



# CCSS Collaboration

## How Librarians Can Collaborate with Teachers on Common Core

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Librarians play a crucial part in planning and implementing effective literacy instruction that serves the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for both ELA (English Language Arts) and social studies. The CCSS are a set of high-quality academic standards in mathematics and ELA, developed by a collaborative group of teachers, school chiefs, administrators, and other education experts.

School librarians may contribute as literacy experts for teachers as they plan and deliver social studies instruction aligned to the CCSS. Librarians offer a wealth of knowledge about resources valuable to social studies teachers. The strategies librarians provide can support classroom teachers as they guide students in analyzing and synthesizing their thinking about a social studies text. Librarians' role in relation to the CCSS is to support teaching and learning in information literacy, as well as selecting and finding resources for learning.

Consider the following CCSS for ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects:

**6.RI.1** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**7.RI.1** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**8.RI.1** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

It's clear that citing evidence from the text to support the reader's thinking is an important skill that readers need to successfully comprehend informational text. Therefore, one instructional method librarians can share with classroom teachers is the **think aloud method**, a practice that involves modeling how skilled readers construct meaning from a text.<sup>1</sup>

More specifically, a librarian could suggest a teacher use *Henry's Freedom Box*, Ellen Levine's captivating picturebook



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about a slave who mailed himself to freedom, to read aloud and think aloud to model for students what it looks and sounds like to keep track of one's thinking while reading and use evidence from the text to support that thinking. Librarians can encourage teachers to use the think aloud method to demonstrate various strategies that engaged readers use.

In addition to thinking aloud and demonstrating what it looks and sounds like to use evidence from the text to support thinking, a librarian could also suggest that classroom teachers use *Henry's Freedom Box* to help students identify important aspects of the pivotal time period. This could also take place using a think aloud during which time the teacher could share his/her thinking about the sorrow and sadness the main character feels after being separated from his family.

Librarians can support teachers in utilizing **shared reading** as an avenue to support readers as they navigate text.<sup>2</sup> Shared reading involves providing all students with a copy of the informational text (individual copies or displaying the text on a large screen) so they can access it as it is read aloud by the teacher and students. Frequent pauses are included in the reading for the teacher to share his/her thinking in addition to asking questions to prompt deep thinking from the students.

Here are a few additional resources librarians can use when supporting teachers specific to informational reading instructional strategies:

- “Supporting Student Comprehension in Content Area Reading” ([www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/supporting-student-comprehension-content-30517.html](http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/supporting-student-comprehension-content-30517.html))
- *Texts and Lessons for Content Area Reading* by Harvey Daniels and Nancy Steineke (Heinemann, 2011)
- *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading? Content Comprehension, Grades 6-12* by Cris Tovani (Stenhouse, 2004)
- *Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis (Stenhouse, 2007).
- *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Content Area Strategies at Work* by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey (Pearson, 2015)

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) standards call on librarians to teach students to “find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources to answer questions.”<sup>3</sup> These standards are in place to guide students as they search for the most relevant source of information. This information may be in the form of databases, websites, books, or other multimedia.

“With the CCSS, explicit literacy instruction is now shared responsibility of all teachers, librarians, reading specialists, and technology integration specialists throughout the school.”<sup>4</sup>

In describing what successful collaboration looks like between a teacher and librarians, imagine this scene: A social studies teacher posts a map of current world conflicts on the classroom wall. As students enter the class, they begin asking questions about the highlighted regions.

Student curiosity inspires the teacher to work with the librarian to develop a unit for this topic. This teacher prefers project and problem based learning and decides to assign students to research one of the current world conflicts. Collaboration with the librarian is essential in the preparation, organization, and implementation of this unit plan.

As media literacy experts and guides for students as they research online, the librarian spends time demonstrating and illustrating website reliability as well as what it looks and sounds like to evaluate website courses using Kathy Schrock's guide to all things tech savvy found at [www.schrockguide.net/critical-evaluation.html](http://www.schrockguide.net/critical-evaluation.html).<sup>5</sup>

During the planning phase, the teacher and librarian work together to create an online database of reputable websites for students to access. The teacher and librarian also select novels and create a reserve section in the library specific to the topic of world conflict.

As students enter the school library, attention is drawn to scrolling news (MSNBC) on the projector screen. Several tables are set up with displays for student exploration. Displays feature maps and a wide variety of informational texts. In the back of the library, a group of computers with headphones await students to view videos and news broadcasts. As students browse the displays, watch news broadcasts, and use computers, questions, comments, and concerns of our global world fill the air. “How many conflicts are there in the world today?” “What countries are involved?” “What are the disputes about?”

Using these student-generated questions, the teacher and librarian continue to co-plan daily lessons as well as co-teach the entire unit. The culminating project includes creation of a website that houses student-produced news broadcasts about several world conflicts.

This collaboration is aligned with steps suggested to librarians by AASL, including the approach they are to take in implementing the CCSS—to understand it, create a plan, and act on it. This interdisciplinary project described spans the social studies content standards for grades 6–8.

Here are a few tips to make the collaboration between classroom teachers and librarians successful:

1. Build trust and rapport. Share a little bit about yourself as a person and professional so you can begin to establish a working relationship.
2. Identify teaching beliefs and philosophies. This will be

essential as you begin to plan and implement instruction as a team.

3. Clarify the role each of you will take in planning and delivering instruction. Make sure to plan time to share with students that each of you are teachers. Students will thrive when they know the roles librarians and teachers are filling in helping them learn.
4. Map out the logistics (e.g., materials, schedule for time devoted to the instruction, class location—library, classroom, or both, etc.).
5. Set aside time after each lesson to reflect. Address what went well and what factors caused the lesson to go well. Also, look back at what didn't work well and identify the causal factors. Use the answers to these reflective questions to enhance future lessons. ↻

## References

1. P. J. Dunston and K. N. Headley, "Think-Alouds," in *Literacy in America: An Encyclopedia of History, Theory, and Practice*, edited by B. Guzzetti, 655–56 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2002).
2. Don Holdaway, *The Foundations of Literacy* (Sydney: Ashton Scholastic, 1979).
3. American Association of School Librarians, *Implementing the Common Core State Standards: The Role of the School Librarian* (Chicago: American Association of School Librarians, 2013), 4.
4. Ibid.
5. Kathy Schrock, "Teaching Media Literacy in the Age of the Internet: The ABCs of Website Evaluation," *Classroom Connect* (December 1998/January 1999), [www.schrockguide.net/critical-evaluation.html](http://www.schrockguide.net/critical-evaluation.html).

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