



Digital tools enable school librarians to be vibrant, engaging hubs of lessons with online accessibility 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Curate a Digital Collection for All Learners

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The school library is an extension of the classroom. It is also a safe space learners use to make discoveries academically and personally. If the school library does not have the resources learners need, the library will be empty. If the school library is full of resources, but they are inaccessible to learners, the resources are useless. Curation is at the heart of every school library.

Every school system should have a collection development policy to assist with curation. The goal of this policy “must be to provide the library with a collection that meets the appropriate needs of its client population within the limits of its fiscal and personnel resources. To reach this goal, each segment of the collection must be developed with an application of resources consistent with its relative importance to the mission of the library and the needs of its patrons” (Johnson 2014). A collection development policy keeps the focus on the collection to support teaching and learning, not on the personal views of the school librarian.

While the philosophy of the collection development process has been the same for many years, there are more types of resources available for school librarians to consider incorporating into their collections, like digital tools. Digital tools enable school libraries to be vibrant, engaging hubs of learning with online accessibility 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Incorporating these tools into your collection provides learners with more ways to learn and engage with information.

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With these resources school librarians can show learners how to select and organize information for a variety of audiences by:

1. Engaging learners in ongoing analysis of and reflection on the quality, usefulness, and accuracy of curated resources.
2. Formulating tasks that help learners to integrate and depict in a conceptual knowledge network learners’ understanding gained from resources.
3. Making opportunities for learners to openly communicate curation processes for others to use, interpret, and validate. (AASL 2018, 50)

By every measure your school library can be an incredible hub of information based on your allocated funding. It begins with collaboration and analysis of the current state of your school library collection. What are the needs of

your learners? Have you obtained input from your learners and other stakeholders? Do current resources match your learners' needs?

When curating the school library collection consider learners who physically visit the library space; use online resources at school or at home; and have visual, hearing, physical, and cognitive impairments and need assistive technology. To meet the needs of all learners, school librarians should analyze their school library and collection for:

- Engaging interactive learning resources that support the curriculum
- Types of databases to support the curriculum
- Other materials that can be added to the school library space to support learners
- Digital tools available for learners to showcase their learning
- Open educational resources

Why should learners visit the school library?

Providing a safe place for learners in the library includes a quiet space for individuals, collaborative spaces for groups, and areas for whole-class learning opportunities. The library is a safe haven for learners in the school that seek personal time. Safe place considerations also include diversity in the collection and the belief of inclusiveness for learners.

When curating the school library collection school librarians must consider learners with visual, hearing, physical, and cognitive impairments. Learners need resources that allow them independence and the ability to participate in the learning process.

How can you transform learning via the resources you curate for the school library?

In this day and age a school library is more than just the books on a school library's shelves. School librarians should consider making room in their collection for makerspaces. Makerspaces can occupy a specific location in the library or have the flexibility of a mobile cart.

In addition, school librarians need access to the pre-eminent communication tools to engage with their communities about their collection. With the plethora of resources available, school librarians should consider the best digital communication tools to communicate with learners and educators about their school library collections.

Breakout boxes are another resource school librarians should consider when curating their collections. Breakout boxes involve solving a series of puzzles or problems collaboratively with a group of peers. They can support academic learning and social and emotional learning, or they can be used as a fun cooperative activity.

How can learners make connections using resources you curate for the library?

School librarians should curate databases for their school library and use them in their instruction. Databases provide learners with a vetted repository to teach critical information-literacy skills and provide learners with the skill set to evaluate resources online for academic research and personal use.

Digitization of resources is rapidly increasing. However, the cost of these resources can create a digital divide for learners. The advent of open educational resources helps level the playing field and create equity, eliminating the digital divide regarding cost.

Curation is no easy task and requires time, energy, and money. Even on the tightest of budgets school librarians can curate a digital collection to meet the needs of all learners. Curation is at the heart of every school library. Successful school libraries include many stakeholders. By providing learners with thriving, vibrant school libraries, we are preparing them to be participants in their own learning now and in the future.

Schenell Agee has worked in the field of librarianship for more than sixteen years. She currently serves as the supervisor of library media programs and research with Prince William County Public Schools in Virginia. She earned a Master's of Library of Information Science from the University of Southern Mississippi and a Master's of Education in Education Leadership from George Mason University. She is a member of AASL and currently serves as the author co-chair for the AASL National Conference Committee.

Works Cited:

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