Connecting Students to the World: Connected Learning Approach

Fadekemi Oyewusi Ph.D. and Monica Colón-Aguirre Ph.D.
Department of Interdisciplinary Professions (Library Science)
East Carolina University
What is Connected Learning Approach?

• Learning beyond the traditional classroom.
• Connected learning combines personal interests, supportive relationships, and opportunities.
• It is learning in an age of abundant access to information and social connection that embraces the diverse backgrounds and interests of all young people.
Connected Learning Principles

- Peer Supported
- Interest Driven
- Academically Enriched

- Openly Networked
- Shared Purpose
- Production Centered
There is a interconnectedness of the different parts of a youth’s life through which they are learning.

Peer and community support for interest- and passion-driven learning

Translating and linking that learning to academic success and eventually to career success.
Elements of Connected Learning

So learning is irresistible and life-changing when it connects personal interests to meaningful relationships and real-world opportunity.
Personal interests

Supportive relationships

Opportunities

Connected Learning Approach
Libraries are a nexus for informal learning, offering interest-driven programming with the support of a librarian.

Agreed?
What should librarians do to support Connected Learners?
Whose interests are prioritized?

Who is offered the chance to build relationships?

To whom are opportunities given, and to whom are they denied?
YOUmedia, a youth digital makerspace in Chicago’s main downtown public library, embodies the values and elements of connected learning. YOUmedia centers on digital media production such as music, art, poetry and journalism. Young people can “hang out socially, mess around with new projects and geek out” in areas of specialization when they want to take the leap. Librarians and mentors organize showcases, support the production of various projects and broker connections to other opportunities in their interest area.

YOUmedia Chicago: an example
Summary

• Learning is motivating when it grows out of personal interest.

• For example, when reading about games they enjoy playing, teenage boys read at a much higher level than their reading level in school.

Interests
Summary

• Learners need support from peers and mentors to persist through setbacks and challenges.

• Peer learning situations allow for anyone to be an expert and take the role of the teacher.

• They also allow individuals to move between the role of teacher and learner fluidly.
Summary

• Success beyond the classroom requires tangible connections to real-world career and civic opportunities.
Thank you