

Zmuda, Allison & Harada, Violet. *Librarians as learning specialists: Meeting the learning imperative for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 128 pages. \$40.00 (ISBN: 978-1-59158-679-1)

The book is geared towards school librarians and school administrators to encourage, engage, and “empower” learning specialists to elicit positive responses from their most important patrons, the students. The school library is the hub of activity, intellectual growth, and study. Authors Allison Zmuda and Violet H. Harada deem school librarians as learning specialists. The authors realize the importance of learning specialists and how they are integral to students’ success. One suggestion is to focus lessons and instruction with a “results-oriented” mindset. The authors say that learning specialists should, “design learning that fosters deep understanding and develop strategies to assess this learning.”

Authors Zmuda and Harada also suggest that the mission statement of the school and library must take into consideration the success of the student keeping in mind curriculum planning, collaboration on instructional improvement and inspire a “culture of teaching” by sharing expertise that facilitates growth. The book is intensely packed with topics ranging from reform in our schools to the role of Learning Specialists. Also included are instruction designs and how to apply them to diverse learning styles. Concepts include inquiry learning, backward mapping in instructional planning, and differentiated teaching and learning. The book is firmly grounded in theory towards assessment and feedback and “Looking to the future.” The authors pay close attention to the multimedia landscape that not only students but also the educators must adopt in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The book includes an afterword looking at the learning specialist as leader in education. The challenge authors Zmuda and Harada pose is to determine student needs in this age of information and how learning specialists and school administrators as stakeholders can “serve as leaders” in bridging the gap between student needs and learning.

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