

SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN CANADA

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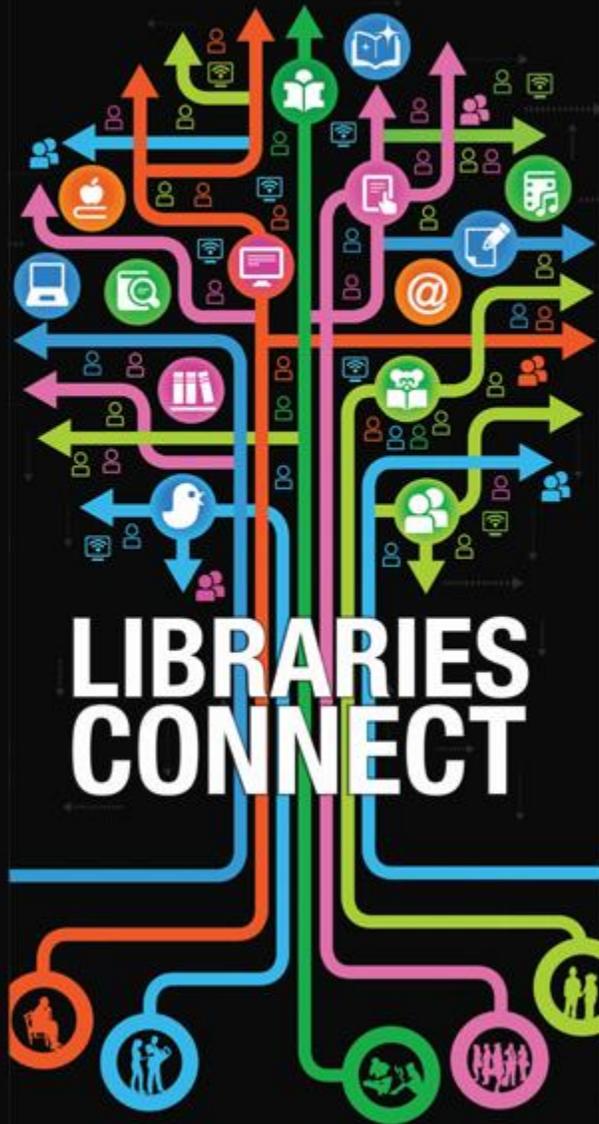
BALANCE IN THE DIGITAL AGE



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School Libraries in Canada

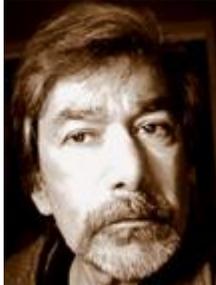
Volume 30, Number 3

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 Fall 2012
 Volume 30 Number 3

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<p>Kristen Yates Office of the Privacy Commissioner / Commissariat à la protection de la vie privée</p>		<p>Nora Young Host of Spark on CBC</p>	
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Thanks to retired Teacher-Librarian Helen Lee for her assistance with this issue.

Balance in a Digital Age

Derrick Grose

Teacher-Librarian

Lisgar Collegiate Institute

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I admire skateboarders. Not just the really talented ones who make everything look easy, but, more particularly, the ones I see practicing a trick over and over again, trying to get it right. I am sometimes irritated when they practice in the wrong places, and I get concerned when they fail to take reasonable precautions like wearing helmets and pads; however, I marvel at their engagement with learning, their commitment to perfecting their moves, and their willingness to take the risks that are necessary for ultimate success.

Dewey Decimal classification 796.22 aside, what does this have to do with school libraries? Although a skateboard may be a mere fashion accessory for a few, to be truly useful it must be moving forward (perhaps making some awesome jumps and going through impressive loops on occasion). One key to successful skateboarding is forward momentum and the other is balance.

You may relate school libraries to the ‘impressive jumps’ and ‘awesome loops’ but this issue of *School Libraries in Canada* will focus on the balance that is essential if school libraries are going to continue moving forward in this digital age.

Balance has always been important in school libraries. Traditional challenges have included:

- **finding the appropriate balance in collections between fiction and non-fiction and circulating and reference books (not to mention balancing the content within those collections);**
- **balancing the need for a refuge for quiet study, the need for a place for productive discussion and the need for a social space;**
- **balancing the budget while trying to keep up with demands for current books, paying for subscriptions to periodicals and databases, purchasing supplies or buying new technology and,**
- **balancing the demands of time for delivering programs, maintaining the collection and facilities and completing administrative tasks.**

How is this different in the digital age? With the exception of a few challenges that relate specifically to printed books and magazines, most of the challenges of past remain, and new ones arise as school libraries reach out to become the heart of the learning commons.

One critical challenge is finding the appropriate balance between ensuring the safety of students and providing them with all of the educational benefits that flow from the collaborative potential of social networking and cloud computing, not to mention access to all of the information available online. School librarians can no longer control what makes it onto the

virtual bookshelves to which their students have access. They cannot vet all of the information students may share or the contacts they may make. Excessive filtering of the virtual world within the school is likely to leave students vulnerable when they leave that protected environment. In this issue of *SLiC*, articles from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and from Media Smarts point to resources that will help teach students how to safely take advantage of the digital tools that are available to them.

Elsewhere in this issue the reader will find an interview with Nora Young. The host of CBC's *Spark* has written a book entitled *The Virtual Self: How Our Digital Lives are Altering the World Around Us*. She acknowledges the challenge of the virtual world's encroachments on our connections with physical reality when she writes:

We can find some balance in our use of digital technologies, recognizing that we need to create space for embodied experience, time to attend quietly to what it feels like to be me right now. We just need to put down the iPhone long enough to do it (96).

Both library staff and students need to address this issue. The virtual school library, open 24/7, offers both students and library staff the freedom to work at their own convenience; however, it can also become a trap undermining the equilibrium between one's school life and one's "extracurricular" existence. The educational community, with its concerns about privacy and copyright, will also be interested in Young's discussion of how data should be collected, shared and controlled in ways that serve positive social purposes, connecting people with the real physical world in which they live.

The issue of balanced cultural representation in our libraries, curricula and the media is addressed in the School Library profile from Ermineskin Elementary School in Hobbema, Alberta, in an interview with author and educator Rabindranath Maharaj and in an article from Media Smarts on addressing diversity in Media.

While we are trying to maintain our balance, it is useful to have a sense of the road ahead. Two papers from Treasure Mountain Canada are included here to help readers as they reflect on the future directions for their school libraries. Alanna King has presented a paper about the implications of digital media for instruction in literacy and Donna Presz and Sarah Murray have described how the School Learning Commons concept has evolved in the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

Hopefully the ideas presented by all of the contributors to this issue of *SLiC* will help you to find the appropriate balance to maintain the forward momentum in your school library. Celebrate Canadian Library Month and Canadian School Library Day (October 22, 2012) by putting on your helmet and kneepads and jumping on your school library's metaphorical skateboard!

Help students avoid the privacy pitfalls of the online world

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada Offers Educational Tools for Elementary and Secondary Students.

Kristen Yates
Senior Public Education Officer
Public Education and Communications
Office of the Privacy Commissioner

Today's students are growing up in a much different privacy world than their parents did.

Their parents might have shared gossip over lunch in the cafeteria – uttered once, possibly repeated, but ultimately forgotten.

Nowadays, those indiscreet moments are captured on a smartphone and uploaded online for anyone with an Internet connection to see – all on display then, and for years afterward.

New technologies have taken on a central role in daily life - and how we communicate with one another.

"More and more often, we see people being stung by the privacy perils implicit in taking their personal lives online," says Jennifer Stoddart, the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

"They have been fired, missed out on job interviews and academic opportunities, and been suspended from school for instant messages, wall posts and other messages they mistakenly thought were like private conversations with friends."

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada has been tasked by Parliament with a mission of protecting and promoting the privacy rights of Canadians.

Several years ago, the Office recognized that younger Canadians tended to be early adopters of new technologies and faced significant privacy risks as a result. The Office has developed a variety of teaching resources to help Canadian educators to talk with young people about how to protect their privacy - and their reputations - when using modern technologies.

Young people today are sophisticated users of the Internet, using this medium with ease and enthusiasm. They also need to understand the impact that these technologies can have on their privacy.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada offers a number of

materials to assist school librarians and other educators in sharing information that can help students to make smart decisions when they go online.

Graphic Novel

SOCIAL SMARTS: PRIVACY, THE INTERNET AND YOU

A new graphic novel developed by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada with feedback from youth tells the story of a brother and sister who learn (sometimes the hard way) about the privacy risks related to social networking, mobile devices and texting, and online gaming.



Social Smarts: Privacy, the Internet and You is designed to appeal to tweens and younger teens. The 12-page graphic novel includes detailed black and white illustrations so it can be easily copied. (http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/gn_intro.html)

Presentation Packages

[YOUTH PRESENTATION PACKAGE GRADES 4-6](http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/4-6presentation.html)
(<http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/4-6presentation.html>)

[YOUTH PRESENTATION PACKAGE GRADES 7-8](http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/7-8presentation.html)
[SECONDARY I-II IN QUEBEC](http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/7-8presentation.html)
(<http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/7-8presentation.html>)

[YOUTH PRESENTATION PACKAGE GRADES 9-12](http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/9-12presentation.html)
[SECONDARY III-V IN QUEBEC](http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/9-12presentation.html)
(<http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/9-12presentation.html>)

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner's *Protecting Your Online Rep* presentation series offers all the tools necessary to provide an engaging and effective presentation right in your own library, school or community.

The goal of these presentations is to help demonstrate to young people how technology can affect their privacy, and what they can do to build a secure online identity while keeping their personal information safe.

The presentation packages have been designed to appeal to young people in grades 7 and 8 and in grades 9 to 12.

Each package includes PowerPoint slides that are packed with helpful information and examples, and speaking notes that are numbered to match the PowerPoint slides and that include class discussion topics at different points in the presentation.

The presentations take roughly 30 minutes to deliver, but can take longer if you allow time for the class discussion topics.

Youth Video

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOUR ON-LINE REP



Protect Your Online Rep is a video that speaks to teens and tweens alike and covers the key privacy concepts kids need to consider when sharing information online. The video can be viewed online or downloaded for discussing privacy issues with kids. (http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/video_index.html)

Tip Sheet for Parents

12 QUICK TIPS FOR PARENTS

It can be tough raising kids in a digital environment. The tip sheet for parents - and which can also be used by educators - offers 12 practical tips for talking to kids about privacy in the online world. The tips include simple ideas and advice to help limit the risks to children's personal information, while still allowing them to benefit from and enjoy their time online. (<http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/tipsheet.html>)

Web site for educators, parents and youth

[YOUTHPRIVACY.CA](http://youthprivacy.ca)



The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada’s youth privacy web site is loaded with interesting content for youth ages 8 through 18. It includes videos created by young people, privacy facts, a privacy quiz and a special section for educators and parents offering tools (including all of the ones highlighted in this article) to help you teach young people the importance of privacy in their everyday lives. (<http://www.youthprivacy.ca/en/index.html>)

Conclusion

While young people are growing up in an age of digital interaction, they still value their online reputations and they want to protect them. Many just don’t know how.

Educators can provide them with the tools and information they need to help build a secure online identity and to keep their personal information safe.

For More Information

If you have questions or comments, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada’s public education officers can be reached at youth-jeunes@priv.gc.ca

Aider les élèves à éviter les pièges du monde virtuel en matière de protection de la vie privée

Le Commissariat à la protection de la vie privée du Canada offre des outils éducatifs destinés aux élèves du primaire et du secondaire.

Kristen Yates

**Agente principale de sensibilisation du grand public
Communications et sensibilisation du grand public
Commissariat à la protection de la vie privée**

Lorsqu'il s'agit de vie privée, les jeunes d'aujourd'hui vivent dans un monde totalement différent de celui dans lequel évoluaient leurs parents.

À l'époque, leurs parents échangeaient probablement des potins à l'heure du lunch – ces ragots étaient parfois répétés une fois, voire plusieurs, mais en définitive, ils étaient vite oubliés. Aujourd'hui, les bavardages sont immortalisés sur un téléphone intelligent et téléchargés en ligne, à la vue de quiconque a une connexion Internet – tout est alors affiché et le demeurera pendant des années.

Les nouvelles technologies occupent dorénavant une place de choix dans notre quotidien et transforment radicalement notre façon de communiquer.

«Il est de plus en plus fréquent de voir des gens s'exposer aux risques à la vie privée que pose implicitement le fait de raconter en ligne des détails les concernant », affirme Jennifer Stoddart, commissaire à la protection de la vie privée du Canada.

« Des gens ont perdu leur emploi, ont raté des occasions d'entrevue pour des emplois potentiels, ont été freinés dans leur cheminement universitaire ou suspendus de l'école en raison de messages instantanés, de commentaires en ligne ou autres types de correspondance en ligne qu'ils croyaient à tort être des conversations privées entre amis. »

Le Parlement a confié au Commissariat à la protection de la vie privée du Canada le mandat de protéger et de promouvoir le droit à la vie privée de la population canadienne.

Il y a quelques années, le Commissariat a pris conscience du fait que les jeunes du Canada étaient des utilisateurs précoces des nouvelles technologies et qu'ils étaient par conséquent fort vulnérables face au risque d'atteinte à la vie privée. C'est pourquoi il a élaboré toute une série de ressources pédagogiques afin d'aider les éducateurs à discuter avec les

jeunes des façons de protéger leur vie privée – et leur réputation – lorsqu'ils utilisent les technologies modernes.

Les jeunes d'aujourd'hui sont des utilisateurs chevronnés d'Internet et naviguent avec facilité et enthousiasme. Aussi faut-il leur faire prendre conscience des répercussions que peuvent avoir ces technologies sur leur vie privée.

Le Commissariat à la protection de la vie privée du Canada propose de nombreuses ressources afin d'aider les bibliothécaires en milieu scolaire et les autres éducateurs à communiquer des renseignements susceptibles d'aider les élèves à prendre des décisions éclairées dans le monde virtuel.

Bande dessinée romanesque

Branchés et futés : Internet et la vie privée

Le Commissariat à la protection de la vie privée du Canada a produit une bande dessinée romanesque de 12 pages intitulée *Branchés et futés : Internet et la vie privée*, qui raconte l'apprentissage parfois difficile d'un garçon et de sa sœur, aux prises avec les risques d'atteinte à la vie privée inhérents aux sites de réseautage social, aux appareils mobiles, aux textos et aux jeux en ligne.



Le document, élaboré avec l'apport des jeunes, s'adresse à un public de préadolescents et de jeunes adolescents. Il contient des illustrations en noir et blanc qui peuvent être reproduites facilement. (http://www.youthprivacy.ca/fr/gn_intro.html)

Trousses de présentation

Trousses de présentation pour les jeunes de la 4e et 6e année
(<http://www.youthprivacy.ca/fr/4-6presentation.html>)

Trousses de présentation pour les jeunes de la 7e et 8e années
sec. Ire à IIe au Québec
(<http://www.youthprivacy.ca/fr/7-8presentation.html>)

Trousses de présentation pour les jeunes de la 9e et 12e année
sec. IIIe à Ve au Québec
(<http://www.youthprivacy.ca/fr/9-12presentation.html>)

Les trousse de présentation de la série Protéger votre réputation en ligne conçues par le Commissariat à la protection de la vie privée du Canada comportent tous les outils nécessaires pour animer une présentation dynamique et efficace dans votre bibliothèque, votre école ou votre collectivité.

Les trousse ont pour objet d'expliquer aux jeunes les effets de la technologie sur leur vie privée et la façon dont ils peuvent se construire une identité en ligne tout en protégeant leurs renseignements personnels.

Les trousse de présentation s'adressent aux jeunes de 7e et 8e année (sec. I et II au Québec) et de la 9e à la 12e année (sec. III à V au Québec).

Chaque trousse comprend une présentation PowerPoint renfermant une foule d'informations et d'exemples utiles, ainsi que des notes dont la numérotation correspond à celle des diapositives de la présentation. Certaines diapositives proposent des sujets pouvant faire l'objet de discussions en classe à certaines étapes de la présentation.

Les présentations sont d'une durée approximative de 30 minutes, mais elles peuvent durer plus longtemps si vous prévoyez du temps pour les discussions en classe.

Vidéo à l'intention des jeunes

Que pouvez-VOUS faire pour protéger votre réputation en ligne?



La vidéo intitulée *Que pouvez-VOUS faire pour protéger votre réputation en ligne?* s'adresse aux préadolescents et aux adolescents et aborde les principaux concepts auxquels les jeunes doivent réfléchir quand ils communiquent des renseignements en ligne. Cette vidéo peut être visionnée en ligne ou téléchargée pour animer une discussion avec les jeunes sur les questions de protection de la vie privée. (http://www.youthprivacy.ca/fr/video_index.html)

Fiche-conseil pour les parents

12 conseils pratiques pour les parents

À l'ère du numérique, il est parfois difficile d'éduquer des enfants. La fiche-conseil pour les parents, qui peut également être utilisée par les éducateurs, offre 12 conseils pratiques pour parler aux jeunes de protection de la vie privée dans le monde virtuel. Ces conseils comportent des idées simples et des suggestions à utiliser pour limiter les risques d'atteinte à la protection des renseignements personnels des jeunes, tout en permettant à ces derniers de bien utiliser leur temps passé en ligne et d'en profiter. (<http://www.youthprivacy.ca/fr/tipsheet.html>)

Viepriveedesjeunes.ca



Le site Web du Commissariat à la protection de la vie privée du Canada consacré aux jeunes contient une foule de renseignements intéressants destinés à un public de 8 à 18 ans. Il renferme des vidéos conçues par des jeunes, des renseignements factuels sur la protection de la vie privée, un jeu-questionnaire sur la protection de la vie privée et une section spéciale qui propose aux parents et aux éducateurs des outils (dont ceux décrits dans le présent article) pour montrer aux jeunes l'importance de la protection de la vie privée au quotidien.)

Conclusion

Même si les enfants grandissent à une époque d'interactivité numérique, ils attachent encore de l'importance à leur réputation en ligne et souhaitent la protéger, mais bien souvent, ils ne savent pas comment s'y prendre.

Les éducateurs peuvent leur fournir les outils et l'information dont ils ont besoin pour se construire une identité en ligne tout en protégeant leurs renseignements personnels.

Renseignements complémentaires

Si vous avez des questions ou des commentaires, vous pouvez communiquer avec les agents de sensibilisation du grand public à l'adresse youth-jeunes@priv.gc.ca.



Office of the
Privacy Commissioner
of Canada

Commissariat
à la protection de
la vie privée du Canada

SOCIAL SMARTS

PRIVACY, THE INTERNET, AND YOU

NEW GRAPHIC NOVEL HELPS YOUTH NAVIGATE ONLINE
PRIVACY RISKS. GET A FREE COPY FOR YOUR LIBRARY.

WWW.YOUTHPRIVACY.CA

BRANCHÉS ET FUTÉS

INTERNET ET VIE PRIVÉE

UNE NOUVELLE BD ROMANESQUE AIDE LES JEUNES À
ÉVITER LES PIÈGES LIÉS À LA PROTECTION DE LA VIE
PRIVÉE SUR INTERNET. DEMANDEZ UN EXEMPLAIRE
GRATUIT POUR VOTRE BIBLIOTHÈQUE.

WWW.VIEPRIVEEDESJEUNES.CA

0% 100%

Access to information, information and media literacy, and participation in media ... more important than ever

Nora Young

"can't think of a more important time for librarians and teachers to be playing a role in shaping access, critical thinking, and activism."



Nora Young, Broadcaster & Author - photo: giberto.ca

Photo credit: giberto.ca

Nora Young - Broadcaster and Author

For many years, listeners to CBC Radio's *DNTO* and *Spark* have been entertained and informed by Nora Young. Earlier this year she released her book *The Virtual Self - How Our Digital Lives Are Altering The World Around Us*. At the end of the summer, despite an inbox bursting with unanswered emails as she returned from vacation, she kindly agreed to respond to *SLiC*'s questions about reading, writing, broadcasting and technology.

SLiC - What drew you into your career as a broadcaster? If you were starting your career today, would the omnipresence of technology make it more or less likely that you would pursue a similar career path? Why?

NY - I always knew I wanted to be a journalist, but my default, I suppose, was print. I sort of fell into radio through a happy accident, but I quickly fell in love with the power of audio to communicate emotion, ideas, and 'presence' in a powerful way.

In spite of the challenges of the current climate for journalists, (where the internet has created opportunities, but also real financial challenges for journalism) I would still go into journalism. I think that the idea of a journalist working in one medium (radio, print, TV, online) is basically over. I increasingly see myself as a journalist creating content through a number of different digital media: blogging, social media, podcast, online video etc. There's still a role for expertise, which journalists and others can provide, but the sense of the job as inhabiting one medium and the job as 'voice of authority' are gone, probably for the best.

SLiC - In your book, *The Virtual Self - How Our Digital Lives Are Altering the World Around Us*, you identify Benjamin Franklin with his penchant for “documenting, perfecting and monitoring on the road to self-improvement,” as, possibly, “a perfect model for our technologically fixated time.” Would he have been as successful in this century when it may be more of a challenge to carve out a two hour break in the middle of the day and to reserve the time after 6 p.m. for organization and leisure?

NY - From what I know about Franklin, he was so diligent, he would probably have worked in a focused way even in our age of digital distraction. I do think we have to work harder to create focused periods of time when we can just think. This is a bigger challenge all the time.

SLiC - I understand that you came back from your summer vacation to 4000 emails. Was it a challenge to “take a vacation” from email? What makes a vacation a vacation for you?

NY - Ha! While it wasn't literally 4,000, it certainly felt like it! More and more I feel the pull of social media, email etc, when I'm on vacation. When people are planning things like conferences far in advance, it's pretty tough just to have a 'yeah, I'll get back to you in a month' autoreply, so I do check email when I'm on vacation. I am always careful to enforce a "digital hiatus" for part of that time and I find most people who are active online understand that. A real vacation really does involve being unconnected from work. What I also find changing about vacations is that I stay in touch with my friends back home more when I'm travelling. There's Skype, email, Twitter etc, which is great, but I do think there's something lovely about 'missing' your friends and the joy of seeing them again when you return, sharing news etc. It's that old 'how can I miss you when you won't go away?' problem!

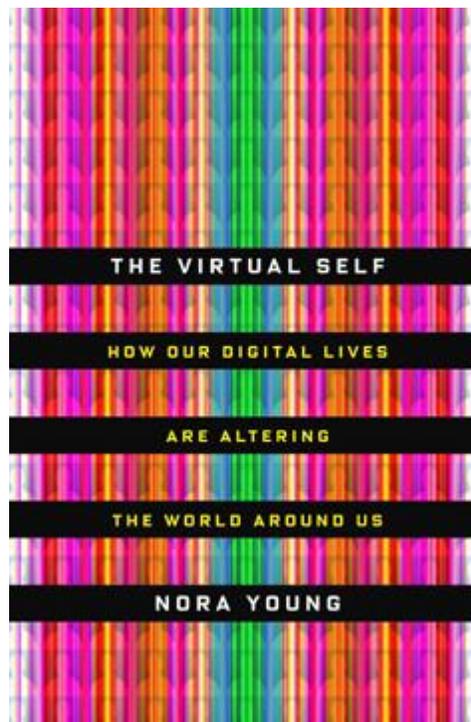
SLiC - What do you like best about your work as a broadcaster? What is the most memorable episode you have created in the course of that work?

NY - My favourite thing in my current broadcasting work is that in speaking to technologists, bloggers, geeks, and academics, I'm usually talking to people who just want to tell you what they think, which, after dealing with spin, or artists on tour who are (legitimately) promoting something, is really refreshing.

My favourite episode of *Spark* is one from the last season, called the Proto Internet show, about things that were 'internetty' before the internet. I love playing with ideas in a way that blends whimsy and depth.

SLiC - What you like best about working as an author?

NY - It's great to be able to go more deeply into topics than I'd have the chance to do as a journalist with a weekly show.



ISBN: 9780771070648

NY - What was the most significant technology in your education before your high school graduation? How important was it and why was it important to your learning at that time?

NY - I would say recorded music as a technology really allowed me to connect with the broader world. It wasn't formally part of my school education, but it certainly taught me a lot about the world.

SLiC - Is there any piece of technology available today that makes you wish you were a member of the generation that is now in school? What is it and why do you think it would be so wonderful to have it in your hands as a student?

NY - I think tools of collaboration would be fantastic to have as a student. There are so many ways for students to use wikis, blogs and social media tools to create things collaboratively, which has always been a big value for me.

SLiC - What memories do you have of school libraries when you were in elementary or secondary school?

NY - Further to the music technology question, I remember listening to music in the school library when I was in elementary school. I remember there was a reel-to-reel player, and that was very cool tech at the time!

SLiC - What were your favourite books when you were growing up? What made them memorable for you?

NY - I had a thing for old noir detective stories as a teenager: Philip Marlowe, that kind of thing. There's something about that hard-boiled noir era that I love. It's so bleak and yet so romantic.

SLiC - If you were at the same age today, do you think those books would have the same appeal? Why or why not?

NY - When I was younger, (boy this makes me sound old) we didn't really have culture 'on demand'. VCRs existed, but we didn't have one, so my experience of culture was much more curated than it is today. I loved vintage pop culture, I think, because I watched a lot of old movies on TV. I probably wouldn't have done that now, and so probably not discovered those old novels.

SLiC - What is your favorite amongst the books you have read recently? What makes it a favourite?

NY - I really loved Gary Shteyngart's book, *Super Sad True Love Story*. It's a touching, funny, and scary satire about techno-culture that cuts remarkably close to reality.

SLiC - What is your favorite newest piece of hardware or software? What makes it a favourite?

NY - I pretty compulsively try out new productivity and organization software. Recently I've been using *Asana*, which is mostly for group work, but until I get my colleagues on it, I'm trying it myself.

SLiC - In your book you note that data can be a tool empowering people to create the society that they want or a tool controlling and manipulating people for political and commercial ends. What is the most encouraging evidence that the former collective purpose will not be sacrificed to powerful economic interests?

NY - I'm encouraged by the active conversations technologists are having about protecting the open platform spirit of the internet in designing these new tools. For every product that makes me disheartened, I see new commitment to harnessing the power of these tools for democracy. And I'm heartened by the power of the internet itself to allow for disruption and innovation without having to invest enormous amounts in infrastructure (at least in the early going).

SLiC - Now that *The Virtual Self* is out, do you have any new writing projects or ideas for other new projects in the works?

NY - I haven't given it too much thought yet, but one thing I'd love is to do something more collaborative. I've been thinking it would be great to edit a series of short 'book-ettes' or mini ebooks on big picture topics in technology, possibly even under the *Spark* brand. Who knows?

SLiC - Is there anything else you would like to say to our audience of school librarians, teacher-librarians, instructional consultants and administrators?

NY - One of the things I have come to believe very strongly as a result of researching all the information we're starting to generate about ourselves is that it makes access to information, information and media literacy, and participation in media more important than ever.

I can't think of a more important time for librarians and teachers to be playing a role in shaping access, critical thinking, and activism.

SLiC - Once again, many thanks for many years of great information and entertainment from your work at C.B.C., for the insights in *The Virtual Self* and, especially, for doing this interview!

Shaping Digital Citizens: preparing students to work and play in the online world

**by Matthew Johnson
Director of Education, MediaSmarts**

Why do students need to learn media literacy? This is a question that skeptical parents and teachers have been asking since media literacy first moved into the classroom and library in the 1970s and 1980s: surely they get enough media at home that they don't need it in the classroom too. In more recent years, as digital literacy has developed under the umbrella of media literacy, it has similarly met with resistance due to the idea of young people as "digital natives," so far ahead of their "immigrant" parents and teachers that they have nothing to learn.

Both of these attitudes, however, mistake fluency for literacy. While it's true that young people are avid consumers of media and often display a tremendous degree of comfort with digital technology, this does not necessarily translate to a critical understanding of what they read, see and hear, or to their being skilled in using the Internet ethically and effectively. Teens, along with their parents, teachers and school librarians, are in desperate need of resources to teach them essential media and digital literacy skills. This is the reason why MediaSmarts (formerly Media Awareness Network) has in recent years expanded our mission to include not just media literacy but digital literacy as well, and to devote an increasing number of our resources to digital issues. Working with school and public libraries has been an invaluable partnership for us: librarians have taken a lead in promoting digital and media literacy by disseminating our materials to teachers, parents and youth as well as acting as mentors to students and colleagues.

There is, of course, a tremendous amount of overlap between traditional media literacy and digital literacy. The key concepts of media literacy – that media is constructed; that audiences negotiate meaning; that media

have commercial, social and political implications; and that each medium has a unique aesthetic form that affects how content is presented – are as applicable to searching for information online as to watching TV. Moreover, young people are spending an increasing amount of time consuming traditional media, such as TV and music videos, on digital platforms. Many of the most important topics in media literacy, such as body image, diversity representation and violent content, are all equally relevant to the digital realm, which is why we've developed new resources, as well as updating existing ones, to address the digital aspects of these issues. For example, the body image section of our website, which is intended to provide teachers and parents with key background information on the topic, now includes sections on the influence of photo-manipulation tools such as Photoshop and an examination of how body image issues play out in video games, social networks and virtual worlds.

There are some elements of digital literacy that are absent from traditional definitions of media literacy – such as online safety and cyber security, privacy and reputation management, and ethical media use – as well as some that have always been a part of media literacy but have become much more important in the digital realm, such as authenticating information. Like traditional media literacy, though, these are all based fundamentally on critical thinking, which is why this forms the foundation of all our digital literacy materials. For instance, research has shown that what many teachers and librarians have long suspected is true: high school students – who do nearly all of their research for both school and personal topics on the Internet – are aware of how much misinformation is out there but lack the skills to identify reliable sources or separate good information from bad. As one of the teachers we interviewed for our study *Young Canadians in a Wired World* put it, "I'm always surprised at the lack of knowledge that students have about how to search and navigate online." Other teachers were concerned about how uncritical students were about the information they found online: one elementary teacher said his Grade 5 students, while researching the Sasquatch myth, were taken in by a website that had been intended as an obvious and humorous hoax. Much of the misinformation that's available on the Internet, of course, is much less innocent – from online scams to subtle hate sites – which shows us just how important it is for youth to learn tools and strategies for authenticating the information they find online.

That last example demonstrates how digital literacy skills are interconnected: a situation that hinges on the ability to evaluate and authenticate information, such as being able to recognize a "cloaked" hate site, can have serious ramifications on a student's online safety as it can determine whether or not they are drawn further into the world of online hate. Indeed, nearly all of the situations youth face online overlap between different elements of digital literacy: sexting, for example, is at once a privacy issue (youth have to make wise choices about taking and transmitting photos of themselves), an ethical issue (those who receive sexts – which are most often intended to be seen only by a single recipient – have to decide what to do with them) and a safety issue. This is why in

addition to the lessons and resources that focus on a single element of digital literacy, we have produced professional development workshops and interactive classroom tutorials that approach the topic in a holistic way, showing how the key skills connect to and reinforce one another. While the PD workshops are straightforward presentations, the classroom tutorials are delivered in the form with which students are already most comfortable: as games.

MediaSmarts has been creating interactive Internet literacy tools since 1998, when we launched Privacy Playground: The First Adventure of the Three CyberPigs. With each project we've broadened our focus, adding resources that deal with topics such as online advertising to children, hate material and propaganda, and parenting in the Internet age, and in 2008 we debuted our first comprehensive digital literacy tutorial, Passport to the Internet (for Grades 4-8), which was followed in 2011 by MyWorld (Grades 9-12). Both of these simulate young people's favourite online environments, such as social networking sites, search engines and online games, within a closed environment where we are able to control what content students encounter. Within these environments students are presented with challenges that test their Internet literacy skills. In MyWorld, which is designed to reflect teens' multitasking habits, these challenges may take them through two, three or more of the different environments – perhaps from SpaceFace, the social networking site, to Googolplex, the search engine, to a site that must be evaluated as a source of information and then back to SpaceFace to advise a concerned friend.

By simulating real online environments, these tutorials let students practice skills they can transfer directly to their real online experiences: for instance, in MyWorld students are taught how to properly use and evaluate articles in Collaborapedia (equivalent to Wikipedia) by learning how to determine whether an article is reliable through looking at its content, edit history and the identities of its contributors, and even how to improve an article by flagging errors, omissions or other problems. The "walled garden" approach also allows us to present students with scenarios that require them to make decisions about safety or ethical behaviour. Rather than teaching simple strategies for avoiding or dealing with bullying, for instance, students are given the opportunity to turn the tables on someone who is bullying a friend and expose the perpetrators publicly: in making this choice they must ask themselves whether this would be any different from what the bullies have done.

Teachers, too, want to bring digital technology into the classroom in a meaningful way, as well as training in things like how to deal with cyberbullying and teach digital literacy skills. Along with our professional development resources, our free online lesson library provides hundreds of lessons, backgrounders and other resources – all tied to the curricula of each province and territory – to help teachers bring both media and digital literacy into the classroom. As facilitators to knowledge and resources, school librarians are able to play a particularly valuable role in steering teachers and students to the materials most relevant to their needs. Our survey participants overwhelmingly felt that digital media provide

tremendous opportunities for teachers and students so long as students are taught how to engage critically with the media they consume and to consider the ethical ramifications of what they do online. As one elementary teacher in our study put it, "The biggest skill they need is a moral compass." Today's students are not just users of digital media, they are citizens of the online world; young Canadians need to learn digital literacy and digital citizenship in their schools, and librarians and teachers need to be provided with the tools, support and learning opportunities to be ready to teach them those skills.

ABOUT MEDIASMARTS:

MediaSmarts (formerly Media Awareness Network) is a Canadian not-for-profit centre for digital and media literacy. Its vision is that young people have the critical thinking skills to engage with media as active and informed digital citizens. MediaSmarts' website (mediasmarts.ca) hosts hundreds of free bilingual resources to support digital and media literacy in Canadian homes, schools and libraries.

Save the date! Kaleidoscope 10 November 1-3rd
2012



The Kaleidoscope Children's Literature Conference is presented by the Alberta Teacher's Association and the Alberta School Library Council of the ATA. Kaleidoscope 10 "Twisting the Lens" will take place in Calgary, November 1st, 2nd & 3rd 2012. Kaleidoscope is a celebration of Children's Literature and has assembled hundreds of international writers, illustrators and publishers over its long and colourful history. Look for the Kaleidoscope 10 website launch November 1st, 2011 at www.kaleidoscopeconference.ca for early registration information and confirmed authors. Information will also be available from the ASLC website <http://ask.ca/>.

School Library Profile

Thank you to Manisha Khetarpal, the librarian at Ermineskin Elementary School in Hobbema, Alberta, for this school library profile. You are invited to submit your own school library for consideration to be featured in a future edition of *School Libraries in Canada*. The form is available at:

English - <http://clatoolbox.ca/casl/slicv27n1/profile.doc>

Français - <http://clatoolbox.ca/casl/slicv27n1/profil.doc>



Photo Credit: miyo.ca

Ermineskin Elementary school is housed in Ermineskin Cree Nation in Hobbema, Alberta. The community has a high birthrate. The off reserve transition is high and some First Nations' people stay in Edmonton and come to work at Ermineskin Cree Nation. The school has a enrolment of around 700 students studying in Kindergarten to Grade 6 classes with twenty-five teachers on staff and one librarian. There are 5000 books in the collection and eight computers.



Photo Credit: Manisha Khetarpal
"Give a child a ball the child will play."

The library runs an Accelerated Reading program and coffeehouses to promote reading together with families. The atmosphere is focused on Cree culture. Inspired

by the proverb, "Give a child a ball the child will play," the librarian endeavors to get books to give away to students. Challenges include a lack of money for more staff and more resources and the librarian's feeling of isolation. The librarian would love to connect and collaborate with other school librarians and start a local chapter of IFLA Sister Libraries.

Despite its challenges, Ermineskin Elementary School's Library Report card for 2012 lists thirty special events and programs. (<http://schoollibraryservices.blogspot.ca/2012/06/report-card-for-2012.html>)

A few highlights include:

a Family Literacy Day coffeehouse

(<http://familyliteracydaycelebration.blogspot.com>)

Every child takes home a book

(<http://abookforeverychildnov22.blogspot.com>)

Around the world game to celebrate UNESCO's International Mother Language Day

(<http://schoollibraryservices.blogspot.com/2012/03/around-world-game-for-unescos.html>)

Bead and Bannock workshop

(<http://schoollibraryservices.blogspot.com/2012/03/bannock-and-bead-workshop-february-29-4.html>)

Career week celebrations with Grade 5 students learning about making films (storyboarding, location, checklist etc.)

(<http://schoollibraryservices.blogspot.ca/2012/03/grade-5-learning-about-filmmaking.html>)

Giller Prize Finalist Marina Endicott instructing budding writers

(<http://www.wetaskiwintimes.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3530356>)

the TD Summer Reading Program

(<http://schoollibraryservices.blogspot.ca/2012/05/students-made-list-of-things-they-would.html>).

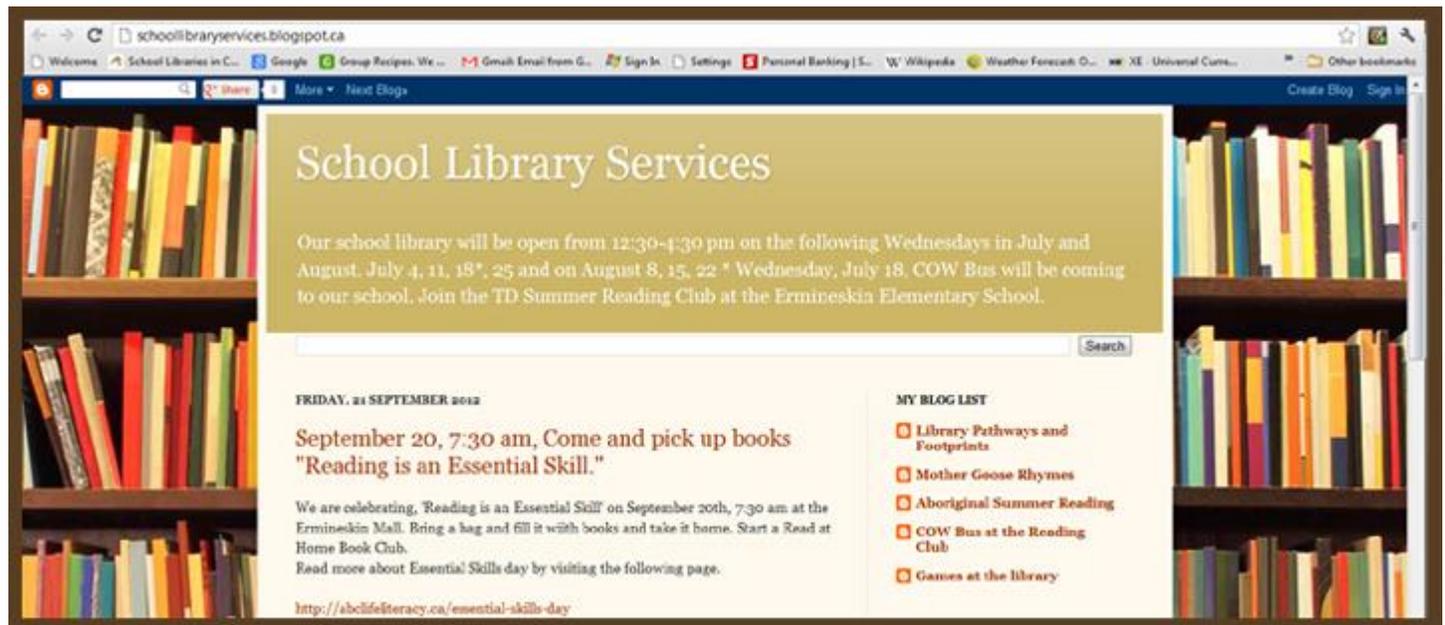


Photo Credit: Manisha Khetarpal

Library activities are well documented for the entire community on the Library Blog.

Submit your school library profile for consideration for publication in a future issue of *School Libraries in Canada*. (<http://clatoolbox.ca/casl/slicv27n1/slicprofileeng.pdf> / <http://clatoolbox.ca/casl/slicv27n1/slicprofilfr.pdf>)

Redefining reading and the role of the teacher-librarian

by Alanna King

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Every day as a teacher-librarian, I try to match resources to students and students to resources. In the stacks, it's often quite easy to rely on Dewey and the alphabet for locating material, but when it comes to finding and reading online, the students get bogged down. Often I teach a whole class how to access material online for their assignments, and watch them struggle with the nuances of web material. Even when we open up a Learning Management System (LMS) that directs them to specific hypertext links, they have trouble navigating toolbars and columns. Fundamentally, this comes down to reading skills. As David Warlick (2009) said "Educators should seek to integrate literacy, rather than integrate technology ... Computers and the Internet will be an essential part of teaching and learning because they are the tools of contemporary literacy" (p. xiii). As a teacher-librarian I set out in this paper to discover what progress, if any, has been made in implementing strategies for teaching reading online. What I discovered is the complexity of interpreting online text is much greater than I anticipated. Ranjana Das (2011) explains that the very nature of online text has blurred the previously predictable line between authors, readers, users and producers (p. 346). Being an online student myself, I am often reading while authoring, using while curating my library. The complexity of reading online has implications for all of us in the education system.

Reading skills and the online text

As a secondary school teacher, my experiences of teaching reading have always been about remediating what has already been learned. The same is true for teaching reading online. While secondary readers want to have predictable structures to rely on, they also want enough novelty to be enticed and challenged. The very nature of reading online brings into play many new variables of this medium including conventions, structure, and legibility. According to Doug Achterman (2010) there are four interrelated factors that have changed the nature of literacy:

1.1. The ubiquity of the internet

1.2. The nature of the internet itself allows for the continuous change of literacy technologies themselves

1.3. Such technologies [citation] change the form and functions of earlier literacies since they carry within them new potentials for literacy

1.4. The way we make and create meaning with text is in constant evolution. (p. 79)

There has been some educator concern about keeping up with technology. Rather than using this excuse to not adapt to the new nature of literacy, it

is better that we become more adaptable. Annette Lamb and Larry Johnson (2011) say that the [digitization of text] impacts information organization, selection, evaluation and creation.

The task for teachers is to prepare our students for these challenges. One of those ways is to expose them to reading in multiple dimensions. Just as we have adapted teaching to suit the diversity of learners, so must we teach to the multitude of dimensions from which meaning can be made.

Reading in multiple dimensions

In describing the complexity of reading in hypertext environments, David Warlick (2002) said "This 3-D arrangement adds value to the message you are trying to deliver in that it points to supporting documents, and related documents can point to yours. Its depth and richness can also lead to unrelated content that deflects us from our goals" (p. 22). What we've learned in the last decade is that the same depth and richness can be overwhelming to readers, and may make learning through the internet near impossible for some students. We cannot assume that the same set of offline reading skills will develop online reading skills.

In fact, very little research has been developed to highlight the attributes of successful online reading comprehension (Coiro, 2011, p. 353). Livingstone (2012) warns that while exposure to online reading generally improves school achievement, that the "already high-achieving children get more from gaining internet access than do low-achieving children" (p. 15). Recent research indicates that the initial description of online reading complexity has even more variables than originally thought. In agreeing to participate with a text, the reader enters into a contract where meaning lies "in a relationship of mutuality and transactions between the text and reader, technology and user" (Das, 2011, p. 347). The heterogeneity of these four variables, text with reader, technology with user, take the job of teaching to a remarkable degree of difficulty. The students we teach right now cannot be summed up with a catch phrase like "digital native" (Prensky, 2005). In fact, painting all readers with the same brush may have set our work in education back ten years. If we had come to the problem of implementing digital fluency with many lenses on in the first place, we would be at a better point to help further along each variable.

What we used to call 'reading' can now mean a kind of active act of interpretation of a text that can physically alter form and shape (Das, 2011, p. 346). One example of this new act of interpretation is using audio. In my library our recent implementation of audiobooks has challenged the idea of reading, and many teachers question the validity of the experience over print text reading. Now students are taking advantage of the database feature that reads the text to the user. Likewise, access to information presented in so many dynamic ways brings additional hurdles. Berger (2007) describes the process of reading online as constructing understanding of online material from nonlinear hypertext, while evaluating the quality and validity of information. Students are also

struggling to maintain focus while abiding by the rules of cyberspace (p. 117).

School focus on online reading comprehension

Schools need to develop a comprehensive continuum for online reading. Livingstone (2012) summarized her research saying that students were using ICT [information and communication technologies] better for presentation purposes than numeracy, and the use of specific software was being taught rather than transferable skills (p. 14). With a reading continuum should come:

clear and shared conceptual vocabulary to analyse learning processes along with new modes of assessment so as to permit media (or digital) literacies a place within the established curriculum, preferably without turning soft skills into a new and burdensome set of targets. (Livingstone, 2012, p. 19)

Direct support from teachers is imperative as inconsistencies continue to be found in independent online learning. In addition to the four variables of user, reader, content and technology, a fifth factor was discovered to bring about inconsistent results when learning moved from school to home, where provisions of technology and parent expertise were variable (Livingstone, 2012, p. 16). Teacher-librarians can provide a face-to-face and online bridge between home and school to minimize these inconsistencies.

Teacher-librarians as change agents

When teaching processes of inquiry, teacher-librarians should also include reading strategies which may, as Dobler (2007) suggests, include drawing on previous experiences, prior knowledge and summarizing key ideas (p. 96). Lawless, Schrader, and Mayall (2007) found that students who were given content-specific background- building information prior to their Internet reading activity actually performed more complex navigational tasks in search of information than did a control group (p. 298). Ideally this background knowledge would come in a variety of modes including print text, audio-visual formats, and online text.

Teacher-librarians can use these findings related to the complexities of online reading to advocate for both online and print resources and assessments. With the advent of anytime anywhere learning, teacher-librarian support is essential when the child dictates their own readiness, outside of the scheduled classroom. Teacher-librarians can assist by proposing situations that emphasize online process over outcomes and flexible modes of discovery over subject-specific knowledge (Livingstone, 2012, pp. 17-18). Studies show that a blended learning class environment, partially online and partially face-to-face, is more successful than either strategy on its own (Livingstone, 2012, p. 12). Similarly, having access to these resources everywhere, through implementations like online teacher content spaces and wireless internet connections, would be beneficial.

An answer to developing rich online content will inevitably involve professional learning in the areas of using learning management systems for communication and collaboration. The teacher-librarian can facilitate the management of these environments, and lead staff to more confidently implement these goals. Students can also help build the content and gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of hypertext environments through creation of a collaborative online space, such as a wiki. The wiki is a rich environment where students can learn about reading 3-D text, but more importantly they can learn to construct it. Making collaborative choices of organization, hyper linking, tagging and content will give students the deep insight into how online spaces are designed.

The teacher-librarian is in a unique place to maintain a continuum of reading comprehension to help students and staff as they develop digital fluency. Doug Achterman (2010) says:

technology has fundamentally changed the definition of literacy, and school librarians are among those at a school site best positioned to lead explorations and help school communities consider the ramifications of that change, as well as to develop educational approaches that effectively exploit technologies and build new literacy skills. (p. 79)

Giving students the confidence to adapt in new learning situations online is more important than content (Dobler, 2007, p. 95). Livingstone (2012) advises that teachers ensure that student interactions with online environments reflect new literacies, and aren't just online ways to perpetuate 20th century skills (p. 16). Achterman (2010) also advocates that teacher-librarians need to recognize that "in some respects, teachers may be less literate than their students" (p. 81). Instead of seeing this as an insurmountable problem, there is another unique opportunity that a teacher-librarian can play to build whole school consistency. While teacher-librarians are seeking instructional strategies to enable their students, they can also seek support for their own development in digital fluency (Dobler, 2007, p. 97). Achterman (2010) says the challenge for the school librarian as a literacy leader is twofold:

1. to help the school community understand the need to expand our traditional notions of literacy to include new literacies; and 2. to lead, through study, communication, staff development, curricular planning, and collaboration with classroom teachers, the exploration of new literacies, examining current research and trying promising strategies that may lead to best practice. (p.81)

Leading through example can help to bring the entire school community to develop digital fluency.

As the internet continues to morph, teacher-librarians can help in a number of ways. However, the most important moment of impact is before the reader engages with the text at all: giving background knowledge in

content areas before the pursuit of deeper material. The challenge is no longer to get comfortable with technology but to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. Knowing that each user and reader will come to each text on a variety of technology devices, with a multitude of further elements affecting each variable, means that teacher-librarians will have to get better at troubleshooting. The role of the teacher-librarian to facilitate the relationship between text and user has become more imperative than ever to the literacy of our students. Lawless, Schrader, and Mayall (2007) say:

New learning environments, such as that provided by the Internet, may very well require new approaches for capturing and examining the processes and artifacts of reading. Indeed, the possibilities are endless, but the potential for improving instructional practice and learning success is infinite. (p. 301)

With the emergence of Web 3.0 tools, reading will certainly change again. Whether technology will continue to be used as a tool or the implications of online literacy will fundamentally change pedagogy, the teacher-librarian will remain an essential part of this process.

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**"Immigrant students ... confessed to me
that the novels were too unfamiliar ..."**

Author, teacher and comic-lover

Rabindranath Maharaj

tells *SLiC* about his writing and his
desire to engage male readers with
fiction that reflects their own worlds.



Rabindranath Maharaj

Born and raised in Trinidad, Rabindranath Maharaj is the award-winning author of eight books. His five novels include *The Amazing Absorbing Boy* (Winner of the Trillium Book Award; Winner of the 2011 Toronto Book Award, named a "Best of 2010" book by NOW and Uptown magazines, and longlisted for the 2011 OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature), *The Picture of Nobody, A Perfect Pledge* (a finalist for the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize and the Commonwealth Writers' Prize – Canada/ Caribbean Region); *The Lagahoo's Apprentice* (named a notable book of the year by both the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star*) and *Homer in Flight* (finalist for the Chapters/Books in Canada First Novel Award). His three collections of short stories are *The Book of Ifs and Buts* (2002), *The Writer and His Wife* (1996), and *The Interloper* (1995) (nominated for a Commonwealth Writers' Prize – Canada/Caribbean Region – for Best First Book). He has taught high school in both Trinidad and Ontario. He was a founding editor of the Canadian literary journal *LICHEN*. Rabindranath Maharaj continues to teach and mentor other writers and, despite the hectic pace at the beginning of a new school year, he generously agreed to reply to some questions from *SLiC* from his home in Ajax, Ontario.

SLiC - This issue of *School Libraries in Canada* is focusing on mass media which certainly play an important role in your most recent novel, *The Picture of Nobody*. The novel opens with a family “glued to the television” watching the London subway bombings. Later on, the protagonist sees a newspaper article describing a terrorist that has made him the target of scrutiny by strangers. What are the most important effects of mass media, both positive and negative, on immigrants to Canada and their families?

RM - Most immigrants, especially those without an extended cast of family or friends, try to get cues about their new home from the media. They learn of social issues, of political ideologies, and of their place in the complex hierarchy, from news reports. Typically, they are looking for jobs and trying to fit in so most of what they read or see on television will be filtered by these concerns. There is, in my mind, a generational gap in the immigrant response to the media as younger immigrants are more open to different types of media than their parents or grandparents. It is also likely that the media may affect some communities more than they do others and the level of influence may be coloured by perceived portrayal and by cultural encumbrances brought from their homeland.

Most of the immigrants I know balance a continuing interest in their homelands with a curiosity about their new place of residence. As they do this they are constantly assessing their situations, trying to equilibrate nostalgia with practical concerns.

SLiC - Later on, in the same novel, the protagonist seeks revenge against a bully by planting a rumour via an email using a contact list taken from his sister’s computer. He regrets his actions when he sees their impact. On balance, do you think the effects of social networking and email are more positive or negative for young people? Why?

RM - This response will show my age more than anything else. I believe that social networking and emails are quite important. I also believe that, increasingly, it is impossible – and counterproductive - to not get involved with some type of social networking. However, I also feel that a too deep immersion can, ironically, create a barrier around you by cutting off more immediate contacts. It can potentially create a sort of vacuum.

The relationship of young people with social networking is constantly evolving. (As they grow older and as new technologies become available.)

On balance, the advantages of social networking outweigh the disadvantages.

SLiC - You have worked as a journalist, literary critic, short-story writer and novelist. What is the most appealing aspect of each of these writing activities for you?

RM - As a journalist I enjoyed the ability to comment on - and perhaps shape the response to - events that were still fresh in the minds of the readers. I liked the immediacy of what I was doing. My brief experience as

a literary critic gave me a comparative sense of my own work and allowed me to think of writing and of stories in an objective manner. It granted me moments of reflection. I wrote most of my short stories during brief bursts of energy and illumination. I knew I had to complete these stories before my mood shifted so I wrote quickly. Each novel I have written changed me in some way. This may be due to the longish period it takes to complete a novel but it is also due to my immersion in the lives of the characters. Usually, I am a bit lackadaisical until about halfway when, quite suddenly, everything comes together and the world outside the novel recedes. From then on, all the connections and insights I had been struggling with, come easily. I have often worried about what I would do if this intervention never arrived but so far, it has always landed, just in time.

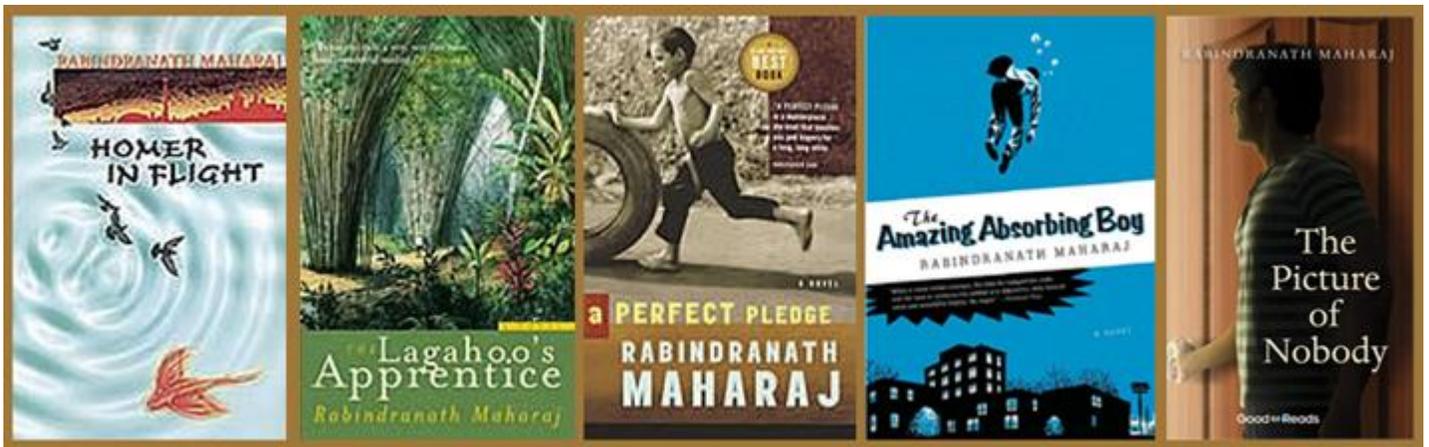
SLiC - What personal quality has contributed most to your success as a writer?

RM - For a long time, I believed it was my way of looking at the world. I felt that my curiosity about people's lives and secrets and manner of speaking, and my interest in quirky behavior and in anomalous events, fitted me with the right tools to write a particular kind of book. Now, I am beginning to understand the importance of discipline. There are so many distractions - and some of these, such as the internet, masquerade as helpers. I have developed a daily routine and I try to stick to it as much as it is possible.

SLiC - In *The Amazing Absorbing Boy* the narrator's perceptions and interpretations of the world are heavily influenced by the world of comics. Did they play an important part of your own development when you were growing up? What do you think of the influence of graphic novels today?

RM - I was an avid comic book reader. I followed all the plot lines, participated in the quarrels about whether DC was better than Marvel, sought out obscure writers and artists, and speculated, childishly, on my own creations. When I was about twelve or thirteen, my mother burnt a big pile of my comics. She had constantly threatened to do this with my comics scattered around the house. She spared, though, the *Classics Illustrated* series, which were comic book versions of literary classics. For a period, comic books opened up an entirely new world for me and I enjoyed everything that was outlandish or exaggerated.

Today's graphic novels are worlds apart from the comics I used to read. The writing is no longer filled with silly alliterative dialogue, and the artwork is stupendous.



Rabindranth Maharaj's five novels

SLiC - What more traditional literature influenced you most as you were growing up?

RM - Trinidad was a British colony so most of the books I read were by British writers. Enid Blyton. The Billy Bunter series by Frank Richards. The Biggles books by W.E. Johns. I read anything I could get my hands on and I spent most of my meagre allowance on books.

SLiC - Which novelists have had the greatest influence on you as a writer? Why have they influenced you?

SLiC - The answer to this shifts from time to time. I came to Caribbean literature rather late. I may have been in my late teens when I first read the Trinidadian writers, Samuel Selvon and V.S. Naipaul, and although I initially ignored them both, they were, I now realize, important influences. First of all, their successful careers assured me that it was possible for someone from a little island to write not only of folklore and local issues but of universal themes. From Selvon, I developed an appreciation for dialogue; and from Naipaul, small lessons on the economy of words.

At other times I could have mentioned Dickens and Flaubert, and Coetzee (formerly from South Africa) and the American writer Paul Theroux, and RK Narayan from India. There may be others, too, I have forgotten.

SLiC - Your two most recent novels, *The Picture of Nobody* and *The Amazing Absorbing Boy* both focus on adolescent boys. What inspired you write about the experiences of these teenage characters?

RM - With *The Amazing Absorbing Boy*, I wanted a character who was naïve and innocent; someone without an agenda and whom the reader could trust. I had actually been thinking of a more conventional immigrant novel with a middle-aged protagonist who had arrived in Canada filled with dreams. But I soon saw where this would lead – unfulfilled ambitions, depression or ambivalence, and some minor redeeming moment at the end - and decided against it. It also occurred to me that there was a different type of immigrant from the common fictional representation. This new immigrant, I saw, was younger, less burdened by adult obligations,

adventurous, and far more willing to participate in and contribute to this new land. For these reasons, I chose teenage protagonists in *The Amazing Absorbing Boy*, and in *The Picture of Nobody*. For the latter book, the plot also required a teenage protagonist.

SLiC - How have your experiences as a high school teacher in Trinidad and in Canada influenced your writing?

RM - Not in too many ways that I can pinpoint. Maybe in the sense that both vocations required a certain amount of planning, a bit of research, and intellectual curiosity. But both in Trinidad and in Canada, during my teaching periods, I always wished I was writing instead. I now teach Creative Writing at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies and this is more agreeable as there is a direct intersection between what I teach and what occupies me for the remainder of the day.

SLiC - From your point of view as a teacher, what are the most important similarities and differences between school in Trinidad and school in Canada?

RM - In Trinidad, there is still a fair bit of rote learning, and exams there are far more stressful than in Canada. High grades are necessary to get into the "prestige" schools, and it seems as if many students are perpetually studying. But education, including university, is free and the literacy level is quite high in Trinidad. In Canada, there are far more options available to high school students, particularly to those who are not academically inclined. In some respects, Canadian schools are similar to those in America, while Trinidadian schools still draw a great deal from the British system.

SLiC - What did you like best and what did you like least about teaching?

RM - I enjoyed the actual teaching, standing before a classroom and explaining or debating some topic. I was gratified when I got through to some difficult student and, over a period of time, felt I had helped that student in some small way. I disliked the interminable meetings and, in Trinidad, I skipped the staff meetings whenever it was possible.

SLiC - Your novel *The Amazing Absorbing Boy* concludes with the narrator defining his world as "a patch of every amazing thing I had touched and absorbed, a dust here and a dust there." Would you regard this as a universal truth or is it more true for immigrants than for others?

RM - It may be particularly relevant, or poignant, for immigrants but I consider it a universal truth. I believe people who shut themselves out from any sort of change or who view any trivial deviation from particular traditions with alarm are condemning themselves to static and empty lives.

SLiC - What are you working on at the moment?

RM - I am working on a novel set in a mental asylum where the psychiatrist is not all he pretends to be.

SLiC - Is there anything else you would like to say to our audience of school librarians?

RM - I suppose I could have put this under question nine about the influence of my teaching experiences on my writing. When I taught at a high school in Ontario it was hard to miss the low interest of most of the male students in reading. This problem was compounded with the immigrant students who sometimes confessed to me that the novels were too unfamiliar and – more significantly – they could not see any representations of themselves in the stories. Some of them mentioned the young protagonist in *The Life of Pi*, but that was it. Although this was not my main consideration in the writing of my last two books, I believe it must have played some role.

SLiC - Thank you very much for taking the time to answer our questions and for giving some of the young male readers in our schools a chance to see some of their experiences mirrored in literature.

That's Not Me: Addressing diversity in media

**by Matthew Johnson
Director of Education, MediaSmarts**

Teachers who include media literacy in their classrooms often face issues that don't arise in other subjects. Nothing illustrates this better than the issue of diversity in media. It's not unreasonable for teachers to see the topic as a can of worms and be concerned about offending students and their parents – not to mention worrying about what the students themselves might say. At the same time, it's a topic that is simply too important to be ignored: what we see in media hugely influences how we see others, ourselves and the world. As a result, an ability to analyze media depictions of diversity is not only a key element of being media literate, it's essential to understanding many of the social issues and concerns that we face as citizens. That's why MediaSmarts has developed *That's Not Me* – a new online tutorial for professional development to help educators and community leaders approach this issue through key concepts of media literacy.

There are a number of principles for media literacy, many of which are formulated in different ways by different writers and educators, but a few are nearly universal:

first, that media are constructions that re-present reality, created by individuals and shaped by their opinions, assumptions and biases;
second, that media contain ideological messages, about such things as power, values, and authority, and which – because we base our view of reality in part on our media exposure – may have social and political implications;
third, that because most media are created in order to make a profit, their creation generally has commercial implications;
fourth, that media texts do not have a single fixed meaning but are interpreted by different audiences; and
fifth, that each medium has a distinct aesthetic form, which may encompass things such as the influence of technical limitations on storytelling or the particular stock themes, or tropes, of a particular genre.

To better understand how these principles can help to frame discussions with youth about diversity, let's look at them in more detail.

Media are constructions that re-present reality

The notion that media are constructions is best illustrated by examining the issue of stereotypes. This is likely the diversity issue with which youth will be most familiar, and students can likely describe a number of common stereotypes – whether about minority groups, particular types of people (athletes, “geeks,” and so on) or about young people themselves. It's important for youth to understand, though, that just because they are aware of these stereotypes this doesn't mean they don't influence attitudes and perceptions: a 2002 study, “Why It Matters: Diversity on Television,” illustrated this by asking young children to “cast” a variety of roles. The children – many of whom were themselves members of visible minority groups – frequently cast African-Americans as criminals, with the explanation that “he just looks like the type of criminal that would probably steal or something.”

Media contain ideological messages

The above example illustrates as well the second principle that media contain ideological messages: as both individuals and a society, our views of different groups are based in part on how they are represented in media – and whether they are represented at all. Roughly one in seven Canadians, for instance, has a disability, but a 2009 study of American network TV found that only one in fifty TV characters did. (There are no similar statistics for Canadian TV, but it seems unlikely that the numbers here are much better.) This near-invisibility almost certainly affects how common we think disability is and how important we consider disability issues to be.

Media have commercial implications

The commercial implications of media creation are what frequently push diversity representation to the sidelines. Though various media have made

significant improvements – both in how often and how they present diversity – these improvements nearly always stop short of the top: while supporting characters may be visible minorities, gays or lesbians, persons with disabilities or Aboriginals, the lead character seldom is. Commercial implications aren't limited to a consideration of the audience: who owns media outlets can be a significant influence on whether and how diversity appears onscreen. Maureen Googoo, a reporter for Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, contrasts working there to being at a mainstream network by saying "the atmosphere at APTN National News is no different than any other newsroom... The difference is that the entire news staff is aboriginal and the primary goal is to cover issues and events important to Aboriginal Peoples. I report on these issues... without being questioned about bias or objectivity."

Audiences negotiate meaning

Identity can influence not just how media products are created but how they are interpreted as well. The small number and peripheral status of minority characters has led to a tradition, in many communities, of reading against a text – either "assigning" an identity to ambiguous characters (such as the long-running campaign to have *The Simpsons'* Mr. Smithers come out of the closet) or by ascribing greater importance to secondary characters (Bruce Lee, who played Kato on the TV series *The Green Hornet*, received top billing when that show aired in east Asia, and in some cases it was even renamed *The Kato Show*.) The principle that audiences negotiate meaning can also help students understand how different groups might view the same character or storyline differently. To mainstream audiences, for example, the character of Artie on *Glee* – a member of the glee club who participates in club activities despite being in a wheelchair – is seen as a positive, empowering portrayal of a young man with a disability, but many members of the disabled community feel that he embodies many of the clichés and stereotypes associated with disability.

Each medium has a distinct aesthetic form

Understanding the unique aesthetic forms of different media can also help students understand how problematic depictions of diversity can occur. Many media and genres contain tropes, repeated themes and images, which may be decades or even centuries old. While the heroes in the Disney movie *Aladdin*, for example, have basically Caucasian features, the villain is depicted with exaggeratedly Semitic features – embodying a trope that is at least as old as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*.

In our digital age, nearly all of us are not just media consumers but producers as well – whether we create videos, remixes, blog entries or just Facebook status entries – which means that to be responsible digital citizens, young people need to learn how to recognize and engage with diversity issues in media. *That's Not Me* provides teachers and community leaders with tools to help them do just that.

This article has been reprinted from the Media Smarts web site with permission. Five other articles exploring issues relating to Media Education can be found on the Media Smarts Articles page (http://www.medialiteracyweek.ca/en/press_articles.htm):

Privacy Matters for Media Literacy Week 2012

Constant Surveillance: Youth privacy in a digital age

Facing Online Hate: Preparing youth to deal with hate on the Internet

Resilient, Resourceful and Under Surveillance: Young Canadians online

Teaching the Net Generation: Teachers' Perspectives in Young Canadians in a Wired World

Use these articles promote media literacy and Media Literacy Week, November 5-9, 2012.



Pour connaître et se reconnaître : tenir compte de la diversité dans les médias

**par Matthew Johnson
directeur de l'éducation, HabiloMédias**

Les enseignants qui assurent l'éducation aux médias dans leur classe font souvent face à des difficultés qui ne surviennent pas dans d'autres matières. Rien n'illustre mieux ces difficultés que la question de la diversité dans les médias. On comprendra que, pour les enseignants, aborder ce sujet, c'est souvent ouvrir une boîte de Pandore. Ils sont également soucieux de ne pas offenser les élèves et leurs parents – sans compter qu'ils s'inquiètent de ce que les jeunes eux-mêmes pourraient dire. En même temps, c'est un sujet qui est tout simplement trop important pour qu'on l'évite : ce que nous voyons dans les médias influence énormément la façon dont nous percevons les autres, nous-mêmes et le monde. Par conséquent, la capacité d'analyser les

représentations de la diversité dans les médias est non seulement un élément clé de l'éducation aux médias, mais elle est essentielle pour comprendre plusieurs des préoccupations et des enjeux sociaux auxquels nous faisons face en tant que citoyens. HabiloMédias a donc mis au point un nouveau tutoriel de perfectionnement professionnel, Pour connaître et se reconnaître, offert en ligne pour aider les éducateurs et les dirigeants communautaires à aborder cette question au moyen de certains concepts clés de l'éducation aux médias.

Un certain nombre de principes guident l'éducation aux médias ; les auteurs et éducateurs ont formulé ces principes chacun à leur façon, mais certains principes sont presque universels. Ces principes sont les suivants :

Pour commencer, les médias sont des constructions qui représentent la réalité ; les produits médiatiques sont créés par des individus et reflètent leurs opinions, leurs hypothèses et leurs partis pris.

Deuxièmement, les médias véhiculent des messages idéologiques sur différentes notions comme le pouvoir, les valeurs et l'autorité ; parce que notre façon de voir la réalité repose en partie sur les médias que nous utilisons, ces messages pourraient avoir des répercussions au plan social et politique.

Troisièmement, puisque la plupart des médias sont créés en vue de faire des profits, ces médias sont généralement influencés par des considérations commerciales.

Quatrièmement, les produits médiatiques n'ont pas une signification unique et fixe, mais différents publics peuvent en donner différentes interprétations.

Cinquièmement, chaque média possède une forme esthétique distincte qui peut comprendre des éléments tels que l'influence des limites technologiques sur le récit ou encore la transmission de thèmes généraux ou récurrents propres à un genre particulier.

Pour mieux comprendre comment ces principes peuvent servir de cadre à la discussion sur la diversité engagée avec les jeunes, examinons-les avec plus d'attention.

Les médias sont des constructions qui représentent la réalité

Les stéréotypes illustrent sans doute le mieux la notion que les médias sont des constructions. C'est une question que les jeunes connaissent très bien et ils pourront sans doute énumérer plusieurs stéréotypes courants – que ce soit à propos des groupes minoritaires, de catégories particulières de personnes (athlètes, maniaques d'Internet, etc.) ou des jeunes eux-mêmes. Il est toutefois important pour les jeunes de comprendre que ce n'est pas parce qu'ils sont sensibilisés à ces stéréotypes que ces derniers n'influencent pas leurs attitudes et leurs perceptions. Pour illustrer cette idée, dans le cadre de l'étude « Why It Matters: Diversity on Television, » menée en 2002, on a demandé à de jeunes enfants d'attribuer divers rôles à diverses personnes. Les enfants – dont plusieurs faisaient partie de minorités visibles – ont choisi un Afro-Américain pour tenir le rôle d'un

criminel, expliquant que « il a tout simplement l'air du type de criminel capable de voler ou de faire ce genre de choses. »

Les médias véhiculent des messages idéologiques

L'exemple précédent illustre également le deuxième principe, à savoir que les médias véhiculent des messages idéologiques : en tant qu'individu et en tant que société, notre opinion de différents groupes se forge en partie d'après la façon dont ces groupes sont représentés dans les médias – pour autant qu'ils soient représentés. Par exemple, environ 1 Canadien sur 7 est atteint d'une incapacité, mais une étude des réseaux de télévision américains effectuée en 2009 révèle qu'à la télévision, seulement 1 personnage sur 50 'était. (Il n'existe pas de statistiques pour la télévision canadienne, mais il semble peu probable que les données soient très différentes.) Cette quasi-invisibilité influence presque certainement notre opinion quant à la fréquence des incapacités dans la société et à l'importance que nous attachons aux questions d'incapacité.

Les médias sont influencés par des considérations commerciales

Les intérêts commerciaux liés aux médias relèguent souvent la représentation diversifiée au second plan. Bien que divers médias aient grandement amélioré la situation – tant dans la façon de représenter la diversité que dans la fréquence des représentations –, ces améliorations ne s'appliquent toujours pas aux personnages principaux : si les personnages secondaires sont parfois issus des minorités visibles, sont allosexuel, sont atteints d'incapacités ou autochtones, le personnage principal l'est rarement. Les considérations commerciales ne se limitent pas au public visé : il est important de savoir à qui appartient un média, car cela peut avoir une influence considérable sur la décision de représenter ou non la diversité et sur la façon dont on la présente. Maureen Googoo, reporter au réseau autochtone Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), compare ainsi le travail dans un réseau autochtone et un réseau traditionnel : « L'atmosphère qui règne dans la salle de rédaction de l'APTN n'est pas différente de celle des autres salles de rédaction... Ce qui est différent, c'est que tout le personnel est autochtone et que l'objectif principal est de couvrir les enjeux et les événements qui ont de l'importance pour les Premières Nations. Je fais des reportages sur ces enjeux... et personne ne soulève la question du parti pris ou de l'objectivité. »

Le public « négocie » le sens du produit médiatique

L'identité peut influencer non seulement la création du produit médiatique, mais aussi l'interprétation qu'en fait le public. Le petit nombre de personnages représentant des minorités, personnages qui sont toujours secondaires, a donné naissance à une tradition dans plusieurs communautés qui font une « autre lecture » du texte – soit en « assignant » une identité à un personnage ambigu (par exemple la campagne pour demander que M. Smithers des Simpsons affirme son homosexualité) ou

en donnant plus d'importance aux personnages secondaires (notamment Bruce Lee, qui a joué le rôle de Kato dans la série télévisée The Green Hornet ; il a fini par prendre la tête d'affiche et, sur certains marchés, l'émission portait le nom de Télé-Kato). Le principe voulant que le public négocie le sens peut aussi aider les élèves à comprendre comment divers groupes peuvent donner une interprétation différente à un personnage ou à un récit. Par exemple, pour le grand public, le personnage d'Artie de l'émission Glee – personnage qui est membre d'une petite chorale et participe aux activités du groupe bien qu'il soit en fauteuil roulant – est une représentation positive et stimulante d'un jeune homme atteint d'une incapacité. Mais, pour plusieurs membres de la communauté handicapée, il incarne plusieurs des clichés et stéréotypes associés à un handicap.

Chaque média possède une forme esthétique distincte

Comprendre les formes esthétiques propres aux différents médias peut aussi aider les élèves à saisir comment les représentations douteuses de la diversité peuvent se produire. Plusieurs médias et genres utilisent des tropes, images ou thèmes récurrents, qui peuvent exister depuis des dizaines, voire des centaines d'années. Par exemple, tandis que les héros du film Aladin, réalisé par Disney, ont des traits généralement associés à la race blanche, le méchant a des traits sémitiques exagérés et incarne un trope que véhiculait déjà le Shylock de Shakespeare dans Le marchand de Venise.

En cette ère numérique, nous sommes presque tous des consommateurs de médias, mais aussi des auteurs – que nous produisons des vidéos, des remixages, des articles de blogues ou simplement quelques lignes dans Facebook–, ce qui signifie que pour être des citoyens numériques responsables, les jeunes doivent apprendre à reconnaître les questions de diversité dans les médias et à s'y intéresser. Pour connaître et se reconnaître offre justement aux enseignants et aux dirigeants communautaires des outils pour les seconder dans cette tâche.

Cet article a été réimprimé avec la permission de HabiloMédias. Cinq autres articles qui explorent les questions concernant l'éducation relative aux médias sont disponibles sur la page Dossiers de presse - Archives (http://www.medialiteracyweek.ca/fr/presse_articles.htm):

« Le respect de la vie privée : ça compte » est le thème de la Semaine éducation médias 2012

Sous constante surveillance : la vie privée des jeunes à l'ère du numérique

Faire face à la haine sur Internet : préparer les jeunes à faire face à la haine sur Internet

Résilients, débrouillards et sous surveillance : jeunes Canadiens branchés

Enseigner à la génération Internet : la perspective des enseignants dans *Jeunes*

Utilisez ces articles afin de promouvoir l'éducation aux médias et la Semaine de l'éducation aux médias, 5-9 Novembre 2012.



2012 BCTLA Conference – “We’re IN!: Inquire, Inspire, Innovate”
October 18-19, 2012

Port Coquitlam, BC

Program & Registration

The conference program features a range of sessions that will interest teacher-librarians and educators from all levels, and anyone interested in improving their teaching skills in literacy (e.g. visual, critical, etc.), research, and technology. Please contact Heather Daly if you have questions: hdaly@sd43.bc.ca or 604-937-6380.

Keynotes include: **Dr. David Loertscher**, San José State University School of Library & Information Science and **Chris Kennedy**, CEO / Superintendent of Schools, School District #45 West Vancouver. **Featured speakers** include: Dr. Joanne de Groot, Dr. Ann Ewbank, Adrienne Gear, Judith Comfort, and over thirty other amazing educators.

Making the Learning Commons Happen at the Ottawa Catholic School Board

**by Donna Presz and Sarah Murray
Ottawa Catholic School Board**

THE VISION

Newly appointed Superintendent of Learning Technologies, Student Success, Thomas D'Amico created a vision document for 21st Century learning for the Ottawa Catholic School Board. The vision was to increase the use of technology in our schools, to empower students to become future digital citizens and to prepare them for workplace realities. To do so would require a whole new philosophy.

Mr. D'Amico's vision was strongly influenced by the OSLA *Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons* document. He agreed that the Learning Commons model would be a great starting point for transition and change in our school libraries. It was a good fit with his mandate.

Combining the *Together for Learning* vision with our Board's 21st Century Learning mandate resulted in a transformation of our libraries into Learning Commons.

We began by asking ourselves guiding questions.

How to sell this vision to traditionalists?

Can we sell this vision to upper management, to trustees, to our library staff?

Where do we get the funding?

How do we engage with our students in their digital world?

How can we engage and encourage our students to use the library?

Thus began our odyssey to transform our libraries into Learning Commons.

THE TEAM

The Learning Technologies team Donna Presz (Library Services Supervisor) and Gabriel Massicotte (Learning Technologies Consultant) partnered with various key personnel in Purchasing, Planning & Facilities to execute the plan.

The Superintendent actively began campaigning for funding by presenting to senior executive. He enlisted the support of Sarah Murray, a teacher-librarian to promote the concept to trustees at a budget meeting.

THE PROCESS

When budgeting and agreements were secured, it was time to start the project. The Learning Technology department partnered with Planning and

Facilities, our main contributor to the budget for this project, and created an online application process to facilitate the process. Purchasing played an integral part, providing us with vendor and pricing information, purchasing and accounting processes. At the start of the project purchasing dealt directly with the schools but as the project grew in scope, the Library Services Supervisor became the “go-to” person.

In June of 2011 we began a pilot project with three high schools which were given a one month timeline to implement the transition plan.

The pilot schools selected technology and furniture with budget and purchasing guidelines. The requests were submitted to the team for approval.

The Planning and Facilities department visited each school to look at infrastructure and electrical change requests.

The Purchasing department assisted with respect to vendors, furniture selection and pricing.

Each high school received \$20,000 for tech purchases and \$10,000 for furniture. An additional amount was granted to purchase a wall-mounted SMART board, arm and projector. The SMART Board was intended for student collaboration.

Elementary schools received the same funding for technology and received \$5000 for furniture, plus a SMART board.

THE APPLICATION

An online shareable (Google doc) application consisting of instructions and required information to link the process to school improvement plans was created. It served as an order form for technology and furniture as well.

It was crucial that the whole school participate in the change. It was vital that we had administration, teaching and library staff, students and parents on board. After all, we were advocating a whole new concept in libraries; increasing more digital resources and access to devices and open networks. The vision also included a less restrictive atmosphere where the emphasis was learner centred, inclusive and welcoming with permission for noisy, productive collaboration.

Our mandate was to:

Reduce the print collections by 1/3 (many schools surpassed this amount by judicious weeding) and to provide readers with more fiction, high interest non-fiction and graphic novels.

Create collaborative and open spaces for daily, weekly, monthly events.

Create the look and feel of an Internet café.

Add a plethora of mobile digital devices.

Entice teens to use the space for both social and educational purposes. Upgrade the ILS to enable a virtual library space.

The lessons learned from the pilot projects allowed us to revisit our original process and fine tune it for the full implementation board-wide.

Funding has been approved to expand the project to 30 schools for the 2011-2012 school year. Our goal is to transform 81 schools within three years. Funding will be crucial to complete the remaining schools.

The scope of the project is enormous and the three departments continue to work together to make it a success. Implementation is further complicated due to the collaborative nature of coordinating infrastructure and purchasing request and building consensus of the vision.

POST MORTEM

The Learning Commons school committees comprised of staff, students and parents have been very successful. The commitment by parents has been phenomenal. Parent councils have jumped wholeheartedly into the project by promising funds directed annually towards the Learning Commons. There is also the added benefit of bringing school administrators closer to the work being done by our library staff.

Not everyone is happy. The traditionalists disapprove of the “noisy” library. A disconcerting trend is the shift away from the emphasis on literacy and print resources to circulating devices and maintaining equipment. Are we becoming a larger more comfortable computer lab?

Part-time library staff in our elementary schools worry that going digital will mean the loss of the rich content available to younger students in picture book format to support reading literacy development. Is story time is dead?

We’ve just begun this journey and we can only grow from the experience. We continue to ask ourselves questions as the project continues. Are we making a difference? Only time will tell. The shift to cybrarian has happened quickly and as staff adjusts to the reality of the Learning Commons we have many challenges.

It has been, and continues to be an exciting project and reaffirms the Learning Commons as a key component of the 21st Century learning model.

THE PILOT PROJECT-ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL (June 2011)

St. Joseph has a student population of 1350 students. It is a Gr. 7-12 high school in an affluent suburban neighbourhood of Ottawa. Staffing consists of a full-time teacher- librarian and library technician.

Having participated in the implementation of the Learning Commons transition plan, below is our current status with regard to the *Together for Learning* document.

Physical Space:

Collaborative Seating

- **6 small group collaborative seating areas for students to sit on couches and comfortable chairs for reading, working and resting.**
- **6 smaller circular tables to encourage small group collaborations.**
- **Three tall bistro tables and chairs which are very popular with learners.**
- **Floor outlets have been installed under the circular tables for additional power sources.**
- **14 rectangular tables for student collaboration.**

Learning Spaces

The print collection has been moved to one side of the library to maximize space for furniture and mobility.

We have a SMART board seating area, a plasma TV seating area and an LCD projection area.

A silent seminar room is available to accommodate learners who require a quiet study space.

Harkening back to the open classroom concept of the 1970's, there are classes viewing media on the TV at one end of the L.C. while there is a book talk being delivered at the SMART board using YouTube at the other end of the L.C.

Displays

Books are still prominently displayed on the circulation desk, around pillars, and in the "New Book" display case, as well as Books for Boys and Red Maple and White Pine displays. The SMART board and Plasma TV are being used to display on-line information i.e. our blog, themes for reader advisory etc.

Atmosphere

The popularity of the Learning Commons as a lunch hour destination has increased dramatically for purposes other than silent study. Students, who eschewed the library before, now come to use the couches to sleep, to chat and use technology to view media, and play games. We must often remind students that it is a public space that is shared with those who wish to study. There is a tipping point between the social and the learning aspect of the space.

There are more relaxed library rules. In the past, students were asked to sit in groups of 4 and to be quiet and on task. Now, students are permitted to arrange furniture as they see fit and staff only intervenes when the noise level is too extreme. The space at lunchtime is both social and

academic.

The experiment with allowing lunches into the L.C. was a failure. There was a tangible change in the purpose of the library from learning destination to cafeteria. The “no food or drink” policy was re-introduced to protect our new furniture, carpet and expensive electronic devices. The rules are often bent to accommodate special events such as lunch hour book club meetings, special events etc.

Virtual Space:

- **24/7 access to our collection through Destiny with access available on Smart devices.**
- **Blog with links to research and reading information.**
- **Facebook page to share photos and videos of library events and activities.**
- **Blackboard course on the research process available to all students and staff**
- **Twitter account with the intention of tweeting about professional resources to staff next year.**

Establishing a virtual presence and sharing it with our school community is the biggest challenge of our transition. Making our blog relevant to students and easy to locate and navigate is our mission. Although we realize we may never be able to compete with Google, it is our hope that if we build it they will come. Future plans include webinars to assist students on-line with the research process. Next year we will promote a Learning Commons club to give students access and control over the content of the blog and Facebook pages to encourage more student engagement.

Equitable Access:

- **Wi-Fi**
- **Dell Netbook cart of 24 touch screen laptops. With parental permission, up to 12 students may take units to class or home for overnight use.**
- **8 iPads and 2 iPods for student use in the library.**
- **Our minilab of 15 desktops will be updated with new devices in September**
- **Destiny allows for 24/7 access to resources and databases as well as reader advocacy through social networking capabilities.**
- **Expanded library hours.**

Assistance:

- **Speak Up Teen Tech club project, in collaboration with our elearning consultant, will focus on teens teaching teens using webinars.**
- **Increased troubleshooting for printing, password/ login, and equipment issues**
- **Creation of two circulation workstations at the desk to meet the increased demand to borrow devices.**

Personal Contributions:

- **Students and staff were represented on the Learning Commons implementation committee**

- The school community was surveyed for input

Experimentation:

- Promotion of SMART board use by students and staff.
- Web 2.0 tools presented through Tech Tidbits to staff and students i.e. prezzi, bitstrips, volki, blackboard, jing, etc.

Activities and Exhibitions:

Our space is used for university presentations, demonstrations, mass, authors/artist, guest speakers, workshops, performances, celebrations etc.

For example, we celebrated “Christmas in the Commons” by holding a Wii Dance, MarioKart and Glee Sing-along Challenge.

Future plans include a partnership with the Photo teacher to offer a digital display of work that will change each week

In June, as a year-end activity, we will re-create the Hunger Games for our gr. 7 and 8 students.

Learning Commons Partnership Teams 2012:

The Learning Commons has partnered with:

Guidance to run the Careers Human Library with over 30 living books speaking to 190 gr. 10 Career students.

The English department to host a Spoken Word Artist to celebrate Poetry Month.

The L.C. ran an on-line Poetry Contest.

Student Success and our School Council to run a parent-teacher book club using Dr. Neufeld and Dr. Mate’s Hold On To Your Kids.

The Eng4C teachers to teach research and citation skills using interactive on-line tutorials at the SMART board and citations tools.

The Technology Book club, read *Cellphones in the Classroom* and shared a lesson plan for using the L.C. blog, audioboo.fm and polleverywhere.com to create QR code posters to advertise the Poetry Contest.

The elearning consultant with funding from Speak Up to facilitate the Teen Tech Club students to share their tech expertise with other teens through webinars.

Student Services and 7/8 staff to provide mentoring services for the Real Guys Read Club and the Real Girls Count Math Club.

Reading Engagement:

Our high school has one of the highest circulation statistics for fiction in our board. This is in part due to a school wide silent reading program called FeVeR. The Learning Commons supports this reading program with daily written announcements to promote books from our collection. We also run a Red Maple and White Pine book club. We connect our book club

members and the school community to the books on the reading list through a blog that lists author links, book trailers and other information. Next year we will actively promote the use of the social networking features of Destiny. Our Anime club uses the L.C. plasma TV for viewing and the SMART board for gaming.

Developing the Individual in the Learning Commons:

This aspect of the Learning Commons is our biggest challenge. Our work is to capitalize on the tools and social media to further learning opportunities for critical and creative thought. How do we encourage students to become responsible digital citizens? How do we promote imagination and creativity when students are primarily engaged in the pursuit of entertainment?

Pedagogical Shifts:

In a traditional library setting, the primary directive was to collaborate with teachers to support learners with print resources and the research process.

Before the transition, teachers had stopped using our print collection for research in favour of computer labs for Googling. As a result, we had less access to teachers for collaboration.

There is a paradigm shift from collaboration with teachers to connecting directly with students through the virtual library, mobile devices etc.

Ironically, as traditional computer labs become obsolete, we may see more teachers accessing the Learning Commons to use our Wi-Fi and devices to support learners.

The Learning Commons is available to teachers who wish to differentiate learning. Currently, opportunities to collaborate are often feast or famine.

We have transitioned to a Learning Commons so quickly that there is a lag between our vision and practice. We will work to address this gap by marketing our new services next year.

Creating a Culture of Inquiry:

The Learning Commons has an important role to play in supporting student Critical and Creative Thinking and teachers with Discovery and Guided Inquiry. We are still underutilized in this regard. Our long range goal is to create a school-wide Research project with all the gr. 9 students to teach the four stages of the Research Process. We hope that the standardization of a school Research model will be adopted by all teachers in all subject areas. Presently, we work with interested teachers in an ad hoc fashion. We are also trying to reach students through our virtual library resources with just in time delivery of instruction when they need it for any aspect of the research process. This is another area of growth and challenge.

The investment in the library with the vision of the Learning Commons to support 21st Century learners has promise. Our school is well on the way towards realizing the potential.

Author Biographies:

Sarah Murray is a qualified teacher-librarian, who began her career teaching English 14 years ago. She began her library career by building the library at St. Joseph from scratch and is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the school by piloting the Learning Commons transition. Sarah is also an active OLA member and is on both the Red Maple and White Pine Steering Committees.

Donna Presz is the Library Services Supervisor for the Ottawa Catholic School Board. Over the last 17 years she has worked in private, academic, special, and mostly school libraries at both elementary and senior elementary schools. Donna ran the Derry Byrne Teacher Resource Centre for 7 years and is now the key contact for the Learning Commons transition.

Reference:

Together For Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons. (2010). Toronto: Ontario Library Association.

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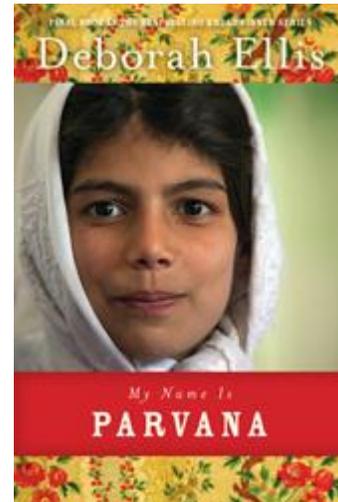
Publishers recommend . . .

Publishers of Canadian authors and illustrators are invited to submit the title of one book they have published in the last year that they would consider a "best book" or a "neglected gem". Let *School Libraries in Canada* know about recent works to satisfy the needs and interests of school library patrons.

Fiction

My Name Is Parvana
by Deborah Ellis
Groundwood Books, 2012.
176 p. Ages 11+. ISBN 9781554982974

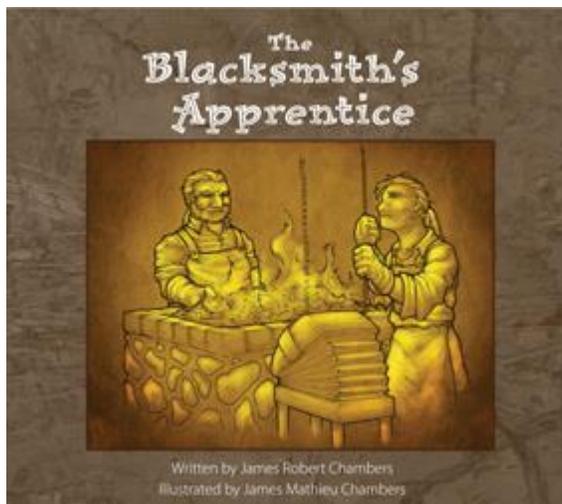
In this long-awaited sequel to *The Breadwinner* Trilogy, Parvana is now fifteen years old. As she waits for foreign military forces to determine her fate, she remembers the past four years of her life. Reunited with her mother and sisters, she has been living in a village where her mother has finally managed to open a school for girls. But even though the Taliban has been driven from the government, the country is still at war, and many continue to view the education and freedom of girls and women with suspicion and fear.



The Blacksmith's Apprentice
by James Robert Chambers; illustrated by James Mathieu Chambers
Pemmican Press, 2012.
ISBN 9781894717694

In her village, six-year-old Catherine plays near André the blacksmith's shop, where she loves the sound of the hammer on the anvil – ring, ring, ping, ping. When André needs a new apprentice, she is ready to try. Her father says blacksmithing isn't a proper job for a young woman, but Catherine's hard work and determination are as strong and true as any hammer.

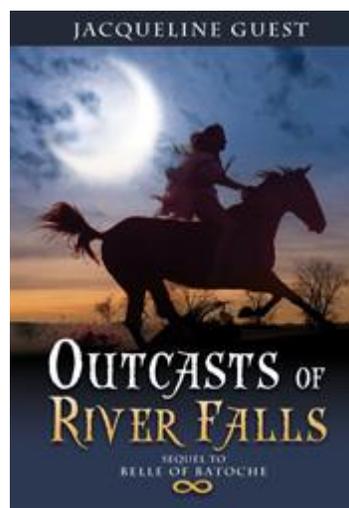
Combining an empowering message with an illuminating look inside the smithy, *The Blacksmith's Apprentice* is a warm and enchanting debut from James Robert Chambers – himself an amateur blacksmith – with vivid illustrations from James Mathieu Chambers.



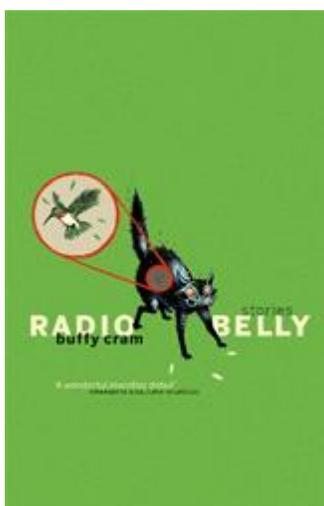
Outcasts of River Falls
by Jacqueline Guest
Coteau Books, 2012.
248 p. Ages 8+. ISBN 9781550504804.

When young city lady Kathryn moves to live with her Aunt Belle in Alberta, she is shocked to learn her true Métis heritage – and how her people are forced to live. Barred from owning land, the Métis exist on the strips of government land between the highway and citizens' private properties. Excitement comes with a mysterious stranger, the Highwayman, who rights wrongs against the Métis people in his own way. When he is framed for a crime, and Aunt Belle becomes involved, Kathryn must prove their innocence.

Sequel to *Belle of Batoche*; historical fiction; author is 2012 winner of the American Indian Library Association Young Adult literature award.



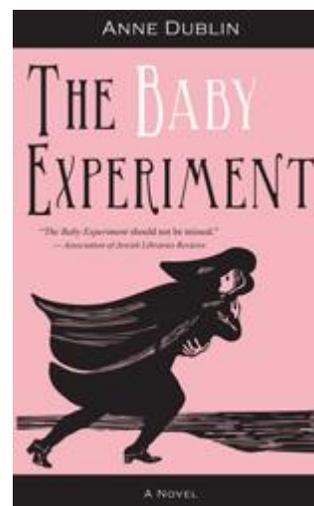
Radio Belly
by Buffy Cram
Douglas & McIntyre, 2012
224 p. Teens + ISBN 9781553659020



In the surreal world of Buffy Cram's stories, someone or something has slipped beneath the skins of her already beleaguered characters, rearranging the familiar into something strange and even sinister, making off with their emotional and even physical goods. Inhabited, occupied, possessed—suddenly, the world as they knew it is no longer quite recognizable, not to mention safe—if it actually was safe before. But it's the surprising, often revelatory ways in which Cram's characters navigate through these strange new landscapes that imbue these stories with complexity, grace and lustre.

The Baby Experiment
by Ann Dublin
Dundurn Press, 2012.
160 p. Ages 12-15. ISBN 9781459701359.

Johanna is a 14-year-old Jewish girl who lives in Hamburg, Germany, in the early 18th century. She feels stifled by the daily drudgery of her life and dreams of seeing what lies outside the confines of the Jewish quarter. Johanna lies about her identity and gets a job as a caregiver at an orphanage. Until it's too late, she doesn't realize a secret experiment is taking place that results in the deaths of babies. Deciding to kidnap one of the orphans, Johanna sets off for Amsterdam. She faces many dangers on her journey, including plague, bandits, storms and, not least of all, anti-Semitism. Johanna has a lot of courage and determination, but will it be enough to save the baby and reach her destination? Will she finally find a place where she can be free?



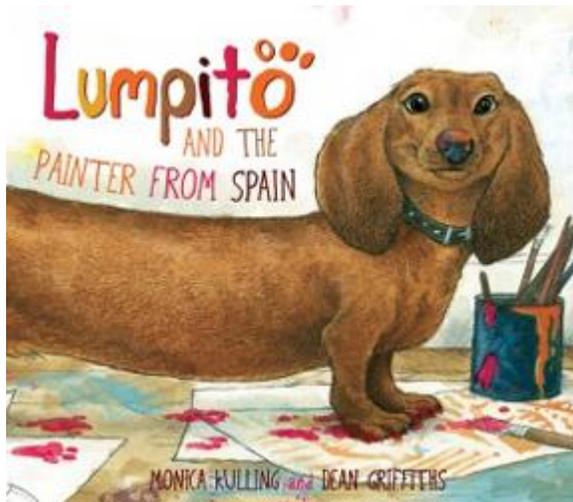
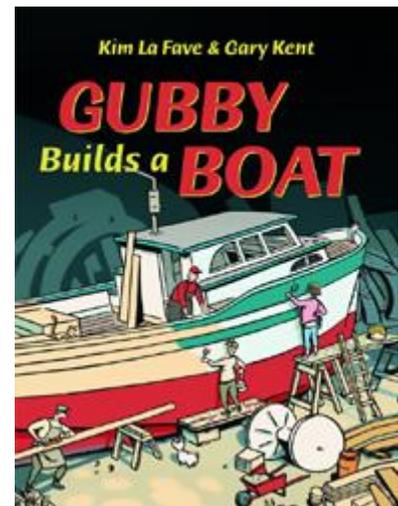


Wicket Season
by Gabrielle Prendergast
Lorimer, 2012
136 p. Ages 10–13. ISBN 9781459400207

Used to being the star cricket player in Winnipeg, Harry finds his skills aren't so special when he moves to Toronto. Determined to make the school cricket team, Harry realizes being in a community can be more rewarding than standing out on your own.

Gubby Builds a Boat
by Kim La Fave and Gary Kent
Harbour Publishing, 2012.
48 p. Children Ages 5 and up. ISBN
9781550175912.

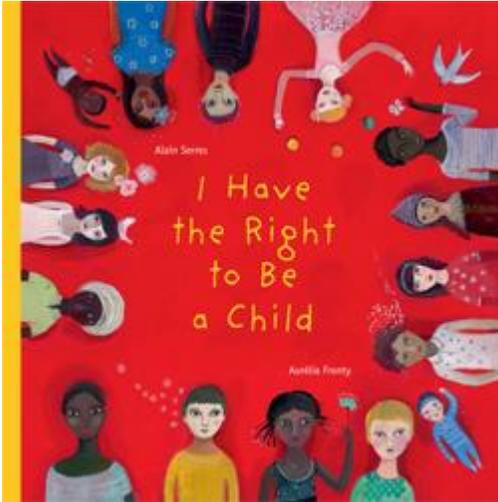
In this sequel to the Governor General's Award-nominated *Fishing with Gubby*, Gubby, his nephew Cam, and his cat Puss, are headed home to the little village of Gibsons on his fishing troller, the *Flounder*, when they begin taking on water. After a trip to boat mechanic to see what's wrong, it becomes apparent that Gubby needs a new boat! They travel to Steveston where Gubby's best pal Minoru, a Japanese boat builder, shows Gubby, Cam, and Puss all the steps of building a wooden gillnetter over the winter season.



Lumpito and the Painter from Spain
by Monica Kulling; illustrated by Dean Griffiths
Pajama Press, 2012
32 p. Ages 5+. ISBN 9781927485002

Lump the dachshund is excited to escape his housemate, Big Dog the bully, and visit a painter in southern France. There Lump and Pablo Picasso become fast friends, and the little dog finds a new name—and a new home.

Non-Fiction

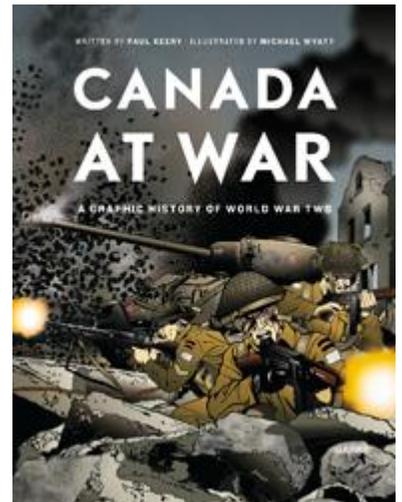


Canada at War
by Paul Keery; illustrated by Michael Wyatt
Douglas & McIntyre, 2012
176 p. ISBN 9781553655961 .

In graphic-novel format in full colour, *Canada at War* shows the growth of a nation's military through movingly depicted triumphs and tragedies. From the disheartening losses at Dieppe and Hong Kong through the invasion of Sicily, it focuses on the human dimension of the key battles and decisions that ultimately swung the war in the Allies' favour. This poignant account ends with a final reckoning of the legacy these storied years have had on a country forged through war. Aimed at both adult and young adult readers, this very human history tells the stories behind some of this country's most distinguishing military moments.

I Have the Right to Be a Child
by Alain Serres; illustrated by Aurélie Fronty
Groundwood Books, 2012.
48 p. Ages 4 – 8. ISBN 9781554981496.

With a very simple text accompanied by rich, vibrant illustrations a young narrator describes what it means to be a child with rights – from the right to food, water and shelter, to the right to go to school, to be free from violence, to breathe clean air, and more. The book emphasizes that these rights belong to every child on the planet, whether they are "black or white, small or big, rich or poor, born here or somewhere else." It also makes evident that knowing and talking about these rights are the first steps toward making sure that they are respected.





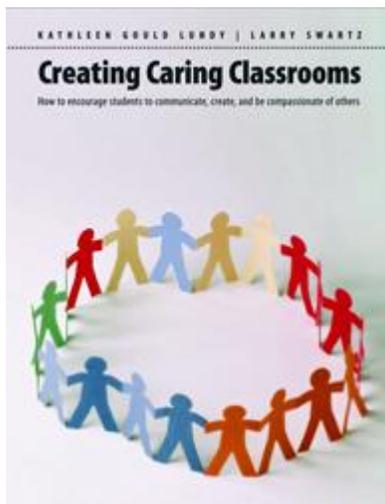
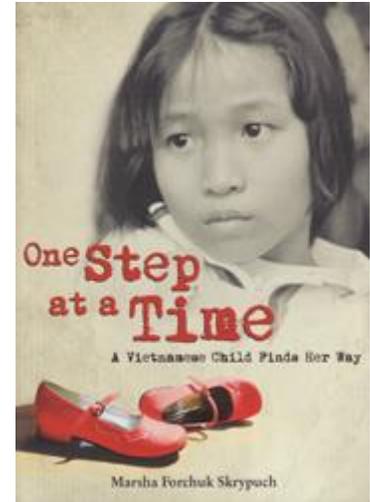
Project Media
By Sylvie Webb and Jessica Pegis
Emond Montgomery Publications, 2012
96 p. Ages 15 + ISBN 978-1-55239-410-6 .

Project Media is a book for project-based learning in high school media studies. Project Media promotes learning through doing. Instructive text is kept to a minimum and limited to key terms, detailed definitions, and background/context needed to complete a project. Student knowledge is activated and constructed through the use of questions and group discussion. Each media project represents an essential idea in media studies and brings together multiple outcomes for the benefit of both teacher and student.

One Step at a Time: A Vietnamese Child Finds Her Way
by Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch
Pajama Press, 2012
128 p. Ages 8+ ISBN 9781927485026 .

One Step at a Time is a sequel to *Last Airlift* and picks up the story of Son Thi Anh Tuyet as she adjusts to life as part of a Canadian family with a new language and unfamiliar customs.

Polio has left Tuyet with a weak leg and turned in foot and a strong fear of doctors and hospitals. However, dreams of having two straight legs, wearing shoes that match and being able to play with other children and the support of a loving family inspire the young girl to find the courage to do what is necessary to stand on her own two feet.



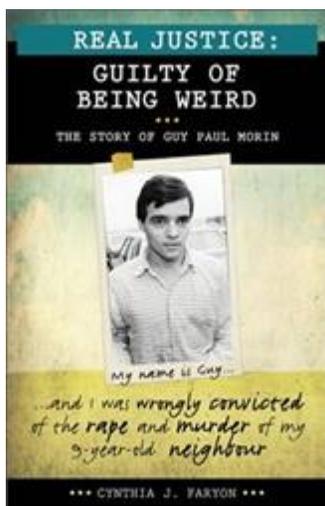
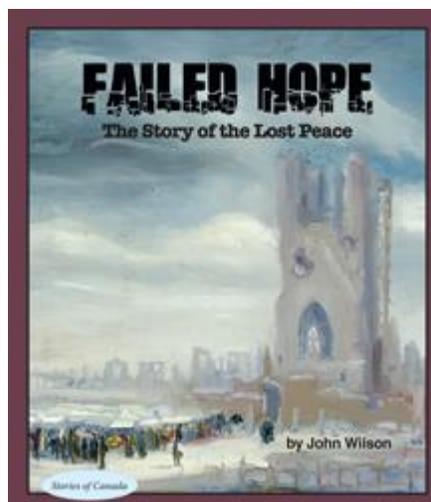
Creating Caring Classrooms
by Kathleen Gould Lundy and Larry Swartz
Dundurn Press, 2011
160 p. Teachers Grades K-8 ISBN 9781551382708 .

Creating Caring Classrooms is committed to building respectful relationships among students, teachers, administrators, and the entire school community. Teachers will learn how to establish inclusive classrooms, introduce strategies that promote collaboration, and be prepared to confront difficult issues such as bullying and exclusion.

Failed Hope
by John Wilson
Dundurn Press, 2012
120 p. 9-12 yrs ISBN
9781459703452 .

Beginning with the Treaty of Versailles and the hope for the birth of a better world, *Failed Hope* follows the postwar rise of fascism, social unrest, Prohibition, the Great Depression, Adolf Hitler's rise to power, and the wars in Abyssinia, Spain, and China. The general strike in Winnipeg provides a Canadian perspective to the global labour turmoil of the period. The book ends with the failure of appeasement and the outbreak of the Second World War.

The information is presented in easily digestible segments, accompanied by photographs. Informative sidebars provide background information or connect world events to activities in Canada.



Real Justice: Guilty of Being Weird – The story of Guy Paul Morin

by Cynthia J. Faryon
Lorimer, 2012

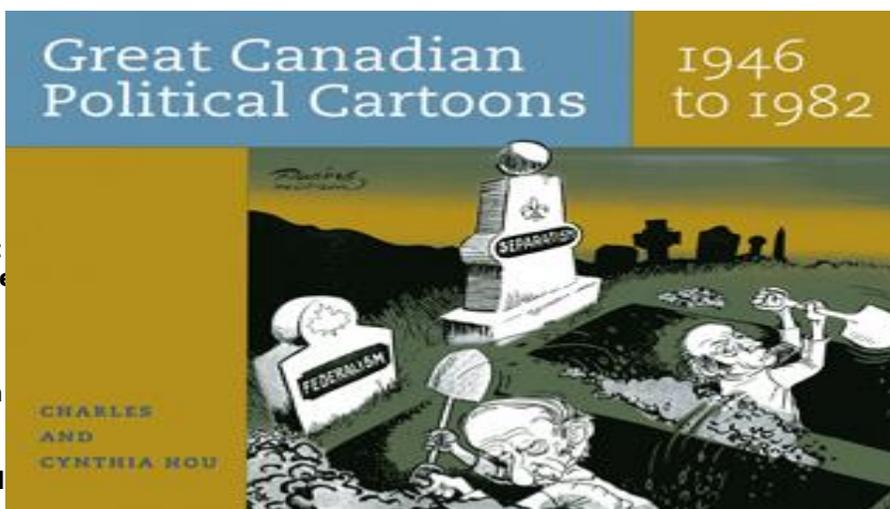
144 p. Reading level grades 4.0-5.0. Interest level ages
13 and up ISBN 9781459400924 .

The riveting true story of how the police's tunnel vision allowed a 24-year-old to be convicted for a murder he didn't commit. It took ten years, a committed group advocating for justice, and the just developed science of DNA testing to finally clear his name.

Great Canadian Political Cartoons 1946 to 1982

by Charles and Cynthia Hou
Moody's Lookout Press, 2011
240 p. Young Adult ISBN 978-0-9680016-6-0

The postwar years were a golden age of political cartooning in Canada. In this third collection from Moody's Lookout Press, some of the best cartoonists in the country present an inclusive view of Canadian history from the Gouzenko affair and the early years of the Cold War to the patriation of the Constitution and the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Along the way they deal with such matters as aboriginal affairs, feminism, human rights, labour, multiculturalism, nationalism, regionalism and separatism, and with the ever-present challenge of dealing with Uncle Sam.



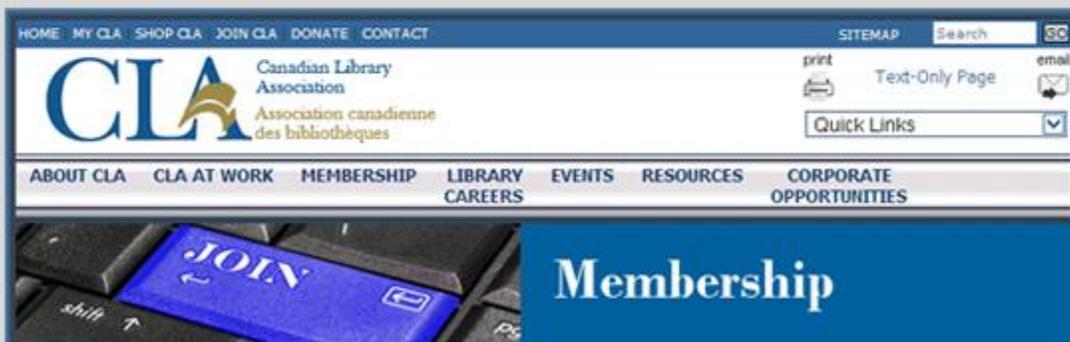
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