

KNOWLEDGE QUEST



GRADUATING INFORMATION- AND MEDIA-LITERATE STUDENTS

Journal of the American Association of School Librarians

VOLUME 50, NO. 2 | November/December 2021 | ISSN 1094-9046 | www.aasl.org

American Association of School Librarians, a division of the American Library Association

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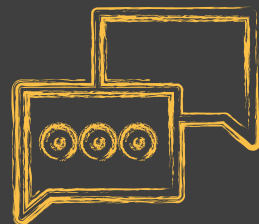
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Knowledge Quest is read by building-level school librarians, supervisors, library educators, and others concerned with the development of school libraries and school library services in elementary and secondary schools.

Indexing and Abstracting
Knowledge Quest is indexed in *Academic Abstracts/CD-ROM*; *Book Review Index*; *Current Contents*; *Social & Behavioral Sciences*; *Current Index to Journals in Education*; *Exceptional Child Education Abstracts*; *Information Science* and *CSA Illumina*.

School Library Research, AASL's online research journal, can be accessed at <www.ala.org/aasl/slr>.

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Ultimately, in many ways and across disciplines, what we want for our students is to know that they are capable of responsible decision-making.

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Knowledge Quest (ISSN 1094-9046) is published bimonthly September through May by the American Library Association (ALA), 225 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601, <www.ala.org/aasl>. It is the official publication of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of ALA. Subscription price to members of AASL, \$20 a year, included in membership dues; to nonmembers, \$65 in U.S., \$75 in foreign countries. Single copies \$15 from ALA. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, Illinois, and at additional mailing offices.

Change of address notices and subscription inquiries should be sent to the Subscription Dept., ALA, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Knowledge Quest*, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1300, Chicago, IL 60601.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

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We need to teach media literacy as explicitly as we teach decoding so that our learners understand how to filter the disinformation and cite their sources. And it should be taught across all content areas.

Weaving Media Literacy into Content-Area Instruction

Jennisen Lucas, 2021–2022 AASL President | jennisenlucas@park6.org

I was at a doctor's appointment when the nurse asked me what I did for a living. I said, proudly, "I am a school librarian." Her response was predictable. "Oh. How nice. It must be great to read to kids all day." Inwardly I did a face-palm and allowed myself to think up a snarky response. Outwardly I kept my composure and answered, "That is an amazing part of the job, but it is way more challenging to teach them how to identify reliable websites." This exchange began a decade-long conversation about the importance of school librarians. Now the questions when I go in are, "Are you really still the only librarian in the school district? When are they going to fix that?"

We all have stories to share relating to media literacy. Some are cringe-worthy, like the person on Twitter who argued with me that we don't need school librarians because "anyone can teach what you do." Others make you wonder, like the teacher who commented, "Better you than me" when I shared a media bias chart (www.adfontesmedia.com) with his middle school class.

Media literacy is a challenging topic that delves into political topics and discussions that many would rather not touch with a ten-foot pole. It also comes with many assumptions about who knows what. Adults assume others are media literate because we have been consuming and deciphering media for

years. There is an assumption that children born in the Internet Era have an innate knowledge of all things digital, including media literacy, which can make us reticent to teach them media literacy. However, we need to teach media literacy as explicitly as we teach decoding so that our learners understand how to filter the disinformation and cite their sources. And it should be taught across all content areas.

Today's media landscape is harder than when I was a kid. I vaguely remember teachers (I didn't have school librarians) occasionally sharing *Weekly Reader* articles about how we can't trust everything we see on TV, especially commercials: that sugary cereal really isn't good for you and can only be part of a well-balanced breakfast if you also have everything else shown on the screen: eggs, fruit, toast, and milk. It was up to us to sort out the subtle (or not so subtle) media messages; for example, we were left on our own to contemplate how buying a certain kind of jeans will make you cool or how a toy is for boys because there are no girls in the commercial.

Moving beyond the obviously targeted commercials from my youth, media literacy is so much more vitally important now because these subliminal messages are hidden in everything we read or hear, including the news. Anchors on the nightly news used to embody the high ideals of journalistic ethics and did their

School librarians are experts in how to work media literacy skills (weft) into the pattern of the content area (warp) to help learners create their own educational weaving. Through this focus of weaving media literacy into content areas, we teach the skills our youth need to become truly media-literate, life-long learners.

best to tell us the who, what, when, where, and how of the events without indulging in speculation. Today's twenty-four-hour news cycle often relies on interpretations of "why," causing viewer confusion about the who, what, when, where, and how. "Experts" are called upon, but they give opinions cleverly disguised as facts. Different news stations share different interpretations of events, often based on viewer rating data. Fact blurs into opinion, which is blurred into fact.

And then there are memes. I love a good meme. I laugh at them and share them with friends, just like anyone. My favorites are the ones that poke fun at everyday life. However, in the past week on Facebook, I saw a meme that said, "Imagine if you will...a world where every tweet and meme must be fact-checked, but not a ballot." The picture in the background was a black-and-white photo of a serious-looking man in a suit with an air of the old-time anchors you could trust.

Ballot-checking has become a serious issue in our country, but the truth is that ballots have always been checked. The irony of having this addressed in a meme about fact-checking memes did elicit a wry smile, but it also caused me a bit of anxiety regarding how many people would read the meme as a comment on how we are asked to fact-check everything except ballots. It sends a clear message about the importance of teaching media literacy. If a teacher or school librarian uses this meme to teach fact-checking, we run the risk of sharing our own political opinions, whether in the very sharing of the meme or the explanation of it.

During the summer I presented at both the International Association of School Librarianship

Conference and the National Association for Media Literacy Education Conference on weaving media literacy into content-area instruction by using the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. When weaving a rug on a loom, the first step is to warp the loom. The warp becomes the basic start of the rug, the part that will contain the weft. The warp is wound on in sections, which I think of as the general content areas: algebra, Earth science, British literature, health, art, etc. The individual strands would represent the content-area standards. The strands are hugely important, but they each follow their own path in a continuum. We need to be able to link them together, and to do that we use the weft of information, or media, literacy.

Teaching the AASL Standards embeds the process of making sense of information and allows learners to connect all content areas so that they can think about the economics of art or the governmental influence in British literature. School librarians are experts in how to work media literacy skills (weft) into the pattern of the content area (warp) to help learners create their own educational weaving. Through this focus of weaving media literacy into content areas, we teach the skills our youth need to become truly media-literate, life-long learners.

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This issue is replete with best practices, resources, and strategies to teach our students to be information, media, and digitally literate for life.

Strategies to Teach Students to Be Media Literate

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Today's media landscape is nothing short of challenging, with a relentless barrage of news and information on the global pandemic, disputed elections, social and political conflict, remote and hybrid learning, deep fakes, dangerous conspiracies, and the real-world consequences of misinformation and disinformation. States across the country have adopted standards focused on computer science over the last few years to prepare students for this technologically savvy society of algorithms, coding, system design, networking, and security. But recent events have highlighted the need for media standards and digital citizenship practices.

This issue is replete with best practices, resources, and strategies to teach our students to be information, media, and digitally literate for life.

Donna Mignardi, a school librarian from Calvert High School in Prince Frederick, Maryland, explains how to ensure students graduate with the skills necessary to be media literate in her article "Graduating Information- and Media-Literate Students." She offers tips that include teacher training with micro-credentials, constant modeling, bias awareness, and a robust curriculum. She

Recent events have highlighted the need for media standards and digital citizenship practices.

writes, "The critical thinking competencies needed for information and media literacy have to be integrated into daily learning."

In "The Social-Emotional Underpinnings of Our Information Literacy," Jacquelyn Whiting, an instructional coach and technology integrator at Brookfield Public Schools, writes how disinformation works by preying on our emotional vulnerabilities. The pandemic heightened our feelings of isolation and anxiousness, so "as we sought ways out of our isolation each distorted factoid was designed to lead us incrementally toward both extremism and belonging." Whiting asserts effective information literacy instruction hinges on the concomitant teaching of socio-emotional skills and development with our students.

Jim Belair and Nicole Waskie-Laura, two New York State School Library System Directors, explain how the New York State Computer Science and Digital Fluency Standards (CS/DF), in alignment with the *AASL Standards Framework for Learners*, "can serve as a useful tool to shift mindsets and promote the perception of school librarians as cutting-edge instructional leaders." They identify six alignments between the CS/DF standards (impacts of computing, computational thinking, networks and system design, cybersecurity, and digital citizenship) and school libraries (makerspaces, digital citizenship, inquiry, curation, literacy collaborations, and career readiness). The CS/DF standards help educators define the necessary skills students require to be successful and agile in a world of continuous change. The article gives samples of how leading school librarians can teach students these skills.

GRADE BAND	CS/DF STANDARD	LIBRARY APPLICATION
Elementary	<i>K–1 Network & Systems Designs: Hardware & Software</i> Identify ways people provide input and get output from computing devices.	The school librarian can help students investigate the ways individuals input information into a computing device, like a barcode, that results in output, like a student account or book record, to understand networks and system design.
Secondary	<i>7–8 Critical Thinking: Algorithms and Programming</i> Design, compare, and refine algorithms for a specific task or within a program.	The school librarian can instruct students in the use of Boolean algorithms to create powerful search strategies and to compare/contrast search results.

Table 1. Example alignment between CS/DF standards and school library lessons.

Of particular interest to school librarians are the position statements that define the intersection of media literacy within the various subject areas and education fields that identify ways to integrate media literacy education practices into existing curricula and lessons.

In “Gatekeeping Misinformation with Media Literacy Education,” Belinha De Abreu, PhD, details how educators help students understand social media’s role in the rise and spread of disinformation and the challenges societies face when relying on global companies to police themselves. She examines how media literacy allows students to understand how media works to “influence our thinking” and outlines practices to combat these influences from lateral reading to source evaluation. She cites the Center for Media Literacy’s “5 Key Questions of Media Literacy” as a foundational source to guide students’ thinking about information and recommends sites to combat misinformation from Poynter.org to Opensecrets.org.

Finally, Michelle Ciulla Lipkin, the executive director of the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), writes about the core principles of media literacy education and how NAMLE works to promote those principles through curated resources and Media Literacy Week. Of particular interest to school librarians are the position statements that define the intersection of media literacy within the various subject areas and education fields that identify ways to integrate media literacy education practices into existing curricula and lessons. These subject areas include early childhood education, science, social studies, math, English, journalism, and technology.

As you can see, the scope of these articles clarifies the school librarian’s vital role in ensuring students learn how to be critical consumers, producers, and communicators of information and knowledge as part of a democratic and dynamic society filled with possibility and opportunity.

Let’s get started!

Leanne Ellis is the school library coordinator for the New York City School Library System. She also manages the Destiny Library Catalog and the MyLibraryNYC Project with the three public library systems and delivers extensive professional development. She is a member of AASL and serves on the Knowledge Quest Editorial Board and is a blogger for the Knowledge Quest website.

FEATURE



GRADUATING INFORMATION- AND MEDIA-LITERATE STUDENTS

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Twenty years ago, as an introduction activity to an information literacy lesson, I may have held up a tabloid and a popular magazine to start a discussion on credibility and reliability. The questions I wanted students to answer were: who said it, why did they say it, do they have the authority to say it, and can this information be verified. We want students to answer the same questions when reviewing information and media today; however, answering those questions is more complicated. The abundance of information and media sources—some factual, some not—can make it difficult to find trustworthy and reliable information.

Students are continually exposed to news and information from multiple media resources. The competencies our students need to make good decisions with the information they are exposed to need to be taught, modeled, and practiced continually.

Teacher Training

In addition to school librarians, classroom teachers need to hold students to a continued expectation of information and news literacy

practices. To do this it is important that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of information and media literacy.

When teachers are locating a mentor text to use with a lesson, they need to make sure that they have used their literacy skills to locate the resource and always explain to the students how they located it and why they selected that particular resource to use in class. This will mean providing professional development for teachers and administrators.

It is important that there is professional development for not just teachers but administrators. We need to broaden the understanding of media literacy for all stakeholders. Not everyone has the same level of understanding of what media literacy is. New teachers' knowledge and training on media literacy can differ from that of veteran teachers. To have consistent expectations and teaching strategies we need a consistent understanding of media literacy. According to Tracy McNelly and Jessica Harvey, a teacher's knowledge of media literacy determines their confidence and

likelihood of integrating media literacy into instruction. Teacher training should demonstrate relevancy to their content areas and be ongoing. We do not want this training to be just another pre-service experience (2021). UNESCO considers teachers the gateway to literate societies and offers free information and media literacy curriculum for teachers (n.d.).

In our district we have been working on creating micro-credentials for teacher mastery of media literacy competencies. Micro-credentialing offers a structured approach for flexible learning and provides a way to track learned competencies. Using online coursework and micro-credentials is one way to have teachers take ownership of their learning on their own time. (If you are interested in learning more about micro-credentials see the National Education Association's offerings and information for micro-credentials at www.nea.org/professional-excellence/professional-learning/micro-credentials.)

As a district we offer both synchronous and self-paced professional

THE COMPETENCIES OUR STUDENTS
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PRACTICED CONTINUALLY.

learning opportunities. Using our district's learning management system, Schoology, learning opportunities can be easily offered. Depending on the amount of hours spent learning, teachers also have the opportunity to earn continuing professional development credit.

Bias Awareness

When it comes to instructing students on media literacy, bias awareness is something that is harder to teach and model. We all have emotional reactions to information, and it is difficult not to immediately gravitate to affirming information. Even discerning users of information need to not let disinformation and emotion manipulate their critical response to what they read, view, and hear. Providing students with an understanding of implicit and explicit bias and the strategies to seek out truth will help to avoid echo chambers and filter bubbles (see sidebar).

When instructing students on reviewing media sources, consider the following strategies:

- Pause. Do not instantly respond to messages. Recognize your emotions; be aware of those immediate emotional reactions and objectively look at the facts.
- Pause. Evaluate the position of the source.
- Pause. Fact-check the information.

We want our students to ask questions, to be skeptical fact-checkers. We need to teach our students how to laterally search and check facts. Before reading vertically students should automatically open one or more browser tabs and check facts and evaluate an author's or an organization's authority and perspective. At one time we directed our students to the "About" page of a

DEFINING BIAS, ECHO CHAMBERS, AND FILTER BUBBLES

Bias is our attitudes and behaviors that can influence our responses/actions towards a person, group, or issue. **Implicit bias** is bias we may not even be aware of. This can be unintentional but still affect our decisions and behaviors. Bias we are aware of is often referred to as **explicit bias**.

An **echo chamber** is an online environment in which we are exposed only to information and beliefs that reflect our own. This echo of information and misinformation makes it more difficult for us to understand viewpoints that differ from our own.

A **filter bubble** is a type of echo chamber based on an algorithm in which we are exposed to opinions and information that confirm existing beliefs. Internet algorithms keep track of our search behavior, our shopping, clicks, and likes and filter the information retrieved by showing you content that you will most likely consume. Stories that will appeal to us will take priority on our feeds. This filtering of information is limiting our exposure to beliefs and ideas that differ from our own.



A SCHOOL LIBRARIAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE CURRICULUM AND LEADERSHIP ROLE IN ADVOCATING FOR A ROBUST CURRICULUM PROMOTE EASIER DISCUSSION AND COLLABORATION WITH CLASSROOM TEACHERS.



website/resource. "About" pages can easily be contrived and misleading. We want our students do develop a research stamina that have them willing to not take the first easy answer. Students need to go beyond the first few results and to not trust that a search engine will put the most reliable results first.

Creating a Robust Curriculum

Teaching media literacy includes digital literacy, information literacy, news literacy, visual literacy, and

digital citizenship (Media Literacy Now n.d.). These literacies overlap and are not taught in isolation. They are reflected in many of the Shared Foundations from AASL's *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*:

- The **Curate Shared Foundation** asks our students to identify an information need, identify appropriate resources to answer the information need, and make good choices about the sources to use.
- The **Inquire Shared Foundation** asks our students to build new knowledge by thinking critically and developing strategies to address the need for new knowledge.
- The **Engage Shared Foundation** asks our students to create and share new knowledge safely and ethically.
- In the **Include and Collaborate Shared Foundations** we ask our students to interact with diverse perspectives and to develop new understandings.

Students also need to understand their emotional reactions to news media.



Students also need to understand their emotional reactions to news media. It is important that students understand how to respectfully acknowledge other viewpoints and not immediately discount viewpoints because they do not align with their own beliefs. Students need to be aware of the damage that can be caused by not fact-checking a media post. We need curriculum that can address the power of “likes” and educate our students on the implications of reacting to and forwarding on false information.

We need a robust curriculum that addresses the critical thinking skills necessary to be proficient in multiple literacies. And in conjunction with teacher training, we need curriculum that addresses how media and information literacy can be integrated and taught in multiple content areas.

There are many curriculum resources available to help schools and school librarians update their media literacy lessons:

- **The Explore Shared Foundation** tasks students with questioning possible misconceptions. (AASL 2018)
- **Common Sense Education** offers a wealth of curriculum resources to meet all the literacies at www.commonsense.org/education/news-media-literacy-resource-center.
- **UNESCO** provides resources for media and information literacy at www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/media-development/media-literacy/mil-as-composite-concept/. It also includes a “Media and Information Curriculum for Teachers” at www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/publications-and-communication-materials/publications/full-list/media-and-information-literacy-curriculum-for-teachers/.

As school librarians we want our students to be able to identify an information need, to be able to accurately answer that information need, and to communicate that information ethically and accurately. We want our students to ask questions and develop the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate through the multiple media messages in which they are constantly exposed.

- **The New York Times** has a series of videos that can be used to help high school students to recognize bias. It is available at www.nytimes.com/2017/03/15/learning/lesson-plans/25-mini-films-for-exploring-race-bias-and-identity-with-students.html.
- **Newseum** provides lessons and resources for teaching media literacy at https://newseumed.org/medialiteracy.
- **The National Association for Media Literacy Education** provides knowledge and resources for teaching media literacy at https://namle.net/. [To learn more about NAMLE and its media literacy resources read “Media Literacy Resources to Support Instruction across Content Areas” on page 16.]

A school librarian’s knowledge of the curriculum and leadership role in advocating for a robust curriculum promote easier discussion and collaboration with classroom teachers.

Removing Barriers

Time and competing demands for standardized testing preparation have been a barrier for school librarians and library instruction. However, school librarians are famous for not giving up and creating workarounds. When time is an issue how do we get students to the school library for literacy instruction and practice?

One short-term answer is that we go to the classrooms. We volunteer to teach/co-teach with teachers in their classroom. Since the pandemic and our recent immersion into teaching virtually we have embraced how-to videos. Creating videos and integrating interactive tools such as Edpuzzle and Kahoot allows us to teach anywhere anytime. Creating

THE CRITICAL THINKING COMPETENCIES NEEDED FOR INFORMATION AND MEDIA LITERACY HAVE TO BE INTEGRATED INTO DAILY LEARNING. A SPORADIC VISIT TO THE SCHOOL LIBRARY IS NOT ENOUGH.

lessons and videos that teachers can easily integrate into their classroom instruction allows school librarians to be everywhere and in every classroom.

Edpuzzle is a great platform to use for engaging students with videos. You can upload your own content or use already created content from platforms such as YouTube and Kahn Academy. Edpuzzle lets you insert questions and comments in videos and provides analytical data such as how long the learner spent watching the video. It is a free resource for teachers and students. The free version of Edpuzzle provides storage for up to twenty videos.

The critical thinking competencies needed for information and media literacy have to be integrated into daily learning. A sporadic visit to the school library is not enough. To prepare our students to be information and media literate we need long-term strategies, tools, and advocates.

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16 Knowledge Quest | Graduating Information- and Media-Literate Students

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As executive director of the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), I am often asked why I think media literacy is so important. I honestly can't think of anything *more* important than media literacy. Everything we believe, do, and aspire to is influenced by the media messages around us. Whether you care deeply about climate change or gun issues or the arts or even sports, media messages are impacting you every single day.

NAMLE is a national non-profit organization that works to make media literacy highly valued and widely practiced as an essential life skill in every school, library, community center, and home in our nation. We define media literacy as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication.

NAMLE curates media literacy resource lists that may be of interest to school librarians as they engage with students and teachers on instruction for various subject areas. For instance, we recently pulled together "Race, Equity, and Social Justice Resources" (<https://namle.net/race-equity-and-social-justice-resources/>) and "Fighting Misinformation about the Coronavirus" (<https://namle.net/fighting-misinformation-about-coronavirus/>).

In addition NAMLE published the *Core Principles of Media Literacy Education* in 2007. The core principles were written to articulate a common ground around which media literacy educators and advocates can coalesce. The core principles are:

- Media literacy education requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create.

- Media literacy education expands the concept of literacy to include all forms of media (i.e., reading and writing).
- Media literacy education builds and reinforces skills for learners of all ages. Like print literacy, those skills necessitate integrated, interactive, and repeated practice.
- Media literacy education develops informed, reflective, and engaged participants essential for a democratic society.
- Media literacy education recognizes that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization.
- Media literacy education affirms that people use their individual skills, beliefs, and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.

The core principles and their accompanying implications for practice are available for free on the NAMLE website at <https://namle.net/resources/core-principles/>.

Media Literacy Week and National Media Literacy Alliance

NAMLE is also the founder and organizer of the U.S. Media Literacy Week, now in its seventh year. Together participants elevate the importance of media literacy, advocate for its integration in formal and informal education, and raise the visibility of our community across the country and the globe. There are many ways for schools and school librarians to get involved in Media Literacy Week via the Media Literacy Week website at <https://medialiteracyweek.us/get-involved/participate/> whether you want to add a special lesson for your class, plan an event, or create a resource.

NAMLE often represents the education community in conversations with policy makers, government entities, corporations, and global media literacy groups to advocate for media literacy through networking and community building. An important new initiative in 2020 was the launch of the National Media Literacy Alliance, a network of leading education associations united in an effort to advance media literacy education as a necessary element of a complete twenty-first-century education (<https://namle.net/community/national-media-literacy-alliance/>). AASL is a founding member of the alliance, and AASL Executive Director Sylvia Knight Norton represents AASL in the alliance, working with other association leaders to ensure that learners have the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate the ever-expanding media landscape.

As part of the 2020 U.S. Media Literacy Week, the members of alliance released a set of position statements to demonstrate the value of media literacy education as a vital component of each of their respective disciplines. School librarians should explore the intersection of media literacy within the various subject areas and education fields and identify ways to integrate media literacy education practices into their existing curricula and lessons.

Media Literacy + Libraries.

School librarians equip learners to think critically, to question and synthesize information for accuracy and possible bias, and to develop the skills needed to curate all forms of information. The ability to decipher, gauge, and analyze information is necessary to an understanding of the importance of creating credible information to disseminate to others, ensuring savvy and

informed consumers as well as ethical creators of content/information.

Media Literacy + Early Childhood Education. Media literacy and early childhood education emphasize inquiry and critical thinking in the form of reasoning, questioning, self-reflection, and self-expression. Young learners are encouraged to engage with diverse media forms, explore storytelling, and engage in activities that help them understand what media is and that media is created by people and represents diverse perspectives.

Media Literacy + English Education. Media literacy education aims to teach students how to interpret media messages including the ability to understand how the message was constructed, who created the message and their intended audience, how the author wanted their audience to think, feel, or act, and how the information might have embedded points of views, ideologies, or representations. A deeper analysis of media messages, like the written word, will explore cultural, political, ideological, and socioeconomic implications.

Media Literacy + Journalism Education. Media literacy and journalism education have an overarching mission of helping students to think critically about

mediated messages and to be active participants in our democracy. Each discipline focuses on media, its construction, influence, and role in society with a particular emphasis on modes of storytelling, understanding sourcing, evaluating credibility, appreciating diversity, asking questions, being curious and reflective, and producing media.

Media Literacy + Mathematics Education. In order to be a responsible creator of information, students must develop the ability to formulate questions and collect, organize, and display data and engage in discussion and perspective taking to help develop connections and understandings. Further, each and every student should develop a deep mathematical understanding to be better positioned to understand and critique their world.

Media Literacy + Science Education. As part of being a consumer and producer of content in the modern media landscape, students must possess data analysis, problem solving, reasoning, and proof, and representation tools that significantly expand their capacity to model and interpret physical, social, and mathematical phenomena.

Media Literacy + Social Studies Education. There are many strong connections between media literacy

and the standards for social studies education especially through the C3 Framework and its Inquiry Arc. Social studies education recognizes that in order to be active media consumers and producers, students must be able to develop the skills necessary to critique and question claims, communicate one's ideas using diverse sources, provide evidence, identify target audiences, and take action both in and outside the classroom using digital technologies and social media.

Media Literacy + ISTE Standards. Media literacy and the ISTE Standards for Students empower young people to participate responsibly and actively online while critically examining digital resources, data, and media and support student innovation, collaboration, and creation. Both best serve students to be digital citizens when they are integrated across the curriculum throughout their academic career.

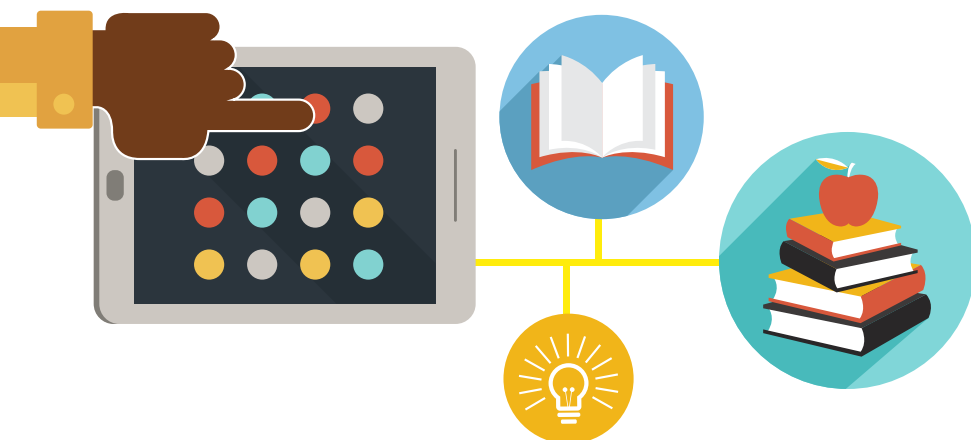
To read more, visit <https://medialiteracyweek.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Alliance-MLW-Statement.pdf>.



Michelle Ciulla

Lipkin is the executive director of the National Association for Media Literacy Education. She

launched the first ever Media Literacy Week in the U.S. and developed strategic partnerships with companies such as Thomson Reuters, Facebook, Twitter, and Nickelodeon. She is currently an adjunct lecturer at Brooklyn College where she teaches media literacy. Michelle was the recipient of the 2020 Global Media and Information Literacy Award given by UNESCO. In 2020 Michelle appeared in the documentary "Trust Me" from award-winning director Roko Belic as well as the PBS Documentary "Fake."



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The Social-Emotional Underpinnings

of Our Information Literacy

Jacquelyn Whiting | jacquelynwhiting@gmail.com

When it comes to the spread of disinformation we have lived through the perfect storm. The isolation of the pandemic and the depression induced by that isolation gave rise to a raw need for camaraderie and connection. Forced into digital spaces to work, teach, and learn, we spent increasing amounts of time in those spaces hoping to be entertained and distracted and informed—informed about the pandemic, about social upheaval, about the impending elections. We each weathered a news and information barrage, hoping not to drown, while simultaneously seeking comfort and security and some truth to which we could anchor ourselves as the world became increasingly chaotic and unpredictable.

Disseminators of disinformation prey upon us when we are in an agitated emotional state. Pre-pandemic, they created media that sought to ruffle, perturb, or unsettle us to boost our susceptibility to manipulation and disinformation. During the pandemic we existed in a constant state of disquietude; given that we were already emotionally aroused, we were primed to receive, believe, and share disinformation. As we sought ways out of our isolation each distorted factoid was designed to lead us incrementally toward both extremism and belonging. Many of us became entrenched in partisanship; others—a distressingly large minority at that—ended up caught in the fringes of conspiracy thinking.

And all of that could happen before 8 a.m. over a cup of coffee as we doom-scrolled our feeds. That we were worried about our students, our colleagues, our friends and family, and our own mental well-being during these extraordinary times was warranted. As we reflect on our teaching experiences during the pandemic, it is abundantly clear that accurate, cogently conveyed, and timely information is essential, especially when people's lives are in jeopardy. Our work building news and media literacy capacities in our learning communities is as essential as ever.

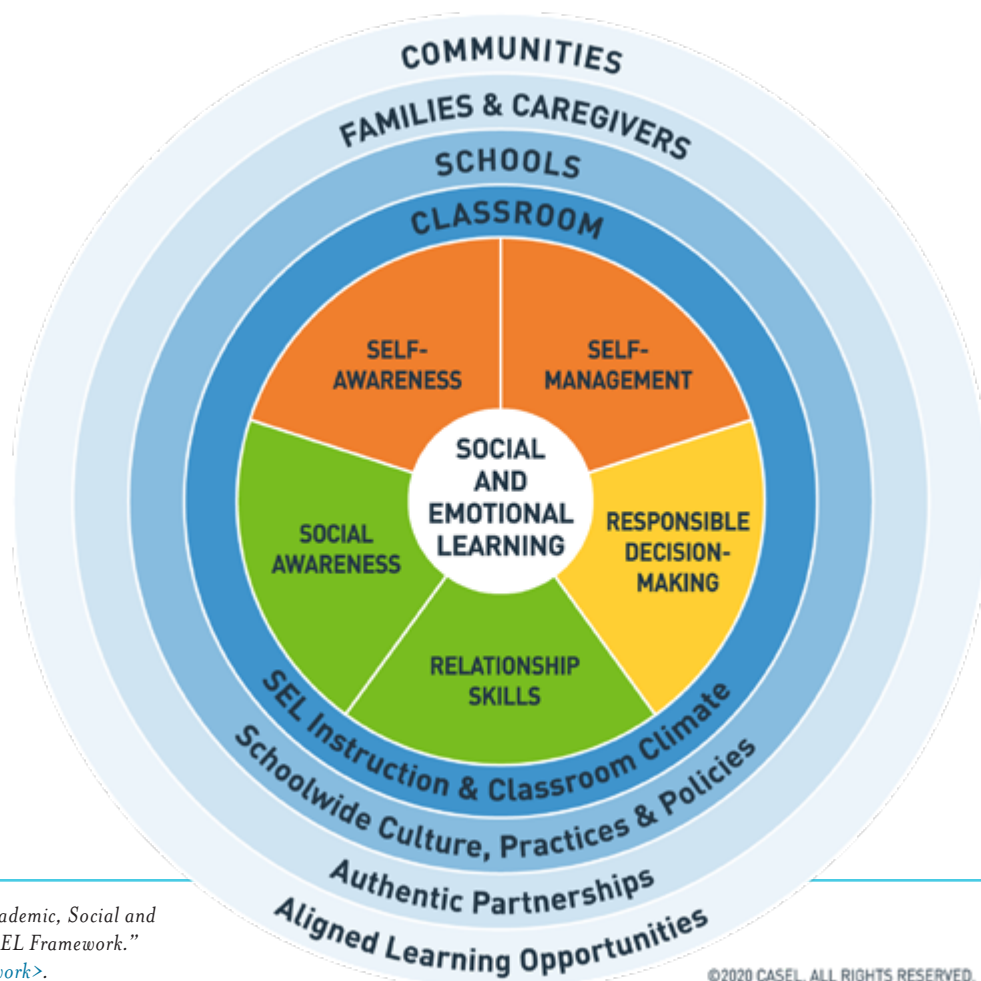


Figure 1. CASEL's "SEL Framework."

Source: Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning. n.d. "SEL Framework." <https://casel.org/sel-framework>.

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Lack of Information and Media Literacy Education

Writing for *The Atlantic*, Barbara Fister wondered why decades of information and media literacy education has not sufficiently equipped many (most?) of us with the skills to discern fact from lies and liars from credible journalistic institutions. Her assertion that information literacy belongs both everywhere and nowhere in a school's curriculum is sadly true. As Fister notes, when information and media literacy instruction is everyone's job and no one's responsibility, it gets watered down and marginalized, denying learners the opportunity to examine "how information flows through and across platforms that shape and are shaped by participatory audiences and influencers" (2021).

Fister's assertions are valid and troubling. In our efforts to build media-literate students we are one step (if not more) behind the evolution of tech and its influence on the dissemination of information and our interactions with that information. Furthermore, while most of our students are not the influencers Fister references, they are the participatory audience. And because "these systems are social, influenced by the biases and assumptions of the humans who create and use them" (Fister 2021) it is critical we help our students develop social-emotional competencies.

Developing Social-Emotional Competencies

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is comprised of thought leaders on social-emotional (SEL) development. Its mission is to support the implementation of evidence-based social and emotional learning in PreK–12 schools, and its

wheel of SEL competencies can be a roadmap for information literacy instruction.

Amid our reckoning with our history and the institutional structures of inequity that have developed and engrained over decades if not centuries, our students' abilities to self-regulate and to function constructively as members of a community are keys to truth and reconciliation.

Development of the inward-looking competencies, self-awareness and self-management, enables students to grow interpersonally in terms of their social awareness and relationship skills. The development of these four competencies then inclines them to the fifth competency: responsible decision-making. Let's explore the connections between each of these competencies and a student's susceptibility to media influence and disinformation.

Self-awareness is described by CASEL as understanding your "emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts" (n.d.). When students (and adults) recognize that their actions, choices, and attitudes are directly connected to their emotional state, they can then see how media is sometimes designed

to—and can—inflame them. They have examined the origins of their biases and the implicit impact those perspectives and perceptions have on their information access. Furthermore they recognize that engaging in media when inflamed can lead to overstimulation, insufficient critical consideration, impulsivity, and overreaction.

This process of reflection dovetails with self-management, the ability to recognize and moderate "emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations" including while researching, consuming news, perusing social media, etc. (n.d.). The development of self-awareness and self-management is a source of agency when it comes to goal setting and attainment and ultimately a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. Having and exerting agency over how, when, and why we act upon information stimulation is key to avoiding manipulation and consciously not participating in perpetuating disinformation.

The Effects of Misinformation

Ironically, the perception of agency despite its absence is a hallmark of those most misdirected by the false media they consume, according to Fister. "Those who spend their time in the library of the unreal have an abundance of something that is scarce in college classrooms: information agency. One of the powers they feel elites have tried to withhold from them is the ability to define what constitutes knowledge. They don't simply distrust what the experts say; they distrust the social systems that create expertise. They take pleasure in claiming expertise for themselves, on their own terms" (2021).

Whether the goal of those who create and distribute misinformation is to enrage us or isolate us or divide us or drive us to action, these dissemi-

A Tool to Help Develop SEL & Media Literacy Skills



Project Zero from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education offers the “Thinking Routine Toolkit,” which is quite useful when engaging students in this work. The routines are adaptable to any discipline area and age group. They simultaneously invite critical thinking and self-reflection. It can be accessed at <www.pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines>.

A few noteworthy routines from the toolkit when it comes to building SEL competencies in the context of information literacy are:

- » ***“True for Who?”***
- » ***“Tug for Truth”***
- » ***“Circle of Viewpoints”***
- » ***“Stories”***

School librarians can stretch students’ ability to understand how systems work and the impact individual components or members of a system have on the health of the whole system with the “Parts, People, Interactions” routine.

Students’ text analysis skills can be expanded to include visual material with the “See, Think, Make, Discuss” routine and the “Values, Identities, Actions” routine.

nators of misinformation are, in a macro sense, trying to affect the social structure of our lives. The net effect is that communication and relationships are breaking down. People are declaring on social media that they are unfriending and unfollowing people who hold views in opposition to their own. Fake news has become an invective hurled with the intention of shutting down dialogue. Those who champion the marginalized are now dismissed and demonized as “cancel culture.”

Amid our reckoning with our history and the institutional structures of inequity that have developed and engrained over decades if not centuries, our students’ abilities to self-regulate and to function constructively as members of a community are keys to truth and reconciliation. Read that again. We need to have truth in order to have reconciliation.

It’s as though these disingenuous content creators have studied the CASEL wheel and set out to disrupt each competency.

With our social interactions so manipulated and distorted, our students’ development of healthy relationship skills is in jeopardy.

Self-Awareness and Community Membership

Once a person has developed self-awareness and the ability to self-regulate, the next phase of social-emotional development is about community membership, beginning with social awareness. CASEL defines social awareness as the ability “to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts. This includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports” (n.d.). This competency seems to be the very thing disinformation is intent on eviscerating.

In his analysis of the goals of Russian disinformation spread via social media, professor Steven Wilson of Brandeis University said, “The campaigns exploit existing political fault lines like race and regionalism to increase polarization and disaffection with the political system. The complete lack of a coherent message across these campaigns is jarring until one realizes that the goal of the campaigns is not necessarily to convince anyone of anything, but rather to generate noise” (2020). Noise that polarizes, that disrupts thoughtful conversation, that breaks down relationships.

With our social interactions so manipulated and distorted, our students’ development of healthy relationship skills is in jeopardy. Part of healthy relationships is being able “to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups” (CASEL n.d.). As misinformation,

algorithms, and the systems of information coax us increasingly into separate, non-communicative ideological camps, we lose the capacities necessary to:

- communicate clearly,
- listen authentically,
- work collaboratively,
- problem solve,
- negotiate conflict,
- navigate differing social and cultural demands and opportunities,
- recognize the need for and offer help

And here’s the rub: those are the future-ready skills that our students’ future employers say are so important and valued across workplaces and service centers in any field. These are the skills that our students need if we really want to heal from our history and its legacy.

Ultimately, in many ways and across disciplines, what we want for our students is to know that they are capable of responsible decision-making. That throughout their lives they “make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.” That they “consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and...evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being” (CASEL n.d.). Their willingness and ability to be such a community member and global citizen hinges on their information access and vice versa.

Conclusion

The following story was relayed by Andrew Marantz, author of *Antisocial: Online Extremists, Techno-Utopians and The Hijacking of the American Conversation*, during an interview on NPR's *TED Radio Hour*. As you read, look for the feeling words. Look for the phrases that underscore social-emotional needs and skills.

I talked a lot with one young woman who grew up in New Jersey, and then after high school, she moved to a new place. And suddenly, she just felt alienated and cut off and started retreating into her phone. She found some of these spaces on the Internet where people would post the most shocking, heinous things. And she found this stuff really off-putting but also kind of engrossing.

This is our call to action. The social-emotional development of our students is our shared responsibility because everything else hinges on it.

She started interacting with people in these online spaces, and they made her feel smart. They made her feel validated. She started feeling a sense of community, started wondering if maybe some of these shocking memes might actually contain a kernel of truth. A few months later, she was in a car with some of her new Internet friends headed to Charlottesville, Va., to march with torches in the name of the white race. She'd gone, in a few months, from Obama supporter to fully radicalized white supremacist. (2020)

And there it is. At the root of her experience with manipulation through misinformation, emotional vulnerability ultimately trumped her initial skepticism and made way for her to accept increasingly outrageous ideas and engage in radical and violent behavior.

This is our call to action. The social-emotional development of our students is our shared responsibility because everything else hinges on it. Self-aware students, engaged in healthy relationships, seeking to make a positive impact on their communities will demand systems of information that are fair, honest, credible, and equitable.



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Schools in Brookfield, Connecticut. She is the information literacy editor for School Library Connection and authored five essays with lesson material that were published on the SLC website. She also authored the 2021 article "The Key to Better Student Engagement Is Letting Them Show You How They Learn," the 2019 article "Everyone Has Invisible Bias. This Lesson Shows Students How to Recognize It," and the 2019 article "Here's What

Happened When Students Solved Social Media Problems with Design Thinking" on EdSurge. She is a Google Certified Coach and a Google Certified Innovator. She authored the book *Student-Centered Learning by Design* (2021) and was a co-author for the book *News Literacy: The Keys to Combating Fake News* (2018). She was awarded the Connecticut Educator's Computer Association Educator Award for "students solving problems of social media" in 2019 and the Connecticut Association of School Librarians' Carlton W.H. Erickson Award for an auspicious beginning in media services in 2017. She is a member of AASL.

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Gatekeeping Misinformation with Media Literacy Education

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Misinformation and disinformation are a growing symptom of the lack of media and information literacy among the general public. These problems have grown exponentially because of social media use. Despite the protests of many social network owners, it is a fact that people are obtaining, aggregating, and dispersing misinformation regularly on these sites.

Facebook has more than 2.8 billion monthly users worldwide (Gramlich 2021). It is the social media site most frequented by people of all ages. Twitter comes in a close second with 290.5 million monthly active users worldwide. Further, the company has projected that it will have 340 million users by 2024 (Tankovksa 2021). We use these social media sites to share and communicate with friends and family, but these platforms are also being utilized by many to misguide and misdirect people.

As educators, we are faced with mis/disinformation via these platforms on a daily basis. The rapid spread of this mis/disinformation over the past several years demonstrates the absolute imperative for critical thinking and critical discourse regarding media consumption and media literacy.

Media literacy education provides multiple perspectives and voices to inform students' views on different subjects.

Media literacy instruction is more than just assessing information sources. It also involves assessing where we get our information.

The Necessity for Media Literacy Education

Engaged learning should be an exchange of ideas and not limited to one idea or one form of thinking. Media literacy education provides multiple perspectives and voices to inform students' views on different subjects. Including media literacy education principles in a school's curriculum offers students the opportunity to engage in conversations that are sometimes uncomfortable but essential in order for everyone to hear and learn from different individuals.

Educating students on how to find answers to their questions and how to find resources that provide valid information is integral to media literacy instruction. It involves engaging learners at the platform level and teaching them how media works to influence our thinking. Information literacy experts such as school librarians have been providing this type of instruction for years.

Media literacy instruction can begin with the simple process of educators and school librarians providing students with multiple references and resources to access and review. This starting point can happen when students are doing research or during their everyday searching online. Access and evaluation are key concepts for media and information literacy. They address the question of "Who is omitted from the message?" and "How might different people experience this message from me?"

The Center for Media Literacy's "Five Key Questions of Media Literacy" have always been fundamental to the development of my own curricular work and can be used by school librarians and educators in their media literacy education:

1. All media messages are constructed.
 - a) Who created this message?
2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.
 - a) What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. Different people experience the same media message differently.
 - a) How might different people understand this message differently than me?
4. Media have embedded values and points of view.
 - a) What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.
 - a) Why is this message being sent? (2005)

Each of these questions asks students to probe deeper into what they are accepting at face value from their social media platforms. At the same time they provide a simple way to engage in difficult dialogue about various issues and topics.

What Bias?

Media literacy instruction is more than just assessing information sources. It also involves assessing where we get our information. Many people live in echo chambers that propagate their own views. These echo chambers have helped to create a polarized society that is reluctant to engage with those with opposing views. This is why it is vitally important that bias be taught and understood by students.

Bias is defined as “a natural inclination for or against an idea, object, group, or individual. It is often learned and is highly dependent on variables like a person’s socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, educational background, etc.” (Psychology Today n.d.). However, bias can be broken down even more to explain how we fall prey to information—true and false.

Instructing students on the differences between cognitive bias and confirmation bias helps them wade through misinformation and disinformation. Cognitive bias has to do with how the brain receives information. The more popular an item is, the more our brains fall into repetitive patterns in order to believe the popular piece of information over a second piece of information—even if the second is the credible one.

As we work through elements of stories in our feeds, the algorithms in the social media platforms begin to follow our choices and begin directing data to what they believe

we want to read or view. These algorithms allow for the simplification of information processing, but not differentiation. It is also why algorithms work so well in finding the gaps and niches that we focus on when we are online. This cognitive manipulation lends itself to confirmation bias, especially if the algorithms in our social media networks are feeding what they think we believe. We do not notice that the same information is repeated back to us, and/or we don’t activate our brains to search for different thought processes or viewpoints.

Confirmation bias corroborates existing beliefs, which plays into why people can become so polarized in their thinking. When information adds to the bias then it adds to partiality and the cherry picking of information. This process can limit our thinking and make people less media literate. As Eli Pariser notes in his book *The Filter Bubble*:

Consuming information that conforms to our ideas of the world is easy and pleasurable; consuming information that challenges us to think in new ways or question our assumptions is frustrating and difficult. (2011, 88)

People are choosing to read the same media outlets that reinforce their beliefs, which has resulted in those very same echo chambers. Asking people to step out of their comfort zones of how they obtain information is difficult, especially when they are resistant to even considering

Media literacy is the purposeful push to see that more exists and there are other versions of the story.

other perspectives. Yet, the fact that people are confined to these echo chambers demonstrates exactly why media literacy education is so vital. Media literacy is the purposeful push to see that more exists and there are other versions of the story. As David E. McGraw notes in his book *Truth in Our Times*:

Power news organizations undoubtedly shape public opinion, but it is complicated. We all bring our own filters to what we read, and we form our own opinions about what we read based on—pick as many as you want—our existing bias, our station in life, how critically we read a particular story, what we’re hearing from those around us, and what we’re reading elsewhere in a media environment that is saturated with alternative news sources. (2019, 85)

It is important that we consider what we are receiving from the media and critically think about it in a way that allows for us to process the information, verify it through a variety of sources (even ones we do not agree with), and then determine validity. This is lateral thinking at its best and is something that we need to emphasize with our students.

Grappling Globally

As media technologies continue to expand in scope and reach, how we educate students about the role of media in their daily lives increasingly

We do not notice that the same information is repeated back to us, and/or we don’t activate our brains to search for different thought processes or viewpoints.

incorporates more global perspectives. On a global scale, our world has been tipped upside down by the amount of information that is manipulated, misrepresented, and distributed daily. Digital companies have been put in the position of figuring out the difference between censorship and hate speech. Some of these companies are being called out for normalizing the spread of misinformation whether about elections or vaccination information. More countries are demanding that social media outlets take responsibility via fines and new laws that hold them accountable. It's just a matter of time before the United States is put in the position of demanding the same while balancing accusations of censorship.

Further, biometrics, data privacy, and algorithmic injustice are beginning to be part of the social media conversation. All these elements are an essential part of media literacy education as they require questioning how information has been gathered, produced, and decided. Consider how fast information is moving and how we are already faced with the challenge

It is important that we consider what we are receiving from the media and critically think about it in a way that allows for us to process the information, verify it through a variety of sources (even ones we do not agree with), and then determine validity.

SOURCES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

- **Critical Literacy Project:**
<www.dilectae.com>
 - The Critical Literacy Project connects critical thinking to literacy in order to empower the individual to make independent decisions for the good of society. It works with Parlay in developing a learning lab and other techniques.
- **Critical Media Project:**
<<https://criticalmediaproject.org>>
 - Critical Media Project is a free media literacy web resource for educators and students (ages 8–21) that enhances young people's critical thinking and empathy and builds on their capacities to advocate for change around questions of identity.
- **International Council for Media Literacy:**
<www.ic4ml.org>
 - The International Council for Media Literacy offers programs, policy recommendations, publications, and dissemination of research and practice across fields to stimulate critical conversations and deepen media education.
- **KQED Media Literacy Innovators:**
<www.kqed.org/education/teacher-ambassador-program>
 - School librarians and educators collaborate with KQED to create and share the best professional development and classroom resources on media literacy; advocate for media literacy; empower student voice and youth civic engagement; integrate media analysis and media-making skills into classrooms; and share their skills with colleagues to enhance teaching and learning in both face-to-face and virtual settings.
- **Media Smarts:**
<<https://mediasmarts.ca/mlw-themes>>
 - This Canadian not-for-profit charitable organization for digital and media literacy has been developing digital and media literacy programs and resources since 1996. It supports adults with information and tools so they can help children and teens develop the critical thinking skills they need to interact with the media.
- **PBS Media Literacy Educator Certification by KQED:**
<<https://edu-landing.kqed.org/certification/>>
 - PBS and KQED offer media literacy micro-credentials for free via the Digital Promise platform. Teachers, coaches, and librarians are all encouraged to apply.

SITES FOR FIGHTING FAKE NEWS



<www.opensecrets.org>



<www.factcheck.org>



<www.poynter.org>

of finding truth among misinformation. Data production and collection is a part of that cycle of misinformation because it pushes people into filter bubbles without their knowledge, further limiting the lateral way of looking and studying information. These issues are still in development around the world. Monitoring the content produced by global companies must take on greater importance as our dependence on the digital marketplace increases.

Sites for Fighting Fake News

Many nonprofit and news-funded organizations today are promoting rubrics or checklists to evaluate the validity of stories such as the News Literacy Project. These tools are great starting points, but not always the best way to verify information. Other organizations have developed their own methods for detecting whether a news story is true or false and are more comprehensive as they dig deeper into the individual elements of the story and demonstrate how information was gathered and how to verify its veracity. Here are just a few to consider:

Opensecrets: <www.opensecrets.org>. This site is all about following the money. It points out the connections among political contributions, lobbying data, and government policy. It works to produce and disseminate information on money in politics to inform and engage Americans, advocate for transparency, and expose disproportionate or undue influence on public policy.

Factcheck.org: <www.factcheck.org>. This site is a nonpartisan, nonprofit consumer advocate for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. It monitors the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. politicians to increase public knowledge and understanding. The site is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania.

Poynter: <www.poynter.org>. This journalism site is guided by fairness and transparency and offers a weekly newsletter on fact-checking and accountability. Its mission is to provide excellent journalism and public awareness necessary for an informed electorate and a strong democracy. The site offers a training

platform to teach those who manage, edit, produce, program, report, write, blog, photograph, and design news platforms, whether they belong to news organizations or work as independent entrepreneurs.

Snopes: <snopes.com>. Snopes is the most well-known site for debunking the latest rumors, urban legends, myths, and misinformation. Its work has been described as painstaking, scholarly, and reliable. It is the site used the most in many classrooms, whether with pre-service teachers, school librarians, or general educators. The system of delivery is well thought out and includes labels that identify items as True, Mostly True, Mixture, Mostly False, False, Unproven, Outdated, Miscaptioned, Correct Attribution, Misattributed, Scam, and Urban Legend (De Abreu 2019). However, it is important to note that it has recently been in the news because its co-founder plagiarized dozens of articles for Snopes ("Prominent Fact-Checker Snopes Apologizes for Plagiarism" 2021). As evidenced by this event, false information is marketable business. It is also a detriment to our society.



<snopes.com>



<www.firstdraftnews.org>

First Draft: <www.firstdraftnews.org>. This organization works to empower society with the knowledge, understanding, and tools needed to deal with false and misleading information. It brings together a global network of journalists to investigate and verify emerging stories among many of its other projects. Its newsletter is noteworthy as it provides readers with a wider lens on the news stories that have been falsified.

There are many other notable sources and programs that are contributing to the work of media literacy education such as the Critical Media Project, News Literacy Project, Critical Literacy Project, KQED Media Literacy Innovators, and the International Council for Media Literacy.

In the end, media literacy education as an aide to gatekeeping misinformation requires growth and persistence as the role of technology and social media will continue to be a fundamental part of our society. As such, media literacy educators are necessary, whether in the form of information specialists, school librarians, civics teachers—the work needs all of us.

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PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN FUTURE

How School Librarians Can Integrate Computer Science Standards into the Curriculum



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Gone are the days of Marian the Librarian, the physical card catalogue, and reading on the job. Yet, for many school leaders, community members, and even colleagues, these unshakable perceptions of the school librarian remains. So what do we do? How do we change this view of librarianship to better match the reality of our work?

One potential path is to increase our explicit connections with broad, recognizable initiatives, like digital fluency and computer science. The New York State Computer Science and Digital Fluency (CS/DF) Standards, in alignment with the *AASL Standards Framework for Learners*, can serve as a useful tool to shift mindsets and promote the perception of librarians as cutting-edge instructional leaders.

The New York State CS/DF Standards, while recently adopted, have been in the making for several years. In 2018 the New York State Education Department convened an authoring workgroup and review panel to begin drafting new standards focused on computer science and digital fluency for PreK–12. The standards were intended to prepare students for life in a technology-rich world, with equity, access, interdisciplinary connections, coherence, and relevance/engagement serving as the guiding principles for development.

The standards were drafted and reviewed by teachers, school librarians, administrators, professors, content experts, early-learning experts, consultants, and parents and were released for widespread stakeholder review. Following a robust revision process, the standards were approved in December 2020; full implementation is anticipated for September 2024 (New York State Ed. Dept. 2020).

The standards are organized into five conceptual areas, with subconcepts in each area:

- **Impacts of computing** focuses on the reciprocal impacts between computing and individuals, communities, and culture at a local, national, and global scale. Subconcepts within this area include societal impacts, the ethics of computing, accessibility considerations, and computer science career paths.
- **Computational thinking** focuses on underlying programming concepts, including algorithms, variables, abstraction, decomposition, data analysis, modeling, and simulation.
- **Networks and system design** delves into cloud computing, data, connectivity, and the function of hardware and software.
- **Cybersecurity** explores risks, safeguards, and actions related to keeping our data and resources secure.
- **Digital literacy** empowers learners to fluently access, use, create, and share digital information.

Each of the conceptual areas are further broken down into grade-level bands: Kindergarten to first grade, second to third grade, fourth to sixth grade, seventh to eighth grade, and ninth to twelfth grade. At the elementary level, the standards are designed to be embedded across the curriculum. At the secondary level, students have the opportunity to deeply explore digital technologies, computer programming, and the role they play in society. The standards are intended to develop digitally savvy students who can adapt to the constantly evolving technologies they will encounter in their school, work, and life.

The New York State CS/DF Standards are one model of many that can serve as a launching point for infusing computer science principles into school library instruction and programs. This past June a group of New York School Library Systems Directors collaboratively reviewed the CS/DF standards and brainstormed ways that school libraries can lead and support implementation—not just in the realm of digital literacy, but across all five conceptual areas. As a result of the brainstorming and debriefing process, six potential alignment areas between the CS/DF standards and an effective school library emerged: makerspaces, digital citizenship, inquiry, curation, literacy collaborations, and career readiness. Within these categories, there are clear connections to the AASL Shared Foundations. As you examine the CS/DF standards or similar standards in your state, we encourage you to use the examples below as inspiration for further connections with your school library.

Makerspaces

School libraries across the world have embraced makerspaces because they offer opportunities for hands-on learning, inquiry, problem-solving, and exploration. The makerspace movement aligns with the Explore Shared Foundation from the AASL Standards as school librarians encourage students to “discover and innovate in a growth mindset developed through experience and reflection” (AASL 2018). As school librarians, we have the opportunity to provide our students with access to maker resources, instruction on the use of various tools, and space to investigate, iterate, and create.

The makerspaces we create in our school libraries can vary widely. For example, we may gather materials for students to engage

GRADE BAND	CS/DF STANDARD	LIBRARY APPLICATION
Elementary	<i>K–1 Computational Thinking: Abstraction and Decomposition</i> Identify a problem or task and discuss ways to break it into multiple smaller steps.	In the library makerspace, students could code a path for a basic robot (such as Cubetto, BeeBot, Robot Mouse, Caterpillars) to go from point A to point B. Students would code distance and direction (left, right, front, back). If you do not have access to robotics kits, try contacting your local educational service agency/board of cooperative education services or public library, ask the PTA for a grant, or have the students “code” one another across a masking-taped floor.
Secondary	<i>7–8 Computational Thinking: Algorithm and Programming</i> Design or remix a program that uses a variable to maintain the current value of a key piece of information.	In the library makerspace, students could create binary bracelets where they encode their name or a secret message in a bracelet.

Table 1. Connecting school library makerspaces with CS/DF concepts.

GRADE BAND	CS/DF STANDARD	LIBRARY APPLICATION
Elementary	<i>K–1 Cybersecurity: Safeguards</i> Identify simple ways to help keep accounts secure.	The school librarian can teach students the importance of logging in and out of a computer. Additionally, this can be applied to online databases and library catalogues.
Secondary	<i>7–8 Cybersecurity: Risks</i> Determine the types of personal information and digital resources that an individual may have access to that need to be protected.	The school librarian can review different types of personal information that someone may want to steal or use without permission. The conversation could include what is appropriate to share, ways to keep this information safe, and how to respond if personal information is used or accessed without permission.

Table 2. Opportunities for school librarians to support digital literacy via the CS/DF standards.

in artistic endeavors, provide robotics and coding kits, upcycle materials, or provide space and resources for students to fabricate and solve problems. School library makerspace programs present many opportunities for connections with the CS/DF concepts. At left are a few examples to jump-start your thinking (see table 1).

Digital Citizenship

The New York Computer Science Standards define digital citizenship as “the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to the use of technology” (New York State Ed. Dept. 2020). Digital citizenship lives within the broader concept of digital literacy, defined by the CS/DF standards as “the knowledge of and the ability to use digital technologies to create, research, communicate, collaborate, and share information and work” (2020, 10). The concepts of digital literacy and digital citizenship are inseparable from computer science, as students need both the technical and dispositional skills to engage in responsible and productive technology use.

The Engage Shared Foundation calls on school librarians to teach our students to responsibly and ethically gather, use, and share information. As we teach our students how to access, evaluate, and leverage digital tools, we know the importance of simultaneously teaching the considerations of use for different purposes and audiences. Likewise, in our connected world, our students are creating a digital footprint with each interaction they have with technology. From comments and posts, to personally identifiable information that is shared when creating online accounts (e.g., online gaming accounts, social media accounts), to the data generated by their academic

GRADE BAND	CS/DF STANDARD	LIBRARY APPLICATION
Elementary	4–6 Computational Thinking: Algorithms and Programming Describe the steps taken and choices made to design and develop a solution using an iterative design process.	The Iterative Design Process is similar to various inquiry cycles we are familiar with: define a problem, develop a solution, test the solution, and repeat until you solve the issue. This can easily be achieved by using a research process, such as the Stripling Model of Inquiry. Students can explore an issue or topic of their choice, then create and deliver a presentation that describes the steps taken to iteratively conduct their research.
Secondary	9–12 Impact of Computing: Ethics Debate issues of ethics related to real-world computing technologies.	The school librarian, in collaboration with a colleague in social studies or ELA, can structure an opportunity for students to research and debate if the internet should be free or paid.

Table 3. Inquiry alignment with CS/DF computational thinking concept.

activities (e.g., grades, library circulation history), it is imperative for students to understand how to protect their data, the role of data privacy, and how to interface with others online in constructive, ethical, and respectful ways.

While there is a dedicated digital literacy concept area in the CS/DF standards, opportunities for school librarians to support these skills can be found across the standards. We invite you to look beyond the obvious connections to discover more opportunities (see table 2).

Inquiry

With inquiry as a lens, school librarians can leverage strong connections between the CS/DF standards and the guiding documents of our profession. The Inquire Shared Foundation is the heart of effective school library instruction, as it invites us to “build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems” (AASL 2018). As school librarians, our pedagogical focus centers on building students’ critical thinking skills. We achieve

this by providing resources and guiding students through the research process, both for personal inquiry and in collaboration with teachers across disciplines.

As we seek to move our students beyond low-level research projects toward deep, meaningful inquiry, the issues related to the ethics and impacts of computing provide a wealth of debatable topics. Alignment with the inquiry process is particularly evident in the CS/DF computational thinking concept area (see table 3).

Curation

The Curate Shared Foundation is defined as “making meaning for oneself and others by collecting, organizing, and sharing resources of personal relevance” (AASL 2018). Today information is ubiquitous and freely available to everyone all the time. As access has expanded, the role of the school librarian has similarly evolved. We assist our students and colleagues through the process of narrowing the breadth of information at their disposal to meet their needs. School librarians can achieve this goal by curating

and sharing high-quality, relevant, and meaningful resources that represent a range of perspectives. In conjunction with curation, we are tasked with promoting knowledge about and comfort with using these materials, by creating resource guides in a range of modalities and providing coaching and instruction on how to access, gather, assess, and synthesize information. Additionally, we help our students and colleagues build their capacity to curate their own quality resources to meet their information needs.

Within the CS/DF standards, curation can be found wherever the standards point toward characteristics of digital information/data and public/private information uses (see table 4).

Literacy Collaborations

The Collaborate Shared Foundation involves partnering with others to “broaden perspectives and work toward common goals” (AASL 2018). As school librarians we interact with the entire school community through our work with students across grade levels, our involvement in building- and district-wide initiatives, and our

GRADE BAND	CS/DF STANDARD	LIBRARY APPLICATION
Elementary	2–3 <i>Impacts of Computing: Ethics</i> Identify public and private digital spaces.	The school librarian can help students create a curated list of books that they want to read for themselves and a list of titles they would recommend to a friend and save each to an appropriate private or public location. Additionally, the school librarian could teach students that they are able to leave a book review or rating for a book in the library catalog (public), but they cannot change the title or description of the book (private).
Secondary	9–12 <i>Computational Thinking: Data Analysis and Visualization</i> Refine and visualize complex data sets to tell different stories with the same data set.	The librarian can provide resources and instruction for students to watch different streaming video clips (data sets) on the same topic from multiple perspectives.

Table 4. Curation within the CS/DF standards.

GRADE BAND	CS/DF STANDARD	LIBRARY APPLICATION
Elementary	K–1 <i>Computational Thinking: Modeling and Simulation</i> Identify and describe one or more patterns (found in nature or designed), and examine the patterns to find similarities and make predictions.	During story time in the library, students can predict what will happen next in the story based on their previous observations. They can also find or predict sequences or patterns in stories.
Secondary	9–12 <i>Networks & System Designs: Hardware and Software</i> Develop and communicate multistep troubleshooting strategies others can use to identify and fix problems with computing devices and their components.	Students could create how-to videos and pamphlets for accessing the e-book platform, online databases, or streaming videos. These guides could be created for use by fellow high school students or for elementary students in lower grade levels. The school librarian could work with students to help them design guides and instructional videos for other library skill-related items such as effective internet searching, citations, or note-taking.

Table 5. Opportunities to collaboratively develop student literacies across formats.

collaboration with teachers across content areas. We are champions for interdisciplinary learning and connecting various subject areas together. School librarians can serve as the bridge between disciplines, as our instruction focuses on skills that transfer across subjects and modalities.

Literacy comes in many forms, including print, visual, media, and information/digital literacy, to name a few. Jointly these literacies are essential in helping our students prepare for the future and present a golden opportunity for school librarians to collaborate with colleagues. As we consider literacy through the lens of the CS/DF standards, it is important to note that not all aspects of the standards need to be addressed using technology or electronics. In the examples in table 5, we identify opportunities to collaboratively develop student literacies across a myriad of formats.

Career Readiness

A primary goal of education is to prepare our students for what comes next as they enter adulthood. One of the AASL Common Beliefs states, “Learners should be prepared for college, career, and life” (2018). Whatever path our students take, they will undoubtedly encounter new technologies and applications. To be ready for the future, our students need to not only understand how to use the technologies of today but also be ready to apply underlying theories and foundational skills to the developments of tomorrow. In addition to an awareness of how technology works, students need critical thinking skills so they can locate, assess, and use information—from using GPS to find their way home from an unfamiliar location,

GRADE BAND	CS/DF STANDARD	LIBRARY APPLICATION
Elementary	K–1 Network & Systems Designs: Hardware & Software Identify ways people provide input and get output from computing devices.	The school librarian can help students investigate the ways individuals input information into a computing device, like a barcode, that results in output, like a student account or book record, to understand networks and system design.
Secondary	7–8 Critical Thinking: Algorithms and Programming Design, compare, and refine algorithms for a specific task or within a program.	The school librarian can instruct students in the use of Boolean algorithms to create powerful search strategies and to compare/contrast search results.

Table 6. Career exploration and readiness skills within CS/DF standards.

to navigating online banking, to researching academic topics, new consumer goods, or the latest news.

Within the CS/DF standards, career exploration and readiness skills can be found explicitly in the impacts of the computing/career paths subarea and in less overt ways through connections to the foundational skill sets that students will need post-graduation (see table 6).

Conclusion

The examples above are a small sampling of the possibilities the CS/DF standards, or similar standards in your state, offer for school librarians to integrate computer science and digital fluency into programs and instruction. While books and fostering a love of reading will always be paramount in our profession, a school librarian should also provide

leadership and support across the curriculum through literacy, inquiry, and technology. As the role of the school librarian continues to evolve, we need to embrace the changing landscape of education to remain relevant and essential. The *AASL Standards Framework for Learners* provides clear benchmarks for school library instruction; the CS/DF standards deepen the connections between library instruction and real-world skills for our students. By layering computer science standards into our teaching, we strengthen our message to stakeholders about the importance of our instructional role, we support the needs of students in our building, and we reinforce our position as instructional leaders in our schools.



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ARTICLE

ESTABLISHING SCHOOL LIBRARY LEADERSHIP AS A FIRST-YEAR SCHOOL LIBRARIAN

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Being a First-Year School Librarian during a Pandemic

Most school librarians can think back on their first year and reminisce about the exciting experience, as well as how stressful that time was. Now, imagine how a new school librarian felt during a worldwide pandemic! Many beginning school librarians like me are attending graduate school to obtain their Master's in Library Science, and while this may have added another layer of stress, my classes are preparing me to take a leadership role in my school as a trusted colleague who can create and collect data from needs assessments, present professional development sessions, mentor new teachers, and promote materials and programs that our school library provides.

Needs Assessments

Several of my classes from East Carolina University's library science graduate program have prepared me to create and plan a needs assessment that will help me support the faculty and staff at my middle school. This past fall I distributed an electronic Google form to my school's teachers, student support staff, and administration that focused on the use of technology at our school. The survey asked various questions centered around seven of the eight major key indicators in a needs assessment. A comprehensive needs assessment includes eight major key indicators (O'Reilly 2016):

1. **Self-assessed skill level.** I asked staff to rate their skill level with the use of technology. Over 80 percent of the staff rated their instructional technology ability at proficient or accomplished.

2. **Technology use and integration.** I asked teachers how they integrate technology into their instruction. More than 60 percent of participants stated that they mostly utilize technology to present information to students.

3. **Teacher beliefs.** Faculty and staff were asked how they believed technology was best utilized in the classroom as well as their beliefs regarding learning about new technology to apply in the classroom. Again, more than 60 percent of participants stated that technology should be used to present information to students. More than 30 percent stated that technology should be used to present a problem or brief description and students should use technology to find solutions or complete projects.

4. **Barriers to access.** The faculty and staff members answered questions regarding what barriers impeded students' access to technology. More than 80 percent of participants believed that parents' ability to use technology was the greatest barrier to access to technology.

5. **Professional development resources.** Participants were asked how open they were to learning more about technology and what topics for professional development they'd most likely attend.

6. **Leadership.** Participants were asked how much emphasis and support the leadership at the school put on technology. Most answered "a moderate amount."

7. **Needs and wants.** Faculty and staff were asked what topics in which they'd like to receive professional development. Participants stated that they wanted to learn how to use technology to ensure more student engagement.

Most needs assessments include demographic questions that ask about each participant's years of experience/teaching, grade levels, or subjects taught, etc. (O'Reilly 2016). However, I wanted the administration, teachers, and staff to feel like they could be completely honest with their responses and that the needs assessment was entirely anonymous. Therefore, I chose to not ask demographic questions.

After I analyzed the responses from the needs assessment, I looked for trends that could help me determine where I could begin supporting the staff at my school. One trend I noticed was how many teachers believed that technology is best used to present information to students, and I wondered how this affected student engagement during remote learning. Student engagement was mentioned during a previous school improvement team meeting.

At the same time, one of my graduate school course assignments focused on presenting a tech tool as a professional development session, and I had been assigned Padlet for a tech tool. I asked my assistant principal if I could give a mini-professional development on how to increase student engagement using Padlet. To my surprise, the school principal asked me to put together a twenty-hour professional development segment for the entire school staff! I was nervous because I was a new faculty member, and I knew that the sessions would need to be conducted online via WebEx.

Presenting and Leading Professional Development

I quickly called on one of my professors from East Carolina University, Laura Mangum, and asked her to help me turn a one-hour session into a five-session professional development course. I communicated to Mangum that I wanted teachers to use Padlet in a way that wasn't just to present information: I wanted students to use the technology to become more involved in their learning. We divided the multiple components of Padlet into five categories:

1. **Overview of Padlet.** The first session focused on showing participants how to set up an account, introduced the various layouts, and demonstrated how to create a simple Padlet that allows students to use GIFs to respond to a bell-ringer style question.
2. **Exploring the Eight Padlet Features.** This session focused on the eight different layouts to choose from when creating a Padlet: wall, canvas, stream, grid, shelf, backchannel, map, and timeline. Before presenting I collaborated with an eighth-grade math teacher and a sixth-grade social studies teacher to see which Padlet feature they thought would be most beneficial to use with their prospective subjects. During the second session, I showed teachers how a shelf layout Padlet could help students find real-life examples for geometric terms; I also dem-

onstrated how a timeline feature could be used with sixth-grade students who were learning about ancient Mesopotamia. Teachers pretended to be students of each class and added information to the Padlets that had been created. Participants seemed to enjoy the feature that allowed them to use a GIF to answer the questions. They were also given time to work in breakout rooms to create a Padlet for a topic they were covering in their classes.

3. **Using Padlet with Other Online Tools.** Teachers learned how to effectively use Padlets during a lesson. Our district had just adopted Canvas as a learning platform, so I also showed teachers how Padlets could be embedded into Canvas for students to access rather than sharing a link in the chat feature of WebEx.
4. **Student and Teacher Collaboration Opportunities.** This session focused on ways teachers could provide cross-curricular learning opportunities for students using Padlet and how students could collaborate in small groups to complete a learning artifact in Padlet. I paired teachers off into groups of two and challenged them to create a Padlet that offered a cross-curricular opportunity for students. It was amazing to watch our orchestra teacher and our adaptive physical education teacher collaborate and make a Padlet that had students

performing exercises that mimicked the way students play their instruments.

5. **Using Padlet for Assessment.** Given that many participants used technology for presenting information to students, I wanted to show teachers how they could use Padlet as a formative or informal assessment tool. I demonstrated how I used a Padlet as an assessment tool by using the shelf layout in Padlet after I completed a unit on the four factors of fair use with my students. I showed participants how to archive Padlets and how to export and/or print Padlets to save for artifacts or grades.

Overall, the professional development was well received, and several faculty members were able to obtain one CEU credit for completing the course sessions and homework. I received follow-up feedback from several faculty members who continued to use Padlet to engage students in the classroom. Our adaptive P.E. teacher used Padlet features to engage students in lessons during the school year because more of his students opted to learn virtually for the remainder of the school year. Our visual arts teacher utilized Padlet for bell-ringer activities where students shared their critiques, questions, or thoughts about discussion topics at the beginning of class. She was able to save the Padlets to verify student participation.

Mentoring Beginning Teachers

I was an elementary school teacher for thirteen years prior to becoming a school library media coordinator, and I've been a mentor teacher for the past eight years. My assistant principal asked the staff to consider volunteering to be a mentor teacher to a new or beginning teacher at our

I agreed to mentor this year in hopes that I would become better acquainted with teams and grade levels as well as learn more about the standards that were taught in middle school.



eBooks

These books are currently available through our LNJMS Destiny site. These are pictures of the books. You will have to access them via Destiny.



Figures 1 and 2: Our school's Destiny page and the Google hyperdoc e-book menu.

The opportunity has kept me abreast on learning objectives and standards in middle school, and I have been able to assist her with student engagement. We've even collaborated on a few social studies lessons using Pear Deck.

school. I was hesitant to step up because I am a new media coordinator and new to the middle school world. However, I agreed to mentor this year in hopes that I would become better acquainted with teams and grade levels as well as learn more about the standards that were taught in middle school.

I meet weekly every Monday with my assigned beginning teacher for thirty minutes during her planning time. The opportunity has kept me

abreast on learning objectives and standards in middle school, and I have been able to assist her with student engagement. We've even collaborated on a few social studies lessons using Pear Deck.

Promoting the School Library's Materials and Programs

One way I have been able to promote the school library and its relevance is by attending school improvement

team meetings. Attending these meetings allows me to stay abreast of the school's goals and objectives, and I'm able to create lists of topics or materials to consider when purchasing materials for our collections next year.

Our school improvement plan has a goal that is aligned with the positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) program at our school. In considering how the school library could align with this goal, I remembered a teacher-friend of mine who had posted on social media how she was able to obtain a book vending machine for her school. I approached my principal and mentioned the book vending machine idea to her. I explained how programs such as AR sometimes cause students to lose interest in reading and classroom curriculum doesn't encourage students to read

Our book vending machine should arrive at our school by the end of the school year, and we plan to allow students to cash in their PBIS points for tokens to select a book or gift card from a local bookstore.

for enjoyment since many of the books are pre-selected. My principal had stated that she had seen many students and even family members lose their love of reading by the time they left elementary school. Being an avid reader and supporter of the school library, she gave me the green light to request quotes from companies.

Our book vending machine should arrive at our school by the end of the school year, and we plan to allow students to cash in their PBIS points for tokens to select a book or gift card from a local bookstore. Where will the book vending machine be located? Right beside the doors of the school library! My principal and I are planning on holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the vending machine at the beginning of the next school year.

Let your principal and leadership team know that you are willing to support the school's curriculum, faculty, and students.

Our school system operated on a remote learning model until March; therefore, it was impossible for students to access physical copies of books in our school library this school year. After reaching out to another middle school librarian in our district, Craig Wilson, I learned how I could use our Follett Destiny system to link URLs to a Google hyperdoc (figure 2) that gives students access to our e-books. I linked the Google hyperdoc to our school's Destiny page (figure 1), and from there, students can view our e-book collection. This has given our students more access to books and reading opportunities. Several students expressed their disappointment about not being able to physically check out books once we returned to school; however, they were excited to learn about the e-books we offered once I showed them how to access the Google hyperdoc.

When Considering How You Can Lead in Your School...

- I. **Communicate with your school leaders.** Ask the administration what they envision for the school library; however, let them know that you have aspirations and goals as well! Sometimes, there are misconceptions that school librarians only deal with books and some technology. Let your principal and leadership team know that you are willing to support the school's curriculum, faculty, and students.

2. **Think about your own knowledge and skill set.** What do you have to bring to the table? Do you strike up conversations easily with others? You could start with attending grade-level planning sessions! Are you a natural host? You could set up an area in the school library that welcomes faculty and staff with a refreshment. Do you enjoy writing? Research grants that you could write to obtain needed furniture or materials for your school or library.
3. **Challenge yourself.** Perhaps you aren't the mingling type. Set a goal to get to know one faculty member better each month. Maybe there isn't an area for teachers to interact in the school library. How can you get them interested in visiting the school library more? Set at least one goal and challenge yourself to meet it within a set amount of time. You'll be glad you did!

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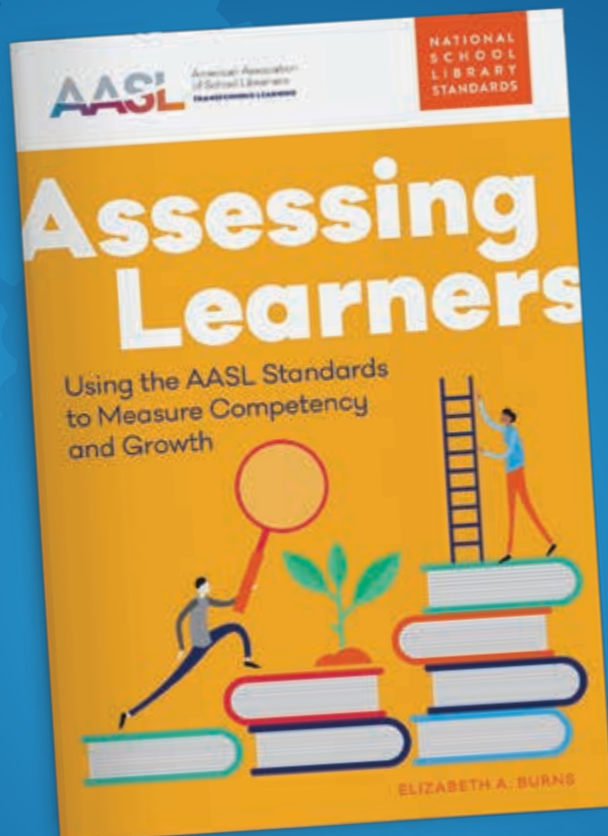


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HACKING THE PANDEMIC

LAUNCHING THIRD SPACE INTO CYBERSPACE



Brittany Bowser

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It's been over a year and a half of curbside pickups, hand sanitizer stations, and social distancing. Whether teaching students from behind a mask and plexiglass barriers or virtually using slides and prerecorded read-alouds, school librarians are juggling numerous responsibilities. New schedules and split classes have resulted in more time constraints and fewer library lessons; however, school libraries are standing the test of the pandemic because they are essential to the school community.

The *National School Library Standards* stress the importance of the school library as "a third space for learning, a space between the classroom and home" (AASL 2018, 11). As we have seen over the past year and a half, there is no guarantee that the physical school library will be accessible to provide this essential third space for learning. In a world turned more remote, we need to be able to move beyond a school library's physical walls. Revamping the school library website can reap many benefits in a virtual, in-person, or hybrid learning environment. To continue forming relationships, inspiring inquiry, and fostering independent, lifelong learning, a school library's third space must expand into cyberspace.

Install Your Purpose

Many school libraries have websites or some presence within the school's website. Too often, though, a school library website contains the bare minimum: the library's hours and circulation policies, a short bio of the librarian, a link to the online catalog, and/or a bitmoji smiling above an e-mail address. Just as your physical library exists for your users, so too should your library website. Thinking about your community

and their needs will help guide you in creating a virtual third space that is as attractive, inviting, and informative as the physical school library.

Manage Your Stacks

The "stack" in a physical library is a "structure of bookshelves," according to Merriam-Webster (2021). In cyberspace, it is a "section of memory in a computer." Collections today consist of both physical and digital stacks that contain resources, from e-books to coding robots. While it might be tempting to spend time organizing only the physical stacks, making sure the school library website is easy to navigate and understand ensures users can find what they need efficiently.

Not all school libraries are effective or user-friendly. The existence of a physical school library does not mean quality service and customer satisfaction will be found inside. The same can be said about websites: time spent online is not always time well spent. How does a physical school library meet its users' needs? The books and materials that are added to the collection are selected, not chosen at random. Book reviews, professional publications, prestigious awards, and librarian blogs are consulted before purchases are made. The same should be true for resources shared in a virtual library. Links should be vetted and kept up-to-date and online experiences evaluated for age-appropriateness, usability, and educational worth.

How do you feel when you visit a business's website and the information you find is lacking, incorrect, or altogether missing? It sends messages about lack of credibility, service, and care. The links provided on a school library website need to be live links, meaning they take users to the

intended sites. A broken link would be the physical library equivalent to a blank book. Additionally, the links provided need to be meaningful for students, inspiring creativity and a motivation to learn. Directing students to sites that are confusing or dated would be the physical library equivalent of providing old and archaic print books.

The school library website should be as user-friendly as the physical space. Managing the stacks means weeding and continually reviewing and evaluating the resources and services provided in the third space, both physical and virtual.

Power-Up Your Process

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a lot of change at once, but not all of it has been negative. Although it was unexpected and unplanned, it highlighted the virtual tools and resources at our fingertips that can take online learning opportunities to new heights. Jennifer Finch and Renee N. Jefferson analyzed a class that shifted from in-person learning using traditional lectures to online instruction. The shift

In a world turned more remote, we need to be able to move beyond a school library's physical walls. Revamping the school library website can reap many benefits in a virtual, in-person, or hybrid learning environment.

created an opportunity to revamp the assignments and resulted in more meaningful and authentic tasks, which led to greater student achievement (2012).

Revamping your school library website may involve learning a new tool, but you can also use that tool in your lessons as well as your website. For example, how often have you welcomed students into your library with a warm and inviting voice? Use Vocaroo to upload an audio recording of your welcome message to add that personal touch to your website. The virtual third space can remove barriers and provide alternate paths of reaching your community and creating a platform to display your process.

In addition, engaging with your community via a school library website is a powerful way to advocate for your role as the school librarian. Stakeholders will not grasp the value of a school library until they are given concrete evidence. Because advocacy is important for securing relationships, trust, support, and funding, school librarians should prioritize marketing themselves and their instruction because “no one knows or can accurately tell the library story like a school librarian” (Kachel 2020, 61). When the

school library website reflects the physical library in terms of lessons, resources, and empowerment, it doubles as a platform to advocate for the value of the school library and the school librarian.

Of course, stakeholders can’t visit the school library website if they don’t know about it. You must also market the website. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and Instagram can be easily incorporated into the virtual library to broaden those connections with the community and increase website traffic. Creating specific access points or hashtags for your social media posts can ensure your messages reach the targeted audiences, engage students, advocate for the school library, and build a network with other school librarians.

Whether you choose to showcase student work, highlight the collection, or promote awareness of school librarianship, be sure to choose the social media platform that works best for your school’s community. For example, an elementary school library might find connecting with parents easier on Twitter, whereas a high school librarian might seek student interest and involvement using TikTok.

Input Standards, Upload Opportunities

A school library website can easily incorporate the *National School Library Standards*. The following examples illustrate how seamlessly each of the six Shared Foundations can be supported in the virtual third space.

Inquire. The inquiry process is driven by the learner and guided by the instructor; it begins with a meaningful question or problem. Conditions for inquiry are right when students have the time to delve into a topic, the resources necessary to seek out meaningful answers, and the inspiration and motivation to do so. Opportunities for online inquiry can exist when curating resources using tools such as Wakelet. Parts of the process and products can be shared using podcasts or journal entries on a student-centered blog. Whether face-to-face or virtual, “choice and a voice will ensure learners are invested in the process and products of their own learning” (Moreillon 2016, 5).

Include. The library website can be created and maintained to include all users. Weeding and diversifying the physical shelves can often take a while due to limited funding, time, and resources. In only a few clicks, resources can be added to a school library’s virtual space that engage multiple perspectives and cultures. Inviting students to share connections or reactions to books and lessons on Flipgrid provides increased opportunities to practice empathy and reflect on others’ differing views.

Collaborate. As we have experienced first-hand over the past year and a half, it is possible to collaborate toward common goals virtually and to do so effectively. The valuable time we share with our students during school library lessons or classroom collaborations should not be viewed

*The virtual third space
can remove barriers and
provide alternate paths of
reaching your community
and creating a platform
to display your process.*



as isolated experiences; rather they should be thought of as jumping-off points to foster deeper and more meaningful learning. Pose questions during class time and extend the conversations virtually on the school website. Spark the conversation and nurture its growth online.

Curate. The virtual world opens up new experiences including, but not limited to, 3D tours, interactive field trips, digital scavenger hunts, and online escape rooms. Choose to curate resources that foster these experiences for your users by using tools such as Symbaloo or pre-made choice boards, such as those created by blogger-librarian Shannon McClintock Miller (2021). Gamify the process of gathering information with online scavenger hunts to extend learning about searching, organizing, and evaluating information while increasing motivation.

Explore. What is needed for in-depth exploration? Time. Whether immersed in a story, engaged in discussion, or even tinkering in the makerspace, giving students extra time to explore is not always feasible during school hours. Extending learning beyond the physical walls of the school library keeps even makerspace opportunities accessible. Coding websites like MakeCode Arcade and Hour of Code can incorporate STEAM skills within an online makerspace. Online resources can even spark interest in explorations offline. CS Unplugged provides ideas for students to practice and explore twenty-first-century skills at home without screens.

Engage. Simply providing portals to the world of information through the library website is not enough. Students need to know how to engage with the information. Online games, like Google's



Interland, get students practicing the digital literacy skills necessary to make informed decisions about online behaviors. Create a collaborative board on Padlet where students can practice giving attribution when they share about books they've read or interesting information they've learned. Visit Kathy Schrock's *Guide to Everything* blog for resources on evaluating websites, using primary sources, and copyright.

Debug Your Doubts

For any change to be successful, you must adapt your thinking and behavior to align with your goal. Maybe taking a different perspective will help you remove barriers to your own learning.

Instead of: "I don't even have a website."

Think: "It's 2021 and almost everything is online now. It's time I talk to my administrator about getting a website."

If the school library is the heart of the school and the school has a

website, shouldn't the school library have a website, too?

Instead of: "My students already have access to e-books and databases."

Think: "My students deserve increased access to more high-quality resources that have been curated to meet their unique needs."

Just because students have access to multiple databases does not mean they are utilizing them or doing so effectively. Creating a school library website does not take away from what is already available; it enhances it.

Instead of: "Many of my families don't have access to the internet so they wouldn't even visit my website."

Think: "My website is the first step towards advocating for increased internet access for the families and students I serve. I can use it as my platform and springboard for change."

What better way to argue for resources your community needs

than showing what is possible with those resources?

Instead of: "This will take too much of my time."

Think: "Spending time developing a useful and purposeful website will help me and my users in the long run."

A meaningful online space for your students will be an investment into their learning and your impact. It is time worth taking.

Instead of: "I already do too much. I don't get paid enough for all of this."

Think: "None of my stakeholders who control my funding will know what I do until I market myself and my library."

The school library website can be the tool to advocate for what your community needs and allow you to advocate for what your position needs.

Plug In and Sign On

As school librarians and future-ready leaders we must evolve our definition of third space and raise our expectations of the virtual library. "Traditional libraries strive to foster service, social equality, and the appreciation of human individuality and virtual libraries should try to do the same" (Lawson 2004, 12). Designing an online presence for the learning community is mutually beneficial to the learners and the school librarian. Greater access to resources and extended learning opportunities results in greater advocacy for the role of the school librarian. To be part of the future, it is imperative that the school library remain an "essential part of the learning community" (AASL 2018, 11). As school librarians, we must continue to evolve our practice just as our third spaces must also evolve. Whatever your worries or

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doubts, keep the five laws of third spaces in mind:

Third spaces are for use.

Every learner, their third space.

Every third space, its learner.

Save the time of the learner.

The third space is a growing organism.

(adapted from Ranganathan's *Five Laws of Library Science*).



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LOOKING FOR MORE INSPIRATION?

Check out these excellent examples of school library websites:

Makalapa Elementary School Library's website features student-created e-book trailers, a Padlet of book recommendations, and a digital makerspace: <<https://makalapalibrary.weebly.com>>.

Mashpee Middle High School's Janice M. Mills Library Learning Commons displays linked book covers in virtual library scenes for student access, the library's Twitter feed, and virtual field trips titled "Armchair Adventures": <<https://mmhslmc.wordpress.com>>.



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Cultivating Our Self-Efficacy as School Librarians

Jessica Thompson

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In recent years I have become very familiar with a term I had not previously pondered: *self-efficacy*. Teacher self-efficacy is the personal belief that one's actions can have a positive impact on students (Coker 2015). It is cultivated through positive experiences, observing others in action, and being mindful of one's social and emotional states (Bandura 2012). I often think of self-efficacy as being synonymous with confidence; confidence in what we as educators do, why we are in the profession, and in knowing we have a purpose. As school librarians, we need to develop high self-efficacy to have a positive impact on our students, both socially and academically.

Digging into Self-Efficacy

Studies have examined classroom teacher self-efficacy and its impact on student achievement, such as those conducted by Robert M. Klassen and Virginia M. C. Tze (2014) and Harsha N. Perera, Celeste Galkins, and Rachel Part (2019). Both studies indicated that higher teacher

self-efficacy led to greater academic achievement among students. Further, Tori L. Shoulders and Melinda Scott Krei linked earning a Master's degree and having more than five years of teaching experience with higher self-efficacy (2015).

As a school library educator and a recent practicing school librarian, I believe that self-efficacy matters greatly for school librarians, though few studies have been conducted directly relating our self-efficacy to student achievement. Studies have shown that school librarians who feel strongly about their leadership skills are more likely to plan collaborative activities with teachers, which typically result in higher student achievement (Ash-Argyle and Shoham 2012, 2014; Cansoy and Parlar 2018). Additionally, unlicensed school librarians tend to have lower self-efficacy when it comes to leadership in their school settings (Ritchie 2011). Schools with full-time, fully certified school librarians have students who perform better on reading assessments (Coker 2015; Lance and Hofschire

2012). The *School Libraries Work!* report details the benefits of school librarians and school libraries and their impact on our communities (Scholastic Library Publishing 2016).

All this research led to my study of school librarians' self-efficacy and the impact it has on student achievement. I surveyed school librarians across the state of Virginia using an instrument designed to assess the self-efficacy levels of classroom teachers (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy 2001). The purpose was to examine if there were differences in elementary, middle, and high school librarians' self-efficacy levels and to see if the self-efficacy levels of school librarians could predict schools' overall pass rates on state standardized reading assessments.

Not surprisingly, the levels of self-efficacy did not differ between elementary, middle, and high school librarians (Thompson, Barthlow, and Paynter 2021). Each participant in the study, regardless of the school at which they worked, had similar levels of self-efficacy, which we can assume is due to similar training and coursework. The results also indicated that there is a predictive, correlational relationship between school librarians' self-efficacy levels and reading scores, meaning that higher levels of self-efficacy lead to higher reading scores. These results are similar to previous research

The results also indicated that there is a predictive, correlational relationship between school librarians' self-efficacy levels and reading scores, meaning that higher levels of self-efficacy lead to higher reading scores.

indicating that school librarians, in general, have positive impacts on reading scores (Lance, Schwarz, and Rodney 2014; Lance, Rodney, and Hamilton-Pennell 2000; Small, Shanahan, and Stasak 2010) without taking into account the self-efficacy of those librarians.

My study was conducted during the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic. I wonder if this context influenced participants' responses and how they felt about their perceived impact. Recall when you were thrown into a new world of collaborating online, trying to provide reading materials to students who did not have computers or internet access and book checkout was halted, and simply feeling the uncertainty of what your job was going to look like for the rest of the school year. These factors likely influenced school librarians' feelings of self-efficacy during those unprecedented times.

but I was not sure I considered myself a leader, even though I was often put in positions of leadership by means of being "volun-told." I realized throughout my preparatory program, which was during my first years as a school librarian, that I really could make a positive impact and that I was a leader in my school.

My school library preparatory program at Old Dominion University taught me so much and cultivated my self-efficacy. Some of the most memorable assignments and requirements involved authentic experiences, such as being required to attend and present at library conferences, writing a collection development policy, and writing an article for publication. Before my program I was not interested in attending conferences, let alone presenting at one, but I learned that I needed to try new things and to do things occasionally that may

Practicing school librarians can maintain and grow self-efficacy by continuing to learn, immersing themselves in their schools, and becoming an active member of a community of practice. Learning can happen in many ways: attending conferences, reading professional articles and texts, and participating in various professional development opportunities. Immersing ourselves in our schools helps us make contributions to the school community. We become members of leadership teams and essential collaborative partners for our teachers. Having open conversations with others in a community of practice and hearing about what other school librarians do can help us see what we do well and where we can improve. It is so important to remember that we do make a difference and to not get complacent in our jobs.

Reaping the Benefits

I feel my own self-efficacy has grown by leaps and bounds since I started in school librarianship, and it is something that will continue to grow and blossom. I know I make a difference in the lives of my students and school community. Whether working in an elementary school library or teaching future school librarians, I am confident that my self-efficacy ultimately benefits my students.

Because my research brings to light the impact that school librarians' self-efficacy has on students, I want to challenge you, dear reader, to help your students reap the benefits of your own self-efficacy; allow them to have the best of you that you can give them. Know that you make a difference. You are important and what you do is essential to your students. Do not think of self-efficacy as being arrogant or conceited; there is empirical research to support

School librarian preparatory programs need to include opportunities for authentic tasks that promote self-efficacy, such as assignments that build leadership skills, community service projects, collaborations, simulated teaching practice, and quality practicums.

Planting the Seeds of Self-Efficacy

So, how do these results inform school library practice? We need to remain confident in what we do and why we are school librarians to fully support our students. When I realized that I wanted to become a school librarian, I was not 100 percent confident in myself. I knew I was passionate about education and wanted what was best for my students,

be uncomfortable. I found I love attending conferences and since then I have presented at three other conferences, spoken comfortably in front of crowds, and conducted professional development for my school. I have subsequently gained confidence in my writing abilities, and the collection development policy that I wrote during my program has been adapted and adopted as the division collection development policy for my county.

the impact that you as the school librarian believe you can have on your students and your school.

Prepping for the Next Season

As an educator of future school librarians, I want to help cultivate my students' self-efficacy so they know they can make a difference. School librarian preparatory programs need to include opportunities for

authentic tasks that promote self-efficacy, such as assignments that build leadership skills, community service projects, collaborations, simulated teaching practice, and quality practicums. Class projects that result in ready-to-use products such as my collection development policy or a grant-funding application are also useful in building self-efficacy.

For those who are already practicing school librarians, remember to nurture your self-efficacy. Continue to be a lifelong learner and apply your new knowledge to benefit your school community. Attend conferences when you are able, participate in professional development opportunities, and be a leader in your school. Know that you make a difference! Your students will reap the rewards of your self-efficacy!

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We must give children tools to become truth detectives in their own right. Glossaries, source lists, and other text features all play a part, but we also need to encourage more critical thinking.

Raising Young Thinkers

David Miles

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Truth matters. Facts matter.

And therein lies the rub, because what is truth anymore?

"Standing up for what's right," says one news source. "The most trusted name in news," says another. And yet anyone reading both—as I do as a matter of principle—would conclude that, so different are the headlines, they couldn't *possibly* be covering the same events of even the same country.

It's this polarization that makes me wonder: do we really care about what's true, or is finding the "truth" simply an exercise in shoring up our own biases? Since even a glance at one's social newsfeed seems to suggest the latter, I'm left to ponder what Marie Curie once said: "Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."

Fear, it seems, is what drives our flight from truth. Fear of the unknown, fear of being wrong, or, hardest of all, fear of what being wrong might *mean*. It's understandable; after all, the choices we make, the people we decide to be, the very purpose we put on our existence, are all built upon the worldview we've adopted. And worldviews, it seems, are surprisingly fragile things. Thus we guard them with "fact," we insulate them with confirmation bias, we feed them with cable news, because the thought of them crumbling—the loss of our very identity—is the gravest of threats.

It's no wonder, then, that children's books—our earliest introductions to the worlds and words of outsiders—have become ground zero in this fight over truth.

I once, rather naively I suppose, thought that working in children's publishing would be a quiet, happy backwater of bookmaking. After all, how controversial could an "I love you" book be? A is for apple. The cow says moo. Full stop. But as anyone familiar with banned books, boycotts, and all the rest of it knows, some of society's fiercest battles are fought on the pages of children's literature.

If we cannot collectively agree on what is true, we can at least agree to try to understand. It is for precisely this reason that the world needs children's books.

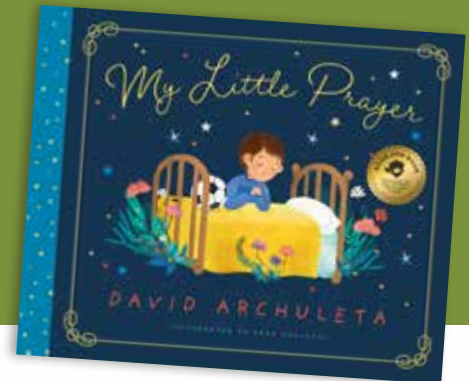
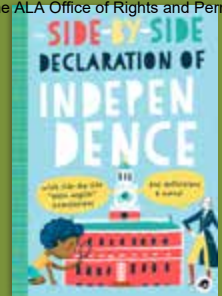
Perhaps our parental angst can be forgiven. After all, children are still developing their worldviews. And with our children in that vulnerable, trusting incubator called childhood, we well-meaning adults—with biases of our own—sometimes fear what might hatch.

But fear cannot be abolished by circling the wagons. In the spirit of Marie Curie, it is *understanding*—that rarest of gems—that helps one fear less. If we cannot collectively agree on what is true, we can at least agree to try to understand. It is for precisely this reason that the world needs children's books. Different books. Conflicting books. *Lots* of books. Because only then will we give children the kind of environment where thinking, listening, empathy, and yes, understanding, can happen.

The question you and I must ask ourselves is this: as stewards of children's literature, what role should we play? Or to borrow a warning from another industry, do we have a duty to "create responsibly?"

I believe we do.

First, I believe we must safeguard a plurality of voices. When things run counter to our own worldview, it's tempting to want to silence those voices. "Cancel her!" people cry. "Boycott his publication!" others shout. But we in the business of books—we of all people—should be the ones to know that censorship—whether of the left or the right—is not the answer: education is. As we find ourselves afloat in today's sudden, rising flood of information, it is perhaps not for us to dam the river, but to become the river guides—teaching the younger generation how to think, how to analyze, how to question, how to fact-check, how to challenge oneself. It's hard work, and it's a work that requires us to be just as disciplined in our own thinking, but it's a necessary work; shortcuts are but short-lived.



Listening is the surest path to empathy, and it cannot happen in an echo chamber of homogenous voices and opinions.

Perhaps it's our interest in this plurality of voices—in information in general—that has drawn our publishing house, Bushel & Peck, to so many challenging topics. Our authors come from diverse backgrounds, and since we began in 2018, we've published books for kids on subjects as complex as atomic theory, climate change, race, sexting, the mechanics of flight, the Constitution, advanced astronomy, and even prayer. The question we continually ask ourselves and our authors is, "What

does each book bring to the collective conversation? Are we just more noise, or are we adding perspective?" If the former, we've failed in our duties as content stewards. If the latter, we've advanced the cause of dialogue and mutual understanding.

Which brings us to our second duty: we must help our children learn to listen. Listening is the surest path to empathy, and it cannot happen in an echo chamber of homogenous voices and opinions. In that regard,

I hope our library shelves are filled with books that challenge our own worldview. We recently published a book called *Your Life Matters* by Chris Singleton. Chris and I come from very different backgrounds. I was raised in Pennsylvania in a nearly all-white community. Chris is a Black baseball player who hails from South Carolina. In 2015 his mother was killed in a racially motivated shooting at his family's church in Charleston. Working together on his book changed me forever. I stepped into Chris's shoes. I thought more deeply about the challenges faced by Black kids in our communities. I discovered just how much I didn't understand. Best of all I found a friend. My hope is that reading the book will do the same for many others.

Finally, we must give children tools to become truth detectives in their own right. Glossaries, source lists, and other text features all play a part, but we also need to encourage more critical thinking. In a book we published called *The Side-by-Side Declaration of Independence*, we do more than recite historical events; we challenge kids to form their own opinions about how government works best. Should it be small? Expansive? What does it mean to be free? What does it mean to safeguard one's pursuit of happiness? Our goal in that book isn't to teach one philosophy over another, but to invite thoughtful consideration of the debate as a whole.

We do the same in a new series called Read-Aloud Kid's Classics.

Throughout the unabridged text of kid's literary classics, we include moments to pause and critically consider why an author wrote the way she did or why a character might have said what he did. (What great training for considering motive and context of a person's tweets later in life!)

And the pattern continues in many of our other titles. In S. E. Abramson's *Grit* we challenge kids to reconsider what society has taught them about failure. In Mifflin Lowe's *The True West* we discover forgotten heroes of the American West, where, contrary to popular culture, it turns out that as many as one in four cowboys were Black. And in David Archuleta's *My Little Prayer*, we ponder the tough question of what it means when it seems God doesn't answer one's prayer.

David Miles is an award-winning and bestselling author and illustrator of over 40 books, including *Book*, *The Interactive Constitution*, *Allegro*, *Unicorn and Horse*, and other titles. He has worked as a designer, illustrator, and creative director, and he now runs *Bushel & Peck Books* with his wife, *Stephanie*. He's been named a *CYBILS* Award Finalist, *Publishers Weekly Star Watch* Nominee, *Trust Changemaker*, *New York Book Show Award Winner*, and *Bill Fisher Award Finalist*, among other accolades. He lives in *Fresno, California*, with his family.

It is this diverse library of voices, punctuated with invitations to think, that we hope will get kids doing just that: *thinking*. Because while you and I may write differently, publish differently, read differently, and maybe even disagree on fundamental truths, if we're at least *thinking*, then there's a chance we'll be *listening*. And listening, if we let it, can change us forever.

We might even stop being afraid.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Knowledge Quest, Publication No. 483-860, is published five times per year by the American Association of School Librarians, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611-2795. Annual subscription price, \$50. Printed in U.S.A. with periodical class postage paid at (Illinois). As a nonprofit organization authorized to mail at special rates (DMM Section 424.12 only), the purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding twelve months.

EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION

("Average" figures denote the average number of copies printed each issue during the preceding twelve months; "actual" figures denote actual number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: September/October 2019 issue). Total number of copies printed average 7,640; actual 7,303. Sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors, and counter sales: none. Mail subscription: actual 6,961. Free distribution actual 110. Total distribution average 7,256; actual 7,213. Office use, leftover, unaccounted, spoiled after printing average 384; actual 90. Total: average/actual 7,640/7,303. Percentage paid: average 96.4; actual 96.5.

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