

# THE Teaching Librarian

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association  
ISSN 1188679X

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Helping students identify fact from fiction

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**myths and reality** @ your library

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# THE Teaching Librarian

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# myths and reality @ your library

Cover Photo by Jared Craig on Unsplash

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## TingL Mission

*The Teaching Librarian*

*The Teaching Librarian* (TingL) is the official magazine of the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA). It is published three times a year to support OSLA members in providing significant and effective library programs and services. *The Teaching Librarian* promotes library programs and curriculum development that furthers exemplary educational objectives. The magazine fosters effective collaboration within the school library community and provides a forum to share experience and expertise.

## TingL References

*The Teaching Librarian* is a general magazine for OSLA members and not a scholarly journal. If your article does require citation of sources, please provide them within the text of your article or column with as much or as little bibliographic information as necessary for identification (e.g. book title, year). If you feel that the works you are citing require full identification, please provide a bibliography at the end of your piece, formatted according to the latest Chicago Manual of Style (16<sup>th</sup> edition) or APA Style.

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## TingL Submission Guidelines

Please Note: Themes are subject to change.

May Issue V. 26, Issue 3	"Indigenous @ your library" Deadline: January 30, 2019
September Issue V. 27, Issue 1	"Special Issue: State of the School Library" Deadline: May 27, 2019
January Issue V. 27, Issue 2	"Quiet @ your library" Deadline: September 30, 2019

Articles of 150-250 words, 500 words, or 800-1,300 words are welcome. Articles, when approved, should be accompanied by high quality images and/or graphics whenever possible. Text must be sent electronically, preferably in a Microsoft Word (or compatible) file. Images or graphics must be digital (minimum size and quality are 4" x 6" and 300 dpi, in .jpeg, .tiff, or .ai format). With photos that contain a recognized individual, please secure the individual's permission in writing for the use of the photo. Photos taken at public events or crowd shots taken in a public place do not require permission from the subjects. All submissions are subject to editing for consistency, length, content, and style. Journalistic style is preferred. *The Teaching Librarian* adheres to Canadian Press Style. Articles must include the working title, name of author, and email address in the body of the text. OSLA reserves the right to use pictures in other OSLA publications unless permission is limited or denied at the time of publishing.

When writers consent to having articles published in *The Teaching Librarian* magazine, permission is also granted to online distribution of the periodical through accessola.com and educational databases, without expectation of financial compensation. Ownership and copyright of the article is still retained by the original authors. Any questions about submissions should be directed to the Editor of *The Teaching Librarian*: teachinglibrarian@outlook.com.

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# The Editor's Notebook

**W**hen I taught mythology in Grade 9 English classes, the students and I loved exploring the many adventures of Hercules, the half-man, half-god hero who never seemed to give up, no matter how many times he lost his temper. He was always striving for something better, a true enlightenment.

Sometimes, when I attend the regular meetings of The Association of Library Consultants and Co-ordinators, I look at the school library professionals sitting around the table and consider their heroic qualities. Certainly, there is a long list of differences between the TALCO bunch and the muscle-bound, hellhound-tamer who wore a lion skin like a poncho. But the teacher-librarians, librarians, library technicians and administrators all share with Hercules the same super-human resolve to keep working to achieve their goal of a greater good. And in the case of TALCO members, that greater good is the protection and nurturing of the school library learning commons because we know that this will positively impact all aspects of students' lives.

Like Hercules, teacher-librarians have many demons to battle. They arise in the form of myths and falsehoods that distort the true benefit of the school library learning commons. This edition of *The Teaching Librarian* addresses and offers ways to debunk many of them. By facing the reality behind these mythologies, we truly can begin our advocacy work.

For this edition, I asked the TALCO members to consider some myths impacting teacher-librarians. To whet your

appetite for the articles to follow in this edition, they are offered below. Sharing this brief list with administrators would be a great start to a conversation about the benefit of the library learning commons.

**One of the biggest myths** is that cutting library learning commons services will make school boards more efficient. The **reality** is that cutting funding to the library learning commons will have a direct negative impact on student success.

**Young people don't read...What a myth!** The sheer strength, volume and popularity of the Ontario Library Association's Forest of Reading program refutes this. Thousands of students, aged 5 to 18, participate in this amazing program, reading the books, discussing them with their friends and teachers, voting for their favourites, and then celebrating our fantastic Canadian authors. The success of the program reflects that our young people are readers.

**Myth:** Kids can just go to the public library to get what their teachers tell them to read.

**Reality:** There is lots of scope for partnership development with public libraries, and the best potential leaders for this are teacher-librarians.

**Myth:** One teacher-librarian for every 700 students.

**Reality:** One teacher-librarian doing prep coverage for art, music, drama and physical education at the same time.

“

**Like Hercules, teacher-librarians have many demons to battle. They arise in the form of myths and falsehoods that distort the true benefit of the school library learning commons...By facing the reality behind these mythologies, we truly can begin our advocacy work.**

”



Caroline Freibauer

**Myth:** The school library is filled with antiquated material.

**Reality:** Effective teacher-librarians are keeping collections up to date.

**Myth:** Librarians just read books to students and do book exchange.

**Reality:** Those books do not just grow on the shelves. The librarian needs to select and de-select those books. The book read aloud needs to tie into a plan, topic, season, and still be engaging! And all books need to be processed.

**Myth:** All resources are online so physical books are no longer needed.

**Reality:** Due to the increase in technology, teacher-librarians have developed new skills and work in collaboration with other professionals, such as library technicians.

**Myth:** The teacher-librarian has read ALL the books in the library collection!

**Reality:** The teacher-librarian sometimes has panic attacks that s/he will NEVER read all the books s/he wants to read. If time currently used for work and family and grocery shopping and personal hygiene were all suddenly available to be dedicated

exclusively to the consumption of the written word, there are still books that would not fit into this lifetime. So, teacher-librarians are expert skimmer-scanners and are selective about their reading material. In my youth, I felt compelled to finish every book I started. Now? Not so much. If I'm past page 100 and I'm not all that keen, I take a page from Elsa in *Frozen*, and Let It Go.

**Myth:** When I left the classroom for the teacher-librarian role, I would be lonely without my department colleagues.

**Reality:** Being in the library allows you the possibility of building connections and relationships with teachers you would never otherwise have occasion to collaborate with. Prior to coming to the library, as an English and Drama teacher, I worked closely with other teachers in my departments but didn't have a working relationship with people from science or tech or geography. Now, it's my job to know their curricula and extend the offer to collaborate every school year. Being a teacher-librarian is like being a consultant in your school, whether it's supporting a new teacher or collaborating to rework a project that a veteran teacher has been using for years. The constant change and interaction with students, teachers and the school community guarantee that you are never lonely! ■

## ***The Teaching Librarian* is looking for contributors!**

Interested in writing for *The Teaching Librarian*? Here are themes and submission deadlines for upcoming issues:

**"Indigenous @ your library"**  
Deadline: January 30, 2019

**"Special Issue:  
State of School Libraries"**  
Deadline: May 27, 2019

**"Quiet @ your library"**  
Deadline: September 30, 2019

We are looking for articles of 150-250 words, 500 words, or 800-1,300 words with high-resolution images or illustrations. Please see page 5 for more detailed information on submitting articles.

*The Teaching Librarian* adheres to Canadian Press Style.

We look forward to hearing from you!

# President's Report



Kelly Maggiras

**T**his issue of *The Teaching Librarian* focuses on the Myths and Realities in our lives as school library experts. The myths are numerous: we read books all day; libraries are quiet; librarians are all crazy, cardigan-wearing, cat people... And the reality? We almost never sit down! School library learning commons are hubs of active learning for whole school communities, and not all of us like cats! It is true that we are in a time of flux in our province as the newly elected provincial government makes its mark. We don't know what changes will come and how they will impact our schools and our school libraries. As we work through this challenging time as educators, we must continue to advocate and speak up for comprehensive library programming. Parents are often unaware that in many parts of the province, students no longer have access to a school library program. We must continue to spread the word that a resourced and staffed school library has proven to increase reading comprehension, EQAO test scores, and digital information literacy skills. We must return to properly resourced school libraries!

Members of the Ontario School Library Association Council have been busy advocating for school libraries and our students – supporting literacies and promoting a love of reading every day. As a council we continue to develop and foster relationships with our subject associations, community partners, students and parents through important programs such as the Forest of Reading program and Treaty Recognition Week events. We also have been celebrating libraries through our partnership with the Canadian School Library Association. On Oct. 22, Canadian School Library Day, we joined forces with school libraries across the country to share via social media the magical things happening in school library learning commons. We encourage your students to raise their voices for school libraries by accessing the My School Library Rocks campaign and telling us, in their own words, why their school library rocks. Direct students to this site and we will share their responses: [sites.google.com/view/myschoollibraryrocks](https://sites.google.com/view/myschoollibraryrocks).

I am happy to share that during the year, OSLA council has continued our partnership with TVO and Teach Ontario to support and run online professional learning book clubs. We are looking forward to our continued collaboration with Teach Ontario and to offering meaningful, relevant, asynchronous online professional development to our colleagues.

Another myth that we work to dispel is, “Libraries are all about books!” While we love our collections, we know that libraries are really about people. This year's OLA Super Conference theme, “Powered by the People,” reinforces this truth. We are excited to offer amazing opportunities to learn and share with colleagues in school libraries and across sectors with a diverse and engaging slate of sessions at the OLA Super Conference 2019, which runs from Wednesday, Jan. 30 – Friday, Feb. 1, 2019. Our OSLA stream planners have put together a fantastic program for school library staff and their administrators.

One way to help dispel the myths surrounding school libraries is to invite your administrator to attend with you for FREE! Send your name and your administrator's name to [superconference@accessola.com](mailto:superconference@accessola.com) to take advantage of this amazing opportunity! Please remember to renew your membership to help support our school library initiatives and to take part in the wonderful incentives that OLA offers.

My term as OSLA Council President is coming to an end and I would like to thank the Ontario Library Association for wonderful support throughout my term. I also would like to thank OSLA council members for their support, advocacy and never-ending work! Behind the scenes, council is always working hard to represent and support school librarians and school libraries throughout the province. I especially would like to thank, Kate Johnson-McGregor for being my rock and a wonderful mentor to me and all teaching librarians.

Librarians are truly the superheroes of our school communities! We continuously collaborate and work together with students, teachers and parents, to foster learning and create learning spaces that are special for everyone. Our joy comes from knowing that we strive to develop collections and resources that are unique and to create opportunities where our students can learn through inclusion, equity and diversity. It has been an honour to represent school librarians throughout our province and to work with such passionate people! As Helen Keller said: “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

I look forward to seeing everyone in January at the OLA Super Conference, Powered by the People! 📖

# GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP

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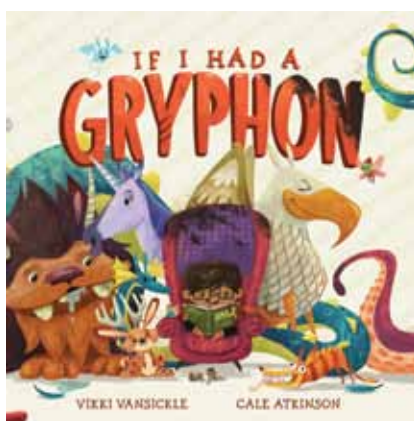
# Book Buzz

I contemplated this issue's theme of Myths and Reality deeply, as these two areas present quite the dichotomy.

Mythology is a popular unit of study for children and young adults – and with mythology's interesting fables about heroes and heroines, it's easy to see why! Storytelling is an important way to inspire creativity in children, laying the groundwork for future studies in literature and humanities. Reality, on the other hand, provides structure and keeps students centred.

There is much fantastical and false information out there, and it's more accessible than ever with the modern reality of social media and technology. Students require exposure to resources that include imagination and information and need the tools to understand the difference between what is true and false.

Here are a few reading suggestions around this theme for your school library:



## **If I Had a Gryphon**

Written by Vikki VanSickle,  
Illustrated by Cale Atkinson  
Tundra

*Hardcover: ISBN 9781770498099*

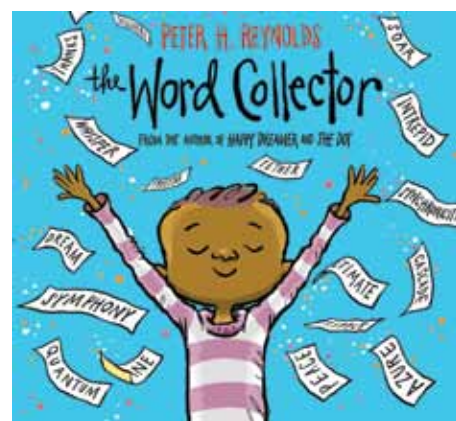
*(published 2016)*

*Board Book: ISBN 9780735264656*

*(published 2018)*

**For ages: 3 – 7**

This children's story provides a unique intro to the differences between myths and reality for little learners. The author, Vikki VanSickle (originally from Woodstock, Ontario), is also behind the award-winning chapter book, *The Winnowing*, which is featured on page 12 of this column. This magical picture book (also available as a board book) follows a young girl named Sam who reads about mythological creatures. She decides her new hamster is not very exciting and dreams of a more exotic pet. By the end, readers will agree with Sam that traditional pets are not so bad after all!



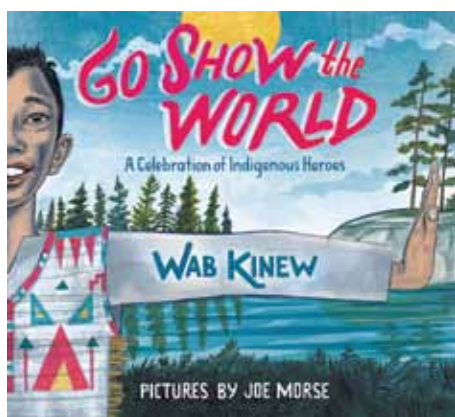
## **The Word Collector**

Written and Illustrated by  
Peter H. Reynolds  
Scholastic Inc., 2018

*ISBN: 9780545865029*

**For ages: 4 – 8**

Peter H. Reynolds is a teacher favourite, famous for writing and illustrating numerous bestsellers with real messages for kids. His work is admired worldwide and has been translated into more than 25 languages (great news if you are searching for French resources). *The Word Collector* also is available in French – *Le Collectionneur de Mots*. This story follows Jerome who collects something untraditional for children: words. Jerome is fascinated by the words all around him, and he likes to mark them down in his scrapbook. One day Jerome slips, and his words fly loose and out of place. The takeaway is that words are powerful. While officially recommended for ages 4 – 8, it will be appreciated by bookworms of all ages. Fans of Peter H. Reynolds should also look out for his new book, *Say Something*, coming out in February.



**Go Show the World: A Celebration of Indigenous Heroes**

Written by Wab Kinew,  
Illustrated by Joe Morse  
Tundra, 2018

ISBN: 9780735262928

For ages: 5 – 9

Feedback I often hear from elementary educators is that they need more non-fiction for early readers as well as resources about Indigenous people. Both can be found in this debut picture book from Wab Kinew. He has a diverse background as a politician, musician, and author. He even wrote a rap song to highlight both known Indigenous trailblazers and lesser-known male and female leaders in the community. In fact, the lyrics of his rap became the text of this book. His mission is to instill the message in young people that they are valued and should share their gifts with the world. He highlights true stories relevant to Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, showing examples of strength and resilience, overcoming adversity, pride, and success to inspire children of all backgrounds.



**Connect the Dots: The Dead Kid Detective Agency #4**

Written by Evan Munday  
ECW Press, 2018  
ISBN 9781770413337

For ages: 8 – 12

For students with an interest in the supernatural, the fourth title in the *Dead Kid Detective Agency* was released this fall. A good series is a great literacy tool, as it encourages kids to continue reading when they have characters and plots to which they feel connected. This series of chapter books follows heroine October Schwartz. She likes to hang out in the Stickville Cemetery, solving crimes with her ghost friends. This book finds October investigating the past death of Tabettha Scott and a current robbery at a school concert. As a bonus, I had the opportunity to connect with the author Evan Munday. Of interest to teacher-librarians, he mentioned how – amongst the ghosts and witchcraft – all four books aim to include Canadian history and real details!



**Real or Fake? 3: Even More Far-Out Fibs, Fishy Facts, and Phony Photos to Test for the Truth**

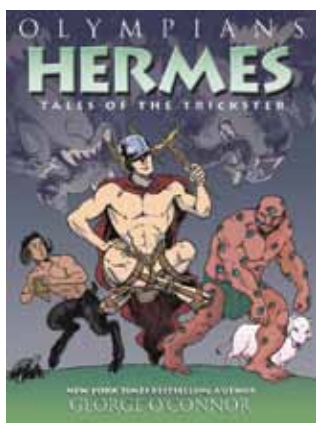
Written by Emily Krieger  
National Geographic Society, 2018  
ISBN: 9781426330049

For ages: 8 – 12

National Geographic Kids is known for interactive resources that teach kids important skills in an entertaining manner. This series is no exception, and charges kids with an important task to decipher real versus fake events with the help of a fib-o-meter. The pages are filled with far-fetched stories and pictures, leaving students to use their detective skills to determine true from false as well as gauge the actual level of the lie (little white lie or big ol' whopper). Did students strike over homework in Spain? Was a toddler ticketed for littering in Washington? Is there a yoga class open to goats? If these questions intrigue your library-goers, you may just need to pick up a copy of this funny little book.

*continued on page 12*

...continued from page 11



### **Olympians: Hermes: Tales of the Trickster**

Written and Illustrated by

George O'Connor

First Second, 2018

ISBN 9781626725256

For ages: 9 – 14

Greek mythology – a very popular unit of study for students – is brought to life in an exciting and entertaining manner in the popular *Olympian* series by George O'Connor. His tenth graphic novel focuses on Hermes – god of several areas including astrology, travel, athletics – and trickery. The back pages of the series are particularly educational, with sections on author's notes, Greek notes, biographies of the gods in the stories, and thought-provoking discussion questions for students. George O'Connor is slated to be a guest speaker at the Reading for the Love of It conference in February in Toronto, Ont. He'll be launching the most recent title in the series, *Hephaistos*, which comes out this January.



### **The Winnowing**

Written by Vikki VanSickle

Scholastic Canada Ltd, 2017

ISBN 9781443148863

For ages: 12 – 18

This sci-fi thriller won the Red Maple Fiction Award in 2018, as voted by children in the Forest of Reading program. Not surprisingly, Vikki VanSickle was a huge fan of *The X-Files* growing up. This adventure follows Marivic Stone as she tries to uncover the truth about a secret procedure called the winnowing – a rite of passage for all adolescents – that no one who experiences it actually remembers. For students and teachers who want to delve further, there is a discussion guide and project ideas that can be accessed on the author and publisher websites. It's a great title to inspire students to think ahead to the 2019 Festival of Trees.



### **Fighting Fake News!: Teaching Critical Thinking and Media Literacy in a Digital Age**

Written by Brian C. Housand

Prufrock Press Inc., 2018

ISBN 9781618217288

For Teachers

Fake news is a very popular topic right now and it fits perfectly with our myths and reality theme. While this title is officially targeted to a middle school audience, this educator resource can certainly apply to a wider group. Students may be surprised to learn that fake news has a long history, but that the extreme access to information through technology has presented new challenges. This title aims to help students develop appropriate research and problem-solving skills to decipher real from fake news using current examples and social media channels. The chapters are filled with activities, but the author also encourages teachers and students to develop their own projects as well. A timely resource for teacher-librarians who want to help students improve their media literacy and critical thinking skills. ■

# THE Teaching Librarian Event Calendar

For more information on OLA events and programs, visit [accessola.com/events](http://accessola.com/events)

## DECEMBER

**1**  
Elections open for OLA Board and OSLA Council

**10**  
Elections close for OLA Board and OSLA Council

**Dec. 22—Jan. 1**  
The OLA office closes for the holidays

## JANUARY

**22**  
Festival of Trees  
Tickets on Sale for Toronto (English and French) and Satellite Festivals

**Jan. 30—Feb. 2**  
Ontario Library Association Super Conference, Toronto, Ont.

## FEBRUARY

**Jan. 30—Feb. 2**  
Ontario Library Association Super Conference, Toronto, Ont.

## MARCH

**11—15**  
March Break

## APRIL

**ALL MONTH**  
Voting for Forest of Reading® school-aged award programs

**26**  
NEW OLA EVENT:  
“Bridge Between”  
OCULA/OSLA Combined Spring Conference

**29**  
OPLA's RA in a Day

## Fascinating New Books on *Myths & Realities!*



**Magic, Myth, and Mystery (45th Parallel Press)**  
Cherry Lake Publishing



**News Literacy**  
North Star Classroom



**Minecraft: Virtual Reality**  
Unofficial Guides  
(21st Century Skills Innovation Library)

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# Meet the Author

## Carrie Mac

Carrie Mac is the award-winning author of – most recently – *Ten Things I Can See From Here*, published by Knopf, USA. Her novel *The Opposite of Tidy* was a Forest of Reading White Pine nominee in 2013. She lives in Vancouver, B.C.



**TingL:** Think back to the publication of your first novel – am I right in thinking that was *The Beckoners* in 2004? What did that accomplishment feel like?

CM: I loved that I had a whole manuscript that was mine. One that didn't exist until I made it. I had a story that had not been told before, which felt precious and, also somewhat precarious as I looked for a home for it. When it was published, I was so delighted to have a stack of copies for myself, because that is what made it so special...that there were thousands of them out there.

Myth: I thought that would be my proudest moment. Reality: Finishing the book was my proudest moment. I was ready for it to never be published at all.

**There isn't one tiny piece of this planet that doesn't hold a story. How do you decide what that story is?**

I pick the most compelling image and start there. I see the whole as visual snapshots, and for that, I'm thankful. I can usually pick out the image that I want to focus on. If I had to simply experience the miasma as emotions or storylines or people or ideas, I'm certain that I'd feel overwhelmed and not have a clue where to begin.

Myth: It's hard to find a story idea. Reality: It's harder to narrow all the billions of story ideas down and concentrate on just one.

**What compels you to write for a primarily teen audience?**

I don't primarily write for a teen audience, but I do pitch the books as such, because I appreciate how loyal YA readers are, and how they are relentless in their expectations that you write

## Angela Thompson

up to them, and not down. Also, I want to put books out that speak to kids who don't see themselves in the mainstream. Queer kids, kids with mental health problems, kids with serious sh\*t going down in their personal lives, kids who live on the margins in ways that are underrepresented.

Myth: Writing for teens is a very different thing than writing for adults. Reality: Writers should write what they write. Readers will sort themselves out.

**You have written both contemporary, realistic fiction, and science fiction for young adults. What are the challenges specific to writing in each genre?**

I'm going to insist that the challenges are the same. The world you create must be believable. The dialogue must ring true. Your characters need to be as complex as real people, yet not be over written. Avoid overly timely tropes and language.

**How do you decide on the genre for the stories you tell?**

The stories come with the genre already set. If I feel compelled enough by the story to write a first draft all the way through to the end, then that means it's going to become a book. Genre be darned.

**Do you have a story that is in the process of being told? Will you share something about it?**

It's the story of the deepest kind of friendship; one that is about survival and raising each other up as much as it is about affection and what two people have in common. I could say that most people don't get to know this kind of "chosen family" friendship, but that's the relationship my characters have in the book I'm working on now. And of course, a terrible thing happens.

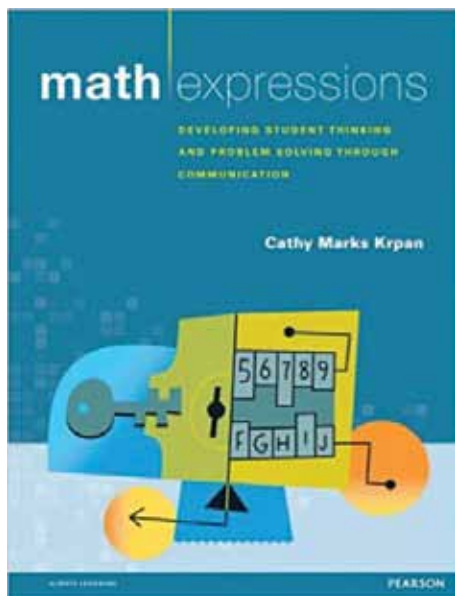


**Is there any recent "found writing advice" that you have encountered? What inspired you to blog these words of wisdom?**

I'm always collecting found writing advice. Here's one for you:

Say no. Say no to commitments that will take you away from your writing. Say no to people who tell you that you shouldn't waste your time on your story, your characters. Say no to accepted defeat when it comes to your efforts to get people to read your work. And, also, rubbish removal. Get rid of the garbage in your writing, the fluff that hides the real story. Murder your darlings over and over and over. ■

# Professional Resources



## **Math Expressions: Developing Student Thinking and Problem Solving Through Communication**

by Cathy Marks Krpan, PhD  
Pearson Canada Inc., 2013  
ISBN 978-0-32-175615-2

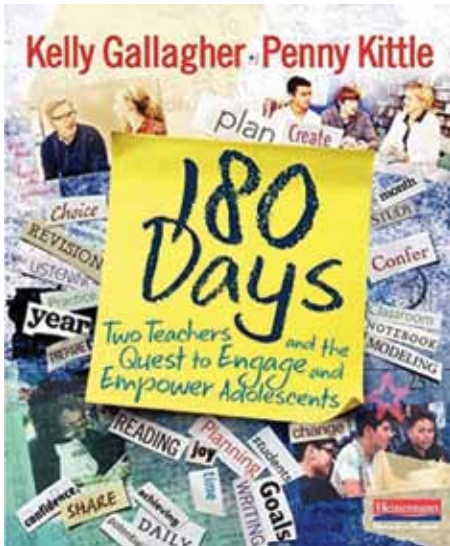
*A worthwhile resource providing elementary math teachers with templates, activities, blackline masters, and teaching guides to build a collaborative, exploratory, and communication-based math class.*

The trouble with teaching math is there is so much to cover. People often misperceive the need for set procedures with right and wrong answers, but math, like any subject, should be filled with exploration, concept-development, and communication to build an understanding and confidence in our students.

Cathy Marks Krpan, a doctor of philosophy in education, provides a practical and well-researched guide to support teachers of all levels in their implementation of collaboration, inquiry, accountable talk, reading and writing into their math programs. Each chapter includes “an overview of the background research that supports the specific communication approach” with “practical, how-to examples and activities” (p. ix). The companion website has resources, tools, and blackline masters you can download and use along with step-by-step guides, found within the book, to support your initial use of various structures like the “Mathematical Clothesline,” “Wanted Number,” and “It Is and It Isn’t.”

Perhaps one of the most critical sections of the book is the section on reading. Marks Krpan highlights the differences between reading for other subjects versus math, explicitly referring to the structure of math problems. She guides you through supports for teaching your students to approach problem-solving from a language perspective. Her awareness of the impact of math anxiety on English language learners and those who struggle with language is evident, and her procedures provide supports and understandings for these students. She provides success criteria and checklists designed for goal-setting to help your students understand where they are at and how they can move forward.

Two copies of this book are available from the Ontario College of Teachers’ Margaret Wilson Library, but chances are, if you are working to develop a language-rich math program, you’ll want a copy of your very own!



### **180 Days: Two Teachers and the Quest to Engage and Empower Adolescents**

by Kelly Gallagher & Penny Kittle  
Heinemann, 2018  
ISBN 978-0-325-08113-7

*A mentor text for language teachers written by reading and writing workshop teacher leaders. Created through the process of collaborating on a year of teaching and reflecting upon the many decisions made, it responds to the question “How do we fit it all in?”*

If you’ve taught language before you know the power of a mentor text to inspire thinking, word choice, and grammar usage. In response to the question: “How do you fit it all in?” high school educators Kelly Gallagher and Penny Kittle have created a teaching mentor text to illustrate what a year of solid teaching can look like. Their opening quote by Goldberg highlights the complexity of teaching and points out that teachers make “more than three thousand nontrivial decisions every day” (p. xv). This book looks in detail at the whys and hows of the decisions made throughout their year of teaching together.

Not only is it a guide for language classes, but also for good teaching that could apply to any class. They outline the need for planning and focusing on the “bones” (p. 91) of your program while adapting to student need through conferences and mini-lessons to support a larger number of students. They explore assessment practices, homework, and the reasons for decisions that influence what you teach, how you teach, and the students you focus on. As they state beautifully, “Students are at the centre of our work. We teach them, not curriculum. Even though we plan ahead for a year, our day-to-day teaching will vary as we respond to the learning of

our students—we teach with urgency—deciding daily how to best lead our students to engage deeply and to sustain energy for learning” (p. 9). Every class could benefit if teachers kept these goals in mind.

In this book, you’ll find two sections – Planning Decisions and Teaching Essential Discourses. The Planning Decisions section could be read by everyone from teachers to superintendents. While Teaching Essential Discourses is more specific to educators. It focuses on units such as Narrative, Information, Multi-Genre Writing and Argument. It also provides examples, lessons, processes of mini-lessons, how to spiral through and build skills, specific uses of notebooks, and where to find authentic and engaging mentor texts to inspire student talk, skills, and engagement in today’s complicated society.

Not only can you read about it, but you can also observe and listen. Teaching Videos and Conversation Videos are found in the margins of the book and available through their site. If you want to see exactly what a lesson looks like, how a mentor text is presented, the structure of notebooks, or observe a reading conference, you can. As well, blackline masters are provided to support your exploration of reading and writing workshop practices.

In reading *180 Days*, you can collaborate with master teachers through text and virtually, but Gallagher and Kittle also challenge you to find your own teaching partner. In their afterword video, they state that reflection and collaboration create better teachers. They highlight that teaching together to create *180 Days* was difficult but ultimately improved and challenged their teaching practices. ■

# DRAWN TO THE FORM

## Phoenix Rising: The Reopening of the Only Kids-Focused Comic Store in North America

Finding appealing and appropriate comics for young readers is not as difficult as it was in the past, thanks to great authors, illustrators, publishers and vendors like the renowned Little Island Comics. Many members of the Toronto comic community were dismayed when the rumour circulated that Little Island Comics, the only kids-focused comic store in North America, was scheduled to close. Sadly, the rumour was true. Thankfully, it didn't stay closed for long! Here's a short history of Little Island Comics, separating the myths from reality.

### A Brief History of Little Island Comics

Little Island Comics was opened as a spin-off of longstanding Toronto comic book shop The Beguiling Books & Art. When Little Island opened in 2011, The Beguiling already had been operating a free-standing library services division for about a decade, doing consultation and sales for graphic novel collection development. Because of the library part of the business, there was a warehouse fully stocked with all kinds of graphics for all ages, especially kids and teens, as well as a small but impressive team of specialist booksellers for that area. The Beguiling staff needed to move the library services offices and warehouse that year, and a great space opened up around the corner, but that space had a retail storefront. So, the real estate was part of the reason to open the shop.

Another major factor was the huge boom in comics publishing for young people that started about 10 years ago and continues today. In the 1990s, there just wasn't enough material to fill a whole shop with graphic novels for kids. But by 2010, this youth category really began to emerge



and flourish. This current era is a golden age of illustrated narratives for all ages.

The third factor was the need to create a retail space that was welcoming for kids, parents, and educators. Comics is a diverse medium, but quite often a local comic book shop is a place focused on the kinds of narratives that adult readers enjoy, including much that is far from appropriate for kids! Little Island was a chance to create a space where no one would have to worry about digging through the adult content to find the stuff that's good for a middle-schooler. Many parents who shop at Little Island would never have thought to go into a "regular" comic book shop with their children.

Ever wondered why the store is called Little Island Comics? Andrew Woodrow-Butcher explains that "we wanted to find something that would relate to our original shop but still be clearly for kids. Since "beguiling" is a relatively under-used word, it's often misheard by our customers. And one of the most common mis-hearings of "beguiling" is "big island." We

## Diana Maliszewski and Andrew Woodrow-Butcher

thought “little island” would be a great name for a shop for our littler customers!”

### Little Island “Sinks”

So, with all these supportive factors, why did Little Island shut down? The short answer: real estate. The original location closed when developers purchased the historic Mirvish Village neighbourhood, which is currently being torn down to be replaced by condominiums. Many kinds of cultural spaces – bookstores, event spaces, artists’ studios – are legally considered “commercial use,” so there is no protection for the delicate literary ecosystem of Toronto, which relies on those kinds of venues. When Little Island Comics was forced to close in 2016, Toronto lost its only downtown children’s bookshop, and the world lost its only comic book shop specializing in comics for kids.

### Little Island Emerges Anew

The library services division continued to operate for the year that Little Island was closed, and that meant they still had all the books, a lot of the furniture, and, most importantly, all the expert booksellers that made Little Island what it was! They operated out of a warehouse/office in Cabbagetown for that year, continuing to sell books to schools and libraries. Meanwhile, The Beguiling, which also had been forced to vacate its home in Mirvish Village, had found a new retail location on College Street, at the top of Kensington Market. When a storefront adjacent to the new Beguiling became available, it was too good an opportunity to pass up! This was a bonus to their retail customers. Considering how healthy business has been for the kids’ comic book store, it’s unlikely that another foreclosure will occur. Little Island Comics plans to be around for a long time. Now that Little Island Comics is literally and figuratively next door to The Beguiling, they can share resources such as the new event space and gallery. The new shops also provide a nicer, more spacious showroom for teachers and librarians who shop in person. What remains the same is the selection, staff, and spirit of the establishment. ■



#### Little Island Comics

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@littleislandcmx

# TVO Separates Myth from Reality

Leah Kearney

It has been said that we live in VUCA—volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous—times, which means that it is more important than ever for Ontarians to be able to discern between myths and realities. With its root in the Greek word *mythos*, the term myth has come to refer to stories that are often derived through word of mouth. Myths are generally started to give a sense of understanding or control over something. Whereas realities are facts that are evidence-based and not up for debate.

As teacher-librarians, you have a front-line role in supporting your students as they make sense of the world around them. Your role is crucial in:

- developing critical and creative thinkers
- developing an understanding of how knowledge is created
- promoting the ability to evaluate ideas
- enabling students to think for themselves

Toward these goals, TVO is excited to introduce a new and easy way for educators to enhance in-class learning with in-depth current affairs, thought-provoking documentaries and award-winning TVOkids videos and games.

More than 10,000 TVO and TVOkids videos, articles, and games are now available and searchable by grade, subject, and keyword (including curriculum keyword) to support you, the educator, in developing and sharing engaging lessons with students in the classroom. A few simple clicks in your e-learning (or blended learning) platform can unlock thousands of new and interactive ways to reinforce the Ontario K-12 Curriculum. Speak with your TELT contact or visit your e-learning platform to discover more. ■

**tvo** Never stop learning

## Don't Miss OLA's Signature and Divisional Events!

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LIBRARY  
AS PLACE

**RA  
IN A  
DAY**

**MARKETING  
LIBRARIES** think tank

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visit [accessola.com/events](http://accessola.com/events) for more info

# The results are in! Ontario's public libraries are doing **AMAZING** things for teens!



## Public libraries partner with schools more than any other community partner

82.1% of public libraries partner with local schools to deliver teen programming, a 9% increase from 2013.



## Teen volunteering and engagement at the public library

Public libraries remain a significant source for teen volunteer opportunities, with 93% of public libraries offering opportunities for teens to volunteer towards their OSSD volunteer hour requirements.

Teen volunteers can make a big difference at their local public library, participating in teen advisory groups, strategic planning, and advising on physical teen space.



## Programming is evolving

Teen programming has evolved in the past 5 years, with more libraries offering teen programming that focuses on: LGBTQ+ specific programming, homework help, and leadership programs.



## Makerspaces and STEM

51.3% of Ontario libraries reported having a makerspace at their library – including 50% of libraries serving fewer than 5,000 people. More than half of Ontario's libraries are offering some kind of maker programming for teens, with just under half offering digital technology/media, STEM and robotics programming.



## More dedicated space for teens

71.3% of libraries reported offering a separate area for teens, and 92% reported having a multi-use space available for teen programming.



Check out the 2018 Teen Services Benchmarking & Statistical Report for more!

Available for download at [accessola.com/opla](https://accessola.com/opla).

Anita Brooks Kirkland

# Smashing the Nobody Understands Me Myth

**Myth: Nobody understands what we do in school libraries.**

**Reality: We need to accept some responsibility for the myth. It's up to all of us to create understanding of the unique value proposition of the school library learning commons.**

**B**uilding this understanding is our – practitioners and leaders – collective responsibility. I take this opportunity to offer some provocations, empowering us to make the shift from feeling disenfranchised to feeling empowered. Here is the action advocacy approach!

## **1. Understand and be able to articulate the unique value proposition of the school library learning commons.**

School libraries have unique value in education. Understanding and being able to articulate that unique value proposition is critical. If we can't explain why we exist, how do we expect others to understand? Why is freedom of choice in reading important to literacy development? Why is the free exploration of ideas, an idea at the heart of the library's identity, a critical part of inquiry learning and creativity? Why is information literacy more important now than ever before, and what does that look like in the era of big data, social media and "fake news"?

## **2. Expand your sphere of influence and build relationships.**

The more we increase our sphere of influence through relationship-building, the more influence we will have about things that concern us. Your sphere of influence may be within the school or school district, or within professional learning networks or associations. Expanding our sphere of influence strengthens our voice. Positive relationships and building influence go hand in hand.

## **3. Market ideas and possibilities.**

Marketing is the process of intentionally making connections between what is valued by those we serve and what we have

to offer. This addresses the perception that others don't understand what we do. Of course they don't! They don't have the training and specific program knowledge that we do! It is up to us to open their minds to the possibilities.

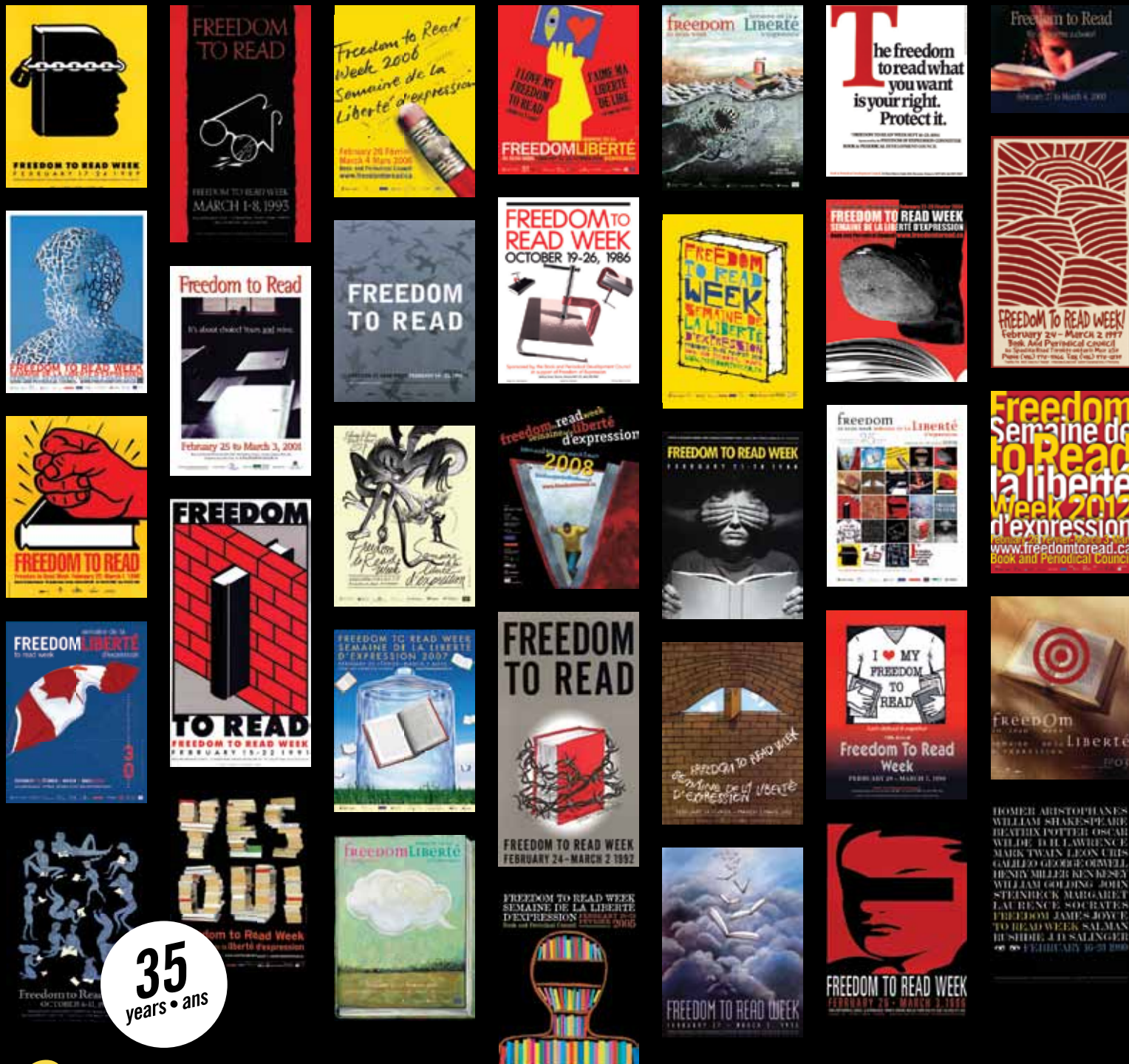
Here's a marketing approach to try on. Instead of asking colleagues how you can help them, why not flip that approach 180 degrees. Ask them what they are trying to achieve – what their goals are – and then make the connections to how you can help them achieve those goals. A simple but powerful change. Instead of despairing at our own perception that nobody understands what we do, take a proactive marketing approach to open up deeper understanding and new opportunities.

## **4. Be strategic and be accountable.**

Innovation is at the heart of strategic thinking. With innovation comes accountability: the process of articulating goals, evaluating the success of new strategies, reporting on our progress, and using that information to inform future plans.

## **5. Understand that this is what advocacy looks like – all of us taking positive action.**

We often think of advocacy as something that leaders do. But I believe that we all own advocacy through what we do every day. In the words of Shakespeare (*Coriolanus*), action is eloquence. We all own it, and we can all influence change. ■



# freedom to read week

## FEBRUARY 24 to MARCH 2, 2019

Order *Freedom to Read*, our annual review of current censorship issues in Canada, and our 2019 poster at

[freedomtoread.ca](http://freedomtoread.ca)



Canada Council for the Arts  
Conseil des arts du Canada

Visit our Facebook page and join the conversation  
@Freedom\_to\_Read #FTRWeek

Book and  
Periodical  
Council

JANUARY 2019

# FAKE NEWS

TRISH HURLEY

**W**hat do the words fidget spinner, gender-fluid and fake news all have in common? They were all shortlisted as the Collins Dictionary Word of the Year for 2017. Taking the top spot on the list was fake news, defined as, “noun: false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting.”

The term itself is an oxymoron. If it is fake, it isn't news, because news is based in fact. If it is news, it therefore cannot be fake. Perhaps the term itself is the problem. Hoax, fabrication, misinformation and down-right lies would be more accurate if one was to suggest the news being reported was untrue, and written or produced to mislead others.

However, semantics aside, it has become wildly popular in the last few years and used incessantly by United States President Donald Trump, as a way to denounce media outlets that disagree with him.

Mary McGuire, Associate Professor and Undergraduate Supervisor from the School of Journalism and Communication at Carleton University, explained, “Fake news is propaganda or disinformation that is produced to mislead people, to damage others or attract readers. This term has broadened in recent years thanks to Donald Trump. He uses the term fake news when it is really news that isn't fake at all. He uses the term when he doesn't like what is being reported or it is inconvenient or doesn't flatter him.”

Whether you are a fan of Trump, or your fingers curl into a fist in rage when you hear his name, fake news is now a mainstream term that needs to be addressed in schools. With the rise of social media and platforms like Instagram and Twitter, opinions can be shared instantaneously and students need help determining fact from fiction.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan was a long-serving American politician, as well as a sociologist and diplomat. He said, “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts.” This statement has a stronger meaning than ever when we live in a world where people can no longer agree on the same facts. When journalists research and report facts, others call that information fake news. Social media now allows users to connect with like-minded people who have similar views. This allows media consumers to customize their newsfeeds reinforcing narrow viewpoints. If people are following newsfeeds that only support what they believe, a tainted view of the world can be produced, and then everything outside of that viewpoint can be called fake news.

As early as Grade 1, the Ontario curriculum begins to address Media Literacy. Under the specific expectation 1.1, Purpose and Audience, the curriculum states, “identify the purpose and intended audience of some simple media texts.” By the time students hit Grade 12, the curriculum has numerous expectations, which relate to understanding media. Under the specific Critical Literacy 1.5 expectation, students are required to “identify the perspectives and/or biases evident in media texts, including increasingly complex texts, and comment on any questions they may raise about beliefs, values, identity, and power (e.g., comment on the different perspectives on an issue revealed in the news websites of different cultural groups).” This type of critical reflection, as laid out by the curriculum, helps ensure students learn how to determine if “fake news” is real, or not.

In response to the curriculum, and teenagers' use of social media, high school teachers are including specific lessons about fake news in their programs. Imman Sarhan, an English teacher at Lorne Park Secondary School in Mississauga with the Peel District School Board, already has a go-to lesson



**Providing students with an easy to follow, step-by-step resource...is a good first step in helping them become assertive and critical about the media they are exposed to.**

connecting the ideas of fake news to George Orwell's *1984*.

"This lesson is important in our current social and political climate because it gives young students an opportunity to learn that literature such as *1984* can predict, warn, and encourage people to act," she said. "They are constantly hearing the term 'fake news' being thrown around while they themselves may not have the tools to differentiate between what is fake and what is real. This can result in a passive approach to being critical about what they see, hear, or read online. Providing students with an easy to follow, step-by-step resource on how to determine what is fake news, and what is not, is a good first step in helping them become assertive and critical about the media they are exposed to."

In some schools, optional courses like Grade 11 Media Studies are available. The overview in the curriculum states: "Through analyzing the forms and messages of a variety of media works and audience responses to them, and through creating their own media works, students will develop critical thinking skills, aesthetic and ethical judgment, and skills in viewing, representing, listening, speaking, reading, and writing." It appears the curriculum is looking to teach Ontario children to view media with a critical eye. McGuire suggests the main thing to think about is, "When people are listening or watching, they need to examine it carefully and not assume it's fake because someone says it's fake. If they say it is fake, ask why they are saying that."

Teachers need tools to help students learn how to check the veracity of a story. One website that checks and debunks untrue stories that have gone viral is [snopes.com](https://snopes.com). For example, a story in April about Mark Zuckerberg announcing he was closing down Facebook went viral and looked real.

([snopes.com/fact-check/mark-zuckerberg-closing-facebook](https://snopes.com/fact-check/mark-zuckerberg-closing-facebook)) The video was 3:21 in length and highly convincing.

[Snopes.com](https://snopes.com) went through the story and the website explains how it was digitally manipulated. Snopes representatives said on the website that "most internet users have come across numerous fake photographs in the online world, but digitally altered videos – at least convincing ones – are a relatively new phenomenon in 2018. Although this footage may look pretty convincing, several aspects give away that the video is a hoax."

The website outlined some clues that helped to determine the video was a fake. Its first key point was the video did not originate from Zuckerberg's official Facebook page or any page associated with Facebook. Another hint, and perhaps the biggest, was the date the video was released – April 1, 2018 – which happens to be April Fool's Day. The website debunked the hoax. The clear explanations offered help to alleviate the panic that these fake stories may cause. This is just one of many examples on the website that teachers can use.

As this phenomenon deepens, books are being published as resources for teachers. *Fighting Fake News!: Teaching Critical Thinking and Media Literacy in the Digital Age* by Brian Housand, is one book teachers may consider to help debunk the fake news breakout (check out the short review in our Book Buzz section on page 12). *Information Literacy and Fake News* by Diane Dakers is another book analyzing the media. In it she explains why people may want to produce fake news. "The short answer is that creating fake news is easy. Remember, anyone with Internet and a computer, tablet, or smartphone can create and deliver instant information to the world. For some people, sending out bogus news stories may simply be a thrill, or a challenge to see how many readers they can trick," said Dakers.

If you Google lesson plans on fake news, you will no doubt come across crap, or more correctly put, C.R.A.A.P. This is an acronym, used for its memorability and fiction-detecting attributes. It stands for currency, reliability, authority, accuracy and purpose. There are numerous sources and graphics available online to use.

McGuire summarizes the tool with this advice: "Ask yourself who is the source of the news? If it is professional with policies and practices and goes to lengths to ensure they have the facts, consider it as reasonably credible. If you are online and it's written by a strange name and you cannot go to the profile nor can you figure out who wrote it, you should question the credibility of the source." She added that it's probably not fake when "no one else is calling it fake news. Reporters are paid and they are professional. The company they work for has policies and practices around how it is they report and edit their content and how many sources they use. Those policies are available if you ask for them. They follow professional standards."

Another great resource for teachers is Newswise ([newswise.ca](https://newswise.ca)), launched this year for students in Grades 5-12 by CIVIX and the Canadian Journalism Foundation with support from the Google.org Charitable Giving Fund of Tides Foundation. There are lessons on the website available for teachers to use with students.

For all people looking at media with a critical eye, most misinformation gets spread through social media, because it's instantaneous. When a large story breaks, the public wants information quickly. Unfortunately, people need to slow down and allow a journalist to do his/her job so that the facts can be reported.

Whether the story is being dubbed "fake news" or it is an intentional hoax, students need a clear understanding of how to figure out what is the truth. ■

Jennifer Brown and Jonelle St. Aubyn

# High School and Elementary Myths and Reality

## About Us:

### Secondary Perspective: Jonelle

I started my teaching career with Peel District School Board (PDSB) as a Health and Physical Education and Family Studies teacher at T.L. Kennedy Secondary School in 2002. I opened Louise Arbour Secondary School in 2010 as the Head of Physical Education and transitioned to the library learning commons in 2015. Since then I have been the full-time teacher-librarian at Louise Arbour and I am starting my fourth year in this role.

### Elementary Perspective: Jennifer

In 1998, I began my elementary teaching career in the Toronto District School Board, gaining experience in Grades 1, 6, and 8 along with the LEAP program and ESL support. By 2007, I moved to PDSB and returned to the primary classroom. Spending the next few years in special education, ESL support and library, in 2015, I started the journey to co-create the library learning commons at Castle Oaks Public School. Now in our fourth year, the school is a thriving K to 8 dual-track school.

## Our Connection:

Finding each other via Twitter, we realized that secondary and elementary teacher-librarians in our professional learning network rarely connected. We wanted to start a conversation around the differences and similarities in the secondary and elementary library learning commons. Once we got together, we realized that, despite the obvious systemic and

age differences of a K to 8 school and a 9 to 12 school, we had a great deal in common. Our approach to student learning, messages of trust and independence, and our desire to serve our learners' needs, made it clear that our core philosophies were very much aligned. We also discovered that there were many misconceptions or myths about our libraries that we had in common.

## Myths:

**Myth #1:** Students can't be trusted to use books, the equipment and the space independently or to take home a variety of materials (including technology) overnight.

**Myth #2:** The library is a quiet and controlled space in which the teacher-librarian is in control at all times.

**Myth #3:** We are either a warehouse of books or we are a technological hub — we can't be both. In other words, you are either a traditional library or a technology-based learning commons.

**Myth #4:** Teacher-Librarians can read the latest books or learn the newest technology because they have more time than other teachers to get things done.

**Myth #5:** The library is an "extra" and not a crucial component of teaching and learning. Essentially that libraries are expendable.

**Myth #6:** A quality library can run effectively on a low budget, minimal staff and no/low technology.

## Our Realities:

### Secondary Perspective: Jonelle

#### Myth #1

In our library, we have been letting our students take home Chromebooks, iPads and our media kits (which include a green screen, tripod, microphone and headphones) for the past two years, with great success. We do not have our students fill out a waiver or any paperwork to take out the devices and/or equipment. We simply take their student card and ask them to return the equipment first thing in the morning before period one begins. Over this two-year period, none of the devices have been lost, damaged or stolen.

At our school, teachers are engaged in 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning practices and students are given a variety of options to demonstrate their learning. This can include podcasts, filmed projects, blogging, vlogging and more! Therefore, equitable access to technology is a critical component for student success. We know that not all of our students have computers, tablets, phones or laptops that they can use at home to complete their work and we didn't want this to be a barrier for them. We made a conscious decision to trust our students to be responsible with the equipment and they have not let us down.

#### Myth #2

Most days, our library learning commons is far from quiet! However, most of the noise that is generated is from students working together and collaborating on assignments. We open every day at 7:45 in the morning, we are open during the entire lunch hour and we are open after school until 3:45. We have lots of tables that are great for collaboration and some of our tables are painted with clear whiteboard paint that students can write on when working together. We also encourage our students to play board games (which can be borrowed from the circulation desk) or engage in makerspace activities as means of stress relief and relaxation.

Students who need to study quietly often choose the study carrels to work in or retreat to the seminar room attached to the library. We are the preferred place for students who are on spare to work individually or in groups. In addition to the curricular activities that run out of the library learning commons, we also host extra-curricular activities as well. This includes the Milk Bag Mat Club, the Book Club, the Team Crew and the Peer Tutoring program in the library learning commons on different days of the week. It's rare for the library not to be a busy place at all hours of the school day.

#### Myth #3

At our school, we try to blend aspects of the traditional library, with the technological resources necessary to produce future ready learners. For example, we still buy lots of books in print. Students still love to read them and we find that having a

diverse collection really helps to engage our readers. However, we also maintain an online library through Sora. Our school is made up of an extremely diverse group of students. We have ESL students, Special Education students, and students in our DDR (Developmentally Delayed Resource) program. Therefore, having books in print and in ebook and audiobook format helps us to meet the needs of all students.

We teach the inquiry process and spend a lot of time helping students learn how to do research efficiently and effectively, but we rely on technology to help us do that. We build subject specific resources that students can continue to use even when they are not with us as they can access all material online on their teacher's class sites (i.e, Google Classroom, D2L, etc.). This flipped classroom approach has allowed us to reduce the amount of paper distributed to students and helps students to actively participate in their learning. Our colleagues also rely on the library learning commons as a technological hub, where we also teach lessons on film-making, podcasting, vlogging, and blogging. We do our best to keep up to date on the latest resources that make teaching and learning fun.

#### Myth #4

This myth always makes me smile. Contrary to popular belief, we are really busy in our library learning commons and it is rare that we have days that we are not fully booked all day. We are fortunate to have staff at this school that are open to collaboration and are always trying to move their teaching practice forward. It keeps us on our toes and we are constantly looking for ways to engage our students and support our colleagues. This involves regularly attending professional development sessions, visiting with departments to find out their greatest areas of need, researching the best and most effective resources to buy and planning, preparing and teaching lessons. We run lunch and learn sessions to support teachers when transitioning to online platforms like Google Classroom or using other forms of technology with their classes.

We connect regularly with the teacher-librarians at the feeder schools from our family of schools and host their students at our schools for board game tournaments and other social activities. We run poetry contests, reading challenges and STEM activities. We never let our space stay the same for too long! Every month is a different celebration and the bulletin boards change monthly to reflect those celebrations and/or events happening in the library learning commons.

#### Myth #5

The library is not an "extra" at our school. We are the hub of our school for so many reasons. When each department determines their greatest areas of need, we then figure out how the library learning commons can help support them to meet their goals. We buy resources with whole school needs in mind. We also house and maintain a great deal of the technology used by the school. We bring in guest speakers and

*continued on page 28*

authors that support a variety of curricular areas and we host numerous clubs, activities and events in our space. Our space is flexible and easily transformed to be a multi-purpose space for teaching and learning.

Everyone on the library team takes a customer service approach when dealing with staff and students. We welcome feedback and gather input on how we are doing. We celebrate every book a student checks out or every new idea a teacher has come up with for engaging students in learning. We honour voice and choice and give everyone a say in what gets purchased for the library learning commons. This has allowed us to become an integral part of the day to day operations of the school and a place that so many rely on.

#### Myth #6

Many would like to believe that a library learning commons can operate effectively on a shoestring budget and nothing could be further from the truth. Adequate funding is a must and we have been fortunate enough to have the support of the administration to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of our school. However, we consistently advocate for our library learning commons and promote what we have to offer to staff, students, parents and the community.

Our budget plan lines up with two things: meeting the needs of our school goals and meeting the criteria of an effective library learning commons, according to the *Together for Learning* document. We have been able to improve our physical space through the addition of club chairs, mobile tables, plants, posters, book displays and art. We also cut down our shelving to improve site lines and to make our space feel more open and welcoming. We added an online collection so that our library learning commons could be accessible at any time and from anywhere.

We give our students opportunities to access technology when they need it and we frequently use technology when teaching to prepare students for what lies ahead. We run field trips to McMaster University and the University of Toronto for library research workshops and campus tours and we participated in the Culture Days event at the Brampton Library. None of this would have been possible without a meaningful budget. An effective library learning commons must have the funding to make great ideas a reality.

### Elementary Perspective: Jennifer

#### Myth #1

The foundation of any relationship is trust. In the library learning commons, a space where students and staff from all grades should feel welcome and included, trust is the foundation of serving the entire school community. In an elementary school this means that some of our learners are as young as 3-years-old when they start with us in the fall. To suggest that we cannot trust our young students (or the older ones for that matter) starts us off in a deficit frame of mind. If we believe that all learners are competent and capable, then we must convey trust in our systemic structures, words and actions.

In our school that means a gradual release approach to independent library use through free flow book exchange for Kindergarten to Grade 8. It means that we do not lock technology behind cabinet doors. It means that we allow each child to take out any book they want right from day one. It means that we do not charge for damaged or lost books. We understand that mistakes occur as part of learning and developing responsibility but, we want the children to know that they are more important than any book, or device, or maker material we might own.

#### Myth #2

The shhhhhing librarian of old does not exist in our LLC. The space is active and, yes, loud. Students and staff can move chairs and tables to meet their immediate needs and create a responsive, collaborative learning environment. The learning is purposeful but, exploration, play and inquiry require conversation, questioning and occasionally the loud rumble of a bucket of LEGO crashing to the ground. That is not to say that quiet moments are not valued and that the negotiation of the movement and noise within the space is always easy. We often need to “stop the bus” as one of my TL friends used to say and ask everyone to take a pause and reflect on the types of learning happening around them. This is not meant to be seen as “getting in trouble” but, rather, as a lesson in community building and a chance for self-regulation.

Recently, thanks to fellow PDSB teacher-librarian Nicole Baron, I learned about the great strategy of creating a “quiet” zone by adding some noise cancelling headphones to our

collection. The co-construction of the space and the types of learning occurring within it mean that I am not in control in a traditional sense. However, it does mean that I have the responsibility of helping the students navigate their own learning and develop a deeper respect for the learning of others.

### Myth #3

This debate about the modern library learning commons does not feel like much of a debate to me in many ways. I think part of that is being in a new building where we were able to set the tone, structures and values from the beginning. Without the challenge of converting an older space, collection and mindset, there was no either/or when it came to love of books and love of technology. The core value of our LLC remains love of literacy, supported by a diverse collection of rich, inspiring reading materials and plenty of opportunities to share our excitement about the books and information we read.

The need to embrace technology in a variety of forms is essential to the world in which our students live. However, gone are the days where I feel the need to be the expert in the room. Equitable access is the top priority and remains a challenge but, a mindset that prioritizes co-learning over teacher expertise means that students and staff can experiment with technology together through meaningful, non-threatening inquiry learning.

### Myth #4

This myth is an often-heard comment in the school library world. “You have time to read that latest pedagogical book because you are JUST in the library,” or from the kids “Mrs. Brown – when are you going to become a real teacher?”

The first thing to clear up here is that classroom teachers are on the frontlines with their classes every day. They are bound by aspects of reporting cycles and homeroom responsibilities that I, as a full time TL, just do not have to adhere to in my daily practice. This does not, however, mean that I am relaxing with a good book and a box of chocolates in the library learning commons. Each role has its perks and challenges. I do feel a level of responsibility to be up on the latest educational trend or read the popular YA novels as they hit the shelves so that I can support and advise staff and students alike.

The library learning commons should be a hub of activity and learning for all 800 or so students in our school, so my time is used differently than a classroom educator but, hopefully no less active or demanding.

### Myth #5

Sometimes it’s hard for me to put into words why a thriving library learning commons is essential and not an afterthought. This isn’t because I do not believe this to be true, it’s because I worry that it can sound self-serving and self-congratulatory. Research and observational data tell us that having a thriving hub of learning at the heart of our school community improves student success across the grades.

So how do we see that come to life in our school?

When students tell us or we overhear:

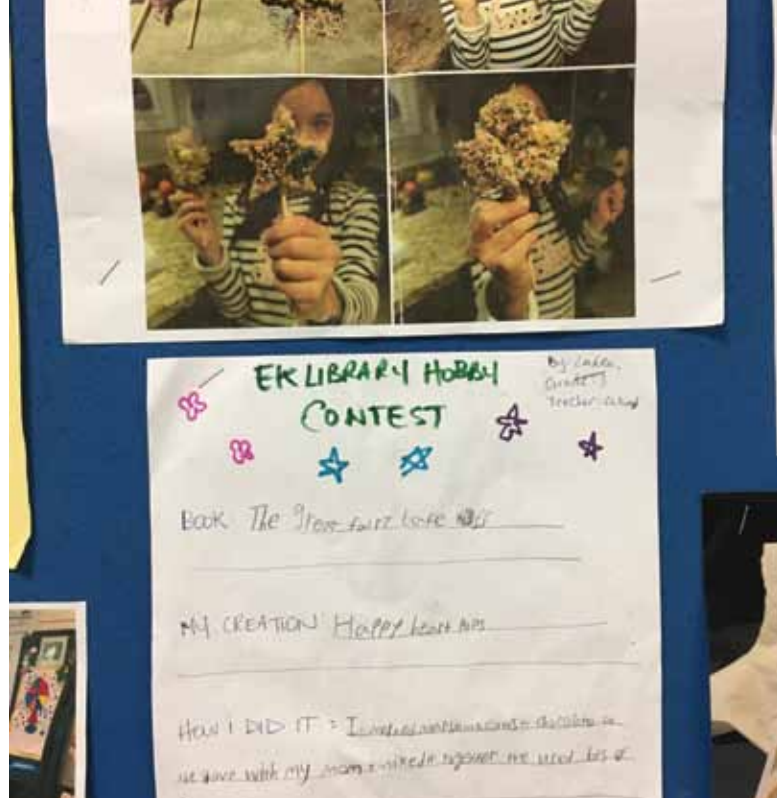
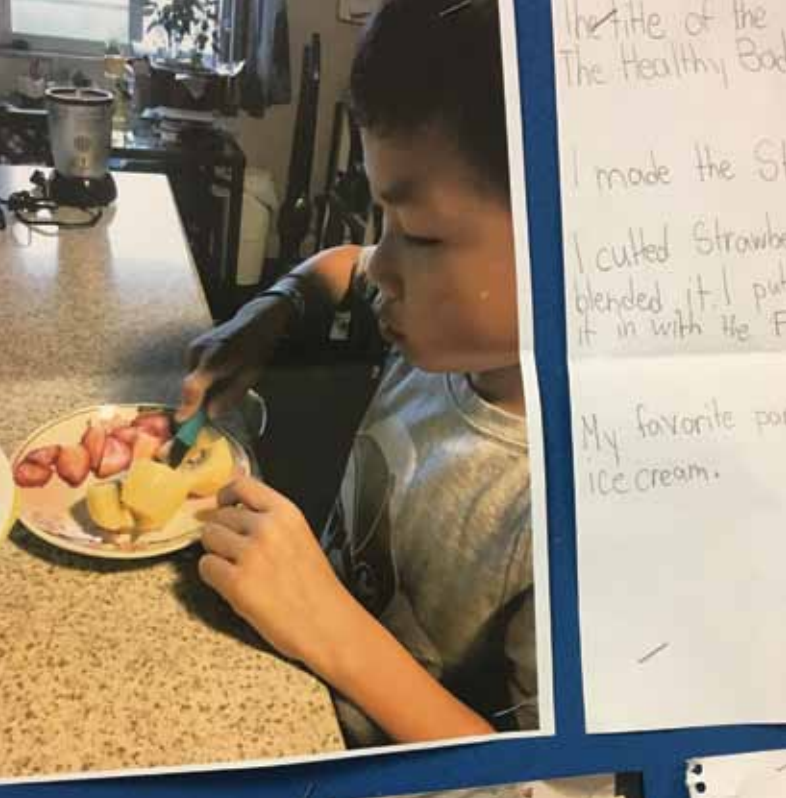
- I never liked reading before but now I do.
- I did it all by myself.
- I want to learn more about.
- I hate when the library is closed.
- I tried something new.
- I can’t wait to share this with my teacher/parent/friend.
- The library is my favourite place because...

### Myth #6

This is just not reality. The elementary library learning commons must be highly funded each year, fully staffed and include a well-maintained collection of books, a variety of technology and various hands-on materials to support play and inquiry.

In order to foster a love of reading, develop extensive research skills, embrace maker mindset, inspire design thinking and encourage global competencies, the financial and human support for the library must be a top priority for the entire school community. The strain that constant advocacy or fundraising can take on the teacher-librarian may mean a higher turnover of library staff and significantly less noticeable impact on student learning and growth.

I am thrilled to say I am currently in an ideal scenario in many ways but, I certainly realize this is very far from the reality across much of our province. ■



Heather MacNamara

# The Library Hobby Book Contest: A Fun Way to Increase Book Circulation

**M**y school library has a nice selection of hobby books, but they were always getting passed over. I decided to run a hobby book contest to increase their circulation. I was hesitant, wondering if there would be much interest in today's digital world, but it was met with great enthusiasm. It is now a fun tradition that I look forward to every year.

The idea is simple. Students sign out a hobby book and then use it to make something at home. They can get help from an adult, depending on the creation. There also is an entry form, which asks them to describe how they made their creation, and to recount their favourite part of the process. Finally, they are asked to take a photo, or draw a picture, of their creation.

Seeing the wonderful projects created at home is my favourite part. I display the photos for all to see, admire, and be inspired by. Projects that have been created include cookies, cakes, pizza, puppets, lanterns, comics, drawings, fruit punch, plasticine art, sewing projects, mini gardens, paintings, and more.

In the past I have displayed the hobby books on top of our book cubbies, but this year I placed the books in two labelled boxes. I find it's neater this way – fewer toppled and trampled books! – and it's easy for the kids to flip through the titles. Since there are only so many hobby books, each class is limited to two hobby books per week. I run the contest until everyone interested has had a chance to participate. Nine to ten weeks is usually sufficient.

As for the prizes for this contest, I find it very difficult to objectively choose the “best” entries since they are all so uniquely fantastic. I randomly choose a winner from each grade, and they receive a book gift certificate.

The time it takes to run the contest is minimal. I pull the hobby books from the shelves, photocopy the entry forms and then spend a few minutes a week displaying the entries as they come in.



### Top five things I like about the contest:

1. It is widely accessible. This is a naturally differentiated activity. Students can do as much or as little as they'd like for their entries, and the choices of hobby books embody a wide variety of skill sets.
2. It is widely appealing. Boys and girls of varying backgrounds equally enjoy creating something new, and they are free to choose a project based on their own interests.
3. It doesn't involve screen time. Technology has many fantastic uses, but it's refreshing in this day and age to see kids creatively engage in digital-free pursuits.
4. It motivates kids. This is an opportunity for kids to create without the pressure of assessment. It is especially rewarding when students who struggle in school put forth a tremendous effort for the contest. I will always remember one student who went above and beyond to create an entire book detailing her hobby experience. With tears in her eyes, her mother said that she had never seen her daughter be so motivated about a project before.
5. It creates a sense of community. It really is wonderful to see the photos of the students at home with their creations. Students and teachers alike pause to peruse and comment on our display of pictures. ■

### Looking for some hobby book suggestions to add to your collection? Here are a few of our favourites:

Bucholz, Dinah. *The Unofficial Harry Potter Cookbook: from Cauldron Cakes to Butterbeer—More than 150 Magical Recipes for Wizards and Non-Wizards Alike*. Adams Media, 2018.

Davis, Robin, and Frankie Frankeny. *The Star Wars Cookbook: Wookie Cookies and Other Galactic Recipes*. Chronicle Books, 1998.

McGraw, Sheila. *Papier-mâché for Kids*. Firefly Books, 1991.

Reid, Barbara. *Playing with Plasticine*. Kids Can Press, 1988.

### Check out these book-themed cookbooks:

Brennan, Georgeanne, and Frankie Frankeny. *Green Eggs and Ham Cookbook: Recipes Inspired by Dr. Seuss!* Random House, 2006.

Odell, Carol, and Anna Pignataro. *Once Upon a Time in the Kitchen: Recipes and Tales from Classic Childrens Stories*. Sleeping Bear Press, 2010.

Walker, Barbara M., and Garth Williams. *The Little House Cook Book*. Harper Collins, 2018.



Polly Krabbé

# The Myth About Digital Natives

**F**rom a distance it could seem a fair assumption that young people click their way through the online world with ease. They spend most of their waking hours “connected” after all.

That’s certainly what American technologist Mark Prensky thought when he coined the term “digital natives” in the early 2000s. He used the expression to describe people born after 1980 all of whom, he believed, had an innate ability to use technology.

However, the belief that young people are “digital natives,” has been disproved time and time again and now is widely thought a myth. Research has shown that there is a gap between students’ fluency in the use of technology and their ability to use digital tools to further their own learning.

Over a period of six months, the Stanford History Education Group in the United States set students across 12 states 56 tasks to discover their ability to judge the trustworthiness of the information they read online. More than 7,800 responses from students of high school to undergraduate age and from a wide range of institutions were collected and evaluated. The overwhelming conclusion? Most young people struggle to evaluate the credibility and reliability of information shared online! For instance, in one task, 80 per cent of middle school students (11-13 years old) could not differentiate between native advertising – identifiable by the words “sponsored content” – and real news stories.

The reality is that while young people may spend most of their time online, it is spent socializing and consuming entertainment. They don’t necessarily know the best way to use technology for educational purposes, identify authoritative information or recognize fake news from real. They lack what has become called “digital literacy.”

Young people therefore need to develop a critical appreciation of what they read online. They need, as Cornell University has defined, “the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share, and create content using information technologies and the Internet.” The school library or learning commons plays a key role in developing students’ digital literacy skills.

Many school libraries invest in e-resources, as they provide invaluable support for digital literacy and research skills. Subscription e-resources from academic publishers offer carefully curated scholarly content ensuring students have access to the best-trusted sources of information and research.

To ensure students have access to the resources and skills they need, it is important librarians and other teaching staff collaborate. Digital literacy is often thought to be something that can just sit alongside the curriculum where students learn a set of skills or use a certain resource and then it is done. This is not the case. Digital literacy skills need to be integrated across the curricula and developed within a subject context.

So, beware the myth. Young people need help in this increasingly complex digital world. ■



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Allison Hall

# Teacher-Librarians as Tech Wizards: Myth or Reality?

**W**hen I was a kid, the coolest technology I remember being in the library was a tiny, manual filmstrip projector. I would search the card catalogue for the desired filmstrip, thread it through the projector and eagerly watch the blurred image on the wall of a study carrel. If I was lucky, there would be a cassette tape companion that would not only narrate, but also let me know when it was time to advance the film.

These days our libraries are bursting with technology. We have iPads (with numerous apps), Chromebooks, robots, circuit kits, 3D printers, you name it. How can we be knowledgeable about all these tools? The answer is: We can't. Even if we could find the time to study and explore tech tools every night and on weekends, becoming an expert on all of them is an impossible task. So, what can we do?

Fortunately, modern learning allows us, as educators, to act as facilitators and become co-learners in our classrooms. The "sage on the stage" of the past is no more. We're all in this together. Our students have grown up using technology; it's part of their everyday lives. We will never know more about technology than they do.

As teacher-librarians, we understand the curriculum, ask good questions and provide exciting opportunities for our students. Integrating technology, where appropriate, can enhance the library program. And even if we're not confident in our tech skills, learning alongside the students is a great way to connect and build relationships. Am I ever afraid of looking like I don't know what I'm doing? Absolutely! Once I put aside the discomfort and dive in, the result is confident, enthusiastic and engaged learners.

Here are some simple ways to embrace new technology in your library learning commons:

## Time for Exploration

Give students time to explore new tech tools and figure out how they work. This year, I started an animation club. We began with Google Slides animation, something I learned about at a conference. My students got the hang of it right away and were ready to move on to something new. I introduced them to Adobe Flash CS4, and by introducing I literally mean showed them how to open the program and where to find support material. Then I let them explore. As I walked around the LLC, I could tell that some students were struggling while others were progressing quickly with their animation skills. I directed the struggling students to the ones who had figured things out. The students worked together as co-learners and soon all members of the club were able to begin a simple animation.

## Co-learning with Students

When I first heard about the importance of coding for all students, I was mystified. To me, coding meant typing pages of commands and symbols. How could elementary students be expected to do something like that? After a little research, I learned about block coding, discovered [code.org](http://code.org) ([code.org](http://code.org)), found some simple step-by-step tutorials and figured out how to code together with my students. We used collaboration and problem solving to work through the challenges and the students soon surpassed my very basic skills and moved on to Scratch ([scratch.mit.edu](http://scratch.mit.edu)), where they taught me how to make video games.



### A Robot Inquiry

Robotics can be overwhelming at first. There are so many different kinds: Sphero, Dash and Dot, Ozobot, Lego WeDo, Mindstorms. It's difficult to know where to begin. A robotics inquiry can be a good starting point. Students can work in groups to choose a robot and come up with some questions. Then they can play, explore and find answers. The best part is when they demonstrate their new knowledge to the rest of the class. Students also can be prompted to figure out how the robots can be used with the curriculum for their grade level.

### QR Codes on Tech Bins

Find some tutorial videos on YouTube that show students how the technology works. Paste a QR code ([goqr.me](https://goqr.me)) that links to the video on the bin where the material is stored. Students can scan the code, watch the video and try out the tech tool. Better yet, have other students – library helpers – create the tutorial videos themselves.

### Tech Buddies

Recruit older students (or students with already established expertise or interest) to learn about new tech tools first. These students can then partner with younger peers to help them figure out what to do.

Make use of volunteers and co-op students. They may be tech savvy in an area where you need help.

### Students Teaching Teachers

Involve students in professional learning. When I was asked to provide a lunch and learn on Minecraft for teachers, I was a little nervous. I knew the basics, but I certainly wasn't an advanced user. I decided to call in the experts. I brought some of my Minecraft club members to host the lunch and learn. They played Minecraft every day and were able to not only teach the teachers, but answer all their questions about the game and its curriculum applications.

### Ask for Help

We are fortunate to live in such a connected world. There are so many educators with expertise in different areas that we can contact. Your board may have technology resource teachers, who can help you get your head around new tech materials and co-plan lessons with you to use that technology in meaningful ways as part of your curriculum. Look for Twitter friends using similar tech tools and ask questions. Attend workshops and conferences or connect with other librarians in your area and book some time to play and explore. Hands-on learning is often the best way to fully understand how something works.

So, try that new app, buy that new robot and give your students the chance to enhance their 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and become leaders in the classroom. You'll build the confidence of your students and maybe even your own. ■

# The Five Myths of Makerspace

**M**any makerspaces having been popping up in the school learning commons over the past few years. What is the purpose of these makerspaces within the education model? What is it about makerspaces that makes the learning commons staff apprehensive about organizing and running these creative spaces?

## 1. A Makerspace is Just a Craft Centre — Purpose

In my new book *Creating a Learning Commons for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with Design Thinking*, I describe makerspaces as, “an area where students are free to explore, create, design, test, and share creations. A makerspace is not a craft centre. What is the difference? A craft centre is where students are given step-by-step instructions to make a specific item. In a makerspace, students can be given a goal, but are not given directions. Students create and design their own solution. They have supplies available and are free to use what they need.” (p. 71)

But what is the purpose of a makerspace? It is to teach students creativity, critical thinking, and encourage collaboration and design thinking. With free access to many materials and their own (or group) ideas, many students learn that several attempts are needed before a viable solution can be created. These are the skills that many companies are searching for in new recruits and they are finding few graduating students who understand the skills needed for teamwork and design thinking. It is for this reason that many schools are changing their education model to include these skills. Understanding this thinking cycle, and how to interact with others when sharing ideas and solving problems, is something that needs to be modelled and practiced over time. Students need to understand what it sounds and looks like when one is truly practicing teamwork skills: focus, respect, acceptance of others’ ideas, manners, positive attitude, active listening.

“The design thinking cycle actually boosts creativity by walking students through specific stages of the creative journey. Some of the most creative thinkers in the universe follow this framework, and they see it as a way to open up new possibilities rather than a system that stifles their creative work.” (Spencer 53)

It is imperative for staff to realize that for makerspace and design thinking to work, staff must not interfere with the students’ solutions, creations and/or work. It is essential that students learn to think critically and problem solve their own solutions. One challenge I organize uses paper cups to build a pathway for a robot. Many students come and say that they do not have enough cups and ask what they should do. I answer back with a question “How do you make the cups go further?” No answers, only questions.

## 2. I Don’t Have Any Space

Makerspaces can be made to fit into any space whether large or small. Obviously, it is nice to have large area with shelving with a wide variety of material available. However, having carts that can be easily moved from class to class is another creative and space saving solution.

Try to have labelled bins so students can return unused items for a tidy and organized area. Organization is key to any well-used area. Material needs to be found quickly and there should be plenty of space to work.

## 3. I Don’t Have Enough Time

How do you have time to continually invent new challenges for your makerspace? Have an open makerspace where students are free to create and design their own ideas. I also like to have specific challenges as well so we can practice modelling teamwork, collaboration and communication skills.

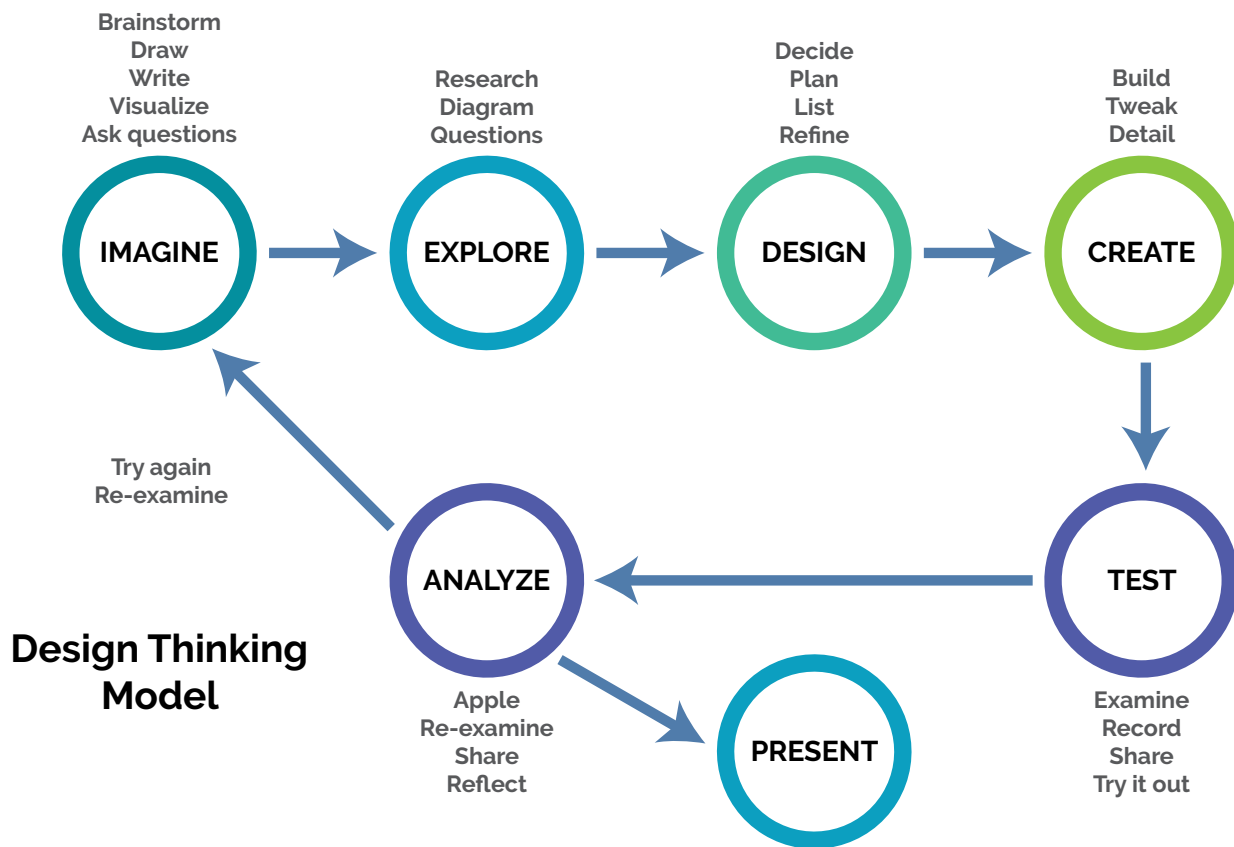
I manage my time by having six to eight challenges set up in the makerspace that students rotate through during the year. Each class is divided into groups and every time that class comes to a makerspace session, each group rotates to the next challenge.

“Properly designed Makerspaces support and encourage collaboration. There will always be a time and a place for people to fly solo on different projects...However, collaboration is an important skill, and we want to encourage students to embrace working with others with the understanding that different people bring various skills to the table.” (Provenzano 24)

To have enough time for makerspace and other parts of a learning commons, it is essential to have flexible scheduling and self-checkout. Managing time and allowing others to manage their time has a tremendous impact on staff and students. When they realize that they are responsible for their own book exchange and scheduling management then they become empowered, responsible and take ownership of their educational needs.

## 4. We Can’t Afford A Makerspace

Makerspace can have many kinds of supplies. Many of these supplies can come from recycle bins such as toilet paper rolls, clean yogurt cups, Styrofoam containers, water bottles etc. Other supplies can come from school supplies such as tape, scissors, paper clips, markers, etc. Parents and families are



another source of supplies from home with boxes, paper towel rolls, material, thread, and other supplies. These supplies can be switched and changed over time according to what is available. Of course, if a student needs something specific and it is not available at that time, they are welcome to bring things from home.

Start small when adding robotics and other technology. These additions can be costly but when chosen wisely with a budget and purpose in mind then they are an invaluable tool for teaching any subject.

## 5. We Don't Have All the Robotics and Gadgets

One of my favourite areas of the makerspace is the "Low Tech" area. These challenges give students an opportunity to build with recycled material. A great resource for these challenges is the non-profit group, Destination Imagination.

### Remove These Objects

Given specific items students are asked to create a device that will remove each ball without any body part crossing the line. The balls must not touch the ground or the toilet paper rolls – on which the balls are sitting – must not be knocked over.

### "Build a House for the Three Little Pigs"

Using recycled material, build the three little pigs a house. The students are given a piece of paper to draw a plan of their house and then may begin to build. To increase the difficulty, add a price to the building material and give a total budget allowance such as \$1.50. Then each individual item also has a

cost, e.g., paper cup 15¢, paper plate 15¢, popsicle stick 10¢. Not only do they now have to plan a design, but they also have to follow a budget and plan accordingly.

Remember, these challenges are done in groups, so as the students plan and build, they must communicate and collaborate politely with others as they practice their teamwork skills.

"As schools continue to foster 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in students in order to prepare them for the demands of a global workforce, K-12 will see the adoption of more makerspaces and research efforts to surface best benefits and practices." (Gerstein 1) ■

## Resources

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Spencer, John et al. *Launch: Using Design Thinking To Boost Creativity And Bring Out The Maker In Every Student*. San Diego, CA: Dave Burgess Consulting Inc, 2016. Print.



# Student Writers Debunk School Library Myths

**S**tudents in the Writer's Craft class at Assumption College in Brantford were asked to bust a few myths about school libraries. Here is a sampling of what they came up with.

## Justus Alexander

When the word "library" is mentioned, most people instantly think of a drab, lifeless hollow, housing the Zombies of Novels, The Queen of Quiets, and the shelves upon shelves of words. Most people find this room to be unappealing, for a variety of reasons. Some don't admire the concept of a silent chamber of knowledge. Some despise the concept of reading as a whole. It's insane to think about the true nature of a school library, though.

A school library is akin to a hub, from which you can travel to any universe imaginable. Just around the corner of any shelf is a brand-new adventure, a brand-new scene, a brand-new story. A school library is the perfect place to sit back, relax and escape from our land. We find a universe of cops and robbers, a land of kings and queens, a landscape of a far away planet. The school library opens the doors to these magical places. The school library hands you the key to the multiverses and leaves you in silence to enjoy in awe for as long as you require.

Most people assume that nothing occurs in a library, aside from the occasional sneeze. They think school libraries are for nerds and nerds only. Bookworms. Outcasts. When, in reality, the school library is so much more. The school library is a place to hang with friends, to discuss our world today, to discuss a new story thesis. It's a place to discuss the happy things of life, the sad things. The school library is so much more than we're led to believe. It's a cheerful place, available for anybody – regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, or religion – to sit, take a moment off life, and live in the now.

So, I encourage you, dear reader: go to a school library! Experience the home of books with a fresh perspective. Books can do that for you too. The school library can do that for you.

## Darrien Bomberry

One myth that a lot of people perceive about school libraries are what the teacher-librarian looks like. The old woman who can hardly move, pencils stuck in her hair, smells funny, does not monitor the library and leaves it a big mess. Surprisingly, the reality to this myth is that all teacher-librarians are not the

little old lady, but, are like you and me. There are librarians who are young and old, male and female. Not all librarians fit the stereotype. Another myth is that libraries have just books and nothing else. Just shelves upon shelves of reading material that you sign out and bring back three weeks later. Libraries are not all just books. The myth that "libraries just have books" more than likely came about before computers were a thing. School libraries are a getaway from reality and a place to let go of stress. The final myth is that all school libraries are old, smelly and dirty. People believe that the books are dusty from not being read, or that the library is some eerie place only the brave ones go. School libraries are clean and a very pleasant place to be. Teacher-Librarians love their jobs and always put forth 110% effort in keeping their workspace in clean, tip-top shape. I think that students should be more appreciative about school libraries and be thankful they have unlimited access to one.

## Cassidy Shapardanis

"The library just has old books that nobody reads anymore," your friends say to you. Actually, you can tell your friends that the school library has many different features, including wireless Internet, conference rooms, computers, and new books of all genres for you to enjoy!

"The librarian hates teenagers," you hear in the hallway. Don't be afraid to intervene in someone else's conversation! Tell them that the teacher-librarian is keeping a calm, safe environment for people to work, study, read and learn! The teacher-librarian loves the teenagers in their school and is always willing to help you find or learn something new if you are unsure. Just ask!

"The library is so boring," your sibling says. Let them know the school library is filled with many books of all eras and topics that cover everything imaginable! The school library also consists of separate computer labs where they can browse, research, and learn almost anything they like.

"You can't make any noise in the library!" a classmate utters. This is not true! School libraries often incorporate hands-on activities for students on a regular basis, as well as informative and lively workshops.

"Who even goes to a library anymore?" your cousin asks. Tell him to check it out, he is guaranteed to find something he enjoys. ■



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