

# Information literacy education in Australia: Now is a time of great promise

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## Information literacy in Australian school libraries

Information literacy is a much defined and changing concept in Australia, though at its essence has always been related to effective use and transformation of information into wisdom. Langford's seminal article (1998) explores changing notions of information literacy, asking the questions:

*"Is it [information literacy] a concept or a process? ... Or is it a new literacy that has been transformed from existing literacies to complement the emerging technologies for which the Information Age students must be skilled?"* (p59)

These questions were prophetic about the need for a revised view of IL to expand from a set of information skills into a more wide ranging concept that can be understood in our increasingly complex information landscape. Abilock (2004, p1) sees information literacy as a

*"transformational process in which the learner needs to find, understand, evaluate and use information in various forms to create for personal, social or global purposes".*

The definition of information literacy has been refined as the information landscape evolves. O'Connell (2012) calls for us to consider the characteristics of the digital environment, in particular, search strategies; organising information in ways facilitated by technology, especially social media; finding connections between texts; finding patterns, using organisational tools; developing the skills of deep reading; and understanding the ethics of information use. O'Connell sees information literacy thus: (It)

*"is a meta-literacy of information flow through fast information transactions and social channels of engagement. It is a recursive action that translates core information literacy skills into a pedagogy of digital participation".* (2012, p6)

## Information literacy instruction in Australia

Every school in Australia primary and secondary will have teaching units focusing on research, which will include information literacy instruction. The respective roles of teacher and Teacher Librarian (TL) in these student research tasks vary enormously, depending on whether or not collaborative partnerships exist between teacher and TL, and whether collaboration is sanctioned and actively encouraged by the leadership of the school. The TL may be a full teaching partner; or called upon from time to time to teach information skills; or called upon to provide some resources; or left out of the process altogether. In general, information literacy is regarded as the province of the teacher librarian; and in general a collaborative inquiry unit would see the teacher dealing with the content of the task, and the TL with the process. Information literacy in Australia is embedded in the information literacy outcomes of our syllabuses, in the General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum. It is integrated into traditional subjects, and occasional cross-disciplinary projects, especially in the Cross Curriculum Priority areas of the Australian Curriculum — Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures; Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia; and Sustainability.

So, information literacy teaching in Australian schools is mostly through student research tasks, which are contextualised in the curriculum. These assignments are variable in their use of information literacy models and the extent to which they follow inquiry learning pedagogy.

## The teaching role of the TL — the ideal and the actual

TLs in Australia have three foci for their teaching. They collaborate with teachers to

- design and implement inquiry learning experiences
- design and implement literature programs
- embed digital technologies and literacies into teaching and learning.

The three teaching roles are based on the curriculum, and the skills that TLs teach do not form a separate curriculum. Information literacy skills are explicit in our curriculum, are built into subject content; and while the Australian curriculum does not recommend a single information literacy process to use, the time is ripe for TLs to adopt and embed an information literacy model into the teaching and learning of their schools.

This is the ideal picture of the teaching role of the TL — one actively involved in the curriculum of the school, as much a teacher as any other teacher in the school. In practice, it's not so easy to achieve, for timeworn reasons that obstruct the teaching TL. These reasons are:

minimising of the complexity of information literacy and information skills; seeing TLs as refugees from the classroom, and not “proper teachers”; having TLs provide the Release from Face to Face teaching of teachers in the school; lack of understanding of the information management role of the TL; lack of understanding of the vital role of resourcing in the learning of students through inquiry or literature experiences; diverting of budgets for school libraries into other areas; and minimising the impact of TLs by not allowing them to be part of middle management meetings and reducing their days of work.

## What is Inquiry Learning?

Current best practice - “The state of the art” - in information literacy instruction lies in inquiry learning.

Inquiry learning is highlighted in the Australian Curriculum, in its General Capabilities (Australian’s 21C learning skills), and in the inquiry skills and outcomes liberally peppered through the syllabuses. Inquiry learning generally applies an IL model, or another learning process, such as Project Based Learning (Edutopia, 2015), Problem Based Learning (Study guides and strategies, nd) to a unit of work which focuses on allowing students to explore aspects of curriculum topics which engage them, in order to create a personal solution or expression of understanding. Inquiry learning seeks to allow students the ‘third space’ where the student’s own interest and curriculum meet. (Kuhlthau, et al 2012, p30). An emerging pedagogy with great promise for TLs in their teaching role is Guided Inquiry (GI).

## What is GI?

*Guided Inquiry is carefully planned, closely supervised targeted intervention of an instructional team of school librarians and teachers to guide students through curriculum based inquiry units that build deep knowledge and deep understanding of a curriculum topic, and gradually lead towards independent learning.*(CISSL, 2005) It is grounded in a constructivist approach to learning, based on the Information Search Process developed by Dr Carol Kuhlthau’s extensive research over more than 30 years (Kuhlthau, 2004).

The Information Search Process (ISP) lies at the heart of GI. Because it is supported by evidence, from studies carried out by Kuhlthau, (Kuhlthau, 2007, p21) Ross Todd and others (Kuhlthau et al, 2008), this model of information seeking and using behaviour is not a superimposed process, but describes the experience of thousands of researchers as they handle information. Since 2012, and the publication of *Guided Inquiry Design: A framework for inquiry in your school* (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2012), a second process has been added to GI - The Guided Inquiry Design Process (GID). A surrounding pedagogy is emerging around GI, which is very timely in this country because of the Australian Curriculum’s emphasis on inquiry learning, which does not appear to have a process or scaffolding to support it (Lupton, 2012). The second edition of *Guided Inquiry: Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2015) adds a great deal to the developing pedagogy, covering the theory, research and design framework; a concepts approach to an Information literacy curriculum and an extended section on teaching and learning through Guided Inquiry. (The information literacy curriculum will be of interest to French professeurs documentalistes (PDS) as APDEN’s work towards an information literacy curriculum for French schools reaches its final phase of ratification by government authorities.)

## Concepts in Guided Inquiry: The two processes – ISP and GID

This diagram shows the two GI processes. To the left is the **ISP**, which generally also includes as its last stage, Assessment. There are two critical points about the ISP:

- There is at least one stage of confusion, frustration and doubt that arises in the research process.
- It is essential to allow students time to develop their own “take” on the curriculum topic, in order for them to engage with it – From Initiation to Formulation. If a student doesn’t engage with a topic, it’s more than possible to move from Initiation to Collection. It is then that we get the copy and paste syndrome, so wasteful of student and teacher time.

To the right of the diagram is the **GID process**. This is intended to be used by teaching teams to create, schedule, implement, and assess the inquiry unit. It also describes what the Inquiry community (the class) is doing at any given point, while giving students simple verbs to describe their process. The ISP and GID processes combined underlie GI, and can be written thus (ISP/GID). The ISP is what any **individual** will do when researching, (so it’s what each student does in an inquiry) and GID process is what **the class, teachers and teacher librarians** do in the creation and process of a GI.

## Why use the ISP/GID process?

The most important reason why a school might choose the ISP\_GID process is because it covers the steps the individual researcher takes (ISP), **and** the creation and delivery of inquiry tasks(GID). Right now, inquiry tasks for students are proliferating, and it is of the utmost importance that students internalise an information process to apply across the curriculum. Right now, teachers and teacher librarians are being asked to design, resource and deliver inquiry tasks. To my knowledge, none of the other, often excellent, inquiry processes cater for the **design and implementation** of inquiry units.

The ISP remains the bedrock for this process, with 30 years of research behind it. **It is simply what happens when you do research**, when you are doing it with engagement. Its strength in schools is that it does not allow students to move from task to Google to copy and paste and present.

In this writer's opinion, current "state of the art" information literacy practice could be summed up in the work of Alinda Sheerman, Head of Information Services at Broughton Anglican College. She has instigated over the last 8 years a strong program of Guided Inquiry across her school — primary and secondary. This is her opinion on the role of the TL in inquiry learning:

*"The teacher librarian (TL) holds an important yet rarely understood role in the school community. A TL's primary role is that of an information specialist, trained in the teaching and integration of information literacy skills and inquiry skills across the curriculum, as well as being a library collection manager. Because TLs are curriculum specialists with a breadth of knowledge right across all curricula, they can go beyond teaching information literacy skills and even inquiry skills ... they can lead in inquiry learning and pedagogical change in this area"* (Sheerman, 2013).

Alinda Sheerman and I have collaborated for 8 years or more in the field of Guided Inquiry, setting up the [Australian Guided Inquiry Community](#), recently moved to an Edublogs site. It contains information on the theory, practice and scaffolding of Guided Inquiry, including Guided Inquiry research tasks for many areas of the Australian Curriculum, primary and secondary.

There are two pressing drivers for the information literacy teaching role of the TL (TL) in Australia, which when viewed in the somewhat depressing light of findings in the report, [School Libraries and Tls in 21st Century Australia](#), (2011) constitute an alternative and optimistic view of our future. The two drivers are:

- Curriculum change
- Technological change

The situation in Australia is that official support for school libraries and Tls from official channels has reduced significantly over the last three decades, while there is strong support from our professional associations and other bodies. However, we are at a turning point in our history at present, because of the focus in our national curriculum on inquiry skills, and the embedding of the General Capabilities (which are Australia's version of 21C skills) into our curriculum; and because the pervasiveness of technological change, which needs to be built into teaching and learning in a way that enhances learning, and is not just attractive "bells and whistles".

## Curriculum change

The Australian Curriculum — now complete and in the process of staged implementation in all states — originated with the Melbourne declaration (2008) which focuses on equity and excellence, and young Australians becoming successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens. The Australian Curriculum's emphasis on General Capabilities brings an organised approach to 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, embedding them across the curriculum, in Literacy, Numeracy, ICT, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social capability, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding. Of most relevance to the move to pedagogical change such as inquiry learning is the Critical and Creative Thinking Capability, which is a blueprint for inquiry learning and the area of the Australian Curriculum which needs the information literacy skills of the TL. The four elements of the CCT are:

- Inquiring: identifying, exploring and organizing information and ideas
- Generating ideas, possibilities and actions
- Analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating reasoning and procedures
- Reflecting on thinking and processes. (ACARA, 2012)

It is also true that inquiry skills are peppered across the syllabuses of the Australian curriculum, as the analyses that follow show (Lupton, 2014 and Bonanno, 2015). In the Australian curriculum, information skills abound, but does this mean that a process to teach these is grounded in the Australian curriculum? Two analyses of the Australian Curriculum, with slightly different emphases, suggest that it does not. This absence of a process approach to inquiry learning is an opportunity for Tls to enact their pedagogical role: essentially — **to provide that approach**.

Most school subjects in Australia have a research element, in which coverage of curriculum topics is widened and enriched by student investigation of aspects of those topics. There is a great variety of the kinds of assignments students undertake, but many assignments are based on an information literacy model, which is used to structure the steps of the task. The ideal is that this process will be internalised and followed whenever the individual has an information need. An information literacy model describes the steps that users take in their move from ignorance to understanding, when involved in an inquiry task. Use of a model allows teachers and students to use the steps of the model to break down the inquiry task into separate, though often overlapping, steps — forming the scaffolding of an inquiry task. There are many IL models, for example

- Big6 (Eisenberg & Berkowitz 2012)
- Gourley's Inquiry Cycle model (Gourley 2008)
- Guided Inquiry process (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari 2012)
- Information Process (NSW Department of Education and Training 2007)
- Murdoch phases of inquiry (Murdoch, 2010)
- Stripling model of inquiry (Stripling 2003).

Under the direction of Tls and teachers, students ideally will apply an IL model such as those above, or another learning process, such as Project Based Learning (Edutopia, 2015), to a unit of work which focuses on allowing students to explore aspects of curriculum topics which engage them, in order to create a personal solution or expression of understanding. Inquiry learning seeks to allow students the 'third space' where the student's own interest and curriculum meet. (Kuhlthau, et al 2012, p30).

The role of the TL in inquiry learning is as teaching partner in all the aspects of the inquiry task — from design, to scaffolding, to implementation, to evaluation. However, because of diminishing official support for our role from educational authorities, it is a challenge for all Tls to have principals, teachers and students understand this, and to undertake the necessary collaboration. But the fact remains that the focus on 21C skills in the Australian Curriculum is an opportunity for Tls to centre their teaching role in inquiry learning.

## Technological change

Technology feeds inquiry learning at every stage, from its planning, to its execution, to its product. So, in Australia at least, the time is fortuitous for the teacher librarian's information literacy teaching role — on the one hand, the urgent need for students to develop 21C skills (Australia's General Capabilities) in an information literacy framework; and on the other, the need to contextualise digital developments in learning, mean that Tls can position themselves as leaders of inquiry learning through technology.

As O'Connell (2014) points out, *"The information environment of a good school library has been undergoing a transformation, powered by technology and trans-media influences in our classrooms"*. The interactive multimedia knowledge environment emerging in our schools is an opportunity for Tls to bring their teaching skills to the task of centring digital tools in learning and inquiry. Add this to the curriculum change outlined above, it is an excellent time for the teaching role of Australian Tls to become indispensable in schools.

Technology in schools has as its raison d'être its ability to support 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. There is a need for schools to develop a sustainable and responsive technology-rich learning ecology that has adaptability at its core to support 21st century learning needs. Surveys conducted by O'Connell (2014) amongst Charles Sturt University students, and amongst practising Tls indicate that there is a strong expectation in our schools that Tls will champion digital learning, bringing the skills of information literacy and lifelong learning to the sphere.

O'Connell (2012) points to the need for Tls to develop their skills in the integration of digital tools into teaching and learning, and the online Master of Education (Teacher librarianship) at Charles Sturt University includes consistent experience in digital environments, and a new Master of Education course (Knowledge Networks and Digital Innovation) has begun, under her leadership, with its focus being expert use of technology for learning. She says, *"The reality is that Tls can be the best person to have in a school - but only if they have actually learned how to fill that role well, and have understood and assimilated the principles, tools and practices of a 21st century TL."* (O'Connell, 2012)

Softlink Australia(2015) has been conducting surveys of Australian School Libraries since 2011, in response to a need for data on Australian school libraries and Tls, expressed in the findings of the parliamentary inquiry, [School Libraries and Tls in 21st Century Australia](#), (2011). The most recently available results points to 5 important opportunities for school libraries, as follows:

- The digital resources shift — Digital platforms and e resources are coming the norm.
- The technology curve — embracing technology for learning, using web based library programs, social media, apps, and harnessing technology for learning.
- The growth of personal portable digital devices — New attitudes to the use of personal devices have developed, and the provision of BYOD programs — in the form of ipads and tablets.
- The evolution of the physical space (of the library) — increasing flexibility of spaces for different purposes
- The curriculum and learning connection — the relationship to school educational programs via pedagogy such as Guided Inquiry, flipped classrooms etc.

The Softlink surveys demonstrate how libraries are changing in the digital world, and confirms O'Connell's belief that Tls have a compelling opportunity in the proliferation of technology to tie it in with learning. The two opportunities — curriculum change favouring inquiry learning, which has its base in information literacy; and technological change — with its pressing need for tying it to pedagogical practices — provide a fertile opportunity for Australia's TL to emphasise their information literacy teaching role.

## Differences and convergences with France

The work of FADBEN (Now APDEN) towards creating a specific information literacy curriculum for PDs has been exemplary. The status of PDs was reaffirmed in July 2014 Act from the Ministère de l'éducation nationale as

*“full members of the teaching and educational team, with the specific skill to “create implement and facilitate teaching and learning situations considering diversity of students... responsible for the centre of documentation and info, dedicated to training, reading and access to culture and information. As teachers they can interact directly with students in training and learning activities from their own initiative or according to the needs expressed by teachers in a discipline... There is now political will behind a specific teaching mission for TLs.”*

The French approach to developing a separate curriculum for PD's possibly arises out of similar experiences of TLs in schools, of principals and teachers not understanding the teaching role of TLs, of difficulties in setting up the necessary collaboration to embed information literacy learning into the curriculum; and, in France, *“the lack of a curriculum in information and documentation.”* (Reynaud, et al, 2015) It is an interesting approach, and the document produced is very scholarly and comprehensive, with the road to ratification of the curriculum by official French education authorities well on the way.

In Australia, information literacy skills have been recently incorporated into the General Capabilities, as well as scattered across syllabi in the form of learning outcomes. There is no official sanction for TLs to work with this arrangement of information literacy, only opportunities provided by curriculum and technological change, as indicated above. We congratulate our French colleagues on the dedication and scholarship evident in your information literacy curriculum, on the extensive process you have undertaken, including gathering wide input in your Info-Doc Wikinotions and the powers of persuasion you have brought to educational authorities such that its acceptance into schools appears to be only a matter of time.

Your curriculum is based on four fields, Information and digital environments; process of information and documentation; critical stance on the media, ICT and information; and legal and ethical responsibility on information. I believe your curriculum deals with the same areas as we do in our information literacy work. Your view of libraries transitioning to learning centres as a threat is very interesting, as you see

*“Autonomy is an aim, not a starting point... formal learning is necessary... self-access to skills and knowledge is an illusion: it is the opposite of a democratic and egalitarian education because it means that assistance would only be offered to individuals who come to the CDI learning centre.”*(Reynaud, et al, 2015)

This is interesting for Australian practitioners to contemplate, as it is very true that inquiry learning, our approach to teaching information literacy in a context of proliferation of digital tools, is very rarely systematically introduced across the school, and rarely reaches every student in the school.

Your curriculum [\*Vers un curriculum en information-documentation\*](#) was published 2014, and is waiting formal endorsement from French educational authorities. It is very comprehensive and impressive. Does it make us think we should follow the same path? Yes and No, is the answer to that! Our way of proceeding is to seize the opportunities available in the form of the emphasis on inquiry in the Australian Curriculum, and the pressing need for pedagogy to keep up with technological advancements to choose to put our teaching efforts into inquiry learning and the fostering of literacy in its widest sense, including information literacy and reading of all genres. There have been two very interesting analyses of the place of inquiry skills in the Australian Curriculum:

- Lupton's research (2014) concluded that the areas of the Australian Curriculum lacks an across-the-curriculum-approach to inquiry learning.
- Bonanno's [F-10 Inquiry skills scope and sequence](#) (2015) tying the Guided Inquiry design process to the inquiry skills and General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum.

The two analyses provide guidance for Australian schools seeking to embed inquiry learning into curriculum, as well as an opportunity for TLs to be in the driver's seat for implementing such an approach. However, it is an indicator of the lack of official sanction for the TL role in teaching information literacy that it is up to TLs to suggest that we are the people to teach it: Nowhere in the Australian Curriculum does it suggest that we are the experts in information literacy. One of the inquiry learning models is Guided Inquiry. It is interesting and timely that the most recent Guided Inquiry publication (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2015) includes **an information literacy curriculum.** (See **attachment 1**)

## Professional status of TLs

TLs in Australia are first of all qualified teachers, in the primary or secondary school. As primary teachers, they will be generalist in their training, able to teach all primary school subjects. Secondary teachers will be subject experts, generally in two subjects. They undertake TL

training at a Master's level, presently either through Charles Sturt University, Edith Cowan University, or Queensland University of Technology. TLs might also undertake further Masters' level study in courses such as Educational Leadership, or in the new degree at CSU, Knowledge Networking and Digital Innovation (KNDI). So, TLs are highly trained teachers with expertise in information management in the digital landscape. That is not to say that in some schools, Principals don't decide to place untrained school assistants as library managers, or place worn out teachers needing a break in the library. In essence, TLs are qualified professionals, teachers first and foremost. This however, certainly does not mean that we are regarded as such in every school we work in.

Combes (2008) sees the central challenge for TLship in Australia as the level to which TLs are able to *“place the library squarely at the centre of the school's core business – that is, teaching and learning. The TL should be leading and supporting educational change”*. In practice, this is quite hard to achieve, as is evident in the Australian Parliament's House Standing Committee on Education and Employment report on the inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools entitled [School Libraries and TLs in 21st Century Australia](#), The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) based their recommendations on this report, as follows (Ryan & Girolami, 2010):

- There is a need for national data on school libraries and teacher librarians
- Teacher librarians need to advocate by having their school communities understand that a well-managed and resourced library can make differences to student learning outcomes
- Teacher librarians need to show leadership, and to engage in evidence based practice
- There is a need for research on the connection between school library programs and student learning.
- There is a need for funding for more places for TLs at universities.

Since the publication of report in 2011, all of these items have been actioned. National data on school libraries and teacher librarians is available from the Softlink surveys, annual since 2009, which have also been very useful in pointing out trends favouring school libraries and teacher librarians, especially opportunities for leading digital learning, and engaging in inquiry learning. Teacher librarians are encouraged to write in practitioner journals such as *Scan* and *Access*, and are doing so, using evidence-based practice techniques to demonstrate that they are helping students achieve information literacy outcomes. The research base on school libraries and the difference they can make to student learnings has increased significantly, and can be seen in the article by Hughes et al (2014) which collates and explains both overseas and Australian research on the impact of the TL on student outcomes.. Funding has been achieved for more places for TLs at universities, and the teacher librarianship numbers in the Master of Education (Teacher Librarianship) at CSU are very strong.

## **Are there official/ unofficial reference/framework documents in information-documentation and/or curriculums in your country?**

While the long term impact of [School Libraries and TLs in 21st Century Australia](#), has led to proactive efforts to address the challenges brought out by that report; and the Australian Curriculum's emphasis on inquiry and digital developments are all very positive for the teaching role of the TL in 2016, it is a fact that there is not a clearly mandated role from educational authorities for the TL. What we have are policies from our professional associations, ASLA and ALIA, which do provide a very clear idea of the teaching role of the TL, but they do not have official sanction from educational authorities, in the way that APDEN is seeking in France. While it is true that there are schools which have TLs functioning as vital teaching partners in literature and inquiry programs, it is not an official requirement on the part of national educational authorities.

Listed below in the first category are examples of official policies from two Australian states:

- NSW Department of Education and Training (2005) [Library policy](#).
- Department of education and training Queensland (2014) [Role of the school library](#).

Next are examples of guides from state authorities, rather than policies:

- NSW Department of Education (2016) [School libraries: Home – Curriculum and policy support for school libraries](#).
- NSW Department of Education and Training (2007) [Information skills in the school: engaging learners in constructing knowledge](#)

Next are examples of official documents from the two major professional bodies in Australia relating to the role of the TL:

- The Australian School Library Association's (ASLA)(2014) [Statement on TL qualifications](#).
- ASLA statements <http://www.asla.org.au/policy/Joint-statement.aspx>
- Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) support for school libraries: <https://www.alia.org.au/node/184/school-libraries>
- Future learning and school libraries: <http://www.asla.org.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/2013-ASLA-futures-paper.pdf>

Some international role statements underlying Australian statements

- The International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) statement [http://www.iasl-online.org/about/organization/sl\\_policy.html](http://www.iasl-online.org/about/organization/sl_policy.html)
- The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (1999; 2006) can be found at <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s11/pubs/manifest.htm>
- And accompanying Guidelines (2015) at <http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/school-libraries-resource-centers/publications/ifla-school-library-guidelines.pdf>

## And lastly, these are our Teacher librarian standards:

- ASLA and Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), [Standards of professional excellence for TLs](#) (2004). They are similar to The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) [Standards for the 21st Century Learner](#) (2007).
- Australian School Library Association (2014) [Evidence guide for teacher librarians in the highly accomplished career stage](#).
- Australian School Library Association (2015) [Evidence guide for teacher librarians in the proficient career stage](#).

The last two allow TLs to prepare for the Australian Institute of Teaching accreditation process, which all teachers in Australia are undergoing, including TLs.

## Evolution of information literacy instruction and an information culture in Australia

The picture in Australia is of diminishing official support for our teaching role. The sad fact that a thorough search of the [Australian Curriculum](#) and the [Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority](#) (ACARA) websites make no mention whatsoever of TLs is an indication of the “dire state of Teacher Librarianship and school libraries in Australia” (Bahnisch, 2011). Bahnisch makes a strong case for the need for a return to the levels of government support that used to exist for school libraries in the 1960’s to the 1980’s, when some \$200 million of federal government funds were spent on school libraries, and where there was strong central support in each state of Australia for teacher librarians. This was the result of reports commissioned by library associations and submissions from a broad range of education and library groups. But from the 1990’s onward, there has been a devolution of decision making to school principals, who, when faced with global budgeting shortfalls, are often forced to make cutbacks, and unfortunately, the library has often been the easiest place to do this. Evidence tells us that library budgets plummeted across the country. There is evidence, however, that things have improved since 2011, and our star is on the rise again, especially because of proactive response to the 2011 [School Libraries and TLs in 21st Century Australia](#), and because of the convergence of curriculum reform favouring inquiry learning and the need for embedding technology in learning.

## Examples of information literacy courses?

As this article has explained, information literacy is not taught as a separate course in any Australian schools. Information literacy is always embedded into curriculum topics, with the disadvantages and advantages that that implies. It probably does mean it doesn’t reach every student and that teacher librarians are involved to the level that they are able to engineer in their schools, through collaboration. It does mean that information literacy is always in a context, with a real curriculum need for learners. The present best way forward for Australian schools seems to lie in inquiry learning, where information literacy skills are taught through an information literacy model, with inquiry learning pedagogies emerging, such as Guided Inquiry. If French readers would like to see some Guided Inquiry tasks, please go to the [Australian Guided Inquiry Community](#), and look at Primary and Secondary Guided Inquiry Units.

So, to finish with a mix of English and French idioms, regarding the subjects of this article — how best to teach information literacy, and how to ensure that TLs lead the teaching — *There’s more than one way to skin a cat*, and *Paris ne s’est pas fait en un jour! Allons-y!*

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# Attachment 1: Information Literacy Curriculum Overview

In *Guided Inquiry, Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, second edition, (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari 2015), the authors have presented an information literacy curriculum based on three central concepts which are elaborated on simply but thoroughly to cover the information literacy aspect of Guided Inquiry, and the authors suggest using these rich information literacy concepts as the basis for an information literacy scope and sequence for individual schools.

## Central Concept 1: Information that is organized provides access to facts, ideas and multiple perspectives

<b>Guided Inquiry Information Literacy Concepts</b>	
<b>Central Concept 1</b>	<b>Information that is organized provides access to facts, ideas, and multiple perspectives.</b>
	1.1 A vast array of sources can be either organized or linked.
	1.2 A library is a collection of sources that have been organized according to a classification system, whereas the Internet is a universe of electronic resources that can be linked by attributes that may have nothing to do with their content.
	A. Knowing the title or author of a book is a straightforward way to locate the source.
	B. Keywords are terms and phrases you think best represent a topic.
	C. Subject headings are consistent terms and phrases that a professional has assigned to sources.
	1.3 Search strategies provide ways to forge a path through information on an inquiry journey.
	A. A variety of search strategies enable you to find a wide range of sources of information.
	B. Different types of searches have different purposes and are appropriate for different points in the inquiry process.
	C. Managing inquiry to keep track of sources requires a systematic approach.

Figure 7.1. Guided Inquiry Information Literacy Concept 1.  
Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari (2015) p74

## Central Concept 2: Valuable information prompts curiosity, reflection, and enlightenment

<b>Guided Inquiry Information Literacy Concepts</b>	
<b>Central Concept 2</b>	<b>Valuable information prompts curiosity, reflection, and enlightenment.</b>
	2.1 The purpose of evaluating sources of information is to choose the highest quality and most useful to accomplish a task.
	A. Choosing information in different formats fosters multiple ways of thinking and learning.
	B. The structure of a source offers clues for evaluating the usefulness of the information.
	2.2 Sources have distinct characteristics that will help you evaluate the quality and usefulness of the information.

Figure 7.1. Guided Inquiry Information Literacy Concept 1.  
Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari (2015) p75

**Central Concept 3: Thoughtfully interpreting information  
over time leads to deep learning**

<b>Guided Inquiry Information Literacy Concepts</b>	
<b>Central Concept 3</b>	<b>Thoughtfully interpreting information over time leads to deep learning.</b>
	<b>3.1 Inquiry is a process of learning and building understanding.</b>
	A. The process of learning from a variety of information sources occurs in a series of phases.
	B. Formulating a focused question is the turning point of the inquiry process.
	C. Managing inquiry to keep track of information and ideas requires a systematic approach.
	D. Deciding what content is most important in an information source is essential for constructing deep learning.
	E. Deciding how much information is enough for a given project is an essential task of inquiry.
	F. Deep learning requires interpreting facts, creating connections, and organizing ideas.
	G. Sharing learning requires ethical, thoughtful, and productive practices.
	<b>3.2 Sharing research contributes to the knowledge base of a community, reinforces learning, and helps others to learn.</b>

Figure 7.1. Guided Inquiry Information Literacy Concept 1.  
Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari (2015) p76