

**A** Library Learning Commons collection is about more than just books and traditional literacy. In fact, today, to attain standards of equity and access, it is essential to include different and evolving ways of collaborating, building knowledge, and learning how to think critically about the world.

Equity and access are the cornerstones of remarkable collections in the Library Learning Commons. Therefore, we can build better collections by recognizing that student input, makerspaces, technology, and the creative energy of the entire school community also influence how we learn in this modern world. Incorporating new technologies and ideas like coding, robotics, textiles, and bringing in experts can help students express and harness their own learning and knowledge building. In fact, if we neglect these key aspects of a collection, it will have a detrimental effect on equity and how students will take ownership of their own learning later in life. More options in the Library Learning Commons, means more users, greater collaboration, and the ability for students to learn new relevant skills that they will need in the present and future world of work.

However, there are problems that we can encounter when we try to create a holistic collection and shift the learning culture. For instance, depending upon where your library is located, there can be a lot of pressure to conform to mainstream culture, and maintain the “status quo.” Along with this, includes expectations that students will conform to mainstream values that can omit important experiences, knowledge and opinions. Therefore, to overcome this type of problem, teacher-librarians can address some of the expectations of their own school cultures, and find ways to infuse new makerspace technologies, other experts, and community members that can contribute to the existing knowledge base.

There are certainly challenges that arise when we try to create a holistic collection and shift the learning culture. There can be a lot of pressure to conform to mainstream culture or maintain the “status quo.” Change is a difficult monster for some and conforming to mainstream culture can foster the omission of important experiences, knowledge, and opinions. In particular, articulating our own privilege in the library is an important way to begin to understand how we as individuals contribute to inequitable learning environments.

By considering our own place of privilege and oppression, we can understand the ways that we unknowingly support inequities and stereotypes in our own libraries.

Education for Aboriginal students remains a salient example of one such inequity in education. The education system perpetuates bias and racism towards Aboriginal peoples in a variety of ways, but particularly in the ways that our curriculum is presented from a settler perspective. Therefore, the Library Learning Commons can play a central role in affecting change by doing more than just ensuring access to culturally relevant books, but also by working to make the tools, technologies, and people in the space reflect the knowledge and perspectives of those people that were first on the land we now call Canada.

There may be funding and motivation behind new initiatives like makerspaces, but it is our obligation to consider equitable access. We must advocate that these spaces are open enough to truly allow students to build knowledge in ways important to them and not simply perpetuating what is scripted by the “status quo.”

Equitable and reliable access to the Library Learning Commons is essential to helping us continue to focus on our students and their identities, experiences, privileges and more, for these variables always influence how one thinks and perceives. If we don't believe this, then we will always default to the status quo and teach to the “norm.” Accessible Library Learning Commons help us all to not lose sight of our fundamental roles in preparing children to become independently functioning adults, who are adept at working with and living with people different from ourselves, and who respect cultural differences and embrace multiple perspectives. ■

**We, here at *The Teaching Librarian*, would like to thank Deborah McCallum for beginning what, we hope, will be a dialogue with our readers. We would like to hear about your experiences – those of you who have challenged expectations (whatever the “status quo” means to you), those of you who have designed wonderful and accessible maker or creative spaces that respond to the needs of your community, and those who have been influenced by Aboriginal teachings and endeavoured to redefine your Library Learning Commons. Please write and continue this conversation with us.**