

Public, Private and Blended/Virtual Schools

A Comparison



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Bates Elementary . Dexter Schools . Dexter, MI.

My Background

- ❖ I have experience Birth-Adult.
- ❖ I have worked in public, private and virtual/blended schools as a media specialist and mentor. I've also worked in public libraries.

Why These Schools?

- ❖ I've worked at all three of these example schools.
- ❖ Different demographics.
- ❖ Differing approaches.
- ❖ Different Worlds.

Greenhills School-Private

- ❖ Grades 6-12
- ❖ Director of Information Technology.
- ❖ Located in Ann Arbor, MI.
- ❖ College preparatory private school with substantial tuition cost (Governor Snyder's kids attend Greenhills) .

Greenhills on Information Literacy

- ❖ From their website:
- ❖ Information literacy stimulates curiosity and empowers students to locate, evaluate and use information in a variety of formats.
- ❖ The librarian collaborates with classroom teachers to create opportunities for students to become confident users and creators of information who can...

Greenhills Info. Lit. Continued

- Understand how library and information resources are organized.
- Use strategic search techniques to find information in print, digital, and media sources.
- Evaluate relevance, appropriateness, reliability, and scope of different kinds of information and information resources.

Furthermore

- Use information ethically, including proper documentation of sources.
- Know how and when to scan or to read in depth.
- Form a focused topic question, take notes, create outlines, write thesis statements, pursue and argument, and make conclusions.

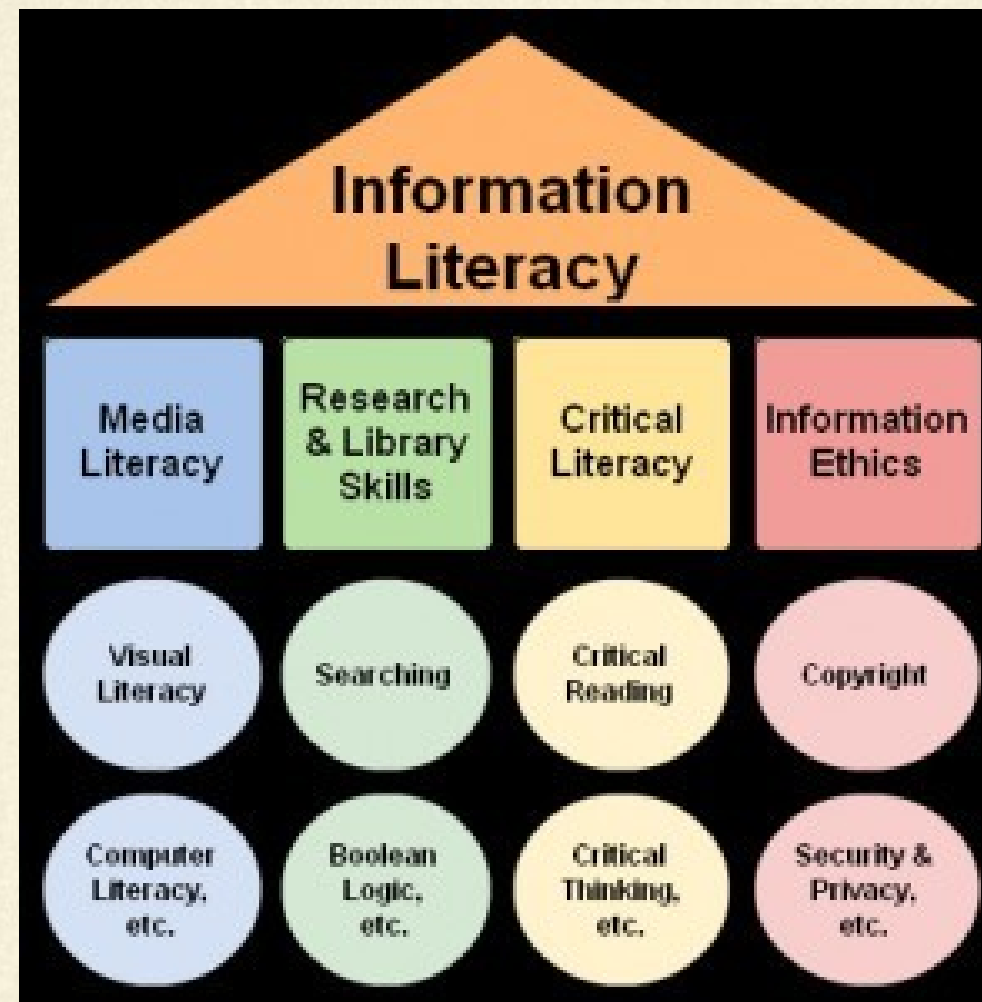
...And Finally

- Synthesize information to create something personal and authentic to oneself.
- Know how to use digital and print tools to pursue and present research.
- Understand principles of information presentation.

Public School - Dexter High School

- ❖ Grades 9-12.
- ❖ Located in Dexter, MI. (Next to Ann Arbor).
- ❖ Not incredibly diverse.
- ❖ Weathered financial woes better than some other districts.
- ❖ Still one full-time media specialist in every building.
- ❖ Input from the High School Media Specialist-Dr. Livingstone.

Dr. Livingstone -DHS on Info. Lit.



- ❖ “ Information literacy is an umbrella term that covers media literacy, research & library skills, critical literacy, and information ethics. This graphic is a start...but it’s not quite the perfect definition”
- ❖ “To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.” (1989)-ALA/ACRL

What's Being Taught?

- ❖ The skills taught under the guise of “Information Literacy” are important, and it is critical they be taught in a way that they’ll stick with the learner; the skills lessons must be purposeful. I often imagine students who step into the library for “instruction” to be asking “What’s in it for me? Why should I do this?”
- ❖ In order to address the “What’s in it for me?” query, I team teach with the classroom teacher. We design the instruction together: the classroom teacher is the subject matter expert, I am the information skills expert. Drawing on the subjects provided by the teacher – frequently in the form of a list of research topics – I prepare a Research Guide to guide students through the research process.
- ❖ The high school English department collaborated with me to create a five-step research process that forms the structure for each research guide. “What’s in it for me?” is quickly answered for students as, armed with questions and tools, they begin guided, purposeful research.

Why Should I Do This?

“Why should I do this?” is a much more challenging question to answer. The usual “because the teacher said so” or “because it’s a lifelong skill” seems weak. But when I watch a student move through the research paper assignment with ease, due to the skills they have learned through their library media center instruction, I am confident that, in time, they will realize an answer and understand the “why” piece.

The most frequent challenge that pops up when working with high school students relates to attitude. All too often the students think they know it all already or they believe Google can do it all for them. To move through and past this obstacle I maintain a “let’s see what we can learn together” attitude. From the outset I share my beliefs:

- I don’t know everything.
- I’m pretty sure they don’t know everything.
- We all have something to learn from each other.
- Technologies present new things to learn every day.

Cognitive Psychology - Memory

- ❖ Why should I do this?
- ❖ Personal relevance.
- ❖ Prior Knowledge.
- ❖ Both - One- None.

Blended/Virtual School

W-A-Y Washtenaw

- ❖ Widening Advancement for Youth.
- ❖ Modeled after the NOT school program in the U.K.
- ❖ Grades 9-12
- ❖ Online/Computer Lab
- ❖ Still in it's infancy (year 3 in Washtenaw County).
- ❖ I was involved year 1 - pilot program.
- ❖ W-A-Y Washtenaw Program Director Monique Uzelac started as a School Media Specialist.

Support from Governor Snyder

- ❖ The theme of his 2011 special message on education was to provide learning “any time, any place, any way and any pace.”
- ❖ In May, 2012 he signed a law - more opportunities for Michigan students to attend “cyber” charter schools.

What is a Blended/Virtual School?

- ❖ This one is mostly about giving kids a second chance - exists for students where traditional school does not work (diploma recovery).
- ❖ Mostly project-based online, students are supposed to visit the computer labs twice a week.
- ❖ Given computers (all) and free Internet (if they qualify).

W-A-Y on Info Lit - Researcher Development Class

- ❖ Still in “beta/case study” mode.
- ❖ Not sure if it will be an elective or requirement
-standards vs. classes, constructivist, project-based.
- ❖ 7 weeks (enough time to form a habit).
- ❖ How to communicate online.
- ❖ How to research online: paraphrasing, plagiarism,
summarizing and synthesizing information will be the
Big Skills at the end of the course.

More Skills From This Course

- ❖ How do you figure out what you are doing in a project?
- ❖ What are the steps?
- ❖ Finding a good source.
- ❖ How to find good information relevant to the topic you are working on, for example, math vs. social studies.



Some Overall Challenges

- ❖ No required curriculum for most media specialists - inconsistency, no accountability... (W-A-Y no media specialists, only “expert” teachers).
- ❖ WIDE budget span.
- ❖ Differing amounts of time spent with students/devoted to instruction.
- ❖ Society - doctors quoting Wikipedia.
- ❖ Many public schools ONE media specialist K-12 or paraprofessionals (Plymouth-Canton primary vs. secondary, Dexter two years ago).
- ❖ Cranbrook vs. Greenhills or Montessori.

Time Constraints

- ❖ What's realistic in public schools? The time teachers give you/deem valuable.
- ❖ Time is a huge issue for teachers
Marzano - regarding Common Core - if you gave 30 minutes to every standard, you would have to add something like 3 more years onto the K-12 curriculum. What is important and what is not. Common Core Video "Teach less. Learn more."
- ❖ Project specific database instruction - access to databases? Usability of databases.
- ❖ Citing sources - some classroom teachers do not know how to do this.

How Do You Get Students to Actually Use This stuff?!

- ❖ We just want to Google! (Greenhills -race!)
- ❖ Make it relevant - Dr. Livingstone's "What's in it for me, why should I do this?".
- ❖ One example I've used - advanced Search on MLive jobs.
- ❖ Contrast good information and misinformation (Facebook embarrassment).

One Resource I've Used

- ❖ Library Skills for Children DVDs
- ❖ Set of 3 by Joyce Valenza.
- ❖ Grades 2-6

Making it Easier: Citing Sources

- ❖ Sometimes built into databases.
- ❖ Bibme: <http://www.bibme.org/>
- ❖ Knightcite:
<http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/>
- ❖ Son of a Citation Machine:
<http://citationmachine.net/index2.php>

U-M SI Class

- ❖ Entire 3-credit course: Information Literacy for Teaching and Learning
- ❖ Class composition-Media Specialists, LIS, MAC

SI-Class Discussion

- ❖ Different districts have adopted different research methodologies, these may have limitations. For example, inquiry is NOT part of the Big 6.
- ❖ The AASL standards are great (my question- how many administrators even know these exist?):

1). Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge (gaining, not finding - keeping)...this document is very Kuhlthau: <http://comminfo.rutgers.edu/~kuhlthau/>
The purpose of librarianship is to facilitate knowledge creation.

2). Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge (very higher order thinking).-high in Bloom's taxonomy.

-Really raising the bar.

3). Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society. Ethical use of information (copyright, creative commons, fair use etc).

4). Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.

Questions?