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CLCD and the Universities A Case Study

The Bowling Green State University (Ohio) College of Education and Human Development is academic home to over 5,00 students, including more than 1,000 graduate students. Their Curriculum Resource Center, according to its Mission Statement, “supports the teaching programs in the College of Education and Human Development and other BGSU education-related programs.” Kathy Yoder, Education Librarian at the Center, works with students training to work in the field of education, helping them find materials appropriate for their assignments or to use in pre-service work. She also helps maintain a collection of trade books for children and young adults. “Education students come to us with some memories of their favorite books from childhood, but not knowing what makes a good book to use in the classroom,” Yoder says. “We work with them, in literature classes, and in the CRC, to help them find that perfect book for a lesson. The Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database is a fantastic resource for them. Once we make them aware of its existence and show them how to use it, they use it frequently. Standards-based education means our students must look at Ohio’s standards and find trade books on topic at correct reading levels in all curriculum areas. CLCD’s many search qualifiers make that easier for them.” Yoder finds the pre-service students particularly need help determining reading and interest levels. “CLCD allows input for age, grade, Reading Level, Interest Level, Lexile, and Point Range. How helpful is that!” Graduate students also use the Database’s ability to search thematically when they create bibliographies



for their units, culling titles from fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and picture books. Yoder says teachers in the College of Education often imbed a link to CLCD in Blackboard and

others hold classes in the Curriculum Resource Center so Yoder is available to teach them some of the tricks to make their searching even more successful. Yoder herself uses the Database to help her build the CRC’s excellent collection. “When I need a stock of books to address a particular standard, for example 7th grade study of Ancient Civilizations, I turn to the Database. The lists of awards are also extremely helpful. It’s great to be able to pull up the reviews and awards right there when I am making collection decisions, whether for the schools’ or college’s curriculum. I love that it’s here and make sure there is money for it in our budget since it’s not part of the Consortium.”

Located in the Chestnut Hill area just outside Boston, Massachusetts, Boston College is proud of its long history of excellence. The Educational Resource Center is one of Boston College’s Special Libraries, and sits in Campion Hall, which also houses the Lynch School of Education. The ERC aims to provide outstanding and relevant print and multi-media materials to its 1800 pre-service and graduate students for use in their courses and fieldwork, as well as for its faculty.

Margaret Cohen, Head Librarian of the ERC, finds the Children’s Literature Comprehensive



Database helpful in teaching the undergraduate Children's Literature classes, for the weekly Read-Aloud Sessions for English Language Learners, and for checking for a snapshot look at reviews when she receives a request for a particular item. Cohen says, "It's important to teach pre-service students use of CLCD so they understand how to choose books for use with young people. The aggregate full-text reviews allow them to see what professionals look for as they evaluate books



and help them know what to consider as they look at books themselves. My literature students must compile a thematic, annotated bibliography as a final project. The Database, with its many search features including genres, fiction, and non-fiction, is invaluable to them. The students really like that it pulls so much together." It's not just literature students using the Database, however.

The ability to search Interest Levels and Reading Levels in the Database is a huge help for those working with Boston College's Read-Aloud Program, a partnership program with the Boston Public Schools in which students and staff of Boston College go into the schools weekly to read aloud to English Language Learners. Cohen points out "Training is provided, including updated booklists and an introduction to CLCD to help them find appropriate materials on their own."

Students and staff have access to the Database across campus and remotely. "The remote access is a huge plus," according to Cohen. "No matter where they are, there's access." Personally, Cohen uses CLCD for collection development. "It's really very helpful when weeding. Having reviews going back years allows me to judge a book's worth in the collection. The ability to sort by publication date makes it easier for me to find newer materials to fill gaps as curriculum changes or to fulfill specific requests." Cohen promotes the Database widely to faculty and students. "The statistics prove it's worth the money spent," Cohen concluded. "I have to justify its purchase every October and the numbers bear out that it's big at the university!"

Texas Woman's University's School of Library and Information Studies offers the MLS and MALS degrees through Distance Education, with students completing all of their coursework online. The demands of the profession mesh well with Distance

Education, helping students acquire needed skills in information technologies, problem solving, and communication. "It allows more leeway for those actually working. Deadlines are met but you don't have to actually show up. I actually have had students in China and Venezuela during a semester," says Dr. Jeanette Larson, SLIS Adjunct Instructor who works with graduate students. "The Children's Literature Comprehensive Database is a wonderful tool for our students; it's available anywhere that has Internet access and gives them so much. Not only can they see multiple reviews on so many books, they also can access author websites, curriculum guides, up-to-date thematic booklists, and book awards lists from the Database.

It's one-stop shopping!" Larson finds it important to help her students develop an underlying understanding of a review source and its purpose. "Amazon's recommendations and parents' blogs are fine for an individual's purchases, but they are not what should be used to determine a school or public library's book collection. Professional reviews need to be used in making library purchases." Larson's students must read lots of children's and young adult literature, of course, but she recognizes it's not always possible for them to physically look at all the books. "The Data-



base allows them to see so many reviews; they learn how to interpret reviews." She has her students read reviews on specific titles and virtually discuss what others have said about the book. "Point of view matters," says Larson, "and I work hard to help them appreciate the professional reviews, written by those who have a real working knowledge of literature for young people."

Her students find CLCD helpful in pulling together themed "collections" within a given budget amount. Students work with its many search options to build lists by grade, interest, and more. "Of course they have access to other online databases," says Larson, "but CLCD is the go to one for much of their work. They love that a statewide contract makes it available to them through their public libraries, any university in Texas, or most school districts. It's not just a graduate school thing, it's real world."

Whether used as a research tool, teaching tool, or collection development tool, these three librarians find CLCD extremely valuable in their work with students and faculty. **"Its versatility works for our various needs," says Yoder. "We couldn't be more pleased."**