



**Hear Ye! Hear Ye!**  
**Boar-ing Production Is a Huge Success**  
by 'Lady' Alice Mullins



Nothing was left to the imagination. The school gym was transformed into a medieval castle hall, serfs waited on tables, minstrels entertained guests who were dressed in medieval attire and the king and queen sat center stage to be entertained by choral and knightly crew. The fare was a feast of roasted pork, potatoes, puddings and a toast of wassail. With the signal from the king and the trumpet call of the herald, the boar's head was presented and the festivities began in earnest. This festive occasion was a culmination of many, many hours of in and out of school efforts.

For the past eight years, much time has been devoted to getting the annual school madrigals organized and produced. Yet, thanks to the innovative and cooperative work of several of our classes, this time has evolved so that the work has really done double and even triple duty when it comes to the academic studies of our students. This article was written to illustrate how this multiple use of time has been accomplished for the high school madrigal production which has come to be of much service to the students as well as the school community at large.

For several years the school administrators urged the performing arts classes to lead in putting on a madrigal. The work of coordinating all that was involved in pulling the madrigal together, drained the teachers and students of their time and resources. As the resource person, I was in an unique position realizing that there were opportunities to increase school participation in the planning phases of the madrigal that were unavailable to the art teachers. I approached the teachers asking them to let me work with them in building a school wide base for involvement. Fortunately, I was already collaborating with members of other departments on individual class projects. This collaboration enabled me to lead the various groups and teachers towards a more cross curriculum approach in their studies [K8, P 2]. The success of this work has been reflective of the meaningfulness to those involved in this work (Callison 154).

Collaborating with the drama and choral instructors allowed me as the LMS representative on several curriculum committees to address concerns other department teachers had expressed about the madrigal being such a monopolizing or consuming project. Many curriculum activities in the English and history classes were directly related to usable research for the madrigal [P 3]. This was the type of dialogue described by Linda L. Wolcott which is fundamental to having successful collaboration (Callison 135).





For example, world history students usually do research on middle age customs such as coat of arms and typical peasant and noble class dress. Their research served as a resource for the stage crafting and drama classes. The history students used the established rubrics for selecting and evaluating materials to include in their history projects. This meant the art students could rely on the authenticity of the selections made [K1].

In a similar way, the senior English class research of medieval literature, customs and daily life held much potential of use for the drama class. The senior students generated a series of original writing pieces reflective of the style and life of the middle ages [K2]. Their completed works have often been selected to go into their portfolios. This year as a part of the class critiquing of the projects, seniors selected pieces which were a part of the repertoire for the wandering minstrels at the madrigal dinner.



In addition, to allow for students who are more technologically savvy than poetic, the English teachers allowed students to choose to create a power point presentation or to create a web page reflective of their findings. The challenge for the teachers was how to adapt their existing assessment and evaluation forms to this technology product. The benefit was increased student interest in the product. Another more long range benefit was this laid some ground work for including more than just paper in student portfolios. As described by Gayla Britt there has been a long range goal to have students with their own electronic accounts (Lamb). So, the use of a technology for what has usually been traditionally a paper and pen type of assignment has opened the opportunity for gaining more teacher support towards electronic portfolios.

Following the review of their product with their English teacher, I approached the students to see if their product could be linked from the school's web page. Various power point presentations were used like slide shows and some of the web pages were used. These presentation links were a promotional tool for the madrigal [K6, P7].

A final example of the cross curriculum cooperation came from the home economics classes. This year, as part of their cooking projects, the classes spent time in the library. Using recipe books and online resources, students selected recipes to offer for the madrigal preparations. The class spent time deciding which recipes would be most easily converted considering the quantity needed and the ingredient's availability [K5]. The volunteer parents responsible for the purchasing of the food and the food preparation met with the students. The students presented their findings in a how to speech presentation. Then the students selected members of the class to do a





“food show presentation” with the audience getting a chance to taste test [K4].

The LMS was able to help by providing the LMC resources. The resource kits normally used for class projects were available for the appropriate classes. As so many groups were needing to use the same materials at the same time, the LMC was fortunate in being able to get additional materials on loan from the public library [P5]. In using the resources the LMS had developed a checklist of what the students needed to find and then how much they were able to do on their own [P4]. These lists were provided to the appropriate teachers [K1]. This gave both the library workers and the classroom teacher an idea of how the individual students were progressing in their fact retrieval skills (Stripling 163).

As mentioned, the senior English students primarily did independent research. Most of this was done in the classroom or on their own time. The senior English students were able to use one of their class periods to do work in the LMC. However, the world history students spent several days in the library. This has been the normal practice with their history projects. The LMS and the classroom teachers have developed rubrics to help the students determine what they need for each project. This same tool was used to help them as they gathered information for the drama classes. It was obvious that many students felt rewarded knowing their work was not just earning them a grade but was going to be produced in some manner at the madrigal [K3,P8].



In order to take advantage of the limited time in the LMC, the students worked together in their various classes to complete a “What I know and What I Want to Learn” chart. The use of this strategy as promoted by Virginia Rankins meant the students' time in research was better directed (Lamb). They had a clearer grasp of questions to be asked or of key terms to search while in the LMC. Depending on the class and the time, this pre-search activity was conducted by the library staff or by the classroom teacher [K9, P8].

A new addition to the cooperative work this year was the musical mix. The choral students used new software (ACID Music Program by Microsoft) for blending the taped background music for the dinner hour. The LMC has this software available for students and teachers in a limited number of licenses. This music was the background atmosphere music for when the guests arrived and played until the student orchestra and the minstrels began their part of the production [K10, P 9].

Among so many positive outcomes one of the great rewards in this school wide project was that students were excited about learning [P 6]. The students were acquiring information that they might otherwise find ‘boring’. Yet, by the time the presenting of the boar ( a major event at the madrigal) took place, the students had not only learned facts they had practiced and honed skills which would make it possible for them to keep

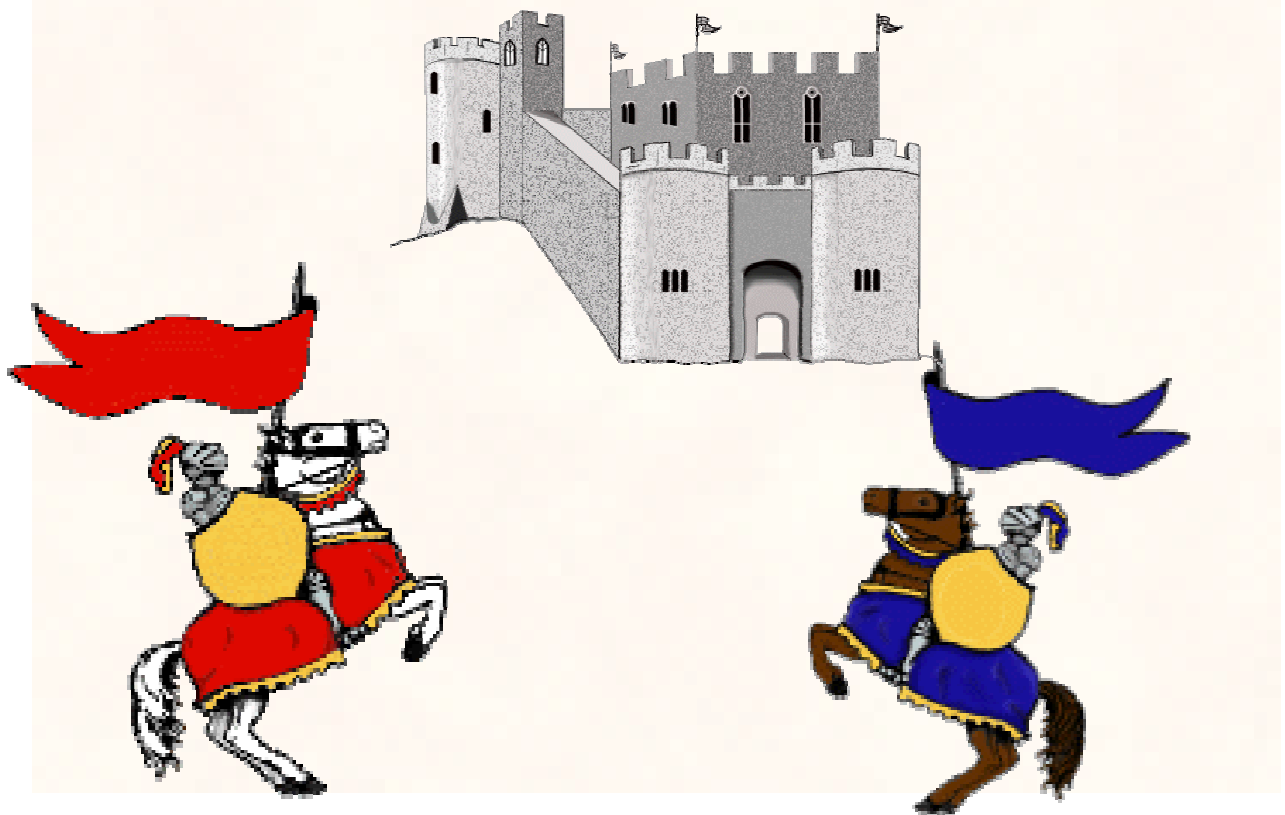




learning. In fact, some had realized that learning was not boring at all [K7]!

In looking towards next year, there are several new plans being pursued. First, one of the business teachers has some ideas about how to incorporate some of the business course curriculum into the madrigal. They are currently discussing how at least one of the classes could get involved in the madrigal. Ideas are numerous such as designing a web page for advertising, or using an accounting system to keep track of student and worker volunteer hours, etc...

To keep the academic potential alive and growing, some of the curriculum committees have been discussing how to incorporate the earlier student studies on the Middle Ages into the student portfolios. The middle school students usually do some work with heraldry and medieval customs. According to Bernajean Porter this work, incorporated into their portfolios, would allow for better reflection on student development (Lamb)[P10]. The specifics are not yet known but rest assured when Lady Alice meets with the curriculum committees throughout this year, plans will be afoot to help bring back another Boar-ing success [P1].





## References

### 10 Key Ideas

- K1. Assessment
- K2. Constructivism
- K3. Cooperative Learning
- K4. Creative and Inventive Thinking
- K5. Critical Thinking
- K6. Individual Differences
- K7. Meaningfulness and Motivation
- K8. Problem & Project Based Learning
- K9. Questioning
- K10. Technology

### 10 Learning and Teaching Principles of School and Library Media Programs

- P 1. The library media program is essential to learning and teaching and must be fully integrated into the curriculum to promote students' achievement of learning goals.
- P 2. The information literacy standards for student learning are integral to the content and objectives of the school's curriculum.
- P 3. The library media program models and promotes collaborative planning and curriculum development.
- P 4. The library media program models and promotes creative, effective, and collaborative teaching.
- P 5. Access to the full range of information resources and services through the library media program is fundamental to learning.
- P 6. The library media program encourages and engages students in reading, viewing, and listening for understanding and enjoyment.
- P 7. The library media program supports the learning of all students and other members of the learning community who have diverse learning abilities, styles, and needs.
- P 8. The library media program fosters individual and collaborative inquiry.
- P 9. The library media program integrates the uses of technology for learning and teaching.
- P10. The library media program is an essential link to the larger learning community.





### Resources

American Association of School Librarians and Association for Educational Communications and Technology. Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning. Chicago: American Library Association, 1998.

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Stripling, Barabara K. and Sandra Hughes-Hassell. Curriculum Connections Through the Library. Westport, CN: Libraries Unlimited, 2003.

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<http://historymedren.about.com/>.

*Disclaimer.* The PCS school community does put on a madrigal every other year. The students are involved and many class curriculums contain the elements I described. The coordination of the madrigal, however, is not in place as written.

