

Best Practices in 21st Century School Libraries

Kentucky Association of School Librarians

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What are best practices in 21st century school libraries? What should you be doing to empower learners to become “critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information”? Let’s find out what the research says and explore practical applications!

Critical Thinking

Todd, R. J. (2012). School libraries and the development of intellectual agency: Evidence from New Jersey. *School Library Research, 15*. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol15/SLR_SchoolLibrariesandDevelopment_V15.pdf

**The depth of knowledge development is influenced by what we are asking children to do, how engaged they are, and the nature of the instructional interventions they experience. Are we having students simply find facts...or are they constructing knowledge—analyzing, synthesizing, and transforming information into deep knowledge?*

Enthusiastic Reading

LeCrone, N. (2010). Free reading is UTOPIA. *Library Media Connection, 28*(6), 40-41.

**The more students read, the better they read. The more students use a library, the more comfortable they feel in a library setting.*

Skillful Research

Herring, J. E. (2011). Year 7 students, information literacy, and transfer: A grounded theory. *School Library Research, 14*. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol14/SLR_Year7Students_V14.pdf

**The majority of students in the study could potentially be engaged in their own learning, could value information literacy practices, and could transfer these skills and practices with teacher/librarian instructional intervention and encouragement.*

Ethical Use of Information

Williamson, K., & McGregor, J. (2011). Generating knowledge and avoiding plagiarism: Smart information use by high school students. *School Library Research, 14*. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslpubsandjournals/slr/vol14/SLR_GeneratingKnowledge_V14.pdf

**Attribution and responsible use of information must be taught at grade appropriate level; assignment design and student engagement are critical. A whole-school approach is necessary.*

“The mission of the school library program is to ensure that students and staff are effective users of ideas and information. The school librarian empowers students to be critical thinkers, enthusiastic readers, skillful researchers, and ethical users of information...”

Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Programs. (2009). Chicago, IL: AASL