

# MAKERSPACES AND LITERACY: A NATURAL COMBINATION

## WISCONSIN STATE READING ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

FEBRUARY 9, 2017

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**“Today’s students require tomorrow’s literacy skills.” – Elena Forzani**

**Big Question:** How might making lead to literacy?

**Exploration:** Find a partner. Go to <http://www.twinery.org> and make a story together.

- What did you notice? What didn’t you notice? (Activity adapted from [R. Halverson](#))

**Big Ideas:** 1. Pathways to literacy may not start with the written word.  
2. Making can offer an entry point to literacy for our most marginalized students.

### - Maker Movement

- Seymour Papert, MIT Professor: Father of the maker movement and coined the term *constructionism*, which builds upon Piaget’s constructivist learning theory.
- Maker Movement: “Growing number of people who are engaged in the creative production of artifacts in their daily lives and who find physical and digital forums to share their processes and products with others.” ([Halverson & Sheridan, 2014](#))

Making	Makerspaces	Maker
“a set of activities”	“communities of practice”	“identities of participation”

- Making: Using tools and materials with a product in mind, “a personally meaningful activity (that) makes learning real and shareable” ([Martinez & Stager, 2013](#))

### - Modern literacy

- Traditional literacy: Reading/writing in print, cognition + communication + emotion
- Critical literacy: Taking a critical stance toward text; using strategies to understand the message and/or author’s intent (Wikipedia)
  - Founded in **social justice** (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, [P. Freire, 1970, 2000](#)), “requires imagining others’ intentions, adopting multiple perspectives, and imagining social arrangements that don’t yet exist” ([Johnston, 2012](#)).
- New literacies: “Includes the traditional literacy that evolved with print culture as well as the newer forms of literacy within mass and digital media” ([Jenkins, 2006](#))
  - Examples: tinkering, web research, blogs, multimedia, animation, podcasts, social media, wikis, video games, online chat, coding

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*Wondering: Is critical literacy the proper frame in which to think about making and new literacies? Why or why not?*

## From Making to Literacy: Exploring the Possibilities

1. Select a station (see below) and start creating.
2. Consider the big question: "How might making lead to literacy?"

<p><b>Little Makers</b> (play-based learning)</p> <p><b>Tools:</b> Squinks; Magformers; Legos; Various building materials</p> <p><b>Research:</b> <a href="#">Murrow &amp; Rand, 1991</a></p>	<p><b>Digital Content Creation</b> (multimedia)</p> <p><b>Tools:</b> Green screen by <a href="#">Do Ink</a>; <a href="#">WeVideo</a>; <a href="#">Pixton</a></p> <p><b>Research:</b> <a href="#">Stewart, 2014</a></p>
<p><b>Genius Hour</b> (web research)</p> <p><b>Tools:</b> <a href="#">Epiphany Learning</a>; <a href="#">Padlet</a>; <a href="#">Sweet Search</a></p> <p><b>Research:</b> <a href="#">Krebs &amp; Zvi, 2015</a></p>	<p><b>Gaming</b> (video games, coding)</p> <p><b>Tools:</b> <a href="#">Minecraft</a>; <a href="#">code.org</a>; <a href="#">Scratch</a>; <a href="#">Aris</a></p> <p><b>Research:</b> <a href="#">Steinkuehler, 2011</a></p>
<p><b>Digital Storytelling</b> (animation, podcasts)</p> <p><b>Tools:</b> <a href="#">Toontastic</a>, <a href="#">Little Bird Tales</a>, <a href="#">Book Creator</a>, <a href="#">Twine</a></p> <p><b>Research:</b> <a href="#">Shelby-Caffey, Ubéda &amp; Jenkins, 2014</a></p>	<p><b>Engineering</b> (tinkering)</p> <p><b>Tools:</b> Little Bits; Goldie Blox; Lego Chain Reactions; <a href="#">Meeper Bots</a></p> <p><b>Research:</b> <a href="#">Shiverdecker &amp; Fries-Gaither, 2014-2015</a></p>

**“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.”**

**– Alvin Toffler**