Information Literacy for Littlies

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Dromkeen Librarian's Award 2003
Why is the sky blue?
Does it hurt when the egg comes out?
Where did I come from?
From the moment they are able to articulate their thoughts children have questions. It is their way of making connections that help them make sense of their world.

Carroll, L (1865). *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* Illustration by John Tenniel (public domain)
I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.

A person soon learns how little they know when a child begins to ask questions.

How can we maintain the curiosity and help them find their own answers?
How can we help them...

- ask quality questions
- find appropriate resources
- identify their purpose

- sort their information
- use clues & cues to choose

- share their learning
- assess their work

- act on what they've learned
How can we help them ...

to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals.
The **Information Literacy Process** provides a scaffold that can support their journey from question to answer.

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<tr>
<th>Defining</th>
<th>Locating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do I want to know?</td>
<td>Where can I find the information I need?</td>
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<th>Selecting</th>
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<tr>
<td>How can I use these resources well?</td>
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<td>What is the information telling me?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Organising</th>
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<tr>
<td>How can I sort what I’ve found?</td>
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<td>How can I share what I’ve learned?</td>
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<th>Assessing</th>
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<td>What have I learned?</td>
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<th>Reflecting</th>
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<td>So what?</td>
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<td>Now what?</td>
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Information Literacy

- is about being able to *locate, interpret and use information sources* in a variety of formats to satisfy an information need or create new information
- is an *across-curriculum perspective* which provides a *scaffold* for all information problems regardless of curriculum area
- supports, connects and embeds the *key competencies* of
  - thinking
  - using language, symbols and texts
  - managing self
  - relating to others
  - participating and contributing
- fits within the *inquiry-based* pedagogy and is most effective when *integrated* into regular learning in *collaboration* with the classroom teacher
- promotes *critical* and *creative thinking*
- is about the *process* rather than the product
- is *cyclic* rather than linear with its different parts getting more or less attention according to need
- is based on a *constructivist* approach with expertise being built on experience so the earlier students start to use it the more proficient they will become
- helps overcome the *feelings of doubt, anxiety and confusion* associated with research projects as identified by Kuhlthau
- enables students to become *independent thinkers* and *lifelong learners*
Even though they may be very young, our early learners can take many steps along their journey to being *information literate*.

Here are some suggestions to help you help them.
Getting started...

1. Identify your focus.
   Is it
   • a curriculum requirement
   • an event
   • a concept
   • something that has captured the students’ interest and imagination
   • a skill or procedure
   • a story, poem, rhyme, song
   • a person
   • an observation

2. Identify your purpose.
   Why do the students need to know this?

3. Identify your priorities.
   What is it important for them to know, understand, appreciate, value and do in the short, medium and long-term?

4. Make the intended outcomes explicit.
   I can ask questions to seek new information.
   I can create information for others to use.

5. Determine the assessment task.
   What evidence will show that the outcomes have been achieved?

6. Develop the big question which will guide the inquiry.
   Questions provide a specific focus to address and answer
1. Share the stimulus.
2. Introduce the big question.
3. Pre-test with *I know, I think, I wonder*
4. Support their curiosity with question starters. Model possible questions.
5. Share what is known
   - brainstorm
   - concept map
   - vocabulary chart
6. Create a Wonder Wall
7. Use the children’s questions to shape the investigation.
8. Explain the learning so they (and their parents) know what, why and how.
1. Locate suitable resources that will support the inquiry.

- **print**
  - non fiction
  - pictures
  - photos
  - maps
  - graphs
  - timetables

- **digital**
  - email
  - websites
  - Digistore
  - Enchanted Learning
  - KidCyber
  - Qunitura Kids

- **electronic**
  - television
  - video
  - audio

- **other**
  - models
  - globe
  - artefacts
  - museums
  - galleries
  - excursions

- **people**
  - family
  - friends
  - teachers
  - experts
  - organisations

2. Discuss why they are the most appropriate for this investigation.

3. Help students begin to identify and locate resources for themselves.

4. Introduce specialist sources such as atlases, maps and dictionaries.
1. Focus on visual literacy – examining the details and interpreting them
   How do you know the koala is good at climbing trees?
   What can we learn from this diagram?

2. Teach the cues and clues for navigating print and online resources.
   • title, contents page, page numbers, headings and index of print resources
   • distinguish between informative text and eye-candy on websites
   • identify menu and hyperlinks

3. Jointly construct anchor charts as ready reminders

4. Model note-taking using key words and phrases

5. Start the conversation about ethical use of ideas, information and images
1. Explore the difference between fiction and non fiction

**Fiction**
- is for your imagination
- is for your entertainment
- happens only in the author’s and the reader’s minds
- might be set in real times or real places but the characters are imaginary
- creates a world of make-believe
- can be a book or a movie, a poem or a play

**Non Fiction**
- is for information
- is for education
- is real
- has happened
- comes from many sources
- helps me understand my world

2. Explore the author’s purpose

3. Investigate perspective by retelling stories from another character’s point of view

*Imagine you were the spider meeting Little Miss Muffet. Tell your story.*
Focus on

• using graphic organisers
• sequencing
• patterns and relationships
• similarities and differences
• sorting
• classifying
• using headings and keywords
• recording in own words
• making lists, tables and graphs
• creating labels and signs
• summarising
• developing collaborative anchor charts
• modelling the need to be organised
**Presenting**

- Sharing what has been learned should be the culmination of the investigation and evidence of learning
- Students are *information creators* as well as *information consumers*
- Format should
  - be related to purpose of study
  - demonstrate the level of the student’s learning
  - meet the needs of the audience
  - include oral, print, digital and 3D options to allow for differentiation of curriculum
  - allow flexibility to cater for learning styles but not too many choices
  - ensure students step out of their comfort zone at times
  - allow for individual or collaborative work depending on focus
  - be known from the beginning of the investigation
- Create a sample and a rubric of essential elements so students have a model to aspire to
- Allow time to plan, prepare and practise
- Explore ways for it to be shared with a wider audience
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral</th>
<th>Print</th>
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<tr>
<td>talk speech discussion debate recount role-play interview court argument re-enactment song poetry reading readers’ theatre</td>
<td>report poster picture mural chart pamphlet instructions explanation description storyboard scrapbook bibliography biography diary directory newsletter letter script profile review summary calendar timeline cartoon collage diagram flow chart graph map photograph advertisement book card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>film video audio animation soundtrack webpage slideshow blog podcast online conference wiki e-zine digital story infographic QR code</td>
<td>model diorama display game mobile art gallery dramatisation dance living museum demonstration</td>
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• Encourage students to be critical thinkers by being critical of their own work and performance.

• Assessment is about being better now than you were before.

• Provide a checklist or rubric as a guide to expected content and standards. Format should reflect the nature of the investigation.

• Allow them to evaluate their choices and explain them.

• Model positive language for self-talk and feedback to others.

• Complete another *I know, I think, I wonder* chart and compare it to the first one for formal assessment.

• Celebrate success and plan for improvement.
• Begin the use of a learning journal.

• Encourage students to ask
  o Now I know this, how can I use it?
  o Now that I know this, what can I do?
Mike Eisenberg describes information literacy as “the most basic of basics”

It begins when the child first seeks an answer to a question.

It is indeed
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Together, we learn from each other
500 Hats http://500hats.edublogs.org
The Bottom Shelf http://thebottomshelf.edublogs.org/
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