



“Effective learners are not just those who are knowledgeable but rather they are people who are able to find and use information as required. It can be said that effective learners are those that are information literate.

Information literacy is synonymous with knowing how to learn. This means that the ability to process and use information effectively is more than a basic tool for the empowerment of school students: it is in fact the basic survival skill for those who wish to be successful members of the 21st century.”

(Learning for the future: developing information services in schools 2001, 2nd edition, p. 2.)

A teacher librarian advocate’s guide
to building information
literate school communities

ASLA Advocacy Kit 2006

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Introduction

You want to invest your money in the shares of a listed company. How can you research its trading history?

Your children want to travel to northern Italy to look up your grandparents' family. How do you find out more about the region?

The teacher suggests your child is hyperactive. Where do you turn for the latest information?

You have written an article for an education magazine. Which agency will provide you with information about copyright?

All of us are faced with making countless decisions each day.

How successful we are depends on a combination of skills known as *information literacy*. Information literacy means more than being able to read or use a computer. It means knowing how to find, evaluate and use the best, most current information available.

‘An information literate person recognises when information is needed and can locate, access, evaluate and apply that information.

Information literacy:

- Encompasses the effective use of multiple information technologies and formats
- Enables individuals to develop skills for learning throughout life.
- Supports skills for workplace enterprise and for community participation.’

(Australian Library and Information Association 2003)

As stated in *Learning for the Future*, ‘effective learners are not just those who are knowledgeable but rather they are people who are able to find and use information as required. It can be said that effective learners are those that are information literate. Information literacy is synonymous with knowing how to learn. This means that the ability to process and use information effectively is more than a basic tool for the empowerment of school students: it is in fact the basic survival skill for those who wish to be successful members of the 21st century’ (ASLA & ALIA 2001, p.2).

In recent years the renewed significance of learning throughout life has led to school libraries focusing on information literacy. This is due to lifelong learning or learning for life being recognised as vital in times of fast and pervasive change. In an environment of rapid individual, community and workplace change a static body of knowledge does not equip us with the capability to adapt or thrive and advance. Acknowledgement of the value of information literacy is driven by new technologies, changing patterns of work, globalisation, family and community mobility, and above all the explosion in available information.

The capability to respond to changing information needs is now a critical life skill.

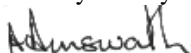
This is the message that teacher librarians and all school library advocates must present if we are to increase support for all school libraries.

This advocacy kit has been adapted, with permission, from the American Library Association’s *A library advocate’s guide to building information literate communities* [Go to <http://www.ala.org/advocacybucket/informationliteracy.pdf>] and the Australian Library and Information Association’s *A library advocate’s guide to building information literate communities* [go to <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/literacy.kit.pdf>].

The adaptation was undertaken by the Executive Officer and Councillors of the Australian School Library Association – Karen Bonanno, Jeff Herd, Michael Kelly and Judy Smith.

Please use this kit as a positive and practical guide to achieving information literacy in your school or community.

Thank you for your support.



Anette Ainsworth
ASLA President

References

Australian Library and Information 2003, 'Exploring information literacy meaning', ALIA Information Literacy Forum, ALIA, Canberra, viewed 7 September 2006, <http://www.alia.org.au/groups/infolit/debate.topics/29.08.2003.html>

Australian School Library Association & Australian Library Information Association 2001, *Learning for the future: developing information services in schools*, 2nd edition, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton South, Vic.

The communications plan

Use this communications plan as a guide in planning your advocacy campaign. Also see the 'Message Sheet' and 'Delivering the message' sections.

Key message

Information literacy is a critical skill in today's information-oriented society. School libraries and teacher librarians can help you find your way.

Goals

A school community enjoys a higher quality of life if school leaders make sound decisions based on quality information, and all stakeholders are informed, aware and involved in the decision making process.

All people have the skills and competencies they need to work effectively in a complex information environment.

Students graduate with the skills and competencies they need to succeed on the job, and they have the capacity to learn throughout their lives.

People of all ages and backgrounds have the resources and skills they need to fully participate in our democracy.

Libraries of all types – public, school, higher education and special – receive increased support as dynamic centres for information literacy and lifelong learning.

Teacher librarians are recognised as information experts and key players in the education process who teach others how to navigate a rich and complex, evolving information/technology environment.

Objectives

Teacher librarians and library advocates will speak out about the critical importance of information literacy skills and the key role of school libraries and teacher librarians.

Schools will expand their programs to include information literacy skills across the curriculum.

Teacher librarians will partner with leaders in government, education, business and other sectors to create models for information literate school communities.

Libraries will expand their reach and involvement in schools, institutions of higher education and the community-at-large.

Target audiences – internal

Teacher librarians/library advocates

Teacher librarians, public librarians, higher education librarians, special, government and corporate librarians, school library administrators, managers and supervisors, frontline personnel, parents & citizens of the school, board members, teachers and other library supporters

Key message

Technology is changing how we live, learn, work and govern. Library advocates must speak out for the importance of information literacy and the critical role of school libraries and teacher librarians.

What we want them to:

- Think:* School libraries and teacher librarians have a key role to play in helping school communities become information literate.
- Feel:* In today's rich and complex information environment, we have a unique opportunity to demonstrate the value of school libraries and teacher librarians.
- Do:* Take a leadership role in educating school communities about the importance of information literacy and why teacher librarians and school libraries are essential.

Target audiences – external

Education community

School and education administrators, teachers, boards, parent bodies

Key message

Information literacy is critical if students are to prosper in today's global information society.

What do we want them to:

- Think:* The school library is essential to the success of our school, students and staff.
- Feel:* Teacher librarians are key partners in enhancing teaching and learning.
- Do:* Integrate information literacy into the curriculum. Allocate funds to ensure school libraries are fully equipped and adequately staffed with dual-qualified teacher librarians and support staff to assist students and teachers in becoming effective users of information.
Partner with public libraries to increase information literacy venues throughout the community.

Decision makers

Elected members of government and government officials at the local, state and federal levels with influence or control over school library funding and policies

Key message

Australians of all ages must develop information literacy skills if they are to prosper in the new global information economy. School libraries and teacher librarians are critical to this effort.

What we want them to:

- Think:* School libraries and teacher librarians are part of the core of our nation's information infrastructure.
- Feel:* It is important that all children and adults have the resources and skills they need to fully participate in our democracy and global information society.
- Do:* Increase funding for school libraries, the training of dual-qualified teacher librarians, and support policies that protect the public's right to know in a democratic society.

School library users and potential users

Students, teachers, parents and adult learners

Key message

Information literacy is a critical life skill in today's information society.

What do we want them to:

- Think:* I must become information literate to live successfully in today's information society.
- Feel:* School libraries and teacher librarians can help my family and I learn this important skill.
- Do:* Support school and public libraries as essential centres for information literacy and lifelong learning.

Business community

Chief executive officers, heads of industry and business-related organisations; for example, within the local community

Key message

Good decisions depend on quality information. Information literacy is critical to a competitive workforce.

What we want them to:

- Think:* To succeed in the 21st century, our businesses must have employees who can find, analyse and use information.
- Feel:* School librarians are valuable partners in building an information literate school community and workforce.
- Do:* Work to ensure students graduate with the information literacy skills they need to succeed in the workplace.

Community leaders

Leaders of community, education and other organisations

Key message

Community leaders recognise the importance of information literacy and so they invest in their school, higher education and public libraries as centres of information, culture and lifelong learning.

What do we want them to:

Think: Our community must address the new challenge of information literacy.

Feel: Teacher librarians have valuable expertise in how to build information literate communities.

Do: Work in partnerships with teacher librarians and librarians to develop programs and strategies to help their community become information literate.

Employees

Workers of all types

Key message

Information literacy is critical to success in today's job market.

What do we want them to:

Think: I need information literacy skills to keep up in today's job market.

Feel: Libraries of all types and the library staff are important resources for developing the information literacy skills I need.

Do: Take advantage of the wealth of opportunities available at all libraries in the local community.

Message Sheet

Use or adapt this message sheet with library advocates and spokespeople to support them in delivering the message.

Key message

Information literacy is a critical life skill in today's information-oriented society. School libraries and teacher librarians can help you find your way.

Key message for target audiences

Teacher librarians/Library advocates

Technology is changing how we live, learn, work and govern. Teacher librarians and library advocates must speak out for the importance of information literacy and the critical role of school libraries and teacher librarians.

Education community

Information literacy is critical if students are to prosper in today's global information society.

Decision makers

Australians of all ages must develop information literacy skills if they are to prosper in the new global information economy. School libraries and teacher librarians are critical to this effort.

School Library users/potential users

Information literacy is a critical life skill in today's information society.

Business community

Good decisions depend on quality information. Information literacy is vital for a competitive workforce.

Community leaders

Information literate communities know how to find, evaluate and use information in all forms to make good decisions. They invest in school, public, and higher education libraries as centres for information, culture and lifelong learning.

Employees

Information literacy is critical to success in today's job market.

Talking points

Select from the following 'sound bites' to reinforce your key message with various audiences.

What is information literacy?

Information literacy means being information smart. It means knowing when a book may be more helpful than a computer. It means knowing how to find, evaluate and use information in all forms.

Information literacy is more than print literacy, computer literacy or media literacy. It means knowing when you need information, where to find it and how to evaluate and use it in your everyday life.

Information smart communities use the latest and best information to develop sound policies. They know the importance of having citizens who are information literate. And they invest in their school, public and higher education libraries as centres for information, culture and lifelong learning.

Information smart people lead satisfying lives. They know how to find quality information that will help them through family, medical or job crises. They are information-smart consumers who know how to use information resources wisely for work and pleasure.

Information smart people run successful businesses. They know when they need data and what data they need to evaluate success and plan for the future.

Information smart people know that what is true today may not be true tomorrow, that information is not the same as knowledge.

Information smart people know school libraries and librarians of all types can be their guides.

Information smart people are smart information users and create information smart communities.

Information smart people support libraries.

Why information literacy?

Good decisions depend on quality information.

Our nation faces a critical new challenge in the 21st century: helping people cope with a bewildering amount of information.

Technology is changing how we live, learn and work. The ability to read or even use a computer is not enough. You must also be able to evaluate and apply information.

The ability to read is a basic survival skill, but it is not enough. Today's workforce must be able to find and use information in all forms.

Our children must be smart information users if they are to succeed in the 21st century.

Today getting information can be easy. Getting the right information can be difficult.

Information is the lifeblood of our democracy. But information is power only if you know how to find the best information and apply it to the decisions you make in your work and daily life.

Real information power is having the right information at the right time.

More information is not necessarily better. Anyone who has done a search on the internet and found 999 hits knows that!

The internet is an exciting medium. But it can be confusing. That is why it is important for parents and all adults to learn about the internet and how it works. The more you know, the more you can help your child and yourself.

Why school libraries?

School libraries are unique. They are one-stop shops. In person. Online. Where else can you have access to nearly anything on the web or in print as well as personal service and assistance in finding it?

School libraries are part of our lives. They are a place for education and self-help. They offer opportunity to all.

School libraries are changing and dynamic places, at the forefront of the information age.

School libraries level the playing field in the information age. They make information affordable, available and accessible to all.

If you know how to use a school library, you know how to learn for a lifetime.

If we did not already have school libraries, we would have to invent them!

Every parent can afford to give his/her child the key to success – a library card.

There is no such thing as good education without good school libraries.

Why teacher librarians?

In a world that is information rich, teacher librarians are information smart.

Teacher librarians are the ultimate search engine. They can help you find the best information, whether it is a website, book, video or pamphlet.

Teaching others how to critically evaluate information is a unique skill that teacher librarians bring to a society suffering from information overload.

Teacher librarians bridge the information gap by ensuring that all people have the resources and skills they need to live, learn, work and take part in the democratic process.

Teacher librarians provide more than facts. They provide the expertise and services that add meaning to those facts.

Teacher librarians provide critical expertise that help decision makers make sound decisions based on quality information.

Teacher librarians teach information literacy skills that students will need to succeed in their jobs and throughout their lives.

Teacher librarians have helped generations of Australians to lead better, more satisfying lives. Today they are teaching them to be smart information users.

Teacher librarians have been organising information and guiding people to the best sources for centuries.

Teacher librarians put the 'high touch' in high tech. They are there to help you.

Let a teacher librarian be your guide through the information maze!

Sample questions and answers

Be prepared to answer questions you might encounter as you advocate for school libraries and information literacy, especially those that might be difficult to answer. Take time to brainstorm questions with your colleagues and practise your answers. Remember to keep your answers brief and ‘on message’. Examples follow.

Note the use of the key message and sound bites from the ‘Message sheet’.

Q. What is ‘information literacy?’

A. Information literacy is a critical life skill in today’s information-oriented society. It means knowing when a book may be more helpful than a computer. It means knowing how to find, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources. It means knowing what questions to ask. Is the information complete? Accurate? Is someone trying to sell me something? Good decisions depend on quality information.

Q. Why are teacher librarians concerned?

A. In a world that is information rich, teacher librarians are information smart. They know that having more information is not necessarily better. Real information power is having the right information at the right time. Teacher librarians have been organising information and guiding people to the best sources for centuries. Teaching others how to be smart information consumers is a unique skill that teacher librarians bring to a society suffering information overload.

Q. Why should I use the school library when I can go to the bookshop down the street?

A. There are a lot of reasons. Let me give you just three. First, school libraries are unique. They are one-stop shops. School libraries offer a greater variety of resources than most bookstores could ever offer – both in print and online. Second, school libraries are both high tech and high touch. Virtually every school library in Australia is wired to the Internet. Many have teacher librarians who help you find exactly what you need. Third, school libraries are part of the Australian dream. They are places for education, enjoyment and self-help.

Q. How can I help my children become information literate?

A. There are several things you can do. The most important thing is to encourage your children to use the school library and to ask the teacher librarian for help. You are cheating your kids if you do not teach them to use the best resources available and that means using your school library. Make sure your children have a good school library with plenty of up-to-date books and the latest information technology. Teacher librarians play a critical role in teaching children how to be information smart.

Q. Won’t the Internet make school libraries obsolete?

A. Absolutely not! In fact, if we did not already have school libraries we would have to invent them. That is because the school library has something very important that the Internet does not – the teacher librarian. The Internet is a wonderful resource and a great convenience, but it is far from perfect. According to one study, 70 percent of health and medical information on the Web is wrong or misleading. Teacher librarians have been collecting and organising information for a long time. Today’s teacher librarians put the high touch into high tech. They can help you find the best source of information, whether it is online or in a book or pamphlet.

Q. I’ve heard that school libraries allow children to look at pornography on computers? Is that true?

A. Absolutely not! No one is more concerned about children than teacher librarians. Our role is to guide children to quality materials, whether books or Internet sites. We also provide classes to teach children about the Internet.

Q. Why should school libraries be funded, when there are such crying needs for health, law and order, and jobs?

A. School libraries are part of the solution to many community problems. School libraries help children and adults become literate, productive citizens. They provide programs for kids, adult literacy classes, job information centres, books and other resources to help people of all ages lead productive, satisfying lives.

Q. Why do we need teacher librarians?

A. Teacher librarians are the ultimate search engine. They know how to find the best information whether it is a book, a video, a pamphlet or a Web site. Teaching others how to find and evaluate information is a unique skill that teacher librarians bring to a society encountering a bewildering avalanche of information.

Making the case

Stories about how school libraries make a difference are the best form of ‘advertising’. Collect examples and stories like the ones below to use in speeches, in submissions, letters to government officials, publications and other communications.

Examples

Stories

International School Library Day

<http://www.iasl-slo.org/isld.html> -- ‘What people are doing’

“The students are mounting a display of fiction from other countries in the library. We are asking for emails from students in other school libraries around the world. We hope that each school will include the name and details about a favourite local book.”

“For the theme *Discover the Adventure* we have prepared a display and online quiz designed to promote reading. Students can enter an online quiz linked to the intranet banner. Students need to visit the school library, use the catalogue and other online resources to find the answers.”

“My school, K-12, will be having a read-a-thon organised by the Student Council to raise money for a school library in Laos.”

“In our school library we will be celebrating International School Library Day in a number of ways – A display of books on other countries; a large map jigsaw puzzle for our community to do; activities for the primary students; a special banner sign and quotes about libraries; scrabble games all week; a T-shirt for our library staff that we have specifically designed for ourselves.”

“The children will look at books written by authors from other countries, books written in other languages, favourite Australian books and books about other countries. Together we will be creating a display in the school library for all to see.”

Delivering the message

As part of your planning, brainstorm ways to deliver the message about school libraries, teacher librarians and information literacy to key audiences.

Suggestions follow.

Aim to become a model ‘information literate school community’. Host a working lunch or breakfast with representatives of key groups, including local government, the media, and the business and education community. Include representatives of all areas of libraries: school, public, higher education and special. Focus on identifying information needs at the widest level and develop strategies to address them.

Examples might be expanding computer access in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and integrating information literacy into the school curriculum. Establish priorities and form working groups. Sometimes communication among these groups is the first best step.

Work with community groups to host public forums on information literacy and its growing importance. Invite school officials to discuss information literacy in formal education and lifelong learning.

Host a “cybercafé” for parents, teachers and others to demonstrate how students are benefiting from the revolution in information technology, to talk about the importance of information literacy and to highlight other resources and information they might find interesting and helpful.

Organise regular workshops for parents, school staff, parents & citizens of the school, and community groups to help them develop their information literacy skills. Provide handouts with tips for finding the best sources of information; how to evaluate information in a variety of formats, including the Web; and how to guide children in viewing TV, surfing the Internet or doing homework assignments. Encourage participation in Internet and other instruction offered at the school library.

Work with local employers to design and organise instruction in reading, computer use and other information literacy skills that they identify as employees needs. Offer to host or provide classes at the school library.

Demonstrate your information power to powerful people. Schedule short meetings with community leaders, school administrators and key faculty members. Ask each a few questions to create an individual information profile. Practice old-fashioned “selective dissemination of information”, and notify them by email of new resources (print and electronic, in the school library and on the Web) that match their interests. Invite them on a real and virtual tour of the school library to explore how the school library can help them do their jobs.

Highlight the school library’s role in promoting an informed electorate and the issues of e-democracy. Display books, pamphlets and other information presenting all points of view. Hand out bookmarks with helpful websites and sources of information. Invite candidates to respond to questions about school library and information issues. Join forces with other community groups to promote informed voting.

Provide an orientation session for new school staff and advocates about information literacy and the school library’s policy.

Develop a media plan, including outreach to talk shows, on the topic of information literacy, school library resources and the role of teacher librarians.

Reach out to community groups by providing speakers and articles for newsletters about information literacy and resources available to their members.

Devote a section of the school library Website to the topic of information literacy. Provide helpful tips and links to information literacy tutorials.

Building partnerships

Everyone has a role in building information literate school communities. Professional associations, government, education, and other sectors are all potential partners in ensuring that all people have the resources and skills they need to fully participate in an information society. Building partnerships with key groups is a primary strategy for building information literate school communities.

At the national level, ASLA has formed a partnership with the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) through the formation of two groups:

The ALIA/ASLA Policy Advisory Group work collaboratively to:

- Develop submissions to governments and other bodies on matters relating to library and information practice within the school community,
- Develop policy statements or documents relating to library and information practice within the school community,
- Represent the associations on appropriate forums, working groups,
- Develop mechanisms for collecting statistical data and research information on the sector,
- Explore issues and make recommendations to ALIA and ASLA.

The ALIA/ASLA Advocacy and Alliances Working Party work collaboratively to:

- Identify relevant organisations for advocacy and alliance activity,
- Work with the identified organisations to bridge the gap between school libraries and related educational bodies,
- Initiate contact with these organisations to implement the strategies identified,
- Promote policy statements or documents formulated for school libraries with the identified organisations.

ASLA commissioned a research review on the impact of school libraries on student achievement with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in 2002. *Impact of school libraries on student achievement: a review of the research – Report for the Australian School Library Association* by Michele Lonsdale was published in 2003.

In 2004, ASLA established a research agreement with Charles Sturt University to conduct research on *Smart information use in schools: Concepts and Practices*. The objectives of this research project are to:

- Explore the concept of *smart information use* using frontier technologies
- Investigate the meaning of *smart information use* within the schools as learning organisations
- Identify current practices in Australian schools that illustrate the existence and applications of *smart information use*.

Steps to success

1. Identify potential partners with a common concern and commitment to building information literate school communities. Recruiting key players early on will help to attract other participants.
2. Promote a sense of ownership among all participants. Success is more likely when all partners are involved in the planning stages.
3. Create a shared vision. Involve all participants in identifying the school community needs, available resources, potential strategies and desired outcomes. A facilitator may be helpful.
4. Respect that partner groups have different constituencies and agendas. It is important to keep an open mind, stay flexible and be willing to negotiate.
5. Make a plan and assign tasks. Promote a ‘can do’ attitude. If those involved have a willingness to do whatever it takes, the project will be successful.
6. Run good meetings. Have a clear agenda and close on time. Solicit everyone’s input. Do not meet more than is necessary.
7. Maintain regular communication. Keep everyone informed by using each agency’s established communication channels as well as creating new outlets.
8. Keep your community informed. Prepare a communications plan and provide opportunities for public input when appropriate.
9. Express appreciation. Make sure each group is recognised for its participation as well as the joint outcome.
10. Evaluate your effort. Identify what worked, what did not and what the next steps will be.

Sample publicity materials

Reach out to the media. Edit and adapt these sample publicity materials to reflect your school library’s programs and services.

News release

Submit this release in connection with Library and Information Week or other time of your choosing, e.g. Book Week or International School Library Day.

For immediate release: *[Date]*

Contact: *[Name]*

[Telephone]

Get information smart at your school library

Books, magazines, videos, CDs, books on tape, even the internet: you will find all this and more at your school library.

Library and Information Week, coming up *[date]*, celebrates this unique resource.

‘Today’s school libraries are one-stop shops’, says *[Name, title, school library]*. ‘Where else can you have access to nearly anything on the web or in print as well as personal assistance in finding it?’ *[Name]* noted that teacher librarians play an increasingly important role in the information age.

‘In a world that is information rich, teacher librarians are information smart,’ *[Name]* explained. ‘Teacher librarians are the ultimate search engine. They can save time and money by helping you find the best and most current information available.’

Teacher librarians are at the forefront of the information age. They were among the first to recognise the importance of new information technology and to make it available to the school communities. Long-time advocates for literacy, teacher librarians now advocate an expanded definition of literacy in the 21st century.

‘The ability to read is still a basic survival skill but it is no longer enough,’ *[Name]* explained. ‘Information literacy is a critical life skill in today’s information maze.’

According to *[Name]*, information literacy means being ‘information smart.’ It means knowing when a book may be more helpful than a computer. It means knowing how to find, evaluate and use information in all forms.

‘Good decisions depend on quality information,’ *[Name]* said. ‘Knowing which sources to use and what questions to ask can be critical.’ These questions include: Is the information accurate? Is it complete? Is it from an authoritative source? Is someone trying to sell me something?

Many school libraries offer instruction in information literacy with teacher librarians playing a key role in teaching students the skills they will need to excel in school and make important decisions on the job and throughout their lives.

A growing number of school libraries also provide computer and other classes to help parents, business people and others develop information literacy skills. *[Add description of your school library’s classes/programs.]*

‘School libraries are a place for education and for self-help. They are there for everyone.’

For more information, call or visit *[Name of school library]* or see the website at *[URL]*.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Submit public service announcements with a cover note to public service directors of radio and television stations six to eight weeks before you would like them to run.

For release: *[Air dates]* **Contact:** *[Name]* *[Contact details, including telephone, email]*

00.10

In a world that’s information rich, your teacher librarian is information smart. Get help finding the information you and your family need at your school library.

Call *[Telephone number]* or visit the *[Name of school library]* online at *[URL]*.

00.20

Books, magazines, videos, CDs, books on tape, even the internet. There isn’t much you can’t find at your school library these days. If you haven’t been to your school library lately, Library and Information Week *[Date]* is a good chance to drop by and see what’s new.

For information, call *[Telephone number]* or visit your *[Name of school library]* online at *[URL]*.

00.30

Your child needs to complete an assignment? How do you find the best information?

The teacher says your child is hyperactive and recommends medical treatment. Where do you turn for the latest information?

Your children want to travel to northern Italy to look up your grandparents' family. How do you find out more about the region?

Good decisions are based on quality information. Put an expert to work for you and your family. In a world that's information rich, teacher librarians can help you find the best, most current information. Find the answers at your school library.

Call [*Telephone number*] or visit your [*Name of school library*] today or check out the library online at [*URL*].

Letter to the editor

Edit and submit this letter to the editor of the editorial or features page of your daily newspaper.

Check to see whether the paper accepts email or fax submissions.

Dear Editor,

Too much information. Too little time. Most of us know the feeling.

Getting a simple answer to a simple question isn't always easy these days, let alone doing advanced research. Anyone who's done an online search – let's say on 'car prices' – and received a message along the lines of '254 431 documents matched your query' knows what I'm talking about.

What many of us don't realise is that help is as close as your school library.

Teacher librarians have come a long way since most of us were students. There are still books and journals, of course, but there are also computers and internet connections, books of tape, videos and CDs. Best of all, there are skilled information professionals – teacher librarians – to help us find precisely what it is we need.

Teacher librarians are at the forefront of the information age. They know how to find the best sources of information online and in print. And they have led the way both in making them available and teaching how to use them.

Library and Information Week [*Date*], is a time when we celebrate this great institution. It's also a good time to visit the school library, to take advantage of the incredible resources it offers and to remind others of what's available.

It's easy to take our school libraries and teacher librarians for granted. I encourage everyone to take a moment to thank our teacher librarians for the services they provide and to remind our [*school/organisation officials*] that school libraries provide vital services in today's information society.

Yours faithfully,

[*Name of library advocate, address, telephone*]

Newspaper feature page

Literacy takes on a new meaning in the 21st Century

If you are reading this you are obviously literate. There's a good change you know how to use a computer and, I'd be willing to bet, know the meaning of the words 'information overload.'

Most of us today are keenly aware of the avalanche of information coming at us from the time we wake to our favourite morning talk show until we turn off the late-night news. Books, newspapers, professional journals, email from our colleagues, and newsletters from community organisations add to the volume of information flooding our lives.

But more information doesn't necessarily mean better information. If you read the headlines, you know that opportunities for inaccuracies, exploitation and deception have grown along with the speed and magnitude of information available to us. Investors in one small company lost millions of dollars when a false news release was circulated online. As much as 70 per cent of health information on the web may be inaccurate, according to one study.

Coping with a bewildering amount of information requires a new form of literacy, one that goes beyond the ability to read – something educators refer to as information literacy. This expanded definition of literacy means more than being able to read or use a computer. It means knowing how to find, evaluate and use the best information from an ever-increasing array of sources.

Noted business leaders and organisational theorists, such as Steven Covey, Peter Drucker, and Peter Senge, tell us that life-long learning and the ability to apply new knowledge in a changing world is the first, most important thing for career and life success. But information literacy is more than theory. It is a critical skill in today's information maze.

Your child needs to complete an assignment? How do you find the best information?

The teacher says your child is hyperactive and recommends medical treatment. Where do you turn for the latest information?

Your children want to travel to northern Italy to look up your grandparents' family. How do you find out more about the region?

Good decisions depend on quality information.

Information literate people know how to find quality information that will help them through family, medical or job crises. They know how to separate the wheat from the chaff, the true from the untrue, and the fact from the rumour. Information smart people are good employers and employees. They know when they need data and what data they need to plan and work successfully. Teacher librarians were among the first to recognise that the traditional definition of literacy no longer applies. Back in 1989, the American Library Association's Presidential Committee on Information Literacy wrote: *'How our country deals with the realities of the information age will have enormous impact on our democratic way of life and on our nation's ability to compete internationally.'*

That was before the internet connected businesses, schools, libraries and, increasingly, our homes. Teacher librarians were among the first to recognise the importance of this new information technology and to fight to make it widely accessible to members of the school community. Today, virtually every school, public and higher education library is connected.

The irony, on course, is that many who could benefit most from information lack basic literacy skills. Imagine a family that is being evicted by a landlord who claims he is within his legal rights. Unless that family knows how to seek information to confirm or disprove his claim, they must take his word.

There are still millions of adults who have difficulty with the basic reading, writing and maths skills needed to function in everyday life. And despite the growing availability of computers, the most recent study by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows 'the digital divide' still exists. In 2004-05, sixty-seven per cent of households had a computer, a fourteen per cent increase since 2000. Fifty-six per cent of households had internet access, a twenty-three per cent increase since 2000. Households with higher incomes are more likely to have access to computers and the internet at home. But what about the other forty-four per cent of households without internet access?

For these people school libraries play an essential role both in providing access to the latest information technology and teaching how to use it. Today even the smallest school libraries are one-stop shops. In person and online. More importantly, there are information experts – teacher librarians – to help you find the best and most current information available whether it's a website, book, video or pamphlet.

As a nation, we have focused our energies on maximising the availability of new technology. The time has come to expand that vision. Teacher librarians know that having internet connections isn't enough. We must be information smart. Teacher librarians are working to build information literate school communities, where people of all ages, have both the resources and skills they need to prosper. In

schools, teacher librarians teach students the information literacy skills they need to succeed on the job and throughout life.

A growing number of teacher librarians also provide instruction for parents, business people and others to help them become smart information users. *[Add description of programs at your school library.]*

School libraries continue to play a unique and central role in our democracy. They are a place for education and self-help. They offer an opportunity to all.

Being information smart means knowing when you need help and where to get it. The place to start is at your school library.

Sample speech

This sample speech is intended for a general audience. Feel free to edit and adapt it for specific audiences, adding examples, and stories about your school library and its users. See the 'Communications plan' and 'Message sheet' for examples of more targeted messages. Other quotes and examples can be found in 'Fast facts' and 'Quotable quotes'.

Get information smart at your school library

How many of us ever thought we'd see the day when we had too much information? I'm willing to bet that most of us have had that thought at least one – maybe even once a day! And no, it's not your imagination.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics records that 130 million books were sold in the 2001-2002 financial year by book publishers in Australia. There are an estimated 4500 magazines available in Australia. More than 800 newspapers and professional newsletters are published in Australia. Local, state and federal governments create thousands of documents each year. And that is only the world of organised, thoughtfully written and designed information.

Now let's add the world wide web/internet. There are more than twenty million sites, with close to three billion webpages. Millions of new webpages are added every day. The vast majority of sites are sponsored by businesses, advocacy organisations and individuals. Only about six per cent are educational or government sites. Unlike a school library, there is no catalogue for access. Even the best search engines are capable of locating less than fifty per cent of what's available on any given topic. Some people have compared the web to walking into a school library after an earthquake.

Welcome to the information society!

Twenty years ago, we used to say there was more information in one week's *Sunday New York Times* than in a person in Medieval Europe encountered in a lifetime. Today, the sheer volume of information and data is even more overwhelming.

Each new advance – radio, TV, the fax, the computer, the internet – has added to the immediacy and scope of information in our lives. For those of us who believe there is never too much of a good thing, having so much information is a good problem to have. But it is one that we as a nation and as individuals are still coming to grips with.

Information technology is changing how we live, learn, work and govern. But more and faster doesn't necessarily mean better. Access to more information also means access to more bad information. It means more opportunities for errors, exploitation and fraud.

Today, more than ever, immediate doesn't necessarily mean urgent or important. It may mean only that someone wants our attention and/or our money. And in a world that changes as quickly as ours, we all know that what is true today may not be true tomorrow.

So how do we live successfully in an information society? How can we distinguish knowledge from data, the true from the untrue, the real from the rumour? How can we find the nuggets of wisdom that we need to make good personal and social decisions in a complicated world?

The answer, thankfully, is not nearly as complex as the problem. And it's as close as your nearest school or public library.

Good decisions depend on quality information. Finding information in an information society can be deceptively easy. Finding the best information can be difficult. How successful we are depends largely on a combination of skills known as information literacy skills.

What is information literacy?

Information literacy is more than being able to read or use a computer. It means knowing when you need information, where to find it and how to use it. It means knowing where to find the best source of information, whether it's online or in print. It means knowing how to evaluate the information you find. Is it current? Authoritative? Is it biased? Is someone trying to sell you something?

Information literacy is a critical life skill in today's information maze. Where we turn for information and how well we are able to evaluate it can make the critical difference between a good decision and a bad one. It can save time and money for our families, our employers and ourselves. It may even keep us healthy. According to one study, seventy per cent of the information on health-related websites is inaccurate.

Teacher librarians are among the first to recognise the importance of information literacy in an information society. Back in 1989, the American Library Association's Presidential Committee on Information Literacy wrote: 'How our country deals with the realities of the information age will have enormous impact on our democratic way of life and on our nation's ability to compete internationally.'

That was before the internet connected business, libraries, schools and increasingly, our homes...before 'information overload' became a household word – and before the information gap became 'the digital divide.'

Today, teacher librarians are concerned because they know the quality of our lives depends on quality information. They know that more information isn't always better and that real information power is having the right information you need when you need it. They also know that children and adults must be skilled and smart information users to succeed in today's world.

The irony, of course, is that many who could benefit most from information often lack access. Imagine a family that is being evicted by a landlord who claims he is within his legal rights. Unless that family knows how to seek information to confirm or disprove his claim, they must take his word. Some forty-eight per cent of Australian adults have trouble doing everyday tasks such as reading, dealing with bus timetables, or interpreting maps. And despite the growing availability of computers, recent studies by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the 'digital divide' continues to exist.

For these people school libraries play an essential role both in providing access to technology and teaching how to use it.

School libraries have always been, and continue to be, fundamental to our democracy. They are places for education and for self-help. They offer opportunity for all. And they are dynamic, changing places. School libraries have transformed themselves in ways that we could not have imagined ten years ago. There's a wealth of books and other print materials, of course, but also books on tape, CDs, videos, computers and internet connections, story time and other children's programs, exhibits, and classes. *[Adapt this description of resources and programs for your school library.]*

Today even the smallest of school libraries are one-stop shops. In person and online. Where else can you have access to nearly anything on the web or in print? More importantly, there are information experts – teacher librarians – to guide you.

Consider your own information needs:

Your child needs to complete an assignment. How do you find the best information?

The teacher says your child is hyperactive and recommends medical treatment. Where do you turn to for the latest information?

Your children want to travel to northern Italy to look up your grandparents' family? How do you find out more about the region?

One of the myths in the information age is that you can find everything you need on the internet. Well, maybe it's there but finding it can often be a challenge! Anyone who's done a search on car prices and received a message along the lines of '148000 documents matched your query' knows what I'm talking about. *[Add examples of how your library staff have assisted information seekers.]*

In a society that is information rich, school libraries are information wise. Teacher librarians are the ultimate search engines. They can save you time by helping to find the best, most current information available whether it's a website, book, video or pamphlet.

Teacher librarians are techno-wise, on the forefront of the information age. They were among the first to recognise the importance of new information technology and to make it available to their school community.

Today they are working to build information literate school communities.

In school libraries, teacher librarians play a key role in teaching students the information literacy skills they will need to succeed in school, on the job and throughout their lives. *[Describe programs at your school library.]*

As teacher librarians, employers and employees, as parents, community leaders and citizens, we all have a role to play in building information literate school communities.

What can you do?

One. Become information smart. Attend a class or workshop. Read a book. Ask the teacher librarian for tips when looking something up on the web. Make sure your child's school or education institution provides instruction in information literacy and that there are well resourced school libraries with qualified teacher librarians to help them. Encourage your children to use the school library and to seek information from a variety of sources for homework and other needs. Teach them to be critical consumers of information, whether in books, newspapers, on TV or on the web. Encourage your employees to take advantage of programs that will help them develop information literacy skills. Or, conversely, suggest that your employer offer such programs. *[Explain any programs your school library offers and/or your willingness to work with others.]*

Two. Be informed and involved in issues that affect your quality to get information. In the future, much of the information that Australians have used for their studies and to do research, may carry a steep price tag unless members of the public actively speak out. Teacher librarians believe that the student's right to fair use of information should apply in cyberspace as it has in the print-based world. They also strongly support confidentiality rights for information users. That isn't always true on the internet. Make sure your government representatives know you want these democratic freedoms preserved for the future.

Three. Use and support your school library. You're cheating yourself and your family if you don't use the best information resource around. Ask the teacher librarian if you have questions. Join the Parents & Citizens group at your local school. Let your government and public officers know you value these services and want your school to receive the support they need to provide state-of-the-art information services.

When Australia was being developed as a country, one of the measures by which a community was deemed civilised was the presence (or absence) of a library. On the new frontiers of cyberspace, school libraries continue to be part of the Australian way of life. They are changing and dynamic places for education and self-help. They offer opportunity for all.

Before I close, I want to invite all of you to visit your school library in person or online at *[URL]*. That's *[repeat URL]*. *[Note other upcoming events.]*

And remember, it's an information maze out there. Let a teacher librarian be your guide!

Fast facts

'At the end of June 2000, there were 505 local government public library services with 1,510 library locations; a national library; and state or territory libraries in each state and territory. Fifty-two per cent of the population were library members. And they were not inactive members: in the year 199-2000, there were 99.4 million visits to national, state and local government libraries, an 11 per cent increase over 1996-1997 figures.'

Parliament of Australia: Senate Committee 2003, *Libraries in the online environment*
http://www.aph.gov.au/senate_communications/completed_inquiries/2002-04/online_libraries/report/c01.pdf

‘At the end of June 2004, there were 548 public library and archive organisations operating in 1,754 locations.’

‘Since 1999-2000, there had been strong growth in the use of information technology within public library operations. The number of organisations with a web presence increased from 46.7% (236) in 1999-2000 to 80.9% (431) in 2003-04. The availability of a local government organisation’s library catalogue on a web presence had increased from 14.9% (75) in 1999-2000 to 42% (223) in 2003-04. For this same period, the number of Internet work stations available for public use had also increased from 2,832 to 4,638 (13% per annum) which represents, on average, three Internet workstations per location.’ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003-04, *Public Libraries*

Survey outcome of 15-year-old students:

- Nearly seventy per cent have been using a computer for more than 5 years
- 100 % of those surveyed indicated they had access to computers at school – only sixty percent indicated frequent use of a computer at school
- Principals’ responses to the school questionnaire indicated an average of five or fewer students per computer at school with approximately ninety per cent of the computers being connected to the Internet
- On average, eighty per cent had access to ICT and educational resources at home, including a computer to use for schoolwork, educational software, calculator and books to help with schoolwork
- Computer use from highest to lowest -
 - Email or chat rooms
 - Looking things up on the Internet
 - Playing games
 - Word processing
 - Learning school material
 - Programming
 - Educational software

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2005, *Are students ready for a technology-rich world?*, What PISA studies tell us.

‘Based on telephone interviews with 350 metropolitan and 150 rural households, this bi-annual study {Australian eGeneration} into Internet and technology usage patterns among Australia’s online kids, teens and parents revealed that 66 per cent of parents believe their children to be more Internet and technology savvy than they are themselves.’

Nielsen/NetRatings 2005, *Media release: Australia’s kids overtake their parents online*

Quotable quotes

‘....there are more public library outlets than there are McDonalds’.

Parliament of Australia: Senate Committee 2003, *Libraries in the online environment*

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate_communications/completed_inquiries/2002-04/online_libraries/report/c01.pdf

‘Existing research shows that school libraries can have a positive impact, whether measured in terms of reading scores, literacy or learning more generally, on student achievement. There is evidence to show that a strong library program that is adequately staff, resourced and funded can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socioeconomic or educational levels of the adults in the community..’

Lonsdale, M 2003, *Impact of school libraries on student achievement: a review of the research*, report for the Australian School Library Association, ACER, Camberwell, Vic., p. 27.

‘A thriving national and global culture, economy and democracy will best be advanced by people able to recognise their need for information, and identify, locate, access, evaluate and apply the needed information’.

ALIA *Statement on Information Literacy for all Australians*

<http://www.alia.org.au/policies/information.literacy.html>

‘Just as success in the Industrial Age depended on a school system that taught us how to read and write, add and subtract; our success in the Information Age depends on a school system that teaches us how to manage information, utilise technologies, innovate, and above all – think.’

Barrett, Matthew. *The Globe and Mail*, 30 November 1996.

‘Effective school library programs can also help promote the development of information literacy skills among all students by supporting and coordinating the collaborative planning and implementation of reading programs, inquiry and research tasks, and independent study.’
Ontario. The Ministry of Education. *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: Program Planning and Assessment*. 2000.

‘The fusion of learning, libraries and literacies is creating dynamic, if not confronting challenges for teacher-librarians, teachers and administrators, particularly when set against the backdrop of learning and information environments that are complex and fluid, connective and interactive, and ones no longer constrained by time and space.’

Todd, Ross 2001, ‘Keynote paper: Virtual conference session’, IASL conference 2001
<http://www.iasl-slo.org/virtualpaper2001.html> 15 August 2001

‘The role played by teacher-librarians goes beyond just keeping the library open. They have an overview of the curriculum, and they work with teachers to ensure that library materials support curriculum and to choose appropriate resources for use in the classroom. They also teach children research skills, how to write papers and how to use the computers and the Internet.’

‘Where have all the teacher-librarians gone?’ *People for Education Newsletter*. December 4, 2000, Vol. 4 No. 1

‘With the advent of high technology and sophisticated networks, many schools have approached technology as if it were separate and distinct from “the library”. But after networks are in and the equipment in place, it soon becomes evident that materials and information merely have new paths to take. The concept of a vast store of materials and information poised to serve teachers and learners remains intact no matter what it is named – the library, the library media centre, the information portal, or network central.’

Loertscher, David V 2000, *Reinventing your school’s library in the age of technology: A guide for principals and superintendents*, Hi Willow Research and Publishing.

‘What I’ve been discussion thus far is a world Peter Drucker calls ‘the knowledge society’, on in which information is, in fact, our most precious resource. In such a world, education should empower everyone, not the few. But for information to become *knowledge*, and ultimately, on hopes, *wisdom*, it must be organised. And, in this new climate, the *public* interest challenge, beyond access and equity is, I believe sorting and selection. The challenge for educators is to help students make sense of a world described by some as *information overload*’.

Boyer, EL 1997, *Selected speeches 1979-1995*, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Princeton, NJ, p. 140.

Learning matrix for student learning

From *Learning for the future: a professional development kit*, published by the Australian School Library Association, 2004, pp. 8-13. The learning matrix is adapted and developed from *Learning for the future: developing information services in schools 2nd edition*, published by the Australian School Library Association (ASLA) and Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), 2001, pp. 14-19.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Defining information needs	INFORMATION LITERACY					
	The student: Suggests questions for investigation with teacher assistance, in response to directed discussion on a given topic using an audio and / or visual stimulus	The student: Selects from a range of well-defined topics, participates in teacher-led brainstorming, clustering of ideas, focus-question development and completion of a group-search strategy.	The student: Selects from within a broad topic and narrows the topic with assistance. Participates in teacher-directed group clustering of ideas to arrive at focus questions and a simple search strategy.	The student: Selects from within a given topic area and narrows a topic given guidelines and assistance where needed. Independently brainstorms and clusters ideas to develop focus questions and devises a search strategy.	The student: Prepares a search strategy in a standard format which involves the analysis of research tasks requiring consideration of more than one point of view. Develops and clusters focus questions under appropriate headings and subheadings and predicts suitable information sources.	The student: Independently analyses or devises a research task or hypothesis for investigation, recognising the key requirements. Prepares a search strategy, which identifies a range of search terms, appropriate sources and a framework for focus questions and subheadings to guide the investigation.
	ICT LITERACY					
	Participates in teacher-led development of questions in graphic and word processing formats.	Participates in teacher-led creation of simple word processed documents containing questions for the task. Includes concept mapping using a graphic format.	Develops graphical format for focus and contributing questions and the search strategy with teacher assistance. Uses tables to outline the research task.	Develops concept maps and word processed documents. Develops web pages to include concept maps	Develops research outlines using word processors, spreadsheets and / or web media. Develops templates for frameworks.	Develops a query for a range of search engines and databases appropriate to the topic. Develops outlines in web and text formats to act as a link for the research.
LITERATURE / LITERACY						
Participates in teacher-led discussion by predicting and identifying the setting of the story, who is the main character	Participates in teacher-led identification of characters and setting	Identifies, with teacher guidance, characters, genre and setting	Develops a story map that provides evidence of genre characteristics and relate characters to same.	Prepares a comparative study of genre, theme and/or storyline	Prepares a framework for study of a novel	

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Locating information	INFORMATION LITERACY					
	The student: Identifies and selects sources of information with teacher assistance using knowledge of the library organisational system, personal experience and / or knowledge of a topic or context primary sources such as people.	The student: Identifies and locates resources following a search strategy with assistance. Uses author, title and subject entries in the catalogue, the Dewey decimal classification system and a knowledge of the purposes of specialist reference materials. Appropriate resources are selected using simple scanning techniques, equipment, surface features of a resource and a table of contents. With assistance data are gathered from primary sources.	The student: Identifies and locates resources with assistance, and modifies a search strategy, using single term catalogue searches and pre judges the relative worth of resources. Selections are made by scanning all parts of a book / package notes and using knowledge of the structure of newspapers and encyclopedias and the need to read / view only the appropriate sections of a resource.	The student: Identifies and locates a range of resources in the school and wider community by independently following a search strategy and using both single and combined search terms. Text headings are surveyed in resource selections and the importance of currency, differing viewpoints and differences in purpose and coverage between magazines, newspapers and pamphlets are recognised.	The student: Locates resources representing a range of viewpoints by following and modifying a search strategy which involves using broad and narrow terms in a variety of combinations and eliminating inappropriate resources using catalogue information. Makes selections by surveying all aspects of resource including complex referencing in indexes. Sources of information can include external databases, electronic information services, and specialist reference materials.	The student: Locates resources representing different viewpoints and from different perspectives by independently refining and adapting a search strategy using multiple combinations of terms to search catalogues, databases and indexes, including periodical indexes. Selections are made by skimming abstracts, all surface features of a resource and text clues.
	ICT LITERACY					
	Uses an online catalogue for a simple query with teacher assistance. Participates with the class and teacher in composing email requesting information.	Uses an online catalogue and / or simple database and / or a teacher pre selected web page to form a simple word query. Composes, sends and reads emails to request information and communicate with teacher assistance. Uses topic specific multimedia programs to locate teacher directed information.	Uses online catalogues, simple databases, simple search engines, and electronic indexes for simple queries. Use email for information gathering, including sending attachments for information. Uses electronic encyclopaedias and topic specific multimedia programs	Uses library related electronic sources as well as the World Wide Web – search engines and “bookmarked” sites to locate information. Email, discussion lists and appropriate chat rooms to locate information.	Uses a range of online services including the WWW and dedicated subscription services. Uses academic / specialist online search services for complex references with teacher assistance.	Independently locates and uses information available in a variety of media.
	LITERATURE / LITERACY					
	Participates in teacher-led identification of storyline – using retell or recount. Identifies main idea of story	With teacher assistance, identifies the beginning of the story, climax and conclusion	Identifies story theme and can relate this to current affairs or events. With teacher assistance can diagrammatically show characters and story events.	Identifies cause and effect relationships in story	Diagrammatically explains relationships, written explanations about the themes and sub themes	Identifies all elements the author has used to create the story.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Selecting information	INFORMATION LITERACY					
	The student: Selects and records the main idea and key words from a text or audio and/or visual source in a concept maps, sequence or list to show the relationship of the ideas to each other and the focus question.	The student: Selects main ideas and supporting key words from more than one source, categorises and records information in lists, picture sequences, grids or concept maps which show the relationship of the ideas to each other and the focus questions.	The student: Selects and records information relevant to a specific purpose using a notemaking strategy suited to the task. Included are semantic grids and structure overviews. Information is evaluated in terms of language suitability and currency and comparisons are made between different formats and sources.	The student: Selects and records information from a variety of types of sources which include magazines, newspapers, pamphlets and reference materials. The text structure of these types of materials is understood and appropriate skimming and scanning techniques are employed. Suitable notemaking strategies are selected with assistance.	The student: Selects and records appropriate information representing a range of viewpoints, recognising whether the information is closer to fact or opinion. Text-content clues are used to identify main and subordinate ideas and headings and subheadings are used to structure notes.	The student: Selects and records relevant information integrating a range of skimming and scanning techniques. The credibility of information which expresses opinion is assessed and inconsistencies, bias and prejudice are identified
	ICT LITERACY					
	Participates in teacher directed development of frameworks for ideas and concept maps using graphics. Uses a word processor to list information and include this information in a table with teacher assistance. Records voice or sound as main ideas. Saves text and graphics to student folder for inclusion in information records.	Uses word processing to develop graphic / text concept maps. Include graphic and / or electronic links to develop relationship of ideas.	Uses tables, teacher developed templates and graphic structures as notetaking frameworks. Included are multimedia components developed by students and / or information sources.	Selects information from electronic indexes, full text sources and online services including web-based information.	Selects information from a range of sources. Uses advanced features of word processors, spreadsheets and multimedia to identify required information and use hyperlinks to show relationships within the notetaking structure	Records information in a range of electronic formats appropriate to the information.
LITERATURE / LITERACY						
Participates in teacher led discussion about the feelings expressed in the story	Determines prejudice in story with teacher assistance. Can represent the emotions of the story in a visual format.	Detects discrimination in story and can classify the discrimination – racial, gender, religious etc	Determines attitudes displayed by author through the story.	Reads a range of material and can select based on types of bias, emotions in books. Relates attitudes or prejudice in at least 3 books to a theme.	Outlines the place of bias, emotions and author attitudes in books. How does this affect the reader?	

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Organising information	INFORMATION LITERACY					
	The student: Participates in teacher-directed group consideration of appropriateness and presentation of information.	The student: Processes information by comparing, selecting and combining, with assistance, that which is relevant to the task and organising according to an agreed format.	The student: Processes and organises information with assistance, determining that which is conflicting and irrelevant and combining it into an appropriate framework using subheadings.	The student: Processes information by synthesising and beginning to make generalisations with information from opposing viewpoints, taking into account accuracy and appropriateness to the task and audience. Information is organised according to an independently chosen standard format.	The student: Processes information by evaluating it for accuracy, fact and opinion and synthesises to substantiate judgments and make generalisations. The organising framework used is modified to suit the task, information and audience.	The student: Processes information having regard for logic, value judgments and contradictions: synthesising and making inferences and deductions to support a thesis or hypothesis. Information is organised using a framework of categories and subcategories to support the position being taken.
	ICT LITERACY					
	Participates in teacher-directed graphical organisation of information.	Uses a word processor and simple multimedia to organise information with teacher assistance	Uses word processing, spreadsheets, multimedia simple databases to organise information with assistance.	Uses word processing, spreadsheets, databases, multimedia and web-based information. Organisation of information is assisted by use of electronic templates and frameworks and is used with teacher assistance.	Use of a variety of multimedia and applications software. Include virtual locations for information organisation.	Organises information using a variety of software and media. Included are student developed electronic templates and hypertext applications.
	LITERATURE / LITERACY					
	Retells a story in parts ensuring sequence is correct with teacher assistance.	Designs a story map showing storyline and characters action.	Combines 2 stories with the same theme and displays this diagrammatically.	Categorises stories based on themes, identifies cause and effect relationships and creates new endings for stories changing the relationship between characters.	Develops generalisations about stories based on themes and relates this to contemporary society.	Develops an argument for or against the author's assertions and relates the argument to the theme and contemporary society.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Creating and sharing information	INFORMATION LITERACY					
	The student: Presents responses to a task or question in a written or oral sentence, drawing a simple picture sequence, model or role-play.	The student: Presents responses to a task/topic which conveys understanding of the information gathered using logical structures such as time sequences and cause and effect. Format of presentation includes simple written or oral recounts and factual descriptions, illustrations, models and role-play.	The student: Presents responses to a research task which are suited to the audience and which demonstrate understanding and interpretation of the information. Organisation is logical with simple conclusions. Appropriate frameworks are used for a variety of forms such as reports, recounts and descriptions or graphic or pictorial, dramatic and constructed representations.	The student: Presents logical responses to a research task which demonstrate an ability to make generalisations and draw simple conclusions based on the given information. With assistance, appropriate construction of written and oral forms and frameworks are chosen, taking into account audience and purpose	The student: Presents cohesive responses to a research task which, based on synthesis of given information, demonstrates and ability to support an issue and to generalise. Appropriate forms and frameworks are selected with assistance to suit audience and purpose.	The student: Presents analytical and persuasive responses to a research task, using subject specific language and demonstrating an ability to consider different viewpoints. Appropriate forms and frameworks are selected to suit the audience, the purpose and the nature of the information.
	ICT LITERACY					
	Presents information using a word processor and simple multimedia including graphics and sound. Uses email to share information with teacher assistance.	Presents the task in a simple multimedia format with teacher assistance. Includes word processed and graphic documents. The task is shared through email.	Presents the task in multimedia format including sound and video with teacher assistance. Publishing completed task through email and the school intranet with teacher assistance.	Presents a task as a multimedia product. Development of web pages with teacher assistance. Publish to the school intranet and the WWW.	Presents task(s) in the most appropriate electronic format for the information and audience type with assistance. Included are full multimedia capabilities.	Presents information in the most appropriate ICT framework to suit audience and purpose. Included are communication mechanisms to allow audience participation.
	LITERATURE / LITERACY					
	Demonstrates a response to literature by: Visually interpreting the authors theme or emotion.	Demonstrates a response to literature by: Creating a timeline of the story and visually identifying the characters moods.	Demonstrates a response to literature by: Composes a written response – poem, letter, diary, alternative ending to story etc.	Demonstrates a response to literature by: Developing the story into a different form – eg. readers theatre, webpage etc.	Demonstrates a response to literature by: Developing an action plan to address any themes or needs identified in the story.	Demonstrates a response to literature by: Writing a balanced perspective of the story from all points of view.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
	INFORMATION LITERACY					
Evaluating information and the information process	The student: Assesses the completed research task, with teacher assistance, with a key question: "Did I answer the questions I chose to investigate?" Evaluates the research task and the information process by orally checking with teacher direction that each stage was covered.	The student: Self-assesses with teacher assistance, the completed research task with the key question: "Did I answer the questions and present the information appropriately?" Evaluates the research task and the process by completing a checklist covering each stage of the information process.	The student: Self-assesses the completed research task with the key question: "Did I present information that directly relates to my questions?" "Were my conclusions based on my information?" Evaluates the information process and identifies one aspect for skill refinement with teacher assistance.	The student: Self-assesses the research task and the identification of the topic with the key question: "Did my assignment answer the questions selected?" "Was my assignment in an appropriate form for the audience and the initial purpose?" using a teacher selected framework. Evaluates the information process using a given framework and identifies areas for improvement with teacher assistance.	The student: Self-assesses the research task using an appropriate framework that is used throughout the information process. The key question is addressed: "Have I presented information that addresses the topic and as well is in an appropriate form?" Evaluates the process of information retrieval and use and identifies stages for more concentrated effort.	The student: Continually self-assesses all aspects of the research task, including appropriateness of notetaking and other frameworks used and re-visits stages of the process as a result of this assessment. Continually evaluates the process undertaken and identifies stages that require improvement.
	ICT LITERACY					
	Prints reports and / or presents word processing and multimedia files with teacher assistance.	Participates in teacher-led evaluation of the role of ICT in the research task.	Uses a teacher-developed framework to evaluate the role of ICT in the research task / process.	Evaluates the skills required and the role of ICT in the learning process with teacher assistance.	Self-assesses the ICT aspects of the task and identifies future skill needs.	Self-assesses the role of ICT in the learning process.
	LITERATURE / LITERACY					
	Rates the success of the author in writing a "good" story with teacher assistance.	Compares story with other work from author and evaluates author's ability to engage the reader.	Explains how the author achieved (or not) believable characters, setting and plot.	Develops criteria for "what makes a good story" and applies this criteria to books.	Appraises the author's believability of theme, characters etc and provides a critique about improvements needed.	Critically evaluates story – mood, theme, characterisation.

ASLA Statement on information literacy

'Information is an essential to our survival as water, food, shelter and sleep. Information is, however, much more than a survival tool. Information unleashes our imagination and challenges our preconceptions and thereby provides us with a pathway to personal growth and fulfilment.

Throughout history the processing of information has been essential to assist human survival and growth. The last few decades have witnessed an amazing increase in the quantity of information and the Australian workforce is now concentrated around the collection, analysis, manipulation and communication of that information. Change has been so dramatic that Australian can now be described as an information society.

Today's decision makers are often overwhelmed with information and the challenge for them it to choose that which is appropriate. Effective decision making is built upon timely access to this information and the ability to process the available information to suit the requirements of the decision. This problem exists for the aged, for those in employment, for the unemployed and for those who are at school.

The need to be able to use information effectively has in many cases become more important than the acquiring of factual knowledge itself. The sum total of information increases at such a rate each day that yesterday's best answer may be known to be incorrect today. Much of what many children learn during their school life will be quite obsolete by the time they enter the workforce.

Effective learners are not just those people who are knowledgeable but rather they are people who are able to find and use information as required. We might say that effective learners are those who are information literate. Information literacy is synonymous with knowing how to learn. This means that the ability to process and use information effectively is more than a basic tool for the empowerment of school students: it is in fact the basic survival skills for those who wish to be successful in the 1990s and beyond.

Australian School Library Association Inc. 1994, *Policy statement: information literacy*,
http://www.asla.org.au/policy/p_infol.htm

Information literacy resources

Events

Conferences

A listing of school library activities and events are available on the website.
<http://www.asla.org.au/pd/>

Library and Information Week

Raises awareness of the value of libraries and information services and information professionals in Australia.
<http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/liw/>

International School Library Day

Raises awareness of the value of school libraries throughout the world.
<http://www.iasl-slo.org/isld.html>

Online

Teacher librarian meeting space: EdNA Groups

<http://www.groups.edna.edu.au/course/view.php?id=5>

Promotional materials

ASLA Advocacy programs

Information on the Association's various advocacy programs
<http://www.asla.org.au/advocacy/>

ALIA Advocacy programs

Information on the Australian Library and Information Association advocacy programs
<http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/>

Publications

Access journal

The national journal of ASLA

<http://www.asla.org.au/pubs/access/>

ASLA published resources

A listing of resources published by ASLA and other joint agencies

<http://www.asla.org.au/pubs/>

Teacher librarianship courses

Courses in teacher librarianship

<http://www.asla.org.au/pd/courses/>

Organisations and leadership

American Association of School Librarians (AASL)

<http://www.ala.org/aasl/aaslindex.htm>

Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)

<http://www.alia.org.au>

Australian School Library Association Inc. (ASLA)

<http://www.asla.org.au>

International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) Inc. (IASL)

<http://www.iasl-slo.org>

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

<http://www.ifla.org>

Member Associations of ASLA

<http://www.asla.org.au/about/member.htm>

School Library Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (SLANZA)

<http://www.slanza.org.nz>