

Order in the Core: Using Common Core as Library Curriculum

Ben Pastcan

Description: The evidence of the Common Core is right before us. Librarians, like Robin Gluck and Ben Pastcan, are implementing the Common Core in conjunction with state school library standards. How? With the assistance of the book *Inquiry and the Common Core: Librarians and Teachers Designing Teaching for Learning* edited by Violet H. Harada and Sharon Coatney. There are three techniques to exercise the state library standards and the Common Core that Ben uses in lessons: Inquiry, Reading, and Complexity of Text. The topics will be shown through three examples from the lessons Ben teaches: different writing styles (4th grade), monitoring of the Internet (5th grade), and the impacts of social networking online (6th grade). Robin will be presenting examples of successful collaborations with middle school faculty that are aligned with common core standards for research.

Ben Pastcan is a librarian at Shalom School in Sacramento, CA. His library received Basic Level Accreditation from AJL in 2009 and at this conference, his school library will be receiving Advanced Level Accreditation. He has contributed book reviews to *AJL Reviews*. His current interests are in implementing more critical thinking when students read in and outside of the library.

Order in the Core. My fellow library workers, the evidence of the Common Core is right before us. Librarians, like Robin Gluck and me, are implementing the Common Core in conjunction with the state school library standards. How am I doing this at the school library I work at? **With the assistance of the book Inquiry and the Common Core:**

Librarians and Teachers Designing for Teaching and Learning edited by Violet H. Harada and Sharon Coatney there are three techniques to exercise the state school library standards and the Common Core that I use in lessons: Inquiry, Reading, and Complexity of Text. The topics will be related to three examples that are current debates in libraries: different writing styles (fourth grade), monitoring of the Internet (fifth grade), and the impacts of social networking (sixth grade).

So how do Jewish day school librarians like most of you in the audience bring these issues affecting your libraries together? **The lessons I did were to go over writing styles with students, I gave them challenging reading comprehension passages to discuss, and the top secret of all that I will reveal to you today was that we invited a FBI special agent who works with internet safety every day to speak to students.**

In fourth grade, the students learned about narrative, persuasive, and informational writing styles (show diagram) (ELA 4) and (California State School Library Standards 3.3 b.). They also explored how to inquire with their writing and ask open ended questions. Many students at first were tempted to ask the FBI special agent questions that only had one word answers or yes or no answers. For example, one student wanted to know what type of gun the FBI special agent uses. While a fact finding question like this could be important and was asked to the FBI special agent in the discussion he lead, the answer to this type of question is too easy to find.

Instead, what the Common Core and the State School Library Standards are trying to do now are to challenge students to ask questions that have no easy answers. Contrary to the prior closed ended question I mentioned earlier about what type of gun the FBI special agent uses, one student from the fourth grade class asked the FBI Special Agent how does he go about catching criminals? This is exactly the type of question the teachers and librarians who are implementing the Common Core and state school library standards are aiming for. **While collecting facts are important, students are now learning to ask inquiry based questions that require more investigation. As Harada and Coatney mentioned in their book, “As we develop habits of inquiry in school, we serve our students best by approximating the experience of inquiry as it will be realized in their own lives. To the extent that we can create an authentic experience of wondering, learning, and concluding or seeking further, we prepare students to be lifelong learners. Inquiry is a habit to be practiced throughout a life lived in a rapidly changing world (pages 4 and 5).”** Fortunately, the FBI Special Agent gave a complete response to this difficult open ended question detailing the steps of how he has to go undercover, provide a warrant for a judge, and carry out the arrest.

In fifth grade, students debated the topic of monitoring the internet. A controversial figure like Edward Snowden was read about and debated. *Junior Scholastic Magazine* published an informative article on March 17, 2014 called, “*Hero or Traitor?*” A sign that this article (show article) had some meaning to a student was discovered at the end of the school year. This student said, “I am glad our school has a library. I love the chances to read books! I also enjoyed learning about current events. I brought the papers home and shared them with my family. They also liked reading them.” **Fifth graders like this student were learning how to summarize points from articles and discover if each claim was or was not supported by evidence (ELA 3 and California State School Library Standard 2.2 a).**

The Common Core and the State Library Standards are putting an emphasis on reading comprehension. Why? The American College Testing Corporation *Condition of College & Career Readiness 2013* report found that only 44% of high school graduates were able to reach the national reading benchmark (<http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/cccr13/pdf/CCCR13-NationalReadinessRpt.pdf>) (Show the PDF). Nobody in this room should be satisfied with this result. Reading critically with comprehension and using inquiry with the Common Core will help raise this score.

Another example of inquiry and an open ended question to the FBI Special Agent that happened to be related to the Edward Snowden article was this one, “How does a person go about preventing an internet attack?” The FBI Special Agent recommended not giving specific locations (like where you go on vacations or what restaurants you visit), names of people, passwords, dates, and personal information on the internet or on social network sites.

A telling example was when the FBI Special Agent asked the students who among them use social network web sites? **PAUSE** After this, the FBI Special Agent

went on to ask how many friends or followers each of them had on their sites. **PAUSE** One sixth grader said she had over one hundred followers on Instagram. Then the FBI Special Agent asked her how many she really knows well. And this sixth grader replied about 2/3 or so. **BRIEF PAUSE** Here is a description of what Instagram does: “Instagram is a fast, beautiful and fun way to share your life with friends and family. Take a picture or video, choose a filter to transform its look and feel, then post to Instagram — it's that easy. And it is that easy to find somebody through Instagram as we learned from the FBI Special Agent. Even revealing locations such as a state and being near a beach, could give a follower clues of where you are at.

Sixth graders studied the more complex texts related to social networking and the internet from a database called *Opposing Viewpoints in Context* which can be accessed through my local public library. This helpful database explores very controversial issues like social networking, internet privacy, and cyber attacks. From this abridged article (show article and their comments), they learned new ideas about solicitation and not sharing anything online that one would want not made public. They also learned about viruses, bugs, and other malicious ways computers can be hacked (ELA 9 b and California State Library Standard 2.1 b).

By having the FBI special agent visit our school, this helped students think critically, analyze evidence or arguments, learn more about internet safety, and ask open ended questions which they came up with prior to the discussion. The Common Core and the state library standards are based on these ideas of research, critical thinking, and inquiry.

Yes, implementing the Common Core in a Jewish day school may seem like a challenge with the state school library standards. **Yet as of this moment, 42 out of 50 states are implementing the Common Core across the country.** And the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have supported the Common Core and the development of the standards by giving \$200 million to work on its implementation (show the article from <http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2014/06/09/320041096/tough-week-for-the-common-core>).

I am not asking you to give \$200 million to the cause of the Common Core. **PAUSE** But consider using it at your Jewish day school. **PAUSE** Coatney and Harada sum it up the best in their book, “**The implementation of the CCSS provides school librarians with an opportunity to bring together our various areas of expertise—collaborative teaching, inquiry, reading comprehension strategies, and technology tools integration—to ensure that our colleagues and students engage with a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of today and, with a bit of luck, tomorrow (page 64-65).**”

As I said at the beginning of my presentation, the evidence of the Common Core is right before us. You can abstain from using it in your school if you think it is too complicated. **But if you are willing to go through the trials of the Common Core and explore how the standards can be used, the verdict can work in your favor and with your state school library standards.** It has worked at the Jewish day school I work at

and with what I have mentioned it can work at yours. My presentation has now been adjourned.

We will now hear from Robin Gluck, outgoing Oakland Hebrew Day School Librarian and incoming Jewish Community High School of the Bay Librarian, on how she implements the Common Core and state library standards with technology and the higher grades.

MARCH 17, 2014

Hero or Traitor?

Edward Snowden leaked top-secret government information

BY KATHY WILMORE | FOR JUNIOR SCHOLASTIC

Edward Snowden had access to some of the federal government's top-secret documents, many of which were related to the fight against terrorism. Last spring, he leaked thousands of them to the media.

Snowden worked for a company that deals with highly **classified** (secret) information for the National Security Agency (NSA). The documents that he gave reporters revealed that the NSA collects massive amounts of data about the e-mails, phone calls, and Internet use of Americans as well as people in other countries. Here are five things to know about the man some people consider a hero, others a traitor.

1: Who is Snowden? Snowden, 30, grew up in North Carolina and Maryland. He dropped out of school in the 10th grade. Good with computers, he took a number of tech courses over the years but never got a degree. Eventually Snowden's computer skills got him jobs with companies that work with the NSA, a high-tech division of the U.S. Department of Defense.

2: What did he do? In the spring of 2013, Snowden leaked details of PRISM, an electronic surveillance program he'd been working on. PRISM grew out of U.S. concerns about terrorism after the 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., that killed nearly 3,000 people. Snowden told reporters that he had come forward because he believed that PRISM and similar programs go too far, violating the privacy rights of people who aren't suspected of wrongdoing. "Much of what I saw [on the job] . . . really disillusioned me about how my government functions and what its impact is in the world," he said. On June 6, 2013, *The Washington Post* and a British newspaper, *The Guardian*, ran their first stories about what Snowden had told them. "NSA PRISM PROGRAM TAPS IN TO USER DATA OF APPLE, GOOGLE AND OTHERS," declared a *Guardian* headline.

3: How did people react? Some Americans were disturbed by the idea of the U.S. government compiling information from their e-mails, Facebook pages, and Google searches. They demanded investigations into the way the NSA does its work. Other people were upset that Snowden had leaked classified information that could aid America's enemies.

Among the outraged spy targets were Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil. Even though their countries are U.S. allies, the NSA had been tapping their private phones. The U.S. government later apologized to both leaders.

In a speech to the nation in January, President Barack Obama called for reforms in how and when the government will collect personal data. But, he said, information

necessary to protect the U.S. from terrorists and other dangers must be and will continue to be gathered.

4: Why do some people see him as a hero, others a traitor? People who are protective of Americans' civil liberties or wary of government power tend to see Snowden as a hero. "He uncovered questionable activities that those in power would rather have kept secret. That's the valuable role that whistle-blowers play in a free society," writes John Cassidy in *The New Yorker* magazine. But some people disagree. "Snowden's actions are likely to have lethal consequences for our troops in the field," says Representative Mike Rogers, a Republican from Michigan who is chairman of the House Intelligence Committee. Senator Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat from California, calls what Snowden did "an act of **treason**." Treason is the crime of betraying one's country.

5: Where is he now, and what's next? By revealing national-security secrets, Snowden broke the law. His name didn't appear in the first articles, but within days he identified himself as the source of the leaks. By then he had traveled to China, a country that doesn't **extradite** (hand over a person wanted by the legal authorities of another nation or state) American fugitives. In late June, he flew to Russia, which also refused to extradite him. He has been there ever since. If he were to return to the U.S. or travel to a country that has an extradition treaty with the U.S., Snowden could be arrested and charged with violating the Espionage Act. That 1917 law makes it a crime for anyone to disclose information that could interfere with U.S. military operations or that promotes the success of the nation's enemies. The penalty for violating the Espionage Act can be severe: up to 30 years in prison—or even death.

Snowden's supporters are lobbying for a deal that would allow him to return home with a promise of reduced punishment if he cooperates with authorities.

This article originally appeared in the March 17, 2014 issue of *Junior Scholastic*. To find out more about *Junior Scholastic*'s great resources, [click here](#).

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The word Internet is short for “interconnected network of computers.” A computer network is two or more computers that are able to communicate and share data with each other, as well as share printers and other devices. The Internet is a network of computer networks worldwide, enabling billions of computer users to send and receive digital information to and from each other. The development of the Internet is an information revolution that has radically changed how modern society operates.

Computers can be cyberattacked in several different ways. Malicious software programs known as viruses, including Trojan horses, worms, etc., can spread across the Internet from computer to computer (typically via e-mail), often causing significant damage to infected machines. Some programs enable people to control a computer from another location. Unwanted junk e-mail comes in the form of spam (unsolicited e-mails) and spim (unsolicited instant messages), and when the user clicks on it, it gains control of the user’s computer or puts a virus on it.

Privacy is another concern with Internet use. Programs called spyware can secretly download to a person’s computer; such programs record every Web search and keystroke the computer user makes. In some cases, unwary Internet users can be fooled into disclosing their credit card numbers or other private information—information that then can be used by criminals. Experts recommend the use of protective software programs, such as antivirus programs, filters, and firewalls to protect computers and private information—and warn users to be very careful about disclosing private information in e-mails and on Web sites.

Privacy concerns have also increased because of the popularity of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Users on these sites typically post personal information and photos of themselves that could be potentially harmful if they fall into the wrong hands. A good rule of thumb for users to remember is that anyone could potentially see anything posted online, so don’t post any information that you would not want to be made public.

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Tough Week For The Common Core

by ANYA KAMENETZ

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The Core gets a few bites taken out of it.

Henrik Brameus/Flickr

A few months ago, when I told friends and media colleagues that I was interested in the Common Core State Standards, the most common response was "What's that?"

Now, it seems, everyone has an opinion about the Core.

And right now, opinions about the K-12 learning goals for math and English that have spread nearly nationwide are trending toward the heated.

While the school year is winding down, education policy sure isn't. This past week brought a bunch of front-page news on the Common Core.

On May 30, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley signed a law requiring the state to stop using the Common Core after the upcoming school year. And last week, Oklahoma dropped the standards effective immediately, bringing the total number of states embracing Common Core State Standards down to 42, from a high of 45 (Indiana is the third state to have pulled back). Those states that adopted, and then dropped, the Core now face spending tens of millions of dollars to create new standards, adopt new materials to go with them and retrain teachers. Speaking of millions of dollars, the money behind the Common Core was the topic of a [long story in *The Washington Post* yesterday](#) that focused on Microsoft founder Bill Gates' role in the creation of the standards and in encouraging their implementation.

The story detailed how the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has spent some \$200 million on the development of the standards, political lobbying, and grants to organizations that now support the Core. (The Gates Foundation is also a longtime supporter of NPR, including its coverage of education.)

Education standards are not a new idea. They've been advocated in the United States at least since the 1950s. But our unique system of highly localized control of public schools with limited federal involvement in education has prevented them from getting much traction on a sustained, national level. Until now. As the piece, by Lyndsey Layton, details, Gates' money helped

unite disparate interests behind a single policy in an incredibly short amount of time.

"The Gates Foundation spread money across the political spectrum, to entities including the big teachers unions, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, and business organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce — groups that have clashed in the past but became vocal backers of the standards.

"Money flowed to policy groups on the right and left, funding research by scholars of varying political persuasions who promoted the idea of common standards. Liberals at the Center for American Progress and conservatives affiliated with the American Legislative Exchange Council who routinely disagree on nearly every issue accepted Gates money and found common ground on the Common Core."

What has seemed most troubling for critics of the Core, and of the influence of large philanthropies in U.S. policy generally, is the close association between the Gates Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education under the Obama administration. The Common Core are not, strictly speaking, national standards. They were developed independently of the federal government, and states are not under a mandate to adopt them. But the standards received a big boost in the form of funding incentives from the Obama administration.

Behind the alignment of interests, the *Post* article noted several close ties: Margot Rogers, who was Education Secretary Arne Duncan's chief of staff, and James Shelton, now a deputy secretary, both came directly from the foundation. The administration [waived ethics rules](#) to allow the two of them to consult closely with former colleagues. And Chicago received \$20 million in Gates funding to reorganize schools while Duncan was that district's CEO before leaving for his Cabinet position. We reached out to the foundation yesterday for comment on the article and on the developments in Oklahoma and South Carolina, but didn't hear back.

Some of the frustrations with the adoption of the Common Core reflect broader concerns with education policymaking in general. In an ideal world, policies would be made like this: Practitioners in the field would develop solutions to problems. Disinterested experts would study and test them. Philanthropists would support that research and development phase without picking winners. And then politicians, through the democratic process, would make the case to the public to support the spread and implementation of the best identified solutions, while giving practitioners the leeway they need to continue to refine and propose new ones.

Many in the ed-policy world agree: The Common Core State Standards skipped a few key steps here.

Critics have long noted that the influence of classroom teachers in writing the standards was limited. They weren't pilot-tested,

although, in fairness, it's pretty hard to pilot universal standards — either they're universal or they're not.

They were adopted with little public debate. And their implementation, as we've reported, has been plagued with criticisms: notably that they are top-down, rushed and underfunded so far.

And yet in some states, the Common Core built on earlier foundations of setting high standards for students. Many teachers and communities have embraced them.

The bigger-picture problem may be one that Gates himself outlined to the *Post*.

"The guys who search for oil, they spend a lot of money researching new tools," Gates said. "Medicine — they spend a lot of money finding new tools. Software is a very R and D-oriented industry. The funding, in general, of what works in education ... is tiny. It's the lowest in this field than any field of human endeavor. Yet you could argue it should be the highest."

And so, the billionaire said, when he was approached with what sounded like a very good idea, he threw his support behind it. But when it comes to conceiving and implementing new education policies, Bill Gates himself says, he is crying out for some competition.

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2014/06/09/320041096/tough-week-for-the-common-core>).

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COMMON CORE TOOL KIT

SCHOLASTIC News

Types of Writing

Authors share their ideas in different ways. Here are the three you'll see most often.

Informational Writing explains something or informs readers by providing facts about a certain topic. It is also called explanatory writing.

Opinion Writing tells what an author thinks about a topic. The author backs up his or her point of view with reasons.

Narrative Writing includes story elements such as characters, dialogue, and plot. It can be fiction or nonfiction. This type of writing is often meant to entertain the reader.

MISSION TO MARS

The U.S. is making plans to send astronauts where no human has gone before—Mars! But getting astronauts to the Red Planet isn't going to be easy. First, scientists have to build a spaceship that humans could board in for more than six months. That's because Mars is more than 35 million miles away from Earth. The Red Planet is also freezing. Temperatures there can drop to 200 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. Scientists need to design special spacesuits to keep astronauts safe.

NASA, the U.S. space agency, hopes to land humans on Mars by 2033. "Our entire exploration program is aimed to support this goal," says Charles Bolden of NASA.

Find two facts about Mars in the text article above.

WHY THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT EXPLORE SPACE

I don't think we should explore space. Even though space exploration helps people learn new things, it costs a lot of money. Since the 1960s, the United States has spent billions of dollars studying space. I believe we should spend that money on fixing problems on Earth instead. We should make sure that everyone has food to eat, clothes to wear, and a place to live. If our planet explodes, then planets and stars seem to me that the U.S. should focus on that are so far away.

Opinion writing often contains words such as think, just, believe, and seem. Can you spot any of those words in the paragraph above?

It was Sunday night. Beth was up later than she should have been. At 10 p.m., she finally glued the last piece of foil onto her spaceship. "Perfect!" Beth exclaimed. She was sure it would win first prize at the Science Fair Monday morning.

Suddenly, Beth heard a loud explosion. She looked out her window. A bright ball of flames zoomed across the sky.

"What was that?" Beth thought. Seconds later, a green alien hopped into her room. "That was my spaceship," muttered the alien. "I knew it would never survive the trip from Mars. Can I borrow yours?"

Who are the characters in the story above?



