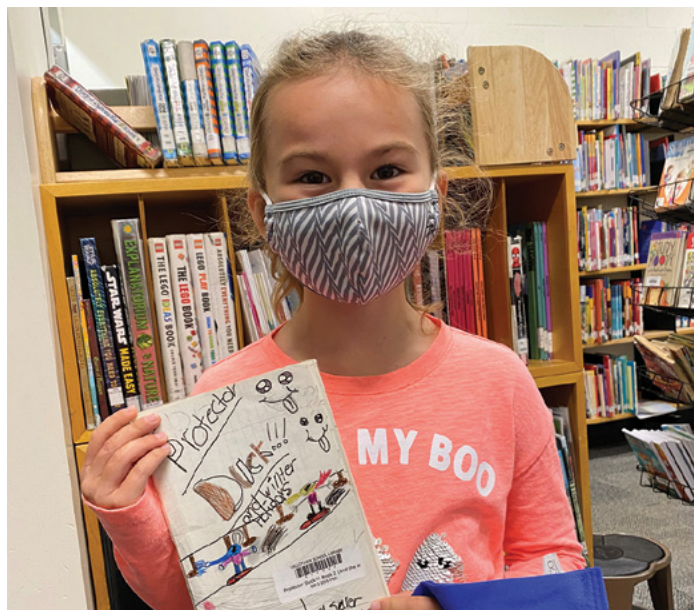


Before long, little folded bits of paper were being dropped on my desk with a little voice behind it asking if it was good enough to be a book, and can it be in the library? Of course, the answer was a resounding yes! There have been times when a student is sitting at the office waiting to be spoken to by the principal – the same student that has been there twice already this week and really doesn't want to be there now – and with permission from admin, I have presented them with some paper and writing or drawing utensils, which completely turned their day around. They were able to put the negative energy that got them sent to the office in the first place into the creative process of writing and illustrating.

So many books come across my desk. I have been presented with flip-books, like Dav Pilkey's Captain Underpants' Flip-o-ramas. There are graphic novels like Aaron Blabey's Bad Guys and wordless books like A Ball for Daisy by Chris Raschka. Whatever is presented to me, I congratulate the artist on their work, ask questions about their creative process, tell them about my creative process while illustrating, ask more questions and finally get their booklet ready for the shelves.

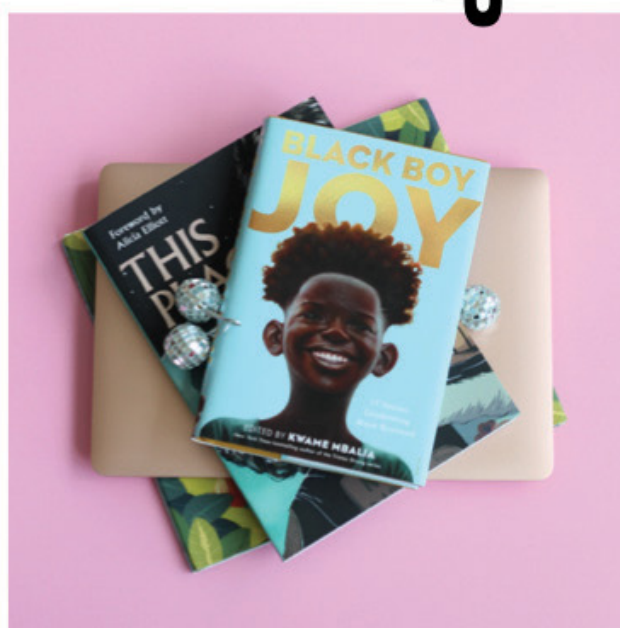
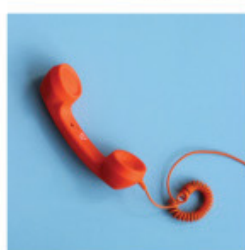
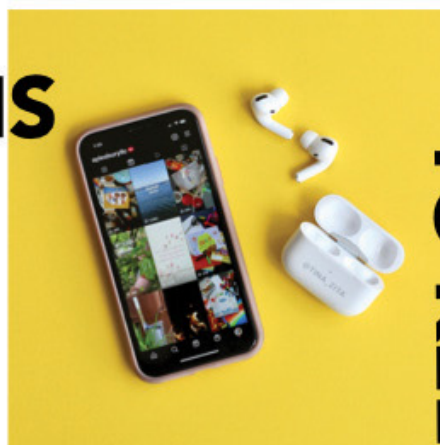
The booklets are taken apart, scanned into a digital format, laminated and put back together to create a less damageable finished product. They are cataloged into the library system, just like any other book, and put out on display to be signed out. At the end of the school year, the books are withdrawn from the collection and returned to the student along with a copy of the digital format. Only the digital copy remains in the library. If we kept every booklet created, there would be no room for purchased library books!

Not only does this little project promote a love of reading, it also promotes visiting the library! Whenever a student finishes a booklet and knows it is ready for sign-out, I get a wave of kids asking to see it, and while they are here they usually end up leaving with a book. It's a sneaky bit of magic power that librarians have, to be able to draw students in with one thing and have them leave with a book in their hands. We have had numerous parents call and send messages of thanks for the opportunity to have their child feel the pride of being an author/illustrator. Cataloging these homemade little booklets is a small thing to do but it brings so much joy and, hopefully, a lifetime love of literacy. ■



# INNOVATIONS

## TO KEEP



We asked colleagues online to share some of the hacks during COVID they would like to keep moving forward. Clockwise from the top left: there were many book delivery hacks but the book fairy had to be the cutest; Instagram feeds also came up; a lot of notes about LIVE FROM THE LLC readings including First Chapter Friday; virtual field trips; online sites, choice boards, virtual classrooms; book scavenger hunts in the community; opportunities to capture student input for purchasing.

Check out the thread on Twitter at [bit.ly/librarytokeep](https://bit.ly/librarytokeep) and add your hacks to keep to the thread.