



TEC Library

Library Letters

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21st Century Skills and Your School Library

Almost all contemporary debate about education and education reform includes a recognition that in order for students today to "be successful" they must have obtained and, to some degree mastered "21st Century Skills".

I suspect we can all make reasonable, educated guesses as to what "21st Century Skills" might incorporate, but having heard this phrase buzzing around in librarian circles, I wanted to really have a handle on what it all means and how my fields of expertise (library, media and information literacy) fit into the bigger picture.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of these 21st Century Skills (so far) comes from [NCREL \(North Central Regional Educational Laboratory\)/Metiri Group](#), a. k. a. "Learning Point Associates". Their graphic highlights four distinct 21st Century skill categories, supporting an overall "Academic Achievement":

1. **Digital-Age Literacy**
2. **Effective Communication**
3. **Inventive Thinking**
4. **High Productivity**

Each is then further broken down into components that you can access at their website.

Although I could provide reasonable connections among all four of these skill categories and "library", the one which provides the obvious match is the first—*Digital Age Literacy*. Within this category dwells basic (reading), scientific, economic and technological literacies, visual and information literacies, and multicultural literacy and global awareness.

Each of these "literacies" have their own "standards", whether officially recognized or simply suggested. Additionally, each can be taught in a variety of ways, throughout many, if not all, academic disciplines.

National "Information Literacy" Standards
Information Power © 1998 American Library Association
National Forum on Information Literacy <www.infolit.org/>

INFORMATION LITERACY

1. **Access information efficiently and effectively.**
2. **Evaluate information critically and competently.**
3. **Use information accurately and creatively.**

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

4. **Pursue information related to personal interests.**
5. **Appreciate literature and other creative expressions of information.**
6. **Strive for excellence in information seeking and knowledge generation.**

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

7. **Recognize the importance of information to a democratic society.**
8. **Practice ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology.**
9. **Participate effectively in groups to pursue and generate information.**

Any underlined blue items below are links

Know Your Library!

The word "library" has grown in recent years to mean much more than "a repository of books". Admittedly, there are books, and the core concepts surrounding libraries as bastions of democracy still remain, but in addition, libraries have adapted and changed to better serve their patrons.

Here are some "meanings" of LIBRARY [school library] for the 21st Century:

- Reading promoter/advocate
- Information access portal
- Technology access/skills provider
- Media awareness/literacy facilitator
- Life-long learning center
- Resource service provider
- "Leveller"[where all can obtain and use information regardless of social or economic status]
- Perpetrator of DEMOCRACY [yeah, I am THAT sappy]

[Library Services](#) [Library Brochure](#)

However, the library realm provides the best opportunities and greatest resources (including the librarian her/him-self) for learning the majority of these literacy skills, including perhaps the most quintessential: information literacy.

"Information" has become the new currency of the 21st Century—and "life-long learners" will know how to access, evaluate and effectively use (not just consume) information.

In subsequent issues, I plan to connect the standards to practical ways your Tyee Library, and teacher-librarian, can facilitate student learning of these "Information Literacy" standards, as well as many of the others.

Monthly Drawing Winner #6!

Congratulations to **Kiersten Lewis**, an ACE student. She won a \$25 gift card from Barnes & Noble.

For more information about how students can participate, click on the link above and print out the poster to put up in your classroom. **The next drawing will be April 30.**

Contact your TEC Librarian by email: carlsolm@hsd401.org