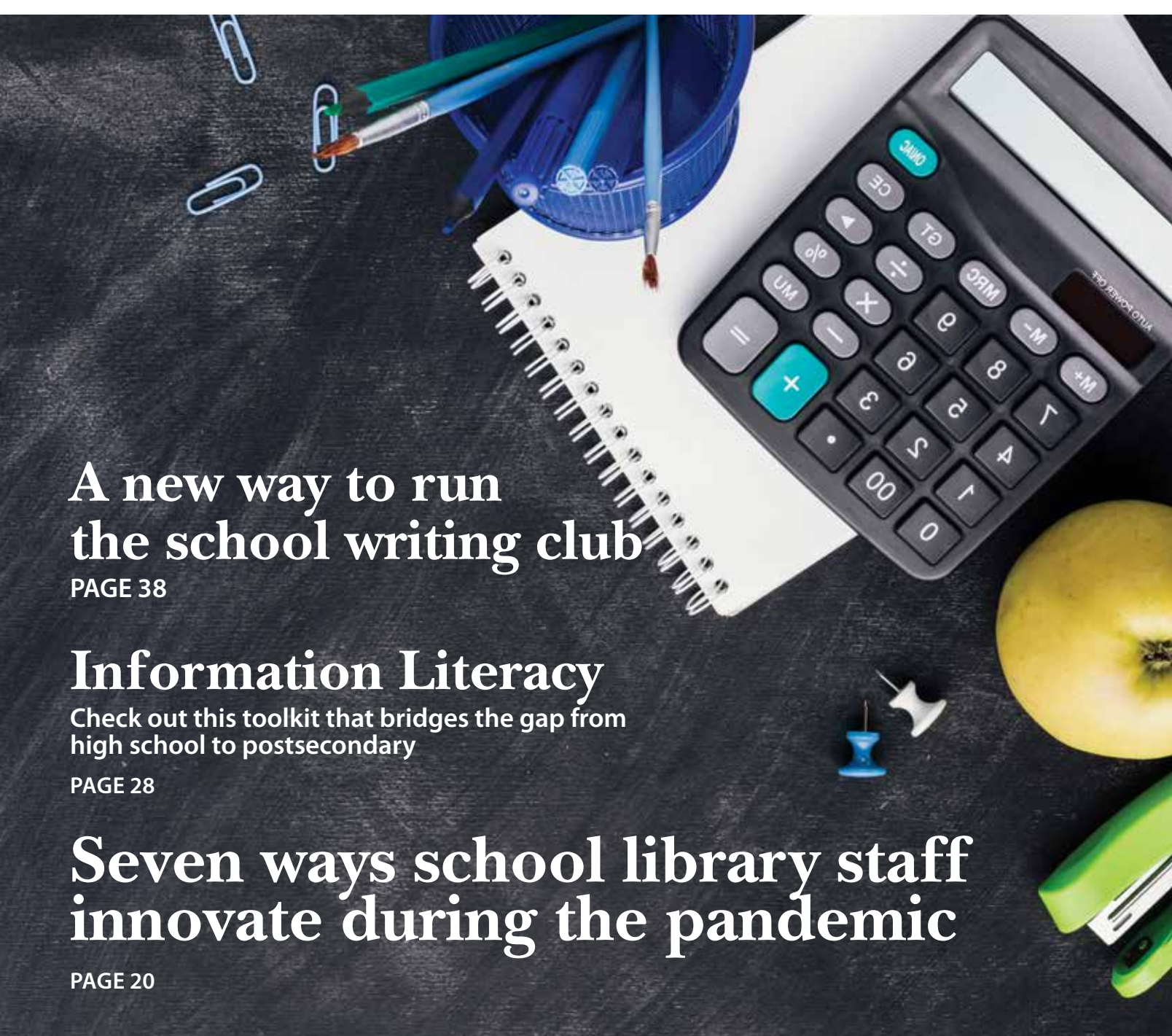


September 2020

Volume 28, Issue 1

THE Teaching Librarian

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association
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PAGE 38

Information Literacy

Check out this toolkit that bridges the gap from high school to postsecondary

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Seven ways school library staff innovate during the pandemic

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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 (16th edition) or APA Style.

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TingL Submission Guidelines

Please Note: Themes are subject to change.

January 2021 V. 28, Issue 2	"Diversity @ your library" Deadline: September 30, 2020
May 2021 V. 28, Issue 3	"STEAM @ your library" Deadline: January 31, 2021
September 2021 V. 29, Issue 1	Theme To Be Determined Deadline: May 31, 2021

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 sent separately in a digital format, such as .jpeg, .png, .tiff, or .ai. The minimum resolution must be 1000 px at 150 dpi. 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



Caroline Freibauer

The desire to learn drives most everything I do. I studied journalism at Carleton because I liked the idea of being paid to ask questions. I became an educator because the way to really learn is to teach someone. And I knew that the learning would be exponential when I became a teacher-librarian because we are a profession on the leading edge of education, where we support students, teachers and maybe even parents as they navigate the tsunami of information driven by technology that bombards us every day.

We are master teachers, curriculum leaders and information seekers. Yet, despite our role as education leaders, there is no formal curriculum set out for us by the Ministry of Education. We teach research skills and provide information about copyright. And, when the COVID-19 pandemic forced everyone into emergency distance education, library learning commons professionals launched into super hero mode, helping teachers manage a new way of doing things, while at the same time keeping students and parents connected to their schools.

We may not have a formal curriculum but that doesn't stop us.

This edition of *The Teaching Librarian* highlights some of the many things staff in the library learning commons do every day. And we have included a special feature on the tremendous work of SLLC staff when learning was forced online. Thanks to Tina Zita for pulling together this esthetically pleasing and informative visual essay. Please keep the conversation going by contributing examples from your own SLLC. We want to hear from the library technicians, informationists, professional



librarians and clerks shared their creativity during the pandemic.

We also feature a team of educators comprising a husband and wife, who are both passionate about the power of technology and the SLLC and leaders in their field. Alanna King shares some vital tips on making online learning relevant and engaging – I know that I felt galvanized after reading her piece – and Tim King highlights the importance of transliteracies in the rapidly evolving world of education.

We have articles on STEAM in the SLLC, how to make writing exciting and ways to bring real-world problem solving into the SLLC space. It is not an exhaustive list and, really, we do so much more. But it is a start.

I hope you learn something from these pieces. I know that I did. ■

***The Teaching Librarian* is looking for contributors and editorial board members!**

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

“Diversity @ your library” Deadline: September 30, 2020

“STEAM @ your library” Deadline: January 31, 2021

For more information, contact the editor at: teachinglibrarian@outlook.com

OSLA School Library Advocacy Update

This is a critical time for school libraries as school boards across the province are being asked to plan for multiple possible scenarios, including contingencies to offer at home, on-line learning.

OSLA has met with the Ministry of Education and sent letters to the 72 Ontario Directors of Education and School Board Trustee Chairs to highlight the important role that school libraries play – before and during the COVID -19 pandemic.

Our key message: Whatever scenario Fall 2020 brings, school libraries and school library staff remain essential.

[According to an OSLA survey](#), school library staff are providing leadership in the following essential functions:

- The curation of digital learning resources,
- Support of students, parents, and teachers in using distance learning technology,
- Sharing virtual programming options with students and teachers,
- Co-teaching classes and supporting curriculum linkages, and
- Moving in-person programming such as read alouds, book clubs and maker activities online.

Prior to the pandemic, school library staff were already leaders in supporting online learning, co-teaching classes, supporting curriculum linkages and curating library digital and print resources. According to [a 2020 Report](#), in 43% of schools, students working on e-learning during the school day work primarily in the school library, and teacher-librarians were supporting students with their online learning.

You can help extend this advocacy work locally

Connect with your local school board leaders:

- Principals,
- Directors of Education,
- Superintendents and
- School Boards Trustees to highlight the work that school libraries have been doing.

We have tools to help:

- You can reach the full letter sent to Directors of Education in July 2020: <https://bit.ly/OSLADoELetter2020>
- See the full slide deck – outlining the Ontario School Library Responses to COVID-19 (2020): <https://bit.ly/OSLACoVID-slides>
- Consult the OLA Advocacy Toolkit for tips: <https://bit.ly/OLAAdvocacyToolkit>
- Have questions? Email sroberts@accessola.com

President's Report

No Time for OSLA Council to Pause During Pandemic

Little did I ever imagine where we would be today when I wrote my first message to you all as OSLA president. Since then the world has been turned upside down, and although this looks different for each of us, I'm sure we have all been attempting to find a way to stay upright.

In the haze of many weeks, there have been so many virtual meetings, but one in particular has stood out for me. In it, the facilitator referred to this time as "The Great Pause." The descriptor stuck, and for the rest of the meeting more than one attendee used the phrase in their comments. In many ways we have paused. Certainly, the work we initially envisioned for Council has paused, school board year-end plans paused and, for educators, any planning for September was put on hold.

But, as weeks went by, the more I reflected on this phrase, the less it resonated. In so many ways we have not paused at all. In fact, I would argue that instead, we have been on professional fast forward.

Council also is not on pause.

We said that we would reach out and now we are using social media like never before to share, connect and advocate. OLA extended memberships for free, opened the Forest of Reading resources for all to access, provided resources and author connections and ran an adapted Forest of Reading Festival virtually in affiliation with CBC Books.

We are running webinars in our own communities as well as through the Education Institute and in partnership with OTF. You may have attended ETFO Summer Academy: *Building Better Schools: Rethinking the School Library Learning Commons in 2020* led by current and past Council members, and/or the ECCO conference in August, which included some of our members as planners and presenters. As well, with the results of our Member Outreach Survey and ideas gathered from our very well-attended #ONLibChats through the summer (created to provide members with the chance to discuss the potential impact on the K to 12 school library learning commons), we will be trying more than ever to work to support your needs.

OSLA Council also has work to do. In the wake of the loss of too many Black lives, and the inequity and racism in our daily lives, we have been spurred on to listen, learn and move toward effective anti-racist action. Beyond our own personal reading, Council has chosen to embark on a journey to start from within by committing our time to learn. We began by watching a conversation hosted by the OISE Centre for Integrative Anti-Racism Studies and the Centre for Leadership and Diversity called: "Addressing Anti-Black Racism in Education." (play.library.utoronto.ca/play/94620a5d967da25ba8d3e6c015028707)

We then met to discuss and reflect and are working toward next steps. In an article in *The Washington Post*, Tre Johnson writes: "Comforting as it may be to read and discuss the big questions about race and justice and America, making up for past wrongs means starting with the fact that you've done wrong in the past, perhaps without realizing it at the time." OSLA Council is committed to acknowledging and examining the pain we have personally caused and to do better moving forward in our library learning commons, our communities and our organization.

In these challenging times, we miss our students, we miss our community of peers, we miss the satisfaction of a light bulb moment on faces and the energy we get when we see learning in action. To help deal with this sense of loss, library learning commons leaders have stepped up to provide needed resources for school communities. We played a vital role in student and educator learning providing technology instruction, access to diverse and challenging stories, collaboration, and support with innovative ways to communicate and motivate learning.

We are creative "out of the box" thinkers. Flexibility is in our DNA. Working in school libraries has meant that we are always ready to pivot, ready to be of use whenever asked. Our job is to find new ways to approach a task and new tools to support learners and colleagues. When technology began to revolutionize literacy and research, many wondered if libraries would even exist. Then, like now, we embraced the change and rethought our spaces both physical and



Maureen McGrath

virtual, becoming more relevant than ever to the culture of our schools. And I would venture to say that, unlike a pause where you start up just where you left off, education will be forever transformed as we leverage new learning and re-centre what we know to be essential priorities for student wellness and learning.

OSLA Council continues to advocate for the school library learning commons with the support of OLA and its work with the Ministry of Education. We met virtually with ministry policy and curriculum representatives in June, July and August to discuss the role of SLLC workers and to continue to ask that school library funding be designated so that boards cannot divert the money into other programs. We underscored in these meetings that even with a gaping lack of government direction and support, school library workers stepped up to guide classroom educators as they navigated the uncharted territory of emergency distance learning. Despite overwhelming demands on professional and personal time, SLLC staff helped teachers master technology and find resources to support a new way of teaching. We emphasized how SLLC workers were the calm amidst the chaos. These meetings continue to build relationship and goodwill and keep the essential role of the school library learning commons in the minds of changemakers.

And, in case you already have forgotten what transpired during the professional fast forward last spring, I encourage you to check out the Canadian School Libraries site: The Post-Pandemic School Library Learning Commons at sites.google.com/view/post-pandemic-sllc/home where you can learn and contribute. It will be a great preparation for whatever awaits us. But whatever it may be, we know that SLLC workers will be there to guide staff, students and parents. ■



KEEP YOUR OSLA MEMBERSHIP CURRENT

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Meet the Author

Danielle Younge-Ullman

Danielle Younge-Ullman discovered her love of crafting characters in the world of theatre, eventually turning to writing novels for young adults. Her White Pine Award winning novel — *Everything Beautiful Is Not Ruined* (2018) — garnered much praise. Her newest novel is *He Must Like You* (2020).



TingL: What path did you take to become an author?

Reading is my greatest lifelong passion, and throughout childhood I was always writing. I wrote poems, stories, personal essays and filled a zillion journals. But for years, though I secretly loved the idea of writing books, I didn't believe I was either talented or self-disciplined enough to do it. In addition, in high school I fell in love with the theatre. I went to McGill for English, with a theatre focus, and spent every summer getting further theatre training. After graduating, I spent the rest of my twenties pursuing an acting career. Through all of this I did a lot of writing. For every character I worked on, I wrote pages of questions and speculations in an effort to bring both the play and character to life. I never really knew how much of that work translated onto the stage, but I was learning so much more than I realized. (See next answer).

Eventually, I became frustrated with the kinds of parts that seemed to be available—for me in particular, and for women in general—and a couple of friends and I decided to write some plays with good parts for women in them. We met regularly, bringing new pages for feedback each time. Through this I wrote my first play and was thrilled to discover it wasn't terrible. (Actually, it probably was terrible, but an accomplishment, regardless). Soon after, I decided to try writing a novel, and once again surprised myself—in getting it written at all, and in the sense that it seemed not half bad. (Again, it certainly was half bad, but it also had some high points.) I received enough positive feedback on these first two projects to feel encouraged to continue, and within a couple of years I'd switched my focus entirely to writing.

What impact has your time in theatre had on your writing?

My time in the theatre helped me with every aspect of writing. Because of theatre, I came to writing with a working knowledge of character, conflict, structure, language and dialogue. It all had to be applied differently, of course, but for example, three and four-act plays are structured the same way most books are structured, and I knew how to work with motivation, obstacles and build complicated characters. I

Angela Thompson



think where my theatre experience helped me most obviously, though, is in writing dialogue. To this day, dialogue—internal, or between characters—is what comes most easily to me. Plus, if I can't figure out how to do something, or can't see exactly where I'm going in a scene, I fall back on dialogue. I put the characters on a stage in my mind, and get them talking, and see what happens. Things usually take

a turn I wasn't expecting, and it may or may not work, but it always leads me to something I can work with.

How do you decide what stories need to be told?

This is an ongoing, ever-evolving process! Sometimes I hear about something in the news, for example, and find that I have nagging questions about the whys and hows of it. My writer's brain starts working like a detective, wanting to fill in all the details. Other times there's an issue I'm furious about or trying to understand (often both), and the writing of the book is a way of sorting through, working out, and ultimately, hopefully, expressing something important about it. *He Must Like You*, my July 2020 YA novel, is an example of that. For years I'd been seeing the messaging and conversations about sexual assault and harassment evolving, and at one point I realized that when I was growing up the word "consent" was never even mentioned. In addition, being female, of course I had experienced sexual harassment. I found I really wanted to look at these issues in a layered, nuanced way, and especially to look at situations where there was a power dynamic, and situations where the consent might be experienced as murky by one or both parties. I hoped to shed some light and also promote discussion. Overall, when choosing what needs to be written, I have to really care about the story in order to want to write it, but the factors that lead to me caring change from book to book.

What does your writing routine look like?

Well, at the time of writing this we're in June of 2020, and I've been in self-isolation with two kids and spouse since March 17, so my writing routine has suffered big time. Normally, though, I

work Monday to Friday during the hours my kids are at school, from 9:30ish to 2:30ish, with breaks. I also do some coffee shop writing, and usually a couple of times per book I try to get away for two-three days to work on my own and really push through some of the tricky parts that require concentration. I'm making myself sound far more disciplined than I am, though—interspersed with all of this are many days I don't write anything due to procrastination, or because I'm mulling (which can be necessary but can also be procrastination, and it's sometimes hard to tell which it is), or because I've been pulled off task by any number of life's distractions. So...this process is something I'm continually trying to improve.

What issues are on your mind at the moment?

Pandemic...Black Lives Matter...feminism...what kind of world I want for my daughters...and with the release of *He Must Like You*, I'm obviously thinking about and will be talking a lot about harassment, consent, friendship, leadership, and about hopefully helping the world change for the better.

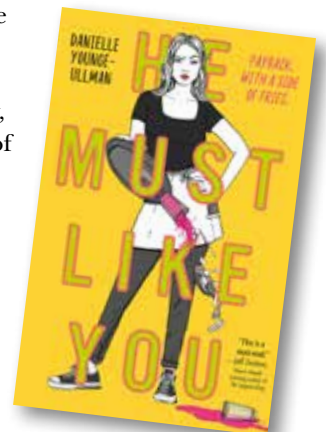
What can you share about upcoming publications or projects?

I mentioned *He Must Like You* above, and that will be recently out when this is published. Here's a quick description: In *He Must Like You*, Libby is a teen waitress working to save for college and an apartment. But when she dumps a pitcher of sangria on a customer who repeatedly makes inappropriate advances, she sets off a sequence of events that will upset the delicate balance of power in her small town forever and cause her to re-examine her most intimate relationships.

I'm also working on something new, but I can't give a good description of it yet.

Any final thoughts or words of wisdom?

I'm not feeling particularly wise these days, but I'm working on it. So...I guess my words of wisdom are that one can always improve. ■



Realizing the Potential of the Virtual Library Learning Commons. It's Time.

The new school year is well underway as you read this edition of *The Teaching Librarian*. Cast your mind back to last March, when the whole world changed. One day you were at school in the vibrant and lively library learning commons space. With virtually no notice, the next day, schools were closed. In the drastic move to universal remote online learning, school libraries had to either find ways to serve their school communities online or risk losing relevance. If you were not online, you did not exist.

So many of you stepped up to this challenge! From the first days of the lockdown, schools relied on library professionals to navigate new technologies, access learning resources and provide copyright advice for the great move online. Schools relied on the new virtual library to engage readers even when they couldn't access "real" books. Many of you were able to extend your influence into online classrooms, actively co-teaching with your peers in course management systems. Innovation thrived in this context, and professional learning networks abounded with wonderful examples of online curations and learning provocations, including "choice grids" and "Bitmoji classrooms." Within no time, the virtual school library learning commons (VLLC) seemed to have finally come of age as an essential element of the participatory learning space.

The vision for a vibrant virtual library learning commons is nothing new, especially in Ontario. While there are many great examples of school and district VLLCs, all sorts of constraints have prevented widespread implementation. Overwhelming need changed things dramatically in the early days of the lockdown. One potential positive outcome of the global pandemic may be its role as the tipping point for realizing lasting and positive change in terms of understanding the library as a vibrant physical AND virtual participatory learning space.

"The time has come for school libraries to welcome an ever-widening variety of learning practices and activities. This can be accomplished through the provision of real and virtual spaces that encourage and facilitate expanded engagement."

– *Together for Learning* (OSLA 2010)

Realizing the *Together for Learning* Vision

When it was released a decade ago, OSLA's landmark guideline document *Together for Learning's* vision for the library space immediately captured educators' imaginations. The vision for the virtual space seemed to be more of an enigma for many. In my own extensive if somewhat informal survey of school library websites in the two years after the release of *Together for Learning*, I observed several pockets of excellence, but generally found that:

- Many school libraries had no visible web presence.
- The problem was far more acute in elementary schools.
- Where websites existed, they typically had minimal content, which tended to be procedural rather than instructional.
- There was a lack of attention to design factors that inhibited usability.
- Websites (library or school) most frequently had no visible links to online subscription databases, the library catalogue, or district library websites.
- Central district sites only existed in a few instances.
- Authentication barriers were a serious problem for most users trying to access online resources.

School library practitioners faced many constraints in creating a vibrant online presence, and for many, the associated challenges sidelined the vision. In the decade since the release of *Together for Learning*, more districts have created increasingly sophisticated library learning commons websites. Our overall understanding of the potential of virtual spaces and tools to facilitate participatory learning has increased. However, I cannot say that there has been a significant change in my observations from many years ago, until now.

The Pandemic Tipping Point

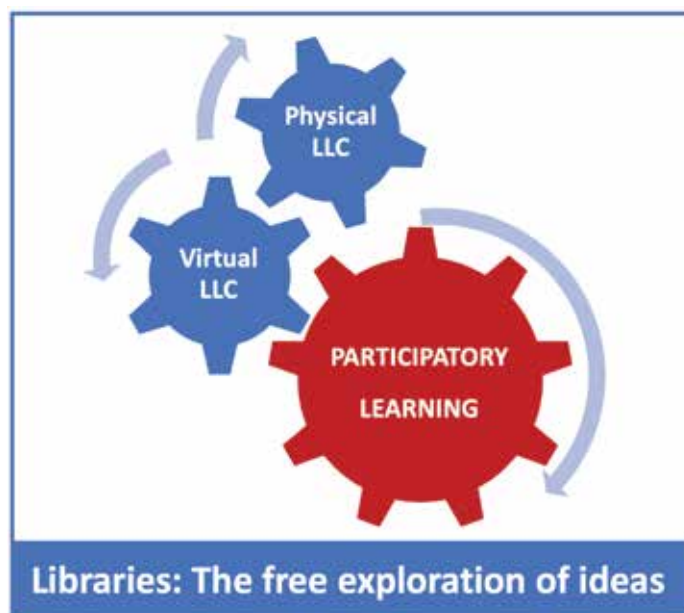
Suddenly, the school library world is starting to realize that the virtual library IS the real library. And we cannot go back. The shorter-term pandemic new normal is likely to include significant restrictions on how the library's physical space is used. The virtual program will retain its importance in this changing environment and may evolve in ways we cannot yet imagine. Physical distancing means relying on ways to integrate the physical and virtual spaces of the school library.

Anita Brooks Kirkland

Most importantly, making connections with teachers and students in the online environment becomes increasingly critical to the library program's success. Shifts in practice in this time of crisis will have long-term implications. We need to leverage this great opportunity: necessity is indeed the mother of invention.

We have almost universally moved beyond understanding the library's physical space as an information warehouse – a place where we go to find information and then leave. We know the physical space of the library as a learning hub, and so must we design virtual spaces that not only facilitate access to resources but also facilitate access to learning experiences and teaching expertise. The virtual space is flexible, far-reaching and dynamic. It extends the reach of the library into classrooms, students' homes and extended communities. It complements and enhances learning in the physical space of the library and the school.

The virtual school library learning commons has finally come of age. The constraints that had made people reluctant to go online before the pandemic seem inconsequential compared to the prospect of remaining offline. For school libraries, the symbiosis of physical and virtual learning commons frames our future. Let this be the beginning of realizing the full potential of the post-pandemic school library learning commons, where critical thinking, inquiry, reading, multiple literacies, curiosity, design thinking, and making thrive in the information-rich, collaborative learning space of the physical AND the virtual library space. ■



Wondering what your next step should be?

Find ideas in Anita's article in the Spring 2020 edition of the *Canadian School Libraries Journal*, *The Virtual Library Learning Commons: Leveraging the Pandemic Tipping Point for Lasting Change*.

journal.canadianschoollibraries.ca/the-virtual-library-learning-commons-leveraging-the-pandemic-tipping-point-for-lasting-change

DRAWN TO THE FORM

Comics Can Cover Curriculum

Tracy Halliday and
Diana Maliszewski

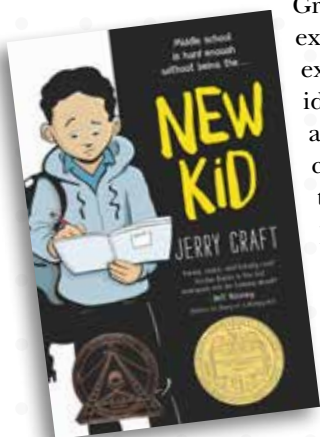
There are as many ways to teach using comics as there are teachers and comics. For different perspectives, two of us are jointly describing the ways we've integrated comics with our curriculum.

When educators gather their “anchor texts” to help them teach, how often do they consider comics?

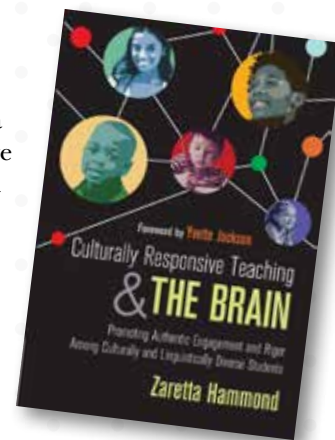
Finding meaning is the ultimate goal when having students read any text, including graphic novels and comics. The priority is for them to relate to the themes, messages and nuances found in between the lines. In particular, for

Grades 7 and 8 Language Arts, “the expectations encourage students to explore issues related to personal identity and community concerns as they interact with increasingly complex and/or challenging texts; to critically analyse and evaluate perspectives in texts and the influence of media on their lives; and to write about and discuss topics of relevance that matter in their daily lives” (Ontario Ministry of Education, p. 122).

The key is relevant connections.



By framing graphic novels with a culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, educators can deepen the understanding and increase the engagement a student has when reading. We can tap into relevant issues and themes that the average middle school student can connect with, while using modern day visual elements that grab a reader's attention.



When reading *New Kid* by Jerry Craft, one is easily able to pinpoint the themes of fitting in and relationships through the perspective of a Black boy named Jordan Banks. These are themes that a typical 12- or 13-year-old can relate to in today's social-political climate. Readers follow the main character as he navigates a new school in a different neighbourhood and uses mental fortitude to tackle issues of economic status, race, colourism, microaggressions and privilege. Educators can use graphic novels, like *New Kid*, as an introduction to explorations of identity as the character is on a journey of self discovery. Visual readers are afforded the chance to process the images seen on the page and interpret them through their own memories of past experiences. Making these connections creates a foundation of knowledge on which students can build new information. In the book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*, Zaretta Hammond explains that “all new information must be coupled with existing funds of knowledge in order to be learned” (p.48). Students use their prior knowledge, coupled with imagery, to increase their comprehension of the story. They then have increased capacity to focus on sharpening other reading skills while enjoying the text.





Jerry Craft's comic style has pop culture and infographics woven into the storyline to pique the reader's interest. In fact, for Grades 7 and 8, the Ontario Arts Curriculum tells us that "(students) are very aware of elements of pop culture and eager to incorporate them into their art" (Ontario Ministry of Education, p. 133). Students most likely will pick up on references pulled from their realities that are inserted consistently throughout this book. In this way, the storyline directly and seamlessly applies to their lives. The author also uses the main character's sketchbook journal to portray inner feelings. Within these pages, the illustrations are rough and imperfect. Yet it is intentionally drawn this way to capture the raw emotions and thoughts of a preteen trying to make sense of the world around him. Hammond informs us that "culture guides how we process information" (Hammond, p.48). For certain cultures, "neural pathways are primed to learn using story, art, movement, and music" (Hammond, p. 48). Educators can use these artistic examples to show that messages can be conveyed in multiple ways. This connects to visual arts expectations as well as those related to reading and writing.

Graphic novels also can be effectively used beyond the language arts curriculum. Social studies, history, and geography expectations can be addressed through comics and graphic novels. The *March* trilogy by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, illustrated by Nate Powell, is a powerful recollection of the American civil rights movement. In Canada, we can look at *The 500 Years of Resistance* by Gord Hill or *This Place: 150 Years Retold* by Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm. Both are no-punches-pulled accounts of Indigenous experiences in North America. I have used *The Secret Path* by Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire with students during Orange Shirt Day and beyond to

address the horrors of residential schools. Neither Downie nor Lemire are themselves Indigenous but, for the most part, they convey the story of Chanie Wenjack without sensationalism and with respect. *Surviving the City* by Tasha Spillett-Sumner and Natasha Donovan is an excellent graphic novel that demonstrates how First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, especially women, are treated, is not just "history." It fits with the Grade 6 social studies unit on Heritage and Identity: Communities in Canada, Past and Present.

Even subjects that seem at first to be difficult to connect to comics are possible. While perusing the Beguiling's website (beguilingbooksandart.com), as well as the tweets from amazing educator Kenisha Bynoe (@booklamations), I found the picture book *Count on Me* by Miguel Tanko. This book would support the social-emotional aspect of math found in the latest curriculum update. The protagonist has a passion for math and finds it everywhere, which is a positive stance that should be nurtured and encouraged in our students.

Enhancing your students' depth of knowledge within a subject can be a challenge. The versatility that comics and graphic novels provide allow educators to expand their use of this type of text. To make a bigger impact within your lessons, use comics to explain instructions or showcase abstract concepts. To further engage students, use graphic novels that connect with their identity or tell of experiences that they have been through themselves. When students can clearly visualize the story, or the information, their focus is geared towards the actual messages that you are trying to teach. They spend less time trying to decipher the technicalities of the text. As a result, students become independent critical thinkers. ■



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Forest Of Reading

Cassandra Knapp

Library Science, a Science?

Whenever I use the term “library science,” I am often met with sympathetic yet unbelieving looks from my listeners. After all, shelving books can’t be a science, can it?

When claiming the legitimacy of one’s discipline, we often try to link our study with science – the holy grail of status in our culture. “Studying music improves test scores in math,” we say; therefore, it is worthy of our attention. (Although, I do not think we need science to justify learning music. Just look around you and imagine a world without music.)

For those who study library science, we already understand the importance of libraries and how they support learning. But what about the library studies as a “science” claim?

While libraries, public and otherwise, have been around for about 2,000 years, the orderly classification of knowledge has been a subject of study for less than 300 years. Carl Linnaeus, an 18th-century Swedish botanist, developed the modern taxonomies for the natural world. It gave the world its classification of every species by order, family, genus and species. That is why an individual Latin name classifies everything.

Even a cursory examination of present classification systems shows how those who created our library systems for subject classification used those same principles to organize knowledge. Libraries are arranged according to these principles. This systematic approach is mirrored in Dewey Decimal Classification:

599 Mammalia
599.7 Carnivora
599.75 Felidae
599.756 Panthera tigris

When students enter their school library, they are entering a space that is logical and based on scientific classification. They find a world that is not the chaos of information that is the Internet, but one of order and method.

While the trend in some school libraries is to throw everything in a labelled bin, these systems will eventually break down (sometimes quite literally in the case of plastic containers). Using coloured dots to classify resources will ultimately fail when library organizers realize that publishers do not care

about their simplified systems. Eventually, they will be required to force-fit or change the entire system. Bins and coloured dots are not expandable systems. Students will also have to learn a completely arbitrary system that is applicable nowhere else. By contrast, science-derived classification systems are expandable.

For example, when dual-language books were first purchased, I was asked to give them their own collection type and mark them as picture books (and put them in a bin). I believed that these resources were meant to teach English through dual text, so I opted for a more classification-based solution. I suggested instead that we use the 400s section of the *Abridged DDC* to house these books. The 400s section of elementary schools is not very crowded, and the items would be easy to find. You do not even need to search the catalogue since staff could be directed to the section to browse the collection, finding each language in its unique number.

These dual-language texts have since proven to be so immensely popular that a couple of years ago we were asked by library staff to use the *Unabridged DDC* to subdivide the languages further so that the individual languages of India would be grouped. Library systems allow for this kind of expansion. Had they used bins or dots to classify these materials, the system would have broken down.

In the end, tried and tested principles end up saving time and that all-important factor: money. No time or money is wasted inventing a system because the problems of library arrangement have already been solved. It is cost-efficient when you have trained technical staff (i.e. those with an MLIS degree or library technician diploma) who can manage these systems and a teacher-librarian to teach how they work.

School libraries are learning environments, not a bookstore. The focus of a bookstore is profit: they exist to sell books. A school library must be more than a room with books in it. It must be a place of order in a chaotic world. I believe that this can be achieved through the study and application of library science. It is a useful tool by which we learn other things. The “library” is not just a place; it is a methodology.

As is often said, the humble wheel does not need reinventing. Library science may seem like an old-fashioned idea, but it is the wheel by which we can go anywhere. ■

Libraries as Hubs for Student **Thinking** and **Action**



Real-world problem solving created the conditions for my students to shine, the school community to act, and the library to be at the centre of it all.

As librarians, we have a long history of reimagining the role of the library in supporting and building communities. We lead with our imagination, creativity and storytelling. In school communities, this creative work is just as needed and just as important. We are uniquely positioned to influence pedagogy, teaching and learning in schools. Embedding real-world problem solving in our library learning commons is a powerful way to continue reimagining, reshaping and expanding the ways we support student learning and achievement.

I began embedding real-world problem solving in my practice as a teacher-librarian at Fred Varley Public School in York Region District School Board because I lead with inquiry and empathy. They are the drivers of my pedagogical practice and key to students being active participants in their learning. Real-world problem solving was my entry point into fostering an engaging learning environment where students confidently question, wonder, and explore models that lead to new perspectives, ideas and action. What this really means is that, when we are solving real-world problems, students are the ones leading.

Shifting my practice positioned the library learning commons as a centre for thinking and action, impacting student achievement, well-being and school culture.

Real-World Problem Solving in the Library Learning Commons...

Amplifies Student Voice

We can get used to being at the front of the room, directing the learning process for our students – but beautiful things happen when we let go. They become the drivers of their

learning. My co-librarian Rita Russell and I brought together Grade 4-8 students at Rouge Park Public School in the YRDSB to engage in an inquiry on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and examine environmental stewardship. Rita and I did not have the answer. Instead, we followed our students' lead.

Our students' insight was that they can't delegate action to those who are older, those we perceive as smarter or those with more experience. They have power and responsibility too. They brainstormed ways to reduce waste and support others in need within our local community. One way was a school-led clothing drive. They shared their thinking with an audience of peers and led action that engaged students and families in our community. They collected more than one hundred items of clothing for our community.

Nogah Kornberg, Associate Director at I-Think reflects: "All students are capable of great insight that leads to impactful action. We've had the joy of seeing student leadership flourish when educators provide a replicable process, like integrative thinking, that builds optimistic and confident problem solvers."

Galvanizes the School Community

When creative and collaborative problem solving come alive in the library it creates a buzz in the whole school. When my Grade 5 class began focusing on active citizenship, students expressed concern about the growing number of dead animals on the roads in our community as they traveled to and from school. They unanimously decided to bring awareness to this problem and develop solutions. We used thinking tools like the causal model and the integrative thinking process as part of their investigation. Their inquiry led them to creating an awareness campaign that helped stakeholders identify actions



Kelly Maggiras in collaboration with Margaryta Ignatenko and Nogah Kornberg

they could take to protect animals in our community. Students notified the mayor, the police, parents and guardians, teachers and other students. They sent newsletters and emails, created posters, announcements and handouts. Having a real audience for their thinking meant that their work could have an even bigger impact. Coming together as a community to address this problem dramatically decreased the number of dead animals on our streets.

Supports Well-Being

We know that when students feel confident, accepted and valued, they learn well. I partnered with I-Think to use one of their Challenge Kits to engage students in solving a real problem for Peacebuilders Canada. Peacebuilders is a non-profit organization which uses restorative practices to support schools in shifting from punitive cultures to those that use conflict as an opportunity to strengthen community. My Grade 5 students worked to solve the challenge question: *How might Peacebuilders support schools in shifting to a restorative culture?* Peacebuilders Restorative Schools Program Manager Erica Lalonde said, “Students are brilliant and as an organization we need their thinking. Their creativity and rigorous thinking influenced both their school community and ours, impacting the many communities we work with.” Engaging with a real organization meant students knew their work mattered.

To start, students created empathy for perspectives that were different from their own by leading town halls and engaging with key stakeholders like parents, teachers and other adults in the community. Their problem-solving led them to insights Peacebuilders and our school leaders hadn’t considered before. Their thinking contributed to our school improvement plan, influencing how our school approaches well-being.

Closing Words

Our library learning commons is perfectly positioned to lead the transformation of student learning. What happens in our

space influences all aspects of school culture. We connect and teach all students in the school. We foster relationships with all adults in the building. This sets the stage for remarkable collaborations that honour the interconnectedness of equity, student achievement, inquiry-based learning and well-being. It’s why our library learning commons is a unique catalyst for real-world problem solving, positioning us to galvanize the school community by leading with student thinking and taking action. ■

Integrative Thinking

Integrative Thinking is a creative problem-solving methodology that help public school problem solvers make sense of tensions and reframe problems in a new light. Its tools provide structure and pathways for ideation, guiding thinkers toward fresh outcomes.

Challenge Kits

I-Think Challenge Kits are grounded in real problems, real people and a replicable process to build bridges between K-12 students and the real world. They are fuel for creative thinking and problem solving. This year, I-Think teamed up with 5 organizations along the theme of well-being and community building to bring 13 real-world problems to students.

I-Think

I-Think is a non-profit organization innovating to help build a resilient education system that prepares the next generation of thinkers for a future of remarkable possibilities. Learn more at rotmanithink.ca

VIRTUAL SPACES



Ketly Appleton, Teacher Librarian at Green Glade S.P., created an interactive virtual LLC as a provocation for Indigenous history month.

@KAppleton_GG

Rula Ferazzoli, teacher librarian at Randall Public School, curated a collection for all ages to start learning and talking about race, racism, inclusion & diversity.

@FerazzoliRula

7 WAYS

on
Lib
in
pa
th

Online



Ontario School
Library Staff
innovated during the
pandemic, bringing
their practice

ine

ONLINE STORYTIME

Renee Shah Singh, teacher
librarian at Ingleborough PS,
brings story time online,
even through the summer.

@IngleboroughLLC



MAKER MONDAYS



Nancy Cheong, teacher librarian at St. Jacinta
Marto Catholic School, and son hosted Maker
Monday every week.

@MsNCheong





AUTHOR VISITS

Jonelle St.Aubyn, Teacher Librarian at Louis Arbour Secondary School, hosted virtual author visits including Senator Patti LaBoucane-Benson, author of The Outside Circle.

@Ms_St_Aubyn

DIGITAL



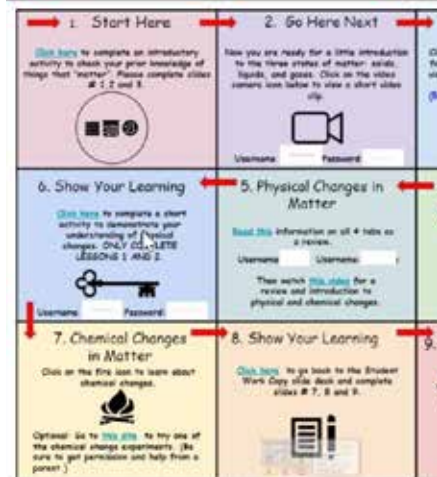
Natasha Temple School, built on break

CHOICE GRIDS



Barbara McVeigh, at Fletcher's Meadow Secondary School, curates 2SLGBTQ+ resources.

@FMSSLibrary



Tracy Stanton, teacher lib Springbank Public School, science unit in a choice support a teacher

@SpringbankLib



AL BREAKOUTS



teacher librarian at Mountain Ash Public School, creating a Digital breakout for learners. **@MmeTemple**

APPY HOUR

Mishelle Pittler-Adam, teacher librarian at Clark Public School, supports colleagues with a virtual happy hour building comfort and expertise with digital applications.



@MishellePA_LLC



teacher librarian at Clark Public School created a digital breakout for learners. **@MmeTemple**



CONNECT & SHARE

Check out the tweets and more ideas that have been shared in a curated Waklet at **bit.ly/7waysLLC**.

Share how you brought your practice online at **#LLCOnline**





Kimberly Senf

Bring Curriculum to Life with Docs for Schools

Documentaries let students into worlds they would not otherwise get the chance to see, introduce them to people they might not encounter and present ideas that they might not otherwise have the chance to discover. The Docs for Schools program, run through the Hot Docs organization, provides an enriching value-added program that complements curriculum taught across the country to students in Grades 7 to 12. The documentary program aims to offer students “an opportunity to engage with current issues, raise critical questions, and interact with new perspectives, outside of traditional media or classroom materials.” The list of films offered through their programs is always varied, and it never fails to offer enriching opportunities for teachers to add to their classroom activities.

The programs offered by Docs for Schools have expanded since its inception in 2006 to include films available for classroom viewing for a large part of the school year. There is an in-school Focus program which runs every fall, from September to early December, and always showcases a central theme. The theme for 2019 was the environment, as Greta Thunberg was a driving force behind bringing environmental concerns to the generation of students sitting in classrooms across this country. The Docs for Schools program leveraged the interest in climate change and included the films *Chasing Ice*, *Fashion’s Dirty Secret*, and *Straws* in their fall line-up – all of which look at climate change and our impact on the environment from different angles.

In addition to the Focus program that runs through the fall, Docs for Schools offers a selection of films in February.

This year, they partnered with Human Rights Watch Film Festival for their in-person Toronto screenings as well. In 2019, Docs for Schools partnered with the Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack fund to offer films during *Secret Path* Week.

Lesley Sparks, the Education and Youth Program Manager at Docs for Schools, is the driving force behind the in-school program. She said that they are constantly looking for relevant content to bring to their programming. Every film they provide to schools is accompanied by an educator-created package that provides background on the documentary and lesson plans with pre- and post-viewing activities. No ratings are given for the films, as every teacher, school board and community may view the film differently. The films are always provided ahead of time so that the librarians and teachers in the school can preview them to make their own judgments on suitability for a class or grade.

The response from students, teachers and librarians to the program has been phenomenal. There are new schools signing on to the program each year. It’s clear from the uptake of the program that students can handle the realities they see in the documentaries. There are documentaries that deal with difficult subject matter that will not be for every school, but the Docs for Schools team aims to ensure that there is a breadth of content available to teachers and students. They are always asking themselves what they can bring to the table (or the screen) that’s a little different. It will be great to see what’s available from the program this fall.

For more information: docsforschools.ca. **I**

Photo by Denise Jans on Unsplash

Tim King

Be Your Own IT Consultant



Here is a list of information technology quick fixes gleaned from 30 years on the job that can help you and your students solve problems quickly:

1. Have You Tried Turning It Off and On Again?

There is a lot of data moving around inside a computer and the person using it may very well have interrupted some of those processes. Rebooting a computer lets it sort itself out and undo those interruptions.

2. Slow Down!

It's a theme! The computer is trying to tell you something, slow down and take the time to read and understand it. Don't assume, slow down and deal with specifics.

3. Become an Online Lookup Ninja!

Put the specific message you're getting in an internet search and you'll get a sense of how common your error is and specific ways to fix it. Include details like operating system and what model of machine you're working on. It's usually on the bottom of the machine.

4. Once You're an Online Search Ninja...

Don't believe everything you read online. Be critical! Look for answers from a quality source (it's NEVER Reddit). If it's from the company that built your machine, that's a good start (Google for Chrome, Apple for Mac, Microsoft for Windows, etc).

5. Make One Change At A Time, And Test It

As Charles from *M*A*S*H* once famously said, "Do one thing at a time, do it very well, and then move on." Slow down, read and understand what's happening, isolate the problem, solve it, then reboot to let the computer sort itself out.

Bonus: User Care

Dealing with user psychology is the unspoken, secret side of the IT business. A lack of confidence often prevents people from solving simple issues. Make a point of congratulating yourself or your user for resolving their own technical challenges — it helps bridge that confidence deficit.

6. Simplify

It's usually something simpler than you think it is. Never be too proud to check to see if it's plugged in and turned on.

7. Push Your Updates!

Being out of date can stop your machine from working properly, especially in our networked world. Search for "update" on your machine (or look it up online) and make sure you're running the latest, most secure version of your machine's software.

Conclusion

Don't over-complicate things. Look for the easiest fix first. Be humble and solutions-focused and support your user. That'll get most of your technical challenges sorted. For the other one percent, that's why we have IT departments. **!**

Time to Help Students Navigate New Literacies

I drove to Toronto on an April Sunday morning in 2018 to attend my first Future Innovation Technology Creativity conference. FITC is a Toronto based organization that promotes and networks digital creatives. It grew out of early web developers who were being asked to transition to digital spaces from traditional arts backgrounds but didn't have any resources or technical background. FITC is now one of the largest and oldest digital creativity collectives in the world and their conference is attended by thousands of people from all over the planet.

I like to think I'm handy with technology. I became an IT technician in the early nineties while I was in university and I now teach computer technology at Centre Wellington DHS in Fergus, Ontario, but my formal education is in English, philosophy and visual arts. I thought I'd be technically and creatively ready for FITC, but it felt more like falling down the rabbit hole.

I walked the three blocks to the hotel through blowing snow and found my way down a fire escape to the basement where a technology circus appeared out of nowhere! Pico projectors threw digital art onto the walls, ceilings and floors, much of it animated; rainbow zebras were walking across the roof. Young people wearing interesting eyeglasses filled the space, trying tech and chatting.

I got my educator pass and began wandering around. In one room they had self-contained VR backpacks with a dozen people moving about, interacting with each other in an alternate reality. Projectors lit up the space, giving outsiders a glimpse into their shared digital experience. Next door was a Zen relaxation room with incense, yoga mats and psychedelic, ever-changing patterns that I later learned were driven by sensors in the room; when you sat down the floor rippled like water.

The talks began at 9 a.m. and they flew by in a whirl of ever-increasing temporal dysphoria. I thought I was at the leading edge of technology, but I was stunned by what I was seeing. The Mill is a "digital foundry" that has created The Blackbird, an electric car platform with movable wheels that can digitally scan the environment and then "skin" itself to look like anything from Doc Brown's DeLorean to next year's Jaguar.

Many of the car commercials you see on TV now feature the Blackbird digitally chameleoning itself into something that isn't there. The Mill also does many of the social media augmented reality overlays that turn you into a white walker. They signed off by showing their Monster computer-generated animation. Unlike the painstaking frame by frame digital animation you see in films, this one is motion capture. An actor skilled in mime wore a sensor suit and they created a series of realistic actions in the space of two hours that would have taken a team of animators weeks. Even new industries like digital animation are being disrupted by emerging technology.

Quantum Capture, a Toronto company, is creating life-like virtual avatars. They were showing a hotel concierge who you can only see and communicate with when you hold up your phone. The artificial intelligence driving this made it startlingly life like, with micro expressions and a remarkable facility for guessing what you needed next. It could check you in to your hotel room without you ever talking to another human being and appear whenever you needed it.

I learned about pico-projectors (tiny digital projectors that turn any surface into an interactive digital space), how to manage creatives to maximize their effectiveness, and even how to keep your creativity burning when you're creative for a living (passion projects are the key). FITC blew open my mind to digital possibilities that I hadn't even considered. Video game development is the focus in our program at Centre Wellington DHS (the video game industry is now financially larger than film, TV and music combined), but there are many more jobs in the digital arts in advertising, engineering and even traditional industries like banking. My students now benefit from a much broader sense of the pathways available in the field of digital media.

In retrospect, what was most shocking to me is how blind most of us are to these subtle digital influences. We buy cars based on advertising that never actually shows the car, we see videos of people that have been doctored to say things they never said but believe them to be real. In a world where we all get our news and entertainment digitally, very few of us recognize just how malleable and potentially manipulative this medium is, mainly because most of us emigrated from analogue mediums that captured what was happening directly.

Emerging mediums have always been a challenge. Socrates worried that reading would “create forgetfulness” because readers wouldn’t use their memory to recall facts. When the printing press made newspapers and books more prevalent, French statesman Malesherbes thought that all this reading would socially isolate people. Similar panics ensued with radio, film, television, the Internet and social media. Our communications mediums are in constant flux and we fear that change. The concept of “getting old” is really our emigration out of the familiar media of our youth and into a strange future of unfamiliar mediums. Unfortunately, too many of us transfer that prejudice on to our students through an education system that is reluctant to embrace change.

I struggled to grasp the implications of that FITC conference for a long while, and found my fellow teachers unnerved and resistant when I tried to pass on what I’d seen there at subsequent education conferences. We’ve long expressed this fear-driven criticism of our evolving communication mediums, but we owe it to our students to recognize the expansive concept of transliteracy as a core component of literacy itself. We need to make a point of moving with the times and teaching students how to best express themselves through these emerging mediums rather than belittling and ignoring them. ■

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Information Literacy Toolkit Connects High School and Postsecondary Libraries



In my role as Student Engagement Librarian at the University of Toronto Libraries, I co-ordinate a Personal Librarian Program, which matches first-year Arts and Science students with a librarian via email. Throughout the students' first year of university, librarians will send out "just in time" information, pointing to research guides (LibGuides) for assistance with assignments, and exam support near the end of term. And students are encouraged to contact their personal librarian when they have any research questions.

Part of this program involves assessing the general nature of questions students ask, which I've been doing for the last five years. Many of the questions fall into one of these areas:

1. Known topic, need sources
2. How to search a database
3. Citation help
4. Writing support (Note: The library does not provide writing support, but will refer students to the writing centres.)

It became apparent that incoming post-secondary students struggle with some of the foundational information literacy concepts. Reports and academic articles from both the United States and Canada also attest to fact that students do not feel prepared for academic research (Head, 2013; Grayson, Côté, Chen, Kenedy, & Roberts, 2019). And conference presentations continue to highlight incoming undergraduate students' lack of preparedness with such foundational information literacy skills. To help with bridging this gap, as it's commonly referred to, the creation of an [OCULA/OSLA information literacy toolkit](https://bit.ly/2Om8ykd) was thought of as a way to bring current and past resources (such as reports and conferences) together in one document, as well as ideas from librarians working within K-20 education. Check out the kit: bit.ly/2Om8ykd

I was also interviewed by Alanna King on the creation of the toolkit and we had a great chat afterwards. You can learn more about this toolkit on the Canadian School Libraries' [Read Into This](#) podcast (Episode 42a and 42b).

The idea of this toolkit came from a similar document jointly created by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and the American Association of School Libraries (AASL), two divisions of the American Library Association (ALA) (ACRL, 2019). The resources within the OCULA/

Heather Buchansky

OSLA information literacy toolkit are meant to aid, educate, and inspire both high school and post-secondary librarians about the potential for collaborative IL programming, resources, and outreach services.

Compiling resources for the IL toolkit began by searching and gathering links to previous conference presentations (primarily from the OLA Super Conference), as well as reports and articles on any studies related to the information literacy and research skills noted in the first year of college and university. As much as possible, Ontario and Canadian sources are highlighted to provide a local context to the situation. Beyond reports and presentations, there are outreach ideas, often derived from presentations and papers, for library staff to try out and collaborate with their colleagues on the other side of the education system.

Remember, this IL toolkit is an iterative document that will continue to be updated as the conversations and (hopefully) collaborations continue between high school and post-secondary library staff. Some great feedback on usage and other resources to include led to additional sections being added, in particular information on teaching IL to students with different pathways that do not include post-secondary education (see point #2 in sidebar). Please provide [feedback](#) on the current document or resources you would like to see, and I will do my best to include it in the toolkit. Provide feedback here: bit.ly/327zFYp. ■

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Three Takeaways from the IL Toolkit

1. **Don't reinvent the wheel.** Creating new online resources detailing the research process and concepts (e.g. keyword searching, citing, plagiarism) can take a lot of time. Take a look at what already exists online at post-secondary libraries through their LibGuides and/or YouTube channel, and link to those when developing your own lesson – and, of course, citing as necessary! The “[Outreach Ideas for High School Teacher-Librarians](#)” section showcases a few of these online resources.
2. **Focus on life-long information literacy skills.** Although this is primarily meant as a resource to help bridge the information literacy gap between high school and post-secondary, students with alternate pathways that do not include college or university can certainly use life-long information literacy skills. The section “[High Schools: Things to Consider](#)” highlights some resources.
3. **Discuss the current “go-to” resources being used.** Most students are familiar with Google and Wikipedia as essential in the information seeking process for school assignments. Discuss ways in which this could be an issue when searching for academic information, when best to use them, and other tools that can help in the process. “[Focus on Foundation Research Skills](#)” outlines these areas.

Technology Tools

Jen Giffen

Before becoming a teacher-librarian with the York Region District School Board, I held the role of digital literacy consultant. As an information and communication technology specialist, I employed education technology (EdTech) tools daily to help engage staff and students. As the teacher-librarian, I am excited to implement many of these as part of daily life in the learning commons. Here are five tools I feel are worth adding to your teacher-librarian EdTech Toolbox.

This list is by no means exhaustive, and many different tools can be used to accomplish the same task. These are just the ones I particularly like and have used regularly.

1. Curate Information Easily with Wakelet (wakelet.com)

Wakelet is a curation tool that allows you to save anything that is online into collections called Wakes. You can insert headers and notes into the collection to help guide learning or explain links. It is entirely free, and accounts are not necessary to view the Wakes, only to create them. I love sharing resources to enhance the learning further once lessons in the Learning Commons are complete. Unlike in a traditional classroom, students don't necessarily see the teacher-librarian every day. If students are looking for resources to support their learning, Wakelet is a great way to have those at-the-ready for them. Wakelet is also a great way to share findings with staff to support in-class learning and professional development. You can add teachers as collaborators if they have a Wakelet account, and then you can create Wakes together. I love to use Wakelet to track Twitter conversations. I capture some great ideas on Equity and Inclusion in the Learning Commons in this wave (bit.ly/eiinllc). Visit learn.wakelet.com for more details about how Wakelet can be used in your Learning Commons.

2. Create Instructional Videos with Screencastify (screencastify.com)

Screencastify captures screencasts, which are recordings of your screen and audio of the system and/or from your mic. You also can

embed a webcam video so that viewers can see you as you narrate. Screencastify is a Google Chrome Extension and is as easy as a push of a button – literally. Click the extension, and your recording begins (you have up to 5 minutes in the free version). When you are finished, you can trim the beginning and end and rename it, and it is automatically saved to your Google Drive and can be shared easily with others. (The paid version is \$49 US and offers some more great features.) I have used Screencastify to walk through how to access school databases, search our catalogue and much more. I embed these videos on our Learning Commons website and share it with students as needed. I also encourage staff and students to install the extension themselves to record their screen as I walk them through an explanation. Doing so allows them to access the learning later from anywhere quickly! Visit screencastify.com/courses for more learning.

3. Amplify Student (and Staff) Voice with Flipgrid (flipgrid.com)

Flipgrid is an entirely free tool that allows educators to create grids (learning communities) and topics (questions, prompts, etc.) to which students can post video replies. These replies, which can be moderated by the teacher, can be viewed by the learning community, replied to (if desired), and shared with parents/guardians. Flipgrid has a built-in recorder that records not only from your webcam



but also from the screen. Teachers can record full lessons to be shared with students. Flipgrid also creates a QR code for every video created, which can lead to interactive sharing when these QR codes are scanned using the Flipgrid mobile app. For example, students could make a video reviewing a book in your collection, and you could print the QR code and paste it into the book. Students could record artist statements. When you affix the QR code to student artwork around your Learning Commons (or the school), it allows others to understand the story or method behind the piece. Learn all about Flipgrid in their Educator guide (bit.ly/fgedguide).



4. Create Beautiful Media with Canva (canva.com)

Canva is a web-based, drag-and-drop design tool that makes the creation of any visual content (posters, infographics, social media posts, etc.) easy. There are millions of images, thousands of icons and shapes, and hundreds of fonts in the tool. Canva also has an education program that gives verified educators free access to Canva Pro and many other add-ons for classroom design use. Our Learning Commons has an active online presence on Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok because I want to engage with the school community, and beyond, and share programming and daily life in the space. As I am not a graphic designer, I rely heavily on Canva to create engaging media for our posts and posters for the physical space. Visit canva.com/education to sign up for the educator account.

5. Create Inclusive Media with Blush Designs (blush.design)

As teacher-librarians, we are very conscientious about ensuring our collection is representative of the students in and beyond our school communities. I also know that learning from the Learning Commons doesn't just come from the collection alone. We share a lot of content via social media posts and slide decks with students and staff. To ensure I continue to be

inclusive of all community members, I like to use blush.design to ensure the clipart in these media include BIPOC. Blush Designs offers clipart where shades and tones are modifiable to be inclusive of the school population.

I hope each of these tools helps you engage staff and students in your Learning Commons. You might choose to dabble in each or dive deeply into one. No matter how you use EdTech, please be sure to check your district's privacy policies before using these tools. These policies concerning digital tools and their use with staff and students vary widely across the province. ■



How to be Engaging Online

Developing Digital Personas for Authentic Communication

Although I've taught formal online classes as part of my annual timetable since 2009, the switch to remote learning has given me a lot more to think about especially:

- How I connect with students
- How I present myself online
- How I can do more to include parents as partners in learning digitally
- How I can personalize my digital content and improve it over time

I have learned to think of my online self in all places as also my professional persona. I develop my class content on a public website and share that widely. A key piece to making your digital teacher persona approachable and reliable, is to allow students and their families to see your body of work as a portfolio of your profession.

Why should teachers develop a digital portfolio of their own?

- To reflect on what they've accomplished
- To highlight their own achievements
- To build student confidence in your expertise
- To entice collaborative work
- To develop your network between families of schools, in your board, province and beyond.

Challenge yourself to take your digital persona to the next level:

Level 1: Make a teacher page and share as much as you feel comfortable doing.

You could use a stock photo, an avatar or your actual picture for personalization. I will often use a Bitmoji so that I have a range of expression types to use when I'm responding to the class or even to individual stakeholders. Link your teacher page everywhere you are digitally. Be intentional about sharing it with students and their families.

Level 2: Use an About.Me page to collate your online places

My profile page: <https://about.me/aking29>

A quick summary and a link to other networks I want to amplify are all in one page. It includes an easy, step-by-step guide to include this link to your digital signature whenever you sign an email. I find that this is a great way to increase my professional network, but also to say to parents and students: This is me and this is what I'm proud of.

Level 3: Be intentional about regular writing and presenting of your professional development.

In other words: Blog. This regular expression of your thinking could be a traditional writing platform, or you could videotape or even podcast your blog. Whichever medium you choose, try to think of your blog as having multiple purposes: to collect your thoughts on one topic, to collate your ideas, to talk about your professional development, and to share your ideas with a greater audience for feedback. I'm a firm believer that taking time to groom my own digital persona has led me to many exciting professional opportunities.

Here's our class website: <https://sites.google.com/ugcloud.ca/kings-creative-writing-website/home>.

You can see my About.Me page on it, which links to my social media and my blog.

Improving the Mindset in your Digital Classroom

One of the barriers we need to overcome as leaders in digital spaces for learning is to set our goals higher than engagement. We need our classroom spaces to be enticing socially and to improve the culture to allow for creativity and innovation. We need to help students connect with each other in genuine ways, and to gradually improve the discourse to highlight greater critical thinking. Here are just a few ways I have had some success this year.

Whole Class Activities

I have always liked software like Padlet or Mindomo for their collaborative nature. They act as both diagnostics and exit cards. Having students try new digital tools also increases their digital fluency as they work through things like saving an image or animation file and then embedding it. I create a digital activity like the one below and then I have it live on our class website, but I can also link to it in our digital classroom. I especially like to try to capture ideas at the start of a unit and then to use them again in reflection at the end of the unit.

Embedding Digital Tools

Padlet Example



Mindomo Example



In this Mindomo example, we used an animated GIF maker called Androidify to each make individual avatars. The students had to: make an avatar, embed the avatar in the Mindomo and then use some of the Mindomo tools to make a border where they could write their names. Not all students were able to do this right away, but it gave us a safe place to set the culture of asking each other for help.

Slideshows for Peer Feedback

I encouraged students to put our weekly work into a slideshow for peer viewing. In this case students were attempting to write a kind of poem that relied on an image (ekphrastic poetry). Once this student put her slide into the class slideshow, students commented using the criteria of the unit. Here's the full slideshow: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/19vnD-jCCzbFsQPOr_NYRr-ZGdNITsw-njLcuRX1QVZI/edit?usp=sharing.



Forms for Peer Feedback and Celebration

Even with all the fun that many of the students were having, I still found that I wasn't getting peer feedback from all students. I tried giving them sentence starters, criteria for peer assessment and still didn't have 100% engagement. Finally, I developed a form for students to rank their peers' writing and even develop their own awards. This seemed to help reluctant students to find a way to be critical. ■

Making Some STEAMY Curriculum Connections in the Library

The world evolves. Curriculum changes. New policies get introduced. What alternatives can a teacher-librarian offer students? How can they incorporate new ideas and 21st Century learning in the Library Learning Commons (LLC)?

Kate Sharp, teacher-librarian at Peel District School Board's Whaley's Corners Public School, says, "I would describe my role in the school as a lead learner and designated risk-taker! In some ways the LLC is still a hub for knowledge, but we have a focus on inquiry with the integration of maker/design thinking ideology. My role is to keep that spirit alive with almost constant reinvention and curiosity for what might come next in education."

With the risk-taker spirit in mind, David Cruz, a teacher-librarian at Tecumseh Public School in Peel District School Board says, "I also want to make myself and our space responsive to students' needs and goals, either through technology or through the library." Cruz says he collaborates with colleagues to see what is needed in the classroom. "I usually post information through our e-mail distribution list, talk to staff during staff meetings, share via social media, team teach (co-plan, co-teach, co-debrief lessons, and units), or have impromptu conversations with staff. I try to make it as organic as I can because I want my practice to be responsive to a teacher's learning needs and their goals as far as implementing STEAM (e.g., Designing a Mars Rover with Sphero and Vex Robots)."

With interesting technology and building tools, students are drawn to a school's LLC. Sharp says that teachers "will often come to me because they want to incorporate the tools but are hesitant to do so. That is where we can work as partners and take risks. Whenever I am using a new tool or tech toy, I will reach out to one or two teachers. After our work, we will share at a staff meeting and before I know it, I have a few more co-learners with me in the LLC!" It's all about taking a risk and learning.

Be it the inquiry model, STEM, STEAM, or design thinking, they all speak to what a teacher-librarian can do. Coding has always been an important skill but is perhaps more so now that it is specifically outlined in the new math curriculum.



Add in caption



Trish Hurley

As curriculum leaders, teacher-librarians can help others proficiently explore coding in the classroom. From robots like Cubetto, Ozobot, Dash/Dot, Ollie, to Lego programs like WeDo 2.0 or Lego Mindstorms, coding a “bot” to move always creates a buzz of excitement. Teacher-Librarians can introduce students to apps, programs, and websites like Scratch Junior, Scratch, Microbits, Bitsbox, Minecraft EDU, and Code.org. There are many ways for a teacher-librarian to find new and more interesting ways to link curriculum to technology. You can even use game design with apps like Sketch Nation, or Bloxels and connect it to a story writing in the language.

Sharp tries to incorporate some tech into everyday curriculum tasks. “I try to connect coding and maker education into reading and writing in the LLC. For example, using techniques outlined in Angela Stockman’s book *Make Writing*, I have utilized Ozobots to “code” the route of a story map. The Forest of Reading® 2019 selection *The Better Tree Fort* text was used as a jumping-off point for a design challenge using loose parts.” Sharp says another popular tool in the LLC is the green screen which is used for everything from facilitating simple Readers’ Theatre to creating Ontario tourist videos for a Grade 3 social studies lesson. “These types of tech tools help the curriculum come to life.”

Whether it is building in a makerspace or creating with technology, Cruz explains that he is “a huge proponent of the design thinking process. I feel that this strategy of a lesson and unit design allows me to connect to all aspects of the curriculum, whether it’s creating graphic novels/comics about life in New France with Pixton or creating your own Day in the Life virtual reality experience with CoSpacesEDU. I always find that STEM/STEAM learning happens naturally when technology is involved. Recently, I had students create pixel art and Mondrian art through Google Sheets courtesy of Eric Curts. Students were able to use a spreadsheet program in a creative manner. And learn certain aspects about the technology.”

Teacher-Librarians are well versed in all aspects of the curriculum, not just reading. Sharp says, “Sphero robots have been great in terms of connecting to the math curriculum – length, rate, angles or even simple shapes. What is great about these technologies is that you can return to them, again and

again, to improve skill sets and review concepts.”

Cruz has “had students use Tinkercad to design 3D models of their names. For language, I have used Ozobots and Dash and Dots to help teachers teach students to create narratives through coding. I also have used Book Creator with kindergarten students to bring the book *Not A Box* to life. With primary students, I have had them design robot helpers with Dash and Dot robots to help solve problems at home and in their community (e.g., robot chef, robot dog walker).”

The projects and new connections students can make are limitless. “I also had intermediate students document Terry Fox’s Marathon of Hope through Google Tour Creator and Google Tour Builder. This way they were able see the story in a new medium – VR,” Cruz says.

“One of my favourites has been the use of CoSpacesEDU with Grade 5 students for building an energy efficient home. Students designed a home in a VR experience. Some students made it interactive by coding parts of their homes to provide information about energy efficiency.”

To incorporate STEM/STEAM ideas into the library, teacher-librarians should build a makerspace and become comfortable using new apps or programs. Sharp says apps such as PicCollage and Apple Clips are great for documenting the learning. “Not only can we apply media literacy skills to various areas of the curriculum, art and design are considered as well. Since we used these tools repeatedly to document our learning, students are constantly reminded of the aesthetics that accompany visual communication.” ■

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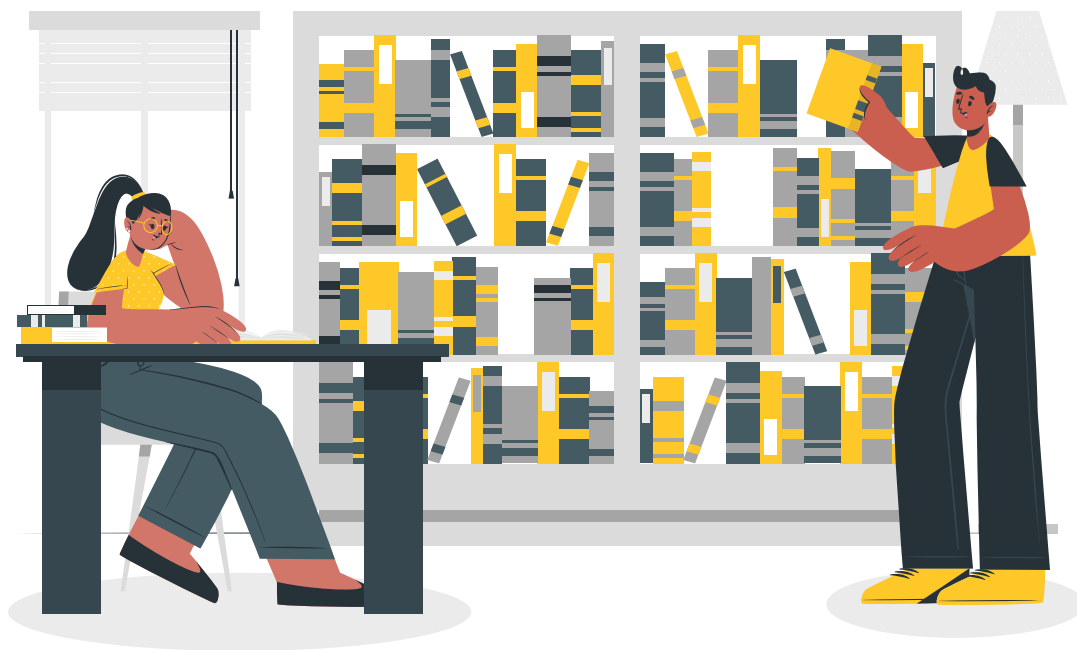
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Supporting the Curriculum Through Weeding

Mary Chisholm

Five years into my career as a school library technician, I took a one-year leave. The person covering my leave asked me if I would be all right with her doing some weeding. Up until that point weeding hadn't been a priority for me, and honestly a book had to pretty much be soaking wet or missing pages for me to let it go. I had very sentimental attachments to the books.

Coming back to my library was a shock. She had packed up and sent off 21 boxes of books for recycling. While I consider this a small weeding project now, in comparison to some other schools that I have worked at, it was still stunning to see the difference that it made. The collection looked cleaner, fresher and more inviting. By getting rid of old and outdated resources, it was easier for students to find what they needed.

Lesson learned: weeding is important. You may be familiar with the M.U.S.T.I.E. criteria for weeding as outlined in *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission: is it misleading, ugly, superseded, trivial, irrelevant, and can it be found elsewhere? Using these criteria, I would encourage targeted weeding, specifically as it applies to the curriculum.

This is particularly important considering one of the main functions of the school library learning commons collection is to support the curriculum. As the curriculum changes, the collection should reflect those changes. This might mean letting go of books that you have used for years, to make space

for new, more relevant titles. If you have to give a warning when you hand a student a book – “Here is a book about Alberta, but keep in mind it is 20 years old so don't rely on it for statistics, a lot has probably changed” – it is time to let that book go.

Whenever there is a change in any subject area, I look over the new curriculum document and then compare the expectations and content to what is on the shelves. If you have been in education a long time, you might remember that students used to study weather in Grade 5, and we had shelves full of books about weather at a Grade 5 reading level. Or all those pioneer books for Grade 3 – you know the ones. Are they still relevant for the Social Studies curriculum? Are they one-sided? Weed out-dated books about pioneers to make room for Indigenous voices and books that accurately portray first contacts between settlers and Indigenous people. Weeding books that are out of date, at the wrong grade level, or that don't support the curriculum in a meaningful way, will help you to identify gaps and prioritize new purchases. Pointing to changes in the curriculum can also help you advocate for funding to fill in gaps.

Make sure that you can be confident in any book a student selects from your shelf that it will have reliable and age-appropriate information. Let the curriculum help guide your weeding decisions. When a collection is well-maintained through regular weeding, staff and students will be more inclined to sign out and use the books. ■



Writing on the Walls: Reimagining the Writing Club

Kasey Whalley

Our high school library is a vibrant and well-used space for academic and social gatherings. Students are encouraged to use the space for studying, discussing schoolwork, gathering in small groups and discovering their next favourite read. The library also is the hub for some of our school's extra-curricular programs and meetings.

When I started *Authorize Reading and Writing Club*, our school had neither a traditional book club nor a writing club. This new club, held in the library, would give readers and writers a space to exchange favourite books, their writing and foster new literary discoveries. More than just a space to talk about words, I wanted clear connections to curriculum and critical thinking to help students (whether they realized it or not) in their classrooms. I had three co-curricular goals in mind when starting this club:

1. Encourage students to read and write confidently about materials they discover independently
2. Support students in their efforts to read and write critically
3. Promote independent, community, and global connections in reading and writing

Authorize began in September 2013. Its ultimate goal is to encourage students to read critically, write carefully, and make connections to their own lives, to communities, and globally. The club focuses on a wide range of material and genres to broaden the reading tastes of its members. We've created a unified support system for booklovers and burgeoning writers alike.

Each month students focus their independent reading and writing on a particular genre, theme or type of literature. Depending on the month, students are encouraged to read or write poetry, short stories, graphic or visual-based stories, or non-fiction literature outside of school-assigned reading. At each meeting, students participate in activities, watch videos, or collaborate in ways that encourage critical thinking and understanding of our focus genre/theme. We also discuss and explore critical aspects of these genres, such as bias, the danger of single stories and ownership. The club is designed to have a critical thinking element that allows students to examine their own writing and reading in new ways.

Once a month, we would have a more traditional format where we host book discussions and writing groups. However, as the club evolved over the years, this sharing became less structured. Students would share great books or a new piece of writing more organically. Our activities often spark book discussions and comparisons and provide an opportunity to write something new. These conversations and writing exercises are the bedrock of our club. I often encourage students to continue talking and discussing these topics, even if it means less time to complete activities – this is critical thinking in action.

Six years ago, members expressed the desire to provide a larger platform for their writing and other students' creative storytelling skills. They created the Tall Tale Event, a coffeehouse show that features original storytelling in any form, including written works, film, art, dance and drama. Last year, the club members also created and hosted an escape room for other students – a stripped-down version of which they presented in the OSLA Sandbox at Super Conference 2020. Both Tall Tale Event and the escape room idea developed from conversations in the club. The activities I present each week are intended to foster these kinds of creative discussions and provide space for students to discuss the power of storytelling, reading, and writing.

Authorize has changed over the years, adapting to new students and their interests. With the introduction of a Forest of Reading® club three years ago hosted by our teacher-librarian, our activities have become more focused on writing and storytelling. With this shift, students are encouraged and welcome to join even if they do not identify as a “writer.” Students express how valuable the club and activities have been for them both in and outside of their classrooms. They have more confidence in their writing, are more critical about

the things they read and write and are more comfortable collaborating and working with other students. Finding the right combination of fun and critical thinking hasn't always been easy. Still, it's a guiding principle of *Authorize* that has proven valuable to its student members.

Below are general outlines to two activities that students have enjoyed, which provide an opportunity to write and think critically.

Prose, Verse, and How Words Work

For this activity, I show the students examples of literary elements such as hard and soft sounds, alliteration, meter, and rhyming. Examples can include the V speech from the movie *V for Vendetta*, reading *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss, watching Kenneth Branagh's To Be or Not To Be soliloquy from *Hamlet* or listening to Harry Baker's “Paper People.” We will briefly go over common literary terms and create a dictionary for reference.

Students are given a writing prompt and asked to write a short piece of prose or verse using a single literary element, working individually or in small groups. After sharing their work with the larger group, we discuss the benefits of each element used and the reasons a writer or creator would choose to use that element in their work. We also talk about the value of using certain elements in verse or prose. We will often create a list of novels in verse and talk about the benefits and limits of this style.

Remix Culture and Ownership

For this activity, I show students different examples of remix culture. Examples I include are the Lego Mona Lisa by artist Marco Pece, the “Desi Remix” series by artist Neha Kapil, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* by Seth Grahame-Smith or the music video Finesse by Bruno Mars featuring Cardi B. Using these as guides, we then create a list of other “remixed” work.

Students are asked to pick a piece of storytelling and remix the work into a written or visual piece. After sharing their work, we discuss ownership, copyright, creative commons and the creative process. Students are encouraged to look critically at the reasons for remixing literature or art and the benefits/drawbacks of using another's work to create something new. ■

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