Course Syllabus

Title: Virtual Libraries for 21st Century Schools/ EDLI 200
Credits: 3
Instructor: Linda McSweeney, M.L.I.S. (lmcsweeney802@gmail.com)
Location: Blackboard Online

Course Description:
21st Century School Library Media Centers or “Learning Commons,” require a virtual library presence along with a physical presence to accommodate student learners 24/7. The scope of this course will include an overview of concepts that drive the development of virtual libraries, the technological components necessary for implementation, and principles for developing a collection of resources for the virtual library. Students will use knowledge gained to produce or enhance a virtual library.

Goals:
In order to meet the needs of 21st Century Learners, accomplished library media specialists lead in providing equitable access to and effective use of technologies and innovations that engage learners and enhance their learning. (Standard V: Library Media National Board Professional Teaching Standards, 23) Flexible open access to information for a variety of sources and services support the needs of a diverse learning community through print, non-print and digital formats. (AASL Standards for School Library Media Specialists, Information and Knowledge 2010). High quality virtual libraries are vital information sources within a school library media program for 21st Century learners. School library media specialists develop and maintain these resources, and provide instruction and guidance for students to inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge from the resources.

Learning Outcomes:
Participants will know …

- Principals of virtual library development.
- Strategies to identify and promote use of high quality virtual resources.
- Cloud computing applications to create virtual libraries

Participants will be able to …

- Evaluate virtual libraries.
- Select appropriate virtual resources.
- Create a virtual library website, based on user-centered design principles.
- Market and manage their virtual resources.

General Course Information

Course Policies/Expectations:
The following are necessary for successful completion of this course:

- Active participation in online lessons and class discussions of readings and literature
- Completion of readings
- Completion of assignments

Typically, students should expect to devote six-nine hours per week in reviewing online lessons and resources, reading required texts and articles offline, creating and completing assignments, and participating in discussions. Discussion postings should reflect student’s understanding and transfer of concepts contained in lessons and readings.

Attendance Expectations:
• Online participation in Blackboard each week to complete assignments and post discussion messages. Students are expected to visit the Blackboard site at least four times per week.
• Active participation in all class discussions of readings.
• There are 2 optional, but highly recommended Saturday ‘work sessions’ when you will have the opportunity to meet face to face with other students and the instructor as you build your virtual library. The dates are Saturday, March 9 and Saturday, April 6 at a location to be determined. Although attendance is not required, these days are opportunities to ask questions and share resources with colleagues.

Contributions in Class:
Students are expected to participate online. See above.

Academic Honesty & Professionalism:
All students are required to be familiar with and adhere to the “Academic Honesty Policy Procedures” delineated in the most recent edition of “The Cat's Tale”. (http://www.uvm.edu/~dosa/handbook/).

Accommodations:
Accommodations will be provided to eligible students with disabilities. Please obtain an accommodation letter from the ACCESS office and see one of the instructors early in the course to discuss what accommodations will be necessary. If you are unfamiliar with ACCESS, visit their website at http://www.uvm.edu/access to learn more about the services they provide. ACCESS: A-170 Living Learning Center, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405. PH: 802-656-7753, TTY: call 711 (relay), Fax: 802-656-0739, Email: access@uvm.edu, Instant Messenger: UVMaccess. General office hours: 8:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday. Call to make an appointment.

Required readings:
Redish, J. (2012). Letting go of the words: Writing Web content that works (2nd ed.). Amsterdam: Morgan Kaufmann.

Supplemental Readings:
Johnson, Doug. “Head For the Edge: These Horses are Out of the Barn-Ride ‘Em.” Library Media Connection Jan/Feb 2011

Electronic Submissions/Internet Use:
Assignments and projects will be submitted through the Blackboard or email.
Student Evaluation/Assessment

Grading:
97-100 points=A+; 94-96=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 84-87=B; 80-83=B-

Description of Class Assignments:
The following performance tasks and activities will be used to evaluate/assess participant performance in this course:

Discussion Board focused on reading topics.

Blogs for journaling and reflections in response to prompts.

Website Evaluation Project: In small groups, participants will complete a virtual library evaluation project.

Focus Group Plan: Participants will work collaboratively in grade-level cohorts (elementary, middle, high school) to develop a focus group plan.

Resources Project: Participants will work collaboratively in grade-level cohorts (elementary, middle, high school) to identify content and design resources for their virtual library sites.

Virtual Library project: Individual participants will each create a virtual library site for their school.

Final Reflection: Each participant will reflect write a final reflection on the importance of a virtual library presence for 21st century student learning.

Scoring Rubrics:

Discussion board, blogs, interactive chats --ongoing (Personal blog to be set up by Jan. 21) 20%

Reflections will be posted on individual blogs or discussion board based on assigned readings, research, field experience, personal observations. Weekly topics and/or prompts will be assigned.

Participants will log on to Blackboard site at least three times a week to respond to questions and posts by other participants. Participants will take advantage of opportunities for interactive chats or synchronous meetings that will be offered to allow students real time conversations with group.

Criteria: Thoughtful, well written posts demonstrate understanding of topics or raise provocative questions for the group to explore. Posts will reference assigned readings, personal experience or prior knowledge, and new learning.

Group Wiki 30%

Groups formed for either elementary, middle or high school library will research best practices for usability, design and content for virtual school libraries. This wiki will be used to present results for three separate group assignments for Modules 2, 3, and 4. It should be well organized, easy to navigate, and contain evidence of collaborative and thoughtful group work. The following three assignments will posted to each group’s wiki:

(1) Website Evaluation Project:

Groups formed for either an elementary, middle, or high school library will research best practices for their age groups. Groups will identify several exemplar websites and the criteria used to evaluate them.
Criteria: Project will consist of a written summary of best practices; a list of exemplar websites, and an evaluation rubric created by the group and shared via the class wiki.

(2) Focus Group Plan:

Groups will create a focus group plan to identify user needs in their schools and post it to their group wiki.

Criteria: The focus group plan will include: purpose, timeline, identifying participants, questions, implementation plan, and post-group follow up.

(3) Resources Project:

Groups will develop collections of resources (both content and design) for implementing a virtual library for either an elementary, middle, or high school. Groups will consider resources for students, teachers, and parents.

Criteria: Resources will be created based on a provided checklist and added to the group wiki.

Virtual Library Website Project  35%
Due date: End of semester

Final project will be a virtual library space designed to meet the needs of 21st century teaching and learning for the participant’s school community.

Criteria: Participant will have created and shared with the instructor a well designed, age-appropriate, website which takes into consideration data collected from prior modules on evaluation, usability, and collection development considerations. Participants will demonstrate evidence of thoughtful design, navigation, and content decisions based on a participant-created rubric.

Final Reflection  15%
Due date: End of semester

Participants will write a final reflection that offers personal connections to the knowledge gained through this course, and the impact that school library media specialists can have as change agents in educational communities. References to readings, experts in the field, and personal experience are encouraged to scope out a personal vision for the future.

Criteria:
2-5 pages, double spaced. Citations.
Reflective essay rubric

Percentage Contribution of Each Assignment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Task</th>
<th>Percentage of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board, Blogs, Interactive Chats</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Wiki (including Evaluation Assignment, Focus Group Assignment, and Resources Assignment)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Library Project</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Reflection</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>
Instructional Sequence: - A list of the course topics for each scheduled class meeting date including readings and assignment due dates.

Module 1: Week 1: Content: Virtual School Libraries: Information and Image - implications of 21st Century Standards and emerging technologies on access to school library media centers, a paradigm shift in information access and learning. Introductions, course overview, projects, and exploration of Blackboard website resources and platforms for communication. Set up personal blog, respond to discussion board based on assigned readings. Readings from Church, Loertscher, AASL and others. Create personal blog and post an introduction including personal goals for the course. Write several short responses to discussion board reading prompts.

Module 2: Weeks 2-3: Content: Evaluation of Virtual Libraries: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly. What makes an effective virtual library for different school configurations? Focus will be on determining best practices for 24/7 access to information and literacy resources, and establishing criteria for excellence based on school levels, and communities. Criteria will be established by the group and presented in a rubric. Assigned readings from Church, Lamb and others. Response to discussion board prompts, and reflections will be posted to blogs. Grade-level groups will present and share their evaluation research on best practices with a group-created rubric on a wiki. Discussion board prompts and blog posts on Module 2 readings also due.

Module 3: Week 4-8: Content: User-Centered Design Considerations: Scanning, Satisficing, Navigating, and other Design Elements. Readings and discussion will focus on understanding website usability and design based on the work of Krug. Usability guiding principles including scanning, satisficing, navigation, and other design concerns will be explored. Working individually, each student will develop a focus group plan to determine what your users want, need, and like in a virtual library site. Assigned readings from Krug, Byerly. Using the wiki created in Module 2, the group will create and share a focus group plan to identify their users' needs. Individual discussion board prompts and blog posts on Module 3 are also due.

Module 4: Weeks: 9-12: Content: Collection Development Considerations: Policies, Planning, Budgets, Mapping; Selection of Resources; Selection of Web Tools and Design, and Eresources. Readings and discussions will focus on web architecture for virtual libraries that reflect appropriate collection needs for 21st Century learners and teachers. Cloud computing, mobile apps, wikis, websites, and widgets will be explored along with other social media applications that could be incorporated into an interactive virtual library. Readings from Johnson, Todd and others. Group project will identify and share age-appropriate resources. Continuing to use the wiki created in Module 2, the group will add age-appropriate resource pages for both site content and site design. Individual discussion board prompts and blog posts on Module 4 are also due.

Module 5: Weeks 13-15: Content: Building the Virtual Library. Participants will use information gathered in the previous modules to design and build a virtual library space for their libraries. During the process, weekly updates will be posted on the class wiki, and opportunities for interactive chats and discussions for feedback on designs will be arranged with the group and the facilitator. The final project for each student is creating a virtual library for his/her school based on research and information gathered in previous modules.

Module 6: Week 16: Advocacy: Managing, Marketing, and Maintaining a Virtual Library. What are the responsibilities and issues that effect the implementation of a 24/7 library in addition to a physical library space? What are the implications for funding and continued community support? Readings from Loertscher, Pursell, Fagan, and others. Reflections will address the future vision of school library service, with an emphasis on theory to practice. Students will share strategies and ideas for advocacy for library media programs through the class wiki. Virtual Library website and Final Reflection paper.