

Put everything you can on rollers and keep furnishings lightweight so they can be moved into many different configurations. Consider laptops or net books housed on rolling carts instead of heavy desktop computers for students. Develop a high tech production centre for creating and publishing projects. Create lots of display areas for book promotion and celebrations of student work. Plan for innovative, active play. Get creative with space!

### Virtual Spaces

How can you turn your current school library webpage into a Virtual Learning Commons? Apart from digital resources, consider what else teachers and learners need to operate effectively in your virtual spaces. Work with classroom teachers to post projects, provide pathfinders, link students to research support and presentation tools, and offer tutorials and tips. Students will appreciate this 24/7 support for their learning. Connect to classroom webpages and blogs. Use Web 2.0 tools to facilitate conversations between students, between teachers, and among students and teachers. Develop collaborative workspaces and professional development support. Provide calendars and spaces for administration to follow. Encourage the “work” of the Learning Commons. Make use of all the free tools and workspaces available to build a virtual Learning Commons. See how close you can get to paperless. Create places for students to play with information and ideas and don’t be surprised if they start to hang out in your library! Invite students and teachers to help you build your virtual Learning Commons. If they build it, they will use it.

The best thing about the Learning Commons is, that once it starts rolling, teachers, administrators, students, and parents will dive in and help build common places and spaces to learn.

- You will be able to collaborate in the design of learning experiences, teach students what they need when they need it, nurture the reading habit, and concentrate on results in the Learning Commons. The management of the library is no longer a yoke to bear, but a shared responsibility. Under the expert guidance of the teacher-librarian, everyone contributes and collaborates to building an environment rich in resources, technologies, and knowledge-building experiences.
- Teachers become more passionate about teaching, knowing they have all the tools and excellent resources they need at their fingertips.
- Students, with a vested interest, see learning as more relevant and take on more responsibility for their own learning.
- Administrators are able to build effective professional learning teams under the umbrella of the Learning Commons and track results in one space common to all teachers and specialists.
- With this vision, the fluidity and transparency

of the Learning Commons has the potential to drive the changes needed to bring schools into the future and sustain improvement.

Plant the seeds today and cultivate a new flowering hybrid, a library/learning lab, a common high think, active learning sphere for the benefit of your school community. Lead the way! !

### References

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### Further Reading and Exploring

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- (Valerie Diggs of Chelmsford High School, Chelmsford, MA details her five-year journey to transform her library into the brand new and very popular Learning Commons.)
- Koechlin, C., D. Loertscher, and S. Zwaan. “The Time is Now: Transform your school library into a Learning Commons,” *Teacher Librarian*. Vol. 36 No. 1. 2008.
- (In this article, teacher-librarians are encouraged to reinvent their school library and computer labs; listen to clients; build learning partnership teams; infuse the best teaching science; and lead the journey in creating a school-wide Learning Commons.)
- Loertscher, David. “Flip this Library: School Libraries Need a Revolution,” *School Library Journal*. Nov. 2008. [www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6610496.html?q=flip+this+library](http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6610496.html?q=flip+this+library).
- (This article challenges the status quo and encourages 180 degree thinking to reinvent the school library into a Learning Commons.)
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- *The New Learning Commons Wiki*. <http://schoollearningcommons.pbworks.com/>.
- Rosenfeld, E., and D. Loertscher. *Towards a 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Library Media Program*. 2007.