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CLCD and the School Librarian A Case Study

The Girls' Middle School in Mountain View CA, is an independent, all-girls day school which focuses on project-based learning in the sixth through eighth grades. The school emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving and assesses students' learning through narrative assessments.

Tower Heights Middle School, Centerville City Schools (Ohio), is one of thirteen schools in a district that has earned an Excellence with Distinction Rating for over 10 years in a row. Located in the Greater Dayton Area, Centerville is known for its academic program, special services, and extra-curricular offerings.

Mendon Center Elementary School, in upstate Pittsford, New York, serves nearly 800 students in an upscale, ethnically diverse, suburban community. The District has often been nationally recognized for excellence. All are top-notch schools; but like schools everywhere, each must work diligently to get the most for their money. Librarians in all three schools rely heavily on the Children's Literature Comprehensive Database.



Tower Middle School

Christine Findlay, Centerville's Coordinator of Library Media Services and Librarian at Tower Middle School, has used the CLCD for over 10

years. She and other librarians in the District have discovered that CLCD is an invaluable resource for information they need and use every day. They use it as a source for collection building, reading reviews online, finding similar or like books, checking the lexiles for appropriate age or grade materials, and occasionally turning to the database to defend challenged materials. A subscriber for over 10 years, Findlay calls the database "key to collection development." Not only does the database help Findlay find titles to purchase, it also is helpful as she weeds the collection, allowing her to check *Children's Catalog* and many state and national lists to guide decision making.



Students at MendonCenter Elementary

Peg Glisson, librarian at Mendon Center Elementary, has also been a long-time subscriber. "Being able to read full-text reviews from several professional journals, as well as those written by CLCD's own, independent reviewers, is invaluable when putting together orders; it was a godsend when I served on the Sibert Award Committee," says Glisson.

“Through CLCD, I could find reviews from *Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books*, *Booklist*, *Library Media Connection*, *VOYA*, *Science Books & Films* and more; having them all literally at my fingertips was a huge timesaver.” She also likes the database’s many search options, which allow searching broadly or with several limiters such as grade levels, genre, and publication date. She can then sort results and print a report detailing books for a thematic list for a teacher, recommendations for her principal’s Book of the Month Club, or for purchase in the library media center.



Walter Mayes, photo Nicole Rosenthal

Walter Mayes, librarian at the Girls’ Middle School, like Findlay and Glisson, finds the database useful for weeding. “Our school is committed to engaging and nurturing the girls’ interests in science, technology, engineering and math. The database helps me flesh out areas of the collection that can quickly become dated; by entering keywords, I then find titles to plug the holes in my collection or to fill a new need. Titlewave and Amazon are not as good with their limiters [as CLCD].” Teachers have come to depend on Mayes’ use of the database to help them select titles for literature circles, summer reading, and fiction to supplement curricular topics.



Girls’
Middle
School

Like Findlay, Mayes commented on the database’s usefulness when he is called upon to justify a teacher’s use of a particular title; “I can immediately point to professionals’ recommendations for that title, showing why it is an important and necessary choice.”



All three like the website’s clean look and find the site easy to navigate. The database is updated monthly and the monthly, online newsletter keeps them aware of trends and new titles, as well as providing themed reviews for holidays and topics. Extensive links to author’s, illustrator’s and publisher’ sites (the most current available), book award sites, recommended reading lists, current literature events and lists of monthly author’s birthdays make the site a virtual portal for children’s literature professionals. “The database now has a blog and twitters,” noted Glisson. “They make it easy to keep up with publishing news as well as offering a forum for thoughtful discussion about children’s literature.”



Mendon
Center
Elementary

In Centerville, it’s not only the librarians who rely on the database. The District makes it available to teachers. Findlay finds some of the heaviest users are reading and special education teachers. The database is ideal for teachers needing to find appropriate content at the right level; it facilitates the differentiation needed in today’s schools. “Teachers adore it!” says Findlay. “In the spring, teachers ask, ‘Are we getting CLCD again?’ Fortunately, I continue to say ‘Of course!’”