

HOW THE LEARNING COMMONS SUPPORTS
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

by

Emily S. Pokorny

An Abstract

of a research paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Library Science and Information Services
in the Department of Educational Leadership and Human Development
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ABSTRACT

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This research paper examines how modern school libraries support student learning related to new educational learning initiatives, like the Common Core State Standards. The paper is divided into 3 chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the purpose of the study and the research questions. Chapter 2 is a review of the recent literature that has been published related to this topic. Chapter 3 concludes the literature review. Overall, this research shows how the modern school library, now referred to as the learning commons, provides students with space (both physical and virtual), resources, and services necessary to support their learning related to the Common Core State Standards.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Traditional school libraries housed resources and provided students and teachers with support, but 21st-Century learning was not happening in school libraries of the past (Koechlin, Loertscher, and Zwaan 10). Many school libraries have recently undergone a facelift in order to become relevant, connect with the newest generation of learners, and support modern learning initiatives like the Common Core State Standards. David Loertscher calls the modern school library the learning commons. The learning commons is a physical and virtual space that is conducive to engaging, experimental, and collaborative learning (“Flip This Library” 46).

In the learning commons, students can participate in the type of active, collaborative learning experiences that are emphasized in the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core State Standards is a set of curricular standards, developed by the National Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, that describe what students across the country are expected to learn in school. The standards are designed with an overall goal of helping students achieve college and career-readiness; they are rigorous, practical, and relate to real-world problem solving. If librarians can show that the learning commons provides learning opportunities for students that support the Common Core State Standards, they have an opportunity to turn their library into the center of teaching and learning in their school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to review the literature related to how the learning commons can have a significant impact on student learning related to the Common Core

State Standards. This paper presents information that illuminates how the learning commons space (both physical and virtual), as well as the resources and services provided in the learning commons, can support learning related to the Common Core State Standards.

Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate how today's learning commons can support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards through physical and virtual spaces, resources provided, and the support of the school librarian. The following questions will be addressed in this paper:

1. What does today's school library look like and how does it support learning in relation to the Common Core State Standards?
2. What kinds of resources do students need to have access to that will support their learning in relation to the Common Core State Standards?
3. How can school librarians support learning in relation to the Common Core State Standards in the learning commons?

Limitations of the Study

Due to the timeliness of this topic, there was quite a bit of information available that discussed how the learning commons supports the Common Core State Standards. The limitation of this research was finding information that was specific enough. Some of the information was very general about the impact the learning commons has on student learning related to the Common Core State Standards, instead of focusing on certain aspects of the learning. I also struggled to find many case studies that focused specifically on the learning commons and the Common Core State Standards. This is, in

my opinion, due to the fact that many schools have only recently begun to adopt the Common Core State Standards. Despite the limitations, I was able to find sufficient amounts of literature to support this topic.

Definition of Terms

Collaboration: People working together with a common goal.

Common Core State Standards: A set of curricular standards, developed by the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, that describe what students across the country are expected to learn in school and are designed with an overall goal of helping students achieve college and career-readiness.

Complex texts: Texts that must be read slowly and thoughtfully and require deep levels of thinking and analysis (Loertscher and Marcoux 11-12).

Digital citizenship skills: The skills needed to use online and digital resources safely, effectively, and lawfully.

Learning commons: A modern library; a flexible, student-centric learning space where students can work collaboratively or independently, use technological tools to enhance learning, and access and utilize information (Educause).

Research skills: The expertise needed to effectively complete the research process.

Virtual learning commons: An extension of the physical learning commons; a digital learning space where information can be shared and learning is collaborative (Koechlin and Loertscher 20-21).

Research Design

My search process began by using the government site, *Education Resources Information Center* (ERIC.ed.gov). I searched the thesaurus for the categories of “librarians,” “librarianship,” and “libraries”. I then searched in *ERIC* using the category descriptors from the thesaurus and searched the keywords “Common Core State Standards,” “learning commons,” “digital resources,” and “teacher librarian”. I then searched for the articles I found in *ERIC* in the James C. Kirkpatrick Library online databases. I did most of my searching using the Central Search feature. Additional keyword searches were completed here using the same keywords that were used before. When searching the databases, I restricted my search to only include peer reviewed, full text articles. Articles were retrieved from the following databases: *Library Literature & Information Science Full Text*, *Education Research Complete*, *Academic Search Elite*, and *ProQuest Central*. Additional resources were found through the bibliographies of articles as well as through Google keyword searches.

Conclusion

The purpose of the research conducted for this paper is to illustrate how 21st century school libraries (learning commons) support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The following chapter is a review of the literature on this topic. The information is divided into three sections which describe various aspects of the learning commons and how it can support student learning in relation to the Common Core State Standards. The first section describes the physical and virtual space of the learning commons. The second section describes the resources provided in the learning commons. The third section describes the support provided by the modern school

librarian in the learning commons. In the final chapter of this paper the research questions posed are answered and a conclusion of the literature review is presented.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This research explores how the 21st century school library, also referred to as the learning commons, supports the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The learning commons shifts the philosophy of the traditional library as a “warehouse of information” to a school-wide “learning laboratory” that is rich in technology and conducive to collaborative learning (Koechlin, Loertscher, and Zwaan 10). The information presented in this chapter is divided into three sections describing the learning commons: the space, the resources, and the librarian’s role. The first section will discuss how the physical space of the learning commons can support student learning by providing opportunities for collaboration and the presenting of ideas. The second section will discuss the resources that the learning commons provides to support student learning. Finally, the last section will discuss the services the librarian in the learning commons provides for staff, faculty, and students to support instruction related to the Common Core State Standards.

The Common Core State Standards is a set of curricular standards, developed by the New Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, that clearly describe what students across the country are expected to learn in school. The standards are designed with an overall goal of helping students achieve college and career-readiness. Learning related to the Common Core State Standards is rigorous and practical in that it relates to real-world problem solving. The standards cover grades K-12 in English Language Arts and in Mathematics. English Language Arts standards for grades K-12 cover reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills. For grades 6-12, the English Language Arts standards also incorporate history and other social

studies, science, and technical subjects. These standards have currently been adopted by 45 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and by the Department of Defense Education Activity (The Council of State School Officers and The New Governor's Association). The following sections provide information related to how the learning commons can support the implementation of these new learning standards in schools across the United States.

The Space

This section will discuss how the learning commons space (both physical and virtual) can support student learning related to the Common Core State Standards by providing opportunities for collaboration and the presentation of ideas. This section will discuss the characteristics of how an effective learning commons looks and functions by providing a general description of what a learning commons is, describing the physical space, and discussing the virtual learning commons. Compared to curricular standards of the past, the Common Core State Standards requires deeper levels of inquiry based learning as well as collaborative learning. The learning commons provides the space needed to support that pedagogy shift. According to the Ontario School Library Association, a learning commons is where, “[l]earners move beyond merely retrieving factual information to constructing personal meaning and building individual and collective knowledge. As learners read, research, experiment, discover, perform and create in the Learning Commons, they collaborate with each other to test, confirm and enrich their learning” (“Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons” 14).

A 2011 Educause publication titled “7 Things You Should Know About...The Modern Learning Commons,” describes the learning commons as a student-centric meeting space where students can collaborate on group projects or find a quiet spot to study independently. But, not only does the learning commons provide a learning space, it also provides the tools and technology necessary to present and share ideas and information. According to the Ontario School Library Association, the most important job of the learning commons is to create an environment that is conducive to rich learning opportunities by providing a vibrant space with ample amounts of resources and the technology that supports intellectual development and promotes collaboration and community (“Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons” 3).

Physical Space

The physical space of the learning commons has transformed from that of a traditional library in order to meet the changes in educational practices. Valerie Diggs, a librarian at Chelmsford High School in Massachusetts, transformed her library into a learning commons and described the process. Her vision for a modern school library is a space with an atmosphere of learning, where students can collaborate or work independently, and where students can access technology (Diggs 35). Diggs (37) describes what her transformed learning commons looks like by stating:

Groups of students sit in a circle on our new eggplant-colored lounge chairs, discussing the beginnings of World War I and how they would like their project to look. Similar groups of three or four students sit in the restaurant-style booths completing projects, working on homework, and collaborating on assignments . . .

Students check out one of 29 laptops received as part of a grant from a large technology firm in our community. These laptops are wireless and connect to the Internet anywhere in our Learning Commons. The group workrooms have been opened up, providing space for students to work together and for staff to meet. Carol Koechlin describes the learning commons as "...much more than a room" it is a place of experimentation, learning, and play where everyone in the school can come together (Koechlin 20).

An important characteristic of the learning commons is flexibility. The usefulness of the learning commons for students depends on how well it can adapt to best meet the changing requirements of their academic work (Educause). David Loertscher discusses the need for flexible furniture that is light weight or on rollers and that can be easily moved to best meet the needs of students at any given time and laptops that can be moved around easily instead of desktop computers that are immobile ("Flip This Library" 46-48). This type of flexibility works well in a collaborative space. Ways to increase the flexibility of the learning commons include moving shelves of books along walls to open up space in the middle of the learning commons for students to gather and collaborate and also putting a selection of materials into a rotation amongst classrooms, so they will not take up space in the learning commons (Koechlin 22).

Another important aspect of an effective learning commons is technology. David Loertscher suggests, technology access for students is crucial as schools adopt the Common Core State Standards. In his article he references the National Education Technology Plan 2010: Learning Powered by Technology put forth by the United States Department of Education, which is a plan that focuses on the need for students to have

access to various technological devices and 24/7 access to online learning resources to enhance their learning. This means providing students with wireless access in the learning commons that can be accessed by many devices (both school-owned and personal) within an infrastructure (i.e.: servers, management systems, etc.) that can handle the load (“The Power of Technology to Enhance Learning” 40-41).

Virtual Presence

The idea of students having 24/7 access to online resources leads to the concept of the virtual learning commons. Carol Koechlin, David Loertscher, and Sandi Zwaan describe the virtual learning commons as a place where teachers and students can obtain information literacy support at any time of day (11). Koechlin and Loertscher (20-21) describe the virtual learning commons by stating:

The Virtual Learning Commons (VLC) is the online force of the Learning Commons; it’s a digital learning community in which the whole school participates. It is not a library website that only provides a one-way stream of useful information. Instead, both the instructors and the students of the school collaborate to establish the VLC as a place where individuals and groups are actively learning, communicating, and building together in real time. This participatory community of learners is powered by software that allows many contributors, and it is as public or private as the school wishes it to be . . . Overall, the VLC fosters a sense of ownership by everyone in the school. It is a place where everyone is reaching for and exhibiting excellence.

Koechlin and Loertscher go on to discuss how the VLC can contribute to school improvement and support the adaptation of the Common Core State Standards by

becoming a center of change for all members of the school community. They believe that the VLC can do this because it naturally weaves together all of the school's learning resources (library, technology and reading resources) into one easily accessible place for students, staff, and administrators (20-21).

Carol Koechlin (23) provides some suggestions for librarians who want to transform their library webpage into a virtual learning commons (or to create a VLC from scratch). She advises librarians to collaborate with classroom teachers to create technology rich lessons and to post projects, pathfinders, or links on the VLC for students to access. She also encourages librarians to link classroom blogs or other web 2.0 tools to the VLC in order to create a collaborative workspace for students. Finally, she suggests including tutorials or tips for students to help them effectively use the online resources that are provided.

Overall the learning commons is a place to bring the entire school community together with a common goal: learning. The school library is no longer just a room full of books. It has transformed into a physical and virtual place that provides students and teachers with a place to find relevant resources (in a variety of formats), spaces to collaborate and share ideas, and to engage in the higher levels of thinking that the Common Core State Standards require.

The Resources

This section will discuss the resources the learning commons provides for students to support their learning related to the Common Core State Standards. The resources needed to support the Common Core State Standards include the following: complex texts, a wide variety of nonfiction and reference texts, digitized materials, and

technology resources. Loertscher and Marcoux (9-10) explain, “The standards are quite clear: To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts . . . Reading widely assumes a large collection of resources in every format imaginable from print to digital and on a wide variety of devices. . .”

Lamb and Johnson (61) discuss how the Common Core State Standards Initiative focuses on how learners think and communicate their ideas. The complex tasks that the Common Core Standards require involve reading information from a variety of sources, formats, and from multiple viewpoints. They also require students to support ideas with evidence and to connect ideas to the real-world to make learning more engaging and meaningful. In turn, librarians will be required to reevaluate their collections in order to ensure the resources they provide for students in the learning commons adequately support their learning.

Nonfiction Resources

Rebecca Hill discusses the resources that librarians can provide for students to support their learning in relation to the Common Core State Standards. She believes that since the predominant goal of these standards is literacy, social studies, and science standards will be taught more effectively using literary nonfiction resources as well as shorter, well-crafted, topic-specific informational texts, than with traditional classroom textbook sets. This will require the learning commons to provide students with high-quality informational texts on many topics as well as access to databases for students and teachers.

The Common Core State Standards place an emphasis on informational texts that increases as students advance through the grades. By twelfth grade students should be reading a ratio of 30% literary texts to 70% informational texts. “The CCLS emphasis on informational text in all grades . . . affords librarians an opportunity to demonstrate their nonfiction collection expertise and influence the instruction that goes along with navigating and deeply understanding informational text . . . the librarian can facilitate not just the access to and retrieval of this greatly expanded pool of informational text but also guide its instructional trajectory” (Naylor-Gutierrez 15-16). Rebecca Hill encourages librarians to focus their collection development primarily on nonfiction materials since the Common Core State Standards put such a strong emphasis on informational resources. She also advises librarians to promote materials in their current collections that align with Common Core State Standards, but also to ask teachers and administrators what resources they need and make those needs their top priority. If the library’s budget is not sufficient to meet these needs, she advises trying to purchase digital resources instead of print, using interlibrary loan, or trying to raise money to help build an ample nonfiction section.

Complex Texts

In addition to providing high-quality nonfiction materials, the Common Core State Standards requires that students have access to complex texts to support their learning. Complex texts are ones that must be read slowly and thoughtfully and require deep levels of thinking and analysis. The texts students read should gradually increase in complexity so that, by the time students graduate, they are capable of comprehending the type of texts they will experience in college and their careers (Loertscher and Marcoux

11-12). Barbara Stripling, current ALA president, emphasizes the importance of providing students with a wide variety of options from many different perspectives. Students need options (Hill). Chelsey Philpot reaffirms this by stating, “Given that the Common Core State Standards emphasize cross-discipline synthesis, research, analysis, writing, and the importance of nonfiction texts, now is the time to take a ruthless approach to weeding out dusty titles and replacing them with rich, complex series with great visuals and strong back matter.”

Variety in Format

The learning commons not only has a wide variety of resources but also offers materials in a variety of formats to best meet the needs of all learners. The Common Core State Standard strands reading, writing, speaking, listening, history, social studies, science, and technical subjects require students to gather, assess, and apply information from sources in a variety of formats. The learning commons provides the information students and teachers need in both print and digital formats to support learning (Mansfield 24). Print books are no longer the only method students have for accessing information or literature. Digital resources have changed the way students get their information. Students can now access information in digital formats, such as on e-readers, or online in quality databases that are available 24/7.

Thanuskodi (437) observed that the increased digitization of resources has amplified the distribution of information and helped libraries better meet the needs of all users. Terrence E. Young (48) also emphasizes the importance of e-resources, particularly e-books, in implementing the Common Core State Standards. He describes the benefits of including e-books in library collections. E-books will not only free up

shelf space (keeping the learning commons flexible as discussed in section I), but they will also ensure that students have constant access to informational resources.

Technology

As discussed in section I, providing students with access to technology, such as wireless laptops or tablets, is vital in supporting their learning. The learning commons is where students can access the newest technological tools and learn how to function in our digital world (Koechlin, Loertscher, and Zwaan 13). Today's students live in a highly technological world. Providing technology that can be incorporated into learning makes the learning more engaging and relevant for students. Allowing students to problem solve using technology provides connections to the real world, which is an important part of the Common Core State Standards' focus on career readiness ("Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons" 4-5).

The implementation of the Common Core State Standards requires a shift in thinking when it comes to collection development for librarians. The resources needed to support the Common Core State Standards include complex texts, a wide variety of nonfiction and reference texts, digitized materials, and technology tools. These resources can all be accessed and utilized in the learning commons.

The Librarian in the Learning Commons

This section describes the services provided in the learning commons by librarians for staff and students to support instruction and learning related to the Common Core State Standards. These services include: relevant collection development (discussed, in part, in section II), collaboration with classroom teachers; and lessons for students on

research skills, effective use of online resources, and how to effectively utilize technology to support learning.

Rebecca Morris examines a workbook that has been developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College Careers (PARCC). The purpose of this workbook is to help aid administrators in implementing the Common Core State Standards. It includes information for librarians on how their skills in collection development and collaborative technology in relation to instruction will be an asset in supporting the Common Core State Standards. The skills that librarians possess give them an opportunity to be curriculum and instructional leaders in their schools. Morris advises librarians to use the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) publication, "Crosswalk of the Common Core Standards and Standards for the 21st Century Learner," to help better align information literacy lessons to the Common Core State Standards (9). Marcia Madis, assistant professor at the Florida State University School of Library and Information Studies, explains that aligning the AASL's Standards for 21st Century Learners and the Common Core State Standards is easy because they have so many similarities. She describes the Common Core State Standards as a mix between language arts standards and 21st-century skills (Hill).

According to "Position Statement on the Common Core College-and Career-Readiness Standards" by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and the American Library Association (ALA):

The school library professional as leader, instructional partner, information specialist, teacher, and program administrator is critical for teaching and learning in today's schools. The school librarian leads in building 21st-century skills by

collaborating with classroom teachers to design engaging learning tasks that integrate key critical thinking skills, technology, and information literacy skills with subject area content. In addition, the school librarian provides a library program that contains multiple instructional avenues and resources in various formats for the authentic application of information literacy skills.

Collaboration

Collaboration is key in providing librarians the opportunity to be leaders in implementing the Common Core State Standards. Librarians are qualified teachers who can lighten the load of other educators in their schools through collaboration in executing lessons or research projects for students (Mansfield 26). Collaboration between teachers and librarians not only supports teachers who are overwhelmed by these new standards, but it also enhances student learning. A close relationship exists between collaboration and student academic achievement related to higher-level thinking, which is emphasized in the Common Core State Standards (Montiel-Overall 31). The Common Core State Standards also emphasize inquiry skills and cross-curricular collaboration, which reaffirms the need for librarians and classroom teachers to engage in shared planning and instruction to enrich learning experiences for students (Stafford 8).

Lessons

The librarian supports the implementation of the Common Core State Standards by creating and executing information literacy lessons that are relevant and align with the standards. For example, the librarian provides lessons on effective research skills, proper use of online resources, and how to utilize technology (including presentation tools) to

enhance student learning. These lessons provide students with the skills they need to be successful now and in the future.

A significant component of the Common Core State Standards relates to research skills; skills that the librarian helps students develop through inquiry-based lessons that teach students the process of effective research. David Loertscher and Elizabeth Marcoux (12) found that research skills are embedded across all of the Common Core State Standards, not just language arts, and are emphasized more than in the curricular standards of the past, reaffirming the importance of the librarian in their implementation. School librarians can also take research instruction to a higher level by getting involved in the complex reading process needed for conducting research (Morris 10-11). Effective research involves being highly engaged in the material and taking time to analyze it. Librarians help students thoughtfully read the material to draw conclusions, add to their prior knowledge, and make new knowledge.

Librarians also provide instruction for students on how to effectively use online resources to enhance their learning. If taught correctly, online resources provide an opportunity for students to access unlimited amounts of information. However, not all accessible information is credible, and students will require skills necessary to evaluate these resources. Teaching digital citizenship skills such as the effective use of information is also important in ensuring that students follow copyright laws and use information appropriately. ("Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons" 29). Today's students have grown up surrounded by technology, and an assumption seems to have been made that they are information literate when that is not the case. Paige Jaeger (7) claims that in many cases, students can locate

information but do not understand how to use it effectively. School librarians have high levels of expertise related to information access and use that can be shared with students to help them navigate through search results to find what they need as well as how to analyze and synthesize it.

Online resources and digital tools can also be used to support writing standards and collaborative learning. Caitlin Tucker (31) asserts, the Common Core writing standards focus on the use of digital tools to share information and collaborate with others from as early as kindergarten. Today's students employ these tools on a daily basis. They know how to navigate online spaces, Web 2.0 tools, and use social networking sites, but require the skills to communicate respectfully and in a way that promotes learning. Librarians can provide students with necessary support to use these tools effectively.

David Loertscher and Elizabeth Marcoux (14) suggest that Web 2.0 tools provide engaging, educational opportunities for students to share information, collaborate with others, and achieve deep levels of thinking and understanding. For example, they discuss how, with the help of school librarians, Google tools, such as Google Documents, provide opportunities to support the Common Core State Standards through document sharing as well as collaborative writing and idea development. Pam Berger provides additional suggestions for online learning tools that librarians can help students and teachers utilize that support the Common Core State Standards through collaboration and organization of information and resources including: Edublogs, Edmodo, and LiveBinders. Edublogs is an educational blogging site that can be used by teachers and students to improve writings skills and promote reflection and questioning. It can also be

used to share information in a variety of formats including text, video or audio that can be shared with audiences outside the classroom (Berger 19). Edmodo is a free, private site that provides opportunities for class and teacher discussion and collaboration. Using this site, the teacher can also administer surveys to gauge student understanding of material, and even give awards for student academic or behavioral performance (Berger 20).

LiveBinders is a site that allows users to bookmark and organize information, like in a three-ring binder. The information can be easily added and shared with others (Berger 22).

Librarians develop lessons that assist students in using technology tools appropriately to enhance their learning. Elizabeth Marcoux states that the ability to utilize technology tools and digital media effectively and strategically is seen repeatedly across the Common Core State Standards in math and English language arts standards (“Common Core and Technology” 68). Marcoux also discusses how in the Common Core math standards, students are required to understand which tool can most effectively help them solve the problem at hand as well as how to use it (“Use Technology Wisely” 61). This emphasis on technology gives librarians a chance to demonstrate how effectively using technology can provide powerful support for student learning and also provide opportunities to differentiate instruction.

Overall, librarians have an opportunity to support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards for students and teachers in the learning commons. The learning commons provides the resources, and the librarian provides the services necessary to help support student learning. The services provided by the librarian include

collaboration with teachers to improve student learning, as well as providing relevant lessons that align information literacy skills with the Common Core State Standards.

Conclusion

Recent academic publications provide evidence showing some of the many ways the learning commons can support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The physical and virtual space of the learning commons provide opportunities for exploration, collaboration, inquiry-based research, using technology and sharing ideas, which are all key aspects of the Common Core State Standards. The resources provided in the learning commons support instruction and learning in relation to the Common Core State Standards. Such resources include complex texts, a wide variety of nonfiction and reference texts, digitized materials, and technology resources. Finally, the librarian in the learning commons provides necessary support, materials, and instruction to support their entire school community as they embrace the Common Core State Standards.

CHAPTER 3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research paper is to illustrate how the modern learning commons can support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. It can do this by providing flexible physical and virtual educational environments that are conducive to collaborative learning, necessary resources in a variety of formats that support student learning, and through the services provided by modern school librarians. In this chapter the research questions that have driven this research will be addressed.

The Modern School Library

The world in which students live and work is constantly changing. The way students are educated must also evolve to reflect these changes so students are fully prepared for the world they will face outside of school. This requires the school environment, including the school library, to adapt in order to best meet the changing needs of students. Traditional school libraries housed resources and provided students and teachers with support, but 21st-Century learning was not happening in school libraries of the past (Koechlin, Loertscher, and Zwaan 10).

In order to remain relevant to its users, the role of the modern school library, now referred to as the learning commons, has shifted to provide learners with a physical and virtual space that is conducive to engaging, experimental, and collaborative learning (“Flip This Library” 46). The learning commons is not simply a place to find information, it is a place where information is being utilized and shared to build new understanding. The learning commons is a full-service learning environment where students are provided with the tools they need to support their learning. It is also a place where they can meet and work together on research or other projects (Educause). The

school library is no longer a place that must always be silent. In the learning commons, students can participate in the type of active, collaborative learning experiences that are emphasized in the Common Core State Standards.

The Resources Needed to Support Modern Curricular Standards

As curricular standards change, the resources needed to support them also change. The newly adopted Common Core State Standards is a set of curricular standards that are being implemented across the United States. These standards place an emphasis on college and career-readiness as well as real-world problem solving (The Council of Chief State Officers and The New Governor's Association). School librarians have had to fine-tune their collections to ensure the materials they provide in their learning commons adequately support student learning in relation to the Common Core State Standards.

The Common Core State Standards require students to read widely which necessitates students to have access to a wide variety of resources in a variety of formats. The Common Core State Standards also put a strong emphasis on students reading informational texts. This will require larger, up to date nonfiction and reference sections. Finally, the standards require students to read increasingly complex texts that can be deeply analyzed (Loertscher and Marcoux 9). This will require librarians to ensure that the collection available in the learning commons is challenging for users as well as diverse in content.

In order to ensure their collection is adequately supporting student learning in relation to the Common Core State Standards, school librarians will have to thoroughly evaluate their collections and determine areas of weakness. This may not only require school librarians to add significant amounts of new materials to their collection, but also

to be thorough about weeding out inadequate or outdated resources. Librarians are also encouraged to look to teachers and administrators for what resources they need to support instruction and learning related to the Common Core, and make these needs top priority in regards to collection development (Hill).

The Modern School Librarian

School librarians are afforded the opportunity to support student learning related to the Common Core State Standards in a variety of ways in the learning commons. Not only do they support student learning through the provision of quality resources through their skilled collection development, but also through the lessons they provide for students. These lessons include teaching students information literacy skills, inquiry skills, effective research skills, and how to use the latest technology to enhance learning. School librarians also have an opportunity to collaborate with classroom teachers to enrich the learning experiences for students. Cross-curricular collaboration is emphasized in the Common Core State Standards, which reaffirms the need for librarians and classroom teachers to engage in shared planning and instruction (Stafford 8).

School librarians already have the AASL's 21st-Century Learner Standards to use as a guide for their library lessons. The AASL has created a document called "Crosswalk of the Common Core Standards and the Standards for the 21st-Century Learner" that aligns these two sets of standards. With the strong commonalities that exist between the AASL's 21st-Century Learner Standards and the Common Core State Standards, it's easy to see how school librarians can support the Common Core State Standards in the learning commons (Hill).

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