

Libraries for a post-literate society

'The fact is that people don't read anymore.'

Steve Jobs

Next time you wander an airplane's aisles, do a quick scan over the shoulders of your fellow passengers. What are they doing? If your observations are similar to mine, more than 50% of air travellers are listening to portable music devices, playing games on handhelds, working on presentations or spreadsheets using laptop computers, or watching video on diminutive players. Paper book and magazine readers are in the minority.

Any number of recent studies are concluding that reading is declining, primarily the reading of novels and longer works of nonfiction. Pundits are remarking that online reading is changing their personal reading behaviours. As the Jobs quote above suggests, we are rapidly becoming a post-literate society.

Wikipedia describes a post-literate society as one 'wherein multimedia technology has advanced to the point where literacy, the ability to read written words, is no longer necessary' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-literate_society, Aug. 10, 2008).

I would modify that definition and define the post-literate as those who can read but who choose to meet their primary information and recreational needs through audio, video, graphics and gaming. Print for the post-literate is relegated to brief personal messages, short informational needs, and other functional, highly

pragmatic uses such as instructions, signage and time-management device entries – each often highly supplemented by graphics. The post-literate's need for extended works or larger amounts of information is met through visual and/or auditory formats.

Post-literacy is impacting books in the following ways (among others):

- Many citizens – already manga and graphic novel fans – learned about US presidential candidates from the Obama and McCain comics that were published during the campaign (see <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/herocomplex/2008/07/mccain-and-obam.html>).
- The introduction to Google's browser, Chrome, was released as a comic (www.google.com/googlebooks/chrome/index.html).



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Libraries for a post-literate society (cont.)

- The Duke Center for the Study of the Public Domain published its copyright guide, *Tales from the Public Domain: Bound by Law?*, as a graphic novel (www.law.duke.edu/cspd/comics).

While many adults exhibit post-literate behaviours, the Net Generation is post-literacy's poster child. And the poster child of the Net Gens is Jeremy from the popular comic strip Zits. The panel appearing on 20 August 2008 was illuminating. Jeremy is asked by his mother if he's 'through' his summer reading list. Jeremy replies: "Read" as in look at every page and comprehend its meaning ... or 'read' as in flip through the first chapter and plan to Google a synopsis the night before school starts? (Take a look at www.chron.com/apps/comics/showComick.mpl?date=20080820&name=Zits.) Like many young adults (and an increasing number of older ones), Jeremy exhibits episodic reading behaviours.

Attitudes and biases

The term 'post-literate library' may appear to be an oxymoron at first glance, but it is not. Our best libraries are already post-literate, increasingly meeting the needs of users who communicate, play, and learn using media other than print. And the attitudes we as professional librarians adopt toward the post-literate may well determine whether our libraries continue to exist.

Education and librarianship have a current bias toward print. This communication and information format has served civilisation well for a couple millennia. Most professionals now demonstrate high levels of proficiency in print literacy skills, and they can be expected to defend the necessity of such skills vociferously. Most of my fellow professionals are in the same straights that I find myself – a competent reader, writer and print analyst but a neophyte video, audio and graphic producer, consumer and critic. And it is human nature to be dismissive of those competencies that we ourselves lack.

But I would argue that post-literacy is a return to more natural forms of multisensory communication – speaking, storytelling, dialogue, debate and dramatisation. It is just now that these modes can be captured and stored digitally as easily as writing.

Information, emotion and persuasion may be even more powerfully conveyed in multimedia formats.

Serving the post-literate clientele

Libraries, especially those that serve children and young adults, need to acknowledge that society is becoming post-literate. These are some critical attributes of a library that serves a post-literate (PL) clientele:


1. PL libraries budget, select, acquire, catalogue and circulate as many or more materials in non-print formats as they do traditional print materials. The circulation policy for all materials, print and non-print, is similar.
2. PL libraries stock, without prejudice, age-appropriate graphic novels and audio books, both fiction and nonfiction, for informational and recreational use.
3. PL libraries support gaming for instruction and recreation.
4. PL libraries purchase high-value online information resources.
5. PL libraries provide resources for patrons to create visual and auditory materials and promote the demonstration of learning and research through original video, audio and graphics production. They also provide physical spaces for the presentation of these creations.
6. PL libraries allow the use of personal communication devices (MP3 players, handhelds, laptops, etc) and provide wireless network access for these devices.
7. PL library programs teach the critical evaluation of non-print information.
8. PL library programs teach the skills necessary to produce effective communication in all formats.
9. PL library programs accept and promote the use of non-print resources as sources for research and problem-based assignments.
10. PL librarians recognize the legitimacy of non-print resources and promote their use without bias.

While I recognize this may look frightening, even culturally destructive, to many of us 'print-bound' professionals, we cannot ignore the society of which we are a part and are charged with supporting. Culture

determines library programs; libraries transmit culture.

School libraries are often the bellwether programs in their schools. If we as librarians support and use learning resources that are meaningful, useful and appealing to our students, so might the classroom teacher.

In *Phaedrus*, Plato decries an 'alternate' communication technology: 'The fact is that this invention will produce forgetfulness in the souls of those who have learned it. They will not need to exercise their memories, being able to rely on what is written, calling things to mind no longer from within themselves by their own unaided powers, but under the stimulus of external marks that are alien to themselves.'

The Greek philosopher was, of course, dissing the new technology of his day: writing. Plato might well approve of our return to an oral tradition in a digital form. But his quote also demonstrates that sometimes our greatest fears become our greatest blessings. 

Doug Johnson



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After school in the library media centre

For one afternoon every week, our middle school library becomes a gamers' paradise. Free snacks, loud music, Guitar Hero, and Dragonball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi.

We supply the snacks and the games, but the kids mostly run the program themselves; rotating players, switching games, settling their own disputes, even cleaning up after themselves ... OK, for the last part they need a little prodding from the grown-ups. They are, after all, middle schoolers.

But even though it's very much about gaming and hanging out, there's so much more to it than that. Gamers Club is one piece of a broad after-school program that helps us to serve our kids for more time and in more ways than the regular school day allows. It provides a space where we can meet kids on their own terms and open up real conversations about what matters to all of us.

Our focus in the library is always on student success. Just recently, I met with the school's instructional coach to take a close look at some disaggregated data from last year's standardised test results. She was able to show me specific curriculum objectives in targeted content areas where our students performed below district averages. With this information, we're going to department chairs and individual teachers to discuss ways we can collaborate on lessons to address those specific shortfalls – and bring some AASL standards too.

But, as crucial as academics are, there are more facets to children's lives. Children's school experiences must include more than what can be done in the classroom. We want to be here for our kids whenever and in whatever way they need us. We can't be with them at home; that's not our place. But we use our website and our Blackboard site to make sure our services are available to them during the off hours. And the after-school program allows us to engage with them face-to-face for many additional hours each week.

Not only that, but our kids love it. Recently the head librarian from one of the high schools our students feed into told that me some of our former students had been asking when they're going to have after-school programs in their library because 'we did in middle school.'

A fortunate confluence of forces

No doubt we are fortunate to be at the confluence of several forces.

Here in Fairfax county, nearly 70% of families have dual incomes or a single working parent. This holds true across demographic distinctions. A majority of our middle school children come home to empty houses at the end of the regular school day.

These kids, roughly 11–15 years old, are hanging around with no grown-ups to keep an eye on them and – let's face it – this is the age when they're likely to start getting into real trouble.

So the county funds a program. It's paid out separately from the school budget, a big part of which comes from the county too. But this is a grant that pays for each of the 26 middle schools in the county to have a full-time after-school program coordinator who runs academic, social, physical and community programs for the kids. Our coordinator is Christine Lyons, a truly amazing veteran special ed math teacher who now administers more than 30 programs in addition to a slate of summer institutes that served more than 300 children last summer. The program also pays for late buses to take the children home. They provide snacks for the kids. They even pay participating teachers a stipend for our time.

It's tough to make a direct correlation, but according to the county police, gang-related activity in Fairfax was down last year. In truth it was never very high to begin with – Fairfax is one of the most prosperous counties in the country – but it happens. And it doesn't happen as much as it used to. The county credits the three-year-old middle school program as a major factor.

So that's the motivation behind funding the program. But we can do much better than just keeping kids distracted and under supervision for a couple of hours in the afternoon.

The days of our week

Monday is meeting day for the staff – faculty meetings, department meetings, committee meetings, Leadership Council. Every Monday, somebody is meeting. As a result, there are no late buses. We're a suburban school located on a busy road in a commercial strip. Almost all of our children ride the bus. So even on the rare Monday when we don't have a meeting, it's just not practical to offer anything after school.

Tuesday is always academic day. That means anybody who stays after school, in the library or anywhere else, has to have

something school-related to work on. If they're struggling or behind in a particular class, they'll typically stay with a classroom teacher. For group work, projects, or research, or for kids who just want to get their homework out of the way, the library is the place to be. It's quiet, spacious and comfortable. There are plenty of computers and friendly staff eager to help out.

Similarly, on alternate Fridays we host the Homework Party. In addition to Christine, there are outside tutors and a rotating cast of content area teachers who spend the afternoon with kids who are committed to putting in the extra time to catch up on their work. It's not strictly a library function, but we're happy that they meet here. They could just as well use the cafeteria or the multipurpose room. But the library is the place for collaboration and sharing, for open access to resources. It's a neutral spot where everyone is welcome.

Wednesdays we give up most of our space to a tutoring program run in cooperation with Exxon Mobil, which sends a group, made up mostly of engineers from its local headquarters down the road, to work with seventh graders on maths. We still have room for more kids beyond that and we let them do whatever they like, so long as they don't disturb their classmates in the tutoring program. They work on homework, read, or sometimes just visit quietly with each other, huddled around a computer or sprawled out on the floor of the magazine section. They are tweens and young teens, after all. Socialising is OK sometimes.

It's also an opportunity for students to put in community service hours required for their social studies classes. We have them reshelving books, clean whatever tables aren't being used, straighten displays, and help prepare materials for bulletin boards.

But no doubt the centrepiece of the after-school program is the Thursday Gamers Club.

And then there's Thursday

On a typical Thursday, we have 35–40 kids, making it one of the most popular after-school activities. If we had more game systems and more grown-ups to supervise, we could have even more. There are about 100 kids who game with us over the course of the year. But not everybody can come every week. And we do try to keep part of the library open for reading and studying.

After school in the library media centre (cont.)

We set up two TVs with PlayStation 2s (PS2) and two more TVs with Wiis. We also set up one PS2 console on a data projector, displayed on a large wall screen with a booming PA, running either Dance Dance Revolution (DDR) or Guitar Hero II. This way, even those kids who have the games at home get a better experience here, in addition to competing against school friends who might not be close enough to come by the house.

We're up to about 15 games now and try to add a couple more each spring and autumn. Next up will be Rock Band and Super Smash Bros. Brawl, both of which are great games for groups of kids to play with and against each other. I also let kids bring in their own games from home. I hesitated about it at first, thinking, 'What if they bring a game that gets us into trouble?' But I figured one could scuttle any good idea with enough what-ifs. And if the point is engagement, why not let the kids participate in setting the agenda? Besides, there's always going to be somebody who gets the coolest, newest game long before I will. And what do they want to do right away with it? Bring it in to show off to their friends.

I've never had to write anybody up. I've never asked someone to not come back. Every once in a while we have to ask them to stop chasing each other around, but that happens during the school day too. It just comes with the territory.

Another policy that keeps us focused is that kids can only come to Gamers Club if they have all A's, B's, and C's on their most recent grade reports. We check them out in the student database just to make sure everybody's being honest. Any D's or F's and we make them go to their core teachers and get signatures that it's OK. Because Tuesday is academic day, everybody has a chance to work with a teacher. We've had a lot of kids whose grades occasionally flip-flop around the bubble, and they go to their teachers and work really hard to get their grades up so they can game.

I have mixed feelings about the policy. Some of the kids with the poorest grades are also the kids who would most benefit from having a supervised place to hang out in the afternoon.

Supporting the mission

But we're not doing social engineering, much as it might seem worthwhile. We're doing learning. And if the administration comes to see that we're not supporting that mission, they're going to have a hard time standing up for us when the parents get antsy (which some of them do from time to time). As it is, our principal supports us, we have teachers who come by and play DDR or Wii Tennis with the kids, and our circulation numbers keep going up.

My next project is to analyse grades longitudinally – to look at kids who come to Gamers Club and how they do against

the overall population. Who knows? It'll be interesting to see. But I can say anecdotally that there have been many, many kids who have gone to work with teachers at lunchtime and after school to bring their grades up specifically because they couldn't come back to Game Club until they did. With academic day on Tuesday, we can let kids know by that afternoon what they need to do if they want to game on Thursday. If somebody is really in a slump, we remind him or her that there's always next week or the week after.

So now we have a new group of library kids. The library has become a place where more kids are comfortable hanging out. They see the librarians as genuine, warm people who express an interest in something they are passionate about, even if it isn't necessarily books. Obviously there's a big overlap between readers and gamers, but there are kids who come to the library now because they know it as a game hangout. And while they're here, we're talking with them about books and reading and grades.

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 97% of boys aged 12–17 reported playing electronic games at least occasionally. For girls the number is 94%. Almost one-third of kids reported playing video games daily; 48% play games on their mobile phones. This is a big part of our kids' lives. Why would we tell them that their interests don't matter to us? That's just no way to build a constructive relationship.

The after-school program isn't just about the library. At our schools, we've got indoor soccer, basketball, hip-hop dance, a geography bee, theatre, and Future Business Leaders of America, to name only a few. But by fully participating and grounding ourselves in the program, we make sure that we're full partners in student success – and that we've got a little extra funding to help make it happen. **O**

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New resources for teachers of the middle years

To celebrate this year's 150th Melbourne Cup, Curriculum Corporation has been contracted by the Victoria Racing Club to develop resources highlighting the historic legacy of the Melbourne Cup to help Australian students experience and understand its contribution to Australian life and culture. Curriculum Corporation is creating a website with information and a PDF of inquiry activities suitable for students in the middle years of schooling.



A wealth of historical material will be available, along with contemporary articles and images and a DVD. A wide range of topics covered in the activities will make this site an engaging and attractive resource for students and teachers alike.

The launch date for the website is expected to be September 2010, in time for the activities to be used in the lead-up to the 150th celebrations.

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A library without books?

The question is a vital one. Indeed it wouldn't be too dramatic to say the question relates ultimately to your continued employment.

When you do a concerted analysis, you'll find there is a dramatic difference between a 'school library' and an information services unit, a difference that has to do with both perception and the actual situation, which sees one disappearing and the other continuing to play a significant role in the education of the young.

In 1996, I wrote a piece for *The Practising Administrator* – at the time, Australia's preeminent educational administration journal – entitled 'Close the School Library: Open the Information Services Unit'. In it I argued that that, based on the contemporary trend lines, 'the time has come to close the school library and open the information services unit ... It is strongly recommended that schools, and indeed teacher librarians themselves, work towards a ceremonious closing of the library and ushering in a new era with a name change.' (Lee, 1996)

The schools and the teacher librarians that took heed of that warning are today generally very well positioned to continue to play a significant role in schooling, but those that did not have little or possibly next to no time to do so.

Soon after writing the aforementioned article, I followed it up with another arguing for a name change and the creation of the position of director of information services. Fifteen years on, most of the flourishing information services units are led by a person with that type of title – leading an information services and management unit.

When I was researching the history of the school library for *The Use of Instructional Technology in Schools* (Lee and Winzenried, 2009), it soon became apparent that the standing of the teacher librarian position, rightly or wrongly, has always been closely correlated to the facility to astutely integrate the latest information technologies into the school's educational program. The failure to do so would have long resulted in the demise of that library. It was also apparent that the life of the teacher librarian is relatively short – 40, maybe 50 years at best – and that

their traditional habitat is fast disappearing. The days are numbered for that segmented school organisation where the teacher library takes almost sole responsibility for teaching the 'library' and more recently information literacy.

As schooling across the developed world evolves, and pathfinding schools move from the traditional paper-based mode to a digital operational paradigm (Lee and Gaffney, 2008) where the use of the digital is normal in every classroom, each classroom becomes a digital teaching hub and thus a 'state of the art library'. As digital integration daily dismantles the traditional segmented school operations, the role of the specialist 'teacher librarian' will become ever more questionable.

When – as we are now starting to see globally – schools move from the digital mode where the operations are still conducted within the traditional school walls to the networked mode where those walls are dismantled, the old book-dominated school library becomes an anachronism.

What we are seeing globally within the more proactive, path-finding schools and education authorities is libraries morphing into information services and management units or, daftly, in some instances disappearing.

It is – in very general terms – only in the slower-moving, more reactive (Lee and Winzenried, 2009) schools and education authorities where the pen, paper and the teaching board remain the most commonly used teaching tools that the 'school library' survives. However, as many on this list have noted, even those operations are under ever-greater scrutiny. The teacher librarian is a very easy person for school leaders to grab to help solve the growing teacher shortage.

One of the great problems is a perceptual one – the names 'school library' and 'teacher librarian' act as clear targets for the educational administrators. Bear in mind the perception is the reality. The old labels serve to inform the educational administrator that that group/entity has not moved with the times.

This was brought home to me vividly recently in discussions with one of Australia's national award-winning school principals. Her school had normalised the use of digital technology throughout the school. She wanted to create a unit to handle the burgeoning information support and management needs of her school. She was about to be given a new library, but she had a teacher librarian who refused to change her role. She turned to me for advice. Having control of her staff funding, she decided to terminate the position of teacher librarian and create a new executive position that was in essence a director of learning technology, designed to oversee both the operation of the new 'library' and all the other digital technology within the school.

She wanted a person in her primary school that had the professional acumen to oversee the total use of all manner of digital and information technologies in a tightly integrated teaching and learning environment. Interestingly, she chose a person who had a teacher librarian background.

In a digital – and in particular, a networked – mode, there is a vital and growing need for information professionals with a strong understanding of teaching and learning to play a central role in the school's operations. In a digital environment where the technology is ever-converging, and where the digital capacity of the home and the student's mobile computing is becoming ever more important, it is vital that the same person/team has responsibility for the management of all the school's educational, administrative and archival information. The actual form of that unit will depend on the particular context and will most likely evolve.


In her chapter 'Managing and Servicing the Information Needs of a Digital School' in *Leading a Digital School* (Lee and Gaffney, 2008), Karen Bonanno spells out the desired attributes of that information service very powerfully, while Lyn Hay (Charles Sturt University) in the soon-to-be-released *Developing a Networked School Community* (Lee and Finger, 2010) identifies the information paradigm needed to support a home-school nexus.

A library without books? (cont.)

What we are witnessing in many respects is a gradual cessation of the old ICT and school library wars that started in the mid '80's when the 'computer empires' began to burgeon and a merging of those operations to better suit the needs of a digital and networked school.

In a previous life as the director of an education authority school closure program, I saw the damage caused by those who tried to forestall the inevitable. You all can see the dramatic impact the digital world is having upon our lives.

Recently I spoke with a colleague who had just returned from visiting some Japanese schools. The one that hit home was the secondary school where its vast investment in a school-wide, carefully

controlled network was now only used by the administration. The students had in their pockets the wherewithal to access the 'Net whenever and wherever they wished, unfettered by any educators' controls. That is the kind of reality we need to recognise as we seek to provide the best possible education. 

Mal Lee



Mal is an educational consultant specialising in the development of digital schools.

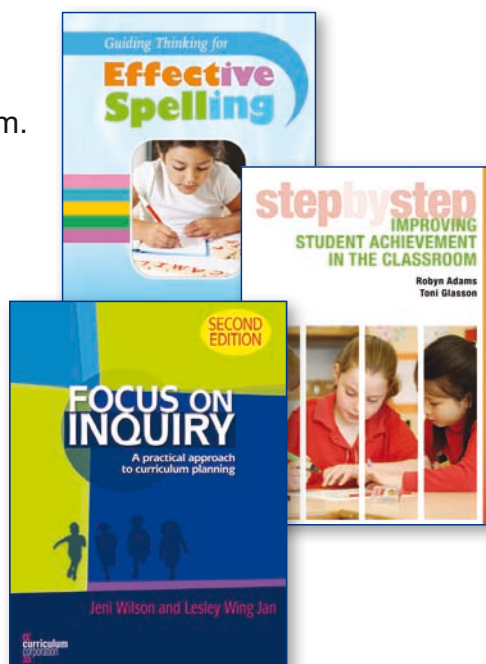
Mal has co-authored *Leading a Digital School, The Use of Instructional Technology in Schools – Lessons to be Learned*, and *The Interactive Whiteboard Revolution: Teaching with IWBs*. Mal is currently working on a new book, *Developing Networked School Communities*.

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Website reviews

Children's Books Online – Read, Create & Share

www.biguniverse.com/

Although most activities require a subscription, teachers and teacher librarians should investigate the possibilities on offer. This site allows students to read and access multimedia versions of popular books and to devise and share their own books. Work is applicable to interactive whiteboards.

SCIS No: 1435089

Chopin: The Poet of the Piano

www.ourchopin.com/

The subject of this award-winning website is the great Polish composer and pianist, Frederic Chopin. The site contains a biography, all of Chopin's music, images, quizzes, music analysis and links.

SCIS No: 1435091

Eric Weisstein's World of Physics

<http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/physics/>

Noted internet encyclopaedist Eric Weisstein has authored several informative science websites. This one focuses on physics and contains over 2700 entries ranging from astrophysics to wave motion.

SCIS No: 1435095

Library Conferences and Events

www.edna.edu.au/edna/go/schooled/schools_events/pid/1987

Teacher librarians committed to keeping abreast of upcoming conferences and events should bookmark this site. Compiled by edna, the site also contains pertinent links to the subject matter highlighted.

SCIS No: 1435106

Nette Hilton – Children's & Young Adults Author

www.nettehilton.com.au/

Students and teachers are invited into Nette Hilton's world via this appealing and informative website. Readers are offered autobiographical material, writing hints, an endearing *Notes from My Studio* section, bibliography of published works and a link to her blog.

SCIS No: 1435108

New York Philharmonic Kidzone!

www.nyphilkids.org/

By clever use of audio, animation, video and text, primary students will be motivated to explore the comprehensive world of this renowned orchestra. Students can

research composers, explore instruments, compose music and even construct their own instruments.

SCIS No: 1136807

Teacher Resources

www.csiro.au/csiro/channel/pchav.html

Teachers can access a variety of classroom resources regarding the various scientific education projects, events and services operated by CSIRO. Links are present to related sites run by the organisation.

SCIS No: 1435113

Toyota Children's Web Site

www.toyota.co.jp/en/kids/toyota/index.html

Containing colourful graphics and a clear layout, this promotional site allows younger students to investigate the Toyota company, how it makes cars and the increasing emphasis it places on people-friendly and environmentally friendly cars.

SCIS No: 1435132

UNICEF NZ Children's Charity

www.unicef.org.nz/page/9/SchoolRoom.html

The School Room area of the overall UNICEF NZ site outlines the work the organisation undertakes in relation to education, child labour, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, sanitation and refugees. Classroom resources for both students and teachers are a feature.

SCIS No: 1435143

Using your Interactive Whiteboard

www.yowiebay-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/Interactive%20Whiteboard.htm

Developed by Yowie Bay Public School, this portal allows teachers to access a plethora of K-6 links focused on using interactive whiteboards. Subjects covered include mathematics, science, English and HSIE.

SCIS No: 1435151

Visual Aids for Learning – Free Downloads

www.visualaidsforlearning.com/products/index.htm

The images contained on this site are particularly useful for teachers and aides working with students who experience learning difficulties. The images are gender and age specific and are applicable to charts, timetables and specific learning situations.

SCIS No: 1435157

Welcome to Mapzone

<http://mapzone.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/mapzone/index.html>

Ordnance Survey, Great Britain's national mapping agency, has created a fascinating interactive website that brings mapping to life. Features include mapping conventions and symbols, GIS (Geographical Information Systems), a global knowledge quiz, games and teacher resources.

SCIS No: 1435168

WFP Food Force – The Game, The Reality, How to Help

www.food-force.com/

Operating under the auspices of the United Nations World Food Program, this site encourages students to undertake a series of educational quizzes which result in rice grains being donated to hunger relief. Lesson notes and background information are also available.

SCIS No: 1370661

Engineering Impact – Interactive Science & Engineering for 9-11 Year Olds

www.engineeringinteract.org/resources.htm

Suitable for an interactive whiteboard or individual use on a computer, this website will engage primary students with a clever mix of graphics and text, often using a games format. Topics covered include: electricity, earth and space, forces and motion, light and sound.

SCIS No: 1435461

Reviewed by Nigel Paull



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The internet sites selected in *Website reviews* are often of a professional nature and should be initially viewed by teachers and library staff to determine suitability for students. The links, content and address of these sites may not be permanent.

The Rights of the Reader

by Daniel Pennac

illustrated by Quentin Blake



1 The right not to read.



2 The right to skip.

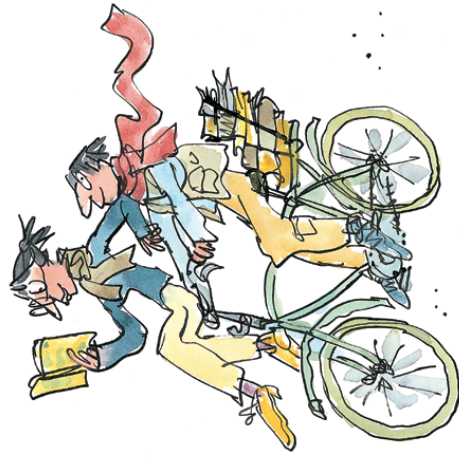


3 The right not to finish a book.



4 The right to read it again.

5 The right to read anything.



*Try this page —
it's fantastic!*



7 The right to read anywhere.

8 The right to dip in.



9 The right to read out loud.



*10 rights — 1 warning
Don't make fun of people
who don't read —
or they never will.*

10 The right to be quiet.



SCIS is more ...

SCIS = Successful Cataloguing in Schools

SCIS cataloguers add up to 4,000 catalogue records to the database each month. The resources we catalogue come from a number of sources such as publishers, booksellers and education systems, but the majority are contributed by school library staff throughout Australasia.

In order to assist us in keeping the SCIS database up to date, we encourage schools to send any resources not on the SCIS database to one of our cataloguing agencies for cataloguing. Cataloguing agencies supported by the state education authorities in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia, as well as SCIS cataloguers in Melbourne, Adelaide, and New Zealand, all welcome resources from schools for cataloguing.

There are three SCIS cataloguers in New Zealand. They catalogue books, non-book materials, websites and teacher and digital resources that are purchased by New Zealand schools and relevant to the New Zealand curriculum. Teacher resources include New Zealand Ministry of Education and Learning Media publications, including resources in Maori and Pacific Island languages.

In September 2009, our SCIS cataloguer in Dunedin, Bruce Moir, gave a presentation to the School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (SLANZA) Conference in Christchurch. Bruce outlined the types of resources which are unique to SCIS and gave an insight into the process by which SCIS


cataloguers create original catalogue records with the items to hand.

Bruce described how SCIS cataloguers save you time by ensuring that each record accurately describes the item to hand. Records are created either from scratch or by editing and enhancing records from other databases, in which many items are catalogued prior to publication and do not always correspond exactly to the published items.

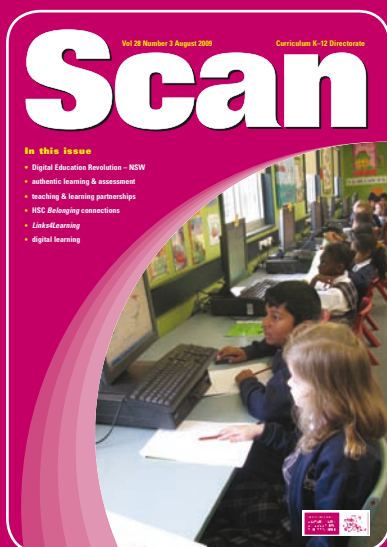
Each ISBN has a separate record in SCIS, so you don't have to check on multiple ISBNs. You can be confident that records include SCIS standard Abridged Dewey classification numbers, including 'book numbers' or call number suffixes to help with labelling and shelving. Cataloguers include SCIS Subject Headings and Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT) terms as a matter of course and where possible, especially for online resources, a summary of the content. Subject headings are carefully chosen to be consistent with other resources on similar topics and to comply with the *Guidelines to Using SCIS Subject Headings*.

SCIS Subject Headings include many terms suggested by New Zealand users, for example 'Rocky shore', which is not included in other lists of subject headings. Many SCIS records also have a note indicating that the work is by a New Zealand author and/or illustrator. To find these with a SCIS OPAC keyword search, search for either the phrase "new zealand author" or "new zealand illustrator" (include the double quotes).

Over 10,000 website catalogue records on the SCIS database are free for *SCISWeb* subscribers. These websites are endorsed by education authorities and catalogued to SCIS standards. They can be found by searching SCIS OPAC. For example, to find Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) *Hot Topics* about Sir Edmund Hillary, try a keyword search for 'tki hot topics hillary'. A title or keyword search for 'tki hot topics' will find all the *Hot Topics* catalogued to date. Just note the SCIS numbers of the items you would like to include in your catalogue and use them to order records in *SCISWeb*. Alternatively, you can download website catalogue records in monthly batches from the 'Special Order Files' page. From Special Order Files, you can also order sets of catalogue records for other resources which are not available in other library databases, including The Le@ming Federation (TLF) learning objects (which in New Zealand are available through Digistore, www.tki.org.nz/t/digistore/); the ClickView digital video library, and websites reviewed in the New South Wales Department of Education and Training's Scan journal.

Elsewhere in this issue you will read about a library supplier who through collaboration with SCIS ensures that books ordered by schools are catalogued in SCIS before the items are supplied to schools. SCIS has many similar arrangements with publishers and suppliers of library resources. This cooperation benefits everyone. 

Bruce Moir, SCIS Cataloguer
Leonie Bourke, Manager, SCIS



Scan is a quarterly professional journal produced by the NSW Department of Education and Training. Of interest to all educators, Scan is an essential resource for teacher librarians and school libraries.

Each 96-page issue of Scan contains a range of articles covering:

- *Quality Teaching* for teacher librarians
- meaningful integration of ICT in teaching and learning
- examples of best practice in connected learning environments
- practical ideas for library management
- current thinking about pedagogy.

Every Scan contains at least 200 resource reviews, of which over 80 are internet site reviews with SCIS barcodes for easily creating orders in *SCISWeb*.

Contact the Editor, cath.keane@det.nsw.edu.au, for further information or visit the *School Libraries and Information Literacy* website for subscription forms at www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/schoollibraries/scan.

New and revised subject headings

A summary list of new and revised SCIS subject headings is provided in each issue of *Connections*. For the detailed lists of new and revised subject headings, see the SCIS website at www2.curriculum.edu.au/scis/subject_headings.html.

In the summary lists, headings are marked with:

- * Existing allowed headings which have been updated with changes to references or notes
- A Headings which were previously USE references but are now headings in their own right
- D Deleted headings
- N New headings
- U Previously allowed headings which have become USE references

* Allergy	N Immune system	N Riding clubs
* Antigens and antibodies	U Immunity	N Snowboarding
* Bacteriology	* Islam	* Social ethics
* Cancer	N Islamic ethics	* Sporting equipment
* Christian ethics	* Jewish ethics	* Vaccination
* Christianity	* Leukaemia	* War - Religious aspects
* Clubs	N Lung cancer	N Welsh literature
* Communicable diseases	* Office equipment	A Welsh poetry
* English literature	* Pathology	* Winter sports
* English poetry	* Physiology	
* Ethics	* Poetry	
* Horse riding	N Religious ethics	

The SLANZA wiki

On the school library listserv, the same questions are asked about the same things over and over again. Often these questions relate to books with a particular theme. A group of school librarians, all of whom are members of SLANZA, the School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa, have gathered together the lists we have been collecting in our own files for years and shared them in a collaborative space.




The SLANZA wiki

Along with the book lists, there are commonly asked questions from the listserv, links to information that library staff find useful, particularly new or isolated library staff, places to go for helpful information, library management help, Library 2.0 and everything from weeding advice to useful readings, and from ideas for managing your student librarians to information literacy. These have all been put in an easy-to-navigate, searchable, easy-to-find place: the SLANZA Collaborative Wiki, <http://slanzawiki.wetpaint.com>. The site was for members only while it developed. As a result of a consultative process, it is now open to view by everyone (though only SLANZA members can contribute). It is hoped that our membership will grow when people see the value of working collaboratively with other members of the organisation and the fact that members have created a new useful resource. It is particularly useful for our isolated members and primary school librarians with limited hours, but we really hope that there is something there for everyone.



A blogs page on the SLANZA wiki

There is a huge amount of information already there, and more being added all the time (wiki by their nature evolve). There are places you can discuss topics, you can join in other people's discussions, you can initiate discussions of your own, you can message members. Find out what is happening around the country and see what others are doing in their regions.

The wiki is an extra tool in your library toolbox and for some an introduction to the cool things you can do with web 2.0. Most importantly, what we hope is that members contribute to the wiki, keeping it alive and growing. 

Bridget Schaumann
Librarian/Careers Advisor
King's High School, South Dunedin

If you are not yet a SLANZA member, you can download the membership application from the SLANZA website, www.slanza.org.nz

Shopping online saves time: a library supplier's view

More work, less time. This combination seems, increasingly, to be the lot of school librarians. There are reduced budgets for staffing and resources but teachers and students still require a librarian to be the last minute solution to all their information needs.

To compensate, school libraries are working more and more with specialist library suppliers – in the same way that public libraries have been doing for years. The benefits can be substantial – irrespective of your book-buying style.

Librarians appreciate being able to see books before purchase. The advantages of touching and feeling a book need to be weighed against the disadvantages of this approach, which include:

- time involved for rep/shop visits
- size of the range that can be viewed compared to the number of new releases (there are approximately 3,000 new children's/teen titles released each month, from hundreds of publishers – and twice that number in the adult range)
- limitations on searching for specific titles and subjects
- titles can only be viewed after they are released.

Having all past, present and future titles in print (and out of print) profiled on a single online database means that titles can be searched for and located quickly. Additional benefits include:

- the ability to browse all upcoming releases in advance of release in one location
- active databases covering all books of interest to libraries across all publishers – both locally and internationally
- the ability to search by various attributes – keyword, ISBN, title, author, series or a combination thereof
- author biographies and reviews available online.


Many librarians have of course been shopping online for a long while – using a broad range of websites, databases, blogs and reviews to make informed purchasing decisions.

Library suppliers try to bring together in one place each of these things in a format that most closely matches the unique needs of a librarian. Available features/services not always available from non-specialist online suppliers include:

- search by Dewey classification number
- ability to see what other school librarians are buying
- online order history and order status
- 'title notes' to document your thoughts on why the title would be useful (e.g. 'requested by John K...')
- control over creating and naming multiple 'wishlists' and 'baskets' to help with sorting planned purchases for different collections, terms, etc.

And, what's more, the discounts available to school libraries may be larger than from non-specialist library suppliers.

One library supplier in tune with the needs of school libraries is Wheelers (www.wheelersbooks.com.au). Wheelers is one of the many library suppliers and publishers who have teamed up with SCIS to provide a free service to confirm all titles ordered have a SCIS catalogue record available before titles are delivered – ensuring a 100% hit rate with SCIS!

All of which leaves you with more time to field requests for information resources – sometimes only minutes before they are needed for a class or homework assignment! 

Paul du Temple
Wheelers Books



Connections

Connections is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS), a business unit of Curriculum Corporation. SCIS is committed to publishing informative and useful material for the benefit of library staff in schools. Our focus is helping library professionals keep up to date with the latest in information services and information technology relevant to school libraries.

Connections is distributed by Curriculum Corporation to all schools in Australia.

Connections content does not necessarily reflect the views of Curriculum Corporation, the editor, publisher or printer, or imply endorsement by them. Authors retain copyright of articles and should be contacted for permission to reprint.

Connections contributions

SCIS welcomes submissions of articles to be considered for publication in *Connections*.

Articles may range in length from 500 to 2,000 words. Work outside these specifications will be considered.

Contributions and correspondence are welcome and should be forwarded to scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au

Please include your contact details.

Advertising in Connections

Advertisements, supplied in electronic form, should be forwarded to SCIS. Contact SCIS for specifications and advertising rates.

Connections online

All articles and regular features are available electronically at www.curriculum.edu.au/scis

Educational Lending Right

The Educational Lending Right (ELR) scheme is an Australian Government cultural program administered by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA).

Curriculum Corporation (CC) has been operating the Educational Lending Right school library survey for DEWHA, previously the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA), for ten years.

Each year, the ELR school library survey is identified with the year in which it is operating and the survey number. For example, last year the survey was identified as the ELR 2009-10 school library survey, indicating the year, 2009, and the fact that it was the 10th survey.

What are the objectives of ELR?

The objectives of ELR are to make payments to Australian creators and publishers on the basis that income is lost from the availability of their books in educational lending libraries, and to support the enrichment of Australian culture by encouraging the growth and development of Australian writing and publishing.

How does ELR work?

The payments available under the ELR scheme are made to eligible Australian creators and publishers whose books are held in educational libraries on the basis that income is lost from the availability of their books in these libraries.

Creators and publishers submit claims for books that are registered for the scheme after meeting the eligibility criteria.

An annual survey of the book stock of a representative sample of educational libraries provides an estimated number

of copies of each eligible book. Payment is calculated by multiplying the number of copies by a rate that is determined each year.

ELR complements the existing Public Lending Right (PLR) scheme which covers books held in public lending libraries.

The annual process to operate the ELR school library survey

Claims from creators and publishers are invited by advertisements that appear in national daily newspapers and book industry trade journals each year.

Creators or publishers may make a claim by completing an approved claim form and submitting it to the Lending Rights Office at DEWHA before 31 March each year.

DEWHA will then process all the claims, which takes considerable time. They then formulate a list of titles which will become the 'source file'. This file is then made available in September of each year for Curriculum Corporation technical support to incorporate into software for some library management systems to use, so the number of copies of specified titles can be calculated.

Each year at the commencement of term four, 600 schools across Australia are invited to participate in the ELR school library survey. These schools are randomly selected from a representative sample of primary, secondary and K-12 schools. Schools may be government, Catholic or independent, with an enrolment of more than 100 students. Only schools with a library management system supplied by one of the participating vendors are included in the sample.


The invited schools are sent a package of information, which includes instructions on how to carry out the survey in their library management system. It will also include

items to support the process such as a blank CD-ROM for saving data and a reply-paid envelope for returning items. Recent packages have also contained a free pen, printed with the ELR slogan, 'School libraries support ELR'.



ELR 2009-10 school library survey package

The ELR 2008-09 survey introduced a feedback form for participants to fill in and return to us with their comments on running the survey in their library management system. The feedback forms have given us information on how to improve the documents and help school libraries participate in the survey. Comments from schools about the process of running the survey have assisted CC and library system vendors to improve the processes of running the programs in library management systems.

If your school should be selected to participate in future ELR school library surveys, we hope you are able to engage with the request and provide the data which will be used to calculate the number of copies of particular titles in your collection. Your school will be supporting Australian writing and publishing. 

Cipherlab wireless portable scanners - great options for stocktake

Cipherlab 1166 with stand - \$779



- scanner size (9.1 x 7.3 x 15.8 cm)
- transmits barcodes within 50 metres
- weighs 200 grams
- can be configured to scan in continuous mode
- ergonomic design
- additional battery charges in cradle while scanner is in use
- 3 year manufacturer warranty

Cipherlab 1660 - pocket-size - \$499



- small pocket-size scanner (9.5 x 3.5 x 2 cm)
- transmits barcodes up to 10 metres
- lightweight - 50 grams
- operates by pressing trigger
- hand held operation only - no cable or cradle
- two AAA batteries - approx 18 hours scanning
- 1 year manufacturer warranty

Order from SCIS: www2.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/order_form.pdf

SCIS SCHOOLS CATALOGUE
INFORMATION SERVICE

Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT)

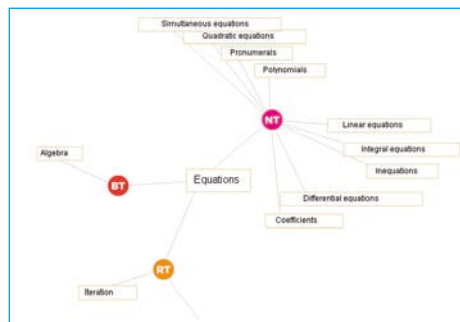
The Project Sponsor for the Schools Online Thesaurus routinely asks me 'How's ScOT going?'. I'd like to borrow from this playful anthropomorphism and relay to *Connections* readers that ScOT has come of age.



Connections readers will be familiar with ScOT; issues 59 and 60 featured articles on ScOT and its application in SCIS catalogue records. ScOT is a subject vocabulary that can be used in various cataloguing standards, including MARC 21 (the MACHine-Readable Cataloguing standard used by SCIS), Dublin Core and ANZ-LOM (the Learning Object Metadata profile developed for the education sector in Australia and New Zealand). ScOT is updated as it is applied to content projects and collections relevant to school curricula. ScOT is a significant authority for metadata creation and validation as digital content and records are harvested and shared across the school sector. ScOT terms can be accessed at <http://scot.curriculum.edu.au/>.

Several initiatives in 2009 have positioned ScOT as a significant tool for the description and retrieval of education resources. The new look and feel website is the gateway to these initiatives. A summary of website highlights are below.

Visual ScOT



More than a list or even a taxonomy, a subject thesaurus is a complex web of hierarchical and associative relationships. Traditional methods of displaying these relationships are suitable for expert users such as cataloguers and content

managers. The new 'Visual ScOT' is a graphic representation of the rich semantic relationships that pull the curriculum concepts together. It's fun to browse this too – have a play at <http://visualscot.curriculum.edu.au/VisualScot/>.

Guidelines

Focusing now on the *Connections* readership, a new cataloguing guideline is available. This document is based on the guidelines developed by SCIS cataloguing agencies to assist them in assigning ScOT terms to SCIS catalogue records. ScOT can be incorporated within a number of cataloguing standards. The document *Using ScOT: Guidelines for Indexers and Cataloguers* provides further tips for selecting the right terms for content description. The *Guidelines* were released early in 2009 and are available at <http://scot.curriculum.edu.au/indexing.html>

Licensing

ScOT is mostly used either to describe education resources or to retrieve them. Between the cataloguer and end user are the information architects, system developers and IT managers responsible for implementing thesaurus look-up features. These users need to get the whole ScOT authority file, not just browse a few terms!

Curriculum Corporation has developed a licence that permits use of the whole ScOT authority file in cataloguing and/or discovery systems for non-commercial educational purposes. The licence supports rapid uptake of ScOT in significant cataloguing, harvesting and discovery systems.

Users who need the whole ScOT authority and regular updates can register at <http://scot.curriculum.edu.au/download.asp>

Thesaurus formats


[Warning! Nerdy details!] Speaking of information architects – what does the ScOT file look like anyway? In 2009, ScOT was made available in SKOS RDF format. SKOS stands for 'Simple Knowledge Organisation System' and is a data model for sharing and linking knowledge organisation systems via the semantic web. RDF is the 'Resource Description Framework', a language for representing

information about resources in the world wide web. The SKOS RDF framework is promulgated by W3C, the world wide web consortium which works collaboratively to develop web standards. SKOS is a significant data standard used in emerging discovery tools that will play important roles in linking content to curriculum in the near future.

Which brings ScOT up to date – and segues nicely to what's next.

Curriculum mapping

Around the corner, ScOT will be very busy providing links between significant content collections and the Australian curriculum. The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is managing the design of new curriculum statements and metadata standards are central to the design process. ScOT terms are used to describe the draft curriculum and will play an integral role linking curriculum statements to curriculum resources.

As well as enhancing discoverability of the curriculum, the draft curriculum itself is a source of warrant for ScOT. New and modified terms based on ACARA publications have already been released in ScOT. For detailed changes to ScOT see our release documentation at <http://scot.curriculum.edu.au/releases.html>. 

Les Kneebone
Thesaurus Analyst,
The Learning Federation

Resources for classroom teachers

This page features our most recent or highly recommended professional resources to support teaching practice. Please visit www.curriculumpress.edu.au for a full list of titles and to place your order.

Guiding Thinking for Effective Spelling

144 pp

Authors: Christine Topfer and Deirdre Arendt

RRP: \$39.95

SCIS No: 1414400

ISBN: 9781742004815



Spelling is a complex cognitive process, not a simple act of memorisation.

This book is based on the authors' many years studying current research and trialling the findings in their classrooms. It promotes their belief that spelling is an engaging inquiry process which needs to be supported by the school community.

Guiding Thinking for Effective Spelling explains practical ways to assess your students' spelling needs and implement a consistent, supportive spelling approach across the whole school at all primary levels.

Learning activities demonstrate engaging ways to explicitly teach spelling strategies, including:

- Sound – focusing on how words sound
- Visual – focusing on how words look
- Meaning – thinking about word meaning
- Connecting – making connections with other words
- Checking – using resources to find the correct spelling.

Prompts for the teacher demonstrate ways to encourage students to become more aware of the spelling strategies they use when writing or learning new words.

Support resources such as word cards and questioning prompts are also available as free downloads from www.curriculumpress.edu.au/effectivespelling.

Step by Step: Improving student achievement in the classroom

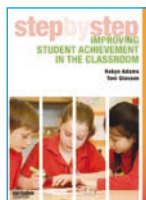
96 pp

Authors: Robyn Adams and Toni Glasson

RRP: \$36.95

SCIS No: 1412344

ISBN: 9781742003153



Every teacher wants to see their students fully engaged, highly motivated,

taking responsibility for their own learning, and experiencing greater success as a result.

Robyn Adams and Toni Glasson share their research and classroom experience, exploring assessment for learning strategies such as:

- sharing learning intentions and success criteria with the class
- peer feedback
- effective teacher feedback
- strategic questioning
- student reflection, self-motivation and self-assessment.

When implemented consistently, these strategies lead to significant improvement in student achievement:

Step by Step: Improving student achievement in the classroom demonstrates how these strategies can be implemented in the context of a teaching and learning unit.

Packed with activities, worksheets and student work samples, *Step by Step* is your opportunity to follow in the steps of practising classroom teachers using assessment for learning strategies to effect greater student achievement.

These resources are complemented by online material on the Assessment for Learning website at www.assessmentforlearning.edu.au

Thinking Strategies for the Inquiry Classroom

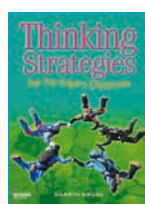
96 pp

Authors: Darryn Kruse

RRP: \$38.95

SCIS No: 1410041

ISBN: 9781742003139



A practical resource for middle years teachers implementing an inquiry learning approach. An enormously flexible approach for teachers and learners, inquiry learning requires students to take an active role in:

- asking questions, building on prior knowledge and making their own discoveries
- finding information from a variety of sources
- making connections between ideas, learning domains and experiences
- reflecting on, and taking action related to, their understandings.

Thinking Strategies for the Inquiry Classroom presents a selection of tried and tested activities linking inquiry to thinking skills. These valuable strategies are structured around the stages of inquiry – Tuning In,

Finding Out, Sorting Out, Making Conclusions, Going Further, Reflecting and Taking Action – and clearly relate to thinking skills relevant to each stage. 'Inquiry in Action' snapshots explain the classroom experience of real teachers putting the strategies to work, and help you to decide how you will adapt these activities for the specific needs of your own students.

An invaluable source of inspiration, *Thinking Strategies for the Inquiry Classroom* will help you to extend your students' inquiry journey into rich and varied learning experiences.

Focus on Inquiry: A practical approach to curriculum planning

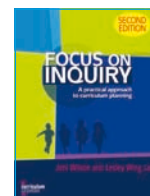
144 pp

Authors: Jeni Wilson and Lesley Wing Jan

RRP: \$42.00

SCIS No: 1405684

ISBN: 9781742004808




Implement effective inquiry-based learning with *Focus on Inquiry: A practical approach to curriculum planning*.

Learn how to plan and assess inquiry-based units with this clear guide to the practice of inquiry, the forms it can take in the classroom, and the pivotal role of the teacher in effective inquiry learning.

Inquiry inspires students to take an active role in:

- asking questions, building on prior knowledge and making their own discoveries
- finding information from a variety of sources
- making connections between ideas, learning domains and experiences
- reflecting on, and taking action related to, their understandings.

This new edition of *Focus on Inquiry* builds on current research into learning and pedagogy, the authors' continued experiences and the renewed interest in inquiry as a way to facilitate student learning.

Busy teachers can adapt ideas from short classroom snapshots or the in-depth sample units illustrating the what and the how of each different type of inquiry. New material on assessment, planning and questioning is supplemented with practical lists, photocopiable resources and activities sure to spark off ideas about your own journey into inquiry-based learning. 

When it comes to library and information management at schools...
...we've had our finger on the pulse for more than 25 years

The Oliver logo is displayed in a dark blue box with a red underline. In the background, a hand is shown pointing at a screen that displays the Oliver logo and the words 'alice' and 'Oasis'.

Oliver is the latest web based library and information management solution from **Softlink**

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- ✓ Customised tools and filters for easy search and selection
- ✓ Shortlist of the best new/upcoming titles, chosen by experienced librarians

SCIS records confirmed on all titles - giving you a 100% hit rate every time!

*To register: Contact us for your customer code which gives you access to further discounts and a pre-approved 30 day account



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