

CONNECTIONS

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Even better than the real thing? Virtual and augmented reality in the school library

As a child, I spent hours gazing through my stereoscopic View-Master, clicking around the film cartridges that revealed 3D images of nature, superheroes and classic stories. The View-Master allowed me to escape into an imaginative world in a different way to books or television. Holding it up to my eyes, the whole world disappeared as my field of vision was completely taken up by these tiny slides.

Technology now allows for immersive experiences light years beyond the simple View-Master. Oculus Rift and HTC Vive are bringing virtual reality (VR) out of the realm of science fiction and into the hands of everyday people — thanks to the incredibly cheap Google Cardboard VR viewer, which is literally a cardboard viewer into which the mobile device is placed.

The 2017 K–12 Horizon Report suggests that in only two to three years VR will be widely adopted, and the Gartner Hype Cycle methodologies predict VR and its sibling, augmented reality (AR), will become regular productive technologies in two to five years.

Getting to grips with augmented reality and virtual reality

If you are new to AR and VR, the best place to begin is with a thorough understanding of exactly what these technologies are, how they differ and what tools and applications they require. Then comes the fun part — play!

Augmented reality

AR is when technology creates a ‘layer’ of information over a person’s experience of the world. There are two main types. The first is where a physical object or

IN THIS ISSUE

Even better than the real thing? Virtual and augmented reality in the school library	1
SCIS is more	4
Supporting Australian book creators	5
ELR – Encouraging the growth and development of Australian writing and publishing	5
Supporting multiple literacies through robotics clubs	6
The value of podcasts for school library staff	8
Marketing your school library	10
Using technology to promote reading	11
School library spotlight: Macleans College	12
Using the <i>Medium</i> blogging platform to teach critical and digital literacies in art	13
Website & app reviews	15

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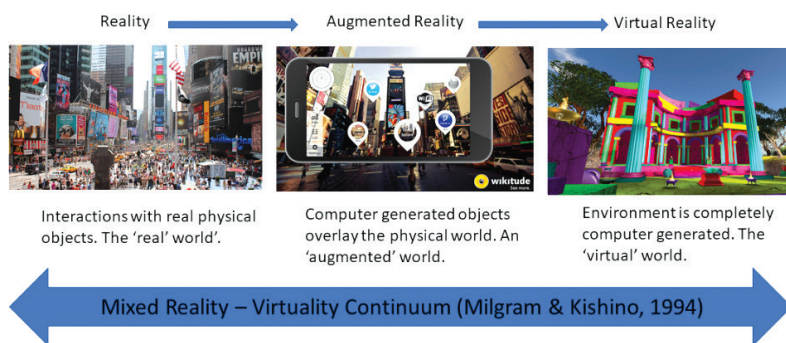


image triggers an interaction with the camera of a mobile smart device. The second is where the mobile device's GPS capabilities act as the trigger; the GPS then 'layers' digital data over the user's location.

Australian wine brand 19 Crimes has recently used an example of this first type of AR as a marketing tool for the creation of talking wine labels. The label of each wine variety has a photo of a convict. Using a bespoke app, potential purchasers can hold their smart device to the label and see the convict tell their story in a video. This type of AR is the easiest to create in an education setting, using apps like HP Reveal (previously known as Aurasma) or Metaverse. Imagine being able to embed a book trailer video into a book cover?



Living Wine Labels
<https://www.livingwinelabels.com/>

The second type of AR is perhaps most widely known through its use in the Snapchat and Pokémon GO! apps. With Pokémon GO!, the app identifies where the user is in real time and creates Pokémon animations that can be viewed through the smart device camera. As the user walks around, their location and the time of day or night determines when different Pokémon 'appear'. This type of AR provides a number of opportunities to engage students.

For example, Plane Finder allows the user to identify what type of planes are flying overhead, their destination and point of origin. Star Chart reveals the identity of and facts about the planets, stars and constellations that the user points their device towards.

Some of the simpler AR apps that overlay without GPS can also be fun and instructive. Money Everywhere captures photos of students with money falling from the sky. These money calculations can be made more engaging by snapping a range of photos, adding the totals and graphing them to see who receives the most virtual cash.

Virtual reality

VR is complete immersion into a computer-generated environment or simulation, made possible through technology such as a helmet or viewer. The most fascinating aspect of VR is its ability to trick the mind into thinking it is actually within a virtual environment. For example, when viewing a VR app that features a rollercoaster ride, users may feel the same dizziness and displacement that they would in reality.

Simple apps on a phone, combined with a Google Cardboard viewer, provide enough immersion to make one feel a little ill, but the lack of audio stimulus and real interactivity limits just how 'real' the experience feels. This may be a good thing for younger students.

For older or more experienced users of VR, technologies that provide a much fuller immersion are becoming increasingly available. Here, sensory stimulation including the sense of touch (e.g. wind blowing through your hair as you fly) and audio (e.g. the rushing sound as you soar), as well as the ability to interact with the virtual environment, makes the real world disappear.

The ability to experience 'being there' from the safety of a classroom has obvious appeal for the educator. Already, international travel is available through the immersive VR version of Google Earth, and

opportunities for interactive excursions such as walking through historical sites or investigating the human body are increasing.

Augmented reality and virtual reality in the library

As a space for innovative and contemporary learning, the library is a fantastic place for AR and VR. There are so many ways these technologies could be used to raise engagement and to promote literature and literacy. As both AR and VR require specific digital tools, keeping these tools in a central location such as the library makes sense.

Augmented reality

While most AR applications focus on providing pre-created animations or information that overlays reality when viewed through a mobile device, the suggestions below allow students to be part of the creation process. The AR technology is changing rapidly. However, two of the most well-established platforms, Metaverse and HP Reveal, contain desktop studio environments where the experiences are created. The experiences themselves are activated via the apps. The following activities can be conducted using these:

1. Create an interactive orientation activity

Students must find all trigger images and view overlays in order to answer trivia questions. This idea could be adapted for getting students to navigate different parts of the library, or for introducing specific tools or equipment in a teaching area such as home economics or industrial arts.

2. Invite students/parents/the community to view an interactive gallery

Students could create videos of themselves talking about their work. Display the pieces of work — which also act as the trigger images — and provide visitors with advice about which app to download to their smart mobile devices.

3. Encourage parents to interact with library newsletters

Add one or more trigger images to the newsletter that create overlay videos of a recent library event, new resource or positive message.

4. Guide teachers to embed audio or video explanations onto homework tasks

The inclusion of audiovisual explanations means that students can access 24/7 support.

5. Have students create a 'digital story walk' by embedding a narrative into the library or school environment

As characters move around the library or school telling their story, encourage the viewer to travel with them, adding a chapter to each trigger image.

Virtual reality

For virtual reality within the school library, all that is needed is a mobile device (which runs the VR experience), headphones (to be truly immersed in the 'new' reality) and a VR viewer. The VR viewer can be a high-end model, but terrific experiences can be had using Google Cardboard. Consider VR as a way to:

1. Develop empathy

Global Nomad Group's [Experience of Syria](http://gngvrlab.brandcast.com/Syria) (<http://gngvrlab.brandcast.com/Syria>) allows students to develop empathy and explore for themselves what life is like for children trapped in a war zone.

2. Add a further layer to literature

Be inspired by the beautiful [War of Words](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.BDH.WarofWords) (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.BDH.WarofWords>), which

features a reading of Siegfried Sassoon's poem 'The Kiss'. This app demonstrates how VR might engage students in poetry and literature through immersing them in an atmosphere that a simple reading may not provide.

3. Build confidence with public speaking

Apps such as [Beyond VR Public Speaking](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.BeyondVR.beyond) (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.BeyondVR.beyond>) or [Virtual Speech](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.virtualSpeech.android&hl=en_AU) (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.virtualSpeech.android&hl=en_AU) can make presentations a less painful experience by offering students the opportunity to practise in front of a virtual audience, in a variety of settings.

AR and VR have the potential to transform learning experiences. As curriculum and digital technology leaders, teacher librarians are well-placed to explore and implement these immersive technologies within the library, the classroom and beyond. To learn more, check out the collection of articles in my Flipboard magazine at <http://flip.it/NdZQaU>.

Image credits

Main photo by stem.T4L on [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com/) and figure supplied by Kay Oddone.

References

For a full list of references, please see the online version of this article scisdata.com/connections.



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Author's note: HP Reveal has announced the closure of the platform. A reminder that this is a changeable space, and we need to embrace a flexible mindset when using these technologies.

An earlier version of this article was first published in *IC3: Professional Journal of the WA School Library Association*.

SCIS is more

Welcome to Issue 110 of *Connections*!

New Connections editor

In this issue, we welcome our new *Connections* editor, Carmen Eastman. Carmen brings a background in marketing for libraries to our team. We are very happy to have her, and I'm looking forward to all the great content she has planned for coming issues. Welcome, Carmen!

In May, we farewellled Nicole Richardson. Nicole has been editing *Connections* since Issue 96, and gave the magazine a complete new look from Issue 103. She also arranged the digitising of all the back issues, now available at scisdata.com/connections. Thank you, Nicole!

As always, we welcome submissions to *Connections* from both first-time and experienced writers. It is a great way to advocate for your library, and share your fantastic ideas with colleagues around the world. Please contact connections@esa.edu.au.

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Conferences and professional learning

We were out and about at conferences for SLAV (<https://slav.org.au/>) and ASLA (<https://asla.org.au/conference-2019>) in March and April. It's always good to hear from you about what is happening in the schools.

We have also been on the road with

SCIS workshops in Mandurah, Fremantle and Sydney.

In Term 2 we ran a brand new webinar, 'Understanding SCIS records'. Cataloguing Team Leader Renate Beilharz explained the anatomy of a SCIS record, and discussed subject cataloguing, the importance of the subject search, how authority files enhance discoverability, consistent series and genre headings, and more! We also re-ran the popular webinar, 'Search and download in SCIS Data'.

Keep an eye on the SCIS [Professional learning](https://www.scisdata.com/professional-learning/) (<https://www.scisdata.com/professional-learning/>) page, to see where the next SCIS workshop(s) will be, and what webinars are coming up. We'd love to see you there.



Caroline Ramsden
SCIS Manager

SUPPORTING AUSTRALIAN BOOK CREATORS

Alison Lester, the award-winning author whose work mixes imaginary worlds with everyday life, reflects on her love of school libraries.



I love school libraries and it makes me feel sad and angry when I hear about schools closing their libraries.

The library should be the engine room of every school, a place where students and teachers can go and be expertly steered to the information they need. And, this information might be digital too. Often, I hear talk about the digital world as an alternative to books, but the two can and should go hand in hand.

I've been visiting schools to talk about making books for nearly 40 years, and almost all those talks have been in the school library. I've seen some sad, uninviting libraries with barely a book in sight and others that are bursting with life. A great school library has kids clamouring to get in, fabulous books on display, cosy nooks to read in, and something going on all the time. The mind-blowing Book Week displays and special projects are an added bonus.

As an author, it's a privilege to be part of this rich world. When I visit a school, the

library often has an art display inspired by my books, and I love looking at all the students' creations organised by the librarian. So, librarians, thank you for having my books on your shelves and sharing them with your students!

In a process that my non-mathematical brain has no chance of understanding, those books are tallied up and an Educational Lending Right payment (ELR) is paid to me once a year by the Australian Government. ELR is paid to authors to make up for income lost as a result of having their books in educational libraries. It's such a great thing to be rewarded for having our books on your shelves — a real financial validation of the importance of good books.

Image credits

Images supplied by Alison Lester



Alison Lester
Author and illustrator
Australia's Inaugural Children's
Laureate 2011-2013

ELR – Encouraging the growth and development of Australian writing and publishing

Each year, SCIS manages the Educational Lending Right (ELR) School Library Survey on behalf of the Department of Communications and the Arts. In turn, annual payments to authors and publishers are calculated using the results of this survey, extrapolated to reach a national school score and then combined with scores in the university and TAFE sectors.

In Term 4, we send invitations to participate in the ELR survey to a randomly selected sample of Australian schools. We ask these schools to run a report in their library system that takes a count of the number of copies of titles held in their library. It is a quick process – only taking a few minutes and a few clicks.

We highly encourage schools to participate, as the more who do, the more statistically valid the survey results will be. For a relatively small amount of effort, you will be providing much valued support to an excellent cause.

So, in Term 4, please keep an eye out for an email in your school's inbox or a package mailed to your school, and take part in ELR 2019–20.

Let's support Australian book creators so we can continue to enjoy the fantastic works they have to offer!



Ruilin Shi
ELR project coordinator
Education Services
Australia

SUPPORTING MULTIPLE LITERACIES THROUGH ROBOTICS CLUBS

Chelsea Quake discusses the benefits of introducing a robotics club to your school library.

School libraries have long had a natural affinity with English and humanities departments. This is understandable, given school library professionals' long-standing involvement in literacy support and advocacy, and the traditional assumption that literacy belongs to these subjects. However, the recent broadening of the scholarly definition of literacy into multiple literacies (sometimes referred to as 'multiliteracies' or 'new literacies') has revealed what school library professionals have known for a long time: the whole curriculum is the school library's business. Furthermore, literacy extends beyond the classroom. It encompasses a seemingly endless range of non-academic skills and capabilities, including those commonly referred to as '21st-century skills', such as communication, problem-solving and creative thinking.

Why robotics and why the school library?

ICT, technology and multimodal resources are well suited to programs designed around a multiple literacy approach (Walsh, 2017). This is where robotics comes in. When run through a school library as an extracurricular program, robotics offers students an opportunity to explore outside the bounds of a linear learning path and a prescribed assessable outcome. The self-driven but collaborative nature of an extracurricular robotics program requires that students embrace higher order communication skills in order to cooperate and co-create with others. It also requires trouble-shooting, inventiveness, creative problem-solving, decision-making, strategic thinking, planning, and lots of self-regulation. These skills and other so-called 'non-academic skills', are becoming increasingly relevant to the future world of work (World Economic Forum, 2016).

Soft skills and the future world of work

According to the *Future of Jobs* report from the World Economic Forum (2016), today's students will be entering an employment landscape where demand for:

- technical skills and knowledge across all key industries will decline significantly
- social skills 'such as persuasion, emotional intelligence and teaching others, [and] strong social and collaboration skills' will boom.

This report, along with many others, points to a widening gap between the skills students leave school with and the skills they need to participate fully in the job market. This was confirmed by the findings of a recent report by the Mitchell Institute (Torii & O'Connell, 2017) in which the warning to educators was: 'young people need to bring more than knowledge to the modern workforce' and 'the most crucial capabilities for the future include critical thinking, creativity, curiosity and communication skills'.

But I am not tech savvy ...

For the less tech savvy among us, simply wondering where to start with a library robotics club may seem daunting. However, it can be as simple or as complicated as you want it to be. With the advent of drag-and-drop block coding, and umpteen YouTube tutorials for neophytes, 'simple' can be 'very simple' if it needs to be. In truth, once students engage with robotics, their knowledge will surpass yours, and you probably won't have time to catch up. It turns out that this is okay because, by that stage, students will tend to prefer turning to each other to solve problems collaboratively. This is one of the things that makes robotics so appealing to me as a teacher librarian. Robotics has such an immense capacity to inspire inquiry-based learning, collaboration and knowledge-sharing between students.

“Recent broadening of the scholarly definition of literacy into multiple literacies has revealed what school library professionals have known for a long time: the whole curriculum is the school library's business.”

Partnering with STEM/STEAM teachers

If you can, convince a STEM/STEAM teacher to partner with you in your robotics adventure. At my previous school our new technology teacher, Brother Barry Parker, was eager to get involved. After a couple of weeks working with Barry in the library, it was clear to me that his expertise and experience could take the robotics program to a whole new level! Later that year, our robotics club entered the regional and then the state Robocup competition. We earned first and second place at the former, but missed out on a place at the latter. However, we had an amazing experience visiting the University of Melbourne and chatting with students and mentors from 56 different Victorian schools. To my knowledge, our two teams were the only ones who entered through a school library. This in itself was a point of pride for the students, since the library held a special place in their lives.



Photo by Phi Hung Nguyen on Unsplash

Eighteen months on, and I am now working at a different school, managing a different library, and beginning the process of drawing tech programs into the library space once again. This time, I went straight to the 7–9 STEAM coordinator. Andrew Wilkinson (‘Wilko’) has been running extracurricular robotics clubs through the college for many years with huge success and much involvement with international competitions. He and I have plans for a new junior library robotics club, using very basic robots and block coding.

The hope is that Year 7 students, in particular, will get involved with what the library offers and will eventually ‘graduate’ from the library program into Wilko’s more advanced robotics clubs. Clearly, this is a mutually beneficial arrangement for Wilko and me. He gets an additional support structure for his program and I gain the benefit of his support and expertise.

Robotics builds community

I recently spoke with Wilko about something I have noticed for some time now: the tremendous capacity of robotics clubs to build community within a school. He commented:

It brings a variety of kids together to do a variety of different jobs. Robotics projects need many hands, many different skills and many different interests. Sometimes you end up with kids you never would have guessed would be interested, but they are, and it works.

Wilko also spoke about the friendships that emerged from parental involvement:

So many parents want to help with this kind of thing. It’s good for the students, it’s good for the school, and it’s also good for the parents ... It’s a real community that gets built through robotics, and real friendships emerge. So much voluntary effort is put in — time, money, parents’ expertise — and it’s all for the kids’ learning. It’s just amazing.

Final practical considerations

You will need to budget for a robotics club. However, it does not need to cost a fortune. If funds are limited, check out simple robots such as the Edison. These little robots have a lot of functionality despite their simple appearance. If money is not an issue and you are willing to spend a little time learning the software, take a look at the Lego EV3 robots. There are many more options out there. However, I do recommend making sure that you are actually buying a robot and not a toy. Look for sensors, flexibility to adjust and build on the body (attachments and extensions), and the ability to program the robot to perform tasks.

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Chelsea Quake

Head of Library and Information Literacy
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THE VALUE OF PODCASTS FOR SCHOOL LIBRARY STAFF

School Librarians United is an American podcast dedicated to the nuts and bolts of running a successful school library. Host Amy Hermon shares the podcasts that help her do her job every day.

No one likes to feel foolish, and I don't know anyone who wants to admit that they don't know something. This is how I became such a fan of podcasts and decided to create one of my own.

I was never more aware of my kryptonite than sitting in my first class in library school. With nine years of experience teaching high school social studies, I figured returning to graduate school would be fun, and a welcome distraction from my teaching. It certainly wouldn't be hard!

My first class was Young Adult Literature, with the infamous 100 Book project. It became readily apparent that I was out of my league. I floundered, as others around me rattled off their favourite titles and reads aloud. Unlike many of my classmates in library school, I wasn't called to this profession because of a love of reading. I do not have a lifetime of reading upon which I can rely when I arrive at my library each day.

Rather, I am obsessed with information and revel in the ease of access to it. I find everything interesting, and I love learning.

So what do I do with my kryptonite? How do I not let this gap in my personal knowledge adversely affect my ability to do my job? Just as importantly, how do I do this without alerting my co-workers to this embarrassing predicament?

Over the years, I've cultivated my own Personal Learning Network. I regularly visit my favourite blogs of leaders in children's and middle-grade literature. I love attending conferences, and take advantage of the presentations that focus on literature. Another way to bolster my knowledge of children's literature is with audiobooks. These are

available for free through my local public library, and entertain me during dog walks, grocery shopping, and housework.

However, perhaps the most meaningful and sustained solution to my quandary is subscribing to a host of podcasts. I scour archived episodes for ones that I'd find useful. I have become a devoted listener, and receive alerts when new episodes are posted. It isn't uncommon for me to take notes about programming ideas and add book titles to my ongoing purchase orders. As a result of this, the knowledge I have gleaned from fascinating author interviews and informative book reviews finds its way into my interactions with students and teachers throughout the day. As a dedicated podcast listener, I've learned

to embrace my kryptonite and enjoyed finding ways to compensate and catch up with my fellow school librarians.

I fell in love with podcasts seven years ago. When we moved to our new home, I spent afternoons and weekends in our new house alone for hours as I painted nearly every room. As a former history teacher, I became addicted to the podcast 'Stuff you Missed in History Class' (www.missedinhistory.com). I went back into their archives and committed to listening to their entire back catalogue. I continued to listen while I weeded the garden and packed up boxes. My initial reaction was 'Where was this podcast when I was teaching history to teenagers?' But, by that time, I had graduated with my Master of Library and Information Science, and had already started working as an elementary library media specialist.

This was the very first time it had occurred to me that podcasts could help listeners be more effective in their jobs. As I state in the intro to my own podcast, *School*

Librarians United (<https://schoollibrariansunited.libsyn.com>), I wanted a podcast which addressed 'the nuts and bolts of running a successful library program'.

My podcast is the culmination of many things — a perfect storm, really. I'm a chronic overthinker. Not only has my podcast offered me the opportunity to ruminate aloud about the finer points of school librarianship, but I also have the perfect excuse to delve into subjects about which I know very little. Over a bitterly cold mid-winter break in 2018, I discovered *Google Keep*

(www.google.com.au/keep), and started jotting down episode ideas. Before long, my passing interest had taken on a life of its own.

More than 30 episodes later, my podcast is my connection to a growing listening community around the world. I see it as another support I provide, alongside the work I do with students and staff in my schools every day. I network with school librarians via social media. We share with one another, and this is clear to anyone who tunes in.

School library professionals possess an extraordinary willingness to learn. Educators of all subjects and grade levels can find relevant podcasts using a phone app. Podcasts fill



Amy Hermon recording the popular *School Librarians United* podcast.



the gaps in my education and life experience. In addition, they offer ways for me to improve as an educator and keep me up to date with constantly evolving technology, and its applications in the classroom.

In many ways, podcasts are how I personalise my professional development. A recommended strategy is to review archived episodes and cherry-pick the ones that serve your interests and needs. Or — as I sometimes refer to it as Netflix for your ears — binge on a podcast, beginning at the very first episode. It is rarely a waste of time.

If you've ever encountered another podcast fan, perhaps you too have found yourselves pulling out your phones to compare playlists. Dedicated podcast listeners are always looking for new shows. Here's a list of what you'd find on my phone. Keep in mind that podcasting is a dynamic field and, just as some new podcasters come onto the scene, so too do podcasters decide to stop recording. Hopefully, you'll find something that helps you do your job!

My current podcast list

Literature

Like all of us, I don't have the time to read all the new books which, no doubt, my students will want to. This is where book review podcasts come in. Caution: Listening to these podcasts can get expensive as you will want to purchase all the books that are reviewed!

- **Book Club for Kids** (www.bookclubforkids.org), hosted by Kitty Felde
- **Books Between Podcast** (<https://mgbookvillage.org/books-between-podcast>), hosted by Corrina Allen
- **The Children's Book Podcast** (<https://bookriot.com/listen/shows/kidlit-these-days>), hosted by Matthew Winner
- **Kidlit These Days** (<http://bit.ly/2WfQWML>), hosted by Karina Yan Glaser and Matthew Winner
- **Kidlit Women** (<https://www.kidlitwomen.com>), hosted by Grace Lin and Alvina Ling
- **Lifelines: Books that Bridge the Divide** (<http://annbradenbooks.com/podcast>), hosted by Saadia Faruqi and Ann Braden
- **Scholastic Reads** (<http://oomscholasticblog.com/podcast>), hosted by Suzanne McCabe
- **The Yarn** (<https://apple.co/2M3UttK>), hosted by Travis Jonker and Colby Sharp

Teaching

I teach all day — six classes of 45 minutes, with students aged from five to 11. There isn't a day that I don't discover some aspect of my teaching, classroom management, or lesson design that could be improved. My advice is to try an episode or two of the podcasts below. Also, try not to limit your options because the podcast is designed for English teachers and you're a school librarian, or is focused on high school and you teach primary — or vice versa.

- The **10 Minute Teacher Podcast** (<https://10minuteteacher.libsyn.com>), hosted by Vicki Davis
- The **Cult of Pedagogy** (www.cultofpedagogy.com/pod), hosted by Jennifer Gonzalez
- The **Spark Creativity Teacher Podcast** (<http://www.nowsparkcreativity.com/p/podcasts.html>), hosted by Betsy Potash
- **Truth for Teachers** (<https://thecornerstoneforteachers.com/truth-for-teachers-podcast>), hosted by Angela Watson

Technology

My Michigan teaching certificate is for the K–12 school library and technology. I have taught K–5 technology while also working as a school librarian. I get asked a lot of tech questions throughout my day and technology podcasts are a great way to get tips and advice on generating relevant lessons, and advising on technology and makerspace purchases. It also helps me with my committee work for the district.

- **BBC's Trending** (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01kdgrn/episodes/downloads>), hosted by the BBC Bureau
- **Check This Out** (<http://checkthisoutsite.weebly.com>), hosted by Brian Briggs and Ryan O'Donnell
- The **Chromebook Classroom Podcast** (<http://chrmbk.libsyn.com>), hosted by John Sowash
- The **Google Teacher Tribe Podcast** (<https://googleteachertribe.com>), hosted by Matt Miller and Kasey Bell
- **House of #EdTech Podcast** (<https://chrisnesi.com>), hosted by Chris Nesi
- **TOSA's Talking Tech Podcast** (<https://tosastalkingtech.libsyn.com>), hosted by Tom Covington and Michael Jephcott

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Amy Hermon

Host of *School Librarians United*

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MARKETING YOUR SCHOOL LIBRARY

Andrew Downie, a teacher librarian from Fairfield High School, NSW, suggests how some marketing skills might help your library.

How many times have you heard a school library professional make a comment such as, 'My school leadership team doesn't understand my role or the value it brings'. As a teacher librarian with long experience working both as a teacher librarian and in an education sales environment, this question is close to my heart.

Background

When I started my teaching career I certainly didn't understand the importance of my role. It wasn't until I took a job in direct sales for an education company that I began to understand what it was, and how best to present it.

Lessons learnt

Find opportunities to make connections with students and colleagues so you can find out what they need from your library, and then make every effort to fulfil these. In informal environments you can also share positive library stories. Being

involved in activities outside the library, such as working on committees or sports coaching, can be helpful.

Find a meeting time that works

When setting up appointments with colleagues, it is helpful to find out when they might have the time to be more open to hearing what you have to say. For example, I had several principals who only operated on set appointments. However, with another principal, our best appointments were often before or after school hours. Also, remember that some of the best 'meetings' are the 30-second chats in the corridor.

When meeting with colleagues, it's also important to be flexible when prearranged meetings might be cancelled because of some issue that requires their immediate attention.

Find the narrative of your library

Build understanding and support for your cause by sharing engaging stories about your library with colleagues. Focus on the positive ways it has contributed to particular events, discoveries, staff members or students.

Use social media

Use social media whenever you can to keep your principal and others fully informed of everything that goes on in the library. Find out what social media platform your principal uses and use it too as often as you can. With my current principal, I use Twitter. A tweet with photos is often the most effective.

Keep your web presence up to date

Make sure that you have an up-to-date library page on your school website. I'm often surprised how many school websites are out of date or do not have a library page!

Connect with the whole school

It is useful to connect informally with a wide range of people at the school (for example by becoming involved in school activities outside the library). Doing this helps you to find out how people see the library, and what they need from it. You can then make every effort to fulfil requests, while communicating positive stories about what your library is already achieving.

Marketing aims to 'sell the benefits'. While marketing is something that many school library professionals may not feel comfortable doing, with the right intention and support there are many platforms through which we can do this both sensitively and effectively.

Image credits

Image supplied by Andrew Downie



Andrew Downie
Teacher librarian
Fairfield High School, NSW

USING TECHNOLOGY TO PROMOTE READING

Bev Humphrey, founder of Write Path International Collaborative Writing Project, examines how digital media can help students discover the excitement of opening a new book.

Encouraging reluctant

young people to pick up a book and read for information and pleasure seems to be becoming more difficult every year, especially as the range of digital distractions is ever increasing. To be fair to kids that are addicted to their computer games, tablets etc., it's definitely not something that is confined to the young. How many of us, hand on heart, can say we would be happy to give up our smartphone with its immediate gratification of Google search results and likes on social media? Tapping in to this fascination with screens can be very effective for promoting reading, however, and can assist you in helping your students discover the excitement of opening a new book.

YouTube

YouTube has replaced Google searching for many young people now, as they would prefer to watch a video on how to do something than read through websites. There is a vibrant community of book lovers on YouTube that goes under the moniker of 'BookTube'.

Some of you may have heard of **Zoella** (Zoe Sugg) (<http://bit.ly/2W2vZW7>), a YouTuber with a huge influence on young people in the UK. The video she made about her next bookclub list with UK booksellers WH Smith had 1.3 million views and sold a heck of a lot of books. There are a great number of young people who take to YouTube to share their love of books and reading, and post unboxing videos (where they open boxes of books they have been sent and show the contents), and it's hugely popular with kids. This [unboxing video](https://tinyurl.com/y9ddxe6a) (<https://tinyurl.com/y9ddxe6a>) from Jesy Elysie has been viewed more than 38,000 times! I think your students are much more likely to give a book a go if it is recommended by a YouTuber of a similar age rather than a teacher or librarian.

Other videos

Publishers and authors have realised the power videos have too, and many of them produce book trailer videos for new releases that can advertise the book pre-publication in the same way that film trailers have always whetted our appetite for new films.

If your school has a YouTube account, you can follow publishers' channels and be notified if they add new content. Showcasing trailers can pique teens' interest and can even help break them out of their self-imposed genre boundaries — the student that will only read vampire books, for example.



Photo by Christian Wiediger on Unsplash

There are a great many unofficial trailers on YouTube, created by readers such as this one about *Frozen Charlotte* (<https://tinyurl.com/y9at5qd5>) by Alex Bell. Encouraging your students to create their own trailers, using sites like Animoto or Powtoon, is a great way of getting some peer recommendations going.

Social media

Social media is very important to young (and more mature) people, and sites like Twitter and Instagram have immense

potential for encouraging reading. Instagram, especially, is well suited to sharing pictures of great books with a short review, using the hashtag #60secreview. The #bookstagram community is a great bunch of people to interact with, many of its members being young, keen readers. Many authors are approachable on social media, and are often happy to respond to tweets or posts about their books. It can be very exciting for a student when the author of a book they have commented on replies to them personally via a class or library Twitter account.

School librarians and teachers are sharing books on Instagram too. [Glenthorne High School's account](https://tinyurl.com/ycw2bgqu) (<https://tinyurl.com/ycw2bgqu>) is a particularly good example of how you can do this to best effect. Something I enjoy taking part in are book challenges, where you take a different photo on a daily bookish theme, like this recent one set by @CILIPSLG (<https://tinyurl.com/y4ezlln4>).

I have often been asked if I think that paper books will ever be replaced by ebooks, and the very idea of this happening sends a cold shiver down my spine. But, to be honest, I don't really care how my students access books as long as they are reading! It's very satisfying when you can marry a love for technology with a passion for reading, however, and digital media is a powerful weapon in our fight to enthuse reluctant readers.

Bev Humphrey

Literacy & Technology Consultant
Founder Write Path International Collaborative Writing Project
Editor of SLA Digital & SLA Website Content Manager

Bev Humphrey runs an international collaborative writing project, The Write Path, and she is always looking for more schools to join the fun www.writepathint.com. Visit www.bevhumphrey.com and follow @Libwithattitude on Twitter.

SCHOOL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT: MACLEANS COLLEGE

SCIS speaks to Christine Hurst of Macleans College in Auckland, New Zealand about what is happening in her school library.

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

I am the library manager and my role is a mixture of behind the scenes and 'front of house' tasks. An ordinary day — if there is such a thing in high school libraries — could involve acquisition and purchases, showing a class how to access the databases we have, updating procedure documents, curating online content for class topics, creating a display, issuing books, helping students find suitable resources, or unjamming the printer! We have two library assistants who job share and, as we have 2,500 students in our school, there is never a dull moment in the library.

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

It is rewarding when I can convince a student who doesn't normally read to borrow a book; or when a student finds a book they love and they're super-excited about it; or when they ask for me to buy a book and they squeal with delight when it arrives.

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

I see the library as a vital place to support students' learning. We encourage students to come to our dedicated library space to research topics, source information and get help from the library staff. However, our students can also search and access our resources from anywhere inside or outside the school grounds using our one-search LMS, Accessit.

Are there any current issues or challenges facing your library? How are you working to overcome these?

We are a high-achieving state school, and we have a large proportion of students whose parents have sent them here from overseas to get a quality education. There are some parents who don't see reading books as an academic pastime — all they see is their child reading for pleasure instead of studying hard. So, one of my greatest challenges is convincing parents and students that reading equals academic



An example of the engaging activities and displays featured in Macleans College library.

success, and that it's not a waste of time. The school addresses this with parents at an information evening about striking the right balance between education and recreation and I do this by including on the library web page some results of studies that support the benefits of reading.

How do you promote reading and literacy in your school? Are there any challenges in doing so?

One thing we do is a reading challenge sponsored by a pizza company. Students have to read six books and they get a voucher for a free pizza. We also offer classes book talks, where I talk very fast about a selection of books. This usually generates a lot of competition for the same books and some classes rush me once I've finished! Luckily, the English faculty supports recreational reading and every junior class has a regular library booking where they come and get books issued, and sit and read for the hour.

It is harder for seniors, as their schedules are packed and it takes more to convince the teachers to book library sessions. I recently completed a project where I surveyed and analysed the reading habits of two classes. As expected, lack of time to read seemed to be the biggest issue for most students,

although there were some who just didn't like to read. So, my challenge was convincing them that reading is worthwhile. Again, I used studies to support the argument that reading is relaxing, and that it helps with vocabulary and general knowledge. Some students reported an increase in their reading after participating in my project, and one lovely Year 12 student said she was delighted to have rediscovered her love of books.

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

We try to make the library a welcoming place to come. The school administration likes the library to be an academic space, so they don't allow games in the library (our school has a house system, so students have a loud, fun place to play games at all times). Having an 'academic' library goes against the trend as many school libraries are evolving into fun makerspaces. However, rather than students being put off from coming, the library is in high demand and is packed to bursting most of the day. We also do vibrant displays of both fiction and non-fiction topics and themes. Even a small shelf of a particular author gets results. We also have a recent returns shelf and it's amazing how many books are borrowed from there!

What is your favourite thing about SCIS?

Having great, consistent cataloguing! I also love the authority files with their 'see also' references.

What would you like to see SCIS do more of?

We subscribe to ClickView's video library. I'd like to see all ClickView records have a SCIS record (with the exception of Clickview exchange and personal recordings, of course).

Image credits

Images supplied by Christine Hurst

Christine Hurst
Library Manager
Macleans College

USING THE MEDIUM BLOGGING PLATFORM TO TEACH CRITICAL AND DIGITAL LITERACIES IN ART

Tania Sheko, a teacher librarian from Melbourne High School, explores the value of dedicating time to collaboration and innovation.

The teacher librarian role is elastic

What I love the most about the teacher librarian role is its elasticity; it can assume so many different shapes and play out in a variety of stories. In many cases, teacher librarians have come from classroom teaching and therefore bring their expertise and experience, as well as a passion for their areas of speciality. My teaching methods were English and languages (German and French), and this is what I taught before completing the Master of Education (Teacher Librarianship). However, I also have a passion for the arts, and love supporting and collaborating with teachers in the arts faculty.

New year, new challenges

Every year I challenge myself to a new project, aiming to forge new relationships with students and teachers while trying out something innovative, sometimes without knowing precisely what it will be until it happens. Collaborating with a teacher and their students over a longer period — at least a term, but ideally a year — gives me the opportunity to get to know them and experience their teaching/learning styles first hand.

This year I approached an art teacher with whom I had worked a couple of years ago with an idea I had been contemplating for some time. Previous experiences in the art classroom had me thinking, how can we:

- solve students' blocks to creativity, and simultaneously broaden their exposure to a variety of art works and styles
- improve their critical literacies when discussing or writing about art?

The first point stems from my ongoing role in supporting art teachers and students by creating online resources (LibGuides). The second relates to a recent realisation that if I'm supporting critical literacies — typically by working with English teachers — then why shouldn't I do it with art?

Using Medium as a blogging platform

The art teacher decided we would work with her Year 10 drawing and painting class. I suggested to her that we use Medium as a

blogging platform for our purposes, for the following reasons:

1. The blog would be the space where we posted all our content and instructions.
2. Student blogs would be easily accessible in the followers list.
3. Students would be able to read and respond to each other's posts — in the form of 'clapping' or comments — resulting in the development of a reading/writing community.
4. Images, videos and other media — particularly important in art teaching — could be easily embedded in the posts.
5. Our blog and students' blogs would be situated within a global writing/blogging community, instead of sitting in isolation. The Medium homepage (<https://medium.com>) is cleverly designed to entice the reader into further reading, based on reading history, their network (as they follow people), and according to their self-appointed areas of interest. In this way, students have agency over their feed, in the same way as they feel a sense of ownership while designing their blog.

From archive to targeted post

Medium enabled me to feature online resources I have been creating for years in our LibGuides. This is exciting because it

solves the issue of how to make archived online resources relevant to students and teachers. So, for example, when a teacher requested resources about artist [William Kentridge](http://bit.ly/2JrMQeq) (<http://bit.ly/2JrMQeq>) or [drawing techniques](http://bit.ly/2E92Jcf) (<http://bit.ly/2E92Jcf>), I was able to pull these out of the LibGuides. This then meant that the blog post was all we needed for the lesson. It could be easily mirrored on the large screen so that students

could follow the lesson, or set before the lesson, in 'flipped classroom' style.

Medium allows the creation of tabs at the top of each page. While thinking about blog design, I also realised that I could create tabs for 'drawing techniques', 'artists', 'artworks', 'critiques' and 'teacher posts', and tag posts accordingly. In this way, the blog became interactive, providing students with a wealth of resources that they can easily navigate.



Photo by Nik MacMillan on Unsplash

The blog also allows for quick and easy ‘just in time’ posting; my role in resourcing becomes ‘live’ when things come up during the lesson and I’m able to create a post on the spot.

A real readership

When students post their writing on a blog in response to assigned tasks, they have a real audience, which is very different to writing for their teacher. They usually feel more motivated to write, to edit their work before it gets published, and — because we instruct them to read each others’ posts — they learn from each other’s posts. Students are familiar with the ‘clapping’ (liking) and commenting options, which are ubiquitous on all social media sites. They enjoy being connected to the class, and are motivated by the possibility of attracting a readership outside the school, too. Of course, it’s my job to monitor the appropriateness of all interactions.

Digital literacies

In the first lesson, I spoke to students about the implications of being published externally. The acceptable behaviour policies are permanently in the blog’s archive for students to revisit. I also posted a piece called ‘How to comment on someone’s writing in an online environment’ (<http://bit.ly/2Q5koPQ>).

Commenting is actually harder than it first seems. Writing a ‘comment’ following another student’s post is much more than the monosyllabic or gif-laden comments on social media; it involves an understanding and evaluation of the post, and an articulate, constructive observation or even extension of the original ideas. These are additional literacies, which, if not taught explicitly or practised, will not be developed.

relevant media available online on this topic, and it’s the teacher librarian’s role to sift through and carefully curate the best resources for the class, as well as for the teacher. On the same topic, I also posted: ‘Ways of seeing and writing about art’ (<http://bit.ly/2YI9u5T>), in which I included a video from Smart History, as well as one called ‘How to understand a Picasso’ by The Nerdwriter. As this kind of resourcing is time-consuming, teachers always appreciate additional help in this area.

Progress so far

Despite being in its early stages, our blog is growing in leaps and bounds. I appreciate being informed by the teacher’s and students’ needs that arise during class time, so that it evolves organically and often at the point of need. I find this works so much more effectively than my earlier experiences of emailing teachers to ask how I might support them. My participation in classes has resulted in many more ideas, and our collaborative teaching and conversations during class inform my work. As we bounce off one another during the lesson, ideas are generated in the most productive and creative way.

What is it about the blog format?


Since working with blogs in classes from 2008, I’ve had a chance to reflect on what works well and how to innovate for even better results. I think that the separation into posts of what might become too dense and difficult for students to take in in one sitting is one of the advantages of teaching and learning this way. Tags, categories (tabs) and hyperlinks all help students take in digestible amounts, and enable them to follow hyperlinks to further reading if they wish, or navigate the site to find what they need to revise their content. These are the digital literacies school library professionals will often teach and, in this way, we are not doing so in isolation, but in context.

Differentiation

When providing extension material for students, the blogging platform allows school library professionals to provide differentiation by posting content for depth and breadth, then tagging posts accordingly. In art, there are always more examples and opportunities to expand students’ horizons with more artists, more techniques, art history, local exhibitions, art from featured museums and galleries, and articles or videos/podcasts about art issues. I’ve shared a range of broad and issues-based posts; for example, ‘Who decides what art means?’ (<http://bit.ly/2LQv2vz>), ‘Women artists and their struggle to be seen’ (<http://bit.ly/2LRb03V>), and ‘It seems art can help you if you’re studying to become a doctor’ (<http://bit.ly/2JphAg0>).


Projects such as this one have me thinking about the issue of staffing in some school libraries. Even with well-staffed libraries, teacher librarians might not have the opportunity to explore and experiment. Some of my most valuable experiences have developed from a mere hunch that something worthwhile might eventuate. Frankly, there is always a positive outcome when you experiment with the stretchiness of your role, even if it is not what you expected. Let’s hope that we hold our ground in schools so that we can prove our value.

Tania Sheko
Teacher librarian
Melbourne High School



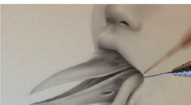
Marija Tiurina
An insanely detailed work by Marija Tiurina, jam-packed with both realistic and imaginative characters existing in a parallel universe to...

Tania Sheko
Jun 20 • 2 min read




Joanna Concejo
Joanna Concejo was born in Poland and graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan. Her books have been published in numerous...

Tania Sheko
Jun 19 • 4 min read



Instagram illustrators
I'm sharing a few Instagram accounts which share different styles of illustration. Hopefully you can find something you like, and even...

Tania Sheko
Jun 19 • 3 min read



How to annotate your visual diary
How to annotate a sketchbook

Tania Sheko
May 21 • 2 min read

Art viewpoints, let's talk about Art
<https://medium.com/art-viewpoints>

Critical literacies in art

We sometimes forget that critical literacy skills have been taught explicitly to students in art classes. These skills develop as students learn to see, then unpack, discuss, and finally write about an artwork.

Blogs lend themselves to short ‘lessons’ on what this might look like. For example, I posted ‘How to critique someone else’s art work’ (<http://bit.ly/2lqQR0M>), which begins with a cartoon, and then shows a video created by PBS Digital Studios’ The Art Assignment (<http://bit.ly/2HmgvmN>). There is so much

WEBSITE + APP REVIEWS

10 MINUTES A DAY TIMES TABLES

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/10-minutes-a-day-times-tables/id775904110>

Dorling Kindersley offers this free, engaging times tables resource for primary school students. Students are encouraged to beat the clock in a series of short games. Has hints and tips on how to reach higher levels.

SCIS no. 1925307

ATLAS OF LIVING AUSTRALIA

<https://www.ala.org.au/>

This atlas 'is a collaborative, national project that aggregates biodiversity data from multiple sources and makes it freely available and usable online'. Teachers and students can search interactive maps of flora and fauna, investigate data sets, and browse natural history collections.

SCIS no. 1521391

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

<https://aiatsis.gov.au/>

This website is a gateway to a vast array of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources about traditions, cultures, languages, and stories both past and present. Teachers exploring the collection can access curriculum-linked educational resources and teaching notes.

SCIS no. 994972

COLLISIONS: PLAY CHEMISTRY

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.PlayMadaGames.Collisions&hl=en_US

<https://apps.apple.com/au/app/collisions-play-chemistry/id1132644631>

Various chemistry topics for curious secondary students are brought to life in this app. Content includes atoms, acids, covalent bonding, ions and ionic bonding, and phase change. The atoms unit is free; however, the full suite of challenges involves an in-app purchase.

SCIS no. 1925344

GLOBAL ONENESS PROJECT

<https://www.globalonenessproject.org/>

Concentrating on cultural, ecological and social issues, this project has a global focus. Using stories, photos, articles, videos and lesson plans, contemporary issues such as migration, climate change, the environment, indigenous cultures, and inspirational people are explored.

SCIS no. 1918945

THE GOLDEN PIPELINE

<https://www.goldenpipeline.com.au/>

The pipeline from the outskirts of Perth to Western Australia's eastern goldfields is both historically significant and a wonder of engineering. This impressive website from National Trust Western Australia provides information on the scheme and how it works, the people involved, its economic impact, and educational resources for teachers.

SCIS no. 1143494

MANAAKI WHENUA LANDCARE RESEARCH

<https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/information-for/schools>

The educational section of this website offers students and teachers resources and information relating to New Zealand's flora and fauna, land and water resources, biodiversity, and biosecurity. Students will be engaged with quizzes, competitions and videos.

SCIS no. 1099051

OCEAN SHOCK

<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/section/ocean-shock/>

Ocean shock is one of the thought-provoking Reuters Investigates series available on the web. The world beneath the waves is explored in this investigation, with the focus on the deleterious effects of warming waters on marine life across the globe.

SCIS no. 1925325

SEEING AI

<https://apps.apple.com/au/app/seeing-ai-talking-camera-for-the-blind/id999062298>

Microsoft is developing a free artificial intelligence app for people who are blind and the low vision community that uses their iPhones to scan products and then hear product information, recognise faces, speak text, identify handwriting and colour, describe captured scenes, identify certain currencies, and describe photos on phones.

SCIS no. 1925340

TES: TEACHING RESOURCES

<https://www.tes.com/en-au/teaching-resources>

With over 500,000 P-12 lesson resources available, teachers are encouraged to investigate this encompassing resource. The NSW Teachers Federation Centre for Professional Learning, the NSW Board of Studies, and the Australian Education Union have combined with Times Education to create a website that 'provides an unprecedented level of teaching resources

focused on the curriculum needs and priorities of Australian schools'.

SCIS no. 1925331

WONDERSCOPE

<https://apps.apple.com/au/app/wonderscope/id1437417679>

This award-winning iOS app immerses and engages readers in an augmented reality storytelling experience. Readers become part of the story, interacting with characters and moving about as the story progresses. The first story is free; others incur a fee.

SCIS no. 1925334

FAKE NEWS

<https://libguides.lsbu.ac.uk/fakenews/home>

The contentious issue of fake news is explored on this guide originating from London South Bank University. There are many aspects relating to fake news covered, including: how to determine if news is fake; how to check facts; elections and fake news; fake news in history; and what libraries and teacher librarians can do to expose fake news.

SCIS: 1903780

FOOD LOSS AND FOOD WASTE

<http://www.fao.org/food-loss-and-food-waste/en/>

An initiative of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, this topical website focuses attention on global food waste and loss. Almost one-third of food produced globally is wasted, with a corresponding loss of natural resources, labour, water and energy. Content includes video, authoritative links, stories, reports and policy measures.

SCIS: 1926761



Nigel Paull
Teacher Librarian
North Coast, 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.



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