

Maureen Welch Elementary, Pennsylvania

An organized adventure in research and writing

Maureen M. Welch Elementary School in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, is a very lucky school indeed. Not only is it a new facility, (the school opened August 29, 2000). But the school also has a wonderful library headed by Beth Auwarter, media specialist extraordinaire.

What makes this library so wonderful?

Mrs. Auwarter has many resources in her library. Yet it is *how* she puts those resources to work that makes her library so amazing. One of those resources is eLibrary Elementary™. Mrs. Auwarter uses eLibrary Elementary to its fullest potential.

How is eLibrary Elementary used in the library?

First, every student (700+) and teacher is given a document describing how to log on to the database. This way they can access eLibrary in one of the three computer labs, in the classroom and at home. Teachers are also reminded how to login in the library's bi-monthly newsletter. Second, and very importantly, is that bigchalk Library is incorporated into the school's curriculum.

How exactly is this done?

For example, Ms. Auwarter assigned a project to the sixth graders based on an expected visit from author Dan Gutman. Dan would discuss his books *Shoeless Joe and Me* and *Babe and Me*, as well as the important role research played in his writing. The children were to write a magazine article about an athlete of their choice.

"In May, the students had just completed an intense Elementary Performance Assessment research project and were eager for a 'fun' activity to round out the school year," says Mrs. Auwarter. "They spent two full periods browsing through eLibrary Elementary to find information and pictures to inspire them to get ideas for their creative writing magazine article." Mrs. Auwarter found the multimedia resources, the *Lincoln Library of Sports Champions*, and shorter, age-appropriate articles to be perfect. Mrs. Auwarter also read portions of Dan's books aloud, especially focusing on the "back in time" interaction of the protagonist with a sports hero. Most of the students had selected one article to print out, read, and highlight, and were working on developing their story using Kidspiration when Dan Gutman visited.

When asked how they could make their stories based on research come alive, Dan suggested that they get their hero into trouble. The next class period, the students used this hint in their writing, and the project became an exciting one. Up until the last day of school, the sixth graders wrote their stories, edited, printed them in color, and presented to their classmates using the SmartBoard. "They were proud of their products and told me that they are looking forward to using eLibrary in the junior high when they have to do research," she said.

As you can see Mrs. Auwarter used Library Elementary in correlation to the creative writing curriculum and technology curriculum at Maureen Welch Elementary. The Big6™ is an important part of the library and eLibrary Elementary helps reach the curriculum goals. Mrs. Auwarter is planning new projects, and she plans to use eLibrary Elementary even more. One of her personal favorite features of eLibrary Elementary is that it does not confine the students to certain research topics. And with technology in the forefront of education, she loves the multimedia resources, including the audio/video clips and pictures.

To learn more about this library please visit

<http://www.crsd.org/buildings/mwe/library.htm>