



American Association  
of School Librarians  
**TRANSFORMING LEARNING**

NATIONAL  
SCHOOL  
LIBRARY  
STANDARDS

AASL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK for  
**Learners**

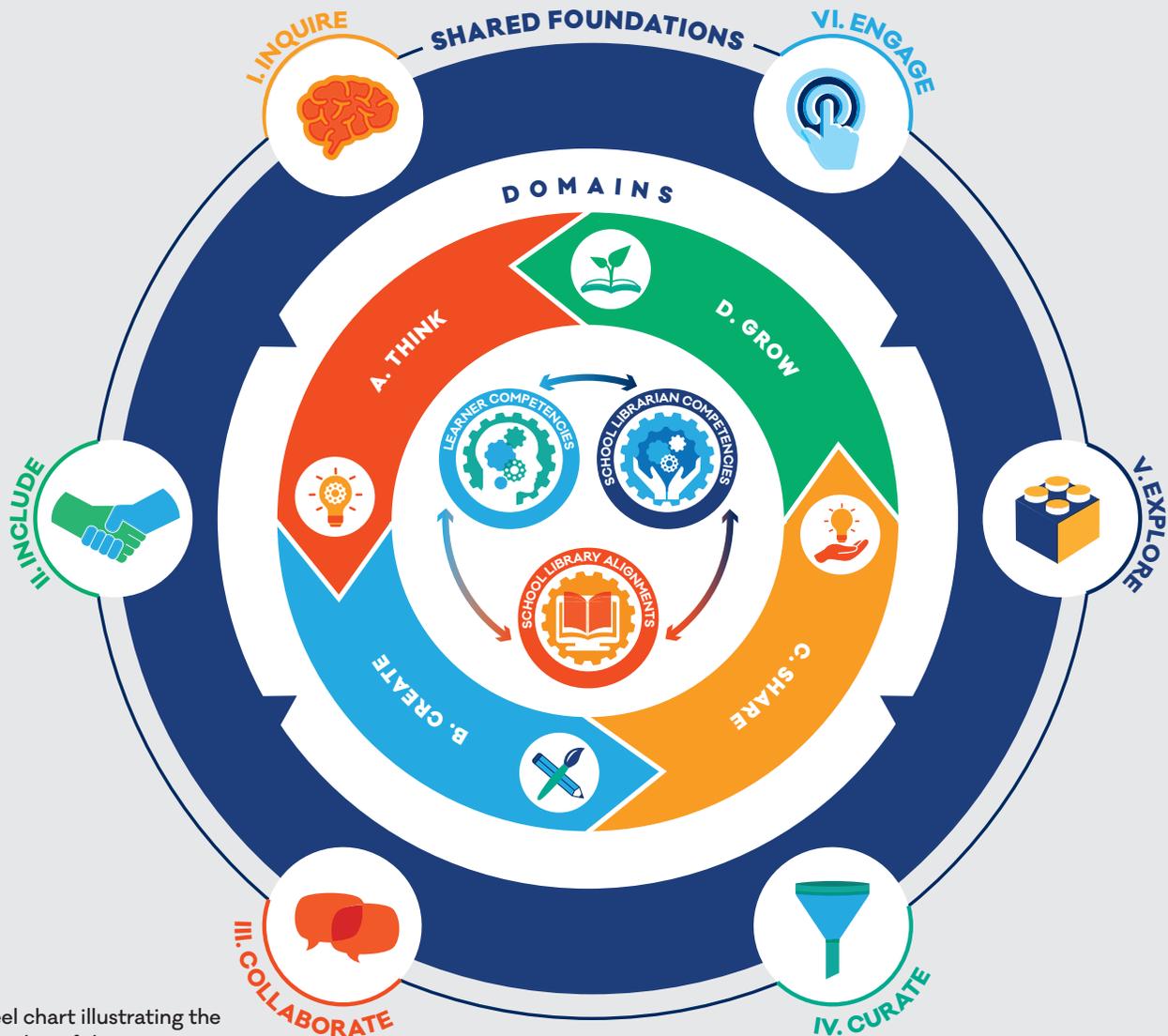


# Introducing the AASL Standards Framework for LEARNERS



THE **AASL STANDARDS** Framework for Learners pamphlet presents the standards framework for application with students and other learners. This is one of three sets of standards that make up the *AASL Standards Integrated Framework* featured within the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. The AASL Standards framework reflects a comprehensive approach to teaching

and learning by demonstrating the connection between learner, librarian, and library standards. Each section of the standards framework was designed to reflect the others, ensuring that standards-related activities would be mutually reinforcing, simultaneously building capacity among learners, school librarians, and the school library. This pamphlet provides educators access specifically to AASL's learner standards.



A wheel chart illustrating the relationship of the components within the AASL Standards framework structure.

# Common Beliefs

How do we define the qualities of well-prepared learners, effective school librarians, and dynamic school libraries?

IN THE STANDARDS remodeling process, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) reviewed Common Beliefs from earlier AASL Standards and official AASL position statements. These documents, and feedback collected from more than 1,300 school librarians and stakeholders nationally, provided AASL with a clear expression of the qualities of well-prepared learners, effective school librarians, and dynamic school libraries. The following Common Beliefs and summary descriptions were identified as central to the profession.

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

As a destination for on-site and virtual personalized learning, the school library is a vital connection between school and home. As the leader of this space and its functions, the school librarian ensures that the school library environment provides all members of the school community access to information and technology, connecting learning to real-world events. By providing access to an array of well-managed resources, school librarians enable academic knowledge to be linked to deep understanding.

## 2. Qualified school librarians lead effective school libraries.

As they guide organizational and personal change, effective school librarians model, promote, and foster inquiry learning in adequately staffed and resourced school libraries. Qualified school librarians have been educated and certified to perform interlinked, interdisciplinary, and cross-cutting roles as instructional leaders, program administrators, educators, collaborative partners, and information specialists.

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

Committed to inclusion and equity, effective school librarians use evidence to determine what works, for whom and under what conditions for each learner; complemented by community engagement and innovative leadership, school librarians improve all learners' opportunities for success. This success empowers learners to persist in inquiry, advanced study, enriching professional work, and community participation through continuous improvement within and beyond the school building and school day.

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

In the school library, learners engage with relevant information resources and digital learning opportunities in a culture of reading. School librarians initiate and elevate motivational reading initiatives by using story and personal narrative to engage learners. School librarians curate current digital and print materials and technology to provide access to high-quality reading materials that encourage learners, educators, and families to become lifelong learners and readers.

## 5. Intellectual freedom is every learner's right.

Learners have the freedom to speak and hear what others have to say, rather than allowing others to control their access to ideas and information; the school librarian's responsibility is to develop these dispositions in learners, educators, and all other members of the learning community.

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

Although information technology is woven into almost every aspect of learning and life, not every learner and educator has equitable access to up-to-date, appropriate technology and connectivity. An effective school library bridges digital and socioeconomic divides to affect information technology access and skill.



# AASL Standards Fram

## SHARED FOUNDATIONS AND KEY COMMITMENTS

DOMAINS AND COMPETENCIES	I. INQUIRE	II. INCLUDE	III. COLLABORATE
<b>A. THINK</b>	<p><b>Learners display curiosity and initiative by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formulating questions about a personal interest or a curricular topic.</li> <li>2. Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners contribute a balanced perspective when participating in a learning community by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Articulating an awareness of the contributions of a range of learners.</li> <li>2. Adopting a discerning stance toward points of view and opinions expressed in information resources and learning products.</li> <li>3. Describing their understanding of cultural relevancy and placement within the global learning community.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners identify collaborative opportunities by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrating their desire to broaden and deepen understandings.</li> <li>2. Developing new understandings through engagement in a learning group.</li> <li>3. Deciding to solve problems informed by group interaction.</li> </ol>
<b>B. CREATE</b>	<p><b>Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using evidence to investigate questions.</li> <li>2. Devising and implementing a plan to fill knowledge gaps.</li> <li>3. Generating products that illustrate learning.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners adjust their awareness of the global learning community by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interacting with learners who reflect a range of perspectives.</li> <li>2. Evaluating a variety of perspectives during learning activities.</li> <li>3. Representing diverse perspectives during learning activities.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners participate in personal, social, and intellectual networks by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using a variety of communication tools and resources.</li> <li>2. Establishing connections with other learners to build on their own prior knowledge and create new knowledge</li> </ol>
<b>C. SHARE</b>	<p><b>Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interacting with content presented by others.</li> <li>2. Providing constructive feedback.</li> <li>3. Acting on feedback to improve.</li> <li>4. Sharing products with an authentic audience.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners exhibit empathy with and tolerance for diverse ideas by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engaging in informed conversation and active debate.</li> <li>2. Contributing to discussions in which multiple viewpoints on a topic are expressed.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners work productively with others to solve problems by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Soliciting and responding to feedback from others.</li> <li>2. Involving diverse perspectives in their own inquiry processes.</li> </ol>
<b>D. GROW</b>	<p><b>Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continually seeking knowledge.</li> <li>2. Engaging in sustained inquiry.</li> <li>3. Enacting new understanding through real-world connections.</li> <li>4. Using reflection to guide informed decisions.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners demonstrate empathy and equity in knowledge building within the global learning community by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seeking interactions with a range of learners.</li> <li>2. Demonstrating interest in other perspectives during learning activities.</li> <li>3. Reflecting on their own place within the global learning community.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners actively participate with others in learning situations by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Actively contributing to group discussions.</li> <li>2. Recognizing learning as a social responsibility.</li> </ol>

# ework for Learners

<h2>IV. CURATE</h2> <p>Make meaning for oneself and others by collecting, organizing, and sharing resources of personal relevance.</p>	<h2>V. EXPLORE</h2> <p>Discover and innovate in a growth mindset developed through experience and reflection.</p>	<h2>VI. ENGAGE</h2> <p>Demonstrate safe, legal, and ethical creating and sharing of knowledge products independently while engaging in a community of practice and an interconnected world.</p>
<p><b>Learners act on an information need by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determining the need to gather information.</li> <li>2. Identifying possible sources of information.</li> <li>3. Making critical choices about information sources to use.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners develop and satisfy personal curiosity by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reading widely and deeply in multiple formats and write and create for a variety of purposes.</li> <li>2. Reflecting and questioning assumptions and possible misconceptions.</li> <li>3. Engaging in inquiry-based processes for personal growth.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners follow ethical and legal guidelines for gathering and using information by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responsibly applying information, technology, and media to learning.</li> <li>2. Understanding the ethical use of information, technology, and media.</li> <li>3. Evaluating information for accuracy, validity, social and cultural context, and appropriateness for need.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Learners gather information appropriate to the task by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seeking a variety of sources.</li> <li>2. Collecting information representing diverse perspectives.</li> <li>3. Systematically questioning and assessing the validity and accuracy of information.</li> <li>4. Organizing information by priority, topic, or other systematic scheme.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners construct new knowledge by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Problem solving through cycles of design, implementation, and reflection.</li> <li>2. Persisting through self-directed pursuits by tinkering and making.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners use valid information and reasoned conclusions to make ethical decisions in the creation of knowledge by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ethically using and reproducing others' work.</li> <li>2. Acknowledging authorship and demonstrating respect for the intellectual property of others.</li> <li>3. Including elements in personal-knowledge products that allow others to credit content appropriately.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Learners exchange information resources within and beyond their learning community by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accessing and evaluating collaboratively constructed information sites.</li> <li>2. Contributing to collaboratively constructed information sites by ethically using and reproducing others' work.</li> <li>3. Joining with others to compare and contrast information derived from collaboratively constructed information sites.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners engage with the learning community by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expressing curiosity about a topic of personal interest or curricular relevance.</li> <li>2. Co-constructing innovative means of investigation.</li> <li>3. Collaboratively identifying innovative solutions to a challenge or problem.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners responsibly, ethically, and legally share new information with a global community by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sharing information resources in accordance with modification, reuse, and remix policies.</li> <li>2. Disseminating new knowledge through means appropriate for the intended audience.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Learners select and organize information for a variety of audiences by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Performing ongoing analysis of and reflection on the quality, usefulness, and accuracy of curated resources.</li> <li>2. Integrating and depicting in a conceptual knowledge network their understanding gained from resources.</li> <li>3. Openly communicating curation processes for others to use, interpret, and validate.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners develop through experience and reflection by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Iteratively responding to challenges.</li> <li>2. Recognizing capabilities and skills that can be developed, improved, and expanded.</li> <li>3. Open-mindedly accepting feedback for positive and constructive growth.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Learners engage with information to extend personal learning by:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Personalizing their use of information and information technologies.</li> <li>2. Reflecting on the process of ethical generation of knowledge.</li> <li>3. Inspiring others to engage in safe, responsible, ethical, and legal information behaviors.</li> </ol>



# How Are the Standards Used?

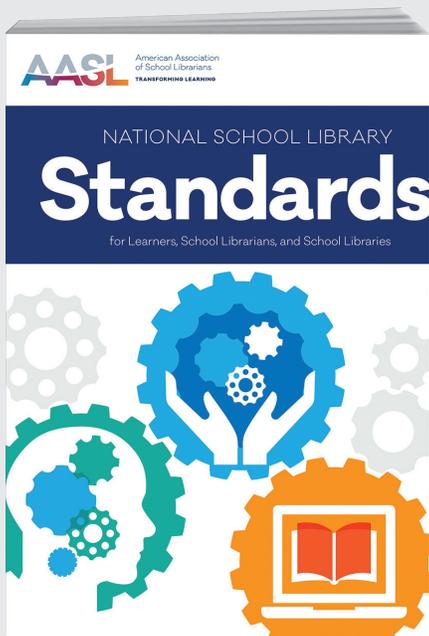
**LIKE OTHER SETS** of learning, professional, and program standards, the AASL Standards are not a curriculum; rather, they provide you with guidance and structure as you develop a curriculum tailored to your local priorities and needs.

The contents of the standards are designed to be used in two ways:

**1. As Personalized Guides.** Learners and school librarians can enter the standards at the point most appropriate to the learning task or professional activity and use the standards to guide decisions about actions to develop specific competencies.

**2. As Progressions.** Learners and school librarians first engage with the Domains at the level of Think, and once mastery of the Competencies related to Think are achieved, progress through Create, Share, and Grow.

Teaching and learning are at the center of school librarians' practice. As learning leaders, school librarians enact, model, and communicate the Competencies in the Domains. This domain-based approach to organizing the standards ensures that school librarians are able to personalize their professional practice and growth, continuously tailoring their school library to local needs, their own strengths, and learners' benefits.



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## The Complete Standards

**AASL'S NATIONAL SCHOOL Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries** offers the *AASL Standards Integrated Framework* in full and expands on the application and assessment of the standards. Sections of the book include:

- **the six integrated frameworks** (Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, and Engage) anchored with details that explain the Competencies and best practices, which include practices school librarians can use to get started with effective implementation of the standards;
- **detailed approaches to measuring success.** The goal of competency-based education is to support learners' growth through personalized learning experiences. Examples are provided for creating your own assessment and evaluation tools that align school and district models with AASL Standards; and
- **a series of case studies** that illustrate authentic scenarios through which district-level supervisors and building-level school librarians can envision putting the AASL Standards into action.

For more information about the *National School Library Standards*, and to access the latest implementation assistance resources, visit [standards.aasl.org](https://standards.aasl.org).

# How Does It Work?

THE AASL STANDARDS framework is anchored by six **Shared Foundations**—Inquire, Include, Collaborate, Curate, Explore, and Engage—which highlight the standards' core educational concepts. A one-sentence **Key Commitment** describes the essential understandings for each of the six Shared Foundations.

Each Shared Foundation is elaborated by three to five **Competencies** for each learning category or **Domain**: Think (cognitive), Create (psychomotor), Share (affective), and Grow (developmental). The Competencies are measurable statements describing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for learners and school librarians.

For school libraries the Competencies are expressed as **Alignments**.

Figure 1 illustrates the arrangement of these components in the *AASL Standards Integrated Framework* featured in the *National School Library Standards*. Shared Foundations, Key Commitments, and Domains appear across all three standards sets for learners, school librarians, and school libraries. The parallel structure helps articulate how student learning relates to school librarian practice and to the overall school library environment. Each Shared Foundation is most effectively executed when viewed across all three standards sets.

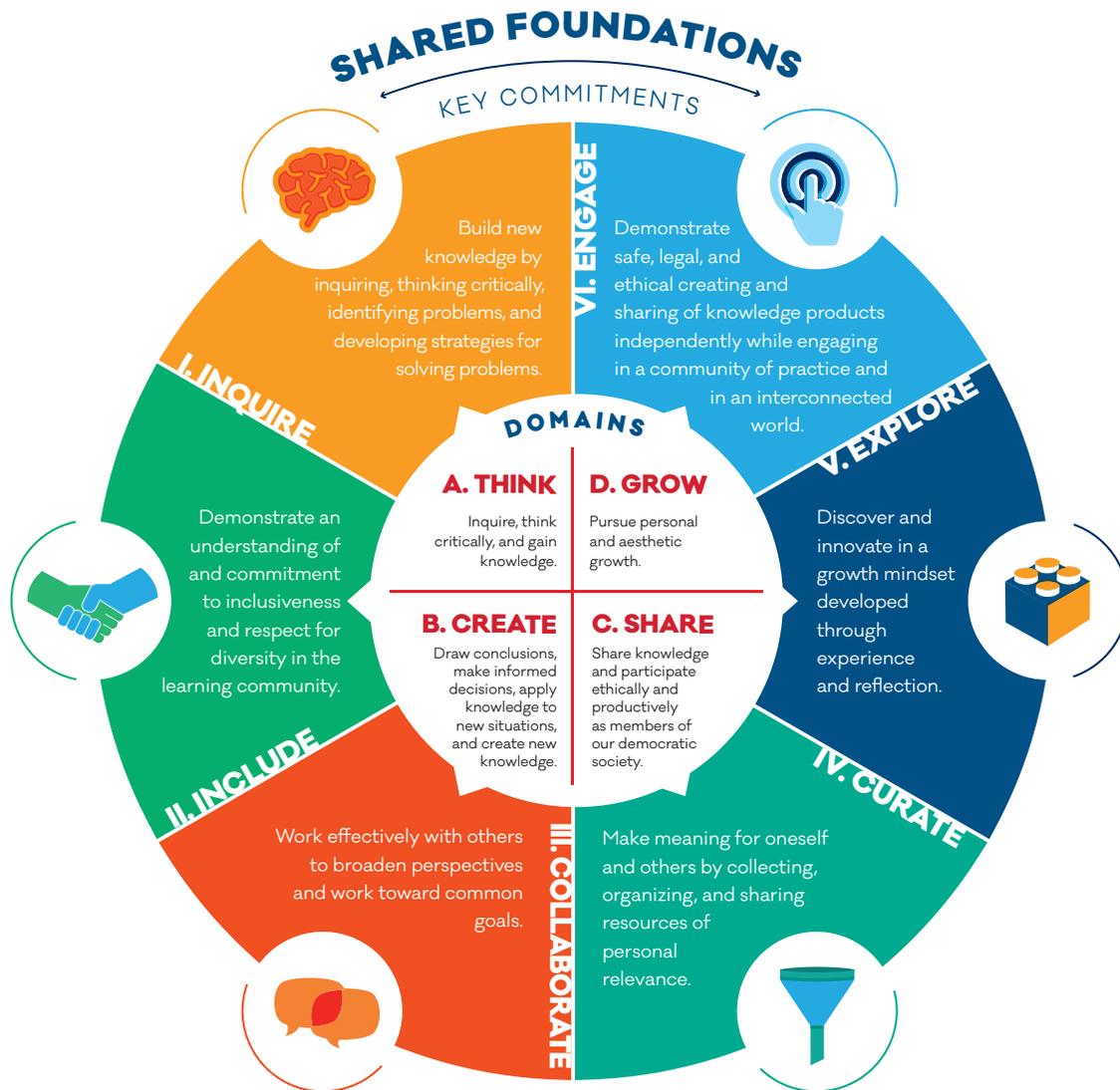
FIG. 1 A structural overview of the components in the *AASL Standards Integrated Framework* featured in the *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. The learner standards are just one of three integrated standards sets. In the integrated framework, the learner Competencies are joined with Competencies for school librarians and with school library Alignments.

Shared Foundation		Key Commitment			
<b>SHARED FOUNDATION I.</b> <b>Inquire</b>		<b>KEY COMMITMENT</b> Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.			
Domain	LEARNER DOMAINS AND COMPETENCIES	SCHOOL LIBRARIAN DOMAINS AND COMPETENCIES	SCHOOL LIBRARY DOMAINS AND ALIGNMENTS	The school library facilitates the Key Commitment to and Competencies of INQUIRE	Domain
<b>A. Think</b>	<b>Learners display curiosity and initiative by:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulating questions about a personal interest or a curricular topic.</li> <li>Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.</li> </ol>	<b>School librarians teach learners to display curiosity and initiative when seeking information by:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging learners to formulate questions about a personal interest or a curricular topic.</li> <li>Activating learners' prior and background knowledge as context for constructing new meaning.</li> </ol>	<b>The school library enables curiosity and initiative by:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embedding the inquiry process within grade bands and within disciplines.</li> <li>Using a systematic instructional-development and information-search process in working with other educators to improve integration of the process into curriculum.</li> </ol>		<b>A. Think</b>
<b>B. Create</b>	<b>Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using evidence to investigate questions.</li> <li>Devising and implementing a plan to fill knowledge gaps.</li> <li>Generating products that illustrate learning.</li> </ol>	<b>School librarians promote new knowledge generation by:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting learners probe possible answers to questions.</li> <li>Devising and implementing a plan to fill knowledge gaps.</li> <li>Facilitating the development of products that illustrate learning.</li> </ol>	<b>The school library enables generation of new knowledge by:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing experiences with and access to resources, information, ideas, and technology for all learners in the school community.</li> <li>Supporting flexible scheduling to provide learner and educator access to staff and resources at the point of need.</li> </ol>		<b>B. Create</b>
<b>C. Share</b>	<b>Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interacting with content presented by others.</li> <li>Providing constructive feedback.</li> <li>Acting on feedback to improve.</li> <li>Sharing products with an authentic audience.</li> </ol>	<b>School librarians guide learners to maintain focus throughout the inquiry-based research process:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting in assessing the inquiry-based research process.</li> <li>Providing opportunities for learners to bring products and reflect on processes with others.</li> </ol>	<b>The school library provides learners opportunities to maintain focus throughout the inquiry process by:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating and maintaining a teaching and learning environment that is inviting, safe, adaptable, and conducive to learning.</li> <li>Ensuring equitable physical and intellectual access by providing barrier-free, universally designed environments.</li> <li>Engaging with measurable learner outcomes and with data sources to improve resources, instruction, and services.</li> </ol>		<b>C. Share</b>
<b>D. Grow</b>	<b>Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continually seeking knowledge.</li> <li>Engaging in sustained inquiry.</li> <li>Enacting new understanding through real-world connections.</li> <li>Using reflection to guide informed decisions.</li> </ol>	<b>School librarians ensure an inquiry-based process for learners by:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leading learners and staff through the research process.</li> <li>Constructing tasks focused on learners' individual areas of interest.</li> <li>Enabling learners to seek knowledge, create new knowledge, and make real-world connections for lifelong learning.</li> </ol>	<b>The school library ensures an inquiry-based process for learners by:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continually supporting a learning environment that builds critical-thinking and inquiry dispositions for all learners.</li> <li>Reinforcing the role of the school library, information, and technology resources in maximizing learning and institutional effectiveness.</li> </ol>		<b>D. Grow</b>

When referring to a specific **Competency** or **Alignment** within the standards, you can use the numeric and letter indicators. For example, the following Competency for Learners could be stated as learner standard I.B.3.

because it references the first Shared Foundation (Inquire), the second Domain (Create), and the third Competency.

**I.B.3.** Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes: Generating products that illustrate learning.



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