

SHARED FOUNDATIONS

Curate

DANIELLA LASHAUN SMITH AND LEN BRYAN

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TRANSFORMING LEARNING

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SHARED FOUNDATION IV

Curate



KEY COMMITMENT

Make meaning for oneself and others by collecting, organizing, and sharing resources of personal relevance.

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Series Introduction

The Shared Foundations series from the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) examines the six Shared Foundations that anchor the comprehensive approach to teaching and learning in the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. The Shared Foundations—Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, and Engage—represent the core concepts that all learners, school librarians, and school libraries develop and promote in their K-12 learning environment.

Each of the six books in this series is dedicated to the deep exploration of a single Shared Foundation. Although each of the Shared Foundations supports its own inherent priorities, it cannot be implemented in isolation. The writing process used by the authors created a series of books that, like the AASL Standards Frameworks, are unique and yet parallel each other. Common elements are found throughout the series:

- A balance between theoretical discussion, practical strategies, and implementation examples, promoting reflection and creativity
- Development of the Competencies and Alignments for the Learner, School Librarian, and School Library in all four Domains—Think, Create, Share, and Grow
- Differences in application and assessment across grades K-12, promoting a growth mindset and envisioning outcomes for all learners, whether student learners, school librarians, or other educators
- An emphasis on personalized learning experiences, project-based learning, and authenticity of learning and projects
- Challenges addressed, illustrating ways to implement the Shared Foundations in various environments and levels of support

Questions for the Reflective Practitioner conclude each chapter, allowing readers to consider the application of concepts specific to their own learning communities and stimulate nuanced professional conversations. For ease of reference, readers also will find the AASL Standards Integrated Framework for the relevant Shared Foundation included in this work.

AASL and its series authors hope that this immersive and dedicated examination of the Shared Foundations will help school library professionals deepen their understandings, broaden their perspectives, make connections for personal relevance, and innovate and reflect on their practice with a professional community.

For more information about the *National School Library Standards*, and to access the latest implementation assistance resources, visit standards.aasl.org.

Curate

Domain	LEARNER DOMAINS AND COMPETENCIES	SCHOOL LIBRARIAN DOMAINS AND COMPETENCIES
A. Think	<p>Learners act on an information need by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determining the need to gather information. 2. Identifying possible sources of information. 3. Making critical choices about information sources to use. 	<p>School librarians challenge learners to act on an information need by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modeling the response to a need to gather and organize information. 2. Designing opportunities for learners to explore possible information sources. 3. Guiding learners to make critical choices about information sources to use.
B. Create	<p>Learners gather information appropriate to the task by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeking a variety of sources. 2. Collecting information representing diverse perspectives. 3. Systematically questioning and assessing the validity and accuracy of information. 4. Organizing information by priority, topic, or other systematic scheme. 	<p>School librarians promote information gathering appropriate to the task by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sharing a variety of sources. 2. Encouraging the use of information representing diverse perspectives. 3. Fostering the questioning and assessing of validity and accuracy of information. 4. Providing tools and strategies to organize information by priority, topic, or other systematic scheme.
C. Share	<p>Learners exchange information resources within and beyond their learning community by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accessing and evaluating collaboratively constructed information sites. 2. Contributing to collaboratively constructed information sites by ethically using and reproducing others' work. 3. Joining with others to compare and contrast information derived from collaboratively constructed information sites. 	<p>School librarians contribute to and guide information resource exchange within and beyond the school learning community by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitating opportunities to access and evaluate collaboratively constructed information sites. 2. Devising pathways for learners to contribute to collaboratively constructed information sites by ethically using and reproducing others' work. 3. Directing learners to join others to compare and contrast information derived from collaboratively constructed information sites.
D. Grow	<p>Learners select and organize information for a variety of audiences by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performing ongoing analysis of and reflection on the quality, usefulness, and accuracy of curated resources. 2. Integrating and depicting in a conceptual knowledge network their understanding gained from resources. 3. Openly communicating curation processes for others to use, interpret, and validate. 	<p>School librarians show learners how to select and organize information for a variety of audiences by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engaging learners in ongoing analysis of and reflection on the quality, usefulness, and accuracy of curated resources. 2. Formulating tasks that help learners to integrate and depict in a conceptual knowledge network learners' understanding gained from resources. 3. Making opportunities for learners to openly communicate curation processes for others to use, interpret, and validate.

KEY COMMITMENT

Make meaning for oneself and others by collecting, organizing, and sharing resources of personal relevance.



SCHOOL LIBRARY DOMAINS AND ALIGNMENTS

The school library facilitates the Key Commitment to and Competencies of CURATE

Domain

The school library provides problem-based learning experiences and environments by:

1. Using resources and technology to foster inquiry and scaffold mastery of skills necessary for learning to progress.
2. Adopting a dynamic collection-development plan to ensure that adequate resources reflect current and in-depth knowledge.
3. Focusing on the effective use of a wide range of resources to foster information skills appropriate to content areas.

A. Think

The school library promotes selection of appropriate resources and tools for information use by:

1. Demonstrating and documenting how resources and technology are used to address information needs.
2. Providing opportunities for all members of the school community to develop information and technology skills needed to promote the transfer of information-related problem-solving strategies across all disciplines.
3. Employing a dynamic collection policy that includes selection and retention criteria for all materials within the collection.
4. Implementing an administratively approved and endorsed policy that clearly addresses procedures for handling material challenges.
5. Designing and providing adequate, appropriate space for library resources, services, and activities.

B. Create

The school library facilitates the contribution and exchange of information within and among learning communities by:

1. Providing an environment in which resources that support the school's curriculum and learning goals can be collaboratively selected and developed.
2. Including and tracking collection materials in a system that uses standardized approaches to description and location.
3. Establishing policies that promote effective acquisition, description, circulation, sharing, and access to resources within and beyond the school day.
4. Maintaining procedures that ensure user confidentiality and promote unimpeded access to materials by staff members and learners.

C. Share

The school library engages the learning community in exploring resources by:

1. Describing, organizing, and promoting the collection for maximum and effective uses for multiple learning applications.
2. Maintaining a collection of sufficient breadth and currency to be pertinent to the school's program of studies.
3. Supporting access through a schedule that allows use by learners and staff at time of need.
4. Using local and external data to inform ongoing adjustments to the scope of the resource collection, and its audiences, formats, and applications.

D. Grow

Preface

I hope you don't mind my telling you why the Curate Shared Foundation is so important. The entire country has been through so much during the past three years. We have had to find our way through a crisis that we were not prepared for. As school librarians, we used our ability to *Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, and Explore* to *Engage* our school communities. Although we felt unprepared, we still had the foundational skills that enabled us to shine through the darkness like lighthouses.

We faced an enormous challenge. Yet we have grown—within our global community, in our country, in our local locations, and as a profession. Evolution is indeed essential for society. It is with evolution in mind that I write my part of the preface. The Curate Shared Foundation is my favorite Shared Foundation because it induces the evolutionary process.

As you read the book and examine our discussion of the Curate Shared Foundation, you will see that we (school librarians) are asking learners to evolve, and to do that within our foundational competencies, we are charged with accepting the need to change, to move ourselves and our school communities toward questioning what we know so we can find new information. Without the curation and questioning of knowledge, we cease to learn. As Nobel Peace Prize winner Kofi Annan (1997) said, “Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.”

We have always emphasized learning and education in my family. My parents grew up in the rural Deep South where Jim Crow laws were prevalent. As youth, they thirsted for knowledge when access to education and books was discouraged. Years before I earned my degrees, my parents described to me what I came to know as information poverty. Information poverty is a deadly disease that continues to be

prevalent. It is sinister when the quality of life suffers because of a lack of access to correct information.

When I became an educator and librarian, my parents expressed pride because I had access to something they had dreamed of when they were children. I had a special job . . . and a calling to fulfill. So when I was invited to write about the Curate Shared Foundation, I was delighted. It is a privilege to coauthor a book designed to assist learners and educators with curating knowledge and embracing intellectual freedom. May we never forget the power of school librarianship.

—Daniella LaShaun Smith

As I reflect on the very long process of working on this book, I keep thinking about resilience. When I began drafting *Curate* in 2018, I had just started working in Denver Public Schools. It is now near the end of 2022, and we have survived a global pandemic, political and social turmoil, and increasingly bizarre challenges—not only to library books but also to our jobs, our safety, and the education profession in general. We have lost colleagues, friends, and loved ones, and our world and work look very different.

School librarians have faced unprecedented obstacles as what were once relatively rare and usually civil conversations about instructional materials and library books have devolved into polarizing, politically motivated assaults on our character and intentions. Our curation policies and practices, a core component of our work, have been called into question and publicly ridiculed for political gain. Many have chosen to retire or leave the profession as these attacks persisted. I personally reconsidered my career choice several times within those four years and seriously pondered the possibility of leaving education.

And still we persist, working within our schools to ensure that our learners have unimpeded access to information, no matter how uncomfortable that access might be to some who would rather shelter learners than trust them to curate information for themselves. We continue to curate information in all its forms, to instruct our learners in the power of information and ideas, and to advocate that how we curate information matters. We work with educators and learners to provide tools and training to help them *think* for themselves, *create* learning products that demonstrate their knowledge in innovative ways, *share* that knowledge both within the school and around the world, and *grow* as learners, curators, and global citizens.

I have been fortunate to serve as a librarian and school library administrator in three U.S. states, five school districts, and one state agency. In all these places and in all my experiences, the Curate Shared Foundation consistently comes up as a central component of my work. As a result of working on this book, my understanding of

curation in school libraries now extends far beyond library collection development, though that is still a fundamental part of our work. The Curate Shared Foundation is inextricably tied to instruction and is interwoven throughout all the Shared Foundations in our *National School Library Standards*.

My hopes are that the ideas and examples in this book will contribute something of value to our profession and that you, the reader, also practice curation as you move through the chapters—making meaning for yourself and others as you absorb and reflect on the text, tables, illustrations, and examples from your school library peers.

School librarianship continues to evolve, with new tools, techniques, ideas, and yes, even challenges. As we look to the future, our Shared Foundations and Common Beliefs provide a solid foundation of library science fundamentals on which we can build innovative, responsive, and student-focused resources, instruction, and programming. In an age when our learners face increasing challenges to their freedom to access and use information, school librarians are perfectly positioned to practice, teach, and model the Curate Shared Foundation, which is essential to learning.

—Len Bryan

Introduction: What Drives Our Work?

The Curate Shared Foundation is defined in the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries* as “[making] meaning for oneself and others by collecting, organizing, and sharing resources of personal relevance” (American Association of School Librarians [AASL] 2018, 94). The purpose of this book is to help you, no matter where you are in your school library career, whether you are a school librarian, school library supervisor, school library professor, or a pre-service school librarian, to understand and apply curation as illustrated in the *National School Library Standards* to your practice, your ongoing professional learning, and your instruction and collaboration with learners and other educators. If you are a school administrator, our hope is for you to understand more deeply what the school librarian profession calls us to do and inspire your school librarian with high expectations when it comes to curating for your school community. Supporting your school librarian in their curation activities can positively impact academic achievement in your school. In addition, research supports the benefits of having highly qualified school librarians (Scholastic 2016).

Curation is a needed activity throughout the academic years so that learners can then effectively curate for themselves, no matter what they choose to pursue after graduation (Kist 2022). Connecting the human activity of curation across time and disciplines outside school librarianship provides a compelling case for curation services in our schools. Moreover, the connection to our behaviors also supports school librarians as they teach curation skills and provide opportunities for learners to practice curation.

Common Beliefs

One of the most compelling features of the *National School Library Standards* is the set of Common Beliefs (AASL 2018, 11–14). These six statements do a terrific job of capturing and expressing the core pillars of school librarianship. The Common Beliefs consider our experiences in a complicated, messy, and ever-changing profession and condense them into a few key statements that are helpful and instructive in various scenarios. The Common Beliefs, as articulated on the AASL Standards web portal (AASL, n.d.-b), provide both a firm foundation for the work of librarians and a clear sense of the direction school districts should take as they strive to continuously improve school libraries. We have added commentary to each of the Common Beliefs to connect them to the Curate Shared Foundation and to the focus of the chapters to follow.

Common Beliefs

1. The school library is a unique and essential part of a learning community.
2. Qualified school librarians lead effective school libraries.
3. Learners should be prepared for college, career, and life.
4. Reading is the core of personal and academic competency.
5. Intellectual freedom is every learner's right.
6. Information technologies must be appropriately integrated and equitably available.

Source: AASL 2018, 11.

1. The school library is a unique and essential part of a learning community.

Building and strengthening connections are core functions of the work of school librarians. We connect learners, other educators, administrators, and our communities to information, to the world outside our school walls, and to each other. School librarians create strong connections between our communities and the love of reading. We teach our colleagues, learners, and the community how to access, evaluate, and use both traditional and emerging sources of information ethically and productively. Our instruction empowers our school communities to contribute to the advancement of our society.

School librarians are unique educators for many reasons, chief among which is our provision of resources curated for our schools. While collecting and facilitating

access to a wide variety of learning resources, school librarians create connections between academic knowledge and a deep understanding of our world. Curation has always been a core part of librarianship. Chapter 1 briefly explores the history of school libraries and librarians and how they have curated materials through the ages.

2. Qualified school librarians lead effective school libraries.

Change is a constant, and we must not only embrace it and what it means for our communities but also create opportunities to lead change for our organizations. Gone are the days when school librarians presided over stacks of well-organized books in a dull, authoritarian, adult-focused environment (Gross 2022). Significant time is now spent outside the physical library, *engaging* with our community, *exploring* the world of virtual works online, *curating* resources in easily accessible spaces, *collaborating* with our colleagues, building *inclusive* library spaces, both physical and virtual, and leading our school community in deep *inquiry* that goes far beyond the mere collection of bits of knowledge. It is truly the most exciting time to be a school librarian!

Adequate staffing and resources vary according to settings. As a result, AASL emphasizes that every child, regardless of the type or size of school they attend, deserves access to a full-time, certified school librarian, with dedicated support staff and budget. These factors are essential for transforming teaching and learning (AASL 2019b). Advocacy is discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

3. Learners should be prepared for college, career, and life.

How we address the Curate Shared Foundation plays a tremendous role in how we contribute to the mission of our districts and schools. School librarians help every learner achieve academic success and curate resources that learners need. Effective library programming supports equity by ensuring that accessible materials serve as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors (Bishop 1990) for all learners.

Teaching learners, stakeholders, and colleagues to curate diverse resources is important in an information society. We provide access and opportunities for learners to connect with college, careers, and their lives after school through curated resources. The role of curation in instruction is discussed in chapters 3, 4, and 5.

4. Reading is the core of personal and academic competency.

Even with the proliferation of learning opportunities through digital audio and video, the visual-cognitive discipline of reading print is still our society's dominant means of developing reading comprehension skills (Sparks 2021). School librarians curate high-quality information for our schools in a wide variety of formats—print and digital resources, video, audio, augmented and virtual reality—all have a place in school library collections. We present all these to our communities within a culture

of reading, engaging our communities through the power of story and encouraging them to pursue lifelong learning for its own sake. Aspects of nontraditional curation are discussed in chapters 6, 8, and 9.

5. Intellectual freedom is every learner's right.

Intellectual freedom is embedded within the core values of librarianship (American Library Association Council 2019). School librarians facilitate intellectual freedom by facilitating access to diverse viewpoints, intellectual tools, and spaces to read, view, and listen to discourse. Curation efforts must be inclusive of different perspectives, free from censorship, and supported by strong collection-development policies, and we must actively lead our communities in modeling respect for the viewpoints of those whose experiences differ from our own. Intellectual freedom as an essential component of collection-development and general school library policies is explored in chapter 2.

6. Information technologies must be appropriately integrated and equitably available.

Curating technologies and teaching learners to use them effectively are the responsibility of every educator (ISTE 2023). School librarians must be leaders in these efforts by ensuring that technology and connectivity are enhanced with resources that increase multiple literacy skills. Technology is a powerful tool for engaging our communities, creating transformational works, and finding opportunities to enhance the quality of our lives. Leveraging technology for curation is explored in chapter 7.

The Content of This Book

We have divided this book into four sections. *Part I: Placing Curate in Context* discusses the history of curation and how it has evolved. You will learn how other professions curate and about the policies that school librarians use to guide curation behaviors. *Part II: Curation for Learners* considers how the entire school community comprises learners, regardless of their ages. You will learn how school librarians are teachers of curation who facilitate lifelong curation skills. *Part III: Beyond Books* explains how curation is more than just the traditional concept of collecting books. It involves an interactive process that draws from the knowledge of the entire school community. Finally, *Part IV: Curate in Practice* shares case studies from school librarians who understand curation best practices. You will also notice Field Notes placed throughout the book. These alerts include tips and reflections from school librarians about their curation practices.

We hope that upon completing this book, you will embrace and promote the Curate Shared Foundation as a guide for exceeding traditional school library collection development. The Curate Shared Foundation offers opportunities to expand how our profession situates collections within services to school communities. We hope you will feel empowered to use this information to improve student learning outcomes and the culture of your school community. Dynamic curation practices will assist you with reinforcing connections to your school, allowing you to prepare learners for lifelong learning and the transition to college and strengthening the school library as a hub for intellectual freedom and scholarly communication and as a provider of relevant, engaging materials.

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