Reading for pleasure

Professor Teresa Cremin looks at the latest research on reading for pleasure, and how it can be used in the school library.

A fond farewell

Caroline Roche reflects on the last six years as SLG chair
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A fond farewell

SLG chair Caroline Roche has been at the helm for the last 6 years, guiding the committee through some challenging and equally exciting times. Here Caroline reflects on her period as chair and talks about her hopes for SLG in the future.

It is with a mixture of emotions that I write this Introduction and farewell. I am finally standing down as Chair of SLG, after an extended term of office of six years. My term of office ends in December 2022, although the official handover will be at Conference 2023.

The last six years leading SLG have been the honour of my life. I know that sounds like a cliché, but for me, those words are true. The Committee has accomplished many things during those six years, and I enjoyed leading the team through them. One of the things we are really proud of is our new book ‘Creating a School Library with Impact’. The book was co-written by members of the Committee – Barbara Band, Lucy Chambers, Annie Everall, Sarah Pavey, and myself, and ably edited by Ellen Krajewski and Nick Cavender. By the time we finished the book, Lucy and Ellen had finished their terms of office, but continued with the book, and Nick Cavender had joined us. He quickly took on the job of editing with Ellen, who was now Chair of Judges for the Carnegie Greenaway Award and so had less time available to her.

The book’s conception arose from a discussion, which I led, about how we could help and guide new librarians, and get them skilled up for this demanding role. All of us had seen many questions from new librarians asking for help, especially on Facebook groups. This book is our response, and we hope to help others with the expertise that SLG has built up over the years we have collectively worked in and with school libraries, both primary and secondary.

Alongside the book, we have developed an Open University Badged Open Course (BOC). An Introduction to School Librarianship is a free course, again aimed at beginners, that is available now at https://tinyurl.com/3486d9wm. Committee member Rosalind Buckland took the lead on this, alongside Barbara Band, Sarah Pavey and Nick Cavender.

During the pandemic, we worked as hard as always, switching to Zoom Committee meetings seamlessly. As we had been due to have a Conference in April 2020, we had to immediately transform this to digital. Annie Everall, our
Conference Manager, did this superbly, and I think we were the first SIG to go digital in this way. All credit goes to all of the team, and especially to Bev Humphrey our digital manager at the time, who managed to pull this off seamlessly. We also continued to put on webinars and other learning opportunities throughout all of the various stages of lockdown.

Working with Nick Poole, CEO of CILIP, and Alison Tarrant who leads the School Libraries Association (SLA), I worked on a statement about working in school libraries during the frightening times of the pandemic. We put out a joint statement about what was then known about safety, incorporating DfE advice. As you can imagine, this was difficult as not too much was then known about how and why the virus spread; but we answered questions around quarantining books, handling money and wiping surfaces to keep school librarians safe. Librarians used this advice to go to their Senior Leadership Teams who needed to know how to keep their libraries open for students as far as was possible. It was amazing to see how school librarians carried on working throughout the pandemic, first from home and then in restricted and frightening conditions, not even knowing how this mystery virus spread, but having to be at school. I couldn’t have been more proud to have been in this profession during that time.

Behind the scenes, during my time with SLG I have had the chance to be part of the team that advised Cressida Cowell’s campaign for more libraries in primary schools; at a literacy conference at senior level leading to later work on an APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group), working as co-Chair on the amazing Great School Libraries Campaign; and other such opportunities where questions about school libraries have been asked at higher levels and passed on to our team. Many of those you may never hear about, but they are our chance to have our say where it matters.

As I said, it has been the honour of my life, and I will miss being Chair dreadfully. But I know that the new Chair – Nick Cavender – who has been my VC all this year, is a fantastic leader and will lead SLG on to greater things yet. There is strength in working together, and in partnership working. During my time I have seen some partnerships restored – with ILG and YLG in particular, and a new working relationship forged with the SLA. All of this takes time to work itself out, but Nick Cavender will carry on what I began here.

What do I wish for the future? – That’s easy! A library in every single school, primary or secondary, overseen by an inspirational and trained school librarian. Primary schools may have to share access to a full time librarian, but everyone should have this chance. Our book and the course should help with this dream.

I have a dream …

Caroline Roche
This deeply researched, highly practical book is a must-read for education leaders, librarians and all those concerned with young people's literacy.’ - Richard Gerver

Out now! Our introductory manual for anyone entering or looking to enter the world of school librarianship in primary or secondary school settings. It provides readers with everything they need to know from day one. There is so much packed into this book, there is something for the more experienced librarian too.

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The School Libraries Group (SLG) are delighted that The Open University (OU) has launched a new free online course, An Introduction to School Librarianship, on OpenLearn, their free learning platform.

The course content is delivered through video and supporting activities in which experienced practitioners, Sarah Pavey and Nick Cavender, guide participants through topics such as the librarian’s role in the school, creating a reading rich culture, and independent study and information literacy skills.

SLG recognises that increasing numbers of people find themselves in charge of a school library with little or no formal qualifications or experience, and we are committed to developing the professionalism of school librarians with the aim of encouraging them to join CILIP and become Certified or Chartered members of the profession.

With this in mind, the online course, along with the accompanying book Creating a School Library with Impact, (Facet Publishing, 2022) was the brainchild of Caroline Roche and is the culmination of her six-year tenure as chair of SLG. Caroline said “I am incredibly proud of the team who worked both on the book and the OpenLearn course. SLG are dedicated to ensuring that all school librarians have the opportunity to become professionally qualified, and these resources are the first stepping stone to achieving this.”

Selena Killick from The Open University Library said “Librarians are always supporting each other, and it’s been a real honour for us to be able to support the SLG with our world-leading digital learning expertise here at the OU. An Introduction to School Librarianship has been an excellent addition to our suite of free learning courses available to everyone.”

The course, available online at https://tinyurl.com/3486d9wm, is free to all, and you do not need to be a CILIP member to enrol. However, if you join CILIP you can take advantage of further CPD offered by SLG and CILIP as well as discounts on Facet publications.
Reading for pleasure

Reading for pleasure is a hot topic, as OFSTED are taking a keen interest in schools' approaches, during their inspections. In this article, Professor Teresa Cremin looks at the latest research on reading for pleasure and how it can be used to benefit school libraries.

Reading for pleasure, a term more commonly used in England than elsewhere, is essentially volitional, choice-led reading of any kind of text. Often described as ‘recreational’ or ‘free voluntary reading’, it is undertaken for the personal satisfaction of the reader in their own time and has been positioned as every child’s right (International Literacy Association, 2018).

Interest in such self-directed reading - reading for pleasure - has grown in recent years. Whilst librarians have always recognised the value of choice-led reading, nowadays we find policy makers, researchers, literacy organisations and educators all turning their attention to young people’s desire to read. This is partly due to an international decline in the number of young people who are choosing to read in their own time (e.g., International Literacy Association, 2018; McGrane et al., 2017), and partly in response to research evidence which reveals that volitional reading is associated with greater engagement with learning and stronger academic outcomes (Mullis et al., 2017; OECD, 2019; Sullivan and Brown, 2015). Increasingly this is also acknowledged as a matter of social justice, with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stating that ‘being a frequent reader is more of an advantage than having well educated parents and that finding ways to engage students in reading may be one of the most effective ways to leverage social change’ (OECD Publishing, 2001, p.3). Recently the OECD (2021) affirmed that engagement in reading, framed by a desire to read for pleasure can mediate socio-economic status and may help address endemic inequalities.

This article offers a summary of some recent research evidence in this area in order to widen knowledge and understanding and enable informed conversations about timetabling and budgets between librarians and senior management. In such discussions, I recommend highlighting societal concerns about the decline in young people’s recreational reading, and through the use of attitude surveys, indicating any school based challenges in this regard, as well as drawing attention to the associated benefits of being a childhood reader.
Declining attitudes to and engagement in reading

International studies document a decline in the number of children who enjoy reading (OECD, 2019). In England for instance, in the most recent PIRLS, despite being 10th internationally in relation to reading achievement, 20% of the 10-year-olds reported that they did not like reading at all (McGrane et al., 2017). This exceeded the international median of 17% and positioned England in a rather contradictory context. Are we are developing readers who can score well in reading tests, but who do not care to read?

In the most recent National Literacy Trust (NLT) survey, disinterest in reading was again evidenced (Cole et al., 2022). In examining over 70,000 responses from young people aged 8-18 years, the team found that less than half (47.8%) reported enjoying reading. This is the equal lowest level recorded by the NLT since 2005. Additionally, studies continue to indicate that reading enjoyment declines towards the end of primary school (Nootens et al., 2019) and deteriorates across the years of adolescence (e.g., Cole et al., 2022; Merga et al., 2018). Book ownership is also seen to decrease with age, with far fewer young people aged 14 or above reporting that they had a book of their own at home compared with their younger counterparts (Clark et al., 2021). Unsurprisingly, those young people who report having more books at home report much higher levels of pleasure in reading (e.g., Cole et al., 2022; McGrane et al., 2017).

Boys continue to represent a concern in terms of reading enjoyment, the longstanding trend that more girls enjoy reading than boys persists, indeed the NLT survey suggests the gender gap in relation to daily reading has significantly expanded over the past three years, increasing from 4.6 percentage points difference in 2019 to 7.8 percentage points difference in 2022 (Cole et al., 2022). This disparity is common internationally, with an Australian survey of 12–16-year-olds also revealing this (Merga et al., 2018). Also in Australia, research indicates that boys’ reading volition may be constrained by educators’ underestimating the range of their reading preferences and the changing nature of these as they develop as readers (Scholes, Spina and Comber, 2021). It may be that if boys cannot access the books they desire at the right time, they simply do not read at all.

There are too many young people who can read, but do not choose to do so - disengaged and even detached - they are unable to access the benefits associated with being a recreational reader.

The benefits associated with reading for pleasure

International studies indicate that reading enjoyment has a strong bi-directional relationship with reading attainment. This is seen for example in England
(McGrane et al., 2017), Ireland (Gilleece and Eivers, 2018), Germany (Schiefele et al., 2012), the Netherlands, (Rogiers et al., 2020), and the US (Troyer et al., 2019) to mention just a few. These large-scale surveys and cohort studies commonly indicate that the will influences the skill and vice versa. For example, examining data from the 1970 British Cohort study, Sullivan and Brown (2015) show that those children who read in childhood make substantial cognitive progress between the ages of 10 and 16. In addition, in the US, positive associations between all students’ out-of-school reading engagement and their information text comprehension in school have been documented. For children from low-income households however, the association, while present was not as strong as that of their peers from higher-income households. The researchers argue that the former group may have less access to reading resources at home, but that nonetheless recreational reading does help children handle the complexities of information texts, and arguably therefore approach the curriculum with more ease.

Interestingly, reading fiction seems to have a positive effect on young people’s reading comprehension, as those who read fiction get better results in PIRLS and PISA (Harjunen and Rautopuro, 2015; Jerrim and Moss, 2019; Sulkunen and Nissinen, 2014). Librarians will not be surprised by the presence of this ‘fiction effect’, since they are fully aware of the sustained time and commitment required to read fiction, the high cognitive demands and the willingness needed to concentrate when reading richly layered literary texts. UK research also indicates the positive impact of teenagers hearing challenging, complex novels read aloud and at a fast pace, to all readers, including less experienced 12 to 13-year-olds (Westbrook et al., 2019). Reading aloud was seen in this study to influence the young people’s attitudes, motivation and engagement as readers. It also contributed to enhanced reading attainment; on average they made 16 months progress over a 12-week period.

Additionally, research reveals that young people who read for pleasure at home will be widening their treasure chests of words – the vocabulary upon which they can draw (e.g., Sullivan and Brown, 2015). In comparing the impact of 14 studies of ‘free reading’ to studies of the impact of explicit language instruction, McQuillan (2019) found that free reading was far more efficient for vocabulary acquisition than direct instruction. He argues that choice-led recreational reading offers incidental vocabulary gains and provides a bridge to more challenging academic reading and sub-technical vocabulary.

Other benefits claimed by researchers relate to the habit of reading include enriched narrative writing (Sénéchal et al., 2018), enhanced imagination, empathy and mindfulness of others (Kidd and Castano, 2019) and new reader-to-reader relationships (both adult-child and child-child), which can, in turn,
help build socially supportive communities of readers in schools (Cremin et al., 2014; Ng, 2018). Research into adult reading for pleasure also asserts its potential to foster connections and help assuage loneliness (Billington, 2013) and recent studies indicate a mutually positive relationship between reading for pleasure and psychological wellbeing (e.g., Clark and Teravainen-Goff, 2018), although more work is needed in this area.

In sum, whilst challenges persist in nurturing the desire to read, particularly in cultures of accountability where reading for pleasure is somewhat side-lined, it is critical that librarians and teachers, redouble their efforts to motivate and support young people as readers, building a legacy of past satisfactions that power them forwards. Readers who can and do choose to read regularly and widely, are giving themselves unofficial reading lessons of significant value - cognitively, socially, and emotionally. Reading for pleasure matters.

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Reward based learning. Does it work?

SLG committee member and educational consultant Sarah Pavey delves into the world of gamification and investigates the different factors in what can make these schemes a success or a failure.

School librarians often devise lessons that involve rewards for achievement or maybe invest in a points-based reading scheme. But why is it some students seem to thrive in this environment whereas others just “switch off”?

During the COVID lockdown I was invited by Facet Publishing to write a book about game-based learning and gamification (Pavey, 2021). As part of the research for this publication, which drew on case-studies from school librarians in 35 countries, I delved into the psychology and pedagogy underpinning this approach to learning. One chapter in my book is focussed on gamification or the awarding of rewards for effort and attainment and I was fascinated by all the factors that determine the success or failure of such schemes. This article shares my findings.

What is the difference between gamification and game-based learning?

It is important to distinguish between gamification and game-based learning. Gamification is about incentives for completing tasks or levels but game-based learning focuses on achieving learning outcomes to make a topic that is dry or difficult to understand such as referencing or the Dewey Decimal System more palatable. Sometimes these two elements can be combined but the focus of this article is gamification or reward-based learning.

Rewarding customers for purchases dates to the late 1800s. Scouts and Girl Guides movements offered badges in return for skills in the early 20th Century. Nick Pelling a computer scientist and game developer coined the term Gamification in 2011 (Pelling, 2011). Although now commonplace with digital badges in consumer based and leisure-based activities this pedagogy sits uneasily in a library setting because, unlike subject teaching colleagues, school librarians do not always award grades but try and instil life-long learning concepts in students.

Psychology and motivation in gamification approaches

The argument about behaviourist approaches to teaching and learning is at the core of modern education and knowing about this development can inform school librarians on the power and limitations of reward-based learning.
In 1961 Skinner’s experiments influenced pedagogy by suggesting rote learning techniques to improve performance and retain facts. Humanists (Vallet, 1974) and constructivists (Vygotsky, 1978) felt that for true motivation students needed to be connected emotionally to a subject as well and that reward alone did not always work. However, Palmer, Zajonc and Scribner (2010) highlighted that within a mandatory curriculum it cannot be guaranteed there will be a positive emotional response to all subjects, so maybe this is where reward-based learning can help.

There is an issue with using incentives as a motivator as pointed out by Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford (2014). It is true that rewards may enhance a performance for some students for a while but when a student is motivated to do something from within, ie an intrinsic motivation, this enhances performance too. If you give a reward to a student who performs a task well naturally and is motivated already, that motivation may decrease because they feel their skill is being controlled or simply because they do not want reward.

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For example, colleagues may reward you with a bottle or chocolates when you just feel you are doing your job and you feel awkward or annoyed that they obviously do not understand your role – imagine if students gave their teachers a reward every time they enjoyed a lesson. Rewards should always state a purpose for the giving to avoid this situation and this thought needs to be applied to gamification approaches.

Ryan & Deci (2000) in their Self Determination theory suggested there are four levels of motivation:

- **Level 1**: external regulation where a student simply accepts the reward as a control to receive benefit or avoid punishment
- **Level 2**: introjected regulation, which adds an emotional component to gaining the reward – guilt at failure or pride through achievement
- **Level 3**: identified regulation, which sets targets and personalises the learning outcome desired
- **Level 4**: integrated regulation based on the personal value the student places on the task rather than interest in the task, which would be defined by intrinsic motivation.

In gamification design, the aim is to raise students to a level 3 or 4 for the best outcomes.
Gamification design for success

When ways to achieve motivation are considered, models to evaluate whether a gamification approach is likely to be successful can be used. One such approach is the Expectancy Value Cost framework (Yarborough & Fedesco, 2020). This asks does the game boost self-esteem because students sense that the outcome of the task is likely to be achievable? Does the student understand the rationale behind the learning or the reason for accomplishing the task – is it just the satisfaction of reward or do they want something more intrinsic? What might demotivate participants? – maybe the task is too hard or even too easy, maybe the students see no relevance to it, maybe they think they have not got the skills to achieve it, maybe the students do not think it is worth it especially if it takes a long time, if it is competitive maybe they think others will achieve it first so there is no point in attempting it.

The pros and cons of gamification need to be balanced. On the plus side the approach may offer increased engagement and better knowledge retention as the learning is more focused (being connected to a defined score system). Gamification allows for immediate feedback and the chance to improve a score. It permits graceful failure in a safe environment and has a familiar format to leisure video games. Conversely, gamification may be expensive or require specialist technology, the game may become addictive and the game-play might override the importance of the learning, the focus is on end-product rather than process, motivation is often purely extrinsic for some students and this type of game may not even appeal to all students. Consideration needs to be given to which students and how many students will use the gamification product and how any extra costs or time can be justified to senior leaders. This is especially true if implementing a commercial points-based reading scheme which would be an expensive investment.

In designing gamification, game-play also needs to be considered. These decisions may affect whether the learning outcomes are successful for the majority of students. Too much choice placed on the student can switch them off beginning and engaging with the process (Patall, 2013) e.g., a reading scheme should just have a small selection of options. School librarians need to explain to students why they are doing the task and maybe build in small steps or model what the students have to do to obtain the points or maybe stage and permit a practise run or two. It is important not to make the task too challenging or too simple or the students will not engage. However, the opportunity to learn through failure is a familiar concept in many video games so building this in with annotations about what went wrong or hints on what they should try next is useful.
Incentives for success

Another element to consider in gamification design is the nature of the incentive and when it is awarded. Research shows unexpected offerings have the most impact and this is not just when they are offered but also the randomness of the nature of the offer (Hidi, 2016) – so do not stick to a predictable formula but add in the element of surprise even if it is just for bonus points. For those students already intrinsically motivated to play, it is vital that the reward is not seen as a control measure but something that gives the student more freedom through recognising their talent – just an unexpected offer to share their secret of success might be enough (DeCharms, 1968).

Rewards need to have meaning – they should lead to something whether that is tangible or ethereal and have purpose to the learning. It is important NEVER threaten to remove a reward once given as that is a real demotivator. However, reward-based schemes often have a limited life span and unless the terms and conditions are changed regularly or the group using the scheme changes may decline in effectiveness. When thinking about incentives it is important to consider costs and also whether the reward can be replicated if needed - not just a one off eg if the incentive is a specially printed badge or pen – will it be available for future purchase and what will happen if the price rises?

What kinds of incentive can be offered? These might vary. For example, students could to link an app that identifies their learning and self-regulate their achievements by awarding their own points and rewards. Apps might include Flora (grows a tree the more you achieve), Epic Win (takes you on a quest), Study Bunny (helps you raise a rabbit), Habitica (links with tangible rewards), Write or Die – more punishment based – if you stop writing the words fall off the page, or a reading scheme such as Accelerated Reader.

School librarians might choose to incorporate an app such as Badgr to offer digital badges linked to class tools for work projects such as Google Classroom, Moodle or Nearpod. Reading passports can be a good reward-based scheme to read around genres or countries and open minds to new experiences. Library visitors could be offered stickers, bookmarks, reward cards or library loyalty cards – there are plenty of templates freely available online. However sometimes all students need is verbal thanks or maybe some extra break time or permission to sit in a special area of the library or to choose from a special selection of resources. The choice is ours to make.

Maximising the chance of success can also be achieved by understanding the nature of gamification rewards. Miles (2017) separated out incentives into three basic types. Maximising the chance of success can also be achieved by understanding the nature of gamification rewards.
Miles (2017) separated out incentives into three basic types:

- Points are indicators of achievement and progress and can reward users with status or they can offer tangible rewards maybe as part of a loyalty scheme.
- Badges serve to recognise a user’s accomplishments. They are status symbols, distinguishing badge-holders from others.
- Leaderboards indicate progress against others, as a competitive pursuit. Like badges, leaderboards can motivate users when they serve as visual indicators of status among other users. But will all users want public recognition in this way?

**Gamification in practice – student response**

Students are individuals and if they do not respond to a gamification scheme positively then it is important to identify what the issues might be.

Consider a student who is bright but bored with school and makes no connection between what they are expected to learn in the curriculum and real-life scenarios. For this person rewards need to be linked with aspirations, not to be viewed as a control mechanism and they are unlikely to seek public adulation. Such students may prefer to be awarded incentives for mastery rather than just level achievements.

A gifted student facing pressure from parents and staff to achieve at the highest level may be stressed about the possibility of failure. Here public displays of achievements through badges or leaderboards will be important. Equally the challenge element will need careful balance to keep motivation high but maybe the opportunity for graceful failure will add a social learning dimension too.

When a student has special needs or maybe is working in a new language then gamification with choices using different creative abilities can help. Again, it is important these students can achieve the goals to keep their motivation high and if this is built into the design then public displays of their attainment will open social groups to them.

The hyper competitive student also needs careful handling. For these students winning at all costs will be a priority and may override the learning objectives. They will find ways to cheat! So here a leaderboard or even badges may not achieve the desired learning outcome and it may be a better approach to allow these students to set their own personal goals through points that are individualised.
Conclusion

There are many aspects to gamification that need to be considered to maximise the chances of success and this short paper touches on some of them. However, Playing Games in the School Library (Pavey, 2021) expands on the content here and also delves into how gamification elements can be built into game-based learning as well. Overall, winning with reward-based requires thought about the students who will participate, the design of the challenge and the design of the incentives. The school librarian needs to explore and experiment and discover what works best in their own school library environment and be prepared to change to re-invigorate the experience from time to time.

![Image of the book Playing Games in the School Library]

'Everyone should have a copy of this wonderful book.'

Christopher Evans

Playing Games in the School Library: Developing Game-Based Lessons and Using Gamification Concepts by Sarah Pavey, ISBN 9781783305339, is published by Facet Publishing. CILIP members are entitled to a 35% discount on all Facet Publications.

Sarah Pavey is an independent trainer and consultant for school libraries. She holds degrees in Biochemistry and Information Science and is a Fellow of CILIP and the Royal Society of Arts. Based on her lengthy experience of working in schools she delivers training courses home and abroad at both primary and secondary level on a variety of topics related to school librarianship and teaching practice. Sarah is passionate about game-based learning and gamification and during COVID wrote Playing Games in the School Library (Facet 2021). She is also co author of the recently published Creating a School Library with Impact (Facet 2022) and Global Action for School Libraries: Models of Inquiry (De Gruyter Saur, 2022). Further details about Sarah’s work can be found on her website SP4IL https://www.sp4il.co.uk/ and you can follow her on Twitter @Sarahinthelib
References


Censorship and intellectual freedom in the School Library

Censorship in the school library has become even more of a prevalent issue over recent months. Here, SLG Chair Caroline Roche looks at how to deal with this delicate subject whilst still being able to offer the best opportunities to students.

During this past year, there have been several threats to intellectual freedom in school libraries. Once upon a time in the UK we enjoyed Banned Books Week, putting up displays of books which are banned in America and feeling slightly superior in the fact that, unless you were in a strict faith school, this generally did not apply to us. Well, no more – a controversy earlier this year shocked all of us, and then another one followed hard on its heels.

Simon James Green, author of such books as ‘Noah can’t even’ and ‘Gay Club’ found himself suddenly in the spotlight after his World Book Day visit to a faith school in Southwark was cancelled by the diocese just before he was due to visit. Simon James Green writes for the LGBTQI young adult market, but this wasn’t a surprise to the school or the librarian who was caught up in the middle of this storm. She had cleared the visit of the author with her senior leadership team, all of whom backed the visit. The school was a Catholic School, but they stood behind the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles that every school must adhere to. However, the school's priest demanded that the visit be cancelled against the wishes of the school leadership and the Governors.

Uproar ensued online, in the press, and in the school. A strike was called at the school, with most teachers going out in support of the principle of free speech. Governors who supported the author visit were sacked, and it resulted in a lot of turmoil and upset. The librarian, although not blamed by the school – and nor should she have been as she did nothing wrong – felt that she had to leave the school and is now happily in another library.

School librarians were naturally shocked by this, as it wasn’t something that had happened here before. We were worried about the implications for all of us about inviting authors into our schools – surely we would be covered by the Equality Act of 2010? (For more information about Diversity and Inclusion in the School Library, please see our Key Issues leaflet with that title). As Nick Cavender, SLG Vice Chair says in his article for Insight Magazine ‘As professional
Archbishop of Southwark backed decision to cancel visit by gay author to Catholic school and sack governors

Archbishop John Wilson backed a decision to cancel the visit, and to sack governors who wanted it to go ahead

The cancellation of Simon James Green’s World Book Day school author visit hit the headlines in March 2022

Source: i news.co.uk

We have a duty to promote equality and diversity, but we also have statutory responsibilities under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Equality Act 2010 to provide equal access and support to all students.’

Whilst we were still all reeling from this shock, a school librarian from an International School in London contacted me as Chair. Her school used Destiny Follett, and American LMS, and she wanted to share with me and Nick Poole, CILIP’s CEO, a shocking development in America. If you read the referenced article on Forsyth County schools you will see that it was proposed that an addition be made to the Destiny LMS to allow parents to see – and censor – any books that their young person was reading. This, inevitably, would mean that LGBTQI students – and especially those questioning or not out – would effectively be ousted to their parents and could be banned from reading this material. Librarians all over America were outraged, with whole districts threatening to ditch Follett Destiny. In the wake of these protests, Follett walked back from this decision. Nick Poole, on our behalf, made representation to Follett in the UK. Again, it showed us what is possible for an LMS to do – and where the USA goes we often follow.

At about the same time, a librarian contacted me, worried because their senior leadership team had told her to take down a tweet about the LGBTQI History Month display. They were perfectly happy that she have the display up in her school – they just didn’t want the fact publicised. The Librarian was unhappy
that this contravened CILIP’s Ethics Code. Nick Poole and I assured her that it didn’t, although it wasn’t a decision we personally agreed with. On discreet enquiries we found that this form of silent censorship was actually quite common in schools – there is still a lot of flak associated with taking a strong position with LGBTQI students, and many schools prefer to keep their support for this cause internal to the school. Thus schools comply with the code, whilst staying in the closet, as it were, themselves.

With all of this in mind, Nick Poole called a meeting between himself, the SLG and the SLA (School Library Association) under the leadership of Alison Tarrant. The three of us agreed on and released an Interim Joint Position Statement on Censorship and Intellectual Freedom in School Libraries (reproduced here). At the time of writing, a webinar is underway to gather views from many stakeholders – unions, publishing, CILIP, CILIPSLG and the SLA, and it is open to any school librarian to take part. This will result in us drawing up a full statement from the organisations.

This is why our organisation having a strong Ethics Policy is important. Without this to refer to, we would not have any backing when we are looking at these decisions on censorship and other issues. I know that the librarian involved in the Simon James Green event was really grateful for the immediate backing that our organisations gave her – this statement was released within a week of the problem occurring.

Whilst we continue to enjoy putting displays up for Banned Book Week in September, we can no longer blithely say “But it doesn’t happen over here”. Sadly it can, and has happened here – let’s hope though that it doesn’t happen again. Our young people deserve not to feel unsafe in their school, or feel that they are firmly shoved in their closets with the doors locked tight in school. As an older Education Policy stated ‘Every Child Matters’, and this is something that, as school Librarians, we firmly believe in.

References

- Bookseller article on Simon James Green https://bit.ly/3MeXvqk
- Information Professional Magazine April-May 2022 page 51
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Interim Joint Position Statement:
Censorship and Intellectual Freedom in School Libraries

May 2022

This statement has been produced jointly by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the CILIP School Libraries Group (CILIP SLG) and the School Library Association (SLA). It is intended to provide clear guidance for school librarians, school leadership and Governors when considering issues relating to intellectual freedom and censorship.

As leadership organisations for School Libraries, we believe that:

i) Intellectual freedom – the freedom to read, to learn, to question and to access information – is central to a functioning democracy.

ii) It is a core role of libraries, librarians and other library staff to promote intellectual freedom on behalf of their users, to empower users to enact their information rights and to oppose censorship in all its forms – both tacit and explicit.

iii) School librarians and library staff are responsible for promoting and preserving intellectual freedom by working with school leadership and teaching colleagues to support children and young people in their development as informed and responsible citizens.

We affirm the principles set out in the AASL School Library Bill of Rights. Based on this, we assert that it is the responsibility of the school librarian or library staff to:

iv) Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of individual learners;

v) Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards;

vi) Provide a range of information resources which will enable pupils to make informed judgments in their daily life;

vii) Provide materials that illustrate and illuminate different views on controversial issues so that learners may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking;

viii) Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups in our society and their contribution to our national heritage and identity;

ix) Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library;

x) Actively oppose censorship for any purpose other than material that is proscribed by law, which risks the incitement of illegal acts or which constitutes ‘hate speech’ as defined by the Public Order Act 1986, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 and the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006.

We recognise the significant challenges faced by school librarians in embedding these beliefs into their practice and will be working to provide further support in the coming months.
The lockdown legacies

Dr Carol Webb, librarian at the Portsmouth Grammar School looks at how school librarians worked tirelessly to provide a service to staff and students during the pandemic and looks at how this changed things, particularly in secondary schools.

This article was inspired by Caroline Roche’s recent work (Roche, 2022) on how the landscape of school libraries changed in response to the lockdown experience. It aims to look more closely at how practice was transformed in one secondary school setting, the lessons learned and the legacies that have emerged.

The eLibrary

As lockdown approached librarians in online communities went into overtime identifying and sharing useful free resources. Never was the support of each other more valued. As a legacy, this strength was brought into clear focus: when one of us shares, we all benefit.

Our eLibrary is a Google Site which began life in 2017 thanks to the tutelage and encouragement given by Adam Say at Barton Peveril College Library. Lockdown involved a major growth in the range of what was offered by adding good quality free resources to the subscription services. On each subject page there were databases and websites links and further sections were added for podcasts, videos and booklists. It was clear from email queries that both staff and sixth form pupils found it an important resource. Teachers were able to point towards it or draw articles from it to share with their classes. It gained a higher profile than it might otherwise have done through normal promotions. It is a tremendous ‘shop window’ for library services and therefore important, that it feel dynamic and up-to-date which means it needs regular maintenance. However one cannot assume it will be remembered and recommended, particularly in the face of staff turnover and changing pupil cohorts so on-going promotion and induction is still necessary.
This image shows the main page from which one can travel to specific subject pages, such as History and Politics; or to specialist pages like News where resources include guidance on fact-checking; or to Reading with its sub-pages for Poetry and What To Read Next.

Lessons learned include:

- a disclaimer is essential: these resources have been recommended by teachers and sixth form pupils and are intended for use by older pupils. The links to external websites are checked for relevancy; their appearance here is not an endorsement of content or products
- updating, editing and checking links needs scheduling
- check website relevance with a teacher before adding it to a subject page
- monitor usage of online subs to ensure it matches investment
- ask subject heads of department to share the cost of a subscription as this means they will promote to their team and pupils and the library budget will stretch further

Teaching tools

Of the video-making tools available Screencastify is the one I continue to use and would not be without. It is free for up to five minutes but the subscription is worth the payment for the greater flexibility it gives. As we entered lockdown we were planning our Year 12 EPQ course for launch in September 2020. No one could predict when in-person teaching would return so we prepared an online offer. Screencastify syncs with Google Drive and enables one to share a slide presentation on different aspects of study skills while recording a voiceover to explore the options available to the viewer. One’s computer screen can be shared in order to demonstrate how to search a database while recording one’s thinking, the reasons for the choices being made and to give an insight into how to evaluate such resources. The films and activity tasks were deployed by teachers in their Google Meets and continue to be used in their classrooms today.

It made it possible for the librarian to be appear and be heard in multiple classrooms throughout the week. Pupils then emailed direct for further support. This support could then be tailored to the individual. The other advantage of providing videos for teaching is that the pupil can replay them as many times as required; they can stop and start them as needed; and fast forward to the relevant section, all of which gives them more control over their own learning. Critically they use them at the point of need, which as we know, is when skill learning is much more likely to be effective.
These videos also became a great way:

- to contribute to assemblies in order to promote books and launch a competition
- to share a themed booklist with a tutor group
- to respond to email queries about how to use a resource. Instead of a lengthy, linear narrative by email, a video can be quickly recorded and shared showing each step with options explained
- for tutors and heads of year share the videos on their Google Classrooms so that children who are absent will not miss out

The videos implicitly infer the librarian as an expert and source of support for both staff and pupils and feedback shows that they are much appreciated. Continuing to create videos has been a useful legacy. One lesson learned: if the eLibrary is a changing environment then that means the videos on how to navigate and use it need regular updating too.

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**Google Meetings**

Google Classroom and Google Meet enabled book clubs and Carnegie shadowing to continue. There were three book clubs running for Year 7, 8 and 9. These Meets with pupils to run quizzes and discussions were certainly the highlight events of the week. They led to using the postal service for delivery of books to pupil homes. When we began returning to in-person teaching and bubble groups, reserved books were paper bagged and delivered to classrooms. This meant that reserved books no longer went uncollected and forgotten as some did pre-Covid. Deliveries made the librarian visible not only to pupils but to the senior leadership on duty each morning. The service was seen as highly responsive to requests and the bags arriving often cause much excitement among pupils. This delivery service is proving to be an invaluable legacy.

As our guidelines for Google Meets evolved, codes were shared with line managers and a DSL staff member for monitoring which made it possible to re-start the library’s one-to-one study support for pupils during morning registrations. Virtual meetings underline how much one relies on seeing pupils in-person in order to really be able to gauge their mood and well-being. The return to school with all of its new routines and safety rules underlined the importance that structure plays in our daily lives.
At each stage we have adapted library services and learnt to create our own sense of certainty. Adaptability as a mode of operation and form of strategic thinking should be upheld and nurtured as one of the legacies of our experience.

**Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonising Education**

Increasing diversity in the library collection is a foundation stone for policy and practice. In a school library we represent and promote equality through education about race, gender, sexuality, neurodivergence, disability and all forms of human rights as enshrined in our code of ethics (CILIP, n.d.). In the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder there were calls for many institutions to examine their composition and practices.

Library reflections included:

- do we purchase enough works by BIPOC authors and illustrators?
- do they have parity in our collections, displays and promotions?
- do we read enough of them to ensure we recommend them to others?
- do we provide a sufficient range of material to support learning about prejudice and anti-racism?

We have since audited our senior school collection, tagged all stock created by BIPOC writers and illustrators so that we can evaluate and have transparency about this aspect of our stock management. The lesson and legacy of all work on equality is that re-examining these values regularly creates awareness of our biases. Communicating our values clearly to others helps ensure diversity is upheld as a priority in displays, book lists, stock selection and activities.

Subject departments were asked to examine their curricula, to identify and ensure a diversity of perspectives were included. The library undertook a range of research in support of teaching colleagues to identify useful resources. The Futurelearn MOOC on decolonising education (University of Bristol, 2021) was really helpful as were the National Literacy Trust webinars (National Literacy Trust, 2021) in approaching this work.

A legacy of huge benefit to all has been the increased visibility of BIPOC creators resulting in a greater amount of their work being published and promoted. Part of our role is to ensure our demand for this material is clear to those who commission writers and illustrators.

**Coaching**

Furlough, online working, anxiety, isolation, illness; each on its own is sufficient to give one pause for reflection. When combined and fuelled by daily bulletins, family concerns and a dystopian sense of the unknown; it became life-changing.
Even in the best of times school librarians wrestle with questions about how their role is perceived and valued. Feeling valued is a basic human need and when this is absent, as it is when in the very worst of times like Covid, we are forced to enter a process of emotional divorce. Our professional identity in that setting enters a state of flux. This is deeply stressful as it puts our values about librarianship and a belief in our professional identity under great strain. Conflict and stress, when examined closely are often rooted in pressure being placed on one’s values.

Creating a coaching culture at PGS began pre-Covid and during lockdown became a strong focus for development. Coaching supports an individual to develop an awareness of what they want to achieve, to examine different perspectives and possible forms of action that they may wish to take. Training in the skills of coaching is an opportunity to add to the librarian’s repertoire of skills.

Coaching gives one lightbulb moments of clarity, particularly in relation to one’s values, priorities and ability to identify ways forward. It is a way to support and empower pupils and staff in their own personal learning; the most durable of all legacies.

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References


Dr Carol Webb's first degree is in Librarianship, her MA and Doctoral degrees are in Education and she has a post-16 teaching qualification. Her career began in hospital and public libraries before settling into schools. She is currently Head Librarian at Portsmouth Grammar School where her work was recognised with an Inspirational Women of Portsmouth Award. She has experience in both state and independent school sectors receiving both a Fellowship from CILIP and the accolade of School Librarian of the Year. She is co-author of “The Innovative School Librarian” and a range of articles; an experienced presenter; and a fully qualified coach and trainer of coaching including Graydin coaching.
I am immensely grateful to the School Libraries Group for awarding me the bursary to attend the CILIP Conference and Expo 2022. I was lucky enough to attend my first conference only nine months into my career in school librarianship, and it was such a wonderful experience! An inspiring two days filled with engaging talks, inspiring seminars, stimulating workshops and meeting a ton of fantastic librarians from all over the country – and some from overseas! Ultimately, I really enjoyed the experience.

After unfortunately missing the first brilliant keynote speaker, who I luckily later met anyway, due to train delays, the first session on the programme I was able to attend was ‘Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – practical advice for the workplace’ with Beth Montague-Hellen, Senior Research Librarian at the University of Nottingham. This was a workshop session and delegates were seated in round groups as Beth discussed diverse and accessible initiatives that are already making a difference in the library and information sector. She was an incredibly exciting speaker, full of passion and enthusiasm for the topic. Somehow I found myself placed between Kate Robinson, the President of CILIP, and Dr Briony Birdi, the Senior Lecturer at the top Library and Information School in the country (the University of Sheffield). As a group, we brainstormed a few accessible and practical tips on making library spaces and services more inclusive for all. The workshop was interactive – Beth had QR Codes up on the screen for us to scan, which lead to a survey where our answers showed on the screen in real life. Super fun!

After this, delegates were treated to a wonderful lunch and an opportunity to socialise. I met a few more lovely people and networked with stakeholders and CILIP member groups who had stalls all around the venue. CILIP organised an exciting competition for delegates to take part in – we were invited to visit every stall, chat with whoever managed it and collect a sticker. Whoever collected them all won a prize! We were also invited to vote for who we thought had the most aesthetically pleasing, well put-together stall. I tried my best but unfortunately wasn’t quick enough!
Next on the agenda was a panel discussion on Launching the Green Manifesto. In conversation were Sue Williamson MBE (Director, Libraries, Arts Council England), Claire Buckley (Environment Sustainability Consultant, Julie’s Bicycle), Maja Maricevic (Head of Higher Education and Science, British Library), Sarah Mears MBE (Programmes Manager, Libraries Connected) and lastly, Rabeea Arif (Projects and Programmes Manager, CILIP).

We learnt that the Green Libraries project was developed by CILIP and Arts Council England in response to COP26 and the long-term climate commitments made by libraries and local authorities across England. The project aims to reduce the carbon footprint of library assets including physical and digital content, buildings and vehicles, enable libraries to help their users engage with environmental issues, and position libraries at the heart of local environmental programmes. The panellists were both insightful and engaging, and it was overall a brilliant discussion.

Between sessions, we had another short break. I popped over to the CILIP Member stand where Helen Berry, Workforce Development Manager at CILIP, had set up a table for delegates to ask about Professional Registration. I had a long and lovely chat with her about what my options were and whether Certification or Chartership suited me best. She lovingly explained how the process works, which is information you can find on the Professional Registration page on the CILIP website, and how to use the Professional Knowledge and Skills Base. Following this, the final session of the day was a Keynote Address from Krystal Vittles of Suffolk Libraries.
On day two of the conference, I opted to attend a talk on ‘Censorship and Intellectual Freedom’. Dr Louise Cooke, Emeritus Professor of Information and Knowledge Management at Loughborough University was the speaker for this session and she offered practical some practical resources to manage the issue of censorship. CILIP’s Ethical Framework provides guidance on ethical professional practice for librarians and includes an active responsibility to “uphold, promote and defend Human Rights, equality and diversity and the equitable treatment of library users”.

She discussed how the responsibility extends to all aspects of library provision, including the selection and development of diverse and representative book collections as well as activities, resources and access to electronic materials in the library. This session also had some interactive elements to it – delegates were invited to help to identify measures and tools to aid intellectual freedom and explore how they can be applied to practical case scenarios, thereby helping us to develop resilience in our handling of censorship challenges. I found it to be enlightening and thoroughly enjoyed it.

After lunch, I joined another panel debate on Information As A Social Justice Issue. This time, the panellists were discussing a similar topic to Dr Louise Cooke - they debated if information literacy be better recognised as a vital contribution to society? This is a question which is addressed by a new initiative, the Media and Information Literacy Alliance (MILA), which was set up in the summer of 2021, and the panel brought together passionate and insightful representative stakeholders to discuss the issues and explore solutions.

We quickly arrived at the final session of the entire conference – We Are CILIP, A Celebration. This closing session, hosted by CILIP President Kate Robinson celebrated the people who make our community what it is, including myself. I was asked by CILIP to give a lightening talk about my journey as a librarian so far. Alongside four other speakers, I gave a keynote address about how, at my last school, I transformed a small classroom into bubbling school library that served over a thousand students.

Overall, the conference was a fantastic experience and I’m incredibly grateful to SLG for the experience. It was lovely meeting Nick and Charlotte, other SLG members and delegates. I walked away from the experience excited to take what I had learnt back into my own librarian practice. In the months passed, I’ve been using my findings in the workplace. Let’s hope I can go again next year!

Hannah Mohamed
I was delighted to receive an invitation from Caroline Roche to contribute an article on IFLA and school libraries to this issue of SLIV, for the last year has seen the culmination of two significant and far-reaching developments in this regard.

The first development is the revised IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (2021), which revitalises the principles upholding the IFLA School Library Guidelines (2015). After extensive and widespread international consultation, the revised Manifesto – as jointly agreed by the Chair on behalf of the IFLA School Libraries Section (IFLA SLS) and the President on behalf of the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) – has been submitted by IFLA to UNESCO for endorsement, and we eagerly look forward to being able to reference this document in its final form. It is worth noting that the Guidelines were also reviewed, and it was agreed that they are not yet due for revision.

The second development is the publication of the latest book in the IFLA/De Gruyter Global Action for School Libraries series, Models of Inquiry (Schultz-Jones & Oberg, 2022), which reaffirms the centrality of inquiry to achieving the school library’s educational and moral purpose. This book was launched jointly at the IASL 2022 Conference and Research Forum and the IFLA SLS Satellite Meeting ahead of the IFLA 2022 World Library and Information Congress. Although I was not able to attend the IASL book launch, I was able to present my chapter on FOSIL – FOSIL: Developing and Extending the Stripling Model of Inquiry – at the IFLA SLS Satellite Meeting, and Jenny Toerien was able to present her chapter – FOSIL: Deep Collaboration by Teacher and Librarian to Develop an Inquiry Mindset – that she co-authored with Joe Sanders from Oakham School.

Both presentations can be downloaded from the FOSIL Group website https://bit.ly/3ft4KId. Jenny and Joe jointly delivered an inspiring presentation on their chapter at the IFLA SLS 2022 Midyear Meeting, which can be viewed on YouTube https://bit.ly/3RkZyKc.
I include the book overview from the publisher’s website below for reasons that I will return to later.

*This book focuses on inquiry-based teaching, one of the five vital aspects of the instructional work of school librarians identified in the second edition of the IFLA School Library Guidelines (2015). Effective implementation of inquiry-based teaching and learning requires a consistent instructional approach, based on a model of inquiry that is built upon foundations of research and best practice.*

The book explains the importance and significance of inquiry as a process of learning; outlines the research underpinning this process of learning; describes ways in which models of inquiry have been developed; provides recommendations for implementing the use of such models; and demonstrates how the other core instructional activities of school librarians, such as literacy and reading promotion, media and information literacy instruction, technology integration and professional development of teachers, can be integrated into inquiry. Inquiry-based learning is part of “learning to be a learner,” a lifelong pursuit involving finding and using information. Inquiry develops the skills and understandings that learners need in new information environments, whether that be as students in post-secondary institutions, as producers and creators in workplaces, or as citizens in communities.

Through inquiry-based teaching, school librarians help students to build the essential skills and understandings needed for dealing with complex learning challenges, including analysis, critical thinking, and problem solving. In this book, special attention is given to the development of students’ metacognitive abilities, which are essential to their becoming life-long and life-wide learners.

Following our presentations, I was invited to submit a chapter on FOSIL for an upcoming IFLA/De Gruyter book titled, Libraries Empowering Society through Digital Literacy. As Matthew Syed (2015) observes, insight is the endpoint of a long term, iterative process, and in wrestling with this chapter I reached great insight into the importance and urgency of our calling as school librarians. Because exploring this in any detail is beyond the scope of this article, I share the abstract below, which will bring me back to Models of Inquiry.

**Digital Literacy: Necessary but Not Sufficient for Lifelong Learning**

This chapter argues that the problem that digital literacy addresses is an epistemological problem, a problem of knowing and coming to know, and so is bigger than digital literacy skills even though knowing and coming to know are increasingly dependent on digital literacy skills. The rupture between knowledge
and reality as uncovered by the academic disciplines – reflected in Jean-Francois Lyotard’s, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (1984) – has resulted in a more widespread breakdown of the knowledge-building process, which is an inquiry process. Because action conforms to knowledge, or ought to, this epistemological crisis lays the groundwork for an existential crisis, mounting evidence of which is all too obvious. To avert this existential crisis, it is necessary, therefore, to resolve the underlying epistemological crisis, which means developing engaged and empowered inquirers. The most effective way to do this is to make better use of the many years of formal education that school provides. In this, schools can draw on more than 60 years of international research-informed development of inquiry as a highly effective pedagogical strategy for learning disciplinary content in a school setting, which requires collaboration between classroom-based teachers and library-based teachers. Central to this pedagogical strategy is a sound instructional model of the inquiry process and underlying framework of developmentally appropriate inquiry skills, which, crucially, include digital literacy skills. FOSIL, which is based on the Empire State Information Fluency Continuum, is such a model and underlying framework of inquiry skills.

My concern here is not with FOSIL, for FOSIL is but one – two if you count the Empire State Information Fluency Continuum – of the five inquiry models in Models of Inquiry, which is not exhaustive. Rather, my concern here is with school as the vital means of producing the reality-based community of error-seeking inquirers that are responsible for and responsible to the Constitution of Knowledge, which is the epistemological operating system of liberal democracy (Rauch, 2021). For, as Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner (1971) point out, “school, after all, is the one institution in our society that is inflicted on everybody, and what happens in school makes a difference – for good or ill” (p.12). They then go on to argue that “of all the ‘survival strategies’ education has to offer, none is more potent or in greater need of explication than the ‘inquiry environment’” (p.36). Now, I am in no doubt of the potency of the inquiry environment as a survival strategy. However, I am also in no doubt that the inquiry environment remains in great need of explication, despite the best efforts of colleagues around the world over the last 60 years. For this reason, the publication of Models of Inquiry is a welcome theoretical and practical contribution to the growing body of work explicating the inquiry environment. This, somewhat perplexingly, is in stark contrast to Understanding the impact of inquiry learning: Literature review, which is included in the Great School Libraries Campaign End of Phase 1 Report (2021), and which I feel I must address here for the record.

I say perplexing, because the review is clearly a review of the international literature, and yet contains glaring omissions that weaken the case for inquiry to the extent that I did not feel able to share the Report for the time that it would
take to compensate for them. As I do not want this article to become negative, or detract from the laudable achievements of the GSL campaign as reflected in the Report, I will provide a single example that may serve to encourage other colleagues who may have been similarly disappointed.

A simple web search (I used Bing) for "inquiry-based learning literature review" lead immediately to Inquiry-Based Learning: A Review of the Research Literature (Friesen & Scott, 2013), which “draws on theory and research in the field to provide insight into the efficacy of particular approaches to inquiry in terms of their impact on student learning, achievement, and engagement” (from the website summary).

While this particular review is now a little dated, it is more recent than the majority of references in the GSL review. Not only does this review provide a sound contextual framework for inquiry-based learning, it also, and more importantly, includes Why Minimal Guidance During Instruction Does Not Work: An Analysis of the Failure of Constructivist, Discovery, Problem-Based, Experiential, and Inquiry-Based Teaching, by Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark (2006), which the GSL review includes, as well as the robust response by Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, and Chinn (2006), Scaffolding and Achievement in Problem-Based and Inquiry Learning: A Response to Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark, which the GSL review does not include. Nothing that I have read by Kirschner, Sweller and/or Clark since then convinces me that they are actually addressing what we understand inquiry-based learning and teaching to be, including Sweller's recent Why Inquiry-based Approaches Harm Students’ Learning (2021). Although focused on STEM, but clearly not limited to it, for a balanced and helpful discussion of the main issues involved in this particular debate, see Inquiry vs direct teaching for interdisciplinary STEM (Tytler, 2019), especially the concluding paragraph:

Direct teaching advocates the gradual ceding of control to students after they have been taught techniques, and monitoring of their work, rather than our staged process of exploration, invention, evaluation and revision. The payoff, we argue, is that students come to know the disciplinary ideas in richer ways. We have found, however, that the approach requires of teachers both significant knowledge of the science and mathematics, and command of a pedagogy involving negotiation and refinement of student ideas, compared to ‘telling’. It also takes more time. However, if we are serious about developing STEM skills for interdisciplinary problem solving, we argue there are no shortcuts.

More broadly, the McKinsey report, How to improve student educational outcomes: New insights from data analytics (Mourshed, Krawitz, & Dorn, 2017), includes the finding that "students who receive a blend of teacher-directed and
inquiry-based instruction have the best outcomes," which comes as no surprise to us.

The point that I hope to make here, is that against the relentless attack on the Constitution of Knowledge, upon which our democracy depends, inquiry remains the most potent survival strategy that education can offer society, and which school librarians are, or can be, integral to. However, conditions in schools will always only be more or less favourable to inquiry, and librarians, hence the great and abiding need for explication of the inquiry environment. By way of encouragement, though, I share the following, which now appears in every teaching and learning space in our school, from reception to Year 13, and which offers only GCSEs and A-levels:

In no way does this mean that the need here for explication is over, and I doubt that it ever will be. However, it is a first and vital expression of Charles Sanders Peirce's corollary upon the first rule of reason (p. 54, emphasis added):

Upon this first, and in one sense this sole, rule of reason – that in order to learn you must desire to learn, and in so desiring not be satisfied with what you already incline to think – there follows one corollary which itself deserves to be inscribed upon every wall of the city of philosophy: Do not block the way of inquiry.

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References


Darryl Toerien, is the originator of FOSIL (2011) and the FOSIL Group (2019), an elected member of the Standing Committee of the School Libraries Section of IFLA, and a co-opted Board Member of the UK School Library Association. Since 2020, Darryl has been working closely with Barbara Stripling, originator of Stripling’s Model of Inquiry/the Empire State Information Fluency Continuum, on deepening their shared understanding of inquiry. Darryl taught Religious Studies and Philosophy before becoming a professionally qualified librarian in 2003.
Cementing Information Literacy into Research Ethics

Dr Andrew Shenton and Emily Cowgill explore the importance of research ethics and how it should be an integral part of student research.

Introduction

Recent years have seen an increasing emphasis on training students in the ethical dimensions of research. Indeed, the latest specification for the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) aimed at Sixth Formers now incorporates an expectation that coverage of this area will be included in the “taught skills” aspect of the course (AQA, 2019). Typically, however, the need for scrupulous ethics is seen largely in terms of the primary research aspect of independent learning. In particular, it tends to be equated with sound moral practices that underpin procedures for collecting and then using data from participants. In defining the concept of “ethical”, Mary Kellett, for example, refers to “making sure that the well-being, interests and concerns of those involved in research are looked after” (2005). The real scope of research ethics, though, is much broader. At their most fundamental, ethics mean bringing one’s personal integrity to bear in order to “do the right thing” and clearly, in academic terms, an ethical student will comply with the letter and spirit of the assignment brief. Research ethics should permeate every aspect of the student’s behaviour during their inquiry. Like good time management and personal reflection, their application should not be tied exclusively, or even largely, to a particular phase of a project.

Much is said in textbooks about the importance within primary research of securing informed consent, anonymising data provided by or pertaining to people and organisations, respecting privacy and confidentiality, abiding by undertakings which have been given and ensuring that participants have the freedom to withdraw their involvement at any point. It is not the purpose of this article to restate good, widely acknowledged ethical practice in these areas. Rather, we concentrate on how a regard for high moral standards should be stressed by the educator in various tasks that are integral to student research projects.

Exploring Topics and Generating Research Questions

In situations where students have the freedom to choose their own research areas, it is not unreasonable to require that they neither select topics which will
cause offence to others nor place themselves in opposition to the school’s core values. For example, if one of the school aims is to promote ethnic harmony, we may well feel uncomfortable if a student proposes to explore the justification for the claim reported by Godfrey Hodgson (1973) that the average IQ of a white person is significantly higher than that of a black person. Cara Flanagan and Jane McGee (2014) suggest that, for ethical reasons, “socially sensitive topics” are best avoided. There should be no opportunity for learners to reuse their work from past or other current studies and then pass this off as new research. If it is expected that the assignment will be of an individual nature, the ethical student will not tackle an area that encourages them to collude with others, such as an older sibling or friend who has undertaken a comparable project in the past or a fellow student who is doing a related topic. Learners must also opt for subjects that they know they will address fairly. Some may see their assignment as an opportunity to make a point or present a case, with the result that their own prejudices intrude and an impartial analysis becomes impossible.

Collecting Evidence

We often associate bias with the gathering of data through the use of a sample of participants which is unrepresentative but students should appreciate that similar weaknesses can arise when collecting information. A method may be adopted which leads, for example, to an over-reliance on sources of a particular kind or those whose authors all follow the same school of thought. The latter is especially likely when many materials have been acquired after the pursuit of citations found in one item. We, as educators, know it is wise to go to a range of publications that reflect different viewpoints and cover a variety of aspects and debates. Where the student has a passionate interest in a subject and is intent on taking a certain line in their research, any bias in their method may be deliberate and educators need to be alert to this possibility. A lack of even-handedness can arise in various contexts. An obvious instance lies in cases where students devote much time and effort to pursuing material that confirms what they expect to discover and are far less rigorous when seeking to uncover alternative ideas.

Constructing the Outcome

One of us has written previously in stark terms of how plagiarism is an ethical concern, as well as a scholarly matter, observing that the “use of material prepared by another party without due acknowledgement of its originator is morally wrong and amounts to intellectual theft”, and that one of many persuasive strategies which may be employed by educators to counter plagiarism lies in reasoning with students on this level. (Shenton, 2010). Yet, by no means always do discussions of research ethics cover plagiarism. In their guide to ethical research and the EPQ, the Wellcome Trust (2014) points to the
responsibilities of the younger to participants in the study, their colleagues and wider society. Any mention here of the individual’s duties to authors whose work they have referred to in their project is conspicuously absent. We may add, too, that, when citing literature, the researcher has to be fair to readers and scrutineers. They must, for example, provide sufficient bibliographic details for the assessor to be able to gauge the strength of the evidence from the information given in or apparent from the citation (e.g. the author, the type of source, the publisher/endorsing body and the year of publication) and have the opportunity, if necessary, to compare the student’s use of the material against the author’s own words so as to determine whether the writer has actually said what is attributed to them. If the individual no longer has a record of the origin of particular material when writing their essay, there may be a temptation to give an incomplete citation or fabricate the required details. In some circumstances when using information, the need to act ethically is given a legal impetus, through copyright law, for example. Some assignment briefs may state their own highly specific rules, such as a stipulation that no quotation within the student’s work can be longer than a given length – say, two to three lines.

Reflecting

Essentially, reflection in a scholarly context demands that the individual takes a critical perspective in terms of their own thoughts, actions and behaviour, so as to ensure their continual development. Self-awareness is a key starting point for reflection and, when exploring the pertinent literature, learners should be cognisant of any particular worldview to which they subscribe and appreciate how this may affect the interpretation they bring to the texts. An ethical student will acknowledge such a stance and its impact. Reflection extends throughout the period of the work involved, from the initial thinking about possible subjects and methods to any final evaluation. In research, this means thinking honestly about the processes undertaken and the product created. Reflection is something many students find challenging. There will be individuals who simply cannot see in their work shortcomings which are obvious to scrutineers. Others may be reluctant to acknowledge these openly or may even seek to conceal them in the belief that they will be penalised for these faults when the final assessment is made. Yet, honesty is a hallmark of not only a principled and ethical researcher but a mature academic, too.

Dishonesty, Expediency, Incompetence or Ignorance?

We should not rush to the conclusion that students whose work does not exhibit sound ethical standards are being deliberately dishonest. Whilst there may indeed be instances where the individual is consciously attempting to deceive, problems can also result from a simple desire to take shortcuts or minimise the expenditure of effort. Other practices may emerge from a restricted overall
perspective, an ignorance of what is necessary in a given situation, insufficient practice in how this should be achieved or simply limited ability on the student’s part. It is not unusual for novices to adopt without reservation the recommendations of a particular expert on research methods; reading further afield would prompt the individual to realise that the course of action they have chosen is merely one option and it may embody the biases or inclinations of its advocate. More generally, a copy and paste mentality sometimes results from a lack of understanding by students of the standard academic conventions surrounding referencing. Youngsters may erroneously assume that they are free to draw on any material they find without the need to attribute it.

Implications for the Information Professional

Interpretation of the term, “research ethics” is not merely a semantic issue, nor is it simply a question of the territories to which this label applies. When discussing research ethics with students, it is important to take an integrated approach that goes far beyond the collection and use of personally gathered data. The possible scope of the coverage is represented in the diagram below. In some schools, there is a disconnection between instruction on primary research, which is deemed the preserve of the relevant subject specialist, and the teaching of information literacy (IL), which often falls under the school librarian’s remit. It is here that modern conceptions of IL can serve information professionals well. Sound ethics are, of course, integral to IL, a fact emphasised by the appearance of either the word, “ethical” or one of its derivatives on no fewer than seven separate occasions in the latest CILIP definition of IL (2018).

If we accept that IL embraces evidence that includes data as well as information, we may consider that IL deals with the ethical acquisition and use of all this material and, by casting themselves as their organisation’s IL specialist, school librarians can extend students’ awareness of the true width of matters that should be borne in mind when planning and delivering “ethical research”.

It is not difficult to forge links between the data collected by students first-hand in research contexts and the areas traditionally associated with IL. The need to achieve both a balanced sample of research participants and a range of perspectives from published literature has already been highlighted. The definition of IL now favoured by CILIP (2018) refers broadly to the importance of preserving the privacy of individuals; a more specific concern with protecting the privacy of contributors of data has long been a central principle within many frameworks devoted to sound research ethics. Similarly, reporting the words of others fairly and avoiding using their ideas out of context are vital whether
these come from a published author or a study participant. Irrespective of the origin of their material, students must resist any inclination either to summarise it with such brevity that the inherent content is misrepresented or to ignore “inconvenient” material in order to allow any thesis they have already determined to be maintained. These are temptations that exercise the minds of experienced journalists, as well as youthful researchers.

Final Thoughts

The argument presented in this article should not be interpreted as an attempt by the authors to belittle the need for sound ethical practices in primary research. There is, though, a danger that if we stress the moral aspects of this form of investigation too vigorously and in isolation this can lead to students whose work is purely literature-based erroneously assuming that research ethics constitute an area that is scarcely relevant to them. On the contrary, high moral standards are essential in all research, whatever the subject and mode of inquiry.

The question remains as to where, in an IL teaching programme, coverage of ethics should be placed. Some educators may believe that accommodating the subject in a discrete session will underline its significance; others will feel that taking this approach places it “out on a limb” somewhat when its relevance to individual issues is best demonstrated at the points elsewhere in the programme when coverage of each of these matters is provided, especially if the instruction in ethics is timed to coincide with the project phases where students will themselves be grappling with the salient issues in their own work.

![Scope of Research Ethics in a Student Project](image-url)
Dr Andrew K Shenton has extensive experience in both information science and education. He holds four degrees in the former (i.e. a BA, an MSc, a PhD and a DLitt) and is currently employed part-time in the resources centre of a high school in northern England. For much of the 1990s, he worked as a primary school teacher. On becoming a Chartered Fellow of CILIP in October 2020, he gained the unusual distinction of holding both the highest academic degree in his field and the highest professional qualification.

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Digital media ideas for you and your library

Digital media expert Bev Humphrey gives some great tech ideas for the library, including BookTok, Canva and TedEd podcasts.

The virtual world has always moved swiftly but it seems that since Lockdown it has accelerated to an almost alarming rate and it’s difficult to keep up. We are all now far beyond thinking Zoom was just a camera lens, but our days are so packed with day-to-day tasks that it is often unthinkable to spend any of our precious hours ‘playing’ online. The relationships and learning I have gained online over the past few years has been invaluable however and has been a real boon to my mental health, keeping me engaged, interested and importantly, feeling supported and understood by like-minded people. I am hoping this article might give you some ideas of digital media you can use both in your library and in your free time, without it being too onerous and time consuming.

**BookTok (bookish community on TikTok)**

If like me, you really don’t like seeing yourself on video the thought of becoming a part of the TikTok community might be something that doesn’t appeal to you at all. However, it is just that, a community, and there are so many like-minded book lovers there that it isn’t hard to find your tribe. No, you won’t agree with everyone and everything that is posted, but that’s the same as in any group with a mix of personalities and agendas. It isn’t just young people on the app either, there are TikTokers of all ages and backgrounds, sharing serious issues as well as fun stuff and it’s this varied content that keeps me scrolling, sometimes for hours at a time (but that’s just me !). The power of so-called influencers to get young people reading cannot be denied and publishers must be rubbing their hands in glee at the increased sales of certain books that has been generated by BookTok.

Commonly booktokers will record their videos sat in front of their book collections, talking about a new book or sharing a book haul or perhaps giving recommendations of a particular genre. This is joyful to watch, although as a librarian I do probably spend far too much time trying to read the book spines behind them - the pause button is definitely my friend! To me BookTok is a cross between BookTube (bookish content on YouTube) and Instagram and has more immediacy and impulsive content, without the meticulous planning that seems to go on before posting on YouTube. I follow a wide range of people - teens,
librarians and publishers in addition to the feline, festive and Harry Potter themed accounts that keep me sane on hard days. I have only just started posting content myself and it still feels odd but I shall persevere if only because I want to be promoting more diverse books and talking about the books I read and love. There is no need to post content yourself however, you can just ‘lurk’ for as long as you want to. Many librarians have created fab displays on the lines of ‘BookTok made me do it’ showcasing books that have been made popular by the site but do check out the suitability for your clientele first - not all Colleen Hoover’s books are suitable for year 7s, for example, although she does have a very useful age range page on her website https://tinyurl.com/CHrecage . Your students will be able to advise you on what’s popular I’m sure and asking their advice is a great way of getting them chatting about books.

Here’s a few suggestions of people to have a look at:

- @books.with.lee - Lee is working on a special project in 2022, reading across Africa, aiming to read a book from every independent country on the continent
- @billreads - always refreshing to see young males who read & I really appreciate Bill’s honesty in addressing his reading slumps
- @epic_reads - as good as their Instagram, blog etc etc

Oh and my TikTok handle is @libwithattitude, see you there!

Canva (https://www.canva.com/)

I expect many of you are already Canva converts, using its great design features to create posters etc but there are so many other great functions included that I just have to shout about it. If you are new to the site/app however, you can either sign up for a basic account which has a certain amount of templates etc and others you will need to pay for or you can apply for an educational account which is free and gets you many more functions https://www.canva.com/education/ . One of the first things I usually show people is how to use Canva as an easy to use and effective photo editor: at the bottom of the dropdown on Create A Design there is an Edit Photo option and this allows you to crop, add different filters and even to remove the background on any picture.

You can adjust the brightness, contrast and shadows with ease and this function alone means that Canva is the app that I use every single day. When using the site in a web browser using the search box in the middle of the screen allows you to find templates that you can adjust to suit your needs or if you are feeling more creative clicking on Create A Design lets you start from scratch. Here’s some things you can do with Canva that you might not have realised:
Canva (https://www.canva.com/)

- Create posters, leaflets and bookmarks
- Design videos using a wide range of video and music clips or by recording yourself directly; Canva has recently added the ability to remove the background in videos thus making green screen video producing much easier
- Make professional looking infographics
- Create content for all forms of social media (the size limitations for each site are already built in)
- Resize content for different apps, e.g., turn a Twitter post into an Instagram post with ease
- Design a website - a new facility, Canva have really upped their game recently
- Make your own computer backgrounds and video conferencing backgrounds, either static or moving
- Photo collages - use your own photos or some of the amazing copyright free images to make home decor

All of these functions are amazing but the list only really scratches the surface of the possibilities of this fabulous creation tool, I cannot urge you enough to put a toe in the water at the very least, it is addictive and allows you to look really technically gifted ... without needing a degree in computer science.
I have always enjoyed TED talks with their mixture of informative learning and entertainment but sadly rarely find the time to sit down and watch one nowadays so I was delighted to discover their podcast site with podcasts on a variety of subjects. Podcasts appeal to my liking for multi-tasking allowing me to listen whilst engaged in another task. TED podcasts can be listened to wherever you usually listen, my own preference is for Apple or Spotify but there are of course many other apps you can use. I particularly like TED Talks Daily, a topical podcast that is seldom more than 15 minutes and is released each weekday and really makes you think. I also subscribe to TED Tech; there is a particularly good talk on preserving your private life in the age of social media that you may find interesting.

I do hope your appetite for digital media has been given a boost by this article! see you online.

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