

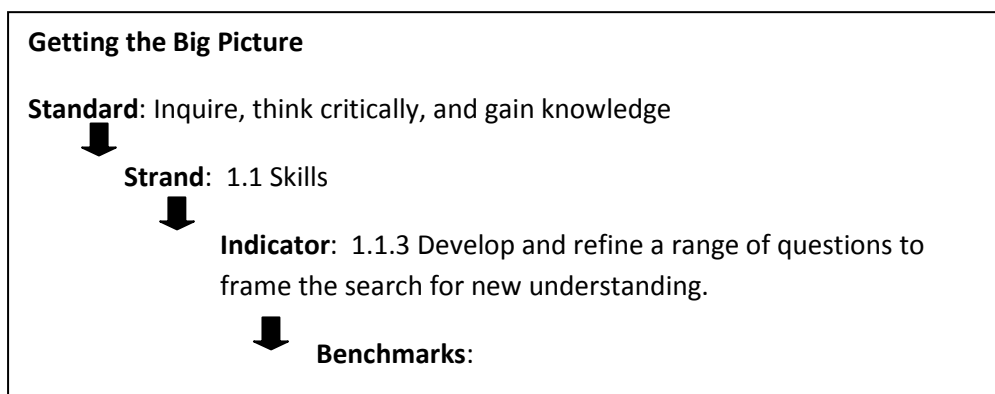
AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner in Action - AASL Conference 2009

Trepidation... I'm sure you have experienced this feeling as you head into an all day workshop or professional development day. We all crave new tools, new understandings, and new ideas for working with students and teachers, and have high hopes that training will provide new light. Full day sessions at a national conference should be the cream of the crop! Fortunately, the pre-session "AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner in Action," did relieve that trepidation and introduced the new publication of the same name which provides the all important benchmarks to accompany *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*.

The new *AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner* brings a new face to how we design lessons, collaborate with teachers, and guide students through inquiry and the research process. For many, getting started with this new approach is difficult. Workshop trainers Barbara Stripling and Pam Berger provided attendees a broad understanding of the standards, hands-on activities, and tools for planning and collaborating with teachers. Have your copy of the standards handy as you read this article or view the standards online at <http://www.ala.org/aasl> and click on the Guidelines and Standards link.

The first step is to understand the structure of the standards, and the new benchmarks. The *Common Beliefs*, found at the beginning of the standards document, outline the philosophical foundation for the standards, and can provide food for thought for librarians and talking points to help others understand our role in education. The four standards presented in the document, define what we expect students to be able to do as learners. Each standard is broken into four *strands*: skills, dispositions in action, responsibilities and self-assessment strategies. The definition of each strand is provided on the back side of the standards document along with key questions for each to help frame the intent.

Next are the *Indicators*. Indicators are sub-categories that describe what abilities students should demonstrate within each of the four standards. See graphic for example as presented in the workshop.



Enter the Benchmarks. A sample of the new grade level benchmark publication *AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner in Action* can be downloaded from the AASL website noted above, or follow the link there to purchase a complete copy of the publication. Grade level benchmarks are provided for grades 2, 5, 8, 10 and 12 for each *Indicator*. Continuing the example above sample benchmarks are:

<p>Getting the Big Picture</p> <p>Benchmarks:</p> <p>Grade 2: Ask “I wonder” questions about the topic, question, or problem.</p> <p>Grade 8: Refine questions depending on the type of information needed (for example, overview, big idea, specific detail, cause and effect, comparison).</p>
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The Learners in Action publication also provides sections on Sample Behaviors, Stages of Development and Action Examples for each standard. This publication is the guide or tool for librarians to make use of the new standards, and a must-have for any librarian developing lessons, units, or curriculum.

Of course, the best part of any workshop is the hands-on activities. As with our students, this is where we can cement our understandings and see how to move forward. One activity helped to understand the “strands” by using a picture book titled, *Wanda’s Roses* by Pat Brisson. For this activity we used a worksheet with a chart where all of the strand indicators are listed in one column and “students” respond in the other column about how Wanda demonstrated the indicators. I can see using this activity with students and even teachers to help them understand what these indicators look like in practice. See the box below for an example, and the AkASL wiki (<http://akasl2.pbworks.com>) for the complete worksheet. I noticed that once I saw all of each strand’s indicators listed in a group it all became clearer.

Dispositions in Action	Wanda’s Actions
Initiative Confidence and Self-Direction Creativity	Wanda noticed a bush that was dying and took care of it. Wanda got the tools she needed. Wanda tries different things to help the bush.
Responsibilities	Wanda’s Actions
Respect Intellectual Property Seek and consider divergent perspectives follow ethical and legal guidelines	
Self-Assessment Strategies	Wanda’s Actions
Monitor own information-seeking process Use interaction and feedback to guide inquiry Monitor gathered information	

Seek appropriate help	
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Other activities involved ways to build inquiry, develop questions and bring action to learning including a lesson using primary sources about the Civil War from the New York Historical Society (<https://www.nyhistory.org/web/grantandlee/>), based on the template below (also found on the AkASL wiki). We discussed development of the lesson plan, and used prints of photographs to engage learning and develop inquiry.

	Learning/Teaching Activities CT = Classroom Teacher L = Librarian	Resources	Disposition Responsibility Self-Assessment Strategy
Motivation			
Mini-Lesson			
Guided Practice			
Independent Practice			
Sharing and Reflection			

Have you conducted successful lessons using the new standards? Do you have insights, questions or resources to share? Visit the AkASL wiki to see these activities, to share your experiences and seek ideas from others. To access the AkASL wiki go to <http://akasl2.pbworks.com> to view. You can edit or add your own information by logging in with your PBworks account.