# Catalyst Fund Proposal

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| **Proposal Title:** | From Information Literate to Information Fluent |
| **ID:** | 51 |
| **Institution:** | Washburn University of Topeka Libraries |
| **Requestor:** | Alan Bearman, Dean |
| **Budget:** | $26,548 |
| **Goal (as pulled from the application):** | "The Washburn University Libraries seek to create open source information literacy modules for use by area middle and high school students…. Access to free online information literacy modules and an accompanying curriculum would create equity in education and improve critical thinking skills for students at 20 schools in the Northeast Kansas target area. This project provides a model replicable on a national scale and open access resources created for the project will be adaptable to any classroom curriculum." |
| **Description:** | 1) The Washburn University Libraries seek to create open source information literacy modules for use by area middle and high school students. Creating pathways for learning information literacy skills at the middle and high school levels better prepares students for postsecondary educational success and for life in the Knowledge Economy. Many target area schools employ librarians who lack the time to teach, are in rural communities or are without the services of a professional librarian altogether. Access to free online information literacy modules and an accompanying curriculum would create equity in education and improve critical thinking skills for students at 20 schools in the Northeast Kansas target area. This project provides a model replicable on a national scale and open access resources created for the project will be adaptable to any classroom curriculum. Four principle project goals and outcomes are listed below: <br><br> Goal 1: Teach information literacy and critical thinking skills Outcome: Middle and high school students will be able to effectively evaluate information sources <br> Goal 2: Teach civic reasoning skills Outcome: Middle and high school students will be able to interpret, discuss and teach others about information <br> Goal 3: Create an information literacy education model that can be easily adapted and replicated Outcome: Advances information literacy and critical thinking nationally before students graduate from high school <br> Goal 4: Create and disseminate educational resources on information literacy Outcome: Supports a nation of learning by enabling students to become lifelong learners. <br><br> (2) A number of recent studies, including one published by the Stanford History Education Group (Executive Summary, 2016) have indicated that an alarming number of university students cannot determine the credibility of information online. Having access to more information than ever before but lacking the ability to identify and determine the credibility of sources puts students at a disadvantage for understanding the world and threatens the stability of American society. When disinformation spreads and remains unchecked, history makes clear that democracy is jeopardized. In an effort to counteract this effect, information literacy promotes critical thinking, civic engagement, digital inclusion, economic vitality and lifelong |

learning. Quality information literacy skills prepare students for life in the Knowledge Economy and for postsecondary success. Critical thinking that develops from information literacy goes beyond dissecting sources and results in students engaging their peers with information and reflecting collectively upon it in order to better understand the world.

In addition to the societal need for basic information literacy skills, this project addresses another serious issue: time constraints of information literacy professionals. One issue specific to USD 501: Topeka Public Schools, the school district in which Washburn University resides, is the distribution of middle and high school librarian's time. Due to a 1:1 laptop initiative (Deines, 2015) for all middle and high school students in USD 501, librarians are occupied with technology support during working hours. Funding shortages made school librarians the de facto technology support for laptop issues and with an average ratio of students to school librarian at 486:1 in the middle schools and an average of 1,344:1 in the high schools (Kansas Report Card), laptop troubleshooting takes up a majority of school librarians' time. This leaves no time for librarians to create information literacy lessons or educate students on how to become critical thinkers. This project advances research on information literacy by focusing on teaching basic skills such as the evaluation of resources and how to engage peers with that information. This project seeks to inform educators on the importance of engaging populations in information literacy learning through the development of open educational resources and curriculum. The results can be replicated in other information literacy courses and adapted to diverse learning environments to assist students in determining credibility of resources and engaging in meaningful discussion in the Knowledge Society. Beyond the results of the project, students will apply the skills they learn in class to a larger context by engaging not just their peers inside the classroom but their families and larger communities outside the classroom. The Open Access resources will be widely available and accessible.

3)
• April 2017 - Organize project personnel and create plan of operation Project Lead (Alan Bearman)
• May 2017 - Gather materials, draft open access resource, advertise resource, research for OAR All Project Personnel
•June- July 2017 - Build modules, develop lesson plans, finalize OAR, promote and advertise resource Open Access Librarian, Information Literacy Librarian, IT Staff
• August 2017-Train school personnel on how to use and implement OA resource, modules made available, track usage, report on use and progress Open Access Librarian, Information Literacy Librarian
• December 2017 - Review pilot implementation, evaluate student learning, conduct focus groups, create final report first semester of implementation All Project Personnel
• January - February 2018 - Assessment and outcomes report All Project Personnel
• March 2018 - Evaluate online module usage and learning, Complete final report and prepare to disseminate results of project Project Lead.

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| | 4) Once the project team compiles a final report on the first year of the project, results will be distributed for inclusion in appropriate forums such as listservs, e-newsletters and the LYRASIS website. In addition, the project team will present the results of the project to forums including but not limited to webinars and the annual LYRASIS Member Summit.<br><br>5) The Washburn University Libraries request $26,548 to build online Information Literacy modules with a project start date of April 15, 2017.<br>PERSONNEL:<br>Temporary Student Technology Support, 2 PTE, $8.00 per hour, 20 hours/week, 16 weeks) @ $5,120<br>Open Access Librarian to Construct Open Access Resource, 1 PTE, $15.00 per hour, 20 hours/week, 16 weeks @ $4,800<br>Information Literacy Librarian to consult on OAR and develop accompanying lesson plans, 1 PTE, $15.00 per hour, 20/hours/week, 8 weeks @ $2,400<br>TRAVEL:<br>Cost to travel to area schools and demo resource, IL and Open Access Librarians, 20 school visits, mileage (average of 20 miles x $.53.5 x mile) and $20 per diem @ $1,228<br>Cost of conference attendance, $2,000 x 2 project team members x 3 conferences @ $12,000<br>OTHER:<br>Supplies, Promotional materials @ $1,000. |
| **Comments from Field Reviewers:** | 1. I was impressed with the creative solution that was proposed to help school librarians. The outcome would be materials that could be useful to school libraries across the country.  The argument for the need was well made and I believe this meets a key library objective. |