BHS Learning Center

A Student-Centered Place for Learning

The Library: A True Learning Center!

The library has been an active learning center this past semester. On a daily average, we have between 400 and 500 students using the library and this includes scheduled classes, as well as before school, brunch, lunch and after school usage. Students' needs range from research to seeking help finding a good book, grabbing quiet study carrels, or taking a moment of respite with a good magazine—The library is the place to be on campus.

Instructional Partnerships!

With new Common Core Standards in place, we see more classes coming in to embark on research units. On average this year, we have had 58 classes per month, 15 classes per week, and averaging about 4 to 5 classes per day. Examples include, Mr. Mills and Mr. Medine's CP Government classes learned how to research our subscription databases for quotes, speeches and news articles on issues related to the establishment of

governments. Mr. Mills and Mr. Chin's 9th grade AS classes were introduced to Noodle Tools (our research collaboration and management program) as they began a Socratic Seminar project on Globalization. Ms. Rohrach, Ms. Miller, and Mr. Chin's students were busy with an immigration project where specific searching techniques helped them to uncover quality articles from the web. Mr. Sullivan's APUSH investigated resources on American Strands of the Westward Expansion Unit and discovered that the library subscription databases were a gold-mine of information! A true global learning center here at BHS.

The Parents are Making It Happen!

With much appreciation to the generosity of the Parent's Group, the library at BHS is open to serve our students until 5:30 p.m. everyday of the week. In addition to the extended operational hours, the students are provided with instructional assistance by a credentialed librarian

Monday through Friday during school hours to serve the research needs of both students and faculty. With the parent's support, there is continuity of instructional support by the librarian as she now has time to collaborate with teachers on research units, work on acquiring a collection of

resources to meet their needs and support students on a daily basis with all their instructional needs. Thank you again to the Parent's group for turning our library into a true Learning Center**!**

Research & The 21st Century Learner

We have all heard the phrase "information overload" yet, education experts like Eisenberg and Berkowitz point out the irony that with this abundance of information at our fingertips, it is still difficult to find the information we really need. This abundance of information is more of a hindrance than a help when it comes to academic research papers. There is no doubt that a simple search that retrieves over a billion hits can be daunting for anyone. In fact, Dr. David Lewis, a British Psychologist coined the phrase, "*information fatigue syndrome*" caused by an overload of information to the brain, compromising students' ability to concentrate and undermining their immune systems. Lewis likens the results to **"paralysis of analysis."** Many experts agree that search training is a must when dealing with this volume of information now found on the Internet. Teaching students to discern credible information and the ability to analyze reliable sources is a crucial skill that must be taught. Sources such as blogs, tweets, op-ed articles, even academic journals from databases may or may not be credible for the type of inquiry for the paper. **Knowing what media and type of searches are appropriate/ efficient for different research questions is the cornerstone of teaching research skills.** It is the goal of the BHS librarian to assist in teaching these skills and preventing "paralysis of analysis."

"Games are not just technological toys, but legitimate tools to achieve real-world goals. (McGonigal)

Gaming in School Libraries

"While parents worry their children spend too much time with computer games, young and old, derive many benefits from gaming ("Reality is broken,"McGonigal) This is a popular sentiment permeating every aspect of society, including the education field. In fact McGonigal is the first PhD scholar researching how games make people smarter from age three to 93. Libraries are now looking at the benefits of allowing students to play games during their breaks from class.

McGonigal calls this gaming generation the "brain age" because they have eliminated mental downtime due to the fact that wherever they go, they are playing a game on their mini consoles. According to McGonigal, the benefits are numerous. They offer real solutions to problems and an authentic source of happiness. As games become more sophisticated they are addressing daily life dilemmas and reducing stress levels in the real world. More importantly, they are empowering people to become more resilient, increasing creativity, and games have proven to be the panacea to depression, anxiety, and attention deficit

Databases Versus Googling!

How many times have I heard from students that they would rather just Google their way through their research. After all, it's easy and accessible. Google now has a competitor, and one that is becoming much more formidable when it come to competing for the best resource available. Databases are becoming extremely popular among our student researchers. Databases are a paid subscription that offers a treasure-trove of peer reviewed articles all vetted and written by scholars in that particular field. The databases are organized so to help students narrow down their searches. Unlike a Google search, the query retrieves articles from a finite set of millions of articles organized by topic, and media. Newswires, radio transcripts, journals, magazines, online books, videos, newspapers, primary source materials, such as speeches and original documents. The most popular with our students is the Opposing Viewpoints database where they can find scholars writing on both sides of a topic.

Common Core and Non-Fiction titles for Young Adults

Quality versus quantity is the focus of recent research that suggests that what students read has a greater impact on learning than just the amount of independent reading they engage in. There is compelling research that reveals students perform better in college when they are able to comprehend more complex, nonfiction texts. "Students who are able to answer questions related to complex text have a high probability of earning a *C* or better in an introductory-level college course in U.S. history or psychology" (Goodwin & Miller).

This emphasis on reading non-fiction texts is to increase comprehension skills, and give students a background knowledge which supports comprehending traditional basal texts in college.

Research has also surfaced on a another benefit of reading non-fiction. These finding suggest there is greater benefit in motivating students to read when it taps into their own interests in the real world (Caswell & Duke). This may, in fact, be the most important insight to be gleaned from research. Although students may continue to find fiction appealing, nonfiction doesn't have to be boring. "*On the contrary, allowing students to explore and pursue their interests within a broad array of informational texts can help them to see that the real world can often be just as surprising and intriguing as make-believe.*"

"A great opportunity for students to connect in their love and appreciation for literature!"

BHS student, Katherine M.

The Book Cafe

The BHS Library has been hosting a book Café for three years and it is still going strong. The Book Café is a forum for students to share their favorite reads and to listen to some book talks that I present, as well as some favorites from the teen librarian at BPL. We meet in the alumni room on the last Thursday of the Month during lunch. The students bring their lunch and we provide drinks and snacks as we discuss our favorite authors and titles.

This is a great opportunity for students to be introduced to some award winning authors, and new titles published within the past year. It also provides a venue for students to listen to what their peers have or are currently reading and their recommendations. We are also very fortunate to have the fabulous teen librarian from the Burlingame Public library present her book talks that are always a hit with the students, who usually end up checking out the books at the end of our meeting.

Many students are quite the book critic, knowing exactly what they like or dislike about a particular author or title. Some favorite genres are fantasy authors such as Brandon Sanderson and Adam Douglas, as well as Jackaby by William Ritter. Come join us!

The BHS Library has a New Web Site!

The BHS library had a face lift this year and is now available through the address: www.pantherlearningcenter.com. The site can also be accessed through the main school site under "Library."

The reason for the change in format is so that students have a clear, uncluttered, user friendly interface to find exactly what they need. For example, if they are looking for a book in print, they would click on the tab "print resources' and it will take them to our online catalog tab.   And if they don't find a book in our library, the link right below will take them to the public library where they can search for a book without having to have their library card. We also have a separate tab for e -resources so that student can browse this rapidly growing area. The "more" button will take them to various categories of resources relevant to searching information. The most popular category is "Research Databases!

BHS Learning Center

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We're on the Web!

example.com