Modernizing the Marion High School library

GOOGLE CLASSROOM: Business teacher Mike Robertson, at left, uses Google Classroom to teach Introduction to Entrepreneurship class in the Marion High School library on Wednesday. The program allows students to access all of their materials online.

BY TYLER JURANOVICH
juranovich@chronicle-tribune.com

Gone are the days of row upon row of books at school libraries.

In a way to better the learning of students, Diane Gardner, library media specialist at Marion High School, is constantly upgrading the school’s library into a media center, complete with an iMac computer lab, online access to ebooks and more.

While there is still a high number of print books students can check-out, the focus of the Marion High School library has shifted towards giving students online access to research databases to help students better write their papers and perform better at college, which then they’ll be asked to use more complex search databases than simply a Google search. The library also gives students access to digital versions of books students can check-out and read on their phone, tablet or Kindle.

“It’s cool to see faces of students light up and realize when they go to college they’ll know what to do,” Gardner said.

With the removal of some books shelves, Gardner opened up a lot of room in the library.

Where the rows and rows of books shelves used to be now stands a state-of-the-art iMac lab, complete with Google Classroom, video and photo editing software and projector so teachers can give instructions, have a class in the iMac lab and students can grow their digital media skills.

Also added to the library are couches, TVs and relaxing music being played over the intercoms.

The changes, Gardner said, were to create a more relaxed, college-feel atmosphere.

“So far, that idea is working,” Eryn McMillion, a junior at Marion High School, said.

“It’s really nice to have somewhere to go if I’m stressed and to just hang out,” McMillion said.

For other students, the new library and digital media center offers a more fun, relaxing time to spend a class period than the traditional study hall.

“There’s a lot more resources here than study hall,” Alex Lyons, a senior at Marion High School, said about his decision to choose to help with shelving books and other activities rather than take a study hall.

For all the changes that have already come, Gardner said she’s still planning on adding more in the future, including a four-seat “maker space” table designed so students can work on a project on their laptops easier and more efficiently.

“These changes are sometimes small, but I hope we’re making a positive difference,” Gardner said.