

# CONNECTIONS

ISSUE NO. 119 | TERM 4 2021

ISSN 2207-8924

AVAILABLE ON SCISDATA.COM/CONNECTIONS



## Andrew Smith, CEO of Education Services Australia, on data security and privacy in schools

**All of us**, library professionals included, need to work together to protect our schools and students at this time of high reliance on digital technologies.

Digital technology and innovation are an intrinsic part of society and education. Rapid technological growth and enhanced access to technologies continuously present new possibilities for teaching and learning at school and remotely. At the same time, integration of digital technologies in schools can be a complicated process and one that is not without risk.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an unprecedented disruption to Australia's system of classroom-based learning, forcing teachers to rapidly adapt to new methods of digital pedagogy, resulting almost overnight in a rapid expansion in the use of education technology products in classrooms. Understandably, most of the focus has been on making these valuable learning tools available to as many students as possible, as quickly as possible.

An estimated 4,000 online education products and services are used across Australian classrooms. These products and services continually evolve with new features and functionality being added frequently.

School library professionals are already deeply aware of this, as they advise staff and students about quality curriculum resources, many of which are online. If you are reading this, you already know the services that SCIS Data provides in this area, and about the regular Website and App reviews in each *Connections* issue.

Schools and the educators you work with are already deeply concerned about

online safety and security. ESA's 2020 Voice of Education research project asked educators about the post-COVID classroom. Respondents cited 'online safety and security for students' as the most important issue the sector would have to manage. Three-quarters of those surveyed rated it as 'extremely important', placing it on a par with quality professional learning for teachers, quality curriculum resources, and accessible technology solutions.

### Specific challenges

Privacy and data security present complex policy challenges. Family, peers and education settings have traditionally been recognised as the three most influential environments in a child's socialisation. We now understand that the digital environment can be added as a fourth.

For this reason we must be vigilant and take proactive steps to create a digital environment that recognises the privileges and rights of children.

The risks that young people face as they navigate the digital world can be classified into four broad categories<sup>1</sup>:

- Content risks: the risk of exposure to harmful material such as age-inappropriate content, disinformation, hostile discourse or content that endorses risky behaviour.
- Contact risks: research shows that one in four young people have been contacted by someone they don't know online. Often the contact is harmless but at times it can be inappropriate, unwanted or unsafe<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 5Rights Foundation 2019

<sup>2</sup> eSafety Commissioner, <https://www.esafety.gov.au/educators/training-professionals/professional-learning-program-teachers/unwanted-contact-grooming-factsheet>

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### Connections

A quarterly magazine by SCIS  
Schools Catalogue Information Service  
[scisdata.com/connections](http://scisdata.com/connections)



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## CONNECT WITH SCIS



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

# Professional learning

## Term 4

### Webinars

#### Subject headings and authorities in SCIS

Wednesday 20 October 2 pm

This 1-hour webinar provides an overview of SCIS Subject Headings (SCISSH) and Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT) in SCIS records. This webinar will be useful for school library staff who are not yet trained in cataloguing or would like a refresher on subject headings, and will help you understand the role that controlled vocabularies play in effective information retrieval.

#### Dewey and book numbers in SCIS

Friday 26 November 2 pm

This 1-hour webinar will provide an overview of Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) and book numbers as applied in SCIS records. This will be useful for school library staff who are not yet trained in cataloguing or would like a refresher on DDC, and will help you understand the role of a call number in organising your information resources for effective retrieval.

### New SCIS Video Tutorial series

(available on demand until November 16)

New 15-minute video tutorials on key SCIS topics:

- **Genres in SCIS** This tutorial will describe the genre headings used by SCIS, and explain how they are used in catalogue records.
- **Series headings and authorities** This tutorial covers how series authorities can assist with searching, and also the difference between series headings and series statements in SCIS records.
- **Four free digital collections to import into your catalogue** This short tutorial shows how to import free eBooks, websites and apps into your LMS.
- **SCIS doesn't have a record for my resource – what now?** This tutorial presents three ways to place cataloguing requests to SCIS.

**FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER NOW**

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

**SCIS** Schools Catalogue  
Information Service

- Conduct risks: online interactions that are harmful such as cyberbullying, sexting or loss of personal data.
- Contract risks: a young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial contractual relationships that include sharing of personal data or targeted advertising.

No environment, online or physical, can be made entirely risk free. However, in a rapidly evolving digital-first world where student learning is increasingly supported through digital applications and resources we must be proactive in supporting young people.

### Available national support

Education is a key component of any safety strategy. ESA and the Office of the eSafety Commissioner both play a key role in providing education resources for young people, educators and product developers so that they, in turn, can ensure the safety of students.

Increasing the knowledge and confidence of our teaching workforce in areas related to online safety and security is critical to developing a broad understanding of the full range of opportunities and risks in the digital environment. Initial teacher education programs have an obligation to impart a basic understanding of online safety covering choice and use of applications and programs. For existing teachers, there is an opportunity to incorporate professional learning into professional standards and continuing professional development requirements.

Library professionals including teacher librarians can also provide valuable support for teachers, school leaders and parents.

Information for parents often contains conflicting messages about their child's interaction with the digital environment. On one hand, they are told that their child's future prospects depend on their digital literacy and ability to harness technology, on the other, they read media articles that make the risk of extreme harm loom disproportionately large. The need to arm parents with quality information and guidance on how to discuss online safety with children has never been greater.

Children represent one-third of all internet users globally<sup>3</sup> and it is important to recognise that the data created by children in the digital world has significant economic value. Educating young people about the value of their data, in both a personal and commercial sense, will shift the dynamic.

Increased understanding of their value will assist them to see themselves as discerning consumers with rights and, in turn, force education technology vendors to be more selective about what they collect<sup>4</sup>. The end result being better protection for children who are interacting with digital technologies in the education setting.

Campaigns and resources to enable young people to look after themselves online are necessary, but not sufficient. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders to create a digital education world in which children can flourish and do so safely and with confidence.

“Close partnerships are forming between education technology providers and educators through an increasing commitment to safety, privacy and security by design.”

### The Privacy by Design approach

Education technology developers are now strongly encouraged to adopt a Privacy by Design (PbD) approach to their design and development activities. The PbD approach is characterised by proactive rather than reactive measures. It does not wait for privacy risks to materialise, it anticipates and prevents privacy breaches and covers the entire lifecycle of the product. Thus, PbD ensures cradle-to-grave, secure management of a child's information.

Close partnerships are forming between education technology providers and educators through an increasing commitment to safety, privacy and security by design.

### The Safer Technologies 4 Schools (ST4S) program

The Safer Technologies 4 Schools (ST4S) program is a national partnership between ESA and all Australian state, territory,

Catholic and independent school sectors that assesses online education products and services against an agreed set of privacy, security and online safety criteria. The initial round of assessments found that, among commonly used education technology products, one in five did not meet the standards. While this is a cause for concern, in a positive sign of industry commitment to privacy and security, vendors addressed gaps in a timely manner, making all students safer online.

Strengthening our collective commitment to privacy through education, product design and transparency is key to ensuring that education technology products are appropriate for the changing developmental stages of children and young adults.

### Ongoing research

The last 18 months have fast-tracked our understanding of the extent to which almost every aspect of a student's education is, or will be, impacted by digital technology. While some students have thrived, others have likely needed additional support to navigate issues with access and digital literacy.

Research into these scenarios and their impact on young people's learning is well advanced. Another important area to examine is how various privacy and data security protections, which exist to protect students, have performed under the surge in demand for online learning products and services.

### Our duty of care

Teachers and school leaders take their duty of care for students in the digital environment as seriously as they do their duty of care in the physical environment. All of us, including library professionals, have a responsibility to support children and young adults as they navigate the digital world. Failure to do so is a failure to uphold the protections and rights that define childhood.



**Andrew Smith**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Education Services Australia

Andrew Smith is CEO of Education Services Australia, a not for profit education technology company owned by all Australian education ministers. ESA develops and deploys national education infrastructure, develops digital education resources and provides technology-based services to the education sector.

3 One in Three: Internet Governance and Children's Rights, S. Livingstone, et al, Unicef, January 2016

4 5Rights Foundation 2019

# THE NEED FOR FAMILY-DIVERSE PICTURE BOOKS

Sarah Mokrzycki shows just how much representation matters.

**Did you grow** up in a ‘picture perfect’ family? Let’s see.

Were you raised by both biological parents? Was your house a white, middle-class home? Was it also heteronormative and highly gendered? Were there no half- or step-siblings? And did you grow up as a stereotypical (and most likely blonde) little boy?

If that wasn’t quite your experience, don’t worry. It wasn’t mine, either. Nor is it the experience of over a million Australians. Yet it is this ideal of the ‘picture perfect’ family that dominates Australia’s picture books.

Families with a traditional, nuclear structure are labelled ‘intact’ by the Australian Government (Australian Institute of Family Studies). The *Oxford Dictionary* defines ‘intact’ as complete and undamaged (*Oxford Learner’s Dictionary*, 2021).

What does that say about all the other types of families? The 142,000 step- and blended families – like the one I was raised in? The 46,000 foster families – like the one I’m in now? The 900,000 single-parent families? What does it say to the 1.2 million Australian children who don’t live with both biological parents?

As Brendan Churchill explains in *The Conversation* (8 Jan 2018), ‘[T]he Australian family is as diverse and different as the country’s terrain’. And yet diverse families are rarely acknowledged in our picture books. Where are the First Nations protagonists? The single dads? The same sex parents? The wheelchair users? The neurodiverse?

Their stories do exist but they are rare and hard to find, and almost always published internationally, highlighting a major gap in Australian children’s publishing. This issue was highlighted in a Deakin University survey about LGBTQI+ picture books:

It’s hard to find books featuring LGBTQI+ families online unless you already know the titles, and the ones that do exist mostly come from North America ... there’s a very narrow range of representations of the diversity of rainbow families, and the books that do exist are often not easily located because there’s no consistency in how they are categorised ... or referred to online.

This issue extends to all forms of family diversity. As there is no consistency in how books are categorised, titles can be easy to miss. To combat this issue, I created a list of 100 family-diverse picture books for my recent PhD. The list includes the types of diversity the books cover (under the umbrellas of Structure, Culture, Identity and Body).

It also includes the method in which diversity is presented (Issue-driven, Combination [showing diversity in both text and illustration] or Illustration only). The aim of this list is to help families and schools easily find family-diverse titles for their homes and classrooms.

Research shows that when

children can’t see themselves in books, their sense of self-worth, their ability to form healthy friendships and their reading and educational development can all be obstructed. Relating to book characters is a vital tool that engages young children with literature. It connects them to the world, validates their personal experiences and helps forge a lifelong love of reading.

“Representation in books should be a right, not a privilege.”

There are many instances where lack of representation has caused our foster children to feel lonely and ashamed. One such instance happened over Mother’s Day a few years back.

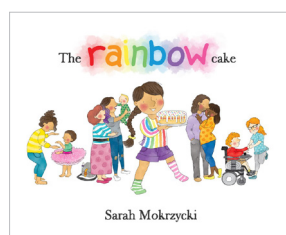
Our foster son, who my husband and I co-parent with his biological father, lives with us on weekends and school holidays. As such, he isn’t with me, his ‘non-bio mum’ (as he calls me), through the week. When Mother’s Day was drawing near, he asked us for craft supplies: wood, cardboard, glue. When we asked him what he was making, he replied simply, ‘A mum.’

After a bit of discussion we found out that children in his class – where the past few days had been spent making Mother’s Day gifts and reading Mother’s Day books – had started asking him incessantly about his biological mother. *Where is she? Why doesn’t she live with you? Why don’t you see her?* In desperation, our son tried to make himself a mother to keep with him through the week.

Children are naturally curious, and it is natural for them to ask questions when presented with a lifestyle different from their own. However, this can inadvertently make the object of their questions feel scrutinised and uncomfortable. For this reason, it is vital that children are presented with diverse books in the classroom. As noted by researcher Skrlac Lo, family-diverse books in the classroom can help children from diverse families feel accepted, but also help all children understand that there are many different – and equally valid – ways to make a family.

Put simply: representation matters. The World of Difference Institute says that ‘when children are represented in books, they can see themselves as valuable and worthy of notice’. It is vital for all children to feel this way. Representation in books should be a right, not a privilege. And, most importantly, all families – whatever shape they take – are intact.

Find some recommended resources on Family Diversity in Children’s literature in our online version of this article.



Cover art for a picture book, created for Sarah’s PHD.

## References

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**Sarah Mokrzycki**

Sessional Academic  
Victoria University

Sarah's PhD research examines representation and the importance of family diversity in children's picture books.

# SCIS is more

Welcome to the Term 4, 2021 issue of *Connections*.

As we come to the latter part of 2021, another very busy year for the SCIS team, we would like to extend our thanks to the school library community for your support and camaraderie. The global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of us throughout 2021, and at SCIS we strive to provide consistent and timely support to the school community – including during periods of pivoting to remote learning due to lockdown restrictions. This has meant we've needed to reschedule face-to-face workshops, or had delays in sending out books to schools in our Box of Books promotions. We hope we've been of assistance to you and your school this year, as we know that school library professionals have been keenly focused on providing the high-quality ongoing support to students and teachers that supports the teaching and learning goals of schools.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our SCIS User Surveys, we appreciate you taking the time to share your feedback and ideas with us on a range of topics that can help us to provide better service to the school library community.

The purpose of the SCIS User Surveys is to measure customer satisfaction, including satisfaction with SCIS record quality and with our *Connections* school library journal.

Some of the key findings from the SCIS User Surveys include:

- Quality of records: Ninety-two percent of respondents indicated that they thought the quality of SCIS records was High or Very High.
- Use of the SCIS website: Almost four-fifths of SCIS users catalogue from within

their library system and some users continue to download records from the SCIS website. Other reasons to use the SCIS website include to: search for curriculum resources, refer to subject headings for original cataloguing, check or update school catalogue records, search for books that haven't been located through the library system, look at catalogue records for language specific resources, and report books and resources not found in SCIS Data.

- *Connections* magazine: Regarding your feedback on the types of articles that resonate with you and are of most interest, many of you said that you enjoy regular features such as the School Spotlight overview of a school library, the app and website reviews and the author contributions. The most requested articles are on library programming. (We will endeavour to include more for you.)
- Professional learning (PL): A high number of survey respondents mentioned topics of interest they would like to see covered in future PL sessions. These include using enhanced data, genre headings in SCIS records and the difference between SCIS Subject Headings List (SCISHL) and the Schools Online Thesaurus (ScOT). In response to subscriber feedback we introduced new SCIS video tutorials in Term 3. These provide 15-minute overviews of some key topics such as series headings and authorities, genre headings in SCIS, how to create a catalogue request with SCIS, and four free digital collections for your catalogue (importing free ebooks,

websites and apps into your collection).

## Staff updates

Since our last issue, we've welcomed Daniel Czech to the SCIS team as our Marketing and Communications Specialist. Dan brings an energetic, analytical and strategic approach to marketing and communications. He has worked in a range of education settings, most recently with William Angliss Institute.

We also welcome Jerrie as our new SCIS Customer Service Team Leader. Jerrie comes to the SCIS team with a wealth of experience working in schools and school libraries, most recently as Library Technician, Language Support and Literacy Intervention Officer and previously as Library Assistant. Jerrie's customer service background and working knowledge of SCIS and the library systems of our subscriber base position her as the 'voice of the customer' within our team.

We hope that you have the opportunity to speak with Dan and Jerrie soon. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us with any feedback, ideas or comments.

We thank you again for your feedback on using SCIS and invite you to keep in touch with us via our various social media channels. You can find us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and contact us via [help@scisdata.com](mailto:help@scisdata.com)

Best wishes to the SCIS community as we head into the holiday period for a restful and rejuvenating break and of course a wonderful 2022.



**Caroline Hartley**

SCIS Manager  
Education Services Australia

# HOW TO SUPPORT EARLY LITERACY WITH PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Teacher, author and education consultant Judith Barker talks about how library professionals can contribute to students' early reading and writing success.

When I first read *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* to children, it was clear that the repetition and rhyming of the sounds and letters in Dr Seuss's whimsical story seemed to fully resonate with them. I was at an international school in Italy, and the children would separate the individual sounds (s-a-t), recognise the syllables in spoken words (ha-ppy) and manipulate the letters to make different words (look, book). However, trying to master the many vagaries of English spelling became much more of a challenge for them. With so many peculiarities in the English language, the mind boggles! There are 44 sounds and hundreds of ways to spell them, but how do you explain that the words *rough*, *cough* and *plough* each sound very different?

While researching a masters degree in phonological awareness, I began to use visual sounds in stories by writing fun and lyrical phoneme-themed (sound) stories and highlighting the graphemes (letters). (*The Oo in Uluru* is one of these.) These stories helped children to develop a wholistic sense of the orthographic (writing) system and the different spelling patterns – in an enjoyable and meaningful way. This propelled me to further investigate the science of reading by studying the multiplicities involved in supporting phonemic awareness and teaching phonics to young readers and students with special needs.

## Some terminology

Library professionals of course play an important role in the development of literacy and enjoyment of reading. Maybe you are unaware of some important terminology and major new resources now available in this area. Teachers at your school may already know or use these terms and resources, so being familiar with these will help you to discuss literacy with them.

Just a note, though: terminology can vary in schools, the media and the community, but those below are based on well-established explanations on major government education websites. You will find them in all of the items in the Resources section below.

## Phonological awareness

Phonological awareness is an umbrella term for critical early skills in literacy development. It *relates only to oral language*, to the ability to hear and discriminate sounds in spoken words. It is the first building block for learning to read. Students who have this awareness of the sounds in spoken words are more likely to have later success in reading and spelling, as they will already have an understanding of the ways that language can be broken down.

## Phonics

Phonics is about letter-sound knowledge, and it depends on the learner's ability to hear the separate sounds in words. It relates to the point where letters (graphemes) of the alphabet are introduced to children. You can see a good description of it on

the [Literacy Hub's 'Working with phonics' page](#).

You may have heard the phonics term 'analytic phonics'. [Evidence for Learning](#) has a references appendix that discusses phonics. It explains that this is often known as the 'whole word' approach. It is based on the learner having some pre-existing phonological awareness, and begins with the whole word, with smaller parts of it sounded out.

More recently you may have seen the term 'synthetic phonics' or 'systematic synthetic phonics' increasingly used. Also based on the learner having some pre-existing phonological awareness, it focuses on a set progression that builds on the development of phonemic awareness as a key skill.

## Breaking the code of written language

So, *before* children learn to read print, they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of individual speech sounds, or phonemes. Children then learn to blend these sounds together to make words.

The development of this phonological skill is essential in 'breaking the code' of the written language.

Terms used here often overlap in the classroom. For more detailed phonics information and resources for libraries and schools see **Resources** below.

## Encouraging students' confidence and success in reading

Both phonemic awareness and phonics are taught on a continuum (in a progressive way) and are essential tools for early reading and writing success. Once children have learned how to 'break the code', they need opportunities to apply their phonemic awareness and knowledge of phonics by reading, and to experience success in the early stages.

Children all learn how to read at different stages on the continuum – and some require individual support. But no matter what level the child is at, there are a number of important ways to encourage confident readers.

## Supporting frequency of reading

We all know one of the most important ones: that reading practice and repetition strengthen fluency, as they help children develop word and sound recognition. To achieve confidence, children need to practise their skills frequently to internalise the sounds and orthographic system.

Frequent opportunities for children to apply what they are learning about letters and sounds to the reading of words, sentences and stories can help to consolidate the teaching and learning in the classroom, in the library and at home. Creating these opportunities for children to obtain meaning from print improves their chances of reading success.

Teaching sounds along with the letters during reading can

help to reinforce how the sounds are related to reading and writing. Such integration of phonics and phonemic awareness into reading children's books enhances each child's experience, especially the experience of struggling readers.

### Using enjoyable children's books

Children's story books are one of the best and most enjoyable tools for promoting phonemic awareness. Reading books with rhymes is always helpful, as these help children to learn how to sound out the words and recognise rhyming patterns. While huge numbers of children have fallen in love with the wacky characters from classic Dr Seuss books such as *Hop on Pop*, *The Lorax* and *Green Eggs and Ham*, Meredith Costain's *Doodledum Dancing* (illustrated by Pamela Allen) is another great hit with children. You may know of many more.



Children engaging with phonetic learning materials

### Milestones for early reading success: some resources

A child's skill in phonics and phonemic awareness is critical later for measuring their reading and writing success.

These two resources will help you and the whole school community with this:

- The Literacy Hub is a new Australian Government resource for School leaders, teachers, and families. <https://literacyhub.edu.au/>
- The Australian Curriculum's [National Literacy Learning Progression](#). You can see all of its elements (and expected outcomes for each of them) there.

### Some strategies for supporting beginning readers

Here are some useful ways you and others in the school community can support students.

1. Use context and pictures to monitor sound, letter and word recognition.
2. Sound out letters, identify high-frequency words (common, or 'sight' words) in stories.
3. Use repetition often to consolidate the teaching and learning of sounds and letters.
4. Provide opportunities for reading a variety of texts, to obtain meaning from sounds, letters and words.
5. Support the teaching of spelling by helping children to

understand that sounds create different letter combinations.

6. Help children to sound out unfamiliar words and encourage self-correction.

7. Support children to make predictions, identify the main idea in paragraphs and practise summarising.

We want all children to be happy, confident readers and writers. See the resource list below and enjoy working with teachers at your school to help the students who come to your library to find books that will support their literacy and love of reading.

### Resources for library professionals and teachers

Australian Curriculum: Australian National Literacy Learning Progression. <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/national-literacy-and-numeracy-learning-progressions/national-literacy-learning-progression/reading-and-viewing/?subElementId=50898&scaleId=0>

Australian Government Department of Education and Training (funder) and Education Services Australia (manager). (2021) The Literacy Hub. <https://literacyhub.edu.au/>

AUSPELD Recommended literacy apps for primary school children. <https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/Information%20Sheet%2036%20-%20Recommended%20Literacy%20Apps%20for%20primary.pdf>

AUSPELD supports students and adults throughout Australia struggling with both learning difficulties and specific learning disorders. A directory of selected apps is available in the target areas of phonological awareness, phonics, reading, writing and vocabulary/grammar. SCIS No. 5364143

(Reviewed by Nigel Paull in *Connections* 118)

Evidence for Learning: <https://evidenceforlearning.org.au>

Evidence for Learning: technical appendix <https://evidenceforlearning.org.au/the-toolkits/the-teaching-and-learning-toolkit/all-approaches/phonics/technical-appendix/five-from-five>: <https://fivefromfive.com.au>

New South Wales Government Department of Education (June 2020): Effective reading in the early years of school: Phonological awareness. <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/literacy-and-numeracy/teaching-and-learning-resources/literacy/effective-reading-in-the-early-years-of-school/phonological-awareness>

Victorian Government Department of Education and Training (July 2021) Literacy teaching kit: Phonics. <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/readingviewing/Pages/litfocusphonics.aspx#link75>



**Judith Barker**

Award-winning children's author, teacher and education consultant

Judith Barker is passionate about lending a 'helping hand' to those involved in the art of teaching basic reading skills.

Visit <https://www.woodslane.com.au/> to find publications by Judith.

# Supporting Australian book creators

Author Nova Weetman talks to SCIS about her novel *Sick Bay*, the PLR and ELR schemes and the secrets of libraries.

I grew up in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne along the Yarra River from Warrandyte, in a sleepy orchard town called Wonga Park. It wasn't big enough for a permanent library. Instead, we relied on the weekly visit of a mobile library full of books. By the time I was ten, I was allowed to ride my yellow bike alone down the road to the tennis courts where the mobile van parked on Tuesdays between 4.00 and 5.30 pm.

First, I'd return my pile of books. Then I'd browse for as long as I could before borrowing some more. As many as I could carry in the cane basket on the front of my bike. The book choice was limited, but we could make requests. Reading was my world. In primary school, it was Judy Blume and Agatha Christie. When I scored an old black typewriter as a birthday present, I started to write murder mysteries, carrying around a suitcase of props as possible murder weapons. Then it was onto Virginia Andrews and the Sweet Dreams series.

In high school we had a library. It was big and well-resourced, but there were limits to the number of books we could borrow. Five a week was not enough for me. So, I dated a boy in Year 7 for three days just to use his library card. That's how committed I was.

Between reading everything I could get my hands on, I wrote. Angry poetry, mopey love songs, short stories and then finally a novel. It was unpublishable but it was long. Like many authors, my road to publication was slow and meandering. I never intended writing for younger readers but when I had a small child of my own, I found myself writing a young adult novel. When it was published, I realised I'd found my happy place. Years later, I'm still writing for younger readers and between publications, I make a living visiting schools and running writing workshops and talks. These are often held in school libraries, surrounded by students who love books as much as I do. It's a pretty special job.

I'm still a member of a library. Three in fact. And the first thing my teen daughter and I do when a lockdown is announced is race to one of them and stock up. We often don't even bother with checking titles, and just grab anything with a cover we like. In



Nova Weetman holding her latest novel, *The Edge of Thirteen*, SCIS ID 1999399

Melbourne's long lockdown last year, we ran out of books. We hadn't borrowed enough for the endless weeks, and we found ourselves swapping. I read her teen dramas and she read my tales of Irish woe. We found new favourite authors and unexpected joy.

A library means access to stories you'd never dream of if you bought a book in a shop. It means stepping outside your comfort zone, reading something just because you like the cover, or the feel of the paper.

When it came time to choose schools for my children, the first place my daughter and I would suss out on a tour was the library. She chose her primary school this way. And then she chose her high school the same way. Now my children are both at a government school with a library at its heart. At lunchtime it's so full that the librarians sometimes rotate students.

My middle-grade novel, *Sick Bay*, features a girl called Meg who spends a lot of time hanging out in the school sick bay reading *Anne of Green Gables*. I've had people ask me why she didn't go to the school library instead of the sick bay. It's not like she's sick. The reason is that her school didn't have a library that was open at lunchtime. Many schools don't. So

students like Meg must find somewhere else to hide out.

I think about those students who can't access books. Those students who don't have shelves of reading at home, or computers to access the world. Those students who want nothing more than to crack a book open and hold it in their hands and read.

Libraries aren't just for borrowing books. They are for sitting and thinking, for escaping, for just being. For an author they are also an income stream. I remember when I published my first book and received a small advance. I didn't know about the Australian Government's Educational Lending Right (ELR) and Public Lending Right (PLR) schemes. Another author explained it to me as if passing on a great secret. Eligible Australian authors and publishers receive annual payments through ELR and PLR as compensation for the copies of their books held in educational and public libraries. Each year that money is often enough to keep my family going for a few months. Without it, I'd be stuck.

I launched my last book in a library down the road. We felt naughty sipping champagne and eating cake. In a library! But it was perfect. Surrounded by books and bookish folk, the library is still my favourite place to be.

Further information about the Australian Lending Right Schemes is available at: <https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/lending-rights>

## Image credits

Image supplied by Nova Weetman.



**Nova Weetman**

Author

[www.novaweetman.com.au](http://www.novaweetman.com.au)

Nova Weetman is a writer for books, film and television. She received an AWGIE nomination for best short screenplay and the Best Short Film Award from the Melbourne International Film Festival. She has also won the HarperCollins Fellowship and the FAW Award for Best Unpublished Manuscript.



# EDUCATION IN DIFFICULT TIMES

**David de Carvalho, CEO of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) writes about the value of NAPLAN through the pandemic.**

**We already know** that COVID-19 made 2020 a year in which many of the standard approaches to education had to be shaken up. It's now apparent 2021 will be just as significant on the schooling front.

The global pandemic has changed all of our lives and the ripple effect is immense. Even when we are all vaccinated and the infections and deaths have stopped, the impact on all aspects of life will be felt for years. What of the educational effect? What have we learnt?

On the upside, COVID-19 has led to a greater appreciation of our teachers' professionalism and dedication. But the disruption to NAPLAN created a gap in national comparative data at a time when our results from international assessments show how important that information is.

For parents, there was no nationally consistent point-in-time assessment in 2020 to help them understand how their children were progressing against national standards in literacy and numeracy.

We know, through ACARA's ongoing engagement with national peak parent representatives and through the many enquiries we have received from individual parents, that the lack of data around the impact of school closures and remote learning from home associated with the pandemic is a real concern.

This makes the data for this year's NAPLAN assessment particularly important.

NAPLAN returned in May this year, with more than 1.2 million students from more than 9,000 schools taking part in the tests. Of those, about 70% did NAPLAN Online, submitting more than 2.9 million online tests from 870,000 students.

NAPLAN, including the online format, is a truly collaborative effort, with multiple organisations across all states and territories working together. That it went smoothly this year is a testament to the efforts of education authorities, our schools and our teachers.

The online tests are more engaging for many students and are 'tailored', which means the test adapts to student responses, presenting students with questions that may be more or less difficult depending on the correctness of their answers. This means better assessment and more precise results.

By the time you are reading this, ACARA will have published the summary results. The insights provided by the data will be one measure we can look to when considering the impact that COVID-19 has had on students' attainment of the foundational literacy and numeracy skills that NAPLAN measures.

Later this year, final results will be available in the National Report, giving a good picture of how school closures and remote learning and teaching have affected progress for different student sub-groups and geographic areas.

Governments and school systems can also use the results to identify those educational practices that are working to improve student outcomes. This aspect of the tests is often overlooked.

“The global pandemic has changed all of our lives and the ripple effect is immense. Even when we are all vaccinated and the infections and deaths have stopped, the impact on all aspects of life will be felt for years. What of the educational effect? What have we learnt?”

To identify such practices, you have to look for schools that have consistently achieved a level of progress that is above what you would expect, given the socio-educational background of the students, rather than looking solely at overall achievement levels.

Last year, ACARA analysed NAPLAN data at the school level and discovered that when you look at progress rather than just overall achievement, high-performing schools can be found right across the socio-educational spectrum. The things these schools tend to have in common are practices such as explicit teaching, good use of data about student learning and a collaborative approach to professional development.

Without NAPLAN, we would not have been able to identify these common practices of high-performing schools. NAPLAN data also helps education authorities identify schools where additional support and resourcing may be needed.

This valuable information will continue to be enriched as we transition to all students completing NAPLAN tests online in 2022.

For more information on the 2021 NAPLAN Summary data, [visit the NAP website](https://reports.acara.edu.au/NAP).



**David de Carvalho**

CEO  
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)  
<https://reports.acara.edu.au/NAP>

# UNIQUE LIBRARIES: THE SCHOOL OF ST JUDE IN TANZANIA

Read this report written by our friends at St Jude's to see all the things the school's three libraries are doing with few resources but great dedication to their students. If you would like to support their efforts with books – or even volunteer at the school in the future – see below.

**The School of** St Jude is a unique school that is home to three unique libraries.

St Jude's is located in Arusha, Tanzania. The school provides 1,800 bright students from poor backgrounds with free, quality education. Established in 2002 with just three students, St Jude's now stretches across three campuses. There is a primary school, a girls' O Level school (the first four years of secondary) and another secondary school, which comprises boys' O Level and co-educational A Level (the final two years of secondary). Each of the schools has its own library.

In Tanzania, school libraries are few and far between. The staff in our three libraries have a challenge on their hands – to provide our students with quality library resources and services with a limited budget. 'We have beautiful libraries,' smiles Miss Judith, the librarian at our girls' secondary school. 'Now, we are putting more focus on getting the right materials for our students.'

'We always love when people donate books on our wishlist. And we love to welcome experienced library volunteers, people who would like to see what we're doing and share their recommendations and expertise,' Miss Judith says.

## Primary Library

Mr Forehead is St Jude's primary library teacher. He's never met another Tanzanian with the same job. 'It is not a common role,' he laughs. 'I don't know any others.'

Mr Forehead has worked at St Jude's for 13 years, starting as a library guard. Then he completed a diploma and Bachelor of Teaching. Today, he mainly teaches library classes. 'I teach students how to utilise the library, how to find books, how to borrow and how to take care of the books,' he explains.

When students begin at St Jude's, in Standard 1 or 2 (the first years of primary school), it's usually their first time in a library. 'When they first arrive, they are so excited about the library,'

explains Mr Forehead. It's also their first time speaking English, as St Jude's is an English medium school, where all subjects (except Kiswahili) are taught in English. The libraries play an important role in helping students learn the new language. 'Reading definitely helps them to improve their English,' says Mr Forehead. 'You'll see when they start, you give them a book and they'll just know one or two words, and then over time, as we read more and more, it just improves so much.'

Mr Forehead has lots of ideas for encouraging reading. 'The students have reading competitions and then they make presentations about what they have read. And I always remind them to bring their library bags so they can borrow a book to read at home. And the young ones especially, I give them stickers when they finish a book, which gives them a lot of motivation. I also remind them to read the right books for their level, so they don't get discouraged,' he says.

“When students begin at St Jude's, in Standard 1 or 2 (the first years of primary school), it's usually their first time in a library. 'When they first arrive, they are so excited about the library.'”



Mr Forehead, a primary library teacher, reads to some of his youngest students.



Mr Forehead helps his students borrow new books.

Mr Forehead's enthusiasm for reading is particularly remarkable given that his own school did not have a library. 'We had a few books in boxes which were kept in the headmaster's office and if you wanted to borrow a book, you would have to ask the headmaster. A year might go by without anyone borrowing the books and then you would find they had been spoiled,' he recalls.

### Girls' Secondary Library

Miss Sylvia is the Library Assistant at St Jude's Girls' Secondary School library. She takes a keen interest in her students to help them thrive in their first four years of secondary education.

Miss Sylvia's efforts are rewarded as she sees their appetite for reading bloom. 'My students are big fans of novels. The most popular books are those in the Twilight series by Stephenie Meyer and the Mortal Instruments series by Cassandra Clare,' she says. But, Miss Sylvia isn't content to leave her students to read only the most popular books. 'I get to know students and staff members, so when they visit I can tell them about the certain things they're interested in. So, students start to think, "Oh, Miss Sylvia is really interested in me," and it makes them feel important, that I care about them.'



Students from St Jude's Girls' Secondary School catch up on the news during lunch time.

In St Jude's libraries there are more than books on offer. The secondary libraries in particular are hubs for other activities. During breaks and after school, the libraries are full of students studying. 'In addition to borrowing and reading, they can use the computers for research, use the reference books and read newspapers,' explains Miss Sylvia. While St Jude's has computer labs and classrooms, our students do not have the same, constant access to computers as most Australian students, so the library computers are popular additions.

The libraries also contribute to the school's thriving program of extracurricular activities. 'We host the journalism club in our library once a week,' says Miss Sylvia. 'We also have games in the library, including Scrabble and puzzles, which are very popular.'

### SCIS and St Jude's

For the last two years, SCIS has supported St Jude's by donating their annual licensing fee and it's made a huge difference in our libraries. 'SCIS is a great help. We can do smarter cataloguing of materials and it fits perfectly with Oliver [their library

management system]. We are saving time and it makes it much easier for us to find the correct resources,' enthuses Miss Judith.

SCIS also assisted library staff with a series of webinars in 2020 to help them get up to speed and make the most of everything SCIS has to offer. Mr Forehead recalls, 'I especially liked learning about headings and subjects and the importance of that in the system.'

In a country without a huge network of libraries, it's been great for St Jude's library staff to have a link to experts in Australia for inspiration and learning.

### The Impact of COVID-19

Over the years, St Jude's libraries have been stocked with books donated by generous visitors. The school prepares a 'wishlist' of requested books each year so that visitors who wish to donate books can bring those which will be most useful.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 has reduced our international visitors from around 1,100 every year to almost zero. And no visitors means no new books. 'The biggest challenge is having enough books. The students love to read, and they've almost read all the books,' says Mr Forehead.

In our secondary schools, there's a great need for non-fiction resources. 'On our wishlist, there's a lot of science content, because our students love science. We really need resources to support their studies in addition to the curriculum,' explains Miss Judith.

### A crucial role

St Jude's strives to provide our 1,800 students with high-quality education, for free. Our libraries have a crucial role to play in this mission. They support our students' English skills, provide a safe place for study and research, allow our students to discover new worlds and help them to form friendships and gain support.

St Jude's is incredibly grateful to SCIS for their support. With SCIS, our library staff have more time to spend with students, supporting, guiding and inspiring them as they learn and grow.

### Image credits

All photographs supplied by The School of St Jude, Arusha, Tanzania © The School of St Jude, Arusha, Tanzania.



**Rebecca Hansford,**  
Communications Officer  
The School of St Jude

If you would like to donate books to St Jude's, please contact us for a copy of our wishlist. We can then arrange for staff or visitors to bring the books to Tanzania. Or, you could even visit yourself! We would love to welcome any experienced librarians for short-term volunteer opportunities in our libraries. Please contact [info@schoolofstjude.co.tz](mailto:info@schoolofstjude.co.tz)

You can also visit our website [www.schoolofstjude.org](http://www.schoolofstjude.org) or follow us on social media to keep up to date with all our latest news and inspiring stories.

# SCHOOL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT: XAVIER COLLEGE, BURKE HALL

SCIS speaks to Fiona O'Rourke, a teacher librarian at Xavier College, Melbourne, about starting her new job in a time of COVID-19 lockdowns.

## 1. What is your job title, and what challenges are you facing?

I have just commenced at Xavier College, Burke Hall as a part-time teacher librarian for the Middle Years.

Beginning a new job in a school can be both exciting and daunting. However, when you begin at the commencement of Lockdown 5.0 and are thrust into remote learning it really is a whole new level of adventure. It was a career first, further complicated by the challenge of learning how to use unfamiliar digital tools such as MS Teams when I was used to Zoom, using a Mac when I have always had a PC! Mindset is everything. I viewed it as an exciting opportunity to learn. The experience did not disappoint. The learning curve was steep and often mid-lesson with the students as my teachers.

The Head of Learning Resources and a fellow teacher librarian were very generous with their time and expertise, showing me how to call the roll, upload lessons to the learning management system as well as the basics of MS Teams. Armed with this knowledge, I dived into my first online class with Year 8s. The homeroom teacher introduced me and kindly stayed for the lesson. It is these small acts of kindness that make a deep impact on you.

No matter how well you have planned or strategised, when your students tell you that you sound like a computer or you are lagging, your heart skips a beat, and you know you need to pivot. The reality is that it affects the flow of your lesson. That may mean restarting the call, asking a student to co-present or praying to your network provider. When you have not yet met your students, it really is a leap of faith. You are trusting them to help you. Working together and problem-solving can lead to a deeper connection with them. Letting the students know at the beginning of each class that I was new to the programs and that I would love their help and advice was viewed not as a weakness but as an opportunity to share

their expertise.

Online breakout rooms have been extremely useful, making it easier to have meaningful conversations and to ascertain student understanding of the task at hand. Personally, it has been more important to forgo the lesson content and to invest in the time to connect.

There are many wonderful educators sharing ideas and resources about surviving remote learning. Kathleen Morris's blog has been a life-saver, helping me to create online content for my students. My favourite tools are Canva (creating digital posters), Loom (creating screencasts) MS PowerPoint (recording presentations) and iMovie (recording read-aloud stories). MS PowerPoint was a great place to start my digital content creation journey as each slide could be recorded separately. I found it time-consuming as I was tripping over words or forgetting important points. MS PowerPoint allowed me to keep each slide narration short and to the point.

Many years ago, I read Bill Cullen's *It's a Long Way from Penny Apples* and was struck by his mother's counsel: 'Say nothing till ya hear more.' I have found this advice to be invaluable both professionally and personally. As I begin my journey here at Xavier College, I am mindful of pausing, taking time to actively listen to others, reflecting on what it means for me, the community of learners and the library.

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

Building learner and teacher capacity as well as promoting student voice and agency are the most rewarding aspects of working in a school library.

I endeavour to create a culture of 'learning how to learn' as explained by Guy Claxton, emeritus Professor of the Learning Sciences at the University of Winchester, well-known for his Building Learning Power approach to teaching. Information has grown exponentially, and it is important to

give learners the tools to be discerning when selecting content. It is rewarding when you see students independently access your LibGuide in preference to doing a Google search. However, it is more pleasing when you see them ask questions about the author and purpose of a website.

Equally important is the concept of student voice and agency. When students have co-ownership of what and how they learn, it makes learning more meaningful and purposeful. As curators and caretakers of information we also need to be co-creators. Taking the time to listen to what the students want and enlisting their help with actioning it brings me the greatest joy. Such collaborations have given birth to projects such as the creation of a Young Adult collection for Year 5 and Year 6 students in my previous school.

“Taking the time to listen to what the students want and enlisting their help with actioning it brings me the greatest joy.”

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

Collaboration, conversation and convenience (ease of access to the collection), and these principles guide my practice. I love Montiel-Overall's (2006) work on the different levels of collaboration. As I embark on my teacher librarian (TL)

role here at Xavier College, I have begun with her lower levels of coordination and cooperation. I, a TL colleague and Senior School LibGuide guru and the Year 7 teachers have collaboratively revamped the LibGuide for the current Humanities inquiry unit. Teachers have booked in extra sessions and students have given insightful feedback on what works well and what needs to be improved.

The power of conversation cannot be underestimated. Those incidental chats in the hallways can lead to monumental change. The ease of access to the collection is paramount. If library users cannot access content easily and in multimodal formats we need to rethink and change how we service the community. I love how our Middle Years library has two rows of front-facing shelves above its other shelves. Also, each fiction series has a special spine label with the ordinal number of the book. Authors with multiple series are colour-coded.

Watching a student-created film clip *Burke Hall: What does the Library mean to you?* gave me a great sense of my new place of work and its purpose. I was particularly struck by this comment: 'I am not a great reader but the library makes me feel safe.' It highlights another important role that libraries play – helping to maintaining the wellbeing of our students.

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

It is exciting to see that my new school wants to continuously reflect and improve. I am excited to be a part of re-energising the whole school's reading culture. The Head of Learning Resources is passionate about our reading culture and is a crucial advocate at leadership meetings. I am looking forward to our in-house symposium *Turning the Page: An Exploration into the Joy of Reading*.

At present, the school has a well-established Year 7 and Year 8 reading program called Read to Succeed. Students have a dedicated library session once a cycle where they log their reading, engage in 1:1 conversations with the teacher librarian and choose books they want to read.

Sessions exposing students to different genres are beneficial; however, it is more important that students know that all types of reading are acceptable. Initiatives

such as Book Club and Buddy Reading also play an important role in promoting reading at the school. Challenges? For all of these things to be effective, collaboration and shared responsibility are imperative across all teaching faculties, and include administration staff, students and parents.

“ SCIS is invaluable. It is a cost-effective and time-saving alternative to cataloguing your collection while lending authority and uniformity to your Subject Headings – for both print material and digital content. ”

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

The days of cardigan wearing, shushing librarians are disappearing. I still love to wear a colourful cardigan; however, I encourage students to see the library as a space for fun, collaboration and creativity, a place to chat, laugh and share ideas.

For me, makerspaces and libraries are a good fit. I have always taken the lead from the students. A few years ago, I invited a class to put forward their ideas, thinking beyond the possible and imagining a futuristic space. Examining their responses and dialoguing with them, it was easy to see what the challenges and aspirations were. One student wanted a robot to reshelve the books! Exploring this idea further led to the library purchasing a Lego Mindstorms robot. Thus began my journey into robotics and makerspaces.

During the cold winter months, I have previously organised a buddy reading program before school. Students escaping the cold have been pleasantly surprised how enjoyable it is to read with a younger student. Even students who don't view themselves as good readers have enjoyed being a role-model to their fledgling reading partner.

#### 6. What is your favourite thing about SCIS?

SCIS is invaluable. It is a cost-effective and time-saving alternative to cataloguing your collection while lending authority and uniformity to your Subject Headings – for both print material and digital content.

As with any service, it is important that the user experience is effortless. With pertinent professional learning workshops offered, this has certainly been my experience. I enjoy reading *Connections*. My favourite section is the App review. I also love accessing relevant information on SCIS's Twitter feed. SCIS is also a great resource for curating curriculum resources. I use the SCIS catalogue to discover new digital resources. As SCIS itself says, using their digital repository certainly is 'a great way to future-proof your library in a digital age'.

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**Fiona O'Rourke**  
Teacher librarian  
Xavier College, Melbourne

# AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT: VANESSA LEN

SCIS speaks to Australian author Vanessa Len about why she wrote her first novel, *Only a Monster* – and what happened next.

## Tell us a bit about your journey towards becoming a published writer.

*Only a Monster* is a young adult novel about a monster girl whose summer is ruined when the cute guy at work turns out to be a monster slayer! It's my first novel, and the journey to its publication has been exciting, surreal, and sometimes just a lot of work.

The book began at a dinner with some friends. It turned out that we had all been thinking about writing novels, and we made a pact to do it. So far, three published novels have come out of that dinner, and I'm sure there'll be many more. It really helped to have a support network of friends on the same journey – writing a book can be a solitary endeavour, but it doesn't have to be.

I wanted to try publishing the book 'traditionally', which means selling the rights to publishers rather than publishing the book yourself. One way to do that is to find a literary agent to represent you. I was lucky that my amazing agent, Tracey, read the manuscript and liked it. She is based in the US, but she and her husband Josh represent lots of young adult novelists in Melbourne, so they have a great understanding of working with international authors.

Tracey took the manuscript 'on submission' – which means that she sent the manuscript to editors at various US publishers. At the same time, her co-agents overseas sent the manuscript to publishers in other countries. For me, it was a whirlwind time of nerves and excitement and sleeplessness (everything was happening in the middle of the night for me). For the first week, I woke up each morning to 'rejection letters' (emails from editors saying that they had decided not to buy the book). I got very sick of seeing my own name, because it was in the subject line of all the rejection emails!

But then, a week into the submission process, everything started to get very surreal – a German publisher bought the book! And then a few days later, a Spanish publisher bought it. Two weeks after that, the book went to auction in the US. And a couple of weeks after that, a Hollywood production company bought the film and TV rights. Then it sold to my amazing Australian publisher, Allen & Unwin, and then to Serbia, Russia and the UK ...

Sometimes, I still can't believe it all really happened (is happening!).

The most exciting thing is that my friends from that dinner have had very similar experiences with their own books. I think that there's a lot of opportunities for Australian novelists to publish here and internationally – you just have to finish that book!



## What were the biggest challenges along the way?

I'd written short stories, but nothing novel length, so at the beginning the biggest challenge was trying to figure out how to write a novel. I found myself googling things like 'How long is a chapter?' and 'How do you create a character?' and 'What happens next in my plot?' (Sadly, Google didn't have an answer for that last one!)

It was a steep learning curve. I read a lot of craft books about how to write a novel, but in the end I found that the best way to learn how to write was to read and to watch TV shows and movies – to see how other people tell stories. I analysed ways to create characters, set up twists, structure scenes, and more. And I wanted to write a book that was fun to read, so I was also really interested in the mechanics of 'page-turniness'.

## Where did the idea for *Only a Monster* come from?

When I was growing up, the heroes of stories didn't often look and sound like me, but the 'bad guys' sometimes did. I wanted to write about what it feels like when the hero of the story isn't necessarily the hero of *your* story: what it feels like to be the 'monster' of the book.

At the same time, I wanted to write the kind of book that I would want to read, so I put in all the things I like – twists and turns, a fast pace, magical powers, time travel, heists!

## How do you find a creative voice that will speak to the most diverse range of children possible?

That's a really interesting question! We all have our own likes and dislikes when it comes to stories, and we all come to books with different perspectives (I'm sure we've all had the experience of loving a book that someone else doesn't like). I'd love to see lots and lots of diverse voices published so that children have lots of books to choose from. That way each child might find something that speaks to them from among those many voices.

## Image credits

Images supplied by Vanessa Len.



Vanessa Len is a Melbourne writer and an educational editor. Her first novel, *Only a Monster*, comes out in February 2022 with Allen & Unwin. You can find her on Instagram at [vanessa.len\\_writes](https://www.instagram.com/vanessa.len_writes) and via her website at [www.vanessalen.com](http://www.vanessalen.com)

# WEBSITE + APP REVIEWS

Scan the QR codes to visit websites and apps!

## THE A-Z OF AI

<https://atozofai.withgoogle.com/intl/en-US/>

The Oxford Internet Institute at Oxford University and Google have collaborated to produce this straightforward guide to the multifaceted world of artificial intelligence. Searchable by specific subject or broader categories.

SCIS no: 5378293



## BE MY EYES

<https://apps.apple.com/au/app/apple-store/id905177575>

By using phone camera technology, over 3 million volunteers worldwide are available to individually assist the visually impaired or blind with a variety of tasks. These include: reading small print; sorting clothes by colour; reading screens; or operating ticket and vending machines.

SCIS no: 5378316



## ESAKIDS

<https://apps.apple.com/au/app/esakids/id1527436992>

The European Space Agency has developed an app specifically for students K- 4. This free app encourages students to explore space and add to their knowledge base. Activities include: a variety of games; matching activities; and undertaking specific missions, such as cleaning up space debris.

SCIS no: 5378393



## FABRICIUS

<https://artsexperiments.withgoogle.com/fabricius/en>

Ancient history and computing studies teachers will discover exciting teaching possibilities with this resource. Using machine learning to decode Egyptian hieroglyphs, students can learn basic steps in hieroglyphs, play coding games and uncover additional ways artificial intelligence can be used.

SCIS no: 5378411



## FIRST NATIONS

<https://australian.museum/learn/first-nations/>

The Australian Museum in Sydney holds an extensive collection of First Nations realia, information, and cultural material. Resources are available covering a variety of pertinent subjects, often interpreted by writers from First Nations. The website also provides details of forthcoming exhibitions and programs.

SCIS no: 5364140



## HISTORY IN THE MAKING

<https://www.historyinthemaking.ais.wa.edu.au>

This website offers a collection of K-6 history teaching and learning programs based on the Australian Curriculum. A feature is the wide variety of resource materials from various Australian education bodies.

SCIS no: 5378442



## INATURALIST AUSTRALIA

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

This website supports the work of citizen scientists who use the iNaturalist phone app to record plants and animals. Users can share their results and assist scientists involved with the Atlas of Living Australia.

SCIS no: 5378461



## NARRAGUNAWALI: RECONCILIATION IN EDUCATION

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

Support material is available from this website for schools to 'develop environments that foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions'. Included are sections on reconciliation action plans, curriculum resources and professional learning material.

SCIS no: 5377845



### OUR KIWI LEGACY

<https://www.capitalkiwi.co.nz/>

Restoring a large, wild population of the iconic Kiwi bird to the Wellington region is the focus of this NZ website. Suitable for secondary teachers looking for a case study for sustainability and environmental education lessons.

SCIS no: 5378473



### TAYASUI SKETCHES

<https://apps.apple.com/au/app/tayasui-sketches-draw-paint/id641900855>

This app allows users to create sketches, artworks and illustrations from a mobile device. A variety of unique virtual tools can be used, including an air brush, filling tool, wet and dry brushes and a cutter. Free, with additional features available via in-app purchase.

SCIS no: 5378558



### TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS GAMES

<https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/traditional-indigenous-games>

A variety of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander games are available for teachers to use with age-appropriate classes. These games will assist with the enhancement of understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

SCIS no: 5378572



**Nigel Paull**

Teacher Librarian  
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*The websites and apps selected for review are often of a professional nature and should be initially viewed by teachers and library staff to determine suitability for students. The links, content and address of these sites are subject to change.*

# Enhance your reading resources with quality decodable InitialLit Readers



Evidence has shown that systematic synthetic phonics is the fastest way to develop early literacy. Offering phonic decodable readers for loan at your school library will help students practise at home the new skills they have learned in class.

MultiLit, an Australian publisher, has developed four sets of 60 carefully sequenced phonic readers for children who are just learning to read. InitialLit Readers are now also available via subscription to the MultiLit eLibrary.

