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Librarians Connected to National Future Ready Initiative

Introducing Future Ready Librarians (FRL), as an expansion of the Future Ready school initiative

From Library Power to the Lilead Fellows Program

Creating a new generation of leaders among school district library administrators.

Meeting the Needs of LGBTQ Students

Including books that serve the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, or Questioning (LGBTQ) community





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Librarians Connected to National Future Ready Initiative by Mark Ray and Sara Trettin

Leading superintendents, educational leaders, and school districts increasingly recognize strong librarians and vibrant libraries are essential to future ready schools. This article introduces Future Ready Librarians (FRL) as an expansion of the Future Ready school initiative led by the Alliance for Excellent Education in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education. Through FRL, librarians and libraries have become part of the national conversation about future ready schools.

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Historically, spatial skills were known by the term "spatial ability," but as researchers began to examine the components of "spatial ability," they realized that the widely held assumption that it was a fixed, innate ability was incorrect. That assumption has kept generations of students, particularly girls and women, from reaching their full potential in the STEM fields. This article helps raise awareness of the importance of spatial skill development.

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ADVISORYBOARD

Susan Ballard
sdballard@comcast.net
Granite State College/University System
of NH, Concord, NH

Jennifer Boudrye
jennifer.boudrye@dc.gov
District of Columbia Public Schools,
Washington, DC

Anita Brooks
anitabk@bythebooks.ca
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Michele Farquharson
mfarquhars@vsb.bc.ca
Kerrisdale Elementary, Vancouver, BC

Kristin Fontichiaro
font@umich.edu
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

Lyn Hay
lyn_hay@live.com
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Tara Jones
jonesta@bsd405.org
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Sara Kelly Johns
skjohns@gmail.com
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doug0077@gmail.com
Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Public Schools,
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Debra Kachel
dkachel69@comcast.net
SchoolLibraryAdvocacy.org, Wales, PA

Keith Curry Lance
keithlance@comcast.net
RSL Research Group, Louisville, CO

Marcia Mardis
mmardis@fsu.edu
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL

Jo Ellen Priest Misakian
jmisakian@fresno.edu
Fresno Pacific University, Fresno, CA

Mark Ray
mark.ray.vps@gmail.com
Vancouver Public Schools, Vancouver, WA

Ann Carlson Weeks
acweeks@umd.edu
University of Maryland, MD

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Make This a Signature Year

Deborah Levitov and Christie Kaaland

As a new school year gets underway, we can't help but be reminded of the many tragic events and the unsettling political climate that has deeply affected our world over the past months. Librarians enter their schools this fall with a new sense of purpose related to

- Creating a safe haven for all students,
- Providing a library collection, which provides the broadest perspectives and diverse viewpoints
- Offering open spaces for difficult discussions,
- Respecting the needs of students to feel accepted and to be heard,
- And when needed, helping students find solace and reassurance.

This issue of *Teacher Librarian* offers ideas for enriching and extending school library programs supportive of these goals. For example, in her article, Lisa Horton shares considerations for elementary, middle, and high school libraries regarding the selection of LGBTQ literature, while Sujei Lugo proposes collection development strategies for an anti-racist approach to selecting Latino literature for the K-3 school library. Efforts such as these — increasing both LGBTQ and Latino literature — offer opportunities for informed discourse while supporting a respectful climate and celebration of diversity through

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is committed to collaborative partnerships for improved student learning through thought-provoking and challenging feature articles, strategies for effective advocacy, regular review columns, and critical analyses of management and programming issues.

Publisher Edward Kurdyla
Editor Deborah Levitov
Associate Editor Christie Kaaland

COLUMNISTS

Reid Goldsborough, Sara Catherine Howard,
 Debra Kachel, Fran Kompar, Annette Lamb,
 David Loertscher, Kathleen Odean, Betty Winslow

EDITORIAL OFFICES TEACHER LIBRARIAN
The Journal for School Library Professionals
Box 958

Bowie, MD 20718-0958

Phone: 301-805-2191

Fax: 301-805-2192

E-mail: editor@teacherlibrarian.com

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The YGS Group,
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Deeper Learning, Inquiry, and the Teacher Librarian

David V. Loertscher

While teacher librarians would like to claim center stage when it comes to inquiry, many other experts and organizations besides AASL claim inquiry as their specialty. From our perspective, such initiatives often run on parallel tracks without the acknowledgment of other ideas. Discussions about inquiry are most often insular, turf proactive, and an effort to gain traction in a crowded field of educational ideas.



Models of inquiry are commonplace, ranging from those in the field of librarianship to the ISTE standards for students, the four Cs, and the efforts from such organizations as Edutopia. Recently, an amazing document has appeared from an organization named Digital Promise. They are in the business of creating and issuing micro credentials. The idea is that educators would decide for themselves a goal of excellence—something they want to know and be able to do—and then assemble a group of “short courses” that would be individually tailored for each person. Instead of a district or state defining a goal and a required pathway to demonstrate expertise, the responsibility rests with individuals to design their own pathways where their strengths aren’t overused and their weaknesses can be addressed in short, or micro, units that document expertise. Such pathways are disruptive to the “normal” way of doing things, and whether school

districts and states can recognize such competencies is the chief concern toward further development of the idea.

The document issued by Digital Promise (<http://digitalpromise.org/>) is titled *Developing a System of Micro-credentials:*

Supporting Deeper Learning in the Classroom. It can be downloaded at <http://tinyurl.com/glr6ddb>.

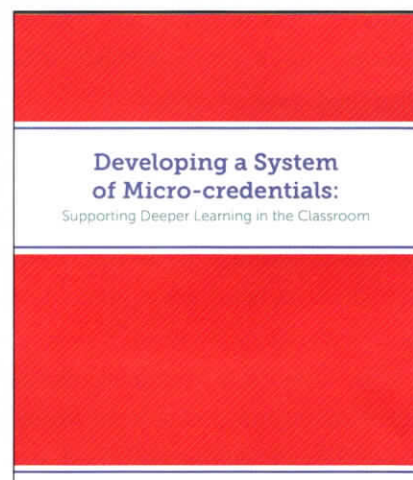
The publication outlines six major ideas in a framework that describes the behavior of learners who are adept at deeper learning. Below, I present the six ideas and after each, in italics, summarize a longer set of descriptive statements. The reader is encouraged to consult the original document for the full exposition of ideas.

FRAMEWORK FOR DEEPER LEARNING

1. Master core academic content. *Know and understand content knowledge.*
2. Think critically and solve complex problems. *Become a smart learner.*
3. Work collaboratively. *Be effective as a team member.*
4. Communicate effectively. *Create and deliver clear messages.*
5. Learn how to learn. *Become a great learner.*
6. Develop academic mindsets. *Act like a pro.*

The framework above is then used by an educator to check personal knowledge and recognize deficiencies. Then the document describes some 40 micro courses that the educator can select from to build and demonstrate competence in the entire framework. It is like starting with a puzzle picture for which you might have half the pieces and then “earning” the rest of the pieces to complete the puzzle.

For the teacher librarian, merging the information and technology environment with the deeper learning projects going on in the classroom makes a great deal of sense. The advantage to any teacher who collaborates with the teacher librarian is that together they face an increasingly diverse group of students in their classrooms. The opportunity to



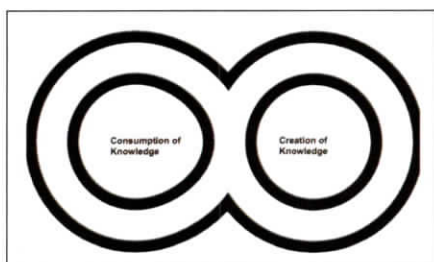
mentor diversity in a personalized way with a plethora of tools and a variety of information makes a huge difference if one looks at the percentage of students in the class who meet expectations.

However, the mastery of what is already known about any area of topical knowledge is just one piece of a larger role that library learning commons can play. Consider carefully the following role target.

COMPLEMENTARY FUNCTIONS OF THE LIBRARY LEARNING COMMONS

Suppose we embrace the idea that a young person can not only master the known but can also contribute novel and inventive ideas to the pool of knowledge. Such a position has not generally been considered as a part of education, but young entrepreneurs, inventors, and creative kids constantly prove adults wrong in this arena. Every year the president of the United States recognizes young inventors, and a search of YouTube or a visit to a Maker Faire reminds us all that there is a huge hole if we only encourage the young in a single effort. The picture below encourages teacher librarians to create an environment in the library learning commons where knowledge can be created as well as mastered.

After a visit to a Maker Faire in New York City a couple of years ago, I, along with two other colleagues, sat down to reflect on what we had seen



during the faire. Kids and teens had created amazing things, and we saw the process a creative person goes through on the path to creation and invention. The uTEC Maker Model was the result, and it is pictured above with its accompanying description of stages, from “using” to “creating.”

THE UTEC MAKER MODEL

Using: Enjoying, sampling, engaging, playing. Participate or experience what others have created.

Tinkering: Playing, messing around, questioning, researching. Making personal changes to other’s creations.

Experimenting: Building, trying/failing, repurposing. Modifying and testing theories. Learning from failure/success.

Creating: Inventing, producing, entrepreneurship. Novel products, ideas, innovations.

What we observed as we interacted with young inventors was not just the path they had taken toward creativity but also the development of various

dispositions along the way that mirrored many of the dispositions recognized in the push toward deeper learning. The major difference was that instead of being required to summarize what others knew, the emphasis of the adults was to liberate the young learner toward the creativity pathway. It was our own discovery of what Sir Ken Robinson has been advocating across the world. (see www.sirken-robinson.com.)

Thus I recommend, and really challenge, each teacher librarian, school administrator, and classroom teacher to consider whether the dual role is already at work in the school. If not, or even if it is undeveloped, imagine how the environment of the traditional library could be transformed to embrace creativity, making, inventing, and doing as a partnership with content mastery. Carol Koechlin’s and my newly revised website dealing with the transformation to a library learning commons might be a great starting point or a checklist for those already working on the transformation. The website address is <https://sites.google.com/site/schoolllearningcommons/>.