

# CONNECTIONS

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## School libraries: miracles and madness



**The first school** I went to burnt down. This was not my fault. The library didn't burn down, because there wasn't one — just a classroom with a shelf of books. I won third place in the lottery to read one of the two or three new books donated each year: *The Magic Pudding*. Three weeks later, it was mine for a week. (And it changed my life.)

My second school was Brisbane's most expensive for girls. Its library was a glass-fronted bookcase. If the teacher remembered to unlock it, we could read a book at lunchtime — none published later than possibly 1789. My third, a selective high school, had a library. It even had

books, possibly bought by the metre as 'suitable for children'. I don't think any student bothered to read them.

But I did have books. In those days, English teachers played the role of teacher librarian — an unheard-of concept back then in our region. My teacher brought me in an armful every Monday. Years later, I discovered she even spent days hunting out and buying the books she knew I needed. That teacher possibly saved my life. She certainly played an enormous part in making me the person, and writer, I am now.

That is the magic of a teacher librarian (and in that case my English teacher).

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Jackie French (Photo credit: Kelly Sturgiss)

They know the right book, the one you didn't know you needed, the one that changes a child's life.

In these days, when a low student-to-teacher ratio is deemed one of the most important signs of a 'good school', the role of teachers is often prioritised over that of library staff. This may lead to the decision to make the library role part time and to hire someone who does not have teacher librarianship qualifications, or even to rely on volunteers. I have been in schools where so much was spent on the library building that there was no budget for books — or for a person who knew them and the students who might read them.

Give me five minutes at a school, and I will tell you if there is a teacher librarian. Literally. Each time I go to a school now

“The one inescapable essential in a school is a qualified, experienced, deeply compassionate teacher librarian. The job being what it is, I don't think teacher librarians come in any other flavour.”

I bet every kid who thinks books are boring that their teacher librarian, their teacher, or I (as a last resort) can find them a book they love so much they can't stop reading it — and that they will immediately want another book.

Somewhere, past the small mob of boys at the front, the teacher librarian is grinning. Because, like me, they know they can make sure I will never, ever lose the bet.

I've never had a kid from a school with a teacher librarian email me for book recommendations. The teacher librarian does the work. And no, I've never had to pay out either, as when I don't know what book to recommend, whether on soccer or on zombies, I put out a Twitter or Facebook post and dozens of teacher librarians answer, with glorious lists of books. Problem solved.

That's anecdotal, but there are studies too: where there are teacher librarians, kids read and achieve more. There are many studies available, but they are conveniently ignored when the time comes to scrimp a few dollars that might be used elsewhere. It is unqualified madness to let a full-time teacher librarian position go.

Sell the oval. Get rid of the swimming pool. They can be borrowed. But a teacher librarian can't be — one who is the heart of the school and knows every kid. Once an experienced teacher librarian sees what a student chooses to read, they know who that young person has become, often before their parents. They will also know what books that student needs, or what literacy help is essential if an obviously intelligent child chooses books way below their level. They will see a previously gregarious child turn hollow-eyed and know when to offer escapism or even, literally, escape.

Earlier this year, a girl contacted me: her best friend was going to email me, and asked if I could email back 'because a lot of bad things are happening to her'. The teacher librarian had suggested the best friend ask me what my next book would be.

The best friend emailed. I sent her library a copy of the next book, on the condition she be the first borrower. No problem, as she was already a library monitor and was able to choose which new books to read. She not only helped in the library at lunchtime, but from 8 am each morning, where the teacher librarian brought in breakfast for them to share, and after school, with afternoon tea. A few months later (we continued emailing), the school had arranged for this student to help at a local library each weekend. Here, she had joy, books and refuge the whole week.

That's the beginning of her story. I have gradually learned much more of it, and her life is now far happier. In her first email, she wrote this: 'When I grow up I am going to be a teacher librarian, so I can give everyone in the world the books they need, and save their lives and make them laugh and think and stuff like that'.

It is exactly because of 'stuff like that' that the one inescapable essential in a school is a qualified, experienced, deeply compassionate teacher librarian.

The job being what it is, I don't think teacher librarians come in any other flavour.

**Jackie French**

Author, historian, and honorary wombat (part time)



# DO WE NEED LIBRARY LESSONS?

**Barbara Band looks at the many benefits of regular library lessons, and speculates what would be lost without them.**

**A school library** is (or should be) a whole-school facility, enabling the learning needs of all students, supporting staff to deliver the curriculum, and providing resources for reading and information within a unique space. That's the theory. The reality, however, is likely to be library staff constantly juggling between the diverse needs of various groups, library lessons full of hands-on activities, busy research lessons using a multitude of resources, quiet periods of study, and times of silent personal reading. All this usually in one room during one day! It is said that you can't be all things to all people and yet that is exactly what a school librarian tries to do.

Most of the time this works, although it does depend on what sort of space you have — an area that lends itself to being 'zoned' will be more accommodating to differing needs than a large square room — and it also requires tolerance, recognition of diverse needs, and flexibility. It is no surprise, though, that sometimes the needs of one group override another's. This is not usually a problem if it's short-term, such as during the intense exam period when students may need a quiet place to revise, but when the school library is permanently designated for a specific use, it means the rest of the school population lose out.

There have been a couple of trends I've noticed recently in schools: one is to use the library as a dedicated space for years 12 and 13 students, making it a silent study area often with library staff supervising students (a waste of their skills and expertise) and preventing other groups from accessing resources and services. The other is to stop regular library lessons altogether, with the often-heard comment that 'students don't need to read in the library because they read in English class' and the general consensus that the library is open at breaks for them to visit.

Does this matter? Do students need regular library lessons? What do they lose when these don't happen?

## Library induction sessions

Library induction delivered in one or two sessions does not work. The beginning of a school year is a busy time, even more so for new students who have to cope with finding their way around a huge site and integrating with their peers while remembering what to bring each day, where to go for each lesson and what their teacher's name is. So it's no surprise that the Dewey Decimal System is lower on their list of priorities. How to use the library needs to be reinforced via several lessons, not delivered in a quick session fitted in between other subjects.

## A safe space

Regular library lessons mean that students become comfortable with both the space and their library staff. They soon recognise that the library is somewhere 'different' in the school; it's not a classroom — and although the library staff are not necessarily teachers, they have the authority of being members of the school staff. Students also learn that while certain behaviours are expected of them during lessons, the library can be, and often is,

A LIBRARY IS A GOOD PLACE TO GO WHEN YOU FEEL UNHAPPY, FOR THERE, IN A BOOK, YOU MAY FIND ENCOURAGEMENT AND COMFORT.

A LIBRARY IS A GOOD PLACE TO GO WHEN YOU FEEL BEWILDERED OR UNDECIDED, FOR THERE, IN A BOOK, YOU MAY FIND YOUR QUESTION ANSWERED.



Illustration by Chris Riddell

a much altered room at break times. Most school librarians will tell you that their library is a safe haven for the vulnerable, for those students who have not found their niche in the school, and for those who are not at ease with the masses. This pastoral role is much undervalued yet so important, as the library provides a unique space for such students within the school.

## Exposure to books

Library lessons mean exposure to books! Even if a library is accessible at breaks, those visiting it are likely to already be readers. The students that you want to lure into the library — the reluctant and non-readers — are unlikely to be anywhere near the library. Contact with books on a regular basis sends an important message: that the school values reading and considers it important.

## Creating readers

Regular library lessons enable the library staff to develop relationships with each student, to find out what type of reader they are, what sort of texts (if any) they like to read, and what their interests are. They allow us to guide each student in selecting books, something even the more able readers need at times. They expose students to a wide range of genres, media and authors and, essentially, give students 'permission' to read. In an environment where reading is often seen as 'uncool', regular

“Most school librarians will tell you that their library is a safe haven for the vulnerable, for those students who have not found their niche in the school, and for those who are not at ease with the masses.”

library lessons that incorporate reading time enable those who enjoy books to do so knowing that they won't be disparaged. Without library lessons, you are unlikely to turn non-readers into lifelong readers.

### Promotion of library programs

A lack of regular library lessons makes it difficult to organise and promote many of the activities that encourage reading and boost literacy levels, such as competitions, book talks, author visits and participation in both local and national initiatives. Communication via tutors and promotional posters has a limited reach.

### Lifelong learning

In addition to library skills, many school libraries deliver an information skills program teaching basic competencies that are essential for both further education and the workplace, and that create independent learners with the capabilities to cope with further and higher education. These skills are sometimes taught via the curriculum, albeit in a piecemeal fashion, but the librarian is able to incorporate all of them into a cross-curricular program using research lessons designed in collaboration with teaching staff. Restricting use of the library limits the delivery of such a program.

### Schools need regular library lessons

Basically, reduced access to books — which is what happens when the library is used exclusively for one group of students or when library lessons are not part of the timetable — means a reduction in reading. This impacts on reading for pleasure, which needs choice *and* access, and discourages students from using the library for their information needs. A school that allows this to happen is not using its library staff or library efficiently or effectively, and is providing a much diminished service to its students.



**Barbara Band**

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This article was originally published by Barbara Band, and has been republished here with permission. To view the original article, please visit: <http://bit.ly/librarylessons>

## Supporting Australian book creators

In Term 4 of 2017, SCIS invited 750 Australian schools to participate in the Educational Lending Right (ELR) School Library Survey. We received 364 responses to the survey, surpassing the required minimum of 300. We are grateful to all school library, teaching and administrative staff who recognised the value of the survey by sharing their time and support in completing it. We also extend this thank you to all education departments, Catholic Education offices, and library vendors who assisted with the data extraction process.

The survey, which we manage on behalf of the Department of Communications and the Arts, is part of the Australian Government's ELR program that recompenses book creators for their books being available in educational libraries. The survey determines the estimated holdings of particular titles in Australian school libraries. This information, combined with the results from TAFE and university libraries, is then used as the basis for payments to registered book creators. ELR is a relative of the Public Lending Right (PLR), which sees book creators recompensed for having their work held in public libraries.

Together, the Lending Rights schemes encourage the growth and development of Australian writing and publishing by providing an additional income stream for book creators. Australia is fortunate to be the only country with a comprehensive ELR scheme.

The Department of Communications and the Arts recently published the *Public Lending Right Committee Annual Report 2016–17*, available at <http://bit.ly/plrreport>. In 2016–17, ELR payments totalling \$12.128 million were made to 9,996 claimants, including 9,632 creators and 364 publishers.

The report names the 100 highest scoring books from the results of the 2016 ELR survey. Of these, the ten highest scoring books were:

1. Mem Fox, *Possum Magic*
2. Mem Fox, *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*
3. Emily Rodda, *The Forests of Silence*
4. Morris Gleitzman, *Boy Overboard*
5. Robin Klein, *Hating Alison Ashley*
6. Jeannie Baker, *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*
7. John Marsden, *Tomorrow, When the War Began*
8. Pamela Allen, *Who Sank the Boat?*
9. Morris Gleitzman, *Once*
10. Robin Klein, *Boss of the Pool*



**Nicole Richardson**

SCIS communications & projects coordinator  
Education Services Australia

# BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

The National Film and Sound Archive provides access to a wide range of audiovisual content to help bring history to life.

With knowledge more obtainable than ever, educators have countless options to stimulate their students' curiosity. New generations are digital natives, immersed in media 24/7. High-quality audiovisual resources have become increasingly important tools to inspire students.

With more than 2.8 million items in its collection, the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) is the custodian of Australia's audiovisual history. It is also a rich source for the classroom, with an increased amount of interesting, freely available content on the new website ([www.nfsa.gov.au](http://www.nfsa.gov.au)).

Besides accessible digital educational resources and teachers' notes in its Learning section, the website also has a wealth of material that can be viewed and enjoyed via online exhibitions, curated collections, and its Australian screen website ([www.aso.gov.au](http://www.aso.gov.au)). The latter was created in partnership with Education Services Australia and features clips that were selected for their educational value, accompanied by teachers' notes from specialist curriculum writers.

The NFSA Education Manager, Cris Kennedy, cites Film Australia Collection as one of the best resources for educators. It includes more than 3,000 documentaries and docu-dramas that were commissioned by the federal government between 1913 and 2008.

With an aim of producing an audiovisual record of Australian life, the collection includes the arts, history, the environment, science, Indigenous studies, immigration, war, and politics — with specific topics such as the story of the ANZACs, the life of Eddie Mabo, the importance of the wool industry, and even the history of cane toads.

One of the best things about this collection is that it is a great way to teach the difference between primary and secondary sources. In recounting real-life occurrences, many of these films include first-hand accounts, photographs, footage and audio.

'Being able to comprehend the value of primary and secondary sources is in the curriculum from grades 4 through to 8, with

increasing complexity', says Kennedy. 'It's a really good thing for students to go beyond Wikipedia and think about the value of these kinds of sources.'

Not only are clips from the collection available on the NFSA website and YouTube channel, but schools are also able to acquire DVDs and Blu-rays via the NFSA's worldwide distribution service. Many of the titles also come with study guides that can be downloaded for free from the NFSA shop.

Across primary and secondary levels, there are a number of programs to choose from, covering areas such as Indigenous representation on screen, Australia at war, and the history of advertising in Australia.

'We want to be a support for teachers', says Kennedy. 'We know our collection and can help you to use it as a teaching tool.'

However, that doesn't mean these sessions are simply a matter of hitting 'play' on a selection of clips. As every teacher will know, it takes more than that to catch the attention of young minds.

'Kids are more engaged when there's a way to interact with the clips', Kennedy says. 'We ask them to pick apart what they've seen, encourage them to ask questions. The aim is to be the start of a big conversation that can carry over to the classroom.'

Cris Kennedy believes that the glimpses into the past offered by the NFSA's resources are an exciting way to experience history holistically.

'It's not just about what happened. You get to see what things were like *when* they happened', he says. 'What people were wearing, how they lived ... You can see first-hand what those times were like — and it will give your students a more in-depth knowledge than a list of facts ever would.'

**Amanda Diaz**  
National Film and Sound Archive

## YOUR ONE-STOP SHOP FOR EDUCATION

### The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA)

has thousands of audiovisual resources available for educators to inspire primary and secondary school students:

- > Online resources:  
[Nfsa.gov.au](http://Nfsa.gov.au), [aso.gov.au](http://aso.gov.au),  
[YouTube.com/filmaustralia](http://YouTube.com/filmaustralia)
- > Curriculum-relevant documentaries on DVD/Blu-ray:  
[shop.nfsa.gov.au](http://shop.nfsa.gov.au)
- > Education programs onsite (Canberra)

For more information, contact [enquiries@nfsa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@nfsa.gov.au), or visit our website.



**WINNER**  
TOURISM VISITOR  
EDUCATION AWARD

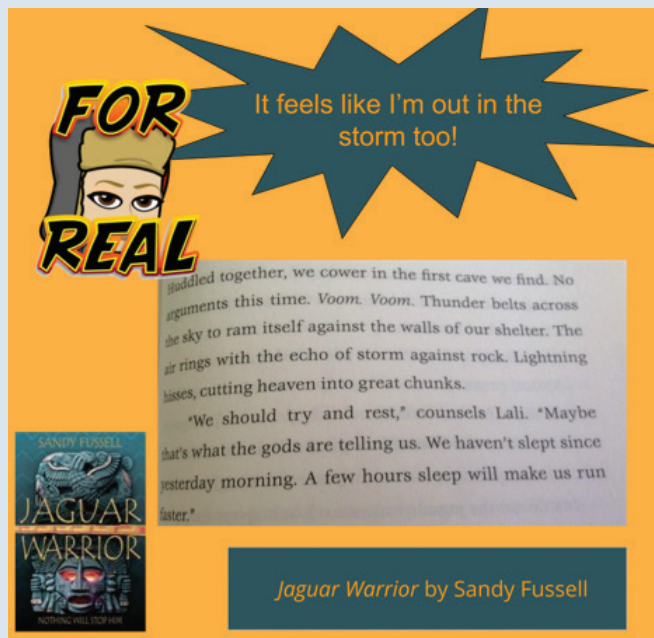


[Nfsa.gov.au](http://Nfsa.gov.au)    



# BUILDING A BOOK BUZZ WITH BOOK SNAPS

Susan Stephenson shares ideas for creating a buzz around library books through easy-to-make images.



## What is a book snap?

**Essentially, a book snap** is about grabbing a short quote from a book and creating a shareable image about it. Typically, people take a quick snap or screenshot (if the text is digital) of something they are reading. Once it is an image, they add to it other images and text, then save and share it. While Snapchat has often been used for the sharing aspect, it doesn't need to be the only option. Book snaps can be annotated with text as simple as 'Love this part!' or 'Funny!' Or the text might be a sentence that summarises a section, a paragraph, a chapter or even a whole book — this is a really useful skill for students to develop. Many people add an image of the book cover to make sure they include the names of the author and illustrator.

## Why a book snap?

Book snaps are fun, and an excellent way to communicate visually. There is a social aspect when students share with each other, as they come across something they notice, like, or make a judgement about. Book snapping is also an opportunity to integrate technology with literature and literacy. It is much faster than writing a book report, but is still an authentic way to respond to text, be an active reader, and potentially read and communicate more. I love that book snapping is a natural extension of what kids and adults do naturally — that is, share their comments on the content they consume.

## But what about copyright?

Book covers, illustrations and text are copyright to their creators, and I know teachers and librarians want to respect that, and model that for kids. I am conscientious about my own handling

of copyrighted material in my book reviews at *The Book Chook* ([www.thebookchook.com](http://www.thebookchook.com)). I acknowledge the author and title and, as my purpose is to review, or make a judgement of the work, I consider this to be fair dealing. It is important for schools to ensure that their own approach adheres to copyright principles. You can find more information at the Australian Copyright Council ([www.copyright.org.au](http://www.copyright.org.au)). You can also read about the special agreement covering libraries and book covers ([www.alia.org.au/copyright-and-book-covers](http://www.alia.org.au/copyright-and-book-covers)).

## So, how can you make a book snap?

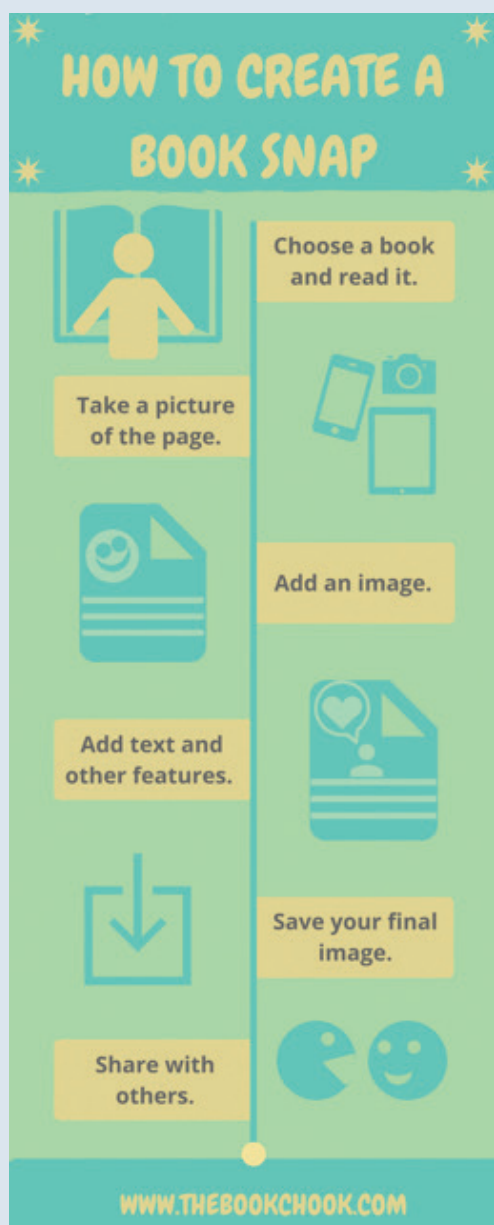
You start with a tablet or computer. You also need something that can take a photo of a physical book or a screenshot of a digital book, and software to edit the image. Tablets and computers usually have regular image-editing software, tools, apps, or a combination of all three. You will also need a way to share the completed image with your intended audience.

Here is the process I followed to make my sample book snaps by using the freely available software Google Drawings ([drawings.google.com](http://drawings.google.com)).

## Take a picture of your chosen book

Take a picture of the front cover and/or the page you want to feature. You could choose to take a picture of a quote or a particular page from your book; perhaps you have found something that is really important to you. This might be via a screenshot if the reading is online, or via a tablet, phone or other camera.





An infographic summarising the processes of creating a book snap.

### Choose an image-editing program

There you can upload what you need to your workplace or canvas for the rest of the book snapping. For example, if you are using Google Drawings, you can set up your canvas/page to the dimensions you want. For my book snap images featured in this article, I chose an orange 1000 x 1000 px square. To change your canvas size, click on File/Page Setup, select 'Custom' and enter your chosen dimensions. To change the background colour, simply right-click on the canvas, click on 'Background', and choose your desired colour.

### Add other images

For example, it is great to find an extra image that adds some emotion and colour to the book snap. I sometimes use the Bitmoji app on my iPad. If I want to use it, I save my chosen Bitmoji image and share it with myself. The Bitmoji Chrome Extension makes this even faster. Other fun images can be smileys, clip art, avatars, and drawn or digitised images — anything you have saved to your device that you have the right to use.

### Add text annotations and other features

In Google Drawings, this is a matter of using the textbox tool, positioning the text (for example, over a speech bubble or another shape) then choosing font, colour and size. The shapes menu in Google Drawings has arrows, callouts and a range of other shapes. It's useful to use rectangles and make them slightly transparent in order to make text stand out a little more. You can also embed a link via the 'Insert' menu. With a tablet, you can annotate by 'handwriting' and 'drawing' on the screen.

### Save your final image

It is important to remember to title the image and save it to your device.

### Share with others

The digital sharing aspect will depend on each school's or student's situation. I have read about sharing via class blogs, a class Snapchat account, a Padlet gallery, and Google Slides. A scrolling slideshow on a computer in a display area is another way of reaching a wider audience. Or, how about a noticeboard outside the library with printed book snaps?

### Where can I find out more about book snaps?

Teachers are also using book snaps, perhaps to share what they are learning in their own professional development. The principles are the same as with students, although there is probably more emphasis on text when teachers share with each other. If you are part of a group or network that would be interested in commenting on part of a book or your online reading, book snapping is an almost instant way to communicate with them. On Twitter and Instagram, people use the hashtag #BookSnaps to share their images.

Tara M Martin, a US educator, started the book snap phenomenon and has many how-to videos on the 'Resources' tab of her website at [www.tarammartin.com](http://www.tarammartin.com).

St Rita's College in Queensland have posted several book snaps on their library website and on their Instagram and Twitter accounts (@StRitasLibrary). In my opinion, they have elevated book snaps to an art form.

There is a great quote, often attributed to Einstein: 'Creativity is intelligence having fun'. As well as being fun, book snapping is one way for your students to share their reactions to the books they read. Why not build a buzz with book snaps and have a display or competition? Book snapping is a quick, easy and visually interesting way to share the joy of reading.

### Image credits

From *Once Upon a Small Rhinoceros*

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Illustrations © 2017 Leila Rudge

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From *Jaguar Warrior*

Text © 2010 Sandy Fussell

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**Susan Stephenson**

[www.thebookchook.com](http://www.thebookchook.com)

# SCHOOL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

SCIS speaks to Helen Tomazin, WASLA award-winning library technician from Good Shepherd Catholic School in Lockridge WA, about what's happening in her school library.

## What is your job title and what does your role entail?

In my role as library technician, I assist in organising, operating and maintaining the school library. I look after loans and acquisitions, and maintain library records and equipment. I inform users of circulation policies and procedures and generate overdue reports.

My main focus is to maintain a high level of customer service to support students, staff and parents. My teacher assistant qualifications enable me to assist students in literacy, numeracy and information literacy. Patrons often need assistance in locating resources and using our library catalogue and equipment such as computers, the printer/photocopier, and the laminator. Maintaining a high level of presentation in the library also helps to create a wonderful experience for students, staff and parents.

To stay current in my profession, I volunteer as a committee member for the Western Australian School Library Association (WASLA). The committee's professionalism and dedication to its members are second to none. I take the knowledge gained through WASLA back to the library with me in order to improve our library services.

My principal is supportive of my role in learning and building relationships with the students so they feel inspired and excited to read.

## What is the most rewarding aspect of working in a school library, and why?

The most rewarding aspect is the feedback we receive from our students. It is always wonderful to see their enthusiasm when they enter the library.

There are times when students do not know what book to choose, and I occasionally come across a reluctant reader. In both cases, I get to know their abilities and interests and will suggest a particular title for them. Before I know it, they have come into the library to thank me.

This is the best reward I can receive.

## What do you see as the most important part of the library's role in the school community?

The library is the central hub of the school, where students, teachers and the community get together to enjoy literature and learn. It should be a modern learning space where students can create, experiment, relax, and feel inspired. To do this, we need to engage with, listen to, and get to know our students.

We need to demonstrate a supportive culture for students, staff and the community. We are here to help students in all aspects of their learning, including literacy, numeracy and information literacy skills. It's important that library resources are aligned with the curriculum and available to all staff.

The library should feel like a safe and comfortable place for students to learn and to discover and develop their imagination and problem-solving skills; it should encourage curiosity and innovation.

## Are there any current issues or challenges facing the library?

One issue we recently faced was where students were unable to borrow books on a Friday as the library was not staffed. To overcome this challenge, we have set up a self-checkout for the students and they are now using this self-checkout with much enthusiasm. This has been a great success for our staff and students.

## How do you promote reading in your school?

We are very fortunate to have an excellent school leadership team that supports and promotes a love of reading and literacy. We have a variety of reading programs and initiatives including Literacy Pro, Reading Mastery and Reading Recovery. We have dedicated staff who support and promote reading and literacy in our school. There is a teacher reference area, and I regularly collaborate with teachers to provide them with new reading and literacy resources.

We run various events including Book



Helen, dressed up as a witch for Book Week, stands in her staff room surrounded by hand-picked books.

Week, Book Fair, and National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS). Our principal is very supportive of these events. During NSS, he reads the chosen book to our lucky pre-primary and kindy students and then to the whole school, during assembly. This is fantastic modelling for our students, and we find many requests for the book afterwards.

We also have displays of new, interesting and creative books in the library, classrooms, resource areas, and even in the staffroom. This creates a positive environment for reading, allowing students to spend more time reading and interacting with books. I also share the



“The library should feel like a safe and comfortable place for students to learn, and to discover and develop their imagination and problem-solving skills; it should encourage curiosity and innovation.”

knowledge I have gained from WASLA. All staff share the same passion to have students become lifelong readers, and as a result we have a wonderful school culture of promoting reading and literacy.

### How do you encourage students to make use of the library?

It is wonderful to see all the students make use of our library during class time and during the day. We make a constant effort to stock the library with the latest and most popular books, as well as the classics. We especially cater for reluctant readers; for example, with graphic novels, which students love.

The students love the many comfortable areas to read including reading corners, couches and beanbags. There is plenty of natural light and it is a very welcoming place. It's important for students to feel welcome and safe when they enter the library.

When students borrow books, I always ask for feedback on the titles they read. This is important because we need to be role models for the students and show interest in their reading, which allows us to better cater for their needs. We are also happy for students to suggest books for us to purchase.

### What is your favourite thing about SCIS?

Having the SCIS subscription is wonderful as I can add resources to the catalogue much faster than if I had to create the records myself. The library is busy and having SCIS saves us so much time. I love the new SCIS Data website — it is very easy to navigate. I particularly enjoy their professional learning webinars available to users. SCIS is also doing an amazing job cataloguing resources relevant to the Australian Curriculum, with new records always available to download. The SCIS team is professional, resourceful and efficient. I recently needed some assistance and they were able to sort out my issues within 24 hours — sometimes even within an hour.



**Helen Tomazin**  
Library technician  
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Lockridge, Western Australia

## SCIS is more

Welcome to the first edition of *Connections* for 2018.

We have another exciting and busy year ahead of us — and it has already started. By the time you read this, we will have completed the first SCIS webinar for the year, with more scheduled. We are also hosting workshops in Perth and Melbourne in Term 1. For details and registrations, visit the 'Professional learning' page of the SCIS website ([www.scisdata.com/professional-learning](http://www.scisdata.com/professional-learning)). We will be planning more workshops and webinars to showcase the new SCIS Data platform, so keep an eye on the page for more announcements.

In recent issues of *Connections*, we introduced the new-look SCIS website. Here are a few highlights to remind you of the ways in which the site can help you in your day-to-day work.

### Cataloguing services

SCIS Data makes access to cataloguing services much easier. When you request ISBNs to download, any unmatched records are listed for you. Your unmatched orders can be automatically checked against the

SCIS database for up to eight weeks from when you placed the order. Notification of successful matches will be emailed to you. Alternatively, you can easily complete an online request for SCIS to catalogue these items for you. Check that a valid email address is included in your SCIS profile so that you can make use of these services.

### Material selection

SCIS Data can be a useful tool for the selection of material. With the inclusion of enriched content from Syndetics and LibraryThing for Libraries in the catalogue, you can easily view additional information including plot summaries, author notes, awards and reviews.

### Where to find help

There is easy access to help, via a link on the bottom of each page. You can search for help on any topic, view any of our help articles or send in a query. There are some very useful short tutorials in the SCIS Vimeo stream ([www.vimeo.com/user4095009](http://www.vimeo.com/user4095009)).

Keep in touch with all things SCIS by following us on any of our social

media accounts. You can find us on Facebook and Twitter under the handle @SCISData, at LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com/company/22287262](http://www.linkedin.com/company/22287262)), and on the SCIS blog (<http://scis.edublogs.org>).

### Connections

Our team has been very busy with the back collection of *Connections*. The complete set is now online — from the very first issue in 1992, through to the current one. Please visit [www.scisdata.com/connections](http://www.scisdata.com/connections) to check out the history of this publication.



**Caroline Ramsden**  
Manager, SCIS  
Education Services Australia

# SCIS AS A RESOURCE SELECTION AID

While SCIS's key business is providing catalogue records, the SCIS catalogue is also a fantastic tool to help you find new resources for your school library. Nicole Richardson shares how to do this.

**When a teacher** approaches you about finding resources for their upcoming unit, where is the first place you look? Perhaps you perform a quick Google search to see if it can direct you to any relevant resources. Maybe you check a publisher's website. Yet, if we encourage students to use the library catalogue based on its inclusion of trusted, credible and educational resources, why not use a catalogue ourselves?

The SCIS catalogue contains over 1.5 million resources, all of which have been vetted by our experienced cataloguers. It is a comprehensive, diverse database of educationally focused resources, spanning various publishers and resource types. Many catalogue records — primarily for books — provide additional information such as a resource summary, author notes, other editions and similar titles to assist with your selection.

## Where does SCIS find resources for cataloguing?

SCIS cataloguers add approximately 4,500 catalogue records to the database each month. The resources come from a range of sources, including publishers, booksellers and school libraries. We are always on the lookout for publishers with whom to partner. We even find inspiration for the SCIS catalogue on social media. How many times have you saved links such as 'The top 50 educational websites' but forgotten to come back to them?

## How do I use SCIS as a selection aid?

Two new features of the SCIS Data website support the use of our catalogue in this way.

## Search tags to increase discoverability

The SCIS catalogue now displays additional terms to support resource discoverability in schools. These are not embedded in the MARC record itself, but are value-adding terms inferred from the MARC data. These terms, classified as learning area, resource type or audience level, have been developed to enhance resource discovery. This new search capability is on top of the usual SCIS Subject Headings, which is an effective tool

to limit your search by subject.

Let's say the history teacher has approached you to help her find World War I resources for her Year 9 class. If you pop over to the SCIS catalogue, you can start with a basic search — perhaps simply 'World War I' — and, from the results page, refine your search. Filtering by your specific learning area, subject and audience level will provide you with the most relevant resources catalogued by SCIS.

The advanced search option allows you to limit your search further by either fiction or non-fiction — and, if it's fiction you're looking for, to narrow your search by specific genres.

## Saved lists to support content curation

The SCIS catalogue now has the ability to build lists. Rather than downloading one record at a time, you can curate lists within the SCIS catalogue; this is particularly helpful for schools using SCIS as a resource selection tool.

Following the scenario above, say you are starting to put together a list of resources on World War I for the history teacher. You may wish to use the SCIS catalogue to see what resources are in use by other schools. Rather than downloading one record at a time, you can select the 'Add record' icon (an icon displaying a plus sign over a folder) to build your list. Just remember to save or download the list at the end of your session!

By curating lists of quality, educationally focused digital content that you can import into your library catalogue, you are helping to build the foundations for digital literacy in your school. In addition to using the SCIS catalogue to curate digital content, you could also build 'wish lists' for physical items.

Next time someone asks you for resources that you don't already have in your library, consider using SCIS to point you in the right direction.



**Nicole Richardson**

SCIS communications & projects coordinator  
Education Services Australia

## ARE YOU MAKING THE MOST OF SCIS?



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**scis** Schools Catalogue  
Information Service

# GENRE WARS

Teacher librarian Martin Gray shares the results of his school library survey, looking at the different ways schools are promoting genre within their fiction collections.

**My local public library** has moved to sorting its fiction collection by genre and has reported a 20 per cent increase in borrowing. Naturally, this has interested the school libraries in town. I decided to run a poll to see whether making the change was worth it for our school.

Twenty-six per cent of the 100 respondents had changed to this method. Eighteen respondents were thinking about changing to genre. The rest were happy with what they had.

Of those who had changed to genre order, their results were largely positive. Only two said stocktaking was harder, and three that shelving or cataloguing was harder.

Two respondents reported little or no increase in borrowing. All the others had increases of at least five per cent. One school even had an increase of more than 50 per cent. Only one library had changed from genre order back to sorting by author name, and one more was thinking of doing so.

## Advantages of genre order

Several schools changed to genre order after students kept asking for books by genre. This is how bookshops are often set up and seemed to reflect what the students wanted. Respondents who had genrefied their fiction collection stated that teachers and students reported back positively. The change had increased lending figures, consequently increasing student reading.

When books are sorted by genre, students who are taking reading classes tend to find their books and settle into reading more quickly, improving lesson effectiveness.

Some literature suggests that traditional library set-ups make it difficult for many students to find books, causing them to have negative associations with libraries and book searching. It has been argued that genrefication is a way to overcome this (Potter 2016).

## Advantages of name order

The argument that several survey respondents put forward for continuing to use name order for their fiction collection was that they were trying to encourage students to use search skills, especially since university libraries do not sort by genre. This would also enable students to transfer these search skills to other spheres of later life.

Many of the respondents were also worried that shelving by genre would limit a student's reading range, as they would not make discoveries outside their favoured genre.

Another argument was that genres often overlap, and that ordering books in this way could be arbitrary and even self-defeating. It is also possible that students who search using the enquiry terminal would have more difficulty finding fiction books as they are not in alphabetical order (Dunne 2015).

Other survey respondents were worried that genrefication may just be a trend and, sooner or later, the library would have to change back. They also pointed to the lack of clear research indicating that it is worth the change. Reports of school and

public libraries returning to traditional cataloguing for their fiction collection shows that genre collections do indeed have some issues.

Some survey respondents reported that time, space, staff allocation and money may affect a library's ability to do a major rework of their collection. Many were simply happy with their library as is.

## Some alternatives

One alternative to complete genrefication is the use of genre displays. With this approach, books are kept in name order but, periodically, a genre group is broken out into a display.

Another alternative is to use spine stickers to make the genre easier to find within a collection sorted by author name.

I would like to try both of these alternatives. If they work, I will consult with the school community to see if they like it. If we do wish to change, then the genre stickers will already be in place and the transition will be much smoother. This process will be made easier by SCIS records now including genre headings.

## A few questions

If a library can afford to move to sorting by genre, and we assume that increased borrowing and reading does actually occur, there are still factors to be considered before we can judge the change worthwhile:

1. Are search skills affected?
2. Is reading range reduced?
3. If search skills or reading range are affected, would this be more or less important than increased reading?
4. How much of an increase in reading is worth all the time that it would take to move to genre order?

The answers to these questions will need to be decided within each school. A selective school that has a high level of reading may want to focus on search skills. A school with poor reading statistics may wish to do anything to get those figures up. There is no clear and obvious choice.

## References

Dunne, K 2015, 'Genrefication of the fiction collection in an elementary school library', Masters thesis, University of Central Missouri.

Potter JM 2016, 'The effects of genrefication of fiction on the book selection process in elementary schools', *Culminating projects in information media*, paper 7.



**Martin Gray**  
Teacher librarian  
NSW



# SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND E-LEARNING: WHERE SYNERGY EQUALS OPPORTUNITY

Anita McMillan explores the synergy between libraries and learning management systems, promoting e-learning as a skill in which school library staff should invest.

**E-learning is gaining** momentum in schools, and opportunities abound for school library professionals to support and even lead in this area.

School library staff are highly regarded for their information, critical and digital literacy skills, and well known for their early adoption of new technologies. Those school library staff who proactively engage with new technologies, as well as assisting others with their learning and becoming involved in decision-making processes, will undoubtedly succeed as leaders.

## My school's story

Just over two years ago, I was approached by the principal to form and lead an E-learning Strategy Group for the school. I jumped at the opportunity and set about electing departmental representatives who could work together, but had quite different perspectives reflecting their teaching, administrative and managerial backgrounds.

Our first port of call was to define e-learning. In researching the concept, we quickly realised it means very different things to different schools and, in fact, different things across industries. Our focus became how we ourselves could create content and resources for our teaching and learning, and how to facilitate students' ability to create, not just consume.

Consensus was reached regarding our college-wide desire to have a new learning management platform. Our custom system hadn't been updated in years and we were aware that plenty of products in the marketplace offered so much more than content management.

Over a 12-month period, the E-Learning Strategy Group investigated contemporary learning management systems (LMS) to support the delivery of our Prep to Year 12 curriculum. Below is a snapshot of the selection process we followed, which may be of assistance if you are thinking about undertaking any project implementation in your school library. The synergy between an LMS and an integrated library management system is undeniable. (Please note that vendor and product identification information has been omitted from this article intentionally.)

## Finding the right learning management system

### Initial research

We combed the internet to work out what other schools and universities, both in Australia and overseas, were providing for their academic environment.

Schools were contacted by phone and email to determine whether they had a dedicated LMS and, if so, which vendors and products they use. We set up a collaborative Office 365 team site to capture our findings.



Library technician Rani McLennan (left) and Anita McMillan explore the new learning management system on their tablet device.

### Sandbox/trial sites

Following the initial research, a number of LMS products were considered for trial. Vendors were asked to supply a trial site or 'sandbox' for interested staff to access. Login details were shared with the E-Learning Strategy Group and members were encouraged to test out each LMS.

### Demonstrations

As a result of the LMS trials, four vendors were asked to provide online demonstrations of their products to the strategy group. We then selected three finalists, who were asked to provide onsite demonstrations of their LMS to more than 30 staff members, including the E-Learning Strategy Group, heads of departments, junior school team leaders and other selected staff.

### Staff surveys

Feedback from staff was sought throughout the onsite demonstration process, with surveys completed after each demonstration. A summary of the feedback was included in the collaborative team site.

### Showcase school visits

The opportunity to connect with other schools and explore their LMS environment in person was integral to our selection process. Staff at four schools spent hours demonstrating their LMS and student management systems, and their efforts were truly appreciated.

### Other schools' success factors

Noteworthy success factors at the showcase school visits included:

- accessibility to devices through college-supplied laptops or Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) programs
- a strong existing culture surrounding the use of digital

technologies and a clear vision for their LMS

- infrastructure to support access
- dedicated deployment resources including e-learning leaders, trainers and lead teachers
- bottom-up and top-down approaches, including dedicated professional development time, new staff appointments to lead implementation and training, retirement of previous systems, and a staged approach with clear timelines.

### Identified risks and challenges

To ensure successful implementation and take-up of the new LMS at our college, a number of challenges needed to be overcome:

- Choosing between on-premises or cloud-hosted LMS — whether the college could support either option
- Breadth of project scope — some LMS were purely teaching and learning tools, and some were all-in-one school solutions
- Access during class — ensuring there was enough equipment for students to access the LMS and that login procedures were simple and quick
- Access from home — ensuring that students had at-home access to the internet
- Implementation resources — giving thought to what our design would be; how we would roll out the system; what training staff would need; what the communication strategy for staff, students and our families would be
- Look and feel — implementing single sign-on; creating professional branding; ensuring minimum standards for course and class pages
- Current data quality — considering whether the data in our student management system was accurate and whether the new system would seamlessly integrate with current systems.

### Risk mitigation

The college is subject to limited and constrained internet access, which was an important consideration when we evaluated cloud-based application suites. One particular LMS provided a number of deployment scenarios that would allow us to mitigate likely problems. It could be deployed in the cloud or on premises, thereby avoiding any potential internet bottlenecks that could affect performance and response times.

### Costs

Costs were analysed over a projected five-year period. Quotes included initial implementation, training, ongoing support and yearly licences (fee per student).

“Being involved in a process such as this is but one way to further demonstrate the professional skill, knowledge and understanding of our school library staff.”

### Our decision

One of the finalists was a pure teaching and learning portal. The other was a one-stop-shop community and education portal. Given that the school wished to retire its current system, the latter was the logical choice. To ensure a clear and transparent process, a vote was put to the E-Learning Strategy Group. The result was a majority vote for the all-in-one solution.

### Recommendations to the executive

Three members of the E-Learning Strategy Group were then called upon to present recommendations to the executive team. It was recommended that the college choose the all-in-one system, and to implement it over a number of terms, one portal at a time. The LMS would only be released to students and families after teachers were trained and given a realistic timeframe in which to add their courses. The strategy group also recommended the employment of a new digital training officer to oversee LMS operations; create templates, policies, procedures and how-to videos; and train teachers and support staff.

### E-learning outcomes

A contemporary Prep to Year 12 LMS used by teachers, support staff, students and parents would enhance the college's teaching and learning experience, extracurricular program and house/year-level systems. Teaching would be enriched through the inclusion of digital tools, media and virtual environments, which could be collated and created within the one system.

The expected business outcomes outlined:

- increased efficiency in teacher practices and processes
- a consistent approach to curriculum delivery across the college
- the integration of digital technologies and tools across the curriculum
- a reflection of current 'real-world' virtual experiences
- the transition from 'chalk and talk' to e-learning that also supports face-to-face delivery
- the ability for parents to access course materials to gain a better understanding of student learning and academic achievement
- monetary savings on software applications that can be replaced by the new LMS (eg resource-booking software)
- an analysis of student academic achievement.

### Conclusion

Our college's experience in investigating and implementing a new LMS highlighted the synergy between e-learning and libraries. Library staff have always been and will continue to be early adopters and leaders, and this is set to continue as each phase of the LMS implementation occurs.

Being involved in a process such as this is but one way to further demonstrate the professional skill, knowledge and understanding of our school library staff. We feel that investing in e-learning is investing in our future, and you might find the same should you decide to implement an LMS at your school.



**Anita McMillan**

Knowledge and learning resources manager  
West Moreton Anglican College

# NEW AND REVISED SUBJECT HEADINGS

An overview of the new and revised subject headings approved by the SCIS Information Services Standards Committee in 2017

## New headings

### Drone aircraft

Scope note: Use for resources about remotely controlled, unmanned aerial devices.

### High interest-low readability

Scope note: Use for works that have themes and topics relevant and interesting to adolescents whose reading abilities are below age or grade. Use only if the publisher identifies the work as such. Do not use for levelled readers that are for teaching reading in primary school. For example, PM readers, Oxford reading tree, and Flying start to literacy.

### Kayaking

#### Kayaks

### Levelled readers

Scope note: Use for books that are part of a collection and are used to teach primary school students to read. They have themes and topics developmentally appropriate to primary school children and are graded at different levels of reading competency. They may be either fiction or non-fiction. For example, PM readers, Oxford reading tree, and Flying start to literacy.

### LGBTQI people

Scope note: Use for resources about people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and/or intersex.

### Mindfulness

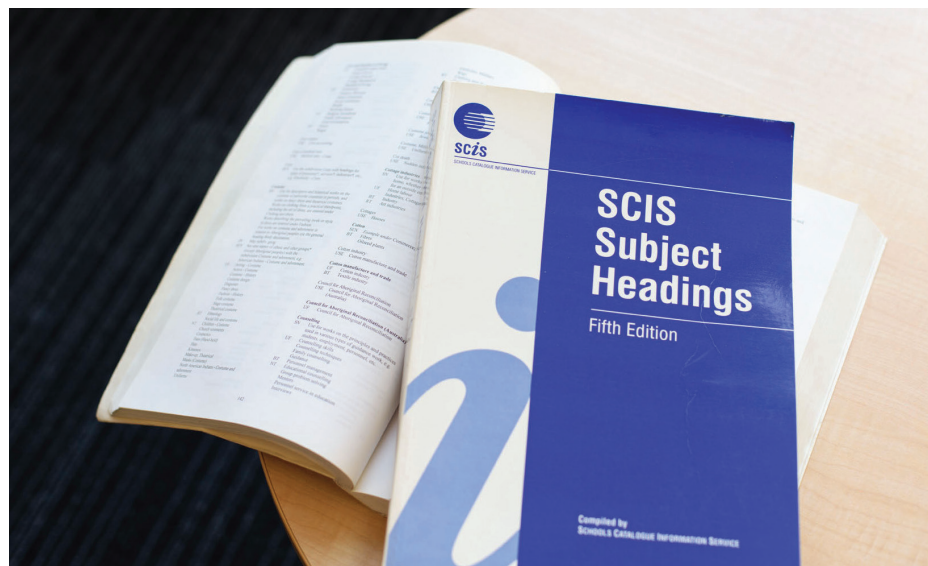
Scope note: Use for works on the study or practice of living in the present moment, self-awareness or attention.

### STEAM education

Scope note: Use for resources about education in, and study and teaching of, five specific disciplines — science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics — in an interdisciplinary and applied approach. Use for the teaching of STEAM education, without subdivision.

### STEM education

Scope note: Use for works of, or works about education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in an



interdisciplinary and applied approach. Use for the teaching of STEM education, without subdivision.

### Sports stories

Scope note: Use for works of fiction including fictional films in which a sport has an impact on the plot of the main characters. Sport should be the main theme of the title and be of significance to the characters of the work. Works in this genre include *Big Nate*; Kwame Alexander's *The Crossover*; Derek E. Sullivan's *Biggie*; Chris Crutcher's *Ironmen*; and Edward Bloor's *Tangerine*. For works about sport stories, use the heading Sports stories — History and criticism. See also names of individual sports with the subdivision Fiction, e.g. Soccer — Fiction.

### Veganism

## Revised headings

### Animal-human relationships

Scope note: Use for works on social and ecological interactions between animals and humans.

The 'Animal-human relationships' authority is no longer linked to the broader terms 'Diseases' and 'Parasites', and is no longer a 'See also' reference to 'Pests'. Its sole broader term is now 'Human-animal communication'.

### Computer markup language

This heading is now used to qualify specific programs that assist with the look of web applications. The previous heading for this purpose was 'Computer program language'. This updated descriptor affects the following terms:

- DHTML
- HTML
- SGML
- VRML
- XHTML
- XML
- CSS
- SVG.

For example, 'XML (Computer program language)' is now 'XML (Computer markup language)'.

### Cooking

Scope note: Use for general works on the preparation of food, whether heat is used or not, and for recipe books not restricted by national group.

Previously a non-preferred term for 'Cookery', 'Cooking' is now the authorised subject heading. 'Cookery' has been demoted to a non-preferred term (otherwise known as a USE reference).

## SCIS cataloguing team

Education Services Australia



# WEBSITE + APP REVIEWS

## ALIA NATIONAL SIMULTANEOUS STORYTIME 2018

[www.alia.org.au/nss](http://www.alia.org.au/nss)

Get prepared for National Simultaneous Storytime, which is occurring in both Australia and New Zealand on Wednesday 23 May. The book for this year is *Hickory dickory dash*, written by Tony Wilson and illustrated by Laura Wood. The website includes background information, merchandise details, downloads and teachers' notes.

SCIS no. 1842145

## ASIA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

[www.asiaeducation.edu.au](http://www.asiaeducation.edu.au)

An initiative of Asialink at the University of Melbourne, the Asia Education Foundation provides teachers with access to curriculum resources, networks, programs and professional learning to 'develop Asia capability for Foundation to Year 12 students in Australian schools'. Specific information for parents is also provided.

SCIS no. 1040032

## ASIC'S MONEYSMART

[www.moneysmart.gov.au/teaching/teaching-resources](http://www.moneysmart.gov.au/teaching/teaching-resources)

The Australian Securities and Investments Commission has developed a range of financial literacy resources for primary, secondary and community educators. Subject matter is aligned to the Australian Curriculum and the resources feature digital activities, units of work and teachers' guides.

SCIS no. 1844486

## EDUCATION WORLD

[www.educationworld.com](http://www.educationworld.com)

Although it has a US focus, this website provides an array of interesting opportunities for teachers to broaden their teaching horizons. Of particular relevance are technology articles and new technology tools, webquests, classroom management tips, and a variety of classroom games.

SCIS no. 1024927

## ELECTIONS — SCHOOL RESOURCES

[www.elections.org.nz/resources-learning/school-resources](http://www.elections.org.nz/resources-learning/school-resources)

New Zealand's Electoral Commission website for schools presents teachers and students with resources regarding the electoral process, responsibilities in a democracy, and ideas to encourage belief and confidence in electoral participation. All material is aligned to the New Zealand Curriculum.

SCIS no. 1842202

## INTERNATIONAL DAYS

<https://en.unesco.org/celebrations/international-days>

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) celebrates a variety of UN international days that relate to its fields of competence. Using the information and links available, teachers can select days in 2018 that fit curriculum needs. Examples include World Book and Copyright Day, World Oceans Day, and International Youth Day.

SCIS no. 1845351

## NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA — ERESOURCES

[www.nla.gov.au/app/eresources/list/free](http://www.nla.gov.au/app/eresources/list/free)

The National Library of Australia has approximately 250 freely available e-resources, including websites, indexes, databases, e-journals, subject guides and full-text journals on a variety of topics. School library staff would benefit from becoming familiar with this content.

SCIS no. 1842227

## PETAA TEACHING RESOURCES

[www.petaa.edu.au/imis\\_prod/teaching-resources](http://www.petaa.edu.au/imis_prod/teaching-resources)

Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA) has an array of material that is pertinent to all primary teachers and linked to the Australian Curriculum. Material includes units of work, professional development videos, webinars, professional papers, and details of authors and illustrators who will visit schools.

SCIS no. 1844446

## POWTOON

[www.powtoon.com](http://www.powtoon.com)

Teachers wishing to engage students, or the wider school community, with engrossing, animated videos should investigate this resource. The drag and drop templates are quick and effective.

SCIS no. 1750572

## SCISHOW KIDS

[www.youtube.com/channel/UCRFIPG2u1DxKLNuE3y2SjHA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRFIPG2u1DxKLNuE3y2SjHA)

Diverse science topics for curious primary students are brought to life in short videos by the presenter Jessie and her robot rat. The content is appealing and age-appropriate.

SCIS no. 1844473

## SCRATCHJR

<https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/scratchjr/id895485086?mt=8>

ScratchJr, designed for students aged 5–7, has been developed from the Scratch programming language. Using ScratchJr, students snap blocks together to make characters move and sing. This not only helps students learn to code but also augments their maths and literacy skills.

SCIS no. 1725022

## SYMBALOOEDU

[www.symbalooedu.com](http://www.symbalooedu.com)

Teachers or students wishing to organise, save and share resources from the cloud may find this visual management tool meets their specific needs. Information can be managed and retrieved from any device. Enhanced versions attract a fee.

SCIS no. 1796285



**Nigel Paull**

Teacher librarian  
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*The websites and apps selected for review 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.*

### Connections

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