

## About finding out

*Priority 1: Information Skills* was the title of the LAA School Librarians Section (NSW Group) seminar held on 11 October at Fort Street High School. It was the first in a series of seminars to support the new direction in teacher-librarianship and the introduction of information skills across the curriculum in NSW schools.

Ninety teacher-librarians, divided into workshop groups, compiled a long list of the steps a student needs to take to find information and to communicate about a topic. This set the scene for Joyce Kirk's lecture on the implications of the NSW Education Department *Draft Information Skills K-12 Guidelines Document*.

Joyce reminded the participants that we live in an information society, that in 1981 41 percent of the Australian workforce was employed in information related activities. All students need to acquire information literacy — the ability to access and evaluate information for a given need.

Information literacy is characterised by a set of skills, knowledge and attitudes which are time and labour intensive, need driven, distinct from and relevant to literacy and computer literacy. In South Australia, computer literacy stresses technological literacy, keyboard skills, organisation of data in data bases and the assimilation of data by the screenful.

Among its aims of education the NSW Education Department includes preparing the individual for lifelong and independent learning. With resource-based learning a student learns from confrontation with learning resources, accepting responsibility for his/her

own learning. Information skills are broad in scope and are information based, not library based.

As part of a world wide trend towards information skills curricula, in UK there are whole school information policies and programs, and investigation of the needs of students. In Canada, a partnership approach is emphasised with the principal, teacher and teacher-librarian teaching co-operatively. In the ACT Bloom's taxonomy has been related to information skills. In WA knowledge acquisition skills are emphasised as life skills. In Tasmania, there is an example of a whole school approach to locating, selecting, interpreting and evaluating.

In Victoria, a draft program on teaching information skills relies on Marland's nine questions for students:

1. What do I need to know?
2. Where can I get the information?
3. How do I get the resources I want?
4. Which resources shall I use?
5. How shall I use the resources?
6. What information shall I record?
7. Do I have the information I need?
8. How shall I present the information?
9. How have I done?

The NSW *Draft Information Skills K-12 Guidelines Document* includes an introduction, a taxonomy, sample units of work, a bibliography and a glossary. The taxonomy allows for the familiarisation and development of skills which the learner needs, that the skills are transferable, and covers six process phases:

1. Definition of purpose
2. Location of sources and data
3. Selection of useful data
4. Answering the task
5. Presenting the answer
6. Evaluating the task

These are often not linear, and in particular, the student often will return to phase 1. There are process steps within each process phase.

This draft document is a teacher's as well as a teacher-librarian's document. The teaching of information skills is a partnership of the principal, the teacher and the teacher-librarian. The teacher would be responsible for the educational program for his/her classes, while the teacher-librarian would teach those skills mutually agreed upon, and reinforce the skills of independent learners.

Participants in two further workshops attempted to plan the outline of a unit of work which related to the taxonomy, and assessed the role of the teacher and of the teacher-librarian through each process phase. In the concluding panel discussion some of the problems relating to the implementation of the information skills guidelines were raised.

This challenging and thought provoking seminar was highly successful in raising participants' awareness of the wide range of issues on the implementation of information skills guidelines in schools.

*Sheila Hawkins*

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