

# CONNECTIONS

ISSUE NO. 105 | TERM 2 2018

ISSN 2207-8924

AVAILABLE ON [SCISDATA.COM/CONNECTIONS](http://SCISDATA.COM/CONNECTIONS)



## Stories make us: in conversation with Morris Gleitzman

In February, award-winning children's author Morris Gleitzman was named the new Australian Children's Laureate for 2018–19. As laureate, he will join his predecessors, Leigh Hobbs, Jackie French, Alison Lester and Boori Monty Pryor in promoting the importance of reading.

Morris kindly shared his time with us to discuss the laureateship; why the need for stories is more important now than ever; how he will advocate for the transformative power of reading — and how library professionals are a fundamental part of this process.

Speaking just a couple of days after his appointment, he was excited about how he would use his role to promote reading for young people. 'I want to make available to as many young Australians as possible a wide range of rich and nourishing reading experiences, with all the support, encouragement, inspiration, resources and permissions that help that happen.'

Morris will take his campaign to parents, decision makers, and people outside the education sphere — those 'who may have either forgotten how important good stories were to them in their childhood, or maybe those who had the misfortune to not have the opportunity to discover everything good stories had to offer'. This means that his campaign will be targeted at adults as much as children; it is, after all, largely adults who are at the centre of children's lives and help make reading available to them.

### The transformative power of stories

The focus of Morris's laureateship will be 'Stories make us; stories create our future', highlighting the power of good books to inspire empathy, resilience, and positive thinking. Stories are particularly important for young people, having the transformative power to help them make sense of the world. Through stories, young people are often exposed to protagonists who form empathetic capacity and resilience, and follow them on their journey as they grapple with problems, Morris explains. Young readers who share the journey with characters 'need to continue that process of grappling and not give up and not be crushed or daunted as they make their way to the conclusion of the story'. It is through this shared journey that we absorb the qualities of the characters. 'There's an absolute connection between reading good stories and all of the developments that ideally take place through childhood into adolescence,' he says.

'I think one of the daunting things that occurs when young people reach around eight, nine or ten years old — the age I specifically write for — is when they no longer allow their world to be wholly defined by the ideas, opinions and information that they get from others. When we reach middle to upper primary, we're starting to think for ourselves, look at the world in a more independent way and make our own decisions about what strikes us as good or bad, or right or

### IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 Making the library the true heart of the school
- 6 Daring to be different: celebrating diversity in literature
- 8 School libraries enhancing student wellbeing
- 10 Supercharge students' digital literacy skills with content curation
- 12 School library spotlight
- 13 SCIS is more
- 14 A national celebration of storytime
- 15 Website & app reviews

wrong. We're laying the foundation for our own personal, moral landscape, and it's a very exciting and important time of our life.

'Stories have a really important role to play here because, in many ways, that's exactly what many of the central characters of kids' stories are doing: developing the capacity for critical thinking and problem solving. There are a few years for each of us where this process has started, but the biological imperative hasn't hit us yet. It's wonderful that we have those few years to do some important thinking and broadening of our awareness. I find it a great privilege to contribute my stories to that particular time in my young readers' lives,' Morris says.

“I always love the opportunity to say thank you to the librarians of the world. I see us as all being part of the same team. None of us could really do our job without the others.”

### The urgency for stories remains

The need for students to connect with reading material is becoming increasingly important in our current climate. Morris recognises two aspects that make this so: competing with the distraction of screen culture, and the need to help young people make sense of the fragmented world that is presented to them through channels such as the news media. The role of the author is, in a way, to collect those pieces and assemble them into a more cohesive form.

'In one sense,' Morris says, 'young people today have the world at their fingertips; there is very little that they can't get a glimpse of. Stories have the opportunity, and therefore the responsibility, to portray a more fully formed view of the world than a lot of those glimpses will give.'

'The news media, for example, has an important responsibility to let us know what is going on in the world. Traditionally, they tend to let us know about the not-so-good things; they reflect, in countless decontextualised little fragments, examples of the worst that we humans are capable of.'

'But,' he continues, 'there is another side to human existence that is equally, perhaps more important, and the two sides shouldn't be separated from each other. And what stories can do, and what I've always tried to do in my work, is to look honestly at the worst we humans are capable of, but also to have a part of each story where characters show the best that we are capable of, starting with the love and friendship that, if we're lucky, is at the centre of most of our lives, through to responsibility, generosity and compassion.'

Morris doesn't shy away from the difficult topics in his writing. His Felix series, for example, tells the story of a Jewish boy living through the Holocaust — but at the centre of the story is resilience and survival, imagination and friendship. In the series' first book, *Once*, Felix comforts his friends with stories from his imagination; and, while bearing witness to the atrocities portrayed in the story, we too allow ourselves to be comforted by the human spirit in the face of extreme adversity.

Morris paints a picture of a world that is at the fingertips of young people, just waiting to be discovered, and this naturally comes with the potential to be misused or misunderstood. We know that library professionals play a significant role here; while stories help children understand the world, library professionals teach the digital literacy skills required to navigate it. According to Morris, 'most students, at least in a developed world, have some sort of online access; with judicious guidance, there is good reading to be found online as well'.

Of course, our unfiltered access to the world is made possible by screen culture, which the new laureate also emphasises as a hurdle in helping young people develop a love of reading. We often rely on technology to speed up the way we do things, and 'in this world where time efficiency is such a dominant thing, reading is not really something that you can speed up without losing much of what it gives us,' Morris explains. 'One of the challenges for us all is to find or make the time for our own reading, and for the reading of young people.'

### Fostering a reading culture through conversation

For adults to make reading available to as many kids as possible, in a rich and rewarding way, Morris says that we need to focus on helping provide them with access to books, and the space and time to read them.

He starts with how adults at home can encourage, model and share reading with children of all ages; not necessarily just those who are not yet independent readers. 'I hear from upper primary kids, and even secondary kids, who are perfectly capable of happily reading to themselves, how wonderful it is when a member of the family wants to take the time to sit down and share the process.' And while that focuses on familial relationships, Morris highlights another way for adults in general to share the experience with young people: 'to be available for those conversations that all of us, at any age, want to have once we've read a story that has had an impact on us and expanded our world view'.

He says, 'Books can take us into the emotional circumstances inside a character that perhaps we haven't quite experienced ourselves so, as soon as we come across something that affects us and creates important shifts in our thinking of the world, we have to talk about this with people we care about, and young readers are no different. I see this as an extension of the reading process itself — in fact, the reading process isn't wholly complete unless these conversations are available. So many of the life skills and attributes that reading good stories can develop in young people are further cemented and made applicable to everyday life through these conversations.'

But how do we open the doorway that leads children to a lifetime of reading? It's about finding that one particular book — the one that transforms their lives. 'We only need to have the experience of one story that we engage with so deeply that it takes over our life so completely and changes us in all sorts of





ways,' he says. 'Once we discover what encountering stories through the medium of words can give us, we don't want to stop. And I'm pretty confident that we will continue, as long as young people have the opportunities.'

'This,' Morris says, 'is where informed help from adults is so important. Once a young person has had the experience once or twice, I believe, and I hear this from parents and librarians all the time, no barrier will stop them finding more stories, more books like that.'

### Library professionals open doors to new experiences

Morris Gleitzman's predecessor Leigh Hobbs spent a large portion of his laureateship campaigning for school librarians and school libraries, especially in response to their diminishing roles in some schools. Morris also understands the important role that school library staff play in developing young people's literacy skills. 'I can't really think — certainly in the developed world — of a greater piece of damage that can be done to the quality of young people's education than to either diminish or remove their school library,' he says.

With 30 years in the industry, and over 40 published books and countless awards behind him, Morris is grateful for the role that librarians played in his own life. His parents signed him up to their public library in 1950s South London, unleashing him into a world of new experiences.

'The librarians were quite enlightened for their time,' he remembers. Once he was able to read independently, they gave him full reign of the library and, recognising his reading levels, were happy for him to dip into the odd adult book during his upper primary years.

'That sense of freedom and adventure they gave me in that library transformed my life. I think everything I've done as an adult writer — and reader — had its seeds in those experiences.' It's exactly because of that — the ability of library professionals to recognise and cater to individual reading levels rather than relying on the assignment of age-appropriate texts — that they are so important in developing students' literacy skills and giving them the tools to become lifelong readers.

And although Morris isn't averse to ebooks or digital reading, he does think that a library well-stocked with print books cannot

be replaced. He says that is 'because of the very thing that I experienced myself as a child: that feeling of agency that a library gives us because there are so many choices and they are ours to make. I don't think I'm being unduly old-fashioned to say that wandering among bookshelves with physical books on them increases that feeling of agency; that delightful feeling of the world of books and reading being a physical adventure as well as an intellectual, emotional and cultural one.'

'A lot of great education theorists have said that the best learning experiences come when intellectual, emotional and cultural experiences are occurring in a physical way — where there is actually a tactile component to it. I think traditional books on library shelves is the absolute perfect place for that part of human education to happen.'

### We're all in this together

Morris recognises an opportunity to work with members of the library and publishing professions during his laureateship. He will consult with experienced librarians and booksellers and let them be his 'recommendation panels' to help him get the right books into the right children's hands.

'I always love the opportunity to say thank you to the librarians of the world,' he says. 'I see us as all being part of the same team. None of us could really do our job without the others.'

We wish you the best of luck in your laureateship, Morris. Thank you for your compassion, your humour, and your ongoing endeavours to help children discover the magic of stories.

### Image credits

Front cover: Supplied by DMCPR Media

The interview extracts have been lightly edited and reordered where necessary to improve readability or clarity.



**Nicole Richardson**

Communications and projects coordinator, SCIS  
Education Services Australia

# MAKING THE LIBRARY THE TRUE HEART OF THE SCHOOL

Caroline Roche, founder of the Heart of the School website, writes about the need to advocate for and share stories from school libraries — and what makes them the heart of the school.

**That the library** is the ‘heart of the school’ is a commonly accepted phrase nowadays, certainly in the United Kingdom. You see it in ads for a new librarian, you see it in tweets, you see it in newspaper articles, and it is even the title of the All Party Parliamentary Group white paper on school libraries: ‘The beating heart of the school’. But where does this phrase that is so ubiquitous now come from? Well, actually, I know. It is a phrase that fills me with pride, because it is the name of the website I set up seven years ago to celebrate the work of school librarians. You can find the Heart of the School website (<http://heartoftheschool.edublogs.org>) and follow the Twitter feed @HeartOTSchool. There is also a Facebook page.

How did I come to set up Heart in the first place? I was part of a program called Lead Practitioners, which chose the top people from academic subjects to help raise standards in schools. At the end of our Lead Practitioner year, everyone was required to produce a resource to help support others. I decided I would make a website that demonstrated best practice. Coinciding with this, the first savage cuts to public libraries were proposed, and a campaigning group called Voices for the Library (VFTL) set up a website and a Twitter feed to protest the cuts. Many school libraries were also closing, and I contacted VFTL to see if they would include us in their campaigning. They told me that they really didn’t know enough about school libraries, but that I was welcome to set up my own website. Although I didn’t feel that I could campaign for school libraries — there is no central set-up, each school is individually run — I did feel that I could show people what they would be missing without a school library and

librarian, and highlight our excellence.

I contacted several well-established school librarians I knew and asked them to feed into a Google Doc about what the website could/should contain. This formed the bones of the website. My thanks go to Anne Robinson, who built the structure of Heart while I was still learning about websites, as well as Laura Taylor, Annike Dase, Bev Humphrey, and others who gave their time, wrote some pieces, and helped start the site off.

What quickly became apparent once the site was going — and something that I hadn’t expected — was that it would be read internationally. Heart was intended for UK audiences, and I didn’t expect too many people to read it (though I hoped they would). However, if you look at the visitor map on the website, you will see that it is read all over the world.

In order to keep Heart going, I am constantly advocating on the School Librarians Network, a supportive Yahoo group that was set up by Elizabeth Bentley and reaches over 1,000 librarians. Whenever someone mentions a good thing they are doing in their school I jump in and ask them if I can share it on Heart. I need to constantly advocate, because I find that a lot of people are doing wonderful things that they don’t think are good enough to share with everyone! I do have regular contributors, but I try not to feature any one school or event too much, so that it doesn’t become exclusive to a small group of schools, and remains a resource for everyone. I regularly tell people that Heart is not mine, but ours — I just post their stories on there for them.

Until fairly recently, there hasn’t been a question about why a school should have a library. Libraries were seen as good for



The Heart of the School website is read by people across the world — a great tribute to the collective work that goes into it.

encouraging reading, education and general cultural enrichment. When I started as a librarian more than 20 years ago, I certainly never used to have to justify the use of the library in terms of footfall, books borrowed or anything of that sort. I didn't have to convert part of my room into a makerspace or have a games club. All I had to do was have a great collection of books, both fiction and non-fiction, and promote reading for pleasure and enrichment. But, in these tough financial times, everyone is now required to prove that they are worth keeping, and this can be a particular problem for school librarians.

“I need to constantly advocate, because I find that a lot of people are doing wonderful things that they don't think are good enough to share with everyone.”

Teachers can justify their existence by improving grades and outcomes, but how can librarians prove that they add value and cultural capital? Now, school librarians run courses on how to use statistics, how to gather evidence and in what form, and how to present these to senior management to save our jobs. And, even with all of these tools to hand, school librarians increasingly find that nothing counts when they face the hard financial reality of losing a teacher or losing the library. 'Value adding' and 'cultural capital' no longer matter when placed against statistics that head teachers need to show to ensure that their school stays out of 'special measures'. Not that this is a problem confined to the UK — this Gradgrind privileging of facts prevails elsewhere. It reflects Charles Dickens's Mr Gradgrind in *Hard Times*: 'Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else and root out everything else ... nothing else will be of any service to them'.

So, in these times when only facts seem to matter, how do we ensure that a school has such an emotional connection to the library that losing it would be like tearing the heart out of a school, raising an outcry among staff, students and parents? I believe that, just as the heart is the nerve centre of the body, so should the library be. The skilled librarian (and there has to be one, otherwise you don't have a library — just a roomful of books) needs to be a vital part of every department's teaching and learning. Whether or not you teach formal library lessons in your room — which I don't — you need to be involved.

There are many ways of entwining the library in the school, so that losing it becomes unthinkable. These include making departmental-wide reading lists and ensuring the latest resources are stocked for all subjects; providing online resources; hosting debates, clubs and makerspaces; helping university candidates with careers resources and interviews; hosting language days and stocking foreign language resources and magazines; helping with the Extended Project Qualification or the International Baccalaureate; teaching information literacy and fact checking; and educating about plagiarism. Elizabeth Hutchinson's guest post on Leon's library blog will give you lots of other ideas to increase collaboration in your own school: <https://leonslibraryblog.com/2017/12/06/school-librarians-and-why-our-children-need-them>.

School librarians ensure that resources are provided for LGBTQI students and those who have been bereaved, face difficult life choices, and who may have a host of medical conditions from ADHD to cancer. A properly trained school librarian is discreet and will know which resources to buy and who to recommend them to. This is an often unseen, but vitally important, function of the library. All of this counts for nothing in a Gradgrind world, but means everything to a child.

You can also guarantee that the Special Education Needs Coordinator knows the vital role that school libraries play in helping children with additional needs, particularly the vulnerable, and those on the autism spectrum. A read of Barbara Band's recent guest blog will help leadership understand the key role that librarians play in this area: <https://leonslibraryblog.com/2017/12/02/the-oft-hidden-role-of-the-school-library>.

So, keep your library right at the heart of the school. It is easy just to focus on the books, the reading clubs, the children who love reading and encouraging those who don't. That, after all, is our primary function and what we do most of the day. But, if we only focus on this, we may find that we become marginalised. If the library closes, it will be desperately missed by the children, but not by the departments and the school in general. You'll be like a foot that can be amputated — the school can limp on without you. You need to be the heart, pumping blood through everything, so that losing you is unthinkable. Your value needs to be perceived by everyone — not in the value of your statistics, but in the life you bring to the school.



**Caroline Roche**

School librarian  
Chair of CILIP School Library Group  
United Kingdom



# DARING TO BE DIFFERENT: CELEBRATING DIVERSITY IN LITERATURE

Ruth Devine shares why children's books that feature physical and neurological diversity are to be celebrated — for all our sakes.

**My favourite memory** growing up is of snuggling under the doona while my dad sat on the edge of the bed and read me a story. It was our cosy, nightly ritual. I would drift off to sleep with a head full of shipwrecks and pirates, fairytale castles and magical faraway trees.

Often the stories were of girls called Anne, Pippi or Holly, from books my parents bought for birthdays or Christmas, or which they borrowed from the local library. These girls were funny and brave, feisty and adventurous. I loved them.

I campaigned (and failed) to rename our house 'Green Gables'; Longstocking didn't seem such a funny surname to have when you were sporting Devine; and, as for Holly's bonnet, I was sure rural England of the '70s could handle it. It never occurred to me that the reason my bookshelves were laden with stories of redheads was because I was one, too.

I'm sometimes asked as an adult if I was bullied for having red hair as a kid. I wasn't. I can remember as a newbie at high school, one older girl trying just once, but her words rolled off me. I remember her puzzled face as I laughed. She couldn't possibly be teasing me for being a ginger. Gingers were cool and clever. I'd read the books. I knew how they rolled. Heck, I was one!

I regaled my family with the tale of being teased over dinner. Mum smiled conspiratorially at Dad. I didn't realise it then but, later, it struck me: the redhead books. They had bought them deliberately. 'We wanted you to love your colouring as much as we did,' Mum explained when I questioned her.

It had worked. Even with Anne who hated her hair colour. I'd been surrounded by stories with characters who looked just like me and I had subconsciously developed a suit of armour: confidence in myself and confidence in the way I looked. The joke was on my failed bully.

Being a redhead was my, admittedly, very small difference and I embraced it because that's simply what I was taught to do. I didn't know any other way. I believe this approach should also be the case for any child, whatever their physical or developmental difference may be.

Almost one in five Australians has a disability of one kind or another, including 3.2 per cent of 0–4 year olds and 8.3 per cent of 5–14 year olds. Whether they are being read to or reading themselves, these children, *all* children, need to see themselves reflected in the books they read. They need stories about people who look like them, move like them and live like them, in order to validate themselves and build a sense of self-worth.

Of course, books need act not only as mirrors, but also as windows. We need a diversity of stories and storytellers that reflect ourselves as much as showing us what else is out there.

The world gets smaller by the day and, as fears about any form of difference grow and we increasingly turn in on ourselves

to focus on the familiar, it's through books that we can expand our attitudes and our understanding. Introducing even the youngest of children to stories whose characters have physical or mental challenges helps build empathy and acceptance by increasing their concept of what constitutes 'normal'.

With best-selling series such as Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* (whose eponymous hero is dyslexic and has ADHD) and the runaway success of *Wonder* by RJ Palacio (about Auggie, a boy with a facial difference), we're making inroads, but the going is slow.

While books need to tell the whole story, it's how that whole story is told that's just as important. Baddies don't need to have a facial difference to indicate they are wrong 'uns. A wheelchair user should not necessarily be kind and thoughtful. Someone with an artificial limb does not have to be sweet and innocent, because, newsflash: people with a difference, be it physical or developmental, *are just like the rest of the world*. They are just as likely to be kind as they are mean, considerate as they are thoughtless, introverted as they are extroverted, good as they are bad — and all the permutations that lie in between. This is why we need books that represent those differences in all the myriad of ways they possibly can: where the syndrome, the condition, the disorder, the label is not the story; where it's not about being inspirational or heart-warming, but just a cracking good read. After all, a good story, is a good story, is a good story.

So, how do we increase the number of books that feature physical and developmental diversity in such a way? Simple. We need writers to write them, publishers to produce them and booksellers, schools and libraries to stock them.

## 10 children's and YA books that positively feature difference

- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon
- *Trueman Bradley: Aspie Detective* by Alexei Maxim Russell
- *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* by Rick Riordan
- *The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Dowd
- *Amelia Bedelia* by Peggy Parish
- *The Alphabet War* by Diane Burton Robb
- *Thank You, Mr Falker* by Patricia Polacco
- *Susan Laughs* by Jeanne Willis
- *Dan and Diesel* by Charlotte Hudson
- *Just Because* by Rebecca Elliott

As a mum of three boys with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), it hurt when the eldest told me he felt defective. It's not surprising with the words 'deficit' and 'disorder' included in the label. You can't get much more negative than that! This really struck me. We had worked so hard on building his sense of self-worth for years and yet still he felt as if he were substandard. No one should ever feel like that. No kid should ever feel they are 'defective'.

That's when I started to write *The Chronicles of Jack McCool* about an ordinary schoolboy who discovers he holds the key to breaking an ancient curse. This boy just happens to have ADHD.

I wrote the books because I wanted my sons to have a hero who was just like them: who got into trouble through being distracted, who missed things because he wasn't listening, who made mistakes and impulsive decisions but who picked himself up time and time again and carried on. And someone who was a good person — most of the time.

I used devices that I know from experience with my own children will hold readers' attention, so chapters end on cliffhangers, the pace is speedy and there's action all the way. ADHD brains can be so easily distracted that I needed to help pull the kids through the story in as many ways as I could. I also subtly recapped the story frequently because I knew that's what children such as my sons often need. Above all, I wanted to write books that were exciting and adventurous, ones that all children could enjoy.

There are five *Jack McCool* books so far, and a sixth on its way, because I wanted any child out there who has ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia, or who is quirky in some unidentified, unlabelled way to have a character that might remind them of themselves. And if they don't identify in any of these ways then, at the very least, they might be able to see life from a different perspective.

Everyone has a challenge in life. Everyone. ADHD is Jack McCool's, but it doesn't stop him. In fact, as the books go on, it's his ADHD that is the very thing — this incredible way in which his brain is wired — that fuels him.

I only ever wanted to write words that other people could enjoy. But if someone reads the *Jack McCool* books and finds the message in there that a difference — something that is simply a quirk of nature — is also something that can be supported, managed and celebrated, then my heart is full and my work here is done.

Life would be very boring if we were all the same. Now, we just need to reflect and embrace that in the books our children read.

## References

ABS, 4430.0 - Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2012, [www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4430.02012?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4430.02012?OpenDocument)



**Ruth Devine**  
Writer

## Supporting Australian book creators

At a writers' festival in Alice Springs, a young boy marched into the room where I was about to speak, stood in front of me and announced, 'My name is Jason. I'm always in trouble and I hate reading'. I liked his pluckiness but I also thought, 'I have an hour to change what you think about reading'. By the end of my talk, he was full of questions and volunteering to hand out bookmarks.

I have been writing for kids for over 20 years. The more I write, and the more I work with kids and see the world they're inheriting, the more I *know* we need books.

These kids are our future leaders. We need them to be educated, but also to be able to face problems with open minds, wild with ideas but with their humanity and empathy firmly intact.

Books give us that and more. They make us human, they allow us to feel and, as John Green says, 'Great books help you understand, and they help you feel understood'.

But it's a big task that needs many hands: family, teachers, librarians, publishers, creators ... everyone. We need libraries filled with books kids love and are yet to discover, and a dedicated book-loving librarian who'll help find them.

We also need creators and, in a publishing world where it can be hard to make a living, we need the Public and Educational Lending Rights programs (PLR and ELR). These initiatives compensate creators for their books being read over and over for the one royalty rate, and supplement their incomes so they can keep creating books that engage children and add to our national story and culture.

I am eternally grateful for the program and the people who fought so hard to create it because, as Philip Pullman said, 'Children need art and stories and poems and music as much as they need love and food and fresh air and play'. It's that fundamental.



**Deborah Abela**  
Children's author and teacher  
[www.deborahabela.com](http://www.deborahabela.com)

SCIS manages the annual ELR School Library Survey on behalf of the Department of Communications and the Arts. The survey determines national estimates of school library book holdings, which, together with tertiary libraries' holdings, **determine** payments made to book creators and publishers for having their work available in educational libraries. Invitations will be sent to selected schools in Term 4. Participation is highly encouraged.

# SCHOOL LIBRARIES ENHANCING STUDENT WELLBEING

**School libraries foster student wellbeing, providing students with a place of refuge where creativity and mindfulness are valued.**

**The school library** is the hub of the school. It is a place for students to come and be free from the expectations of time, home, playground and classroom. It is a safe place where students can come to chill out, meet, talk, study, make and play. For many students, school libraries have always been a place of refuge from the playground or extreme weather.

School libraries, like so many public libraries, are changing. The library is no longer a 'silent' place to do academic work. With the vast amount of information and technology available to our students, the library needs to be a place where creativity, innovation and collaboration are possible. It is welcoming and relaxing, yet provides a stimulating and flexible learning environment too. The creation of a 'makerspace' within the school library has been a rewarding experience for the students here at St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School.

The library is that place where student wellbeing can be fostered and encouraged. By providing regular library lessons and being open during, before and after school, we give students access to an incredible space where teacher librarians and other school library professionals are at their aid. Teacher librarians and classroom teachers prepare lessons for students in the areas of healthy minds and bodies: protecting against bullying, being safe online, respecting diversity, making responsible choices, and building positive relationships.

Wellbeing is difficult to define as it is different for each person, but there are commonalities. It is more than just being happy with life. There has been a lot of research overseas and here in Australia to incorporate it into the school curriculum. Student wellbeing is emerging as an important approach to the development of students' social, emotional and academic competence, and is significant in preventing youth depression, suicide, self-harm, antisocial behaviour (including bullying and violence), and substance abuse.

Wellbeing is important and 'the whole child theory' and 'holistic education' are aimed at helping students be the most that they can be, or what Maslow (1954) referred to as achieving 'self-actualisation'. Ron Miller's four core qualities that characterise a holistic education — experiential learning, personal relationships, interior life of children (feelings etc), and ecological consciousness — can all be met within the setting of a library.



**Libraries provide a place where students can relax, meet, make, play — and of course read.**

A whole-child focus was reflected in the Australian education ministers' statement as far back as 2008: 'Schools play a vital role in promoting the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral, spiritual and aesthetic development and wellbeing of young Australians, and in ensuring the nation's ongoing economic prosperity and social cohesion' (MCEETYA 2008, p. 4).

Evidence (Noble & Wyatt 2008) shows that students with high levels of wellbeing are more likely to attain higher levels of academic achievement including completing Year 12, and possess better mental health, and a more pro-social, responsible and lawful lifestyle.

Makerspaces within libraries encapsulate the 4Cs of future skills: creating, communicating, collaborating, and critical thinking.

In addition, it is increasingly being recognised that makerspaces also support student wellbeing and develop what I propose as the 3Rs: resilience, relationships and *rebellion*. Here, 'rebellion' gives students permission to use their creativity to disrupt the norm.

When students engage in the many activities and opportunities provided in a library or library makerspace, they relax and have fun. It is non-threatening and students can fulfil their own desires to give things a go. It gives students wings and the permission to forgive themselves for not being perfect; failing becomes part of the fun. This can prevent procrastinating about starting things. Solving problems and challenges when creating and trying to make things work also gives students the confidence to succeed. They can share, collaborate and help each other in the pursuit of making. Giving students purpose and allowing passions to be explored fulfils an innate human need. Libraries allow students to get their curiosity and creativity back, which Sir Ken Robinson (2007) fervently believes needs to be reinstated.

Libraries support student wellbeing and provide a gathering place to talk; share ideas, skills and stories; play with Lego; play or listen to music; and build relationships with peers, teachers and facilitators. They are where emotional support can be given by spending time with others to listen and talk both formally and informally, and feelings and understanding can be developed by working with friends and peers on tasks and projects.

Cognitive development can be stimulated by providing challenges and opportunities for discovery and play, like pulling computers apart, and naming and identifying parts and what



they do. Learning new skills can help boost confidence and a sense of achievement and deeper learning. The library can benefit students intellectually through promoting reading, researching and taking part in many STEAM and innovative possibilities by sharing and learning together, motivated by fun and self-fulfilment.

Canadian research (Jackson 2015) reported that students felt less stressed after participating in various library programs, with extended hours, free caffeine and snacks, and pet therapy clearly being the most popular. Yoga, mindfulness, pet therapy, and micro-breaks provided students with healthy, positive coping mechanisms for relieving stress. These initiatives also allowed the libraries to engage users in unexpected ways through social media and served as an unintentional but useful way to promote the library to the broader community.

Lucy Clark, senior editor of *The Guardian* in Australia and a past student of St Aidan's, gives a personal account of her daughter's experiences in her book *Beautiful Failures*, supported by research of the education system. She also addresses issues about the pressures of standardised testing, peers, family and cultural diversity. Clark talks about the amount of competition in schools for awards, marks, and places in schools and universities.

High-stakes testing, apart from causing anxiety and stress, can lead to a shift from supportive, collaborative and inquiry-based learning to increasingly competitive and individualistic attitudes and ways of learning, requiring teachers to become more traditional in their pedagogy. So, with pressure on teachers and students, the library has an important part to play by providing a stress-free environment to recover and invigorate.

Clark also discusses the influence of increasing levels of tuition aimed at improving results, and how this affects students in Australian schools. She writes about lost childhood and adolescence: no time for enjoying growing up!

In her book, Clark also presents the increased amount of self-harm and suicide among school-aged students, and the fact that huge numbers come from countries that do well in PISA (The Programme for International Student Assessment). In contrast, the author points out the relative success of Finnish students, in a country where there is very little standardised testing.

A library, then, is positioned to support student wellbeing by being that place to de-stress, especially during or before examinations; to chill out or be motivated to learn through the varied activities that are offered in the library. Researchers in the UK studied 658 students and discovered that after engaging in something 'crafty', students felt happier and calmer the following day, with more energy, too (Conner 2016). According to Margaret Hodge of Voluntary Arts, 'improving people's wellbeing through participation in the arts' has been evident (Devlin 2010). Colouring has also proven effective at reducing anxiety among undergraduates (Powell, Alcorn & Lindsay 2017).

The story of one of our students, Anna, demonstrates how student wellness can increase in a safe, welcoming environment where there is freedom to explore, play, and create. Anna has been coming to our library for a few years before school and during lunchtime. She is a sporty girl, but reserved. She had struggled with literacy and lacked confidence in her abilities. Anna used to come in and play with GoldieBlox, building

interesting structures. She also started to build circuits with our Snap Circuits blocks. She was fascinated by motors and was always creating things with them, such as windmills and flying shapes with propellers, and would look for illustrated books to give her ideas.

Last year, Anna entered the Ekka (The Royal Queensland Show) competition, which involved designing a toy. She designed a DrawBot in the shape of a crab, which had a battery-run motor and legs made of textas to draw with. She had off-centred the motor spindle, which caused the crab to vibrate and move. She won first prize! Her mother expressed how her daughter had found peace, comfort and interest in the equipment and books in the library. Success breeds success — Anna grew in her ability to problem-solve, and in her confidence to collaborate and believe in herself.



Makerspaces allow students to explore, tinker and take on new challenges, without the pressure of needing to perform well.

The school library serves the whole-school community by providing and supporting events like author visits, Readers Cup competitions, parent functions, professional presentations, social nights, hobby nights, and the list goes on. These events and functions all benefit and create wellbeing among students, teachers, family and the wider school community.

## References

For a full list of references, please see the online version of this article ([www.scisdata.com/connections/issue-105/school-libraries-enhancing-student-wellbeing](http://www.scisdata.com/connections/issue-105/school-libraries-enhancing-student-wellbeing)).

## Image credits

Supplied by St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School



**Jackie Child**  
Teacher librarian  
St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School, QLD

# SUPERCARGE STUDENTS' DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS WITH CONTENT CURATION

Kay Oddone discusses digital content curation as a secret weapon that can be used by teacher librarians to enrich their students' digital literacy skills.

**Digital content curation** is a meta-skill, requiring many different facets of information and digital literacy. While articles abound promoting it as a tool for teachers, the rich learning opportunities embedded within this practice also make it a supercharged pedagogical approach for students. As the internet has transformed from the static Web 1.0 to the social and participatory Web 2.0, it is important that we offer students opportunities to remix and recreate content in new ways to enrich their research capabilities and enhance their digital literacy skills, and empower students to take an active role in information-rich contexts. Teacher librarians are perfectly positioned to assist with this process.

## What is digital content curation?

Beth Kanter (2011) describes digital content curation as 'helping your audience dive in and make sense of a specific topic, issue, event or news story. It is about collecting, but it is also about explaining, illustrating, bringing in different points of view and updating the view as it changes'.

This pithy summary captures the storytelling nature of digital content curation. Beyond simply saving a list of links, it is an active literacy practice that requires the curator to critically engage with information to construct a collection that meets a particular purpose (Mihailidis, 2015). Figure 1: The evolution of curation shows how managing links can develop from low-level accumulating to collecting, aggregating and on to curating.

Each of the information strategies described in the figure serve a particular and valid purpose. Curating is the most time-consuming, but has the greatest long-term value, and also creates the maximum potential for others through sharing.

While simple collecting is additive, curation is subtractive — what is left out is almost more important than what is included. A great way to think about collection and curation is described by Frank Chimero (2011). Consider collection as a bowl of loose pearls, and curation as a pearl necklace. The individual pearls in the bowl may be of great value, but they are pretty useless when

they are just gathered together. Curation is what happens when particular pearls are selected from the bowl and strung, in a particular order, into a beautiful necklace. The necklace has fewer pearls than the bowl but, as it can be publicly admired and worn, it may be considered to have more worth.

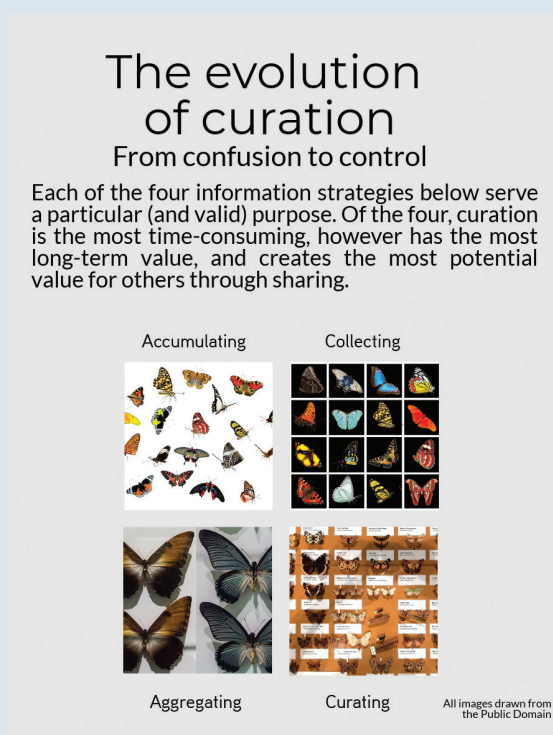


Figure 1 The evolution of curation (Source: Kay Oddone)

## An information and digital literacy meta-skill

Challenging students to create a high-quality curated collection assumes that they possess a wide range of information and digital literacy skills. Adopting the curation approach outlined by Weisgerber (2011), students must find, select, editorialise, create and share their collection.

These steps encourage students to develop and apply many different information and digital literacy strategies. Breaking down each of these steps makes it possible to identify just what these strategies are and demonstrates the rich teaching opportunities embedded in them.

## Finding the information

Creating a curated collection of high-quality information requires more than a simple Google search. This first step in the curation process requires students to develop their

expert search skills, so that they go beyond the first hits returned by the search engine to find relevant information that warrants inclusion in their collection.

Expert search strategies, including the use of keywords, advanced search operators and Boolean logic, are key tools in the curator's arsenal. Another strategy that students may rarely consider is to be found in social media. Searching Twitter, Instagram and Facebook using the hashtag symbol (#) appended to keywords can be surprisingly effective in locating quality information and resources, particularly in rapidly changing or developing areas, including current affairs.

## Selecting what to include

Through the process of content curation, students must apply several different evaluative approaches to select resources and information that is of the highest quality and most aligned to

their purpose and audience. Critical evaluation is a key skill that every student must develop in our environment of information abundance. This is an ongoing process for all of us, particularly as online publishing makes it increasingly difficult to identify credible information from that which is of dubious quality.

Evaluating material for selection and inclusion in a curated collection requires students to apply several critical lenses. At a surface level, they should use a framework such as the CRAP test, attributed to Beestrum & Orenic (2008), which prompts examination for currency, reliability, authority and purpose. Depending on the topic being researched, students should also be introduced to the potential for satire, clickbait, highly biased or just plain fake information masquerading as high-quality information. Interrogating information by asking questions such as 'Whose voices are heard, and whose are silenced?' and 'Who may benefit from this?' also provides a deeper level of analysis, which Lupton (2016) describes as transformative.

### Editorialising or annotating the collection

Adding an editorial note or annotation to each inclusion within the curated collection is a key step that is often overlooked. Although time-consuming, these short passages add real value and help to differentiate a curated collection from an aggregated list. Ideally, the annotation should explain why the piece was chosen and how it fits within the collection. This makes the individual items more meaningful and brings the collection together as a whole resource.

Requiring editorials for each curated item enables students to demonstrate higher level thinking skills as they must summarise each article, identify how it contributes to the collection, and, if possible, draw links between it and other items within the group. Students are therefore practising how to evaluate, analyse and synthesise each item and, in doing so, creating a unique digital artefact that positively contributes to their digital footprint.

### Creating and publishing the collection

There are many online tools that exist for the creation of digital curated collections. Deciding which to choose requires an awareness of audience, the capabilities of each tool for presentation, and a knowledge of digital publication strategies. Students may be drawn to applications such as Pinterest for highly visual topics, Diigo for text-heavy, complex collections, or Scoop-it for extensive annotation capacity. Choice of tool also depends on the age of the student (some tools require account holders to be 13 years or older) and the likely users of the collection. Some tools require an account to view curated collections, while others are published openly.

Republishing content through digital content curation requires a knowledge of copyright. Although the copyright implications remain a grey area, it is important that students model best practice, curating directly from the original publisher or owner of the content, rather than from second- or third-hand sources. It is also important for students to be aware that the usual educational exemptions do not apply when sharing on the open web.

### Sharing the collection

The value of a digital curated collection is lost if it is not shared. Students may be encouraged to include their curated collection on library web pages for other students to make use of, or



may include it as part of a larger digital project such as a blog or website. They can also seek feedback on their collection by emailing or communicating the link via social networks. Understanding how a digital curated collection may be shared provides new learning opportunities as we encourage students to actively and positively develop their online presence for future purposes. Students can also add the web links of their curations into their digital portfolio to show evidence of their learning.

### A supercharged pedagogical approach

Digital content curation is a meta-skill, and it is evident that it includes an array of information and digital literacy skills. The process of digital content curation offers many learning opportunities that are ideally taught by the teacher librarian or teacher within the context of a larger research project. Spread over a term or semester, students could curate and publish resources relevant to their chosen topic. This in itself could be an assessment task. The curated collections could be used as a basis for a research project or, even better, could be shared and used to inform future students' study.

### Championing digital content curation for learning

Teacher librarians are perfectly positioned to work with teachers and students to enhance the information and digital literacy skills that underpin digital content curation. It is not only an information management strategy, but also a powerful pedagogical practice that may be built into any curriculum area. Digital content curation is a strategy that we will all make increasing use of in an information-saturated society, and explicitly teaching the process is an innovative and creative way to encourage students to become active and critical users of information.

To support this article, I have curated a Padlet that provides further reading and resources to extend the concepts introduced here: <https://padlet.com/KayO28/SCISConnect2018>.

### References

For a full list of references, please see the online version of this article ([www.scisdata.com/connections/issue-105/supercharge-students-digital-literacy-skills-with-content-curation](http://www.scisdata.com/connections/issue-105/supercharge-students-digital-literacy-skills-with-content-curation)).



**Kay Oddone**  
PhD candidate  
Queensland University of Technology



# SCHOOL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

SCIS speaks to Kay Morfett, librarian at Rolleston School in New Zealand, about what's happening in her school library.

## What is your job title, and what does your role entail? How many people work in your library?

I work at Rolleston School as the librarian. My role is 25 hours a week, split over five days. I have a teacher in charge who is really wonderful and supportive and, aside from a brilliant group of student librarians to provide help at lunchtimes, I work alone.

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

The most rewarding part of the job is definitely the reaction I get from staff and children. This may be amazed and happy faces over a new display I have created in the foyer; a display book I have shared with the staff that they found fascinating and useful in their class; or a student accepting a suggestion and actually borrowing a

book after telling me they couldn't find one. I absolutely adore my job. I work hard, admittedly, and do a lot outside of school hours, but I get a lot back in return from everyone — that is why I do it!

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

The biggest challenge has been trying to get all of my ideas into play! When I began this role in 2016 I was the first librarian in the school and that created its own set of problems. Don't get me wrong. My predecessors did an amazing job: full-time teaching and running a library! I mean, who can do that? But, I had a pile of obstacles to clear up and wanted to put my own touch on the library. I had issues to clean up in the LMS, displays to make the library look loved and exciting, teachers' respect to earn,

attitudes to change towards reading, and showing the support a library and librarian can offer everyone in the school.

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

I believe that the library should be the hub of a school — and the library was not that when I arrived. It was grey and almost uninviting; it was not a safe zone. There weren't exciting things to look at everywhere as there are now. But, that all takes an incredible amount of time: searching for ideas constantly and then putting them into action, making displays, putting them up around class times, all while I carry on with regular librarian duties, supporting the teaching staff, and teaching library skills.

## How do you promote reading and literacy in your school?

When I began in 2016, the borrowing stats were quite low, so I focused on increasing this as much as I could. I put together a to-do list to set up a library program and, during that year, the borrowing went up by around 45 per cent, then again last year by 75 per cent!

I keep up to date with new books and listen to the ideas that students and teachers provide. The library isn't just about what I think; their opinion is just as important. So, I do surveys every year to find out what interests the children in relation to books. I also check on the statistics to see what is popular and what is not, and we have a book suggestion system so students can provide ideas for specific titles. In addition, I do weekly displays with a picture book of the week and a senior fiction book of the week. The teachers then have a go-to book to read to the class that I know inside and out, and the children see that I read, too. This year, I have dedicated more time to interacting with each of the classes that come in. I ensure every child borrows a book to encourage them in their reading.

The challenge here is to spread the word regarding all the resources the library



Engaging displays in the library promote books and reading to the school community.

has to offer. I have been compiling a great collection of books for reluctant readers and students with dyslexia, for example. Only a handful of staff were aware that such books existed, because they hadn't looked, relied on the library before, or hadn't asked. So, I think, the hardest part is keeping people up to date because they do not necessarily do that themselves. Teaching is a really busy job and, bearing in mind that my hours are few and the library sessions are quite short, it can be challenging at times!

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

I try to make it as fun and interesting as possible! We have the library open at morning tea and lunchtimes and it is absolutely packed with students. We have playtime with board games, colouring that coincides with our displays, and audiobooks and storytime with cuddly toys and

cushions in a quieter room. There is also an electronics club to support the children with their eplatform accounts. Alongside that, we have student librarians that change each year to provide extra support during break times; 'emachines' and an iPad that are available for students to access our web app and perform catalogue searches; fun displays in the foyer, and art and displays on the walls that I change frequently. There are no plain or boring spaces ... I think that may be my motto!

### What is your favourite thing about SCIS?

I have SCIS automated to my LMS and I love the fact that SCIS has worked alongside Access-IT to provide this. It is so much easier than having to go back and forth, updating from the website directly. The information provided is up to date and useful for the students and teachers and, from a library

point of view, it's simple. I enjoy doing the online training; it reminds me of all the information SCIS offers and gives me new ideas moving forwards. I also really like reading the *Connections* magazine and seeing what other librarians are up to.

### What would you like to see SCIS do more of?

I would like more online training in decent NZ hours of the day! They tend to fall at 5 pm or 6 pm over here and it can be hard to schedule time to watch then.

### Image credits

Supplied by Kay Morfett



**Kay Morfett**  
Librarian  
Rolleston School, NZ

## SCIS is more

In the last issue of *Connections*, we highlighted some of the features of our new website, SCIS Data ([www.scisdata.com](http://www.scisdata.com)). We have been busy since then, fine-tuning the site, and have enabled some additional functionality in close collaboration with library system vendors.

### Record preferences

In your school's SCIS profile, there are some settings that you can customise to suit your school and the library system that you are using. You can find these by clicking on your school's name in the top right of the screen, and then selecting **My profile**. Clicking on **School/Organisation settings** gives you the option to customise your downloads by setting **Record preferences**, and there are some new features here.

The first new setting is for **Download preference**. The SCIS default for downloading is a single, zipped folder with the MARC records and cover images both included. If your library management system prefers to import unzipped MARC records separately from the cover images, then select **Separate MARC records and cover images**. You will then see two buttons on the Downloads page — one for the MARC records, and one for the cover images.

The second new setting relates to the **Holding format**. If your library system

requires the call number to be included in an 852 field in order to create a copy record, then you can select **MARC holdings format (852 tag)**.

Remember to scroll to the bottom of the page and save your changes if you select either of the above options.

While you are in your library's profile area, please take a moment to check that all the contact details for your school are up to date and that we have the current information.

### Value-added features

We have also been working on some enhanced features for the SCIS Data record details pages. Look out for the 'Additional terms' area. SCIS Data examines the record details and, where possible, will determine what learning area the resource relates to. You will see links to other resources that relate to the same learning area. The same applies to the material type. This information is not part of the downloaded MARC record, but can be used to refine searches or help with material selection.

### Search filters

You can also use learning area as a filter to refine your search results. After you do a search, the learning areas included in all your search results are displayed in the

navigation panel of the 'Search results' page, and you can then filter your search results by any of the learning areas found. SCIS Data also looks for information about target audience level in the MARC record, and then enables you to filter by audience level. You can also filter by a number of other elements, such as publication date, subject, genre or material type.

### Browse headings

There has been quite a bit of interest in the Browse headings page in SCIS Data, and we are working to add some exciting new features to it so that you can get even more out of this page and view more details for the headings.

### Professional learning

We have kicked off the year with a number of professional learning webinars and workshops in Perth and Melbourne. We are planning further workshops for Terms 2 and 3, so remember to keep an eye on our professional learning page for upcoming session details and registrations, and look for us at school library events.



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



# A NATIONAL CELEBRATION OF STORYTIME

**ALIA's National Simultaneous Storytime will be held on Wednesday 23 May, 2018.  
Brendan Eichholzer shares how to celebrate it in school libraries.**

National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) is an annual event organised by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) as part of the Library and Information Week celebrations. Each year a picture book, written by an Australian author, is read simultaneously in libraries, schools, preschools, childcare centres, family homes, and bookshops. Now in its 18th year, NSS is a fun, vibrant event that aims to promote the value of reading and literacy, using an Australian children's book that explores age-appropriate themes, and addresses key learning areas of the Australian Curriculum for Foundation to Year 6.

With NSS, ALIA aims to get as many people as possible reading, while also promoting the valuable contributions that libraries make to our communities. This includes showcasing the value of reading and literacy, highlighting Australian writers and publishers, putting the spotlight on storytime activities across the country, and providing opportunities for parents, grandparents, the media and others to participate in and enjoy the act of reading.

Each year NSS receives positive media coverage and generates community interest. In 2017, NSS was the biggest and most successful to date with 686,324 registered participants at over 6,000 locations. In 2018, we officially welcome communities in New Zealand to participate in NSS for the first time, thanks to the support of LIANZA (Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa).

NSS 2018 takes place on Wednesday 23 May at 11 am (AEST) and we would love you to join us in reading *Hickory Dickory Dash*, written by Tony Wilson and illustrated by Laura Wood. Ensure that you register ([membership.alia.org.au/events/event/national-simultaneous-storytime-2018](http://membership.alia.org.au/events/event/national-simultaneous-storytime-2018)) before Monday 21 May 2018 (it's free!), so you don't miss out. On this date, we will send you a digital version of the book as well as a version that has been signed in AUSLAN. You can order print copies of the book online at [shop.scholastic.com.au/Product/8545970](http://shop.scholastic.com.au/Product/8545970), and find it in most major book retailers. There is also a range of merchandise available to help you celebrate the day available at [membership.alia.org.au/products/national-simultaneous-storytime](http://membership.alia.org.au/products/national-simultaneous-storytime).

Anyone can participate in NSS; it doesn't matter whether you are registering a home, school, public library or university library.

You could partner with a local business for an NSS morning tea, read the book at your school assembly, celebrate in the staffroom during lunchbreak, or even help those in need by donating a copy of the book to your local library or childcare centre.

To help prepare you for NSS 2018, ALIA and Scholastic Australia — with thanks to Tony Wilson and Laura Wood — have prepared a range of resources to help you make the most of the day. Please note that all artwork, downloads, and digital presentations are licensed for use only in conjunction with NSS events and activities. See the permissions from the publisher on

the ALIA website ([alia.org.au/nss](http://alia.org.au/nss)) for more information.

There are free resources available on the ALIA website to help make NSS 2018 a special day for all, including teacher's notes to accompany the book. You can also download printable files containing instructions to create cut-out finger puppets, find-a-words, and even a find-the-mouse chatterbox. You can also encourage participants to create clock faces with moveable hands; or plan a dramatisation of the book, which could be performed alongside the reading. Make sure to let ALIA know what you are up to by using the hashtag #NSS2018 on all your social media in the lead up to NSS 2018.

Getting young children reading is vital to their development, and storytimes are a great way to involve them in the magic. Taking part in events like NSS not only gives children the wonderful experience of the day, but also reminds parents of the importance of reading to young minds, and contributes to creating healthy reading habits for life. School libraries are a crucial part of making NSS such a success, while exposing thousands of children to storytime activities. In 2018, NSS will bring together over 1 million participants from across Australia and New Zealand. Will you be joining us to make this the biggest and most successful National Simultaneous Storytime yet?



**Brendan Eichholzer**  
Publications editor  
Australian Library and Information Association



# WEBSITE + APP REVIEWS

## ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN

[www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc)

Teacher librarians seeking to expand their horizons will locate a variety of pertinent information from this US site. Of particular relevance are links to book awards, a blog, professional resources, and elearning.

SCIS no. 1858313

## AUTISM APPS

[www.autismapps.org.au](http://www.autismapps.org.au)

The Autism Association of Western Australia has reviewed a selection of apps relevant for children with autism. Topics covered on the database include fine motor skills, literacy, numeracy, ethical behaviour, and social skills.

SCIS no. 1659236

## BEE-BOT

[itunes.apple.com/au/app/bee-bot/id500131639?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/bee-bot/id500131639?mt=8)

By using this app, younger primary students can improve their skills in 'directional language and programming through sequences of forwards, backwards, left and right 90 degree turns', learning to control the virtual robot. Also available from Google Play.

SCIS no. 1858338

## COLLECTIONS CARE MANUAL

[manual.museum.wa.gov.au](http://manual.museum.wa.gov.au)

Emanating from the Western Australian Museum, the 12-part video guide and digitised book provides practical advice for small libraries on how to best preserve and care for their collections. Content includes pest management, dealing with temperature and humidity, treating mould, and textile management.

SCIS no. 1858413

## CYCLING SAFETY FOR STUDENTS

[education.amygillet.org.au](http://education.amygillet.org.au)

The singular goal of the Amy Gillett Foundation is bike rider safety. The foundation offers teachers a five-lesson cross-curricular unit of work intended for students in years 3–6. The student

section provides fact sheets, a history of bicycles, and activities.

SCIS no. 1858417

## ESSENTIAL SKELETON 4

[itunes.apple.com/au/app/essential-skeleton-4/id623811668?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/essential-skeleton-4/id623811668?mt=8)

This 3D app should find a place in the resource files of biology and PE teachers who are teaching the human skeletal system. This easily navigated app allows students to drop location pins, listen to correct pronunciation, and view descriptions of skeleton structures.

SCIS no. 1858470

## GEOSCIENCE AUSTRALIA – EDUCATION

[www.ga.gov.au/education](http://www.ga.gov.au/education)

Primary and secondary teachers searching for resources on the earth and environmental science topics of earthquakes, erosion, plate tectonics, minerals and fossils are provided with background information, posters, maps, classroom activities, and virtual exhibits.

SCIS no. 1858423

## GOLD RUSH GAME

[www.nma.gov.au/education/resources/multimedia/gold-rush](http://www.nma.gov.au/education/resources/multimedia/gold-rush)

The National Museum of Australia offers teachers a significant array of online material and resources. One such resource is this award-winning gold rush era game, for 1–4 players aged from 8 years. Students need to combine strategic thinking with a dose of luck to be successful.

SCIS no. 1858434

## MUSIC SPARKLES

[itunes.apple.com/au/app/music-sparkles/id452584114?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/music-sparkles/id452584114?mt=8)

This engaging app offers primary students the opportunity to play different musical instruments (some are free, others need an in-app purchase) either by themselves or following and repeating a provided musical pattern. Instruments include drums, xylophone, electric guitar and piano.

SCIS no. 1858468

## PARLIAMENTARY EDUCATION OFFICE

[www.peo.gov.au](http://www.peo.gov.au)

Primary and secondary students and teachers are presented with a plethora of information about the Australian Parliament. The teaching resources are aligned to the Australian Curriculum and include videos, images, role plays, units of work, links to external websites, and fact sheets.

SCIS no. 1018522

## ROSIE'S WORLD

[www.rosiesworld.co.nz](http://www.rosiesworld.co.nz)

DairyNZ has published this website, linked to aspects of the New Zealand curriculum, which encourages students to explore most aspects of dairying and have fun at the same time. Content includes games, a blog, videos ('moovies'), background information, and sections for teachers and parents.

SCIS no. 1858494

## TAX, SUPER + YOU

[www.taxsuperandyou.gov.au](http://www.taxsuperandyou.gov.au)

The Australian Taxation Office has created an informative website explaining to secondary students why they have to pay tax and superannuation. Students, teachers and parents need to get a login to access the information, tests, forums, and associated media.

SCIS no. 1567829



**Nigel Paull**  
Teacher Librarian  
NSW

*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

A quarterly magazine by SCIS  
Schools Catalogue Information Service



Education  
Services  
Australia

### Education Services Australia

scisdata.com/connections  
PO Box 177, Carlton South  
Victoria 3053 Australia  
Tel +61 3 9207 9600  
Fax +61 3 9910 9800

### Submissions and advertising

Please send enquiries to [connections@esa.edu.au](mailto:connections@esa.edu.au).

### Disclaimer

Views and opinions expressed in *Connections* do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, SCIS or Education Services Australia, or imply endorsement by them.

### Copyright

© 2018 Education Services Australia Ltd, except where indicated otherwise.

### Terms of use

Unless otherwise stated this material may be used, reproduced and communicated for non-commercial educational purposes, provided you retain all copyright notices and acknowledgements.

# Are you making the most of SCIS?

The SCIS Data platform makes resource management in your library even simpler — and even more exciting.

Don't miss out on our series of webinars to show you how to make the most of SCIS Data.

**3 May, 2018**

Search and selection on the SCIS catalogue

**15 May, 2018**

Downloading SCIS records

**FIND OUT MORE & REGISTER NOW**

[scisdata.com/professional-learning](http://scisdata.com/professional-learning)  
[help@scisdata.com](mailto:help@scisdata.com)

Please check out our Vimeo page for free help videos:  
**[bit.ly/scisvimeo](https://bit.ly/scisvimeo)**