



The hybrid classroom—and school library—may provide the best opportunity to help students become better readers, writers, and thinkers. Not only can we crumple up the SILENCE sign—we can take the clock off the wall as well.

No More Silence in the Library

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In her autobiographical *One Writer's Beginnings*, Eudora Welty described the way her town's formidable librarian, Mrs. Calloway, kept order: "SILENCE in big black letters was on signs tacked up everywhere" (1984, 29). Just as the autocratic librarian Welty described belongs to a very different era, so, too, does the SILENCE sign. That was a time when teaching a child library etiquette was a much simpler proposition. Today, in school libraries and in classrooms, students need to learn to be digital citizens in a global community. Silence is no longer appropriate in the school library or classroom, and a list of rules will no longer work. Instead, we must arm our students with a toolbox of skills.

This daunting challenge comes at a time when we are also charged with preparing students for a host

of standardized tests designed to measure their progress in content-area skills. One such necessary skill: learning to navigate the digital world. Luckily, this world also provides us a multitude of avenues to reach these digital natives and help them assemble that toolbox of skills.

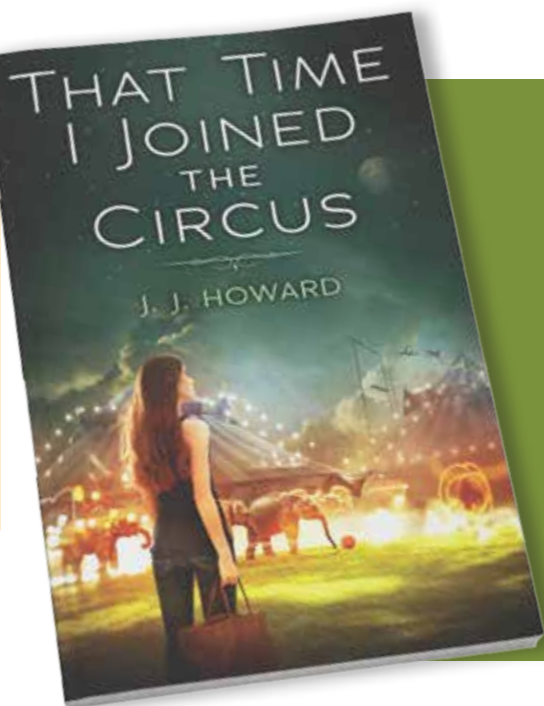
The hybrid classroom—and school library—may provide the best opportunity to help students become better readers, writers, and thinkers. Not only can we crumple up the SILENCE sign—we can take the clock off the wall as well. Collaborating via the Web allows for asynchronous learning. Students can work at their own pace. Often, multiple intelligences can work and learn in the style that suits them best. And today, schools receive a wealth of information about each learner based on their performance on various standardized tests. We can

use this data to help match students with the programs and platforms that can help them the most.

Teachers and school library professionals have countless platforms and sites to choose from—and more popping up each day. Here is a short list of some of the best ones I've used with my students.

Blogger

With Google Blogger my students create their own blogs, which I link together via a central course blog. I post the assignment prompts and sample responses on the main course blog. Students revise and post their own work and then respond to one another via the reply feature. Each year we review digital citizenship, and I can also model my expectations via the course blog.



As a writer as well as a teacher, I've also discovered that today's YA authors have been very active in sharing resources; discussion guides, alternate point-of-view chapters, and even playlists are shared online. Many writers are also available for virtual visits via Skype. **Students can connect with the written word in ways that weren't possible in the past.**

As I began promoting my debut novel, I came in contact with a fellow teacher who works with her middle school students to maintain a book review blog. The students reach out to authors and request galley copies, and then write, edit, and post reviews. These students are engaged in not only creating work, but also publishing it and sharing it with the world. They are also interacting with authors—and getting excited about books in the process. I myself have enjoyed connecting with readers via social-media platforms such as Twitter and Tumblr.

Prezi

Prezi is a free program that allows students to create professional-quality presentations with embedded sound, images, and video. The best part: students can work together on separate devices, at different times, to create one final presentation. Once again, students are charged with revising and polishing their work for online publication.

Turnitin.com

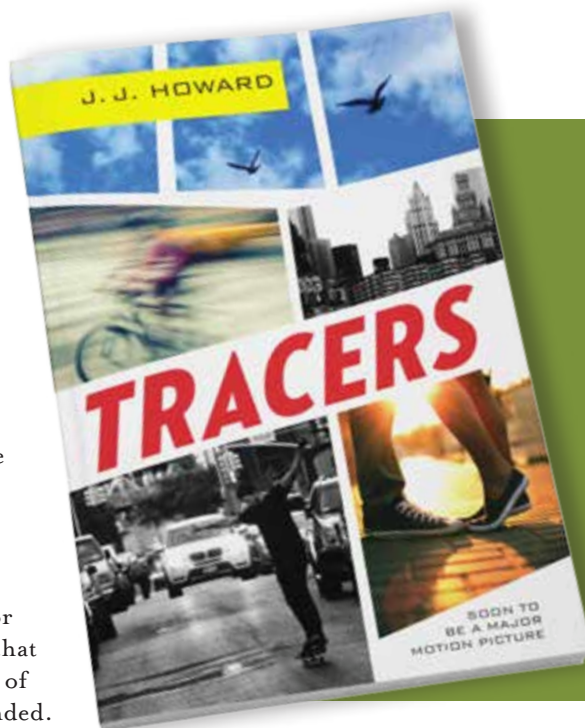
The Turnitin website, which does require a school subscription, was once known only for offering checks

to ensure information literacy and catch instances of plagiarism. While the site still provides this important service, the updated version allows instructors to make digital comments in several formats, including voice comments. Students can also work collaboratively on their writing via the peer-review function. The site also offers a threaded discussion feature students can use to interact in an online forum.

Other Options

There are too many other tools to detail, but some other great resources include Pinterest, iBooks Author, and even Twitter. These resources can all be used with any size group in a school library or classroom setting. In particular English Language Arts skills such as pre-writing, editing, revising, and publication can be practiced and honed via these platforms. With the limitations of time and space essentially removed, projects can continue after the school year ends. The book review site I mentioned, for example, is an ongoing project that students are pleased to be a part of long after the assignment has ended.

As a writer as well as a teacher, I've also discovered that today's YA authors have been very active in sharing resources; discussion guides, alternate point-of-view chapters, and even playlists are shared online. Many writers are also available for virtual visits via Skype. Students can connect with the written word in ways that weren't possible in the past.



Beyond the realm of encouraging the love of fiction, though, it must be acknowledged that the Common Core State Standards have shifted teachers' focus in terms of instruction and evaluation, with an increased emphasis on nonfiction texts. As we see ELA curricula evolve in the wake of adoption of the new standards, it's important for teachers and school librarians to work together so that new library acquisitions match the new foci in the classroom. Common Core exemplar texts are from a wide range of genres, including poetry, drama, and the aforementioned nonfiction.

Though there may not be a playlist posted for a nonfiction text, I've found success in selecting topical works that can be used as a springboard for discussing—and writing about—ideas that are of interest to kids today. For example, my students love M. T. Anderson's YA novel *Feed*; I use the work as a gateway to begin a unit that includes nonfiction reading from authors such as Neil Postman and Marshall McLuhan—works that engage students in debate about how our lives are changing in this brave new digital age. Nonfiction works also offer a broad range of

topics; student reading and writing can be focused on an area of strong interest for each learner.

Education is changing in this new age as well, and collaboration among teachers, librarians, and students is an important key to helping kids to gain those skills they will need in college and beyond. It's much more complicated now than learning to be quiet and still while reading a book—but so much more exciting to be able to use so many new resources to enhance every learner's experience.

J.J. Howard is a YA author and teacher. Her debut novel, That Time I Joined the Circus, was published by Scholastic in April 2013. Her second book, Tracers, was released from Putnam in January 2015. J.J. attended Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and earned a degree in English; she earned her Master's degree from Tiffin University in Ohio. She has been teaching for twenty years and currently serves as the AP English teacher and department chair at Lake Mary (FL) Preparatory School. Writing instruction and using technology in the classroom are two areas of special interest and focus in her teaching.

Work Cited:

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