

connections

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SCIS SCHOOLS CATALOGUE
INFORMATION SERVICE



To inspire or to instruct

During May and June this year, I travelled Australia as part of the Positive Schools Initiative to speak and network with teachers and educators. Doing so provided an insightful introduction to what teachers are thinking and drew thousands to Fremantle, Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney. The convention centres were full with educators coming from miles around—some travelling overnight from smaller townships—seeking new ideas and positive answers to questions from the classroom. It was humbling for me to witness the universal passion attendees came with. They all knew one thing: that change is needed in schools.

Students are looking for leadership. Teachers and educators must take ownership of teaching their students and understand that attendance does not constitute a willingness or eagerness to learn.

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» To inspire or to instruct (cont.)

Those who work within the education sector, whether as a teacher, a librarian, or a social worker, need to understand that students have to be inspired to want to learn.

The world is full of fast evolving distractions. What I, as a student back in 1982, faced on the way to school is completely different to what students face on their way to school today. Generation Z (people born between 1995 and 2009) are the first ever generation to have never experienced life without the internet. Accordingly, they are technology focused and the internet is their first port of call for information. The advancement of science, ideas, and technology has meant that we can live a better, easier way of life.

At the annual School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (SLANZA) conference in 2013, I was asked whether I thought school libraries were getting left behind in the digital age. My answer is still the same a year later. Libraries should be the centre of technological innovation in schools. The library is the creative heart of a school and I believe

the humble library will come into the fore more now than ever before. Librarians are trained to assist students in sorting through information sources. They help students to learn to use new tools, and answer their questions. This means librarians are a necessity no matter how one looks at it.

It is up to the library to coordinate and become an indispensable 'centre' where creativity and technology become an innovative and complementary extension of learning. As many people have mentioned to me, the library is the avenue where students can seek refuge. It is also the place where instead of pushing 'traditional' books as some schools are still doing, they can push for more relevant and current titles.

A student's life today, whether it be in New Zealand, Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, or Brisbane, has little relevance to the 1930's Salinas Valley, California of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. I have nothing against George, Lennie, Candy, or John Steinbeck for that matter. The point is that many students find life at school tough and often lonely. Some students are having their own 'midlife' crises. The very least we can do is to provide reading materials that have some bearing on what is happening today.

If you are finding it hard to influence reading or to increase student literacy, try something different. Introduce a book that is currently trending amongst the younger generation. There is the *Divergent* series - Veronica Roth, *The Hunger Games* series - Suzanne Collins, *The Fault in our Stars* - John Green, *The Help* - Kathryn Stockett, just to mention a few. Some in the education sector might say that these are not books that could be used to help a student. As my friend Luka Lesson, the renowned Spoken Word Poet, once pointed out: Shakespeare was the rebel of his times. I've had many 'spirited' discussions about introducing these so called 'populist' Young Adult books to school libraries. Yet in the *Divergent* series a student will read about:

- utopian/dystopian societies
- factions
- conformity
- the role of government
- power
- creative freedom
- restriction and confliction
- freedom of choice
- what sacrifices are made for love
- friendship.

Do these sound familiar? If you ask most students what is important to them today, you'll find much of that can be slotted into the above categories.

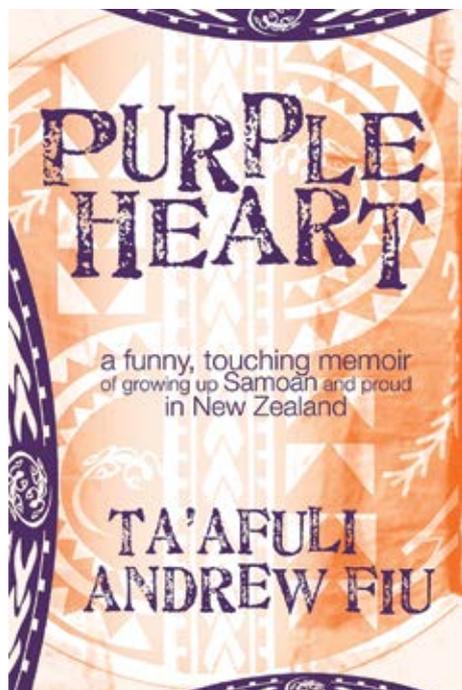
If a school does not have a pioneering teacher with a lesson plan for any of the above books, try starting a book club through the library to introduce these books to students. In your regular meetings, you can discuss character analysis, similes, themes, history examples, quotes, hypothetical theories, reflect on actual world events and conflicts that are happening now, and how these things can happen just like in the book.

Looking back at my own life, my love of reading came about through the passion of the elderly patients in the hospital beds beside me, rather than my trained teachers at school. It was these patients who inspired me to read with passion, they did not instruct me to read. That is the difference.

Image credits

Andrew Fiu with Peter Thompson at Positive Schools Conference, Sydney:
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Purple Heart by Andrew Fiu. © Random House, 2006.



Purple Heart by Andrew Fiu



Ta'afuli Andrew Fiu is author of the memoir *Purple Heart*, his account of growing up Samoan in New Zealand and of the four and a half years he spent in hospital coping with a serious heart condition. It is studied for NCEA exams and has been an English study text in New Zealand since 2007. He is in demand as a motivational speaker for big business, as well as schools, and appeared recently at The Positive Schools Australia Conferences 2014. <http://lifeafter6.com/>

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Dr Ben Chadwick
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SCIS is more

Welcome to *Connections* 91. Thank you to Laura Armstrong, our *Connections* editor, for another sterling effort and wonderful end-product.

You Say Goodbye, I say Hello

There have been some significant changes in the SCIS camp since *Connections* 90. Perhaps the most obvious one is the departure of Pru Mitchell as SCIS Manager. Who could possibly replace Pru, a veteran and acknowledged guru in the school libraries industry? Well, I thought I might give it a go. My name is Ben Chadwick. I have been at ESA since January 2012. To start with I worked with Les Kneebone on the Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT). For the past two years I have also been working with SCIS as systems librarian. It is daunting to follow on from Pru. Nonetheless, I look forward to helping you get the most out of SCIS, for the ultimate benefit of your library, teachers, and students.



The Magic Roundabout

You might have noticed a few changes on our home page. Our attractive book carousel gives selected titles a free ride for a few weeks. So far we've featured titles from the Children's Book Council of Australia's Book of the Year Awards, the 2014 Australian Book Design Awards, and the NZ Post Book Awards. You can click on a cover to see it in the SCIS catalogue and we'll often include a hyperlink to a new Special Orders page, where you can choose to download MARC records for your selection of the featured titles.

Just beneath the book carousel, we've brought a few of our most popular links together into one handy list. We hope this will make it a little easier to navigate your way around the site.

There have been other changes to our Special Orders (scis.curriculum.edu.au/scisweb/specialorder.php) page, too. This page is intended to provide access to bulk MARC downloads for collections of electronic records that are either free or available en masse to subscribers to a given service. Up until now the page has included collections for NDLRN learning objects, Clickview videos, Campfire films, and resources reviewed in the *Scan* journal. There is also a tool for searching and selectively downloading websites we have catalogued. This has now been expanded, with additional tools for finding and selecting apps and ebooks. There may be further changes to our offerings on this page, so watch this space.

2015 SCIS subscriptions

Schools who pay their SCIS subscriptions on an annual basis will receive their invoice for SCIS early in Term 4. Payment is due by the end of 2014 to ensure continuous access. Government school systems, except Victoria and Tasmania, and a number of Catholic Dioceses coordinate access to SCIS on behalf of all their schools.

The Magic Bus

October 2014 will see SCIS take off on its New Zealand North Island road show. Michael Jongen, our Library Services Coordinator, will be conducting

'Making the Most of SCIS' workshops in Auckland on 20 October, Hamilton on 22 October, and Wellington on 24 October. This three-hour workshop is aimed at beginner to intermediate users, and will give you an overview of all of SCIS's offerings. See our professional learning page (www2.curriculum.edu.au/scis/professional_learning.html) for more details. SCIS will return to the South Island in 2015 for workshops and SLANZA15.

See Also...

SCIS releases updated MARC authorities twice each year, in February and August. If you need help downloading or installing the files, see our Authority Files help page and, importantly, consult your system vendor.

If you don't use Authority Files in your system, you aren't doing everything you can to assist your students and teachers in finding what they are looking for. Michael Jongen recently put together a blog post and a webcast about using Authority Files. To subscribe please get in touch with us at scisinfo@esa.edu.au.

Later in this issue Les Kneebone mentions the new MARC download for ScOT authorities. This is an exciting development, meaning that at some stage in the near future your system can take advantage of the rich reference structures in the ScOT thesaurus. Again, this will help direct your students and teachers to their learning and reading needs by exploiting ScOT's educational and curriculum-focused terms. We don't recommend rushing in and installing these authorities just yet: some systems may not know how to deal with two sets of authorities. As always, check with your system vendor.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Connections*. Please get in touch with us if you have any queries or comments about articles or issues raised. I look forward to communicating with as many of you as possible over coming months.

Warm regards,

Ben Chadwick

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Brendan Eichholzer
Project Administrator
Education Services Australia

Taking the guesswork out of genre

School libraries are not just designed for accessing curriculum material; they are also a playground for young minds. Students who discover the joys of reading for pleasure are well positioned for enhanced literacy, language acquisition, cultural understanding, and social skills (Clark and Rumbold, 2006). The school library is a vital part of this discovery process. The availability and accessibility of fiction in school libraries encourages students to read. This increases their literary skills while expanding their imagination. The question arises, how can this best be achieved?

While there is no question that creating an independently accessible shelving system—one that exposes students to as broad a range of fiction as possible—is ideal, there is increasing contention about how best to achieve this. In a bookstore, children’s titles are usually found under generic ‘children’ or ‘young adult’ sections while adult fiction is

shelved by genre. Some librarians believe that the tried-and-true system of shelving alphabetically by author surname is the best way to shelve fiction; others believe that by genre shelving they can encourage students to read more. A third group prefer a middle ground, where author arrangement and genre stickers combine to promote exposure to different titles as well as independent access.

It is our job at SCIS to ensure we meet the needs of school librarians in creating an easily accessible library catalogue, where every physical item has a distinct and logical home. In an attempt to do so, we have been working on a multi-fold approach to the issue of fiction shelving. By giving you the tools required to shelve fiction in your school library in a way that best suits you, we enable you to decide the ideal course of action for your school. For this purpose we have developed a system that facilitates

traditional shelving methods while also catering to alternative arrangements.

Above all else, any system used for shelving fiction must be based around avoiding chaos. Knowing where each book lives is a key component of the job description. Ideally a standardised approach would be achieved; however currently there are multiple systems being used in libraries for shelving fiction.

Traditionally in school libraries fiction books are given a call number beginning with ‘F’ and followed by the first three letters of the author’s surname. These books are then shelved separately to non-fiction and ordered alphabetically by the author’s surname. This system allows students to quickly and easily find books by authors they know, but it can be difficult for students to source titles similar to those they already enjoy without prior knowledge or assistance. It does encourage students to expand their horizons by



Genre identifiers in use.



placing different titles in front of them that they may not otherwise discover using another shelving system. However, problems may arise, if all a student knows is that they want to read a book about knights, for example. They would need to go to the catalogue, carry out a subject search for the term 'Knights - Fiction', and filter the results. This level of work required to find a title may be off putting to students, but it is a great learning opportunity. As this is the same system they would use to find non-fiction titles, it is a good way to teach students about how to look up material in a library, a skill that will last a lifetime.

Another option is to shelve fiction under the traditional system, while also including genre identifiers. By placing stickers on the spines of fiction titles next to the call number, it allows students to easily identify which genres they are consuming and enables them to find other books in a similar vein. This removes some of the requirement of looking up the catalogue and may make the idea of browsing for reading material more enticing. If a student wants a book about dragons, they can simply go to the shelves and look for the fantasy stickers and know that they will be able to find what they are looking for.

It is our job at SCIS to ensure we meet the needs of school librarians in creating an easily accessible library catalogue, where every physical item has a distinct and logical home. In an attempt to do so, we have been working on a multi-fold approach to the issue of fiction shelving.

An alternative to these is to break with library tradition and shelve fiction similar to the way adult fiction is shelved in bookstores: by genre. This allows for students to quickly and autonomously find similar titles to ones they know that they enjoy. Proponents of this system claim that it encourages students to read more voraciously, as they know what they like and where to find it. It allows for a high level of individual accessibility but comes at the cost of using the opportunity to teach any relevant library skills. Even if a student knows how to find a genre book in the catalogue, that skill may not translate onto the non-fiction section. Issues also arise here in defining genres. How specific should these be, and what happens to titles that cross the boundaries?

Assigning an item to a single genre is one of the many difficulties associated with genre shelving. It is important that the same genre is used for a title across libraries. While many titles can be considered to cross genres, genre shelving only allows for a title to be shelved in one genre area, unless the library invests in multiple copies.

SCIS assists those who wish to identify their fiction titles with genres by adding genre headings to catalogue records for works of fiction. Selection of the appropriate genre is determined by our cataloguers through a series of guidelines. The rationale behind these decisions can be seen in the scope notes attached to each heading. A brief overview of these genre headings has been recently updated and can be found in the Guidelines to using SCIS Subject Headings (2014, p7).

In collaboration with Syba Signs, SCIS has been working to ensure that the genre headings we produce are relevant to the libraries that use them. Syba Signs have developed a series of stickers designed to be fixed to the spines of books to indicate their genre. These stickers are indicative of the genre covered; for example, an alien for science fiction or a tank for war stories. These stickers cover most of the genre headings found in school libraries, including Australian and New Zealand specific stories.

Changing the way something is done is often time consuming and costly, and the way that you choose to shelve fiction in your library is no exception to this. All of the above techniques have pros and cons, and it can be difficult to decide which would be best to encourage positive reading habits in your students. As all of these options promote reading in different ways, the question becomes, which is the most beneficial for your library? Currently there is no hard and fast answer. What are other schools in your area doing? What system have your students come from and what system will be used in libraries they will use in the future? It is also vital to decide if the value of any change outweighs the time and cost requirements associated with altering how you currently shelve fiction in your library.

There are advantages for library staff in using a defined set of genres that are consistent across the school library community. By using the options outlined above, we hope to make it easier for you to create and promote an accessible fiction section in your library. Encouraging students to read voraciously and independently gives them skills for life and a passion for the written word. In the end, it is up to them to become interested, all you can do is set up your library in a way that appeals.

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Genre identifiers in use. Photography by Laura Armstrong. CC-BY-NC-SA.

If you have any suggestions on how we can help to create a better set of genre headings for your students, please contact us at scisinfo@esa.edu.au and let us know how we can improve our services to you and your students.



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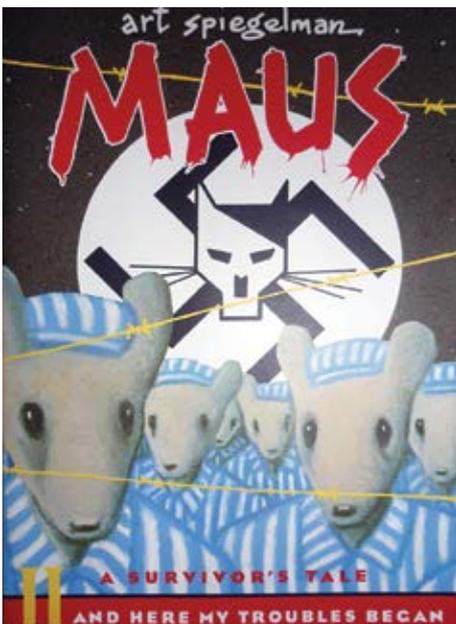
Karen Gray works as a teacher librarian at St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Norville, NSW. After many years as a classroom teacher, she is now able to combine her belief in the importance of children's literacy, passion for children's literature, and an ongoing quest in using technology to support quality 21st century learning.

Graphic novels: providing a different perspective

Graphic stories have been told since time immemorial. From the 17,000-year old cave paintings of Lascaux, the hieroglyphics of Ancient Egypt, the tapestry panels of the Middle Ages, and the invention of the printing press; all had a graphic story to tell.

Today, manga, comics, comic books, graphic literature, graphic stories, and graphic novels are analogous to the same form of text. However, an enduring prejudice towards these texts as sub-standard literature has been a difficult issue to overcome.

William Eisner's (1978) *Contract With God and Other Tenement Stories* was seen as a turning point. An attitude change was further cemented when the 1991 Pulitzer Prize was awarded to Art Spiegelman for *Maus*, which tells of his family's experiences in the Holocaust. Graphic novels now tell richer and more extended stories that deal with serious topics (Cromer and Clark, 2007). They are also a bridge to their text



Maus II: a survivor's tale: and here my troubles began, by Art Spiegelman

based counterparts (Lee, 2007). For high school students manga interpretations of Shakespearean works such as *Hamlet* or *Romeo and Juliet* provide such a bridge.

The graphic novel format has also been a platform for the popular trend of fusion texts. These books merge the features of comics, graphic novels and prose (Evans, 2013). Kinney's (2008) *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series and Pichon's (2011) *Tom Gates* series are examples of this hybrid text.

What Value Do Graphic Novels Add to the School Library Collection?

Students of the 21st century are inundated with visual images accessible on a range of devices and formats. With a prolific online world, Kunkle (2004) identifies similarities between reading a graphic novel, the interactivity contained in websites, and the importance of visual literacy skills in being able to navigate both. Graphic novels are considered multimodal texts that tap into the way students already learn.

The Australian Curriculum: English has a strong focus on visual literacy. Students are required to read and view a wide range of texts as a key outcome. Becoming visually literate means students read and interpret the purpose and intended meaning, as well as analyse, synthesise and evaluate the form, structure and features of visual texts (NSW English K-10 Syllabus 2012 Glossary). This implies the use of higher order thinking skills. For the first time recommended texts include graphic novels. DiCamillo's (2004) *The Tale of Desperaux*, a suggested text in the NSW English K-10 Syllabus, has been adapted into a graphic novel and film. This differentiates the curriculum and enables exploration of the text through various formats. Given this mandate it would be an expectation that a school library include graphic novels in its collection to support visual literacy.

Graphic novels support the varying learning needs of all students, which is another reason for their inclusion in the library. Students who are hearing impaired or diagnosed with autism use pictures as a way to understand and derive meaning (Kluth, 2008, p170). They also support students who experience difficulty visualising pictures in their head and motivate reluctant readers. Further comparisons have been drawn between graphic novels and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. Graphic novels provide a creative outlet for students with linguistic intelligence. Using graphic formats allows students to respond and express their knowledge and ideas in a creative way. Because of their layout there is an obvious connection for students with spatial intelligence. The visual elements of facial expressions, settings, lines, and shadings appeal to students whose strength is interpersonal intelligence, as they identify and empathise with the characters (Lyga, 2006).

The reading of any text involves interpretation. Sabeti (2012) conducted research into critical reading practices of an extra-curricular Graphic Novel Reading Group with Shaun Tan's (2007) novel, *The Arrival*. The aim was to determine the strategies applied when interpreting texts in English classrooms. Contrary to her assumptions she found that students used a wider range of strategies to interpret the graphic novel that went beyond their classroom experience. Sabeti saw that traditional teaching methods imposed limitations on students. Through both studies, students developed greater understanding of the political and social contexts conveyed through the novels and were able to empathise with the characters' experiences. Graphic novels enriched student learning.

Graphic novels can be used across the curriculum to address artistic style and technique or complex issues of bullying, prejudice, coming of age, social justice and injustice, and triumph over adversity (Schwarz, 2006; Patrick, 2010). Social, economic and cultural contexts of different historic periods are visually reinforced through graphic novels that can be a tool to aid learning across the curriculum (Boerman-Cornell, 2013).

What is the Role of the Teacher Librarian?

The Australian School Library Association (ASLA, 2004) outlines three areas for standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians: professional knowledge; professional practice; and professional commitment. Including graphic novels in the library collection requires teacher librarians to have a thorough understanding of their school community, the curriculum, and the recreational interests of the users. Acceptance of graphic novels as legitimate reading sources within the school community may be an issue. The teacher librarian must advocate their value to the curriculum and student learning, as well as making them part of the school library collection to foster students' love of reading (Crawford, 2004).

It is up to the teacher librarian to have sound professional knowledge of literacy and literature for the teachers and students in their schools. (ASLA, 2004, 1.3) This professional knowledge means applying sound judgment in deciding which graphic novels to add to the collection, as 'not all graphic novels are equally useful' (Boerman-Cornell, 2013). A comprehensive collection policy is essential in sourcing professional reviews and recommendations to select

and acquire graphic novels. Publisher guidelines should not be accepted at face value, as they do not always align with the school library's selection criteria (Lee, 2007). Like other resources in the collection graphic novels may be challenged and a rigorous process must be in place to review and resolve any objection.

Part of the teacher librarian's role is to support teaching and learning. Laycock (2007) believes teacher librarians are placed in a strong position to collaborate and lead planning and implementation of rich literacy programs. This includes the use of graphic novels as a means of differentiating the curriculum and meeting the diverse needs and reading interests of students across the school. There may be initial resistance, but collaborating with an interested working party is a step towards overcoming this. Carter (2009) suggests that teachers may be more willing to use graphic novels as curriculum supplements. It can be more effective to integrate graphic novels into existing units of work than reading them in isolation. Monitoring the impact of graphic novels on student learning and sharing this evidence with staff may gradually change perception.

Graphic novels have a valid place in today's school library collection as a literary form. They engage learning across the curriculum, support differentiation within the classroom and foster a dynamic reading culture.

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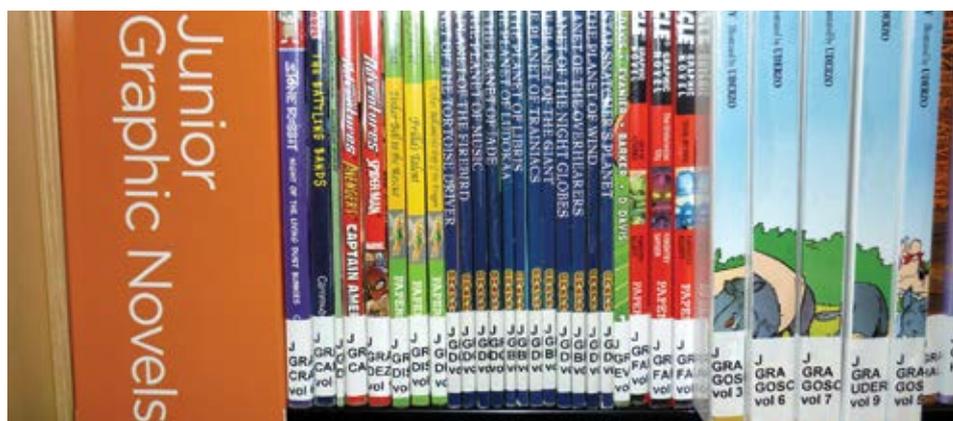
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Maus II: a survivor's tale: and here my troubles began by Art Spiegelman. © 1991 by Pantheon Books, a division of Random House LLC; Used by permission of Pantheon Books, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

Graphic novels in the collection. Photography by Laura Armstrong. CC-BY-NC-SA.



Graphic novels in the collection





Jane Godwin
 Publisher of *Our Australian Girl*
 and *Do You Dare?*
 Penguin Books Australia

Historical fiction in the classroom: reflecting on *Our Australian Girl* and *Do You Dare?*

Our Australian Girl is a fiction series for girls featuring characters from different eras in Australian history, between 1808 and 1983. There are currently ten female characters, each with four books to their name, and each story set during a 12–18 month period of their life. The series is aimed at 7–12 year olds, with the ‘sweet spot’ being years 3–5. Each book is 136 pages in length, with a reading level of 30+.

Do You Dare? is a fiction series for boys featuring stand-alone novels that are set in different eras in Australian history. Each book centres on the adventures of a gang of boys (and some girls). The series is aimed at 8–12 year olds, with the ‘sweet spot’ being years 4–6.

Background

The *Our Australian Girl* series took us two years and one month to build, but the ideas behind the series had been around for a lot longer than that. Although we wanted to bring the hardships and triumphs of Australian history to life in a relevant way for young readers, and encourage an appreciation of what it really means to be Australian, our vision was deeper than that.

What we wanted more than anything was to provide a rich and meaningful reading experience for young girls. Books about sleepovers and fairy princesses have their place, but there seemed to be a lack of books built around strength, hope, resilience, and courage.

Our Australian Girl stemmed from a desire to create something that was pretty but not glitzy, enjoyable but not vapid, educational but still compelling, and completely devoid of crop tops and mobile phones. The *Do You Dare?* series came about by popular demand.

Many readers, parents and teachers emailed us from all over Australia asking for a companion series for boys, so we produced just that. Both of these series have linked eras and themes, so that teachers are able to use the series alongside each other in the classroom.

With the advent of the Australian Curriculum, we believed that it was an opportune time to provide fresh angles in interpreting our past for a new generation, so we always had the curriculum in mind as each series developed. *Our Australian Girl* and *Do You Dare?* are linked to many aspects of the curriculum and can be used widely in literature circles, wider reading, history, English, literacy, SOSE, geography, and even in subjects like philosophy as they can be used as a springboard for self-reflection and enquiry into one’s own personal history.

Both series also link to the curriculum’s overarching general capabilities as they explore values of kindness, fortitude, compassion, and tolerance. They touch on aspects of intercultural understanding, ethical behaviours, critical and creative thinking, literacy, and personal and social capability.

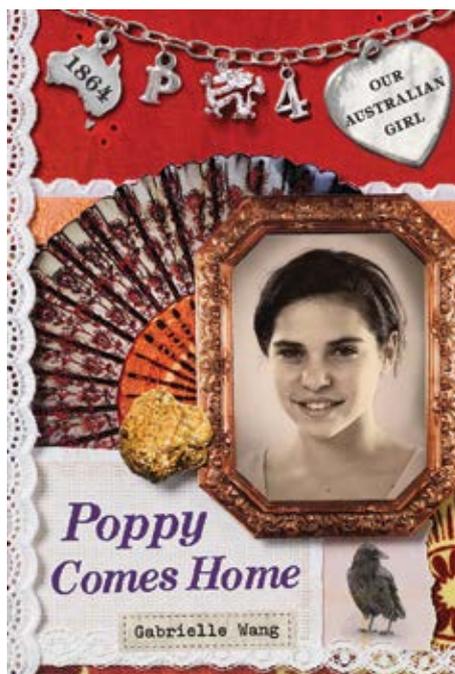
There are many benefits that historical fiction can bring to the classroom. If implemented well it:

Makes the past accessible

Young readers need to be given the opportunity to understand aspects of the past through the eyes of characters that they recognise as having similarities to themselves. The tagline of the *Our Australian Girl* series is ‘a girl like me in a time gone by’, and to achieve this we made sure that there were aspects of each character that young readers today could relate to. Grace loves horses, Rose feels that sometimes the world is unfair and people are not treated equally, and Ruby has to adjust when her privileged life is altered forever. Similarly, in the *Do You Dare?* series, Jem feels let down by his father, and Tom overcomes his fear and stands up to a bully. Young readers today can relate to all of these aspects in the stories. The characters in both series are searching for a place where they fit in; they are exploring notions of independence and finding their way in the world, just as children do today.

Allows children to explore some big themes at a level that is appropriate for them

Compelling historical fiction for children is not just a retelling or reimagining of major events with children on the periphery. Children need to be the heroes. Both series tackle big themes and ideas, but



Our Australian Girl: Poppy Comes Home by Gabrielle Wong



Do You Dare? Tough Times 1931 by Simon Mitchell

have been carefully considered, and are written at a level that the young reader can manage, without being didactic or simplistic. The motivations and actions of the young heroes in these stories also serve to illustrate that history is not only about the big events, but also about individuals making small choices that will affect their lives in a profound way.

Offers the richness and depth of a story and demonstrates to young readers the complexity of issues

Historical fiction should never feel like a history lesson. It can, through offering multiple different points of view, offer a deeper understanding of a complex situation. Alice's brother Teddy doesn't want to go to war, but others believe he's a coward; Rose thinks it's unfair that she's not allowed to ride a bike or wear trousers, and must be educated by a governess. *Our Australian Girl* and *Do You Dare?* are well researched but the touch is light. Above all they are novels, full of adventure and excitement, which just happen to be written about people living in a different time.

Helps us to understand the mistakes of the past so we may shape a brighter future

It is a powerful feeling when a young reader sees their hero treated unfairly by the system, or society. We want to inspire them to find ways to make things better.

Allows us to fight stereotypes and encourage empathy

Not all people were racist, not all rich people were cold and uncaring, not all poor people were simple and moral. Characters in good historical fiction have conflicting aspects to them; in *Our Australian Girl*, Grace is a hero and a thief, Daisy is generous but a scavenger, and Nellie is proud but a beggar.

Demonstrates that beliefs are constantly evolving

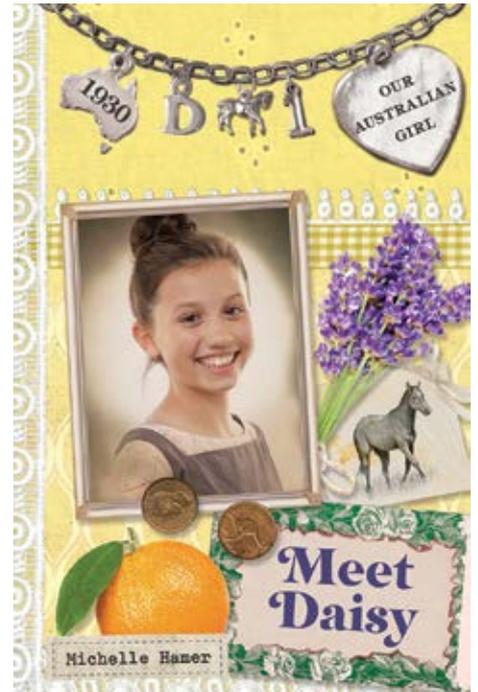
People and society change all the time, and that's what shapes history. Children were taken from their families and placed in orphanages; war was glorified; women weren't allowed to vote; not all children had the means to go to school; and people who were unable to find work were looked down upon.

Compelling historical fiction for children is not just a retelling or reimagining of major events with children on the periphery. Children need to be the heroes.

Strengthens the idea of Australia as a patchwork of cultural diversity

When we first visited schools talking about the series, we asked the students to raise their hand if one or both parents were not born in Australia. Regardless of the type of school or demographic, the room was always full of hands in the air.

Australia is defined by its diversity, and we wanted to celebrate this by including many aspects of its history. We still have a few to go, but both the series cover aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, English and Irish immigration, colonial times, several waves of post-war immigration, the birth and growth of cities, life on the land, rich and poor society, and conventional families and those that are different from the norm. There are also extra facts and resources provided at the back of the books for readers who are interested. Each book acts as a springboard for further research, enabling students to find other books and sources on particular topics once they are engaged.



Our Australian Girl: Meet Daisy by Michelle Hamer

Can personalise history

Discussion about the books in these series often leads to lively classroom conversations about where each of us came from; of our family's history and our own history. In both series there are also cameo appearances from real figures in history, for example Caroline Chisholm, Macpherson McRobertson, Captain Booth, and Peter Lalor.

Offer a reassuring underlying message about resilience through hard times, and celebrate each era of Australia's unique history

Through historical fiction, students learn that life was often hard, people were brave, choices were made, and endings weren't always happy, but hope and resilience frequently prevailed. Historical fiction can be used effectively to explore history in all its diversity, and to celebrate the independence of spirit that we treasure.

For specific use of these books across the curriculum, see the *Our Australian Girl* website: www.ouraustraliangirl.com.au/

Image credits

Our Australian Girl: Poppy Comes Home by Gabrielle Wong. © Penguin Group (Australia).

Do You Dare? Tough Times 1931 by Simon Mitchell. © Penguin Group (Australia).

Our Australian Girl: Meet Daisy by Michelle Hamer. © Penguin Group (Australia).



Natasha Georgiou
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Natasha Georgiou is the Information and Resource Centre Manager at Sevenoaks Senior College in Perth, WA. She is a committee member of the WA School Library Association, where she coordinates and runs professional development for school library staff. She is passionate about teaching digital technologies and literacy to teachers and students. In her down-time she loves all things Italian, travel, and tending to her growing menagerie of pets.

A world of online distraction

Students are becoming increasingly distracted and are finding it harder to focus on a task for any length of time. A growing amount of research has indicated that how we use technology and what we pay attention to is affecting the way we think, act, and feel. Could it be possible that technology is making it more difficult for the next generation to learn? We as educators need to guide students to become balanced citizens in a digital world. Are we becoming a society of mobile phone addicts?

I know that I often find it difficult to stop picking up my phone throughout the day. Looking at statistics about Australian smartphone usage, we, as adults, are obviously having difficulty putting our phones down, so how are teenagers responding to this mobile media?

Australian teenagers are active players in our digital economy and they are increasingly accessing the internet via mobile technologies. As the price of phones and data declines, there are more and more school age teenagers that have access to smartphones (emarketer.com, 2014). This usage continues to rise as these school age teenagers move into their late teens and twenties.

Is the internet making us stupid?

There is growing debate around this topic with many prominent technology industry leaders aware of smartphone addiction and the issues that can arise from it. They claim that in today's world, convenience, efficiency, and immediacy have become more important than anything else. The engineers of technology companies are creating in humanity the expectation of maximum results for minimum effort. According to Carr (2014), 'media are not just passive channels of information. They supply the stuff of thought, but they also shape the process of thought'.

Carr references a recent study of online research habits, conducted by scholars

from University College London, which suggests that we are changing the way we read and think. The researchers found that the people studied exhibited 'skimming behaviour', hopping from one source to another and rarely returning to any source they'd already visited. They typically read no more than one or two pages of an article or book before moving to another source (Carr, 2014). Companies like Google base their business model on this fact. The more we click on links whilst surfing the web, the more they learn about our likes and interests. The information they collect is on-sold to their advertisers, who then market their products to targeted audiences. It is in their economic interests to drive us to continue this trend. The more we click the more they earn.

Distraction is the new focus

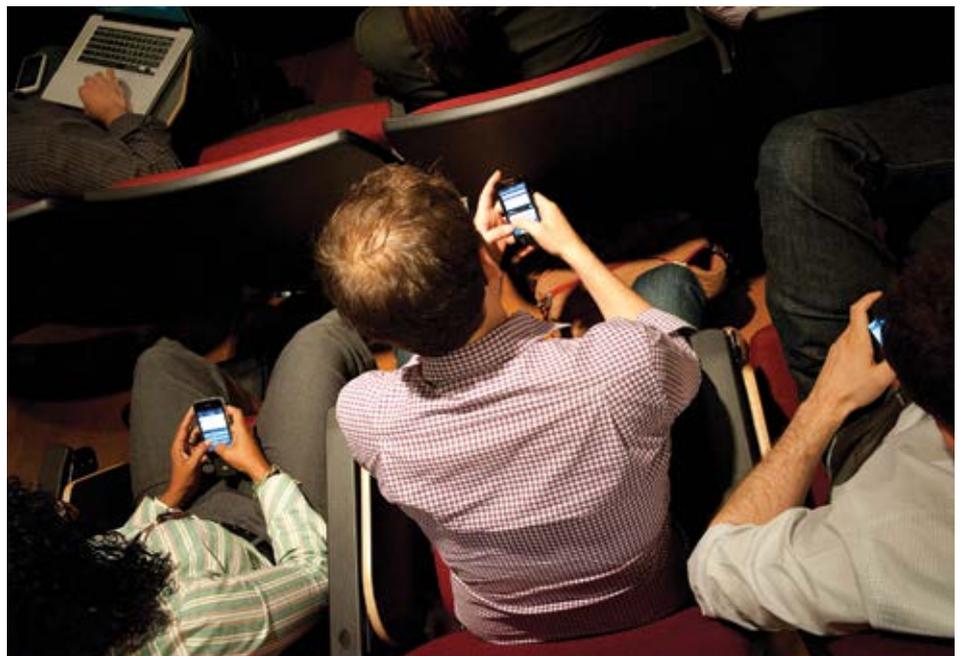
This 'butterfly effect' of quickly transitioning from one online action to another—which we are able to do anywhere with our smartphones—is starting to have an impact on the cognitive functioning, memory

formation, focus, and attention parts of our brains. Joe Kraus has coined this effect a 'crisis of attention'. We have a constant need to fill up the gaps in our day with technology and online media. How often have you seen couples, friends or families at dinner with their mobile phones out instead of talking to each other?

Attention is a muscle, and the less we exercise it, the more weakened it becomes. Kraus (2014) states that to be distracted is a worsening condition; this is because we are training our brain in only one area—the fast thinking part—and overlooking the long form thinking, contemplative, solitude-seeking, and creative areas. We are not giving ourselves time to work on these important sides of our thinking. In fact, we now often feel anxious when our brains are 'unstimulated'.

Connected, but alone?

Being always connected has had an impact in the way we interact with others. Dr. Sherry Turkle pointedly noted in her TED Talk that 'we are lonely but fearful of intimacy. Digital connections



Crisis of Attention

offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. We expect more from technology and less from each other.' (Turkle, 2012). This explains the constant desire for virtual contact and how that contact gets in the way of real relationships.

Turkle believes that we are using modern technology to present ourselves as we want to be. We can easily edit, delete, and retouch ourselves and, in effect, hide from each other. This is a bigger problem for adolescents as they need to learn to develop face-to-face relationships. In the midst of this constant connection is isolation. She warns that 'if we don't teach our children to be alone, they will only know how to be lonely.' (Turkle, 2012). What is missing from our modern society is the need for self-reflection. It is important that we find the time and space to reflect and process our thoughts and actions. As educators we should address this issue by instilling mindful practices in our classrooms.



We stand so close together, but we are so far apart

Should we ban technology in education?

It is unwise to say that mobile technology is bad and that it should be banned from schools. Such a decision would make education increasingly irrelevant and outdated to students, and yet in many schools this is the case. Modern technology, including smartphones and tablets, enhances our lives. In Plato's Phaedrus, Socrates is quoted on his concern about the invention of books,

as he thought that writing would 'destroy education by discouraging students from using their own memories.' There was also fear when textbooks began to be published in the 1800s. Many believed that teachers would no longer be needed, that the texts would contain all of the information that students needed to learn (Laster, 2013).

Finding a Balance

As educators it is important that we understand technology and its advancements, and keep abreast of how it impacts student learning. Furthermore, as Teacher Librarians we are well placed in our schools to inform others of how students seek information in this connected and increasingly personalised world. Mobile devices have changed the school library landscape and we need to be prepared for this if we want to remain relevant in our schools. In a world of information overload, libraries have never been more important. Teaching information and digital literacies, and promoting and encouraging a love of reading are vital for the success of our students.

In seeking balance it is important to model appropriate use of technology. Reading promotion programs are still relevant. We need to teach traditional literacy before we can tackle its digital equivalent. Encourage other teachers, from the Principal down, to spend time reading each day. I previously worked in a school where once a week every student and teacher spent 40 minutes in a calm space away from technology. Reading was encouraged, but listening to music or playing computer games was not allowed. It was interesting watching 14 and 15 year olds struggle with this time, but I can now appreciate how important it is for students and teachers to take time out of their schedules.

We also need to encourage deeper learning experiences. Always focus on your learning objectives and use digital tools only to compliment or enhance these skills. Whatever you teach you also need to keep in mind the purpose behind using the technology; if it has a purpose then it needs to be taught and assessed, otherwise students may never make the transition from using the technology as a form of entertainment to a productive tool.

Teaching self-reflection

Self-reflection goes hand-in-hand with mindfulness; the intentional cultivation of moment-by-moment, non-judgmental, focused attention and awareness. It is not about eliminating technology, but about the importance of scheduling into our busy routines some 'time out'. Research has shown that teaching mindfulness and self-reflection develops various skillsets, including increased attention, social skills, and self-esteem (mindfuleducation.org, 2014).

Technology will continue to change our society and we will likely continue to be distracted by it. In our effort to adapt we need to stop and reflect on how we can use it productively and responsibly. It is time now to learn how to become mindful educators and create learning environments that promote and practice mindfulness, respect, and appropriate use of technology, as well as self-reflection. Are you ready to accept this challenge?

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Leigh Murphy
Scootle Community Project Manager
Education Services Australia



Collaborative learning with Scootle Community

Building connections with colleagues has become a catch cry internationally. Education Services Australia has introduced Scootle Community to provide educators across the nation with the ability to collaborate with peers, across faculties and year levels, suburbs, states, and sectors.

Funded by the Australian Government and developed in collaboration with the Australian teaching profession, Scootle Community (<http://community.scootle.edu.au>) is a private space for teachers to give and receive advice and information online.

The platform's search functionality enables educators to locate curriculum resources and discussions about the year level, learning area, or topics that inspire and interest them.

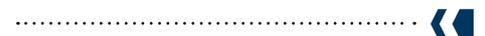
School leaders have been quick to embrace the potential of Scootle Community. Whether it is lesson plans, resources and research relevant to the Australian Curriculum, or just a helpful peer perspective on a classroom challenge, Scootle Community can put a world of ideas and information at educators' fingertips.

"Scootle Community means your learning advisers are no longer the people sitting next to you," says Lauren Sayer, Head of Teaching and Learning at the Royal Children's Hospital Education Institute. "I equate it to a big staffroom. I've always found the larger the staffroom the better the talks. Beginning teachers would walk up and ask you how you teach something and kick off a conversation that gets everyone involved. With Scootle Community, all teachers can be in the

same staffroom. We can all join that conversation, ask questions and help each other. We can talk about what really works but also what doesn't work and why. That's an incredible support for teachers." Sayer is one of over 14,000 educators from across Australia who has been contributing to Scootle Community site since its inception in May last year.

Teachers can join networks or create their own. Scootle Community can also be a collaborative platform for school teams. Scootle Community is simple, intuitive to use, and is even available as a mobile app.

Thousands of teachers from schools across Australia have already registered. Join the conversation in Australia's biggest staffroom.



Supporting Australian book creators

Each year, Educational Lending Right (ELR), an Australian Government cultural program, makes payments to thousands of book creators across Australia. These payments compensate Australian book creators and publishers for income potentially lost as a result of their books being available for loan in educational lending libraries.

Libraries and library staff: ELR's cornerstone

600 schools have now been selected to participate in the 2014–15 school library survey. The survey collects data to estimate how many copies of particular titles are held in Australian school libraries. This data is used to determine appropriate payments for book creators.

Selected schools have been mailed an ELR invitation package designed to make the data-extraction process efficient, painless, and easy to follow. The pack contains an invitation letter, explanatory flyer, and step-by-step instructions on how to extract the book data from their library management system.

School library staff play a critical part in the data-collection process—without their assistance to extract the book count data from their library management systems, ELR would not be possible.

Australian authors and illustrators value school libraries

Many authors and illustrators have told us how much they appreciate the support they have received from school libraries.



A message from Will Kostakis

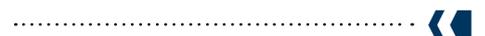
I wouldn't be where I am today without the supportive library staff at my school. Growing up, they nurtured my love of reading with recommendations and encouragement, not only to read widely, but beyond what I thought I was capable of. They nurtured my writing with pointed feedback and warm advice... and more reading recommendations. They opened my eyes to a world beyond my own, and when I was inspired to write, they pushed me to be the best I can be. And they still do, because their effects have been lasting.

Image credit

Will Kostakis. Photography by Marina Pliatsikas.

Laura Armstrong

SCIS Communications & Projects Coordinator
Education Services Australia





Les Kneebone
 Metadata Services Manager
 Education Services Australia
<http://scot.curriculum.edu.au/contact.asp>

Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT): Read All Over

Two years ago in *Connections* Issue 83 I provided an update for Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT) that focused on new technical developments in providing thesaurus services. These tools and web-services are made possible by PoolParty, a new generation vocabulary management platform. PoolParty provides a specialist 'triple-store' database suited to managing thesaurus-type data using the W3C's RDF specification and providing access to that data via a 'SPARQL' webservice. RDF, or 'Resource Description Framework' is a data syntax and format that can be used to model information (such as the concepts contained in thesauri), which can then be communicated between machines, and even 'understood' by machines. RDF data can be queried by other systems using the W3C's SPARQL language, much like SQL is used to query relational databases. PoolParty also provides support for multi-language character encoding, and a more traditional REST-based webservice API for connection to other systems.

Today we are using our thesaurus platform to serve the needs of systems using new and old data standards. We hope that an additional vocabulary format will support better integration of curriculum and teaching frameworks with education resources in the sector.

Australian Curriculum



A significant user of ScOT data is the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). ScOT concept URIs are embedded in all 'Content Descriptions', which

are the most granular curriculum elements published by ACARA. ScOT is the subject-indexing language used to provide a common vocabulary link between Australian Curriculum and education resources. ScOT tagging of the two final learning areas, Languages and Work Studies, is in progress.

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers



The 'Teacher standards' have recently been migrated onto the PoolParty platform and are hosted at Australian Education Vocabularies (AEV) on behalf of Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). ScOT is also used to describe each teacher standard, again providing a common vocabulary link between the standards and resource that may support their objectives.

ScOT and MARC: Machine-Readable Cataloguing



ScOT is no stranger to the SCIS database and has been used within SCIS cataloguing standards for about seven years.

However the mechanism for loading, updating and maintaining ScOT in SCIS systems has relied upon complex transformations between vastly different data structures. ScOT (and the other AEV projects) is managed natively in RDF, a relatively new W3C data standard. Most library systems use bibliographic, authority and holdings data in MARC format – developed at the Library of Congress in the 1960s.

In order to better operate with MARC-based systems, ScOT is now distributed

openly in MARC-21 format. Available from the AEV homepage, the MARC format is an odd addition next to its much younger sibling formats RDF/XML and JSON (developed 16 and 14 years ago respectively). Perhaps in 40 or 50 years someone will be charged with designing a backwards-compatible transformation between some far off data standard to 'Semantic Web' standards like RDF in use today.

Ahead

As the last of the Australian Curriculum is profiled, the ScOT project is looking forward to new sources of warrant. Other curriculum frameworks near, and possibly far, may present opportunities to grow the coverage of school sector topics within ScOT. The concepts, and language used to describe the concepts, used in education resources and in user search behavior will continue to inform new terms and reference structures.

The ScOT continues to be project managed by ESA. I've had a job title change, but while the 'ScOT' bit has been removed I can still field any questions about the project.





Website and App Reviews

Australian Poetry Library

www.poetrylibrary.edu.au

The Australian Poetry Library contains over 42,000 Australian poems, and various critical and contextual resources relating to them. The website is searchable by poet, poem, or phrase. Teachers and students can create their own anthologies and download them for a small fee.

SCIS no. 1522656

Best apps for teaching & learning in 2014

www.ala.org/aasl/standards-guidelines/best-apps/2014

Compiled by a committee from the American Association of School Librarians, this website has reviews of their 25 best new apps for 2014. The apps selected are in five different categories: books; STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics); organisation and management; social sciences; and content creation.

SCIS no. 1678472

Education - Australian War Memorial

www.awm.gov.au/education/

Teachers need to investigate the extensive resources on offer from the AWM. Included are details of: memorial boxes (available to borrow, with six different themes); professional development opportunities; school visitation information; publications; and student activities.

SCIS no. 1678487

Edudemic – education technology tips for students and teachers

www.edudemic.com

Teachers interested in most aspects of integrating IT into the curriculum will find an abundance of pertinent information on this website. Separate subsections are available for teachers, and for students, which feature technology, news, and



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The internet sites selected in Website and app 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 are subject to change.

articles; social media use; trends; and the best IOS and Android apps.

SCIS no. 1678496

Flying High For Kids

www.flyinghighforkids.com

The Flying High For Kids World Balloon Project is a not-for-profit project created to support UNICEF, particularly their Schools for Africa and Schools For Asia programs. The overland hot air ballooning journey commenced in New Zealand in 2013 and will finish in Chile in 2017. Students are encouraged to follow the journey via the blog and to help raise funds for UNICEF projects.

SCIS no. 1678508

How far is it to Mars?

www.distancetomars.com

This simple, yet effective site uses pixels as a unit of measurement, to show students the vast distance from Earth to the Moon and Mars. By using a measurement that can be easily viewed by students it reinforces upon them the difficult distances associated in sending a manned flight to Mars.

SCIS no. 1678520

Joyce Valenza on Pinterest

www.pinterest.com/joycevalenza/

Joyce Valenza, a noted teacher librarian and an assistant professor at Rutgers University, has compiled an absorbing and eclectic selection of links, or pins, using Pinterest. Teacher librarians will find an array of interests including: 'Librarian infographics', 'Reading suggestions engines', 'Favourite libraries', 'Apps for learning', right through to 'Curly hair'.

SCIS no. 1678525

Milk Monitor – the official website of Lauren Child

www.milkmonitor.com

Featuring beloved characters including Charlie and Lola, Clarice Bean, Ruby Redfort, and Hubert Horatio, fans of writer and illustrator Lauren Child will find details of all her books and projects here. Students will be captivated with the design of the website and the variety of information it contains, which ranges from details of forthcoming publications to how she designs fabric for Liberty.

SCIS no. 1444944

NMC Horizon Report – 2014 K-12 Edition

www.nmc.org/publications/2014-horizon-report-k12

School leaders and other technology stakeholders can use this internationally recognised report to help inform and plan for technology education, now and into the immediate future. Content focuses on trends and challenges that will impact on K-12 schools, the roles of teachers, intuitive technology, BYOD, cloud computing, gamification, and wearable technology.

SCIS no. 1678627

War Memorial – Auckland War Memorial Museum

www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial

With the centenary of the commencement of World War I and the forthcoming centenary of the Anzac landing at Gallipoli, teachers will find particulars of exhibitions, school programs, teacher and student subject matter, and digital resources on this comprehensive website.

SCIS no. 1678653

The Woodlands Hub

www.thewoodlandshub.blogspot.com.au

Woodlands Primary School is a Teacher Development School with the WA Department of Education. This blog focuses on implementing the Australian Curriculum (AC), with particular emphasis on English and the Early Years Learning Framework. Examples of lessons/strands and how they link to the AC are a feature.

SCIS no. 1678665

World food clock

www.worldfoodclock.com

This thought provoking website provides a clock running in seconds to show worldwide production of food, the amount consumed, and the quantity wasted. The resources used to produce, transport manufacture and distribute wasted food are staggering. This website will generate extensive debate amongst students.

SCIS no. 1678670



For your classroom

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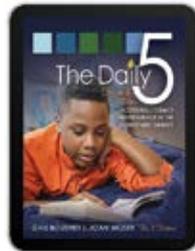
Japan Diary (ebook)



Years: 5–8
Author: Trudy White
Publisher: Education Services Australia
ISBN: 978 1 74200 535 5
SCIS no: 1521362

A short novel in two parts, *Japan Diary* is the fictional account of an Australian girl and a Japanese boy who trade places for six months on student exchange. Written in diary format, the reader gets to step into the shoes of Amy and Taro to explore their personal journeys and cultural discoveries.

The Daily Five (2nd ed) (ebook)



Years: F–5
Author: Gail Boushey & Joan Moser
Publisher: Stenhouse
ISBN: 978 1 62531 002 6
SCIS no: 1660422

This book provides guidance on structuring literacy time to increase student independence, and allow for individual attention in small groups and one-on-one. It will assist you to provide time for reading, writing, and maths practice; and improve school-wide achievement.

100 Minutes (ebook)



Years: F–6
Author: Lisa Donohue
Publisher: Pembroke
ISBN: 978 1 55138 845 8
SCIS no: 1670652

Discover how to fit balanced literacy into daily 100-minute blocks using whole-class instruction and writing sessions, combined with independent work. This book will help you to engage your students in all aspects of literacy.

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Connections

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Making the most of SCIS webinars with Michael Jongen

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Free Session
11 Nov. at 3:30–5:00pm

Downloading records including Z39.50
13 Nov. at 1:30–3:00pm
18 Nov. at 3:30–5:00pm

SCIS Catalogue Searching and selection
20 Nov. at 1:30–3:00pm
25 Nov. at 3:30–5:00pm

Special Order files
27 Nov. at 3:30–5:00pm

SCIS Website and social media
2 Dec. at 3:30–5:00pm

Subject access
4 Dec. at 3:30–5:00pm

For any questions please contact Michael Jongen **03 9207 9600** or scisinfo@esa.edu.au