

CONNECTIONS

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Schools Cataloguing Community of Practice

A new initiative from ALIA Committee on Resource Description (ACORD)

Every school that has a library management system uses catalogue records. These records help school libraries with administrative tasks such as stock control (circulation and shelving). More importantly, catalogue records help end-users (students, teachers, library staff) locate resources specific to their needs.

School library users, both staff and students, are beneficiaries of a well-maintained catalogue, but very few understand the work, skills and knowledge that goes into cataloguing. It is a backroom task that does not receive much publicity or fanfare.

Undertaking (and understanding) cataloguing is sometimes seen as a 'specialist' skill. Even so, every library staff member interacts with the catalogue as soon as they touch the library management system. Also, in every library there is at least one person who has the responsibility for importing, adjusting, modifying and creating catalogue records in the system.

Catalogue records are created to specific standards to ensure that search results will be relevant and useful to end users. These standards are not static – they adapt to meet the changing needs of society and technology. Cataloguing in school libraries relies on these standards but may be adjusted to meet the needs of an individual school library community.

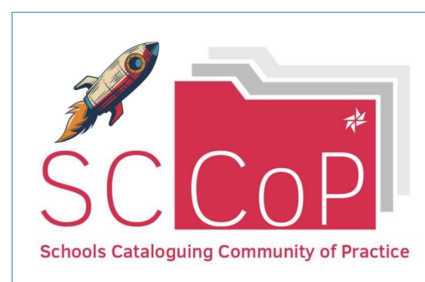
Staff maintaining a school library's catalogue are often working on their own and have little opportunity to talk 'cataloguing' with others – enter the Schools Cataloguing Community of Practice (SCCoP).

The purpose of SCCoP is to provide a vendor-neutral forum in which to encourage discussion and share information on any aspects of bibliographic metadata and discoverability in school libraries. It is open to anyone with an interest in bibliographic metadata for school libraries in Australasia.

The objectives of the SCCoP will vary over time, but may include:

- to identify, gather and share effective bibliographic metadata practices in school libraries
- to provide a point of contact for Australasian school library staff to ask questions and discuss issues of relevance to bibliographic metadata
- to report on developments in international bibliographic metadata that could impact discoverability of resources in Australasian school libraries.

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the ALIA Community of Resource Description (ACORD) invite you to join SCCoP to share your knowledge. Online meetings will be held at least 4 times a year, with a communal online space available for ongoing conversations and notifications.



The first meeting was held on 27 August. It started with a short presentation on the reparative cataloguing initiative undertaken by Abbotsleigh School Library. This was followed by animated discussion, including ideas and plans for future meetings.

To join SCCoP, send an email to education@alia.org.au, with 'Schools Cataloguing CoP' in the subject line. Please include in the body of the email your organisation and, if you like, a few words about why you're interested in joining the group.

Once you have joined the group, you will be notified of the next meeting by email.

Renate Beilharz

ACORD member
Catalogue Content Manager, SCIS

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Tuesday November 11 | 2 pm AEDT



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Participants are encouraged to follow along using their own SCIS Data account. Contact help@scisdata.com if you need help to log in.

Find out more and register now

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THE RETURN OF A LANDMARK IN YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

Reading Matters, once Australia's largest youth literature event, is set to return under the stewardship of #LoveOzYA – reviving its mission to champion diverse, teen-centred Australian voices.

Reading Matters was long a part of Australia's reading culture.

Established in 1991 as a biennial event by the State Library of Victoria's Centre for Youth Literature, it grew to become the nation's largest youth literature event with audiences that included students, professionals and the public. From 2013 to 2017 it hosted Australian and international authors, and attendance across the 3-day event climbed to more than 1,000. The program was discontinued in 2019 when the State Library of Victoria retired the Centre for Youth Literature.

#LoveOzYA: Championing Australian young adult fiction

Founded in 2015 after an ALIA survey revealed that most young adult (YA) books borrowed by Australian teens were by international rather than Australian authors, #LoveOzYA began as a grassroots social media campaign to raise awareness of local YA literature and promote Australian authors and voices. The movement became the Australian Young Adult Literature Alliance, and committee members over the years have included Danielle Binks, Michael Earp, Ambelin Kwaymullina and Adele Walsh.

Alongside an ongoing social presence, #LoveOzYA has:

- created the Aussie Readalikes poster, pairing popular US YA titles with Australian equivalents
- launched a [monthly newsletter](#)
- crowdfunded and built a [website](#) for readers, writers and educators that includes news, advice, resources and teaching guides.

In 2022, #LoveOzYA became a registered charity to enable further fundraising and strategic planning and to provide a structured organisational hub powered by passionate and hardworking volunteers.

#LoveOzYA and the return of Reading Matters

With the Centre for Youth Literature no longer in operation, #LoveOzYA is now stepping forward to carry Reading Matters into a new chapter. As a registered charity with a strong grassroots network, #LoveOzYA provides the organisational base and community energy to enable the conference's revival. Both Reading Matters and the Australian Young Adult Literature Alliance share the same mission: to connect readers, authors and industry professionals while championing diverse, inclusive, teen-centred Australian voices.

Details are still in development, but planning is underway and the project now turns to the community for support. There is a call for funding, partnerships and sponsors, as well as ideas and enthusiasm from the potential audience.

Why YA conferences matter

Reading Matters was never just another conference – it was a gathering point for everyone invested in young adult literature. For librarians, teachers and booksellers, it offered professional development that felt immediate and relevant, built on direct encounters with authors and, importantly, with young readers themselves. The program placed Australian representation, diversity and local voices at its core, while teen panels gave young people the microphone, allowing them to speak about what mattered most in their reading and, in turn, allowing the adults who guide them to listen closely.

Reading for pleasure in childhood and adolescence is widely recognised as a gateway to becoming a lifelong reader, and nurturing it remains a shared goal for educators. Events such as Reading Matters bring that idea to life in practical ways. They celebrate achievement and connect young readers with the people behind the books they love. They also offer adults in the sector valuable insight into publishing trends and the craft of writing, and elucidate changing reading habits and the issues most often on teens' minds.

The Australian Young Adult Literature Alliance aims to carry forward the values that made Reading Matters so significant: championing Australian voices, celebrating diversity and inclusion, centring the perspectives of teens, and ensuring that young adult literature continues to be recognised as an essential part of Australia's cultural life.

How the community can be involved

Get involved by putting forward your interest in becoming a speaker, volunteer, sponsor or partner of the event, sharing the news of the event's revival, following #LoveOzYA on social media, and signing up for updates as the project develops. To get in touch: email contact@loveozya.com.au.

Because reading still matters – and it always will.



Inside SCIS: News and info to support your library work

This morning was cold and grey, with a biting breeze felt to the depths of my core and there was a dampness in the air, making a morning walk with sometimes-crazy 5-year-old border collie Rudy less than inviting for me – and perhaps for him too. As we traipsed through the streets of inner-city Melbourne, avoiding traffic lights, which have a habit of upsetting Rudy, the beautiful pale pink of the first blossoms of the season caught my eye. It got me thinking about how beautiful but delicate their brief flowering season is. Walking further, I spied a wattle in full bloom, its branches stretching high towards the steely early morning sky, awaiting the pale winter sun to bestow its nurturing warmth upon it to sustain the beautifully bright yellow flowers into the inevitable spring. As Term 3 turns into Term 4, I hope everyone in school libraries experiences a similar moment where they see the beauty of their work and how it supports students to blossom and learn.

Welcome to Term 4, where winter gives way to spring, then summer rolls on and we no longer complain about the cold but seek relief from the heat. As poet Robert Frost reminds us, ‘nothing gold can stay’, so celebrate each golden moment, for as quickly as it bestows its beautiful lustre upon us, it can dull and pass us by. Thank you for indulging my contemplative start to ‘Inside SCIS’ as we enter the last term of the year.

Learn how SCIS Authority Files support discovery and unlock resources for library users

At the end of Term 3, the second of our twice-yearly SCIS Authority Files for the year was released. We often get asked by customers how authority files help to enhance their school library catalogues. SCIS Authority Files provide context around authors, subject headings and series titles. Authority files provide the crucial links that connect related resources, making those resources more discoverable for users.

The **Name Authority** networks information about authors and contributors to ensure all works by a particular author in your school library catalogue can be found by users. For example, Australian author Emily Rodda also publishes under the name Mary-Anne Dickinson and her crime fiction

novels are published under her own name, Jennifer Rowe. The Name Authority links all three author names, ensuring that library users can locate all titles published by the author, even if they are using a pseudonym.

For readers like me who want to read everything by the authors they enjoy, this feature ensures catalogue users discover everything by that author held in their school library.

The **Series Authority** links all titles within a series under the correct series heading. To continue the Emily Rodda theme, the Series Authority groups all books in the Fairy Realm series under the correct series heading. This ensures that all books in the series in your library catalogue can be easily discovered. If a user searches for an individual title from a series, they’ll find that title and a link in the catalogue record to the other titles in the series. Alternatively, if they search for the series name, they’ll be able to see all the titles within the series.

The **Subject Authority** feature facilitates crucial links by providing ‘used for’, ‘narrower terms’, ‘broader terms’ and ‘related terms’. These additional terms support research and discovery for library users. If we think of a student doing a project on the lifecycle of insects, they may search the catalogue for ‘bugs’. The search will return everything closely associated with bugs but would also have the link to the SCIS Subject Heading ‘insects’. When the user selects ‘insects’ (the SCIS Subject Heading), the title records returned will include search terms related to insects categorised as ‘used for’, ‘narrower terms’, ‘broader terms’ and ‘related terms’ to support the search.

Not every library management system (LMS) integrates SCIS Authority Files data in the same way. If your LMS doesn’t maximise the SCIS authority data in order to improve the search and discovery process for you and your users, please raise this with your LMS account manager or customer service representative. When authority data is integrated well in the LMS, it enhances the user experience, matching the most suitable resource to the needs of your library users.

If you’re speaking to LMS providers about authority files and you’re still having to manually download and upload the SCIS authorities, please mention the SCIS

API to them. For the past 3 years, SCIS has facilitated the automation of this process via the SCIS API.

If you don’t subscribe to SCIS Authority Files, please visit our website to create a subscription or contact our customer service team who will be happy to set up a subscription with you. If you want to learn more about SCIS Authority Files, please view our training videos.

- **Authority Files subscriptions:** scisdata.com/products/authority-files/
- **Benefits of Authority Files training video:** scisdata.com/the-benefits-of-scis-authority-files/

SCIS on the road in Term 4

The SCIS team looks forward to meeting school library staff in NSW, Queensland and Victoria. You’ll be able to drop by our stands and say ‘hello’ at the Mantle, QSLA and SLAV conferences. We’re very happy to answer any questions, provide advice on making the most of your subscription, and send you home with a free SCIS pen.

The SCIS discovery process

In issue 134 of *Connections*, I mentioned that SCIS had started the discovery process to improve how SCIS delivers our services and how users interact with SCIS. The SCIS team, along with our technology and marketing colleagues, are continuing our work to analyse customer input, as well planning and prioritising our product improvement roadmap. As you can imagine, SCIS has many moving parts and ensuring that we focus on the right parts to deliver the best user experiences is essential. We can’t wait to share our plans and deliver even better user experiences for SCIS customers.

Welcome to *Connections* issue 135. We hope that you enjoy it and discover something new from your peers and colleagues.



Anthony Shaw
Product Manager, SCIS

CREATING A COLLECTION WITH SCIS

Written as part of her Master of Education (Teacher Librarianship), Claire McLennan's article examines how contemporary realistic fiction can help teacher librarians curate inclusive collections that reflect the diversity of their school communities. By focusing on titles with neurodivergent characters, she shows how literature can support student identity and wellbeing while linking to curriculum outcomes. McLennan also highlights how SCIS's advanced search tools and subject headings make it easier for teacher librarians to create purposeful, up-to-date reading lists.

The collection starts here

The value of a teacher librarian in a primary school

The teacher librarian is responsible for planning and managing the use of the library to ensure it is safe, inclusive, engaging and encourages independent reading and learning (NSW Department of Education, 2025). Teacher librarians must read, review and select new titles that meet the changing needs of every student. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL Standards for teacher librarian practice](#) 'outlines the professional knowledge, practice and commitment expected of teacher librarians at a working level of excellence' (2014, p.1).

When teacher librarians are asked to curate a collection, they consult with various LibGuides and book selection tools, such as the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS), to find full bibliographic records, reviews, journal articles and webinars that ensure the library remains an ever-evolving resource (SCIS, 2025). When this is combined with the teacher librarian's comprehensive understanding of their school context and class profiles, it ensures the teacher librarian is an essential school resource when planning for learning across the curriculum.

The interactions between teacher librarians and students and teachers across the school offer them a unique perspective on how students at different developmental phases engage with various texts. They can observe what students gravitate towards in the library and identify new reading trends, making them a valuable human resource linking teachers to new literature for educational purposes which often influences students to seek new genres.

“Teacher librarians need to consider the profile of their school to ensure the library provides access to literature that includes a diverse range of characters.”

Inclusive collections

Curating with purpose

In 2024, 25.7% of students enrolled in Australian schools received educational adjustments due to a diagnosed disability. Some 53.9% of these were students with a cognitive disability (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2024).

To meet these needs, it is essential that school libraries provide access to books that mirror the diversity of their school community and build empathy.

Teacher librarians need to consider the profile of their school to ensure the library provides access to literature that includes a diverse range of characters. To support this, we have evaluated a variety of literature that includes neurodivergent characters and themes recommended for students aged between 8 and 12, titles that you might like to consider including in your school library.

Connecting to texts

The power of contemporary realistic fiction

Contemporary realistic fiction focuses on real-life issues such as survival, identity, family dynamics, friendships, disabilities and growing up. It explores themes such as self-discovery, family relationships, friendships and multiculturalism (Vardell, 2019, pp. 154–155). The evolving social themes in this genre can lead to controversy due to the perspectives they reveal and the challenges of the associated ideologies. Vardell (2019, p. 157) identifies a need for more realistic stories with contemporary characters living with a disability. This identification can have a profound impact on our students. As Temple et al. (2019) note, 'When child readers recognise something in a story that is similar to their own feelings or thoughts, they realise they are not alone.'

Dr Leanne Longfellow (2020) highlights how focusing on representations of people with a disability serves as a critical window for examining and challenging ableism and discrimination. Her article outlines standards to consider when selecting texts, although she suggests that adhering completely to every standard limits opportunity for discussion surrounding societal attitudes towards people with a disability. Some of the key standards she lists include the following.

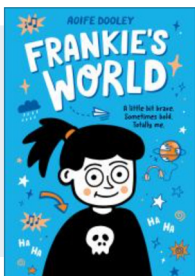
- Stereotypes: does the portrayal of the character with a disability differ significantly from other characters?
- Message in the text: describing the characters with a disability as inspirational by overcoming their disability is problematic.
- Approach: is the character's disability an obstacle to overcome?
- Positive language: does the story include slurs or negative language such as 'suffering from' or 'wheelchair bound'.
- Experience: what is the author's and illustrator's experience of disability?

The following annotated bibliography was developed with the support of SCIS. Using the advanced search tool, SCIS and ScOT, and direct links to book reviews made selecting the texts easy.

Texts to add to the collection

Frankie's world by Aoife Dooley

Figure 1 (SCIS, 2025)



Aoife Dooley's graphic novel *Frankie's world* (2022) explores the world of 12-year-old Frankie who knows she is different to her peers. She feels excluded by everyone except her best friend Sam.

Dooley created Frankie as a mirror of her own experiences growing up with autism. She uses a candid approach to describe Frankie's family life and adventures with her best friend Sam. Sam is illustrated in a wheelchair. However, Dooley doesn't place both characters' disabilities at the forefront of the narrative. She describes Frankie's personality traits, such as saying what's on her mind, her reaction to loud noises and strong smells without connecting them to a diagnosis. By doing this, she offers readers the opportunity to recognise themselves in the story, without them seeing it as a disability. This is evident in the book review provided by Ryan, aged 10.

'I like that Frankie doesn't quite fit in, I have definitely felt like that and her descriptions of saying things without thinking about them definitely sounds like me.' (Tyson, 2021).

Teaching with graphic novels moves beyond reading for pictures, it leads the way for deep discussion and critical analysis of the nuances of the format (Laycock, 2019, p. 26). As multimodal texts, graphic novels help students to visualise and understand complicated ideas. Graphic novels reduce text overload, decreasing anxieties students have with heavy print-based reading (Falter, cited in Gonzalez, 2016). This offers students the opportunity to focus on the themes in the story. The organisation of *Frankie's world* shows consideration of readers of all abilities not only in its themes, but also its formatting.

Dooley limits the frames per page so as not to overwhelm the reader. Ryan highlights that Dooley's limited colours of blue, black and orange in her illustrations helped him to see colour variation where his colour blindness had left other comics dull.

The characters' experiences in *Frankie's world* provide opportunity for teachers to explore important elements of the HPE learning area of the Australian Curriculum. It is an inclusive novel that allows students to recognise themselves within the story or better understand peers who share similar characteristics. As suggested by Johnson et. al. (2017, p. 175), seeing the world from a character's perspective ultimately opens a doorway for students to see the world differently.

The kindness project by Deborah Abela

Figure 2 (SCIS, 2025)



This verse novel is about friendships that emerge as four students come together to share their experiences of life, family relationships and mental health.

Peter Hollindale describes the genre of the verse novel as 'a fairly recent but fast-growing addition to the repertoire of children's literature' (as cited in Alexander, 2005, p. 269). As a contemporary genre, its characteristics continue to evolve. It is a genre where both poets and novelists use verse techniques to colour their story. Alexander (2005, pp. 270–271) highlights the suitability of verse novels as a genre for portraying the angst of adolescence, allowing the reader to experience the emotions of the characters in the moment. One key feature of verse novels is the 'narrative voice' that is evident in *The kindness project*. Abela also uses font type, size and position to further emphasise how the protagonist, Nicolette, is feeling at various points in the story. Readers are provided a window into how Nicolette observes and interacts with the world around her.

Abela avoids stereotypes while the characters feel isolated; they are not described as significantly different and the disabilities addressed are not left as a taboo, but are explored through the characters' curiosity. Nicolette tries to learn more about Alzheimer's to better understand her nanna's behaviour. Her friend Leaf openly discusses his mum's treatment for schizophrenia, eliminating any preconceived assumptions made about the disabilities addressed in the novel. *The kindness project* examines characters' strengths as they are discovered through the sharing of the many personal challenges they face.

The kindness project provides opportunities for students to identify with the characters' personal strengths and observe and understand how their sense of identity changes over the novel.

The unlikely heroes club by Kate Foster

Figure 3 (SCIS, 2025)

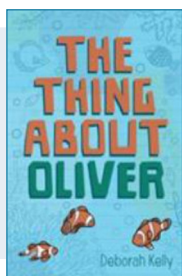


Kate Foster's novel offers readers a window into the world of Oli, who narrates his story. Oli reluctantly attends 'Heroes Club', which is designed to foster social connections and emotional awareness for children on the autism spectrum. Foster moves beyond stigmas and stereotypes surrounding autism by creating four friends for Oli, each sharing his diagnosis, yet possessing their own unique characteristics and personalities. Through their diverse strengths, the children demonstrate that they can face challenges just like other children.

Artman-Meeker, Grant and Yang (2016, p. 151) highlight the importance of providing agency for characters with disability, which Foster achieves by empowering her characters. Marge, Oli's social coach, candidly embraces her autism diagnosis, exemplifying that adult autistic people have jobs like every other adult. Oli and his friends are empowered in their shared decision to save a stray dog from a derelict building. *The unlikely heroes club* promotes inclusivity by presenting its characters as individuals finding their own place in the world, as is the case for everyone, rather than limiting them to stereotypes connected with their diagnoses.

The thing about Oliver by Deborah Kelly

Figure 4 (SCIS, 2025)



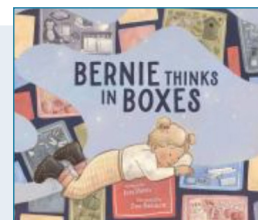
Deborah Kelly's *The thing about Oliver* is told from the perspective of 12-year-old Tilly who shares the complexities of living with her autistic brother who requires most of her mum's attention. Kelly confronts the reader by providing unfiltered descriptions of Oliver's reactions when he is upset. Kelly's novel provides a good example of the controversy that exists in contemporary realistic fiction. Teacher librarians must reflect on their personal inclinations to exclude a text to avoid challenging conversations. Excluding this type of text limits opportunities to discuss complex social issues found in contemporary realistic novels (Vardell, 2019, p. 162).

Excluding *The thing about Oliver* risks silencing a demographic that is rarely given a voice. In a recent interview Kelly highlighted that she wanted to address the complexities experienced by siblings of children with severe autism (Lawn, 2020).

Collection development should be inclusive of varied viewpoints and the teacher librarian needs to use their 'knowledge, insight, judgment, courage and imagination' when selecting texts (Rickman, 2010, p. 3). This book demonstrates why it is essential that the teacher librarian works with the classroom teacher to review class profiles to evaluate the impact the inclusion of a title such as this may have on the class profile. Introducing the text for the classroom would require careful scaffolding and the creation of safe spaces for discussions with prepared responses. Kelly wrote the book to give children like Tilly a voice to help them understand they are not alone (Lawn, 2020).

Bernie thinks in boxes written by Jess Horn, illustrated by Zoe Bennett

Figure 5 (SCIS, 2025)



SCIS provides teacher librarians with opportunities to broaden resource lists to include various formats of books connected to a specific subject. Using the SCIS subject terms provides a doorway to similarly themed books. When selecting picture books for teaching purposes, teacher librarians must analyse both narrative and illustrations. Coats (2008, p. 76) highlights that postmodern picturebooks provide children with cultural and visual literacies and narrative patterns that allow them to craft identities recognisable in society. This highlights why it is essential to provide students access to contemporary picture books that reflect who they are or provide a window in to how their peers may think and feel.

Jess Horn is an advocate for autism and acceptance. She is open about her late autistic diagnosis and discusses the challenges she faced growing up (Horn, 2024). Bernie was inspired by Jess's categorical way of thinking. Her book symbolises how someone with autism processes the world around them (Attain Healthtech, 2025). Zoe Bennett's illustrations of Bernie in literal and metaphorical boxes provide opportunities for teachers to explore the author's play on language and discuss why using boxes to categorise people and places may be helpful.

Horn provides Bernie with a sense of agency by modelling how Bernie deals with her conflicting emotions when her figurative boxes become muddled. Bennett's illustrations of how Bernie reacts provide opportunities for children to see their own behaviours or those of their peers. This provides the reader with empathy and understanding. Ultimately, Bernie finds her own solution to the problem by finding a way to merge some of her boxes.

Horn provides a window into how changes can upset students with autism. Bennett illustrates strategies that teachers, parents and students can apply when managing changes in routine. Bernie's boxes lend themselves to an art activity that allows children to explore their identity. Bernie's illustrations of her boxes of people and places highlight the importance of visualising changes in routines in order to cope better with them.

Neurodiversity and the twice-exceptional student: a comprehensive resource for teachers

by Ronda Filmer with
Geraldine Townend and
Trevor Clark.

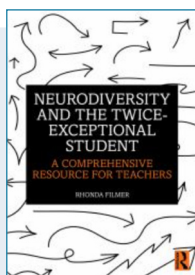


Figure 6 (SCIS, 2025)

It is crucial for teacher librarians to provide access to suitable resources that align with the school context. By curating resources that reflect the curriculum, student interests and community values, teacher librarians foster an inclusive learning environment that promotes academic success and critical thinking.

SCIS offers features that streamline the resource selection process. Its comprehensive database allows teacher librarians to easily find and select materials that meet the specific needs of their school. Additionally, SCIS offers cataloguing and classification services that save library staff time and ensure consistency, making it easier to manage and share resources effectively.

Filmer's book offers an overview of assessing the impact of co-existing conditions both on student wellbeing and learning strategies. It models specific examples of various student behaviour and offers discussion points and research of how to approach, support and extend students.

Combining the SCIS subject search and filtering by publication year can provide teachers with the most up-to-date reference material.

“Using SCIS subject searches, advanced searches and additional resources provided on the SCIS platform, teacher librarians can effectively ensure their school has the reading materials that suits its context.”

Conclusion

The purpose of creating this neurodivergent reading list is for students to discover how family, community, peers, culture and place contribute to their identity. As highly accomplished leaders, teacher librarians know there is more to curating a collection than grouping similar texts. They must ensure their choices are aligned to a framework recommended by specialists in the field. Artman-Meeker, Grant and Yang (2016) highlight key considerations to

include such as the portrayal of disabilities, family roles, cultural diversity, voice and self-determination. Longfellow (2020) emphasises the importance of evaluating novel choices and use in the specific school context. The teacher librarian must consider all of these factors during the curation process to ensure the right book is available to the right class at the right developmental reading phase.

Thematically organising books maximises the impact literature can have on readers. It paves the way for teachers to address universal issues (Johnson, Koss, & Martinez, 2017, p. 573). Contemporary realistic fiction novels present new perspectives on how other students think and feel which, when scaffolded into class discussions, allow students to see the world with a new perspective.

Teacher librarians need access to the tools that can support them in the creation of up-to-date reading that provides students with the opportunity to meet familiar characters in realistic contemporary fiction. When students can see themselves represented, they gain a sense of belonging. Teacher librarians must remain mindful that teachers also need access to current professional development resources that suit their school context. Using SCIS subject searches, advanced searches and additional resources provided on the SCIS platform, teacher librarians can effectively ensure their school has the reading materials that suit its context.

For further support in effectively using SCIS in your school library select the links below:

players.brightcove.net/6153144529001/experience_654336ee09d2cb458fb591aa/share.html
scisdata.com

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



Claire McLennan

IT Co-ordinator / Acting Librarian
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Claire McLennan is an experienced educator currently serving as the Teacher Librarian and ICT Co-Ordinator at a large inner-west school in Sydney. She is dedicated to enhancing students' information fluency by integrating a balanced approach to referencing skills and digital literacy.

NEW WEBSITES AND APPS

BBC LEARNING HUB

Year levels: Preschool–Year 12

Link: bbclearninghub.com

SCIS ID: 5546811

The brand new BBC Learning Hub launched in August 2025 and is offered free to teachers worldwide. The platform includes short videos (some narrated by Sir David Attenborough), lesson plans, levelled reading material, printable worksheets, and news clips that link curriculum content with current events. Science and nature subjects feature prominently, but resources also span literacy, numeracy and humanities.

The Hub integrates with Google Classroom and allows teachers to create playlists of resources, making it flexible across different teaching contexts.

EARLY LEARNING LANGUAGES AUSTRALIA (ELLA)

Year levels: Preschool–Year 2

URL: ella.edu.au

SCIS ID: 1966403

ELLA is a free, nationally supported program that introduces children to languages through play-based digital apps via characters known as the Polyglots. Originally developed for preschool, the program is expanding in late 2025 to include Foundation to Year 2 resources.

The apps use interactive games, songs and activities to develop cultural awareness, language skills, and early digital literacy. From late 2025, F–2 teachers will be able to integrate the expanded suite into their classrooms by signing up for a free account on the ELLA platform.

WAYGROUND

Year levels: Year 5–12

Link: wayground.com

SCIS ID: 1780218

The interactive quiz tool formerly known as Quizizz has rebranded and relaunched as Wayground. While it retains the familiar quiz interface that teachers know, the platform now incorporates gamified lessons, multimedia integration, and AI-powered personalisation that adapts to student progress.

Among the new additions is VoyageMath, a program for middle years learners, along with subject-specific lesson bundles that expand classroom options. Teachers can run activities without requiring student logins, ensuring privacy and ease of use. For those wanting more, advanced gamification tools and a premium subscription plan are also available.

While the below tools support library and classroom use, they fall outside the scope of resources catalogued by SCIS.

CHATGPT STUDY MODE

Year levels: Year 7–12

URL: openai.com/index/chatgpt-study-mode

OpenAI has introduced a new ‘study mode’ within ChatGPT, designed to encourage active learning rather than shortcut answers. The mode prompts students with Socratic questioning, provides feedback and encourages reflection after tasks. The goal is to make ChatGPT function as a learning companion that helps students practise retrieval and critical thinking, rather than simply providing results.

GOOGLE GEMINI FOR EDUCATION

Year levels: For teachers

Link: edu.google.com/intl/en/workspace-for-education/products/classroom

At the 2025 International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) conference, Google unveiled its Gemini for Education suite. It provides more than 30 free tools that enable teachers to generate interactive diagrams, personalised quizzes, and audio or video summaries, all integrated with Google Classroom, Forms and NotebookLM.

New Gemini features in Google Classroom allow teachers to create lesson materials, quizzes, and short AI-produced videos through Google Vids, while new analytics dashboards help track student progress.

NOTEBOOKLM IN CLASSROOM

Year levels: Year 5–12

Link: notebooklm.google

Google has also expanded NotebookLM, its research and study assistant, to now cater to students under 18, a shift from its earlier limitation to adult users. Teachers and students can now create ‘Gems’, custom AI agents trained on specific materials, that help guide research and project work.

Informit Explore: new to SCIS Collections

Did you know that you can now download SCIS catalogue records for each of the topic-based briefs in the new Informit Explore platform?

This is good news for secondary schools that subscribe to Informit Explore, as well as for those who are budgeting for a subscription in 2026 or considering a trial subscription.

School library staff help teachers save time by providing easy access to credible, curriculum-aligned resources. Just as you incorporate digital content in the school's collection to provide a richer experience for staff and students, you can include metadata records for this content in your library catalogue to provide a consistent 'one-stop' searching experience across all your curated resources.

What is Informit Explore?

Informit Explore is a research platform built on a rich archive of authentic Australasian

content. Explore's topic briefs are written by Australian teachers in a style readily accessible for secondary students, and there are currently more than 130 topics representing key issues shaping our region. Each topic is supported by recent Australasian magazine articles and news items.

Why are schools subscribing to Informit Explore?

Developed in partnership with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and aligned with the Australian curriculum, Informit Explore provides access to a diverse range of Australian and New Zealand publications and original sources, kick-starting research and sparking critical thinking on issues in areas of health, Indigenous studies, psychology, arts, literature, technology, media and popular culture, society, history, sustainability, business and economics, law and politics.

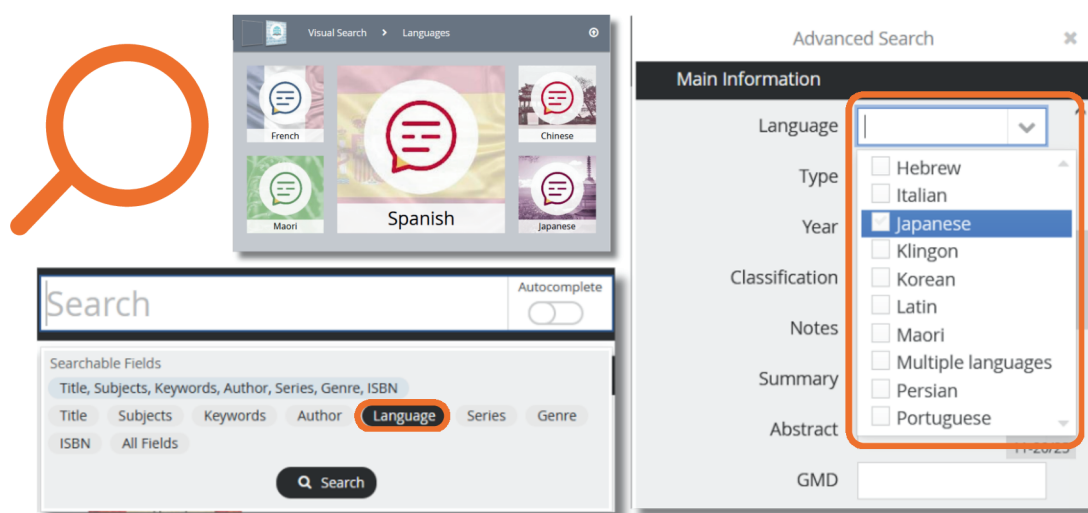
Unlike broad academic databases,

“Unlike broad academic databases, Informit Explore is built specifically for schools.”

Informit Explore is built specifically for schools. The content is curated from Australian magazines, media, policy reports and video sources, and organised into curriculum-aligned topic pages.

Informit is also the premier Australasian

Make your language resources easier to find



with the new searchable language field.

Get more out of SCIS with Accessit Library



Support from librarians



Secure Cloud Servers



Made for librarians



Safer Technologies 4 Schools

ASSESSED 2023

Psychology & Mental Health

Anxiety
Behaviour disorders
Depression
Group behaviour
and more...

Society

Asylum seekers
Bullying
Crime rates
Gender identity
and more...

Sustainability & Environment

Climate change
Renewable energy
Food security
Biodiversity
and more...

SearchDownloadCataloguing servicesAuthority Files

Quick scanDigital contentCollections

Download curated collections of records

ClickView Libraries (subscription)

National Library of New Zealand (free)

ePlatform Digital Libraries (subscription)

Reading Australia (free)

Websites & apps (free)

e-Books (free)

Digital videos (free)

Standing Orders (subscription)

StoryBox Hub Stories (subscription)

Informit Explore Topics 2024 (Subscription)

Informit Explore Topics 2024 (Subscription)

Name	Records	Status	Created Date	Modified Date	Download
Health, Indigenous studies, psychology, arts, literature	52	Published	05/12/2025	05/16/2025	Download
Technology, media and popular culture, society, history, sustainability	54	Published	05/12/2025	05/12/2025	Download
Business & economics, law, politics	29	Published	05/12/2025	05/12/2025	Download

Informit Explore landing page.

When students read an article on First Nations storytelling, or an editorial about vaping legislation, they're not just absorbing content, they're learning what citable evidence looks like, how arguments are framed, and what kind of information holds up under scrutiny. (Sideris, 2025)

database used in university libraries, and using Explore gives senior secondary students a head start to tertiary studies through gaining familiarity with this content and interface.

How are schools using Explore?

School library staff use Informit Explore to scaffold the development of research skills. It is not enough to be able to find information through a web search or chatbot prompt; the important skill is to determine the level of confidence you have in that information. What sources have contributed to this content? Another critical element of trusted content is context. Local content is scarce in most databases, but Explore is focused on Australasian-centric resources, including an extensive collection of First Nations publications and articles.

Schools can start a free trial of Informit Explore to give teachers and students a preview of the authentic Australasian digital journal content available. Sign up at: about.informit.org/explore-trial.

“SCIS Collections makes it easy for library staff to lead students and staff from the catalogue to trusted, curated resources.”

Why SCIS Collections?

The SCIS Collections page is a fast way to identify and download catalogue records for popular education content platforms and providers. SCIS Collections makes it easy for library staff to lead students and staff from the catalogue to trusted, curated resources.

How do I download SCIS Collections records?

SCIS subscribers who are logged in can navigate to Download – Collections and select from the list of options in the left-hand menu. The Informit Explore topics are split into batches to make it easier to manage your downloaded batch of SCIS records. Full instructions for selecting subsets of records are available at: help.scisdata.com/hc/en-us/articles/115006380187-How-do-I-download-SCIS-digital-collections.

References

Sideris, L. (2025, July 17). Using Informit Explore in the classroom: Teaching students to recognise evidence. Informit. about.informit.org/news/using-informit-explore-in-the-classroom-teaching-students-to-recognise-evidence

Pru Mitchell

Manager – Information Services
Australian Council for Educational Research

A NEW LOOK FOR A TRUSTED LEARNING RESOURCE

The National Library of New Zealand has unveiled a refreshed Topic Explorer, bringing a more intuitive, inclusive and visually engaging way for teachers, students and library staff to discover trusted resources.

We're excited to share that the new Topic Explorer is now live on the National Library of New Zealand website. It brings a refreshed experience to a trusted tool that's supported teaching and learning for more than a decade.

Hōpara Kaupapa (Topic Explorer) continues its mission to help teachers, school library staff and students in Years 0–13 (NZ classification) discover quality, curated online resources. The name *hōpara kaupapa* means 'to explore the topics', and the new version makes that exploration more intuitive, inclusive and visually engaging.

Why the update?

Since its original launch 10 years ago, Topic Explorer has become a staple in many classrooms and libraries across New Zealand. However, with evolving digital expectations and curriculum needs, it was time for a redesign to better support today's learners and educators.

What's new?

The updated Topic Explorer introduces a modern look and feel, with a landing page that's more visual and user-friendly. Each topic is now represented by an image, making browsing more engaging. Users can:

- browse featured topics
- search by keyword
- explore by curriculum year level.

Topics are now smaller and more targeted, curated to closely align with the New Zealand curriculum. This makes it easier to find relevant resources for specific learning goals.

Improved navigation and resource access

The new design streamlines the user journey.

- Resources now open directly onto an item page, which replaces pop-up modals in the legacy version.
- Enhanced image display allows users to view photos, artworks, cartoons and more directly within Topic Explorer.
- Related resources are displayed in a right-hand navigation panel, making it easier for users to access a range of supporting materials in one place.

A new filter highlights content inclusive of te ao Māori perspectives, sitting alongside the existing primary source filter. This helps support a more inclusive and culturally responsive approach to learning.

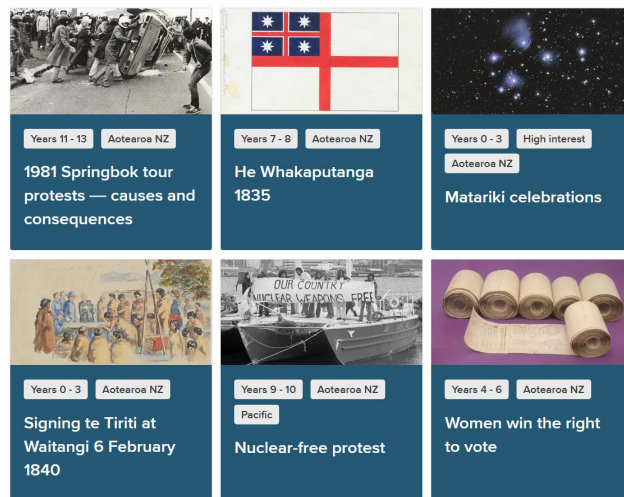
Transitioning from the legacy site

To support a smooth transition:

- The legacy Topic Explorer will remain available until the end of 2025, while content is built up on the new version.

Featured topics

Explore all topics →



An image of the new Topic Explorer interface on the National Library of New Zealand's website.

- Both versions will run concurrently until the end of this year, giving users time to update their catalogues and explore the new version while still using the old.
- When the legacy site is retired, links will redirect to the new Topic Explorer homepage.
- For SCIS users: New SCIS numbers will be allocated to topics on the new version, and library staff will need to redownload the Topic Explorer collection from our [collections page](#) to ensure their records are up to date with the new site.

We encourage users to start exploring the new Topic Explorer. It's a great opportunity to see what's changed and how the new features can enhance your resource discovery.

Need help?

Support is available! Users can submit feedback directly to the National Library of New Zealand team through the 'Send us your feedback' link on the new Topic Explorer site. The team is ready to assist with any questions or transition needs.

Links to both the new and legacy versions of Topic Explorer:

- New version: natlib.govt.nz/schools/topic-explorer
- Legacy version: natlib.govt.nz/schools/topics

The Educational Lending Right (ELR)

‘Great Aussie Book Count’ launches for 2025

Thank you for your continued participation in the ELR *Great Aussie Book Count*, a school library survey that takes place each year between September and November.

At present, there are

9,847 and it is estimated that at least

80% of them have a physical library.

The Australian Lending Right Scheme is an important program that ensures Australian authors and publishers receive compensation for the free use of their books in Australian public and educational lending libraries.

Why is it important to survey Australian library content?

As Olivia Lanchester, chair of the Public Lending Right Committee, puts it: ‘Australian authors need to fight to be read in a global market, increasingly shaped by algorithms, so the challenges are there – but compelling beautiful stories always win. So we must back our authors, because they are the ones that will produce the material that will draw in readers and listeners.’

2025 marks 26 years of Education Services Australia (ESA) delivering the survey to Australian school libraries on behalf of the Australian Government

The scheme, managed by the Australian Government’s Office for the Arts, has two components: Educational Lending Right (ELR) for school, TAFE and university libraries, and Public Lending Right (PLR), for public libraries.

Each year, we receive data from close to half of all Australian school libraries, across

primary, secondary and F-12 Government, Catholic and Independent schools

in all states and territories.



Olivia Lanchester, Chair of the Public Lending Right Committee

To break it down, the *Great Aussie Book Count* is the yearly campaign for the ELR school survey, but it is not surveying your school or your school’s student body. Instead, it is a book count estimating how many books by Australian authors are held across Australian school libraries. It starts with a list of eligible book titles, which are then cross-referenced with the book counts from participating school libraries, and this is then extrapolated to find out how many copies of that title there would be across all schools.

This benefits school libraries in that the ELR Scheme helps financially compensate Australian content creators so they can continue to create more amazing books to help shape the minds of future generations.

For 2024–25,

\$13.1 million was paid to **10,904** publishers and creators through the ELR Scheme.

The success of the ELR survey is due in no small part to the valuable industry collaboration, from writers, creators, publishers, library management system vendors, Government and peak bodies across Australia, as well as principals, schools and library administrators. Thank you for your continuing participation.

Together we are
**strengthening the
Australian creative
industries.**

We will report the survey results in the Term 1 edition of *Connections*. Please send any feedback on the ELR Survey to elr@esa.edu.au

SCHOOL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT: NEMARLUK SCHOOL

This term's library spotlight is a little different than usual. Instead of visiting an established school library, we're following the story of one that is only just beginning to take shape. We're speaking to teachers at a school that did not have a library, and where the idea to create one started from the students.

As part of the Northern Territory Learning Commission (NTLC), students at Namarluk School were asked to reflect on what would most improve their learning.

The NTLC is a program that gives students a genuine voice in shaping how their schools improve. It places students at the centre of decision-making, asking them to use evidence, data and their own experiences to recommend what will most strengthen learning. Its aim is to ensure that reform in schools reflects what matters most to students, while simultaneously making improvements that help young people develop skills in leadership, collaboration and critical thinking.

At Namarluk School, NTLC students met every week with their classroom teachers to explore challenges and opportunities. They began with data: surveys of teachers, students, and families, as well as their own observations of school life. From this evidence they identified priorities, refined them through discussion, and tested their ideas through pitch meetings with other NTLC schools. By the end of the year, they were expected to present their recommendations to peers, school leaders and the Minister for Education.



A student at Namarluk School participating in the Northern Territory Learning Commission

For this cohort, literacy quickly rose to the surface as an area where change was most needed. They spoke about wanting to choose their own books, to share stories with younger peers, and to have a quiet space for reading. They wanted a library. The NTLC group responded by putting forward a plan for an initial step towards this; a mobile library that could move across the school as trolleys.

We spoke with classroom teachers Yvette and Bianca, who have been working alongside their students through the NTLC, about the process and the steps now being taken to bring a school library to life.

What is your role in your school?

Yvette

We're both classroom teachers, responsible for the day-to-day running of specialist classrooms. Each class has around eight students, sometimes a few more, supported by one or two classroom assistants depending on the students' needs.

As part of the NTLC, we meet with our group of student commissioners once a week for about an hour. In addition, we set aside another hour together during the week for planning and preparation. This gives us time to design activities, think through how to run the sessions, and consider ways to involve the students in meaningful leadership roles across the school.

How did the library get started?

Yvette

The library idea started last year with the previous NTLC students cohort. It was only touched on then, but this year we decided to really push it forward with the new cohort

Bianca

So, when we looked at the data, literacy really stood out as an area we needed to work on. When we brought that to the NTLC students, the idea of a library came up straight away. They talked about how much they love reading, and how they wanted to be able to share that with younger students.

At the moment, teachers choose 'borrow books' for them to borrow from classrooms, so the kids don't really get a say in what's chosen. The students saw that as a real gap. They wanted the freedom to browse, to make their own choices, and to feel some ownership over what they were reading. They felt it wasn't the same when the books appeared in their classrooms without their input. Having a library would give them that sense of choice and involvement.

Because we don't have the space for a traditional library, they suggested creating a mobile one – using trolleys that could be kept in the hall and brought out at lunchtimes or wheeled into classrooms.

Do you think the push for a library was influenced by the fact that not all students have the same access to books outside of school?

Yvette

Yeah, and I would say that is probably a massive factor. A lot of our kids would be on the lower end of the socio-economic scale and they definitely would not have books at home. Some families don't have vehicles to take them to the public library, and getting the whole family on a bus to the closest library can be a huge challenge. I think that really hinders a lot of our families from accessing books, apart from the ones we send home.

We also notice it when the Scholastic Book Club comes out once a term. We don't have a high rate of kids purchasing from it, and that's because many families can't afford to buy brand-new books.

What makes the NTLC different from other programs, and why do you think it's having a greater impact on students and schools?

Yvette

For me, the big thing is that it's really driven by the kids. We might provide some data or background, but we don't tell them what direction they have to take. If you sit in on



Students from Nemarluk School with books for their library trolley.

“ I think books are especially important for our students because they spend so much time on technology. ”

one of the Learning Commission sessions, it's amazing what they come up with. Sure, sometimes you'll get an off-the-wall idea like putting in a water slide, but more often they choose really thoughtful, well-considered projects that can genuinely improve their learning, their school community, and make school a better place for everyone.

As you've started exploring how to build a library, what has it revealed to you about the complexity of cataloguing and library systems, and about the role of libraries in schools more broadly?

Yvette

I'm definitely a reader, I love books. I go to the public library, I'm part of book clubs, and for me there's nothing more important than still having books. Even though I use iBooks and a Kindle, I love the smell of the pages, folding the corners, using a bookmark. A library has always been a safe, comforting place.

In a specialist school like ours, where students have such a range of needs, I think a library would be especially valuable. It could give them a quiet space to regulate. What I find intimidating is the cataloguing side, figuring out how to set it up properly and efficiently. That's where we'll need to rely on the expertise of others.

It wouldn't surprise me if some of our students could figure it out faster than I could. Between their input, our resource leader, and support from others, I'm hopeful we can create something that works smoothly and can be passed on easily, so it's not lost if staff move on.

Bianca

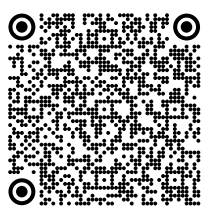
I think books are especially important for our students because they spend so much time on technology. For many families, iPads are an easy way to keep kids entertained while daily needs are met. Having a space where they can access books, have technology-free time, and just enjoy looking through pages and images feels really important.

We also have a lot of non-verbal students. They can't always tell us what they enjoy or what they'd like to read, so a library would give them the chance to explore and discover for themselves.

Education Services Australia is building on the success of the Northern Territory Learning Commission through Students as Partners in Improvement.

This initiative gives students a meaningful role in identifying what's working in their school, where improvements are needed, and how change should happen.

Through structured peer consultation and collaboration with educators, students co-design recommendations grounded in real experiences.



Want to get your school involved?

Scan the QR code or head to esa.edu.au/solutions/students-as-partners-in-improvement and fill out the form on the page.



Did you know that SCIS sells barcode scanners?



Bundle
deal

Nexa Bundle Deal – 1600 and 2951
Scanner bundle

\$572.00



Zebra DS2208
2D Imager

\$249.00



Cipherlab 1560P
Portable scanner

\$675.00



Nexa BL-8060
Hands-free scanner

\$342.00



Cipherlab 1500P
Cordless scanner

\$280.00



MST – XL1
Portable bluetooth
scanner

\$499.00



Cipherlab 1663
Portable pocket-sized
bluetooth scanner

\$384.00



Nexa ZED 1600
Laser barcode
scanner

\$176.00

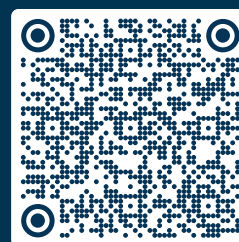


Nexa ZED 2951
Cordless 2D
barcode scanner

\$415.00

Our plug and play barcode scanners are perfectly tailored for your school library Barcode scanners purchased from SCIS are:

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- supported by free technical support from All Barcodes Australia (our partners and quality local barcode scanner supplier since 1995)
- pre-configured to read ISBNs and a wide variety of universal barcodes.



scisdata.com/barcode-scanners

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