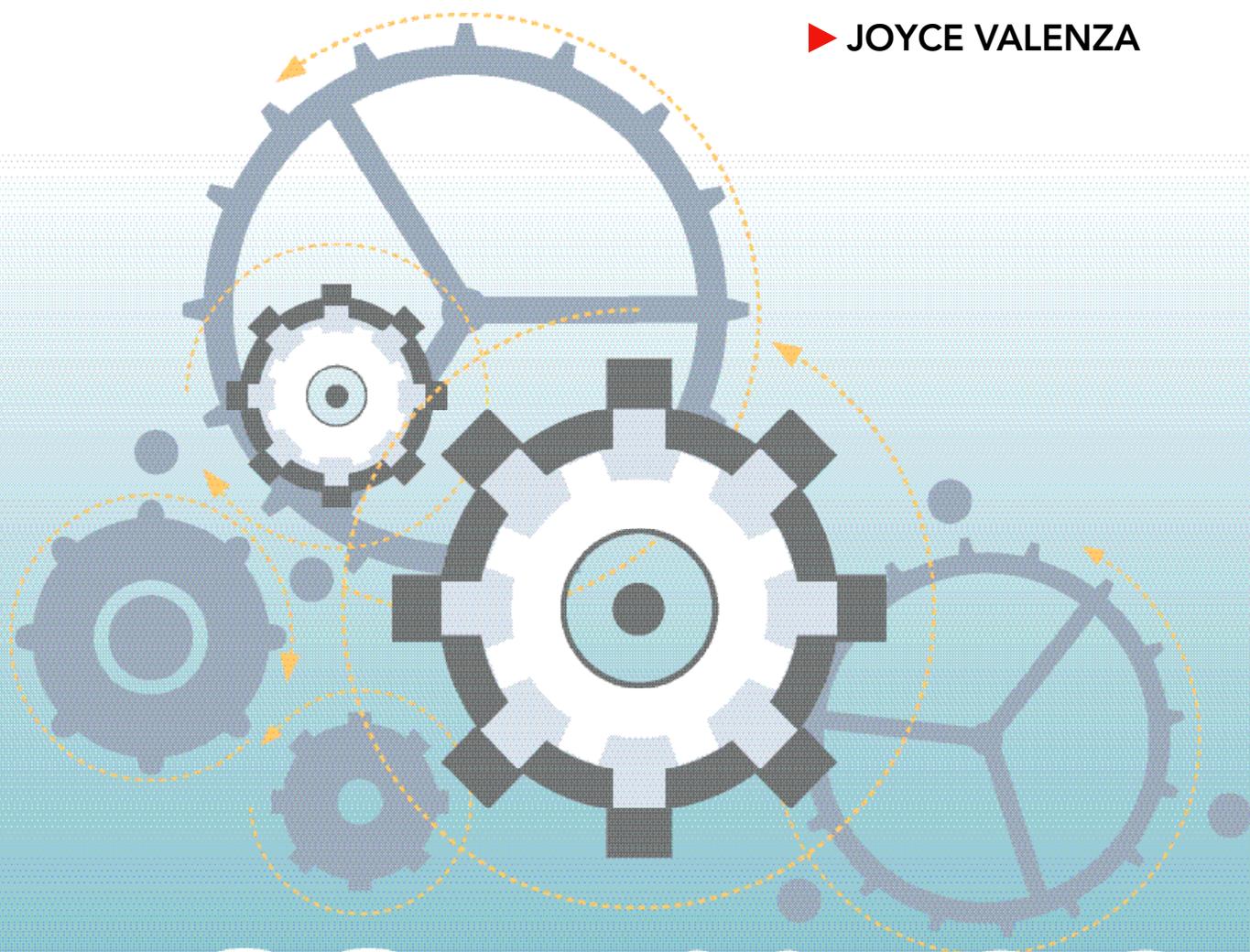




▶ JOYCE VALENZA



# Reading 2.0

GETTING THE GEARS TO WORK IN HARMONY

**FOR YEARS,** I'VE BEEN FOCUSING ON TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION AND IMPROVING STUDENT RESEARCH. IN THE BACK OF MY MIND, I KNEW THAT MY FOCUS HAD BEEN A LITTLE OFF. I LOST SOMETHING ALONG THE WAY. BACK IN JULY AT THE NATIONAL EDUCATING COMPUTING CONFERENCE (NECC), I EXPERIENCED A SERIOUS EPIPHANY.

It was there that I met Anita Beaman, who presented the Reading 2.0 portion of our Library 2.5 Remix panel. As I listened to her, I realized that over the years, I somehow lost my reading focus. I recognized that I had been ignoring a significant part of my own practice. I needed to connect the “technology thing” to the “reading thing.”

Beaman showed me the way. Actually she showed me the many ways I could combine my passion for technology in learning with my (only slightly lost) passion for promoting reading. She and her colleague, elementary school media specialist Amy Oberts, have been working to discover the intersection between students’ reading interests and their lives online. They call the wonderful wiki they’ve created **Reading 2.0** (<http://readingtech.wikispaces.com>).

## MEET ANITA BEAMAN

Beaman is the high school librarian at University High School, a laboratory school with a challenging academic environment that serves as a model facility for the teacher candidates at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. She also teaches classes in ISU’s post-baccalaureate school library program, which provides courses for classroom teachers to obtain their school library endorsements.

She described what the Reading 2.0 concept means to her: “I started thinking about this concept when I discovered great young adult author blogs by Sarah Dessen, Meg Cabot, and others. I love YA lit, and I started reading their blogs regularly. When a new book came out, I realized my reading experience was a little different because I felt as if I knew the author personally from reading her blog. I began wondering how I could share this personal reading experience with my students, and I thought about how it was changing things for the authors and how they communicated with their readers.”

The result was an article for the American Association of School Librarians’ journal, **Knowledge Quest** ([http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/kqweb/kqarchives/volume35/KQW35\\_1Beaman.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/kqweb/kqarchives/volume35/KQW35_1Beaman.pdf)). Beaman joined forces with her graduate students to present their Reading 2.0 ideas for their state library association conference. The positive response fueled their work at school.

“My greatest challenge is getting this stuff out to the kids,” says Beaman, who after completely renovating a physical library, is now trying to remodel the library program. “I’ve been at my current school for only two years, and there was absolutely no culture of reading there when I started. I’ve spent two years building the collection, and now I’m focusing on activities to get the teens reading. It’s a college-prep high school with a rigorous academic schedule, and sometimes it’s difficult to get the teachers and students to see the value of reading just for pleasure. It’s all about college prep and reading the classics. When they do have a few minutes free, the teens want to veg out online with their friends and not read. So combining the two—reading and technology—seems like the logical way to create readers. I’m hoping to do a whole lot more starting this year. I think we’re finally ready for it.”

Beaman echoes my own issues as a high school librarian. We get so caught up in teaching effective research and information skills that we find ourselves unintentionally letting go of another mission, likely the same goal that brought us into this field in the first place. Beaman notes, “A 2.0 librarian can’t afford to put all her eggs in one basket.”

Although the use of technology is often associated with teaching research skills and information literacy, Beaman and Oberts both believe that we can combine our missions—to integrate technology thoughtfully, to develop information literacy, and to promote the love of reading.

## STRATEGIES

Beaman introduced a very low-tech strategy that had the NECC audience furiously taking notes. First she proved that teens still like to read by describing the reading phenomenon that surrounds Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight Saga*. Beaman helps her Edward and Bella fans to continue their experience beyond the pages through little labels affixed in the back of books. If a student checks out *Twilight*, she discovers a small map to help her expand the reading journey.

Beaman and Oberts include a Word document of their low-tech reading labels on the wiki. Labels include authors’ official sites, playlists for listening while reading, fan-fiction sites, trailers and videos, online chats, and discussion sites. The Meyer label reads:

### WANT MORE BELLA? MORE EDWARD? THERE’S TONS MORE ON THE WEB! CHECK THESE OUT:

- **Web page:** <http://www.stepheniemeyer.com>.
- **Playlist:** [http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight\\_playlist.html](http://www.stepheniemeyer.com/twilight_playlist.html).
- **Twilight Lexicon** (all things Twilight): <http://twilightlexicon.com>.
- **MySpace groups:** [http://groups.myspace.com/steph\\_meyer](http://groups.myspace.com/steph_meyer) or <http://groups.myspace.com/booktwilight>.
- **Teen Lit (MySpace):** <http://groups.myspace.com/teenlit>.
- **Readergirlz:** <http://www.readergirlz.com/> or <http://www.myspace.com/readergirlz>.
- **Not Your Mother’s Book Club:** [http://www.myspace.com/not\\_yourmothers](http://www.myspace.com/not_yourmothers).

Beaman advocates the use of social bookmarking to extend the pages. She maintains **Del.icio.us** links relating to great reads and popular authors for teens on the University Library Web site at <http://del.icio.us/uhighlibrary>. She also recommends the use of **LibraryThing** (<http://librarything.com>) for promoting books.



Beaman discussed trends as well, predicting that reading devices like the Kindle might soon play a larger role in our practice. She envisions more opportunities online for creativity and for collaborative writing with authors.

The **Reading 2.0** wiki shares pictures of how the librarians offer audiobook Playaways to students. Oberts notes, “We position the Playaway case along side the print selection. We ask students to check out both items as a means of ‘retraining’ their stereotypes. . . . Why should a child have to choose between a book and technology? Can’t

they enjoy both? I'd like to think the Reading 2.0 mindset takes the either/or notion and reframes it to be a meshing of the two."

### ENTER AMY OBERTS

Oberts had been a classroom teacher for eleven years in fourth, sixth, and eighth grades and is relatively new to the library world. After recently finishing her Information Specialist courses, Oberts now works at Oakland Elementary in Bloomington, Illinois.

As someone new to our field, Amy's observations are fresh and suggest that we might rethink K-12 practices. Amy landed into a fixed schedule situation, teaching twenty-three classes a week during teachers' prep times. Her instruction includes introductions to library technology and information literacy as well as exposing learners to literature, authors, and genre studies.

Oberts noticed that for the younger grades, the fallback in the classroom was to read aloud. For these students, technology seemed to be limited to drill-and-kill learning games, so it was largely reserved for the upper grades.

Oberts met Beaman when she took a course in the Information Specialist program at Illinois State. "When I met Anita, she was interested in how I was using technology to promote reading rather than to compete with reading," said Oberts.

The conversation provoked Oberts to rethink her program and the way she used technology with young people. "Formerly the emphasis was on either promoting literature or on using technology rather than having the two work together as gears." It was then that the two began building the **Reading 2.0** wiki.

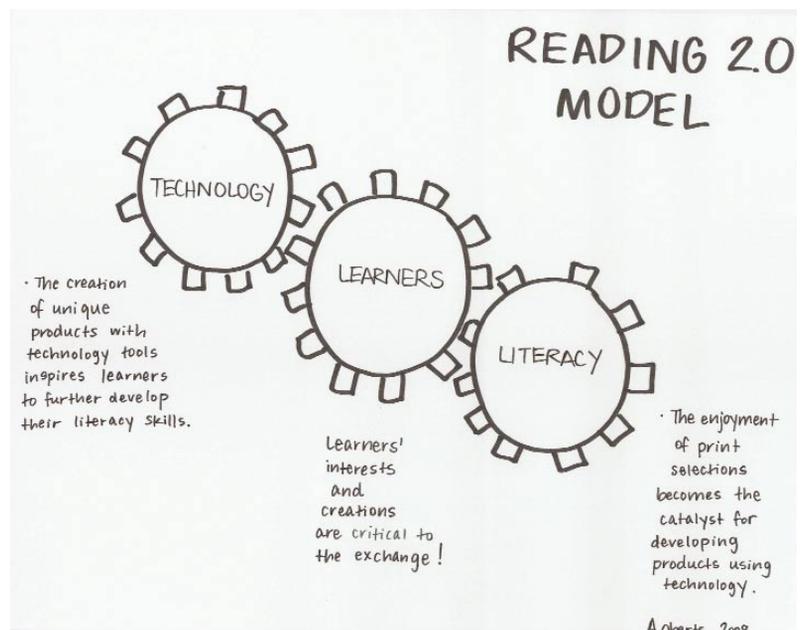
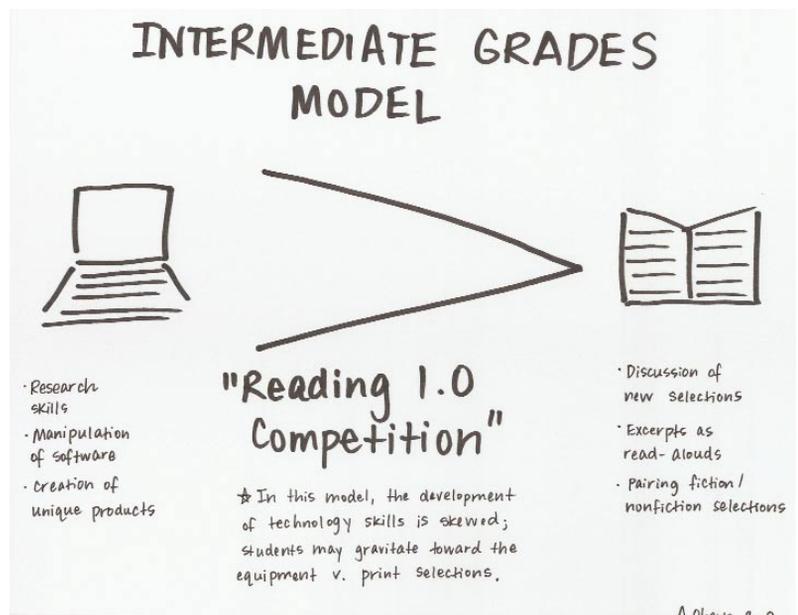
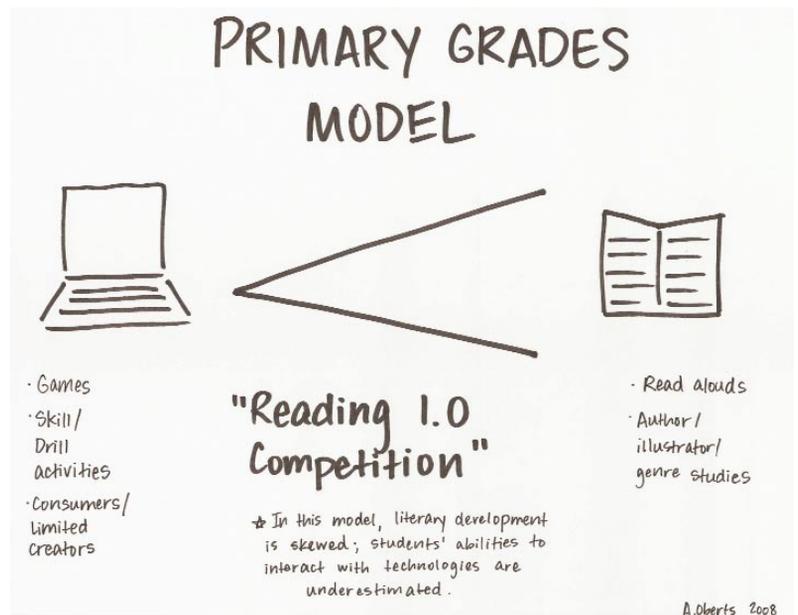
While they were working, "we kept discussing how to harness technology to excite and empower students' literary development," recalls Oberts. She sees Reading 1.0 as a competition between reading activities and technology. Reading 2.0 is when the two work together as gears.

Oberts drew a model to represent what she saw and what she thinks we should see in our schools:

One of Oberts's favorite reading/technology intersections is creating interactive booktalks using SmartBoards (or other interactive white boards). She includes sample lessons and booktalks on the **Reading 2.0** wiki (<http://readingtech.wikispaces.com/SMART%E2%84%A2+Connections>). The software and notebook tools are free to download even if you don't have the equipment.

Among the activities Oberts describes is inviting students to come up to the board to manipulate parts of the book. She suggests bringing up one of the many **Lookybook** (<http://www.lookybook.com>) e-books, reading it as a group, and then asking younger students to identify parts of the book—spine, author, illustrator, award seals. Older students might also annotate the e-book as they flip through its pages.

For older students, we discussed how they might use Smartboards to guide class booktalks.



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## READING 2.0

### Using Technology to Promote Books - Not Replace Them!

**Anita Beaman, Librarian:**  
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**Session Overview:**  
Tired of seeing your patrons sit in front of computers while your library's books collect dust on the shelves? Turn their fondness for the online world to your advantage by highlighting your library's offerings with the latest technological tools! We will discuss how to engage students in the low-tech art of reading by presenting a range of simple to complex technologies.

 Conference attendees...what questions do you have that didn't get addressed? What other technological tools are *you* using to promote reading? Did you return to your school or library and experiment with one of the technologies present? How did it go? How could this session be improved? We invite you to share your thoughts by contributing to this wiki. Click the "Talk Back" icon to get started.

**Actions**  
 Join this Space  
 Recent Changes  
 Manage Space  
 Search 

**Navigation**  
 Home  
 Why Reading 2.0?  
 Session Resources  
 Low-Tech Labels  
 Creating Screensavers  
 Work the Web:  
 - Social Bookmarking  
 - Interactive Book Sites  
 - Video Book Talks  
 Here & Hear:  
 - Playaways  
 - Playlists  
 - Podcasts  
 SMART™ Connections  
 No Fuss Videos

They might drive the illustrations that Oberts includes in her prepared booktalks (using slideshow software like PowerPoint), deciding where to start and proceed, describing images they bring up and possibly magnify for details, and predicting events.

Such slides don't necessarily have to include images from the book. Learners might easily find illustrations and create the booktalks themselves. We chatted about the possibility of having learners use the board and their own selected images to create book improvs for themselves and their classmates, spontaneously expanding talk on a story or book.

Oberts is a big fan of creating book-related screensavers. "They are super easy to make with a collection of JPEG files. The teachers and I have screensavers representing the twenty nominees for our state book awards. We shout out ideas, spontaneous booktalks, as images pop up on student screens. Sometimes we share the emotions that each book evokes. In our lab, thirty computers face the students. Why should we be showing them Windows logos?"

Oberts has her students create book commercials or teasers like those featured on **Bookwink** (<http://bookwink.com>). "But our kids have to immerse themselves into being characters, writing scripts, and gathering and sequencing associated images." Students e-mail the whole package to Oberts, who works with them to produce a video using Adobe's Visual Communicator. She likes this software because it allows the user to layer video over video and to use green screens, actually placing students in scenes.

"I can't believe how many readers will make selections based on what they see in these one-minute commercials! Before I couldn't get most of these books to move at all. Their covers aren't flashy. They appear dated." She noted that even with a sleeper kind of new book, for instance Elise Borache's **Shakespeare's Secret** (Henry Holt, 2005/VOYA August 2005), "once the kids did a green screen video, I couldn't keep the book in the library. I had a hold list a mile long."

Oberts also uses Microsoft's free Photo Story software (<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=92755126-a008-49b3-b3f4-6f33852af9c1&DisplayLang=en>) for book commercials, and we chatted about her possible use of **VoiceThread** (<http://voicethread.com>) and other digital storytelling tools in the coming year to further promote those sleepers.

Like Beaman, Oberts works to pair quality print selections with interactive Web sites connected to the selection's content or created by the author or publisher. "For example, I enjoy reading Jon Scieszka's first book from Trucktown, **Smash! Crash!** (Simon & Schuster, 2008) and then challenging students to virtually explore the setting at <http://www.behindthepulse.com/trucktown>. With older students, it has been effective to have them explore Jon's wacky site (<http://www.jsworldwide.com>), as well as Lane Smith's Web site (<http://www.lanesmithbooks.com>) as hooks to introduce their works. It all goes back to that 'gear diagram.' Somehow the learner has to be able to connect and engage with related print and technical tools."

One of Oberts's big worries was getting students interested in nonfiction. "We began to create Photo Stories about significant people from different cultures who made a difference. Although we never suggested it, the kids began asking for books about these people." She never recommended the biographies; she simply asked them to find information, images, and use their voices. "We were shocked by how much time they spent in the stacks. I guarantee those books had an inch of dust on them. Watching the clamoring was neat."

The technology project fueled the stack action.

## GETTING THE GEARS TO MOVE TOGETHER

Neither we nor our learners need to choose between technology and reading. The two can work in harmony.

Beaman says, "There are too many great ways to combine both! As librarians, educators, and readers, we must not only accept that

technology is here to stay but also embrace that fact. I think we have begun to do so in research/info lit, but we are still holding out when it comes to reading. Our ideas of what someone's reading experience should be like need to change with the times and technology if we want to keep teen readers interested."

"I've never said it out loud before," said Oberts, "but I hear a lot of librarians talk about how students are migrating to technology and away from books. I often hear colleagues complaining that today's students are spending too much time immersed in the virtual world. I now see it as my mission to take the tools toward which students naturally gravitate and use them to promote literacy. By taking the time to learn and speak their language, I help build a bridge between their virtual world and the physical library."

A couple of weeks ago, I reflected in my **NeverEndingSearch** blog (<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/blog/1340000334.html>), "Over the years I'd turned into ResearchGirl. And for years, ResearchGirl was far more powerful than ReadingGirl. ReadingGirl is beginning to emerge, and she is planning to use a 2.0 toolbelt."

I invite you to help me edit, grow, and beautify our **ReadingResources** wiki (<http://bookleads.wikispaces.com>). Please add pages. Please share your best ideas. Anita and Amy also invite you to contribute to **Reading 2.0**, where you will find instructions for the activities mentioned in this piece.

Together we can get those gears smoothly moving. ■

Joyce Kasman Valenza is the librarian at Springfield Township High School in Erdenheim, Pennsylvania, and her video series, *Internet Searching Skills*, was a 1999 YALSA Selected Video for Young Adults. Her newest book is *Super Searchers Go to School* (Information Today, 2005). Valenza's *Virtual Library* won the IASL School Library Web Page of the Year Award for 2001, and her blog won the Edublog Award for 2005. An active member of several professional organizations, she speaks regularly about issues relating to libraries and thoughtful use of educational technology. She recently earned a doctoral degree in Information Science at the University of North Texas.

