

Inquiry: An educational, moral and spiritual imperative

MA School Libraries Course

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Information and Communication Sciences

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University of Zagreb | Faculty of humanities and social sciences

Department of information and communication sciences

Idea(s) about education

“Education is a practice, but before that it is an idea rooted in an uplifting belief...or at least that is the hope.”

Simone Weil

In *The Value of “Failed Experiments” in School Studies*, by Ronald K. L. Collins (2025)

- What is your idea about education?
- What uplifting belief is that idea rooted in?

A global vision for the school library

“The school library is **integral to the educational process.**”

IFLA School Library Guidelines (p. 38)

Quoting *IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto* (1999)



Written by the IFLA School Libraries Section Standing Committee
Edited by: Barbara Schultz-Jones and Dianne Oberg, with contributions from
the International Association of School Librarianship Executive Board

2nd revised edition

June 2015
Endorsed by the IFLA Professional Committee



A global definition of the school library

- “A school’s physical and digital learning space where ...
- ... reading, inquiry, research, thinking, imagination, and creativity are central to ...
- ... students’ **information-to-knowledge journey** and to their **personal, social, and cultural growth**”.

IFLA School Library Guidelines (p. 13)



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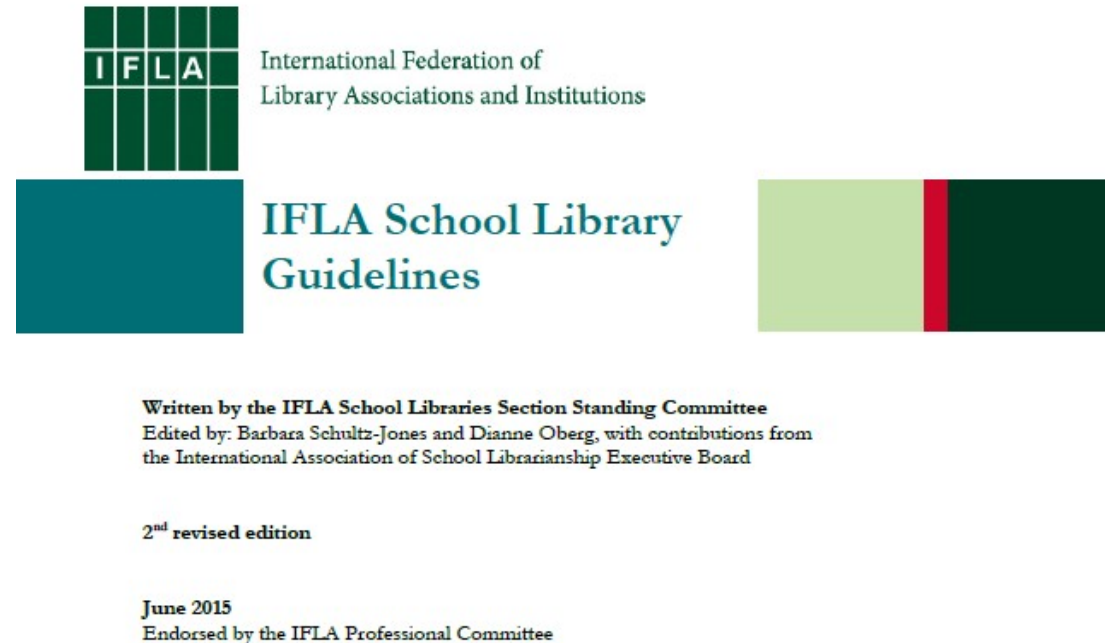
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A global purpose of the school library

The school library exists to serve its **educational purpose** - improving teaching and learning for all - and its **moral purpose** - making a difference in the lives of young people.

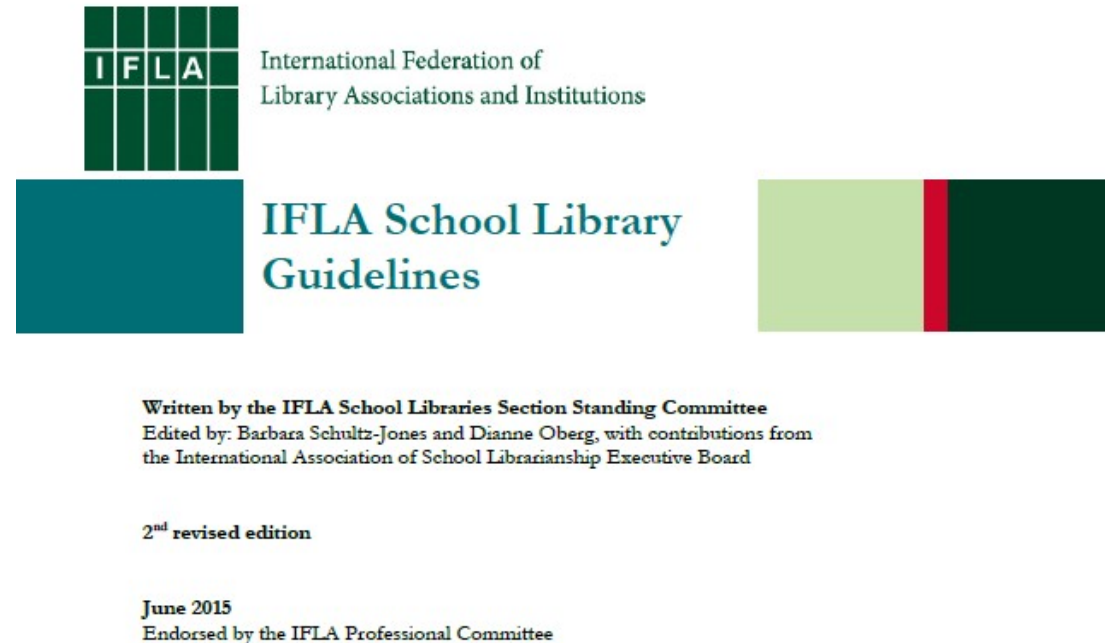
IFLA School Library Guidelines (p. 13)



Our educational and moral purpose

Our **educational purpose** may be broadly understood in terms of the student's **information-to-knowledge journey**.

Our **moral purpose** may be broadly understood in terms of the student's **personal, social, and cultural growth**.



An inquiry-centred instructional programme

Core instructional activities:

- Literacy & reading promotion
- Media & information literacy
 - Can be included in inquiry-based learning
- **Inquiry-based learning**
 - **Includes media & information literacy**
- Technology integration
- Professional development for teachers

IFLA School Library Guidelines (p. 8)



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Inquiry as coming to know and understand

“Inquiry is a stance of wonder and puzzlement that gives rise to a dynamic process of coming to know and understand the world and ourselves in it as the basis of responsible participation in community.”

Stripling and Toerien (2021)

Enlarged from GEN definition



The screenshot displays the Galileo Educational Network (galileo.org) website. The header includes the logo and the tagline "Inspiring A Passionate Commitment To Learning". A navigation bar lists categories: ABOUT, DESIGNING LEARNING, PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, IN THE CLASSROOM, RESEARCH, and BLOG. The main content area is titled "Designing Learning" and features a featured article "Teachers As Designers" with a summary of design thinking in education. Below this, an "Articles" section presents three articles, all titled "On the Nature of Inquiry:", each with a brief introduction and a "Read More" button. The first article is "On the Nature of Inquiry: Choosing a Topic", the second is "On the Nature of Inquiry: The Experienced Teacher", and the third is "On the Nature of Inquiry: The Individual Student". At the bottom, two additional links are visible: "What is Inquiry?" and "Why Inquiry?".

galileo.org
educational network

GALILEO EDUCATIONAL NETWORK
Inspiring A Passionate Commitment To Learning

ABOUT DESIGNING LEARNING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM RESEARCH BLOG

GALILEO EDUCATIONAL NETWORK > DESIGNING LEARNING

Designing Learning

CLICK HERE TO VISIT
Teachers As Designers

Today, people's interest in design and design thinking have intensified, including within the educational sector. The potential of design thinking in improving curriculum and pedagogy has been advanced by a growing number of scholars and educational leaders...

Articles

On the Nature of Inquiry: Choosing a Topic

The arrival of new information technologies in our lives and the lives of our students means much more than simply new ways to provide the...

[Read More](#)

On the Nature of Inquiry: The Experienced Teacher

Recently, Matt talked to me about how he was approaching the topic of "percentages" with a Grade Six class. He noted that, in this particular...

[Read More](#)

On the Nature of Inquiry: The Individual Student

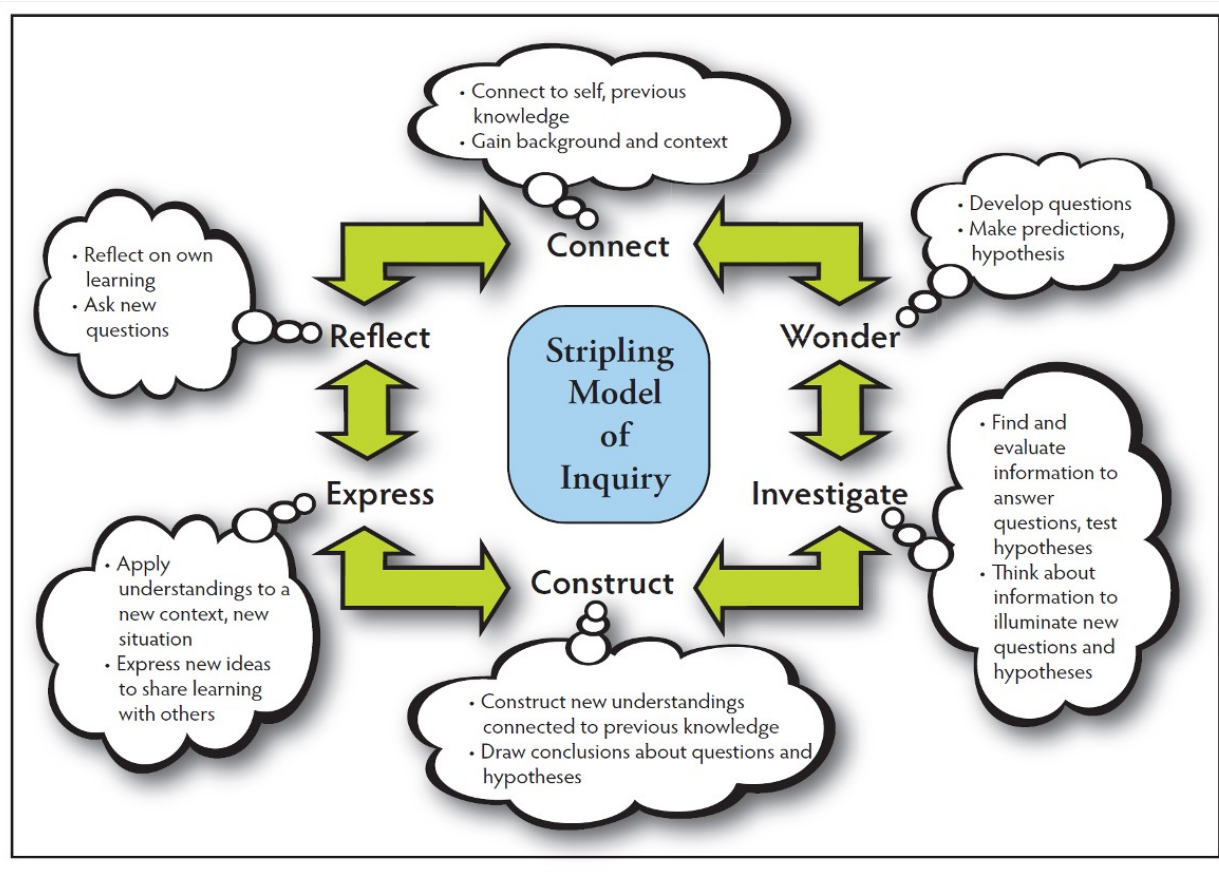
It is not at all a question of a mere subjective variety of conceptions, but of [this topic's] own possibilities of being that emerge as...

[Read More](#)

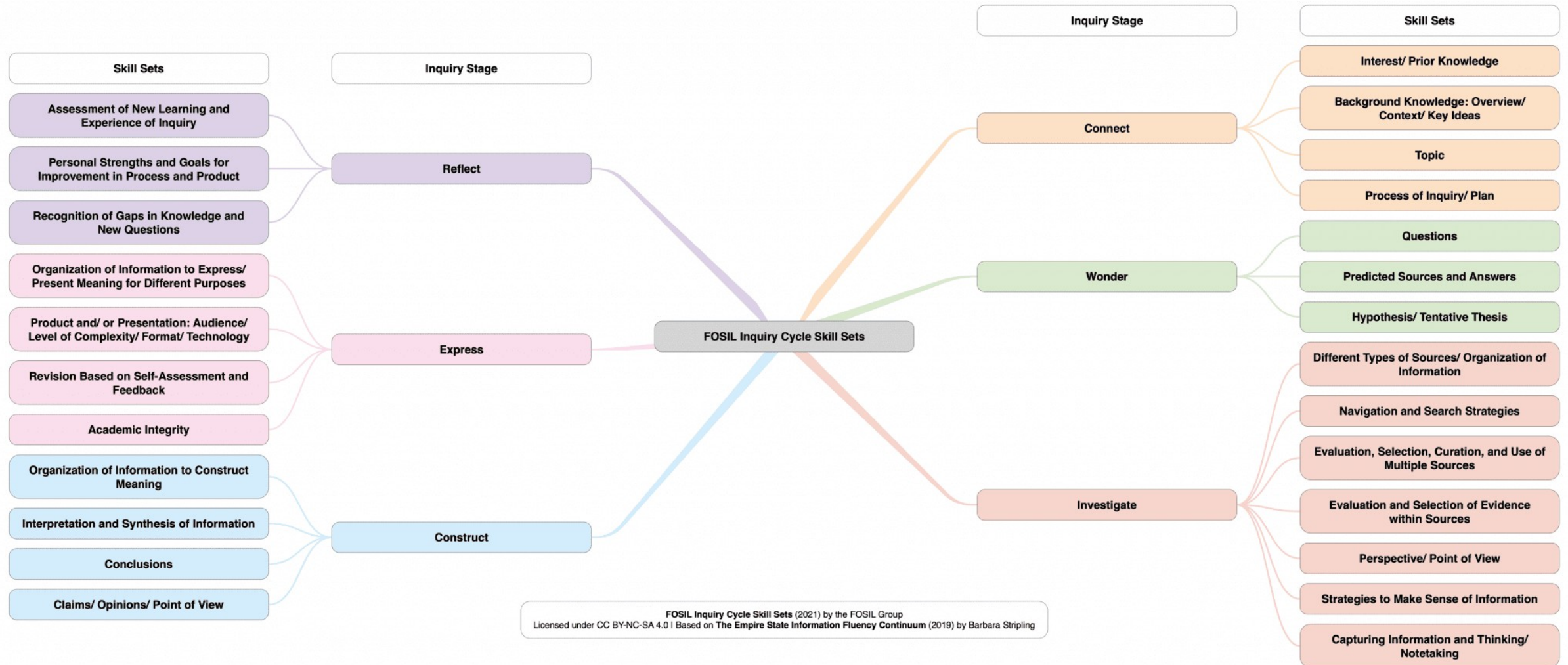
[What is Inquiry?](#)

[Why Inquiry](#)

Instructional models of the inquiry process

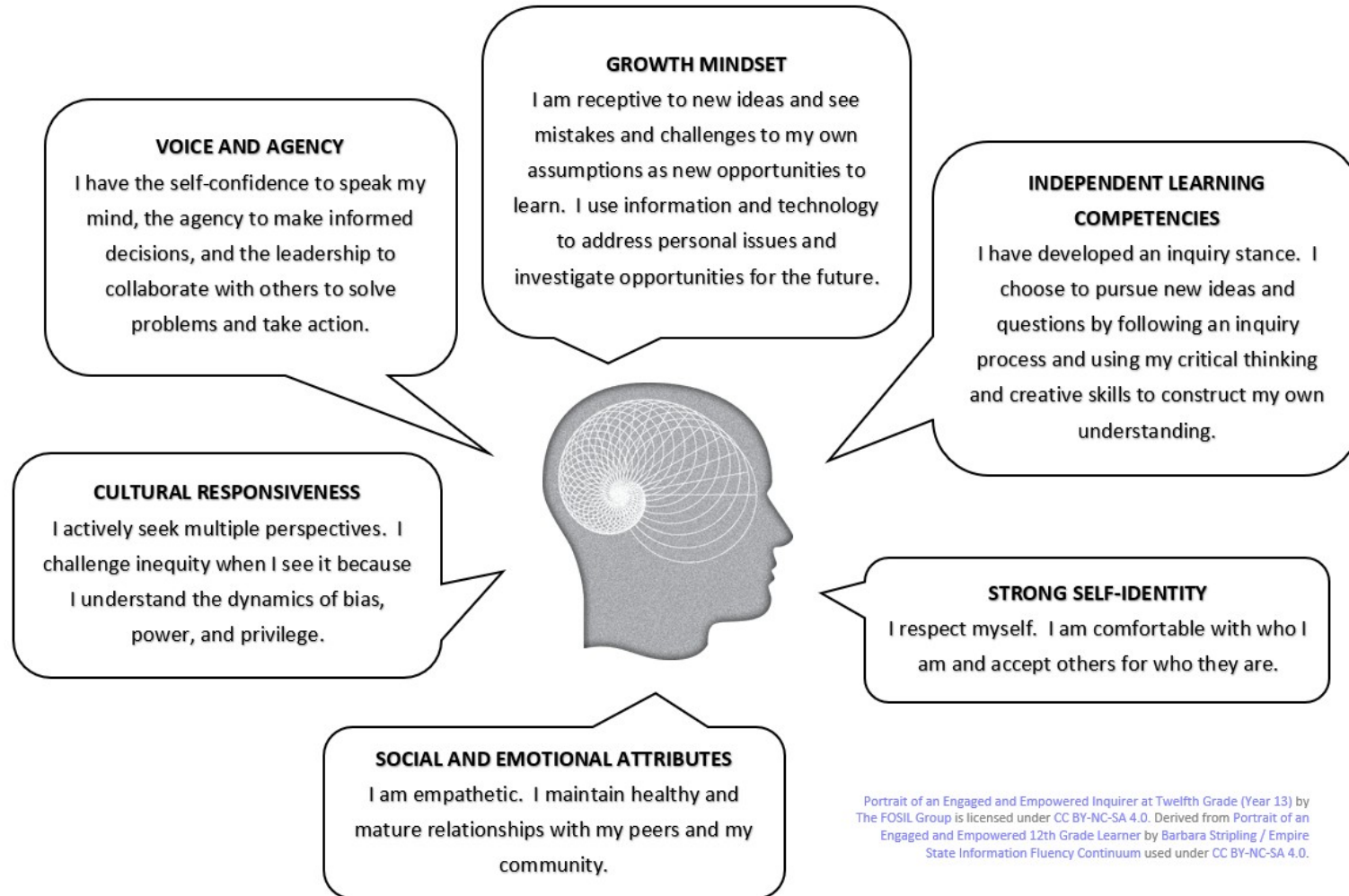


PK-12 framework of inquiry skills, incl. InfoLit

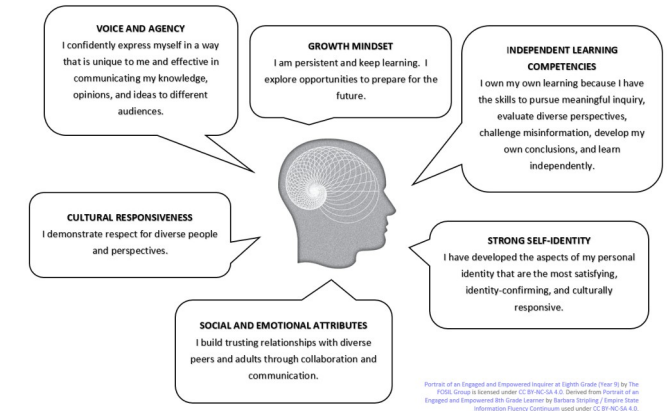


Attributes of a Heroic Inquirer

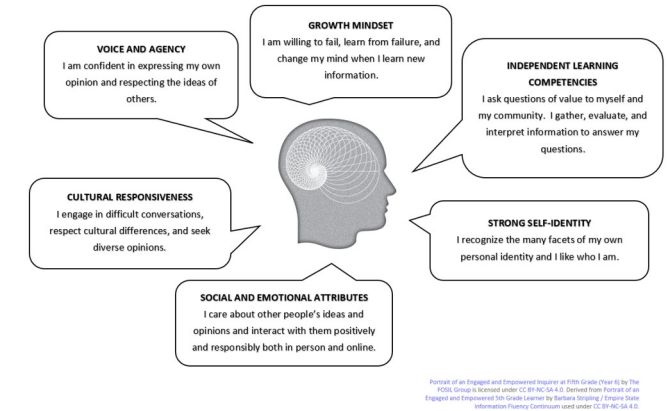
Portrait of an Engaged and Empowered Inquirer at Year 13 (Grade 12)



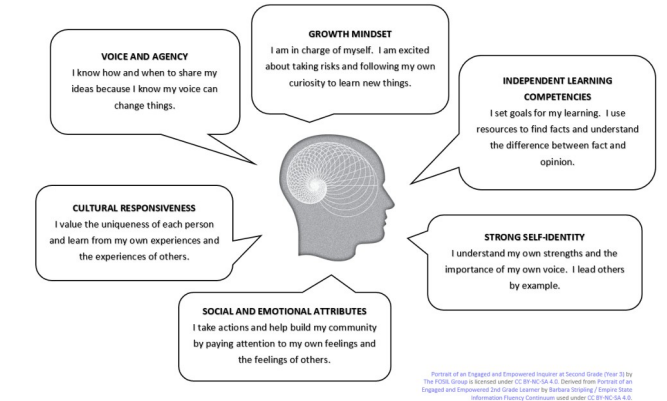
Portrait of an Engaged and Empowered Inquirer at Year 9 (Grade 8)



Portrait of an Engaged and Empowered Inquirer at Year 6 (Grade 5)



Portrait of an Engaged and Empowered Inquirer at Year 3 (Grade 2)



Our spiritual purpose

“The chief task of education is above all to ... guide the evolving dynamism through which a person forms themselves as a person.”

Jacques Maritain

Education at the crossroads (p. 1)



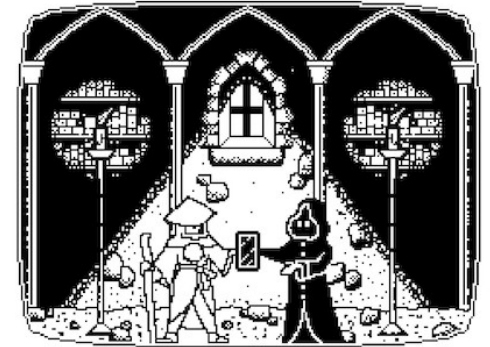
REFLECT

What lessons can I learn from this?



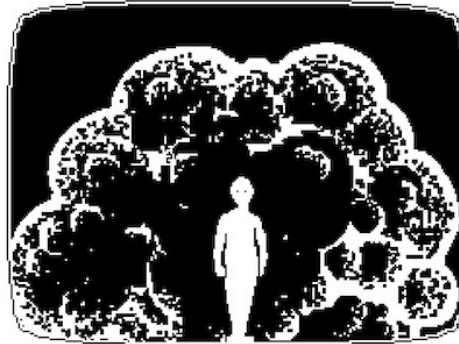
CONNECT

What do I already know?



WONDER

What do I want to know?



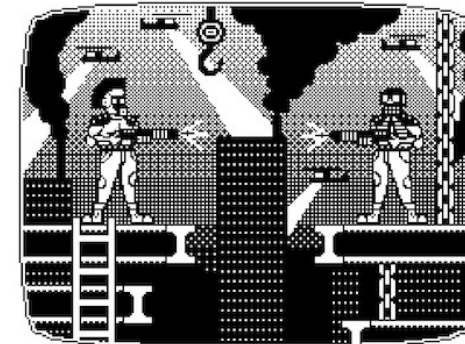
EXPRESS

What do you need to know?



CONSTRUCT

What does this mean to me?



INVESTIGATE

What did I find out?

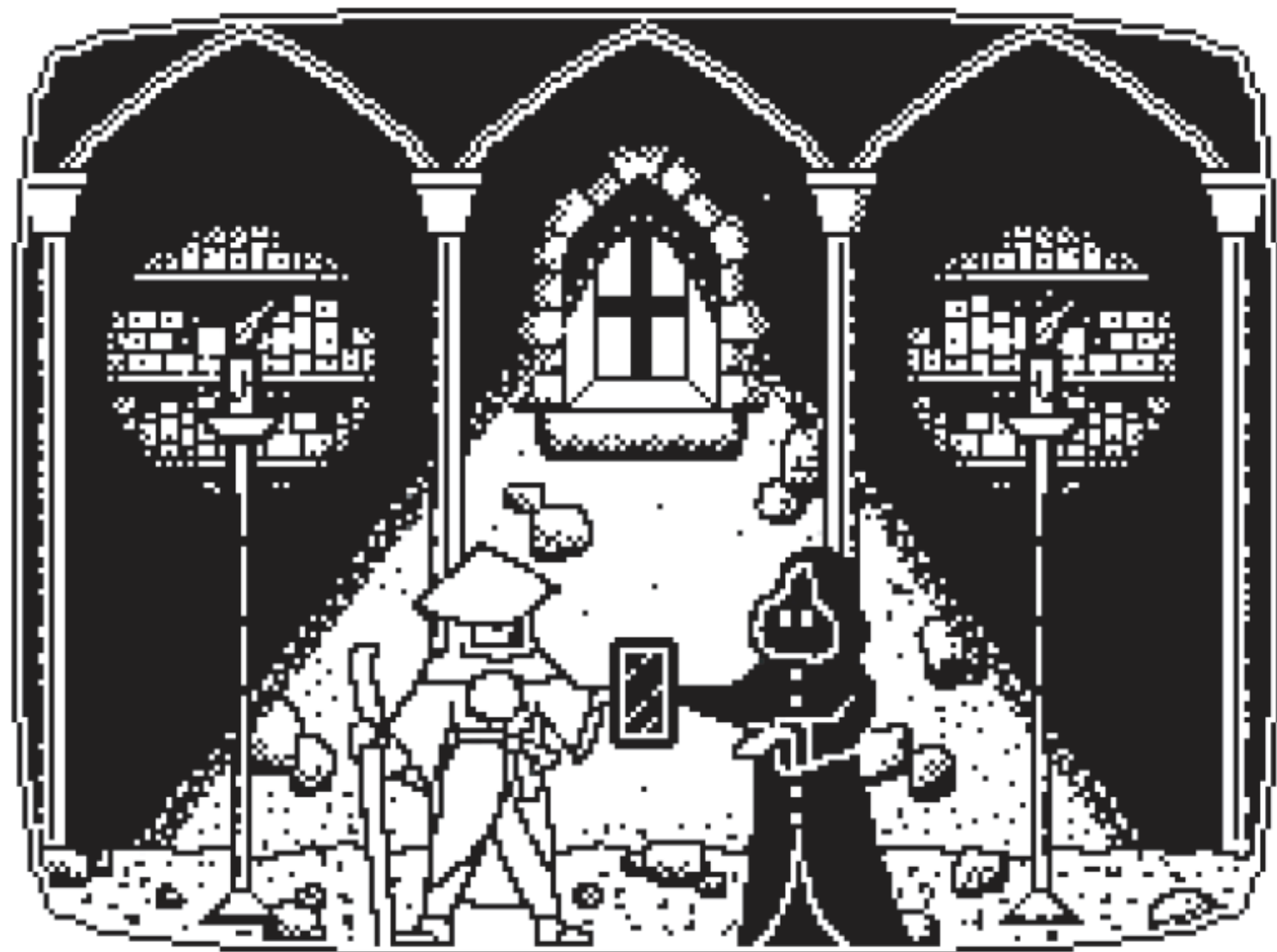




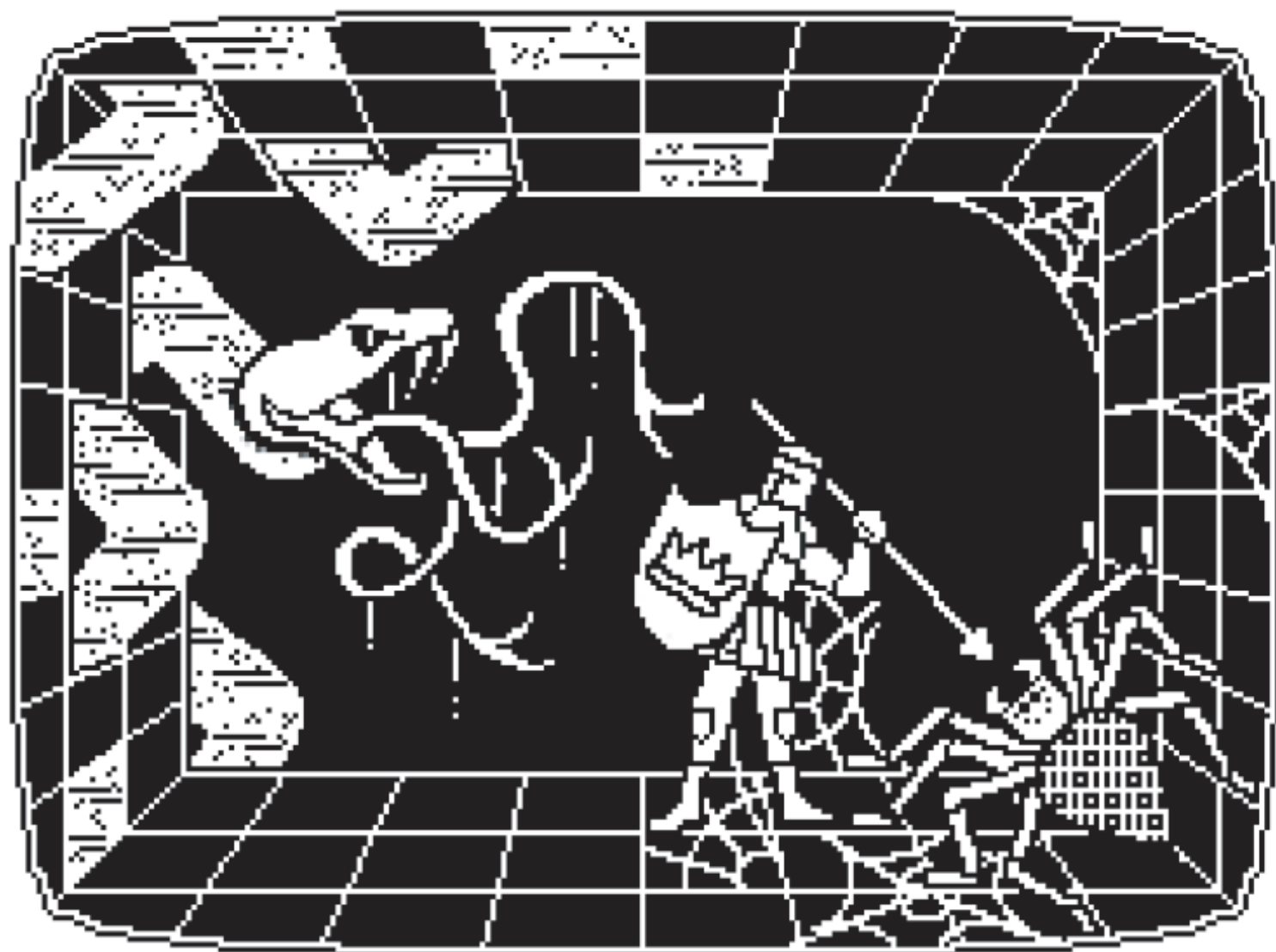
the Heroic Inquirer stands,
feet firmly planted in the scroll
that is the unfolding record of human knowledge,
upholding and upheld by that light,
which illuminates the way ahead



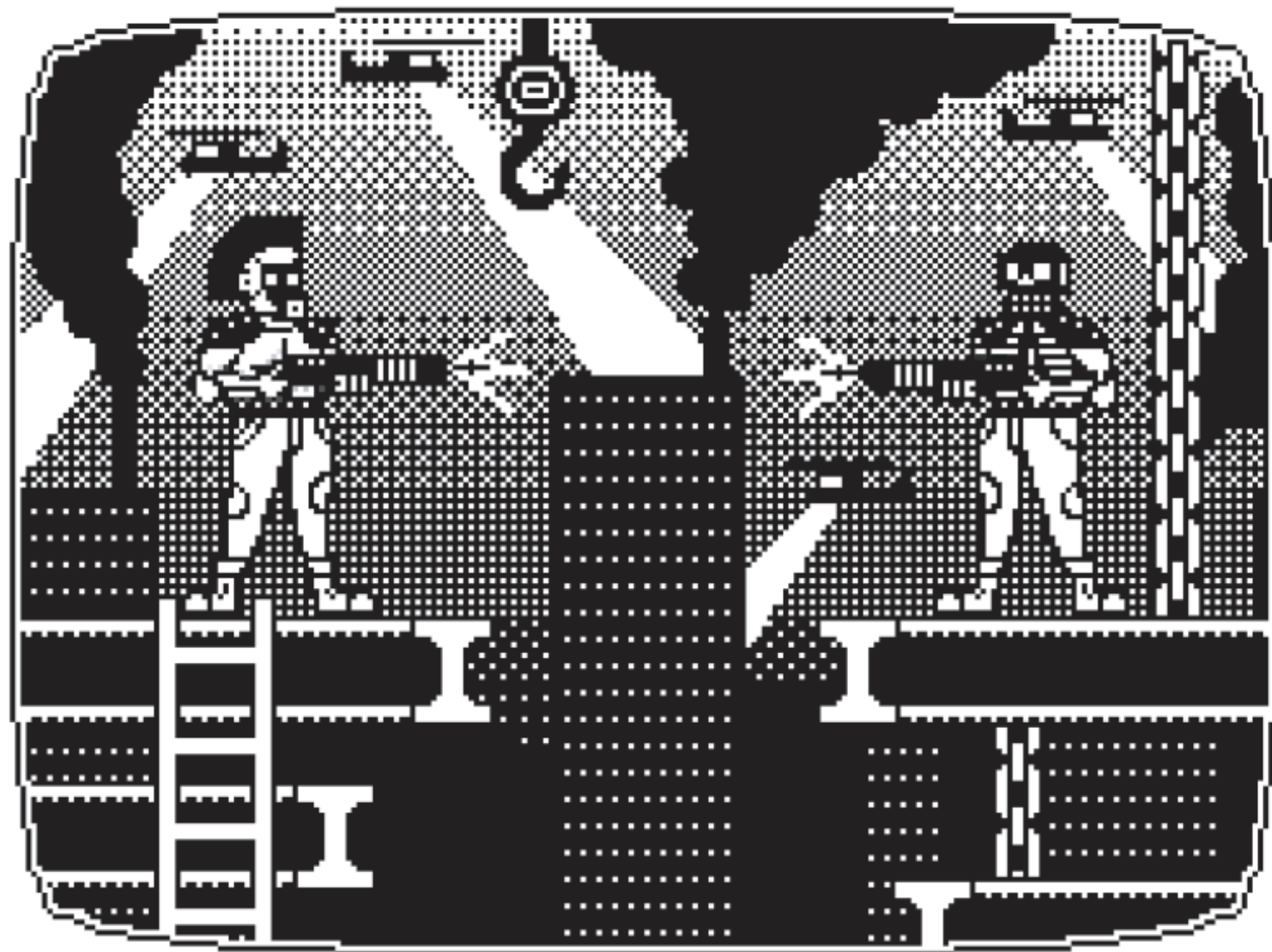
CONNECT



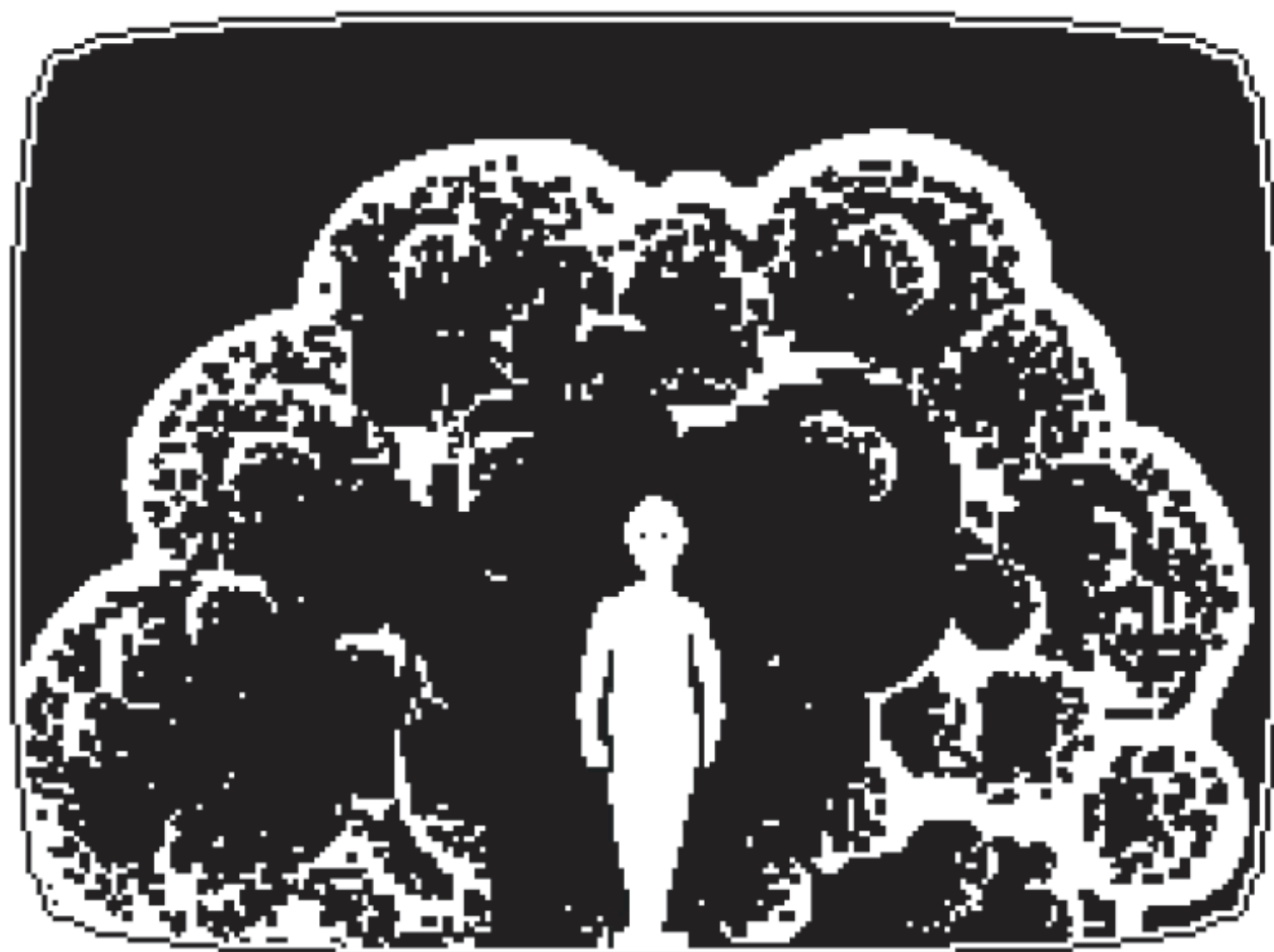
WONDER



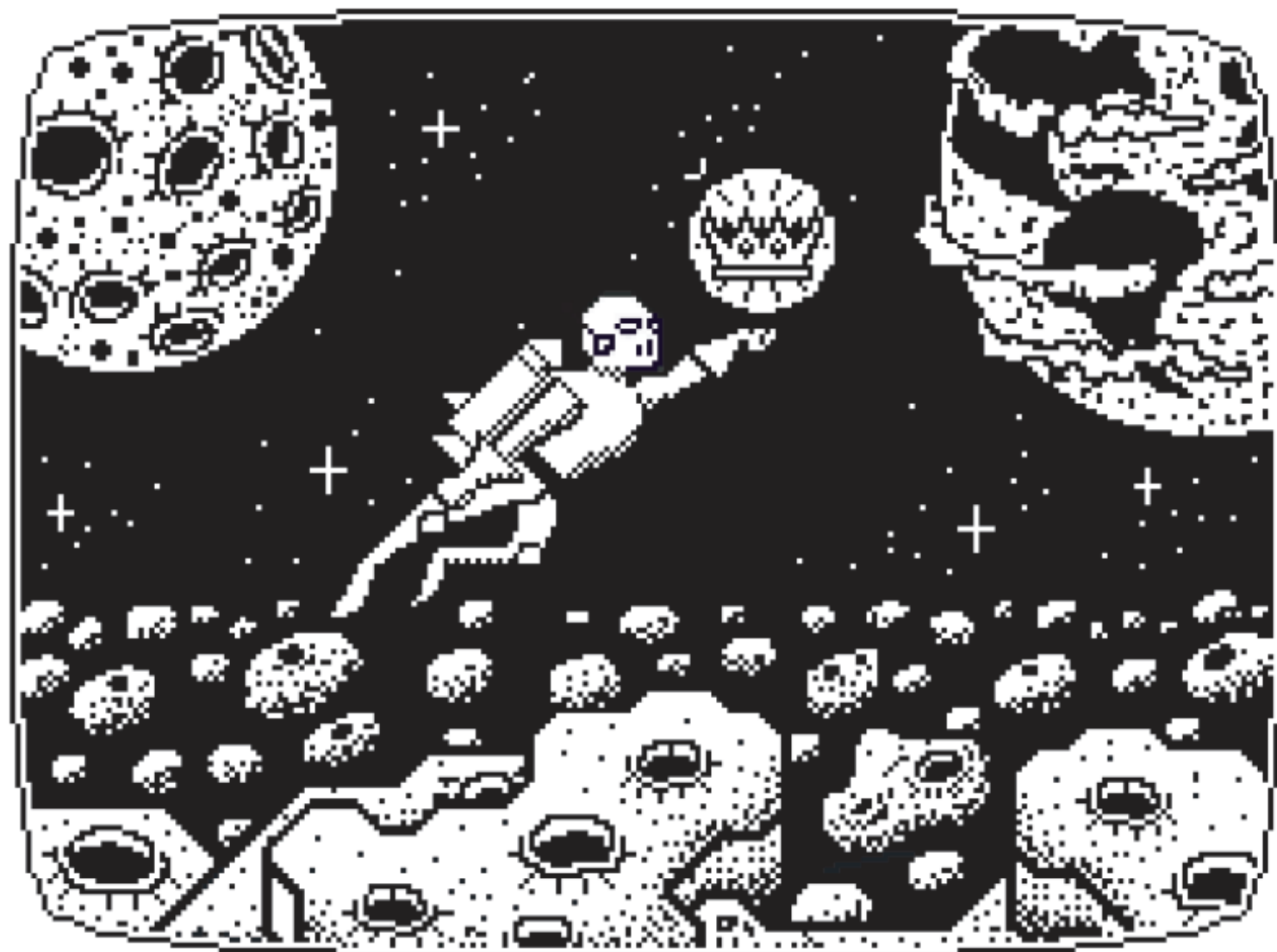
INVESTIGATE



CONSTRUCT



EXPRESS



REFLECT

Concluding ideas

- Douglas Knight (President Emeritus of Duke University)
 - Two major and unique functions of the library
 - To facilitate the meeting of mind and idea through our collections
 - To facilitate the extension of those ideas in the mind
 - Requires close collaboration between
 - Those in the classroom who teach the mind to inquire *and*
 - Those in library who teach the mind how to inquire
 - Therefore, the librarian is a teacher of the inquiry process of learning
- Inquiry is learning about **reality**, which is the basis of responsible participation in community
- Dallas Willard (Professor Emeritus in Philosophy at USC)
 - Reality is what we have to deal with
 - Success is dealing with reality, which is ultimately spiritual

References

- Simone Weil in [The Value of “Failed Experiments” in School Studies](#)
- IFLA-UNESCO School Library Manifesto (1999)
 - See updated [IFLA-UNESCO School Library Manifesto](#) (2025)
- [IFLA School Library Guidelines](#) (2015)
- [Galileo Educational Network](#)
- [Stripling Model of Inquiry / ESIFC](#)
- [FOSIL](#)
 - [Creative Commons reboot of Heroic Inquiry Cycle](#)
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- Knight, D. M. (1968). *Library services for the nation’s needs: Toward fulfillment of a national policy*. United States National Advisory Commission on Libraries.
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