



SCIS

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SCHOOLS CATALOGUE INFORMATION SERVICE

# connections

## *In this issue...*

SCISWeb Handy Hints	3
Catalogue Records for Television Programs	3
Do You Treat Yourself Professionally?	4
CC News	5
Resources	6
Educational Lending Right (ELR) School Library Survey	6
Interoperability	7
Best Practices in Teaching and Learning: What Does the Research Say?	8
Internetting Corner	11
Creating Your Library Home Page	15
Cataloguing and Database News	16

## Promote or Perish: Developing a Public Relations Plan for Your School Library

***The school principal's support is paramount to achieving library staff goals. Regardless of the size of the school library, staff need to promote the services offered. Many of the ideas contained in this article could be adapted for use in any school library. This article highlights some of the ideas Jane Viner presented in her keynote address at the ASLA XVII biennial conference at Ocean Beach, Queensland, in October 2001.***

Teacher Librarianship is a unique profession that is undervalued and not understood by either governments or the community. This can be partly attributed to the lack of understanding of the role of the Teacher Librarian, school librarian or library media specialist. Even our own teaching communities are not always sure of our role in their school. Are we librarians? Are we teachers? Or are we a combination of both?

As a geography teacher you are never asked to explain your role, but as a Teacher Librarian it is often simpler to say *library teacher* and then there seems to be a lot more understanding. Students will often call you the *library teacher* and this identifies you as a teacher with a specific subject area. The danger of the name *Teacher Librarian* is the *librarian* part. Librarians are seen as managing collections and cataloguing resources – and not teaching! In an educational setting credibility often comes with being a *teacher*.

If one is employed as a teacher, certain responsibilities are attached to that role – imparting knowledge to students, not just managing the information. Teacher Librarians need to be visibly seen addressing this *teaching* role and not just focusing on the *librarian* part of their roles.

Todd (2001) states that:

*... at the heart of a school library empowering learning are Teacher Librarians and educators, whose philosophy and actions empower learners to connect with, interact with and utilise information to develop their own understanding, to construct their own meaning, and who have the evidence to demonstrate this.*

Our profession is a valuable contributor to the education of current and future generations and we must ensure it is not eroded by a lack of funding and understanding by both governments and the community. Therefore, it is in the educational interest of current and future students to promote our profession to other educators, parents and students both within our schools and in the wider community.

Methodist Ladies' College, in the Melbourne suburb of Kew, is committed to providing a challenging, enriching and supportive learning environment for its young women. The College has two libraries and this article focuses on the programs and promotion in the Walton Library.

*continued on page 2*

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## Promote or Perish: Developing a Public Relations Plan for Your School Library (cont.)

The Walton Library is a busy two-storey facility with over 6,000 users per week. The physical library is open 45 hours per week; the virtual library at <http://library.mlc.vic.edu.au> is available to the college community 24 hours per day. Students and staff also have virtual access to Teacher Librarians for reference queries via our recently developed *Ask an information expert* section on our library home page. Queries are answered within 24 hours and emailed to the student or staff member. Towards the end of 2000 the physical space and learning environments were restructured to cater for the rapidly changing educational needs of today's society.

The Media Services Department on level 4 is an integral part of the library. It houses a television studio that conforms to commercial standards, avid digital editing suites, a multimedia studio, a range of audiovisual equipment and a comprehensive audio and video collection. To offer this wide and unique range of information services, we are fortunate to have a professional and enthusiastic library team of 16 staff. This is made up of a library director and four Teacher Librarians, one technology library consultant, one librarian, three library technicians, four media/library technicians and one archivist.

Marketing and public relations terminology, which is frequently used and often used interchangeably in a variety of environments, includes: public relations, marketing, promotion and advertising. These terms all describe communication strategies but they are not interchangeable. The following clear definitions will hopefully assist you in designing a PR plan for your library and in promoting the plan to your audience. According to Lisa Wolfe (1997, pp. 8–9),

- Public relations is: 'The business of trying to convince the public to have understanding for and goodwill towards a person, firm, or institution.'
- Marketing has two definitions:
  1. 'Actually selling or purchasing in a market'
  2. 'A combination of functions involved in moving goods from producer to consumer'.

Marketing involves the planning and execution of the concept, price promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and

services to create exchanges that satisfy consumer and organisational objectives (Zikmund, 1992, p. 9).

- Promotion is: 'Trying to further the growth or development of something; especially trying to sell merchandise through advertising, publicity, or discounting.'

Last but by no means least,

- Advertising is: 'Calling something to the attention of the public, especially by paid announcements.'

### **Goals of a public relations plan**

The goals of a public relations plan can simply be to create a positive public perception of your library. This could be for your main user groups – students and staff. There is a number of other purposes:

- to inform various audiences about the collection, services and programs
- to justify or seek an increase in staffing and resources budgets that will enhance learning opportunities for students and staff
- to position the library as one of the school's key facilities
- to create awareness of library services among parent stakeholders
- to promote reading to students
- to increase awareness, change attitudes and promote your information services to your teaching peers
- to publicise the library via media coverage of library events such as author visits or Book Week
- to encourage library donations via the fundraising body in your school.

The PR plan should support the library mission statement and be one of the first goals to focus on. A coordinated PR plan saves time in the long run and improves the strength of your message.

### **Why develop a public relations plan for your school library?**

There is a number of reasons why developing a PR plan is a worthwhile exercise and idea. In a more formalised structure it forces us to plan and promote our role as Teacher Librarians. It is an integral part of our role, which we perform on a daily basis. Anderson states, 'It is part of the way 21st century media specialists do business'. Just like the value of a collection policy, a PR plan is also paramount to a

successful library program. It promotes our role to the college and wider community as well as informing them about our services and programs. Many users are often unaware of the wide range of services and programs that are available. We are all performing PR everyday, both formally and informally.

As Teacher Librarians we need to work smarter and in a more systematic way. The outcome will improve our image within our school community, increase understanding of the Teacher Librarian role, and increase both usage of information services and information literacy of the user group. A succinct PR plan will assist with these goals of increasing our visibility as a Teacher Librarians.

### **Mission statement of the Walton Library**

The mission statement is the umbrella that underpins the library's programs, services and purpose. It has a number of major components, such as staff, resources, programs, users and so on.

The Walton Library and Information Centre at Methodist Ladies' College is committed to:

- providing the best possible level of access to information in a range of formats to meet the educational and recreational needs of the school community
- supporting the school curriculum
- providing responsive and proactive customer service
- promoting an appreciation and enjoyment of literature
- fostering independent lifelong learning skills through information literacy programs.

At Methodist Ladies' College the Walton Library mission statement was a collaborative effort led by the library education team, which consists of the library director, the Teacher Librarians and the library technology consultant. It was then discussed with all the library staff and negotiated with the college marketing department. The mission statement needed not only to reflect our ideas, but also to be in keeping with the college mission statement, which is the basis for our educational purpose.

### **Visibility as a Teacher Librarian**

Visibility is the first step to building influence in your school community. As a library

# SCISWeb Handy Hints

## 1. Locating new or amended SCIS subject headings

SCISWeb customers who need to locate new or amended SCIS subject headings created since the publication of the fourth edition of the book can use SCIS OPAC to verify a heading. When searching for a subject heading in SCIS OPAC the most appropriate search to do is on the Basic Search screen. In the Find box type the subject eg *rainforests*. From the In box select Subject from the listed menu. Press the Enter key on the keyboard or click on the Search button. SCIS OPAC will display a subject heading browse list from which you can select an appropriate subject heading. If a heading is non-preferred it will not display as a link.

Customers should click on the References button to display the references for that heading.

Customers and non-subscribers can also access a cumulative list of new and amended subject headings on the SCIS website. Library staff can insert handwritten headings in alphabetical order into their fourth edition of SCIS Subject Headings or print off the list and insert it into the back of their copy to use as an appendix. Locate the list at <<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/database/newhead.htm>>.

It is anticipated that SCIS Subject Headings Fifth Edition will be available in mid 2002.

## 2. Limits transfer in SCIS OPAC

SCISWeb customers may limit SCIS OPAC searches made in the Basic Search screen to any of the criteria found in the Limit by menu or by clicking on the More Limits button to display the More Search Limits page.

Note that the message *Search Limits are in effect!* does not appear at the top of the screen when limits are selected from the Limit by menu in Basic Search. This means that customers may not be aware that Limits are still in effect if they go into Guided Search to do a new search. Customers should remove existing limits by clicking on the More Limits button in the Guided Search screen. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the Limits button.

## Catalogue Records for Television Programs

SCIS encourages library staff to contact us on email at <[scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au](mailto:scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au)> if they have any queries or feedback. This article by Bev Blackwell is in response to an email query from a customer that specifically related to programs such as *Compass* and *The Cutting Edge*, but it also gives insights into the issues of cataloguing television broadcasts.

The WA cataloguing agency has been taping and giving priority to cataloguing television programs for the last 12 months. Normally we tape and catalogue *Compass* and *The Cutting Edge* as individual programs because they have separate titles. There are 104 *Cutting Edge* programs and 14 *Compass* programs catalogued. One of the issues for taping *Compass* is that it is screened late on Sunday evening, and sometimes we run out of tape with the programs from Friday night to Sunday

night (and I can't really see anyone coming in on Sunday just to change the videocassette!). *Quantum* and *Four Corners* are normally treated as periodicals (ie one record for the whole series) because the weekly programs contain a number of articles without distinctive titles. Cataloguing these would be equivalent to indexing periodical articles, and we don't have the staff available to do this. If the weekly program is devoted to one topic and has a distinctive title then it is catalogued separately. There are about 80 individual *Quantum* programs and about 160 individual *Four Corners* programs catalogued.

If a Western Australian school requests a catalogue record for a program we have failed to tape, the school can send their videocassette to us and we will catalogue it. Sometimes schools fail to find the record because the title on the videocassette label or in the program guide is significantly different to that on the videorecording itself. Using our web page at <<http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/centoff/cmisis/cat/toa.htm>> helps to overcome that problem. Schools just have to allow us

enough time to catalogue the previous night's recordings – and remember that we're two hours behind EST and we don't start cataloguing until after 7.30 am WST (9.30 am EST). If there are a lot of programs to catalogue, the record you want may not be available until the following day ESST.

Additional information about cataloguing records for television programs appeared in *Connections 33*. You can read the online version at <<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connect/cnetw00/33tele.htm>>.

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# Do You Treat Yourself Professionally?

When I was asked to write this article about professional associations and their value for Teacher Librarians, I thought back to an Australian School Library Association (ASLA) conference in 1991 that had the theme *Treat Yourself Professionally*. This conference had many sub-themes, but the dominant message was that Teacher Librarians must act professionally in all aspects if they are to be perceived as professionals in both the education and library communities.

Of course, the reason I remember this so vividly is because I was one of the people on the conference organising committee. As president of ASLA for 2001–2002, I am convinced much of that message is still critical ten years later. In the intervening time changes in technology, curriculum and pedagogy and the impact of the information society have provided opportunities and threats to the role of the Teacher Librarian. It is now, more than ever, imperative for us as Teacher Librarians to clearly articulate who we are, what we stand for and how we can make a difference in education in the 21st century.

## How do we define ourselves?

In order to know who we are, what we do and how we want to be perceived, we must understand this clearly ourselves.

Last year a short discussion took place on OZTL\_NET (a discussion list from Charles Sturt University for Teacher Librarians) about the characteristics of a *good* Teacher Librarian. Some of the characteristics offered were:

- is flexible (ie goes 'with the flow', recognises the individual needs of each client)
- sets the tone of the library in line with the school's mission statement and the unique requirements of the school community
- networks and shares with colleagues, other Teacher Librarians, librarians and teachers in other sectors
- is a competent teacher
- has specialist qualifications
- is a competent practising Teacher Librarian
- is able to change and influence school practice
- acts as a mentor and role model
- has empathy and respect for the individual student and the needs of the school community
- is willing to let go of what is not necessary or detrimental to the goals and ideals aspired to
- jettisons the unnecessary tasks and unsuccessful programs that are run, year in year out, without real evaluation and authentic assessment
- is willing to learn alongside or from their students
- fosters a happy, calm, active climate in the school environment and library
- is an evidence gatherer – photos, videos, anecdotes, statistical, paper, display, publications
- is a lifelong learner
- is dynamic – not static or accepting of status quo but always moving forward
- is proactive
- is visible and walking the walk
- is a risk taker
- is a problem solver
- needs to be genuine
- is willing to admit their errors and learn from them.

Consider the list and decide how well it relates to your current position as Teacher Librarian.

Individual Teacher Librarians operate at varying degrees of competency across primary to secondary levels and within the major areas of information and communication technology (ICT), information management, children's literature, information literacy and teaching and learning methodology. These elements are the basis of the mix that is the role of the Teacher Librarian in individual schools. The mix depends on the school community's learning needs, its goals and the education sector that the school belongs to.

A professional in such a dynamic environment as a school, especially when the only one of that profession within the school, must be able to justify a place according to best practice in learning and librarianship. This is not a one-off occurrence but is a continual process.

To be able to provide this justification, a Teacher Librarian needs to demonstrate lifelong learning, and to:

- Undertake ongoing professional development in all elements of librarianship as well as in other areas of education. It is critical that this professional development

## Island Journeys: A Quest for Inspiration

Joint ASLA XVIII/CBCA National Conference  
2–5 October 2003  
Wrest Point Hotel Casino  
Hobart, Tasmania

be selected from both within and outside the education system. Professional development will focus on educational initiatives while outside professional development will provide broad top-level and future focus.

- Read professional literature from all aspects of education and librarianship.
- Develop networks that go across systems and regions to enrich their professional dialogue and, more importantly, provide a contact base for specific issues as they arise.
- Be aware of regional, state, national and international initiatives and how they impact on learning and the role of Teacher Librarians.

According to the *Macquarie Online Dictionary* (2002) a professional is 'someone belonging to one of the learned or skilled professions'. The *Oxford Dictionary* (2002) elaborates further: 'Reaching a standard or having the quality expected of a professional person or his work; competent in the manner of a professional' and '... that is trained and skilled in the theoretic or scientific parts of a trade or occupation, as distinct from its merely mechanical parts'.

Clearly, if Teacher Librarians are to be treated as professionals, we must 'walk the walk' – of lifelong learning and being a professional.

## What can professional associations do?

It is precisely for the above purposes that professional associations were formed. A professional association's prime objective is to support its members in being or becoming *professional*. They provide a broad range of opportunities for networking, professional development and professional reading. In recent years, professional associations have also started talking to each other through membership of umbrella organisations. For example, the Professional Teacher Council

*continued on page 5*

## SCISWeb Manual

SCIS staff have written a new manual for *SCISWeb*, the *SCISWEB Manual*, which includes comprehensive instructions, screen dumps, glossary, answers to FAQs and handy hints. There will also be an online version. Users will be able to print a copy from their PC. However, a print version will be available for sale at \$15.00 (including GST). This is an excellent, well laid-out publication for first-time users and ideal for current customers wishing to ensure they are maximising their usage of *SCISWeb*. The manual will be updated after the next upgrade of Voyager in 2003.

## New Zealand

New Zealand contracts have been finalised between SCIS and New Zealand National Library. This arrangement will benefit all customers especially schools in New Zealand. A special cataloguing project, which commenced in March 2002, will result in extra records being added to the database to increase the hit rate for New Zealand schools. We look forward to collaborating with New Zealand National Library to ensure that all schools in New Zealand use SCIS products to improve services in their libraries. Recently Steven Haby, Manager Metadata Initiatives, visited New Zealand National Library in Wellington to discuss the proposed changes

to subject headings relating to New Zealand issues. It is expected that these changes will be incorporated in the *SCIS Subject Headings Fifth Edition* due to be published mid 2002.

## Staff changes

Keith Gove, manager of the SCIS Unit, has left Curriculum Corporation. Keith ably led SCIS through a period of significant change and positioned SCIS as a leader in projects that assist school libraries. He has been replaced by Anne Camfield. Anne comes to us from CSIRO, where she worked for 12 years in the corporate IT section, managing the library system and the corporate cataloguing and acquisitions teams.

## Do You Treat Yourself Professionally? (cont.)

(PTC) of NSW consists of a variety of subject associations. Other states have similar arrangements.

Professional associations are an essential part of a Teacher Librarian's professional life. It is where knowledge, skills and networking can be broadened in order not only to survive, but to be proactive in the Teacher Librarian role. It is ultimately a measure of the professionalism of a Teacher Librarian or indeed of any educator that they not only belong to a professional association but are also an active member of that association.

### What can ASLA do?

The Australian School Library Association (ASLA) is the national professional association for Australian Teacher Librarians. It consists of member associations from all states and territories in Australia. Membership of ASLA is currently only available through membership of the state or territory association.

Consequently, each member of the following associations is also a member of ALSA:

- Australian School Library Association, ACT (ASLA ACT)
- Australian School Library Association, NSW (ASLA NSW)
- Australian School Library Association, NT (ASLA NT)
- Australian School Library Association, TAS (ASLA Tas)
- School Library Association of Queensland (SLAQ)

- School Library Association of Victoria (SLAV)
- South Australian School Library Association (SASLA)
- Western Australian School Library Association (WASLA)

ASLA provides the following services and products to members:

- A quarterly journal, *Access*
- Member discounts for professional development activities, the main one being a national biennial conference (the next one to be held in Hobart – see information box)
- National focus for research and information
- Member discounts of publications, eg *Steps to Success* video
- Collaboration with other relevant associations eg working relations with ALIA
- Development of products for the Teacher Librarian community and other educators eg *Learning for the Future* was written by ASLA and ALIA, the *Information Skills* CD-ROM was developed by ASLA
- Projects undertaken for Teacher Librarians eg ASLA ran the EdNA Train the trainer workshops in each state
- Consultancy on a reduced fee basis for members
- Upcoming resources available from the ASLA website <<http://www.asla.org.au>>.

Further, each state or territory association provides for its own members:

- Local professional development workshops, conferences and seminars
- Newsletters or journals
- Email lists
- State-based advocacy for specific systems
- Face-to-face meetings for members.

If your answer to my opening question was *Yes*, then you must already be a member of ASLA and other associations. If your answer was *No* – what are you waiting for? Join now!

### Contact details for ASLA:

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<<http://www.asla.org.au>>

*June Wall is President of the Australian School Library Association (ASLA). The article with bibliography appears in the online version of Connections 41 at <<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connect/connect.htm>>.*



# Resources

## ***Learning for the Future: Developing information services in schools (Second Edition)***

Publisher: Curriculum Corporation  
RRP: \$32.95  
SCIS order no: 1023580  
ISBN: 1 86366 710 5

The second edition of *Learning for the Future: Developing information services in schools* has gone into reprint in its first year of publication. This reference builds on the processes and structure articulated in the first edition and highlights the ever-increasing role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the school's learning environment. Using the concepts of information and knowledge management, the authors provide guidelines and indicators for developing information and ICT literacy in the school. A planning structure and a matrix of information and ICT literacy are included for educators to use as the basis for school development and achievement of lifelong learning and positive student outcomes. This new edition is based on the practice of effective learning and the successful development, management and implementation of ICT in schools.

## ***Come to the Party!***

Series title: *Come to the Party!*  
Series RRP: \$34.95 (three books)  
Individual book RRP: \$12.95

*Malay Muslim festival*  
SCIS order no: 1062370  
ISBN: 9 81407 455 1

*Indian Hindu festivals*  
SCIS order no: 1062365  
ISBN: 9 81407 457 8

*Chinese festivals*  
SCIS order no: 1062371  
ISBN: 9 81407 454 3

Four new primary titles are now available to support Curriculum Corporation's range of Studies of Asia books. These include a Libby Hathorn picture-story book, *A Face In The Water*, to partner our own publication, *The River*, also written by Libby, and a series of three picture-story books introducing the rich traditions of Chinese, Indian Hindu and Malay Muslim festivals as celebrated in the Asia-Pacific region. By recounting the legends and stories behind the festivals, these beautifully illustrated books offer an excellent way for students to develop literacy skills and explore other cultures in the classroom.

## ***Corporation news***

The Curriculum Corporation catalogue web page has undergone a revamp recently. The new user-friendly style includes a weekly news bulletin, enhanced search capabilities, provision for extra teacher support, which will be updated throughout 2002, as well as a dedicated online product area and a section where you can contact our sales staff.

Visit the fresh new look and easy-to-navigate site at [www.curriculum.edu.au/catalogue](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/catalogue).

## ***What's new in 2002?***

If you are interested in receiving brief email bulletins about enhancements to the Curriculum Corporation website, including information about the organisation's projects, free teacher resources, news about new titles and online materials for purchase, register your email address with [news@curriculum.edu.au](mailto:news@curriculum.edu.au).

New middle school and primary catalogues will be in your school now. If you would like your own copy, please email [sales@curriculum.edu.au](mailto:sales@curriculum.edu.au) with your name and address and advise which catalogue you wish to receive by return mail.

## Educational Lending Right (ELR) School Library Survey

### ***Special thanks to participating schools***

In November 2001, a representative sample of Australian schools was asked to participate in the 2001–02 Educational Lending Right (ELR) School Library Survey.

Educational Lending Right (ELR) is a program of the Commonwealth Government's Book Industry Assistance Plan and is funded from 2000–01 to 2003–04. It has two objectives:

- to make payments to Australian creators and publishers on the basis that income is lost from the availability of their books in school libraries, ie school, TAFE and university libraries; and
- to support the enrichment of Australian culture by encouraging the growth and development of Australian writing and publishing.

The ELR School Library Survey provides an estimate of the number of holdings in Australian school libraries of selected book titles. The results of this survey are used by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) to determine payments to eligible authors and publishers made under ELR.

The ELR School Library Survey is undertaken by the SCIS unit of Curriculum Corporation for DCITA. Working with library software vendors, Curriculum Corporation surveys a representative sample of schools in all states, territories and jurisdictions according to approved stratification guidelines. Schools selected to participate in the survey must meet specified criteria based on school size, sector and location and the library automation system

used. It is intended that a different sample of schools will be used in the survey each year.

The excellent response rate from schools involved in the 2001–02 ELR Survey enabled us to meet our target sample of schools. A summary of the Survey results and findings will be sent to all participating schools early this year and made available on our website at [www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/links/elrschool.htm](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/links/elrschool.htm).

The SCIS unit wishes to thank the Teacher Librarians and library staff who took the time to complete the 2001–02 ELR Survey. Schools selected for the 2002–03 sample will be approached later this year.

*Bridie Mackay*  
SCIS Project Officer

# Interoperability

***In July 2001 The Le@rning Federation – Schools Online Curriculum Content Initiative completed a report of the School Learning Information Architectures Project. The project called for national discussion about the establishment of interoperable standards that would work across a range of school, system, sector and national digital repositories. It also suggested that consideration be given to how digital curriculum resources may interact with specific learner profiles and be linked to learning programs and pathways, learning products and learner outcomes and achievements.***

Teacher Librarians have long understood the need for interoperability, both in electronic systems and in the functions they represent in schools – curriculum resources, administrative functions, library functions and teaching programs, for example. Education authorities are now coming to terms with standards and specifications for bringing such services together. Online services also require interaction across traditional state, national and international boundaries. The Australian schooling system must interface with other education sectors in Australia as well as with schooling and IT systems globally.

National discussions have commenced on this issue, with a meeting being chaired by New

South Wales under the auspices of the Ministers' ICT Task Force. This discussion is not confined to Australian education. Work is being undertaken by the IMS Digital Repositories Working Group in the US and there is also an industry initiative in the US called the Schools Interoperability Framework that is developing open specifications.

The Le@rning Federation is the trigger for much of this discussion in Australia. This is a positive development as it places curriculum issues, curriculum resources and teaching and learning practice as the major driver of interoperability in the schooling sector. While school administrative systems and, in some places, assessment systems have been implemented ahead of learning management systems, Teacher Librarians have argued in vain for better integration of curriculum with library systems. The result of current discussions should be standards and agreements that will greatly assist future decisions about appropriate software applications to harness technology for better learning outcomes.

There is still a long way to go in terms of a national discussion on the information that would be useful to access and how this access would improve teaching and learning. To date, the business drivers for the implementation of existing technology have largely been the technical and administrative players in the

education systems. Curriculum personnel also need to be involved and to indicate the instructional and administrative data that could best be integrated to improve student outcomes. While this discussion is proceeding, however, it makes sense to work towards removing impediments so that schools and systems can access data effortlessly from a range of different applications.

The Le@rning Federation – Schools Online Curriculum Content Initiative is a national project to generate online curriculum content and the supportive infrastructure to deliver it to all Australian schools. Curriculum Corporation and education.au limited have been assigned management of the project, and have formed a joint venture to undertake the work over the next five years. A detailed article about the initiative appeared in *Connections 38* last year. To learn more about the project and its progress, you are invited to visit the project website at <[www.thelearningfederation.edu.au](http://www.thelearningfederation.edu.au)>.

Each issue of *Connections* this year will feature an article on the project or a related issue.

*Margery Hornibrook  
Project Manager  
The Le@rning Federation*

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## 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 on helping library professionals keep abreast of the latest in information services and information technology relevant to school libraries.

*Connections* is distributed free of charge to all schools in Australia and New Zealand. All prices quoted in *Connections* are in Australian dollars.

### ***Connections contributions***

SCIS welcomes submissions for work or articles to be published in future issues of *Connections*. Of interest are articles that may relate to the management of information or resource management in schools.

#### *Length*

Articles may range in length from 500 to 1500 words; however, work outside these specifications will be considered.

### *Submissions*

Contributions and correspondence are welcome and should be forwarded to <[scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au](mailto:scisinfo@curriculum.edu.au)>. Please include contact details.

### ***Connections online***

<<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connect/connect.htm>>

# Best Practices in Teaching and Learning: What Does the Research Say?

A good education makes its demands clearly known. It includes ensuring that what is being learned makes sense to the learner, and generating an understanding of both its utilitarian and its intrinsic value. It assumes all learners can and will succeed. It provides a series of well-structured steps relevant to the competence and background knowledge of students. It provides a maximum of explicit guidance and modelling. It accommodates variation in pace and pays special attention to those who don't get it first time. It searches for strategies to which students will respond. It includes a level of intensity and manageable challenge (McRae et al, 2000).

Today's students are entering workplaces and communities with tougher requirements than ever before. They are entering a world of rapid change that needs citizens who can think critically and strategically to solve problems. They are challenged by vast stores of information taken from numerous sources and different perspectives, from which they need to make meaning. They must understand systems in diverse contexts, and collaborate locally and around the globe.

These needs for the 21st century contrast sharply with the discrete, low-level skills, content and assessment methods favoured by traditional ways of learning. The new requirements for learning are incompatible with instruction that assumes the teacher is the information giver and the student a passive recipient. The new requirements are at odds with testing programs that assess skills that are useful only in school (Jones et al, 1995).

Research into what makes effective teaching and learning, and teachers' reflecting on their own learning, suggest that there are significant reasons to change how we educate children if we wish to produce the adaptable, problem-solving, communicative students needed for the future.

## How humans learn

Evidence clearly indicates that many teachers use teaching strategies that do not promote learning. The following material, adapted from *Teaching and the Human Brain* (Caine & Caine, 1991), summarises some of what we now know about how humans learn and some implications for educators.

- The brain is a parallel processor. Thoughts, emotions, imagination and predispositions operate simultaneously and interact with other modes of information processing and with the expansion of general social and cultural knowledge.

*Implications for education:* Good teaching means that teachers must use methodologies that enable them to orchestrate the learner's experience so that all aspects of the brain's operation are addressed.

- Learning engages the entire physiology. Learning is as natural as breathing; however, its performance can be negatively affected by stress and threat (Ornstein & Sobel, 1987).

*Implications for education:* Awareness of the need for stress management, nutrition, exercise and relaxation must be built into the learning process. In addition, there can be a five-year difference in maturation between any two children of the same age. Expecting equal achievement on the basis of chronological age is inappropriate.

- The search for meaning is innate. The search for meaning (making sense of our experiences) and the need to act on our environment are automatic.

*Implications for education:* The learning environment needs to provide stability and familiarity. At the same time, provision must be made to satisfy the brain's curiosity and hunger for discovery and challenge. Lessons need to be exciting, meaningful and offer students abundant choices. The more lifelike the better. In many programs for gifted children these implications are taken for granted and the children are provided with a rich environment with complex and meaningful challenges. These strategies should be applied to all students.

- The search for meaning occurs through patterning. The brain is both artist and scientist. It is designed to perceive and

generate patterns, and it resists having meaningless patterns imposed upon it (Hart, 1983; Lakoff, 1987). Meaningless patterns are isolated pieces of information that are unrelated to what makes sense to a student.

*Implications for education:* Learners are patterning or perceiving and creating meanings all of the time in one way or another. We cannot stop them, but can influence the direction that their learning takes. Although we select much of what students are to learn, the ideal process is to present the information in a way that allows the brain to extract patterns, rather than try to impose patterns.

- Emotions are critical to patterning. What we learn is influenced and organised by emotions and mind sets based on expectations, personal biases and prejudices, degrees of self-esteem, and the need for social interaction. Emotion and cognition cannot be separated (Ornstein & Sobel, 1987; Lakoff, 1987). *Implications for education:* Because it is impossible to isolate the cognitive from the affective domain, the emotional climate of the school and classroom must be monitored on a consistent basis, using effective communication strategies and allowing for student and teacher reflection on metacognitive processes.
- The brain processes parts and wholes simultaneously. There is evidence of brain laterality, meaning significant differences between left and right hemispheres of the brain (Springer & Deutsch, 1985). In a healthy person, the two hemispheres are inextricably interactive, whether a person is dealing with words, mathematics, music, or art (Hart, 1985; Levy, 1985). *Implications for education:* People have enormous difficulty learning when either parts or wholes are overlooked. Good teaching necessarily builds understanding and skills over time because learning is cumulative and developmental. However, parts and wholes are conceptually interactive. They derive meaning from and give meaning to each other.
- Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes. Most signals that are peripherally perceived enter the brain

without the learner's awareness and interact at unconscious levels. Thus, we become our experiences and remember what we experience, not just what we are told. For example, a student can learn to sing on key and learn to hate singing at the same time.

*Implications for education:* Much of the effort that we put into teaching and studying is wasted because students do not adequately process their experiences. What we call *active processing* allows students to review how and what they have learned so that they begin to take charge of learning and the development of personal meanings.

- We have at least two different types of memory: a spatial memory system and a set of systems for rote learning. We have a natural, spatial memory system that does not need rehearsal and allows for *instant memory* of experiences. It is always engaged and is inexhaustible. We also possess a set of systems designed for storing relatively unrelated information. The greater the separation of information and skills from prior knowledge and actual experience, the more we must depend on rote memory and repetition.

*Implications for education:* Teachers are adept at teaching strategies that emphasise memorisation. Although sometimes memorisation is important and useful, teaching devoted to memorisation does not facilitate the transfer of learning and probably interferes with the subsequent development of understanding. By ignoring the personal world of the learner, educators actually inhibit the effective functioning of the brain.

- We understand and remember best when facts and skills are embedded in natural, spatial memory. Our native language is learned through multiple interactive experiences involving vocabulary and grammar. It is shaped by internal processes and by social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978). Language is an example of how specific *items* are given meaning when embedded in ordinary experiences. All education can be enhanced when this type of embedding is adopted.

*Implications for education:* The embedding process depends on all of the other principles. Spatial learning is generally best

invoked through experiential learning. Teachers need to use a great deal of real-life activity, including classroom demonstrations, projects, field trips, visual imagery of certain experiences and best performances, stories, metaphor, drama, and interaction of different subjects.

- Learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat. The brain downshifts under perceived threat and learns optimally when appropriately challenged. The central feature of downshifting is a sense of helplessness. The learner becomes less flexible and reverts to automatic and often more primitive routine behaviours.  
*Implications for education:* Teachers and administrators need to create a state of relaxed alertness in students – low in threat and high in challenge.
- Each brain is unique. Although we all have the same physiological systems, they are integrated differently in every brain. Moreover, because learning actually changes the structure of the brain, the more we learn, the more complex our brains become.  
*Implications for education:* Teaching should be multifaceted and allow all students to express visual, tactile, emotional, and auditory preferences. To accomplish these goals, we need to recognise the need for fundamental change in schools themselves.

### **Effective teaching and learning**

According to Barbara Means of SRI International, there are seven variables that, when present in the classroom, indicate that effective teaching and learning are occurring. These classroom variables are:

- students are engaged in authentic and multidisciplinary tasks
- assessments are based on students' performance of real tasks
- students participate in interactive modes of instruction
- students work collaboratively
- students are grouped heterogeneously
- the teacher is a facilitator in learning
- students learn through exploration.

Research suggests that the most effective learning occurs when a balance exists between teacher-directed and student-directed instruction. This balance becomes particularly important when the goal of the instructional

process is to engage students in activities that are intellectually challenging. To achieve this balance Jones et al (1995) suggest that teachers should:

- explicitly teach the underlying thinking processes along with skills
- encourage students to use each other as learning resources and structure their interaction accordingly
- gradually turn over responsibility for students' learning to the students across the school year as they become more accustomed to constructing knowledge and applying strategies on their own.

So, what are the qualities of teachers who seem able to engage their students in effective learning?

- *Expert* teachers have a deep understanding of the structure and epistemologies of their disciplines, combined with knowledge of the kinds of teaching activities that will help students come to understand the discipline themselves (Bransford et al, 1999). They teach for understanding and challenge their students to make sense of what they are doing.
- These teachers realise that expertise in particular areas involves more than a set of general problem-solving skills; it also requires well-organised knowledge of concepts and inquiry procedures. They have pedagogical content knowledge as well as knowledge of their subject matter (Shulman, 1987). Pedagogical content knowledge is different from knowledge of general teaching methods. Expert teachers know the structure of their disciplines and this knowledge provides them with cognitive roadmaps that guide the assignments they give students. They are sensitive to those aspects of the discipline that are especially hard for new students to master. They are aware of the *conceptual barriers* likely to hinder others (Bransford et al, 1999). They know that different disciplines are organised differently and have different approaches to inquiry. There is also a difference between expertise in a discipline and the ability to help others learn about that discipline.
- Expert teachers understand their students as learners and know how each individual

*continued on page 10*

## Best Practices in Teaching and Learning: What Does the Research Say? (cont.)

student in their class thinks about a particular topic. Their instructional decisions give a clear diagnosis of individual students' current state of understanding and they use this knowledge to guide further instructional activities (Bransford et al, 1999).

- Research indicates that students often can parrot back correct answers on tests that might be erroneously interpreted as displaying mastery of the material presented, but later tests show that the students have misconceptions about the material or concept involved. Expert teachers are aware of the areas of their discipline that might evoke misconceptions and put strategies in place to overcome them. They focus on understanding rather than memorisation and routine procedures, and they engage students in activities that help them to reflect on their own learning and understanding.
- Skills such as the ability to describe a problem in detail before attempting a solution, the ability to determine what relevant information should enter the analysis of a problem, and the ability to decide which procedures can be used to generate problem descriptions and analyses are tacitly used by teachers but rarely taught explicitly. Expert teachers explicitly teach the skills of their discipline.
- Expert teachers also teach the *facts* of their discipline. Research on expertise demonstrates that experts' abilities to think and solve problems depend strongly on a rich body of knowledge about subject matter. However, the research also shows clearly that *usable knowledge* is not the same as a mere list of disconnected facts (Bransford et al, 1999). Furthermore, experts organise their knowledge around core concepts and expert teachers provide students with learning experiences that specifically enhance their abilities to recognise meaningful patterns of information.
- Expert teachers also assist students to *conditionise* their knowledge, that is, they help their students retrieve the knowledge that is relevant to a particular task. Many forms of instruction do not help students

conditionise their knowledge. Textbooks, for example, can be much more explicit in presenting the rules of mathematics or the laws of science than in saying anything about when these laws may be useful in solving problems.

- The ability to recognise the limits of one's current knowledge, then take steps to remedy the situation, is extremely important for learners of all ages. An important characteristic exhibited by experts involves metacognition – the ability to monitor one's own current level of understanding and decide when it is not adequate.
- Educators hope that students will transfer learning from one problem to another and over time and place. Modern theories of learning and transfer retain the emphasis that transfer occurs with practice but there are some important new additions to transfer theories. Expert teachers realise that successful transfer is dependent on the degree of mastery of the original subject. Without an adequate level of initial learning, transfer cannot be expected.

Transfer is also affected by the degree to which students learn with understanding rather than merely memorise sets of facts.

Transfer takes time. Learners can often be faced with tasks that do not have any apparent meaning or logic. They may not have the basic knowledge they need on which to build concepts and understanding or to make connections and organise ideas. They may be faced with the apparent need to cover too many topics too quickly in order to get through the syllabus. Research indicates that learning cannot be rushed; the 'complex cognitive activity of information integration requires time' (Bransford et al, 1999). Expert teachers give students 'deliberate practice' (Ericsson et al, 1993) that includes active monitoring of one's own learning experiences, regular feedback and the presentation of knowledge in multiple contexts.

### Conclusion

The best teaching and learning:

- Focuses on the students' real interests as the best starting point for teaching and learning. The best time to teach something new is when children are ready and this is

why it is important to select relevant content that relates to their own experiences.

- Allows children to seek understanding by exploring and investigating on their own with teachers as facilitators.
- Recognises the *teachable moment* when children begin to realise that what they have been doing may not be the right way and there may be conventions to assist them. At this stage students are ready to learn through observation, questioning, listening and modelling.
- Recognises that real, rich, complex ideas and materials are at the heart of the curriculum. Lessons or textbooks that water down, control or over-simplify content ultimately disempower students.
- Understands that when a new concept is taught students need to use it to gain understanding. The application of their skills and understanding to authentic contexts, helps to consolidate and refine them.
- Knows that learning is always socially constructed and interactive; teachers need to create classroom interaction and collaboration which taps the social power of learning.
- Models the classroom as a democratic community in which students learn what they live as citizens of the school.
- Recognises the most powerful learning for children comes from developing true understanding of concepts and higher order thinking associated with various fields of inquiry and self-monitoring of their thinking.
- Celebrates the individuality of each child and fits its activities to the developmental level of students.
- Realises that students learn best when faced with genuine challenges, choices, and responsibility in their own learning.

*This research brief was written for the Association of Independent Schools Queensland (AISQ), and was printed with permission from Robyn Collins, © Association of Independent Schools (AISQ), 2001.*

*The full article with bibliography appears in the online version of Connections 41 at <<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connect/connect.htm>>.*



# Internetting Corner

**The following websites can be easily accessed on the Internet via the links found on the Curriculum Corporation's Connections website for Issue 41 at** <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/connect/connect.htm>

## **Antarctica New Zealand**

<http://www.antarcticanz.govt.nz/>  
Antarctica New Zealand is the body responsible for developing and administering New Zealand's activities in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. This gateway includes student-centred activities, images, news, weather and environmental data.  
SCIS 1073435

## **Aspects of the Victorian Book**

<http://www.bl.uk/collections/early/victorian/intro.html>  
The Victorian era saw the introduction of cost-effective printing methods coupled with a dramatic rise in literacy levels. This British Library website details the production and publishing techniques that saw the beginning of affordable novels, yellowbacks, 'penny dreadfuls', children's books and magazines.  
SCIS 1073439

## **Australian stamps**

<http://www.2.auspost.com.au/stamps/intro.asp>  
The Philatelic Group of Australia Post has produced this easily navigated and informative site, which looks at all aspects of stamp collecting, design, exhibitions and current stamp issues. Teachers can download education kits for use in the classroom.  
SCIS 1073442

## **Based on the Book**

<http://www.mcpl.lib.mo.us/readers/movies/>  
Published by a US public library, this website is a compilation of selected books that have been made into movies released in 1980 or later. Users can undertake cross-referenced searches via the title of the book, movie title (which can differ from the book's title), year of release or the book's author.  
SCIS 1073447

## **Calendars Through the Ages**

<http://webexhibits.org/calendars/>  
The importance of astronomy and mathematics in determining calendars forms the basis of this comprehensive website. Fascinating

insights can be garnered from the use and acceptance of calendars including Gregorian, Islamic, Jewish, Chinese and Indian.  
SCIS 1073452

## **Figure This! Math Challenges for Families**

<http://www.figurethis.org/>  
Senior primary and junior secondary students with an interest in solving real world mathematics problems will be challenged by the scenarios outlined here. Although aimed at home usage the material lends itself well to extension use in classrooms.  
SCIS 1073455

## **Geometry Through Art: exploring geometry by making drawings**

<http://mathforum.org/~sarah/shapiro/shapiro.introduction.html>  
Students will become enamoured with the activities on this site that promotes the rigour of geometry via the creative series of ready-made worksheets and exercises available for a variety of student levels.  
SCIS 1073460

## **Australian Museum fish site: fish**

<http://www.amonline.net.au/fishes/>  
There is a wealth of material present on this website for students studying fish. Students can dissect a fish, view video footage, identify fish, search the database, locate the habitat of breeds of fish and access links to related sites.  
SCIS 1073466

## **Museum Victoria [ed-online] Hidden Histories**

[http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/Hidden\\_Histories/](http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/Hidden_Histories/)  
This joint program from Museum Victoria and the Victorian Department of Education and Training aims to document oral histories from a wide cross-section of members from Indigenous communities. Students, particularly Koori students, are encouraged to participate in the program. Appropriate classroom material and associated resources can be easily accessed.  
SCIS 1069913

## **Nobel e-Museum**

<http://www.nobel.se/>  
Information regarding the scientific, literary and peace achievements recognised by the Nobel Prize are available on this official

website of the Nobel Foundation. Webcasts and interactive educational documents are available for secondary students.  
SCIS 1073437

## **Outback 2002**

<http://www.outback2002.com.au/>  
This is the official web site for Australia's 2002 Year of the Outback. The vast array of contents include The Dreaming, history, exploration, recognition for the spirit of the outback, destinations, outback characters and icons, events and animals.  
SCIS 1064925

## **(Paper Airplanes) – Home Page**

<http://paperplane.org/>  
Everything students would need regarding constructing and flying paper aircraft is available on this site. The author, a Guinness world record holder, outlines paper aircraft aerodynamics and offers teaching resources.  
SCIS 1073438

## **Stormy Weather Main Page**

<http://www.educationcentral.org/stormy/>  
Secondary students will apply their technology and research skills to complete the activities associated with storms, tornadoes and wild weather. Students study the causes and effects of storms, read weather maps and symbols and work cooperatively to recognise the impact of storms on people.  
SCIS 1073441

## **Walking With Prehistoric Beasts – Discovery Channel – Prehistoric Beasts**

<http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/beast/beasts.html>  
An in-depth look at the monstrous mammals that ruled the planet in the period after the dinosaurs became extinct until the ice ages began. Features include images, how palaeontology offers evidence regarding the creatures, games, quizzes and links.  
SCIS 1073450

*Reviewed by Nigel Paull, South Grafton Primary School, <paull@turboweb.net.au>*

*The Internet sites abstracted in Internetting Corner are often of a professional nature and should be initially viewed by teachers and Teacher Librarians to determine suitability for students. The links, content and address of sites reviewed may not be permanent.*

## Promote or Perish: Developing a Public Relations Plan for Your School Library (cont.)

manager and Teacher Librarian it is essential that you continually demonstrate the value of the school library to the school community. Gary Hartzell believes Teacher Librarians must take on this role, take the initiative and increase their visibility by raising their library's profile. Dianne Oberg's research investigations have demonstrated that Teacher Librarians and libraries do make a difference to student learning. The library, its staff and you are a professional package and you as the Teacher Librarian are the most important part of this.

### Your school principal

Principals need to understand the diversity of roles their Teacher Librarians undertake and be supportive of the programs that the library offers which enhance student learning outcomes. Linda Kinzer, School Library Media Specialist at Armand Bayou Elementary School in Houston, said that a key factor in making the library media centre really work was her principal's active involvement. Her principal admitted to little knowledge of school libraries so the two met regularly to discuss everything from budgets and scheduling to curriculum and standards. 'As his knowledge about the library media centre grew, so did our activities and programs', Kinzer said (Wilson, 1998, p. 1). A principal's support is paramount to achieving your goals as a library manager.

### Promotion

Promoting the school library, its functions and information services to the whole school community is an essential part of the Teacher Librarian's role. Library managers today and in the future need to be a 'manager, not a mouse' (Viner, 2000) and translate school librarianship theories into practice in their own school environments. Strategic planning, action plans and transformational leadership are all part of this process.

### Environment

The library environment is an empty space for you to place your own personal touches from your appearance through to creating a warm and welcoming information environment. A cosy reading corner, well planned technology, suitable shelving, popular fiction, display boards, healthy plants, posters and clean, comfortable furniture all add to the atmosphere. Don't forget, the most important promotional tool of the school library is *you!*

A comprehensive Intranet home page, open nights, bookmarks, newsletters, Book Week, web resource guides, reading sessions, professional development sessions for school staff with wine, cheese and biscuits all add to the positive atmosphere you need to create about this most important school resource.

Keep statistics of usage, write regular articles and library reports for the principal, and inform the school community via the school newsletter about their library and its information services and activities. Remember to keep abreast of curriculum change by also reading professional educational journals as well as library journals.

### Communication plan: the 6W approach

When planning a public relations strategy, whether it is a particular event or service you would like to promote, or an entire PR program, one way to approach it is to use the six Ws (or rather, five Ws and an H) that we employ as a learning strategy with students on a regular basis. These Ws are also the basic building block used by journalists to write stories, and by public relations practitioners when they develop media releases. The W questions provide a framework or structure for planning and enable one to approach the process in a systematic way.

- *What* is your message?
- *Who* is your audience?
- *When* do you want to communicate this message?
- *How* will you communicate it?
- *Why* do you want to give people this message? What response are you hoping for? (Wolfe, pp.17–18)
- *Where* will you communicate your message?

In the American Library Association's publication *Library Advocate's Handbook* (p. 7) three key elements in developing a communication plan are outlined:

- Define the key message
- Target key audiences
- Identify communication strategies and resources.

### What is your message?

The starting point in developing your strategy is *what* you want to communicate. What is your message? Your message may be simply about an extension of hours, a new series of information brochures, an electronic resource

or a student competition. It could be to inform users of a visit by a popular author, the activities planned for Library or Book Week, or a parent evening. Perhaps you have added a new feature to your website or would like to launch a new program or service. You may want to communicate some information about the latest research on school libraries. The list is almost endless! Your message should be clear, and ideally will be linked to your mission statement and goals.

### Who is your audience?

After you have clarified your message, you need to identify your audience. *Who* is your audience and *how* will your audience shape the way you convey the message? Is your audience internal or external? Consider that your audience may not just be students and staff. It may be parents, prospective parents and students, the local community, old collegians, professional associations and networks, the broader educational community, even trade suppliers and distributors.

You may have the same message but need to communicate it to three or four different groups. The way you do this will probably be different for each group. For example, a message about extending opening hours in the afternoon may focus on homework assistance for your student audience. While for parents, in addition to this, you may want to promote the library as a safe place for students after school. For your teaching staff you may indicate the library is a place where they can work with an individual student after school. The language and approach you use will vary for each group.

To promote a new feature on the library website we needed to inform both students and staff. For staff, we hosted a morning tea where we demonstrated the new feature. Our approach with students was different, as we had to attempt to reach 1,800 people. We did this through signage in the library, as well as messages in the student dailies, and by informing classes and individuals about it during library visits.

### When do you want to communicate this message?

Timing is a crucial factor when planning your strategy. *When* will you communicate your message? Messages may be lost or overlooked if competing with other events or messages.

Choose a time that will enable you to make the most impact, or shape the events to suit you. Check the school calendar. Last year in our college calendar, Book Week was coincidentally scheduled during the same week as Art Week. We decided to make the most of the situation and combine forces. As it happened, the theme for Book Week – ‘Put yourself in the picture’ – worked exceptionally well for both departments. This year we shared the week with Deaf Awareness week and focused on captioned videos.

Some PR takes place within a very short time-span and does not involve much lead-in or organisation. If you want to display some new titles, the preparation time may be short.

Conversely, an event like Book Week requires an enormous amount of planning. A planned strategy, with responsibilities and tasks assigned well in advance, should ensure that the week or event runs smoothly with all bases covered.

*How is your message communicated?*  
According to Anderson (p. 12):

*Strong programs and good service speak for themselves and will provide the most superior public relations mechanisms in existence. Nothing beats good, prompt service. Even state-of-the-art collections, technology, online catalogs, or facilities are meaningless without good service to teachers and students.*

Strong programs and good service may speak for themselves. However, sometimes they need to be brought to the attention of your learning community. You may offer a fabulous professional development program, but are your staff aware of it? You may have a fantastic new binding machine, but have you publicised its existence? You may know that a good library program will enhance the learning opportunities of your students, but is your principal aware of the research that supports it? How will you let her or him know? Do you keep a file of articles that show the benefits of a strong library program? Have you invited your principal for morning tea recently? What type of publications do you produce? Newsletters, reading lists, user guides? Are they well used, or do you need to promote them? Do you have a library *style* in terms of stationery or *look*? Do you have a website? Is it used by the

learning community? How do you promote its use? Is your environment inviting, with dynamic displays? How frequently are they changed? Are there any special events that you host and how are these planned?

*Why do you want to communicate this message?*  
The reasons for your message are critical. *Why* do you want to convey this message? If your message is that you are extending library hours, the reason behind it may be that you have surveyed users and found that there was a demand for longer opening hours. The aim of your message is to inform your school community, and also to increase the number of users during the extended hours. The why of the PR message is fundamental to the goal behind the message. What do you want your audience to think, to feel, to do? (American Library Association, p. 11)

*Where do you want to communicate this message?*  
The format and location of your message will vary depending on circumstances. Whether your means of communication is visual, verbal or written will depend on your audience. Perhaps a combination of methods will be employed. Displays in the library and on notice boards around the school will provide visual information about a forthcoming event. Add to this a presentation at an assembly or staff meeting, or notices in the daily bulletin, and a wider group of people will be exposed to your message.

Consider that some of your target audience may not be library users – perhaps they may be your main target audience – in which case notices and displays in the library will have little effect. What method will you use for such a group? Often the best promotion happens informally in the staff room or at the school sports. This can be particularly effective with library non-users.

Some messages, particularly those that focus on a special event or award, may involve media coverage. How is this managed in your school?

Participation at conferences and publishing articles in journals also helps to raise your profile and that of your school.

### **Evaluation**

When considering the implementation of a PR plan for your library, you may decide to review existing programs and services. This may

seem overwhelming; however, a short survey about an aspect of your service or a focus group discussion may deliver useful information that can assist in setting goals and refining the programs and services you offer, and identifying those needing promotion.

Results from these user surveys can be illuminating. Library staff may be passionate about some services or programs, but the survey may show that they do not meet the target audience. This can then force the library staff to reflect on the value of the service, whether to retain it, revise it, reject it or promote it.

### **The Walton Library PR planner**

A PR plan will involve a range of programs and activities. Some will be special events that occur occasionally; others will happen daily, weekly, monthly or perhaps once a term. Programs and services are generally ongoing.

On a daily basis, our focus at the Walton Library is customer service whether it is in the physical library or virtually through the library website. Our school Intranet is an avenue for promoting events. Each week we contribute LINKnet, an article evaluating websites, in our staff newsletter. Each fortnight we have the opportunity to communicate with parents through a column in the parent newsletter.

### *Professional development program*

Also on a fortnightly basis, we offer PD sessions for college staff. Providing professional development is one of our most effective ways of promoting our services to college staff. Our program is designed to broaden our delivery of information literacy throughout the school community, to ‘train the trainers’ – ie the teaching staff – and to further develop collaborative relationships with teaching staff across the college.

Sessions are usually held at the end of the school day. The self-paced, flexible nature of the sessions is one of the keys to the success of the program, as is the friendly and relaxed atmosphere with coffee and light refreshments. The outcomes of the PD program have included the development of closer relationships with teachers, and the increased use of the library and its services by former non-users. It has also led to an increase in the number of classes taught or introduced by Teacher Librarians.

## Promote or Perish: Developing a public relations plan for your school library (cont.)

### *Other promotional activities*

Each month the library director writes a report for the principal informing her about library events, news and management issues. This is then relayed to the College Board. Our principal also receives minutes from the library, education, technology and media services meetings.

At least once a term, we have a staff book club meeting, and a new book display afternoon tea. New student and staff orientation occurs at the beginning of each term, and our newsletter is produced for an end-of-term release. We would have also hosted some visitor groups throughout the term.

Once a year we have a library Christmas appeal, and a thank-you function to acknowledge our support staff.

Our ongoing programs that contribute to raising our profile and demonstrating our value include information literacy programs, with Information Networkers offered as an elective to years 7 and 8 students and MS Gateway now a core subject for all year 9 students. Throughout the year there is a number of special events that warrant extra PR efforts, such as Book Week, Library Week and School Libraries Day.

This list is by no means exhaustive as much of our role revolves around promoting ourselves to our community.

### **The public relations role of the Teacher Librarian**

The public relations nature of a Teacher Librarian's role is emphasised in the American Library Association's *Information Power: Building partnerships for learning* (pp. 112–113):

*A well-documented, well-publicised program affirms its own excellence and demonstrates its value to the entire learning community. An effective program increases its stature through regular and systematic communication about its mission, goals, functions, achievements, and overall impact. . . . The school library media specialist is the chief advocate for the library media program and documents its effectiveness so that the full learning community recognises its value and supports its role. Seeking both formal and informal opportunities to raise public awareness, the library media specialist uses a variety of techniques to demonstrate the program's significance.*

### **Conclusion**

School libraries are critically placed to be dynamic and flexible in meeting the changing needs of their users. The virtual library has illustrated how school libraries have changed over the last century. Plan the year ahead;

increase your visibility as a Teacher Librarian to students, teachers, administration and the principal.

Start with a mission statement for your school library that reflects the school's own and plan a new-staff orientation program for 2002. In 1990 Geoff Dubber said 'Try to achieve three positive moves to improve your status, expertise and self-esteem by the end of the day. Above all, talk positive and smile!' And at IASL in 2001, Ross Todd stated that his own personal philosophy is 'You begin the road by walking it!'

Finally, go out and promote our profession of Teacher Librarianship, empower your staff and students, set realistic goals and objectives, but don't forget the innovative ideas. 'Take on a challenge and refocus your school library and its staff for the future' (Viner, 2000, p. 13).

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## Creating Your Library Home Page (cont.)

different pages and the index page by clicking on the hyperlinked item/s or the *Back* button on the toolbar.

### **Adding images**

You can add whatever image you want by scanning photographs, pictures or other material or by using images from free Clip Art sites on the Internet. Decide where you want to place your image. You may need to create a text box so that the image can be slotted into it easily. This box could be one cell of a table. If you are scanning an image, save the scan as a JPEG file in your Library Home Page folder. You then need to import the scan from your folder or from a disk to your page. However, if you want to download an image from the Internet, go to that web site and *Save As* a JPEG file. Create a text

box where you want to place the image, then copy and paste.

**Note:** Schools must be aware of breaching copyright when linking to websites, or when downloading images for use in your own materials. Permission is often required to link to any page other than the main page. Please refer to the article titled 'Hyperlinking: Some Legal Issues' in *Connections 36* for further details.

### *An alternative method*

Decide on the image or graphic you wish to add. Place the cursor where you wish to place

the image on the page or table or alternatively, click on *Image* in the *Insert* menu on the toolbar. Decide how you wish your image to be placed on the page by clicking on one of the options under *Text alignment and wrapping around images*. Click on *Choose file*. Find the relevant file and double click on the file name in the box. Click *OK*. You can enlarge or reduce the image by placing the cursor in the top right-hand corner and moving it up or down.

**You have now established your library home page. You will need to contact your school Information Technology manager and ask for your library home page to be uploaded onto the school website on the Internet or Intranet.**

*Ester Csaky  
SCIS Customer Support*

# Creating Your Library Home Page

**In 2001, SCIS conducted the Curriculum Related Electronic Resources in Schools Survey. One interesting result was that, while most schools had a website, very few school libraries had their own home page as part of their school website. This article describes how you can create your own web page using Netscape® Composer on a Windows PC.**

Why would a library require its own web page? Apart from basic information about such matters as opening hours, staff contacts and library services, a library home page can serve as the gateway to innumerable resources that have been tailored to the specific needs of the school. In *Connections 40*, 'The School Intranet: Making schools even more resourceful' dealt with the school Intranet and its potential as a tool for the storage and retrieval of vast amounts of information. Library staff are key information managers in the school with the expertise to establish a library home page that can maximise the use of the Internet and the school Intranet.

Though time consuming at first, it is very easy to create a basic web page and then adapt it to the changing needs of the school community by adding and deleting information. There are many web design software packages such as Microsoft® FrontPage®. You can also use word-processing software and save it as an HTML document, or you can use Netscape® Composer, which is part of the Netscape® Communicator software and which can be downloaded free from the Netscape page at <[http://home.netscape.com/download/?cp=myupgrd\\_my](http://home.netscape.com/download/?cp=myupgrd_my)>. The version that has been used here is Netscape® Communicator 4.7.

## First steps

Begin by opening Netscape® Navigator®. From the Communicator drop-down menu, click on Composer. You should now be viewing your first (blank) page of Netscape® Composer. Make this your index page – your gateway to all the other pages you wish to add and link to.

You can now begin word processing, designing and formatting your page as you would in a word-processing program. Type your school or library name, say, Mountain High School Library. You can decide on the colour and font size of your text now or change

it later. To do this, highlight the title and select a size from the font size box on the toolbar. If you want the title to be in a different colour, click on the font colour box and select a colour.

To add background colour, right click your mouse and select *Page properties*. Click on the *Colors and Background* tab, then click on *Background*. Select a colour. Click *OK*. You can also change the colour of the links or you can leave the default colours.

## Inserting a table

From the *Insert* menu on the toolbar, click on *Table*. Decide on the number of rows and columns, for example two rows and three columns. Click on the centre text alignment box on the toolbar to centre the table. You may wish to experiment and give your table added width and depth by changing the number of pixels in the pixel boxes for example instead of 1, 1, 1, try 5, 6, 7.

From the *Table background* box select *Use Color*. Click on the grey box beside this box to select the background colour. Click *OK*. Insert the areas of information you want to provide into the cells, for example Guide to the Library, Library Catalogue, New Resources, Special Events. Use the *tab* key to move from cell to cell. You can change the font type and size. Click *OK* to finish.

Are you happy with your index page? Do you like your colour scheme? If not, make the appropriate changes now. You may now want to add images and graphics. But first, save your page.

## Saving your home page

Use the *Save* function on the toolbar. It is a good idea to create a new folder so that all your web pages are kept together. To do this, click on the *Create New Folder* button, and call it, say, Library Home Page by typing in the *Name* box, and then click *OK*. Double click on your newly named folder in the window so that it appears in the *Save in* box. Now name your file, and as this is the index page add index to the file name, for example, MHSLibraryIndex. If using a number of words, do not use spaces. Click on *Save*.

You may want to see what your first web page will actually look like on the World Wide Web. Click on the *Preview* toolbar. As the screen changes, so does the toolbar. Click on the

*Reload* toolbar. This is how your home page will look on the Internet.

## Editing your home page

From the *File* menu select *Edit Page*. Make and save any required changes. Now click on the *Preview* toolbar. Click on the *Reload* toolbar. Repeat for any new changes. Note that each time you make changes to any page, you must *Save*, *Preview* and *Reload*.

## Linking pages 1

Before linking pages or creating a hyperlink, you must create new pages for the link. You need to create new pages for whatever you wish to display on your home page for example Referencing Guidelines or Research Skills.

To create a new page, you must be in *Edit Page* mode. Select *New* from the toolbar. You are now on a new blank page. Follow the instructions as for your first page. After completing this page proceed to *Save*, for example File Name –RefGuide; Name of Page – Referencing Guidelines. Alternatively, you can just Enter and use the same page name as for the file name. Click on *Review* or *Reload*. Repeat for other pages that you may wish to create. For example, you may want to have a separate page for Websites and Reading. Now you have a number of web pages that need to be linked to the index page, ie linked to the items in the table on the index page.

## Linking pages 2

Find the file MHSLibraryIndex (or whatever you have named your home page). You are now on the index page. In the table, highlight the item you wish to link to the index page, for example the guide to the Library page. Click on the *Link* icon on the toolbar (looks like a chain link). In the *Character Properties* box select *Link* and click on *Choose File*. The file or files should appear in the *Link to File* box. Highlight the file you wish to create a link to for example Guide to the Library. Select *Open*. The file should come up in the box. Click *OK*.

You should now be back on your index page and the item in the table to which a link was created should now be in a different colour and underlined – it is now a hyperlink. Repeat this process for the other pages. When you have finished each page, proceed to *Save*, *Preview* and *Reload*. You can now move between your



# Cataloguing and Database News

In addition to the amended headings published in each issue of *Connections*, we also publish a cumulative list of headings, which can be located at <<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/database/changes.htm>>.

As *SCIS Subject Headings Fourth Edition* is now out of print, customers are encouraged to keep their Fourth Edition up to date until publication of the next edition by printing the cumulative list for insertion at the back of their copy.

### **New, amended and replaced subject headings (February 2002)**

Note: Due to publishing deadlines it has not been possible to include headings that were on the agenda for the March 2002 ISSC meeting. They are on the SCIS website at <<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/database/changes.htm>>.

#### **Amusement parks**

Add UF Theme parks

Attack on America, 2001

USE September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001

#### **Criminal justice, Administration of**

Add SN May subdiv. geog.

#### **Engines**

Remove NT Fire engines

#### **Fire engines**

Remove BT Engines

Add BT Motor vehicles

#### **Hijacking**

Add NT September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001

#### **Motor vehicles**

Add NT Fire engines

#### **Motor vehicles – Bodies**

Remove BT Painting, Industrial

Operation Enduring Freedom, 2001

USE War on Terrorism, 2001–

#### **Painting, Industrial**

Remove NT Motor vehicles – Bodies

Pentagon (Va.) – Terrorist attack, 2001

USE September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001

#### **September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001**

Use for works on the terrorist attacks using hijacked aeroplanes on the World Trade Centre in New York City and the Pentagon outside Washington DC, including the crash of a fourth aeroplane in Pennsylvania on September 11 2001.

UF Attack on America, 2001

Pentagon (Va.) – Terrorist attack, 2001

World Trade Center (New York) –

Terrorist attack, 2001

BT Hijacking

Terrorism

RT War on Terrorism, 2001

#### **Terrorism**

Add NT September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001

NT War on Terrorism, 2001–

Theme parks

USE Amusement parks

War against Terrorism, 2001

USE War on Terrorism, 2001–

#### **War on Terrorism, 2001–**

Use for works on the military operations, diplomatic activities and other counter-terrorist measures undertaken by the United States and allied countries in response to the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

UF Operation Enduring Freedom, 2001  
War against Terrorism, 2001

BT Terrorism

RT September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001

World Trade Center (New York) – Terrorist attack, 2001

USE September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001

## SCISWeb Manual

\$15.00 (plus postage)

**SCISWeb Manual** provides guidance to school library staff on how to gain the full benefits of *SCISWeb*. *SCISWeb* is an essential component in managing a school library collection, as it allows library staff to download online catalogue records for use in their own catalogue. This manual helps library staff to fully utilise *SCISWeb* with their cataloguing.

*SCISWeb Manual* also shows how *SCISWeb* can be used as a resource selection tool. It provides instructions on how to use *SCIS OPAC* effectively to create comprehensive lists of educational materials when selecting new resources.

*SCISWeb Manual* features:

- Detailed instructions: clear and concise directions for using *SCISWeb* effectively
- Graphic displays: *SCISWeb* screen dumps complement the text
- Hints, Frequently Asked Questions and Notes provide a thorough understanding of all facets of *SCISWeb*.

Order forms are located at

<<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/scis/handouts/handouts.htm>>.

## Important

### ***'Computer software' GMD to be replaced by 'electronic resource'***

The 2001 Amendments to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2) include some important changes. Chapter nine has been renamed 'Electronic Resources' and the GMD 'electronic resource' has replaced 'computer file'. (SCIS has used 'computer software' instead of 'computer file' and 'website' for online resources.)

At the February teleconference, the SCIS agencies agreed in principle to use the GMD 'electronic resource' instead of 'computer software'. However, SCIS will continue to use the GMD 'website' for websites, and the GMDs 'map' and 'globe' instead of the new 'cartographic material'.

Recognising that some library system vendors and users may need time to prepare for the change, SCIS proposes implementing it on 1 June 2002. Your comments and feedback on this proposal are welcome.

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